Trust protects three new properties

Whatcom Land Trust is proud to announce the conservation of three new properties. These include a historical site in Lynden, tidelands in Drayton Harbor, and an additional portion of Chuckanut wetlands.

Stremlers conserve historic homestead

Part of Lynden's history has been preserved through a conservation easement by Ken and Jan Stremler.

In August, the Stremlers placed an easement on their 38-acre property just south of Lynden city limits. The land was once part of the historic Judson homestead and the Stremlers have beautifully restored their Victorian style house, reported to have been built in 1888.

“We want to preserve the historic value of our property so that future generations can enjoy it as we have learned to,” Ken said. “Jan and I were excited to hear about the Whatcom Land Trust and enter into a conservation easement that will always protect this beautiful piece of property from any development,” he added.

The Stremler property opens south over the Nooksack floodplain and river. It acts as a buffer between the southern expansion of Lynden and

(Continued on page 8)

1997 Land Stewards of the Year
Community award announced

To recognize outstanding conservation efforts in our community, the Trust has established a Land Steward of the Year Award.

In August, the Board of Directors named the first recipients of this award: George and Lois Garlick of Pleasant Cove, and Michael and ElaineMcRory of Bellingham. Their conservation accomplishments in our community set high standards for this award.

Garlicks' tradition of conservation

Long before the Land Trust existed, George and Lois Garlick were committed to protect our shorelines and wildlife habitat. For over 30 years they have worked to preserve special places like Scudder Pond, Squires Lake, Lummi Rocks, and Padden Lagoon.

Lois has devoted much of her time to sea birds and other wildlife. Both Garlicks are members of the Audubon Society.

“The Garlicks have shown, in grand style, through their conservation efforts, stewardship, and civic involvement, how much two people can do to make our world a better place to live,” said David Schmalz, Audubon Society.

For the last 15 years, George and Lois have monitored Chuckanut Island for the Nature Conservancy. This involves visiting the island throughout the year (once a week in the summer) to check conditions and talk to people using the island. George said behavior has steadily im-

(Continued on page 3)
President's Message

Who is the Land Trust?

Gordon Scott

As President of the Whatcom Land Trust, I spend much of my time introducing landowners to the concepts of land conservation and land trusts.

Probably the most frequently asked question is, "What is the Land Trust?"

The easiest way to answer this question is to describe who the board members are and what they do.

Land Trust activities are managed by a thirteen-member Board of Directors. Meeting with landowners, negotiating easements, soliciting donations, organizing events, speaking in public, maintaining financial records, and monitoring conservation properties are all managed by these volunteers.

This diverse group of people comes from a variety of backgrounds and differing political beliefs. While their diversity can be difficult to facilitate at times (I speak from experience as moderator of the monthly Board meetings!), it is this diversity which provides a depth of skills and experience that makes the work of the Trust so successful.

Despite varied philosophies and personalities, the Managing Board comes together solidly around our mission: to protect special places in our community.

Sharon Digby coordinates the Monitoring Committee, ensuring annual property site visits are made and the important natural values of our properties remain protected. This work is critical to our conservation easements.

Bill Carroll's professional assistance with our computer systems help facilitate the smooth operation of our office; his connections with members of the business community have directly resulted in corporate donations to the Trust.

Chris Moench's years of experience with the Trust bring meaningful insight to his community presentations, contributions to our newsletters, and frequent calls to meet with interested landowners.

With Hilda Bajema's careful attention to bookkeeping detail we know with confidence the financial position of the Trust at any time. Hilda is also a founding member and provides us with an important institutional memory.

Joan Casey has the important ability to network our Land Trust message with a diverse group of hiking clubs, kayak groups, and bird watching organizations. Her enthusiasm for connecting with people in our community is a valuable asset to the Trust.

Cindy Klein organizes membership field trips and last May planned a reception in celebration of the completion of our book, Whatcom Places. Her artistic attention to detail always brings a classy touch to WLT events.

Rand Jack is a guiding light for the Board, providing creative solutions to all our knotty problems. Rand is an excellent negotiator who is able to bring just about any potential transaction to a successful close.

Dick Beardsley’s recent addition to the Board significantly strengthens our fund-raising and community outreach capacities, as well as our sense of humor.

(Continued on page 3)
Land Stewards

(Continued from page 1)

proved over the years and they are proud of doing this for our community.

“There was not a single beach fire on the island this year,” George said. “It’s been a good demonstration of the public learning to take care of our environment. I think people really appreciate being able to use the island.”

For George and Lois’s work protecting Chuckanut island, and their lifelong dedication to conservation in Whatcom County, WLT is pleased to acknowledge them with this award.

McRorys’ conservation projects involve hands-on work

Elaine and Mike McRory are responsible for the ongoing success of the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association (NSEA), a community project that has involved hundreds of adults and children in restoration of damaged salmon habitat on Whatcom rivers and streams.

“Mike leads by example,” said Phelps McIlvaine, Northwest Salmon Recovery Fund (NSRF) Chair.

“The reason so many people work with him is because he’s doing so much of it himself.”

The McRorys have contributed considerable financial aid to the NSRF, an endowment which they created. They also volunteer large amounts of their time in creative conservation programs involving private businesses, schools, county and city governments and frequently speak to classes throughout the county to help students understand the importance of salmon.

“For the last five years, Elaine has inspired my students to help in the restoration of Whatcom Creek Shoreline. Her energy and enthusiasm have encouraged a heroic effort from these kids,” said John Horner, sixth grade teacher at Whatcom Middle School.

WLT admires Mike and Elaine’s dedication, energy, and generosity; above all, we honor their inspirational vision of the future.

Land Steward of the Year Awards are given to people who make exceptional contributions to the mission of the Trust. Criteria are:

(1) Specific, concrete accomplishments that advance land and habitat conservation, and

(2) Volunteering time and resources.

Current members of the WLT Board of Directors are not eligible.

Who is the Trust

(Continued from page 2)

Carl Batchelor’s commitment and “can do” approach to problem solving is greatly appreciated. His knowledge as a land use planner with Whatcom County often provides valuable insight to a conservation issue.

Julie Carpenter’s organizational development and fund-raising skills help us focus on building our membership and creating a secure financial future for the Trust.

As registered agent for the Trust, Bruce Smith is responsible for preparing our legal and financial tax documents. Without Bruce Smith’s thoughtful and timely advice, the Land Trust would not be as secure as we are today.

Bob Keller, the “father of Whatcom Places,” continues to spread the word of the Land Trust to civic organizations, middle school students, and at various public events. This kind of person-to-person outreach directly leads to land conservation by people in our community.

With this brief description of our board, you can see the range of talents of the Land Trust Board.

When I stop to remember that all their time working for the Trust is done “after hours,” on weekends, at lunch hours, or during a moment of free time, I appreciate the personal dedication of the Board to the fulfillment of the Trust’s mission.

Such dedication is the heart of our Land Trust.
The Trust's presence can encourage people to think about caring for their land in ways that extend beyond property boundaries.

The Land Trust is frequently asked how the Board of Directors decides which properties to protect. Why would the Trust want 35 acres of Drayton Harbor tidelands or two very wet city lots? These properties are unlikely to be developed given the laws protecting wetlands and shoreline.

Even aquaculture on the tidelands is impractical given the pollution of Drayton Harbor. In all likelihood these properties would remain in their present state far into the future without the Trust's involvement.

Of course it is into the future that the Board casts its collective eye when evaluating a proposed conservation property. We ask whether our protection could help to maintain or restore some larger natural system?

Recent gifts may inspire others
Margaret Eames' gift of tidelands gives the Trust a stake in the health of Drayton Harbor and by extension, the Dakota Creek watershed. We hope our ownership of the tidelands serves as an inspiration to other landowners, businesses and agencies to work for protection of the harbor and Dakota Creek. The Trust's presence can encourage people to think about caring for their land in ways that extend beyond property boundaries to the wildlife habitat and water quality of an entire area. Already there are signs that our message is being heard as several landowners in the watershed inquired about conserving their land after we announced Margaret Eames' gift.

The Trust accepted Jane and Kathy Marlowe's wetland lots in south Bellingham for the same reason. We hope their example will inspire owners of adjacent wetlands to conserve their land. The Marlowes' property is part of a larger wetland, most of which is already owned by the Trust. Their gift makes protection of the wetland less complicated and more predictable.

Both gifts affect wildlife habitats and natural water systems. Water and wildlife respect no legal boundaries. Neither do human activities which often pollute water or air, destroy wildlife habitat and soil fertility. However, an act of land conservation can also spread an influence that effects us all, by not polluting our air and water, by providing habitat for the wildlife that intrigues us and by inspiring us with the conservators' faith in a beautiful future that it so clearly implies. The Trust relies on these examples to achieve that wider "landscape" vision for conserving Whatcom County.

General goals and purposes
As a volunteer organization we don’t have the resources to acquire much less to maintain conservation easements or ownership in more than a small percentage of our county lands. Therefore, before accepting a new property the Trust carefully applies specific criteria.

Initially the property must meet the following criteria:

1. Be consistent with the Trust’s mission to protect unique natural, scenic, agricultural and recreational land in Whatcom County.
2. Be in a relatively undisturbed natural, scenic or historic state, or have recreational or agricultural value.
3. Be of sufficient size that its conservation values are likely to remain intact, even if adjacent properties are developed, or belong with a larger block of conservation acquisitions.
4. Finally, protection of the property will promote land conservation and encourage land stewardship.

Public Benefit
The property must include at least one of eighteen specific attributes that will significantly benefit the public. These criteria are relatively broad and flexible types of wildlife habitat, unique natural or archaeological features, maintaining or improving water quality, preserving agricultural land, providing access to shoreline, additions to park or trail systems, or having educational or scientific value. The board must identify qualities of the property that are worth protecting for the public good.

Feasibility
Finally the board must consider the long term feasibility of protecting the property. Because we accept stewardship responsibilities “in perpetuity” this means educated guess work.
Properties to protect

However, the property may not be accepted if it fails any one of eleven criteria. Regarding conservation value: Is it large enough to protect the quality identified as having public benefit? What impact will development of adjacent properties have on the property and the quality we are trying to protect? If it is small, can the Trust acquire adjacent properties to improve protection?

The Board must also consider long-term relationships with the current and future property owners. Can we reasonably monitor the property? Do the Board and the landowner clearly understand and embrace the objectives set out in the proposed conservation easement? Are there outstanding liens, encumbrances, easements, timber or mineral rights or other restrictions on the property that are unaccounted for in the easement? Is the land contaminated with toxic waste?

The board also considers the potential impact of conservation on neighboring communities. Are there concerns of other property owners that the Trust can’t resolve?

Varied and complex issues affect the Trust’s ability to conserve property. However, our history reflects few refusals to accept properties.

We encourage all landowners who desire help to contact us. You can talk to any board member or call our office, 650-9470.

Land Trust Board adds new faces

Whatcom Land Trust announces the following changes on the managing and advisory Board of Directors.

New Board Member

We are pleased to announce the addition of Cindy Franklin to our Managing Board of Directors.

Cindy, a local organizational development consultant, is an enthusiastic supporter of the Land Trust. In addition to her skills in facilitating dialogue among groups, she brings a valuable marketing background to our Board.

One of her first projects is promoting Whatcom Places. We are offering the book to members as a fund-raising tool and also encouraging businesses and corporations to use Whatcom Places as a promotional item. Feel free to contact Cindy, 671-8975, if you are interested in either of these programs.

Other board changes

The Board of Directors also announces the addition of Richard Eggemeyer to our Advisory Board.

Richard is a Realtor with Coldwell Banker Miller Real Estate, Inc. He has been a supportive Land Trust member for many years and has volunteered his assistance with several land transactions. We are pleased to add his name to our advisory board.

Sean Ebnet has resigned from the managing board due to work conflicts with our monthly board meetings. He continues to support the Land Trust as a valuable resource for wildlife habitat information.

Cindy Franklin brings a valuable marketing background to our board.

The Mission of the Whatcom Land Trust is to preserve and protect unique natural, scenic, agricultural and open space land in Whatcom County through acquisition of perpetual conservation easements or other land interest that insure the protection of the resource value.

Whatcom Land Trust is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization working for voluntary land conservation in Whatcom County. The Steward is published three times a year by the WLT. Your comments are welcomed. Complimentary copies are available by calling the Land Trust office, 650-9470.

Newsletter Committee Chair .......... Chris Moench
Contributors ......................... Gordon Scott, Sharon Digby, Chris Moench, Bob Keller, Pat Karlberg, Julie Carpenter, Mike Mathews, Cindy Franklin
Desktop Publishing .................. Sheri Emerson

Cindy Franklin adds new faces

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Use investments to maximize the benefits of charitable giving

Through the generosity of many individuals and businesses in our community, the Whatcom Land Trust is able to provide conservation options for local landowners.

As 1997 comes to a close, many of our supporters start planning their gifts and contributions to charitable organizations. We will list some ways you can make contributions that will help the Trust continue conserving the special places in Whatcom County and possibly enhance your tax benefits.

**Deductible donations**

Whatcom Land Trust is a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation and cash donations to the Trust, including your membership renewal, are tax-deductible. One of the best ways to support the Trust is to renew your membership on an annual basis. We depend upon broad community support to pay our expenses.

**Stocks, Bonds, and Mutual Funds**

When considering a gift to the Whatcom Land Trust, it may be to your advantage to give stocks, bonds or mutual funds instead of cash, especially if these investments carry taxable appreciation. By donating stock, for example, you can generally obtain a deduction for the current fair market value of the stock and avoid paying taxes on the capital gain you would have realized if you had sold the stock and donated the proceeds.*

Donors not only save on their taxes by donating appreciated securities rather than selling them and gifting the proceeds. They also give the Trust the opportunity to benefit from any further appreciation potential.

Securities you have owned for twelve months or more that have increased in value since you bought them are subject to capital gains tax if sold (per 1997 tax laws). However, if you make a gift of these securities to the Land Trust, you get a charitable deduction for the full fair market value as of the day of transfer and you avoid the tax on capital gain.*

For example: Richard S. owns $10,000 worth of Microsoft Corporation stock, which he purchased for $2,000 five years ago. By donating this stock to the Whatcom Land Trust, he receives a charitable deduction of $10,000 and avoids tax on $8,000 of capital gain.*

Since you get a charitable deduction for the market value and avoid the capital gain tax, you are making a gift that significantly increases the tax benefits to you.

**Investment Account**

To make it convenient for our supporters who donate securities to the Land Trust, we have opened a brokerage holding account to facilitate this process. Please call us if you are interested in donating securities to the Land Trust or would like more information.

*Consult your tax advisor or attorney to find out the tax benefits you may receive from donating assets or securities to the Land Trust.
Annual Campaign '97

Membership in the Trust provides conservation options for landowners

Once a year, the Whatcom Land Trust focuses on building membership and securing a solid financial future for the Land Trust. We do this during our Annual Campaign by asking our members, both new and returning, to support the Trust financially. This year's Campaign begins in October.

WLT members support conservation resources

The Trust receives no tax dollars. Our ability to maintain an effective organization relies on Land Trust members donating generously every year. Thanks to our member support and a grant from the Wilberforce Foundation, we have been able to maintain an office, publish this newsletter, and provide conservation counseling and information resources to landowners and the community at large. To continue this service we need to increase community support.

You will soon receive our Annual Campaign letter. Please take time to read how your dollars have been used to preserve special places in Whatcom County. We hope you'll agree that the work of the Trust is crucial for everyone who chooses to live here.

Your support is important. Tell your friends about the work of the Trust and encourage them to become members, too. Or get them started with a gift membership and they will receive a complementary copy of Whatcom Places. (See form below.)

Membership benefits

With your membership donation, you will continue to receive this newsletter, The Steward and will be invited to special member-only activities such as private tours of conservation properties, invitations to plays, film series, and other events.

But most importantly, as a Land Trust member you know that you are helping to preserve Whatcom County's special qualities, for our children and grandchildren.

Special Campaign Offers

During our Annual Campaign, members who join or renew with a contribution of $50 will receive a 40% discount coupon for Whatcom Places ($10 value.) Members who donate $100 or more will receive an autographed hardcover copy of Whatcom Places ($40 value.)

These premiums are a limited offer for our members during the Annual Campaign, now through the end of 1997. (See form below.)

Since 1985, Whatcom Land Trust has worked with landowners to conserve over 4,000 acres of special places in Whatcom County. Your contributions help make that happen. Please renew your membership today.

Name: __________________________________________
Address: _______________________________________
City/State/Zip: _____________________________
Telephone: ________________________________

Contribution enclosed: $25_ $50* $100** $250** other

Annual Campaign offer for memberships received by December 31, 1997:

*$50 memberships will receive a coupon for 40% off the purchase of Whatcom Places softcover edition. (Redeemable at Village Books in Fairhaven or the Boekhandel in Lynden.)

**$100 memberships or more will receive a signed hardcover edition of Whatcom Places ($40.00 value.)

WLT is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Your contribution is tax deductible.

Please send a WLT gift membership to:

Name (please print): ____________________________
Address: _____________________________________
City/State/Zip: ________________________________

Enclosed: __$40 (minimum) __Other

We will send your gift recipient:

• Complimentary copy of Whatcom Places ($25.00 value.)

• One-year subscription to our newsletter, The Steward

• Invitations to WLT member events such as field trips, receptions

Please indicate the message to be written on the note card announcing your gift to this new member

(Please be specific.)

