



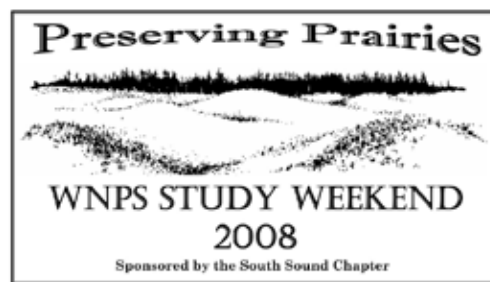
The Acorn

*Serving the South Sound Chapter of the
Washington Native Plant Society*

Summer 2008

South Sound Chapter Hosts Native Plant Study Weekend 2008

By the time you receive this article, the Native Plant Study Weekend for 2008, May 2-4, will be history. The study weekend this year was hosted by the South Sound Chapter of WNPS in Olympia at the Black Lake Bible Camp. The weekend focused on the prairies and their plants of the south Puget Sound. Over 100 people will have attended our evening talks and taken part in the field trips and activities.



Native Plant Study Weekend is not just one thing. It is an opportunity to focus on the flora of one region of our beautiful state. It is a learning opportunity for both the expert botanist and the novice. And, as importantly, it is a time for fellowship and sharing among people of a common passion – our Washington native plants.

Hosting the Native Plant Study Weekend is always an interesting challenge to come up with a variety of field trips and activities to provide enjoyment and learning to members of all levels of expertise. We have Rod Gilbert to thank for his work in arranging speakers and field trip leaders. The next great challenge is handling all the registration information. We thank Dan and Pat Montague for ably taking on that large task. And to make it all come together, it takes a group effort – Anna Thurston, Reba Olsen, Bev and Charles Heebner, Kevin Head, Sue Summers, Bill Brookreson, and all the other members who worked on the study weekend as well as the staff at Black Lake Bible Camp. The most important contribution is from those who come and share their knowledge and expertise as field trip or activity leaders or a participant. We learn best together.

The next issue of *Douglasia* will have more highlights of field trips and programs. Those of you who attended, you will have your own highlights and memories. For those who didn't, we look forward to seeing you there next year.

5th Native Plant Appreciation Week Celebration • April 27-May 3, 2008

Governor Gregoire proclaimed April 27-May 3 as our 5th annual Native Plant Appreciation Week in Washington. NPAW is a celebration of the amazing diversity of Washington's over 3000 native plant species that inhabit deserts, rain forests, high alpine environments, river valleys, and even backyard landscapes. Native plant ecosystems are critical to sustaining our native wildlife and the quality of Washington's environment. The Native Plant Appreciation Week inspires citizens through diverse activities and events to learn more about native plant species and their habitats and how to protect them. The public can participate in everything from talks, walks, hikes, garden tours, and visits to our natural areas to active involvement in habitat restoration projects.

Native Plant Appreciation Week is an opportunity for governmental agencies, non-profit groups and environmental organizations to highlight their

work in protecting native plant species and restoring native plant habitats. The public can learn about the many projects and hard work that enhances their area. It is also an opportunity to convey the tremendous threat posed by invasive exotic pests – insects, plant diseases and invasive plant species. The public can see and learn how invasive species harm native plants and ecosystems. They can learn about work being done in both the public and private sector to combat that threat.

The week was highlighted by Mark Turner's presentation on *Wildflowers of Pacific Northwest National Parks* on May 1 at the Center for Urban Horticulture in Seattle. For the South Sound Chapter, a highlight was that Kevin Head's beautiful photo of monkey-flowers at the base of Curtis Glacier on Mt. Shuksan was selected for the NPAW poster.

Calendar

Because we like to botanize while the days are long, chapter meetings are not scheduled during summer months. WNPS South Sound Chapter gatherings generally occur from October through May: on the **second Monday of the month (in Olympia) and the second Wednesday of the month (in Tacoma)**. Fall meetings will be announced in our next addition of the Acorn newsletter, arriving in September.

Chapter meetings start at 7:00 pm and consist of a quick preview of local activity announcements, and presentations that last 45 minutes to over an hour. Our topics are geared to attract and speak to neophytes and amateurs, as well as “dyed-in-the-wool” and otherwise committed botanists. Members and the public are invited to attend all free presentations. For more information about our programs, contact: John Neorr at 253-631-4727, or by e-mail at neorrj@yahoo.com.

