

THE UNDERSTORY

Newsletter for Skagit Land Trust Volunteer Land Stewards

Winter / Spring 2018

Safety First by Regina Wandler, Stewardship Manager

Safety is a high priority here at the Trust, particularly for those of us heading out to conduct field visits. Trust staff have many procedures we try to follow to reduce risks associated with working outdoors in natural areas, but we are always looking for ways to improve and to create a true culture of safety for both staff and volunteers. Please remember to adopt a safety first outlook by taking the following precautions:

- ◆ Make sure you are prepared for a change in weather – bring appropriate clothing and footwear.
- ◆ Carry a cell phone.
- ◆ If you'll be bushwhacking, wear eye protection.
- ◆ If you'll be doing more than a quick sweep of the parking/access area, carry the 10 essentials with you on your site visits (Washington Trails Association has a good list to refer to!)
- ◆ Invite a trusty field buddy to join you – remember Land Steward Aides have filled out all the paperwork!
 - ◇ If going alone be sure someone (at home or our office) knows when to expect you back from the field.
 - ◇ If you ever have questions about safety or need someone to join you in the field, give us a call!
- ◆ Leave **any situation that feels unsafe** – we can always schedule a follow up visit if needed.

Field Safety Training Opportunities

We are happy to announce that a grant from Puget Sound Energy will help us achieve some of our safety goals this year. PSE generously donated funding to help staff and volunteers attend Wilderness First Aid (WFA) trainings. I attended a WFA training in October, and learned a great deal about how to handle emergencies in remote natural areas. Though I hope I never have to use most of what I learned, I was glad for the opportunity to hone my skills!

We are able to offer scholarships to help cover the cost for four Land Stewards to attend a WFA training this year. Classes are typically about \$250, but you would only pay half the cost (so about \$125). Please contact me if you would like to take advantage of this scholarship opportunity!

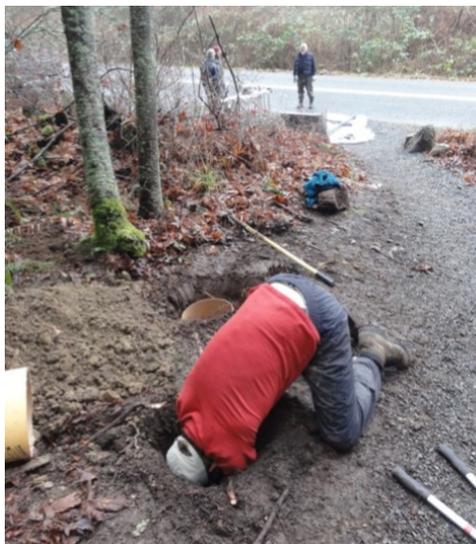
There are WFA trainings scheduled through the spring in nearby locations, including one in **Conway on May 5-6.**

[Can you identify field safety procedures in this picture?](#)

Field Buddy? Check

Tools in a safe place? Check

Eye protection???



In This Issue

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Land Stewards have volunteered over **520 hours** in 2017! Thank you for all you do to keep Skagit special.


SKAGIT LAND TRUST
Saving Land for Tomorrow

Reminder about Land Steward Aides

by Lisa Miller, Outreach Programs Coordinator

As you may recall, we introduced this additional volunteer position last January, it has been off to a great start. These volunteers are available to join Land Stewards and staff to visit properties for an extra set of hands or if a property is remote and a field partner is needed – always a good idea.

A Land Steward Aide is a volunteer that is not committed to a single property. Land Steward Aides will gain more knowledge about properties than volunteers that join for one-time stewardship events. With this experience, Aides may wish to become Land Stewards of an assigned property when an appropriate location becomes available. Current Land Stewards may contact Aides directly or the office if you need more information. Be sure to look for updated contact info with your next Monitoring Report reminder.

If you know of anyone interested in becoming a Volunteer Land Steward Aide please contact Lisa.



Land Steward Jim Fukuyama passing off the keys to Land Steward Aide Bengt Miller

Transitions by Hannah Williams, Conservation Assistant



On July 16th, my position with Skagit Land Trust changed from AmeriCorps Volunteer to Conservation Assistant and official staff member. Along with the new title, my focus has shifted from youth and volunteer outreach, to stewardship and land acquisition. As a Conservation Assistant, I help the land department with our continuous stream of projects, assisting with project development and file management. My position allows me to see a property from start to never ending finish. I help bridge the land and stewardship departments, creating an efficient transition from acquisition to management.

In the stewardship department, I focus on conservation area stewardship, meaning I help ensure that all 38 of our fee owned properties are monitored and cared for. I do this by coordinating with Volunteer Land Stewards to make sure we complete regular monitoring visits and have reports on file. If I can't join you on the ground, your detailed reports tell me where on the property you went, track observations you made, and help paint a picture of your visit. This helps track site changes and property needs over time. I like to think of monitoring reports as writing a lab experiment report. In a lab experiment you write the report as if someone was going to repeat the exact experiment and the same is true for monitoring reports. I also help with many other stewardship tasks, and have helped write management plans for several of the nine properties transferred over from TNC this year.

I wish I could join you all on every visit, but unfortunately there is never enough time. My goal for 2018 is to visit every property at least once and I hope to visit them with you! Thank you all for your hard work and dedication to the Trust and to caring for these amazing natural spaces!

New Volunteer Land Stewards* & Land Steward Aides

Bengt Miller; Day Creek Kosbab Conservation Area

Many know Bengt already as he is a vital partner at Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group and has been helping as a Land Steward Aide this year. We are happy to announce he has become an official Steward of Day Creek Kosbab.

