



- *Marvin Elsasser of Marv's Plumbing provided and installed the new toilet for volunteer workers*
- *The Lee family donated furniture for use in the Lee/Gates House, including several of Cyrus Gates' original pieces*

## Dear Friend of Woodstock Farm,

The City of Bellingham purchased Woodstock Farm (Inspiration Point) from the Lee family seven months ago. Here is a brief report on Farm activities, along with my sincere thanks to the many people who have donated time, labor, brainpower and money. This is also a request for your support over the next few years, support which can take many forms.

The Greenway Committee, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and City Council all unanimously approved buying the Farm because of its unique landscape, plants, animals, views, and its critical role in the Chuckanut Bay Greenway. The 16-acre tract connects 23 acres of public land around Teddy Bear Cove Park with over 155 public acres around the mouth of Chuckanut Creek. Along with the precious headlands and tidelands, the public also acquired the buildings of Cyrus Gates' Woodstock Farm estate and the Lee boathouse, potential community assets which are addressed below.

### 2004 Accomplishments & Thanks

- *Joan & Bill Tezak donated a serviceable Bateau-style row boat for the boathouse*
- *Helen Scholtz began an ongoing photo essay of Farm views and details*

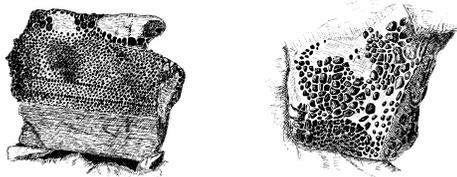
- *Americor participant Dave Newell of WWU's Service Learning program provided steady, reliable work and organization, along with the ES 101 crew*
- *A private donor began an endowment fund for one or more of the estate buildings with a \$200,000 donation*
- *David Christensen assisted City Parks in creating a site plan base map, ready for more ideas*
- *Terry Wahl and Paul Woodcock began the baseline, seasonal bird listing process*



- *Denise Guren found The Inspiration Point, a projectile head crafted of agate, perhaps 2,000 years old and no doubt one of many*
- *Margaret Curtis volunteered with site mapping and preliminary design work by Wilson Engineering*
- *Denis and Georgie Bailey donated the baby grand piano and Brad Reynolds tuned it, gratis*
- *The Koma Kulshan Chapter of the Washington Native Plant Society began*

*plant inventory work and measured the Inspiration Garry oak on the cliff—31 feet down to salt water and 14 up!*

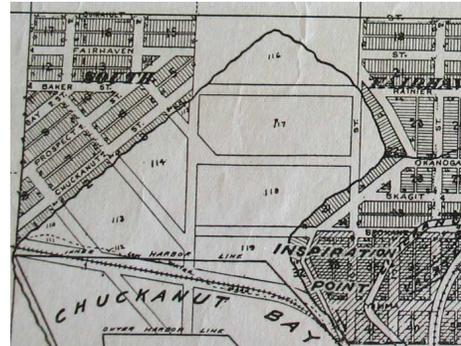
- *Maura Wahl donated a gaming table from the Fairhaven Hotel*
- *Tom Wood and the Whatcom Museum began outdoor painting classes on the site*
- *Anna Misky of New York City completed a fabulous bit of historical work on the Gates family and initiated forms and background work for a National Historic Register application*
- *With the approval of State officials “the Farm” (i.e. City Parks) took possession of an historic Indian petroglyph being stolen from just across the bay*
- *The sheep were taken off the Bluff and the Baileys made a huge dent in its Scot’s broom population*
- *The Whatcom Volunteer Center and WWU’s Service Learning program provided major support for a Make a Difference Day work party; English ivy and holly bore the brunt of it.*
- *Wayne Gerner began an on-the-ground assessment of human accessibility around the site, pledged items for a cultural exhibit*



HONEY-COMBED ROCK.  
NEAR CHUCKANUT BAY.

