

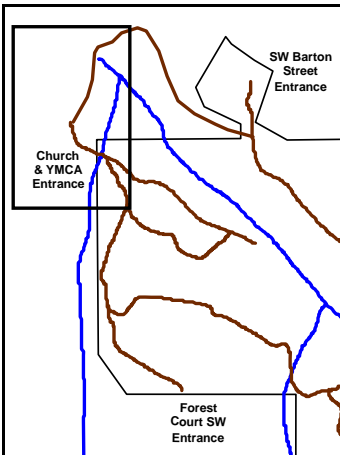
**FAUNTLEROY  
WATERSHED  
COUNCIL**

# 2010 ANNUAL REPORT

Thanks to partnerships with governmental agencies and schools, we are pleased to report another productive year improving park and creek stewardship in the Fauntleroy watershed, restoring habitat, reaching out to residents with water-quality information, and providing educational experiences for hundreds of students.

## PARK STEWARDSHIP

The year brought several strides forward for Fauntleroy Park and those who value and enjoy this uniquely natural space in the city's park system. Partnerships are what made these strides possible.



Box defines the area of easement-related upgrades.

**EASEMENT IMPROVEMENTS.** With final approval last year of the easement between Fauntleroy Church UCC and Seattle Parks, the Parks trail crew was able to replace a derelict bridge, upgrade its approaches, and bring the church fire lane up to trail standards. The city also revegetated both sides of the lane. By year's end, park users were enjoying a safe, dry trail from the woods to the bridge and dry footing from there to the church parking lot. A pedestrian lane remains to be painted across the lot to connect to the alley trail.

**RESTORATION.** In the spring, a community-service crew from King County Corrections inadvertently stripped a steep slope along the alley trail. As soon as the mistake was discovered, Seattle Parks covered the area with jute

matting, straw, and grass seed for immediate erosion control, then scheduled full revegetation over the winter.

Two difficult-to-weed areas of the park got special attention during work parties made possible by the city's Green Seattle Partnership program. In July, a crew from EarthCorps worked alongside 29 volunteers to clear 6,000 sq. ft. of English ivy. Fewer people turned out in

November but they pulled another impressive pile of ivy.



Forest stewards Annabelle Lota, Steve Hodson, and Peggy Cummings, with junior steward Georgia Hodson. Photo courtesy Judy Pickens

**FOREST STEWARDS.** November brought the appointment of not one but *three* forest stewards for Fauntleroy Park through the Green Seattle Partnership. Forest stewards are monitoring conditions in the park, helping organize work parties, and encouraging stewardship among park users.

**INFORMATION.** Also in November, Carol Baker, district maintenance chief for Seattle Parks, oversaw installation of a covered kiosk at the 97th Street entrance to the park. At year's end, it was becoming the go-to place for park users entering from the south, with a trails map, bird list, publication box, and bulletin-board space public postings.



Peggy Cumming at the new 97th St. kiosk. Photo courtesy David Gould

# CREEK HABITAT

**REACH TO THE BEACH.** The Council achieved a milestone in November by filing the final report to the city on the Lower Fauntleroy Creek and Estuary Water Quality and Habitat Enhancements (reach-to-the beach) project. Fund-raising began in 2005 and garnered just over \$93,000 in grants from the State Department of Ecology, Seattle Public Utilities, King Conservation District, and the Community Salmon Fund. The instream portion was completed in 2007; then followed a three-year period of monitoring plant survival.



The reach to the beach as it was in 2005 (above) and as it was in 2010 at the close of the project (right).  
Photo courtesy Bob Keller



The last expenditure was a comprehensive evaluation, prepared by Natural Systems Design, which gave all facets of the project high marks. After paying final bills, the undertaking cost \$78,000. Property owners Elizabeth Butler and Chris Kim continue to monitor and pay for herbicide treatment of reed canary grass near the beach.

We also provided perspective for a report marking accomplishments to date of the city's Aquatic Habitat Matching Grant program.

**FENTON GLEN.** Boots were on the ground this year to restore lower Fenton Glen. The \$52,850 project on the last degraded section of the creek is funded by Seattle Public Utilities' Aquatic Habitat Matching Grant program, King Conservation District, King County, and Fauntleroy Church UCC (the property owner). It involves herbicide and hand eradication of invasive plants (especially yellow archangel), instream diversification of 180' of channel with logs and rocks, revegetation with 400 native plants, and monitoring plant survival.

