

# The Source

A Newsletter of the Thornton Creek Project

Spring, 2002

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## Students Experience a Confluence

*by Rosanna Bradbury, TCP intern*

On the crisp morning of Wednesday, May 29, 2002, 120 students from the Evergreen School and Dunlap and Parkwood Elementary Schools arrived at the Meadowbrook Community Center for the annual Thornton Creek Project (TCP) Confluence. This was a chance for students to meet new people, learn about the watershed, and problem solve for their communities. Students spent the day outside doing hands-on activities with stream bugs, water flow rates, and mapping to answer the question "How do people affect the health of streams in the city?" At the end of the day, students presented their results to other groups and generated ideas about how to improve people's influence on streams.



*Students help each other find bugs for identification.*

Like a confluence of multiple waterways, these fourth, fifth and sixth grade students from different schools in Shoreline and South Seattle came together for a common goal. Students' shyness dissolved into giggles as they helped each other find stream

bugs (macroinvertebrates) to study with their hand lenses. In groups of 15, students sketched and identified their bugs to assess the quality of water in Thornton Creek based on diversity and tolerance to pollution. Results ranged from "fair" to "poor" with pollution from roads, lawns, cars, and trash being hypothesized as possible reasons.

Focusing not only on quality, but quantity as well, each group also worked together to measure the flow rate of the stream. Groups discussed problems with high flow such as flooding in houses and stream bank erosion. Later the students explored the grounds of the community center to identify how the area may affect stream health. Groups recorded key observations, such as restoration projects, ponds, animals, as well as trash, oil, and asphalt surfaces through which rainwater cannot penetrate, using maps and colorful icon stickers. Students shared their maps and other findings from the day with one other group and together generated creative solutions to the negative ways we affect the stream and watershed.

Many things were learned at this Confluence, but perhaps the most important was the connection people have to their natural living place and to each other. ■



*A student sketched this stream bug at the Confluence and identified it as a scud.*

## ***Who's Who in the Thornton Creek Project***

### Staff

Director - Meredith Lohr  
Technology and Communications  
Coordinator - Emily Inkpen  
Schools Coordinator - Pete Lortz  
Program Developer - Peter Hayes

### TCP Steerers Board

Chair - Richard Gelb  
Vice Chair - Janet Charnley  
Treasurer - Mary Manous  
Board Members - Marina Alberti,  
Tom Griffith, Susan Stillman, Linda Vane

### Stewards Council Members

Co-Chair - Elaine Woo, Seattle Public Schools  
Co-Chair - Scott Haskins, Seattle Public Utilities

## **History Mystery**

Gazing at the amazing elm and other remarkable trees and plants bordering the south side of NE 100<sup>th</sup> in the block between Ravenna Ave. and Lake City Way, you may get the sense that this beautiful garden is a clue to an important part of our community's history. What is the story behind the garden? What was the name of the family that once lived on this land? Answers to this History Mystery may be found in the online Community Library and in the new "Exploring Local History" curricular materials. ■



*Who planted these lovely trees along Lake City Way?*

## **AS#1 and TCP Shake it Up**

On the evening of Friday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, six local bands served up a few hours of vibrant music to a rapt audience in the cafeteria of North Seattle Community College. Inspired by **Adam Boesel** and other teachers from Alternative School #1 (AS#1), the concert was co-hosted with the Thornton Creek Project to raise money for both groups.

The evening of music was fun and lively. Bands **Creeping Time, The Trachtenburg Family Slide Show Players, Rigor Mortis, Fluffy Kittens, Maximum Coherence**, and others, gave energetic performances for the large crowd, inspiring kids and adults alike to dance. All bands were well-received, with the musical highlight being the stage debut of AS#1 student band Rigor Mortis, who, contrary to their name, injected life into the crowd as the last act.



