

Superintendent's Report  
Parks and Neighborhoods Committee  
April 19, 2012

**ITEMS OF INTEREST**

Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center. LHPAC's Mock Trial team placed 11<sup>th</sup> out of 20 school teams in the YMCA King County District Mock Trial Competition on February 25. Thanks go to the sponsors, Seattle Youth Violence Prevention Initiative and Jefferson Community Center Advisory Council, and to the supporters, Volunteer Coach Russell Odell, Julie Kesler and Tom Grant, Tony Innovong, Judge Mary Yu, William Downing, Chris Washington and Judge Jackie Lum.

National Walking Day. Parks took a leadership role in the kickoff of National Walking Day on April 4, holding 30-minute walks (some of them in water at pools) at 18 sites. We had great media coverage and great participation.

Crown Hill Elementary Park Development. This project is physically complete! The fencing will stay up through the spring to allow the turf to get established. We're planning an opening celebration in collaboration with Crown Hill Center for May 19 and hope to see you there.

Golden Gardens Landslide Repair 2011 & Lake Washington Boulevard Landslide Repair 2011. We are now in a position to make a formal request for federal funds for slope stabilization related to both the Golden Gardens and the Lake Washington Boulevard landslides. SDOT is helping process federal paperwork through WSDOT.

Beaver Pond Natural Area Renovation. The final public meeting for the renovation was March 14. This Parks and Green Spaces Opportunity Fund project modifies the existing park, refines and completes channel work in portions of the park by relocating two portions of Thornton Creek, removes invasive plants and restores native habitat. The schematic is complete; between schematic and design development we need to get grading, drainage and MUP permits from DPD, and work out some issues with SDOT. We are considering where to relocate the stream in response to Parks Arborist concerns and those of a neighbor, and hope to have that issue resolved soon.

Lakewood Moorage. Staff met with Christopher Schober, Concessionaire of both the City's Lakewood and Leschi Moorages, on April 4 to discuss adding dry storage of rowboats at the facility.

Seward Park Andrews Bay Shoreline Restoration. The Conservation Corps has finished up the planting work along the east side of Andrews Bay funded by a grant from the King Conservation District. The Corps removed of 16 Lombardy poplars (some used for aquatic and terrestrial habitat) and planted 16 new trees, 180 riparian shrubs and 30 ferns. They did a great job.

Jefferson Skatepark. This project is open for use! This is the first lighted skatepark in the city. Users are already asking for improvements to what is there, and the design team has made a proposal that Parks has submitted to the contractor for pricing. We're planning an opening celebration for July 14 for the entire park. Please mark your calendar!

University Heights Open Space Improvements/University Heights South Lot Park. I met with UHCC's key board members to talk about a draft construction/maintenance MOA. It needs more negotiation. They have done their own site analysis and design revisions they would like Parks to include in the project; and they are applying for an NMF grant to support some improvements. Parks is completing contract negotiations with Hough Beck and Baird for final project design and with Terracon Consultants for a soils study to support the rain garden design. We are in communication with SDOT to clarify any requirements for work in the alley right-of-way. I am working now on the contract with HBB to move ahead with work. Remaining issues: UHCC's desire for flexibility with Parks' layout (and construction schedule), opposition to the use of an agreement to allow our contractor onto their property to do infiltration tests for the rain gardens, and funding for new play equipment.

Seacrest Boathouse: We canceled the open house scheduled for March 27 upon learning that a restaurant permit is required. This will cause a minor delay in Marination's move in and we will reschedule the open house where Marination will talk about its vision and plan for providing quality food services at Seacrest.

Rainier Beach Community Center and Pool Partnership Open House. Thank you for joining us and the more than 60 community stakeholders and interested organizations who participated in an Open House Parks last month to launch the Request for Interest (RFI) announcement that Parks has issued for partnership opportunities at the RBCC. Parks has the opportunity to jumpstart some of the Goals and Priorities outlined in the Rainier Beach Neighborhood Plan Update that DON and DPD have been working with the community on over the last year. We support the active engagement of Rainier Beach community members and organizations in this endeavor. The RFI is due April 16 at 4:00 pm.

