

## Native Plant Stewardship Training for Pierce and Thurston Counties

The Washington Native Plant Society (WNPS) is offering a new, six-week Native Plant Stewardship Program for Pierce and Thurston Counties in Spring 2016. This no-cost program combines classroom learning with field trips to educate stewards about the region's native plants and their roles in local ecosystems and how to use this knowledge to protect and restore these ecosystems. Learning goals of the program include:



- An overview of lowland Puget Sound ecosystems and their environmental settings.
- Identification of key native plants and plant communities of the south Puget Sound.
- An understanding of many of the key roles native plants play in ecosystem functions, such as wildlife habitat, water quality, and more.
- Identification of important noxious and invasive weeds and methods for their control.
- Principles and practices of ecological restoration, including hands-on experience in planting, invasive species management, and other practices.
- How to work individually and as part of a team to maintain and restore habitats for native plants and wildlife. We will include overviews of local conservation organizations and public agencies that need your help!



Perhaps most importantly, stewards will acquire the tools and resources to continue learning and contributing long after the course has been completed.



Stewards will receive a minimum of 30 hours of direct training, supplemented by selected readings and videos for home study. The program schedule is as follows:

- Classroom sessions: five Tuesdays (April 5, 12, 26; May 3, 10); one Monday (April 18), from 6:30-9:00 PM. Classes will be held at the Tacoma Nature Center, 1919 So. Tyler Street, Tacoma.
- Field trips: Three Saturdays (April 9, 30; May 7). Plan on a full day!

Prospective stewards must be members of the Washington Native Plant Society (This is easy! Visit [www.wnps.org](http://www.wnps.org)), and must commit to providing 30 hours of volunteer service to approved local conservation and restoration projects within 12-18 months following completion of the course. The Pierce Conservation District, Nisqually Land Trust, Center

for Natural Lands Management, and other local conservation organizations and land trusts will assist with the training and have many volunteer projects where stewards can join in.

Stewards must apply by April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 (No kidding!). For more information and to apply, contact Jim Evans, State Stewardship Program Manager, Washington Native Plant Society: 206-678-8914 or [jimevans@centurytel.net](mailto:jimevans@centurytel.net).

