
STEWARDSHIP & OUTREACH REPORT

JULY 2026

Overview

Erin and Tanja attended their first Northwest Land Camp, a conference for Oregon and Washington land trusts that featured oodles of great [workshops](#). They attended sessions on communication strategies, search engine optimization, and conservation planning strategies to help balance public access for recreation and habitat conservation for wildlife (Photo 1). -- And speaking of sensitive wildlife: the golden eagles featured on the 2025 annual report are busy rearing another young one. While this is something that staff would love to share more broadly, human disturbance in their vicinity could lead to abandonment of the nest, and this year's eaglet needs roughly another month before it's ready to fledge its quiet corner on Orcas.

Outreach

Staff: Tanja Williamson, Margo Thorp

The Summer Series of monthly guided walks at the Dolphin Bay Road property kicked off with a full tour in June and now a waitlist for the July 16 outing. Free Art in Nature events continue with partner organizations [Alchemy Art Center](#) (plein air painting) and [Island Verse Literary Collective](#) (poetry in place writing), as does the Senior walks with Mullis Community Senior Center (SJI) and Orcas Senior Center (Orcas). Lastly, Tanja will host a booth at the [SJI Lavender Festival](#) July 18 and 19. Be sure to stop by. On July 27, Margo will host Salish Sea Sciences program students for a nursery tour and work party. She will also visit several summer camps to lead native plant activities on July 29 (San Juan), July 31 (Lopez), and August 5th (San Juan).

Salish Seeds Nursery

Staff: Eliza Habegger, Margo Thorp

Volunteers have been making a big impact with extra workdays for greenhouse construction as well as the usual weeding, seeding, and transplanting. Plug seeding is complete. Seed harvest is in full swing. Margo and Eliza attended a tour of the Skagit River System Cooperative's native plant nursery in Burlington. They met other regional native plant and restoration professionals and learned protocols for preventing and managing plant diseases in a nursery setting.

District 1

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

General: Rain Shadow Consulting has initiated field work for the District 1 Forest Health Assessment. The assessment will mirror efforts initiated by Peter in District 2 and completed by Amanda for District 3. The assessment will help identify forest health issues and prioritize work within and across districts.

Equipment breakdowns have plagued District 1 this spring, resulting in deferred maintenance. Some portion of these breakdowns may be due to need for replacement of aging equipment which has been deferred for a couple of years for budgetary reasons. Staff will be reviewing status of major tools and equipment and refining a depreciation and replacement schedule.

Beaverton Marsh Trail: Work over the last month has focused on refining design and plan sets. The 90% plan was received and shared with a subset of the Land Bank Commission. The focus of that discussion was on budget which has presented us with some challenges and will be discussed in greater detail at the LBC meeting on July 17th. Reviews and edits of the 90% plan set were returned to our consultant, with updates and edits anticipated by end of week (July 12). Permitting for the project continues with some hiccups at the local level.

Beaverton Marsh: Monitoring well installation was finally completed in the bogs on the north and south sides of the Preserve. Initial installation attempts last fall were thwarted by weather and delays with equipment. The wells will be used to help understand hydrology and water quality parameters which might be influencing the health and function of these rare habitats (Photo 2).

Overmarsh Farm Commons is bustling with gardeners and pumping out fresh produce! A flock of sheep are rotationally grazing the pastures. Noxious weed control is underway.

Cady Mountain: Staff worked with SJC Noxious Weed Board employees on control and removal of a Scotch broom patch that had gone undetected along a property line. Additional work with thistle, broom, foxglove, and tansy has been undertaken across restoration areas.

Deadman Bay: Recent work to pull Teasel, tansy, and Italian Arum have taken place.

False Bay Creek: Staff has been pulling tansy ragwort and keeping an eye out for slender flower thistle that may have come in with the recent county road construction.

Frazer Homestead: Cows have been rotated off the Preserve but will likely return soon. Cost share projects continue, next step is interior fencing. The new solar water system is working swimmingly.

Kellett Bluff: Our amazing group of volunteers from KEEN boated over to Henry with LB staff. They helped with some much-needed weeding, monitoring, and trail maintenance.

King Sisters: Staff met with the farm team to discuss maintenance and repair needs. Plans are developing to repair and improve the loafing shed, corral, and hay storage shed.

Limekiln: The restroom was pumped out in early July. With the decline in commercial kayak tours, use levels of the restroom have declined significantly, reducing the need for pump-out to once every 1.5-2 years rather than annually.

Mount Grant: Our KEEN volunteers helped with a multitude of tasks at the Preserve including trail brushing, invasive weed removal, trail maintenance, split rail fence demo and rebuilding. We are very grateful to have this group return each year (Photos 4 and 5)!

