



# Newsletter

Fall 2007

## **Message from the President**

The Stewardship Foundation has been spending a fair amount of time lately keeping up with various proposals related to development of houses in and/or near sensitive areas. "Sensitive Areas", in the context of development in our City, means steep slopes, wetlands, streams, and the buffers associated with these areas. One of the Foundation's ongoing tasks is submitting Comment Letters to the City's Planning Department regarding these development proposals.

A discussion at a recent Board of Directors meeting revolved around the importance of these comment letters. I've been thinking about that discussion lately and I'd like to share some thoughts on the subject, in hopes that we, as a community, can better work to save the fantastic natural environment we enjoy.

Lake Forest Park has a superb set of ordinances which regulate what type of development can (and, more importantly, cannot) occur in sensitive areas and their associated buffers. These ordinances, mandated by Washington's Growth Management Act, are collectively referred to as Sensitive Area Ordinances (SAOs). There are a significant number of properties in the City in which development is partially or even entirely prohibited by the SAOs due to the presence of sensitive areas. There exists a mechanism called a Reasonable Use Exemption (RUE) which provides, with tightly prescribed restrictions, a mechanism by which a developer can obtain relief from some of the SAOs in order to allow them to build a house which will result in the minimum reasonable economic use of the land in question. (Such relief, in some form, is actually required by the Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.) The process of applying for and obtaining an RUE is quite often a highly contentious

affair; after all, in such a case, a developer is in fact asking for a waiver from environmental laws that our community worked very hard to put in place.

Ultimately, the granting of an RUE is decided by a Hearing Examiner, who is essentially (but not technically) a judge; the Hearing Examiner scrupulously follows legal procedures that are a lot like the procedures in an actual court case, with a well-defined burden of proof, rules of evidence, and so forth. The developer presents their application and associated documentation to the City's Planning Department; at some point the City deems the application to be complete, and invites comment letters from the public at large. After considering the application and the comment letters, the Planning Department submits their recommendation to the Hearing Examiner in the form of a Staff Report. The Hearing Examiner's job is to consider all of the evidence before them; this evidence consists of the Staff Report, the applicant's materials, and the comment letters.

*...Continued on Page 2*

*We've "Moved"*

Our new mailing address is:

**P.O. Box 82861  
Kenmore, WA 98028**

*Please note this new address in your records, as the U.S. Postal Service will not forward mail from our current address because it is a Private Mail Box.*

*...Message from the President, Continued  
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At this point, a rather loose - but still apt - analogy is in order. In a criminal case before a judge, the judge has to consider the material before them before rendering a judgment. The judge does not question witnesses, or gather evidence pro or con, or make legal arguments related to the case. All of that is the job of the two attorneys - the prosecutor, and the defense attorney. Consider this analogy: in an RUE hearing, the Staff Report is like the prosecuting attorney's case; the Hearing Examiner is the judge (or the jury); the defense attorney is analogous to the comment letters in the file, if any; the defendant is... the environment. If there is not a single comment letter in the file at the time the case goes to the Hearing Examiner, then the Hearing Examiner has absolutely no choice but to accept the Planning Department's recommendations. This would like going into court, accused of a crime, with no defense attorney and no defense of one's own. The judge would be forced to accept the prosecution's case. You're guilty. Do not pass Go. Do not collect \$200.

In an RUE case, the Planning Department is supposed to do its best to ensure that the applicant is following all the rules, and is in conformance with all of the SAOs related to the development. Similarly, in a criminal case, the prosecutor should never bring a case to trial without firm, unassailable evidence that the accused is, in fact, guilty. What if they - the Planning Department in an RUE, or the prosecutor in a criminal case - miss something? What if they make a mistake? In such a case, in an RUE, in the absence of comment letters to the contrary, the Hearing Examiner has no choice but to accept the Planning Department's recommendations regardless of any mistakes they - or the applicant - have made.

It's our job - the job of environmentally aware citizens - to provide for the defense of the environment in these RUE cases. If there is a point of law which has been missed, we have to bring it to the attention of the Hearing Examiner. If there is erroneous information in the applicant's materials, we have to point that out - because if we don't do it, often nobody will...and the Hearing Examiner will be forced - by law - to accept the erroneous information as factual.

