

Rithet's Bog - East Pond Restoration Project

Russ Pym

Work in the East Wetland area began in early 2016 when a wall of blackberry from the trailside was cleared to provide access and to survey the site. Volunteers are also working on the storm drain ditch on the outside of the trail, the trailside area, and further back in the pond. This article focusses on one facet of the work: the area close to the trail and visible to trail walkers.

The East Pond is 100 meters southwest from the Fir Tree Glen entrance to Rithet's Bog. It retains water all year round, but by 2017, had become overrun by two invasive species: hairy willowherb and reed canary grass. Hairy willowherb can be as damaging as purple loosestrife. Reed canary grass, a fodder crop, was planted when Rithet's Bog was farmed. Originally in early 2016, this restoration project's purpose was to eradicate the hairy willowherb. However, by late 2017, we realized that a series of exceptionally dry summers were severely affecting the park's wetlands. Since the East Pond is one of the few locations in Rithet's Bog that consistently remains wet through even extremely dry summers,



July 20, 2017

we decided to extend the project to include restoration of some shallow open water habitat to provide refuge for wetland species.

The first photo, from July 20, 2017 shows the trailside end of the pond before any invasive species removal. The entire surface of the pond was covered by a dense growth of hairy willowherb and reed canary grass.

The August 10 amplifolius photo shows the same area after removal of the hairy willowherb and some of the reed canary grass. However, as you can see in the foreground, the entire surface of the pond was still covered by a dense mat of reed canary grass rhizomes floating on top of the pond water and leaving no open water.

The March 11 photo shows shallow open water created by removing the floating mat of reed canary grass. We purposely chose a small area that is both accessible and a manageable size, since this is a trial project exploring unfamiliar



August 10, 2017

methods. The open water area will be planted with native aquatic plants, such as water smartweed and pondweeds (likely *Potamogeton amplifolius*), to provide cover for native animals such as three-spined stickleback, Pacific chorus frogs, and aquatic invertebrates. The ultimate goal is restoration of a functioning and self-sustaining ecosystem, not just creation of open water spaces.

The floating mat material and some pond sediment was used to restore the berm between the pond and creek, visible on the left edge of the photo. This berm will be planted with Cooley's hedge nettle and black twinberry, two native plants popular with hummingbirds that occur naturally in the immediate area.

If you are interested in helping us restore native habitat and ecosystems, we welcome new volunteers. Please view the events schedule on our Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/rithetsbog

Photos Russ Pym



March 11, 2020