



## **PROTECTING A WILD PLACE FOR NATURE**

### **Land on the Cascade River Donated to Skagit Land Trust**

Most days, the only visitors to a secluded spot along the Cascade River property near Marblemount are those with four legs, or perhaps the numerous fish fighting the rapids or resting in rockpools. These beautiful 12 acres, gifted to Skagit Land Trust early this year by a visionary and generous couple, features steelhead, Chinook, coho, sockeye, and pink salmon that use the more than 1,300 feet of wild and scenic river that flows through the property. The donors, who wish to remain anonymous, never really thought of themselves as owners of the land.

“It’s more like we’re the people who were lucky enough to find and enjoy it these past 30 years,” they said.

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**“This is not a spot that should be developed. It’s a stretch of wild and scenic river that should be left as is, for nature to manage. The idea of donating it to an organization which would protect it, letting it continue to be the wild and natural place that it is, felt absolutely right.”**

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Thinking about the future they wanted to see for the property, the landowners approached the Trust in summer of 2021.

“When the landowners called to talk about donating their beautiful property, we immediately recognized that it fit perfectly into the Trust’s Conservation Strategy,” said Michael Kirshenbaum, the Trust’s Conservation Director. “Surrounded on almost all sides by public land, bordering the federally-protected Cascade River and in beautiful condition, it checked all the boxes for the type of land the Trust is trying to protect in perpetuity.”

*Continued on page 3...*

## Reflections on the State of the Board of Directors of Skagit Land Trust

2022 – this year marks the 30th anniversary of Skagit Land Trust. Our organization has come a long way since its beginnings. Much credit is due to the forethought of the early founders and members; and to the continued efforts of subsequent Boards, membership, and staff who constantly improve the way the Trust operates. The Board plays an oversight role to ensure that the Trust is in sound financial shape, its mission is being followed, and decisions are being made in support of that mission. This requires a diverse skill set from the Board, and a staff that is competent and mission driven. I can report that the state of the Board and staff is strong. Consequently, we are on target to successfully meet our current goals and obligations and we have the resources to steward essential land management on our current properties well into the future. Your financial help and volunteerism continues to strengthen our organization and is greatly appreciated.

There have been a few changes to the composition of the Board over the last year. We've had two retirements and one addition.

John Hunt, a board member since 2010, left the board this year after 12 years as our Treasurer. A retired engineer and business executive, John pretty much created the structure of our investment portfolio. He helped grow the Trust's investments for stewardship and land acquisition by about 800%! He will be sorely missed. Barbara Trask has assumed his duties and continues John's commitment to ensuring financial stability.



Curt Miller also retired from the board this year. Curt brought to the Board 30 years of experience in land planning and natural resource management and design. Curt's voice on the Board ensured that our mission to protect and preserve lands included thoughtful attention to the natural habitat that wildlife depend on to survive and thrive. Curt will continue to serve on our Stewardship Committee.

Our newest board member, Kirk Johnson, brings a skill set that is important as our county grows and development pressures mount. Kirk, now retired, was a planner for Skagit County for 19 years. He has an expertise in sustainable communities and a background in government, having worked as a legislative assistant. Kirk has been on our Public Policy Committee for the last five years. We welcome him to our Board!



The Board over the last few years, with the leadership of Carolyn Gastellum, chair of our JEDI Committee, has strived to grow to be a more diverse and welcoming organization to our broad community. JEDI stands for Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. It is a major goal of the Board to listen to as diverse an audience as exists in our county. We welcome input and membership to the Board and staff from voices and communities that remain underrepresented at Skagit Land Trust. One aspect of this goal is to see more diversity on our Board. If you are reading this and have a viewpoint that you think will help us with this goal, we invite you to consider joining a committee or applying for a Board or staff position. Also, consider this a request to you as a member to bring to our attention individuals that you feel will add more perspectives to the work of the Trust. **To get involved or share your thoughts, please reach out to Executive Director Molly Doran, [mollyd@skagitlandtrust.org](mailto:mollyd@skagitlandtrust.org) or 360-428-7878 x202.**

Our Board and staff are always interested in hearing from the membership about ideas and initiatives that will help us grow and prosper – feel free to reach out and play a more active part in fulfilling our mission. Thank you for supporting the Trust as we work to save land for tomorrow.



- Mark Hitchcock, Skagit Land Trust Board President

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The property features a mature forest dripping with moss and lichen. An old logging road descends towards the river, hugging looming rock walls as it drops from the Cascade River Road. The path is slowly being reclaimed by ferns, trees, and native plants.

