

Saving Land, Nurturing Curiosity

Dear Supporters of Skagit Land Trust,

Growing up in Toronto, my world was mostly city streets and buildings. But every summer from age eight to eighteen, I spent weeks at a Y camp on Georgian Bay, Ontario. Those summers changed my life.

Each day we paddled among rocky islands and fell asleep under the stars -- on very hard rock, since insolate pads didn't exist back then! But I grew curious about the vast, colorful, striped rocks we camped on and how they formed. I began to notice birds -- even a kid pauses when a loon's call echoes across a still bay at night. Those experiences gave me a sense of connection to nature. They led me to study Environmental Science and, eventually, to a career in conservation.

Giving children the chance to fall in love with the natural world and follow whatever it awakens in them, matters. At Skagit Land Trust, with your help, we get to see that spark often. Each year, our Outreach programs touch the lives of hundreds of kids. Many explore forests, wetlands, and shorelines that you and other members have helped us protect. Kids watch salmon return to streams, study birds going in and out of snags, and marvel at the size of a tree a beaver can cut with their endlessly growing teeth.

The kids' thank you notes that we receive show the many ways they are impacted by being in nature:

"When you told me the beavers almost went extinct that was sad."
"I loved doing the binoculars!"
"I learned beaver tails squirt goo that they used to use in vanilla ice cream. I got my brother to stop eating vanilla ice cream."
"I'm bringing my family here this weekend."
"I want to go to Utopia again. I wish I was still there!"

I wish I was still there. Nurturing curiosity, wonder, and connection will shape the choices and lives of tomorrow's leaders, helping to protect the wildlife and natural world they love.

Saving land takes a community. Whether you volunteer, donate, or share your love for the land in other ways, you are part of this legacy. Thank you.

Molly Doran

Molly Doran, Executive Director



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Warren Walz**, *President*
Anacortes
- Brad Furlong**, *Vice President*
Fir Island
- Lynne Wenberg-Davidson**
Treasurer
Anacortes
- Tim Manns**, *Secretary*
Mount Vernon
- Harold Lee**, *Exec. Committee*
Mount Vernon
- Jim Glackin**
Mount Vernon
- Mark Hitchcock**
Samish Island
- Steven H. Johnson**
Anacortes
- Karen Krub**
La Conner
- Mark Linnemann**
Guemes Island
- Denby Lloyd**
Anacortes
- Meagan Maillet**
Mount Vernon
- Therese Ogle**
Samish Island/Anacortes
- Kathy Thornburgh**
Mount Vernon
- Barbara Trask**
Birdsview
- Chris Varela**
Mount Vernon
- Keith Wiggers**
Burlington
- Anne Winkes**
Conway
- STAFF**
- Molly Doran**
Executive Director
- Michael Kirshenbaum**
Conservation Director
- Laura Hartner**
Development Director
- Max Morange**
Stewardship Director
- Jaz Strode-Elfant**
Membership & Office Admin.
- Jessica Lange**
Conservation Project Manager
- Kari Odden**
Conservation Project Manager
- Stacy Dahl**
Volunteer & Education Prog Coord.
- Sarah Gardam**
Outreach Coordinator
- Emily Schauble**
Stewardship Coordinator
- Jonathan Worley**
Stewardship Coordinator
- Oceanna Boulanger**
Outreach Assistant
- Leslie Menard**
Accountant
- Phil Buri, P.S.**
General Counsel



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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.