We hope to see you (and your guests) at future gatherings! Have a good summer botanizing.

Botany Washington

Spend the weekend on the shores of Lake Crescent and the Olympic Mountains, July 25-27, as you participate in Botany Washington. Late July is the best time for botanizing the high country. Field trips will be to the most diverse areas of the Olympic Mountains including the location of rare and/or endemic species. Botany Washington will be at the Sol Duc Hot Springs, so if anyone cares for a botany break, they can also go for a soak. Base camp will be at the campus of the Olympic Park Institute with accommodations and meals at the historic Rosemary Inn, site of the 2004 study weekend.

On Friday and Saturday nights, programs will feature the flora of the Olympic Peninsula presented by researchers and botanists of the National Park Service. Space is limited, so register early. Registration forms will be in the Spring/Summer

Field Trips

South Sound

While no South Sound field trips are currently scheduled, we hope you'll check out the WNPS state and chapter websites (www.wnps.org and www.southsoundchapterwnps.org) for summer activities, including these outings:

Columbia Coast Wildflower Hikes

For those that do not hesitate to travel a bit, Kathleen Sayce (Columbia County) has three scheduled Columbia Coast Wildflower Hikes that may be of interest. These are:

- 1) Saturday, May 17, at 9 am - Scarboro Hill and Canyon Creek at Fort Columbia State Park.** This hike is about a 4 mile round trip. Hikers will meet at the upper parking lot near the trailhead, hike over Scarboro Hill and east into old growth forest. This is a good hike to see many flowers of the Coast Range. During peak flowering, it is “staggeringly floriferous.” The hike is moderately strenuous. Wear good boots or hiking shoes.
- 2) Saturday, June 14, at 9 am - Saddle Mountain State Park.** Meet in the parking lot at the trailhead. This is a strenuous hike of six mile round trip, which is best done with stout walking shoes or boots, walking sticks, water, food and appropriate clothing. Saddle Mountain has a long flowering period and more species than any other site in the area.
- 3) Saturday, July 12, 9 am - Bay to ocean at Leadbetter Point, Willapa, NWR.** Meet at the north parking lot. Hiker will go on the bayside beach and north trail to the ocean. About 3 miles round trip, all within 20 feet of sea level. Plant communities to see include: sand beaches, salt marsh, interdunal wetlands and costal dunes.

Kathleen asks that you call the hike leader at least 48 hours in advance to confirm attendance and allow the organizers to know how many to anticipate. Contact information: Kathleen Sayce, 360-665-5292 or ksayce@willapabay.org. Car pool if possible. Hikes are usually restricted to 12 people, no pets. In Willapa, wear suitable gear to the weather; bring food and water. Hikes will be postponed for high winds. For wildflower lists for these and other Willapa sites, go to www.reachone.com/columbiacoastplants

Workshops and Conferences



People for Puget Sound is organizing a “**Storming the Sound: A Regional Gathering of Environmental Educators**” set for May 17, 2008, 9 am – 4 pm at the Nisqually Wildlife Refuge. They are anticipating that 100 teachers will participate this year, along with a variety of organizations. Your support of such workshops makes a huge impact in ongoing efforts to involve citizens in the protection, restoration and education about Puget Sound. For questions about “Storming the Sound” call Gabrielle Byrne, Education and Involvement Coordinator, People Puget Sound, (360) 754-9177, gbryne@pugetsound.org. or visit the website at <http://www.pugetsound.org/primary/connect/events/0517storming/>.

Regional Activities

People for Puget Sound Activities

Summer Beach Walks: July 5th and August 2nd we will walk along the shores of our beautiful Puget Sound, smell the salt air, enjoy the sunshine, learn about the ecosystem of the sound, and find some of those critters that inhabit this amazing place. For locations, more information, and to sign up contact Gabriel Byrne, gbryne@pugetsound.org or call (360) 754-9177.

Pier Peer: June 7th and July 20th in the late summer evening hours(9-11) we will drop a submersible light from the pier at Boston Harbor Marina, 312 73rd Ave NE in Olympia, and peer at the polychaete worms, skeleton shrimp, squid, nudibranchs(sea slugs), harbor seals, and more. This is a family event (close supervision necessary) so dress appropriately, bring a flashlight, enjoy some snacks, and be prepared to be amazed at what you will see. For more information and to sign up contact Gabriel Byrne, gbryne@pugetsound.org or call (360) 754-9177.

