

THE

Steward



Newsletter of Whatcom Land Trust: Protecting the Nature of Whatcom County, Washington



Dwarfed by towering fir trees that escaped the logging of the 1890s, visitors hear from David Bean, a forest canopy specialist and interpretive guide. WLT plans to provide several opportunities per year for naturalists to share their passions with visitors to Stimpson and other reserves and parks across the county, conserved for public use in partnership with Whatcom County Parks & Recreation.

The Story Cannot Be Stopped

Rob Rich

The day began with gray, deceptively ordinary Bellingham skies. But eight miles away, the parking lot bustled at the Stimpson Family Nature Reserve. Something was happening. People clustered, chatting like crows. Hidden in the breezing alders, yellowthroats joined with songs of wicity-wicity-which. A man drove by on Lake Louise Road and craned his head with curious eyes: what's so special about today?

Many of us had a sense of why we came. For me, it felt like a chance to say thanks for the 15th year one of Whatcom County's greatest wonders has been shared. It also was a chance to walk among naturalists, friends and the very family that made this reserve possible. I tried to find the faces to match the 50s era photograph of the young Stimpson children. I had guesses, but the truth was that they were as much a part of this crowd as apart from it. We all hushed when WLT Board Member Rand Jack finally perched upon a chunk of Chuckanut sandstone backed by maples and Indian plums with yellowing fruit. "We stand on sacred ground," he began, "not only for what it is, but for how it came about." He did not need to tell us of the sprawling developments or the ceaseless distractions in our lives. We face these things each day. Even Rand was quick to confess his own distractions, which included a daughter beginning labor in Boston as he spoke. But this made his statement all the more powerful. "The story of Stimpson Family Nature Reserve is one to perpetuate," he went on. Indeed, it is a story that cannot be stopped.

Rand did not so much declare the story as share it, calling on the family and the early partners for corrections and contributions to the plot. Like any good story, it meandered with the dramatic, the mundane and the messy. Consider George Pierce, the former Western Washington University Vice President, who discovered his college's forgotten, unwanted parcel—that became part of the acreage for the celebrated beaver pond. Or think of the complex puzzle for the seven

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Stimpson siblings—who had to coalesce a single vision for the land that nourished their youth.

Somehow they knew these are not problems to solve alone. John Stimpson pointed to his sister Susan Trimmingham as the diplomat. But Susan was quick to note her observation from the reserve's new kiosk, suggesting that in its purest sense this reserve "is a gift from our community, for our community; from the past, for our present and future." After the talk, as we dispersed into the woods for a celebratory walk, I found this thought in every face. After all, this place is now part of each of us. Whatcom Land Trust stationed naturalists at many turns of the trail, and each stop became a testament to how integrated and rich this community—natural AND cultural—can be at its best. Beyond the diverse names of new ferns, flowers and singing birds we learned, the single most common phrase on the trail became "thank you". As we thanked Holly Roger for telling us about beavers, she thanked John Stimpson for the gift that enables her to bring hundreds of children and families to celebrate this place each year in her Wild Whatcom programs. As we thanked Mark Turner for telling us about the blooming starflowers, he echoed, thankful for a place to share nature through his epic photography and botanical field guides. Even a pair of random folks walking in from Sudden Valley without thought of the day's event—when they realized they were crossing paths with the Stimpsons, the words came: Thank you, thank you.

Because I happened to fall in with John Stimpson, his son Taylor, Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt and a few others, this became the day's refrain. Russ, the affectionately designated WLT "Trail Master," has cut hundreds of miles of footpaths across our county. But he doesn't build trails to get from one place to another; he builds them to enhance the experience of nature. There is artistry, ethics, and science all rolled into this labor of love, which for Russ is just as much about individuals as about the collective ecosystem. He not only considers how to minimize erosion and maximize wildlife habitat, but also how fence height will best welcome the viewer using a wheelchair to survey the beaver pond. And on the back side of the Main Loop, he makes sure walkers can encounter one of the three Douglas firs that survived the fire 200 years ago, a tree that is at least 500 years old.