At a recent meeting between the City's Planning Department, two members of City Council, and myself, the Planning Director informed us that, in his opinion, the comment period in these cases was "a time to bring up issues that the developer must address". The Stewardship Foundation disagrees with this attitude most strenuously; we believe that it's the Planning Department's job to bring up these issues, before an application is deemed "complete" and before the comment period begins. But consider such a belief, expressed by the very department that is responsible for analyzing RUE applications and preparing Staff Reports, which in turn serve as the City's official recommendation to the Hearing Examiner. In such an environment, it is absolutely essential that we - the citizens of Lake Forest Park who care passionately about the environment and are willing to really do something about saving it - stay informed and involved, and be prepared to study development applications in detail, and to submit detailed comment letters whenever an RUE or other environmentally sensitive development is being considered. We are the defenders of the environment. If we don't defend it...nobody will.

*-- Doug Mitchell, President*

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### ***Time to Pass the Torch!***

As your president during the last 5 years, I'm passing the torch. Doug Mitchell has generously stepped forward to carry out the responsibilities for the remaining year of my term. After 32 years, Vern and I recently sold our home and purchased a condo seven blocks north but still in Lake Forest Park. In addition to downsizing and moving, a major remodel (that seems like it will never end) and a sibling's illness have consumed huge amounts of my time and energy and diverted my attention from important Foundation issues. Thanks to my colleagues for taking care of business in my absence. My plan is to continue to serve as a member of the Board and help further the work of the Foundation. I look forward to more opportunities for serving, learning and living in one of the Northwest's most special places.

*-- Carol Dahl*

## Good Stewards Update

On April 21st at Third Place Commons we celebrated the official certification by the National Wildlife Federation of Lake Forest Park as a Community Wildlife Habitat. This was the culmination of over two years of hard work by many community members. Our community is the second in King County, the third in the state, and the 21st in the nation to achieve this certification.

This could not have been achieved without the particular efforts at Lake Forest Park Elementary School of Rick Purn and Terry Williamson, who, through many projects, got that school certified as a Schoolyard Wildlife Habitat. David Hepp was responsible for getting all five of our parks certified as Wildlife Habitats, as well as being involved with Rick Purn and Libby Fiene in the certification of Blue Heron Park as a Demonstration Garden. Lisa Pedigo did a wonderful job throughout the whole project of keeping a detailed journal and taking photos of the project. Over 160 community members contributed to the effort by certifying their yards, either with the National Wildlife Federation or the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife, as Backyard Wildlife Habitats.



Five of our members, Debra and Jeff Watts, Tina Loucks-Jaret, June Ireland, and Annee Brizo generously opened their Backyard Wildlife Habitats for tours. At the ceremony Tony Angell, who as you know, is a celebrated sculptor and educator, as well as a member of the advisory board of the Lake Forest Park Stewardship Foundation, gave a wonderful talk about the history of preservation in Lake Forest Park. At the end of our presentation we handed the “torch” in the shape of “food, water, shelter, and a place to raise young” to representatives of the newly formed team from Shoreline who are beginning their effort to be certified as another Community Wildlife Habitat.

We hope that Puget Sound will become the first certified Regional Wildlife Habitat.

Terry Williamson and Rick Purn are continuing their educational efforts at Lake Forest Park Elementary School through programs such as Seattle Audubon’s FUN (Finding Urban Nature).

Now that we are certified, one of our main focuses will be an effort to decrease the number of invasive plants throughout the community. If you are interested in volunteering for our invasives-out program, please contact Libby Fiene at [lfwildlife@comcast.net](mailto:lfwildlife@comcast.net) or Mamie Bolender at [mamiejb@hotmail.com](mailto:mamiejb@hotmail.com).

To certify your yard with the National Wildlife Federation or both NWF and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife:

Apply online at [www.nwf.org/bwh](http://www.nwf.org/bwh)

Paper applications for certification are available at  
Wild Birds Unlimited-Lake Forest Park.

