

Spring 2015

SKAGIT UPDATE

NEWSLETTER OF THE SKAGIT LAND TRUST

Forever Wild Illabot Creek

Largest Ranch on Illabot Creek Conserved Forever

By Jane Zillig, Land Specalist

Just east of Rockport you will find Illabot Creek, one of the most important tributaries of the Skagit River. This flourishing creek provides spawning and rearing habitat for Chinook, chum, coho and pink salmon; bulltrout and steelhead. With such a wild fish smorgasbord, it's no surprise that one of the largest bald eagle wintering areas in the lower 48 is adjacent to Illabot Creek. Because of this ecological richness, Illabot Creek has been the focus of a variety of wildlife habitat protection and restoration projects through the decades.

Recognizing the importance of this tributary, several years ago Skagit Land Trust reached out to the landowners of the largest remaining private tract in the lower Illabot watershed to propose a project that would benefit salmon habitat as well as farmland.

Ken and Velma Perrigoue bought 100 acres with a half mile of frontage on Illabot Creek in 1986. They had a history of farming and ranching and this property allowed them to continue a lifestyle they loved. Over the years, they have observed cougar, bear, bobcat, deer and coyotes on their land. Woodland Park Zoo released rehabilitated and tagged bald eagles on their property. When the Trust contacted the Perrigoues, the key was finding the right tool to both protect the land for salmon habitat conservation along with supporting their ranching lifestyle.





PHOTOS: THE OLD SAYING "SALMON SO THICK YOU CAN WALK ACROSS THE RIVER ON THEIR BACKS" STILL HOLDS TRUE FOR ILLABOT CREEK. KEN AND VELMA PERRIGOUE PICTURED ABOVE RECENTLY PLACED MORE THAN A HALF MILE OF THE RIVER AND 100 ACRES INTO PERMANENT PROTECTION WITH SKAGIT LAND TRUST.

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From the President

"The real names of the environment are the names of rivers and river valleys; creeks, ridges, and mountains; towns and cities; lakes, woodlands, lanes roads, creatures, and people." ~Wendell Berry

Dear Members,

It is an honor to write to you in the role of Skagit Land Trust Board President. It has been a humbling and deeply rewarding experience to work closely with the board and staff of this organization. They are bright, hard-working people. This year we welcome Jana Hanson to the Board of Directors. Jana is recently retired, having served as the Community & Economic Development Director for the City of Mount Vernon since 2003. She brings a depth of knowledge and energy to the board that we are fortunate to have.



At the Trust's auction this year, a wise person said "How great it is to be in a room full of people who share the same values." Our membership is broad and diverse, but we are all connected to this beautiful, dynamic river valley. We all know this environment by name. We all want clean water and clean air. We all want to know that there will be places where our children and grandchildren can experience the natural world and find their own connection to it.

Like the lands we protect for future generations, the Trust itself is a dynamic entity. This year will see new horizons for the organization. We are implementing a new Conservation Strategy that focuses on the preservation of enough land in the right places to allow our ecosystems to sustain themselves. We are completing a new Strategic Direction for the Trust that takes stock of where we have come from, confirms our core values, and sets a clear vision for our future. We see healthy landscapes, where our natural world in turn sustains and supports the health and wellbeing of our communities. This year we will also see changes in the faces of our staff, as both Martha Bray and Diane Bednarz prepare to begin their next adventures in life.

And like the lands we protect, we are a durable and resilient organization. There is strength in our diversity, and we have a clear direction and plan for the organization that allows for change, while ensuring that we are able to continue protecting those special places we know by name for many generations to come. It is exciting to be a part of such great work. I thank you for your partnership and look forward to the year ahead.

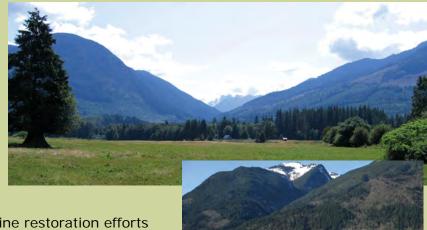
Sara Young, President - Board of Directors

The Trust proposed a voluntary conservation easement which became a win-win for both parties. When the easement was signed in December 2014, the Perrigoues extinguished their remaining development rights, ensuring the land would not be developed for home sites. Instead the

conservation easement ensures that the stream corridor, wildlife habitat and the open space are protected forever. The project also restores a 130 foot buffer along the creek. New fencing will be installed, invasive weeds will be removed and then native trees and shrubs will be planted along this beautiful and important stream.

