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## STEWARDSHIP & OUTREACH REPORT

### OCTOBER 2022

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#### OVERVIEW

This October might be coined Outreach Month as there's been a tremendous number of events these past couple weeks. Staff from your Conservation Land Bank have been out in front of many of them: leading tours of project work and new acquisitions, presenting at symposiums, providing leadership at volunteer events, and sharing in the pleasure of providing native plants to the broader community.

The open house celebration at the Orcas Island North Shore property was well attended, including by Mother Nature. Gorgeous blue skies coupled with temperate weather was icing on top of the property's "environmental cake." An estimated 100-150 people visited the property, and this included a couple who *literally* walked down memory lane on their way to the shoreline. They had spent their honeymoon at the Inn over 50 years ago! (Photo) Many thanks are extended to the San Juan Preservation Trust for their help in co-hosting. Their participation in planning, their presence, and their tasty snacks were appreciated by all.

For National Public Lands Day, Amanda participated in Lopez's Great Islands Cleanup where she worked the desk (which is a rare thing for this land steward) and helped to sign-in volunteers before they embarked on cleaning-up their beaches and roads. At the Garry oak symposium, hosted by the SJI Chapter of the Washington Native Plant Society, Lincoln presented on the big picture of protecting high-resiliency areas and Doug presented on the historical ecology of Douglas-fir savannas (Photo). Doug also led a tour to highlight the upcoming eco-cultural restoration project on the west side of Mount Grant Preserve, which included a fun "how to" activity of estimating tree ages (Photo). He and Kai Hoffman-Krull also recently participated in a film being made by WSU Extension for an upcoming virtual ["Fall Field Day"](#) forestry seminar on Saturday, October 22. The 45-minute film will be followed by a Q/A session.

And working behind the scenes to make sure that the public knew about all these various opportunities, as well as comment periods for plans and agricultural lime applications, and more, is a single (and often smiling) person: Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator, Tanja Williamson.

## **SALISH SEEDS NURSERY**

Staff: Eliza Habegger, Margo Thorp

Our annual fall native wildflower plant sale event was a success. There were a few website issues and a couple of order mix-ups but, in the end, everyone received their plants and seemed happy to have them! The fall sale is focused on potted plants. This year there seemed to be a lot of interest in purchasing seed, too. So, next year we hope to provide more native seed mix options at the sale. Afterall, the focus of nursery work in the fall is definitely on seed.

Nursery staff have completed processing 99% of this year's seed harvest, and the total pounds of seed produced at Red Mill Farm weighs in over 18 pounds. Seed mixes that incorporate 30 native species have been created for various preserves, Cady Mountain, Mount Grant, and Turtleback Mountain, they will soon be sown at these sites. By the time of the Commission meeting, we'll also have sown a small patch of ground at the Conservation Land Bank's office in Friday Harbor, which is being converted from lawn to native meadow (Photo).

Now, all we need is some rain.

## **DISTRICT 1**

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

**Beaverton Marsh:** Staff held a "soft opening" for volunteers and neighbors and celebrated the completion of the new trailhead, the new Nuthatch trail, and the cumulative service of 260 volunteer hours. Staff made a toast to the volunteers for their amazing contribution by offering them... real toasted bread! A REI volunteer group joined staff to begin clearing another new section of trail, and their accomplishment in just one day was also impressive. (Thank you!) Falcon Cultural Resources has also conducted site visits and is working on an assessment.

**Cady Mountain:** Forest thinning was initiated on the 2022 addition. The ICC spent three days on site and Land Bank staff, from across the districts, also gathered for a workday (Photo). The progress has yet to be measured in terms of 'acres treated' but suffice it to say that in this first push a lot of Douglas firs were removed from within the driplines of many beautiful -- and ecologically significant -- oaks on site.

**Kellett Bluff:** Edits made to the draft mooring buoy agreement were not favorably received by the Suquamish Tribe. The property adjacent to the Preserve, which shares the community beach parcel, has new owners and they have shown positive support for public access.

**Limekiln:** Evan Stickles with State Parks has been monitoring the Land Bank's portion of Limekiln, in addition to the Deadman's connection, and helped to report a vehicle abandoned at the Carefree Lake parking area. He's expressed capacity and interest in continuing to assist staff.

**Mount Grant:** A reservation system for hunting was implemented in the Preserve's western basin. Hunters now log-in online with WDFW to make a reservation. Thinning in the western basin, the San Juan's component of the LSR project, starts next week. Falcon Cultural Resources conducted a site visit and concluded that there may be remnants of an indigenous trail, and culturally modified trees. Protection of these resources is being explored with Falcon Resources and the Tribes. Driving access has shifted to the reduced winter hours: Sundays only, from 10-4.

