

Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners Meeting Minutes June 10, 2010

Web site: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>
(Includes agendas and minutes from 2001-present)

Also, view Seattle Channel tapes of meetings, June 12, 2008-most current, at
<http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/watchVideos.asp?program=Parks>

Board of Park Commissioners:

Present:

Neal Adams, Vice-chair
John Barber
Terry Holme

Excused:

Jourdan Keith
Diana Kincaid
Donna Kostka
Jackie Ramels, Chair

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff:

Christopher Williams, Acting Superintendent
Eric Friedli, Acting Deputy Superintendent
Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

Announcement: *The Board of Park Commissioners meetings are taped for viewing by Seattle Channel and posted to the Board's web page. Beginning with the May 13, 2010, minutes, the written briefing paper for all non-public hearing topics will be included in the written minutes. The minutes will not include the verbal staff presentation and the Board's question and answer segment. To listen to the briefing and hear the discussion, please see the tape at:*
<http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/watchVideos.asp?program=Parks>

For public hearings (where the Board is asked to vote on a recommendation to the Superintendent), the minutes will include the written briefing paper and any subsequent updates, a summary of the verbal public testimony, a summary of the Board's discussion and recommendation, and a link to the Seattle Channel tape.

The minutes will continue to include a summary of the Superintendent's Report, Oral Communications, and Old/New Business.

This meeting was held at the Woodland Park Zoo's Activity Resource Center and was preceded by a 5:00 pm tour, led by Zoo Director Deborah Jensen and other Zoo staff. The public was invited to the tour.

Commissioner Adams called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm, introduced himself, and welcomed the audience to the meeting. Jackie Ramels, Park Board Chair, is out of town. As there was not a quorum of Board members present, approval of the May 13 and May 27 minutes was delayed until the June 24 meeting.

Superintendent's Report

Acting Superintendent Williams reported on the following items. To learn more about Seattle Parks, see the website at <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/>.

Mid-year Budget Reduction Update: Mayor McGinn is expected to announce mid-year budget reductions no later than Tuesday, June 15. The information will be forwarded to the Board soon after. The Department's Finance Director will attend the June 24 Park Board meeting and present an update briefing and answer the Board's questions. For more information on the City's budget, see <http://www.seattle.gov/mayor/newsdetail.asp?ID=10820&dept=48>.

Aquarium Director John Braden to Retire: In September 1979, John Braden was employed by the City's Department of Community Development as a Senior Planning & Development Specialist, the Economic Development Program Manager, Manager of Development Projects, and the Director of Economic Development. In 1991 he moved to the Aquarium, leaving for a few years to be the Executive Director of Seattle Emergency Housing Service and then returning to the Aquarium in May of 1998 as the Supervising Planning and Development Specialist. He became Deputy Director of the Aquarium in 2002, and Director in 2005 when Bill Arntz retired.

The Seattle Aquarium Society will celebrate his retirement on Wednesday, June 23, from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. at the Seattle Aquarium. His retirement coincides with the Aquarium Society assuming management of the Aquarium. For more information on the Seattle Aquarium, see <http://www.seattleaquarium.org/netcommunity/page.aspx?pid=183>.

Arboretum Foundation Celebrates 75th Anniversary: The Arboretum Foundation was founded in 1935, one year after the Washington Park Arboretum was officially established. This year marks the 75th year that the Foundation has provided vital support to Seattle's beloved Arboretum. On Friday, June 11, at 5:30 p.m., the Foundation will host a party, in conjunction with its annual meeting, to celebrate this milestone year. For more information on the Foundation, see <http://www.arboretumfoundation.org/>.

Arboretum Chilean Garden Celebrates Groundbreaking: This event is also scheduled for Friday, June 11, at 3:45 pm. The "Gateway to Chile" project is located at the southern intersection of Arboretum Drive and Lake Washington Boulevard. It includes the restoration of the formerly overgrown Holmdahl Rockery and creation of an eye-catching display of colorful Chilean plant species. The project includes the planting of 72 Chilean trees that will contribute to the horticultural collection and is one of five gardens that will comprise the Pacific Connections. For more information on Pacific Connections, see http://depts.washington.edu/uwbg/gardens/wpa/pacific_connections.shtml.

