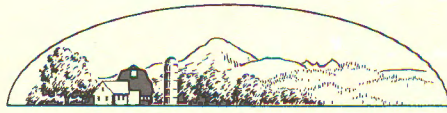


The



Newsletter of Whatcom Land Trust
Whatcom County, Washington

Steward

Whatcom Land Trust: Preserving the Nature of Whatcom County since 1984

Volume 16 Number 1

Spring 2007

South Fork Wetland Complex Protected

Step back 150 years when Europeans first entered the South Fork Valley and you would find a large river meandering amid swamps and dark old growth forests. At one time forested wetlands covered most of the South Fork Nooksack valley, storing winter rains and slowly releasing them over the year into the river system providing ample flow for Chinook salmon migrating from Bellingham Bay to their spawning grounds upriver. While this was excellent habitat for fish, it wasn't very good farmland. But farmland was the reason the first settlers from around the world journeyed all the way to Whatcom County and the South Fork Valley.

Now jump ahead to the present. Homesteading, farming, logging, transportation and energy development have

transformed the South Fork Valley into a landscape unrecognizable to the first settlers, and to fish. The South Fork has been straightened and diked to protect valuable farmland, Highway 9, Burlington Northern Railway and the Williams natural gas pipelines that run through the valley. The South Fork is now 22% shorter, most of the valley wetlands have been drained, and just about all of the old growth forests harvested. Yet a few Chinook salmon still make it up the South Fork from Bellingham Bay to spawn.

Saving the South Fork Chinook from extinction is the number one salmon recovery goal of the Nooksack Tribe, Lummi Nation, Whatcom County, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and Whatcom Land Trust. To save the



Illustration from photo by Eric Carabba
Nootka Rose blooms at Homesteader Road Conservation Easement.

South Fork Chinook from a footnote in the history books we need to make sure they have clear, cool, clean water in which to swim, spawn and live. ...continued on page four



Raspberry Fields Forever

Preserving and protecting Whatcom County farmland is one of the most important policies of County government, for farmland and farming are recognized as important economic, environmental and spiritual activities of our community. One of the most important crops grown in the fertile soils of the county are raspberries. To help protect raspberry farming Whatcom County recently purchased the development rights on the 91-acre Townline Berry Farm, owned and operated by the Alamwala family near Custer. Whatcom Land Trust is a partner with the County in preserving farmland and we co-hold the conservation easement over the Alamwala farm. As part of our partnership with the County we are responsible for conducting the annual monitoring of the property and conservation easement.

Whatcom County is recognized as one of the best raspberry growing regions in the entire world and many farmers are moving here ...continued on page four

Illustration from original photo by Brett Baunton

Raspberries are one of the main crops produced in Whatcom County.

Strategic Planning: a VISION and a Way to Get There

To be an effective force for conserving the natural heritage of our landscape, Whatcom Land Trust must be both profoundly inspiring in its vision and practical in its methods. It is with that intent that the Board of Directors recently wrote and adopted *Protection and Restoration: Whatcom Land Trust Strategic Plan 2007-2011*.

Protection and Restoration sets goals that will systematically move WLT closer to achieving its vision by conserving additional land while gathering the resources in the organization and within the larger community to take care of it for generations to come. Each goal is followed by a set of specific objectives by which we can measure our success as execution of the plan proceeds.

If you are interested in reading the full document please contact our office for a copy of the strategic plan.

