

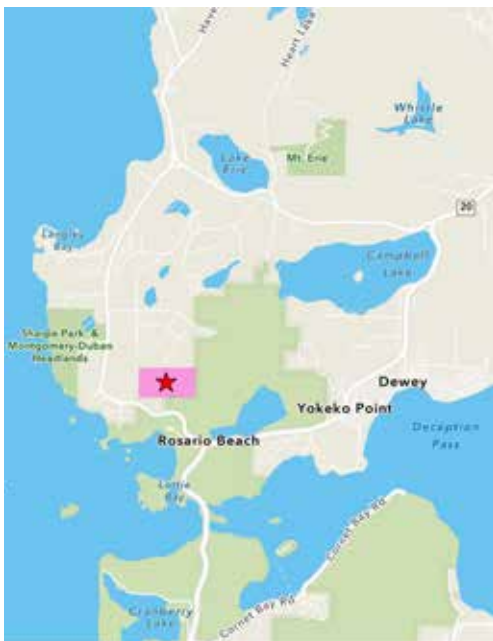


Deception Pass Park Grows Thanks to Grassroots Effort

“This protection opportunity was almost lost so many times,” says Molly Doran, Executive Director of Skagit Land Trust. “It is so gratifying to know it has all come together.”

After three years of work, the partnership of Skagit Land Trust, Washington State Parks & Recreation, Skagit County Parks & Recreation, and South Fidalgo community members is on track to expand Deception Pass State Park by 78 acres. Thanks to the commitment of these project partners and a conservation minded private landowner, this adjacent acreage will become part of the park by the end of the year.

“Deception Pass is the most visited state park in the system,” says Washington State Parks Program Manager Nikki Fields. “I am excited that we’ve had an opportunity to expand the diversity of what the park offers, protect the largest remaining property within the park’s long-term boundary from development, and help connect the park to other public lands in the area.”



Skagit Land Trust served in a coordinating role to get the property ready for purchase by the park. The Trust and its members also assisted the park in applying for a state grant, gathering letters of support and matching funds, and navigating the intricacies of this three-year conservation effort.

“Skagit Land Trust, the South Fidalgo community, Skagit County Parks, and Deception Pass staff all were behind this grassroots effort,” says Skagit County Parks & Recreation Director Brian Adams. “This is a huge accomplishment that will be enjoyed by recreationalists and wildlife in perpetuity. The Trust was instrumental in making this acquisition project a reality.”

“After much work through a wide array of partners and community members I am elated that the purchase of this parcel will protect the view shed from North Beach and provide future opportunities for visitors to explore another part of Deception Pass State Park,” says Jason Armstrong,

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Hiking possibilities on the property.

Area Manager for Deception Pass State Park. "I look forward to a thoughtful trail development plan where people get to explore the High G Mountain area and hopefully connect the trails system to Sharpe's Park."

The property is surrounded by current park boundaries and features a rich mosaic of rocky balds, the southern side of Mount High-G, and an important viewshed from Bowman Bay. Water from the property drains to Bowman Bay and Pass Lake basins. Ownership of this land allows the park more control over what happens in these two watersheds.

"Washington State Parks would like to thank our partners on this project," says Fields. "Our acquisition grants can be quite competitive, and partnerships like the ones that formed to save this property really make the difference between the projects that are funded and those that aren't."

Future Forest Frontiers



Board President Mark Hitchcock and Stewardship Director Regina Wandler looking out across the young trees on the property.

In October of 2022 Skagit Land Trust purchased 80 acres of forestlands near Marblemount. The forest, which is in a working forest classification, is located just south of the confluence of the Cascade and Skagit Rivers. It features regrowth of cedar, alder, and Douglas fir trees. The property connects to other forests, which provide important habitat corridors for wildlife. Several creeks run through the property, ultimately connecting to the Cascade River. Protecting the property benefits water quality and salmon habitat.

"The property is lovely with rocky outcroppings, creeks, young conifers growing up in forest canopy openings, and a diverse understory," says Conservation Project Manager Kari Odden. "Keeping the property in forestland protects sustainable forest resources as well as wildlife habitat."

One unique feature of the property is found beneath the forest floor. The bedrock of the property is made up of Shuksan greenschist, the same rock found at the once proposed quarry near Rockport. By conserving this land now, the Trust was able to eliminate any future mining potential.

"The Trust is interested in additional ways to ensure that the large tracts of forestland in Skagit County remain undeveloped. Resource and working forests such as this continue to filter our drinking water and provide upland forest habitat for wildlife across the foothills of the North Cascades," says Stewardship Director Regina Wandler. "We look forward to learning more about the future of sustainable forestry in the Skagit."