**Westside:** Staff spent several days mowing shrubs in the grassland in order to simulate the structure that could exist following a low-intensity fire; because English Hawthorn, Himalayan Blackberry, and various other shrubs have been threatening to displace prairie species (Photos).

**Zylstra Lake:** Agricultural lime was applied to the hay fields to help boost soil health and productivity. Water quality continues to be monitored for cyanobacteria blooms, with no significant issues this year. The dead geese and teal that were found last month tested positive for avian flu. Seasonal changes to access are in effect: the eastern half of the walking loop is closed, to give migratory waterfowl a bit more space, and dogs are not allowed again until April.

## **DISTRICT 2**

Staff: Peter Guillozet, Andrew Jansen

**Coffelt Farm:** There was a large turnout for the annual farm tour hosted by the Lums. The tour coincided with the Conservation Land Bank's ever-popular native plant sale. Staff also joined Meghan Howard, land steward with the SJPT, for her annual monitoring of the Preserve's conservation easement.

**Coho:** Coho salmon have been circling in Buck Bay, near the mouth of Cascade Creek, and are impeded in their continued return upstream by low flows. This has led to a request by Jenny

DeGroot, of Speckled Trout Consulting, for voluntary releases of additional flow into the stream from Mountain Lake to enable successful spawning.

**Crescent Beach:** Following the site tour last month, Peter has now prepared a funding request to Washington DNR's Forest Resiliency program. As envisioned, these funds would support much needed forest thinning on the property in 2023.

**Deer Harbor:** Staff worked with an arborist to identify and mitigate several hazard trees, and to leave as much of the snags in place as possible for the critters, and for the critter lovers. More than 100 species of wildlife in Washington need standing dead trees for nesting, roosting, shelter, and feeding. One small (12-14 cm) example is the brown creeper which nests in pockets made from the decay process, the gaps that form between the tree trunk and loose bark. Though there's not much privacy for raising a creeper family at this preserve currently, there are plans for more plantings. New tree and shrub seedlings will go in this winter to bolster the small patch of shoreline forest.

**Stonebridge-Terrill:** Field mowing was finally completed. The primary objective was to suppress thousands of highly invasive English hawthorn seedlings. Meanwhile, Peter continues to dream about how wonderful extensive wetland restoration would be at this site.

**Judd Cove:** Fidalgo Paving & Construction is under contract to pave the entrance to Fowlers Way and, thanks to complexities of ferry scheduling, is expected to complete the work in late October.

**North Shore:** Ron Zee with the Madrona Institute, and members of the Coast Salish Youth Corps advisory board and staff, joined staff for a tour. Among the group's objectives was to explore opportunities for cultural uses. Joe Herrin, from Heliotrope Architects, visited and measured the garage as an early step in the pro bono project to provide a conceptual rendering of the building as a center for conservation-oriented activities. We received a quote for planning and project design support from Natural Systems Design, a mainland-based restoration firm. As envisioned, the resulting contract will yield conceptual and final site plans, and supporting documents for wetland and slope restoration, reforestation, parking facilities and trails.

Following the ongoing removal of old fencing and debris, Andrew has made excellent headway in mowing the thistle fields. We've led public tours at a rate of three per month through October

and will continue to do so a reduced frequency over the winter. And in what has become a series of open-ended discussions with potential partners, Orkila Director, David Affolte came over for a closer look at the garage and a planning update.

**Turtleback Mountain:** Peter requested a visit by Dave Klingbiel, DNR's Road Maintenance and Abandonment Planning Coordinator, to review plans for culvert replacements and other drainage improvements. Based on the strong support expressed during the meeting, Peter intends to proceed with replacement of up to 27 culverts. The project will be phased over several years; bring the property into compliance with state forest road rules; and, perhaps more importantly, increase the resiliency of the mountain's roads and streams during the severe runoff events that have been experienced over the last several years, and predicted to continue with climate change. Implementation will rely on funds from both the SJPT's Turtleback Endowment and the Land Bank's stewardship budget. Maintaining a functional road network is also crucial to the forest management efforts on the mountain, which will rely at least in part on DNR forest resiliency funding. The ICC began their work on the Orcas portion of the Landscape Scale Restoration (LSR) grant-funded project. This project area expands oak connectivity on the southern slope. Andrew counted 199 small burn piles created by the ICC, last year. The piles are 'papered' to maintain dry interior conditions after the rains begin and will be carefully burned between late fall and early spring. Some may be left for the wrens. Areas opened by pile burning will be seeded with over 10 pounds of nursery grown native forbs seed as well as additional seed purchased from private sources. Andrew also joined Troy with SJPT for another day of releasing oaks.

