

Skagit Land Trust Annual Meeting Minutes

MARCH 8, 2023
Via Zoom

Beginning at 5:15 p.m. participants in the Zoom meeting who had logged in early watched a review of Skagit Land Trust projects and events during the past year. At 5:32 p.m. Molly Doran welcomed the 74 households participating in the virtual meeting. Molly thanked Mark Hitchcock, who is finishing a two-year term as board President, and gave an overview of his excellent leadership during these years.

Annual Business Meeting

Molly then introduced Vice President, and incoming President, Kathy Thornburgh. Kathy conducted the business portion of the annual meeting.

The following board members were up for re-election to three-year terms: Roger Fuller, Karen Krub, Hal Lee, Mark Linnemann, Therese Ogle, Warren Walz, and Anne Winkes. Lynne Wenberg-Davidson was a candidate to join the board for a three-year term.

Laura Hartner moved to accept the slate of candidates. Stacey Dahl seconded the motion. The members attending voted via Zoom poll, and 97% supported the slate, none opposed, and 4% abstained.

Kathy next introduced the proposed by-law updates, which would:

- Clarify that Notice of Special Meetings refers to special meetings of the board.
- Add to the by-laws the purposes and membership of the Facilities Committee and the Investment Committee.
- Clarify committee membership for Stewardship, Development, Outreach, Public Policy, and Facilities Committees (must include board and staff and may include Trust members who are not board or staff).
- Change the Communication Committee's name to Outreach Committee, clarify its role, modernize media language, and add the goal of working with communities not yet reached.

Keith Wiggers moved to accept the by-law changes as presented, Anne Winkes seconded, and the members voted via Zoom poll 98% in favor of the motion, none opposed, and 2% abstaining.

Presentation of Awards

Kathy Thornburgh presented the Blue Heron Award to board member and past president Anne Winkes. Each year this award goes to a member who has shown extraordinary dedication to the environment and wildlife of Skagit County. Kathy described Anne, who is chair of the Trust's Public Policy Committee and past Board President, as a force in promoting public policy to

protect our lands and wildlife. Kathy also recognized Anne for her outstanding work to protect Great Blue Herons. Anne said that receiving the award was an honor and that she feels it is a wonderful honor to be part of Skagit Land Trust and its work to protect habitat for people and for wildlife.

Conservation Director Michael Kirshenbaum presented the Conservation Award to Phil Buri, the Trust's attorney. Phil, who is currently working on thirteen different projects for the Trust, has handled a wide range of legal matters for the organization, almost always pro bono. He expressed his thanks for the award and his belief in the significant positive effect that small groups of dedicated people, multiplied over many places across the world, can have at a time when such problems as climate change can cause us to despair.

Kari Odden, Conservation Project Manager, presented the Conservation Easement Recognition Award to Anne Casperson. Anne donated a conservation easement on a large portion of her Guemes Island shoreline property. Anne refers to herself as the current steward of the property, almost all of which she maintains in a natural condition.

Kayla Seaforth, Stewardship Coordinator – East County, presented the Stewardship Department Award to the Restoration Program of the Skagit River Systems Cooperative (SRSC), represented by Brenda Clifton, Senior Riparian Botanist. SRSC has completed restoration projects at five Skagit Land Trust properties and has planted 400,00 plants across 600 acres in the Skagit watershed to support salmon restoration. Brenda expressed her appreciation for the partnership with the Trust. SRSC has planted over 80 acres of riparian habitat on Trust properties. She called out SRSC's planting crew for doing the hard work that has made these projects possible.

Stacy Dahl, Volunteer & Education Programs Coordinator, presented the Education & Outreach Department Award to the March Point Heronry Volunteers. Between April and September of 2022, twelve volunteers gave almost 500 hours to observing heronry behavior via the March Point heronry cameras, observing over 300 nests and gathering a trove of behavioral and productivity information about Great Blue Herons. The volunteers include Terry Armstrong, Sarah Zabel, Anne Winkes, Laurette Culbert, Tracy Ouellette, Sue Ehler, Shirley Hoh, Sharon Howard, May Haley, Mike Antrim, Gloria Hubacker, and Ava Meredith.

Executive Director Molly Doran next expressed her appreciation for the dedication of Rusty Kuntze, now leaving the board. Rusty has been a board member for most of the years since 2006, served as Board President, and served on every committee and at one time or another chaired most of them. He was a charter member of Skagit Land Trust.

Laura Hartner, Development & Outreach Director, then presented the Development Department Award to Rusty Kuntze, who has been on the Development Committee for fifteen years and served with all three of the Trust's successive Development Directors. In response, Rusty referred to his time with Skagit Land Trust as "one of the true joys of my life" and expressed his thanks for having been given the opportunity to serve these many years. He said that seeing how the Trust has evolved gives him hope for this place that we all care about so deeply.

Molly then presented an illustrated summary of Skagit Land Trust's accomplishments from April 2022 through March 2023, the Trust's fiscal year.

Molly introduced Skagit Land Trust founder and board member Keith Wiggers, who described how the Trust came to own a portion of the March Point Heronry when the Trust was just two years old. Bud and Vera Kinney donated 2.5 acres, the first property the Trust owned. Over the years, the Trust has been able to acquire 13 more acres of the forest where the heronry is located.

Stacy Dahl gave background on the March Point heronry's location and significance and described the Trust's three community science projects (active tree survey, nest count, and ground-based nesting observation) in addition to the camera observations. Anne Winkes then presented a program about what the volunteers have learned about heron behavior in the March Point colony using the cameras installed there. The program concluded with a question and answer session and ended at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Manns, Board Secretary