



## Coming Home to Diobsud: Salmon Lead, Wildlife Follow

A few miles northeast of Marblemount is Diobsud Creek (deye-AWB-suhd), a small but important tributary to the Skagit River. Diobsud's headwaters emanate in the glaciated peaks and alpine lakes of the federally-designated Noisy-Diobsud Wilderness

before flowing downhill about 10 miles, making a brief appearance on the valley bottom, and then joining the Skagit. This relatively short waterway is home to many a conservation success, thanks to the partnership of private landowners, public agencies and the ongoing support of Skagit Land Trust's members.

Home to spawning grounds for the mighty chinook (king) salmon, as well as steelhead, chum, and numerous other important aquatic species, Diobsud Creek has long been a target for conservation efforts. Beginning with a project in 1997, Skagit Land Trust (the Trust) helped private landowners Linden Jordan and Mary Kay Barbieri protect 11 acres in the Diobsud watershed through a conservation easement. In 2002, the Trust assisted the U.S. Forest Service in protecting nearly 40 acres along Diobsud Creek. Last year, the Trust acquired 25 acres of beautiful mature forest along the creek with assistance from you, our members, the Washington State Salmon Recovery Funding Board, and Seattle City Light. Two more fish-related projects are in the works. As a result, Diobsud Creek now has one of the most protected watersheds in the Skagit.

This area not only hosts protected salmon runs; the wolves have returned as well! A pair of breeding wolves, named the "Diobsud Pack," have established their range in this small valley. The first wolf pack in Western Washington in



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## Message From the Board President

Dear Members and Partners,

Hello and a warm welcome to the Skagit Land Trust's summer newsletter. This spring marked my third full year on the Land Trust Board. It has been a learning, growing and eventful experience! It's an honor to work with such a knowledgeable board, competent staff, and dedicated volunteers on the important work of protecting and stewarding wild places throughout Skagit County.

I arrived on the board shortly after major land acquisitions on Guemes mountain. During my short time on the board we as an organization have managed to protect Kelly's Point on Guemes Island and the Samish Flower Farm property on Samish Island. Both of these acquisition campaigns required a lot of coordinated effort by staff, volunteers and community members. They were both large projects that made staff dig deep to come up with solutions for complicated land issues and, thanks to a lot of community, member, and volunteer help, we were ultimately very successful.

Also during this time, we concluded a major transfer of properties from The Nature Conservancy to Skagit Land Trust. We will steward these important properties in the upper area of the Skagit River basin in perpetuity. The fact that this transfer occurred speaks to the respect and trust our organization receives on the state and national conservation scene.

It has been an eventful three years and I can see as new properties present themselves that much more is on the horizon. We're currently involved in looking over our strategic direction for the next five to ten years.

Throughout my time on the board, I have grown to understand that acquiring property into the Trust is crucial to preserving it - but that's only half the battle. We as an organization need to steward these properties, and not just for a few years, but for a very long time. This effort first requires planning. But ultimately what is needed are the resources of time on the ground and funding to make sure that we are good stewards. And again, not just for a few years, but for a very long time.

Many important opportunities to acquire and protect lands and habitats present themselves to the Trust. My goal as a board member - as I suspect is yours as well as you read this - is to work to make sure the Skagit Land Trust is in a position to take on as many of these opportunities as we responsibly can. Thank you for your financial support and active interest in the Skagit Land Trust!

- Jim Glackin, Skagit Land Trust Board President



### Thank you Jen

This spring, board member Jen Sevigny stepped down to focus on her work as a wildlife biologist with the Stillaguamish Tribe. Luckily the Trust will continue to work with Jen on our Upper Skagit River wildlife projects. Thank you Jen, for your dedication to the Trust.

nearly a century has joined the chinook in calling Diobsud home. This news is an endorsement for the establishment of wildlife corridors as a benefit to multiple species. It turns out that what's good for the salmon is good for wolves as well.

