

Our Mashel River Protected Area provides critical habitat for threatened Chinook salmon and steelhead trout.

NISQUALLY LAND TRUST Winter 2019-2020

Nisqually Marine Shoreline: Impossible to Put a Price On

Land Trust Wins Major Funding to Protect High-Value Coastal Habitat

By Eric Erler, Marine Conservation Initiative Project Manager

where are pleased to announce that the Land Trust and our project partners have secured over \$3 million to support our Marine Conservation Initiative – a strategic approach to protecting high-value coastal habitats within the South Sound/Nisqually Reach marine environment.

Federal, state and county agencies have awarded these funds to protect some of the area's best-remaining coastal habitat -1.5 miles of estuarine and marine shoreline surrounded by 175 acres of mature forests and freshwater wetlands.

We are still negotiating these transactions, but this is urgent work, as an informal survey of the South Puget Sound waterfront property market makes compellingly clear. It's telling that there are so few undeveloped waterfront properties still for sale in the region. Over 75 percent of Puget Sound's estuary and nearshore habitat has already been developed or converted to non-natural uses.

The loss of this vital habitat is pushing salmon, orca and many other keystone species to the brink of extinction. The region's commercial fish, shellfish, recreation, tourism and real-estate economies also depend upon a healthy Puget Sound.

A highlight of this work is the Sound View Camp project, on Drayton Passage near Anderson Island. The site has mature forest and freshwater wetlands adjacent to a spectacular nearshore complex that includes a large barrier embayment and barrier beach and lagoon, feeder bluff, saltmarsh, tideland and other habitats.

Continued on page 7

Sound View Camp shoreline: This project will protect rich orca and salmon habitat while supporting the Camp's environmental education and outdoor recreation programs.

The River Is Coming: Land Trust Acquires 49 Acres of Floodplain along Lackamas Creek (page 3)



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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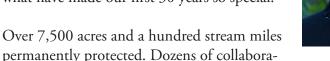
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President's Letter Our Celebration Cake

Hard to believe we're nearing completion of our 30th year of conservation work. Celebrations usually include a cake. So join me in creating an imaginary Nisqually Land Trust 30th Anniversary Celebration Cake.

The high-quality ingredients for our cake are what have made our first 30 years so special:



tive partnerships. Sound stewardship of our financial resources. An \$8 million Ohop Creek restoration project. Washington's first carbon-credit project. Creation of the Nisqually Community Forest. Local green jobs. Great habitat for Ohop Bob the black bear and his wild buddies.

And the survival of at least two species – Nisqually Chinook salmon and steelhead trout – that might not be here without us.

The decorations on our cake include some of this year's biggest accomplishments: Four major grants, totaling \$7 million, that we won by leveraging support from you and our partners.

We were awarded two grants, out of 15 awarded statewide, from the state's Streamflow Restoration program to protect the Nisqually River and its tributaries. And we won two grants, out of 22 awarded nationwide, from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Coastal Wetlands Conservation program to protect Puget Sound shoreline.

Wow, that is a sweet frosting!

Our cake is topped with a single candle. Board and staff will blow it out to signal the close of our celebration – and our wish to continue to be worthy stewards of your support.

Thank you for that opportunity.

Brian Sullivan, Board President

Thank you to our 2019 Annual Meeting and Salmon Bake sponsors





National Fish and Oyster Company



The River Will Be Here Soon

Land Trust Acquires 49 Acres of Nisqually Floodplain along Lackamas Creek

The Land Trust has acquired 49 acres along Lackamas Creek, a salmon-producing tributary to the Nisqually River in the Wilcox Reach, one of the most dramatic and dynamic sections of the main stem river.

"This property doesn't contain Nisqually River shoreline right now," said Land Trust Associate Director Kim Bredensteiner. "But it likely will soon. In this part of the watershed, the river channel shifts significantly every winter."

Currently, the Nisqually is within two hundred feet of the newly acquired property, which adjoins our 212acre Lackamas Flats Protected Area and will be incorporated into its management plan.

