



Making A Real and Lasting Difference at Home!



Dear Friends,

September 2019

Each fall, when the eleven-month contract with our Washington Conservation Corps staffer ends, we reflect on the year's accomplishments and say a bittersweet goodbye. The WCC's AmeriCorps program creates future leaders through community involvement and service, and our Individual Placement teammate, Rose Richardson, just accepted a leadership position with the Northwest Inland Land Conservancy in Spokane. We are thrilled! When I asked what the highpoint of her time with us had been, Rose answered, "making a real and lasting difference here in Whatcom County!"

Whatcom Land Trust, with our emphasis on community, land, and permanence, offers great opportunities to do just that. Last year, with the help of so many businesses, friends, partners and you, the Land Trust was able to permanently secure a number of important, iconic and well-recognized properties. Thank you! We celebrate these high-profile accomplishments, but know that success often comes in quiet but significant wins. And sometimes land conservation and stewardship gains are experienced on a smaller scale.

Our Harrison Reserve property is one such example. Donated to the Land Trust by Jo Anne Harrison and her family in 2000 to honor the memory of Arley Harrison, this 5.5-acre property, located along Kendall Creek, sat unused and lightly managed, visited mostly by deer, salmon and herons. When teachers from Kendall Elementary School reached out to see if the Reserve could be used as a safe, outdoor space for students to immerse in environmental curriculum, Land Trust staff responded enthusiastically. Harrison, located 500 feet from the school and along a dead-end road, provided a perfect opportunity to blend outdoor education and love of land. We convened a coalition of environmental partners including North Cascades Audubon, Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association, Whatcom Conservation District and with funding from Whatcom Community Foundation, McEachern Charitable Trust, and the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation's Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Program, we got to work.

In Spring 2019, the Land Trust worked with kids from 11 classrooms to plant more than 2,300 native trees and shrubs. Community volunteers helped out and one summed up her experience this way:

"We could hear them before we could see them. A roar of small voices travelling from the doors of their indoor education to the new experiences of their outdoor one. As the third grade students of Kendall Elementary began filing under the Whatcom Land Trust tent set up at the Harrison Reserve you could feel the excitement in the air. After instructions from (Stewardship Director) Jenn, the students were able to pick a young potted snowberry plant and carry it to their planting site. The affection, care, and admiration the students showed for their plants was inspiring. After all the planting was done, a couple of students asked, "Can I bring my Mom and Dad back to see what we did? Cool!" The feeling of pride among the students was palpable: WE are doing conservation. WE are doing something powerful for our school, our neighborhood, our future."

Pretty wonderful to light the fire of conservation, one child at a time, and see kids working together to plant trees that they will visit year after year. Trees they planted and the self-reliance they represent will grow to shade the creek and provide habitat as those kids move towards adulthood. Imagine the changes they will observe, the stewards they will become, the conservation values they will impart to their children, and future they will inherit.

Picture a small project like the Harrison Reserve, fueled by an exceptional community effort, making a real and lasting difference in our community.

Thank you for your part in helping to awaken the spirit of conservation for Kendall Elementary School students, and for scoring wins this year – large and small – for Whatcom's special places. Thank you for envisioning with us a future where conservation and stewardship efforts buffer against a changing climate and everything we do today ensures a brighter, more resilient tomorrow. Upcoming projects that will make a real and lasting difference include additional protected land along Skookum Creek, creating an expanded conservation corridor joining Land Trust properties with The Nature Conservancy's Arlecho Creek Old Growth Preserve; increasing protected land along California Creek and continuing to work with Blaine-Birch Bay Parks on an eventual hiking/biking/kayaking public access trail; and acquiring two key riparian properties along the lower South Fork Nooksack River to protect salmon and improve water quality.

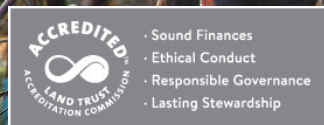
Over the past year, I have been genuinely pleased to hear this community talking about the good work the Land Trust has done, to see increased volunteers out working on the land, to enjoy a growing level of support, and to live in this special place. I hope that you will continue to be a partner with the Land Trust as together we add to the successful and permanent legacy of making a real and lasting difference here at home. Thank you for your continued interest and support of our work.

Sincerely,



Rich Bowers

Photos used with permission, Kendall Elementary School



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.