



Restore Our Waters is the City of Seattle's commitment to take actions and promote partnerships that protect and improve our creeks, lakes, the Duwamish River and Puget Sound.

[www.seattle.gov/util/RestoreOurWaters](http://www.seattle.gov/util/RestoreOurWaters)

## RESTORE OUR WATERS WATERSHEDS FORUM #2 FORUM SUMMARY June 2009



### Leading with Science Small Actions Add Up to Big Changes



**Slow the flow** of stormwater, and let the rain soak in.



**Keep it clean** and prevent pollution at its source.



**Replant and restore** native trees, plants and in-water habitat.

**Restore Our Waters** is taking actions and promoting partnerships that protect and improve our creeks, lakes, the Duwamish River and Puget Sound. Visit [www.seattle.gov/util/RestoreOurWaters](http://www.seattle.gov/util/RestoreOurWaters) for more information.

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## **Watersheds Forum Background and Purpose:**

In December 2008, Restore Our Waters convened Watersheds Forum #1. Watershed groups and volunteers working in five major watersheds in Seattle – Fauntleroy, Pipers, Longfellow, Taylor and Thornton started a dialogue about what is happening to improve our waters, where the gaps are, and the opportunities.

The Watersheds Forum #2 took the conversation to the next level and looked at the bigger picture of all Seattle's watersheds and their impact on Puget Sound. The meeting design considered key themes that emerged out of Forum #1. Attendees addressed these issues during facilitated breakout groups.

### **Key themes that emerged from Forum #1:**

- Building Partnerships
- Managing stormwater runoff
- Reducing combined sewer overflows
- Reducing fragmentation of green spaces
- Education and public involvement
- Research, data gathering and monitoring
- Improving coordination between City departments, other government agencies, community-based groups and residents

### **Watersheds Forum #2 Purposes:**

- Investigate opportunities for coordination and cooperation
- Identify specific approaches, programs and initiatives for collaboration and partnership

The Forum looked at community-wide programs, approaches and initiatives and asked participants to share information and ideas in order to develop some next steps toward engaging in some meaningful actions by partnering together.

### **Opening remarks by Nancy Ahern:**

She thanked people for attending and expressed her excitement to see new faces in the room. She reiterated the mission for Restore Our Waters as a city-wide initiative aimed at focusing our efforts to improve Seattle's urban waters and that connection with Puget Sound health. She remarked that Restore Our Waters is attempting to convene a broad constituency to bring new energy together and double our efforts. This evening is about building on the December 3<sup>rd</sup> Watersheds Forum. She acknowledged the Restore Our Waters Stakeholders Committee and in particular the members who helped shape the Forum were present, including Heather Trim, Steve Ruden, and Tom von Schrader.

She addressed the challenging economic situation. Her hope for this evening was reinforced by the communities' vision and commitment to water quality protection, and commended all in attendance for their commitment during these tough economic times. To her, this is a time of soul searching – SPU had to make budget cuts, re-assign staff, and make some difficult choices, but the commitment is still there. The importance of partnerships has really come out of all this – which is the theme of this meeting tonight. She asked that we look at how we can

be more effective collaborating our efforts between the public and private sector. She was heartened because of the new perspectives, people and disciplines present at this Forum.

Finally, she reiterated key themes from December 3<sup>rd</sup> Forum #1 that included managing stormwater runoff, reducing combined sewer overflows, reducing fragmentation of green spaces throughout the city, the importance of education and public involvement, and the role of research and monitoring.

**Science Presentation** – Chris May, PhD, Urban Watersheds, Seattle Public Utilities. Presentation available at [www.seattle.gov/util/RestoreOurWaters](http://www.seattle.gov/util/RestoreOurWaters)

### **Breakout Groups:**

*A description of the breakout groups is provided in the Appendix of this summary.*

There were four breakout groups who met for about 45 minutes and were asked to report out answering the following questions:

- What is the greatest challenge?
- What is the biggest aha?
- What are the top three action items?

The following was reported:

### **Social Marketing & Stewardship Actions**

- Challenge
  - So many messages about doom and gloom right now – need a central positive message that hits home
  - Engaging a broader and more diverse part of the community
- Aha
  - Sometimes the best way to reach people is by just talking to them
  - We are always giving message but sometimes we get great messages back – and we should provide a venue for this like YouTube or other ways to let people share the great work they are doing
  - People want to know what is in it for them – gear toward self interest
- Action Items
  - Resources for helping to find community groups and volunteer groups
  - Making this all fun
  - One City One Book – A book is read city-wide with associated discussions and action done city-wide

### **Capacity Building & Sustaining Action**

- Challenge
  - Connecting and leveraging information and resources – groups are so isolated
- Aha
  - There are simple things we can do right away to build off each other's efforts like sharing meeting minutes and using web/social networking electronic communications
- Action Items
  - Sharing meeting minutes and what goes on between organizations – set up a listserv to facilitate better communications