Destruction of forests contributes more to carbon emissions than all the world's trucks, cars, ships, trains, and planes combined. We must find ways to maintain our forest lands, both as wildlife and recreation areas and as sustainably managed forest resource lands. Owning a sustainably managed resource forest, such as this one, is an opportunity for the Trust to explore how working forests contribute to our ecosystem and community.



One of many rock faces found on the property.

"This was a great opportunity for the Trust to acquire a young, thriving forest from which to explore emerging markets for ecosystem services," says Board President Mark Hitchcock. "Our experiences will help inform future working-forest conservation easements."

IRA Giving Just Made Sense for Couple Passionate about Protecting Wild Places

Eric Hall and Susie Wilson have seen a lot of changes in the 50 years they have lived in the Skagit. They've witnessed development spread from town centers to the more rural and wild parts of the County. Loving the outdoors and wildlife, and knowing that natural lands are limited, Eric and Susie started donating to Skagit Land Trust in 2012.



"With everything else that's going on in the world, I find it more important than ever to support Skagit Land Trust," says Susie. "People need the peacefulness of conserved areas to escape for a while and return refreshed. It might be a matter of just viewing an area where man's influence is not so obvious or being able to walk those lands and re-boot."

Through Trust events Eric and Susie found a community of like-minded people working together to protect the natural places needed for clean water, air, wildlife, and people.

"Skagit Valley is a beautiful and treasured place," says Eric. "Conservation, if done wisely, is a way to ensure that the great parts remain for future generations."

Since becoming members, Susie and Eric have supported the work of the Trust in a variety of ways from volunteering, sharing photography from Trust properties, and making financial gifts. This year, looking at the Required Minimum Distribution they needed to take from their IRA, they decided the best use of those funds would be to support the work of the Trust.



"Since we can be comfortable without all of that income, it makes sense to pass some or all of that retirement income on to an organization that is accomplishing goals that we share," says Susie.

Eric and Susie found the donation process easy. With one form, they directed the institution holding their IRA to transfer funds to the Trust. They would recommend this donation option to anyone looking for a tax-savvy way to support charities they care about.



Susie and Eric's travels to natural wonders around the world have deepened their love of nature and inspired them to protect the place they call home.

"When reaching the age of taking the Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), if one is not dependent on that income for living, it makes perfect sense to donate, since that income becomes non-taxable if it is a traditional IRA," says Susie.

Eric and Susie say that given the Trust's track record over the years, they are convinced that this is the best way to direct their local conservation efforts. "The amount of land, and its diversity, is growing to be a great success for Skagit. Why not continue a good thing?"

If you are interested in supporting Skagit Land Trust with a gift from your IRA, Donor Advised Fund, or with appreciated stock, please contact Development & Outreach Director Laura Hartner, laurah@skagitlandtrust.org.

Have you recently made a gift to the Trust with an IRA? Please be sure to contact us and let us know! Sometimes the Trust receives no information on the person making a gift through their IRA. When this happens, we're unable to send an acknowledgment letter or share our thanks with the member. We currently have one generous gift that we have not been able to connect to the person who gave it. If you have been waiting for a thank you letter and think this might be you, please contact the Trust – 360-428-7878. Thank you for your support!

Double Your Gift to Skagit Lands and Waters on Giving Tuesday

Mark your calendars for November 29th

On Giving Tuesday (November 29th) our community will be coming together to make a difference in the world around us. This special day encourages each of us to unite, do good, and exercise generosity. Your donation to Skagit Land Trust during Giving Tuesday will make a positive impact on nature in the Skagit. It will protect places for wildlife. It will connect the next generation with lands they care for.



Your gift on November 29th will go further! All gifts during Giving Tuesday will be doubled thanks to a \$10,000 matching fund.

2023 will be an important year in Skagit Land Trust's history. You can have a huge impact on the coming year by making a gift during Giving Tuesday.

Want to make your gift go even further? Rise to our Skagit Sustainer Challenge!

For our 30th Anniversary year, we are looking for 30 new Skagit Sustainers, who make a recurring monthly or quarterly gift to the Trust. Ongoing gifts of any amount from sustaining members allow the Trust to have funds on hand when the chance to save a special place arises.

Thanks to a generous match from a Trust board member, we also have a dedicated \$6,000 match for all new Skagit Sustainers gifts. Your recurring donation will be doubled for the value of your full year of giving and go twice as far to protect and care for lands in the Skagit in the year to come.

Giving Tuesday is about looking for ways to support the causes you care about and help your community. Here at Skagit Land Trust, one of our goals is to inspire the next generation to care about the natural lands of the Skagit. We do this by bringing students out to learn on Trust lands, and by supporting other organizations in the community with their efforts to connect the community to the outdoors.



