Thank you to hundreds of Whatcom County citizens for sharing your vision of a healthy, prosperous community by participating in the Conservation Plan Update. This process honed our conservation strategy encompassing six broad conservation values across seven geographical focal areas as illustrated on the map (right) and charts (below). Your conservation values and public input will guide our mission, giving our diverse neighbors a strong voice in protecting our lands and natural resources, and help us connect more people like you to the forests, parks, agricultural lands, rivers and shorelines that you love.

Our Community has Spoken

And We Are Listening

For future conservation projects, how would you prioritize the following focal areas?

1. Lake Whatcom Watershed
2. Coastal Shorelines
3. Whatcom Agricultural Core
4. North and Middle Forks of the Nooksack River
5. Chuckanut Mountain
6. South Fork Nooksack River Valley
7. Upper South Fork Nooksack River

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In your opinion, what are the top conservation priorities for the future?

- Water Quality and Quantity
- Wildlife Habitat
- Farmland
- Forests
- Coastal Shorelines
- Community Open Space & Parks

For more information about the Conservation Plan Update, please visit our website at: whatcomlandtrust.org

Statement of Activities sources and uses of funds represent the fiscal year ending June 30, 2017. This financial information is excerpted from Whatcom Land Trust’s audited financial statements and includes property acquisitions and transfers completed by June 30, 2017. To obtain a copy of the complete audit by Bellingham public accounting firm Larson Gross PLLC, please contact Whatcom Land Trust at 360-650-9470.
A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Love this Land!

The last year of turmoil, particularly regarding our public lands, emphasizes the need for increased local and voluntary efforts to protect and steward the lands and natural systems that make Whatcom County so special. Voluntary, private landowner conservation is not easy. It is not uncomplicated. It requires vision, patience, friendships, and trust. Decisions on protecting private property lie with the landowner, whether family or business, and the ability to protect one’s land is the true measure of conservation.

Sometimes, landowners are just not ready or financially able to commit to permanent protections. Our work with the Stimpson Family on the Stimpson Family Nature Preserve, with the Steiner family on the Wildcat Reach property, and with the Gelling family at Maple Creek Reach are all examples of local relationships that took decades to build into successful efforts to protect land.

Whatcom Land Trust is honored to be the key local organization enabling individual landowners, concerned citizens, businesses and others to protect that heritage for future generations. We take that work very seriously. In the past year, we have:

• Achieved re-accreditation by the National Land Trust Alliance Commission. This third-party audit of our entire organization is an assurance to this community that we are doing our work with the integrity necessary to protect the land “in perpetuity.”
• Helped property owners with homes threatened by flooding on the Canyon Lake Creek Alluvial Fan.
• Worked with a private landowner and The Conservation Fund to acquire 11.5 acres at the mouth of California Creek on Drayton Harbor.
• Worked with one of our long-time conservation easement donors to expand protections under their easement on Ten Mile Creek.
• Developed an on-going loan/easement solution to assist local farmers in their purchase of 44 acres near Everson.

Our methods in each of these projects varied depending on the need. But each is a partnership that both helped the landowner achieve his or her goals while also restoring and legally protecting some of the critical natural systems that all of us depend on and love.

There is an ardent vision of hope and generosity to the larger community and future generations in our supporters’ contributions to Whatcom Land Trust. While the acquisition of land is an achievement to celebrate; it is only the first step in what will be a continuous, long devotion to stewarding that land. It is important to celebrate the many landowners, partners and volunteers who work with us to care for the 75 properties spread from Birch Bay to Saxton, and Sumas to Fairhaven.

While it is increasingly difficult to affect, or often even comprehend, policies and actions at the federal and state levels, we each have a chance to make Whatcom County different. Both of us, and the Whatcom Land Trust staff and Board of Directors, look forward to working with you to conserve, restore and protect the lands that make this a special place to live.

Chris Moench, President
Rich Bowers, Executive Director

LOOKING AHEAD

Protecting Our Special Places
Continuing a Legacy of Stewardship
Cultivating Community Partnerships

CULTIVATING A LEGACY OF PLACE

Skookum Creek

Whatcom Land Trust's primary focus and goal for 2018 is to provide permanent water quality, quantity, and salmon habitat protection for Skookum Creek. Skookum is a major tributary, cold water contributor, and the largest land conservation opportunity available for the South Fork Nooksack River. Protection of this tributary watershed is also an enduring investment in aquatic habitat as climate warms. Skookum has the potential to buffer some expected climate effects with high-elevation headwaters, healthy forests, and functional stream processes.

