

# OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY TRUST BOARD

Thursday · January 17 · 2019  
Regular Meeting Agenda

6:00 pm Letterboxing Celebration

6:20 pm Call to Order & Roll Call

6:25 pm Minutes of September 20, 2018 Meeting

6:30 pm Public Appearances

6:45 pm Regular Business

- |   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 1. Rotary Peace Pole project                          | Paul West/Elizabeth Baska (15 min) |
| 2. Open Space Program overview                        | Staff (30 min)                     |
| 3. Contracted restoration<br>& prevailing wage change | Alaine Sommargren (10 min)         |
| 4. 2018 Annual Report &<br>2019 Work Plan             | Alaine Sommargren (10 min)         |
| 5. Quadrant reports                                   | Trustees (5 min)                   |
| 6. Next Meeting: <b>March 21, 2019</b>                | Chair (5 min)                      |

8:00 pm Adjournment (estimated)

## BOARD MEMBERS

Rory Westberg, *Chair*  
Marie Bender, *Vice Chair*  
Thomas Hildebrandt, *Secretary*  
Bruce Bassett, *Council Liaison*  
Carol Lynn Berseth  
Craig Olson  
Geraldine Poor

## STAFF

Paul West, *Parks Operations Superintendent*  
Alaine Sommargren, *Natural Resources Manager*  
Kim Frappier, *Natural Resources Specialist*





# OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY TRUST BOARD REGULAR MEETING MINUTES September 20, 2018

## Call To Order:

Vice Chair Bender called the meeting to order at 6:07 pm in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 9611 SE 36th Street, Mercer Island, WA 98040.

## Roll Call:

Vice Chair Marie Bender, Secretary Thomas Hildebrandt, Trustee Geraldine Poor, Trustee Craig Olson, Trustee Carol Lynn Berseth, Council Liaison Bruce Bassett (left meeting at 7:03 PM). Chair Rory Westberg was absent.

Staff present were Paul West, Park Operations Superintendent, Alaine Sommargren, Natural Resources Manager, and Kim Frappier, Natural Resources Specialist, and Parks Director, Jessi Bon.

## Minutes:

Trustee Olson motioned to approve the July minutes with proposed changes. Trustee Poor seconded. Motion passed: 6-0.

## Public Appearances:

Barbara Crawford, 8445 SE 63<sup>rd</sup> Street

Ms. Crawford spoke in support of retaining the social trail that leads from her home into the NW quadrant of Pioneer Park. Her full statement is included with the minutes.

## Regular Business:

### (I) Social trail follow-up

Superintendent West reported that he read through the Pioneer Park Master Plan and found no mention of social trail management. The Pioneer Park Forest Management Plan mentions closing social trails if they are causing damage to the park, but there is no specific policy. Natural Resources Manager Sommargren reported back on her outreach to private homeowners adjacent to the NW and SE quadrants. She spoke with 7 of 9 home owners with social trails. She noted that perspectives varied by homeowner with some expressing a desire to close all social trails and others requesting to keep them. Two neighbors have agreed to having their trails decommissioned, which will be done next spring, and one other has agreed to narrow the point of entry to minimize impact.

Board members discussed varied approaches to addressing the issue of social trails from private property into the park. Suggestions ranged from dealing with the issue on a case-by-case basis to an official policy banning social trails altogether. Some Trustees requested a middle ground approach working closely with the neighbors, but not creating an official policy at this time.

Board Direction: Trustees agreed to the middle ground approach which will involve working with the two neighbors who have agreed to close their social trails and minimize the size and appearance of the widest one leading to 8445 SE 63<sup>rd</sup> St. The board agreed to revisit this issue again next year and requested that staff report back on the success and status of the trail decommission work.

(II) By-laws revision adoption

Natural Resources Sommargren reported back on her review of the OSCT by-laws and ordinance with the City Clerk to ensure that the two documents were in agreement. There was a conflict regarding the term length for the Council Liaison, which will be updated in the job description section of the by-laws. There was a minor modification to the language in section 2G regarding meeting absences. Notification of the by-laws revision was posted in the Mercer Island Reporter as required.

Vice Chair Bender moved to adopt the by-laws revisions as amended. Seconded by Trustee Berseth. Approved 6-0.

(III) Forest Health Survey (FHS) data collection progress

Natural Resources Manager Sommargren reported on the status of data collection for the FHS. Data collection has concluded. She provided a brief synopsis of the tree composition data including the occurrence of holly versus native trees between 2008 and 2018. A more comprehensive report on the findings will be presented to the Trust board in early 2019.

(IV) Rotary Peace Pole project and picnic table replacement

Superintendent West requested feedback from the Trust board regarding the placement of a new picnic table in the NW quadrant, within the existing picnic area. He also requested feedback on the preferred type of base for the table. Trustees requested that staff place the new table on a gravel base and anchor it so that the table cannot be moved. He also provided background on the Peace Pole donated through the Rotary Club Peace Pole program. Trustees were presented with three options, but suggested a fourth option located next to the Mythical Bird sculpture.

Board direction: Superintendent West will explore the possibility of placing the pole near the other sculpture. Trustees will revisit this decision at the November meeting.

(V) Hatheway Bench

Superintendent West reported that staff have not been successful in recruiting a volunteer scout to refurbish the Hatheway Bench. A community member has offered to pay for materials, but a volunteer is still needed to complete the work. Trustee Hildebrandt volunteered to refurbish the bench and will coordinate with Superintendent West on the project.

(VI) Quadrant Reports

**NW Quadrant:** Trustee Berseth and Trustee Bender

Trustee Bender inquired about getting a Mutt Mitt dispenser on 84<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE. Staff reported that this on the work plan for the Parks maintenance team.

