

The



Newsletter of Whatcom Land Trust  
Whatcom County, Washington

# Steward

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

Volume 19 Number 2

Summer 2010

## The Schornbush Forest A Whatcom County Legacy

On June 25th, Whatcom Land Trust purchased the 85-acre Schornbush Road Forest, located in the South Fork Valley east of Highway 9 adjacent to public land on the Van Zandt Dyke. With 340,000 dollars donated by WLT supporters, we bought the property to help protect the natural heritage of Whatcom County. This is a rare 4-star conservation project.

First, the land is covered by a forest diverse in species, age, and structure, as befits a mature, healthy Northwest forest. There are vine and big leaf maples, cottonwoods, alders, spruce, and Douglas fir. However, red cedar predominates with many over 5 feet in diameter. A verdant native understory carpets the ground beneath the canopy. According to Land Trust Conservation Director Eric Carabba, "This forest is already in the shape we usually hope for in our properties after many years of stewardship."

Second, the land provides a variety of habitats: forests and forested wetlands, hills, streams, and gullies. In the spring, the wetlands turn yellow with skunk cabbage adorned in shiny green leaves, filling the air with a pungent, sweet odor.

Third, as a result of the diverse forest and habitat, the Schornbush Forest and surrounding lands abound in an incredible array of wild animals, reported



photo: Eric Carabba

*Moss-covered trees and sword ferns provide excellent habitat for a variety of animals.*

with the help of local animal stewards Judy and Scott Davis. Black bear, cougar, coyote, bobcat, elk, deer, beaver, Douglas squirrel, raccoon, possum, weasel, chipmunks, bushy tailed wood rats, bats, mink, porcupine, skunk, blue herons, band tailed pigeons, numerous species of woodpeckers, song birds and water fowl, many kinds of raptors and owls, and a wolverine. Yes, a wolverine, apparently visiting from eastern Washington.

On adjoining state land live many of the above and a peregrine falcon family and marbled murrelets.

The fourth star is awarded for community involvement. All land trusts dream of an acquisition that precipitates conservation commitments by surrounding neighbors. That dream has come true with the Schornbush Forest purchase. Neighbors have coalesced around this project; three have ...continued on page four

# President's Message

Dear Friend of the Whatcom Land Trust,

In the past I have written about the importance of our many volunteers, supporters and partners in successfully pursuing the Trust's mission to preserve and protect wildlife habitat as well as scenic, agricultural, and open space lands in Whatcom County. While we could accomplish little without this important backing, the great work and achievements completed by our staff and volunteer board members is equally vital. The Land Trust has a long history of great staff and board members, and I am pleased to share with you some of the changes taking place this summer.

Gordon Scott has been Whatcom Land Trust Conservation Director and Conservation Specialist for the last 11 years (and Board President before that), and Gordon is now doing special projects as an independent contractor for the Trust. We are extremely grateful for all he has done for the Land Trust for so many years and in so many capacities. We would not be what we are today without his expertise and devoted work. Gordon's past work with the Trust leaves a huge legacy of conservation, community relations, and land preservation that includes Canyon Lake Community Forest, Race Horse Creek, Lily Point, Deming Eagle Park, Ladies of the Lake, Fenton, Point Whitehorn, and thousands of acres of salmon habitat on the Nooksack River and many more across the County.

Laura Wallace, the Trust's first ever AmeriCorps volunteer, is completing her work as Volunteer Coordinator for the past year. Laura was very helpful in planning, recruiting and executing our weekday, weekend, and in-house work parties. Laura also assisted with this year's Great Outdoors Auction. Laura's position was so successful that we have already applied for a second AmeriCorps volunteer. Our best wishes go with Laura; we expect she will be excellent in whatever career she chooses.

We also want to extend our thanks and best wishes to Stephanie Johnson, our Whatcom Community College intern. Stephanie has assisted the office staff with clerical work and with the auction.

