



## Preserving Ancient Trees Through a 'Community Forest'

Old growth forests are few and far between.

Truly ancient forests are rare among the rare.

Canyon Lake Creek Old Growth, located east of Deming, is one of those truly rare ancient forests and currently the oldest privately owned forest in the state. Whatcom Land Trust, in its largest project ever, is working towards preserving this local treasure as a "community forest."

Working with the Trust for Public Lands, WLT has helped facilitate an option to purchase this old growth forest and the surrounding 2,300-acre watershed from Crown Pacific, a local forest products company. The purchase price for this property, including the lake and 600 acres of ancient forest, is \$3.692 million.

Identified in 1993 by WLT as a conservation site of highest priority, this site gained national attention earlier this year when scientists were investigating the ecological significance of the forest and discovered the trees were 800 years old. According to Dr. James Agee, Professor of Forest Ecology at the University of Washington School of Forestry, this is one of the oldest forest stands known in the Pacific Northwest and one of the largest intact stands of its age. Other experts at the university agree.

"The forest and trees at Canyon Lake are extraordinary for their antiquity. Trees of this age have rarely been found and documented in the Cascade Range," Dr. Jerry Franklin, professor of Ecosystem Analysis, said.

*(Continued on page 4)*

*"This is exciting. The notion of a community acquiring and managing a site such as Canyon Creek, is a first and worthy of recognition"*

*Brad Smith  
Dean of Huxley  
College, WWU*

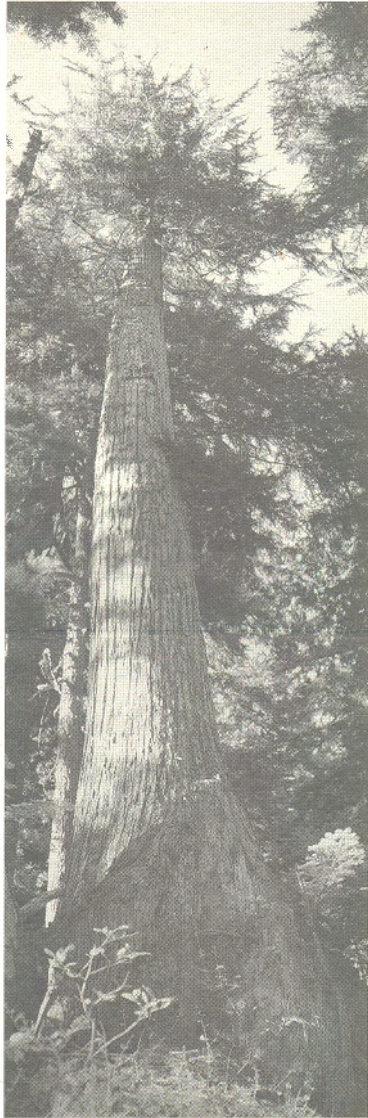


Photo Courtesy: Rand Jack, Rod Burron

### Conservation properties

## Trust preserves river frontage, farm site, tidelands

### River frontage protected

In April, Dr. Virginia Streets of Lynden donated a conservation easement to Whatcom Land Trust protecting two acres of land near Lynden.

This beautiful property, originally part of the Holden and Phoebe Judson homestead, borders the Nooksack River and is surrounded by farmland. It is very near the conservation easement donated to the Trust by Jan and Ken

Stremler in 1997.

The easement restricts subdivision of the property or building of any additional residences, while protecting scenic views of Mt. Baker, the Twin Sisters, and views to the west over the San Juan Islands.

In addition to maintaining scenic views, this easement protects important wetlands associated with the Nooksack River. These valuable riparian

*(Continued on page 8)*

**WLT hires  
Conservation  
Director**  
*(See president's  
message, pg. 2.)*

**Monitoring  
conservation  
easements, forever.**  
*(See pg. 3.)*

## Membership survey underway

WLT members are being contacted and asked their opinions about WLT conservation projects, this newsletter and other outreach programs. The goal is to reach every WLT member, but there is a chance some may be missed.

