



VASHON-MAURY ISLAND LAND TRUST

Preserving the wild places and rural character of Vashon-Maury Island

WINTER 2008-2009 Update for Members & Friends

LAND TRUST SECURES GRANT TO WORK ON SHINGLEMILL CREEK

\$30,000 from the Community Salmon Fund to slow erosion.

In the late 1800s, logging began in earnest on Vashon. Shinglemill Ravine, which is steep and sandy, was subject to a logging practice called “splash damming.” Loggers would make a dam with their logs, and use the backed-up water to sluice the logs all the way to Fern Cove. Shinglemill Creek has never fully recovered.

The practice of splash damming was a double-whammy for the creek. The plug of logs tore the meandering creek into a much straighter run, which made the water flow faster. At the same time, the roots still attached to the big fir, cedar and hemlock stumps slowly rotted away, and loosened their grasp on the soil. Ever since, the creek banks have tended to give way here and there during big rains, and a couple of the feeder creeks have formed “nick points,” canyon-like features with very unstable banks.

For many years now, the Land Trust has worked hard to heal these wounds. The strategies have ranged from wide-spread plantings of conifer seedlings to terracing and planting the bare slopes. Land Steward Abel Eckhardt has led the effort, focusing on stabilizing the largest of the nick points and on placing large logs back into the creek. The work also included, this past summer, the removal of a derelict bridge up-stream of the Cedarhurst crossing.

The Land Trust is pleased to announce that we have been awarded \$30,000 from the Community Salmon Fund to focus on the next effort – stabilizing the nick point on Needle Creek, the largest tributary to Shinglemill. The Community Salmon Fund is a joint effort of King County and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

Abel has ordered thousands of conifer seedlings to plant this winter on the 45-acre Needle Creek parcel, and has made plans to stabilize several large erosion areas using “coir logs.” These logs are made by rolling up fabric made with coconut husk fibers. They are much easier to move into place than real logs, and naturally degrade over time.

Once the erosion is slowed and the conifers can begin to hold the soil, the positive impact downstream will be significant. Salmon eggs in the stream will not be suffocated by the silt washed down during the winter rains. And, with the water flowing more slowly through a winding path, the eggs won't be washed away by the onslaught of water flow. Salmon egg survival means more fish will live to return as adults and spawn in Shinglemill Creek.



*Land steward, Abel Eckhardt, assesses the nick point at Needle Creek. Controlling this erosion will be a major focus of our 2009 stewardship projects.
Photo © Land Trust*



DID YOU KNOW that the Land Trust has an Endowment Fund?

The board established the fund in 2006 to provide the Land Trust with a stable source of operating income. The endowment is managed by the Seattle Foundation – which has produced an excellent guide on legacy gifts called “Tools for Giving”. This brochure explains a variety of gift options such as gifts of appreciated property, bequests, and annuities. The Foundation also has staff available to assist you with putting together a legacy gift. Give us a call at 206-463-2644 and we'll send you a copy of “Tools for Giving”, or stop by the Land Trust office on Bank Road between the Senior Center and the Fire Station and pick up a copy.



NATIVE PLANT AND TREE SALE



It's one of our most popular annual events and no wonder. Here's your chance to buy native trees and shrubs at a bargain price. They come bare root, meaning you need to get them in the ground or pot them up quickly.

Order online at the Land Trust web site www.vashonlandtrust.org. Order forms can also be picked up at the Land Trust building - look in the box on the front door. Or call us at 463-2644 and we'll mail you a form.

Order now to make sure you get the plants you want. Ordering deadline is December 15. And remember: Orders must be picked up at the Land Trust building on Saturday, January 10, 2009, between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

SNOWBERRY

(*Symphoricarpos albus*) This short shrub is bird-friendly all year round. The small pink spring flowers attract hummingbirds, and the white showy berries provide good feed for the birds all winter long. In the fall, after the leaves have dropped, the berries shine out from the branches like snow – a lovely contrast to the holiday red-berry look of many other species. Plant them in singles amongst other shrubs for the winter accent, or bunch them for a thick, informal hedge. We're pleased to be offering this native again after a few years hiatus.



LAND TRUST: A SOLID INVESTMENT

Everyone's looking hard at their giving choices these days. You want to feel confident your money is being well spent.

In this uncertain economy, donating to the Land Trust remains a wise investment. Because we invest in permanent protection of the land, our accomplishments aren't subject to ups and downs of the economy.

The Land Trust is financially sound with a record of prudent, responsible management. For every operating dollar received from donors, we've raised \$8.25 for conservation. This translates to more than \$25 million spent on conservation in our 20-year history, a 40% return on our donors' investments.