To touch a living being that predates Columbus puts our community in context. This is sacred ground indeed, sacred to the Stimpson family as it was (and still is) for the Coast Salish. This story is long and important, but so is the fact that we are here now, giving a piece of ourselves to it. We are here now because of the gifts of those before us, and Whatcom Land Trust was born to be part of its telling. We need places like the Stimpson Family Nature Reserve to continually give thanks for the given: trees, friends, families, all. This is good work, and we are proud to share in the story that cannot be stopped.

WLT would like to thank the following naturalists for bringing

their expertise and enthusiasm to the celebration of the Stimpson Family Nature Reserve: Holly Roger (Wild Whatcom), Mark Turner (Turner Photographics and author, *Trees and Shrubs of the Pacific Northwest*), Fred Rhoades (Licheneers of North Puget Sound), Caleb Brown and Buck McAdoo (Northwest Mushroomers Association), Lynne Givler (WLT and North Cascades Audubon Society), Kim Clarkin (WLT Volunteer Land Steward standing in for Paul Pittman, Pacific Survey and Engineering), David Bean (formerly Whatcom County Parks), Patricia Otto and Valerie Wisniewski (Koma Kulshan chapter of the Washington Native Plant Society), Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt (Trail Master), Rob Rich (writer and naturalist).



The naturalists from Northwest Mushroomers Association and North Puget Sound Licheneers drew a small crowd, including Susan Trimmingham (nee Stimpson) and her husband Loch, John Stimpson and his son Taylor, Rand Jack (WLT), Gordon Scott (formerly of WLT), Craig Lee (WLT Executive Director), and Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt ("Trail Master").



The Stimpson Legacy of Community Conservation

From the main loop trail, a number of cedar stumps notched for spring boards and cut more than 100 years ago are readily visible. In the early 1900s the Stimpsons purchased the property known as Manning's Camp, pictured above, from the Upright Shingle Company.

Rand Jack

This February, four of the Stimpson siblings made yet another important addition to the extraordinary Stimpson Family Nature Reserve—20 acres with 100-year-old fir and cedar trees adjoining the reserve and traversed by Beaver Creek. Thank you for your foresight and generosity Catharine Stimpson, Mary Rivkin, Caroline Macdonald and John Stimpson. No property protected by Whatcom Land Trust has received such consistent public accolades as the Stimpson Reserve and none is the result of such diverse and extensive conservation partnerships. As this project demonstrates, conservation at its best is a community undertaking.

In March of 2000, Susan Trimingham and her brother Edward Stimpson invited Whatcom Land Trust to visit their family's 116-acre forested property along Lake Louise Road and talk about conservation options. The Stimpsons purchased the property, known as Manning's Camp, in the early 1900s from the Upright Shingle Company. The seven Stimpson siblings grew up playing, exploring and discovering the wonders of nature in these woods. With the death of their father Dr. Edward K. Stimpson in 1967 and in 1998 of their mother, prominent community leader and philanthropist "Kitty" Stimpson, the now adult siblings were considering the future of the Manning's Camp legacy that meant so much to them. Consistent with the family tradition of civic generosity, they decided to donate Manning's Camp to Whatcom Land Trust.

The property is a complex ecological mix of streams and ponds, mature Douglas fir and red cedar trees, sandstone ridges

and pocket wetlands, all within the Lake Whatcom watershed. The gift stipulated that the property would not be a park, but rather a nature reserve, a place for exploring, contemplating and discovering the wonders of nature, just as the Stimpson children had done.

Immediately following the donation, WLT purchased an adjoining 80 acres for the reserve, which the owner, Trillium Corporation, agreed to sell for less than fair market value. Working with Whatcom County Parks, WLT negotiated an agreement with the State Department of Natural Resources to incorporate the adjoining 138-acre Lake Louise Natural Resource Conservation Area (NRCA) into the Stimpson Family Nature Reserve and to turn management of the NRCA over to Whatcom County. At the same time, WLT obtained from Western Washington University a donation of 16 acres critical to the integrity of the rapidly expanding nature reserve—now grown to 350 acres and created through WLT's partnerships with the Stimpson family, Whatcom County, Trillium, DNR, and Western Washington University.

