

**FAUNTLEROY
WATERSHED
COUNCIL**

2008 ANNUAL REPORT

Together with our agency partners, we celebrate another productive year - no huge projects but many smaller efforts to improve habitat in Fauntleroy's park, creek, and cove, reach out to residents with practical stewardship information, and secure funding for in-stream restoration of the last degraded reach of the creek.

PRESERVING & RESTORING HABITAT

With in-stream/revegetation projects completed in the lower creek, planning attention this year turned to the last unrestored section, in Fenton Glen. Owned by Fauntleroy Church, the half-acre site in the upper creek hosts 100 feet of creek tributary and mainstem, plus a huge infestation of yellow archangel. This invasive groundcover blankets the area and has crept into adjacent Fauntleroy Park. The Council applied for and expects to receive nearly \$36,000 in city and county grant funding for the project. Another \$10,000 is being sought from the King Conservation District. That third grant, together with \$1,200 from the church and \$6,500 in volunteer hours and in-kind services, will complete match requirements. If all the funding pieces come together shortly, work will begin late first quarter 2009.

In April, 20 Cub Scouts from Pack 793 in West Seattle, aided by a dozen adults, earned their conservation badges during a work party in Fauntleroy Park planned by the Council and Seattle Parks. They mulched for weed control, dug blackberry crowns, and used fell wood to discourage foot traffic through a planting area.



Cub Scouts distributed a mountain of wood chips as they earned their conservation badges, plus a thank-you salmon release.



ONGOING PARK STEWARDSHIP

Long-time park steward Steve Hodson (with sidekick, Kodi) joined David Follis and current property owner Dan Ayers to haul quite an assortment of junk from the east side of Forest Court S.W., abutting Fauntleroy Park. David is also adept at spreading gravel when street runoff damages the Forest Court trailhead.

In response to high water from a torrential rain in December 2007, Nick Silverman (engineer with Natural Systems Design) led volunteers in installing coir logs and matting at the mouth of the creek in Fauntleroy Cove to provide extra stability until plants are better able to hold the soil. Although the reach flooded during that rain, the water did not threaten adjacent homes and it quickly receded into the defined channel.

Late in the year, the Council began working with Chris May, stormwater and urban stream habitat lead with Seattle Public Utilities, to identify possible sites in the watershed for installation of natural drainage features that could clean or reduce the volume of runoff. This collaboration is ongoing.

SUPPORTING RESEARCH



Sinang Lee with State Ecology presents a trophy (dog with scoop) to KapKa students in recognition of their research.

During the 2007-08 school year, students from KapKa Cooperative K-2 repeated the "poop study" in Fauntleroy Park to document any changes in dog-walker stewardship since the baseline study in 2004. In order to survey the 600-ft. study trail every month without the chance of double counting, they collected deposits as they went.

Although the average count was down (11 compared to 14 in 2004), they concluded that dog walkers still have room for improved stewardship. Installation of fell limbs at a large clearing to define the trail edge may have reduced off-trail fecal deposits in that area.

In January, the Puget Soundkeeper Alliance reported on a study of Olympia oyster populations and chemical levels in Puget Sound. It included testing Fauntleroy Creek for heavy metals; only trace levels of zinc and arsenic were found.

Fourth- and fifth-grade students at Gatewood Elementary reported to the Council in May on their macroinvertebrate re-establishment study in the last reach of the creek before it discharges into Fauntleroy Cove. Their task was to compare rebuilt channel with relatively undisturbed channel. They found the entire reach teeming with life, mostly species that live only in good-quality water. They concluded that rebuilding the channel had no negative effect on macroinvertebrates, which re-established themselves quickly.

Late in the year, the Council initiated another research project with Gatewood School whereby teams of fourth- and fifth-grade students will collect water samples along the creek. Their work will significantly increase the number of times that the State Department of Ecology can test for fecal coliform bacteria and other indicators of water quality. Regional DOE staff Sinang Lee and Dave Garland, along with Councilmember Jed Moore (fish biologist with Long Live the Kings) trained the students in December and will assist streamside through the rest of the school year. Jed will also help students track and report test results from the DOE lab.



Team 5 students from Gatewood Elementary and Volunteer Coordinator Trish Montemayor (at creek) documented re-establishment of aquatic insects in the reach to the beach.

Fourth- and fifth-grade students from Arbor Heights Elementary continued the annual count of stonefly exoskeletons in the lower creek. In May, they reported finding 20 exoskeletons in the study area, continuing a gradual trend downward since 2002. They also found the longest torso recorded to date (5.5 cm). With no spawner carcasses in the study area in 2006, they observed, food for stoneflies would have been scarce for a year during their lifespan. Another possible contributor: A sizable crop of home hatch from 89 spawners in 2007 could have resulted in more stonefly larva being eaten by juveniles before they could morph to flying stage.

