

City of Olympia Habitat Stewardship Program

Presented to:
Utility Advisory Committee
November 2, 2023



Habitat and Habitat Stewardship

What is “Habitat”?

- Forested parks and natural areas (owned by Parks and/or PW, schools, some private properties)
- Green stormwater infrastructure: bioswales and rain gardens
- Pollinator gardens
- *Focus on aquatic habitat:* Wetlands, streams, marine shorelines and adjacent landscapes

What is “Habitat Stewardship?”

- Invasive plant and noxious weed control
- PNW (native) vegetation establishment
- Sediment management and erosion control
- Outreach, education and technical support
- Planning, monitoring, research and adaptive management
- Land acquisition



Interdepartmental Collaboration

Who?

- Public Works: Vegetation Operations Crew
- Public Works: Environmental Services
- Parks Stewardship Program
- All other City departments (planning and policy work)



Community Collaboration



Ecosystem Services

Why Aquatic Habitat?

- Natural surface water storage and filtration
- Slope stabilization and erosion control
- Healthy habitat and resources for protected wildlife species
- Increase climate resilience
- Address historic environmental inequities
- Restore cultural connections to the PNW landscape
- Improve overall livability and sustainability

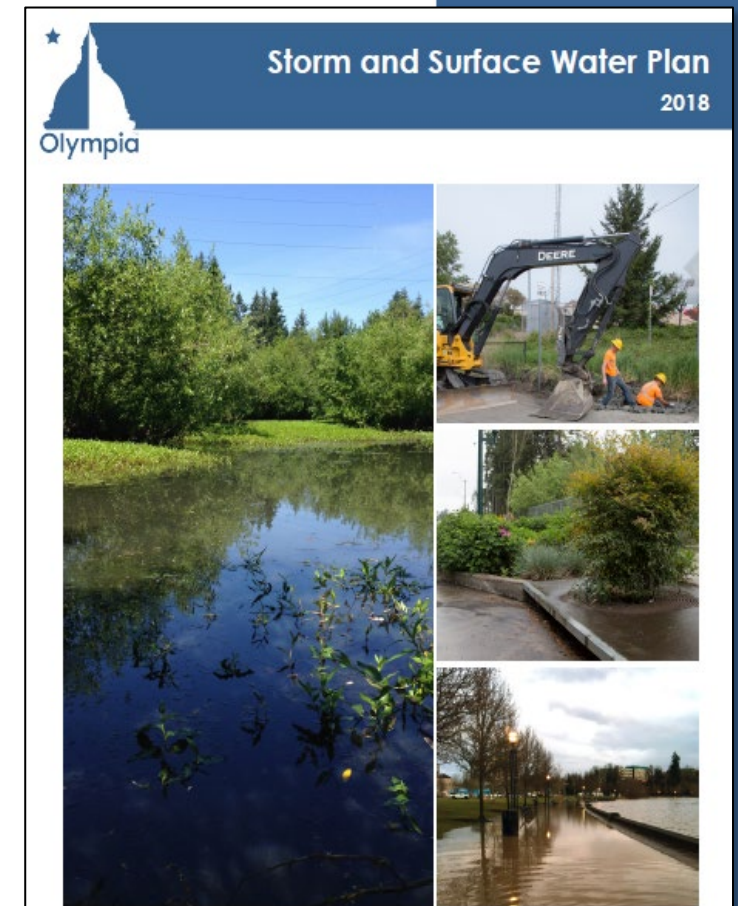


Policy Framework



Storm & Surface Water Goal #3: Protect, enhance, and restore aquatic habitat functions provided by wetlands, streams, lakes, marine shorelines and riparian areas (Chapter 8)

