

FAUNTLEROY
WATERSHED
COUNCIL

2005 ANNUAL REPORT

Guided by the Fauntleroy Watershed Action Plan and in cooperation with agency partners, the Fauntleroy Watershed Council provides a venue for citizens and agency staff to advance restoration and stewardship goals for Fauntleroy Park and the Fauntleroy Creek system. This report summarizes our 2005 activities and previews 2006 priorities.

RESTORING THE CREEK

Two reaches of the creek corridor received major emphasis during the year. Using a nearly \$12,000 Community Salmon Fund grant, the Council contracted with EarthCorps to complete instream restoration above the fish ladder. The large woody debris/revegetation project continued similar work completed by Seattle Public Utilities above 45th Ave. S.W.

Tom Linde did volunteer recruitment and directed two work parties, which drew a combined total of 31 volunteers. He also secured permissions from 11 of 13 households along the reach to do work on their property. Dennis Hinton developed the communication plan. Judy Pickens coordinated the project and managed permitting. EarthCorps installed 43 donated logs as large wood debris. The work rehabilitated nearly 500 feet of channel and replaced invasive species in work areas with more than 200 purchased and donated native plants.



Because of unanticipated complexities near the beach, we were able to redirect some of our Community Salmon Fund grant to development of a more detailed plan for that reach, with an eye toward installation in summer 2006. With strong encouragement from partner agencies and consultants, we sought and won funding from three new sources. The King Conservation District awarded \$19,300 to continue planning and permitting. State Ecology will fund up to \$44,235 in project costs, especially to boost water quality. By year's end we had won \$28,830 from SPU's Aquatic Habitat Matching Grant program. We were able to apply an unspent \$1,078 from the Community Salmon Fund grant to education-related aspects of the project, completing the estimated \$93,443 required.



The project brought in a strong team of consultants: Natural Systems Design for the creek plan, Coastal Geologic Services for beach recommendations, Eastern Washington University's Archaeological and Historical Services for assessment of cultural resources, ECOdecisions for permitting, Jones and Jones for landscape architecture, and EarthCorps for construction. Homeowners Elizabeth Butler and Chris Kim have been central to all planning, supplemented by perspectives on key decisions from adjacent property owners.

PRESERVING THE PARK

Using funds left over from development of the vegetation management plan for Fauntleroy Park, the city invested in the outreach services of EarthCorps to help draw more volunteers to park stewardship. Working with the Council and Seattle Parks' volunteer coordinator Janine VanSanden, Tokya Colpitts did door-to-door solicitation of park neighbors, fliers, and outreach to YMCA and corporate groups.

Resident response was minimal but she was able to draw groups into the park for four late-winter work parties to remove invasive species and plant wetland borders. The project netted more than 350 hours of labor donated by some 80 volunteers.

Other activities:

- Individual Friends of Fauntleroy Park - Steve Bomkamp, Steve Hodson, and Luli Weatherwax - continued to weed invasives, and Luli continued to look out for opportunities to involve service groups and projects in the park.
- In response to illegal dumping along the north side of the park, Tokya provided laminated signs along the alley.
- Students with KapKa Cooperative Primary School came out regularly to maintain their seedlings at the Barton Street entrance and do habitat exploration.
- Two students from Guadalupe School took over weeding and mulching of a rosebush area as their 8th-grade service project.
- At the suggestion of Scott Dolfay, Seattle Parks surfaced the muddy parking area at the 97th Street entrance with rock to make it better for parking and for the neighbors.

