

October 2022 marks the 10th anniversary of the Land Trust's Natural History Society! Can it possibly be ten years ago that we formed?!? Instead of our regular newsletter format, this month I'd like to share the history of our organization along with the attached photo collages with memories of some gatherings.



October 2012, the first graduates of the Land Trust's "Tidelands to Timberline Natural History Course" were unwilling to stop our wonder and exploration of the Olympic Peninsula's many ecosystems and species. We were so inspired by Erik Kingfisher and the superb volunteer naturalists who led the course-- Scott Brinton, Geoff Hammerson, Heather Harding, Roger Risley, Lorna and Darrell Smith, and Ken Wilson-- that Erik encouraged a group of us to consider forming a Natural History Society. The original six members of the Natural History Society's Guiding Committee reviewed websites of established Natural History Societies. It turns out that Northumbria (N. England and S.E. Scotland) founded theirs in 1829; in India the Bombay Natural History Society was established in 1883; and across the strait, Victoria's began in 1944. We created ours "to foster active exploration, appreciation, understanding, and conservation of the diverse natural environments of the Olympic Peninsula

Pat Rothman built a website, jltnatural.org, now carefully maintained by our webmaster, Leslie Nolan. We formed a book club in January 2013, first meeting in homes, then outdoors at the Illahee Preserve and indoors in the PT Library's Pink House, until Covid moved us to Zoom, and now we've ventured back to the Illahee for the warmer months. Linda Rhines now coordinates our readings, and updates the list of over 100 books: jltnatural.org/book-club/. Sometimes we've been delighted to have authors join our conversations, including Robert Michael Pyle, Dylan Tomine, Jonathan White, Geoff Hammerson, and by Zoom, Lyanda Lynn Haupt and Thor Hanson.

For the first few years of the Natural History Society, Noreen Parks coordinated evening lectures. Dave Rugh presented "Whales of Northern Alaska" in January 2013 at the Cotton Building, and Eric Kessler spoke of the Elwha dam removal to 150 people in April 2013. We then moved to a larger hall with better acoustics at the Unitarian Fellowship. Gordon Hempton mesmerized us with his audio recordings in "Earth is a Solar-Powered Juke Box." Other fabulous speakers included experts on carnivores, tracking, butterflies, bats, wildflowers, birdsong, forest fires, bees, and more. Even people who couldn't attend would benefit, because Nan Evans would often interview the speakers and the book club authors for her program on KPTZ's "Nature Now."



Covid paused our famous outings, and we look forward to starting them again soon. I remember the first outing in November 2012 to Mt. Walker, Rocky Brook Falls, and Dosewallips State Park, with no leader. The next month we realized we'd prefer to have a leader, and the first was Ken Wilson, who guided us around Fort Flagler State Park. Over the years we have ventured out to study mushrooms, native medicinal plants, ethnobotany, mosses, salmon, and much more. Dana Ecelberger, Coca Sanchez, Kathy Darrow, and Cheryl Lowe led many wildflower and plant walks. Bob Boekelheide and Ken Wilson took us on winter birds; Tim McNulty led a hike on the Lower Dungeness Trail;



Stephen Cunliffe shared his insights into nature photography; Richard Lewis showed us insects both in pouring rain and in warm sunshine; and Dr. Peter Rhines explained the Kilisut Harbor restoration.

Since August 2016, Dave Rugh has been my brilliant co-chair, volunteering countless hours along with our dedicated Guiding Committee of Eileen Cooney, Nan Evans, Janell Jelliffe, Chris Jones, Oma Landstra, Lee Merrill, Michele Olsen, Marcia Schwendiman, and Ken Wilson. I have learned so much from each of them, and each has coordinated and/or led outings. Their companionship on Zoom calls in

the first years of the pandemic were highlights of those uncertain days, and their contributions and suggestions for guest columnists keep our newsletter alive.



Our Natural History Society is an offshoot of the Jefferson Land Trust, originally inspired by Erik Kingfisher, and over the years by all of the staff, many of whom have led outings and supported us in

various ways. We value the Land Trust and most of us volunteer in other ways-- as Preserve Stewards, Board members, photographers, and with the natural history course. We appreciate that Executive Director Richard Tucker meets with us whenever we need guidance.

Ten years later, dozens of local naturalists have graduated from Erik's "Tidelands to Timberline Natural History Course." Each year the graduates are added to our newsletter listserv, along with other interested friends. Currently 482 people receive it each month.



In a few years, the Natural History Society of Northumbria will celebrate their 200th anniversary. Who knows? Perhaps the Land Trust Natural History Society will endure that long as well. Happy 10th Anniversary, everyone!