
STEWARDSHIP & OUTREACH REPORT
NOVEMBER 2022

OUTREACH

Staff: Tanja Williamson

Lots of brainstorming, planning and promotion this month. We hosted our Countywide Community Conversation, November 9th, and continue to advertise the three upcoming vacancies on the Commission. Planning for the December annual retreat is underway, as well as the end of year “Top 10 Highlights” email.

SALISH SEEDS NURSERY

Staff: Eliza Habegger, Margo Thorp

We are seeding, seeding, seeding – sowing seeds in 10,000 plug containers, to grow up into plants for outplanting in fall of next year. This year’s seed harvest came in once again at around 20 pounds. Much of this seed, as well as seed that we’ve been stockpiling in cold storage, was sown this fall at Turtleback Mountain and Cady Mountain Preserves. Some was also sold (to reimburse our cost of production) to the [San Juan Preservation Trust](#) (SJPT), the [Ecostudies Institute](#), [Field & Fern](#) ecological consulting, [WSU Extension](#), and a number of private landowners.

Peter and Eliza attended the Cascadia Prairie Oak Partnership conference, where Eliza presented “The Salish Seeds Project: A Case Study in Developing a Local Plant Materials Program.”

DISTRICT 1

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

American Camp Trail:

Beaverton Marsh: Word of the new trail has been spreading, with many nice compliments and appreciations to the Land Bank, the majority of which echo the same sentiment: the benefit of a natural area trail in close proximity to town, and that side of the island. Karen Vedder has been

working with the Town of Friday Harbor on planning and permitting issues related to the future trail connection with Linde Community Park. A presentation of the project to Town Council is scheduled for January 2023. Doug engaged foresters with the [Washington Department of Natural Resources](#) to conduct a site visit geared towards forest assessment and potential for cost-share funding related to habitat restoration and enhancement. Doug found notable the foresters' assessment that portions of the property have a short window of intervention before resulting unrecoverable structure.

Cady Mountain: Seeding was completed on sites that were recently thinned. Thank you, Salish Seeds Project, for the amazing native seeds! Doug and Kai Hoffman-Krull ([SJICD](#)) were filmed the previous month for a Washington State University Fall Forestland workshop video on Garry oak restoration on Oct 22. The film was well received with a lively Q&A following the presentation. Doug is hoping to hire Blackcap Restoration to assist with fall Garry oak restoration work after losing a Washington Conservation Crew (WCC) to hurricane recovery. Blackcap Restoration consists of three alumni from last year's Islands Conservation Crew (ICC).

Driggs Park: The small south lawn has been planted with bulbs and seeded with a native dry meadow mix.

Limekiln: A small windfall tree was removed after a recent storm.

Mount Grant: The LSR site in the western basin has been a flurry of activity over the last month. (Photo 1) Members of the [Samish Indian Nation](#), WCC, ICC, and SJPT have been busy getting started on the multi-year thinning project. Even with weather delays (due to high fire danger) and snow, crews have managed to make big progress on the site. (Photo 2) Hunting has closed at the Preserve with many hunters reporting successful harvesting of Blacktail deer this season. We are super excited to have three new volunteer stewards starting next week. They will be assisting with a variety of maintenance projects, gate duty, and public interface.

Westside: WCC members weaved their way across the upper slopes of the Preserve, cutting and grubbing out the infamous Himalayan blackberry.

Zylstra Lake: Annual preserve monitoring was recently completed, along with annual dam inspections, and replacement of a bog bridge on the trail along the west boundary. Groups of

Cackling geese and Snow geese have been seen flying over and up to eight Trumpeter swans have been sighted at a time on both reservoirs.

DISTRICT 2

Staff: Peter Guillozet, Andrew Jansen

Coffelt Farm: The ICC removed barbed wire from the old boundary fence along Crow Valley Road in preparation for native hedgerow enhancement, and installation of new, parallel fencing designed to separate the pasture from a future perimeter trail. Andrew completed riparian maintenance for the year and installed additional willow stakes harvested with permission from Killebrew Lake. Charlie advanced the draft Coffelt farm lease to legal review by the Prosecuting Attorney.

Coho: Preserve visitors have enjoyed seeing returning Salmon in unusually large numbers following voluntary water releases by [Rosario Resort](#) and [Olga Water Users](#).

Crescent Beach: Andrew and a small ICC crew removed several trees blocking and hanging over the trail. Peter is reviewing a draft forest assessment report from [Rain Shadow Consulting](#) that covers Crescent Beach and five other Orcas Preserves.

Judd Cove: We've received positive comments from both preserve neighbors and visitors following the recent paving of the entrance to Fowlers Way by a Land Bank contractor. (Photo 3) The project improved safety and will reduce the need for maintenance by staff. Andrew cleared the ditches to prevent culvert blockages as we head into the rainy season.

North Shore: Peter and Andrew implemented road stabilization recommendations provided by a geotechnical consultant. (Photo 4) Tina Whitman and Katherine Dietzman of [Friends of the San Juans](#) visited the site to conduct forage fish monitoring. Joe Herrin, from [Heliotrope Architects](#), provided pro bono conceptual floorplans of the existing garage as a center for conservation-oriented activities. [Natural Systems Design, Inc](#) is under contract to develop conceptual site plans.

Turtleback Mountain: Jacob joined Andrew and Peter in replacing the stairway above the new bridge near the south entrance with locally milled cedar steps. (Photo 5) We also caged additional oak seedlings and planted bulbs and seed throughout the LSR area. With the recent issuance of a burn permit, pile burning is commencing with help from with the ICC.

DISTRICT 3

Staff: Amanda Wedow

Channel: Heavy rain discouraged birders from joining Amanda on the monthly scheduled bird walk. She's hoping for better weather in December, when she'll bring her binoculars and scope to Richardson Marsh.

Richardson Marsh: Six volunteers helped cut back vegetation on the old road/ future trail. (Photo 6) The group also looked at the potential overlooks and provided input, in preparation for December's bird walk.

Lopez Hill: Site planning at the addition included scouting and mapping areas for the Conservation Easement. Hunting season wrapped up, with about 50 hunters contacted.

Spencer Spit: More cleanup at the old, shed site, with help from State Parks. Used a backhoe to pull the concrete blocks, which were hauled away. Worked with Erin on final touches on a Draft stewardship and management plan.

Watmough: Monthly sampling for forage fish spawning on both beaches. Planning for a work party on November 17th.

Photos



Photo 1: 40 Members of the WAFAC (Washington Fire Adapted Communities) group toured the Mount Grant LSR site in partnership with the Conservation District to learn about fire ecology and Douglas Fir savannahs.



Photo 2: The Islands Conservation crew braved frigid weather while doing some amazing thinning work at the Mount Grant LSR site.



Photo 3: Contractor wraps up paving at the entrance to Judd Cove Preserve.



Photo 4: Peter and Andrew implementing North Shore road stabilization measures recommended by geotechnical consultant.



Photo 5: Andrew and Jacob stand proud on cedar box steps installed at Turtleback.



Photo 6: Volunteers at Richardson Marsh Preserve.

Bonus Photos from Conservation Easement Monitoring with Erin