Westside: The draft cultural resource assessment for Limekiln/Deadman/Westside/Mount Ben has been received and is under review by Land Bank and Preservation Trust (includes Mount Ben West) staff.

Zylstra Lake: Doug and volunteer Pete Kilpatrick met with Community Development to review restroom plans as CD review and requirements had been inconsistent between restroom projects. The meeting was very helpful for all parties and permitting is back on track. Dam mowing was just completed by staff and Blackcap Restoration.

District 2

Staff: Peter Guillozet, Tyler Goodman, Scot Devereaux

Thanks to Scot, we now have a full year of trail data for Turtleback (north and south), North Shore, and Coho (Photo 6). From July 2025–June 2026, these preserves saw just over 93,000 visitors (70% at Turtleback), with nearly 50,000 cars pulling into just the Turtleback and North Shore parking lots. Year-over-year data from three weeks in June of 2025 and 2026 shows roughly 5% growth overall, while visits to North Shore increased by 28% over last year.

Blakely: Lincoln, Erin, Tyler, Scot and Peter got a lift from to the island from Blakely resident Lance Douglas. With the loan of his vehicle, we were able to spend several hours exploring the new preserve. Scot took advantage of fair conditions to collect extensive drone imagery (Photos 7 and 8). While we saw some older trees, we didn't find the fabled old growth. Thanks to Lance, we also boated the eastern shore and located the boundaries from the water.

Coffelt Farm: Lum's are busy as always, deep in hay and milk! Minor plumbing repairs were made on the farmer house. Annual well water testing has been completed and passed for the dairy operation.

Coho: Tyler and Scot did trail maintenance. To satisfy a requirement of the RCO acquisition grant, Peter initiated a contract for a Phase I Environmental Assessment by Stratum Group.

Crescent Beach: Staff put in a day of weed management and trail maintenance. Peter responded to several reports of overnight parkers and off-leash dog walkers.

Dolphin Bay Property: With staff edits incorporated, the draft Stewardship and Management Plan is under review by Commissioners. Peter led a well-attended third Thursday tour of happy community members. The next tour is Thursday, July 16th.

Eastsound Waterfront: Tanja fielded a request from a bicycle tour company to accommodate 150 cyclists at the Preserve. Citing the Land Bank's non-commercial use policy and the fact that an event of this scale would interfere with use by others, she declined the request.

Entrance Mountain: Staff tackled several tansy ragwort patches.

Fowler's Pond: Peter scheduled a site visit with Beth Tate (WDFW) to review permit requirements associated with removing 'fill' placed by beaver to plug the dam valve. This work is necessary to ensure that the valve functions to prevent dam overtopping during high flows.

Judd Cove: With stream restoration permit applications in review, Peter responded to questions from the Army Corps of Engineers.

North Shore: Tyler and Scot performed routine maintenance including weed whacking, mowing and weed management. Many have enjoyed exploring the beach during this summer's very low tides.

Turtleback Mountain: Tyler mowed the north entrance roads as well as the South Entrance field for the first time since we planted oaks. He and Scot then worked with the YCC watering the oaks and brushing a section of the north trail near the parking lot (Photo 9). Scot has been busy finding and pulling hidden patches of tansy, mullein and broom. Peter and Tyler are preparing to close the North Entrance parking lot briefly on Monday July 13th for maintenance. Tasks will include gravel spreading, placement of a new

bicycle rack, re-setting the kiosk on new brackets and moving the porta potty to a more accessible location. As noted above, Scot and Tyler completed a golden eagle monitoring visit and conveyed findings to WDFW staff (Photo 10).

District 3

Staff: Amanda Wedow

The Seasonal Field Assistant position was vacated mid-June, and new applications are under review for filling the position for the rest of the season.

There have been a series of incidents ranging from graffiti, trash and stolen signs to destructive vandalism of the Spit preserve's fence and outhouse (Photo 12).

Hummel Lake: Completed annual field mowing with the County Parks tractor. This may be the last year for use of the mower due to lack of storage space at county parks and infrequent use. Staff noticed that the sign on the dock informing visitors of "Danger, no swimming" was missing and ordered and installed a replacement. Painted over graffiti on the outhouse. Erin Halcomb and Cathi Winnings from the San Juan Conservation District walked the Preserve to review potential forestry projects.

Lopez Hill: Another site visit with Erin and Cathi from SJCD to discuss potential forestry projects. Staff posted a temporary closure sign at the top of the hill to protect a nesting nighthawk whose ground nest is only 3 feet from the trail. More to come on whether the closure and nest are successful.

