



FALL 2004

OPAL NEWSLETTER

HOUSING ISLAND PEOPLE, MAINTAINING ISLAND CHARACTER

SIX HOMES ON THE WAY IN DEER HARBOR

OPAL CLOSES ON PURCHASE OF LAND FROM LAHARI

Another red-letter day for OPAL! On October 5, after many months of working out all the details, we purchased six lots from Lahari Hospice and Respite Care in Deer Harbor,



A Lahari homesite

where six homes for Orcas Island individuals and families will soon materialize—our first homes in that part of the island.

The homes will be small, 840 square feet, with optional interior floor plans for a studio, a one-bedroom or a two-bedroom layout. By mid-October the site work contractor, Orcas Excavating, was already laying out utility lines and excavating house-site locations. The building contractor, Justin Paulsen of Terra Firma NW, began working on-site at the end of October.

There are currently seventeen households who have completed the steps necessary to get onto OPAL's prequalified waiting list for homeownership. Six of those are the prospective owners of the Deer Harbor homes. They are delighted by the progress and the prospect of owning their own home in such a beautiful setting.

The purchase of the property was made possible because of a number of generous donations. First, Lahari set a price for the lots significantly below market value. Next, local donors contributed funds toward the project. And finally, OPAL was able to leverage all those donations to secure a grant from the Washington State Housing Trust Fund. The total project will cost just under \$1.2 million. A small gap remains in the total funds needed, and OPAL's trustees and staff will continue fundraising until we close the gap.

Construction is being financed through loans

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Studio floor plan

NORTHWEST COMMUNITY LAND TRUST COALITION

This spring, after five years of meeting twice a year for two to three days at a time, twelve community land trusts in Washington, Oregon, and British Columbia joined together to form the Northwest Community Land Trust Coalition.

The mission of the Coalition is to “coordinate, support, and enhance the activities of the CLTs in the Pacific Northwest so that, working together and independently, we can provide permanently affordable access to land for housing and other community efforts that serve low- and moderate-income members of our communities.”



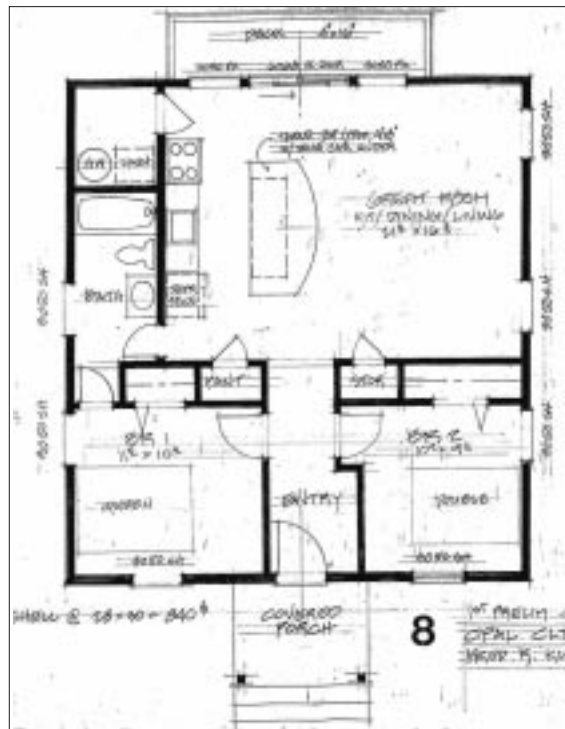
Participants in the Northwest Community Land Trust Coalition gathering held at Camp Orkila, October 21-23, 2004

Our initial three-year vision for the Coalition is to (1) increase public awareness of the land trust model and promote a common agenda resulting in favorable policies and increased resources to benefit the work of community land trusts across the region; (2) build the capacity of individual Coalition members, leading to more effective and sustainable organizations serving our communities; (3) strengthen the ties and mutual support among member CLTs in the region; and (4) ensure greater geographic representation through the thoughtful and strategic growth of land trusts in the region.

LAHARI PROPERTY (FROM FRONT PAGE)

from individuals in our community. Typically, a builder would take out a construction loan from a bank, paying a loan fee and market-rate interest. But OPAL is reducing costs by borrowing from eight individuals a total of \$575,000 in increments of \$25,000 to \$150,000. We'll borrow the funds for periods of two to eight months (drawing on the loans as needed to pay contractors) and pay 4 percent interest. Then we will repay individual lenders with the mortgage funds received from the sale of the homes to qualified homebuyers. These construction loans offer another way for local supporters to forward OPAL's work.

The six homes are scheduled to be completed early in the summer of 2005.



Two-bedroom floor plan

MADRONA STREET PROPERTY DONATED TO OPAL

The year 2004 marks another turning point in OPAL's history: for the first time we received a donation of buildable land. At the end of September OPAL accepted the gift of a .16-acre lot on Madrona Street in Eastsound from an anonymous donor. Our trustees and staff are greatly pleased by the donation, valued at more than \$100,000.

The property's zoning and location make it ideal for two residences—maybe a duplex, or maybe two separate cottages.



Donated land is especially advantageous because it enables OPAL to serve households we have not previously been able to serve. In this case, we're exploring the possibility of housing for people earning slightly more than 80 percent of San Juan County's median income, which is the limit defined by the federal and state funding sources that support most of our projects.

OPAL's staff and trustees will work with neighboring property owners and others over the winter to develop plans for the property.

NINTH ANNUAL SOIREE A GRAND SUCCESS!



Ruth Newman and Jim Foote

More than ninety people attended this year's Dinner and Auction Soiree. Auctioneer John Clancy entertained the crowd and kept everyone engaged with his quick pace and gentle tone. This year's auction offered trips to a number of popular locations, continuing the theme of "helping us provide homes on Orcas by getting away from yours." Completing her third year as the event's chairperson, Bev Leyman expressed enthusiasm about the \$18,000 (after expenses) raised to support OPAL's work.



*Mary Blackstone
and Roger Collier*



Harvey Olsan and Lance Evans



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OPAL's neighborhoods are visited by numerous creatures on Halloween night. Many households offered a non-candy option that was a favorite for a surprising number of small children and a not-so-surprising number of parents.

TWO OF OPAL COMMUNITY LAND TRUST'S FIVE PURPOSES:

Purpose #1: To provide permanently affordable access to land, homes and workplaces for current and future community members in need and/or of low and moderate income.

Purpose #4: To develop and exercise responsible, ecological practices which preserve, protect, and enhance the land's natural, scenic, recreational, and productive attributes.

