

# 2018 ANNUAL REPORT



This year, the Fautleroy Watershed Council

- established the Fautleroy Watershed Stewardship Fund.
- hosted 662 students and adults releasing salmon in Fautleroy Park.
- drew 240 visitors and 100 students during spawning season.
- supported planning for replacement of Fautleroy Creek culverts.

## STEWARDSHIP & HABITAT RESTORATION

**STEWARDSHIP FUND.** By the time Seattle's urban creeks slid down the funding-priority list a few years ago, jurisdictions and foundations had invested millions of dollars to restore Fautleroy Creek and park. The shift came just as pressure brought on by climate change began putting those investments at risk. Peak flows in the creek are seven times what they were a decade ago and summer droughts routinely take a toll on vegetation. At the same time, most areas that need attention are too hazardous for volunteers to do the work. Given that nearly 11,000 students have visited the creek and park since 1995, the safety of areas used as both classroom and science lab are of particular concern.

These facts led to our decision to begin tapping into the community goodwill built over nearly 30 years of stewardship and education. We arranged with EarthCorps, a 501(c)3 nonprofit, to receive donations that will fund its trainees to do work in the watershed. We began marketing the Fautleroy Watershed Stewardship Fund on March 1 with a long-term goal of \$30,000.

By Dec. 31, it had grown to \$9,475. In addition to individual gifts, we received donations this year from West Seattle Rotary's past-presidents fund, the MMS Giving Foundation, the Seattle Nature Alliance, and D Squared, a local business. We have one grant request pending. For details and donation options, go to [www.fautleroywatershed.org/donate](http://www.fautleroywatershed.org/donate).



Judy Pickens pitched our new stewardship fund to watershed residents at the Fautleroy Food Fest in March.

**KILBOURNE RAVINE RESTORATION.** EarthCorps crews completed five days (240 person hours) of work on the



Tessa Yoder, an EarthCorps trainee from Indiana, checked plant species during a spring workday in the ravine.

Kilbourne ravine riparian and buffer project, treating returning invasive plants and refreshing survival rings to protect trees from English ivy. The six-year project, funded by a \$70,023 grant from the King Conservation District and \$5,000 from the Rose Foundation, is improving water quality, reclaiming the ravine as wildlife habitat, halting the spread of invasive plants into the neighborhood, and enlisting adjacent property owners and the community in keeping invasive plants out of landscapes.

A monitoring assessment identified priorities for the last year of grant funding. After December 2019, we plan to tap the Fautleroy Watershed Stewardship Fund to finance annual EarthCorps crew days to maintain the investment. Thanks to an arrangement made this year with the Seattle Department of Transportation, we will be able to file annual written summaries of ongoing work in undeveloped right-of-way in the ravine, thereby saving us more than \$100 a year in on-site inspection fees.

**CULVERT REPLACEMENT.** Seattle Public Utilities continued its planning process for replacement of culverts under 45th Ave. SW and California Ave. SW that carry flow through the middle reach of Fauntleroy Creek. The utility appointed a project manager and contracted with an engineering firm to aid in analyzing design options for each location. The project team identified the best potential options for replacement and sought early input from Fauntleroy Church, the owner of a portion of the California Ave. SW culvert that extends under the church parking lot. The team also connected with a variety of other stakeholders, including our watershed council, Seattle Parks, Salmon in the Schools, and Washington State Ferries. A fuller evaluation of the potential options is now under way to consider feasibility, risk, and cost effectiveness, as well as community and environmental benefits.

**OPEN SPACE RESTORATION.** Forest steward Peggy Cummings represented the watershed council in planning restoration of the 8,415 sf open-space slope adjacent to the fish ladder in the lower creek. The multi-year Green Seattle Partnership project is weeding the site of well-established English laurel and ivy and revegetating with beneficial natives to control erosion and enrich habitat. Peggy will lead a volunteer work party early in the new year to revegetate the flat portion of the site while a contractor safely begins doing the same on the steep portion of the site.