Race and Social Justice. I am working on responses to our Race and Justice Change Team's concerns about more transparency and better follow-up with unsuccessful candidates in our hiring processes. I also unveiled our new mentoring program in which we are matching mentors with mentees. From April through October, Parks directors, managers and strategic advisors will provide mentoring that we hope will help make interested and qualified employees competitive in hiring processes.

Tree of Life Sculpture Project: The Tree of Life Sculpture project is at 95% construction documents. The sculpture will go in the existing council ring at Victor Steinbrueck Park in September. The Homeless Place of Remembrance Committee raised the match for this NMF project, and they will work with the Parks Volunteer Coordinator on the plant installation work.

## **GOOD NEWS**

Denny Park Temporary Off-Leash Area: About 50 people came to the rainy opening of the Denny Park Off Leash Area on Friday, March 30, and about 30 dogs enjoyed their inaugural romp! It has been busy ever since. The area is about 4,500 square feet and includes a free-draining rock surface, a drainage system, an automated irrigation system, paw-washing station, and a use counter. Work was completed in record time by Conservation Corps, and Parks drainage, plumbing and electrical crews. Funding for construction and maintenance of this project was provided by community partners, Vulcan Real Estate, and Amazon.

The Delridge Community Center Teen Youth Media: Interns screened “Emerald Concrete” on April 17 at the Northwest Film Forum. The documentary is about the construction of the new Delridge Skatepark and skateboarding. Sponsors include the Northwest Film forum, ARC’s RecTech Youth Media Interns, Grindline, and James Cheek.

Women of the World Muslim Women’s Group: Parks met with this group who are interested in participating in Women’s only fitness classes at High Point Community Center. Staff gave the women a tour of the facility, information on building rentals and the different classes offered at the center. The outcome of the meeting was that exercise class will take place on Friday Nights from 5:45 - 6:45 p.m. for a \$2 drop-in fee. If all goes well and the class is well attended, we’ll add a second class. (Child care will be provided for this class). Three of the women also expressed interested in becoming members of the High Point Advisory Council.

Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center: This project is substantially complete; it included structural strengthening to the building, specifically the dome-roof above the theater; electrical improvements throughout, re-piping of the water supply system, and numerous interior improvements. The staff are beginning to re-occupy the facility and the first production took place on April 14 with the kickoff of the African-American Film Festival. We look forward to seeing you at the grand opening is scheduled for May 1.

Propeller Art Project at North Passage Point Park: The propeller that was stolen from the donor and then found a week later after the story caught the attention of the media was installed at last on March 2. It is now in its new home at North Passage Point Park and is a beautiful tribute to the maritime tradition of Lake Union. Thanks to all who made this dream a reality for Phil Thiel, professor emeritus from the University of Washington School of Architecture. There will be a celebration on May 20 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

## **Update: Environmental Learning Centers**

### Carkeek Park

Parks is working on a formal agreement with Seattle Audubon to provide environmental learning programs in Carkeek Park that should be complete in a couple of weeks. Staff are updating the building for their occupancy and we expect programs to begin in late fall. Parks-staffed public programs were discontinued in 2011 because of budget reductions. We continue to work with

SPU to provide the Salmon in the Schools program as classroom and instructor-led park programs.

Seattle Audubon is also a partner with the Green Seattle Partnership. Working in concert with our Forest Steward program, this partnership is providing citizen science opportunities to monitor our forest restoration sites to gather data about neighborhood birds for the nationwide Neighborhood Bird Project.

[http://www.seattleaudubon.org/sas/Portals/0/Science/NBP\\_Protocol.pdf](http://www.seattleaudubon.org/sas/Portals/0/Science/NBP_Protocol.pdf)

### Discovery Park

Demolition of the Capehart military housing is complete and the restoration of 27 acres from military housing to mixed forest and meadow is complete and now in establishment and warranty phase. The area will be fenced until the plantings are established (three years).

