



Vincent van Gogh's *The Starry Night* oil on canvas painted in 1889, is one of his best known works. Image courtesy of Google Art Project from Wikipedia Commons.

Dark Skies: Magical, Inspiring, and Endangered

Saving Land and Our Starry Nights

There's something magical about looking up into a dark sky punctuated with stars. It was the night sky in the small French village of Saint-Rémy-de-Provence that inspired Vincent van Gogh to paint his famous masterpiece, *The Starry Night*, shown above. Sadly, people in that French town now can no longer see the Milky Way; its otherworldly glow has been overwhelmed by artificial light.

Less than 100 years ago, everyone could look up and enjoy a spectacular starry night, but the invention of the incandescent light bulb changed everything. Today, more than 99 percent of the American population lives under light-polluted skies and the Milky Way is hidden from nearly 80 percent of North Americans. We are more fortunate than most, as areas of Whidbey and Camano Islands are among the few places in

Puget Sound where the Milky Way can still be seen with the unaided eye on clear, dark nights.

The good news is that conserving land, especially large natural areas like the recently protected Fakkema Farm on North Whidbey and Barnum Point on Camano Island, can have a positive impact on the night skies. Although conserving dark skies is not generally

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Mission

We actively involve the community in protecting, restoring, and appreciating the important natural habitats and resource lands that support the diversity of life on our Islands and in the waters of Puget Sound.



Our newest board members, from left to right: Grant Heiken, Sandy Barney, Joyce Richards, and Joyce Peterson.

Four New Directors Join Our Board

Bringing Passion and Talent to the Land Trust

The Land Trust is delighted to welcome four Island County residents to its all-volunteer Board of Directors. After a one-year hiatus, two former board members, Sandy Barney and Grant Heiken, return with their vast experience and particular expertise — Sandy in community outreach and Grant in geology. Two new members, Joyce Richards from Camano Island and Joyce Peterson from Central Whidbey, bring a wealth of knowledge and new energy to the board. Please join us in welcoming these fantastic four to their new Land Trust leadership role!

With the addition of these new directors, we are fortunate to have 13 incredible community members generously donate their time, passion, and expertise in serving on our Board. Learn more about each of them at: www.wclt.org/board.

Volunteer Spotlight: *Cleveland Hall*

Walk the trails at our Admiralty Inlet Preserve a few miles south of Coupeville on any Friday and you might see someone digging in the dirt. That will almost certainly be Cleveland Hall, one of the Land Trust's most dedicated volunteers. No one is more enthusiastic when it comes to restoring Whidbey Island's rare prairie habitat, of which more than 99 percent has disappeared.

Cleveland has been doing prairie restoration work since she joined the Land Trust as a volunteer in 2012. She has planted a series of raised beds at the preserve to grow native prairie species for seed production. The seeds,

plus others collected from the surrounding prairie, are used to grow plants for prairie restoration. Many are planted in tubes, grown to a healthy size, then transplanted to the preserve's two prairies by volunteers and local workers. The contents of more than 100,000 tubes, many originally started by Cleveland, have been transplanted. Regardless of weather, her job is an ongoing cycle of weeding, watering, gathering, planting, and transplanting — all in an effort to rejuvenate and restore the prairies for wildlife and future generations of Whidbey Islanders.

"It's been a fabulous experience," Cleveland



Cleveland can often be found seeding, planting, and weeding at our Admiralty Inlet Preserve. When you visit, be sure to say hi!

said on a particularly frigid winter day when, despite frozen ground, she'd come to weed the raised beds.

"To help with augmenting the plant populations and working to get this prairie back to something like what it used to be is a great thing to participate in."

We agree and are grateful for her dedication, passion, and knowledge.



This view of the Milky Way over Ebey's Landing showcases our dark skies. The glow of lights from Port Townsend indicate that those viewing the sky from there will not enjoy the same spectacular view. Photo by Holly Davison, a local photographer who loves the night sky. See more of her images at www.hollydavisonphotography.com.