Look no further than the recently protected Hidden Valley Ranch conservation easement on the Sauk River (see below) for more evidence of salmon leading the way. 18-acres of this beautiful property have been protected by the Trust with cooperation from the landowners, weaving together open space, agricultural land and a wide, natural buffer along the Sauk River. This property was protected primarily for salmon habitat, but wildlife cameras on the property have also captured pictures of the endangered fisher – recently part of a re-introduction program – and mountain cougar.

From the mighty Sauk and Skagit rivers, to the countless small tributaries like Diobsud, these critical stream and river corridors could have been further developed and degraded. Instead, they are protected forever and restored, but only because Trust members continue to support our day-to-day work of knitting landscapes back together. Your support allows us to pursue grants, work with partners, and implement the Trust's Conservation Strategy to save land for future generations.

We're lucky to live in a state where our members' support can open the door to grants and other funding opportunities to make even a small creek like Diobsud have a big impact. Without the ongoing and consistent support of land trust members, donors, and volunteers, the Trust wouldn't be in the position to take advantage of opportunities to save the best of the Skagit. As the dramatic successes at Diobsud Creek show, what starts as one small project can turn into a large conserved and functioning landscape. Just ask the salmon, and the wildlife that follow them.

### **Landowners Seek the 'Better Angels of Nature' to Protect Their Property**

Last month, Skagit Land Trust worked with landowners Pete Delachapelle and Claudia Maple to forever protect almost 20 acres of salmon habitat and open space on the Sauk River between Rockport and Darrington. Below is a letter they wrote about their new conservation easement on what is known as Hidden Valley Ranch:



Claudia Maple on her farm

*"We love our property. We wanted to protect the farm and wild aspects of the property. We realized that good intentions might not be good enough protection over time and ownership changes. We needed to listen to the better angels of our nature now, and lock in land use protections for the future.*

*A conservation easement with Skagit Land Trust was a great mechanism for providing lasting protection. The people of the Trust are professional, smart, kind, and also really cool. In Skagit Valley, they are the better angels of our nature.*

*A previous owner of our property came by one day. He was living in an old folks home and a caretaker had taken him out for a birthday drive. As Claudia was showing him around, he got choked up and tearful. He was very grateful and very happy that his farm was still intact and making a comeback. He was moved to tears.*

*Now it's our turn to get a little choked up. We probably won't get the opportunity to come back to check up on things after the next generation has taken over. But we won't need to. Thanks Skagit Land Trust"*

-Pete Delachapelle & Claudia Maple



Above: Pete Delachapelle Left: The endangered fisher walking from the farm to the Sauk River shoreline which is protected by the Trust.

## Thank you for all the ways you support land conservation here in the Skagit!



As a member of Skagit Land Trust you are protecting local waters, forests, and the wildlife that depend on these places for survival.

When you volunteer at a Trust event, shop at a business that supports the Trust, and share our posts online, you are spreading the word about the great work we are doing together.

Donations also come to the Trust in a variety of forms and we are grateful for each of them. **If you are curious about the different ways to give, please contact Martha at 360-428-7878 or [marthaf@skagitlandtrust.org](mailto:marthaf@skagitlandtrust.org).**



### Make a QCD from your IRA

If you are 70 1/2, you can make a **qualified charitable distribution from your IRA account** directly to the Trust without that gift counting as "income". Studies show that gifting directly from your IRA is one of the most tax beneficial ways of giving to charity. While donations can't be claimed as a charitable deduction, donors can realize substantial benefits by reducing their taxable income.



### Donate Stocks or Securities

Donating stocks, bonds, and mutual funds can be an easy way to give to the Trust. If itemizing, you'll generally take a tax deduction for their full fair market value. In 2019, donating appreciated stocks, bonds, or other assets instead of cash still avoids all capital gains taxes regardless of whether or not a donor itemizes their taxes. Please contact the Trust for forms you can give your broker.



### Maximize your Membership Impact – as a Skagit Sustainer

**Skagit Sustainers give automatic monthly or quarterly donations**, rather than making one annual membership contribution. This minimizes our mailing costs and paper use, which allows us to do even more with your dollar. Knowing a steady source of revenue will be coming in helps us stretch. We can put a down payment on a property, double our field trips with schools, or increase the stewardship projects we take on in the next year.

