

2023

Volunteer Program Annual Report



 King County

PARKS

Your Big Backyard



The King County Parks Volunteer Program

works to provide meaningful opportunities to connect people of all ages to our parks through hands-on service learning, environmental education and teen career pathway development programming.

By the Numbers



4,902
Volunteers



28,415
**Hours of
Service**



5,036
**Plants
Installed**



2,190
**Plants
Potted**
**in the
King
County
Nursery**

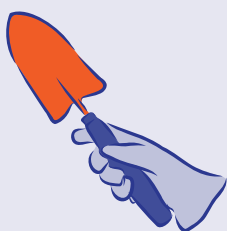


673
Events

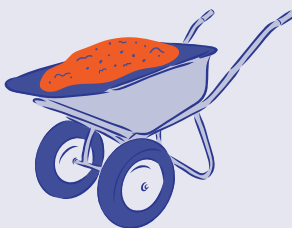


123
**cubic yards of
noxious weeds
removed**

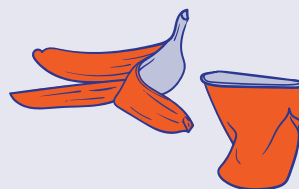
1.76 acres of
**noxious weed
removal in new sites**



13.00
**acres of
weed
maintenance
in existing
sites**



943
**cubic yards of
woodchip mulch
spread in sites**



801
**gallons of
litter
picked up**

2023 Highlights

Meaningful Projects with New and Existing Partners



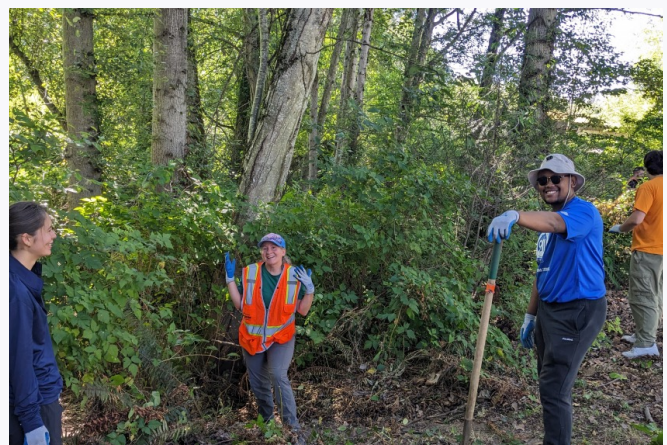
African Young Dreamers Empowerment Programs International (AYDEPI) returned to Lake Geneva Park to continue ivy removal over the summer and planting in the fall.



The Muslim Association of Puget Sound (MAPS) continued their efforts along the Marymoor Connector Trail where they removed blackberry and spread mulch to ensure their planting site will thrive for years to come.



Our journey with the **Homeschool Stewardship Squad** continued, this time on the shores of the Snoqualmie River at Tolt MacDonald Park .



An exciting new partnership with the **Kraken Externship** formed in July at Skyway Park.

2023 Highlights

School Programs

In 2023, we worked with 300 students and teachers across King County bringing a range of restoration and educational opportunities to 2nd to 12th graders. This included **Tahoma High School** at Danville-Georgetown Open Space (pictured left) and **Two Rivers School** at Tanner Landing Park (pictured right).



Creative Programming



In early 2023, we partnered with the **Restoration Program** and hosted 4 public potting events at the King County Nursery in Maple Valley. Volunteers helped to pot over 2,000 plant plugs into one-gallon pots, boosting internal efforts to supply native plants to parks throughout King County.



In September, we hosted a land-based whale watching and beach cleanup event with the Whale Scouts at Maury Island Marine Park on Vashon Island. All while keeping a lookout for wildlife on the Sound, volunteers removed over 20 gallons of garbage.

Partner-led Projects

The following partners led over **440 events** in King County Parks: Mid-Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group, Eastside Audubon Society, Washington Trails Association, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance, Sammamish Rivers Stewards, Snoqualmie Indian Tribe, Vashon Mountain Bike Alliance, Mirrormont HOA, SODA at Marymoor Park Dog Park, Seattle Running Club, and more.

