
STEWARDSHIP & OUTREACH REPORT

AUGUST 2023

OVERVIEW

In the spirit of service-learning, participants in the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) labored along shorelines and within forests this past month. The Conservation Land Bank (CLB) is proud to be one of the supporters of this summer youth program and staff devised a diverse array of projects. On San Juan, the crew surveyed approximately 65 acres on Cady Mountain and recorded characteristics of big and old trees. Lincoln and Tanja joined for a fun field day, and as it turns out, Tanja's got a knack for guessing circumference. Lopez field work consisted of preparing habitat at Fisherman Bay Spit for the island marble butterfly and removing weeds from Watmough. And, along the North Shore of Orcas the youthful laborers assisted staff in removing a slew of old fencing, which subsequently filled several trailers and made Andrew a frequent visitor to the dump (Photos 1 and 2).

Andrew is moving on to a position with the SJI Conservation District at the end of the month. In his new role, he will lead the Conservation District's other conservation-focused work crew, the Island Conservation Corps (ICC). We've all enjoyed having him as a colleague and are grateful to continue to work closely with him and his new role with ICC.

OUTREACH

Staff: Tanja Williamson

The 2022 Annual Report is out! Print copies are circulating in the mail and a [digital version](#) is available on the website. Tanja has now shifted her full focus to prepping for the [County Fair](#) (8/16-8/19). The CLB booth will once again be located in the [Green Village](#) alongside many of our partners-in-conservation. Be sure to preview the robust [Schedule of Events](#) before you attend as there's a wide array of presenters over the four-day spread. Our own Eliza Habegger will co-lead a talk, "Qwlho7el, Camas," with Sam Barr, Program Director of the Coast Salish YCC on Saturday, August 19th.

SALISH SEEDS NURSERY

Staff: Eliza Habegger, Margo Thorp

Everything is potted up for the fall plant sale. Summer drought leads to thirsty plants which leads to lots of watering. Seed harvest is starting to wind down, and now seed cleaning and processing is ascendant. Ferry Boat Seeds, a local seed company on San Juan Island, just delivered 3.5 pounds of seed, all sea blush (*Plectritis congesta*), that they grew for the CLB this year. Their cost of production was considerably lower than ours, and the seed looks to be very high quality. In addition, it's certified organic. We're excited to explore future seed production contracts with this company and/or other experienced local growers.

DISTRICT 1

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

Beaverton Marsh: A single bid was received for trail construction on the portion within Linde Park, and it was more than anticipated. However, subsequent negotiations with the contractor have staff hopeful that it might be adjusted. Permitting is still underway with the Town, and we hope to complete construction this fall. Charlie completed the base construction for the last segment of the trail and volunteer work will continue over the next couple of months. Doug led tours of the Nuthatch trail for SJPT's summer social event, and a turtle was temporarily admired (Photo 3).

Cady Mountain: The YCC trekked with staff across remote sections of the Preserve, measured old gnarly trees, studied the flakey plates of bark, and developed a deeper sense of place.

False Bay Creek: Repairs were made to the solar water system, and cattle are currently grazing the western pasture, which is dominated by reed canary grass.

Frazer Homestead: A portion of the northern preserve was hayed in exchange for weed control and mowing. Heaps of tansy has been removed. CLB staff and SJICD staff prepped a new area for the island marble butterfly. Black plastic tarps were spread to suppress grass within the plot. This fall, the plan is to plant.

Kellett Bluff: [Whiteswan Environmental](#), a Lummi-based tribal nonprofit, will travel to San Juan Island as part of their digital Ecocultural Mapping project. During their week-long stay they

are scheduled to visit Kellett Bluff on Saturday, August 26th and to be welcomed to the site by staff from the CLB and SJPT, Councilmember Christine Minney, and Environmental Stewardship's Frances Robertson.

King Sisters: Cattle are grazing in the pastures, and weed control efforts continue.

Limekiln: A large boulder, located near old structures from the mining era, was covered with graffiti. Staff expended considerable effort to remove markings from the stone's many irregular surfaces and were successful after using two angle grinders, paint stripper, and a lot of time. The vandalism was documented by Sheriff deputies and is likely related to a spate of other graffiti that has appeared around the island.

