

Birdsview Farm Preserved for Salmon Habitat and Agriculture

A mile of Skagit River shoreline protected

One of the last big farms in the community of Birdsview, west of the city of Concrete, has been permanently preserved in a three way partnership between the landowners, Skagit Land Trust and the Washington State Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB). The 110-acre property was historically a dairy farm, but was acquired by an investor and then subdivided into six residential lots in 2003. Ger van den Engh and Barbara Trask of Seattle discovered the property listing several years ago when looking for a small farm as their future retirement home. They were entranced by the beauty and the potential of the land, and ultimately purchased 9 separate lots, with the intention of keeping the property intact and as a place where farming and wildlife can continue to coexist. The new owners are enthusiastic gardeners, birdwatchers and naturalists, and the idea of rescuing the property from development had enormous appeal to them.

Landowners Ger van den Engh and Barbara Trask discuss their conservation easement with Martha Bray of the Trust and Perry Welch of Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group. Below: Birdsview Farm Property



Located on the bend in the Skagit River known as “Cape Horn”, the property is about half open farmland and half woodland. It includes a mile of Skagit River shoreline. The property had been identified as a priority for salmon habitat protection by Skagit Land Trust because of its expansive floodplain, spawning areas and side channel important to young salmon. Needless to say, it was a happy day when



Photo by John Scurlock

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Drawings by Brenda Cunningham

From the Executive Director

Dear Members and Supporters,

2007 marks Skagit Land Trust's 15th anniversary and also the final year of implementing a successful strategic plan that the Trust created in 2002. This is not one of those strategic plans that gathered dust while used as a coffee coaster. It was a road map. We have implemented over 90% of its goals.

Later this year we will undertake a new strategic planning process to guide us through the next five years. We are at an exciting and pivotal point as an organization. We have been highly successful to date, protecting over 5000 acres of land and wildlife habitat and 21 miles of shoreline. Yet we wonder if we need to tweak our model a bit or even a lot to accomplish our mission of land protection quickly. 4 acres a minute of open space in the United States is being converted. Conversion refers to the replacement of trees, wildlife habitat, agricultural land, shorelines and wetlands with houses, lawns, roads, buildings and pavement. Much of this loss is happening via low density growth and sprawl that fragments ecosystems. Washington State alone is losing between 30,000 and 80,000 acres of functional habitat annually.

The Skagit is an increasingly popular place to live. The irony is that we could love our home to death. Roads and pavement splinter wildlife habitat. As we subdivide forests and farmland, these industries face dwindling economic returns and their loss affects the fabric of the landscape. Even our community services are affected as unmitigated sprawl is costly. Yet we know more people will come – and didn't most of us, at some point in our family's history, also come?

So our question is, how do we work with our community these next five years to select, preserve and connect the lands and waterways that are essential to us, to wildlife and to future generations? How do we leverage our capacity and



partnerships to do this quickly? Are there ways to exponentially increase our strategic impact and pace?

We also have other questions to answer: Where does habitat restoration fit for us and why? What about public access on lands we own? Who isn't involved in land conservation that should be involved? What is land conservation's role in the urban areas and urban fringe areas? What kind of land or waterways are we taking for granted that may be critical links in 25-30 years? Is there a funding source that seems to fit us well, that we could grow significantly to help us sustain a fast pace of land conservation? How do we help create a community consciousness of conservation?

We want your input as we prepare our road map for the next five years. We may convene several focus groups to gather input and we welcome you to write or call us with your thoughts.

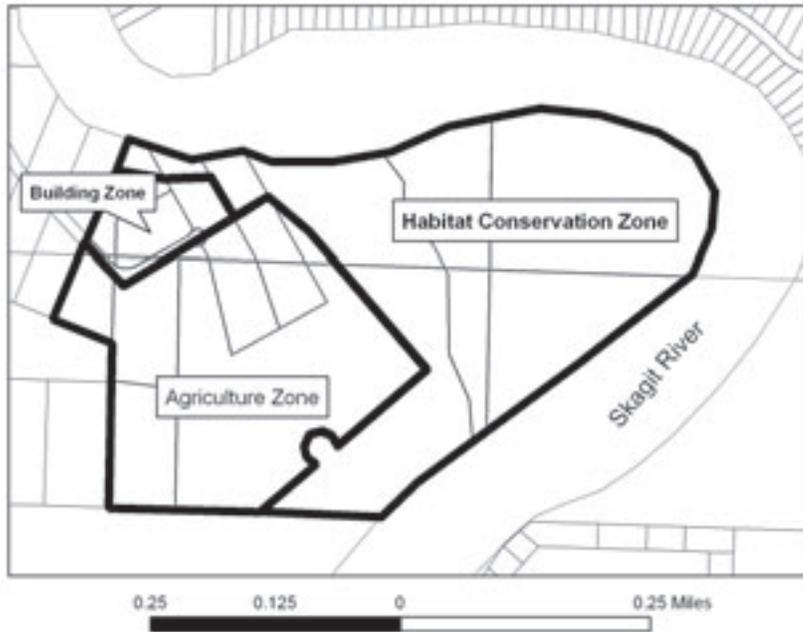
Thank you for helping us think through the future of protecting beloved local lands.