Dark Skies: Magical, Inspiring, and Endangered

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associated with protecting the special places on our Islands, it's often one of the benefits. And darker night skies, in turn, can have far-reaching positive effects on both wildlife and our community. Here are some:

Our local wildlife – Plants and animals need the daily pattern of light and dark to govern their life cycles. Studies have shown artificial light can have significant detrimental effects (including death) on many species. Darker nights can improve foraging for food, mating, sleep, and migration activities for wildlife.

Our health – Humans are not immune to the effects of artificial light. Studies have shown that greater nighttime darkness reduces the risk of sleep disorders, obesity, diabetes, depression, and other maladies.

Our economy – Unlike many other forms of pollution, light pollution is easily reversible. Successful efforts to keep light out of the night skies of Whidbey and Camano Islands could bring recognition from the International Dark-Sky Association, which could help our islands tap a

growing astro-tourism market. That would bring more visitors to the area during off-seasons when stargazing is best.

The Land Trust's preserves do not contribute to light pollution, so through your support, you're already helping protect the night sky. Recent conservation easements negotiated by the Land Trust also mandate that any new lighting must be night-sky friendly and existing outdoor lighting must be converted within two years of the easement's effective date.

Community action can also help keep the stars shining in our night sky. For example, the Town of Coupeville recently voted to replace all its street lights with fully shielded, night-sky friendly, warm-white LEDs. See the sidebar at right for a list of other simple steps you can take with your outdoor lighting to help darken the night sky.

You can learn more about the importance of dark skies and light pollution by visiting the International Dark-Sky Association's website, www.darksky.org.

5 Ways You Can Make a Difference for Dark Skies

1 Light only what you need



2 Shield lights and direct them down



3 Use energy efficient bulbs that are only as bright as you need



4 Choose warm white light bulbs (< 3000K)



5 Only use light when you need it with timers, dimmers, and motion detectors



Crockett Lake – Where the Birds Go

A Durable Commitment to Conservation

It takes a long time and lots of persistence for a river to wear a hole through a rock. The same might be said of the Land Trust’s continuing efforts to protect and restore Crockett Lake on Central Whidbey, one of the most beautiful and treasured natural areas in Island County and nationally renowned as a spectacular birding destination.

Over the past 12 years we’ve been privileged to work with willing landowners to create the Crockett Lake Preserve, protecting 493 acres. Combined with 345 acres of adjacent land in public ownership, most of this critical natural area is now preserved (see map below).

The Land Trust recently purchased two key properties totaling 100 acres that include an intact forest. Since most of the lands around Crockett Lake were cleared by early settlers for farming, the forest is an extremely valuable addition to the preserve, joining a mosaic of high quality fresh, salt, and brackish wetlands, mudflats, and shallow open water. Vegetation in the preserve includes shrubby areas, wetland forest, and mature upland forest. This richness provides vital breeding, nesting, feeding and resting

areas for more than 230 bird species that rely on Crockett Lake, including thousands of shorebirds that stop here during fall and spring migrations.

We’re working now to enhance and restore the natural functions of this valuable wetland system, including portions where non-native vegetation has choked out many beneficial native plants. We’ll describe our habitat restoration plan and implementation strategy in a future newsletter.

Your financial support has been essential in protecting, caring for, and now restoring this invaluable natural area. The leverage on your investment has also been terrific! So far, our staff has secured eight grants totaling more than \$3.5 million. We’ve also received several land donations from generous supporters who care deeply about this amazing place. And there’s more to come, so stay tuned.

A Happy Neighbor

Bill Young has enjoyed having Crockett Lake as his backyard for the past 17 years. He and his wife, Lauren, live on the northeast side of the lake. They “jumped for joy” after learning the Land Trust had acquired