If you are interested in answering this brief survey but haven't been contacted, please call us at 650-9470.

## Thanks to young volunteers

The Land Trust thanks **Derek Franklin**, age 10, and **Cecily Franklin**, age 6, for helping us label 400 invitations to the community forum in May.

## Donating stocks or securities can result in double benefits

If you are considering a gift to the Whatcom Land Trust it may be to your advantage to give stocks, bonds or mutual funds instead of cash.

Any securities you have owned for more than 18 months may be subject to capital gains tax if you sell them. However, if you make a gift of these securities to WLT, you get a charitable deduction for the full fair market value as of the day of transfer and you avoid the tax on capital gain.

Please give us a call if you would like to discuss this or any other gift, 650-9470

## New advertising sponsor added

Business advertisers in *The Steward* continue to underwrite our printing and mailing expenses.

This issue we have added **Water Resources Consulting, LLC** to this group of supporters. Thank you **Jan and Peter Willing**.

## Board resignations

Dick Beardsley has resigned from the managing board of directors and is now serving on the advisory board. As a managing board member, Dick was active in WLT's media relations and fund-raising campaigns. He also initiated the business sponsors for this newsletter. Dick continues to serve on the WLT outreach committee.

Gordon Scott has also officially resigned as WLT board member as he begins his new role as WLT Conservation Director. Gordon served on the board for four years, including a two-year term as president, from 1996-97.

## ARCO sponsors heron lectures

Biologist Ann Eissinger will present information on Great Blue Herons this summer. These events are sponsored by ARCO and will be held at Birch Bay State Park on July 4, at 7:30 p.m.; July 5, at 9 a.m.; August 8, at 7:30 p.m.; and August 9, at 9 a.m.

For information call the Park office, 371-2800.

## Message from the President

# New conservation director, public forum: actions that support Land Trust mission

Chris Moench  
WLT Board President

Two basic ideas motivate Whatcom Land Trust actions. One is *the acquisition of legal interest in conservation property* so that there is a natural legacy to protect; the second is the idea of *stewardship education* so that there are people to protect that legacy. This spring WLT took two steps symbolic of these ideas.

## New WLT position provides resources

The first action was to hire Gordon Scott, professional land use planner and former WLT Board of Directors president, as a full-time Conservation Director.

Gordon's responsibilities include planning and executing conservation programs that protect important elements of the county's natural heritage and landscape. For example, the Board has often discussed the idea of identifying salmon, elk and eagle habitat and developing a program to protect these sites. With Gordon on staff we now have the resources to engage in this kind of programmatic approach to land conservation.

These efforts will hopefully leave a legacy of protected natural systems for the next generations of Whatcom County residents to enjoy.

## Public forums promote understanding

The second action was to sponsor a series of public forums on local land use issues. These panel discussions explored our relationship, as individuals and as a community, to the land. The goal is to leave the land in as good or better condition than when we received it. We believe this can be done through a clear understanding of the many economic, emotional, physical and spiritual factors that govern our relationship to the land.

We also believe that everyone is responsible to the land on which they live. If a community is to have a sustainable relationship with land, individual actions must be based on an ethic of stewardship. We sponsored the panels to build that stewardship ethic.

## WLT members encouraged to participate

In this issue of *The Steward*, you'll notice many activities inviting WLT members to participate in land conservation efforts and stewardship education. Among these is our membership survey. This is an opportunity for you to let us know how the we're doing and how you might want to get involved.

We are also inviting members to send in their nomination for the "Land Steward of the Year" award. (*See form on page 7.*)

And finally, be sure to mark on your calendars and come to our first annual membership gathering on September 11. It will be the first time we'll all be able to come together as a community of stewards. We'll honor people who have conserved their land through the Trust, announce the "Land Steward of the Year" and meet (or reconnect) with each other.