The Cascade River, flowing from its glaciated headwaters in North Cascades National Park and the Glacier Peak Wilderness, rushes through this part of the forest with great speed, churning against the rocks that puncture its path to meet up with the Skagit River at Marblemount.

This is the future the former owners hope for the property. “We’d like the trees and shrubs to grow, fall, and reseed themselves. We’d like the river to host dippers, ducks, eagles & osprey, salmon, and otters in the way it always has. We’d like human visitors to tread softly and respectfully and find wonder and joy.”

“We couldn’t be more amazed at how easy the process was. Describing the land to Michael and sharing questions and thoughts with him, was both comfortable and informative. Once the decision was made, the process itself went smoothly – Michael explained it well, and most of the work was on the Trust’s end.”

By donating their land to Skagit Land Trust, they ensured that the natural legacy of the land will continue. It’s a solution they’d recommend to others considering what to do with land that they love and want to protect.



Donating land is a way to “give back” to a place you love and to future generations of people and wildlife. It is an incredible act of generosity for a landowner to consider donating a property. Skagit Land Trust is honored to work with you if you are considering donating your land. Here are some questions and answers about that process:

**Question: Does the Trust accept all land donations and manage them for conservation?**

**Answer:** The Trust considers all potential donations of land for their conservation values. If your land fits conservation criteria for us to be the long-term owner, we will help guide you on how to ensure your intentions for the land get met.

Lands that are candidates for us to be the long-term landowner prioritize protecting and connecting ecosystems and landscapes, providing places for fish and wildlife, places that offer opportunities for scenic views or low impact use; environmentally sensitive lands like wetlands, old-growth forests and natural shoreline; natural resource lands; and lands near or adjacent to our existing conservation areas.

If we are not the right long-term owner, we can often suggest a partner who may be. Or we may discuss with you that if you donate your land, it may be sold with a conservation easement held by us and the proceeds put towards conservation.

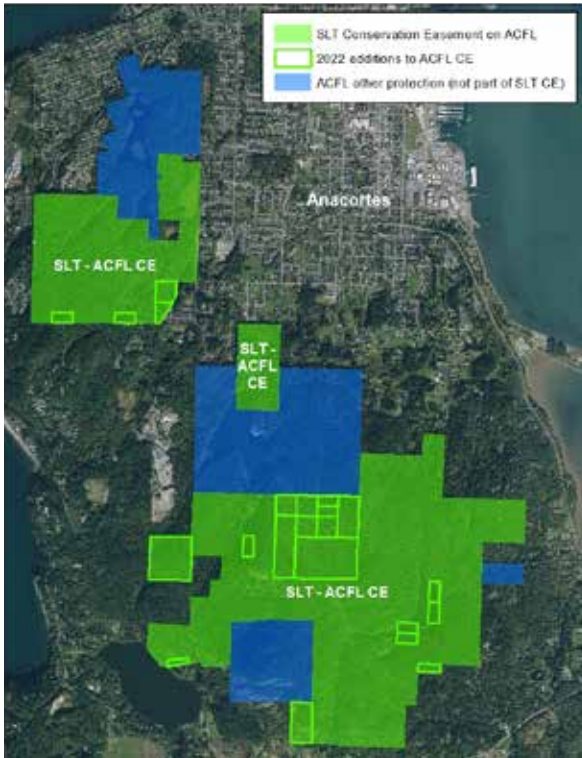
**Question: Does the Trust accept non-conservation land that could be used for revenue?**

**Answer:** The Trust accepts what we call “gift lands” where the intent of the donor is to gift land to SLT to sell, and then use the proceeds to protect critical conservation lands. In the past, the Trust has been donated lots in residential areas that are suitable for housing or homes. We’ve been able to sell these homes or parcels and use the proceeds to help protect critical natural lands.

**Question: I’m thinking about donating my land to the Trust as a bequest and part of my estate. Is that okay and what should I know about that?**

**Answer:** The Trust is happy to work with you to discuss a property donation as part of your planned giving. We strongly recommend contacting the Trust to let us know your intention to include us in your estate planning so that we can better ensure that your wishes can be met. We also love to learn more about your land, from you.

## 30 Year Partnership Now Protects 1,900 Acres in Conservation Easements



Walk the trails of the Anacortes Community Forest Lands (ACFL) and you might easily assume that the beautiful forest, lakes, wetlands, and wildlife have always been protected. How could this special place ever have been considered for any use other than the amazing public land that it is today? The miles of trails, panoramic views and sense of peace that one can enjoy in the ACFL feels timeless.

**These lands have in fact served many purposes over generations.** The peoples of the Coast Salish were the first stewards of these lands. When Anacortes incorporated in 1891, the lakes found in the ACFL provided water for the city. The forests surrounding the lakes ensured the water was clean and uncontaminated.