(Offer expires 12-31-97. Allow 3-4 weeks for delivery)
New Properties
(Continued from page 1)

the productive farmland of the Nooksack river valley. With its park-like appearance, this historic property will be appreciated by citizens of Lynden for generations to come.

Tidelands donation
Margaret Eames’ concern for the health of Drayton Harbor led her to donate 35 acres of Drayton Harbor tidelands to the Trust.

The Eames property, located at the mouth of Dakota Creek, was formerly an oyster farm, and still provides habitat for a diversity of marine fauna and shorebirds.

As a lifelong resident of the Blaine area, Margaret remembers eating oysters from Drayton Harbor and playing on this beach. Neither activity exists today. Drayton Harbor is closed to shellfish gathering because of water pollution. Margaret’s donation of tideland gives the Trust a presence and voice in efforts to improve the harbor.

Wetland donation provides access
Last June, two city lots in south Bellingham were donated to WLT by Jane and Kathy Marlowe. Adjacent to the Trust’s 16-acre Chuckanut wetland parcel (donated to the Trust in December, 1996), this property provides an important link between the wetland parcel and the Interurban Trail.

“The Marlowes’ gift helps the Trust by putting more of the wetland under a single owner,” said Trust board member Chris Moench.

“Several similar parcels exist between the Interurban Trail and the wetland. We hope the Marlowes’ gift will inspire owners of all property affecting the wetland to act for the protection of this important community treasure,” he added.

Please join us
and Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Commission at the
Dedication and Opening of Squires Lake Park
Saturday, October 25, 1997, 10:00 a.m.

Two years ago, many of you showed your support for the County’s acquisition of this beautiful lake property.

This month, we hope you will join in our celebration as Squires Lake Park is officially opened to the public.

Ceremonies will begin at the trailhead, located just off Pacific Highway south of Nulle Road. The opening will conclude at the lake after a 1/3 mile hike up the new trail. Please call our office, 650-9470, for directions or more information.

WHATCOM LAND TRUST
P. O. Box 6131 • Bellingham WA 98227
How did the Land Trust publish a book?

Organizing a community project

Bob Keller, Whatcom Places Editor

To celebrate the diverse beauty of Whatcom County and to show how thoughtful stewardship can shape our future, the WLT Board of Directors approved a book publishing project in January of 1996.

Two months later a publication committee met for the first time.

Last March, one year later, the committee met for the final time as Whatcom Places headed to the printer.

Few books, no matter how simple, move at this speed from conception to finished product. And our local effort was not simple, involving the cooperation of an editor, graphic designer, six writers, seventeen photographers, and several dozen financial contributors.

How did this happen? I claim credit for two smart decisions: picking the book committee members and selecting the designer. Most other matters just seemed to fall into place.

The book committee began with an organizing miracle: after one hour of phoning, everyone asked to serve on this committee had said yes!

Individuals were chosen for special expertise and dependability. Their willingness to pitch in, their hard work and new ideas, their connections and advice made this committee exceptional.

Dave Peebles, former Sehome High School

Open space can bring economic benefits

Gordon Scott and Sheri Emerson

When the Whatcom Land Trust accepts land or easement donations, we are often asked about the impact of conservation on the county tax base. There is a common belief that undeveloped land, even if nice to look at, is not economically productive and it only carries its weight in the local tax base after it is developed.

But when comparing generated tax revenues to the costs of providing services, researchers have found that open space lands generate more tax dollars per acre than they consume in services.

More and more communities are discovering open space has many economic benefits.
Memorials and gifts
in honor of someone special
Whatcom County Parks Department is now offering a way to honor someone very special.
Benches or picnic tables may be purchased and placed in a County Park in honor of someone you know. Benches cost between $800 and $1,000 and picnic tables cost $1,200 to $1,800. This price includes the installation and a plaque naming the person honored.

If you are interested in this program, contact Larry Simkins, Whatcom County Parks Department, 733-2900.

See you at the NW Washington Fair!
Whatcom Land Trust has reserved a booth at the Northwest Washington Fair in Lynden, August 11-16. We're looking forward to sharing our land conservation goals at such a well-attended event.

If you can volunteer for a few hours in our booth, please call the WLT office, 650-9470.

Thanks to...
We are always grateful to folks in this community who lend us a helping hand. Many thanks to Adoline Brown and staff at Chicago Title Insurance Company, Wade and Tonic Marlow for hosting the “Book Debut Party” at the Blue Horse Gallery, and putting together a beautiful show featuring photographers from the book, the reliable volunteers at Washington Square who help with our newsletter mailings, especially Maxine Sorenson and Del Hedberg, Sid and Aline Wanne for hosting a book sponsor appreciation dinner and Wilson Engineering for donating work on the Squires Lake project.

New book is on the internet
Special thanks to Dick Carlson for setting up a Whatcom Places web site. Information about the book and the Land Trust can be found at www.institute.org/whatcom.

DNR goes on-line
Owners of nonindustrial forestland will now be able to get the latest stewardship information and questions answered on the Department of Natural Resources’ “Internet Home Page.” The address is: http://www.wa.gov/dnr/htdocs/rp/rp.html

Land Trust needs your help
WLT is looking for volunteers to fill specific needs in our organization. Please call 650-9470, if you can help with one of these projects:
1. Manage the distribution of Whatcom Places, (20 hrs./month).
2. Organize a film series, (20-30 hrs./total).
3. Manage the speakers bureau, (1-2 hrs./week).

Community project
(Continued from page 1)

teacher, helped with writing and photos. Ann Yow is a professional photojournalist. Duane Sweeney owns a marketing company in Bellingham and is a fount of fresh ideas. Tom Wood brought the eye of talented landscape artist. Wendy Walker of Blaine teaches environmental education at Huxley College and Patty Nelson taught the same subject in the Bellingham schools. Chuck Robinson, is co-owner of Village Books and an intimate of the publishing world, Steve Brinn, not on the committee, proved a great confidence builder and help in fund-raising.

During the summer I selected a graphic designer, Roderick Burton. Rod became an invaluable member of our group. Without him, we would still be shuffling though hundreds of photos and preparing for another year of committee meetings. A local copy editor has called Rod “a design genius,” a view enthusiastically endorsed by the committee.

Much of the rest was luck and good will. Photographers such as Mark Bergsma, Lee Mann and Tore Ofteness enthusiastically donated their work from the start. The photo mix from big names like Tim Fitzharris, Bob and Ira Spring and less well-known but highly skilled Whatcom artists like Sharon Granger, Jon Brunk, Richard Williams, Mark Turner, Grant Myers, Gene Davis, Fredrick Sears, Rod del Pozo and others brought a diverse visual quality.

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Contributors ................................ Chris Moench, Dick Beardsley, Bob Keller, Gordon Scott, Pat Karlberg, Julie Carpenter, Sheri Emerson
Desktop Publishing ..................... Sheri Emerson
Our instinct to stay local for printing also proved correct. Cooperation by Scott Wheeler at Premier Graphics, Brett Baunton at Digital Photo Imaging, and Rod Burton explains in part why this book appeared ahead of schedule and why it is so beautiful.

Community supports “a good idea”

Finally, there was financial support. The Land Trust, as you know, is a small, local, non-profit, volunteer organization with limited funds. It could not underwrite this project, so we turned to the community and asked people to support a good idea.

Business contributors to an environmental program testify to the depth of pride in and concern for this place. The list of donors and volunteers may be the most telling statement in Whatcom Places. (See a complete list of sponsors on page 4.)

The most astounding fund-raising, however, was done by A. J. Friedman, a Whatcom Middle School 6th grader who, on his own initiative, collected $186 from the general public by sitting at a table outside Haggen’s Meridian store on two cold winter days. (See story on back page.)

Will this book meet our goals?

The Land Trust’s goals for Whatcom Places are to honor our natural landscape, to instill a sense of pride and geographic belonging, to inspire a commitment toward A. J. Friedman’s generation, to encourage careful reflection about where our fast-growing community is headed and to raise awareness of WLT and the land stewardship tools we offer.

This is a lofty agenda, but the process of publishing this book shows what committed people, given an opportunity, can do in a short time.

And besides, we believe that this book conclusively proves that Whatcom County deserves lofty environmental goals.

Where can you buy a copy?

Whatcom Places is available at many retail outlets in the county. Here are a few:

Chuckanut Gallery, Mark Bergsma Studio, WWU Bookstore, Community Food Co-op, Village Books, Base Camp, The Great Adventure, Whatcom Museum Giftshop, Tourist & Convention Center, Brown and Cole Stores, Ferndale and Blaine; Stremler Boekhandel, Lynden; Dodson’s IGA, Nuggets Corner; Everybody’s Store, Van Zandt; Maple Fuels of Maple Falls.

In Skagit County: Scotts Bookstore, Mt. Vernon.

People like you make it happen

Look into the leathery smile of Herman Miller on page 84 of Whatcom Places, and the beaming face of 16-year-old Kelsey Jack on page 63. Miller’s 160-acre farm is the first property protected through a Land Trust conservation easement. The wooded 40 acres on which Kelsey’s family lives is one of the most recent.

More than 4,000 acres of special places in Whatcom County have been protected to date. People like you help make it happen. The Land Trust relies upon private contributions. Send a contribution and join today.

Encourage a friend to join, too.

Enclosed is my membership contribution: __$25 Supporter __$50 Friend __$100 Donor __$250 Sponsor __Other

I’ve included the names of friends who may be interested in becoming a member. You can use my name when contacting them.

Name(s) ___________ Business ___________
Address ________________ City ___________ State __ Zip ___________
Telephone (Home) ___________ (Work) ___________

Please make your check payable to Whatcom Land Trust. Whatcom Land Trust is a 501 (c)3 nonprofit organization and donations are tax deductible.
The beholder...The best land use is not always viewed differently by a biologist, a family from Detroit, an immigrant someone raised in Van Zandt; that one person admires blocks another. Yet to say that beauty remains only we can rejoice beholding: a miahmoo, morning...The beauty is to learn and to share our

Local support for Whatcom Places was overwhelming. It not only allowed us to produce a book even bigger (and better) than originally planned, but is a powerful statement of how much people care about this community. Here is what some sponsors said about the project.

“We’ve been looking for a way to support the Land Trust for a couple of years and this book seemed to be a good opportunity to do that. We especially liked the idea that contributions were limited, making this a community-sponsored project and not something funded by just one or two major corporations,” observed Jerry Eklund, Tosco Refinery, Ferndale. “And the final product is even better than promised!” he added.

“When we read the Whatcom Land Trust mission statement, and saw the names of the people on the managing board who are dedicated to the mission statement, Pat and I were happy to be a part of this project,” commented Fielding Formway.

“Bob Keller came to me last year and asked for our support on this project,” said Bob Morse, Morse Hardware Company. “Since this was different than anything we had supported previously, I discussed the project with the shareholders of our company. The shareholders absolutely endorsed the idea and we were happy to add our support for the book.”
“What many people don’t realize is that residential development does not provide sufficient tax revenue to support itself. Open space is generally the most cost-effective land there is, supplying more tax money than it requires,” Dale Bonar, Jefferson Land Trust (Port Townsend) recently explained.

Open space provides economic advantage

Cost-benefit studies conducted by the American Farmland Trust in ten communities around the country found that, on average, for every tax dollar generated by land in conservation status, the same property used only 29 cents worth of public services. Land in commercial or industrial use cost 30 cents in services for every tax dollar generated. On residential land use, for every dollar of tax revenue collected, the public spent $1.16 to provide services. (Economic Benefits of Land Protection, Land Trust Alliance)

In summary: open space lands actually provide a tax revenue surplus that subsidizes other land uses, especially residential development.

Other economic benefits of conserving lands also should be noted: open space tends to increase the value of surrounding properties; may provide significant public benefits in terms of community health and welfare.

Increased property value can result from open space

Property adjacent to protected open-space land is often considered more valuable than similar property located elsewhere. Such amenities are used as selling points by the real estate industry.

A recent survey in the Bellingham Herald indicated a significantly higher local market value for land with waterfront, water and mountain views. In Boulder, Colorado, a study of the impacts of greenbelts on neighborhood property revealed the aggregate property value for one neighborhood was about $5.4 million dollars higher than without a greenbelt.

Home buyers seem willing to pay for nearby open space. This increase in property value results in increased revenues for local governments.

Other benefits to the local community

Open space lands can provide significant public benefits that may not directly result in tax dollars. Scenic vistas, protection of stream and river shorelines, preservation of wildlife habitats, and conservation of historic buildings and sites cannot be replaced if lost, and thus are priceless in a market economy. Extinction of species, loss of historic structures, or pollution of ground water aquifers are examples of irreplaceable community assets.

While land conservation clearly has a net positive impact on community tax budgets, non-market attributes of open space may be the biggest benefit land trusts provide. Working to maintain Whatcom County as a place of forests, farms, fish streams and native northwest habitat gives all of us a higher quality of life.

Research in cities across America has revealed that money does in fact grow on trees.

Parks and open spaces contribute to a flourishing economy and strong tax base. Research by the Trust for Public Land and others show that parks and open space are high on the list of what makes people want to live, work, play, shop, and visit an area. Access to parks, recreation, and natural areas was noted as a key factor in companies’ decisions to expand and relocate their operations. (Courtesy: Trust for Public Land).
Youngest fund-raisers honored by Land Trust

Listed among the names of the sponsors of Whatcom Places are three middle school students: A. J. Friedman, Darren Johnson, and Hadley Youngberg.

As part of the Whatcom Middle School curriculum, students participated in a project called The Teen Action Plan (TAP). Following a presentation to their class by WLT Board Member Bob Keller, these students chose the Land Trust for their TAP project. They specifically chose to work on fund-raising for the book project.

While Whatcom Places was still being designed and before anyone knew how the final version would turn out, the students set up a table at Haggen’s store on Meridian Street and convinced passersby to donate toward the project. They brought their earnings to the March Board meeting.

“It is our pleasure to present to the board of directors $186. We hope it will help the Whatcom Land Trust reach its goals,” A. J. said as he handed the contribution to Treasurer Hilda Bajema.

The Board of Directors unanimously passed a resolution in appreciation of the students’ initiative on behalf of the Trust.

Book bulk-sale discounts available from Land Trust office

Whatcom Places can be purchased in bulk from the WLT office. Discounts for paper cover copies ordered in bulk are:

<table>
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<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Discount</th>
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<tr>
<td>6 or more</td>
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<td>Full case (44 books)</td>
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Please call the Land Trust office, 650-9470, for more information.

Whatcom Land Trust
P. O. Box 6131 • Bellingham WA 98227

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email: wltrust@juno.com
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10:00am-1:09pm Mon.-Thurs.
Diverse properties added to Land Trust accomplishments

In the last three months Whatcom Land Trust secured four new conservation properties bringing our total conservation easements and land donations to eighteen. These properties are as diverse as their donors, ranging from a 45-acre farm to a 4-acre riverfront parcel, a 77-acre home to a heron colony, and a 16.5 acre wetland and buffer area in Bellingham.

We are privileged to work with many different property owners and we recognize that each landowner has individual reasons for conserving property. We applaud the foresight of these donors and acknowledge their generosity with this issue of The Steward.

ARCO Conservation Easement
December 1996

In an act of farsighted environmental stewardship, the Atlantic Richfield Corporation (ARCO) granted a conservation easement to the Land Trust on a major Great Blue Heron nesting colony located near the company’s Cherry Point oil refinery.

The 77-acre conservation property, adjacent to Birch Bay State Park, is home to a heron colony containing approximately 230 nests making it the third largest heron colony in the Pacific Northwest. The intent of ARCO and the Land Trust is to protect the long-term viability of the heron colony, including a buffer from disturbance and future natural relocation sites for the colony.

“The people at ARCO’s Cherry Point refinery take pride in being part of a world-class refinery located in a world-class setting. To us, preserving the third-largest heron colony in this region seems like the right thing to do. We have a long-range interest in this 77-acre unique environmental setting,” said Scott Walker, Director of Communications and External Affairs at the Cherry Point Refinery.

“The question was how best to do that: Cherry Point is an industrial site; new development will be part of the future here. We decided Whatcom Land Trust was the best option. It’s a local group involving local people. We’re pretty home grown here,” Walker added. “The conservation easement we’ve signed with the (Continued on page 3)

“What the Land Trust isn’t”
Robert Keller

Recently the Whatcom Land Trust failed on a grant proposal seeking support for one of our projects. Questioned on why they rejected a seemingly (to us!) attractive program, foundation officials politely explained that our enterprise was too intangible, that an immediate product and outcome were not evident.

Now, in a sense, we can wonder how the work of an organization that has protected nearly 4,500 acres of Whatcom County agricultural land, forests, watershed and wetland appears “intan-
The Land Trust is pleased to welcome Dick Beardsley as the newest member of our Board of Directors. Beardsley just retired after 22 years with the Bellingham Herald. His most recent position was editorial page editor. After years as a Land Trust member, he joined the Board because he believes in voluntary social activism.

"Citizens deciding for themselves how to protect the environment is one of the most important things we can do and the Land Trust embodies that principle." Beardsley said. "This is exactly the kind of thing we should be doing in this county."

Volunteers help monitor conservation properties

Sharon Digby, Monitoring Committee Chair, thanks the following land monitors for their site visits in 1996: Carl Batchelor, Dan Taylor, Mark Johnson, The Odom Family, Clare Fogelsong, Steve Irving, and Cindy Klein.