Conservation Issues

Invasive Species: Taking a Broad View of this WNPS Priority By Bill Brookreson

In the fall of 2002, the WNPS Board of Directors began the process of creating a new five-year strategic plan. As those discussions came to fruition, WNPS has identified three priorities to focus on over the next five years – **Garry Oak**, **Shrub-steppe**, and **Invasive Species**. Of those three, invasive species is the most difficult to “get your hands around.” Nearly two years ago, the Governor signed the bill creating the Invasive Species Council, with the charge of coordinating state action against invasive species and creating a strategic plan to better deal with the problems. The first draft of that strategic plan is soon to be released for public comment.

In an organization that is native plant focused, invasive plants – largely but by no means exclusively noxious weeds – and their devastating impact on our native plant ecosystems are easily identified by our members. With minor exceptions, that has been the focus of most of our discussions. In reality, however, the greatest threat to native plant ecosystems and the greatest likelihood of disastrous consequences, may

come from other invasive species, notably insect pests and plant diseases.

The classic example is the chestnut blight caused by an introduced fungus, *Cryphonectria parasitica* (Murrill) Barr. By 1940, three and a half billion American chestnuts had perished. Formerly the tallest trees in our eastern hardwood forests (100 feet tall was common), American chestnuts survive mostly as small understory trees that sprout back from the original root systems and are continuously attacked by the blight. More recently, in 1995, Sudden Oak Death (SOD) caused by a pathogen called *Phytophthora ramorum* has killed tens of thousands of tanoaks (*Lithocarpus densiflorus*), coast live oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*), and California black oaks (*Quercus kelloggii*). SOD attacks many types of plants and trees common to the Pacific Northwest, including azaleas, big leaf maples, huckleberry, California bay laurel, camellia, myrtles, honeysuckle, Pacific madrone, Douglas fir, rhododendrons, and viburnum. Most are not likely to die, but we cannot be sure.

... we should be constantly looking for better, more environmentally sound ways to address invasive species.

Introduced insect pests can be equally devastating. Some are long time threats like European gypsy moth (EGM). The gypsy moth is known to feed on the foliage of hundreds of species of plants in North America but its most common hosts are oaks and aspen. Extensive mortality of oaks usually occurs following two or more consecutive years of defoliation, though mortality can occur following only one year of defoliation if some other predisposing condition exists (e.g. drought). In eastern forests, there have been significant changes in the makeup caused by the Gypsy moth. Its Asian cousin (AGM) is even a greater threat because its targets, unlike EGM, includes evergreen tree species.

Other threats are new. Emerald ash borer (EAB), *Agrilus planipennis* Fairmaire, is an exotic beetle that was discovered in southeastern Michigan near Detroit in the summer of 2002. The adult beetles nibble on ash foliage but cause little damage. The larvae (the immature stage) feed on the inner bark of ash trees, disrupting the tree's ability to transport water and nutrients. Since its discovery, EAB has killed more than 20 million ash trees in Michigan, Ohio and Indiana. Many more examples could be given to include animals and aquatic invaders as well.

If our goal is to protect and preserve our native plants and their ecosystems for the future, we need to view the threat of invasive species broadly and support good public policy that does the same. There are some steps that are important if we are to be successful.

- We must have in place a strong system of **early detection and rapid response**. Many invasive species can only be handled cost effectively and in an environmentally sound manner with early detection and response.
- We must have a fully functioning risk assessment process. Since we will never have the resources to deal with everything that we find, we need to quickly assess the real threats and act.
- We must have system with the scientists and researchers closely integrated with the regulators and those carrying out control activities. We should be looking at potential problems and developing strategies and controls before problems become a crisis. And, as importantly, we should be constantly looking for better, more environmentally sound ways to address invasive species.
- We must have public support for early and decisive action, and
- We need to recognize that just eliminating an invasive species may not be enough. We also may need to restore the damaged system so that another invasive species doesn't immediately fill the vacant niche.

Dealing with invasive species is often costly both in terms of money and short term environmental consequences. Not dealing with them is always costly and has much worse consequences.

