

TNC Steward Report – January - December, 2025

Color key: Black = Work performed in period. Red = Future plans.

Seed sowing locations are covered in a table at the end, not in the text. As a reminder the TNC Committee has a "natives only" and "permission required" planting policy to prevent the introduction of non-native plants. You can find this at <https://thurstonnaturecenter.info/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/TNC-Plant-Policy-Revision-June-2018.pdf>

Our Land Stewards are Jim Vallem and Michael Tucker. Rain Garden Stewards are Sandy Breck, Sheryl Wytychak, Lynn Olson, and Elizabeth Morehead. Our Water Steward is Smita Malpani.

Primary invasives removals: Phragmites in various locations, and non-native cattails that were near the OHAC parking lot, were killed by a technician at Plantwise, LLC. Flower heads of purple loosestrife along the east and south side of the pond were cut off and bagged for trash (to prevent seed dispersal). Clearing of other invasives such as black alder, buckthorn, honeysuckle and giant ragweed occurred in many places, including major efforts on the north side of the Peninsula, the Prairie and North Prairie.

Mitigating the impact of the new Thurston construction project: Much effort was made by neighbors and friends of TNC, and by AAPS contractors, to mitigate the loss of nearly 1 acre of natural area. This including moving of TNC infrastructure (signs, equipment shed, etc.) and plants. Thanks to all who helped. Details are in the text below.

Location-Specific Information

Woodlands between the Pond Outlet and Thurston-Clague Trail Catch Basin: *This is the area cleared in 2021 to repair the collapsed drainage line between the two catch basins. It has been partially flooded from Fall 2021 to late July 2022, and again in spring and summer of 2023, 2024 and 2025. The school district had the berm near the outlet replaced in summer 2023 (due to voids in the berm), but the flooding issue was not fixed by this.* In 2025, some buckthorn and honeysuckle removal was done along Bloodroot Trail.

Prairie and North Prairie: Cleared trails in North Prairie. A controlled burn was conducted in Spring in the Prairie and North Prairie. These burns are used to top-kill large invasives and completely kill younger ones. Some invasives were removed from the Prairie and the narrow strip between North Prairie and Thurston-Clague Trails. The southern half of the Prairie is being used as an entrance to the construction site for New Thurston, and will ultimately have an entrance for fire trucks and pedestrian access. Our equipment shed was moved next to Thurston-Clague Trail, and the kiosk's display board was mounted to the shed wall. **North Prairie is due for some serious buckthorn and honeysuckle removal.**

South Entrance of Conboy Trail: This area was eliminated, as the fire truck access road on the north side of the new school will go here. Prior to this, we moved some Meadowsweet (5), Shrubby Cinquefoil (8), Ninebark (6), Alt. Leaf Dogwood (3), Red Osier Dogwood (1), Elderberry (3), Plums (10), and Gooseberry (1) to other locations in TNC. The Conboy Trail sign was also moved to the new southern end of the trail.

Hummingbird Rain Garden: All but a tiny section on the north side of the most recent rain garden expansion was eliminated due to the new school construction. Prior to this, a replacement trellis was placed to the north along with the *Lonicera sempervirens* 'Major Wheeler' vines (a cultivar of the native trumpet or coral honeysuckle), and a few shrubs. Swamp Buttercup (a couple), Virginia Mountain Mint (lots), Rose Mallow (15), Blue Flag Iris (lots), Rushes (lots), Buttonbush (2), Swamp Milkweed (lots), and Pussy Willow (2) were moved ahead of the construction. In total, several hundred plants were moved from here to numerous places all around the pond.

Oak Savanna: The southern half of the Savanna was eliminated due to school construction. Seven oaks from the southern half, plus three others nearby, were moved to the northern half (two were placed just outside the savanna, to the east). We are expanding the Savanna to the east to enclose these two trees. The grass there was killed, and native

forb (flower) seeds were sowed in December (they need to overwinter to break their dormancy). **In late winter, we will sow native grass seeds there as well (they don't need overwintering).**

OHAC Pond Buffer Strip: Did some weeding. Several of the plants moved from Conboy Trail and the Rain Gardens were moved here.

