

"Looking for the worst plants in the best places"

BACKGROUND

The Mt. Tamalpais Watershed is part of the Golden Gate Biosphere reserve, an internationally recognized biodiversity "hot spot". This watershed is home to over 900 species of plants and 400 species of animals, including 77 rare, threatened and endangered species. Marin Municipal Water District manages 18,500 acres of land in the Mt. Tam Watershed and 2,750 acres adjacent to the Nicasio and Soulajule reservoirs in west Marin. Habitats include oak woodlands, redwood forests, serpentine ridge tops, grasslands and fresh water creeks. This abundance of life is threatened by many factors, including increased recreational use, invasive species and global climate change. Our Weed Watcher Volunteer Program offers the experience to work in conjunction with BAEDN, the Bay Area Early Detection Network, on public lands throughout the region—or just on Mt. Tam!

OVERVIEW

This program seeks to monitor the Mt. Tamalpais Watershed's trails and roadsides where new weed invasives often occur. Discovering weeds before they become well established is critical to reducing damage to ecosystem integrity, preventing the loss of habitat for rare plants and animals, and preventing costly natural resource management. You can help protect our watershed by conducting invasive species early detection surveys for some known pest plants. These surveys are part of a scientific monitoring program developed by the San Francisco Bay Area Network, and are part of the Bay Area Early Detection Network. The information gathered, both about the weeds that are found and the areas that remain weed-free, will be useful in helping set habitat restoration priorities.

DESCRIPTION OF DUTIES

- Participate in a four-hour workshop on invasive plant identification and data collection.
- Assist watershed staff in trail and roadside invasive plant monitoring and mapping.
- Conduct at least 3 hours of surveys on MMWD trails monthly over a period of six months.
- Follow safety guidelines including responsible use of personal protective gear including a hat, sunblock and sturdy footwear.
- Follow instructions from all watershed staff, understand and respect all watershed regulations and policies. Proudly wear the MMWD or Weed Watcher volunteer uniform while surveying.

CONDITIONS

Tasks are mainly performed outdoors in all extremes of weather in hilly terrain in elevations from sea level to the highest point in Marin at 2571 feet on East Peak. Conditions range from hot/dry/dusty to foggy/damp/cold or rainy. Some assignments may require stamina to perform light to heavy physical labor and walk on uneven ground surfaces such as hills, slopes, streams, ditches or trenches. You may hike in adverse conditions that include extended exposure to sun, wind, rain, uneven terrain, mud, poison oak, and various invertebrates and other animals.

KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS/EXPERIENCE DESIRED

- Knowledge of San Francisco Bay region flora, and/or willingness to learn.
- Knowledge of Global Positioning System (GPS) devices and/or willingness to learn.
- The ability to work with a diverse community of people alongside watershed personnel.
- Desire and ability to work outdoors, at times in inclement weather and terrain as well as sometimes exert strenuous physical activity while walking.

REQUIREMENTS

Volunteers will have submitted a Weed Watcher volunteer application form and completed on-site training before participating in the program. Volunteers must disclose any physical limitations or restrictions that limit ability to perform certain physical demands or to work in certain environmental conditions. Weed Watchers must be able to work in a safe and efficient manner with or without direct supervision of District staff and commit to hike and report data regularly over a six-month period. Before embarking on and at the completion of a hike volunteers will notify their appointed contact. Weed Watchers must be at least 18 years old.

BENEFITS

- Training in watershed procedures and policies and knowledge of resources.
- Valuable training in general botany, invasive species, and Global Positioning System (GPS) units and their use in conservation and resource management.
- Opportunities to enjoy the scenery, wildlife and cultural resources of this spectacular watershed.
- Become a stewardship leader in your community.

MMWD CONTACT

Suzanne Whelan

MMWD Volunteer Coordinator

415-945-1169

volunteerprogram@marinwater.org

Marin Municipal Water District, 220 Nellen Avenue, Corte Madera, CA 94925