



Diverse properties added to Land Trust accomplishments

In the last three months Whatcom Land Trust secured four new conservation properties bringing our total conservation easements and land donations to eighteen. These properties are as diverse as their donors, ranging from a 45-acre farm to a 4-acre riverfront parcel, a 77-acre home to a heron colony, and a 16.5 acre wetland and buffer area in Bellingham.

We are privileged to work with many different property owners and we recognize that each landowner has individual reasons for conserving property. We applaud the foresight of these donors and acknowledge their generosity with this issue of *The Steward*.

ARCO Conservation Easement December 1996

In an act of farsighted environmental stewardship, the Atlantic Richfield Corporation (ARCO) granted a conservation easement to the Land Trust on a major Great Blue Heron nesting colony located near the company's Cherry Point oil refinery.

The 77-acre conservation property, adjacent to Birch Bay State Park, is home to a heron colony containing approximately 230 nests making it the third largest heron colony in the Pacific Northwest. The intent of ARCO and the Land Trust is to protect the long-term viability of the heron colony, including a buffer from disturbance and future natural relocation sites for the colony.

"The people at ARCO's Cherry Point refinery take pride in being part of a world-class refinery located in a world-class setting. To us, preserving the third-largest heron colony in this region seems like the right thing to do. We have a long-range interest in this 77-acre unique environmental setting," said Scott Walker, Director of Communications and External Affairs at the Cherry Point Refinery.

"The question was how best to do that: Cherry Point is an industrial site; new development will be part of the future here. We decided Whatcom Land Trust was the best option. It's a local group involving local people. We're pretty home grown here," Walker added. "The conservation easement we've signed with the

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WLT President Gordon Scott, (front, left) accepts a land donation from the Pitts Sportsmen's Foundation. Seated next to Gordon is PSF representative Elmer DeRonzo. Standing (l-r) are PSF representative Bill Birchall, and WLT members Cindy Klein, Chris Moench. (Photo: Roger DeSpain)



Sportsmen's Foundation donates riverfront property. See story page 3.

"What the Land Trust isn't"

Robert Keller

Recently the Whatcom Land Trust failed on a grant proposal seeking support for one of our projects. Questioned on why they rejected a seemingly (to us!) attractive program, foundation officials politely explained that our enterprise was too intangible, that an immediate product and outcome were not evident.

Now, in a sense, we can wonder how the work of an organization that has protected nearly 4,500 acres of Whatcom County agricultural land, forests, watershed and wetland appears "intan-

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A new face on the board

The Land Trust is pleased to welcome Dick Beardsley as the newest member of our Board of Directors. Beardsley just retired after 22 years with the *Bellingham Herald*. His most recent position was editorial page editor. After years as a Land Trust member, he joined the Board because he believes in voluntary social activism.

"Citizens deciding for themselves how to protect the environment is one of the most important things we can do and the Land Trust embodies that principle," Beardsley said. "This is exactly the kind of thing we should be doing in this county."

Volunteers help monitor conservation properties

Sharon Digby, Monitoring Committee Chair, thanks the following land monitors for their site visits in 1996: **Carl Batchelor, Dan Taylor, Mark Johnson, The Odom Family, Clare Fogelson, Steve Irving, and Cindy Klein.**

We appreciate our supporters

We continue to benefit from the generosity of our Land Trust supporters. Our thanks to the following volunteers and organizations.

Henry Skinner and Frank James for their help and participation in the WLT sponsored performance of *An Enemy of the People* by the Foothills Theater on October 18, **Brett Baunton of DPI Imaging, Jayne Cronlund** for her volunteer research and office help, **Scott Sandel at Island Title Company, Clare Fogelson** for his help with the Mueller-Chase conservation easement, **Premier Graphics** for printing the *Whatcom Places* book promotional flyer, **LTA Northwest** for a much appreciated scholarship to the National LTA Rally last October.

WLT adds e-mail address

WLT can now be reached via e-mail. Send your messages to WLTrust@juno.com.

Gifts of appreciated stock

If you are considering a gift to the Land Trust, it may be to your advantage to give stocks, bonds or mutual funds instead of cash.

Example: Mary S. owns \$10,000 worth of XYZ stock, which she purchased for \$2,000 just a few years ago. By donating this stock to the Whatcom Land Trust, she receives a charitable deduction of \$10,000 and may avoid tax on \$8,000 of capital gain.

