

Washington Native Plant Society - South Sound Chapter Native Plant Hike

Date: **November 9, 10 am-2 pm.**

Title/Location: **The “Trail of the Giants”– Pack Forest’s Walk in the “Old Growth”**

Hike Leader: Bill Brookreson Contact Information b.brookreson@comcast.net or 253-292-8570

Departure Time: 10 am Estimated Return Time: 2 pm

Departure location: We will meet at the Pack Forest entrance Number of people: 15

Hike Description Join Bill Brookreson if you have the urge for a visit to some remaining old growth forest. Pack Forest’s Trail of the Giants may be just the answer for you. The Trail of the Giants is part of a 166-acre section of “old growth” located near the center of the University of Washington’s 4,300-acre Charles L. Pack Experimental Forest near Eatonville. The trail is at low altitude, 2000 feet or less, so snow is not usually a problem, even in winter. Because we will be able to park at the trailhead, the walk is easy. There are two “loops”, we will take the long loop of ca. 1 mile.

The term “old growth” can be a bit deceptive because old growth forests contain a variety of tree sizes as trees die, fall and are replaced. Many of the trees in this area date from the 1800s with some significantly larger and older specimens – several over 500 years old. The stand contains a variety of Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), western red cedar (*Thuja plicata*), western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*), and some Sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*). This section of Pack Forest survived a fire in 1927 that destroyed much of the forest in the area, although many of the older trees show evidence of fires in the 1700s. Highlights of the trail are two trees over 800 years old, one nearly 230 feet tall.

Any special requirements: Wear good hiking shoes, Bring a lunch or snacks. Dress for the weather.

Directions: From Tacoma. I-5 south through Tacoma. Take Exit 127, and follow Highway 512 for about ¾ of a mile. Take the first exit for Steele St and turn left onto Steele St. Steele St becomes Spanaway Lake Loop Road. Continue for about 5 miles on Steele St/Spanaway Lake Loop Road. Turn left where the Spanaway Lake Loop Road ends onto WA-704E/Cross Base Hwy and follow for ¾ of a mile. Turn right onto Highway 7 South. Stay on Highway 7 for about 22 toward Elbe. After you cross the Mashel River, watch for the sign "University of Washington Pack Forest." The entrance to Pack Forest will be on your left.

From Olympia: Take the Yelm Highway to Washington 702 east in McKenna, turn right to wards E Eatonville, Turn right on Highway 7 (Mountain Highway) toward Elbe. After you cross the Mashel River, watch for the sign on your left.