



Welcome to The Understory!

Dear Reader:

I am happy to announce the start of a new newsletter highlighting the activities of the Seattle Urban Nature Project, **The Understory**. SUNP is on the verge of an exciting new phase of operation, providing ecological services and GIS mapping to non-profit and public sector organizations.

This work augments the maintenance of our comprehensive database of vegetation and habitats on Seattle Public Lands conducted in 1999-2000, which we will continue to make accessible to interested parties. I hope you enjoy this newsletter and consider how the Seattle Urban Nature Project may help your organization.

Jeff Bash
Executive Director of SUNP

SUNP Receives Grant for Collaborative Deadhorse Canyon Project

In April 2004, SUNP set out to develop a pilot project that would apply the organization's skills in vegetation surveying and GIS mapping to on-the-ground work performed by a local community group. SUNP found a partner in Darryl Dobson of the Friends of Deadhorse Canyon (FDC). Deadhorse Canyon is located in Southeast Seattle, in Lakeridge Park. Dobson has been working for eight years with local citizens to remove invasive species, plant native trees and shrubs and improve habitat conditions in Deadhorse Canyon.

SUNP and Friends of Deadhorse Canyon applied for a grant from the King County Natural Resource Stewardship Network to fund this effort. In August, the team was informed that the project had been approved. Funds provided will help SUNP to produce a detailed vegetation survey of the park, including management recommendations for the FDC to implement. SUNP will also be helping to set up monitoring plots. In addition, SUNP will be assisting Friends of Deadhorse Canyon to identify

Which invasive species is the most extensive on public land in Seattle?

Guess which non-native invasive plant species is found most often on public land in Seattle? Guess which one covers the most area on public land in Seattle?

Based on casual observation from driving through the city or walking our parks, you might have guessed that it was any one of the most common invasive species: perhaps it is Himalayan blackberry or English Ivy, Scot's Broom, Holly, clematis, reed canary grass or knotweed. However, the answer on both counts is Himalayan blackberry. There are approximately 1,000 acres of blackberry on public land as compared to the next most extensive invasive species, English ivy, which covers approximately 700 acres on public land in Seattle. The rest of the species named above are listed in descending order of abundance on Seattle's public lands.

In 1999-2000, Seattle Urban Nature Project surveyed habitats on all of Seattle's public lands. Prior to this effort, casual observation and professional best judgment would have been all we had to set management goals and priorities or monitor progress towards improving our city's natural areas. However, thanks to many months of fieldwork, we can actually provide better answers to questions like this one based on the SUNP survey. **(continued, page 3)**



Right: Darryl Dobson leads tour of Deadhorse Canyon.

and organize community resources to aid their efforts. SUNP wishes to thank the USDA Forest Service, WA State DNR, and King County for providing funds for this project through the Natural Resource Stewardship Network.

Gold Creek Project Completed!

SUNP recently completed a collaborative project with the Boys and Girls Club of King County at Gold Creek Park, in Woodinville. Gold Creek Park provides a unique opportunity for Boys and Girls Club members in King County to experience the natural environment. The Boys and Girls Club maintain an educational facility on the site and are active stewards of the area.

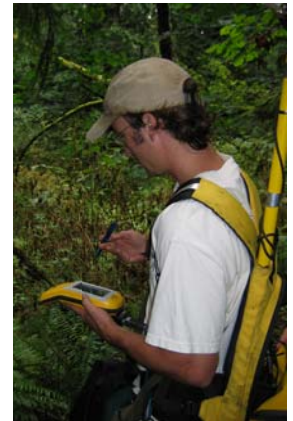
Tara Irvin, Program Director of the Boys and Girls Club, and Nelson Salisbury of SUNP were introduced through the Washington Native Plant Society's Native Plant Stewardship Program. Tara was looking for someone to report on the current status of the vegetation at the park and the Seattle Urban Nature Project was a perfect fit.

SUNP provided an inventory of the natural vegetation at Gold Creek Park and developed restoration monitoring protocols to assist Tara in her efforts to improve resources within the park.

In addition to providing an ecological inventory that will help Tara monitor the success of her stewardship efforts at the park, Nelson and Matthew Ramsay of SUNP also developed and directed science-based educational activities designed to introduce concepts of ecology and GIS mapping to Boys and Girls Club youth visiting the park. SUNP hopes to continue to collaborate with the Boys and Girls Club of King County to improve conditions at Gold Creek Park.