3-1	Collaborate with other agencies, tribes, and community organizations to support stream, riparian, wetland, and shoreline enhancement and restoration, fish passage, and adaptation to climate change/sea level rise.	HM LRP CFP	
3-2	Collaborate with other departments to develop a comprehensive integrated pest management strategy to guide noxious weed control and vegetation management efforts.	HM LRP	
3-3	Develop and implement vegetation and habitat management plans for City-owned properties containing aquatic and associated habitat to improve habitat, protect water quality, and support native species.	HM LRP	
3-4	Identify and acquire important habitat areas or easements (collaborating with internal and external partners).	HM LRP	CFP
3-5	Identify and manage invasive species in aquatic and associated habitats to protect habitat and water quality functions.	HM LRP	AM
3-6	Identify important corridors and support efforts linking important habitats across the City and adjacent jurisdictions.	AM LRP	
3-7	Identify, prioritize, and implement aquatic habitat protection and enhancement opportunities by watershed to enhance and restore ecosystem function (i.e. implement the <i>Habitat Stewardship Strategy</i>).	LRP	HM
3-8	Influence and assess effectiveness of City regulations that protect aquatic resources (e.g. Critical Areas Ordinance and Shoreline Master Program).	LRP	
3-9	Manage beaver activity to provide habitat and water quality benefits while mitigating flooding risk.	LRP FP	HM

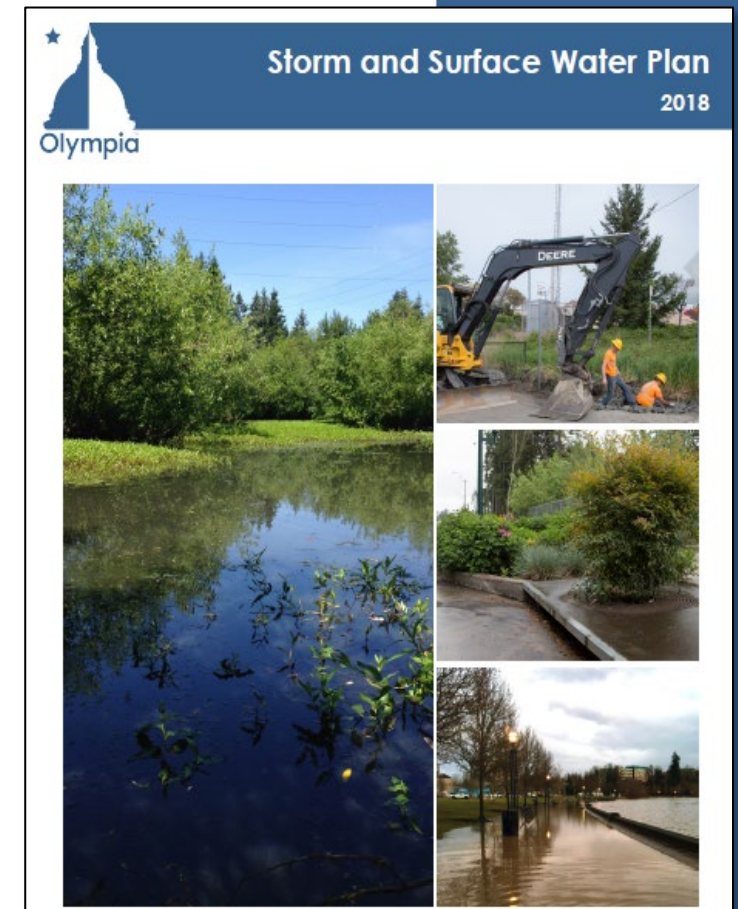


Policy Framework



Storm & Surface Water Goal #3: Protect, enhance and restore aquatic habitat functions provided by wetlands, streams, lakes, marine shorelines and riparian areas (Chapter 8)

