



Trees, animals, birds, plants, forests, mountains, lakes and rivers — everything that exists in Nature are in desperate need of our kindness, of the compassionate care and protection of human beings. If we protect them, they in turn will protect us. - Amma

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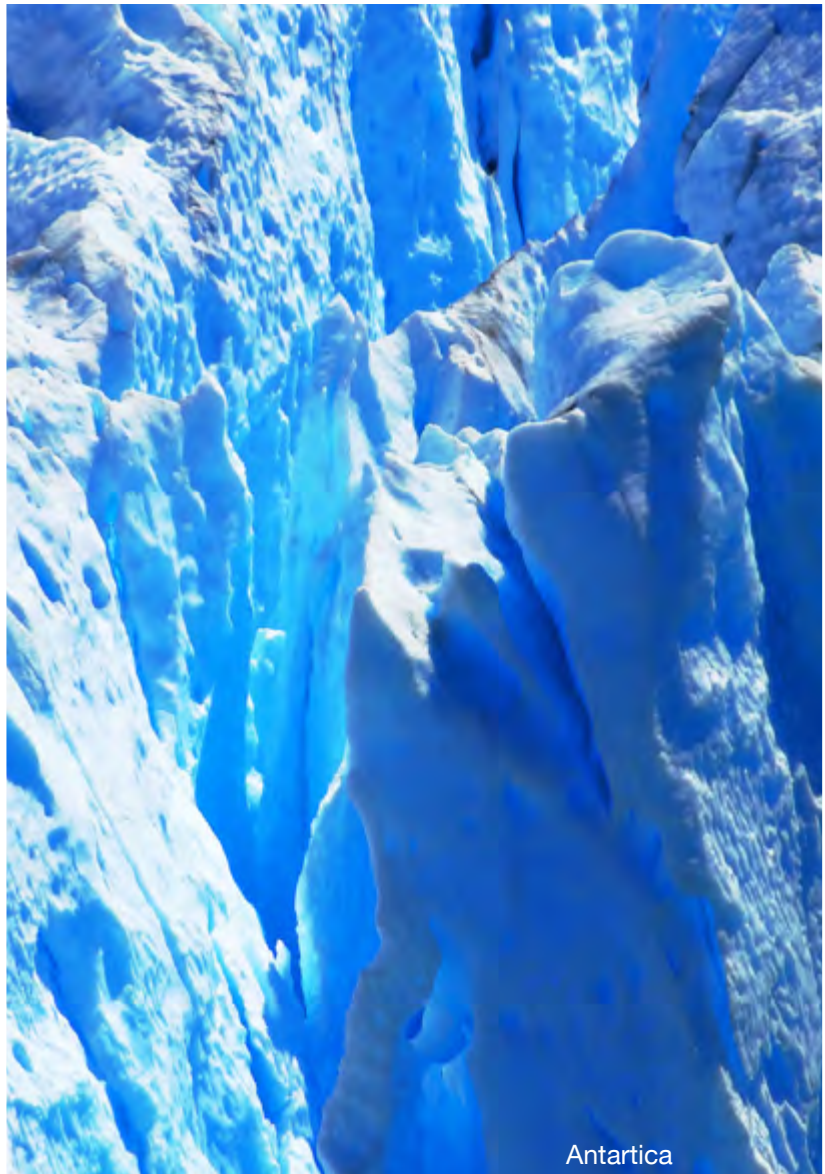
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Antartica

GreenFriends is a global grassroots environmental movement which promotes environmental awareness and local participation in conservation efforts throughout the world.

GreenFriends is one of the projects of [Embracing the World](#), a not-for-profit international collective of charities founded by internationally known spiritual and humanitarian leader, Mata Amritanandamayi (Amma)

To join the Pacific Northwest GreenFriends Litter Project, write Karuna at karunap108@comcast.net

PNW Gardening

Another Photo from Kristin's Garden (Seattle)



Nature

Art Inspired by Amma- by Sarah (Eugene)

