

Report to the Natural Heritage Advisory Council from the DNR Natural Areas Program

*Conserving Washington's native species and
ecosystems, today and for future generations*

March 2014 Meeting of the NHAC

Report from the Conservation, Recreation and Transactions Division

At **Bald Hill NAP** staff and contractors completed a restoration project in fall 2013 involving removal of conifer trees encroaching on rare grassland bald habitats. Approximately 300 trees were selected for removal or girdling based on their encroachment into bald habitat and their impact on habitat connectivity for the Taylor's checkerspot butterfly (recently federally listed "endangered"). This butterfly occurred on the site historically but was last seen there in 2006. This project, along with other habitat enhancements, is helping to prepare the site for future re-introduction of the species. Trees selected for removal were carefully assessed and directionally fallen to avoid impacts to grassland bald habitats and Garry oak trees, and then removed via helicopter. An additional approximately 50 trees that could not be fallen due to risks to bald habitat or oak trees were girdled. The project was funded through a State Wildlife Grant (SWG) from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, a WWRP state lands restoration grant, and funds from the Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) program.



Northeast Region

At **Loomis NRCA**, about 3/8 of a mile of the Johnny Beall Trail, which was originally pioneered by cattlemen and trappers in the early 1900s, was originally located in a relatively flat draw that held moisture for much of the year, including spring and summer months. The amount and

longevity of the moisture saturated the ground and created myriad braided run-off channels, which made trail maintenance nearly impossible. An alternate route was located on the south side of the draw where the elevation was a bit higher. This new route, while in a much better location, required installation of a bridge crossing a tributary to Disappointment Creek (see photos). Throughout the conservation area, volunteer groups continue their work under adopt-a-trail agreements, including the Okanogan Valley Chapter of Backcountry Horsemen of Washington, Association of Okanogan Valley Snowmobile Clubs, and Pacific Northwest Trails Association. The groups maintain their adopted trails, which may include clearing, maintenance of improvements, or other projects approved by the department.

Loomis NRCA Trail Renovation



Northwest Region

At **Cypress Island NRCA** salt marsh restoration in Secret Harbor commenced in August 2013 and much of the construction work was completed. Remaining construction work will resume in summer 2014 with completion scheduled by fall. Work this past fall and winter focused on restoration-related planting. Puget Sound Corps crews planted approximately 10,000 native trees, shrubs and grass plugs in and around the restoration area during six separate sessions. When completed, the project will have included planting of approximately 15,000 native trees, shrubs and grass plugs in all.

Secret Harbor Salt Marsh Restoration



Salt marsh prior to restoration



Salt marsh current conditions (incoming high tide)

At **Cattle Point NRCA** work continues on the county road relocation project. The 30 percent design is complete, and 70 percent design is forthcoming. DNR is working with the National Park to coordinate restoration planning and implementation efforts. A public meeting to present the design is expected soon.

At **Morning Star NRCA** a landscape-scale inventory and assessment of public use facilities is underway to address a backlog of work related to aging or, in some cases, inappropriately-located older facilities. In the meantime, the program continues to utilize Puget Sound Corps crew time to focus work on issues related to user safety and resource protection throughout the conservation area.

Pacific Cascade Region

At **Washougal Oaks Natural Area** high school students from Battleground's Center for Agriculture, Science and Environmental Education helped plant native shrubs and oaks where structures have been removed on recently acquired parcels.

At **Elk River NRCA** preparations are underway to conduct forest restoration thinnings on about 500 acres of second or third growth timber. These stands are from 20-60 years old and are largely composed of Douglas fir trees, a species that was historically uncommon in coastal forests. A volunteer (retired USFS silviculturist) has been examining forest stands to determine age, density and structure in order to come up with thinning prescriptions. Thinning these very dense stands will allow for more light to hit the forest floor and promote undergrowth and a multilayered canopy.

At **Chehalis River Surge Plain NAP** management plan implementation continues with construction of a canoe launch on the Chehalis River, at the end of Preachers Slough Road, and work is underway to complete a second launch at the Blue Slough access. The Preachers Slough project also included improvements to parking and the shoreline trail.

South Puget Sound Region

At **West Tiger Mountain NRCA** an ADA bridge was installed on Forest Loop Interpretive Trail, along with improvements to the barrier-free interpretive trail.

