



MEMORANDUM

Date: September 11, 2009
To: Parks & Community Services Board
From: Christina Krueger, Environmental Programs Coordinator
Subject: 2009 Well KEPT (Kids Environmental Project Training) Program Brief

The Well KEPT Program has completed another successful summer serving Bellevue's community. For 23 years, the Parks & Community Services Department has engaged youth in providing valuable employment experience. Two crews of Bellevue teens were hired for the summer to implement projects throughout the Parks & Open Space System. The Well KEPT Program's mission is to "provide summer employment opportunities to local area youth with little or no job experience, focusing on job skills and career development training in the field of park and open space management." This mission was achieved through the following goals:

- Provide job skills training to Bellevue youth, ages 14 – 18, through a competitive interview and hiring process.
- Provide a positive work experience that helps develop leadership skills, boosts self-esteem and promotes teamwork while learning positive work habits.
- Develop a sense of community stewardship and appreciation for the natural world through meaningful hands-on projects and environmental education.
- Obtain valuable job skills and career training, and an understanding of the diversity of career opportunities within the field of Park Resource Management.
- Assist the Natural Resource and Resource Management crews to efficiently maintain the parks facilities and natural resources during the peak summer season.

After completing the Trainee hiring process, workload for the summer was divided equally between the two crews. Each crew consisted of two Program Supervisors and eight Trainees, with one Supervisor in Training alternating between teams. Both crews were given the opportunity to work in a variety of parks throughout the city. A brief summary of the accomplishments of the program are as follows:

- Acquired agricultural/Farm management skills. Spread over 400 cubic yards of environmentally friendly hogfuel over 5900 linear feet within the Mercer Slough Blueberry Farm. The rows between the blueberries were filled, increasing community accessibility by improving pathway conditions.

- Received training in trail design and construction methods. Resurfaced over two miles of trails within Coal Creek Natural Area, Woodridge Park, Forest Glen East Open Space, Horizon Heights Open Space, the Bellevue Botanical Gardens and others. Dismantled and built a 180' post and rail fence along the southern border of Ardmore Park.
- Gained extensive knowledge of invasive and noxious weed management, including proper identification of and problems associated with the spread of non-native plants. Assisted King County in stopping the spread of two Class A noxious weeds, Policeman's Helmet and Purple Loosestrife from the Kelsey Creek watershed. In addition, removed Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Blackberry, English Ivy, Scotch Broom, and Holly at several park sites.
- Developed an understanding of trail maintenance practices. Removed over 50 tires and other debris lodged within the banks of Coal Creek, along the new YMCA trail in Coal Creek Natural Area.
- Gained knowledge of horticultural propagation techniques and greenhouse operations while working at the Bellevue nursery. The Well KEPT crews transplanted over 10,000 plugs. Teams also assisted the staff at the Bellevue Botanical Garden to remove invasive species, opening up areas for future planting and increasing the viability of existing native plants.
- Developed public speaking skills while interacting with the general public. Provided verbal information on Bellevue parks and the importance of their restoration efforts.
- Expanded their habitat improvement skills by planting native trees and shrubs in an area previously occupied by Himalayan Blackberry.
- Acquired a firm understanding of the opportunities that exist for employment within a Parks Department, while working with crews from the Natural Resource Division, Resource Management and the Bellevue Botanical Garden.
- Understood how performance and work ethic are assessed during end of summer evaluations. Trainees were encouraged to implement goal setting strategies towards work and school by utilizing their identified assets.
- Attended educational workshops in cooperation with the following staff and agencies:

Personal Financial Management
Ann Marie Davis, Beth Malloy, Ryan Scharnhorst, WSCPA

Resume Writing
Aimee Elber, North Seattle Community College

Recycling and Waste Management
Jennifer Kaufman, COB Resource Conservation Program

Introduction to Noxious Weeds
Sasha Shaw, King County Noxious Weed Control Program

Blueberry Farm History
Geoff Bradley, COB Parks & Community Services

Coal Creek History
Steve Williams, Eastside Heritage Society

Soils and Geology
Chuck Natsuhara, USDA

Insects/Stream Ecology
Laurie Devereaux, COB Stream Team Coordinator

The Well KEPT Program continues to provide an exceptional employment opportunity to Bellevue youth, and in turn helps to maintain the City of Bellevue's natural resources. The participants develop a strong connection to their environment, a firm understanding of its value, and develop a positive work ethic. We look forward to continually improving the program in the years ahead.