Being a Skagit Sustainer can be easier on your budget, and you don't have to wonder if your membership is current- it always is! Your automatic payments continue until you decide to stop them.

Here are four easy ways to be a Skagit Sustainer:

- \*Direct Transfer from your checking account to ours can be set up by clicking the Donate Now button on the top of the page at [skagitlandtrust.org](http://skagitlandtrust.org). Use the "echeck" option instead of "credit card".
- \*A bank issued check can be set up from your bank and mailed to us each month/quarter.
- \*A credit card payment can be set up online at [skagitlandtrust.org](http://skagitlandtrust.org). Use the "credit card" option instead of "echeck". You can also opt to pay the credit card fee, which really maximizes your donation.
- \*If you work for a larger company that offers an Employee Matching Gifts Program, you can make a recurring automatic gift through your employer- who transfers the funds to us- and may match your gift up to 100%.

## Messing Around in Creeks Inspires Land Conservation Richard & Sharon Stewart's Natural Legacy

by Molly Doran



It was a rainy January day in 2012 when a casual visit to Skagit Land Trust culminated in protecting the Bell Property near Big Rock - and so much more. A fellow with a jaunty tweed Irish paddy-cap stood dripping in the office foyer. He introduced himself as Rich Stewart and asked if I had time to talk about creeks. He regaled me with stories of his childhood and the joy he and his friends had "messaging around" in creeks near Olympia and in Seattle ravines. And then he told me that he had recently visited the creek on the Bell Property and it had really called to him. Rich said that he and his wife, Sharon, wanted to find a way to help us conserve it. And they did - by putting forward a generous challenge match through the Skagit Community Foundation to help Skagit Land Trust purchase the land and add it to our Barney Lake Conservation Area.



Since that January, several of us at the Trust have been welcomed into the Stewart's home, walked their beautiful Fir Island farm and wildlife sanctuary, and listened to their dreams. Sadly, Rich passed away suddenly in February of this year. Sharon called me soon afterwards and told me that conserving their own land was so important to them both, that she was going to note it in Rich's obituary.

"We feel privileged to give our land back to the Skagit Valley," said Sharon. "We have loved living here, and want to give back that which wasn't "ours" in the first place."

For decades, Rich and Sharon Stewart have been living a rural life, lovingly stewarding their land, and quietly helping the communities they are rooted in. I think back to that day when Rich so joyously told me about his time "messaging around" in creeks. That phrase is defined in the dictionary as "to waste time without a particular purpose". I think Rich and Sharon would say the dictionary gets this one wrong. It was unstructured time in nature that helped them both kindle and act on their love of nature. Rich and Sharon are leaving a natural legacy that will give back to people, wildlife and future generations, forever.



*Sharon proudly posed with her gang of chickens when she presented the Trust with another gift - our first vehicle donation.*

### **Join our Cedar Legacy Roundtable on September 4th**

The Trust will be hosting an appreciation and roundtable **event for Cedar Legacy Members at the Padilla Bay Interpretive Center on September 4th from 3-5pm**. We want to hear your thoughts about the strategic direction of Skagit Land Trust. Look for your invitation in the mail this July. Cedar Legacy Members have included Skagit Land Trust in their estate plans. **If you have included the Trust in your estate planning, please let us know so we can include you in this event and honor the gift you are giving the community.**

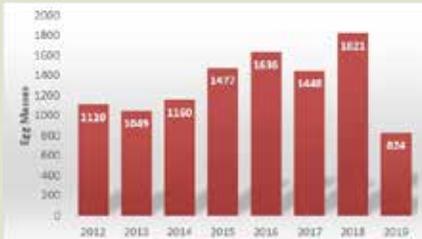
## Amphibian Monitors Come Up Dry on Egg Mass Counts

The ground was covered in snow on March 10th when 16 of our citizen science volunteers and land stewards visited Green Road Marsh to begin the annual survey of amphibians on Trust properties. There were no signs of eggs, but a few frozen juvenile amphibians came to life in the warm hands of the volunteers.



Volunteers at Green Road Marsh.