South Sound Activity

Pacific Cascade Regional Natural Areas Program Highlights

Protecting and preserving our Natural Areas is an important part of preserving our biodiversity. Birdie Davenport, Dept of Natural Resources Manager for the Pacific Cascade Region, her staff and volunteers have been very busy with restoration of butterfly habitat and weed control at **Rocky Prairie, Bald Hills and Mima Mounds Natural Area Preserves**. An interpretive exhibit is going into the newly remodeled interpretive center at Mima Mounds where the NAP conducted tours for Prairie Appreciation Day, May 3. In addition, fish passage and road abandonment projects are getting underway at Elk River Natural Resource Conservation Area and the Chehalis River Surge Plain Natural Area Preserve draft Management Plan is near completion. For more information about how you may volunteer, visit the website:

http://www.dnr.wa.gov/ResearchScience/Topics/NaturalAreas/Pages/amp_na.aspx#stewardship

Olympia Woodland Trail – Now Connects to the Chehalis-Western Trail

The WTGA (Woodland Trail Greenway Association) and swarms of volunteers were busy this winter planting trees. The completion of the Olympia Woodland Trail in early November opened up another segment of paved biking trail and gravel walking trail through Olympia to Lacey. At several planting parties, hundreds of volunteers braved rain, snow, sleet and cold while digging in more than 11,000 trees and shrubs along the new trail right-of-way.

Bikers and hikers will appreciate that the new trail is constructed as a divided trailway, with one wide surface (pictured at right) for bikes and other non-motorized vehicles. The other surface, slightly narrower, is a gravel

path for walkers. Separation of the two types of trail use in the same right-of-way adds to both enjoyment and safety for all users. Within a few years, there should be a lot of new tree cover and shade in this area, thanks to the efforts of volunteers this winter. The WTGA plans more tree plantings and "Tree-L-C" events - for maintenance of the trees that have been planted in this and past years. It's a great time for volunteering in your community, and meeting other people who share your passion for trees and recreational resources like the Olympia Woodland Trail.



The Olympia Woodland Trail now connects to the Chehalis Western trail. As trail users know, the Chehalis-Western trail is the major regional north-south bike trail - and now the OWT trail is becoming the major east-west trail. Trail users can start in Olympia at the new large kiosk on Eastside Road, just south of the bridge over I-5. The Eastside kiosk has parking spaces, signage, restrooms, and picnic tables, too. For trail maps, take a look at www.wtga.org.

The WTGA and other groups are working to extend the trail eastward from the Chehalis- Western intersection, to connect into the Lacey trail system. Eventually the trail should to McAllister Springs. There will be more work for volunteers, so stay tuned for announcements of events, or join the WTGA if you want to help out.

New Native Plant Garden Planned in Federal Way

PowellsWood, a 3-acre private garden in Federal Way that is open to the public, announced the development of an additional acre of land that will be devoted to native plants.

PowellsWood is now mostly an ornamental garden, composed of nearly a thousand varieties of trees, flowering shrubs and plants. The new native section will be located in the valley adjacent to the garden, a pristine stretch of land that is already home to many natives. Owner Monte Powell has been working with native plant steward Brett Johnson, proprietor of Green Man Gardens, to assess the area and make recommendations for preservation and restoration of the space. Brett says the slopes of the valley are "remarkably well intact," relatively free of the holly and ivy and other weeds found in urban areas, while the valley floor presents opportunities for restoration.

PowellsWood is currently open to the public Tuesdays through Fridays from April through October. The garden is the result of an extensive soil conservation project, and demonstrates how private landowners can use natural land features to develop stunning landscapes.

Members of the Washington Native Plant Society are invited to take a preliminary tour of the new native plant section as it is being developed. Please call Rochele Gardner at 253-529-1620 to make arrangements. For more information and for volunteer opportunities at PowellsWood, please visit www.powellswood.org



Vanilla-leaf, *Achlys triphylla*

Volunteer Opportunity

New Office Space and Chapter Service Opportunities

Starting in June, the WNPS South Sound Chapter will have access to an office facility made available by Metro Parks Tacoma at the Meadow Park Golf Course. We have already begun to outfit this office with computer equipment and three comfortable desk spaces so that volunteers can assist us with chapter activities. We need chapter members to get involved, we are seeking volunteers to help us fulfill the following roles:

Vice Chair(s)

One (or two individuals) are needed to assist with meeting logistics (meals with speakers before meetings/presentations); member communications (welcoming new folks and keeping in touch with others who have lapsed); volunteer recognition, and general well-being of our organization. Attendance at our monthly chapter meetings (October through May), is important, as is attendance at our tri-annual Executive Committee meetings.

