



# SKAGIT LAND TRUST

## 2010 ANNUAL REPORT



### **MISSION STATEMENT:**

*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.*

ON THE COVER: (TOP) GUEMES MOUNTAIN, BRENDA CUNNINGHAM, (BOTTOM LEFT) GUEMES PICNIC, CHRISTINE KITCH. BACK COVER: NICOLS BAR, OUR NEWEST COUNTY PARK.

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

April 1, 2009 - March 31, 2010

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**Janice Martin**, *Secretary*  
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### **STAFF**

**Molly Doran**  
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*Conservation Director*

**Michael Kirshenbaum**  
*Stewardship Director*

**Jane Zillig**  
*Land Specialist*

**Renata Hoyle Maybruck**  
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**Diane Bednarz**  
*Administrative Assistant*

**Sue Edelberg & Ellie Rogers**  
*Volunteer Coordinator*  
Americorp

### **GENERAL COUNCIL**

**Bradford E. Furlong, P.S.**

*Managing Editor: Diane Bednarz*  
*Editor: Molly Doran*



# FROM THE PRESIDENT & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Dear Members and Partners,

This report captures a year of working together to save land for tomorrow.

Despite the financial challenges that we



had to grapple with, 2009-10 was one of the most remarkable years in our history. Staff, board and volunteers were resourceful, ingenious and generous in responding to difficulties and challenges. Our members and conservation partners stretched to help us and to help the land. You kept us strong and allowed us to meet our goals. Because of this, we gained more members, raised more funds for land conservation, had more volunteers helping us

and engaged with a wider breadth of our community than ever before. Thank you for your confidence in us and belief that we need to continue to conserve land, despite hard times.

The remarkable part is what we did together, in the depths of a recession. We worked with the community and the San Juan Preservation Trust to successfully raise over \$2 million and protect the summit of Guemes Mountain, the jewel at the center of almost 600 acres of conserved public and private land. We then secured a future forest trail to the summit through an easement with a generous neighbor. We purchased over one third of a mile of shoreline salmon habitat plus gravel bars along the Skagit River that had unfortunately become a dumping ground, cleaned it up and created Skagit County's newest park near Lyman. Working with a science-focused team under the umbrella of the Skagit Watershed Council, we negotiated future purchases of several more miles of critical Chinook salmon habitat along the Skagit's Wild and Scenic River corridor - the most important river for salmon in all of Puget Sound. With Friends of the Forest

and the City of Anacortes, we completed what we set out to do in 1999; we now have permanent protection on 1680 acres in the Anacortes Community Forest Lands. Through far-sighted landowner donations, we permanently protected wildlife habitat on the Samish River, Thomas Creek and on the well-known rocky face of Mt Erie. And our dedicated volunteers worked with us to take loving care of all the conservation areas we oversee, their eyes and stories of the land bringing us all in touch with why we do this work.

This annual report is a tribute to what we - as collective members, staff, board, volunteers and partners of Skagit Land Trust - can do despite difficult times. I hope you are as inspired as we are by what we've accomplished together. Thank you so much for your help and support.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Molly Doran".

Molly Doran, Executive Director

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rusty Kuntze".

Rusty Kuntze, President

# LAND CONSERVATION



Skagit Land Trust board member Bob Boudinot strolls along a side channel of the Skagit River that is part of Nichols Bar, a new 33-acre County Park. This new park is the result of a partnership between Skagit Land Trust and Skagit County, with funding assistance from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board and Skagit Watershed Council. Located just west of Lyman, this new park will ensure important existing salmon habitat is not further degraded and provide non-motorized river access to our community.

