

# Homewaters Project



discovery • linking • community

## The Source

A Newsletter of the Homewaters Project  
(formerly known as the Thornton Creek Project)

Winter, 2003

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**Insert: Homewaters Project 2001-2002 Annual Report**



*Drawing by Kelly Ptacek*

*The Pacific Chorus Frogs have already begun their nightly songs. Listen for them at your neighborhood wetland or pond in the early evening.*

## Natural Cycles and Healthy Communities

*by Richard Gelb and Meredith Lohr*

Cycles – tiny, small, larger and huge – are the mostly-unseen driving forces in our human and natural worlds. We breathe in and out, eat and pass waste, recreate and work, learn and teach, procreate and expire, all within the larger natural cycles of rock, water, climate, seasons, migration and evolution.

As these cycles continue within and around us, most people seek a comfortable balance of personal concerns (managing their human cycles) while staying connected to their surroundings (engaging in cycles around them). Building healthy communities, however, requires that the cycles of our lives fit within the cycles of the natural systems upon which all living things depend. Each person and every community play an important role in ensuring this fit.

The Homewaters Project prepares and empowers people to shape human communities that fit within natural cycles. Through our educational programs, young people learn about the fundamental interdependence of life and the land, in the context of their home places. We prepare and empower students of all ages to apply their skills and knowledge to make positive contributions at the local level. Our goal is to help young people cultivate a sense of wonder and develop connections within their communities and beyond.

The world is a challenging and dynamic place these days, arguably as volatile and fragile as any time in recent history. Perhaps as never before, we need to tune to and find ways to live harmoniously within both human and natural cycles. Though this harmony depends on certain attitudes – like humility, reverence and respect — which are difficult to address in the context of school, we believe that these perspectives develop from direct experience of the links between both large and small cycles. In order to make our young people, home communities, and planet healthy, experiences that show how we fit into the big picture must be an essential part of every person's education.

We appreciate your ongoing support and participation in these efforts. ■



*Two students measure temperature in Thornton Creek near Twin Ponds.*

## Who's Who in the Homewaters Project

### Staff

Director - Meredith Lohr  
Technology and Communications  
Coordinator - Emily Inkpen  
Schools Coordinator - Linda Versage  
History Program Coordinator - Bob Lapsley

### Steerers Board

Chair - Richard Gelb  
Vice Chair - Janet Charnley  
Board Members:  
Marina Alberti, Kelley Duffield, Ross Freeman,  
Tom Griffith, Elisa Murray, Rich Stearns,  
Susan Stillman, Linda Vane

## Fundraising Progress Report

The Homewaters Project has made excellent progress with fundraising since the beginning of the school year, thanks to support from the local community. As of January 30<sup>th</sup>, individuals and businesses have given over \$21,000 towards our educational programs, not including a \$20,000 matching gift from an anonymous donor!

In addition, we are pleased to report that we recently received a \$10,000 grant from the **Seattle Foundation**, and a \$2,000 grant from **Washington Foundation for the Environment** for development of middle school Community Mapping activities. Thanks to these individuals, businesses and foundations for advancing our efforts to connect people to local nature and community.

Though we have made significant strides toward our fundraising goal for the year, we still require essential funds to serve students, teachers, schools and community in 2003. If you believe in or have benefitted from the work of Homewaters, we encourage you to make your tax-deductible contribution today. Please contact Meredith Lohr at 206.526.0187 or check our website for more information. ■



Young scientists peer at their pond water to discover their tiny neighbors.

## Celebrating our New Name

On November 16, 2002, we officially changed our name from Thornton Creek Project, to **Homewaters Project**. We began our celebration with "Leave it to Beavers," at Meadowbrook Pond. There we braved November weather to learn about our furry neighbors and their habitat. We were rewarded with the sighting of two resident beavers, with a third beaver, **Nicolo Gelb**, appearing in the guise of a five-year-old boy in a costume.

After leaving it to beavers, a large crowd of TCP/HWP friends gathered that evening at the **Fiddlers Inn** to usher in our new name. With a lively crowd looking on, the ghost of Edith Thornton (name sake of Thornton Creek) paid a surprise visit. After a creaky introduction, she was magically transformed into the "Spirit of Homewaters", who looked strikingly like our Board Chair, **Richard Gelb**, in a sparkling blue jumpsuit. Attendees also enjoyed the Homewaters Project raffle, with prizes ranging from gift certificates to the Fiddlers Inn, to a bottle of genuine Thornton Creek water. Accompanying the antics was live music from **Son Cafe**, who delighted all with Latin Jazz.

Thanks to **Larry's Market** for providing our celebration cake, to **Fiddlers Inn** for hosting the event and donating gift certificates, and to all who came and who support our organization! ■

## Tiny Neighbors in a Pond Near You

Homewaters Project is teaming up with Seattle Public Schools to assist 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers and students in learning about the "tiny neighbors" living in our urban ponds and lakes. The activities in our *Tiny Neighbors* program create a bridge from classroom investigations to the real world, and extend and reinforce learning in the inquiry-based *Microworlds* science unit.

In October, 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers **Spring Zoog** and **Kathy Jones** from Lowell Elementary took their classes to Foster Island on the edge of Lake Washington. In addition, **Onny Tabares** from John Rogers walked his class to the wetlands behind Meadowbrook Community Center. At both sites, students joyfully found that the watery world was teeming with tiny neighbors such as protozoa, copepods, mites, hydra and water bears.

