



Nisqually River view from the Arp Property

NISQUALLY LAND TRUST

WINTER 2017-2018

Land Trust Acquires Wild Stretch of Nisqually Shoreline

In November, the Land Trust acquired 9.86 acres and one-third mile of salmon-producing shoreline at the confluence of the Nisqually River and Toboton Creek. And we were hustling to remove a small log cabin before winter floods washed it into the river.

The property is located in the Wilcox Reach, one of the most dynamic stretches of the Nisqually River. Two years ago, just upstream, the river blasted away a hundred horizontal feet of riverbank in a matter of months and destroyed a family home.

Toboton Creek contains extensive coho salmon habitat, and the Nisqually Salmon Recovery Program rates the Wilcox Reach high priority for protection of Chinook salmon habitat and highest priority for protection of steelhead trout habitat. Both Chinook and steelhead are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

Save for the cabin, the property is undeveloped and includes wetlands and second-growth conifer and deciduous forest.

The purchase was ranked to be funded through a 2017 Salmon Recovery Board grant. However, salmon-

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The Arp property is on the east shoreline of Toboton Creek, at the creek's confluence with the Nisqually river. This area is a priority for habitat protection in the Nisqually Chinook Recovery Plan.



A chinook salmon in the Nisqually River near Toboton Creek.



OUR MISSION

The Nisqually Land Trust acquires and manages critical lands to permanently benefit the water, wildlife, and people of the Nisqually River Watershed.

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This seal recognizes land conservation organizations that meet national standards for excellence, uphold the public trust, and ensure that conservation efforts are permanent.



All photos in this publication are courtesy of Land Trust staff and volunteers.

President's Letter: Come Be a Part of the Story

Autumn in the Northwest is pretty special, and not only because of the World Series, college football, the Seahawks and local elections! It's also the best time of year to visit some of the Land Trust's protected properties and make a difference. We have work parties scheduled every week so you can get your boots on the ground.



My wife, Nicki, and I had a great time just before Halloween, when we joined about 45 other volunteers to plant trees along our Yelm Shoreline property, on the Nisqually River. Two of our adult children were able to come out, too.

We shared a wonderful moment watching the little kids from a local Cub Scout pack plant trees like our children had years ago. Now, another generation gets hooked! And, like us, and like our children, they are becoming part of this ongoing story.

Come make it a part of your family's story, too. Grab some loppers and get personal with the blackberry – it thinks it's winning!

Or plant a tree that you can watch grow as it joins forces with the 33,300 others that our teams planted this past year to shade the water, keeping it cool for the salmon.

The colors are amazing right now. The soil is just right for planting, or pulling, and the yellow jackets are pretty much done for the season.

Come make friends and be part of the story!

See you on the river...

JW Foster, Board President

Save a tree!

Sign up to receive this newsletter by e-mail at www.nisquallylandtrust.org. Please recycle or pass on to a friend. Printed on recycled paper.

Land Trust Protects Another Critical Nisqually River Property

As we went to press, the Land Trust purchased 13 acres of exceptionally high-quality shoreline habitat in the Whitewater Reach of the Nisqually River, near Yelm, which is rated highest priority for recovery of threatened Chinook salmon and steelhead trout.

The property is undeveloped and contains the most intact riparian forest in our 237-acre Yelm Shoreline Protected Area. The land was acquired from the estate of the late Barb Wood and Jim Park, who had long managed it to enhance its wildlife values.

About half of the property's \$125,000 acquisition cost was funded by a state Salmon Recovery Funding Board grant. The remainder had been proposed for funding in Thurston County's 2017 Conservation Futures round, but the county has frozen the program while it negotiates with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service over Mazama pocket gopher protection.

"This property's a jewel," said Executive Director Joe Kane. "We simply couldn't lose it. We were able to



Whitewater Reach of the Nisqually River near Yelm.

divert other funding, and that might hurt us down the road. But you have to go for it."

Permanently protecting the property also keeps alive the vision of a shoreline trail along the Whitewater Reach. "This property would be in the heart of that trail," said Kane.

Wilcox Reach Salmon Shoreline Protected

Continued from cover

recovery funds are bottled up in the 2017-2019 capital budget, which the state legislature still has not passed. The Land Trust had to scramble to deploy internal cash reserves ahead of the oncoming winter.



The Arp cabin sits close to the Nisqually shoreline.

"The Nisqually River won't wait for the legislature," said Executive Director Joe Kane. In recent winters the river has chipped away at the property and flooded around the cabin. Last winter a cedar log stove in the front

porch. "If we don't get that cabin out now," Kane said, "the river will surely take it this winter. That would be a real mess."

