

# *The Acorn*

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



*Summer  
2019*

## **A May 2019 Special Program - Era of Mega Forest Fires by Paul Hessburg, PhD. Monday, May 6, 2019, 7 pm at Recital Hall of The Evergreen State College**

Megafires—wildfires over 100,000 acres—has become one of today's most pressing and complex problems. Communities, homes, businesses, even our lives and way of life are threatened. This presentation is a 60-minute multi-media presentation and discussion based on the research of Paul Hessburg and his team. It provides a powerful look at what we need to do to change how forests are managed and what we need to do be prepared for the future.

The speaker Paul Hessburg, a Research Ecologist with Pacific Northwest Research Station, US Forest Service, has studied historical and modern era forests of the Inland West for the last 32 years, and published extensively in leading national and international journals. His work documents large changes in forest conditions and how these changes, along with climate change, have set the stage for large and severe wildfires. For his significant contribution to fire and landscape ecology, Paul was awarded the Forest Service's 2017 Research & Development Deputy Chief's Distinguished Science Award. His recent book, *Making Transparent Environmental Management Decisions*, offers compelling and new insights into using modern-day decision support systems to plan for forest restoration.

This program is jointly sponsored by the South Sound Chapter, WNPS and the Masters Environmental Sciences, Evergreen State College. For the official trailer on this event see: Era of Megafires, <https://vimeo.com/248070355>.

*Unless we change a few of our forest and fire management habits in the US, we will lose many more beloved forests; some won't recover in our lifetime.*

Paul Hessburg



## **Lowell Elementary School Native Plant Garden, Stewards Making a Difference!**

One of the Native Plant Stewardship Program's goals is to make a difference in your community. Jenny deMars, one of the South Sound's stewards, has chosen to create a native plant garden at Lowell Elementary School in Tacoma where she has been teaching gardening for the past five years. She decided to add a native plant garden to help students and their parents to better understand and appreciate our native plants. The site for the garden is badly infested with English ivy (*Hedera helix*) that needs to be removed before a native plant garden can be installed. Jenny organized the first work party on March 30 to tackle the long-established ivy. With 14 volunteers from stewards, parents and students, a huge amount of ivy was removed, but at least one more work party will be needed before preparation for planting. When the garden is finished, it will be a wonderful place to enjoy some of our native plants. Watch for our monthly updates if you would like to help in this great project. Thanks, Jenny, for taking on the challenge and being a fine steward of our environment.



### Celebrating Native Plant Appreciation Week 2019

As winter's gray and drizzle is replaced by the sun of spring, we are very fortunate to live in an area with so many wonderful places to enjoy our blooming native flora. Native Plant Society's Native Plant Appreciation Week (NPAW) is April 21-27 this year, but that is no reason for you to confine the celebration to a week. We have a new coordinator for NPAW activities, Gail Sklar. Gail has added new energy for 2019 and has great plans for 2020.

The governor's proclamation designates a week, but the flora knows no one-week calendar. There are many places to enjoy our wonderful flora. If you have only a few hours or even minutes, there are a number of great places to take a walk close to where you may live. There are literally dozens of choices. In Pierce County, explore the trails of Point Defiance Park, Swan Creek Natural Area or the Tacoma Nature Center alone or with your friends and family. In Thurston County, walk Priest Point Park, Tolmie State Park or Woodard Bay. In Gig Harbor, there are wonderful parks within minutes such as Sehmel Homestead Park, Gateway Park or Kopachuck State Park. Where ever you go, take it slowly. Walk Sequelitchew Creek Trail in DuPont and see the blooming white fawn lilies or the trilliums at Priest Point in Olympia. Take time and see the small wonders, those tiny flowers often overlooked like the fringe cup. All these are available to you for an hour or an afternoon. You can go out alone, with friends or as part of group activity such as our walks at Woodard Bay Natural Resource Conservation Area, Millersylvania State Park, or Lake Sylvia in Montesano. Just go out and enjoy.

