

## 2010 Skagit Watershed Letterbox Trail Clues

Letterboxing is a form of recreation that is fun for the whole family! Someone hides a distinctive box, and then gives clues to others in hopes that they may find the box. We've hidden educational boxes all up and down the Skagit Watershed area! You can start by getting a small journal, ink-stamp, and inkpad. Our boxes contain a logbook and a stamp or sticker for you to stamp into your own personal logbook, and then stamp yours into our logbook! Find them all! This adventure continues until late-October! Leave your contact info with [sceamail@verizon.net](mailto:sceamail@verizon.net) to receive information about the wrap-up party!!! 360 419 3161 or [sceamail@verizon.net](mailto:sceamail@verizon.net) to report missing/damaged boxes.

(Try [www.atlasquest.com](http://www.atlasquest.com) for any clue updates and to record your successes and comments!)

### 1.) North Cascades National Park – National Park Service

Venture up the Skagit Watershed along the wild and scenic river as far as Goodell Creek. Near Milepost 120 you will see the turn south across the river to the North Cascades Visitor Center. Park in the parallel parking just after you cross the river across from the Newhalem Creek Campground camp tender station. Journey along the River Loop trail toward the Skagit River. (the largest watershed pouring into the Puget Sound basin. Ask a ranger if you need help finding the trail. You will reach a sign that describes the river ecosystem and its inhabitants: eagles, otters, dippers, Native Americans, and salmon, to name a few! After reading the sign, face the direction in which salmon would travel on their way from the ocean upriver to spawn. On the trail, take 70-80 paces in that direction until you reach a bench. Take a rest on the bench and look for an ancient tree with stories to tell. The letterbox is hidden inside, be sure to return it to its place after solving the puzzle, placing your stamp and recording the treasure word(s).

### 2.) Marblemount Hatchery – Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group

From I-5, travel on Hwy 20 east 46 miles to Marblemount. At the right angle turn, bear right onto Cascade River Road and cross over the Skagit River. Turn right onto Rockport Cascade Road, cross over the Cascade River and then right onto Fish Hatchery Road. Continue on Fish Hatchery Road, and park in the far (west) end of the lot. Cross the footbridge and visit the educational kiosk in front of the Visitor Center for your next clue!

### 3.) Barr Creek – Skagit Land Trust

Drive State Route 20 east towards Rockport. Approximately 1.4 miles east of the intersection of SR 20 and SR 532 in Rockport, turn left (north) on Conrad Rd. Drive 0.2 miles on Conrad Rd, look on your left for a "No Hunting" sign on a tree. Park on the grass shoulder as this marks the start of the trail. If you drive too far on Conrad Rd., you'll see a driveway and gate with a Skagit Land Trust sign on the front. Go back about 50 yards to find the start of the trail. Hike north on the trail from Conrad Rd. In just a minute or two, you will cross an old grassy road-bed. Keep going north on the trail across the road. In about 10 minutes, the trail reaches another grassy road-bed. Cross this road-bed as well, and find a narrow trail that leads to a view of a small waterfall. The letterbox is at the viewing spot where you can see the waterfall.

### 4.) Northern State Recreational Area – Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group

From I-5, take Hwy 20 for 8 miles east to Helmick road in Sedro-Woolley. Turn left onto Helmick Road and park on the left in the gravel parking lot for Northern State Recreational Area. Find the informational kiosk on the north end of the parking lot. Find your next clue on the **East** side of the kiosk next to the trail.

### 5.) Green Rd. Reserve – Skagit Land Trust

From I-5, take exit 232 for Cook Road toward Sedro-Woolley. Take Cook Road east past Old WA-99. Take the next left onto Green Road. Follow Green Road north to just before Kelleher Road. Look for the interpretive sign on your right and park on the shoulder. Head north on foot but don't cross the bridge. See the old log? Look down!

### 6.) Taylor Shellfish Farm– Taylor Shellfish

Heading north on I-5 (from Mt. Vernon), take exit 231. Head north on Chuckanut Drive (Hwy 11) for 10 miles to the Oyster Creek Inn Restaurant (just past the hairpin turn). The entrance to the farm's driveway is in the corner of the restaurant's parking lot. Drive under the sign, across the bridge and down the hill. It's about a half mile to the facility. Please be careful crossing the railroad track. Park near the Taylor Shellfish retail store and walk towards the bay. If the tide is in, you may have to get your feet wet! From this point, follow the oyster shells to the "light" to find the rest of the clue!

