SKAGIT UPDATE



FALL 2021



9/4/21 Volunteers & Staff at Hurn Field. (I to r) Sharon Howard, Ron Lindsay, Andy Wargo, Tress Connolly, Abby Weaver, Ian McKellips, Stacy Dahl, Terry Armstrong, Jonathan Worley, Katt Klass, Irene Blanchard, Paul Johnson. Missing from photo: Hannah Katz & Dennis Stanchfield.

Finding Community On The Land

Like many Skagit Land Trust volunteers, Paul Johnson likes to explore. During 2020 he was looking for a safe way to connect with others and discover new parts of the Skagit.

"Participating in the Trust's volunteer stewardship events has introduced me to parts of our valley that I had not seen before," Johnson says. "I really enjoy meeting and working with other like-minded individuals to preserve the natural parts of our valley that make it so special."

2020 left many of us looking for ways to connect with our community and make a difference.

"I wanted to do something I was passionate about, and the work SLT does fits the bill nicely," says volunteer Dan Allison.

Skagit Land Trust is fortunate to have many passionate volunteers who find reward in restoring our natural lands. Some come to the land to learn new skills or gain experience outside the normal scope of their daily work and life. Some are curious about the plants and animals of the Pacific Northwest. Some just want to get their hands dirty and feel the satisfaction that comes from grubbing blackberry, pulling ivy, or planting a sapling in just the right spot to grow strong.



March 2021 at Samish Flower Farm

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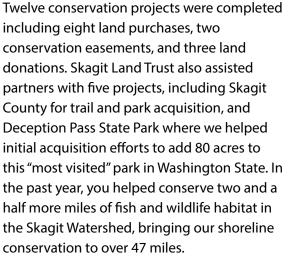
Annual Report

Dear members, partners and other supporters,

What a year! Skagit Land Trust had a highly productive year thanks to you - our members, supporters, partners and conservation-minded landowners. You were incredibly generous in multiple ways and together, the outcome is remarkable. The following information covers our fiscal year of April 1 2021-March 31 2021.



Funding for 9 Skagit River protection projects this past year came from you and the Trust, landowner donations, WA State Salmon Recovery Funding Board, & Seattle City Light





In a fast-paced campaign with enthusiastic support, we added over 50 acres and half a mile of marine shoreline to our Samish Island Conservation Area on the edge of Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. Funding came from a Capital Campaign, Skagit Land Trust board, National Coastal Wetlands Grant and Washington State Estuary and Salmon Protection Program.



On Guemes Island, a generous 78-acre land donation expanded the Guemes Mountain & Valley Conservation Area. It is now 285 acres, and an anchor in the Guemes Island Wildlife Corridor.



In the Samish River watershed, our Tope Ryan Conservation Area expanded through a land donation by Cougar Peak LLC. With the help of volunteers and funding from the National Estuary Program and Department of Ecology, we restored over 12 acres of the land.

With 88 conservation areas and conservation easements that we own and manage, plus hundreds of acres of land we manage for partners, our stewardship staff and volunteers were busy. In total, 130 volunteers cared for, monitored or restored our properties. They were incredibly productive, and through a lot of volunteer effort we completed projects such as planting 5,370 trees at Tope Ryan, planting over 4,000 trees and shrubs on the Samish Flower Farm, adding a new trail to our Samish Island Conservation Area, and preserving a lovely shoreline and forest trail at our Marblemount Conservation Area. We also hosted and partnered with many crews for habitat restoration on our lands, including from Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group, Skagit River System Cooperative, Washington Conservation Corps and EarthCorps.

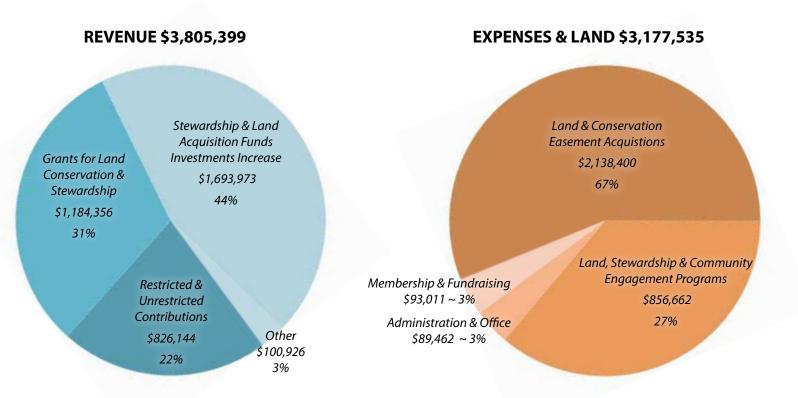


Our conservation areas and conservation easements had over 170,000 visits in the past year. We are delighted to see a growing use of our conservation areas near Mount Vernon from diverse urban communities.

