



Koma Kulshan

Chapter WNPS

Newsletter

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Website: www.wnpskoma.org
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Native Plant Stewardship Course

This course focuses on stewardship of the native plant and wildlife habitats of the Bellingham area, combining classroom learning with field trips to enrich understanding of the key roles that native plants play in our forests, rivers, shorelines, and other vital habitats, and how to help protect and restore these habitats.

When: 6 weeks, Thursday evenings, September 19 - October 24, 6-8:30 p.m., Bloedel Beach Pavilion at Bloedel Donovan Park, 1124 Electric Avenue in Bellingham. There will be Saturday field trips on September 21, October 5, and October 19.

What: 30 hours of learning native and invasive plant identification, key wildlife-habitat relationships, restoration skills, and other topics. Home study supports classroom topics. The course is free in return for 30 hours of service to local conservation and restoration projects within 18 months of course completion. The City of Bellingham and conservation organizations are partnering with the WNPS to offer this course, and have habitat projects that need stewards' help!

Participants must be members of WNPS. Participants who complete the training will earn credit towards recognition as a WNPS Native Plant Steward. Registration will be open soon. For more information or to request an application, contact Jim Evans, at 206-678-8914 or jimevans@centurytel.net.

Summer (July, August, September) 2019

President's Corner by Allan Richardson

You may have been wondering if the Flora Fair and plant sale was worth all of the effort. It certainly furthered our purpose of educating the world about native plants through the displays, handouts, and talks with many people, and the plants themselves surely showed our purpose. We also made quite a bit of money—roughly \$2700 net on sales of \$4700 and costs of about \$2000. What do we do with this money that we have earned? We pay to use our meeting space at RE Sources and our guest presenters are provided with a dinner, and occasionally travel expenses. We print up signs, flyers, and this newsletter, and mail out the newsletter. The website and email group both have fees. Our display panel is in need of replacement, which may cost \$150 or so, and we might buy some books to go with the display. This spring we provided two scholarships to the state WNPS study weekend. We also have a generous amount budgeted for grants this year, but so far no funds have been spent. Proposals for small projects in need of support would be welcome, details are on our chapter website.

At the recent board meeting we also talked about things that we do out in the field. Berthusen Park near Lynden was mentioned as good location for a field trip or plant walk in the future—check it out and share your thoughts. Barry Wendling is organizing collecting forays for the WWU herbarium in the Twin Sisters Range this summer and will be looking for volunteer help. Jim Davis has been exploring the area near Newhalem that was burned two or three years ago, and will lead a field trip on July 14 to see how the plants are recovering.

There will be a native plant stewardship class again this fall! The City of Bellingham Public Works Department and Parks Volunteer Program will provide funding and coordination. The state WNPS will provide additional funds and oversee the hiring of the instructor. Details are still being worked out, but the class will start September 19 with meetings on 6 Thursday evenings, plus 3 all day field sessions on Saturdays. As in 2017, this adds up to 30 hours of training with 30 volunteer hours expected after the class is completed. All participants will need to join WNPS, but otherwise the class is free. Promotion and registration materials should be ready and posted on our website by the time you receive this newsletter.

Cypress Island Boat Trip (Cont'd p2) by Marie Hitchman

Leader: Dave Wilderman, Washington Natural Areas Program Ecologist

Our Island Express charter left Skyline at 8 a.m. with many happy and lucky hikers aboard. We landed at Pelican Beach to about one dozen Pelican dinghies pulled up on the sand. Bob Lemon recognized Mr. Fred Smith, now in his 90s, who designed the Pelican 'way back when.' Mr. Smith and his brother formed a Pelican club and still meet there regularly. I chatted with Mr. Smith and told him that for years I had wondered why the name Pelican Beach, because I have never seen pelicans in the San Juans.

I explored the beach and was delighted to see no evidence of Yellow Iris (*iris pseudacorus*). Koma kulshan held a work party there in May of 1997. Muddy and tired, we had loaded the DNR boat with bags of tubers for later burning.

Our group read the various interpretive signs and Dave gave an introductory talk. We took the eagle Cliff trail up through the forest with really tall Douglas maples (*Acer glabrum*) and mixed

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Cypress Island (cont'd)

conifers. The understory was carpeted in sword ferns and pinkish white starflowers (*Trientalis latifolia*) in full bloom. We encountered pure pink swathes of sea blush (*Plectritus congesta*).

Just before the summit we spotted hairy manzanita (*Arctostaphylos columbiana*), which I remembered from an earlier trip in our family boat. The old tree is mostly dead but four or five new sizeable shrubs surrounded in on the rocky hillside. An old gnarled Rocky mountain juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum*) is nearby.

