FAUNTLEROY WATERSHED ACTION PLAN

PRESERVING, ENHANCING AND MAINTAINING THE NATURAL ECOSYSTEM OF FAUNTLEROY PARK AND THE CREEK CORRIDOR

Prepared by watershed citizens in cooperation with Seattle Public Utilities and Seattle Parks and Recreation, Seattle, Washington. Adopted September 2001 by the Fauntleroy Watershed Council as a 'living' guide to current and future stewardship.

GENESIS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THIS PLAN

The projects and programs outlined in this plan build on a dozen years of accomplishment by the community and supporting agencies in water-quality monitoring, watershed awareness, habitat restoration, salmon restoration, education, and habitat advocacy. Development of a watershed action plan to give more direction was a logical next step after obvious projects in the creek and park were completed and as additional volunteers began to surface.

Two efforts initiated by the community to respond to these factors were the genesis of this plan. One was a planning process funded in 1999 by Seattle Public Utilities to create an action plan, primarily for the creek corridor, through a combination of consultant and volunteer expertise. The other was creation in early 2000 of a work plan by the newly formed Friends of Fauntleroy Park, an Adopt-a-Park group. After circulation of the first draft of the creek plan to agency stakeholders in late 2000, SPU and Parks assigned staff to advise the process and all parties agreed to merge the park work plan and creek draft into one document that would become the basis for a watershed-wide action plan.

For more information about the watershed, action plan, or watershed council, contact any member of the council's executive committee:

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CORE VALUES

The core values that guided development of the goals and objectives of this plan and that established the context for their implementation are as follows:

- Emphasize natural habitat.
- Respect nature's innate ability to heal itself.
- Cooperate as full partners in an environment of open, timely communication.
- Encourage broad citizen input and involvement.
- Provide training, rehabilitation, and educational opportunities for young people.
- Respect the rights and concerns of residents adjacent to the park and creek.
- Share experience and expertise to benefit other watersheds and inform public policy.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The action plan focuses on five goals. Corresponding objectives are broadly stated here and fleshed out in the plan's text and action items.

GOAL 1: Preserve, restore, and enhance native vegetation for long-term sustainability of the natural ecosystem.

a) Control invasive plants.
b) Revegetate to increase the habitat's potential to support appropriate wildlife.
c) Use vegetation to direct and restrict pedestrian traffic and stabilize soils.

GOAL 2: Preserve and enhance native aquatic resources for long-term sustainability.

a) Reduce non-point pollution, erosion, and sedimentation.
b) Restore natural in-stream and riparian habitat, using salmonids as the indicator species.
c) Reconnect the creek corridor to the extent feasible for migratory fish.
d) Advocate for public policies that promote healthy freshwater and nearshore habitat.

GOAL 3: Promote safe, habitat-sensitive public enjoyment of the park.

a) Develop and maintain a trail system that provides safe, inviting access while minimizing runoff and human impact on sensitive habitat.
b) Block established and rogue trails that encourage destructive access.
c) Use signage to reinforce habitat-friendly behaviors.
d) Offer nature walks and other opportunities that emphasize the value of natural habitat.
e) Incorporate security considerations into the design of park structures.

GOAL 4: Provide and encourage opportunities for environmental education.

a) Support schools and organizations in habitat-friendly use of the creek and park as focal points for outdoor education, service learning, and research.
b) Identify opportunities for young people to participate in restoration and enhancement.
c) Use interpretive signage, publications, and other passive tools to encourage learning.

GOAL 5: Establish and facilitate long-term stewardship of the park and creek.

a) Encourage and enable residents to take informed "ownership" of their watershed.
b) Cultivate positive relations with residents adjacent to the park and creek.
c) Establish ties with agencies and groups that have expertise, funding, or in-kind services to offer.
d) Monitor the permitting of proposed development projects that could negatively impact natural habitat.
e) Incorporate long-term maintenance considerations into the design of all projects.

ABOUT THIS SUMMARY

The following summary captures all actions detailed in the plan, along with their status. Action items are grouped according to what they address. All the actions summarized here are in the edition of the action plan adopted by the watershed council in September 2001. Some originated from citizen experience and observations and others from public meetings about Fauntleroy Park. Over time, we are refining proposed actions and adding to the list to reflect emerging opportunities and challenges.

For study, engineering, and annual reports about activities mentioned in this summary, go to www.fauntleroy.net.

Note: "SPU" refers to Seattle Public Utilities. "Seattle Parks" refers to the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation.

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

A-1: Continue weeding invasive non-natives in Fauntleroy Park to give beneficial natives a chance to flourish and propagate.

Ongoing with volunteers and as school and special projects.

A-2: Tap existing knowledge to shape and maximize the benefits of the city's scheduled investment in a vegetation management plan for Fauntleroy Park.

Completed January 2004.

A-3: Maintain areas of the park that have been replanted to control erosion, restore plant diversity, and direct public access.