- *Michael Durbin of David Evans and Associates provided base mapping and led an intrepid overland trail design group along the nearby bay shore*
- *Kyle Olson kept on keeping on, doing trail work, barn cleaning, showing up and more*
- *The initial caretaking and artist/interpreter in residence arrangements were finalized*

- *The City of Bellingham Parks and Recreation Department secured a \$600,000 grant from Washington State in reimbursement for the City’s purchase of the property — most likely to be used to open the site via regular trail access. (Thanks to Parks officials Leslie Bryson, Paul Leuthold, the Washington Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account and the many organizations providing letters of support)*



- *A \$6,000 donation established the Arro Project at the Whatcom Community Foundation to assist with development of a business and site plan*
- *Presentations and outreach to potential partners were made to 15 diverse groups, ranging from the Old Fairhaven Merchants Association to Northwest Indian College*
- *Bobbie Morris, granddaughter of Grace Huntoon (sister of Mrs. Cyrus Gates), donated unique and wonderful historic materials and art from Woodstock’s Gates-Huntoon era*

## 2005 & Beyond

During the acquisition process, it was widely suggested that private assistance and creative partnerships between various public and private organizations could match the public’s investment of Greenway levy funds—to open and interpret the site for the public and to preserve and adapt most, if not all, of

Woodstock's historic buildings for uses complementing the wild and scenic site.

This letter (from me rather than the City in this instance), along with the private contributions noted above, marks the beginning of an era of collaboration at Woodstock. Cooperative projects and joint investments can be blended to enhance, protect and open one of Bellingham's most special places, including short term events and activities such as the following:

- *A special site opening celebration and other visiting days for the general public*
- *Art and natural history classes open through public registration*
- *Baseline definition of the shell middens and development of themes and plans to protect and interpret cultural resources, beginning with a June-July 2005, WWU Archeology Field School*
- *Ongoing species inventory, habitat assessment and restoration plan development: birds, mammals and native plant communities*
- *Seed procurement and propagation for landscape restoration: Garry oak meadow, rocky balds and other themes*
- *Cavity-nesters habitat creation*
- *Eagle Scout, service club and community volunteer work parties: site, landscape and structures improvements, along with invasive species control*
- *Ongoing outreach to potential site partners and users, including tours and presentations*
- *Formation of an organization to support and plan for operation of the site, and various site steering and project committees*
- *Business and site plan development, including review of alternatives*
- *Ongoing visitation and site plan review and comment by the general public*
- *Technical site plan consultation, harnessing volunteer and paid professionals, particularly*

*focused on driveway, septic system and adaptive reuse issues*

## **Best Uses & a Site Vision — Beyond the Steep Driveway**

There are two prehistoric shell middens at Woodstock and remnants of the Garry Oak meadow ecosystem that was once more prevalent throughout the Olympic rainshadow and on nearby Chuckanut Mountain. Such meadows are among the oldest human-shaped landscapes of the Salish Sea basin. The Farm has seen thousands of years of use by people we cannot really know—and whose identity few of us should presume to understand—but whose enduring relationship with the place that we now use and treasure invites our respect and wonder.

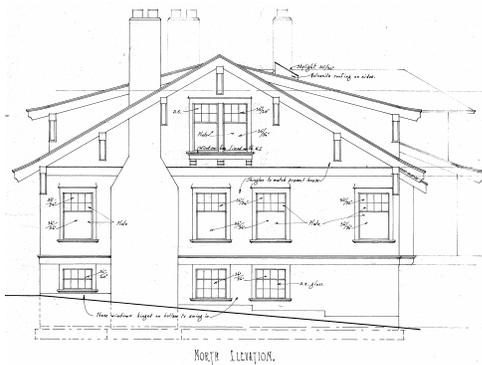


The Point is also a place to recall, honor and continue the community-building and open space preservation efforts of leaders like Cyrus Gates, Woodstock's creator. After the death of C.X. Larrabee, Chuckanut landowner Gates led in the creation of Larrabee State Park. As the local manager of the Larrabee companies, Gates dedicated Fairhaven Park and saw to its initial improvements. He personally donated Arroyo Park to the public and land-banked the first purchase of what has become today's

Sehome Arboretum. With his brother-in-law, Bert Huntoon, Gates led the development of Chuckanut Drive, the final segment of the Mt. Baker Highway, and the creation of the Mt. Baker Lodge.

