

# THE STEWARD

WHATCOM LAND TRUST  
LOVE THE LAND

FALL 2020



Empowering  
Our Future Stewards



Students from Kendall Elementary School learn the importance of stewardship through class work parties, planting 2,200 native trees and shrubs so far.

# Harrison Reserve

## Empowering our Future Stewards

Located in Kendall, Washington is Whatcom Land Trust's Harrison Reserve, 5.5 acres along Kendall Creek of exceptional habitat for native fish, birds and other wildlife species. While this may not be a large piece of property, the positive impact it is having on both native species and the community has been huge. The Harrison Reserve idyllically represents the impact of strong partnerships in conservation, stewardship and education. More than Ten organizations have come together to protect the Harrison Reserve for future generations through funding, restoration, stewardship, and educational efforts.

The Harrison property was donated to Whatcom Land Trust in 2001 by Jo Anne Harrison and family in memory of J. Arley Harrison, husband and father. The site was donated with the vision of being restored into a conservation area and wildlife refuge. The five acres of riparian, wetland, and open space is used heavily by waterfowl, raptors, and eagles and includes 500 feet of waterfrontage along Kendall Creek, an important salmon stream. Ongoing restoration, stewardship, and education is ensuring the Harrison family's vision for this property.

Because the Harrison Reserve is within a safe walking distance from Kendall Elementary, educational work parties have been instrumental in fostering a sense of stewardship for hundreds of elementary age students at Kendall Elementary School. "The affection, care, and admiration the students showed for their plants was inspiring," noted one volunteer who helped with a work party. "After all the planting was done and the students were heading back to their class, I heard conversations of their eagerness to come back and watch their young plants grow for years to come."

Once the restoration work is complete, site improvements will be made for future classes to utilize the land as an outdoor learning environment and provide a real sense of connection and responsibility for the lands we love close to home and school.

**Our partners provide us with the necessary stepping stones to turn our ideas into action.**

### Harrison Partners

- Kendall Elementary
- Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association
- North Cascades Audubon Society
- Whatcom Community Foundation
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- National Audubon Society
- Superfeet
- Trout Unlimited
- Whatcom Conservation District
- Wild Whatcom

### Learning can be fun!



Jenn Mackey, Stewardship Director at Whatcom Land Trust teaching Kendall Elementary Students about stewardship.



Kendall Elementary kids working hard and exploring nature.

# Feeling Nature



## The Community-Shaping Partnership of Whatcom Land Trust and Wild Whatcom

by Eloise Steere, Intern

**D**iane Garmo's love of children rivals love of her nature preserve just outside Bellingham. A future gift of that nature preserve to Whatcom Land Trust provides a unique space today for young stewards to learn about nature. And Diane's dream to make that space open to more children sparked an important partnership between youth-serving environmental organizations in Whatcom County.

The initial union of Whatcom Land Trust and Wild Whatcom began on a hike through the trails of Diane's preserve. An environmental steward herself and retired educator, she could think of no better use for the property than to dedicate it to learning and exploration. Not wanting to "reinvent the wheel," as Whatcom Land Trust Communications Director Karen Parker said, leaders from the two organizations realized they could rely on one another to bring this vision into focus. Through their combined initiative, they created a plan to honor Diane's wishes.

Now, Wild Whatcom leads expeditions of Whatcom County's youth to Garmo's land for educational field trips. From outdoor games to naturalist learning projects, children of all ages are able to access the wild space and future Land Trust preserve. Thanks to the program, a new generation can learn to treat the land like the precious resource it is.

"I am so glad that Whatcom Land Trust and organizations like it exist to continue fighting to preserve spaces not only for this generation, but for those to come," said Wild Whatcom Executive Director Licia Sahagun. "[In the] environmental field in particular, we are up against the biggest crises we've faced as humanity with climate change... to species loss and habitat degradation. We have to work together."

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, field trips have been few and far between in 2020. Sahagun sees the pandemic as the biggest challenge she's faced so far as Executive Director, and describes it as a "rapid" and "constant" change. Despite these setbacks, both Sahagun and Parker are excited for future collaborations. Through values of togetherness, creativity and love, Whatcom Land Trust and Wild Whatcom have created priceless experiences that will last lifetimes.

For more information on how to support Whatcom Land Trust, visit their website at [www.whatcomlandtrust.org](http://www.whatcomlandtrust.org). Visit the "Planned Gifts" page to learn more about how to give a Legacy Gift.