PO Box 1017 • 1020 S Third Street
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
www.skagitlandtrust.org • 360-428-7878

Upcoming Events

- Invasive Plant Removal Work Party**
@ Minkler Lake Conservation Area
Friday, November 21st @ 9am - 12pm
- SLT Online Speaker Series:**
Dan McShane on Skagit Geology
On Zoom, Wednesday, December 3rd @ 6pm
- Trail Maintenance Work Party**
@ Barr Creek Conservation Area
Friday, December 5th @ 10am-1pm
- Wreathmaking with Skagit Land Trust**
@ Samish Miles Conservation Area
Sunday, December 7th @ 10am - 1pm
- Holiday Open House**
@ the Skagit Land Trust office
Tuesday, December 16th @ 3pm - 6pm
- Live Willow Stake Harvesting & Planting Work Party @ Tope Ryan Conservation Area**
Thursday, December 18th @ 9am - 12pm
- Please go to our website, skagitlandtrust.org, for more information.*



The lands conserved and protected by Skagit Land Trust have been inhabited and stewarded by numerous tribes and Indigenous peoples since time immemorial. We recognize and respect the inherent, indigenous, and treaty rights of the Coast Salish People who have deep and abiding connections to these places. We seek to partner with local tribes as we conserve and care for these lands and waters.



SKAGIT UPDATE

NOVEMBER 2025



Landowner Support Secures Critical Sauk River Habitat

"I have always assumed this land belongs to the river," says local landowner Michael Knapp, who is partnering with Skagit Land Trust to permanently protect 18.6 acres of rich salmon and forest habitat along the Sauk River. This pending Conservation Easement (CE) lies in a valley originally carved by eruptions from the Glacier Peak volcano. Today, the Sauk -- one of the longest undammed rivers in the Pacific Northwest -- continues that work. The river flows through the CE in two active side channels, one of which floods almost every year, refreshing the soil and nurturing a lush web of life for Chinook salmon and other species.

Located just a mile south of Skagit County, this will be the Trust's first CE in Snohomish County. The property lies at the heart of a biologically rich corridor between two sections of the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. The Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe, Skagit Land Trust, Washington Department of Natural Resources, the Nature Conservancy, and the City of Seattle protect adjacent and nearby lands. The new CE adds to and connects other conserved land in this area, helping to secure a wildlife corridor for animals moving through the upper Skagit watershed.

The forest canopy of towering western hemlock and red cedar shares space with big leaf maple, vine maple, and black cottonwood. Beneath them grows a thriving understory of sword fern, snowberry, and salmonberry, providing year-round food and shelter for wildlife. Deer, elk, coyote, black bear, and Douglas squirrel have all been spotted here. Beavers build and rebuild their dams along the river channels, creating habitat for countless other species -- from cavity-nesting birds to rearing salmon fry. The Sauk River supports Chinook, coho, sockeye, chum, pink,

Continued on p. 2

bull trout, salmon, and both summer and winter steelhead.

The conservation easement, which is partially funded by WA State’s Recreation and Conservation Office’s Salmon Recovery Funding Board, will ensure there is never development on the property’s natural areas. Landowner Michael Knapp is also donating a portion of the easement’s value. An avid hiker and trail builder, Knapp has cared for this property for decades, creating footpaths that connect to neighboring public lands and to the mainstem Sauk River. Thanks to his decision to protect the land in perpetuity, this lovely riparian forest will remain a living legacy for generations to come. “I am just a steward,” says Knapp, “I’m so glad that Skagit Land Trust can carry on this stewardship long after I’m gone.”

Skagit Land Trust will pay for the monitoring and enforcement of the easement going forward. This ongoing protection is made possible by the dedication of our members and donors, whose support extends the reach of conservation one acre at a time. Thank you for building lasting connections – between rivers and forests, people and place – that help to keep special spaces like this one forever wild.



Top left: Landowner Michael Knapp and SLT Conservation Project Manager Jessica Lange examine one of the new easement’s Sauk River side channels. Top right: Changing vine maple leaves signal the arrival of fall to the forested floodplain of the new CE. Bottom: The undammed Sauk River is a critical salmon and steelhead river and is popular for fishing.

Growing Conservation, One Stock Share at a Time

Skagit Land Trust members protect the places they love by supporting conservation in many forms, from planting trees, to volunteering, to making charitable gifts. One growing form of giving we have seen is the donation of appreciated securities such as stocks or mutual funds that have increased in value.