Board Transitions

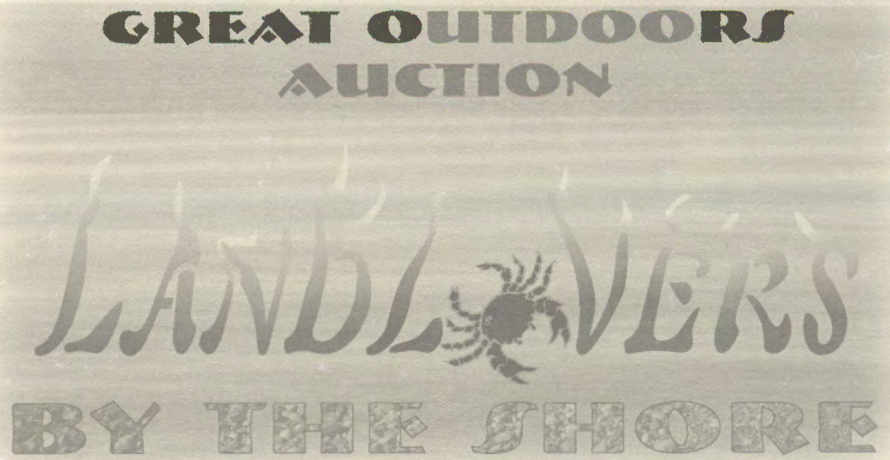
After 22 years on our Board of Directors, founding member **Hilda Bajema** is moving to an Emeritus role. Hilda served as Secretary for WLT from 1984 to 1990, and served as Treasurer from 1991 to 2001. In recent years she has organized WLT's policies and recorded its history. We are grateful to Hilda for her many contributions and are happy she wishes to continue her involvement in the role of Board Member Emeritus of WLT.



Photo: Ann Yow

Bruce Smith is leaving WLT's board to spend more time with his children. Bruce has provided WLT with sound legal advice throughout the years, for which we are greatly appreciative. Bruce will continue to be our registered agent.

New officers were elected at the Board Retreat in February. **Chris Moench** is our new President, **Rich Bowers** will act as our new Vice-President, **Rod Burton** remains as Secretary. **Harte Bressler** agreed to stay on as Treasurer.



Join us and other *Land Lovers by the Shore* for the event of the year!

May 5, 2007 marks the date of the 7th annual Great Outdoors Auction at the Bellingham Ferry Terminal in Fairhaven. Up for bid will be unique items by local craftspeople and artisans, fine dining experiences, invigorating excursions, and great outdoor gear. The high point for many attendees at previous auctions is the "Fund an Acre" sweep, an opportunity to preserve and protect a parcel of land in just less than 5 minutes.

Not only will you have a great time and enjoy dinner with other Land Trust supporters, you will have an opportunity to bid on some terrific auction items! We already have secured a getaway to Tobago, long weekend cabin stays on the Rocky Mountain Front and the Oregon coast, fishing and float trips on the region's rivers and bays, and numerous works of art, including pieces by Tom Sherwood, Laurie Potter, and Randy Van Beek.

We enjoy the support of so many in making the Great Outdoors Auction such a fun event - but we are always looking to include more! If you wish to attend, call early! If you wish to donate, drop us a note! If you want to assist in the planning or just help out for a few hours at the event, give us a shout! We will be happy to assist you in assisting us - call the office, 650-9470, or drop an email to info@whatcomlandtrust.org.

Volunteer Opportunities to Help WLT

Development: auction help, make community contacts

Outreach: table staffing, parade participation, assist at outdoor concert

Administration: assist with mailing

Land Management: land monitoring, land clean-up projects

call the office at 650-9470 to get more information

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P.O. Box 6131

Bellingham, Washington, 98227-6131

(360) 650-9470

info@whatcomlandtrust.org

Newsletter Team Rod Burton, Connie Clement, Jerry DeBacker
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Lee and Prentiss Cole

It is often interesting to learn the various reasons donors choose to support their favorite causes. Lee and Prentiss Cole are no exception. Discussing their interests over a cup of coffee one learns from Lee, "supporting the work of conservation has long been an interest for us. In the late 1960s we were involved in educational efforts to make known the importance of conscious conservation and sustainable living. Our commitment continues to this day."