As Anacortes' water needs grew, the city turned to the Skagit River for this resource and the forest lands became recreational lands for the community. **Parts of the forest were logged to pay for expenses of the water system and for managing the recreational lands and building trails.**

Logging these lands did not seem like a sustainable option for many residents of Anacortes. **In the 1980's the organization Friends of the Forest (FOF) was formed** and one of their key activities was to stop the logging and change the management of the forest lands.



Gene Murphy

**Skagit Land Trust co-founder and forest advocate Gene Murphy was part of these efforts.** As development pressures grew in the 1990's it became clear to him and many others that it was time to make sure that the ACFL would never again be threatened with logging, mining and subdivision, as it had through much of the 20th century.

A dedicated group of citizens, working with Friends of the Forest, Skagit Land Trust and the City of Anacortes, landed on **a creative solution to ensure the ACFL would be protected forever and have funds for its stewardship: for every \$1,000 donated by the public to an ACFL Stewardship Fund held by the City, another acre of land would be enrolled in a permanent conservation easement held by the Trust.**

Now, almost 30 years later, the program continues: **we're happy to announce that 253 more acres have been permanently protected this spring, bringing the total to over 1,900 acres in Skagit Land Trust's ACFL conservation easement program.**

The City of Anacortes owns and manages the ACFL, but the Trust's conservation easement provides an essential backstop to ensure that the forestlands will never be logged, mined or subdivided and shall remain in their natural condition in perpetuity.



2008 Community Celebration of the ACFL Conservation Easement Program Partnership between the Trust, the City of Anacortes and FOF.

This unique partnership between Skagit Land Trust, Friends of the Forest and the City of Anacortes would never have succeeded without one thing: the deep support of all of those who have generously given their time and financial support to ensure that timeless quality of the ACFL is protected forever!



Left to Right: Community members hiking in the ACFL in the early 1980's; A family participating in a scavenger hunt event this fall in the ACFL hosted by Skagit Land Trust and Friends of the Forest.

## Managing Your Own Land with a Conservation Lens



As stewards of over 6,000 acres of forestland in Skagit County, we get questions from landowners interested in learning more about how to best manage their own lands to preserve wildlife habitat and protect conservation values on their properties. It all starts with getting to know your land and deciding what your management goals are. There is a lot to learn, but there are some great programs out there for those interested in managing their own forests.

**Washington State University (WSU) Extension Forestry** supplies a wide array of learning opportunities for the curious landowner. You can find online resources and classes on their website (including Forest Stewardship University). Their in-person field days are full of interesting short classes taught by engaging local experts. When it's offered, nothing beats the "Coached Planning Course", which guides landowners through the process of finding their goals and developing their own Forest Stewardship Plans. It truly helps you to know your land at a deeper level, and a forester visits your property to supply personalized recommendations on how to manage your land.

**The Skagit Conservation District is another fantastic local resource.** Their forester can provide initial consultation to figure out what specific needs and concerns landowners have with forest planning, best management practice implementation, and monitoring forest resources. They can help you find and apply for funding sources to develop a forest management plan and implement forestry best practices to improve your forest's health. Their community wildfire resilience coordinator (who serves both Whatcom and Skagit conservation districts) can also help landowners understand and mitigate wildfire risk on their properties.

Finally, the **Washington Farm Forestry Association** is a membership-based group of forest landowners. They share information about forest-relevant events, and regularly publish resources on managing forestlands in Washington state for their members. Visit our website, [skagitlandtrust.org](http://skagitlandtrust.org) to find links for all these resources.

**If you have forest lands that you are interested in permanently protecting through a conservation easement or land donation, please reach out to [michaelk@skagitlandtrust.org](mailto:michaelk@skagitlandtrust.org).** Permanent conservation can be a way to protect the trees, plants, and wildlife habitat you care about for generations to come.

## Eyes of the Heronry - Heron Camera Update



In March, Great Blue Herons once again returned to the March Point Conservation Area to nest. Thanks to the support of our members - **hundreds of whom gave special gifts to protect more of the hilltop forest used by the herons, and to upgrade our camera monitoring system** - the Trust's videos from the heronry have returned too.

This winter, 14 volunteers helped install a nine-panel solar array to support three state-of-the-art cameras. They worked hard to clear a trail and the solar site, and carried heavy bags of concrete and solar components up the hill. Volunteers also provided guidance in locating the best solar site and assessed the forest to ensure minimal impact from the project.

The new cameras are spread throughout the heronry **allowing heron monitors to observe up to 350 nests**. The camera system will also record infrared images overnight. An additional camera on the forest floor will record audio inside the heronry.