Jim Fukuyama has transitioned from many years at Day Creek Kosbab to a new property in Hamilton known as **Muddy Creek Conservation Area**. Jim has done a wonderful job keeping track of the ever changing lands at Day Creek Kosbab, Thank you!

Tara McGowan & Kevin Crozier; Upper Skagit 1 Conservation Area

Tara and Kevin have been in Rockport since 2008 and became fulltime residents at their farm in 2013. Busy planting trees, raising a few animals and enjoying a rural life, they are now happy new stewards of Upper Skagit 1 – an opportunity for them to care for a mature forest while their own trees grow.

John Freeman is officially passing the torch to Kirsten and Tim Colton to look over his cherished Grandy Creek. John has been a wonderful steward since 2003 and is looking forward to his next adventure. Thank you for all the years of dedication John, and remember, you're always invited to the picnics!

Kirsten & Tim Colton; Grandy Creek Conservation Area

Welcomed to the team last January, Kirsten and Tim have been helping out at Grandy during this past year and will begin the transition process to steward Grandy Creek. The Colton's live in the nearby town of Birdsvie and enjoy spending much of their time outdoors.

Dennis Stanchfield; Hurn Field Conservation Area

Dennis is joining Lin and Stef at Hurn Field near Concrete. Dennis' additional support at the growing property is greatly appreciated and much needed. If you haven't been by in a while be sure to check out the improving conditions of the field as well as the upland forest along the Cascade Trail.

Please welcome new Volunteer Land Steward Aide Pete Delachapelle

Pete lives on the lower Sauk River. After working most of his career under fluorescent lights in an office cubicle, he is enjoying working under the open skies of the Skagit watershed. Pete believes the two most important steps needed to improve/maintain the watershed are first, buy sensitive riparian areas to keep them in a wild state, and second, control invasive species. Pete believes that the Skagit Land Trust does both of these well and is a welcome addition to contribute to the good work.

***Correction from Previous newsletter: Lynne Jordan and Dennis Clark** have been volunteer Land Stewards at the Fidalgo Bay Carstens property since early 2017! Thank you Lynne and Dennis for working on all that ivy!

Land Stewards and their Conservation Areas

- ~ **Barney Lake** - Brenda Cunningham, Tim Manns, & Janet Cray ~ **Barr Creek** - Russ Dalton ~
- ~ **Big Lake Wetlands** - Heidi & Matt Hixson ~~~ **Butler Creek** - Jim Owens ~
- ~ **Cumberland Creek** - Jim Johnson ~ **Day Creek Berquist & Day Creek Forest** - Stan Zyskowski ~
- ~ **Day Creek Kosbab** - Bengt Miller ~~~ **Day Creek Slough** - Hal Lee ~
- ~ **Fidalgo Bay Carstens** - Lynne Jordan & Dennis Clark ~
- ~ **Grandy Creek** - Kirsten & Tim Colton ~~~ **Green Road Marsh** - Heidi Nichols ~
- ~ **Guemes Mountain** - Carolyn & Ed Gastellum, Ian Woofenden & Kit Harma ~
- ~ **Hurn Field** - Steffany Raynes, Lin Skavdahl & Dennis Stanchfield ~
- ~ **Lyman Slough** - Richard Raisler ~ **March Point** - LaVerne & Jim Scheltens ~~~ **Minkler Lake** - Hal Lee
- ~~ **Mud Lake** - Mike Olson ~ **Muddy Creek** - Jim Fukuyama ~ **Pressentin Ranch** - Ranae & Jim Watson
- ~ **Samish Ochs** - Pete Haase ~ **Cascade River South 1 & 2** - Bob Boudinot ~
- ~ **Suiattle River** - Phil Kincare ~ **Sumner Lake** - Tami Thomas & Tom Mayes ~
- ~ **TNC Preserves Dupuis & Rankin** - Phil Kincare ~
- ~ **Tope Ryan** - John Day ~~~ **Upper Skagit 1** - Tara McGowan & Kevin Crozier ~ **Utopia** - Kinsey Shilling

Land Steward biographies can be found at www.skagitlandtrust.org click About Us



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PLACE
STAMP
HERE

Upcoming Stewardship Events

1st Saturday & 3rd Friday of every month

- **1st Saturday Stewardship - Hurn Field - Jan 6**
- **3rd Friday Stewardship - Minkler Lake - Jan 19**
- **1st Sat Stewardship - Skagit River Kahn - Feb 3**
- **3rd Sat Stewardship - Anacortes Graber - Feb 16**

Please join us, and visit a new property!

Updated conservation statistics Achieved with your support!

Acres Protected

Conservation Easements (36): 3,629 acres
Trust-Owned Lands (40): 2,933 acres
Trust-Assisted Projects (37): 1,555 acres
TOTAL acres protected: 8,117

Conservation Values Protected

Forested Habitat: 5,655 acres
Agricultural Lands: 815 acres
Lakes and Wetlands: 842 acres
Intertidal Habitat: 541 ft.
River Shoreline: 23.5 miles
Saltwater Shoreline: 14,320 ft.

Thank you!

Land Steward Check-In Results

Thank you everyone for taking time to meet and talk with Lisa about your volunteer experience in our efforts to evaluate the program. Your comments and feedback were very helpful and will be taken into consideration as we plan for 2018 and beyond.

Many of you are interested in more training opportunities. We will be sure to share information as we find it or plan some small group workshops. The top choices are plant ID (specifically invasives) and GPS units.

If you find opportunities you'd like to share with the group please do! Also, if you have any referrals, we are looking to recruit more Stewards.

Please contact Lisa for materials to distribute!

Don't forget, your Quarterly Monitoring Reports are now sent to Hannah "

*Due Dates; March 31 ~ June 30 ~ September 30
~ December 31*