



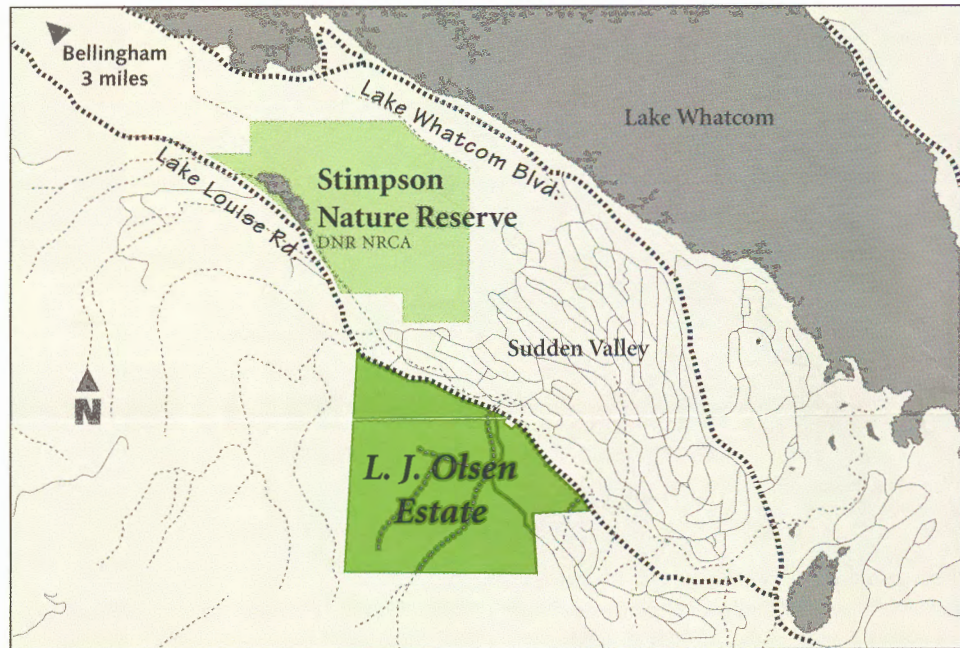
Working Together to Protect the Lake Whatcom Watershed

In a rare joint session, the Bellingham City Council and the Whatcom County Council met May 21 to accept from the Whatcom Land Trust an option to purchase the 369-acre Olsen Estate Property in the Lake Whatcom Watershed. The property is located across Lake Louise Road from Sudden Valley. The Land Trust obtained an option in March to purchase the forested property for \$819,000. In this three-way partnership, the County and City own the property together, and the Land Trust holds a conservation easement protecting the property in perpetuity from development.

Land Trust president Wendy Walker hailed this transition as “the kind of cooperation that will be needed if we are to protect the watershed” and praised the City and County “for joining with the Land Trust to take this substantial and symbolic step.”

After owning the property for sixty years and living there as somewhat of a recluse, Leila June Olsen died in 1994. She left no will and a long search turned up no heirs. Under such circumstances, the property passes to the State Department of Natural Resources. By law, heirs have seven years from the date of death to claim property. A few months before the redemption period expired, a professional bounty hunter located three distant relatives of Leila June Olsen. For a 15 percent commission, he told them of

Olsen Estate Adds to Watershed Protection



“...the kind of cooperation that will be needed if we are to protect the watershed...”

— Wendy Walker, WLT President

their inheritance. A great grandfather had changed the spelling of Olsen from “e” to “o,” which had thrown the original searchers off track. Ironically, one of the heirs is named Leila June Olson.

A court ordered the property returned to the estate, setting the stage for the Land Trust to secure an option to purchase. This project is exciting for a number of reasons:

- protects one of the largest privately owned blocks of land in the Lake Whatcom watershed

- strategically situated near the 350-acre Stimpson Family Nature Reserve (cover story in Winter-Spring 2001 *The Steward*).
- provides a great vehicle to demonstrate the power of working together with key partners to protect an invaluable resource.

The Land Trust thanks Theresa Schrempp, attorney for the Olsen Estate, for making this transaction work for the Land Trust and the people of Whatcom County.

