

Habitat Stewardship Program

November 2015 Progress Report



Water Resources - Environmental Services
City of Olympia, Public Works



City of Olympia, Water Resources Habitat Stewardship Program November 2015 Progress Report

Program Development Overview

The Storm and Surface Water Utility has three primary goals: minimizing flooding, maintaining or improving water quality, and protecting and enhancing aquatic habitat. The habitat program was created to implement the 2013 Habitat and Stewardship Strategy by focusing additional resources on aquatic habitat protection and enhancement City- wide. Work was initiated in October 2014 when new staff was hired and existing staff dedicated a portion of their time on habitat stewardship efforts. The program supports City-wide environmental enhancement priorities and projects.

Program Goal: Partner with the community to protect, steward, and restore aquatic, riparian, and associated terrestrial habitats within Olympia’s watersheds.

Program Objectives:

1. Restore and facilitate natural processes in aquatic and associated habitats within the City of Olympia.
2. Restore and enhance upland forest, riparian forest, and wetland native species and structural diversity.
3. Preserve and restore riparian habitats to support a diversity of native wildlife and plant species.
4. Support neighborhood advocacy and stewardship of aquatic and associated habitats.
5. Improve water quality and aquatic habitat of streams, lakes, Budd Inlet, and adjacent shoreline.

STRATEGIES	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	FUTURE PRIORITIES
Engage community and solicit input.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosted focus group to identify program priorities with neighborhood and community organization representatives. • Attended two Coalition of Neighborhoods Assn. meetings. • Partnered with Northeast Neighborhood Assn. on the 2015 Mission Creek Watershed Forum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare annual update on accomplishments and priorities • Provide additional outreach to neighborhoods and community organizations • Pilot a project focused on the Mission Creek Watershed
Collaborate on habitat stewardship efforts across departments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interdepartmental habitat work group with Olympia Parks, Arts and Recreation (OPARD). • Managing West Bay Environmental Restoration Assessment with Port, OPARD, and Squaxin Island Tribe. • Coordinating noxious weed related needs with Thurston County staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support OPARD, Public Works, and other internal habitat-related efforts on City-owned or managed properties. • Continue coordination of noxious weed management on City property. • Develop agreements with at least three privately-owned parcels/or homeowner association
Develop legal authority and mechanism to provide stewardship work on private properties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed framework and legal agreement. • Entered into two agreements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop agreements with at least three privately-owned parcels/or homeowners

Summary of Program Metrics

<u>Acres in Stewardship</u> Parks – 50 Water Resources – 36 Private – 17	<u>Native Plants Installed</u> Approximately 9,100 native trees and shrubs installed. 5, 850 planned 2015-16.	<u>Volunteers</u> Collaborated on 7 events. Supported 800+ volunteers contributing over 1,775 hours.
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Partnerships

Partnerships are key to the success of the habitat program. Aquatic resources and habitat concerns span various public and private ownership across the City. Working together with other City departments, neighborhoods, and community groups is critical to restore and protect aquatic and associated habitat across the landscape by leveraging efforts of partners and building advocacy to implement scientifically-based projects and programs.

PARTNERS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	FUTURE PRIORITIES
<p style="text-align: center;">Internal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Olympia Parks, Arts, and Recreation (OPARD) • Olympia Community Planning and Development (Urban Forestry and Long Term Planning) • Olympia Drinking Water Utility <p style="text-align: center;">External</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capitol Land Trust (CLT) • South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group (SPSSEG) • City of Lacey • City of Yelm • Olympia Coalition for Ecosystem Preservation (OCEP) • Goldcrest Homeowners Assn • Northeast Neighborhood Assn (NENA) • 4-H • Port of Olympia (Port) • Squaxin Island Tribe • The Evergreen State College (TESC) • Quixote Village • Washington State Departments of Ecology/Washington Conservation Corp, Natural Resources and Enterprise Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborated with OPARD on open space habitat assessments, stewardship planning, volunteer events, and restoration work. Completed habitat assessment of Mission Creek Nature Park. • Implemented restoration planting projects at Grass Lake Nature Park with TESC and at Allison Springs with CLT. • Supporting Deschutes Ranch riparian planting and wetland restoration associated with water rights mitigation in collaboration with SPSSEG, Lacey and Yelm. • Assisted OCEP landowner with stewardship planning, volunteer event, and restoration at the Westside heron rookery. • Developed stewardship plan for Goldcrest HOA community-owned open space in the headwaters of Green Cove Creek. • Partnering with the Port of Olympia, OPARD and the Squaxin Island Tribe on a West Bay restoration assessment. • Supporting Quixote Village habitat stewardship on their property and the adjacent Black Lake Meadows stormwater facility. • Partnered with NENA to organize the 2nd annual Mission Creek Watershed Forum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to collaborate with internal and external partners to further stewardship of aquatic and associated habitat in all watersheds within the City of Olympia. • Engage with neighborhoods and community groups supporting aquatic stewardship in the various watersheds of the City.

Projects and Events

The habitat program has participated and partnered on a number of habitat stewardship projects in the community. These projects improve aquatic and associated habitat at key sites within the City of Olympia and engage community volunteers.

