



The Acorn

Serving the South Sound Chapter of the Washington Native Plant Society

Summer 2011

The Washington Natural Heritage Program: The End of the Program?

All those who are interested in Washington's native plants, whether they are aware of it or not, have benefitted greatly from the work of the Washington Natural Heritage Program (WNHP). The program has worked quietly for 30 years collecting information on Washington's endangered native plants and animals. A most recent product was the publication of the new **Field Guide to the**

Rare Plants of Washington. The WNHP played a key role in producing the book. It looks, at this writing, as if the future of this program that has played such an important part in preserving our flora heritage is in great doubt.

The Washington Natural Heritage Program was established in the Department of Natural Resources by the Legislature in 1981 (RCW 79.70). The DNR website describes the functions. "The WNHP manages site-specific and species/ecosystem-specific information on priority species and ecosystems; those that are rare or have very limited distribution. Specifically, the WNHP's mandate is to:

- Identify which species and ecosystems are priorities for conservation effort.
- Build and maintain a database for priority species and ecosystems.
- Share the information with others so that it can be used for environmental assessments and conservation planning purposes.

In less governmental terms, it is the storehouse for the knowledge of our floral heritage and animal species. The sharing of that knowledge and expertise is very important. This program is the only comprehensive source of information on the status and location

of Washington's most rare and threatened plant and animal species.

- It identifies sites that are important to the long-term conservation of the state's most imperilled species and ecosystems.
- It provides the scientific framework for the statewide system of natural areas, provides

scientific support to land trusts, and works with individual landowners interested in voluntary protection of rare species and ecosystems.

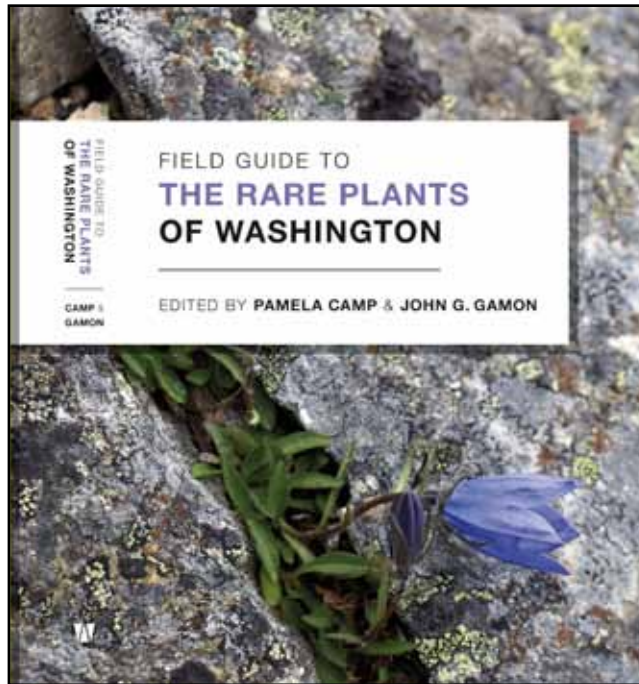
- It provides a science-based classification system to federal, state and local agencies in Washington to make critical land management and land use decisions on the land they manage.

Without active management of the Natural Heritage database, Washington risks losing an asset that has taken 30 years to build and maintain.

The WNHP is also part of NatureServe; a network of

80 natural heritage programs located in all 50 states, all Canadian provinces, and several Latin American and Caribbean countries. NatureServe collects and manages detailed local information on plants, animals, and ecosystems, and develops information products, data management tools, and conservation services to help meet local, national, and global conservation needs.

All that may well be in jeopardy. The WNHP's general fund budget has been cut by \$537,000 in the Senate and the House version of 2011-2013 biennial budget. That also places in jeopardy the matching



Heritage Program continued from page 1...

federal funds. Other small amounts of available funding do not appear large enough to maintain even the shell of a program.