Watch the video, "Wild Whatcom with Diane Garmo." <https://youtu.be/vGVu4eSPCfk>

To support Wild Whatcom, check out their work parties and events at [www.wildwhatcom.org/get-involved](http://www.wildwhatcom.org/get-involved). You can donate to Wild Whatcom here, at [www.wildwhatcom.org/donate](http://www.wildwhatcom.org/donate).

# ROUGH NATURE

## Teaching Art Through a Different Lens

by Savannah Hauduc, Intern

**A**rt is a part of education that, for many people, has been taught through a narrow lens. Especially as children reach their secondary education, art projects are generally assigned with strict boundaries for an A. But should art really be graded based on a single person's interpretation of your piece? Doug Banner and Ham Hayes, founders of *Imagine Myself*, believe art's only judge should be the artist who created it.

The *Imagine Myself* program started with a dream. Hayes wanted to find a way to teach art that would remove the judgement connected with art, and do it through connecting students with the outdoors. The first few weeks of the program focus on teaching students from local schools the basic skills of the chosen medium, which is photography, and building the students' technical foundations. The final step of the workshop is immersing themselves in nature with a camera and the question: "how does nature affect me and how do I affect nature?" Banner and Hayes believe Land Trust properties offer the right setting for students' artistic expression to flourish.

Eventually, Banner hopes to take students to Whatcom Land Trust's Skookum Creek property in the South Fork Nooksack. With over 1,000 acres of forest, riparian habitat, and flowing water, Skookum Creek offers a perfect opportunity to explore nature and capture the beauty of the natural world through photography. Once there the workshop aims at judging the art the students create solely on how happy the student is with their piece, and if they achieved what they set out to do. Alex Alexander, a Whatcom Land Trust volunteer who represented the Land Trust at one of these workshops, says "students were very engaged, and definitely connecting with nature". Programs like this are an amazing opportunity for future generations to foster and nourish their connection with and understanding of the world around them.

The main objectives of *Imagine Myself* are to connect children with the environment around them, and to teach them that their artistic success has more to do with their assessment than other peoples' judgement. The program espouses that art is a subject best self-driven because it reflects one's own self discoveries. Allowing students to immerse in artistic expression while on Land Trust properties means we can play a part in teaching our community about the importance of the land that surrounds us, and the impact of our relationship with it.

Whatcom Land Trust's partnership with Doug and Ham helps empower students to better understand their connection to nature, and the lands that they love. We look forward to inspiring more youth to find their artistic voice through this dynamic program.



# Empowerment through internships

by Andrew Mason, Intern

Every year student interns – from Northwest Indian College to Western Washington University – immerse themselves in the work of Whatcom Land Trust. Learning mapping and GIS skills, researching and helping to write stewardship reports and land acquisition grants, and planning donor events and outreach activities are among the activities that apply academic coursework into real world experiences and skills.

A number of different positions are available for interns at the Land Trust. But whether an intern is a part of the Communications, Philanthropy, Conservation, or Stewardship team, they are all gaining experience and learning skills that will impact their thinking on conservation work.

Western Washington University senior Kristy Lee was tasked to research and show agricultural landowners that allowing conservation easements would not only permanently protect their farmland, but improve its value too. A conservation easement is a recorded, legal agreement between landowners and a land trust that places restrictions on the use of the land to protect its conservation values. Conservation easements allow landowners to maintain ownership and use of their property, while forever protecting its ecological and cultural values. Before her summer 2019 internship, Kristy thought of conservation in terms of wildlife habitat. Now, after discussing the benefits of easements with farmers, Kristy loves Whatcom's agricultural land even more: "Farmlands are incredibly important to conservation, especially small, local, generational farms. Conservation easements protect farmers and farmland for generations." Don Bauthues oversees one such "generational" farm. When interviewed by Kristy about his decision to conserve his land with a conservation easement that prevents future subdivision, Don said the encroaching development up the road was the deciding factor. He wanted to see his family's farmland "remain in one piece, forever."

