

# Washington

## WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

The Urban Forest Restoration Project, funded through a Western Competitive Grant, has engaged a broad range of new internal and external partners, and established a model for training young adults in preparation for natural resources careers.

The Urban Forest Restoration Project – organized by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) – coordinates natural resource jobs for young adults and veterans returning from service by partnering with communities in western Washington to improve community forests and restore urban natural areas. The project is focused on restoration work in the Puget Sound area of western Washington, an area that covers 1.6 million acres with a human population exceeding four million.

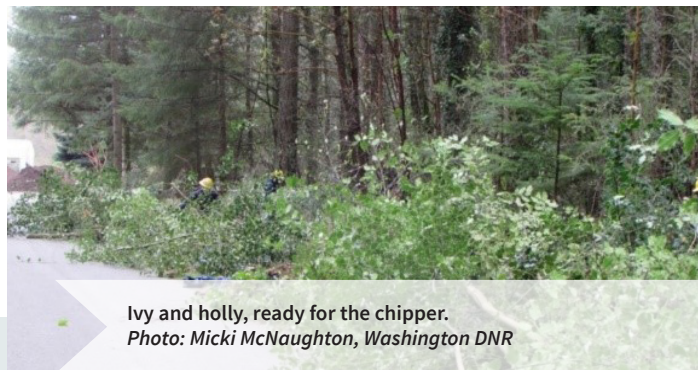
Project implementation is by the Puget SoundCorps (PSC), an AmeriCorps program administered by the Washington State Department of Ecology. Crews and projects are coordinated by urban and community forestry (UCF) staff. The model for this program was initiated and funded through a two-year 'Jobs Now' bill legislated in WA State in 2012. The project continued with funding through the 2014 Western Competitive Grant. Local project partners are granted one month of crew time for urban forestry restoration or improvement activities. Projects are mapped by PSC crews using ArcGIS online then incorporated into a project report of work accomplished written by UCF. Once they've received the report, project partners are required to develop and submit to UCF a three-year maintenance and monitoring plan with assistance by UCF. Following the plan, partners report annually for three years on the status of the project, including strategies for maintenance.

The original Western Competitive Grant proposal design was for one year of implementation with three PSC crews assisting 27 local project partners. Through an internal partnership



Puget SoundCorps crews pause after a service project at Bloedel Reserve on Bainbridge Island, WA. Three crews worked together to clear five acres of invasive English ivy and holly from Reserve grounds.

*Photo: Micki McNaughton, Washington DNR*



Ivy and holly, ready for the chipper.

*Photo: Micki McNaughton, Washington DNR*

with DNR's NW Region, the Recreation and Aquatics Divisions and some creative scheduling to share crew time, the UCF Program coordinated year-round work for five PSC crews. During summer months, when crews were able to work on water-based aquatics restoration projects, crew and staff time was paid for by the Aquatics division. By leveraging grant funding, the project tripled in scope with 72 urban forestry restoration and maintenance projects completed in 42 communities, counties, and in cooperation with nonprofit volunteer organizations. Each partner has developed three-year maintenance and monitoring plans to assure project sustainability. Close to 100 young adults have been trained in urban forestry technical skills and GIS mapping.

Project success has garnered support from all three Washington DNR divisions. A collaborative budget request was submitted in support of a full-time staff coordinator position and three to four PSC crews over the next two years, which will continue the internal and external partnerships developed over the last three years.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Washington State Department of Natural Resources  
Urban and Community Forestry Program  
Wildfire Division  
<https://www.dnr.wa.gov/urbanforestry>