I hope to see you there. ☺

*The Mission of the Whatcom Land Trust is to preserve and protect unique natural, scenic, agricultural and open space land in Whatcom County through acquisition of perpetual conservation easements or other land interests that insure the protection of the resource value. The Steward is published three times each year by the WLT.*

Newsletter Committee Chair ..... Chris Moench  
Contributors ..... Gordon Scott, Chris Moench, Rand Jack, Cindy Franklin, Sharon Digby, Rod Burton, Brett Bauton, Dan Taylor, Bob Keller  
Desktop Publishing ..... Sheri Emerson

# Monitoring conservation properties 'in perpetuity'

Sharon Digby

WLT Monitoring Coordinator

Often the highlight of this newsletter is the announcement of Whatcom Land Trust's latest conservation easement or property acquisition.

But granting an easement to the WLT is just the beginning of the conservation process.

Conservation easements are attached to property "in perpetuity" and perpetuity means forever. While this is a little hard to envision, it is an important consideration of every easement that WLT agrees to protect. Easements dictate that WLT must make sure the property owners, now and in the future, abide by the terms of the conservation easement.

To do this, the Trust has set up a monitoring system to watch over these properties.

## Monitoring process begins with base-line data

The first step of monitoring an easement is to collect base-line data and create a monitoring notebook. This information is the basis for comparison of the property over time and is updated as necessary.

A monitoring notebook usually contains a detailed map, legal description, copy of the signed easement and photographs of the property. We are also now able to take advantage of Whatcom County's GIS system to obtain a map with geologic, critical areas, geologic hazards and wildlife information.

Once a year, volunteer monitors officially visit the conservation properties. Some volunteers act as land stewards and check on sites more often.

## Problems have been rare

Fortunately, WLT has had very few problems with its 19 conservation easements and 10 properties. One of the properties owned by the Trust has had trouble with ORV (off-road vehicle) trespassing. The steward for this property, Steve Irving, discovered the situation



Volunteer monitor Dan Taylor (left) visits Teddy Bear Cove and discusses the site with Steve LeCocq, Whatcom County Parks, and Trish Cuzner, a WWU intern. (Photo: Dan Taylor.)

and helped with the resolution. WLT is very grateful for his dedication.

One reason monitoring has been relatively easy so far is because, except for one property, none of the easement properties have changed owners.

As time goes on and more properties have new owners, it may make the monitoring job more difficult. A conservation easement is part of the property title and if the property is sold, both buyer and seller are aware of these encumbrances. But new owners may not be as aware of the stipulations and intent of the original owner.

## As land holdings grow, so does monitoring job

Every year, monitoring WLT properties becomes a bigger task. At some point in the future, WLT may have to consider hiring a monitoring coordinator. (Other land trusts have gone this route.) So while the Trust eagerly looks forward to conserving new properties, it also knows that this means a much larger responsibility for monitoring ☸

WLT appreciates the time and dedication of these volunteer monitors.

Carl Batchelor  
Cindy Klein  
Dan Taylor  
Mark Johnson  
Connie Clement  
Clare Fogelsong  
Mike Savatgy  
Pat Savatgy  
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*Ancient forests look down on Canyon Lake, located east of Deming. Geologists believe the lake was formed by a massive land slide in the 1820s. (Photo by Gordon Scott.)*

*Efforts are underway to raise the funds needed to purchase and protect this ancient old growth forest.*

*To date, WLT has received several unsolicited donations from private citizens contributing to the protection of this property. Pilchuck Audubon Society contributed \$1,000 which was used to begin the outreach for this project.*

*Thanks to their donation, and the kind assistance of Rod Burton, we have a professional folder of information about this ancient forest to inform or educate prospective funders.*

*WLT Board of Directors is equally grateful for the donations from two local students. Derek Franklin, age 10, and Maya Reynolds, age 14, each contributed a portion of their allowance help save this old growth forest. Derek wrote: "I'm donating this because I recently received a Super Nintendo system and I wanted to donate money to help balance the world between electronics and nature."*

# 'Community Forest' A place to cele

*(Continued from page 1)*

## A New England idea

The idea of protecting this ancient grove by creating a "community forest" is a concept borrowed from the historic New England village commons model. Rand Jack, WLT board member, explains this concept as "a segment of the landscape that unifies the community and gives it a sense of pride and shared meaning."