Successful projects like this are made possible through strong partnerships. Skagit County Public

Works is heading up the stream shoreline restoration efforts and provided matching grant funds. The Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office-Salmon Recovery Funding Board and the Department of Ecology generously assisted with funding the project. The Skagit Watershed Council provided expert guidance on pulling the many pieces of this project together. "In terms of fish, there are few tributaries as important as Illabot in the Skagit watershed" says Executive Director Molly Doran. "We are grateful to the Perrigoues and our partners for working with us to find the common ground where the fish and wildlife habitat will thrive and the landowners will continue ranching."



THE PERRIGOUE RANCH IS A WORKING CATTLE RANCH. UP TO NINE DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS AND ALL SUBDIVISION POSSIBILITIES ARE NOW EXTINGUISHED, PRESERVING THE CREEK, OPEN SPACE AND RANCH. A BUFFER OF NATIVE TREES WILL BE PLANTED ALONG ILLABOT CREEK BY PARTNER SKAGIT COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS.

Hidden Lakes Update

As many of our supporters know, Skagit Land Trust and the City of Mount Vernon tried to purchase 120 acres of the Hidden Lakes property adjacent to Little Mountain Park in 2011. We were unsuccessful in that attempt and the property was recently purchased by a Bellingham-based logging company. One of Skagit Land Trust's most successful conservation methods is to acquire land from willing sellers for the purpose of permanent conservation. Thus, the Trust is again looking into the possibility of purchasing some of this property to ensure it is protected for our community. It is too early to know if this will come together. Our hope would be that the property's wetlands would eventually be added to the Mount Vernon's Little Mountain Park for recreation and as a nature preserve.

Stay tuned....

In Memory – James Clifford Squires

James Clifford Squires passed away in December 2014. James was the son of James Squires Jr., the Samish Island property owner who donated a conservation easement to the Trust in 1995. In 2004, James Clifford added more land to the easement bringing the total protected acreage to 13 acres of forest, with cedars and firs that are more than 90 years old and host numerous native species, including a large great blue heron nesting site. James grew up on Samish Island and was employed with Boeing for 50 years. He was an avid reader and would come up to the Samish Island farm every weekend. He is survived by his wife Joanne at the family home. He and his father left a lasting and important legacy of conservation on Samish Island.

Thank you Diane Bednarz and Martha Bray: Colleagues, Friends, Conservationists

By Molly Doran, Executive Director

As serendipity would have it, two of our key staff are retiring at the end of July. It is impossible to detail in this space how much they have done for the land, for our community and future generations and for the Trust. Their impact has been huge. It has been a great privilege to work with Martha and Diane.



Martha Bray started with the Skagit Land Trust in 1996 working to protect Barney Lake. In her 19-year career with the Trust, she managed to get almost all of this special wildlife sanctuary conserved in five separate and complex projects. She was also at the center of directly conserving over 6,700 acres of other threatened natural land throughout Skagit County. Imagine children in 100 years walking amongst old growth forest along the wild and scenic Skagit River as they watch kingfishers swoop down on their prey – or hikers gathering on top of Guemes Mountain to drink in one of the most expansive, natural views in Puget Sound. That is the essence of Martha's impact. She has worked diligently to make sure that we use both science and local knowledge to protect what

is needed for a sustainable, connected Skagit far into the future. One of Martha's keystone philosophies is partnership. Some of the most successful projects under her leadership have protected ecosystems across multiple ownership boundaries, helping landowners, community members, non-profits and public agencies to join a wider protection network. Few can match what Martha has done for the natural legacy of Skagit County. Because of the professionalism, passion and tenacity Martha put into her work as Conservation Director, that legacy will be here, thriving for wildlife and our community, for as far as we can see.