Please contact your financial advisor for more information.

gible," but in another sense that conclusion is quite valid: we mainly protect and conserve, a passive posture. We do not lobby or protest, endorse or oppose candidates, feed the homeless, organize a Farmers' Market, or advocate tax reform. Last year when the Trust declined invitations to join the local Chamber of Commerce and another group promoting county parks, the "purist" label carried some sting.

That political "purity" derives from the Trust's narrow definition of its mission—protecting particular lands through voluntary cooperation with private landowners and government agencies. Period. If our land holdings or easements become threatened, we certainly will respond emphatically, legally and politically. But our prime mission, like the Nature Conservancy and Trust for Public Land, is to conserve. If one likes to play games with labels, that indeed makes us "conservative."

Obviously we depend upon others in our mission. We depend on small businesses, corporations, realtors, title companies, planning departments, large landowners and private individuals who donate their talents and money. We likewise depend on other organizations that fight toxic waste and air pollution, that oppose destructive logging practices, monitor rivers and hydrologic health, promote bio-diversity and native species.

We depend on others but do not take sides in their endeavors. The Brown & Cole/Thrifty merger will affect us because it involves one of our strongest supporters and the economic health of Whatcom County, but food marketing economics are beyond the Land Trust's mission. If Barnes and Noble wipes out Village Books, it will make some of us almost physically ill, but that's not the Trust's business. Likewise, Trillium's global operations, the Sierra Club's hyper-electioneering or Bellingham building a public swimming pool, fall beyond our pale.

Two complex words define the WLT: "land" and "trust." Land involves ecology, no simple matter. Trust has various meanings, but one is that people must place long-range confidence in someone if they plan to entrust them with property and wealth. That requires neutrality, credibility and integrity -- doing what we say we will do and not launching off on tangents. For example, opposition to the "Chuckanut Ridge development," oil spills and gasoline consumption would have doomed two important transactions described in this newsletter. To imbue our new book, *Whatcom Places*, with an "anti-growth" message would not only be a futile exercise in nostalgia, the book itself would be viewed as absurd by potential supporters and very likely would never see print.

Our members and directors can and do play a variety of other roles outside the land Trust, but the Trust as an organization has precise ideas of what it is and where it is going, which translate into clear concepts of what it is not.

The Mission of the Whatcom Land Trust is to preserve and protect unique natural, scenic, agricultural and open space land in Whatcom County through acquisition of perpetual conservation easements or other land interest that insure the protection of the resource value.

Whatcom Land Trust is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization working for voluntary land conservation in Whatcom County. The Steward is published three times each year by the WLT. Your comments are welcomed. Complimentary copies are available by calling the Land Trust office, 650-9470.

Contributors Chris Moench, Dick Beardsley, Bob Keller, Julie Carpenter, Pat Karlberg, Brett Baunton, Rod Burton

Desktop Publishing Sheri Emerson

New conservation properties

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Land Trust guarantees that the heronry will be preserved regardless of what happens at Cherry Point in the future. That's important to us at ARCO. We're pleased the Land Trust could help us do that," said Scott.

Pitts Sportsmen's Donation

January 1997

On January 22, the Land Trust received a gift of four acres on the Nooksack River. The property is located just east of Boulder Creek about four and a half miles west of Glacier.

This gift to the Land Trust was made possible with the help of Mark Anderson, a local realtor and long time Land Trust supporter. Anderson learned of the property through his work with the Pitts Sportsmen's Foundation, a nonprofit charitable group made up of six members of the former Bellingham Sportsman's Club. Anderson suggested the club donate this property to Whatcom County.

"Without hesitation, the Sportsmen's Foundation wanted to donate this property for public use," said Anderson. "When they tried to get the county to accept this land donation, they found the procedure for property review and approval to be a very long, bureaucratic process. When the Foundation started to become a little frustrated with that process the Whatcom Land Trust was invited to serve as a conduit or interim donee."

The Land Trust will place a conservation easement on the land to protect its value as wildlife habitat. In the near future, WLT intends to fulfill the Sportsman's desire that this property

be available for public use, and will gift the property to Whatcom County Parks. The Parks Department hopes to route a portion of the Bay-to-Baker Trail along the old railroad bed and to develop a small picnic area and river access for raft launching or fishing elsewhere on the property.