— Rand Jack

Valuable Summer Help

Katherine Marieb

Conservation Research

Katherine Marieb is a Master's candidate in a University of Montana Environmental Studies Program and a Doris Duke Environmental Fellow. She is working with the Land Trust on the Chuckanut to Cascades Conservation Plan. Katherine has accomplished research necessary to move the C-to-C project forward significantly. She has lived and worked in and around Whatcom County for the past five years, performing wildlife biology surveys as well as volunteering for Northwest Ecosystem Alliance. Her focus in school is habitat and wildlife linkages, and she is excited about this opportunity.

Emily Steel

Public Relations

Emily Steel, a Western Washington University intern working primarily on outreach, special events and writing projects, is from Gig Harbor, Washington. Emily attended Pacific Lutheran University for two years where she studied communications. She now studies journalism at Western and will graduate this fall with a degree in Public Relations, and a concentration in Environmental Studies. Emily previously volunteered for the Peninsula Heritage Land Trust in Gig Harbor. She enjoys living in Whatcom County because of its beautiful landscapes, and is happy to be part of preserving this natural beauty.

Land Donor Ernie Craver is Remembered

The Whatcom Land Trust was saddened to hear that Ernie Craver passed away on August 8, 2002. In 1999 Ernie donated his 102-acre property along Hutchinson Creek to the Land Trust.

Six months after the donation, the Land Trust planted 20,000 tree seedlings to help reforest Ernie's land.

New Look for Steward

Thanks to our new Business Partner, Lithtex Northwest, for adding a second color to the Land Trust Newsletter as part of their donation of printing the *Steward*.

Retired...but Still Working

Larry Simkins

"The crazier the idea, the more excited Larry is to do it."

— Gordon Scott, WLT Conservation Director

Larry Simkins came to Whatcom County from Port Angeles, Washington in 1965 to attend Western Washington University. He graduated with degrees in Urban Planning and Parks and Recreation. Though now retired, Larry worked many years for Whatcom County Parks as Parks Operation Manager. His involvement with WLT land transactions that turned into county parks inspired Larry to become a Land Trust member in 1994.



photo: Gordon Scott

One of many loads of vehicles Larry Simkins had removed from property on Hutchinson Creek.

Larry has dedicated countless hours to volunteer projects with the Land Trust. He has led tours of Land Trust properties, and has been involved with the 2001 and 2002 Great Outdoors Auctions. He is also the property monitor for Canyon Lake Creek.

Recently Larry was asked to take on a massive project, removing approximately 80 to 90 vehicles from the Craver property on Hutchinson Creek. The two-month project consisted of extensive planning, and required coor-

inating the auto recycler, the owner, and various agencies. This was not the average project for a Land Trust volunteer but Larry's "can do" approach made the difficult project seem simple.

Larry always enjoys his time working with the Land Trust and looks forward to more adventures in the future. Ongoing support from volunteers like Larry Simkins plays a significant role in making the Land Trust such a successful organization.

— Emily Steel

The Mission of the Whatcom Land Trust is to preserve and protect wildlife habitat, scenic, agricultural and open space lands in Whatcom County for future generations by securing interests in land and promoting land stewardship.

Newsletter Editorial Team Carl Batchelor, Rod Burton, Katherine Freimund, Trish Navarre

Design and Layout Donated by Roderick C. Burton - Art & Design

Contributors Katherine Freimund, Rand Jack, Trish Navarre, Gordon Scott, Emily Steel

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A Man of His Word (the fossil is back!)

On June 13, a cloud of dust could be seen moving very slowly up the road to Canyon Lake Creek. Upon closer inspection the dust was actually following a flatbed truck with a giant six-ton slab of rock strapped to it. But this was no ordinary rock, for it contained a 50-million-year-old fossil palm frond, removed from the site back in the fall of 1998.

Before closing the sale of the 2300-acre Canyon Lake Creek Community Forest, Crown Pacific, past owner of the Canyon Lake Creek Basin, removed the fossil from the property and placed it in front of the company office in Hamilton. Russ Paul, regional manager for Crown Pacific, promised to return the fossil. True to his word, on June 13 Russ Paul returned the fossil to its home. Russ contributed greatly to the success of the Community Forest Project and continues to be an invaluable asset in these transactions.