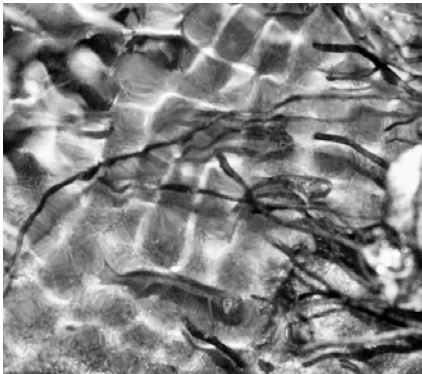


ADVOCATING FOR HABITAT

Thanks to local ferry advisory committee chairman, we were able to work amicably with Washington State Ferries to avoid maintenance activities at the terminal during return season. A surprise appearance of a pile-driving barge in late October prompted an exchange among the Council, community association, and ferry director, the result being a clear articulation of the State Ferries' recognition of the creek as an important environmental resource.

Other activities:

- The Council cooperated with WRIA 9 to encourage comments on the draft regional habitat plan for Green/Duwamish and Central Puget Sound watersheds.
- Phil Sweetland and Judy Pickens participated in a forum hosted by the city to give environmental advocates opportunity to comment on a near-final draft of Seattle's critical-areas ordinance.
- Acting for the Council, the Executive Committee wrote a letter to our congressional delegation regarding Bush Administration plans to reduce substantially the habitat area targeted for endangered salmon in the region.



MONITORING SALMON

The creek again proved its ability to produce a natural hatch when dozens of coho fry emerged above and below the fish ladder. Volunteer fish biologist Steev Ward estimated that we had two more redds than the one marked during spawning in the fall. An additional 1,100 coho fry entered the system as release fish.

Spotters off the ferry pier began reporting salmon in the cove in mid September. They began coming in on Halloween and, by Thanksgiving, two dozen veteran and new volunteers counted 48 coho spawners in the creek. Several watchers had not seen fish in three years and so were especially rewarded.

For the first time, Steev Ward was authorized to examine and mark carcasses so that the data would not be lost to predation (including very active river otter) and washout between weekly surveys for the city. The decision gave us the most reliable information to date on the number and condition of spawners. Washington Trout surveyors marked nine possibly viable redds above the fish ladder.

Council volunteers Steev Ward and Tom Linde monitored the out-migration March 15 - May. They documented 10 coho smolts, compared to 11 last year and 37 in 2003. Unlike the prior two years, they found very few fry in the trap and almost all of them were alive - possibly related to additional pools created upstream by new large woody debris. Fry trapped in late May were substantially bigger than release fish, suggesting that the head start enjoyed by "home hatch" gave them a feeding advantage.



SUPPORTING RESEARCH

Fourth-graders from Arbor Heights Elementary School again contributed to our store of habitat data by doing the annual stonefly exoskeleton count in May and the annual sampling of macro-invertebrates (a major juvenile food source) in the upper creek in October. Both reports are posted at www.fauntleroy.net.

We also received results of Seattle Public Utilities' 2004 sampling for macroinvertebrates in the lower creek. The research showed that, while benthic diversity and abundance were low throughout the city, Fauntleroy Creek ranked highest.



The Council received preliminary findings of what became a two-year study of creek chemistry by State Department of Ecology staff. Monthly samples near the mouth - including one taken for metals - showed high fecal-coliform readings and one elevated mercury reading.

REACHING OUT

Several student groups took advantage of a new activity to look for and learn about plants in Fauntleroy Park that Native Americans would have used. Judy Pickens developed the worksheet, which is posted on the education section of our Website. We provided directed streamside education experiences for some 300 youth during the year, preschool through elementary.



Other activities:

- Several Council volunteers helped with a spring nature walk in Fauntleroy Park, organized by the community association. The afternoon included a lively stroll with Seattle Parks' educator Willie Campbell to look at plants that Native Americans would have used.



