



Funds Distribution Report

Recipient Organization:
Skagit Land Trust

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Organization's General Goals:

Conserving wildlife habitat, agricultural and forest lands, scenic open space, wetlands, and shorelines for the benefit of our community and as a legacy for future generations.

Date of Award:

2018 Q4

Level:

\$5,001 to \$7,500

For more information, please read the attached report from Skagit Land Trust.

8802 27th Ave NE
Tulalip, WA 98271

TulalipCares.org

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Skagit Land Trust's Engaging Youth in Conservation Program Tulalip Tribes Charitable Fund Grant Report for grant received April 2019.

Description of Program

Skagit Land Trust's Engaging Youth in Conservation program allows young people, especially those with limited access to the outdoors, to experience nature and learn responsible stewardship of the land. We work to engage youth in a way that makes nature enjoyable, so that they want to return to these places in the future. It is our hope that these field visits teach the next generation the value of sustaining fish, wildlife, clean air, water, and natural landscapes for the health of their community. Thanks to the generous grant of \$ [REDACTED] from the Tulalip Tribes Charitable Fund, Skagit Land Trust (the Trust) was able to build upon last year's successes and make our youth conservation program more sustainable and recognized by community partners. **Thank you.** We were also able to offer our programs free of charge to local schools and youth groups. This is important in Skagit County where over 60% of schoolchildren in the largest school districts qualify for free and reduced lunch.

With your help, the Trust engaged 1,479 youth in our youth programs in 2019, a 39% increase from 2018. Youth between four and 24 years old engaged with nature in a hands-on way during stewardship and educational visits to Trust properties. The Trust increased internship opportunities to six students from local colleges and universities. These students assisted in our citizen science, stewardship, and environmental education programs. These students received hands on experience conducting heron and amphibian monitoring and data analysis, developing geology activities for our Kelly's Point property, assembling an invasive species herbarium, working with our GIS database, and supporting stewardship on many of our properties across the county. Their assistance was invaluable. In the long term, we believe if our Youth Program is successful, the community of people who share our concern for the environment and wildlife will grow each year.

Demand for our youth programs continues to grow and the support from the Tulalip Tribes Charitable Fund has enabled us to increase program efficiencies through more partnerships, increased volunteer efforts, and teacher support. This supports our goal of a community supported, sustainable youth program that engages multi-generations in conservation of natural areas and the environment.

The Trust has a unique role in the Skagit Watershed in focusing permanently on safeguarding the broad spectrum of land and water systems that are critical to the region – from wetlands, to forests, salmon habitat, trails and accessible natural areas close to communities. We work closely with organizations and communities who share common goals, rather than duplicating existing programs. During 2019 we partnered with over 23 schools, agencies and youth organizations within the Youth in Conservation Program. Community partners included Bayview Elementary School, Big Lake Elementary School, Boys & Girls Clubs of Skagit County, Cascade Career Academy, Cascade Middle School, Central Elementary School, Conway School, Emerson High School, State Street, Evergreen Elementary School, Fiddlehead Montessori, Huxley College at Western Washington University, Kulshan Creek Kids Neighborhood Program, La Conner Middle School, Lyman Elementary School, North Cascades Institute, Samish Elementary School, Skagit Conservation District, Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group, Skagit Valley College, Skagit Watershed Council, The Centre for the New Human, and the US Forest Service. Our approach is synergistic, coordinated, and sustainable. In addition to our community partners, the Engaging Youth in Conservation program in 2019 was supported by 800 hours of volunteer time.

Examples of Program Participants

Fiddlehead Montessori (new this year)

This winter students from Fiddlehead met Skagit Land Trust staff at our Kelly's Point Conservation Area. The children ranged in age from kindergarten to 6th grade. The focus of the trip was the geology of Yellow Bluff. One of the Trust's interns from Western Washington University developed site specific activities to engage students in STEM learning. The students participated in a geologic scavenger hunt looking for different kinds of rocks; drew pictures of what they imagined the beach and bluff looked like in past and future; and surveyed the beach to see if there was suitable habitat for animals. All activities included a discussion of geology and the importance of Yellow Bluff to the local ecosystem. For many students it was their first time visiting this iconic beach. The teachers now have tools and confidence to visit this conservation area on their own with their students.



STEM at Utopia

For the second year, the Trust worked with Sedro-Woolley's STEM coordinator to bring students to our Utopia property. 279 students from five elementary schools (including three new schools) visited the conservation area over the month of May. The second graders visited six Investigation Stations staffed by Trust volunteers. They searched for pacific tree frogs and beaver signs, watched tree swallows swoop into cavities of trees, learned how restoration plantings can improve wildlife habitat, and used hand lenses to look at macro-invertebrates. The Trust was donated an elk information trunk from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, allowing the students to touch an elk hide and horns. All students took pre/post surveys. 88% of the children increased their knowledge of the natural environment after visiting Utopia. The Trust plans to have all seven elementary schools in the district participate next year.



