



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF
Natural Resources
Peter Goldmark - Commissioner of Public Lands



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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State DNR awarded ‘Outstanding Conservation Partner’ by Skagit Land Trust

OLYMPIA – Skagit Land Trust has named the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) its Outstanding Conservation Partner. This annual award given by Skagit Land Trust seeks to recognize a partner who displays strong collaborative conservation approaches that help to protect threatened Skagit lands. Craig Calhoun of the DNR Conservation Lands Acquisition Program and Paul McFarland of the DNR Northwest Region office accepted the award on behalf of the agency.

“This award from the Skagit Land Trust recognizes the practical, problem-solving approach DNR is taking with the Land Trust and others who want to protect our state’s most viable forestlands and wildlife habitat from threats of conversion,” said Peter Goldmark, State Commissioner of Public Land.

“DNR takes a practical approach and “can-do” attitude, and this has resulted in numerous conservation successes on projects we have collaborated on,” said Martha Bray, Skagit Land Trust’s conservation director, when presenting the award. “Many of the projects we have worked on with DNR are quite complicated or include some challenging obstacles, but DNR is always willing to work with us to find good solution.”

The Land Trust cites several examples including:

- This past year, sponsoring a land acquisition grant from the US Fish and Wildlife Service to help fund the protection of a 43-acre property crossed by Barr Creek below Sauk Mountain. This unique forested property is now owned by Skagit Land Trust, and DNR holds a conservation easement on it. It will be managed to benefit endangered species in perpetuity.
- Finding a way to do a conservation lease on Skagit Land Trust’s Hurn Field property in 2001, when it was discovered that a portion of the land it was proposing to restore for riparian habitat lay in the historic river bed and, thus, owned by the State and managed by DNR.
- Working together to transfer more than 530 acres of submerged lands in Fidalgo Bay into public ownership. The grant required that DNR accept the tidelands encumbered by a conservation easement held by Skagit Land Trust. This had never been done before but DNR found a way to do it.
- Convening the Blanchard Strategies Group to help find a solution and agreement between disparate interests on the future of state lands on Blanchard Mountain. This agreement includes DNR’s purchase of working forestlands at risk of conversion to non-forestry uses.

- Working tirelessly to conserve Cypress Island as both a Natural Resources Conservation Area and Natural Area Preserve and pursuing opportunities to protect properties brought to DNR's attention by Skagit Land Trust and other groups.

“All of these examples exemplify collaboration and partnership through DNR's combination of creative problem-solving, keeping the goal of conservation ahead of getting recognition or credit, flexibility, thinking outside of the box, and hard work and perseverance,” said Molly Doran, Skagit Land Trust's executive director. “We are extremely fortunate to have the DNR in the Skagit as such a strong conservation partner.”

Skagit Land Trust

Skagit Land Trust conserves lands vital to Skagit County's natural heritage for the benefit of our community and as a legacy for future generations. This mission is accomplished through voluntary conservation methods including land purchases and permanent conservation agreements with landowners. Once land is protected, staff and volunteers restore and maintain the Trust's conservation areas. The Trust has protected 5,500 acres in Skagit County. For more information, contact the Trust at www.skagitlandtrust.org.

DNR managing public lands

DNR manages millions of acres of state trust lands to raise money for the construction of public schools, colleges and universities, prisons, and other institutions and to help pay for hospitals, libraries, and other services in several counties. DNR also manages about 130,000 acres in state Natural Area Preserves and Natural Resources Conservation Areas, and partners with local land trusts on other conservation land acquisition projects throughout the state.

Goldmark is the state's 13th Commissioner of Public Lands and the first from Eastern Washington.

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