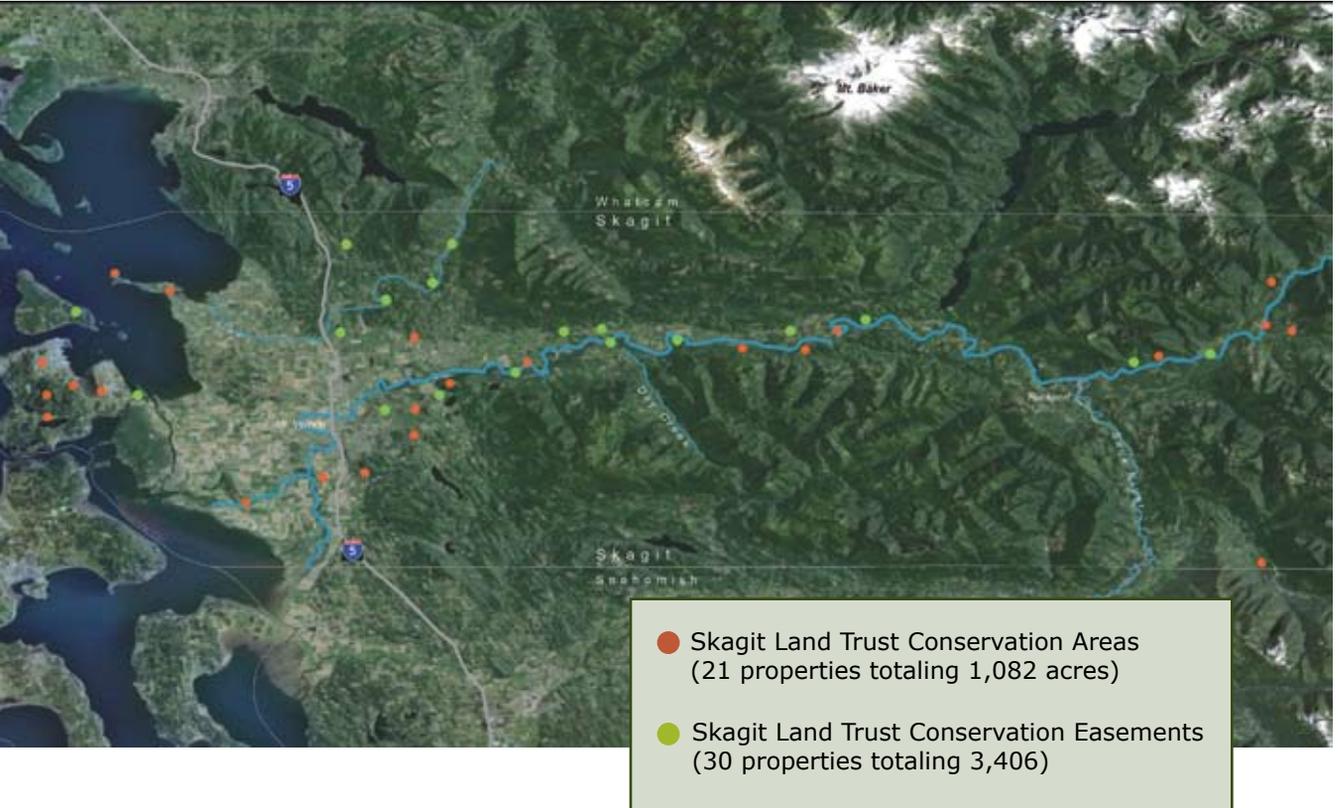


Our wetland complex known as Green Road Marsh Conservation Area grew by two more acres thanks to the charitable donation of land by Mildred Callahan. A total of 44 acres is now preserved and managed by Skagit Land Trust. Visitors to this area will find bald eagle nests nearby and an area that is heavily used by waterfowl and raptors.

After an astounding community fund-raising campaign that raised over \$2,000,000 to purchase Guemes Mountain, support for this project continues. Joost Businger donated a small inholding on the summit to complete the protection. A neighboring landowner generously donated an easement through her land to provide a foot trail for folks to access the top of Guemes Mountain from South Shore Road. Trail building will begin in the fall of 2010.



ABOVE PHOTO, FAR LEFT: Michael Kirshenbaum and Molly Doran with son Zerihun, lead a tour with supporters Alba Stevens and Tamara Stevens, RIGHT.



Salmon and other riparian dependent species in the Upper Samish River will benefit from the Ochs family's generous donation of 28 acres of land. This donated property includes both sides of the Samish River and is within the "Cascades to Chuckanut" corridor. LEFT: Stan Zyskowski helps make a management plan for the property.



Eleven years ago, the City of Anacortes and Skagit Land Trust joined together to protect forestland within Anacortes' city limits. This year, the program met its goal ahead of schedule when the 25th conservation easement was recorded. A total of 1680 acres is now preserved. Spend an afternoon visiting this beautiful oasis of lakes, wetlands, forests and rocky balds. This is truly a Skagit gem.

