

Saving Land for Tomorrow



 **Skagit Land Trust** Annual Report 2003-2004

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Annual Report

April 1, 2003 - March 31, 2004

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Editor: Molly Doran

Cover Photos by: Phil Green
(Western Sandpiper), Diane
Bednarz (Maidenhair Fern) and
Keith Wiggers (forest)
Illustrations, Brenda Cunningham

From the President & Executive Director

Dear Members,

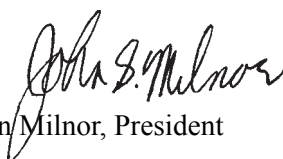
The future of Skagit County is being decided now. To balance the loss of open space and habitat shaping our landscape today, we have taken a creative, nimble, approach to saving the best places while we can. As you will note in our 2003-04 Annual Report, an increasing aspect of our work is collaborating with capable partners. Cooperatively, we are better able to leverage scarce resources to achieve common goals that protect our natural heritage.

In 2003-2004, we exceeded expectations by protecting 995 acres including over 6 miles of freshwater shoreline. We added substantially to our stewardship reserve fund, knowing that the real challenges in managing the lands we have protected will come down the road. We must leave to the future an ability to steward and defend the natural areas we worked so hard to protect.

We are proud that Skagit County remains a green jewel in an increasingly paved world. How many people live where wild salmon spawn, elk roam the floodplains, heron gather by the thousands to nest, and views of islands, water and mountains surround daily tasks? We are very lucky and we must continue to work hard to pass special places on to future generations.

This work is simply not possible without a strong membership base. This Annual Report is a summary and celebration of the land we, together, are saving for tomorrow.

Thank you!


John Milnor, President


Molly Doran, Executive Director

Mud Lake, protected in 2003

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Conservation Highlights

April 1, 2003 - March 31, 2004

In 2003-04 the Trust protected 2.5 more miles of Middle Skagit River shoreline bringing our total protection of this stretch of waterways to over 10 miles. With help from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board and the Skagit Watershed Council, two more important properties were added to the Trust's ownership in the Day Creek area and a grant for Minkler Lake was secured.

May saw the final transfer of 593 acres of floodplain and four sites of Skagit River shoreline and vital habitat into public lands when the Trust sold Skiyou Island to the US Forest Service for inclusion as Wild and Scenic Rivers lands.

In May the Trust placed a Conservation Easement with the Farmland Legacy Program on a 139-acre property along I-5 north of Burlington and sold the land to organic farmer, Douwe Dykstra. This made the property affordable as farmland while also protecting it as waterfowl habitat and open space.



Executive Director Molly Doran and Board Member John Osborn on a Samish Island Conservation Easement.

In June the Trust purchased 29 additional acres of Mud Lake bringing our total Mud Lake Conservation Area to 48 acres. This lake connects to the Nookachamps floodplain and is critical habitat plus allows for natural flood ecosystem processes of the Skagit River.

75 acres of Conservation Easements were added to the Anacortes Community Forest Lands. This co-operative project with the City of Anacortes and local citizens through Friends of the Forest will eventually protect 1500 acres of urban forest and lakes within city limits.

Private Conservation Easement donors are conservation champions. By protecting their property for perpetuity they ensure important landscapes remain as a legacy for future generations. This year we had easements donated by Bob Keller and Pat Karlberg on the Cascade River, John and Kristen Boyes in Clear Lake, and Cliff Squires on Samish Island.



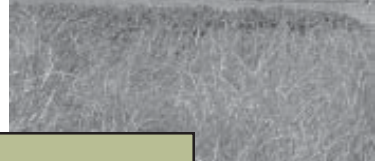
48 acres of Mud Lake is now protected by Skagit Land Trust.



