



Trees, animals, birds, plants, forests, mountains, lakes and rivers — everything that exists in Nature are in desperate need of our kindness, of the compassionate care and protection of human beings. If we protect them, they in turn will protect us. - Amma

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Interesting Information from Our Readers



GreenFriends is a global grassroots environmental movement which promotes environmental awareness and local participation in conservation efforts throughout the world.

GreenFriends is one of the projects of [Embracing the World](#), a not-for-profit international collective of charities founded by internationally known spiritual and humanitarian leader, Mata Amritanandamayi (Amma)

To join the Pacific Northwest GreenFriends Litter Project, write Karuna at karunap108@comcast.net

PNW Gardening

Spring Flowers in Butchart Gardens, Victoria, BC by Joanne



PNW Gardening



PNW Gardening

What's Blooming by Kothai in Bellevue



PNW Gardening



Nature

Burrowing Owls by Cindy Knoke

Burrowing Owls are “a species of special concern,” in Southern California, where much of their natural habitat has been destroyed by development. Petitions are being submitted to the state to change their status to endangered.



Nature

Burrowing owls nest underground to hide from raptors and raise their young. People and organizations all over California are setting up underground Burrowing Owl boxes to help shelter and protect these adorable owls. It is a rare thrill to see them out of the boxes curious about the human who is photographing them! These guys were being sheltered by The Big Bear Zoo & Rehabilitation Center.



[Local Feathers](#)

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

Greenbelt Restoration Work Parties: March 20 - April 16, 2019

by Karuna



From Spring of 2017 through Autumn of 2018, students from the University of Washington's Introduction to Environmental Science class worked in our restoration site. The students were required to do three hours of volunteer work during the quarter, so their needs and ours matched very well. In November of 2018, I was dismayed to learn that the instructor was retiring at the end of the quarter, and the future of the course was uncertain. That class had been our primary source of volunteers.

Losing those volunteers has been a good chance to practice taking the attitude "What you need will be provided." I also kept in mind a line adapted from the movie, *Field of Dreams*— "If you build it, he (they) will come."

In mid-November 2018, DocuSign, a corporate group did our fall planting. On Martin Luther King Day, we had a sizable work party. In February 2019, my neighbor John and I worked together to rescue a shrub that a massive branch from a pine tree branch had fallen on. We also had two winter work parties where the participants consisted primarily, or exclusively, of team leaders.

As spring came, I began to get worried because I didn't know how we were going to get volunteers. Blackberry shoots, bindweed and other invasive plants were emerging from the ground. I started working in the site on my own and thoroughly enjoyed the work, but I knew I couldn't do everything that needed to be done by myself. In addition to trusting that what I needed would be provided, this was an opportunity to practice staying focused on what I was doing in the moment rather than being distracted and/or brought down by obsessing about the enormity of the whole task.

One day in mid-March, Lillie, a woman whom I had seen on the Hanford Stairs numerous times, stopped and talked

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

debris from the fallen pine tree branch and scattered it on an area where I had removed a drying rack.



The second time we worked together, we cut up debris on another drying rack and took it to The Rack Zone, a place we are beginning to prepare as a planting area.



Lillie cutting up dried debris



Mycole

A week or so after Lillie started working with me, a young man walked up to me as I was working near the stairs. His name is Mycole and he wanted to work with me once or twice a week. The first time he came, we removed wood chips from around the plants in two planting areas. The next time, we started taking apart a large drying rack, cutting up the debris and taking it to the Rack Zone. The last time during this time period, we finished clearing an area I will describe later.

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

The debris pile in the photos below is the one that Mycole, Lillie and I worked to dismantle. The first photo shows what it looked like when we began. The second photo shows what it looks like now. We will eliminate it fully in the near-future.



In March, I applied to be a community partner in the Carlson Center's (University of Washington) service-learning program. They help match students who need volunteer opportunities as part of their course work with community partners who need help. Students in their program work three hours a week throughout the quarter, unlike the three-hour requirement the Introduction to Environmental Science students had. I hoped the Carlson Center's service-learning students would become our much-needed volunteers.

My application was accepted. This quarter we have four service-learning students. They are part of an English Composition course that is focusing on the Environment. It is fun to work with them and nice to have the continuity from week to week. Shirley, one of our most active team leaders, and I lead their weekly work parties.

During their first two service-learning experiences, the students focused on clearing weeds and grass from an area that is near the entrance to the restoration site. They also moved a big pile of ivy and tree branches from that area to a different part of the site. As each patch of ground was cleared, it was covered with wood chips. The students also cut up a big branch that had fallen on top of a large shrub during a wind or snow storm.



Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

When we started the project, the area looked like this:

Before:



The transformation in the land after the students worked on it for the two sessions was remarkable. Mycole and I finished that section two days after the second service-learning work party. What a difference it makes to be greeted by this sight when walking towards the entrance to our Greenbelt site:

After:



I'm thoroughly enjoying working with our new volunteers and with the volunteers who have been committed to this project for a long time. What we need is definitely being provided.

If you live in the Seattle area and are interested in attending one of our events, our next public work party is Saturday, May 4 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. You can get more information and/or sign up at <https://seattle.greencitypartnerships.org/event/16055/>.

