



Date: February 14, 2012

To: Parks & Community Services Board

From: Alexandra DySard, Park Ranger
 Geoff Bradley, Environmental Programs Supervisor
 Dan DeWald, Natural Resource Manager

Subject: 2011 Natural Resource Volunteer Program Update

Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to update Park Board on 2011 Natural Resource Division volunteer program accomplishments.

Background

The Parks & Community Services Natural Resource Division volunteer program provides meaningful volunteer opportunities that help instill a sense of pride, ownership, and shared responsibility of Bellevue’s natural resources. From one-time Stewardship Saturday projects to on-going partnership activities, the program facilitates diverse and widespread citizen participation. Natural Resource volunteers deliver environmental education programs, lead canoe trips, staff visitor centers, and participate in a plethora of other activities that help enhance and protect Bellevue’s natural resources.

Stewardship Saturday/Eco Friday Volunteer Events

Stewardship Saturday volunteer events provide opportunities for volunteers with fewer skills, limited time, and/or a desire for group involvement to participate in one-time volunteer projects. Staff provides tools, materials, education, and project supervision while working alongside volunteers. Examples of typical projects include clearing invasive vegetation, planting native plants, and renovating trails. Eco Fridays provide expanded opportunities during the week that cater more to the needs of the Bellevue business community. The table below provides totals for 2011 volunteer stewardship events.

Volunteer Event	Volunteers	Total Hours	Projects
Arbor Day Earth Day 2011	241	603	10
King County Day of Caring	124	540	2
Stewardship Saturdays/Eco Fridays	797	2735	26



Park Stewards/Master Naturalists

In addition to one-time projects the Division also provides citizens with opportunities for longer term volunteer service. Natural Resource Park Stewards are volunteers who have a desire for extended service, flexible schedules, and skills that allow them to work more independently. Examples include canoe guides, environmental education docents, and trail stewards. For citizens who would like a longer commitment, but lack necessary background skills, the Natural Resource Division created the Master Naturalist Program. In exchange for 66 hours of training Master Naturalists provide 100 hours of volunteer service back to the City. The Division also coordinates with resource professionals from numerous agencies who volunteer time as instructors for established programs such as Natural Resource Week, Well KEPT Program, and the Master Naturalist Program.

Volunteer Type	Volunteers	Total Hours
Park Stewards	12	673
Master Naturalists	18	514
Resource Professionals	60	322

Partnerships

The Division also manages formal partnership agreements with organizations that have similar missions and goals. Volunteers from these organizations develop and deliver programs, staff visitor centers, and help run events.

Partner Organization	Volunteers	Total Hours	Programs/Events
Master Gardeners	112	4,130	52
Eastside Heritage Center	59	3,174	23
Northwest Striders	25	500	1
Pacific Science Center	65	4,392	310

Conclusion

The Natural Resource Division manages over 2,000 acres of open space forests and wetlands. Having well-trained, motivated, and dependable volunteers helps the Division accomplish existing workloads, increases opportunities for education, and helps build transparency and trust with the community. In conclusion, we would like to recognize and thank the Parks & Community Services Board for their significant volunteer contributions and ongoing support of Natural Resource Division programs.