Savannah Hauduc and Lauren Sackett also had their views on conservation expand, especially while volunteering in the field with other community members. Savannah was "quite impressed by the number of young people working at the Land Trust," which gave her "a lot of courage to pursue

*"I am so happy to have been able to work for the Land Trust. This internship has helped me to become a stronger educator, communicator, and community member here within Whatcom County. I am extremely grateful to have been given this opportunity to intern for the Whatcom Land Trust."*

**Mia Munoz, Former Intern**



Field Friday at Clearwater Creek. Mia Munoz far right.

career interests." Moreover, Savannah believes the support she received while interning was "key to her success," then and in the present. Likewise, Lauren was encouraged by the Land Trust's accessibility and welcoming vibe. There is not a "mentality that you need to be over 40 with years of experience" for your work to be taken seriously, Lauren said. Savannah and Lauren's experiences demonstrate that conservation work is for people of all ages, and we have much to learn from each other to appreciate the value and future of Whatcom's agricultural and wild spaces.

These enriching internship experiences are made possible by Land Trust donor gifts, including those to the Rebecca Reich Conservation Internship Fund, named after a beloved board member who believed in the power of youth to carry the torch of land conservation to future generations. Under the guiding hand of supervisors and working shoulder to shoulder with veteran volunteers and program partners, Whatcom Land Trust's internship program is actively inspiring conservation ethics in younger generations. Harnessing their passion and energy with the wisdom of mentors, young people are having a powerfully positive impact on the world they are inheriting while finding their voice and acting on what they care about. As Whatcom County continues to grow and face a myriad of challenges to our natural lands, the youth inspired today will be tomorrow's decision makers.



Whatcom County high school students like these Lummi students at a Work Party at Kelsey will benefit from the Youth Climate Action Initiative.

## Empowering youth to address the climate crisis

*“The eyes of all future generations are upon you.”*

**-Greta Thunberg, UN Climate Action Summit,  
September 2019**

**G**reta Thunberg has brought internationally awareness to the climate crisis that we see unfolding in increasing intensity globally and nationally. She has lit a fire to inspire youth world-wide to take action, including right here in Whatcom County. Local youth have organized, led rallies and climate strikes, seeking ways to stem the negative impacts of greenhouse gas emissions and take other climate risk actions to benefit the next generation, our community and beyond.

Thanks to a grant from Whatcom Community Foundation’s Youth Environment Fund, the Youth Environment Climate Action Initiative is a first step in what Whatcom Land Trust hopes will be a powerful opportunity for local youth to put their values to work sequestering carbon through a multi-year tree planting and stewardship project in partnership with the Trust and local business. In doing so, they will demonstrate to themselves and to the community the power of youth action in addressing the climate crisis, achieve carbon reductions and offsets for themselves, their respective schools and for the community, and be a model for youth climate-activists elsewhere.

Once it’s safe to do so, members of WCF’s Youth Philanthropy Project team will enlist students from their respective schools and hone their leadership skills by planting and stewarding 300-350 trees this year on a Land Trust property with Land Trust staff, volunteers land stewards and employees of

Ecotech Solar. They will learn principles of carbon sequestration and calculate the value of their planting endeavor. Using a locally-developed tool by ReduceApp, students will learn how carbon offsets work, are part of a comprehensive carbon reduction strategy that they can incorporate into their personal carbon reduction goals, their respective school carbon and greenhouse gas reduction goals, and community reduction goals.

The project will be documented in film, including interviews with participating students as to the value of this Initiative, and edited collaboratively into a five to six-minute final video that students can use to inspire more students to participate in more Climate Action Initiatives like this. Land Trust staff will work with students to find a wider distribution for further impact and to inspire youth in other communities. If this Initiative goes well – as we expect it will – Whatcom Land Trust will nominate the Youth Environment Philanthropy Project Team for a statewide philanthropy award. We can’t wait to unleash the power and passion of youth!

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- North Cascades Audubon Society
- Whatcom Community Foundation Pitt Sportsman Fund
- Whatcom Community Foundation Youth Philanthropy Fund



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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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The accreditation seal is awarded to land trusts meeting the highest national standards for excellence and conservation permanence.

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### WATER, LAND, VOLUNTEERS AND DONORS

The past few months have required all of us here at Whatcom Land Trust to be flexible and adaptable to continue meeting the needs of our community. However we are committed to continuing our mission even during these uncertain times. Our experienced and dedicated volunteers, land stewards and supporters have helped us to forge ahead with this mission. We have continued to provide outdoor volunteer opportunities that keep our volunteers and community safe, though in a slightly altered way. All of this work would not be possible without these volunteers who donate their time and energy to supporting the Land Trust's mission as well as all of our donors, big or small, who make our work possible. Thank you!

For more information on volunteer opportunities and ways to give, visit our website at: [whatcomlandtrust.org](http://whatcomlandtrust.org)