

# Steward

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

Volume 15 Number 3

Fall, 2006



photo: Eric Carabba

Beaver have attempted to fall a Red Cedar near the pond at Fenton Family Nature Reserve.

## Fenton Property Preserved *Rand Jack*

Last month Whatcom Land Trust purchased from Ray Fenton a beautiful 78-acre property with giant cedar trees, a 10-acre pond, a salmon and steelhead stream and occasional visits from bear and cougar. And Ray will continue to live there. This is an example of Whatcom Land Trust working with landowners to meet their needs while preserving special places in Whatcom County.

Ray did not want his property broken up and developed. Understanding the exceptional environmental attributes of the property, he sought to protect them. He also knew that he required financial resources to care for his wife Betty in a nursing home and for his granddaughter. Ray wished to remain on the land.

Working with Ray's attorney, Brian Hansen, we were able to find a solution that satisfied everyone. After an appraisal, a financial planner computed Ray's economic needs. With \$500,000 in fines paid to the State Department of Ecology for the 1999 Whatcom Creek fire and an additional \$100,000 from an anonymous donor, Whatcom Land Trust purchased the Fenton site. Ray retained the right to live out his life in a home on five acres. The purchase price

...continued on page 10

## Waterfront Park at Point Whitehorn *Rand Jack*

For years Whatcom Land Trust has sought to create a park that would provide access to the mile and a half of public beach between Cherry Point and Point Whitehorn. Now it is happening.

This marine shoreline is a natural treasure of Whatcom County. Strolling north along the cobble beach, a person can easily forget we are not on the Olympic Peninsula.

After several unsuccessful attempts to buy parkland along this stretch of coast, the Land Trust learned that B.C. Hydro intended to sell a 43-acre parcel it had purchased from Trillium in a now defunct

cross-sound pipeline project. To purchase the property, the Land Trust secured a one-million-dollar grant from the State Department of Ecology. The funds came from fines paid after the 1999 Whatcom Creek gas line explosion. Governor Gregoire, Senators Murray and Cantwell, Representative Larson and County Executive Kremen all urged B.C. Hydro to sell the property to Whatcom Land Trust.

After B.C. Hydro agreed to sell, we learned that Trillium Corporation retained right of first refusal. Trillium agreed not to exercise that right, allowing our purchase in exchange for the Trust



photo: Gordon Scott

Southern beach view at Whatcom Land Trust's Pt. Whitehorn property.

trading the B.C. Hydro land to Trillium for a 54-acre wooded wetland further up the coast.

...continued on page four

## Whatcom Artists Studio Tour

Two weekends in October, 52 Whatcom County artists opened their studios to the public as part of the 12th Annual Whatcom Artist Studio Tour. Many of the artists donated a percentage of their proceeds to Whatcom Land Trust. We are grateful to have this kind of support from our community and wish to thank the artists involved in this year's Whatcom Artists Studio Tour.

## Fall Campaign

Once a year we come to our supporters and ask for financial help. The past year has been very productive; Whatcom Land Trust efforts at securing new county parks, scenic shoreline preservation, conservation of agricultural ground, and protection of a heron rookery, are all the results of our supporters' investment in the organization. We simply could not do this work without you

*Thanks to a committed and concerned donor, we have an unusual opportunity this year – any individual donation greater than last year's Fall Campaign donation, or any new membership purchased, will be doubled!*

Please make a generous financial contribution in support of our work. WLT's conservation strategy seeks to protect and restore critical yet fragmented habitat. We are a catalyst for success; our organization and lean staff enable us to maximize all the funds we raise. To support the ideas and organization you care about, take this special opportunity to double the value of your donation.

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Whatcom Land Trust

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Bellingham, Washington, 98227-6131

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## PARTNER PROFILE

# Cascade Joinery

*“Through Whatcom Land Trust we can contribute to improving everyone’s quality of life in our region.”*

– Jeff Arvin, president, Cascade Joinery

About eight years ago The Cascade Joinery became the first official “business partner” of Whatcom Land Trust. That partnership involved a 5-year pledge of cash to help meet our overhead and operating expenses. Since then the firm has remained a steady supporter, giving structures and benches to the Great Outdoors Auction and also supporting publication of *Whatcom Places II*.



photo: Jerry DeBacker

*Cascade Joinery's entry shows off their work.*

Founded in 1990, this timber-framing business spent a decade on Hemmi Road before expanding to south Bellingham's waterfront in 2000. Co-owner is Jeff Arvin. Although the Trust has no litmus test for supporters, the award-winning Joinery is an excellent fit. It builds durable homes for wood lovers using large wooden beams salvaged whenever

possible from demolished wharves, warehouses, schools and mills. Morale is high among twenty-six skilled employees—a positive, upbeat place to work.

