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## STEWARDSHIP & OUTREACH REPORT

JUNE 2022

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### **OVERVIEW**

It's the time of year when vegetation management dominates the daily schedule, and yet the uptick in user activity can also lead stewards to feel like their monthly dispatch reads a bit too much like the local Sheriff's Log. For example, a stolen vehicle was abandoned in Turtleback's south parking area, and then a trio of paragliders caused Peter to run up the mountain and end their eye-catching antics. A string of sign damage and theft occurred across several Lopez preserves and later turned out to be part of a broader wave of dereliction that also affected the Village. A group of campers in a RV were discovered at Mount Grant and upon discussion they shared that they'd received permission from the neighbors. After the neighbors were contacted, it seemed possible that the campers were confused after returning to the site late at night.

All the while, mowing to maintain trails and parking lots and noxious weed control continued (Photo 1). Land Bank staff look forward to welcoming Andrew Jansen as the new Orcas Field Assistant on July 18<sup>th</sup>. He is well-suited for the position as a current member of the Island Conservation Corps (ICC) and has training and field experience in riparian restoration, noxious weed eradication and forest health.

### **OUTREACH**

Staff: Tanja Williamson

The Summer Farmers Market Series kicked off this month and the Land Bank was represented across all districts (Photo 2). Tanja hosted on Lopez; Peter hosted on Orcas; and Jacob hosted on San Juan Island. Staff will return to the Lopez and Orcas markets on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, and to SJI on July 9<sup>th</sup>. Then, all three islands will be represented again on August 2<sup>nd</sup>. Are you interested in joining in the adventure of fielding questions and meeting community?

The annual report is off to the printer! Tanja generated the Summer e-newsletter (for the second quarter) and this will be posted prior to the LBC meeting. Tanja also invites suggestions from the

Commission for any material they'd like to see in the fall newsletter. Also, the [Beauties and Beasties](#) article for the 2022 Springtide Issue, which is a visitor's guide that's published through The Journal, is now available online and in print. And last but not least, Tanja would like to give a shout out to Aaron who did some heavy lifting to set-up the hybrid Teams meetings. Oh, just when we were getting Zoom all figured out...

### **SALISH SEEDS NURSERY**

Staff: Eliza Habegger, Margo Thorp

More weeding, more seeding, and more volunteers. The new crop of Master Gardeners has reinvigorated the nursery's "Third Thursdays" work parties. Wild seed collection has also begun, and staff and volunteers throughout the County are lending a hand. With deer-munching down, and plant productivity up, it's a fabulous year to collect fresh "foundation" seed from the wild. These seeds will be used to start more plants and seed production in the nursery. Eliza is also beginning to explore how to work with private individuals that are interested in native seed production on their own land.

### **DISTRICT 1**

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

**Beaverton Marsh:** ICC member Susan Ridl has chosen to design an eBird-based community bird inventory and monitoring project. Her project will be tested with a small group of birders at the beginning of summer and then it's expected to be shared with the public later this fall, following the Preserve's opening of public access. Preliminary trail construction (Phase 1) has begun and a WDFW biologist recently surveyed the Preserve to look for raptor nests and assess potential impacts from public access. He was pleased with the alignments and the accommodations made for wildlife. A Request for Qualifications (RFQ) was sent to six engineering firms to solicit assistance with boardwalk design in the wetland's challenging soils. A Request for Proposals (RFP) for cultural resource assessment was also distributed to six cultural and archaeological resource consultants. The RFQ and RFP submittals will be reviewed

next month. Brook Brouwer with WSU Extension gave a public tour of the agricultural pasture trials and will continue with forage sampling efforts later in June.

**Cady Mountain:** ICC member Julia Jaquery is helping to map and ground-truth vegetation communities on the Preserve. Her work will inform the management plan process. The golden paintbrush plots were monitored, and many of the plants look outstanding this year (Photo 3).

**Deadman Bay:** Erin toured the shoreline area with a small group of managers to discuss recreational impacts on resources and coincidentally had the opportunity to inform multiple hikers about the leash law.

**False Bay Creek:** Cattle are rotating through the lush pastures. Byron Rot with SJC Environmental Stewardship and the ICC continue to maintain riparian restoration areas. Kathleen Foley of SJPT reported western bluebirds in the nest box. Surprising, the occupants appear to be a single mother with two chicks. The male is presumed to have died.

**Frazer Homestead:** The perimeter trails are being maintained and staff made an initial sweep for tansy ragwort. The weed population seems to have decreased. Cattle are expected onsite later in the season.

**King Sisters:** The perimeter trail here continues to be maintained by a volunteer neighbor. Cows are out grazing, and a portion of the fields may be hayed this year.

**Limekiln:** New signs were installed at two areas where trails lead into the Preserve from the State Park (Photo 4).

**Mount Grant:** Planning for the Landscape Scale Restoration (LSR) grant continues, as does the effort to switch the SJI site from Mt Grant to the still-pending acquisition on Cady Mountain. Group coordination – there are numerous partners participating in the LSR grant, such as the Samish Indian Nation, DNR, and the ICC -- has coalesced and there are now dates set in October to begin implementation. The CLB will also be co-hosting a forestry field trip on Wednesday, June 15<sup>th</sup>. Other partners involved include staff from the WSU North Sound Extension as well as the SJI Conservation District. The trip's focus will be on health and diversity within the islands' grassland-savanna-woodland complexes.

**Westside:** The Westside Volunteer Naturalist Program is re-booting after a two-year COVID-induced hiatus. This program involves several marine research and education groups that help to provide trained naturalists during the summer. These volunteers also help to interpret the Preserve's natural history and provide information on the Land Bank. Shauna is leading a volunteer weed pull.