This year for Giving Tuesday, Skagit Land Trust is partnering with the Mount Vernon Parks & Recreation Department on their "Explore Outdoors" Backpack program. These backpacks will include Skagit Land Trust's new field guide on the plants and animals of the Skagit along with supplies for families to explore nature close to home. **When you donate \$100 or more to Skagit Land Trust on Giving Tuesday, we'll donate a field guide to the backpack program.** Our goal is to have member support for 100 field guides. This is a great opportunity to support two organizations working to connect and educate the community on the importance of natural spaces.

During this season we take time to reflect on what we are grateful for. Here at Skagit Land Trust, we are grateful for you. Thanks to your membership support, critical natural lands in the Skagit will be here for generations of people and wildlife to enjoy. Thank you!

Interested in making a gift of stock, from your IRA, or a Donor Advised Fund? Many members have found this to be a smart and tax-savvy way to support land conservation here in the Skagit. You can learn more about these giving options on our website, skagitlandtrust.org, or by emailing Laura Hartner, laurah@skagitlandtrust.org.



SLT's 100 out of 100 Score Lets Donors Give With Confidence

Skagit Land Trust recently learned that Charity Navigator lists the Trust as a four-star charity with a 100 out of 100 score for our accountability and finances.

"I love Charity Navigator and I use it both personally and for other clients," says Leslie Menard with Benchmark Business Services. "I'm beyond thrilled to see that score for Skagit Land Trust!"



Charity Navigator is an online independent organization that the public can use to review the overall health of a non-profit. Since 2001, the website has rated 200,000 charities.

"From an objective insider position, this non-profit has an amazing team working hard individually and collectively with commitment and deep caring to support the mission," says Leslie, whom the Trust began contracting with for bookkeeping services in 2020. "The Trust's rating on Charity Navigator is well-earned."

The rating lets the public know that Skagit Land Trust meets or exceeds best practices and industry standards across all areas tracked and is a highly-effective charity.

"I started using Charity Navigator personally in 2010," Leslie says. "It was eye-opening because I realized some of my favorite charities at the time were not using donated funds very efficiently or effectively."



After learning more about the Trust's mission, Leslie decided she wanted to support this work as a donating member too. "Asphalt is unforgiving and relentless," says Leslie. "Skagit Land Trust is effectively and efficiently using grants and contributions to save what we love about this green (sometimes soggy) valley. I am so happy to be a part of it."

Executive Director Molly Doran says - "It is an honor to have both Charity Navigator's highest rating as well as our accreditation status awarded by the national Land Trust Accreditation Commission. Third party verification helps us report to our donors. The Trust's board and staff are deeply indebted to our members and supporters, and we strive to make sure we maintain that trust."

Come Experience the Birds Of Winter at a Trumpeter Swan Viewing Event at Barney Lake



Skagit Land Trust has multiple events planned this winter to allow Trust members and the community to view hundreds of Trumpeter Swans as they take off for the day from their overnight resting spot at Barney Lake.

Trust staff and local birding experts will lead groups to viewing areas near the main part of the lake. There, as the sun's first rays burn the mist off the water, guests will listen as a chorus of migrating waterfowl greet the day with squawks, honks, and general chatter.

Be sure to bring your binoculars for a closer look at the variety of waterfowl that use the lake. Hawks, eagles, and great blue heron are often spotted during these visits.

Not a morning person? We also have a "Goodnight Swan" walk to view the birds as they come back to the lake in the evening. For more information, visit www.skagitlandtrust.org.



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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.

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Mark Your Calendars!

Giving Tuesday is November 29th

Read inside to learn about special matching fund opportunities



Join Us For An Upcoming Event!

Learn more & RSVP Online - www.skagitlandtrust.org

November 25 — Opt Outside at Samish Island — 9am-12pm

December 3 — Barney Lake Work Party — 9am-12pm

December 9 — Barr Creek Work Party — 10am-2pm

December 10 — Swanrise — 7:15am-9am

December 16 — Samish Miles Work Party — 9am-12pm

January 7 — Swanrise — 7:30am-9am

January 16 — MLK Day of Service at Cumberland — 4:15pm-5:30pm

January 21 — Goodnight Swans — 4:15pm-5:30pm

The lands conserved and protected by Skagit Land Trust have been inhabited and stewarded by numerous tribes and Indigenous peoples since time immemorial. We recognize and respect the inherent, indigenous, and treaty rights of the Coast Salish People who have deep and abiding connections to these places. We seek to partner with local tribes as we conserve and care for these lands and waters.