

# DISCOVERY PARK NEWS



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**West Point Light Station, wrapped in plastic and scaffolding for safe lead paint.**

## West Point Lighthouse Restoration Underway

**By Garrett Farrell**  
**Project Manager**

After weathering 128 Puget Sound winters, the West Point Light Station has temporarily taken cover.

The lighthouse, which became part of Discovery Park in 2004 under a federal act that allowed local governments to acquire surplus U.S. Coast Guard facilities, is currently under wraps during the first stage of its restoration. Opened in November 1881, the lighthouse was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1977.

Seattle Parks and Recreation selected BOLA Architecture and Planning to head the restoration effort in 2008, and BOLA retained Grulich Architecture and Planning to study the lighthouse's historic and existing condition. Completed in March 2009, Grulich's

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## Lighthouse

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Historic Structures Report (HSR), the essential first step in this and any similar preservation effort, found significant deterioration to the inside and outside of the lighthouse due to high moisture content within the structure as well as deterioration of the two light keepers' cottages on the property.

Many layers of lead paint hindered full assessment of moisture issues, so removal of exterior paint became the first priority for restoration. The parks department and its design team worked through summer 2009 to devise a plan to remove the coatings without damaging the building. Tests showed that this would take three applications of a water-based stripper, lots of hand-scraping, blasting with fine glass grit, and a wash down with low-pressure water. The department presented these findings and restoration specifications in such areas as masonry, plaster, metal, and wood work to the National Park Service (NPS) and received approval for exterior restoration in late summer 2009.



**Oldest sections required four applications.**

After NPS approval, Seattle Parks began lead paint removal in advance of public bidding for the restoration work. Crews erected scaffold, shrink-wrapped the building and began hand-stripping the exterior last September. Paint

removal took longer than expected because the oldest sections of the building required a fourth application of stripper and a second blast of glass grit and another wash down. Stripping was completed in late December 2009.

Bids for exterior restoration work opened in November, but the low bidder



**Lighthouse trail, summer 2007 (Mike Greenstein photo).**

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failed to meet requirements and was disqualified in December. The parks department then contacted and qualified the second low bidder, and exterior restoration is expected to begin soon and conclude within 60 days of starting.

After these repairs are complete, the lighthouse exterior will be refinished with a special mineral coating that will protect the lighthouse and allow moisture trapped inside the brick structure to escape. When refinished, it will be white with dark trim and a red roof. The design team will work with the NPS to identify proper colors.



**Light keeper's cottages will be restored later.**

Restoration of the lighthouse's lens and lens enclosure are not included in the first phase. After finishing this phase and removal of the scaffolding and wrap, the next focus will be on the window glazing and roofing around the lens. Two lens specialists visited the site in late 2009 and will provide quotes for lens cleaning and preservation.

Thanks to the efforts of Discovery Park staff member Anne Bentley and Seattle Parks representative Charles Ng, the project received \$300,000

(\$294,000 after fees) from Washington State Heritage Capital Grant funding in 2009. These funds will help complete the lighthouse work and start work on the light keepers' cottages if funds allow. While the cottage exteriors are scheduled to be evaluated this year, budgetary concerns dictate that lighthouse restoration be completed before starting work on the houses. In 2010, restoration efforts will continue on the roof, siding, exterior doors, and windows of the lighthouse.

For more information about West Point Light Station restoration, e-mail [garrett.farrell@seattle.gov](mailto:garrett.farrell@seattle.gov). For information about future programming at the lighthouse, e-mail [anne.bentley@seattle.gov](mailto:anne.bentley@seattle.gov). Look in future issues of *Discovery Park News* for notices of public meetings about the lighthouse scheduled to be held in spring 2010.

## Volunteer Opportunities at Discovery Park

Interested in helping to promote Discovery Park and the environmental programs it offers?

**Anne Bentley**, the park's Public Education Program Specialist, is looking for a volunteer to become a **Discovery Park Marketing Associate**. Duties would include entering program events in the public calendar for the city and the *Discovery Park News* and developing flyers to post in the park. Other tasks may present themselves in the future. Ideally, this

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## Volunteer

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volunteer would work at the park's Environmental Learning Center using the park's computers. It may become possible, however, to work off-site in the future. Please contact Anne at 206-386-9110 or [anne.bentley@seattle.gov](mailto:anne.bentley@seattle.gov) for more information.

Discovery Park is always looking for people to help with **habitat restoration**. In the **Adopt-an-Area** program, a person or a group of people restore a specific area of the



**Volunteers restore Discovery Park.**

park, learning to identify native and invasive plants; remove the invasive plants in their area, and plant native species to improve habitat. Contact Becca Fong at 206-615-1811 or at [becca.fong@seattle.gov](mailto:becca.fong@seattle.gov) for more information.