Above: Matthew Ramsay and Nelson Salisbury of Seattle Urban Nature Project speak with Tara Irvin and teens from the Boys and Girls Club of South Seattle. At Gold Creek Park in Woodinville, kids from Boys and Girls Clubs from throughout King County have an opportunity to learn about natural resources.

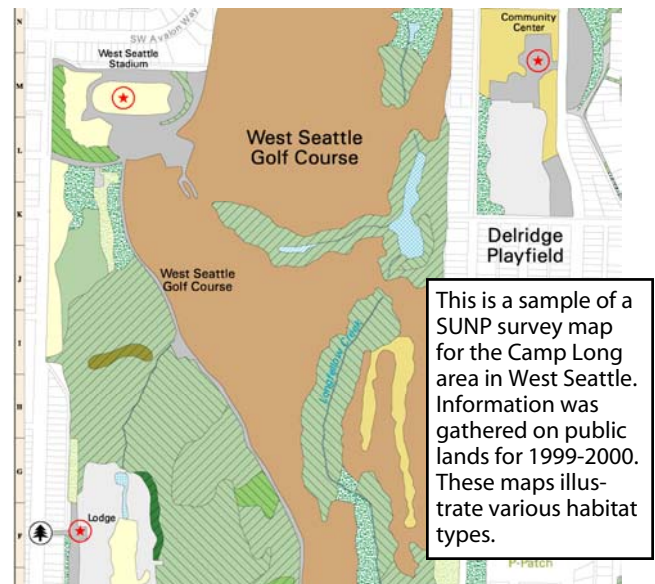


Right: Nelson Salisbury of SUNP takes a GPS reading. Coordinates assist Suzi Surbey, GIS Program Director, to make accurate maps highlighting trails, vegetation zones, and other areas of interest, such as trail erosion points.

SUNP Maps and Data Available

In 1999 and 2000, SUNP ecologists surveyed and mapped 8,000 acres of public land in the City of Seattle. The product of this effort was the SUNP Atlas, which identifies and maps over 33 habitat types related to vegetation and habitat on Seattle Public Lands. There are a number of ways to access this data.

- Complete paper atlases are located at Seattle Public Libraries.
- Maps such as the one to the right may be printed from our website, www.seattleurbannature.org.
- Full-sized color maps (2 feet by 3 feet) may be purchased for \$20 per map by contacting SUNP at (206) 522-0334. 57 maps are available.
- The complete GIS database may be purchased from SUNP for a licensing fee of \$100 (\$50 for non-profit organizations).
- SUNP can also produce custom maps upon request for a fee.
- Please contact Suzi Surbey, GIS Program Director at (206) 522-0334 or suzi@seattleurbannature.org for information.



SUNP Services

- Biological inventoring, monitoring, reporting & recommendations.
- GIS custom mapping and analysis for environmental projects.

For additional details, contact us at (206) 522-0334.

SUNP Wish List

Support the Seattle Urban Nature Project by contributing an item or funds for an item that will help us to document and improve public lands in Seattle.

- Laptop & Projector
- Printing Costs
- Field Equipment
- Digital Camera
- Postage, Paper Supplies

Blackberry and Ivy (from page 1)

Figure A illustrates **how widespread** these two species are over the landscape by reporting the percent of surveyed public land with either species present. In looking across all habitat types, and among forested habitats, Himalayan blackberry is found more often than English ivy. It may be startling to realize that more than half of all public lands surveyed and nearly three-quarters of all forested lands surveyed have some Himalayan blackberry present.

Figure B illustrates **how much area** each species covers by reporting the estimated acreage of each species on public land in Seattle. Himalayan blackberry covers more area than English ivy, whether one considers all habitats together or just the forested habitat types.

This brief analysis is not meant to suggest that Himalayan blackberry should be our city's greatest management priority or that all the hard work and effort to rid our public lands of English ivy are not warranted. After all, 700 acres of ivy might not sound like much to some readers, but remember, this is equivalent to **700 UW Huskies football fields** of ivy scattered over half of the city's natural areas! This analysis is merely intended to engage our readership in the kinds of queries and applications that are possible with the SUNP information.

Figure C illustrates how the SUNP GIS information can display locations of blackberry infestations (red), ivy infestations (light-green), areas with both species present (orange), and un-invaded areas with neither of these species present (dark-green) within Discovery Park. Such information exists in the SUNP database for all 8,000 acres of the city's public land. Just imagine how this information could be used to monitor habitat degradation and improvement or to develop defensible restoration priorities on our city's public lands.

For more information on SUNP data, contact ecologist Matthew Ramsay at matthew@seattleurbanature.org.