3-10	Manage vegetation in riparian areas in order to improve habitat and water quality functions.	HM	AM
3-11	Monitor aquatic habitat quality and quantity based on the best scientific information, methods, and tools available.	LRP HM AM	
3-12	Participate in regional planning to support salmon and Puget Sound recovery (e.g. WRIA 13 and Alliance for a Healthy South Sound).		LRP
3-13	Provide outreach and education to the community around aquatic habitat, wildlife and ecosystem function (wetlands, streams, marine shoreline, lakes, buffers and associated wildlife).	HM	
3-14	Provide focused outreach, technical assistance and incentives to private properties containing aquatic and associated habitats, while promoting voluntary stewardship.	HM LRP TR	
3-15	Provide technical support to City projects with aquatic permitting requirements (e.g. CWA 401/404 and HPA) or that are specifically habitat related.		TR LRP
3-16	Support partners and community efforts to protect, steward, and restore aquatic and associated habitats.	LRP HM TR CFP	



Policy Framework

Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies

PN2.3 Identify, remove and prevent the use and spread of invasive plants and wildlife

PN2.4 Preserve and restore native plants by including restoration efforts and volunteer partnerships in all city land management

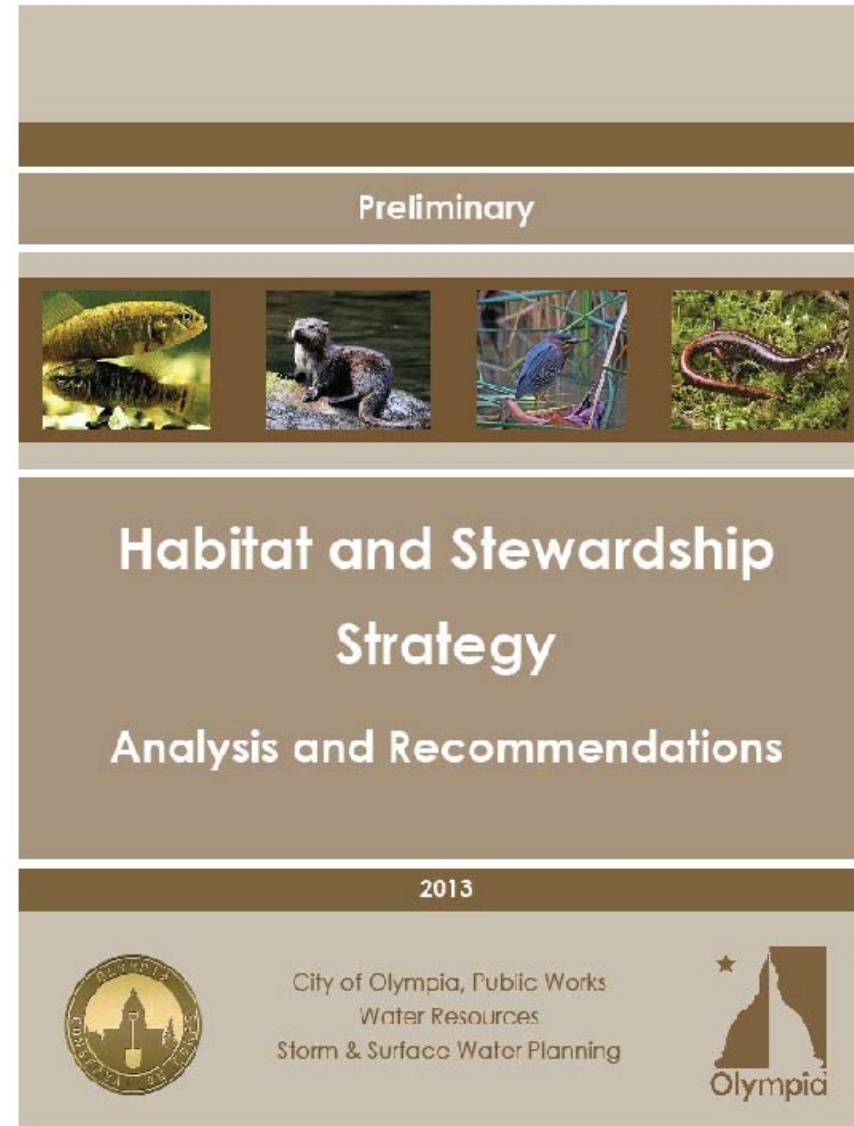
PN2.6 Conserve and restore wildlife habitat in both existing corridors and high-priority separate sites

