



Robert Bishop loads hay on to a pickup on his brother's farm. Bishop and his nine siblings worked with the Land Trust this year to protect a nearby property where they grew up.

Protection Efforts Stacking up in Ebey's Reserve *Land Trust Has Protected 45 properties, 1,547 Acres Since 2003*

Some things never change.

Robert Bishop realized that on a recent sunny afternoon when he found himself covered in sweat and green alfalfa dust after loading bales of hay into a pickup driven by his older brother, Malcolm. They had come to help out another brother, Wilbur, at his farm on Ebey's Prairie in Central Whidbey.

"How come I have the bad job?" Robert joked to Malcolm while peering into the pickup's window.

"Because you're younger than I am," Malcolm said with a grin.

The light hearted exchange between the two brothers led Malcolm to reflect on the early years at their parents' small farm just west of Coupeville and share why it was important for their family to work

"I want my great grandkids to see (our family property) just the way it was when I was growing up. I love that idea."

— Robert Bishop

with the Whidbey Camano Land Trust to protect the land that surrounded the family home.

All 10 Bishop siblings agreed that the family's 12-acre rural property needed to be protected to preserve a place of so many fond memories. In August, a conservation easement was placed on the land to permanently protect it from development.

"My dad (the late Paul Bishop) was a doctor," said Malcolm, now retired as Coupeville's public works director. "He grew up on a farm. Farming life was very important to him. Our folks loved this area. We loved it growing up."

"I don't think anyone in the family ever wanted to see houses and development on it," said Robert, a veterinarian who also serves as the Island County coroner. "I want my great grandkids to see it just the way it was when I was growing up. I love that idea."

The Bishop conservation easement is just the latest in a growing list of protection successes orchestrated by the Land Trust in Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve. In the 14 years since Pat Powell was hired as Land Trust executive director, the organization has secured \$24 million in grants to protect important lands and waters in the Reserve.

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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.

Land Trust Earns National Re-accreditation

Good News for Our Community

Land Trust accreditation is a voluntary program administered by the Accreditation Commission of the Land Trust Alliance. Receiving accreditation is a mark of excellence that indicates sound finances, ethical conduct, responsible governance, and lasting stewardship.

In 2012, the Whidbey Camano Land Trust became one of the nation's first land trusts to receive national accreditation. However, accreditation status is evaluated every five years, so it was necessary for the Land Trust to go through the rigorous process again this year. Re-accreditation was received in August.

According to the Land Trust Alliance, there are more than 1,700 land trusts across the country. Collectively, they permanently protect more than 40 million acres of farms, forests, parks and natural areas that are vital to healthy, vibrant communities. However, only 389 trusts (about 23 percent) have achieved accreditation.

Why accreditation matters

According to Land Trust Alliance data, there is a strong correlation between accreditation and conservation success. Accredited land trusts now conserve almost 80 percent of all land owned in fee by land trusts or held in conservation easements, ensuring the promise of permanent protection.



Membership coordinator Jennifer Hajny holds our new plaque.

Accredited land trusts also:

- Have significantly more money to defend and care for their holdings, and
- Are five times more likely to have baseline documentation for every easement and 100 percent monitoring of easements.

The benefits are clear to Debora Valis, Land Trust board president. "Our determination to follow these rigorous standards makes our organization stronger and gives our members the reassurance that we can protect important farms, shoreline, forests, and wildlife habitat in our communities," she said. "Our staff can share in the pride with the community that so generously supports conservation.

"This national recognition reinforces the commitment of our outstanding staff to work at the highest level of excellence."

Land Trust Now a Goosefoot Supported Organization

In early 2017, Goosefoot changed its tax status from "private foundation" to "supporting organization" to expand its grant programs and realize its full philanthropic potential. In doing so, it selected four nonprofits that fit its broader mission of a thriving South Whidbey — one was the Whidbey Camano Land Trust.