We appreciate our supporters

We continue to benefit from the generosity of our Land Trust supporters. Our thanks to the following volunteers and organizations.

Henry Skinner and Frank James for their help and participation in the WLT sponsored performance of An Enemy of the People by the Foothills Theater on October 18, Brett Baunton of DPI Imaging, Jayne Cronlund for her volunteer research and office help, Scott Sandel at Island Title Company, Clare Fogelson for his help with the Mueller-Chase conservation easement, Premier Graphics for printing the Whatcom Places book promotional flyer, LTA Northwest for a much appreciated scholarship to the National LTA Rally last October.

WLT adds e-mail address

WLT can now be reached via e-mail. Send your messages to WLTTrust@juno.com.

 Gifts of appreciated stock

If you are considering a gift to the Land Trust, it may be to your advantage to give stocks; bonds or mutual funds instead of cash.

Example: Mary S. owns $10,000 worth of XYZ stock, which she purchased for $2,000 just a few years ago. By donating this stock to the Whatcom Land Trust, she receives a charitable deduction of $10,000 and may avoid tax on $8,000 of capital gain.

Please contact your financial advisor for more information.

"What the Land Trust isn't"

(Continued from page 1)
gible," but in another sense that conclusion is quite valid: we mainly protect and conserve, a passive posture. We do not lobby or protest, endorse or oppose candidates, feed the homeless, organize a Farmers' Market, or advocate tax reform. Last year when the Trust declined invitations to join the local Chamber of Commerce and another group promoting county parks, the "purist" label carried some sting.

That political "purity" derives from the Trust's narrow definition of its mission—protecting particular lands through voluntary cooperation with private landowners and government agencies. Period. If our land holdings or easements become threatened, we certainly will respond emphatically, legally and politically. But our prime mission, like the Nature Conservancy and Trust for Public Land, is to conserve. If one likes to play games with labels, that indeed makes us "conservative."

Obviously we depend upon others in our mission. We depend on small businesses, corporations, realtors, title companies, planning departments, large landowners and private individuals who donate their talents and money. We likewise depend on other organizations that fight toxic waste and air pollution, that oppose destructive logging practices, monitor rivers and hydrologic health, promote bio-diversity and native species.

We depend on others but do not take sides in their endeavors. The Brown & Cole/Thrifty merger will affect us because it involves one of our strongest supporters and the economic health of Whatcom County, but food marketing economics are beyond the Land Trust's mission. If Barnes and Noble wipes out Village Books, it will make some of us almost physically ill, but that's not the Trust's business. Likewise, Trillium's global operations, the Sierra Club's hyper-electioneering or Bellingham building a public swimming pool, fall beyond our pale.

Two complex words define the WLT: "land" and "trust." Land involves ecology, no simple matter. Trust has various meanings, but one is that people must place long-range confidence in someone if they plan to entrust them with property and wealth. That requires neutrality, credibility and integrity -- doing what we say we will do and not launching off on tangents. For example, opposition to the "Chuckanut Ridge development," oil spills and gasoline consumption would have doomed two important transactions described in this newsletter. To imbue our new book, Whatcom Places, with an "anti-growth" message would not only be a futile exercise in nostalgia, the book itself would be viewed as absurd by potential supporters and very likely would never see print.

Our members and directors can and do play a variety of other roles outside the land Trust, but the Trust as an organization has precise ideas of what it is and where it is going, which translate into clear concepts of what it is not.
New conservation properties
Continued from page 1

Land Trust guarantees that the heronry will be preserved regardless of what happens at Cherry Point in the future. That’s important to us at ARCO. We’re pleased the Land Trust could help us do that,” said Scott.

Pitts Sportsmen’s Donation
January 1997

On January 22, the Land Trust received a gift of four acres on the Nooksack River. The property is located just east of Boulder Creek about four and a half miles west of Glacier. This gift to the Land Trust was made possible with the help of Mark Anderson, a local realtor and long time Land Trust supporter. Anderson learned of the property through his work with the Pitts Sportsmen’s Foundation, a nonprofit charitable group made up of six members of the former Bellingham Sportsman’s Club. Anderson suggested the club donate this property to Whatcom County.

“Without hesitation, the Sportsmen’s Foundation wanted to donate this property for public use,” said Anderson. “When they tried to get the county to accept this land donation, they found the procedure for property review and approval to be a very long, bureaucratic process. When the Foundation started to become a little frustrated with that process the Whatcom Land Trust was invited to serve as a conduit or interim donee.”

The Land Trust will place a conservation easement on the land to protect its value as wildlife habitat. In the near future, WLT intends to fulfill the Sportsman’s desire that this property be available for public use, and will gift the property to Whatcom County Parks. The Parks Department hopes to route a portion of the Bay-to-Baker Trail along the old railroad bed and to develop a small picnic area and river access for raft launching or fishing elsewhere on the property.

Sandwiched between the Mount Baker Highway and the Nooksack River, the land lies largely in the flood plain and boasts 430 feet of river frontage. These attributes make the property a gift that will long be appreciated by generations of fisher folk, river rafters, hikers, and other trail users.

Chuckanut Wetland donation
December 1996

The landowners who propose to build the Chuckanut Ridge residential development have donated 16.5 acres of wetlands and woods to Whatcom Land Trust. The donated land abuts the Interurban Trail near Fairhaven.

The new holding is a piece from the 101-acre site of more than 1,000 single and multifamily residences to be built over the next two decades. Madrona Development Company is coordinating the effort to get the project approved.

The landowners, Roger and Gerry Sahlin, Ralph and Kay Hemingway, and F. D. Smith, also donated $15,000 to the Land Trust to help pay to protect and enhance the wetlands on the 16.5 acres they donated.

Attorney Robert Tull represents the Chuckanut Ridge landowners.

“Working with the Land Trust has been very enjoyable.”

Mardi Chase
Easement donor

Are you a Land Trust member?
Have you renewed your membership?

Please join us. With your help we can continue to protect Whatcom County’s natural landscapes.

[Enclosed is my membership contribution: $25 Friend $50 Supporter $100 Donor $250 Sponsor Other]
[I am a current Land Trust member who is pleased with all the Land Trust has accomplished. Enclosed is my extra gift—a “booster shot” to help you continue your work: $25 $50 $100 Other]
[I’ve included the name of someone who may be interested in becoming a member. You can use my name when contacting them: Name (s) Business]

Address City State Zip
Telephone (Home) (Work)

*Please make your check payable to Whatcom Land Trust. Whatcom Land Trust is a 501 (c)3 nonprofit organization. Under Internal Revenue Service guidelines, the estimated value of the benefits received from membership is not substantial; therefore, the full amount of your payment is a deductible contribution.*

The Steward Winter 1997 3
satisfying for my clients and for me. In the Chuckanut Ridge donation, the donors, who have deep roots in the neighborhood, saw a chance to respond to the Land Trust's efforts to secure and protect great woods and wetlands in the midst of our growing community. Their land is valuable on aesthetic and monetary levels and their generosity is above and beyond any call of duty," said Tull.

"The Smith-Hemingway-Sahlin families and I were pleased that the Land Trust would work with us so carefully and successfully. Special thanks should go to WLT Board member Rand Jack and to Chris Spens, Bellingham Planning Department staff," Tull added.

The Land Trust's new conservation property is a link in an ecological system that extends from the Interurban Trail to Chuckanut Bay. The Interurban Trail is a favorite route with walkers and cyclists. The Land Trust's 16.5 acres provides a buffer that will separate the trail from development on Chuckanut Ridge's remaining 84.5 acres.

**Mueller-Chase November 1996**

Last November, a Colorado couple placed a conservation easement on their 45-acre Whatcom County farm on the Noon Road. Their property, which offers a spectacular view of Mount Baker, is in a section of the county where considerable acreage has been converted to residences and a golf course.

Mardi Chase and Bill Mueller contacted Whatcom Land Trust last July and asked about options that would allow them to conserve their property. The rolling 45-acre farm is buffered by woods and includes a handmade log home and an artist studio. Even though they no longer lived at this property, it was important to them to preserve this land.

"It's something we've always wanted to do. Whatcom County is growing so fast and a lot of farmland is being divided into housing developments; it was important to us that this property stay intact," Mardi Chase said.

The conservation easement they placed on their land allows the property to be subdivided into two parcels no smaller than 20 acres each. One more residence may be built. Mardi feels this easement helps fulfill a promise she made to Earl Kildall, who sold the property to her in 1983:

"I've always had a special feeling for this property and my conversations with Earl helped deepen those feelings. He was born and raised in Whatcom County and he worked so hard farming this property, it seemed like a crime to allow it to be converted into housing tracts," Chase said.

The easement on the Mueller-Chase property will help preserve more than a wonderful view of Mount Baker and a smaller, independent farm. It will preserve an example of the roots from which Whatcom County has spring.
The challenge of stewardship

Rand Jack

The following address was delivered by Rand Jack during the “Wealth in Our Woodlands” workshop at Bloedel Donovan Community Center, May 30, 1996. This program for small private forest landowners was sponsored by the Washington State University science extension program for Whatcom County.

To be sound stewards of forest and other land, we must mold our management to be compatible with natural systems.

How many of you own forested land? How many of you expect to be around 100 years from now? How many of you expect your land to be around 100 years from now? And therein lies the challenge of stewardship. How do we account for our impact on something much older (and perhaps much wiser in its ability to sustain itself) than we are, something that will be here long after we are gone? Something which we and future generations ultimately depend upon for our well-being—the land. The land not in the sense of soil, but in the sense of an integrated biotic community rooted in the soil, a web of living things.

Land differs from our cars and clothes in that it will continue to be needed longer than we can see into the future, long after our cars and clothes have again become part of the land.

We depend on the longevity of land as a productive biotic community not only to provide products such as wood fiber, food and Christmas wreaths, but also to give us clean air and water, to stabilize climate, maintain the carbon cycle, and to maintain its own health. Given this dependency, it is incumbent on us, especially we who are forest landowners, to care for our lands. That relationship of care I call stewardship.

I would like to first mention the problem posed by stewardship, then address the ethical attitude essential to become successful stewards.

Stewardship requires a reversal of this approach. Stewardship requires that we alter human systems, including how we manage our forest lands, so that we do not undermine the functioning of natural systems. Rather than just asking what we want from the forest, we begin by asking what must we leave in the forest so that it can continue indefinitely as a healthy natural system? Only then can we decide what to take out, and how to take it out.

Turning again to Genesis, people have found here, and in the story of Noah, support for a stewardship relation to land. Twice God tells Eve and Adam to have dominion over the earth and over all the fish and birds and everything that creeps on the earth. Going back to the Hebrew roots, dominion can be understood to mean safeguarding or protecting the earth, not destroying it or merely exploiting it. After all, according to Genesis, everything that God created was “good” in the beginning.

To be sound stewards of forest and other land, we must mold our management to be compatible with natural systems. Thus, one task for a steward is to gain some understanding and technical advice regarding how these natural systems work, something which the science of ecology can provide. We need to study land, resource and forest management, as well as land economics.

Now the second point: Our ethical attitude. To be stewards of the land we need to...
Land Trust slide show soon available

As part of our community outreach program, a slide show presentation of Whatcom County properties and Land Trust conservation methods is being designed by Board members Joan Casey and Bob Keller.

We are looking forward to presenting this new program for the North Whatcom Rotary Club, on February 20.

We welcome invitations to speak at other organizations and community events. If you are involved with an organization which would be interested in hearing more about the Land Trust, please call our office.

Tax strategy books for landowners

Several issues of Preserving Family Lands, by Stephen Small, have been purchased for the Land Trust office. This book is a simple introduction to tax issues in land ownership. You may find this book helpful:

- If you think you will be leaving land to your children
- If you think you will be inheriting land from your parents
- If you have land you care about and don't want to lose it

Books cost $6.00 each. Please call our office if you would like a copy for yourself or your family.

Can you help?

Occasionally, we rely on the generosity of our supporters to fill specific Land Trust needs. Please call us if you can provide one of the following:

- Legal size file cabinet
- Slide projector
- Volunteers to spend an afternoon or evening with us stuffing envelopes. (Refreshments will be provided!)

Memorials and Gifts in Honor Of

Are you looking for a way to honor someone in a very special way? A gift to Whatcom Land Trust in honor of birthdays, anniversaries, etc., may be the answer.

When you give a gift in honor of someone, we will send them a special acknowledgment indicating that a gift has been made for the special occasion. Gifts also may be made in memory of an individual.

Let us know what you think

You'll soon receive a Membership Survey in the mail with the annual fund-raising campaign materials.

We truly appreciate our supporters and we hope every one of you will take the time to fill out the membership survey form and return it to us with your donation. Let us know how we're doing. Your support is important to us.

WLT News

Stewardship

Continued from page 1

change our ethical consciousness and to enlarge the scope of our ethical obligations.

We feel “ethical” obligations toward those with whom we share a community of interests. To have an ethical obligation to others suggests that, in at least some circumstances, we put their interests above our own. This is most apparent with family. Mothers and fathers regularly put the interests of their children above their own. Most of us feel a further sense of ethical obligation well beyond our family, extending perhaps to neighbors, fellow workers, church members, the homeless, people in our town, other American citizens, our nation, and perhaps all of humanity. Individuals and cultures draw lines and shape their ethical obligations as they feel appropriate and as they are taught by religion, elders and tradition.

Most people probably limit ethical obligation to only include humans, and perhaps to include animals for whom they have special responsibility, such as their pets and livestock. I believe that stewardship requires us to expand this circle of obligation to include land and forests—to follow what Aldo Leopold described nearly 50 years ago in A Sand County Almanac as a “land ethic.” For Leopold, “the land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land . . . a land ethic changes the role of Homo sapiens from conqueror of the land community to being a member and citizen of it. It implies respect for the fellow members, and respect for the community as such.”

At some point, we might even need to put the land’s interests above our own.

Including land within one’s ethical community changes our relationship to land. Land no longer is just an economic object but rather something for which we have obligations of care, obligations to help insure the healthy functioning of the land’s natural systems. At some point, we might even need to put the land’s interests above our own.

Stewardship expands ethics, particularly to include the land with which we have a special relationship because it is “ours.” Previously we have thought of ownership as meaning that we could do nearly anything we pleased with our land, within the limits of law. We now realize that ownership has a more profound meaning, one that includes ethical obligation, an obligation of stewardship.

Today we are rethinking the relationship between our personal interests and the interests of the forest. In doing so, we must rethink the relationship between our short term self-interest, usually measured in economic terms, and our long term self-interest measured in clean air and water, a stable climate, the diversity of life, and the remarkable ability of natural systems to perpetuate themselves. Our families, our fellow workers, church members, people in our towns, the unborn, all share these interests. Indeed, our own fate and that of all other people depends on long-term interests which are the object of stewardship.

And thus, interestingly, the land ethic of stewardship comes full circle to confront our ethical obligation to other members of the human community.
Why should you become a Land Trust member?

Second annual fund-raising campaign begins October 28

Julie Carpenter

This year, the Whatcom Land Trust has developed a membership policy to complement our annual fund-raising campaign. You’ll soon receive a newly developed Membership Survey in the mail along with the annual request for your hard-earned dollars.

Why should you join?

When you join the Land Trust you are supporting voluntary land conservation of special places in Whatcom County. Your membership donation helps us provide conservation counseling and information resources to land owners and the community at large. The more support we receive, the more we are able to work with private land owners and local government to protect wildlife habitat, scenic, recreational, timber, open space, and agricultural lands.

When you join the Land Trust you are supporting voluntary land conservation of special places in Whatcom County.

As a member, you will continue to receive this newsletter, The Steward. You will be invited to special member-only activities such as private tours of conservation properties not open to the public, (see photos on page 6), invitations to plays, film series, and other events.

Most importantly, as a Land Trust member you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you are a vital part of helping to “keep Whatcom County green,” today and for future generations.

Our goal:

To be a member-supported organization

The Land Trust continues to be primarily a volunteer organization. Lawyers, planners, realtors, photographers, homemakers, scientists, designers, and private business people donate their skill and time -- hundreds of hours a year -- to promote the work of the Trust.

Because of our volunteers, and the WLT Board of Directors’ commitment to minimizing the cost of basic operations, our goal of becoming a membership-supported organization is attainable. We can sustain our organization with regular contributions from within Whatcom County.

If 400 Land Trust members gave $50 each, that’s $20,000, enough to run the office for a year. If, five members give $500, 25 members give $250, 50 members give $100, 100 members give $50, and 100 give $25, that will work as well. These numbers show that you are critical to the success and stability of the WLT.

Recently, WLT had the good fortune to receive a grant from the Seattle-based Wilburforce Foundation. This money is being used for “organizational development,” including establishing a Land Trust office and part-time staff. Our ability to continue maintaining an effective organization depends on Land Trust members donating generously every year.

Are you currently a WLT member?

Just what does “membership” mean?

The Fund-raising and Membership Development Committee defines a WLT member as anyone who supports the Land Trust financially, by in-kind donation, or by volunteering.

Committee members have also determined no one should be denied the Land Trust newsletter or related information due to inability to contribute. While the Trust is in the process of streamlining our data base to eliminate anyone not truly interested in the work of the Trust, we will certainly retain the names of everyone who wishes to remain informed.

The Mission of the Whatcom Land Trust is to preserve and protect unique natural, scenic, agricultural and open space land in Whatcom County through acquisition of perpetual conservation easements or other land interest that insure the protection of the resource value.