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

Spring Beauty in the Greenbelt Restoration Project (Beacon Hill, Seattle)



Entrance

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



Red Flowering Currant



Tulip peaking through the Red Flowering Currant shrub (near Entrance)



Oregon Grape

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Salmonberry

Red Huckleberry Shrub Awakening



March 29



March 30



March 30

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



April 4



April 5



April 5

Fern Awakening

This fern was completely covered by blackberry vines and had been for decades. The blackberry vines were cut down on March 4. This is what happened after it was discovered under the debris.



March 11



March 28

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April 5



April 12



April 19



April 26

Trees



Cedar



Douglas Fir



Hemlock

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Alder



Sitka Spruce



Grand Fir



Oak

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Shrubs and Ground covers



Pacific Ninebark



Fringecup



Mock Orange



Pearly Everlasting



Vine Maple



Bald Hip Rose



Roemer's Fescue



Nodding Onion



Snowberry

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Elderberry



Oceanspray



Salal



Twinberry



Indian Plum



Goatsbeard



Wild Ginger



Kinnikinnick



Early Blue Violet

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Thimbleberry



Black Currant



Orange Huckleberry

We also have Trailing blackberry, Red columbine, Deer ferns, Bracken ferns, Lady ferns, Serviceberry, Dewey sedge, Slough sedge, Red twig dogwood, Hazelnut trees, Pacific bleeding heart, Spreading wood fern, Skunk cabbage, Coltsfoot, Pacific rhododendron, Oregon stonecrop, Sea thrift, Nootka rose, Piggyback, Evergreen huckleberry, Bunchberry, Coastal strawberry, and Davidson's Penstemon on the site. All of the plants shown in this article are native.



You are welcome to visit the site or participate in our work parties. The next work party is Saturday May 4 from 10-1. For more information or to register for the event go to:

<https://seattle.greencitypartnerships.org/event/16055>

PNW Litter Project

Litter Pick-up in Panama by Bruce Fast



One seva I love doing is picking up garbage because I can do it almost anywhere, even when travelling. Recently I travelled to Panama and Costa Rica. In Panama, I stayed at the eco-friendly Palmar Eco Lodge on Red Frog Beach, mainly to take Yoga classes and eat healthy food.

On arrival, I took a stroll along the beach which I found to be cleaner than most beaches I had seen thus far. I did notice a few items I wanted to clean up. When I got back to the lodge and had settled in one of the beach chairs, a volunteer at the lodge asked if I wanted to come on a walk to clean up the beach. Well, how could I say, "No." As we walked along, picking up small pieces of plastic, I told the volunteer that I did this almost every day. I gave the same explanation to the few who, upon our return, were impressed with how much garbage we had collected. As I often do, I made a sculpture inspired by some of the pieces we had collected.

A few days later, I stopped at Casa Amma in nearby Puerto Viejo, Costa Rica. I had no idea who lived there but seeing it on the map, I knew I had to stop and say, "Hello." Iswari and Leo welcomed me and as we visited in the beautiful garden, we remembered we knew each other from the seva desk in the Seattle programs. Iswari told me how she and others had been able to serve thousands of meals with Amma's help in Puerto Viejo. Although I wasn't going to be there for the next Amma kitchen, Iswari arranged for me to serve food at another soup kitchen. Interestingly, in the weeks before arriving at Casa Amma, I had had a strong desire to do some seva with the indigenous people of this area, so it was wonderful to finally get the chance to do so.

I was overwhelmed by the intensity of Amma's love I felt in this place and in this community. Om Namah Shivaya, Casa Amma.



PNW Litter Project

Litter Stats

In April 2019, **31** Litter Project members and their friends picked up litter for **57.6** hours. (Average **1.86** hours; Median **1** hour; Range **2** minutes to **10** hours) We have picked up litter for **10,539** hours since the project began in July of 2011.



TerraCycle Stats

GreenFriends has sent them **355,724** cigarette butts, **394** drink pouches, **1,362** cereal bag liners, and **4,147** energy bar wrappers since 2013. [TerraCycle is an organization that recycles items which are normally considered unrecyclable.]

Requests

Needed: Photos and Articles on any GreenFriends Topic for the PNW GreenFriends Newsletter.

Wanted: Normally Unrecyclable Articles to Send to TerraCycle for Recycling

Please save the items below and bring them to Amma's Seattle programs. Drop them off at the local GreenFriends table (Litter Project/ Greenbelt Restoration Project).

- toothpaste tubes and caps
- outer tooth brush packaging
- toothpaste cartons
- toothbrushes
- empty floss containers
- energy bar wrappers
- cereal bags
- drink pouches
- cigarette butts

We will send these normally unrecyclable items to TerraCycle to be recycled. If you live in the Seattle area you can give them to Visala or Karuna anytime.

Interesting Information from Our Readers

From Shobana in Shoreline:

[Our campaign to ban plastic bags in Bali](#)

From Priya in Seattle:

[Oliver Sacks: The Healing Power of Gardens](#)

[Selecting Plants for Pollinators](#)

From Lin in Bellevue:

[Meet the Super Dogs Protecting Mother Earth](#)

From Eileen in Seattle:

[India Leading in Solving Plastic Pollution Problem- New Israeli Invention May Help](#)

[The Plastic Cow Project](#)

From Karuna in Seattle:

[The Seabin Project- Seabin v5](#)

[The Seabin Project- Recycling and Sustainability](#)

From Mira in South Africa:

[The Plastic Project South Africa Facebook Page](#)

