



**CHARITABLE
CONTRIBUTIONS**

8802 27th Ave NE
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TulalipCares.org

Funds Distribution Report

Recipient Organization:

Whale Scout

Address:

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Organization's General Goals:

Our mission to protect Pacific Northwest whales through land-based conservation experiences is accomplished at this new park featuring a mile of shoreline habitat along the Sammamish River and two small streams.

Date of Award:

2024 Q3

Level:

\$500 to \$2,500

For more information, please read the attached report from Whale Scout.

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Thanks to the support provided by the Tulalip Tribes, Whale Scout was able to engage the community in the restoration of the former Wayne Golf Course in Bothell. This report will outline some of the successes and highlights of what we accomplished. Our mission to protect Pacific Northwest whales through land-based conservation experiences is accomplished at this new park featuring a mile of shoreline habitat along the Sammamish River and two small streams.

As you may recall from our application, the former private operators of the golf course used fertilizers, pesticides, and pumped water from the river to maintain a manicured aesthetic of mostly turfgrass with a few ornamental trees on this land. These modifications in combination with other actions led to the Sammamish River being listed on the state 303(d) list for violation of water temperature, dissolved oxygen, fecal coliform bacteria, and pH standards. During the summer months when threatened Chinook salmon migrate through the park, water temperatures exceed healthy thresholds. Tree canopy, offering benefits for both people and wildlife, is extremely low.

Donated funds from the Tulalip Tribes focused on the third of five phases of planting Whale Scout has planned, increasing the diversity of native plants at the park. Plantings now benefit pollinators and birds, and lead to improvements in water quality (temperature, dissolved oxygen, bacteria levels). Fast-growing willows combined with a mix of native trees quickly add shade to the river and result in a long-term forested canopy. Leaf litter falling into the water feeds aquatic insects, which are food for young salmonids who need to increase in size for more favorable survival odds in saltwater. These critical foundations of the food web lead all the way up to people and orcas. Native vegetation is also now reducing erosion of the riverbank and mitigating flooding risk. The plantings we installed in this grant along the Sammamish River are now growing into their full potential, shading and cooling the water. Improvements benefit salmon, including coho in the river which are extremely sensitive to tire dust chemicals, as well as people who recreate at the park and depend on these natural resources, such as fish and berries, for food.

This winter, six UWBothell students joined us during their winter quarter to complete capstone projects. Each student had a different area of focus for their final project to complete their Bachelor's degrees in Restoration Science or Environmental Science. Some examples of individual projects were: bioremediation of 6ppd-q, calculating an overall tree canopy score along the Sammamish River, expanding pollinator habitat, and more. Beyond their individual research projects, they collaborated with each other to restore two river bank sections and maintain three other riparian restoration sites. In addition, these students worked to protect the mature trees that were being covered in invasive Himalayan Blackberry and English Ivy throughout the riparian buffer. They first removed these non-native plants, then developed a

planting plan and implemented it. Students put together an amazing website and video which outlines their methodology, process, and results. This work would not have been possible without the guidance, leadership, and mentorship by our staff Rachael Kutz.

A significant part of our work engaging local students in restoration includes hiring local student interns. These students receive hands-on experience in habitat restoration, community education, stewardship, water quality monitoring, and more! Liz and Harshleen restored salmon habitat benefitting their community, salmon, and the Southern Resident killer whale population through land-based restoration and community education. Interns spent time at the Former Wayne Golf Course in Bothell once a week and participated in independent study work at home. This focused on the history of the Sammamish River, the current status of Southern Resident killer whales, salmon migration, tribal treaty rights, etc. Restoration and giving back to their environment was one of the largest take-aways from their internship. Seeing how local action can make a huge ripple effect on their environment has left a lasting impact on both of them. Interns assisted in a water quality assessment on one of the creeks at the park, led by Rachael Kutz, the intern coordinator. Along with volunteer stewardship and habitat restoration events with the public and local school groups. Interns participated in community events such as Bothell's Earth Day event. They helped educate the public on ways that they can get involved in restoration and why our work at the former Wayne Golf Course is so important. Rachael Kutz organized much of the day-to-day tasks that the interns participated in. This also included compiling their independent material and how it aligned with the work being done out in the field. Rachael focused on educating and preparing interns for what a career in conservation and restoration would look like. Rachael also provided a holistic view into environmental science and public outreach. Rachael's favorite part about mentoring our spring interns was sparking their fascination in environmental and restoration sciences. Whale Scout sees the tremendous importance in not only educating but also providing encouragement through scientific curiosity as much as possible.

We look forward to moving into the next phases of restoration in the coming years. We plan to finish four river bank sections this fall and continue to work with students. One of the things we've hoped to do in the future is hire past interns to continue their education with us throughout the remaining part of the year. This will equip students with a full year of seasons where activities differ. This well-rounded experience will beef up their resumes and also provide Whale Scout with trained staff to add capacity to our programming. This includes ongoing weeding and watering maintenance and vegetation monitoring for the next 3-5 years. We expect to continue requesting funding for ongoing support. Community stewardship will always be at the heart of our programming. This will continue in the future. We do acknowledge that some people experience physical barriers to participation. We've already added educational walks as a part of another grant but would like to expand these offerings with additional support. This fall we will launch a job exploration program for high school students called "Seeds to Sky" and will certainly be seeking funding to maintain robust programming at the park.

We really enjoyed this opportunity to engage the community in restoration. We plan to apply for funding again in the future.

Thank you!

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