Both Lee and Prentiss have extensive experience assisting nonprofit organizations. Among several such groups, Lee was an environmental education volunteer at Filoli, a garden/nature preserve and a National Trust for Historic Preservation site. The unusual name Filoli comes from combining the first two letters from the key words of the founder's credo: "Fight for a just cause; Love your fellow man; Live a good life." "It was a delightful place to work with children helping them gain an appreciation for the natural world," said Lee.

Prentiss's working career is an interesting story in its own right. He began his engineering phase after graduation from M.I.T., working with elastomeric materials and processes before returning to school to acquire a Masters in Fine Arts in

"Our support of the Land Trust is rooted in our wish to preserve for future generations as much as possible the beauties and magnificence of this planet."

— Prentiss Cole

the early 1970s. His work shifted to the solar energy industry, and then in the late 70s to the nonprofit educational field where he worked on issues of nuclear proliferation, conflict resolution and energy conservation. In the late 80s he returned full-time to his art work and began exhibiting at venues throughout the western United States.

The Coles made a significant donation to Whatcom Land Trust last year, a gift that secured the permanent protection of 105 acres in the Lake Whatcom watershed. Prentiss spoke to the importance of the Land Trust's work, "The Land Trust is engaged in protecting this gift we all enjoy. Lee and I have been fortunate in our lives, yet we have also experienced firsthand the loss of vital, vibrant, living soil - that is now gone forever. We feel an obligation to be responsible stewards of the earth. Our support of the Land Trust is rooted in our wish to preserve for future generations as much as possible the beauties and magnificence of this planet." The Coles' diverse background, artistic expression, and commitment to a viable future are an asset to our community, and their generosity has preserved a remarkable piece of the watershed we all rely upon. 🌱

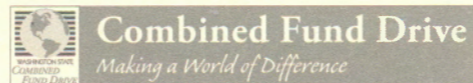
Love a Parade?

If you've ever been in the crowd at the Ski-To-Sea Grand Parade, you know the fun, community spirit it brings about. This year, Whatcom Land Trust plans to be a part of this event with a non-motorized "float," accompanied by various walking animals. Okay, they won't be "real" animals. They'll be people who love the land, and have a good sense of humor, who are willing to walk around in public dressed like some sort of animal native to Whatcom County. So, do you have a secret desire to be an eagle or a banana slug or an elk? This is your golden opportunity. The parade is May 26th. Please contact Connie at connie@whatcomlandtrust.org if you're interested. 🌱

Outreach Training Opportunity

Are you passionate about saving the beautiful areas of Whatcom County? Would you like to share your passion with others? Whatcom Land Trust is looking for people to act as friendly educators at our outreach table at special events. Interested? A table training is set for April 26th from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the WECU Education Center (511 East Holly Street - across from their main office). This session will discuss the work of Whatcom Land Trust, our outreach materials and how to engage people in conversation. 🌱

State Employees Give to WLT with Combined Fund Drive Support



Thanks to all the generous state employees who have chosen to give to Whatcom Land Trust through the Combined Fund Drive.

Are you a current or retired state employee? Please consider giving to WLT through the CFD: an easy and safe way to assist in the preservation of the best of Whatcom places. 🌱

S. Fork Wetlands continued from front page

One way to help is to protect any remaining wetlands in the South Fork Valley. One of our latest projects, the Homesteader Road Conservation Easement, aims to do just that.

The Homesteader Road Conservation Easement protects 28 acres of forested wetland in the central part of the South Fork valley. This is one of the largest undeveloped forested wetland complexes remaining in the South Fork, providing summer flow to small streams and ditches that feed into Black Slough and the South Fork River. The conservation easement was donated by Ken and Carolyn Lane, commercial fishers who bought the property for its conservation value and live nearby. The project is also part of the Williams Pipeline system upgrade to their natural gas lines in the South Fork. As part of their permit requirements Williams Pipeline agreed to help fund restoration and protection of Homesteader site, including tree planting and stream rehabilitation. Williams also donated funds to the Whatcom Land Trust Stewardship fund. The conservation easement prohibits development or tree cutting except for hazard trees and firewood for the Lanes. 🌲



photo: Eric Carabba

Black Slough wetlands provide rearing habitat for salmon.

