



CORPS

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Photo courtesy of: Sara Grossie

## Maury Island Marine Park

*By: Kyle Corroon, Maury Island*

In October of 2012, twenty-four somewhat strangers gathered on an island in the middle of the sound on a rock known as Vashon. We had no idea that our year would be full of so many new friendships and experiences. Sometimes, it's like we are one enormous crew and seeing what we are capable of is astonishing. The main task on Vashon is the restoration of an old, abandoned gravel mine. We get to transform a pile of rocks and weeds into one of King County's most phenomenal parks. The mine is located on the southeast corner of the island, technically Maury Island. The project has been very rewarding. The community on Vashon is very thankful, excited, and involved!

The project began with every corps member's favorite gig: the removal of acres and acres of blackberries and scotch broom! Wrenching, cutting, and grubbing consumed our first months on the work site. Soon the ground leveled out and it was time to rope up, and tackle the invasively infested, steep, sandy slopes. Bridget from the WCC headquarters office came down to show us all how to put on the harness and repel off the cliffs safely. We learned a number of knots and techniques used for climbing and repelling. I personally loved the life-saving precious, prussic knot, allowing a simple bit of tension to save your life if you were to slip or fall. Harnessed in with brush cutters in hand, we stepped off the tops of cliffs to sever blackberries as we descended to the bottom. The hills soon began to mirror the parks level ground. The worksite became a

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## Maury Island continued

blank canvas waiting to be painted with close to 65,000 plants and miles of trails. As the piles of debris that we left behind were chipped and shredded, two enormous, refrigerated semi trailers arrived on site. Each filled with all sorts of fresh, bare-root baby plants eager to get in the ground. We planted everything from “Dougie Fresh” to Salmonberry. Only time will show what a thick, lush, and diverse park this will be; or you can just use your imagination! As planting came to an end there was still a surplus of plants.

Local commuter of Vashon Island water taxi supports the Maury Island Crews on the way to site

Photo courtesy of the Maury Island Crews



Our crews got together and built a nursery to house the remaining Douglas Firs, Alders, Etc. Now with hot weather approaching we are putting together a major watering plan for all 65,000+ plants including irrigation, sprinklers, and water trailers. Additionally, crews have begun carving new trails into the park. Teaming up with King County Parks & Recreation, we are building more enjoyable and relaxing switchbacks alongside old, steep, exhausting trails.

It is truly exciting to see what the rest of the year will bring. Including next year, since we now know a WCC crew will be back next year. So if you have a free weekend or you are just looking to get away, hop on a ferry and come on down to the Maury Island Marine Park and reap the benefits your fellow WCC members have built for you!

## Help Fight the Spread of Invasive Plants!

*By: Janna Ryan, WCC Outreach Coordinator*

Do you have a personal vendetta against noxious weeds and other invasive plants? Do you spend a lot of time outside? If so, the Pacific Northwest Invasive Plant Council’s new plan to fight invasive plants might be perfect for you! The goal is to train “Citizen Scientists” in plant identification and reporting and then unleash them on prime recreational areas spanning 11 counties (Clallam, Jefferson, Grays Harbor, Mason, Thurston, Lewis, Skamania, Pierce, Kittitas, Yakima and Klickitat).



*Centaurea solstitialis*, or Yellow Starthistle, is a Class B noxious weed which is toxic to livestock. Photo courtesy of Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board.

The target species list includes common annoyances like English Holly and Japanese Knotweed, but also some rarities like Kudzu and Crupina. Plants accurately identified by volunteers will be eradicated quickly to prevent further spread.

Visit the council’s website at <http://pnw-ipc.org/edrrlocal.shtml> to check out the target species list and a set of maps showing areas needing volunteer surveys. The Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR) program has also developed a free smart phone application called “PNEDN”—Pacific Northwest Early Detection Network (available for Android and iPhone). The app allows you to take geo-tagged photos and submit them electronically with your own notes to describe the size of the patch and percentage covered.

If you are a current WCC Member interested in earning some external hours by volunteering with the EDRR program, contact Janna Ryan at [Janna.Ryan@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Janna.Ryan@ecy.wa.gov) for details.



