



How Science Benefits Our Community

Restoring the Naches Trail Preserve



The 50-acre Naches Trail Preserve was acquired by Pierce County in April 2003 with a combination of Conservation Futures funds and Pierce County Public Works and Utilities Water Programs funds. The Cascade Land Conservancy also has an easement for protection of the conservation values of the property.

This site is called the Naches Trail Preserve because it is near the location of the final encampment of the first group of settlers to cross the Cascade Mountains in October of 1853. The preserve land had already been settled by Frederick Meyer (for whom Frederickson is named) earlier that same year. Some 149 settlers and 53 wagons made that first crossing on this northern extension of the Oregon Trail.

The Stewardship Plan

Water Programs and Cascade Land Conservancy are working together to create and implement a Stewardship Plan for the property.

The plan provides a description of current conditions on the Preserve and details the management strategy. The purpose of the plan is to provide for conservation of the natural features

and functions of the property by protecting existing high quality features, identifying potential enhancement opportunities, and providing appropriate access to the public.

Site Assessment and Restoration Activities

Significant ecological systems and plant communities found on the site include the aquatic habitat in Clover Creek, an extensive wetland associated with the creek, prairie grassland, an Oregon White Oak woodland, and a mixed coniferous forest.

Clover Creek flows through the site from east to west. Large numbers of resident cutthroat trout were found in the creek last summer.



Restoration activities on the site so far have focused on the removal of the invasive plant Scot's broom from the oak savanna area. Volunteer work parties have used weed wrenches to pull the broom out of the ground.

Planned activities include more vegetation control by removing more Scot's broom, Himalayan blackberry and deadly nightshade. In the longer term, berms along the creek will be removed to

restore connection between the creek and its historic floodplain. This will allow the creek to flood naturally as it once did. Conifer trees may also be planted in the forested areas along with other native plant species along the existing powerline corridor.

Eventually, Pierce County hopes to build a system of trails on site to help people enjoy the varied habitats at the Naches Trail Preserve.



Volunteers have spent several Saturday mornings this past year removing Scot's Broom from the site.



For more information, contact Water Programs at 253-798-2725 or www.piercecountywa.org/water