



Date: September 15th, 2016
To: Parks & Community Services Board
From: Curtis Kukal, Park Ranger & Environmental Programs Coordinator
Geoff Bradley, Environmental Programs Supervisor
Subject: 2016 *Well KEPT* Program Brief

INTRODUCTION

The City of Bellevue's *Well KEPT* (Kids Environmental Project Training) program has completed another successful summer serving the Bellevue community. For 29 years, Bellevue Parks & Community Services has engaged youth and invested in our city's future by providing valuable employment opportunities to Bellevue youth through *Well KEPT*.

The *Well KEPT* program is a summer youth employment internship offered through the Bellevue Parks' Natural Resource Division. The program is designed to provide Bellevue youth with education, job skills, and career development training in the field of park resource management. The work focuses on parkland restoration and maintenance. This summer, a typical project included forest enhancement, wetland restoration, and trail construction. *Well KEPT* combines on-the-job work experience with environmental education and career development to instill strong self-esteem, good work habits, and sound environmental ethics.

2016 PROJECTS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Noxious Weed Removal Projects:

- *Wildwood Park*: cleared over 19,000 ft² of Himalayan blackberry, laurel, and English ivy.
- *Coal Creek Natural Area*: created ivy "life rings" for 21 trees.
- *Goldsmith Park*: cleared over 100,000 ft² of Himalayan blackberry, laurel, and English holly.
- *Lewis Creek Park*: removed approximately 3yd³ of tansy ragwort.



Left: Well KEPT Trainees are seen here after having made "life rings" on trees in Coal Creek Natural Area. Above: Well KEPT crew removing noxious weeds at Lewis Creek Park.

- *Forest Hills Park*: created ivy “life rings” for 10 trees.
- *Lake Hills Greenbelt*: cleared approximately 14,000 ft² of Himalayan blackberry, evergreen blackberry, and morning glory.
- *Kelsey Creek Park*: cleared over 5,700 ft² of Himalayan blackberry and policeman’s helmet. Removed approximately 3yd³ of tansy ragwort.
- *Horizen Heights Open Space*: created ivy “life rings” for 12 trees.

Noxious weed removal projects help develop an understanding of plant physiology, introduce techniques of plant identification, and teach the importance of vegetation management to maintaining healthy forest and wetland ecosystems in expanding urban environments.

Lakemont Highlands Open Space Trail Renovation:

- Renovated over 2,300 ft of existing nature trail
 - regraded trail to improve citizen safety and drainage
 - replaced old retainage structures to stabilize trail
 - transported and spread 40 yd³ of bark to resurface trail

The project provided practical experience in trail construction techniques while increasing an understanding of the pivotal role Bellevue integrated trails system has in the holistic management of Bellevue’s open space system.



*Left: The crew begins restoration of the Lakemont Highlands Open Space trail.
 Middle: The trainees finishing up grading before they begin resurfacing the trail.
 Right: The Well KEPT crew presents the fully-upgraded trail.*

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

The *Well KEPT* student internship provides educational opportunities to Bellevue youth. Educational seminars provided the students with more information about their projects, improved their environmental awareness, and developed their professional skills. After designing an evaluation instrument, we found that their professional skills improved dramatically (mock interview scores increased from 54.5% to 88.3% over the course of the 8-week program). Educational seminars and workshops completed during the 2016 program are listed below:

Seminar or Workshop Topic(s)	Instructor(s)
Aquatic Invasive: Background & Prevention	Kit Paulsen, COB
Trail-Building Techniques	Chris Vandall & Steve Vukelich, COB
Phone & Email Etiquette	Chanelle Cadot & Amber Davis, COB
Kelsey Creek Park: Restoration Orientation	Ryan Popke, COB
Regulated Noxious Weeds	Patrick Sowers, King County
Aquatic Invertebrates & Stream Health	Laurie Devereaux, COB
Native Plant Identification	Chanelle Cadot & Amber Davis, COB
Street Trees & Urban Forestry	Melissa Kerson, COB
Parks Workload Planning	Dan Acker, COB
PSC: Internships & Water Turbidity	Ian Schooley, Seattle Pacific Science Center
Resume, Cover Letter & Interview Skills	Chanelle Cadot & Amber Davis, COB
Wildlife Science	Curtis Kukal, COB
Finance Seminar	Abigail Richardson, Nicole Beall, & Ray Fleshman, COB



*Right: The crew learns about aquatic invertebrates at the Mercer Slough Nature Park.
Left: The Well KEPT crew performs New Zealand Mud Snail decontamination as part of an aquatic invasive seminar.*

Quality Community Outcomes

The City of Bellevue *Well KEPT* program is committed to providing exceptional public service and community stewardship. The 2016 *Well KEPT* program addresses the following city outcomes.

Responsive Government:

- Addressed community needs including park maintenance and youth unemployment.

Improved Mobility:

- Renovated 2,300 ft. of trail that connects neighborhoods in the Lakemont Highlands area.