Judy Arp and her husband, Sammy, purchased the property 21 years ago, camped there with their kids, and built the cabin, which includes a stately granite fireplace erected by Sammy, a renowned stonemason.

"Our favorite activity was just to sit by the river and watch the wildlife," Judy said during a visit to the Land Trust office. "We saw bears, salmon, beautiful herds of elk and deer. It was a very special place for us." But Sammy passed away two years ago, and the Arp children grew up and moved north. "It's time for this land to go back to what it was," she said.

The cabin cannot be moved intact. We hope to re-purpose the timbers and granite, which remain in good condition. And the site's ready access to Toboton Creek makes it a good location for environmental education.

Land Trust Receives Historic Mount Rainier Property

Walker Family Donates Property to Protect Its Natural Beauty Forever

Pictured to the right is the original cabin, circa 1910, on a historic 14-acre property that was recently donated to the Land Trust by the Walker Family, whose deep ties to Washington State and Mount Rainier go back to the turn of the twentieth century.

Situated along Highway 706, near the main entrance to Mount Rainier National Park, the property's towering fir and cedar trees have long lent a cathedral-like atmosphere to the approach to the park. The property is bisected by Tenas Creek, whose crystalline waters cascade out of the park on their way to the Nisqually River.

Robert Walker, president of the family corporation created to hold the property, said that his family donated it "because we know that the Land Trust will manage it just as we always have – to protect its natural beauty, which has been so important to our family for so long."

The Land Trust will manage the property as part of its Mount Rainier Gateway Reserve. The cabin, alas, was destroyed by a falling tree in about 1931.



Save the Date



Nisqually Land Trust
Conservation Dinner & Auction
March 17, 2018

South Puget Sound Community College—
Lacey Campus

4:30 pm - 9:00 pm

Activities on Our Protected Areas

Connecting Students with Conservation in the Ohop Valley

In November, the Land Trust partnered with the Nisqually River Education Project to bring over 300 elementary and middle-school students to the Ohop Valley to plant trees on one of our properties. The site had long ago been cleared for pasture, and the restoration project was designed to reforest the Ohop Creek floodplain, which meanders through the 30-acre property. Over the course of a week, 18 classes of students helped to plant 1,500 native trees and shrubs on about 2.5 acres!

The Nisqually River Education Project connects local students with conservation work in the Nisqually Watershed. The Land Trust really enjoys partnering on these projects. Not only does it help restore our native habitats,



but we also get to watch young people learn about their environment. The kids love getting muddy, finding worms, and getting out of the classroom. We are already looking forward to our planned events next fall!



Exploring New Ideas with Microsoft

How can Microsoft technology be leveraged to maximize conservation in the Nisqually Watershed? That's the question the company's Environmental Sustainability team explored with Land Trust Executive Director Joe Kane (above right, overlooking the Nisqually Community Forest with Microsoft's Liz Willmott and Rob Bernard) when it visited our Mount Rainier Gateway Forest Reserve in mid-October.

Over the past two years, Microsoft and the Land Trust partnered to complete the first carbon-credit transaction in the Pacific Northwest. The project helped protect habitat for at least fifteen "at risk" species in the Reserve and was the equivalent of taking 6,600 carbon-emitting cars off the road.



Jump-Starting Restoration on the Mashel River

Engineered logjams, or ELJs, jump-start habitat restoration in salmon-producing rivers where the natural supply of timber has been depleted: Logs are piled up to change the river's hydraulics, which immediately increases the complexity of pools and riffles and provides sheltered alcoves for juvenile fish until replanted forests mature.

Pictured above is one of four ELJs installed this summer on Land Trust property near the confluence of the Mashel and Little Mashel rivers. Next summer, five more ELJs will be installed on adjoining properties owned by the Land Trust and the Town of Eatonville.

With the early start to the fall rains, river flows increased and returning Chinook were already being spotted nearby.

Mount Rainier Gateway Forest Reserve: Transforming Timberlands

Managing the Forest to Promote Old-Growth Characteristics

By Charly Kearns, Land Steward

The Land Trust's Mount Rainier Gateway Forest Reserve, near Ashford and the main entrance to Mount Rainier National Park, encompasses over 3,000 acres. Most of this property was formerly owned and managed for commercial timber production, and the legacy of that management is still visible.

A prime example is an abundance of densely stocked, even-aged stands, with little structural or biological diversity. In these areas it is difficult to walk between the trees, because they are so close together, and the ferns, shrubs, and young trees that you would expect to see are absent.

