

FAUNTLEROY  
WATERSHED  
COUNCIL

## 2006 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 2006 activities and previews 2007 priorities.

### **RESTORING & PRESERVING THE CREEK**

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Restoration of the reach to the beach was the emphasis of the year. Planning, construction, and follow-up on this last, unrestored section of the creek, is being financed by just over \$93,000 in grants from the King Conservation District, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Seattle Public Utilities, and the State Department of Ecology.

We submitted permit applications at the end of March, several weeks later than hoped. After beefing up certain parts of the biological evaluation, the Army Corps of Engineers proceeded with its review. We received our hydraulic permit from State Fish and Wildlife within a few weeks.



#### **SALMON DRUMMING DRAWS SINGERS, DRUMMERS, ACTORS**

Singer/teacher Jamie Shilling draws the children close at the annual salmon drumming in late October. An estimated 80 people of all ages attended the event at the fish-ladder viewpoint to welcome expected spawners.

Complications arose, however, with city permit requirements to do proposed work on the beach and we elected to drop that facet of the project in order to accomplish the stream work. Delays in other permits forced us to drop plans to construct in September. Federal permits arrived in December, allowing the project as planned; concurrence from the State Department of Ecology followed shortly. As soon as the city has completed its review, we will wrap up negotiations with the neighbors and schedule construction for July 2007.

Led by creekside homeowner Elizabeth Butler, the Council initiated a conversation with four households in the lower creek about conservation easements to help preserve the riparian corridor. Expansion to additional properties is being discussed. A multi-parcel easement along Maple Creek in north Seattle is serving as a guide. The Cascade Land Conservancy and Seattle Public Utilities are participating in the effort.

## PRESERVING THE PARK

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Planning progressed on an easement between Seattle Park and Fauntleroy Church to formalize use of the fire lane behind the church by Fauntleroy Park users as part of the trail system. By year's end, church officials had a solid draft of an agreement in hand for review.

Friend extraordinare of Fauntleroy Park, Steve Hodson, continued his regular commitment to weeding invasives, getting to the park several times a week. Luli Weatherwax took the initiative

to explore possible ways to bring groups of volunteers to the park.

Scott Dolfay took the lead in coordinating a July work party that brought 15 youth and young adult volunteers to the park. They were recruited by the local arm of Service for Peace, an international group that organizes service-learning experiences to benefit communities.

**Volunteers put their backs to it during the Service for Peace work party, which focused on removing invasive plants on the east side of the park.**

Volunteers continued to work with Seattle Parks staff to improve safety and reduce vandalism in the park. Of particular concern was evidence of beer parties and a campfire.

Seattle Public Utilities, Seattle Parks, and neighbors cooperated to address a drainage problem on the Forest Court cul-de-sac, which resulted in a washout of part of a trail. After drainage specialists did what they could, neighbors Cathy and David Follis volunteered to do the heavy lifting, shoveling and hauling yards of crushed rock to resurface the trail.

## **ADVOCATING FOR HABITAT**

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Council members followed activities in Fauntleroy Cove associated with sewage discharges into nearshore habitat. Two pipe failures on the beach in the winter resulted in sewer-line replacement between pump stations in the cove and at Lowman Beach to the north. We are "in the loop" regarding possible strategies to reduce combined-sewer overflows into the cove, a need brought home in January 2007 when torrential rains caused (among other drainage problems in the watershed) just such an overflow.

On behalf of the Council and Fauntleroy Community Association, Judy Pickens ramped up advocacy for an agency response to the continuing problem of hydrogen sulfide coming from rotting seaweed in nutrient-rich Fauntleroy Cove. She was able to enlist state Senator Erik Paulsen's office to seek funding for summer haul-outs here and elsewhere in Puget Sound and identify an appropriate agency to address underlying causes. Legislative action is pending. A \$5,000 grant to the community in the 2007 King County budget, secured by Councilman Dow Constantine, will further the project. A "white paper" on Fauntleroy's experience with the "stench" has been shared with agency staff and other parts of the Sound having similar episodes.

## **MONITORING SALMON**

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Although spawners left nine suspected redds in the fall of 2005, the observed "home hatch" in the spring was nil. Heavy winter rains scoured the channel with exceptional force, likely washing out the eggs.

For the fourth year, volunteers Steev Ward and Tom Linde monitored outward-bound coho juveniles using a soft trap in the fish ladder. Between April 9 and May 18, they counted and measured 23 smolts, 22 of them alive (compared to 10 live in 2005). They also sent 121 early-leaving fry on their way to saltwater (compared to 34 in 2005). For the second year, the number of fry leaving prematurely was much lower than the high of more than 600 recorded in 2003.

