

Herbaugh, Melinda

From: Wallis Bolz <wallisbolz@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 24, 2017 4:30 PM
To: PRC
Subject: project number 3020338: habitat

To whom it may concern:

It is with pleasure that I read the habitat assessment prepared for Velmeir by Jim Keany of ESA. In particular, I am gratified by this statement:

"Development of the site will remove a dense infestation of several weed species - Himalayan blackberry, Japanese knotweed, and English ivy. In addition, the landscaping plan for the proposed development includes a mix of native and ornamental groundcover, shrubs and trees that will provide some habitat for urban wildlife, particularly resident and neotropical migrant songbirds. Regular maintenance of the site will ensure that noxious weeds do not invade and dominate the landscape, such as the site's current condition."

The slope above Dewey Place has been planted by City People's with native ornamental groundcover and shrubs. However, as noted by Keany, native plants give way to invasive species at the northern end of the City People's portion of the slope, where it abuts an SDoT property. As noted, this transition to SDoT property is dominated by English ivy, Japanese knotweed and Himalayan blackberry, invasive species that thrive in wet soil. The SDoT property is host to an impressive canopy of Himalayan blackberry and the Mad P community garden. This property abuts a Seattle Parks & Recreation property, which is host to a declining canopy of Big Leaf maple plus some vigorous *Oemleria cerasiformis*, Beaked hazelnut, native sedges, Mahonias nervosa and aquifolium, Scouler willow, Hawthorn, Apple and invasive species Himalayan blackberry and English laurel.

As Keany notes above, **this is a habitat restoration waiting to happen!** SDoT requires a right-of-way improvement of Velmeir, and I cannot imagine a better or more appropriate right-of-way improvement than the restoration of the entire slope--Dewey Place and the city of Seattle properties. Set aside 25 feet for a buffer on Dewey Place, join that to the SDoT and Park&Rec properties, and you have high-quality habitat, respite for both resident and neotropical migrant songbirds plus native insects and mammals. Did you notice the giant bumble bees?

I would like to point out that backyards and waste spaces are habitat, hence the National Wildlife Federation Backyard Habitat Program. If you state, as Keany does, that the City People's site has no habitat value because it is separated from the Washington Park Arboretum by East Madison Street and has not earned a WDFW designation, you pretty much dismiss as habitat any property that is not a managed park landscape. You also dismiss important connections to the south of East Madison Street, and you ignore how animals move through our urban landscape.

I have worked as a Green Seattle forest steward at the Alder Creek Natural Area since 2008. Restoration is a long process when one works entirely with volunteer labor. **Dollars expedite restoration**, and Velmeir has plenty of those. Let's put them to good use in the Dewey Basin. What a gift Velmeir can make to our community, restoration of high-quality habitat. In the Anthropocene, where abundance has given way to extinction, these efforts count. I look forward to working with Velmeir on this restoration. Thank you.

With best regards,
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