Many Skagit Land Trust members have discovered that stock gifts offer a double dose of benefits. **When you donate stock that has gone up in value, you can usually take a tax deduction for the full value of the stock. Even better, you don’t have to pay any tax on the increase in value when you donate the stock directly to Skagit Land Trust instead of selling it first.**

“I realized I could give significantly more by donating stock,” shared a member this fall who contacted the Trust about making her first stock donation. “I liked that I could stretch my impact on protecting the places and wildlife I love.”

Some donors may make stock gifts when rebalancing their finances. Others enjoy turning gains into conservation success. Whatever the motivation, this type of giving keeps working season after season, helping restore wetlands, protect wildlife habitat, and upkeep trails.

If you have questions or want guidance on making a stock gift, contact Laura Hartner, laurah@skagitlandtrust.org for a form to donate stock or mutual funds to SLT. This form is easy to share with your investment advisor or broker.

Please reach out if you have questions about other types of gifts such as Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) from a traditional IRA or using a Donor Advised Fund. We are grateful for all of our supporters who are ensuring a natural Skagit will be here for generations of people and wildlife.



It Is In Our Hands to Conserve Their Habitat Double Your Impact on Giving Tuesday

Mark your calendars for December 2nd

You can have a huge impact on local conservation in the coming year by making a gift during Giving Tuesday. Your support powers the work we are doing together to conserve and care for our lands, waters, and wildlife. It also connects the next generation with lands they will soon steward.

Your gift will go twice as far! Generous members have provided a \$28,000 match for all Giving Tuesday gifts.

Giving Tuesday is about looking for ways to support the issues you care about. Here at Skagit Land Trust, **we are grateful for your commitment to local conservation.** Thanks to your membership, critical natural lands in the Skagit will be here for generations of people and wildlife to enjoy.

Visit our website on or before Giving Tuesday to make a donation.

Interested in making your donation through a gift of stock, an IRA, or a Donor Advised Fund? Please email laurah@skagitlandtrust.org.



Volunteer Spotlight: Mike Antrim

When retired high school science teacher Mike Antrim moved from Southern California to Anacortes in 2016, he was eager to dive into the ecosystems of his new home. Through the Salish Sea Stewards program, run by Skagit County Marine Resources and the Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Mike discovered Skagit Land Trust – and a calling to join our Great Blue Heron monitoring project at March Point Heronry.

Having once helped create a wetland haven for herons in Nebraska, Mike was excited to assist with heron monitoring in the Skagit. Through their home computers, Mike and other monitors operate the Trust’s three wildlife cameras and observe the birds’ intricate cycle of courtship, nesting, and fledging. “It’s always exciting to see newly hatched herons grow and interact with their siblings and parents,” Mike says.



Left: Nest count volunteers pose for a group photo, smiling from a day of sunshine, camaraderie, and fresh air. Right: A March Point heron hovers above its baby during nesting season in June of 2025.

When the nesting season ends, Mike joins the on-site nest count. “I find it amazing that one of the largest heron colonies on the West Coast is right here on Fidalgo Island,” he adds.

For nine years, Mike has also participated in the Skagit Heron Foraging Study, run by the Wildlife Conservation Trust in cooperation with Oregon State University’s Department of Biological and Ecological Engineering. In addition to all his heron-related efforts, Mike finds time to volunteer with the Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Deception Pass State Park, and the Anacortes Community Forest Lands.

Mike’s curiosity and dedication embody the heart of community science, which empowers community members to understand and protect local ecosystems. “By volunteering with Skagit Land Trust and other organizations, I have opportunities to both learn about and help protect our environment,” he says. “I want to help ensure that future generations have access to enjoy these natural lands.”

Skagit Land Trust’s community is fueled by volunteers like Mike who bring their knowledge, talents, and time to support local conservation. Are you interested in becoming a volunteer? You can visit our website to sign-up for a work party, or contact Stacy Dahl, our Volunteer & Education Programs Coordinator, to see how your skills can be used to further our mission of local conservation: stacyd@skagitlandtrust.org or call 360-428-7878 x212.