

# COVID 19 Protection Plan – Field Work Excerpts



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Skagit Land Trust prioritizes the well-being of our community, including our staff, volunteers, contractors, partners, landowners and members. This protection plan lays out the protocols we will follow during the Washington Stay Home order in response to the spread of COVID 19. This plan will be regularly updated as recommendations and requirements from entities such as Washington State, the Center for Disease Control, and the World Health Organization change over time.

## **Protection Plan Goals**

Reduce transmission among employees, volunteers, and our community.

Maintain healthy business operations.

## **Trust Conservation Areas**

Trust lands currently remain open to public access. The Trust decided to leave Trust lands open for public access at this time because many Trust lands are easily accessible for local communities, and we wish to provide opportunities for community members to get outside near their homes, especially as many other outdoor areas have closed to public access. The Trust does not typically experience high levels of use on our lands. If staff receive reports or observe crowding at any of our conservation areas, we may choose to close access. The Trust encourages visitors to visit Trust lands close to home.

Staff will share updates about access considerations related to COVID 19 on property webpages as appropriate. For example, on the Guemes Mountain and Valley webpage and the Kelly's Point webpage, staff have noted that the Guemes Island Ferry is only open for essential travel.

## **Field Work and Field Events**

At this time, to comply with the WA State Stay Home proclamation and support social distancing efforts, the Trust is not holding general volunteer events or conducting non-essential field work.

WA State issued a clarification that Skagit Land Trust can undertake certain stewardship and land management tasks that have been approved as "essential". The Stewardship Manager, Conservation Director and/or Executive Director will determine if a field task falls into these essential realms. If field work is determined to be essential, the following protocols must be followed. Non-essential field work is postponed until the stay home order lifts.

Trust staff and volunteers will take the following precautions to increase social distancing and reduce pathways for virus transmission at any of our field events and while conducting field work;

- Anyone exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 (which include fever, cough, and shortness of breath), or who has been exposed to someone with a confirmed or likely case of COVID-19 is asked to stay at home and not attend Trust events or visit the office until they are cleared to be around other people by their medical provider (generally after they have had 2 negative COVID-19

tests), or, if they did not seek medical attention, have had no symptoms for at least 2 weeks. If the lead staff for field work shows symptoms of concern, they will identify another staff to lead the field work and / or cancel the field work.

- In limited situations, staff and volunteers may conduct fieldwork in small groups of no more than 5 people with people outside of their households if it is deemed necessary to complete essential work or if staff and volunteers feel that it is safest to be in a small group on a particular site or project.
- Staff and volunteers will not carpool with anyone outside of their households.
- Staff and volunteers will give each other at least a 6 ft bubble when conducting any field work.
- Staff and volunteers will bring hand sanitizer and wet wipes when conducting field work.
- Staff and volunteers must bring their own PPE (face masks or coverings, gloves and eye protection) to events, and must wear the appropriate PPE and clothing while completing field work.
- Face masks should be kept in easily accessible locations at all times and must be worn if staff and /or volunteers are working within 6 ft of someone outside of their household. It is generally recommended that face masks be worn if staff and/ or volunteers are working on a project within 12 ft of someone outside of their household.
- Staff and volunteers will not share tools with anyone outside of their household whenever possible.
- Everyone should bring their own food and water to events. Staff will bring a water jug to any field events where volunteers will be present in case of emergencies.
- Staff and volunteers must sanitize their hands before touching items that others need to touch (eg, equipment or resources that must be shared).
- Any shared items used during field work that were handled by multiple people will be cleaned and disinfected if deemed necessary before being used again. The CDC provides extensive guidelines on cleaning and disinfection practices here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>
- Trust staff will track recommendations and regulations from authorities (such as WA state government and the CDC) and will update this protocol as appropriate.

## **Volunteers**

During the stay home order, volunteers are generally not being asked to come into the Trust office. Some willing volunteers are carrying out some low-risk work deemed “essential” as defined by WA State on behalf of the Trust. This includes some volunteers visiting Trust properties to complete monitoring or to assist with Trust stewardship projects.

Volunteers are signing an updated waiver that includes release from communicable diseases (including COVID-19) and assenting to reporting to us if they contact COVID-19. If a volunteer contracts COVID 19 and has been in contact with staff or other volunteers, or in Trust facilities / protected lands in the previous 2 weeks, they should notify the Stewardship Manager or Executive Director. Notified staff will protect the volunteers privacy while informing appropriate staff and volunteers that they may have been close to someone with COVID 19. Information will be handled with discretion to the full extent public health guidance permits. Notified staff will inform appropriate staff and volunteers that they may have been close to someone with COVID 19. (note: elsewhere, our plan lays out staff notification requirements) Volunteers conducting fieldwork must also review and agree to follow the Trust’s COVID 19 Fieldwork and Field Event protocols.

**Additional Resources**

Additional guidance can be found through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Washington State Department of Health, Washington State Department of Labor and Industries, and the Land Trust Alliance.