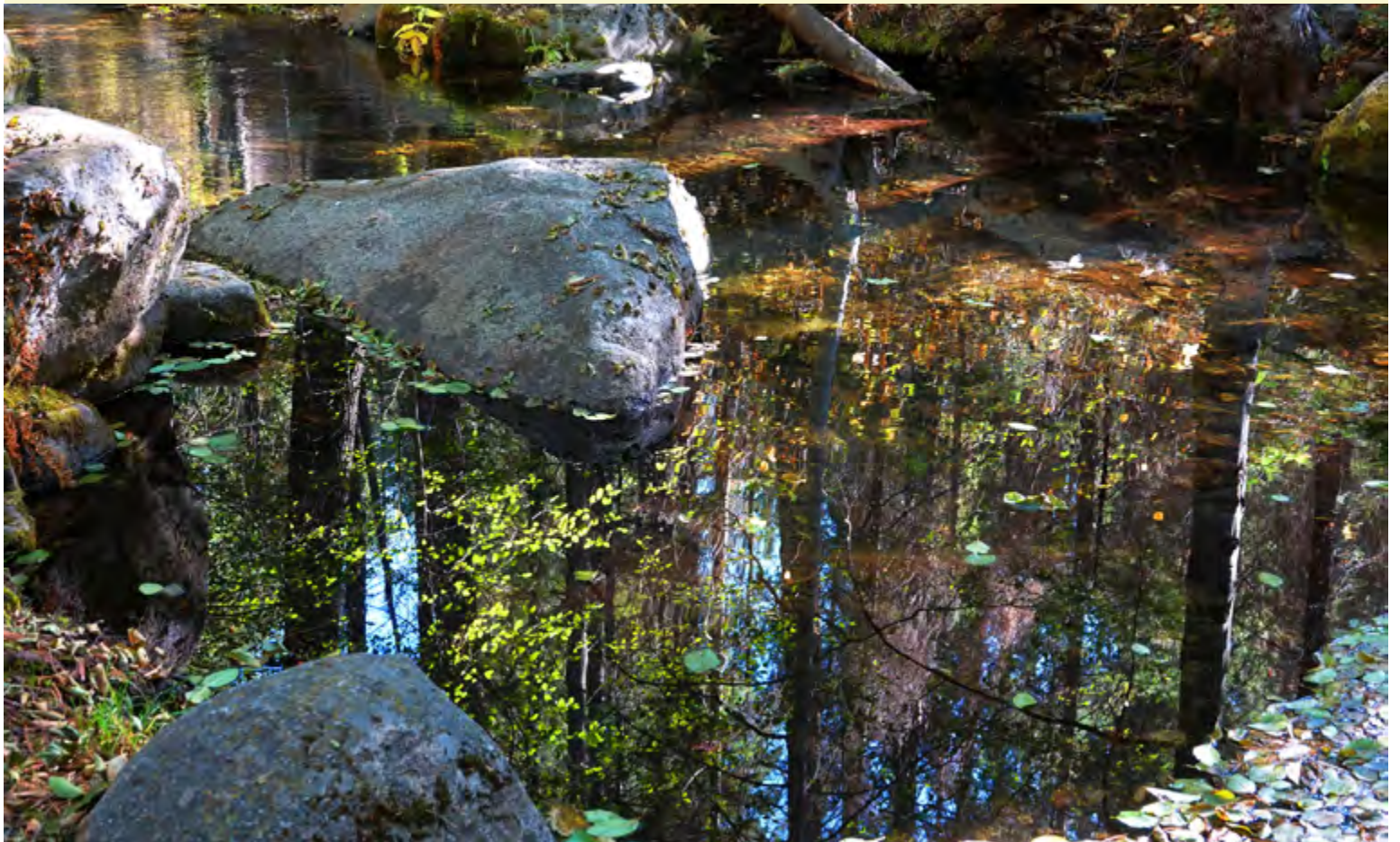


Nature

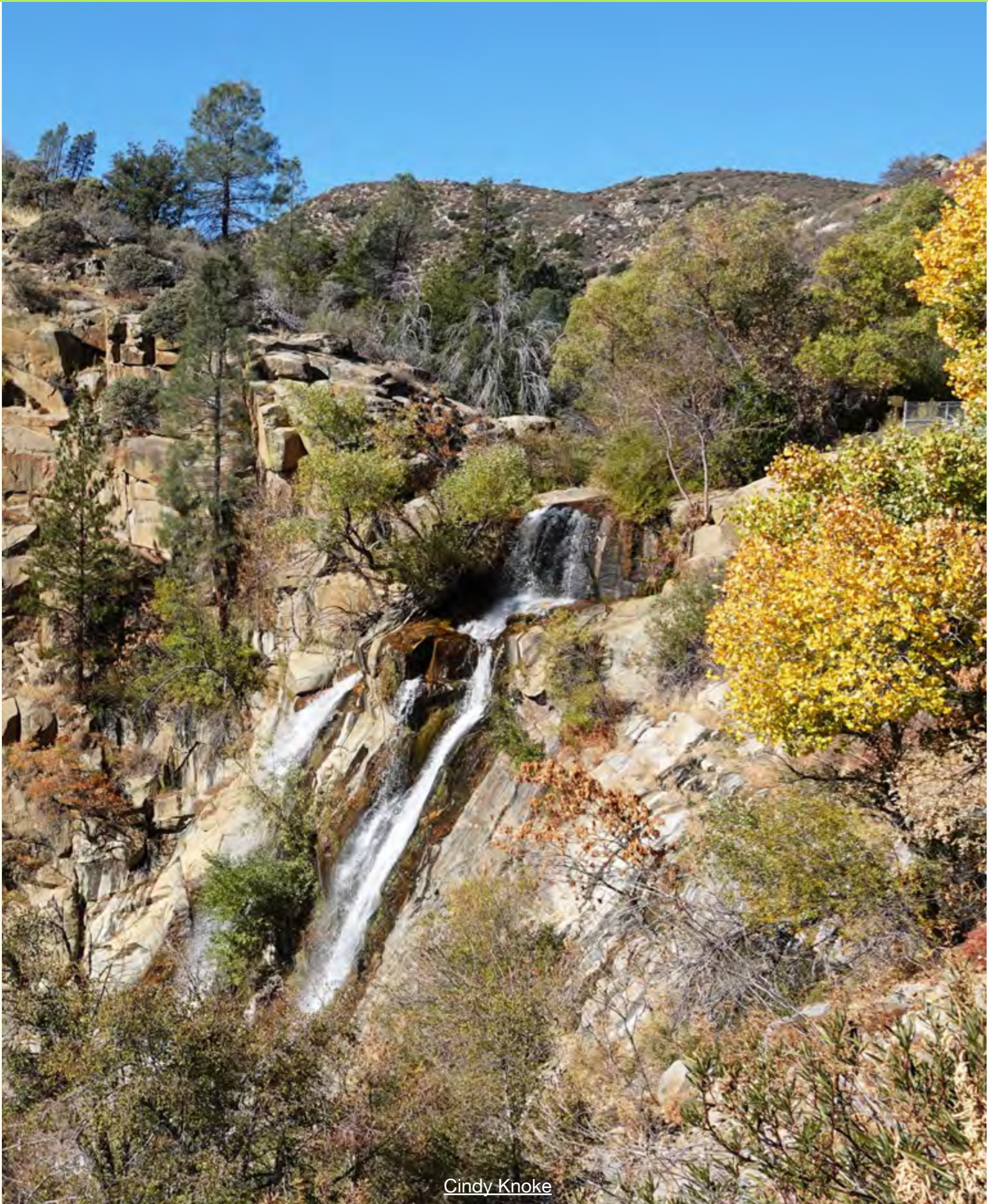
Photos from Sequoia National Forest by Cindy (California)



Nature



Nature



Cindy Knoke

Nature

Crows - from Seattle NextDoor Chat

Todd: Who needs to thatch... when you have a group of crows to do it for you. They work cheap but leave a mess.



Daniel: I like to watch them get the nuts and drop them onto the road for cars to run over. They also fly straight down with the nuts to get more force so the nuts will crack open on their own. That way they don't have to wait for a car or be inconvenienced by a car completely obliterating the nut. Such smart birds with the ability to reason.

(Photos and text used with permission.)



Nature

Hawaii Island Photos by Eric (Redmond)



Nature



Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

Mother Nature Provides... Again by Karuna



As I mentioned in the Service-Learning report in last month's newsletter, on November 19th of this year, two of the students planted Roemer's fescue and tall managrass plants along the southern and western inner borders of the remains of an old house foundation area we are turning into a new planting area.