Diane Bednarz. The old adage is that we only get one chance to make a good first impression. Since 2004 Skagit Land Trust has been extremely fortunate to have Diane be the first impression many people have when they contact the Trust. Diane exemplifies the ethos of the Trust and has set the tone for our strong community of members, board and staff, volunteers, landowners and partners. As our Office and Publications Manager, on top of knowing who you are before you finish saying "hello", she has overseen daily membership and thank you letters, the newsletter and annual report, board support and has kept track of all our schedules and office needs. With a



background in art and graphics, we have been lucky to have Diane as our in-house designer. She has been part of the leadership team of every auction the Trust has ever run and every special event since 2004. Her work has touched every piece of mail from us to you that you have received in the past 12 years. Her knowledge of our members has meant that we have established strong relationships with many of our supporters - and Diane continues to grow those connections even as she leaves. Never one to take center stage, Diane has been standing behind all of us and all our work for more than a decade, connecting all of you with all of us in the office. As the secret ingredient in the Trust's ability to accomplish what we do, we cannot thank her enough.

Connecting Youth to Outdoor Observations and Experiences

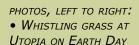
By Lisa Miller, Community Engagement Assistant

"EEEWWWW, I don't like mud," exclaimed one of the 7th grade girls in my group from Sedro-Woolley's Cascade Middle School. A group of 42 students applied to attend this April's field trip to Skagit Land Trust's Utopia Conservation Area. This nature experience included hands-on native tree and shrub planting with Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group and EarthCorps and discussions about land stewardship and how our community is helping to conserve wildlife habitat and green places across Skagit County. Over the course of an hour-and-a-half with the group, we covered the basics of planting a bare root tree, why invasive grass is harmful and why the ground was very muddy. What grabbed my attention was how confidently they answered questions about natural and connected habitats and how, in one day, they were helping improve the lives of many different animals today and for the future. These observations were coming directly from the mouths of our community's future land stewards and conservation leaders.

At 11am some were weary of touching the mud, but by 2pm some were wearing it on their arms and faces! "Some people pay money at spas to have mud on their face" I told them, as they laughed, they remarked how all of the "nutrients must be good for your skin just like it is good for the trees". It is these experiences we have on the land, and in the mud, that prepare our conservation leaders of the future. Recent grants from the Satterberg Foundation, Cascade Natural Gas, Lucky Seven Foundation and other partners are enabling the Trust to expand our youth in conservation program to further our collective impact. This past year we partnered

with several excellent youth groups and classrooms including Emerson High School, the Sedro- Woolley Boys and Girls Club,

several Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops, and Cascade Middle School. If you would like to help grow our Youth in Conservation program, contact Lisa Miller at lisam@ skagitlandtrust.org or give us a call at (360) 428-7878.



- CASCADE MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS WERE HAPPY TO HELP PLANT TREES.
- TOP LEFT THE SEDRO-WOOLLEY BOYS & GIRLS CLUB WERE A HUGE HELP PULLING IVY AND PLANTING TREES.
- Emerson High School students work with us regularly. Here they help land Steward Dick Raisler with planting.



Welcome Jana Hanson to the Board



Jana Hanson joined the Trust's Board of Directors in April 2015. Jana recently retired after 11 years as the Community & Economic Development Director for the City of Mount Vernon. During her time with the City of Mount Vernon, Jana was instrumental in efforts to transform Mount Vernon's historic downtown with

a flood protection project and waterfront revitalization plan. She developed a community marketing campaign; initiated the Skagit Innovation Partnership Zone for Value Added Agriculture and worked with others in the county to strengthen the region's economy. Also under Jana's direction, the city adopted a model ordinance with broad community support to protect critical areas. Jana shares "I chose to live in Skagit because of its amazing natural beauty and agricultural landscape, so it is a great privilege to be part of a strong and effective land trust whose mission it is to conserve these precious resources for today and tomorrow. Skagit Land Trust is comprised of people with the passion to protect Skagit's extraordinary resources and equipped with the knowledge and expertise to be effective stewards. I look forward being part of the solution to conserving Skagit's resources and raising awareness about the public benefits of conservation."

Shop and Support Youth in Conservation

Shop at the Skagit
Valley Food Co-op on
Friday, July 24 and 4%
of the day's proceeds
will benefit Skagit Land
Trust's Engaging Youth in
Conservation Program!
Funds will enable local
students and youth
groups to participate in
conservation leadership
activities such as tree
planting and nature walks
at Conservation Areas
near our communities.



