Habitat Types

Within the boundaries of the property are five major habitat types:

- A large pond/marsh (China Pond) central on the tract uniformly covered by Broadleaf Cattail. The perimeter of the wetland is populated by Sitka and Pacific Willow, Pacific Crabapple and Western Skunk Cabbage. A smaller wetland to the northwest consists of primarily Salmonberry and Nootka Rose.

- A mature upland forest comprised primarily of Western Red Cedar, Grand Fir, Douglas Fir and Bigleaf Maple to the east and southeast of the marsh. Understory includes large numbers of OceanSpray, Red Huckleberry, Dwarf Oregon Grape and Western Sword Fern.

- A younger forest to the southwest and west is primarily Red Alder, but includes younger Bigleaf Maple and Grand Fir. North of the central pond is habitat that transitions from the mature woods to the east to the younger mix of Red Alder, Salmonberry and Nootka Rose to the west.

- Between East Marrowstone Road and Admiralty Inlet is a mature forest of Western Red Cedar and Bigleaf Maple that leads to a high bluff.

- The bluff and shoreline comprise the fifth habitat type. The shore area has a natural rock jetty along with a cobble and sand beach. Offshore are a couple of large rocks on which several pinniped species have been observed to haul out.
Animal Species

The following species were identified, from either direct observation or from tracks and signs left behind. The time of year was not conducive to making significant bird observations.


Plant Species

The following species were identified, some sighted in multiple habitat types.

Douglas Fir  Grand Fir  Western Hemlock  Western Red Cedar  Bigleaf Maple  Madrona  Red Alder  Pacific Willow  Sitka Willow  Beaked Hazelnut  Oceanspray  Oso berry/Indian Plum  Pacific Crab Apple  Red Huckleberry  Salmonberry  Snowberry  Thimbleberry  Baldhip Rose  Hardhack  Nootka Rose  Orange Honeysuckle  Red Elderberry  Salal  Common Rush  Slough Sedge  Broadleaf Cattail  Western Skunk Cabbage  Bittersweet Nightshade  Field Mint  American Brooklime  Aquatic Forget-Me-Not  Seep Monkeyflower  Unbranched Bur-Reed  Water Parsley  Western Sword Fern  Lady Fern  Western Lily of the Valley  False Solomon's Seal  Western Star Flower  Threeleaf Foamflower  Broadleaved Willowherb  Pacific Trillium  Trailing Blackberry  Twinflower  Dwarf Oregon Grape  Pearly Everlasting  American Searocket  Coastal Burnweed  Holly (invasive)  Spurge Laurel (invasive)  Common Ivy (invasive)  Cherry Laurel
Fungus/Lichen Species
The following species were identified.

- Artist's Bracket (two species)
- Dyer's Polypore
- Oyster Mushroom
- Russula sp.
- Shaggy Parasol
- Short-stemmed Russula
- Turkey-Tail Mushroom
- Gold Dust Lichen
- Membranous Pelt Lichen
- Oak Moss Lichen
- Old Man's Beard Lichen
- Ramalina sp.
- Wrinkled Crust Lichen

Membranous Pelt Lichen on the forest floor.

HIGHLIGHTS

Native plants
The majority of plants identified at the site are native to the Pacific Northwest. From the canopy of conifers and maples, through the understory of huckleberry, oceanspray, beaked hazelnut, snowberry, osoberry and mahonia, to the small plants and wildflowers of the forest floor, we observed myriad native forest plants. Notable observations were the carpets of Western Lily of the Valley, wetland wildflowers like Seep Monkeyflower, pockets of Pacific Trillium, and beach wildflowers such as American Searocket and Pearly Everlasting. In addition, a number of invasive species were observed, some widely distributed. A concerted removal of plants listed as noxious weeds would be a worthwhile project for a volunteer’s corps.

Large Wetland
China Pond is of biological and historical significance. Historically it was of value to early islanders as a fresh water source, and today it provides unique habitat to myriad plants and animals. While the current pond is thickly covered with cattails, the perimeter has an abundance of alder snags presenting rich opportunities for wildlife, along with numerous skunk cabbage, crabapple and willow. Our survey, and oral accounts, revealed the pond and wetland may have been drained to allow for property development. A ditch appears to have been dug to drain the wetlands into the roadside ditch on Flagler Road. Removing the ditch could potentially restore the wetlands to a more natural state and greater biological diversity.

Mature Forest
There is stump evidence the property once supported massive old growth, likely felled over one hundred years ago. The oldest trees on the parcel appear to be around 100-120 years of age. The shading of the high canopy in the mature forest creates a low-light habitat for thick stands of sword fern and natural clearings with carpets of small native plants and wildflowers.

Coastal Bluff
The bluff on the easternmost part of the property faces onto Admiralty Inlet. It appears to be a typical glacial till bluff that has recently sloughed a large piece onto the cobble beach below. There is a presence of some stabilizing native vegetation at the top of the bluff. We did not see any evidence of nesting birds, although adjacent parcels have Rough Wing Swallow and Belted Kingfisher nesting holes.
Google Map of Survey Project

Associated Web Links
- The survey project site on iNaturalist, listing species photo documented, is located at www.inaturalist.org/projects/marrowstone-island-project. This includes a link to the above Google map.