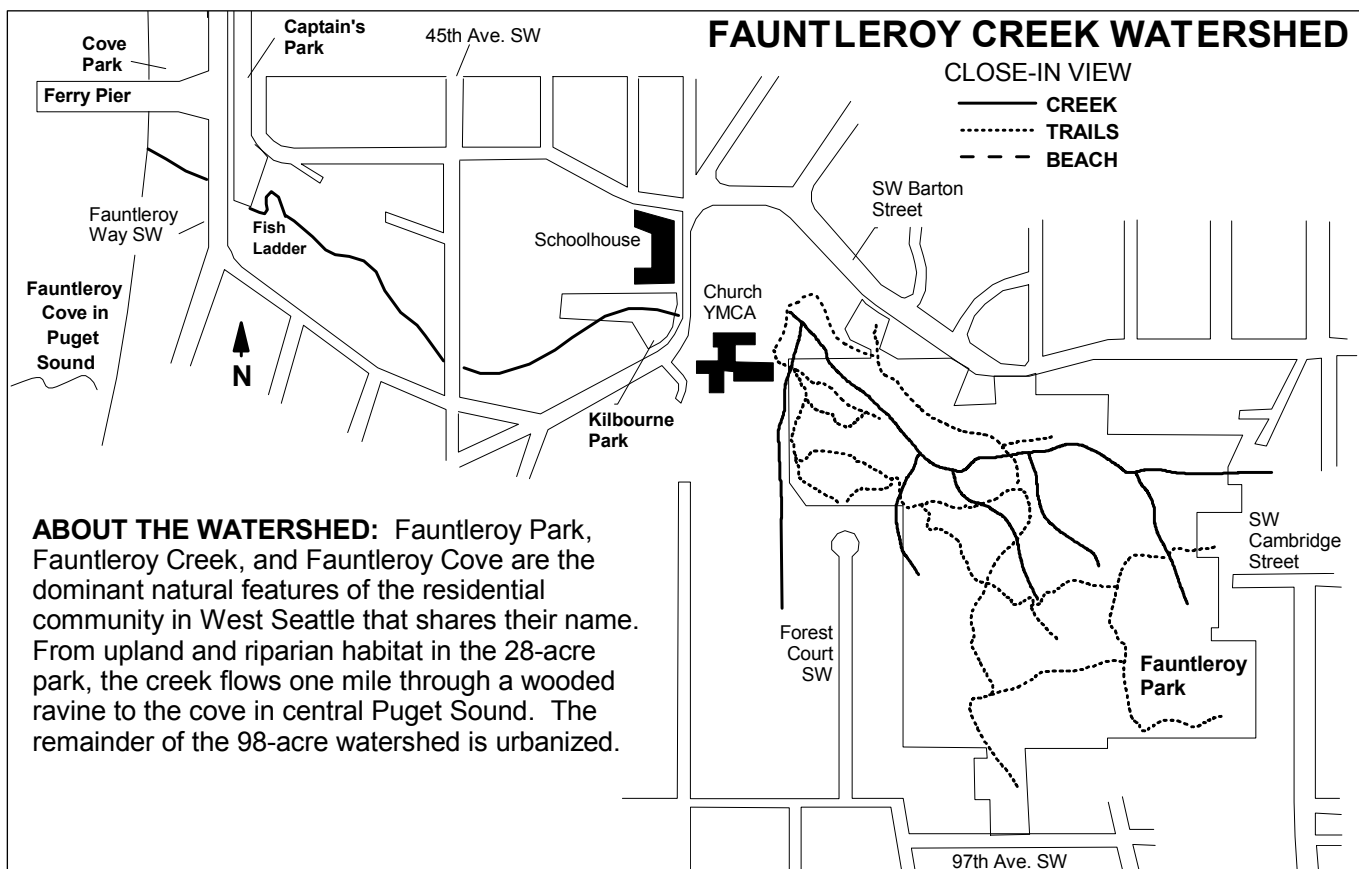
- We hosted the fourth annual drumming to call the fish home, with some 65 folks - including lots of children - in attendance.

- Luli Weatherwax took the lead in hosting a watershed table at the community association's annual meeting and had many substantive conversations with residents.

