

**FAUNTLEROY
WATERSHED
COUNCIL**

2007 ANNUAL REPORT

Together with our agency partners and consultants, we celebrate an especially productive year that saw major habitat improvements in Fauntleroy Creek, more schools using Fauntleroy Park as a learning resource, and significant groundwork laid for improving water quality in the creek and Fauntleroy Cove. Read on about these and other 2007 activities and a preview of 2008 priorities.

RESTORING & PRESERVING THE CREEK

After more than two years of fund-raising, designing, and permitting, we finally got "boots on the ground" in the fall to restore the last major degraded reach of the creek. Engineer Nick Silverman, excavator Scott Dutro, and a multi-national crew of EarthCorps trainees finished instream restoration on 40 feet of channel in the upper reach and rebuilt 200 feet of degraded channel to the beach. In



Tight quarters required careful planning and excavating to restore a natural channel without damaging adjacent homes.

the process, they created natural meanders, added logs and rocks for diversity, and shifted the mouth away from an adjacent bulkhead. The crew returned a few weeks later to install some 1,300 native plants that will mature into lush riparian habitat.

Major funders of the project were the State Department of Ecology's Coastal Protection Fund and the City of Seattle's Aquatic Habitat Matching Grant program. The King Conservation District donated planning money and saltwater plants, and the Community Salmon Fund (King County and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation) provided money for the interpretive sign to be installed on the ferry pier

in the new year. Major supporters were property owners Elizabeth Butler and Chris Kim, plus adjacent neighbors Edna and Chuck Sawyer and Susan Lantz-Dey and Mike Dey.

For the first time on Fauntleroy Creek, an artist in residence was a member of the project team! Karen Brussat Butler captured many images during construction and planting, relying on her whimsical style to convey actions and emotions. One of her works will enliven the interpretive sign.

The project finished on time, with sufficient funds left over to enable detailed engineering monitoring of structures over the next three years, plus any remedial action that needs to be taken. Funding will also provide the property owners with strategic weeding assistance near the beach so that highly invasive reed canary grass doesn't succeed in restarting.

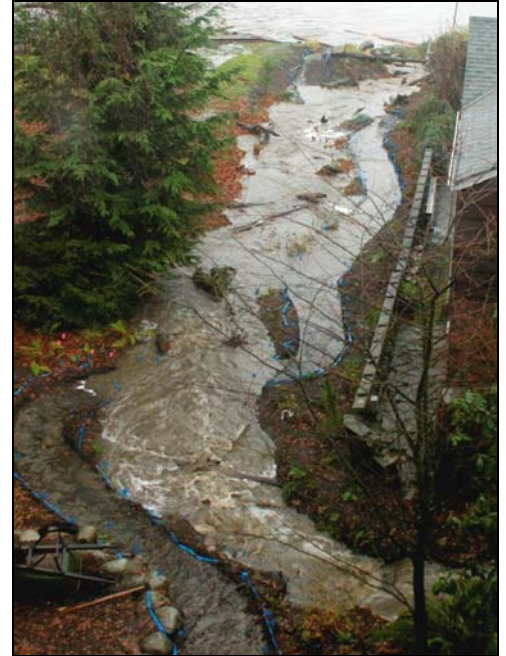
IMPROVING WATER QUALITY

Exceptional rainstorms book-ended the year, prompting continued concern about habitat and other damage from stormwater. In March, the Council met with city drainage staff to pinpoint problem areas and discuss code compliance issues, especially related to construction on private property and rights-of-way during the rainy season. Using the community association's e-news, we collected and forwarded additional problem reports from the neighborhood. In October, Council representatives participated in a briefing about updating of the city's stormwater code, and we will have further input as that process advances.

In cooperation with the Fauntleroy Community Association board and Sen. Erik Paulsen's office, we secured a state appropriation of \$150,000 for seaweed removal from Fauntleroy Cove. Residents near the cove have been plagued by noxious hydrogen-sulfide gas from rotting seaweed for more than 25 years. In the process, we established an ongoing communication link with drainage staff at the City of Federal Way, where similar eutrophication is sucking oxygen out of Dumas Bay and fouling the air.

Assignment of State Department of Ecology staff to administer the money gave the habitat/public-health problem throughout central Puget Sound the highest profile ever. Volunteer Elizabeth Butler will work with agency partners in 2008 to enlist beachfront owners in helping reduce the amount of nutrients available to feed aggressive seaweed growth in the cove.

