

FAUNTLEROY WATERSHED COUNCIL
Meeting #109, March 9, 2023, on Zoom

ATTENDEES

Watershed volunteers: Dennis Hinton, Pete Draughon, Ryan Lewis, Vanessa Pepi, Tom Trulin, Karen Farnsworth, and Judy Pickens (scribe)

Fauntleroy Church: Phil Sweetland

Seattle Parks: Brent Nakamura

1. Introductions

2. November minutes

Approved as distributed

3. Financial reports

Dennis reported a balance of \$907.35 in our checking account at WaFd. Judy reported a balance of \$17,382.90 in our stewardship fund with EarthCorps. She noted the receipt of our \$4,700 grant from the West Seattle Garden Tour and two gifts late last year totaling \$300: one from creekside neighbor Craig Pedersen and one from the MMS Giving Foundation (a one-person foundation that has been giving annually).

4. Seattle Parks

Brent reported a fair amount of staff turnover but new hires will be at work soon. Topics we raised:

- Karen noted that the grass at the 97th St. entrance needs reseeding because of lots of dog use. She suggested taping off a section at a time until new grass has established. Signage to let users know what's going on would be helpful.

Action item: Brent will talk with his senior gardener about the project and coordinate with Karen.

- Judy raised the presence of several wild clematis vines on city property in the Kilbourne ravine. She emphasized that we're spending about \$5K annually for EarthCorps to maintain the rest of the site and need Seattle Parks to do its part. In recent correspondence with Brent and Michael Yadrick, they indicated that the department's natural-areas team needs to do the work, and Michael advised that the seeds won't be spreading for awhile. Brent said he understands that to be the case and also our concern that the invasive not re-establish.

Action item: Brent will check in with Michael to see if the work can get on the schedule.

- Dennis reiterated his earlier offer of a walkaround to acquaint newcomers to the creek system.

Action item: Dennis will coordinate with Ryan, Vanessa, Brent, and Mark Sears to settle on a day/time.

Karen brought up graffiti on the two park kiosks, and Brent explained how Seattle Parks is currently addressing it, depending on amount. He advised using the city's Find It Fix It website to submit our request.

Action item: Karen will send Brent photos and he will advise if she should use the city's Find It Fix It website to submit our request or use another approach. .

5. Project activity

Smolt monitoring: Dennis reported that Pete and Tom will be installing our two traps by March 15 and that Mark has offered to help. He noted that Tom saw our first home hatch on Feb. 20 and that the lower creek is teeming with at least a hundred fry.

Tree walk: In Lindsey's absence, Judy summarized her comprehensive update of this project:

A dozen iconic native trees and shrubs have been identified along arterial trails in Fauntleroy Park. Rosalie Miller and Tom have taken photos and Jean McMackin is currently editing the species profiles that Lindsey drafted.

Chris Nack has developed a web page and put up introductory text. People taking the walk will click on the QR code on each plant's ID sign to get to the page, then select which species to read about. Michele Balagot with the Tulalip Tribe kindly provided Lushootseed translation for the signs.

The March issue of *Neighbors* previewed the walk, and Lindsey is putting together an information table about it for the March 21 Fauntleroy Food Fest (including a drawing for native plants). Assuming all goes well, the walk rollout will be via the *West Seattle Blog* in early May.

Per conditions of our grant from the West Seattle Garden Tour, Lindsey will have an information table at one of the gardens on June 25, represent us at the tour finale in July, and submit all required reports.

Wayfinding in Fauntleroy Park: Judy shared the idea of somehow using smart phones instead of signage to get park visitors where they want to go and to areas they haven't explored. Eddie Martin advised that we need someone experienced in mapping/GIS/cartography. Judy sent a feeler to our volunteer list and got one lead from a salmon watcher and another possibility from Vanessa. She will be following up to see if we can advance this idea.

6. Stewardship/habitat

Forest steward activity: Karen explained that she is serving as our second volunteer forest steward until the Green Seattle Partnership reactivates the training, after which she will be official. She itemized several things she's interested in pursuing:

- Continuing to work on invasive removal
- Increasing user "ownership" of the park, including making more use of the kiosks (such as posting children's art from area schools)
- Adding signage at the big bridge to encourage dog walkers to keep their pets out of the creek (perhaps incorporating children's art)
- Encouraging night photography in the park (long exposure)

Also, she reported that her neighbor is working with Hazelwood Preschool to develop a summer camp for 9/10-year-olds using the park as its focal point.

7. Watershed plan update

Ryan reported that he and Vanessa have been passing a draft of introductory text back and forth and have a bit more work to do before sending it to everyone for comment. Vanessa noted that some concerns from our initial plan will be ongoing. She said they would like to put more emphasis on nearshore habitat and that she's reached out to a wetland specialist about suggesting action items for those areas. They are enthused about how it's coming together and expect to share the draft within a few days.

Action item: *Judy will send Vanessa what she has on the existing vegetation management plan for the park for possible updating.*

8. Outreach

In the media: Dennis reported the *West Seattle Blog* recently published our article about emergence of home hatch, including a video by Tom. The March issue of *Neighbors* included a preview of the tree walk. Tom enlisted Sam Verbon, a photographer with better equipment for water shots, to take what is now posted on our website; he expects Sam to continue as an on-call volunteer.

Watershed brochure: Noting that our current brochure dates from 2021 and that some habitat conditions have surely changed, Judy said she had corresponded with forest steward Charlotte Linton

about her updating the nature walk portion this summer. Karen suggested that the update might make a great project for kids in the summer camp associated with Hazelwood.

Action item: *Judy will send a simple text file of the nature walk to Karen, who will pursue updating by the summer campers.*

Watershed tour: Judy explained that members of the Seattle Watershed Alliance have been offering tours and that we need to see if we can offer one in the fall, primarily for fellow citizen stewards. Ryan advised an emphasis on how Fauntleroy is one of the few remaining creek system closely connected to Puget Sound. Ideas expressed:

- Start at the release bridge and move down to the beach (timed according to low tide).
- Aim for September when weather will likely cooperate.
- Start building by identifying someone familiar with each area we want to highlight.
- Culminate with talk and refreshments on the Pickens/Sweetland patio.

Action item: *Judy will pursue these ideas with an eye toward having a solid plan by our May meeting.*

9. Education

School tank support: Phil said that all schools except Highland Park Elementary have been doing well. The new teacher there lost most of his fish early on and Phil will be augmenting soon from Jack's supply.

Release field trips: Judy reported that all our releases will be on the calendar very soon. She arranged a chat with EarthCorps trainees after Pathfinder's release on May 4, an popular enhancement we offered a few times before Covid. Also, Shannon Ninburg requested a children's release on May 21 as part of her congregation's welcoming of a new rabbi; she will coordinate and use some of Jack's fish.

Judy also reported an early release. The education coordinator with the Mid-Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group negotiated with the state to release coho reared by White Center Heights Elementary in Fauntleroy Creek on March 30. Judy learned that the school got eggs a month ahead of ours, so the fry may be able to survive. Mid-Sound will run its own release. Judy has asked Brent to check trails near the release bridge for any safety concerns, and Dennis is working with Steve Winter to make sure that students can reach flow as it passes the kneeling rock. In April, she plans to repeat these requests so that all is ready when our releases start in late April.

Next meeting: Thursday, May 11, 6:30 pm on Zoom