

The Understory

Fall/Winter 2014

In this issue.

Illegal Harvesting



English Ivy...
pip, pip!



STEWARDSHIP ON THE MIGHTY SKAGIT

50 Volunteers planted 800 trees in just under an hour (!!!) at Presentin Conservation Area. Skagit Land Trust, Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group, and the Skagit River System Cooperative co-sponsored the event to help restore the riparian area and create a better home for wild salmon.

Presentin Conservation Area was purchased by Skagit Land Trust in 2010. There are walking trails through the riparian area and directly to the banks of the Skagit. This special place is surrounded by private property, but will never be developed thanks to supporters and staff of Skagit Land Trust.



*Super
Volunteers
08 Nov 2014*



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Unscramble the anagram to identify this plant found at Butler Creek Conservation Area.

D I W L R G N G I E

Q: Where does seaweed go to look for a job?

A: The kelp wanted section.

English Ivy... *pip, pip!*

English ivy was introduced to North America in the early 1800's as an ornamental plant. In fact, invasive and non-invasive species of ivy are *still* sold as ornamentals. Ivy's beauty, easy propagation, and ability to grow in shade make it a good decorative garden plant, but these characteristics also allow some species to be aggressive invasives. In Pacific Northwest forests, ivy can cover large areas of the ground, crowding and shading out native herbs and seedlings. It also grows on trees, competing with them for water and sunlight. The weight and wind-catching shape of ivy can topple a full grown tree.

Removing Ivy:

- ♣ Pull the ivy deliberately from the ground, slowly easing out as much of the roots as possible.
- ♣ Work from the outer edges of an infested area in towards the middle.
- ♣ Cut ivy that is growing up trees at eye level and then remove all the ivy from that point *down* and out in a 3-foot radius. Trying to remove ivy above your head is dangerous- it can cause limbs to break and fall.
- ♣ Ideally, ivy is bagged and removed from a site, but this is not always possible or practical. Alternately, pile pulled ivy on a layer of cardboard to prevent re-rooting.

Safety Considerations:

- ♣ Ivy roots can be deeper and stronger than you'd expect! Pulling too hard may cause back or other injuries. Instead, ask a friend to help or simply remove that which you can pull safely.
- ♣ You can easily get poked in the eye by brush limbs when trying to reach ivy on the ground... protective glasses are a good idea!



Emerson High School



Samish Island Volunteers

If you spot ivy on your property, contact Skagit Land Trust. We are available to offer information, tools, and hands-on help!

Illegal Harvesting on Public Properties

What to Look For and What To Do About It

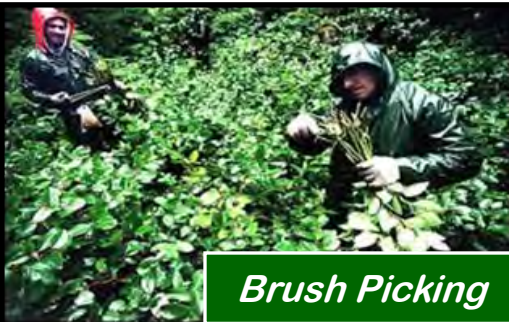
Russ Dalton, Barr Creek Conservation Area Volunteer Land Steward

I visit Barr Creek often and do the requisite quarterly formal reports. But I've had a nagging feeling that I might not be doing my job completely. What should I be looking for as I inspect my area or other properties under the Trust's protection?

The public is allowed to visit the Trust lands with some limitations. The expectation is that visitors will "leave no trace", but there certainly have been inappropriate uses taking place- illegal dumping, illegal camping, firewood poaching. But what else?

To answer that, I fired up the Google Machine and also consulted two law enforcement officers who have dealt with resource protection on public lands in western Washington and elsewhere. The following are just some of the activities which might be taking place on our entrusted lands.

→ **But, first a note about flagging tape:** Skagit Land Trust uses orange and blue to mark property boundaries. Flagging might still be present from contracted land survey work, wildlife inventories, or from marking salmon redds in adjacent waters. *However, it might also delineate a trail to a harvest site, or may be part of grid harvesting. Check it out.*



Brush Picking

People who pick brush for a living look for parts of wild plants used by floral companies to accent their flower arrangements. Specialty products harvested from Northwest forests— including moss, salal, huckleberry, beargrass, evergreen boughs, and ferns— once were a low-class sideshow to logging, picked by rural folks in need of extra bucks. It since has swelled to a mammoth industry that brings in at least a quarter-billion dollars a year — nearly one-fourth the size of the apple industry. Brush pickers bushwhack through forestland 365 days a year, gleaning specific greens from it. Each year around Christmas time, they trim limbs off evergreen trees. The boughs are made into wreaths.

The Hiawatha Corporation is a giant in the Northwest floral greens business. Up to 65 container loads are shipped domestically and overseas each week, much of it to Europe. More than 250 companies in Washington are involved in picking, buying or shipping these products.

