

Coming Soon - Another Bend of the Skagit Protected



When Thanksgiving rolls around, we will all have much to be thankful for. Due to your support, along with a state grant, the Trust will be buying and preserving 62 acres of floodplain and riparian forest with over a half mile of Skagit River shoreline. An old river channel carves its way through this land, and backwaters off of the Skagit provide spawning sites for salmon. The landowners have tracked flood levels on the property, and the 2003 flood crested at least six feet higher than the existing riverbank (see picture at right).



Conservation Director Michael Kirshenbaum reaching up to point out the 2003 flood marking on a property tree by the Skagit River.



Above: Conservation Project Manager Jane Zillig surveying the property leading down to the Skagit River.

Right: One of many spawned salmon found on the property's backwaters.

After Skagit Land Trust takes ownership, and we do initial stewardship work, planning will begin on ways to provide public to access to the property. We hope to bring school children to the site so they can explore and learn about the natural Skagit. More information will be coming after we buy this beautiful property, but for now, these pictures give you a taste of what your support is helping to protect.



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Annual Financial Report From the Executive Director

Dear Members and Supporters,

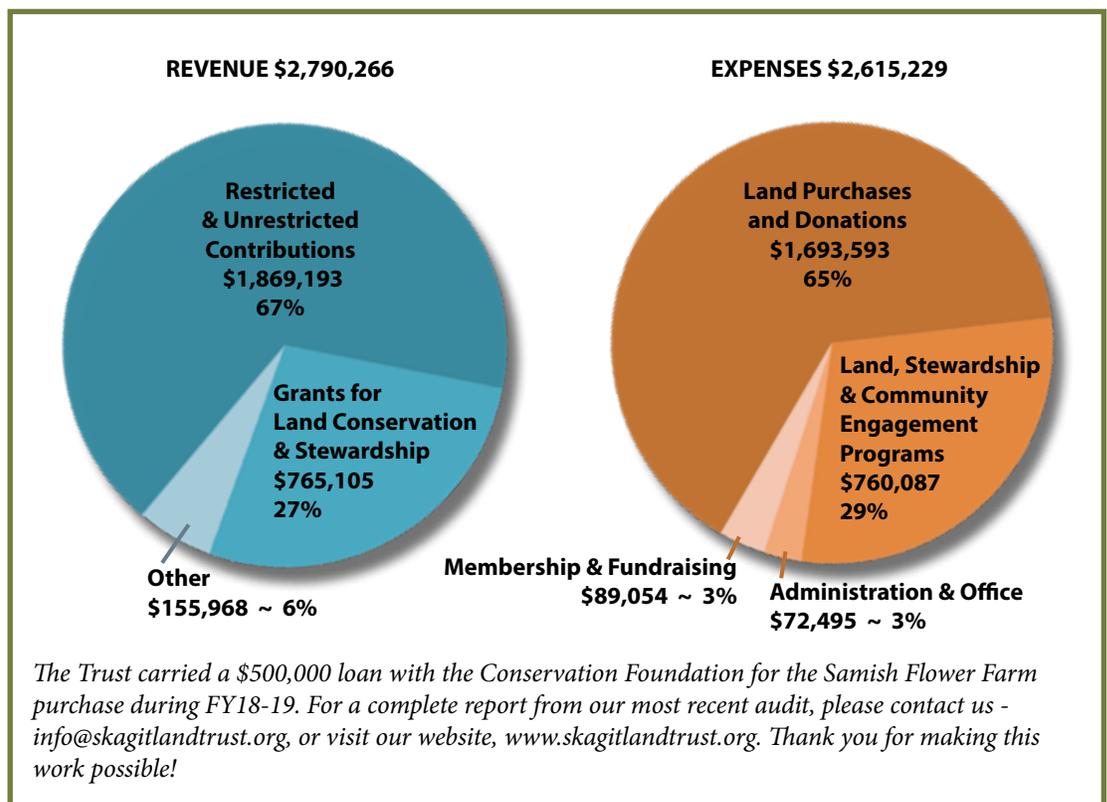
We recently completed our Fiscal Year 18-19 audit. Following is a snapshot of how your generous donations, gifts, and grants were spent in this past year to help save land for tomorrow.

We initiated ten land protection projects throughout Skagit County. Several of these were completed in the year and others are being completed now. With strong public support, we undertook a large community campaign and received state and federal grants to purchase the 34-acre Samish Flower Farm on Padilla Bay. We assisted neighbors and partners to add a property to Blanchard State Forest. We participated in DNR's 10-year Blanchard Strategies which finalized 1600 acres of forest conservation for recreation and habitat values in that state forest.

