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## STEWARDSHIP & OUTREACH REPORT

AUGUST 2022

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### OVERVIEW

Staff from all districts gathered on the new Orcas Island preserve for their monthly staff meeting, and stayed long after lunch to tour the site, and to discuss potential site stabilization actions and other preliminary plans (Photos 1-2). The first public tour of the property occurred in late July, and others are scheduled for the second Saturday, third Thursday, and fourth Tuesday of each month. The [webpage](#) for the new preserve also features a sign-up link for these tours.

The guided walks to the Watmough Addition are quite popular (Photo 3). Sara has been leading a huge push to remove noxious weeds across all the Lopez preserves. Staff on the other islands have too, yet they've been able to enlist the help of the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC). Lopez didn't have enough kids sign-up to support a crew this year!

Charlie provided a tour of the Land Bank's agricultural preserves for a group with the SJI Ag Guild that continues to explore models for supporting farmers with farmland. The SJI staff will participate in a Garry oak restoration video production by WSU North Sound Forestry which will be presented at a state-wide forestry seminar. San Juan staff have also had difficulty getting a contract for maintenance, mowing, and repair of preserve infrastructure renewed, and it this may make it so that some projects, like a culvert replacement, won't be able to be completed this year.

Peter has led several staff in discussions about the allowance of compensatory wetland mitigation on Conservation Land Bank Preserves. He followed-up on some further questions and drafting a thoughtful overview on the topic. This will soon be circulated more broadly with staff and Commissioners, and we look forward to more discussion.

At their most recent meeting, the Terrestrial Managers Group touched based on various happenings within the partnership. This included steps taken toward preparing a proposal to the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and sharing updates on various plans that are in-preparation such as the Sustainable Tourism Master Plan and the Park, Trails and Natural Areas Plan. Your Conservation Land Bank is participating in all these efforts.

## **OUTREACH**

Staff: Tanja Williamson

The last day of our Summer Farmers Market Series was August 6<sup>th</sup>. Erin hosted a table on SJI. Jacob hosted a table on Lopez, and Andrew and Brian hosted a table on Orcas. All the attendees had fun answering questions from the interested public. Jacob even proactively avoided any ferry issues by taking his personal boat over to Lopez, then paddleboarding to shore, and then driving the Land Bank vehicle to market. Wow! That's a creative commute!

There's been oodles of public tours and volunteer events, which are described in more detail under district-specific news. The annual report is receiving great feedback. Tanja is happy to hear most people enjoy working a crossword. Following that theme, Tanja has more games and educational opportunities planned for the Land Bank's [County Fair](#) booth located within the [Green Village](#). She enlisted the help of Salish Seeds Project assistant, Margo Thorp, to give a talk on [Camas at 1pm Friday, August 19<sup>th</sup>](#).

## **SALISH SEEDS NURSERY**

Staff: Eliza Habegger, Margo Thorp

Seed harvest continues onsite at the Salish Seeds Nursery. Staff and volunteers have finished potting up plants for the plant sale in September. Volunteers have taken on sticking plant labels for the sale. Hot and dry weather has required more regular watering of plugs and pots. Staff installed shade cloth to reduce heat stress. Weeding is ongoing. Margo is preparing to give a talk on Camas at the County Fair.

## **DISTRICT 1**

Staff: Doug McCutchen, Charlie Behnke, Jacob Wagner, Shauna Barrows

**Beaverton Marsh:** Two wells were tested to determine water quantity and quality. The west well produced 14 GPM, and the east well produced 4 GPM. Water quality results are not yet available. This information was gathered in order to design a solar water system for agricultural use. Trail construction near Taylors Way, which entailed countless hours of smoothing gravel, is nearly complete thanks again to an incredible set of volunteers (Photo 4). The YCC also helped staff build a trail turnpike and remove tansy (Photo 5). "Phase I" of public access is likely to open by mid-to-late September. Karen and Doug continue to work on the interlocal agreement

with Island Rec for parking at Linde Community Park, and interface with the Town and adjacent neighbors.

