

# The Canopy

May 2026



# Celebrating our exciting progress!

Trees protected  
to date:

493,257

Trees planted  
to date:

7,064

Tree Connect  
Events to date:

224

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# Our Homes, Our Fears, and Another Wildfire Season



This is the fourth season Whatcom County has declared a drought emergency, and many of us are concerned again this spring about wildfire. Since May is National Wildfire Preparedness Month, we thought it might be a good time to share what we have learned from the latest science and studies about forests, wildland-urban interface communities (the intersection where humans and wild areas meet), and wildfire.

As an organization dedicated to planting and protecting native trees, we're always curious about the science behind the way wildfire is portrayed in the media. Wildfire is often explained as fire that has been fueled by excessive vegetation. The best way to protect communities from wildfire then, the thinking goes, must be to reduce the forests' fuel loads. The latest wildfire science, however, has made this argument a lot less clear.



# Our Homes, Our Fears... Cont.

## HOME IGNITION ZONE CHECKLIST

**SIMPLE STEPS FROM ROOF TO FOUNDATION TO MAKE A HOME SAFER FROM EMBERS AND RADIANT HEAT**

- Clean roofs and gutters of dead leaves, debris and pine needles that could catch embers
- Replace or repair any loose or missing shingles or roof tiles to prevent ember penetration
- Reduce embers that could pass through vents in the eaves by installing 1/8 inch metal mesh screening
- Clean debris from exterior attic vents and install 1/8 inch metal mesh screening to reduce embers
- Repair or replace damaged or loose window screens and any broken windows
- Screen or box-in areas below patios and decks with wire mesh to prevent debris and combustible materials from accumulating
- Move any flammable material away from wall exteriors - mulch, flammable plants, leaves and needles, firewood piles - anything that can burn
- Remove anything stored underneath decks or porches

**VISIT [FIREWISE.ORG](https://www.firewise.org) FOR MORE DETAILS**

Image by NFPA, with funding from USDA Forest Service

Several recent studies show that large-scale logging or thinning isn't the best way to protect communities from fire. In some cases, in fact, the evidence suggests that these practices may, over time, increase a community's vulnerability. Areas that have been logged or thinned are left with a degraded ecosystem that is more vulnerable to hotter, drier, and windier conditions, which makes them more susceptible to repeated wildfires when the vegetation returns.

But there is one area of agreement in this conversation: Homes are safest when they have been hardened against wildfire.

Most homes that succumb to wildfires are not engulfed by walls of flames or ignited by nearby trees. They are ignited by embers that wind has carried and dropped into a gutter or the mulch in the flower bed. Home hardening reduces these points of vulnerability and prevents embers entering homes and igniting flammable materials. Home-hardening can be

complemented by creating defensible space around the circumference of the building, which involves removing dead flammable materials, thinning unhealthy trees and other plants, and pruning low-hanging tree branches.

Home-hardening doesn't have to be a lengthy or even expensive process. A small amount of effort can have a major impact on your home's ability to avoid damage in the event of a wildfire without removing the trees that beautify your space, reduce your stress, provide shade and reduce your cooling bills. See the checklist above and visit [Firewise.org](https://www.firewise.org) for more information!



# Partnering with WWU Students for May Events

## May 16th - WWU Miyawaki Forest Trail-Building & Invasives Removal Work Party

The poster features a central illustration of a forest path with trees and a deer fence. At the top, the L.E.A.D. logo is displayed with the text 'Learning Environment Action Discovery'. The main title 'TRAIL INSTALLATION EVENT' is written in a large, blue, arched font. Below the illustration, the date '16 MAY' is prominently shown in a blue box, along with the time '9:00-12:00'. The location '802 IVY TERRACE ST.' is also listed. A call to action reads: 'Join us in removing invasives, planting native plants, and building the new trail.' At the bottom, there is a QR code labeled 'SIGN UP NOW!' and a list of funding partners including the City of Bellingham, Washington Trails Association, and the Sustainability, Equity, & Justice Fund. The text 'QUESTIONS? EMAIL US AT: LEAD@WWU.EDU' is at the very bottom.

