Plant Species Added to Whelan Cemetery Plant Lists

by Eric Anderson and Kim Sarff

Great news everyone! Ben Legler, University of Idaho Stillinger Herbarium Collections Manager, is producing a comprehensive, specimen-based (and thereby verifiable) catalog of the plants at Whelan Cemetery.

Eric Anderson, PPF Vice President, arranged for Ben to visit Whelan Cemetery in May. Ben collected 14 specimens and found 19 species not on the Washington Native Plant Society (WNPS) plant list for the site. In early June he identified and added another 8 species.

He plans to visit Whelan again later this summer as well as early spring 2021 to observe both late-season and early-season plants.

PPF is happy to work with Ben and the Stillinger Herbarium.

There would be tremendous potential from obtaining similar catalogs for other prairie remnants, not just to know what is on each, but also as baseline data for more in-depth ecological and bio-geographical studies.

– Ben Legler, Collections Manager,
UI Stillinger Herbarium

Species Ben Legler added to Washington Native Plant Society's Whelan plant list

Anthriscus caucalis – burr chervil
Arrhenatherum elatius – oat-grass
Bryonia alba – white bryony
Calochortus elegans var. elegans – elegant cat's ear
Camassia quamash – common camas
Cardamine hirsuta – hairy bittercress
(or possibly *C. oligosperma)*
Claytonia perfoliata – miner's lettuce
Claytonia rubra – red miner's lettuce
Collinsia parviflora – small-flowered blue-eyed Mary
Collomia linearis – narrow-leaf collomia
Draba verna – spring whitlow-grass
Erythronium grandiflorum – glacier lily
Fritillaria pudica – yellow bell
Holosteum umbellatum – jagged chickweed
Juncus sp. – rushes
Lithophragma parviflorum – small-flowered prairie-star
Lomatium simplex – nine-leaf biscuit-root
Microsteris gracilis – pink microsteris
Mnotia linearis – narrow-leaf montia
Myosotis micrantha – blue forget-me-not
Poa bulbosa – bulbous blue grass
Saponaria officinalis – bouncing-bet
Sisyrinchium idahoense – Idaho blue-eyed grass
Taraxacum officinale – common dandelion
Triteleia grandiflora var. grandiflora – blue umber lily
Valerianella locusta – corn salad
Veronica arvensis – field veronica

The Palouse Prairie Foundation promotes preservation and restoration of the Palouse Prairie ecosystem.

Palouse Prairie Foundation
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What's Happening at Whelan Cemetery

by Joan Folwell

Many of us enjoy a visit to Whelan Cemetery. It is a premier Palouse Prairie remnant containing over one-hundred native species, all within a short driving distance from both Pullman and Moscow. Whelan Cemetery was established in 1888. Burials continued there until the mid-1940s. The cemetery has been declared officially abandoned, having lost any city, county, or cemetery district affiliation. Through a program with the Washington Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation, the Palouse Prairie Foundation (PPF) was able to obtain authority for the site in 2013 with the goal to preserve and enhance it.

During the years of active service, relatives decorated graves with a variety of horticultural plants including rugosa roses, iris, narcissus, and lilacs. The lilacs have thrived over the last 132 years and have overgrown many grave sites and encroached into the native prairie.

Funded by a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2018 and 2019, the Palouse Conservation District attempted to reduce the lilac invasion. Last year they removed over 900 pounds of debris using loppers, but a lot more needs to be done.

During the past spring, PPF was alerted to grants available from the Washington Native Plant Society. PPF applied and was awarded $700 to help with the cost to remove more of the lilacs. The work will be done this fall between the end of September and the first snow flurries, after the plants are senescent. A professional service will be hired to cut down the lilacs at ground level with chain saws making the work go much faster. The debris will be carefully removed from the site. PPF members will paint glyphosate on the stubs to prevent regrowth. Some of the lilacs will be left to honor the intent of the pioneer families. The hope is that natives growing nearby, such as lupine, wild geranium, little sunflower, and native grasses, will be quick to recolonize the lilac beds.

Watch for appeals for your help next spring and summer to wage war on weeds and promote this restoration effort!

