



2022

## City of Bellingham Parks Dept Restoration Intern

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*Western Washington University*

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# COLLEGE OF THE ENVIRONMENT



**Internship Title:** City of Bellingham Parks Volunteer Program: Restoration Intern

**Student Name:** Janie Egan

**Internship Dates:** August 2021 - December 2021

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**STUDENT SIGNATURE**

*Janie Egan*

**DATE:** 02/03/2022

Janie Egan

Advisor: Michael Medler

Dates Worked: September 2021 - December 2021

## **Restoration Internship Report**

In 2020, as a freshman at Western, I heard about an opportunity to help remove invasive species in a nearby park and jumped on the chance to get off campus and explore the city. I rallied a handful of dorm neighbors to join me, and we had a fantastic day pulling English Ivy from the ground and navigating the bus lines between Cornwall Park and campus. Spring break came a week later, and shortly after the pandemic forced me to move back in with my parents, leaving my friends and my newfound freedom behind. The groupchat I had made for that stewardship event happened to stay alive through the chaos, and in the year to follow those people would ultimately become my closest friends and pandemic social bubble. That event was not only the start of some of my most meaningful friendships, but it was also my first experience with the Bellingham Parks Volunteer Program; an organization that would go on to help me grow in countless other ways.

The Bellingham Parks Volunteer Program (PVP) is a program within the city's Parks and Recreation department that facilitates volunteer stewardship projects and environmental education programming in Bellingham's parks and natural spaces. Each Saturday, the program hosts a work party at a different location for members of the community to help with ecological stewardship projects such as invasive species removal, native species planting, erosion control, and trail management. Run out of what is essentially a closet in the corner of the Bellingham Park Operations office, it is a small program that makes a massive impact on the well-being of communities and ecological systems in our city. Over the four months that I worked as a Restoration Intern for the program, I gained new insights, skills, role models, and connections that I know will continue to serve me in my future endeavors.

### **Role & Responsibilities**

My role as a Restoration Intern with the PVP evolved and changed throughout the duration of the position. When I joined the program in early September, the team consisted of Amy Brown, the Volunteer Coordinator, Shelby Kita, an Americorps program assistant, my co-intern Zach, and myself. We spent the first few weeks getting oriented to the program, learning leadership techniques, and shadowing other

small group leaders during Saturday work parties. This is when the most fundamental intern responsibilities were established, including packing tools for work parties, visiting future project sites, working in the nursery, and taking care of equipment. As the year progressed, Zach and I were able to become more independent, and took on more active leadership roles both within the program and for partnering organizations. By mid-October, I was independently leading small groups during work parties, which included responsibilities like leading volunteer orientations, teaching technical skills and plant identification, accommodating diverse volunteer needs, and organizing logistics. Zach and I were trusted to prepare for and set up work parties with little oversight, and as our skills and experience grew we became capable of making decisions on behalf of the team as a whole.

Some of the PVP's work parties were more ambitious than others in scope and scale, and for those work parties we collaborated with other organizations to combine resources and draw in the most volunteers possible. Our most frequent partner was the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association, but we also worked with other groups including the Whatcom Conservation Corps, Skagit Fisheries, and WWU LEAD. In our collaboration with other groups during work parties, I was often encouraged to step into a leadership role to guide other leaders, communicating plans and directing set up during large events like the MLK Day of Service, Earth Day, and Make a Difference Day. Through this role I became more involved in the event coordination side of the PVP in addition to environmental education, volunteer management, and stewardship efforts.

## **Educational Connections**

From the very beginning of my term as a Restoration Intern, it was clear to me that my supervisors intended to help me gain as many skills as possible during my service. Not only did I get to see how a volunteer program is run, I also learned about professional practices, large scale ecological system design, government systems, and stewardship practices such as planting techniques and kribbing installation.

Excitingly, the content of this internship is also directly connected to my studies at Western. In Fall quarter, I was a writer for The Planet Magazine as a part of my course load. I learned about the controversial beavers at Squalicum Creek Park through this internship, and was allowed to write about them for my story. As a Restoration Intern I made connections with people like Annaliese Burns (the Bellingham Restoration Manager) and Bev Siegele (a park steward volunteer) who I interviewed and included in my piece. These two parts of my life became intertwined as I used my learnings from the internship to inform and inspire my writing. Ultimately, that story received regional recognition as a

finalist in the Society of Professional Journalists Mark of Excellence Awards, available to read in print in the Fall 2021 edition of The Planet and at the link below.

<https://theplanetmagazine.net/dam-it-787d3b98a0fc>

Gaining plant identification skills was also a huge emphasis of this position. Each week, when our team met to prepare for Saturday work parties, Zach and I each presented on a native or invasive species that our volunteers would be encountering in the project. The presentations I created are designed to double as resources for volunteers to use as reference in their own learning, some samples of that work are included below.



