

# 2009 ANNUAL REPORT



Together with our agency and school partners, we report another productive year improving habitat in Fauntleroy Creek, Fauntleroy Park, and Fauntleroy Cove, cultivating stewardship among watershed residents, and providing well-respected streamside education.

## FOCUS ON WATER QUALITY

**STORMWATER MANAGEMENT.** Thanks to a grant from King County to People for Puget Sound, the Fauntleroy watershed became the site for a pilot project to encourage homeowners to manage more stormwater onsite.

In addition to providing information about residential stormwater management, People for Puget Sound distributed 20 rain barrels in the watershed, primarily on Forest Court S.W., where residents live directly above a creek tributary. The Council arranged for a permanent installation of one barrel funded by the grant at Fauntleroy Church, which was first used as a demonstration during the October Fauntleroy Fall Festival. At the Council's request, the Seattle Conservation Corps donated an additional barrel for a drawing, which drew 37 entries from festival-goers.

People for Puget Sound organizer Paige Haggie distributed the remaining barrels, plus lots of information and encouragement, during a Nov. 7 installation demonstration at the home of Megan and Jed Moore on Forest Court.



**Neighbors gathered 'round the rain barrel at the Nov. 7 demonstration. Kevin Wooley (left) came to pick up the barrel that his wife, Tammy, won at the Fauntleroy Fall Festival. Photo courtesy People for Puget Sound.**

**SEA LETTUCE.** The State Department of Ecology released the final report on the sea-lettuce removal pilot project for which the Council had helped secure state funding. Because the algae bloom in Fauntleroy Cove was mild when the project occurred (summer 2008), the contractor harvested sea lettuce at Dumas Bay in Federal Way only. The endeavor proved to be unprofitable for the contractor, who had hoped to use the algae to generate energy.

Judy Pickens testified in Olympia in favor of a bill to designate a portion of boat-registration fees for algae response in saltwater, parallel to existing provisions for algae response in freshwater. Although the \$140,000 allocation passed, Fauntleroy could not apply. The grant process requires that the community have a beach management district or, when assigned, that a project manager with the city apply. A small research grant made to the City of Federal Way may have findings pertinent to Fauntleroy.

Researchers also have their eye on federal grants. The Council provided a letter of support for a NOAA grant proposal submitted in the fall by a research team led by Tim Nelson, Ph.D., at Seattle Pacific University. If funded, the focus will be on sources of nutrients feeding the sea lettuce. Another letter of support, signed by leaders of the Council and the Fauntleroy Community Association, went out early in the new year to encourage EPA funding for a related research proposal.

## THE BIGGER PICTURE

**PLANNING.** In anticipation of the day when money is not so tight, the Council enlisted the help of Chris May, stormwater and urban stream habitat lead with Seattle Public Utilities, to brainstorm areas in the watershed where natural drainage techniques might be helpful.

**CODE UPDATING.** Led by Randy Sleight, the Council weighed in on proposed updates to the city's stormwater code, especially related to erosion-control measures required of contractors on small construction projects. The Council also began monitoring progress on an update of the city's Shoreline Master Program.

# SUPPORTING STUDENT RESEARCH

**WATER SAMPLING.** Gatewood Elementary 4th/5th graders got on-the-ground research experience during the school year by collecting periodic water samples along Fautleroy Creek. The Council provided volunteer support and the State Department of Ecology provided classroom training, collection oversight, and water testing. The project was part of ongoing efforts by the council and partner agencies to reduce fecal coliform bacteria in the creek.

A class delegation, led by volunteer coordinator Trisha Montemayor, reported the students' findings at the May Council meeting. Their conclusion: Fecal coliform levels changed over time according to the amount of precipitation washing bacteria into the creek.



Gatewood students mulled over data from their water samples. Photo courtesy Sinang Lee



Natalie Barr was on the collection team in March. Photo courtesy Judy Pickens

**MACROINVERTEBRATE SAMPLING.** In conjunction with their May salmon release, fifth-grade students from Arbor Heights Elementary partnered with their kindergarten reading buddies to do the annual stonefly exoskeleton count in the lower creek. The total number of exoskeletons on bridges, trees, and bushes in the study reach was slightly more than last year but, overall, the trend line has been downward since 2002. Torso length was down from the last two years, and the average was the shortest recorded since 2004.