Volunteer heron nest monitors will use the cameras to count eggs, watch as they hatch, and report on how many young fledge compared to the number of eggs laid during the season. This mega-colony, the largest on the West Coast of the U.S., **contributes the genetic diversity needed for a healthy population of Great Blue Herons in the Salish Sea**. Regular observation during breeding season will also allow the Trust to watch for disturbances to herons from both humans and predators. Although many nests will be obscured after the trees are fully leafed out, the three cameras spread throughout the colony will allow the Trust to better understand how productive this important colony is.



**Livestreams of each camera will be available to the public on the Trust's website by the end of April.** Since fieldtrips to Trust properties have been hard for schools to take this year, the camera system provides a great opportunity for teachers and their students to peek inside the heronry from their classroom and watch these beloved birds.

**The Trust gives much thanks to the members and volunteers who made this project happen.** Thanks to Rob Walters and team at Horizon Audio-Visual and Tim Nelson's team at Fire Mountain Solar for their expertise in selecting the right equipment and advising the Trust on its operation. Thanks to Tom Otto at Canopy Conservation who climbed high into the trees to install the cameras. Thanks also to T. Bailey Inc for working with the Trust on access for the camera project and continuing to support heron conservation on their adjacent property.



*From top to bottom: Herons settling into the heronry this spring; Volunteer Hal Lee with one of the new cameras; The first eggs spotted in the heronry this season; Volunteers celebrating getting all the heavy supplies up the hill to the solar array site at the edge of the heronry.*

## Snags: There's Life in a Dead Tree



With a funny name for an important part of the ecosystem, 'snags' refer to standing dead trees. Without snags, many different types of wildlife would not be able to survive. More than 100 species of birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians use snags for nesting, roosting, shelter, denning, and feeding. 45 different species of animals use snags as a source of food, foraging for insects, grubs, moss, lichen and fungi.

These trees provide nesting spots for birds like woodpeckers and wood ducks. Although wood ducks cannot carve out their own holes like a woodpecker can, they require snags to lay their eggs. Most often they will use the spot where a branch has broken off from the snag and the wood has rotted, but sometimes they will take over a hole or cavity

constructed by a woodpecker. Other birds that depend on cavities for nesting are tree swallows, bluebirds, chickadees, nuthatches, house wrens and owls. Like the wood duck, they do not create their own cavities.

Snags also provide roosting places for bats that crawl into the space between the bark and wood of the tree. Squirrels, raccoons, porcupines and bears also seek shelter in the right size hole. Squirrels and Steller's Jays tuck nuts and seeds under the bark and in small holes in the wood.



Board member Mark Hitchcock, a retired forest consultant says, "Landowners can help their forests by retaining non-threatening snags and shortening threatening snags," . Thus even next to homes, snags can safely serve as wildlife habitat.

Who would have thought that a dead tree could be so important? It is often said that a dead tree will serve the health of the forest for at least the same amount of time it was alive. Skagit Land Trust leaves snags in place wherever we safely can, and we encourage other landowners to do so too.

*From top to bottom: Example of a snag found in the forest; Pileated Woodpecker photo from Chris Boutillier; Saw-Whet Owl photo from Phil Green.*

## The Next 30 Years Starts Now!

### *Celebrating 30 Years of Conservation in the Skagit with an Eye to the Future*

Since 1992, thousands of members have given Skagit Land Trust the inspiration and ability to save the lands and waters of the Skagit. In the last three decades, we've worked with the community and partners to protect more than 10,000 acres of forests, rivers and marine shorelines, beloved natural spaces and trails, wetlands, wildlife habitat, and farmland that make the Skagit so special.

**We want to celebrate with you on the lands you've saved for generations to enjoy.** We have a series of events, tours, and walks we'll be rolling out this year. These gatherings will range from boat tours of our properties in the Salish Sea, to rafting trips on the Upper Skagit, and an open house at a special property near Marblemount. **Visit our website, [skagitlandtrust.org](http://skagitlandtrust.org), to learn more and RSVP for upcoming events.**

Most importantly, **we want to hear from you this year.** Why is it important to you to protect and care for the lands and waters of the Skagit? **What do you think we should focus on in the next 5, 10, and 30 years?** We'll be gathering your views at our events and online in the months to come. You can always email your thoughts to [laurah@skagitlandtrust.org](mailto:laurah@skagitlandtrust.org). **Thank you for your love of the Skagit and your vision to save these land for tomorrow.**

## Join a 'Heron & Beaver & Frogs, Oh My!' Walk at Barney Lake & Share Your Ideas



Skagit Land Trust has worked for the past 30 years to protect and care for natural lands across Skagit County. One of the Trust's largest properties is hidden in plain sight at the edge of the city of Mount Vernon. In fact, you've probably passed it many times without knowing it. The Barney Lake Conservation Area is just east of Skagit Valley College, bordered by College Way and Highway 9.