And the river's coming. Three winters ago, it blasted away a hundred horizontal feet of shoreline in the Wilcox Reach and destroyed a family home. The river continues to eat away shoreline at a steady pace.

The lower mile of Lackamas Creek and the entirety of the Nisqually River in the Wilcox Reach provide habitat for all five species of Pacific salmon native to the watershed, including spawning habitat for threatened Chinook salmon and steelhead trout.

The new property was clear-cut between 1990 and 2000 and a portion was used as farmland until several

years ago. It's now overrun with invasive Scot's broom. "But on the bright side," said Kim Bredensteiner, "a lot of native cottonwood is popping up."

Most of the remainder is covered by young regenerating forest. Restoring and enhancing the forest will, over time, improve riparian conditions along Lackamas Creek and in the area adjacent to the Nisqually River floodplain.

The state's Streamflow Restoration and Salmon Recovery programs funded the project.



Restoring our new property to its natural state will help protect the Nisqually River floodplain, and soon, the river itself, which is on its way.



Girl Scouts Tackle Key Nisqually River Restoration Site

Will Earn Silver Awards, Scouting's Highest Honor

hen the going gets tough, call the Girl Scouts: Four scouts from troops in Olympia and Steilacoom are tackling the restoration of a critical but much-abused shoreline property the Land Trust recently acquired along the main stem of the Nisqually River, near Yelm.

"These girls are incredibly ambitious," said Courtney Murphy, the Land Trust's Stewardship Assistant, who has been working with the Scouts for much of the last year. "They've worked hard – researched what kind of



plant diversity they need, raised money to buy plants, salvaged plants from other sites, prepped the site. They've done it all."

The four Scouts – Cassidy Chaney, from Steilacoom Troop 45261, and Maya Hanson and Maggie and Addie Barker, from Olympia Troop 40116 – are middle-school students

Girl Scouts helped salvage plants for their McKenna Reach restoration project.

and Girl Scout Cadettes. They'll earn the Girl Scouting Silver Award for their project. It's the highest honor a Cadette can receive.

In November and December, the Scouts and a team of volunteers will plant 500 plants on an acre of land that has been torn up over the years by dirt bikes and off-road vehicles. The property anchors one end of a ten-acre habitat block in the Nisqually River's McKenna Reach that is salmon-rich but highly vulnerable.

In particular, the McKenna Reach contains spawning grounds used by Nisqually Chinook salmon and steelhead trout, both of which are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. A Silver Award project must demonstrate a Scout's "understanding of sustainability and the wider world." In addition to the restoration project, all four Scouts have completed the rigorous six-week Nisqually Stream Stewards class held by the Nisqually Indian Tribe and the Nisqually River Council.



The Girl Scouts and a team of volunteers will plant 500 plants on this acre of shoreline land, which has been torn up over the years by dirt bikes and off-road vehicles.

Would you like to help?

As we approach the holiday season, many people write a wish list for gifts they hope to receive.

We have a list as well: Work gloves Shovels Hand clippers Waders Brush cutter All-terrain mower Fig bars/snacks/coffee/tea for volunteer events HP Officejet Pro 7740 Wireless Color Wide-Format All-in-One Printer and additional ink

If you have questions or would like more information, please email staff@nisquallylandtrust.org or call 360.489.3400.

2019 Nature Walk Highlights

Exploring the Nisqually

Thanks to our partners and volunteers we had another great year out on the land, learning about conservation work in the Nisqually Watershed.

We hope you'll join us in the field again next year to learn firsthand about the special places you are helping to protect!



Nature Walk participants on Land Trust property along the Mashel River getting an up-close view of engineered logjams. "ELJs," as they're known, are a cutting-edge salmon-recovery technique pioneered in the Nisqually Watershed. They are now used throughout the Pacific Northwest.



Grace Ann Byrd (left) and Carlin Briner (right) led a tour of the Nisqually Indian Tribe Community Garden, where we learned about traditional foods and herbs and the great project work they are doing for their Tribal elders and larger community.



Tahoma Audubon and Nisqually Land Trust supporters got together on Anderson Island for a day of birding and exploring our newly protected shoreline properties.

