

2013 ANNUAL REPORT

While we dug into city permit requirements to enable restoration of vegetative habitat along the middle reach of Fauntleroy Creek, we continued to restore native vegetation in Fauntleroy Park. We welcomed more participation in Salmon in the Schools and involved sixth graders in resurrecting an important study of instream habitat and water quality.



HABITAT RESTORATION

FENTON GLEN: To reduce debris in the culvert grate in lower Fenton Glen and create a dense barrier to foot traffic, we invited Fauntleroy Church families to a planting party on Feb. 10. Judy Pickens organized the after-worship event, Peggy Cummings marked plant locations, and Steve Hodson gave a welcome hand with the planting, then taped off the area to keep the new plants safe.



(At left) Julie Huff and daughter, Zoe Zoellner, were among families that planted 20 native shrubs and trees. Zoe affixed a nametag so they could monitor progress of their tree. The donated saplings augmented planting done during our four-year restoration project, where shade in the former flood plain made plant survival spotty. (Photo courtesy Ben Ackers)

Volunteer Connie King continued to work in the upper glen, an ornamental garden installed by church members in 1983. Many plants were well past their prime and others proved invasive. Judy Pickens found funding so Connie had native groundcovers and a few shrubs to install in the spring. As time allowed, she pared many original plants for herbicide treatment in the fall by Garden Cycle's Steve Richmond, while Judy worked through church channels to secure funding and authorization for the habitat-safe procedure.

Also in the fall, middle schoolers from the church salvaged dozens of conifers from Peggy's yard. With Connie's help, Steve planted those that appeared healthy in the lower glen.

KILBOURNE RAVINE: With nearly \$50,000 in grant funding from the King Conservation District, we were poised to have EarthCorps begin weeding and revegetating habitat along the middle reach of Fauntleroy Creek when unforeseen city permitting requirements put the brakes on. Even though the project is a straightforward one, the steeply sloped ravine is classified by the city as an environmentally critical area (ECA). Given provisions of the current ECA ordinance, habitat-restoration projects must meet the same requirements as construction projects for work in such areas.



Bob Keller with Natural Systems Design worked in tandem with Rob Anderson with EarthCorps to share responsibility for creating a master restoration plan and a geo-tech assessment of the ravine. With key pointers from Bob, Rob accomplished much of the work, saving us money and gaining valuable experience in the process. As project coordinator for the watershed council, Judy Pickens filed preliminary documents with the city's Department of Planning and Development, applied for a permit from the Seattle Department of Transportation to work in undeveloped right-of-way-in the base of the ravine, drafted the SEPA checklist, and moved everything toward submittal in mid January 2014. City staff provided essential guidance through the process.

A related requirement is that owners sign a city permission form authorizing work on their property in the ravine. Six of the eight owners readily complied and staff at the King Conservation District took on the task of gaining the two remaining signatures.

While our permit process moved along, we received a \$5,000 water-quality grant from the Rose Foundation (money from a settlement for environmental damage). We are using it to help fund the estimated \$10,000 for permitting not factored into our original project budget.

Contractors for Seattle Parks restored a demonstration area in 2012 and returned this year to make great progress in initial weeding of the Kilbourne Park portion of the ravine, plus abutting undeveloped right-of-way.

PARK & COVE STEWARDSHIP

Forest steward Peggy Cummings secured several "good dog/green dog" signs through the Green Seattle Partnership and placed them in the Fauntleroy Park and in lower Fenton Glen at Fauntleroy Church. They encourage owners to keep their dogs on leash to help prevent habitat damage.

We supported the idea of "jamboree" projects, raised by Schmitz Park steward Dylan Mendenhal, that would enlist all West Seattle forest stewards to rally volunteers for major work parties when area parks needed major attention. We also supported EarthCorps' use of the park for training in monitoring of restoration plots.

In the fall, forest steward Steve Hodson took delivery of 200 trees and other native plants from the Green Seattle Partnership and began enlisting volunteers to plant them where needed in Fauntleroy Park over the rainy season. Steve continued his almost-daily work in Fauntleroy Park - weeding, watering new plants, doing light train maintenance, and generally keeping the park a welcoming and healthy habitat. During the year, he and Peggy also responded to citizen concerns and alerted Seattle Parks staff to hazards and areas that needed maintenance by city crews. Steve reported 600 volunteer hours to Seattle Parks during the year.

With help from Seattle Parks southwest maintenance chief Carol Baker, we were finally able to make the soupy area on the Barton alley trail history. In the spring, Senior Forest Maintenance Worker Jacobo Jimenez was able to improve drainage such that water from a seep there now drains away from the trail.

