



Koma Kulshan Chapter WNPS Newsletter

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Find Koma Kulshan Online

Website: www.wnpskoma.org
Facebook: WNPSKomaKulshan

Plant ID Video Series

Abe Lloyd has produced a series of videos, some for his Natural History of the Pacific Northwest class at Western.

Links are at Abe's Youtube page:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-7nqaurjzp4U0ZQG539KoQ> (or search for "Abe Lloyd" at youtube.com)

Some of the selections include:

- * Conifer ID and ethnobotanical uses of conifer trees in the lowlands of Western Washington.
- * An exploration of shoreline communities at Larrabee State Park.
- * The structure of a mature lowland forest at Stimpson Reserve and a young industrial forest on Stewart Mountain.
- * Diverse habitats and ethnobotany at Bowman Bay at Deception Pass State Park.
- * Demonstration of indigenous cooking techniques, including pit cooking, barbecuing salmon beside a fire, and boiling water in a bentwood box.
- * Identification of about 30 marsh plants at Lake Terrell and Tennant Lake.
- * Medicinal plants.

Summer (July, August, September) 2020

President's Corner

by Allan Richardson

The Washington Native Plant Society is alive and well, despite the Covid-19 shut down. In response to the ban on in person meetings, webinar events such as our past three chapter meetings have been recorded, and are available for all to view through links on the state WNPS website. The state board is having a series of virtual meetings to develop a strategic plan for the next five years. Three areas that are likely to be in the plan are increasing the diversity of our membership, advocacy for native plants impacted by climate change, and support for school curricula and other education efforts. Our chapter is also planning for the future with the start of a stewardship committee as detailed elsewhere in this newsletter.

This summer I will miss going on native plant field trips with their great teaching and learning opportunities and time in beautiful natural areas with great people. Here are a few highlights from some of my favorite field trip destinations. Goat Mountain Trail has spectacular mountain views and interesting plants at all elevations--on our most recent trip we saw *Botrychium* and *Anticlea occidentale* (bronze bells) in the high meadows. Yellow Aster Butte Trail has an amazing variety of ferns in the serpentine area on the shoulder of the butte after the meadows full of blueberries. Ridley Creek Trail has a forest of yellow cedar about one and a half miles in, and not many people. Boundary Way Trail is another quiet and beautiful place after you leave the main trail by Damfino Lakes. Lake Ann Trail has a number of copper bush plants on the woody downhill portion, before and after the first wet meadows. Ptarmigan Ridge Trail is a great late season destination for views, wildlife, and plants, and even crowberries growing on the ridge away from the trail. Find a plant list on the state WNPS website, take a friend, and head out.

Take a Hike to Squires Lake (cont'd p 2)

a botanical trail guide, by Ellen Kuhlmann

Directions: from Bellingham go South on I-5, approximately 9 miles, to the South Lake Samish exit at Nulle Road. Get off the highway at this exit, turning left onto Nulle Road (old Highway 99), travelling underneath the freeway. In about ½ mile there will be a small parking lot on the left and the sign for Squires Lake Park. No pass needed. It is managed jointly by Whatcom and Skagit County Parks. There is a vault toilet available located near the edge of the parking lot.

Plant List: https://www.wnps.org/plant-lists/list?Squires_Lake

The trail begins in typical lowland Puget Sound forest, with a mix of Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), red alder (*Alnus rubra*), bigleaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*), and scattered western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*) and western red cedar (*Thuja plicata*) trees. The trail switchbacks up the first one-third of a mile through the forest, climbing about 300 feet to the lake. In places bigleaf maple is the predominant tree, when walking through these areas note the tall shrub understory of plants like hazelnut (*Corylus* sp.) and vine maple (*Acer circinatum*). In spring native bleeding hearts (*Dicentra formosa*) with their pink flowers are found in abundance under the maples

As the trail reaches the lake, there is a junction with the Squires Lake loop trail. Before turning left towards a bench at the lake edge, examine the tree right above the wooden trail marker. It is a Pacific dogwood (*Cornus nutallii*), with shiny dark green oppositely arranged leaves, egg-shaped with prominent parallel veins. There are several young specimens in this vicinity, including one behind the nearby bench. Although not rare, Pacific dogwood populations have declined due to dogwood anthracnose, a fungal disease caused by the introduced pathogen *Discula destructiva*.

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Squires Lake (Cont'd)

Pacific dogwood flowers in spring and sometimes again in the fall, the blooms very showy with large white petaloid bracts surrounding a central cluster of small flowers. At Squires Lake most of the trees bloomed in May but I saw one outlier blooming in mid-June.

