

Planting along the Duwamish - a Little Dirty but a Lot of Fun.

Saturday October 21, 2017 in Tukwila. Reforesting the Duwamish Shoreline.

Saturday was a cool rainy Seattle morning. As I drove to the NFA Conservaton Outing site I thought for certain everyone would stay home. However, Tom Beaulaurier, Cynthia Hickey, and Dustin Robinson all showed up to join in with Forterra and Green Tukwila Partnership on the banks of the

Duwamish to participate in replanting along the river. As we were loading up tools and plants to start planting, the Mayor of Tukwila, Allan Ekberg, showed up and personally thanked us for volunteering. And the light rain stopped, as we were ready to get to work.



On the banks of the Duwamish: Wytold Lebing, Cynthia Hickey (holding a large blackberry root she tenaciously dug out), Tom Beaulaurier, Dustin Robinson

When you are going over the West Seattle Bridge and looking down at the murky green water, it's easy to dismiss the Duwamish Waterway. But the waterway running through south Seattle is the path to salmon spawning grounds. From the bridge view it looks like so many urban rivers: lined by industrial sites, cargo ship

docks, and old rotting bulkheads. Because of the scene below, few of us think of it as a place to fish. But, once past all the blight, the waterway becomes the Green River and supports spawns of both Coho and Pink salmon.

For the past few years, Forterra, the Green Tukwila Partnership and the City of

Tukwila have been working to restore the waterway. It can be a long slow process because of limited funding and a rather low position in the priorities of a rapidly growing city. However, progress is being made with the help of volunteers (like us), donations, and some city support.

Last spring a large section of the Dumwamish shore behind Gateway Business Park had been cleared of invasives, like blackberry, earlier in the year and it was time to plant native species. Fall planting means the winter rains will allow the plantings to become established and restore the banks to a more natural state. The native plants and trees once established will filter run off and one day the trees will shade the river, keeping it a bit cooler for the salmon trying to get up stream. When the rain eased off by 10, we had couple of hours to plant.

The project leaders remarked on just how fast the NFA members were planting, and staying ahead of their efforts to bring more plants and mulch. And yes, all of us went at the task with energy and enthusiasm. It wasn't long until we all had given up on trying to stay clean ... and as these things go we all ended up muddy, a little wet, but happy.



Clockwise from top right: Dustin, Cynthia, and Tom digging in on the banks of the Duwamish

If there is one thing I can say about NFA volunteers at these outings, we always seem ready to jump into the project with relish.

Join us for our next outing. It's a great feeling to end up dirty and maybe a little bit tired. And knowing that instead of just frowning at the condition of the rivers in Seattle, you pitched in to make things a little bit better. You will be glad you did.

- WYTOLD LEBING