There is more information about Whelan Cemetery at the Washington Native Plant Society website under 2020 grant recipients and plant lists.

Photo by Kim Sarff

Photo by Kim Sarff

Update on the John Crock Native Pollinator Garden

by Elisabeth Brackney

The half-acre native prairie restoration site under the stewardship of the Palouse Prairie Foundation (PPF) is located along the Latah Trail along Highway 8 (Troy Highway) between Carmichael and Lenville Roads. To control a heavy infestation of weeds, PPF had it sprayed with herbicide three times last year. After mowing the dead vegetation close to the ground and removing the cuttings, we spread a mixture of native grass seed last fall and covered it with weed-free straw mulch to carry it through the winter. Our thanks to the PPF members and volunteers who helped with spreading and raking the mulch on five days between November 8 and 20.

This spring, PPF purchased 15 MacKenzie's willows (*Salix prolixa*) from the University of Idaho Pitkin Forest Nursery, which Elisabeth Brackney planted on April 7 in the wet swale along the south edge of the property. Joan Folwell planted 20 redosier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*) saplings between those willows on April 10 and put plant protectors around the seedlings.

The first plants to emerge in large patches this spring were three herbaceous species: native narrowleaf miner's lettuce (*Montia linearis*), introduced corn salad (*Valerianella locusta*), and introduced corn gromwell (*Buglossoides arvensis*). There were also smaller numbers of spring draba (*Draba verna*), field pennycress (*Thlaspi arvense*), and German-madwort (*Asperugo procumbens*), all introduced species. The native grasses we planted were slower to emerge and unfortunately did not achieve even coverage on parts of the field.

Corn gromwell is very invasive, spreading by prolific seeds, and is hard to eradicate. Elisabeth decided to pull it by hand before it developed seeds, as it comes out easily with taproots intact. She pulled three large trash bags full in May. That eliminated all the corn gromwell in the field, except for a lot of predominantly tiny plants at the base of the embankment along the bike trail. She went back to pull those plants in June, so that all the corn gromwell has been eliminated for this growing season and hopefully will be greatly reduced next year.

The board members were considering spraying the site with the broadleaf herbicide Milestone, but in consultation with the Latah Soil and Water Conservation District, they were advised to avoid spraying a newly seeded field, as new grass seedlings often are susceptible to any herbicide treatment.

Instead, Elisabeth flagged the camas plants, willows, and dogwoods. PPF hired MRT from Pullman to mow the field and remove the cuttings in late May. They did a good job of leaving the site looking bare of weeds.

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Photo by David Hall

Joan Folwell, James Sayre and James Riser planting camas, September 2017.