Spent a day in the field with YCC to remove tansy and thistle from various patches across half the Preserve (Photo 13). The group covered a lot of ground, and the amount of tansy found was significantly less from previous years.

Richardson Marsh: Quiet

The Spit at Fisherman Bay Preserves: As mentioned earlier, the spit has been vandalized repeatedly over the last month. The split rail fence around the parking area was damaged. Staff repaired some sections and another section had to be completely removed. A week later, someone vandalized the outhouse, likely by putting fireworks in the vault toilet. A local contractor, A1 Septic, brought their water tank and cleaned out the building. Staff are planning to have it repainted.

Annual field mowing was completed with the County Parks tractor. YCC removed Italian arum seedheads from several acres of the Preserve, totaling around 20 gallons of seed heads. Killdeer chicks were also observed at the sand spit.

The Tombolo at Fisherman Bay Preserves: The YCC helped with fireworks cleanup on Monday along the Tombolo. The main cleanup is July 5th, and the YCC sweep crew filled up 6 buckets of fireworks debris.

Weeks Wetland at Fisherman Bay Preserves: Killdeer chicks were observed in the marsh.

Watmough: Scheduled routine buoy inspections and noticed that one of the buoys was missing. This is an annual or biennial occurrence that a buoy is damaged or missing. The contractor found the buoy line, but the ball has not been located. The Youth Conservation Corps helped remove bull thistle and Canada thistle from the Preserve. There seems to be a decrease from previous years.

A neighbor reported hearing fireworks from the beach one evening late June, and trash was found at the preserve's gate.

Hikers reported seeing a baby seal on the outer Watmough Head beach. Staff posted a temporary beach closure sign (Photo 14). Two days later the seal was still present and had moved to the other side of the beach, and by the end of week it was gone.

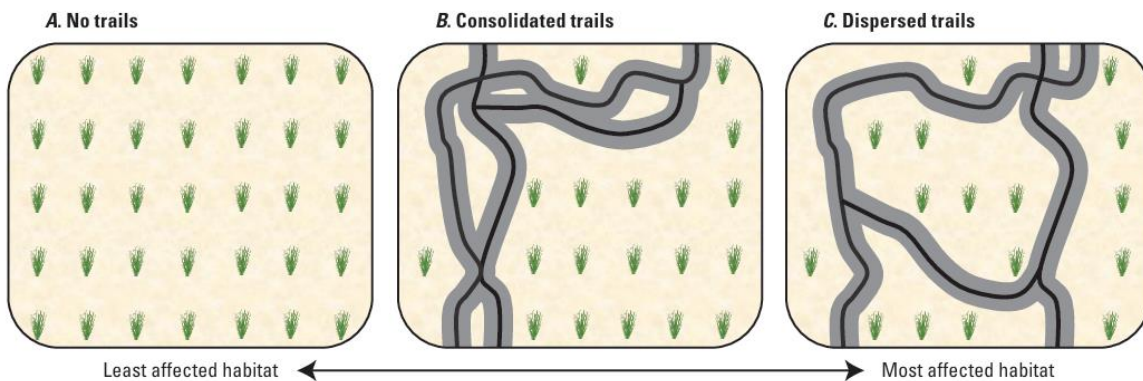


Photo 1. This diagram was shared during a presentation at NW Land Camp. It shows how the configuration of trails can modulate the amount of habitat affected by recreation (assuming all recreation follows trails).