The Japanese Garden Celebrates Its 50th Anniversary: On Sunday, June 6, the Japanese Garden, a 3-1/2 acre formal garden located within the Washington Park Arboretum, celebrated its 50th anniversary. Commissioner Holme and over 100 others were in attendance. The garden was designed and constructed under the supervision of world-renowned Japanese garden designer Juki Iida in 1960. Since then it has won the hearts of locals who appreciate its artfully-placed trees, shrubs, flowers, stones, lanterns, ponds, paths, and bridges that create a harmonious balance of northwest and Japanese garden design. Acting Superintendent Williams also attended the event and encouraged the Board and public to visit the recently-renovated Garden – it is spectacular! For more information on the Japanese Garden, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkspaces/japanesegarden.htm>.

Off-leash Area Update: Concern about violations of leash and scoop laws continues to come from members of the public. While existing signs at off-leash areas (OLA) notify dog owners about the existence of these laws, they do not promote understanding of how dog owners and dogs benefit by compliance and the public health and safety reasons for these laws, as well as protection of nesting birds. As part of the signage inventory and review now under way, the Department will consider how best to convey this information to boost leash and scoop law compliance. Currently of the 11 OLAs, four have agreements from before 2006, prior to the revised program for volunteer activities. These are under the Citizens for Off-leash Association (COLA) master agreement. There is also a separate agreement with Magnuson Off-Leash Group (MOLG) signed in 2008. The other off-leash areas have no agreement. Parks has been working with staff to adapt the standard volunteer agreement to reflect special conditions that OLAs present, and will also be working to

update the COLA master agreement, as conditions have changed greatly from the initial pilot stage for the entire program.

COLA stewards will be invited to a future Park Board meeting to present information. For more information on off-leash areas in Seattle's parks, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/offleash.asp>. For more information on COLA, see http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&source=hp&q=seattle+COLA&aq=f&aqi=g1&aql=&oq=&gs_rfai.

Commissioner Holme questioned whether there is long-term sustainability for the off-leash area groups and whether only three groups currently having a contract reflects a lack of energy. Acting Superintendent Williams responded that the agreements are more administrative than a reflection of the groups' commitment. However, some sites have shown less than the desired level of stewardship. Commissioner Holme agreed and recommended that the troublesome off-leash areas be identified so other dog owners who use the sites can step forward to help.

Delridge Clean & Green Update: On Saturday, June 5, more than 900 people celebrated community in the Delridge neighborhood. The Delridge Neighborhood Development Association, NUCOR Steel, Sustainable West Seattle, Seattle Public Utilities, and Seattle Parks and Recreation also participated. The Parks team, the Department of Corrections' crew, and neighborhood volunteers removed more than two tons of debris during the Spring Clean. For more information on the City's efforts to keep Seattle Clean and Green, see <http://www.seattle.gov/util/Services/Garbage/KeepSeattleClean/index.asp>.

Garfield Playfield Celebration: On Saturday, June 5, the community celebrated the renovation of Field #1 at Garfield Playfield. This event celebrated the public/private partnerships that came together to make the field renovation happen and honored the Negro League [Seattle Steelheads] that once played on the field. (For more information on the Negro League Baseball Players Association see http://www.nlbpa.com/seattle_steelheads.html.) The renovation improvements included replacing the sand/silt infield with a synthetic turf infield and synthetic pitcher's mound and replacing the existing clam shell backstop with a 30' high, upright backstop and wing fence fabric and netting.

Parks partnered with many generous donors who donated time and materials to create a more sustainable field which is now available for year round play. Representatives from Ohno Construction, Field Turf, Seattle Mariners, and additional donors were on hand, along with many athletic field supporters such as Donny Herald, Seattle University Baseball Coach; William Hogan, Seattle University Athletic Director; Ted Howard, Garfield High School Principal; and Dave Mann who began his career playing with the Detroit Stars of National Negro League and ended his playing career with the Seattle Rainiers.