*Creeping Time with Adam Boesel plays while children dance.*

As a community event and fundraiser, the night was a success. Over 200 students, school and TCP supporters, and other community members gathered for the concert and raised over \$1,000. AS#1 will use half of the donations and revenue from refreshment sales for student summer scholarships and for free lunch programs. TCP will use its share for program development and services. It was, for all of us, a fun and unique way to fund raise!

Many thanks go to all involved: the bands, those who helped with set-up and clean-up, and especially to North Seattle Community College who generously donated space and staff time for this event. We look forward to more events like this in the future! ■

## Cheers for Interns and Volunteers!

We've had a fantastic year at the Thornton Creek Project, due in large part to our equally fantastic interns and volunteers. The Project would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to our interns **Cheryl Pacheco, Rosanna Bradbury**, our website intern **Gary Anderson**, our field and office volunteers **Colleen Durkin, Signe Johannes, Lisa Krikara, Krystan Swobody**, and **Shirley Wu**, and to our Confluence volunteers **Chase Barton, Chris Einstein, Melissa Frysztacki, Jess, Sean, Sam Mason, and Mark Stamey**. THANK YOU ALL! We couldn't have done it without you! ■

## Staffing Update: Farewells and Welcome!

With the end of the school year upon us, it's time to express our gratitude to the staff that will be leaving us, as well as welcome new members to our team. Much appreciation is due to **Pete Lortz**, the NSCC biology instructor who served as Schools Coordinator this year, for his great work with our watershed ecology program, the Confluence, and his contributions to our organization's development. We intend to keep Pete engaged next year, even though we know he'll be busy with his brand new baby, Leandra Lortz. Congratulations and best wishes to Pete, Kristan and baby girl!

Speaking of fathers, as many of you are aware, one of TCP's founding fathers, **Peter Hayes**, will be leaving us at the end of this school year. After serving as the Project's Director for eight years, Peter spent this year developing innovative educational resources for teachers (see articles on Local History and Tiny Neighbors). Peter and his family will be moving to his hometown of Portland, Oregon, after a year sailing the Pacific. Those of you who know him will understand how we will miss Peter's inspirational commitment, creative thinking, and enthusiasm. He leaves behind a legacy for which we are all truly grateful.

A new school year provides opportunity for growth, and thus we are excited to welcome **Linda Versage**, our new Schools Coordinator as of September. Linda comes to us from the Seattle Public Schools where she has been teaching science to at-risk high school students. Previously, Linda was the Education Supervisor at Discovery Park for seven years and brings a wealth of enthusiasm and experience to her work with TCP. Her other interests include natural history, art, and gardening. Welcome, Linda; we are very fortunate to have you join us! ■

## Building Our Foundation

*by Richard Gelb, TCP Board Chair*

For nearly 10 years, the Thornton Creek Project has provided innovative tools and resources for students, teachers, schools and the community. Our resources and programs are evolving to meet a growing demand from both within and beyond the Thornton Creek watershed. We are increasingly becoming a regional resource for educators who want to ground what and how they teach in their local setting.

Luckily, the successful, interdisciplinary approaches that have drawn so many teachers and schools to TCP have also attracted talented people who are interested in helping build this organization. In the last 18 months, the TCP Board has been hard at work developing the organizational infrastructure needed to take TCP successfully into the future.

Our Board, comprised of teachers, university professors, local government program managers and community members, has been very busy charting how TCP can expand our client base in an effective, sustainable way. Our new strategic plan defines the critical things we need to achieve, and establishes the specific steps for the upcoming years.

Working with our talented staff and director, we've re-crafted our mission and vision statements to better reflect the contributions and ambitions of this organization. We've developed organizational by-laws and launched a fundraising drive to support our existing and emerging programs (see pages 3-4). Along the way, we've learned plenty and had fun together, too.

As TCP broadens its impact and refines its approaches to weaving the local dimension into K-college education, it needs strong leadership and broad support. We are looking to you to contribute as we ramp up to serve a growing need.

Please help shoulder our efforts by:

- Recommending potential board members to help guide future development
- Volunteering to help with special projects
- Providing financial or in-kind support

Thanks for helping TCP grow and prosper!