We had geared up for growth in our Youth

Program but had to put that on hold until 2022 due to the pandemic. With trips postponed, SLT and our partners (Kulshan Creek Community, U.S. Forest Service, Catholic Housing Services, Mount Vernon Police Department, and North Cascades Institute) instead distributed nature bags filled with activities to families in the neighborhood.

Financials for April 1, 2020 - March 31, 2021



New Faces at Skagit Land Trust







As the Trust's new Conservation Project Manager, Jessica Lange (she/her/hers) brings an extensive background in stewardship from her time at Sound Salmon Solutions, a regional fisheries enhancement group south of Skagit County. Her understanding of local conservation issues and experience in applying for and managing grants will be beneficial to the Trust's work of acquiring and conserving land. Jessica graduated from Hawaii Pacific University, where she received a degree in Environmental Studies and Natural Resource Management. Jessica will continue to commute from her home on Camano Island where she likes "salsa dancing, the sunshine, not following recipes, nature, trying new things, sudoku and getting muddy"!

Jaz Strode-Elfant (they/them/theirs) joins Skagit Land Trust as our new Membership and Office Administrator. Jaz was most recently the Administrative Director for Resolutions Northwest in Portland, OR and brings to the Trust great technical skills and familiarity with donor databases and non-profit financial operations. A graduate of Western Washington University, where they studied Sociology and Art, Jaz is excited to return to an area where they can easily get to nature and hiking trails. Jaz has already helped out at work parties and is not afraid of hard work and getting dirty!

Jonathan Worley (he/him/his) joins us from San Diego, CA by way of Stanford University where he recently graduated with a Masters in Sustainability Science. As our Stewardship AmeriCorps, Jonathan will be the main contact for work party volunteers and along with Hannah Katz, will soon begin leading the Trust's volunteer work parties. Jonathan is looking forward to learning about places to backpack in the Pacific Northwest and spending time in the numerous bookstores in the area. Be sure to talk to him about his favorite baseball team. Hint: it's not the Mariners!



Hannah Katz (she/her/hers) has started as our Community Engagement AmeriCorps. Along with running volunteer work parties with Jonathan, Hannah will support Trust communications and outreach, and work with Community Science projects, Conservation Classroom programs and other Youth activities. Hannah hails from upstate New York and recently graduated from Hamilton College with a degree in Environmental Studies. Besides hiking, biking and paddling, she likes to spend time cooking. Ask Hannah how she and her roommates chose to move to Bellingham all the way from New York.

A great deal of work was accomplished through the efforts of the 2020/2021 AmeriCorps Stewardship Specialist, Abby Weaver, seen here working hard at the Mehler Conservation Easement. Abby was our Education and Community Engagement Associate in 2019/2020 and chose to take on another AmeriCorps term in the Stewardship department. We were so lucky to have her help while navigating the challenges of caring for Trust lands during Covid. As our volunteers who worked with her know, she connected with many Trust supporters and helped them get out to make a real difference on our conservation areas. Abby is staying in the region and has accepted a position as the Volunteer Coordinator at Whatcom Land Trust. Thank you so much for your time and energy over the last couple of years, Abby!



...Continued from page 1



7/16/21 Volunteers at Marblemount. (Front: I to r) Clay Wilcox, Adriana Barsan. (Back: I to r) Keith Saar, Sharon Howard, Mary Saar, Paul Johnson, Ro Watson.

One thing that many volunteers take away with them after the work is done is the friendships that have formed.

"I've been fortunate enough to have spent a lot of time with volunteers during Covid," says Stacy Dahl, Volunteer and Education Programs Coordinator.

"Many volunteers I've met this year are new to the area, hoping to make friends and learn the important issues in the community. It's been fun to overhear the conversations between people who can't even see each other as they tackle a big blackberry bush from opposite sides."

Volunteers are the driving force behind much of Skagit Land Trust's work. Over 50 volunteer stewardship work parties were held in the past year and a half. Through the ever-changing protocols, volunteers rolled with the punches and made a huge impact on the health of natural lands here in the Skagit. They planted thousands of trees. They cleaned up beloved shorelines. They forged new trails and kept others in good repair.

"With volunteers, more land can be restored and conserved for a given amount of money," says Allison.

Volunteers do help the Trust stretch our budget and increase our capacity to steward the land. Most importantly they strengthen and grow the community of those who care about saving land for future generations of people and wildlife.

The Trust is always looking for new volunteers. If you are interested in planting trees that will one day be the perch for a bald eagle, or clearing a trail on which a child will discover their first trillium flower, come join us on the land!



