

Cumberland Creek Conservation Area

Latest Land Purchase Gives Middle Skagit Habitat Protection a Big Boost

Across the Skagit River from the town of Hamilton is a big thumb of land that pushes the river north – then the channel sweeps back around the bend to flow west again past Cockreham Island. Last month, the Trust completed the purchase of 143 acres of this peninsula. Cumberland Creek joins the Skagit River just upstream, which creates a nutrient rich and quiet side channel that is good for migrating salmon.

from the Washington State Salmon Recovery Funding Board as part of the Trust's Middle Skagit Habitat Protection Project. Matching funds from Skagit Land

The Trust purchased the property from the Janicki family of Sedro-Woolley. The property had been subdivided into four parcels before the Janickis acquired it, but they were interested in seeing the land remain in a single ownership. They managed the land as a tree farm and enjoyed using it for recreation and to host Boy Scout outings. Because they were interested in seeing the land remain in its natural state, selling to the Trust was a good fit. As Mike Janicki said "This place is like being in a National Geographic special, with the eagles, the elk and the river."

Last year the Trust purchased 24 acres next to the Janicki land in anticipation of this larger transaction. Both of these 'Cumberland Creek' purchases were accomplished with financial assistance

Trust came from our Hegg-Benson Opportunity Fund. The land will be managed primarily to benefit salmon that use the 5,000 feet of adjacent river. Healthy



The large cobbles in this reach of the Skagit River are perfect for Chinook salmon spawning sites.

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Skagit Update

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Drawings by Brenda Cunningham

From the President

Dear Skagit Land Trust members:

When asked to write my first president's letter for this issue of the newsletter, I wrote something adequate, but not especially inspired. Time was short, I had new duties and my creative juices weren't flowing. I praised the board, the staff and you, the members, as I should, and stressed the strength and success of the organization.



But I failed to talk about why we do what we do: the land itself. It's easy to get caught up in the nitty-gritty of overseeing an organization the size and complexity of the Trust: raising more money, reaching out to the community, managing our resources well, developing policies. What we sometimes forget is why we're doing all of this.

I had to be reminded of what it's like to get out and walk a piece of property, get my feet wet, get slapped in the face with an errant tree branch, catch a shirtsleeve on a blackberry vine, smell fresh air, listen to the quiet, stand on a rocky beach along the Skagit and soak up the sun, or just stop along the road to view swans in the fields or eagles soaring overhead. That's what Skagit Land Trust is really all about.

Sadly, these special places, what I call "the last, best places", are often what's most at risk, not only in Skagit County, but all over the world. While we do what we can for the greater natural environment, we can "think globally, but act locally" through Skagit Land Trust.

That's why I joined the Trust, serve on the board, and agreed to become president.

Recent interviews I did with other board members, one-on-one, confirmed that we all share these same values and made me realize how lucky the Trust is to have such a talented, committed and diverse board. We are doubly fortunate to also have a knowledgeable and experienced staff who are passionate about their work.

And last, but not least, committed members who make everything possible. Without your support, there would be no Skagit Land Trust.

And that's critical as we study the feasibility of a Capital Campaign to preserve several significant parcels of land. We will need your backing to make such an undertaking successful.

Thanks again for all your support – past, present and future.

Sincerely,

Marlene V. Moore
President



Continued from page 1

salmon habitat depends on forested shoreline and protected floodplain.



Photo by Bob Butterfield

Mike Janicki, board member Ralph Heft and Stewardship Director Brenda Cunningham discuss the history of the Cumberland Creek property.