Reforestation continues throughout the park through the Green Seattle Partnership and Discovery Park Volunteers, and the Landmarks Preservation Board is finalizing guidelines for the five historical districts in preparation of the sale of the Officers' Row and Montana Circle Homes to private individuals.

The CIP and Washington State Historical Grant project is 99% complete. The Lighthouse and Keeper's cottages have been upgraded to protect them from weather damage and maintain them until further funding is available for complete restoration (new roofs, siding repair, interior repair of the lighthouse).

In February the Army Reserve closed its Unit located at Fort Lawton.

The park continues to be actively used daily. On weekends the parking lots are full before noon, except on the rainiest days. The number of off leash dogs is epidemic numbers and there is no hope of resolution without enforcement.

The Docent Program has a new name, the Seattle Volunteer Naturalist (SVN) Program. Twenty-one participants are in training to learn how to deliver environmental learning programs to school groups, and another 25 are learning the content and facilitation for public programs. Graduates will provide programs, at ELCs, and at green spaces such as Northacres, Frink, Leschi, Lower Schmitz, Colman, Mt. Baker, Beer Sheva, and Pritchard.

### Camp Long

Newly built in 2011, the Challenge Course was funded by a 4-H grant; in 2012 a High Course will be completed with two other grants: a King County Youth Sports Facility Grant (\$50K) and Department of Neighborhoods (DON) Large Matching Fund (\$100K). Parks entered an MOU with the Washington State University 4-H to manage and operate the challenge course. The DON award is building capacity in youth-serving organizations by training their staff and some of the youth who participate in their programs to be certified for facilitation on the course. The challenge course has conducted four trainings and trained more than 40 low course facilitators, of whom 12 are Parks employees.

Some 30 groups have spent more than 120 hours on the course, including Peace Trees- Veterans Going Back to Vietnam, a Seattle University Leadership Class, West Seattle and Chief Sealth High Schools, Seattle Girls School and Seattle Lutheran High School (private high schools), Mountaineers, Youth Violence Prevention Initiative youth, and Parks teen programs from South Park CC and other sites.

Project Design for the High Ropes Course has been submitted. The High Ropes Course project is estimated for completion by October of 2012. Camp Long continues to provide programs for elementary school kids through the Seattle Volunteer Naturalist program, and for the Special Populations and Girl Scout camps held each summer.

Families continue to enjoy cabin rentals for overnight camping in the city. The right of way between the neighbors on 35<sup>th</sup> Ave. SW and the western fence of Camp Long is being restored to native plantings. An intern from South Seattle Community College has been maintaining the wildlife garden for the last 9 months.

#### **Update: Community Centers**

In the 2012 budget, to better align city services and save taxpayers and ratepayers some money, the Delridge Neighborhood Service Center (NSC) closed and has reopened as the new Southwest NSC in the former Southwest Community Center. This "little city hall" is one of six located throughout Seattle that allows residents to conduct a variety of city-related business, from paying utility bills and parking tickets to purchasing pet licenses to applying for passports. NSC customer service representatives also provide information and referrals regarding other services and programs. The Southwest NSC is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; passport applications are accepted until 5 p.m. each of these days.

At the Service Level 1, 2a and 2b centers, staff are adjusting to new roles and the management model that groups them geographically under the supervision of a Sr. Recreation Coordinator. Attitudes are positive overall, and the centers are functioning well.

#### **Update: Conservatory**

Parks has received the draft consultant report, and staff are working with the consultant to finalize it. The consultant will be in Seattle on April 27 to meet with you and CM Rasmussen.

**Update: People Counters:** All but five are installed, and we are ahead of schedule. Installation will be complete within two weeks, and staff are undergoing training on the software. Many are functioning now, and the whole system will be operating by the end of April.