And we want to welcome three new members to our Board

of Directors: Jayme Curley, Alan Fritzberg, and Carl Prince. Jayme is a long-time committee and auction volunteer with the Trust; she brings a passion for the outdoors and "connectedness" to the Whatcom community. Alan brings both scientific and nonprofit expertise to our board, with volunteer experience with the San Juan Preservation Trust and the SeaDoc Society. Alan is the land steward for the Whatcom Land Trust's Pratum and Hogan properties. Carl Prince is also a long-time volunteer with the Trust, including our auction committee. Carl brings outdoor recreation and nonprofit experience.

Please join us in welcoming our new board members and wishing our staff the best in everything that they do.

Sincerely,



Rich Bowers, President

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## 2010 Jr. Stewards Program Underway!

If you haven't yet picked up your Jr. Stewards booklet, there's still time. The free, self-paced, environmental education program for kids and their families continues through August 27th. The program consists of a booklet with activities to do at 3 specific Whatcom County locations. Then, there are activities for you to do at a location of your choice. At the end of the summer, turn in the Reflect & Respond sheet to be entered into a drawing for cool prizes like a Carson Adventure Pak (includes binoculars, compass, flashlight, whistle, and thermometer), field guides, and the Grand Prize: a private-party hike with amphibian experts Peter and Maureen Ryan!

To get your booklet, call (650-9470) or visit Whatcom Land Trust's office (near the downtown library) at 110 Central Ave., Bellingham, WA, or download it off our website: [www.whatcomlandtrust.org](http://www.whatcomlandtrust.org).

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Volume 19, No. 2 - Summer, 2010  
The Steward published quarterly by  
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# Tribute to Long-time WLT Board Member: Cindy Klein

When I first got into Cindy Klein's car and noticed the Barbie doll and the shark on the dashboard, I knew it was going to be an interesting ride. As we carpooled off to my first Whatcom Land Trust board meeting, little did I know that I was in the company of one amazingly talented birder and a creative force extraordinaire.

Cindy's talents have been drawn on heartily at the Whatcom Land Trust over her 10 years as a board member. She is equally talented in creating delectable treats and leading amazing volunteer teams. As the chair of the Whatcom Land Trust Auction Committee, for 2010 and many years prior, Cindy cultivated an esprit de corps that has the place sparkling by event start time. You would have to participate in the committee creative brainstorming sessions or show up at 12:00 pm on auction day to witness the creative firestorm that unleashes on the hall each year to build dioramas bringing

out the beauty of our donors' gifts and the best of our bidders.

In addition to throwing one hell of a party, Cindy also works on quieter fronts in our community. Some weeks you might find her serving meals at the Maple Alley Inn or calling a Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife employee to see if something might be done about swan deaths via power lines in her neighborhood. If Cindy sees something that might need doing, she is likely to step up and do it or support and encourage others in the task.

As chair of the Whatcom Land Trust Board of Directors, Cindy invited and helped many of our volunteers take a more active role in the Whatcom Land Trust. Her quiet and creative leadership assisted our board in contemplating new ideas and seizing important opportunities. We appreciate the long-standing, generous financial contributions Cindy and her husband Bob Klein have provided



the Whatcom Land Trust over the years. Their sustaining support has played a significant role in protecting 10,000 acres of special places across Whatcom County and maintaining a vital organization.

With Cindy stepping down from the Whatcom Land Trust board, it seems she will have more time to help Bob in the garden growing and processing crops for rural food banks, to kayak, or bird watch in Whatcom County's forest, marshes, and beaches while keeping a keen eye out for the many species who migrate through our area. And if Cindy calls you to come see the baby owls in her barn in the spring, don't snooze on the offer, like I did. She is so tuned in (via remote camera) that she's ready for the one week peek she has into the nest before the tree foliage blocks the view. Now there's some creativity, patience, and planning.