Annual Auction & Dinner a Success

Thank you to the 250 guests who attended our Have Fun, Save Land Auction & Dinner on



March 7th and generously helped us raise over \$100,000 for local land conservation! We extend our sincere gratitude to all of the people and businesses who gave their time, talent

and treasure to make this event a great success. Save the date for the Trust's 10th Annual Auction on Saturday, March 5 2016 at the St Joseph Center in Mount Vernon.



Jumbled Pie started the auction off with a "twang".

Join Us! Annual Picnic on August 8th at Elysium near Birdsview

Skagit Land Trust's Annual Members & Volunteers Picnic will be held on Saturday, August 8 from 11am - 2pm at the Elysium Conservation Easement near Birdsview. The picnic is our thank you to supporters who make local land conservation and stewardship possible. We will explore this beautiful property's farmland, forest, and 1 mile of Skagit River shoreline and hear stories from the dedicated landowners. The Trust will provides the main dish and members with last name A – J are encouraged to bring a dessert and K – Z a side dish to share. Visit skagitlandtrust.org for more information.



Leave it to Nature, Forever

Learn how an estate gift
can preserve Skagit's
wildlife habitat and green places
for generations to come. View Skagit
Land Trust's Guide to Planned Giving
at skagitlandtrust.org or
contact Executive Director
Molly Doran at (360) 428-7878
or mollyd@skagitlandtrust.org
for information on ways
you can leave a legacy gift.



Wildlife Habitat Restoration Honors Community Leader & Conservationist Ric Boge

Skagit Land Trust connects our community with the protection and stewardship of the natural environment. There has not been a better example of this than working with Ric Boge's family and friends to restore wildlife habitat at our Green Road Marsh Conservation Area. More than 100 people participated in events to honor and remember Ric's contribution to the Skagit. This enthusiastic crew installed more than 1,600 native trees and shrubs as

well as bird and bat houses to transform this wetland for wildlife. It was a gift to all of us that Ric was able to participate in a planting this past fall.



PHOTOS: TEAM RIC WORKED

THROUGH RAIN BLOWING

SIDEWAYS, POTS FULL OF ICE, AND
BEAUTIFUL DAYS IN FRIENDSHIP
AND COLLABORATION, TO CREATE A
LIVING LEGACY IN
RIC BOGE'S HONOR.

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In honor of Joan L Baker Dr John & Judge Joan Baker

In memory of Ric Boge

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In memory of Sophie Braaten Anne Braaten

In honor of Inspiring Hero Martha Bray Barbara Francis

In memory of Bruce Laura Saunders

In memory of George Bucher Nadene Frazier - Westphall

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In honor of Kelly Bush's retirement Pat Milliren

In memory of **Harold Christenson** Karen & Doug Radcliffe

In honor of Frieda Cohan's graduation

Jay Smith & Susan Wood

In memory of Jan Conklin Charles Stavig

In memory of Thomas F. Corrigan MD Barbara Corrigan

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In memory of Fran Ford Jim Ford

In memory of Roslyn Glasser Mary Pease

In honor of Louise Line Grout Bobbi Krebs-McMullen

In honor & memory of Ralph Heft

Lisa Nissley

In honor of John & Linda Hunt

James Hunt Martha Wilson Carrie Zeriav & Nathan Moore

In honor of Marcia Hunt & Steve Hulsey

James Hunt Martha Wilson Carrie Zerjav & Nathan Moore

In honor of Roger Kinney Judy Fisher

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Ingrid & Bruce McBane Louise Harris

In honor of grandchildren Marisol and Azuul Richard Bergner

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In memory of Todd Wilbur Alix Foster & Rick Shorten

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In memory of Annie Zillig Douglas & Lani Haag

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Jean Heflin

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were received between April 1, 2014 - March 31, 2015

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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.

SAVING LAND FOR TOMORROW

Upcoming Events

ACFL Geology Walk – July date TBD

Friday, July 24th

4% Friday at Skagit Valley Coop

Saturday, August 8th

Annual Picnic at Elysium Conservation Easement, Birdsview

Thursday, November 12th - Conservation Social at MoNA, La Conner

Visit skagitlandtrust.org to view events calendar



PHOTO: WORKING TO PROTECT THE SENSITIVE WILDFLOWERS ON GUEMES MOUNTAIN MEANT SOME HEAVY LIFTING OF "PERFECT" LOGS TO CREATE A PROTECTIVE BUFFER... AND A PLACE TO SIT TO TAKE IN THE VIEW.