

# Monitor the Marsh

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q: Why should I sign up?**

There are many reasons why you should become a Citizen Scientist! Here are a few of them:

- Exploring marshes and discovering all of the abundant life within is fun! Many participants use this as an opportunity to engage their family and friends in a fun nature-based excursion.
- The data you obtain is incredibly useful – it is directly submitted to the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife biologists for analysis. They simply do not have the funding or staff to do all of this necessary work – your support is critical!
- Many participants report that this experience inspires them to learn more about their local wetlands and the animals that inhabit them; this experience is a great springboard for natural history knowledge development.

### **Q: How do I sign up?**

Contact Craig Standridge at [craig.standridge@pdza.org](mailto:craig.standridge@pdza.org) or (253) 404-3690. I will be happy to discuss the program, answer any questions and send you registration materials.

### **Q: What is required for participation?**

This is an incredibly rewarding program, however there are several items to carefully consider before registering:

- Ability level – it can be difficult to walk in marshy areas and some of the sites require a bit of walking to get to.
- Time commitment – the training session in February is one full 8 hour day, and each field session can take anywhere from 2-4 hours per month from March – June.
- Gear – it is highly recommended that participants obtain a pair of chest waders, which cost between \$40-\$65 for the neoprene stocking foot versions. The zoo has several hip waders to loan out, but it can be very inconvenient to pick up and drop off. Additional gear to consider are a GPS unit (many smartphones have this capability, so you may already be carrying one!) and a field guide. The zoo has some of these items to loan.

**Q: When, Where, and How Long For the Training?**

The 2014 training program will occur at the Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium in the Education Center on Saturday February 22. This training will begin at 9 a.m. and finish at 4 p.m. The first part of the program will be in a classroom, followed by a field visit to Spanaway Marsh after lunch. Participants should plan on bringing necessary field gear to the training, and driving to the marsh after lunch (more details given during registration).

**Q: Where Do I Park for the Training?**

Parking at this time of year will not be an issue; there will be plenty of spaces available. If you require assistance with directions and/or parking, call Craig Standridge at (253) 278-4583. Parking is free in Point Defiance Park.

**Q: What If I'm Hungry?**

We will provide light snacks and beverages – coffee, tea, water, soda and trail mix, cookies, and fruit. Please plan to bring a lunch.

**Q: Where Are The Bathrooms?**

Bathrooms are located in and near the Education Center. However, when we are in the field no facilities will be available.

**Q: What Should I Wear?**

Anything that is comfortable and non-offensive. And covers your body, please. For the field session, bring your waders and dress appropriately for weather conditions at the time.

**Q: What If It Rains?**

It always rains, we shall carry on!

**Q: Will I Need to Fill Out Paperwork?**

We will have several forms for participants to complete the day of the workshop. Additional details will be given during the training regarding registration as a Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife Volunteer.

**Q: Do I Have To Complete the Paperwork?**

Yes, all participants are required to complete the liability forms and other paperwork.

**Q: How Will I Choose a Survey Site?**

One of the highlights of this project is that you can choose your own survey site. This allows participants to choose a site that is convenient and appealing to them. There are some basic site considerations to think about, such as potential amphibian presence and land ownership. A good site is one that you suspect or know (from hearing or seeing past presence) to be active amphibian-wise. Although it is certainly beneficial for WDFW to know that no amphibians are present at a site it is more rewarding for volunteers to pick a site with some presence. It is critical that before you investigate a site you know the ownership of the land. We must have full permission to be on any given piece of property, with understanding by the owner as to the exact nature of our project. If you need help with this, we have form permission letters that we will have available at the training. Feel free to share Craig's contact information (at the end of this document) with landowners who need more information. We will also need to obtain permission for public land, such as parks – generally this is a formality, but it is still critical!

If you do not have a site chosen, we will have some suggestions at the workshop.

**Q: How Often Do I Need to Monitor My Site?**

Once per month, beginning in February (the training session counts as your first monitor) and ending in June. It is vital, critical, necessary, and otherwise important that volunteers commit to monitoring their sites once per month during this period. An incomplete data set is not a good thing! We will cover more specifics about the monitoring process in the workshop.

**THANK YOU!!!**

**Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns:**

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