

# WASHINGTON

## WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

The 'Tenacious Roots' program offers enrichment to teens in south Seattle. The program is a model of science education, outdoor exploration, and leadership training that helps youth develop a deeper appreciation for the natural world, while empowering them to lead environmental conservation efforts toward the future.



After invasive plants are removed, students lay out old coffee sacks and cover with mulch to protect native plantings and inhibit re-growth of invasives. Photo Credit: Seward Park Audubon.

The Tenacious Roots Leadership Team project, administered by Seward Park Audubon Center, focuses on forestry and habitat restoration to train standout leaders that guide their schools, classmates and communities in conservation action.

For the past several years, the program has been held at Seward Park, a perfect learning environment with a 277-acre old growth forest in a diverse neighborhood in south Seattle. In 2017, the program ramped up teen leadership skills by utilizing the knowledge and skills of program veterans to train their peers. Teen leaders encouraged program participation and facilitated sign-up, training and communication with students from their schools. Program lessons are focused on leadership skills and advanced knowledge of urban forestry stewardship.

Throughout the program, students earned learning hour credits while leading and participating in restoration activities to remove invasive species that threaten the forest. Events held at the park were planned and led by student leaders who were responsible for instructing participants in forest restoration, plant identification and tool safety. 119 adults and 77 youth participated in events, completing restoration activities on approximately two thirds of an acre of park land, planting 348 native trees and shrubs.

During the year, students also learned about the science of climate change, conservation advocacy and education. At Seattle's Youth Climate Action Summit, teens learned about the effects of climate change and action steps they can take to make a difference in their neighborhood, including helping to restore forests like Seward Park. Students crafted their own issue statement on climate change and took a field trip to Audubon's Advocacy Day at the state capitol in Olympia.

Today, many Tenacious Roots graduates have become regular volunteers at forest restoration and environmental education activities. These forest advocates play a key role in helping communities learn the importance of healthy community forests.

Funding for Tenacious Roots was through a Washington Department of Natural Resources' Urban and Community Forestry Program grant made possible in partnership with the USDA Forest Service.



Planting a sword fern in Seattle's Seward Park is a fun part of urban forestry restoration. Photo Credit: Seward Park Audubon.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Washington State Department of Natural Resources, Urban and Community Forestry Program  
[www.dnr.wa.gov/urbanforestry](http://www.dnr.wa.gov/urbanforestry)