During lunch on Eagle Cliff bald we were entertained by at least a dozen turkey vultures playing in the thermal updrafts. Views of Mount Baker and San Juans were glorious.

Hiking back down we took an old logging trail to Duck Lake, which is almost completely filled with pond lilies (*Nuphar polysepala*), and cattails (*Typa latifolia*). We discussed a couple of tiny pond plants and then took the connector trail to Eagle Harbor.

At one point we spotted a decaying log totally covered in really big oyster mushrooms looking like stacked pancakes. A very healthy-looking banana slug was enjoying a banquet on the underside of an overhanging mushroom.

Just before coming out of the forest at Eagle Harbor we encountered several large rectangular holes in a large Western cedar (*Thuja plicata*), which was surprising as they were very low at eye level. Dave told us they are made by pileated woodpeckers.

At Eagle Harbor we explored the near-shore. I was surprised to see a lovely blue bearded iris in the backshore, but Dave said there used to be a residence nearby. As we walked toward a small saltwater marsh I encountered *Iris pseudacorus*! I told Dave about our 1997 work party and Dave and I picked off the flowers and emerging seed pod, which was satisfying.

At the marsh we saw seaside arrowgrass (*Triglochin maritima*) and Dave showed us sea milkwort (*Glaux maritima*).

The boat arrived at 4 p.m. and we scrambled aboard and back to Anacortes after a wonderful day with our leader Dave on the Salish Sea and Cypress Island.

Botanical Survey and Monitor Project

At the May meeting of the Koma Kulshan chapter, Western Washington University professor of biology Eric DeChaine gave a presentation describing the Botanical Survey and Monitor Project (<https://wp.wvu.edu/botanySAM>), which aims to document changes to plant populations in the Pacific Northwest. It is associated with the Pacific Northwest Herbarium at WWU.

Specifically, 8 field botanists, all students or recent graduates of Western, will investigate 19th and 20th century historical records of various plant populations, many of which have never been revisited. The aim is to relocate populations if possible, or mark them as extirpated if not, and to examine ecological, climate change, or development factors that may threaten or directly impact them. Over time, researchers also hope to document changes to species distributions, and even estimate when species may go extinct locally or regionally. The project aims to track about 500 taxa spread throughout Washington and Oregon. They are focusing on uncommon species, according to DeChaine, rather than common or rare species, which tend to get lots of attention.

Last year, field botanists found 236 populations, while 33 populations (26 species) couldn't be located. They documented five northward range extensions. First indications were that more southerly populations were more likely to be lost, but more data needs to be collected to confirm this. They plan to continue searching for populations, and revisiting existing populations to document changes in the next 10-20 years. The work so far has been in Western Washington and Oregon, but plans are in place to expand east of the Cascades. In time, DeChaine hopes to expand into the Rocky Mountain region as well.

It isn't an easy task locating previous sightings. Many were made when GPS technology was much less accurate than it is today, and many before GPS was available at all. In fact, some 19th century records only mention the county, but the system automatically assigned GPS coordinates to them, which of course are grossly inaccurate. In other cases, the GPS coordinates are available and recent enough to create the illusion accuracy, but could be on the wrong side of a mountain. Field botanists must cross-reference the existing description of the site to the available GPS coordinates in order to pinpoint the location of the sighted population. Every record must be decoded this way before the botanists head out into the field.

One of the ultimate goals of the program is to provide conservationists and researchers an evolving dataset to help understand how plants are adapting or migrating as a result of climate change, habitat loss, and other stressors. But to do that, researchers must first establish a baseline. "In this age of extinction, you can't know what is disappearing if you don't know what's already there," DuChaine said.

To find out more about the program, you can read a detailed blog post by Dr. DeChaine at <https://www.wnps.org/blog/where-have-all-the-flowers-gone>. Also follow along at the SAM blog (<https://wp.wvu.edu/botanySAM/>) or on the Instagram page (@botanypnw).

Summer (July, August, September) 2019

Chapter Meetings

Meetings begin at 7pm in the Sustainable Living Center education room at the ReStore (2309 Meridian St.). The entrance is off the back alley and the SLC is upstairs. For more information, contact Katrina Poppe at (360) 303-7806 or katrinalee_98@yahoo.com.

There are no meetings in July or August.

September 18, 2019: To be Determined

Field Trips

July 6, Saturday, 8:30AM to 5:00pm: Lily and Lizard Lakes

We will hike a loop, about 5+ miles with 1100 feet elevation gain on Blanchard Mountain, starting from the east side. If you want to go out onto the sphagnum moss island in Lily Lake, you may want to bring special footgear for that part of the trip. A plant list is available on the WNPS state website. Meet at the Fairhaven Parkway Park & Ride off 32nd street on the west side of I-5. Questions: contact Jim Duemmel at 360-733-3448 or JimDuemmel@q.com.

