



Bainbridge Island

Metro Park & Recreation District

Student Conservation Corps

2017 Program Report

The Bainbridge Island Metropolitan Park and Recreation District (BIMPRD) Student Conservation Corps (SCoCo) has completed its eighth successful year, with a core summer session of noxious weed control efforts at five Island Parks. The program focused on goals outlined in the BIMPRD Vegetative Management Plans created with the Kitsap County Noxious Weed Commission and has contributed to noxious weed management progress in Island natural spaces. The goal of SCoCo is to significantly advance noxious weed management in our Parks while educating a group of dedicated students and future environmental stewards on conservation sciences and related career opportunities.



The 2017 Student Conservation Corps has four program components: Spring volunteer application work-parties, an optional paid Spring Break session, a paid Summer session, and a Fall volunteer restoration program. Twenty applicants were selected from volunteer application work-parties in the Spring to serve on the SCoCo Summer crew. A waitlist was maintained.

Spring Application Work Parties take place during the months of March and April. Attendance of at

least one application work party is required in order to apply for a position as a SCoCo member. This system is to ensure students are familiar with the duties required of a SCoCo crew member and ready to participate.

The Spring Break Session- funded by Let's Pull Together- Bainbridge Island Scotch Broom Control, an initiative of Sustainable Bainbridge- ran for a fifth successful season, providing employment for five students over four days in April. Corps members pulled significant stands of Scotch broom from meadows and forest edges in three parks: Sakai Park, Hilltop Meadow between East and West Grand Forest, and Gazzam Nature Preserve. The Sakai Property had large stands of Scotch broom removed along the northwestern border of the property,

running adjacent to Madison Avenue. The work done in the Hilltop and Gazzam meadows was critical maintenance of small but plentiful Scotch broom seedlings. (Note: 2017 is the final year of guaranteed funding for the non-profit Let's Pull Together. LPT plans on diversifying funding and continuing its efforts in an adaptive way. SCoCo and LPT intend to collaborate again next Spring Break, however the program will likely expand its goal beyond Scotch broom and include other invasive species.)



The Summer Session included eighteen high school aged students working for twelve days, June 26th through July 13th. Workdays consisted of four hours of work and a one-hour lunch break with an educational program. The Summer SCoCo members worked to remove English ivy from trees and the ground in Blakely to Fort Ward Trail, Blakely Harbor Park, Fort Ward Park, Waypoint Woods, and Gazzam Lake Nature Preserve, Knudsen Trail, and Williams-Olson Park. Corps members also worked to control Scotch broom, English holly, Hawthorne, and Spurge laurel in these parks. Emily Helgeson, Park District Volunteer Specialist, led the program and was assisted by Maxwell Gordinier, Coordinator of Let's Pull Together and former Park District Senior Park Aide, and Anna Bornstein, Environmental Science student from Ithica College.

Three Fall volunteer restoration work parties will take place in October and November for maintenance and native plant restoration in critical areas. Restoration days serve as a conclusion for 2017 SCoCo members and as an outreach opportunity to potential 2018 members. 2017 SCoCo members are expected to participate in a minimum of two of the three volunteer restoration work parties and are highly encouraged to bring friends and family to participate.

2017 Quantitative Data:

- The 2017 Spring Break program provided a cumulative 136 hours of Scotch broom removal in three parks: Sakai Park, Hilltop Meadow, and Gazzam Lake Nature Preserve
- The Summer session provided over 945 hours of noxious weed removal in 5 parks: Blakely Harbor, Fort Ward, Waypoint Woods, Gazzam Lake Nature Preserve, and Williams-Olson
- 80+ hours of noxious weed removal are expected to be added during fall volunteer work parties
- 753 trees were cleared of ivy in the 2017 Summer session bringing SCoCo's grand total to over 13,700 trees cleared

- 39 square yards of ground ivy were removed and hauled out of Phase 1 and 2 of Blakely Harbor Park
- A 30-yard dumpster was filled with English Holly and English ivy removed from the Waypoint Woods
- An estimated 1,500 native plant species will be planted by SCoCo volunteers in critical Park areas this Fall to complete the restoration process, discouraging ground ivy from returning

