



Return Service Requested

Connecting people
to nature
and each other
in the context of
their home communities.

Home Team Giving

We'd love to welcome you to Homewaters' Home Team!

Please join the Home Team, our monthly giving arrangement. You'll strengthen the important work of Homewaters in a way that's easier for you and makes your contribution go further. It saves you time and frees us to focus on fostering curiosity, science skills, and stewardship for our children.

- For just 33 cents a day, you single-handedly allow sixty fourth graders to explore a schoolyard ecosystem.
- For \$1 a day, less than a cup of coffee, you help 200 youngsters explore and map their neighborhood's healthy features.



Every Drop Counts!

This season, your support will build a strong foundation for our 2007-08 school and community programs. By contributing today you help Homewaters focus on our programs, not our finances, furthering our mission of connecting people to nature and each other.

Please consider a contribution today.

You can now donate online at
www.homewatersproject.org

Remember, every drop counts!

Contact Chris Page for more information:
206.529.6040 or cpage@sccd.ctc.edu

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (_____) _____ - _____

Email: _____

Amount: _____ This is a one-time gift
 This is a monthly pledge

*Please make checks payable to: NSCC Education Fund
with Homewaters Project in the notes section.*

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The Source

Fall 2007



2008 Events

To confirm dates & details or pre-register, please sign up for our e-newsletter, see our website, call 206-526-0187 or email jyoungman@sccd.ctc.edu.

Dirt: The Erosion of Civilization — Book Reading with Dave Montgomery Thursday, Jan 24, 7-9 pm

Join us in North Seattle Community College's North Star Room, and be prepared to never look at dirt the same way again. **FREE.**

Thornton Creek Long Walk (North Fork) Saturday, Feb 23

Hike from Ronald Bog to Matthews Beach. Pre-register (see note at top).

Brian Waite Band kids' concert Saturday, April 12

Enjoy an afternoon of lively entertainment at a local school.

Living With Beavers Wednesday, May 7, 6-8 pm

Learn about beavers, including tips on protecting your property, and maybe even catch a glimpse of one.

Know Your Homewaters Spring Party Wednesday, May 21, 7-9 pm

Support Homewaters Project and have fun while you're doing it!

For Teacher Trainings, please visit our website at www.homewatersproject.org.

Tiny Neighbors program

Water fleas brought him to his knees

One glimpse of a speedy water flea zipping into view under the lens of their scopes and they were hooked.

"One student sat perched on his knees hunched over his microscope, literally on top of his desk, to get the best view!" Lowell Elementary's 5th-grade teacher, Spring Zoog recalls. "And getting them to put away their water samples for a trip to the library was almost impossible!"

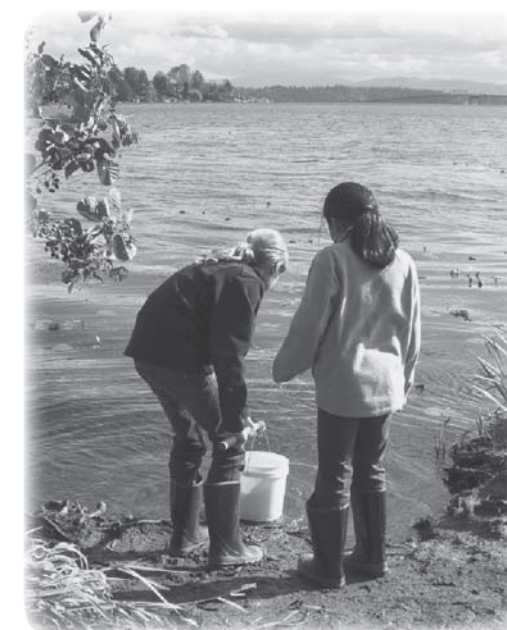
Five classes of 5th-graders had an "up close and personal" look at what lives in their neighborhood's watershed this fall during Homewaters' Tiny Neighbors program. Zoog's class took a trip to Foster Island at the north end of Washington Park Arboretum. In addition to collecting water samples to investigate back in her classroom, Zoog and her students recorded local flora and fauna, drew pictures of the surrounding landscapes, and took weather readings.

