

FAUNTLEROY WATERSHED COUNCIL

Meeting #120, May 8, 2025, on Zoom

ATTENDEES

Watershed volunteers: Dennis Hinton (facilitator), Phil Sweetland, Alana Khayat, Chaz Hastings, Diana Spence, Julia Stavnitski, Kathy Mutchler, and Judy Pickens (scribe)

1. Introductions

2. March minutes

Approved as distributed.

3. Park projects

Judy noted that Parks responded quickly to someone camping on the platform east of the release bridge – a concern for the park in general and for students in the area. Tom Trulin sounded the alert and confirmed removal with timely photos. She has not heard anything further from Brian Willis about what's planned to alleviate the long-running problem of mud in the alley entrance/exit resulting from a seep.

Action item: Judy will take the next opportunity to talk with Karen Farnsworth about continuing her engagement with Fauntleroy Park.

4. Fish business

Out-migration monitoring: Dennis reported that volunteers have been faithfully checking upper and lower smolt traps up to three times daily since mid March. The traps have worked fine, though vandalism of the upper one required repair. The project is winding down for the season, with a count of 21.

One monitor found a small crawdad – a critter that is positive for water quality. Phil brought up that church staff recently had an encounter with a mentally unstable man with a goatee and advised that our release team be prepared to act if he shows up in the park.

School and community releases: Judy reported that many volunteers have assured that school releases have gone well, with 22 expected by month's end. This week, the salmon teacher at Arbor Heights postponed those two releases after she became ill; Judy and Dennis are working on other dates so the students have a release experience. Educator Peggy Lee with MidSound Fisheries Enhancement Group, will be bringing 30 members of Evergreen High's salmon club on May 28 to release their fry and do a Q&A with Judy and Phil over lunch on their patio. This group will not need further staffing.

Julia reported that she's been focusing on preschool releases and said she is learning a lot and finding several resources, some of which she plans to recommend to teachers. She called out Jamie Shilling's coming to sing a salmon song with preschoolers at the bridge – and that she has arranged to teach songs during a session at the Urban Nature Preschool in the Fauntleroy Schoolhouse.

Judy announced that core team members will host a community release on Sunday, June 1, 1:00-3:00 pm. In addition to putting the last of Jack Lawless's fry in the water, the event will honor our most-senior volunteer, Dick Paynter, for his exceptional enthusiasm. To match his interest and limitations, she arranged for him and his daughter to attend the Sealth special-ed release in the lower creek and invited him to assist during the community release. Judy has created a framed certificate to be presented in the park, along with a photo of Dick and Dennis at the creek. Family is thrilled with this recognition and is being very supportive. Tom will take photos for the *West Seattle Blog* and our annual report.

5. Culverts

In Tom's absence, Judy reported that he observed creek flow no longer going as intended through the culvert grate at 45th. His photo got the quick attention of Steve Damm at Seattle Public Utilities, who saw that the problem got fixed to avoid erosion there.

Judy reported knowing very little about progress on the two culvert replacements, other than that project managers at SPU expect to need our feedback this summer.

Action item: Judy will send meeting details to all so that those available can participate in the Zoom session.

She recently learned that SPU created an advisory committee about public art that's expected to be part of the church/California culvert replacement. David Haggerty with Tuxedos and Tennis Shoes Catering in the schoolhouse is a member. Neither she nor Phil has heard anything more about installation of an emergency bypass there to direct creek flow in the event of a partial culvert collapse.

6. Ferry terminal rebuild

Judy reported receiving notification that the state is ready to submit its preferred terminal design for an in-depth environmental analysis at the federal level. She also learned that the next meeting of the community advisory group (on which she serves, representing the creek) is to be its last. In the past week, the state made an offer to purchase the residential property adjacent to Cove Park in order to upgrade the house for use as an office during construction and then as a staff-break facility.

One of the volunteers who developed the street-end park recently clarified with King County that, because of its wastewater pump station there, it is responsible for all aspects of the park, including responding to recent illegal camping in the park by three people. Nearby homeowners were very concerned; a photo by Tom got Judy into the loop, and she alerted teachers whose students might be in or near the park after salmon releases. She advocated for getting West Seattle's CARE team involved to offer the campers social and medical services but does not know if that happened.

Action item: Judy will suggest to Tracy Record at the West Seattle Blog an article about the team's experience to date to give readers an idea of how busy and effective it has been.

7. Outreach

Food fest recap: In Tracy Randle's absence, Judy reported that, despite being located in the back corner of the room, Tracy and her colleague, Sam To, generated interest in their new wayfinding resource for Fauntleroy Park. Tracy and Sam engaged as many people as they could, including giving out a flyer about wayfinding and our 2024 annual report.

Webmaster recruitment: Judy reported that our founding webmaster Chris Nack has asked to be relieved of that responsibility. While working full time, she is devoting much attention to caring for her husband, who has multiple medical challenges. Dennis commended Chris for doing an excellent job – creating, updating, and staying on top of the website for many years.

Action item: Judy will meet with Chris to understand particulars of the job and cast a net to our list of volunteers for a new webmaster.

In the media: Dennis reported articles on the *West Seattle Blog* about smolt trapping, our first release, and our annual stonefly exoskeleton count.

Recognitions: Judy reported that, in addition to the planned recognition of Dick Paynter during the community release, she worked with Dennis, Tom, and Phil to create a card (along with two photos) for Steve Damm, who retired today from Seattle Public Utilities. The card emphasized how Steve was for years our reliable go-to guy for getting the city's help related to the creek.

8. Money matters

Dennis reported \$860.93 in our checking account; Tracy Randle has yet to cash our check for just over \$100 Tracy for expenses associated with the wayfinding project.

Action item: Judy will remind Tracy to pick up her check.

Judy did not hear from EarthCorps about recent activity in our stewardship fund. Phil noted that, with the abrupt termination of funding for AmeriCorps, EarthCorps is scrambling to find its financial footing.

Next meeting: Thursday, Sept. 11, 6:30 on Zoom