



The Purchase of Development Rights Partnership

Back to Our Agricultural Roots

One night in 1983, a group consisting mostly of farmers met in the basement of Dutch Mothers Restaurant on Main Street in Lynden. Their intent was to save Whatcom County's farmland and a way of life that farms epitomize. This group founded the Whatcom Land Trust for that purpose.

The first conservation easement is always the most difficult for a land trust to obtain. Fortunately, among those farmers who met at Dutch Mothers was Herman Miller. In an act of great courage and foresight, Herman donated the first conservation easement to the Whatcom Land Trust, an easement over his 160-acre farm, a place where Herman grew up and lived out his fruitful life.

For a variety of reasons, no farmers followed Herman's lead. The Land Trust grew and prospered. We obtained many conservation easements and properties to protect wildlife habitat, open space, forests, scenic vistas and public use. But despite our efforts, we were not able to successfully engage the intent of our founders. That is about to change.

Like the sea and the mountains and the Nooksack River, farms define the character of Whatcom County. First in the state in dairy farms and first in the nation growing raspberries, Whatcom County ranks in the top 3% of counties nationwide in farm production. Each year local farms yield products worth \$250,000,000. Farms are part of

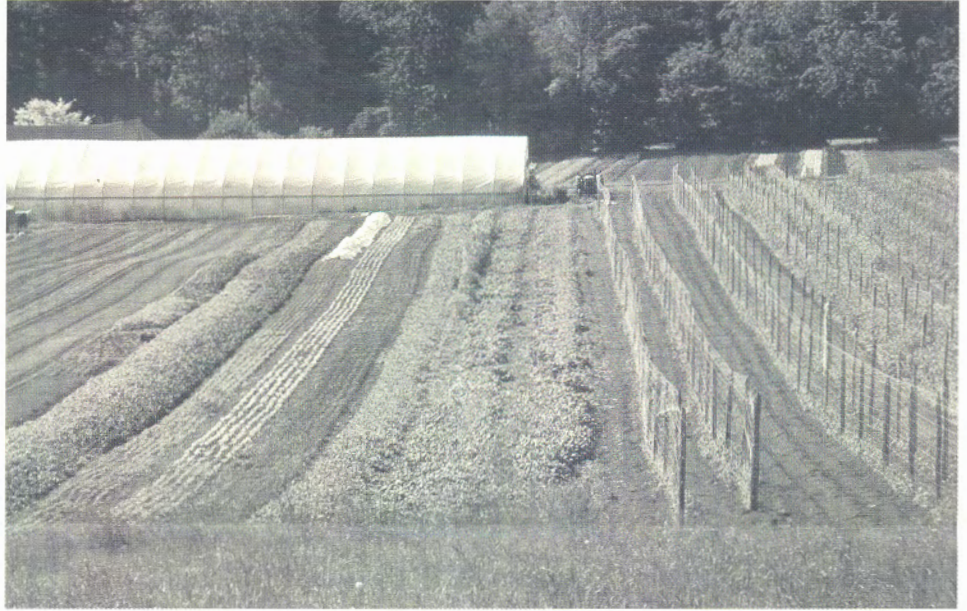


photo by Tore Oftness, courtesy of Farm Friends

These rows of crops at Alm Hill Farm are a part of the \$250,000,000 annual farm production in our county.

our sense of place, of our landscape. They preserve a heritage and a way of life. Well-run farms contribute to a healthy environment. Still, Whatcom County lost nearly half of its farmland between 1949 and 1997.

In September 2001, the Land Trust began working with a citizen committee appointed by County Executive Pete Kremen to develop a program to purchase development rights from farmers as a way of helping protect farmland. A year later the County Council adopted the committee's recommendations and passed the Purchase of Agricultural Development Rights Program Ordinance.

Under the ordinance, farmers in strategic areas will have the opportu-

nity to sell their development rights in order to help keep the land in farming. All sales will be voluntary, and farmers will be paid a fair market price based on the difference between the appraised value of their land with and without development rights. Acquisitions will be paid for by the County Conservation Futures Fund and matching federal funds. Priority will be given to strategically located farms that will best contribute to protecting agricultural enterprise in Whatcom County. The Land Trust helped draft a model Agricultural Protection Conservation Easement as a tool for the acquisition of development rights and has agreed to help implement the program.

continued on page four

Our Invaluable Land Stewards

New Staff Member Brings Conservation Help to Trust

Welcome to new staff member, conservation assistant Katie Knight who was selected from among a pool of 63 applicants. Half the funding for the position comes from Land Trust Alliance Northwest. Whatcom Land Trust was awarded the two-year \$37,800 grant in September.

