



Steward

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

Volume 18 Number 2

Summer 2009

City of Bellingham works with Land Trust to preserve the Lake Whatcom Watershed

Lake Whatcom is an important drinking water resource to 95,000 people of Whatcom County. Careful land management is needed to ensure that the water quality of the lake remains safe. This requires a multi-tiered approach to safeguard against the challenges of land disturbance, loss of forest cover, urbanization, increased impervious surfaces, and contaminants from daily activities. These influences impact the water quality of the lake and contribute to decreasing levels of dissolved oxygen.



photo: Eric Carabba

This western lowland forest captures rainfall, reduces runoff, filters nutrients and runoff, and stabilizes soils at Three Creeks Preserve II.

Watershed protection is the first and most basic step in a multi-barrier approach to ensuring pure drinking water. The City of Bellingham Public Works Department has been acquiring land in the Lake Whatcom Watershed in order to protect the water quality of Lake Whatcom. Over the past eight years, the City has purchased approximately 1,309 acres of land at a cost of \$20.3 million. The City's Property Acquisition program is financed by water usage fees to protect the drinking water source, including the conservation and management of the acquired land. In order to make the best use of available funds for property purchase, the City has employed

a strategy of first obtaining large parcels with the most development potential. In addition, for efficiency and effectiveness, the City considers properties that are adjacent to already protected lands or very sensitive areas.

In order to assure long-term protection of these strategic investments, the City and Whatcom Land Trust have partnered using conservation easements held by the trust to ensure perpetual protection of these preserves for water quality.

"The primary purpose of this conservation easement is to protect the water

quality of Lake Whatcom by preserving, and where needed, restoring natural ecological functions that act to maintain high water quality and reduce or eliminate sources of water quality degradation. The secondary purposes include the protection and enhancement of wildlife habitat, preservation of open space, and providing opportunities for passive recreation."

Over the past three years the City has acquired three different properties along Olsen and Carpenter Creeks, which now form the 60-acre Olsen Creek

...continued on page five

Sincere Appreciation for Intern Nora Gay's Help



Nora Gay found her love for nature while growing up in Port Angeles surrounded by forests, mountains, and bodies of water. This past spring during her WLT internship, Nora helped with projects like the auction, as well as the curriculum for the Stimpson Family Nature Reserve. She hopes children in our schools will have the opportunity to explore Stimpson and learn about the natural world. Nora just graduated from Western Washington University with a degree in Environmental Education along with a dance minor, and she plans to become an educator to promote environmental awareness and preservation.

We are grateful to Nora for her work on the curriculum, the auction and all the various tasks she cheerfully completed for WLT. We wish her the best as she continues onto her next phase of life.

President's Message

Dear Friend,

As the newly elected President of the Whatcom Land Trust, I would like to welcome you to the summer edition of our newsletter and invite you to celebrate the longer days and warmer weather by visiting our nearly 10,000 acres of community forests, tidelands, saltwater shorelands and riparian and habitat areas. These special places were protected with you and your family in mind – as shelter for wildlife, for quiet solitude, and as open-space and parkland for the Whatcom community and those traveling the Northwest.

While the current economy may not lend itself to extensive travel, “getting away” in Whatcom County is simple and easy. Take a quiet walk along the trails in the Stimpson Nature Reserve, or along some 1,900 feet of public beachfront on the just-opened Point Whitehorn Marine Reserve. With a bit more time, visit Point Roberts and the outstanding tide-pools and eagle viewing available at Lily Point.

As you visit these areas, keep Whatcom Land Trust in mind. I'd like to hear your thoughts about the properties you visit, and can be reached at nwdrivers@comcast.com. And please think of WLT when you decide which organizations you will be supporting this year. Your assistance allows us to preserve even more of those “special places,” places that directly impact our community's quality of life, and that provide a visible and personal return for our families.

See you out there!

Rich Bowers, President, Whatcom Land Trust



photo: Rod Burton

Rich Bowers accepts a ceremonial blanket from Vernell Lane of the Lummi Nation in thanks for Whatcom Land Trust's work protecting Lily Point. The dedication ceremony was held on June 4, 2008.

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Whatcom Land Trust

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Community Food Co-op supports WLT

The Community Food Co-op has been an integral part of the local community since opening its doors in 1970 in the Good Earth Building in Fairhaven with fewer than 10 items. Today, the Co-op operates two stores, one in downtown Bellingham and a new second store open since January in the Cordata neighborhood, and offers more than 20,000 products.

