



View of the Nisqually Community Forest

NISQUALLY LAND TRUST

Spring/Summer 2019

PSE Foundation Awards Land Trust \$500,000 for Nisqually Community Forest

First-ever Environmental Partnership Grant Saves Final Land Purchase

Over a year ago, facing a deadline to come up with nearly a million dollars or lose the opportunity to acquire the crown-jewel property for its Nisqually Community Forest Project, the Land Trust did something it had never done before – took out a private, short-term, eleventh-hour loan. “And we did that with no idea how we’d pay it off,” said Executive Director Joe Kane.

In the ensuing months the Land Trust managed to reduce the mortgage to \$500,000 by winning a U.S. Forest Service Community Forest grant and additional funding from the state’s Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration program.

“But there it stood,” said Kane, “with the clock ticking, interest payments mounting, and the very

real possibility that we could still lose the land – until the Puget Sound Energy Foundation called.”



Nisqually Community Forest Board members (left to right) Justin Hall, Joe Kane, and Bryan Bowden along with PSE government affairs rep Kelsey Hulse

The Foundation had just launched its new Environmental Partnership program, and Executive Director Sandra Carson was canvassing the PSE service area for potential applicants. Foundation Chair and President Andy Wappler recommended she look into the Nisqually Land Trust.

Carson and Kelsey Hulse, Puget Sound Energy’s government affairs representative, visited the Land Trust offices and learned about the 320-acre Busy Wild Creek property, the final piece in the community forest’s 1,920-acre Phase I acquisition plan.

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

OFFICE

Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge
Old Education Center
100 Brown Farm Road NE
Olympia, WA 98516

MAILING ADDRESS

1420 Marvin Road NE
Suite C PMB 243
Lacey, WA 98516-3878

Telephone: 360.489.3400
E-mail: staff@nisquallylandtrust.org
Website: www.nisquallylandtrust.org

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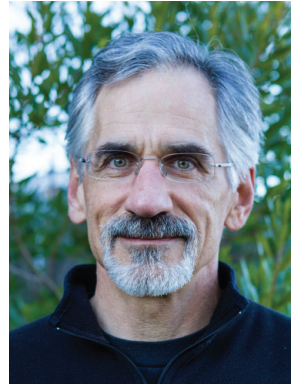
This seal recognizes land conservation organizations that meet national standards for excellence, uphold the public trust, and ensure that conservation efforts are permanent.



President's Letter:

Celebrating 30 Years of Conservation Work

This year marks the 30th anniversary of your Nisqually Land Trust. What a journey it's been! Our celebrations began with a record-breaking annual Conservation Dinner and Auction. On behalf of the board and staff I wish to express our appreciation for your generosity. Your support is vital to our conservation work.



During these first 30 years, working with the Nisqually Tribe and local, county, state and federal partners, we've transformed properties from the Puget Sound to Mount Rainier National Park. As an example, salmon, beaver, and bear are returning to our 480-acre Ohop Creek Restoration site.

But when you look at the Nisqually Watershed map, there are still critical lands to protect and habitat to restore. With your support and participation, just imagine what we can accomplish in the next 30 years and beyond.

I invite you to go to our website calendar and sign up for our work parties, nature walks and rafting trips. Visit the lands you've helped protect, celebrate their beauty and be inspired by the portal to the natural world they provide.

Thank you, Nisquamily – see you on the Nisqually!

Brian Sullivan, Board President

Land Trust Wins \$7 Million for New Shoreline Protection

Supported largely by the generosity of our donors, we recently wrote four grant proposals that won \$7 million to permanently protect shoreline habitat along South Puget Sound and the Nisqually and Mashel rivers.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has awarded us two National Coastal Wetland Conservation grants, totaling \$1.95 million, to protect 181 acres of marine and estuary shoreline along the Nisqually Aquatic Reserve.

And we also won two of the state's new "Streamflow" grants, totaling \$5.1 million, to protect ten properties along the Nisqually River and Ohop Creek and add forestlands to the Nisqually Community Forest, in the Mashel River headwaters. Thank you for your support!

Environmental Partnership Grant

continued from page 1

Busy Wild Creek is the headwaters of the Mashel River, the largest tributary to the Nisqually River. In 2016, both the Mashel and the Busy Wild were designated federal critical habitat for steelhead trout, which are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act and verge dangerously close to extinction.

“The community forest properties are in the headwaters of the Busy Wild,” said Kane. “They influence everything below them, all the way to Puget Sound. And they have dense timberlands that need management to improve salmon habitat. That means steady local forestry jobs.”