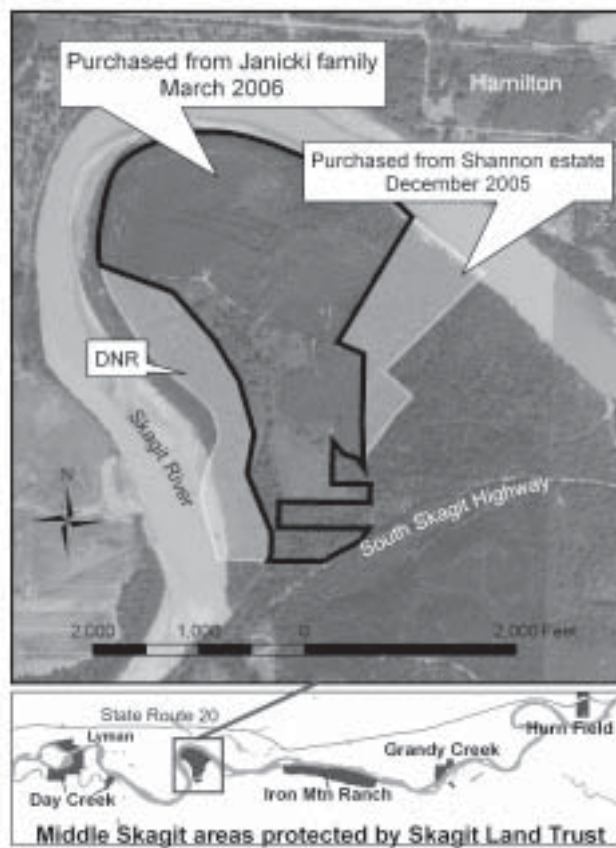
This part of the river floodplain is wide, and in flood events the river channel may move across it unpredictably. Land Trust ownership will prevent future residential development that could interfere with this natural floodplain process. The lowland habitat along the river is not only important for salmon, but also many species of mammals, songbirds and amphibians. And, on this site there is a lovely ‘old oxbow’ pond that teems with life.

Another 35 acres of the peninsula is considered ‘old river bed’ and is owned by the WA State Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The sensitive nature of the shoreline and wetlands on the DNR parcel dictates that it will also be managed primarily for habitat.

Last, but not least, in 2005, sympathetic Land Trust members purchased a five-acre parcel adjacent to the DNR and Janicki parcels. This piece was listed for sale as a residential building lot. These ‘Conservation Buyers’ intend to keep the land undisturbed. Thus, through three

transactions, and across four separate ownership boundaries, 207 acres and over one and a half miles of shoreline habitat have been pieced together.

Purchasing this land has had a long history. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) first began working on the project but had to drop it in 2002 when the Janicki family decided they were not ready to sell. When they were ready several years later, TNC generously suggested we take on the project as part of our Middle Skagit work. Our partner, the Skagit Watershed Council, agreed it was a good fit for the SRFB and supports it. Thus with many helping hands, more vital land and shoreline has been protected for fish and wildlife and future generations.



The 207-acre Cumberland Creek Conservation Area protects 1.6 miles of Skagit River shoreline and a 1300 foot long oxbow pond.



An oxbow pond provides refuge for salmon and provides habitat for beaver, wood ducks and other animals that need wetlands to thrive.

Photo by Bob Butterfield

Skagit Land Trust's 14th Annual Meeting

Skagit Land Trust celebrated its 14th Annual Meeting on March 24th at Skyline Beach Club in Anacortes. We had the honor of having 120 members and supporters join us in celebration of Skagit Land Trust's achievements in the past year. The award for "traveled furthest to celebrate" went to



Board member Jerry Haegele left received the Blue Heron Award and Bill Stendal accepted A Lifetime Achievement Award for Patricia and Robert Brown.

Lois and Ben Englebright's granddaughter, Tamara Stevens who came all the way from California.

And we had much to celebrate! In the past year we have permanently protected:

- 3.5 miles of shoreline and salmon habitat along the Skagit River and its tributaries,
- 220 acres of Anacortes Community Forest Land in partnership with Friends of the Forest and The City of Anacortes,
- 236 acres of ranchland that are also important wildlife habitat,
- 184 acres of forested floodplain and wildlife habitat and
- 21 acres of high quality wetlands added to our Minkler Lake Conservation Area.

John Milnor, out-going president oversaw the election of six new or renewing board members for 3-year terms: Patsy Martin (Alger), Keith Wiggers (Burlington), Rusty Kuntze (Bay View), Ron Feld (Mount Vernon), Mark Hitchcock (Samish Island) and David Hall (Anacortes). He also handed over the reins to the capable hands of incoming Trust president Marlene Moore. Marlene, a board member since 1999, has served in the positions of Secretary, Vice President, and Chair of the Development and Communications Committee.

We had an excellent slide show of the Pacific Northwest's underwater wonders by photographer and diver, Jim Ramaglia. Jim has completed over 1000 dives worldwide and considers the Pacific Northwest to be the best, most colorful diving in the world. Jim's presentation was one more reminder of why it is critical to continue doing the conservation work we do enabled by our members' support.