Originally from Bremerton, Katie recently completed her Masters of Professional Studies program in the Department of Natural Resources at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY. Recipient of a prestigious Doris Duke Conservation Fellowship at Cornell, Katie returned to the Pacific Northwest after completing an internship at the Great Land Trust in Alaska. Her professional project report is being incorporated into the Anchorage area's local planning efforts and is viewed by faculty members who reviewed the final results as "exceptional and in a class of its own!"

Having owned a successful small business in Bremerton, Katie developed a strong work ethic and competence in public relations. The Land Trust is proud to have someone of Katie's caliber available to assist Conservation Director Gordon Scott as we continue the important work of preserving Whatcom County's natural heritage.

New Business Partners

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Businesses Partners become our partners in conservation by donating money or services to help defray our general overhead and operating expenses. Their contributions help support the work of our staff, and allow us to spend more of our general funding directly on land acquisition and preservation projects.

Mark Your Calendars

The Land Trust's third annual **Great Outdoors Auction** is scheduled for Saturday evening, June 7, 2003 at the Semiahmoo Resort near Blaine. Travel, outdoor equipment, artwork, access to special places and people and lots more await you. Look for details in the spring issue. To donate items or make advance reservations, call the office at 650-9470.

What does it take to do the conservation work of the Land Trust? Dedicated volunteers. For every conservation easement held by Whatcom Land Trust (WLT) there is a volunteer steward who takes on the job of being the Trust's eyes and ears on the ground. Once a conservation easement is granted to WLT, the steward becomes the liaison between the Trust and the land or property owner. WLT depends on ordinary citizens to succeed in its mission. Being a Land Steward requires:

1. Willingness to commit up to ten hours per year.
2. Familiarity with the terms of the conservation easement and how those terms look in the context of the property.
3. Commitment to representing the Land Trust.
4. Enjoyment in being outside, perhaps bushwhacking or getting wet and muddy.

Dan Taylor stewards three properties: Zweegman Family Social Club, on Birch Point, the Renius Conservation Easement off Chuckanut Drive and Teddy Bear Cove County Park off Chuckanut Drive. Since his retirement in 1995 from his job as director of the Whatcom County Planning Department, Dan has devoted himself to family life and volunteering as a board member of the Whatcom County Parks Commission. For nearly eight years he has made annual monitoring visits to each of these properties.

At each site Dan walks the property to note any changes that have taken place over the preceding year. When applicable, Dan sits down with owners or representatives to gather news about the land and to cultivate an open dialogue between the Trust and land owners. To complete the annual process, Dan files a monitoring report with the Land Trust, which becomes a part of the permanent property record.

The Zweegman Family Social Club is a privately owned retreat on the tip of Birch Point with a cluster of simple cabins, a community hall and huge old western red cedars perch cliff top above a wide gravel beach. Dan lets Marlin Hendricks,



photo courtesy of Trish Navarre

Stewards Pat and Michael Savatgy

The Mission of the 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.

Newsletter Editorial Team Carl Batchelor, Rod Burton, Katherine Freimund, Trish Navarre

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Contributors Barbara Francis, Katherine Freimund, Rand Jack, Bob Keller, Chris Moench, Trish Navarre, Gordon Scott

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the family's local contact, know when he intends to monitor the property, even though he doesn't need to be present. Dan walks the property, noting and taking photos of any changes. He also goes down on the beach, which isn't critical to the monitoring, but is a spectacular place. The whole visit, including the drive to the property, takes about 90 minutes. Occasionally Dan will also be contacted by the property owner to observe and document an activity that may affect the conservation easement, such as limbing of the gigantic cedars on the Zweegman place. Dan photographed the limbs being removed and added those photos to the archive, providing documentation that is critical to maintaining ongoing and clear communication.

Manager Steve LeCocq helps Dan monitor Teddy Bear Cove County Park where they follow a switch back trail down the steep wooded slope below Chuckanut Drive to the beach. "Monitoring is a good excuse to get down there. It's such a beautiful place, but I don't usually take the time to go otherwise."

Pat Savatgy and his brother Michael are partners in a busy carpentry business while handling the responsibilities of parenting (Pat) and playing banjo (Michael) in a music group that travels. Still they take time to steward the Kenny Creek Bald Eagle Night Roost Conservation Easement and the Canyon Lake Creek Corridor Conservation Easement (which they simply call "The Gorge").

