Saving a Piece of Wilderness

By Rand Jack

When Doug Walker paddled up in his kayak to the home I was visiting on Lopez Island last New Year's, I had no idea that that meeting would lead to a landmark transaction for the Land Trust. A few months later, realtor Tim Lloyd called the Land Trust about a 38-acre inholding for sale, a property completely surrounded by the Mt. Baker Wilderness Area. We needed a conservation buyer, someone who would purchase the property with the intent to protect it and someday return it to official wilderness status.

I immediately thought of Doug, an outdoor enthusiast, accomplished mountain climber and very successful Seattle businessman with a history of supporting worthy causes. His response was direct, enthusiastic and positive. "If you want me to be interested, I'm interested," he said.

In June, several of us made a site inspection for Doug, then out of the country on business. The property, located on the northeast side of Goat Mountain at about 5,000 feet, lay at the end of a route deep in snow. Using ice axes and crampons, we made it. We found the small cabin, built 11 years earlier with 30 helicopter loads of supplies, in good shape. The setting was spectacular. The best surprise: 20 acres of imposing old-growth forest, with mountain hemlock approaching four feet in diameter.

According to the 1903 mineral survey and plat, the current cabin is not the first. At the time of the original survey, a 12'x16' cabin had a value of $200. The northern part of the property, designated the Mt. Vernon Lode and the southern part the Jumbo Lode, was transferred from the United States to Hamline B. Williams in 1906 by a patent that was signed by President Theodore Roosevelt. In July of 2000, it was deeded to Doug Walker.

Doug will donate a very restrictive conservation easement to the Land Trust, ensuring that the Mt. Vernon Lode and the Jumbo Lode remain only a romantic part of our history and never become real gold mines.

We deeply appreciate Doug's generosity and foresight in undertaking this transaction at the request of the Land Trust. We also thank Tim Lloyd of RE\MAX Realty and Jan Owen of Mt. Baker Properties for donating part of their commissions to make the transaction possible. This is the first time the Land Trust has found a conservation buyer and saved a wilderness in-holding!

Doug Walker is a founding partner and CEO of WRQ, a Seattle manufacturer of software to link businesses to the Internet. WRQ has over 8 million users worldwide, including over half of the Fortune 500 companies. For the past two years, Fortune has recognized WRQ as one of the "100 Best Companies to Work For in America," and it has been identified by an industry newsletter as one of the top 20 personal computer software companies in the U.S.

Doug is on the state board of The Nature Conservancy, which honored him with the Oak Leaf award for long-term volunteer service. He also serves on the Governing Council of the Wilderness Society and is active in causes devoted to helping abused children. Doug's personal commitments are mirrored in the way he runs WRQ, where employees are encouraged to do volunteer work on company time.
New Brochure & Display Make Their Debut

They’ve arrived! Board member Rod Burton of Roderick C. Burton - Art & Design volunteered his professional graphic design services to create striking and informative new outreach materials for us. Do you have a community event coming up where beautiful brochures or a stunning exhibit about Whatcom Land Trust could be of use? Just call us and we’ll set you up with everything you need! You can reach our office at 650-9470.

Computers Lovingly Tended by Member Volunteers

Members Jim Hildt of CompuHealth NW and Dr. Greg Brown have logged many volunteer hours in the Land Trust office, pushing, prodding and nudging our computers into shape.

Jim has worked extensively to help us set-up and network printers, enable one-step CD back-up of important files, and trouble-shoot various aspects of an ailing machine, which he is currently helping us replace. He has graciously worked the Land Trust into his busy schedule many, many times.

Greg is our on-call Access database guy, offering advice over the phone to our Office Manager, as well as working with her one-on-one to implement a variety of significant improvements. His work has greatly improved the accuracy and efficiency of our record-keeping system, and more is on the horizon.

Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt: Volunteer of Many Talents

Thank you to Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt, who recently led a tour of the Nesser Farm for major donors to our 1999 fund-raising campaign, built bridges up at Canyon Lake Creek Community Forest (see story on page 10) and contributed to this issue of The Steward. Russ is a talented, committed individual, an asset to the Land Trust and our community.

State Grant Helps Land Trust Protect Habitat of Endangered Salmon

By Gordon Scott

Salmon recovery efforts on the South Fork Nooksack got a big boost this summer with the acquisition of 155 acres of habitat between Acme and Saxon. Using a grant from the Washington State Salmon Recovery Funding Board, we purchased two tracts of riverfront property that contain wetlands, streamside forests, quiet side channels and spawning beds. These new conservation sites increase the area of protected land to 758 acres on the South Fork, covering nearly 6 miles of riverfront.

Protection of sensitive habitat is vital to the recovery of Chinook salmon in the South Fork Nooksack. Acquisition of habitat lands is a cost-effective way to help endangered salmon. While new regulations may make it more difficult to develop sensitive lands, acquisition of habitat proves cheaper and more effective in the long run. For some properties in the Nooksack River floodplain, habitat preservation may truly be the highest and best use.

Restoration work has begun on the newly acquired properties. Lummi Natural Resource crews will be planting conifer seedlings along a riverbank eroded by past flooding. A Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association (NSEA) technical assessment team has been surveying habitat elements and large woody debris in the South Fork. This information will be used to plan and coordinate future restoration work in the Acme-Saxon reach.

We thank our partners in this project: Jim Hansen of Lummi Natural Resources and Bruce Barbour of the Washington State Department of Ecology. George Boggs of the Whatcom Conservation District and John Thompson of the Whatcom County Water Resources Department were also helpful in navigating us through the grant process. We particularly thank the property owners who agreed to work with us on this project: Lawson Curtis and Kenny and Corrine Roos. Without their patience, we would not have completed these important transactions.

The Mission of the Whatcom Land Trust is to preserve and protect wildlife habitat, scenic, agricultural and open space lands in Whatcom County for future generations by securing interests in land and promoting land stewardship.

Newsletter Editorial Team ......... Rod Burton, Jessica Raley
Design and Layout ............. Donated by Roderick C. Burton - Art & Design
Contributors to this issue .. Rand Jack, Bob Keller, Gordon Scott, Jessica Raley, Amy Trebon Frazier, Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt, Laura Pitts
Patricia Otto: Land Steward of the Year

By Amy Trebon Frazier

continued from page 12

a program to install and maintain nest boxes on private lands. Our chosen Land Steward of the Year fits the criteria precisely: someone who, year after year, has been a dedicated volunteer, preserving and protecting land in Whatcom County.

Patricia's earliest mentor was her mother, Lorrie Otto. Lorrie's keen interest in wildflowers and birds was tended and passed on during Sunday walks in the 20-acre woods and meadow near the family home. Lorrie's later work as an environmental activist, first toward banning DDT, and more recently as an advocate for natural landscaping, has earned her a national reputation.

Ten years ago, when Patricia sought to purchase land, she looked for acreage with diverse ecological niches and potential for varied wildlife habitat. The land she purchased began as 85 acres of second growth forest, approximately five acres of pasture, steep-sided irrigation ponds, non-native plants and grasses, and two streams flanked by invasive reed canary grass. Ten years later, the forest is full of bird nesting boxes; the pasture is prairie; the ponds are gradually sloped, one a shallow marsh; the plants, shrubs and grasses are native, riparian, and planted with wildlife in mind; and the canary grass has been replaced with native trees and riparian shrubs.

Native birds and animals have responded favorably to Patricia's stewardship. They made her home theirs, re-shaping habitat in the process. Here beaver and muskrat transform the stream, the native birds, fish and amphibians alter the forest and ponds, all changing the life cycle and food chain. Patricia realizes "I'm not in charge at all." However, her on-going efforts reflect a belief that human management of native ecosystems has become necessary in preserving them. Invasive, non-native species like starlings, bullfrogs, weeds, and even cats and dogs, pose a continuous threat to native plants and animals. Time off from work as a local physician is spent tending the small Garden of Eden she helped make, and expanding her efforts into the wider county.

Along with her friend Veronica Wisniewski, Patricia meets with property owners to tour their land, making suggestions for enhancing wildlife habitat. Recommendations might include putting up nest boxes (which she and Veronica install and maintain), planting native vegetation, and restoration on a scale the owner can manage. Patricia finds her optimism about the future of native habitat in Whatcom County enhanced by these encounters with private property owners who care deeply about the future of their land.

Patricia Otto's work serves as a model. Thinking seven generations ahead, she has learned that every human action has consequences, good and bad, and that change is constant. With a happy and supportive grin, she urges us all not to separate, but attend the whole of the rich interconnected web of life that is Whatcom County's heritage.

Whatcom Land Trust: By the Numbers

Keep your eye on this box. Your membership is the reason for our success.

- Acres protected since 1984: over 5,600
- Acres of public parkland created: over 3,000
- Acres of old-growth forest protected: 738
- Acres of salmon, eagle and elk habitat protected: nearly 1,000
- Acres of farmland protected: over 230
- Acres of tidelands, wetlands and beaches protected: 72
- Number of current members: 419

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"We cannot build our way out of sprawl. Building new roads will not solve our traffic problems — just as buying bigger pants will not help us lose weight."

—Daniel Silverman

We can't grow on like this.
Volunteer Opportunities

Position Title: **Marketing Assistant**  
Supervisor/Contact: Bob Keller  
Phone: 734-9641 /650-9470  
Time Commitment Desired: 10 hours a month for 6 to 9 months  
Position Description: *Contact local businesses, organizations and other possible vendors to encourage them to sell Whatcom Places books and notecards. The position requires a car, as well as some experience in promotion and advertising. Expenses are reimbursed.*

Position Title: **Newsletter Ad Coordinator**  
Supervisor/Contact: Bob Keller  
Phone: 734-9641 /650-9470  
Time Commitment Desired: 10 hours a month for 6 to 9 months  
Position Description: *Confirm contracts with existing advertisers in Whatcom Land Trust's newsletter “The Steward,” as well as help recruit new advertisers to help sponsor the newsletter.*

Position Title: **Fund Raising Assistant**  
Supervisor/Contact: Bob Keller  
Phone: 734-9641 /650-9470  
Time Commitment Desired: 10 hours a month for 3 months  
Position Description: *Help recruit new businesses to join existing Business Partner program, which partially funds Whatcom Land Trust operations. Some sales experience helpful.*

Position Title: **Ambassadors**  
Supervisor/Contact: Aurora Fox  
Phone: 733-1531  
Time Commitment Desired: Variable  
Position Description: *Meet the public at community events, bringing information about Whatcom Land Trust, conservation and land stewardship. Speak at service clubs and small community gatherings about the work of the Trust and what individuals can do to preserve the land.*

Position Title: **Writers and Editors**  
Supervisor/Contact: Outreach Committee  
Phone: 650-9470  
Time Commitment Desired: About 2 hours a month on an on-call basis for 1 year  
Position Description: *Will draft text for newsletter articles and outreach materials. Will read staff and Board prepared materials as editors. Background in journalism, public relations or marketing desired.*

Position Title: **Photographers**  
Supervisor/Contact: Outreach Committee  
Phone: 650-9470  
Time Commitment Desired: About 2 hours a month on an on-call basis for 1 year  
Position Description: *On-call for press events and assignments for outreach materials and newsletter. Background in black and white and color photography. Submit an informal portfolio for consideration.*

---

**Water Resources Consulting, LLC**  
Peter Willing, Ph.D.  
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Bellingham, Washington 98225  
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(360) 734-1445 FAX: (360) 676-1040

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Your help is needed! If you have any questions about these volunteer positions, please call the contact number listed, or call our office at 650-9470.
If you have ideas for volunteering that aren’t listed, we’d love you to share them with us.

Position Title: **Party and Event Planners**
Supervisor/Contact: Outreach Committee
Phone: 650-9470
Time Commitment Desired: 10 - 20 hours a year on an on-call basis
Position Description: Assist with planning, invitations and production of Whatcom Land Trust celebrations and other events. Team players who can creatively solve problems and love having fun are needed most.

Position Title: **Neighborhood Publicity Folks**
Supervisor/Contact: Outreach Committee
Phone: 650-9470
Time Commitment Desired: 2 hours a month for 1 year
Position Description: Develop and implement plan to distribute Whatcom Land Trust membership materials to key gathering spots in area of residence. Puts up posters, distributes brochures, etc. Must have a car and be willing to use it! Expenses are reimbursed.

Position Title: **Property Tour Volunteers**
Supervisor/Contact: Outreach Committee
Phone: 650-9470
Time Commitment Desired: 4 hours a month for 1 year
Position Description: Will be trained by experienced naturalists and Whatcom Land Trust Board and staff to lead hikes and tours of Whatcom Land Trust properties. Experience leading groups and talking with people about the natural world is desired. Will work in pairs.

Position Title: **Youth Educators**
Supervisor/Contact: Wendy Walker
Phone: 650-3504
Time Commitment Desired: Variable
Position Description: Outgoing folks are needed who want to share Whatcom Land Trust's message of stewardship in action with youth. Opportunity to help plan the Youth Outreach Program, as well as work with students. Will work in pairs. Background in education helpful but not necessary.

Position Title: **Clean-up Crew Members**
Supervisor/Contact: Gordon Scott
Phone: 650-9470
Time Commitment Desired: On-call project basis
Position Description: People are needed to spend 1/2 to full day picking up trash, pulling weeds and performing other minor property management tasks on some of the most beautiful land in Whatcom County.

Position Title: **Auto Wreckers**
Supervisor/Contact: Gordon Scott
Phone: 650-9470
Time Commitment Desired: Two months or until done
Position Description: Responsible for facilitating the removal of 100+ junk vehicles from a Whatcom Land Trust property. Includes tracking down vehicle titles, arranging for legal and safe removal and disposal of vehicles according to all applicable laws. Large portion of research has already been completed!

Position Title: **Mailing Assistants**
Supervisor/Contact: Jessica Raley
Phone: 650-9470
Time Commitment Desired: Variable, on-call basis
Position Description: Help label, fold, sort and stuff newsletter and fund-raising mailings. Snacks provided.