**NE Quadrant:** Chair Westberg, Council Liaison Bassett, and Trustee Poor

Trustees relayed information on observations between dog owners and their dogs. Trustee Berseth attended a walking tour with Natural Resources Manager Sommargren and Natural Resources Specialist Frappier.

**SE Quadrant:** Trustee Hildebrandt and Trustee Olson

No report

(VII) Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for November 15, 2018.

**Adjournment:** 7:13 pm

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Marie Bender, Vice Chair

Attest:

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Kim Frappier, Scribe



I am Barbara Crawford and I have lived at 8445 SE 63<sup>rd</sup> Street since 1972. My husband died in 2014, and there is a bench dedicated to him in the park along the Island Crest Way portion of the Northwest quadrant. We spent many a happy hour walking all portions of the park walking a succession of golden retrievers and on our own. We accessed from our back yard on a small trail created by our use.

We worked hard to save various portions of the park from becoming a 9-hole golf course. The last attempt to do so was in perhaps the late 80's or early 90's. At that time, we met a young, dynamic, articulate young man, who probably had not been on the Island very long. He was to become our leader and hero --- DON COHEN!

It was through these efforts that Conservancy was born. No one can appreciate more than I, your efforts to make this beautiful park accessible to all. From its earliest days, (when there were often summertime pot parties in the park) to what the park is now, from the South 40, to the Nature Trail with ravine walk and the Northwest Quadrant which is truly accessible, it a joy to behold.

Accessibility is very close to my heart. In his last months of life, due to congestive heart failure, my dear husband could no longer make it from our home to the corner. I purchased a scooter for him. At first, we went down 63<sup>rd</sup> to 84<sup>th</sup> to enter the park. That proved to be somewhat dangerous, when crossing 63<sup>rd</sup> at 84<sup>th</sup>, due to considerable traffic and poor visibility. With Paul West's approval, we widened our path. Since his death in June of 2014, I have attempted to allow it to fill in for privacy.

Coincidentally, our eldest of four daughters, uses a scooter wheelchair and in the early days, there was no way she could enjoy this treasure. Presently, whenever she visits from Mukilteo WA, the first item is "let's walk in the park". We use Dick's scooter to keep hers clean for in the house.

An occasional dog may use my trail, but frankly, they do so even where there is no trail. I have never had a problem with any dog in my 46 years in my home.

I honestly see no need to de-access these small trails, unless the homeowner wishes to do so. Most of us are your best stewards Pioneer Park, reporting downed trees or lost bicycles. and would never cause harm to the park in any way.

Thank you.



**CITY OF MERCER ISLAND  
OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY  
TRUST BOARD  
STAFF REPORT**

**Action Item No. 2  
January 17, 2019**

Description:	Open Space Program overview
Exhibits:	1. Island Crest Park restoration history 2. Cayhill Open Space restoration history

**BACKGROUND**

At the May 2018 meeting, Trustees discussed a request by the Concerned Citizens of Mercer Island Parks to add additional park properties to the Open Space Conservancy Trust. Staff recommended that the Trust take no action on the request.

Staff reported that developed parks are not 'open space' and therefore are not eligible for inclusion in Trust properties. Staff also provided examples of park areas that are classified as open space that would be eligible for inclusion. These properties are currently managed for ecological health by Parks Natural Resources staff and are protected by adopted plans including the City's Comprehensive Plan, the Parks and Recreation Plan, the City budget, and the Open Space Management Plan and 10-Year Update. Each of these documents aim to preserve open space. Staff also suggested that the City could enact additional protections for these properties through other mechanisms, including conservation easements.

After discussion, the Trust decided not to act on the CCMIP proposal to add all park properties to the OSCT. Trustees expressed their interest in a further discussion of public open space properties and requested that staff provide additional information about how other Mercer Island open spaces are managed currently and how this management compares to that of Trust properties. Trustees also requested information about which open space properties are expressly protected from development by deed restrictions, which will be addressed at the March 2019 meeting.

**OPEN SPACE PROGRAM**

Vegetation work in Mercer Island's public open spaces began in the early 2000s, when it became apparent that invasive species were hindering the growth of native trees and shrubs and beginning to dominate the forested landscapes. In September 2004, City Council adopted the Open Space Vegetation Plan (<http://www.mercergov.org/files/osvegplanfinal.pdf>). In crafting this plan, staff performed site assessments of each open space and held public meetings to evaluate management priorities. This plan outlines the benefits of healthy open spaces, identifies the ecological issues facing Mercer Island's open spaces and set goals for their long-

term management. Each open space was assigned a Level of Service for management, which ranged from a limited scope that would result in loss of benefits over time (Level C), a broader suite of services to maintain current ecological function (Level B), and to intensive, park-wide management that would maximize ecological function (Level A).

Over the following years, open spaces were managed following this framework, through the combined work of volunteers and contracted restoration crews. The program’s budget increased gradually to augment the Levels of Service set out in the 2004 plan.

In 2008, Mercer Island voters approved a levy that provided additional funding for vegetation management in all open spaces, as well as specific funding to be used for restoration work in Pioneer Park. This increased funding dovetailed with the downturn in the economy, enabling staff to contract a great deal of restoration work at very economical rates for several years.