**Zylstra Lake:** Streams are still flowing into the upper lake, and temperature monitors were deployed once again. These tidbits will record the temperature of the lake. One was placed approx. two feet off the bottom, and another was placed approx. three feet below the water's surface. This research is being conducted by Dept. of Environmental Stewardship and UW Friday Harbor Labs to learn more about (with hopes to improve) water quality. All these late spring rains have delayed haying. However, it will likely begin mid-to-late June. The Greenes (lessees) would like to collaborate on a public educational opportunity and share knowledge about haying and agriculture. However, timing for this event is still up in the air.

## **DISTRICT 2**

Staff: Peter Guillozet, Mary Gropp

**Coffelt Farm:** The farm lease application deadline was June 1<sup>st</sup>. Proposals will now be reviewed by a committee comprised of staff and commissioners, and a final recommendation will be made at the LBC's July meeting. The Pickett Spring Electric contract was executed, and acquisition of materials is underway. Perennial Consulting, LLC is also now under contract to complete a wetland delineation and a plant inventory.

**Crescent Beach:** A neighbor to the Preserve, Scott McKay, called and reported an uptick in driftwood collection. The CLB's rules (and signage) prohibit this activity, but it's been tough to catch folks in the act.

**Judd Cove:** In addition to regular maintenance, 'tis the season for mystery boats to appear on the beaches. And Peter is looking into one now...

**Entrance Mountain:** Rain Shadow Consulting staff and a subconsultant initiated their multi-preserve forest assessment with an orientation on this steep preserve. Modeled on the 2021 forest

assessment for Turtleback Mountain, their fieldwork will cover roughly 346 acres of forestland across six Orcas preserves and help to determine priority areas for forest health treatments.

**North Shore/Glenwood:** This is the first entry about the ongoing acquisition of Glenwood Inn, which is currently being referred to as the North Shore property. Peter's been busy planning. He's drafted an impressive number of documents (communications plan, outreach letter, interim signage) and supported the SJPT in their application for \$3.5 million in grant funds. If awarded, this money will support their effort to obtain a conservation easement, and remove multiple, decrepit buildings along the shoreline.

**President Channel:** Over Memorial Day weekend, Erin spotted a family fishing from the bluff of this preserve. Fishing and other extractive activities are not allowed.

**Turtleback Mountain:** A volunteer trail crew from Oregon lent a hand with maintenance of the Lost Oak trail (Photos 6-8). Peter and Erin led numerous naturalist walks, to show off the birds and wildflowers, as well as a tour of the recently completed forest management demonstration projects. These were also opportunities to answer community questions about the draft Stewardship and Management Plan (SMP) and discuss recent and future management actions. The public comment period for the SMP has closed and responses to the 13 comments are currently being drafted. A summary of comments and staff responses will be posted shortly, as will a final (draft) SMP for review by the Commission.

And as expected, Mary Gropp is doing a terrific job pulling weeds, mowing, weed whacking, maintaining trails, and interacting with preserve users in her part-time, seasonal position. She's also begun collecting seed from wild plant populations during this stellar wildflower season.

### **DISTRICT 3**

Staff: Amanda Wedow, Sara De Roy

**Blakely Island:** Erin joined SJPT to monitor the conservation easement on their Crowley Preserve. Numerous wildflowers were observed, including one called naked broomrape (*Orobanche uniflora*) that is parasitic on sedum (Photos 9-10).

**Spencer Spit:** Staff from Spencer Spit State Park helped to clean up the old building site (Photos 11-12).

**FB Spit:** Staff replaced a sign that was stolen from the parking lot and installed some new 'private property' signs at beach boundary. The trail was mowed. The Island marble butterfly plots were monitored, and more plants were found in bloom than at the first visit.

**Tombolo:** Seven whimbrels were observed on the Tombolo shoreline! These large shorebirds have a long de-curved bill and striped head. They were likely stopping over on their migration route to snack on invertebrates in the intertidal, and they definitely delighted birders for a few days before they moved on (Photo 13). Staff also removed Meadow knapweed.

**Watmough:** Amanda and Sara continue to clean and clear up the new addition. The pumphouse is in poor condition. It had a shredded tarp for a roof and was without doors or windows. Sara removed the tarp (and as many micro-plastic tarp pieces as possible). The well head inside also needs repair. The next steps for the pumphouse are unknown at this time because the future use of the well is also unknown. An old mower and miscellaneous household garbage were taken to the dump, with help from County Parks staff. Now that the house is mostly emptied out, photos and measurements were taken and shared in order to receive a price estimate on removing the lead paint. The grant application to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board was cleared by the local chapter, and after a few more tweaks, it will be submitted to the State along with a grant application to the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account.

## Photos



Photo 1. Charlie wears a smile while removing *Euphorbia lathyris*, an invasive weed at Mount Ben Preserve.



Photo 2. The CLB is at the Farmer's Market this summer. Interested in supporting staff the booth? Contact Tanja! Or just come by and say, Hi.



Photo 3. Golden paintbrush (*Castilleja levisecta*) plant on Cady Mountain, SJI.



Photo 4. A new wayfinding sign installed at Limekiln Preserve, SJI.





Photo 5. It is always feels lucky to witness the brittle prickly pear cactus in bloom, Westside Preserve, SJI



Photo 6. A 'Botany Washington' tour of Turtleback Mountain's flora



Photo 7. Erin 'handles' a trail-blocking tree on Orcas



Photo 8. Oregon trail crew working it on Turtleback Mountain



Photos 9-10. Wildflowers on Blakely Island, naked broomrape (left) and harsh paintbrush (right)



Photo 11. The CLB Spencer Spit Clean-up crew...



Photo 12. The State Parks Spencer Spit clean-up crew! Many hands make light work 😊



Photo 13. Picture of a whimbrel from The Cornell Lab website.