

The



Newsletter of Whatcom Land Trust
Whatcom County, Washington

Steward

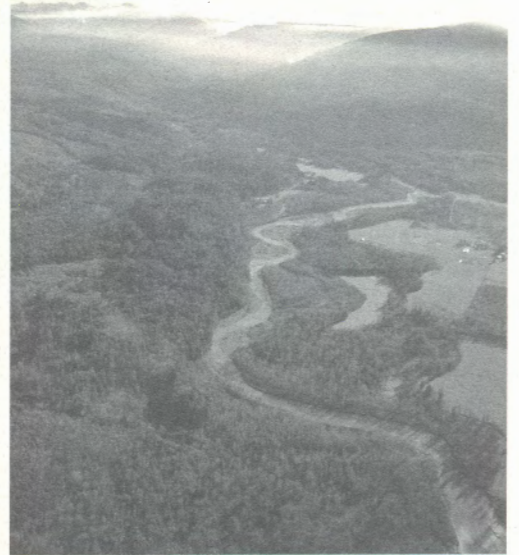
Whatcom Land Trust: Preserving the Nature of Whatcom County since 1984

Volume 18 Number 4

Winter 2009

Whatcom Land Trust Protects 10,000 Acres!

Over the past 25 years the Land Trust has worked collaboratively with private landowners to protect the conservation values of special lands across Whatcom County. The Trust's mission to secure interest in land and promote land stewardship has involved over 130 projects that include land trust ownership, conservation easements and facilitating land exchanges. This work has only been possible through visionary board members, countless volunteers, creative partnerships, and the ground swell of generous support of individual donors. Contributions have ranged from monthly giving to significant specific project support.



photos: Eric Carabba, John Skurlock

Aerial views of protected properties.
From top: Agricultural easements,
Nooksack River frontage, Lily Point.

Many of the early projects, such as the Miller Farm, the Nessel Farm, and Clark's Point, were donated conservation easements. As the Land Trust evolved, projects became more complicated, like Stimpson Family Nature Reserve where the generous donation by the Stimpson family leveraged the protection of additional land and partnerships creating the 350-acre Reserve.

As the Land Trust evolved from an all-volunteer organization to include staff, an effort was made to better focus its work and increase the pace of conservation. The Land Trust pursued a conservation planning process in 1999. Over the past decade the ...continued on page four

New Samish River Preserve Acquisition Alpine Meadows

At the end of October, the Land Trust purchased 65 acres in the headwaters of the Samish River from the Alpine Meadows Tree Farm owners, brothers Ken and Lewis Stremler, bringing the Land Trust's protected land to 10,000 acres.

In 1997, Ken and Jan Stremler preserved part of Lynden's history by donating a conservation easement protecting their 38-acre farm. The land was once part of the historic Judson homestead built in 1888 and ...continued on page five



New WLT Intern Stephanie Johnson

Stephanie Johnson just moved to Bellingham three months ago from Ellensburg, Washington. She lived there all her life and wanted to expand her horizons to a different part of beautiful Washington State. Stephanie participated in Running Start at Central Washington University and Yakima Valley Community College. She now plans to finish her Associates degree and transfer to Western Washington University to further her education. Stephanie wants to pursue studies in naturopathic medicine and botany. A couple of years ago Stephanie found love in nature. Stephanie wants to help preserve the environment for future generations so they can see the beauty of the natural world. Stephanie loves Washington State's beauty and wants to make sure the forests and farmlands are preserved and kept in a natural state for years to come.

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CONSERVATION MOTIVATIONS

Patty Bolyard, WLT Supporter

It can seem quite an impossible, or, at the least, an endlessly complex task to do something "good" for the environment these days. Multiple disciplines of knowledge and authority inform our views on the health of Whatcom County's natural resource systems and how well a proposed project or strategy might improve current conditions. Add the long list of rights-based, regulatory, and power issues that arise when one is working with water, air, or land-based resources and you really have a lot to chew on before deciding on how beneficial your efforts might be. Yes, it's enough to numb an interested community member into a state of inactivity and confusion.