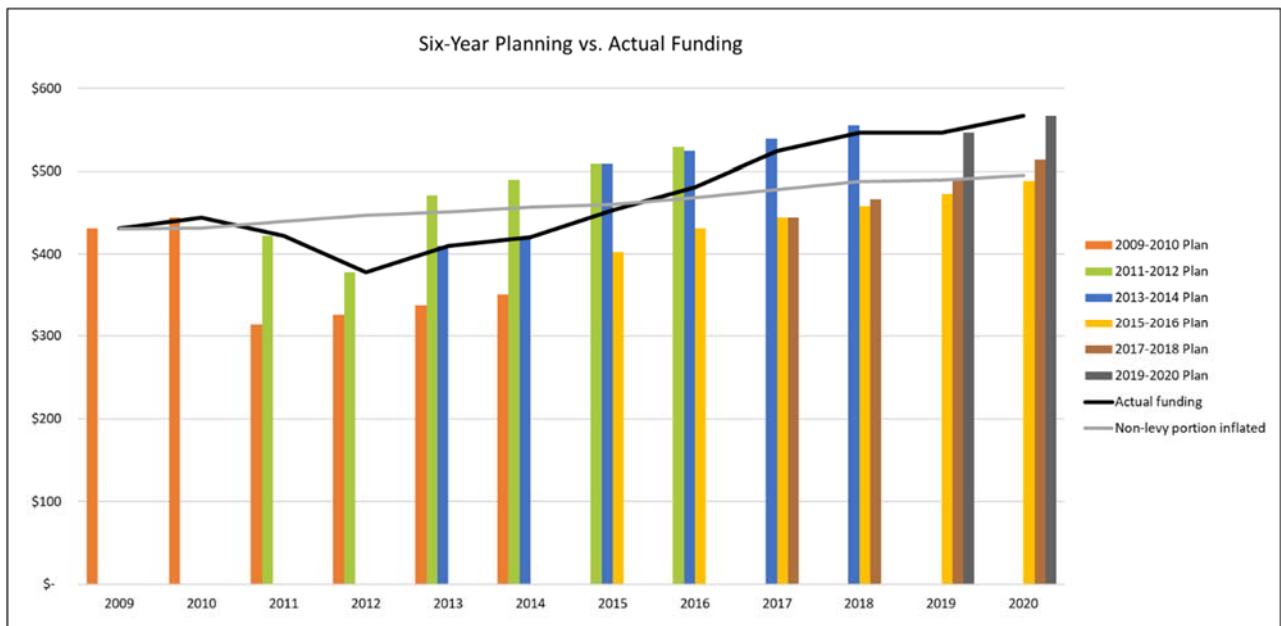


Figure 1. Six-year Budget Plans for Open Space Vegetation Management, with actual budget overlay. Gray line represents inflation of the non-levy portion of the OSVM budget.

In 2015, City Council adopted a 10-Year Update to the Open Space Vegetation Plan (<http://www.mercergov.org/SIB/files/FINAL%20Open%20Space%20Update.pdf>). The update documented the progress made in ecological restoration in public open space. It added several new policy tools, including those to address prioritization, climate resiliency and adaptive management needs of the open space. The plan update also includes policy that employs actions of the Open Space Conservancy Trust to inform the department’s standards of care for other open spaces.

## OPEN SPACE RESTORATION WORK

Currently, the Parks Natural Resources group manages restoration work on just under 300 acres. Excluding Trust properties, this work covers 170 acres in 20 separate parks. The following table lists each open space and the approximate acreage of undeveloped natural area within the park:

<b>Open Space area</b>	<b>Approx. area (acres)</b>
Cayhill Open Space	1.07
Clarke Beach Park	6.94
Clise Park	1.65
Ellis Pond	8.53
Gallagher Hill Open Space	11.44
Groveland Beach Park	1.84
Hollerbach Open Space	5.22
Homestead Park	3.24
Island Crest	27.46
Luther Burbank Park	18.9
Mercerdale Hillside	24.79
North Mercerdale Hillside	6.19
Parkwood Ridge Open Space	3.8
Salem Wood Open Space	0.32
SE 47 <sup>th</sup> Open Space	1.29
SE 50 <sup>th</sup> Open Space	1.79
SE 53 <sup>rd</sup> Open Space	23.99
Secret Park	0.6
Upper Luther Burbank Park	18.04
Wildwood Park	1.78

Over the last 13 years, some type of restoration work has been performed on the majority of these lands, and most have received multiple years of work. Because a full accounting of this work is too lengthy to discuss here, two open space areas will be presented as case studies, representing the scope of work typical of Mercer Island's open spaces.

### **Island Crest Park**

Island Crest Park is a 39 acre multi-use park that includes ballfields, tennis courts, 1.3 miles of walking trails, and 27.5 acres of forested open space. Like Pioneer Park, Island Crest Park represents exceptional ecological value due to its large size, more mature forest, and relatively undisturbed soils. Island Crest Park's open space is characterized by stands of mixed conifer/deciduous canopy, a ravine with north-facing slopes, as well as a watercourse and mosaic of wet areas that serve important biological and hydrologic functions.

Island Crest Park has lower levels of ivy on trees, overall invasive cover, and a somewhat higher proportion of conifers than other city parks (not including Pioneer Park). Although this open space has lower levels of invasive species, there are still significant areas of ivy cover and blackberry, particularly in canopy gaps. Management of invasive trees is an ongoing challenge.

Restoration of Island Crest Park began in 2005 and has been accomplished by professional contractors, volunteers, and the city's seasonal restoration crew. Areas with high value habitat were prioritized for comprehensive restoration which includes removal of all non-native exotic species and replanting with native trees and shrubs. Comprehensive restoration was conducted



on just over 9 acres and included the forested ravine and wet areas. In other areas of the park, the management focuses on canopy retention: creating ivy rings, treating invasive trees such as cherry laurel and English holly, and planting the next generation of conifers and other canopy trees. Exhibit 1 details contracted restoration work in Island Crest Park between 2005 and 2018.

Volunteers play an important role in stewarding Island Crest Park. EarthCorps has been hosting events since 2008 working on comprehensive removal and ivy rings in various parts of the park.