Molly Doran
Executive Director



Cape Horn Continued from page 1

Trask and Engh inquired to the Trust about preserving the property.



habitat in appropriate areas. The SRFB grant includes funds for habitat restoration that will be undertaken by the landowners and the fourth project partner, Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group.

When they are not busy with their new project in the Skagit Valley, Engh and Trask are active research scientists in Seattle. Barbara is a division director at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center and runs her own laboratory there to study human genetics and evolution. Ger owns and operates Cytopeia, a company that develops analytical instruments for biomedical research. They are also both on the faculty at the University of Washington. ■

Located on the bend in the Skagit River known as "Cape Horn", the property is about half open farmland and half woodland.



Ultimately the Trust was able to secure a grant from the SRFB to purchase a conservation easement from Trask and Engh through a 'charitable bargain sale'.

The conservation easement is a permanent preservation agreement between the landowners and the Trust, which extinguishes five development rights and protects the shoreline and existing woodland areas for fish and wildlife habitat. Engh and Trask donated over half the appraised fair market value of the conservation easement, a donation value of over \$200,000.

"Our community is very lucky that Barb and Ger are so committed to doing the right thing with their land – there is a huge public benefit to protecting this floodplain area from further subdivision and development – they gave up a lot property value to make this dream come true" said Molly Doran of Skagit Land Trust.

The agreement allows residential use of the existing farmhouse and ongoing agriculture on the farmland. It also allows for restoration of

Save the Date



Van Tours of protected properties this summer!

We will have two van tours this summer, **Saturday June 23rd** to *Samish and Fidalgo Island* properties and **Saturday July 21st** to *Middle and Upper Skagit* properties. Each tour will depart downtown Mount Vernon at 9:30am and will arrive back at approximately 3pm and will include a picnic lunch at one of the Skagit Land Trust properties. The cost of the tour is \$30 for members and \$35 for non-members. Space is limited and the tours sell out fast! Sign-up with Diane @ 428-7878 or email: trustmv@fidalgo.net.

15th Annual Members' Picnic at Eagle Haven Winery

We will be celebrating our 15th Annual Members' picnic on **Saturday August 18th** at *Eagle Haven Winery* in Sedro-Woolley. There will be a property tour of a nearby Skagit Land Trust property from 11:30am-12:30pm, followed by the picnic at the Winery from 1-4pm. Please join us for great wines and other refreshments, food and fellowship.

RSVP to Diane at 428-7878

Together, Anything is Possible

Skagit Land Trust and The Nature Conservancy partner to protect 2.5 miles of shoreline in Upper Skagit

It's often said that two heads are better than one. This was proven in the past year when Skagit Land Trust and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) partnered together to successfully preserve over 175 acres of habitat in the Upper Skagit Valley. This partnership was funded by the Washington State Salmon Recovery Funding Board with instrumental support from The Skagit Watershed Council.

TNC produced an in-depth assessment of key salmon habitat areas in the Upper Skagit. The Trust then began extensive landowner outreach based on this assessment in July 2006. This work resulted in the Trust negotiating to purchase three parcels in early 2007 and that were subsequently bought by The Nature Conservancy. Each property contains high priority salmon habitat and each is also uniquely beautiful with qualities we cherish in this area.

- The 26 acre Hough property is on the north bank of the Skagit River at the confluence with Jackman Creek. It had been short-platted into four lots but the owner struggled with the idea of developing the property where he loved to walk and fish. The land contains a grove of large cedar and grand fir and a small creek runs through the property.
- The 49 acre Smith property, located on the Sauk River, contains large wetlands fed by three creeks that run through the property. The owners initially purchased the land to preserve the diverse habitat found there and were pleased to have the property permanently protected.
- The 101-acre Cascade River Associate's property borders the south bank of the Cascade River. This land connects two protected parcels, owned by State Parks and Recreation and by Skagit County, to form a valuable wildlife corridor for native species dependent on riparian areas.