SUNP Helps Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks Map Bike Trails

SUNP helps community groups connect the public to Seattle's park system. Suzi Surbey, GIS Program Director has been working with Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks (FSOP) to develop four bicycle maps which focus on Olmsted parks throughout the city. With the new maps, which will be downloadable from the FSOP website (see caption below), people will be able to plan an enjoyable bike outing through the Olmsted Parks.

Right: One of four Olmsted-inspired bicycle route maps created by Seattle Urban Nature Project for Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks. Available for download at: www.cityofseattle.net/friendsofolmstedparks/

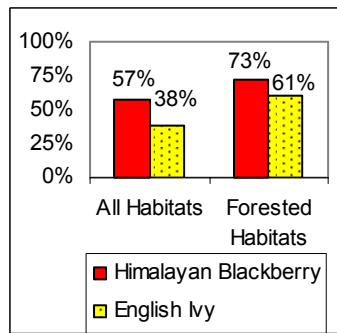


Figure A

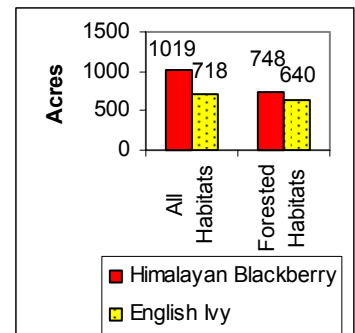


Figure B

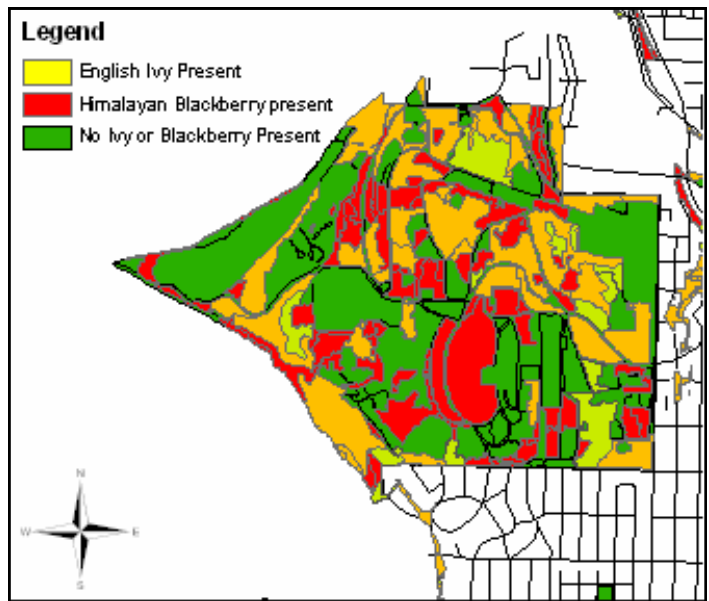


Figure C



SUNP Calendar

October

Invasive Species Survey, Kiwanis Ravine

October-December

Deadhorse Canyon Project

November 12

SUNP Board Meeting
UW Center for Urban Horticulture

November 20

SUNP Annual Retreat
UW Center for Urban Horticulture

Seattle Urban Nature Project's mission is to document, improve, expand and connect natural environments in Seattle.

Board

Bryan Baker	President (on leave)
Peggy Gaynor	Acting President
Linda Chalker-Scott	Secretary
Herb Curl	Treasurer
Davidya Kasperzyk	
Anne Lennartz	
April Mills	

Staff

Jeff Bash	Executive Director
Suzi Surbey	GIS Program Director
Matthew Ramsay	Ecologist
Nelson Salisbury	Assistant Ecologist

Do you like what we do?

Consider a donation to the Seattle Urban Nature Project. It's tax deductible.

A donation to the Seattle Urban Nature Project helps the organization to provide quality ecological and GIS mapping services to public and non-profit sector groups. With your donation, you will receive a quarterly newsletter highlighting SUNP's activities. We will send you an acknowledgement of the gift for your tax records.



Yes, I would like to help the Seattle Urban Nature Project to document, improve, expand, and connect natural environments in Seattle. Here is my donation.

\$100 \$75 \$50
 \$25 Other

Please make your check out to Seattle Urban Nature Project

And mail to:

**Seattle Urban Nature Project
5218 University Way NE
Seattle, WA 98105**

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Comments, questions, or submissions? Please contact Jeff Bash, Executive Director at via e-mail at jeff@seattleurbannature.org. If you would like to receive this newsletter in a different format or would like to be removed from the mailing list, please let us know. Learn more about SUNP at www.seattleurbannature.org.

Seattle
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*mapping our
ecological future*

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