In October, the same class at Arbor Heights did the seventh annual sampling of macroinvertebrates in the upper creek, in Fenton Glen. Channel conditions and water chemistry were similar to prior years, with temperature the lowest in five years. The macro larva count was up slightly and about average for the course of this study. Indicators of good-quality water (stoneflies, mayflies, and caddis flies) were also about average.

REACHING OUT TO THE WATERSHED & BEYOND



Council volunteers assisted 150 young children in decorating the ever-popular salmon hats at the annual Fauntleroy Fall Festival in October. Also, as part of outreach to reduce fecal coliform bacteria in the creek, Scoopy Doo (a dog suit kindly loaned by the Pacific Shellfish Institute in Olympia and worn by two volunteers) handed out poop bags to dog owners and "I'm doo-ing the right thing!" stickers to those already in the stewardship groove.

Elizabeth Butler took charge of creating an interpretive sign about the "reach to the beach" restoration project to be installed on the ferry pier's pedestrian railing. Her mother, nationally known artist Karen Brussat Butler, contributed a striking watercolor of the estuary to draw attention to text about the project and creek system, plus the logos of project partners. Installation is expected first quarter 2009.

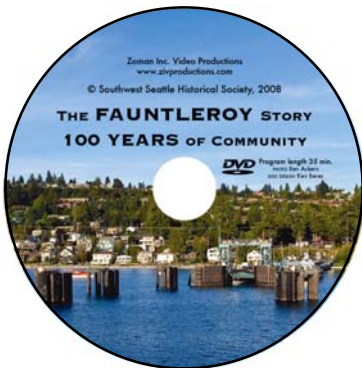
In March, the Council had an information table at the annual community Food Fest. In May, Judy Pickens represented the watershed on a panel on watershed issues organized by Sustainable West Seattle for its first festival, mounted in conjunction with the West Seattle Farmers Market.

Judy was one of five area environmental activists selected by KIRO-TV as finalists for a "heroes" award. Video about her and the creek was broadcast and available on the station's website. The winner through on-line voting received \$5,000 for a favored non-profit. She was runner-up (508 votes compared to the winning 538) but the recognition appeared to enlarge the circle of citizens aware of restoration and education work in the watershed.



DRUMMING DRAWS LIVELY CROWD

In October, more than 60 people, including many children, gathered at the fish-ladder viewpoint to call in the spawners with spirited singing, storytelling, and drumming. Jamie Shilling led the music.



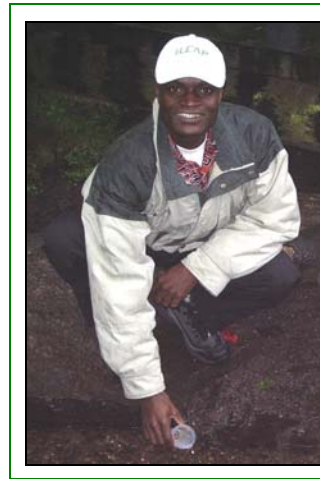
Information about education activities (including a salmon release by Little Pilgrim School) and creek and park stewardship were featured in *The Fauntleroy Story: 100 Years of Community*, a 35-minute, professionally produced documentary about the neighborhood released in September.

Webmaster Chris Nack posted news, minutes, and education information throughout the year at www.fauntleroy.net. We maintained a publication box stocked with the watershed brochure at the S.W. Barton Street entrance to Fauntleroy Park. We also posted current bulletins about the creek and maintained a publication box at the fish-ladder viewpoint.

Wider notice of Council activities during the year was as follows:

- Articles about the city's 2007 State of the Waters report in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (including interview with and photo of Judy) and in the *Seattle Times*.
- Articles about restoration of the creek reach to the beach in the *EarthCorps Connections* newsletter and WRIA 9's *News Fit for a King* newsletter
- Article in People for Puget Sound's newsletter featuring Judy as a founder of the Council
- Fauntleroy profile in the "Explorer" section of the *West Seattle Herald*, including Council activities
- Coverage by KING-TV of KapKa Cooperative K-2's pet-waste study

- Quote and reference to the creek in the book, *Emerald City: An Environmental History of Seattle*
- Mention in an article in the *West Seattle Herald* about the Fautleroy documentary
- Photos, video, and story on the *West Seattle Blog* about the salmon drumming; numerous other mentions on the Blog throughout the year about watershed activities
- Announcements of Council activities in periodic "Upcoming Events" table tents initiated this year for Endolyne Joe's restaurant and The Original Bakery in Fautleroy's business area.