**Cady Mountain:** Hardy volunteers traversed the oak restoration zones and removed more conifers and even some noxious weeds; although for the latter, only a few were found!

Volunteers also performed trail maintenance, including trail-side weed removal, on the portion that was opened last year between Three Corner Lake Road and Mitchell Hill.

**Deadman Bay:** Hardy volunteers braved these steep slopes to help remove weeds and collect the seed heads of Italian Arum and teasel.

**False Bay Creek:** Cattle continue to rotate through the pastures. Tansy was pulled in all the fields, including the far-eastern field that is known as the Alderman property (Photo 6).

**Frazer Homestead:** Staff pulled tansy, and mowed areas with a tractor to control hawthorn, brambles, and other encroaching vegetation. The SJPT Island Marble butterfly plots were also mowed, carefully, to protect areas with butterfly larvae.

**Kellett Bluff:** Staff brought volunteers and SJPT staff to assist with annual monitoring and weed control, and they were pleased to note that there's significantly fewer weeds than previous years.

**King Sisters:** Cattle rotate around the field, and a portion was cut for hay this year.

**Limekiln:** Volunteers and staff combed for tansy and thistle.

**Mount Grant:** A group from Salish Seeds Sciences visited the Preserve for an informational hike and they had so much fun they decided to join staff and volunteers for a weed removal party. Implementation of the Landscape Scale Restoration grant has started, and staff are working on an MOU with the Conservation District, as they will coordinate activities. Jacob is revamping the hunting program to a reservation system. Previously, the program was first-come, first-served but this proved challenging for users. Early-season archery opens September 1.

**Third Lagoon:** A thistle patch was battled.

**Westside:** Volunteers and staff hiked around and helped to control tansy and egg-leaf spurge. Neighbors, including State Park staff, have noted an uptick in camper vans along the Westside Corridor (#vanlife), and staff are working on the issue and developing new signage.

**Zylstra Lake:** The YCC joined staff to help trim overgrown trails, harvest noxious weeds – tansy and teasel were pulled -- and clear around native plantings (Photo 7). Hay was harvested and is still being moved off the fields. The fallow areas of western pastures have been mulch-cut with a tractor. The resident bald eagle pair successfully fledged another eaglet.

## **DISTRICT 2**

Staff: Peter Guillozet, Andrew Jansen, Mary Gropp

**Coffelt Farm:** Pickett Spring Electric made excellent progress this past month on the long-planned electrical system upgrades. Peter worked with Perennial Consulting (Darcey Miller) and helped complete a wetland delineation, create a botanical inventory, and establish baseline vegetation plots in the Preserve's wetlands. Staff completed another round of riparian area maintenance to prevent vole browse.

**Coho:** Andrew assisted Speckled Trout Consulting (Jenny DeGroot) and superstar volunteer Jerry Weatherman with annual fish seining. The effort yielded 52 coastal cutthroat trout. Routine maintenance included caging alder seedlings, cleanup of a fallen alder and tansy pulling.

**Crescent Beach:** Staff scouted the trail and forest boundaries for remote campsites or piles of garbage. They didn't find either! So, they pivoted to pulling tansy and disassembling driftwood structures on the beach.

**Deer Harbor:** Deer Harbor resident, and dedicated volunteer, Steve Spence is now assisting with routine maintenance. It's wonderful! Staff brushed the trails and cut back patches of thistle and blackberry.

**Judd Cove:** Perennial Consulting completed a wetland delineation and made another step of progress toward having permits completed for shoreline and stream improvements. Andrew and Mary removed a large maple branch that was hung precariously over the trail and repaired a boundary sign on the beach. Peter prepared a Request for Quotes (RFQ) to repair and pave the entrance to Fowlers Way to improve safety while exiting onto Orcas Road.