Whatcom Land Trust is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization working for voluntary land conservation in Whatcom County. The Steward is published three times each year by the WLT. Your comments are welcomed. Complimentary copies are available by calling the Land Trust office, 650-9470.

Newsletter Committee Chair ....... Chris Moench

Contributors ......................... Chris Moench, Rand Jack, Bob Keller, Julie Carpenter, Pat Karlberg

Desktop Publishing ..................... Sheri Emerson

Our ability to maintain an effective organization will rely on Land Trust members donating generously every year.
Do you have a favorite Whatcom County place?

Whatcom Land Trust is producing a high quality photographic book featuring lands that make Whatcom County a special place to live. Board member Bob Keller chairs this project.

Your Favorite Place?

If you have a personal and unusual spot in Whatcom County that might be included in the Land Trust's new book, Whatcom Places, please let us know where it is. We are looking for those unique, rich and lovely locations or views that help define Northwest Washington as special.

Progress Report

A large share of the labor and creativity for this book is being donated. Rod Burton of Pyramid Imagelab will contribute all of the graphic design and layout. Brett Baunton of Digital Photo Imaging has offered the Trust reduced rates for digital scanning. Premier Graphics will donate the printing of a fundraising brochure. Photographers who have volunteered their time and work are Baunton, Burton, Tore Ofteness, Mark Bergsma, Lee Mann, Ann Yow, Rod Del Pozo, Gene Davis, Ira Spring and Jonathan Duncan. The Trust also has access to photo archives at the Port of Bellingham, ARCO, and other business firms. Steve Brinn of Trillium is assisting with fundraising.

Writing and editing of the book's text is also donated by Aimee Trebon, Wendy Walker, Dave Peebles, Binda Colebrook and Ron Polinder. Ivan Doig will write a special introduction on "The Sense of Place." We have permission from Annie Dillard to extract appropriate sections from her book, The Living.

We are convinced that a high quality publication will increase appreciation for the natural wonder of Whatcom County while promoting awareness of how to protect it for the future.

Whatcom Places will be funded through contributions from individuals, foundations, and local businesses. If you have advice on potential major financial supporters, or on the content of the book, please call our office, 650-9470, or contact members of the Outreach Committee: Chris Moench, Dave Peebles, Tom Wood, Ann Yow, Rod Burton, Bob Keller, Duane Sweeney, Cindy Klein, Julie Carpenter, Chuck Robinson, Wendy Walker, Scott Brennan.

The Trust is deeply grateful to all the individuals and firms that have responded so enthusiastically to this project. We are convinced that a high quality publication will increase appreciation for the natural wonder of Whatcom County while promoting awareness of how to protect it for the future.

This view of the Nooksack river is one of photographer Brett Baunton's favorite places in Whatcom County.

(PHOTO BY B. BAUNTON, DIGITAL PHOTO IMAGING)
One year later
Squires Lake has been "an excellent example of effective public and private cooperation"

The Whatcom Land Trust sent the following letter to Whatcom County Council members, past and present, thanking them for their role in acquiring and developing Squires Lake. Our gratitude goes to all the supporting players who helped obtain this tremendously valuable asset for Whatcom County Parks.

Dear County Council Members,

In May, 1995, the Whatcom Land Trust and the County Parks Department brought a proposal to the County Council to purchase Squires Lake, a beautiful 87-acre piece of property consisting of woods, wetlands and a 10-acre lake just a few miles south of Bellingham. The Land Trust secured an option on the property and found an anonymous donor who would pay $300,000, half of the purchase price. The remainder of the purchase price would be paid from Conservation Futures dollars earmarked by law for park land and open space acquisition.

Neighbors and Council members raised a number of objections to the proposed purchase. The most significant of these were the inadequate dam at the end of the lake, safety and convenience problems posed by using the existing gravel road as primary access to a future park, and the cost of improvements necessary for a park. The Land Trust and the Parks Department advised the Council that these problems could and would be solved without public expenditure. The Council approved the acquisition by a narrow vote.

The dam has now been replaced with a pleasing structure approved by the Department of Ecology. The 12 X 24 inch beams across the top of the dam could support passage of Desert Storm troops. A new route for access to the future park has been obtained so that the existing gravel road will be used only for maintenance and handicap access. Needed improvements are nearly completed without expenditure of public funds and the Land Trust holds a cash account dedicated to future work and park maintenance.

County Parks and the Land Trust made a pledge to the Council, and we are pleased to report that our pledge has been kept - a dam, access, and an untapped public purse. This is an excellent example of effective cooperation between the public and private sector, of what can be accomplished when people work together by focusing on possibilities rather than being impaled by problems.

From every perspective, Squires Lake Park will be a wonderful asset for our community for decades. For making this possible, we thank the Council for their final vote of confidence and the private donors who gave so generously to this project - the anonymous benefactors, Trillium Corporation, Cowden Gravel, Wilder Construction, Harold Simon of MKB Construction, Craig Cole of Brown & Cole, and Richard Eggemeyer of Coldwell Banker Miller Real Estate, Inc. We also thank Whatcom County Parks for sharing our vision - Roger DeSpain, Larry Simkins, Steve LeCocq, and others who answer phones, punch the keyboards, paint the fences and clear the trails so that we can all enjoy the beauty that makes Whatcom County a very rewarding place to live.

Conservation Futures Levy update
Advisory vote may determine the future of park tax

November’s ballot will include an advisory vote on the Whatcom County Conservation Futures Levy. Through this ballot, the County Council seeks to measure support for publicly funded conservation of our County’s heritage of open spaces, shorelines, wildlife habitat and park land.

The ballot title will read: Should Whatcom County continue to levy a tax of no more than 6.25 cents per $1,000 of assessed valuation to fund a reserve from which to finance purchases of property or property rights for conservation purposes?

Several important points should be noted:

1. Should the levy be continued? The levy was originally enacted by the County Council in January of 1992. This is a tax we have been paying for four years.

2. The amount of the levy is 6.25 cents per $1,000 assessed valuation. That works out to $6.25 per year on a $100,000 home, less than the cost of a cheap hair cut or five gallons of gas. At this rate the levy generates about $500,000 per year for the fund.

3. The funds finance purchases of property or property rights. Land cannot be acquired with these funds through eminent domain. Citizens can honor property rights, by setting aside funds to pay for benefits we all receive.

4. The levy dollars accumulate in a fund that can only be used to acquire land, or interest in land, for conservation, to ensure that the present generation leaves a healthy legacy of natural lands to our children and grandchildren. The levy is the only locally collected and controlled source of funds for conservation.

As funds from Washington State become more limited, the importance of local public money has increased. Your vote to continue the levy makes a commitment to the quality of life your children and grandchildren will enjoy.

While the ballot is “advisory,” a negative vote may lead the Council to terminate the Conservation Futures Levy.
Squires Lake Tour

Land Trust members enjoyed a private tour of Squires Lake on Sunday, September 29. Larry Simkins and Steve LeCocq of Whatcom County Parks led the tour around the lake and discussed the history of the property, as well as proposed changes for trails, parking and access for the future park.

Pictured at left: Larry Simkins (left) discusses the county acquisition of this property with Riley Manke, Jim Sullivan (behind) and Jim Futrelle.

The Land Trust will sponsor private property tours for our members next winter and spring. Phone the Land Trust office, 650-9470, for more information. (Photos courtesy of Joan Casey.)
Jack family donates easement

Chris Moench

Whatcom Land Trust is pleased to announce the donation of a conservation easement on 40 acres of forest land on the western slope of the Van Zandt Dike in the valley of the south fork of the Nooksack River.

The gift, from Rand, Dana, Darby and Kelsey Jack, will ensure that the land will be preserved for wildlife habitat, continued natural forest succession and limited human residential use.

“This land and its wildlife has brought our family joy and contentment for the past 20 years. For that, we owe it some care and protection—nothing could make me feel better,” said Dana Jack.

The Jacks have given up many of their private property rights through the gift of the conservation easement, including the ability to log or significantly subdivide the property. However, they have retained the right to live on the land as they always have, sell it, or pass it on to their children, Darby and Kelsey.

Under the terms of the easement, the eastern two thirds of the property, which stretches in stately conifer and deciduous forest up the Van Zandt Dike, abuts state forest land. It will be left untouched. The western one third presently contains the Jack residence and the easement allows construction of one additional residence in the event that both Kelsey and Darby wish to live on the property as adults. The option to build the second residence may only be exercised by Darby or Kelsey.

“I believe I’m putting this land to its highest and best use—for a century from now,” said Rand Jack, who has been a volunteer board member for the Land Trust almost since its founding in 1984.

Rand and Dana’s daughter, Kelsey, the youngest of the family, also reflected on the future.

“Larger pieces of land should stay large to make sure that the city won’t spread all the way out here,” she said. “Keep the land in a way that no one can ever come in and do condos.”

If she or her brother Darby reside on the property and later sell their home, Kelsey said she feels good knowing they won’t be giving away responsibility for determining future use to another person.

In accepting the easement, the Land Trust accepts responsibility to enforce its terms.

The Trust is grateful for this gift, a treasure that will truly grow in value for decades to come.
Thoughts from the President

Meeting the challenge

Gordon Scott
WLT Board of Directors President

This issue of The Steward brings you a special insert of comments from the Land Trust film series, Public Forum on Land Ethics. Each of the four films generated lively conversation among the viewers and commentators, with attendance exceeding 100 people over the entire series. The presentation of the Public Forum on Land Ethics is an example of the Land Trust’s commitment to being a leader in land conservation by offering the community educational events that stimulate one’s thinking and challenge our concepts of land use.

If you liked the film series, be sure to attend the next event being sponsored by the Land Trust, a theatrical production by the Foothills Theater Company of the play by Henrik Ibsen, An Enemy of the People. (See page 4 for more information.)

Loss of staff challenges us

Land conservation is full of interesting challenges, but the departure of our dedicated Conservation Coordinator Robyn du Pré at the end of May is one challenge that is particularly hard to accept.

The Land Trust was unable to employ Robyn after Whatcom County chose to discontinue the Natural Heritage Contract which provided funding for the position of Conservation Coordinator. The County’s concern over the outcome of the Conservation Futures Levy advisory vote this fall was the reason for terminating the contract.

Robyn’s departure means more work for Sheri Emerson, our Administrative Assistant, and challenges all the members of the Land Trust Board to volunteer more time to accomplish the important land conservation work ahead of us.

Family decision meets the challenge

One of the Land Trust’s own Board members, Rand Jack, recently met the challenge of land conservation when Rand and his family donated a conservation easement over their 40-acre property in the South Fork Nooksack Valley.

The Jack family’s decision to protect their land for future generations is the kind of personal commitment towards land conservation that makes Whatcom County a great place to live. Thank you Rand, Dana, Darby and Kelsey.

The Mission of the Whatcom Land Trust is to preserve and protect unique natural, scenic, agricultural and open space land in Whatcom County through acquisition of perpetual conservation easements or other land interest that insure the protection of the resource value.

Whatcom Land Trust is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization working for voluntary land conservation in Whatcom County. The Steward is published three times each year by the WLT. Your comments are welcomed. Complimentary copies are available by calling the Land Trust office, 650-9470.

Newsletter Committee Chair: Chris Moench
Contributors: Chris Moench, Gordon Scott, Sharon Digby, Jayne Cronlund, Pat Karlberg
Desktop Publishing: Sheri Emerson
A new perspective
Volunteer compares our conservation opportunities to the Midwest
Jayne Cronlund

I am a newcomer to Whatcom County, having recently moved to Bellingham from Port Townsend. I decided to move to Bellingham because of its scenic beauty, proximity to the mountains, and a personal feeling of the latent potential this area holds.

Bellingham is a city with amazing parks and extensive trail systems. Lake Whatcom adds a pleasant scenic quality in addition to sunsets over Bellingham Bay, and the Cascade Mountains are awe-inspiring. I feel truly fortunate to live amidst nature’s glorious benevolence. However, living this close to nature carries a responsibility to ensure that human usage does not destroy the integrity of the land and ecosystems.

After getting settled, I began to travel the varied hiking and biking trail systems and visit the mountains. The scenic beauty of Whatcom County and my sense of responsibility toward the land led me to investigate local conservation efforts. A few phone calls led me to the Whatcom Land Trust office. After meeting with Board members, attending a Land Trust Board meeting, and meeting with Gordon Scott (WLT Board President), I am happily on my way to providing some useful services for the Trust.

I find Whatcom County stimulating simply because of its bounty. The natural resources and scenic beauty which characterize this county seemingly provide excellent opportunities for the Trust. Not every county is home to the trees, mountains, and shorelines that pervade Whatcom county. I view these habitat and open space opportunities as challenges for all citizens of Whatcom County to control growth and reach sustainability.

This winter I spent some time visiting family in the Midwest, where I was able to volunteer for The Nature Conservancy in Minnesota. The difference in approaches to land conservation is noticeable due to the condition of the land. The Conservancy must play a difficult game of “catchup” by attempting to recreate ecosystems like prairies since very few naturally occurring prairies exist in the Midwest. Of course, TNC also focuses on identifying the extremely limited pristine areas and attempting to preserve them.

Here in Whatcom County, we have the opportunity to preserve critical habitat and open space before they are lost. Comparing the Midwest to the Pacific Northwest lends my own personal goals of conservation a sense of urgency. Although I feel the immediacy of the need to preserve important habitat, I understand that many citizens in Whatcom County rely on our natural resources for livelihoods. Living on the Olympic Peninsula and working for Forest Service, I became intimately aware of the complexity of preserving our resources. While I understand the issues are difficult, I believe that land conservation efforts require creative problem solving, not blind devotion to “zero development” nor utter hopelessness. I look forward to working with the Land Trust and the community to meet the coming challenges.

Conservation Futures Levy
Advisory vote on fall ballot
Chris Moench

This fall’s ballot is the place to cast your vote on the Conservation Futures Levy, (CFL), a source of funding county parks, open space, and wildlife habitat.

Whatcom County Council has decided to ask voters whether they want to continue to support this tax for parks and open space. While this ballot will be “advisory” it is likely that a negative vote will lead the Council to renew its attempt to end the CFL. The first move to end the levy was vetoed by County Executive Shirley Van Zanten.

CFL is the only locally collected and controlled source of county funds designated to purchase land for parks and wildlife. Funds from this levy have provided the leverage to negotiate matching federal and state monies, and purchase land at 50% or less than its appraised value.

Since 1993, this levy has enabled the County to acquire natural treasures such as Squire’s Lake and portions of Chuckanut Mountain. At 6.25 cents per $1,000 assessed valuation, (A home valued at $150,000 pays less than $10 per year), the levy generates about $500,000 annually.
Land Trust welcomes new board members

Sharon Digby

The Whatcom Land Trust welcomes two new board members this spring, Sean Ebnet and Joan Casey.

Sean and his wife Lisa moved to Bellingham in 1995 when Lisa started a job at Western Washington University. Sean is a certified wildlife biologist with more than eight years experience conducting fish and wildlife studies. He has worked for government agencies and private firms in the Pacific Northwest. Presently he is employed as a wildlife biologist and watershed scientist by Cascades Environmental Services in Bellingham.

Both Sean and Lisa have been white water river guides in the past. Their hobbies include horses and Bernese Mountain dogs, which they raise and show. Sean’s wildlife expertise will be a great addition to the board.

Joan and her husband, John Watts, moved to Bellingham in 1990. She spent 25 years in San Francisco, where she was a computer consultant for 15 years and did computer-related work for 10 years. Her interests include gardening, hiking, and travel. On two separate trips this spring, she has trekked in Nepal and walked with her husband through Scotland. She is a member of the Mountainneers, North Cascades Audubon, and WAKE. She volunteers for the Womencare Shelter and served on the Chuckanut Mountain Trails Steering Committee.

Joan has had experience with organizing memberships and fund-raising, and is excited about contributing to the Land Trust in these and other areas.

Community support appreciated

We always try to give credit to the many friends of the Land Trust that lend us a helping hand. Our thanks to:

Dick Cole and the staff at Island Title Company, 1616 Cornwall Ave. Bellingham, for providing us with property profile information. Their services were both quick and efficient!

Kyle Haggith and the crew at Pacific Surveying and Engineering deserve both our thanks and our apology. Their name was inadvertently left off our list of 1995 contributors that was printed in the Spring newsletter. We apologize for our error and note that their name should be included on our list of valued supporters. Thank you, Kyle. Your support is appreciated.

Join us for an evening at the theater

Whatcom Land Trust is the featured organization at the Foothills Theater Company’s production of Henrik Ibsen’s “An Enemy of the People”

Friday, October 18, 7:30 p.m.

Echo Glen Community Center

Goodman & South Pass Rd.

(3 miles east of Everson)

Followed by a discussion led by Frank James, MD, W.C. Health Officer

Tickets are $5.00 each and available by contacting any board member, or calling our office, 650-9470.

Address Correction Requested
Community Outreach Program

Land Trust Film Series raises complex land issues

Because we depend upon voluntary actions by private landowners who realize that the Land Trust exists to help them protect natural values of property, the Trust created a community outreach committee this year.

Last March this committee sponsored a film series, A Public Forum on Land Ethics. On four evenings we viewed and discussed five movies: The River, The Plow That Broke the Plains, The Milagro Beanfield War, Heartland, and The Field. Each evening, two guest commentators discussed the film and the audience was invited to share their thoughts and observations. Approximately 200 people attended this series.