Sandwiched between the Mount Baker Highway and the Nooksack River, the land lies largely in the flood plain and boasts 430 feet of river frontage. These attributes make the property a gift that will long be appreciated by generations of fisher folk, river rafters, hikers, and other trail users.

Chuckanut Wetland donation

December 1996

The landowners who propose to build the Chuckanut Ridge residential development have donated 16.5 acres of wetlands and woods to Whatcom Land Trust. The donated land abuts the Interurban Trail near Fairhaven.

The new holding is a piece from the 101-acre site of more than 1,000 single and multifamily residences to be built over the next two decades. Madrona Development Company is coordinating the effort to get the project approved.

The landowners, Roger and Gerry Annie Sahlin, Ralph and Kay Hemingway, and F. D. Smith, also donated \$15,000 to the Land Trust to help pay to protect and enhance the wetlands on the 16.5 acres they donated.

Attorney Robert Tull represents the Chuckanut Ridge landowners.

"Working with the Land Trust has been very

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"...he had worked so hard farming his property, it seemed like a crime to allow it to be converted into housing tracts."

Mardi Chase
Easement donor

Are you a Land Trust member?

Have you renewed your membership?

Please join us. With your help we can continue to protect Whatcom County's natural landscapes.

Enclosed is my membership contribution: \$25 Friend \$50 Supporter \$100 Donor \$250 Sponsor Other

I am a current Land Trust member who is pleased with all the Land Trust has accomplished. Enclosed is my extra gift—a "booster shot" to help you continue your work: \$25 \$50 \$100 Other

I've included the name of someone who may be interested in becoming a member. You can use my name when contacting them.

Name (s) _____ Business _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone (Home) _____ (Work) _____

Please make your check payable to Whatcom Land Trust. Whatcom Land Trust is a 501 (c)3 nonprofit organization. Under Internal Revenue Service guidelines, the estimated value of the benefits received from membership is not substantial; therefore, the full amount of your payment is a deductible contribution.

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New Properties

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satisfying for my clients and for me. In the Chuckanut Ridge donation, the donors, who have deep roots in the neighborhood, saw a chance to respond to the Land Trust's efforts to secure and protect great woods and wetlands in the midst of our growing community. Their land is valuable on aesthetic and monetary levels and their generosity is above and beyond any call of duty," said Tull.

"The Smith-Hemingway-Sahlin families and I were pleased that the Land Trust would work with us so carefully and successfully. Special thanks should go to WLT Board member Rand Jack and to Chris Spens, Bellingham Planning Department staff," Tull added.

The Land Trust's new conservation property is a link in an ecological system that extends from the Interurban Trail to Chuckanut Bay. The Interurban Trail is a favorite route with walkers and cyclists. The Land Trust's 16.5 acres provides a buffer that will separate the trail from development on Chuckanut Ridge's remaining 84.5 acres.

Mueller-Chase November 1996

Last November, a Colorado couple placed a conservation easement on their 45-acre Whatcom County farm on the Noon Road. Their property, which offers a spectacular view of Mount Baker, is in a section of the county where considerable acreage has been converted to residences and a golf course.

Mardi Chase and Bill Mueller contacted Whatcom Land Trust last July and asked about options that would allow them to conserve their property. The rolling 45-acre farm is buffered by woods and includes a handmade log home and an artist studio. Even though they no longer lived at this property, it was important to them to preserve this land.

"It's something we've always wanted to do. Whatcom County is growing so fast and a lot of farmland is being divided into housing developments; it was important to us that this property stay intact," Mardi Chase said.

The conservation easement they placed on their land allows the property to be subdivided into two parcels no smaller than 20 acres each. One more residence may be built. Mardi feels this easement helps fulfill a promise she made to Earl Kildall, who sold the property to her in 1983.

"I've always had a special feeling for this property and my conversations with Earl helped deepen those feelings. He was born and raised in Whatcom County and he worked so hard farming this property, it seemed like a crime to allow it to be converted into housing tracts," Chase said.

The easement on the Mueller-Chase property will help preserve more than a wonderful view of Mount Baker and a smaller, independent farm. It will preserve an example of the roots from which Whatcom County has sprung.



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