Their homes are strategically located on 20 acres between Land Trust property on the North Fork of the Nooksack River and the Kenny Creek Conservation Easement. Pat and Michael hike this area several times a week for exercise, which works for monitoring, too. Here they can watch the activities of Crown Pacific, the timber company that owns the land that includes the easement. They can easily observe the activities of the eagles feeding on the banks of the Nooksack and flying to their evening roosts in the mountainside forests. When the salmon are running they have counted as many as ninety eagles along the river.

The Gorge conservation easement, a steep sided creek valley running out of Canyon Lake Creek in the Canyon Lake Creek Community Forest, is very difficult to access. Pat and

Michael usually monitor from the vantage of the logging roads and clear cuts surrounding the easement. Pat has only once attempted the difficult task of walking the easement border adjacent to a proposed clear cut area. "It's so steep and unstable. But the one time I walked it, the line was clearly tagged every twenty feet or so. Apparently Crown wanted to be really sure that no mistake was made that violated the easement." Why is Pat a steward? "I'm not as involved with the Trust as I would like to be, so I'm grateful to be able to do this...there is real satisfaction in being a steward."

Michael sees WLT properties as real enhancements to the neighborhood. He hopes that someday his land will host a conservation easement that will link the Kenny Creek roost with the Trust's river land. The land, the eagles, the fish and the forests all live together. "I would hate to think that I am the last generation to have this." — *Chris Moench*

Land Stewards and the properties they monitor

- Sarah Bakke.....Nesset Farm, Overby Farmstead
- Carl Batchelor.....Hegg Memorial, White Deer
- John Bower.....ARCO Heron Reserve, Terrell Creek
- Lauralee Brakke.....Clark's Point
- Mark Johnson.....Miller Farm, Leaf Light Farm
- Sara Hill.....Ansley, Korman
- Steve Irving.....Kelsey
- Karen McMains.....Pigeon Point, Chuckanut Rocks, Eliza Island, Carter Point, Lummi Rocks
- Kraig Olason.....Smith, Maple Beach
- Andy Ross.....Chase Mueller
- Pat and Michael Savatgy.....Kenny Creek Eagle Roost, Canyon Lake Creek Corridor
- Larry Simkins.....Canyon Lake Community Forest
- Dan Taylor.....Renius, Zweegman Social Club, Teddy Bear Cove
- Chuck Timblin.....Stremier, Niewendorp, Streets
- Bill and Sarah Watts.....Squires Lake, Brinn Trail

Multi-Sport Endurance Challenge Brings in Land Preservation Dollars!

On September 14, 2002 the Bellingham Traverse, a race involving mountain biking, road biking, running, sea kayaking, and trekking, helped raise money by collecting pledges for local environmental organizations. Over \$900 was raised for the Whatcom Land Trust by this event! Thank you to all of the athletes who took part in the race!

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Where There's a Will, There's a Way...

Every year thousands of people die without a will, leaving to others the decision of how to distribute their assets. However, some people sit down and carefully consider how to divide their resources among their family and various charitable organizations,

such as the Whatcom Land Trust. This year some of our supporters have called, written or talked to a staff member to let us know that the Land Trust is included in their wills. One of those individuals is Barbara Francis, who penned this short essay....

Bequests – Barbara Francis, guest editorial

Three years ago, after moving back to Bellingham I needed to update my will.

Naming the Whatcom Land Trust as a beneficiary in my will was an easy decision. Taking time out of my schedule to actually set up an appointment was much harder.

My story is probably similar to others who lived in Whatcom County, moved away and were fortunate enough to return. Being able to return to here to live was a dream come true. I had first come to Bellingham in 1983 to attend Huxley College of Environmental Studies. Majoring in Environmental Education meant that all of Whatcom County became my classroom. Like most people, I fell in love with the natural beauty of this area. My desire to stay and live here, strong as it was, squared off against the challenge of finding work. Living on the East Coast and in the Midwest fueled a strong desire to return to Bellingham.

In 1999 the dream became reality. Although Whatcom County has grown and changed significantly in the last 20 years, I still find much joy in exploring and a deep appreciation for healthy wild places. I believe to preserve and protect this rare region is paramount. At present I am able to donate money and volunteer time to the Land Trust. I want to do more. By including WLT in my will I am able to give back to the land even after I'm gone.

Back to our Roots

continued from page one



photo by Mark Bergsma, courtesy of Farm Friends Holmquist Hazelnut Orchards.