PROTECTING OUR SPECIAL PLACES

California Creek Drayton Harbor

Estuaries are a vital part of marine life. Here in the northwest, they are as important as rain forests and coral reefs are elsewhere as the most productive and efficient ecosystems. Whatcom Land Trust acquired 11.5 acres of the California Creek Estuary in the Drayton Harbor watershed on June 30th, 2017 and we’re excited about the many benefits it will provide to the community. In addition to the ecological benefits of restoring the property, we are partnering with the local park district to improve public access to Drayton Harbor.

The acquisition was made possible from grants, a bridge loan from the Conservation Fund, a donation from the Blaine-Birch Bay Park and Recreation District #2 and donations from Whatcom Land Trust patrons. Once the site is restored and permanently protected through a conservation easement, Whatcom Land Trust will turn over ownership and management to the Blaine-Birch Bay Park and Recreation District #2. The new park is part of a long-term park district goal to provide public shoreline access, educational and stewardship opportunities and a much-needed continuous off-road walking and cycling trail that will connect Birch Bay to the Canadian border.

This is just another example of how partnerships both public and private share a common vision of conservation, protection and accessibility to Whatcom County’s special coastal places for generations to come.

“Whatcom Land Trust’s acquisition of this property and the Park District’s management of it for the public good is a perfect partnership.”

Ted Morris – Blaine-Birch Bay Park and Recreation District 2 Director

Preserving our shorelines

By protecting and restoring our wetlands we can address a changing climate while also protecting healthy lands and waters, and improving communities and economies.
Did you know that farm production in Whatcom County ranks in the top three percent of all counties in the United States? Did you know that Whatcom County is the largest producer of red raspberries and first in the nation for milk production per cow? Indeed, central to our quality of life is protecting our farmland and agricultural heritage to ensure fresh food and a thriving farm economy.

Since 2000, Whatcom Land Trust and Whatcom County have worked together with willing landowners to protect farmlands through the Agricultural Purchase of Development Rights Program (or Ag PDR). Today 18 farms covering 905 acres of farmland in Whatcom County are protected from development through the County’s farm easement program.

In May 2017, the Land Trust and Whatcom County completed our most recent Ag PDR farm easement with Dusty Williams’ 37-acre farm, protecting the land for agricultural production in perpetuity. Dusty grows several varieties of organic grains on this property that are used to feed livestock throughout the County. Protecting farmland for current and future generations is a foundation in our shared vision for a healthy, prosperous community.

“Farming is not something one does for the money, farming is something one does for the love of it.”
- Dusty Williams, Broadleaf Farm

“The Ag PDR program is one of the pillars of farmland protection. While zoning is by far the greatest tool we have, the Ag PDR program allows us to strategically protect land vulnerable to misaligned development. Currently 115,000 acres of land in Whatcom County are farmed. Eighty-seven thousand of those acres are zoned for agriculture, the other 30,000 are in rural zoning and are at risk of conversion.”
- Chris Elder, County Planner

Protecting farmland benefits our community by providing local, fresh, healthy food and our thriving farm economy.
PROTECTING OUR SPECIAL PLACES

Lower Middle Fork Properties a win-win for everyone

The Lower Middle Fork properties on Canyon Lake Creek have several roles. The forest is vital for the subsistence of the salmon, acting as a riparian buffer that shades the creek, stabilizing the hillsides, and adding wood to create pools for the fish. These newly acquired properties are also within the historic channel migration zone of the Nooksack River’s Middle Fork. As people moved into the area in the 1960s and 70s, they built their new homes and recreational cabins in the floodplain, unknowingly placing them in the path of a deluge. In 2015 a high-water event hit the area, damaging some of the human structures while threatening others.

Whatcom County’s Public Works Department and the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife contacted the Whatcom Land Trust to aid in the search for a solution. In May and June of 2017, Whatcom Land Trust acquired funding from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board and purchased these properties. These finances helped demolish the damaged structures, assist the landowners who almost lost everything by purchasing the flood-prone area to permanently protect the riparian habitat for salmon. The Land Trust’s initial efforts will be restoration of habitat. Invasive plant species will be removed; native plants will be reinstated.

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“I am completely pleased with my interaction with the Land Trust…It took 7 minutes or less to decide to sell.”

- Don Higdon, Landowner

“We watched the land get cut away a foot an hour for two-and-a-half days. It was nerve wracking at first because we didn’t know when it was going to stop.”