Eight schools brought nearly 300 students, preschool through fifth grade, to the creek for salmon-release field trips in the spring. Elementary students released coho fry raised through Salmon in the Classroom; preschoolers released fry raised by volunteer Jack Lawless. Just over 1,900 fish were released in the upper creek. Judy Pickens provided blank "salmon hats" for preschoolers to decorate and wear on release day. For the first time, Gatewood School opted for a full morning of activities associated with its release; Schmitz Park School may start doing the same next year.

Salmon watchers in the fall had their biggest disappointment in more than a decade when no coho returned. Volunteers began watching the cove in mid September and monitoring the creek from late October through November, never seeing a fish. Reasons for the scarcity of coho



Like preschoolers prior to salmon releases, this lad takes decorating a "salmon hat" seriously. He was among nearly 100 children who made hats at the Council's booth during the popular Fauntleroy Fall Festival.

spawners throughout the city are speculative but two factors may have been at play. An area of warm water off the Oregon-Washington coast killed many coho during their ocean phase and those that survived to return to Puget Sound faced especially aggressive commercial fishing, including tribal gill-nets and purse-seiners between Fauntleroy Cove and Alki.

## REACHING OUT

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On a chilly but dry Saturday morning in January, the Council sponsored a community bird walk organized and led by avian volunteer Robert Gresky (at left). Fifteen people participated, sighting 36 species from Fauntleroy Park to Fauntleroy Cove.

In May, the Council hosted an information table at the Fauntleroy Community Association's food fest/annual meeting, focusing on volunteer needs in Fauntleroy Park and the reach-to-the-beach restoration plan.

Council representatives led a nature walk in Fauntleroy Park in October as part of an "exploring" series of monthly events sponsored by MegaWatt, a nonprofit promoting volunteerism in West Seattle. Taking the lead were Tom Linde (mushrooms), Robert and Linda Gresky (birds), Steve Hodson (park stewardship), and Judy Pickens (creek). A dozen enthusiastic and inquisitive children and adults attended.

Seattle Public Utilities awarded the Council a \$400 STEP grant at year's end to produce an update of the watershed brochure, due out first quarter 2007.

## IN THE MEDIA

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

- Publication of the 2005 Annual Report, primarily by e-mail and on our Website.
- Frequent updates of the bulletin at the fish-ladder viewpoint; also posted on our website.
- Notices in the *West Seattle Herald* announcing the community bird walk in January and salmon drumming in October; also a large color photo from the drumming.
- Articles in every issue of *Neighbors* published by the Fauntleroy Community Association, including photos of the bird walk, salmon releases, and Service for Peace work party.
- Inclusion in MegaWatt's 2006 calendar (October) of a photo from Tom Jay's "Stream Echo" installation at the fish-ladder viewpoint.
- Publication in the national *Volunteer Monitor* of an article on the pet-waste study conducted by students in 2005.
- Coverage in the club newsletter of Judy Pickens' talk in August to the West Seattle Kiwanis.

# SUPPORTING RESEARCH

Fifth-graders from Arbor Heights Elementary School continued to add to the knowledge base about macroinvertebrates in the creek. In the spring, they conducted the annual stonefly exoskeleton count in the lower creek, finding that the number has declined over the past five years. In the fall, they did the annual sampling for aquatic larva in the upper creek. Their report to the Council noted the second year of high temperatures at the study site and half the number of critters recorded the year before.