Clearing at NE of Pond: Several of the plants moved from the Rain Gardens were moved here. **There is a long-term plan to replace the illegally-planted bulbs with native plants.**

East Side of Pond: A few plants were moved to the opening in the middle of the east side of the pond. Two Scout projects (Girl Scout Bronze and Boy Scout Eagle) were completed to add boardwalks where the trail tends to be the wettest near the NE corner of the pond. Both projects were very well received by the community.

Oak/Hickory Woods: A Boy Scout Eagle project completed two goals here. One was to eliminate flooding of the trail near the western rain garden by trenching along the uphill side of the trail, to collect water and then move it through a pipe under the trail to the pond side. The other was to plant about 400 native plants of eight different species (see table at end) on the west side of the Thurston-Clague Trail, north of the bridge. While there, the Scouts also removed some buckthorn and honeysuckle near the pond. We also re-installed the kiosk that had been broken off when a tree fell on it the previous year. **We are hoping to get in a burn here next spring, conducted by Plantwise, LLC, to continue our battle against the buckthorn, honeysuckle and invasive ground covers. More info on the use of controlled burns is at <https://thurstonnaturecenter.info/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Controlled-Burns-in-Thurston-Nature-Center.pdf>**

The Hollow (low area west and south of the berm): Despite a 4th year with flooding, many of the trees, shrubs and other plants in the flooded area survived. Lots of buckthorn and honeysuckle are now at mature sizes and are producing seeds. **We will try to burn this area whenever it is possible to get a good burn, but because of usual dampness, we have been unsuccessful at getting this done. Absent a burn in the near future, we will need to do a cut and daub process on the invasives. Seeding of native grasses whenever we are able to burn off the leaf litter will provide better (drier) fuel for future burns.**

Peninsula: Many non-native black alder and buckthorn trees were removed along the north side of the peninsula, with elderberry shrubs and plums planted and seeds of several flower species sowed in their place.

Amphitheater to OHAC: Removed some black alder. **The goat area and the area between it and the pond should be burned to help kill the remaining buckthorn, honeysuckle and European spindle tree and allow sowing of more native species.**

Trails: Two community days were held to place wood chips on trails. Thank you, neighbors and friends!

