



ARTICLE

Planting Native Species to Improve Salmon Habitat

Golden Gate National Recreation Area (<https://www.nps.gov/goga/>), Point Reyes National Seashore (<https://www.nps.gov/pore/>)

By Natale Urquhart



Thirty-four volunteers in front of the planting site at Zanardi Ranch along Lagunitas Creek. Over time, native plants will help shade the creek, which can lower water temperature to make for the salmon's preferred, cooler environment.

WSP / NPS / Tara Blake

March 24, 2022 - Every year, [Watershed Stewards Program](https://ccc.ca.gov/what-we-do/conservation-programs/watershed-stewards-program/) (<https://ccc.ca.gov/what-we-do/conservation-programs/watershed-stewards-program/>) (WSP) Corpsmembers host a Watershed Awareness Volunteer Event during their term of service. These events bring the local community together to engage in various restoration activities and learn about watershed health. This year, WSP members Natale Urquhart and Tara Blake recruited volunteers from all over the Bay Area to pull invasive blackberry and plant native juncus grass, willow, maple, alder, and oak trees along Lagunitas Creek.

It's easy to see how increasing native plant cover is important for adding biodiversity, preventing erosion, increasing habitat for local pollinators, and carbon sequestration. However, one might not think of the many benefits that native plants provide for salmonid species. Once the native trees grow taller, they will begin to shade the creek, which can lower water temperature to make for the salmon's preferred, cooler environment. Additionally, riparian cover prevents evaporation, cleans the water, and keeps the stream flowing for longer by

increasing groundwater storage. That means the trees that were planted this winter could benefit local steelhead, Chinook, pink, and coho salmon years into the future!

Keep an eye out on the [Point Reyes \(https://www.nps.gov/pore/planyourvisit/calendar.htm\)](https://www.nps.gov/pore/planyourvisit/calendar.htm) and [Golden Gate \(https://www.nps.gov/goga/planyourvisit/calendar.htm\)](https://www.nps.gov/goga/planyourvisit/calendar.htm) park calendars if you want to get involved in similar events. Thank you to all the volunteers that came to help our local watershed!

For more information

- San Francisco Bay Area Network [Salmonid Monitoring webpage \(https://www.nps.gov/im/sfan/salmonids.htm\)](https://www.nps.gov/im/sfan/salmonids.htm)
- Pacific Coast Science & Learning Center [Coho & Steelhead webpage \(https://www.nps.gov/rlc/pacificcoast/coho-steelhead.htm\)](https://www.nps.gov/rlc/pacificcoast/coho-steelhead.htm)
 - [San Francisco Bay Area Coho and Steelhead Blog \(https://www.nps.gov/rlc/pacificcoast/coho-steelhead-blog.htm\)](https://www.nps.gov/rlc/pacificcoast/coho-steelhead-blog.htm)
- Contact Fishery Biologist [Michael Reichmuth \(https://cms.nps.gov/common/utilities/sendmail/sendemail.cfm?o=468CD8B39CD6A38386BE1AACF11ABEB94EBD489F4FF88B9049&r=/articles/000/coho-continue-recolonizing-pine-gulch-creek-after-long-hiatus.htm\)](https://cms.nps.gov/common/utilities/sendmail/sendemail.cfm?o=468CD8B39CD6A38386BE1AACF11ABEB94EBD489F4FF88B9049&r=/articles/000/coho-continue-recolonizing-pine-gulch-creek-after-long-hiatus.htm)

See more from the [Bay Area Nature & Science Blog \(https://www.nps.gov/rlc/pacificcoast/blog.htm\)](https://www.nps.gov/rlc/pacificcoast/blog.htm).



golden gate national recreation area

point reyes national seashore

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volunteer event

volunteers

restoration

salmonids

coho salmon

habitat restoration

Last updated: March 25, 2022

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