



THE UNDERSTORY

GROWING PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL YOUTH

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YOUTH PARTNERSHIPS



SPRING STEWARDSHIP UPDATE



CITIZEN SCIENCE: GROWING OUR PROGRAMS



NATURALIST COLUMN: SPRING BLOOMS



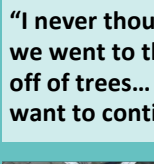
Over the past few months, the relationship between Skagit Land Trust and Emerson High School has strengthened, and Beverly Mowrer's Natural Resource and Community class has assisted the Trust on many conservation projects. For two of these projects, Emerson students mentored Lyman elementary students in restoration tree plantings at the Lyman Slough Conservation area. On Arbor Day, the entire Emerson student body, faculty, and staff came out to the Cumberland Creek Conservation Area for a large invasive removal effort. Many of our land stewards and other volunteers have worked with this group of students who are both enriched and excited by the opportunity to get outdoors and make real change in the conservation of our county. Read below for some words from the students themselves on this experience:



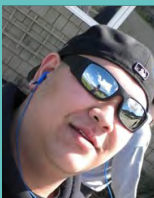
Emerson High School at Cumberland Creek for Arbor Day



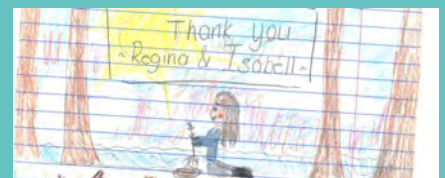
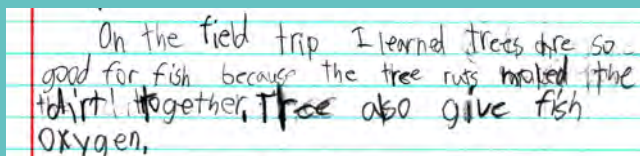
"Ever since Skagit Land Trust gave me the opportunity to help out my community, I became more aware of what could happen if we don't take care of our planet. So, whenever I'm walking down the sidewalk and I see trash, I pick it up. I think everybody should be doing this; they should be going outside and seeing what happens when the plastics thrown down eventually make it to our oceans." - Miguel Gonzalez



"I never thought about helping to keep the environment a clean and beautiful place until we went to the Samish Island Heronry and pulled invasive ivy from the forest ground and off of trees... Being out at the Heronry was such a great experience and totally made me want to continue helping the environment." - McKenzie Saxton



"I felt so happy to know that I was helping some elementary kids from Lyman. I felt that I was finally doing something right for a change. I felt that I was talking to my own little brother and teaching him about nature... Now, not only do I mentor other kids, I mentor their parents and other adults who don't go to school. The time I spent with the kids was really meaningful to me." - Christian Cuizon



WE WANT YOUR MONITORING REPORTS!

Thanks for sending us the latest news from your property.

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THE UNDERSTORY • SPRING 2014

On two separate occasions the Emerson class mentored students from Lyman Elementary School, teaching them how to plant trees and about riparian ecology. They enjoyed being in a role of mentorship, while the Lyman kids had a blast hanging out with and learning from the 'cool' older students. You will notice some of their quotes and drawings as well.



Emerson students and Lyman 5th grade students



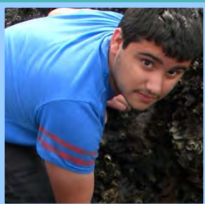
"Learning all the things when I was outside was a wonderful experience with the Skagit Land Trust. It has changed me as a person. The things we have done such as killing ivy, picking up garbage, and planting trees makes me want to do it on a regular basis now... The whole experience has changed my perspective on my community and how we should help it in different ways!" - Dylan Gomez

"Honestly, I feel we would not have had the same learning experiences we did, if we would have tried learning it in class by watching videos or doing other activities... All of the things we've done with Skagit Land Trust are things I would have never gone out and done by myself. But I'm glad we have had those opportunities. It was also good life experience too, like learning to do things out of my 'box'." - Jessica Johnson

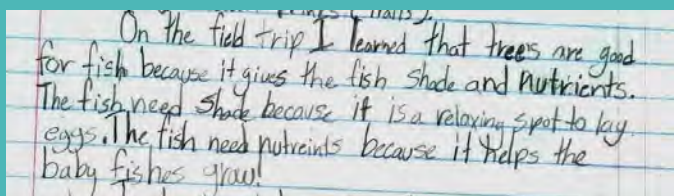


"Look deep into nature and then you will understand everything better." This quote was written by the great Albert Einstein as many may know. Every word of the quote is true. Teachers are always preaching to their students how as students and as a new generation we can make a difference in the world... Skagit Land Trust has given me and my peers the opportunity to go out and help our community and environment." - Tayler Baker

