



Your Land Trust—Working for You!



Livingston Bay on Camano Island provides a rich and diverse place for all kinds of fish and wildlife, including waterbirds and salmon. The Land Trust owns 3,160 acres of tidelands, wetlands, and shore at Livingston Bay. Photo: Mark Sheehan

Your membership and unrestricted donations to the Land Trust are among the best investments you can make—giving both a “great” and “green” return on your dollars. The Land Trust excels at delivering results by permanently protecting and caring for the lands and waters you love. If you value the extraordinary quality of life on Whidbey and Camano Island— whether you live here or visit—you’ll want to continue supporting the Land Trust during these tough economic times.

Your dues and unrestricted donations pay for the professional staff that consistently leverages your dollars to save the best places on our islands. In most years, the Land Trust protects more than \$20 worth of land for every \$1 you donate to support our staff. That’s how effective we are at securing funds to acquire important lands and conservation easements.

Although it may seem more productive to restrict your donations to the acquisition of a specific property, it is your *unrestricted* support of our general operations that makes the greatest difference and enables us to fulfill our mission.

In 2003, the volunteer board of directors took a big step forward that paid off handsomely. It decided to hire professional staff. In its first 19 years, the all-volunteer Land Trust protected 438 acres of land. In the last eight years, thanks to our highly skilled staff, the Land Trust has protected over 6,600 acres of land. This is an incredible return on your investment.

We have saved critical fish and wildlife habitat, scenic vistas, and wonderful places for your outdoor adventures:

- **2,600 acres of forest**, including the Trillium Community Forest.

- **600 acres of working farmland**, including hundreds of acres in Ebey’s Reserve.

- **3,400 acres of coastal lands**, including beach access, wetlands, uplands, and tidelands.

We’re actively working to protect hundreds of additional acres. We’re also giving nature a hand and helping to restore prairies, wetlands, forests, and salmon habitat. In this issue, we’ve highlighted just a few of the projects that are underway.

Thank you for investing and believing in the Land Trust so that we can continue to protect and care for critical lands on Whidbey and Camano Islands. When you help us protect land—it is “great,” it is green” and it is “forever”.



Mission

The Whidbey Camano Land Trust protects the Islands' most important natural habitats, scenic vistas, and working farms and forests in partnership with landowners and our island communities.

Contact Information

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Discover Indian Point

The 68-acre Indian Point property, with its steep, eroding feeder bluff and long expanses of sandy tidelands, is undeveloped and spans nearly a half mile along Admiralty Inlet. The property, located on the southwest end of Whidbey Island, contains many ravines, forested wetlands, tidelands, and a mature forest cover with scattered remnant old-growth Douglas fir trees and a rare bigleaf maple forest community. Many of the maple trees are huge and provide great perches for all kinds of owls, hawks, eagles, and other raptors.

The ecological diversity of the Indian Point property provides important benefits for numerous fish and wildlife species—on the land as well as in adjacent waters. Birds using its unusual forest include Peregrine Falcons and Merlins that follow the shorebird migration, year-round residents such as Ospreys and Bald Eagles, and wintering waterfowl such as Brants, not to mention nesting sites for a variety of songbirds.

The property's steep, eroding feeder bluffs and numerous ravines deposit sediment and organic material into the tidelands below, enriching and maintaining the shallow water habitat required for productive eelgrass and shellfish beds. This process also provides essential nutrients for fish that feed and find refuge in the eelgrass beds, including many species of migrating salmon. Sampling in this area by the Wild Fish Conservancy documented that species richness was high—they netted 58 different species of marine fish, including six salmon species.

The Land Trust has submitted a competitive grant application to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the majority of the funds to acquire and protect the Indian Point property. If the grant funds are awarded, the Land Trust will need to raise matching funds and work with the landowners to complete the project.

There is much work yet to do, as is usually the case in working on land protection. Projects often take many years to complete and can involve multiple funding sources as well as a number of players and agencies.

Stay tuned for more information on the Indian Point project. Your unrestricted donations are critical to protecting this and other valuable properties in Island County.