The Community Food Co-op has supported Whatcom Land Trust in a number of ways. In 1999 and 2005, Whatcom Land Trust was the recipient of a Community Shopping Day (CSD) donation. This program donates 2% of sales from one Saturday each month to a designated community organization. The Co-op also provides \$5 volunteer coupons to organizations in the community. In turn, organizations use these coupons to thank their volunteers. Whatcom Land Trust receives more than 120 coupons every year—an annual donation totaling more than \$600. The Co-op also donated funds toward the production of *Whatcom Places II*, WLT's beautiful book featuring photographs and stories detailing some of the majestic locations in Whatcom County. Last, but

not least, the Co-op donates every year to WLT's annual Great Outdoors Auction.

The beautiful thing about a partnership like that between the Co-op and the Land Trust is that it benefits everyone. That is why the Community Food Co-op wants to remind WLT supporters how you can help the Co-op to build community and establish a strong core of shoppers for the new Cordata store:

Shop Cordata! If you haven't visited the new store yet, please stop by.

Introduce a friend, neighbor, or family member to the Co-op. If you love the Co-op, don't keep it a secret—share the joy!

Sign up for one of the Co-op's fabulous Healthy Connections classes. Class schedules are in the Co-op Community News and on their website at www.communityfood.coop.

Host your business meeting, book club, or other gathering in their café or in the Local Roots Room at Cordata. For regularly scheduled meetings, make a reservation to use the Local Roots Room. This space, as well as the downtown Healthy Connections Building, is available for free

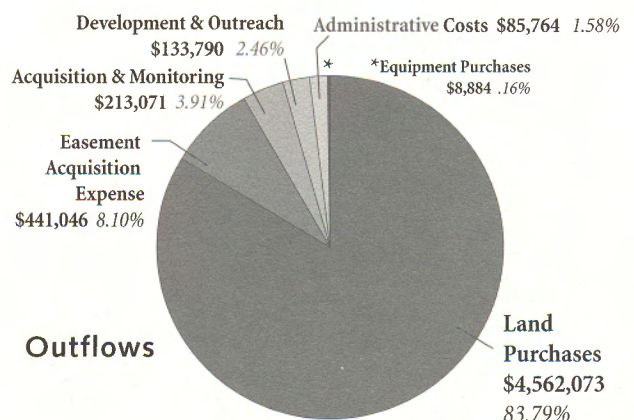
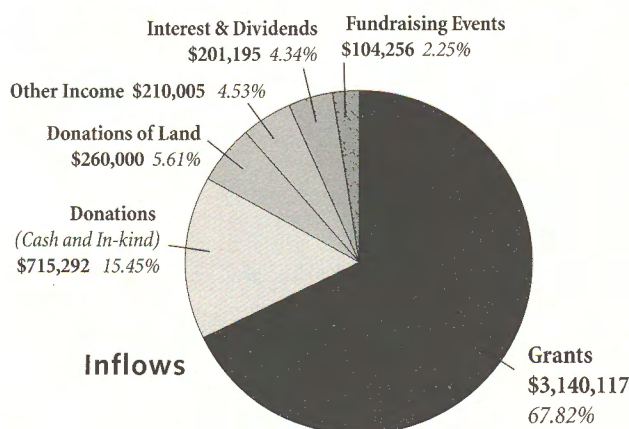
when booked by a Co-op member. Contact Kevin Murphy at 734-8158, ext. 220, or kevinm@communityfood.coop.

Order a catered box lunch from the Swan Deli. Forget about uninspired box lunches, pizza, or fast food and feed the minds at your next meeting with a healthy, delicious meal!

Attend a Cordata event and bring a friend, or two, or three, or more! A series of summer events will be held on the second Sunday of June, July, and August at the Cordata store. Each event features a BBQ lunch with partial proceeds benefitting a community organization, live music, and activities organized around a central theme. Upcoming events are on July 12 and August 9. See details in the Co-op Community News or the Co-op website.

So, Whatcom Land Trust supporters, the next time you grab your reusable shopping bags and head out to the store, please consider shopping the Co-op! The Co-op has almost everything you need and when you shop at the Co-op you benefit the community you love and help great organizations like Whatcom Land Trust continue to prosper!

Amended Financial Information



Within the most recent annual report, the pie chart presentation of "outflows" for the fiscal year ending 6/30/08 inadvertently omitted the acquisition of the Lily Point property. This piece of property was acquired during the fiscal year at a total cost of \$3,527,382 and was subsequently donated to Whatcom County for a park within the same fiscal year. This revised set of inflow and outflow charts reflect this correction. —*Harte Bressler, Treasurer*

The Great Outdoors Auction

The 9th Annual Great Outdoors Auction was held May 2nd at the Lakeway Inn ballroom. Guests took turns bidding against friends and neighbors as they wandered about the decorated hall. The Land Trust's 25th Anniversary was featured in the color scheme of silver, blue, and green silent auction tables filling the room. Over 300 guests and volunteers gathered to bid fast and furiously on a wide variety of unique items and experiences. Outdoor gear, weekend getaways, art and crafts, garden plants and products, local food baskets, and much more all vied for the bidders' attention. Over \$78,000 in gross proceeds was raised through a combination of the silent and live auctions.