Because of the careful driving of trucker Henry Robeldo and the excavator artistry of Doug Bumgarner, the ancient fossil is now receiving visitors about 150 yards up the trail from the Community Forest parking lot.

— Rand Jack



photo: Rand Jack

Doug Bumgarner and Henry Robeldo pose before the fossil they carefully replaced on the Canyon Lake Creek Community Forest trail.



A Work in Progress

Canyon Lake Creek Community Forest, jointly owned and managed by Western Washington University and Whatcom County continues to stir interest and support:

- Featured in the May 2002 issue of *Sunset Magazine*
- Highlighted in July 6 *Bellingham Herald* cover story
- Awarded a \$2,000 grant from Phillips Petroleum to be used for signage at the trailhead

“A man is rich in proportion to the things he can afford to let alone.”

—Thoreau

Our company salutes Whatcom Land Trust for the richness they bring to this community by helping us all leave things alone.

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Going Once, Going Twice...

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Sold!

Whatcom Land Trust held its second *Great Outdoors Auction* June 1 at the Bellwether Ballroom. Great food, good company and the generosity of many caring people made this auction an enjoyable and successful event. The auction sold out with 300 people attending on a sunny summer evening.

Holding the yearly auction helps the Land Trust heighten community awareness of the Land Trust mission and increases enthusiasm and support for land conservation. With the "outdoor" theme in mind, many individuals and businesses donated their time, talents, services and money in support of the Land Trust.

"People have such generosity and love and value Land Trust work so much that they give of themselves," said Trish Navarre, Development Director.

Auction items ranged from landscape art to outdoor hikes to gourmet dinners. A focal point this year was a 1972 vintage Volkswagen Super Beetle, which was part of Barbara Smith's estate left to the Land Trust. The sporty little yellow car was driven away by successful bidders Bob Thomas and Kathy Hughes.

The auction outcome was remarkable. The Land Trust netted over \$40,000, bringing in \$12,000 more than last year's auction.

Thank you to all our dedicated volunteers, to those attending and to the countless number of people who donated items and activities to the auction. The Land Trust is grateful for your support and generosity.

— Emily Steel

photo: Trish Navarre

Kathy Hughes, President of SMC, a maker of outdoor equipment, with her Great Outdoors Auction VW, parked outside the company's Ferndale manufacturing site.



AUCTION DIVIDEND

Hutchinson Creek Wetland Preserve

Using proceeds from the 2001 Great Outdoors Auction Fund-a-Site and Fund-a-Salmon, Whatcom Land Trust purchased 40 acres of prime habitat on Hutchinson Creek. The \$5,100 in auction revenue served as a match for a \$23,500 Department of Ecology Coastal Protection Fund grant.

Hutchinson Creek is one of the largest tributaries to the South Fork of the Nooksack River and is an important spawning and rearing area for salmon and steelhead. The Hutchinson Creek Watershed is also an important winter-

ing area for the Nooksack elk herd.

Flowing crystal clear over fine gravel beds, Hutchinson Creek crosses the property through a mature forest of cedar, spruce, hemlock, Douglas fir, alder, maple and cottonwood. Intercepted by two smaller streams and surrounded by a seven-acre wetland, about half of the property has been logged and replanted with Douglas fir seedlings.

The forest cover, water quality and gravel beds combine to make this exceptional habitat. Eagles, elk, bear and



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photo: Janet Boyhan

Kim Martin, of Wood Stone Corp., enjoying one of Janet Boyhan's 2001 llama expeditions, a hot item at this year's auction.