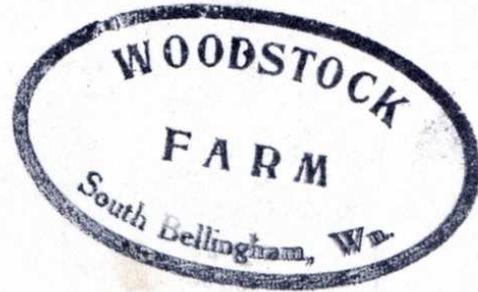
100 years ago, in 1905, Cyrus Gates began to assemble the Woodstock properties. Along with many other civic endeavors Gates operated “the Bluff” adjacent to the Inspiration Point wayside on Chuckanut Drive as a privately-owned park for the public. Chuckanut Island, donated to the Nature Conservancy by two of Gates’ children and viewed from the Bluff, carries the heirs’ official name of “The Cyrus Gates Memorial.”

With its diverse wildlife, wild landscape, and marks of enduring human use, Woodstock seems best as a site for reflection, passive leisure and the discovery of the landscape and natural and human history of Chuckanut Mountain to the east, and the “Rainshadow Straits” to the west. Woodstock’s estate buildings, particularly the Lee House, the barn and the roadster garage, could become elements of a unique center for learning, the visual arts (painting, photography, sculpture etc.) and small to midsize meetings, retreats and social and cultural events.



The Farm must be innovatively managed and designed for public enjoyment AND protection of

its resources and character. Like the rest of Chuckanut’s most prized beaches, groves and promontories, access by foot and bike, ridesharing, public transit and shuttle services from off-site auto parking will be the order of the future, along with a limited supply of on-site auto parking.



While many activities at the center may be oriented to discovery and protection of the adjacent Chuckanut parklands and the ecosystems and history of the nearby islands and marine waters, Woodstock must eventually be open to and protected for the general public—families, community organizations and drop-in walkers. Once assured for the future, the quiet magic of the place needs to reach well beyond what are sometimes called the “environmental” or “recreation” communities.

The preliminary site plan (attached or available) is the sort of initial vision that a founding board of directors, various committees and public workshops will consider and refine during 2005 and 2006.

As many of you have indicated, a creative, private operating body may be best for opening and operating many aspects of the site for the public. An initial operator might greet, inform and schedule events for the general public, as well as for a consortium of learning, research,

cultural and social organizations. There may be similarities to the civic arrangements now in effect for the Mt. Baker Theater. I also see a group with members representing the public parks, cultural and education agencies and the community, with similarities to the Sehome Arboretum Board.

## Ways You Can Help

These early visions, shaped with many of you over the past year, require development of a business plan, and also operating funds, materials, and volunteers. Please consider donating time, expertise or money to support and shape this project in its critical period of formation. As I am permitted by my personal and public abilities and responsibilities, I intend to be involved in the creation of a public facility at the Farm. However, the expertise and involvement of many others is essential.

- *Please consider the list of volunteer work and goods welcome (attached or available) donations that will get the project off the ground and keep it moving ahead—and please pass word the word to others*
- *Please consider a cash gift to continue Woodstock's evolution as a community asset; contact me for details. Cash donations will be accepted in the name of the Arro Conservancy, a component fund of the Whatcom Community Foundation, 119 Unity Street, Bellingham, Washington, 98225. (Arro will NOT be an operating agency or partner; it was established under the purview of the Whatcom Community Foundation Board to assist with the development of a plan for the creative, economical operation of Woodstock Farm. Cash donations will be used to support outreach, public involvement and*

*planning for public use and preservation of historic features*

- *Consider serving on a Woodstock Farm board or a project committee or helping raise money and interest*

Would you or your organization like to visit the site? Would your group like a presentation about the project? Please contact me at [twahl@comcast.net](mailto:twahl@comcast.net) or at 360-676-6985. Additional information, maps and photographic images are available; much is in digital form and should soon be available on a project website

***Yours sincerely, Tim Wahl***

***February 1, 2005***



### **Arro Conservancy**

c/o Tim Wahl, 1125 16 Street  
Bellingham, WA 98225

a Whatcom Community Foundation Component Fund