Master of Ceremonies Chuck Robinson and Auctioneer Gaye Godfrey started the night off with an energetic foot race, urging participants to dash to the dessert table (laden with delectable choices) and claim a treat. Board President Rich Bowers welcomed the crowd and reflected on the organization's recent successes, while



Photo: Alan Fritzborg

Early in the auction, bidders studied the many different offerings in Silent Section A.

special guest Craig Lee recalled early formative days in the basement of Dutch Mother's restaurant in Lynden. The live auction highlighted unique experiences ranging from cabin stays, Olympic tickets, sailing excursions and picnics. Fine art ranged from board members' pottery and wood carvings to a Thomas Wood etching that generated the most spirited bidding of the evening.

The Best of Live raffle, a chance to pick any item out the live catalog before the auction begins, resulted in Dar and Dave New winning and deciding the carbon touring kayak from Johnson Outdoors would look just right loaded onto their car! The highlight of the evening came with the outpouring of support for our Fund an Acre project, the Mulka acquisition. Over \$13,000 was raised in under 5 minutes to protect this parcel located in the midst of our Samish River complex of protected properties.

We extend special recognition and

thanks to our auction sponsors: Pacific Surveying & Engineering, Whatcom Educational Credit Union, ConocoPhillips, Lithtex Northwest, Village Books, and the Lakeway Inn. We are privileged to receive support from many businesses that make the Great Outdoor Auction possible. Additionally we wish to recognize assistance received from Whatcom Sound, Boundary Bay Brewing and Vartanyan Estate Winery.

We are truly grateful for the volunteers who make this fun event possible. The enthusiasm of volunteers as they transform a ballroom into a market bazaar of good deals and great gear is simply remarkable! Auction committee members Carol Rondello, Katy Batchelor, Barbara Brandt, Laurie Heck, Becky Masters, Nancy Hart, Catherine O'Keefe and Jean Calhoun worked extremely hard to make the event a fun for all. The committee was supported in its work by Board members Cindy Klein, Rod Burton,



Photo: Dar New

Dave New, and his dog Riley, try out the Necky Kayak he selected as winner of the "Best of Live" raffle.

Rebecca Reich, Margo Burton and Chris Moench. Staff members Connie Clement and Dawn Sodt were instrumental in providing assistance to the committee. Many volunteers helped with setup, data entry, cleanup and the numerous tasks required to make any auction a success. Our greatest thanks go to auction coordinator Ren ea Roberts who once again pulled together all the loose threads of the event. This year she did it while also planning her wedding – all with her eyes closed! Congratulations to everyone for a job well done and special congratulations and best wishes to Ren ea!

Thanks to all the donors, patrons, and volunteers who made this year's auction a big hit. Give us a call if you wish to join in planning next year's 10th Great Outdoors Auction!



photo: Eric Carabba

Wildlife and hikers make use of an old skid road that winds through the protected watershed property.



Photo: Alan Fritzbeg

Gaye Godfrey was a great auctioneer.

Preserve. Protection of this site removes 14 potential development rights from this watershed and protects a mixed lowland forest serving as wildlife habitat and natural storm water filter. The property contains a diverse mixture of conifers and deciduous forest. Several open areas have been recently re-planted. This preserve also protects approximately 165 feet of Lake Whatcom frontage off North Shore Drive. In 2004 the City donated a conservation easement protecting the 104-acre Three Creeks Preserve. Acquiring the additional 60 acres in 2008, the

City will add the adjacent land to protected status.

The Land Trust now holds six conservation easements on some 974 acres owned by the City of Bellingham in the Lake Whatcom watershed. Two preserves are jointly owned by Whatcom County and the City.

How you can help—consider donating, selling or placing a conservation easement on your watershed property. For more information please contact City of Bellingham's Public Works Department at (360) 778-7900. —Eric Carabba

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Point Whitehorn Opening

It was a beautiful, sunny Memorial Day and over 400 people came to discover the treasure known as Point Whitehorn Marine Reserve. For this park opening, we tried something new. We received a grant from the Alliance for Puget Sound Shorelines (the MudUp people) to get a radio broadcast from Point Whitehorn. During the event, the station was at Point Whitehorn, periodically broadcasting live. Tom and Jon from the station enthusiastically talked about the park and encouraged people to visit. It seemed to work, as several families mentioned they heard it on the radio and decided to come out.



photo: Rod Burton

Visitors found fascinating low tide marine life at Point Whitehorn.