Position Title: **Website Maintenance**
Supervisor/Contact: Jessica Raley
Phone: 650-9470
Time Commitment Desired: Variable, 6-12 months
Position Description: Update and maintain our website. Web experience and proofreading skills required.
Some of those who helped create the Deming Homestead Eagle Park

Jeff and Amy Margolis
Everybody’s Store

photo: Bob Keller

Kerry Thalhofer
EcoLog

photo: Ann Yaw

Jeff Arvin
The Cascade Joinery

photo: Jessica Raley

Ed and Michelle Stone
Mt. Baker Veterinary Clinic

photo: Bob Keffer

Thank you benches
Local sup
to the many local businesses and individuals who donated signs, and tables to equip the Deming Homestead Eagle Park. Support for local projects is what we're all about. Thanks again!
Loyal Members Find A Wise Investment

By Bob Keller

In the fall of 1989, when the Land Trust made one of its first fund-raising appeals, we received 20 donations. This year that number will total nearly 400.

The astonishing fact about the 1989 list is that at least 14 of those 20 donors remain among the 400: Marge Laidlaw, Harriet Spanel, Paul Schissler, Sue Willis, Sharon Digby (now President of the Board), Dan Larner, Michael Frome, Dan and Janet Taylor, Pete Kremen, Rob and Kari Galbraith, Sylvia Thorpe, Joe and Phyllis Entrikin, Darlene McLeod, Cindy Klein (long-time Board member), and Patricia Otto (2000 Land Steward of the Year).

Thank you, Land Trust pioneers! Your loyalty is a major reason we now have over 400 members and over 50 conserved properties.

Why do people consistently support the Land Trust over so many years? My guess:

First and foremost, they believe in what we are doing and how we do it - the voluntary conservation of land and resources.

Second, the results of their giving are positive, active, local and tangible.

You can see Clarks Point. You can picnic at Teddy Bear Cove. You can watch eagles on the North Fork. You can walk around Squires Lake. You can wade at Pt. Roberts. Your conservation dollars pay for specific sites, views, and wildlife habitat.

Third, we don't waste money. Overhead is kept low, with no amenities for staff or Board members.

Fourth, the Land Trust makes every effort to keep donors informed through our newsletter, annual report, annual meeting and the media. Whenever you have a question or comment,

Land Trust Shaping Whatcom County, One Property, One Land-Owner at a Time

By Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt

A conservation easement is a powerful tool to protect the qualities that we value in our land. Many landowners have a strong attachment to the land. We may spend years nurturing the land, only to have that work torn apart by a future generation. Whatcom Land Trust provides landowners with the opportunity to choose long-term conservation as an option for their land.

Without an organization such as the Land Trust, long-term conservation of land would hardly be possible. The Land Trust is dependable, accessible and responsive to landowners' special concerns. In my experience with the Nesset Farm, I think that without the Whatcom Land Trust it is unlikely that the farm would have been protected for future generations of people and wildlife. I remember the big grin that Tom Nesset had when he signed their conservation easement, feeling secure that he had done what was necessary to see that the beauty of their special farm would be protected forever.

The heart and strength of the Land Trust is in the vision and hard work of its dedicated volunteers. When I look at the fruits of its work, I am grateful to all of you who have given your time to nurture this organization. The Land Trust is as solid as the people who

Give the Gift of Preservation

Consider the gift of a membership in the Whatcom Land Trust for your friends during the coming season of celebration.

To arrange your gift contact the office at 360-650-9470.

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just pick up the phone and talk to staff or board members. You can reach our office at (360) 650-9470 or me personally at (360) 734-9641.

Once again it’s time to send that annual check. Or, if you’ve already sent in your membership contribution, thank you! Last year the membership response in numbers and dollars was the best ever. Let’s break our record again. Without you, events like the opening of the Deming Homestead Eagle Park and Canyon Lake Creek Community Forest would never happen.

make it possible.

I hope that over time the land protected by conservation easements will not be an oasis in a sea of asphalt, but rather speak to that part in each of us that values the beauty that surrounds us. Many landowners will continue to be inspired to protect the future of their land with a conservation easement, but even for those who don’t, the focus on conservation around them tends to raise awareness of stewardship. With 3,600 acres protected by conservation easements (with an additional 2,000 donated and purchased conservation acres), the Land Trust is shaping our county’s landscape. Just as importantly, Whatcom Land Trust is shaping the way we think about our land.

Land Trust. Because of the Point’s high visibility from Chuckanut Drive, and because of the eminence of the Clark family in the local community, this early, special gift greatly enhanced the credibility of the Land Trust. It was a breakthrough act of voluntary land conservation.

Doug, as a young man, left a short logging career during the Great Depression. He and his wife Peggy operated a popular grocery store in Bellingham for 25 years before they purchased 78 acres for a new waterfront home in 1958. After living there for 30 years - in a house that blends perfectly with its surroundings - they began to wonder what would happen to this special environment of waterfowl, deer, eagles, raccoons, fossils and old-growth trees. The Point could be platted into 120 building sites, bringing substantial monetary return to them and their heirs. Or, it could be saved as a jewel, a remnant of how Bellingham Bay once appeared to Captain George Vancouver and pioneer Phoebe Judson - a visual refuge for humans and a real refuge for wildlife. After long consultation with Rand Jack and many family meetings, they decided to save it.

Clark’s Point is a model of how the Land Trust would like the world to run: private landowners voluntarily requesting assistance to achieve their personal ideals about land, family, community and the future. We deeply admire Doug and Peggy Clark, and their children. Our organization, like all of Whatcom County, will be in their debt "in perpetuity."

For this story in Doug’s own words, see the interview in our book Whatcom Places, page 71.

“In the end our society will be defined not only by what we create, but by what we refuse to destroy.”

—John Sawhill
Progress on Trails at Canyon Lake Creek Community Forest

By Rand Jack

The Canyon Lake Creek Community Forest is being transformed from a commercial to a conservation forest. Through the generous support of Crown Pacific and its Regional Manager Russ Paul, the road between the lake and the ancient forest has been decommissioned and prepared for its future role as a trail, the work done with care by K.W. Enterprises. When I thanked the bulldozer operator for artfully placing boulders in the road to help speed the transition, he replied, “I figured that if I ever walked up here, I would want to have something to lean against while I had my heart attack.”

In place of excavated culverts, Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt, with his crew of daughter Karen and Eric Carabba, are installing sturdy wooden footbridges. Thanks to the salesmanship of Bob Keller, the seven bridges were donated by the Bellingham Herald, Brett & Daugert, Bill and Jeanne Carroll, Dr. and Mrs. Robert Hamilton, Morse Distribution, Inc., REI and Tosco Refinery. We very much appreciate the support of those who bought bridges in the Community Forest, but want to warn everyone that if Bob tries to sell you a bridge in Brooklyn, it is not a Land Trust project!

For information about trail access and openings, in Spring 2001 contact Whatcom County Parks and Recreation at (360) 733-2900.

Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt and his daughter Karen begin to install one of the seven bridges on the Canyon Lake Creek Community Forest trail.

Thank You to Celebration Provisioners

We want to thank those who provided the wonderful food, and the accessories, that helped make our annual celebration such a great success. Thanks too, to all those volunteers who worked to make it happen, and those who brought potluck dishes to share.

Joe's Garden; for the sweet corn
Bornstein's Seafood; for scrumptious salmon
Cloud Mountain Farm; for awesome Akane apples
Master Rentals; for chairs, tables and shelter

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Membership Update: We’re Growing

Neighborhood gatherings and personal parties spark a wave of growth, and set the pace for an exciting year of community outreach. This summer we welcomed nearly 40 new members to Whatcom Land Trust.

Fairhaven Gathering of Neighbors

On Wednesday evening, August 16th, 35 people had a great time thanks to local Land Trust members who hosted a neighborhood gathering. Attractions included: colorful displays; an entertaining quiz about conservation in the Fairhaven neighborhood and Whatcom County; prizes from Fairhaven businesses; slide presentations on the history and future of the Land Trust by Conservation Director, Gordon Scott, and Membership Coordinator, Laura Pitts; and delicious homemade desserts. All those who attended expressed their support for the Land Trust, and quite a few became actively involved as members and volunteers that very night!

Prizes for the drawing were generously donated by Village Books, Stanello’s Restaurant, Fairhaven Massage and Brenthaven. Thanks to Bob Keller for his energy, initiative and hard work in masterminding the event, and to member hosts Jan Adams, Jeff Arvin, Migo and Vince Biciunas, Pat Karlberg, Paul Schissler; Carl and Janet Simpson and Sue Willis for a wonderful time!

Sound like fun? Laura, Gordon and Outreach Committee volunteers would love to help you host a gathering - small or large - in your neighborhood. Just call us for details: 650-9740.

Happy Birthday!

Two Whatcom Land Trust members celebrated their birthdays by saving the land this summer: Wendy Walker and Rod Burton encouraged their friends and family to become members of the Land Trust in lieu of giving presents this year, marking the special occasion in a way that benefits us all.

As one Land Trust member said: “It’s like getting and giving many gifts all at once: you (the birthday celebrant) get the present of knowing that the future will be brighter. Your friends know exactly what you want for your birthday, and they get tangible, local conservation in return with their membership. It’s a gift that keeps on giving!”

If you’d like to make the Land Trust a part of your next celebration, give us a call at 650-9740. We’ll support you in planning and provide all the necessary Land Trust materials to complement your occasion.
Land Steward of the Year and Distinguished Conservator Honored at Annual Celebration

Patricia Otto

Patricia Otto manages a property with a purpose. She has devoted the past ten years to reshaping 90 acres near Lake Whatcom, restoring habitat for Northwest native plants and animals. If asked who owns her property, she might include a lengthy list of birds, butterflies, insects, plants, amphibians, fish and mammals. And she has taken her restorative efforts countywide, co-facilitating continued on page 3

Doug Clark

When we accepted a conservation easement on Clarks Point at the north end of Chuckanut Bay, it was a crucial, watershed event in the early history of Whatcom continued on page 9
A PARK FOR THE NOOKSACK EAGLES

By Rand Jack

Promoted and protected by The Nature Conservancy’s eagle reserve, the eagles of the Skagit River have become famous. Less well known is the fact that, according to recent counts, wintering eagles on the Nooksack River match those on the Skagit bird for bird. Apparently, Skagit eagles just have a better public relations agent.

Whatcom County does not even have a place designated for public eagle watching. That is about to change thanks to a generous gift from Hank and Lorrell Rensink. They have given Whatcom Land Trust 33 acres of prime eagle watching property along the Truck Road behind Carol’s Coffee Cup. In the late Fall of 2000 the Land Trust will open the Deming Homestead Eagle Park bordering the North Fork of the Nooksack on part of the old Deming homestead.

When Hank was a senior at Mt. Baker High School in 1961, he was required to write a paper on a city or town in Washington for his State history class. Rather than looking to far away places like Tacoma or Spokane, he decided to write about something close to home - Deming. His teacher, Chester Baker, suggested that students write to the Chamber of Commerce in the town they had selected, but, of course, Deming had no Chamber of Commerce. So, Hank turned to Deming’s keepers of the local lore. In postmaster Harold Woolf, Hank struck gold.

To Hank’s great surprise, Harold revealed that Hank was living on the old Deming Homestead and that the first Deming Post Office had been in Hank’s front yard. Hank’s interest in Deming turned into fascination. His folks had bought the place in 1938; ten years later, his dad Peter traded five cows for the beautifully wooded acre where the original post office once stood. E. W. Owen, the first postmaster in these parts, was appointed in 1889 and named the post office Deming after the man from whom he had bought his homestead. The town of Deming was eventually situated two miles down the river and the post...
Thank You to Departing Office Manager, Tina Mirable

After seven months of service, Tina has left Whatcom Land Trust to pursue her interest in biological field work. She is currently working in Southwest Washington, where she is documenting populations of marbled murrelets. Whatcom Land Trust is grateful for her hard work and wishes her the best of luck.

Jessica Raley Joins the Land Trust as Office Manager

Jessica comes to Whatcom Land Trust from the Opportunity Council, where she engaged in grant writing, donor database management, newsletter production and a variety of public relations support activities. Jessica earned her degree in Women Studies and Political Economics at Fairhaven College and is currently attending Whatcom Community College's Graphic Design program. She is pleased to have joined such a committed and inspiring group of folks, and is looking forward to doing her part to preserve Whatcom County's unique natural heritage.

New Membership Campaign Coordinator, Laura Pitts

Laura brings to Whatcom Land Trust expertise in community outreach from six years' experience directing public programs for environmental and community leadership non-profits in Silicon Valley, CA. Educated at Brown University, she brings professional experience as a writer and teacher of writing, as well. Laura lives in Sudden Valley, where looking out through the Douglas firs to Lake Whatcom each morning reminds her how lucky she is to work on behalf of this beautiful land and its residents of all species.

Volunteers

Many thanks to all the wonderful volunteers who help us out in so many ways.

Volunteers Needed

If you've helped with Whatcom Land Trust newsletter and fund raising mailings in the past, or if you're interested in folding and stuffing for a good cause, we'd love to hear from you. Contact Jessica at 360-650-9470 for more information.

Volunteer Profile

Rand Jack

by Bob Keller

“...the guy's a legal genius,” attorney Dean Brett said of his associate Rand Jack. Everyone at Whatcom Land Trust would agree - except we'd say that the genius lies in negotiating land deals and achieving goals through an exceptional capacity for finding creative ways around seemingly impossible obstacles. Rand Jack’s other qualities include perseverance, focus, his intense land ethic and a contagious zest for life.

Rand came to Bellingham from a large Seattle law firm in 1970 at my invitation to teach at Fairhaven College at Western Washington University. Over the years, in what could be called his free time, he has built his own home, raised two children, trained himself in wood carving, and helped found Whatcom Land Trust. As an attorney and professor, he won several major lawsuits (including the San Juan jet ski case), worked with Trillium in Chile, published a book on legal ethics, created the Law & Diversity Program at Western, and traveled in Europe, Africa and South America. Three years ago he traversed Alaska's Brooks Range by foot and canoe.

Rand holds high expectations for students. A college education, he would say, above all involves asking the right questions, recognizing sound answers, and thinking about one's purposes on earth. His remarkable wildlife sculptures, one of his many purposes, have won awards and been purchased by Hollywood stars.

Yet Rand's most lasting contribution to Whatcom County has come through Whatcom Land Trust: the Chuckanut land exchange, Squires Lake Park, Clark's Point, the Nesset Farm, Canyon Lake Creek Community Forest, and a dozen other local conservation properties, including his own land at Van Zandt. In recognition of this legacy, the Whatcom County Parks Foundation recently honored Rand with their William J. Dittrich Award for Leadership.

