

Urban Wildlife Project

by Shelley Matthews

YEAR
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in Brush Prairie, Washington, just west of NE 117th Ave., at 11104 NE 149th Street

The 80-acre Center for Agricultural, Scientific and Environmental Education (C.A.S.E.E.), south of Brush Prairie, was the site of this project. A 3-acre parcel of unused pasture was selected for restoration. This area had been significantly altered and degraded, primarily through farming practices and for the clearing and development of homesteads. Due to these conditions and the presence of extensive non-native invasive species, wildlife abundance and diversity were low.

The Urban Wildlife Enhancement/Demonstration Project fulfilled two main objectives: 1) To educate homeowners by demonstrating how to attract and /or retain wildlife (birds, etc.) in an urban setting; 2) To rehabilitate and enhance a previously degraded 3-acre upland site. This was accomplished by re-establishing a large variety of native vegetation to the site. A well-planned trail and pathway system was created to prevent degradation from non-intended or informal entrance into the enhancement / demonstration area. One main paved trail was built for handicapped accessibility. Smaller, crushed rock paths were established on the perimeter of each garden habitat. From these, small wood chip paths enter each habitat to enable citizens to see and identify first hand how native plants can be used in an urban environment, and to see the principles of layering, edge, and plant variety that are promoted in the center's education program. An information kiosk was built on-site to provide information on the project. Also, to augment their education and demonstration process, an informational/educational brochure was funded and published by The Columbian newspaper.

Benefits

- Increased the public's awareness of habitat loss, and their ability to create wildlife sanctuaries in their own backyards.
- Rehabilitated a highly visible and much frequented, 3-acre urban wildlife habitat as a site for education, interpretation, wildlife viewing, and enjoyment.
- Non-native plants were replaced with native vegetation and both habitat and wildlife abundance and diversity were increased.
- Involved volunteers in project implementation.

Budget

Total Proposed – \$68,800.

Total Actual – \$12,744.

Metro/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service grant award – \$2,900.

Grant Dollars Spent - \$2,900.

Helpful Hints – what worked, what didn't

- Allow for significant delays, especially if you are relying on donations from businesses and volunteers.

Partners

Audubon Society
Battle Ground School District
Bellevue, Washington Parks and Recreation Department
Boy Scouts of America
CASEE Center
Naturescaping
Sierra Club
Southwestern Washington Sierra Club
The Columbian
Vancouver Audubon Society
Vancouver Hummingbird Club
Vancouver Parks and Recreation Dept.
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Washington Native Plant Society
Washington State University Master Gardeners and Master Composters

Contact

Jeff Wittler, Naturescaping, (360) 735-5570

Timeline and Tasks

Winter 1996	Planned and designed restoration project
Spring & Summer 1996	Prepared site
Spring 1996	Removed non-native vegetation
Spring & Fall 1996	Planted native vegetation
Spring 1997	Replanted for non-surviving vegetation
Through 2000	Monitored site