*Cascade River - Keller - Karlberg
Conservation Easement*

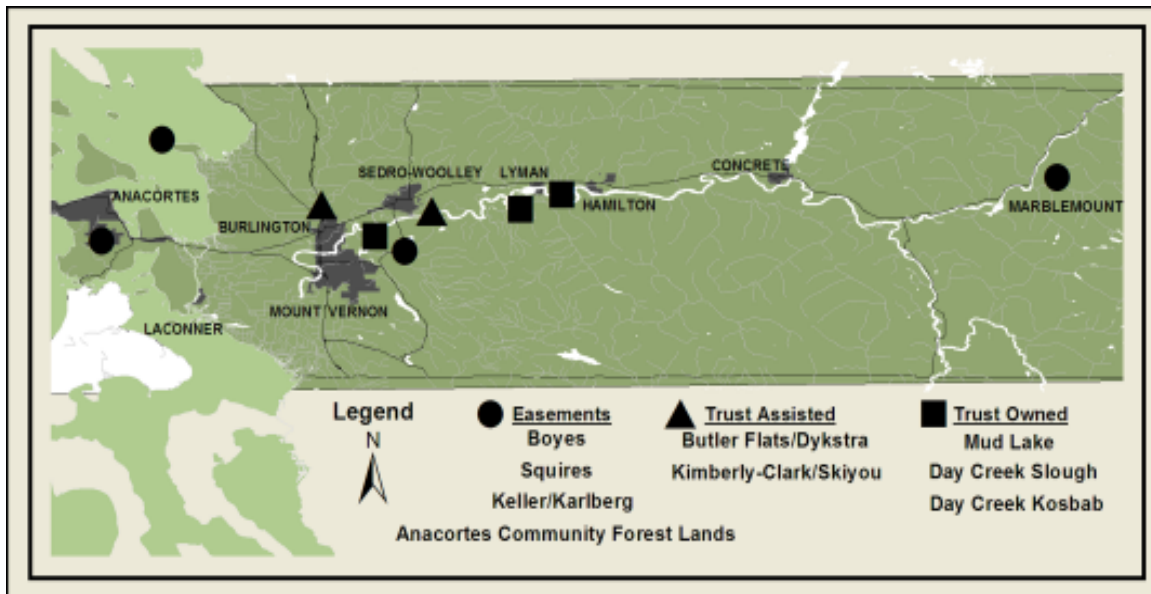


*One of five Samish Island
Conservation Easement*



Day Creek

Lands Protected 2003-2004



Mud Lake



*Keith Wiggers & Ralph Heft
working the land*



Boyes Conservation Easement - Clear Lake

Protected Lands 2003-2004



The gravel bars at Day Creek Slough, purchased in August 2003, provide ideal salmon spawning.



Day Creek - staff and volunteers checking on the growth of trees planted in a riparian area.

"I know of no movement...as convincing, as effective, and as compassionate as the land trust movement in this country. It is like water, seeping into the most unexpected places, rising and falling and filling the basin of the human heart."

Renowned writer and naturalist, Terry Tempest Williams

Investing in land conservation cultivates hope

At the Trust we tend to be pretty practical – We count acres of land protected. We use measurable criteria to select the best projects. We ask hard questions. This discipline has paid many dividends – in the form of an impressive rate of land protection, and examples of exceptional collaboration within a diverse community.

There is more, however, to land conservation than technical expertise. As the Trust grows, so do our roots in the community. We hear the stories of the early settlers who stored logs on Minkler Lake, we watch farmer friends struggling to stay afloat, and we envision a future where this jewel that is Skagit County is vibrantly alive....

Saving land links us to the past and gives us hope for the future – acres protected say *"Salmon Recovery"*, *"Preserved Forever"*, *"A Natural Legacy"*. This is the antidote for seemingly endless sprawl. Saving land for the future promises open space and native plants and animals and wild places – it cultivates hope.

And so, we are trying to think big – in the next five years we look to some of the remaining largest tracts of undeveloped lands in the county, where growth presses hardest and threatens special places – the Chuckanut Foothills, the Nookachamps basin and Devils Mountain. We'll use the tools we know well, and look for new ones. And we'll make new friends and learn new stories that link us back to the land.



Mud Lake - protected for waterfowl and fish

Highlights in Stewardship

March's Point Heronry

Members from Skagit Land Trust, Evergreen Islands, Skagit Audubon, Friends of Skagit County, the Port of Anacortes, and T Bailey counted 575 active nests at March's Point in December. This heronry is the largest known Great Blue Heron nesting site in Western North America. A mitigation and monitoring agreement with T Bailey, with the purpose to alleviate potential disruption to the nesting herons, took effect in 2004. Biologists from Skagit Land Trust and Grette Associates state that the agreement conditions appear to be working for current T Bailey activities.

CREP

Just what are those blue tubes everywhere?? They are "protectors" for newly planted native trees. The plantings are part of the the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program or CREP (pronounced krep). This is a joint, state-federal land conservation program that assists qualified landowners in addressing particular environmental issues, such as restoration of stream buffers. Despite two very dry summers, Skagit Land Trust's CREP buffers on our Hurn Field and Tope Ryan properties are thriving thanks to help from Skagit Conservation District.

Butler Flats Restoration

This past year the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) began to enhance the duck habitat found on Skagit Land Trust's Butler Flats property. The NRCS constructed many shallow ponds in the wetland, providing year-round open water for ducks, amphibians and other wildlife. Skagit Land Trust volunteers assisted by planting hundreds of willows, cottonwoods and Sitka spruce trees on the edges of these ponds, increasing the cover for songbirds and providing shade for the water.

Stewardship Reserve Fund

When we say we will protect land in perpetuity, we mean it.