In September, Rand and his wife Dana leave for her 10-month Fulbright appointment in Nepal. We shall miss him. But we know he will be back, more determined than ever.

The Mission of the Whatcom Land Trust is to preserve and protect wildlife habitat, scenic, agricultural and open space lands in Whatcom County for future generations by securing interests in land and promoting land stewardship.

Newsletter Editorial Team, Rod Burton, Jessica Raley

Design and Layout, Donated by Roderick C. Burton - Art & Design

Contributors to this issue, Rand Jack, Bob Keller, Laura Pitts, Gordon Scott, Jessica Raley
SAVING THE FOREST AND THE TREES

By Rand Jack

Thanks to a generous anonymous donation of $500,000, Whatcom Land Trust was able to join with Whatcom County to save the beautiful, mature forest on the 235 acres adjoining the Nesset Farm to the north. The forest spans over a mile of the South Fork of the Nooksack River; a stream winds through the woods between the river and a complex of ponds. In addition to large stands of second-growth Douglas fir, the forest is made of a rich texture of moss-covered maple trees, tall pointed cedars, sculpted vine maples, scaly ancient spruce trees by the ponds, a handful of rutted old growth Douglas fir, and alders and cottonwoods on the gravel bars by the river.

This is vital habitat for Whatcom Land Trust's SEE (Salmon, Eagle, Elk) Project. On a winter day, all three species can be seen along the river. Even when the elk themselves are not visible, hoof prints on the sandbars and forest trail are constant witness to their presence. We call this property the Overby Farm in remembrance of the last family to live there 50 years ago.

During the Depression, counties foreclosed on parcels of clear-cut timberland because of unpaid taxes. Since the counties did not have facilities to manage the land, the legislature required them to turn it over to the State Department of Natural Resources (DNR), where it was known as Forest Board Transfer Land. The legislature also provided that a county could request the reconveyance of this land to the county for use as a park.

Acquisition of the Overby Farm was an essential part of the Nesset Farm Park project the Land Trust has been working on for over ten years. Unfortunately, it was not Forest Board Transfer Land, but rather, was owned by Goodyear Nelson Timber Company. Working with the Land Trust, Whatcom County asked DNR to obtain the Overby Farm from Goodyear Nelson, perform an internal trade within the agency to convert it to Forest Board Transfer Land, and then convey it to the County for a park. Again unfortunately, DNR acquired, traded and conveyed the Overby Farm to Whatcom County to become a park, but left Goodyear Nelson with the right to cut most of the trees. And thus, we were faced with the prospect of a 235-acre stump park.

In negotiations with Whatcom Land Trust and Whatcom County Parks, Goodyear Nelson agreed to sell the timber rights they retained for $1,250,000. To save the forest, the Land Trust obtained a grant of $500,000 and the County Council agreed to contribute $750,000 from the Conservation Futures Fund. Some Council members wanted to allow selective logging on the property, but our anonymous donor had made very clear to us the intent to save the forest and the trees - all of the trees. Faced with this clear intent, the Council agreed. The Land Trust now holds a conservation easement on the Overby Farm assuring that this intent will be honored. In a sense the donor saved the forest twice - once through the monetary donation and again through insisting that it be used to save the forest and the trees.

Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt, 1998 Land Steward of the Year, walks through the recently purchased forest.
Deming Homestead Eagle Park continued from page one

At our first meeting, Hank and I stood next to the Truck Road and watched the river pound at the bank of his lush field of clover. When I asked him what kind of park he wanted it to be, he said “maybe something with soccer fields.” With the rushing river and the trees and the hillsides, this didn’t seem quite right. About that time an eagle swooped into a nearby cottonwood. “What about an eagle watching park?” I asked. Hank lit up. “That would be fine.”

Not until I went into his house several months later did I understand why it had been such an easy decision. Lorrell and Hank’s home is filled with eagle pictures of every imaginable sort. The welcome sign by the door is capped with a soaring eagle. Hank’s son baked an eagle on his dad’s 50th birthday cake. Even their front yard wishing well has an eagle perched in it. Lorrell joked that Hank had a drawer full of eagle hats and T-shirts. The eagles of the Nooksack have been so much a part of Hank’s life that it took him a moment to realize that others needed a special place set aside to watch the eagles.

To protect Truck Road, and incidentally the eagle park, County engineers dug a 1400 foot crescent-shaped ditch 15 feet deep and about that wide. They filled the ditch with giant rocks, set to await the encroaching river. Halfway through construction, the Washington State Fish and Wildlife Department decided that the buried rock wall would not be good salmon habitat if and when the river reached it. They required the County to devise a habitat mitigation plan as a condition of completing the rock-filled trench. If you drive down the Truck Road, you will see seven great piles of logs, root balls and olivine boulders bound together with thick chains. Placed between the river and the buried rock wall, the engineer’s sculptures are supposed to drop into the river as the bank erodes. There they are to collect woody debris floating down the Nooksack, forming protective habitat for salmon and maybe keeping the river from reaching the sterile buried rip rap. Thus we have an eagle park, and the engineers have an experiment in trying to manage the river.
Land Trust Gets Salmon Recovery Grant

On March 17 the Governor's Salmon Recovery Funding Board announced a grant to the Whatcom Land Trust for the acquisition and restoration of critical Chinook salmon habitat on the South Fork Nooksack River near Acme. The project, entitled South Fork Chinook, will acquire about 250 acres of stream habitat, wetlands, side channels and floodplain along the best natural meandering reach of the river. Upstream of the project area the river flows in a narrow valley with few stable off-channel sloughs. Downstream, flood control dikes confine the river. Since 1938, 86% of the off-channel habitat in the South Fork has been converted to farmland, and the total length of the river has been reduced by 37%. The project site is located adjacent to the County's Nesson Farm Park and will add to the habitat value of that land. The project includes restoration of natural hydrologic functions through placement of engineered logjams and streamside planting. Lummi Nation, Department of Ecology, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Whatcom County Parks and the Whatcom Land Trust are all cooperating on this project. The project site is ideal for acquisition and protection because it is located in the most strategic naturally functioning reach of the South Fork.

20,000 Trees Planted on Craver Property

Whatcom Land Trust's first comprehensive restoration project achieved a major milestone this year with the completion of tree planting on forest land donated to the Trust in 1999 by Ernie Craver of Mosquito Lake Road. As part of our obligation to Ernie for donating his land, the Land Trust facilitated the replanting of 60 acres that had previously been high-grade logged and left unplanted by a logging contractor who later went bankrupt. Because of the overgrown nature of the property, the Land Trust first hired a local logging contractor, Kerry Thalhofer of Acme, to clear planting spots of brush and slash. Once the site preparation was complete the Land Trust contracted with Bill Hatley, owner of Cascade Reforestation out of Concrete, to plant the cleared ground. Bill's crew worked for five days planting 20,000 two-year-old Douglas fir trees. Because the selective nature of the previous logging favored Douglas fir, a diverse mix of tree species and age classes was left on the site. Hemlock, cedar, spruce, alder, cherry, birch and maple are scattered throughout the property. Our tree planting project reforested areas that were bare of any trees, and the planting of Douglas fir species will help restore the natural diversity of the new forest. Funding for the project was provided by a grant from American Forests Global ReLeaf Program. Crown Pacific of Hamilton generously donated all 20,000 trees.
GAP Conservation Analysis Completed

There are many aspects to a successful conservation program, including having the best scientific information at your fingertips in order to analyze wildlife habitats. This spring Whatcom Land Trust completed an analysis of habitat needs and current levels of protection for salmon, eagles and elk in Whatcom County. Terra Logic, an environmental consulting firm from Stanwood, worked with the Land Trust to identify and map the known habitat needs for these three species as well as map properties that are currently managed for habitat protection or held by the public as recreation lands. This mapping exercise indicated areas for future conservation efforts. This project determined the most important habitat feature in the County is the Nooksack River, from the estuary at Marietta to the Forks at Deming, upstream to Glacier on the North Fork and the Middle Fork Confluence, and down past Saxon on the South Fork.

One interesting finding of the project revealed that cities and other urban areas occupy about 5.25% of the landscape in Western Whatcom County. Private land is the predominate type of ownership in the county, amounting to 81% of the non-federal land area. Within this category, timber companies constitute the largest private landowners in the county with 12% of the land base. The amount of land in conservation status, including city, county, state parks, The Nature Conservancy and Whatcom Land Trust, amount to just 1.5% of the total land area.

Partnership Acquires North Fork Wetlands

This spring Whatcom Land Trust acquired an important wetland parcel along the North Fork of the Nooksack River near Glacier. As part of a United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) wetland protection grant, Whatcom Land Trust, the Department of Ecology and the Lummi Nation joined together to acquire and restore 44 acres of stream and wetland habitat. The property will be managed solely for salmon enhancement and habitat conservation, and is not open for public access. The new acquisition includes a 5-acre spring-fed wetland and about 1,300 feet of North Fork River frontage. Wood ducks, mergansers, and other waterfowl frequent the site, as well as bald eagles. Several intact side channels along the south bank of the river carry floodwaters and provide quiet, clean habitat for small salmon smolts. Vegetation on the property is predominately alder and cottonwood. In order to improve habitat diversity, the Lummi Nation Natural Resources Department planted about 15 acres of the property with Western red cedar and grand fir. Over time, these trees will grow up and provide valuable shade for the wetlands and the river. Eventually these conifers will fall into the Nooksack and help restore some of the complex stream diversity necessary for long-term survival of salmon.
COMMUNITY CORNER

By Laura Pitts

We're Growing!
Member by Member, Neighbor to Neighbor

With this newsletter, we invite you to reach out through a special campaign welcoming new members to Whatcom Land Trust. Thanks to a generous grant from the Whatcom Community Foundation, we can now bring our message of community stewardship to citizens throughout our county.

Our vision is to give every resident of Whatcom County the opportunity to protect the lands they love. And our hope is that our membership will grow neighbor to neighbor in the same way we accomplish all our goals here at Whatcom Land Trust.

This season, we're encouraging all our supporters to reach out to friends, neighbors, and colleagues, extending them an invitation to learn more about the Trust.

Our volunteers, board members, and committees are putting together a host of activities that you can attend with your friends to introduce them to Land Trust people and programs. And we're updating our brochures, exhibits, and general outreach materials, adding a variety of fact sheets and a guide to parks and preserves affiliated with Whatcom Land Trust. By midsummer we should have all the new support materials and a schedule of events ready to support you in talking with your friends, neighbors and colleagues about Whatcom Land Trust. Call us at (360) 650-9470 with questions and ideas.

Whatcom Land-Trust Member Lesley Rigg enthusiastically removes harvest tags in celebration of saving the Overby Forest. (see story on page 3.)

Our Outreach & Membership committee will be thriving this season, so expect to hear from us!

Member Volunteers Promote Stewardship

If you're a member who'd like to get more involved with Whatcom Land Trust, the moment is now!

With outreach activities and events we'll be opening up a variety of new volunteer opportunities, from hike guides to publicity writers to party-planners and community educators.

If you're ready to take a new step for stewardship, give us a call or drop us an e-mail with your name, contact information, and areas of interest/experience. As opportunities arise (midsummer through late autumn), we'll contact you for screening and available volunteer positions. Reach us at (360) 650-9470 or wltrust@nas.com.

And we've made it easy for you: just use the return envelope enclosed in this issue to let us know you're joining our community of stewardship, preserving the spaces and species you love.

P.S. Don't forget, with your membership contribution, all Whatcom Land Trust activities are FREE! That includes our Annual Members' Celebration, educational forums, the dedication and opening of Deming Homestead Eagle Park, and your complementary subscription to The Steward newsletter.

Contact Whatcom Land Trust by calling the office at (360) 650-9470 or e-mailing wltrust@nas.com
Rensink Donation

A Park for Eagles

photo courtesy of Lee Mann

Celebrate with the Trust
Deming Homestead Eagle Park Dedication
July 29, 2000 at 11:00 a.m.

Head out the Mt. Baker Highway (exit 255)
Go .4 miles past the Sedro Woolley/Hwy 9 turn-off
Turn right on Truck Road, the park is on the right.

ANNUAL MEMBER’S CELEBRATION IN SEPTEMBER

The Whatcom Land Trust Annual Membership Celebration will be held at the Fairhaven Park picnic area from 3-6 p.m. on Sunday, September 24. The Land Steward of the Year and Distinguished Conservator Awards will be presented at 3 p.m. Following, we will highlight important land conservation achievements which have been made possible through the support of our members. Delicious local food will be served.

Bring a Friend

Members are invited to bring a friend who might be interested in joining the Trust. Watch for your personalized invitation!
For a baby Great Blue Heron of the Birch Bay colony, the view from the nest must be spectacular. On the north and east are tall trees on the original 77 acres protected by ARCO in 1996 in a conservation easement with the Whatcom Land Trust. On the west is Birch Bay State Park, hosting huge cedar trees and rich feeding grounds along the park beach. All of this is protected for the future as a wildlife habitat.

The view to the south is no less spectacular. It includes the meandering Terrell Creek and the marshes formed by the saltwater intrusion during high tides. There are other large forested areas, a pond full of creatures and open field areas necessary for the winter when the heron’s diet changes from marine life to rodents. However, the birds had no promise that human development wouldn’t continue to encroach on their heron heaven.

Now that has changed. In November the ARCO Cherry Point Refinery added an additional 103 acres to the Land Trust easement, bringing the total in permanent protection to 180 acres. The zone encompasses all of the nesting sites and feeding grounds at Terrell Creek.

ARCO began acquiring property in the early 90’s to create a buffer zone around the refinery south of the easement. Most landowners offered a chance to sell, did. Now, nearing the millennium, ARCO completed the continued on page 3

North Fork Salmon Habitat Protected

A long time goal of the Trust came to fruition late last year with the acquisition of two important North Fork Nooksack riverfront properties. With the help of the Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE) and a grant from the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Land Trust purchased from two Baptist Church organizations two properties, totaling 56 acres, near Boulder Creek. Under the terms of the grant, the properties must be kept in perpetual conservation status to benefit wetlands and wildlife.

The newly acquired properties are undeveloped and located in historic salmon and eagle habitat areas. A small salmon stream flows across one of the properties and into the North Fork. The other property, located across the river, contains a wetland complex and wooded island. The properties join another parcel previously donated to the Land Trust by the Pitts-Sportsman Association. According to Land Trust Conservation Director Gordon Scott, “The Baptist properties are located in a strategic reach of the North Fork for habitat protection. In this area the river flows across a broad floodplain with shifting channels and gravel bars. This type of habitat is ideal for salmon and eagles.” The properties are currently undeveloped. The Trust will be investigate the feasibility of salmon restoration.