Neighbor Ann Lyle and Land Trust board member Todd Peterson admiring an old-growth Douglas fir tree on the Indian Point property earlier this year.

Photo: Cheryl Lowe

Conservation Hero, Maurine Ryan, Passes Peacefully

Maurine Ryan, long-time community leader and environmentalist, died recently at her home in Coupeville.

Maurine came to Whidbey Island in 1971 to retire. But “retire” she did not! For 40 years she actively helped protect the unique and beautiful place that is Whidbey Island, for wildlife and future generations. Keystone Spit and the Wilbert Trail in South Whidbey State Park are two exceptional areas that she and her husband, Al, worked diligently and successfully to protect. The Ryan Addition to the Wilbert Trail acknowledges their efforts and accomplishments in land conservation. As part of the Land Trust’s 25th anniversary celebration in 2009, Maurine was named a Conservation Hero and was honored for her work.

Thank you, Maurine. We will miss you.



Maurine Ryan at our 25th anniversary event. Photo: Cac Kamak

Thinning a Forest to Improve Wildlife Habitat

The first forest restoration thinning at the Trillium Community Forest will occur in early 2012. This thinning will help a heavily logged portion of the forest return to a much healthier condition that will, in turn, significantly enhance wildlife habitat.

A healthy forest on Whidbey Island has a variety of different tree species with a wide range of sizes and a robust understory of native shrubs and other plants. A healthy forest naturally thins itself as the more vigorous trees shade out weaker trees. Many of the forest stands at the Trillium Community Forest, however, are the product of commercial clear-cut logging followed by dense planting of only one tree species with no subsequent thinning. This resulted in areas where the forest lacks the species diversity and variability of size and spacing found in a natural and healthy forest.

Sixty acres of the 654-acre Trillium Community Forest has been selected for the Land Trust’s first restoration thinning

project. This previously logged acreage contains a dense thicket of small trees with a barren understory. It is exhibiting great stress due to unnatural competition for water, nutrients, and sunlight which weakens all the trees and leaves them vulnerable to insects, disease and fire.

By thinning out some of the weakest trees and reducing competition, the remaining trees will be able to thrive. More light reaching the forest floor will promote the development of an understory of native plants such as ferns and huckleberries. This in turn will enhance wildlife habitat, especially for songbirds and other species that depend on a healthy forest understory for nesting, feeding, and refuge from predators. Thinning young, dense forest stands has also been shown to improve tree growth rates, resistance to disease and insect invasion, ability to survive wildfires, and its visual appearance.

The Land Trust will be working with Janicki Logging Company out of Sedro Woolley, a forestry firm experienced in ecological

restoration logging with demonstrated successes in Washington State. This firm has purchased specialized, low-impact equipment to allow them to leave a smaller footprint on the ground. This results in significantly reducing impacts on soil and surrounding vegetation and speeds the recovery of the forest after the thinning is completed.

The Land Trust’s primary goal for the Trillium Community Forest is protecting ecological values, which includes enhancing wildlife habitat. This means we need to take action to help some of the property’s forest stands reach a healthy and diverse condition that will evolve toward old-growth. Thinning dense and unhealthy forest stands is one of the most effective management tools available to help us implement this goal.

For more information on what’s happening in the Trillium Community Forest, visit our website at www.wclt.org and click on Trillium Update.



Before Thinning: A young, unthinned conifer forest (that is slightly older than the Trillium forest stand) shows typical over-crowded conditions. Photo: Janicki Logging Company



After Thinning: The same young forest, two years after thinning, shows an increase in understory growth now used by wildlife. Photo: Janicki Logging Company

Thank You!

We're grateful to the following individuals and businesses who contributed to our Operating Fund and to projects between July 16, 2011 and October 15, 2011.

