Appreciate, Conserve, and Study Our Native Plants and Habitats

Washington Native Plant Society

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Dear members and friends of WNPS:

In this report for the calendar year 2017 we are highlighting chapter activities. Our 12 chapters are the heart of our Society. They offer educational programs, field trips, newsletters, and native plant sales in addition to supporting education and conservation activities in their communities. Not to mention the opportunities to meet other native plant enthusiasts and learn from each other. If you are not already active in your chapter I encourage you to get involved. The more you participate the more you will gain from your membership. And together we will be able to do more for native plants.

In addition to our financial summary, in this annual report you will see how Columbia Basin Chapter member Gretchen Graber involved 4th and 5th graders in sagebrush restoration, how the Wenatchee Valley and Koma Kulshan (Bellingham) Chapters hosted stewardship pilot projects, and how the Olympic Chapter protected coastal plant communities at Point Wilson. Plus the latest stewardship project in the Central Puget Sound Chapter, which took place in the City of Shoreline. You will also read about great projects funded by grants from the WNPS Endowment, including restoration of a neighborhood pond near Burien and forest stewardship work near Seattle.

WNPS members understand why native plants are important: They are part of a complex web of life upon which many other species of plants and animals depend. Native plants are adapted to their environments, so in the garden they may not require watering, pesticides, or fertilizers. They attract butterflies and birds. Yet native plants need our help more each year. With pressure from development and invasive species, among other threats, we are losing natural areas faster than they can be preserved or restored. But there is hope, and WNPS, as a Society and as chapters, is working to slow this trend.

A good example is a request we received in Fall 2017. Whitman County had received a proposal to build a cell tower on a mountain above the wheat fields of the Palouse. A concerned citizen contacted WNPS, and the Conservation Committee, with the help of the Natural Heritage Program, was able to find a Washington Department of Natural Resources report which identified this mountain as one potentially containing remnants of native Palouse prairie. Conservation Chair Becky Chaney contacted the County planning officials and they acted, postponing action until the flora could be assessed in the spring. While this is one small area, it shows the value WNPS can bring to questions involving native habitat. We bring botanical science to questions involving native plant habitats and advocate for their protection.

We hope this annual report inspires you and earns your confidence in the work of the Washington Native Plant Society. We are grateful for the many members who support us with contributions of both time and money. Together, WNPS can become an even stronger voice for native plants.

Finally, we would like to thank Clay Antieau for his service as WNPS President for the past three years. Clay worked tirelessly to advance our mission, recruit new board members, and keep our Society up-to-date in our rapidly changing world.

*Don Schaechtel*
President, 2017-18, on behalf of the Board of Directors

*Denise Mahnke*
Business Manager
**2017 HIGHLIGHTS**

**Tri-Cities students grow and plant sagebrush**
Children in Pasco are on their way to becoming the next generation of wildland stewards and advocates thanks to an innovative program developed by Columbia Basin Chapter member Gretchen Graber. As 4th graders in the spring, the kids sow and grow sagebrush plants, then in the fall, as 5th graders, they plant the sagebrush in areas needing restoration. Gretchen leveraged grants from her chapter and the WNPS Education Committee to gain support from the school district and the community to provide this hands-on learning experience. [https://wnps.org/blog/kids-growing-sagebrush](https://wnps.org/blog/kids-growing-sagebrush)

**WNPS volunteers inventory plants in East Wenatchee**
Susan Ballinger of the Wenatchee Valley Chapter organized a plant inventory of "Coyote Dunes," which is adjacent to the Columbia River and owned by the Chelan County PUD. Susan recruited chapter members to survey the area in the spring and summer to list species and bloom times. They also documented a population of gray Cryptantha (Cryptantha leucophaea), which is listed as "sensitive" in Washington state. This information will assist the PUD in creating interpretive materials and ensure that gray Cryptantha is protected.

**Olympic Peninsula Chapter continues work at Point Wilson**
With help from a WNPS Conservation Committee grant, volunteers from the Olympic Chapter installed an auger and cable barrier to protect coastal plant communities at Point Wilson. Maintaining this stretch of beach is ongoing and a source of continual surprise.

**WNPS Education Grant supports neighborhood stewardship**
With support from a WNPS education grant, more than 50 kids weeded, dug, and planted native plants at a neighborhood pond north of Burien. Scott Dolfay, who lives nearby, created and led a project, which involved WNPS, King County, local schools, and other funders. He used the WNPS grant to buy plants and educational signs. This grant was funded by contributions to the WNPS Endowment. [https://wnps.org/blog/seola-pond-project](https://wnps.org/blog/seola-pond-project)
Northeast Chapter hosts annual Study Weekend
Each year the Study Weekend brings members together for a weekend of fellowship and exploration. This year the Northeast Chapter hosted the Study Weekend at Eastern Washington University. Over 130 members gathered to visit a variety of sites near Cheney, including several trips visiting remnants of native Palouse prairie. On Friday night Kurt Merg gave a presentation about restoration of eastern Washington prairies. On Saturday night Jack Nisbet and Gene Kiver discussed how geology, floods, and human interactions shaped the eastern Washington scablands.

Chapter plant sales continue to be popular
Plant sales continue to attract crowds and encourage gardeners to use native plants in their landscapes. The Central Puget Sound, South Sound, Salal, Koma Kulshan, and Columbia Basin Chapters all had successful sales that each sent hundreds of native plants to new homes. Proceeds supported chapter activities and native plant projects, including funding a pollinator garden at the Lakota Middle School in Federal Way.