Mary Dumas


## Whatcom Land Trust • By the Numbers




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

Total Acres .....	10,660
Miles of Riverfront .....	22.5
Miles of Salt Water Shoreline .....	7.5
Public Parks Created .....	13

*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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# Tales From the Schornbush Forest by Judy Davis

## A Rare Encounter

The dogs and I were meandering along our usual trail when all of them stiffened, turned their gaze to the hill above us and sprinted off in that direction. I could see glimpses of a dark brown animal racing through the dense underbrush ahead of them. It was crying with a strange catlike sound as it ran. Suddenly there was a deep,

throaty growl from above the hill; another animal coming to the aid of the first. The dogs spun around and raced down the hill. The new and larger animal moved at lightning speed in hot pursuit. The dogs broke clear of the woods and entered an open field where their pursuer stopped at the edge at the tree line. I could see it clearly

as it turned and glanced in my direction. It was a wolverine, dark brown with what appeared to be faded lines down its back. It turned and headed back up the hill as I caught a final glimpse of its bushy tail. To this day, our dogs avoid that hillside and no amount of coaxing has ever changed their minds!

## Schornbush Forest, continued

committed to placing conservation easements on their property and hopefully others will follow. In addition to a conservation easement, Glen and Radha Speer have generously donated \$100,000 to support the acquisition. Together with the Jack Family conservation easement donated in 1996, this will conserve 175 contiguous acres of exceptional forest and wildlife habitat. Whatcom Land Trust is deeply grateful to the Speers and other neighbors who share our commitments and have supported this special project.

The Land Trust would like to pay special tribute to Bart and Kathie Clendenen, who cared for this land with gentle, loving hands for 32 years. Bart is a devoted member of the Whatcom County Farm Forestry

Association, removing his Farm Forestry cap only when cold weather demanded warmer head gear.

For years the Clendenens kept a giant black and white Percheron named Star. When neighbor children came to feed him apples or carrots or sometimes just grass growing beyond his reach, Star came thundering across the pasture. When Star thundered, the ground shook.

The Land Trust was fortunate to be able to purchase the legacy of the Clendenens' stewardship of this beautiful and bountiful land. The neighbors will miss Bart and Kathie, and Star too. Now Whatcom Land Trust will carry on their land ethic at the end of Schornbush Road.

## Friends of a Different Kind

Two years ago our three dogs crossed paths with two coyote pups around five months old while strolling along a creek in the woods behind our house. Somehow, the dogs had surrounded the pups, who were whining and yipping in fear. We watched as our golden retriever stepped forward and nudged and then licked one of the pups who cowered under him. Within minutes the pups and dogs were mingling but then Mom showed up. She gave out a few short barks and the pups scurried up to her. Weeks followed and every now and then the pups would appear and briefly play with the dogs as long as we stayed well away from them. They have maintained this friendship since then, still playing together whenever they meet.



photo: Rod Burton

Dr. Robert Pyle (r) discusses plants needed for butterfly habitat with George Dalen as WLT board member Rebecca Reich and Land Steward Seeve Walker take notes.

## Developing Butterfly Habitat

Renowned lepidopterist Robert Michael Pyle visited two Whatcom Land Trust preserves this past spring to provide an assessment of current butterfly habitat and potential for enhancement projects. Dr. Pyle, author of *The Butterflies of Cascadia*, was in Bellingham to present the keynote address at the conference of the Northwest Chapter of the Society of Wetland Scientists. He joined a gathering of Whatcom Land Trust board and staff members along with selected naturalists to tour WLT's Leaf Light Farm and Ruth Kelsey Nature Sanctuary. The cool, late April weather prevented butterfly sightings, but Dr. Pyle noted the variety of existing habitat to support a myriad of native species. Particularly at Leaf Light Farm, where George Dalen maintains extensive gardens and natural areas, the landscape provides a diverse environment for butterflies. Mr. Dalen, who donated Leaf Light Farm to the Land Trust in 2005 and still resides there under the terms of a life-estate, responded positively to Dr. Pyle's request to allow colleagues from Western Washington University and their students to return to the farm to monitor butterfly presence in future years.

