



Our mission: to create tools to empower stewards for healthy urban ecosystems.

Native Plants of Seattle



Bleeding heart (*Dicentra Formosa*)
Photo: Nelson Salisbury

Spring is here...

The flowers are blooming...

Time to identify plants!

With contracts spanning from Renton to the City of Shoreline, SUN ecologists are busy in the field now that spring is here and plants are in bloom. Read all about SUN's exciting projects in this newsletter!

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Licton Springs – Citizen science and adaptive restoration

Over the past six months, SUN has been working in Licton Springs Park, an urban wetland located in North Seattle. The Friends of Licton Springs (FOLS) approached SUN to help them update the park's vegetation management plan which was written by the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation in 2001. For the past 10 years, FOLS have held monthly work parties and have restored much of the northern section of the park.

SUN and FOLS were awarded a grant from the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods to monitor the restoration efforts and provide recommendations for future restoration activities. In fall of 2006, SUN ecologists sampled vegetation in areas where substantial restoration has taken place. SUN also participated in a meeting of the Licton Springs Community Council to gather input of neighborhood residents regarding park management.
(Continued on page 2)

The Citywide Habitat Assessment

In 2007, SUN ecologists will be inventorying deciduous forest habitats throughout Seattle as part of our ongoing Citywide Habitat Assessment (CHA). We are in the process of analyzing data collected last season on madrone and mixed-madrone forest habitat types. We will be releasing the second CHA interim report in the fall summarizing our findings for madrone forests. See our website for the first interim report on conifer forests released last year.

After data is collected for deciduous forests, Seattle's most abundant forest type, we will be working on releasing the first comprehensive assessment and analysis of our cities' forested habitats. We hope that this information will give valuable insight into the current state of Seattle's natural areas and provide important management implications for the preservation and restoration of our forested habitat. Partial funding for this program comes from a generous grant from the Bullitt Foundation. SUN is actively working to raise funds for the remaining portion of this project.

Upcoming Events Involving SUN:

Town Hall Meeting about Urban Green Spaces in North Seattle – May 7th!

7th Annual Backyard Wildlife Festival in Tukwila – May 12th!

Visit www.seattleurbannature.org/About/events.html for more details

Licton Springs - (Continued from page 1)

The project resulted in several products:

- An update to the vegetation management plan, which is now available on our website at: www.seattleurbannature.org
- Maps of management zones, habitat types, locations of past restoration activities, and significant features such as trails, streams and springs. These maps are available online as part of the updated vegetation management plan.
- A brochure for visitors describing the park, its history and community involvement in park stewardship. The brochure can be downloaded from our website by [clicking here](#).
- A citizen science experiment testing the viability of using different species of native shrubs and herbaceous plants to combat reed canarygrass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) (see the next article on page 3 for more information about this project).

Key findings:

- In areas where intensive restoration activities have taken place, the cover of invasive species has substantially decreased and native plant diversity has increased. Across the four intensively restored areas, the diversity of native shrub species has increased from an average of three species in 2001 to eleven species in 2006. The diversity of herbaceous species has increased from an average of three species in 2001 to six species in 2006. The total average percent cover of invasive species in these five areas has decreased from 115% to 35%. A cover of greater than 100% is possible if invasive species are present in more than one strata in the forest (e.g.



John Potter enjoys a mud shower at Licton Springs
Photo: Nelson Salisbury

tree, shrub and herbaceous layers).

- Invasive trees are posing an increasing threat to Licton Springs. Seven different species of invasive trees compose the majority of all regeneration in the park. These species include: English holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), sweet cherry (*Prunus avium*), European mountain ash (*Sorbus aucuparia*), white poplar (*Populus alba*), cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), one-seed hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*). Figure 1 shows the total percent cover of invasive trees compared to native trees across five surveyed management zones in the park.
- Reed canarygrass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus discolor*) and hedge-false bindweed (*Calystegia sepium*) are the dominant invasive species present in the sampled wetland and forested areas in Licton Springs.

Future management directions

Based on the findings of the study, SUN crafted specific recommendations for each surveyed area in the park. These recommendations are available in the VMP addendum. The project has also resulted in new management directions for the FOLS.