In this supplement to The Steward we review the dialogue and reactions to the series, a discussion that we hope will inspire all of us to reflect on the complex land issues presently facing society. Personal opinions expressed in this special supplement do not necessarily represent or reflect Land Trust policy. Should you wish to watch the films, The River and The Plow That Broke the Plains are available from the Land Trust; others are available from local video rentals.

The Film Series in Review
A summary of comments and reflections

March 6
The Plow That Broke the Plains and The River (1936, 1937, Pare Lorentz, dir.)

Commentators: Patricia Decker and Barney Goltz.

Patricia Decker spoke on how much, and how little, we had learned since the Great Depression. We now recognize the need for planning and are not so naive about the damage we can cause, but good planning requires citizen effort and participation. We need to anticipate change or we may get what we don't want.

Barney Goltz reflected on his experience living through the Depression in the upper Midwest; he discussed the origins and problems of the Growth Management Act as an example of anticipating the future.

Audience comments: “People in the Dust Bowl seemed helpless; can the individual citizen do anything against the politicians and City Hall?” . . . The films show how technological fixes don’t always work, how ‘progress’ can be just the opposite.” . . . “Water is crucial to the value of land. Farming is also crucial and should be considered permanent, yet farm land is often prime property for housing.” . . . “How can we define the line between private property rights and the common good in such local issues as clear-cut logging, Padden Creek, Chuckanut Ridge, infilling and sprawl?”

March 13
The Milagro Beanfield War (1988, Robert Redford, dir.)

Commentators: Larry Estrada and Mark Asmundson.

Larry Estrada provided cultural, religious and historical context for the film, arguing that land concepts cannot be separated from culture. In New Mexico, land crosses generations and belongs to the past and future as well as the present. The

(Continued on page H)
Who holds the “rights?”

New land use visions challenge our identity

Gordon Scott

Because of the capital and technological power the newcomers controlled, they had significant ability to impose their own particular vision of nature onto a local community.

Our recent Whatcom County Land Trust film series, Public Forum on Land Ethics, was an opportunity to stand aside from the nitty-gritty details of current land use struggles festering in our community and think in a broader context about human relationships with this planet. Consequently, I perceived a common theme in each story’s particular conflict, and, not surprisingly, a theme articulated by advocates on all sides of land use issues facing our community today.

In each film, the key protagonist driving the tension and turmoil came from outside the established community, bringing powerful technology, organization, and control of capital. Each protagonist carried a new vision of “nature,” or how to use land in the best and right way, into a local community. Because of the capital and technological power the newcomers controlled, they had significant ability to impose their own particular vision of nature onto a local community.

Often times newcomers seemed ignorant of local ecological conditions and limitations, but believed that by applying technology and capital they could successfully transfer a pattern (vision) of land use from one environment to another.

Powerful technology results in economic disaster for farmers

In The Plow That Broke The Plains the combination of new advances in technology being marketed to farmers and the rapid rise of international demand for wheat in time of war drove American farm families to convert Great Plains grassland soils into intensively cultivated fields. The imposition of traditional American intensive farming, developed in the moist climate of eastern forests, on the arid grasslands of the Great Plains was ecologically unsustainable over the long-term. Applying an untested but powerful new technology of mechanized land tilling over large areas, promoted by farm implement corporations, lead to massive alteration of sensitive soils.

The economic motive for breaking new ground in the Plains was provided by speculators in commodity future markets, a situation made very explicit and personal in Heartland, where remote Wyoming homesteaders suffered the whims of eastern investors. However, when minor climatic variations lead to several dry years while thousands of acres of soil were turned over for crop production, ecological disaster resulted for the grasslands region, an economic disaster for thousands of small farmers, and a social disaster for displaced farmers and for communities where they migrated after abandoning the Dust Bowl.

Defeating development leaves scars

In The Milagro Beanfield War the protagonist is a stereotyped modern American land developer who imposes capital, organization, and his own particular vision of the American Dream upon an economically poor and isolated rural community. In response to construction of the “Enchanted Valley” resort community on the outskirts of rural Milagro, townsfolk attempt to organize themselves and draw support from their own outside “forces”, a liberal lawyer turned small town newspaper publisher. Eventually the individual bean farmer, with some help from supernatural powers, defeats the development by illegally taking control over the one vital resource in the southwest: water.

We don’t know how the victorious townsfolk survive their victory, but their scrape with powerful outside market forces have surely lead to loss of innocence. The scars of the half completed cul-de-sacs in the mountains outside of town changed more than the local topography of Milagro. Each member of the town now knows that their poor, quaint, isolated rural existence is also a powerful “dream” for the urban American Leviathan.

(Continued on next page)
Perseverance and tradition vs. capital and resources

The Field is the dramatic story of a rural Irishman’s desperate attachment to a small field, long nurtured with the sweat and blood of his family, challenged by a competing dream of roads and factories visioned by an Irish-American returning to the homeland of his emigrant family, with newfound wealth from the United States. The central question is what constitutes right and correct ownership of the earth? Is it one’s ability to persevere on the same land in the face of famine and poverty, manipulating the soil with materials at hand to turn a stony field into a velvet green pasture, or is it the right of another to organize capital, resources, and legal relationships, relying on the authority of the state to support legal title?

This story gains greater poignancy by one man’s family staying in Ireland and fighting foreigners and famine, while the other man’s family escapes to America in the face of adversity. He now returns flush with money from the New World to buy the green field for a quarry and the waterfall for hydroelectric power.

The victory of one over the other solves little, for each outcome creates untenable results; right of ownership through historical use only leads to anarchy and breakdown in the rule of law. On the other hand, a right to ownership through control of capital only discourages the value of tradition, rooted to a local, and the special knowledge gained that comes only through living and working in the same place for a generations. This film posed more questions than answers.

Land views are part of our identity

I believe how a social group views land and defines nature, defines the “right way” to use land and natural resources, is a part of their cultural identity, hence part of one’s personal identity.

Sudden imposition of new or competing visions of land use and nature, like converting green pasture into neon shopping malls, is a challenge to a person’s sense of who they are as an individual, much like imposing a new national political identity upon traditional aboriginal peoples.

Each film poses knotty questions. Does simple legal ownership grant one the right to impose his or her own particular vision of nature, no matter what that vision is, onto the land, water, air, animals and plants?

Given what we know as a culture about ecological relationships, geomorphic process, and climatic changes, what responsibility do we as individual owners of land have to our neighbors, our ancestors, our children?

Or are we responsible only to ourselves?

Thank you

A Public Form on Land Ethics was attended by nearly 200 people. The Land Trust thanks everyone who came, and especially those who served as commentators:

**Patricia Decker,**
City of Bellingham Planning Director

**Barney Goltz,**
Planner, Former State Senator

**Larry Estrada,**
Dir. of American Cultural Studies, WWU
former Mayor of Fort Collins, Colorado

**Mark Asmundson,**
Mayor of Bellingham

**Carl Simpson,**
Sociologist, Western Washington University

**Barbara Cheatham,**
Minister, Bellingham Unitarian Church

**Rand Jack,**
Attorney,
Land Steward, Rio Condor Project

**Skip Richards,**
Coalition for Land Use Education

What responsibility do we as individual owners of land have to our neighbors, our ancestors, our children?
Film Series raises more questions than answers

Katy and Carl Batchelor

Farmers and their friends were prominent among the small group of people who came together in 1983 to form the Whatcom County Land Trust. Although they cared in general about saving the open lands of the county, they were personally concerned with threats to productive agricultural land.

Over the years, as the Land Trust has labored to save natural areas of beauty and ecological significance, it has continued its original interest in preserving “working” lands. The goal remains to preserve them, not from use but for their traditional use.

Films show land and people are connected

The films in the March series spoke to the Trust’s concern with working agricultural lands. Each film viewed land as a place where people work, forcing us to view land not merely as geographic spaces—as mountains, valleys, prairies—but as human places—farms, fields, homes—which people use and which give meaning to their lives. As we viewed each film, the lesson became clearer and clearer: we cannot separate land from the people who live on it and with it.

The first films in the series—The Plow That Broke the Plains and The River—voiced a drastic but clear message. When people behave with ignorance and arrogance, their interaction with land will be destructive. Nature is an uncompromising and harsh teacher. These New Deal documentaries were equally clear in proposing that government and technology can rectify the damage, yet technology in the service of individualism and the government, as it encouraged people to homestead inappropriate land, to a large measure caused the same destructive agriculture which the films deplored.

As we ponder farmland protection more than a half century after these films, at a time that Congress is again restructuring the government’s agricultural policy, we must factor these unpleasant realities into any course of action: our ability to predict and control the course and effects of technology is at best limited, and the realities of power in (political) give-and-take change governmental policies in unintended ways.

Complications posed by our technological and political limitations, however, pale in comparison to the cultural complexities introduced by the remaining films, where social values and family-community dynamics weaken our ability to draw clear-cut boundaries between right and wrong interactions with the natural world.

In the Milagro Bean Field War, a struggle of the individual against outside interests and in support of a local community’s heritage irresistibly drew the sympathy of the audience. Yet the film avoided the question of whether or not individual action, despite its cultural value, may be destructive if carried out on a wider scale. Anyone aware of the erosion caused by small scale irrigated agriculture and pastoralism in northern New Mexico realizes that a fragile environment is as susceptible to degradation from an indigenous culture’s overuse as it is to the depredations of the small scale capitalism that preceded the Great Plains’ dust bowl.

Heartland and The Field, compelled us to acknowledge that people as well as the land will suffer when we try to force the natural world to conform to and satisfy human expectations. In Heartland a woman dreams of an independent life, free from servitude. When this noble dream clashes with limits of the land, she and the people she loves pay a terrible toll while the land endures. The Field was excruciating in driving home the human cost of trying to force land to carry the weight of complex human needs and values. A beneficial stewardship created a fertile field, but also instilled in the steward a belief that he alone had the right to ownership and control. When this concept of ownership, rooted in local custom and beneficial use, clashed with ownership conferred through law and economics, every “owner” was destroyed. The fate of the land remained uncertain.

The opinions expressed by the commentators in the discussions that followed carried a value beyond the messages of the films themselves. A diversity of opinion was expressed, ranging from moderate to extreme; from personal to global. People who are interested in land, its ownership, stewardship, and conservation must exchange ideas with others. Although more questions were raised than answered, the film series stimulated meaningful thought and discussion about our land issues.
We are all one ...
and each is accountable

Skip Richards

The Field portrays a conflict in 1930s Ireland between a tenant farmer, his landlady who decides to sell the land he loves and has devoted his life to, and an American who wants to buy the land to develop it.

The movie is not about land ethics. It is about a failure of human ethics on every level: governmental, social, familial and personal. The central character, Bull McCabe, is at odds with everyone; his actions result in the death of his own son and the destruction of his life’s work.

The Field is thus not about humanity’s — or one man’s — relationship with the land, but about one man’s fatally flawed relationships with everyone with whom he comes in contact. Good steward of the land he might be, but Bull McCabe fails as a husband, father, neighbor, and ultimately as a human being, which in turn renders his land stewardship unsustainable.

Government imposed land ethics are First Amendment violation

As for a land ethic, I assume that the Trust had in mind the ethic described by Aldo Leopold: “A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.” There are two comments I can make about that sort of ethic.

First, if there are objective criteria by which we can determine integrity and stability of the biotic system, those who tend to preserve it will live long and prosper; those who do not, will not. Nature always bats last; there are physical constraints upon our behavior toward land which we can only ignore at great cost. Thus, such an ethic is to some extent a matter of enlightened self-interest.

Second, the foundation of one’s ethics springs from religious or spiritual beliefs, or lack thereof. The founders of this nation realized that religious freedom was the only way to avoid the continuous religious wars that devastated the Europe from which they fled. So while Leopold’s land ethic may appeal to many, they should practice it on their own land, exercising their private property rights, and, if they wish, attempt to persuade others to join them. They can certainly advocate similar policies on public lands, but it is a violation of First Amendment rights to attempt to impose any particular land ethic as a governmental policy which all must obey on private land.

As to who should own the land, I sensed that most of the film audience believed that the best stewards of the land should “own” it. McCabe, for instance, should not have faced challenges to his control of the field. Any system of “ownership” based upon how well one takes care of land must include how we establish the criteria for best land stewardship, and who controls that process. There is no way to avoid a subjective element in that determination. Centralized planning schemes to implement such a system have been miserable failures throughout history, the Soviet “experiment” being one example. I know of no equitable and sustainable way to allocate land based upon how well someone takes care of it. I challenge anyone to propose such a system.

Unless we find that utopia, the modern system of definable, secure, and transferable private property rights, in the free market, with all its imperfections, is by far the best system available to insure that those best able to take care of land own most of it.

Systems are no better than the humans who employ them, of course; that land is held by those without a sustainable land ethic reflects maladaptive cultural elements, the vestiges of the feudal hierarchy, and common human foibles, which our many thousands of years of civilized history have failed to eradicate, and which utopian schemes such as socialism only made worse.

Private rights and the free market enable the swiftest cultural evolution. In the last 40 years, the appreciation of environmental concerns has grown exponentially in the western capitalist democracies, but the land use policies of centrally planned states continued on unchecked because those societies contained no feedback mechanisms provided by market pricing in response to supply and demand; as well, regimes based upon centralized planning have systematically ignored consumer preferences and suppressed citizen dissent by force.

(Continued on page F)
The modern system of definable, secure, and transferable private property rights, in the free market... is by far the best system available to insure that those best able to take care of land own most of it.

Private interest, public interest, and private rights

Should the private sector be allowed to do whatever it wants? No. There must be a clear hierarchy established with private interests (what each individual wants or expects from land he owns) at the bottom, the public interest (as determined by the representative democratic process) in the middle, and private rights (which are inalienable, and, with respect to government, absolute, but with respect to other persons, relative) at the top. Under the last two clauses of the Fifth Amendment to the US Constitution, the public interest is allowed to take precedence over private interests, but not at the expense of private rights. Thus, government is allowed to take private property (public interest supersedes private interests) but not without just compensation (private rights are supreme over both public and private interests).

Public rights are not provided for in the Declaration, or the federal or state Constitutions because such a concept would directly contravene the essence of a democratic society. Public rights would legalize tyranny of the majority: individual civil rights to free speech, assembly, etc. — let alone property rights — could be suspended by an act of the majority at any time, leaving the individual no recourse.

I note, with interest, that the Land Trust's efforts would be without lasting effect absent a system of definable, secure, and transferable property rights.

A member of the film audience quoted Einstein as saying we are all a part of nature and of each other, so the idea of individual separateness is a fallacy, and, the speaker seemed to suggest, so is the system of individual rights.

The first claim is correct, the second is not. Larry Dossey, M.D., in Space, Time, and Medicine, relying on the work of modern physicists, including Einstein associate David Bohm (Wholeness and Implicate Order) addresses the first part:

All mental images of human beings as isolated, fundamental, clinical units are bound to be as wrong as the notions of subatomic particles as spatially separated particulate bits. ... human beings are essentially dynamic processes and patterns that are fundamentally not analyzable into separate parts — either within or between each other. ... they are spread through space and time, and it is their interrelatedness and oneness, not their isolation and separation, which is most important.

Thus, human beings are "dynamic processes and patterns" linked to all other such patterns by multi-dimensional and multi-modal connections of varying strength. These patterns, however, possess free will and moral responsibility, something that cosmic dust, chairs, rocks and other beings of the universe do not. The human being is the logical unit of accountability for decision making because he possesses willpower, an ability to act, and feelings which react to both his actions and the actions of others. Human collectives, even blood families, do not exhibit any characteristics beyond those of the humans which inhabit them. While human relationships not only impact, but to a certain extent define, the people who participate in them, only the individual human being can take action and therefore be responsible for that action. Collective responsibility is a contradiction in terms.

Property rights involve personal relationships

Like The Field, property rights are about our relations with one another, not relationships between people and land. By holding title to property its owner engages in a complex set of relationships involving his heirs, sellers, neighbors, government, real estate agents, title companies, guests, potential trespassers, and so on.

As Wendell Berry has pointed out, the only true basis for a human economy is affection. People like Bull McCabe will always be poverty stricken, no matter how much land they own or how well they take care of it, because without healthy human relationships, life isn’t worth much.

I hope this long passage by Berry (see page G) can give us a common starting place for further discussion.
In my own politics and economics I am a Jeffersonian — or, I might more accurately say, I am a democrat and an agrarian. I believe that land that is to be used should be divided into small parcels among a lot of small owners; I believe therefore in the right of private property. I believe that, given our history and tradition, a large population of small property holders offers the best available chance for local cultural adaptation and good stewardship of the land — provided that the property holders are secure, legally and economically, in their properties. There is also, I believe, an ecological justification [for such a system of private property]. If landed properties are democratically divided and properly scaled, and if family security in these properties can be preserved over a number of generations, then we will greatly increase the possibility of authentic cultural adaptation to local homelands.

Not only will we make more apparent to successive generations the necessary identity between the health of human communities and the health of local ecosystems but we will also give people the best motives for caretaking and we will call into service the necessary local intelligence and imagination. Such an arrangement would give us the fullest possible assurance that our forests and farmlands would be used by people who know them best and care the most about them.

Our history, obviously, gives us no hope that, in our present lack of a general culture of land stewardship, the weaknesses in our idea of private property can be corrected by the idea of public property. To insist that our public forests should be cared for and used as a commonwealth already strains belief, for it raises immediately the question of where we are to find the people who know how and are adequately motivated to care for it.

