



**FAUNTLEROY
WATERSHED
COUNCIL**

2011 ANNUAL REPORT

In September, the Council marked its 10th year of improving park and creek stewardship in the Fauntleroy watershed, restoring habitat, bringing water-quality information to residents, and providing educational experiences for hundreds of students. Thanks to every agency, nonprofit, and education partner for helping make this milestone year so productive.

PARK STEWARDSHIP

Fauntleroy Park forest stewards Steve Hodson, Peggy Cummings, and Annabelle Lota hit their stride in 2011, helping organize work parties, planting trees, and monitoring habitat and safety conditions. Steve encountered many first-timer visitors to the park, especially during the holiday season in late December, and was rewarded with encouraging comments about how inviting the park is and how healthy it is looking.

WORK, WORK, WORK. Thanks to funding from the Green Seattle Partnership, EarthCorps and the forest stewards organized two **work parties** during the year to remove ivy in the southeast corner of the park, an area long blanketed with the invasive vine. The March 19 event drew 18 people and a lot of enthusiasm. The October 8 event was equally productive, with 23 people clearing an estimated 7,000 square feet of ivy. The stewards provided guidance for Seattle Audubon as it organized a June work party for 5th graders from Alki Elementary. Annabelle got Fauntleroy Park on the Seattle Works list for volunteer groups seeking work-party sites and established a Facebook page for networking and volunteer recruitment.



Volunteers and EarthCorps trainees created four giant piles of ivy at the fall work party, all of which they composted on site. Photo courtesy Peggy Cummings

The Council began discussions with Seattle Parks staff about how to address heavily infested **Kilbourne Park** adjacent to the Fauntleroy Schoolhouse Community Center. Because wild clematis has seeded nearby properties and the seed can be viable for years, a community-wide approach is needed. Decisions about this big project will come in 2012.

Volunteers planted 200 conifer **seedlings** acquired through the Green Seattle Partnership. Helping Steve and daughter Georgia with installation were Steve Richmond and crew from Garden Cycles; David, Cathy, and Ellie Follis; and Shane and Gretta Flinn and children.

ABOUT THE WATERSHED

Fauntleroy Park, Fauntleroy Creek, and Fauntleroy Cove are the dominant natural features of the residential community in West Seattle that shares their name. Fauntleroy Park is a 28-acre wooded ravine preserved by the city as a natural public park. Its network of well-maintained trails provides access to explore and enjoy a remnant of the coastal forest ecosystem that once blanketed the Puget Sound region. Fauntleroy Creek originates in the park and drops 300 feet in elevation over its one-mile course to Fauntleroy Cove in central Puget Sound. Springs and runoff from the 149-acre watershed sustain creek flow year round. The natural, geologic watershed is approximately 493 acres. The engineered watershed (after installation of storm drains) reduced the runoff area to 144 acres.

Steve logged some 360 **volunteer hours** during the year on almost daily stewardship of the park. Peggy volunteered some 70 hours and Annabelle another 20.

ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES. In the spring, Steve discovered an **illegal clearing** in a remote section of the park. Trees and shrubs had been hacked back and groundcover stripped. Seattle Parks posted a sign and monitored the site for continued activity, which did not occur. Speculation was that, as in other parks, the clearing may have been for a marijuana grow operation. Steve and Council member David Follis salvaged what plants they could to restore groundcover and shade.

Seattle Parks staff worked quietly but forcefully with a new homeowner along SW Barton Street on fines and restitution for **illegally cutting trees** on adjacent park property. Parks also negotiated removal of fencing and landscaping at the home that encroaches on the park; removal will occur when equipment and crew for this type of work are available.

Volunteers at a work party spotted **illegal dumping** of plant material at the Barton Street entrance. Their information was sufficient for Seattle Parks to put the responsible commercial landscaper on notice. The plant material was used for trail maintenance.

TRAIL WORK. The forest stewards worked with drainage staff from Seattle Public Utilities and various staff from Seattle Parks to redirect street drainage from the steps and trail at the **SW Cambridge Street** entrance to the park. More work is to come in 2012, including stair and trail repair once the runoff problem is fully resolved. Parks staff also responded to concern about erosion where a seep was keeping the alley/trail damp in the northwest corner of the park; work done in early February 2012 is expected to improve the drainage there long-term.

In line with terms of a **city/church easement**, Seattle Parks completed transformation of the Fautleroy Church fire lane parallel to the park boundary into an official park trail with installation of locked concrete bollards to prevent unauthorized vehicle access. The Council encouraged the easement that made this trail extension possible.

Seattle Parks staff responded promptly to a **tree felled by wind** and blocking an arterial trail, deciding to leave it in place and fill the depression with rock to restore the trail to grade. Parks provided the rock; volunteers provided the muscle.

PARK USER COMMUNICATION. We moved into the newly installed kiosk at the 97th Street entrance to the park. Peggy stocked it with a park map, brochure box, park and bird photos, poop-bag dispenser, tacks for the community-bulletin board panel, and an email address (*fpark.steward@gmail.com*) for comments, concerns, and suggestions. She began maintaining this kiosk as well as the one at the Barton Street entrance.

