

Lake Forest Park
Stewardship Foundation
Annual Report

Fiscal Year July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023

The Mission of the Stewardship Foundation is to contribute to the well-being of our community by fostering awareness, understanding, appreciation, and stewardship of our natural environment; and by preserving and enhancing parks and open spaces.

Officers During FY 22-23

Kim Josund, Co-President **Randi Sibonga**, Co-President
Jeff Jensen, Vice President **John Brew**, Secretary/ Treasurer

Board Members

Doug Hennick Lisa Pedigo Brian Saunders Vicki Scuri*
Jeff Snedden* Jean Reid Jean Robbins Amanda Royal*
Doug Wacker (on sabbatical) *elected mid-fiscal year

Project Reports & Accomplishments

Grace Cole Nature Park

This beautiful natural area was the original project of the Stewardship Foundation and continues to be the standard-setting project for other park works. Under the leadership of park neighbor Jim Mead and Board Members John Brew and Jean Robbins, restoration projects and park improvements continue. Regular volunteer work parties are held on the third Saturday of each month. Grace Cole Nature Park benefits from the time and attention of many dedicated volunteers who turn out in any weather! Their efforts totaled 405 volunteer hours over the year. Tasks include invasive plant removal and trail maintenance. Native plants continue to be acquired and planted. A fun new addition is a pre-work party birding walk, led by volunteer Jeremy Schwartz, who shares the data to eBird for Grace Cole. Special shoutouts to family volunteers, the Pearlscoatts (Elsa, Marie, and "Daddy"), and the Prosser Family (Bruce, Ian, and Julia).

Special Projects:

- In September 2022 Eagle Scout candidates from Troop 850 completed a project to improve hillside trail stability;
- In May 2023 Jim Mead and John Brew hosted a team of 10 Liberty Mutual Insurance employees for an in-service day;
- In June 2023 enthusiastic members of Girl Scout Troup 41945 planted 12 Doug Fir trees.

A unique situation has arisen at Grace Cole with the arrival of a family of beavers. Monitoring pond levels and wrapping fencing around tree trunks has become a regular part of Jim's volunteer duties, with assistance and advice from Beavers NW and supplies from the City. We are working on installing informational signs about the beavers to add to the viewing platform.

Five Acre Woods

Volunteers dedicated to this park continue to make remarkable progress, led by restoration volunteer leader Polly Saunders with Board Member Lisa Pedigo. This mature forest land was saved from development by community effort in 2018 and has needed extensive effort to remove invasive ivy, laurel, bamboo, and holly. Because of the terrain and access, trail building is done by hand, including hauling buckets of wood chips. Polly organizes volunteer work parties on the first Saturday of each month, when a contingent of stalwart volunteers can be found pulling weeds and digging out bamboo roots. Regular work parties totaled 350 volunteer hours during the fiscal year.

Many of the core volunteers at the monthly work parties started volunteering in 2018.

Special mentions to: Monica Twitchell, Rick & Char Bender, Richard Saunders, Mark Phillips, Anneka Boccio, Bret & Lyn Duncan, Thea & Kirk Hoover, Lisa Pedigo, Jim Klahn, Tracy & Justine Furutani, Michel Goffin, Corrie Henderson, Therese Frare Davis and Board Member Doug Hennick.

New regulars this fiscal year included John Brew & Kirk Foster.

Over 170 native plants were planted over the year, including numerous Western Red Cedar seedlings donated by Kim & Marty Josund. Lisa Pedigo and her neighbor nurtured bare root Salmonberry, red flowering currant, snowberry, Red Osier Dogwood, Nootka rose, twinberry, serviceberry, mock orange, and ninebark through two hot, dry summers.

With oversight from Board Members Doug Hennick and John Brew, an energetic team of 8 Liberty Mutual Insurance employees volunteered a half day in-service in the park.

Special guests: In April 2023, an enthusiastic group of LFP Elementary 4th graders and their moms planted a couple flats of Lily of the Valley in areas that they liberated from invasive ivy.

We would also like to recognize the City for providing and maintaining Port-A-Potties at both parks. The City also hauls away green debris after our work parties. Thank you to LFP's own Out on A Limb Tree Service for providing regular loads of wood chips to layer on the park paths.

