



## News Release

### For immediate release

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Friday, July 30, 2010

## Land Trust makes progress in its efforts to protect the Trillium Woods

The Whidbey Camano Land Trust is making headway in its efforts to raise the \$4.2 million dollars it needs by September 10 to purchase the Trillium Woods. So far, the Land Trust has received commitments of \$2.5 million dollars and still has \$1.7 million dollars left to raise. Earlier this month, an anonymous donor in her 80s cashed in an annuity so she could donate \$45,000 dollars toward the purchase. "It still makes me happy that I was able to do this," she says. "Every time I talk to Elizabeth Guss, I get excited because it feels like this is going to happen." Guss is the Land Trust's director of development and outreach.

Although the Land Trust is reaching out to potential donors in a variety of ways, members of the community are reaching out, too. Past donations have included proceeds from a wishing well (\$6.36 dollars in change) collected by Bruce Callahan's fourth and fifth grade students at the South Whidbey Elementary School and the \$6,600 that members of the Centaurs, Knight Riders, and Wranglers 4-H groups gathered by asking people directly for pledges. John Cave, owner of The Healthy Pet, held a dog wash and donated \$500 toward saving the Trillium Woods, and Maureen Freehill held a birthday bash that netted more than \$4,000 dollars.

More grassroots efforts include a community garage sale in the Baby Island neighborhood for the benefit of the Trillium Woods on July 31, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Land Trust member and volunteer Harry Jester has a booth at the Mutiny Bay Antique Mall and is donating the profits he makes between now and September 10 toward saving the Trillium Woods. And Sue McKenney is going door to door asking her neighbors in Lagoon Point to support the effort. "This is the Whidbey Island spirit, people coming together to achieve a seemingly impossible goal," says Guss. "We can each do something to help make this project successful. And we each need to do what we can."

Islanders aren't the only ones interested in protecting the forest. People across the state—and even other countries—have learned about the project and donated online. Many have never been to Whidbey Island, but want to protect wildlife habitat.

"One of the questions we're often asked is 'Can you buy just part of the forest if you don't raise enough money to buy all of it?'" says Tom Cahill, president of the Land Trust's board of directors. "Our goal is to buy the whole property and the banks' goal is to sell it in one piece. Buying less is an option for us, but our ability to negotiate depends on how much money we raise. The less we raise, the less interest the banks will have in negotiating a partial sale. The more we raise, the more interest they may have."

“Another factor that needs to be considered is that some of our donors and pledgers have conditioned their contributions on our buying the entire forest,” Cahill continues. “So it’s not just the banks we have to deal with. For now, we need to maintain our goal of raising the whole amount, and then, if necessary, evaluate other options as September 10 approaches.”

Three tours in July and August provide an opportunity to experience the forest first-hand. Elliott Menashe leads a forest ecology tour on July 25, David Gardiner leads a cycling tour on August 1, and Cleveland Hall leads an ethnobotany tour on August 15. To donate, or for more information, see <http://savetheforestnow.org>.

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