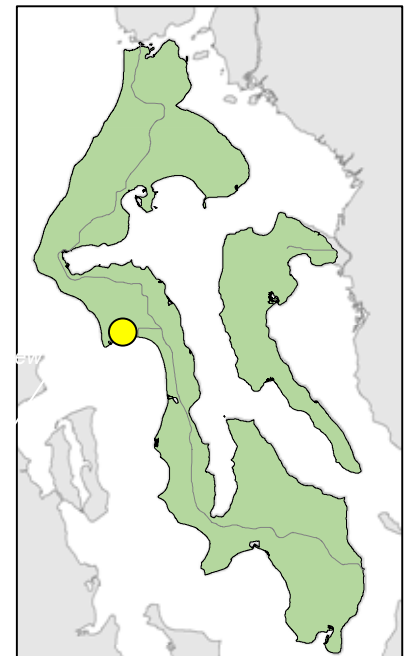
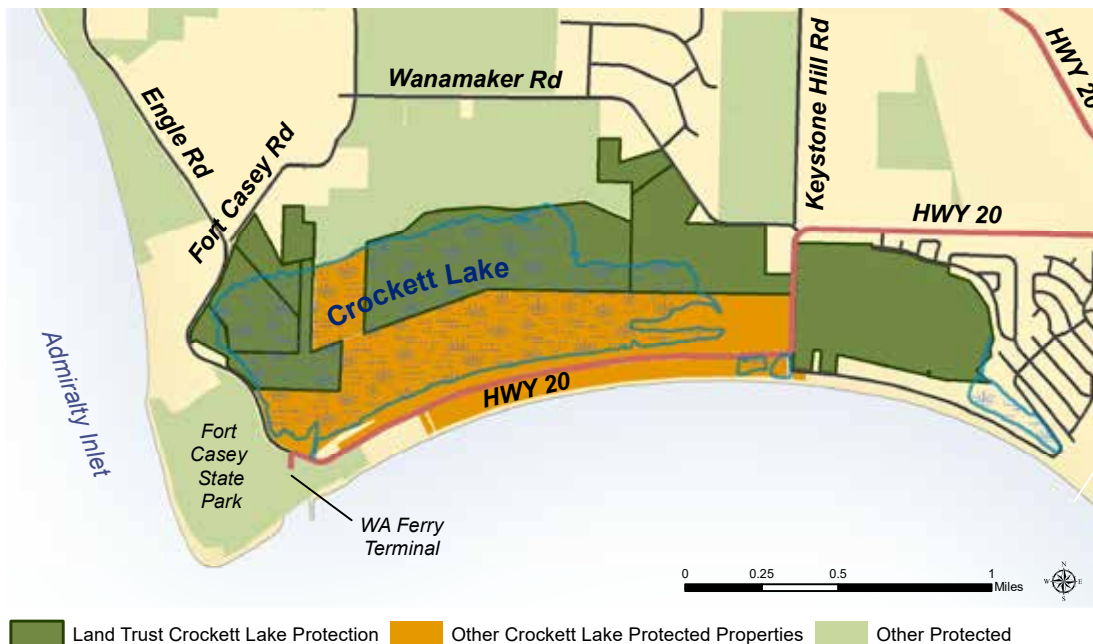


Bill Young and his dog, Shayla, at Crockett Lake.

an 85-acre property next to their home, taking comfort from knowing it will never be developed.

After seeing Land Trust signs posted on the newly acquired property, Bill immediately visited our office to become a donor. He also signed up as a Land Steward, committing to mowing, trimming, and other maintenance work with the Land Trust’s stewardship staff and other volunteers.

“We want to be active members,” Bill said of himself and Lauren. “I’ve been caring for that property for the last 17 years and would continue to care for it, whether I’m an official Land Steward or not!”



Lending Hands Help Us Thrive

A Big Thank-You to Our Amazing Volunteers

Volunteers are often driven by a desire to make a difference. You certainly do! In much the same way donor dollars are leveraged to achieve substantially greater land protection, the efforts of the Land Trust's staff are greatly amplified by your volunteerism.

As a donor-funded organization with more work to do than our staff can handle, the time, effort, and care you devote to our events, administrative work, serving on our board of directors, and caring for our preserves are big reasons for our shared success. Collectively, you donated more than 3,600 hours in 2016 and we can't thank you enough!

Interested in volunteering? Please contact Kyle Ostermick-Durkee at 360.222.3310 or kyle@wclt.org.



Volunteers remove a truckful of trash from the Waterman Shoreline Preserve.

