

FAUNTLEROY WATERSHED COUNCIL

Meeting #121, Sept. 11, 2025, on Zoom

ATTENDEES

Watershed volunteers: Dennis Hinton (facilitator), Phil Sweetland, Alana Khayat, Diana Spence, Julia Stavitski, Eric Gould, John Sturdevant, Ryan Lewis, Tracy Randle, Dave Gershgor, Rosalie Daggett, and Judy Pickens (scribe)

1. Introductions

2. May minutes

Approved as distributed

3. Encampments

Judy summarized difficulties over the summer getting illegal encampments out of Fauntleroy Park. Two men set up camp on the two wooden platforms we installed in 1996 and, despite photo evidence and multiple reports of fires, drug use, habitat damage, and possibly related petty theft, the campers were there for six weeks before the city agreed to post removal notices. Throughout, she heard from residents concerned about safety in the park, as well as pollution of the creek, and received many photos from Tom Trulin's near-daily monitoring.

Tom suggested that the platforms be removed and, toward that end, Judy opened conversations with Amir Williams (trails) and Kristy Darcy (area crew chief) at Seattle Parks. Amir favored keeping the platforms as "amenities" and Kristy had the idea that the eastern platforms could be reduced in size and still serve as a turnaround for visitors relying on wheels, plus it would continue to discourage people going into a slide-prone area. Judy received a letter from Hazelwood Preschool supportive of removal, and this week the community association's board supported action. She received interest from our local Scout troop in making platform removal and revegetation an Eagle project.

Kristy conferred with Amir and he proposed cutting a hole in the middle of each platform, with a safety railing, so that no one could pitch a tent on them. Parks would need to do the work because Scouts aren't allowed to use a power saw on city projects. Discussion: Phil suggested we see how his idea works and, if it doesn't, press for removal/revegetation. John wondered about installing some type of interpretive signage above the holes, though vandalism is a constant concern. Tracy noted you don't need a tent to set up a camp. Kristy suggested starting with the east platform to see what happens and said she would stay in conversation with Amir.

Action item: Judy will advise Amir that we are willing to try his idea on the east platform and ,if practical, on both at the same time. She will also forward him the Hazelwood letter encouraging removal.

4. Park maintenance

Kristy reported that, since her return to this district, she has been catching up on maintenance needs in both Kilbourne and Fauntleroy parks:

- She is addressing wild clematis that is attempting to return in Kilbourne and can engage a special crew for difficult-to-reach vines.
- She is in discussion with colleagues about replacing failed mesh on boardwalks in Fauntleroy using a stronger material and is expecting installation sometime this fall.
- She has oriented a new employee to Fauntleroy with an eye toward his doing ongoing monitoring to more promptly address maintenance. Judy offered to recognize this initiative in the community newsletter.

5. Habitat in lower creek

Noting that the Green Seattle Partnership committed to return to finish work in the open space across from the spawning reach, Judy said the project had dropped off GSP's radar but she got it back on, though nothing will happen soon.

She also raised a concern about encroaching beach vegetation on the Sawyer property that abuts the channel as it flows under the ferry trestle. Ryan advised that mucking it out is the only strategy as no herbicide is safe and the species are persistent. Diana recalled attacking it last year during the log relocation work party and Dennis said volunteers could do so again.

Action item: Judy will let Chuck Sawyer know and ask Chaz Hastings if he knows of any other way to address.

6. Spawning season

Dennis reminded all that initial relocation of logs on the beach will take place on Saturday, Sept. 20, 10 am-noon.

Judy announced that Salmon Watch 2025 will officially start with our annual drumming (Sunday, Oct. 26, 4 pm). Dennis and friends will start informal monitoring in mid October, just in case. She solicited everyone on last year's watcher list and most (two dozen) plan to return.

7. Creek culverts/salmon releases

Phil reported that the city's repair of the California/parking lot culvert is to start Sept. 22. It will consist of installing a creek bypass, then inserting and curing a liner to keep the existing culvert operational until the city can replace it. The coffer dam that directs flow into the bypass will have a debris/fish screen and we will be able to see how easy it is to maintain – and how a similar screen in that location might enable releases in the park to continue during the two years that the 45th culvert is being replaced.

He emphasized that the church negotiated an agreement with the city to limit impacts on normal operations during the repair and that the church lot will be available as usual for the Fauntleroy Fall Festival. He also noted that unnecessarily moving festival activities elsewhere might falsely suggest to the city that the replacement culvert could take up much of that space without negatively impacting the community.

He explained that he has arranged with the state to have school release permits indicate Fauntleroy. The state will change them to Longfellow for any Salmon in the Schools teachers who elect to release there. Smaller groups (preschools and special ed. Students) will continue to release in the lower creek. Judy emphasized that teachers will not be notified until all hope for releasing in the park is lost.

Dennis reported talking with Jack Lawless, who says he expects to rear 500 back-up fish again this year.

8. Outreach

Eric said he had not started posting to our website for lack of direction and access. Phil said he had provided what was needed to take over as webmaster and Judy had sent him a report to post and an indication of what typically comes throughout the year. Diana offered to document the turnover process to avoid future hiccups.

Action item: Phil and Judy will resend their information and answer specific questions as Eric has them. They will cc Diana so she can document the turnover process.

Chaz Hastings will again add his tabla drumming and loan his audio equipment for our Oct. 26 drumming. Jamie Shilling will lead the music and she and Judy will plan songs and an activity around a welcome theme. If arrangements with his family can be made, the event will include recognition our eldest volunteer.

9. Wildlife poster

Ryan showed an update of the poster, reflecting layout of animals according to creek, understory, and canopy habitats and the addition of a couple of favored species. He said he had gone as far as he could and that others needed to take over. Dave offered to take high-resolution photos as options for the background and Diana offered to send some of her park photos to Dave to assess. Regarding design, Dave said he may be able to advise, Tracy offered to ask Sam Too (who worked on our wayfinding map), and Eric offered to help with design.

Action item: Ryan will forward his draft to Judy to share with those offering to carry the project forward.

10. Education

Judy announced that Ayla Wilk at Summit Atlas is now tying her high-school students into an established protocol for water-quality monitoring at multiple sites in the creek system that will enable them to post findings on a national database. The monitoring specialist with the Sno-King Watershed Council is doing the training, including sampling for macroinvertebrates. Shannon Ninburg is loaning our Surber sampler for the latter.

11. Money matters

Dennis reported \$760.51 in our bank account.

Judy reported \$6,813.45 in our stewardship fund, which includes \$86 from the city to replace a check she never received; not sure why we were owed but she accepted the check.

She noted that the amount we have would cover a little more than two EarthCorps crew days maintaining the Kilbourne ravine. She approached Chaz about his organizing a wetlands-related project that would enable us to apply for another West Seattle Garden Tour grant, with about a fourth going to the project and the rest to our stewardship fund. Ryan mentioned that Kilbourne maintenance might be a fit for King County's Small Habitat Grant Program.

Action item: Ryan will look into the county's grant program and, if promising, work with Judy to apply.

Next meeting: Thursday, Nov. 13, 6:30pm on Zoom

Upcoming events

- Recycle Roundup Sunday, Sept. 20, 9 am-3 pm in the church parking lot
- 45th culvert community meeting Thursday, Oct. 2, 5:30 pm in the Hall at Fauntleroy
- Fauntleroy Fall Festival Sunday, Oct. 19, 2-5 pm in the "triangle"
- Annual salmon drumming Sunday, Oct. 26, 4 pm next to fish ladder