**North Shore:** The YCC came out for two days to pull holly seedlings and to help initiate clean-up of the many trash piles on site (Photo 8). New contracts are in the works for: 1) a cultural resources assessment and historic property inventory, by ERCI, Inc., 2) a geotechnical survey, by ZipperGeo, and 3) a basic maintenance and repairs agreement, by Chihuahua Team. Staff also

prepared a RFQ for an automatic gate and reached out to Island Excavating, OPALCO and Rainshadow Solar. Meetings are being held to review the water supply and the electrical systems. Staff has met with neighbors, patched a leaking well pipes, installed signage, mowed, removed tansy, hosted public tours, and more (Photo 9). On August 18<sup>th</sup>, Peter will meet with Madrona Institute staff and others to discuss potential Coast Salish cultural uses in the context of a future conservation easement.

**Turtleback Mountain:** The Northwest Regional Manager for the Washington Trails Association, Arlen Bogaards, came to review and discuss some of the potential future trail modifications. (These are detailed in the draft Stewardship and Management Plan.) Arlen agreed to help assist with design later this year, and pending a cultural resource assessment and other planning, he even offered to provide a large, volunteer trail crew to assist with implementation in late 2023. Mary wrapped up a very productive wild seed collection effort. All the seed was sent them to Eliza for future sorting and planting at the Salish Seeds Project. Andrew led the YCC crew on two days. They removed old fencing and scotch broom near Haida Point. And together, Andrew and Mary brushed the Lost Oak trail, pulled weeds, and cleared around all the caged oaks.

### **DISTRICT 3**

Staff: Amanda Wedow, Sara De Roy

**FB Spit:** Volunteers from the Lopez Community Trails Network (LCTN) helped to seek and destroy Italian arum seed heads. Together with staff, two garbage bags were filled. Sara also tackled thistles and rebuilt the sign posts for the reef net fishing interpretive sign -- just as the reef net fishing boats appeared for the season. There's been a recent increase in bicycle riders using the field trails.

**Hummel Lake:** Prompted by Tanja's naturalist series, [Kwiaht](#) hosted an educational evening to observe bats. The Washington Dept of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) owns 20 acres along the norther portion of the lake, and this includes the boat launch. Once it was decided the boat launch would be the best place to observe bats, Amanda reached out to WDFW staff to coordinate and their exchange went well-beyond bats. Now, there's plan to host a volunteer work party to help clean-up and maintain the WDFW property for National Public Lands Day.

**Lopez Hill:** Staff tackled tansy, teasel, thistle....and herb Robert.

**Spencer Spit:** A Stewardship and Management Plan (SMP) has been drafted and its soon to be shared with staff and Commission for review.

**Watmough:** There's been high turnout for events hosted at the new addition. Ten people showed up for 'weed warrior volunteer day.' They cut thistles and filled four garbage bags with flowers and seed heads (Photo 10). Ten people also showed up for a recent guided tour. Erin joined for the event and had a great time getting to know more Lopezians. These tours will continue weekly throughout the month of August. BLM staff also visited the addition to assess hazards and safety. The grant application to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) was preliminarily awarded \$500K. Notification of the final award is scheduled for late September. Amanda and Erin have compiled a draft Interim SMP plan, and they'll send it to the LBC and staff next week.

#### Photos



Photo 1. Staff walk the north shore beach together.



Photo 2. Staff walked to the far end of the beach and oriented themselves to the new views of outer islands.



Photo 3. Amanda leads a well-attended tour of the Watmough Addition.



Photo 4. An incredible set of volunteers helped distribute and smooth gravel at Beaverton Marsh Preserve



Photo 5. The YCC helps to battle Beaverton Marsh's tansy





Photo 6. John Wilson's cattle on False Bay Creek Preserve



Photo 7. Goldenrod and hay bales at Zylstra Preserve



Photo 8. Orcas YCC crew pulled holly at North Shore. The first work party at the new preserve!



Photo 9. Interim North Shore signage features a QR code that links to website. So fancy!



Photo 10. It was all about thistles and smiles at the recent Weed Warrior work day on Lopez.