As a direct result of the survey, FOLS plans to tackle the problem of invasive trees in the park as a priority issue. This is a new focus for the park, as the 2001 vegetation survey did not document many of the invasive tree species. FOLS plans to write a grant to hire a contractor to remove these trees throughout the park. (continued on page 3)

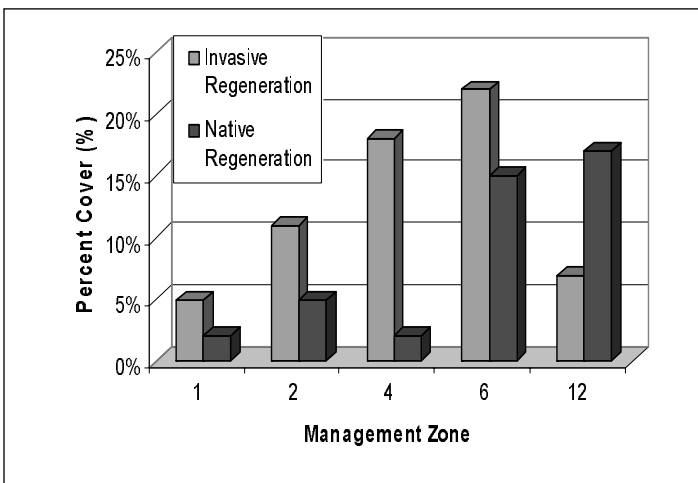


Figure 1. Percent cover of invasive and native regenerating trees recorded in five management zones during the 2006 survey in Licton Springs.

Licton Springs-(Continued from page 2)

Reed canarygrass (RCG) is one of the most significant invasive problems in the park and FOLS is looking for new and innovative ways to address this issue. Through discussions with FOLS members and input from neighbors at the Licton Springs Community Council meeting, it became apparent to SUN that many of the common management prescriptions are insufficient to meet the goals of the community. Several areas in the wetlands are emergent – they contain no trees or shrubs. In a healthy wetland, these areas would be dominated by native grasses, sedges and herbaceous plants. In Licton Springs these areas are completely covered by RCG. However, the community would like to be able to preserve a view corridor into these areas. To address these concerns, SUN devised a citizen science experiment to see whether native low-growing shrubs and emergent plants can successfully compete with and suppress RCG. We hope that in a year or two, FOLS will be able to use the results of these field trials to craft their own management strategies.



Licton Springs community members and friends hard at work...or is that play? Photo: Ella Ellman

tific method. We are excited about this collaboration with FOLS and the data that this project produces. It will help us understand better how to mitigate the effects of reed canarygrass on crucial wetland resources, and will help FOLS to create site-specific management strategies in Licton Springs Park.

A Voice from the Community: Liz Kearns of Friends of Licton Springs speaks about SUN:

"Working with SUN was so easy that it can't really be called 'work'. Everything involved with this Department of Neighborhoods grant went smoothly. From the meetings to the work parties the Friends of Licton Springs Park have made new friends and learned a lot thanks to SUN and the great staff. We are proud of the outreach brochure and can't say enough good stuff about the Licton Springs Park revised/updated VMP. Excellent workmanship by everyone at SUN. Thank You! We look forward to working with you again." - L.K.



SUN Ecologist Nelson Salisbury gives an informative tour of Licton Springs. Photo: Sharon London

About Citizen Science: Involving the community in research and monitoring

The March 10th FOLS work party had some very unique qualities: Friends of Licton Springs dedicated their volunteer efforts to carrying out this scientific experiment, designed and guided by the SUN team. "Citizen Science", as it's called, is a process by which the local community is involved in setting up plots and collecting the necessary data for a scientific study. One of the most popular examples of citizen science is the Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count, a volunteer driven bird census in the Western Hemisphere. This kind of community involvement allows scientists to obtain data that would have otherwise been impossible to gain due to lack of funding, all while educating curious community members about biology, invasive species, and the scien-

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Be sure to check out the work party photos on our website! Click [here](#) to be redirected to our gallery.

Spring and Summer Field Work—Let the assessment, monitoring and mapping begin!



Big-leaved lupine (Lupinus polyphyllus)
Photo: Nelson Salisbury

Starflower Foundation Restoration Monitoring

The Starflower Foundation has spent the last ten years implementing some of the most intensive and complicated restoration projects ever undertaken in Seattle. Founded by Ann Lennartz, Starflower Foundation has conducted restoration projects in Pritchard Beach Park, Roxhill Park, Greg Davis Park, Colman Park and Genesee

Meadow in Seattle. They have spent a number of years working with community Adopt-a-Park groups to restore and maintain these important projects on public lands in Seattle.

At the end of this year, Starflower Foundation will be closing its doors and will cease to maintain these projects. To document these restoration projects, SUN has teamed up with Starflower to conduct inventories of vegetation present in each park. In April, SUN and Starflower ecologists began surveying each of the projects. The goal is to create a comprehensive baseline inventory of the sites using repeatable scientific methods, which will allow for future comparisons of species diversity and abundance in the parks. A vegetation management plan for each park will be co-authored by the two groups and will contain the results of the surveys, comprehensive lists of species planted and seeded in each area of the park, documentation of restoration activities and methods and management recommendations to guide future stewardship of these areas.

Interested stewards and community groups are being sought out by Starflower Foundation to continue to maintain these projects. If you are interested in participating or know someone who is, please contact Sharon London at sharon@seattleurbannature.org.