Steve Richmond, owner of GardenCycles, completed herbicide application in time for EarthCorps to do instream construction in early September. The crew returned in mid October to plant.

Also, the church invested money and labor to refresh the upper glen. After a work party made headway mucking out the site, crew-members with GardenCycles volunteered their time to finish the job so that all funds could be used for plants. Their generosity greatly enhanced habitat and aesthetic values.



(Above) The EarthCorps crew that did instream restoration. (Left) EarthCorps volunteer specialist Irena Castello from Serbia got down and dirty with Little Pilgrim preschoolers to install plants, adding an outreach component to the project. Photos courtesy Bob Keller



# REACHING OUT

**COMMUNITY EVENTS.** The Council's table at the annual Fauntleroy Food Fest in March focused on rain gardens and other ways that homeowners could retain more stormwater where it falls.



Scoopy Doo chatted with a young festival goer as "dogwalker" Kate Pierce handed out poop bags. Photo courtesy *West Seattle Blog*

At the annual Fauntleroy Fall Festival in October we provided our perennial salmon-hat booth for nearly 200 children to decorate hats and then wear them throughout the event. Our newly fledged forest stewards staffed an information table to introduce themselves to park users and emphasize the need for volunteers. And not to be missed was Scoopy Doo, back by request of the festival steering committee to emphasize the need for proper disposal of pet waste. Seattle Public Utilities provided biodegradable bags for Scoopy to distribute.

**COMMUNICATION.** We helped Steve Richmond publicize his second "Tour de Fronds" interpretive walk to introduce area residents to the diversity of native plants in Fauntleroy Park.



Guide Steve Richmond in March with *Tour de Fronds* participants. Photo courtesy David Follis

Near year's end, we completed an update of the watershed brochure, our sixth edition. It is now available at Fauntleroy Park kiosks and at the fish-ladder viewpoint in the lower watershed for anyone interested in knowing about park and creek restoration and stewardship or in taking an updated, self-guided nature walk.

Webmaster Chris Nack faithfully posted minutes, current news, and other items of potential public interest on our website, hosted by the Fauntleroy Community Association (FCA).

We tied into the regional "Puget Sound Starts Here" campaign by recommending Endolyne Joe's restaurant as a candidate for using a set of drink coasters printed with water-quality advice.

**IN THE MEDIA.** Exposure of Council activities in the media included the following:

- Articles in every issue of FCA's newsletter, *Neighbors*, about Council projects during the year.
- Inclusion of watershed events on FCA's events list distributed at Endolyne Joe's and The Original Bakery; also on the monthly events list distributed by e-mail to all FCA members.
- Photo and story on the *West Seattle Blog* in January about delivery of salmon eggs to schools.
- Stories with photos about salmon releases on the *Blog* and *KOMO News* website in May.
- Mention of Fauntleroy Creek in the *Seattle Times* religion column just before Earth Day (April).
- Article on the West Seattle Elementary marine-science grant project (see p. 5) in the city's Restore Our Waters summer e-newsletter.
- Story and photo on the *Blog* in July about Steve Hodson's volunteer work in Fauntleroy Park.
- Article and photos on the *Blog* in October about EarthCorps planting in Fenton Glen with Little Pilgrim preschoolers.
- Article about Judy Pickens' environmental activities by People for Puget Sound, posted on its website in November as part of its 20th anniversary recognition.
- References to the creek and quotes from Judy Pickens in a *Seattle Times* December profile of the Fauntleroy neighborhood.

# SALMON IN THE CREEK & CLASSROOM

**JUVENILES AND SPAWNERS.** Volunteer fish biologist Steev Ward walked the lower creek in late winter and saw an estimated 200 home-hatch fry from spawning in the fall. Steev, Jack Lawless, and Dennis Hinton checked a smolt trap in the lower creek from early April to late May, documenting 24 coho smolts leaving for saltwater.

A total of 497 youngsters released 2,298 fry during 16 field trips in May, guided by Judy Pickens and Dennis. Jack raised 500 of that total for the 128 children who did not bring their own fish; among them were a Head Start program and two preschools that were new to releasing here.