Cc: Patrick Foran, Director, Parks & Community Services
Shelley Marelli, Deputy Director, Parks & Community Services
Dan Dewald, Natural Resource Manager
Geoff Bradley, Environmental Programs Supervisor



Photo by Ashley Bouck, Well KEPT Supervisor
 Team members use weed wrenches to remove the invasive Scotch Broom plant from an old school site at Coal Creek Park.

Well KEPT Wrap Up

*Layout by Krista Purcell,
 Asst. Park Ranger*



Photo by Ashley Bouck, Well KEPT Supervisor
 Team members take turns pulling at a sunken tire on the Coal Creek YMCA trail. Approximately 60 tires were removed by the teams.



Team members breakdown old fence material before installing the new fence at Ardmore park.

*Photo by Ashley Bouck,
 Well KEPT Supervisor*



Photo by Ashley Bouck, Well KEPT Supervisor
 Team Members moved roughly 400 yards of environmentally-friendly Hog Fuel as they resurfaced farm rows at the Overlake Blueberry Farm.

This new 180-foot post and rail fence, along NE 24th street bordering Ardmore park, was completed by the 2009 Well KEPT teams.

*Photo by Ashley Bouck,
 Well KEPT Supervisor*





Date: September 16, 2009

To: Parks & Community Services Board

From: Geoff Bradley, Environmental Programs Supervisor
Jim Bennett, Park Forester

Subject: Larsen Lake Riparian and Greenbelt Enhancement Project

BACKGROUND

The Lake Hills Greenbelt contains the headwater wetlands for Kelsey Creek, Bellevue’s largest drainage system. In response to the need to improve degraded habitat conditions in the Lake Hills Greenbelt, the Parks Department worked with Skillings and Connelly to develop the *Lake Hills Greenbelt Wildlife and Habitat Assessment and Enhancement Plan* in 2006. The report identified the shoreline of Larsen Lake as a critical area in need of natural resource restoration. In 2007, the Watershed Company used the Skillings and Connelly report to design the *Larsen Lake Riparian and Greenbelt Enhancement Plan*. The plan designs specific natural resource enhancement activities around the shoreline of Larsen Lake that will improve wetland functions and values. These plans will guide the implementation of the Larsen Lake Riparian and Greenbelt Enhancement Project.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project will provide direct natural resources improvements to the wetland functions and values provided by the Larsen Lake wetland. Specific enhancements will focus on controlling presence of noxious species, planting of native species, and adding large woody debris to the shoreline. These improvements will provide food and nesting habitat for birds, additional shading and cover for fish, and help stabilize the shoreline to reduce erosion and protect water quality.

PARTNERSHIPS

The project provides numerous opportunities for public/private involvement in the protection and enhancement of freshwater wetland ecosystems. Partial sponsorship and funding for the project was provided through the King Conservation District (KCD). The City received a grant from the KCD in for \$89,000 to assist with project implementation. In addition, the project involved a partnership with the Washington Native Plant Society (WNPS) creating a Stewardship Training Program for community volunteers. The 12 week training program was completed in June 2009. Graduates of the training will help lead volunteer planting efforts, assist with ongoing maintenance and monitoring, and develop additional interpretive materials regarding the project. These significant public education and involvement efforts will help raise community awareness and support of critical wetland habitat.

TIMING

Initial project implementation is scheduled to run from October – December 2009.

cc: Patrick Foran, Director, Parks & Community Services
Shelley Marelli, Deputy Director
Dan DeWald, Natural Resource Manager