Stewardship volunteers gave 1,885 hours to care for 42 conservation areas that we own, and monitored 36 conservation easements. Restoration projects revived natural habitat on Trumpeter Creek at Barney Lake, Sumner Lake, Cumberland Creek, and at 10 other conservation areas. Trails and public access were enhanced on four properties.

The Trust had the support of over 400 invaluable volunteers. The Trust's Youth Program had more than 1,400 participants. We hosted 14 interns from local colleges, The Nature Conservancy, and other organizations. Our Citizen Scientists contributed to valuable research on herons and amphibians. We held over 15 community and member events and tours. We participated in over 20 collaborative processes. We partnered with 15 organizations on conservation projects. Skagit Land Trust conservation areas experienced over 28,000 visits. Public conservation easements we protect had over 140,000 visits.

Thank you so much for your support that helped make this happen.



2019 Annual Membership Picnic

Thanks to everyone who was able to join us for the member picnic this July. A huge thank you to Cascadian Farm for hosting us and Jumbled Pie for playing such great music. Below: nature walk before the picnic at Barr Creek; some of the members who worked at the farm when it first started; members enjoying ice cream donated by the farm.



Skagit Sustainer Profile: Ellen Anderson and Kent Turner



Ellen and Kent moved to Skagit County two years ago, drawn to the natural beauty, outdoor activities, and close proximity to their children. Their realtor gave them a copy of the Trust's 'Natural Skagit' book as a housewarming gift. Ellen and Kent are now Skagit Sustainers. That means they give to the Trust monthly in an on-going way.

"We had no idea when we bought our house that we were in the flight path of the swans at Barney Lake commuting to and from their forage fields," says Ellen. "We appreciate that Barney Lake provides outstanding wildlife habitat. We enjoy frequent sightings of raptors soaring over the grass meadows, swans and geese coming and going daily in the winter, and the basin filling with the low morning fog."

They quickly became members of the Trust, volunteered for committees, and assisted with educational outings. "As we researched more about what the Trust does, and discovered its properties, we were greatly impressed with the local conservation efforts and recreational opportunities. We both enjoy the Guemes Mountain trail," says Kent. "Ellen's request for Mother's Day this year was to take our two children on that hike!"

Ellen and Kent have always loved exploring coastal estuaries and fresh water wetlands. Ellen's 20+ and Kent's 30+ year careers with the National Park Service took them from the waters of the Outer Banks barrier islands in North Carolina, to Lake Mead National Recreational Area in Nevada.

Supporting Skagit Land Trust's work was important to Ellen and Kent. "We realized that monthly giving helps the Trust predict monthly income and lower its administrative costs. We wanted to be long-term supporters and decided setting up an online recurring gift would keep it easy for us."



Ellen explaining the Elk habitat to Sedro Woolley second graders.

JOIN SKAGIT SUSTAINERS!

Sustaining members give ongoing contributions on a regular basis such as monthly or quarterly. We work with you to make your giving convenient (and with less paper!) while conserving what you love. Please consider joining Ellen and Kent, and the many other Skagit Sustainer members who support the lands they love with a recurring gift.

To set up your Skagit Sustainer giving or if you are curious about the different ways to give, please contact Martha at 360-428-7878 or marthaf@skagitlandtrust.org.

Investing In The Future of Conservation

Thanks to you, many are taking their first step into the field of conservation!



Stewardship Manager Regina Wandler, orienting an EarthCorps Crew to Cumberland Creek.

The sunshine was a good sign for the EarthCorps Crew arriving at the Trust's Cumberland Creek Conservation Area. The team needed dry weather to remove invasive knotweed. Crew member Sean Gilluly, who interned with the Trust while working on a degree in Environmental Science, was excited to be back tackling this familiar weed.

"I like the idea of reclaiming land, repairing damages, and restoring ecosystems that can give back to the health of society," says Sean.

Thanks to member support, Skagit Land Trust is able to partner with EarthCorps, and commit to being a crew sponsor for the Washington Conservation Corps. These programs engage young people between

the ages of 18-25, focusing on restoration projects and trail access. The Trust coordinates career talks so that while here, crews can meet with staff, partners, board members, and Trust volunteers to learn more about jobs in the conservation field.