Vegetation management plan being used to guide ongoing and special projects.

A-4: Propagate native plants for streamside and wetland transplanting as needed.

Ready availability now by other means has diminished the importance of local propagation except as a learning experience.

UPLAND EROSION

B-1: Provide emergency response to ensure public safety or check runoff from landslides occurring in the park or creek corridor.

Ongoing as needed by Seattle Parks and SPU.

B-2: Work with the community or private property owners for long-term restoration of habitat affected by landslides.

SPU is monitoring revegetated landslide and will assist or advise if/when other slides occur.

B-3: Study sources of silt and long-term effectiveness of reduction strategies and recommend action steps.

SPU completed major erosion-control project from creek tributaries in Fauntleroy Park down to 45th Ave. S.W. (addition of large woody debris in channel and revegetation of work areas with beneficial natives). Council will complete similar work downstream by fall 2005.

UPLAND AND AQUATIC WILDLIFE

C-1: Weigh the pros and cons of trying to sustain a natural coho run, including what additional documentation of the return would be needed.

Strategy updated December 2003 to focus on enhancing and maintaining the creek as rearing habitat for juveniles. Annual volunteer monitoring of out-migration initiated 2003.

C-2: Identify additional options for improving spawning habitat in accessible reaches and recommend action steps.

Council-directed downstream project (see B-3) will help, as will completing restoration of the reach to the beach (tentatively scheduled for 2006).

C-3: Continue regular sampling of macroinvertebrates in the lower creek.

Ongoing by SPU-directed volunteers every other year.

C-4: Initiate baseline and periodic sampling of macroinvertebrates in the upper creek.

Ongoing annually by students at Arbor Heights Elementary.

C-5: Complement macroinvertebrate sampling with annual monitoring of stonefly exoskeletons in the lower creek.

Ongoing annually by students at Arbor Heights Elementary.

C-6: If indicated by data, implement strategies (such as carcass enhancement) to increase nutrients for macroinvertebrates in the upper creek.

Not yet indicated. Monitoring of large woody debris projects will document value for macros (which is expected). Number of fish released in the upper creek is restricted each year to try to avoid overloading that habitat.

C-7: Document the number, diversity, and behaviors of wildlife in the watershed over time.

Some done as part of vegetation management planning. Volunteers initiated a watershed-wide emphasis on bird species and abundance, which is being developed as opportunities and available time coincide.

C-8: Continue efforts to restore Pacific tree frogs to their historic habitat in the park.

Cancelled March 2002 because of new understanding about species and habitat.

C-9: As indicated by wildlife data, reintroduce other species as feasible to restore the natural diversity of native wildlife historically found in the park.

No action indicated yet.

C-10: Continue annual monitoring of the salmon return and associated factors that may increase knowledge and document trends.

Ongoing

TRAILS AND SIGNAGE

D-1: Develop a comprehensive plan to reduce direct runoff into the creek from trails, including monitoring, repairing, and improving existing trails and trail structures, building new trails/structures as warranted, and closing rogue trails.

Major maintenance of arterial trails completed January 2004. Severe erosion at Cambridge Street entrance addressed in 2004/05. Council discussed but tabled action on development of a trails master plan, pending a volunteer willing to coordinate.

D-2: Coordinate implementation of the trails plan, including scheduling, funding, and community involvement.

Upon completion of trails master plan.

D-3: Reinforce stream banks at trail crossings as needed to reduce erosion by foot traffic.

Included in erosion-control project implemented 2004.

D-4: Define the park's major trails and their ADA accessibility with signage or by other means.
To be included as an action item in a trails master plan, if pursued.

D-5: Install additional "do-don't" signage as needed to promote positive use of the park.
Park hours/scoop signs installed 2001; pet-waste signs added as part of student study (2003-04); yard-waste signs added as part of volunteer outreach (2005).

D-6: Create and install interpretive signage (or other means) in the park and elsewhere in the watershed to call public attention to and increase public awareness and knowledge of native plants, wildlife, soils, and other features of the ecosystem.
To be factored into larger projects as opportunities arise and funding for replacement signage is available.

D-7: Use park kiosk(s) to provide timely information about work parties, guided nature walks, landslide reporting, and other topics of interest to watershed residents and visitors.
Ongoing; community has keys to kiosk for posting at will.

IN-STREAM EROSION

E-1: Re-contour steep banks as deemed beneficial to reducing in-stream erosion and revegetate as needed to restore native cover.
Included in large woody debris projects throughout system.

E-2: Install natural weirs as deemed beneficial to reducing in-stream erosion.
Included in large woody debris projects throughout system.

E-3: Anchor large woody debris in all reaches to reduce in-stream erosion and enhance habitat.
See above.

E-4: Construct or retrofit in-stream structures to help speed transport of silt through the creek corridor.
See above.

E-5: Do a cost/benefit analysis of vactoring of the fish ladder and possibly other sites as needed until silt-reduction strategies become effective.
Removed silt from ladder fall 2001; installed rocks to improve transport, 2002-2004.