"Thanks to Skagit Land Trust this program gave me the information and the insight of how my actions affect the area I live in. I had the chance to pull over 10,000 sq. feet of invasive ivy! I've always loved being outside as a child and now that I was able to work with my classmates, it made it even better. I learned team building skills that will help me later in life. Through all the hard work we were able to come closer as a class." - Mikey Sedano



"I got the opportunity to be a mentor to a group of two 5th graders. My group and I planted many different types of native trees. Some kids do the things they see older people do, so when they see that we are keeping the environment clean it makes them want to help out too. I had a great time teaching the kids how to plant a tree and also showing them how to take care of our planet." - Junior Mendez



Emerson students and Lyman Elementary 4th Grade students

Festival of Frogs: a ribbiting good time!



This past April, Skagit Land Trust held an educational event focusing on amphibian ecology at the Utopia Conservation Area. Children from throughout the county attended to listen to talks by local



experts and participate in fun educational activities. Sue Madsen, restoration ecologist at Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group, led a talk on restoration and wildlife. Ned Currence, Utopia Land Steward and biologist with the Nooksack tribe, offered a talk on salmon in Skagit County. Samantha Hale, Masters Candidate with NCI and Western Washington University, taught about the frog life cycle and engaged kids in an interactive game.

The children also enjoyed arts and crafts projects, story time (with frog themed books, of course), and hand made frog buttons. Everyone learned a lot about amphibians, their importance in the local ecosystem, and had a great time.

This event was part of an effort to involve local youth in Skagit Land Trust's Amphibian Monitoring Program. There were over 100 youth and adults from various groups including Children of the Valley, several girl and boy scout troops, and local families. Thanks to all of our partners for making this a huge success!



NEW NEST BOXES AT LYMAN SLOUGH

Land Steward Jim Owens, volunteer Richard Stewart, and I recently placed Wood Duck and Tree Swallow nesting boxes at the Lyman Slough property. This is the time of the year that these and other birds will be looking for nesting sites. The procedure is quite simple, especially with the skill and experience of Jim O. and Richard S.



Lyman Slough is bordered on the north by the Cascade Trail. Walkers, using the trail, can view the Tree Swallow boxes. A side channel of the Skagit River is also visible from the trail. We hope that Wood Ducks will enjoy the view and nest in the boxes. Upon finishing the project we had a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction that Lyman Slough, native birds and those that enjoy nature had a good day.

- Richard Raisler, Lyman Slough Land Steward

Noteworthy Stewardship Events:

Land stewards have been busy this Spring with tree plantings at **Minkler Lake**, invasive species removal at **Cumberland Creek**, scotch broom removal at **Pressentin Ranch**, thistle pulling at **Lyman slough** and trail work both on **Guemes Mountain** and the **Barr Creek Trail**. Thanks Land Stewards for being vigilant and enthusiastic!



Guemes Mountain, May 2014



The Scientist Within

by Regina Wandler, Stewardship Associate

What exactly is ‘citizen science’? There are many definitions, but my favorite is the simplest - public participation in scientific research. It is an attractive concept for many reasons. Data collection is prohibitively expensive, and when volunteers are willing to help count and measure things they find in the natural world, scientists have more data available to help understand natural (or unnatural) processes. Citizen scientists have the opportunity to go places and see things they might otherwise not have engaged with in a more meaningful way. Becoming a citizen scientist encourages critical thinking both in the project and in other aspects of one’s life – making more thoughtful and engaged community members overall.



The Trust has greatly expanded our own citizen science programs over the last year, and it has been exciting. Our Great Blue Heron monitoring program has grown from tracking heronry size by annual nest counts to closely monitoring heron nesting behavior and success at both the March Point and Samish Island Heronries. A dedicated group of volunteers now observes the herons according to a monitoring protocol developed by biologist Ann Eissinger—they can recognize what the clacks and stances of these iconic birds indicate, and can explain behavioral quirks to others in detail. A group of 14 Beachwatcher volunteers has signed on to work closely with Ann Eissinger and monitor heron forage areas throughout Skagit County. They stand on the beach for hours, watching carefully through spotting scopes to try and see what the herons are gulping down far out in eelgrass dominated bays. All of this information will give us a much better understanding of heron dynamics and health in Skagit County.