These cold, dry conditions continued throughout March and April. During this time, volunteers made 15 visits to eight Trust properties to survey egg masses and look for evidence of the endangered Oregon Spotted Frog. While this species was not found, the group did record Pacific chorus frog, red-legged frog, long-toed salamander, and northwestern salamander egg masses.



Total egg masses found over the years.

The egg mass total for this year was 824, half of the number found the past four years. This drop may be due to the cold weather in February, or less rain this season. Yearly data collection allows scientists and Washington Fish & Wildlife to track long term trends in the local environment.

Thank you to Janet Cray, Tim Manns, Dennis Dagley, John Moore, Zena Gavin, Kathy Anderson, Emerson High School, Hal Lee, Janet Nevitt, Mike Oros, Julie Newkirk, Brenda Cunningham, Russ Dalton, Lin Skavdahl, Tara McGown, Mark Malone, and Joan Declaire for contributing 105 hours to these surveys. We hope to see many returning and new citizen scientists next year!



To the left: Emerson High School students surveying at Big Lake Wetlands as part of their Conservation Classroom program. They were great citizen scientists!

## Kids Take Over Utopia and Find it the Ideal Place to Learn on the Land

279 Sedro-Woolley second graders visited the Trust's Utopia property this spring over five days. With their 86 chaperones, they learned about beaver, elk, amphibians, macroinvertebrates, plants and birds, while visiting six Investigation Stations scattered throughout the restoration area.



Dear Stacy,  
 Thank you so much for setting up the station. Also thank you for setting up the beaver station because I love beavers.  
 From,  
 Caden

Dear Joe,  
 The Bird Station was cool because we were supposed to see the Treeswallows and we actually got to see the TREESWALLOWS!!! It was amazing! Thank You Joe.

Thanks to Richard Raisler, Ellen Anderson, Kit and Carol Harma, Jim Johnson, Chris Varela, Kent Turner, King Dahl and intern Phoebe Jud for facilitating the stations! Along with Trust AmeriCorps Members Zena Gavin and Meagan Maillet, these volunteers helped the kids watch tree swallows through binoculars, use hand lenses to discover mayfly nymphs, and showed how plants slow erosion and absorb pollutants. **The students showed an 88% increase in knowledge of the natural environment after their exploration of the property.**



Volunteer Ellen Anderson showing students an elk antler during their visit to Utopia.

The children had a chance to hold a beaver skull, measure an elk antler and talk about habitat while searching for amphibians. Students from Lyman, Samish, Central, Evergreen and Big Lake Elementary Schools discovered garter snakes slithering through the grasses, found insects scurrying over the ground and wrinkled their noses at coyote scat on the trail. **Students left expressing the importance of protecting habit for wildlife, and excited to visit such environments again.** It was a fun and educational introduction to Skagit Land Trust for these future stewards.

## Samish Flower Farm - Conserved Forever!

Thanks to support from 500 families, businesses, and organizations, Skagit Land Trust has conserved Samish Flower Farm forever.

Located at the entrance to Samish Island, Samish Flower Farm is the forested “coming home” view for Islanders and visitors. The 100+ year-old forest that encompasses both sides of Samish Island Road, provides nesting, roosting, perching, and foraging habitat for a variety of raptors such as the Bald Eagle, Osprey, Cooper’s Hawk, and owls, as well as migratory song birds. It is also a staging and feeding area for herons that nest nearby, and features 500 feet of natural shoreline that feeds into Padilla Bay.



*The forest of Samish Flower Farm as seen from the road to Samish Island.*

The creation of the Samish Flower Farm Conservation Area is a testament to the community’s love and support for this unique property. Without conservation ownership, the property could have been cleared and subdivided into numerous smaller lots. The purchase of these 34.25 acres ensures that the land will remain forever undeveloped.



*Pictured from left to right, Conservation Director Michael Kirshenbaum, Samish Flower Farm Project Manager Jane Zillig, and Executive Director Molly Doran on the Padilla Bay shoreline.*

“All of us are so grateful that our community came out in full force to support this project,” says Trust Executive Director Molly Doran. “This forest is a huge part of the Island’s character and we all know how precious natural shoreline is. Padilla Bay holds the second largest bed of seagrass on the west coast of North America. It is critical we keep it healthy. Our objectives are to steward the property as wildlife habitat and provide ways for public access for walking and wildlife viewing. Low impact access can help engender conservation and education of Salish Sea habitats.”