*You can contact Richard at 206.784.4897. ■*



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**Community Library**  
If you are a teacher with student projects online or a community member with online resources related to the Thornton Creek watershed, send us your links and we will link them up to the Community Library! The CL is a great place for students, community members, scientists and others to share their work and knowledge with other people who are connected to this watershed. We will be adding these and other resources over the summer and look forward to receiving your contributions!

**Latest Links**

If you're cruising the internet in the near future, don't miss the newest additions on our website! You'll be treated to a view of our new "Exploring Local History" resources, a student-produced Green Map in North Seattle, and examples of student work in our program areas (all are linked from our homepage at [www.thorntoncreek.org](http://www.thorntoncreek.org)). The Community Library is also a hot item, with new additions including work done by students at the Evergreen School, a report about pesticide use in the watershed, and research on ponds and the creek by NSCC students. (Linked from the Community Library at [www.thorntoncreek.org](http://www.thorntoncreek.org)).

**Technology Tidbits**



North Seattle Community College  
Science and Math Division  
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Email: [tcp@nscclx.sccd.ctc.edu](mailto:tcp@nscclx.sccd.ctc.edu)  
Phone: 206.526.0187

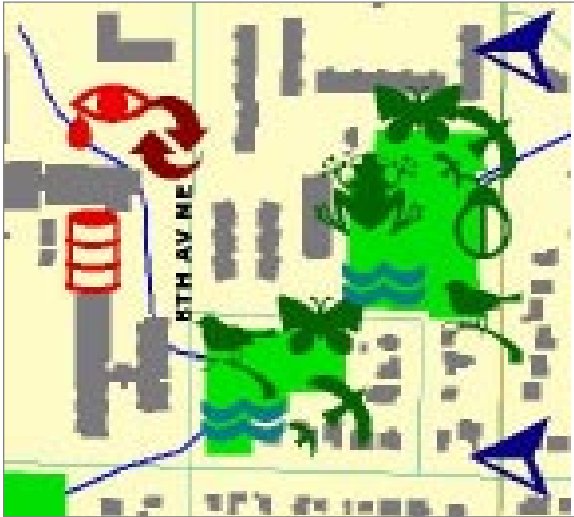
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**Mission Statement:**  
By inspiring and supporting educators' use of Thornton Creek and its watershed, the Thornton Creek Project fosters educational innovations that make local community an essential element of teaching and learning.

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## Mapping a Better Future

Gardens, art spots, renewable resources, natural resources, and even pollution sources captured the attention of Environmental Geology students from North Seattle Community College. This last March, the students split up into eight teams to cover about one square mile near NSCC to map the ecological, social, and cultural resources of the area, and to assess what could be done to improve the community. Mappers identified the important places using the Green Map Icon System ([www.greenmap.com](http://www.greenmap.com))



Icons showing nature, culture, transportation, and pollution locations on the NSCC Green map.

developed by Wendy Brawer to produce a resource that is comparable to other Green Maps around the world. Using their newly collected data, students made several creative suggestions for improving the area, including development of eco-businesses and tree planting projects in abandoned parking lots, installation of sidewalks for easier pedestrian travel, building a community center, and a park for nearby residents and families. Look for this green map on our website! ■

## Make a Difference for Tomorrow;

### Invest in TCP Today

As you may be aware, TCP provides resources and services for students, teachers, and community members free of charge. For this reason, we depend on the support of people like you to advance our efforts in community-based education. As we begin our 10th school year, we will be building on our high-quality programs and resources and continue to make them available to children and students of all ages. Your investment at this time will make a big difference to students in Seattle, Shoreline, and beyond.

Please take this important opportunity to make a tax-

## Expanding Field Trip Opportunities

Since last fall, over 500 students from 11 different Seattle Public Schools have participated in field trips designed by the Thornton Creek Project to reinforce skills and concepts addressed in the Land and Water science unit. During these field experiences, students make observations and collect data to learn how a real stream compares to the models they create in the classroom. Their activities also provide insight into how human behaviors affect ecosystems.

