

FAUNTLEROY WATERSHED COUNCIL

Meeting #125, May 14, 2026, on Zoom

ATTENDEES

Watershed volunteers: Dennis Hinton (facilitator), Phil Sweetland, Diana Spence, Alana Khayat, Eric Gould, Tom Trulin, John Sturtevant, Tracy Randle, Shannon Ninburg, Julia Stavitski, Ellen Brown, Mary Brennan, and Judy Pickens (scribe)

1. Introductions

Dennis welcomed newcomers Ellen (working on garden-tour grant) and Mary (smolt-trap monitor).

2. March minutes

Approved as distributed.

3. Natural-areas stewardship

Fauntleroy Park: Seattle Parks district crew chief Kristy Darcy was away at a conference. Judy reported the following updates based on information from trails supervisor Amir Williams:

- The boardwalk is far beyond repair and needs to be replaced. He am working with the department's management, planning, and development group as well as with a contractor to assess how to replace it, which will be very expensive and take some time to complete. The next hurdle is having department engineers look at it and possibly a geo survey for the area as it is very wet all year round. If the engineers are okay with it, he thinks the department or a contractor can build a new boardwalk in sections over two years so that funding wouldn't be so much of an issue.
- Modification of the two wooden platforms is on hold. Staff has been visiting Fauntleroy two or three times a month and not yet seen anyone camping, sleeping, or hanging out on the platforms other than people using them properly. There is great internal concern that removing or modifying them would impact the creek. The department is trying to figure out something that is sustainable and equitable.
- He has brought Seattle Public Utilities into the conversation about the Cambridge Street entrance as he feels the drain that SPU installed isn't working the way it should and is likely the cause of the ongoing water issue. Building anything there would require going through engineering, and a simple fix will likely not last because of the amount of water that is coming into the park. The department has fixed the trail three or four times and it just washes away, which is very bad for any fish in that creek tributary.

Kilbourne ravine: Alana reported that an EarthCorps crew of 10 put in a full day in the ravine on April 3, with an emphasis on removing ivy and other invasives encroaching on trees and creating/reinforcing tree rings. An oversight in planning left an infestation of wild clematis and blackberry next to the schoolhouse wall, which Alana removed and disposed of herself in multiple sessions.

Plant-related grant project: Ellen reported that Amir's assessment of the situation at the Cambridge Street entrance means a project there with Summit Atlas science student isn't yet "ripe." She will check the park's vegetation management plan for ideas. She also suggested we might want to use grant money for a community-outreach project about invasives. The grant application is due mid July.

Action item: *Ellen will continue planning and keep those of us who might be involved abreast.*

Lower-creek open space: Judy reported contacting the Green Seattle Partnership again about when to expect Phase 2 work along the south slope of the spawning reach. This time she got a response: this summer/early fall.

4. Outreach

Alana reported that, with Diana's able assistance, our table at the FCA Annual Meeting and Food Fest on March 24 drew a lot of interest, especially the trivia game she devised. Their promotion of our stewardship fund brought in \$70 in cash with a corporate match, plus \$60 online, for a total of \$200 for

the evening. Leftovers of the specially designed “I live in the Fauntleroy watershed” Koozies and stickers are stored to support another event. Thoughts about next year:

- Encourage donations with just a click.
- Emphasize projects the fund has enabled.

Action item: *Judy will clarify with FCA leadership its policy about money changing hands during the event (donations, product sales).*

Website activity: Eric reported that traffic has been down so far from last spring and he’s most concerned about usage in the U.S. He is monitoring for a possible breach of security.

Action item: *Tracy will help as needed to get informative local data about usage.*

Action item: *Judy will be attuned to opportunities to promote the website as a resource for teachers, volunteers, and watershed residents.*

5. Salmon releases

Lower creek: Julia reported that preschool releases in the lower creek have been going well, with about 100 students so far. She gave a shout out to Jack Lawless, whose fish make most preschool releases possible. Those involved in our field trip for students with autism and attention deficient enthused about the experience, from releasing and exploring with Dennis, Diana, Judy, and Alana to beach time with Tracy at Lincoln Park. City Councilmember Rob Saka and two of his aides were special guests during one release and stayed for a brief chat about creek activities and issues. A release for area Scouts will be May 18 up near 45th Ave. SW on Dunbar property.

Longfellow: Shannon reported the releases she is coordinating in Longfellow have also been going well. The site is not as spacious as in Fauntleroy Park and it’s very much an urban setting with several water-quality related studies ongoing. Fairmount Park kicked off the season with support from our drumming musician, Jamie Shilling. She has offered musical support for other release in Longfellow. Shannon arranged for five learning stations through which small groups of students are rotating. They include a demonstration of stormwater runoff and bio filtration; “beaver detective” Pamela Adams may provide a station during some releases.

6. Research

Smolt monitoring: Dennis reported that about a half dozen volunteers have been checking upper and lower smolt traps twice daily since March 15; Scouts will remove the traps on May 18. Sixteen smolts have been documented so far - 4 in the upper trap and 12 in the lower. Because fry caught in the lower trap are already weak and likely would not survive further handling, monitors are letting them go downstream.

Exoskeleton survey: Judy reported that our annual survey of stonefly exoskeletons in the spawning reach went amazingly well on April 23 with four-years-olds from the Urban Nature Preschool. Working in teams with an adult, they counted and measured, then Alana walked them through reporting their findings and showed how their data compared to prior years using line graphs. This year’s count was noticeably down (21) and size was on the low end. Next year’s survey needs to be done in early April when exoskeletons tend to be more prevalent. Preschool staff and our volunteers agreed that the experience was very positive, the kids were prepared, and scheduling them was simple compared with elementary students.

Research reports: Judy reminded all that Summit Atlas science students will be reporting on their research projects during an online session Tuesday, May 19, 9:30-12:30.

7. Culvert replacements

Phil reported that the manager of one SPU project recently changed and the manager of the other is going on unplanned sabbatical, which may result in another change. Utility-related work at 45th is to commence June 15 and run into September. Planning for the other project recently resumed, as

evidenced by additional soil testing done in the church parking lot. Church representatives will meet with that project manager as soon as possible.

8. Watershed plan check-in

Judy shared the “goals and aspirations” section from our 2023 watershed plan and invited comments on how well we have been doing, which included

- Judy and Phil clarified our relationship with the Salmon in the Schools program.
- Tracy advised that more feedback on wayfinding in Fauntleroy Park would be helpful as usage has been noticeably down compared with when this resource was initially announced.
- What’s happening about the video guide?
- What’s happening with succession of responsibilities?

Action item: Tracy will assess if any tweaks are needed in our wayfinding resource, including a QR code link.

Action item: Judy will scope out what would be required to create and post a video guide to the creek system and report in September.

Action item: Judy will draft a plan for transferring what she has been doing to others and report in September.

9. In the media

Dennis reported coverage on the *West Seattle Blog* for home hatch, the exoskeleton survey, smolt-trap installation, and Saka’s participation in a release.

10. Volunteer recruitment

Diana suggested that a summary of our accomplishments to date would be helpful to orient prospective volunteers to what we’ve been doing.

Action item: With Diana’s assistance, Judy will work on over the summer and report in September.

11. Money matters

Dennis reported a balance in our checking account of \$760.51. Judy was not able to get a status report on our stewardship fund from EarthCorps in time for this meeting.

Action item: Judy will request a detailed report to make sure that EarthCorps’ transferring of accounting responsibility to a contractor did not cause any slippage.

Next meeting: Thursday, September 10, 6:30 pm on Zoom