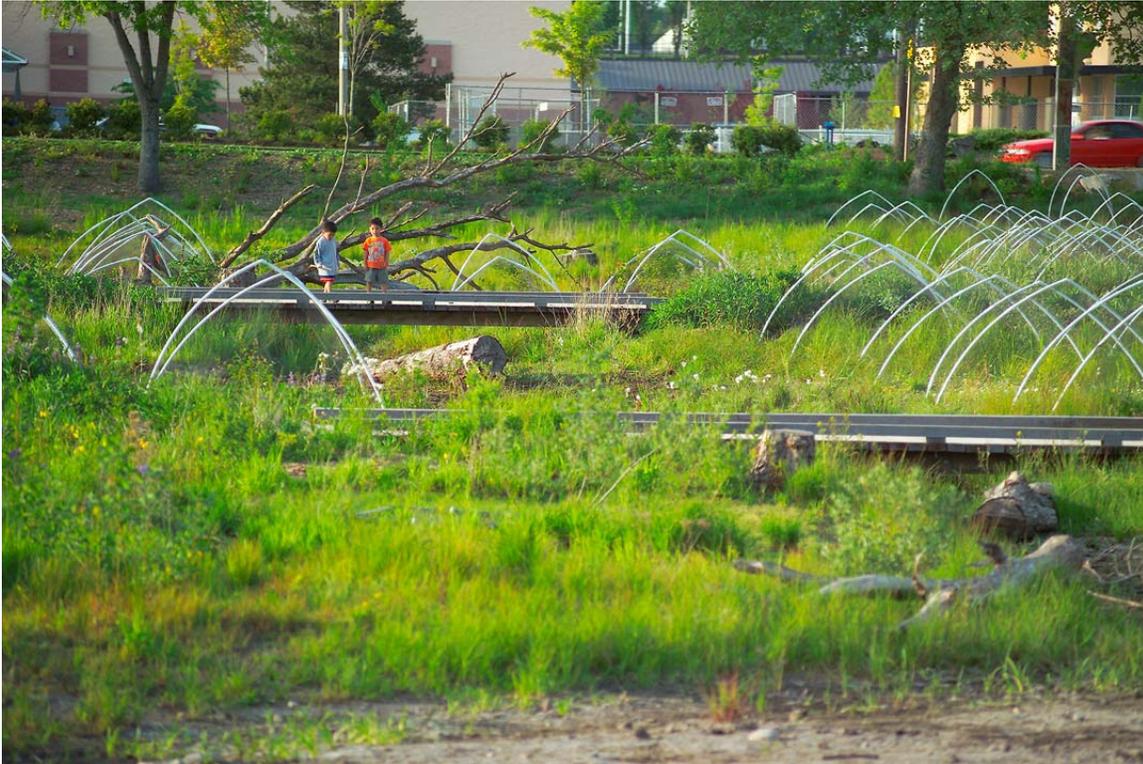


Roxhill Park Natural Areas: Past Efforts, Vegetation Survey and Recommendations for Future Stewardship



Peat Cell 1

Executive Summary

Roxhill Park, located in the Delridge district of West Seattle, is an important site for recreation and wildlife, providing ballfields, a picnic area and a 5.3-acre natural area with a wide variety of habitats. The site is at the headwaters of Longfellow Creek. The City of Seattle received the land as a donation in 1960, subsequently draining and filling the wetland portions of the site in order to create lawns for recreation. In spite of those efforts, much of the lawn remained too wet to be usable most of the year. In 1999, neighborhood residents and other stakeholders embarked on a planning process with Seattle Parks and Recreation to improve the underutilized acres in the park. The result of the ensuing public planning process was a vision for a natural area centered on a restored wetland that would be aesthetically appealing and would serve as a site for nature-oriented recreation and environmental learning. To act on this vision, several dedicated community members formed the Friends of Roxhill Bog and solicited support for the project from various public and private entities. Starflower Foundation committed to providing in-kind support for design, plants and seeds, restoration expertise, planting and maintenance, with 14 other organizations also contributing to the project. Friends of Roxhill Bog supervised the process and held monthly work parties to remove invasive species, plant native species and maintain the plantings.

Construction and initial planting were completed in two phases in 2000 and 2001. Over the course of 8 years, more than 215,000 native plants were planted in 14 different management zones at Roxhill Park. In addition, a large amount and variety of native

plant seed was sown. An average of 2000 person-hours a year were spent doing maintenance on the project, primarily consisting of hand-removal of non-native plants. Maintenance hours decreased towards the end of Starflower's involvement with the project, with 626 person-hours scheduled for maintenance in 2007.

In the spring of 2007, Starflower Foundation partnered with Seattle Urban Nature to assess the composition of the plant communities at the park. Data was collected using the line-intercept method on 86 transects that spanned each of the 14 management zones. In addition, Starflower Foundation assembled comprehensive planting and seeding lists for each management zone.

A total of 300 native species were planted and/or seeded in Roxhill Park by Starflower Foundation from 2000 to 2007. During the 2007 survey, a total of 255 species were recorded: 189 native plants, 55 non-native plants (of which 16 are considered potentially invasive) and 11 plants that were not identified to species. Potentially invasive species found were mostly seedlings. Twelve of the 16 potentially invasive species found showed an average percent cover in zones where they were found of less than 1%, and four an average percent cover of 1%. A total of 135 species that were planted and/or seeded were not located during the survey.

Based on the survey's findings, Section VI of this report includes recommendations for managing invasive species, improving structural diversity and increasing conifer regeneration developed for future stewards of the area. Of note is the importance of encouraging the development of a structurally diverse, species-rich conifer forest on the site. Care should be taken that invasive species do not regain a foothold. Also, young conifers should be encouraged by periodically clearing competing plants around them and mulching with woodchips.