

## **CKC Volunteers Reach Scotch Broom Removal Milestone**

April 15, 2018

Scotch broom is an invasive plant that is a serious threat to native habitat throughout Washington State. It's also toxic to animals and a fire hazard. Hundreds of these plants grew along the Cross Kirkland Corridor (CKC), the beloved 5.75-mile gravel walking and biking trail that runs through the heart of Kirkland. Thanks to a tremendous effort by dozens of volunteers who have worked more than a thousand hours over the past two years, all accessible Scotch broom has been removed from the entire length of the trail!

Scotch broom seeds will still sprout for years to come, but the bright neon-yellow flowers in the spring will make the invaders easy to monitor.

The broom has been swept away, but there is still much work to be done along the trail. Future volunteer efforts will focus on removing other invasive plants such as holly, butterfly bush, ivy, blackberry, and laurel; and planting native plants. The City of Kirkland also plans to contact commercial and residential property owners adjacent to the CKC and ask for their help in maintaining their section of the trail. Training is available to ensure that property owners know which plants are invasive.

City crews perform a lot of CKC maintenance, but don't have time to do all of the invasive removal work that is needed. Volunteers are crucial to restoring the trail habitat. Work parties are held two Monday mornings each month and tools are provided. It's hard work, but volunteers say it's fun, satisfying, and a great way to meet people and get exercise. Contact [ckctrailvolunteers@gmail.com](mailto:ckctrailvolunteers@gmail.com) to learn more.

Many people wonder why Scotch broom needs to be removed. A [2017 report](#) by the Washington State Invasive Species Council "analyzed the ecological and economic impacts of 23 invasive species to Washington's landscapes, agriculture, business, and recreation.

"Of the 23 species, Scotch Broom is one of the most costly to Washington. The invasive species is a serious threat to native prairies and forests. It prevents timber regeneration and displaces pasture forage for grazing animals. The plant is also toxic to livestock and is a fire hazard. If Scotch broom is allowed to spread an additional 12 percent a year in Washington, it has the potential total economic impact of \$142.7 million and the loss of 660 jobs."