# STEWARDSHIP



Forging ahead: In collaboration with the National Park Service, youth from an Alternative Spring Break program lent a hand in the construction of the new Hegg-Benson Trail at our Barr Creek Conservation Area. In the last year, land steward Russ Dalton and Skagit Land Trust stewardship staff hosted several work parties to begin building a trail through the lush forest near Rockport. Thanks to dedicated volunteers, the trail will be finished soon.



Putting down roots: By partnering with local organizations, Skagit Land Trust is able to restore the crucial habitat we conserve through large-scale tree plantings. Volunteers and staff planted over 1000 new trees this year, and revisited previous plantings to ensure survival of young trees.

FAR LEFT: Lester Bradford & Ellie Rogers. LEFT: Hella & Hal Lee. BELOW: Happy tree protector removal team at Hurn Field have removed over 4,000 protectors.



THANK YOU TO OUR MANY DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS



Showing and telling: The Trust designed and installed five interpretive signs for visitors to peruse as they enjoy walking, birding, or stopping at our conservation areas. FAR LEFT: Brenda Cunningham & Tim Manns were instrumental in these projects.

Getting our ducks in a row: Our volunteers have put up over 16 wood duck boxes on five Skagit Land Trust properties. Carolyn Gastellum is shown below with one of three new boxes at the Hurn Field slough. LEFT: In 2009, volunteers bundled up for an annual survey of over 400 Great Blue Heron nests at the March Point Conservation Area and at a conservation easement on Samish Island.



Leading the way: Skagit Land Trust has a committed crew of Land Stewards in which volunteers each take on a conservation area to monitor and maintain. All of our stewardship efforts work toward enhancing the legacy of conserved lands for generations to come. RIGHT: Guemes Mountain Land Stewards, Joost Businger, Marianne Kooiman, Carolyn & Ed Gastellum.

PHOTO (RIGHT): HOLIDAY MATCHETT



# OUTREACH



Skagit Land Trust and community members collaborated to put up a live heron cam at the March Point Heron Colony on Padilla Bay. Streaming video of the nests is available online and at the Padilla Bay Interpretive Center, allowing all of us a chance to peek into the lives of the great blue herons in their rookery. Visit our website at [www.skagitlandtrust.org](http://www.skagitlandtrust.org) to see webcam images.

NEST PHOTO LEFT: THOMAS OTTO

Young and old alike enjoy experiencing our conservation areas, whether it be for birding, exploring, or quiet reflection. Our knowledgeable members and friends help us partner with local high schools to grow compassion for conservation through discovery.



Skagit Land Trust teamed up with the environmental science class at Emerson High School to create a place based experiential learning program, focusing on building a relationship between these youth and our local lands. The students became junior stewards of Cumberland Creek Conservation Area, visiting the property 18 times, and helping with general stewardship and also developing an interpretive trail for the community. Student Shae Quigley and teacher Kyle Fagan are pictured here presenting wood duck boxes they crafted and donated to the Trust, which were later installed at Hurn Field slough.



Skagit Land Trust's board and staff made an impressive showing at the 2009 national Land Trust Alliance Rally in Portland, as 14 representatives from the Trust attended. We were formally congratulated by the national Land Trust Accreditation Commission for being awarded accredited status in 2009. We also gave a presentation on our book *Natural Skagit*.

This year we hosted a number of fundraising events, hoping to exchange an evening of food and fun for donations to this great cause. From our annual auction to garden dinner events, we raised money for our beloved lands and gave members and friends a chance to reconnect with each other and our organization.



**1014**

*Family & business memberships*

**5695**

*Total acres protected*

**28**

*Total miles of shoreline protected by Skagit Land Trust*

**220**

*Volunteers who played a significant role this year*



NICHOLS BAR

Who calls this valley home?—  
but just one plea:

Orient me.

Teach me the language  
of this place.

My tongue trips over words I've never  
heard before:  
Skagit, Sauk, Swinomish,  
Guemes, Padilla, madrone.

Teach me how the seasons  
swell across this land.

My eyes scan for the only winter I know:  
bare boughs or blizzards,  
but here, only evergreens.

Teach me your stories  
so I know how you write your lives  
into the daily rains and crumbling canneries,  
the lore that is yours  
that roots you here.

I listen for my story in yours.  
Who is serving who?

You have answers.  
You give them to me—  
the names of trees,  
and which way is west.  
Pack a parka every day,  
you say.

We are glad you are here.

