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Summary of the 2014 Urban Forestry Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the City of Seattle's Urban Forestry Commission and Urban Forest Inter-departmental Team (IDT) was held on October 8, 2014 from Noon - 5:00 p.m. at Camp Long in West Seattle. The goal of the meeting was "strengthening the partnership between the Urban Forestry Commission/Urban Forest Interdepartmental Team in order to accomplish the goals of the Urban Forest Stewardship Plan".

To that end, the primary focus of the annual meeting was the 4H Challenge Course, a team-building exercise lead by facilitators from Camp Long. After lunch, introductions and an icebreaker activity, participants embarked on the three hour Challenge Course. The annual meeting concluded with a visit to the future site of the Urban Forestry Commission Grove at Camp Long.



Key Theme from Survey Responses

Post-meeting, participants were sent a link to an online survey to review their experience. A total of twelve people responded to the eight question online survey. While individual responses are listed below, responses indicate several key themes:

- When asked if the meeting worked to strengthen the relationship between the IDT and the Commission, respondents unanimously responded: “YES”.
- There was strong response that while the Challenge Course was an excellent experience it was too long. Additionally, there was strong response that the activity should have been accessible to all.
- While the meeting format worked well to strengthen relationships between the IDT and the Commission, there was not a strong link to framing the activity as a means of “accomplishing the goals of the Urban Forest Stewardship Plan”.
- The Challenge Course facilitators did a great job encouraging interaction and building team rapport.

Suggestions for Improvement

- Include the Challenge Course as part of retreat agenda, but reserve time to discuss business items, the Urban Forest Stewardship Plan, and future goals for the IDT and Commission.
- Hosting a meeting between the IDT and the Commission more than once a year.
- Modify any Challenge Course-type activities to be more inclusive.

2014 Attendees:

Urban Forestry Commission: Tom Early, Donna Kostka, Joanna Nelson de Flores, Jeff Reibman, Erik Rundell, Peg Staeheli, and Steve Zemke.

Urban Forest Inter-departmental Team: Glen Allen, Seth Amrhein, David Bayard, Sarah Calvillo-Hoffman, Shane Dewald, Deb Heiden, Katie Gibbons, Jon Jainga, Darren Morgan, David Mutchler, Heidi Narte, Keiko Nungesser, Sandra Pinto de Bader, and Brent Schmidt.