**FOREST STEWARDS.** Working closely with the Green Seattle Partnership and Seattle Parks and Recreation, the watershed's two volunteer forest stewards continued their investments, primarily in Fauntleroy Park.

- Despite a broken ankle, Steve Hodson contributed over 300 hours this year and, with the assistance from other volunteers, added some 200 trees to the natural habitat. Peggy Cummings contributed 70 hours for public outreach, restoration planning, and minor maintenance. She also coordinated with Seattle Parks to plan trail maintenance, ensure safety at the big bridge for salmon releases, raised maintenance concerns about newly restored habitat in Kilbourne Park, and updated information available at kiosks at two park entrances. Both she and Steve reported safety issues, including downed trees and encampment activity.
- During a May 31 salmon release, Peggy created an extra teaching moment when a student noticed a small brown bat dead along the trail. Following proper protocol, she assured that no contact was made with the bat and later notified Seattle-King County Public Health. She also alerted the Fauntleroy Children's Center, Taproot School, and Little Pilgrim School and let teachers know where they could find information about bats.
- Peggy attended the partnership's shareholders meeting in January, where climate change and its effects on forests was a key topic. It is beginning in the second half of a 20-year program to develop, train, and oversee the volunteer-stewards program in Seattle parks.



**SAFETY IMPROVEMENT**

Early in the year, Fauntleroy Park users began to enjoy these steps courtesy of an Eagle Scout project.

In June a park visitor discovered a small fire in the base of a large tree near a main trail and called 911. The Seattle Fire Department quickly extinguished the fire, with no apparent serious damage to the tree.

**OTHER PARK IMPROVEMENTS.**

- Fauntleroy Park volunteer Steve Bomkamp submitted an action plan for work on the SW Cambridge Street entrance to the park, where street runoff has for years caused erosion and compromised pedestrian safety. In the wake of Steve's sudden death in August, we welcomed new volunteer Mike Arizona's offer to take on the project.
- A contractor weeded a sloped area along the eastern edge of the park near 37th Ave. SW and planted about 1,900 shrubs and trees.
- In response to council concerns, staff with Seattle Parks did a thorough job of securing wire mesh to slippery boardwalks and removed mesh from the big bridge so it would not be a hazard during salmon releases.

**ON THE HORIZON.** The watershed council is monitoring possible habitat implications of Washington State Ferries' plan to rebuild the Fauntleroy terminal within a decade. We are also weighing what to propose in King County's first-quarter 2019 round of council-allocated WaterWorks grants.

# SALMON

**OUT MIGRATION.** Volunteers Steev Ward, Dennis Hinton, and Pete Draughon took charge of our monitoring of smolts leaving the creek. They installed net traps in mid March in the upper and lower creek and checked them twice daily through the end of May to document 45 smolts headed to saltwater, the highest number since 2013. They trapped no dead smolts and only a few fry that washed down after release.

**SALMON IN THE SCHOOLS.** The Fautleroy watershed is an essential component of the Salmon in the Schools program in West Seattle. In 2018, 13 schools, from preschool to high school, reared coho and an additional three schools took advantage of volunteer-reared fish to join them in releasing fry into upper Fautleroy Creek. Our volunteers hosted 21 school releases in Fautleroy Park for 662 students and 232 adults and young siblings. Special guests included King County Councilman Joe McDermott and a local aide for Rep. Pramila Jayapal. We also hosted our first-ever community release in the park and, since we had no home hatch in the lower creek, we released the last of the fry there to take advantage of that habitat.

For the third year, we enhanced the program by offering schools in-class dissections of coho spawners, ably and entertainingly done by Steev Ward. Also, we were able to schedule an EarthCorps crew in the Kilbourne ravine during release season so students (this year from Pathfinder) could talk with trainees about the restoration project and their plans for environmental careers.