Yet, despite this morass of complexity, Whatcom Land Trust continues to meet people of all ages who find time for active and informed stewardship on behalf of the resources that matter the most to them. For some folks, the salt water shoreline draws them, and others prefer to advance the big picture.

Of particular curiosity to me are the many young adults I've met at WLT, who, amidst new job duties, educational pursuits, and young family demands, still find time to be informed AND active stewards of Whatcom County's water, air, and land resources. Patty Bolyard shared this about her conservation motivations

and why she contributes her time to Whatcom Land Trust projects.

"When I had kids, I took on a different perspective. I evaluated how I wanted to live my life and how I want to make an impact on the world. I want to do something to be part of an active change in the areas I care about, right here in this community. I want the special places I walked in my 20's to be here, not only for my kids, but future generations to enjoy. I'm talking about taking a big stance when it comes to conservation."

Like Patty, many at Whatcom Land Trust share an emphasis on the big picture approach to stewardship and conservation. The legal framework we contribute to natural resource projects is just one way Whatcom Land Trust advances big picture improvements. Another vehicle is through collaborations and partnerships that secure and provide public access to some of our remaining Pacific Northwest natural resource jewels. These sites, along with tours, Junior Stewards, and education programs, provide a variety of forums in which to ponder your own personal stewardship action plan.

Put your conservation motivations to work with the Whatcom Land Trust. We welcome new perspectives and approaches to active stewardship.

Mary Dumas, WLT Vice President

GPS Unit Needed for WLT Field Work

Do you have a GPS unit that is not getting out into the field often enough? WLT could use a couple of good quality GPS units for the land stewards and tour leaders. Contact the office to donate your under-utilized global positioning system.

Newsletter Team.....Rod Burton, Connie Clement, Jerry DeBacker
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Mary Dumas, Stephanie Johnson, Steve Walker, Laura Wallace

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Renew Your Support for WLT

It is time to renew your commitment to conservation. Recently you received the annual appeal letter in the mail. Once a year we ask our supporters to provide the necessary financial support that makes the successes of the organization possible. If you have already sent in your annual donation, thank you. If you have yet to do so, please take a moment and send in your gift. Your generosity today will resonate for generations to come!

Please consider different ways in which you might support Whatcom Land Trust. For example, setting up a monthly giving program is easily done and the office would be glad to assist you. Giving through your workplace or linking us to your employers matching gift program is one way many people use to support our work. Charities depend on the generosity of donors like you to keep their missions alive. Donating a traditional

IRA through a bequest increases the amount of money you can give to support them. The tax advantages of donating a traditional IRA through a bequest allow you to be even more generous to your favorite charities, and the tax savings often allow you to leave an even larger legacy for your heirs.

Events: Past and Future

We owe a great deal of thanks to all who helped make BrewHaHa such a successful evening. First and foremost, hats off to Boundary Bay Brewing who concocted a remarkably tasty and hoppy Stew Brew for the event. Ralf's Bavarian Pretzels and brats by Hemplers were equally popular among the patrons; the brats were grilled by the gang from Pacific Survey & Engineering who were having way too much fun around the grills! Fun and festivity was the theme of the evening as Rich Bowers proposed a toast to Whatcom Land Trust's 25th anniversary and the accomplishments of the organization. The salute was sandwiched by sets of music provided by the End of the Road String Band and the improvisational sketches of the Second Story Players. Additional beverages and treats were provided by Starbucks and Jen's House of Chai. The event was made possible by the support of Glacier Lily Design, Cascadia Weekly, and all of the volunteers who helped organize, decorate, set up and cleanup on the day of the event. Special thanks to Margo Gillaspy, Renea Roberts, Brett Baunton, John D'Onofrio, and Steve George who all added their own unique touch to a delightful celebration!