We manage the Forest Reserve to promote old-growth forest characteristics for the benefit of spotted owls and marbled murrelets, which are federally listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. With this in mind, we have contracted with Northwest Natural Resource Group (NNRG), a non-profit dedicated to assisting forest landowners manage healthy working forests, to oversee ecologically-based thinning on 114 acres of overstocked timberlands.

Our forester, Andy Chittick, received a master's degree from Humboldt State University, where he studied techniques for accelerating development of

old-growth characteristics in second-growth forests. Prior to joining NNRG, he worked with the Cedar and Tolt municipal watersheds to improve forest conditions in the headwaters that supply Seattle's drinking water.

Why Is Thinning Necessary?

In old-growth forests, big trees are important, but so are small trees, medium-sized trees, shrubs, ferns, and forbs. Old-growth forests also tend to have a variety of tree and shrub species, and a significant number of snags – standing dead trees.

One method of transforming standard industrial timberland into forests that will develop into old growth over time is called variable density thinning (VDT), which increases complexity in the forest structure.

VDT includes thinning dense stands to improve growing conditions for both the biggest, most dominant trees and the smallest trees. This is referred to as “thinning from the middle,” and it kick-starts development of multiple canopy layers. VDT also involves skips, or areas where no trees are cut, and small “patch” cuts, each less than an acre, where most of the trees are removed to ensure that sun-loving native plants become established throughout the forest.

Ultimately, this forest will provide a home for many wildlife species.



Tree spacing before thinning



Tree spacing after thinning

Supporting the Local Economy

Not only does such management benefit the forest and wildlife, but it is also good for the local economy. This operation is employing three loggers and one driver for several months. Tony Scarsella, owner of Scarsella Cutting and Logging, manages the logging. He's known for his attention to detail and the care that he and his employees bring to their work. Tony says he's glad to have the opportunity to work on this habitat enhancement project and prefers thinning projects to more traditional clear-cutting.



Scarsella Cutting and Logging works on this habitat restoration project with great care.

Long-Term Planning

This type of forest management requires that we think long-term, planning and implementing habitat enhancement and restoration projects today that will mature over the next 100-200 years.

As this project matures there will be stages of improvement in the forest. In the near term, the shrub layers will take advantage of the sunnier forest floor and thrive, adding value for wildlife. The large trees will experience rapid growth, now that they don't have to compete as much for light and nutrients.

Over the next twenty years or so,



A fallen tree serves as nurse log to a new tree by providing decades of water and nutrients as it slowly decays.

silver fir and western hemlock will start to regenerate in the understory, creating the next level of forest canopy. In time, some large trees will be killed by insects or wind throw, creating snags and nurse logs; and the others will continue to grow and form the overstory canopy layer.

Ultimately, this forest will provide a home for many wildlife species, including sensitive birds that require large trees with sturdy branches for nesting platforms high in the forest canopy.



Tree canopy before thinning



Tree canopy after thinning

Species Highlight

Lobsters in the Forest

By Charly Kearns, Land Steward

Fall is probably my favorite time of the year to go for a walk in the woods. This is largely because the onset of fall rain stimulates underground mycelium to produce their beautiful and bizarre fruiting bodies, mushrooms.

One of the most bizarre and interesting is the lobster mushroom, *Hypomyces lactifluorum*. These are visually striking, blaze-orange blobs and they really look like boiled lobster claws protruding from the deep greens and browns of the forest floor. However, what makes these mushrooms even more interesting is their biology.

Lobster mushrooms are created when a parasitic fungus attacks another mushroom. The mold covers the outside of Basidiomycetes species, usually *Russula* or *Lactarius* mushrooms, and parasitizes its host by gradually eating it from the outside in, eventually

liquefying it. In the process, the host mushroom is also sterilized. Fortunately, only a small number of host mushrooms are parasitized in any given year, which allows the lobster mushroom mold to have a regular food source for years.



Look for lobster mushrooms in the forest during fall rains.

Because the *Hypomyces* fungus can parasitize multiple species of mushroom, and renders the host nearly unidentifiable, it can be difficult to judge whether or not the original host mushroom is edible or poisonous. The most common hosts are edible, but not generally very tasty on their own. However, the parasitic mold is edible, and

transforms the otherwise unappetizing host mushroom into a delicacy.

I encourage you to go for a walk in the fall rains and keep an eye out for these forest lobsters! But if you find some, be sure to identify that the host species is edible before you sample them.

Departing Board Member Guided Our Growth

Steve Craig, the Land Trust's longest-serving director, is stepping down after 28 years of service. Steve was a member of our founding board, in 1989, and has helped guide every square foot of the Land Trust's growth, from our first two-and-a-half acre donation in 1990 to the more than 6,000 acres of high-quality habitat we now own and manage.