Field Trip/Activity Coordinator

One to two people who have time to coordinate and/or lead field trips locally and regionally are desired. We can provide you with names and contact information of potential leaders. Follow-up after field trips to secure photos and reports would also be welcomed. Attendance at our monthly chapter meetings (October through May), is important, as is attendance at our tri-annual Executive Committee meetings.

Field Trip Leaders

You know where you like to go. Learning in the real world doesn't get any better. Near or far, we need your help to guide others to your favorite places. All you need is our sign-up sheets, a basic plant ID book, a carpool, a first-aid kit and a desire to share your enthusiasm (even for those who barely know their plants, "botany by consensus" is a great way to lead a field trip!). We do the advertising for you both on the web and via local news media.

Speaker Coordination

A team of 2-3 people could make our chapter presentations even better than they already are. In support of the great effort being provided by John Neorr, we seek one person in Tacoma, and another in Olympia to coordinate with speakers, and to make sure that presenters have appropriate AV equipment and other resources available to them. We can provide you with names and contact information of potential speakers. Attendance at our monthly chapter meetings (October through May), is important, as is attendance at our tri-annual Executive Committee meetings.

Community Conservation

If you attend public meetings, read the paper and have an "ear to the ground" to keep a pulse on for local issues, and can communicate the issues with our members, we are looking for you. Especially if you have connections with organizations having similar interests to the WNPS, this is an important role.

Membership Communications

If you are acquainted with computer database entry, we could use assistance inputting contact information for volunteers and potential members.

Secretary

Our institutional memory is lost without you. If you can assist in this role, you will need to attend and record our tri-annual Executive Committee meetings.

Refreshments Coordinator

More important than one thinks, is the role of the person(s) who provides something to eat and drink at our monthly meetings (October through May). We especially need someone in Tacoma, to help us make our meetings even more accommodating. Expenses for refreshment can be reimbursed.

Events Coordination

New events are occurring every year where the WNPS could be present to gain new members while educating the public about the values of native plants, and the pursuit of control over invasive plants. Some of these events are information only, while others invite us to create time-intensive educational displays and presentations. Even if you sign up for coordination of only one event, it will help us further the mission of the WNPS and the South Sound Chapter.

Other

That undefined role could be something you have to offer that we would truly value. If you think you have a skill to offer, let's be creative in how to plug you into the fun of supporting the South Sound Chapter.

If you or someone you know would be interested or gifted in taking on any of the above volunteer positions, please contact Anna Thurston at 253-566-3342, or by e-mail at a.thurston@worldnet.att.net.

Volunteer Opportunity

Puget Creek Restoration

In the heartland of Tacoma's North End is **Puget Creek**, surrounded by 66 natural acres. This creek is one of three in Tacoma that have returning salmon. Part of the beauty of this watershed is a result of hands-on restoration activities by volunteers who have learned native plant and invasive species identification by working in the watershed.

The volunteers are local citizens; local businesses; local citizens groups; and "SYTI" students engaged in Puget Creek's Student/Youth Job Training/Internship program. The SYTI program:

- teaches students about invasive/native plants
- fulfills the Senior culminating project
- gives students a head start in environmental fields
- offers internships on numerous research projects

For more information about the SYTI program, contact Anni Watkins at pugetcreeksyti@yahoo.com.

A great way to give back to the community and learn about Puget Creek's native species/invasive species is to volunteer! Restoration activities are held on the **2nd Saturday** of the month, from 9a-noon. Directions can be found at our website: <http://www.pugetcreek.org/directions.html>. If you'd like to participate in additional activities, would like to bring a group of students, scouts, or other group, or would like more information, contact Scott Hansen at pugetcreek@yahoo.com or (253) 779-8890.

Plant and Seed Sales

Central Puget Sound Chapter Native Plant Sale – Saturday May 20, 2008

The Central Puget Sound Chapter of WNPS will hold its annual native plant sale, Saturday, May 10, 2008, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Bellevue Botanical Gardens, 12001 Main Street, Bellevue. This annual sale features NW native perennials, ferns, shrubs and trees as well as a selection of native plant books and Cedar Grove compost for sale. A full plant list is available at http://www.wnps.org/chapter_info/chapter_sales.html. Buyers are asked to bring their own trays or boxes.

Whether we and our politicians know it or not, Nature is party to all our deals and decisions, and she has more votes, a longer memory, and a sterner sense of justice than we do.