SALMON IN THE SCHOOLS & CREEK

SALMON IN THE SCHOOLS. In the wake of state budget cuts, a Salmon in the Schools "summit" in February, largely organized by Council member Judy Pickens, led to formation of the Salmon Education Alliance to administer the program in Seattle/King County. Council member Phil Sweetland created the database of participating schools and began assisting with equipment repair. Judy helped with communication and fund-raising, with an eye toward focusing on developing and vetting lesson plans. Much work by city staff, educators, parents, and environmental advocates enabled the program to continue for 150 schools. Judy is one of three area coordinators for the program in Seattle, serving Fautleroy Creek schools.



FAUNTLEROY SALMON. In January, Judy and Phil delivered coho eggs to 12 tanks to begin the 2011 rearing season. Steev Ward and Jack Lawless again provided invaluable expertise to teachers and tank volunteers as eggs hatched, alevin buttoned up, and fry grew, solving equipment problems and advising about tank chemistry. Schmitz Park rejoined the program with a tank volunteer, and we were instrumental in connecting Roxhill with a volunteer to augment teacher/student care.



Pathfinder students count coho eggs as they put them in their tank as part of Salmon in the Schools. Photo courtesy Phil Sweetland

Year	Live Smolts Upper	Live Smolts Lower	Released Fry	Spawners
2011	147	36	2,027	14
2010		24	2,298	0*
2009		18	1,936	18
2008		17	1,790	2
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

*corrected

one, talking salmon biology, habitat, culture, and economics with 234 second- and fifth-graders. Also, Judy attended an environmental education summit called by Seattle Parks to find ways to work more collaboratively with community groups to maximize education resources.

In addition to developing lesson plans keyed to state learning standards (posted on our website for teacher access), Judy made six classrooms visits during the year and Steev made

Dennis Hinton and Judy led a record 19 **salmon releases** during May involving 647 youngsters from 11 elementary schools, 5 preschools, and 1 meet-up group. Salmon for several releases were reared by volunteer Jack Lawless for students not in the Salmon in the Schools program. Our release team provided observation activities for students waiting to release or having already released, answers to many habitat

questions, student safety at the release site, and a



(Left) Dennis Hinton helps youngsters from Alki Cooperative Preschool see a coho spawner headed up the creek. Photo courtesy West Seattle Blog



(Right) Three Little Pilgrim preschoolers got to see how much the fish they released in 2010 had grown. The large fish in the bucket is a smolt and the small fish are fry about to go into the creek. Photo courtesy Dennis Hinton

gentle introduction into the wild for just over 2,000 coho fry. Seattle School Board President Steve Sundquist was a special guest at the first release.

Dennis, Steev, and Gail Cucksey monitored out-migration April through May, this year including a trap in the upper creek, as smolts leave Fauntleroy Park. They were surprised to find 147 smolts there but only 36 in the trap at the



A spawning pair captured by Dennis Hinton.

fish ladder in the lower creek. They found no dead smolts in either trap. Various factors may have contributed to the apparent mortality during transit, among them the 6-foot drop in the drainage system at 45th Ave. SW. A site visit there by staff from State Fish and Wildlife and Seattle Public Utilities is on the 2012 calendar.

The patience of veteran salmon watchers was rewarded in mid November with 14 spawners. Jack Lawless saw the first and Ann Samenfink saw the last. About 100 people visited the fish-ladder viewpoint while watchers were on duty and many came down to the creek for a closer look and answers to many questions.

CREEK & COVE HABITAT

FENTON GLEN. With instream and revegetation work in Fenton Glen complete, the main activities this year were monitoring of plant survival, keeping the pressure on invasives, and weeding and revegetating the upper glen. We successfully closed out our grant from the King Conservation District; our Seattle Aquatic Habitat Matching Grant continues through 2012.

FISH LADDER. Plant die-off during the winter opened the fish-ladder landscaping to more sunlight, prompting concern about proliferation of Himalayan blackberry. Seattle Public Utilities responded promptly with a conservation team to sweep the rocky area of invasives.

COVE CSO: The Council continued to monitor progress on King County's "green streets" project to reduce stormwater runoff in the Barton basin, thus reducing combined-sewer overflows into Fauntleroy Cove. Installation of swales and other structures to retain more rainwater where it falls is to begin in 2013 at the crest of the hill, in the Sunrise Heights and Westwood neighborhoods.

SHORELINE MASTER PROGRAM. Council leadership commented on proposed updates to Seattle's shoreline master program with which we have had experience.

BEACH RENOURISHMENT: With help from State Department of Ecology Council liaison Chris Coffin, we were able to reach the key permitting person for the late 2010 placement, without public notification, of tons of rock and sand at the Lincoln Park seawall. We reiterated our concern about materials blanketing eelgrass beds and prey-fish habitat in the cove. Steps were taken to ensure Council notification of plans for any additional renourishment and to have the state's coastal hydrologist do an informal assessment of eelgrass in the cove.

