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## **Metro Parks Tacoma Wins Two WRPA Spotlight Awards**

*Dickman Mill Park and Wildlife Champions education program both win awards for outstanding achievement from Washington Parks & Recreation Association.*

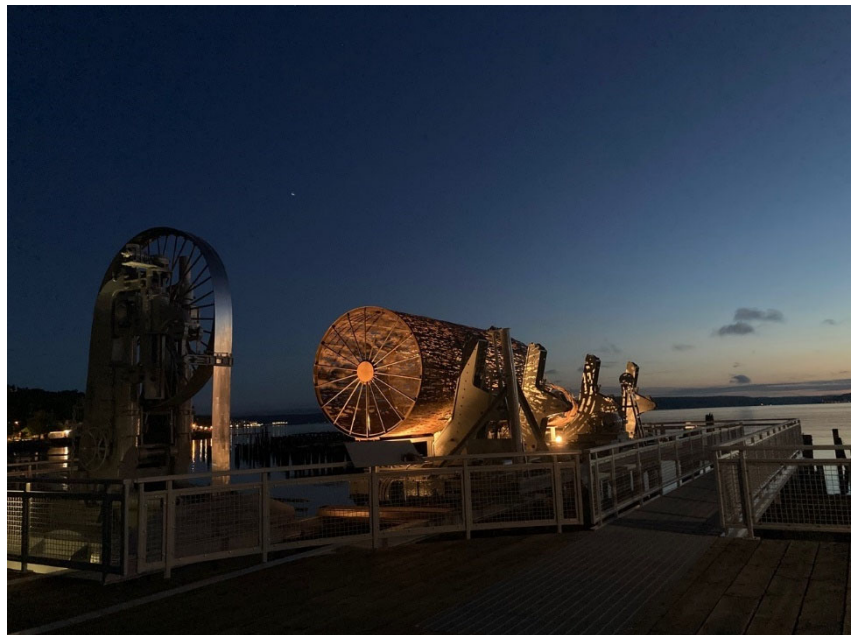
Tacoma, WA: Metro Parks Tacoma's Dickman Mill Park and groundbreaking nature science education curriculum Wildlife Champions have won 2022 Spotlight Awards from the Washington Recreation & Park Association (WRPA). The awards, open to any Washington parks district, were announced Thursday night at the annual WRPA conference in Bellevue, Washington.

The Spotlight Award category recognizes outstanding achievement in facilities, parks, trails or programs by parks and recreation agencies.

"Metro Parks is extremely proud of both of these outstanding contributions to our community, which perfectly fulfil our mission of creating healthy opportunities to play, learn and grow," said Andrea Smith, Park Board president. "We're grateful to have these achievements honored by other leaders in our field, and to lift up the hard work, dedication and creativity of the Metro Parks staff and volunteers who make those achievements possible."

Dickman Mill Park, which opened July 2021 as a stunning shoreline restoration of habitat and history, won the 2022 Spotlight Award for excellence in facility design and construction.

Built on the site of Tacoma's longest-operating lumber mill, long since burned down, the \$2.9m project was a collaboration between Metro Parks Tacoma and sponsor Cambia Health Solutions. The mill's iconic head saw, a rare artifact listed on the state and local Register of Historic Places, was restored as the centerpiece of a plaza featuring reclaimed mill bricks, welcoming benches, a catwalk and interpretive signs.



The breathtaking public artwork “Ghost Log” was commissioned to rest on top of the carriage, telling the stories of Tacoma’s waterfront and the significance of the cedar tree to both the lumber industry and the Puyallup Tribe. Finally, the shoreline habitat was restored with native plants, creating a refuge for wildlife and a beautiful park for waterfront exploration and recreation.

Wildlife Champions is a nature-based elementary science curriculum designed by staff at Metro Parks’ Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium in collaboration with teachers at Tacoma Public Schools’ Arlington Elementary and with support from Northwest Trek, Tacoma Nature Center and Metro Arts. It won the 2022 Spotlight Award for excellence in parks and recreation programs and services.

Alternating lessons between classroom, schoolyard and the local Oak Tree Park from 2018-2021, the curriculum taught empathy for wildlife while hitting state learning targets in science, math, language, arts and Native American studies in grades K-5.

Now led by Arlington staff with ongoing support from Zoo staff, the grant-supported program continues to meet equity and access needs in a low-income neighborhood by offering free equipment, clothing, zoo field trips and park celebrations. A second program is about to launch at Lister Elementary on Tacoma’s east side.

For more information on Dickman Mill Park, see [metroparkstacoma.org/place/dickman-mill-park](https://metroparkstacoma.org/place/dickman-mill-park).

For more information on Wildlife Champions, see [pdza.org/creating-wildlife-champions](https://pdza.org/creating-wildlife-champions).

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**Contact:**

Rosemary Ponnekanti, Communications Media Administrator/PIO:  
[rosemary.ponnekanti@tacomaparks.com](mailto:rosemary.ponnekanti@tacomaparks.com), (253) 345-0948

Photographs are available for media use. Please contact Metro Parks:  
[rosemary.ponnekanti@tacomaparks.com](mailto:rosemary.ponnekanti@tacomaparks.com)