Raspberry Farmland continued from front page

to raise this valuable crop. Raspberries have long been gathered by humans. The red raspberry is indigenous to both North America and Asia Minor where the fruit was gathered in the wild by the people of Troy in the foothills of Mt. Ida around the time of Christ. Raspberries are thought to have been domesticated around the 4th century and Romans are believed to have spread cultivation throughout Europe. The first settlers from Europe discovered Native Americans gathering and eating berries where they were dried for preservation and ease of transportation. Europeans also brought cultivated raspberries to the new colonies.

A most intriguing health benefit of red raspberries is the substantial quantity of ellagic acid found in the fruits. Ellagic acid is a phenolic compound that has been identified as a potent anti-carcinogenic/anti-mutagenic compound. Scientific tests show that ellagic acid may help prevent cancer, inhibit the growth of cancer cells, and arrest the growth of cancer in subjects with a genetic predisposition for the disease. Raspberries provide important health benefits for society, and protecting the berry fields is a critical action in insuring the long term viability of their production.



photo: Gordon Scott

Pruned raspberries wait for spring at the Alamwala conservation easement.

Washington, Oregon and California are leading producers of raspberries, and Washington state accounts for nearly 60 % of the U.S. production. In 2006 Whatcom County raised a whopping 87% of all raspberries grown in Washington State. These production figures, along with the noted health benefits of raspberries, make this crop one of the most important to protect in Whatcom County. Whatcom Land Trust is pleased and excited to be part of the solution of farmland preservation. 🌲

A Memorial to Don Jensen



photo: Gordon Scott

Don Jensen walking in his beloved forest.

Twenty-three acres of stately Douglas fir trees stand tall in the northeast corner of the Jensen family farm. Don Jensen passed away on February 23rd, nearly four months to the day from the dedication of those forested acres known as the Jensen Family Forest Park. The trees Don loved so much and protected for his lifetime soar as a fitting memorial to this man of the earth.

Don and his wife Judy signed a conservation easement protecting the trees in perpetuity and arranged with the Land Trust for the property to become a county park. We knew Don was ill and promised Judy we would do all we could to create the park while Don was still able to celebrate and enjoy it. With the help of many people, we succeeded. Don departed knowing that his trees were safe and would be appreciated by many generations to come.

We are privileged to have worked with Don Jensen and to have experienced his commitment to the land, the trees and his community. 🌱

Clark's Point Volunteers Needed

Would you like to help Whatcom Land Trust protect one of the most beautiful spots in the county by taking a walk? If so, read on...

The beautiful peninsula known as Clark's Point is protected by a conservation easement. The area is home to eagle, heron, hawk, deer, aquatic animals and many other critters. At one time, Clark's Point was open to the public, but because of abuses to the land and threats to wildlife, the area was closed. There are four homes on Clark's Point. One of them belonged to Doug and Peggy Clark,

the patriarch and matriarch of the family who, with their children, placed the conservation easement on the land. Peggy died several years ago and Doug died last fall. Since Doug's death (which was highly publicized), trespassing has increased on Clark's Point along with the abuses and wildlife threats.

In response, Whatcom Land Trust is gathering volunteers willing to take a walk on Clark's Point on scheduled days to keep on eye on the property and to let visitors know that they cannot party on the point. Most of the time, it will be just

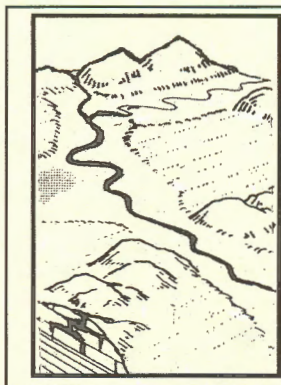
a beautiful walk in this special spot. Whatcom Land Trust will provide training, a specific route, a hat and other identification. We are not asking volunteers to be police officers, just commu-



photo: Eric Carabba

Bill Wright describes to volunteers the monitoring issues at Clark's Point.