Laura Wallace, WLT's AmeriCorps Volunteer



Laura Wallace, the new AmeriCorps volunteer for the Whatcom Land Trust, was born and raised in Wichita, Kansas. Growing up in the suburbs, she saw hundreds of acres of natural habitat and good farmland being paved over and dug up to make room for the growing city. Disturbed by this, she decided to pursue a career in environmental conservation, and in May of 2009 she graduated with a bachelor's degree in Wildlife Management and Conservation from Kansas State Uni-

SAVE THE DATE

If you are a Conservation Business Partner, please remember to mark your calendar for the morning of January 21st. Join us and your fellow partners for breakfast at Pacific Survey and Engineering's office, 1812 Cornwall Avenue in downtown Bellingham. To learn more about how your business might support the work of Whatcom Land Trust, contact Jerry at 650-9470 or send an email to jerry@whatcom-landtrust.org

versity. She is currently an AmeriCorps State service member, and is excited to be serving as Whatcom Land Trust's first AmeriCorps Volunteer. Laura is working as our Volunteer Coordinator.

New to the Pacific Northwest, she looks forward to enjoying the many recreational opportunities found in the area, particularly kayaking and whale watching. Goals for the future include pursuing a career that makes significant advances in habitat conservation and the sustainable use of our resources, learning a second foreign language in addition to Spanish, and backpacking through Europe.

Loss of WLT Supporter Ed Stimpson

As the newsletter was going to press we learned of the death of Ed Stimpson. Appointed by President Clinton in July 1999 as Ambassador of the United States on the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization, he had a long and diverse life devoted to many causes and interests. A Bellingham native, Ed is best known by this organization as a member of the Stimpson family, the generous benefactors who made the Stimpson Family Nature Reserve a reality. Our condolences are offered to Ed's wife Dottie, and all of the extended Stimpson family.

10,000 Acres

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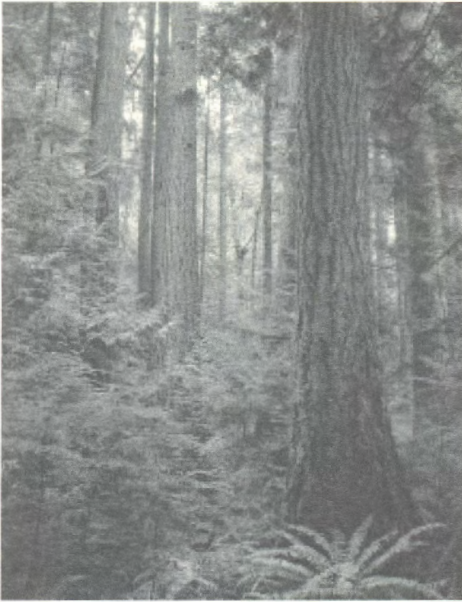


photo: Brett Baunton

Stimpson Family Nature Reserve.

Land Trust has pursued four program areas from that conservation agenda:

- 1) *Farmland Preservation Program*
- 2) *Salmon Eagle Elk (SEE Program)*
- 3) *Open Space and Sensitive Areas Program*
- 4) *Shoreline Program*

Farmland Preservation Program

The roots of the Land Trust stem from the meeting of a group of concerned citizens, farmers, and politicians in the basement of the Dutch Mother's restaurant in Lynden. The first conservation easement came with the donation of the 160-acre Miller Farm. The Land Trust has a strong partnership with Whatcom County through the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program where the Trust co-holds easements and is responsible for long-term stewardship. The Land Trust now co-holds with Whatcom County 12 agriculture conservation easements protecting more than 640 acres of farmland for the production of food and fiber. The Land Trust is eager to work with farmers to protect productive working farmland with donated conservation easements as well.

The Salmon Eagle Elk Program

This program works to protect the habitats of these three aforementioned northwest wildlife species by protecting core habitat reserves, habitat islands, and connecting corridors, primarily along the North and South Forks of the Nooksack River. Along the forks of the Nooksack River and the Samish River, through 42 projects, the Trust has protected 2,330 acres with more than 20 miles of shoreline and extensive wetlands. Thanks to partnerships with The Nooksack Tribe, Lummi Nation, and Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association, many miles of streams and acres of riparian forest have been restored along these protected lands.