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William Young

Your Photos Are Worth a Thousand Words

Thanks for Sharing Them

Photographs create a visual narrative of our community's special places, moments, and inhabitants. Often, the success of our grant funding presentations, public campaigns, and community outreach programs depends on our ability to convey the beauty, importance, and value of the places we are working to protect. Words are never enough.

In recent years, many of you have graciously shared your images of wildlife, shorelines, forests, wetlands, working farms, the amazing beauty of our Islands, and people enjoying what we've protected. These images ensure our grant applications are more successful, our presentations more compelling, and our communications more meaningful. We think of you and thank you each time we use them.

Sometimes, such as with Holly Davison's night sky photo used on page 3 in the cover story of this newsletter, we ask a photographer for permission to use certain photos. On other occasions, we ask Land Trust supporters and volunteers to take photos of specific places. In 2016, many of you gladly shared your photos and accepted photo assignments to capture the images we needed to tell the year's important stories. We're grateful to you for sharing both your time and the priceless images featured here, along with many others.



Dave Wechner took this photo showcasing the beauty of Fakkema Farm, helping us share the protection of this important landscape.



Steve Hillborn captured this photo of a coyote family at the forest's edge on the Tull Family Farm, just inside Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve.



Barbara Brock graciously accepted an assignment to capture this and other kayak photos at Bamum Point; it was critical for grant presentations.



Benjamin Drummond shared this and many other photos to help us showcase Bamum Point in grant presentations and fundraising materials.



This eagle's nest is one of the many images that Tom Eisenberg captured at Bamum Point for use in our spring newsletter and fundraising materials.



Rodney Simmons shared this photo of Bruiser the Elk for use in our summer newsletter article about the proposed Donald Borgman Nature Preserve.



Denis Hill captured the removal of creosote-treated wooden structures at Glendale Beach (shown here) and Waterman Shoreline in a series of aerial photographs.



Cara Hefflinger submitted this beautiful image to our Calendar Photo Contest. This photo is featured on the month of August in our 2017 calendar.



This Craig Johnson photo of a Rufous Hummingbird was used in the spring newsletter announcing a new pollinator garden at Saratoga Woods.

A Big Thank You to Our 2016 Community Contributors!

As a donor-funded organization, your support is critical in achieving our shared vision for life on our Islands, one that includes clean air and water, thriving productive farms, places of respite and recreation, and abundant habitat where wildlife flourishes.

Your donations – no matter their size – keep our Islands amazing, beautiful, and naturally wild and we want you to know how much we appreciate your partnership. Thank you for supporting us, working beside us, cheering us on, and celebrating our shared successes.

Recurring donors, those who give monthly or at other intervals throughout the year, are identified below with an asterisk (*).

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If you see anything wrong, please let us know.

We treasure our donors and partners and want to ensure that your information is correct.

If any of the information in this section is incorrect, please let us know at info@wclt.org and we'll correct it. Thanks!

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"Whidbey Island and Camano Island are both incredible jewels in the necklace of water, islands, and mountains that surround this fabulous Island County. Thanks to the Whidbey Camano Land Trust and all those who dedicate their time and energy to keep land available for all to enjoy — the humans, flora, and fauna of this unique archipelago."

— Christine Whitney, hiker, dog walker, horseback rider, bird watcher, boater, kayaker, fisherman, and crabber

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***"Thank you all for your dedication and the creative
steps taken toward protecting a very special place.
Barnum Point will give Nature a place to stretch and
people will have a place to enjoy natural
beauty and serenity."***

– Joani and Dale Boose

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Island Guardian

(\$1,000 – \$4,999)

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 Deborah Jones
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 Bill and Gloria Koll
 Earl and Kristin Lasher
 Cheryl Lawrence

"Hearing about the Fakkema Farm protection was some much needed good news. Thank you for everything the Land Trust is doing now and always!"

– Judy Feldman

Whidbey Island Kayaking / Krista Loercher
 Dennis White and Charlotte Bell
 Shannon and Joel White
 Robert G. and Marguerite W. White
 Kurt and Christine Wieland
 Brenda and Robert Wilbur
 William Wilcox

Jonathan Eveleigh and Laura Strong
 Lois Farrington
 Judith Finn
 Britt Fletcher
 William Graves and Frances Wood
 Andrew Grenier and Rebecca Cleary
 Patrick and Sheila Gross

"A huge THANK YOU for all the Land Trust has done to save and make the Trillium Community Forest trails available to the public. Our family has helped raise money and forge trails. We look forward to driving our rig and horses to the new parking lot on Smugglers Cove Road and accessing the trails from there. And we plan to volunteer as Land Stewards too!"