Bellingham's first ever Miyawaki Forest was planted on Earth Day, 2023, just north of the WWU campus by a coalition of organizations led by WMTP, WWU L.E.A.D., and Bellingham Parks & Recreation. WWU students in the L.E.A.D. (Learning, Environment, Action, Discovery) program have stewarded the forest's successful development through fence maintenance, monitoring plant growth, and removing invasive weeds. In addition to impressive growth, the forest has also reached some important milestones in its first three years:

- The trees and shrubs have grown enough that they no longer need to be protected by a deer fence.
- WMTP and A1 Design Build collaborated to design and install a permanent interpretive sign and a natural wood bench to enhance the experience of visitors to the forest and help them gain a better appreciation of the potential for Miyawaki forests in the urban environment.

The next step for the forest will occur on May 16th! WWU L.E.A.D. is coordinating a community work party 9am-12pm to install a new trail extension and remove invasive weeds so the native species in the forest can continue developing into a thriving habitat. Whether you prefer to contribute to trail-building or weeding, you're invited to join us at this fun and positive community event! Please [click here](#) to find out more and sign up!



# Saturday, May 30th



## *Arboretum Day*

Arboretum Day celebrates the Sehome Arboretum. It's a free, public event that is organized by the WWU Ecological Restoration Club and hosted at the WWU Outback Farm Outdoor Classroom. This will be their second year holding the event. There will be a restoration volunteer work party hosted by Bellingham Parks & Recreation, interpretive hikes, engagement with local organizations (including WMTP!), arts and crafts workshops, live music, snacks, and storytelling. View the full schedule and how you can participate at the link below!

**More info!**



# May 31st - Ivy Removal Work Party



On May 31st, for our third year running we'll be supporting WWU L.E.A.D seminar students to host an ivy removal work party to save trees. This event will focus on removing ivy along the South Bay Trail, just down the hill from the WWU campus. As part of their experiential requirements for the seminar, students will be publicizing the event and recruiting volunteers, managing registrations, and leading the event. WMTP will be there to provide guidance and support volunteers in their ivy-removal efforts. Hats off to these students for working hard to bring people together and take good care of our community and environment!

[Sign up](#)



# That's a Wrap on Spring Tree Planting!



On Saturday, April 18th, we got an early start on Earth Day celebrations with the help of 18 volunteers at Jensen Family Forest Park for our last tree-planting work party of the season. They added a nice round total of 100 new seedlings to our forest-expansion project, bringing the total planted by WMTP volunteers and WCC crew working with WMTP this spring to nearly 700 new seedlings for Whatcom County! What a tree-rific finale to a stellar planting season! Thank you, volunteers!

We were honored to be joined at this event by six members of the Jensen family across three generations! We're grateful to the Jensen family for working with us on this project, stewarding the park for decades, and contributing it to the community. Shout-out to Whatcom County Parks and Recreation, and Whatcom Land Trust for their ongoing stewardship of the park and coordinating with us to make the planting project a reality! Thank you as well to employee team members from Regal Cinema in Barkley Village for choosing this event for their service project! And of course, a huge thank you to all our volunteers and donors whose continuing support makes this progress possible!

# A Super Earth Day in Blaine



This Earth Day we partnered with Superfeet and the City of Blaine to kick off the effort to free the trees of Lincoln Park from invasive English ivy! Thank you to the 23 Superfeet employees who chose this event for their Earth Day Awesome Hours and did incredible work removing yards and yards of ivy vines to free 128 trees! Thank you as well to the Blaine Public Works staff members who helped us coordinate and facilitate the event! We're immensely grateful for these community partnerships and how much we can accomplish for the forests of Whatcom County when we come together.

**Event Photos**

# Gratitude for Extra Earth Week Support



Thank you to Sea Witch Botanicals for their generous ongoing support, which included donating all their profits from Earth Day sales to WMTP!

Thank you as well to Vital Bellingham for offering a free yoga class on Earth Day and encouraging participants to donate to WMTP.

# Would you like to serve on WMTP's Board of Directors?

Join our board & support our success!



We're always looking for talented and passionate leaders. Please consider completing this quick form and we'll get in touch when we have an opening.

[Apply here](#)



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