Such partners in conservation make the Land Trust mission gratifying.

Cascade Joinery is located at 1401 Sixth Street in Bellingham. Their web address is: [www.cascadejoinery.com](http://www.cascadejoinery.com)

## Volunteer Opportunities to Help WLT

**Development:** Auction 2007 committee members

**Outreach:** Table staffing, event planning and organization, assisting with tours

**Administration:** Assist with mailing

**Land Management:** Easement monitoring, land clean-up projects

*call the office at 650-9470 to get more information*

Newsletter Team ..... Rod Burton, Connie Clement, Jerry DeBacker

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Contributors..... Connie Clement, Eric Carabba, Jerry DeBacker,

Rand Jack, Bob Keller, Gordon Scott, Margaret Squires

# EVENTS & Opportunities

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## **Festival of the Arts**

From November 18th through December 24th, Whatcom Land Trust will once again be part of the Allied Arts Holiday Festival of the Arts. This year the Festival will take place in the old J.C. Penney building at 1310 Cornwall. We are excited to feature the new *Whatcom Places II* (see page 11) for sale at our booth, along with our usual gift cards, and mugs created by potter and boardmember Chris Moench.

## **Farmer's Market First Annual Tree Lighting**

WLT is happy to be the featured non-profit at the First Annual Farmer's Market Tree Lighting taking place December 2nd! Bring the entire family for a memorable holiday experience and enjoy the lighting of a huge Christmas tree on display. Don't forget to come by the WLT booth and say hello.

## **Supporting Conservation— One Search at a Time**

What if Whatcom Land Trust earned a penny every time you searched the Internet? Well, now we can!

Goodsearch.com is a new search engine that donates half its revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. You use it just as you would any search engine, and it is powered by Yahoo, so you get great results.

Just go to [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com) and be sure to enter Whatcom Land Trust as the charity you want to support. Just 100 of us searching four times a day will raise enough in a year to offset the cost of our website maintenance, without anyone spending a dime! And, be sure to spread the word!!

## **New Retirement Savings Law Brings New Opportunity**

Congress has recently taken steps to strengthen America's retirement system while also encouraging charitable giving. The Pension Protection Act of 2006 includes incentives for those 70-1/2 years of age and older who would like to make charitable gifts from potentially taxable IRA funds. For 2006 and 2007, Congress is allowing those individuals with traditional or Roth IRAs to make tax-free gifts up to \$100,000 per year directly to qualified organizations like Whatcom Land Trust.

If you are over the age of 59-1/2 funds may not go directly to charities, but can be withdrawn from IRAs and other retirement accounts and then be donated without incurring a penalty for early withdrawal. While amounts withdrawn and donated in this way are reported as part of your income, they can then be deducted as charitable contributions, which generally result in a "wash" for federal income tax purposes.

Check with your financial advisors about the best way to take advantage of these new giving opportunities. As always we will be pleased to assist you in any way possible. Please contact the office at 650-9470.

## **05/05/07—Save the Date Great Outdoors Auction**

*Make your plans now to attend Whatcom Land Trust's Great Outdoors Auction, Saturday, May 5, 2007 at the Ferry Terminal. Come join the fun, enjoy fine food and wine, and bid on outdoor gear, fine art, getaways, exciting expeditions and excursions, all in support of the work of the land trust. A great time is guaranteed to be had by all!!*

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## **A Letter of Thanks**

*Thanks for keeping me and my family informed on the Land Trust Activities—you're doing a great job. My daughter and I are so happy to have Squires Lake available for hiking around. She will call and say "How about a hike around the lake today?" Then she will drive from her home in Orting, pick me up here in Des Moines on the way north, and we'll spend the day hiking and often spend the night in Bellingham or Mount Vernon. My sons, who both work at Boeing, love to come up in the summer with their families, but we will come by ourselves or with my granddaughter during spring or winter break (she's a teacher in the Sumner school district). Our October hike, with the falling leaves on the trail, is super. My family misses living there but we're happy it's in good hands. Keep up the good work. - Margaret Squires*



photos: Eric Carabba

Above: A trail will be constructed allowing access to this saltwater shoreline along the Strait of Georgia.

Left: Bald Eagles and other raptors nest in giant cottonwoods throughout the Point Whitehorn property.