# California Creek Habitat Acquired

Whatcom Land Trust has acquired 41 acres of forests and wetlands along California Creek near Custer for \$170,000. Purchased with donations from supporters of the Land Trust, the acquisition protects fish and wildlife habitat along 1,800 feet of California Creek. The Creek, together with tributary streams, connects to a large wetland and provides fine habitat for Coho salmon, winter steelhead, and cutthroat trout. The property is also home to a variety of song birds, waterfowl, small mammals, and a chorus of frogs. Beavers are active throughout the wetlands.

California Creek is one of two primary freshwater streams flowing into Drayton Harbor. California Creek's water quality is essential to the ecological health of Drayton Harbor. For example, sensitive eel grass in Drayton Harbor depends on the clean water of California Creek. Herring, an essential part of the Salmon food web, spawn in this eel grass. The cool, clear water flowing down California Creek is also essential to Drayton Harbor's historically important shell fish farming. Finally, the National Audubon Society has designated Drayton Harbor an Important Bird Area because of the tens of thousands of shorebirds and waterfowl that flock there every winter.

Whatcom Land Trust will manage the young forests on the site to create a mature, structurally diverse wetland habitat. "We see this as a long-term restoration project, where we will nurture the



photo: Eric Carabba

California Creek meanders on its way to Drayton Harbor.

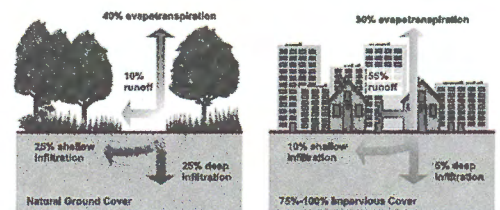
land over time into a lowland, evergreen old growth forested wetland," said the Land Trust's Conservation Director, Eric Carabba. Salmon and multiple other species of wildlife will be the beneficiaries.

## Forests Vital to Lake Whatcom Watershed

There is nothing like a mature mixed-forest canopy to absorb rainfall, also called "stormwater." When stormwater hits natural ground cover in the 45-acre Geneva Preserve, around 10 percent ends up as runoff that enters the Lake Whatcom reservoir. In contrast, in parts of the watershed with impervious cover, more than 3/4 of the stormwater can end up as runoff that needs to be treated. Stormwater is of concern because of the volume and timing and the potential contaminants that the runoff can carry to surface waters. After decades of monitoring, scientists have demonstrated that the Lake Whatcom Reservoir is an impaired body of water due to lack of dissolved oxygen. This condition is caused by nutrient loading, primarily from phosphorus. Additionally, most of Lake Whatcom's tributaries are classified as impaired because they fail to meet Washington state water quality standards for fecal coliform bacteria.

Protecting quality forestland in the Lake Whatcom watershed through land protection is the first and most basic step in a multi-barrier approach to ensuring clean water for fish, wildlife, and people. The Lake Whatcom reservoir is an important resource to the people of Whatcom County since it provides the clean drinking water to 95,000 residents. Of course, the water is treated, but it costs less to treat water that is less contaminated.

In 2001 the City of Bellingham began a program to purchase available land in the Lake Whatcom watershed. The City's Property Acquisition program is financed by water usage fees for the purpose of protecting the drinking water source. In order to make the best use of available funds for property purchase, the City has employed a strategy of first obtaining large parcels with the most development potential. In addition, for efficiency and effectiveness,



graphic courtesy of wiki commons and EPA

the City considers properties that are adjacent to already protected lands or very sensitive areas.

In order to ensure long-term protection of these strategic investments, the City of Bellingham and Whatcom Land Trust are partners for the perpetual protection of these water quality preserves. Over the past decade, the City has acquired several properties forming preserves on more than 1309 acres.