We kick off the week with our Spring Native Plant Sale at the Coach House on April 20, 9-3. Enhance your yard or garden with some of our native plants. Participate in the structured activities as well. Bill Brookreson and Anna Thurston will be giving talks on Native Plant Gardening. Jim Evans will lead a walk around the China Lake Natural Area. Although it is technically after the week, Prairie Appreciation Day, May 11, 2019, can open the world of the South Sound Prairies for you at Mima Mounds or Glacial Heritage. With Gail's leadership, we look forward to more exciting activities.



### 24th Prairies Appreciation Day, May 11, 2019, 10 am–3 pm



Come help celebrate spring on our Western Washington prairies. The main event location will be at the Glacial Heritage Preserve. Admission is free. Handicapped accessible prairie will be available at the Mima Mounds Natural Area. There is a wide variety of activity. You can learn about and experience: prairie wildflower walks, gardening with native plants, native American use of native plants, birds of the prairies, butterflies and bugs; bees and other pollinators, geology of the prairies, prairie restoration efforts; oak gall ink, and organizations working to preserve the prairies; and you can take a self-guided natural history walk.

You are encouraged to bring a picnic lunch since no food will be available. Also, please bring a donation for the Thurston County Food Bank--no glass, please. For more details and directions, go to <http://prairieappreciationday.org/>

## More South Sound Chapter Activities

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### Grants Report by John Neorr

“Eye on Nature” Project. The South Sound Chapter recently awarded a \$1000 grant to the Eye on Nature (EON) project that is conducted primarily at Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). The Eye on Nature program is very well done, the kids love it, and learn a lot from it. The students have a lot of in-class instruction before visiting the Wildlife Refuge. We provided a similar grant to EON last year and several of our chapter members served as volunteers, leading small groups of students as they hiked through the NWR and identifying native plants.

The “Eye on Nature” program has been going on for over 10 years. It is a partnership environmental education program that takes place across 14 dates and connects 750 3rd-through-8th grade students annually to nature through a citizen-science based field trip to Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually NWR. The program is a partnership between the refuge, Friends of Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge Complex, the Nisqually River Education Project, the Nisqually Reach Nature Center, and the Chehalis Basin Education Consortium. (Note: this consortium serves Education District 113, which includes school districts in Grays Harbor, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, and Thurston counties.)

The South Sound chapter still has grant funds available for other worthwhile projects. Visit our website at <http://www.southsoundchapterwnps.org/projects/projects.htm>. The application process is simple and can be found at that URL.

### Tacoma Nature Center – An Ongoing Stewardship Effort



Restoration work, whether it is in a park or a natural area, is a marathon and not a sprint. What makes the most difference is a long-term commitment. We have that in one of our Native Plant Stewards, Cyndy Dillon. Cyndy, having been trained as a Native Plant Steward by WNPS, took on a restoration project at the Tacoma Nature Center. Cyndy has been a steward at the Nature Center for 10 years.

Cyndy has built up a group of steady volunteers who have joined in her in removing invasive species and planting native plants (and enjoying Cyndy’s cookies) throughout the park at Snake Lake. For the last several years, when all the environmental paperwork and permits were obtained, the work has focused in the sensitive area around the lake. Volunteers, under Cyndy’s guidance, have removed tons of

Himalayan blackberry, English ivy, holly, European ash, spurge laurel, and a vast selection of other non-native, invasive species. Hundreds of native trees and shrubs have been planted and tended in their place by the volunteers.

It hasn’t just been about the work; it is also a teaching time. We have seen a large number of students and other youngsters who have joined into the restoration activity from pulling ivy and digging blackberries to learning how to plant properly. Not only does it change the environment but also changes peoples’ perceptions and understanding. It has been a tremendous effort that Cyndy and WNPS can view with pride and satisfaction. Cyndy has been a model of what we hope stewards become.

## Chapter Meetings

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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 August and September newsletters. Program meetings are normally scheduled from October through May on the second Monday of each month in Olympia and on the second Wednesday in Tacoma. Starting at 7 pm, each meeting consists of a quick review of local items and announcements, and a presentation lasting approximately an hour. 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 Lord Mansion Coach House, 211 21st Avenue SW, Olympia. Meetings are free and open to the public. Please contact Gail Sklar ([presentations@southsoundchapterwnps.org](mailto: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. We have a special kickoff meeting planned for September--watch monthly updates and the newsletter for details.

