



Fall 2020

The SOUTHEAST STEWARD

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS
OF LAND CONSERVATION



The Jensen-Olson Arboretum, the first property conserved by the Southeast Alaska Land Trust in 1998, has become a beloved destination for our community.

Looking Back On 25 Years

In 1995, Sam Skaggs, a resident of Juneau, envisioned a non-profit, community organization that would help landowners in Southeast Alaska take actions to ensure that the natural values of the lands that they call home remain in place not just for themselves, but for all generations.

With this vision, and the support of a half dozen volunteers, Deborah Marshall established the Southeast Alaska Land Trust as a member-supported, nonprofit 501(c)(3), tax-exempt organization on September 18, 1995.

Since the beginning, our supporters (you!) have successfully preserved the landscapes that make up our Southeast Alaska home: sweeping panoramas, vital wetlands, vibrant salmon streams, lush grassy meadows, and rugged rocky shorelines.

Now, over 3,500 conserved acres, 38 properties, and 25 years later, we find ourselves reflecting on all that we have accomplished as a community, while also looking forward to what's coming next.

We have a lot to celebrate!

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Southeast Alaska Land Trust
119 Seward Street, Suite 2
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(907) 586-3100
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COVER

Lesser Yellowlegs at the
Mendenhall Wetlands State
Game Refuge in Juneau,
courtesy of Mark Kelley.
www.MarkKelley.com

*Thank you to all of the
photographers who
contributed to this
newsletter!*

The Southeast Alaska Land Trust, like our conservation properties, is sustainable.

Here's to the next 25 years of conserving land for generations to come.

- Deborah Marshall, Founder



Is Conservation Right for You or Someone You Know?

Would you like to protect your land? Do you know someone who might be interested in preserving their property? People conserve land for a variety of reasons. Many times it's a way to ensure their love of the land will remain intact after they leave. For others, it's a way to honor their loved ones.

Sometimes it helps with estate planning or financial management. If you would like to have a conversation about conserving your land, feel free to call Krista Garrett, Conservation Specialist, at (907) 586-3100. All conversations are confidential.



This coastal property on Douglas Island, in Juneau, expands upon two established conservation areas and preserves an important corridor for Sitka black-tailed deer, black bear, and other wildlife.

This Local Conservation Area Is Growing

When the Southeast Alaska Land Trust was approached by Earthjustice about conserving an undeveloped section of shorefront property on Douglas Island, in Juneau, we knew we had to act. Conserving this property, now known as the **Grummett Wetlands** (after the late Michael Grummett), has long been a goal of the organization.

The Grummett Wetlands sit between and expands upon, two established conservation properties: the City and Borough of Juneau's 108-acre Conservation Area and the Mendenhall Wetlands State Game Refuge. It was purchased using funds received through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers wetland mitigation program, and it is one of the last undeveloped private parcels along the Douglas Island shoreline.

Properties like this are becoming more and more critical to animals like deer and bear, who use it as a crossing between Douglas Island and the Refuge. Outright ownership allows us to manage the property as conservation lands, in perpetuity.

When asked how he felt about the recent acquisition, Jay Nelson, President of the Board of Directors, was quick to reply: "It's wonderful to be able to celebrate the acquisition of these beautiful wetlands on the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Southeast Alaska Land Trust. It's especially rewarding that the conservation of this parcel was the dream of Mike Grummett, one of our early supporters and Board members."

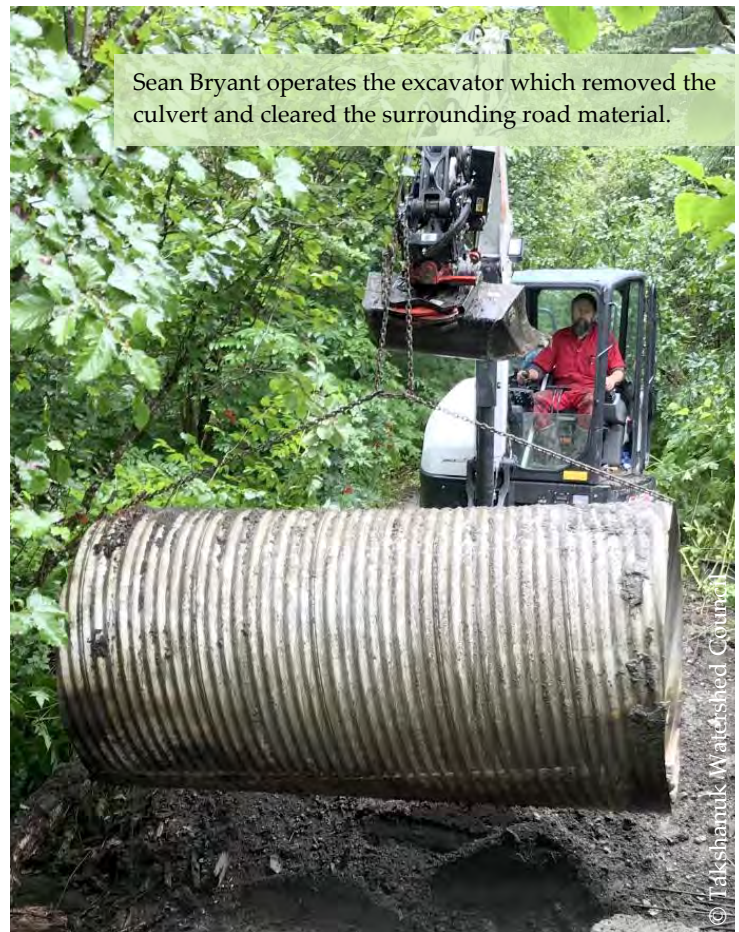
The Grummett Wetlands are free and open year-round to the public for passive recreation, including hiking, birding, and exploring.