Because of the untimely loss of teacher Lynn Barnicle to leukemia, we sought a new relationship with the school that would continue to involve students in these macro studies. Her fifth-grade colleague, Sandy Kennewick, stepped forward in time for the class to do the ninth annual macro sampling in Fenton Glen (site of upcoming restoration) in October and compile an impressive report of findings and observations. The total count of aquatic insects was the highest during this multi-year study, with insects requiring good-quality water more abundant than most years.

## REACHING OUT

**SIGNAGE.** Elizabeth Butler brought the interpretive-sign project for the Lower Fautleroy Creek and Estuary Water Quality and Habitat Enhancements project ("reach to the beach") to completion, overseeing creation and installation of the sign on the railing of the pedestrian walkway on the ferry pier. With the aid of ferry terminal staff, watershed resident Ware Lantz fabricated a mechanism to hold the sign and did the installation. The location affords a view of the restoration site as the creek discharges onto the beach in Fautleroy Cove.

The Council attempted to move forward with installation of six wayfinding signposts to aid users in exploring Fautleroy Park. With help from Seattle Parks, we explored applying for a Department of Neighborhoods grant that would have required a 100-percent match. We tabled the project when the price of the required posts far outstripped anticipated volunteer hours to make the match.



Ware Lantz firmly mounted the inviting sign on the railing overlooking the reach to the beach. Photo courtesy Chris Kim

**PUBLIC EVENTS.** Our table at the Fauntleroy Food Fest in March featured three topics. The Council emphasized pet waste with laminated take-home mini-signs and State Ecology's report on fecal coliform in creek water. Steve Richmond (owner of Garden Cycles plant care) promoted an upcoming "Tour de Fronds" in Fauntleroy Park. And Susan Harper with the city's Restore Our Waters program hosted a drawing that engaged those entering in discussion about reducing stormwater runoff.

The annual Fauntleroy Fall Festival in mid October was once again an occasion for young children to decorate and wear paper salmon hats. In addition to supporting the rain barrel demonstration, the Council invited the State Department of Ecology to have a display emphasizing water quality.



Youngsters used bingo markers, ribbon, dots, and creativity to decorate 172 salmon hats at the festival.



Sinang Lee with the State Department of Ecology's regional water-quality team enticed scores of festival attendees to consider practical ways to keep pollutants out of storm drains. DOE created the "spin the wheel" game to focus on personal actions that can help citizens protect water quality. Photos courtesy Judy Pickens

The annual salmon drumming in late October drew more than 60 people to sing, drum, and watch a salmon story enacted. Randy Sleight wrote this year's story and wore a button-blanket ensemble made decades ago by his mother, Jean, who was present.

**IN THE MEDIA.** In December, Judy Pickens received a volunteer award given by the Southwest District Council, Delridge District Council, and *West Seattle Blog* for her environmental activism. Council member David Follis initiated the nomination. Watershed news appeared in the following media during the year:

- *West Seattle Blog:* Articles, photos, and/or videos appeared about the Gatewood water sampling, Arbor Heights salmon release, stench from sea lettuce in Fauntleroy Cove, salmon drumming (both promo and event), first spawners in the creek, the "mystery" spawner, and Judy's volunteer award.
- *West Seattle Herald:* Video about the "mystery" spawner appeared on its website.
- *Seattle Channel:* *The Fauntleroy Story* documentary (with its section on creek restoration and education) aired periodically.

## IMPROVING HABITAT

**FENTON GLEN.** Final funding fell into place for the Fenton Glen Creek Restoration and Revegetation Project, a half-acre site owned by Fauntleroy Church. We received a \$25,775 Aquatic Habitat Matching grant from the City of Seattle, matched with \$11,575 from the King Conservation District, \$7,650 from the King County Department of Natural Resources, \$1,400 from the church, a \$100 gift certificate from West Seattle Nursery, and \$5,450 in volunteer time and in-kind service. By year's end, the combination wooded and landscaped site had been surveyed by volunteer Randy Sleight, much of the preliminary design work had been completed, and permit applications were nearing completion. Herbicide application on yellow archangel and eradication efforts on other invasive plants are expected to start mid spring 2010.