Thanks to the Community Foundation of South Puget Sound for making these events possible!



Thank you to our partners and volunteers!

Kayak Nisqually Mount Tahoma Trails Association Nisqually Indian Tribe, Grace Ann Byrd & Carlin Briner Nisqually Valley Farm, Petersen Family South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group, Brian Coombs Tahoma Audubon, Jerry Broadus WA Native Plant Society, South Sound Chapter, Bill Brookrenson, Cyndy Dillon & Kurt Redinger Site Stewards: Brian Kerr, Meredith Rafferty, Etsuko & Jim Reistroffer & Crow Vecchio Volunteers: Barb Agee, Renee Buck, Barbara & Tom Cook, Kirstin Craig, Cris Peck & George Walter

Bringing Salmon Back to the Ohop Valley

New Ohop Acquisitions Protect Spawning Beds, Set Stage for Further Restoration

The Land Trust recently executed a rapid series of transactions to advance a two-fold strategy for salmon recovery in Ohop Creek, one of the two main salmon-producing tributaries to the Nisqually River:

One, secure safe passage for salmon by restoring the lower four miles of the creek. (Ohop Creek was ditched over a century ago to drain the Ohop Valley for dairy farming, with devastating impacts to the fish population.) Two, secure the spawning beds immediately upstream of the restoration area to reduce streambed depredation from livestock and residential development.

All five species of Pacific salmonids native to the Nisqually Watershed use Ohop Creek, including Chinook salmon and steelhead trout, both of which are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

To secure the spawning beds, we recently acquired 33 acres of floodplain and upland forest along Ohop Creek just outside of Eatonville. The property adjoins 32 acres we acquired in 2016. In total, they contain almost two thousand feet of the creek in the heart of the spawning area.

In turn, these two properties are linked to 160 acres of upland forest owned by the state's Department of



We acquired 90 acres, which include 1.1 miles of Ohop Creek shoreline, for the next phase of the Lower Ohop Creek Restoration project, one of the largest stream-restoration projects in the state.

Natural Resources. Together, they form a substantial corridor of protected habitat that is also used by a wide variety of other wildlife, including cougar, elk, black bear and many bird species.



Planting native trees and shrubs along Ohop Creek helps restore the spawning area. Ohop Creek is used by all five species of Pacific salmon native to the Nisqually Watershed.

The purchase was partially funded by the state's new Streamflow Restoration program and has been ranked for future funding by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board. The Land Trust advanced internal reserves to take the property off the market before the remaining grant funds are approved. "It's a risk," said Executive Director Joe Kane. "But a bigger risk is losing those spawning beds."

In October, we added another four hundred feet of Ohop Creek spawning shoreline by acquiring a property auctioned by Pierce County.

Reanwhile, in two transactions downstream, in the lower Ohop Valley, we acquired 90 acres and 1.1 miles of Ohop Creek shoreline from the Pruitt family. The Pruitts are longtime residents and conservation leaders in the valley, and perhaps best known as the owners of the nonprofit Pioneer Farm Museum. We acquired these properties for the next phase of the Lower Ohop Creek Restoration project, one of the largest stream-restoration projects in the state.

In 2015, the Land Trust, the Nisqually Indian Tribe, and a team of local, state, and federal partners completed the first phase of restoration, re-converting 1.6 miles of ditch back to 2.4 miles of meandering, salmon-friendly stream. The \$8.7 million project included the planting of 186,000 native trees and shrubs across 180 acres of floodplain.

"The Pruitt family properties will help us set up the next phase," said the Land Trust's George Walter, who completed many of the land transactions that made the first phase possible. "It took us fifteen years to acquire the properties for Phase I. We don't know when Phase II will take place, but one lesson we learned is that you acquire the land whenever it becomes available."

The properties were acquired with a land donation from one of the sellers, Tim Pruitt, and grants from the state's Salmon Recovery, Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration, and Streamflow Restoration programs. The newly protected land adjoins 72 acres that the Nisqually Tribe and the Land Trust have already secured for Phase II.

