STEWARDSHIP & OUTREACH REPORT

OCTOBER 2026

Outreach
Staff: Tanja Williamson, Margo Thorp

Tanja managed online logistics for the annual Fall Native Wildflower Sale, highlighted stewardship accomplishments and outreach events via social media, and is currently focused on the Fall 2026 Newsletter and 2026 Annual Retreat.

Salish Seeds Nursery
Staff: Eliza Habegger, Margo Thorp

Staff have shifted into high gear for fall. Greenhouse construction is nearing an end, with a big final push planned for late October, weather permitting. Volunteers put in a lot of time over the past month, and Jacob helped out by moving and spreading gravel on the ground surface. The Fall Native Wildflower Sale event was completed with around 1,200 potted plants finding new homes (Photos 1 and 2). Staff have been busy filling numerous bulk seed orders from conservation groups and island residents. Other customers are starting to stop by to pick up their special orders of plugs and bulbs. An unusual request came from a Harvard University graduate student seeking death camas bulbs for her study of the species. The Salish Seeds Project was the only nursery she could find that propagates bulbs of this plant. We were able to help her out thanks to a good bulb harvest this year.

Conservation Easements
Charlie has begun scheduling annual monitoring visits of conservation easements throughout the county, beginning with the outer islands, Waldron, Blakely, Henry, and Crane.

District 1
Staff: Doug McCutchen, Charlie Behnke, Jacob Wagner, Shauna Barrows

Beaverton Marsh: The second round of water quality and hydrologic monitoring of the bogs was completed, including revisions to monitoring wells and testing equipment (Photo 3). A portion of the bog, lagg, and surrounding marsh on the south side was mowed as an ongoing experiment to try to maintain associated herbaceous habitat, as well as support waterfowl.

Overmarsh Farm Commons: Charlie joined the Grange for the annual farm tours. The farm looked fantastic and abundant, there was a great turn out (Photos 4 and 5).

Beaverton Trail Project: We continue to move forward. There are still many steps needing completion. The construction timeline has been fleshed with the caveat that everything is subject to change.

9/16/26	**CN fund obligation**	We owe WSDOT some revisions, then we can advertise
10/30/26	**CN Bid Ad - 1st publication**	2nd advertisement in a week
11/10/26	**Mandatory pre-bid conference**	Site walk of the entire trail
12/1/26	**bid opening**	To be held in Council Meeting Rm
12/14/26	**Bid Award**	Once bid is awarded, CN funds become available
1/12/27	**NTP**	Notice to Proceed - for contractor to order materials with long lead time (crosing structure)
1/19/27	**Suspension of Work**	No construction work until Resume Work Order
5/31/27	**Resume Work Order**	Expected work to begin in earnest

Cady Mountain: Volunteers began preparation for the restroom foundation. This and the Mt Grant project are on a brief pause while volunteers are on vacation. Project will resume in mid-October.

False Bay Creek: Public Works has begun site preparation for plantings along the stream that were part of the mitigation requirement for the Bailor Hill Road project.

Frazer Homestead: Interior fence work is underway by the lessee.

Kellett Bluff: Charlie accompanied Ben Hallowell from the Preservation Trust on their annual monitoring of the conservation easement as well as completing the monitoring of the Land Bank's easement on the Mosquito Pass Preserve.

King Sisters: Charlie crawled under the old granary barn to do some minor repairs and improvements to the supports. Sheep are being more actively rotationally grazed with fall growth, and the assistance of CJ, Rob's new mentee with his sheep flock.

Limekiln: Neighbors have expressed concern over the re-introduction of bass in the lake. Doug is developing a scope of work for an assessment of the earthen dam and associated infrastructure. The dam was installed in the 1970s and there are concerns that water control mechanism and conveyance may be reaching end of serviceable life.

Mount Ben: Staff was accompanied by Blackcap Restoration, ICC, Samish DNR, and Coast Salish Youth Stewardship Coalition to work on thinning projects within the vicinity of the proposed trail corridor between Westide Preserve and Mount Ben (Photo 6). The goal has been to complete forestry work in these sections prior to opening of public access, should this be approved. The trail corridor was also lightly brushed to facilitate access and aid floristic and hydrologic evaluation of the draft alignment through winter/spring. Activities also included invasive plant control, removing small trees from view easement zones, and creation of habitat and burn piles. Rainshadow Consulting is scheduled to provide additional climbing work in the next few weeks.