PN2.8 Evaluate, monitor and measure environmental conditions, and use this data to develop short- and long-term management strategies

PN3.4 Evaluate the environmental, ecologic, health, social and economic benefits of the urban forest

PN4.2 Prioritize and implement restoration efforts based on the best scientific information available to restore natural processes and improve the health and condition of Budd Inlet and its tributaries

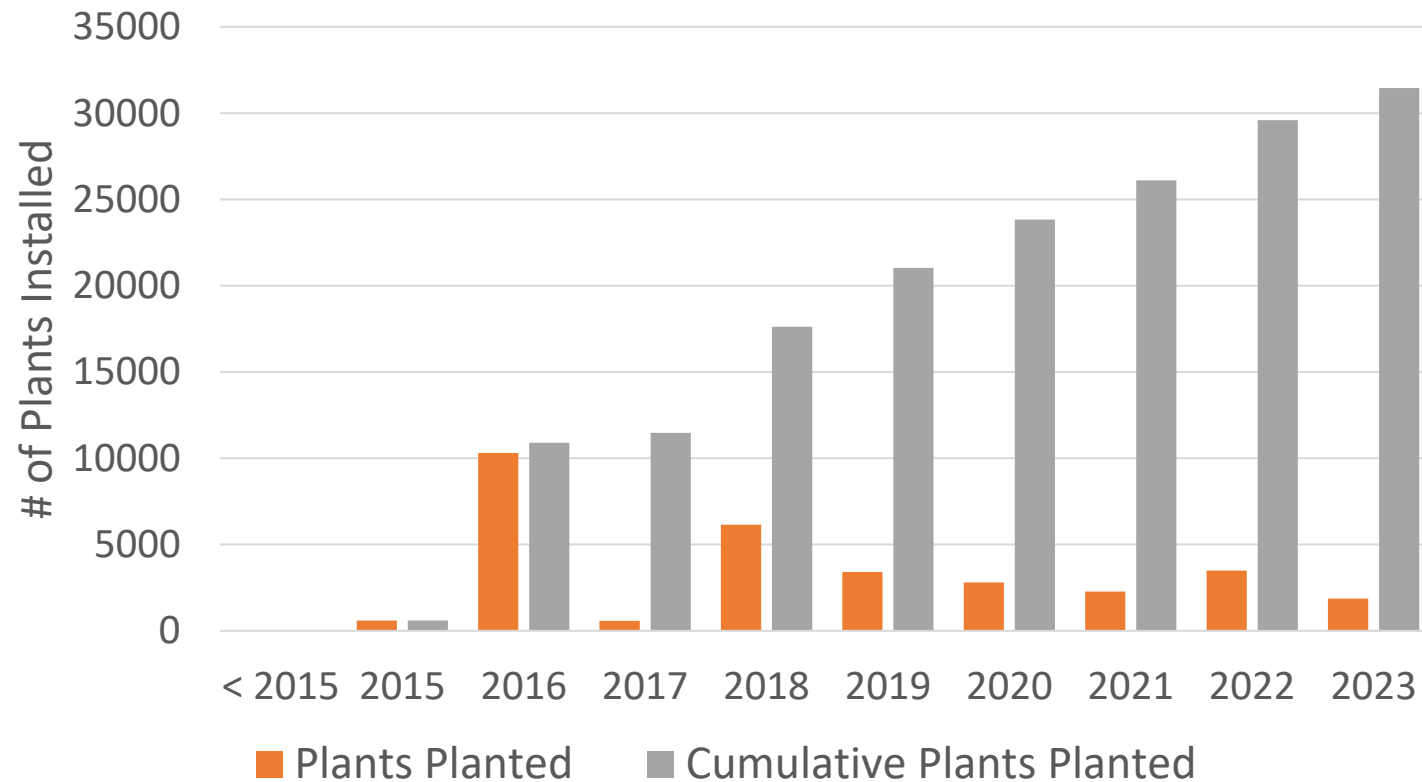
PN6.1 Restore and manage vegetation next to streams, with an emphasis on native vegetation, to greatly improve or provide new fish and wildlife habitat