Run With A Purpose

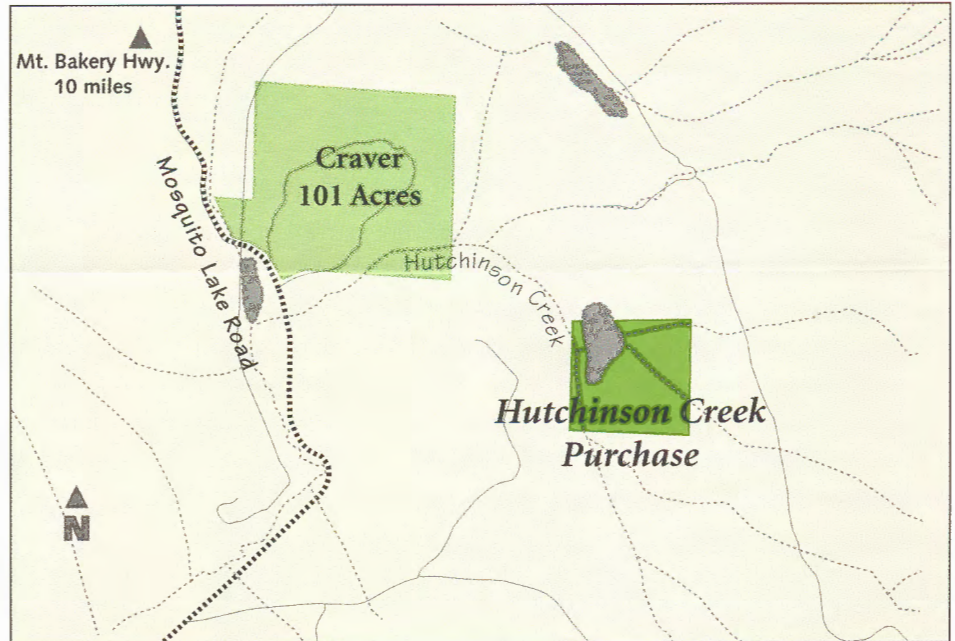
Saturday, Sept. 14, the Whatcom Land Trust will host a table at the Eco-Expo as part of Bellingham Traverse, a multi-sport endurance challenge. The Land Trust is one of several environmental organizations that can be designated to receive pledges earned from the Traverse.

The race begins at the Bellingham Farmers Market and includes a 6-mile run, 4-mile mountain bike stretch, 16-mile road bike stretch, 2.5-mile trail run, 6-mile sea kayak paddle, and finishes with a 2-mile trek ending at Boundary Bay Brewery. Show your support for local environmental organizations by registering for the race, or by visiting the Eco-Expo and cheering on local athletes who are raising money and awareness for a better world.

To register, visit www.BellinghamTraverse.com, or call WLT at 650-9470 for more information.

smaller animals also frequent the site. Fred Ossewarde, from whom the Land Trust purchased the site, has observed elk calving there. All of this makes the Hutchinson Creek Wetland Preserve an ideal addition to the Land Trust SEE (Salmon, Eagle, Elk) Project.

This preserve adds an important piece to the Land Trust's regional conservation program, protecting natural ecosystem processes in the South Fork of the Nooksack Valley. The property is less than a quarter mile upstream from the 101-acre Craver property. Above and below where Hutchinson Creek intersects the South Fork, the Land Trust has protected and restored habitat along 4 miles of the South Fork and over 523 acres. A project to acquire an additional 150 acres in the area is underway.



The Land Trust very much appreciates the support and help of the Department of Ecology in making this purchase possible. The Hutchinson

Creek Wetland Preserve will be maintained in a natural state to preserve the site for native fish and wildlife that thrive there. — Rand Jack

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“A Tree-Roots Organization”

— excerpts from a speech by Wendy Walker, WLT President

The Whatcom Land Trust is just seventeen years old. So far, we have protected over 6,500 acres of land, much of it increasingly rare and valuable riparian and wetland habitat for wildlife, especially wild salmon. People have gained recreation and open space as WLT helped create eight Whatcom County Parks.

What makes the Whatcom Land Trust such an effective organization? The words ‘grass roots’ come to mind, but this metaphor doesn’t have deep enough roots. I think the WLT is a “tree roots” organization, with roots that go deep into our local earth and back through time.