Mount Grant: A sizeable old-growth Douglas fir collapsed across one of the trails. It likely succumbed to a fungus commonly called 'heart rot' that is often evidenced by the presence of conks. Volunteers Peggy Riley and Barrett Kennedy assisted with untangling the plethora of branches (Photo 4). Now considered 'coarse woody debris,' the mass of fiber will continue to provide food and habitat for a wide range of critters. Construction of a new parking area is scheduled to start on Monday, August 14. Staff will strive to keep the preserve open to the extent possible, but the priority will be public safety.

Zylstra Lake: Staff tended the overgrown rose hedges along the trail and weeded the native plantings within the parking area. The Noxious Weed Board manually removed sulphur cinquefoil from the trail. Hay bales are awaiting transport to their winter home, and water from the lake continues to be conveyed downstream for irrigation, stock water, and restoration plantings.

DISTRICT 2

Staff: Peter Guillozet, Andrew Jansen, Mary Gropp

Coho: The summer fish survey was completed in lower Cascade Creek. Many hands helped to catch and count a total of 298 beasties, including volunteers Jerry Weatherman and Roan Ontjes-DeGroot, WDFW biologist Steve Boessow, consultant Jenny DeGroot and Peter (Photos 5 and 6). Among the total sample were Coastal Cutthroat Trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkii clarkii*), 7 Chinook Salmon (*O. tshawytscha*) fry, 116 Coho Salmon (*O. kisutch*) fry, 154 "unknown" sculpins (*Cottus sp.*) and one non-native Brook Trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*).

Coffelt Farm: Lum Farm has been bustling with day-to-day farmwork as well as with hosting local youth programs and farm visitors. Recent maintenance of the water system revealed the need for minor system upgrades, and Peter is working on a plan.

Judd Cove: Peter met again with the new neighbors. He connected them to the consultants that are supporting the CLB's stream and wetland restoration project to help advance their own, self-funded initiatives to protect freshwater resources on their side of the property line.

North Shore: The heavy lifting continues! Five contractors attended a pre-bid meeting and reviewed plans for removing the buildings and converting the shoreline road into a trail. In anticipation of removing the shoreline cabins and decommissioning their septic tanks, A1 Septic completed necessary maintenance. To help facilitate access down to the beachfront cabins, Peter rented an excavator and prepped the road for the septic truck. Following that endeavor, he used the rental to remove tree-sized invasives such as English hawthorn and holly and, in collaboration with a geotechnical consultant, to evaluate the soils in the berm of the pond. Material from the berm will be used in planned wetland restoration.

Orcas Electric, and subcontractor Charlie Nigretto Enterprises, installed a new electrical service panel for the property; new water and electrical lines to the well and garage; and both power and fiber optic conduit to the location of the future entry gate location (Photos 7 and 8).

Turtleback Mountain: Staff issued a Request for Bids for decommissioning a segment of the south slope trail. A pre-bid tour will be held this week. As described in the Stewardship Management Plan, this project will eliminate a steep segment of road that serves as a portion of trail because it is subject to regular erosion, and it fragments habitat within the oak savanna. If all goes as planned, the work will occur in late September at the same time the Washington Trails Association will be making improvements to the Morning Ridge trail. A special thank-you goes to preserve neighbors Thomas Baldwin and Miriam Ziegler; they provided easy access to the Preserve's southeast corner and enabled Rainshadow Consulting to complete long-planned forest thinning work in the Landscape-Scale Restoration grant area.

DISTRICT 3

Staff: Amanda Wedow, Sara DeRoy

FB Spit: Lopez Island's YCC, also called LICC, helped to install new tarps for the island marble butterfly's "Movable Feast" project. Staff removed seed heads from Italian arum plants and non-native thistles.

Hummel Lake: The LICC performed trail maintenance activities such as trimming vegetation back from along the pathway, and Sara performed maintenance of the new(ish) plantings.

Lopez Hill: Staff continued to work on building a new trail (Photo 9). This next segment will traverse private property via a 20-foot-wide trail easement. The easement area was surveyed, and Amanda and Sara are carefully laying it out through some very brushy areas. Inquiries about hunting have begun.