Fish Get a Pass in Haines

Work on removing a culvert at the **Nelson Homestead conservation easement**, in Haines, is nearly complete! The project, headed up by Takshanuk Watershed Council (TWC) and funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, aims to improve fish passage on Mink Creek for coho and chum salmon, Dolly Varden, and cutthroat trout.

The culvert, installed as part of a road which is no longer in use, had been getting choked by sticks and debris and was creating a barrier for fish making their way upstream. Thanks to TWC, the culvert has been fully removed. All that remains left to do is replant the area with native vegetation.

We're excited to see the positive impact this improved passage will have on local fish!



Conservation has a bright future, thanks to you!

Thanks to your support, the Southeast Alaska Land Trust is growing!

Jordan Tanguay, originally from Maine, has filled a new, full-time **Stewardship Coordinator** position. Having Jordan on board means that we have more capacity to monitor and care our conservation properties, as well as more capacity to work toward conserving more land for wildlife and residents of Southeast Alaska. We're thrilled to welcome Jordan to our team.

To learn more about Jordan, please go to our website at www.SoutheastAlaskaLandTrust.org.

Thank you, for making more conservation possible!

Southeast Alaska Land Trust—the beginning

SEALT is officially incorporated on September 18, 1995.



1995



Gunnuk Creek North and South, Kake

At a combined total of 2,557 acres, these are the two largest conservation easements held by SEALT. These easements safeguard a municipal drinking water source for the community of Kake.

2001

Crescent Bay, Sitka

This was the first property SEALT conserved in the community of Sitka. The easement conserves rare and valuable eelgrass beds.



2010

25 YEARS OF LAND CONS

1998



Jensen-Olson Arboretum, Juneau

The first conservation project completed by SEALT. Caroline Jensen partnered with SEALT and the City and Borough of Juneau to conserve her family's land and gardens with a conservation easement.

2003

Herbert River Wetlands, Juneau

SEALT worked with the State of Alaska and the City and Borough of Juneau to conserve the wetlands at the confluence of the Herbert and Eagle Rivers. Before this, the property was being considered for gravel extraction.



2010



First Mendenhall Peninsula property conserved, Juneau.

Today, SEALT conserves 11 properties along the Mendenhall Peninsula, establishing a buffer next to the Mendenhall Wetlands State Game Refuge.



Nelson Homestead, Haines

Located at the head of Mud Bay, this property is an historic homestead. The property still has remnants of a brick kiln, which supplied bricks to build up Fort William H. Seward, in Haines.

2013

Marjory & Edgar Huizer Fishing Access Site, Juneau

This is SEALT's first dedicated recreational access site. The property allows visitors to access Gastineau Channel and the Mendenhall Wetlands State Game Refuge from North Douglas Highway for fishing and other activities.



2015



Honsinger Wetlands, Juneau

This property conserves important tidal wetland habitat adjacent to the Refuge, and also preserves an iconic viewshed within the community.

2018

CONSERVATION MILESTONES

2014

Accreditation

Accreditation through the Land Trust Alliance certifies that our practices meet national standards for excellence, uphold the public trust, and ensure that our conservation efforts are permanent. SEALT achieved reaccreditation in 2020.



2017



Sunny Point, in Juneau, is completely conserved

Starting in 2002, SEALT worked to conserve six properties totaling 27 acres of wetlands surrounding Sunny Point, preserving, among other things, critical habitat for migratory birds.

2020

Grummett Wetlands, Juneau

This is SEALT's most recent conservation success. To date, 38 properties and 3,590 acres have been conserved throughout Southeast Alaska.