**SALMON WATCH.** The annual salmon watch on Fautleroy Creek began Oct. 29 - the morning after the drumming to call in spawners - and that very day, salmon watchers recorded the first six. By Nov. 18 when the watch ended, 18 vigorous spawners had taken advantage of favorable tides, ample rainfall, and ideal habitat conditions to make their way into the lower creek - the most in four years. All stayed in or very near the fish ladder.



Vigorous spawners made their way up the fish ladder, to the delight of watchers and our hundreds of visitors during spawning season.



Long-time volunteers Phil Sweetland and Judy Pickens (right) took coho eggs to area schools in early January, including this first-time delivery to students at Highland Park Elementary.

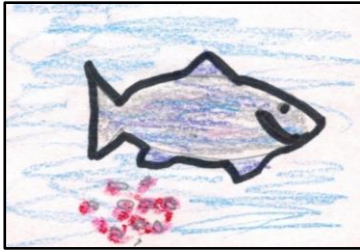


Kindergarten students at Arbor Heights Elementary bid the school's fry farewell on release day with costumes and signs they made as part of their Native American study.



Exploration was a big part of release field trips. Here Pathfinder students search for habitat features associated with their salmon.

Four were “jack” salmon - males that came in a year early. Full-sized spawners ranged up to 6 pounds. As evidenced by a clipped fin, most had been released as smolts by hatcheries but at least two could have originated in the creek from school releases. Watchers marked three possible redds at the entrance to the fish ladder to monitor for home hatch.



Art by a St. Frances of Assisi kindergarten student after visiting the creek during spawning season

Nearly 100 students from two area schools came in hopes of seeing fish living or dead. Two “open creeks” drew 120 people and another 120 stopped by to chat with one

of the 16 volunteers who took turns watching. Several of our visitors had participated in Salmon in the Schools or were about to do so in 2019.

*Joining you for releasing the salmon into the creek in the spring is always a highlight of my year. This (spawner) report brings the process full circle, seeing the cycle of life play out in an ecosystem you all have worked so hard to make sure is healthy. The educators involved in the program do outstanding work on behalf of our environment and our youth.*

*Thank you.*

**County Council President Joe McDermott**

Year	# Eggs	# Released Fry	% of Fry From Eggs	# Live Smolts Upper	# Live Smolts Lower	# Smolts to Salt	# Spawners
2018	2,400	1,955	81	26	19	45	18
2017	2,400	1,817	-	18	14	32	4
2016	2,900	1,795	62	14	5	19	7
2015	2,700	1,700	63	2	33	35	0
2014	3,450	2,409	70	8	11	19	19
2013	2,800	1,987	71	65	76	141	3
2012	3,100	2,615	84	145	85	230*	274
2011	2,900	2,027	70	147	36	183*	14
2010	2,500	2,298	92	---	24	24	0
2009	2,500	1,936	77	---	18	18	18
2008	---	1,790	---	---	17	17	2
2007	---	2,276	---	---	24	42	89
2006	---	2,033	---	---	22	22	0
2005	---	1,138	---	---	10	10	48
2004	---	1,534	---	---	11	11	6
2003	---	1,254	---	---	37	37	4
2002	---	1,965	---	---	---	---	5
2001	---	1,050	---	---	---	---	167
2000	---	750	---	---	---	---	126
1999	---	875	---	---	---	---	100**
1998	---	unspecified	---	---	---	---	200**
1997	---	unspecified	---	---	---	---	2**
1996	---	unspecified	---	---	---	---	6
1995	---	unspecified	---	---	---	---	11**
1994	---	unspecified	---	---	---	---	2
1993	---	unspecified	---	---	---	---	---
1992	---	?	---	---	---	---	---
1991	---	unspecified	---	---	---	---	---
1990	---	unspecified	---	---	---	---	---

\*corrected \*\*approximate

# RESEARCH

**PROFESSIONAL MONITORING.** Seattle Public Utilities continued monitoring water temperature and electrical conductivity in the upper and lower creek, a study begun late 2016 to document any dissolved solids, indicating sewage, in the water. Findings indicate relatively clean water. The utility also sampled for *E. coli* and *Bacteroides* (an alternative fecal indicator), finding low counts typical of this creek system.