## Winter Events at Discovery Park

The Environmental Learning Programs winter brochure lists programs at all Seattle Environmental Learning Centers. Pick up one up at any ELC, or view it online at [www.seattle.gov/parks](http://www.seattle.gov/parks). (To see Discovery Park programs, click on Environmental Learning, then Discovery Park.) Note that some programs and talks were added after the brochure was published, so check at the ELCs and in *Discovery Park News* for the most current information. To register for programs online, click on the SPARC icon ([SPARC: Seattle Parks and Recreation Connection](#)) on the parks link above.

## The Wildlife in Our Lives Series

At the Discovery Park Environmental Learning Center



### **Bears of the North Cascades and Beyond**

Thursday, Feb. 18, 7-9 p.m., \$5 donation requested

This family-oriented presentation by Dennis Ryan of the Grizzly Bear Outreach Project (GBOP) will cover the history, biology, behavior, and current issues surrounding black bears and the small population of grizzly bears that live in Washington State.

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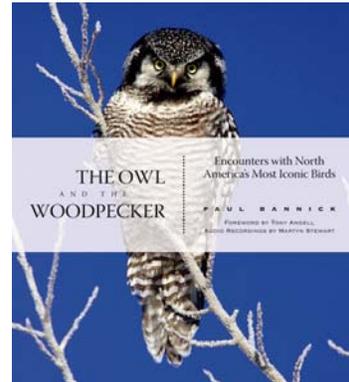
## Winter Events

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### **The Owl and the Woodpecker: Encounters With North America's Most Iconic Birds**

Thursday, March 18, 7–9 p.m., \$5 donation requested

Award-winning photographer Paul Bannick guides a visual journey to several Northwest habitats of several owl and woodpecker species. His talk looks at the way owls and woodpeckers define and enrich their habitat and how their life histories are intertwined.



### **From Backyards to the Cascade Crest: Cougar Ecology & Behavior in Washington**

Saturday, March 6, 3:30–5:30 p.m., \$5 donation requested

Join Brian Kertson, wildlife scientist with the Washington Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, for a late-afternoon presentation that will cover all facets of cougar ecology, behavior, and management as well as how to identify cougar signs in the field and tips on coexisting with cougars where you live and recreate.

## Other Park Programs

### **Full Moon Trek**

Friday, Feb. 27, 5:30–7:30 p.m., \$5 per person, age 8 and older

Experience Discovery Park from a different angle. Venture into a moonlit park to explore what makes our park special after dark. Please dress for the weather and bring a flashlight. Children must be accompanied by an adult. These walks tend to fill up, so pre-registering is recommended. Use course code #49160 to register on [SPARC](#).

### **Sharing Nature with Your Children – A Presentation for Adults**

Wednesday, March 10, 7–8:30p.m., \$7 per person

If you've ever had difficulty getting your kids to play outside and explore nature or take a hike with you, then join us for an evening of fun activities and nature tidbits that will get your kids involved. Included are tips on places to go and where to learn more about natural adventures in the area. Use course code #49168 to register on [SPARC](#).

### **Birding by Ear – Basics**

Saturday, March 20, 7:30–10:30a.m., \$10 per person, age 8 and older

Open up the world of birding by learning to identify birds by their songs and calls. Use course code #49157 to register on [SPARC](#).

## Upcoming Events

### **Living with Coyotes – A Presentation for Dogs and the Humans That Live with Them**

### **The Importance of Not Feeding Wildlife**

Dates to be determined. Watch your e-mail for updates.

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## Winter Events

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### Habitat Restoration Work Parties

#### Last Chance to Plant!

Saturday, Feb. 20, 1–4 p.m., age 5 and older

Last chance this spring to plant native species – make a difference while you can! Use course code #49165 to register on [SPARC](#).

#### Spring Cleanup of the Forest

Saturday, March 6, 1–4 p.m., age 5 and older

Remove invasive plants and protect native plants through the spring growing season. Use course code #49166 to register on [SPARC](#).

## Natural History Notes: Dawn of the Season

By Penny Rose

Discovery Park Naturalist

Mother Nature waits with baited breath through the gray of winter in anticipation of the energy and exuberance of spring. Throughout Discovery Park, visitors can discover the quiet changes from the dark of winter to the warmth and light of spring. This dawn of the season is an excellent time to enjoy the wonders that the park has to offer.

The beach remains wrapped in winter, wracked by strong tides and winds. Flocks of birds seeking the shelter and riches of Puget Sound bob among the waves. **Western**



**Yellow-rumped Warbler**

“whit....whit....whit” fill the gray skies with sound.