### 7.) Little Mountain Park - Skagit Conservation District

Heading north or south on I-5, take the Anderson Road Exit #225 in south Mount Vernon. Head EAST on ANDERSON Road for 0.2 miles and turn left onto Cedardale Road for 0.5 miles. Turn right on E. Blackburn and follow for 1.1 miles. Turn slight right onto Little Mountain Rd. and follow approximately 0.3 miles to the entrance of Little Mountain Park, which will be on your right. Turn right into park and follow the paved road 1.5 miles to main parking lot. As you near the top, note the "North View Trailhead," which will be on your right just before you reach the parking lot. From parking lot, begin your quest by walking downhill to the North View trailhead, which will be on your left. Follow trail and walk out to the viewpoint, which provides a spectacular view of the Skagit River and our beautiful valley. Enjoy! Turn around from the viewpoint and walk back to the trail – straight ahead you will see 5 wooden steps. Go up steps and turn left. Walk 5 paces then walk between 2 gigantic Cedars. Then, veer left at 1<sup>st</sup> fern on your left. Note the soft branches of a little Cedar tree – tucked under the branches of this little tree you will find what you are looking for.

### 8.) PUD Main Office – Skagit Public Utility District #1

From Interstate 5, take the College Way (Exit 227). Head west on College Way before turning left on Freeway Drive, continue south for approximately ¼ mile to the PUD's Main Office, located on your right. After entering the customer service entrance, located at the northwest corner of the PUD's office and maintenance facility, park your vehicle as near to the athletic fields along the west side of the parking lot as possible. Go to the far west end of the parking lot and look for the "Yellow ribbon tied around the old oak tree." When standing next to the yellow ribbon oak tree look towards the east to find George Washington's image approximately 85 paces from the yellow ribbon oak tree. From here, walk 7 paces to the south and observe the Skagit PUD **Rain Barrel** display. From the PUD **Rain Barrel** display head north for 19 paces. Then proceed to the east for 36 paces. Turn and head south 5 paces to the "Backyard Sanctuary" sign. From the backyard sanctuary sign head 25 paces in a south to south-westerly direction towards a bright blue **Rain Barrel** located next to the Skagit PUD administration building. Look for the Skagit PUD's letterbox located within the **Rain Barrel's** secret rear compartment. Please use caution and walk safely when walking through the District's parking lot and vehicle travel lanes. **Note: 1 Pace = approximately three (3) feet or thirty- six (36) inches**

9.) WSU Discovery Gardens – Master Composters/Recyclers

Go to the WSU Research and Extension Center at 16650 SR 536 just west of Mt. Vernon. I love nectar, and I like tea, but I am not a honeybee. My tea is steeped to share with friends; but I do not sip it from both my ends! Find me where the dirt grows tall, in piles held in by four strong walls. Under Clematis vines large and small, I hang over the arbor in a flowery shawl. My wriggly brewers live next door, in a box, up off the floor. Take a seat and cheers with me, here's to tea brewed differently!

10.) Port of Skagit – Nature Trails

From I-5, exit at Highway 20. Go west on Highway 20 to Higgins Airport Way. Turn right onto Higgins Airport Way and travel north. When you reach Ovenell Road, turn left and then immediately right into the parking lot at this corner. From the trailhead at the Ovenell Parking lot, take the trail to the left and head west. Veer right at the next intersection. Just around the corner you will see a lone young alder tree on the right side of the trail. From the alder tree, walk straight toward the cattail marsh. The letterbox is hidden in the willows at the edge of the marsh.

11.) Bay View State Park – Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

Take Highway 20 west from I-5 about 7 miles to the light at the Farmhouse Inn Restaurant. Go right onto Bayview-Edison Road for about 3 miles. Turn right at Bay View State Park and drive under the road to the beach. Find a sign with information about local birds, tides, and the Breazeale Interpretive Center. (You can record this info in your journal). Look behind you at the bluff. You will see an old log lying at the back corner of the parking lot along the bluff. Look carefully! The letterbox is waiting for you behind the log.