Each supported organization receives funding and also appoints two people to Goosefoot's 15-member board.

Together, board members will decide how best to direct Goosefoot philanthropy so that it has the maximum community impact.

Land Trust Board President Debora Valis and Executive Director Pat Powell joined the Goosefoot board in September. Valis is excited to have a voice on Goosefoot's board and for the opportunity to play an integral role supporting South Whidbey nonprofits.

"By working together, we're more effective," said Valis. "We all benefit from a stronger, more vibrant South Whidbey."

The Land Trust remains a separate and independent organization. Being a supported organization will not affect our mission, operations, or governance in any way.

Protecting the Reserve

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This year alone, the Land Trust has protected five properties totaling more than 50 acres in the Reserve and is working on eight others representing another 573 acres. Some of those projects are at the north end of the Reserve, an area which historically hasn't had much protection. Several properties along Monroe Landing Road north of Penn Cove are subjects of particular focus.

"In addition to local farms and woodlots, we've protected two rare prairies, an old growth forest, coastal bluffs, critical wetlands, and beach access. We also build and connect walking trails. It's the whole suite of conservation," Powell said.

The Land Trust's efforts dispel a public misconception that all properties within the boundaries of the 17,572-acre Reserve are protected from development. It's true that the creation of the nation's first historical reserve by Congress in 1978 led to protection of thousands of acres of farmland by the National Park Service and other entities, but the only protection measures within the Reserve over the past 14 years have been achieved by the Land Trust.

The Land Trust's strategic focus has been to connect both large and small parcels of land with existing protected areas to complete a protected landscape tapestry throughout the Reserve. Most land in the Reserve remains in private ownership and much remains vulnerable to development pressures. Those pressures have increased due to population growth and the allure of owning a residence near such natural beauty and open space.

"When you drive in here, people always say how beautiful it is," Malcolm Bishop said. "Well, it's only beautiful if it stays farmed. Today, this



Greg Meredith feeds his sheep on his Coupeville property that was protected by the Land Trust earlier this year.

would be prime country for homes right here."

Greg Meredith understands that feeling. He lives over the ridgeline from Ebey's Prairie, smack dab in the middle of a pastoral setting with a view of vast fields, mountains, and weathered barns.

Meredith worked with the Land Trust this year to protect 20 acres next to his home through a conservation agreement. He continues to raise sheep on the property and agreed to a trail easement that soon will allow walkers to enjoy the rural scenery as part of the Land Trust's Walking Ebey's trail system.

"I bought the property about 20 years ago," Meredith said. "I'd always wanted it to remain as farmland. I feel it's a very unique area. Everybody should look to try to save a little bit of what might have been in years past so people in the future can enjoy it. It's a gem we all have to protect."

That philosophy is similar to the one shared by the Bishops. That's what got them thinking it was time to get down to the business of protecting the land where they grew up. Their land includes farmland, forest, and

remnants of the family orchard. The Bishops also agreed to a trail easement and a small parking area that will be linked to a larger trail network.

Arletta Uptegrove can relate to the special feeling the Bishops have for their land. It's one reason she worked with the Land Trust this year on a conservation easement to protect the three-acre property that still holds her childhood home. She also donated the five-acre forest next to it to the Land Trust that is one of the scenic entrances into Coupeville.

Her property isn't far away from the old Bishop place, and Paul Bishop used to be her doctor.

Uptegrove, formerly Arletta Lynch, said her reasons to protect the land were deeply sentimental. Her ancestors in Coupeville date back to the 19th century. Uptegrove's parents, grandparents, and great grandparents are all buried at Sunnyside Cemetery. When her own daughter died of cancer in 2002, her ashes were sprinkled in the waters off Ebey's Landing.

"I wanted to keep a piece of Whidbey as it was when my relatives settled here," she said.

Restoration Success at Dugualla Preserves

Toads, other wildlife finding habitat to their liking

Watching thousands of tiny toads crawl across a landscape can be a moving experience.