Updates & Highlights



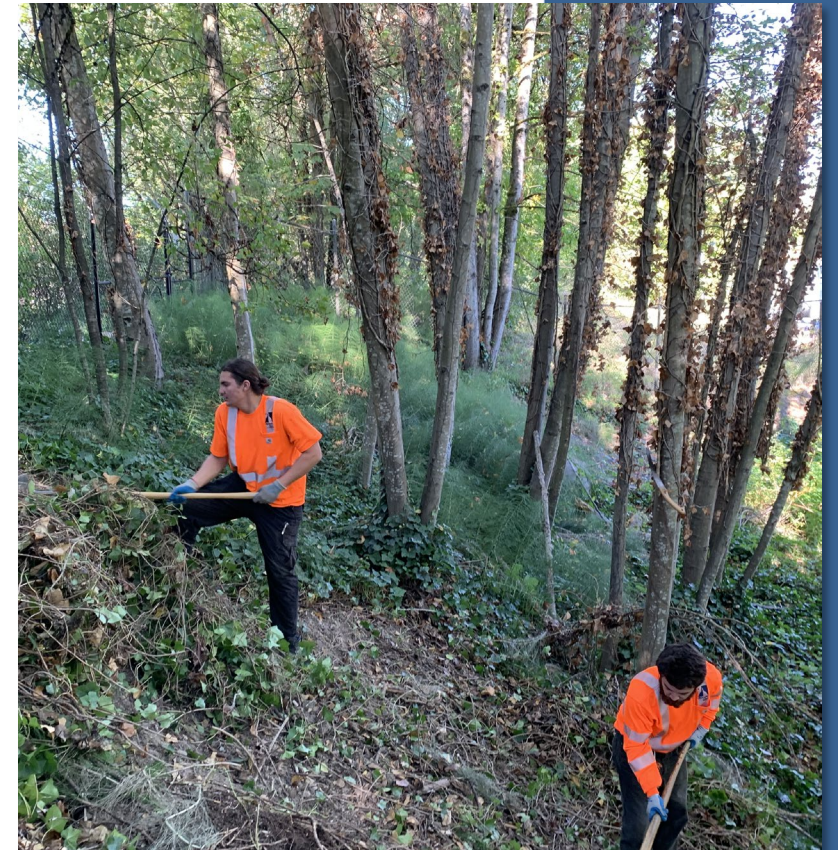
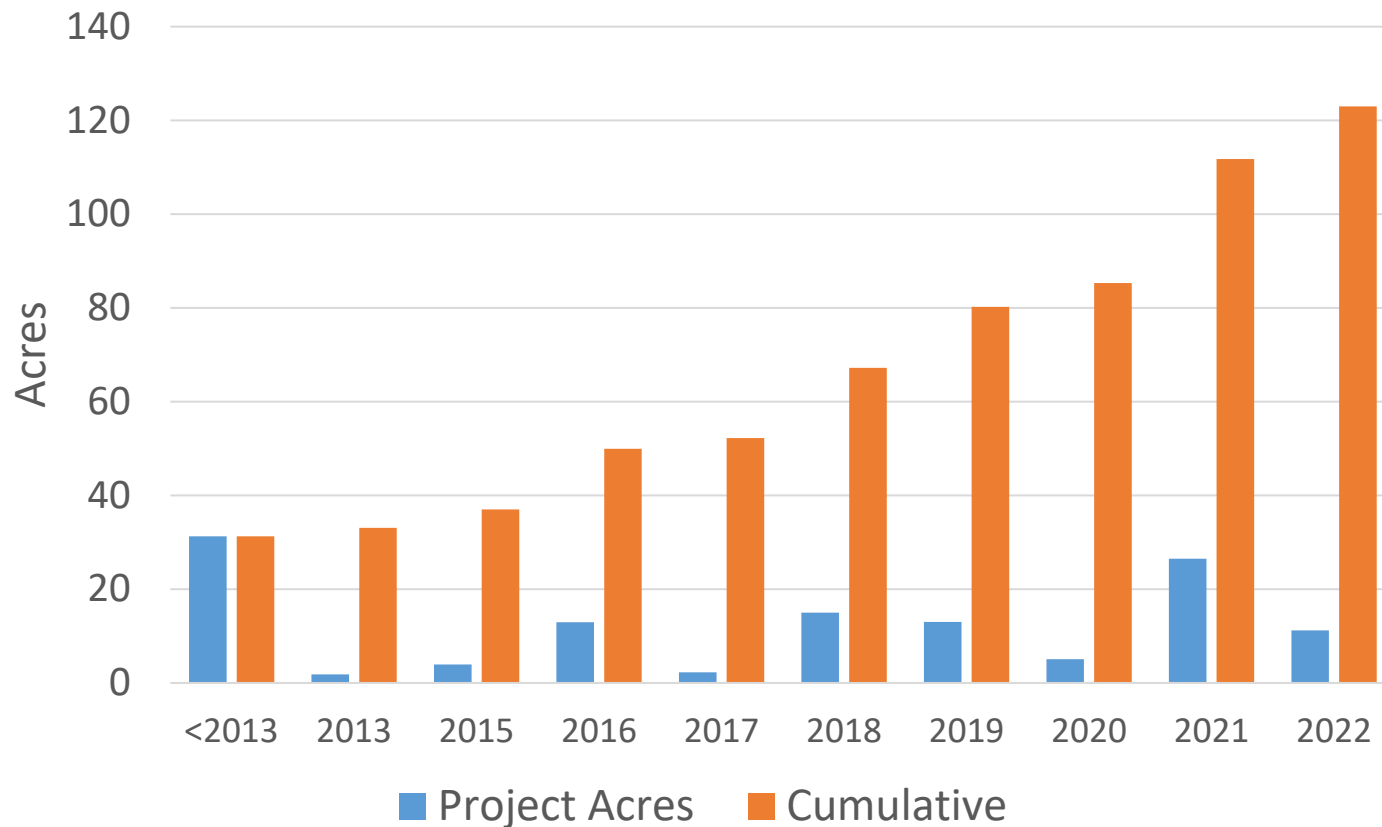
Habitat Stewardship Plantings