Nisqually Marine Shoreline Funding

Continued from page 1

Sound View Camp also hosts hundreds of youth and adult visitors every year. Our unique partnership will support the Camp's extensive environmental education and outdoor recreation programs and increase understanding of the importance of marine habitats and conservation.

Circling back to the survey of waterfront properties mentioned earlier, an even more compelling case emerges for the value contributed through our Marine Initiative: The average cost of the ten or so waterfront properties currently for sale in the region is \$1,798 per "waterfront foot." Viewed through this lens, within the coming year the Initiative would protect approximately \$14 million in waterfront value.

However, it's impossible to place a monetary value on the benefits this unique habitat provides for orcas, salmon and the region's human inhabitants. Essential support for our current Marine Conservation Initiative projects has been provided by the Washington Departments of Ecology, Fish and Wildlife, and Natural Resources, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Nisqually Indian Tribe, Pierce County Conservation Futures, Thurston County Conservation Futures, Ducks Unlimited and the Nisqually Delta Association.



Sound View Camp has a spectacular nearshore complex that includes barrier beach, lagoon, feeder bluff, saltmarsh, tideland and other habitats. Photo courtesy WA Dept. of Ecology.

Thank You to Our Generous Volunteers

Many thanks to the volunteers who support our conservation work in the field, at the office, and at events. We appreciate their hard work, dedication, and enthusiasm for our mission, and the thousands of hours they have generously contributed.

Over 500 Hours

Etsuko Riestroffer James Riestroffer James Terry

Over 300 Hours Sharon Bergquist-Moody Lloyd Fetterly JW Foster Martin McCallum Adam Schweitzer Brian Sullivan



Last year 417 volunteers contributed 4,287 hours – the equivalent of two full-time positions.

250-299 Hours Hannah Andrascik Dwight Bergquist-Moody John Blair Diana Lloyd Julian Strodel

200-249 Hours Roger Andrascik Kevin Cammon Gabriel Chavez Nikki Dizon Basil Engledow Nicki Foster Dyson Fowler Dena Fromberg Megan Kelly Linda Kunze Daniel Miszewski Kathy Mix Caleb Stauffer Jackie Van Der Hout

150-199 Martha Anderson Christian Craft Kylee Doherty Bill Funk Devin Geiger Shawn Harrington Chris Hoff Brad Jones Emily Mann Jim Mckinlay Courtney Murphy Danny Perkins Crow Vecchio George Walter

100-149 Hours

Mimi Andrews Mary Birchem Michele Boderck Alex Chaney Barbara Craven Colin Edwards Rose Edwards Ann Genn Mary Gentry Rosa Beth Gibson Terry Gibson Tom Ginsburg John Grettenberger Jill Heine Ed Kenney Daniel Locke Shawn Pecht Carly Perez Meredith Rafferty Jim Sluman Sean Smith

50-99 Hours

Erica Calhoon Steve Craig Logan Foster Mary Foster Josh Goodin Nick Gosling Ralph Gross Margaret Hansen Mike Hargrove Tammy Harrison **Butch Hennings** Mark Hunter Jim Isom Buck James Trisha James Byrna Klavano Anna O Mangan Tom Murphy Deni Murray Suzanne Nelson Karelina Resnick Justin Parsons Mollie Parsons Kelly Rathbun Sunny Thompson Nisqually AmeriCorps Crew

25-49 Hours

Barb Agee Shelly Bentley Warren Bergh Renee Buck Tony Burmeister

Cassidy Chaney Church of Jesus Christ of LDS Art Constantino Magda Constantino Steve Cross Karen Deckard Taegan Foster Mindy Garvin Candra Grimm Lorena Guerrero Deon Hanft Ann Harrie Lynn Hennings Michael Hill Frank Hudik Sidney Hunt Will James Nicki Johnson Dale Judkins William Kogut John Lee Julia McCain-Burmeister Robin Melcher Colin Owen Chris Peterson Donovan Rafferty Sean Randall Kelly Smith Luke Smith William Smith Donna Snow Lea Swearingen **Tim Tobin** Kathie Torgison Dan Tufford Ashlev Von Essen Charlie Ware Katie Wilcox Cathy Williams

Volunteer Spotlight

Butch Hennings: A Nisqually Way of Life

By Courtney Murphy, Stewardship Assistant

Butch Hennings began volunteering with the Land Trust about a year ago, but his involvement in the Nisqually Watershed is lifelong.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Butch grew up hunting with his father on what was then the Brown Farm gun club, in the Nisqually Delta. In 1965, when the Ports of Olympia and Tacoma announced plans to dike and fill portions of the delta and develop a deepwater port, Butch and his father joined the opposition. They won: Today, his old hunting grounds are part of the Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge.