### Cayhill Open Space

Cayhill Open Space is a 1.1 acre forested ravine located on the east side of the Island across East Mercer Way from SE 53<sup>rd</sup> Open Space. Although small in size, Cayhill Open Space also holds important ecological and hydrologic value with a watercourse that drains into Lake Washington, a steep north-facing slope, and large mature conifers. It also contains large areas of ground ivy, Himalayan blackberry, and invasive trees. Within the ravine, invasive shrubs and trees are present, but there are also large thickets of native salmonberry throughout the watercourse, and native ferns and shrubs along the hillside.

Due to its steep slopes and location, Cayhill Open Space is solely managed for habitat and ecological services. The site is not accessible for public recreation and contains no trails. For these reasons, only professional contractors and seasonal staff have conducted work on the site. Restoration began in 2011 and has primarily consisted of canopy retention efforts such as ivy rings and invasive tree treatments. The city plans to do tree planting in this open space as funding allows. Exhibit 2 details contracted restoration work in Cayhill Open Space between 2011 and 2018.

### BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

Funding for vegetation management in Mercer Island's open spaces has two sources: REET 2 Real Estate Excise Tax (REET 2) and the 2008 open space levy. In the 2017-2018 biennium, approximately 30% of the

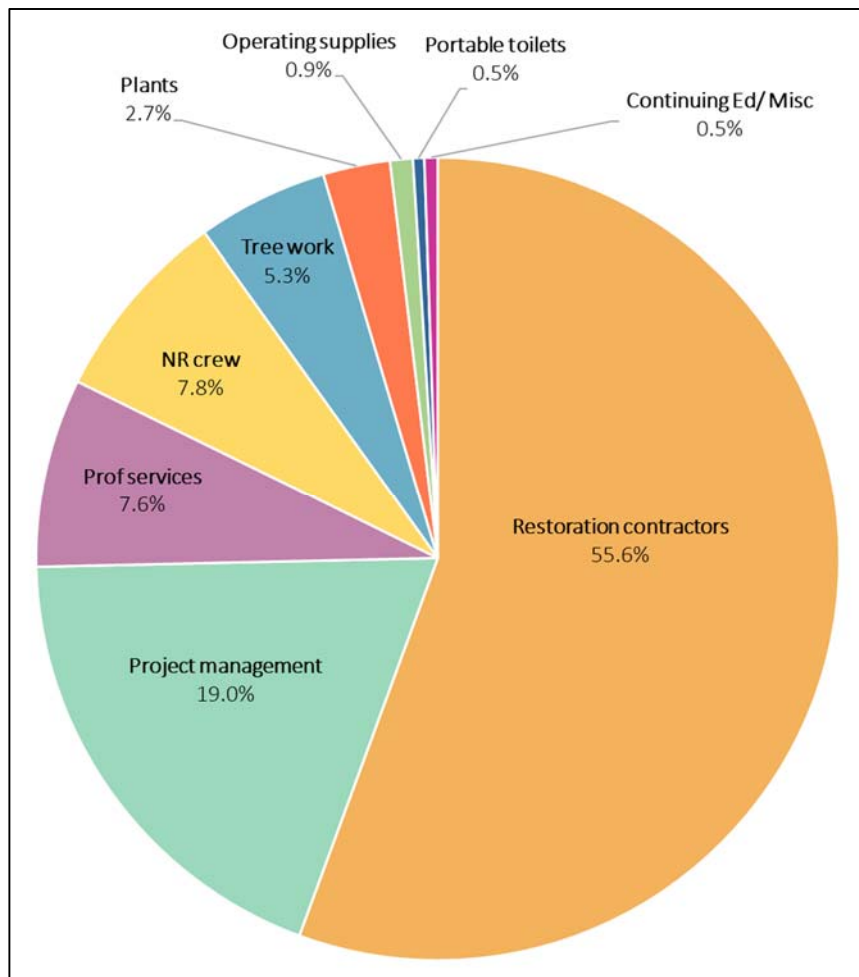


Figure 2. 2017-2018 analysis of Open Space Vegetation Management fund use for non-Trust properties.

total budget for restoration, tree and trail work was used on Trust properties (approximately 120 acres). The remaining 70% of funds were used to fund those activities in the island's other open space areas.

Figure 2 shows the approximate breakdown of the use of those funds for all non-Trust properties in the 2017-2018 biennium (2018 year-end totals not yet available). Contracted restoration accounts for the largest portion of costs, followed by project management, which includes staff time for tree assessments, restoration project scoping, and all contracting.

Professional services primarily cover volunteer management contracts that the City holds with Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust and EarthCorps. These organizations lead regular volunteer events in eight parks, including Pioneer Park.

Remaining expenses are distributed amongst several areas of work:

- Seasonal Natural Resources crew – Treatment and mapping of noxious weeds, fine scale restoration work
- Contracted tree work – Publicly bid work to address trees requiring removal or pruning
- Plants – Purchase of bareroot and container stock used for contracted and volunteer restoration projects
- Operating supplies – Tools and equipment
- Portable toilets – Rented for volunteer events in parks without restrooms
- Continuing education/Misc – Staff professional development, professional memberships and miscellaneous expenses

## **NEXT STEPS**

The protection and management of the City's open space areas is one area of focus in the upcoming Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan (PROS Plan). This is a key planning document that is revised every six years to set overall direction for the department. It provides an analysis of the community's needs for park facilities, recreation programs, passive recreation, landscapes, trails and open space. It provides a prioritized schedule of capital investments that are needed based on that analysis. It is developed by a consultant with input from the community and is approved by City Council. It is required for eligibility for certain state grants. Many major system-wide changes are vetted through the PROS plan. The Trust board will be part of the development of that plan starting in mid-2019.