nicators. We need to establish a (peaceful) presence. We will ask volunteers to choose day(s) on which they will be willing to take a walk on Clark's Point from mid-March through mid-October. If you are interested in participating in this effort, contact Connie at 650-9470 or e-mail connie@whatcomlandtrust.org. 🌱



Water Resources Consulting, LLC

PETER WILLING
PH.D., HYDROGEOLOGIST
1903 Broadway
Bellingham, Washington 98225
pwilling@telcomplus.net
(360) 734-1445

What is going on Out On the Land?

Eric Carabba

Stewardship is the cornerstone of the land trust's mission. Stewardship of the land comes in a variety of forms from allowing nature to take its course to active intervention to restore non-functioning habitat. Whether ecosystems and natural processes are functioning or being restored, invasive plants continue to threaten wildlife habitat throughout Whatcom County.

For example, the butterfly bush is seemingly harmless with its beautiful purple flowers and sweet scent, but this tenacious plant grows quickly and its millions of seeds per plant are spread easily by wind, water and wildlife. The butterfly bush is showing up on clear cuts high on the hillsides and choking gravel bars where forested islands should establish shade to side channels. Within a few years, a butterfly bush quickly grows to be 20 feet tall and just as wide with stocks several inches in diameter. If the tough stocks are cut down, the tap root rapidly re-grows a new bush within months. This is one of several ornamental plants that challenge the protection of salmon habitat. Eradication of these plants is unfortunately very unlikely. Our challenge as stewards of the land is to keep these invasive plants from overpowering the native vegetation as we accelerate the establishment of healthy mature riparian forests. In general these plants are unable

to establish in healthy evergreen forests.

In the meantime, butterfly bushes, Scotch Broom, English holly and ivy, knotweed, and blackberries make it difficult for native plants to establish, and all of these are present on several of our protected properties. We have many years of continuous, consistent work ahead to present future generations with healthy functioning habitat to support salmon, eagles, elk and much more!

Looking for fun? Join Whatcom Land Trust and other conservation minded friends, young and old, for Spring and Fall Work Parties!

Thank you to all the volunteers who have worked hard to take care of Whatcom Land Trust protected properties this spring, with a special thanks to Western Washington University's BAP Accounting Students for their consistent effort.

Upcoming work parties are:

March 24 – Racehorse Creek

April 21 – Jensen Family Forest Park

If you can arrange a group of 10 – 15 able bodies and would like to help out, we can arrange a work party to suit your group's availability. Please call Eric for more information.

Whatcom Land Trust volunteer stewards have been instrumental in keeping an eye on and caring for our properties and

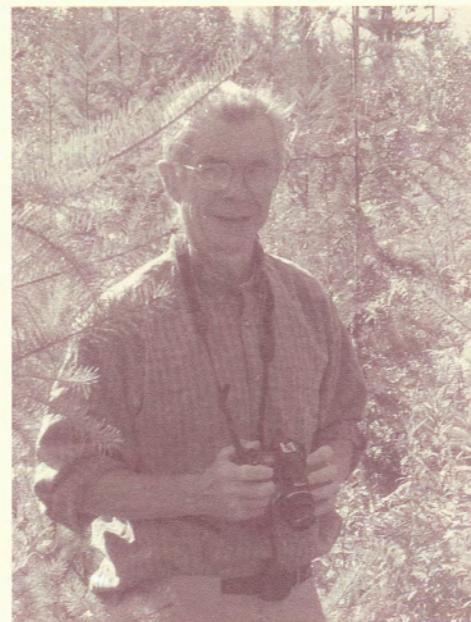


photo: Eric Carabba

Whatcom Land Trust would like to acknowledge John Bremer for his dedication as a volunteer over the past year. Not only has John kept a close eye on four properties, he diligently removed several hundred butterfly bushes from a young timber plantation on WLT's Port Blakley property along the South Fork of the Nooksack. John has taken on two more properties along the North Fork.

providing a necessary presence on lands the public frequents.

