

Biennium Overview

In 2009 and 2010, partnerships with the volunteer management organizations EarthCorps and Mountains to Sound Greenway continued, while commercial landscape contractors were hired to accomplish the majority of the work plan. A combination of volunteer and contract crews performed restoration on 204 acres in 17 parks and open spaces. Of this total, approximately 126 acres were new work areas. Contracted crews and volunteers planted 12,947 native trees and 2,027 native shrubs into 15 parks.

	2009-2010	2007-2008	2005-2006
Total acres worked	204	99.2	88.3
Trees planted	12,947	2,407	3,799
Shrubs planted	2,027	2,066	N/A
Ivy survival rings created	37.4 acres	30.4 acres	2,233 rings
Volunteer events	109	92	125
Volunteers	4,148	2,089	1,312
Volunteer hours	13,547	8,371	2,260

Contracted Restoration Work

In 2009-2010, contracted restoration work focused on selective tasks that address the most serious threats to the health of Mercer Island's open space forests. These tasks include controlling invasive tree species, removing ivy from mature trees, planting native tree and shrubs and maintaining these plantings.

Parks that had previously undergone very little or no restoration work, such as Engstrom Open Space, Parkwood Ridge Open Space and Gallagher Hill Open Space, received substantial attention this biennium. Others, such as Hollerbach Open Space and SE 53rd Open Space, in which only small areas received restoration treatments in previous years, underwent more extensive and aggressive treatments in the 2009-2010 biennium.

This biennium saw the implementation of the Pioneer Park Forest Health Plan, adopted by the Open Space Conservancy Trust Board in early 2009. A favorable bidding climate allowed the City to greatly accelerate the workplan outlined in the Forest Health Plan. Every part of Pioneer Park received some restoration treatment, including invasive tree treatment (108.7 acres), tree planting (39.2 acres), and invasive species removal (15.1 acres). The Open Space Conservancy Trust Board will provide a more extensive report of activities to the Council in April 2011.

Volunteer Contributions

Levels of volunteer participation in forest restoration on Mercer Island in 2009-2010 were unprecedented. In total, 4148 volunteers participated in restoration events in the parks and open spaces, contributing over 13,500 hours of service. The majority of volunteer hours were spent removing invasive plants and planting native trees in Pioneer Park, Island Crest Park, Mercerdale Hillside, Clarke Beach Park, and the wetlands in Luther Burbank Park.

EarthCorps and Mountains to Sound Greenway managed the majority of volunteer events in 2009-2010. Most events occurred on weekends, with additional weekday events during the summer to accommodate volunteers with the VOICE and SVP programs. EarthCorps also organized large events for school groups from Islander Middle School, Mercer Island High School and Forest Ridge Academy. Several dedicated residents continued to organize small events and independently steward the forest in their neighborhood parks.

2011-2012 Workplan

The first priority of the Open Space Vegetation CIP program in the 2011-2012 biennium is to maintain areas of open space that have previously received restoration. This work will focus on removing invasive plants and completing new plantings in current restoration areas and maintaining recent tree plantings. This first priority group of projects are called "Maintenance" projects. Maintenance projects for 2011 and 2012 are listed in Exhibit 2. Cost estimates for this work are based on bids received in the past three years.

The second priority of the program is a group of projects that are called "Additional" projects. This is a list of new projects that advance progress in restoration of City open space properties. This list of projects is intentionally larger than the available budget. Parks and Recreation staff will seek proposals from contractors on these projects along with the Maintenance projects described above. Additional projects will be funded within the budget available in the CIP. It is unlikely that all Additional projects will be funded. Projects will be selected for funding based on the cost effectiveness of the project, treatment of areas with the most pressing forest health issues and upgrading Level C parks to Level B service. Additional projects are listed in Exhibit 2.