



# THE BALTIMORE WOODS-WORKER

*Welcome to the Winter 2017/2018 edition of the Friends of Baltimore Woods e-newsletter. It's time again to share news of our ongoing work to bring a native oak woodland to the riverbank in St. Johns. We invite your feedback and participation.*

## *Upcoming Events:*

**Friends of  
Baltimore Woods  
General Meeting**

**December 19  
Tuesday  
6:30 – 8pm**

BES water lab  
6543 N Burlington Ave,  
Portland 97203.



*An urban weed: traveler's joy*

## **Urban Weeds Class Helps Educate Neighbors**

By Caroline Skinner

Thank you to presenter Kathy Shearin from EMSWCD for leading the class on urban weeds on September 16. Held at the BES lab meeting space in St Johns, the class quickly filled to capacity. Kathy presented general information on the levels of concern raised by different weeds. For example, the common dandelion is a weed, but is considered less malevolent than others. She gave detailed information about a number of common and troublesome weeds we see in our area, including English ivy, holly, Scotch broom, purple loosestrife, lesser celandine, pokeweed, Armenian blackberry, tree of heaven, traveler's joy, and yellow flag iris. You can help by learning to identify them and removing them from your yard.

Kathy spoke about Early Detection and

Reporting (EDR), a program for weeds that merit special concern, such as garlic mustard, giant hogweed, spurge laurel, and kudzu. You can learn to identify these. If you see any of them, please call 1-866-INVADER immediately to report them. The purpose of the program is to manage these invaders before they become established and therefore much harder to fight.

Some weeds with woody stems, like Scotch broom, holly, and tree of heaven, can be successfully removed with a weed wrench. However, there is no need to buy one. You can borrow a weed wrench from any of several tool libraries in the Portland area.

All of these urban weeds are capable of reproducing rapidly. They spread from yards and roadsides into parks and natural areas like Baltimore Woods, where they can grow very densely and crowd out native plants. Some, such as garlic mustard, emit toxins into the soil that



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discourage other plants from growing. Identifying them and managing them in our own yards is one of the most helpful things we can do.

The class also gave some clever suggestions for alternatives to weedy plants,



*EMSWCD urban weeds class*

such as planting Douglas spirea instead of butterfly bush (buddleia). Kathy explained that while butterfly bush does attract butterflies and offer them pollen, it does not offer food for emerging insects. The backside of the leaves are covered in hairs that make them inedible to the native insects we would like to encourage.

Some of the common weeds can be irritating to the skin, so always wear long sleeves and gloves when you are removing them.



*Teasel in winter*

## SOLVE and Friends of Baltimore Woods— An Ongoing Partnership

By Monica Gunderson of SOLVE

SOLVE is a statewide non-profit organization supporting volunteer litter pickup and restoration events across Oregon. With free supplies and logistical support, we engage over 30,000 volunteers in over 800 events each year. SOLVE's mission is to bring Oregonians together to improve our environment and build a legacy of stewardship.

SOLVE has been happy to contribute to the

*The North Portland Tool Library is located in the basement of the Old Kenton Firehouse, 2209 N Schofield St. in Portland.*

*It is open Tuesdays 5:00-7:30pm and Saturdays 9am to 2pm.*

*For more information, call them at 503-823-02090 or email [info@northportlandtoollibrary.org](mailto:info@northportlandtoollibrary.org).*



*One of many SOLVE work parties at BW*

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restoration of Baltimore Woods since 2009, when SOLVE completed an intensive restoration plan as part of the Team Up program in coordination with FoBW and the City of Portland

Bureau of Environmental Services (BES). At the time, the site was 30% invasive plants, primarily Himalayan blackberry. The goal was to remove invasive vegetation and re-vegetate the site as an oak woodland, using the ecological expertise of BES.

Fast-forward to 2015, the Baltimore Woods site was graduated from the Team Up program after six years of restoration. The North Portland community had volunteered alongside student groups from around Portland to remove invasive species and plant native plants, creating a habitat for wildlife and a healthier watershed.

Today, SOLVE partners with FoBW throughout the year to engage volunteers in maintenance of those same native plants from years before. Willows, currants, and snowberry create a thriving habitat for birds, bugs, and North Portlanders.

From community volunteer days to bigger corporate events, Baltimore Woods is a site where many SOLVE volunteers have discovered the term “invasive plants,” learned to hold a shear, and identified perennial peavine for the first time. We are happy with our continued partnership with Friends of Baltimore Woods, and happy to bring volunteers to this beautiful and inspiring site.