July 14, Sunday, 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM: Newhalem Fire and Pyramid Lake

There was a major fire in the Newhalem area during 2015. Extensive regrowth has occurred in the burned area. We will visit one portion of the fire near Goodell Creek to learn more about which plants have returned to the burned area and which plants may still be missing four years after the fire. We will then move further along Highway 20 to a moderately rigorous hike to Pyramid Lake (4.2 miles round trip with 1,500 feet gain). The trail has a high diversity of plants, topped off by a floating log garden in Pyramid Lake. The field trip will be led by Jim Davis and Abe Lloyd. Meet at 8am at the Fairhaven Parkway Park & Ride off 32nd street on the west side of I-5. If you have questions, contact Jim Davis at 360-296-5159 or jimdavispcp@comcast.net.

August 3, Saturday, 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM: Grouse Ridge

Hike a way trail to a rocky ridge and endless flower meadows on the slopes of Mt. Baker looking over to Marmot Ridge and the Black Buttes. Explore plant communities of both thin rocky soil and lush alpine meadows. The habitats are like Skyline Divide and Ptarmigan Ridge, but without the crowds. There's no maintained trail, but the boot track was in good shape in 2017. The hike will be about 5 miles round trip with 1600 feet elevation gain, high point about 5850 feet. Meet to carpool at the southeast corner of Sunset Square Safeway parking lot for a 7:30 AM departure. Contact Allan Richardson at 360-733-5477 or asrichardson5@gmail.com with any questions and to confirm.

August 23, Friday, 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM: Boundary Way Trail and Cowap Peak

A moderate hike to wildflower meadows and a summit perch; about 5 miles round trip and 1,400 feet elevation gain. Allan will share his knowledge of the 1857-62 Boundary Survey and Nooksack place names from the viewpoint, and ethnobotany along the trail. Meet to carpool at the southeast corner of Sunset Square Safeway parking lot for a 7:30 AM departure. Contact Allan Richardson at 360-733-5477 or asrichardson5@gmail.com with any questions and to confirm.

August 28, Wednesday, 7:30am to 6pm: Heliotrope Ridge

A challenging hike, about 2.5 miles one way, 2300 feet elevation gain, some steep trail, a little scrambling and a sometimes difficult creek crossing. We will be looking for *Arabidopsis kamchatica*, Lyre-leaved Rockcress, which has been found in Washington state ONLY on the northwest slopes of Mt. Baker. We are going in the middle of the week to avoid the crowds on this trail. A plant list is available on the WNPS state website. For carpooling meet at the SE corner of Sunset Square. Since we will enter a wilderness area, the group is limited to 12. To sign up contact Jim Duemmel at 360-733-3448 or JimDuemmel@q.com.

September 13, Friday, 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM: Chain Lakes Loop

This is a fall favorite with our group. We should see several species of late-blooming plants, ripe blueberries, picas, and perhaps marmots and mountain goats. On the way up we will drop a car at the Heather Meadows visitor's center for the return car shuttle. Our hike starts at Artists' Point. After a mile we leave the Ptarmigan Ridge trail and descend into the Chain Lakes Basin. After passing three lakes we ascend to Hermann Saddle and drop down to the Bagley Lakes. Distance 6 miles, elevation gain 600 feet. Meet to carpool at the southeast corner of Sunset Square Safeway parking lot for an 8:00 AM departure. Contact Allan Richardson at 360-733-5477 or asrichardson5@gmail.com with any questions and to confirm.



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If you would like to join WNPS

Please return the membership application form to:
Washington Native Plant Society
6310 NE 74th St., Suite 215E
Seattle, WA 98115

Please make checks payable to WNPS
(outside US add \$5 to dues)

Name:_____

Address:_____

City, State, Postal Code:_____

Phone:_____

Email:_____

Koma Kulshan Chapter Total Enclosed:_____

Mebership Category:

- \$20 Budget (Senior/Student)
- \$40 Individual
- \$55 Family
- \$75 Club/Institution
- \$50 WNPS Friend
- \$100 WNPS Special Friend
- \$500 WNPS Best Friend
- \$1000 WNPS Sustaining Member

The Koma Kulshan chapter of WNPS is dedicated to the preservation and study of native plants and vegetation of Washington State and the education of the public to the values of native flora and its habitat.

WNPS -- Koma Kulshan Chapter
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