More recently, Butch discovered the Land Trust and was eager to get back to work in the watershed. Now that he's retired and has more time, volunteering on the land is "the least I

can do," Butch says. Since January 2019, Butch and his wife, Lynn, have contributed 141 volunteer hours at work parties and Land Trust events such as the auction and annual salmon bake.

One of Butch's first work parties was the MLK Day of Service, when he planted trees and shrubs at our Powell Creek site, one of his favorites. In addition to planting, Butch enjoys tackling our old-growth Scot's broom stands, and says it makes him feel "real macho" to take down huge broom with a weed wrench.

Although Butch's least-favorite stewardship activity is dealing with blackberry, if you come out to a work party you're likely to see him attacking them enthusiastically, machete in one hand and shovel in the other.

<image>

Butch's favorite stewardship activity is planting trees and shrubs at our Powell Creek protected area.

And even when the other volunteers and stewardship staff are taking their coffee and fig bar break!

> Outside of volunteering, Butch and Lynn love to travel and are avid cyclists. They've biked in Turkey, Greece, Nova Scotia, and throughout South America.

Lynn is a Spanish instructor who works with students of all ages. Investing in their community, Butch says, is something they feel a need to do, and volunteering with the Land Trust is another way for them to do it.

"I feel like I'm doing something...for the environment, and there's so many good

people you meet. It just makes you feel good. We really accomplish something here," Butch says.

We appreciate Butch's hard work, dedication, and enthusiasm for our mission, even during the late summer/ early fall blackberry slog. Thanks Butch!

Join Us for a Restoration Party

Would you like to help restore a Land Trust property? Join us for a Wednesday or Saturday morning work party.

For more info, please contact Sarah McCarthy at americorps@nisquallylandtrust.org or 360.489.3400, ext. 106.

Species Highlight

War of the Woods: Cute but Deadly

By Addie Schlussel, Land Steward

As I hike through the woods, I tend to keep my eyes on the ground – not just to avoid the pesky roots and vines that are always tripping me, but also in hopes of spotting the special gifts of our forest floor: mushBut there is one predator that can eat a newt and live to tell the tale: our common garter snake. Garter snakes have evolved a resistance to the newts' toxin and can even test how much toxin individual newts contain. If

rooms peeking out from the leaf litter, mosses and lichens covering old logs, or – if I'm really lucky – maybe even one of our local salamanders, like the deadly rough-skinned newt.

With their bumpy backs, striking orange bellies, and darn cute faces, roughskinned newts are by far my favorite local amphibian. But these newts are more than just a pretty face. They also have some serious defense skills.



The rough-skinned newt, a small salamander found in the Nisqually Watershed, is known for its powerful poison.

the newt seems too toxic to handle, the snake will spit it out; if not, down the hatch.

The relationship between garter snakes and rough-skinned newts is still evolving. As snakes have developed resistance to the newts' toxins, evolution has favored those newts that are a little more toxic and get spit out more often than their neighbors.

This causes newt populations to become more toxic overall, so evolution favors snakes that are more resistant and can eat more newts. So newts become more toxic, and snakes become more resistant, and on and on. This evolutionary arms race has created

Their secret power lies in their tetrodotoxin, a potent neurotoxin found in the newts' skin, muscles, and blood. This toxin is the same chemical that can make pufferfish a risky meal, and a rough-skinned newt can produce enough of it to kill almost any predator that thinks it looks tasty.

newts toxic enough to kill several adult humans, and it isn't stopping any time soon.