King County Executive Dow Constantine threw the first "official pitch" to Yosh Ohno, of Ohno Construction and the community declared the field open for play. For more information on Garfield Playfield, see http://www.seattle.gov/parks/park_detail.asp?ID=353.

Park Peak Season Maintenance: Parks Division staff will provide City Council with an overview of seasonal park operations. This will include a Power Point describing issues such as the difference between off-season and peak season, the evolution from a 5-day to a 7-day work week, and Pro Parks evening scheduling.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Adams why the Department is presenting this overview, Acting Superintendent Williams answered that it is to educate City Council on the Department's maintenance schedule. City staff are taking 10 furlough days this year to help with the City's budget shortfall and one of the furlough days was the Monday after Mother's Day. The weekend had great weather, resulting in high usage. The Department had not yet started its summer schedule of increased park maintenance. On Tuesday, Parks headquarters, City Council, and the Mayor's office received complaints of overflowing trash cans, etc., in the parks. This maintenance overview will also reflect any mid-year budget cuts which impact park maintenance.

Update on Park Road Programs and Closures

Volunteer Park Lower Loop: Several parents have commented to the Parks Department that they are enjoying use of the lower road. A bicyclist expressed concern about the impact of the closure on organized bike races, to which staff replied the event permit would allow appropriate access. While a Parks staff person mentioned that they had heard Seattle Asian Art Museum (SAAM) is concerned about patron parking, no direct contact has been made from SAAM to Parks staff. Last week on SAAM's free First Thursday tour, which was also a sunny afternoon, there was parking readily available.

Arboretum Drive: Generally, the use of the north gate for access with no through traffic appears to be working well. For the Japanese Garden event coming this weekend, Parks staff reiterated that the event permit allows for one-way through traffic as part of the event traffic management plan.

Carkeek Park: Due to steep inclines and inadequate parking, this Wednesday road closure has been modified to promote walkers to view the "Heaven and Earth" art exhibit. This exhibit brought many people to the park last summer, and as it is scattered throughout the park, it promotes walking. The configuration of the park with most of the parking at the far end of a longish incline made the closure very confusing and somewhat challenging for many visitors and the road closure has been discontinued.

Seward Park: The weekday closure has had no problems as there is ample parking at the entry to the park, and the hours are very limited.

Bicycle Sunday: This component is continuing with a weekly schedule similar to last year, again excepting major holidays and events.

SDOT Summer Streets: Parks' involvement with this Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) program continued with an Alki Beach event on May 23.

Acting Superintendent Williams believes that, overall, the closures seem to be working well. Commissioner Barber, however, expressed continuing concern with the Volunteer Park Loop closure and would like more information on whether the closure has affected picnics or other use of the area. Acting Superintendent Williams responded that Parks' staff will be scheduled for a full briefing to the Board at an upcoming meeting. For more information on the Department's "It's A Walk in the Park" program, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/walk.htm>.

During Old/New Business (near the end of the meeting), Commissioner Holme stated that he attended the recent Japanese Garden celebration and spoke with some elderly park visitors. They voiced frustration with the Arboretum Drive closure and are confused by the signage which allows vehicles with elderly or physically impaired park visitors to drive their vehicle past the gates and onto Arboretum Drive. Some of these visitors understand the language while others don't. This isn't a very ADA-friendly system. He has also heard concerns from elderly pedestrians who are fearful of the fast-moving bicycle traffic on the road. In addition, the volunteers who lead tours that start and end at set times say that they are using much of the tour time just to get people from point A to point B in the park, with little time left for the actual garden tour.

Commissioner Holme noted that the road closures were set up as a pilot program and requested Acting Superintendent Williams to have staff now review the closures as a service to the parks' users. Commissioner Adams agreed. He supports the concept of some park roads being closed to vehicles; however, he wants to understand any issues these closures cause. He recommended that if the Department isn't already doing so, it conduct a study and collect data about these closures to determine their effectiveness.