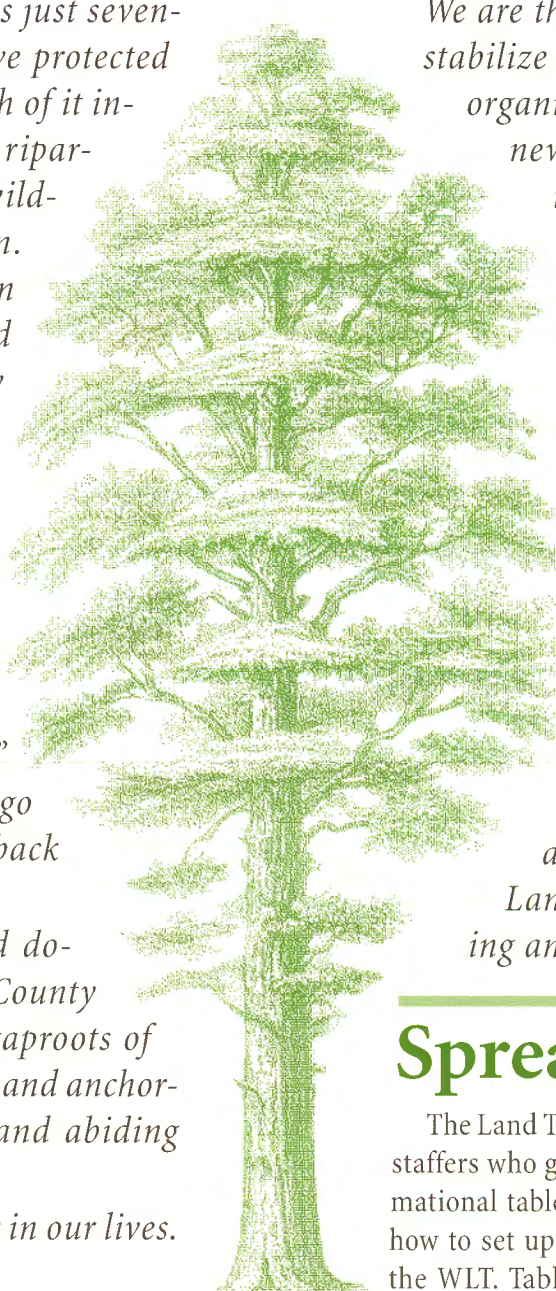
Many of our members and donors have lived in Whatcom County all their lives. These are the taproots of the land trust tree, nourishing and anchoring our efforts with a deep and abiding sense of place.

Others of us came here later in our lives.

We are the lateral, newer roots that help stabilize and bring other nutrients to the organization as we reach broadly for new sources of energy, skill, funding and commitment.

And our staff, too, are roots, but they also function like mycorrhizal fungi, symbiotically working with the roots to help supply water and nutrients to this vigorous, healthy western red cedar of a land trust. This is the Land Trust which I have great hopes of still working for when I’m eighty, and my children and grandchildren after me...

So thank you, to all you thick and strong and vital roots of the Land Trust! We couldn’t keep growing and thriving without you!



Spread the Word

The Land Trust is building a cadre of cheerful table staffers who greet visitors at events where our informational table is displayed. Training is provided on how to set up the table and handle questions about the WLT. Table staffers work in pairs, and will be matched with a more experienced volunteer. There are some “on-the-job” training opportunities in September. Volunteers are needed for 2-hour shifts on the following dates:

- Wednesdays from 3-7 at the Fairhaven Farmer’s Market.
- Saturday, Sept. 14 at the Eco-Expo, from noon to 6 p.m. (We may also have a booth at the Bellingham Farmer’s Market earlier that day)

Please contact Wilma Totten of the Outreach Committee, at 354-1971 (wtotten@telcomplus.com) if you are interested in helping in September or any other time.

