

Jefferson County Marine Resources Committee 2023 Rain Gardens Project Summary Report

Project Lead: Janette Mestre

Subcommittee Members: Troy McKelvey, Frank Handler, Sarah Fisken, Brenda Johnson

MRC 2023 Rain Garden Intern: Isabelle Jones

Additional Volunteers: Vern Bessey, David Winters, Christi Adams, Taghi Ghanaie, Ann Seim, Jesse Cordova, Rose Fabrick, Ken Fabrick, Pam Kelley, Allison Krizner, Ellen Larkin, Renee Blattner, Mindy Rupley, Beverly Stoll, Tim Englert, Harry Hayward, Mark Toy, Amy Meyers, Jordan Lucas, Amber Langley, Patty Schmucker, Kate Nichols, Chris Kauffman, Sophie DeGroot

Project Overview

The Jefferson County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) works with community partners to build and maintain a network of rain gardens in suitable, priority locations across East Jefferson County. Rain gardens treat stormwater runoff, removing contaminants and improving water quality to benefit nearshore and marine ecosystems. Expected outcomes of this project include reduced flow of contaminated stormwater and increased understanding about stormwater issues through volunteer engagement in rain garden installations and maintenance. Going forward, the MRC will be focusing on maintenance of existing network of 19 rain gardens.

October 2022 – September 2023 Rain Garden Project Activities

This year, the MRC installed two new rain gardens, tackled maintenance needs at several established rain gardens, and began creating the foundation for an “Adopt-a-Rain Garden” program. **Volunteers contributed a total of 151.25 hours to the rain garden project this year.** Through assessing rain garden maintenance needs, the MRC inventoried all the rain gardens it has installed to date, with the help of 2023 rain garden intern Isabelle Jones. With the two new rain gardens added this year, the MRC has co-sponsored a total of 19 rain garden installations to date across East Jefferson County – 13 in Port Townsend, 3 in Port Hadlock and 3 in Quilcene.

October 28 – The MRC hosted a garden work party, attended by four volunteers (including one MRC member, Janette; Vern, David, Christi) and two staff (Monica, Bob). The group did some final weeding, focusing on thistle, added supplemental plants, and mulched two rain gardens, located at Franklin/Adams and Lincoln/Adams.

December 22 – The rain garden project subcommittee met to discuss the role of a rain garden intern in 2023.

April 14 – The subcommittee reviewed intern applications and scheduled interviews for a rain garden intern.

- May 16 – A new rain garden was installed at the Old Alcohol Plant Inn in Port Hadlock. This project included the help of WSU Extension, Native Salvage Plant Foundation, groundskeeping staff and three volunteers (including MRC member Frank and WSU Master Gardener Renee).
- May 25 – The MRC onboarded the rain garden intern, Isabelle. She helped the project lead, Janette, assess rain garden maintenance needs across Port Townsend to prioritize work parties for the summer.
- May 30 – Janette organized a small work party at Franklin/Adams to cut back the problematic thistle and apply natural herbicide, with the help of Isabelle and two community volunteers (Ann, Jesse).
- June 11 – Isabelle helped an adjacent property owner weed the Benton/Clay rain garden.
- June 15 – Isabelle organized a work party to finish weeding at Franklin/Adams and apply mulch at Franklin/Adams and Benton/Clay rain gardens, with the help of staff (Monica, Bob) and four community volunteers (Rose, Ken, David, Jesse).
- July 13 – Isabelle organized a work party at Franklin/Adams, attended by MRC member Frank, to remove thistle and other weeds, and add supplemental plants.
- July 14 – Isabelle organized a work party at the WSU office rain garden, attended by MRC member Janette and three community volunteers (Pam, Jesse, Allison). Volunteers did some light weeding, added supplemental plants, and mulched.
- August 1 – Isabelle organized a work party at Water/Monroe (front of the NW Maritime Center), attended by Janette, Monica and Frank, to remove weeds and add mulch.
- August 10 – Isabelle organized a work party at the Jefferson County Courthouse to remove weeds and add mulch, with the help of Monica and one community volunteer (Ellen).
- August 18 – Isabelle completed her internship.
- September 21 – The MRC's final rain garden installation was completed at the Swan School in Port Townsend, with the help of two staff (Bob, Monica), the Native Plant Salvage Foundation (Erica), 39 students from the Swan School, and 13 community volunteers (Beverly, Tim, Harry, Mark, Amy, Jordan, Amber, Patty, Kate, Chris, Sophie, Taghi, and one MRC member, Sarah).