Updates & Highlights



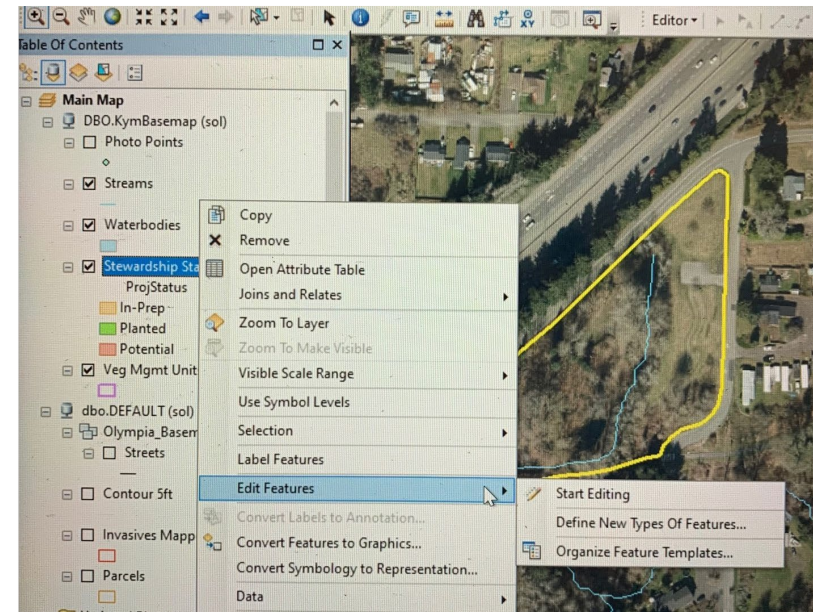
Acres Planted



Updates & Highlights