The property also contains key sections of the most popular trail in the Mount Tahoma Trails Association’s hut-to-hut cross-country ski network, which attracts

some 3,000 users annually and is an economic driver for upper Nisqually Watershed communities.

Two months later, Carson called with big news: The Land Trust had won \$500,000 to pay off the property loan. It was the first and largest grant the Foundation awarded under its new program. In announcing the award, the Foundation cited the Land Trust’s “environmental and community impact in a rapidly growing area.”

“The PSE Foundation is committed to supporting programs that deliver meaningful, measurable and long-lasting results for generations to come,” said Foundation Chair Andy Wappler. “We’re proud to help the Nisqually Land Trust protect this critical watershed.”



“The community forest properties are in the headwaters of the Busy Wild. They influence everything below them.”

A PSE Foundation grant helped conserve Busy Wild Creek. Photo: Jed Moore, Nisqually Department of Natural Resources

2019 Conservation Dinner and Auction Highlights

Thanks!

to our generous friends,
sponsors, and donors—
we raised over \$150,000
to help conserve the
Nisqually River Water-
shed...*forever.*



Emcee (and NLT Past President) JW Foster and Auctioneer Cindy Schorno take the stage for the Land Trust's 30th Anniversary Conservation Dinner & Auction.

SAVE THE DATE

March 14, 2020
4:30 - 9:00 PM

Conservation Dinner and Auction
South Puget Sound Community College -
Lacey Campus

Our Sponsors



Taylor Shellfish staff shucked and served over 40 dozen oysters for our guests!



Enthusiastic bidders made the event a record-breaker.

Land Trust Acquires First Anderson Island Properties

Marine Conservation Initiative Project Protects Puget Sound Shoreline and Orca Habitat

At the close of 2018 the Land Trust acquired 72 spectacular acres and over half a mile of marine frontage on beautiful Anderson Island, in the heart of the Nisqually Reach Aquatic Reserve.

The new acquisitions include adjoining properties purchased from two sets of landowners. Combined, they are a rich mix of tide flats and tidal channels, saltmarsh, wetlands and mature forest along the South Oro Bay estuary. They provide valuable habitat

for orcas and the threatened Chinook, chum and pink salmon that use the Nisqually Reach and the Nisqually Delta, which is 2.3 miles due south.

The project was made possible by \$550,000 in grant funding from the Pierce County Conservation Futures program, a \$220,000 land donation from Spectrum Holdings, LLC, and stewardship funding from the estate of Marjorie E. Johnson.



Ospreys are common residents on Anderson Island.

“When you consider the average cost of even a small waterfront parcel,” he said, “it really puts into perspective the challenging nature of this work – and the value contributed by our partners in protecting this remaining estuarine habitat.”



The new properties are a rich mix of tide flats, saltmarsh, wetlands and mature forest along South Oro Bay.

The new properties are the first acquired outright by the Land Trust under its Marine Conservation Initiative. In 2016, after 27 years of focusing on the Nisqually

Watershed’s freshwater systems – its rivers and streams – the board of directors decided to expand the organization’s conservation efforts into the marine environment of Puget Sound.

“It was a natural extension of the work we’d been doing all along,” said Lands Committee Chair George Walter.

“The freshwater and marine environments are really one big system.

We’ve worked very successfully with freshwater habitat, but marine conditions have steadily deteriorated and are growing more urgent by the day.”

The Land Trust and Anderson Island Park and Recreation District are now working on an agreement that would provide a trail through one of the new Land Trust properties to a 24-acre Park shoreline property that is currently inaccessible.

The newly protected properties also build upon protection of nearby Jacobs Point Park, the largest protected marine park in South Puget Sound.

In 2016, the Land Trust partnered with the Anderson Island park district and Forterra to add 18 acres to the park, expanding it to 100 acres. The park offers pristine shorelines, mature forest and wetlands, hiking trails, and great views of Puget Sound and Mount Rainier – all just a 20-minute ferry ride from Steilacoom.

Anderson Island Bird Walk

We’re hosting a bird walk on Anderson Island Saturday, June 15. We hope you’ll join us! Visit nisquallylandtrust.org for more information.

Celebrating Our Thirty Years of Conservation in the Nisqually

As they say, “A plan without action is a daydream. Action without a plan is a nightmare.”