West Tiger Mountain NRCA



New accessible bridge and ramp



Five interpretive panels renovated

Southeast Region

At **Trout Lake NAP** work continues under the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program grant aimed at improving oviposition habitat for the Oregon spotted frog by controlling reed canary grass. During late summer and fall we removed weed cloth previously placed within these sensitive wet meadows. About 2,000 grass and sedge plugs have been planted. More weed cloth was added in select areas and seed was collected to be grown into more plugs for planting in 2014. Half of an old road was removed near Trout Creek last fall before rain stopped the project. The road was planted with 2,000 grass and sedge plants with the help of a Washington Conservation Corps crew. This year we will complete the road removal and planting, as well as continue with weed control in the frog oviposition areas.

Trout Lake Natural Area Preserve



Road removal



Planting with WCC crews



Weed cloth and planting within Oregon Spotted Frog oviposition areas

At **Camas Meadows NAP** DNR fire crews will construct an interpretive trail segment this summer and fall. Interpretive signs are in the early design phase and should be ready for installation along with a new kiosk at the parking area. DNR staff held a neighbor-outreach meeting last fall and are planning both a spring meeting and a June wildflower/weed walk.

At **Columbia Hills NAP** crews completed replacement of 1.25 miles of fence last fall. Two miles of new fence will soon be installed along the northwestern boundary of the preserve, which will

allow removal of 1.2 miles of older fence. This will complete the boundary fence for the site. New kiosks and entrance signs will be placed on the north and south entrances to the preserve.

At **Klickitat Canyon NRCA** Natural Areas Program staff are preparing a restoration thinning of trees encroaching on meadow, sandhill crane and rare plant habitats, scheduled for this spring and fall. The work is funded by a restoration grant from the Recreation and Conservation Office. Washington Conservation Corps crews will remove interior fencing that is no longer needed, and permitting is underway for removal of an irrigation diversion structure.

Prepared by Region Staff, Program Ecologists,
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March 5, 2014

/CWP

Project Status Report – March 2014

Project Name	Project Type	Region or Division / Lead Staff	Recent Activity / Status
Admiralty Inlet restoration phase 2 riparian	RCO restoration grant – Project GEN	<u>CR&T Division</u> Dave Wilderman	Work contracted to Whildbey-Camano Land Trust. Invasive species control, prairie soil addition, and planting on 2 acres. Project continues through June 2015.
Prairie and bald restoration phase 2 and 3	State grant (WDFW) – Projects OLH and GEO	<u>CR&T Division</u> Dave Wilderman	Native prairie seeding and planting on 20 acres at Mima Mounds NAP and Rocky Prairie NAP. Project continues through December 2015.
South Puget Sound Prairies and Balds – Army Compatible Use Buffer program (funds from U.S. Army)	Local grant (Center for Natural Lands Management) – Projects OWT, OWW, OWX, and RPO	<u>CR&T Division</u> Dave Wilderman	Planning prairie restoration activities for 2014 field season and developing proposals for future funding. Funding in hand for 2014.
Mima Mounds golden paintbrush reintroduction	Local grant (Pacific Rim Institute) – Project RDN	<u>CR&T Division</u> Dave Wilderman	Invasive species control and seeding of golden paintbrush. Project complete.
Bald Hill prairie habitat protection	Local grant (Center for Natural Lands Management) – Project OGQ	<u>CR&T Division</u> Dave Wilderman	Helicopter removal of approximately 300 conifer trees encroaching on grassland bald habitat. Project complete except for follow-up monitoring.
Woodard Bay nearshore restoration	RCO/ALEA restoration grant – Project ODZ	<u>CR&T Division</u> Michele Zukerberg	A weed control contract is underway to remove blackberry, holly, English ivy and other invasive plants from the shorelines.
Woodard Bay public access ALEA	RCO/ALEA development grant – Project GCX	<u>CR&T Division</u> Michele Zukerberg	The development project received permit approvals and the public works contract will go out for bid this spring for summer construction.
Woodard Bay public access WWRP	RCO/WWRP development grant – Project GCW	<u>CR&T Division</u> Michele Zukerberg	The development project received permit approvals and the public works contract will go out for bid this spring for summer construction.
Dishman Hills signs	Capital Budget – Project GDE	<u>Northeast</u> Brett Walker	Final installation of access and directional signs planned for spring 2014.
Loomis trails	Capital Budget – Project GDH	<u>Northeast</u> Chris Marcolin	Trail relocation and abandonment completed, with bridge installation. Trail maintenance continues with donated volunteer labor.
Loomis road maintenance	Capital Budget – Projects HZJ and HZK	<u>Northeast</u> Chris Marcolin	Thunder Mountain Road project = Installed cross drains, armored 1,400 feet of ditchline, rocked 800 feet of road surface to prevent erosion and sediment delivery. Lone Frank Pass and 14 Mile Roads = Ditch and culvert cleanout, grade and reshape road to prevent erosion and sediment delivery.