- Groups operate independently, and the City or some other power would feed us an annual emphasis, could have interesting results i.e. Year of reducing pet waste or driving less and maintaining cars.
- Citizen mentors
- Identify gaps and what is not being done

### Using Science for Results

- Challenge
  - How can the results that come from science research be converted to action?
    - Start doing something, use adaptive management, and keep studying and researching
  - How to engage citizen scientists? Do they have to always meet high standards of science and protocols or can it be simplified?
- Aha
  - It is much more cost effective to get to the source and remove the pollutants first instead of trying to treat it later. How would you do this?
    - Use simple things to reach them first like household product examples.
- Action Items
  - Provide a map with the utility bill so that people can really look and see what watershed they are in and also include why it matters for you to know which watershed you live in
  - How to reach out and share science information with citizens – Aquatic Neighborhood Block Watch
  - Hold an annual science information summit for citizens – and share information from different groups – consider partnering with the Aquarium, U.W., etc.
  - Provide youth science educational opportunities

### Green Stormwater Practices

- Challenge
  - Make it easy for people to do the right thing / permitting issues can be a barrier
  - Friction trying to work with different agencies (DPD/SDOT/SPU)
  - Lack of access to knowledge of what is the right thing to do – conflicting messages from government.
- Aha
  - Better communication needed throughout and continuous dialogue
  - Treating the issue at the source rather than the end of the pipe
- Action Items
  - More pilot projects – allowing the City to move forward with innovative approaches that educate residents– allow forgiveness and provide flexibility to address issues
  - Continue to support and enhance the education programs – partnerships with schools, watersheds, neighborhoods, etc.
  - Continue events like this one that bring together different agencies, practitioners and the public.
  - Connect with do it yourself stores(i.e. Home Depot) and reach out to people doing home improvement projects.
  - One person or a group of people at the City to be the point contact that can broker these ideas and issues throughout the various agencies – an ombudsman of sorts.



- Develop more private property incentives.

### **Nancy Ahern provided closing remarks**

- Aha
  - Having the other departments here as well as new faces and new organizations
- Action Items
  - ROW should take some topics of timely interest out to some new and different audiences in other parts of the City to raise new awareness
  - Summarize all these great ideas and cull them down into a short list that the City and ROW can commit to – and communicate that back to the Forum participants

## **Appendix**

### **Breakout Group Description**

#### Social Marketing, Personal Actions and Stewardship

##### Focus:

- Using Social Marketing Strategies to Engage Individuals in Stewardship Actions and Behavior Change.
- City-wide Volunteer-based Programs
- Personal Actions

##### Discussion Questions:

1. How do we involve new individuals and entities in environmental restoration efforts?
2. What partnerships and strategies would help to engage more citizens to practice sustainable behaviors?
3. What partnerships and strategies can be developed or strengthened to further volunteerism and sustainable behavior?

#### Green Stormwater Practices

##### Focus:

- Partnerships & Coordination
- Green Development
- Roadway Runoff
- Infrastructure and Watershed Health
- Combined Sewer Overflow's

##### Discussion Questions

1. What limits and what encourages environmentally friendly development approaches?
2. How best can the City, other agencies, and residents work together to develop an optimal portfolio of actions?
3. What specific coordination actions or partnerships can be developed or strengthened to address these issues?

#### Capacity Building and Sustaining Activism

##### Focus:

- Partnerships & Coordination
- Cultivating New Leadership
- City-wide Coordination
- Succession Planning
- Resource Sharing

##### Discussion Questions:

1. How best can the City, other agencies, and residents work together to build environmental organizations and leadership?
2. How do we use existing volunteers to grow the base?



3. What are the best tools available to share resources and support collaboration?
4. What specific coordination actions and partnerships can be developed or strengthened to address these issues?

#### Using Science for Results

##### Focus:

- Partnerships & Coordination
- Aquatic Health
  - Water Quality
  - Habitat
  - Monitoring
  - Adaptive Management

##### Discussion Questions:

1. What key things interest you from the science presentation?
2. How best can the City, other agencies, and residents work together to use science in identifying priority actions? How can City staff and citizen scientists best work together?
3. What specific coordination actions and partnerships can be developed or strengthened to address these issues?

#### Attendees List

##### Seattle Public Utilities Staff:

Nancy Ahern – Deputy Director, Utilities Systems Management  
 Chris May – Urban Watersheds, Drainage & Wastewater  
 Miles Mayhew – Program Manager, Restore Our Waters  
 Susan Harper – Outreach Coordinator, Restore Our Waters

##### Breakout Group Leads:

Beth Miller  
 Sheryl Shapiro  
 Kathy Minsch  
 Cheryl Eastburg  
 Susan Harper  
 Bob Spencer

##### Triangle Associates:

Robert Wheeler, Facilitator  
 Cole Gainer, Note taker

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