Strategic Action Plan (SAP): The Strategic Action Plan was developed in the fall of 2008, and the Department's budget was much different at that time. Staff will revise the plan after the 2011-2012 budget process to ensure the future SAP work reflects the reality of the Department's resource constraints. A briefing to the Park Board is scheduled for October 14. For more information on the Department's SAP, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/Publications/ParksActionPlan.htm>.

Thomas C. Wales Park: Helen Swint, a neighbor of this park, has written the Park Board on several occasions, listing concerns with this project, in particular the fence, and with Parks staff. Ms. Swint testified

at the Board's May 27 meeting and followed her testimony with a letter to the Board. The Department's last communication with her was Monday, June 7, stating that staff had previously responded to her points. Mayor McGinn's office sent her an e-mail on June 8 stating that the fence will remain. Don Harper of the Parks and Green Spaces Levy Oversight Committee and the Queen Anne Community Council has told Parks staff that the Community Council will send a letter in full support of the project as built. In response to Ms. Swint's request for a management audit, Interim Deputy Superintendent Eric Friedli, Parks and Green Spaces Levy Manager Rick Nish, and Project Planner Patrick Donohue are scheduled to meet Ms. Swint at the project on June 16 to review the project.

Golf Request for Proposals (RFP) Update: The golf RFP evaluation team has completed review of eight proposals from nationally-recognized operators. The team will be making its final recommendation to the Parks Superintendent in the next few days. This interdepartmental team was comprised of representatives from City Council, the Golf Steering Committee, the Central Budget Office, and Parks staff. This effort is on track to have a new operating agreement in place at the beginning of 2011. For more information on the Department's golf program, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/Athletics/golfcrse.htm>.

Genesee Playfield: Commissioner Barber asked if Parks staff tested the old synthetic field surface at this site during the last year. Kevin Stoops, Parks' Planning and Development Division's Director, responded that it was tested in fall of 2009 and the final report is due next week. Commissioner Barber noted that he observed people sitting on the field eating their lunch last year and questioned whether Parks should install a sign warning against this. Mr. Stoops responded that the new synthetic surface is scheduled for installation this summer. Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli added that the field is below the consumer safety levels for toxins. Commissioner Holme noted that this field is scheduled for replacement with Parks Levy funds.

Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience

The Chair explained that this portion of the agenda is reserved for topics that have not had, or are not scheduled for, a public hearing. Speakers are limited to three minutes each, will be timed, and are asked to stand at the podium to speak. The Board's usual process is for 10 minutes of testimony to be heard at this time, with additional testimony heard after the regular agenda and just before Board of Park Commissioner's Old/New Business. Four people testified, with a brief summary of their testimony included below. To hear the full testimony, see: <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5591053> and move cursor under screen to position 30.

Brad Kahn: Mr. Kahn is a member of the Board of Trustees for Seattle Park Foundation and a consultant for a number of environmental organizations. He lives near the Zoo and, along with many of his neighbors, loves living near it. He is the parent of a two-year old and they visit the Zoo three-to-four times weekly. Going to the Zoo is a great opportunity for kids to be outside. These opportunities are especially important with how much time kids now spend in front of computer and television screens. His annual Zoo pass is one of the best ways he spends his money.

Irene Wall: She also lives in Phinney and loves the Zoo. She thanked Zoo staff for opening the interior north parking lot. However, she isn't as excited about the new West Entry. She referred to the area near the entry signed as "Bank of America Commons". The Zoo Society developed a naming policy in 2004 that is different from the Park Department's naming policy. Seattle City Council was unaware that the Society was developing its own policy. The policy requires that 50% of a project's costs be paid by the name. The West Entry cost \$14 million, with Bank of America paying only \$1 million of the cost, yet its name is displayed at the entry. She also pointed out that the Zoo's annual report does not mention its closing of the nocturnal house.

[Zoo Director Deborah Jensen addressed the naming concern during her briefing and pointed out that the Bank of America Commons does not apply to the entire entry and is for 10 years. During the discussion, Park Board Commissioners had additional questions on how the Zoo's Naming Policy works within the Park

Naming Policy. To listen to the Board's questions and Ms. Jensen's responses, see briefing <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5591053> and drag pointer under screen to position 60.