Judy Lane caught this sea lion swallowing a salmon in Fauntleroy Cove in November, perhaps one headed for Fauntleroy Creek.



Very young children, including these from a MOMS meet-up group, released "volunteer" salmon. Photo courtesy Bonnie Gilbert.

are to teach students the elements of a healthy watershed, enhance observation skills, demonstrate how to be stewards of the local watershed, and help evaluate the general health of the creek. Students found only one stonefly larvae, a species that requires clean water. The drop in abundance and diversity may be attributed to channel disturbance during instream restoration at the study site.

**EXOSKELETON COUNT.** Arbor Heights fifth-graders were back in May with their kindergarten reading buddies for the 11th annual stonefly exoskeleton count in the lower creek (due upstream of the fish ladder). The number continued a downward trend since 2002, which may have been attributable to a pattern of long, cool springs and/or the relatively late date of this year's count.

Year	Live Smolts	Released Fry	Spawners
2010	24	2,298	1*
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

\*unconfirmed

In line with a sparse coho return regionwide, salmon watchers did not observe any spawners in the creek between Halloween and Thanksgiving. A creekside neighbor reported that her dog brought home a salmon in early November. The medium-sized dog was later observed prowling along the creek, which gave the report credence.

**SALMON IN THE CLASSROOM.** This year, Judy Pickens and Phil Sweetland began coordinating the Salmon in the Classroom program for 10 schools (11 eventually released here). They picked up eggs in early January from the state's Soos Creek Hatchery and distributed them to local schools, in several instances fielding questions from students. In May, they made sure all schools submitted release reports to State Fish and Wildlife. Jack Lawless and Steev Ward backed our tip sheet for teachers with on-call technical assistance.

In the fall, Judy began monitoring the status of state funding for the program, which was eliminated in late December. She then turned to organizing a "summit" of key people to begin to preserve the program citywide.

## STUDENT RESEARCH

**BENTHIC STUDY.** For the 10th year, fifth-grade students at Arbor Heights Elementary sampled for macroinvertebrates in the upper creek (Fenton Glen) in October. Study objectives



## OTHER EDUCATION

**MARINE SCIENCE.** In the spring, the Council won a \$1,185 grant from the Puget Sound Partnership through the King County EcoNet group. It provided a marine-science unit for low-income/immigrant fifth graders at West Seattle Elementary to help make Sound stewardship "real" to them and their families. In cooperation with Seattle Schools and the Seattle Aquarium, the students had two classroom lessons, a field trip to the aquarium, and guided beach exploration during super-low tide at Lincoln Park, the closest public beach to their homes. The latter experience included a class picnic.

Enthusiasm was high, especially among students new to the aquarium and/or beach. Exceptional cooperation by the classroom teacher helped the project, at the tag end of the school year, move forward. Despite offering Somali translation and inviting at-home small children to come along, few parents accepted the invitation to participate in the beach study.



Volunteer Liz Thomas encourages all hands to touch during the students' introduction to sea life at the aquarium. Photo courtesy Phil Sweetland

**EXPLORATIONS.** In addition to the 497 youngsters who came to the watershed to release salmon, we had 19 students come to study the seed cycle, 13 preschoolers come for a creek walk, and 27 students sampling for macroinvertebrates, for a year-end total of 556 students from 16 schools.

## HONORABLE MENTION

**Janice Mathiesen** with the Seattle Aquarium, **Kathryn Show** with Seattle Schools, and **Tara Slinden** with West Seattle Elementary for partnering with us to offer the marine-science unit. Also the **Puget Sound Partnership** and **King County EcoNet** for funding it.

**Pacific Shellfish Institute** for loan of the Scoopy Doo costume and watershed resident **Elizabeth Butler** for schlepping it back and forth from Olympia.

**Jacobo Jimenez** with Seattle Parks for bringing so many skills to bridge building and trail making behind Fauntleroy Church.

**Joanna Nelson** with the Green Seattle Partnership for leaning on us to identify willing and able forest stewards for Fauntleroy Park.

**Bob Keller** with Natural Systems Design for bringing just the right skills to the Fenton Glen restoration project and **Fauntleroy Church UCC** for support funding, volunteers, and crew hospitality.