We successfully partnered with the Fauntleroy Community Association and Tim Nelson, PhD, an algae researcher at Seattle Pacific University, to adjust the timing for flushing of a stormwater outfall pipe in Fauntleroy Cove. Seattle Public Utilities proposed to flush vegetative debris and rock from the pipe during the summer, which would have added nutrients to fuel growth of *Ulva expansa*. The algae blooms in warm weather and, when it decomposes on the beach at low tide, it releases noxious hydrogen sulfide gas (Fauntleroy's "summer stench"). Not being familiar with this dynamic, city planners readily agreed to reschedule the work for the fall.

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 region.
- **Fauntleroy Creek** originates in the park and drops 300 feet over its one-mile course to Fauntleroy Cove in central Puget Sound. Springs and runoff from a 144-acre watershed sustain flow year round. Prior to installation of the city's storm-drain system, the natural, geologic watershed was approximately 493 acres.

SALMON IN THE CREEK & SCHOOLS

OUT-MIGRATION STUDY: Dennis Hinton, Pete Droughon, and Steev Ward again monitored smolts leaving the creek for central Puget Sound. They installed and daily checked two soft traps, one in Fenton Glen in the upper creek and the other due upstream of the fish ladder in the lower creek, between March 15 and May 31. As approved by State Fish and Wildlife, they transported smolts from the upper trap downstream in a bucket for release below the lower trap, thus guaranteeing that the juveniles safely made the two-block journey. All told, 141 smolts went on their way to saltwater this year.

SALMON RELEASES: Thanks to several volunteers, we hosted 17 salmon releases in Fautleroy Park in May. An estimated 515 students participated from 12 Salmon in the Schools locations, plus five preschools that released "volunteer" fish reared by Jack Lawless for schools not in the program. In this way, nearly 2,000 vigorous coho fry started their year in the creek. Staff from Seattle Parks' southwest district assisted with timely application of gravel at the release site to keep students out of the mud.



West Seattle Elementary students watch their fry in the water at the release site with Nancie Hernandez, who provides technical support to salmon schools in Seattle. Photo courtesy Tara Slinden



Coho fry reared by students at Arbor Heights Elementary await their chance to survive a year in the creek before heading to saltwater. Photo courtesy Craig Harold Photography

SALMON IN THE SCHOOLS: Phil Sweetland and Judy continued their strong support for Salmon in the Schools in Seattle/King County through the Salmon Education Alliance. With other members of SEA's hardworking steering committee, they enabled 145 schools to participate in 2013.

In his quest to simplify the rearing experience for teachers and their tank volunteers, Phil engaged fifth graders at West Seattle Elementary in a four-month study of water chemistry. The study culminated in reports to the two classes involved, plus representatives of SEA and our watershed council. Their data suggested that encouraging the growth of beneficial bacteria in tank gravel could reduce harmful ammonia spikes. Phil is leading students in replicating the study in 2014. His work with the fifth graders also included comparing two types of water-testing products.

Year	Live Smolts Upper	Live Smolts Lower	Smolts to Salt	Released Fry	Spawners
2013			141	1,987	3
2012	145	85	157	2,615	274
2011	147	36	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

SALMON WATCH: Compared to last year's record-busting count of 274 spawners, our 11 volunteer salmon watchers had little to see this year, documenting only three fish between Oct. 28 and Nov. 24. The first was at the mouth on Nov. 12 (likely lunch for river otters in the area), followed a week later by a pair upstream in the spawning reach. During the watch, volunteers welcomed at least 40 streamside visitors from the neighborhood, plus a group of 14 preschoolers eager to explore the habitat.

A note received during Salmon Watch 2013:
"Last autumn when I was in a wheelchair with a broken leg, I made a point to get myself to the observation area during salmon season. It lifted my spirits greatly to at least be within sight of the creek, among the trees, and to hear my son and neighbor thrilled by seeing salmon below. This will always be a fond memory for me.

- Dave Allen

EDUCATION

In October, Judy Pickens and teacher Nathan Franck led sixth-grade science students from Our Lady of Guadalupe School in sampling for benthic macroinvertebrates in the upper and lower creek. The students ably collected and examined samples, created and presented a slideshow about



Photos courtesy science students at Our Lady of Guadalupe School

the study at school, and fielded questions after their presentation from visiting members of the watershed council, plus Jonathan Froge, a benthic scientist with Seattle Public Utilities. Guadalupe resurrected the study done annually between 2002 and 2010 in the upper creek by fifth graders at Arbor Heights Elementary and added a site in the lower creek. This is one of several activities Nathan is leading to tie the students' rearing of coho fry through Salmon in the Schools with habitat in the area.