-Liz McPhee, Jack Tisa, and Madison Tisa McPhee

Stephen LeCuyer and Joan O'Connell
Robert Lehman and Christopher Mathews
Georgie Lindquist
Gretchen Luxenberg
Brenda and Donald Mallett
Sally McAdoo
Stephen McMinn
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Ronda and Brad Miller
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Island Visionary

(\$5,000 and above)

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Leigh Smith
Mary Jo and Michael Stansbury
Diana and Steve White
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Carolyn Barnum by *Carole and Patrick Carroll*
Clark and Danielle Bishop by *Elizabeth and Alan Hancock*
Clark and Danielle Bishop by *Kimberly Konrath*
Clark and Danielle Bishop by *Gretchen Luxenberg and Leigh Smith*
Clark and Danielle Bishop by *Pat Powell and Mark Sheehan*
Ted Brookes by *Ted and Pat Brookes*
Wally and Sally Campbell by *Erin and Clark Campbell*
Loretta Carter by *Bruce Long and Lorraine Gibbs*
Amanda Clark by *Sherry and Tony Zoars*

Margot and Chris Colley by *Bob King*
Margot and Chris Colley by *Judith Fihn*
Margot and Chris Colley by *Michael Hecklinger*
Margot and Chris Colley by *Stephanie Fitzhugh*
Friends of Camano Parks by *Robin Hanks*
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Susan and Tom Gideon by *Anne Rau*
Susan and Tom Gideon by *Deborah Waters*
Susan and Tom Gideon by *Kenneth Williams*
Bonnie and Bob Johnson by *Marcia Moriarty*
Randall Morgan by *Lauri and Wayne Morgan*
Paul Piercey by *Ellyn Thoreen and Terry Benham*
Pam Pritzl by *Vera Halfmoon*
Roaming Artists by *Peter and Sylvia Domoto*
Denese Schauer by *Ayesha Fuentes*
Southern Resident Orcas: Samish, Nigel, Polaris, Dipper, and Doublestuff by *Bonnie Gretz*
Laura B. Waugh by *Charles Waugh*
Howard Welser by *Dick and Kathy Bowen*
Faith Wilder by *Phill and Maria Wilder*

In Memory

Robert Barnum by *Linda Sherer*
Robert Barnum by *Mary Jane Taylor*
Robert Barnum by *Wally and Brenda Leja*
James Bolin by *Ardeth Bolin*
Marge and Barry Brugman by *Barbara Brugman and Masanori Hashimoto*
Robert K. Clark by *Amanda Clark*
Jeanie Cooley by *Edward and Peggy Cooley*
John Denver by *Greg and Susan Gilles*
Mike Gibbons by *Henri and Sally Hardenberg*
Sheryl Goldfinger by *Candace Richardson and Bob Allen*
Sheryl Goldfinger by *Tom and Sally Cahill*
Vernon A. Good by *Barbara Brock*
Kirby Guss - a great dog by *Gail Madden and Elaine Rost*
Marge A. Hayes by *Sandra Hayes*
Roy C. Hayes by *Sandra Hayes*
Richard "Dick" Martin Hepburn by *Marni and Gary Jezek*
Emily Lasco by *John and Sherry Douceur*
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Bob Mieger by *Maradel Gale*
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Kristin Ravetz by *Ted Ravetz*
John R. Scott by *Jack Scott*
Lowell Smith by *Kevin Smith*
Dorothy Strong by *Jonathan Eveleigh and Laura Strong*
Zoe Wiegand by *Stephanie and Bill Wiegand*

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Mary Ann Benack from *William and Keri Benack*
Mary Jacobson and Michael Howard from *Amy Raymond and Tim Dale*
Anne and Mya-Li Zuckerman from *Ed Zuckerman*

