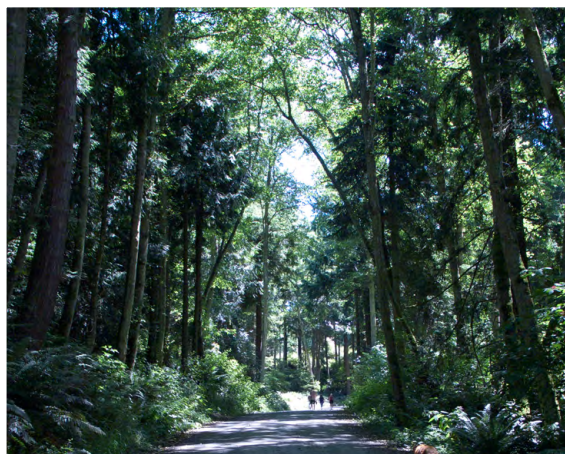




Nature on its own is indeed beautiful and clean. The hills and rivers do not need us to clean them. In fact it is nature's water which cleans us; it is trees which purify air for us. Because we have littered, we have spoilt its pristine beauty.

Amma



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Excerpt from Amma's New Year's Message

"Amma has a request: When we make our New Year's resolutions, we also need to make a resolve to show compassion towards nature. Every small effort we make towards environmental conservation is precious because it actually aids in sustaining life. It is more precious than any kind of material wealth. Through our schools, we can awaken in our children an interest in protecting nature, just like the interest we've awoken in them for amassing money." To read more of the message go to: <http://www.amritapuri.org/17075/14newyear.aum>

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

For Organic Gardening and Permaculture write Maheswari at: PNWGreenFriends@google.com

For The Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration Project write:

Ananya ammasananya@comcast.net and Kalavathi annecrory@gmail.com

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration Project December Work-Party Report

by Kalavathi

GreenFriends Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration Project had another fun and successful work party at Magnuson Park on December 21st. As well as continuing to weed out the invasive plants (primarily Himalayan Blackberry), we also finally got to actual TREE PLANTING!! With the guidance of our trusty Green Seattle guide "Tom", we successfully planted 40-something native trees and bushes. Tom showed us how the plants and trees we are planting are all valuable to the native fauna for food, shelter, etc. In the last 10 years, this forest area has gone from being more or less one big blackberry bramble, to becoming a real thriving native habitat. As usual, there were tree frogs nearby to cheer us on as we worked. Please join us at the Freeway Park food forest in January or back at Magnuson Park in February!



January Work Party Invitation

Happy New Year from Tree Planting and
Habitat Restoration Project!!

The next work party for Freeway Estates,
will be January 12, 2-4. It will now be
the 2nd Sunday of the month

For more information contact Ananya
ammasananya@comcast.net



Worm Composting in Amritapuri

by Karuna

I first worked with the Amritapuri worm composting project the end of December 2012. It was located in a small house on the beach, between the Recycling Center and the Food Composting Center. You can see by the picture that the area that contained the worm beds was actually very small. They shared a lot of the building with the food composting project. (You can read about the Food Composting and the Worm Composting as it existed last year in <http://amma.org/sites/default/files/litterprojectnewsletterjan2013-2.pdf>)



When I arrived at Amritapuri this year I was eager to get back to the worms. I learned that they were in the process of moving to a much bigger facility about a mile south of the ashram. At some point they are going to have a machine that will separate the worms from the compost, but for now it is still being done by hand. They bring buckets of the compost that is ready to separate to the Amritapuri facility in the morning and once the worms have been harvested from the compost they are taken back to the new facility.

I wanted to see the new place, so one day walked there with one of the people who work in the project. The new facility is many, many, many times bigger than the old one.

The building is very long. On the right side are the worm beds. On the left is a compost pile that will be used for future worm beds. (The beds are made from the compost that is created by the food composting process. So they start with good compost even before the worms go in.) The worms work it further and create incredible compost.

(Worm compost is said to be the most potent and nutritious compost there is! The worms “produce a range of powerful plant growth hormones that supercharge the growth of plant roots, thus helping plants to flourish and be very resistant to disease and pests.” <http://www.amritapuri.org/activity/nature/compost/>)

There are already as many worm beds in the new facility as they had in the old one, yet there is a huge amount of space left to expand. Clearly they are going to multiply production at an impressive rate.