### **DISTRICT 3**

Staff: Amanda Wedow

**Channel:** With Sara's position ending, Amanda has resumed field work and maintenance, and has begun to perform annual monitoring at this Preserve and others.

**FB Spit:** With volunteer help, half of the island marble butterfly habitat plots were seeded with field mustard. The remainder of plots will be sown in the spring.

**Lopez Hill:** Amanda has initiated a trail layout for the addition area. SJPT has been fundraising to support their purchase of the conservation easement. And hunting season has begun.

**Richardson Marsh:** Amanda performed annual monitoring and is in the early stages of identifying what needs to happen to establish a long-term SMP for this property. A wetland assessment seems to be a clear first step.

**Spencer Spit:** State Parks staff joined to review the proposed trail layout and to discuss the future management agreement (Photo). The proposed trail connects to the State Parks trail system, including the parking lot, and loops through the forested preserve. A draft MOU has been shared with Parks staff and is under review. A draft long-term SMP is well underway and expected to go out next month for LBC review.

**Weeks Wetland:** Amanda performed annual monitoring here as well as harvested *Sidalcea* seed, which is commonly known as Henderson's Checkermallow.

**Watmough:** Amanda is working to winterize the pumphouse and clean-up the shed. She will host a bird walk, and over the course of the summer, tallied seven different guided tours for visitors. The draft interim plan was opened for public comment for two weeks. We received 13 responses. Eleven were from individuals and two were from organizations, the Madrona Institute and the Friends of the San Juans. Several letters shared personal anecdotes and included memories of what once happened or once stood on the property. (There was "a small dynamite shed that I was instructed to stay clear of.") Some commenters provided specific line edits to elevate inclusiveness such mentioning Adelia Chadwick, "the wife who raised six children in the house with Sampson," and was from the S'Klallam Tribe. Staff has prepared an overview of the comments that focuses on future activities and interests. In sum, following the public comment period, there weren't any significant issues with our proposed strategy and there were some great suggestions to both help improve our understanding of the area's ecology and our engagement with community.



Photo. Couple who honeymooned at Glenwood Inn over 50 years ago.



Photo. Attendees on the September 30th LSR tour of Mount Grant Preserve attempt to age trees.

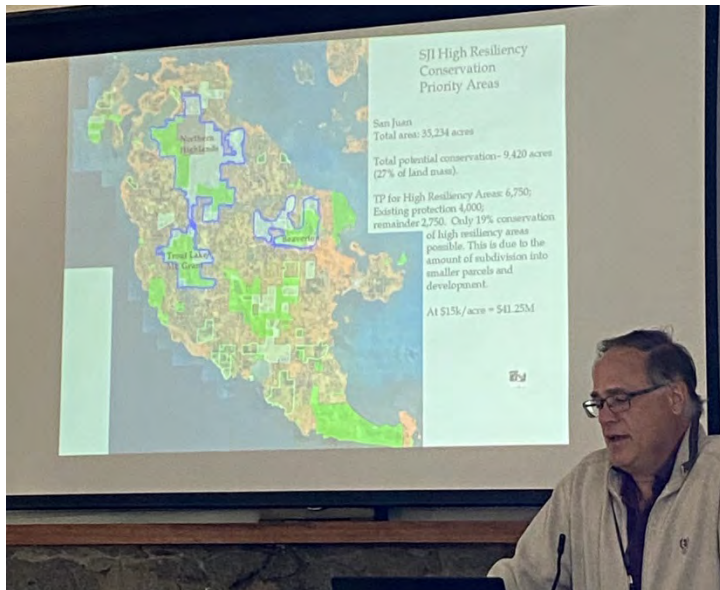


Photo. Lincoln presents on the conservation priorities at the WNPS Garry Oak Symposium



Photo. Margo seeds the area by the office that will be converted to native meadow.





Photo. The ICC crew prepares for a big day of releasing Garry oaks on Cady Mountain



Photo. Land Bank staff head off for a big workday at releasing Garry oaks on Cady Mountain.



Photo. Westside prairie mowing: Before.....



Photo. Westside prairie mowing: After.....



Photo. The hazardous alders at Deer Harbor Preserve, prior to their removal and pruning



Photo. Andrew testing out the electric Kombitool on a hazard tree at Coho Preserve.



Photo. Maggie with the ICC on Turtleback Mountain.



Photo. It's not all cutting trees down! Peter (for scale) next to an alder sapling that was planted at Coho Preserve in 2020.



Photo. Coho salmon schooling in lower Cascade Creek



Photo. Peter leads a North Shore tour on a beautiful evening.



Photo. Amanda leads State Parks staff on a tour Spencer Spit Preserve to scout that trail alignment and visit a glacial erratic.