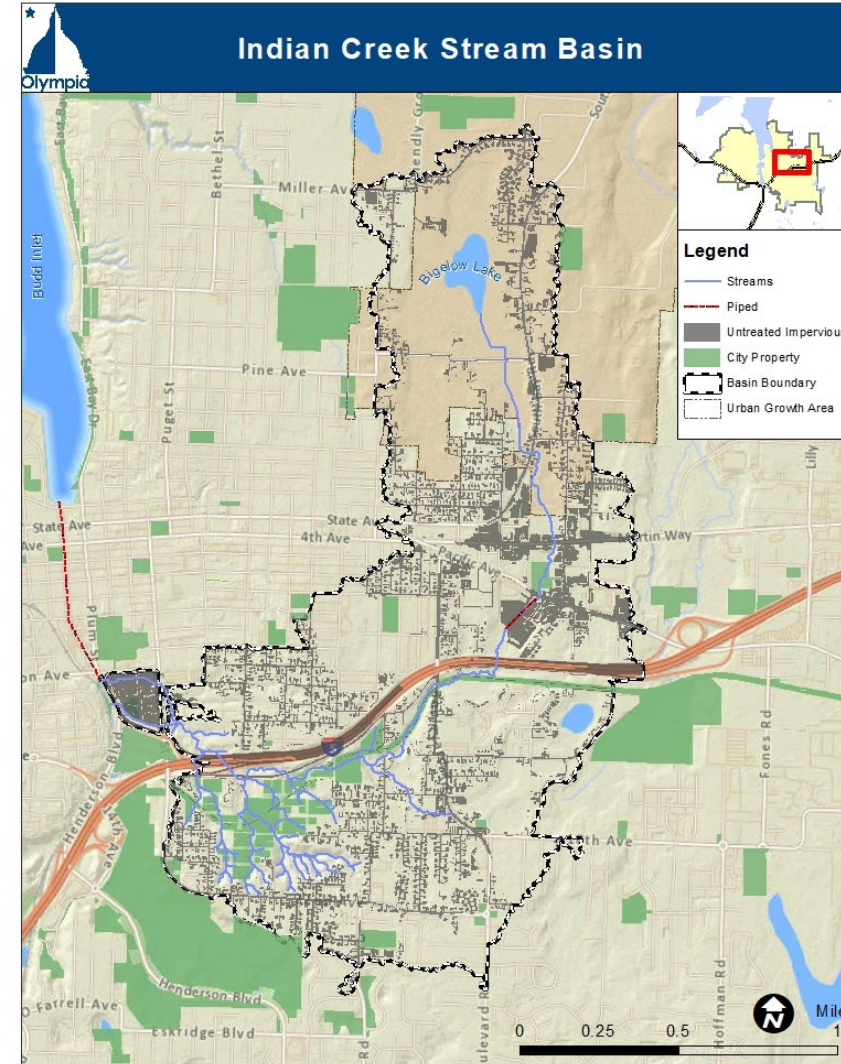
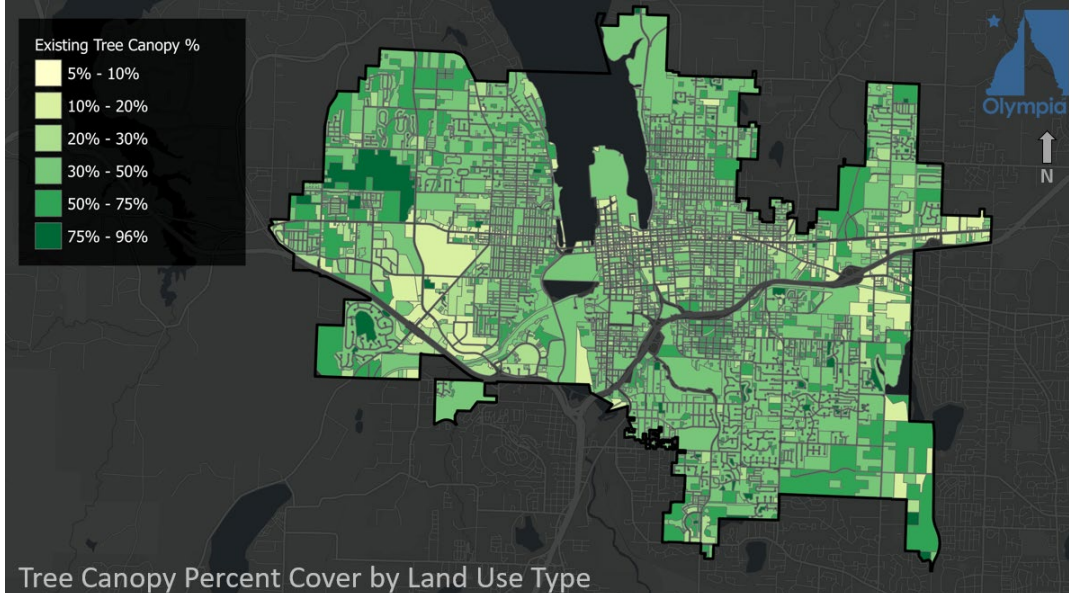


