

# Dairy Barn Site Washington State University

seven miles northeast of Vancouver city center, bounded on the east by Northeast 50th Avenue and on the south by Salmon Creek Avenue, which parallels Salmon Creek



## AFTER

*Removal of structures allows release of native vegetation*

The entire southern and eastern end of the Washington State University campus has been retained as open space. The buildings and roads have been confined to the northern, upland part of the campus. The site, formerly a large dairy operation, which was closed because of manure contamination problems, was cleared of a large barn, shed and silos. The built-upon area was graded and left with small, but significant elevation differences, which nearly correspond to prebuilding conditions.

The northwest and northeast portions of the site lie slightly lower than the former barn site to the south. Blackberries and other exotics, especially grasses, and a few native plant species were left behind. A ditch from the uplands to the north supplies surface water. The wetlands area will serve as a final treatment for WSU's stormwater before it discharges into Salmon Creek. After exotics were removed, they were replaced by native vegetation that emphasizes both wildlife habitat and plants used by the Native American population of the area. During the

winter, the site was monitored using test holes to determine water conditions. This information was used to help determine what plant species would be best suited for the site.

Being part of the campus makes the perpetual monitoring and maintenance of the site possible. It serves as a resource for college students, researchers, nearby elementary and middle schools and the interested public. The campus location and interest will also minimize illegal use of the site.

## Benefits

- Increased plantings in this area will assist in slowing and filtering increased drainage from the developed campus site prior to the water entering Salmon Creek.
- Plant and habitat diversity on the site have been added, which in turn will improve wildlife habitat.

## Timeline and tasks

- Winter 1994 ..... Information was collected on the water table levels and lower areas where water tended to pond. Locations for wetland and upland plants were identified, based on information.
- March 1994 ..... First volunteer planting day – 500 donated western red cedar and 100 red osier dogwood were planted.
- March 1995 ..... Many of the 1994 plants died due to limited irrigation in the hot summer months. Dead plants were removed and replaced. In addition, ninebark, Pacific willow, sitka willow, black cottonwood, quaking aspen, vine maple, blue elderberry and grand fir were planted. Plants were placed in the areas of appropriate moisture.
- September 1996 ..... Classes will be held on the campus. Students in a restoration ecology class will monitor and maintain this site as part of their course work.

- The project has served as a tool to show students, faculty, staff and local residents that it is possible for people of many skill levels and interests to restore a degraded area.

## Budget

Proposed - \$34,800

Actual- \$21,187

Metro/US Fish and Wildlife grant award – \$5,000

## Helpful hints – what worked, what didn't

- For trees and shrubs fall is a better time to plant than spring and summer. Plants will have a better chance to establish their root systems for hot and dry summers.
- Planting in sod requires a 3-foot diameter scalping.
- When using volunteers, it is important to have someone in charge of quality control to insure proper placement and care of plants.
- There are a lot of sources for donated or reduced-cost plant materials. Check around before buying plants.
- Watering, monitoring and general maintenance of a project are very difficult when no one involved in the project is living or working on the project site. Now that college classes will be held on campus, it will be easier to conduct monitoring and maintenance.

## Partners

Washington State University students and faculty

Friends of Salmon Creek

Friends of Trees

Fort Vancouver High School students

Interested citizens

## Contact

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