The Tiny Neighbors field investigation, designed by Homewaters 6 years ago, extends the learning of the in-class Microworlds unit. Overarching questions include "Who makes their home in a pond or lake?" and "How does the ecosystem provide what organisms need in order to survive?" Students use what they've learned in the classroom about scientific studies, single-celled organisms, and microscopes and lenses to conduct a real-world investigation at a local pond or lake.

Students from Bryant Elementary walked to their study site at the Union Bay Natural Area this fall. Having spent quite a bit of time learning about Ravenna Creek in their classes, the kids' visit to its outlet into Lake Washington was quite a surprise. "It is

so straight here, it hardly looks like the same creek!" one student observed. Groups were thrilled to spot bald eagles soaring overhead, great blue herons hunting, two crayfish, and a few of the season's last flowering wildflowers.

In addition to enjoying the chance to observe local wildlife, both big and small, Tiny Neighbors students often comment on how much they like the field trip's first activity. The field trip begins with students silently, slowly, approaching the site, taking time to become grounded in their new surroundings. "I watched a class of 26 kids from BF Day Elementary slow down, become completely silent, and



observe the vegetated shoreline of Green Lake with such deliberate focus," said Kate Bedient, Homewaters' new Education Specialist. "With a new awareness of the diversity of local flora and fauna, students may never look at their neighborhood park the same way!"

View a slideshow of this fall's Tiny Neighbors program on our website at <http://www.homewatersproject.org>.

Enjoy sending mail with custom U.S. postage stamps



Homewaters Project has designed four U.S. postage stamps featuring native snowberry, native sword fern, and students engaged in the Tiny Neighbors program. They are printed by an authorized, licensed vendor and may be used as regular U.S. postage. Homewaters receives a small royalty on every order. See all four designs and learn how to order online at www.homewatersproject.org.



Mike Mercer
August 17, 1949-July 13, 2007

Homewaters Project is saddened by the loss of our friend and colleague, Mike Mercer. Since 2000, Mike advocated for and worked with Homewaters through his job at Seattle Public Utilities. Mike provided support to our Land and Water and Watershed Gardens programs, served on our 2005 Education Advisory Committee, attended most Long Walks and in 2004 became our liaison to SPU for our contract with the agency. Mike died suddenly of a heart attack this past summer. We will miss him greatly.



Walkable field trips and new curricula engage increasing numbers of students and teachers

Homewaters completed a five-year strategic plan in the spring of 2006. A year and a half later, what progress have we made? I'm glad you asked! By 2010-2011, we intend to "double the number of 4th-12th graders we deliver programs to throughout the cities of Seattle and Shoreline." The 2005-2006 school year is our baseline, with 1342 students served. In 2006-2007 we connected 1941 school children to nearby nature, a strong first step toward our goal of serving 2700 students in the 2010-2011 year.

To connect so many of tomorrow's leaders to nearby nature, the Homewaters board determined "action items" to guide program decisions:

1. Design new activities linked to existing public school curricula and service learning.

We created and piloted two new field investigations connected to public school district science kits: Ecosystems in Seattle, and Water in Our Lives in Shoreline. For service learning, we're looking at storm drain stenciling connected to Water and Community, and are working with high schoolers in Shoreline on Neighborhood Green Mapping of native and invasive plants followed by a presentation to the Parks Board.

2. Make field-based educational opportunities more accessible by creating programs within walking distance of schools.

We focus on place-based education using inquiry learning around local themes, systems, and content. Founded by and for teachers, Homewaters Project prioritizes hands-on educational opportunities for young people, in programs designed to ease the burden on instructors...Place-based education extends beyond ecology to incorporate neighborhood connections, historical context, and the impact of each person's daily choices on the place they live. —a taste of our 2006-2011 strategic plan

All our new initiatives provide the opportunity for teachers and students to investigate and connect with nature right outside their door. The logistics and expense of busing doesn't need to prohibit teachers from bringing students to our field explorations.