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2016 Legacy Gifts

Robert Giswold

In-Kind Gifts

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 Bayleaf
 Bayview Bicycles
 Bayview Farm & Garden
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 Camano Center
 Coastal Geological Services Inc.
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 Flyers Restaurant and Brewery
 Goose Community Grocer
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 Zanini's Catering and Events

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 Windermere Real Estate - Stanwood / Camano

Matching Gifts & Workplace Giving

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 City of Seattle Combined Charities Campaign
 Google Matching Gift Program
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 Intel Corporation
 Microsoft Matching Gifts Campaign
 Pfizer Foundation Matching

Gifts Program
 Puget Sound Energy Foundation
 RealNetwork Foundation
 T Mobile USA, Inc
 The Seattle Foundation
 United Way of King County
 Washington State Combined Fund Drive

Barnum Point Gifts

We recognized the majority of Barnum Point donors in our fall newsletter. Donors listed below are those whose gifts we received after that newsletter went to print.

Kate Ambros
 Ellyn Thoreen and Terry Benham
 Wally and Brenda Leja
 Linda Sherer
 Richard and Maxine Steele
 Mary Jane Taylor

Donald Borgman Nature Preserve Gifts

Elizabeth and Pete Berg
 David Blashill
 David Bravender
 Ben Breedlove and Ann O'Barr-Breedlove
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 Douglas and Dianne Wills

Trillium Community Forest Gifts

Back Country Horsemen - Island County Chapter
 Ted and Pat Brookes
 Rowena DeFato and Scott Thor
 Diane and Richard Delmonte
 Marni and Gary Jezek
 Karl and Ruth King
 Melinda Kurtz
 Daniel and Clare LaFond
 Sound Investment Strategies
 South Whidbey Yacht Club
 Richard Strickland and Denise Krouse
 Kestutis and Birute Tautvydus

Organizational Support

Island County Conservation Futures
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 U.S. Department of the Navy
 U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service
 WA Department of Ecology
 WA Puget Sound Partnership
 WA Recreation and Conservation Office

Property Donations

Paul Bakken
 The estates of Mary Louise Thie and Lawrence H. Thie
 Rebecca Silliman
 Tom and Barbara Silliman

In Memorium ***Bill Black***

Bill Black passed away recently at his beloved Whidbey cabin surrounded by his family. Just days before his death at the age of 93, Bill was still hiking on the beach. Bill was a founding member of the Whidbey Camano Land Trust, which was incorporated in 1984. He and his wife Mary have been generous donors ever since. Bill left us a planned gift in his will to continue his support. We will use his gift with the same integrity that Bill lived his life – ensuring we're protecting and caring for this island that he cherished. Fair winds and following seas to you Bill. We will miss you!



Bill and Mary at their beloved Whidbey cabin. Black family photo.



Whidbey Camano Land Trust
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Trillium Community Forest – Seven Years Later

Sharing the Results of Your Support

Over the years, we’ve noticed our supporters enjoy getting together to hear about Land Trust projects. This year you’ll have several opportunities to learn more about on-the-ground results made possible by your support. These events will be held at different locations around Island County. Each will begin with an opportunity for attendees to socialize and enjoy light refreshments.

The first gathering, “Showcasing the Trillium Community Forest,” will be at Trinity Lutheran Church (old building) in Freeland from 7 to 9 p.m. Wednesday, March 15. Jessica Larson, our land steward, will explain the exciting progress made in the forest since 2010, when our community rallied to raise nearly \$4 million to save this large, imperiled forest between Freeland and Greenbank.

You’ll learn about new, convenient trailhead access (including ADA) for hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians. You’ll hear results of the successful restoration efforts underway to improve the forest’s health and wildlife habitat and what’s next for this amazing landscape.

There will also be time for questions and discussion. We’re looking forward to seeing you there!

You're Invited!

Wednesday, March 15, from 7- 9 pm

Trinity Lutheran Church (in the old building)

18341 State Route 525, Freeland, WA 98249



With the help of volunteers, the Land Trust manages more than 6.5 miles of trails in the Community Forest. Photo by Kevin Horan.