In 2019, the City Council is planning to create a Parks and Recreation Commission. The purpose of the Parks & Recreation Commission will be to serve in a policy advisory capacity to the City Council and any other board or commission of the City. The P&R Commission will work on the PROS Plan and future master plans, advise on the acquisition of property, provide a forum for the public to express their views on parks and recreation programs, services and facilities, and make recommendations on budget, among other things.

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

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Receive report.



# Exhibit 1: Island Crest Park Restoration History

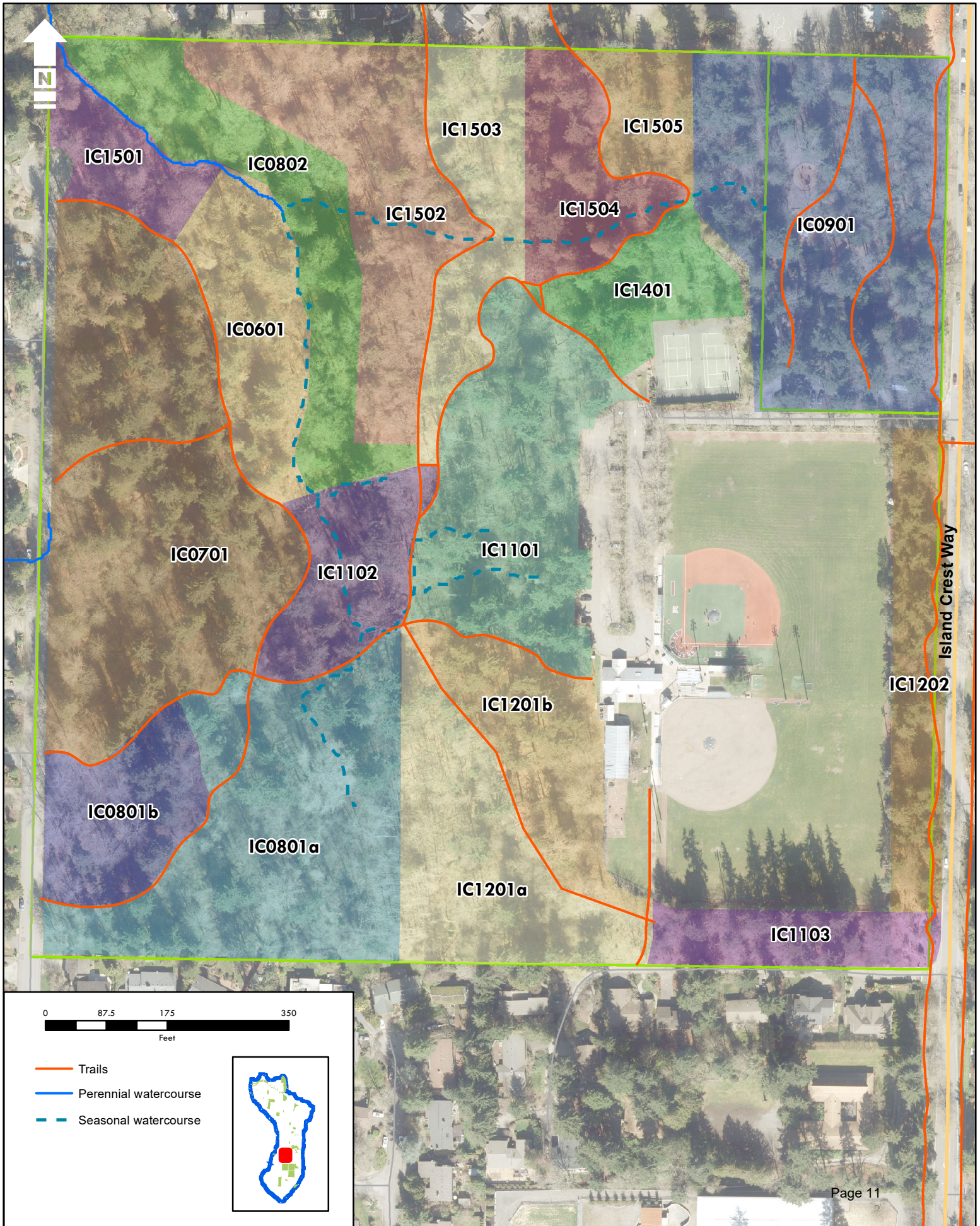




Exhibit 1: Island Crest Park Restoration History

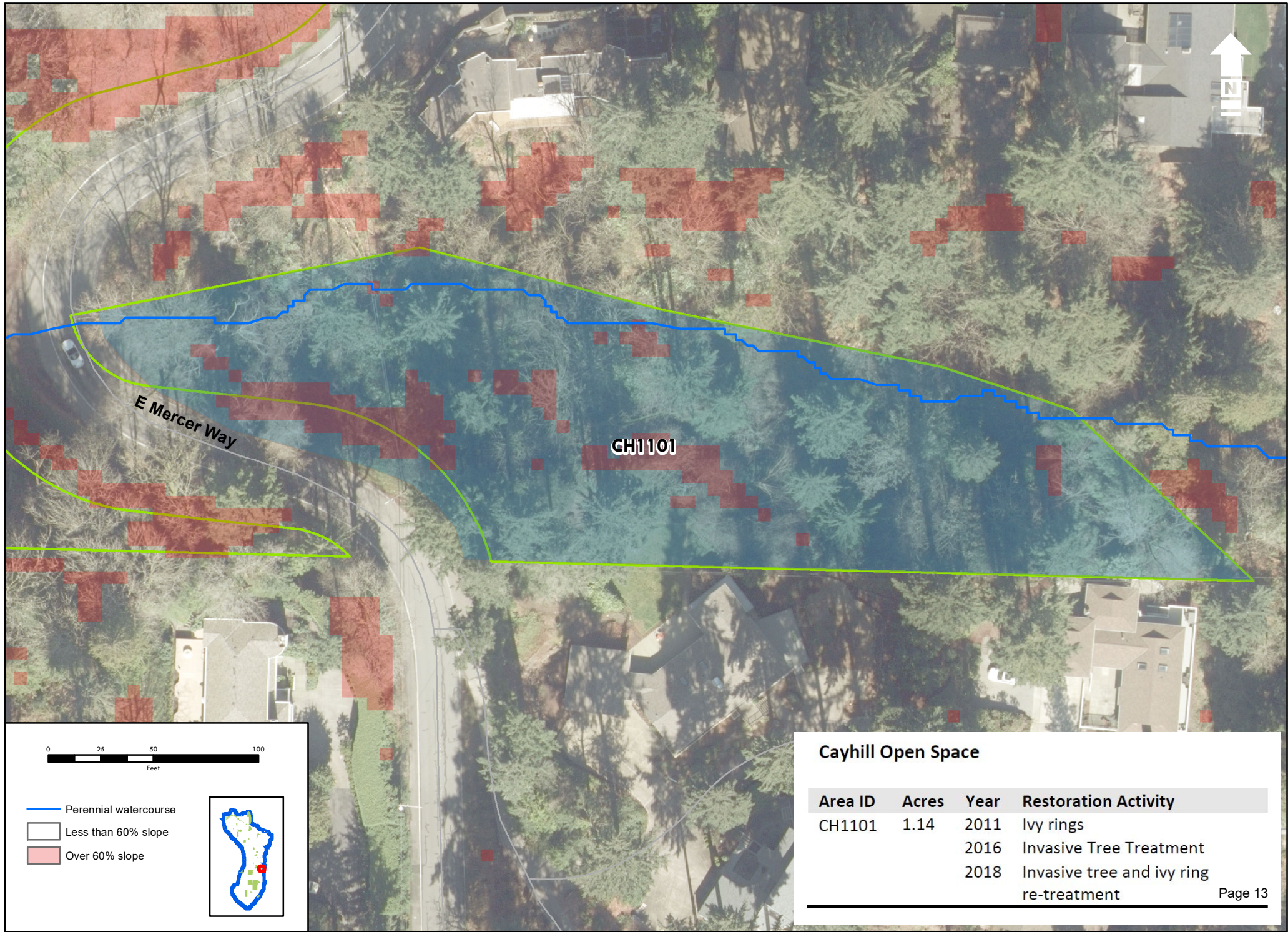
**Island Crest Park**

Area ID	Acres	Year	Restoration Activity
IC0501	0.84	2005	Comprehensive removal
		2006	2nd year invasive removal
		2007	3rd year invasive removal
<i>Area unit now part of IC1502 and IC1503</i>			
IC0502	1.16	2005	Fall planting
		2007	Comprehensive removal
		2008	Tree planting
			Planting maintenance
<i>Area unit now part of IC1502 and IC1503</i>			
IC0504	1.51	2005	Comprehensive removal
		2006	2nd year invasive removal
		2007	3rd year invasive removal
		2008	Tree planting
		2008	Planting maintenance
		2009	Invasive removal maintenance
			Selective herbicide treatment
		2010	Fall tree planting
			Invasive removal maintenance
		<i>Area unit now part of IC0801a and IC1201a</i>	
IC0601	1.30	2006	Fall Planting
		2007	2nd year invasive removal
		2008	3rd year invasive removal
			Planting maintenance
		2015	Invasive removal maintenance
		2018	Invasive removal maintenance
IC0701	0.77	2007	Comprehensive removal
		2008	2nd year invasive removal
			Planting maintenance
IC0801	3.62	2008	Blackberry knockdown
IC0801a	3.09	2009	Invasive knockdown
			Fall tree planting
		2010	Invasive knockdown
			Planting maintenance
		2011	Planting maintenance
			Invasive knockdown