Ron Siegle: He is a member of the Woodland Park Zoo Board and a Zoo neighbor. He and his five-year-old granddaughter are frequent visitors and are there almost every Sunday. He observes many families visiting this regional treasure. He believes in the Zoo's mission and that it is a good neighbor; however, it must listen to its neighbors.

Ron Sterling: Mr. Lowman is a resident of the Lowman Beach area. Lowman Beach Park has good kayaking, windsurfing, and there is an old-style tennis court which is irreplaceable. He believes King County's proposal to use the park for a combined sewer overflow site is ludicrous. He asked that the Park Board recommend against this proposal and presented the Board with a copy of his testimony.

Commissioner Adams thanked those who testified and shared their ideas with the Board.

Briefing: Woodland Park Zoo Annual Report

Deborah Jensen, Woodland Park Zoo Executive Director, presented information on the Zoo's annual report. Prior to this meeting, Ms. Jensen and Zoo staff led Commissioners, Parks staff, and the public on a tour of the new west entry, penguin exhibit, meerkat exhibit, and other sites. Commissioners received a copy of the annual report, which is included in these minutes and was posted to the Board's web page for public review. This briefing is for informational purposes only and the Board is not asked for a recommendation. Ms. Jensen introduced herself and reviewed the annual report, which included a Powerpoint presentation.

Written Briefing

2009 Annual Report to the Board of Park Commissioners, May 1, 2010

Summary of operations

Woodland Park Zoo's 2009 operations included opening the new Humboldt Penguin exhibit, the most innovative new animal exhibit at the zoo in several years. Zoo attendance was the second-highest on record – for the second year in a row – indicating continual broad community support for the zoo and its mission.

A new food concessionaire, Lancer Hospitality, brought a variety of new, less-expensive and higher-quality food items to the zoo, further enhancing the experience of zoo visitors. Lancer renovated the former Outback Café into the Pacific Blue Chowder House, with Northwest-themed entrees. The food concessionaire is fully committed to the zoo's principles involving sustainability, waste reduction and locally sourced items.

More than 450,000 visitors participated in keeper talks, docent talks or other public programs during the summer season, in which zoo hours are lengthened and the number of keeper talks and other educational programs are increased. The year's theme was Share the Habitat, and research indicated that more than 30,000 people took specific conservation action as a result of hearing or experiencing a zoo program.

However, the success of the programs was made possible through strict budgeting, cost controls and a significant sacrifice on the part of staff. The zoo began its 2009 budget by continuing the hiring and travel freeze imposed in the fall of 2008. In addition, the budgeting included layoffs of two staff members, closing the Butterflies & Blooms exhibit and a two percent, across-the-board cut in non-personnel accounts.

By the first quarter, when it became increasingly clear that the recession would be longer and deeper than had been predicted, the zoo imposed additional reductions by imposing furloughs on senior staff and suspending retirement (403b) payments to all staff. (Represented staff took a combination of furloughs and reduced 403b payments.)

Those steps allowed the zoo to operate successfully through the year and to end the year with a budget surplus. Additional budget reductions were taken for 2010, as outlined in the Annual Plan to the Superintendent, issued in November, 2009.

Capital Projects

Work began in September on the zoo's new West Entrance, a part of the Long-Range Physical Development Plan adopted by the City Council in 2004.

The new entrance, scheduled to open May 1, will replace the existing North and West entrances and provides crucial access improvements, including reduction of wait times at admission gates, membership services, first aid, stroller and wheelchair rentals, and a zoo store. A landscaped path will connect the north and west sides of the zoo.

Throughout the project, attention has been paid to the purchase of locally available and sustainable materials. The wood siding, Ipe, is Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified; the sealant used is nontoxic; the concrete contains fly-ash, and the steel is fabricated in Centralia.

All rainwater that falls on to the new West Entrance infiltrates into the site via planting areas and an infiltration infrastructure. The project is on track for a LEED "silver" certification.

Work also began on renovation of the Rain Forest Food Pavilion. The pavilion has been open during construction, and renovations are scheduled to be finished in May as well.