The Washington Native Plant Society has expressed its strong concerns, and we hope it can make a difference. Much of our plant heritage, once it's lost, can never be recovered. Now, we can only watch, hope, and thank John Gammon and all the dedicated members (past and present) of WNHP who have done so much to protect our plant heritage.

South Sound Chapter Activities

Native Plant Sale

Saturday, May 7, 2011, 10 am to 3 pm.

Don't miss this great chance to get native plants for your gardens and restoration projects at great prices and to support the South Sound Chapter. The location is the Washington State Capitol Museum Coach House (same location as the chapter meetings), 211 21st Avenue SW, Olympia, WA 98501. Bring a friend, or more. Credit cards will be accepted.

South Sound Restoration Projects Tacoma Nature Center

Under the leadership of Cyndy Dillon, the restoration work of removing invasives and planting native plants continued at the Tacoma Nature Center. The upper restoration area on top of the hill has continued to expand, and what was once an impenetrable thicket of Himalayan blackberry is now cleared and has been planted with native evergreen trees and shrubs. With the resolution of the permitting issues, Cyndy and her volunteers have also undertaken the restoration of an area just north of the Nature Center. Work continues in the



Photos at Tacoma Nature Center



upper restoration area on the first Friday of each month and on the lower restoration area on the third Friday. Both work parties are from 9 am until noon. To volunteer, contact Cyndy at cpdillongh@comcast.net.

Woodland Trail (Olympia)

Bill Brookreson and his dedicated volunteers have moved the Woodland Trail restoration project firmly into the maintenance phase. The native plantings are doing well and we are primarily concerned with "weeding" to prevent any regrowth of the Himalayan blackberry and Scot's broom. Depending on the rate of invasive regrowth, we will schedule monthly Thursday work parties. For more information or to volunteer, contact Bill at b.brookreson@comcast.net.

Native Plant Study Weekend June 10-12, 2011

Explore the beautiful Methow Valley. Spend a weekend this June wandering the shrub-steppe and surrounding hills of the Methow Valley. The Okanogan Chapter of the Washington Native Plant Society invites you to visit this semi-arid land when it's flush with spring.

Observe a landscape once scoured by mile-high glaciers, shaped by meltwater floods, and swept by frequent wildfire. Examine today's plant communities that survive temperature swings from 50 below to 106° F, and up to 66 consecutive summer days without rain. And experience the awe of intimately studying vibrant blossoms of surprising delicacy and the tiny pollinators that visit them – all thriving in these harsh conditions.

The chapter is presenting its favorite field trip destinations, from the sagebrush hills of the Okanogan Valley to the transitional foothills of the North Cascades. We've lined up fascinating speakers, knowledgeable field trip leaders, and terrific food. Don't miss this chance to explore the Methow Valley. Registration deadline is May 28.

Conservations Issues

Advocating for Native Plants - 35 Years of WNPS By Bill Brookreson

The Washington Native Plant Society is celebrating its 35th anniversary in 2011. We have a great deal to celebrate -- 35 years of acting as a respected advocate for Washington's wonderful native flora and the environment that sustains it. Our members have contributed tens of thousands of hours of education, restoration work, and advocacy on behalf of native plants. We have been a valued partner with other environmental organizations and government agencies in projects across the state. WNPS Native Plant Stewards have over 100,000 volunteer hours. Most recently we partnered with the Natural Heritage Program of Department of Natural Resources, the Bureau of Land Management, the University of Washington Herbarium and others to produce A Guide to the Rare Plants of Washington.

Our South Sound Chapter conducts educational programs in Tacoma and Olympia as well as conducting restoration projects in both cities' parks, conducting a native plant sale, supporting native plant salvage programs, and being involved in other community activities. We have members who are doing active restoration work with other organizations such as People for Puget Sound, the Puget Creek Restoration Society and the Woodland Trail Greenway Association. We are blessed with a lot of members who care and act on that caring.