\$10,000+

Sara Campbell

\$5,000+

Doug and Marjie Gustafson

\$2,500+

Ian MacGowan and Brenda Fillipi • Jan Pickard and Anne Harvey • Island County Smart Growth Coalition

\$1,000+

Sandy and John Barney • Ann Casey and Carol Plunkett • Margaret and Bannister Farquhar • Penelope Harger and Robert Boehm • Grant and Jody Heiken • Robert Kramer and Sharon Hummel-Kramer • Cheryl Lawrence • James Somers and Melissa Merickel • Whidbey Island Garden Tour

\$500+

Susan and David Bavo • Coastal Community Bank • Richard and Nora Doyle • Roxanne Fairfax • Robert and Linda Helsell • Marguerite and Ken Hilton • Kathleen and Jeff Landel • Kent and Julie Langabeer • LeRoss Family Foundation • Uilliem MacGreigor/Phoenix Internationale • Isabel Neddow • Scott, Karen and Lydia Price • Leigh Smith

\$250+

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"Many of us are involved with nonprofits. But, in my experience, the Whidbey Camano Land Trust is one of the best managed and most effective nonprofits I've ever known. "

—Linda Beeman, real estate broker

\$50+

Douglas Adams • Judith Albrecht and Angela Ish Lawton • David Allen and Kathleen Stetz • Dan and Lois Anderson • Anonymous • Virginia and David Brown • Susan Bullerdick • Beverly Casebeer • Carol Chaplin • Kristine Collins • Robert and Dorothy Deering • Sherry and John Douceur • Erick Winger and Julie Dougherty • Tom and Susan Gideon • Susan and James Haley • Sally and Henri Hardenberg • Donald and Sandra Harper • Paul Hayes and Kim Robinson • Vicki and Eugene Hemner • Ursula Heuscher • Geoffrey and Kathy Hornsby • Judy Howard and Chris Fisher • Karen Jeffers • Richard and Colette Johnston • Sara Jane Kayser • Kay and Marv Klein • Paul Knowles • Mary Alice Kois • Rebecca Kranz • Katrina Lindahl • Leanne and Douglas Maxwell • Susan Yarrow Morris and David Morris • Holly Muenchow • Julie Newnam • Mara Palmen • Kurt and Shirley Persson • Diana Putney • Dick and Patty Reed • Sandra Rubini • Carol Scheuffele and Percy Tierney • Val Schroeder and David Baumchen • Gordon and Beverly Young

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We have made every effort to acknowledge all donors correctly. If we've listed any names incorrectly, we apologize. Please contact Vicky at 360.222.3310 with questions or corrections.

Protecting Precious Farmland

The Land Trust's on-going work in Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve continues! In 2012, we plan to protect five more farmland properties, totaling another 95 acres. Success means permanently protecting working farmlands with rich, productive soils and preserving the unsurpassed scenic and historic landscape that makes this place of national importance.

One property is located along the waterfront on north Penn Cove. It provides visitors and residents who enter the Reserve from the north with one of the Island's finest views—the Olympic and Cascade Mountains and Penn Cove.

Closer to Coupeville, the Land Trust is working on four more farmland properties. These properties are connected to hundreds of acres of working farmland



In late summer on the prairie, a local farmer harvests his crops. The excellent agricultural soils support an impressive array of forage and garden crops. Photo: Mark Sheehan

already protected by agricultural conservation easements, thereby ensuring the growing of food, views, open space, and hunting grounds for hawks, eagles, owls, and falcons will be protected for all time.

We look forward to sharing more details with you after the New Year. Look for news on our website and in our newsletters and emails.

Fire on the Prairie!

More than two acres of native prairie at the Land Trust's Naas Natural Area Preserve were burned in early September. The prescribed fire was designed to restore this rare habitat to a more natural condition. The 33-acre Naas Preserve, located south of Coupeville, is home to native



Soaking the edge of the burn area to keep the fire within bounds. Photo: Mark Sheehan

prairie species, including the endangered golden paintbrush (*Castilleja levisecta*).

For thousands of years before European settlement, Native Americans regularly burned the prairies to remove invading trees and shrubs. The cleared land encouraged the proliferation of important prairie plants used for food and medicine, such as camas bulbs and desert parsley.