Open Space and Sensitive Areas Program

This program focuses on areas such as the Lake Whatcom Watershed, the Chuckanut Mountain Region, and significant wetlands. In the Lake Whatcom Watershed over 1,400 acres have been protected through different partnerships with the City of Bellingham, Whatcom County, Lake Whatcom Treatment Center, and private landowners. The Trust has partnered with the City of Bellingham to ensure that land acquired for watershed protection serves that purpose in the future. The 350-acre Stimpson Nature Reserve is a tremendous gift to the public. Three additional donations have protected special forestlands in the watershed thanks to the Pratum Family, the O'Conner Family, and Bill Hogan, the man who planted trees.

Shoreline Preservation Program

Several important projects have been completed in this program in recent years. Because shorelines are some of the most biologically productive habitats and are extremely limited and important to people for recreation, this program has worked to delicately balance the two goals: conserve marine and freshwater shoreline habitats and increase public access to public waterfront.

The Trust has worked with local government to bring this to fruition. In recent years the acquisition and protection of Point Whitehorn Marine Reserve and Lily Point Marine Reserve are significant accomplishments fulfilling the two goals. Both areas are rich biologically, while offering the public much needed passive recreational access to waterfront.

Squires Lake, Deming Homestead Eagle Park, Maple Beach, and Teddy Bear Cove are other examples of Land Trust projects to protect shoreline habitats and partner with Whatcom County Parks to create parkland. Over the past 25 years, the Trust has secured nearly nine miles of shoreline and facilitated the creation of parks providing access to salt water.

The Next Decade

As we move forward into a new decade, Whatcom Land Trust is excited to continue conservation work through collaboration, creativity, and exploring innovative new conservation tools and partnerships to expand the protection of wildlife habitat, farms, and open space lands for future generations.

Whatcom Land Trust • By the Numbers

Total Acres	10,036 acres
WLT ownership - 64 properties	6,024 acres
Land Trade Negotiations - 2	1,312 acres
Public Parks	13 parks
Riverfront	20 miles
Creekfront	30 miles
Miles of Shoreline (fresh & saltwater)	9

Alpine Meadows

continued from page one

beautifully restored by the Stremmlers. "We want to preserve the historic value of our property so that future generations can enjoy it as we have learned to," Ken said. "Jan and I were excited to hear about the Whatcom Land Trust and enter into a conservation easement that will always protect this beautiful piece of property from any development," he added. The Stremmler property opens south over the Nooksack River and its floodplain. It acts as a significant buffer between the southern expansion of Lynden and the productive farmland of the Nooksack River Valley.

Fast forward a dozen years to the present when brothers Ken and Lewis Stremmler generously agreed to a bargain sale price 30 percent less than the appraised fair market value of their 65 acres along the Samish River near Wickersham.

After discussing how the property was just too wet for good agricultural ground, they purchased the property in the late 1990s for growing poplars, but the market had already fallen out. After a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) planting in 2001, beavers moved in and flooded the land. The best use of the property has come to be as wildlife habitat. "It's in good hands with the Land Trust," says Ken. Lewis Stremmler, an avid hunter and fisherman, is content to see the site be set aside for wildlife habitat.

This acquisition brings the Samish River Preserve to 202 acres along 1.5 miles of the Samish River. The site has some great opportunity for wetland enhancement to benefit fish and wildlife and is a critical addition to forming a wildlife habitat preserve. The acquisition was made possible through the Land Trust's acquisition funds and a \$21,000 grant from Washington State Department of Ecology's Coastal Protection Fund.