The "community forest" would be accomplished through a partnership of public and private efforts. It could result in joint ownership by public agencies such as Whatcom County and Western Washington University, with a restrictive conservation easement held by the Land Trust.

The easement restrictions would permit supervised public access, environmental education and nondestructive scientific research while prohibiting subdivision, commercial use and timber harvest.

Coordinated by the Land Trust, public access could be provided through a stewardship program with several organizations — such as, the Whatcom County Parks Department, the North Cascades Institute, Western Washington University's park and recreation program and the local chapter of the Mountaineers.

Volunteer stewards, who would be trained in forest ecology, geology and the history of the area, could lead educational day trips. Special arrangements could be made for school groups and organizations. The County Parks Department and the North Cascade

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and the univer  
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at the possibi*



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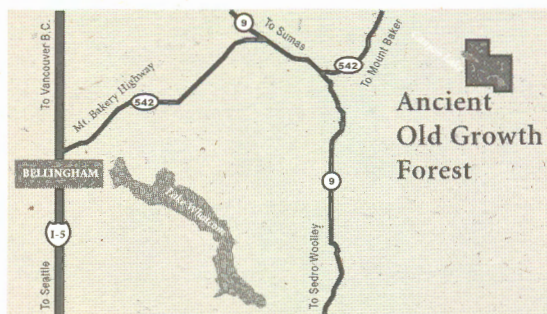
## Community representatives support recreational, educational uses

Both the parks department and the university have expressed enthusiasm at the possibilities.

"I am very excited about the educational opportunities," Brad Smith, Dean of Huxley College, WWU, said. "I can think of no other site in North America on which students could spend a day studying both old growth timber and forest transition. The opportunities are virtually limitless from an educational point of view."

department  
sity  
l enthusiasm  
ties.

The local parks department is interested in providing an opportunity for people to visit this site, as part of their outdoor recre-



Canyon Lake Old Growth is located east of Deming. (Map graphic by Rod Burton.)

ational program.

"The thought of being able to see an 800-year-old forest will draw many visitors," Roger DeSpain, Director of Whatcom County Parks and Recreation, said.

"This is exciting! The notion of a community....acquiring and managing a site such as Canyon Creek, is indeed a first and worthy of recognition," Smith said.

## On a visit to the Canyon Lake Old Growth you'll find...

...a grove of forest giants. The ridge lines of the Canyon Lake watershed are steep – over 4,000 feet in elevation. The native forest is composed of rough mountain hemlocks, towering Pacific silver firs and the long-lived Alaska yellow cedar.

The antiquity of the forest is evident by the broken and gnarled tree tops, massive limbs and open forest floor. In the occasional opening left by a fallen tree, huckleberry bushes compete for filtered sunlight with 50-year-old miniature silver firs.

Right now, in the early summer, the sound of falling water dominates the forest. Numerous rivulets cascade over rocky ledges, draining away the melting snow. Later in the season, huckleberries will be ripe and the sounds of feeding birds and bears will prevail. On one recent visit the tracks of a bobcat family traversed patches of old snow.

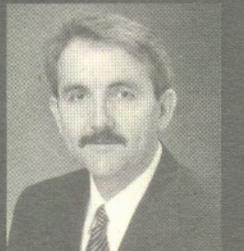
For a moment, this forest can help the visitor forget all the cares of the lowlands.

*"The forest and trees at Canyon Lake are extraordinary for their antiquity. Trees of this age have rarely been found and documented in the Cascade Range,"*

*Dr. Jerry Franklin  
University of Washington  
Professor of Ecosystem Analysis*

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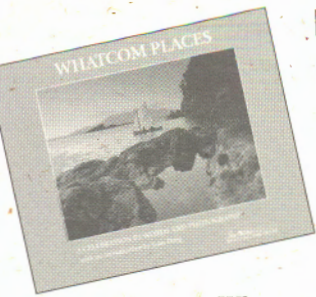
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## Whatcom Places wins Mayors Award.

