



Title: "Native Plants in the Landscape: A Hands-on Approach to Protecting Water Resources"

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Organization: Washington State University

State: WA **Region:** Pacific Northwest

Year of Funding:

Theme: Environmental Restoration

Situation: Residential development in Western WA and the US has led to habitat loss and stormwater impacts: non-point pollution, erosion, siltation, flooding, and reduced groundwater recharge. Typical landscapes don't slow stormwater/recharge groundwater, and often need undue irrigation and chemical pesticides/fertilizer inputs. We need to preserve vegetation in new developments and modify landscapes in existing developments so that they mimic natural hydrology to protect water resources and habitat. Audiences: developers, landowners.

Objectives: (1) Build capacity of individuals to recognize, preserve and restore native vegetation in the landscape to benefit native wildlife and water resources. (2) Preserve existing vegetation to protect water quality and aquatic and terrestrial habitats. (3) Recover native vegetation from development sites and use the plants in restoration projects and in urban demonstration projects to promote the benefits of native plants.

Methods: Volunteers are trained to carryout education and action projects for native plant restoration. Activities include salvaging native plants from sites slated for development, restoration projects, and creation of demonstration landscapes. Field courses and workshops teach audiences how to protect water resources and habitat, and how to preserve, restore or modify landscapes. Technical assistance is also provided through publications/videos, such as "Grow Your Own Native Landscape" (M. Leigh), "Winter in the Woods" (E. Guttman/R. Thurman), and "Plant it Right" (R. Simmons/E. Guttman).

Partnerships: The Project relies on a wide range of partners who provide financial and advisory support, including: Cities of Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater; Thurston County; WA DOT; WA Dept. of Ecology; US Fish & Wildlife Service; Natural Resources Conservation Service; Thurston Conservation District; Puget Sound Action Team; Master Gardeners; Realtors; Center for Real Estate Research; US EPA Region 10; area schools & colleges; local nurseries and ecological restoration businesses.

Research: Ecological restoration is an evolving science. Project participants learn from ongoing field experiences as well as those of local and regional restoration professionals. These experiences and research inform the technical assistance provided to target audiences through improved workshops, publications, and resource materials.

Resources: \$92,500/yr total: \$50,000 cash raised through local partnerships and grants; \$40,000 in-kind support: office space/vehicle use (NRCS), nursery lot (WA DOT); \$2,500 materials (cash contributions and business donations). Unaccounted, volunteer hours = over 2500/yr.

Results: With the aid of 250 active annual volunteers, since 1994 the project has achieved: salvage of over 25,000 native plants provided to partners for restoration projects; workshops, field courses, tours, and hands-on classroom activities reached more than 8,500, including landowners, custom-homebuilders, developers, realtors, K-12 & college students; project has created and maintained 13 demonstration landscapes with accompanying signage and workshops for ongoing impact, and has revegetated public lands adjacent to major streams.



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