European settlement has converted the vast majority of these abundant and beautiful prairies to farmland, residential, and commercial uses. Native prairie habitat is now nearly extinct on Whidbey Island. Once covering about 8,000 acres, fewer than 80 acres (1%) of prairie remains in small fragments. One of the largest prairie remnants is on the Land Trust's Naas Natural Area Preserve.

Prairie species depend on periodic fires to control competition and create favorable conditions for seeds to germinate and plants to grow. The prescribed burn removed accumulated layers of dead grass, allowing us to plant over 20,000 native plants on the recently burned areas in late October.

The carefully orchestrated and successful prescribed burn and other on-going restoration work at the Naas Preserve is funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partner's Program and the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act. Additional assistance comes from the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program and donations of both time and money from Land Trust members. The Center for Natural Lands Management oversaw the burn and had the assistance of a volunteer fire crew from the Washington Department of Natural Resources.



Land Trust volunteers and staff recently planted 25 different native prairie species. Photo: Cheryl Lowe

There are many ways to support our work

There are many ways to support the Land Trust's work of local land conservation besides your annual membership donation. Our supporters have been pretty creative in working out ways to give now and to give a legacy gift in the future. The key is to think seriously about how and when you want give...and then take action. The following stories may give you some ideas of your own.

Join with others

To benefit the Land Trust's work, the "Magic Change Jar" at the Clyde Theatre in Langley collected tips from its patrons during September and October. The amount was matched by Island Athletic Club, Lindsay Communications, and The Clyde Theatre. Each dollar donated by the Theatre's patrons became four.

"Thank you" to these three businesses and movie fans for their generosity and commitment to protecting our island lands. And special thanks to Lynn and Blake Willeford for their innovative "Magic Change Jar" project.

Use your Trust

Be creative! An anonymous donor decided last year that she wanted the Trillium Community Forest to be saved. She made a gift of \$1,000 and then wanted to do more. She donated the balance of a Charitable Remainder Trust (CRT) that she had set up some years ago. Her gift made a wonderful difference in the Trillium campaign to raise \$4 million. A year later she said, "I'm so glad I thought of it. I wanted to do what I could to help protect this beautiful place."

Thoughts on a Legacy Gift

This year long-time member Robert Kenny contacted us to let us know that the Land Trust was included in his will. Here are his reasons in his own words:



"I have named the Whidbey Camano Land Trust in my will for several reasons. First, I have been very impressed with their operational efficiency and effectiveness... Second, the Land Trust has done a great job of communicating with the residents of Island County and seeking input regarding priorities and goals. I have a voice in how my contributions are spent. Third, I decided to focus and concentrate my environmental contributions locally, to maximize the impact of my gifts... I love these islands and I have confidence that the Land Trust will care for them and for the common good." —Robert Kenny

Giving is its own reward.

Leave the Land Trust your house

Nancy Waddell is leaving her house to the Land Trust. "I have found a way to give more than I normally could... After I am gone, the Land Trust will sell my house and the sale proceeds will be used to protect important island lands." This type of donation is known as a "trade land"—turning real estate into habitat.

Put the Land Trust in your Will

Diane Kendy stated in her will that 25% of her estate will be given to the Land Trust to help protect and steward the very nature of these islands. Diane wants her estate plan publicized so that others will add the Land Trust to their own estate plans.

Give at the office

Many organizations have workplace giving programs that allow employees to spread giving through monthly payroll deductions. Some also have matching gift programs. If your employer offers such programs, find out how you can participate and support us through your workplace.

"Smart" Donation

With its work completed, the **Smart Growth Coalition** distributed its remaining funds to several island nonprofits, including the Whidbey Camano Land Trust.

The Coalition was founded in 1994 by several environmental groups to oversee the development of the Island County Comprehensive Growth Management Plan. Today, this Comprehensive Plan is the official vision, strategy, and legal basis for Island County's land use and environmental policies. The Land Trust received a check for \$2,788.62—funds that will help us continue the work of protecting the very nature of Whidbey and Camano Islands.

Pictured at right: Diane Kendy (center), from the Smart Growth Coalition, presents a check for its remaining funds to Pat Powell (left) and Elizabeth Guss (right).