**Grebes, Horned Grebes, Greater Scaup** and **Scoters** abound just off West Point. **Pigeon Guillemots** in their winter white dive beneath the surf. A few **Sanderlings** skitter along the North Beach, survivors of hunts from **Merlins** and **Peregrines**. **Bufflehead** pop like corks from the waters of the North Beach wetlands. **Northern Shovelers** undergo their painfully ugly winter molt into their stunning breeding plumage in the shelter of these wetlands. The North Beach area is also alive with the sounds of a large wintering flock of **Yellow-rumped Warblers**. Their calls of

The forest is still filled with winter mixed feeding flocks. **Bushtits, Black-capped and Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Hutton’s Vireos, Ruby and Golden-crowned Kinglets** call softly in their groups, seeking food and protection from the many wintering Accipiters, such as **Sharp-shinned** and **Cooper’s Hawks**.

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## Natural History Notes

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Only the most alert visitors detect the namesake bird of this gray season, the **Winter Wren**, as they are excellent at hiding and incredible ventriloquists. Winter oddities and



Winter Wren

rarities continue to show up, such as a **Great Horned Owl**; her cedar roost revealed by raucous crows, she blinks sleepily in the pale winter light. A few visitors have been lucky enough to see a **Black-billed Magpie** briefly in the South Meadow and a **Red-naped Sapsucker** creating sap wells in a pine.

Stark white **snowberries** cling brightly to the barren twigs. The forest floor is littered with branches, twigs, and thousands of

minute **red alder** seeds, all reminders of the heavy winds and rain of winter. But closer examination makes an aware visitor smile with anticipation. The few minutes of extra daylight each day have coaxed the **skunk cabbage** from their muddy beds along the Wolf Tree Nature Trail, and **red alder** catkins are full and long, lending a pinkish hue to large stands in the 500 Area near the South parking lot. **Anna's Hummingbird** males are waging pitched battles over prime feeding territories, while the females have already begun building nests.

Scattered moments of sunshine fill the forest with the voices of **Song Sparrows** busily staking out territories for March nesting. **Indian plum**, **salmonberry**, and even a few **red flowering currant** buds are swelling and revealing a tiny bit of color. Within weeks they will burst forth to welcome **Rufous Hummingbirds** back from their winter migration.

Explore the park during this dawn season and revel in the hints and signs of spring to come while embracing the winter that remains.

## Ask Discovery Park

This new section of *Discovery Park News* is devoted specifically to you, our readers. If you have any questions about the park, here is the chance to ask. Send questions to [anne.bentley@seattle.gov](mailto:anne.bentley@seattle.gov), and Anne will direct selected questions to the appropriate staff person or park volunteer for the answer. Please include your name, phone number and the neighborhood where you live. To kick things off, we'll answer a couple of questions commonly asked at the front desk of the Environmental Learning Center.

### Can I drive to the beach?

**Anne Bentley, public education specialist for the park, answers:** Discovery Park is mainly a walking park. The mile and a half sidewalk to the beach is handicapped accessible, but it is mostly uphill coming back. On certain summer weekends, a shuttle van runs from the East parking lot (at the Environmental Learning Center) to the beach and back. A

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View from South Meadow in early spring (Mike Greenstein photo).

## Ask Discovery Park

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parking lot with eight spaces at the beach is reserved for people accompanied by young children, people who are 62 or older, or people who have some other physical reason that they cannot walk to the beach and back. So the short answer to this question is, “It depends.”

**Are any restrooms in the park open during the winter?**

**Eileen Justice, customer service specialist for the park, answers:** Restrooms in the Environmental Learning Center are open whenever the center is. External rest rooms (North and South parking lots, near tennis courts/playground, South Bluff) are open during park hours for most of the winter, except for short periods when it is going to freeze. On those occasions, plumbers shut them down so the pipes do not burst. The Hidden Valley restrooms are temporarily closed for repair.

## Discovery Park Discoveries

Mike Greenstein is the new volunteer editor of *Discovery Park News*. Mike, who has lived in Magnolia since 1999, is a freelance editor and writer who formerly edited weekly newspapers and the *Washington State Visitors Guide*. He and his wife, Heather Tully, have been Discovery Park Adopt-an-Area volunteers since 2004. Send newsletter comments to [mikegreenstein@aol.com](mailto:mikegreenstein@aol.com).



Newsletter editor

*Discovery Park News* will be published bi-monthly. Get each issue delivered to your inbox by going to

[www.seattle.gov/Parks/Environment/discovparkindex.htm](http://www.seattle.gov/Parks/Environment/discovparkindex.htm), scrolling down to the newsletter box and entering your e-mail address.

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