The Samish River headwaters contain a large complex of forested and open marsh wetlands, and small tributary streams supporting fish and wildlife. Both resident and migratory birds along the Pacific Flyway utilize the wetlands for resting, feeding, nesting, and rearing. The Samish River and its many small but dynamic tributary streams situated on alluvial fans support Coho, Chum, winter steelhead, and both resident and sea run cutthroat trout. These dynamic and volatile tributary streams provide excellent spawning habitat, while young fish rear in



photo: Eric Carabba

Alpine Meadows wetlands with Twins Sisters Range and Mt. Baker in the distance.

the large wetland complex and Samish River. And of course, don't forget the bats that depend upon wetland habitats. Oh, and amphibians too.



photo: Eric Carabba

Lewis (L) and Ken (R) Stremmler also own Alpine Meadows Tree Farm in the South Fork Valley between Acme and Van Zandt. The Stremmlers sell U-Cut Christmas Trees on their 100-acre farm from the Friday after Thanksgiving to just before Christmas from 9 am until dark, closed on Sundays.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: THE GREAT OUTDOORS AUCTION

The 10th annual Great Outdoors Auction is scheduled for Saturday, May 8th, 2010! It is never too early to begin planning this fabulous event and we could use your help in planning the next one.

We are looking for volunteers to serve on the auction committee. There are a variety of tasks and assignments carried out by committee members but they are rewarded with trays of desserts at the

committee meetings! For more information and to find out how you might get involved please contact the Whatcom Land Trust office at 650-9470.

Work Parties in Fall and Winter

This September, Whatcom Land Trust kicked off its Fall work party schedule at Lily Point Marine Reserve on Point Roberts. On a cheerful sunny day, volunteers worked hard to remove as much invasive English Ivy from the property as they could. Some vines were as big as tree trunks! A big round of applause to all who participated in this project. Their dedication is much appreciated.

The Trust completed three work parties this October. First, debris was cleared from the barn on the Mulka Preserve. Then, volunteers completed five bat boxes which will be installed on WLT land throughout the county to provide habitat for bats. Finally, on Make A Difference Day, WLT tackled the invasive blackberries at the Ruth Kelsey Nature Sanctuary near Ferndale. Beta Alpha Psi (BAP), the honorary for financial information students from Western Washington University, was joined by the Starbucks crew, members from New Horizon Community Church, as well as several of WLT's dedicated Volunteer Land Stewards. Thanks to their enthusiasm and hard work, we cleared a huge area that is now free of blackberry brambles. We couldn't have done it without them. We also extend our appreciation to Starbucks, Avenue Bread, and Avellino for donating refreshments.

The rest of the Fall will be dedicated

PDR Easement Protects Eldridge Dairy Farm

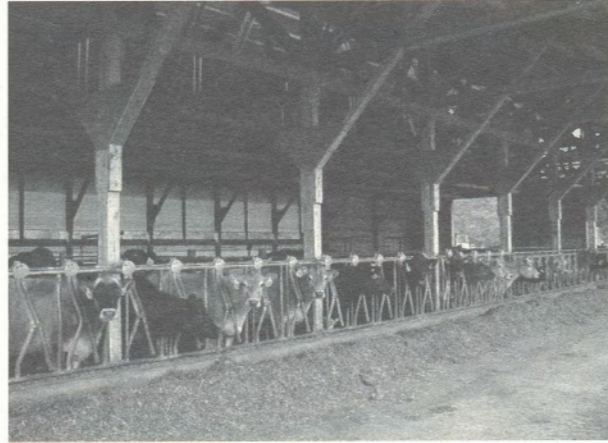


photo: Steve Walker
Dairy barn at the Eldridge farm.

The Eldridge Farm is the newest conservation easement held by Whatcom Land Trust, secured through the Purchase of Development Rights program administered by Whatcom County government. The program, designed to assure that lands are forever available for farming, is funded with money from the US Department of Agriculture, and a matching amount from the county. The

Eldridge Farm is located on Leibrant Road, east of the city of Nooksack. On the 30-acre property, Matt and Robyn Eldridge own and operate an organic dairy. Matt worked on dairy farms as a boy in Petaluma, California. After his career as a smokejumper and a hunting and fishing guide, he moved with Robyn to Whatcom County in 2000 where they purchased their current farm. Most of their 105 milking cows are Jerseys, known for the high butterfat content of their milk and their genial nature. About 30% of the herd are Jersey/Holstein cross-breeds. For the last three years the Eldridges have been part of the Organic Valley cooperative, whose mission is supporting rural communities by protecting the health of the family farms, working toward both economic and environmental sustainability.

to land management projects such as removing invasive plant species, the installation of the bat boxes, and further clean up of the Mulka Preserve. We are in the process of planning these work parties

now and are looking for groups and individual volunteers to get involved! Also in the works are educational workshops for volunteers and volunteer land stewards for later this winter. Come and learn!