After farmers are accepted into the Purchase of Development Rights Program, the Land Trust will negotiate the sale of development rights with the farmer. We will hold each Agricultural Protection Conservation Easement jointly with Whatcom County and will have primary responsibility for administering the easement and monitoring and enforcing compliance with its terms. The County will compensate the Land Trust for these services, with most of the money going into an Agricultural Easement Monitoring Fund to insure that we have resources to meet our monitoring and enforcement responsibilities.

After a long wait, the Land Trust is returning to its agricultural roots, grown from seeds first planted on Main Street in Lynden. While we will still be working hard to save wildlife habitat, open space and recreational land for public enjoyment, we will be putting fresh energy into our new partnership with Whatcom County to protect working farms as a resource for all of us now and for those who follow us.

— Rand Jack



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Islands in the Stream:

Heath, Schumann & Parker-Kuromiya

This fall and winter the Land Trust increased habitat protection along the North and Middle Fork Nooksack through the addition of 42.5 acres of wild river frontage, ephemeral gravel bars, native riparian forest, and meandering side channels. These newly protected habitats are some of the most diverse and ecologically productive lands in the Nooksack Basin. The properties are located along the Nooksack Confluence Zone, a wildlife corridor that links the lowlands of the South Fork Nooksack and lower Whatcom County with the upper Middle and North Fork Nooksack watersheds.

Beginning with a 1998 donation of 12 acres from James Roslyn WLT has protected land in this corridor and now has over 250 acres placed in perpetual conservation status. The latest conservation properties include 19.1 acres acquired from James Heath and funded by a \$10,000 grant from the Mead Foundation, a donation of 5 acres from Leaf Schumann and Louise Granger, and 18 acres from Paul Parker and Gail Kuromiya. The Heath and Schumann-Granger properties are located on a small wooded island at the confluence of the Middle Fork, North Fork and Canyon Lake Creek. The Parker-Kuromiya property lies along both sides of the North Fork adjacent to the "Forks of the Nooksack" conservation site near Truck Road.

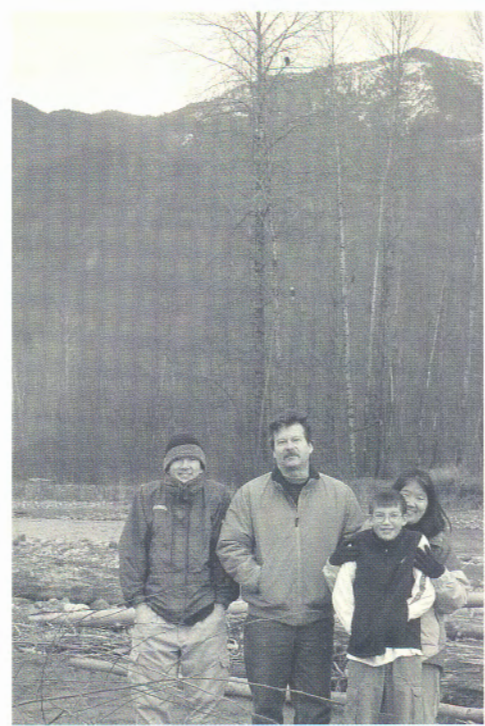


photo courtesy of Trish Navarre

Eagles roost in the trees at the Parker-Kuromiya property. Pictured (l to r) are Tyler, Paul, Gail and Koji.

30-acre wetland saved for S. Fork salmon

In the low ground near Acme the South Fork Nooksack and the Samish River pass close to each other. Sometime in the past, these two rivers were joined together and shared the same drainage basins, making the boggy, wet ground between them difficult for early farmers to work. However, these same wetlands provide ideal habitat for wintering salmon smolts who hide under the forest canopy and grow into fingerlings before journeying down-river and out to sea. While most of the forested wetlands in the South Fork

Valley have been converted to farmland, a few of the wettest areas remain forested and undrained, providing some of the last and best refuge for South Fork salmon smolts.

This summer Whatcom Land Trust, with the help of a grant from the State Salmon Recovery Funding Board, purchased 30 acres of forested wetland. The property was sold to the Trust by Jon Syre, owner of Foxglove LLC, and is located adjacent to the 78-acre Roos Property, another Land Trust Salmon Recovery project. These two projects

conserve about 70 acres of forested wetlands and 1,300 feet of "Airport Creek", a seasonal stream. The Foxglove Property, as the latest acquisition is known, also provides excellent forest cover for the wintering South Fork elk herd, and is haunted by owls, hawks, and woodpeckers. To date the Land Trust, in cooperation with the Lummi Nation, Nooksack Tribe and Whatcom County Parks has helped conserve 621 acres of salmon habitat between Acme and Saxon. More acquisitions are pending.