Date: October 2, 2009

To: Parks & Community Services Board

From: Shelley Brittingham, Assistant Director
Parks & Community Services

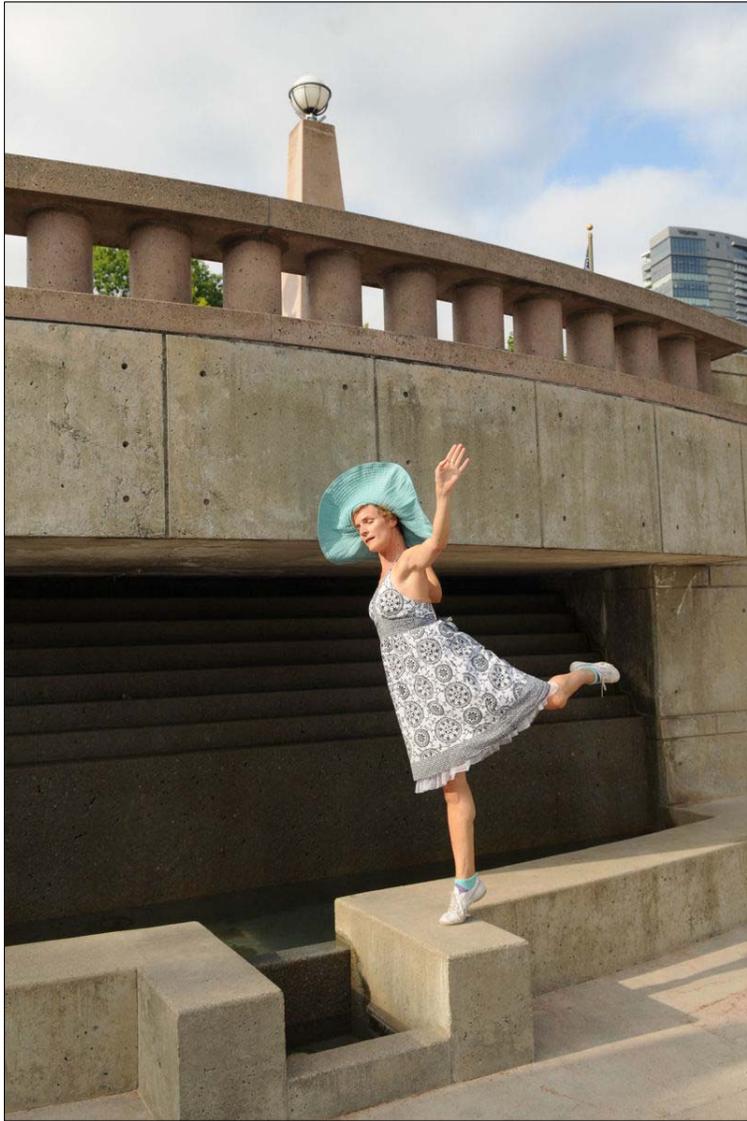
Subject: PARKDance Program - Citizen Comments

The attached letter refers to the PARKDance program that took place in the Downtown Park this summer.

PARKDance was conceived and choreographed by Bellevue resident Aiko Kinoshita. Ms. Kinoshita brought a group of contemporary dancers together for four weeks, July 21 – August 31, to rehearse and perform in the park. Combining improvised and choreographed movement, the dancers used different areas of the park to create a new dance each week, which was performed on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. 2009 was the second year of the PARKDance Site Series and was enthusiastically received by new and returning audience members.

Ms. Kinoshita's project was funded by 4Culture's King County Performance Network Site Specific program and the City of Bellevue's Special Projects grant program through the Bellevue Arts Commission. Ms. Kinoshita worked with Parks staff to develop the project, which also provided free introductory contemporary dance classes at two of our community centers as a community outreach component.

Also attached are pictures of the performances for your enjoyment. If you have any questions about the project, please feel free to contact me.



September 12, 2009
Bellevue, Washington

To Whom It May Concern;

Intent on exposing my sons to the arts, I found PARKdance an ideal and unique opportunity for them to experience contemporary dance in an open, free-spirited environment. The thematic nature of each performance is fun to follow throughout the park as the dance troupe moves from space to space, allowing us to follow in close proximity, to appreciate the fluid movement of energy and dynamic self expression.

I did not stress nor did I explain the distinction of audience participation to my sons as they watched the PARKdance performances. The improvised nature of the choreography and the open setting of the park create a very engaging environment in which audience participation follows naturally. My sons not only participated actively but were inspired by the performances; at night, in our living room, they reenacted the dance movements -- one falling to be caught in the other's arms, rhythmic, discreet motion, without music.

One afternoon while getting ready to go to one of the last PARKdance performances, I mentioned that PARKdance would soon come to a close for the summer that we may have to wait until next year to see PARKdance again; moments later they began sharing what they were thinking and feeling. I was very surprised by what they had internalized. At one point they told me we should pick flowers from the garden to give to each of the dancers. When I asked them why flowers they replied that flowers are beautiful and should be given to people who do beautiful things. At the conclusion of that afternoon performance, my sons handed out flowers to each of the dancers. In addition, they openly acknowledged two of the dancers individually.