"The work of these dedicated service members has been crucial in caring for our conservation areas," says Stewardship Manager Regina Wandler. "It's great to have the resources to offer training to those who will care for these lands in the future."

From internships to hosting AmeriCorps members at our office, the Trust is always looking for ways to involve and inspire those just starting out in the field of conservation. Local resident Meagan Maillet served as the Trust's Stewardship AmeriCorps last year and is now in Boston, working on a law degree with a focus in environmental impact litigation.

"I've always considered myself lucky to have grown up in Skagit Valley, but getting the opportunity to work with Skagit Land Trust exposed me to how truly special the lands we protect are, and the impact of the conservation work that goes on here. I'm excited to return home after graduation and continue to work with the Trust in these efforts that are doing so much for the people, wilderness, and wildlife here."

~ Meagan Maillet



Meagan at a Trust work party.

The Trust often sees familiar faces return. Dennis Dagley worked on wildlife structures during his internship with us in 2017, and is now a land steward at our Butler Creek property with veteran steward Jim Owens.

"Dennis is an enthusiastic land steward and is doing a great job at Butler Creek," says Jim. "Plus it's nice to have some youthful involvement!"

Returning student Felicia Arrotta interned with our stewardship department this summer and was able to put her classroom learning to work on the land, compiling species lists for properties and refining her GIS tracking skills. Felicia brought her 10 year old son along for a few field days, and plans to stay involved as a Trust volunteer now that her internship has ended.

"I am always quizzing my boys on plants, trees, and animal signs," says Felicia. "I think that they probably know more than most kids do these days. The learning starts early!"



Felicia and her family volunteering for the Trust at the 'Kids in Nature' event at Pomona Grange.

"My first career was in teaching. I loved my work, but life had other plans. Three kids later, I had the opportunity to try something different. I chose my other passion, the outdoors. I am so glad I resisted the fear of doing something new, because I am loving the work."

~ Felicia Arrotta

Back out at Cumberland Conservation Area, members of the EarthCorps crew are planning to bring their new skills back to the places they call home. Jib Niñal is a community organizer in the Philippines. His job with EarthCorps gave him the time to gain skills in restoration and volunteer organizing.

"I'm excited to learn," Jib says. Back in the Philippines he plans to use these new skills to support indigenous communities in mangrove restoration projects. He notes, "They really do the best job caring for these places."

Emily Jones came from New York. In her career she hopes to work with communities to restore culturally significant landscapes. She has been inspired by seeing so many different agencies work together to make conservation projects possible and hopes to take these lessons back with her. "I want to engage communities of color in the environmental movement and make sure their priorities are visible."



Emily Jones from New York and Yousra Makanse from Brazil discuss where to start the day's work.

Your support of Skagit Land is motivating these future leaders of the conservation field and extending the importance of caring for the land across the world and generations. Thank you!

Cedar Legacy Circle

Cedar Legacy members have informed us that they have left Skagit Land Trust in their will or other estate plans. Thank you to these wonderful supporters who joined us for our appreciation event on September 4th. Old friends had a chance to catch up, and many great stories were shared about the early days of the Trust. We are so grateful to all of our Cedar Legacy members. Your gifts will make a lasting difference in the natural landscape of Skagit County. **If you have included the Trust in your estate planning, please let us know so we can thank you and include you in future events.**



Hurn Field Turns 20 and Continues to Grow

In 1999, Skagit Land Trust had a short window to save what was locally called “the elk field”. This was 45 acres of farmland, wetland, and forest along highway 20 just west of Concrete. The community responded to an emergency request for donations and the Hurn Field Conservation Area was born. Over the past 20 years, your support has helped Skagit Land Trust acquire an additional 84 acres through ten separate purchases and donations. Your giving inspired the protection of the adjacent 77 acres by the US Forest Service.



Known as a popular elk viewing spot, Hurn Field is also home to an estimated 100 species of birds.

The conservation area has almost a half-mile of Skagit River shoreline and hosts 1,300-foot-long House Slough. This is important rearing habitat for salmon and cutthroat trout. The mosaic of wetland, forest and open field habitat support elk who graze and bed down at Hurn. The Trust has worked with tribal wildlife biologists to assess the vegetation in the open areas to improve quality of hay for both elk foraging and agricultural harvest. A local farmer continues to hay the field which is protected by a Farmland Legacy conservation easement.

