

Homewaters Project



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The Source

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

Spring, 2003

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Watershed Gardens...

Soon to be Growing at Schools Near You

The Homewaters Project is pleased to announce a new initiative for 2003-2004, courtesy of a Splash grant from the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks. For the coming school year, we will select three public schools (six classrooms of upper elementary students) to participate in our Watershed Gardens Project. Through this hands-on learning and community service program, students will apply their math and critical thinking skills to complete simple water audits and construct small drought-tolerant gardens at their schools.

In the fall, students will conduct the audits, and based on their findings about how water is used, make recommendations for how water can be conserved at school. Then in the winter and spring, participating classrooms will work with Homewaters Project staff and volunteers to design and create small watershed gardens on the school grounds. Through Watershed Gardens, students will apply their skills to a practical, hands-on project and make positive contributions to their communities.

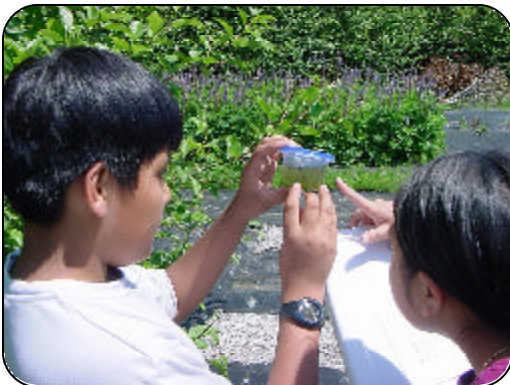
Fourth, fifth and sixth grade teachers, thanks to our Splash grant, we have some funding for your planning time, as well as tools, plants and equipment. If you would be interested in learning more about the Watershed Gardens Project and how you can get your school involved, contact Linda Versage at 526-0187 or lversage@sccd.ctc.edu. ■

Seattle Students Meet Their Tiny Neighbors

In April, Homewaters teamed up with the Seattle School District to train nine more fifth-grade teachers in our new Tiny Neighbors program. These teachers will now be able to help their students apply knowledge and skills from the Microworlds science unit, in which students explore microscopes and microorganisms, by investigating local ponds, lakes and wetlands.

The Homewaters Project supports Tiny Neighbors teachers by training them in the detailed lesson plans, facilitating the loan of materials, helping them plan their investigations and providing adult support during the teacher-led field trips. During the teacher workshops, participants experience the same lessons their students will, including visiting a local pond, collecting water samples and exploring samples of microorganisms using pipettes, slides and microscopes.

By the end of this school year, the following Seattle Public elementary school teachers will have completed Tiny Neighbors with their students: **Kathy Jones** and **Spring Zoog** from Lowell; **Onny Tabares** from John Rogers; **Wil Depusoy** and **Sheri Fujisawa** from Dunlap; **Penny Scordas** from Viewlands and **Lisa Calvert** from McGilvra. In September, look for news about Tiny Neighbors in 2003-2004 at www.homewatersproject.org. ■



Students from Dunlap Elementary excitedly inspect a pond sample during a Tiny Neighbors field trip.

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

Board of Directors

Chair - Kelley Duffield
Vice Chair - Janet Charnley
Treasurer - Ross Freeman

Board Members:

Marina Alberti, Richard Gelb, Tom Griffith,
Elisa Murray, Susan Stillman, Linda Vane

Finding the Fun in Fundraising

Fundraising can be hard work, but it's fun when it's effective! We are pleased to announce that the inaugural year of the Homewaters Project annual fund was a great success. We've received over \$42,000 in contributions from individuals since the beginning of the school year. These gifts have made it possible for us to offer resources and services to students, teachers and schools at no cost to them.

For those who are interested, now is the perfect time to send your gift for next year. Young people from throughout the Seattle area are depending on you to enrich their education through locally-based learning. Contact us to find out more about our programs and the impact of your contribution. ■

Hurray for Volunteers!!



Aneth McCarthy, a volunteer from Colombia, takes a quick break from her translating work.

People often ask, "How can you do so much with only 4 staff? Our answer, "volunteers!" With their help, this year we've served more than 120 teachers and 3000 students! 2002-2003 has been one of our most volunteer rich, with over 40 people donating 600+ hours of service.

**Thanks to you all!
What a difference
you make!**

Mapping Graffiti in Lake City

As those of you who live, work or shop in the Lake City neighborhood are aware, this is a community that cares. This spring, student volunteers **Jacque Hogan** and **Lindsay Lawrence** with Homewaters Project have joined the cadre of citizens lending a hand in Lake City. These college students have been tracking, mapping and reporting the graffiti between 95th and 145th Sts. and in just two months, they've documented tags in over 70 locations. Their GIS maps (available on our website), digital photos and graffiti database will advance the efforts of the Lake City Task Force to remove graffiti and reduce the number of future incidences in the neighborhood. Watch for positive changes in Lake City over the summer. ■

Parkwood Explores Twin Ponds

This school year the Homewaters Project worked with Parkwood Elementary School teachers Susan McAllister and Bobbi Giammona to design and implement a year-long study of their local neighborhood and how humans interact with the environment. This article is written by one of the participating students.

by Lauren Sweeten, Parkwood sixth grader

Twin Ponds, Twin Ponds... whether this location sparks a thought, memory, or nothing at all, it is the inspirational site where Parkwood's sixth



grade has studied the art of environmental science. Here we have utilized our knowledge of the environment to help further extend our knowledge of the Thornton Creek watershed.