		2013	Planting maintenance
			Invasive knockdown
2014	Herbicide invasive trees		
	Ivy rings		
2017	Planting maintenance		
	2017	Planting maintenance	
IC0802	1.73	2008	Comprehensive removal
		2009	2nd year invasive removal
			Fall tree planting
		2010	3rd year invasive removal
			Planting maintenance
		2011	Invasive removal maintenance
		2012	Invasive removal maintenance
2016	Invasive removal maintenance		

Area ID	Acres	Year	Restoration Activity		
IC0901	3.77	2009	Invasive trees cutting Invasive knockdown		
IC1101	2.38	2011	Herbicide invasive trees		
			Ivy rings		
		2013	Invasive knockdown		
			Fall planting		
		2014	Planting maintenance		
Invasive knockdown					
2015	Planting maintenance				
	2015	Planting maintenance			
	2015	Planting maintenance			
IC1102	1.09	2011	Comprehensive removal		
			2012	2nd year invasive removal	
		2013	3rd year invasive removal		
			2013	3rd year invasive removal	
IC1103	0.76	2011	Ivy rings		
			Fall planting		
		2012	Planting maintenance		
			2014	Fall planting	
		2015	Water plantings		
			Planting maintenance		
		IC1201	3.23	2012	Herbicide invasive trees
					Ivy rings
2014	Invasive knockdown				
	Fall planting				
IC1201a	1.9	2016	Comprehensive removal		
			2017	2nd year invasive removal	
		2018	3rd year invasive removal		
			2018	3rd year invasive removal	
IC1201b	1.39	2015	Planting maintenance		
			Water plantings		
		2016	Planting maintenance		
IC1202	1.22	2012	Herbicide invasive trees		
			Invasive knockdown		
		2013	Fall planting		
			2015	Planting maintenance	
IC1401	0.84	2014	Ivy rings		
			Herbicide invasive trees		
		2014	Herbicide invasive trees		
			Invasive knockdown		
		2015	Invasive knockdown		
			Fall planting		
		2016	Fall planting		
			Planting maintenance		
2017	Planting maintenance				
	2018	Water plantings			
IC1501	0.72	2015	Ivy rings		
IC1502	2.18	2015	Invasive tree treatment		
		2018	Ivy rings		
IC1503	1.62	2015	Invasive tree treatment		
C1504	1.04	2015	Invasive tree treatment		
IC1505	0.57	2015	Invasive tree treatment		



