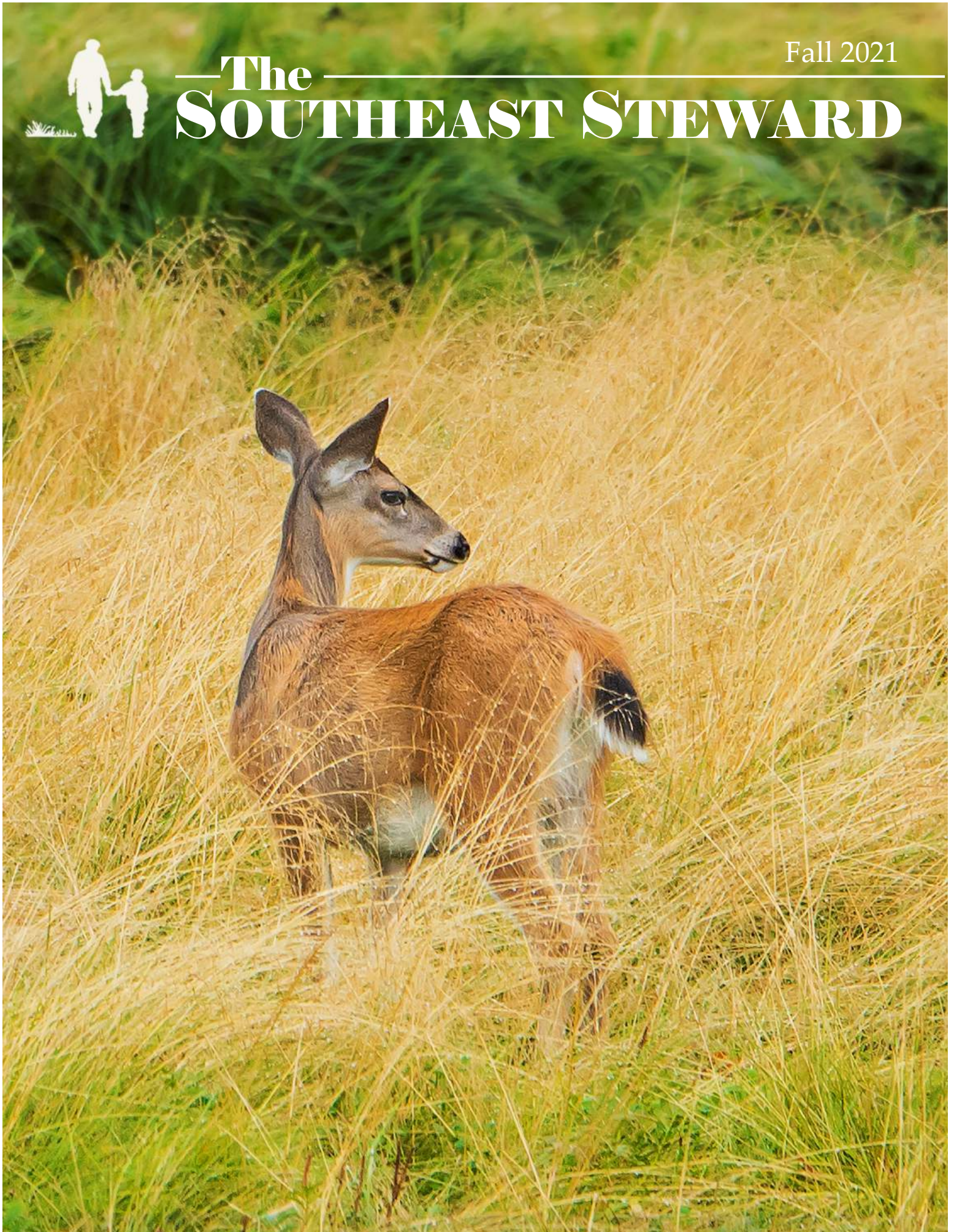




Fall 2021

The **SOUTHEAST STEWARD**



The Moraine Edge conservation easement is 7 acres in the heart of the Mendenhall Valley, in Juneau. It is completely surrounded by urban development.