Worm Composting in Amritapuri

by Karuna



There are other projects on that land as well. The newest of the ashram's tulasi gardens is located there. Lakshmi, one of the ashram elephants was there the day I visited. They are building a big structure for the elephants. Once it is ready, then Ram will be coming to join Lakshmi!

I know a lot will change for the Worm Composting Project between now and the time I come back to Amritapuri. I have loved sitting outside listening to the sound of the waves on the beach while I work with the worms most mornings. I hope there will still be a job for me once they get their worm harvesting machine!

Here are some of my worms from this year! https://www.dropbox.com/s/elrkbgraz7ka3xn/20131226_094008.mp4

Nature/Garden Stories from Our Members

From Shobana in Seattle:

I went to the beach this afternoon and saw this beautiful “pool” of light reflected through the gray skies, clouds and mist. May 2014 be a light-filled year for you and all those you love....and for all beings!



From Geoff in Port Townsend:

I just moved my compost. I had put a few of those little composting worms (red wigglers?) in there, and when I started taking out the compost there were thousands of them. Amazing!

From Lin in Bellevue:

It's so surprising to see hummingbirds here in the Seattle area in Winter. That's because years ago Anna's Hummingbirds stopped migrating south with other birds, thanks to the availability of hummingbird feeders many people put out all year round. They need a prodigious amount of nectar to fuel those speedy metabolisms... so it's a crisis when we get below-freezing weather as we've had the last several days.



PNW Litter Project Report

Litter Project Story

From Gwendolyn in Burien :

My son Matthew has gotten into picking up litter on the way home from the bus stop, which is about three times a week. It is about a half a mile. So he picks up litter for about a half hour a week. He told me last night that he cannot walk past garbage without picking it up when he is walking home. It is a busy road and people see him doing it. I am hoping that this will inspire more people to remember to take care of our earth.



CNN Hero of the Year

Our May 2013 PNW GreenFriends newsletter contained the following report:



CNN Hero Chad Pregracke has helped pick 67,000 tires, 218 washing machines, 19 tractors, 12 hot tubs, four pianos and almost 1,000 refrigerators out of rivers during the last 15 years. He is sometimes called the "Rivers' Garbageman". His philosophy is: "The garbage got into the water one piece at a time, and that's the only way it's going to come out."

Article and video: http://www.cnn.com/2013/04/18/us/cnnheroes-pregracke-rivers-garbage/index.html?hpt=hp_t5

Recently Chad was made CNN Hero of the Year! He lives on a barge with his 12 person crew and goes from place to place to do the work. He has held 700 work parties on 23 rivers. 70,000 volunteers have joined in the work.

The CNN article goes on to say that "Pregracke has launched a floating classroom barge where his staff educates high school students and teachers about the damages of pollution on river ecosystems. In 2007, his nonprofit implemented a program to plant 1 million trees along river shorelines to protect and restore the natural environment. The group is halfway to its goal."

PNW Litter Project Report - cont



Each of the top 10 CNN Heroes won \$50,000. As the Hero of the Year he won \$250,000 more to continue his work. He said he will give \$10,000 to each of the other top 9 because he was moved and amazed by all they are doing around the world. To learn more go to: http://us.cnn.com/2013/11/19/world/hero-of-the-year/index.html?hpt=hp_bn1

Stories like this one can inspire us as we continue on in our own journey to serve Mother Nature.

PNW Litter Project Stats:

As of November 30, 2013, we had **347** members.

Thirty-two members reported picking up **124.38** hours of litter during December 2013. Those members average pick up was: **3.9 hours**; the range was **2 minutes to 36 hours** and the median was **1 hour**.

Members of the project have picked up litter for **4626** hours since the project began in July 2011.

TerraCycle has credited us with turning in **132,834** cigarette butts in 2013.

Coming Next Month!

Article about Amritapuri Rudraksha Seed Project



The next newsletter will likely also contain information about the Electrical and Metal Recycling Fundraiser!