THREE COME LONG WAY FOR SALMON
Togo scholar Abel Chadi Adje and colleagues from Cameroon and Nepal met with Judy Pickens and Phil Sweetland in May to talk about community volunteering and release salmon. They were participating in Antioch University's program that hones the public-service skills of global citizens.

IMPROVING WATER QUALITY

Continuing a process begun in 2007, the Council worked with the State Department of Ecology and Seattle Public Utilities to finalize a water-quality improvement plan aimed at reducing fecal coliform bacteria and related pathogens in the creek. The outreach portion of the plan targets pet owners about responsible disposal of pet waste. (See other sections of this report for more on pet waste.)



A \$300 grant from the State Department of Ecology funded the creation and installation of 17 tailor-made pet-waste signs around the watershed and in other West Seattle locations to help reduce fecal coliform levels in fresh- and saltwater.

Councilmember Judy Pickens worked closely with State Department of Ecology regional water-quality staff on a state-funded project to address "green tide" in Fautleroy Cove. (Excess nutrients in the water fuel growth of sea lettuce that, when it dries on the beach, emits noxious hydrogen-sulfide gas.) After much planning, a removal methodology was devised, permits were secured, a contractor was selected, and neighbors were informed. Cool summer temperatures, however, kept sea lettuce growth in the cove below levels for permitted removal (although pilot removal did occur in Federal Way's Dumas Bay).

In conjunction with anticipated seaweed removal, Elizabeth Butler devised an outreach plan to educate beachfront property owners about effective ways to reduce the nutrients they may be sending into the cove from lawns and gardens. This promising plan, too, was thwarted; agencies could not afford to provide resource people for the small gatherings that have been shown to have high potential for changing behaviors.

Because the state allocation was specifically for hauling out seaweed by the end of the year, efforts to retain leftover funds earmarked for Fautleroy were unsuccessful. Judy then turned her attention to working with State Rep. Sharon Nelson on proposed legislation that would provide an ongoing funding source for seaweed research and emergency response.

The Puget Soundkeeper Alliance provided water-quality stewardship signs tailored to the watershed for installation at Fautleroy and Lincoln parks and at the fish-ladder viewpoint.

SALMON IN THE CREEK



With help from mom Sarah and fellow parent John Woodruff, Lane Bucher releases coho fry. Volunteer Jack Lawless provided fry for Lane's "meet-up" group of preschoolers.

From late April through May, students from 12 elementary and preschools released 1,845 coho fry in the upper creek. These juveniles augmented a few dozen "home hatch" observed in the lower creek as a result of fall 2007 spawning.

Through April and May, volunteers documented the annual out-migration of coho smolts, using a soft trap installed in the fish ladder (lower creek). They recorded a total of 17, below average for the six years of this study. More may have left during a brief period when the trap overflowed because of excess debris. The range of total body length was typical, as was the number of fry leaving the creek prematurely. Sighting of a school of seven smolts just above the fish ladder in late April prompted us to reconsider our assumption that smolts leave for saltwater one or two at a time.

During spawning season, fishers reported only a few coho in the cove; sea lions and seals were active, as were tribal purse seiners off shore. Creek conditions were excellent and rains were periodic and generous. Our watch ran Oct. 27 to Nov. 24 and involved 16 volunteers. They reported only one coho spawner, who appeared on Nov. 8 in the fish ladder and waited in vain for a mate.

In the wake of an especially frustrating year for Salmon in the Classroom teachers in managing their tanks, the Council sought money for key upgrades that neither Seattle Schools nor State Fish & Wildlife could fund. A watershed resident generously donated \$1,200 for use by seven public schools that release here. The Council added another \$340 so that two private schools could also participate. B & D Aquarium in White Center cooperated by setting up a \$170 account for each school to spend in time for the 2009 growing season. Of particular note: Larger filters will help tanks keep pace with waste as the fish grow, thus eliminating the need to release fish too early or set up an off-site tank.

Year	Live Smolts	Released Fry	Spawners
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

THE BIGGER PICTURE

Randy Sleight led the Council in reviewing and commenting on proposed updates to the city's stormwater code. He also attended a workshop focusing on priorities for eliminating combined sanitary and storm sewer overflows during heavy rain, a regular occurrence in Fauntleroy Cove.

Five representatives from the Council attended a "watershed summit" hosted in early December by Seattle Public Utilities' Restore Our Waters program. This first such gathering in many years of creek and lake advocates from throughout the city proved a worthwhile venue for sharing information, successes, challenges, and partnering opportunities. Follow-up sessions are planned.