**MACROINVERTEBRATES.** On Oct. 22, sixth-grade science students from Our Lady of Guadalupe School sampled for macroinvertebrates - indicators of water quality and an essential food source for juvenile salmon. The annual research gives students a real-world opportunity to execute an established protocol, make site observations, document their work, pose and answer questions based on their findings, evaluate the experience, and present a summary to watershed, school, and city representatives. Recent data are shown in the table. This year's class concluded that a change in the upper-creek location and recent heavy rain may have



Macroinvertebrate sampling gave students an opportunity to engage in real research.



Science students braved the rain to find dozens of stonefly exoskeletons in the lower creek.

affected abundance and diversity.

The sixth-grade class of 2017-18 came in early April to count stonefly exoskeletons in the research area in the lower creek (due upstream of the fish ladder). They found the second highest number since the count began in 2002. Two scientists from Seattle Public Utilities joined them to talk about the city's conductivity study. The class recommended that the count be done in late March as stoneflies appear to be leaving the creek sooner in recent years.

STUDENT MACROINVERTEBRATE SAMPLING							
	2015		2016		2017	2018	
	Upper Creek	Lower Creek	Upper Creek	Lower Creek	No Data	Upper Creek	Lower Creek
Stonefly larvae		2				1	
Mayfly larvae	1	5					1
Caddis fly larvae	1	19					
Aquatic worms	1	5	1	7		1	2
Black fly larvae							
Water penny							
Beetle larvae							
Riffle beetle							
Snail		4					1
Unable to ID	2					1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>

*Get out of the house. See where that takes you. Whether it is to the top of the world or just down to the beach, it might change you. You could begin to enjoy it. And if you do enjoy it, you could then begin to love it, and then you might take care of it.*

Jim Whittaker, *The Seattle Times*, April 14, 2013

# OUTREACH

**CITY COUNCIL PRESENTATION.** On Feb. 13, Judy Pickens, Dennis Hinton, and Peggy Cummings made a 20-minute presentation to the Civil Rights, Utilities, Economic Development and Arts Committee of the City Council. Chairwoman Lisa Herbold extended the invitation after seeing our 2017 annual report. Brief comments about education, volunteering, and stewardship, backed by PowerPoint slides, provided an overview and colleagues from Seattle Public Utilities and EarthCorps helped address questions. Our “ask” was for the utility to restore two-way communication with creek advocates as one way to help retain the city’s considerable investment, now that many resources have shifted away from urban creeks.

**CREEK PEOPLE GATHERING.** On June 19, Seattle Public Utilities hosted representatives of the city’s five major creek systems, plus a volunteer associated with a small creek in the Arboretum. The utility’s general manager, staff from six city departments, and a representative of the Green Seattle Partnership made brief presentations and answered questions. Judy Pickens and Phil Sweetland joined other creek representatives in emphasizing the need for improved communication with city departments and among watersheds. Utility staff took on the task of devising an effective way to do so that is practical for all concerned.

**OTHER OUTREACH.** In March, we fulfilled an obligation of our funding for the Kilbourne project by providing information about wild clematis, a highly invasive non-native that was rampant in the ravine prior to the project. The community newsletter ran an article about it and residents had a chance to discuss eradication techniques later that month with forest steward Peggy Cummings at the Fautleroy Food Fest.

On Oct. 28, our annual drumming to call in coho spawners drew about 30 people, many for the first time. Because of rainy weather, we moved it to the Pickens/Sweetland carport, which kept instruments dry and provided ready access for a brief stream walk afterwards. Long-time volunteer Jamie Shilling led the singing and drumming.

In May, outreach got a boost with publication of the ninth edition of our watershed brochure, with updated text, nature walk, and photos. Its primary distribution is through racks on the kiosks at Fautleroy Park’s two main entrances.

