

Friends of Mt. Tabor Park Weed Warrior Event Summary July 2014

July 26th, fifty-three Weed Warriors gathered at Mt. Tabor Park for a productive day of habitat restoration. Among the group were five crew leaders who contributed twenty hours, and forty-eight volunteers who contributed 144 hours. All together the Weed Warriors contributed 184 service hours!

Several groups participated in July. Willamette Dental Group (Milwaukie office) chose the Weed Warriors for one of their regular service days. Christ Lutheran Church Leaders were visiting from Southern California (Visalia). Service Portland, an organization that provides young professionals with ways to get involved with the local community, chose the Weed Warriors for their monthly event. A few volunteers were representing Portland State University. Students participated as part of the Mt. Hood Community College Scholarship for Education and Economic Development (SEED); they are from different countries in South America and are in the United States studying Natural Resources and Environmental Technology.

Weed Warriors returned to unit 5 remove invasive plants (Figure 3) and care for plantings. Volunteers broke up into several groups each addressing a different problem plant.



FIGURE 1: CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH LEADERS TAKE A PHOTO BREAK UNDER THE CANOPY OF UNIT 5



FIGURE 2: MT. HOOD COMMUNITY COLLEGE SEED STUDENTS WEED AND MULCH AROUND FERNS



FIGURE 3: JULY'S PLAN MAP SHOWS THE SPECIES AND AREAS WHERE WEED WARRIORS WORKED



cutleaf blackberry



tansy ragwort



Canada thistle



bull thistle

Several new infestations were addressed by the Weed Warriors. Cutleaf blackberry (*Rubus lucinatus*) was first observed by a volunteer earlier this year. Another invasive plant that has only been observed for the last year or two is tansy ragwort. Since it was in bloom during the workparty and had not gone to seed yet, volunteers were able to remove the plants without bagging them. Weed Warriors also dug up a few bull thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*) plants, another new addition that sprung up in the last couple months. Under the canopy on the south end of unit 5, volunteers removed bittersweet nightshade (*Solanum dulcamara*), a poisonous plant with purple flowers and bright red berries.

After the initial removal of Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) in May, the plant returned to once again cover much of the planting area in unit

5. This is most likely because fragments of roots and stems remained in the ground. Returning plants like Canada thistle demonstrate why taking the time and concentration to get as much of the plant out of the soil is important.

Since the group pulling tansy ragwort finished early, they spent the remaining time as Weed Warrior Wanderers in pursuit of tansy ragwort to the west of the Harvey Scott Circle and clematis by the tennis courts in the northeast side of the park. Another few volunteers dug up returning Himalayan blackberry from the east side of unit 5.

In addition to weeding, several volunteers spread mulch around native plantings throughout unit 5. This involved clearing weeds that hid the plants to be mulched. Portland Parks & Recreation has provided the Weed Warriors with





great piles of mulch since the first planting in 2012.

It was a beautiful (and hot) summer day in Portland. In the meadowed work area,

at least fifty dragonflies flew overhead. Fortunately, there were several large trees around the work area where beneath volunteers could break from the sun. Another tree stood out to long-term Weed Warriors, not for its shade value, but for its resiliency. A couple years ago, this beaked hazelnut tree (image to the left) was discovered buried under a mob of invasive plants when Weed Warriors initially cleared the area. It was uncertain whether the tree was alive.

There were many more volunteers participating this July than in previous years (the average number of participants in July between 2010 to 2013 is twenty-four). Though it takes a little longer to get started when there are many volunteers, the large group was able to get a lot done. Seven species of invasive plants were targeted. A large part of unit 5 was worked in as well as other parts of the park—an estimated two acres total.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

48	volunteers
144	volunteer service hours
5	crew leaders
20	crew leader service hours
2	acres (approximately) worked by the Weed Warriors
7	species of invasive plants targeted

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Fireweed
(*Chamerion angustifolium*)

Fireweed is a native pioneer species meaning it is a hardy plant that quickly spreads in disturbed sites - a great weed for habitat restoration. Fireweed was planted by the Weed Warriors in 2013 and was blooming in July.



Red-Tailed Hawk Joined Weed Warriors

Every last Saturday Weed Warrior event, volunteers come together halfway through the work party, hydrate, eat Kind bars, drink coffee/tea from Bipartisan Cafe, and learn about habitat restoration at Mt. Tabor Park. In July, the Weed Warriors had a special visitor: a red-tailed hawk! No more than 100 feet away, the hawk rested atop the mulch pile and watched the group. From nearby trees, smaller birds chirped warning signals.



Upcoming Weed Warrior Events

August 30th, 9:00 am to 12:00 pm: Weed Warrior last Saturday volunteer event
 September 17th: Warner Pacific College Common Day of Service at Mt. Tabor Park
 September 27th, 9:00 am to 12:00 pm: Weed Warrior last Saturday volunteer event
 October 4th, 9:30 am to 12:30 pm: The Nature Conservancy service project at Mt. Tabor Park
 October 11th.: Parke Diem
 October 30th, 9:00 am to 12:00 pm: Weed Warrior last Saturday volunteer event