Educational Grant Applications Due May 15

Persons seeking WNPS Educational Grants are reminded that applications are due no later than May 15 at the WNPS office. Requirements and detailed instructions may be found at www.wnps.org/education/education_grant.html. Information on Conservation Grants and Research Grants is also available on the WNPS website home page.

Prairie Appreciation Day, Saturday, May 14, 2011, 10 am-3 pm.

The 16th annual Prairie Appreciation Day will be celebrated on Saturday, May 14, at the Glacial Heritage and Mima Mounds nature preserves. Volunteers for the Washington Native Plant Society booth are requested to contact Dan and Pat Montague, 360-709-0866 or montague30@comcast.net. Volunteers will also be welcome and appreciated for other activities. Prairie Appreciation Day is always great fun for the participants.

This year, after 10 years with no change, the Society has implemented a small dues increase to enable us to sustain the work we have undertaken and are undertaking. In these difficult economic times, that decision was not taken lightly but, faced with increased costs for everything involved in sustaining WNPS, was necessary. We sincerely ask that you understand and maintain your membership.

What is important, is that those of us who love native plants and want to protect their ecosystems, increase all our activities. Environmental protection, unfortunately, is a part of governmental budgets that is labeled "discretionary spending." Whether it is at the federal, the state, the county, or the city level, all the budgets that support the work of environmental protection are being slashed. Parks are being closed, and restoration budgets are being diminished or eliminated. Once lost, many of the fine natural areas can never be recovered because of the costs of restoration.

As these budgets are cut, your volunteer work, your advocacy work, your voice in the community decisions are very important. Whether it is within a WNPS activity or another organization, or as an individual voice for the environment, your commitment has not been more important in any of the 35 years we are celebrating.

Chapter Meetings

Because plant lovers like to botanize while the days are long, chapter meetings are not scheduled during summer months (June-August).

The fall meetings will be announced in our next addition of the Acorn newsletter, arriving in September. Meetings are normally scheduled on the second Monday of each month from October through May (Olympia) and the second Wednesday (Tacoma). Starting at 7 pm, each meeting consists of a quick review of local items and announcements, and a presentation lasting approximately an hour. This year we will have a special September "Kickoff Meeting."

Watch for details in the Fall 2011 newsletter. Programs are geared for all levels of botanical knowledge. Unless otherwise noted, all Tacoma meetings are at Tacoma Nature Center, 1919 South Tyler Street, Tacoma. All Olympia meetings are at Capitol Museum Coach House, 211 21st Avenue SW, Olympia. Meetings are free and open to the public. Please contact John Neorr at presentations@southsoundchapterwnps.org if you have a suggestion for a future presentation.

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



Native Plant Resources

If you have ever been out in the field and wished you had a microscope to look at plant parts, insects, or some other item that catches your interest, the Trekker handheld microscope may be just the thing for you. The Trekker is from the UK and was designed for outdoor use. It features:

- 35x high resolution optics
- Use natural light or has a LED for low light or opaque specimens
- The 10x eye piece doubles as a hand lens
- Portable, pocket size
- Pretty shock proof design

A thumb wheel makes focusing with one hand fairly easy and a magnetic slide holder keeps specimens in place. It can also be adapted for use with a 35 mm SLR Camera. The 35x magnification would best suit a naturalist seeking a higher magnification than a hand lens can offer to study the smaller features of fauna and flora critical to identification in the field e.g. leaf hairs, smaller insect features etc. It's also useful for studying aspects of smaller aquatic and land invertebrates. For a good review on-line check that discusses both strengths and weaknesses, see <http://www.microscopy-uk.org.uk/mag/indexmag.html> Check on-line for prices.



The Chair Report will be back in the next issue...



Volunteer Opportunities

Restoration Projects Tacoma Nature Center & Woodland Trail Olympia

Tacoma Nature Center: Project dates scheduled for the summer are June 3 and June 17, July 1 and 15, and August 19. Project activity is from 9 am to noon. Bring gloves and appropriate shoes. For more information, contact Cyndy Dillon at 253-857-4003 or at cpdillongh@comcast.net.