We would like to thank Jerry Wittenmyer of the Mt. Baker Baptist Camp and Jeff Iorg of the Northwest Baptist Convention, the property owners, for their patience in concluding this transaction. We would also thank Bruce Barbour of the Department of Ecology for his help in facilitating the acquisitions.
WLT News

Board Members
A warm welcome is extended to Betty Kiner and Rod Burton who have recently joined our Board of Directors. Two board members, Joan Casey and Chris Moench, have moved on to other endeavors. Joan will be devoting her energy to many of her other causes. We wish her luck! Chris served on our board for eight years, three of those as President. We will surely miss him as he pursues new ventures. Thanks to both Joan and Chris for their work and dedication to WLT.

Volunteers
Thanks to the following volunteers who help us out in so many ways:

Port Christmas Festival
Del Lowery, Barbara Davidson, Miga Biciunas, Sue Willis, Rod Burton, Carl Simpson, Alice Litton, and Bob Keller.

Refining the Mailing List
Aimee Trebon, Jane Raney, Susie Davis, Del and Brenda Lowery, Sue Willis, Connie Clement, Pat Karlberg, Mardi Solomon, and Darol Strieb.

Office Support
Robin Dexter, John Harriman, Alice Litton, Dorothy Sherwood, Sarah Baake, Jamie Emerson, Corinne and Katie, Sally Hansberry, Anne Hayden, Debbie Lafferty, Pam Went, and Wanda Boyd.

Membership database
Greg Brown

Press Releases
Hugh Fleetwood

Business Partners Dinner
Thank you to Jean Gorton, Charles and Phyllis Self for hosting the dinner.

Whatcom Places Distribution in Eastern Whatcom County
Dennis Smith

Receive WLT News more frequently via Email!
If you have email and are interested in receiving WLT News more frequently, please share your email address with the office: wlttrust@nas.com. We are starting a new initiative towards communicating timely announcements of WLT events and property acquisitions to our members via email. Also check out our web site at www.whatcomland.com for updates.

Volunteer Profile
Joe O'Keefe

“There’s community out there that you never knew existed without volunteering.”

photo courtesy of Joe O'Keefe

Some of you may already know Joe, who distributes the Whatcom Places books and notecards to your store. In fact, there are over 15 retailers in the greater Bellingham area that Joe frequents regularly filling book orders. Between deliveries, Joe remains mobile and enjoys the great outdoors by ocean kayaking, mountaineering, and riding his bicycle daily through Larrabee State Park. After several years of traveling extensively, and sailing on the Atlantic and the Carribean sea, Joe became enchanted with the beauty of the Bellingham area and the San Juan Islands, and has made his home here for 11 years. A graduate of Fairhaven College, Joe designed his own major in screen writing. He now works on video and photographic productions in northwestern Washington.

While Joe provides us a great service by distributing Whatcom Places, WLT could use some additional help in marketing the book and notecards to new retailers. If you are a retailer interested in selling Whatcom Places, or a volunteer who would like to assist us in exploring new outlets for book sales, please contact us!

Opportunities for volunteering your skills and talent to WLT include:

Web Page Design and Update
Computer Networking
Office Support - flexible times and projects
Internships - Marketing

Phone Tina in the office at 650-9470 to discuss your interests.

The Mission of the Whatcom Land Trust is to preserve and protect wildlife habitat, scenic, agricultural and open space lands in Whatcom County for future generations by securing interests in land and promoting land stewardship.

Newsletter Committee Chair .................................. Chris Moench
Design and Layout ........................................... Donated by Roderick C. Burton - Art & Design
Contributors to this issue .................................... ARCO, GBA Design Group, Rand Jack,
Pat Karlberg, Bob Keller, Tina Mirabile, Gordon Scott
program for long-term protection and conservation use. ARCO Refinery Manager Glenn Butler said, "This is one of those decisions that makes everyone happy. Our employees are proud of our environmental record. They appreciate placing the welfare of our natural neighbors above the $2 million value if we had developed the land. We've helped the Land Trust meet its goal of saving our natural heritage. I don't know if herons smile, but knowing the next thousand generations of their offspring will have a home makes me smile."

Included in the parcel is an arboretum that ARCO began last year on a former home site. Professionally designed and landscaped to mirror the five climate zones of Washington state, the site will be used after full growth as an opportunity for school children who take refinery tours. Plants are from alpine to coastal zones, including a food plot of species used by native peoples for food and medicine.

"This is a unique opportunity," said refinery External Affairs Manager Scott Walker. "In my 25 years with ARCO I have been part of many things that exemplify the culture and spirit of the company toward the environment. But the legacy this easement gives to this beautiful natural area will outlive all of us. We at Cherry Point should never forget that on our watch we made a difference."

Have you ever wondered where the most important habitat for salmon, eagles and elk in Whatcom County is located? Is it the rugged shoreline of Chuckanut Bay, the broad reaches of the South Fork Nooksack, or deep in the forests of the Lake Whatcom Watershed? The answers to that simple question are the purpose of a recent Land Trust project known as the GAP Analysis.

A GAP analysis compares the location of wildlife habitat and currently conserved properties, and then identifies the "gaps" in habitat protection. Using the best existing scientific research available and the power of computer mapping, the Trust has worked with a local consultant to identify regions of Whatcom County where land conservation would most benefit wildlife.

With simple questions, however, the answers tend to be more complex than we would like. A lack of fundamental scientific research on the habitat needs and locations of salmon, eagles and elk has limited our results. To offset this problem the Trust conducted a half-day workshop with local experts to tap into their local knowledge about salmon, elk and eagles. With the help of state, county, and tribal biologists, as well as local consultants, we significantly improved our knowledge of habitat use and needs.

An important result of this study is clarifying the vital role of rivers and streams have as habitat. Elk use river and stream corridors for travelling from one feeding area to another. Eagles depend on spawning salmon for food during critical winter months. And of course the Nooksack is spawning, rearing and resting habitat for several species of Pacific Salmon, including the Chinook recently listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. The GAP Analysis reinforces a long held intuitive belief in the multiple benefits of river and stream conservation.

The study will be completed soon and the final results reported in future issues of The Steward.

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Rick Dubrow, First Hammer
By Rand Jack

In 1894, the Victoria Daily Colonist wrote about Point Roberts: "The land at the end of the promontory is completely isolated. It is in the United States, but not of it. As a piece of territory it is really not worth considering." The Daily Colonist did not realize that three years earlier Patrick J. Whalen and his son Michael had settled at Point Roberts, having purchased the northeast corner of Point Roberts on Boundary Bay, which would later become known as Maple Beach. Over the next hundred years the Whalen clan would help make Point Roberts "a piece of territory ... worth considering."

Now, three great grandchildren of Patrick Whalen have donated 2000 feet of saltwater frontage on Maple Beach to the Whatcom Land Trust. The Trust will transfer the beach to Whatcom County for use as a public park.

When the tide is out, Maple Beach is hard packed sand stretching over a quarter of a mile beyond the bulkhead. It is a wonderful place for children to wade in shallow tidepools, build sand castles, fly kites and play volley ball. The incoming tide warmed by sand bars provides great swimming and water sports. The tidelands are also important marine habitat, particularly for the large heron colony on Point Roberts.

The Trust is deeply grateful for this generous gift from Michelle Pomada, Peter Whalen and Kim Pringle and her husband Gary. They write, "We and our families are happy to donate the tidelands to the Whatcom Land Trust for the County to use and maintain as a beach for safe, family fun. We are happy to make a move that ensures the tidelands' preservation in their natural state, for the enjoyment of all."

Patrick Whalen made his way to Point Roberts from County Wicklow, Ireland. Widowed, Patrick earned a living working construction with draft horses in Vancouver while his teenage son Michael established the family farm on Boundary Bay.

Water Resources Consulting, LLC

Peter Willing, Ph.D.

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Commissioner of the General Land Office in Washington, D.C. (found in Point Roberts, USA by Richard E. Clark), noted that Patrick had a two-story frame house 26 x 30 feet worth $800 and a barn worth $200. Though they owned 160 acres, only 12 were "cleared and under cultivation." The report observed that "there are no lawyers, doctors or preachers on the Point, which may or may not account for the peace, health and happiness, which seems to reign in this remote community."

Early on, Michael recognized the recreational potential of Maple Beach and began selling vacation lots with beach access to people from Vancouver and New Westminster. The Whalens built rental cottages, and in 1920 opened a general store, including a soda fountain. Later an outdoor skating rink was added to the family resort. In 1951 Michael's son Pat built a harness race track at the site where the Whalen RV Park is now located. That year The Vancouver Daily Province reported that "next to swimming, the biggest attraction at the Bay is Pat Whalen's harness racing track, opened in the middle of July. Some 2000 people come every Sunday to bet and cheer the trotters. The races share equal honors with the summer's long stretch of good weather for boosting border crossing figures more than 20 percent. An average of 1800-2000 cars cross each Sunday...."

The race track is gone but Maple Beach remains a prime recreation site. Roger DeSpain, director of the Whatcom County Parks Department, is delighted about the new beach property. "Increasing saltwater access has long been a County priority. Maple Beach is a tremendous recreational resource, a wonderful addition to our existing facilities at Point Roberts. It will be well worth a drive from lower Whatcom County to spend a summer day with County Parks at Point Roberts. This is the sixth county park to be established with the help of the Land Trust, a legacy for which the people of Whatcom County are deeply grateful." The Maple Beach Park will be protected by a conservation easement held by the Land Trust.

The end of the beach in the distance is the border station.
The Bridge Project

The Land Trust conservation plan for the Canyon Lake Creek Community Forest allows for low impact public access, much like the highly successful county park at Squires Lake. In accordance with this goal, logging roads within the Forest will be converted to trails, including the road from the lake to the higher southeastern ridge of the basin. This in turn requires removal of culverts which, in times of heavy run-off, can clog and cause severe erosion or wash-outs.

It is wise to build footbridges for ease and safety to span these open creeks. But once the culverts are removed, delivery of construction materials would be difficult and expensive. Recognizing this, the Trust asked various members and business partners to “buy a bridge” during October—seven bridges to be exact. Due to immediate response, the campaign lasted but three weeks. Our appreciation to REI, Morse Distribution Co., Brett & Daugert Law Firm, the Tosco Refinery, Dr. and Mrs. Robert Hamilton, Bill Carroll, and another donor to be announced in March.

Thank you, friends. You’ve made a very nice statement about Canyon Lake being a “community forest.”

Business Conservation Partnerships

Throughout its history, the Trust has cooperated with various local businesses in achieving mutual conservation goals. A half-dozen different firms helped Squires Lake become a county park. ARCO has donated two conservation easements on 180 acres of its land to protect a heron colony. Trillium's eagle night roost easement provides a model of creative ecological thinking, and Crown Pacific has protected Canyon Lake Creek for two miles below its source at the lake.

With such positive cooperation in mind, we have asked various businesses in the county to help defray our general overhead and operating expenses by donating money or services, in effect becoming long-term “partners” in conservation. We are proud to be officially associated with the following firms:

- ARCO
- American Alpine Institute
- Anvil Corporation
- Bellingham Cold Storage
- Blythe Plumbing and Heating
- Brenthaven
- Brett & Daugert
- Cascade Joinery
- Copies Now
- Harmony Motorworks
- Homestead Development
- Intalco
- Morse Distribution
- Northwest Propane
- Premier Graphics
- River Oak Properties
- Tosco Refinery
- Village Books
- Waycross Investment

We hope to double the number of partners this year. If your firm would like to join the program, or you know a business committed to our goals, please call Bob Keller at 360-734-9641.
Members Support Annual Fundraising Campaign

"We raised more money, spent less administratively, and maintained a base of loyal supporters," summarizes Bob Keller, Development Committee Chairperson of the successful 1999 fundraising campaign. Total funds raised were $32,100. These donations surpassed the results of the 1998 Campaign by 14%.

Loyalty to the Trust is increasing. Thirty percent of membership renewals received this year were new members last year. Another one-third of our renewing members have been contributing to the Land Trust for 5 years or more! The Trust continues to grow as well, with new members accounting for thirteen percent of the donations received.

The hat, book, and tour incentives offered during the Annual Campaign were popular this year. This year’s average donation increased from $98 to $128 last year. Tours to the Nesset Farm for Guardians – those who contributed $250 or more, will be scheduled later this year. Please contact Tina Mirabile in the office if you have any questions regarding incentives.

Gordon Scott, Conservation Director declares “The tremendous support of the Land Trust by community members strengthens our resolve to conserve the rivers, woods and open spaces of Whatcom County.”

The Land Trust thanks our continuing and new members for their generous support.

Congratulations
To The Alliance

When Mitch Friedman, Director of Bellingham-based Northwest Ecosystem Alliance set out to raise more than $13 million over a few months to save the Loomis Forest, it was easy to label the effort a pipe dream. Where could they find that much money to save a large stand of old trees and a few lynx in eastern Washington?

It would have been easy for the Alliance to fold its tents at any point in the campaign. It would have been easier not to try in the first place. But they did. They knew the public support was out there, they went after it, and, working overtime on raw nerve, they won a magnificent victory for land conservation in our state.

Congratulations!

$220,000 for Watershed Protection given to WLT

Through the diligent, hard work of Sherilyn Wells and the Watershed Defense Fund, now known as the Clean Water Alliance, the Land Trust has received $220,000 to purchase land in the Lake Whatcom watershed. The money is from a settlement of a lawsuit brought by Wells and the Watershed Defense Fund, claiming Whatcom County Water District No. 10 violated the federal Clean Water Act by allowing sewage overflows into Lake Whatcom. The Whatcom Land Trust was not involved in the lawsuit.

As part of the settlement, the Watershed Defense Fund and the Water District agreed to donate the funds to the Land Trust “for purchase and permanent protection of environmentally sensitive, undeveloped land in the Lake Whatcom watershed” (Federal District Court Consent Decree). The Trust has agreed to use the $220,000 for acquisition of land in proximity to significant streams flowing into Lake Whatcom in order to protect water quality. Scientists who have worked with the Watershed Defense Fund are working with the Land Trust to examine land for potential purchase.