Bayview Kindergarten Class



During their visit to our Green Road Marsh property, these five and six year olds learned about taking care of the land by mulching around native trees planted on this former agricultural property. This land was historically part of the expansive Olympia Marsh. The Trust worked with partners to reconstruct part of the wetland and it is now an excellent example of restoration. This conservation area is only fifteen minutes from the school and provides the children an opportunity to learn about the importance of wetlands. Through a ‘Let the Cattail Out of the Bag’ activity, students learned more about the plants and animals that inhabit the marsh, such as beaver, red-winged blackbirds and frogs. They also spent time observing birds

through toilet paper roll binoculars. This was the second year that Bayview brought their kindergarteners to Green Road Marsh and they were only able to do so through a Skagit Land Trust Transportation Scholarship assisted by the Island Fund grant.

Emerson High School – Amphibian Monitoring

The Trust worked with the natural sciences teacher at Emerson to connect her classroom learning with activities on Trust properties. The class made visits to our properties twice a month. Students learned about the hydrology of creeks, the glaciology of the region, invasive species, birds, and amphibians. The class assisted in amphibian monitoring and learned about careers in the conservation world. Emerson is an alternative high school for students who experience challenges including chronic poverty and homelessness. One of our goals is to connect students to opportunities for recreation and employment that they may not have been exposed to before. In addition to the bi-monthly visits, other students from



Emerson participated in an Earth Day event at SLT’s Barney Lake conservation area. 21 students planted a riparian buffer along Nookachamps Creek and maintained trees planted by the school in previous years.



State Street High School – Forests and Foraging

Thanks to your funding, The Trust was able to expand our work with high schools this past year and added a partnership with State Street in Sedro Woolley. The class of 23 students took monthly field trips to Trust properties to conducted forest health monitoring surveys, learn about native and invasive species, and tips for foraging. The students planted trees at Utopia & Tope Ryan Conservation Areas, and removed invasive species at Minkler Lake. These students also got exposure to conservation career opportunities and recreation locations close to home.

North Cascades Institute Youth Ambassadors

Our partnership with North Cascades Institute's (NCI) Youth Ambassador Program continued. Students from Mount Vernon, Sedro-Woolley, and Concrete High Schools learned about careers in the outdoors while gaining college readiness skills and completing service projects. Trust staff, board, and land stewards shared information about their career paths with students. The groups planted trees at various properties, installed a viewing bench overlooking Fidalgo Bay, and helped maintain the Guemes Mountain trail.



Partner Youth Projects – Stream Stewards and Conservation Tours



Two of our longtime partners in educating youth are Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEG) and Skagit Conservation District (SCD). This year, students from Cascade Middle School and Edison Elementary School planted trees and shrubs on the Trust's Utopia conservation area as part of SFEG's Junior Stream Stewards program. Not deterred by the frigid temperatures and falling snow, students planted 850 willow stakes over the course of two days. By stewarding a stream in their watershed, they saw the difference that restoration can make for quality salmon habitat. The Trust also participated in SCD's Youth Conservation Tour, introducing more students and teachers to our work and opportunities. Hundreds of middle school students visited the Trust's activity station along Friday Creek and learned the importance of healthy riparian buffers to water quality. Trust staff and volunteers led discussions on habitat restoration and students played an energetic game of 'Macroinvertebrate Mayhem' to demonstrate how tiny organisms can be used to indicate the success of plantings in improving water quality.

Skagit Boys & Girls

After school let out for the year, Skagit Land Trust worked with middle school students from both Concrete and Mt. Baker Boys & Girls Clubs. Their summer programs emphasized community service. Our AmeriCorps members helped students find projects that would benefit their own part of Skagit County. With the student's help we were able to build a trail on our Barr Creek Conservation Area, remove a truckload of dumped appliances from our Minkler Lake Conservation Area and grub out invasive ivy and herb robert from the Little Mountain-Darvill Conservation Easement. By working alongside AmeriCorps Service Members, these youth also learned about career opportunities and job training available to them.





Girl Scouts Day of Service

In honor of Martin Luther King Day, Girl Scouts from throughout Skagit County and beyond, travelled to our Barr Creek Conservation Area to work on a new trail. Twenty-five youth and parents cleared duff from the forest floor to make a low-impact trail. Our volunteer land steward for this property created the “fern gurney” so they could transport and replant ferns that were up-rooted. The Scouts learned about outdoor careers and local wildlife. Activities developed by our AmeriCorps Members helped the Scouts work towards their Environmental Stewardship badge and develop awareness of Leave No Trace Principles.