## Park Planned for Point Whitehorn Land Purchase

*continued from front page*

Whatcom Land Trust is delighted with the trade. The pristine wooded wetland is a far superior site. It is ecologically rich, provides better access to the mile and a half of public beach and has twice as much marine frontage as the B.C. Hydro property. Bald eagles and red tail hawks nest among the big spruce, cottonwoods and cedar in the wetlands. After walking the property, a wetlands specialist commented “this is

what much of Whatcom county looked like before Europeans arrived.” In addition to trading the wooded wetland, Trillium granted a trail-use right over an adjoining 30 acres.

Within a year, Whatcom Land Trust intends to build a trail through the wetlands to the beach and turn the property over to Whatcom County Parks.

Like all complicated projects, none of this could have happened without the

support and cooperation of many people. Whatcom Land Trust is deeply grateful to Richard Grout and Dale Jensen of the State Department of Ecology, B.C. Hydro, Trillium, and our elected public officials, particularly Pete Kremen who has long shared our dream of a Whitehorn park and public access to this exceptional beach. Generations to come will celebrate and enjoy walking through wetlands and over the cobble beach at Point Whitehorn. 🙌



photo: Eric Carabba

The Point Whitehorn park will offer an expansive open space, with views of both Mount Baker and the San Juans.

# Bell Creek Salmon Habitat Gordon Scott



photo: Gordon Scott

*Bell Creek property (outlined) seen from Whatcom Land Trust's Kenny Creek Eagle Roost site across the Nooksack Valley.*

Some of the best farmland in Whatcom County lies in the floodplain of the Nooksack River where old channels and stream meanders form complex habitats favored by our native salmon species. River bottoms are also great farming areas where centuries of flooding have deposited layers of nutrient rich sediments. Whatcom Land Trust has just acquired such a valuable property, a 25-acre tract along the North Fork Nooksack that combines excellent farmland soils and productive salmon spawning and rearing areas.

In 2005 Whatcom Land Trust received a grant from the State Salmon Recovery Funding Board to purchase this property from Kathy Hawes and her two brothers, Richard and Robert Gay. Kathy and her brothers inherited the property from their parents, who farmed the land for many years, and had created a beau-

tiful, productive pasture between Bell Creek and the North Fork.

To acquire the portion of the property that contained the best salmon habitat, the Land Trust had to first divide the

***The Bell Creek salmon property protects 1,800 feet of stream and river habitat that is surrounded by mature conifers and hardwoods shading the water.***

property and separate the old house, barn and out building on five acres from the remaining 25 acres of pasture and salmon habitat. This involved the first ever use of a provision of the Whatcom County Code allowing for an exempt division of lands for conservation purposes. In exchange for the exempt division, Whatcom Land Trust granted Whatcom County a conservation easement extinguishing all development rights over the 25-acre property. Thanks to Director Hal Hart, Bob Martin, Land Use Division Manager, and the sub-

division staff for working out the details and helping protect salmon habitat.

The Bell Creek salmon property protects 1,800 feet of stream and river habitat that is surrounded by mature conifers and hardwoods shading the water. All five species of northwest salmon utilize the Bell Creek property, spawning in the cool clear waters of

Bell Creek and rearing in the shady side channels protected from predators by overhanging trees. This new property adjoins two other Whatcom Land Trust preserved sites on the North Fork: the 10-acre North Fork Island tract acquired with monies raised from our 2004 Great Outdoors Auction, and our North Fork Eagle site, 40 acres purchased in 1999 with funding from the USFWS. Together these preserved places are helping protect our native wildlife, natural habitats and productive farmlands. 🌲

# Canyon Lake Community Forest Opening Celebration



Photo: Rand Jack

A helicopter delivered the 50-foot steel I-beams for the upper bridge, gently placing predrilled holes over bolts anchored in concrete.

Though open to the public for several years, Canyon Lake Community Forest finally received a proper christening on October 14th. The occasion was the completion of new bridges spanning streams flowing into and out of the lake and the inauguration of a new trail around the lake – all the handiwork of Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt. Russ led this first official tour on this new trail. He explained the ecology and told tales, such as a story about the guys who, about 45 years ago, winched logs out of the lake that had been there since a landslide formed the lake about 150 years ago.

Before the ribbon cutting, County Executive Pete Kremen summed things up when he said, “This is what it is all about.” 🍷

## Storm Damage Temporarily Closes Access to Park

Recent rainstorms have washed out the road to Canyon Lake Community Forest. A schedule for re-opening the road has not yet been determined, but may not be until Spring. Call Whatcom County Parks for updates or more information.



Photo: Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt

Completed new bridge crossing Canyon Creek as it flows from the lake.



Photos: Rand Jack

Left: Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt and Joey Herbest begin the assembly of the bridge platform.