With the land assembled, master trail builder Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt designed and constructed a 3-mile loop trail skirting a magnificent beaver pond and weaving through the mature forests, over sandstone ridges and beside the assorted wetlands of the reserve. The trail is an invitation to experience the natural beauty of this very special place. Eagle Scout candidate Casey Oswald built the first two bridges on the trail, and local businesses donated the engineering, construction and landscaping of the parking lot.

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photo: Mark Turner

In 2005, 34 acres and a new conservation partner joined the Stimpson Family Nature Reserve. In a transaction arranged by Whatcom Land Trust, the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County jointly purchased an adjacent forested property with a 5-acre pond frequented by wood ducks, herons, kingfishers and sometimes an osprey. A conservation easement held by WLT protects the property and helps safeguard Lake Whatcom water quality; a spur off the main loop trail provides hiker access.

And just a few months ago, the Rotary Club of Bellingham, our newest Stimpson Reserve conservation partner, donated \$35,000, toward the construction of a state-of-the-art toilet facility in the parking lot.

This amazing conservation journey all started with the historic generosity of Susan Trimmingham, Edward Stimpson, Catharine R. Stimpson, Mary Rivkin, Jane Bremner, Caroline Macdonald and John Stimpson. Thank you for this community treasure, a very special place for exploring, contemplating and discovering the wonders of nature.



photo: Alan Fritberg

Rand Jack, WLT Board Member, mounted a handy chunk of sandstone to address the crowd, but kept his hand on his phone, awaiting news of his grandchild's imminent birth. With the arrival of grandbabies (a girl!) and three generations of Stimpsons in the crowd, the WLT mission to conserve natural lands for future generations hardly needed a voice.

**ENJOY
NATURAL
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Many Whatcom Land Trust Preserves
are open to the public.
Learn more at whatcomlandtrust.org



Tribute Gifts

WLT supporters have made the following tribute gifts in the past year:

Kevin and Margaret Malcomb
in honor of Nathan Malcomb

Margaret Vanderberg
in honor of Bob Lemon and Annie Prevost

Kathryn Beck
in honor of Maya and Frieda

Steve Walker
in honor of Suasive Nelson's birthday

Maya Hartford
in honor of Harte Bressler

Patricia Maass
in honor of Jane Talbot

Bob Keller & Pat Karlberg
in memory of Lucienné Hebert

John & Debra Frey
in memory of Andrew Perkins

Esther Faber
*in memory of my dog Buddy
and my sister Miriam*

Margaret Woll
in memory of JoAnne Feringer

James and Tracie Johannessen
in memory of Robert Carson Burgess

Gwen Parker
in memory of Patricia Wenke

Beth K. Erickson
in memory of Patricia Wenke

Kathryn Hanowell
in memory of Hugh McMurry

William Watts
in memory of Carl Batchelor

Vermont and Donna McAllister
in memory of Marjorie Stolley

Harvey Schwartz
in memory of John Westgate



Clearwater Creek

Early in 2015, a dozen heirs of Mary Lea (Fisken) and Everett Griggs graciously donated to WLT their family's 80-acre tract in the shadow of Mount Baker along the banks of Clearwater Creek, a tributary of the Middle Fork of the Nooksack River. Steep, rugged, and covered by mature second-growth forest providing diverse habitat, the property is surrounded by

public land. Clearwater Creek tumbles through the forest, where, downstream, WLT Executive Director Craig Lee has been known to wet a fly. WLT wishes to thank the Griggs heirs, the McKinstry, Morgan and Daugherty families, for helping advance our efforts to conserve lands in the Cascades to Chuckanuts Corridor.

BUSINESS SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT:

Blossom
management corporation

Ken and Kathy Hertz support Whatcom Land Trust through Blossom Management because they understand that conservation is good for local business.