Skagit Land Trust presented conservation awards to five outstanding citizens and groups.



120 Skagit Land Trust members & supporters attended the 14th Annual Meeting at Skyline Beach Club.

Patricia Hegg Brown and the late Robert Brown - Lifetime Achievement Award. In recognition of a lifetime of extraordinary passion, leadership and dedication to land conservation in the West, including significant support for land conservation in Skagit County.

Staff at Environmental Affairs Division of Seattle City Light - Outstanding Partnership Award. In recognition of their commitment to the Skagit River Watershed as reflected in their cooperative approach, and successful efforts to protect key salmon habitat on the Skagit River, through the purchase of land and the granting of a conservation easement at Iron Mountain Ranch.

Jim Johnson - Exceptional Steward Award. In recognition of his deep concern for the land as reflected by his many hours of volunteer work and land stewardship.



Volunteer Jim Johnson received the Exceptional Steward Award at the Annual Meeting.

Jerry Haegele - Blue Heron Award. In recognition of extraordinary dedication to the land of Skagit County through distinguished service to Skagit Land Trust.

John Milnor - With special appreciation for his leadership and commitment to voluntary land conservation as President of Skagit Land Trust from 2003 through 2006.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Lee Mann Poster Unveiling and Reception - "Cloud Forest"

Renowned Pacific Northwest photographer, Lee Mann, will unveil a second poster in his exclusive series created for Skagit Land Trust. A reception will be held from 4-7 pm on Wednesday May 24th at Althea's in downtown Mount Vernon (614 S. First Street). Copies of the photographic poster "Cloud Forest", will be available for purchase and signing.

Please RSVP to Diane at 360-428-7878 for events below.

Summer Bicycle Tours with Skagit Bike Club and Skagit Land Trust

Three different rides offered for all levels of riders. We'll have groups at your pace, whether fast or slow and several route lengths for you to choose from.

May 20th – South Skagit Highway

We'll stop and take a look at Trust-owned Cumberland Creek Conservation Area as well as visit a few private properties that are protected through conservation easements.

June 24th – March's Point and Fidalgo Island

Join Skagit Land Trust for a tour of their protection work on Fidalgo Island. The trip will include a stop at the March's Point heronry, home to over 600 Great Blue Heron nests.

July 22nd – Grip Road, Butler Flats and Samish Island

Stops will include a few conservation areas you are welcome to come back to on your own, as well as a look at several private properties that are protected with conservation easements, including one that has an unusual stand of Garry Oak.



Sharp-shinned Hawk

Photo by Bertha Bridge

Summer Bus Tour:

July 29th – Annual Bus Tour with Picnic Lunch!

This always popular event shows off some of our beautiful properties. This year we will re-visit the Skagit River area and be stopping at a number of new projects along the river, including Cumberland Creek Conservation Area.
(cost \$35 for non-members and \$25 for members)



Cascade River property protected with a conservation easement.

Volunteer Event:

June 3rd

Join us at a protected property on the Cascade River as we help the landowners control herb-robot, a beautiful, but invasive little geranium. The day will include a tour of the forest, pond and streams on this wonderful 32-acre property.



Leadership Skagit helps Skagit Land Trust and our community learn more about herons

A Leadership Skagit group, “*Team Spare Time*”, has helped the Trust and our community by installing a web camera in the March’s Point heronry and linking it to the Padilla Bay Research Reserve. This “Heron Cam” will provide virtual access to far more students and community members than would be possible through any other means to tell the herons’ remarkable story.

The team, composed of community members Kendra Gentry-Decker, Tawni Helms, Gary Lorenz, Andrew Rice, Joyce Shoop and Sue Stolpe, secured a large discount from the camera company, Statewide Security, and raised much of the remaining funds needed for the camera. They worked with the Trust to install the web cam and brought in Padilla Bay Research Reserve as a partner. The camera is secured 70 feet up in a tree and provides views of several heron nests. The images are transmitted across Padilla Bay and will soon be available for viewing in the exhibit area of the Breazeale Interpretive Center at the Reserve. An additional step for this project is to have the images available on an internet website, although there are some technical limitations that need to be overcome. But if anyone can overcome obstacles, it is *Team Spare Time*! The project’s major sponsor was Landed Gentry. Contributors to the camera and installation include members of Team Spare Time and Shell Oil Puget Sound, as well as several individual donors.