Our history could not produce an adequate number of people adequately prepared to be good stewards of the public lands any more than of lands "privately" owned.

If in order to protect our forest land we designate it a commons separate from private ownership, then who will care for it? The absentee timber companies who see no reason to care about local consequences? The same government agencies and agents who are failing at present to take good care of our public forests? Is it credible that people inadequately skilled and inadequately motivated to care well for the land can be made to care well for it by public insistence that they do so?

The answer is obvious: you cannot get good care in the use of the land by demanding it from public officials. That you have the legal right to demand it does not at all improve the case. If one out of every two of us should become a public official, we would be no nearer to good land stewardship than we are now. The idea that a displaced people might take appropriate care of places is merely absurd; there is no sense in it and no hope. Our present ideas of conservation and of public stewardship are not enough. Duty is not enough. Sentiment is not enough. No mere law, divine or human, could conceivably be enough to protect the land while we are using it.

If we want the land to be cared for, then we must have people living on and from the land who are able and willing to care for it. If landowners and land users are accountable to their fellow citizens for their work, their products, and their stewardship, then these landowners and land users must be granted an equitable membership in the economy.

From Another Turn of the Crank by Wendell Berry. Reprinted with permission from Counterpoint. For more information, please write Counterpoint, P.O. Box 65793, Washington, D.C. 20035-5793, or call 202-887-0363.
Summary

“Rapid changes in Bellingham are altering our personal relations with land; there is less and less sense that land is shared and part of our community. We should begin asking if new land uses add anything to the quality of life here.”

Mark Asmundson
March 13, 1996

...and benign land for granted, forgetting it, paving it over, or building on rich, valuable soil.


March 27
The Field (1990, Jim Sheridan, dir.)

Commentators: Skip Richards and Rand Jack.

(See Skip Richards’ comments, page 5 of this supplement.)

Rand Jack remarked that the film powerfully demonstrates how complex the idea of private property can become once we move beyond slogans. It raises dilemmas for the myth that landowners possess absolute rights in land and instead asks who really “owns” what? How? Why? Where do our “rights” stop? overlap? Is the basis for such rights in human legislation or, as Bull McCabe insisted, in natural law? Or in the hands of those who are in the best position to exercise stewardship? How should we resolve such clashes over property and its care? Whose interests do we uphold: the community, the legal owner, a developer, the laborer, our future? By what criteria? If we demand absolute, either-or answers, we may end up, like the film, with disaster.

Audience comments: “Criteria? How about the social good? Are there biological criteria that should govern? the relation of parts to the whole?” . . . “How should we react to outsiders?” . . .

“Real problem not addressed in the movie was deforestation of Ireland long before. That denuded landscape was not natural.” . . . “External forces control local communities: the church, the British, the wealthy American.” . . . “The Custer rezone victory shows the importance of community organization and struggle, of not giving up.” . . .

“Obsession with land, McCabe’s greed, can be as fatal as an obsession with money.” . . . “Environmentalists, in trying to oppose irresistible forces of history, eventually go insane.”
Planning now can help protect your land from estate tax

Stephen J. Small, Esq.

Land may have become so valuable it may have to be sold to pay the estate tax.

A few years ago, at a national conference in Montana, a speaker made the following observation.

"There are 90 million acres of land in Montana," he said, "and over the next 15-20 years 30 million of those acres are going to change hands. That's because that's how much land we have that is owned by people who are of an average age of 59 and one half."

That is really remarkable, I thought. And then I thought, you know, that's not true only in Montana, it's true in Georgia...and Virginia...and Pennsylvania...and New York...and all over the United States. An enormous amount of private land in this country is held by people who are 55, even 65 and older. And over the next 15 to 20 years, millions of acres are going to change hands and potentially change use, depending on how landowners plan for—and don't plan for—their land's future.

With all due credit to that speaker, I don't think he realized the significance of what he had said.

In New England, the average age of the woodland owner is 65. In the Southeast, the average age of the private forestland owner is 64. I was told recently that on one particularly important stretch of scenic road outside of Lexington, Kentucky, there are 20 landowners, and 18 of them are 70 or older.

In 1988, I wrote a little book called Preserving Family Lands. The message of Preserving Family Lands is simple: if you have a piece of land you care about, you may have a serious estate tax problem. That land may have become so valuable it may have to be sold to pay the estate tax. Given the one-two combination of demographics and the estate tax, millions of acres of open space, wildlife habitat, farmland, forestland, wildlife corridors, watershed, and ranch-land are at risk.

There was another message in Preserving Family Lands. If you are a landowner, and if you care about preserving the quality of life in your neighborhood and your community, you also have tools for dealing with the estate tax problem. Let me give you an example of how devastating the estate tax can be, then turn to the tools to fix the problem.

Let's say that John and Mary own Rolling Hills, a beautiful county estate. A real estate developer has just offered John and Mary $3 million for Rolling Hills, with the idea of turning the estate into a 50-lot subdivision. Of course, John and Mary turned the fellow down.

Let's also say that John and Mary are comfortable, with a portfolio and savings worth about $1.5 million, and that they haven't bothered to have their wills updated for some time.

Mary dies first, and she leaves the cash, the portfolio, and Rolling Hills to John. Assume there is no estate tax due at that time. John dies, and he thinks he leaves Rolling Hills, and the $1.5 million to their three children.

The children, who had assumed all along that they would inherit their beloved Rolling hills, are in for a rude awakening, because this is what happens.

(Continued on page 3)
A critically important part of the Trust's structure is the active participation of the volunteer board.

This issue of The Steward will highlight some of the duties the Land Trust performs to carry out land conservation in Whatcom County. Monitoring existing easements, public education of land stewardship principles, and building the strength of the Trust's organization are essential to fulfill the Land Trust's mission of conserving special places in Whatcom County.

Monitoring is important part of conservation service

Monitoring is the yearly process of visiting easement properties to insure that the terms of the easements are being upheld. Volunteers who conduct the monitoring review the terms of the easements before contacting the property owner to request permission to visit the land. On site, the monitors compare the condition of the property with photographs of the site. Monitoring is a delicate task requiring sensitivity to property owners, but firmness in protecting our easement. This is a responsibility the Land Trust takes very seriously as part of our conservation service to the community. Special thanks to Sharon Digby and Cindy Klein for organizing a successful monitoring program in 1995. (See related article on page 6.)

New Community Outreach Program

Also, this issue of The Steward announces the formation of the Community Outreach Committee to coordinate community education projects. Besides the book project (described in the annual meeting article on page 4), the Trust sponsored a Public Forum on Land Ethics during March, with a film series and discussion of a variety of vexing issues concerning land use. Given the selection of films and speakers, the Forum promises to be a very interesting event.

Part-time staff provides organizational support

For the Land Trust to work smoothly, a strong organization with efficient staff and lean administration is required. The Land Trust is very fortunate to have two very dedicated, part time staff, Robyn du Pré, the Conservation Coordinator, and Sheri Emerson, our Administrative Assistant. The organizational support these folks provide gives the Land Trust Board members the time and information we need to provide responsible land conservation services.

Thanks to outgoing Board president

A critically important part of the Trust's organizational structure is the active participation of the volunteer board. In February, I was elected to succeed Chris Moench as President of the Land Trust. Thanks to Chris' commitment and dedication over the last three years, the Trust is on solid ground with a clear direction for the future. Chris was instrumental in developing our current organizational strength; he committed enormous amounts of time to keep the Trust operating smoothly. Chris's work with the Trust is an example of the kind of devotion our volunteer Board gives to make land conservation work for the benefit of all in Whatcom County.

The Land Trust board of Directors expresses its deep appreciation for Chris Moench's work and devotion to the organization during the past three years.

In addition to progress in programs, staff and activities during that time, Chris has set an example of personal dedication. He has provided leadership and generously given time, energy and thought to the protection of our natural heritage—the qualities that voluntary organizations must have in order to flourish.

Thank you Chris, you have our admiration and gratitude for a job well done.

WCLT Board of Directors
Another Perspective

Private property rights: Comparing attitudes with Germany

Bob Keller
WCLT Board member Bob Keller spent last Fall living in Germany. While there he observed major differences in property owner attitudes among his German neighbors and the property rights movement witnessed locally.

After walking just a few steps one morning into the Black Forest near St. Margen, we found a trail sign: Land und Forstwirtsch. Verkehr frei. (Field and Forest Management. Open space.) In other words: “you are free to hike here,” which in our case meant we were welcome to hike for three hours on private land.

Having moved to Germany in the midst of Washington’s Proposition 48 campaign, attitudes about private property struck me more forcefully than any other contrast between Europe and America. Living a little less than four months in Buchenbach, a small village east of Freiburg between the Rhine and Danube, obviously does not make one an instant expert on Germany. There is much that I do not know about their land concepts, land management philosophy, and environmental attitudes. Nonetheless, observations and talking with people provided some initial grounds for comparison.

Germany’s open spaces

Germans, despite their population density (nearly eight times as great as ours) and love of cars, have managed to avoid American sprawl. One leaves Freiburg to almost instantly enter countryside. The landscape has frequent villages and settlements, but the spaces between are green and open. Urban houses pack tightly together with small yards and few front lawns. In the open country, as in the city, one can stroll or bike just about anywhere, including private property.

Most German and Swiss land is privately owned, with few game sanctuaries and public reserves, and almost no national parks, yet it is extensively used by the public for recreation. In Germany and Switzerland one finds trails crisscrossing everywhere over private land, allowing public access - Verkehr frei - to woods, pastures, livestock, farms, forests, private homes, and private recreational sites. One can hike almost anywhere in the Black Forest or Swiss Alps, and 95 percent of that travel is apparently on private property where the owners either ignore the intruder, wave a greeting, or give helpful directions. In walking nearly 150 miles through the Black Forest and in the Alps, I recall only two Durchgang verboten (No Trespassing/Keep Out) signs. Instead, trails were coded for route, benched, and maintained by local hiking clubs.

Public trails often cover private land

We had two routes from our Buchenbach house to the railway station; the second path being half the distance of the first. This route existed because a farmer gave everyone permission to cross his property even though using his land meant walking next to his barn, by his cattle, past his equipment storage and his house. In Switzerland, I have hiked directly below a family’s front porch. By contrast, in America, I may not venture that close to a private home for fear of being shot.

Property rights controversy subdued

Although the Germans, and certainly the Swiss, are capitalists, controversy over private property and landowner rights either has never happened or is buried in the distant past. Legal issues raised in America by conversion of railroad right-of-way to public trail, such as the Chuckanut lawsuit over the Interurban route, does not exist there. This “taking” happens despite Germans being very proud and jealous of their land, and much more private in their personal lives than Americans.

It’s not clear why such differences exist. Germans as a culture do not practice much American individualism, which has cost them dearly at times. Perhaps the idea of a public “taking” through limited access never occurs to Germans? Perhaps sharing one’s land is an old civic virtue, part of belonging to Germany, part of an assumed trust of ownership? If so, it goes both ways. The wanderers don’t trash trails; they close gates, use stiles, respect livestock, and they stay on footpaths.

There’s a private hand-lettered plaque someone had hung beneath the official sign at St. Margen: Wer zu fuss geht, hat mehr von leben. (Those-who walk, get more out of life.) Germans apparently believe this, for every Sunday people of all ages head out onto their trails and through the farmlands, trespassing at will.

Hiking on agricultural land in the Black Forest.

The Steward Spring 1996
On an ice-crusted February 4, in the cozy home of Carl and Katie Batchelor, the WCLT Board held its annual meeting. The agenda was broad, reflecting on the past year and to charting the course for the coming seasons.

Starting things on a grateful note, President Chris Moench spoke of 1995 as a year of great change and accomplishment for the Trust. Moench highlighted the County’s acquisition of Squire’s Lake and the protection of the Kenny Creek Eagle Night Roost as the year’s biggest conservation successes.

Long range planning work by the board last spring, the new office and staff, and the successful completion of the first annual fund raising campaign were noted as signs that the Trust is taking real steps to strengthen its presence in the community and move toward the financial stability.

In his final act as president, Moench personally thanked each of the board members and other volunteers present for their contributions to the Trust.

**New board officers**

New Board members elected this year are:

- **Gordon Scott**, president,
- **Carl Batchelor**, vice-president,
- **Hilda Bajema**, treasurer,
- **Chris Moench**, secretary.

Looking toward the coming year the board reaffirmed its commitment to these long term goals of the Land Trust:

I. Protect, preserve and restore unique natural, recreational, agricultural and wildlife habitat lands.

II. Build a financially strong organization.

III. Build a diverse board representing interests from across the geographic, socioeconomic, and ethnic landscape of the county.

IV. Build public awareness and practice of land stewardship principals.

**New wildlife project targets habitat conservation**

With the above goals in mind, the board decided to focus on a project to ensure the long term health of the Nooksack River Basin ecosystem through conservation of key wildlife habitat.

This project, still in its initial phases, will entail research of habitat needs for key wildlife species as well as property ownership and land use patterns for the area. Key habitat areas under particular pressure from human use will be prioritized. Armed with this information, the Land Trust will design a conservation program to meet the needs of both wildlife and people in the Nooksack River Basin.

The Board also made a commitment to continue the conservation work already under way and to respond to opportunities as they arise through the year.

**New committee**

A new committee, called the Community Outreach Program, was created at the suggestion of Board member Bob Keller, to undertake long term projects of stewardship education. The first of the committee’s tasks will be the creation of a “coffee table” book called *Whatcom Places* that will be a document of special natural gems of the county and the work of the Land Trust. Look for it in local book stores in about two years.

Having completed the meeting’s agenda in four hours of hard work, the board adjourned for a sumptuous potluck lunch and then skated its way down Carl’s driveway toward a year promising new challenges and achievements.
Donations are big slice of support

Julie Carpenter, Fund-raising Committee Chair

No brief words can adequately express our appreciation for your response to our first annual fund-raising campaign. Private donations were the Trust’s third largest source of support in 1995.

Currently, the renewal of the Whatcom County Natural heritage contract is uncertain. This contract has funded the work of the Conservation development grant from the Wilburforce Foundation will expire at the end of 1996.

Your donations will be critical to the continuation of the Land Trust office, outreach, and land preservation efforts in the years to come.

Again, please accept our sincere thanks for your donations.

The Land Trust extends its thanks to all our 1995 contributors

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And many office equipment donors and other individuals and organizations. Thank you!
Letters to the Land Trust
Squires family pleased with county acquisition

Dear Sirs:

My wife and I have received your Summer 1995 newsletter in which you describe the negotiations and acquisition of Squires Lake and the surrounding property as a county park.

We want you to know that we are extremely happy to see this come about. And I’m sure that my mother and father, Leta and Ralph Squires, were they alive, would also be pleased to see that what was once our property is now and will forever be a park that everyone can enjoy.

If there are any questions that we can answer about the lake or its history, please let us know.

Sincerely, Martin and Margaret Squires

New Parks Program invites community participation

The “Trail Volunteers Program,” a new Whatcom County Parks Department program of community volunteers, has been meeting regularly to maintain and establish trails on Whatcom County Parks property.

Although Squires Lake is not yet open to the public, this group has spent Saturdays working to develop trails near the lake. Steve LeCocq, longtime Samish resident and Samish Park manager, organized the Trails Volunteer Program and is using community volunteers and resources to develop trails.

Anyone interested in volunteering with the Trails Volunteer Program is encouraged to contact Steve at 733-2362. The group meets on the first Saturday of each month, at 8:30 am, at Samish Park.

Classes study natural setting

Julie Carpenter

We’re excited about the next phase of the Squires Lake project. There are two pieces of good news: the Land Trust has received a $2,000.00 grant from the new Foley Frischkorn Wildlife & Conservation Fund for use at Squires Lake.

The Trust is also pleased to announce the volunteer cooperation of Huxley College of Environmental Studies in developing baseline data for the lake and its surroundings.

Dr. Leo Bodensteiner, Assistant Professor of Aquatic Ecology, and his graduate Limnology class visited Squires Lake in February to study the depth and contours of the lake, the water chemistry, and to take and identify biological samples.

In the Spring, Dr. Bert Webber, Professor of Environmental Studies at Huxley College, will lead his classes in research on the wildlife habitat and native plant species surrounding the lake. Both Dr. Webber and Dr. Bodensteiner have agreed to serve as technical consultants for the project.

The data from their studies and funding from the Foley Frischkorn Fund will eventually be used to help create an interpretive sign illustrating the natural habitat of Squires Lake.

Thanks once again to the many donors and volunteers who helped make the permanent preservation of Squires Lake possible. For more information about how you can get involved as a “Friend of Squires Lake,” contact the Land Trust office, 650-9470.

Jerry Wiseman, Anita Wiseman, Birger Solberg, and Lang Solberg help clear trails near Squires Lake. These volunteers have been working as part of the Whatcom County Parks Department’s newly organized Trails Volunteer Program. (Photo courtesy of Steve LeCocq.)
Monitoring easements is ongoing process
Sharon Digby
Monitoring Committee Chair

This was a banner year for monitoring our conservation easements. Board members and volunteers visited all of our 14 sites. Thanks to all property owners for working with us to arrange the visits. A special thanks to Vern and Carol Renius for the strawberries and ice cream!

When the Whatcom County Land Trust takes an easement on a property, we are entering into a commitment to maintain the terms of the easement in perpetuity. Most of our easement properties still have the original owners, however, in time, as the properties change hands, monitoring will become more important. Our yearly visits will help us keep track of changes.