Steve Craig

Steve had a distinguished career as a biologist with the

Department of Ecology and has long been involved in conservation, politics, business and the arts in the Nisqually Watershed, including a term as president of the Nisqually River Council.

Steve's expertise, wide experience, and extensive connections helped make him one of our most visionary board members. Steve is highly active in the Yelm community, in particular through his work with the Triad Theater and the Yelm Business Association, and we'll continue to count on his good counsel to guide us.

Thanks, Steve!

New Board and Staff Members Join Our Team

New board member **Suzanne Nelson** decamped Boulder, Colorado, earlier this year for the moister climes of the Pacific Northwest, a job as a biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and a home in the Nisqually Watershed.

Suzanne has a Ph.D. in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation – she is one of only a handful of wildlife nutritionists in the U.S. – and taught for over a decade at the University of Colorado. While there, she also served on the Boulder County Planning Commission.

Sean Smith, also new to our board, is a fourth-generation mining engineer whose career has taken him across the United States, into the high Andes in Peru and the coastal jungles of Brazil, and now to the storied shores of Dupont, Washington, where he is the assistant plant superintendent for CalPortland.

Sean spends much of his free time outdoors, canoeing, climbing, hiking, skiing and “simply enjoying the sound of the creek from my backyard,” he says.

Katie Wilcox, our third new board member, was raised along the Nisqually River, at Wilcox Farms, where she now owns and operates the Harts Lake Pioneer Lumber Company. Katie specializes in making beautiful live-edge custom furniture from timber grown on the family farm (you can see her work at hartslakepioneerlumber.com).

Katie is also our first second-gen-



eration director! Her father (and business partner) is State Representative J.T. Wilcox, who was a founding board member and served from 1990 through 1992.

Volunteer Coordinator **Addie Schlüssel** joined the Land Trust in September. She is a Washington Service Corps AmeriCorps member and a 2017 graduate of St. Mary's College of Maryland, where she studied biology and environmental studies.

Before moving to Washington, Addie worked in environmental education on Chesapeake Bay and coastal conservation and research in New Jersey salt marshes. She is new to the Nisqually Watershed and excited to engage with its people and places.

Administrative Assistant **Henry Smith** joined the Land Trust in August, following a season as a Northwest Youth Corps AmeriCorps member doing trail work in Mount Rainier National Park and elsewhere around Oregon and Washington.

Henry is an Olympia native and a graduate of Pacific Lutheran University's School of Arts and Communication, where he earned degrees in journalism and environmental studies.

Welcome all!

Volunteer Spotlight

Saying Goodbye to Josh Goodin, a Dedicated Site Steward

By Cris Peck, Outreach Coordinator



Josh visited the Van Eaton site monthly.

Josh Goodin is a volunteer Site Steward at our Van Eaton property, along the Mashel River in Eatonville, and he's been one of our most consistent stewards since he joined the program in 2015.

Volunteer Site Stewards increase our capacity to monitor our protected lands, and Josh has been

crucial in helping us care for this property. He's reported dump piles, camp sites, and invasive species we wouldn't have found without his help. He's visited the property at least once a month to hike, take pictures, watch wildlife, and report on property conditions.

On his visits, Josh said, he "learned a lot in the woods there: plant identification, tracks and scats, how to see the forest through the trees. I've had some amazing experiences, like looking up and seeing a dozen bald eagles circling overhead, or putting on flip flops and talking a walk with the salmon."

Josh has dedicated almost 60 hours of volunteer time over the span of almost 35 visits. We love hearing about this connection to the land; it's what motivates us, too.

Recently, Josh moved to the East Coast for work. We'll miss reading his reports, but he says he plans to check on the property every time he's out here visiting family. "I hope my time as a [site] steward helped the Land Trust as much as it helped me," he said. We definitely think so!



Josh carried his camera with him on his site visits and captured many photos on the Van Eaton property, including this one of the Mashel River.



Site Stewards Workshop January 20, 2018, 9 AM – 12 PM

Join Land Trust staff and volunteers for an informational session about our site stewards program. Learn how you can "adopt" a Land Trust protected area to visit while providing valuable information to inform future stewardship efforts. We'd love to have you join us in the field!

Contact Addie at volunteer@nisquallylandtrust.org or (360) 489-3400 x106 to register or for more information.

Would You Like to Help?