**Since 1995, Skagit Land Trust has worked to protect and restore hundreds of acres of Barney Lake and its surrounding lands.** The Barney Lake Conservation Area features an interconnected web of wetlands, creeks, seasonal lakes, forests, scenic views, and working farmlands. Waterfowl including trumpeter swans and many species of ducks call Barney Lake home during the winter. Bald eagles and great blue herons nest and forage next to the property's farmlands and open fields. Nookachamps Creek and Trumpeter Creek, which border the eastern edge of the property, provide important habitat for salmon.

The Barney Lake Conservation Area is open to the community, however access has been difficult and not well-known. Most visits occur during volunteer work parties, youth group field trips, and nature walks. **The Trust wants to provide better wildlife viewing and nature opportunities for a wide range of community members. To do this, we need your help.**

In studying how to improve public access at Barney Lake, our goal is to create a low-impact, inviting experience for people without negatively effecting the birds, wildlife, or sensitive wetlands. To find this balance, **we want to hear from the wide range of people who live and work near this conservation area, as well as others who would be excited to visit this place.**

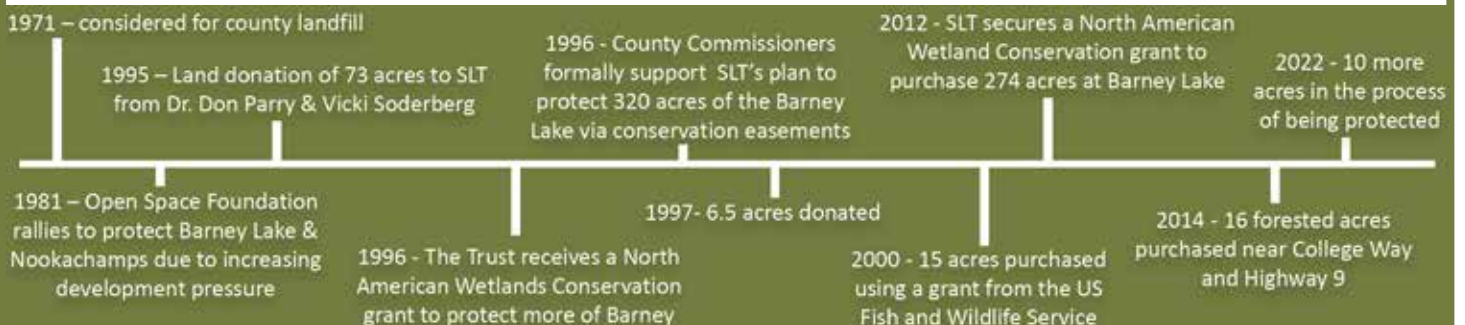


*Youth from a nearby apartment complex on a recent fieldtrip to Barney Lake*



*Walks will include opportunities to learn about and view birds found on the property*

**We invite you to join us for a tour of Barney Lake where we will look for beaver, great blue heron and other wildlife that share this land with us.** During the walk, Trust staff will share the history of this property and how we hope to expand public access in the future. Most importantly, we'd like to hear your thoughts on how you would like to connect the community with these natural lands while protecting its wildlife. **Please join us at one of our "Heron & Beaver & Frogs, Oh My!" walks in the month of May. See the Trust Events page for details.**



# Celebrating Our Amazing Volunteers During National Volunteer Appreciation Month

## Your Hands-On Support Makes a Difference Every Day to the Lands of the Skagit

The Trust thanks all the volunteers who help us achieve our mission of conserving wildlife habitat, agricultural & forest lands, scenic open space, wetlands, & shorelines for the benefit of our community and as a legacy for future generations.

“Our volunteers are essential to the Trust’s impact,” says Jonathan Worley, the Trust’s Stewardship AmeriCorps Member. “They allow us to complete projects that we wouldn’t have the capacity for otherwise – they make our work possible!”

Over the past year, hundreds of volunteers have contributed their time and energy to the Trust by serving on our board of directors or committees, stewarding our protected lands, completing community science projects, or participating in stewardship work parties or other events. Our volunteers come from all over Skagit County and beyond to help with everything from great blue heron monitoring to working on our facilities to trail building to financial management.

Give yourself a pat on the back, volunteers – April is National Volunteer Appreciation Month and we’re celebrating you!



Left to right: Volunteers working on a new trail at Barr Creek Conservation Area; Youth from the Kulshan Creek Neighborhood Youth Program at Barney Lake removing invasive teasel; Students from Youth for the Environment and People (YEP!) program maintaining recent plantings at Tope Ryan Conservation Area.

