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## STEWARDSHIP & OUTREACH REPORT

MARCH 2025

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### **Overview**

Bumblebee queens are surfacing! One was spotted flying fast on March 12th - they can exceed 10 mph. Satinflower, *Olsynium douglasii*, is currently in bloom on the Westside Preserve and the Salish Seeds Nursery. This delicate, early bloomer attracts bumblebees and offers early season nectar (Photo 1).

Several organizational meetings occurred this past month including one with NRCS to better understand their cost-share program for agricultural conservation easements as well as among members of the Terrestrial Managers Group to revisit their purpose and discuss long-term goals. Erin prepared materials for both of these and also had the opportunity to attend a government-to-government training offered by the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs (GOIA). She is also drafting a summary report of recent tribal engagement and consultation for the County's Cultural Coordinator.

The Co-Stewardship subgroup of the Stewardship Network is planning for additional outreach events. This includes working with the Land Bank to host lectures by archaeologists/ethnoecologists from the University of Victoria. These are to be held this summer and will cover the archaeology of camas gardens and estuarine root gardens.

### **Outreach**

Staff: Tanja Williamson, Margo Thorp

Planting and painting have been prevalent on the Preserves! Alchemy Art Center continued their Free Friday Painting Sessions with some nature inspired poetry prompts from Island Verse Literary Collective. Three preserves have benefitted from five different planting parties since the last LBC meeting: Beaverton Marsh, Cady Mountain, and North Shore Preserves. Collaborations are in the works with Joyce L. Sobel Family Resource Center, County Noxious Weed Board, Camp Eagle Rock, the San Juan Makers Guild, and our three library districts, to name a few. The Town of Friday Harbor is planning Arbor Day Events on April 25<sup>th</sup> at Brickworks. Eliza and Margo will host a Salish Seeds Nursery table and Margo will offer a tree identification walk on the Redtail Trail. Work continues in formatting the 2024 Annual Report and website updates.

### **Salish Seeds Nursery**

Staff: Eliza Habegger, Margo Thorp

Margo attended the National Native Seed Conference in Tucson, Arizona (Photo 2). Plants are waking up with the onset of spring. Seeds that were sowed in the fall are germinating (Photo 3) and everyone's favorite satinflower started blooming at the end of February (Photo 4). Because weeds are growing quickly, too, we held our first volunteer workday of the year to help get them under control. Eliza co-presented at a San Juan Islands Agricultural Summit workshop with the theme "Nursery Production for Landscape Resiliency". We were happy and grateful to receive a \$1,700 award from the Master Gardener Foundation of San Juan County to reprint another 500 copies of the popular "Growing Native Wildflowers in the San Juan Islands" guide.

### **District 1**

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

**Beaverton Marsh:** Shauna's Shrub planting-palooza got off to a great start on the Redtail trail where volunteers planted hundreds of native shrubs (Photo 5). Doug has begun revising the draft management plan, initiated in Fall 2023, to reflect changes in agricultural use and potential for expanded public access funding. He has been meeting with consultants and partners for preliminary large-scale planning (Lincoln will have more on this for the Director's Report during the meeting).

**Cady Mountain:** Staff worked on content for a future Cady Mountain Management Plan. Eliza and Doug initiated work on updating the Garry oak restoration plan as well as planning for activities in 2025-26. Shauna led several successful planting events at the trailhead where thousands of bare root shrubs were put in the ground (Photos 6-9). Thank you volunteers and Spring Street students!

**Deadman Bay:** Potholes were recently filled in and trash was cleaned up from the beach.

**Driggs Park:** New native plantings in the front yard of Driggs Park (the yard of our Friday Harbor office) are beginning to leaf out, and an interpretive sign is ready for installation. Doug & Charlie have developed a maintenance plan for resurfacing and formalizing the parking lot at the office, with work tentatively scheduled for April.

**Frazer Homestead:** Doug and Emilio located survey markers in the field to assist with potential property transfer due to National Park surveyors being currently restricted from travel.

**King Sisters:** After receiving negative feedback from neighbors and trail users about Public Works road easement mowing, conversations were initiated with Public Works. Attempts will be made to shift the mowing approach on this site with the Land Bank taking on responsibility for pruning and trimming of trees. Jacob walked the trail with volunteer mower Laura to chat about roadside mowing impacts. Thanks for your help Laura!

**Limekiln:** WDFW has resumed gillnetting control of northern pike. The first outing netted just one juvenile fish. Meanwhile, conversations continue between Land Bank and WDFW regarding the long-term management options.

**Mount Ben:** Doug has been working with neighbors on view easement related issues.

**Mount Grant:** Several trees fell during a recent windstorm including a legacy fir on the summit. The large fir snapped 40 feet up and fell into the trail. This month, community members were chosen in a lottery for free firewood from the Mount Grant preserve. Ten truckloads of wood were hauled away to help islanders heat their homes next winter (Photo 10). Public outreach, in collaboration with the SJI Conservation District, regarding the micro-burns planned for the western meadow at Mt Grant are underway, including letters sent to neighbors, a site walkthrough with neighbors, and a community meeting. We are entering the last year of work funded through the US Forest Service's Landscape Scale Restoration grant, with approximately 25% of the Land Bank match requirement remaining. Jacob and Doug are finalizing a workplan for the year which will include additional thinning, processing burn piles, noxious weed control, and out-planting. ICC member, Nick Walsh, has been using the site for his graduate thesis involving burn techniques which effect temperature and efficiency/efficacy of charcoal production.

**Third Lagoon:** Doug and Jacob have been interfacing with DNR and the community water system (located inside the preserve) to discuss Firewise management along easements and near infrastructure with a goal of minimizing ecological impacts. Conversations have also been initiated regarding cultural resource inventory that might inform shoreline trail realignment in an area subject to upland and aquatic shore erosion.