George Walter, Land Trust Founder, 1989

In 1987 the Washington State Legislature adopted the Nisqually River Management Plan. In 1989, to accomplish the plan’s goals, a team of Nisqually Watershed partners created the Nisqually Land Trust. As founder George Walter said, “It simply offered the best way to protect the Nisqually River in the long term. Acquire property – that’s permanent.”

And here we are, thirty years and 7,132 permanently protected acres later.

The Early Years

We started by acquiring wildlife habitat in the lower, or salmon-producing, portion of the Nisqually River — the forty-two miles above the Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, on Puget Sound.

In 1989 we acquired our first property, a 2.5-acre donation along the river’s Wilcox Reach, above Yelm. “There couldn’t be a better place to put our land,” the donors, Larry and Beverly Hauge, wrote us.

In 1993 we made our first “big” purchase, the 65-acre Gold property, along the river’s Middle Reach. Today,



Our first property, donated by Larry and Betty Hauge, 1989

it’s in the heart of our 461-acre Powell Creek Protected Area.

By 1999, we’d acquired 269 acres. We were on a roll!

Moving into the Upper Watershed

In 2006 we expanded into the upper watershed to protect timberlands, endangered-species habitat, recreation lands, and scenic vistas near Mount Rainier National Park, where the Nisqually River has its source.

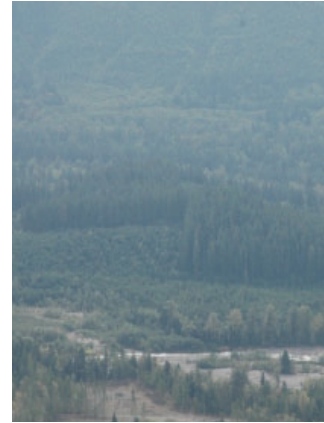
By 2010, we’d acquired 2,000 acres in our Mount Rainier Gateway Reserve, a wildlife corridor connecting federal, state, and county lands near the main entrance to the park.

And we’d added 1,200 acres of shoreline along the Nisqually and Mashel rivers and Ohop Creek, connecting large blocks of protected habitat.

“Small Watershed, Big Ideas”

In the Twenty-teens we started pushing the conservation envelope:

- We executed *the state’s first “environmental services” project*, creating a conservation easement that helps protect the City of Olympia’s water supply by protecting forest cover.
- We completed *the first carbon-credit transaction in the Pacific Northwest* and sold the credits to Microsoft – the company’s first conservation project in the U.S.
- We restored lower Ohop Creek, converting 1.6 miles of ditched creekbed back into 2.4 miles of curving, salmon-friendly stream and installing 86,000 native plants – *one of the largest stream restorations on the West Coast*.



Executive Director Joe Kane Mount Rainier Gateway Reserve



A portion of the Ohop Creek

Nisqually River Watershed

- And we launched the *Nisqually Community Forest Project*, creating a block of 1,920 acres of timberlands with over 22 miles of protected shoreline along upper Busy Wild Creek and its feeder streams – a working forest managed to support recovery of threatened Chinook salmon and steelhead trout while also providing jobs, recreation, and environmental benefits to our local communities.



Kane viewing our first Reserve property, 2011

Pushing into Puget Sound

In 2016 we extended our work into the marine environment of Puget Sound and the Nisqually Aquatic Reserve. In 2017 we partnered with Forterra and the Anderson Island Park and Recreation District to expand Jacobs Point Park on beautiful Anderson Island. Last year, we acquired another 72 acres and over one-half mile of marine frontage near the park. This year we won \$1.8 million for new acquisitions (see page 2).

Today

We continue to play a central role in the watershed's recovery plans for threatened salmon. (Fun fact: All told, the Nisqually Watershed partnership has protected 77 percent of the Nisqually River's salmon-producing shoreline.)

We also work with our many partners to steward and restore our lands. Each year hundreds of volunteers and over a thousand students help us. Since our founding, we have planted over 300,000 native trees and shrubs.

Our Future

The next thirty years will be tough. We have multiple species threatened by extinction. Climate change is real. But if the Nisqually Watershed is about anything, it's about solutions. (Nothing gobbles carbon like a tree!) It's about partners, and putting our collective shoulder to the wheel. Our deepest thanks to all who've been – and are – a part of this journey.



Each year over a thousand students help plant native trees and shrubs on our properties.