*Examples of content included in weekly plant studies, which I personally researched and designed*

## Outcomes

During my internship, I grew substantially as an individual and a team member. This internship was unpaid, but as I mentioned above I gained so much more from my position than I could have anticipated. One part of this position that I have been especially grateful for is its general emphasis on goal setting, feedback, and growth. After each work party, our team set aside an hour of time to relax, take

care of our personal needs, and then reflect on the day together. This was a very valuable practice to me because it allowed me to set goals, immediately put effort into achieving them, and then immediately receive feedback and celebrate my work. This was also a meaningful time for me because my supervisors were interested in my ideas and feedback, and sought to actively include interns in decision making and program development.

This position also played to some of my existing strengths. Leadership comes naturally to me, so I found I felt most successful and capable during this internship when I was given the opportunity to lead others, think on my feet, and actively contribute to decision making. I loved the opportunity this position gave me to form meaningful connections with my teammates and members of our community at large. I became friends with Zach, Shelby, and Amy, but I also met people in Bellingham who I never would have otherwise, and got close with those who came to work parties frequently.

Aside from personal growth, I played an important role in the function and ultimate success of PVP work parties over the course of my internship. During my internship term, I contributed to/achieved:

- 38 cubic yards of invasive species removed
- 1862 native plants planted
- 792 total volunteers at work parties
- 2407 volunteer hours of work
- 164 total internship hours

In my eyes, these are more than just numbers. They represent long lasting improvements to Bellingham's ecosystems and public space; they represent the value our community places on societal and environmental health; and they represent the Restoration Internship experience that helped me grow with a momentum that will continue to serve me and my goals. As I look forward from this internship, I am excited to apply what I've learned to my future studies--including my upcoming ecological study in Nepal--and future careers in stewardship and environmental education.



### Intern Work Record

Name JANIE EGAN

Date/Year	Time of day Worked	Total time worked	Task	Site
9/17/21	1:00-4:30	All 3.5 hrs	WP prep	Park Ops
9/18/21	7:30-4:00	8.5 hrs	Squalicum Creek WP →	
9/24/21	1:00-4:30	3.5 hrs	WP prep	Park Ops
9/25/21	7:30-3:30	8 hrs	WP co-lead	Squalicum Creek
10/01/21	1:00-4:00	.3 hrs	WP prep	Park Ops
10/02/21	7:30-3:30	8 hrs	WP	Big Rock
10/08/21	1:00-5:00	4 hrs	WP Prep	Park Ops
10/09/21	7:30-4:00	8.5 hrs	WP	Cornwall
10/15/21	1:00-4:30	3.5 hrs	WP Prep	Park Ops
10/16/21	7:30-4:00	8.5 hrs	WP	Arb
10/22/21	1:00-5:30	4.5 hrs	WP Prep	Park Ops
10/23/21	6:00-9:00	11 hrs	WP	Whitcom Falls
10/30/21	7:15-3:45	8.5 hrs	WP	Juliana
10/29/21	1:00-4:30	3.5 hrs	WP Prep	Park Ops
11/5/21	1:00-5:00	4 hrs	WP Prep	Park Ops
11/6/21	7:15-4:00	8.75 hrs	WP	Connelly Creek
11/12/21	10:00-11:00	1 hr	Shard Fern PPT	-
11/12/21	1:00-3:30	2.5 hrs	WP Prep	Park Ops
11/13/21	7:15-3:45	8.5 hrs	WP	H Cemetery Creek
11/19/21	1:00-4:15	3.25 hrs	WP Prep	Park Ops
11/19/21	11:00-12:00	1 hr	Common Tansy PPT	-
11/20/21	7:30-4:15	8.75 hrs	WP	Maritime Heritage
12/3/21	1:00-5:00	4 hrs	WP Prep	Park Ops
12/3/21	10:00-11:00	1 hr	PPT (Dugwood)	-
12/4/21	7:00-4:30	9.5 hrs	WP	Bug Lake
12/10/21	1:00-4:00	3 hrs	WP Prep	Park Ops
12/11/21	7:30-11:00	3.5 hrs	WP	Harriet Spinel
1/17/22		10 hrs.	MLK WP	Squalicum Crk PK
2/03/22		6 hrs.	MLK Day Prep	PK Ops
		2 hrs.	Internship debrief	Whit. Falls PK
Total Hours		163.25		





**HUXLEY**  
COLLEGE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

## Internship/Learning Agreement

Section 1 – Student Identification			
Last Name, First Name:	Egan, Janie	Western ID:	W01445339
Email Address	eganj4@wwu.edu	Major/PreMajor	Env. Studies