Rain Garden Maintenance

To date, the MRC has co-sponsored the installation of 19 rain gardens, including the two installed in 2023, across East Jefferson County. These gardens require regular weeding, mulching, occasional supplementation of new plants, and in particularly dry conditions, watering. In 2023, the MRC's rain garden intern, Isabelle, worked to identify rain gardens with the greatest maintenance needs and organized six work parties, with the guidance of MRC project lead, Janette. In total, eight maintenance workdays were completed across six rain gardens in East Jefferson County. Isabelle also helped to create promotional materials, including flyers, [a StoryMap](#) that maps out the rain gardens and indicates which ones are in need of stewardship, and ads in local newspapers, along with [an online form](#), to begin recruiting community volunteers for long-term "adoption" of rain gardens. Additionally, to support rain garden stewards, the MRC contracted Native Plant Salvage Foundation to develop a plant guide for East Jefferson County to serve as an educational resource for

plant identifications and supplementation needs going forward. So far, three new rain garden stewards have adopted two rain gardens. Renee and Mindy have adopted the WSU office rain garden, helping to water it weekly during the summer months, and Ann has adopted the Garfield and Adams rain garden (the first one installed by the MRC). Going forward, the MRC will continue to focus on recruiting volunteers for ongoing maintenance and organizing volunteer workdays as needed.

Photos of Rain Garden Maintenance Work Parties



10/28/2022 Volunteers tackling thistle at Franklin/Adams one last time before the winter. Photo by Monica Montgomery.



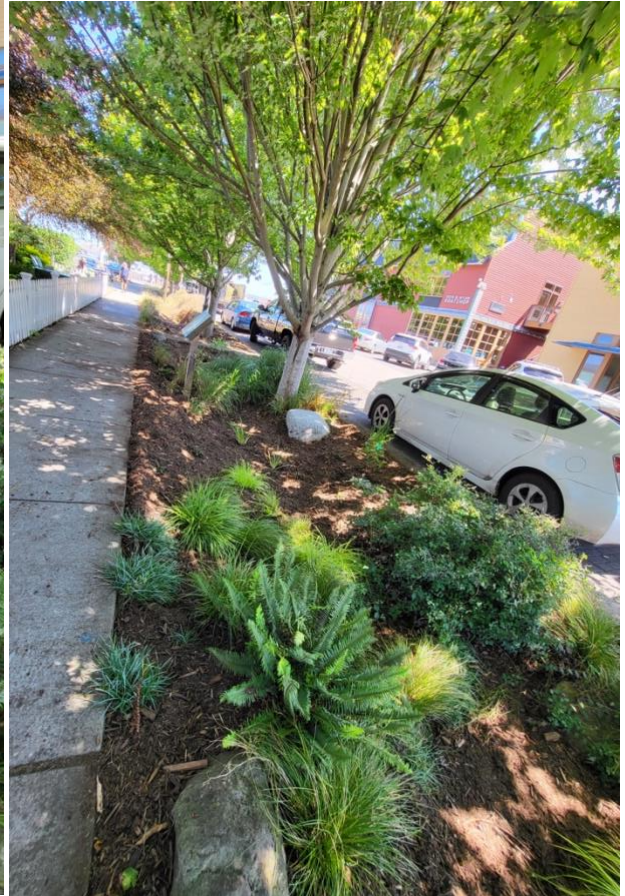
7/14/2023 Volunteers work on weeding, supplementing plants, and mulching at the WSU Office rain garden. Photos by Isabelle Jones.



5/30/2023 Volunteers continue to tackle Canada Thistle at Franklin/Adams. Photo by Isabelle Jones.



6/15/2023 The battle with Canada Thistle at Franklin/Adams continues. Photo by Monica Montgomery.



8/1/2023 Frank and Janette removing weeds (left) and the finished rain garden (right). Photo by Isabelle Jones.



8/1/2023 Frank, Isabelle, and Janette at the NW Maritime Center rain garden. Photo by Monica Montgomery.

Rain Garden Installation at the Old Alcohol Plant Inn

The first of two rain gardens installed in 2023 was placed at the Old Alcohol Plant Inn on May 16th. Bob Simmons (WSU Extension) fostered this partnership and consulted with the Inn's staff on removal of the cement structure (seen in the photos and later chiseled away) and designed a rain garden to treat stormwater from nearby neighborhoods before flowing into South Port Townsend Bay. The Native Plant Salvage Foundation (Erica) was a partner for this installation, providing the plants and expertise on the planting design. Three volunteers – including MRC member Frank, WSU Master Gardener Renee, and Taghi with the Native Plant Salvage Foundation – contributed to the installation of this rain garden. Three groundskeeping staff from the Old Alcohol Plant Inn along with three staff (Bob and Monica with WSU Extension, Erica with Native Plant Salvage Foundation) also helped to plant this garden.

Photos



Rain garden site at the Old Alcohol Plant Inn before digging began. Photo by Bob Simmons.



The excavated rain garden site with bioretention soil added in prior to planting. Photo by Bob Simmons.