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Chopaka cattle fence	Capital Budget – Project GCY	<u>Northeast</u> Chris Marcolin	More than 15,700 feet of cattle-guard fence inspected and repaired or replaced as needed.
Cattle Point access renovation	Capital Budget – Project GCQ	<u>Northwest</u> Paul McFarland	A & E firm selection process underway.
Morning Star trail assessment	Capital Budget – Project GDM	<u>Northwest</u> Paul McFarland	Project scoping underway; design/permitting to commence spring 2014.
Morning Star signs	Capital Budget – Project GDN	<u>Northwest</u> Paul McFarland	Planning phase of project underway.
Cypress Island signs	Capital Budget – Project GDC	<u>Northwest</u> Paul McFarland	Implementation underway.
Cypress Island water system	Capital Budget – Project GDD	<u>Northwest</u> Paul McFarland	Preparing contract documents in anticipation of beginning work in fall 2014.
Chehalis River Surge Plain shoreline access	RCO restoration grant – Project RSH	<u>Pacific Cascade</u> Birdie Davenport	Substantial progress on this project noted above. Completion scheduled for March 2014.
Chehalis River invasives control	State grant (Dept of Ecology) – Project OPM	<u>Pacific Cascade</u> Birdie Davenport	2013 field season completed with control of purple loosestrife, yellow iris, and knotweed on the preserve, with help from DNR's aquatic invasive species crew.
Woodard Bay road repair	“Jobs Bill” Road Maintenance Budget – Project HZY	<u>Pacific Cascade</u> (new natural areas manager)	The repairs will be included in the development project and are planned for construction this summer.
Mima Mounds toilets	Capital Budget – Project GDL	<u>Pacific Cascade</u> Birdie Davenport	PC region recreation staff coordinating installation of a CXT vault toilet.
Chehalis River Surge Plain improvements	Capital Budget – Project GCV	<u>Pacific Cascade</u> (new natural areas manager)	Investigating use of portable toilets at canoe launches that can be removed for winter flood season.
Woodard Bay / Weyer Point restoration	RCO restoration grant – Project OPY	<u>Pacific Cascade</u> (new natural areas manager)	A weed control contract is underway to remove blackberry, holly, English ivy and other invasive plants from the shorelines.
Elk River forest restoration	Capital Budget – Project HZM	<u>Pacific Cascade</u> Carlo Abbruzzese	Forest restoration plan has been written, along with preliminary thinning prescriptions.
Washougal Oaks restoration phase 2 and 3	RCO restoration grant – Projects OHT and GGL	<u>Pacific Cascade</u> Carlo Abbruzzese	Planting of native oaks and shrubs continues in old pastures that were originally oak forest.
Lacamas Prairie restoration	RCO restoration grant – Project GGK	<u>Pacific Cascade</u> Carlo Abbruzzese	About 5 acres of rose, ash, hardhack and hawthorn were cleared. Weed cloth laid down in some areas to prevent weed growth. Resprouting invasive woody shrubs will be treated with herbicide in spring.