- Re-org: Moved to in-house operations crew (no longer Washington Conservation Corps)
- Updated GIS database for work planning & documentation
- Updated tools, methods and technology
- Earmarked over 20 additional stormwater properties for potential future habitat work



Updates & Highlights

- Watershed planning: Indian Creek Stormwater Management Action Plan
- Technical support to Homelessness Response Team, environmental cleanup after encampment removal
- Collaboration with Urban Forestry



Created December 2022

The City of Olympia and its personnel cannot assure the accuracy, completeness, reliability, or suitability of this information for any particular purpose. The parcels, right-of-ways, utilities and structures depicted herein are based on record information and aerial photos only. It is recommended that recipient and/or user field verify all information prior to use. The use of this data for purposes other than those for which they were created may yield inaccurate or misleading results. The recipient may not assert any proprietary rights to this information. The City of Olympia and its personnel neither accept nor assume liability or responsibility, whatsoever, for any activity involving this information with respect to lost profits, lost savings or any other consequential damages.



Updates & Highlights

How Habitat Integrates with Other Utility Objectives

- Beaver management
- Tree and vegetation management for utility infrastructure work



Looking Ahead



Challenges

- Human Impacts: Encampments, illicit activities, trash
- Nuisance wildlife: Deer, rabbits and beavers
- Climate change: Wetter winters and drier summers
- Urban growth and development
- Structure and funding for incentive programs
- Competing cross-departmental priorities



Looking Ahead

Climate Considerations

- Strategic plant species selection and geographic seed sourcing
- Increased maintenance and watering needs
- Invasive pest readiness
- Wildfire threat

Equity Considerations

- Equity Index incorporated into project planning
- Work distributed throughout the City
- Equitable access to natural areas, how our work is reflected in Parks equity work & Master Plan
- Workforce development



City of Olympia Habitat Stewardship Program

Contact:

Kym Foley, Environmental Habitat Planner
Water Resources – Environmental Services
kfoley@ci.Olympia.wa.us
(360) 570-3957