As a parent interested in exposing his children to art, this proved to be a rewarding experience for my sons and for me, as it provided a clearing in which I could see them experience art, be moved to action by what they internalized, and act accordingly, guided by that which inspired them; my eldest son is five years of age and his younger brother three.

Dance as self expression is now a possibility for my sons. Most importantly, through these performances, they realized that there are distinct, possible ways of being through which people communicate powerfully and fully, a possible way of being that would not have been distinguished for them had they not seen these performances.

I am happy for my sons that they were able to be a part of PARKdance. We look forward to PARKdance next summer, to again move through these unique spaces with such wonderful dancers, to be nurtured by the beauty expressed through their art.

Sincerely,
Armando Lemus
(206.941.4142)



MEMORANDUM

Date: October 6, 2009
To: Parks & Community Services Board
From: Laura Hughes, Park Ranger
Subject: 2009 Summer Park Ranger Program Brief

Background

The Parks and Community Services Department established the Park Ranger Program in 1987 with the development of the Lake Hills Greenbelt and Phantom Lake Management Plan. Park Rangers play an integral role in public communication, outreach and service delivery. Full-time Park Rangers are currently stationed at visitor centers located in the Lake Hills Greenbelt, Lewis Creek, and Mercer Slough Nature Park. With increased park programming and visitation during the summer months, the Park Ranger Program expands with additional seasonal staff to assist with service delivery. Assistant Rangers are uniformed, front line ambassadors for the City. They perform routine patrols and work cooperatively with City and other jurisdictional staff to improve customer service, increase safety, provide education, reduce vandalism, and enhance the park user experience.

Ranger Duties

Park Rangers perform various duties throughout the park system to help prevent resource degradation, provide environmental education, and improve customer relations. In addition to park rules education, Park Rangers are trained to provide a wide range of customer services including interpreting natural and cultural amenities, assisting with park maintenance and management and providing information regarding other City programs and services. Some of the specific duties include the following:

- Perform routine patrols to provide information on park rules and reduce deviant behavior
- Staff visitor centers to provide information City programs and events
- Lead nature programs to interpret Bellevue's natural and cultural history
- Develop interpretive displays and brochures
- Coordinate with wildlife rehabilitation agencies to assist with injured wildlife
- Assist with citizens' stewardship efforts to help maintain and restore park resources
- Maintain kiosk system with updated information
- Perform park visitation studies, monitor use, and solicit feedback
- Document and report code violations to BPD, WDFW or other appropriate enforcement agency
- Maintain accurate records, reports and statistics on park use
- Assist with special events

2009 Programs and Events

The summer Park Ranger Program assisted with numerous City of Bellevue events, programs and interpretive activities during the 2009 season. Below is a list highlighting some of these activities:

Earth Day - Arbor Day	Natural Resource Week
Bellevue Strawberry Festival	MSEEC Groundbreaking Ceremony
City of Bellevue 4 th of July Celebration	Sea Fair Weekend
Lake Hills Community Fair	Bellevue Parks Day Camps
Kelsey Creek Park Day Camps	Mercer Slough Canoe Tours
Community Park Nature Walks	Coal Creek Park Interpretive Signage
Community Farms and Gardens Flyers	Living Green Program Series Flyers

For special events, Park Rangers assisted with event set up, welcoming, parking, patrolling and other customer service activities. Rangers strive to be friendly, approachable, and knowledgeable. In addition to citizen contact during special events, our total goodwill contacts in parks increased this year. Environmental education and interpretation is also a major program focus. Park Rangers led weekly nature walks and canoe tours helping users explore their natural environment. In addition, they worked with Parks Department day camps to teach children about forests, meadows, and wetlands. They also developed interpretive materials for future interpretive signage in Coal Creek Park.

2009 User Contact Data

The efforts this season by the summer Park Rangers have been commendable. The Park Rangers provided exceptional customer service while helping maintain a safe and enjoyable user experience. The following chart presents some data of the 2009 accomplishments.