**PLANT ASSESSMENT.** Aided by homeowners Elizabeth Butler and Chris Kim, Bob Keller with Natural Systems Design completed an assessment of plants along the reach to the beach. A requirement of the city's Aquatic Habitat Matching Grant Program, the assessment found the site in great condition, with vegetative cover over 80 percent and, thanks to maintenance by the homeowners, invasive species under control.

**CHURCH EASEMENT.** The City Council approved an easement agreement between Fauntleroy Church and the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation to make the church's fire lane part of the Fauntleroy Park trail system. The Watershed Council initiated this project in 2003 to improve stewardship of the area, primarily the bridge over the Forest Court tributary and its approaches. Pending budget, Seattle Parks plans to start making improvements in 2010.

**FERRY TERMINAL EXPANSION.** Judy Pickens joined many neighbors in testifying at a public meeting in January about Washington State Ferries' interest in widening the Fauntleroy pier to accommodate more vehicles. She highlighted the state's own study showing the negative impact of over-water shading on juvenile salmon and also a beach assessment, done for us in 2006 by geologist Jim Johannessen, which implicated pier pilings in the logjam that traps sand and logs at the mouth of the creek. The community prevailed and the proposal was dropped from the long-range plan that the ferry system submitted to the Legislature.

**PLANT EMPHASIS.** The Council helped publicize a February giveaway of hundreds of plants to neighbors to increase the number and diversity of natives around the rim of Fauntleroy Park. Steve Richmond, a contractor working in the park, secured the plants and Council member Steve Bomkamp offered his yard as the staging area. More than 20 neighbors took advantage of the free plants and advice. Also, Council members helped Webelo Scouts plant trees in the park in April, then followed with a mulching party.



Steve Richmond (left), talked with park neighbors at the plant giveaway hosted by Steve Bomkamp (second from left). Photo courtesy David Follis



Jed Moore, David Follis, and Shane Flynn mulched saplings planted by the Webelos. Photo courtesy the remote

## SALMON: CLASSROOM & CREEK

**SALMON IN THE CLASSROOM.** In May, watershed volunteers hosted 14 salmon releases involving 500 students, preschool through fifth grade. Volunteer hydrologist Steve Winter adjusted logs at the release site to ensure ample water within the kids' reach and Seattle Parks' maintenance staff added gravel to reduce the potential for erosion. The 1,936 fry released included fish donated by volunteer Jack Lawless for youngsters not in the Salmon in the Classroom program. All told, 13 groups participated, including Sanislo and White Center Heights elementary schools for the first time.

Teachers, students, and salmon reaped the benefits of tank upgrades funded in late 2008 by private and Council donations. "Help!!!" calls to tank volunteers Steev Ward and Jack Lawless were significantly reduced - but ably responded to. Thanks to last year's gift from Elizabeth Butler, the Council was also able to provide \$100 to Sanislo Elementary so that students there could have a salmon-release field trip.

Year	Live Smolts	Released Fry	Spawners
2009	18	1,936	18
2008	17	1,790	1
2007	24	2,276	89
2006	22	2,033	0
2005	10	1,138	48
2004	11	1,534	6
2003	37	1,254	4
2002	-	1,965	5
2001	-	1,050	167
2000	-	800	126

At year's end, Phil Sweetland and Judy Pickens became West Seattle coordinators for Salmon in the Classroom. This relationship with the State Department of Fish and Wildlife will enable us to work more closely with teachers who release fish in Fauntleroy Creek.

**OUTMIGRATION STUDY.** Steev Ward, assisted by Dennis Hinton and Jack Lawless, carried out the annual out-migration study, using a net trap in the fish ladder. The volunteers documented 18 healthy-looking smolts leaving the creek between April 1 and May 30.