Budget Facts:

- Bainbridge Island Metro Park & Rec District provided \$11,000 in funding for the 2017 SCoCo program
- Bainbridge Island Parks Foundation granted \$3,000 towards student employment
- Through Sustainable Bainbridge, Town & Country granted \$1000 towards the Spring Break SCoCo session
- The Bainbridge Community Foundation awarded a grant of \$2,500 towards the cost of native plants
- Let’s Pull Together granted \$1,300 to offset the cost of wages during the Spring Break session



2017 Educational Program:

One aspect of our program that differentiates us from other conservation corps is our educational speaker series. During our lunch break the program includes a one-hour educational component, in which time local community members are invited to speak about their career paths and how their work relates to environmental conservation. This serves as an opportunity for corps members to learn about the multitude of ways one can work within the field of conservation,

while pursuing their interested and skillset. The following speakers were extraordinarily generous with their time, knowledge, and encouragement when presenting during our 2017 summer session:

Kirk Robinson BI Park District Board Member, **Taylor Swift** Net Systems, Inc. (Net-making and Ocean Clean Up), **Evan Franz and Claire Beaumont** Patagonia (Sustainability in the apparel industry), **Kathleen Wolf** Urban landscaping, **Dana Coggen** Kitsap County Noxious Weed Control Board, **Deb and Ellen** WestSound Wildlife (Athena the Bard Owl), **David Harry** National Park Service and BIMPRD, **Barb Trafton** Bainbridge Parks Foundation (Origins of SCoCo), **Betsy Peabody** Puget Sound Restoration Fund, **Christina Doherty** IslandWood (The Birds & the Bees), and **Tim Spenser** Boulder City Trails Crew and Student Conservation Association

2018 Proposed Program Changes:

Spring Break Session: For the past five years Let's Pull Together (LPT), an initiative of Sustainable Bainbridge, has helped to fund the Spring Break session by reimbursing the cost of student wages and by providing an assistant leader. In return, during the Spring Break Session SCoCo focused its noxious weed removal specifically on Scotch broom. However, 2017 is the 5th and final year of guaranteed funding for LPT and while the non-profit is working to diversify funding and is interested in continuing a partnership with the Student Conservation Corps, due to these changes LPT cannot confirm future fiscal support of the Spring Break session. It is proposed that the Bainbridge Island Metropolitan Park and Recreation District continue to offer the Student Conservation Corps Spring Break session in 2018 for up to 12 high school participants, expanding its objective of noxious weed removal beyond Scotch broom to address the wider needs of our parks.

Summer Session:

In an effort to expand the 2018 Student Conservation Corps program for both the needs of the Park District and its crew members, it is proposed that an additional 12-day summer session be offered. In the past, SCoCo participants had the option of continuing invasive species removal with the Bainbridge Island Land Trust (BILT) after the conclusion of the Park District's session, expanding the length of their summer employment. However, in 2017 BILT developed a separate program running concurrently to SCoCo, eliminating the option to extend summer employment for SCoCo members. Feedback from 2017 participant surveys indicates that SCoCo members are highly interested in a longer session next summer. Therefore, it is proposed that in 2018 two summer sessions be offered: Session A and Session B. SCoCo Applicants would have the option of applying for just one or both sessions. Dividing into two 12-day sessions rather than doubling the length of one session will allow interested participants to extend summer employment without eliminating those who prefer the single 12-day session structure. Session A would maintain a hiring limit of 18 participants, while Session B would be slightly smaller with 13 participants. This additional session could add an estimated 700 hours of invasive species removal to the existing summer program and support the program's goal of educating future environmental stewards on conservation sciences and related career opportunities.

Thank you for your support!

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"Supporting SCoCo would not only help make a difference on Bainbridge in the short-term by preserving its beautiful environment, but promotes change in the long-term by providing students with skills and knowledge involving conservation that they can apply to their life in the future, both on Bainbridge and elsewhere."

-2016 SCoCo Member