**Zylstra Lake:** Staff recently filled in potholes at the parking area. Several of the neighbor's cattle found a way onto the preserve but were returned quickly by the owners. Staff have been working with Environmental Stewardship, Island Conservation Corps, and the Preservation Trust for planning the next phase of plantings and ongoing maintenance of the restoration site. Gratitude for Peter sharing his expertise with the group.

## **District 2**

Staff: Peter Guillozet, Tyler Goodman

**General:** Peter attended the Saturday sessions at the Agricultural Summit on Lopez.

**Coffelt Farm:** Preparations continue to replace the failing septic drain field. Following further review and design development it has become clear that some of the associated infrastructure (e.g., septic tanks) also requires replacement. Peter met with the design consultant last week to seek cost reducing modifications to the final plans, which will inform a planned request for bids later this month.

**Coho:** Tyler is preparing to provide a presentation for the Whale Museum's annual naturalist training program for the second time. He also removed downed trees on two occasions to keep the trail open.

**Crescent Beach:** We've prepared temporary signage for the planned forest thinning project, which is scheduled to begin in July. QR codes on the signs are linked to a new page on the Land Bank's website that will be updated with additional details as needed throughout the project.

**North Shore:** Tanja and Erin joined a planting party last Saturday during which volunteers planted at least 300 shrubs (Photo 11). Part of an order of 4,800 trees and shrubs were planted in recent weeks by the Chihuahua Team, Blackcap Restoration and the ICC. This marked the completion of major tree and shrub planting at the Preserve (Photos 12-13). In time, the roughly 17,000 trees and shrubs planted since 2024 will close large gaps in native plant cover and reduce the long-term maintenance mowing area from over five acres to less than one acre. It will also please the birds and the bees. We also continued forest health work by thinning out unhealthy, small diameter firs and creating burn piles. Christian Oldham from Kwiaht is preparing to reinstall amphibian monitoring equipment for the season.

**Turtleback Mountain:** We spent 2 weeks of continuing forest health work within the mapped Garry Oak woodland/savannah complex with ICC and were joined for one week by Samish DNR. This included concluding burning from last fall's thinning efforts, continued thinning of Douglas firs in close proximity to oaks and junipers, as well as construction of burn piles for next fall. Erin paired a conservation easement visit to assist with thinning. With the primary nesting season upon us, we've wrapped up forest thinning efforts (Photos 14-16). Tyler and Jacob also worked with the ICC crew on a day of trail building to establish the first segment of the future trail in the portion of the Preserve added by land donation in 2020 (Photos 18-19). This trail is described in the 2022 SMP. We've retained consultant J. A. Brennan Associates to re-design the South Entrance parking and overflow parking areas with the goal of implementing that project this fall following the peak use season. Staff met with Sam Martin and Adam

Martin to plan next steps in a small grant-funded prairie restoration project in the southeast corner of the Preserve. Amphibians are out and about with several tree frogs spotted as well as a northern red-legged frog (Photo 17).

**Fowler's Pond:** Bob Friel and Joe Gaydos from Seadoc Society recently filmed portions of a new episode of Salish Sea Wild at the Preserve. The episode is entitled Secrets of the Saltwater Beaver and is available here: [www.seadocsociety.org/salish-sea-wild](http://www.seadocsociety.org/salish-sea-wild)

### **District 3**

Staff: Amanda Wedow

**General:** The Lopez Preserves got routine visits and maintenance, but Amanda spent a fair amount of time on other activities this month. She attended the Agricultural Summit, which was held on Lopez. She also took a training course at Padilla Bay on Wetland Grass, Sedge and Rush Identification. This class was offered by the Coastal Training Program and was highly technical, but a good step towards improving her plant identification skills. She also attended a wildflower meadow makers tour and discussion on Lopez. And she traveled to Friday Harbor to help plant at Beaverton. She organized the Lopez storage unit and got the mower tuned up.

**Watmough:** Various tasks to get ready for the trail opening on May 3rd. General site work includes mowing, trail work and pruning in the orchard. A sign order has been drafted. HistoriCorps is scheduled to visit at the end of March to complete a Condition Assessment on the four structures and will prepare a project proposal for stabilization.

## PHOTOS



Photo 1. Staff member, Shauna, found the first satinfLOWER of the season at the Westside Preserve.  
Photo 2. Margo attended the National Native Seed Conference in Tucson.



Photo 3. Indian celery (*Lomatium nudicaule*) seeds germinating at the Salish Seeds Nursery.  
Photo 4. SatinfLOWER (*Olsynium douglasii*) in bloom at the Salish Seeds Nursery.



Photo 5. Planting at the Redtail Trail on the Beaverton Marsh Preserve.



Photo 6. Planting at the Cady Mountain Preserve with Spring Street International School students.



Photo 7. Volunteers planting at the Cady Mountain Preserve.



Photos 8 and 9. Volunteers planting at the Cady Mountain Preserve with Shauna's guidance.



Photo 10. Community members pick-up free firewood from the Mount Grant lottery.



Photo 11. Tanja and Erin have too much fun at the North Shore planting party.  
Photo 12. Chihuahua Team planting shrubs at the North Shore Preserve.



Photo 13. ICC planting shrubs along the perimeter of the parking lot at the North Shore Preserve.



Photo 14. Erin on Turtleback with Samish DNR crew members sharing her advanced forestry skills.  
Photo 15. ICC and Peter soak in the views during lunch on a forest thinning day.



Photo 16. Tyler leads ICC crew members in oak-release efforts on Turtleback.  
Photo 17. Northern red-legged frog on a rainy Turtleback day.



Photos 18-19. Trail building at Turtleback