In 2004, Skagit Land Trust updated and augmented its Stewardship Reserve Fund to reflect the growing responsibilities of the Trust. When the Trust sold the Kimberly-Clark Properties to the US Forest Service and others, we put \$136,000 of the net proceeds from this sale into the Stewardship Reserve Fund. This added to the \$90,220 already in this fund, donated by Conservation Easement donors and other concerned members. This fund generates interest that will help pay for the stewardship and legal defense of both conservation easements and Trust-owned lands in the future. The board-directed portion is a revolving fund that can be borrowed for time-sensitive protection opportunities. You may make a contribution to the Stewardship Reserve Fund at any time to help ensure that the lands we are working so hard to protect today, have funds that keep them protected in the future.



Butler Flats provides shelter and nesting areas to numerous bird species. The ponds are a welcome stop over for migrating shorebirds and wintering ducks.



Thank You

Skagit Land Trust is extremely grateful to the dedicated group of hard-working volunteers that help the Trust.

Partnerships



In the Middle Skagit

Our success in the Middle Skagit is built on the shoulders of landowners and our partners such as the Skagit Watershed Council and the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB –pronounced Surfboard). The Skagit is a key watershed in the state for salmon recovery. It is the largest watershed in Puget Sound with significant natural habitat. It is the only river in Washington that supports all five native salmon species. The Skagit Watershed Council, under the direction of Shirley Solomon, brings together 40 partner organizations to work on the well-being of salmon and their habitat in the Skagit and Samish watersheds. The strong leadership of the Watershed Council and high level of partnership work assures that these watersheds receive significant state and federal funding to protect and restore important salmon habitat. A majority of that funding currently comes from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board. Skagit Land Trust has been awarded six SRFB grants. Our SRFB project manager, Mark Dubowski, has been instrumental in helping us work through many complex issues in creative and positive ways to achieve critical and timely protection of salmon habitat. Marc was awarded Conservation Partner of the Year at the Trust's 2004 Annual meeting.



A wide gravel bar at the mouth of Day Creek is spawning habitat for King & Silver Salmon.

On Samish Island

In March, Skagit Land Trust and Cliff Squires expanded a Conservation Easement on Samish Island donated by his father, Jim Squires. This addition brings the total area protected on Samish Island under five Trust Conservation Easements to 40 acres including nearly 1/2 mile of shoreline. Skagit Land Trust is honored to have a strong history of building effective partnerships with private landowners on Samish Island, a place known for its rare flora, exceptional bird habitat and rich marine environment. The Squires, Schayes, Corkerys, Goldstons and Grandy Lake Forest have generously decided to contribute to citizens past, present and future by protecting their lands for perpetuity. We are so grateful.

Partners

2003-2004

City of Anacortes, Ducks Unlimited, Farm Service Agency, Friends of the Anacortes Community Forest Lands, Natural Resources Conservation Service, The Nature Conservancy, Salmon Fisheries Enhancement Group, Salmon Recovery Funding Board, Skagit Conservation District, Skagit County Farmland Legacy Program, Skagit River System Cooperative, Skagit Watershed Council, US Forest Service, Seattle City Light, Whatcom Land Trust.

Board member John Osborn, on Samish Island, is an active member of the Stewardship Committee



Financial Statements 2003-2004

Comparative Financial Statements FOR THE YEARS ENDING MARCH 31, 2004 AND MARCH 31, 2003

Statement of Financial Position

	2004	2003
Current Assets		
Cash and short-term investments	\$681,625	\$281,389
Investments	26,987	25,955
Prepaid expenses	1,550	
Earnest money on deposit	228,430	
Accounts and note receivable	61,211	45,246
Rental deposit	2,499	9,400
Total Current Assets	1,002,204	\$361,990
Long Term Assets (net)		
Land	1,600,277	2,251,048
Equipment (net)	13,348	13,390
Total Long Term Assets	1,613,625	2,264,438
Total Assets	2,615,829	2,626,428
Liabilities		
Current liabilities	765	15,383
Mortgage payable	-	800,000
Accrued interest/taxes payable	6,675	19,233
Unearned revenue	197,300	-
Total Liabilities	204,740	834,616
Net Assets		
Unrestricted	2,188,418	1,666,001
Temporarily restricted	222,671	125,811
Total Net Assets	2,411,089	1,791,812
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$2,615,829	\$2,626,428

This abbreviated financial statement is based on the form recommended by the Financial Accounting Standards Board for Financial Statements for Not-for-Profit Organizations. This statement is a summary of the Report submitted to your Board of Directors. Hoekstra & Hoekstra, Certified Public Accountants, who found them to "present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Skagit Land Trust as of March 31, 2004", audited the 2004 statement. The March 31, 2004 financial statement and independent auditor's report are on file in the offices of Skagit Land Trust. Also available for review is the IRS 990 tax return for this year.