### The Passing of Helen Engle by Bill Brookreson

In this section of *The Acorn* we typically highlight an environmental issue that impacts native plants. This article is no exception since it involves a very environmental person. What follows is a celebration of a long-time member of the South Sound Chapter and a friend, Helen Engle. There will be any articles written about Helen Engle and her impact on this state and this community. On March 13, the Tacoma News Tribune posted Craig Sailor's tribute to Helen entitled *A Mighty Oak as Fallen: Helen Engle, A Giant of Conservation, has Died*. In the field of conservation and environmental protection, Helen was a legend. You can read more about her early accomplishments in Dee Arntz's book, *Extraordinary Women Conservationists of Washington: Mothers of Nature*. Everyone who worked with Helen has memories that they cherish.



Helen had a wonderful way of bringing people together, from political figures, to environmental activists, to ordinary citizens. No one kept count of all the meetings and gatherings that were held at the Engle house in University Place. It was an honor to be invited.

My fondest memories of Helen are of a different nature. I will always think of the woman who loved the birds and the native plants of her extraordinary yard. She led innumerable walks there. I think of her telling me about a favorite tree that attracted the birds. Talking about those pesky ants that spread the hardy cyclamens around her yard. About the western azalea and its fragrance. About the snag she created for the birds. I remember all the special places in her yard and the extraordinary feeling of peace you felt there.

Helen lived a very full life. We were graced by her presence for 93 years. She died at the home she loved, surrounded by people who loved her. Many of the things she helped to create or preserve will serve as monuments to her life: the Billy Frank Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, Point Defiance Park, the Nature Center at Snake Lake, Swan Creek Park, China Lake Natural Area, Chambers Creek Canyon--the list could go on and on. But, my favorite memory will always be just walking with her through the garden she loved. What a privilege.



Helen, sharing the garden she loved.

## Chair Report

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As summer approaches I would like you to help put together some information sheets we can use in our communication tool box. Please help in updating our list of great places to visit, such as demonstration gardens, that have native plants in the South Sound area by sending in your favorite spots. When I first joined the Washington Native Plant Society, I liked going to these special spots to gather information on what native plants would work in my yard and see what they looked like in a garden setting.

We have been asked a few times for lists of native plants that would work in West of the Cascades with Firewise landscaping recommendations. What would you recommend as low flammability native species? What are the key properties of plants for low flammability? Which are low growing? Which plants may not work close to the house? If you have suggestions for these or other related aspects for a Firewise homesite, please send them in too. These ideas can be compiled to have a handout ready for the Washington State Fair where we have a booth in the same building as the Firewise booth.

Send ideas to: [chair@southsoundchapterwnps.org](mailto:chair@southsoundchapterwnps.org)

## Workshops and Conferences

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### Know Your Grasses – 2019 Workshop June 19, 2019 - June 21, 2019

WNPS and the University of Washington Herbarium at the Burke Museum are partnering to offer this grass identification workshop taught by grass expert Clay Antieau. The workshop, at Hitchcock Hall, 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. This class operates daily from 9 am - 5 pm, Wednesday and Thursday, and 9 am - 1 pm on Friday. \$325 for members, \$365 nonmembers. Registration is on line at <https://wnps.org/grasses19-registration>



Now for the rest of the summer enjoy being outside and save the dates:

- June 8, 2019 from 10 AM to 2 PM the Friends of Lake Kapowsin have planned another appreciation day to celebrate all that is Lake Kapowsin and to educate the community about the lake. The WNPS South Sound Chapter will be there to share about native plants and the chapter.
- Aug. 30 - Sept. 22 we will again have a booth at the Washington State Fair and I hope you will be able to volunteer for this event.
- Tue. Sept 10 we will have our joint meeting at the Billy Frank Jr Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge.



## Plant and Seed Sales

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**Central Puget Sound Chapter Spring Plant Sale and Environmental Fair**, Saturday, April 27, 10 am – 4 pm, Mercerdale Park, Mercer Island. WNPS members may shop an hour early, 9 - 10 am for best selection. For more information see the Central Puget Sound web page.