As former Bellingham mayor and Whatcom County's first parks director, Ken knows firsthand that people move to Whatcom County for the quality of life they can experience here. From a business owner's perspective, the parks, intact natural areas, and working lands not only encourage people to come to Whatcom County, they also encourage the retention of happy and healthy workers. Whatcom Land Trust has conserved more than 20,000 acres of those highly valued lands.

"More people and more businesses should donate to the Land Trust. There are lots of businesses that simply sit back and hope others will do the work," Ken said. "I believe there should be more participation because of what (WLT) does for the community."

"Business owners need to start looking at what it takes to get businesses to Whatcom County, then to retain those businesses and retain good employees. That really means parks, open space, preservation of our resources, and showing people that the community really cares."

When asked what compels Ken and Kathy to renew their support of WLT year after year, they cite their personal experiences with the staff and board and their ability to manage conservation resources.

"We need people who are really invested. Are they out there promoting what they say they're promoting? The WLT people are very dedicated," Ken said. "People are important to an organization."

People are also important to projects—not just as funders, but as advocates. One upcoming project Ken hopes that the public will take interest in is the extension of the Taylor Avenue Dock and boardwalk and the Cornwall Beach park property. "That would be just a fantastic improvement to the city," he said.

Please join Whatcom Land Trust in thanking Ken and Kathy Hertz of Blossom Management for their continued sponsorship.

Blossom Management specializes in real estate acquisitions, development, master planning, and property management. Its president and CEO, Ken Hertz, is a former Whatcom County Parks & Recreation director (1965-1975), former Bellingham mayor (1976-1983), and former Trillium Corp. executive and Peoples Bank board member (1984-1994). The popular Hertz Trail, also known as the North Lake Whatcom Trail, is named after Ken.



"Autumn Day at Ladies of the Lake," by Bellingham artist Laurie Potter, is available as a matted 10x7" print. Contact Laurie at art@lauriepotter.com. If you'd like to visit the Ladies of the Lake Preserve, contact WLT for details. It's a lovely place for a quiet country picnic.

Conservation and Art: A Natural Pair

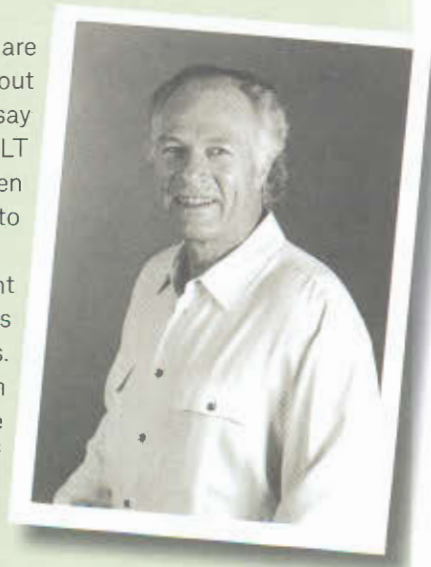
On April 3, WLT joined the Downtown Bellingham Art Walk for the first time. Jeni Cottrell, who will curate four exhibitions a year for WLT, kicked us off in style with a collection of pastel and multimedia landscapes by Laurie Potter. Among the subjects in the exhibit are four scenes from WLT preserves, most notably, the painting above of our Ladies of the Lake Preserve on Lake Whatcom.

"Autumn Day at Ladies of the Lake" was purchased for WLT through Jeni Cottrell's Bellingham Group Art Purchase, an inspired scheme that supports local artists and nonprofits with the same dollar. Jeni connects an artist to a nonprofit, commissions a piece of work for the organization, then arranges payment through contributions collected online.

Our first Art Walk was lively, dynamic and collaborative. Long-time WLT clan members mingled with new faces lured by the art and intrigued by WLT's work. Volunteer hostesses, Susan Marshall and Jan Adams, provided a tasty spread of light appetizers. Kombucha Town donated delicious beverages and Harold Niven of Another Wave Fiber Art brightened our doorstep with the loan of a banner.