Recently, thanks to our members, a grant from WA State Recreation & Conservation Office's Salmon Recovery Funding Board (RCO-SRFB), and matching funds from Seattle City Light (SCL), the Trust purchased another 11 acres at Hurn. An old river channel is located on the east part of one of the new parcels. Beavers are actively using this site and elk have been observed swimming across the Skagit River to the Trust's Presentin property.

On land and by water, wildlife need uninterrupted corridors to safely coexist with people. The expansion of Hurn is giving them that space. Thanks to support from you, our members, partners like the Skagit Watershed Council, and generous landowners it is exciting to see how one protected property can lead to larger wildlife habitat conservation and restoration.

Grant funds help us remove abandoned, vandalized buildings, clean up illegal garbage dumping, and restore scarred landscapes to natural conditions. These before pictures on top, and after pictures on bottom, are from the recent Hurn acquisitions.

Top left shows a tree that had fallen on the house and dumping that had occurred.



Staff and Board Updates



Therese Ogle

Therese Ogle joined the Trust board in November. She lives on Samish Island, just a few feet from the Samish Flower Farm beach property. Therese is a philanthropy advisor for several family foundations and charitable trusts. She has served on boards for North Cascades Institute, Philanthropy Northwest, American Civil Liberties Union, and the Fremont Women's Clinic. She was a steering committee member for the Samish Flower Farm campaign. She currently serves on the Trust Development & Outreach Committee and Auction Committee. Therese lives with her long-time musician partner John Draper, and her sweet golden retriever Lily, who very much enjoyed SLT's picnic this summer.



Abby Weaver

Abby Weaver is serving as the 2019-20 Education and Community Engagement AmeriCorps member for the Trust. She is from Virginia and graduated from Christopher Newport University in 2018 with a degree in Environmental Biology. She has enjoyed exploring the outdoor activities available in Washington. Her favorite things are hiking, camping, trees, and knitting! Abby is excited to work with the local schools to help kids learn about the different ecosystems present on the Trust's properties.



Chris Williams

Chris Williams is working as a Stewardship Assistant this winter for the Trust. Chris grew up in the Bay Area and was drawn to wildlife and conservation from a young age. This passion led him to pursue a degree in zoology at the Evergreen State College. He is currently working on a Master's in Environmental Education from Western Washington University. His time with the Trust is focused on public accessibility to Trust properties.



Tori Wood

Tori Wood is serving as our 2019-20 Stewardship Events AmeriCorps member. She is a recent graduate from Western Washington University with a degree in Environmental Studies. As a student Tori interned with the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association in Whatcom County. She helped engage and lead volunteers at work parties to protect salmon habitat and educated community members about local ecology. Tori has an interest in ecological restoration and is passionate about community based stewardship. This year she will be coordinating work parties and stewardship events for the Trust.



Thank you Jack!

This fall, board member Jack Hartt stepped down to focus on his conservation and trail work. Luckily the Trust will still benefit from his experience and knowledge as he continues to serve on the Stewardship Committee and does contract work with us on parks and trails. Thank you Jack, for your service to the board.



Creating a Vision Together - We Want to Hear from YOU!

We want to hear about your conservation priorities. Skagit Land Trust is actively seeking public input through a short survey in order to better understand our community's needs, values and priorities. Information gathered through the survey will be incorporated into our strategic plan and help guide our work. Please look for the survey on Skagit Land Trust's website, www.skagitlandtrust.org, and social media accounts. We'd love to hear from you before end of 2019.



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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 for an upcoming stewardship event! RSVP online, or call 360-428-7878.

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| 11/23/19 - Samish Flower Farm Work Party | 11/29/19 - Opt Outside at Cumberland Creek |
| 12/7/19 - Hurn Field Fencing Removal & Wreath Making | 12/13/19 - Anacortes Work Party & Wreath Making |
| 12/21/19 - Samish Flower Farm Fence Removal | 1/4/20 - Tope Ryan Fencing Removal |



Annual Membership Meeting - 1/23/20 at the Burlington Community Center

Please join us at the Burlington Community Center on January 23, 2020 from 5:30-8pm. The Trust will present annual awards and update members on current and future projects. Bring a friend who wants to learn about the Trust. Visit our website for information and to RSVP.



Save the Date! "Lands We Love" Auction & Dinner March 14th, 2020 4pm-9pm

Join us for our largest fundraising event of the year! Celebrate and support the work of the Trust across the Skagit. Tickets go on sale in January. Watch for your invitation in the mail. Interested in donating or being a sponsor? Contact debbiee@skagitlandtrust.org or call 360-428-7878.