Spencer Spit: Staff completed the finishing touches on the North Forest Loop trails, and it is now open to the public (Photo 10)! An opening celebration will be held on Saturday, September 23rd for National Public Lands Day.

Upright Head: Staff removed bull thistles and tansy.

Watmough: The LICC helped to remove noxious weeds such as thistles and poison hemlock. Sara led a volunteer work party that tackled the remaining thistles. The effort resulted in numerous trash bags full of weedy flower heads being hauled off to the dump.

Weeks Wetland: Staff replaced a broken board on the small footbridge and are preparing to replace the wooden decking on the boardwalk. The trail was mowed and brushed, and an old signpost as well as many thistles were removed from the locale.

Photos



Photo 1. The YCC on SJI helped to measure trees, Cady Mountain Preserve.



Photo 2. YCC crewmembers on Orcas removed old fencing, North Shore Preserve.



Photo 3. Painted turtles are considered native to the Gulf Islands in British Columbia, , but Washington State regards them as being “introduced” in the San Juans, Beaverton Marsh Preserve.



Photo 4. Can you find the trail? Jacob and volunteers clear a fallen Douglas fir, Mount Grant Preserve.



Photo 5. Jenny and Rowan DeGroot, Steve Boessow (WDFW) and volunteer Jerry Weatherman perform the summer fish survey in lower Cascade Creek.



Photo 6. Juvenile Chinook salmon caught on July 23, 2023, Coho Preserve.



Photo 7. New electrical and water lines were installed to the North Shore garage.



Photo 8. North Shore septic tank pumping, prior to decommissioning.



Photo 9. American Hiking Society and Washington Conservation Corps, Lopez Hill Preserve.

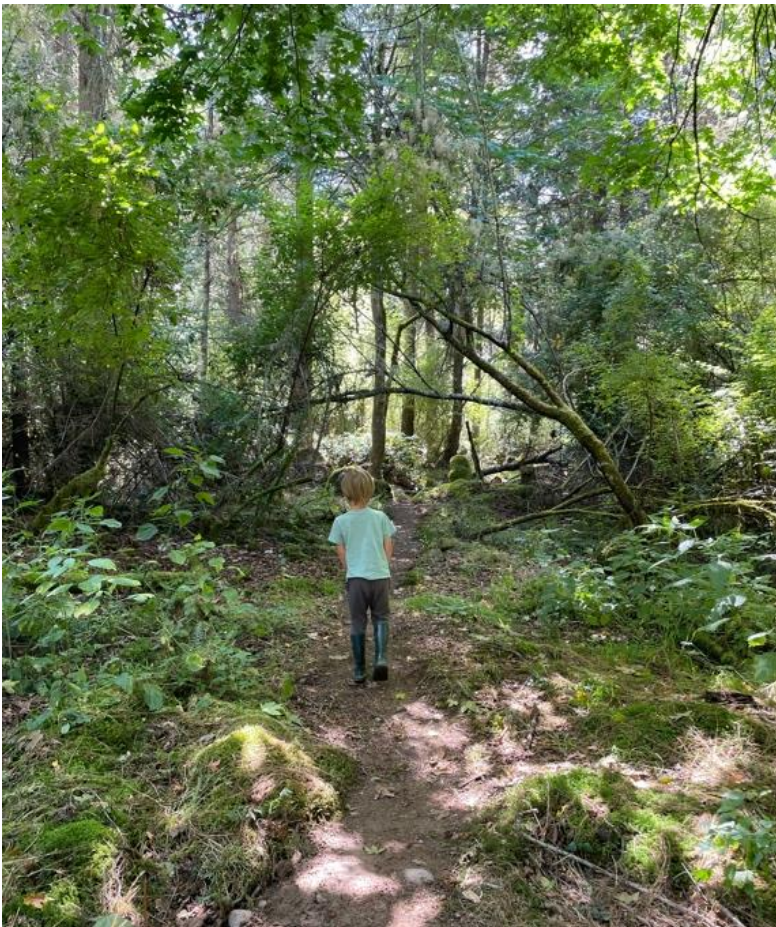


Photo 10. North Forest Trail is now open, Spencer Spit Preserve.