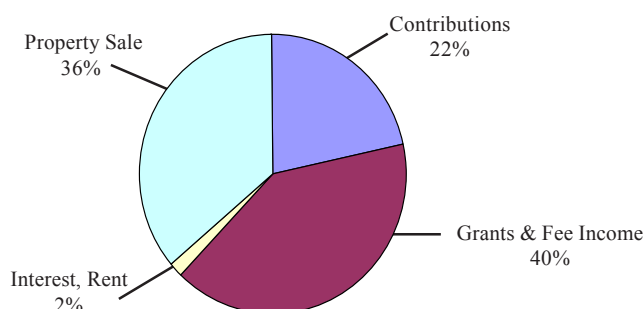
At year-end March 2004 the Trust held 39 Conservation Easements and owned 19 parcels in fee. Total area under Trust stewardship was 3,287 acres throughout Skagit County. Trust membership totaled 475.

Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets

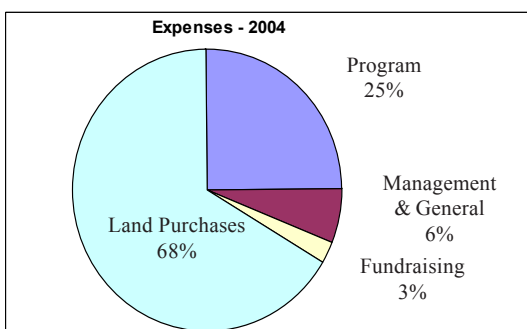
	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total 2004	Total 2003
Support and Revenue				
Contributions (cash and in-kind)	\$93,513	\$104,000	\$197,513	\$224,602
Grant and fee income	364,413		364,413	364,123
Rental Income	4,533		4,533	7,000
Investment Income	10,154		10,154	11,887
Net gain on land sales	330,857		330,857	-
Assets released from restrictions	57,140	(57,140)	-	-
Reclassifications	(50,000)	50,000	-	-
Total Support and Revenue	810,610	96,860	907,470	607,612
Expenses				
Program Services	213,999		213,999	251,404
Management and general	52,513		52,513	72,775
Fundraising	21,681		21,681	13,866
Total Expenses	288,193	-	288,193	338,045
Increase in Net Assets	\$522,417	\$96,860	\$619,277	\$269,567
Net assets, beginning of year			\$1,791,812	\$1,522,245
Net assets, end of year			\$2,411,089	\$1,791,812

Revenue 2003-2004

Revenue - 2004



Expenses - 2004



Financial Notes

Skagit Land Trust completed several major land transactions this year.

- The Trust sold 593 acres of Skiyou Island to the US Forest Service for \$960,000.
- The Trust sold 139 acres at Butler Flats to a private buyer with a simultaneous sale of a Conservation Easement to the Farmland Legacy Program for a total of \$381,834.
- The Trust bought 29 acres of Mud Lake for \$34,000.
- The Trust bought 21 acres at Day Creek for \$34,000 with grant funding of \$28,900 from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board and Trust funds of \$5,100.
- The Trust bought 110 acres at Kosbab Slough (Day Creek) for \$273,000 with grant funding of \$232,050 from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board and Trust funds of \$40,950.
- The Trust placed \$228,430 in escrow for the purchase of Minkler Lake, completed in April 2004. The Salmon Recovery Funding Board contributed grant funding of \$197,300.
- The Trust repaid a note of \$800,000 to The Nature Conservancy and The Nature Conservancy forgave \$13,150 in interest payable.
- The Trust received a cash donation of \$100,000 from Robert V. Brown and Patricia Hegg Brown to be utilized for future land purchases.



Members & Partners

April 1, 2003 - March 31, 2004

Thank You

We are grateful to the individuals, companies and foundations listed below whose donations were received between April 1, 2003 and March 31, 2004.

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Business Conservator (\$1000-\$2499)

Printwise Inc
Skagit Valley Food Co-op

Business Benefactor (\$500-\$999)

Timmers Appraisal Services

Business Patron (\$250-\$499)

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Skagit Valley Healing Arts
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Business Supporters (\$50-\$99)

Earthbound Used Books
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McGregor Insurance Agency, Inc.
Meyer Sign & Advertising Co.

Organizations

Evergreen Islands
Skagit Audubon Society
Skagit Conservation District
Skagitians to Preserve Farmland
The Nature Conservancy
Friends of the Anacortes Community Forest Lands

*continued on
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Skagit Land Trust Members

April 1, 2003 - March 31, 2004

Matching Gifts

Microsoft Giving Campaign
Safeco

Granting Organizations &

Foundations

The Dudley Foundation
Horizons Foundation
The Hugh & Jane Ferguson
Foundation
The Seattle Foundation
Salmon Recovery funding board

Stewardship Fund

Patricia Karlberg & Robert Keller
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Ralph & Ruth Heft

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Major Donors (\$5,000 & Up)

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Patricia Hegg Brown

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Saving Land for Tomorrow



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.