The Trust and TNC plan on continuing this successful partnership and look forward to working with landowners interested in preserving our exceptional, and irreplaceable, natural heritage. ■

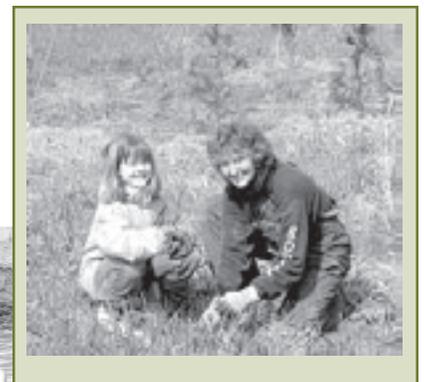


Prime salmon habitat on the Cascade River in the Upper Skagit.

Thank You Volunteers

Skagit Land Trust volunteers were very busy this spring! Between mid-February and mid-April, Trust volunteers and staff planted close to 5000 trees and shrubs! The work was concentrated on six Trust properties: Lyman Slough, Barney Lake, Kosbab Slough, Cumberland Creek, Hurn Field and Minkler Lake. This great undertaking was accomplished with the help of 75 volunteers. A special thanks goes out to Volunteer Land Stewards Dick Raisler, Tim Manns and Jim Johnson for their extra help and support. Thanks also to the scouts and parents of Sedro-Woolley Troop 4067 and to those volunteers who dedicated their time to

more than one event, including: Feryll Blanc, Kurt Buchanan, Lynn Postler, Pete Haase, Rick Machin, Jan Wilson and Cindy McGuiness. Visit the Skagit Land Trust website for more pictures and information about these events, as well as information about upcoming volunteer events!



Volunteers of all ages help plant alders at Hurn Field.

left: Dick Raisler and Dan Farman ferry trees across Lyman Slough.

The Swan Ball was a Fantastic Inaugural Auction!

Board member Ron Feld helps member and artist Dedy Ward draw a winning raffle ticket for his painting he and his wife Susan Park donated to the Trust.



The first Annual Skagit Land Trust Auction, the Swan Ball, was held on Saturday February 3rd at the Burlington Country Club. After the silent auction ended, over 100 members and friends dined on salmon or vegetarian fettucine in the banquet hall before the live auction began. Donations and bidding for the silent auction and live auction both exceeded expectations! The event raised approximately \$10,000 for the Trust to continue doing great work in 2007.

15th Annual Meeting was a Great Success!

The 15th Annual Meeting was held on March 23rd at the Museum of Northwest Art in LaConner. 90 people attended. After a short business meeting awards honoring outstanding volunteers and partnerships were presented, including: **Brenda Cunningham**, retiring stewardship director at Skagit Land Trust; **Ralph Heft**, The Blue Heron Award; **Pete Haase**, Outstanding Stewardship Volunteer; **Laura Wynn**, Outstanding Volunteer Award; **Barbara Trask** and **Gerrit van den Eng**, Conservation Easement Certificate of Appreciation; **Bob Carey** and **Peter Scholes**, Outstanding Partnership Award, The Nature Conservancy, Washington.

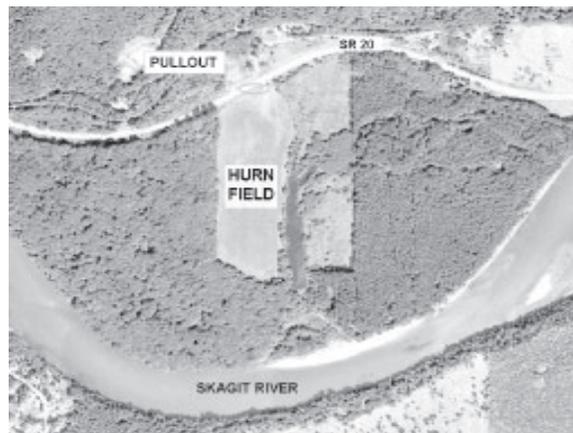
A dynamic presentation titled “15 Years of Land Conservation: Skagit Land Trust, Past, Present and Future” was presented by Andrea Xaver, John Tursi, Keith Wiggers and Molly Doran. To end the meeting, Brenda Cunningham produced her final slideshow for the Trust highlighting the land that we protect in Skagit County with beautiful photos and music.