**Pierce County Master Gardener's Plant Sale**, April 27, 9 am - 4 pm & April 28, 2019, 9 am - 3 pm, at the WSU Almendinger Conference Center, 2606 W. Pioneer Way, Puyallup. The sale will feature vendors and plants grown by Master Gardeners, as well as gardening books for sale. Proceeds support Pierce County Master Gardener's programs.

**Tacoma Nature Center Spring Plant Sale**, May 4, 9 am - 2 pm. Landscape your yard with plants that are native to our area. Planting natives ensures the conservation of our precious water resources and provides habitat for local birds, mammals and insects. A list of available plants will be posted on the website by 1 pm on Friday, May 3. Come early for the best selection.

### Become a Member or Renew Your Membership

The easiest way to become a member or renew your membership is on line at [WNPS.org](http://WNPS.org). If you have any questions, contact the WNPS office or Gail Trotter [chair@southsoundchapterwnps.org](mailto:chair@southsoundchapterwnps.org)

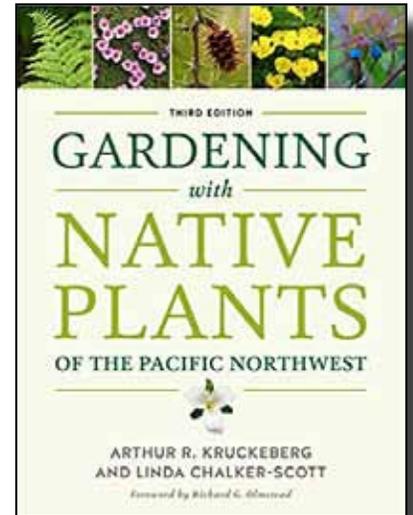
## Native Plant Resources

*Gardening with Native Plants of the Pacific Northwest*, 3rd edition, by Arthur R. Kruckeberg and Linda Chalker-Scott. Introduction by Richard Olmstead, University of Washington Press, 2019, \$39.95. The scheduled release date is April 15, 2019.

For a number of years, many of us have used Kruckeberg's *Gardening with Native Plants of the Pacific Northwest* (1996, second edition) as one of our invaluable references for native plant gardening. This 3rd edition builds on the classic materials developed by Dr. Kruckeberg, but has been updated to reflect the changes in nomenclature. It has over 900 color photos of native trees, shrubs, perennials, grasses and annuals. The plants in the book have been selected as "garden-worthy" which makes it particularly useful. New chapters by horticulturalist Linda Chalker-Scott have been added with new information on garden ecology and the latest in garden science.

Thorough, practical, and easy to use, this updated edition of the book should become the standard guidebook for anyone who gardens with Northwest natives.

Visit <http://www.washington.edu/uwpress/search/books/KRUGAR.html> for a complete description of the contents.



## Volunteer Opportunites



One of the goals of the South Sound Chapter of WNPS is to provide a wide variety of opportunities for people to volunteer in activities that they enjoy, and which can serve the community as well as the society. Most of those opportunities will be found in the monthly updates and on the website. Ongoing activities include:

**Tacoma Nature Center:** Cyndy Dillon leads work parties on the first and third Fridays of the month. For details contact Cyndy at [cpdillongh@comcast.net](mailto:cpdillongh@comcast.net)



**Lord Mansion Native Plant Garden (Olympia):** Bill Brookreson leads work parties on third Thursdays.

**Ryan's Park Work Party (Tacoma):** Luis Yanez, Habitat Steward for Friends of Ryan's Park, leads work parties the first Saturday of the month. For more information, contact Luis at [luis\\_cia@yahoo.com](mailto:luis_cia@yahoo.com)

### Ongoing Activities

**China Lake Natural Area (Tacoma):** Gail Sklar leads a work party the first Saturday of the month. For more information, contact Gail at [gjsklar@gmail.com](mailto:gjsklar@gmail.com)

**Wapato Lake Natural Area. (Tacoma):** On the 4th Saturday of the month, Park Steward Chris Beale has a work party. For more information, contact Chris at 253-320-5623 or [restorewapato@gmail.com](mailto:restorewapato@gmail.com)

**South Sound Prairie Restoration:** Center for Natural Lands Management at Glacial Heritage Preserve continues to help enhance the South Puget Sound Prairies. Work parties are every Tuesday and the second Saturday of the month, 9 am - 3 pm. Contact [ssvolunteers@cnlm.org](mailto:ssvolunteers@cnlm.org) for more information, or call (360) 570-0762.