Future Focused

The wildflowers are in bloom, the streams are full of salmon, and many of us have gathered buckets of berries. As we savor the last beautiful days of summer before the autumn rains, it's impossible not to feel reinvigorated by our mission to help preserve the abundance that our lands and waters have produced for thousands of years.

Since its inception over 25 years ago, the Southeast Alaska Land Trust has had an irreplaceable role in conserving landscapes important for communities. Now, in a time of a changing climate, the need for us to preserve and maintain our backyard landscapes is more imperative than ever.

With these high stakes in mind, we are delighted to announce that SEALT has a new Executive Director! Margaret Custer comes to us with a broad knowledge of Southeast Alaska and a strong background in leadership and community involvement. I am confident that she is just the person we need to enhance and expand our land conservation mission within our region.

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STAY CONNECTED

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SoutheastAlaskaLandTrust.org

COVER

Sitka black-tailed deer at
Pack Creek, Admiralty
Island, Alaska, courtesy of
Mark Kelley.
www.MarkKelley.com

BACK

Group hike to the Moraine
Edge conservation property.
*Thank you to the
photographers who contributed
to this newsletter!*



We're very much looking forward to the benefits this new era of leadership will bring to SEALT and our communities. Although we have a strong 25-year record of conserving important lands, the work we will do in the future, together (with you!) will be some of our most important work yet.

Thank you for conserving our beautiful backyard.

- Jay Nelson
President, Board of Directors

SEALT Welcomes New Leadership

After a six-month, nationwide search, the SEALT Board of Directors unanimously selected Margaret Custer as the new Executive Director of the Southeast Alaska Land Trust.

Margaret has spent the past 13 years with the Southeast Alaska Petroleum Response Organization, managing an oil spill response team throughout 14 communities from Yakutat to Metlakatla. Her career has focused on collaborating with state and federal agencies, tribes, nonprofits, and the private sector to safeguard environmental, economic, cultural, and subsistence assets through oil spill prevention and response.

"I am honored to join the Southeast Alaska Land Trust," states Margaret. "SEALT's leadership in conservation aligns with my deeply held values of community-building, environmental stewardship, respect for Indigenous cultures, and developing partnerships that benefit the greater good."

Margaret also served as Chair of the Ketchikan Community Foundation and as President of the Ketchikan First City Rotary Club. In these roles, Margaret developed fundraising campaigns, led community conversations, and supported projects to encourage local leadership and sustainability. She also served on the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Grants Committee, considering municipal grants and CARES Act funding for local nonprofits.

Margaret can be reached at margaret@sealt.org.



"I am committed to Southeast Alaska and cherish the experiences of this beautiful place."

- Margaret Custer
Executive Director



In April of 2015, in partnership with The Conservation Fund, the Southeast Alaska Land Trust purchased a 10-acre parcel from Sheldon Jackson College, in Sitka.

The Indian River parcel, which is adjacent to the Alaska Raptor Center, is an undeveloped river corridor containing Indian River and wetlands critical to the Indian River watershed. Indian River lacks fish barriers and provides excellent spawning habitat for Coho, pink, and chum salmon, steelhead, and Dolly Varden char. The Sitka Cross Trail starts just east of the property, and the Sitka National Historic Park borders the property to the west.



The Crescent Bay conservation property is comprised of a 0.6-acre waterfront parcel and the adjacent 6.8-acre tidelands along a popular stretch of Sitka's urban coastline. Nestled between the Sitka National Historic Park and the Sitka Sound Science Center, this downtown beachfront is treasured for its coastal open space and outstanding views of Mt. Edgecumbe and the islands of Sitka Sound. The tidelands are also a source of eelgrass, a rare plant that is diminishing on a global scale.

The project was funded by the Alaska Dept. of Transportation & Public Facilities and the Federal Aviation Administration as mitigation for unavoidable impacts from the Sitka Airport Expansion Project. The City holds the title, while SEALT holds the conservation easement on these lands.