Renee, Frank and Erica smiling while preparing the rain garden for planting. Photo by Monica Montgomery.



Frank smiling at the camera. Photo by Monica Montgomery.



Staff and volunteers putting in the final touches on the Old Alcohol Plant Inn rain garden. Photo by Bob Simmons.



*Old Alcohol Plant Inn staff (left) and the completed rain garden installation (right; cement wall later removed).
Photos by Erica Guttman (left) and Bob Simmons (right).*

Rain Garden Installation at the Swan School

The MRC's final rain garden installation occurred on September 21st at 24th and Kuhn Streets, near the Swan School in Port Townsend. This is a comparatively larger rain garden, measuring 30' by 50' with a planned ponding depth of 9". The MRC partnered again with WSU Extension (Bob) to design the rain garden and the Native Plant Salvage Foundation (Erica) to provide plants and the garden's planting design. The City of Port Townsend donated excavation services. Both a morning and afternoon shift of community volunteers were recruited to help plant and mulch the large garden, and four different groups of students ranging from kindergarten to fifth grade at the Swan School helped throughout the day. In total, thirteen community volunteers, including one MRC member (Sarah), contributed 37 hours and 39 students contributed 10 hours planting and mulching the garden. Over the coming months and years, this rain garden will serve its ecological function as well as teach students at the Swan School about stormwater management, the pollution mitigation capabilities of plants and bioretention soil mixes, and their campus' connection to the local marine environment.

Photos



*Rain garden site at the corner of 24th and Kuhn St. near the Swan School prior to installation.
Photo by Bob Simmons.*



*The Swan School site being prepared for the rain garden, with the City of Port Townsend's
donated excavation services. Photo by Bob Simmons.*



A group of Swan School students learning about stormwater issues before working on planting the rain garden. Photo by Monica Montgomery.



The MRC Assistant Intern, Amelia, guides a student in preparing a potted plant for Zone 1 (left) while other paired teams dig. Photo by Monica Montgomery.



Paired teams of community volunteers (Tim, above; Harry, below) and students work on planting Zone 1. Photos by Monica Montgomery.



Paired teams of community volunteers (Beverly, above; Sarah, below) and students work on planting Zone 1. Photos by Monica Montgomery.



The finished Swan School rain garden after a long day of planting and mulching. Photo by Monica Montgomery.

Flyers and Volunteer Sign-in Sheets (below)



Join Us for the Last Rain Garden Work Party of the Year!

Join the Jefferson County Marine Resources Committee, WSU Extension, and community members in stewarding a rain garden or two in Port Townsend. Volunteers will help with weeding, replanting and mulching to get rain gardens in tip top shape for collecting and treating stormwater as we transition into the rainy season. Refreshments will be provided. Sign up today!

When: 10am-1pm on Friday, October 28th

Where: Franklin and Adams Sts in Port Townsend

Sign-up: www.bit.ly/PTraingarden2022



Jefferson County
**Marine
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Committee**



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**PUGET SOUND
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Funded in part by the US EPA

Let's Mulch!

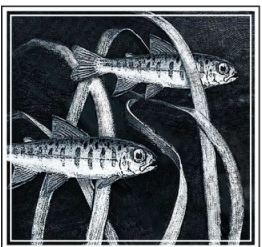


Thursday, 6/15

Time: 10 am - 1pm

Location: Meet at Franklins + Adams Street

Bring: Water, warm layers, gardening tools (provided--but feel free to BYO!)



Jefferson County
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RAIN GARDEN PLANTING DAYS

July 13th and 14th



JULY 13TH

Corner of Franklin st.
and Adams St.

When: 10am - 12pm

JULY 14TH

121 Oak Bay Road
(WSU Office)

When: 10am - 12pm

Join us in giving two rain gardens some TLC by planting perennials, weeding, removing debris, and watering. Supplies and refreshments will be provided!



Sign Up:
bit.ly/43f81oq



Rain Garden Work Party: Maritime Center

08/01/23

WHERE:

Intersection of Monroe and Water
sts.; in front of the Swan Hotel

WHEN:

10 am - 12:30 pm

WHAT:

Weeding & mulching



<https://bit.ly/TuesdayWorkParty>



Help Plant a New Rain Garden!

Join the Jefferson County Marine Resources Committee, WSU Extension, and Swan School in planting a new rain garden in Port Townsend. Learn about stormwater issues, rain garden design and different plant functions, while helping to improve water quality in Port Townsend Bay. Bring a friend or family member, or come on your own! Refreshments and tools will be provided.

When: 10am-1230pm or 230-5pm on Thursday, September 21, 2023

Where: 24th & Kuhn St. in Port Townsend

Sign-up: www.bit.ly/Plant-a-Rain-Garden
(or scan QR code)



Jefferson County
Marine Resources Committee



WSU EXTENSION
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