Led by Sinang Lee and Dave Garland, the State Department of Ecology (with participation by Seattle Public Utilities staff) completed a "total maximum daily load" report about fecal coliform bacteria in the creek and cove. The regional office of the Environmental Protection Agency approved the report in August, clearing the way for planning specific actions to decrease fecal counts. The Council responded immediately by initiating a follow-up study of pet waste in Fauntleroy Park (see "Supporting Research") and distributing biodegradable poop bags during the Fauntleroy Fall Festival.



Heavy rain on Dec. 3 provided the first test of the rebuilt reach to the beach. When the torrent of storm-water receded, the well-engineered channel settled back into its banks.



Boats anchored near the ferry terminal bob in a summertime sea of seaweed.

ENHANCING HABITAT IN THE PARK & UPPER CREEK

The Council's ongoing partnership with Seattle Parks and Recreation got new energy when Carol Baker became the district crew chief, filling a position that had been vacant for several months. Also over the summer, trails staff made repairs at the Cambridge Street entrance.

The easement between Fauntleroy Church and Seattle Parks, first proposed by the Council in 2004, won approval of the church council in the fall and by the congregation in January. Parks property manager MaryLou Whiteford is now shepherding the easement through the process for approval by the city council. The easement would enable Seattle Parks to build a sturdy bridge over the Forest Court tributary, create non-eroding approaches, and maintain the area as it does park land - all improvements to public safety and habitat stewardship.



Park volunteer Steve Hodson and his buddy, Kodi, work several hours a week weeding, hauling out garbage, and (this year) planting seedlings to replace fallen trees.

As part of the city's Green Seattle Partnership program, Seattle Parks initiated a pilot project in Fauntleroy Park to have a private contractor weed stubborn infestations of non-native invasives. Out of that work came a request for the church to address *lamiastrum* (yellow archangel), a non-native groundcover that has blanketed Fenton Glen and crept into the park, where it is pushing out beneficial natives. In addition, some 75 feet of the creek mainstem and Forest Court tributary on church land are in need of instream restoration and bank shoring.

Thus another restoration/ revegetation project was born. With the encouragement of Seattle Public Utilities staff, we secured an engineering estimate for project design and will apply in the spring to the city's Aquatic Habitat Matching Grant Program. If funded, the project would start in 2009.

During monthly field trips, teams of K-2 students from KapKa Cooperative Primary School began planting salal in an erosion-prone area near the S.W. Barton Street entrance to the park, where subsequent classes can easily monitor its progress.

SALMON IN THE WATERSHED

For lack of spawners in 2006, we had no redds to monitor in late winter for home hatch. As a consequence, monitoring for the year began in early April with our annual out-migration study.



Volunteers Tom Linde and Steev Ward were again in charge of installing a trap in the fish ladder and checking it often for outward-bound coho smolts, fry that had washed down from releases in the park, and any other species. They measured and released 24 coho smolts ranging from 4.5" to 5" in body length - a typical showing. Of particular note was the very low number (fewer than a dozen) of fry that had washed down from releases in the park.

Judy Pickens coordinated 11 spring field trips in Fauntleroy Park for area elementary students to release some 2,000 coho fry raised as part of the city's Salmon in the Classroom program. More than 400 students participated, including (for the first time) classes from Alki and Cooper elementaries. An additional 32 students came to the watershed for other learning opportunities.

KapKa Cooperative Primary School's Ruby-Kate Powers was the first violinist to serenade salmon fry in the creek.

Salmon Watch 2007 volunteers were rewarded in spades when they witnessed 89 coho spawners and one cutthroat trout in the creek. The fish held off until the second week of November and then poured in over a 10-day period. To augment weekly checks by members of Wild Fish Conservancy, volunteer biologist Steev Ward came daily to check carcasses for prespawn mortality, estimated by the city's recent *Status of the Waters* report to be about 38 percent in Fauntleroy Creek. Several redds were marked but, according to Dave Crabb with Wild Fish Conservancy, all the eggs likely washed out during an exceptional rainstorm in early December.



This year's coho spawners were vigorous and especially colorful.

REACHING OUT

Using STEP grant funding from Seattle Public Utilities, the Council published an updated edition of our watershed brochure. In addition to having it at the fish-ladder viewpoint and the north entrance to Fauntleroy Park, it reaches neighborhood newcomers in welcome bags provided by the Fauntleroy Community Association.