Following TCP's lead, Seattle School District (SSD) and Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) have teamed up to make *Land and Water* field experiences available to every child studying this unit throughout Seattle. Beginning next year, classrooms will be assigned to one of four urban watersheds: Thornton, Pipers, Longfellow and Seward Park (Lake Washington watershed), and the city will provide guided, inquiry-based field trips for each class. In addition, the *Land and Water* unit will be



A student makes observations on a Land and Water field trip.

officially linked to the *Salmon in the Schools* program and students will continue to learn how stream and watershed health influence salmon. Teachers will receive new lesson plans that focus on how salmon and streams interact in a September workshop co-sponsored by SPU and SSD. Watch for details this summer! ■

## Where Wild Things Are

“What wild mammals make their homes within five miles of our school?” Using one question and one full week, ten Lakeside School students and teachers recently worked to discover and report as completely as possible on the secret lives of our furry, wild neighbors. A combination of on-the-ground tracking, story collecting, and an evening “stake out” led the



Beaver tracks

group to confirm that an increasing variety of wild mammals live in our nearby urban green spaces. One of the most interesting and troubling discoveries was that as beaver rapidly expand their range within the watershed, this longtime native species is in many cases being treated as a troublesome intruder. This observation led to a second question: “Can the humans and wild mammals of Thorntonia learn to peacefully coexist?” Who is up for working on that one? ■

## Sizzling New Resources

Hot off the press, materials for the Thornton Creek Project’s *Exploring Local History* and *Tiny Neighbors* programs are available to teachers for use in planning next fall. Supported by a rich mix of resource materials available on CD or in print, *Exploring Local History* gives teachers a simple, logical way to engage their students with fundamental historical questions, concepts, and themes through exploring visible clues in the local community. The *Tiny Neighbors* pond investigation provides teachers with a field extension to the *Microworlds* unit used in Seattle Public School fifth grade classes, as well as helping guide the work of any young scientist ready to explore and report on the tiny neighbors living in our local ponds. For more information on the materials and upcoming teacher workshops, please contact TCP’s office. ■

## Community Discovery at Meridian park

### Wetland as a Classroom

by Jean Phalen, fifth-grade teacher, Meridian Park Elementary

The teachers and students at Meridian Park Elementary in Shoreline have been working to integrate their district’s science program with hands-on application of their learning in their immediate environment. The fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students respectively have the following foci: water, environments, and plants. We are fortunate to be located near a bog that is part of the Thornton Creek watershed which has made our applied learning particularly rich, rewarding, and successful.

Working with TCP’s Peter Lortz, fifth grade teacher **Lisa Sezate** and I have continued last year’s urban wetlands exploration and restoration. Students have studied a variety of plants and animals both in the classroom and in the neighboring wetlands and have investigated both terrestrial and aquatic systems. In the process the students learned the concepts of environmental factor, tolerance, preference, and range. We look forward to continuing to have local environmental education as an integral part of Meridian Park’s science curriculum. ■

### Collecting Data for the City of Shoreline

by Matt Reiman, fourth-grade teacher, Meridian Park Elementary

**Jonathan Nesson** and I, fourth grade teachers at Meridian Park Elementary School, and **Andy Loch**, a water quality specialist with the City of Shoreline, have teamed up with local area residents to study the water quality and surrounding habitat of Meridian Park. The project began when residents became interested in restoring the park habitat. **Hayra Gunn**, a resident and Shoreline School District employee, notified Mr. Nesson and me of the community interest, and the project was born. Since October students have worked with Andy Loch to collect water level data and recording animal sightings. The data collected by the students, along with measurements from a rain gauge located at the school, are used by the city to create an accurate picture of local run-off. Earlier in the year, community



Students investigate terrestrial systems.

members invited the fourth graders to participate in a native plant restoration day clearing out non-native species and installing native grasses and trees. ■