Our visit to the Ruth Kelsey property this year found that off-road vehicles have been trespassing, damaging the stream. We decided to fence the property boundary, with help from the people at Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association. Thanks go to Wilson Engineering for donating their time to survey the boundary.

Many of our easement properties have stewards who site-visit periodically. If you are interested in becoming a steward or making a yearly monitoring visit, please contact Sharon Digby at 592-2286, or call the Land Trust office, 650-9470.

The Mission of the Whatcom County Land Trust is to preserve and protect unique natural, scenic, agricultural and open space land in Whatcom County through acquisition of perpetual conservation easements or other land interest that insure the protection of the resource value.

Whatcom County Land Trust is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization working for voluntary land conservation in Whatcom County. The Steward is published three times each year by the WCLT. Your comments are welcomed. Complimentary copies are available by calling the Land Trust office, 650-9470.

Newsletter Committee Chair: Chris Moench
Contributors: Chris Moench, Bob Keller, Gordon Scott, Julie Carpenter, Sharon Digby, Steve LeCocq
Desktop Publishing: Sheri Emerson

When (we) take an easement on a property, we are entering into a commitment to maintain the terms of the easement in perpetuity.

County Council update
Conservation Futures Levy up for advisory vote next Fall
Chris Moench

We reported in our Fall issue of The Steward that the County Council had voted to place a moratorium on collecting the Conservation Futures Levy in 1996, and to place the issue of continuing collection up for an advisory vote in the general election this Fall.

Subsequent to the council's vote, County Executive Shirley Van Zanten vetoed the moratorium. So, the levy will be collected in 1996. However, the advisory vote will still be on the ballot.

This vote is an opportunity for thoughtful discussion about conservation of our natural heritage in a climate of rapid population growth and economic development. It is vitally important that all supporters of conservation speak out in the upcoming debate.

In a related matter, the newly seated County Council has voted to renew a contract with the Trust though the end of April to continue the work of implementing the Natural Heritage Plan. Subsequent contracts to implement the plan will be put up for bid. As of this writing, the Trust had not yet decided whether to submit a proposal to the county for the contract.
Estate Planning
(Continued from page 1)

In most states, the combined federal and state estate tax on the $4.5 million estate (Rolling Hills plus the other assets) is almost $2 million. Rolling Hills has to be sold to pay the estate tax, and there are two irrevocable losses. First, the family will lose Rolling Hills. Second, Rolling Hills will almost certainly be paved over, bulldozed, subdivided, and re-landscaped, and all of the open space will be lost forever.

In contrast, what if John and Mary had a successful family business worth $3 million? Would John and Mary and their advisors have done some sophisticated tax, financial, and legal planning to get the family business through the transfer tax system to the children? Absolutely! A whole array of entirely appropriate tools would likely be used to keep that business intact and get it to the kids.

Why haven’t they done the same sort of sophisticated, aggressive, creative planning for Rolling Hills? Succession planning for the business owner is an accepted tax planning and financial planning discipline; for those of us who value open space, it’s time we focus on succession planning for the landowner. Even if Congress changes the estate tax rules, landowners need to understand that good succession planning for family lands will still be necessary.

The principal tool in the private landowner’s toolbox is the conservation easement, but it is not the only tool. A planning strategy may include the use of a family limited partnership, a “generation-skipping trust,” and possibly annual gifts to children and grandchildren. Often, too, more sophisticated planning involves the use of other forms of tax-advantaged charitable giving, including various forms of charitable trust and family private foundations.

The purpose of this article is not to explain these tools. The purpose here is to make three points.

First, open space is threatened because of an aging population of landowners and the impact of high federal estate taxes.

Second, this is a problem that landowners can do something about and that land trusts can do something about.

Third, this is a problem that needs attention now. It is not too late for the educational process to begin, and land trusts can play an important role in that process. Awareness of these issues should force landowners to act, to do the planning, and to protect and preserve the open space that is so important to all of us.
The eagles will vote

Rand Jack

The Whatcom County Land Trust and the Trillium Corporation have agreed to a conservation easement to protect in perpetuity the Kenny Creek bald eagle night roost. The eagles congregate there to sleep after a day of feeding on salmon in the North Fork of the Nooksack River. This conservation easement is unique in that the eagles will ultimately determine the location of the land protected under the easement.

As part of the 1993 land exchange orchestrated by the Land Trust, Trillium acquired the Kenny Creek night roost from the Department of Natural Resources, a result sought by neither Trillium nor the Land Trust. At that time Trillium promised to protect the eagle roost with a conservation easement. That promise is now being fulfilled. For the past two years the Land Trust and Trillium have been working with wildlife biologists and eagle specialists to develop a habitat protection plan for the eagles at Kenny Creek. A plan, incorporated into a conservation easement, has been agreed.

Communal night roosts are an essential aspect of bald eagle habitat, and thus, are critical for stable, healthy eagle populations. After a day of foraging for food, eagles gather in a staging area near the river in the late afternoon, and from there move to a night roost. Though wildlife biologists do not know for certain, they believe that communal winter night roosts serve a variety of functions, including the exchange of information regarding the location of food and the conservation of energy through sleeping in slightly warmer air columns created in forest micro climates. Both the creation of favorable micro climates and the availability of adequate perches require certain forest types and structures.

Prior to acquisition by Trillium, the Kenny Creek area was subject to several episodes of logging. Nevertheless, according to studies stretching back to the mid 1970’s, as many as 25 eagles continued to night roost in the vicinity between November and March.

In addition to looking at past studies, biologists retained by Trillium made ten surveys of the site in...
Thoughts from the President

Chris Moench
WCLT Board of Directors President

The rancorous debates of the recent political season were focused, to a great extent, on our relationship to the land. The turmoil set me thinking on the nature of land stewardship practiced by the land trust movement.

Land stewardship is a kind of marriage, if you will, a sacred trust entered into between the landowner, the land and the communities that live upon it—human, animal and plant. Each of us, land owners or not, owe our existence to fertile land.

The work of land trusts runs counter to our industrial society’s assumption that accumulating individual wealth is the highest goal. Coupling modern legal tools with people’s love of natural places, land trusts create opportunities for us to give back. By individually contributing land, money or time we give a gift to the land and people living today and to the grandchildren of our grandchildren.

National Rally gathers land trusts from across the country

In October WCLT board members Sharon Digby, Cindy Klein and I had the good fortune to attend the national rally of the Land Trust Alliance on the Monterey Peninsula in California. We came home with a host of information and useful tools to help the Trust carry out its mission.

In reflecting on the rally two images come strongly to mind. First, is San Jose’s vast expanse of asphalt and concrete at the south end of San Francisco Bay. Once one of the world’s premier saltwater estuaries, it was home to millions of water birds. As our plane banked through dense October air I was able to spot only one moderate size city park and a small section of shoreline, perhaps 150 acres, that still showed the original estuary channels. All else was filled, paved and built upon. Today the city labors from the uninspired vision of its forefathers.

My second, and more positive impression was the rally itself. Gathered for four days were 950 people from across the nation who make it their cause to work for voluntary land conservation. In places as diverse as the deserts of Arizona, New Hampshire forests and Alaska’s Ketchikan Peninsula thousands of private citizens are working through local trusts to protect lands they love. According to the Land Trust Alliance approximately one new trust is born each week. It is a fast growing national movement!

WCLT opens office

The Whatcom County Land Trust is growing as well. Thanks to a generous organizational development grant from the Wilburforce Foundation, we now have an office in the Bay Street Village at 301 W. Holly Street, Bellingham. Also, we hired a multi-talented Administrative Secretary, Sheri Emerson. A lifelong resident of Whatcom County, Sheri is blessed with just the right temperament to coax ever higher achievements from our diverse and headstrong board. Already she has mothered us through setting up and equipping the office, our first annual fund-raising campaign, production of this issue of “The Steward” and innumerable daily brush fires.

Our Conservation Coordinator, Robyn duPre, has continued helping the Trust with its central work of conserving land. In addition to pursuing and implementing numerous conservation projects, she coordinated a magnificent celebration of the acquisition of Squire’s Lake by Whatcom County. (That project, and the Trust’s role in it, was detailed in our Summer 95 newsletter.)

With a new office and additional staff the Trust is striding forward to serve as one of the primary instruments for the people of Whatcom County to preserve the natural places they love.

Please join us at our Open House

I invite all of our supporters to our Office Open House on Thursday evening, November 30, (See page 8). Or drop by for a visit any weekday during our office hours Monday-Thursday, 10:00 am-1:00 pm. If you are interested in getting involved, please ask about committee openings or other volunteer opportunities. We are at the beginning of a new effort to bring more people into volunteer work for the Trust.

Of course, one vital way you can support the Trust is with financial contributions. We strive to make our operations “lean and mean.” Every dollar you contribute is a direct investment in the future integrity of Whatcom County’s most precious resources—its natural and farm lands.

These lands are your home. This Trust is your trust into the future.
the winter of 1993-94. They surmised that the eagles had been displaced by logging from preferred habitat and that it would be desirable, from an eagle’s point of view, to refurbish the former prime habitat and return it to its preferred status. These assumptions, which became the working basis for the habitat protection plan, led Trillium and the Land Trust for the first time into a vital new undertaking called restoration biology.

Under the conservation easement, the night roost protection area is divided into four zones.

- **Permanent Roost Areas** - 41.1 acres which were most frequently used by eagles during the 1993-94 surveys. This area is permanently protected and will be the site of enhancement work conducted by Trillium according to the Communal Night Winter Roost Protection Area Enhancement Plan. The goal of enhancement is to improve the structure of the forest to make it more attractive to eagles as a night roost.

- **Permanent Buffer Zones** - 57.5 acres of forest land used to buffer the Permanent Roost Areas. This area will also be subject to enhancement work.

- **Temporary Buffer Zone** - 70 acres where some roosting now occurs and where logging will be prohibited until 85% of the eagles roost in the Permanent Roost Areas.

- **Seasonal Timing Restriction Area** - an additional quarter mile buffer of restricted activity between November 1 and March 31.

In other words, the 168.6 acres currently used for night roosts will be protected until the eagles decide that Trillium has done an adequate job of enhancing the habitat in the Permanent Roost Areas and vote with their wings to spend the night there.

With written notice to the Land Trust, Trillium may initiate eagle surveys conducted by wildlife biologists according to an agreed on protocol. Under the conservation easement, the Land Trust may designate someone to accompany the survey team. Provision is also made for special surveys under extreme storm conditions, with an agreement to conduct further discussions and consideration of adjustments if these conditions affect roosting patterns.

The biologists working on the project believe that this is the first night roost habitat restoration effort ever tried. At the very least, the eagles will keep what they now have in the way of habitat. Hopefully, they will end up with night roosts more suitable to their needs.

The Temporary Buffer Zone will be released from restriction only after an average of at least 85% of night roosting occurs for three consecutive years in the Permanent Roost Areas. The eagles get to decide for themselves the most desirable night roost habitat. Presumably no better authority on the subject exists, a fact that human beings have been slow to recognize.

This conservation easement represents a small but exciting step for the Land Trust and an innovative, generous undertaking for Trillium in repairing the earth and giving eagles a voice in their own destiny. On behalf of the eagles and those who cherish their presence, the Land Trust would like to thank Trillium and David Syre, Steve Brinn, and the foresters at Trillium for this gift of a conservation easement and a promise kept.
Our working forests:
The Land Trust seeks economic

Gordon Scott

Creative solutions are needed to meet the needs of land owners, as well as habitat, open space, and watershed protection.

Driving from Bellingham to Deming or Acme, your view is filled with the forested lowlands and foothills - the working forests of Whatcom County.

Owned by local timber companies and individuals, these are the forests that provide logs for local mills, living wage employment for local woodworkers, habitat for many species of wildlife, and the green foreground of our view of Mt. Baker.

The Natural Heritage Plan for Whatcom County recognized the importance of the working forests of Whatcom County as valuable natural and cultural assets, which should be maintained for future generations.

The county's working forests offer many benefits to our community. They grow valuable timber and provide a wealth of wildlife habitat, open space, wetland, and aquifer recharge areas. The working forests are a vital buffer between the intensively used urban areas of the Puget lowlands and the wildland preserves of the high Cascade alpine.

3,000 acres of forest converted to nonworking land uses

There are over 330,000 acres of forest land in western Whatcom County, yet every day, acres of forest are converted to homes, businesses, roads, and other urban uses. Over five, ten or twenty years the cumulative loss of our forest lands to intensive urban uses, fragments and threatens the useful role these working forests serve.

Roughly 3,000 acres of forest land in Whatcom County were officially converted to homesites and other nonworking land uses between 1990 and 1994.

The Trust sees two forces contributing to the decline of the working forest land base: 1. Rising market value for forest land as homesites rather than timber growing soil; 2. Increasing environmental restrictions on timber harvest. In combination, these forces create a disincentive for forestland owners to keep their land growing trees.

The Trust also recognizes that timber and forestry is an important traditional livelihood for many in our community. Timber work provides living wage jobs in an increasingly low wage service economy.

Finally, the conversion of forest land to urban and suburban uses can fragment wildlife habitat, increase stream flows and flooding, and lead to the invasion of exotic species of both plant and animal into the natural environment.

For all of these reasons, the Trust recognizes that the loss of working forests is a threat to our natural heritage and our way of life.

New ideas needed to maintain working forest lands

Recently, members of the Land Trust have discussed the need to find new tools and techniques to help forest land owners maintain the working forest land base of the county. Conservation easements such as the Eagle Night Roost agreement recently signed between the Trust and the Trillium Corporation, (See page 1), are examples of one type of conservation technique that blends the habitat protection for bald eagles with modified forest management actions.

This complex easement was tailored to the specific needs of the bald eagle population as well as to the management options available to the Trillium forest managers. Completion of the easement required the participation of technical experts in wildlife biology and forest management along with our own experts in conservation easements.

The eagle roost easement is possible for a large timber corporation such as Trillium due to its economic and management flexibility. However, the majority of the productive forest land in Whatcom County is owned by landowners with small forest parcels. To meet their needs, as well as the habitat, open space, and watershed protection mission of the Land Trust, creative ecological, economic, and legal solutions are needed.

Working to establish sustainable forest plans

Ideas being examined by the Land Trust focus on offering forest land owners a mix of services that will give them financial stability from their forest land investments while ensuring ecological sustainability for the larger Whatcom County forested ecosystem.

These services could include forest planning and harvest management that can be certified as ecologically sustainable by independent third
and environmental sustainability

parties. This certification would insure timber
management actions that meet strict ecological
standards. Certification would also allow a land
owner to sell their forest products in specialty
markets that command higher prices because of
market demand for products from sustainably
managed forest land.

The forest management plans could identify
alternative forest products, such as floral greens,
mushrooms, or other non-timber products. This
could enhance and diversify the landowner's
economic return while reducing dependence on a
traditional single crop timber rotation.

Finally, by placing conservation easements on
forestlands that have a sustainable management
plan, the long-term ecological stewardship of the
forest land would be guaranteed.

The advantages to the forest land owner under
this scenario would include a sustainable forest
and a higher value for the wood products from
their land, along with the possible tax advantages
of a conservation easement. The Trust envisions
working with qualified local forestry consultants to
establish certifiably sustainable forest plans and
develop relationships with distributors of sustain­
able wood products to insure forestland owners a
market for their wood and forest products.

These ideas are part of the Trust’s recognition
that to fulfill our mission, we will have to expand
our traditional tool box of services to meet the
evolving economic and ecological needs of the
community.

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Conservation Futures Levy ended by County Council

Public will vote in 1996

Bruce Smith

On Halloween night, the Whatcom County
Council voted 4-3 to eliminate the Conserva­
tion Futures Levy for 1996 and to seek the
advice of the voters in November 1996 on whether
the measure should be restored.

In 1991, the County Council appointed the
Natural Heritage Task Force, a citizens' commit­
tee, to develop a plan for the protection and
preservation of the County’s most important scenic
and natural areas. After an extensive series of
public hearings and fact finding, the Task Force
formulated a comprehensive set of recommenda­
tions, which were adopted as the Natural Heritage
Plan.

The Plan recommended, and the Council
adopted, a property tax levy of $6.25 per $100,000
valuation to fund the acquisition of property. The
Task Force and Council determined at the time that
this Conservation Futures Levy was essential to
implement the Plan by allowing the preservation of
property by its purchase and to avoid unfair
“takings.”

With the facilitation of the Land Trust, conserva­
tion Futures funds have made possible two
purchases to date, and in both cases provided a
match to generate other funding. One hundred
forty acres on Chuckanut Mountain were pur­
chased, using $554,000 of Conservation Futures
funds, and a State grant awarded in an equal
amount. This past summer, Conservation Futures
funds of $300,000 were combined with an equal
private donation for the purchase of Squires Lake.

Councilman Ward Nelson introduced the
resolution to stop the collection of Conservation
Futures funds, and he was joined by Barbara
Brenner, Alvin Starkenburg and Marlene Dawson.
Ken Henderson, Larry Harris, and Bob Imhof
voted to keep the Conservation Futures Levy in
place.

The Council, after much debate, voted to let
county voters recommend in November 1996
whether or not to reintroduce the Conservation
Futures Levy.
Fund-raising report

We're off to a great start

Julie Carpenter
Fund-raising Committee Chair

Thanks to you, our first annual fund-raising campaign is off to a great start. At press time we've received donations totaling over $6,000.00. The contributions include one gift of $1,000, and many others of smaller amounts. We run a "low budget" operation, and all gifts are appreciated.

