

COLLEGE OF THE ENVIRONMENT



Internship Title:

Organization Worked For:

Student Name:

Internship Dates:

Faculty Advisor Name

Department

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STUDENT SIGNATURE _____

DATE: _____

Final Internship Report

Josiah Cennamo-Rose

Ed Weber

2023-24

6/2/24

City of Bellingham Parks Volunteer Program Restoration Intern

City of Bellingham Parks Volunteer Program Restoration Intern

Over the course of this internship, September - June, my team and I have facilitated volunteer work parties where everyone involved removed thousands of pounds of invasive plants



from parks all over the city of Bellingham. Plants such as Himalayan Blackberry, Tansy ragwort, Bindweed, Creeping Thistle, Common Tansy, Mullein, Knockweed, Scotch Broom, Clematis (Old Man's Beard), and many more.

We have planted hundreds if not thousands of native plants ranging from trees like Douglas firs and

Western Red Cedars to small and medium shrubs like Oregon Grape and Ocean Spray. At the end of all of our work parties we lay down a thick sheet of mulch to help our new native plants thrive while also making it harder for the invasive plants to reestablish themselves. Over the months we have easily laid out hundreds if not thousands of cubic yards of mulch throughout the city.

My main goals I set for myself when going into this internship back in September were twofold. My first goal was to get better at public speaking since that is something that I have consistently struggled with my entire life and I am pleased to say I think I have succeeded in that goal. One of our jobs as restoration interns with the Parks Volunteer Program is to orient small groups of volunteers on what we are working on at any given work party (see image above in the first paragraph (I am on the far left)). At the start of my working with the city as an intern, back in September all the way through winter, I was honestly scared of doing the small group intros and had to spend five to ten minutes psyching myself up for it every time. Once we got into spring that really took a turn, however. Not only am I not super nervous about gathering 15-30 volunteers and instructing them on what to do and how to do it, I get somewhat excited about it.

It is something new to me that I have never really had the confidence to do before and because of that it feels fun and exciting. I have not had many opportunities to practice public speaking outside of this setting however so I am not sure how this will translate to new situations but I feel confident that I can bring some of the skills I have learned in this department with me once my internship has concluded.

The second goal I set for myself is a little more trackable/numerical. I wanted to get better at my Pacific Northwest plant identification. Both native and common invasive plants in our region. Before starting at this internship I could confidently identify Douglas Fir trees for native plants and English Ivy, English Holly, Scotch



Broom, and Himalayan Blackberry for invasive plants. As the months have past working with the city I have slowly expanded my catalog of plant IDs more and more. Now I can confidently ID a small handful of native plants such as Oregon Grape (and Tall Oregon Grape), Dewberry, Osoberry, Ocean Spray, Western Red Cedar, and more. While also being able to spot and seek out invasives such as Common Tansy, Saint John's Wort, Mullein, Clematis, Knockweed, and Bindweed (morning glory) on top of the other invasive and natives I could already comfortable ID before my start at this internship. I really enjoy being able to just look at a plant and ID it on the spot. It makes my hikes much more interactive and I feel more in tune with the environment around me.

This internship was not all that easy, however. The unpaid time commitment was a lot to balance with class work and a part-time job and having to be up anywhere between 5-7am every Saturday took a great deal of getting used to. I like the routine of it and the fact that it was more or less the same work every weekend was pretty helpful to fall into a pattern. But the early

Saturdays on top of working nights four days a week (4pm-10pm) was a pretty awkward balance to find. For a few weeks, I had work on Saturday too so I would work my internship 6am-3pm and then go to work from 4pm-10pm and that was pretty terrible. I quickly made it known to my boss that I could not work on Saturdays anymore. Other than that and the struggle of public speaking for the first half of my time at the internship, there were not many struggles for me to overcome. The work we are doing every week is something that I personally love and volunteer my free time towards already. I loved that it got me outside and into nature regularly and I really enjoy working with the Parks Volunteer Program team.

This was not a goal of mine but I feel confident saying that we got a pretty good team working at the Parks Volunteer Program right now. I enjoy working with them and look forward to seeing them every week. We have had a few kickbacks outside of work that have always been really nice and I enjoy the company of all of them. I am sad to see this internship coming to an end because it means we won't be working together every week anymore. But roughly half of the

non-intern side of the team is staying next year, with everyone else already committing to volunteering at some of the work parties next year (I plan to volunteer quite a bit) so I will see them all again semi-frequently which I am looking forward to. Overall this experience has been amazing and I am so happy I had the opportunity to do this.