President Sharon Digby said: “We appreciate the confidence shown in the Land Trust demonstrated by the Watershed Defense Fund and Water District 10, entrusting us with these settlement funds. This will be a small but significant step in the huge challenge of protecting water quality in Lake Whatcom.”

Thank you Bellingham, for making us a tradition for 15 years.

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"A tradition since 1984"
New Donation - Story on Page 4

Public Beach Returns to Pt. Roberts

Maple Beach in the 1970's, before private property posting.
Nesset Farm
Our oldest, dearest project

Rand Jack

On August 11, the County Council voted to purchase the Nesset Farm from the Tom and Ingeborg Nesset Foundation for $980,000, turning a giant page in the story of the longest running project of the Whatcom Land Trust.

This story began 10 years ago when someone at an Acme Elementary School PTA event told me about the Nessets and the desire of Tom and his sister Ingeborg to preserve their farm.

This lead to a meeting with Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt, a Nesset cousin and neighbor. Russ grew up in close contact with the Nessets and their land, and had come to know and love it as they did. As the Nessets became older, Russ was their most trusted adviser and an indefatigable helping hand, always available in every way imaginable.

Russ introduced me to Tom and Ingeborg. Russ, Bruce Smith and I met regularly with them for over a year to talk about the future of the farm.

From the beginning it was clear to me that with even the slightest hint to Tom, Russ could have inherited this property. Instead, Russ enthusiastically supported the Nessets' wish that the farm become a park. Without that support and Russ's tireless work to make it happen, the story of the Nesset Farm project would have been short and no page of that story would have been on the County Council August 11 agenda.

Tom shares pioneer memories

When we walked around the 106-acre farm talking about what kind of park it might be, Tom showered his memories.

He told tales of going fishing with Nooksack Indians in their canoes on the South Fork. Once his cousin Aade hooked a king salmon so big that Tom had to hang on Aade's ankles to keep him from being towed down the river. At least that's what Tom told us.

Tom showed us a big, clunky homemade sled that all of the kids had piled onto for a downhill run that was interrupted when they ran into a cow.

He pointed out two 100-foot tall fir trees that he said they would bend to the ground and ride like a whip when he was a boy.

Twice the house was moved back from the river to protect it from flooding. Once it

(Continued on page 4)

1998 Land Steward of the Year Award

Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt honored at membership meeting

If someone asked me what it means to be a land steward, I would say "let me tell you about Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt,"" Rand Jack, WLT board member said about the Trust's 1998 Land Steward of the Year.

The Land Trust's second annual Land Steward Award was presented to Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt during the WLT membership meeting on Friday, September 11. Nominated by WWU professor Wendy Walker and recommended by the Land Trust Outreach Committee, Russ was a unanimous selection by the WLF Board of Directors.

Russ, a neighbor and distant cousin to the Nessets, has been instrumental in guiding the long process of the Nesset Farm towards becoming a county park. (See Nesset story this page.)

None of the Nesset siblings had children. As Tom and Ingeborg Nesset got older and it became harder for them to care for the farm themselves, they cared for the farm through Russ. His tireless efforts to preserve the original farm buildings, coordinate projects to rehabilitate

Why should we preserve 800-year-old trees? (See reflection, pg. 7).

Annual Campaign kicks off. (See pg. 6.)

(Continued on page 3)
We’ve moved!

We’re in the same building, 301 W. Holly Street, but our office has moved down the hall. The new space is nearly twice as big: large enough for conferences with land owners and Land Trust committee meetings.

Thank you WLT members Scott Stodola and Bill Randolf for helping with the move. We also appreciate the extra muscle from our neighbors at Option Snowboards: Chad Perrin, Byron Seegers, and Tim Carlson.

Also, thank you Wade Marlowe, Blue Horse Gallery for the donated office furniture. We are still in need of a legal size file cabinet and extra chairs for meetings. If you have any items you would like to donate, please call the Trust office, 650-9470.

Fair volunteers provide support

Thank you board members and land trust volunteers who worked at the Land Trust booth during the Northwest Washington-Fair in Lynden: Cindy Klein, Carl Batchelor, Joan Casey, Tom Burton, Hilda Bajema, Dick Beardsley, Sharon Digby, John Gillies, Tom Wood, Richard Eggemeyer, Ann Yow, Seth Fleetwood, Herman Miller, Steve LeCocq, Chris Moench, Pete Kremen, Gordon Scott, Rod Burton, Cindy Franklin, Scott Stodola, Aurora Fox, Bob Carmichael, Kerry Thalhofer, Margaret Eames, Elaine Gold, Wendy Walker, Mike Finger, Patricia Wenke, Henry Bierlink, Ron Polinder, Julie Carpenter, and Michael Durbin. Also, thanks to Yarrow Moench, summer intern, for making phone calls to secure the long list of volunteers.

This important community outreach event added 89 names to our mailing list, introduced our new photographic note cards, (see article on note cards, page 6), and gave us the opportunity to tell people about the Canyon Lake Creek Community Forest project. Without the folks listed above, this would not be possible.

New advertising sponsor added

Businesses advertisers in The Steward continue to underwrite our printing and mailing expenses.

This issue we added CGK Wordsmith to this group of supporters. Thank you Cheryl Kinsley.

Congratulations to John Morgan Service, another Newsletter sponsor, for receiving the 1998 EPA “Evergreen Award.” They are the first small business in this four-state region to win this award. John said he considers this an honor and appreciates the recognition for this industry.

Message from the President

Land stewardship for the long-term

Chris Moench, President
Board of Directors

Recently, I took a group of Whatcom County business people up to see the Canyon Lake Creek old growth forest. It was near the end of our long dry spell of summer. As we drove up the mountain, the dirt road thoroughly filled our vehicle and lungs with dust, offering me a new understanding of what it means to be “close to the land.”

Bringing us closer to the land

Perhaps to be a steward of the land one must allow it to become a part of you, as you will eventually become a part of it. Because it is only from ourselves (people) that we seek to protect the land, we must learn to move as intuitively to the needs of the land as we do to our own needs. Indeed, the needs of land and people must be the same.

I think most land conservation supporters agree that we are a long way from achieving such intimacy with our landscape. To be sure, many aspects of our society work against it. I don’t have space to enumerate them all here.

However, many forces are working to draw us closer to the land, and land trusts are among the strongest. Using current legal tools and concepts of private property ownership, land trusts are creating direct responsibility for the protection of specific natural amenities on parcels of land. This is a long-term visionary approach to incrementally shifting a community’s relationship with the land. It recalls a quote of Dorothy Richards from her book Beaversprite... “...man (or woman) can fit himself in. Like a beaver, he can build the structure of a new life. One stick at a time, he can stem the flood of materialism that is threatening to sweep him off the face of the earth.”

It is a big beaver dam we are building through the Trust. Though the root of the Trust’s work is our legal responsibility for protecting the land “in perpetuity,” there are many branches that must grow to make the vision come true. First among them is community support and involvement.

To nurture our relationship with the land, the Land Trust must also nurture its place in the hearts and daily lives of the people who live here. Ideally, the Trust would be supported as willingly as people give to and work for their church or school. For long-term success the Trust must become that kind of community organism.

Building community, sharing the message

In this issue of The Steward, you will find articles on how the Trust is striving to bring us all into closer intimacy with our landscape, helping us be better stewards, and building a community of stewardship in which all residents of Whatcom County can participate. I hope you find it thought provoking and encouraging.

This summer’s membership survey (See page 6) revealed that more than 70% of our members learned about the Trust by word of mouth. Please talk about the Land Trust with your friends and neighbors. If you, or they have any questions, suggestions, or would like to volunteer, please call our office or a board member.

Table: 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 interests that insure the protection of the resource value. The Steward is published three times each year by the WLT.

Newsletter Committee Chair..........................Chris Moench
Contributors..............................................Gordon Scott, Chris Moench, Rand Jack, Cindy Franklin, Brett Bauton, Dick Beardsley
Desktop Publishing....................................Sheri Emerson
the stream, enhance wildlife habitat, lead tours of school children to study and appreciate the beauty and history of the Nesset farm exemplify the qualities of a dedicated steward of the land.

“It was never an obligation,” Jack said. “Russ recognized what it meant to be a steward, shared that responsibility with Tom and Ingeborg and eventually assumed the responsibility.”

In accepting the award, Russ emphasised the importance of the WLT members’ support for this organization. He then deflected attention away from his own participation in the Nesset Farm stewardship and shared his reflections on the Land Trust’s impact in the lives of the Nessets. Two things in particular stood out: One speaks to the profundity of the commitments we make; the other links Tom Nesset to our current work on the Canyon Lake Creek Old Growth Forest.

Norwegian farming tradition
The Nesset family moved from Norway to Whatcom County in 1905. Russ explained to the WLT audience that in Norway the family farm was not just land to be bought and sold - the farm is an extension of the family. The farm defines and provides continuity to the family and is something to be passed down from generation to generation.

Without a next generation to care for the farm, Russ said Tom and Ingeborg wondered what would happen to the farm in the future.

“I heard Ingeborg tell Tom ‘we have to think of something to do,’” Russ said. He explained how the Land Trust filled this need in their lives. The Trust’s promise to protect the farm with a conservation easement provided that the continuity would not be broken.

“I’ve never seen Tom happier than the day he sat at the dining room table with Ingeborg and signed the conservation easement,” Russ said. After he signed his name, Russ said Tom looked up with a big grin.

“He said ‘There! That’s done.’ It was that sense of relief knowing the farm would be cared for,” Russ said.

A lasting memory
Russ shared another story about Tom that was one of the most memorable of the evening and links Tom’s memory to the Land Trust’s current project: the Canyon Lake Creek Old Growth Forest. Russ reflected on Tom’s musings about what it would be like to be an old growth tree.

“Tom said ‘that sure would be something,’” Russ said, “‘to stand in one place for that long, out in all that weather - the snow, rain and fog - and see everything pass by.’”

It was Russ’s observation, and an image that many took home from our WLT membership event, that in his final years Tom spent long periods of time sitting motionless in the living room, looking out the window of the house where he had spent his life.

“Tom became more and more like an old growth tree,” Russ observed.

Congratulations, Russ, on your 1998 Land Steward of the Year award, and thank you. Your dedication and commitment are an inspiration to all.
was taken apart like Lincoln logs and reassembled on a new site. The other time it was moved on log rollers. Tom laughed as he described his mother immersed in housework forgetting the house was up on rollers and walking out the back door.

Today not only are the original farm buildings still there, but so are some of the tools that built them. The broadax used to hew the farm house’s dovetailed cedar beams is still sharp as a razor. In the same shed with generations of farm implements, we found four strange, round snowshoe-like objects - snowshoes for a horse brought by the Nessets from Norway.

Living a conservation ethic

Tom moved from Norway to the farm with his family in 1905. As a young boy he watched the hillside behind the house logged bare of giant old growth trees. Though he worked in logging at times himself, Tom said he never wanted to see the hillside cut like that again. The legacy of that experience is a majestic 60-acre stand of 90-year-old Douglas fir that will be part of the Nesset park.

Long before the term environmentalist was coined, the Nessets lived a conservation ethic. A tiny salmon stream that runs through the farm would sometimes get choked with over 300 spawning coho salmon. Still visible on a post in the barn, inscriptions made each year by the Nessets record the date of the first salmon’s return to the stream.

As early the 1940s, they enhanced the stream habitat by creating pools where returning fish could rest and hide from predators. If low water impeded salmon fry going back to the river, Tom and George had a little net they would use to scoop up the fry and help them on their journey. The little dip net still hangs on the wall in the tool shed. The park will inherit this healthy, functioning spawning stream, cared for in recent years by the Fourth Corner Fly Fishers.

The Nessets were true stewards of their farm. They knew the land intimately; they loved it and cared for it. They became part of the land and the land part of them. Ingeborg (most people called her Johnnie) was born on the farm in 1909. She died there 81 years later in the same bed she was born.

Trust, understanding play important roles

One day when Tom was talking to Russ, a question came up about the future park. Tom told Russ, “I’m not going to worry about that. The fellas will take care of it.” “The fellas” referred to me and Bruce. When Russ told me that story, I knew that Tom had come to trust us and felt that we understood what he and Ingeborg wanted for their land.

On July 31, 1989, Tom and Ingeborg signed a conservation easement protecting forever their farm from development, restricting the cutting of the forest on the hillside behind the house, and providing for the eventual use of the farm as a public park. The easement stipulates that if the land becomes a park, buildings will be restored to their original condition and “used for educational and museum-like purposes... The eagles, fish, and other wildlife will be protected and the integrity of the land respected.”

The Nesset Farm was placed in a family trust, and when Tom died at the age of 94 in 1992, Russ
Pfeiffer-Hoyt, as trustee, assumed full responsibility for the care and upkeep of the farm, a responsibility he has discharged with legendary devotion.

Nearby land acquisitions put park plans in place

Because of a provision in the conservation easement to protect the privacy of neighbors, the land could not become a park until public access could be provided from the north through property owned by the Goodyear Nelson timber company.

In 1993 the Land Trust facilitated a major exchange and purchase of land that involved the Trillium Corporation, the Department of Natural Resources, State Parks, Whatcom County and several other entities. As part of this transaction, DNR agreed to acquire the Goodyear Nelson property north of the Nesset Farm and convey it to Whatcom County. Unfortunately, at the last minute this did not happen.

In the aftermath of the land exchange, the Syre family made a very generous gift to Whatcom County of 262 acres about a mile and a half north of the Nesset Farm. The Syre property is separated from the farm by the 200 acres owned by Goodyear Nelson and a small parcel owned by the Hellyer family.

After years of urging by the Land Trust and Whatcom County, in 1998 DNR acquired the Goodyear Nelson property. At its October 6 meeting, the State Board of Natural Resources will vote to convey this property to the county providing public access from the north so that the farm can become a park. Unfortunately, DNR allowed Goodyear Nelson to retain the right to cut much of the timber on the property, a problem with which we will have to deal in the future.

Council votes to buy Nesset Farm

Last year the Land Trust established the Tom and Ingeborg Nesset Foundation, which has five directors, two from the Land Trust, two from County Parks and Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt. Russ transferred the farm to the Foundation, which agreed to sell it to the county for $980,000.

On August 11, the County Council voted to purchase the farm using money from the Whatcom County Conservation Futures Fund and a $64,000 state grant.

