



2023

Skagit Land Trust Steward Internship

Ian Anderson
Western Washington University

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Recommended Citation

Anderson, Ian, "Skagit Land Trust Steward Internship" (2023). *College of the Environment Internship Reports*. 109.

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COLLEGE OF THE ENVIRONMENT



Internship Title:

Organization Worked For:

Student Name:

Internship Dates:

Faculty Advisor Name

Department

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June 15th, 2023

Hello Dr. Leo Bodensteiner,

My name is Hannah, and I am a Stewardship Coordinator at Skagit Land Trust. I helped coordinate Ian Anderson's internship with the Trust. This letter is to certify that Ian completed his internship with Skagit Land Trust from March 27th to June 9th fulfilling 150 hours.

During his internship, Ian helped staff with a wide variety of stewardship tasks including site visit monitoring, volunteer work parties, restoration activities, property surveys, and environmental education activities. He was an excellent field partner and picked up tasks quickly. Ian was inquisitive and eager to help where needed. I hope he gained valued skills during this internship, and the Trust would be happy to have him back to volunteer with us.

If you have any questions, I am often in meetings or in the field, so email is generally the best way to communicate. I can be reached at hannahw@skagitlandtrust.org. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Hannah Williams
Stewardship Coordinator



Ian Anderson
Dr. Leo Bodensteiner

Skagit Land Trust Internship – Stewardship Intern

The organization that I worked for this spring was Skagit Land Trust, a nonprofit organization headquartered in Mount Vernon that works to conserve land in Skagit County. The Trust conserves over 10,000 acres in Skagit County split up between over thirty different properties. I was involved in the stewardship department of the Skagit Land Trust and my title was stewardship intern. Skagit Land Trust has two employees known as stewardship coordinators and it was my job to assist them with various tasks throughout the couple months I was interning.

The core task of this internship was to participate in volunteer work parties. One of the ways that Skagit Land Trust works to conserve the plots of land they manage is with volunteer work parties, where volunteers sign up to come out and work on improving some aspects of the Trust's properties. My role in this was to assist the stewardship coordinators in setting up the work parties and participating in the work parties themselves. This mostly consisted of landscaping work such as weed whacking, trail clearing, invasive species removal, data collection, and tree planting.

I worked with many great volunteers as well. The majority of volunteers were retired environmentalists of some kind, whether they were environmental scientists by profession or not. I am thankful for the chance to meet all of these amazing people, not only for the useful advice that they were happy to give me, but also as a way to become more connected in the environmentally conscious community in Skagit County. Beyond working on my interpersonal skills, these work parties increased my knowledge as an environmental scientist in many ways. I learned more about invasive species and how these species are divided by threat levels based on how likely they are to threaten an ecosystem as well as how realistic it is to control them.

There were a couple times where I got a chance to participate in larger scale land management operations where multiple local governmental organizations worked together to complete a common goal. On Guemes Island, a beaver dam had disrupted a large portion of one

of the Trust's properties. In collaboration with the county as well as an organization called Ducks Unlimited, the Trust worked to find a solution to this beaver dam, which had the potential to eventually engulf one of the main roads on the island. This was an amazing opportunity to see how organizations work together in real time and how that process takes place.

Another responsibility I had was to participate in Skagit Land Trust led fieldtrips in their Utopia conservation area east of Sedro Woolley. My job was to lead one of the five stations set up around the property where second and third grade students would learn about some aspect of the environment. I educated children on how macroinvertebrates are important to stream ecology and how they are used as an indicator species to signify stream health. Participating in this gave me a chance to strengthen myself in an area I find myself to be particularly weak in, which is working with large groups of small children. This was by far the most challenging part of the internship for me personally, but the benefits made this challenge very rewarding.

This internship was not closely correlated to my academic education, but I did get a chance to apply a good amount of the knowledge I gained throughout my academic career. My understanding of ecology gained from wetland and forest ecology courses came in handy multiple times and it felt great to be able to apply that in a real setting. During the field trips when I explained the importance of macroinvertebrates, I also got a chance to educate others on what I had learned in my coursework.

This internship was a great way for me to get an insight into how nonprofit and government organizations collaborate to enact environmental change. It gave me a view into how the legal side of environmental conservation works. I would most strongly recommend this internship to any students who are interested in becoming more familiar with land management and stewardship practices.