It was for Ruth Milner when she started her career 30 years ago as a biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. She remembers standing at the edge of a pond on Fort Lewis in Pierce County when a colleague told her to look down. “The ground was moving,” Milner recalled. “I thought it was incredible.”

The memory still excites Milner and she was thrilled to learn such a phenomenon was taking place at one of the Whidbey Camano Land Trust’s protected properties on North Whidbey Island.

Biologist Tom Cyra confirmed what he and Milner had already suspected when he visited the Land Trust’s Dugualla Flats Preserve this summer and observed a pile of tiny Western Toads scrambling along the edge of Dugualla Lake.

The biologists had received reports of toadlets migrating en masse in the vicinity but weren’t certain of their pond of origin until the July visit.

Milner said it was important to find a site on Whidbey where biologists can monitor a troubled species that in recent decades has experienced a widespread population decline in the Western Washington lowlands. The Western Toad is considered a state candidate species, meaning it’s under review for possible listing by the state as endangered, threatened, or sensitive.



An adult Western Toad, above, and toadlets, below, find the habitat near our Dugualla properties appealing.

The toad, like most amphibians, is sensitive to changes in the environment.

“I would say it (the Dugualla breeding site) is really significant for two reasons,” Milner said. “One is it certainly appears to be a large breeding area that can accommodate a lot of toads. In terms of habitat provided and breeding potential, it’s one of the best we know of so far on the island.”

The other reason is that the site is part of a wide swath of protected land, including a nearby 39-acre property with 45 acres of Dugualla Bay tidelands known as Dugualla Bay Preserve (protected in 2008). The Land Trust also acquired a 39-acre field east of the lake in 2009 to create the Dugualla Flats Preserve.

A nearby farmer, whose property is adjacent to Dugualla Lake and protected by a Land Trust conservation easement, is mindful of toad activity. He schedules cutting his fields around the toad migration.

Most of the tiny toads are bound for upland forests, where the adults

spend much of their lives and return to their natal ponds only during the spring breeding season. “It’s kind of living proof of a place where the landowners have figured out how to participate in the conservation of this species,” Milner said.

Since acquiring the Dugualla properties nearly a decade ago, the Land Trust partnered with Island County and Ducks Unlimited to restore the land and shoreline to a more natural condition for the benefit of salmon and other wildlife.

Once used as a farm field, Dugualla Flats has returned to its wetland roots. Ditches were plugged to increase water on the site. Abundant planting of native shrubs and placement of woody debris and snags on the land have created more wildlife habitat.

The former estuary in the Dugualla Bay Preserve was restored last fall when the Washington Department of Transportation partnered with us and breached an old dike as mitigation for impacts related to replacement of the Davis Slough Bridge on State Highway 532 near Camano Island.

The toads’ presence is only part of a greater fish and wildlife success story happening on protected and restored lands near Dugualla Bay. Juvenile



White pelicans made a rare appearance in Dugualla Bay this summer. Photo by Lenny Corin.

Dugualla Preserves Continued

Chinook and chum salmon were discovered this year inside the newly restored Dugualla Bay Preserve estuary.

Fish samples taken by the Skagit River System Cooperative revealed 29 juvenile Chinook salmon and more than 2,000 chum inside the tidal lagoon during monitoring between April and July.

This summer revealed further evidence that more of nature's creatures were adapting well to the changes. White pelicans made a rare appearance for a few days not far from the restored estuary. Great blue herons were seen roosting in large numbers in the

forested area next to Dugualla Flats. Even adult toads were still hanging around the protected wetlands near the restored wooded area months after the breeding season.

"It's nice to know they're there," Cyra said. "And it's a big enough protected area that they'll probably be able to survive for a while."

Toadlet mortality is high. Cyra estimated that less than one in 10 of the tiny toads makes it to adulthood. He called them "bite-sized little morsels" for birds and other predators. Roads, though, tend to be a toad's worst enemy. During migration, toadlets tend to follow a direct path bound for upland forests. For many, the journey ends quickly on the pavement.