Jim Vallem, 1/4/2026

SEEDS SOWED IN 2025

Germination Code	Sun: Full, Part, Shade	Moisture: Wet, Mesic (Medium) or Dry	Latin Name	Common Name	Oak Savanna (new section)	Pine Woods Amph to OHAC	North Prairie	South Prairie	Pond Edge - OHAC	Pond Edge - N. Peninula
A	F-P	WM-DM	Echinacea purpurea	Purple Coneflower	x	x	x	x		
A	F-P	M-D	Bouteloua curtipendula	Side Oats Grama*	x	x	x	x		
C(60)	F-P	WM-DM	Rudbeckia fulgida	Orange Coneflower*	x	x	x			
A	F-P-S	W-M	Elymus virginicus	Virginia Wild Rye	x	x				x
A	F-P	WM-D	Elymus canadensis	Canada Wild Rye	x	x				
C(60),M	F-P-S	M-D	Aquilegia canadensis	Columbine	x	x				
A	F-P	WM-DM	Bromus kalmii	Prairie Brome	x	x				
C(60)	F-P	W-DM	Symphyotrichum novae-angliae	New England Aster*	x			x		
C(30)	F-P	W-M	Asclepias incarnata	Swamp Milkweed	x				x	x
C(60)	F-P	WM-DM	Allium cernuum	Nodding Onion	x					
C(10),J,I	F-P	M-D	Amorpha canescens	Lead Plant	x					
F	F-P	WM-M	Anemone canadensis	Canada Anemone	x					
C(30)	F-P	M-D	Asclepias tuberosa	Butterfly Weed	x					
C(10),H,I	F-P	WM-D	Astragalus canadensis	Canada Milk Vetch	x					
C(60)	F-P	M-D	Blephilia ciliata	Downy Wood Mint	x					
C(10),H,I	F-P	M-D	Chamaecrista fasciculata	Partridge Pea	x					
A,I,J	F-P	M-D	Dalea purpurea	Purple Prairie Clover	x					
C(90)	F-P	W-DM	Galium boreale	Northern Bedstraw	x					
C(30)	F-P	M-D	Helianthus occidentalis	Western Sunflower	x					
C(60)	F-P	M-D	Liatris aspera	Button Blazing Star	x					
C(60),D	F-P-S	WM-D	Penstemon hirsutus	Hairy Beardtongue	x					
C(30)	F-P	WM-DM	Rudbeckia hirta	Black-eyed Susan	x					
C(60)	F	M-D	Ruellia humilis	Wild Petunia	x					
A	F-P-S	WM-DM	Symphyotrichum lateriflorum	Calico Aster	x					
A,G	F-P	M-D	Symphyotrichum oolentangiense	Sky Blue Aster	x					
C(10),H,I	F-P	M-D	Tephrosia virginiana	Goat's Rue	x					
A, D	F-P	W-DM	Pycnanthemum virginianum	Virginia Mountain Mint	x					
C(60)	F-P-S	DM-D	Anemone virginiana	Tall Thimbleweed*	x					
C(10),H,I	F-P	WM-M	Baptisia australis	Blue Wild Indigo*	x					
C(60)	F	WM-DM	Eryngium yuccifolium	Rattlesnake Master*	x					
A	F-P	M-D	Schizachyrium scoparium	Little Bluestem	x					
A,D,G	F-P	WM-D	Oenothera biennis	Common Evening Primrose	x					
A	F-P	WM-D	Monarda fistulosa	Wild Bergomot	x					
C(60),D	F-P	WM-M	Gentiana andrewsii	Bottle Gentian*		x			x	x
C(60), M	F-P	WM-D	Geum triflorum	Prairie Smoke*		x				
C(60),D	P-S	M-DM	Solidago caesia	Blue-Stem Goldenrod*			x			
C(60)	P-S	M-DM	Symphyotrichum cordifolium	Heart-Leaved Aster*			x			
E	F-P	WM-DM	Fraxinus pennsylvanica	Green Ash*			x			
A,D	F-P	W-WM	Helenium autumnale	Sneezeweed*					x	x
A	F-P-S	WM-DM	Carex muskingumensis	Palm Sedge*					x	x
C(1), H, I	F-P	WM-M	Senna hebecarpa	Wild Senna*						x

* Harvested by stewards

Germination Codes Used by Prairie Moon Nursery:

- A: Seed should germinate upon sowing in a warm location. No pretreatment is necessary.
- B: Hot water treatment
- C: (Number of stratifying days): Seeds germinate after a period of cold, moist stratification
- D: Seeds are very small or need light to naturally break dormancy and germinate
- E: In order to germinate, seeds need a warm, moist period followed by a cold, moist period
- F: Seeds need a cold, moist period followed by a warm, moist period followed by a 2nd cold, moist period
- G: Seeds germinate most successfully in cool soil
- H: Seeds need scarification
- I: Legume, Rhizobium Inoculum
- J: We remove the hulls from these legume seeds
- K: Hemiparasitic species which needs a host plant
- L: Plant fresh seed or keep moist
- M: Best planted outdoors in the fall
- N: Special seed treatment, indicated by the addition of blue or green dye (potassium nitrate), has been added to aid in germination. Best planted in spring when soil is warm.
- O: Seed needs nicking

Plugs planted west of the Thurston-Clague Trail in the Oak-Hickory Woods, North of the Bridge

Latin Name	Common Name	Quantity
<i>Ageratina altissima</i>	White Snakeroot	38
<i>Eurybia macrophylla</i>	Big Leaf Aster	38
<i>Fragaria virginiana</i>	Wild Strawberry	38
<i>Geranium maculatum</i>	Wild Geranium	76
<i>Potentilla simplex</i>	Common Cinquefoil	38
<i>Solidago caesia</i>	Bluestem Goldenrod	38
<i>Elymus canadensis</i>	Canada Wild Rye	76
<i>Elymus hystrix</i>	Bottlebrush Grass	76
	Total	418