Please join us for our next Art Walk on July 3 from 5:30-8 p.m. Sharon Kingston's collection of landscapes featuring Lake Whatcom will be on display through mid-September. For the months of June and July only, Sharon is offering limited edition framed prints of three of her Lake Whatcom paintings. Visit her website at sharonkingston.com to take a peek!

If you would like to participate as an art walk co-host, there are eight opportunities per year. Sign up with a friend! Please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Dennis Conner, at dennis@whatcomlandtrust.org or (360) 650-9470 Ext. 107.



Join Us On The Land---

Volunteer Land Steward Training: Volunteer Land Stewards new and tenured will get their hands dirty this summer during an annual on-site training.

Date: Saturday, June 27, 9 a.m. to noon. Contact Kelen at kelen@whatcomlandtrust.org or ((360)) 650-9470 Ext. 104 for more information.

Art Walk, Sharon Kingston: During the monthly Bellingham Art Walk on Friday, July 3, Whatcom Land Trust will exhibit Sharon Kingston's new collection of dreamy, atmospheric landscapes in a special homage to Lake Whatcom. Kingston's work will remain on display in our office from late June through September.

Date: Friday, July 3, 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Work Party at North Fork Eagle Reserve: Join our stewardship team for trail and sapling maintenance at our 60-acre property on the North Fork of the Nooksack.

Date: Saturday, July 11, 9 a.m. to noon. Please help us plan! RSVP to Dennis at dennis@whatcomlandtrust.org or (360) 650-9470 Ext. 107.

Work Party and Low-Tide Walk at Lily Point:

Spend the morning pulling scotch broom, cutting blackberries and performing general beach cleanup then stick around for an afternoon of intertidal exploration with expert naturalists.

Date: Saturday, July 18, 9 a.m. to noon (work party) and noon to 4 p.m. (low-tide walk). Please help us plan! If you are going to the work party, RSVP to Dennis at dennis@whatcomlandtrust.org or (360) 650-9470 Ext 107.

Giving Time & Talent

Already in 2015, volunteers have planted trees and shrubs, hauled debris, provided legal counsel, built fences, designed a native landscape for WLT's office, repaired computers, coordinated bird surveys, greeted event guests, prepped food, improved a trail, processed a stack of mail, shot video, provided photographs, attended training, and more.

Now with a permanent volunteer coordinator, we look forward to thanking many more conservation supporters who offer their time and talent to expand our impact. There's a place for you at WLT. Give Dennis Conner a call at (360) 650-9470 ext. 107.

WLT staff and volunteers spent Mother's Day giving a patch of Mother Earth a makeover. Burned last year when an illegal campfire spread, the steep hillside on Clark's Point (private property!) was tough to work on, but these intrepid volunteers, including some mothers and grandmothers, removed invasive species and replanted the forest floor.

Work Party at Edfro Creek: Co-hosted with the Whatcom Chapter of Backcountry Horsemen of Washington, our last work party of the summer will entail trail maintenance at Edfro Creek on the South Fork of the Nooksack River.

Date: Saturday, July 25, 9 a.m. to noon. Please help us plan! RSVP to Dennis at dennis@whatcomlandtrust.org or (360) 650-9470 Ext. 107.

Take a Hike with Beers Made By Walking: Do you love beer almost as much as you love nature? In partnership with the organization Beers Made By Walking, Whatcom Land Trust is hosting several nature walks for local brewers and interested community members in the month of July. Led by naturalists, these hikes will include education about the many uses of the native plants in our area. Brewers will use the inspiration gained on the hikes to brew beers "inspired by Whatcom County," and all the beers will be released at a tapping event in the fall. These events are by RSVP only.

Dates: Canyon Lake, July 11; Lily Point, July 18; Edfro Creek, July 25; and Stimpson Family Nature Reserve, August 1. Contact Virginia at virginia@whatcomlandtrust.org or (360) 650-9470 Ext. 103 for more information.





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