## Thanks to all of the volunteers who have supported the Trust this past year

*We apologize if we missed your name, but know that we sincerely appreciate everyone who volunteers.*

|                      |                    |                   |                    |                     |                      |                    |                     |
|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Abby Weaver          | Carly Boyd         | Edwin Norton      | Janice Buchanan    | Kati Holmstrom      | Mark Linnemann       | Phil Kincaid       | Sidney Anderson     |
| Adam Bessman         | Carol Taylor       | Ellen Anderson    | Jared Johnson      | Katie Bunge         | Mark Nihart          | Phil Kincaid       | Stan Zyskowski      |
| Adriana Barsan       | Carolyn Gastellum  | Emily Crabill     | Jaye Stover        | Katina Kapantais    | Mark Young           | Phil Wright        | State Street School |
| Alan Mackey          | Emma Gosselin      | Emma Gosselin     | Jennifer Bendemire | Kayla Strandberg    | Marnie Pennington    | Puget Sound        | Steffany Raynes     |
| Alexandria Gosselin  | Charlene Day       | Emma Moline       | Jennifer Bunke     | Kaylene Brink       | Martha Bray          | Refinery Employees | Steve Johnson       |
| Alison Wiefels       | Charlie Elliott    | Emma Szegvari     | Jennifer Gosselin  | Keith Saar          | Martha Frankel       | Rachel Van Buren   | Steve La Flam       |
| Amy Han              | Charlie Pearson    | Emma Weaver       | Jeremy Dahl        | Keith Wiggers       | Mary Mae Hardt       | Ranae Watson       | Steve Mowat         |
| Andrea Petrich       | Chloe Mackey       | Emme Mavar        | Jeremy Dierst      | Kent Turner         | Mary Ruth Holder     | Reese Illston      | Steven McMahan      |
| Andrew Mowat         | Chris LeBoutillier | Ensley Kaump      | Jessa Clark        | Kevin Gosselin      | Mary Saar            | Rich Shaughnessy   | Sue Ehler           |
| Andy Wargo           | Chris Pforr        | Eric Hall         | Jessica Cote       | Kim Ray             | Matt Butler          | Richard Mellon     | Susie Wilson        |
| Angela Diamond       | Chris Varela       | Gale Sterrett     | Jim Glackin        | Kimberley Cauvel    | Matt Hixon           | Richard Raisler    | Suzanne Hahn        |
| Angelica Lucchetto   | Chuck Day          | Garth Cray        | Jim Johnson        | King Dahl           | Megan Jewell         | Richard Revoyr     | Sylvia Thorstenson  |
| Anita Gras Bryant    | Cissy Fisher       | Gary Lorenz       | Jim Owens          | Kinsey Shilling     | Melissa Atkinson     | Rish Pavelec       | Talia Russom        |
| Ann Buzatis          | Claire Andrews     | Gary Wickman      | Jim Watson         | Kirk Johnson        | Merrilee Harrell     | Rob Walters        | Terry Armstrong     |
| Ann Eissingner       | Clarence Holden    | George Lang       | Joan DeClaire      | Kirsten Colton      | Michael Cramer       | Robyn Johnson      | Theresa Connolly    |
| Annabella Isaacson   | Claudia Ross-Kuhn  | Greg Curtiss      | Jocelyn Miller     | Kristi Guinn        | Michelle E. O'Connor | Rodrigo Morales    | Theresa Trebon      |
| Anne Chase-Stapleton | Clay F. Wilcox     | Hal Lee           | Joe Schugart       | Kristin Mowat       | Mike Olson           | Roger Fuller       | Therese Ogle        |
| Anne Winkes          | Corbin Farrington  | Heidi Hixson      | Johanna Gamboa     | Kulshan Creek Youth | Mike Oras            | Ron Lindsay        | Thomas Harris       |
| Asha Grossberndt     | Corinne Gardner    | Heidi Rooks       | John Day           | Kurt Buchanan       | Mila Hoagland        | Rowena Watson      | Thomas Kress        |
| Avery Guinn          | Curt Miller        | Henrik Brameus    | John Hunt          | Kylan Guinn         | Miriam Nihart        | Russ Dalton        | Tim Alaniz          |
| Barbara Brock        | Dan Allison        | Ian McKellips     | John Koon          | Kyle List           | Molly Revoyr         | Rusty Kuntze       | Tim Colton          |
| Barbara Trask        | Dan McShane        | Ian Woofenden     | John Strathman     | Laura Caillox       | Natalie Mackey       | Ryan Cook          | Tim Cuthbertson     |
| Barbara Williams     | Danavyn Ferrell    | Irene Blanchard   | José Riefkohl      | Laura Harrigan      | Nathan White         | Ryan Luvera        | Tim Manns           |
| Bengt Miller         | Dartanyn Maddox    | Irene Goble       | Josh Leiper        | Laura Wynn          | Nick Hagan           | Ryan Scally        | Tom McFall          |
| Blake Johnson        | Dave Reff          | Jack Hartt        | Judy Wiefels       | Lee Rudge           | Pam McGaw            | Ryan Walters       | Tom Slocum          |
| Bob Carey            | Dave Scott         | Jack Oelfke       | Karen Bakke        | Lin Skavdahl        | Pattie Sutter        | Sage Mailhiot      | Tom Smiley          |
| Bob Gillespie        | David Baer         | Jai Boreen        | Karen Krub         | Linda Sanford       | Paul Ingalls         | Sally Blake        | Tony Allison        |
| Bonnie Lehecka       | Deborah DeWolfe    | Jake West         | Karen Lamphere     | Lisa McShane        | Paul Ingalls         | Sally Hulbush      | Traci Sanderson     |
| Brad Solomon         | Deborah North      | Jan Buchanan      | Karen Nelson       | Lisa Nissely        | Paul Johnson         | Sarah Pedersen     | Trent Wieburg       |
| Brady Irwin          | Dennis Clark       | Jan Robinson      | Kat Hay            | Loren Schmidt       | Paul Troka           | Sarah Zabel        | Trevor Alerts       |
| Brenda Cunningham    | Dennis Stanchfield | Jan Smiley        | Kat Klass          | Lynne Jordan        | Paul Vance           | Scott Andrews      | Virginia Roberts    |
| Bria Hedahl          | Diana Meeks        | Jana Hanson       | Kathryn Flint      | Marcia Fort         | Pauline Bonner       | Sharon Howard      | Viridiana Cisneros  |
| Brooks Muchenberger  | Don Morgan         | Jane Billinghamst | Kathryn Kamp       | Marie Gallagher     | Pete Delachapelle    | Shawn Nixon        | Warren Walz         |
| Caleb Norton         | Ed Gastellum       | Jane Zillig       | Kathy Anderson     | Marin Anderson      | Pete Haase           | Shawna Jorgenson   | Winni McNamara      |
| Campbell Plageman    | Eduardo Sierra     | Janet Cray        | Kathy Ketteridge   | Mark Hagan          | Peter Castle         | Shelby Zimmerman   | Yolanda Morales     |
| Carl Molesworth      | Edward Anderson    | Janet Nevitt      | Kathy Thornburg    | Mark Hitchcock      | Phil Buri            | Shirley Hoh        | Zena Gavin          |
|                      |                    |                   |                    |                     | Phil Fenner          |                    | Zoe Russom          |