We ventured to Twin Ponds twice this year; once in the fall and once in the spring. Both times we divided into six groups; Human Impacts, Shrubs and Ground Cover, Wildlife, Pond Life, Water Quality, and Trees. On our journeys it helped having skilled guides who made our trips much more effective. They sacrificed their time and energy to transfer their wisdom to our maturing minds -- which, by the way they did to the grade A++.

I am sure that our adventures at Twin Ponds will be treasured for many years to come. I have been reassured by several sixth grade students that they will not soon forget that impervious surfaces do not absorb water, what a red wing black bird looks like, or how to identify a Cedar tree. ■

New Leadership for Homewaters

It has been a very productive year for the Board of the Homewaters Project. We are pleased to officially welcome our new Board Chair, **Kelley Duffield**, and new members **Elisa Murray** and **Ross Freeman**, all of whom joined us during this school year. Kelley, our newest member, is a certified forester and comes to us most recently from the Department of Forest Resources at the University of Washington. Kelley brings a wealth of PR, outreach and fundraising experience to the position of Board Chair, which she began as an interim this spring. We are very pleased that Kelley will continue to lead the Board in the 2003-2004 school year.

Elisa and Ross both work for other well-known non-profits in the area and bring significant experience and enthusiasm to their service on the Board. Elisa is the Communications Director for Northwest Environment Watch, a research and communication organization that promotes sustainability in the Pacific Northwest. Ross is a staff scientist with American Rivers, a national river conservation organization. He will serve as the Board treasurer in 2003-2004.



The newest addition to the Homewaters Board will be our current Director, **Meredith Lohr**. Meredith will be stepping down from her position in June as she and her husband **Chase Barton** are expecting their first child in September. Although Meredith will resign from the staff, after four years of working with the Project, she can't stay completely away! Meredith will serve as the Board's Vice-Chair in 2003-2004. We are very thankful for Meredith's tremendous leadership and service. For more information about the position of Executive Director, please contact the Homewaters' office.

Lastly, after three years of dedication to the Homewaters Project, **Emily Inkpen** will be stepping down as the Technology and Communications Coordinator at the end of June. From leading our Community Mapping program and maintaining our websites to editing this newsletter, Emily has shared her knowledge, patience and good humor with numerous students, volunteers and community partners. In the next few years, she will pursue her interests in community development and plans to begin graduate school in the fall of '04. ■

Thornton Creek: Where Land Meets Water

"This is the best field trip we've been on all year!" exclaimed a fifth grader from Olympic Hills Elementary School at the end of a recent Land and Water Program. In Land and Water, Homewaters staff and volunteers help students learn about salmon habitat and how streams work in the urban environment while creating positive, stimulating field experiences for them. How do we do this?

Each Land and Water field program takes a small community to ensure that it runs smoothly: our Schools Coordinator plus 3 volunteer instructors; the Meadowbrook Community Center custodian; 2 teachers; 4-8 parents; 50 students; a bus and driver; and Thornton Creek and Meadowbrook Pond, their riparian areas and human and wild neighbors.

Our curriculum is inquiry-based, interactive and moves at a fast pace. This keeps the students engaged and enthused—there's always something to do and look forward to. We inspire students' curiosity by engaging their critical thinking throughout the day.

While studying Thornton Creek, students make maps to evaluate the relationship between water speed and the movement of sediment and how this affects salmon habitat. They also measure the velocity of the

stream to help them understand how human development and weather influence water flow. At Meadowbrook Pond, the young scientists learn about detention ponds, human impacts, and local wildlife, as well as the functions of riparian vegetation, woody debris and the importance of native plants.

If you want to know more, ask one of the 560 fifth graders from the following schools: North Beach, McGilvra, Wedgwood, Lowell, Bryant, Assumption-St. Bridget,

Olympic Hills, Olympic View, Bertschi, and Sacajawea

...they'll tell you all about what happens where land meets water in the Thornton Creek

Watershed. ■



A Homewaters volunteer helps students measure stream velocity.

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

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Community Library Refreshed

Have you ever wondered about the history of Meadowbrook Pond? Wanted to learn about the health of Thornton Creek? Or needed to check current traffic conditions? Well we have good news for you! With the help of our website intern, **Theo Nguyen**, we're redesigning, updating and stocking the online Thornton Creek Watershed Community Library (www.thorntoncreek.org). Born in 1999 out of the collective efforts of many community members, students, agencies, and Homewaters, the library is a way to learn about and contribute to the TC watershed community. Students and community members are encouraged to add their own projects or resources. Come visit the site and tell us what you think! ■

Beaver News: Report from the Field

If you haven't yet made the time to visit Meadowbrook Pond in the evening around sunset, there is no reason to delay. When we last visited on May 10th during a beaver walk co-sponsored by Homewaters, Seattle Public Utilities and Seattle Parks, we spotted three resident beavers who were up to their usual beaver tricks. Between munching on willows, patrolling the pond and maintaining their small dam on Thornton Creek, it's no wonder these critters are known to be busy. Stop by the pond with your family and see them this summer. ■

Did you know that your tax-deductible gift to the Homewaters Project will allow school children from all over Seattle to learn about their local communities? Please make the time to contribute today. See www.homewatersproject.org for more information.



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