**Jack Lawless** and **Steev Ward** for seemingly boundless enthusiasm for raising healthy salmon.

**Phil Sweetland** for accurately administering our grant funding.

**Tracy Record** with the *West Seattle Blog* for her ongoing passion for the environment and education.

**Kathy Minsch** with Seattle Public Utilities and **Carol Baker** with Seattle Parks for being faithful and competent agency liaisons to the Council - and Kathy again for her attention to the many details involved in administering our Aquatic Habitat Matching grants and for her wise and timely counsel.

### 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.

# ADVOCACY

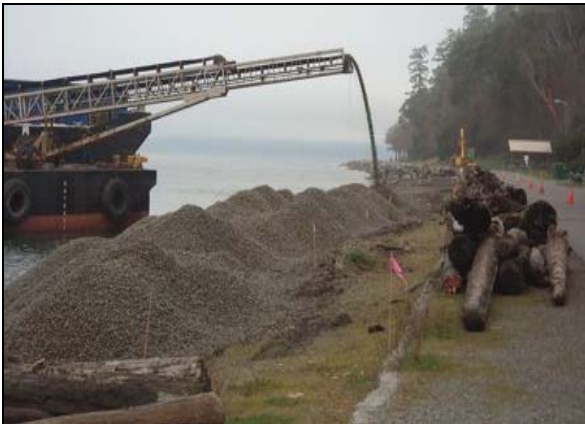
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**NEARSHORE HABITAT.** Although a cool summer did not produce a sea-lettuce bloom in Fauntleroy Cove, the public-health concern about hydrogen sulfide from rotting seaweed continued. And although the state made provision for local taxing districts (beach management districts) to generate funding for green-tide response, Fauntleroy was not a player. The City of Seattle has no provision for establishing or supporting beach management districts, and the Fauntleroy Community Association is not planning to ask beachfront owners to pay for a response to excess nutrients that could be coming from miles away.

The Council did, however, find opportunities to further understanding of the phenomenon. We wrote letters of support for two sea-lettuce research projects, one of which won funding. Led by Tim Nelson, PhD, at Seattle Pacific University, in cooperation with the City of Federal Way, its purpose was to discern sources of the nitrogen that is feeding sea lettuce in Dumas Bay.

The Council also wrote a letter of support for the spill-prevention equipment that Washington State Ferries requested from federal stimulus funding. Though not funded yet, the need remains an active one.

Early in the year, the Council gave King County a "do pass" to put a cap of clean sand above the wrack line north of the ferry terminal, where unwashed sand was inadvertently used during sewer work. All parties agreed that sand in that high location would not further blanket eel grass in the cove.



**Barge discharging rock/sand onto the south beach at Lincoln Park.** Photo courtesy *West Seattle Blog*

Eel grass was the big concern when a barge showed up in the cove in November and the contractor for Seattle Parks and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers placed a reported 200,000 tons of rock and 200 tons of sand to reinforce the sea wall along the south beach of Lincoln Park. Neighbors, the media, and even park staff were not notified. The Council vigorously fought such "beach renourishment" in years past because of documented damage to eel grass beds and is pursuing why it was permitted again without public notice.

**STORMWATER.** In localized action, the third time proved the charm when a Seattle Public Utilities crew fixed the catch basin at the foot of the Forest Court S.W. cul-de-sac so that the area would not flood and wash

out a trail in Fauntleroy Park. Members living on the street brought the problem to the Council's attention and worked with the city toward a solution.

Council members also weighed in as King County worked toward a solution for combined-sewer overflows into Fauntleroy Cove. Under federal mandate to reduce CSOs during heavy rains, the county floated two options. One was placing underground storage tanks at one of two possible locations in the watershed to retain stormwater for later release to the pump station adjacent to the ferry terminal. And the other was a "green streets" project that would build street-side rain gardens in a large residential area at the top of the hill, thus allowing stormwater to soak in rather than run to the pump station. After much public input, the county chose the latter option to forward to the state for a full environmental review.

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## COUNCIL BUSINESS

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The Council opened the year with \$1,885.69 in the bank and closed it with \$1,864.58. Treasurer Dennis Hinton moved the account from Chase to Washington Federal in order to earn a bit of interest.

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

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