SUN Fact Sheets—Free on the Web!

SUN has produced a number of color fact sheets for the public highlighting invasive shrubs, trees, and plants found throughout Seattle's parks. We also have a fact sheet with some examples of native plants that you may consider for your property.

Go to www.seattleurbannature.org to download these free fact sheets today!



Erica Capuana demonstrates her wheelbarrow prowess during the Licton Springs work party.
Photo: Nelson Salisbury



Become a SUN Board Member or Join a SUN Committee

SUN is looking to grow its board by two to three members. You can also join our fundraising or outreach committees. Diverse backgrounds, ages, and ethnicities encouraged! Some areas of expertise we are looking for include:

- Accounting
- Fundraising
- Non-profit management
- Legal
- Outreach
- Grant Writing
- Education
- Media & Marketing

If you are interested in joining, please contact Sharon London at sharon@seattleurbannature.org.

Mapping the City of Shoreline

Our project with the City of Shoreline Parks Department is in full swing! SUN ecologists created preliminary maps showing general habitat delineations in four Shoreline parks; Boeing Creek Park, Shoreview Park, Hamlin Park, and South Woods. These maps show the locations and extents of the different forest types and other features within each of the four parks being inventoried.

During the next several months, SUN ecologists will be establishing permanent monitoring/assessment plots throughout all of the forested habitats. Information collected in each plot will allow us to create a detailed analysis of the health and structure of Shoreline's forested parklands. Specific information will include: tree density and regeneration, presence of snags and coarse woody debris, structure and abundance of shrubs and herbaceous plants, and invasive species locations and extents. This information will help the City of Shoreline develop a comprehensive plan to guide the management and restoration of their community forests.

(Above right) Nelson informs Colin Phifer of Homewaters and Alisan Giesey of Shoreline School District about vegetation sampling. Photo: Ivona Kaczynski. (Below) Map of Boeing Creek and Shoreview Parks



Collaborative Partnerships- Homewaters

While working in Shoreline, SUN is providing scientific expertise to Homewaters Project as they help student environmental groups there learn about native and invasive species and the importance of forest restoration. On April 17th, a Shoreline School District high school teacher learned about vegetation survey data collection methods from SUN ecologists in a mixed deciduous forest in Shoreview Park.



More SUN Projects



Western trillium (Trillium ovatum) blooming in Lake People Park.
Photo: Nelson Salisbury

SUN Services

SUN offers a number of services to assist public, private, and non-profit organizations.

Ecological Services

- Habitat Mapping and Assessment
- Vegetation Inventory and Management
- Restoration Planning and Monitoring
- Vegetation Monitoring
- Wetland Delineation

GIS Services

- Custom Mapping of Project Sites
- Mapping for Grant Reporting Purposes
- GPS Data Collection
- Printing Large Size Maps or Posters

Training and Education

- Habitat Survey and Assessment Methods
- Monitoring Restoration Sites
- GPS and GIS Training
- Plant Identification
- Habitat Restoration Techniques

Please contact us at (206) 522-0334 for more information.

Lake People (Xacua'bs) Park and the Seattle Parks Foundation

SUN partnered with the Seattle Parks Foundation to create a set of maps for a Lake People Park in North Rainier valley. The park is named for the Xacua'bs (Lake People), ancestors of the Duwamish, the first people to live in the area. The maps will be incorporated into the maintenance plan to help guide the restoration and management of the parks natural areas. The maps can be seen on our website by clicking [here](#).

In addition to creating the maps, SUN ecologists reviewed, edited, and commented on portions of the maintenance plan document. For more information or to attend an upcoming work party, see the [Seattle Parks Foundation website](#).

Shadow Lake Bog

Spring has reached the Renton Highlands and the evidence is clear at Shadow Lake Bog. SUN ecologists have been mapping the species associations on more than 90 acres of forest and bog habitat managed by SHADOW (Save Habitat and Diversity of Wetlands).

SUN will be completing a vegetation assessment of the property this field season. This information will be used to create a plan that will provide long-term management strategies and highlight restoration priorities for this unique wetland habitat. The field assessment and management plan will also provide educational opportunities for local students and citizen scientists.



Stair-step moss (Hylocomium splendens) in Shadow Lake bog
Photo: Nelson Salisbury

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Evergreen huckleberry (*Vaccinium ovatum*)
Photo: Nelson Salisbury



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form to order individual maps at www.seattleurbannature.org

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Christy Cherrier smiles for the camera at
Licton Springs. Photo: Nelson Salisbury

Comments, questions, or submissions? Please contact Sharon London, Executive Director via e-mail at sharon@seattleurbannature.org. If you would like to receive this newsletter in a different format or would like to be removed from the mailing list, please let us know. Learn more about SUN at www.seattleurbannature.org.

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