Right: The former bridge.





photo: Eric Carabba

*Don Jensen and County Executive Pete Kremen walk the recently-completed trail after the opening ceremonies.*

# Jensen Family Forest Park Opens

On October 20th, friends, family and neighbors gathered at the corner of Birch Bay-Lynden and Stein Roads to celebrate the opening of the Jensen Family Forest Park. County Executive Pete Kremen expressed the gratitude of all the citizens of Whatcom County to Don and Judith Jensen for their extraordinary generosity in making this beautiful 22 acres of mature Douglas-fir trees available as a county park.

With the sun streaming through the treetops, guests walked in the woods after the ceremony on an enchanting trail built by Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt. Whatcom Land Trust facilitated the transaction and holds a perpetual conservation easement protecting the 22-acre forest. 🌲



photo: Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt

*Whatcom Land Trust boardmember Rand Jack addresses the crowd attending the opening of the Jensen Family Forest Park.*

# What is going on Out On the Land?

Eric Carabba

*Whatcom Land Trust volunteers have participated in six Work Parties during this past fall.*

## Hegg Memorial

At the end of September **Bakerview Starbucks** employees teamed up with land trust volunteers to remove blackberries and holly along Lake Whatcom at Hegg Memorial.

## South Fork Chinook Roos

In early October, **Troop 7 Boy Scouts** completed the removal of barbwire from the South Fork Chinook Roos property just in time for the wintering elk to be able to move more freely into the 20-acre field on the property. This property is highly used by elk, as evidenced by trails throughout the property.

There is a significant invasion of the butterfly bush along South Fork. This tenacious sweet-scented purple flowering plant will take some serious work to keep in check. Last summer, a dedicated volunteer steward, **John Bremer**, diligently cut back hundreds of plants on Whatcom Land Trust's Port Blakely property. On October 21st, students from **Western Washington University's Accounting Society** assembled to pull the roots of the butterfly bushes and pick up litter.

## Overby Farmstead

On October 28, **REI** and **Starbucks** joined with **Boy Scouts**, **Campfire Girls** and other **Whatcom Land Trust volunteers** for "Make a Difference Day" sponsored by the Whatcom Volunteer Center. Over 40 volunteers met at Whatcom County Parks to remove a nasty patch of scotch broom growing amid the orchards



and fields at the old Overby Farmstead. The Overby property is one of three farmsteads that comprise Whatcom County's 603-acre South Fork County Park. Because there was such a great turn out of volunteers for Make a Difference Day, a group of 12 went to Hegg Memorial to complete that job as well.

## Innis Creek

During the first week of November, **Whatcom Land Trust volunteers** and **students from Western** joined forces with Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group to plant over 500 trees at our Innis Creek property. Innis Creek is a 50-acre property dominated by wetlands where Innis Creek joins the Samish River. Hawks, herons and owls are often seen hunting throughout this important salmon habitat.

## Racehorse Creek

Whatcom Land Trust had its final work party of the year with **Wellspring High School** picking up garbage at our 395-acre Racehorse Creek property along the North Fork of the Nooksack River.

Thank you to all the volunteers who have worked hard to take care of Whatcom Land Trust protected properties this fall. Invasive species and public misuse are the two primary challenges faced on our conservation properties. Whatcom Land Trust volunteer stewards have been instrumental in keeping an eye on and caring for our properties. If you would like to become a volunteer Land Steward or participate in work parties, please contact Eric for more information at 650-9470 or [eric@whatcomlandtrust.org](mailto:eric@whatcomlandtrust.org).

***We are planning spring work parties now! Call now to get your group Out On the Land!***

photo: Eric Carabba

*Left: Volunteers from REI and Starbucks remove scotch-broom at the Overby Farmstead on Make a Difference Day.*



## Water Resources Consulting, LLC

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(360) 734-1445



# Upcoming Tours

The fall tours have been quite varied and well attended. From the photography tour at Canyon Lake Community Forest to the Heron tour at the BP conservation easement to the painting session at Nessel Farm, the enthusiasm has been high. We have four tours ahead. We hope you'll join us!

**For more information and to register, call Whatcom Land Trust at 650-9470. Free to WLT members. Suggested \$5 to \$10 donation for non-members is requested.**

photo: Connie Clement

Left: Geologist Bernie Dougan engages high school students during a Stimpson Family Nature Reserve tour.

## Whatcom Land Trust's Chum and Coho Salmon Tour

Saturday, December 2

10 am – 1pm

Leader: Doug Huddle, Outdoors Writer

Limit: 12

Discover winter Chum & Coho on this trip along some of WLT's Nooksack River properties with fish surveyor Doug Huddle. See the salmon as they make their spawning trip up the river and learn about their tendencies and challenges from this experienced outdoorsman.