3. Utilize different delivery methods to maximize effectiveness.

Homewaters offered our first non-school youth program last year: Mapping My Place at Seattle's community centers. We're creating a strategy for publishing curricula on the web, and we've been invited to provide a chapter for a book slated for national distribution.

4. Pilot programming for independent schools.

Lakeside middle schoolers conducted water audits and planted a Watershed Garden with Homewaters last year, and this year students at Seattle Girls School, the Evergreen School, and First Place School will see their home neighborhoods as never before via Homewaters programs. After focusing almost exclusively on public schools from 2002-2006, we're enlarging our reach.

We also laid out initiatives and action items for funding and governance in the full, yet concise, 7-page strategic plan. Contact our office for a copy!

Elementary school programs are growing!

Tiny Neighbors (see page 1) was more popular than ever last year. We trained or assisted 13 teachers and explored ponds, lakes and wetlands with more than 300 students. And Tiny Neighbors is just one of five programs with field-based activities that Homewaters Project now offers 4th-6th graders. Most of these programs connect to science units in Seattle and Shoreline Public Schools.

Two new programs for fourth graders and their teachers are the Ecosystems Field Investigation and Water In Our Lives. Both of these programs include at least one field activity within walking distance of the school building as well as classroom-based activities. Homewaters trains teachers to deliver the lessons and loans them special equipment. Teachers carry out the in-class lessons, and co-teach the field activities with Homewaters Schools Coordinator Linda Versage.

Ecosystems Field Investigation (Seattle Schools) includes a comparative analysis of ground invertebrates and an ecosystem exploration walk. It reinforces concepts such as dependence and interdependence and gives students an awareness of how their everyday actions impact local environments. Sacajawea and Van Asselt Elementary Schools did Ecosystems this fall, and we're planning to do it with more schools in the spring.

In Water In Our Lives, Shoreline students examine how water moves outdoors, learn ways to conserve water, and become aware of their water use by performing audits of their school.

We are gearing up for spring Land and Water programs for 5th-graders that use the in-class science unit by the same name. Students compare a real stream, Thornton Creek, to models of streams they have made in their classrooms. They often tell us this 3.5 hour field program is their favorite field trip of the year. This is the result of an amazing partnership with Seattle Public Utilities, Seattle Parks, and Western Washington University.

Watershed Gardens, Homewaters' year-long applied learning water conservation project, assists schools with measuring their water use and creating water-wise native plant gardens on school grounds. The program is on sabbatical this year so that we might assist the seven previous schools we've worked with to maintain and use their gardens.



Enthusiasm for programs and mission brought them here

They both experienced defining moments as interpretive rangers. They both love to get people excited about their environment. And they both joined Homewaters' staff in September.

A geology major at Vassar College, Kate Bedient was heading toward a career as a scientist until her work at Wind Cave National Park convinced her she wanted to teach science instead. "What I like best is the opportunity to excite teachers about the

field of environmental education," says Kate, Homewaters' new Education Specialist. "It's really fun to see that passion arise

in adults. I know they're going to pass it along to their kids."

Kate earned her M. Ed. in Environmental Education and Non Profit Administration from Western Washington University and North Cascades Institute. Being a lead teacher at Pacific Science Center contributed to her development as a teacher, but the work was indoors. "I like being outside and looking at a place, asking questions and solving little mysteries about the world," she says. She has already led 7 field programs at Homewaters, plus 2 indoor Green Mapping programs.

Jennifer Youngman always knew she wanted to communicate her enthusiasm for nature with others. But after work-

ing in Mt. Rainier National Park, Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, Isle Royale National Park and Sterling College, a natural

resource management school in Vermont, she took some career detours, where she developed marketing and other skills. Now she works part-time as Homewaters' Outreach Coordinator and part-time for Washington Rare Plant Care and Conservation.

"It's exciting to find an organization whose mission so closely echoes my own," says Jennifer. "I'm thrilled to come to Homewaters each day and focus on connecting people to nature and each other."