Sound Transit ST3 Bus Rapid Transit in LFP

This issue rose in importance as our community realized the undue impact of the proposed Bus Rapid Transit lane on SR522 through Lake Forest Park. An updated public transit system is a vital part of regional actions to fight climate change. However, as the project has progressed and new designs were unveiled for the Lake Forest Park segment of the SR522 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), concern has grown that it will have undue impacts on the environment and quality of life here.

The Foundation retained legal counsel to help determine if we could challenge or reopen the Determination of Non Significance (DNS) under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA).

Foundation Board Members met regularly with other concerned organizations, City staff, elected officials and Sound Transit to discuss strategies and request project design modifications that will lower the environmental impact. Adopting a "queue-jump" and signalized light system and smaller bus stops along SR522 will have the added benefit of lowered costs and less time for build out, while providing a similar time savings for bus riders.

Save Our Salmon Mural

Spearheaded by Board President Kim Josund, the Foundation hosted a Community Paint Day in September 2022, with over 200 volunteers to create the beautiful Save Our Salmon mural on the concrete bridge over McAleer Creek. The design by artist Austin Picinich is intended to raise awareness about the salmon-bearing stream just below the road, and the plight of Puget Sound salmon. Special thanks to the City of Lake Forest Park, UrbanArtWorks, ShoreLake Arts, LFP Water District, Trout Unlimited, Westlake ACE Hardware, Bright Street Construction, the LFP Rotary Club and our AWESOME artist Austin!

Salmon in the Schools

The Stewardship Foundation has long supported environmental education in our local elementary schools by providing funding for maintenance and care of salmon eggs in school salmon tanks.

In May 2023 Foundation volunteers assisted students from LFP and Ridgecrest Elementaries in the release of the young salmon into the pond at Grace Cole. Our friends the beavers have enlarged and improved the pond as habitat for young salmon. It is truly a highlight of the year to witness the youngsters carefully releasing tiny Coho salmon fry with heartfelt wishes "to grow big and come back."

In fall 2022, we funded in-class watershed curriculum for LFP Elementary 5th graders, culminating in a field trip to test water quality at Blue Heron Park. The Foundation also donated funds to support environmental education at Camp Orkila for both LFP and Brookside Elementary.

StreamKeepers

The Streamkeepers is a group of about 16 citizens led by board member Brian Saunders. These intrepid volunteers monitor stream quality and help educate on proper care to ensure continuing health and improvement to the quality of the streams within Lake Forest Park. Monthly testing samples are taken at two sites (Lyon Creek Park and Blue Heron Park) with quarterly sampling at four sites (additionally Love Park and a site on 35th Ave NE/40th PI NE). Monitoring parameters pH, turbidity, temperature, dissolved oxygen, conductivity, hardness, nitrogen, phosphorous and bacteria counts. These volunteers currently meet on the 2nd Saturday of each month. Results are posted on the Global Water Watch website for public access: <https://web.auburn.edu/gww/WAS/maps/wasSiteMap.html>

The B-IBI (Benthic Invertebrates) testing is conducted in early October each year, and involves sampling at five sites (Animal Acres, Fiene residence, Love Park, Perkins Way, and Carrie Lewith property). This is a quantitative analysis of the biota that live on the bottom of the creek and provide diagnostics to determine the health of a creek. Data is posted on the Puget Sound Stream Benthos website:

<https://pugetsoundstreambenthos.org/Default.aspx>

Our website has been updated with a new interactive map displaying all the sites in LFP where water monitoring is conducted. By selecting the different sites on the map, citizens can access graphs from the Global Water Watch and Puget Sound Benthos websites to get a visual of our stream's health.

Returning Kokanee Salmon to our Streams

Board member Dr. Jeff Jensen oversees this multi-faceted project with the vision of viable runs of native Lake Washington Basin kokanee in McAleer and Lyon Creeks by 2026.

Lake Forest Park, like many towns in the west, has stories of the olden days in which salmon were stacked like cordwood in local streams. Our streams have a special distinction in having had an abundance of native Kokanee salmon, remembered as "the plentiful Little Red Fish that were unique to the area." This project includes maintenance of a remote site egg incubator box that has successfully reared Coho salmon for the last four years. Information and experience gained from this effort will eventually be applied to rearing Kokanee salmon.