Wendell Berry

People for Puget Sound

People for Puget Sound are seeking volunteers for the first Wednesday and Saturday of each month for their ongoing weeding, mulching, and planting at Woodard Bay, Evergreen, East Bay, or Mud Bay sites along Puget Sound. For more information and to sign up contact Dan Grosboll, dgrosboll@pugetsound.org or call (360) 754-9177.

Tacoma Nature Center Information & Native Plant Booth

Volunteers are needed to answer questions about native plants at the Farmer's Markets in Tacoma and Puyallup and help visitors choose the proper native plants for their situation. Reference books are provided. Set-up, clean-up, and sales are handled by paid staff. Volunteers need only dispense information and suggestions about native plants. Schedule: Saturdays in Puyallup, Tuesdays and Thursdays in Tacoma. Contact Michele Cardinaux if you would like to help out: michele@tacomaparks.com, (253) 591-6439.



Skunk Cabbage (or Swamp Lantern)
Lysichiton americanum

Native Plant Resources

WNPS Call for Conservation Grant Proposals

The WNPS Conservation Committee is soliciting proposals for Conservation Grants of up to \$500 that further the goals of conservation of Washington native plants. Through its grant process, the committee's goal is to support or enhance on-the-ground conservation or restoration projects. Grant requests may be from WNPS local chapters or WNPS members.

For 2008, applications must be received by June 1, 2008. Awards will be announced by **July 1, 2008**. For more information see the spring issue of *Douglasia* or visit our website: <http://www.wnps.org/conservation/index.htm>

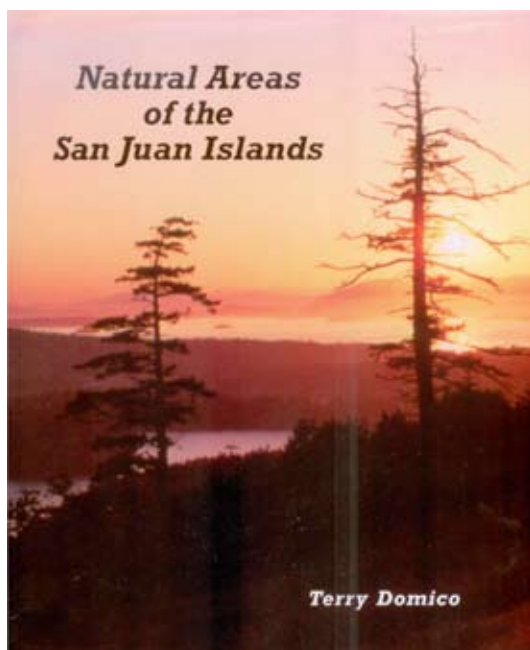
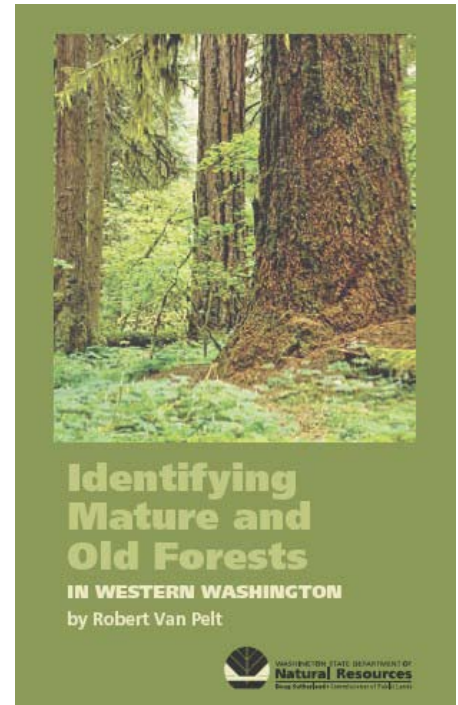
Identifying Mature and Old Forests in Washington

After the State Legislature directed the Department of Natural Resources to inventory its old-growth stands, a group of experts put together a common definition of "old-growth." The end-product of this effort is a document titled *Identifying Mature and Old Forests in Western Washington*, by Robert Van Pelt. A companion guide for Eastern Washington forests is also being developed.

The purpose of these guides is to help readers interpret the ecology, disturbance history, and age of a given stand or tree using environmental features, including the physical characteristics of the trees themselves. It has lots of information in a scientific vein, but is written for people with only a basic understanding of ecology.