Note that our compiled data for the year does not include all smaller partnerships and ongoing service through Community Partnership Grants.



2023 Highlights

One King County – Internal Collaboration



Meadow enhancement planting at Marymoor Park with King County employees



Plant identification training with Parks Specialists at White Center Heights Park

Our Internal collaboration continued to center on process improvements for more impactful collaboration with other work units, Divisions and Departments throughout King County.

We deepened our working relationships within King County, serving on several committees including Parks Equity and Social Justice Work Group, Parks Culture Shift Project, Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) Green Jobs work group, and DNRP Education Work Group, and the Urban Geo Team. We supported the Parks Jobs and Housing and Water and Land Resources Division Green Start crews with projects and educational experience support and collaborated to design and lead restoration events for DNRP staff at Marymoor Park and Lake Geneva Park.

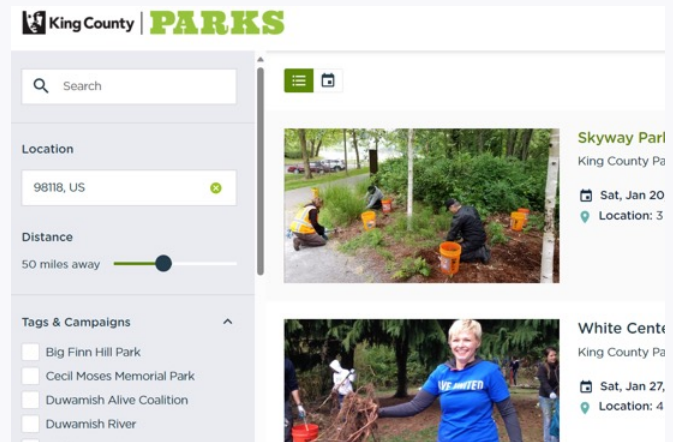


The Volunteer Program Team (left to right: Nick Musso, Sahar Arbab, Lina Rose, and Anna Carragee)

Additional Programmatic Efforts

We developed and implemented a formal Volunteer Program Team Workplan meeting all performance metrics for the year including managing staff transitions. We added an additional new position to our team, welcoming in Anna Carragee as our Program Assistant mid-year, and her role is making a huge positive impact on our work. We also transitioned Nick Musso into the Volunteer Program Coordinator role starting in July.

Another goal achieved was the successful launching of our new Volunteer Management Software, Golden. This launch was years in the making, and allows us to manage publicity, recruitment and communications with volunteers. In 2024, we are leaning into this software further to utilize features that allow for managing enrollment for private groups and schools and collecting post-event metrics for more accurate data collection.



Screenshot of Golden volunteer registration system

2023 Highlights

Youth Conservation Corps



This past summer, our Volunteer Program staff led our third Youth Conservation Corps cohort. The program received 190 applications for 10 open spaces. To date, 83% of our participants have been BIPOC youth representing 20 high schools across the County.

During the 6-week program, we were joined by 35 different workshop presenters and volunteers who supported the interns' learning about various environmental topics. Highlights from the summer included kayaking the Duwamish River to learn about its history and ongoing challenges as a superfund site, visiting the Woodland Park Zoo to assist in Western Pond Turtle conservation, and exploring tools that help us gather important data about environmental inequities. The interns completed restoration projects at Dick Thurnau, White Center Heights, and Skyway parks.



As part of independent projects, the interns all wrote about their personal relationship with nature, land, and the environment in a writing form of their choice. Many of their pieces have been featured on the [Parks Blog in a three-part series](#). The poems, stories, and essays feature diverse perspectives and experiences. The interns read their writing to a room filled with their friends, families, and Parks colleagues.

The YCC continues to meet its goals of introducing youth to careers in Parks and the environment, providing opportunities for mentorship, and building career skills. As one intern shared this past summer,



“ *This experience was not exactly what I expected but it has been the best job I’ve ever had. I would [recommend] to a friend I know is a hard worker, and eager to learn more about opportunities in the environmental field. It can be hard to get an idea of what those jobs look like and YCC has provided a great space for that exploration.*

Our team is already preparing for next summer and we are excited for growth in the program.

