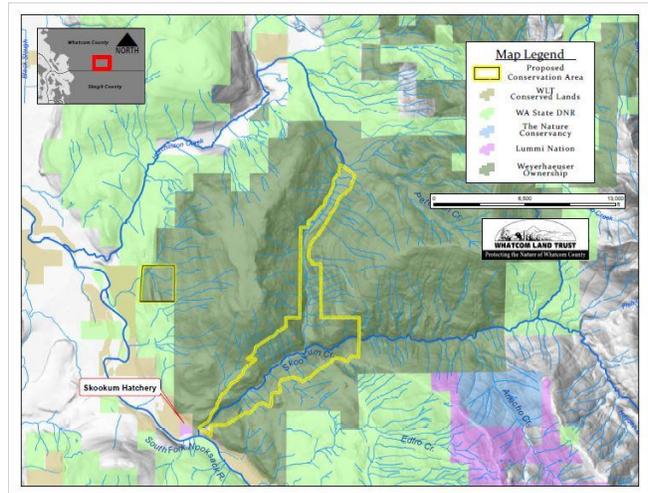


Skookum Creek: A missing piece in the puzzle of the C2C

On the line between Whatcom and Skagit Counties is one of the last remaining relatively intact corridors of undeveloped land spanning the foothills of the Cascades to the waters of the Puget Sound. This unique corridor, known as the Cascades to Chuckanuts Conservation Corridor (C2C) is critical to the fish and wildlife species we know and love in this region. Salmon, eagle, elk and many others have utilized this corridor for hundreds of years in order to survive and repopulate. As development from surrounding cities expands, this corridor has the potential to be lost forever. Protecting land within the C2C is Whatcom Land Trust's highest priority, providing hope for the C2C and aligning with its mission to preserve and protect wildlife habitat, scenic, agricultural and open space lands in Whatcom County for generations to come.



Located on the Eastern edge of the C2C is Skookum Creek, an essential piece of land to help protect landscape connectivity in Whatcom County

A Small Creek with a Big Impact

Located in the Southeast corner of Whatcom County, in the foothills of the Twin Sisters are the headwaters of Skookum Creek, the largest cold water tributary to the South Fork Nooksack River. Once an abundant, healthy flowing stream, Skookum has most recently been utilized for its surrounding natural resources, mainly timber production. Because of this, the health of Skookum has deteriorated over the past decades, resulting in warmer water temperatures, more intense flooding events and lower water quality. Being the largest tributary to the South Fork Nooksack, the health of Skookum Creek has a large impact on the overall health of the South Fork, which is currently listed under the Clean Water Act (CWA) as a federally impaired waterway for both temperature and fine sediment load.



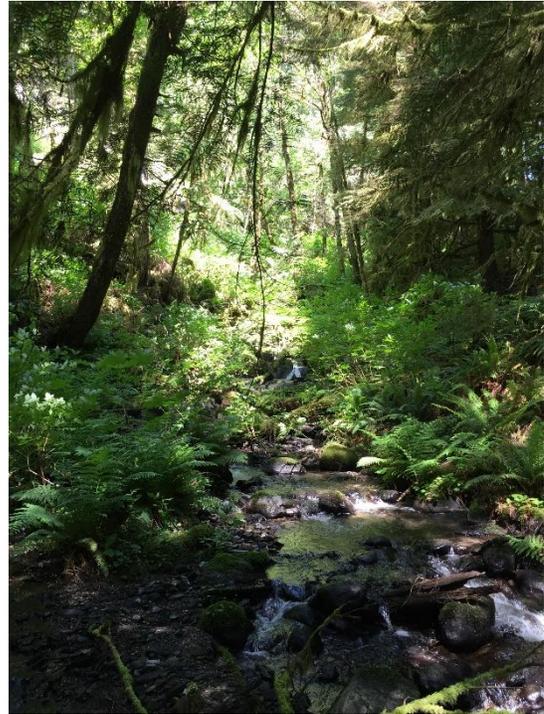
The view from above Skookum Creek shows a ridgeline of logging roads and cut forests. Whatcom Land Trust aims to return Skookum's riparian habitat back to a healthy, mature forest.

Whatcom Land Trust's upcoming acquisition of 1,400 acres in the Skookum Creek Conservation Corridor is the largest contiguous land conservation in the C2C. Protecting Skookum Creek's riparian habitat as well as Musto Marsh and Duck Pond, two wetland complexes providing cold water to Skookum and the South Fork, will help improve water quality, increase habitat connectivity and enhance wildlife and human quality of life through a connection to this land.

Connecting Land in the C2C

Upstream of the proposed Land Trust acquisition is the 650-acre Arlecho Creek Preserve protected by the Nature Conservancy. This preserve of old-growth Douglas fir and western red cedar is the largest remaining privately owned stand of old-growth between the lowlands of the Puget Sound and the higher elevations of the Cascades. Lummi Nation owns property surrounding the Arlecho Creek Preserve, thus increasing the protected land in this area. Downstream from Skookum Creek exists numerous properties conserved by Whatcom Land Trust including Edfro Creek, Port Blakely I&II, Nessel Farm and Christie Creek, just to name a few.

Skookum Creek connects habitat corridors for salmon, beaver and other animals, including the Nooksack elk herd's summer grazing and calving habitat at the base of the Twin Sisters with its lowland winter browsing habitat along the South Fork. Whatcom Land Trust aims to change the land use priority surrounding Skookum from active forestry to habitat conservation while ensuring that large swaths of public and privately owned forestland are intact and functional, connecting waterways and habitat corridors for the benefit of all. Increasing land connectivity through Skookum will not only benefit the South Fork Valley by enhancing water and habitat quality, but also the entire C2C corridor, Whatcom Land Trust's highest priority in conservation, by providing an essential piece in the puzzle of protecting the last remaining undeveloped corridor in the Puget Sound from being lost forever.



Skookum Creek has the potential to provide excellent landscape connectivity between other protected lands in the South Fork Valley, and the C2C overall.