A working ecological understanding of the major tree species, the environments where they grow, and the dominant disturbance regimes at play in a given stand is required when reconstructing stand history and making determinations of tree and stand age. These guides are designed to provide the tools needed for such determinations. They will certainly be useful to anyone making restoration plans.

There are a limited number of hard copies available from DNR and the first of the two guides is available on the web at http://www.dnr.wa.gov/htdocs/lm/oldgrowth/id_guides/.



Natural Areas of the San Juan Islands **by Terry Domico.** **Turtleback Books: Friday Harbor, 2007, \$22.95.**

For those who visit or want to visit the San Juan Islands or the Salish Sea Bioregion, Terry Domico, chair of the San Juan chapter of WNPS, has produced a marvelous guide book. The book provides directions and information on 60 of the best natural areas of the region. Each of the area descriptions includes a useful map. For sites accessible only by water, like Griffin Bay State Park, there are nautical directions or GPS coordinates. The guide provides not only plant information but is also an excellent guide for birders in the San Juans. The book is available at most major bookstores or directly from Turtleback Books at (360) 378-3105 or turtlebackbooks@usa.com.

Native Plant Resources



Pollinators in Natural Areas: A Primer on Habitat Management **by Scott Hoffman Black, Nathan Hodges, Mace Vaughan and Matthew Shepherd**

Pollinators in Natural Areas: A Primer on Habitat Management provides a summary of how land and wildlife managers can provide and protect habitat for bees, butterflies and other pollinators. Specifically, this 8-page booklet reviews the potential impacts of fire, grazing, mowing, herbicides, and insecticides. It then provides a series of recommendations for how land managers can adjust the use of these management actions to benefit pollinators. More detailed guidelines related to habitat management will be released by the Xerces Society in March 2008.

To download the primer or to purchase a copy please visit:
http://www.xerces.org/pubs_merch/Managing_Habitat_for_Pollinators.htm.
Cost for a hard copy (includes shipping and handling): Members: \$2.50 per copy; Non-members: \$5.00 per copy.

Salvage Program Activities

At "Season's" End The Native Plant Salvage Alliance Program By Anna Thurston

The Native Plant Salvage Alliance serving Pierce County has recently completed a second season of grant funding. Although salvaging activities, including digging, program promotions, plant management, and recipient consultation, have been ongoing since the fall of 2004, the Alliance has been awarded nearly \$85,000 since July of 2005. We have enjoyed the support of over 1,000 volunteers, many of whom have returned repeatedly to support the program, and many others who have taken home free native plant materials and hands-on expertise in exchange for their efforts.

Many thanks are offered not only to these volunteers, but also to the land owners who have made access to valuable quality plants unique to the Puget Sound possible. We have been fortunate to dig in both prairie and forested ecosystems, which provide a broad selection of interesting, and appropriate shrubs, trees, bulbs, grasses and perennials for recipient project needs. Members of the Green Tacoma Partnership, including Blueberry Park, Buckley Gulch, Meadow Park Golf Course, Puget Creek Restoration Society, and the Sierra Club's Ivy League, among others, have been the primary recipients, but we have supported the holding, return and distribution of plants on behalf of Pierce County programs as well.

We also owe our thanks to many people who

support the program or spread the word about the benefits of the Native Plant Salvage Alliance behind-the-scenes. In particular, significant thanks are due to the Bellarmine Prep School, without which the program would not be possible. Metro Parks Tacoma's involvement will further the holding and propagation facilities that the NPSA program's growth engenders. TV-12 Tacoma and The News Tribune have also contributed to the kind of exposure that helps us connect with volunteers and funders alike. Ultimately it is our funders, including the City of Tacoma, and citizen funding via the Pierce Conservation District and the Cascade Land Conservancy, for whose support of the NPSA, and vision towards the enhancement of our region's quality of life, we are most thankful.

Assuming we are successful in obtaining additional grants, we'll continue the NSPA into the next digging season in the fall of 2008 and winter/spring of 2009. We will continue our behind the scenes work during the summer when volunteers will be sought to help us maintain the plants we have recently dug, but not yet distributed. Plants remain available to City of Tacoma and Pierce County habitat restoration projects. For more information, please contact Anna Thurston at 253-566-3342, anna.thurston@ssstewardship.org, or visit our website at www.ssstewardship.org.

