

Woodstock Farm, Then, Now (2009) and in the Future

What is Woodstock Farm?

Woodstock Farm is a country home estate created by Cyrus Lester Gates, a prominent Fairhaven parks and public works leader and philanthropist. The Farm was built between 1905 and 1925, partly as a family home and partly as showpiece on scenic Chuckanut Drive, one of the many projects of Gates, his brother-in-law Bert Huntoon and the Charles Larrabee family. The Farm was named for [Woodstock, Vermont](#), a special place to Mr. Gates. Gates also led in the creation of Larrabee State Park, Arroyo Park, Fairhaven Park and construction of the scenic, mountain section of the Mt. Baker Highway. He loaned the City of Bellingham funds for purchasing the first part of the Sehome Arboretum and provided land for the Mt. Baker Lodge, the State Bulb Farm (now Bellis Fair Mall) and other civic facilities.

Prior to Mr. Gates, the site of Woodstock Farm was used for thousands of years by earlier residents, including the Mamosee people and followed by their successors and kin among the Samish, Lummi and other Coast Salish.



Why did the City buy the Farm?

The City of Bellingham acquired Woodstock Farm from the heirs of

Raymond and Gladys Lee in June, 2004 for 2.9 million dollars provided by the 1997 Greenway property tax levy. The Washington State Department of Natural Resources Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account provided \$600,000 in matching funds through the Washington Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation, which will be used for trail improvements and planning.



The site was purchased for public enjoyment of a substantially wild and continuous marine shoreline, for its unique set of island views and landscapes, for its diverse wildlife habitats and as a public heritage site featuring cultural features from prehistoric times and the early 1900's. Woodstock was not actually purchased for its beloved Craftsman era buildings—its [barn](#) and garage, houses and cottages. Perhaps most importantly, the purchase secured a critical tract within the South Chuckanut Bay Greenway at a time when it was threatened with subdivision for private use. The 16-acre purchase connected 23 acres of public land around Teddy Bear Cove Park with over 155 public acres lying around the mouth of Chuckanut Creek, see [map](#). As with many other Greenway Program purchases, Woodstock was acquired to preserve a critical open space resource and public opportunity. Many of the other 600-plus acres acquired by the [Greenway Program](#) are also

unimproved and will not be fully accessible for some years.

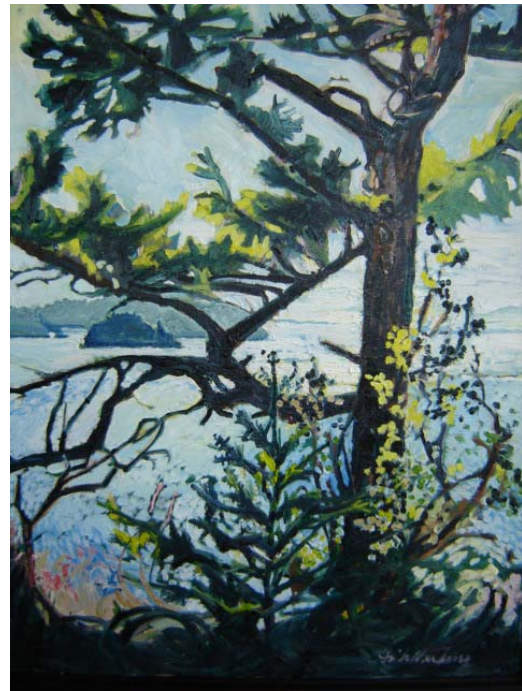
Access and future improvements.

Currently access to the Farm is limited to walkers, runners and bicyclists and, with periodic auto access arrangements, to community groups for activities like work parties, research, education or special partnership projects.

Basic driveway safety improvements at the Woodstock Farm entrance will be made in 2009 or 2010. Most of the funding is also in place for construction of the "California Street" foot trail between the North Chuckanut Mt. Trailhead parking lot and the Farm, but trail construction is still several years away.



To explore future uses the City cosponsored in a site planning charrette in July 2007 with the Bellingham's Woodstock Farm Conservancy. See [Charrette Guiding Principles](#) for more information. Lack of City resources has meant deferring site planning work, for both short term uses of the Farm and for its long term adaptation for the public. As with many other public sites, the City has begun entering and considering partnerships with various organizations to improve and adapt the site and facilitate its enjoyment by the public.



How to get to the Farm and more information about it.

For directions on how to park near and walk to the site, or to bicycle there, and for maps showing how walk to and within the site see [Access](#).

For background information about the site and to review exhibits and summaries from the 2007 site planning charrette see [Woodstock Site Planning](#).

To inquire about volunteering on the site (often a good way to arrange for group access) call the Parks & Recreation Department Volunteer Program at 360-778-7105. For more information about group tours and carpool or van access call 360-778-7000. Opportunities for tours and public service oriented events are limited and are subject to the availability of Parks staff or volunteer leaders.

Paintings, in order. First and second by Nancy Freeman. Third by Joyce Prigot and fourth by Trish Harding.