What to Look For:

- Moss scraped off of trees
- Plant stems tied off in bunches
- Bunches of plants in bales
- Groups of pickers, often dropped off in vans

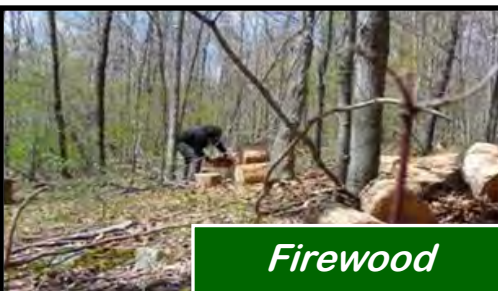


Decorations

Some Trust properties have extensive riparian plantings which include smaller evergreens suitable for Christmas trees. But even tall trees are sometimes cut- their tops are removed and the rest of the tree is left behind. Commercial harvest can begin in early November.

What to Look For:

- Cut stumps and drag marks
- Cut trees or limbs that have been high-graded for the best boughs, the remainders being discarded



Firewood

What to Look For:

- Cut stumps
- Drag marks, wheel marks
- Piles of wood waste and sawdust
- Listen for chainsaws
- Trees flagged, notched, or blazed for relocation after reconnaissance



Mushrooms

Chanterelles, matsutake, black morels, boletes, truffles- all are common, picked for personal consumption, and also gathered and sold commercially. A few entrepreneurs discovered that there could be big money in commercially-harvested wild mushrooms, particularly in the export markets. The National Forests allow some commercial harvesting by permit. National Park policy varies by the park. Locally, North Cascades National Park does not allow picking. Many mushrooms emerge after a period of rain. Mid-summer to late fall are prime harvest times.

What to Look For:

- Disturbed ground from raking or digging, leaving swaths across the forest floor
- Mushroom stems cut and still showing at ground level

- Little mounds of dirt where the mushroom was pulled out
- Discarded mushrooms that were found to be inferior after picking
- Pickers with multiple bags or baskets



Shake/Shingle

Old growth western red cedar can yield the very tight grain and knot-free wood requisite for making shakes and shingles. On most of the Trust parcels, standing old growth cedar trees were harvested long ago. However, some were missed or rejected and then left on the ground. They may yet yield very useable wood. Harvestable cedar logs are also dug out of swamps or are exposed along cut banks of creeks or rivers. Tall old stumps featuring the spring board notches from early logging practices are similarly cut up for shingle bolts.

What to Look For:

- Piles of wood waste and sawdust
- Scars on trees or logs where burls have been sawn off
- Trails, wheel marks, drag marks and/or flagging to harvest sites
- Notches, blazing or flagging higher in a tree top make for easier relocation after earlier reconnaissance

- Wire rope stretched taut between trees on a sloped hillside (blocks of wood can be attached and easily moved out to a roadside)
- Often times a person will work on a single tree for days at a time, working late at night or early morning with a chain saw

WHAT TO DO:*

- If you encounter anything that looks wrong, think first of your own safety. Back away and report what you saw. Call Skagit Land Trust staff.
- If you deem it an emergency, call the Skagit County Sheriff's office.
- Record license plate numbers. Law enforcement regards this as invaluable information.
- Take photos and/or GPS readings.
- For a problem area, a cheap game camera might be a good tool.

*Most visits to Trust properties will be benign and welcome. However, Stewards do act as the eyes and ears for the Trust. Be observant. Be *safe*. Have fun!

Now, if only people would slip in and harvest ivy, scotch broom, knotweed and Himalayan blackberry!

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until next time...

UPCOMING EVENTS WITH SKAGIT LAND TRUST:

December 16th– Hurn Conservation Area Ivy Pull

January 15th– Annual Member’s Meeting: Fidalgo Bay Resort

March 7th– 9th Annual Auction and Dinner: St. Joseph Center, Mt. Vernon

March through June– Amphibian Monitoring!



Skagit Land Trust Conservation Areas and Their (Lovely) Land Stewards

Barney Lake: Kendon Light, Tim Manns & Brenda Cunningham

Barr Creek: Russ Dalton

Butler Creek: Jim Owens

Cumberland Creek: Jim Johnson

Day Creek (Berquist & Forest): Stan Zyskowski

Day Creek Kosbab: Jim Fukuyama

Day Creek Slough: Hal Lee

Grandy Creek: John Freeman

Green Road Marsh: Heidi Nichols

Guemes Mountain: Ed & Carolyn Gastellum, Ian Woofenden, Kit Harma

Hurn Field: Steffany Raynes & Lin Skavdahl

Lyman Slough: Dick Raisler

March Point: LaVerne & Jim Scheltens

Minkler Lake: Hal Lee

Mud Lake: Lloyd Brown

Pressentin: Bill & Sally Pfeifer

Samish—Ochs: Pete Haase

Samish—Squires: Jack & Anne Middleton

South Skagit: Amy Gouley

Sumner Lake: Tami Thomas & Tom Mayes

Tope Ryan: John Day

Utopia: Ned Currance