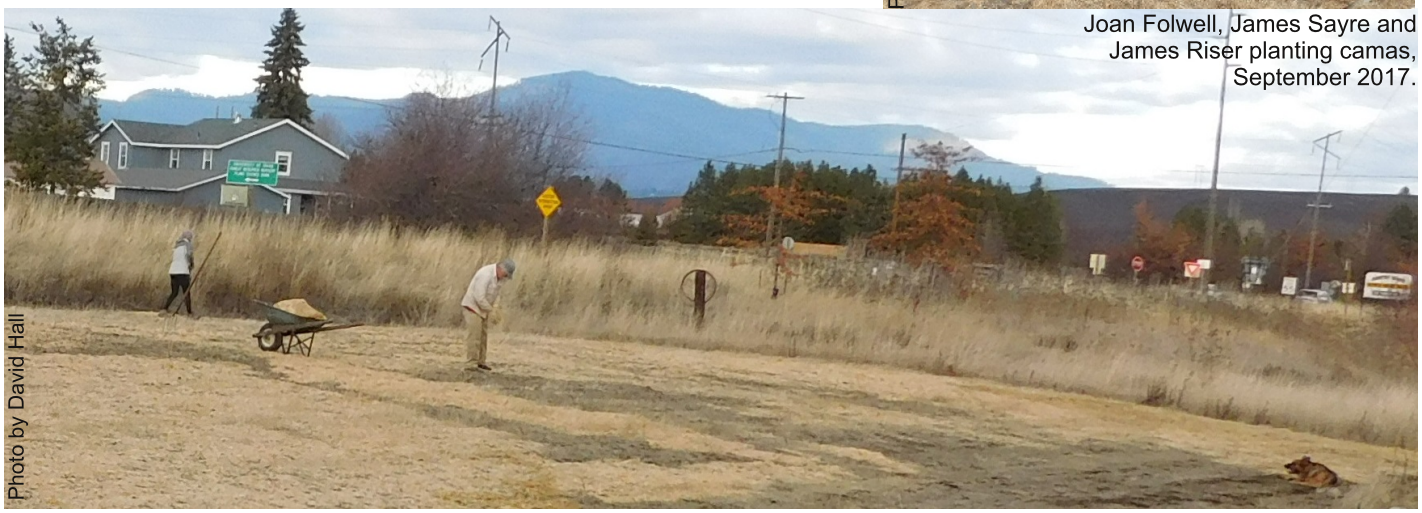

Photo by David Hall

Elisabeth & Kevin Brackney and Sasha spreading mulch at the John Crock Native Pollinator Garden, November 2019.

John Crock Native Pollinator Garden
continued

Unfortunately, the areas that were not mowed are carpeted with *Ventenata dubia*, a very invasive annual grass. Elisabeth took it upon herself to pull all the Ventenata from the flagged area with camas on June 10 and spread some native grass seed on bare soil spots. However, the strip of Ventenata along the shrub border is too extensive for hand-pulling.

There is a lot of prickly lettuce (*Lactuca serriola*) coming up, as well as some Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) and other weeds. Another round of mowing is planned for the near future. We are still trying to come up with a solution to the Ventenata problem, which may have to involve herbicide application.

Common camas at the John Crock Garden, May 2020.

Thank you Scott Cornelius, Sherry Dodson, Matt Kitterman, Ula Moody, Charlotte Omoto, Joe Pallen, Susan Rounds and Palermo, Eric Anderson, Elisabeth and Kevin Brackney and Sasha, Joan Folwell, David Hall and Tandy, and Kim Sarff for spreading mulch over the John Crock Native Pollinator Garden last November.

A special thank you to Elisabeth for working so diligently on maintaining a weed-free environment for the prairie plants at the Crock Garden.

Appaloosa Museum and Heritage Center Mini-Grant Awarded
by David Hall

The new Native Plant/Education Garden will be in the area between the back door of the Museum and the fence to the pasture that houses an Appaloosa horse during the summer months. The garden, combining the history of the Appaloosa, the Chief Joseph Trail, and the Palouse, will showcase native Palouse Prairie plants and a walking path with educational signage throughout. This outdoor exhibit will make connections between regional histories and historical and contemporary preservation efforts. The garden also has a potential to be an outdoor meeting space for classes and groups. The Palouse Prairie Foundation will provide funds for purchasing native plant plugs, preparing the site for planting, and controlling weeds.

Native plantings at the Appaloosa Museum, June 2020.

How to Apply for a PPF Mini-grant

The overarching mission of the Palouse Prairie Foundation (PPF) is to promote the preservation and restoration of native Palouse Prairie ecosystems in Whitman County, Washington, and Latah County, Idaho. To this end, the PPF supports efforts to:

- Raise public awareness about plants and animals (and other biota) found in the prairie and the ecological functions that they carry out to sustain it
- Raise public awareness about issues threatening the prairie as well as opportunities to conserve it
- Develop educational materials and curricula for prairie conservation
- Conduct research
- Restore degraded prairie lands locally
- Increase seed for use in local restoration

In 2008, PPF initiated a mini-grant program in support of their mission. This program provides small grants to students, teachers, conservationists, landowners, and others interested in the conservation and restoration of Palouse Prairie. Monetary awards range from $50 to $1,000.

Mini-grants may be used by:

- Students for research to report on environmental or social issues that affect prairie conservation/restoration efforts in the region
- Educators developing teaching material about the Palouse Prairie
- Landowners wishing cost-share on restoration efforts

To apply, complete and submit an application (available online on the PPF website).

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In the News

Pioneer history, beauty to be preserved, **Moscow-Pullman Daily News**, May 17, 2020.

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