Get ready to explore this spring! The next teacher training opportunities for *Tiny Neighbors* are February 27 and April 29 from 4:30 – 7 p.m. at North Seattle Community College. If you are a 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher in Seattle Schools using the *Microworlds* kit, contact **Kathryn Show** to register for a workshop: **206-252-5964**, [kshow@seattleschools.org](mailto:kshow@seattleschools.org). ■

# Walking the Watershed

by Sue Stillman

Gathering in a ring of Long Walkers amid empty cars in the Matthews Beach Parking lot on Saturday, January 25th, I thought to myself how strange it was to be part of a non-school group for such a trip. As we introduced ourselves and the Homewaters Project's Director Meredith Lohr gave us an overview of the timing (hoofing the six miles would take about four and a half hours!) I began to see the Homewaters Project as something more than a big help for classroom teachers.

Over the last 10 years I have, in my capacity as a teacher, participated in water quality assessment, salmon stories, teacher workshops on macroinvertebrates, multi-school Confluences, and other opportunities under the umbrella of the Homewaters Creek Project. Having joined the Project's Steerers Board about a year ago, I am still getting my head around what else the Project does. Never had I considered walking the whole North Fork from Ronald Bog to Lake Washington. But when I offhandedly suggested it to two friends, **Bob Brooks** and **Carolyn Crockett**, they were immediately intrigued.

Walking the North Fork turned out to be a nice introduction to the health and history of the stream. Meredith kept us informed of the creek's state, both past and present. At the beginning she questioned participants about the fate of the peat, which was mined from both Ronald Bog and Twin Ponds. We noticed streamside restoration at Twin Ponds and big changes in Jackson Park Golf Course. Later, as we rested along the stream in Thornton Creek Park 1, we heard the tale of the Little family sawmill that hitched along, logging off the shores of the creek between 10<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Avenues NE. When we reached the confluence at Meadowbrook Pond, Linda Versage, the Homewaters' Schools Coordinator, filled us in about the local beavers. We saw how they had used the branches of a tree they felled in late November to build up their lodge.

The walk gave me ideas about the sorts of adults who might take an interest in this urban stream as well. During the walk one of my friends took digital photos to document the state of the creek as we saw it. She repeated several times that this was "really neat, the best city hike I've ever been on!" Now it seems natural to use our urban watersheds for more than place-based education for schools. Wouldn't it be fun to take a group of friends or neighbors to stops along the creek which reflect its history? ■



*Walkers get ready to travel from Ronald Bog to Thornton Creek's mouth at Matthews Beach.*



*Parkwood Elementary students work together to create GIS maps to show how people affect Twin Ponds.*

## Mapping People and Nature

This past fall, Homewaters Project held two workshops for a total of 20 educators to learn how to answer questions about their local community using geographic information systems (GIS), or computer mapping. Participants hailed from Shoreline and Seattle Public schools as well as from other educational programs at Seattle Audubon and IslandWood.

After the workshops, teachers were enthusiastic to incorporate GIS into their classrooms. **Sue MacAllister** and **Bobbi Giamonna** from Parkwood Elementary in Shoreline had their classes use GIS to answer "How do people affect Twin Ponds?" On a

walk around the neighborhood, students made notes of human impacts and then used GIS to compile their observations to answer the question.

In March, **Lillie Rainwater** and **Carol Snow's** classes at African American Academy will use GIS as part of the Seattle Audubon's Finding Urban Nature program. Students will use GIS to record observations of birds, plants and water quality in their local wetland, and will be able to compare them with future data collection. We are excited about the integration of community mapping in the work of the these classes and look forward to more to come. ■

**Mission Statement:**  
To create an engaged and informed citizenry by connecting people to nature and each other in the context of their home communities.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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## Calendar: Winter/Spring

*Land and Water* Volunteer Training, Thurs. Feb. 13th, 3:30-6:30 p.m.; Fri. Feb. 28th, 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.; and Wed. Mar. 5th, 3-6 p.m. These trainings are for those who have sent in applications to be a Land and Water volunteer. For more information, contact Linda Versage, [lversage@sccd.ctc.edu](mailto:lversage@sccd.ctc.edu) or call the Project office.

*Land and Water* Field Trips, March-June. Homewaters Project will lead *Land and Water* field trips throughout the spring. Schedule your trip with Linda Versage, [lversage@sccd.ctc.edu](mailto:lversage@sccd.ctc.edu) or call the Project office.

*Tiny Neighbors* Training, Thurs., Feb. 27th, 4:30-7 p.m. North Seattle Community College. Come learn how to apply a field trip extension to the *Microworlds* science unit, (see article on page 3). RSVP with Kathryn Show, [kshow@seattleschools.org](mailto:kshow@seattleschools.org) or 206.252.5964.

Stewards Council Meeting, Tues., Apr. 29th, 7-9 a.m., NSCC Rose Room. Annual meeting of community, business and government leaders. Contact Meredith Lohr for more information, [mlahr@sccd.ctc.edu](mailto:mlahr@sccd.ctc.edu). RSVP.

Tilth Edible Plant Sale, Sat. May 3rd, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., Good Shepherd Center. Homewaters will be hosting a booth at this enjoyable event. If you'd like to participate, contact the Project office.

Lake City Farmers Market, Thurs. May 29th to Oct. 16th, 3-7 p.m., NE 127th and 30th NE. This hub of Lake City activity is a perfect place to support local growers and connect with your local community.

South Fork Long Walk, Fri. June 9th, 3 p.m. Join us for our annual three-mile hike along the South fork of Thornton Creek. We will meet at Matthews Beach at 3 p.m. RSVP by calling the Project office.

See our website for more information about spring events:

Homewaters Lecture Series: TBA  
Shoreline Schools Applied Learning Teacher  
Celebration: TBA  
*and more...[www.homewatersproject.org](http://www.homewatersproject.org)*



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