Major Maintenance

The boiler in the Adaptations Building, formerly known as the Feline House, was replaced with two, new, high-efficiency boilers allowing for redundancy. The original, 1950's secondary switchgear was replaced with new wiring and electrical panels, the design of which allows for a future upgrade to 3-phase power when the supply transformer is replaced. The hot water boiler in the elephant barn also was replaced with a new, high-efficiency, single-fuel unit.

Significant renovations were made to the Education Center auditorium, including new carpet, reupholstered seating, edge lighting of the stage for safety, a complete upgrade of theatrical lighting controls, new stage stairs and new exit doors. This project was funded by a private donor.

Animal shift door operating mechanisms in the colobus monkey holding facility were improved for safety and ergonomics. The old, counter-weighted manual system was replaced with an electric/hydraulic system which allows push-button control.

New fencing was installed in the southeast corner of the zoo to provide better security and improve operational efficiencies. Final renovation began on the Central Shops Office.

Animal care

There were notable changes to the zoo's animal collection this year. In March, 20 Humboldt penguins arrived from several zoos in preparation for opening the new, state-of-the-art exhibit May 1. The exhibit contains significant sustainability measures. A filtration and recirculation system allowed the pool to be filled only once, significantly reducing water use. The water in the pool is heated to 55 degrees using geothermal wells. Porous concrete in the exhibit allows all rainwater to permeate into the soil.

The sustainability features allowed the zoo to use the area for conservation messaging and messaging about sustainable seafood and habitat preservation.

Twin snow leopards – one male and one female – were born May 25. They made their public debut on August 14, in celebration of Snow Leopard Day. The cubs continue to thrive and will live with their mother for the next couple of years.

On February 13, four laughing kookaburras and two tawny frogmouths arrived from the Taronga Zoo in Sidney, Australia. This importation was intended to enhance the demographics and genetics of the North American breeding population of these two species. The effort proved fruitful with kookaburra hatchings in June and October, as well as a tawny frogmouth chick on June 4. The latter represented the first hatching of this Australian bird species at WPZ, and is one of only four frogmouth chicks hatched in U.S. zoos in the last six years.

There were multiple hatchings of Chilean flamingo chicks, the first reproduction of this species at Woodland Park Zoo. To optimize chance for survival and reduce risk of predation from native species such as raccoons, the eggs were incubated and the chicks hand-reared by staff.

The zoo continued building its role in breeding, rearing, and reintroducing endangered Northwest species, including western pond turtles, Oregon silverspot butterflies and Oregon spotted frogs.

In addition, WPZ is participating with several other institutions and wildlife agencies to breed endangered northern spotted owls. The goal of the program is to produce offspring for possible eventual release to augment wild populations in British Columbia.

Other new animals in 2009 included a female giraffe, a pair of northern tree shrews (a new species for Woodland Park Zoo), and a male Matschie's tree kangaroo.

Animal deaths in 2009 included a Chinese crocodile lizard, female gyrfalcon, a mountain goat and male reticulated giraffe.

Education

In Zoomazium, the zoo's venue aimed specifically at younger children, 56,079 young learners and their caregivers were reached through formal programs such as puppet shows and the opportunity to touch an animal.

At the new penguin exhibit, education staff, including a Peruvian penguin researcher, answered visitor questions and encouraged the purchase of sustainable seafood as a way to help penguins and other ocean animals. Maasai cultural interpreters shared their firsthand knowledge of African savanna wildlife, and habitat and conservation issues. Visitors made beaded bracelets and learned about African beading traditions through the Upapi program which generated \$23,000 in support of the Maasai Association Waterhole Restoration Project.

Nearly 74,000 students, teachers and chaperones visited the zoo for programs or self-guided visits as part of their school curriculum; of these 25,729 (35%) came from King County schools with 30% or more students on free or reduced-rate lunch programs. In addition:

12,418 students in King County and statewide participated in outreach programs, with 6,775 (55%) of these coming from Washington schools, with 30% or more students on free or reduced-rate lunch programs.