**DISORIENTATION**

*BY ELLIE ROGERS, SKAGIT LAND TRUST  
VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR - AMERICORP*

I have more to learn than to give.  
(At least on this first walk in the woods  
my first week west.)

You say you'll show me the lay of the land,  
so I know where I'm working,  
what I'm working for,  
this year.

I have too many questions—  
Which mountain is that?  
When will we see sun again?

*Ellie Rogers, Skagit Land Trust's Americorp Volunteer Coordinator, hails from Twin Cities, MN. She wrote this poem after her first outing with volunteers here in the Skagit. The poem was selected as a award winner in the NW Service Symposium.*

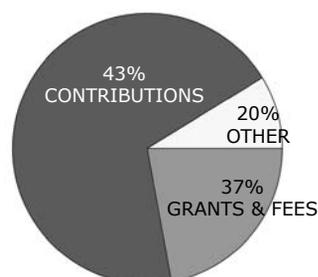
# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2010 (REVIEWED) AND 2009 (AUDITED)

## STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	2010	2009
Cash	289,463	221,188
Pledges, receivables, other	62,966	413,855
Investments (for land & stewardship projects)	1,152,771	990,657
Conservation Land	3,819,834	3,030,845
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>5,325,034</b>	<b>4,656,545</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>	<b>24,738</b>	<b>19,040</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>5,300,296</b>	<b>4,637,505</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>5,325,034</b>	<b>4,656,545</b>

## REVENUE



## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

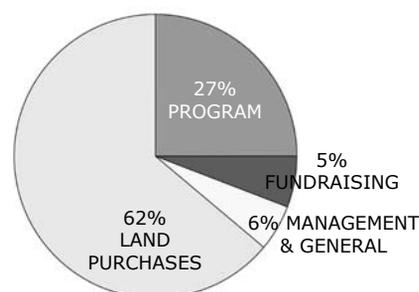
### PUBLIC SUPPORT & OTHER REVENUE

Contributions (cash and in-kind) - unrestricted	185,728	144,739
Contributions - restricted for special projects	293,259	476,448
Grant and fee income	409,923	839,486
Investment Income & interest	172,170	(197,153)
Special events (net)	38,694	31,700
Book sales & other income	17,770	76,113
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>1,117,544</b>	<b>1,371,333</b>

### EXPENSES

Conservation easement purchases	0	403,000
Land & stewardship programs	317,255	387,575
Management, fundraising & general	137,496	130,132
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>454,751</b>	<b>920,707</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>662,793</b>	<b>450,626</b>

## EXPENSES



### CAPITAL PURCHASES

<b>Conservation Land</b>	<b>728,989</b>	<b>487,229</b>
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These abbreviated financial statements for 2010 are derived from the independent auditor's review submitted to the board of trustees by Jones & Associates LLC, CPAs presenting the financial position of Skagit Land Trust as of March 31, 2010.

## FINANCIAL NOTES

- Guemes Mountain's appraised value was \$2,000,000 (appraisal update, August 17 2009). Over 600 contributions were made to purchase the property. On October 1 2009, Skagit Land Trust paid \$728,989 for the property (includes closing and transaction costs). The San Juan Preservation Trust (SJPT) paid \$1,300,000 for the conservation easement which restricts the property's use to a nature preserve. Skagit Land Trust owns and manages the property as the Guemes Mountain Conservation Area. The conservation easement is held by SJPT.
- On October 1 2009 Joost Businger donated a summit in-holding on Guemes Mountain to Skagit Land Trust. This parcel was then included in the conservation easement.
- Skagit Land Trust holds a restricted Guemes Mountain Stewardship Fund. On 3-31-10 the fund's balance was \$162,000. \$50,000 of this will be used for immediate project needs such as trail and parking installation. The remainder, and funds added in subsequent years, will act as a reserve, with principle generating annual earnings for on-going stewardship and maintenance of the preserve.
- Skagit Land Trust received a grant from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board to conserve a 33-acre property on the Skagit River at Robinson Road. The purchase price was \$123,367. Grant funding of \$18,000 was also awarded to clean up debris on the property and install a gate and parking area. Skagit County agreed to own the property and manage it as a county park. There is a deed restriction on the property.
- Skagit Land Trust accepted three donated properties and one donated conservation easement during the fiscal year. The donated properties will be managed as conservation areas.



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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Permit No. 195

## SAVING LAND FOR TOMORROW