The Land Trust is committed to being as good a steward of your cash contributions as we are of the land. We're grateful for your continued support.



LAND TRUST ADDS EIGHT BEACH PARCELS TO SHORELINE PRESERVES

Acquisitions completed at Piner Point, Inspiration Point, and Neil Point

For the past 18 months, the Land Trust has been working closely with King County and the Cascade Land Conservancy on the Maury Island Conservation Initiative. This fall, King County made additional conservation purchases at Piner Point on south Maury, Inspiration Point in outer Quartermaster Harbor, and Neil Point on south Vashon.

The Initiative has focused on conserving vacant parcels around Quartermaster Harbor with highly-productive tidal habitat where eelgrass grows and herring spawn. Places where the sand isn't blocked from sliding to the beach. Where overhanging trees shade the delicate eggs of surf smelt and sand lance. These are all vital links in the marine food chain, ultimately impacting the salmon and orca populations in our local waters.

The current totals for the Maury Island Conservation Initiative are 49 properties and 140 acres – including nearly two miles of pristine beaches. A few of these sites, notably Raab's Lagoon and Neil Point, are located along public right-of-way. This means new points of public access to the island shorelines. Open access to Land Trust preserves, wherever possible, remains a top priority.



*Neil Point, a 51-acre preserve on the southern tip of Vashon, boasts 1,700 feet of pristine shoreline.
Photo © Land Trust*

As we go to press, the King County Council is considering a budget that will allow for the purchase of three additional shoreline parcels next year.

THE SALMON ARE BACK!

The first salmon sighting each year generates a lot of excitement here at the Land Trust. Right after the rains return in the fall, we head out to the two major salmon-bearing creeks on the island, Judd and Shinglemill, in search of evidence that the fish have come back.

This year it's looking good! We've seen both fish and their redds (nests), and have been getting reports of additional sightings from other islanders who are keeping track of the activity in the creeks.

The graph shows our Judd Creek fish report as of mid-November. We'd love to hear about your salmon sightings to add to the tally. Let us know at 463-2644 or info@vashonlandtrust.org



A REMINDER – Eating spawned-out salmon can be harmful, even fatal, to dogs. Keeping your dog leashed will keep them, and the salmon eggs, safe.

LET'S FACE IT – Vashon is Different



HELP US KEEP
VASHON THE
WILD PLACE IT IS.

Please consider
making a special gift
to the Land Trust this
holiday season.

You can send us a
check in the enclosed
envelope, or give
online at
www.vashonlandtrust.org

Thank You, and
Happy Holidays!

Penguins picnic at Fisher Pond

CALENDAR OF EVENTS & VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

TREE PACKAGING VOLUNTEERS NEEDED – Contact beth@vashonlandtrust.org

Any hours, January 6 - 9. We need help the week before our annual Tree Sale distribution, to package the bare-root orders. This is the Land Trust's biggest fundraiser of the year – so your efforts will go straight to our bottom line. We'll provide good company, warm beverages, music, and gloves.

SALVAGE ALDER WHERE WINNIE POO(H)S – Contact abel@vashonlandtrust.org

Wednesday, December 10, 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. We will be salvaging alder at the old treatment plant site to use for our restoration efforts in Judd and Shinglemill, then we'll heel them in at Fisher pond to use for planting over the next two months.

PARADISE VALLEY PLANTING – Contact abel@vashonlandtrust.org

Saturday, December 13, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Help increase the density in our on-going efforts to restore a portion of the Paradise Valley meadow area. We will be planting Douglas fir and bare-root alder over a 2-acre area.

MUKAI POND/CENTER FOREST PLANTING – Contact abel@vashonlandtrust.org

Wednesday, December 17, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Similar to Paradise valley, we are going to be planting more trees to increase the density on the Mukai restoration effort. We will also pull scotch broom in two areas where it is starting to re-establish itself.

NEEDLE CREEK UNDERPLANTING – Contact abel@vashonlandtrust.org

Wednesday, January, 14, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. We are embarking on a major restoration effort on the 44-acre Needle Creek property in '09. As part of that, we'll be planting thousands of conifers in the alder dominated areas, starting with this physically challenging daybe warned and get excited!

FOREST STEWARDSHIP CLASS – Contact beth@vashonlandtrust.org

Tuesday evenings, January 13 to March 3, 7:00-9:30 pm at the Land Trust building. The eight weekly classes cover A to Z on taking care of your forest property and guidance on writing a forest plan to enroll in KC tax incentive programs. Pre-registration required.

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