- Don Higdon

Relocating to higher ground protects both land owners and Salmon Channels.
CONTINUING A LEGACY OF STEWARDSHIP

IMPACTS
Total acres protected = 20,729
Conservation easements = 80 properties totaling 6,541 acres
Land Trust owned and stewarded = 87 properties totaling 4,033 acres
Recorded Volunteer hours worked = 2,087.50
Volunteer Land Stewards = 67
Number of Volunteers = 513

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THROUGH STEWARDSHIP

Our hard working volunteers continue to improve the quality of stewardship on Whatcom Land Trust lands. In 2017, we had more than 500 smiling volunteers on many of these special places throughout Whatcom County helping to plant thousands of native trees and shrubs, remove acres of invasive plant species, improve miles of trails, share their expertise, and even advance their own knowledge. Our Volunteer Land Steward Program significantly expanded to more than 65 committed participants, helping to monitor more than 4,000 acres of land and improve habitat one piece at a time. Every volunteer left a lasting impact on the land, on the wildlife that inhabit such special places, and on all staff at Whatcom Land Trust. We continue to be inspired and amazed, to say the least, by the determination and enthusiasm of our volunteers.

The Fenton Legacy

S\n\ntuated along Haynie Creek in Custer is a 77-acre protected treasure filled with history. This piece of land is referred to as the Fenton Nature Reserve, named after Ray Fenton. Since the 1950s, Ray owned and lived on the property until he passed away in 2016. His light touch on the land is clear when you visit this property and cannot be overlooked as the trees tower over you. This land will be his permanent legacy for the wildlife that inhabit it and for future generations to discover and be inspired by it.

Ray Fenton sold this property to Whatcom Land Trust in 2006 to protect this special place. He retained a Life Estate in the northeast 5 acres to live out his remaining days. These 5 acres, with the Fenton home, will be sold with a Conservation Easement to protect the riparian corridor along Haynie Creek and the amount of development. The remaining 72 acres will continue to serve as a wildlife refuge. We request your use be limited to passive day-use and be respectful of Ray Fenton’s legacy.

Whatcom Water Weeks Tour

Initiated by Hank Kastner, one of our outstanding Volunteer Land Stewards, an educational tour to the property was held during Whatcom Water Weeks. During this visit in September of 2017, Elizabeth remined, a local wetland ecologist and educator, imparted her knowledge of wetlands and their importance to the larger ecosystem.

Work Party at Catalyst Fenton Pond

STEWARDING THE LAND

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Work Party

On March 25, 2017, volunteers gathered to further improve habitat by suppressing invasive plant species. Himalayan Blackberry was cut back from the stream bank and English Holly was removed throughout the forest.

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Galen Smith of Coldstream Farms leases the Trust’s Saxon Road, Strand Road and Catalyst to grow hay for his dairy cows. He has been farming locally for 16 years along with his family who have been part of the South Fork Nooksack Valley agricultural community for 40 years. “The South Fork is a special, unique place. The people who live here are resourceful and self-sufficient and rooted in the land,” says Smith.

Smith adds that Whatcom Land Trust is helping to balance the value of environmentally sensitive areas with the needs of agriculture in Whatcom County,” says Smith. “They show how it’s possible to increase buffers for wildlife habitat and improve water quality while keeping the rest of the land in agricultural production. That’s what we all want, right?”

CULTIVATING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Accomplishing More Together

Thank you to the diverse businesses and organizations who partner with Whatcom Land Trust to ‘Love this Land’ and strengthen community-wide conservation by connecting people with nature.

In June the third annual Conservation Alliance Backyard Collective brought an enthusiastic team of volunteers to clear invasives from Maple Creek Reach and took pleasure in seeing the remarkable growth of one of the many cedar trees, above, they had planted the year before. We honored Superfeet with the Bob Keller Business Conservation Leadership Award at our annual business appreciation breakfast in November, photo left. An emerging collaboration between Kendall Elementary School, NSEA, Whatcom Conservation District, North Cascades Audubon and the Trust will establish a new outdoor learning hub at our Harrison Preserve. These are a few examples of how the health and vitality of our community and local economy benefits by such collaborations. A complete list of our conservation and business partners is located on the inside back cover.

COMMUNITY CONSERVATION & EDUCATION

Every year Whatcom Land Trust connects more members of our diverse community with Whatcom’s special places—from neighborhood parks to wild, remote and scenic areas—to explore, learn, recreate, and renew. Events like the ‘Welcome Back Salmon’ event at our Maple Creek Reach property honors the salmon life cycle and shares the conservation value of forested wetlands in the North Fork Nooksack. ‘Stories from the Great Outdoors’ annual spring benefit celebrates our shared connection to the land among hundreds of friends through stories, camaraderie and philanthropy.

Families and children learn about Whatcom’s abundant marine flora and fauna during the summer solstice’s lowest tide at Point Whitehorn’s ‘What’s the Point?’, an event we co-host with multiple community groups. Naturalists from Cherry Point Citizen Stewardship Committee, Whatcom Marine Resources Committee, Wild Whatcom, RE Sources, Department of Natural Resources and others regale visitors with information they can take home and enjoy again and again.