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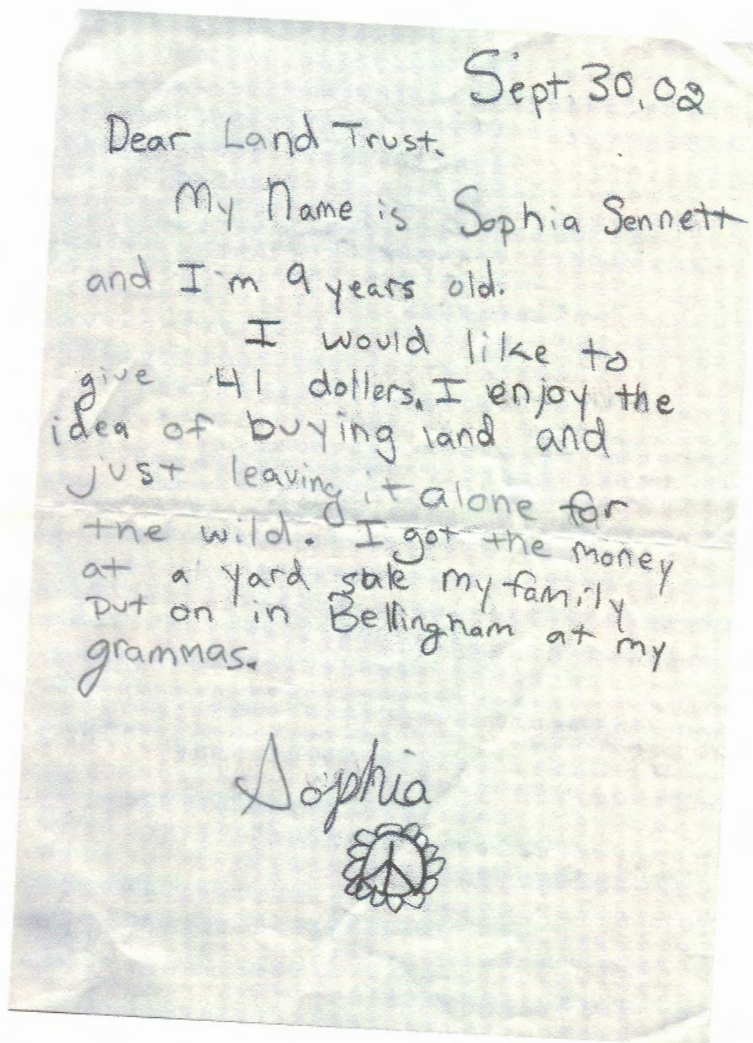
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WLT Annual Picnic Draws Largest Crowd Ever

WLT's 2002 Annual Picnic drew a large turnout to Silver Lake Park in eastern Whatcom County on a gorgeous September afternoon. Volunteers, staff, founding members, and families new to the Land Trust visited, feasted and played at the potluck, attended by more than 80 people of all ages. Salmon was grilled to perfection by Bob Klein, served with corn-on-the-cob donated by Loren Monsen and Immanuel Lutheran Church, near Nugent's Corner. Storyteller Doug Banner provided entertainment while folks gathered round

a campfire built in the gazebo's large central fireplace. Tom Pratum received the 2002 Land Steward of the Year Award for his work as a Land Trust volunteer, as a land donor, and for his ongoing work promoting active stewardship in our community. Mark and Ellie Anderson also were honored for donating 27 acres of important habitat to the Land Trust earlier in the year. What a great opportunity to get to know fellow Land Trust members while visiting a beautiful part of our county!



Stimpson Nature Reserve Created in Lake Whatcom Watershed



photo courtesy of Rodger DeSpain

On September 17, 2002 the Stimpson Nature Reserve was formed through a cooperative effort. Shown signing the agreement are: (l to r) Pete Kremen (Whatcom County Executive) Doug Sutherland (DNR), Wendy Walker (President, WLT), Rand Jack (WLT Board).

Recipients of the prestigious "Founders of a New Northwest" Award for 2002

Awarded by Sustainable Northwest, a non-profit organization established in 1994 to constructively promote stewardship and conservation of natural resources and environmentally compatible economic development throughout Alaska, California, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington.