Head left from the junction to the lakeside bench. The bench faces southeast, and from here you can see the entire lake. This is a good spot to rest and look for wildlife. Migratory birds stop here, in March I saw both bufflehead and ring-necked ducks on the lake. In summer you may hear the harsh croaking of the nonnative bullfrog. Continue along, walking counterclockwise around the lake. For a time the trail stays near the lakeshore with patches of hardhack (*Spiraea douglasii*) and nonnative blackberry (*Rubus* spp.) shrubs. The blackberries were flowering in June, while the hardhack will have spires of rosy pink blooms later in the summer. Along the way look for short side trails to the water's edge. These spots afford a good view of near shore plants such as cattail (*Typha latifolia*), grass-leaved pondweed (*Potamogeton gramineus*), small-flowered bulrush (*Scirpus microcarpus*) and yellow waterlily (*Nuphar polysepala*). The trail then leaves the lakeside, passing through the edge of a shrubby meadow. Plants such as salmonberry (*Rubus spectabilis*) and twinberry (*Lonicera involucrata*) are common here, as well as salal (*Gaultheria shallon*), red huckleberry (*Vaccinium parvifolium*) and Alaska blueberry (*V. ovalifolium*). The invasive reed canarygrass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) is common here and at the beaver pond. Deer fern (*Blechnum spicant*) are found along the trail edge.

Walking on, the trail reaches another junction, this time with the Beaver Pond loop on the left, while the Squires Lake loop continues on the right. If you have the time, go left up to the Beaver Pond. Soon you will see a shallow wetland through the trees on the lefthand side of the trail. Continue on, if you look carefully you may see signs of beaver activity, gnawed tree or shrub stems. The trail ends at the pond, which has many standing dead trees at one end, evidence that the beaver raised the water level, drowning the trees. In late April I saw two wood duck pairs, several mallards, and a Canada goose on the pond.

Heading back to the lake, take a left when a fork appears to avoid backtracking the entire way to the Squires Lake loop. The trail goes through a draw, then rejoins the main trail. Turn left here, walking uphill. Along this section of trail you may see spiny wood fern (*Dryopteris expansa*) and perhaps Pacific yew (*Taxus brevifolia*), a conifer with single needles that narrow to a short stalk as it attaches to the twig. Yew is slow growing, and always an interesting find. You may hear woodpeckers drumming or the hooting of a great horned owl. Near the highest portion of the trail, the Lake loop meets the South Ridge trail. Either take the South Ridge trail or continue on the Squires Lake loop, both options eventually lead back down to the lake and the trail to the parking lot.

The Squires Lake loop with a side trip to the Beaver Pond is a little over 2 miles in total and can be done in under two hours at a leisurely pace. It is a good trail for all ages, including families with small children. Plan on arriving early in the morning or starting your walk later in the afternoon if you'd like to avoid crowds, especially on weekends. Squires Lake Park is open year-round. Parts of the trail can be muddy or underwater at certain times, so sturdy shoes are recommended.

Koma Kulshan Chapter WNPS Stewardship Committee

by Allan Richardson

The Koma Kulshan Chapter board decided in June to form a stewardship committee to guide future stewardship classes, on-going training for native plant stewards, and other stewardship activities. A first meeting will be held later this summer to work on plans for a possible class in 2021. Jim Kling and Janet Murray have offered to serve on the committee, and other volunteers are needed. Allan Richardson will coordinate efforts, at least the beginning. Please contact Allan at asrichardson5@gmail.com if you would like to join the group or have any questions. More details about the committee follow:

VISION: Native plant stewardship is the care, protection, and responsible use of native plants and the habitats where they grow, and the enhancement and restoration of those habitats. Stewardship activities include the following: protection of natural areas from destruction and damage; public education regarding the value of native plants and natural habitats, and the need for their care, protection, and responsible use; removal of invasive species; restoration of degraded areas to a more natural state; improving the habitat value of areas of mixed native and non-native vegetation.

CORE DUTIES: Planning and oversight of native plant stewardship courses offered through WNPS; provide and support on-going training for native plant stewards.

OTHER TASKS AND ACTIVITIES: Plan and coordinate work parties that focus on native plants and habitats; adopt a natural area or areas for on-going stewardship overseen by Koma Kulshan WNPS; assist other organizations in their stewardship work, such as completing botanical surveys and plant lists for Whatcom Land Trust properties; establish and coordinate a cadre of Gardening with Natives advisors. GN advisors would be available to give tips on how to successfully grow different native species on a volunteer basis.

Strategic Planning for the Washington Native Plant Society (cont'd p3)

by Ellen Kuhlmann

This year WNPS is developing a new five-year Strategic Plan. A strategic plan sets a direction, priorities and goals the organization desires to achieve. Over the winter focus groups were held by chapters and statewide committees to gather member input for the plan. Koma Kulshan had our focus group in late January and was attended by ten members.