Cost: \$20 for both, \$15 NWF only, \$5 WDFW only.

Questions: email Libby Fiene at [lfwildlife@comcast.net](mailto:lfwildlife@comcast.net)

## Brookside Creek Sedimentation Study

A sedimentation study is progressing on Brookside Creek and its tributaries, Hillside and Sheridan Creeks. This work is being done primarily by Jay Petracek of Golder Associates, which has a local office located in Redmond. Funding is being provided by a King County Parks and Recreation Waterworks Grant.

Golder Associates has accessed amazing images which were produced by a process called LiDAR. This process employs a radar technique to achieve a "picture" of the earth's surface from space which shows all the ground's contours. Over this image they have superimposed topographic lines from earlier surveys as well as recognizable features such as streets and stream channels. We, the Stewardship Foundation, have helped identify on this map the locations of street runoff, culverts, sewer lines near the creek and major recent landslides which impact the quality of the streams.

It is pretty well established that the ground contours in this neighborhood were formed by advancing and receding glaciers thousands of years ago. After time, as the soils settled and eroded, a certain equilibrium was reached and vegetation became established. Possibly a body of water formed where the 28th/30th Ave. wetlands now are. Golder surmises this from the LiDAR images and previously found peat deposits support that theory. At first there may have been an outlet from this water body to the north (McAleeer Creek or Hillside Creek). Erosion at the approximate location of NE 169th may have formed a dam isolating the southern portion, the current location of Grace Cole Nature Park. Speculation is that waters eventually broke through to create an outlet to the south, now Brookside Creek. Sheridan Creek drains the eastern portion of this watershed, arising from springs in the Sheridan Heights neighborhood. Eventually certain species of fish found their way up these vegetated gravel-lined waterways.

Native Americans, in their relatively small numbers, had little impact upon the delicate equilibrium with their hunting and gathering, their travel modes, agriculture and homes.

A great change came in the recent past with the invasion of primarily western Europeans in large numbers. One of our first acts was to harvest the trees. Lumber brought a good price as there was rapid development all along the west coast at the time. Even after that, the salmon continued to come up the streams in significant numbers into the '60s. Wetlands which formerly held water back, releasing it over an extended period, and which also served as breeding grounds for fish,

became school yards and a shopping mall. As more "improved" roads were built, forcing the creeks into culverts, and as house and driveway construction persisted in increasing the impervious surfaces, with little effort to restrain the accelerated water flow from the roofs and roads, the conditions became intolerable in the creeks. Rains sent surges of water roaring down the waterways, washing out any salmon eggs and eroding away the gravel spawning beds. In many places the creek beds were washed down to hard clay.

The surges of water continue to undercut the banks and the saturated steep slopes lose their grip and slide into the bottoms of the ravines and the water flows dark with mud. The fine soil particles of the soil are the silt which settles into the remaining gravel spawning beds, suffocating eggs. Much of the silt is swept into Lake Washington.

This is not a pretty picture. With the current sedimentation study, we hope to find some solutions to the problems of landslides and degraded spawning habitat.

In their report Golder Associates will discuss conceptual feasibility of restoration projects which may be implemented to reduce or regulate sediment transport processes in the Brookside Creek basin. With this information in hand, we hope to move forward to design projects which will address some of the problems.

Working in the creek will not, however, remove all the impacts to the creek. Much more water from rain needs to be retained on each individual property, preventing it from ever reaching the creeks. Codes regulating new construction have changed recently to improve retention of runoff. Many existing homes, driveways and roads, however, feed water directly to the roadside or to the stream bank. We need to find a solution to this problem. In some cases it may be as simple as providing dry wells filled with gravel to allow runoff to be absorbed into the soil rather than running onto the surface of the ground. Another action homeowners can take is to reduce lawn area by increasing border widths and garden sizes and planting more shrubs and trees. An additional side benefit of this is a resulting increase in the bird and butterfly population, especially when appropriate native plants are chosen.