**SALMON WATCH.** Fourteen volunteer watchers witnessed 18 coho spawners this year. Most entered the spawning area (directly upstream of the fish ladder in the lower creek) on Nov. 8 and 9, with one or two fish per day after that. The last spawner came in on Nov. 12. Watchers saw no cutthroat trout.

All the fish were vigorous and, except for the last few, they quickly moved upstream beyond the watch area to heavily wooded habitat. Conditions were such that we could not confirm the location of redds. Many had more red coloring than usual; one was the most brilliant seen since our first watch, in 1999.



Acting on permits from the state and city, Ann Samenfink, Chris Nack, and Jack Lawless were among 12 community volunteers who cleared a logjam on the beach so spawners could get into the creek. Photo courtesy Judy Pickens

## MORE STREAMSIDE EDUCATION

**KAPKA EXPLORATION.** In addition to the students who came to the creek for salmon-release field trips, teams of students from KapKa K-2 Cooperative School came several times. In the winter and spring (the 2008-09 school year), their focus was soil and the natural composters that create it. In the 2009-10 school year, their focus was the seed cycle. They took samples back to school to create their own cycle poster over the seasons.

**VISITING TEENS.** In January, Judy Pickens led a group of students and staff from Seattle Youth Garden Works on a plant-related tour of the reach to the beach and Fauntleroy Park (plus a hot-chocolate tour of the local bakery!). The program for low-income and homeless teens develops work skills through raising produce in the growing season and propagating native plants in the wet season.

**NEW SCHOOLS.** During the year, we added two schools to our roster of education partners. Steev Ward made our connection with Sanislo Elementary, which unbeknownst to us, had been releasing fry in Fauntleroy Creek for several years. Fifth-grade teacher Shannon Crowley is now enthusiastically on board our education program.

Thanks to a parent who read about the creek on the *West Seattle Blog*, we connected with the Providence Mount St. Vincent Intergenerational Center. Preschool students from there came to see spawners in November and will be back for a salmon release.



Dave McCoy, fishing guide from Emerald Water Anglers, visited the creek Nov. 19, the same day that preschoolers from the Providence Mount St. Vincent Intergenerational Center discovered a salmon carcass (as he explained) with features of both coho and chinook. Photo courtesy Dennis Hinton

# HONORABLE MENTION

The **Seattle Parks' southwest district maintenance crew** for continuing to respond promptly to every concern we'd reported about trail or other conditions in Fautleroy Park.

**Kathy Minsch** (Seattle Public Utilities), **Carol Baker** (Seattle Parks), and **Sinang Lee** (State Department of Ecology) for serving so ably and faithfully as agency liaisons to the Council. Sinang left in January 2010 for a job in the private sector.

**People for Puget Sound** (especially Paige Heggie) for using our watershed to pilot promotion of rain barrels and **Megan and Jed Moore** for volunteering their home as a demonstration site.

The **Seattle Conservation Corps** (especially Cathie Andersen) for giving us a free rain barrel to feature in a drawing at the Fautleroy Fall Festival.

**Ware Lantz** and **staff at the Fautleroy Ferry Terminal** for installation of the reach-to-the-beach sign.

# COUNCIL BUSINESS

We began the year with a balance of \$1,961.69 and ended with \$1,885.69. We had expenses during the year of \$40 for copying salmon hats, \$100 for a bus to bring Sanislo students to the creek, and \$166 for a city permit to relocate drift logs at the mouth of the creek. We received a \$230 private donation.

We fully spent a \$300 grant from the State Department of Ecology for pet-waste signs and, with the Fautleroy Community Association as fiscal agent, continued to administer an Aquatic Habitat Matching Grant from Seattle Public Utilities for the "Lower Fautleroy Creek and Estuary Water Quality and Habitat Enhancements" project. With Fautleroy Church as fiscal agent, we began to administer city, county, and King Conservation District grants for the Fenton Glen Creek Restoration and Revegetation Project.

The Council met in January, March, May, September, and November. All meetings were open to any interested watershed resident.

For contacts, minutes, reports, and information about our education program, visit [www.fautleroy.net](http://www.fautleroy.net).