You can find a community-

led event near you at [solveoregon.org](http://solveoregon.org), or give us a call at (503) 844-9571 to organize a litter pickup or restoration project in your neighborhood.

## SOLVE Beach and Riverside Cleanup

By Caroline Skinner

On September 23rd, we enjoyed favorable weather conditions for outdoor work. It felt like the dwindling days of summer, but really took place on the second official day of fall. About two dozen volunteers came to work at Baltimore Woods with the SOLVE Beach and Riverside Cleanup. We met at N Baltimore and Decatur and worked in the thickets of the planted areas along Decatur.

Although we’ve worked there before, the weeds had grown large and healthy over the summer. The good news is that our plantings are also growing big and well-established on the hillside.

The work party quickly turned into the forces of good battling the forces of evil; the weeds were



Monica Gunderson of SOLVE at the Beach and Riverside Cleanup



Volunteer at the 2017 Beach and Riverside Cleanup

*Baltimore Woods ... has a rich history and has been identified as a rare and unique ecosystem that is increasingly disappearing from the Willamette Valley landscape.*

—Steve Kennett, former SOLVE program coordinator



2017 SOLVE Beach and Riverside Cleanup at BW



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pretty dense and overgrown, so it was gratifying to be able to liberate some of the native plants from their bondage.

After removing traveler's joy, perennial peavine, and blackberry, we found healthy native shrubs including ocean spray, mahonia, flowering red currant, and a few shy Nootka roses. One blue elderberry has grown so large that it has risen above the fray, standing tall above the avenue of other plants, its berries mostly spent at the growing season's end.

We are grateful to volunteers from Skansa and OBRIC for coming to the aid of our natural area on September 23. Clearly, when we keep after the weeds, the native plants can advance. Both the good and the bad have taken root. We aren't out of the woods yet in terms of winning the battle with weeds, but we've certainly made some good progress.

## PBS Engineering & Environmental Takes On Peavine—and Wins!

By Mark Hill

The perennial peavine (*Lathyrus latifolius*, also called everlasting peavine) is a newcomer to our area. When it first appeared in Baltimore Woods, several years ago, we thought it was benign, maybe even helpful. It is lush and beautiful. Its abundant blooms attract native

bees and other pollinators. Its roots enrich the soil with nitrogen. Slowly, however, we have discovered the peavine's dark side.

Peavines die back as winter approaches each year, but their rhizomes live on in the ground. In early spring, they sprout leafy vines which grow up to 20 feet in every direction. The vines climb and blanket neighboring bushes and trees, starving them of sunlight. In the summer, all their beautiful blooms turn into pods which later burst, scattering tiny seeds everywhere. The perennial peavine's capacity to take over swaths of meadow exceeds that of English ivy and even Himalayan blackberry.

This year, our Thursday evening work parties devoted the summer months to controlling peavine in our upper woodland, above Baltimore Woods Meadow. By fall, however, it was apparent that the peavines had expanded their territory again. We were losing ground. It was time to call in reinforcements.

SOLVE responded to our need by turning to one of its corporate sponsors, PBS Engineering and Environmental. PBS is a young company which is building a reputation in Portland for quality and sustainability. Recently, it opened a second office in Vancouver, WA. In the past, PBS had encouraged its workers to help SOLVE with local cleanup projects. Now it

is venturing into SOLVE's restoration efforts too.

On September 14, an ambitious crew of PBS workers, led by SOLVE and five FoBW volunteers, systematically stripped peavines laden with seed pods from half of the upper woodland and piled the plants at collection sites for composting. At the same time, teams with leather gloves and shovels dug out blackberry roots for disposal. The other half of the upper woodland was left untouched. It will serve as a control site for assessing progress.

Our hope is that the trees and



*Thanks to volunteers from PBS Engineering and Environmental!*



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shrubs we have already planted in the upper woodland will someday form a shady canopy that will drive out the peavine and create conditions for a healthy understory. We know our goal is in the distant future, and we are grateful to SOLVE, and community partners like PBS Engineering and Environmental, for helping us along the way.

## Tough and Tenacious Native Plant Seed Mix

By Caroline Skinner

When we proposed a work party dedicated to removal of perennial peavine, we had someone point out that bumblebees love the pea blossoms, so maybe we should think twice about removing the plants. With so few types of plants in bloom during late summer, pollinators do not have as many flowers to visit in fall as they do in spring. Our response to that comment was to plan a shift away from pea vine and toward natives like the solidago, or goldenrod, that also fills a large area of Baltimore Woods Meadow.

