

Date: October 11, 2011

To: Parks & Community Services Board

From: Alexandra DySard, Environmental Programs Coordinator
Geoff Bradley, Environmental Programs Supervisor

Subject: 2011 Well KEPT Program Brief
(No Board action requested)

Introduction

The City of Bellevue’s Well KEPT (Kids Environmental Project Training) Program has completed another successful summer serving the Bellevue community. For 25 years, the Parks & Community Services Department has engaged youth and invested in our future by providing valuable employment opportunities to Bellevue teens through the Well KEPT Program.

The Well-KEPT program is a summer youth employment program 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 renovation and maintenance and typical projects include forest enhancement, wetland restoration, and trail construction. The Well KEPT program combines on-the-job work experience with

environmental education and career development training to instill strong self esteem, good work habits and sound environmental ethics.

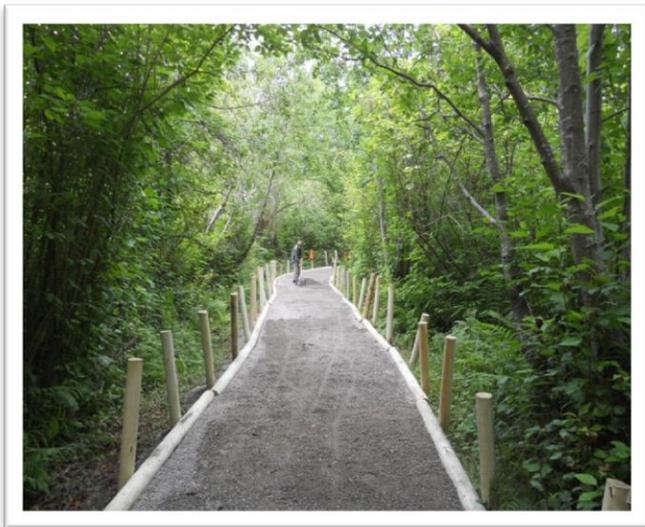


The 2011 Well KEPT Crew included 10 Bellevue youth trainees and two recent UW graduate supervisors.

2011 Projects and Accomplishments

Each year the Well KEPT program works on a variety of projects throughout Bellevue parks. A brief summary of the 2011 accomplishments include the following:

- Removed 25 yards of English ivy from Meydenbauer Beach Park, 25 yards of Himalayan blackberry from Coal Creek Natural Area, 30 yards of English laurel and holly from Wildwood Park, and 15 yards of Himalayan blackberry from Lewis Creek Park.
- Surfaced nearly 2,000 linear feet of agricultural trails at the Larsen Lake and Mercer Slough Blueberry Farms.
- Refurbished the memorial park benches at Downtown Park
- Resurfaced 1,000 linear feet of trail and constructed over 100 feet of elevated turnpike in the Mercer Slough Nature Park.



- Worked with the Washington Conservation Corps to restore approximately ½ a mile of trail in the Coal Creek Natural Area.

The new turnpike in the Mercer Slough Nature Park helps keep park users feet dry while they explore Lake Washington largest remaining wetland.

- Worked with King County Noxious Weed Control to control purple looserife and policeman's helmet in Kelsey Creek Park and the Mercer Slough Nature Park.
- Harvested and planted over 100 willow stakes in a wetland restoration area in the Lake Hills Greenbelt.

Crews hard at work removing policeman's helmet, a Class B noxious weed, from Kelsey Creek Park.



Supplemental Education Workshops

Supplement education is a valuable component of the program that helps reinforce the importance of the work being performed, increase environmental knowledge, and develop essential career skills. The Well KEPT program partners with outside agencies to develop and present educational workshops to enhance on the job training. Below are examples of the 2011 classes:

Educational Workshop

Native Plant Identification
Noxious Weeds
Recycling/Composting
Tree Health and Street Trees
Stream Health and Water Quality
Personal Financial Responsibility
Resume Building
Soils Survey and Analysis
Wetland Management
Willow Stake Harvesting
Coal Creek History

Instructor, Organization

Rachel Phillips and Peter Fosmire, City of Bellevue
Ben Peterson, King County Noxious Weeds
Janet Prichard, Allied Waste Services
Melissa Brown, City of Bellevue
Laurie Devereaux, City of Bellevue
Writu Kakshapati, Washington Society of CPAs
Katy Kouche, Lake Wash. Institute of Technology
Chuck Natsuhara, USDA/NRCS
Geoff Bradley, City of Bellevue
Lara Vyas, Master Naturalist – City of Bellevue
Steve Williams, Eastside Heritage Center

Trainees learn how to use benthic macroinvertebrates to monitor water quality in Coal Creek with Laurie Devereaux from Bellevue Utilities Department.



Teens discover how to take soils samples in the Mercer Slough Nature Park with Chuck Natsuhara of the United States Department of Agriculture.

Program Evaluation

Evaluation is an important component of the Well KEPT program to help measure success and implement adaptive management to increase the effectiveness of future programs. Below is a table showing responses to some of the questions asked on the post program evaluation questionnaire.

2011 WELL KEPT PROGRAM Evaluation Question Responses				
Evaluation Question	Did the program increase your understanding and appreciation of the environment?	Do you feel the program was a good first job that helped you develop career skills?	Were the weekly workshops beneficial in helping supplement the training?	Would you recommend the Well KEPT program to a friend?
Percentage of Yes Responses	100%	100%	85%	100%

Conclusion

Employment opportunities for youth are limited. The Parks Department Well KEPT program is a unique and innovative program that provides an exceptional first employment opportunity for Bellevue youth. The program is an integral component of the Natural Resource Division environmental education and community outreach program that inspires and involves citizens to make a difference in the care of Park resources. By instilling strong environmental values and positive work ethics in tomorrow's community leaders the Well KEPT program provides cost effective stewardship of our City in a Park.