280 teachers participated in professional development opportunities offered by the zoo; 30% of these teachers teach in Washington schools with 30% or more students on free or reduced-rate lunch programs. 23 teachers were active members of our Zoo Teacher Advisory Council

278 Seattle-area residents participated in backyard habitat sessions.

761 volunteers and nine service groups gave over 70,835 hours to the zoo, valued at over \$1.1 million.

85 Zoo Corps volunteers developed their ecological literacy through training and service at the zoo and participated in meaningful and inspiring habitat restoration and conservation experiences.

19 Zoo Corps interns received paid positions at the zoo for a portion of the year.

Field Conservation

Woodland Park Zoo's Field Conservation Department supported the work of 17 field projects in the Partners for Wildlife program.

The Partners for Wildlife program (PFW) makes long-term commitments to comprehensive community-based conservation programs in the focus regions of the Pacific Northwest, Africa and Asia-Pacific. Partner programs stress practical solutions that incorporate habitat and species conservation, research, education, capacity building and community support that recognize the human element necessary for conservation to be successful.

In addition, the zoo provided funding to 16 projects and organizations related to our accrediting organization, the Association of Zoos & Aquariums, its Species Survival Plan programs, in situ field work, and through the Conservation Dues program. In 2009, WPZ awarded grants to four field projects in the Jaguar Conservation Fund program.

"Zoo in the World," a conservation-focused signage concept which was piloted in 2008, continued with six new informational boards on grounds throughout 2009. The project showed increased visitor awareness of the zoo's active role in conservation projects locally and internationally. Projects featured included: the Oregon Spotted Frog Recovery Project, Snow Leopard Trust, Tree Kangaroo Conservation Program, the Western Pond Turtle Recovery Project, Butterflies of the Northwest (Silverspot Butterfly), and the Mbeli Bai Gorilla Study.

Woodland Park Zoo's signature field-conservation program, the Tree Kangaroo Conservation Program, celebrated the dedication of more than 187,000 acres of critical habitat at the YUS Conservation Area in Papua New Guinea on Earth Day, 2009.

In addition to the zoo, financial support comes from Conservation International and the German Development Bank. This initiative seeks to fund new protected areas in tropical forests and assist with local community development and livelihoods. Grants will expand health and education projects in villages; provide staff to implement a forestry projects as well as management of the protected area.

Link to Verbal Briefing and Discussion

Commissioners thanked Ms. Jensen and Zoo staff for the informative tour and briefing. To hear the verbal briefing, view the Powerpoint screens, and hear the Board's discussion, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5591053> and drag pointer under screen to position 45.

Briefing: Lowman Beach Park-King County's Combined Sewer Overflow Project

Kevin Stoops, Seattle Parks' Planning and Development Division Director, introduced himself and briefed the Board on King County's consideration of building a Combined Sewer Overflow Project at Lowman Beach Park. Prior to this meeting, Commissioners received a written briefing paper, which is included in these minutes and was posted to the Board's web page for public review. This briefing was for informational purposes only and the Board was not asked for a recommendation.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

No action is necessary. This is a briefing for informational purposes at this time.

Project Background

Lowman Beach Park is located on Beach Drive SW in West Seattle. It is a small park of 4.2 acres of which 2.6 acres are tidelands. The park features an open lawn, a swing set, a tennis court and a pocket beach fronting a large intertidal beach on Puget Sound. King County operates the Murray Avenue pump station at Lowman Beach Park. The pump station is below ground but there are hatches and vents in the park's lawn area to provide access and ventilation for the facility.

King County is in the process of undertaking improvements to sewage storage, conveyance and pumping systems to control combined sewer overflows (CSO) that result from stormwater entering the regional sanitary sewer system. State law allows no more than one overflow event per location per year.

Overflows to Puget Sound occur from the Murray Avenue pump station several times each year, primarily when wet winter storms cause flows to exceed the capacity of the West Seattle interceptor. Sewers tributary to the pump station meet at the pump station, necessitating a focus on improvements in or adjacent to the park. The alternatives under consideration by King County include:

- Development of a 2 million gallon storage tank in the park;
- Development of a 2 million gallon storage tank on private property across Beach Drive from the park; and
- Installation of 2 million gallons of pipeline storage in Murray and Beach Avenues SW.