SalmonWatchers: Citizen Science in Action

North Lake Washington Salmon Watchers undertook its third season in 2022. This project, a partnership with Trout Unlimited, surveys streams for the presence of spawning salmon through the North Lake Washington drainage, including Lyon and McAleer Creeks in Lake Forest Park. Surveys are conducted from mid-September through November every year. In 2022 volunteers devoted more than 120 hours surveying 8 streams. Surveys in Lake Forest Park revealed that adult Coho and Chinook were present, but no other adults were seen. A surprise run of 2-year-old Kokanee showed up in the Sammamish river and lower North Creek Salmon Watchers.

28th Avenue Conservation Parcel

We completed our second year of a project to remove knotweed covering a tenth of an acre on our 28th Avenue wetland property. Our goal was to restore the wetland ecosystem to its native state. In November, a KCD and Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) team spent four days clearing the site, planted 110 native plants, and mulched the new plantings. The project's first phase is finished; now, we move on to maintenance and monitoring.

Monitoring Tree Removals & Development

The Stewardship Foundation continues to track the implementation of the city's tree ordinance. In July 2022, Foundation volunteers supported the City Council's adopted revisions to the tree ordinance. Notable changes included: Closing the loophole which allowed tree removals during a permit appeal window and adding language recognizing the value of tree groves.

We particularly monitor tree removals related to development and permit applications for proposals where critical areas, such as streams, wetlands, or steep slopes, could be impacted. We advise property owners on best practices for managing their own critical areas or responding to actions on nearby properties. When needed, appropriate statements are directed to Council members and to City staff, sometimes bolstered by arborist, attorney or other professional opinions commissioned by the Stewardship Foundation.

Special Event

In September 2022, the Stewardship Foundation hosted a recognition for Mamie Bolender at Grace Cole Nature Park. Mamie was one of the original "scrappy band of neighbors" organized to save the park and form the Foundation and went on to lead stewardship at the park for decades. About 40 guests and the Bolender family witnessed Mamie and Jim Mead unveil a permanent bronze plaque on the park kiosk in honor of Mamie.

Advocacy, Communication & Outreach

Board members maintain constructive communications with elected officials, City staff, and volunteer boards and commissions through regular contact with individuals and frequent attendance at meetings and providing public comments on environmental aspects of projects and issues.

The Foundation engaged with the public by sponsoring the **LFP Farmer's Market** in September 2022, and holding a well-attended Fiscal Year 21-22 **Annual Meeting** at Red Sky Gallery in November 2022.

Beaver Walks July & August 2022

We brought experts from Beavers Northwest to Grace Cole Nature Park for two evening "Beaver Walks." These events brought nature enthusiasts from as far away as Renton – plus plenty of LFP folks – to learn about beavers, salmon, and wetland ecology. These guided nature walks were timed around sunset to better increase the chance of sighting our elusive beaver family.

Green Fair April 2023

LFPSF hosted a table at the City's annual Green Fair, joining other organizations and businesses to answer public questions regarding composting, recycling, reducing waste, natural yard care, water conservation, environmentally safe products, and more.

Earth Day Trash Clean-Up April 2023

Board member Brian Saunders led about 20 volunteers in a whirlwind clean up of Whispering Willow, Blue Heron Park and Lyon Creek Preserve to celebrate Earth Day.

Secret Gardens Party & Garden Sale June 2023

The annual Secret Gardens of Lake Forest Park Garden Tour features five or six beautiful, private gardens in the City of Lake Forest Park. Once a year, for one day only, these unique and often spectacular local gardens are opened to the public as part of this tour. As an event Sponsor, the Stewardship Foundation gives a party the night before for tour volunteers, special guests, and garden hosts. Foundation Board members also staffed an informational table at the Garden Fair (plant sale) on the day of the tour.

We use several methods to share announcements and relevant information to Lake Forest Park. We distribute electronic newsletters and alerts via our list of over 600 email addresses, provide announcements and articles to the Shoreline Area News, and post notices on NextDoor, Facebook, and Instagram. The Foundation maintains an informative website at www.lfpsf.org.

The Stewardship Foundation Board meets monthly, usually at 7:00 pm on the third Tuesday of each month. We are meeting via Zoom until further notice. Meetings are open to all, and the details are posted on our website calendar.

*THANK YOU
for your interest and support!*

*We are an all-volunteer organization
and we couldn't do all that we do,
without you.*