# Exhibit 2: Cayhill Open Space Restoration



## Cayhill Open Space

Area ID	Acres	Year	Restoration Activity
CH1101	1.14	2011	Ivy rings
		2016	Invasive Tree Treatment
		2018	Invasive tree and ivy ring re-treatment





**CITY OF MERCER ISLAND  
OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY TRUST BOARD  
STAFF REPORT**

**Action Item No. 4**

**January 17, 2019**

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Description:	Annual Report to City Council
Exhibits:	1. Draft 2018 Annual Report 2. Draft 2019 Work Plan

## **BACKGROUND**

The ordinance that established the Open Space Conservancy Trust requires that the Trust report to City Council each year on its activities of the past year and the condition of the Trust properties.

## **PROCESS**

Parks and Recreation staff have drafted a report from 2018 meeting minutes. The Trustees may discuss the report and suggest changes at the January meeting. Staff will finalize the report in conjunction with the Chair. The report will be presented to the City Council on the Consent Calendar at the March 19, 2019 meeting. The report will also include the 2019 Work Plan.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

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Discuss draft report and work plan, and suggest additions or edits.

### TRUSTEE APPOINTMENTS AND ELECTIONS

Councilmember David Wisenteiner served as the Council Liaison through March 2018. Councilmember Bruce Bassett took this position beginning in May 2018. Vice Chair Robin Christy ended her service on the Board in May and was replaced by Trustee Carol Lynn Berseth. The annual election of officers took place at the July meeting. Chair Rory Westberg was reelected to the Chair position for a second term, Trustee Bender was elected as Vice Chair, and Trustee Thomas Hildebrandt elected for a second term as Secretary.

### MERCER ISLAND PARKS AND RECREATION, NATURAL RESOURCES PROGRAM

The Natural Resources program is tasked with implementing the Pioneer Park Forest Health Plan as well as all trail building and maintenance on Trust properties. Natural Resources Staff include:

Alaine Sommargren, Natural Resources Manager  
Kim Frappier, Natural Resources Specialist  
Andrew Prince, Trails and Urban Forestry Specialist  
Hannah Van Pelt, Natural Resources Assistant

### FOREST HEALTH AND MANAGEMENT

The Open Space program continues to implement the recommendations outlined in the Pioneer Park Forest Health Plan (FHP) adopted in 2008. Implementation of the FHP slowed in 2015-2016 compared to previous biennia. Restoration efforts in the park are overall on track, particularly regarding invasive tree treatments and ivy ring creation. Some area units required replanting and additional planting maintenance in addition to what is called for in the FHP benchmarks. This was due to high plant mortality and site conditions. Between 2009 and 2014, the Open Space program was able to get ahead of schedule due to a favorable bidding climate and lower contracting costs. In 2015, the regional demand for qualified restoration contractors increased and restoration costs increased significantly. Natural Resources staff continue to advance restoration priorities while addressing challenges and making effective use of available resources. The following outlines actual progress made to date versus proposed benchmarks outlined in the 2008 FHP:

**Table 1. Forest Health Plan Cumulative Progress in Pioneer Park, 2009-2018**

Restoration Task	Proposed (acres)	Actual (acres)
Invasive tree treatment	93	105
Invasive tree treatment maintenance	60	4
Ivy ring creation	56	76
Tree planting	79	70
<i>Replanting due to high mortality</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>14</i>
Plant maintenance (1 year post-planting)	72	66
<i>Additional plant maintenance due to site conditions</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>70</i>

### Forest Health Survey – 10-year data collection

The Pioneer Park Forest Health Plan specified that data be recollected every ten years, to track changes in ecological health. In summer 2018, the City hired two field technicians to collect vegetation data in the plots established for the 2008 Pioneer Park Forest Health Survey. The new data will be analyzed in early 2019 and results will be presented to the Open Space Conservancy Trust Board in the second quarter of 2019.

## 2018 Accomplishments

In 2018, approximately 38 acres of Trust properties received restoration work from combined efforts of the Parks and Recreation Natural Resources seasonal crew, professional contractors, and volunteers.

### Professional contractors

- Invasive removal maintenance 2.6 acres
- Ivy rings 7.8 acres
- Planting maintenance 20.5 acres
- Planting 700 plants installed on 5.8 acres (495 trees/ 205 shrubs)
- Watering 500 plants on 5.3 acres

### Volunteers

Mercer Island Parks and Recreation contracts with EarthCorps to lead volunteer stewardship events at Pioneer Park as well as conduct outreach in the community to engage and educate Mercer Island residents about forest restoration. Most of EarthCorps' work this year focused on maintenance sweeps along 84<sup>th</sup> Ave SE in the NW quadrant, first-time invasive removal of ground ivy, and planting.

- Events 6
- Volunteers 161 adults; 425 youth
- Volunteer hours 1554 hours
- Invasive removal 0.78 acre
- Maintenance 1.5 acres
- Planting 177 total plants (74 trees/ 314 shrubs)

Organizations/companies engaged:

Beaver Lake Middle School	Islander Middle School
Bellevue College	Kenworth
Cascadia College	Liberty High School DECA
Farmers Insurance	Mercer Island High School
Girl Scouts	Microsoft
Heatherwood Middle School	University of Washington
Holy Names Academy	

In addition to EarthCorps volunteers, Forest Steward James Rollo and volunteer Jenny Rietzler volunteered 15 hours in the park this fall removing invasive plant species in the NW and NE quadrants. Additionally, this volunteer team replanted the area adjacent to the NW kiosk and the PSE trail corridor in the SE quadrant.

