

THE FOREST STEWARD GUIDE TO COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

As Forest Stewards, you work to restore local parks to healthy forests. Protecting and restoring Seattle's urban forests depends on more than any one individual—it requires an entire community, and generations of stewards, to preserve and protect our parks. This guide will help you develop and implement strategies to engage a critical aspect of your community: local businesses and community organizations. Connecting with these groups will increase community awareness of the park, inspire your neighbors to get outside, and grow your volunteer base.

FIVE STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL ENGAGEMENT



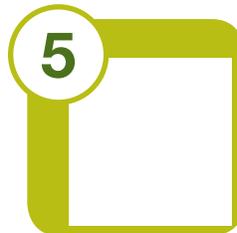
Plan outreach



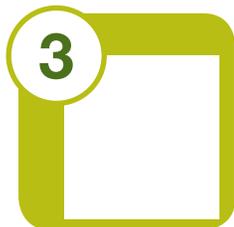
**Follow-up on
meaningful connections**



**Read through best
management practices
and strategies**



**Maintain
relationships**



Conduct outreach!



PLAN OUTREACH EFFORTS

Steps to planning community and business engagement



1. Research priority businesses to reach.



2. Schedule days for community engagement.

» The best times to reach business owners is Tuesday through Thursday from 3 to 6 pm.

» The best times to reach community organizations is when they schedule weekly/monthly/quarterly community meetings.



3. Prepare outreach materials.

- » Business / Community Organization support flyer
- » Upcoming event promotion flyer
- » Business cards



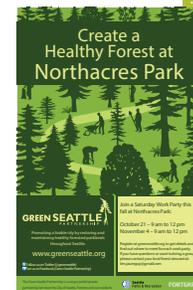
4. Use email, phone, and in-person scripts.

» See below for examples of communications.



5. Set up engagement tracking system.

» Use the tracking template below!





ENGAGEMENT BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Be prepared with material that will help deliver your message. When engaging with a business or organization, use the community engagement flyer to help guide the conversation about why they should support your park. It's helpful to have an upcoming event flyer for the business/community org to post in a public place.

Find the best person with whom to deliver your information. It's best to engage with a decision maker at the business or community organization. If a decision maker is not available, describe the project quickly to the person you're speaking with and leave your business card.

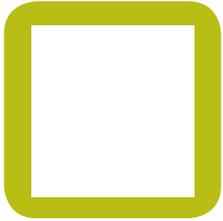
Listen, adjust, and be patient. Understand that business owners are often busy and community organizations can be challenging to contact. Always be patient and work around their schedule whenever possible. Find times to discuss partnering opportunities that will benefit the community and promote one another. When interacting with a new person from these organizations, be approachable, listen to their needs, and discover how you both can benefit from each other.

Recruit community messengers. Recruit a volunteer, friend, or neighbor who may have existing relationships to assist in connecting with these organizations. More community messengers will create more community connections and strengthen your outreach efforts. From this outreach, community messengers will feel more invested in your park and may support your efforts in the future.

Connect your park's restoration efforts with the Green Seattle Partnership to gain a business or community organization's trust. You represent the achievements of a large restoration effort, the Green Seattle Partnership. Connect your restoration efforts with the bigger picture. Remembering these key points about the Green Seattle Partnership will aid the conversation:

- » The Partnership was started in 2004 to respond to a critical threat facing the City's forested parks. Without intervention, Seattle risked losing 70% of the tree cover in our parks in just 20 years. With thousands of volunteers getting involved every year, dedicated staff with City agencies and partners, and professional crews to help out on our toughest sites, we are making great strides, but the work is far from done.
- » The Partnership's goal is to restore all 2,500 acres of Seattle forested parklands by 2025. 51% of total acres are enrolled in restoration (half of the 2,500 acres of Seattle forested parklands and other designated natural areas are undergoing restoration; 1,273 acres remain to restore).

Take notes! Always write down as much as you can from each interaction. These notes can include the business/community organization's level of interest in your restoration efforts, contact details, important notes from the interaction, and the next steps. These notes will be great to review and facilitate next steps as you think through your community connections. See the template engagement table below.



CONDUCT OUTREACH!

Sample in-person and phone communication

Hello **[Business owner/Community organization contact]**,

My name is **[your name]**, I am a Forest Steward at **[your park name]** with the Green Seattle Partnership (GSP). How are you doing today?

Have you heard of the GSP before?

▶ **“No, I’ve never heard of the Green Seattle Partnership.”**



Provide event promotion poster.

Green Seattle Partnership volunteers coordinate restoration projects to care for our forested parklands and bring people into the parks to build community through hands-on volunteerism. I lead events to remove invasive species and plant native plants.

At **[your park name]**, I am looking for business/organization champions to support my efforts to restore and protect the park. I would love your business/organization’s support. A few different ways to do this include providing donations for events throughout the year, promoting the events by posting events for your customers/community members, sharing our Facebook post, or coordinating an employee-volunteer event.

Do you have interest in supporting **[your park name]** restoration efforts?

▶ **“Yes, I’ve heard of the Green Seattle Partnership”**



Great, did you know that I’m a Forest Steward in your neighborhood at **[your park name]**?

I am looking for business/organization champions to support my efforts to restore and protect the park. I would love your organization’s support. A few different ways to do this include providing donations for events throughout the year, promoting the events by posting events for your customers/community members, sharing our Facebook post, or coordinating an employee-volunteer event.

Do you have interest in supporting **[your park name]** restoration efforts?



CONDUCT OUTREACH!

Sample email communication

Subject: Green Seattle Partnership at **[your park name]** Park

Body of Text:

Hello **[Business owner/Community organization contact]**,

My name is **[your name]** and I'm a Forest Steward supporting **[your park name]** through the Green Seattle Partnership. I am contacting you to discuss some great restoration work happening at **[your park name]**.

If you are not familiar with the Green Seattle Partnership, it is a public-private partnership that coordinates restoration projects to care for our forested parklands and bring people into Seattle parks to build community through hands-on volunteerism. I am a forest steward at **[your park name here]** and have been leading restoration efforts there for **[X]** years. I coordinate volunteers to remove invasive species and plant native species, and amend soils throughout the year.

I am looking to connect with local businesses and community organizations to support our restoration efforts at **[your park name here]**. I would love your support as a leader in this community. There are a few ways that businesses and organizations can help:

- 1. Donating/sponsoring** food or beverages at our next event
- 2. Promote our events** within your organization and to your customers/community members to help build our volunteer base
- 3. Coordinate an event with us!** We would love to do an event with your organization and have your employees/community members getting their hands dirty restoring **[your park name]**.

I would love to connect with you in-person or over the phone if this is of interest to you.

I look forward to connecting with you and your organization!

[Your name here]

[Your park name here] Forest Steward