**The Southeast Alaska Land Trust
holds two conservation properties
in the community of Sitka.**

Indian River
Conservation
Property

Alaska Raptor
Center

Sawmill Creek Road

Sitka Sound
Science Center

Sitka National
Historical Park

Crescent Bay
Conservation
Property

Spotlight on **SITKA**



Innovative Ways to Give Back

We are thankful for the committed and growing group of people who choose to support our work by making charitable contributions. Most supporters choose to donate with a check or credit card via our website at www.SoutheastAlaskaLandTrust.org.

Depending on your personal resources and the impact you hope to make on the world, there are other creative ways to support SEALT now and in the future. Here are some additional opportunities to discuss with your family and professional advisors:

GIFTS OF STOCK

A gift of appreciated stock is a tax-wise way to support SEALT because the full value of the stock can be donated without you or SEALT paying taxes on its appreciated value.

GIFTING FROM YOUR IRA

If you are 70 1/2 or older, you may make direct charitable contributions from your IRA without paying income tax. Check with your financial planner or tax advisor for details.

GIVING FROM A DONOR-ADVISED FUND

Give to SEALT during your lifetime from an established donor-advised fund and/or designate SEALT as a future beneficiary of your fund.

SEALT AS YOUR BENEFICIARY

Another popular way to make a planned gift is to name SEALT as a beneficiary of all or a portion of your retirement plan, investments, insurance policies, or bank accounts. It's as simple as filling out a form.

These suggestions are not intended to be financial planning, legal, or tax advice. Please consult your professional advisors to determine if these forms of giving are appropriate for you. You can also start a conversation with us any time: (907) 586-3100.

Southeast Alaska in August

by Mary Willson

Sit at the edge of a muskeg in mid-August. It is not autumn, because the roadside fireweed has not yet gone to seed. But the birds know that things are changing. A mixed flock of juncos and acrobatic chickadees forages in the pines, talking all the while and flitting rapidly from one branch to another. Here in the underbrush is a little group of Wilson's warblers, gleaning what they can from the leaves before heading south. A Steller's jay scolds briefly and flies away.

Out in the meadow, bog laurel and bog rosemary are no longer flowering, but the sundew flowers are still unopened buds. Bog asphodel has sturdy seed pods ripening, some of them being investigated by small green caterpillars that intend to chew into the pods and eat the seeds. Bog cranberries are still green but getting plump, and on the meadow edges high-bush 'cranberry' has fruits in all stages of ripening. The few-flowered sedge grows in stands of bright green that stand out against the less vivid greens of other plants. Maybe the ant colony in this log will send out some scouts if the day warms up. Wait a while, quietly, and note what else can be observed.



Mary Willson is a retired ecologist living in Juneau, Alaska. She devotes her time to writing, exploring, collaborating with other naturalists, and advocating for conservation.

Harvesting Devil's Club at the Jensen-Olson Arboretum

Devil's Club, S'áxt', *Oplopanax horridus*, is a valuable native plant that is well-established at the Jensen-Olson Arboretum (JOA) conservation property. In some areas, it was even encroaching on pathways and even into the foundation of the residence. New JOA manager, Ginger Hudson, contacted Sealaska Heritage Institute (SHI) and proposed a harvest where participants could learn proper pruning timing, techniques, and traditional uses.

In possibly the first partnership of its kind, SHI responded and organized two workshops, engaging both employees and interns from all over the country. Vivian Mork Yéilk' led participants in traditional harvesting methods. The fresh stalks were partially processed at JOA then taken to the Auke Village site for further processing. The JOA is looking forward to future collaborations.



Southeast Alaska Land Trust

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The Southeast Alaska Land Trust collaborates with communities, individuals, and organizations throughout Southeast Alaska to help ensure that highly valued habitat, recreation, open space, and cultural and historic areas continue to thrive for the well-being of each generation.

ABOUT SEALT

The Southeast Alaska Land Trust (SEALT) is a nationally accredited land conservation nonprofit that has been helping local people preserve local land in Southeast Alaska since 1995.

SEALT has conserved more than 3,600 acres of wetlands, recreation lands, wildlife habitat, open space, and subsistence lands throughout Southeast Alaska.

We work to preserve our region's unique natural beauty, provide recreational access, sustain biodiversity, and enhance the quality of life for all in our region.