Oregon's Department of Agriculture has this to say about peavine: "Perennial peavine is a widely-established European native, identified in every state except Florida and North Dakota. It is very invasive on road shoulders and in seasonally dry meadows." It adds that it was used for erosion control, but the genie got out of the bottle. It is now considered to be "increasingly a problem ... large areas are smothered and native plant cover reduced." We believe this is beginning to happen in Baltimore Woods.

We have a Stewardship Team that includes two members of FoBW and public officials from Parks and BES. The group meets on average about every two months. It's a great opportunity for FoBW to bring our questions about restoration to experts. In this case, we asked the team to approve adding more flowering native plants, such as Douglas aster and fireweed, as we work toward decreasing the pea vine slowly, over time.

We've already done a lot of work planting shrubs and small trees. Now we'll change gears. The city staff heard our request and responded with a plan for fall and winter plantings of both seeds and plant plugs, or seedlings. The native plant seed is a mix of varieties that are both tough and tenacious—just what we need at BW! The seed mix includes yarrow, Clarkia, Collomia, lupine, tarweed, Phacelia, and Potentilla, among others. We are excited to see these take root.

Laura Guderyahn of Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) commented,

"...The goal is to increase the diversity of native herbs in general throughout the meadow. In some places, the native flowering herbs are doing very well, i.e. goldenrod and lupine in the upper meadow. However, in areas where we have removed infestations of non-natives like the teasel and encroaching blackberry and cottonwood trees, we will be spreading this seed mix. This way, when we remove the non-natives we aren't just opening up more bare soil for other non-natives to move in. We want to make sure those areas are colonized by natives. Additionally, we ordered about 400 native meadow wildflower plugs that you all will be sprinkling in throughout the [upper woodland and Baltimore Woods Meadow] this winter."

Thank you, Laura, we're up for it!



*Bumble bee visiting pea vine in Baltimore Woods Meadow*



*Lupine seed pods*



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## Yes We Have No Ivy Day

By Caroline Skinner

We were all set and ready to be part of PP&R's No Ivy Day for 2017 when the question arose: Where is the ivy at Baltimore Woods? We could not find any to speak of in our upper woodland and gully behind our tool box, and not much at our Oak Tree site either. Could it be that we've nearly wiped it out? Is it possible that we've run out of ivy?



*English ivy*



*Volunteer pulling ivy*

Unfortunately, no, we have not eliminated ivy in Baltimore Woods. There is still a sturdy stand of the botanical beast along North Decatur, and we found plenty of ivy on the ground in the lower part of Baltimore Woods Meadow, above the railroad tracks. That proved to be the perfect site for this year's No Ivy Day on October 28.



There is still ivy in Baltimore Woods, but we have made substantial strides toward eliminating it. I'm looking forward to some future No Ivy Day when we truly cannot find any ivy to remove. Can we do it? Thank you all who helped us this year.

## A Note from the No Ivy League

By Emily Lytle

Thank you for participating in our 14th annual No Ivy Day! On Saturday, October 28, citizens around the Portland metro area gathered to improve our natural areas through the removal of the invasive weed English ivy. We were very lucky to have a beautiful sunny fall day for the event. The time you dedicated to ivy removal work parties was crucial to our success! Together, we worked to accomplish the following:

- Ivy removal work parties were held at 23 sites in the Portland Metro area.
- More than 410 volunteers participated in invasive plant removal, contributing more than 1,200 volunteer hours of labor to the fight against invasive species.
- More than 31,000 square feet of ground ivy was removed.

With these impressive results, this event will continue to improve the habitat of our natural areas for future use by wildlife and people. Removing invasive plants allows for the establishment of native plants and a more diverse ecosystem.

Your participation was instrumental in showing



*Volunteers at No Ivy Day in Baltimore Woods*



FRIENDS of  
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our community's dedication to stewardship of the natural environment. Please visit our website, [www.noivyleague.com](http://www.noivyleague.com), to learn more about upcoming projects as well as more ways to get involved. See you in the forest.

## The Trail of Discovery in Portland's Harbor

By Steven McClure

I recently had the pleasure of helping to lead a tour of part of the North Portland Greenway (npG). We followed the Willamette River for about a mile south of Cathedral Park, starting beneath the St. Johns Bridge. Our guide was Francie Royce of npG and I was her second in command, representing the Lewis and Clark Trail and Baltimore Woods, which also skirts the Willamette shoreline along the bluff above the Port of Portland's Toyota off-loading dock.