Three questions were asked during the session: What do you think your chapter does best? What do you think the WNPS as an organization does best? And last, imagine it is 2025, what would you like WNPS to have accomplished? The top three things Koma Kulshan focus group participants thought the chapter did best were our native plant sales, field trips, and our meetings with interesting programs. Our focus group felt WNPS as an organization excels in communicating with members through Douglasia, the WNPS website, and other means. Second, we

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Chapter Meetings

Meetings have been moved to a Zoom meeting format. We have no confirmed meetings or webinars scheduled yet for July - September, but watch for future announcements with details and instructions on our chapter website (wnpskoma.org) and the wnps-koma email list. You can also find Zoom webinars sponsored by WNPS at <https://www.wnps.org/events>.

We had had hopes of hosting a summer potluck in July, but unfortunately it appears we will not be out of phase 2 in time to host such a gathering, which would be prohibited under state guidelines.

In the meantime, you can find previous WNPS Zoom seminars archived at <https://www.wnps.org/wnps-annual-events/virtual-events>. Notably, there are two previous Koma Kulshan meetings from April and June: Katrina Poppe's presentation on blue carbon research in the United Arab Emirates ("Chasing Blue Carbon on the Arabian Peninsula"); and Alex Lowe's presentation on fossil plants in western North America ("The Evolution of Temperate Vegetation in North America").

Field Trips

Many of you enjoy group-sponsored field trips as one of your favorite aspects of membership. Obviously, we have some bad news about group-sponsored field trips this summer. However, our group is strong and resourceful so we have a little good news as well.

First the bad news: with the current health guidelines and rules for our area, Koma Kulshan sponsored field trips are not practical for the time being. Also sadly, the trends for state-defined key risk assessment metrics do not favor a loosening of restrictions in the near future.

How can we enjoy native plant field trips in some form this summer? Consider taking advantage of the following WNPS resources to facilitate field trips with your household:

* WNPS online plant lists. These are introduced on the WNPS web site with, "Over the years WNPS members have compiled plant lists for many of our favorite sites. We offer them to you to enhance your enjoyment of these special places." 78 lists are available for Whatcom county alone. If you are looking for ideas for a day hike in our area, you could hardly do better than reviewing the lists available here. Visit wnps.org and look for "Plant Lists" in the site's menu.

* Our greatest resource, our members, available on our groups.io online site and email list! Among our members we have a true wealth of knowledge and experience about every corner of Whatcom county and beyond. Some of our members are still active day by day out in our natural areas. If you need advice about a field trip for your household, and if you are signed up with groups.io, try reaching out to our membership: just send an email to wnps-koma@groups.io.

* You might enjoy a virtual field trip from the comfort of your home. Our indefatigable member Abe Lloyd -- related to his instruction at WWU -- has thoughtfully produced (with much help from Katrina Poppe) video field trips to a number of local sites. These feature instruction and narration relating to natural history and ethnobotany. Find Abe's videos on YouTube by searching for "Abe Lloyd".

Strategic Planning (Cont'd)

thought WNPS has long brought together plant enthusiasts of varying skill levels and types of plant interests (gardening, ethnobotany etc.) in one group, a core strength is the diversity of our membership. Third, we felt the Study Weekend is a successful and valuable annual event.

Looking towards 2025, the Koma Kulshan focus group envisioned a Native Plant Society that had triple the membership it does now, with all chapters vibrant and thriving. We saw a future in which laws had been passed protecting native species, and one in which we were more active in conservation efforts and advocacy.

Ostara, a consultant group hired by the WNPS State Board to guide the Strategic Planning process, gathered results of all the focus groups and put together a summary with suggested action items. Overall our chapters felt they excelled on field trips, offering interesting chapter meeting programs, and producing chapter newsletters. Across the focus groups, most thought the Society's strengths were communicating about native plants through *Douglasia* and other outlets, hosting statewide events like the Study Weekend, and creating a community for those who value our native flora.

Ostara suggested three possible areas for WNPS to explore as strategic priorities for the next five years based on what members wanted to see the Society accomplish by 2025: 1) Many people see it as a key priority for WNPS to become more diverse, not only in terms of age but also race and cultural background at every level of the organization. If WNPS commits to this work, it will be a process that is complex and ongoing. 2) Many people want to center WNPS efforts on the impact of climate change on native plants, to see WNPS play a greater role in advocacy and native plant conservation. 3) Education is a key priority for many – education of the public certainly and some would like to see WNPS play a role in K-12 education. Some see technology as key. The more targeted this work is the greater potential for impact. Does WNPS want to educate gardeners, hikers, K-5 students, K-12 students?

These results were distributed to chapters and committees for review, and the State Board met to discuss the findings in late June. There will be two meetings of board members in September to set the strategic priorities for the next five years, which will be voted on during the October board meeting. Contact our chapter president Allan Richardson for more information about development of the Strategic Plan.

Koma Kulshan Board

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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: _____

Membership Category:

\$20 Budget (Senior/Student)

\$40 Individual

\$55 Family

\$75 Club/Institution

\$100 WNPS Friend

\$250 Special Friend

\$500 Best Friend

\$1000 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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