Organizational Highlights

1989

Nisqually River Basin Land Trust launched First Annual Salmon Bake

1992

First float trip on the Nisqually River

1993

First Conservation Dinner & Auction

1999

First conservation work party

2000

NisquallyLandTrust.org website launched

2002

First office opened and first paid staff hired

2003

First full-time executive director hired

2004

Name changed to Nisqually Land Trust

2011

Move to current office with six staff members



Creek restoration, 2014

Land Trust Transfers New Shoreline Property to Nisqually Indian Tribe

Property Includes over 3,500 Feet of Nisqually River Frontage near Reservation

The Land Trust recently transferred to the Nisqually Indian Tribe a 35-acre property with a long run of salmon-producing Nisqually River shoreline frontage. The property is located in the Lower Reach of the Nisqually River, approximately one mile downstream of the Nisqually Indian Reservation.

Most of the property is forested floodplain. It includes approximately 3,500 feet of river shoreline, the southerly 2,000 of which are in a portion of the reach rated highest priority for protection in both the Nisqually Salmon Recovery Plan and the Nisqually Steelhead Recovery Plan.

At one time the Nisqually River formed the east boundary line of the property, but the river changed course and now runs along the property's west boundary. Though technically still considered to be in Thurston County, the property is on the Pierce County side of the Nisqually River and now adjoins Joint Base Lewis McChord.

Currently the only access to the property is from the river. However, at some point in the not-too-distant future the river is likely to return to the channel on the property's east side and thus re-join the property to the land west of the river, where it would be readily accessible by road and threatened by development.



The transferred property includes 3,500 of Nisqually River frontage.

The property came on the market suddenly, through a tax auction by Thurston County. The Land Trust was in a position to move swiftly to secure the property and coordinated the acquisition with the Tribe.

The Nisqually Tribe is the legally recognized lead entity for salmon recovery in the Nisqually Watershed. "There is no better or more appropriate owner and steward for this land," said Land Trust Executive Director Joe Kane.

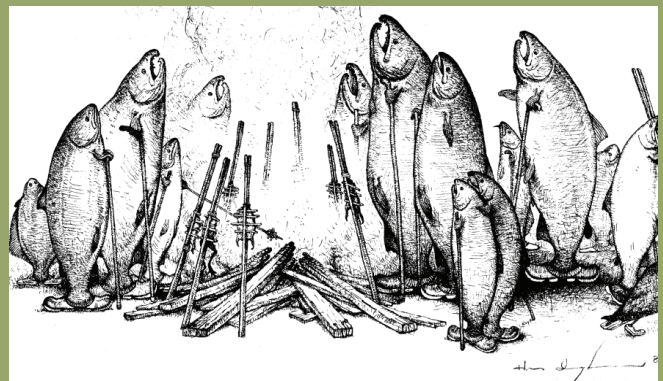
In 2018, the Land Trust transferred 49 acres of Ohop Creek salmon shoreline to the Tribe.

Please Save the Date!

Annual Meeting and Salmon Bake
Sunday, September 22, 2019
4:30 - 7:30 pm

You won't want to miss this much-anticipated community event. Guests will enjoy a delicious picnic dinner featuring grilled Nisqually salmon.

Stay tuned!



Nurseries of the Forest

By Pete Grebowski, Land Steward

It's no secret that much of Washington's old-growth forest has been cut down. Walk through almost any forest and you'll find slowly decaying cedar or Douglas fir stumps, often with spring-board cutouts still visible. Oddly, but often, these monuments of what once was are also markers of what will be.

Every year, while millions of seeds battle for growing space in the forest understory, a few land atop an old log or stump and take root. The first time I observed this phenomenon, I saw a young hemlock stemming from a six inch Douglas fir stump which was sitting on a much larger Douglas fir stump! Clearly it's just confused, I thought.



Stumps provide better access to the sunlight that is so crucial for seed germination and growth.

As I continued to explore, though, I noticed that not only was this hemlock *not* an anomaly, but also that in some forests, the only trees in the understory were those sitting on the old stumps!

Did they not need soil? Would they not fall when the stump rotted away? Wouldn't their roots freeze? And if they could survive in these conditions, why can't I keep my garden alive?

Well, it turns out there are good reasons such pedestals are perfect places to start new trees.

The tops of stumps typically sit above the base layer of ferns, mosses, and small shrubs, providing better access to the

sunlight that is so crucial for seed germination and growth. And the decaying wood is a great substrate, providing a firm base with ample nutrients, better moisture retention, and less leaf and needle loading, which can smother seedlings buried under a thick layer on the forest floor.

Stumps also decay at about the same rate that they grew. A sapling on a 200-year-old cedar stump will have plenty of time to grow strong and support itself.

Next time you are in the forest, keep a lookout for these "nurse" logs and stumps. They help to showcase the amazing resiliency of the natural world!