Many Lake Forest Park residents would like to see the health of our streams improved and to see salmon and trout once again find a welcome spawning ground in our City. The Lake Forest Park Stewardship Foundation would like to be the catalyst which brings about that recovery.

### ***The Invasive Plant Program***

Once a month, every month, the Stewardship Foundation leads work parties in which volunteers help with the removal of invasive plants. So far this has mostly been done in only one park (Grace Cole Nature Park), but we hope to expand this effort to other areas as more volunteers are available.

There is a lot to consider, both in the short and long term, about how to control invasive plants such as Bohemian Knotweed, Himalayan blackberries, English holly, English ivy and the many other invasives throughout Lake Forest Park. Do we ignore them or do we develop a plan to deal with them? Such a plan should involve identification and documentation of the location of invasive plants. It should also involve educating the community about our concerns about them and why we feel they should be removed.

LFPSPF is attempting to work with the City of LFP to set up an Invasive Plant Program because we believe that such a plan would be beneficial to the community. We feel that it is important to return our parks to non-invasive, native vegetation so that they will be able to provide appropriate food, shelter and places to raise young for our native birds, fish and animals.

The Invasive Plant program being proposed has three levels. The top and most important level is an attempt to identify where Bohemian Knotweed (which looks similar to bamboo) exists, map these locations and hopefully later on have certified handlers remove it.

The second level addresses education of homeowners about methods of removal and disposal of common invasive plants such as blackberries, holly, ivy and morning glory, while at the same time offering information about which native plants could be substituted as groundcovers, shrubs and trees.

The final level deals with all the invasive plants that remain on the King County Invasive Plant List. We would like all homeowners to know which other plants could still be considered invasive so that residents could begin to remove them, if seen, and even perhaps be aware that they should not buy them in a nursery!

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### ***Knotweed Eradication***

Seven people have now been trained in the technique of knotweed injection. This is the only effective approved method of eliminating knotweed near water, with the possible exception of tying your sheep or goats near the patch for an extended period of time. These animals love the tender shoots. They shouldn't be kept there all the time, though, because of the obvious pollution factor.

This is an aggressive non-native species of plant which does extremely well in wet (and dry) areas. We hope to eliminate this noxious weed from our City so it does not dominate the wetlands and stream banks, crowding out the desirable native species of plants which provide habitat for our native fish.

Trained members of the Stewardship Foundation and of the StreamKeepers will be working to treat the knotweed. If you would like help in controlling knotweed on your property, please call Mamie at (206) 364-4410.

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### ***Happy 50th Anniversary, Bob and Dee Simmons!***

Bob and Dee Simmons recently celebrated their Golden Anniversary. Bob served on the Stewardship Foundation's Board of Directors, and it was he who wrote the Foundation's little book "A Salmon's Guide to Lake Forest Park" in 2001 and recently revised it. Dee was a much loved friend and volunteer. They are happy in their lovely new home overlooking Bellingham Bay. We hope they miss us just a little, because we surely miss them.

## ***The Case For Electric Heat***

If you are a homeowner, and you own your home long enough, you'll eventually be faced with the prospect of replacing your furnace. Many readers of this newsletter will be interested in finding ways to heat their homes with a minimum CO2 footprint. Aside from cutting-edge technologies like solar and geothermal, both of which are rather expensive to install, the best alternative - from an environmental perspective - for right here where we live is not natural gas, which is what a lot of folks seem to think is the best solution, but electric. The main reason: Lake Forest Park gets its power from Seattle City Light, which in turn currently gets 86% of its power from hydroelectric plants. Aside from whatever feelings we may have about the effect of dams on the salmon population in the Skagit River, the fact is that there is simply no way those dams are coming down anytime soon. The biggest city in the Northwest gets almost all of its power from those dams; there they are, and there they will stay...certainly as long as your house stands. And as long as those dams are there, we get the incredible benefit of totally clean, zero-emission, 100% renewable electricity, at some of the lowest rates in the country.

In addition to the zero-carbon footprint of electric heating, because of those low electric rates, the operating costs of an electric heating system with an efficient heat pump are far lower than any other common system (gas, oil, zone electric, or standard central electric). The additional cost of a heat pump will typically pay for itself within five to ten years at current electric rates.