Mount Grant: Early season archery and muzzleload season wrapped up on October 4th with light usage. "Microchecks," intended to disperse floodwater and encourage slowing, were installed by the ICC as part of their RGP grant project in the West basin as well as completing thinning of hyper-dense stand of Douglas-fir. Work on the restroom has paused while volunteers are on vacation.

Westside: See Mt Ben.

Zylstra Lake: Part of the Emmerling restoration site was mowed in preparation for planting later this winter (Photo 7). Staff are working with ICC on final site plan elements with initial work scheduled for October 13. The trail went through its seasonal signage change and its annual partial closure. Many birds (ducks in particular) are present. Staff plan to deploy a water level and temperature monitoring device

which is anticipated to provide more accurate data than the current visual water staff (Photo 8). The device will record data every four hours whereas the data on the staff was typically captured every few weeks. Doug is developing scope of work with a consultant for assessment of failing culvert at the entrance to the reservoir (Photo 9). The scope of work will provide 3-4 options which will include assessment of environmental impacts (near and long term), regulatory issues, and costs.

District 2

Staff: Peter Guillozet, Tyler Goodman, Scot Devereaux

Coffelt Farm: Jason Ontjes (Noxious Weed Program) joined staff for half a day in an ongoing effort to eliminate English hawthorn from fencelines at the Preserve (Photo 10). Construction has begun on a heavy-use-area improvement cost-share project at the site of the former mobile slaughter facility.

Lum's hosted the annual Farm Tour for three days over a beautiful fall weekend. There was a great turnout and so much to see, from sheep shearing to cheese making.

Coho: The Phase I Environmental Assessment required by the RCO acquisition grant is complete and the acquisition continues to advance towards closing.

Crescent Beach: Tyler and Scot led the ICC in two days of minor thinning in areas adjacent to last year's DNR-funded thinning project. Following the one-year anniversary that project, English hawthorn, blackberry, holly and tansy infestations have been reduced dramatically and planted shrubs and trees are establishing well (Photo 11). Recent feedback from trail users is overwhelmingly positive, and staff think the Preserve looks better than ever.

Deer Harbor Waterfront: Tyler and Scot brushed the Preserve boundaries and trail and flagged a kayak left on the beach. The kayak owner thanked us for the notice and removed it promptly.

Dolphin Bay Property: Peter led a well-attended tour of the future preserve. The last tour of the season is scheduled for Thursday, October 15th. With the Stewardship and Management Plan awaiting approval, clearance on cultural resources, and a long-awaited permit in hand, staff are preparing to remove the deck and bridge from the lower creek area and to begin work on the trail.

Fowler's Pond: Planning continues for a small project to remove beaver-placed muck and debris from around the dam outlet and to install a beaver deceiver. Pending successful permitting, we will complete this work this fall.

Judd Cove: With federal and state permit applications under review, Peter is now working on SJC permit applications to support next summer's planned culvert replacements and stream restoration work.

Turtleback Mountain: Peter joined photographer Erika Schulztz, Dean Dougerty (SJPT) and Orcas resident Anita Orne to capture images for an upcoming magazine article on the 20th anniversary of the Preserve (Photo 12). Staff and the ICC are collaborating on a small project to add downed trees to five headwater streams on Turtleback Mountain Preserve (Photos 13 and 14). Thanks to grant funding secured by the ICC, this effort to slow streamflow during increasingly strong winter downpours may help restore balance to sediment transport processes. By retaining organic debris and associated moisture, these small streams can contribute freshwater inputs to the Salish Sea later into the summer.

District 3
Staff: Amanda Wedow, Katherine McDermott

Hummel Lake: Staff completed various small projects. Amanda and Katherine removed a section of plastic deer fencing from a habitat planting where Nootka rose was growing vigorously through the fence. Katherine weed wacked tall grass around the planted trees and shrubs. The plants are several years old and growing well. Katherine installed a new gate post for the field gate, as the previous one had cracked at the lock attachment. Staff mowed and brushed sections of the trail. Amanda and Katherine completed annual monitoring. Staff completed follow-up holly removal from a tree-sized holly that was cut last spring.