It often takes several decades for a nurse log to decay completely, at which time the seedlings' roots have become strong and thick enough to support themselves.

Join Us on the Water this Summer

Kayak the Nisqually Reach

Kayak Nisqually, a local ecotourism company, is generously offering Land Trust supporters two opportunities to kayak the Nisqually Reach (on Puget Sound) at discounted rates. Enjoy premier wildlife watching, sea-kayaking safety, and interpretation of the marine environment with professional biologist guides.

Sunset and Bioluminescence Tour

Thursday, June 6, 2019

7:30 pm - 10:30 pm

Cost: \$55 per person

Kayakers will enjoy an evening tour as the day transitions to an Impressionist painting and the sky illuminates in orange and purple. After dark we can expect to see the glow and glitter of bioluminescence as marine organisms flash their lights for us.

Half-Day Tour of the Nisqually Reach

Saturday, September 28, 2019

10:00 am - 1:30 pm

Cost: \$45 per person

Spend the day learning about the largest salt marsh restoration on the West Coast. Enjoy world-renowned bird watching as you paddle. Keep your eyes open for seals and sea lions with their pups, teeming salmon runs, and porpoises. You might even see a whale.

Both trips depart from Luhr Beach, near the Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge. Each trip includes a tandem kayak, paddles, life jacket, spray skirt, safety gear, and an expert naturalist and sea kayak guide. A boat lantern is also included for the sunset trip.

Float the Nisqually River

Join us for our annual float trip and view several of our properties from a rarely seen perspective.

Full-Day Nisqually River Float Trips

Saturday, July 27 and Sunday, July 28, 2019

9 am - 4:00 pm

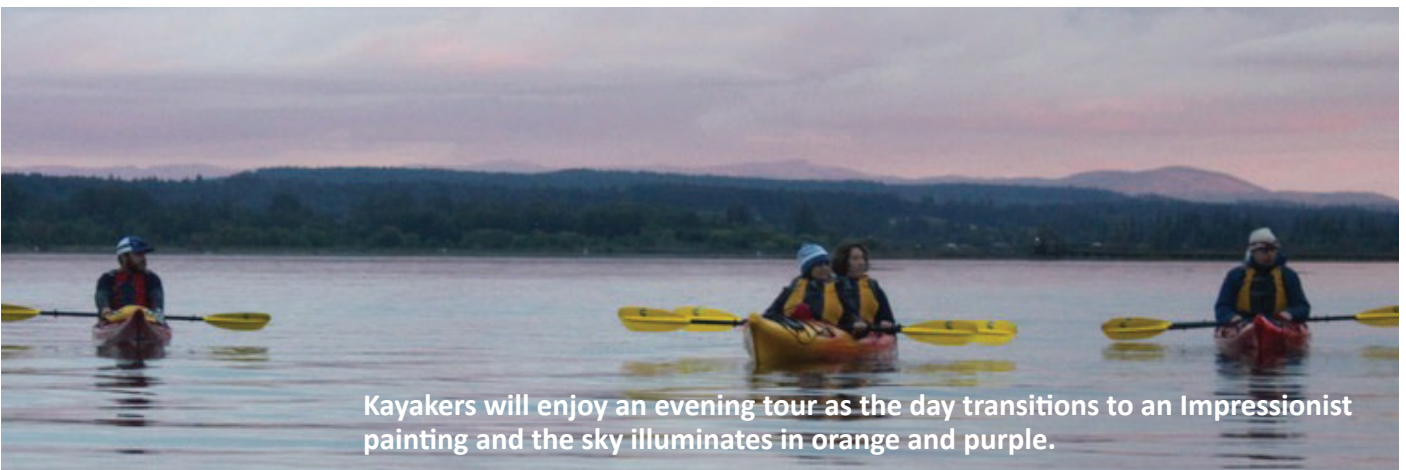
Cost: \$120 per person for one day

Both trips depart from Wilcox Farms in Roy. The cost includes rafting gear, professional guides, and lunch.



Rafters view our properties from a unique perspective.

Space is limited and there are age restrictions for each trip. For more information and to register, visit our website at www.nisquallylandtrust.org, send an email to staff@nisquallylandtrust.org, or call 360.489.3400.



Kayakers will enjoy an evening tour as the day transitions to an Impressionist painting and the sky illuminates in orange and purple.