Volunteers cleanup Samish Island shoreline. From I to r: Andrew Mowat, Ryan Luvera, Hal Lee, Jennifer Bendemire, Abby Weaver, Dan Allison



Fall and winter is the time we plant new hope for the spring to come. We have a large selection of work parties and nature walks on our events page. If you have any questions about how your skills could be used to support the Trust, please contact Stacy Dahl, stacyd@skagitlandtrust.org.

A huge thank you to all of the volunteers who gave their time, talent, and heart to the land this past year. We are so grateful to have you as part of our community!



Finding New Life For An Old Home

One of the main focus areas for Skagit Land Trust is conserving land important for salmon habitat. Often the sites are located in the floodway and are susceptible to the dynamic and ever changing rivers. Sometimes these properties have a house or other structures on them.

Usually by the time the Trust comes to acquire these home sites the structures are unsafe, or damaged beyond repair due to frequent flooding. Grant requirements or donors wishes may also require the Trust remove a house from a property. When this is the case, the Trust works with local contractors such as Lautenbach Recycling to remove the structures, debris, and any harmful waste from the property. These contractors work to recycle as much as possible of materials they remove.



The Stewardship Committee meeting to discuss options for the house.

In 2019, with support from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, the Trust purchased 66 acres that now make up the Marblemount Conservation Area. The previous owners had shown great care for their land, house, and shop. Knowing that the structures would need to be removed due to grant requirements, Trust staff, board members, and grant managers explored options to save the house. We met with house movers to see how feasible it would be to sell the house and move it to a new location. We reached out to those in the local community to see if there was interest in such an option. Unfortunately, after a year of attempts, these

efforts didn't work out, so we found another way to create new life for the structures on the property.

In 2021, we were able to contract with RE-USE Consulting, a local company that deconstructs buildings and repurposes the materials. At the Marblemount Conservation Area, 62% of the materials from the site were reused, 34% were recycled, and only 4% were disposed of. RE-USE was able to accomplish this by deconstructing the buildings piece by piece to allow for reassembling elsewhere, utilizing anything and everything they could from the original structure.

The two-story pole building was disassembled and re-assembled at a new location in Skagit County, while many of the sheds were sold as-is to individuals. The house was dismantled and whole sections, windows and all, were sold to construct other buildings in the area. All of this was accomplished with very limited disturbance to the surrounding forest and land.



Volunteers clearing a tree from the restored loop trail



A volunteer clearing blackberry from the loop trail this summer

The protected property now supports wildlife habitat with a maturing forest and 3,000 feet of Skagit River shoreline. A 1.25-mile-long public loop trail and covered picnic shelter make the area a great place for the whole family to connect with nature. We are currently working on parking for the site, and hope to have the site open for general public use soon. Stay tuned for details!

The Trust is excited to add the deconstruction method to the list of ways we steward our lands.











RE-USE meticulously deconstructed the home site and surrounding structures. The chart above shows the impact of reusing the building supplies and structures. The interior structures, including cabinets and bathroom fixtures also found new homes instead of ending up in a landfill.



The March Point Heronry Expands and a New Camera System is Installed



Thanks to an outpouring of community support, the Trust purchased an additional 3.5 acres of nesting grounds for local Great Blue Herons at the March Point Heronry this summer. Close to 200 families, businesses, and organizations heard our call for the herons, and in two short months raised the funds needed to purchase and steward this land.

This property will be added to 7 acres of the heronry the Trust already owns and protects as a Conservation Area. The Trust also holds a Conservation Easement on 5 acres of the heronry. In total, the Trust now protects 15.5 acres at March Point.

Skagit Land Trust is delighted to be the stewards of this critical heron habitat. For the past 27 years the Trust has worked to knit together protected lands at this site. The March Point Heronry is

small in acreage, but large in importance. At 700+ nests this heronry is the biggest colony of Great Blue Herons on the west coast of the continental United States.

Historically Great Blue Herons have nested in smaller groups across the landscape. As mature coastal forests with tall trees and close proximity to foraging grounds have disappeared, many herons in Skagit County have gathered at March Point. The sheer number of herons breeding, nesting, and rearing their young at March Point provides the genetic diversity necessary to sustain a healthy population of Great Blue Herons in the Salish Sea.

This fall the long-awaited expansion of the heron camera project will be installed, along with a larger solar system to power it. Since July, when the herons left the heronry at the end of nesting season, staff and volunteers have been busy preparing the site. Three cameras will be placed in tall trees overlooking as many nests as possible. The solar array will be placed behind a buffer of trees and sited in a way to capture all available sunlight during the short days of the early nesting season which begins in February.