The heron nest camera can be viewed in the Breazeale Interpretive Center at 10441 Bayview-Edison Road in Bay View, just ¼ mile north of Bay View State Park. The hours of operation are Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 am – 5 pm.



Team Spare Time warming up for the heron web camera installation.



Make a difference to tomorrow’s world Through Deferred Giving

In deferred giving, you can make a lasting contribution that will work to preserve natural land for generations to come. A future gift designated in your will, living trust, or retirement plan is easy to establish. You also may make Skagit Land Trust a beneficiary of a life insurance policy.

If desired, you can direct your deferred gift to one of our land trust funds such as the Stewardship Fund, the Land Fund, the Hegg-Benson Opportunity Fund or our Founders’ Visionary Fund. This last fund was named in honor of Skagit Land Trust’s three founders. The Founders’ Visionary Fund is a resource for Skagit Land Trust, ensuring the Trust’s ability to respond to its most pressing needs and work. It provides a reliable source of funds available to start new projects, leverage other resources to protect and steward land, act swiftly when necessary, and persevere through the ebbs and flows of funding over the years. Use of the funds may only be authorized by a vote of the Board of Directors

We encourage you to discuss deferred giving ideas with your legal or tax advisor and welcome your questions. If you are considering a gift restricted to a particular need, parcel of land or part of Skagit County, it is especially



important to consult us, to ensure that your wishes can be honored. Please contact our executive director, Molly Doran, at trustmd@fidalgo.net or at 360-428-7878. The Trust’s federal tax ID number is 91-1533402.

If you have already invested in the future of our county’s natural areas by establishing a deferred gift for Skagit Land Trust, please let us know so that we may thank you. All information will remain confidential. Thank you for helping to protect a green jewel of the Pacific Northwest for generations to come.

Thank you to the on-going Trust Builders and Partners in Conservation

Trust Builders

Major Donors

(\$5000 and up)

Robert Brown &
Patricia Hegg Brown
Linda & John Hunt
Beau MacGregor

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(\$1000-\$2499)

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First American Title
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MacGregor Publishing Co.
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Friends of Anacortes
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Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland
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Granting Organizations and Foundations

The Burning Foundation
Ducks Unlimited (NAWCA) Funds
The Dudley Foundation
Horizons Foundation
The Hugh & Jane
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The Linnemann Family Foundation
Norman Archibald
Charitable Foundation
Pacific Coast Joint Venture
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Salmon Recovery Funding Board

Seattle Foundation
SFEG (Department of Ecology)
Funds

Skagit Community Foundation
Temcov Foundation
Tulalip Tribes Charitable Fund

Stewardship Fund

City of Anacortes
Brenda Cunningham & Tim Manns
Ralph & Ruth Heft
James C. Squires Jr.

Founders' Visionary Fund

Brenda Cunningham & Tim Manns
Keith & Jan Wiggers

Thank you to all
renewing members.
Membership gifts will be
listed in the Summer and
Winter Newsletter and our
Annual Report.

Welcome New and Returning Lapsed Members

David Brewster
Ann Childs and Stephen Thornton
Richard Fritsch
Richard Greening
Robert and Bev Helton
Elliott and Vickie Johnson
Judy Kennedy
D. Scott Magorien &
Susan Hayton Magorien
Jerry Mansfield
Alec and Sandy McDougall
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Zac Randles
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Carol Taylor and Thomas Carson
Laura Wynn

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Mission Statement

Skagit Land Trust protects wildlife habitat, wetlands, agriculture and forest lands, scenic open space and shorelines throughout the mainland and islands of Skagit County for the benefit of our community and as a legacy for future generations.

Saving Land for Tomorrow

Upcoming Events:

(Details Inside)

Poster Unveiling and Reception, "Cloud Forest"

May 24th – New Lee Mann poster unveiling, downtown Mount Vernon

Summer Bicycle Tours with Skagit Bike Club and Skagit Land Trust

May 20th – South Skagit Highway

June 24th – March's Point and Fidalgo Island

July 22nd – Grip Road, Butler Flats and Samish Island

Summer Bus Tours:

July 29th – 3rd Annual Bus Tour with picnic lunch!

Volunteer Event:

June 3th – protected property on the Cascade River

Please RSVP to Diane at 360-428-7878



The Western Trillium prefers moist to wet woodlands.