The Nesset Foundation will devote all of the money it receives from the sale to restoring farm buildings and to long-term maintenance of the Nesset park. All of the funds that Whatcom County spends to buy the Nesset farm will be returned to the county for the purpose of making the farm into a park and taking care of that park. Thus, the public gets an incredible, historic farm and all of its money back.

The next chapter

When the county acquires the Hellyer property, the Syre, Hellyer, and Goodyear Nelson properties will be linked to the Nesset Farm. The county will have 600 acres and four contiguous miles of frontage on the crystal clear South Fork of the Nooksack River, the makings for what some people say will be the finest county park in the USA.

Sharing with Tom the closing years of his life and his deep, ethical love of the land is an experience I will always treasure. Though the story of the Nesset Farm project is far from over, it has been a pretty exciting story, one which the Land Trust is proud of helping write.

Tom and Ingeborg Nesset sign their conservation easement at the dining room table.

Photos courtesy of Rand Jack.

For more Nesset history, see the Land Steward of the Year article on page 1 in this newsletter.

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Member American Optometric Assn.
Annual Campaign '98
Membership support crucial to conservation successes

Once a year we ask both our new and returning members to support the Land Trust financially. This year our Annual Campaign begins in October.
As our members know, the Land Trust’s work is supported with membership contributions. Our ability to continue providing conservation options to the community relies on our members donating generously every year. Thanks to this support, and a grant from the Wilburforce Foundation, we have been able to continue staffing our office and providing conservation resources to local landowners.
WLT members are invited to special members-only activities such as conservation property tours and field trips. This year, members who join or renew with a contribution of $50 and up can receive special premiums, including a set of our new note cards, (see article on below), our book Whatcom Places, or a trip to the Canyon Lake Creek Old Growth Forest.
But the most important membership benefit is knowing you are helping to preserve Whatcom County’s special qualities for future generations.
Please watch for your Annual Campaign letter in the mail and read how we have used our membership support to preserve special places in Whatcom County. We hope you’ll agree that the work of the Trust is important for everyone who lives here.

New: note cards feature book photographs
Photographs from our book, Whatcom Places, have been reprinted in a set of note cards. Patty Nelson and members of the outreach committee selected eight photographs and arranged to have sets of note cards printed at Premier Graphics.
The eight-card sets went on sale in September at stores around the county. Paper Dreams in Fairhaven and The Inside Passage at the ferry terminal are the first to carry them. Card sets retail for $8 per set and, just like the book, 60% of the purchase price goes directly to conservation.
If you are interested in purchasing a large quantity for your business, please contact board member Joan Casey, 647-2346, or Sheri Emerson at the Land Trust office, 650-9470.

Survey results show support for Trust work
Last June, 122 Land Trust members spent time on the phone answering questions and offering their opinions and ideas about the work of the Whatcom Land Trust. Thank you!
The results from this survey gave us direction in setting goals and re-affirmed that the mission set by the WLT board of directors is in line with our members’ philosophies and values. It was reassuring and exciting to get feedback that our members agree with the priorities assigned to potential and ongoing conservation projects.
We thank the volunteers and board members who helped make calls to other members: Kathy Dunbar, Anne Kauffman, Sheryl Hockett, Judie Wilgress, Sue Blackadar, Kathy Zaiser, Intern Nehalam Breiter and Laura Leigh Brakke. Board members: Joan Casey, Bill Carroll, Hilda Bajema, Sharon Digby, Bob Keller, Cindy Klein, Chris Moehl and organized by Cindy Franklin.

Survey findings:
Newsletter feedback was positive. Many of our members take the time to read this publication.
42 members offered to volunteer their time and talent.
29 members surveyed (24% of those contacted) think that “public education and outreach” are the most important work of the Land Trust. This is a vote of confidence for the board’s decision to establish an education and outreach committee two years ago.

How did you first hear of the Land Trust?*
Friends, relatives or personal contact by WLT members = 75
Newspaper/Herald article = 30
From a land “deal” = 10
From a mailing = 8
From the book Whatcom Places = 5
Contacted at the Farmer’s Market = 1
Film Series = 1

What work of the WLT is most important to you?*
General comments/need to protect land in Whatcom County = 45
Wildlife and/or salmon habitat = 34
Public education and outreach = 29
Conservation of forests = 25
Agricultural Land = 22
Projects ensuring health of our streams and bay = 18

Acquiring land/properties = 14
Public access to shorelines = 8
Parks and scenic areas = 7
Stewardship of private land = 1

*Some gave multiple responses
Why protect the ancient forest?

Rand Jack, Board of Directors

For the past five years I have worked and dreamed with the Whatcom Land Trust about protecting the 800 to 1000 year old Canyon Lake Creek Old Growth Forest. To my surprise, yesterday someone asked me for the first time why, in my heart, I really wanted to preserve that forest.

I knew and believed all of the right answers - biodiversity, endangered species, natural heritage, future generations, water quality. These are all substantial, compelling reasons, but not what convinced my heart. As I ruminated with Sheri, our office administrator who had asked the question, two reasons took shape as to why protecting this ancient forest is so important to me. The reasons are spiritual and moral, and thus not easy to articulate. The words did not come easily then and they do not come easily now.

Natural sanctuary

The first reason has to do with awe and humility. I can not be sure that there is a God, but when I stand in the presence of 800 year old yellow cedar trees, I know that there is something bigger, more enduring, more whole and harmonious than I am. I experience a new understanding of my relationship to other living things, of my place in the scheme of things.

This forest reminds me of the ancient cathedrals of Europe - the soaring space, the mottled light, the smell of antiquity, the connection to the past, the promise of the future, the shared experience across generations of looking for something greater than ourselves. For both the cathedral and the nature reserve we use the same word. Sanctuary. This is space inviolate.

To have an ethical relationship with someone means that we have a special respect for them and a special obligation of care. We see this most readily in our relationships with family and neighbors. I believe that ethical relationships can also extend to other living things. From the moment that I walked into the ancient Canyon Lake Creek Forest, I felt an intense respect and an obligation not just to refrain from harming the forest, but to protect and care for it.

Anything that has lived for eight hundred, a thousand years, has a moral imperative in favor of being left alone. Nature has so proven her abilities and wisdom here that only incredible arrogance could lead to disturbing this forest.

Stewardship opportunity

My second heartfelt reason for protecting this forest has to do with community. The Land Trust envisions that the upper Canyon Lake Creek watershed, including the 600 acres of old growth, 1600 acres of young, regenerating forest, and the 45 acre lake, will be known as the Whatcom County Community Forest. Jointly held by Whatcom County and Western Washington University, the Community Forest will provide opportunities for public recreation, environmental education and scientific research. It will also provide an opportunity for us as a community to grow in our understanding of our stewardship responsibility.

Like the cathedrals of Europe and the village commons of New England, the Community Forest can help give us a sense of shared meaning and common purpose. Given the (Continued on back page)
Benefits of a "community forest"

(Continued from page 7)

rich role forests have played in the history of Whatcom County, an ancient forest is an appropriate symbol and geographical space to help bring us together.

From the Community Forest, the Whatcom County community will have the opportunity to learn and practice a stewardship ethic. From the old growth forest we can learn about the wonders of nature, our relationship to the environment, the rewards of caring for a venerable forest and the benefits of restraint. We can watch the new forest grow to maturity and recover its grandeur and complexity. Though I will not live to see it, perhaps my great grandchildren will one day not be able to easily locate the sharp divide that now exists between the fifteen year old trees and the eight hundred year forest. Perhaps a photo exhibit at the museum will document the transition with pictures taken every twenty years (the trees grow slowly in this high forest).

Community will celebrate old growth

Besides its geographical location, the forest will be made very much a part of the community. Trails will be built and residents of Whatcom County will be able to experience first hand the power of walking among these ancient trees. Visitors will come to share this rare opportunity. Children from all over the county will have this landscape available as an environmental education laboratory. I foresee students from Western working with students at Mt. Baker High School on joint science projects. Since it will be our forest, what is being learned though research will be described in local papers. We will publish a Community Forest calendar with photographs from the forest. Together, these activities can help create a shared feeling of ownership, participation, responsibility and celebration.

Consider the potential

A Community Forest, even if it is one of the oldest forests in the Pacific Northwest, cannot cure the feeling of divisiveness that so many feel in our society. But becoming stewards of this forest may be a step in that direction. A Community Forest that dates back to the last millennium may give us some clearer focus as we look to the future.

While ideas like biodiversity drive my mind to protect the Canyon Lake Creek Old Growth Forest, feelings like awe, humility and the potential for community drive my heart.
Preserving Ancient Trees Through a ‘Community Forest’

Old growth forests are few and far between.

Truly ancient forests are rare among the rare.

Canyon Lake Creek Old Growth, located east of Deming, is one of those truly rare ancient forests and currently the oldest privately owned forest in the state. Whatcom Land Trust, in its largest project ever, is working towards preserving this local treasure as a “community forest.”

Working with the Trust for Public Lands, WLT has helped facilitate an option to purchase this old growth forest and the surrounding 2,300-acre watershed from Crown Pacific, a local forest products company. The purchase price for this property, including the lake and 600 acres of ancient forest, is $3.692 million.

Identified in 1993 by WLT as a conservation site of highest priority, this site gained national attention earlier this year when scientists were investigating the ecological significance of the forest and discovered the trees were 800 years old. According to Dr. James Agee, Professor of Forest Ecology at the University of Washington School of Forestry, this is one of the oldest forest stands known in the Pacific Northwest and one of the largest intact stands of its age. Other experts at the university agree.

“The forest and trees at Canyon Lake are extraordinary for their antiquity. Trees of this age have rarely been found and documented in the Cascade Range,” Dr. Jerry Franklin, professor of Ecosystem Analysis, said.

(Continued on page 4)

Conservation properties

Trust preserves river frontage, farm site, tidelands

River frontage protected

In April, Dr. Virginia Streets of Lynden donated a conservation easement to Whatcom Land Trust protecting two acres of land near Lynden.

This beautiful property, originally part of the Holden and Phoebe Judson homestead, borders the Nooksack River and is surrounded by farmland. It is very near the conservation easement donated to the Trust by Jan and Ken Stremler in 1997.

The easement restricts subdivision of the property or building of any additional residences, while protecting scenic views of Mt. Baker, the Twin Sisters, and views to the west over the San Juan Islands.

In addition to maintaining scenic views, this easement protects important wetlands associated with the Nooksack River. These valuable riparian

(Continued on page 8)
New conservation director, public forum: actions that support Land Trust mission

Chris Moench
WLT Board President

Two basic ideas motivate Whatcom Land Trust actions. One is the acquisition of legal interest in conservation property so that there is a natural legacy to protect; the second is the idea of stewardship education so that there are people to protect that legacy.

This spring WLT took two steps symbolic of these ideas.

New WLT position provides resources

The first action was to hire Gordon Scott, professional land use planner and former WLT Board of Directors president, as a full-time Conservation Director.

Gordon’s responsibilities include planning and executing conservation programs that protect important elements of the county’s natural heritage and landscape. For example, the Board has often discussed the idea of identifying salmon, elk and eagle habitat and developing a program to protect these sites. With Gordon on staff we now have the resources to engage in this kind of programmatic approach to land conservation.

These efforts will hopefully leave a legacy of protected natural systems for the next generations of Whatcom County residents to enjoy.

Public forums promote understanding

The second action was to sponsor a series of public forums on local land use issues. These panel discussions explored our relationship, as individuals and as a community, to the land. The goal is to leave the land in as good or better condition when than when we received it. We believe this can be done through a clear understanding of the many economic, emotional, physical and spiritual factors that govern our relationship to the land.

We also believe that everyone is responsible to the land on which they live. If a community is to have a sustainable relationship with land, individual actions must be based on an ethic of stewardship. We sponsored the panels to build that stewardship ethic.

WLT members encouraged to participate

In this issue of The Steward, you’ll notice many activities inviting WLT members to participate in land conservation efforts and stewardship education. Among these is our membership survey. This is an opportunity for you to let us know how the we’re doing and how you might want to get involved.

We are also inviting members to send in their nomination for the “Land Steward of the Year” award. (See form on page 7.)

And finally, be sure to mark on your calendars and come to our first annual membership gathering on September 11. It will be the first time we’ll all be able to come together as a community of stewards. We’ll honor people who have conserved their land through the Trust, announce the “Land Steward of the Year” and meet (or reconnect) with each other.

I hope to see you there. ☺️

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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 interests that insure the protection of the resource value. The Steward is published three times each year by the WLT.

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Contributors ................................ Gordon Scott, Chris Moench, Rand Jack, Cindy Franklin, Sharon Digby, Rod Burton, Brett Bauon, Dan Taylor, Bob Keller
Desktop Publishing .......................... Sheri Emerson
Monitoring conservation properties ‘in perpetuity’
Sharon Digby  
WLT Monitoring Coordinator

Often the highlight of this newsletter is the announcement of Whatcom Land Trust’s latest conservation easement or property acquisition.

But granting an easement to the WLT is just the beginning of the conservation process.

Conservation easements are attached to property “in perpetuity” and perpetuity means forever. While this is a little hard to envision, it is an important consideration of every easement that WLT agrees to protect. Easements dictate that WLT must make sure the property owners, now and in the future, abide by the terms of the conservation easement.

To do this, the Trust has set up a monitoring system to watch over these properties.

Monitoring process begins with base-line data

The first step of monitoring an easement is to collect base-line data and create a monitoring notebook. This information is the basis for comparison of the property over time and is updated as necessary.

A monitoring notebook usually contains a detailed map, legal description, copy of the signed easement and photographs of the property. We are also now able to take advantage of Whatcom County’s GIS system to obtain a map with geologic, critical areas, geologic hazards and wildlife information.

Once a year, volunteer monitors officially visit the conservation properties. Some volunteers act as land stewards and check on sites more often.

Problems have been rare

Fortunately, WLT has had very few problems with its 19 conservation easements and 10 properties. One of the properties owned by the Trust has had trouble with ORV (off-road vehicle) trespassing. The steward for this property, Steve Irving, discovered the situation and helped with the resolution. WLT is very grateful for his dedication.

One reason monitoring has been relatively easy so far is because, except for one property, none of the easement properties have changed owners.

As time goes on and more properties have new owners, it may make the monitoring job more difficult. A conservation easement is part of the property title and if the property is sold, both buyer and seller are aware of these encumbrances. But new owners may not be as aware of the stipulations and intent of the original owner.