HURN ELK FIELD PULLOUT – IT’S A GO!

After many months of planning, Skagit Land Trust is moving forward with the development of a wildlife viewing pullout at the Hurn elk field. Located a few miles west of Concrete on SR 20, more than 50 elk are often spotted grazing in this beautiful pasture in the winter and spring.

The new pullout will feature a graveled parking area, safer access from SR 20, and several new interpretive signs developed by Tim Manns and Brenda Cunningham.

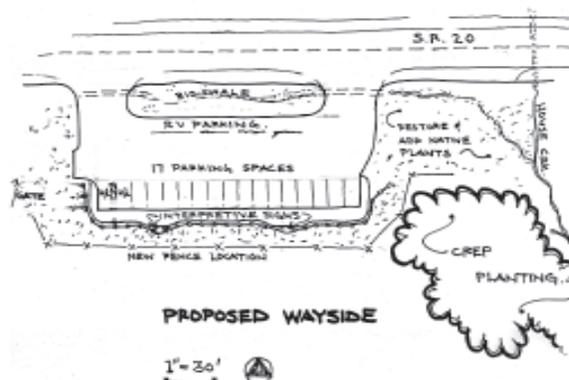
This site is the most visited Trust property and will serve as an exciting educational opportunity to reach thousands of visitors. The project should be completed this summer. Stop by and check it out!



Hurn Field is located on SR 20 just a few miles west of Concrete.



The elk in Hurn Field are Rocky Mountain Elk - they belong to a sub-herd of the Nooksack or North Cascade Herd.



The pullout will feature a durable gravel parking lot and new interpretative signs.

Welcome New Staff Members!



Renata Hoyle Maybruck, Development and Communications Director and Michael Kirshenbaum, Stewardship Director join Skagit Land Trust staff.

We welcome to our staff team Renata Hoyle Maybruck as Development and Communications Director and Michael Kirshenbaum as Stewardship Director.

Renata was born in Skagit Valley. Her family homesteaded in Clear Lake in 1863. Although she has traveled the world, earning a M.S. in Anthropology and Development from the London School of Economics, Renata returned to the valley she loves. She has held positions with The Boys and Girls Club and Janicki Industries.

Michael hails from Michigan originally with time in Washington DC. He has lived in Marblemount for eight years and before joining the Trust was a ranger with North Cascades National Park. Michael has a Masters in Geograpghy/Resource Conservation from Western Washington University.

Please stop in and meet Michael and Renata or join them at a volunteer event!

Blanchard Mountain Update

Skagit Land Trust is a participant in the Blanchard Strategies Group (BSG). The BSG agreement proposes to preserve 1600 acres of the top and west side of Blanchard Mountain as a natural forest “core”, while permitting DNR’s harvest of roughly 2% annually on the remainder of the mountain. When DNR’s management policies in visually and ecologically sensitive areas are also taken into account, approximately 50% of the mountain’s 4827 acres will be in special management status.

The State Forest Trust needs full compensation for lands placed in the core, valued at an estimated \$12 million. In an innovative proposal, the compensation funds will purchase private ‘in-holdings’ and parcels adjacent to Blanchard, thus expanding public forest lands. The BSG asked the Legislature for \$4 million this year to begin the protection process. Senator Harriet Spanel was instrumental in getting funds into the budget.

The BSG proposal was sent to Doug Sutherland who heads the DNR. He received 157 public comments on the proposal. Supporters generally described the recommendation as “an acceptable compromise” “realistic” or “proving we can work together”. Many supporters also stated that they wished the core area was different or larger. Comments that did not support the agreement described the recommendations as “being short-sighted”, “core is far too small”. “ecological and recreational aspects were not proportionally represented” or “catering to private citizens who are not concerned about sustainable timber harvest”. Many comments

recommended that State law be changed so that DNR forests could be freed from providing revenue to schools etc. Some pointed out that without DNR forests fulfilling a financial niche, these same forests would have been surplusd and carved up long ago.

Doug Sutherland has accepted the BSG recommendation with a few minor modifications. The proposal will now go through an environmental review under SEPA with a public comment period. Next steps also involve DNR developing an Advisory Committee to recommend on-going management on Blanchard. More information can be found at www.dnr.wa.gov.

