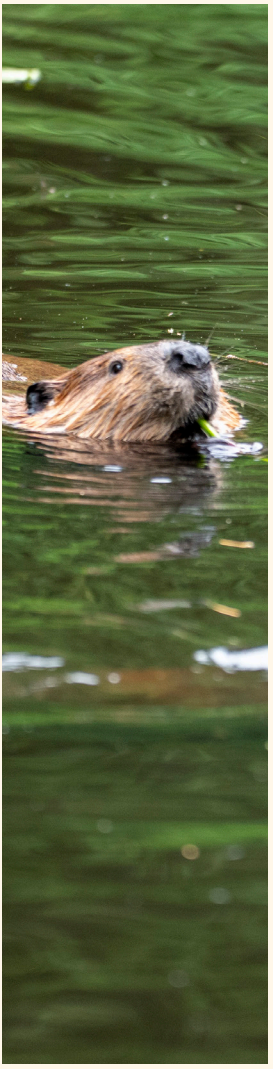
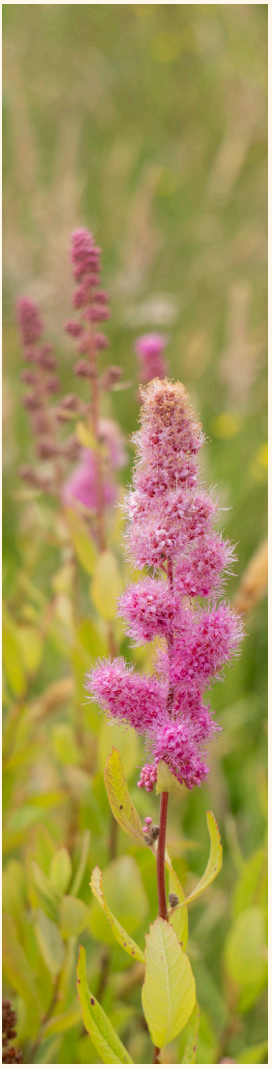
FALL 2026 ZINE

THE STEWARD

SEASONS OF RESILIENCE



WHATCOM LAND TRUST
EST. 1984

CARE KEEPS GROWING

CONSERVED HABITAT ALONG TENMILE CREEK

Ed Stone and Michelle Schraeder, local conservationists and owners of Mountain Veterinary Hospital, have spent nearly 40 years purchasing and restoring land off Everson–Goshen Road. They've stewarded the land every day of the year, rain or shine, gradually creating a wildlife haven. Every turn of the trail they created is filled with wetlands, old forests, restored meadows, meandering streams, hidden springs, and abundant birdlife.

They've also protected the land forever through a conservation easement with Whatcom Land Trust (a legal agreement protecting the land's conservation values). This year, they added almost seven acres of forest to the conservation easement, widening the buffer along Tenmile Creek and preventing development. Now, 82 acres (roughly the same size as Bellingham's Cornwall Park) and half a mile of the creek are protected.

In 1987, Tenmile Creek barely looked like a creek. It was a straight, dredged ditch choked with reed canarygrass, and it ran dry every summer. Through restoration work with Whatcom Conservation District and Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association, they fed more cold water into the creek and created conditions for salmon to return. Ed figured that would take a hundred years. Instead, salmon came back within two decades as the pieces fell into place: water flowing year-round, thousands of planted trees now shading the channel, a fish-friendly bridge, and cold-water springs. In the open pastures, newer plantings of cedar and aspen are providing deer, coyotes, and birds a mix of meadow and forest edge habitat so they can thrive.



Landowner Ed Stone visits with Whatcom Land Trust Conservation Easement Coordinator Tyler Yung

CIRCLE OF LIFE TERRAMATION



The terramated remains of Linda Sue Darks were placed in circles around new tree plantings this spring. The soil produced through terramation can be used to support ecological restoration on protected lands.

For the last two years, Whatcom Land Trust has been exploring a partnership with Wildflower Funeral Concepts to bring donated composted remains to Land Trust-protected sites. Terramation is an indoor, above-ground process that transforms a person's remains into nutrient-rich composted soil over roughly 60-90 days using a mix of straw, alfalfa, and sawdust. The resulting 300-500 pounds of compost can be used as the family sees fit, and many have expressed interest in contributing this compost to support ecological restoration sites. Placing terramated remains on Land Trust-protected sites will create an opportunity for people who care for the land to continue nourishing it after they die.

The nutrient-dense compost can be added to plantings or spread on restoration sites. This partnership lets the Land Trust offer meaningful after-life placement options for community members who want their remains to directly support conservation work. If you're interested in joining this program, please contact brian@wildflowerfuneralconcepts.com. If you would like to make arrangements with another funeral home, call or email the Land Trust!