"I've only seen it one time probably three or four years ago," said Chris Holt, who lives near Dugualla Bay. "There was just a herd of them coming across the road. They were getting smashed flat left and right. It was sad to see."

Holt even tried to help a few toads cross the road, but "there wasn't much you could do," he said.

Read the expanded story online at www.wclt.org/toads.

A Speed Bump at Barnum Point

The Washington State Legislature's failure to pass a state capital budget this year (an unheard of occurrence) put an unanticipated speed bump in the way of our effort to protect the final pieces of Barnum Point County Park (the four western most parcels), delaying funding on three key grants. We're working on alternatives and there's still a possibility that the capital budget will be passed by year end.

The good news is that Island County is planning to open the protected portions of the park in the next month or so. There are still a few things left to do, but the majority of the cleanup has been completed by the Land Trust (all buildings and foundations removed and reused) with wonderful help from the Friends of Camano Island Parks and other community volunteers.

We'll keep you apprised of the situation. Thanks again to everyone who's been a part of expanding the county park from its initial 27 acres. It's now 99 acres and eventually — when the west tract properties are purchased and protected — will be 127 acres with a mile of beach and 2.5 miles of upland trails.



Island Beauty on Display

The 2018 Land Trust Calendar features local images submitted to our photo contest by both amateur and professional photographers.

Many thanks to our 25 local business sponsors whose support makes producing the calendar possible!

Retail Locations

You can buy the 2018 Calendar at the following locations. Those indicated by an asterisk also sponsored the calendar.

Bayview

Bayview Farm and Garden*
Goose Community Grocer*

Camano Island

Camano Island Marketplace*
Elger Bay Grocery
Tyee Store

Clinton

Cadée Distillery*
MAKE Whidbey Market

Coupeville

3 Sisters Market*
Chamber of Commerce
The Kingfisher Book Store
Lavender Wind Farm*
Salty Mug

Freeland

Island Athletic Club*
Linds
Skagit Farmers Supply*
Sound Business Center
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Skagit Cycle Center
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Stanwood

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Online

If you can't get to a local retailer, you can buy a calendar online at www.wclt.org/store.



Bounty Loop resident William Allen is tickled about the new ADA loop trail plan.

Bounty Loop Trailhead Takes Shape **Disabled Veteran Welcomes Progress**

William Allen loves the quiet of the forest.

He and his friends on Bounty Loop Road in Freeland used to enjoy peaceful retreats in the woods near their homes on a trail wide enough for carts and scooters. That was critical for Allen and his friends, all limited by disabilities.

“It was really nice to get out,” Allen said. “You’ve got little birds chirping and flying around. It was just nice to sit there and have a sandwich and enjoy the whole routine.”

But those outings ended about six years ago when a neighbor locked the gate and blocked access to the woods. So when Allen learned recently about a new access being developed in his neighborhood, one specifically designed for people with mobility impairments, a smile returned to his face.

The Whidbey Camano Land Trust and Island County are partnering on a project that will feature an ADA-

compliant loop trail allowing Allen and others with physical limitations to enjoy part of our Trillium Community Forest.

Allen, a 73-year-old Vietnam veteran, has a condition that impacts his equilibrium, making it a challenge for him to stand on uneven surfaces. So when he ventures around the neighborhood, he travels in a mobility scooter he personally restored.

“Any place where it’s not level, I fall down a lot,” he said.

Donations from more than 1,500 people helped the Land Trust acquire much of the 721-acre Trillium Community Forest in 2010. Bounty Loop will be the third access point into the forest, joining trailheads on State Highway 525 north of Freeland and Smugglers Cove Road.

Northwest Trails, Inc. is scheduled to build the trail in November and it’s expected to open in late December. The Island County Road Shop cleared an area to make room for a parking lot during the summer. The asphalt went down in September. Funding for the parking lot and trail was provided by the Washington Recreation and Conservation Office through its Local Parks and Land and Water Conservation Fund grant programs.