As land holdings grow, so does monitoring job

Every year, monitoring WLT properties becomes a bigger task. At some point in the future, WLT may have to consider hiring a monitoring coordinator. (Other land trusts have gone this route.) So while the Trust eagerly looks forward to conserving new properties, it also knows that this means a much larger responsibility for monitoring.

WLT appreciates the time and dedication of these volunteer monitors.

Carl Batchelor  
Cindy Klein  
Dan Taylor  
Mark Johnson  
Connie Clement  
Clare Fogelsong  
Mike Savatgy  
Pat Savatgy  
Rick Roames  
Larry Simkins  
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Ancient forests look down on Canyon Lake, located east of Deming. Geologists believe the lake was formed by a massive land slide in the 1820s. (Photo by Gordon Scott.)

Efforts are underway to raise the funds needed to purchase and protect this ancient old growth forest.

To date, WLT has received several unsolicited donations from private citizens contributing to the protection of this property. Pilchuck Audubon Society contributed $1,000 which was used to begin the outreach for this project. Thanks to their donation, and the kind assistance of Rod Burton, we have a professional folder of information about this ancient forest to inform or educate prospective funders.

WLT Board of Directors is equally grateful for the donations from two local students. Derek Franklin, age 10, and Maya Reynolds, age 14, each contributed a portion of their allowance help save this old growth forest. Derek wrote: "I'm donating this because I recently received a Super Nintendo system and I wanted to donate money to help balance the world between electronics and nature."

A New England idea

The idea of protecting this ancient grove by creating a “community forest” is a concept borrowed from the historic New England village commons model. Rand Jack, WLT board member, explains this concept as “a segment of the landscape that unifies the community and gives it a sense of pride and shared meaning.”

The “community forest” would be accomplished through a partnership of public and private efforts. It could result in joint ownership by public agencies such as Whatcom County and Western Washington University, with a restrictive conservation easement held by the Land Trust.

The easement restrictions would permit supervised public access, environmental education and nondestructive scientific research while prohibiting subdivision, commercial use and timber harvest.

Coordinated by the Land Trust, public access could be provided through a stewardship program with several organizations — such as, the Whatcom County Parks Department, the North Cascades Institute, Western Washington University’s park and recreation program and the local chapter of the Mountaineers.

Volunteer stewards, who would be trained in forest ecology, geology and the history of the area, could lead educational day trips. Special arrangements could be made for school groups and organizations. The County Parks Department and the North Cascade...
Institute have successful experience with self-supporting outdoor recreation programs.

**Community representatives support recreational, educational uses**

Both the parks department and the university have expressed enthusiasm at the possibilities.

"I am very excited about the educational opportunities," Brad Smith, Dean of Huxley College, WWU, said. "I can think of no other site in North America on which students could spend a day studying both old growth timber and forest transition. The opportunities are virtually limitless from an educational point of view."

The local parks department is interested in providing an opportunity for people to visit this site, as part of their outdoor recreational program.

"The thought of being able to see an 800-year-old forest will draw many visitors," Roger DeSpain, Director of Whatcom County Parks and Recreation, said.

"This is exciting! The notion of a community...acquiring and managing a site such as Canyon Creek, is indeed a first and worthy of recognition," Smith said.

**On a visit to the Canyon Lake Old Growth you'll find...**

...a grove of forest giants. The ridge lines of the Canyon Lake watershed are steep – over 4,000 feet in elevation. The native forest is composed of rough mountain hemlocks, towering Pacific silver firs and the long-lived Alaska yellow cedar.

The antiquity of the forest is evident by the broken and gnarled tree tops, massive limbs and open forest floor. In the occasional opening left by a fallen tree, huckleberry bushes compete for filtered sunlight with 50-year-old miniature silver firs.

Right now, in the early summer, the sound of falling water dominates the forest. Numerous rivulets cascade over rocky ledges, draining away the melting snow. Later in the season, huckleberries will be ripe and the sounds of feeding birds and bears will prevail. On one recent visit the tracks of a bobcat family traversed patches of old snow.

For a moment, this forest can help the visitor forget all the cares of the lowlands.

*Dr. Jerry Franklin*

*University of Washington*

*Professor of Ecosystem Analysis*
Whatcom Places wins Mayors Award.

Arts Commission acknowledges portrayal of county's beauty

Whatcom Places, a book published by the Whatcom Land Trust, was among the eight recipients of the 1997 Mayor's Arts Awards for 1997.

The awards were presented April 16 at the Whatcom Museum of History and Art. Photographer Ann Yow, a book contributor, accepted the award for WLT.

The Bellingham Arts Commission acknowledged the book for its "portrayal of Whatcom County's natural beauty, artistry and community involvement."

WLT published Whatcom Places in May, 1997. To date, the book has sold approximately 4,000 copies and was listed among the best sellers at Village Books last year.

The other awardees were Roderick C. Burton, KUGS; Jan Lor, Mike and Elaine McRory, Marian Ritter, Dorothy Wachter and Johnathan Warden. ©

Whatcom Land Trust members are invited to our first membership event on the evening of September 11: (The place is yet to be determined.)

It will be a time to celebrate recent successes of the Whatcom Land Trust with our growing number of supporters.

WLT will take time that evening to honor this year's conservation easement donors, property donors, monitoring volunteers and other volunteers. The highlight of the evening will be to announce the recipient of our second annual “Land Steward of the Year” award.

The Land Steward award recognizes people who make outstanding contributions to conservation in Whatcom County.

The first recipients of this award, Mike and Elaine McRory and Lois and George Garlick, were honored in September, 1997.

Any current Whatcom Land Trust member may nominate someone for the Land Steward award. (Nominees for this award do not have to be WLT members.) Please refer to the form on this page.

Invitations to this event will be mailed out to members in August. Volunteers to help with this celebration would be greatly appreciated. Please call our office, 650-9470, for more information.

Send us your nomination for the 1998 ‘Land Steward of the year’

WLT’s “Land Steward of the Year” Award recognizes people who have made exceptional contributions to land conservation in Whatcom County. We are now accepting nominations for this award. Nominees should meet two requirements:

1. Be responsible for specific, concrete accomplishments towards advancing land and habitat conservation.
2. Volunteer time and resources.

Current WLT members may make nominations for this year’s Land Steward award. WLT Board of Directors are not eligible. The award winner(s) will be announced at the membership meeting on September 11, 1998.

I nominate ________________________________ for WLT 1998 Land Steward of the Year.

Please attach a complete description of the efforts and accomplishments of this nominee as they relate to the land conservation mission of the Whatcom Land Trust.

*Only WLT members may nominate someone for this award; nominees for Land Steward of the Year do not have to be members.

Please send nominations to WLT, PO Box 6131, Bellingham, WA. 98227

Nominations must be received by July 15, 1998.
Conservation donations protect natural values
(Continued from page 1)

wetlands help maintain river flows and water quality in the river. Clean and adequate water are critical elements in our community’s struggle to help protect endangered salmon stocks.

A portion of this property is also within the floodplain. By protecting this property forever from any further development, the integrity of the floodplain at this location can be assured. This will help protect downstream property owners, as well as all of us in the County who are working to reduce damage from flooding.

Farm conserved with easement

A conservation easement on a 25-acre llama farm in central Whatcom County has been donated to WLT.

The donor, who wishes to remain anonymous, had been discussing the easement with the Trust for nine years, a record for this land trust.

The property is a mix of pasture and forest bordered by a small tributary creek of the Nooksack River. Existing buildings include a small house, cabin and barn on the farm which also boasts a beautiful garden and orchard.

The conservation easement provides that the property be used as a farm for light agriculture or be allowed to revert to wildlife habitat.

Under the restriction of this perpetual easement, the property can not be subdivided and the size of any addition to the residence is limited to 10 percent of the size of the current structure.

WWU tidelands donated to Trust

In the late fall of 1997, the Western Foundation donated 35 acres of Drayton Harbor tidelands to the Land Trust.

This property is located west of Georgia Street and the railroad tracks, just north of the Drayton Harbor tideland property WLT received from Margaret Eames in the summer of 1997.

Like the Eames donation, the Western Foundation property is an area that was part of an old tideland plat, complete with streets, alleys and individual residential lots. These old plats were dreams of early developers when land speculation was rampant in the Northwest during the building of the region’s railway system. Fortunately, these tidelands were never developed, retaining intact what we now understand to be some of the most biologically productive areas on the planet.

The Western Foundation tideland donation provides excellent habitat for shellfish, aquatic insects and marine vegetation. This saltwater ecosystem in turn is a rich food source for fish, migrating waterfowl and resident birds such as the Great Blue Heron.

This saltwater ecosystem is a rich food source for fish, migrating waterfowl and resident birds such as the Great Blue Heron.
Lummi Mountain protected as wildlife preserve

As the brothers stated in the easement: "The grantor intends that the character and use of the property remain essentially as it is at the present time."

Two new conservation properties announced

Family retreat property protected
In November three brothers, who wish to remain anonymous, donated to the Land Trust a very restrictive conservation easement on 18 acres in the Lake Whatcom watershed at the south end of the lake. For three generations, the property has served as a gathering place and retreat for their family.

Except for a tiny cabin dating from the 1920s and two old orchards, the land is largely covered by second growth mixed forest and three streams. The easement prohibits subdivision, additional structures and long term residential use of the property. As the brothers stated in the easement: "The grantor intends that the character and use of the property remain essentially as it is at the present time."

(Continued on page 7)

The 112-acre parcel will be owned and managed by the Department of Fish and Wildlife

In December, the Whatcom Land Trust helped protect 112 acres of land on Lummi Island. The parcel is habitat for a number of species, including endangered peregrine falcons, and will be owned and managed by the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW).

Even though the Trust acted as neither buyer, seller, nor received a conservation easement to protect this property, we were directly involved in completing this transaction. It was one of the most intense and complex land deals in our history.

Numerous challenges create complex negotiations

The property owner was a Texas businessman who planned to develop the property and was suing surrounding property owners for legal access. The buyer was a state agency (DFW) who had been trying for several years to purchase this land. Seven parties had an interest in these negotiations: the landowner, DFW, Department of Natural Resources, Lummi Island residents, the Trust for Public Land, a state recreational funding committee, and the Whatcom Land Trust.

"One complication was just the sheer number of parties and their divergent interests," said Rand Jack, WLT attorney who negotiated the transaction. "It's hard enough to bring two parties together when they have different interests, but here we had a number of parties, each having their own perspective and their own goals," he added.

In addition to communications that bounced between Texas, Olympia, Seattle, and Bellingham, Jack was involved with settling the

(Continued on page 8)
Holiday volunteers

In December, the Trust was invited to participate in the Port of Bellingham's Holiday Festival. Thanks to WLT volunteers for helping staff a table at the Fairhaven Ferry Terminal: Tore Ofteness, Cindy Klein, Ann Yow, Rod Burton, Wendy Walker, Aimee Trebon-Frazier, and Bob Keller.

Land Monitors appreciated

The Land Trust acknowledges and thanks the following volunteers who helped monitor our conservation properties in 1997.

Land Monitors were Dan Taylor, the Odom Family, Clare Fogelsong, Mark Johnson, Steve Irving, Pat Savatgy, Mike Savatgy, Carl and Katy Batchelor, and Cindy Klein. Our appreciation also goes to Land Stewards Connie Clement, Steve Irving, Pat Savatgy, and Mike Savatgy.

And many thanks to Bob Kandiko and Anne Crutcher for their photography.

Whatcom Places reviewed in state magazine

In the Fall, 1997 issue of Columbia, the Magazine of Northwest History, Whatcom Places received favorable mention in a book review.

"This is an advocacy book, seeking the voluntary care of land by citizen groups, businesses and landowners. That is the goal of the land Trust, and their sincerity is evident in each page of honest text and vivid photographs."

This newsletter has something new

Beginning with this issue, businesses advertisers in The Steward are underwriting this newsletter; their support helps pay the printing and mailing expenses. When you get the opportunity, thank them.

Newsletter sponsors are: Ken Ryan at the Bagelry, Bob Henderson and Barbara Meyers at Henderson Books, John Morgan at John Morgan Service (auto repair), Mike Hoagland at Hoagland Pharmacy, Drew Pettus, Attorney, Rick Dubrow at A-1 Builders, Michael Hovander at Bellingham Vision Clinic and Ferndale Vision Clinic, and Eric Clarke at Culligan Water, Inc.

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To conserve paper and mailing costs, we are asking you to let us know of duplicate mailings. Please send us any mailing labels you'd like deleted. Or call us at 650-9470. If you wish to make a name or address change, let us know as well. Thanks.

Message from the (outgoing) president

Reflecting on the past two years

After two years of serving as WLT president, Gordon Scott is stepping down. Here are some of his responses to questions about WLT events during his tenure.

Why has the Whatcom Land Trust been so successful these past two years?

Gordon: The Trust is more successful every year because of the community's increasing awareness of the need to conserve important properties. As an organization, we can perform that function. We're growing, getting more professional, and more efficient. We have solid organization and it's tremendous to be able to work with such dedicated, hard-working board members who are doing good things for this community. It takes a lot of time from all of us, but it's been worth it.

What have been some of the Trust's important accomplishments?

Gordon: We've improved the quality of our existing conservation easements by adding properties in the vicinity. We're at the point where we can build on our success and give neighboring property owners the opportunity to conserve their land. Important ecological accomplishments include the preservation of endangered species habitat on Lummi Mountain, and the Great Blue Heron nesting colony on ARCO property at Cherry Point, and also the Kenny Creek Bald Eagle night roost easement with the Trillium Corporation.

(Continued on page 7)
Planning for continued success

Chris Moench, Land Trust President

On January 31, (the sunniest day of 1998 so far!), our Board of Directors held its annual meeting at the home of Joan Casey.

During the eight hour meeting, the board reviewed accomplishments of 1997 and looked for ways to strengthen and expand conservation work in 1998.

Goals for 1998

1. **Reworking the management structure of the Trust.** As demand for our services grows, we need to expand the Trust’s ability to protect land, reach out to the community, and raise money. At the same time we must not compromise the Trust’s strong tradition of volunteerism and flexibility. This year we will seek ways to give decision-making authority to board members, establish clear lines of accountability, and involve more volunteers.