While there are aspects to the agreement, size of the protected forest core etc that we may have wished to have been different, the solution has the strong benefit of focusing the diverse interests at the table in a unified direction – protecting our forests from being developed. In a US Forest Service assessment, the private forests surrounding Blanchard through I-5 were cited as having the highest risk in the entire Northwest of being converted to homes. Protection of unique ecosystems and habitats, such as those found on Blanchard is essential. And if the larger landscape is paved over, we lose future options and pass on a much poorer ecosystem overall. Protecting a mosaic of both natural and working forests in the Cascades to Chuckanut Corridor is a realistic solution to keeping the ecosystem relatively intact. Otherwise, the green forested corridor between Bellingham and Burlington will eventually meld together as undistinguishable sprawl. ■

Thank You to the on-going Trust Builders and Partners in Conservation (giving levels of \$500 and above)

Corporate Partners

Business Conservator

(\$1000-\$5000)

Leonard, Boudinot & Skodje, Inc.
Skagit State Bank
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Skagit Conservation District
Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland

Grants & Foundations

The Burning Foundation
Coastal Protection Fund
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The Hugh & Jane Ferguson
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The Norcross Wildlife Foundation
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Kenneth & Enid Oates
Bob & Barb Rock
Linda Speck & Ken Willis
Tamara Stevens & Todd Rubano
In memory of Lois Englebright
Kate Stewart & Deborah DeWolfe
Richard & Sharon Stewart
Ben & Sloane Winkes
Annette Woolsey & Jim Shiflett

Thank you to all renewing members. Membership gifts will be listed in the Summer & Winter Newsletter and our Annual Report.

Leadership Skagit Team Helps Skagit Land Trust Educate Skagit Residents and visitors about conservation of the Mud Lake Property

by Amy Wilcox, *Leadership Skagit*

One of the Leadership Skagit service project teams, *The History Team (THT)*, is helping the Trust, the Clear Lake Historical Association and our community by designing and erecting interpretive signage at the Mud Lake property in the town of Clear Lake. This signage will detail the rich industrial history of the Clear Lake/Mud Lake area, the flora and fauna native to Mud Lake, and Skagit Land Trust's process for conserving natural resources. Residents and visitors alike will benefit from access to this important information. All *THT* members had shared values of conservation and education, so the Trust was a natural fit for a community partner in this service project.

The team consists of Skagit community members Janie Beasley, Swinomish Indian Tribe; Debbie Blunt, La Conner School District; Elinor Nakis, Sedro Woolley School District;

Lou Petersen, Skagit County Parks and Rec; Josh Scott, Windermere Real Estate; and Amy Wilcox, North Cascades Institute. The team worked with the Trust, Clear Lake Historical Association and Clear Lake Elementary to determine placement of the sign, write the content, design and install the sign, and raised money for the project. Benj Drummond, a Seattle graphic designer and photographer and former Skagit resident, designed the sign. It will be on permanent display in the town of Clear Lake, just west of the post office off of Highway 9 by May 20th. The display features Clear Lake Historical Association photos, illustrations by former Trust Stewardship Director Brenda Cunningham, and lots of interesting information on the area. Stop by and check it out! ■



Leadership Skagit, The History Team, L to R Elinor Nakis, Janie Beasley, Josh Scott, Lou Petersen, Amy Wilcox and Debbie Blunt.



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Mission Statement

Skagit Land Trust protects wildlife habitat, wetlands, agriculture and forest lands, scenic open space and shorelines throughout the mainland and islands of Skagit County for the benefit of our community and as a legacy for future generations.

Saving Land for Tomorrow

5000 Acres + 21 Miles of Shoreline Protected & Counting

Upcoming Events

May 12 - Blackberry control at Hurn Field.
10am - 1:00pm.

May 19 - Trail maintenance at Cumberland Creek. 10am - 1:00pm.

June 23 - Van Tour: (Samish Island and Fidalgo Island).
9:30am-3pm, picnic lunch provided. Cost: \$30 members / \$35 non-members.
(see details inside).

July 21 - Van Tour: (Middle & Upper Skagit)
9:30am-3pm, picnic lunch provided. Cost: \$30 members / \$35 non-members.
(see details inside).

August 18 - 15th Annual Picnic at Eagle Haven Winery: Property tour from 11:30am-12:30pm and picnic from 1-4pm. (see details inside).

RSVP to Trust office at 428-7878



Volunteers and staff felt like doing an Irish jig after they finished planting 500 trees at the Cumberland Creek Property on March 17. Instead they posed for this photo on a rainy St. Patrick's Day.