The loop trail will be five feet wide. It will start out as asphalt, then transition to packed gravel. It will also be a nice option for parents with small children.

“I’m excited about the access,” said Brian Van Wetter, another Bounty Loop resident. “I think it’s wonderful.”

Allen can’t wait to get back out on the trails. He and others limited by disabilities used to help maintain the old trails when they could still access them. “Lots of us chronically gifted folks live out here,” Allen said with a laugh. “I’m trying to be politically correct. Chronically gifted sounds better than gimpy old buggers.”



Prairie Restoration at Admiralty Inlet Preserve

Borrowing a technique used for centuries by Native Americans to manage prairies, a specialized crew conducted a controlled burn at our Admiralty Inlet Preserve in August.

See story online at www.wclt.org/prairie.

A trained fire crew professional working on the recent controlled burn at our Admiralty Inlet Preserve.

Waterman Preserve Gets New Look

Visitors soaking up the fall colors at our Waterman Shoreline Preserve can now also absorb some history about the site. Two beautiful interpretive panels telling the story of the property were installed along the pedestrian/bicycle trail in August.

The panels were designed by Port Townsend artist Larry Eifert, whose works are found at national parks across the U.S. He also created the panels at our Admiralty Inlet Preserve in Coupeville.

The Waterman Shoreline Preserve is a 59-acre nature preserve located just north of Clinton. It was acquired by the Land Trust from the Waterman family in August 2015 with federal and state grant funds.



Volunteers Steve Holmberg and Tom Nielsen install one of the panels.

A Barn Full of Fun for Volunteers

Great Food and Good Times at Volunteer Appreciation BBQ

Volunteers are a vital part of the Whidbey Camano Land Trust's success. They're critical in helping us care for and restore protected lands. They serve on our board of directors. They also help in many other important ways from constructing information kiosks at our properties, staffing booths at public events, preparing mailings, and other invaluable tasks.

Each year, we celebrate our volunteers in a special way by holding an event in their honor. This year, the Volunteer Appreciation Barbecue was held August 24 at 3 Sisters Farm located north of Penn Cove in Ebey's Reserve.

If success could be measured by smiles and laughter, this event was

a hit. There was no shortage of either at the barbecue.

The atmosphere at 3 Sisters Farm and the sunny weather made for a bright and cheery event. The hot dogs donated by 3 Sisters Market and the home brewing talents of one particular volunteer didn't hurt, either.

Some volunteers received special awards. Many participated in lively outdoor games.

The combination of great food, wonderful company and good fun made for a memorable afternoon.

A heartfelt THANK YOU to all of our volunteers! For those able to attend this year, thank you. And for those who were unable, we hope to see you next year!



Board members Jennifer Muzzall Jones and Dan Matlock with Jennifer's daughter, Cora Jones.



Tom Trimbath and Deborah Jones compete in outdoor games.



Volunteers Ruth Stibre and Loretta Wilson.



Volunteer Jean Knapp being recognized.



No celebration would be complete without cake!



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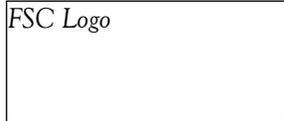
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Accreditation – A Mark of Distinction



- Sound Finances
- Ethical Conduct
- Responsible Governance
- Lasting Stewardship

The Whidbey Camano Land Trust is a nationally accredited land trust. The accreditation seal is awarded to land trusts meeting the highest national standards for excellence and conservation permanence.



Short eared owl. Photo by Matt Ferguson.

Save the Date

2017 Holiday Open House

When: Wednesday, December 13 from 4 - 7 p.m.

Where: Whidbey Camano Land Trust Office

Mark your calendars to save the date for this year's Holiday Open House!
You'll receive an invitation with R.S.V.P details by mail in early November.

