

Urban Park Restoration in Tacoma, WA: Creating a Space for the Community Through Invasive Species Removal and Native Species Enhancement



Kyrstin Onaga, Aiden Downey, Samuel Knoblich, Benjamin Looney, Cameron Pauahilani Mendoza, Gibson Silagi, and Cynthia Updegrave

Spatial Context of Restoration

The Puget Park restoration site is located at the northmost tip of a 66-acre natural area in North Tacoma. Our restoration site is approximately 0.11 acres east of the Puget Creek. The site was divided into 5 polygons based on original vegetation, hydrology, and soil properties.

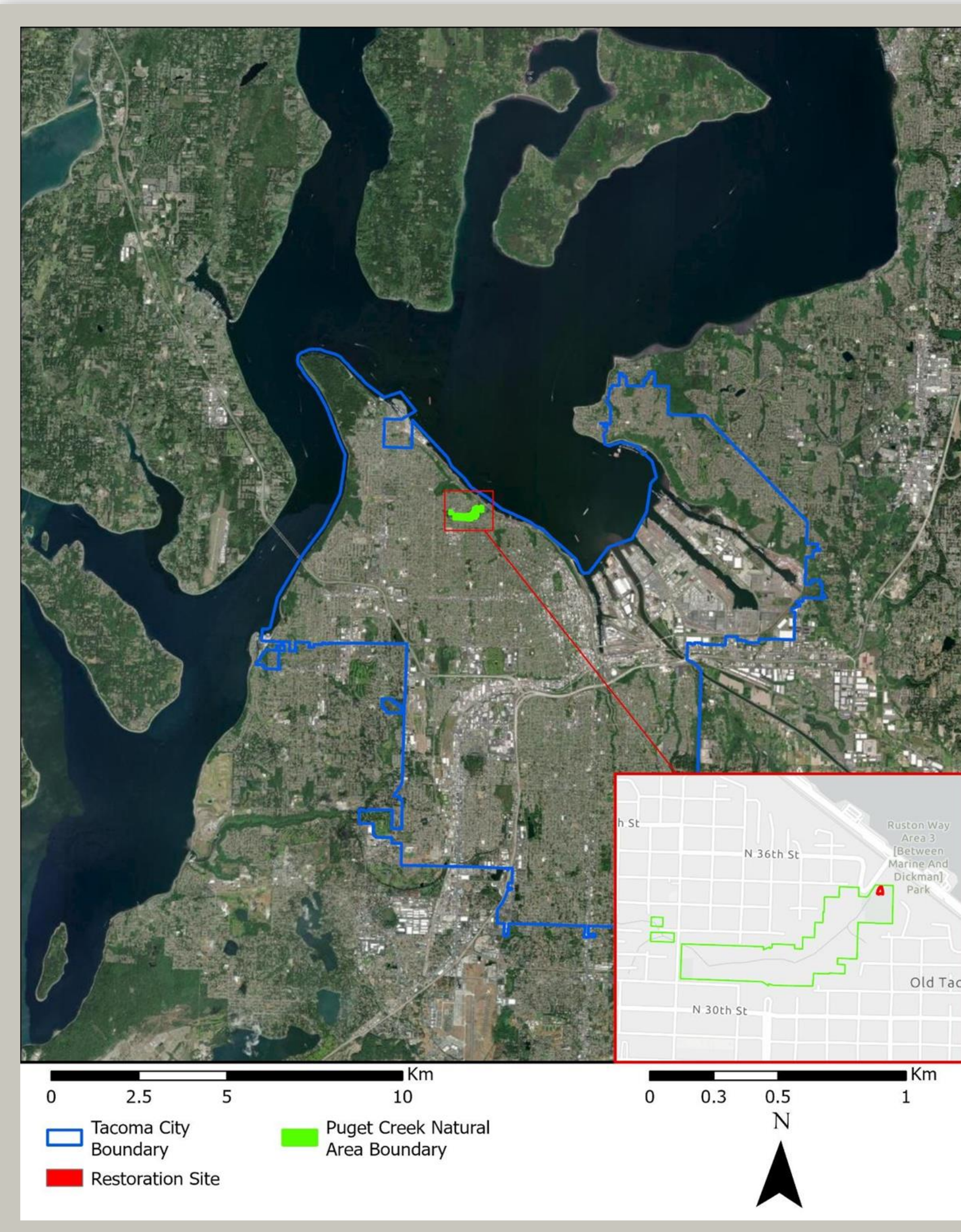


Figure 1. Spatial context of site within Tacoma, WA

Project Goals

- ❖ Reduce the presence of non-native species
- ❖ Enhance and introduce native vegetation
- ❖ Promote community use and stewardship
- ❖ Improve habitat function and productivity

Project Design

- Site assessment
- Project proposal & work plan
- Preliminary mobility work (Mulch pathways/ prune trees)
- Invasive removal
- Mulch 8 inches for plant installation
- Planting
 - Bare root
 - Transplant
 - Container
 - Live stake
- Baseline monitoring

Community Considerations

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

- Natural surveillance
- Natural access control
- Territorial reinforcement
- Maintenance

(Amberg 2018 & Ceccato 2019)



Figure 2. Mulched pathways



Figure 3. Ben (left) with a volunteer (right) removing Himalayan blackberry



Figure 4. Volunteer working on invasive removal

Accomplishments

- Removal of 95% \geq from the site
- Mulch application to enhance mobility
- Mulch application to suppress invasive recruitment
- Plant installation of 12 native species
- Enhancement of 4 native species
- Improved visibility
 - Pruning
 - CPTED plant installation
- Written Stewardship plan adapting community monitoring/engagement
- Two stewardship program candidates



Figure 5. Invasive thicket before removal



Figure 6. Collection of invasives removed



Figure 7. Post invasive removal

Short-term Outcomes

- Reduction of invasive species by natural competition
- Increased community-use
- Development of vegetative layers (groundcover, shrub, and tree)

Long-term Outcomes

- Development of a mature forested wetland typical of the PNW
- Self-sustaining ecosystem free of Himalayan blackberry, English ivy, English holly, and five leaf akebia
- Community stewards for the site

Conclusion

Urban parks act as a space that can bring a community together, but they can also be a breeding ground for crime if left un-managed. Therefore, the continual maintenance of Puget Park is important for the safety of the community as well as the long-term success of the site. MetroParks Tacoma offers a stewardship program for parks under their care. Puget Park currently has two stewardship candidates whom we hope will continue to offer the park maintenance and support. It will take many years before Puget Park will emulate an ideal forested wetland, but we hope it may be used to model future ecological restoration and act as a place that the community may enjoy in years to come.



Figure 8. Puget Park team (left to right): Cameron, Samuel, Aiden, Kyrstin, Benjamin, and Gibson

Citations

Amberg M. 2018. CPTED Site Survey. Seattle Police. <https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/SDOT/BridgeStairsProgram/bridges/NorthgatePedestrianBridge1.pdf>.

Ceccato V. 2019. Fieldwork protocol as a safety inventory tool in public places. *Criminal Justice Studies: A Critical Journal of Crime, Law and Society*. 32(2). Doi: 10.1080/09589236.2019.1601367.

Acknowledgements

A special thank you to Cynthia Updegrave and Maya Kahn Abrams for the guidance and educational opportunity you have provided; Chloe Nelson with MetroParks Tacoma for the support you have extended; Top Pot Doughnuts and Camp Colvos Brewing + Pizza Co. for the donations, and volunteers for the time you have offered.