At that time, live video streaming of the herons in their nests will start and volunteer monitors will observe herons, collecting data that will help protect these iconic birds. Community members interested in assisting with the Trust's behavior monitoring efforts in the 2022 season are invited to contact Stacy Dahl, stacyd@skagitlandtrust.org, who coordinates the Trust's community science efforts. Everyone will be able to watch live images of nesting activity through the Trust's website. We hope you will join us!



Volunteers Ron Lindsay & Hal Lee clear a temporary trail to the solar site.



In addition to the March Point Heronry, the Trust stewards multiple properties that support Great Blue Herons throughout their lifecycle, including the Samish Island and Barney Lake Conservation Areas. Conserving a variety of sites will continue to grow in importance as Great Blue Herons adapt to the effects of climate change on their coastal habitat. Skagit Land Trust is grateful for the community support that made this purchase and protection possible.

An image from the original camera last operational in 2017. Imagine what three cameras will show!

Those We've Lost (2020-2021)

In the past year we have lost some foundational members of Skagit Land Trust. They were charter members, land donors, former board members, longtime supporters, land stewards, and artists who shared their talents to save local lands. They helped rally the community to conserve places like Hurn Field, Guemes Mountain, Kelly's Point, and the entrance to Samish Island. Many were part of our Cedar Legacy Circle. We miss these members and honor them for helping to leave a natural legacy in the Skagit.

Pictured below from left to right, Lloyd Brown, Catherine Carter, Ann Dursch, Mary Froderberg, Glen Hoff, Trevor Kyle, Doug Lundgren, Phil McCracken, Saul Spiro, Gary Miles, Lavone Newall Reim, and Leo Paul.

Not pictured are Gladys Bailey-Hudec, Tony Ball, Peggy Bissell, Hannah Colton, Christina Donahue, Janet Ebersole, Kaylene Farley, Susannah Hartt, Betty Ann Morgan, Richard Nelson, Margaret Pair, Mary Pease, William Pfeifer, Cheri Relyea, Gary Richardson, Cecil Thomas, Elizabeth Warren, Ginny Wolff, and Betty Wright. They are remembered.



In Honor and Memorial Gifts (2020-2021)

In memory of Norm Ainslie Tim Manns & Brenda Cunningham

In memory of Margarethe Allen Deborah Allen

In memory of Tom Andrak M J Andrak

In memory of Tony Ball Charles and Marnie Pennington

In memory of Walter B & Janet P. Barnard Phoebe Barnard and John Bowey

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In memory of Barbara Carstens Jim and Joyce Anderson

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In memory of Lois & Cleve Chase Rebecca Cannon

In memory of Andy Christensen Kelly Bush and Russ Dalton

In memory of Harold Christenson Shirley Christenson Karen and Doug Radcliffe

In honor of John Conlee Gerri and John Gunn

In memory of Gary Coselman Robert and Victoria Bourns

In honor of Norm Culbert Laurette Culbert

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In honor of Tanya Culbert Laurette Culbert

In honor of Stacy Dahl Dai Fryer

In honor of Robert & Edith Dalton Kelly Bush and Russ Dalton

In memory of Bruce Daniel Malcolm Daniel and Darryl Morrison

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In honor of Jeff Ernst & Dana Pound Keith and Jan Wiggers

In memory of Margaret (Maggie) Estes Leslie Menard

In memory of David Farrow Christine Farrow

In honor of Margaret Lin Folsom Fred Burke

In honor of Martha Frankel Jennifer Hagloch

In honor of David Freiberger Danielle Freiberger

In honor of Steve Ganz Merrilee Harrell

In **honor of Dana & Susan George** Robert Thomas

In honor of Ethan & Elizabeth Goldberg John and Linda Hunt

In memory of Michael Golding Linda Swan

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In memory of Robert & Nelly Han Amy Han and Brian Berry In honor of Kit & Carol Harma Miriam Lambert

In memory of Sue Ellen Heflin Ann Reid and Tom Theisen

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SKAGIT UPDATE

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In memory of Ellen True Kathryn True

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Individual Members

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.

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October 15 - **Orca Recovery Weekend Kickoff at Marblemount** - 10am-2pm October 16 - **Orca Recovery Day Work Party at Tope Ryan** - 9am-12pm October 21 - **SLT Reads: A Puget Sound Orca in Captivity** - 5:30-7pm October 22 - **Marblemount CA Work Party & Nature Walk** - 10am-2pm Oct 27 - **Edible and Medicinal Plant Walk at Marblemount CA** - 2pm-3:30pm Oct 28 - **Minkler Lake CA Work Party** - 9am-12pm Oct 29 - **Marblemount CA Work Party & Nature Walk** - 10am-2pm

Nov 6 - First Saturday Work Party at Samish Island CA - 9am-12pm



Save the Date! Giving Tuesday is November 30th Double your Donation to Local Lands More information coming soon