12.) Pioneer Park – LaConner Town and Chamber of Commerce

As you enter La Conner via the roundabout, turn left on Maple Ave. and travel ½ mile. Turn right on Caledonia St. and go 2 blocks. Turn left on 4<sup>th</sup> Street and go straight up hill at end of 4<sup>th</sup> St. Park at “Welcome” sign. Take a short walk on the trail next to the Welcome sign. Just before the switchbacks, you are facing a tree – you will find the letterbox here.

13.) Swinomish Reservation - Swinomish Tribal Nation

Cross the LaConner Rainbow Bridge onto the Swinomish Indian Reservation. Turn right on Moorage Way, pass the Tribal Administration Building and turn right, go past the Skagit River Systems Cooperative and into the parking lot at the Office of Planning and Community Development. Find a Salmon sign at the southeast corner of the parking lot. After reading the sign, proceed along the bank around to find another salmon sign. Look for the box under a root wad.

14.) Anacortes Community Garden – Skagit Beat the Heat

Take SR 20 west to Anacortes and then head north on Commercial Ave. Turn right onto 28<sup>th</sup> street (Jack in the Box on adjacent corner), Arrive at 28th St & Q Ave. The garden is located directly behind Storks Restaurant and Bowling Alley. In the garden safe and sound, lives a seedling under ground. After sun and with the rain, gardeners start to play their game. Tending soil and pulling weeds, the seed that grows is the seed that feeds. Find me when the sun is warm, during wind or with a storm. I hide underneath a barrel of blue, covered up by honeydew.

15.) Port of Anacortes – Skagit Conservation Education Alliance

At the far north end of Commercial Ave. in Anacortes is the Port of Anacortes, along the Guemes Channel. Find a parking spot near “O” Ave. and 2<sup>nd</sup> St. Head toward the water and check out the pocket-beach, views, and interpretive signs. Then find the GREEN watering can. With your back to the can, carefully cross the street and the parking-area that is paved so that water can seep through, rather than run off into the Channel. Look sharp – the box is nearby.

16.) Washington Park – WSU Beachwatchers

From I-5, Take State Highway 20 to Anacortes, and then follow the signs that lead you through town 4 miles to the San Juan Ferry. Just before the entrance to the Ferry Terminal, move to the left lane and follow Sunset Avenue a little more than 1/2 mile to the entrance to Washington Park. Follow signs leading to the Loop Road. You can park in the “Day Use Parking” area. Walk along the loop road. Off to the right you will see the famous leaning tree and Cypress Island in the distance. In about ½ mile you will come to a parking lot on the left side of the road. Head into the parking lot. Just left of the “Wizards of Ooze” you’ll find a trail leading into the woods. Walk 17 steps and you’ll be standing under a leaning tree called a “widow maker”. Turn left and walk 10 steps toward an uprooted tree that looks a little like a barnacle with its feet in the air. Stop at the mossy log and look to your left. The letterbox is hidden under a salal bush. After you have checked out the letterbox and returned it to its hiding place, go back to the loop road. On the water side next to a bench, there’s a stairway leading down to the beach. Spend some time exploring the beach. You’ll surely find some of our “secret words” on the rocks. Note: (You can also drive the loop road between the hours of 10 AM and dusk. Just remember that it’s a one-way road!)

**Waiver of Responsibility and Disclaimer**

Know and respect your limits. Do some research before you go: Know how long and difficult of a hike the letterbox requires. Know the weather forecast. Learn from rangers the local trail conditions. And if you ever find yourself on a dangerously rocky part of a trail that’s wet and slippery, use common sense and turn around. No letterbox is worth the danger of getting injured! If you are lucky enough to see wildlife, do not approach or disturb it. Do not feed the animals – even if it is small, cute, and apparently harmless. If Animals lose their fear of humans, they can and will cause problems with future hikers and letterboxes. Trailhead break-ins are a possibility, so do not leave valuables in your car – or at the very least, keep them hidden from view. You are solely responsible for your vehicle and its contents. Do not let children hunt for letterboxes unsupervised. By reading and utilizing the letterbox clues on this sheet, you acknowledge the above conditions, accept responsibility for your own actions, and agree to hold non-liable the clue writers, website authors, and letterboxing organizations and further, agree to provide this disclaimer to any person with whom you share these letterbox clues.