Arts Commission  
acknowledges portrayal  
of county's beauty

*Whatcom Places*, a book published by the Whatcom Land Trust, was among the eight recipients of the 1997 Mayor's Arts Awards for 1997.

The awards were presented April 16 at the Whatcom Museum of History and Art. Photographer Ann Yow, a book contributor, accepted the award for WLT.

The Bellingham Arts Commission acknowledged the book for its "portrayal of Whatcom County's natural beauty, artistry and community involvement."

WLT published *Whatcom Places* in May, 1997. To date, the book has sold approximately 4,000 copies and was listed among the best sellers at Village Books last year.

The other awardees were Roderick C. Burton, KUGS, Jan Lor, Mike and Elaine McRory, Marian Ritter, Dorothy Wachter and Johnathan Warden. ☺



Ann Yow, Bellingham, enjoys a moment with Bellingham Mayor Mark Asmundson at the Mayor's Arts Awards reception on April 16. Yow was a contributing photographer for *Whatcom Places*. (Photo by Bob Keller.)

## 'Listening to Each Other: the Dialogue About Land'

# Trust sponsors community forums

Bob Keller

"...to preserve and protect unique natural, scenic, agricultural and open space land in Whatcom County..."

WLT Mission Statement

In the pursuit of land conservation, WLT encourages landowners to think about their property and also know about the Trust. The purpose of our May series of public forums aimed at both these objectives: reflecting about land issues and raising awareness of stewardship.

Under the general theme of having respect for different opinions and values, each forum addressed a specific topic.

**May 4: The role of the media in environmental issues.** WLT brought together Tim Johnson from the *Every Other Weekly*; Sea Ganschow of the *Whatcom Watch*; Evan Miller, *Bellingham Herald*; Bill Quehrn, *KGMI*; and Bill Dietrich, former science editor of the *Seattle Times*. The result was an open, respectful, candid discussion of news coverage in the county, with considerable attention paid to drinking water issues. Approximately 45 people attended.

**May 11: Whatcom's Water.** To discuss the wider range of water issues, from ground water, to Lake Whatcom to irrigation, to salmon habitat to recreational uses, we invited Sue Blake, a county planner; Dan Hagen, an economics professor at *WWU*; Skip Richards, a local businessman and property rights advocate, and Robyn du Pré, an environmental activist and educator. We expected a heated evening; it turned out very measured and almost scholarly for the 80-90 people who attended.

**May 18: The Future of Agricultural Land.** This program was organized by the Concerned Christian Citizens of Lynden and featured panelists John Steensma, a dairy farmer; Marty Maberry, a berry grower; Lesa Starkenburg, land use attorney; Bob Libolt, a developer; and Ron Polinder, an educator and farmer. The dialogue was a lively and very thought-provoking examination of the complex issues related to protecting farm land and the agricultural industry in Whatcom County. Approximately 65 people attended. The entire evening was videotaped and may be broadcast on *TCI* or *KVOS* at a future date.

All three forums were moderated by Cindy Franklin, WLT board member. She brought together members of the alternative and establishment media, farmers, a developer, a planner, an attorney for gravel interests, environmentalists and an articulate voice for landowner rights, to prove that, indeed, we can listen to each other and that we all, in our varied ways, care about the land entrusted to us. ☺



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# Trust plans first membership event in September

1998 Land Steward award to be announced

Whatcom Land Trust members are invited to our first membership event on the evening of September 11. (The place is yet to be determined.)

It will be a time to celebrate recent successes of the Whatcom Land Trust with our growing number of supporters.

WLT will take time that evening to honor this year's conservation easement donors, property donors, monitoring volunteers and other volunteers. The highlight of the evening will be to announce the recipient of our second annual "Land Steward of the Year" award.

The Land Steward award recognizes

people who make outstanding contributions to conservation in Whatcom County.

The first recipients of this award, Mike and Elaine McRory and Lois and George Garlick, were honored in September, 1997.