Vital and Vulnerable: Saving Crockett Lake



In the foreground are the Crockett Lake properties that the Land Trust and Navy are working on together to protect. Photo: Mark Sheehan

The Whidbey Naval Air Station and the Land Trust are continuing their effective partnership by beginning work to protect important lands in the Crockett Lake ecosystem. Seven properties are being appraised as the first step in our most recent collaboration to protect important lands by reducing population density near the Navy's Outlying Field. The plan is for the Land Trust to own these properties and for the Navy to hold restrictive conservation easements that prevent future development.

Crockett Lake is designated as an Audubon Important Bird Area and is a renowned

bird-watching site because it is so attractive to wildlife, offering places for refuge, feeding, nesting, and rearing of young. The largest wetland system on Whidbey Island, Crockett Lake contains an unusual variety of habitats, including fresh and salt water wetlands, mudflats teeming with an incredible abundance of organic material, upland and wetland forests, native shrubs, grasslands, farmlands, and open water.

This rich diversity of habitats draws large numbers of wildlife species, including more than 238 different types of birds. Thousands of shorebirds and waterfowl depend on Crockett Lake as a critical

stop during their spring and fall migrations. More than nine species of raptors, including Peregrine Falcon and Merlin, follow these migrations because of the ready food supply. Crockett Lake is also a valuable area for wintering waterfowl, providing nesting and wintering habitat for over 13 species of ducks.

Following acquisition of these seven properties, the Land Trust will be working with other partners to eliminate invasive and harmful weeds from the Crockett Lake ecosystem. This removal effort will focus on the hairy willowherb, a species that, while relatively new to the Island, has aggressively spread through the Crockett Lake system, threatening the health and vitality of this valuable ecosystem. *(Please see below for more information on this noxious weed.)*

The Land Trust's work plans will include restoring and enhancing fresh and brackish wetland areas that were historically drained and ditched for fields. The plan is to return them to a more natural state.

All of this work will be a substantial and long-term undertaking for the Land Trust. However, it is clear that without a concerted effort this beloved natural area will face significant degradation. If that happens, the birds that depend on Crockett Lake for their existence and the people who love birds will suffer.

Your unrestricted donations will be critical to saving Crockett Lake.

Invasion of the Horrible Hairy Willowherb: It's *Not* Science Fiction!

Hairy willowherb, a noxious weed, has invaded parts of the Crockett Lake ecosystem. This weed is extremely competitive with native plants and controlling its spread is very difficult. Already, hairy willowherb is disrupting the ecology of the Crockett Lake wetlands by pushing out native plants and eliminating important wildlife habitat.

A semi-aquatic perennial plant, hairy willowherb spreads primarily through thick rhizomes (roots) but also by windblown seeds. This aggressive weed pushes out native plant species and forms dense stands that impede water flow in wetlands. Growing up to six feet tall with showy rose-purple flowers in July and August, it easily spreads to other areas, particularly nearby grasslands and wetlands.

It is clear that a systematic and concerted weed eradication effort is needed. The first step will be to prevent it from spreading. The second step will be to eliminate it. This will require leadership by the Land Trust and the dedication of many partners. It will also require money, time, and expertise. If not controlled, the weed will have an extremely detrimental effect on Crockett Lake, one of Whidbey Island's most significant wildlife habitats. If the spread of hairy willowherb continues unabated, there will be dire consequences for many of the more than 238 bird species and the other wildlife that depend on the area for their survival.



Hairy willowherb

Photo: Cheryl Lowe



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You're Invited!

WHIDBEY CAMANO LAND TRUST'S
Annual Holiday Open House

Join us to celebrate another amazing year for land conservation in Island County. Visit with old friends and make new friends while you enjoy festive holiday treats and tasty beverages. Toast the extraordinary accomplishments of our local Land Trust community.

WHEN: Wednesday, December 7  5:00 – 7:00 PM
WHERE: 765 Wonn Road, Barn C-201 Greenbank
RSVP: Email info@wclt.org