NORTH CREEK FOREST

The Project Site

Project site location within North Creek Forest (highlighted in red), and in the greater Puget Trough region (inset) Images: Google Earth

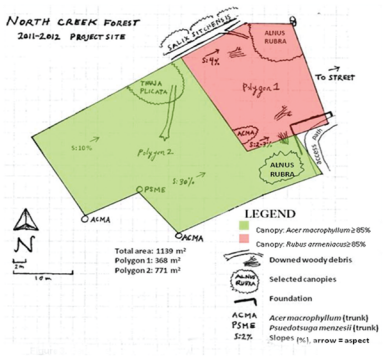
Purchased by Tom and Jeanie Robinson for restoring native vegetation protecting the North Creek Forest

The proposed 2011 – 2012 project site is located within the Puget trough region of the Pacific Northwest in Bothell, Washington. The project site is located in the North Creek Forest, which sits in the North Creek watershed. The project site is part of a section of the North Creek Forest that was purchased by Tom and Jeanie Robinson for the purpose of restoring native vegetation protecting the North Creek Forest. The North Creek Forest is bordered to the east by interstate highway 405 and to the north, south, and west by residential development.

Characteristics

Heavily invaded by Himalayan blackberry

Polygon 1 is approximately 368 square meters, contains 2-4% slope and is heavily invaded by Himalayan blackberry (Rubus armeniacus). The land containing the project site had been cleared for Settlement and was abandoned in the 1960's, leaving behind dilapidated housing structures and a small orchard.



Mixed coniferous evergreen and deciduous tree canopy, shrub and groundcover layer

Polygon 2 is within the forest canopy and is approximately 771square meters in size. It contains moderately rising slopes (10-30%). The canopy coverage in polygon 2 is dominated by big-leaf maple (Acer macrophyllum; greater than or equal to 85% coverage), with occasional Douglas-fir (Pseudotsuga menzesii; less than or equal to 15% coverage) and two young western redcedar (Thuja plicata) coming up under the deciduous canopy. One large downed Douglas-fir lies in the northern half of polygon 2. Dominant sub-canopy natives are vine maple (Acer circinatum), Indian plum (Oemlaria cerasiformis), and salmonberry collectively comprising 80% coverage. Dominant groundcovers are piggy-back plant (Tolmiea menzesii) and sword fern, collectively comprising 95% coverage.

Restoration Project Objectives

Goal 1: Restore a structurally and biologically diverse suite of native plant species typical of Puget Trough lowland forests in polygon 1

Objective 1-1: remove and suppress reoccurrence of invasive species.

Objective 1-2: modify site conditions to ensure success of plantings and biological diversity.

Objective 1-3: install a structurally and biologically diverse palette of native tree species representing early, mid, and late successional stages of Puget Trough lowland forests

Goal 2: Enhance wildlife habitat for native forest fauna

Objective 2-1: create new habitat features and enhance existing ones for forest fauna.

Objective 2-2: install native Puget lowland understory plant species that provide specific wildlife value for native fauna (e.g. food, cover).

Goal 3: Engage local groups and individuals in the project to help build ongoing stewardship and environmental education opportunities within the community

Objective 3-1: utilize media and technology approaches to provide outreach of the project and ongoing North Creek Forest conservation effort.

Objective 3-2: utilize local press to communicate the project, engage the public, and promote conservation efforts.

Objective 3-3: enlist members of the community to assist in restoration tasks.

Objective 3-4: create a long-term maintenance and monitoring plan (stewardship plan) for this site that can be used by the community partners.

Goal 4: Evaluate existing old housing structures on site for the opportunities and constraints that they pose in future restoration of this site and the adjacent area

Challeges

- Urban location of North Creek Forest means many potential sources of weeds and a perpetual need for maintenance
- Half of North Creek Forest was successfully conserved during the course of the project – the community connections we helped to forge will aid in the successful conservation of the remaining forest

Long Term Prospects

- Installed vegetation designed to develop into a Puget Trough lowland forest community, increasing wildlife habitat and enhancing ecological function of the North Creek Forest overall
- Maintenance and monitoring of project site an environmental education resource for nearby students

Restoration Needs

- Himalayan blackberry had arrested natural forest regeneration negatively impacting biodiversity and ecological function of this section of the forest
- Other invasive species (herb-Robert and English holly) spreading in the forest and threatening native biodiversity

Accomplishments

- Over 400 square meters of land cleared of invasive species
- Over 400 native plants representing 26 species planted
- Enhanced wildlife habitat
- Created digital media, signage and an art installation to foster community engagement
- Created a stewardship plan to aid community partner in long term maintenance and monitoring of restoration
- Provided lectures and hands-on learning opportunities to two college classes, and canvassed communities to raise awareness to forest conservation efforts
- Involved over 100 members of the community in restoration efforts

Team Members and Affiliations

Sarah Witte: Research & Document Manager — Friends of North Creek Forest

Elliott Church: Project Manager, writer — Pipers Creek Nursery

Freddie Hensen: Resource Manager — UW-REN

Danee' Moesch: Financial Manager — UW Bothell

Darryl Nevels: Community Partner Liaison — Cacadia Community College

Teppei "Tepp" Sato: Digital Materials Manager

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