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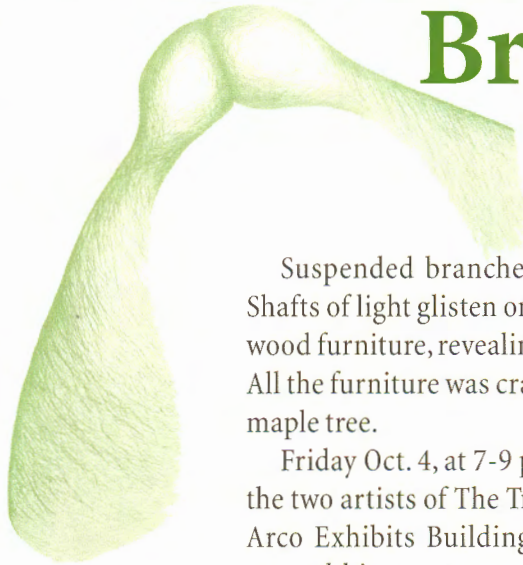
Guided tours of Land Trust properties are excellent opportunities for members to get a closer look at special places, some of which are not otherwise open to the public. Tour guides know the properties intimately and offer a learning experience members would miss visiting these sites on their own. Participants will be able to see and understand why the Land Trust found each particular site significant to preserve.

- North Fork Nooksack Tour September 14
- Stimpson Nature Reserve Tour October 5
- ARCO Heron Reserve-slide presentation and walk November 2

Please call early to register, as the tours fill quickly.

Call for Papers...

The Land Trust has deposited many of its historic records with the Center for Pacific Northwest Studies where they are being indexed and preserved. If you have any WLT papers, especially before 1995, please consider donating them to the archive. Call the Land Trust office at 650-9470 or Elizabeth Joffrion at the Center at 650-7747.



Branching Out

Suspended branches extend out of the gallery doors. Shafts of light glisten on forty pieces of finely crafted maple wood furniture, revealing the beauty of maple's golden glow. All the furniture was crafted from a single Whatcom County maple tree.

Friday Oct. 4, at 7-9 p.m., Land Trust members can meet the two artists of The Tree Project at the Whatcom Museum Arco Exhibits Building. The exhibition unifies local and natural history, resource ecology, environmental art, photography and furniture-making in one tree.

The Land Trust is pleased to sponsor The Tree Project. Connection between the natural environment and the human part in it allows us to travel back 118 years to the birth of this tree at the River Farm in the South Fork Nooksack Valley near Van Zandt. Through pictures, stories and videos we glimpse the history of our natural heritage.

The concept of The Tree Project emerged from artists Andrew Vallee and Wesley Smith's desire to explore different materials used by artists. They designed the project, found as many uses for the wood as possible and worked in an environmentally responsible fashion.

You are invited to join a special after-hours tour of The Tree Project and meet these talented artists whose passion and creativity produced this inspiring exhibit. Please come.

— Emily Steel

Picnic at Silver Lake

Mark your calendars for the annual membership picnic Sunday, Sept 22, 3-6 p.m. at Silver Lake. The picnic is always a fun event that provides a time to get together in a casual, social setting. Bring your family and friends, and meet other Land Trust members. The Land Trust will provide salmon, corn and cider. Bring a side dish or dessert for a potluck. There will be entertainment and a shelter has been reserved in case of rain. Staff and Board Members will answer questions and offer membership to anyone interested in joining. The highlight of the afternoon will be the presentation of the Land Steward of the Year award in recognition of a member of our community who has made exceptional and outstanding contributions to the mission of the Land Trust.

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Wildlife Comes to Whatcom County

As the southern elephant seal releases a loud echoing squawk, a cloud of steam from his mouth rolls over the wet rocks scattered on the shore, only to be cooled quickly by the arctic chill. Though it may be just a photo, renowned wildlife photographer Art Wolfe makes this creature and many others come to life in his award-winning book *The Living Wild*.

Saturday, Oct. 12 at 7 pm in the Bellingham High School auditorium, internationally acclaimed photographer Art Wolfe will present a slide show featuring images from *The Living Wild*. The book includes five powerful essays on wildlife conservation, written by some of the world's leading naturalists. Books will be available for purchase. The vibrant photos of jaguars, snow leopards, giant pandas, mountain gorillas and other amazing animals found throughout the world, will make this an educational and exciting event for adults and children alike.



photo: Art Wolfe

The event is co-sponsored by Whatcom Land Trust and Village Books. Art Wolfe is a supporter of Whatcom Land Trust and its mission to preserve critical habitat and open spaces. Admission is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children (12 and under) and students with valid student ID. Tickets at the door or in advance at Village books, located at 1210 11th St.