Story Telling for a Future with Native Plants by Anna Thurston

I've been visualizing David confronting Goliath... That's how I've felt when reading, listening to, or drawn into discussions about invasive plants and how to deal with them. When walking about the golf course where groups of volunteers have recently installed prairie natives to lure wildlife (and people) back, I have sometimes felt the same. The hundreds of plants that we install seem to disappear against the backdrop of nurtured and manicured greenery. The native plantings seem insignificant and imperiled as we begin a multi-year effort to reclaim something unfamiliar – something before our time.

Forgive my use of a Biblical metaphor. I will since it's a fairly universal story, but hopefully readers will share tales of their own. This story has value, in part because it imbues a sense of optimism in the face of uncertain odds. Relative to invasive plants, the metaphor is a good fit since it seems that the odds of winning against the sheer number of invasives in our environment are almost insurmountable. Stories like this might also offer a way to help the ordinary person to become aware of the problem while engaging them towards personal solutions.

As David overcame the giant with cunning, we must do the same, but I sense it will require something other than a sling-shot, and something that accommodates the wholeness of our future. Where David worked alone, we need to work together, rather than remaining at the sidelines cheering for, or betting on one side or the other. Working together not only lessens the burden on our public agencies, but also transforms and enlightens the group assembled into a stronger community. While it's hard to measure the tangible benefits of these interactions, we know it brings us out of the separation that society's evolution has recently engendered, if not imposed upon us. Story-telling might also help people understand how invasives operate, along with how explosive human population growth and our taste for what we think makes a good life enhances the spread of invasives that could wreak serious damage to future economies with in our lifetimes.

I happened upon an early translation of Grimm's fairy tales (*The Juniper Tree*) when this year's abundant winter rains encouraged me to stay in and stay warm. A young Maurice Sendak's (*Where the Wild Things Are*) line drawings enchanted numerous tales whose story-line was commonly about the quest for golden riches, or the desire to magically change into or be with someone either well endowed, or well connected. In both writing and in illustrations, I was reminded of the dark paths upon which human

nature can be lead astray.

We certainly live in a time when the "stuff" on our wish lists is easy to come by. I encourage people to check out Annie Leonard's www.StoryOfStuff.com for an entertaining, if not educational perspective. And if it's not on our wish lists, it's our list of what to do with all of the stuff that we have accumulated that beckons. How this all relates to native plants, people will likely view in different ways. In contrast to a consumptive and throw-away approach, the emulation of Nature and subsequent promotion of native plants and cultural techniques via story telling provides important choices which accommodate a lasting human future.

When a colleague first told me the story of the Olive-sided Fly catcher, this bird captured my imagination. It's "Quick, Three Beers!!" call note has become a measure of time and a lesson in geography. I get to hear this bird only in the month of May. I have also learned of its incredible and annual migratory travels from the Arctic, south to Chile, and back again. That "quick, three beers!" is a cheerful and yet elusive sound because it's hard to see this 7" bird in the tops of Doug Fir trees that are becoming a legend in my neighborhood. These trees are deemed by some to be "too dangerous" or bad because they "shed too many branches/needles," or "kill the lawn beneath them." Often we are told they "can't be used for urban plantings." Each year newly settled neighbors remove more of these trees, which are the namesake of the City of Fircrest. In our effort to make life "easier," the story of Nature gets lost.

Do we want to hear the songs of the birds and frogs that came with the property we bought at the edge of the water, or will we make it over into a flat and "safer" heated haven for the exotic plants that we sometimes now call weeds? Like David confronting Goliath, I am inclined otherwise to think optimistically and big, and I hope you will join me. Become acquainted with and help us spread the word about natives, their benefits and their stories before the story becomes something about what we used to have but from which we bought our selves away. Let the moral of the story sink into your daily patterns and drive your future patterns of consumption. Your membership and volunteer participation with the Washington Native Plant Society are small but meaningful ways to make this happen. Your involvement helps to build the story while learning other people's stories. Sharing what you know, whether minimal or immense, is important to our future. --A--



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The mission of the Washington Native Plant Society is to promote the appreciation and conservation of Washington's native plants and their habitats through study, education, and advocacy.

Celebrate
Native Plant
Appreciation
Week

April 27th – May 3rd, 2008

Learn more about native plants!
Visit a natural area - take a native plant walk -
go on a garden tour - learn about and volunteer
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Meadow of soap monkey-flowers at the base of Curtis
Glacier on Mt. Shuksan. Photographer: Kevin Head