Restoring Maple Leaf Meadows

A neighborhood crew of volunteers are working to restore the tall grass meadows of Maple Leaf Reservoir Park to a more natural state by introducing plants native to the Northwest prairies of the south sound. These prairies are frequently located above the well-drained glacial deposits (sandy and gravelly) of Pierce and Thurston County. Coast Salish tribes maintained these prairies using fire to suppress trees and shrubs, promote many important food crops, and improve their hunting grounds.

The engineered soils above the Maple Leaf Reservoir are also well-drained and offer an opportunity to plant a native prairie meadow.

These native plants provide excellent forage for pollinators such as bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. We may also see our population of savanna sparrows increase with the added diversity of prairie grasses. Select areas of the unmowed tall grass meadows are planned for this restoration. Some plants that may be included are camas, native onions, ookow, wooly sunflower, sego lily, balsamroot, lupines, red columbine and bunchgrasses.

If Phase One is successful, the project will expand as donations and community funding allows.

This project is funded by Maple Leaf neighbors like you. For more information or to donate see the Seattle Parks Foundation website at https://www.seattleparksfoundation.org/project/maple-leaf-reservoir-park/

Photos courtesy of R Adam Martin and southsoundprairies.org