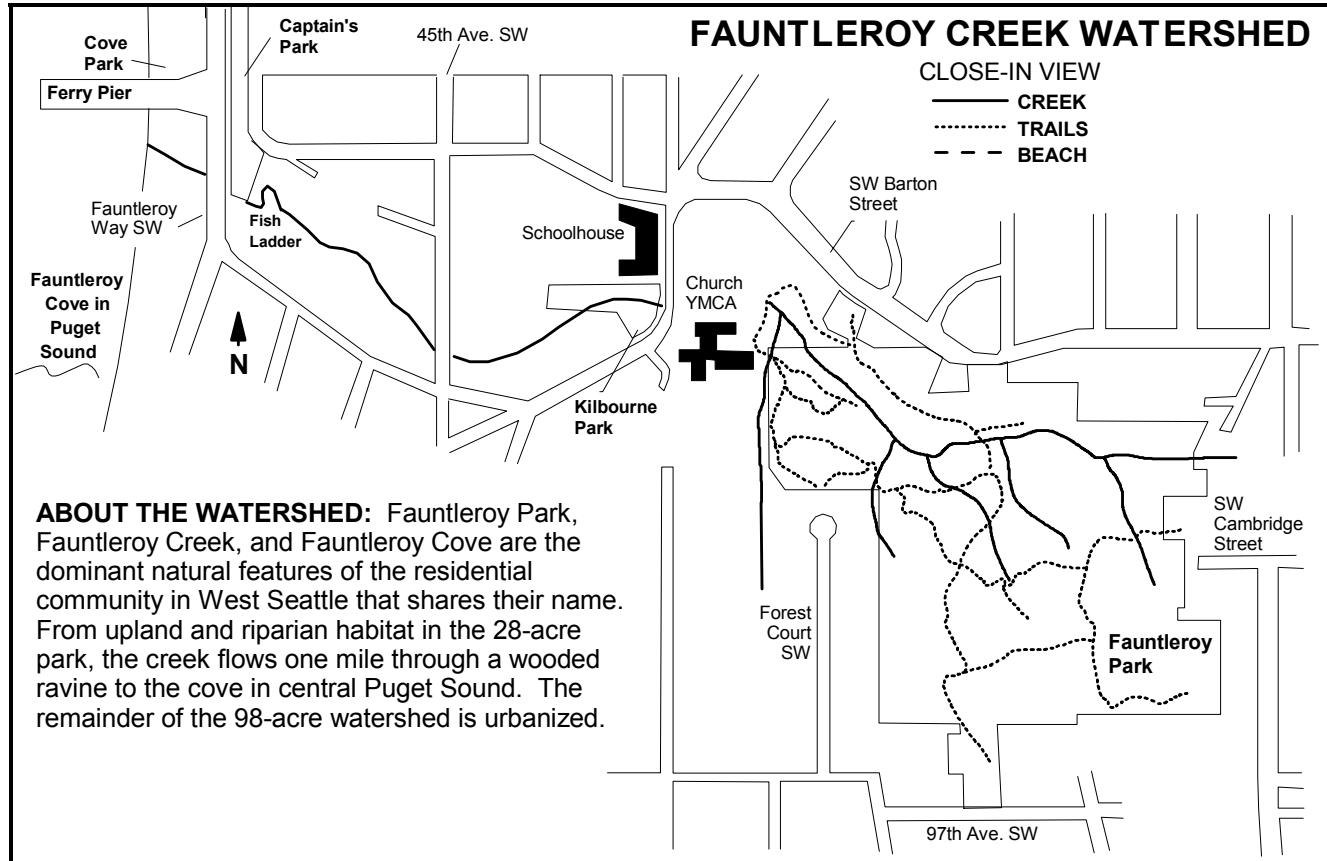
At year's end, the Council agreed to cooperate with a "total daily maximum load" study by the State Department of Ecology to understand sources of fecal coliform bacteria in the creek and propose ways to reduce the contamination. We are also working with Seattle Public Utilities to advance this water-quality work.

# HONORABLE MENTION

Particular thanks are due this year to the following partners of the watershed:

**Kathy Minsch**, Council liaison from Seattle Public Utilities, for doing her job, consistently, *very* well.

**Anne Dettelbach**, who served as Council liaison from the State Department of Ecology's regional water-quality team and was a big help in securing major grant funding for reach-to-the-beach restoration. She has gone on to other assignments and **Sinang Lee** has taken over her portfolio.



**Randel Perry**, project manager with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, who was a great help in getting our reach-to-the-beach permit application through the federal review process.

**Sherry Richardson**, volunteer coordinator for the annual salmon watch, and **all the other volunteers** who had nary a fish to count.

**Jamie Shilling**, singer and teacher, who helped organize and enliven the annual salmon drumming, and all the adult and youth **actors** who told the featured salmon story.

**Phil Sweetland, Cathy and David Follis, and Tom Linde** for pruning vegetation so that salmon watchers and visitors to the viewpoint during spawning season could see into the fish ladder; also **Bob Spencer** with Seattle Public Utilities for frustrating the blackberry bushes.

**Liann Sundquist**, chairwoman of the Fauntleroy Church Green Committee, for briefing the Council on what the church is doing to care for creation.

**Julie Hall**, aquatic ecologist with Seattle Public Utilities, for briefing the Council on nearshore juvenile habitat.

## COUNCIL BUSINESS

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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. We continue to be grateful for meeting space provided at no charge by Fauntleroy Church.

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. In the fall, Southwest District Crew Chief Bardow Lewis took a leave of absence in anticipation of retiring in spring 2007, leaving the Parks' liaison position vacant until his replacement is announced.

As of January 1, 2006, the Council checking account had a balance of \$1,490.64, according to Treasurer Dennis Hinton. Later that month, the Fauntleroy Community Association (our fiscal agent for some grants) reimbursed the checking account \$1,407 in grant-related expenses. After administrative expenses of \$30, balance at year-end 2006 was \$2,837.64. Because of IRS reporting requirements, Phil Sweetland, treasurer for the community association, continued to manage grant funds awarded for reach-to-the-beach restoration.

## CONTACTS & CREDITS

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### Executive Committee Members:

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**Website:** [www.fauntleroy.net](http://www.fauntleroy.net)

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Service for Peace, p. 2