### Thank you to all of the donors who helped save the Samish Flower Farm

Evelyn Adams  
Kathleen and Thor Albro  
Daniel Allison  
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Aubrey Aramaki and Young Sun  
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**Mother' of the Skagit Valley's Bulb Industry**

1954 Seattle Times article about Mary Stewart's pioneering efforts in Skagit Valley's tulip farming.

The history of Skagit's tulips begins on the Samish Flower Farm. In 1903, the Stewart Family homesteaded the property. Mary Stewart began cultivating flowers that eventually developed into a successful mail order business called Tulip Grange Bulb Farms. According to the Skagit County Historical Museum, Mary is credited with starting the county's tulip bulb industry.

In 2017, the family listed the property for sale. A potential sale could have led to logging and the development of ten home sites on the property. In early 2018, the Trust and the family agreed to a conservation and sale solution. The family would keep their three acre homesite, and the Trust would purchase and conserve the rest of the property.

Mary's great granddaughter, Maggie Murphy, commented, "Our dedication to this property grew out of a farming history. We learned the land is regenerative and will give back more than it takes if cared for properly. We were honored for the opportunity to conserve this diverse ecosystem through Skagit Land Trust. A new chapter of stewardship will help protect these critical habitats that are on the edge of environmental peril. Our gratitude is beyond measure to the Trust and the greater Samish Community for joining our vision of preserving this fertile land in perpetuity. This is a dream come true."



Molly Doran from the Trust and landowner Maggie Murphy at Samish Flower Farm.



Jane Zillig, the Trust's Project Manager who oversaw the acquisition, says it was not only the incredible conservation values of this land that excited her about the project, but also the history of the property and the area. "The Murphy family, who sold us the land, have lived on this property for over 100 years and were responsible stewards of their land. In addition, the Salish Sea tribes have an extensive history on Samish Island. For the Trust to now be responsible for continued stewardship of this land is an honor that we take very seriously. Future generations will appreciate the efforts of the community of volunteers and donors who came forward to help preserve and steward this amazing landscape."

Project Manager Jane Zillig in the upper forested portion of the property, where trees are up to 100 years old.

## Thank you to all of the donors who helped save the Samish Flower Farm

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 Judy Farrar and Eric Knudsen  
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 Beth Kraig and Suzanne Klinger  
 Eric and Laura Kraig  
 Jim Kuhn and Claudia Ross-Kuhn  
 Rusty Kuntze and Libby Mills

With less than eight months to raise the funds needed, a steering committee of Samish Islanders and Trust board members helped secure funds and generate wide support for the project. They include Samish Island residents Thais and Howard Armstrong, Mike and Liz Bart, John and Kristen Boyes, Charlene Day, Fonda Downs, Roger and Kris Goodan, Steve and Gail Hopley, Chuck Howell, Lisa McShane, Therese Ogle, Marne Pennington, Jim Zielinski, and board members Jim Glackin, Mark Hitchcock, and Rusty Kuntze.



*Pictured above: Executive Director Molly Doran with Samish Flower Farm steering committee members on the beach.*

“Their dedication to preserving this property was crucial to the campaign’s success,” says Skagit Land Trust’s Development Director Laura Hartner. “They led tours, presented informational booths at summer events, supported challenge matches, and talked to just about everyone who cared about preserving the character of the entrance to Samish Island.”

The accelerated timeline also meant the Trust needed to purchase the property before all of the funds were in hand, so we reached out to The Conservation Fund for a \$500,000 bridge loan to assist with the \$1.24 million purchase, transaction, and stewardship costs of the project. Grants from the Washington State Estuary & Salmon Restoration Program and the North American Wetlands Conservation Act also helped considerably.

“Skagit Land Trust’s ability to quickly garner the support of so many individuals and groups to ensure that this ecologically valuable shoreline forest will be protected, speaks to the close knit community,” said Caitlin Guthrie, Associate Director of The Conservation Fund’s Conservation Loans program.