THE VALUE OF PARTNERING

Superfeet: Insole and footwear company in Ferndale and Whatcom Land Trust Sponsor.

Point Whitehorn Marine Reserve

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“When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.”

— Aldo Leopold

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A DEEP BOW OF GRATITUDE

I offer a deep bow of gratitude to all the individuals, businesses and foundations whose gifts fuel the work of Whatcom Land Trust. This work is a very real manifestation of the wish that each of us carries in our heart to leave this earth better for our presence. We join together in trust in the Land Trust. With your contributions we join hands with a future that includes the vibrant natural system, wild lands, parks, wildlife and fertile soils that sustain us today. Your generosity will fall like gentle spring rain on the budding lives of generations to come.

THANK YOU

Chris Moench, President Board of Directors

Mike Bathum
Frances Barbagallo
Mark Ashworth
Angel Fund of Whatcom
Kari Anderson
Bud Anderson
Luther Allen
Charles & Patricia
Bea Acland
Anonymous (20)
through
& Robert Satushek

John Bremer
Steven Boule
Leslie Boswell & P J
Richard Borden
Vanessa Blackburn
Richard Binder
Fred & Lynn Berman
Benedict Family
Kathleen Bemis
Bellingham Unitarian
Earl & Donna Bell
John & Dorie Belisle
Kathryn A Beck
Bayview Fund of
Don & Irma Bauthues
Collier Family
David Scherrer
Foundation
Solvei Metcalf
Director,
Karen Parker
Gabe Epperson
Juianne Dirks
WCC Stewardship Associate,
Receptionist,
Communications and Outreach Director,
Julie Dugger
Director of Philanthropy,
Morgan Bender-deMoll
Conservation
Karen Teper

Nancy Flournoy
Mike & Kim Finger
Esther Faber
Dudley Evenson

HONORARY & MEMORIAL GIFTS

Solvei Metcalf served on Whatcom Land Trust's board of directors for nine years. When she passed in December 2016, Rebecca's family, friends and colleagues wanted to honor her love of Whatcom County's lands alive by establishing a memorial in her memory to fund a Whatcom Land Trust Conservation Internship.

Solvei Metcalf served as our Rebecca Reich Memorial Conservation Internship following graduation from Washington State University with a degree in Urban Planning in June 2017. She now works as a Conservation Associate with a private conservation organization.

"I am appreciative beyond words for this opportunity to work with the Trust. This experience would not have been possible without the commitment of Rebecca Reich and generosity of donors to the internship fund. I have gained more knowledge about land conservation, stewardship, and non-profit work than I expected and am so grateful!"

Rebecca Reich
Memorial Conservation Internship

Rebecca Reich

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Rebecca Reich
Memorial Conservation Internship
WHAT'S THE POINT PARTNERS:
Cherry Point Audubon Reserve Citizen Stewardship Committee
Marine Life Center
Marine Mammal Stranding Network
Seafarer Foundation
WSA State Department of Natural Resources
Wild Whatcom
Whatcom County
Whatcom Marine Resources Committee

ADDITIONAL STEWARDSHIP PARTNERS:
City of Bellingham
Four Center Fly Fishers
Laurice Nelson
Northwest Indian Tribe
Northwest Salmon Enhancement Association (NSEA)
Whatcom Conservation District
Whatcom County Amphibian Monitoring Program
Whatcom County

LEAGACY GIFTS
Legacy gifts keep conservation values dear to you and your loved ones alive in perpetuity. Have you thought about including Whatcom Land Trust in your will, retirement plan, or life insurance policy? It’s one of the simplest steps you can take to protect the nature of Whatcom County for future generations, and it is as easy as signing your name.

Let us show you how you can plan today. As a steward and mentor, make a world of difference for our future of Whatcom County. Sign your name.

Contact Jill Clark at Jill@whatcomlandtrust.org and 360-740-3423.

WHATCOM LAND TRUST
841 Whatcom Avenue, Bellingham
(360) 768-2342

Janet Ott: A Legacy of Land
“Whatever Land Trust is a tangible legacy, so to be able to contribute to a legacy that future generations can experience wildness is really important to me. Whatcom Land Trust is going to be a legacy portion of my estate when I die. It’s good to know that gifts of all sizes matter. I know my legacy will be a legacy of land preserved forever.”

Jill Ott
Whatcom Land Trust and you... Together growing a natural legacy of Whatcom’s special places.

Of the 20,729 acres we have protected thus far through Conservation Easements, land ownership, and facilitation, there are:

» More than 32 miles of protected marine, river and lake shorelines

» 10,366 acres of the Lake Whatcom watershed

» 1,050 acres of working lands in agriculture

» 13,837 acres of parkland