	Jun*	Jul	Aug	Sep*	YTD
Summer Park Ranger Program					
Activity Highlights					
Programs Delivered	6	10	11	5	32
Parks Patrolled	715	1414	1239	466	3834
Parks Locked	183	210	204	110	707
Parking Notice Issued	28	62	30	26	146
Camping In Park	1	2	2	1	6
Vandalism	8	7	8	8	31
Immediate Response Requested	3	16	15	7	41
Other	0	66	19	19	104
User Contacts					
Good Wills	903	1935	1347	287	4472
Provided Assistance	76	280	139	30	525
Dogs Off-Leash or in Beach Park	27	237	137	31	432
In Park After Hours	407	568	139	30	1144

*summer staff on duty for partial month

The Park Ranger Program serves as a valuable link between the City of Bellevue and its citizens and visitors. Park visitors feel closer to the City when they are able to easily meet and interact with City staff. The Rangers provide a friendly face to give feedback to, and a valuable source of information regarding Parks & Community Services events, locations, and policies.

cc: Patrick Foran, Director
Shelley Marelli, Deputy Director
Dan DeWald, Natural Resource Manager
Geoff Bradley, Environmental Programs Supervisor



MEMORANDUM

Date: October 6, 2009

To: Parks & Community Services Board

From: Camron Parker, Senior Planner
Parks & Community Services

Subject: Parks & Open Space System Plan Update – Progress Report

Public opinion collection for the Parks & Open Space System Plan update has been ongoing for the past several months and will continue through October and November. Progress on various fronts is given below. At the November Board meeting, staff will give you a presentation on the public opinion data collected to date as well as discuss the key issues to be addressed in the updated plan.

Public Opinion Survey

Over 700 randomly selected Bellevue residents completed the enclosed four-page survey during the month of September. The results are being tabulated at this time. As a statistically valid representation of the Bellevue residential community, this survey is the major foundation for the public participation element of the plan update.

Web Survey

A shortened version of the enclosed survey will be released on the City's web page this week. This survey will be available to all park users in Bellevue. The results will not be statistically valid, but will be useful in collecting information for park user groups that are not represented in the public opinion survey, such as youth under age 18 and people who work, but do not live in Bellevue. A link to this survey will be posted on the Parks & Community Services main page at http://bellevuewa.gov/parks_homepage.htm. This survey will be open through November. Your assistance in spreading the word about this survey would be appreciated over the next two months.

Parks & Community Services Blog

The blog has been moderately successful so far. The site has attracted over 500 unique visitors. However, only a little over ten of those have chosen to submit comments on what they read. The blog will continue to be marketed to the public at least through November.

Public Insight Presentations

Staff will make Park Plan update presentations to a variety of the City’s commissions, boards and advisory committees as well as community groups and associations. The scheduled presentations are listed below, and more will be added in the coming weeks. As a board member, you are welcome to attend any of these – most, but not all, are scheduled in the early evening. Please contact me for more detailed information on any that are of interest to you.

Group	Date
Friends of Crossroads Community Center Advisory Board	9/28/09
Bellevue Arts Commission	10/6/09
Bellevue Network on Aging	10/9/09
Soccer Field User Meeting	10/15/09
Bellevue Youth Theatre Foundation	10/15/09
Baseball – Softball Field User Meeting	10/22/09
Bellevue Human Services Commission	11/3/09
East Bellevue Community Council	11/4/09
Bellevue Transportation Commission	11/12/09
<i>Parks & Community Services Board</i>	<i>11/10/09</i>
Bellevue Planning Commission	11/18/09
Bellevue Youth Link Board	11/09
Bellevue Youth Council	11/09

Moderated Web-based Dialogue

In the act of compiling and interpreting the feedback gained through the public input described above, a series of issue topics will emerge that deserve more in-depth discussion. For example, over the next 20 years, population growth in Bellevue will come predominantly in the form of new multi-family housing units. How will demand for parks, open space and recreational opportunities change as a result? How should the city plan now to accommodate these needs in the future?

To enable a more rich discussion of topics like these, we have engaged a student team from the University of Washington’s Community and Environmental Planning program to facilitate a web-based discussion board. Depending on the topics to be addressed, Board members, subject matter experts and others within the community will be invited to participate in a moderated discussion format. We will give you more details on the process as it is developed.

If you have any questions about the Parks & Open Space System Plan update, please contact me at cparker@bellevuewa.gov or (425) 452-2032.