The recently created Geneva Preserve Conservation Easement will forever protect 45 acres of high-quality forestland next to more than 400 acres of ...continued on page seven

# Great Outdoors Auction was Great Fun

The 10th annual Great Outdoors Auction was held May 8 at the Lakeway Inn Crystal Ballroom. Over 275 enthusiastic supporters of the Land Trust gathered to bid against each other and enjoy a fun filled evening of good friends, fine food, and local brews. Guests had many choices to make among the decorated silent auction tables. Outdoor gear, weekend getaways, balloons bursting with gift certificates, art and crafts pieces, garden plants and products, local food baskets, and much more resulted in competitive bidding taking place throughout the hall. The tables of desserts, a cornucopia of chocolate concoctions, cheesecakes, tortes, and tarts caused many of the guests to stop, linger, and admire the handiwork of our local dessert artisans.

Following a welcoming greeting by Board President Rich Bowers, Master of Ceremonies Chuck Robinson and Auctioneer Manca Valum got the live auction underway with a spirited search for the winner of the Best of Live raffle. The lucky ticket holder, Maureen O'Brien, took

little time in selecting the gorgeous hand-carved black walnut puffin. The choices in the live auction highlighted unique dining experiences, exquisite pieces of fine art and hand-built furniture. Keeping the great outdoor theme in mind, there were several opportunities to get out and enjoy

our little slice of paradise. Popular bid items ranged from local hikes, climbing lessons, an evening with bats, to a bike and a kayak. Energetic and competitive bidding kept all the attendees in high spirits. The evening came to an end with the auctioning of a place to rest one's weary head—a green burial site donated by Moles Family Funeral Home.

We are privileged to receive the support of many local businesses that make the Great Outdoor Auction possible by their donations of goods and services. All items in the auction are donated. Please take a moment to thank those that support the work of the Land Trust in this fashion. Special thanks are extended to our auction sponsors who underwrite the expense of the event: **Pacific Surveying & Engineering, Whatcom Educational Credit Union, ConocoPhillips, Boundary Bay Brewing Company, Lithtex Northwest, Village Books, Puget Sound Energy, and the Lakeway Inn.** Additionally, we wish to recognize the assistance we receive from **Whatcom Sound and Glacier Lily Design.**

We are truly grateful for all of the volunteers who help make this fun event possible. The work of decorating the ballroom begins early in the morning,



photo: John Richardson

*The winning table of this year's dessert auction celebrates getting first pick from the many amazing sweet creations*

and it is simply remarkable to see the enthusiasm of the volunteers as they transform the hall into a bazaar of great deals, and exceptional opportunities. Special thanks needs to be expressed to those who toil away in the backroom plugging in the numbers, tracking the items, and keeping the business of the auction running smoothly. Additional volunteers help with setup, data entry, cleanup and all the countless little tasks that go into making the auction a success.

This year's auction yielded over \$85,000 in support of land conservation in Whatcom County. The highlight of the auction is the opportunity to provide direct financial support to a project the Trust has underway; this year nearly \$15,000 was raised during Restore An Acre for the restoration of wetlands in our Samish River complex of reserves.

The Great Outdoors Auction would not be the fun and profitable event it is without the work of the planning committee. Former board president Cindy Klein chaired the committee and was ably assisted by auction coordinator Renée Roberts, while Carol Rondello led the planning for the dessert auction. Committee members included Barbara Brandt, Cynthia Millar, Laurie Heck, Kerri Love,

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Catharine O'Keefe, Gwen Parker, Joanne Taylerson, Carl Prince, Kathie Tupper, Nancy Hart, and Jean Calhoun. Planning begins early in the year, and the committee worked extremely hard to secure items and adventures to be auctioned off. Board members Rod Burton, Margo Gillaspay, Bob Keller, and Rebecca Reich all served on the committee and devoted numerous hours to ensure that the event was a success. Staff members Connie Clement, Kelly Pederson, and Laura Wallace were instrumental in providing assistance to the committee in preparation for the event and handling the numerous issues that arise after the event.

The greatest factor in the continued growth and success of the auction has been the work of Renea Roberts who has served as Auction Coordinator for the last six auctions. Renea has chosen to move on to other challenges but will continue to promote the mission of the Land Trust. We wish to extend our best wishes for Renea's continued success and express our deep gratitude for her incomparable work on behalf of the organization!