Economic Growth & Competitiveness:

- Student interns gained skills and experience for future employment
- Provided local youth with a first job opportunity and career development

Healthy & Sustainable Environment:

- Worked to restore natural system functions and values by removing noxious weeds
- Fostered environmental awareness in Bellevue youth and their parents

Safe Community:

- Increased the safety and comfort of a local trail
- Provided a productive and safe summer activity for local youth

Innovative, Vibrant, & Caring Community:

- Mentored a group of young adults dedicated to improving community sustainability
- Engaged local youth in community pride through local park improvement projects

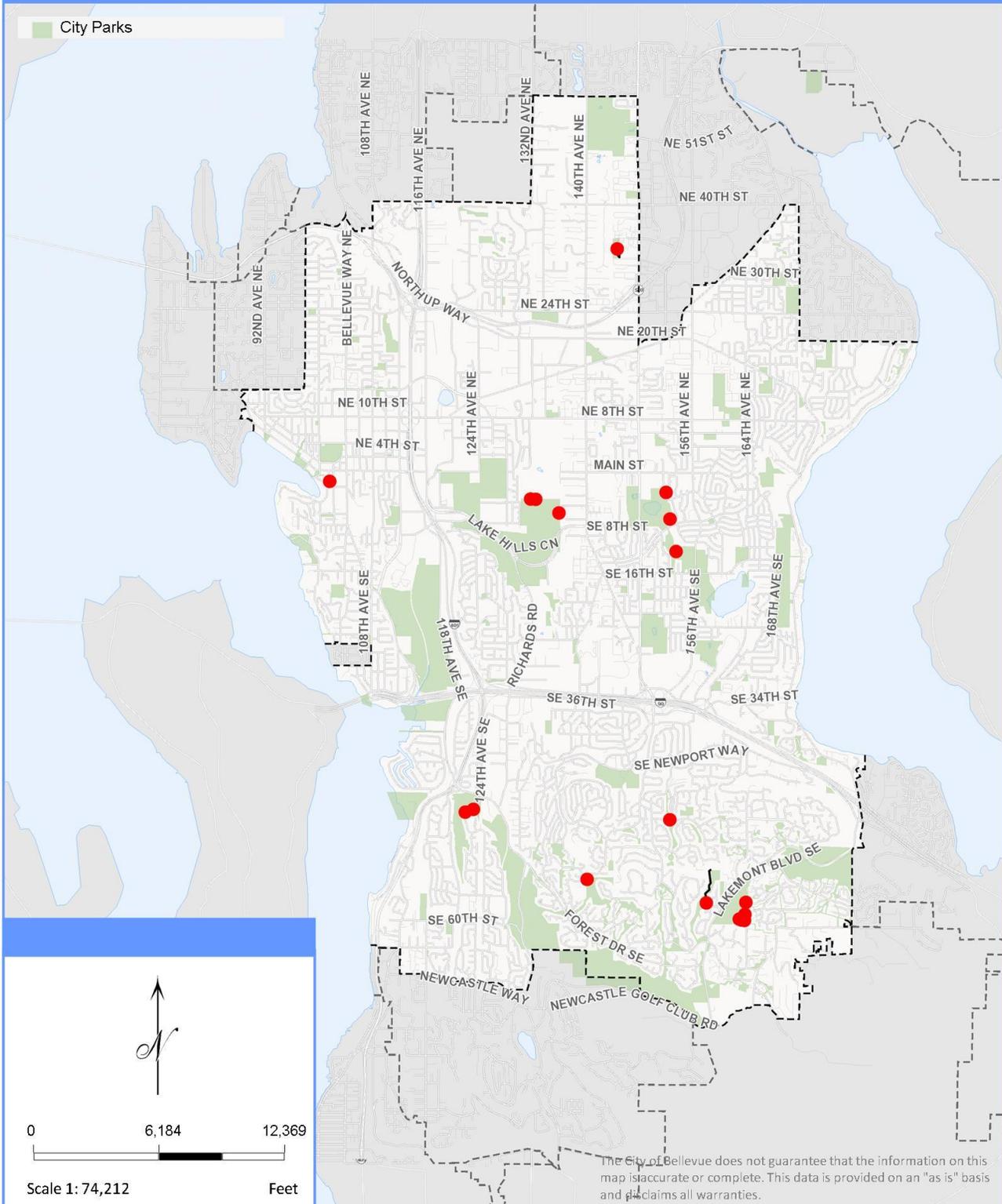
Quality Neighborhoods:

- Local youth became more active members of their community
- Helped to slow the spread of the noxious weeds that degrade our neighborhoods

CONCLUSION

Bellevue's *Well KEPT* program is an innovative program that provides an exceptional first employment opportunity for Bellevue youth. The program serves many adolescents who may otherwise have limited opportunities for career development. *Well KEPT* is an integral component of the Natural Resource Division's environmental education and community outreach that inspires citizens to engage in the stewardship of Bellevue's Parks. By instilling strong environmental values and a positive work ethic in tomorrow's leaders, the *Well KEPT* program provides cost-effective stewardship of our City in a Park.

Well K.E.P.T 2016 Work Sites



Map Generated on: 08/31/2016