That story actually began almost a year earlier when on January 22, 2019, I found a shovel on our Greenbelt restoration site. It was standing up against the remnants of the house foundation. I was very surprised because I had been standing in that spot the day before, and it wasn't there then. I put it away. The following day, I found a shrub sitting on the ledge next to the place where I had found the shovel.

There was blue and white checkered flagging tape on the plant, which indicated that it had been planted somewhere in Autumn of 2018. I couldn't find any hole on the site, so I had no idea where the shrub had come from.

Since I couldn't think of any reasonable explanation for these events, I concluded at that time that I was "supposed" to plant the shrub in the foundation. In January 2019, I wrote about that mystery- [A Mystery in the Greenbelt](#) in the March 2019 issue of this newsletter, pages 3-5. That article contains more information and numerous photos related to this event.

Before I go on, let me give some more backstory, this time going back to 2017! The house foundation was discovered in April 2017 when Seattle Parks Department staff cut down the blackberry vines on the site. Because of items we found within the foundation and the presence of charred material in the area, we believed the house had burned down in the 1950's.

We decided to use the foundation to store the racks we build to facilitate drying out blackberry, ivy and bindweed vines and other invasive weeds we dig out on the site. Putting these invasive plants on racks prevents them from re-rooting.

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

Early in January, 2019, we started disassembling the racks and spreading the dried debris throughout the foundation. We also spread the dried debris from other racks on the site in the foundation. We planned, in time, to use that space as another planting area.

At that time, I had planned to plant in the foundation after the dried debris had composted and turned into dirt. When the mystery plant showed up, however, I let go of that plan; I would plant the shrub in the foundation.

Planting in dried debris is not the same as planting in dirt. There was some material towards the bottom of the debris that was pretty well composted but almost everything above it consisted of dried canes and branches. I decided to dig a hole in the debris and then place some dirt in the bottom of the hole, put the plant on top of it and then spread as much dirt as I could around it.

As I was deciding what to use for dirt, my eye fell on a single mole hill that was near the foundation. I noticed that dirt was very light and airy. I thought it would be perfect! By the beginning of August 2019, the shrub, which had turned out to be oceanspray, had grown significantly. My planting strategy had obviously worked.



Mystery plant January 2019



Mystery plant August 2019

Fast forward to mid-November 2019. We had some extra Roemer's fescue and tall managrace plants after our November 2019 planting day. I thought it would be interesting to use the plants to experiment with planting in the foundation area again. Sarva and I decided we would have the UW service-learning students do the planting.

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



We rarely see mole hills on the property and to see four big ones (there were four even though the photo only shows three) directly in front of the foundation seemed like no accident. I realized that, once again, Mother Nature had provided the dirt we needed for the experiment. And again, the soil was so light and airy; perfect for planting the new plants.

On November 19th, the students planted 9 fescue and managrass plants.



Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



It will be interesting to see how the plants grow in this location. I imagine I will be writing future updates!



Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

Mushrooms Matter by Sarva (Renton)

The presence of mushrooms usually indicates healthy soil. Most mushrooms have a symbiotic relationship with plants, particularly at the root level. Mushrooms help give plants the nutrients they need to help produce the sugars that mushroom feeds off, so they're helping each other to grow and receive the best nutrients they can get.

Saprophytism is when a mushroom or group of mushrooms help decompose something and then release the nutrients and energy back into the soil. Mushrooms take in the remaining nutrients from a dead source, such as dead plant materials or their roots, and introduce those nutrients back into the soil in a way bacteria or insects cannot. Mushrooms prefer cool, moist, and shady areas. This giant grew (rapidly!) at the edge of a decomposing pile of wood chips in our Greenbelt restoration site..



Source Reduction

Trash Talking: Tour Waste by the Numbers by Diya



Tour Waste

During the fall tour in Michigan, the Green Team worked with a company called Schupan Recycling. Schupan is a national leader in recycling and sustainability. They quantified our waste in poundage which we diverted from the landfill through our compost and recycling program. The numbers are remarkable and the positive impact we are having on Mother Nature is something we can all celebrate!

Before we get to the statistics, let's first take a moment and GIVE-IT-UP for Amma's Green Team sevites! They're a bunch of hard core, waste warrior, Gaia groupies, who leave no bin unsorted in their quest to help the planet. They rally when the garbage gets tough with grit, humor and enthusiasm, always coming out on top of the compost heap! They are the epitome of compassion for nature, in action.