## BrewHaHa Coming

Mark your calendar for the next edition of BrewHaHa. This year the annual fall event will be in the garden at Boundary Bay on Saturday, October 2nd. Plan on laughs, music, good food, and a chance to enjoy a special beer brewed just for the occasion. Come out and support the stewardship of the 10,000 plus acres the Land Trust has preserved. If you wish to participate in planning or help the day of

the event, please contact Jerry at 650-9470 or [jerry@whatcomlandtrust.org](mailto:jerry@whatcomlandtrust.org)

## New Phone System Needed

We are on the lookout for a donated phone system. Our old office phone system is becoming more and more difficult to work with. Failures with the system occur regularly and parts are both scarce and costly. If your business or employer has a phone system designed for small businesses that is not in use or is being replaced and could be donated, please give us a call. We need a fairly simple system with a selection of phones, conference phone, voice mail, and standard four line capability. Please call us at 650-9470!

## Watershed, cont.

already preserved land, and the site eliminates 37 potential development rights from this watershed. This site includes several properties that were acquired by the City of Bellingham between 2001 through 2003 totaling a \$1,055,000 investment.

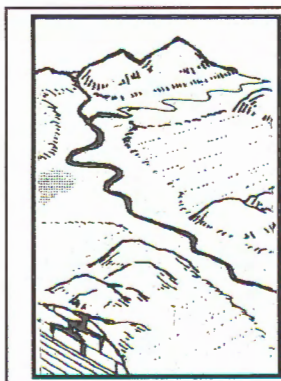
WLT now holds nine conservation easements and owns some 1450 acres in the Lake Whatcom watershed.

You can help by donating, selling, or placing a conservation easement on your watershed property. For more information please contact the City of Bellingham's Public Works Department at (360) 778-7900 or call Whatcom Land Trust at (360) 650-9470.

## Successful Spring Work Parties

In the month of April, Whatcom Land Trust hosted two work parties, both celebrating Earth Day 2010. The first was on Earth Day itself, April 22nd, when the Trust partnered with REI to remove English ivy at Chuckanut Ridge wetlands. Volunteers did a fantastic job, filling 30 garbage bags with the invasive plant. It took three pickup trucks piled high to haul the debris to the City of Bellingham's Clean Green Transfer Station. WLT provided tools & gloves. REI provided refreshments, REI "Get Dirty" t-shirts, and water bottles to those who rode bikes to the event. The second work party was on April 24th with The Explorers' Club, an experiential environmental education club based in Bellingham for school-aged boys and girls. Sixteen middle school girls planted native shrubs at Ruth Kelsey Nature Sanctuary, including beaked filberts, Indian plum, and red Osier dogwood. These hardworking, enthusiastic young women established over 100 plantings in a single morning. Great job, everyone!

In June, two work parties were completed. The first, on the 12th, was held on North Fork Island adjacent to WLT's Bell Creek property. WLT partnered with Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association to bring the Japanese knotweed infestation on the property under control. The Explorers' Club joined us once again, as did WLT volunteer Michael Deitering, for some knotweed stompin' fun! The sun came out just for us it seemed, making it a perfect day for a work party.



### Water Resources Consulting, LLC

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# Mountain Goat Viewing Trip

**Date: Saturday, July 17, 8am - 2pm**

(Time may change to afternoon/evening if temperatures are running too high)

**Leader: Doug Huddle**

**Limit: 15**

Observe mountain goats heading to high country on Barometer Mountain, Lasiocarpa Ridge, and Chowder Ridge. Tour will include strenuous, 1/2 mile hike each way. Contingent on weather, this hike offers chances to see mountain goats, golden eagles, pikas, nesting raptors, and neo-tropical birds. Call WLT to register.

Gear to bring: Ten Essentials Day Pack suggested. Good hiking boots, layered clothing, rain gear, sack lunch, water, binoculars, spotting scopes, cameras with lenses, sunglasses, and bug repellent strongly encouraged.

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