We mailed a copy of our creek-monitoring protocol to all owners of a part of the creek channel. It reads *If a salmon watcher or other volunteer observes what appears to be a barrier to fish passage on private property, the watershed council will make sure the owner is aware and request that the owner assess the situation directly or obtain technical assistance from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.*



## **SALMON HEADGEAR**

An estimated 2,000 people came out in perfect weather for the 16th annual Fautleroy Fall Festival on Oct. 21. Our booth drew 175 young children to decorate salmon hats. Long-time volunteers Cathy and Ellie Follis will take over this outreach activity from Judy Pickens, who started it in 2006.

# ADVOCACY

**ORCAS.** A briefing by long-time whale advocate Kersti Muul became a regular topic on our council agenda as we watched for opportunities to speak out for protection of Puget Sound’s iconic residents.

**BIKE COURSE.** Mountain-bike enthusiasts resurrected the once-rejected idea of creating a course in Cheasty Park, where bikers and pedestrians would use the same trails. When Seattle Parks opened the draft for public comment, we submitted a letter emphasizing that the revised plan would diminish one of Seattle’s few remaining forests and that “Our green spaces are precious and must be protected for the passive enjoyment of all of our citizens.”

# HONORABLE MENTION



## STEVE BOMKAMP

A man of few words but intense dedication to Fautleroy Park, Steve Bomkamp (19[redacted] - 2018) saved this bigleaf maple from English ivy, then set out to save the entire park from invasives. In 1999, he co-founded Friends of Fautleroy Park, which merged into the Fautleroy Watershed Council in 2001.



## JACK LAWLESS

For two decades, Jack (right) has reared coho fry in his basement for schools that don't bring their own to release and those that experience a major die-off, ensuring that every student has a fish to put in the water. He is also chief tank volunteer at the Fautleroy Children's Center and tank consultant at Arbor Heights Elementary. Jack credits his fishing success to this experience: "Everything I know about fish and fishing I learned in my basement!"

The work we do in this watershed benefits greatly from the skills and dedication of many people, including the following standouts in 2018: Seattle City Councilwoman **LISA HERBOLD** and King County Councilman **JOE MCDERMOTT** for their interest in and advocacy for the watershed as a natural resource and classroom.

Hydrologist **STEVE WINTER** for volunteering his considerable expertise.

**DUNCAN DORRIS** for donating a wildlife camera to monitor what goes on after hours in the spawning reach.

Street-use inspector **GARRICK HOPKINS** with the Seattle Department of Transportation for guidance in eliminating ongoing inspection fees for restoration in undeveloped right-of-way in the Kilbourne ravine.

The release team - **DENNIS HINTON, PETE DRAUGHON, and SHANNON NINBURG** - for making every child feel involved in salmon restoration and habitat stewardship.

**BETSY LYONS**, senior capital projects coordinator at Seattle Public Utilities, for her exceptional coordination with the community during planning for culvert replacement.

**PATRICK SAND** and **TRACY RECORD**, publishers of the *West Seattle Blog*, for keeping the public up to date on doings in the watershed.

## COMMUNICATION

**IN THE MEDIA.** The *West Seattle Blog* ([www.westseattleblog.com](http://www.westseattleblog.com)) is our principal medium for relaying news about the watershed. Articles during the year (most with photos) appeared as follows:

- January - Salmon in the Schools egg delivery
- March - announcement of stewardship fund
- April - exoskeleton count and first salmon release
- May - midstream and last releases
- June - community release
- September - call for watchers
- October - salmon drumming and first spawners
- November two open creeks and end of spawning season.

**Neighbors**, the quarterly newsletter of the Fautleroy Community Association, featured watershed news as follows:

- March - wild clematis and launch of the stewardship fund
- June - release summary and fund update
- September - call for watchers and fund update
- December - spawning summary and fund update.

In May, Seattle Public Utilities staff members and consultants working on the culvert replacement project audited a salmon release and project lead Betsy Lyons chose to highlight their Salmon in the Schools experience, in text and photo, for the utility's weekly summary of activities sent to the mayor's office.