In May, the Council had an information table at the annual community Food Fest. Sinang Lee from the State Department of Ecology was there to drum up interest in a public meeting about the problem of fecal coliform bacteria in the creek and cove.

In October, the Council hosted a booth at the annual Fauntleroy Fall Festival, assisting 150 young children decorate salmon hats. The following week, some 30 people attended our annual community drumming at the fish-ladder viewpoint to call in the spawners.

During spawning season, watchers recorded 141 visitors at the viewpoint or below at the fish ladder. These encounters are especially valuable for cultivating community "ownership" of the creek and appreciation for what individual stewardship can do.

Webmaster Chris Nack posted news, minutes, and education information throughout the year at www.fauntleroy.net. Judy Pickens and Phil Sweetland maintained the bulletin box at the fish-ladder viewpoint, where visitors can read what's current about the creek and pick up our watershed brochure or a stewardship brochure published by a partner agency. Exposure of Council activities in other media included the following:

- Articles in every issue of the Fauntleroy Community Association newsletter and inclusion of Council meetings in FCA's monthly e-news.
- Feature article/photo on green tide in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, plus mention of Fauntleroy in an article in the *Tacoma News Tribune*, spring.
- Inclusion in two KOMO-TV reports on green tide and fecal coliform bacteria in city creeks, spring.
- Mention in a profile of Fauntleroy for the *West Seattle Herald's* "Explorer" summer supplement.
- Feature article/photo emphasizing the multi-national EarthCorps crew working on the reach-to-the-beach project, *West Seattle Herald*, summer.
- Feature article/photo on status of urban creeks, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, December.
- Feature on Judy Pickens, People for Puget Sound's *Sound & Straits* newsletter, winter.
- Summary of trainees' work on the reach to the beach, *EarthCorps Connections* newsletter, winter.

SUPPORTING RESEARCH

In response to the State Department of Ecology's focus on reducing fecal coliform bacteria in the creek, K-2 students at KapKa Cooperative Primary School began a second "poop study" in Fauntleroy Park. (The school completed the baseline study in 2004.) By the study's conclusion in May, teams will have recorded pet-waste deposits along the designated trail segment six times.