*Photo courtesy of Rom Holmes. Great Blue Herons roost and feed on the Samish Flower Farm.*

Samish Flower Farm is adjacent to the Samish Island Great Blue Heron colony, which has been established since at least the 1930s. While the rookery became abandoned in 2017, herons can return to nesting sites for up to 10 years, and herons still use this area for foraging and roosting. By protecting this property, the Trust ensures that additional nesting trees are available to the herons and serve as a protected buffer area to prevent disturbances.

Konrad and Herta Kurp  
Trevor and Delberta Kyle  
Hella and Harold Lee  
Joseph and Brynn Leighton  
Larry and Donnette Lennox  
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Wetlands in the forested upper portion of the property.

“Generations of Islanders and visitors have traveled through the property and felt a sense of place and history,” says steering committee member Mark Hitchcock. “Older forests like these are disappearing. These older forests next to tidelands and bays, are why we are so lucky to hear Great Horned Owls at night and see herons fishing during the day. Herring, crab and juvenile Chinook Salmon rely on the bay’s eelgrass beds, and that in turn may help our resident Orcas. I am so pleased we joined together with the Trust as a community, to conserve this land.”

For more information about Samish Flower Farm, visit [www.skagitlandtrust.org](http://www.skagitlandtrust.org).

**Skagit Land Trust is now working on a stewardship management plan for the property.** This plan will lay out a vision for the land and steps to get there. It will address items such as wetland restoration, invasive species control, and public access. During the campaign we heard from donors that protecting the unique wildlife habitat and forest on the property was a priority. The community was also excited to see appropriately-sited trails. Currently the trail to the beach is open for foot traffic.

The Trust will host a **meeting on July 14th from 1:30-3:00pm at the Samish Island Community Center** to gather public input for the Samish Flower Farm management plan. We want to hear thoughts on possible trail locations, a place to park cars or bikes, and how to help the property flourish as a wildlife sanctuary. We hope you can join us.

Stewardship work has already begun and we are grateful to all of the volunteers who have come out to pull ivy and other invasive plants. **We have another work party planned for the morning of our community meeting, July 14th from 10am-1pm.** If you haven’t had a chance to visit the property yet, this will be a great opportunity to see the work being done.

As with all of our properties, the Samish Flower Farm needs volunteer land stewards and land steward aides. These people are trained and assigned to monitor the property and undertake special tasks. **If you are interested in being a land steward or aide, contact [volunteer@skagitlandtrust.org](mailto:volunteer@skagitlandtrust.org).**

The Trust is also looking for volunteers to help with “baseline inventory” for the Samish Flower Farm, documenting birds, insects, plants, and other natural aspects of the property as well as its history. We will have more information about this program at the July 14th meeting.

## **Thank you to all of the donors who helped save the Samish Flower Farm**

Charles Schultz and Terri Bakke-Schultz  
David and Jean Schy  
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Every effort was made to ensure all members are listed correctly. If you discover any errors, please accept our apologies and contact us so that we can make a correction. Members with an asterisk next to their name have passed away this year. We miss them and will always be grateful for all they did for Skagit Land Trust.

Members who also gave an in-kind donation are noted with the following symbol.



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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.



Join us at Cascadian Home Farm near Rockport, WA for our annual members picnic. Feel free to bring a friend! The Trust holds a conservation easement on 56 acres of forest directly behind the farm. We'll have nature walks, activities for the kids, and of course delicious food to share.

**RSVP at [skagitlandtrust.org](http://skagitlandtrust.org) or call us, 360-428-7878.**



Join us for an upcoming event  
**RSVP at [skagitlandtrust.org](http://skagitlandtrust.org), or call 360-428-7878.**

- 7/6/19 - Utopia Stewardship and Nature Walk
- 7/14/19 - Samish Flower Farm Stewardship
- 7/14/19 - Samish Flower Farm Community Meeting
- 8/3/19 - Fidalgo Bay Carstens Stewardship
- 9/4/19- Cedar Legacy Circle Appreciation Event