## There's No Place on Earth Like the Skagit

For Becky Cannon, the forests along the Skagit River and the shoreline on Samish Island are a time machine. They take her back to her childhood.



Samish Island Shoreline

"My aunt and uncle rented a cabin for a week out at Samish most summers," she says. "It was a little one-bedroom cabin and I would spend the days swimming in the Samish River when the tide was out, digging horse clams, and running around like a pack of wild dogs with the other children."

Her family roots push deep into soils of the Skagit flats, along with many other farming families. On rare trips back these days **she makes a point to drive the curves of the South Skagit Highway to properties**

**like Skagit Land Trust's Cumberland Creek Conservation Area.** She walks the same woods she did as a child, listening to the moving water and hoping to see a river otter.

"While I now live in northern California, the Skagit is always in the back of my mind. **I am a life-long fanatic about the landscape, rivers, shorelines, and glaciers of the Skagit,**" she says. "Skagit Land Trust's work protects these natural places in perpetuity."

**Though Becky lives nearly 1,000 miles away from Skagit County, she still wants to do her part to ensure the natural character of her childhood home endures.** For years she has been a Skagit Sustaining Member, making a monthly gift to the Trust. As she thought about the legacy she wanted to create after her lifetime, she knew the Trust was an organization that would carry out her vision for preserving and caring for the lands of the Skagit.

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**"Deciding on Skagit Land Trust as a beneficiary was a no-brainer for me since the Trust's work so strongly aligns with my own priorities. Designating Skagit Land Trust as a beneficiary from my IRA was easy...just one signature!"**

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**By designating Skagit Land Trust as the beneficiary of all or a percentage of your IRA, the funds will pass directly to the Trust tax-free after your lifetime, and the value will be deducted**

**from your taxable estate.** The process to designate the Trust as a beneficiary requires contacting your IRA administrator for a change-of-beneficiary form or downloading it from your provider's website. As always, we recommend discussing any prospective change with your financial advisor.