In Michigan, the only plastic the Green Team collected were PETE and HDPE plastics #1 and #2. These are the only plastics which have a legitimate end market and currently being recycled. We also tweaked our signage to include visual examples for each receptacle. Many people reported the visuals helped alleviate their confusion at the recycle stations. This resulted in a drastic reduction in cross-contamination and less time sorting. We worked once again in conjunction with the dishwashing department who rinsed all of our tin cans, plastic jugs and glass jars containing food residue. There's a special place on Vrindavana for all of you rinsing rock stars! Each of these small changes had a big impact. Our recycling was cleaner and had market value, increasing the probability it would get recycled. A win-win for everyone, especially Mother Nature!

And now, the numbers - drum roll please...

Source Reduction

Waste collected and diverted from the landfill in Michigan:

(stats provided by Schupan)

- Steel cans – 52 pounds
- Glass – 153 pounds
- Plastic film – 19 pounds
- Mixed plastic and aluminum – 78 pounds
- Organics – 1,451 pounds

Here's how our waste diversion impacted the environment:

(stats provided by Schupan)

- 21 gallons of gasoline saved
- 3 cubic yard of landfill space saved. This is the equivalent of 606 1-gallon jugs of milk.
- 389 kilowatt hours of energy saved. This is enough power to power your iPhone, at one full charge per day, for the next 56 years!!
- 4,581 pounds of CO2 saved

If we multiply these numbers by 11 – the number of cities each year where we have a tour waste management program - these numbers become staggering. We are diverting approximately 15,961 pounds of food waste from the landfill and saving 50,391 pounds of CO2 during Amma's North American tours. This is simply AMMAzing!

Next year we will be eliminating the 19 pounds of plastic film by switching to reusable pallet wraps. We are continuing to reduce single-use plastics and will be switching from plastic drink bottles to metal and glass, which are closed-loop recyclables. Becoming sustainable is a collaborative work in progress. Together, we can all make a difference!



Clean & Rinsed

Source Reduction



Dirty Recycling



Rinsing Rock Star Sevites



Dynamic Duo



Devi Bhava Overtime

PNW Litter Project

Monastery Trash Pickup in El Puig, Spain by Harikesh (Eugene)

I had an extra 30 minutes picking up litter in Spain. It was in a small town called El Puig, outside of Valencia, right after the European tour with Amma ended. I went to look at a monastery and noticed trash all over the whole front side of the monastery where the entrance was. I was with my friend Sumangala and we were both shocked to see so much garbage at a monastery. I said to her, "Amma would pick up this garbage." Then I said, "So let's pick it up, it won't take long." It took us about a half hour to pick up the trash and put it in a trashcan and recycle what we could.



PNW Litter Project



PNW Litter Project

Litter Stats

In December 2019, **25** Litter Project members and their friends picked up litter for **58.49** hours. (Average **2.34** hours; Median **1** hour; Range **1** minute to **15** hours) We have picked up litter for **11,046** hours since the project began in July of 2011.

TerraCycle Stats

We have sent TerraCycle **355,724** cigarette butts, **394** drink pouches, **1,748** cereal bag liners, and **6,747** energy bar wrappers since we started sending items to them in 2013. [TerraCycle is an organization that recycles items which are normally considered unrecyclable.]



Interesting Information from Our Readers

From Eileen in Seattle:

[Seattle ReCreative: A Creative Reuse Store and Community Art Center](#)

Desired Donations: [Materials List](#)

From Lin in Bellevue:

[Trees Around Factories Could Absorb 27% of Air Pollution](#)

[The Church Forests in Ethiopia](#)

[Boyan Slat Unveils the Ocean Cleanup Interceptor](#)

[The Biggest Little Farm Movie](#) Available from King County and Seattle Libraries, [Prime Video rental \\$3.99](#). [Watch Trailer](#)

From Tirtha in Victoria:

[Project Showcase: Piloting City Forest Credits in Shoreline](#)

From Karuna in Seattle:

[Long Distance Swimmer Dives into the Great Pacific Garbage Patch](#)

Amritapuri Gardens
International Office Flower Garden



Amritapuri Gardens