PROJECTS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	FUTURE PRIORITIES
Deschutes Ranch Wellfield Mitigation	WCC planted over 6,000 native trees and shrubs in the first phase of riparian restoration. Technical assistance provided on future riparian restoration phases and 20-acre wetland restoration.	Continue technical advice and support on required mitigation actions and site management needs. Assist with replanting this winter.
Allison Springs Restoration	Installed over 1,000 plants with CLT volunteers on continued restoration efforts.	Continue to provide maintenance and invasive plant control work at the site.
4-H Know Your Government Conference Restoration Event	Assisted OPARD staff in coordinating 300 volunteers to pull ivy and plant cedar trees at Priest Point Park.	Continued support of joint Parks/Water Resources habitat stewardship events.
2015 Arbor Day Celebration with Olympia Parks and Urban Forestry	Partnered with OPARD, and Community Planning and Development (CP&D) – Urban Forestry Program to celebrate Arbor Day on March 28th with two concurrent volunteer stewardship events at Grass Lake Refuge and Priest Point Park, a celebration at the Artesian Commons, and a ceremonial street tree planting.	Continue to collaborate with OPARD and CP&D to continue a tradition of celebrating Arbor Day as one City. (April 16, 2016 planned)
Grass Lake Refuge – Shoreline of Lake Louise near Kaiser Entrance	Collaboration with OPARD and volunteers in removing 1.5 acres of blackberry to prepare the site for planting with native species. Installed wood duck boxes on the shoreline of Lake Louise. Restored 0.5 acre with native shoreline species, and planted 300 cedar trees with volunteers.	Complete a habitat and stewardship assessment of Grass Lake Refuge to identify and prioritize restoration opportunities.
Lower Mission Creek in Priest Point Park	Collaboration with Parks Stewardship on ivy removal and planting near the mouth of Mission Creek during multiple events. This work builds off of prior restoration efforts at the Mission Creek estuary by SPSSEG, the Port, and City of Olympia.	Complete a collaborative habitat and stewardship assessment of Priest Point Park with OPARD Staff. Initial focal project to restore lower Mission Creek below East Bay Drive.
Mission Creek Nature Park (MCNP) Habitat Assessment	Collaborated with OPARD to perform aquatic habitat assessment at MCNP. Working with neighborhood park stewards and OPARD to implement recommended projects.	Continue to implement restoration opportunities in collaboration with OPARD, NENA, and neighborhood stewards.

PROJECTS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	FUTURE PRIORITIES
Backyard Stewardship Program (Mission Creek Watershed – Pilot)	Providing stewardship planning tools, information, and technical assistance to targeted landowners adjacent to critical areas and watershed residents. Planning to expand to other watersheds.	Roll out to targeted landowners and watershed residents in Mission Creek Watershed (and vicinity) in early in 2016.
Stewardship activities on Water Resources managed property	Improving stewardship of Public Works managed properties including Black Lake Meadows, Allison Springs, Taylor Wetlands, and Central and Marian properties. Maintaining a modest native plant nursery.	Continue stewardship assessments of Water Resources managed properties and develop recommendations and restoration options.
Westside Heronry Property	Supported OCEP and landowner in a stewardship event with 162 volunteers, planting 800 native plants, removing invasive species, and mulching prior to the 2015 heron nesting season. Completed habitat assessment.	Continue to support the landowner and partners by providing technical assistance and support.

Planning Efforts

The habitat program has been engaged in a number of planning processes over the last year and is anticipating involvement in others over the next year. As these efforts progress, habitat program staff will provide technical advice, review, and project management depending on the project scope, scale, and needs.

PLANNING EFFORT	WORK TO DATE	FUTURE PRIORITIES
West Bay Environmental Restoration Assessment	Managing consultant-led effort to develop a science-based assessment of existing and historic conditions, identify critical habitat processes, restoration alternatives, and stormwater retrofit opportunities along the West Bay shoreline. Collaborating with OPARD, the Port of Olympia, and the Squaxin Island Tribe. April –December 2015.	Complete project by the end of 2015 and inform stakeholders, decision makers and public about results of the assessment.
Assist OPARD with habitat eligibility for Washington State Recreation and Conservation grants	Providing technical review of Parks Master Plan update in order to gain City eligibility for Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) habitat grants as well as the traditional recreation grant funding.	Continue to support OPARD planning staff and provide technical assistance as they complete the updated Parks Master Plan. Future grants could be used to acquire, enhance, or restore habitat.
Critical Areas Ordinance Review	Providing technical assistance to CP&D staff on Critical Areas Ordinance review and update.	Stay engaged as the process moves to completion in mid-2016.

PLANNING EFFORT	WORK TO DATE	FUTURE PRIORITIES
Alliance for a Healthy South Sound	Participated in regional planning and priority development for South Puget Sound.	Increase participation in order to influence environmental projects important to the Olympia area.
Storm and Surface Water Master Plan	Coordinating with PW Water Resources planning staff on the upcoming update to the Storm and Surface Water Master Plan.	Participate in developing the Storm and Surface Water Master Plan with a specific emphasis on aquatic habitat stewardship goals and priorities.
Habitat Grant Database	Tracking grant opportunities that have habitat enhancement, restoration, or acquisition potential.	Continue to track grants and apply to appropriate opportunities as they arise.