Amanda flagged a proposed shaded fuel break work area along the driveway, and drafted material about the proposed project. Cost share funding from DNR is available for a portion of the cost.

Lopez Hill: Hunting season is underway. One hunter left a voicemail expressing their appreciation for the opportunity. Amanda is working on updating the Stewardship and Management Plan.

The Spit at Fisherman Bay Preserves: Volunteers picked up beach trash for the Great Islands Cleanup.

Amanda and Katherine tackled various small projects (Photos 16 and 17). They prepared the fall sowing of field mustard in the island marble butterfly plots. Amanda and Katherine removed a long section of old field fence and barbed wire fencing from the forest. The old fencing was bundled up and recycled. An old camp in the forest was deconstructed and the material hauled out. They also re-tarped a section of Italian arum near the parking area. Amanda had removed the road fabric last winter to see if the arum was still active and found that the tubers sprouted once uncovered.

Annual monitoring was completed. Staff found that someone had cut a trail and installed beach stairs on a pocket beach. Staff removed the stairs and are working on signage denoting that the area is not open for public access due to shoreline erosion.

The Tombolo at Fisherman Bay Preserves: Staff removed part of an old float - two large styrofoam filled tires attached to two 2x6s. Volunteers pulled it up to the road during the Great Islands cleanup.

Weeks Wetland at Fisherman Bay Preserves: Katherine removed blackberries that are spreading along the edges of the wetland.

Watmough: Amanda and Katherine brushed sweetbrier rose along the road. Around the house, staff cut back vinca and seeded grass to have the area mowable for easier maintenance.




Photos 1 and 2. Plants being distributed for the annual Fall Native Wildflower Sale at the Salish Seeds Project.



Photo 3. Water quality monitoring during a squall at Beaverton Marsh Preserve.




Photos 4 and 5. Overmarsh Commons Farm Tour booth and garden



Photo 6. Super crew including the new ICC pro crew, Samish DNR, and CSYC have a group lunch together in between restoration thinning and trail corridor work on the upper Westside Preserve.





Photo 7. Mowing prep for Zylstra habitat restoration.

Photo 8. Zylstra water level staff to be replaced with data logger.



Photo 9. Failing culvert at Zylstra Lake Preserve.





Photo 10. English hawthorn control at Coffelt Farm Preserve.
Photo 11. Crescent Beach trail one year after thinning.



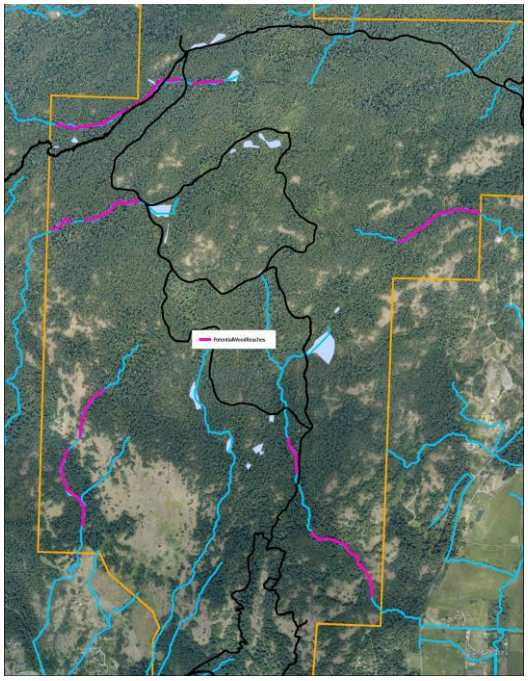

Photo 12. 20th anniversary photography outing on Turtleback.
Photo 13. Map of wood installation reaches on Turtleback.



Photo 14. One of many small 'jams' installed in Turtleback streams.



Photo 15. Seen from the ferry!





Photo 16. Katherine removing old fencing from the forest.

Photo 17. Preparing plots for seeding field mustard for island marble butterfly habitat.