

FAUNTLEROY WATERSHED COUNCIL

Meeting #122, Nov. 13, 2025, on Zoom

ATTENDEES

Watershed volunteers: Dennis Hinton (facilitator), Phil Sweetland, Diana Spence, Julia Stavnitski, John Sturtevant, Tom Trulin, and Judy Pickens (scribe)

Seattle Parks: Kristy Darcy

1. Introductions

2. September minutes

Approved as distributed

3. Fauntleroy Park maintenance

Kristy had a robust report about recent maintenance of Fauntleroy Park::

Seasonal work: Staff has been blowing leaves to keep trails clear of trip hazards, cutting back vegetation along arterial trails so that spring growth doesn't encroach, and addressing tree hazards. She now has someone on staff authorized to do such tree work and encouraged all to report downed trees/limbs that need attention.

Wire mesh on boardwalks: Staff has replaced derelict mesh on 150 feet of boardwalk with a sturdier product to improve visitor safety.

Viewing platforms: As recommended by the trails supervisor, staff will cut out the center of the two platforms to deter illegal encampments and install a safety railing around the hole.

Cambridge St. entrance: In response to an inquiry through our website, a park user described continued water-related damage, which has been a problem for years and asked for help to address. At Kristy's request, the trails supervisor examined the area, including street runoff, and requested a consultation with the department's civil engineer.

Action item: Judy will send Kristy documentation from minutes about our recommendation to close this entrance because of persist erosion.

John summarized what he did to upgrade the kiosks at SW Barton and 97th SW entrances:

- removed outdated postings.
- purchased and installed new locks (Kristy and Judy have the combination).
- asked if Parks might give the structures a fresh coat of paint.
- attempted to clean the two panes of Plexiglas and requested that Seattle Parks replace both of them.

Action item: Kristy will seek advice from the department's graffiti team about any effective cleaning method.

In response to inquiries about the derelict fence in the "owl" area, Kristy will look into removing it and whatever else may need to be done there.

Action item: Judy will send Kristy documentation from minutes about this area.

4. Trees in spawning reach

Phil summarized the plan to address the two trunks of a city-owned bigleaf maple that came down during a recent wind storm:

- Seattle Parks cut through the trunk that fell across the creek channel to open one side of the path and will return soon to open the other.
- State Fish and Wildlife directed that both trunks remain in place to add to habitat. As authorized, Tom cleared small branches from the top of the one that fell along the south bank so that they would not impede spawner passage.
- Phil and son Carl cleared the patio area, billing the city for the dump charge.

- Seattle Parks will shorten still-standing maple trees on the open-space slope that show evidence of rot so that they cannot reach the patio/stairs and leave the snags in place for habitat; work will be done as soon as it can be scheduled.

5. Salmon Watch 2025

Dennis reported nine spawners as of this afternoon, compared to 19 at this time last year. Although watchers saw a lot of spawners near the beach early on, they've not seen any lately. He said that Frank Immel and Mark Sears will be modifying the nearby float to prevent seals from continuing to lounge there between meals. He credited Mark's diligence for keeping the spawners' path to the mouth of the creek open. He also noted that, even with 11-foot tides, relatively low rainfall could have kept spawners from making the jump at the mouth. Some 30 volunteers have been involved in one way or another and are veterans of watch season. Dennis and Tom will continue to check the creek after the watch officially ends in case late coho arrive.

Judy noted that several school groups have come during spawning season. In order to protect students and our volunteers, she is looking into any potential way we should improve the information we provide volunteers who have child contact. For several years, we've required them to do the online training provided by Seattle Schools about preventing adult sexual abuse of children. More when she has it.

6. Culvert repair

Phil reported that the contractor now wrapping up lining of the California/church parking lot was great to work with and the project seems to have gone like clockwork.

7. Salmon in the Schools

Judy reported that, for the two-year duration of construction to replace the creek culvert under 45th Ave. SW, we had no alternative but to stop releases in 2026 and 2027 in Fauntleroy Park. After much discussion, the plan is for West Seattle elementary schools to release at Longfellow Creek and for preschool, high school and special-education students to release in lower Fauntleroy Creek. The Delridge Neighborhoods Development Association will be responsible for scheduling and staffing releases for four elementary schools in the Longfellow watershed and our long-time release volunteer, Shannon Ninburg, generously offered to do the same for the others.

Action item: Judy will make sure Julia has Shannon's email address so that they can coordinate on preschool releases.

Phil added that he just received notice from State Fish and Wildlife of a viral infection at three tribal hatcheries for chum, which affects schools releasing in Carkeek. The closure will go on until the facilities have been clear of virus for three years straight.

8. Wildlife poster

John shared a semi-final draft, ably designed by his neighbor based on initial work by Ryan Lewis. It is to be 24" X 18" to fit in the kiosks at park entrances. Comments were quite positive. After a few more tweaks, the poster will be ready for printing by Minuteman Press, a local shop that is donating copies with some UV protection. Julia questioned whether or not the park needs a third kiosk and discussion ensued about how we might collect data on usage at each entrance and perhaps involve students or Scouts in collecting it.

Action item: Judy will look into potential ways to track usage at park entrances so that we have data to use in decision making.

9. Student research

Judy reported that Shannon led the annual student sampling for macroinvertebrates in the upper and lower creek the end of October with fourth graders from Boren STEM. Because fresh gravel had just been laid in Fenton Glen as part of culvert repair, the group shifted upper sampling to the release bridge. Detailed findings will appear on our website.

She also reported that she and John were online earlier this month when junior and senior science students at Summit Atlas presented their research proposals on Zoom. Their topics had to match constraints of budget (none) and time but were nonetheless creative. Together with two water-quality specialists also on the session, they had constructive suggestions and Judy left with a lengthy to-do list of information to send to teacher Ayla Wilk to pass on to her students.

10. Outreach

Website: Diana reported on development of a process document summarizing how content gets onto our website. She worked with Judy to understand what roles have been involved in developing and posting content, then formatted the process in a way that can be used when similar needs arise, especially when new people step into those roles.

Drumming: Judy reported that, despite a high chance of rain and the downed trees at creek level, a record 130 people attended our annual drumming to call in spawners. Jamie Shilling led the music, Chaz Hastings loaned his audio equipment, Dave Gershgorin took photos, and Alana Khayat helped create compostable tags for the spawning reach, with welcome messages penned by those in attendance. Our tribute to most-senior salmon watcher Dick Paynter was especially well received.

In the media: Dennis reported recent articles on the *West Seattle Blog* about a fall fieldtrip by kindergarten students from St. Francis of Assisi to the lower creek, the work party to clear the path of logs and invasive plants so spawners could reach the mouth, and first coho in the spawning reach.

11. Money matters

Dennis reported \$760.51 in our checking account. Judy did not receive the balance in our stewardship fund from EarthCorps as requested but got it later: \$6,899.45.