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photo courtesy of Chris Navarre

Art Wolfe at the post-presentation book signing.

Wildlife Fans Flock to Art Wolfe Slide Presentation

On October 12, 2002 fans of Art Wolfe turned out to see slides featuring images from Art's latest book *The Living Wild*. The slides were accompanied by the interesting stories on how each slide was taken by Art Wolfe himself as he tried to create a snapshot of global wildlife in the year 2000. The renovated theater at Bellingham High School provided an intimate setting for the event, co-sponsored by Village Books. Art Wolfe donated his time, as well as a percentage of his books sold that night, to the Whatcom Land Trust.

Henry Jansen Remembered

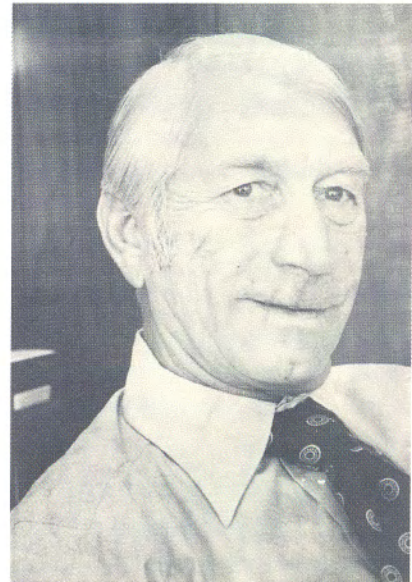
WLT supporter Henry "Hank" Jansen passed away on September 29, 2002. Founding board member Hilda Bajema recalls that Hank made the first \$300 contribution to the Land Trust back in 1984 during an initial campaign to raise \$1,000 for printing an informational newsletter. Through the years Hank remained aware and supportive of the Land Trust's work, referring to founder Rand Jack as "a legend." Henry Jansen remains forever a legend in his own right for his remarkable legacy of philanthropy in our community.

Take Stock Now...

Donations of assets like stock often provide an excellent way to support the Land Trust and also may provide certain tax advantages. Be sure to contact your financial advisor before making your decision. If you would like to donate appreciated stocks to the Whatcom Land Trust, please contact the office at 650-9470 for transfer information.


New WLT Website Feature

Now it's easier than ever to become a member, purchase a gift membership, or make a donation to Whatcom Land Trust. Many people enjoy the convenience of paying bills online. And now that same ease can be applied to charitable giving. When you visit the WLT website, www.whatcomlandtrust.org you'll see a "Donate Now through NetworkforGood" button. Be assured that Whatcom Land Trust will receive 100% of your donation because, as a registered non-profit, we pay no fees or costs to use this secure site. Accepting gifts online is also consistent with our goal of reducing the use of postage, paper and staff time. Donors receive immediate records of contributions for tax purposes from NetworkforGood. Thank you for trying this new way of being philanthropic!



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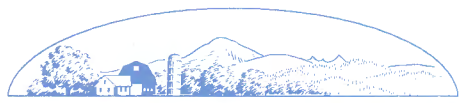
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Whatcom Land Trust Outreach Strategy and Public Forums

At times the Outreach and Development work of the Whatcom Land Trust speaks to everyone in Whatcom County with our newsletter, brochures, site tours and the book *Whatcom Places*. At other times we sponsor programs that target specific groups such as farmers, students, businesses, lawyers, rural areas, major donors, churches, granges or new residents.

Our winter forms on stewardship and religion were designed to stimulate discussion and thought in Whatcom's churches. In doing so, the Land Trust endorses no particular religious tradition but seeks to create dialogue on topics of land ethics. We do believe that a land ethic is crucial to human survival, but we also recognize, as evident in our board of directors, that stewardship arises from experiences, from mysticism, science, pragmatism, the arts, or humanistic philosophy. For others the source may be theism, polytheism, agnosticism, or an eastern religion.

Whatever the source of an individual's basic philosophy, the Trust believes that new ideas, openness and dialogue are essential for sound, long-lasting conservation efforts. We encourage all of the community to join in such endeavors.

Public Forums on the Spiritual Aspects of Stewardship sponsored by WLT

Jan. 28 - Panel Discussion

Feb. 4 - Film and Discussion

7pm - Mt. Baker Theatre, Encore Room

112 W. Champion St., Bellingham

Jan. 30 - Panel Discussion

Feb. 6 - Film and Discussion

7pm - Lynden Community Center

401 Grover, St., Lynden