In June, forest steward Peggy Cummings accompanied children and adult leaders in KapKa Cooperative School's summer program on a work/explore venture in Fautleroy Park.

OUTREACH

COMMUNITY EVENTS: Salmon watcher Anne Samenfink was among several volunteers who made our booth at the 11th-annual festival possible. As she has for several years, she laboriously cutting the salmon profiles for 170 young children to decorate into hats. Dry weather drew an estimated 1,600 people to the October event in the church/YMCA/schoolhouse triangle.

After deciding not to have a table at the Fautleroy Community Association's annual Food Fest in March, Peggy Cummings and Judy Pickens acted on the spur of the moment to draw attention to the Kilbourne ravine project.



Photo courtesy West Seattle Blog

They each wore hats festooned with wild clematis seed and roamed the event, drawing those interested to the large windows at The Hall at Fautleroy for a look at the project site. Peggy explored our having a presence at the West Seattle Street Fair in July but found the cost prohibitive.



Salmon hats found their way to many festival venues, including to this chicken at the Seattle Farm Co-Op's booth. Photo courtesy Eric Dale



Children used drums of all kinds to call in salmon spawners. Photo courtesy West Seattle Bloq

Our annual salmon drumming on Oct. 27 drew an estimated 50 people of all ages to the fish-ladder viewpoint. Musician Jamie Shilling again led the singing and Judy Pickens engineered a first: the telling of salmon jokes!

COMMUNICATION: Webmaster Chris Nack ably posted and removed items from www.faultleroy.watershed.org during the year and generally monitored activity. The site had 915 visitors, 745 of whom were new. The most-visited pages were education/salmon lesson plans, about Fauntleroy Park and creek, and the park map. Our website also served the Salmon Education Alliance, providing all the educational resources that SEA recommends to participating teachers.

We assisted two habitat-related opportunities gain exposure in the watershed through the Fauntleroy Community Association's *Neighbors* newsletter:

- rebates for rain gardens and cisterns in this area's drainage basin as part of county and city efforts to retain rainwater where it falls, thus reducing the potential for combined stormwater/sewage overflows into Fauntleroy Cove.
- free trees for yards and parking strips through Seattle reLeaf's Trees for Neighborhoods program.

We also responded to interest from the association's board by researching how the board might go about getting "Puget Sound Starts Here" markers on area storm drains.

We published and distributed our 2012 annual report to a lengthy list agency and community partners, including our Salmon in the Schools teachers.

NOTORIETY: Watershed activities merited the following coverage on the *West Seattle Blog* during 2013:

- salmon releases and out-migration study with photo, June.
- Kilbourne project promotion at Fauntleroy Food Fest with photo, March.
- salmon hats at Fauntleroy Fall Festival with photo, October.
- drumming promotion and call for salmon watchers with photo, October.
- drumming event with photos and video, October
- first spawner, November
- spawning-season wrap-up, November.
- announcement of Pickens community-service award (see below) with photo; also coverage of award presentation with photo, July.

In addition, Judy Pickens received three honors in 2012 for watershed-related work:

- The West Seattle American Legion chose her for its Orville Rummel Community Service Award, which included a convertible ride in the annual Hi-Yu Parade in July; award announcements in the community association's *Neighbors* newsletter and the Fauntleroy Church newsletter.
- Carol Baker spearheaded the nomination of Judy Pickens for one of the six 2012 Denny Awards, bestowed by the city for exceptional contributions to Seattle Parks and Recreation.
- *The Seattle Times* profiled her in a Dec. 13 article in the Sunday magazine on community service; find it at http://seattletimes.com/html/pacificnw/2022332905_1215coverubervolunteersxml.html.

HONORABLE MENTION

Tuxedos and Tennis Shoes Catering for hosting a "happy hour" event in June that was to kick off on-the-ground work in the Kilbourne ravine by an international crew of conservation trainees.

Kathy Minsch for regularly representing Seattle Public Utilities on the council and for going the extra mile to help keep the Kilbourne ravine restoration project alive.

Carol Baker for ably representing Seattle Parks and Recreation on the council and for spearheading the Denny Award nomination.

Joan Nolan for periodically representing the State Department of Ecology in council discussions.

Kilbourne ravine property owners for patiently partnering with the council toward restoration of the natural area.

Jack Lawless for faithfully rearing vigorous coho fry for schools that don't rear their own for release into Fautleroy Creek and for making up for the occasional "crop failure" at schools so that all students have fish to release.

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 \$1,741.96 in our money-market account at Washington Federal and closed it with \$1,691.95, which includes interest income of \$2.76. We had expenses totaling \$52.77 (paper and copying) to replenish our supply of the watershed brochure.

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