If you would like to become a volunteer Land Steward or participate in work parties, please contact Eric for more information at 650-9470 or e-mail eric@whatcomlandtrust.org. **Call Now and Get Out On the Land!** 🌲

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Spring Tours

For more information and to register, call Whatcom Land Trust at 650-9470. Free to WLT members. Suggested \$5 to \$10 donation for non-members is requested.

Wetlands of Whatcom County

Saturday, March 24 10am- 1:00pm Limit: 15

Leader: Oliver Grah, Whatcom County Planner and Wetland Expert

Discover the fascinating world of wetlands of Whatcom County! Learn the role wetlands play and the conditions that impact them. Oliver Grah is an engaging teacher who leaves his students marveling at the muck under their feet. There is a suggested \$5-10 donation for non-members. Call the office to register. 650-9470

Animal Tracking at Deming Homestead Eagle Park

Saturday, April 21 10am- 1:00pm Limit: 15

Leader: John McLaughlin, Professor at Huxley College of Environmental Studies

Tracking is an excellent way to document the presence and activities of wildlife. Here's your chance to learn how to do it! Huxley professor (and new WLT Board member) John McLaughlin will show you how to discover animal presence by investigating the prints they leave behind – a great way to find out about the animals of our community. There is a suggested \$5-10 donation for non-members. Call the office to register. 650-9470

Wonderful Little Things in the Forest: Stimpson Family Nature Reserve

Sunday, May 20 1pm- 4:00pm Limit: 15

Leader: Marilyn Boysen, Microbiologist

Discover the beautiful and bizarre, the awesome and amazing, the wonderful and wacky small organisms that are often overlooked on a walk in the woods. Trees are the essential part of a forest, but without these "Little Things" there would be no trees. There is a suggested \$5-10 donation for non-members. Call the office to register. 650-9470

The Creation of Whatcom Places II

Have you seen *Whatcom Places II*? This second edition of the old favorite has sold very well since its release in November 2006. The book, a collection of photos, essays, poetry and interviews about Whatcom County, was inspired and produced by WLT Board member, Bob Keller. To hear the story behind the book, join Bob on May 1st at Whatcom Museum for a brown bag lunch presentation on *Whatcom Places II*. 🍷

Living Memorials

Charitable giving is an important tradition for many people. Making gifts for the benefit of others offers a wonderful way to affirm your values and priorities. Honoring a loved one through a charitable gift is often an especially meaningful act. Memorial and tribute gifts allow you to thoughtfully remember family members and friends who have been a vital part of your life. Gifts made in honor of family and friends at times such as Mother's Day or Father's Day, at the birth of a child or grandchild, or on a birthday, wedding, anniversary, or other notable occasion can be gifts of love that show how much you care.

Remember memorial gifts of cash are tax-deductible and here at the Land Trust all such gifts are used strictly for land preservation. For more information on how to make a living memorial gift, please contact the office at 650-9470. 🍷

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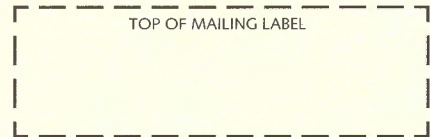
Fax: **360-650-0495**

E-mail:

info@whatcomlandtrust.org

website:

www.whatcomlandtrust.org



Whatcom Land Trust • By the Numbers

Land protected through the efforts or assistance of Whatcom Land Trust:

Total Acres 8,135

Miles of Riverfront 14

Public Parks Created 12

The Mission of Whatcom Land Trust is to preserve and protect wildlife habitat, scenic, agricultural and open space lands in Whatcom County for future generations by securing interests in land and promoting land stewardship.

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