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Merrill Lake campground and shoreline access	Capital Budget – Projects GDI	<u>Pacific Cascade</u> Carlo Abbruzzese	New CXT outhouse installed and work on interpretive signs is underway.
Columbia Falls road maintenance	“Jobs Bill” Road Maintenance Budget – Projects HZT	<u>Pacific Cascade</u> Carlo Abbruzzese	In planning phase.
Hendrickson Canyon road abandonment	“Jobs Bill” Road Maintenance Budget – Projects HZU	<u>Pacific Cascade</u> Carlo Abbruzzese	In planning phase.
Washougal Oaks road abandonment	“Jobs Bill” Road Maintenance Budget – Projects HZX	<u>Pacific Cascade</u> Carlo Abbruzzese	In planning phase.
Willapa Divide road abandonment	“Jobs Bill” Road Maintenance Budget – Projects HZW	<u>Pacific Cascade</u> Carlo Abbruzzese	In planning phase.
Kennedy Creek interpretive trail renovation	Capital Budget – Project GDG	<u>South Puget Sound</u> Michele Zukerberg	Planned for summer 2014.
Oak Patch fence	Capital Budget – Project GDO	<u>South Puget Sound</u> Michele Zukerberg	Planned for summer 2014.
West Tiger Mountain loop bridge	Capital Budget – Project GDT	<u>South Puget Sound</u> Kelly Heintz	Project completed.
West Tiger Mountain cable bridge	Capital Budget – Project GDS	<u>South Puget Sound</u> Kelly Heintz	Design finalized and permits secured.
Middle Fork Snoqualmie trail bridges	Capital Budget – Project GDK	<u>South Puget Sound</u> Kelly Heintz	Design finalized, permits secured and contractor hired. Bridges will be installed in spring/summer 2014.
Mount Si road-to-trail abandonment – Three Lakes	“Jobs Bill” Road Maintenance Budget – Project GAA	<u>South Puget Sound</u> Kelly Heintz	Forest Practices Permit approved and work is planned for summer 2014.
Mount Si road-to-trail abandonment – Teneriffe	“Jobs Bill” Road Maintenance Budget – Project HZZ	<u>South Puget Sound</u> Kelly Heintz	Work is planned for summer 2014.
Mount Si road improvements – Teneriffe	“Jobs Bill” Road Maintenance Budget – Project HZI	<u>South Puget Sound</u> Kelly Heintz	Work is planned for summer 2014.

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Mount Si road abandonment – 92nd Street	“Jobs Bill” Road Maintenance Budget – Project GAB	<u>South Puget Sound</u> Kelly Heintz	Work is planned for summer 2014.
Stavis road abandonment and maintenance	“Jobs Bill” Road Maintenance Budget – Project GAC	<u>South Puget Sound</u> Kelly Heintz / Michele Zukerberg	Boyce Creek fish passage bridge has been designed and permitted and will be constructed this summer along with Stavis road abandonment work.
Klickitat Canyon habitat restoration phase 2	RCO restoration grant – Project GEB	<u>Southeast</u> Jeanne Demorest	Weed control within meadow conducted last fall, seed collected to be grown into plugs for planting in the fall.
Camas Meadows habitat restoration	RCO restoration grant – Project OEF	<u>Southeast</u> Keyna Bugner	SEPA complete, weed control conducted within meadow, seed collected to be grown into plugs for planting in fall.
Trout Lake restoration	RCO restoration grant – Project OEB	<u>Southeast</u> Keyna Bugner	Portion of road near Trout Creek was removed and 2,000 plugs planted; weed cloth removed and 2,000 plugs planted in Oregon Spot Frog oviposition areas; more weed cloth was added in select areas.
Kahlotus-Marcellus restoration	RCO restoration grant – Project GGB	<u>Southeast</u> Jeanne Demorest / Keyna Bugner	Cultural resource review completed and restoration plan developed. This spring mowing and burning of old weed stalks will be done to add in weed control efforts.
Camas Meadows recovery plan implementation	Federal grant (USFWS) – Project ORX	<u>Southeast</u> Keyna Bugner	Thinning of trees that were encroaching into the meadow is complete and most of the piles were burned. More burns will be conducted this year.
Camas Meadows interpretive access	Capital Budget – Project GCJ	<u>Southeast</u> Jeanne Demorest	Permitting complete. Interpretive signs in progress. Trail construction planned this fall.
Trout Lake signs	Capital Budget – Project GDR	<u>Southeast</u> Jeanne Demorest	Signs and kiosks ordered; anticipate installation this fall.
Columbia Hills signs	Capital Budget – Project GCZ	<u>Southeast</u> Jeanne Demorest	Signs and kiosks ordered; anticipate installation this fall.
Selah Cliffs signs	Capital Budget – Project GDP	<u>Southeast</u> Jeanne Demorest	Sign is being developed; anticipate installation this fall.
Kahlotus Ridgetop signs	Capital Budget – Project GDF	<u>Southeast</u> Jeanne Demorest	Signs and kiosk ordered; anticipate installation this fall.
Klickitat Canyon road maintenance	Capital Budget – Project HZP	<u>Southeast</u> Jeanne Demorest	Completed.
Upper Dry Gulch road maintenance	Capital Budget – Project HZQ	<u>Southeast</u> Jeanne Demorest	Work scheduled in March/April 2014.
Camas Meadows road maintenance	Capital Budget – Project HZR	<u>Southeast</u> Jeanne Demorest	Work tentatively scheduled for fall 2014.