Building a storage tank in the park, along with associated mechanical rooms and odor control equipment, would occupy most of the park. If the pipeline alternative is pursued, equipment rooms and odor control facilities may still be needed in the park.

Attached is a graphic of the build the tank in the park alternative. It is likely to be the preferred alternative due to cost, loss of housing and traffic issues associated with the other alternatives. Parks staff has indicated to King County that this magnitude of work would be considered a taking of parkland and that full compensation would need to be provided. Staff has outlined the principles of the "Initiative 42" legislation that precludes non-park uses of parkland and requires replacement of parkland with similar property in the vicinity.

Public Involvement Process

King County held a public meeting on their Murray Basin alternatives in early April and will hold a second meeting on June 19.

Issues

There has been considerable public opposition voiced to the use of Lowman Beach Park for the CSO project. Impacts during construction and in the long run have been cited, as well as a loss of the existing park features due to the construction. As noted above, Parks staff has indicated that the CSO facility in the park constitutes a taking of parkland that will necessitate compensation, if not replacement.

Environmental Sustainability

While it is important for King County to address the public need for clean water, achievement of this objective should not come at a sacrifice to the public need for recreational open space and access to Puget Sound.

Schedule

King County intends to identify a preferred alternative by November 2010, assuming that Washington Department of Ecology will accept a longer facility plan selection process. Environmental review and design would occur in 2011-12. Construction would follow in 2013.

Additional Information

For more information, please contact Kevin Stoops by phone at 206 684-7053 or e-mail at kevin.stoops@seattle.gov/. Cheryl Eastberg is the Parks planner assigned to this issue; she may be reached by phone at 206 386-4381, or e-mail at cheryl.eastberg@seattle.gov/.

To view a map of the area, see:



Lowman Storage
21Apr10l.pdf

Link to Verbal Briefing and Discussion

Commissioners thanked Mr. Stoops for the briefing and asked for future updates on this King County proposal. Mr. Stoops will present an update briefing at the Board's December 9 meeting. The Chair noted that, if King County selects Lowman Beach as its preferred site, it will trigger a public hearing before the Park Board. To hear the verbal briefing and Board discussion, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5591053> and drag pointer under screen to position 78.

Old/New Business

Committee Reports

Seattle Park Foundation: Commissioner Holme is the Board's representative. At the most recent meeting, he learned that 15 major park stakeholders are working to fund a study to determine how best to solve the maintenance and operation funding shortfalls facing Seattle Parks and Recreation.

Magnuson Park Advisory Committee (MPCC): Commissioner Adams represents the Park Board on this committee. He and Acting Superintendent Williams attended the most recent meeting. Chris Leman of the City Neighborhood Council attended the meeting and is opposed to a Metropolitan Park District, as he believes its scope is too broad and he is concerned with its control. However, Mayor McGinn has expressed a willingness to look at a variety of options in an open manner. The creation of an MPD or similar system will not help with the budget cuts the Department must take for 2011; however, it is important to get new ideas out to the public for review and discussion. Commissioner Adams noted that this was brought to MPCC by a non-member. Although the budget shortfall affects Magnuson Park, MPCC is not taking on maintenance and operation funding sources as an issue. The Park Board, on the other hand, will.

West Point Settlement Committee: Commissioner Barber represents the Board on this committee, which oversees the spending of the final mitigation funds from the siting of the West Point sewage treatment center in Discovery Park in the 1990s. There is \$500,000 remaining in the fund and the community has agreed that none of these funds are to be spent on the lighthouse. Instead, it will be used for Discovery Park habitat restoration. Commissioner Holme noted that the lighthouse has a large plastic cover and asked if there is funding to remove it. Acting Superintendent Williams responded that Seattle Parks will complete the current phase of lighthouse work, which is waterproofing and lead abatement. Future plans are for a lighthouse keepers group to form who will raise funds for additional repairs to the building.

There being no other new business, the meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

APPROVED: _____

Jackie Ramels, Chair
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE _____