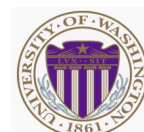




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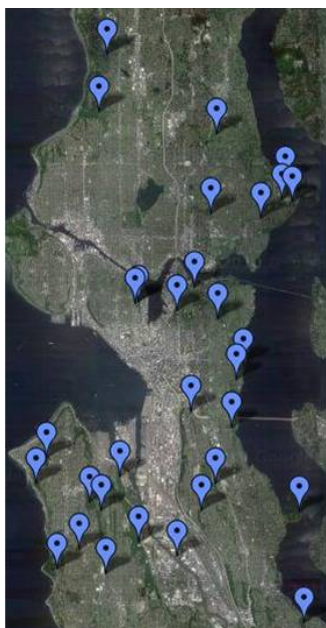
King County



USDA Forest  
Service  
Pacific Northwest  
Research Station



## Civic Environmental Stewardship: Volunteer Motivations, Operations, and Capacity



Thousands of volunteers participate in environmental stewardship projects each year in the Puget Sound region, including work for parks management, street tree planting, and habitat restoration. Yet little is known about who volunteers and why. Sponsor organizations and agencies are now collecting more detailed information about their volunteers. The Green Cities Research Alliance is developing and implementing assessment tools to better understand the volunteer experience, in order to expand recruitment and participation.

*Map: Locations of Seattle forest parks where surveys of volunteer stewards were conducted in 2010.*

### Why is this research important?

Volunteer stewardship is a potentially viable strategy for ecosystem restoration and management. Moreover, stewards contribute to grassroots community building and social cohesion. These crucially important contributions and benefits are now largely unrecognized. The research will elevate visibility and awareness of stewardship impacts. It will also provide tools for organizations to improve the stewardship experience, while increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of field programs.

### What have we found?

Initial results show strong volunteer satisfaction with host organizations and event support. Having access to events in one's neighborhood contributes to a positive experience. Finally, social themes (such as improving one's community) are at least as important as ecological factors in providing motivations and benefits to stewardship participants.

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### Study Goals

- Compile data on volunteer stewards background, volunteer history, and demographics;
- Compile data on volunteer stewards motivations, satisfactions, skills and contributions, and personal health outcomes;
- Aggregate and synthesis data to produce best practices materials that will aid organizations in their efforts to support and foster environmental stewards;
- Apply spatial analysis to survey results and volunteer data for a regional understanding;
- Collaborate with public and private agencies and organizations in urban areas; and
- Advance public awareness of stewardship efforts and further conceptual understanding of their existence and value.

### Research Sponsors



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