Section 2 – Registration Information			
Total Credits:	4	Faculty Advisor:	Michael Medler
Internship Start Date:	9/17/2021	Internship End Date:	6/10/2022
Number Credits Per Quarter (F/W/S/Sum)	F: 4		(120 HOURS/QUARTER)
<i>Note: You must be registered for credits during quarters you perform <b>any part</b> of the internship work (Including Summer Session) to include writing of reports...this can be spread over multiple quarters. You are expected to register an appropriate number of credits based on anticipated hours worked BY Quarter (Example: Working 120 hours during Summer = 4 Credits Summer Enrollment)</i>			

Section 3 – Organization for Internship	
Organization Name:	Bellingham Parks Volunteer Program
Intern Supervisor Name:	Amy Brown
Mailing Address:	210 Lottie Street, Bellingham, Washington
Email Address:	apbrown@cob.org
Phone Number:	(360) 778-7105
Description of Duties (Or Attach Job Description): Leading volunteer work parties for ecological restoration, including planning and tool maintenance.	



### Section 4 – Learning Objectives

What do I intend to learn from this experience:  
 During this internship I intend to grow my leadership skills, my knowledge of local ecology, my familiarity with skills relating to stewardship, and my understanding of occupations in the restoration field. I will grow my leadership abilities during work parties, which I will both logistically plan ahead of time and lead for volunteers on the day of. In order to be a successful leader I must also develop a working knowledge of the native and invasive plant species in the Bellingham area, so I will leave the internship with extensive ecological knowledge. In addition, this internship will give me experience working within the restoration field and in a government setting, and since these are areas where I might seek future jobs I will gain insights that may help me choose a career path.

How does this experience contribute to my educational goals:  
 I am an Environmental Studies major with focuses in urban planning and environmental education, so this internship is extremely relevant to the content I am learning in my classes. I hope the internship will enrich my course content by illustrating outcomes of the planning process, especially since most of my restoration work happens in city owned parks and trail systems. I will also utilize environmental education concepts when teaching volunteers about local ecology and restoration goals.

If Faculty require any additional Learning Objectives, they should be listed here:

### Section 5 - Deadlines, Evaluation, and Assessment (Completed by faculty advisor)

		Yes	No
Meet with Advisor: <u>once per quarter</u>	Additional Learning Objectives (as assigned by faculty)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
First Draft Due: <u>May 22</u>	Oral Presentation Required	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Final Draft Due: <u>June 10, 22</u>	Daily/Weekly Log Require	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

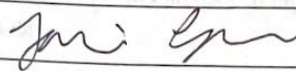
### Section 6 – Students Certification

I certify that I have read the University Policy on Risk Management Considerations for Student Internships and I will report any injuries suffered while performing internship promptly to WWU.

I will endeavor to represent myself and my college well and will abide by the relevant policies, procedures and ethical standards of the university and the internship organization.

I understand that 30-hours of work per credit earned is expected for an internship. I understand that I am expected to enroll in a number of credits commensurate with hours worked each quarter.

Student's  
Signature/Date



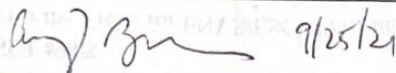
10/03/21

### Section 7 – Internship Site Supervisor Certification

I have reviewed the student's indicated learning objectives and on behalf of my organization agree:

- To enrich the Student's knowledge by orienting him/her to the occupation, the work setting, and the responsibilities relating to the assignment
- To regularly evaluate/provide feedback to student on progress, projects and areas of growth
- At or near the completion of the assignment to provide an evaluation of the student's performance
- To review and approve the Student's Learning Plan and communicate with Huxley College if areas are not going to be met.
- To supply the student with, and abide by the organization's policy against discrimination and/or harassment in the workplace
- To contact the instructor or the Huxley Internship Coordinator (360) 650-3646, should any problems arise

Internship Site  
Supervisor  
Signature/Date



9/25/21

### Section 8 – Faculty Advisor Certification

I certify that the student intern and I have reached agreement on the learning objectives and academic expectations for this experience. These objectives are challenging and enriching to the student's academic and/or career goals. I will award grades after satisfactory completion of all learning objectives/tasks/reports assigned and load final internship report onto the Huxley Server. P:\Huxley\PUBLIC\_folders\COLLEGE\_OFFICE\Intern\_Reports

Faculty Advisor's  
Signature/Date



### Section 9 – Huxley College Internship Coordinator

Actions:

1. Review Agreement
2. Update Course Override
3. File Agreement in Student Records
4. Communicate with Employers as necessary during internship