Cascades Job Corp College & Career Academy

This was an exciting group that we partnered with this year. These students are part of a job training and education program in Sedro-Woolley, WA. During their school year they are required to do community service, and many students volunteered to help Skagit Land Trust. They removed invasive species, undertook trail building at Barr Creek, maintained trails at Cumberland Creek and worked with the Mt. Baker Boys & Girls Club to remove trash from Minkler Lake. Although these students are focusing on health care and I.T. training, through volunteering with the Trust, they learned about the importance of conservation and ecosystem restoration work.



Main Sources of Broad-based Financial Support

Skagit Land Trust receives donations from over 1,500 supporters annually, including businesses and foundations, and funds from state and federal conservation grant programs. Our operating budget in FY18-19 was \$899,000.

This past year the Trust spent over \$46,000 in direct costs to support the Youth Program, over \$9,000 in stewardship expenses and received at least \$19,000 of in-kind volunteer efforts.

INCOME

Generous funding to assist our *Engaging Youth in Conservation Program* was from these grants

- Tulalip Tribes Charitable Fund
- Private Family Fund
- Skagit Valley Food Coop

This past year Skagit Land Trust provided \$21,720 from reserves to our youth program, provided work space and supervision for interns, and spent \$9,025 in stewardship funding for Conservation Classroom activities.

Budget to Actual

INCOME	FY 18-19 Budget	FY 18-19 Actual	Notes
Grants	25,000	24,332	
SLT Funds	12,000	21,720	
YOUTH PROGRAM INCOME	\$37,000	\$46,052	
EXPENSE			
Salaries and wages	\$30,000	\$39,035	Growth of the youth program added costs to this line item which SLT absorbed. Part of AmeriCorps salary is included here.
Event supplies and snacks, outreach supplies to schools and youth groups	\$2,000	\$2,393	

Program Supplies and Training	\$2,000	\$1,201	
Staff mileage/travel/training	\$2,000	\$2,494	
Travel stipend for schools & youth groups	\$1,000	\$929	
YOUTH DIRECT EXPENSE TOTAL	\$37,000	\$46,052	
OTHER			
Stewardship Supplies & Conservation Classroom property improvements	\$10,000	\$ 9,025	Includes costs to involve youth in stewardship activities including plants, tree protectors, tools, and signage.
Partners, Volunteers- in kind staff time	\$8,500	\$8,500	
Teachers in-kind staff time	\$11,000	\$11,000	
In-Kind Time Total	\$19,500	19,500	
PROGRAM TOTAL	\$66,500	\$79,004	

Description and Number of Individuals Served

We charge no fees for our program. In a 12-month period 1,479 youth were served at a direct program cost of \$31 per student, a 16% decrease in direct cost/per/student from the previous year. Through efficiencies, including collaborating on district-wide STEM fieldtrips to Trust properties, and a growing number of community volunteers, we were able to lower direct costs, even while expanding the extent of services. Youth who participated ranged in ages from 4-18. Our programs reflected Skagit County’s school-aged diversity which is often 50% Latino at urban schools.

The Year Ahead

The Trust will build on partnerships with school districts and youth organizations to create more outdoor education opportunities. When students get out in nature they understand why protecting lands and clean waterways is critical to their well-being and quality of life. Many of our Conservation Classrooms are on the edge of towns. When a child has helped to steward a property, they are excited to share the experience with their family. We want more families, especially those who have limited access to nature, to visit our properties on a regular basis, so that the entire family’s conservation ethic is nurtured. We believe this multi-generational approach is critical to engaging our broad community in conservation. In order to facilitate both student and family use, we need to improve access and educational resources for our Conservation Classroom. The Trust will work to enhance these sites with low impact trails and educational signage. Staff will also work to find solutions to barriers to teaching in nature, such as parking, bathroom access, covered areas, and seating. We will also be providing more material in Spanish so Latinx families can better access our properties.

The Trust has been approached by the Kulshan Creek Neighborhood Youth program to become a hosting partner in their program. This will mean supervising two high school interns, and working with partners on monthly field trips. We are excited about the opportunity to connect with this community since the neighborhood, which is majority Latinx, has historically had few outlets for families to access nature for recreation, nature-study, and enjoyment close to home.

Thank you to the Tulalip Tribes Charitable Fund for your exceptional generosity in the helping us expand our youth program this past year.