The Grand Opening of the Point Whitehorn Marine Reserve began with dedication speeches by County Executive Pete Kremen and WLT founding member Rand Jack. WLT board member Chris Moench explained the connection between the pipeline explosion of 1999 and the beautiful park purchased with funds from the legal settlement of that event.

After the words of dedication, the crowd walked down the ¾-mile trail through the forested wetlands. Along the way, the WSU Beach Watchers had 3 stations explaining the importance of those wetlands and their function in keeping the waters of the Strait of Georgia clean. Once on the beach, ReSources Beach Naturalists and Whatcom County Parks & Recreation staff helped people discover the sea life exposed during the -2.8 tide. The big find was a large moon snail.

The magic of the day was captured in the excitement of one child as he eagerly showed off the sunflower sea star he discovered, and in the exclamation of another child as he looked at a prolific nurse log in the forest. Now that this land is a park protected by a conservation easement, future generations can experience the thrill of running through this forest and playing on this beach.

If you haven't had a chance to experience this beautiful, new park, we encourage you to visit. To get there, take Grandview (exit 266) west. Keep going until it takes a 90-degree turn to the left and becomes Koehn Road. The park is on the left.

Junior Stewards

Kickoff Friday, June 26th at 3:30

Bloedel Donovan Multipurpose Room

This free event is the beginning of Whatcom Land Trust's summer environmental education program. Children will receive booklets for self-guided tours and activities to complete during the summer. Pick up a program booklet at the kickoff, download it at: www.whatcomlandtrust.org, or visit the Whatcom Land Trust office at 110 Central (near the Library).

The Sardis Raptor Center's Hunters of the Sky program will be at the kickoff!

Photos: Eagle: Rand Jack, Background beach: Sara Hill

Update on Preserves

Steve Walker

Last month volunteer work parties tackled separate problems at two preserves on the North Fork of the Nooksack River. On May 9th, students from the Western Washington University's chapter of Beta Alpha Psi, an honorary organization for financial information students and professionals, removed old barbed wire fencing at the Bell Creek Preserve. The fencing, much of it collapsed and hidden, posed a threat to the elk population that routinely grazes on the property. It was also a constant nuisance to the teams of restoration specialists from Lummi Natural Resources who have been planting and maintaining young evergreen trees near the main branch of the river. WLT intern Carolyn Kinkade led the work party. The Trust thanks Carolyn and the volunteer crew for braving the nettles and taking on a big task.

On May 28th, volunteers Betsy Gross, Alan Fritzberg, Nancy Hart, and John Bremmer joined WLT Property Steward Steve Walker to uproot dozens of Scotch broom plants at the Glacier Springs Preserve. Betsy, who serves as a volunteer steward for the preserve, noticed the invasive plants during a monitoring visit and offered to guide a volunteer work party. The group used "weed wrenches" to extract the nuisance plants near the site of the old Logs Resort.

That land is part of a complex of properties totalling 86 acres at the mouth of Canyon Creek, purchased by the Trust and the Whatcom County River and Flood Division during the last decade to protect and enhance salmon habitat. While much progress was made, some plants remain. Call Steve at the Land Trust office if you would like to join another "broom crew" to finish the job during the last week of June..

The Land Trust is working with the Nooksack Indian Tribe Watershed Restoration program to enhance habitat along

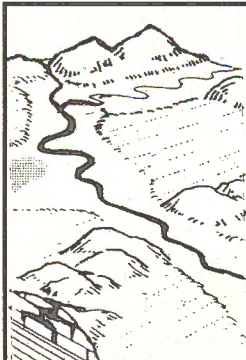
the South Fork of the Nooksack River in the Trust's Edfro Creek Preserve. Tribal workers are planting thousands of small native evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs. Crews reported seeing a cougar while they were working at the site.

A recent monitoring visit to the Racehorse Creek Preserve revealed the extent of debris that was deposited in the creek during winter flooding. A huge slide on the mountainside above the preserve loaded the creek with massive amounts of wood. Visitors can walk west from the bridge to view the spectacle.



photo: Steve Walker

Volunteer Alan Fritzberg muscles out some Scotch Broom with a weed wrench.



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Whatcom Land Trust • By the Numbers

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

Total Acres 9,895

Miles of Riverfront 22.5

Miles of Salt Water Shoreline 7.5

Public Parks Created 13

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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