



ENSURING PUBLIC BEACH ACCESS



The one-half mile of tidelands purchased by the Land Trust will be transferred to Island County to expand the public beach access at Libbey Beach Park. Photo: Mark Sheehan

Walk along Libbey Beach, breathe deeply as the wind brushes your face. Look across Admiralty Inlet toward the Olympic Mountains, watch for birds and marine mammals, or study shells and rocks washed up near your feet.

The Land Trust purchased over one-half mile of tidelands adjacent to Libbey Beach County Park a few years ago to guarantee public access to a long stretch of beach. Libbey Beach, a small park with just 300 feet of tidelands, is located at the end of Libbey Road, just north of Fort Ebey State Park. The Land Trust will soon fulfill its promise and transfer its tidelands to Island County, adding a whopping 2,833 feet of tidelands to Libbey Beach Park.

Libbey Beach is a marvelous place to see many shorebirds, including Harlequin Ducks that feed just offshore; Black Oystercatchers feeding on the rocks at low tide; Common, Pacific and Red-throated Loons; Horned, Red-necked and Western Grebes; Marbled Murrelets; Surf Scoters and more—even the occasional Horned Puffin. It's also a great place to picnic, play on the beach, and walk to refresh your spirit or be with friends.

But even more, tidelands are vital habitat for many species of fish and wildlife that feed and rest at the water's edge. How clean their food and shelter are depends on what flows down to that habitat—and that depends on what's upland. So, the Land Trust's work to permanently protect important island lands is, in part, to make sure that what flows down to Puget Sound is cleaned nature's way and is healthy for all the species that enjoy it, including all of us. So, as you walk the miles of tidelands around Whidbey and Camano Islands, please remember that by protecting the lands above, the Land Trust helps protect the beach and aquatic habitats below.

Watch for the date of a ribbon-cutting celebration when the property is transferred to Island County. Plan to join us and rejoice in protecting more of the very nature of the islands.

Island County has 214 linear miles of shoreline; more than 60% are privately owned. As private tidelands come up for sale, the Land Trust works to acquire those that enhance public access to the beach. By doing this, we also permanently remove the chance of "No Trespassing" signs being installed and blocking beach access.

Tidelands are the strip of land between ordinary low and ordinary high water. They are a vital part of the nearshore marine environment. Rocky, muddy, and sandy beaches are now known to be some of the most productive wildlife habitats in Puget Sound. Due to past practices, nearshore habitat deterioration has been identified as a significant threat to the health of Puget Sound waters. Mudflats, beaches and eelgrass beds were dismissed as "wastelands"—too wet and salty to farm, too shallow for shipping, and suitable only for diking and filling. Sadly, fill and tidal barriers have shortened Puget Sound shoreline by 450 miles (Simenstad *et al.*, 2011).

In addition to the Libbey Beach tidelands, the Land Trust has acquired and protected 3,160 acres of rich mudflats in Livingston Bay and 45 acres of tidelands in Dugalla Bay (see www.wclt.org/projects for more information). And, we are currently working with a landowner who wants to donate a quarter-mile of tidelands along the northwest shore of Whidbey Island. Stay tuned!



Fun times on Libbey Beach!

Photo: Mark Sheehan



**WHIDBEY
CAMANO**
LAND TRUST

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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Restoring Habitat for Salmon "Babies"

Dugualla Bay, located northeast of Oak Harbor, has long been identified as one of the most important salmon habitats in Puget Sound. When the Land Trust learned that key properties around Dugualla Bay were for sale, we moved to protect them before critical salmon habitat restoration opportunities were lost to development.

In December 2009, the Land Trust acquired two properties that stretch along 4,500 feet of Dugualla Bay. Our 84-acre Dugualla Bay Preserve includes upland forest, wetlands, and tidelands. The second property, a conservation easement on 29 acres in the Dugualla Heights neighborhood, includes a former coastal lagoon and a mature forest (see www.wclt.org/projects for more information on our protected properties).

During the last 18 months, the Land Trust has been working in partnership with the Whidbey Island Conservation District to analyze options to restore the tidal connections at these two sites to benefit salmon recovery efforts in Puget Sound. The analysis, called a feasibility study, was paid for with a grant from the Washington Salmon Recovery Funding Board. Surveyors, wetland specialists, coastal engineers, fish biologists, and archaeologists looked at topography, soils, nearshore currents, archaeological resources, and current fish use. A coastal engineer developed restoration options. Neighbors and scientists offered perspectives and insights and more than 50 people attended an open house in April to discuss the restoration options.

Based on the results of this rigorous process, the Land Trust has decided first to focus on restoring tidal flow to 25 acres around the Dugualla Heights lagoon property. This action, along with enhancing the property in other ways, will result in 18 acres of valuable salt marsh, tidal lagoon, and tideflat habitat surrounded by seven acres of shrubs and trees. The project will also "daylight" a small stream—now hidden in a culvert—to flow through an open, natural channel.

Juvenile salmon emerging from freshwater rivers need safe refuge, rich food sources, and time to adjust to saltwater. Once restored, the Dugualla Heights lagoon will serve these vital needs. Scientists estimate that over 26,000 young salmon from the Skagit River will use the restored lagoon each spring to hide from predators, feed, and prepare for their long journey to the ocean.

Restoring juvenile salmon habitat at Dugualla Bay will be a long journey for the Land Trust as well. We need to secure funding to pay for detailed construction drawings, permits, and construction costs. We will return to work on restoring the Dugualla Bay Preserve site when time and funding allow. Check our website for updates on our progress.



The restoration goal is to reconnect the tidal flow between Skagit Bay and the former coastal lagoon shown in the middle of the above photograph. Photo: Cheryl Lowe.

Thank You!

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

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*Want to give a gift that
will last forever?*

Then join us at our
Estate Planning Seminar

**Wednesday, September 7, 2011
4:00 - 6:00 pm**

RSVP at 360-222-3310 or info@wclt.org

Unitarian Universalist Hall
20103 State Road 525
Freeland, WA 98249

Tom Haensly, a noted conservation attorney, will talk about Wills and other important aspects of Estate Planning. Explore options to create a charitable legacy, including gifts for land protection and stewardship on Whidbey and Camano Islands.

From his office in Edmonds, Tom advises clients on real estate and estate planning, including land conservation and charitable contributions.



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Save these dates!

Land Protection Plan Workshop

August 18: 5-7 pm
Camano Senior Center, Camano Island

Work Parties

August 17: 9 am – Naas Preserve
August 24: 9 am – Trillium Community Forest
September 7: 9 am – Maxwelton Preserve

Picnic and Community Celebration

August 21 (Sunday)
12 - 2 pm
Coupeville Town Park

Estate Planning Seminar

September 7: 4-6 pm
Unitarian Universalist Hall, Freeland
RSVP - 360-222-3310

Join us for one – or all – of our events this year. Check our online calendar for newly scheduled tours, work parties, and special events:
www.wclt.org/news-activities/events-calendar

RSVP today for our Land Trust picnic!

Music starts at Noon
The melodrama-in-3-acts starts at 1:00 pm
Bring your picnic lunch—we'll provide cookies & drinks!

Sunday, August 21
Noon - 2:00 pm
Coupeville Town Park -- Pavillion



See you there!

RSVP at 360-222-3310 or info@wclt.org

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