

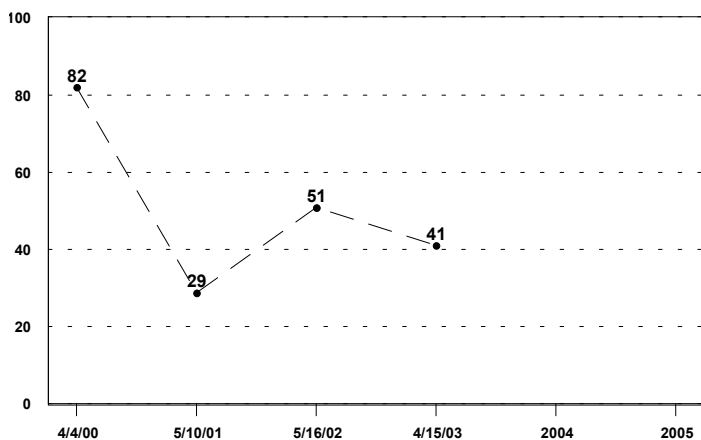
2003 STONEFLY EXOSKELETON COUNT FAUNTLEROY CREEK

Fifth-grade students from Arbor Heights Elementary School did the annual stonefly exoskeleton count on April 15, 2003. The date was a month earlier than last year; the initial sighting of exoskeletons was in late March so the count was scheduled immediately after spring break.

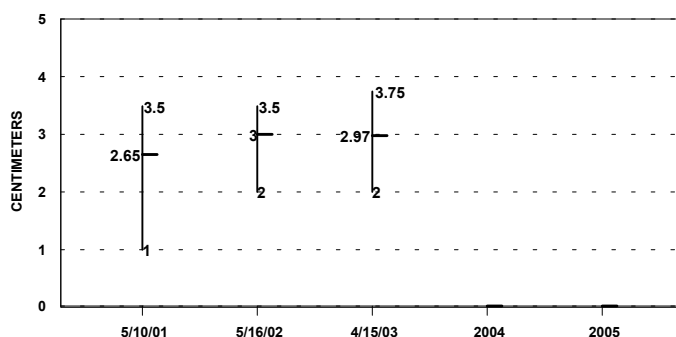
The class followed established protocol by counting all exoskeletons found on trees, bushes, bridges, and other wood in the study area - the reach between the "S" turns due upstream of the first bridge and the entrance to the fish ladder downstream. This reach in the lower creek is nourished by spawner carcasses and is where Seattle Public Utilities does macroinvertebrate sampling in the fall. It is an accessible reach for students to survey a consistent study area year to year.

FINDINGS

NUMBER OF STONEFLY EXOSKELETONS
FAUNTLEROY CREEK



LENGTH OF STONEFLY EXOSKELETONS
TORSO RANGE AND AVERAGE
FAUNTLEROY CREEK



The most notable discovery was the largest single individual (3.75 cm) recorded during the three years that students have been measuring just the torso.

Last fall's "crash" of the coho return (only 5 fish to leave nutrients) and scarcity of stonefly larva in the annual macroinvertebrate sample suggested that we would have a low number of exoskeletons, as did the fact that one day before the count, only two or three exoskeletons were evident. Much metamorphosis happened overnight, however, and 41 exoskeletons awaited the students.

To understand if the metamorphosis might have been just beginning, another class (K-2 students from Kapka Cooperative Primary School) repeated the survey the next day and came up with only 32 exoskeletons. This findings suggests that the official count day happened to be exactly right for the stonefly life cycle.

OBSERVATIONS

The four bridges were the most popular with stoneflies; 27 chose to climb the wooden structures. Trees were next, with 13; the largest number (7) were on the horse chestnut. Only one was found on a bush (a flowering red currant). None was found on rail fences or on exposed logs in the creek.