HONORABLE MENTION

Particular thanks are due the following exemplary partners of the watershed:

- **Mark Harman** (owner of Stonehedge Tree Experts) and **Seattle Parks' southwest crew** for donating logs and delivery labor to the summer project.
- **Nick Silverman** and colleagues at Natural Systems Design for contributing a critical chunk of time to planning the reach-to-the-beach project.
- **Judith Noble** with Seattle Public Utilities for facilitating the King Conservation District grant.
- **Anne Dettelbach** for shepherding a water-quality proposal through State Ecology, resulting in our largest grant award ever!
- **John Taylor** with Seattle Public Utilities for devising a way for the city to receive and forward State Ecology grant monies to the Council.
- **Bob Keller** with EarthCorps for exceptional community relations while preparing for and supervising the crew's week on the creek.
- **Tokya Colpitts** with EarthCorps for showing us how a pro does stewardship outreach.
- **Chris Woelfel** with Seattle Public Utilities for behind-the-scenes assistance whenever asked.
- **Jamie Shilling** for her continued "good vibes" at the annual drumming.
- **Jack Lawless** for raising fry for schools and groups who don't have their own to release.
- **Matthew Durham** for sharing his photographic talent *and* his enthusiasm.
- **Bardow Lewis**, our Council liaison with Seattle Parks, for being so willing to *do* something.
- **Kathy Minsch**, our Council liaison with Seattle Public Utilities, for being responsive at every single turn and so genuinely interested in the watershed.
- **EarthCorps' board** for recognizing Judy Pickens with its 2005 Sullivan Award for exemplary environmental stewardship in King County.



IN THE MEDIA

Webmaster Chris Nack continued to post news, minutes, and education information throughout the year at www.fauntleroy.net. Exposure of Council activities in other media during the year included the following:

- Quotes in an article about the drought and juvenile salmon, *West Seattle Herald*.
- Publication of the 2004 Annual Report, primarily by e-mail and on our Website.
- Preparation of a press "backgrounder" about Community Salmon Fund restoration work.
- A photo/cutline about a planting party in the lower creek, *West Seattle Herald*.
- An article on the return of coho spawners to the creek, *West Seattle Herald*.
- Mention of the return in an article in *The Seattle Times'* Northwest Weekend and footage on Fauntleroy Cove and Cove Park on Northwest Cable News, both associated with reviews of *101 Things To Do in West Seattle*.
- Inclusion of a photo from "Stream Echo" art at the fish-ladder viewpoint in MegaWatt's 2006 West Seattle community calendar.
- Frequent updates of the bulletin at the fish-ladder viewpoint; also posted on our Website.
- Publication of meeting and event notices, *West Seattle Herald*.
- Articles in every issue of *Neighbors* published by the Fauntleroy Community Association.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

The Council met on the second Thursday of January, March, May, September, and November. The Executive Committee met prior to each session to plan agendas and follow up on Council discussions. We continue to be indebted to Fauntleroy Church for providing meeting space.

In addition to creek and park advocates, attendance regularly included representatives of the church, community association, Seattle Parks, and Seattle Public Utilities. Other agency representatives participated as agenda items warranted. We welcomed Southwest District Crew Chief Bardow Lewis as Parks' liaison to the council, replacing Don Allen, who transferred to another district.

As of December 31, 2004, Treasurer Dennis Hinton reported a balance of \$2,895.82 in the Council's administrative account. The Council received Community Salmon Fund grant monies (through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation) totaling \$10,025. After expenses, balance at year-end 2005 was \$1,490.64. Additional reimbursement checks of \$855 and \$522 from Fauntleroy Community Association will be deposited in the Council checking account in early 2006. Because of IRS reporting requirements, Phil Sweetland with the Fauntleroy Community Association (our 501-c-4 fiscal agent) will provide treasurer duties for a \$19,300 grant received from the King County Conservation District. He will also manage forthcoming funds from National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, State Ecology, and the City of Seattle.

CONTACTS & CREDITS

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