WETLAND, RIPARIAN CORRIDOR AND FISH PASSAGE

F-1: Examine creek tributaries in the park to complete the channel assessment already done for mainstem reaches.
Completed July 2001.

F-2: Assess the feasibility of installing a Flow-Mole culvert adjacent to the existing culvert under 45th Ave. S.W. and make recommendations.
Decided March 2002 not to be feasible.

F-3: Assess the feasibility of repairing the "sandbox" catch basin at 45th Ave. S.W. and make recommendations.
Decided March 2002 not to be feasible at this time.

F-4: Assess the feasibility of backwatering between 45th & California Ave. S.W. and revegetating as needed and make recommendations.
Decided March 2002 not to be feasible at this time.

F-5: Assess the feasibility of replacing the California Ave. parking lot culvert with a daylighted pipe and make recommendations.
Decided March 2002 not to be feasible at this time.

F-6: Assess and address conditions at the mouth of the creek prior to and during the return to ensure that spawners have access.
Assessed build-up of sand at mouth initiated with agency partners March 2003; additional assessment planned in conjunction with restoration of reach to beach.

F-7: Assess and address impediments in the fish ladder prior to the return.
Done annually with SPU staff.

MAINTENANCE AND SECURITY

G-1: Discourage and address graffiti in the park.
Ongoing; reporting phone number communicated through community association.

G-2: Discourage and address litter in the park.
Ongoing in conjunction with field trips, work parties, and research projects.

G-3: Discourage and address illegal and unsafe activities in the park, including dumping.
Ongoing; monitoring during field trips, work parties, and nature walks, with articles as needed in community newsletter. Council sent targeted letter to neighbors at northwest corner of park about illegal dumping; signage installed 2005.

G-4: Disseminate phone numbers to call to report landslides.
Periodically through community newsletter and website.

G-5: Assess possible modifications to the 97th Street entrance to the park that balance ecosystem needs with public use.
Council discussed January 2005 and encouraged interested volunteer to propose specific options that could be achieved with grant funding and donated services/supplies. Seattle Parks hardened parking area with rock in spring 2005.

G-6: Decorate, install, and service garbage/recycling cans at park entrances and at the fish-ladder viewpoint.
Undecorated garbage cans installed 2002 at park entrances. Residents who are regulars at the viewpoint keep an eye out for garbage, as do adjacent neighbors.

STEWARDSHIP AND EDUCATION

H-1: Establish a watershed council that involves the community and stakeholder agencies in moving this plan forward and responding to emerging needs and opportunities.
Done July-November 2001; meets every other month.

H-2: Establish a Friends of Fauntleroy Creek volunteer steering committee (parallel with the existing Friends of Fauntleroy Park steering committee) to focus on creek-specific activities and concerns.
Done November 2001 as the Creek Committee; meets as needed.

H-3: Provide ongoing opportunities for students to engage in scientific discovery in the watershed.

Ongoing as needs/opportunities identified.

H.4: Provide ongoing opportunities for students to engage in service learning in the watershed.

Ongoing as needs/opportunities identified.

H-5: Target park neighbors with tailored information that emphasizes erosion control and park stewardship.

Council to provide input to SPU for outreach planned in 2005.

H-G: Target riparian neighbors with tailored information that emphasizes erosion control and creek stewardship.

Council to provide input to SPU for outreach planned in 2005.

H-7: Assess additional ways to strengthen stewardship among park, creek, and beach neighbors and recommend action steps.

Ongoing in conjunction with restoration projects. Seattle Parks funded outreach 2005 to try to interest more residents in park stewardship.

H.8: Involve interested watershed residents in school field trips to the creek.

Ongoing as identified and needed.

H-9: Assess ways to reduce wear and tear on sensitive areas of the park by groups of youngsters (such as preschoolers and daycare children) and recommend action steps.

Sensitive areas identified in vegetation management plan; outreach done as opportunities arise.

H-10: Offer guided walks (ferns, early-bloomers, mushrooms) for nature lovers and special groups (disabled, seniors) to increase habitat knowledge and comfort being in the park.

Council assisted with community nature walks in spring 2004 and 2005; included bird guide in watershed brochure updated fall 2004.

H-11: Stay in touch with the Roxhill wetland restoration project on the assumption that Fauntleroy's deep-water source is below that site.

Key players there included in distribution of minutes and other council information. To date, communication is one way.

H-12: Respond to permit applications to build adjacent to the park or creek and check for compliance.

Ongoing monitoring of weekly land-use notices from city by e-mail.

H-13: Support improved communication among Seattle's creek groups.

Individual volunteers participate in public meetings and other opportunities to get to know other creek advocates and their issues.

H-14: Advocate for public-policy decisions in step with the goals articulated by this watershed plan.

Ongoing by individuals and, as authorized, by the council's executive committee.