2. **Completion of the Nesse Farm/South Fork County Park.** In the works for nearly ten years, the pieces are all nearly in place to create a premier county park.

3. **Work with other organizations and individuals in new efforts to protect agricultural land.** The Trust was originally founded to protect farm land but that goal has been difficult to achieve. Perhaps new dynamics in the economy of farming and in the larger community have opened new ways to approach the problem.

1998 officers elected

New officers for 1998 are: **President: Chris Moench, Vice President: Sharon Digby, Treasurer: Hilda Bajema, and Secretary: Cindy Klein.**

Thanks, Gordon!

The final act in the meeting was to thank Gordon Scott who has ably served as President for two years. Gordon oversaw the Trust through a period of rapid growth and managed several of our most significant conservation projects. Gordon will continue to serve the Trust in the (somewhat) less demanding role of board member.
Another stewardship perspective

Bob Keller

Land trusts do have an ideology and philosophy. Anyone who talks about stewardship, responsibility, conservation, and future generations is making philosophical statements. On these we agree. But such statements, in turn, rest upon other philosophical assumptions, beliefs, or basic premises, and here wide divergence exists with the Trust. Why should we be responsible? can we be? can and should humans try to control the future? are we obligated to care for land? by whom or what?

The chapter in Whatcom Places on Lynden makes a very clear theological statement about one source of stewardship. Ron Polinder's convictions and obligations arise from historic Dutch Calvinism. Some members of the Trust, especially its founders, share such beliefs; others do not. The current board, to cite four examples, includes a Lutheran, Unitarian, humanist, and spouse of a Yoga teacher. We come to land conservation from many angles, with the Trust itself only concerned about the practical, final conclusion that "land matters."

Yet fundamental assumptions, though not our business, are crucial. Recently a friend who teaches philosophy and religion at the University of Wisconsin wrote to me after seeing a copy of Whatcom Places: “The photography is stunning,” he commented, “and I was particularly touched by Polinder's essay. Certainly one could argue that that's Christianity at something close to its best.”

From time to time, it's worthwhile to give voice to such basic convictions, to think about why we are stewards of land. We did so last year in a provocative essay by Skip Richards. The following sermon (at Holden Village on October 6, 1996) was preached by Martin Wells, a former minister at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Bellingham. Holden is a religious retreat center located above Lake Chelan in the Glacier Peak Wilderness Area.

Christian Stewardship and Land

Isaiah 5:1-7; Matthew 21:33-46.

Martin Wells

Two images set the stage this evening. First is the image of harvest. It's a good time to think of harvest because all around us the earth brings forth a bounty during October. The goodness of harvest can be found in those wonderful Chelan apples in our dining hall. If you haven't eaten one, please do, and taste the goodness of harvest.

The second image is more troubling.

We live in orchard country where decisions are made to end the growing of certain fruit, sometimes because the trees grow old, sometimes because of shifts in market "demand," and sometimes because of "higher" human uses for land. If that happens, fruit trees are destroyed. How many of you have driven along the Columbia between Wenatchee and Navarre Coulee and seen a tractor pulling trees out by their roots?

It can be a picture of devastation. I came upon a three-acre site where fruit trees laid on their side, uprooted, prone, in neat, tidy rows. I felt a deep sickness in the gut, a loss of beauty, life and hope. Once was exquisite life, now all that remained was the fire to come.
With that in mind, recall Isaiah's image of God seeking a harvest, God looking at what should have been abundance and finding only tiny, bitter grapes. Isaiah's concept of God is frightening and repulsive: God as destroyer of life. And all that remains was the inevitability of fire to come.

According to Isaiah, the garden of earth, a garden given us to tend, is for growing things. To grow things is to tend to life in a fundamental way: regeneration, growth, harvest. The purpose of growth is that we may eat and live and love and replicate the gift of life. God's creation provides "enough" for all. Enough life, enough food, enough love, so that even in the enjoyment of love the next generation is conceived, a cosmic harmony and balance of ecstatic joy.

Well, that was intended until somebody got the notion that God just set some perpetual life-machine in motion and then disappeared, leaving us an opportunity to rob the orchard. It was harvest time in Eden when human overreaching began. Eve and Adam ate that apple out of turn; they mutinied against the gift of perpetual harvest, everlasting life. Their decision turned out to be Israel's decision, and now is our decision: we want to have it all. And we grab it, hoard it, violating the gift of life for all.

Today it's harvest time once more. Instead of a rich harvest for all, the privileged fill larders with apple sauce and frozen apple crisp, and dried apples, and cold-stored apples for mid-winter. The harvest has been stolen by some while others are invited to go hungry, a kind of murder without the victim's name, for he or she will fall among the nameless dead. God looks at the garden, knows there was enough for all, and watches some eat to obesity while some die of hunger.

God made divine wrath known through Isaiah: "No more! No more!" If a vineyard cannot or will not produce the fruit of righteousness, if it fails to produce social justice, the original gift of the garden, then the garden/vineyard/orchard/civilization will be pulled up by its roots and destroyed. We wait for the fire.

But God could not do it!

Perhaps God saw uprooted fruit trees along the Columbia River and was overwhelmed with compassion. So God sent Isaiah to warn us to turn from hoarding to sharing. The result has not been good. Servants sent by God have been stoned, run off, or murdered when they called for social justice, when they came to the harvest and asked us to share with the poor.

In our own sophisticated days the Word has been ignored because conventional economic wisdom says that the carrot of riches must be held out as the only sure motivator for human productivity. This theory holds that unless we have every expectation of gaining fabulous wealth far beyond our needs, we will never take risks necessary to provide a harvest for others. That may be true—if we see ourselves as owners of the vineyard, of the orchard, the ground on which we pursue our short lives.

But are we the owners? Or do we believe the line from our Holden prayer: "Merciful God, everything in heaven and earth belongs to you."

Whose creation is it? If ours, we do as we please and the fittest survive to revel in the excess of their works. But if creation is God's and we are tenants, then God has a gift for us, and through us a gift for those who cannot provide for themselves. In Jesus' parable of the tenants, the point is this: if humans want to claim ownership of creation, they must kill Jesus first. We must kill him because he comes at the behest of his Father, the real landowner, to collect that part of the harvest belonging to the poor.

Note that the lord comes for part of the harvest. Creation no doubt provides for us

(Continued on page 6)
Christian Stewardship and Land
(Continued from page 5)

tenants, who get first crack at the harvest. Our share is enough and more. But the rest of our bounty is for others and Jesus comes to claim it. When the poor are denied food, when justice is left waiting at the gate of the city, it means one thing: someone has claim-jumped Creation and stolen what God created; next, someone murdered the Son when he came to help the poor. Who is that someone? Listen again to the last lines of our reading: “When the chief priests and Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them.”

Oh, thank goodness! It’s not about us but about our corrupt leaders. We’re safe, at least until the next parable makes it clear that Matthew uses the leaders of Israel as a warning to the new Christian movement. And not just them. My brothers and sisters, we are all in this together. The divide is clear. If we insist that Creation is ours, then we make ourselves God. Then comes the fire as God inevitably claims Creation from us. If we conclude that creation is God’s but all the excess is all ours, then we are thieves and murderers, thieves because we take what is intended for others, and murderers because we eventually try to kill God to prevent his claiming the excess of our labor for the less fortunate.

But those of us who otherwise would be counted murderers are given a new chance. God wills to try yet again! Those who see in Christ’s death and resurrection an invitation to new life, a new creation, will be given a generous share, more than adequate for a good, full life. We may work the vines one time; the second harvest is for the poor, the homeless, the weak, the children, and others who depend on society’s excess. They too must have a full and good life. God provides.

Do you trust God to provide enough for your life? Can you examine your tenancy on earth and ask if you have kept more than enough, more than your fair share? Will you share the second harvest with those in need? Who live in this beautiful mountain valley with so much “enough” must speak. It is easier here, among these mountains and facing winter’s vulnerability, to see our presence as temporary tenancy. We had nothing to do with the valley’s creation. Life here is sheer gift. When we leave Holden, we must not be tempted back into the ways of “more than enough.” Enough is enough.

Enough is enough. The alternative is death. In the origins of the word “enough” we find an Old English root, oneos or tumor. Too much of enough becomes cancer, a growth that defies normal limits and leads to death. We live in a culture of cancers, nature’s price for too much “enough.”

Tonight the Son visits our vineyard again. In bread and wine we stewards are offered enough for a good life, and more. The table extends to all who hunger. There is enough for all. Take the bread and drink deeply from the rich juice of grapes as we recommit ourselves to a life of wise tenancy, to stewardship, to goodness, justice, righteousness, and to respect for all of Creation. Amen.

The WLT Steward invites responses to this sermon.

WLT Board member conserves Skagit property

Whatcom Land Trust board member Bob Keller and his wife Pat Karlberg have granted a conservation easement to the Skagit Land Trust on 30 acres near Marblemount in Skagit County.

The property offers a mixture of forest and pasture and provides habitat to a wide range of wildlife including deer, bear, bald eagle, great blue heron, various duck species, bobcat, pileated woodpecker, coyote, salmon and steelhead. Several small creeks flow across the land into the Cascade River which the property borders for 1,300 feet. After purchasing the property in 1974, Keller built a small log cabin to shelter the occasional human visitors.

The Cascade is a federally designated Wild and Scenic River and the conservation easement is intended to help protect the health of the river system.

Located 1.5 miles east of Marblemount on the Cascade River Road; the property is described in Impressions of the North Cascades, chapter 8 edited by WLT member John Miles.

Trust promotes community discussion

“Listening to Each Other: The Dialogue About Land,” a community forum sponsored by the Land Trust, will be held this Spring.

The forum is scheduled for May 4, 11, and 18, at the Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship, 1708 “I” Street (next to the Bellingham School district administration building). This event is free to the public.

Among the panelists are representatives from Concerned Christian Citizens, Pulitzer prize winner Bill Dietrich, Skip Richards, and Bill Quehrn. Board member Cindy Franklin will moderate the panel and audience discussions.

Watch for more information about this upcoming community event through local media promotions and Land Trust mailings.
While the easement permits limited recreational use by the family and their guests, it is probably the most restrictive conservation easement ever given to the Land Trust. The purpose of the easement is to protect plant and animal habitat, water quality, and open space, to allow for natural forest succession, and to limit density in a watershed that supplies drinking water for Whatcom county.

Though motivated by conservation objectives and family history, the gift of the easement also reduced the land’s appraised value by more than a quarter of a million dollars. In the eyes of the Internal Revenue Service, this is a charitable donation for which a tax deduction may be taken.

The Whatcom Land Trust is deeply grateful to this family for its generosity and foresight in taking positive steps to protect our environment, including the public water supply.

A significant river bottom donation

After reading about the Land Trust and the Canyon Lake Creek Old Growth in the Seattle Times, John Roslyn of Ballard contacted the Trust and offered to donate his property. When visiting the property site along the North Fork River near the Rutsatz Road, WLT discovered that John and his wife Margaret were offering the Trust a beautiful river bottom riparian forest. The Board enthusiastically agreed to accept the donation of the Roslyn property at its December meeting.

“In terms of overall habitat significance for wildlife, river bottom land like the Roslyn’s ranks among the highest in the region," said Gordon Scott, WLT board member.

The Roslyns said they purchased this riverfront parcel on the Nooksack River 25 years ago because they thought it would be perfect for fishing and camping.

A recent property survey showed that due to the river changing course over years, the property is now mostly river bottom. The Roslyns decided to donate the property to someone who could care for and protect this salmon habitat.

“The salmon need all the help they can get,” said John Roslyn.

The addition of the Roslyn property dovetails nicely with the Trust’s other Nooksack River conservation properties along the Middle Fork and at the Kenny Creek Eagle Night Roost.

“With more conservation opportunities in the upper Nooksack River, the Trust increases its capacity to protect salmon, eagle and elk habitat for future generations,” said Gordon Scott.

Reflections

“The publication of Whatcom Places this year has been an overwhelming success. Not only does it highlight this beautiful place we live in, it also raises our profile in the community. WLT membership nearly doubled in 1997. The hard work of our membership and fundraising committees, together with the exposure from the book and our increased conservation projects, all contribute to a growing membership.

How does a growing membership contribute to WLT success?

Gordon: WLT doesn’t receive public funding. We operate solely on donations from the community. Increased membership helps spread the word about what we’re doing.

What else have you especially enjoyed as WLT President?

Gordon: I’ve really enjoyed the opportunity to meet people in the community and introduce them to land preservation tools that the Trust can provide. It’s been a pleasure to work with Scott Walker at ARCO, Ken and Jan Strümler of Lynden, the folks on Lummi Island, and others we’ve met. And I’m looking forward to working with many of these folks in the future.

“A tradition since 1984”

I Eat Bagels and I Vote

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1319 Railroad Ave. Downtown Bellingham
Lummi Mountain
(Continued from page 1)
lawsuit, resolving a disputed appraisal, agreeing
on a selling price, securing a private $200,000
donation to help meet the selling price, preserv­
ing sensitive wildlife habitat, and complying
with state agencies who operate under restrict­
tive procedures and policies.

These complications needed to be resolved by
the end of 1997 due to a state funding expiration
date and the seller's threat to end negotiations.
When it appeared that the transaction was close
to satisfying all parties, the Land Trust put
$10,000 in escrow as a down payment. The
state recreational funding committee paid
$276,000 of the total
purchase price and the
donor contributed the
remaining $200,000.

What was gained?

What was at-stake on Lummi Mountain?
(1) the advent of
logging and residential
development; (2)
protecting a rare
peregrine falcon
nesting site; (3)
settling a lawsuit, (4)
protecting the 'view of
Lummi from Belling­
ham, the San Juans,
and the water—one
of the best sea-to­
mountain vistas on the
West Coast; (5)
 preserving a complex
ecosystem that
integrates saltwater, rock cliffs, beaches and forests.

Rand Jack, Larry Daugert, (Brett and Daugert
Law Office), and Chris Rogers (Trust for Public
Land, Seattle) and the other players in this transac­
tion spent several hundred difficult hours in the
space of a month to achieve these objectives.

Thanks to all their efforts, the sale was com­
pleted and this beautiful piece of Whatcom County
has been preserved. Together with the nearby 500
acres purchased several years ago from the Trillium
Corporation, the new acquisition helps consolidate
a significant wildlife habitat area on Lummi Island
for the Department of Fish and Wildlife.