WCC &amp; Olympic National Park Revegetation Crews at work in former Lake Mills

## Restoring the Wonderful Elwha

*By Nick Cuny, Olympic National Park, Wigle's Crew*

Working in the Elwha this year was an interesting experience for me. Last year I spent most of my time out on spike, doing trail and general maintenance work for Olympic National Park. I caught glimpses of the work but did not know the magnitude of what was happening. I thought the overall idea of the project was cool. Nevertheless, when it came to the work that the other crew did, I was definitely “too cool for school”. I thought to myself, “Good thing the ‘B team’ got this project” (Jokingly calling the other crew the “B Team”). Little did I know, the second month of my second year, I would be jumping head first into this project myself.

As you may already know the Elwha project is the largest dam removal project in the U.S. to date. By this summer, both the Elwha and the Glines Canyon dams will be completely gone. This will let the river flow from headwaters to ocean for the first time in 100 years. Having both dams gone will help restore salmon populations by giving them more places to spawn. Returning salmon will in turn enhance the overall ecosystem of the river. The salmon bring a food source and nutrients for plants and animals that previously did not have access for over 100 years. The sediment coming down from the mountains to the coast will help restore wetlands, beaches, and the estuary at the mouth of the river. The plants we planted will help speed up the natural plant regeneration, as well as crowd out invasive plants, before they get a foot hold in the fertile soil that used to be the bottom of a lake.



Elwha Dam Before its Removal in Sept. 2011,  
Photo: ecy.wa.gov



Elwha Dam After breaching,  
Photo: Western Washington University

We spent 3 months total up at the former Lake Mills (behind the Glines Canyon dam) and occasionally worked down in Lake Aldwell with Justin Zarzeczny's crew. Between the two crews we planted 37,521 plants and built 5 plus miles of trail in the form of access trails to planting sites. We spent seemingly countless hours at the plant nursery. We prepared plants to be planted, washed plant pots, and did general maintenance work around the nursery grounds.

I was astounded at how much work goes into just getting plants into the ground. The project went from being child's play to serious work quicker than you could say “who stole my sandwich?” One week we would be planting and the next week we might be building an access trail. Which would sometimes be washed away and need to be rebuilt somewhere else. I remember one day we spent the entire day carrying swamp grates, from a previous years' planting site. They brought them in initially by boat but because of the dam draw down, they were sitting about a quarter mile from the river's edge. This was

over a mile from the truck. I quickly realized that this was no “B Team” type work. This project needed and still needs anyone and everyone it can get its grey, “silty” hands on.

In the end, this was a great experience. I do not think anyone enjoys planting rose hip in torrential down pour, 35 degree weather. I still think I would rather do trails, but I think I understand why this work needs to happen. I also understand why WCC does a lot of it. It is not glamorous but it helps rebuild natural areas. Especially where we humans, ignorantly (and sometimes arrogantly), destroyed the ecosystem. It also gives people, including myself, a chance to see, learn, and participate in what is happening in the environment around us.



## Chance of Showers: WCC Art Book

### Stories and Experiences From the Evergreen State

The idea behind Chance of Showers is to create a platform for corps members to share their stories and experiences from the year. We want contributors to have an outlet to express the sensation of working outside in the state of Washington. We all put on boots, raingear, hardhats, gloves, etc. From a quarter mile away we all look the same, to a certain extent, we are. Training at Fort Worden, running a chainsaw, everyone can relate to these stories. What happens after work? On weekends? What is unique to your crew? What is unique to you? Chance of showers isn't necessarily about the Washington Conservation Corps, it's about the people who compose the Corps and the stories that will not slip through the cracks undocumented.

To contribute to the WCC art book go to:

<http://nickflows.com/chanceofshowers.html>

To keep up with the latest information on what's happening with WCC visit us at:

[www.facebook.com/washingtonconservationcorps](http://www.facebook.com/washingtonconservationcorps)

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**Sudoku:** Enter a number from 1 through 9 in such a way that each row, column, and region contains only one instance of each number.

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