## Whatcom Land Trust's New Year's Bald Eagle Tour

Monday, January 1

10am – 1pm

Leader: Doug Huddle, Outdoors Writer

Limit: 15

Celebrate the New Year with magnificent Bald Eagles! This New Year's Day tour will visit a popular eagle fishing site protected by Whatcom Land Trust. Learn about the local recovery of this endangered species and of the current threats to its food source. See local places where eagles like to roost and watch the birds in action!

## New Tour of Geology at Stimpson Family Nature Reserve

Saturday, Feb. 24

10am – 1:00pm

Leader: Bernie Dougan, WCC Geology Instructor

Limit: 15

Join geologist Bernie Dougan for a look at the natural treasures that indicate the former life of Stimpson Family Nature Reserve. Bernie has a lot of enthusiasm for geology and feels the new trail at Stimpson exposes many interesting characteristics. Come join him on this 2-mile exploration.

## Wetlands of Whatcom County

Saturday, March 24

10am – 1:00pm

Leader: Oliver Grah, Whatcom County Planner and Wetland Expert

Limit: 15

Discover the fascinating world of wetlands of Whatcom County! Learn the role wetlands play and the conditions that impact them. Oliver Grah is an engaging teacher who leaves his students marveling at the muck under their feet. Call the office to register. 650-9470

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# Park Planned for Fenton Property

continued from front page

will provide for family financial needs. The desire shared by Ray and Whatcom Land Trust to protect environmental amenities of the property is also met.

Eventually the Fenton property will help answer a need for more parkland in northwest Whatcom County. Betty, Ray's wife, has Alzheimer's disease. When Ray told Betty that their property was going to be protected and would someday become a park bearing their name, she perked up in her wheelchair and, for the first time in a long while, smiled. 🍂



photo: Eric Carabba

Above: The protection of this sensitive wetland gives habitat and refuge to multiple species while providing clean water for the salmon and steelhead running in Haynie Creek.



photo: Eric Carabba

Rain falls softly on the 10-acre pond at the Fenton Family Nature Reserve.



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# New Incarnation of *Whatcom Places* Coming

Bob Keller

Statistically, about one in every five Whatcom County homes has a copy of *Whatcom Places*. This is not exact because some of the original 10,000 copies lie scattered around the world. Wherever copies have landed, our 1997 book has now fallen out of print. But—"pres-to!"—by the time you are reading this, thanks to the dedication of many talented volunteer writers, workers and photographers, *Whatcom Places* will be back.

You will find *Whatcom Places II* at once the same book and a different book. Certain chapters (Lynden, Seashore, Foothills and Mountains) remain virtually unchanged while others have been updated. An entirely new essay appears on stewardship. The book's original purposes did not change: to increase awareness and appreciation for the land where we live and to reenforce a sense of place in all of us. To achieve these continuing goals, new features include:

- a foreword by William Dietrich;
- higher quality photo reproduction;
- a glossary of Whatcom place-names;
- greater recycled paper content;
- a fold-out map of the entire county;
- twelve new stewardship interviews.

Although 42% longer than the 1st edition, *Whatcom Places II* comes with only a slight price increase (or, allowing for inflation, no increase). The cost remains low because over forty individuals and businesses have contributed funds. WLT supporters donated all photos and writing.



photo: Brett Baunton

The cover of *Whatcom Places II* features this scene of rural Whatcom County.

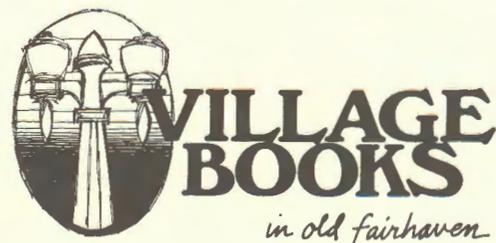
Since the summer of 2005 a committee of eight individuals worked hard to edit and improve this best-selling, award-winning book: Brett Baunton, Rod Burton, Dean Kahn, Ginger Oppenheimer, Chuck Robinson, Connie Shannon, Helen Scholtz and Scott Wheeler. To them, Whatcom Land Trust expresses its sincere thanks. 🍷

## Attend a Celebration of *Whatcom Places II*

Wednesday, Dec. 6th 7:30 p.m.

At Village Books in Fairhaven

slide show and reading by new contributors  
followed by discussion



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**Whatcom Land Trust • By the Numbers**

Land protected through the efforts or assistance of Whatcom Land Trust:

**Total Acres ..... 8,132**

**Miles of Riverfront ..... 14**

**Public Parks Created ..... 12**

*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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