



## WAYPOINT

SUCCESS STORIES FROM ABOVE

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LightHawk's monthly update, WayPoint, was created to share some of the good news we on staff learn about daily. These success stories illustrate the critical role we play in conservation efforts throughout North and Central America through the unique perspective of flight. We hope you enjoy WayPoint and will share with others our success stories from above.

### Protecting the Pacific Northwest's Land of "Noisy Water"

On the northwest tip of Washington state, there is a place bordered on the north by British Columbia and on the west by the Strait of Georgia, which separates mainland Canada from Vancouver Island. Home to a rich mix of saltwater shorelines, forests, rivers and lakes, farmland and volcanic mountains, Whatcom County derives its name from the native Nooksack people's word meaning "noisy water".

Appropriately, the Nooksack River drains an area of the North Cascades Range near Mt. Baker, Whatcom County's highest point, and flows through fertile agricultural lands and past towns and cities, eventually meeting the waters of Bellingham Bay. Like many counties in the Pacific Northwest, residents feel the pinch of encroaching development, and civic leaders struggle to find the balance of economic health and the health of the environment and its residents.

LightHawk has been working with its longtime partner, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, to fly in support of Whatcom Land Trust (WLT) and their efforts to protect and preserve undeveloped areas of the county. LightHawk volunteer pilots flew county and city council members, representatives of local business interests, and members of the media, in December 2007 and again in April 2008, to help galvanize support to protect key areas in Whatcom County. Flights took passengers over much of the lower Nooksack watershed to Lake Whatcom, which provides drinking water for almost 75,000 residents of the city of Bellingham, and out to a unique point of land between Boundary Bay and the Strait of Georgia, a parcel known as Lily Point.



Winding through agricultural areas, the Nooksack River feeds Lake Whatcom which supplies water to almost 75,000 people. Pam Goddard/LightHawk

**"This was a wonderful opportunity to observe land preservation and lack of it in our area. The view of Lake Whatcom Reservoir from the air was very helpful in seeing the watershed."**

- Stan Snapp, Bellingham City Council

The effort to raise funds to purchase Lily Point has been one of the most visible of Whatcom Land Trust's recent projects. Lily Point is a 90-acre marine shoreline property which includes 40 acres of tidelands. It exists as a haven for marine and inter-tidal life, with healthy reefs, rocky tidelands, sandy beaches, mature shoreline forests, and two extensive feeder bluffs that leach rich sediment into the reefs and eelgrass beds of Boundary Bay. Lily Point lies on the edge of Point Roberts, an exclave of the U.S. located on the southernmost tip of a Canadian peninsula-- to get there by land, you must leave and enter back into the U.S.



Lily Point, a U.S. enclave isolated on the tip of a Canadian peninsula. This recently-protected parcel of land will be enjoyed by the public as a marine reserve and public park. *Roderick C. Burton - Art & Design/LightHawk*

With the help of grants, county and state funds, and scores of private donors from the U.S. and Canada, WLT was able to successfully reach its goal and purchase the Lily Point property in April of 2008. Whatcom Land Trust in turn deeded Lily Point to Whatcom County for use as a marine reserve and public park, retaining a conservation easement "to protect the ecological functions, environmental attributes and wildlife habitat of the Property."

By providing the unique aerial perspective, LightHawk donated flights allowed local leaders to see for themselves the interconnectedness of developed and undeveloped areas, to view properties that WLT is actively working to preserve, and to appreciate the importance of the properties they have been successful in preserving.

*"The view from above provides a different perspective and shows many things hidden from the ground. From the air, the underwater reefs at Lily Point showed the biological importance of the area. The number of logging roads was astounding from the air."*

- Carl Weimer, Council Chairman, Whatcom County



Flight group, from left to right: Calvin Bratt, Lynden Tribune; Rod Burton, Whatcom Land Trust (guide); Jane Nicolai, LightHawk volunteer pilot; and Carl Weimer, Whatcom County Council Chairman. *Pam Goddard/LightHawk*

## **About LightHawk**

Founded in 1979, LightHawk is a nonprofit, volunteer pilot-based organization that flies environmental missions in collaboration with with a large network of pilots and hundreds of partner organizations throughout Central and North America. LightHawk flights provide a powerful and effective platform for research, groundtruthing, environmental awareness, and education. Receive this from a friend? Subscribe by sending an email to [info@lighthawk.org](mailto:info@lighthawk.org).