Councilmembers Phil Sweetland and Scott Dolfay took the lead in challenging the city's new way to determine drainage assessments on properties exceeding 10,000 sf. Specific concerns are relying on aerial photos to estimate percent of impervious surface and excluding widely advocated techniques for responsibly managing runoff on-site. By year's end, they had the ear of the mayor and supervisory drainage staff and more clarity about next steps for getting the policy amended.

HONORABLE MENTION

Tracy Record and colleagues at the **West Seattle Blog** for faithfully covering watershed news and events and for over-the-top promotion of Judy Pickens for the KIRO environmental award.

Susan Harris and **Tara Decrow** with Washington State Ferries for passing along 500 posters about Puget Sound marine life for our salmon-release students.

John Garner for generously funding salmon-tank upgrades for seven public schools (as advocated by ardent volunteer salmon raiser **Jack Lawless**).

Karen Brussat Butler for her exquisite watercolor to help explain the reach-to-the-beach project.

Bob Houk, owner of the Center Sign Shop, for making us such a deal on pet-waste signs.

The **Seattle Parks' southwest district maintenance crew** for many supportive services.

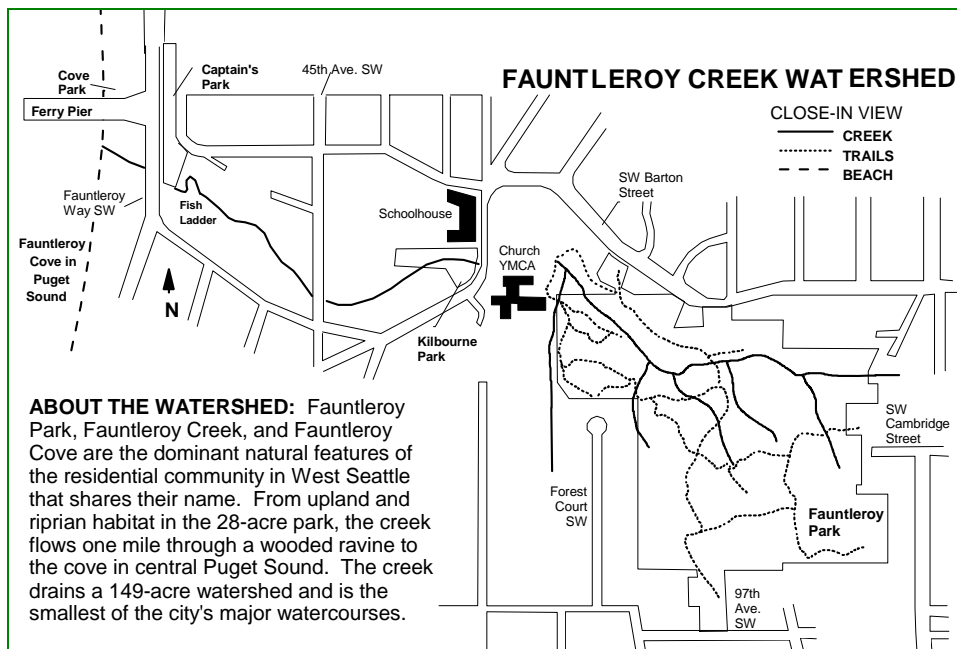
Kathy Minsch (Seattle Public Utilities), **Carol Baker** (Seattle Parks), and **Sinang Lee** (State Department of Ecology) for serving so ably and faithfully as agency liaisons to the Council.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

We began the year with a balance of \$2,711.96 and ended with \$1,961.24. We had administrative expenses during the year of \$410.72 for supplies associated with archiving photos. We received a \$1,200 private donation for Salmon in the Classroom tank upgrades for seven public schools and added \$340 from our treasury so that two private schools could participate; teachers accessed funds through an account established at B & D Aquarium.

We received a \$300 grant from the State Department of Ecology's Direct Implementation Fund for "Pet Waste Hazard Signage in Fauntleroy Creek." We continued to administer three grants associated with the "Lower Fauntleroy Creek and Estuary Water Quality and Habitat Enhancements" project (referred to as "reach to the beach"): an Aquatic Habitat Matching Grant from Seattle Public Utilities, a Coastal Protection Fund grant from the State Department of Ecology, and a Community Salmon Fund grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Federation.

The Council met in January, March, May, September, and November. We had an informal meeting in July associated with the Mayor's Restore Our Waters program and yellow archangel eradication.



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Agenda, minutes, reports, and information about our education program are posted at www.fauntleroy.net.