SEA LETTUCE. Cool summer temperatures this year subdued sea-lettuce algae in the cove, so the neighborhood was not plagued by hydrogen-sulfide gas ("the stench"). The Legislature quietly extended use of boat fees to research and response to algae growth in saltwater. This action continued a grant program to which Fauntleroy cannot apply (not having a local beach management district) and to which the City of Seattle cannot apply for us (not having a mechanism for creating or supporting beach management districts). In late summer, researcher Tim Nelson was able to report results of a significant study, primarily at Dumas Bay in Federal Way, noting that habitat conditions for sea-lettuce blooms are substantially outside of local control. Together with the Fauntleroy Community Association, Council leadership sought a briefing with Sen. Sharon Nelson on these findings, looking toward amendment of the legislation. We expect that meeting to occur 2nd quarter 2012.

OUTREACH

WEBSITE: Webmaster Chris Nack reported about 200 visitors to our website through mid May, 85% of whom were new to the site. The largest segment (37%) went to the "about creek" page. At year's end, Chris discontinued her volunteer work on the community association's website but retained her contribution to the watershed by establishing an independent site at www.fautleroywatershed.org. Much work went into being able to go "live" in mid January 2012 with greatly refreshed content and inviting photos/layouts.



Chris Nack designed this inviting flag from the opening page of www.fautleroywatershed.org.

COMMUNITY EVENTS: The Council again participated in the March 15 **Fautleroy Food Fest and Membership Meeting** organized by the Fautleroy Community Association. The forest stewards offered recipes using native plants and the city's Restore Our Waters coordinator, Susan Harper, brought an interactive game about stormwater. Attendees favored free food and visiting over information tables, and the consensus was to take a break from participating in this annual event.

The annual **Fautleroy Fall Festival** in October drew an estimated 1,500 people. Ann Samenfink, Randy Sleight, Cathy Follis, and Judy Pickens helped 200 of the youngest children make salmon hats. The weeding goats planned as the centerpiece of the forest stewards' exhibit cancelled at the last minute but Peggy Cummings, Annabelle Loto, and Steve Hodson soldiered on, talking up native plants and Fautleroy Park.

A week later, a record crowd, estimated at 75, attended the annual **drumming** to call in coho spawners. Because of a scheduling conflict, musician Jamie Shilling could not participate as in prior years but she primed local musician Bronwyn Edwards, who ably stepped in. Instruments included elders with traditional drums, children with pots and spoons, and Bron on ukulele.

We emailed our **2010 Annual Report** to a long list of government, nonprofit, education, and community partners and had copies available at the Fautleroy Food Fest.

Judy and Phil represented the Council at the June 8 **citywide watershed forum** hosted by Seattle Public Utilities' Restore Our Waters.



(Left) Susan Harper, coordinator for the Restore Our Waters program at Seattle Public Utilities, talked stormwater run-off at the Food Fest. Photo courtesy Gail Ann Photography

(Right) A salmon feels funny when you wear it on your head! Most of the 200 youngsters who made hats during the Fautleroy Fall Festival wore them all afternoon. Photo courtesy Cindy Hegland





The West Seattle Blog covered the first salmon release of the season and included this photo of students trying to see their fish in the water.

IN THE MEDIA. We noted the following coverage during the year:

Seattle Times - feature in the local section (Feb.) on saving Salmon in the Schools and a feature in the travel section (Oct.) on the salmon drumming, both with quotes from Judy.

West Seattle Blog - features on salmon releases (May), spawners in the creek (Nov.), and Judy and Phil's work on Salmon in the Schools (May). Also video on the salmon drumming (Oct.).

Neighbors - features in every issue of this community newsletter.

HONORABLE MENTION

Annabelle Lota for being the first official forest steward for Fautleroy Park and being an able volunteer until January 2012 when the press of other obligations forced her to take a hiatus.

Connie King for volunteer weeding and revegetating in upper Fenton Glen so that available church funds (part of our match for grant money to restore the glen) could be spent on native plants.

Chris Nack for exceptional dedication to maintaining and upgrading our ability to communicate on the web.

Bronwyn Edwards for a superlative job leading music (with ukulele!) at the annual salmon drumming.

Steve Winter, Council member and hydrologist, for generously lending his expertise to checking creek flow at key locations and aiding in compilation of information for the new website.

Kathy Minsch for being a very attentive liaison between the Council and Seattle Public Utilities *and* for certificates of appreciation from the utility director in recognition of our 10th anniversary.

Carol Baker for another year of exceptional liaison work between the Council and Seattle Parks and Recreation.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

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

According to Treasurer Dennis Hinton, we opened the year with \$1,864.58 in the bank and closed it with \$1,881.91. We had no expenses. The closing balance includes interest income of \$4.33 and a deposit of \$13.00 resulting from an invoicing error during the course of a restoration grant.

For contacts, minutes, and information about our education program, visit www.fautleroywatershed.org.