There is still time to contribute. Please use the envelope provided with this newsletter. All contributions are tax deductible, and a thank-you letter will be sent to you as your receipt.

In addition to sending in your donation, you can help by getting the word out to others who should be supporters, but don't yet receive the newsletter and may not contribute to the Trust. Thanks to your generous support, the Trust is able to publish and distribute these materials to anyone who requests them. Please send us the names and addresses of anyone you would like to add to our mailing list.

A portion of your donation helps to make possible the excellent services of our office and support staff. The Trust is continuously engaged in land protection activities. Our staff and facilities make us much more effective.

On behalf of the Board of the Whatcom County Land Trust, thank you so much for helping to make this important work possible. We appreciate your contributions immensely.

Nesset Farm work day a great success

Robyn duPré

It was a warm, sunny day in early September when volunteers from the United Way gathered at the Nesset Farm to spend a day with hammer, paint brush, and shovel doing a bit of fall maintenance on the historic homestead.

The Nesset Farm was settled during the 1890s, with various additions and structures constructed over the years. The last remaining members of the Nesset family, Tom and Ingeborg Nesset placed a conservation easement on the farm in 1990. The farm was put into a trust upon the death of Tom Nesset, with the hope that it will eventually be owned by Whatcom County Parks. To help preserve the farm's historic structures until then, the Land Trust organizes periodic work days on the farm.

As a part of the United Way's Day of Caring, volunteers finished porch reconstruction started during last fall's work day, painted the shed, hung gutters, patched a porch roof, shored up the wood shed roof and cleaned up the gardens. It was a tired crew that ate fresh picked blackberries with cream at the days end!

Our thanks to all of the United Way volunteers who gave a day's labor to the farm: Jamie Carter, Siba Tep, Suzy Hartman, Paulette and Fred Gilbert, Pam West, Shelley Griffin, and Rich Dietz.

Thanks also to Nesset Farm trustee Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt, caretaker Bill Hinley and to United Way Day of Caring Coordinator, Heather Marris for her help in making the Nesset Farm work day a great success!
Give a gift for the land this holiday season

The holidays are a time to pause and remember our many blessings. Here in Whatcom County, we are truly blessed with abundant beauty and natural resources. Rugged mountains, lush forests, rich marine shorelines and productive farmland are some of our rich natural heritage.

Instead of giving gifts that consume resources, you can help conserve resources by remembering the land and giving gift memberships to the Whatcom County Land Trust.

To give a gift membership, simply send $25 or more to the Land Trust, noting that you would like your donation to be recorded as a gift membership. Be sure to give us the name and address of the recipient of your gift, and we'll send them a beautiful holiday card, announcing your gift. Recipients of gift memberships of $50 or more will also receive a Land Trust coffee mug.

Throughout the year, your friends and family will be reminded of your gift when they receive copies of The Steward, the Land Trust's newsletter, and invitations to Land Trust events. And you'll share the satisfaction of knowing that your holiday gift giving has helped make this corner of the world just a little better.

The Mission of the Whatcom County Land Trust is to preserve and protect unique natural, scenic, agricultural and open space land in Whatcom County through acquisition of perpetual conservation easements or other land interest that insure the protection of the resource value.

Whatcom County Land Trust is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization working for voluntary land conservation in Whatcom County.

The Steward is published three times each year by the WCLT. Your comments are welcomed. Complimentary copies are available by calling 650-9470.

Newsletter production
Editing Committee ................. Chris Moench, Bruce Smith, Sharon Digby, Rosemary Flora
Contributors ...................... Rand Jack, Chris Moench, Robyn duPré, Gordon Scott, Julie Carpenter
Desktop Publishing ............... Sheri Emerson

Our appreciation to Rod Burton, Keith Lazelle, Jane Hall, and also to Cindy Bennet from Premier Graphics.

Land Trust hosts luncheon, thanks contributors to Squires Lake

On October 25, the Land Trust hosted a luncheon to recognize the people and organizations that contributed toward the acquisition of Squires Lake.

Luncheon guests braved the blustery autumn weather to visit the property and returned, a bit damp around the edges, to warm themselves by the fire in the Samish Park lodge and enjoy a wonderful lunch provided by Innisfree restaurant. Thank you to Lynn and Fred Berman of Innisfree for giving their time for this event.

Land Trust president Chris Moench presented contributors with a beautiful framed photograph of the lake taken by local photographer John Pratt. Many guests expressed a desire to continue working with the Land Trust to preserve the unique natural and historic places that make our county so special.

Many thanks to all those that helped with the luncheon and to those that contributed to the public acquisition of a place that will remain a jewel for the people of Whatcom County far into the future.

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Our appreciation to Rod Burton, Keith Lazelle, Jane Hall, and also to Cindy Bennet from Premier Graphics.
Office now open

Community support and donations are appreciated

In order to better serve our community, WCLT has opened an office in Bellingham.

Our new office is located at 310 W. Holly Street, Bellingham, in Bay Street Village, Suite U-1A, (upstairs).

Previously, much of the Land Trust information and resource materials were stored with individual board members. Thanks to an organizational grant from the Wilburforce Foundation, and to the support of our members, we now have an office and part-time support staff to better serve our community.

You can reach us at our new address during office hours, Monday through Thursday, 10:00 am-1:00 pm. The WCLT phone number remains 650-9470. Our new mailing address is P.O. Box 6131, Bellingham, Washington, 98227.

We appreciate all the support we have received from the community in setting up this office, and we especially thank the following businesses for donating office equipment or selling equipment to us at greatly discounted prices.

- Ferndale Computer Service
- Brett & Daugert
- Tri-Co Office Products
- B. B. Meat & Sausage
- McEvoy Oil
- Re Store
- Hardware Sales
- Adobe, Inc.
- Lee, Smart, Cook, Martin & Patterson
- Goodwin Attorney Services

You're invited to our Open House

Celebrating our new office location:

Suite U-1A, Bay Street Village

6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Thursday, November 30

Blue Horse Gallery, 301 W. Holly Street,
Bellingham, Washington

Please join us

WHATCOM COUNTY LAND TRUST
P.O. Box 6131 • Bellingham, WA 98227

301 W. Holly St.
Suite #U-1A

Office Hours:
10:00 am-1:00 pm.
Monday-Thursday

Phone: 650-9470
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SQUIRES LAKE: A PARK FOR PEOPLE AND WILDLIFE

By Robyn duPré

After almost a year of negotiations, Squires Lake has been acquired for use as a low-impact county park. The Land Trust has been working with Whatcom County Parks and a private donor to bring this unique property into public ownership. This acquisition was made possible by a generous $300,000 donation from an anonymous local family. This beautiful 84 acre property is home to wood ducks, pileated woodpeckers, barred owls, beaver, and a variety of other creatures. The 10 acre lake and surrounding second-growth forest will be managed by Whatcom County Parks as a low-impact recreational area and for its importance to wildlife. The property will also be protected through a conservation easement held by the Whatcom County Land Trust.

The acquisition of Squires Lake is a prime example of the kind of public/private partnership that is increasingly necessary to achieve lasting conservation in these tight budgetary times. While Whatcom County Parks will own and maintain the property as a park, the Land Trust negotiated the purchase, paid for an appraisal and found local donors to offset the acquisition, development and maintenance costs for the new park. Donations raised by the Trust for the park total more than $360,000 and include:

- $300,000 cash donation: This generous donation was given by a Whatcom County family that wants to help preserve the county’s special natural places. This donation equals half of the $600,000 purchase price for the property. The provision of these private funds allowed (continued on page 2).

THE WHATCOM COUNTY LAND TRUST MISSION

“The mission of the Whatcom County Land Trust is to preserve and protect unique, natural, scenic, agricultural, and recreational land in perpetuity through acquisition of conservation easements or other arrangements in order to promote the stewardship of the land for present and future generations.”
Trust Receives Development Grant  
By Bob Keller

The Whatcom County Land Trust announces that it has been awarded a $30,000 development grant from the Wilberforce Foundation of Seattle.

Land Trust president Chris Moench said the funding will allow the Trust to reach a higher level of effectiveness in the community. “This boost from Wilberforce will allow us to open and staff a downtown office, which in turn will be a new base for membership, stewardship education, and fund raising campaigns,” Moench explained. “The grant enables a two year start-up, after that membership growth and contributions will sustain the office. We’re really excited.”

The Land Trust, founded in 1982, has been instrumental in protecting areas such as Clark’s Point, Teddy Bear Cove, the Chuckanut Mountains, the Lake Whatcom watershed, and wildlife habitat along the Nooksack River. It is currently working to implement the county’s Natural Heritage Plan, and to protect the Point Roberts Heron rookery and privately owned natural lands all across the county.

Wilberforce supports civic groups seeking to upgrade their internal organization. The money cannot be used for land acquisition or any external programs.

FIRST ANNUAL FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN TO START SOON  
By Julie Carpenter

“We’re excited to start bringing the community as a whole more actively into the business of the Whatcom County Land Trust,” said Chris Moench, President of the Whatcom County Land Trust (WCLT) Board. For the first time in WCLT history, the Board is organizing an annual fundraising campaign specifically to ask supporters for financial backing.

WCLT has promised to act as the legal steward in perpetuity for conservation properties. To make sure that the WCLT remains a sustainable organization capable of operating in perpetuity, (continued on page 5)

A VERY SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR NEWSLETTER SUPPORTERS:

SQUIRES LAKE (continued from page 1)  
Whatcom County Parks to acquire this site for one half its appraised value—a good deal for the tax-payers of Whatcom County!

- MKB Construction will donate their services to improve a small dam on the west end of the lake in order to ensure that the park is safe for public use. This donation is valued at approximately $30,000.
- Wilder Construction will provide services for the construction of a parking lot and road improvements. This donation is valued at $10,000.
- Trillium Corporation: In order to allay county concerns about the annual maintenance costs for the park, the Trillium Corporation has pledged $10,000 towards park maintenance expenses. This donation should cover all maintenance costs for the first five years of park operation.

- Private Pledges: To date, three individuals have pledged contributions of $1,000 - $5,000 to be used for other park development costs. These pledges total $11,000.

The generosity of these donors has provided the community with an unparalleled example of private individuals, businesses, non-profits and government working together to make this community a better place. “I think this is unprecedented in Whatcom County” said Land Trust board member, Rand Jack.

The Trust is very grateful to the dozens of people who worked in support of this project. Special kudos must be given to the county council members which championed the acquisition and had the vision and integrity to vote for the preservation of this beautiful place not just for our own enjoyment, but for the enjoyment of our children and our children’s children—not to mention the wildlife that call this area home. Thanks to Ken Henderson, Barbara Brenner, Larry Harris and Ward Nelson for their support. Thanks also to the seller and his representatives for their cooperation and support.

Because of its unique natural features, the property will be left in its natural state, with park improvements kept at a minimum. A conservation easement on the property, held by the Land Trust, will ensure that this precious place remains in its beautiful natural state—forever.
Thoughts From The President, Chris Moench

Last Easter morning I sat in Carl Batchelor’s dining room with ten other members of our managing board, our conservation coordinator Robyn duPré; and Dyan Oldenburg, a professional consultant. It was the second day of a three-day intensive workshop aimed at charting the Trust’s future through 1995 and into the 21st century.

Some observers might ask why we weren’t in church that holy day, or at least outside enjoying one of this spring’s most beautiful days. I can’t answer for each board member, but for me working with the Trust has become a sort of religion. Giving my time to protecting the health of our natural lands, working with the good will of land owners to foster land stewardship is fundamentally spiritual. Listening to the people at that packed table Easter Sunday assured me that our shared love of the land is the basic strength of the Trust. The sacrifice of one holy sun ripe day was willingly granted by all.

Funded by a grant from the Wilberforce Foundation, the workshop was the first step in a two-month planning process. We looked at the challenges of land conservation in these times of increasing population and declining government support for environmental protection. We looked for ways that the Trust can defuse the political polarization of our community. Our mission is to identify the broad areas where we all agree and can cooperate to ensure the health of our natural lands for generations to come.

The role of the Trust is to foster such cooperation, to find and capitalize on opportunities where the public’s interest in land conservation is in common with that of the land owner.

The strategy we developed through our planning process will expand our ability to find and protect natural and agricultural lands, increase our stewardship education work, better utilize our volunteers and build our membership.

Implementation of the strategy has begun with receipt of a second Wilberforce Foundation grant to hire a part-time administrative secretary, a development consultant, develop various publicity and educational materials and open an office! Keep your eyes peeled for your invitation to our grand opening as fall approaches.

Even as we struggled through our planning to build the Trust as an organization, we have been deeply engaged in a broad range of land conservation projects, most notably the effort to add Squires Lake to the County Park system. As you’ll learn from the story on page one, the Squires Lake project required enormous effort on the part of Robyn duPré, our Conservation Coordinator as well as many board members, particularly Sue Webber, Rand Jack, Bruce Smith and Michael Durbin. Realtor Richard Eggemeyer was also unflagging in his efforts and critical to the project’s success.

The project required a great deal of community organizing and emphasized the need in this county for a very active and broadly supported Land Trust. There are so many important natural and agricultural lands under threat of development. The Trust is a small organization running largely on volunteer energy. In the sense that we work to protect the natural health and beauty of this county that drew and holds so many people here it is your Trust. I urge you to join us. Take part in the joy of nurturing your community and the land we all live on! Help us to bring people together to nurture the land we all love. Help us build an ethic of stewardship in the way this county grows.
The Peace of Wild Things

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water,
and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought of grief.
I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting for their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and I am free.

Wendall Berry

MAKE A DIFFERENCE TODAY!
LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY TOMORROW!!

By Bruce Smith

The success of the Land Trust depends upon hundreds of hours of unpaid work by volunteer board members. However, our successes, and growing interest in our work, have created demands that we can’t satisfactorily meet with volunteers alone. The Board recently committed to address the challenges by hiring a part-time administrative secretary and renting an office.

We thought hard before committing ourselves to this additional expense. We have always operated financially “lean and mean,” so that we could focus our efforts on preserving land, and not on fundraising. Regardless, it has become clear that with the volume of our work, our administrative organization is critical to our effective action.

We work for you, and need your support! The view of unspoiled Clark’s Point, the recreational opportunities now open to the general public at Teddy Bear Cove, the addition of hundreds of acres on Chuckanut Mountain to Larrabee Park, and now the addition of Squires Lake to the Whatcom County Park system, to name some of our successes, all would not exist without the work of the Land Trust. Your financial support is critical to maintaining the Trust’s stewardship of these lands and to the success of current and future conservation projects.

Call us, if you would like more information about our need, and how your money would be used. But be assured that we will greatly value your contribution today, and put it to work preserving our natural heritage for tomorrow.
The Whatcom County Land Trust and Local Business: Partners in Conservation

By Robyn duPré

As part of our continuing effort to involve diverse aspects of the community in land conservation, The Land Trust is launching a new program. The Trust’s new Conservation Partners Program will match local businesses with properties under the protection of the Land Trust.

Conservation easements held by the Land Trust are perpetual; upon accepting an easement, the Trust is promising to hold and defend that easement forever. In order to ensure that we have the resources to adequately protect the lands in our care, the Land Trust generally asks property owners to make a donation to our monitoring and legal defense fund when they place a conservation easement on their land. Many property owners do not have the financial resources to make such a contribution.

Through the Trust’s new Conservation Partners Program, the Land Trust will match local businesses or associations with individual properties under easement protection. Businesses in the Conservation Partners Program can adopt a specific property and pay the monitoring and legal defense fee for that property, or enroll in the program by making a donation to the fund and be matched with an appropriate property at a later date. When possible, the business selected will be matched with properties that are related to the type of business involved: a farm equipment dealer could adopt a dairy farm or a fishing supply store could adopt a riparian easement on a salmon stream, for example. Many small businesses may not be able to afford a $2,000 - $5,000 contribution all at once. They will be able to participate in the program through an annual pledge and will be able to pay their partnership fee through annual pledges.

Conservation Partners will receive a framed photograph of the land with a description of its conservation values for display in their place of business. Employees of the business would also be offered the opportunity to act as stewards of the land, conducting monitoring and other activities where appropriate; in this way the partnership becomes personal, with people working together for the future of the land.

If you would like more information about the Conservation Partners Program, contact: the Trust’s Conservation Coordinator, Robyn duPré at P.O. Box 4455 Bellingham, WA 98227 (360) 650-9470.

FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN (continued from page 2)

the Board will be asking for help in building a better financial operating base.

Funds raised through the annual campaign will help provide annual operating expenses for the WCLT. Future plans may also include development of an endowment fund to help sustain the Trust. WCLT has all of the usual expenses associated with running a small office, including purchase of office supplies, equipment, postage, printing and photocopying costs, phone bills, utility and rent bills, safe deposit box rental, modest part-time staff costs, etc. WCLT has always maximized volunteer labor and donation of materials.

The Board’s Fundraising Committee is currently developing annual campaign strategies and materials. Additional volunteers for the committee are welcomed and encouraged to join. Preliminary plans include training for Board members and other volunteers in fundraising techniques, a targeted mailing campaign, and individual contact with potential donors.

Research proves that the majority of support for non-profit organizations comes not from corporations, grants or government, but rather from private individuals. All cash contributions are, of course, tax deductible as provided by law. To volunteer or for more information, contact Julie Carpenter at 647-9464.
WHATCOM COUNTY LAND TRUST
NEWSLETTER

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