## Hikes and Field Trips

Chapter members continue to work on arranging hikes and other native plant walks. These are announced at <https://www.wnps.org/south-sound> and in the monthly updates. If you have a favorite hike you would like to share and lead, please contact Cyndy Dillon at [cpdillongh@comcast.net](mailto:cpdillongh@comcast.net) Cyndy has done an outstanding job arranging hikes in almost every month of the year.

Native plant hikes are a great way to learn more about our wonderful flora and to enjoy the company of other plant enthusiasts. We also try to recommend hikes you can do on your own. If you enjoy having plant lists to check your skill, go to the WNPS website's plant lists [http://www.wnps.org/plant\\_lists/exploring\\_native\\_plants.html](http://www.wnps.org/plant_lists/exploring_native_plants.html)



# Chapter & State Contacts

Chair – Gail Trotter  
[chair@southsoundchapterwnps.org](mailto:chair@southsoundchapterwnps.org)  
 Phone: (360) 819-4513  
 Mail: 6028 Butterball Ln NE, Lacey WA 98516-9523

Vice Chair (Pierce County meeting) – Jane Ostericher  
[vicechair.pierce@southsoundchapterwnps.org](mailto:vicechair.pierce@southsoundchapterwnps.org)

Vice Chair (Thurston County meeting) – Deborah Nashlund  
[vicechair.thurston@southsoundchapterwnps.org](mailto:vicechair.thurston@southsoundchapterwnps.org)

Secretary – Allan Borden  
[secretary@southsoundchapterwnps.org](mailto:secretary@southsoundchapterwnps.org)

Treasurer – Rita Hummel  
[treasurer@southsoundchapterwnps.org](mailto:treasurer@southsoundchapterwnps.org)

Immediate Past Chair – Bill Brookreson  
[b.brookreson@comcast.net](mailto:b.brookreson@comcast.net)

At Large Members - Vacant  
 Chapter Botanist – Vacant  
 Conservation Committee Chair – Vacant

Field Trip Committee Chair – Cyndy Dillon  
[fieldtrips@southsoundchapterwnps.org](mailto:fieldtrips@southsoundchapterwnps.org)

Editorial Committee Chair -- Bill Brookreson  
[newsletterediting@southsoundchapterwnps.org](mailto:newsletterediting@southsoundchapterwnps.org)



Presentations Coordinator – Sue Butkus  
[presentations@southsoundchapterwnps.org](mailto:presentations@southsoundchapterwnps.org)

Publicity Committee Chair -- Jane Ostericher  
[vicechair.pierce@southsoundchapterwnps.org](mailto:vicechair.pierce@southsoundchapterwnps.org)

Volunteers Committee Chair –Gail Trotter  
[getrotter@comcast.net](mailto:getrotter@comcast.net)

Education Committee Chair -- Jane Ostericher  
[vicechair.pierce@southsoundchapterwnps.org](mailto:vicechair.pierce@southsoundchapterwnps.org)

Grant Committee Chair - John Neorr  
[grants@southsoundchapterwnps.org](mailto:grants@southsoundchapterwnps.org)

Stewardship Committee Chair – Bill Brookreson  
[b.brookreson@comcast.net](mailto:b.brookreson@comcast.net)

Speaker Bureau Committee Chair – Gail Sklar  
[gjsklar@gmail.com](mailto:gjsklar@gmail.com)

Chapter Web Manager - Lee Fellenberg  
[webmanager@southsoundchapterwnps.org](mailto:webmanager@southsoundchapterwnps.org)

### WNPS Statewide:

President – Van Bobbit [vanbobbitt@gmail.com](mailto:vanbobbitt@gmail.com)

Administrator – Denise Mahnke  
 6310 N.E. 74th St., Ste 215E Seattle WA 98115-8171  
[wnps@wnps.org](mailto:wnps@wnps.org)



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 Addition chapters: please add \$10 each

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Washington Native Plant Society  
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**South Sound Chapter WNPS**  
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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.***



**The young, and not so young, volunteers at Tacoma Nature Center**