



# October 2009

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## NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION AT PADILLA BAY AND AMERICORPS KICKOFF

Welcome new WCC members! You are now a part of an effort dating back to the 1930's to help address critical needs in the community, and make a big difference in the health and betterment of the environment. This year the Washington Conservation Corps is beginning a new program called **Energy Corps**, where members will take part in energy efficiency projects for communities of need and the State Parks system throughout Washington. With Energy Corps, the great work of WCC can be extended to new avenues involving a huge public need- energy efficiency, alternative energy resources, weatherization and overall sustainability of resources.

### Friday October 23, 2009

The *Americorps Launch* will take place at Seattle Center in the Fisher Pavillion.  
10:00 a.m. until 12 Noon

### New Member Orientation

The two orientations are taking place at *Padilla Bay* (Nov. 2-3 and Nov. 4-5. Padilla Bay demonstrates the uniqueness and importance of estuarine habitats. Sediment collects in the bay from the Skagit river, creating a perfect habitat for eelgrass. Eelgrass is used as a nursery by salmon, crab, perch, and herring. Eelgrass is also home for millions of worms, shrimp, clams, and other invertebrates that are food for great blue herons, eagles, otters, seals, as well as humans.



## NATIVE PLANT OF THE MONTH

**Description:** This multi-stemmed, deciduous shrub grows 6-13 feet tall, with thin, reddish-brown or yellowish-brown bark that flakes away in thin strips. Leaves are alternate, 1½ - 3½ inches long, and serrated, with 3-5 toothed lobes. Flowers are small, white, and are borne in dense, round pompom clusters about 1-3 inches in diameter. Fruits form inconspicuous, reddish clusters, each fruit being about ¼ inch in diameter.

**Habitat:** Moist to wet sites, in somewhat open areas (e.g., wooded edges bordering meadows and along water). More often in wetlands than in dry, brushy areas. Full sun to partial shade.

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Has excellent soil-binding qualities, attractive leaves, and beautiful flowers. Provides cover, nesting sites, and food for birds and small mammals. Deer and elk browse on the twigs, foliage, and buds. Bears eat the berries.

**Propagation:** Grows best from hardwood cuttings, is easy to propagate from cuttings at any time of the year, and can be live- staked. Can also be grown from seed (collect late August to September), but germination is spotty. Seed not sown in the fall may need 2-3 months cold stratification to break seed dormancy. Plants under six feet tall salvage well.

**Suitable Growing Environment:** sun and moist soils (understory)

**NATIVE VS. NON-NATIVE PLANT SPECIES**

As you will soon learn (or perhaps already know) while working on a crew in the WCC, invasive plants are extremely detrimental to the environment. When invasive plants- usually non-native- infect an ecosystem, it is difficult to stop the growth. But if it isn't stopped, the native plants face extinction in the area. In Washington state, plants like English Ivy, Himalayan Blackberry, Scot's (Scotch) Broom, Japanese Knotweed and Milfoil are difficult to control. October's problem plant is...

***Convolvulus sepium***

Hedge Bindweed

(formerly known as Morning Glory)

**Description:** This showy, perennial vine is a highly invasive species. Its trailing or climbing stems can grow up to nine feet long from rhizomes. Leaves are 1-5 inches long and heart-shaped with a distinct point. Flowers are showy, white to pink, and shaped like a wide-mouthed trumpet. It can be distinguished from most native morning-glories by leaf shape.

**Habitat:** Common in gardens, but will also grow in all but the most dry areas.

**Impact:** This vine is a problem in many wetland areas, especially those which have been disturbed. Its stems grow quickly, covering other vegetation and smothering it.

**Control Methods:** Difficult to control once it is intertwined with desirable vegetation. New plants can grow from root fragments, and tilling can spread the plant to new areas. Each vine must be removed by hand, and the rhizomes dug up as completely as possible.



Above: Bindweed strangles green victim

**TEMPERATE RAINFORESTS**



The lush forests in the Quinault, Queets, Hoh, and Bogachiel valleys are some of the most spectacular examples of primeval temperate rain forest in the lower 48 states. These rain forests once stretched from southern Oregon to southeast Alaska, but little remains outside of protected areas. Other temperate rain forests grow in a few isolated spots around the world including Chile, New Zealand and southern Australia. Temperate Rainforests have:

1. Lots of rain!
2. moderate temperatures (barely below freezing and never over 80)
3. Epiphytes (plants growing on other plants, like moss, lichens, ferns)
4. Old growth stands of giant Sitka Spruce, Western Hemlocks and other conifers and deciduous trees
5. Nurse logs are fallen trees that are in a process of decay, cycling nutrients throughout the forest ecosystem.

Fact: The Olympic Marmot is endemic to the ONF! Only lives there.

**SALMON AND HABITAT OF THE MONTH**

**Sockeye salmon (*Oncorhynchus nerka*)**

Also called red salmon or blueback salmon, is an anadromous species of salmon found in the Pacific Ocean. Sockeye is called Kokanee when it stops going to the ocean, and remains landlocked in fresh water. It is the third most common species of Pacific salmon, after Pink and Chum salmon. The name "sockeye" is believed to be a folk etymology of the anglicization of sθ qəy the name for the species in Halkomelem, the language of the indigenous people along the lower reaches of the Fraser River. Sockeye are silver and blue during their salt water phase, and then turn red and green during their journey back up into fresh water streams to spawn. The males acquire a hump in their backs, along with a hooked jaw. Due to overfishing and possibly climate change, many populations of Sockeye have been listed as Endangered Species. There has 30-90% decrease in Sockeye returning to spawn in the Fraser River.

Interesting fact: Sockeye only spawn once in a lifetime, and the only Salmon that raise fry in fresh water lakes.

Below: Sockeye salmon back to fresh water phase for spawning- top to bottom - female to male. Notice altered male body and color changes.