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Informational Meeting for Current & New Volunteers

As you ponder your goals for the coming year, have you thought about how you want to contribute your time? On January 24, we're having an informational session about Whatcom Land Trust, its various facets and how those areas employ volunteers to accomplish its mission. This is a great time to meet the staff and other volunteers, and to figure out how your passions might fit with WLT's efforts. Volunteer opportunities range from indoor clerical work, to auction coordination, to land monitoring, to being in parades, with lots of things in between. This event is open to anyone who'd like more information on WLT, or anyone who just likes to hang out with the WLT staff. Join us on January 24, 2010 from 2:00 to 3:00pm at the Whatcom Land Trust office.



Pumpkin Patch Aids Land Preservation

Many thanks to Steve George for the time and effort he spent to make this year's pumpkin patch a success. During the first four weekends in October, Steve distributed pumpkins from his garden in Everson in exchange for donations to Whatcom Land Trust and/or The Nature Conservancy. Steve grew several varieties including pie pumpkins, white pumpkins, and warty ones! Remember Steve next year when you're ready to make your pumpkin purchases!

Jr. Stewards Winner Learns to Spfish!

The Grand Prize Winner of this year's Jr. Stewards drawing was 10-year-old Nicole Carlson. She won a personal tour with ornithologist John Bower. Nicole invited her brother, parents, and some friends to join her on the bird-watching hike. While there, they learned the art of "spfishing." Nicole's mom Chris explains it this way: "Spfishing is what you do when you hear small birds in the bushes and you make a 'spfish' sound that predator birds will make. Apparently the little birds like to eyeball the predators. If they can see them, then they can outfly them. So if you 'spfish' long enough and wait, the birds will pop out of the bushes to see what predator is there. The kids thought it was super cool."

Congratulations Nicole!

Allied Arts Holiday Market

Once again, WLT is participating in the Allied Arts Holiday Market. This year's event is in the old Michael's space at 3548 Meridian St. Hours of operation are 10am to 6pm Wednesday-Sunday until Dec. 24th (closing at 3:00pm on the 24th). Check out our books, totes, mugs, cards and gift memberships there!

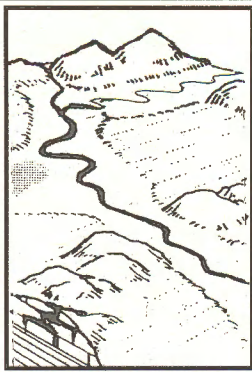
Website Store

Another way to get WLT goodies for your loved ones is to visit the WLT web store at www.whatcomlandtrust.org. Books, cards, mug, and totes are available there.

New Year's Day Eagle Tour

January 1, 2010 at 1:30 pm

Celebrate the New Year with magnificent Bald Eagles! This New Year's Day tour will visit a popular eagle viewing site protected by Whatcom Land Trust. Learn about the local recovery of this endangered species and the current threats to its food source. See local places where eagles like to roost and watch the birds in action! Call 650-9470 to register. A \$5-\$10 donation is suggested for those who are not WLT supporters. (You can become a supporter for \$35/household.)



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On a sunny September Saturday, a dozen people joined WLT staff members Connie Clement, Jerry DeBacker, Steve Walker, and Eric Carabba for a bike ride to several of WLT's South Fork properties. The group made a stop at the Carrasco conservation easement, where Ken and Mariann Carasco talked about their property and showed the group around. Stops were also made at the Ladies of the Lake property, the Innis Creek project, the Edfro Creek trailhead, and the Blue Mountain Bar & Grill for lunch and a pint!

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