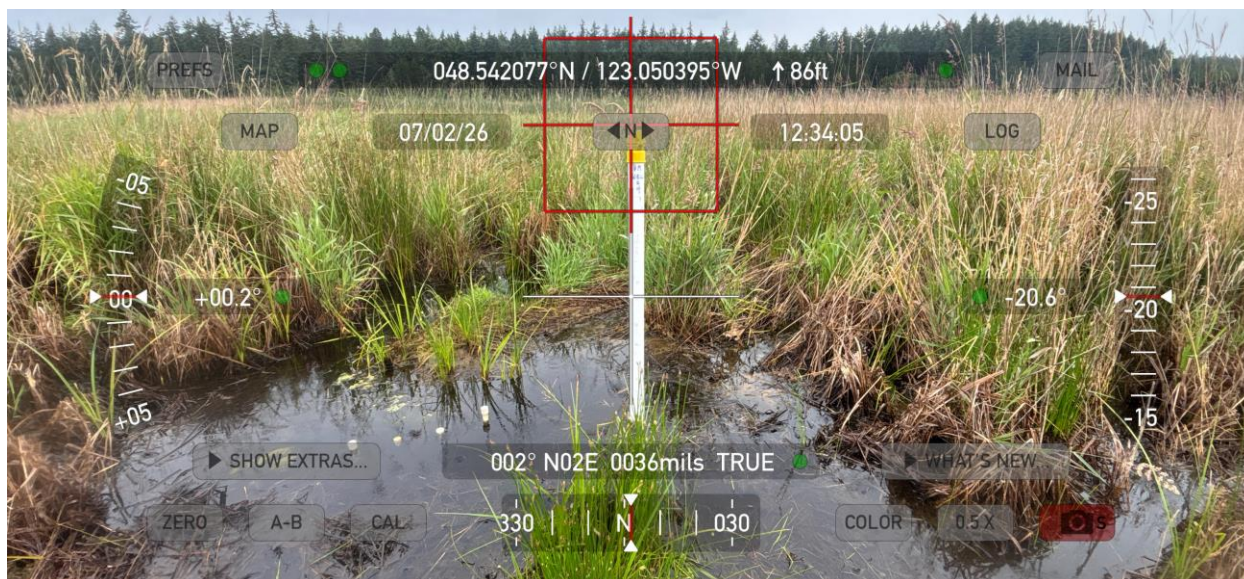


Photo 2. One of six hydrology and water quality monitoring well stations installed in Beaverton Marsh wetland.



Photo 3. Before and after of brushing/mowing the Nuthatch trail at Beaverton Marsh Preserve.



Photos 4 and 5. KEEN group doing various tasks and posing for group pic.

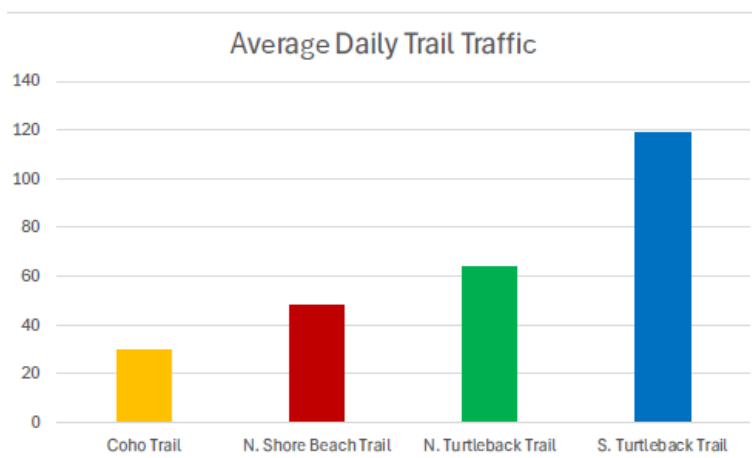
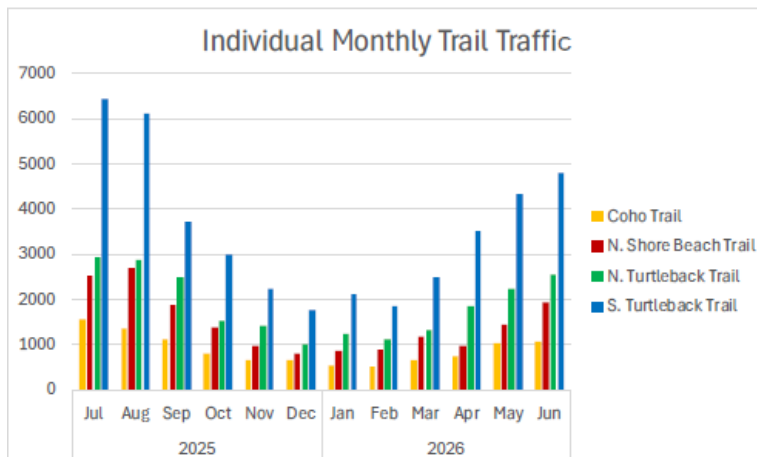


Photo 6. Snapshot of trail use data from Turtleback, North Shore and Coho Preserves.



Photo 7. Scot prepares his drone for an aerial survey of the Blakely Island Preserve.



Photo 8. Drone imagery of Blakely Preserve



Photo 9. Orcas YCC participants remove ocean spray along a shaded fuel break on North Turtleback.



Photo 10. Erin takes a core sample to age a Douglas-fir during a forest health assessment.



Photo 11. Damage to the Fisherman Bay Spit fence around the parking area.



Photo 12. YCC at Lopez Hill to remove noxious weeds.



Photo 13. Temporary sign for temporary beach closure at Watmough Head to prevent disturbance of baby seal (top left near rocks).



Photo 14. Low tide (-4) at Picnic Point revealed approximately nine acres of tidelands and a broad assemblage of intertidal creatures. The final grant application to RCO, seeking funding for a conservation easement, was submitted.



Photos 15. and 16. Some of the intertidal creatures seen around Shaw Island.