Stewardship pilot projects involve two chapters
In 2017, WNPS completed the two-year statewide stewardship pilot program, led by program manager Jim Evans. This program was established to take the message of citizen stewardship around the state, including the opportunity to educate members and involve them in restoration projects with local partners. After successes in 2016 with the South Sound and Wenatchee Valley chapters, two more pilot projects were completed. The Wenatchee Valley Chapter offered a 30-hour stewardship program for shrub-steppe ecosystems as a follow-up to 2016’s riparian ecosystem program. And the Koma Kulshan Chapter hosted a 30-hour stewardship program for shoreline and lowland Puget Sound forest ecosystems. The 75 stewardship students who were trained during the two years were eager to apply what they learned to both public and private lands. These pilot projects pioneered new curricula that can be used to expand stewardship programs around the state. They were made possible by a bequest from WNPS members John and Jane Titland.

Master Native Plant Steward Program Takes Root in Shoreline
The Central Puget Sound Chapter has launched another cohort of community stewards who have received 100 hours of training on native plants and habitats, ecological restoration practices and other skills to engage neighbors before they undertook team-based restoration of degraded forested parkland. They spent a good portion of the year working in teams implementing the site stewardship plans they created by removing invasive weeds, designing and installing planting areas on six different one acre parcels. This partnership with the King Conservation District, the City of Shoreline and 25 community members continues a 20+ year history of addressing habitat needs in communities of King and south Snohomish Counties.

South Sound Chapter hosts special programs
With Evergreen State College, the South Sound Chapter sponsored "The Revegetation of Mt. St. Helens" with Dr. John Bishop and "Prairies and Wetlands of the Olympic Peninsula: Their Native American Uses and Stewardship," with Dr. M. Kat Anderson. These presentations attracted 190 people.
WNPS Research grant funds study of climate change impact on plant-insect interactions

Meera Lee Sethi, who is a PhD student at the University of Washington, was awarded a WNPS research grant to investigate the impact of climate change on plant-insect herbivore interactions in the subalpine meadows of Mt. Rainier National Park. She is using a combination of observational and experimental approaches to study this question. These studies will contribute to our ability to forecast the future of montane habitats, as well as help inform decisions about the protection and management of Mt. Rainier’s meadow landscapes by identifying especially vulnerable plant and insect species.

WNPS Conservation Grants

The WNPS Conservation Committee awarded two Endowment-funded grants in 2017, one in an urban Seattle park and the other in Central Washington’s shrub-steppe. Bonnie Miller, Forest Steward, in partnership with about 40 volunteers and staff from Seattle’s Northeast Park District, prepared and planted 145 native trees and shrubs in the Northeast Ravine of the Yesler Creek Headwater. Across the state, in Douglas County, Aaron Rosenblum of the Foster Creek Conservation District began a pilot study to determine the best restoration prescriptions for converting farmland, formerly marginal wheat fields, to shrub-steppe habitat. Aaron and his volunteers, recent graduates of the local WNPS Native Plant Stewardship class, treated and hand pulled weeds from Nature Conservancy land and expected to have the plots ready to plant WNPS-funded seeds and sagebrush plugs in 2018.

Generous bequest received from Joseph and Margaret Miller

The last week of 2017 we received a generous bequest from the estate of Joseph and Margaret Miller, who were WNPS Fellows and founding members of the Society. Joe and Margaret distinguished themselves with work they did, as volunteers, to document the botanical highlights of the Big Beaver Valley when it was threatened by a proposal to raise the level of Ross Lake Dam, and in pioneering work on revegetation in North Cascades National Park. We are grateful for their confidence in our Society to carry on their love of the Cascades and its native plants.

https://wnps.org/blog/joe-and-margaret-miller-s-legacy
The statement of activities, financial position and pie charts represent the Society's 2017 fiscal year (January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017). Fiscal year 2016 results are provided for comparative purposes. These statements include all chapter as well as state level financial activity.

Total revenue increased significantly in 2017 driven primarily by a gift from the estate of Joe and Margaret Miller. Also contributing was an increase in government funding associated with performance of contracted stewardship programs. These contracted stewardship programs correspondingly increased program related and total expenses as compared to last year. The percent distribution of expenses by category was essentially unchanged between 2016 and 2017.

Overall the Society experienced an increase in net assets as compared to the prior year again due to the extraordinary bequest of the Millers.

The WNPS Endowment (included in the total organization assets) has total funds of $162,772 at year end with new contributions of $3,801 and $5,780 released in 2017 to support the research, education and conservation grant activity of the Society.
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Mid-summer at Mount Rainier
Photo by Nicole Marcotte

Cross-shaped Mitrewort (Ozomelis stauropetala)
Photo by Emil Doyle

Pacific Oak Fern (Gymnocarpium disjunctum) and Western Bunchberry (Cornus unalascensis); Photo by David Hagan
THANK YOU DONORS!
The Washington Native Plant Society is grateful for the financial contributions of our members. This support allows our Society to be an effective voice for native plants. In 2017, over 300 members donated beyond their basic membership rates with contributions of $75 or more. Their names are listed in the Spring 2018 issue of Douglasia. Thank you all!

DONATE NOW
Your contributions help preserve Washington’s remarkable native plants and support outstanding educational and outreach programs. We save what we love. Please visit www.wnps.org to learn more.

DONATE LATER
Include the Washington Native Plant Society in your estate plans and bequeath a legacy of beautiful and fascinating Washington native plants to future generations. Please contact wnps@wnps.org for more information.

HOW YOU CAN HELP!

JOIN
Join the Washington Native Plant Society and receive additional benefits. Memberships help us plan for the future. Please visit www.wnps.org to join or renew on-line.

VOLUNTEER
Enjoy good company, share your professional expertise, and learn more about native plants and their habitats as a WNPS office volunteer or a volunteer in one or more of many activities happening in your local Chapter. Contact wnps@wnps.org for more information.

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