Woodland Trail: Work parties for the Woodland Trail will be on May 19, June 16, July 21 and August 11 all from 9 am to 1 pm for weeding and maintenance. Bring your favorite weeding tools. For more information, contact Bill Brookreson at 253-564-1137 or b.brookreson@comcast.net.

Field Trips

We currently have no field trips scheduled for the summer months. Watch the monthly updates for new information. Below are a couple of ideas for hikes you may enjoy trying.



Pictures courtesy of Birdie Davenport, Washington Department of Natural Resources

Chehalis River Surge Plain Natural Area Preserve Trail

One of the joys of living in Washington is having so many great places to go hiking to enjoy the natural beauty. One such hike is along Preacher's Slough near Montesano. This easy trail follows a converted railroad grade along the "surge plain" of the Chehalis River where the ocean tide mixes with the fresh. This Chehalis River Surge Plain Natural Area Preserve has 2,643 acres of the best surge plain wetland in the state.

A freshwater surge plain is an area along stream and river reaches (edges) where fresh water, instead of salt, spreads out during flooding or high tides. Plants that grow there include Sitka spruce, lady fern, red

osier dogwood, salmonberry, and black twinberry. The Sitka spruce and western red cedar thrive in the wet soils where fresh and salt water mingle. The round trip is about seven miles. Spend a few hours enjoying this area and don't forget your camera.

Directions: Drive west on Highway 8 and Highway 12 from Olympia towards Montesano. Exit highway 8 south at Montesano to Highway 107. Proceed about 3 ½ miles and turn right on Preacher Slough Road. Cross the trail and turn into the parking lot on the left. The trail crosses a slough on a bridge and continues about 3 ½ miles to a similar lot off Blue Slough Road.

Puget Gulch (Puget Creek) Nature Trail, MetroParks Tacoma

An interesting gem for a walk in the MetroParks Tacoma system may be found right on the Tacoma waterfront. Puget Creek (Gulch) is a 66-acre natural area in Tacoma's north end. It includes one of only three salmon bearing streams in the Tacoma City limits. Since 1995, community members have been involved in various activities concerning the restoration of, and research associated with, the Puget Creek Watershed. In September 2000, the nonprofit Puget Creek Restoration Society was formed to augment activities and formulate a plan to establish the area as a viable habitat for salmon and other wildlife species. Thousands of volunteer hours have been contributed. In visiting the area, you can enjoy some of the restoration work that has been carried out. For more information, visit their website at <http://pugetcreek.org/>.

The trail is an easy walk through riparian area of the creek with minimal elevation gain and can be done in about an hour or so at botanist pace. The flora is typical of Puget Sound riparian areas and areas that have been logged in the distant past, unfortunately including typical invasives. The restoration efforts have focused on planting



evergreen species to augment the native deciduous trees such as big-leafed maple. Salmonberry (*Rubus spectabilis*) is currently in glorious bloom and the fringe cup (*Tellima grandiflora*) is close. A walk through Puget Gulch will be not only provide a good chance to review your plant identification skills but also to enjoy a delightful visit.

Directions: From downtown Tacoma, go west along the waterfront on Ruston Way. Just past C.I. Shenanigans restaurant, turn left on North Alder Way. In about 1 ½ blocks, the road makes a right turn. Parking at a small unpaved area and trail access is at that corner.



Workshops and Conferences

Grass Identification Workshop, June 15-17, 2011

“Knowing Your Grasses” is critical to many fields of science and practice, including wetland identification and delineation, ecosystem restoration, erosion control, and interpretation of natural history. Beautiful and diverse, grasses are globally important in many ways—fundamental to the past and future survival of humans. The Washington Native Plant Society and the University of Washington Herbarium are proudly partnering to offer this grass identification Workshop. The three-day workshop will be held on June 15-17, Room 246, Hitchcock Hall, at University of Washington in Seattle.