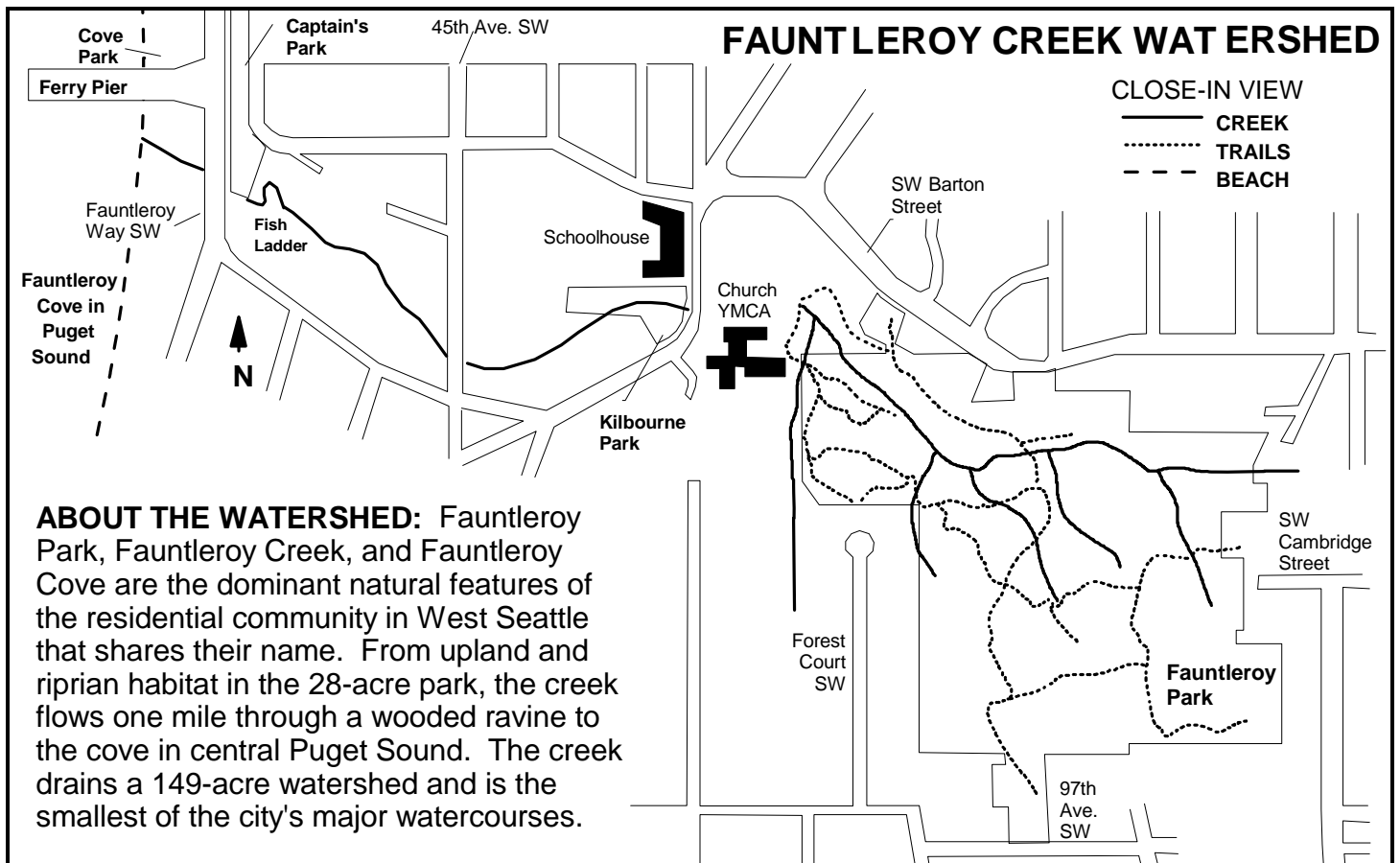


Arbor Heights students look closely to identify macro-invertebrates in their sample.

Fifth-grade students at Arbor Heights Elementary did the seventh annual fall sampling of macro-invertebrates in the upper creek, finding a slight decrease in number and size. In the spring, they did the eighth annual count of stonefly exoskeletons in the lower creek; size was similar to past years but the total continued a pattern of slow decline.

Upon completion of reach-to-the-beach construction, fifth-grade students at Gatewood Elementary began a study to document macroinvertebrate recolonization. Teams periodically sample the slightly disturbed segment, as well as the segment that was entirely rebuilt, and compare changes over time.

State Department of Ecology monthly sampling for water-quality indicators continued in 2007, augmented by baseline and periodic follow-up sampling at various stations throughout the creek system to understand where fecal-coliform bacteria may be entering the creek. In a study associated with shellfish beds, the Puget Soundkeeper Alliance collected several samples from the creek and cove, adding seldom-available information about water chemistry here.



HONORABLE MENTION

Don and Kathy Tredo, who as elementary teachers initiated the field trips on Fauntleroy Creek that grew into our education program. Retired all too briefly, Don passed away in May.

Bob Keller, who during his seven years with EarthCorps trained many crewmembers on Fauntleroy Creek. He left in August to rewind over the winter in the Alaskan outback.

Sinang Lee, who with Dave Garland ably represented (for the first time) the State Department of Ecology's regional water-quality staff on the Council.

Mark Harmon and crew from Stonehedge Tree Experts for logs installed in the reach to the beach.

Fauntleroy Church, United Church of Christ, for generously donating space for Council meetings.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

Our treasury began the year with a balance of \$2,837.64, most of which was a special gift years ago from a former creekside resident in support of our education work. We had expenses during the year of \$125.68 for postage, copies, and Fall Festival supplies. Ending balance was \$2,711.96.

We received a Seattle Public Utilities' STEP grant for publication of our updated watershed brochure. Seattle Public Utilities paid the printer directly approximately \$300.

The Council met bimonthly, in January, March, May, September, and November. Agenda and minutes are available at www.fauntleroy.net.

CONTACTS & CREDITS

Executive Committee Members:

Dennis Hinton, 206-937-1410; denhinton@msn.com
Judy Pickens, 206-938-4203; Judy_Pickens@msn.com
Randy Sleight, 206-932-0476; or randy.sleight@co.snohomish.wa.us

Website: www.fauntleroy.net

Photo Credits:

Judy Pickens, pp. 1, 3, 5
Chris Kim, p. 2
Dave Garland, p. 2
Steev Ward, p. 3