Any current Whatcom Land Trust member may nominate someone for the Land Steward award. (Nominees for this award do not have to be WLT members.) Please refer to the form on this page.

Invitations to this event will be mailed out to members in August. Volunteers to help with this celebration would be greatly appreciated. Please call our office, 650-9470, for more information. ☎

*Current Whatcom Land Trust members may nominate someone for the "Land Steward" award.*

## Send us your nomination for the 1998 'Land Steward of the year'

WLT's "Land Steward of the Year" Award recognizes people who have made exceptional contributions to land conservation in Whatcom County. We are now accepting nominations for this award. Nominees should meet two requirements:

1. Be responsible for specific, concrete accomplishments towards advancing land and habitat conservation.
2. Volunteer time and resources.

Current WLT members may make nominations for this year's Land Steward award.\* WLT Board of Directors are not eligible. The award winner(s) will be announced at the membership meeting on September 11, 1998.

I nominate \_\_\_\_\_ for WLT 1998 Land Steward of the Year.  
Please attach a complete description of the efforts and accomplishments of this nominee as they relate to the land conservation mission of the Whatcom Land Trust.

\*Only WLT members may nominate someone for this award; nominees for Land Steward of the Year do not have to be members.

Please send nominations to WLT, PO Box 6131, Bellingham, WA. 98227  
Nominations must be received by July 15, 1998.

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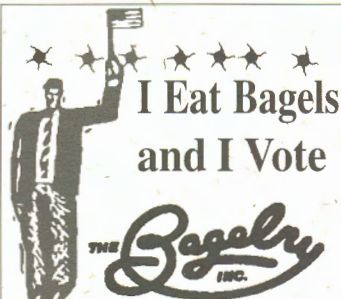
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Suite #U-1A

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Fax: 650-0495

Email: wltrust@juno.com

# Conservation donations protect natural values

(Continued from page 1)

wetlands help maintain river flows and water quality in the river. Clean and adequate water are critical elements in our community's struggle to help protect endangered salmon stocks.

A portion of this property is also within the flood plain. By protecting this property forever from any further development, the integrity of the flood plain at this location can be assured. This will help protect downstream

property owners, as well as all of us in the County who are working to reduce damage from flooding.

## Farm conserved with easement

A conservation easement on a 25-acre llama farm in central Whatcom County has been donated to WLT.

The donor, who wishes to remain anonymous, had been discussing the easement with the Trust for nine years, a record for this land trust.

The property is a mix of pasture and forest bordered by a small tributary creek of the Nooksack River. Existing buildings include a small house, cabin and barn on the farm which also boasts a beautiful garden and orchard.

The conservation easement provides that the property be used as a farm for light agriculture or be allowed to revert to wildlife habitat.

Under the restriction of this perpetual easement, the property can not be subdivided and the

size of any addition to the residence is limited to 10 percent of the size of the current structure.

## WWU tidelands donated to Trust

In the late fall of 1997, the Western Foundation donated 35 acres of Drayton harbor tidelands to the Land Trust.

This property is located west of Georgia Street and the railroad tracks, just north of the Drayton Harbor tideland property WLT received from Margaret Eames in

the summer of 1997.

Like the Eames donation, the Western Foundation property is an area that was part of an old tideland plat, complete with streets, alleys and individual residential lots. These old plats were dreams of early developers when land speculation was rampant in the Northwest during the building of the region's railway system. Fortunately, these tidelands were never developed, retaining intact what we now understand to be some of the most biologically productive areas on the planet.

The Western Foundation tideland donation provides excellent habitat for shellfish, aquatic insects and marine vegetation. This saltwater ecosystem in turn is a rich food source for fish, including salmon, migrating waterfowl and resident birds such as the Great Blue Heron.

With this generous donation by the Western Foundation, the Land Trust is able to further its existing efforts to protect herons and salmon in Whatcom County.

*This saltwater ecosystem is a rich food source for fish, migrating waterfowl and resident birds such as the Great Blue Heron.*



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