Natural gas is just another fossil fuel, and the US Department of Energy reports that the net imports of natural gas as a percentage of total US consumption has been increasing annually since 2003. Gas is only going to get more expensive and more of a threat to the environment (with pipelines and tankers and so forth) to get it to our houses. Meanwhile, our electric rates have been stable for many years. And there are no trucks or tankers to get the energy from the source to our houses. And, zero emissions.

Electric heat makes a lot of sense - environmentally as well as economically.

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## ***“Native Seattle” by Coll Thrush***

Coll Thrush, historian and University of British Columbia professor, former resident of Lake Forest Park and former board member of the Lake Forest Park Stewardship Foundation, has recently had his book “Native Seattle” published by the University of Washington Press. This impeccably researched work chronicles the lives of the indigenous people of the Seattle area. It covers the time before, during and since the arrival of Europeans and explores the cultures as they clashed, struggled and mingled and how they were affected by one another.

Coll makes it clear these early residents did not disappear, as is sometimes implied, but instead remain, living among us, in a variety of professions and jobs.

Within the book is an “Atlas of Indigenous Seattle”. It has maps with the names and locations of Native Seattle places, describing the use and significance of these places in native lives. Native language names are translated by Nile Thompson, a linguist. He also describes the sounds used, which are so unfamiliar and difficult to navigate for us.

In a large praise-filled review on August 30, 2007, the Seattle Times says “Historian Thrush vividly chronicles the rich layer of indigenous history under Seattle’s skin”.

Congratulations, Coll!

## **Ivy Out Work Parties**

Ivy Out work parties are being held on the second Sunday of each month at Grace Cole Nature Park. They begin at 9 AM and continue until 12. You may work longer (or shorter) times if you like. The primary thrust is to eliminate English Ivy from our City. This non-native invasive species has been swiftly proliferating and can quite quickly devastate an entire forest. It covers the ground, displacing native species. In its reproductive mode it climbs the trees. In a short while it can cover the branches to the very top, depriving the tree's leaves of sunlight and eventually killing the trees in this manner, or weighting them down to the point that they fall over. It is spread by birds which feed on the berries, so can spring up far from the parent plants.

Currently the Ivy Out work parties are being held at Grace Cole Nature Park. We plan to move to other parks and to areas along our creeks and roadsides as more volunteers become available.

We encourage residents to try to eliminate ivy from their property. If it is climbing trees, it can be cut off near the base of the tree. Pull it from the trunk as far up as possible. If it cannot be pulled from the trunk, cut the ivy vine in two places and remove the section between cuts. Pull or dig the vines from the ground around the base of the tree, trying to remove as much root as possible. Pull up what is on the ground. Do not pull ivy from a dead tree, as you might topple the tree and cause injury to yourself or others, but do sever the ivy vine and dig or pull it from the base of the tree.

You may pile the ivy vines on a large plastic tarp so none of it touches the ground and let it disintegrate. Areas from which Ivy has been removed should be re-vegetated with more desirable species. The Stewardship Foundation can make suggestions for substitute plantings.

If you have an ivy infestation on your property and are unable to deal with it, please contact the Lake Forest Park Stewardship Foundation. We will try to assist you in its removal.

## A hearty "Thank You!" to the following donors and supporters of the 2007 Stewardship Foundation Dinner and Auction:

Dave Acker	Gregory & Della Friend	Ottoman Trading Company
Albertson's	Gaylyn Photography	Portage Bay Cafe
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Tom Elliott	North City Safeway	Wights Home & Garden
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P.O. Box 82861  
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### ***Interpretive Signs at Grace Cole Nature Park***

Using funds raised at one of the Stewardship Foundation's recent auctions, a series of interpretive signs was recently constructed and installed at Grace Cole Nature Park. The signs, which were designed by the Foundation, are visible at the start of and along the Boardwalk, and also at the pond viewing platform. Thanks to the Stewardship Foundation supporters who made these signs possible!

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**LFP Stewardship Foundation  
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