Help Tell Our Story



Please consider joining the Land Trust team as an outreach volunteer. This position is a great opportunity to connect with the public about ways that Land Trust activities are supporting an ecologically sustainable way of life in the watershed and the region.

Typically, we ask for 2-3 hour shifts at community events. Initially volunteers are asked to attend one outreach event a month for three months.

To volunteer for this opportunity, please send an email to volunteer@nisquallylandtrust.org. Briefly and specifically outline your skills, interests, and availability (weekdays, weekday evenings, and/or weekends). Or call Volunteer Coordinator Addie Schlusel at 360.489.3400 ext. 106.

Can You Help Us With a Truck Donation?

As we approach the holiday season, many people write a wish list for gifts they hope to receive. We have a list as well, and a pickup truck is at the top.

We need a heavy duty, five passenger, ¾ ton, 4x4, 4-wheel drive pickup with a full-sized bed. Ideally, the donated truck will be a 2000 or newer model but we will consider an older model.

It's a great time to donate for tax purposes. And because we will keep the vehicle, you can deduct the fair market value of your truck—the price an individual would pay for it—on your federal taxes. (Please consult a tax professional for more information.)

Call Charly at 360.489.3400 or send an email to landsteward@nisquallylandtrust.org if you have any questions or would like more information.

Thank You

Community Foundation of South Puget Sound



Recently, the Community Foundation of South Puget Sound provided a generous grant of \$7,500 for our 2017-2018 Communication Plan.

We are incredibly thankful for this support and look forward to sharing the news of our work with an even broader audience.

Dawkins Charitable Trust

We are so thankful for the generous support of the Dawkins Charitable Trust. Recently, we received grant support totaling just over \$51,000!

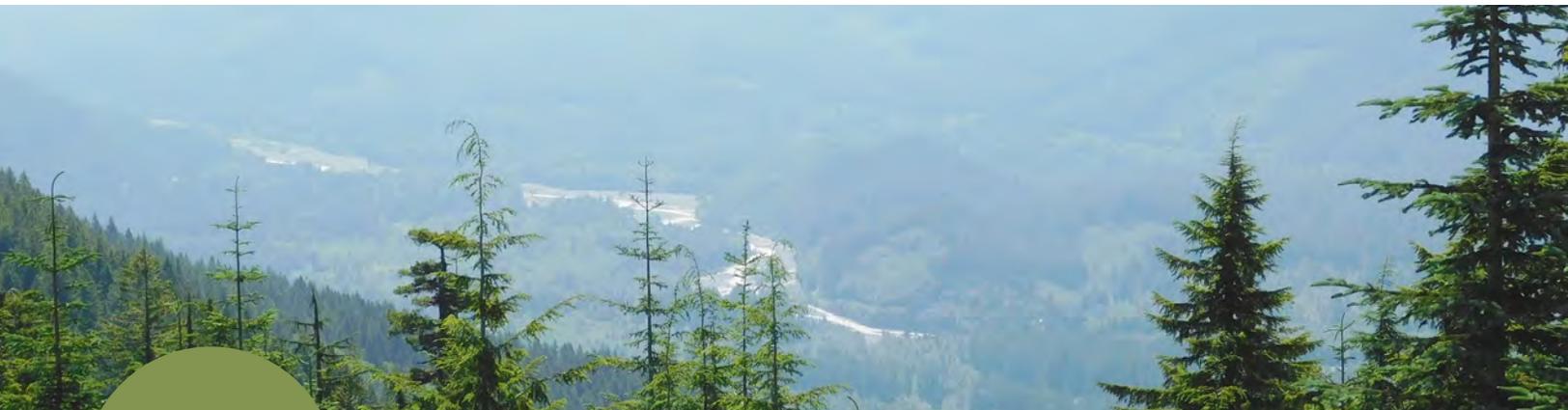
These funds will help with ongoing stewardship of our protected areas, provide much-needed unrestricted support, and help us enhance our planned-giving program.



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We Need Your Support!

Please consider a year-end gift to help protect land, water, and wildlife in the Nisqually River Watershed.

In the Nisqually River Watershed, we're blessed with abundant "natural capital" – our rivers and streams, our mountains and forests, our marine waters and shoreline. Please help us protect this rich natural legacy – now and for generations to come – with a year-end gift. You can easily make your donation online at nisquallylandtrust.org. Call us at 360.489.3400 for more information. Thanks!

You can also make a gift through your IRA.

Simply instruct the institution holding your IRA to send a payment (in any amount up to \$100,000) to the Nisqually Land Trust. The tax you would normally have to pay on that distribution is forgiven, and if you're 70.5 or older, the donation is considered part of your Required Minimum Distribution.