



Washington Native Plant Society's Native Plant Stewardship Program Frequently Asked Questions

What does the Native Plant Stewardship Program offer?

The ten week training program gives volunteers the tools they need to teach others about native plants and to lead projects to restore native habitat. Topics covered include native plant identification, Puget Sound ecosystems and plant communities, forest ecology, ethnobotany, wetlands, invasive plants, rare plants and restoration of native habitats. The program provides technical assistance and support for volunteers as they carry out their projects and offers periodic workshops for continuing education on native plants.

What will the training cost?

You pay for the training by honoring your commitment of 100 hours of volunteer service over the year following the training. There is no registration fee. Materials required include *Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast* by Pojar and MacKinnon, and a hand lens for plant ID. Membership in the Washington Native Plant Society is expected. These expenses should not be an obstacle to participation. Assistance may be available to help with the costs of the materials if needed.

What will I be doing for my 100 hours of volunteer time?

This year, volunteers will be organized into native plant steward teams within one of five parks identified by our east King County Partners: Issaquah, Sammamish, Bellevue, Kirkland, Redmond and King County Parks and Recreation. Steward teams will be assigned to 1 acre sites (approximate) within each of the designated parks. Each volunteer will be asked to make a 75 hour commitment in the 12 months following the training to: evaluate the site, develop a management plan, remove invasives, install native plants, hold one large volunteer event, and prepare a site assessment at the completion of the project with recommendations for future care. The remaining 25 hours will be divided between volunteering for the Washington Native Plant Society and within each steward's own community, workplace, clubs, associations, or place of worship to plant natives, restore natural areas, and educate others with what they have learned through the training.

What will the native plant stewards be working on for the 2010 program? Projects will emphasize native habitat restoration in east King County and may include other goals such as conservation, education, improved water quality through native plant gardening, stream and wetlands improvement, wildlife habitat enhancement and volunteer event planning and management.

How technical is the training?

This is not a technical training although it does include certain technical elements. We want to give stewards the basic understanding of native plants and related natural and human systems. You don't need to be a scientist, but you do have to be willing to read, study, and actively participate.

How many people will be selected?

The class size will be limited to 30-35 participants.

Why do I need to come in for an interview?

We receive many more applications than we have room for in the class. The interview gives the Native Plant Stewardship Program staff a chance to learn more about you and it gives you the opportunity to ask detailed questions about the program.

What kind of people are you looking for? Do I have to be a professional botanist?

We are looking for volunteers living in the Puget Sound area who care about native plants and their relationship with the land, water and other natural resources. You must be willing and able to make the major commitment of time necessary to complete the training and service. Volunteers vary greatly in age, occupation and background but they all share a dedication to volunteering and to improving the environment.

Will I get university credit or certification for the training?

No. This training is to prepare you for stewardship service. Even though the training is comprehensive, we are not able to issue credit or certification for it.

Can I get the Washington Native Plant Society to verify that I took the training so I can get credit for a course I'm taking or a reference in consideration for a job I'm applying for?

We will be happy to supply references, but only after completion of the minimum service commitment.

I won't be able to attend all the sessions. Does it matter? Yes. Each session provides valuable information that is not available in any other form. You will meet people who can help your understanding of various subjects and assist you when it comes time to work on projects.

We ask that you carefully consider whether you can make all of the sessions before applying. If you do miss a session, for whatever reason,

you maybe asked to discuss with us your ability to continue the program.

What kinds of work projects will I be expected to complete? During the training program trainees will be assigned to project teams to work in a designated public park. The work will apply the restoration skills learned in training and provide an opportunity to work with community volunteers. Our Stewards are asked to commit 75 hours to team projects. You will be expected to work closely with your assigned team during the 12 month period following the completion of training.

You also will be asked to commit 25 volunteer hours to a variety of WNPS community projects of your choice.

If I can't make this training, when will you have another? We try to hold at least one training program a year in King County, typically in the early spring. We plan to continue the east King County program in 2010 if adequate funding is available.

If you are on the Washington Native Plant Society's Native Plant Stewardship mailing list, you will be notified of upcoming training programs.

What happens after I finish my volunteer service obligation?

It is hoped that you, like most other Native Plant Stewards, will continue with your service. There is much to be done, and we encourage you to keep getting the word out on the importance of learning about and caring for our precious natural resources.

For more information call the Washington Native Plant Society at 206-527-3210 (or toll free 1-888-288-8022) and leave a message for Stewardship Coordinator Deb Gurney, or email the program at npsp_kc@wnps.org

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