**WEBSITE ACTIVITY.** At year’s end, webmaster Chris Nack tallied 2,368 page views at [www.fauntleroywatershed.org](http://www.fauntleroywatershed.org) compared to 2,531 in 2017. The site had 1,002 distinct users compared to 968 in 2017; 92.2% were new and 44% were from the greater-Seattle area. Pages of highest interest were about Fauntleroy Creek and Fauntleroy Park, the stewardship fund, and the Kilbourne project. Nearly 65% of viewers came by referral from another site, most notably the *West Seattle Blog*.

## COUNCIL BUSINESS

According to council treasurer Dennis Hinton, we opened the year with \$1,052.88 in our money-market account at Washington Federal and closed it with \$930.63, including \$.52 in interest income. We spent \$92.77 for brochure paper and copies and paid \$30 in below-minimum bank fees. We have since switched to a basic checking account with no minimum and no interest.

We received \$12,850.66 in grant reimbursement from the King Conservation District during 2018 for the Kilbourne Ravine Riparian and Buffer Project. We have \$10,934.47 remaining for 2019, the last year of this \$70,023 project.

The council met on the second Thursday in January, March, May, September, and November. All meetings were open to any interested watershed resident. Members of the executive committee planned the agenda and took care of business between meetings. They were

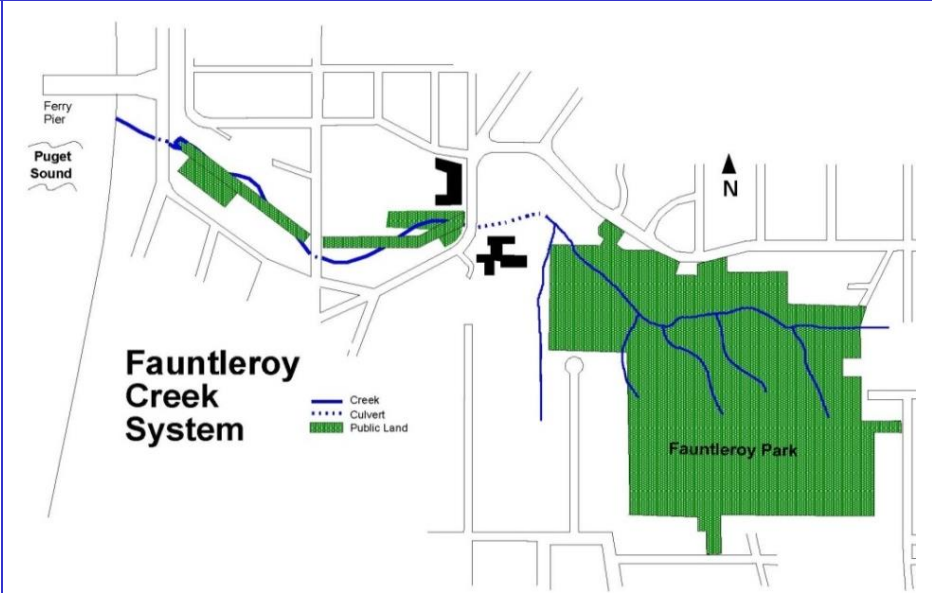
■ **Peggy Cummings** ([peggyc@seanet.com](mailto:peggyc@seanet.com)) ■ **Dennis Hinton** ([denhinton@msn.com](mailto:denhinton@msn.com)) ■ **Judy Pickens** ([judy\\_pickens@msn.com](mailto:judy_pickens@msn.com))

## ABOUT THE WATERSHED

Fauntleroy Park, Fauntleroy Creek, and Fauntleroy Cove are the dominant natural features of the residential community in West Seattle for which they are named.

**Fauntleroy Park** is a 28-acre wooded ravine preserved 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 this 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 stormwater/ wastewater drainage system, the geologic watershed was about 493 acres.



## PHOTO CREDITS

*West Seattle Blog*, EarthCorps, Peggy Cummings, Lori Hinton, Kersti Muul, Dennis Hinton, Our Lady of Guadalupe School