Amphibian monitoring took off running this year as well. Over the last several years, we participated in an Oregon Spotted Frog (OSF) survey initiated by the Forest Service and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). This year, with the OSF surveys complete, we worked with Vikki Jackson and the Whatcom County Amphibian Monitoring Project to develop a Skagit monitoring program mirroring the one in Whatcom County. 20 volunteers have looked for frog egg masses and adults at 10 conservation areas on Skagit Land Trust property. Our shed has filled with waders and boots, disinfected and drying after each visit. The information will be submitted to WDFW, and we now know where some of our amphibian ‘hot spots’ are.



This is an amazing baseline of knowledge that we could not have gathered without the assistance of our community. Our heron information was used to help guide environmental decision making in Anacortes. Last year, we included provisions for the benefit of amphibian populations in the Utopia Conservation Area management plan, a first for the Trust. Thank you so much to all of our citizen scientists – we are extraordinarily lucky to have your help!

SLT CONSERVATION AREAS AND THEIR LAND STEWARDS

Barney Lake: Tim Manns & Brenda Cunningham

Barr Creek: Russ Dalton

Butler Creek: Jim Owens

Cumberland Creek: Jim Johnson

Day Creek (Berquist & Forest): Stan Zyskowski

Day Creek Kosbab: Jim Fukuyama

Day Creek Slough: Hal Lee

Grandy Creek: John Freeman

Green Road Marsh: Heidi Nichols

Guemes Mountain: Ed & Carolyn Gastellum, Ian Woofenden, Kit Harma

Hurn Field: Steffany Raynes & Lin Skavdahl

Lyman Slough: Dick Raisler

March’s Point: LaVerne & Jim Scheltens

Minkler Lake: Hal Lee

Mud Lake: Lloyd Brown

Pressentin Ranch: Bill & Sally Pfeifer

Samish—Ochs: Pete Haase

Samish River: OPEN!

Samish-Squires: Jack Anne Middleton

Sumner Lake: Tami Thomas and Tom Mayes

Topo Ryan: John Day

Utopia: Ned Currence

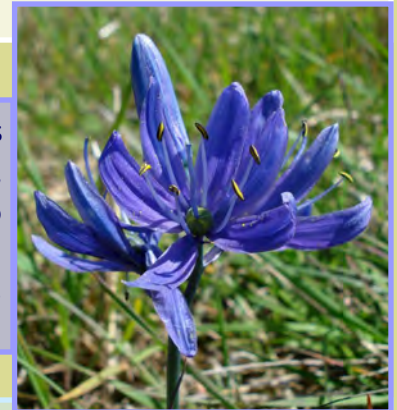


Native Wildflowers



Trillium ovatum, Western Trillium

Western trillium is commonly found on the floors of open forests. The Latin word trillium means 'in 3's', an arrangement in which the petals, leaves, sepals and stigmas are found. Its seeds are dispersed by ants who are attracted the oil-rich appendages. Find trillium on the Butler creek property in April!



Cassamia quamash, Common Camas

Common camas is of the lily family and restricted to rain-shadow climates. Its bulbs are edible, but beware—the bulbs of the similar death camas are lethal if eaten! Death camas tends to have cream colored flowers, while common camas is pale to deep blue. Find these blooming on Guemes Mountain in the Springtime.



Erythronium oregonum, White fawn lily

Fawn lilies can be seen in abundance in the mountain-top meadows on Guemes Island. There is some dispute as to why the flower was named 'fawn' lily; some believe John Burroughs named it after its two leaves that resembled pricked ears of a fawn, others believe fawn refers to the mottled leaf coloring.



Drosera rotundifolia, Roundleaf Sundew

Round leaved sundew is a carnivorous plant often found growing out of sphagnum moss. It feeds on insects and gets its name from the misspelling of the anglosaxon word sin-dew, meaning always dewy. Its has flowers with white petals which open fully only in strong sunlight. See this beauty at Sumner Lake!



Tellima grandiflora, Fragrant fringe cup

Fringecup seems to boast a few magical properties. It was used medicinally for almost every ailment by many Native American groups. For improved night vision, it was once eaten by woodland elves. (Pojar, 1994) This enchanting flower can be found on many Trust properties.



P.O. Box 1017
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98273

OUR MISSION:

Skagit Land Trust conserves wildlife habitat, wetlands, agricultural and forest lands, scenic open space and shorelines for the benefit of our community and as a legacy for future generations.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT SKAGIT LAND TRUST

Citizen Science Potluck

Thursday, June 12th
3:00pm-5:00pm
Bay View State Park

Land Steward Picnic

Saturday, June 28th
3:00pm—6:00pm

Stay Tuned for Location and Event details

Annual Members Picnic

Saturday, July 26th
11:30am-1:30pm
Guemes Island

VISIT: WWW.SKAGITLANDTRUST.ORG FOR MORE INFO!