As you walk through the woods this winter, keep your eyes on the ground. You never know what wild battles are going on by your feet.

Site Stewards Workshop: Learn How to Adopt a Property February 1, 2020 | 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 us with valuable information for stewardship planning. We'd love to have you join us in the field!

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

Board and Staff Transitions

Familiar Faces, New Places

It seemed like all-star volunteer **Brian Kerr** had done everything except serve on our board: Tree planter. Nature Walk guide. Site steward. Raft host on our summer float trip. Nucleus, with wife Bobbi, of the high-energy Oly Fed table at our annual auction.

And now, almost inevitably, he's our newest board member. "I just love the outdoors," Brian says. "And the Nisqually is my backyard." Raised in Indiana, Brian came west via Army service at Joint Base Lewis Mc-Chord and now works as an I.T. specialist for the state Attorney General's office.

Welcome (further) aboard, Brian!

The intrepid **Addie Schlussel** is our new Land Steward. Addie joined our staff back in 2017, as our AmeriCorps Volunteer Coordinator. In 2018, she became our first Stewardship Assistant. And in September, Addie stepped up again.

As Land Steward, she now manages our rapidly expanding portfolio of protected lands (7,562 acres and counting). She already knows our properties well – and their plants and critters. See her story on page 10, about her favorite local amphibian, the rough-skinned newt: Cute, but deadly!

Courtney Murphy is our new Stewardship Assistant.

Well, sort of new – Courtney grew up in Olympia and first surfaced in our offices in 2016, as an intern. In 2018 she followed Addie as our Volunteer Coordinator. Last summer Courtney took a brief hiatus to get



Sarah

married, then returned to her new position as Stewardship Assistant, working alongside Addie and mentoring our next Volunteer Coordinator.

"The Nisqually Watershed is all about growth and collaboration," Courtney says. No one better demonstrates that than Courtney herself.

Sarah McCarthy is our newest Ameri-Corps Volunteer Coordinator. Sarah has extensive experience as a backcountry instructor and guide, including Wilderness First Responder certification, and strong volunteer-support and land-restoration skills.

And she, too, knows the Nisqually Watershed well. The Land Trust's mission "resonates with me," she says, because "I believe the water and wildlife are part of my community." She's looking forward to the opportunity "to help more people benefit from the work this organization does."

Welcome back to **Cris Peck**, who served six years on our staff, first as our AmeriCorps Volunteer Coordinator (of course!), then as Outreach Coordinator. Cris left in 2018 to become a kayak guide and international traveler. Now he's returned as a live-in caretaker for our Yelm Shoreline Protected Area.

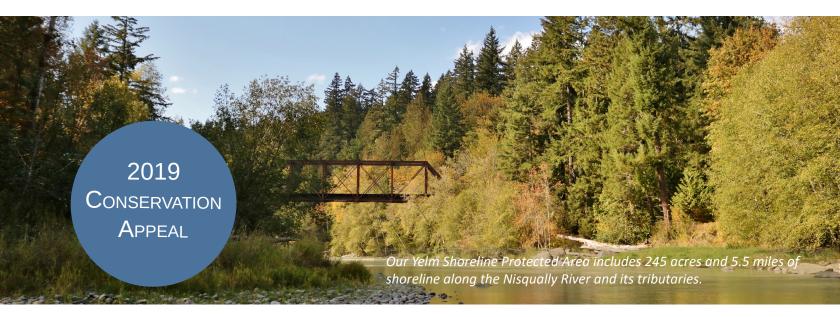
And he's still playing music – keep an eye out for his band, Straw Hat Revival. That's Cris on the drums!



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THE NISQUALLY WATERSHED NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT!

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. <u>Please help us protect this rich natural legacy</u> – now and for generations to come – with a year-end gift. You can easily make your donation on our website at nisquallylandtrust.org. 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 ½ or older, the donation is considered part of your Required Minimum Distribution.

Become a Watershed Steward

Our "Watershed Stewards" program recognizes generous donors who make a one-time or cumulative gift of \$1,000 or more in 2019. Our 2019 Watershed Stewards will be invited to a special event in 2020. Hope to see you there!