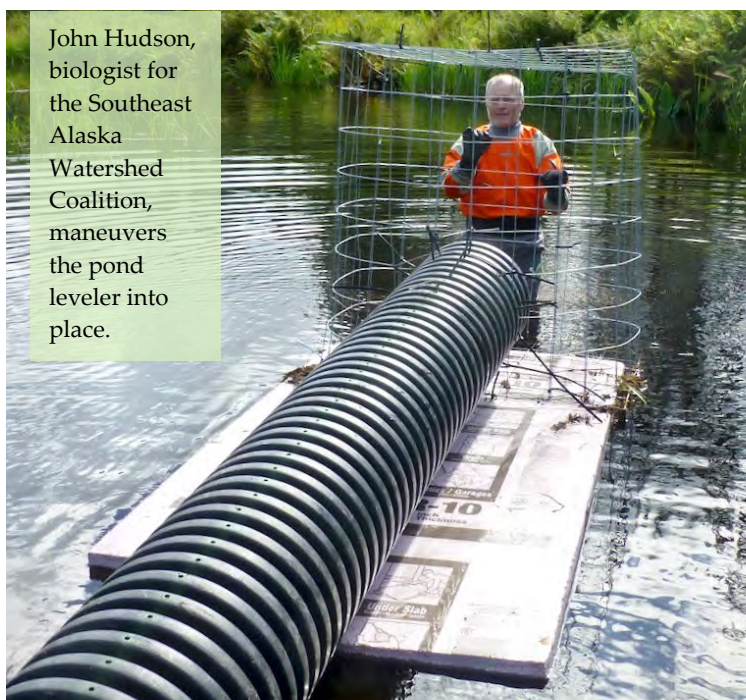


Bears, Berries, and Beavers

When the Southeast Alaska Land Trust named the new Juneau conservation property the “**Very Beary Berry Wetlands**” after the plentiful black bears and the fruit they love, we didn’t know we should have included another “B” word in the name – beaver.

Earlier this summer, the Southeast Alaska Land Trust received a phone call alerting us that beaver had returned to the property and had built a sturdy dam across Strawberry Creek, forming a large pond.

We were excited to hear about the presence of beavers! Beaver are nature’s engineers. Beaver dams create complex and valuable habitat, especially for rearing salmon, which are significant economic drivers here in Southeast Alaska.



John Hudson, biologist for the Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition, maneuvers the pond leveler into place.

But we also learned that the beaver pond was causing potential flooding concerns for our upstream neighbors. We needed to find a solution – but one that didn’t involve removing the dam or the beaver, because SEALT conserves habitat for *all* wildlife, not just bears.

Enter, the pond leveler.

Pond levelers are devices that allow water to flow through beaver dams. On August 29th, a crew of volunteers, unafraid of getting a little wet, installed a pond leveler at the beaver dam at Strawberry Creek.

To accomplish this, a 40-foot long, 15-inch diameter flexible pipe was placed into a notch in the dam. The pipe's intake was set upstream of the dam in the pond and was enclosed in a large cage of wire mesh, to prevent the pipe from being clogged with debris.

As long as the water in the pond is higher than the level of the pipe in the dam, the pond leveler will act as a drain, and water will flow through the pipe and bypass the dam.

SEALT staff will be monitoring the pond leveler in the months ahead, adjusting it as needed. Hopefully, the pond leveler will lower the water level enough to give our upstream neighbors peace of mind – but not so much that the beaver will notice!

Special thanks to all our partners, and especially to John Hudson, who played a major role in installing the pond leveler.



© Bob Armstrong

Getting Seen in Sitka

We are thrilled to share that we have installed SEALT's first interpretive signs along the Sitka Sea Walk at the **Crescent Bay conservation property**, in Sitka. The new signs complement the existing Sitka Sound Science Center signs. One sign explains the importance of SEALT's work and the significance of the Crescent Bay conservation easement. The second sign focuses on eelgrass habitat in Crescent Bay, highlighting the fact that eelgrass preservation was one of the main reasons for conserving the Crescent Bay property. Keep your eyes out for more SEALT interpretive signs coming soon!

Special thanks to Corvus Design for their work designing these signs, and to our partners at the City and Borough of Sitka and the Sitka Sound Science Center for helping with installation.



THANK YOU

We sincerely appreciate the generosity and strong commitment to local land conservation shown by our members. Thank you to the following donors who gave so generously between January 1, 2019, and December 31, 2019. Also, a big thank you to our Legacy Fund donors (in orange), our Evergreen Society members (in green), and our Sustaining members (in blue). If you believe you have been left off of this list in error, please email Amanda at amanda@sealt.org.

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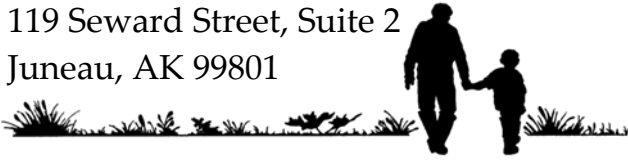
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Southeast Alaska Land Trust

119 Seward Street, Suite 2
Juneau, AK 99801



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Ever consider making a charitable gift from your IRA?

Individuals age 70 ½ and older can donate up to \$100,000 directly to charitable nonprofits from their individual retirement accounts (IRAs) without it being treated as taxable income. One essential detail — your plan administrator must issue the check directly to the charity.

Please consider the Southeast Alaska Land Trust with your generous contribution.

Questions? Call (907) 586-3100
or email: info@sealt.org.