**One of the most important steps is to let your personal representative know about your IRA designation and to let us know about your gifting intentions.** Retirement plans are not required to notify a charity of your designation. Beneficiary forms often don't have space to detail any preferred uses of your funds once we receive them. We are honored when we have the opportunity to thank you for your generosity and to hear from you about how you wish your gift to be used to support conservation in the Skagit.

"The work of Skagit Land Trust – staff, board, partners, volunteers, and members – continues to result in the permanent protection and preservation of the Skagit," says Becky. "I'm impressed by Skagit Land Trust's mission-driven dedication to recognizing the unique qualities of the Skagit because there is no other place on earth like it."



Cumberland Creek Conservation Area

## Swanrise Events Highlight the Soaring Results of Conservation Efforts

On the outskirts of Mount Vernon, Skagit Land Trust's Barney Lake Conservation Area provides refuge for hundreds of Trumpeter Swans each night during their winter visit to the Skagit Valley. At sunrise, these swans leave their overnight home in a flush of honking and flapping. They fly across the county to forage in the farmlands.

Over 75 Skagit Land Trust members gathered throughout January and February to witness several Swanrise events and listen to Tim Manns and John Day from Skagit Audubon speak about the importance of Barney Lake to the continued recovery of Trumpeter Swans.



The heaviest flying waterfowl in North America, Trumpeter Swans were extinct in the lower 48 states by the early 1900s due to overhunting, lead poisoning, and wetland draining . Over many decades, community members took actions to ban lead shot. Much like our local effort to protect Barney Lake, communities also helped to conserve wetland habitat for these majestic swans to return to. **Thanks to these efforts, the first returned Trumpeter Swans were spotted in the Skagit Valley at Barney Lake in the 1950s.**

Today, community members can witness over 8,000 Trumpeter Swans in Skagit County and hear the thump-thump-thump of hundreds of swans taking off each morning from special places like the Barney Lake Conservation Area.



### A Special Opportunity for Those 70½ Years Old and Older

Many members have reached out to the Trust recently to learn more about making a gift through their IRA. Anyone over 70.5 can make a gift through their IRA, and if you are 72, you can make a gift out of your required minimum distribution. More and more people are discovering this simple and tax-friendly way to give.

You can give each year from your IRA directly to a qualified charity such as Skagit Land Trust without having to pay income taxes on the money. Gifts of any value \$100,000 or less are eligible for this benefit and you can feel good knowing that you are making a difference for the lands and waters of the Skagit. This popular gift option is commonly called an IRA charitable rollover, but you may also see it referred to as a qualified charitable distribution, or QCD for short. You can also designate your gift to recur each year. Skagit Land Trust is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with EIN# 91-1533402.

#### Why Consider This Kind of Gift?

- Your gift will be put to use today, allowing you to see the difference your donation is making.
- Once you turn 72, you can use your gift to satisfy all or part of your required minimum distribution.
- You pay no income taxes on the gift. The transfer generates neither taxable income nor a tax deduction, so you benefit even if you do not itemize your deductions.
- Since the gift doesn't count as income, it can reduce your annual income level. This may help lower your Medicare premiums and decrease the amount of Social Security that is subject to tax.

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PO Box 1017  
1020 S Third Street  
Mount Vernon, WA 98273  
www.skagitlandtrust.org  
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Skagit Land Trust conserves wildlife habitat, agricultural and forest lands, scenic open space and shorelines for the benefit of our community and as a legacy for future generations.

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## Join Us For An Upcoming Event!

**RSVP Online - [www.skagitlandtrust.org](http://www.skagitlandtrust.org)**

April 23 – Earth Day Investigation Stations & Nature Walks at Utopia

May 19 – SLT Reads Spring Book Club: All We Can Save

May 30 – Edible Plant Walk at Guemes Mountain and Kelly's Point Geology Walk

May 30 – Kelly's Point Geology Walk

June 8 – Nature Walk & Book Talk with 'Forest Walking' Author, Jane Billingham

"Heron & Beaver & Frogs, Oh My!" Barney Lake Visioning Walks throughout May

**Plus Stewardship Work Parties & Nature Walks across the County**

**GIVE**   
**BIG**  
**2022**  
POWERED BY  
501 COMMONS

Make a BIG Impact on Local Conservation this May

**GivieBIG is May 3rd & 4th**

You Can Double Your Donation to Local Lands & Waters

Visit [SkagitLandTrust.org](http://SkagitLandTrust.org)  
to learn more & spread the word!