The occasion for our excursion was the annual Willamette River Festival, held again this year in Cathedral Park, on July 30th. Francie and I led six intrepid souls along the shoreline to the BES water lab and from there generally along the railroad tracks.

We enjoyed perfect weather on our hike, which I urged onward to the river pilings where the Willamette Cove begins. The pilings remain where several dry docks once sat, including one that was at the time the largest in the world. Now the Cove is slated for clean-up as part of the Portland Harbor Superfund site.

I informed the group that this point was identified by Captain William Clark as the spot where he turned his canoe around, heading back downstream, having been made unsure of his course along the river's changing shoreline in a thick fog. This occurred the morning of April 3, 1806, as this lone vessel of the Lewis and Clark Expedition sought to reach, as suggested by my research, Willamette Falls at what is now Oregon City.

Advocates for npG hope to include the two-mile stretch of shore in St. Johns, followed by Clark and his crew in 1806, in a trail that will extend from the East Bank Esplanade in downtown Portland all the way to Kelley Point Park at the mouth of the Willamette on the Columbia River. Of this two-mile stretch, the northern mile will travel through the nature corridor being restored by Friends of Baltimore Woods. The southern

mile will likely be a continuation of the river access trail developed along Cathedral Park and the BES water lab.

Those who have read my previous articles on the Lewis and Clark Expedition will know that these two complementary segments will directly parallel the highly significant terminal course of the Corps of Discovery on the Willamette's eastern shore.

Premiere viewing sites will include, to the south, the overlook at the Benson mansion above the Willamette Cove, and to the north, the viewpoint where the Baltimore Woods trail



*View of Willamette Cove from the St. Johns Bridge*

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segment will leave the river and wend its way inland to Pier Park. Midway access is provided by Cathedral Park, and the St Johns Bridge affords excellent viewing of the whole. Even today, whether walking the trail, paddling the shore, or traveling to viewpoints by bike or car, a grand conjunction of history and nature in Portland's Harbor unfolds to the informed eye.

## Least Wanted Invasive Species – Italian Arum

From the WMSWCD web site

Italian arum (*Arum italicum*) is also known as Orange Candleflower, Cuckoo's Pint and Italian Lords-and-Ladies. It is a known invasive species in warmer climates, but has also shown up in Oregon. This European perennial was introduced as an ornamental plant and is primarily spread by birds and animals who eat it. The plants have hardy underground tubers

and can also be spread from dumped yard debris or compost. You'll find arum in moist, well-shaded woodland areas.

This species is toxic to animals and humans.

Its distinctive white-veined leaves are present in the fall and sometimes through the winter. The plant produces flowers with a pale hood-like leaf (known as a spathe) circling a white-yellow nodule (called a spadix) in late April to June and give off a displeasing odor. After the flower dies back, you'll see the

green berries, turning to bright orange-red, in tight, oblong clusters.

Some native plant alternatives are:

- Stream violet
- Beach strawberry
- Wood strawberry
- Wild bleeding heart

### Winter 2017/2018 Event Information

We have no events or work parties in December. Enjoy the time off! As always, work party times and locations can change. Check our website for final details.

#### **December 19, Tuesday, 6:30-8pm**

Friends of Baltimore Woods general meetings are on the third Tuesday of each month at the BES water lab at 6543 N Burlington Ave, Portland 97203. All are welcome!

#### **Early January 2018**

EMSWCD's annual online native plant sale. The online store will open January 17, and customers pick up plants on February 17, 2018. To learn more visit [www.emswcd.org/plantsale](http://www.emswcd.org/plantsale).

#### **January 16, Tuesday, 6:30-8pm**

FoBW general meeting. See December 19.

#### **January 20, Saturday, 9am – noon**

Work party to pull blackberry and clematis vines in Baltimore Woods. Meet at N Baltimore and Decatur. This is a continuation of work started at the 2017 SOLVE Beach and Riverside Cleanup.

#### **February 17, Saturday**

Planting work party, co-sponsored by our neighboring group, the Columbia Slough Watershed Council. We hope to put in 400 native plant plugs and broadcast several pounds of native plant seeds. Check our website for details.

#### **February 20, Tuesday, 6:30-8pm**

FoBW general meeting. See December 19.

#### **March 31, Saturday, 10am – 3pm**

Save the date for FoBW's annual native plant sale in the St. Johns plaza. Volunteer for this cheerful and lively event! [friends@friendsofbaltimorewoods.com](mailto:friends@friendsofbaltimorewoods.com).



*Italian arum with seed stalks*