### Natural Resources Seasonal Staff

In 2018, the Natural Resources seasonal crew consisted of three field staff. Under the direction of the Natural Resources Specialist, the crew conducted noxious weed monitoring, mapping and treatments, maintained plantings, and performed invasive tree treatments on English holly and cherry laurel. In addition, the seasonal crew completed comprehensive invasive removal through the PSE trail corridor on the north side of the SE quadrant.

## LETTERBOXING PROGRAM

The Letterboxing Program kicked-off during *Leap for Green* on April 14<sup>th</sup> where children learned about letterboxing and made rubber stamps to use during the program. National Trails Day, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, marked the official start to Letterboxing Season. The program attracted approximately 600 participants over the summer. The 2018 Letterboxing Committee consisted of Elizabeth Cross-Nichol, Kim Borden, and Jennifer Gaspers. The OSCT Board held a ceremony at City Hall on January 17, 2019 to recognize kids who turned in their completed clue books.



Each participant received a certificate of completion, their completed clue book, and a small gift. Refreshments were provided as part of the celebration.

### **LEASH POLICY EDUCATION EFFORTS**

In 2018, Parks and Recreation Natural Resources staff continued to publish and distribute the brochure “Dog Owner’s Guide to Mercer Island Parks” which provides park users with information about voice/signal control and location of off-leash versus on-leash parks. The brochure is distributed at the Pioneer Park kiosk as well as park kiosks across the City and the Mercer Island Community and Events Center.

### **TRAILS**

The Natural Resources team continued to manage trails for safety and access in 2018. Trails are brushed a minimum of two times during the growing season with an emphasis on proper pruning techniques on larger woody plants. Fall leaf drop was blown off major trails to prevent organic muddy material from building up on trails. More substantial trail tread improvements were also completed in 2018. The Horse Trail in the NW quadrant received a new gravel coating and substantial work to build grade dips that would drain water off the trailway. Sections of the Woodpecker and Alder Trails received supplemental gravel to eliminate deep muddy spots. This work was accomplished with volunteer help from Mountains to Sound Greenway and the Overlake School. Finally, with the help of Parks Maintenance staff, sixty tons of gravel were spread over the NW quadrant Perimeter trails to mitigate winter puddling and refresh the firm walking surface.

### **URBAN FORESTRY**

Tree risk mitigation is the focus of our Urban Forestry efforts in Pioneer Park. Certified staff arborists make decisions each year to remove dead, dying, or structurally defective trees to lessen the risk of trees falling on people, property, or causing interference with utility lines or roadways. It is our preference to retain trees through corrective pruning or as wildlife snags when possible, but tree removals are occasionally necessary. In the case of whole tree removals, we keep the wood from the tree on site as habitat and so its decomposition may improve the soil.

This year, the City contracted the removal of eleven trees as risk mitigation and had one tree pruned for retention. Total area of Pioneer Park assessed in 2018 was down substantially from previous years. In 2016, staff completed a full boundary assessment of Pioneer Park, and partial boundary assessments were performed in 2017 and 2018.



## MERCER ISLAND OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY TRUST 2019 Work Plan

January 17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Recognition of 2018 Letterboxing program participants</b></li><li>• <b>Annual Report to Council:</b> The Trust is required in its by-laws to report to City Council each year on the status of Trust properties.</li><li>• <b>Work Plan:</b> The Trust develops a list of topics that it intends to address during the year (this document). This work plan is submitted to City Council with the Annual Report as a courtesy.</li><li>• <b>Open Space Management overview:</b> Staff will provide information about current vegetation management practices in non-Trust open space properties.</li><li>• <b>Rotary Peace Pole project:</b> Staff and/or Rotary representative will present information about the project and request the placement of a Peace Pole on Trust properties.</li><li>• <b>Letterboxing (ongoing item):</b> The Trust board will continue to sponsor and support an annual Letterboxing program for youth on Mercer Island.</li><li>• <b>Quadrant Reports (ongoing item):</b> Trustees will report on the condition of certain quadrants at Trust board meetings.</li></ul>
March 21
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Restoration Work Plan:</b> City staff report to the Trust its planned restoration activities in the spring of each year, and recap work completed in the previous year.</li><li>• <b>Forest Health Survey Data Results:</b> Staff to report on results of 10-year data collection efforts and changes since initial data collection in 2008.</li><li>• <b>MI Open Space Deed/Plat Restrictions:</b> Staff to report on restrictions on non-Trust open space properties</li></ul>
May 16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Summer Trail Work Plan:</b> City staff report to the Trust its intended maintenance activities in the spring of each year, and recap work completed in the previous year.</li><li>• <b>Herbicide application report:</b> The Trust adopted an herbicide use protocol that requires City staff to report on the use of herbicides on Trust properties each year.</li><li>• <b>Off-leash dogs:</b> The Trust will evaluate success of education measures over the past year and discuss possible changes.</li></ul>
July 18
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Election of Officers:</b> The Trust is required by its bylaws to elect officers at its July meeting each year.</li><li>• <b>Island Crest Way North-South Bike Facility</b></li></ul>
September 19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Eagle Project recognition:</b> The Trust will recognize Eagle projects that have benefitted Trust Properties.</li></ul>
November 21
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Recognition of 2019 letterboxing program participants</b></li></ul>

Note: The listing of an item under a particular month means that the item will be introduced at that meeting. There will be follow-up discussions and decisions at subsequent meetings as directed by the Chair.