The Workshop consists of an intensive, hands-on approach that blends one and a half days of classroom work with one day of field study using a combination of lectures, guided examination of live and pressed plant specimens (with and without stereo-microscopes), and use of technical identification keys. Participants learn the grass language and distinguishing features of the grass family, its major taxonomic subdivisions, and many grass genera and species. The Workshop also connects you with useful on-line tools such as identification keys and photo resources.

For more information:

<http://www.wnps.org/workshops/grass-workshop.html>

Meet the Trees of Washington Workshop, June 11, 2011

Stream Team and WSU’s Native Plant Salvage Project will team up to present a free field class on Saturday, June 11, from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., in Olympia. In this fun field class, participants will be introduced to the magnificence of our native trees as well as four South Sound ecosystems: marine shorelines, prairies, freshwater riparian areas, and they will learn some basic keying skills.

Following a morning in the classroom, we’ll travel by bus (provided) for a field trip to a local nature trail to learn to identify native trees, shrubs, ferns and perennials.

The class is especially beneficial for newcomers to our area or anyone else who has ever wondered about the benefits and horticultural uses of native trees and other plants. Participants will learn about several different natural areas to visit in South Sound to experience different ecosystems and the plants and animals that inhabit them.

The workshop is free but space is limited. Register by calling WSU’s Native Plant Salvage Project at 360-867-2166 or email nativeplantsalvage@gmail.com.

Rain Garden Workshops

WSU Cooperative Extension is presenting a series of Rain Garden Workshops. You may join them for a free, hands-on workshop where you’ll get all the details you need to design and install a beautiful rain garden that will manage your home’s drainage while also protecting our local waterways. RSVP is required for all events at <http://www.nativeplantsalvage.org/>. Upcoming Rain Garden workshops:

- April 21, from 6-8 p.m. at the UW Center for Urban Horticulture, Seattle
- April 28, from 6:30-8:45 p.m. at the Tumwater Fire Hall
- May 12, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the WSU Puyallup Research Center
- May 19, from 6:30 to 8:45 p.m. at the LOTT WET center

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Washington Native Plant Society South Sound Chapter

www.southsoundchapterwnps.org

Washington Native Plant Society State Chapter

www.wnps.org 206-527-3210



WNPS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
 PHONE (____) _____ E-MAIL _____

Chapter Affiliation

- Central Puget Sound (Seattle)
 - Central Washington (Yakima, Ellensburg)
 - Columbia Basin (Tri-Cities)
 - Koma Kulshan (Bellingham)
 - NE Washington (Spokane)
 - Okanogan
 - Olympic Peninsula
 - Salal (Mt. Vernon, Skagit Valley)
 - San Juan Islands
 - South Sound (Olympia, Tacoma)
 - Wenatchee Valley
 - At-Large
 - Palouse (inactive)
 - Suksdorfia (inactive)
- Each membership includes affiliation with one chapter. Add \$5.00 for each additional chapter.

WNPS POSTER

"Wildflowers Across Washington"
 A beautiful 24" x 36" full-color poster featuring 36 native species, \$8 (members \$6)
 Shipping \$2.50 each poster

Membership Category

- \$35 Individual Rate
- \$45 Family
- \$65 Club/Institution
- \$20 Budget
- \$50-99 WNPS Friend
- \$100-499 WNPS Special Friend
- \$500 WNPS Best Friend
- \$1,000 WNPS Sustaining
- \$5,000 WNPS Patron

ENCLOSED ARE:

My dues: Please Sign me up! \$ _____
 Additional Chapters (\$5 each) _____
 \$8 for each poster (\$6 members) _____
 Shipping (\$2.50/poster) _____
 TOTAL \$ _____

Make checks payable to WNPS and mail to:
 Washington Native Plant Society, 6310 NE 74th St., Ste 215E
 Seattle, WA 98115



South Sound Chapter WNPS

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Tacoma WA 98407-2119



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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.