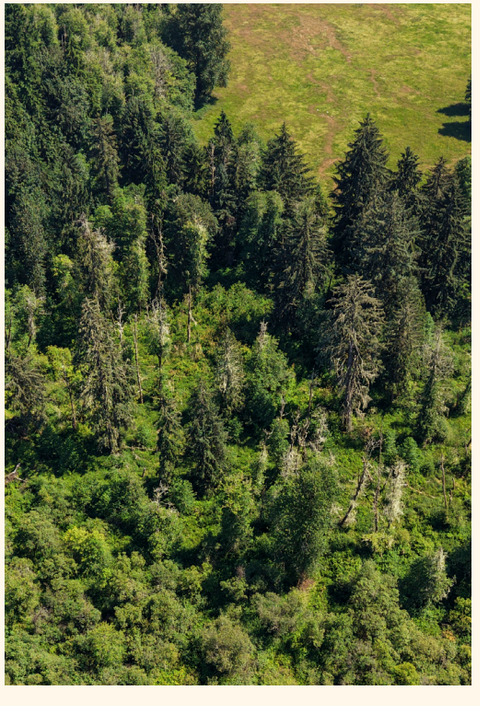
Terramated remains being moved by staff to support new tree plantings at Lower Kenney Creek.



WETLANDS 4EVER

Wetlands filter pollutants out of the water before reaching our rivers. They act like sponges, soaking up floodwater in the winter and slowly releasing it back during the dry summer months. They're nurseries for salmon, rest stops for migrating birds, buffers for sea-level rise, and some of the richest habitat in Whatcom County, supporting overall health for humans and wildlife alike.

This year we protected two new wetland areas that support nearly 80 acres of wetlands, forest, and salmon habitat. Franz Wetland will support clean water in the South Fork Nooksack River, and Haynie Creek will provide fresh water to Dakota Creek all the way down to Drayton Harbor. Over the next several years, we will provide hands-on stewardship care, including habitat restoration and monitoring, to help these lands reach their full potential.



FRANZ WETLAND
LAND TRUST OWNED

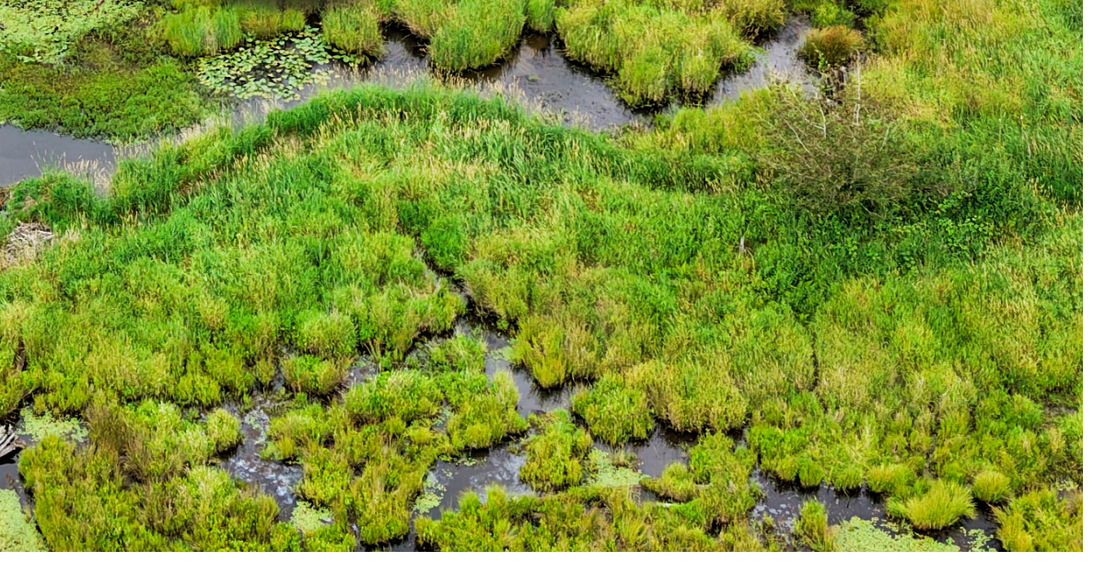
This forested wetland property near Hutchinson Creek is home to mature Douglas fir and Sitka spruce, and provides habitat for waterfowl, beaver, and elk. It connects to Craver Reserve, expanding a protected corridor along the South Fork Nooksack. Once the existing homesite has been moved, we'll replant the area and expand the wetland buffer to support wildlife habitat.





HAYNIE CREEK
CONSERVATION EASEMENT

This wetland sits at the headwaters of Haynie Creek, a stream that's been part of a coho salmon habitat improvement program for nearly two decades. The new conservation easement will prevent future development and permanently protect the wetlands.



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The Steward is back in a compact, sustainable & fun format, called a "zine," short for magazine. Call us to request a copy of our annual full-size Impact Report Magazine!

A SUMMER OF STEWARDSHIP



To date, we've conserved 28,700 acres of land, including more than 8,300 acres we manage directly. This summer, 3 seasonal stewardship technicians had their boots on the ground across Whatcom County. Thanks Josh, Heidi, & Pauline for removing invasive species and doing much-needed restoration, making room for native trees and shrubs to grow. Make your gift today to restore & steward the land you love!

Visit whatcomlandtrust.org