Rosa Beth Gipson, All-Star Volunteer

From House Pests to Invasive Species: A Hero's Journey

By Nikki Dizon, Operations Associate

Rosa Beth Gipson first heard of the Nisqually Land Trust while ridding her home of unwelcome guests, when her local exterminator, Tony Burmeister, mentioned his volunteer work right in the Nisqually Watershed, where Rosa Beth lives.

Recently retired and keen on conservation, she listened eagerly - and soon found herself out on our land every week, helping us plant trees, yank scotch broom, and uproot blackberry.

She mastered the weed-wrench. She gained expertise on local habitat and native species. And she developed a deep sense of camaraderie with our volunteer “regulars” and field staff – friendships Rosa Beth appreciated just as much as getting her hands in the soil.

Last year, a shoulder injury caught up with her, and she shifted from the field to our office, where she

jumped into behind-the-scenes work: event support, database wrangling, of-fice-printer wrestling.

Rosa Beth supports the Land Trust in many other ways as well, including monthly donations and providing for us in her will. When asked what draws her to be involved, she says it’s “knowing that each contribution I make, be it field, office, or financial, will help protect my home, the Nisqually Watershed.”

We are continually inspired by Rosa Beth’s dedication and generosity. Thank you, Rosa Beth. We’ll see you in the office next Thursday!



The intrepid Rosa Beth Gipson

Welcome Back, Courtney

The Land Trust has been extremely lucky to have Courtney Murphy as our AmeriCorps Volunteer Coordinator this winter and spring, through the Washington Service Corps.

And we feel even luckier to announce that Courtney will be back for a second term, starting in September!

Courtney first surfaced in our office in 2016, as an intern from Whitworth University. She graduated in 2018 with a degree in English Writing & Literature and then did a six-month stint on a wilderness trail crew in Gifford Pinchot National Forest.



*Volunteer Coordinator
Courtney Murphy*

Courtney’s excited to be back in her hometown of Olympia. In addition to supporting our rabid volunteers, she’s an aspiring poet and helps coach the Tumwater High School equestrian team.

“To me, the Nisqually Watershed is about growth and collaboration,” she says. “Many organizations and people who care deeply work together to identify issues and then find complex solutions that allow all watershed inhabitants to learn and grow. I’m happy to be a small piece of this collaborative conservation effort.”

Courtney’s amazing good cheer and abundant energy have been far more than a “small piece” of our conservation work. Welcome back, Courtney!



Nisqually Land Trust
1420 Marvin Road NE
Suite C PMB 243
Lacey, WA 98516

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2019 Nature Walks Spring | Summer | Fall

Join us for one of our nature walks and enjoy the beauty of our natural areas. Learn how collaborative conservation is making a lasting difference in the Nisqually Watershed.

May

Friday, May 31, 8:30 am - 10:30 am
Bird Walk with Site Steward Brian Kerr
Nisqually River Shoreline near Yelm

June

Saturday, June 1, 10 am - noon
Native Plant Walk
with WA Native Plant Society
Nisqually River Shoreline near Yelm

Thursday, June 6, 10 am - noon
Mashel River Restoration Project Tour -
Engineered Log Jam with Brian Coombs,
from the South Puget Sound Salmon
Enhancement Group
Mashel River near Eatonville

Saturday, June 15, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm
Bird Walk with Tahoma Audubon
Anderson Island

Saturday, June 29, 8:30 am - 10:30 am
Bird Walk with Cris Peck and Kristin Craig
Nisqually River Shoreline near Yelm

August

Saturday, August 10, 10 am - noon
Nisqually Community Garden Tour with the
Nisqually Indian Tribe
Nisqually Reservation near Olympia

Sunday, August 17, 10 am - noon
Wetlands, Shrubs, and Trees: An Ohop Walk
with Site Steward Crow Vecchio
Ohop Creek Restoration near Eatonville

September

Saturday, September 14, 10 am - noon
Photography Walk with Meredith Rafferty
from the Olympia Camera Club
Nisqually River Shoreline near Yelm

Saturday, September 21, 10 am - 12:30 pm
Nisqually Valley Farm Tour with the
Petersen Family
Nisqually River Shoreline near Yelm

Date TBD
Nisqually Headwaters Tour with
Land Trust Board Member Roger Andrascik
Mount Ranier National Park

October

Date TBD
Mushroom ID Walk
Mount Rainier Gateway near Ashford

*We are planning even more walks for you.
Be sure to check our website.*

Join us on the Water this Summer
See page 10 for information on our
kayak and float trips.

For more information and to register, visit nisquallylandtrust.org, call 360.489.3400, or email staff@nisquallylandtrust.org.