

DISCOVERY PARK NEWS

3801 Government Way, Seattle, WA 98199
<http://www.seattle.gov/Parks/Environment/discoverparkindex.htm>
(206) 386-4236 | discover@seattle.gov



June 2010

Volume 3, No. 3

A Ditch and Demolition on Tap This Summer

By Anne Bentley

If you know any young children who are fascinated by seeing heavy equipment up close and personal, now is the time to visit **Discovery Park**. Two large-scale projects are



Digging “the big ditch”: Sewer line repair and replacement starts at West Emerson and goes through the South Entrance to Discovery Park.

underway simultaneously:

Repair and replacement of the water and sewer lines that service the remaining military housing in the park, and demolition of the Capehart military housing.

Both are the responsibility of Forest City Military Communities (FCMC), a national real estate company that partners with the Navy to provide and manage military housing in the Northwest and other regions. Since both occur within Discovery Park, however, Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) is monitoring both projects.

The Big Ditch

The water and sewer line replacement (affectionately known among **Discovery Park** staff as the “big ditch”) is being completed in three sections. The first section includes the water and sewer lines in the south end of the park, from the West Emerson Street–43rd Avenue West intersection through the South Entrance and up the hill to the chapel and historic houses. Current visitors to the park have seen the backhoes and the wide swath they cut through the park along the route of these lines.

The South Entrance and South Parking Lot and the West Emerson–43rd Avenue intersection are scheduled to be closed to traffic while work is being done June 14 to June 17 (or potentially longer.)

continued on page 2

Summer Projects in Discovery Park

continued from page 1

The second section of the ditch, slightly west of the historic Officer's Row houses along Washington Avenue, is also for repair and replacement of sewer lines. Some of this work also takes place in front of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) radar dome—the large sphere perched above the east rise of the Parade Grounds.



The third section of ditch is for the repair and replacement of sewer lines serving the brick military housing on Montana Circle. A map of the entire project will be displayed in the [Discovery Park Environmental Learning Center](#).

Dig continues westward toward the chapel.

Although this project is not the responsibility of Seattle Parks and Recreation, SPR is involved with Forest City project managers to ensure that vegetation is preserved or removed and transplanted, and especially to ensure the safety of park visitors. SPR's tree and urban forestry specialty employees are working with the contractor when trees must be trimmed in order to allow machinery to pass.

The **Discovery Park** grounds crew and Adopt-an-Area stewards are also involved in this effort, salvaging plants in the ditch path, replacing removed turf with a wildflower mix, and placing barricades and signs around work sites and on trails. Please pay attention to signs in the park, which are placed near specific safety concerns. In addition, anyone interested in helping water salvaged plants during the summer can contact the [Discovery Park Environmental Learning Center](#).

Capehart to Crumble

Demolition of the one-story Capehart housing (built under the federal Capehart Act in the early 1950s) on South Utah Street, at the top of the hill to the beach and lighthouse, will allow the 22-acre area to be reclaimed as park land. Forest City is scheduled to tear down the housing this summer and transfer ownership to the city of Seattle



continued on page 3

Capehart demolition will begin after July 5.

Summer Projects in Discovery Park

continued from page 2

in October 2010.

All hazardous waste abatement is completed, and during June the fenced-in area is being used as a training site for emergency-services exercises. Up first is the Seattle Fire Department, which is training rookies and ladder companies there, using the buildings for smoke simulations (no actual burning takes place) and for places to practice cutting holes in roofs. There may be some water spraying as well.

Other agencies using the site include the Seattle office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Seattle SWAT, Seattle Bomb Squad, Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS), the Snohomish County office of the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), Navy Fire, and Navy Search and Rescue. Teams will practice activities such as breaking down doors and breaking windows to gain access to buildings. All training and simulations are expected to occur during daylight hours and be completed by July 5. Demolition will begin after that date.



Capehart housing will serve as a staging area for emergency services exercises in June.

This explains why all the traffic cones, huge trucks, backhoes, pavement cutters and construction fencing are in **Discovery Park** this summer. This season's special treasure hunt is finding a quiet place near the South Meadow on weekdays, or maybe having your toddler count the number of pieces of large equipment they can find in the park (just don't get too close to it!). The result of all this chaos, though, is that fall will usher in a large new piece of parkland right in the middle of the peninsula—another wonderful development (or undevelopment) in the history of **Discovery Park**.

If you have any questions or concerns during these projects, please contact the [Discovery Park Environmental Learning Center](#).

New Volunteer Opportunities

Database volunteers are needed for bird sighting record entry, No experience (with birds or databases) necessary. Training will be provided for this easy-to-learn computer program. If interested, please contact Penny Rose, penny.rose@seattle.gov.

A **digital photograph organizer** is also needed. **Discovery Park** is looking for a detail-oriented person who can organize all of our digital photographs so they can be easily found on our shared office hard drive. If interested, please contact Anne Bentley, anne.bentley@seattle.gov.

Summer Events at Discovery Park

The Environmental Learning Programs spring 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. (To see **Discovery Park** programs, click on Environmental Learning, then **Discovery Park**.) To register for programs online, click on the SPARC icon ([SPARC: Seattle Parks and Recreation Connection](#)) on the parks link above. Please note that unless otherwise specified, children must be accompanied by an adult.

Twilight Hike

Ages 8 and older

Come enjoy a naturalist-led hike through Discovery Park while the sun sets and the park atmosphere changes. Which animals are heading to bed? Which ones are just beginning to wake up? We'll explore the park for signs of these transitions. Use course code #53095 to register on SPARC. \$5 per person.

Friday, June 25 8:30 p.m.–10:30 p.m.

Family Low Tide Beach Walks

Ages 3 and older

Join Discovery Park naturalist staff as we explore the intertidal world of sea stars, moon snails, sea anemones and clams on our sandy South Beach. This walk is perfect for families with small children. Free

Saturday, June 26 Course code #53087
10 a.m.–12 p.m.

Sunday, July 11 Course code #56814
10 a.m.–12 p.m.

Sunday, July 25 Course code #56815
10 a.m.–12 p.m.

Exploring the Beach At Low Tide

Ages 6 and older

Some of the best low tides of the season! Learn how plants and animals are able to survive the tides. Search for moon snails, crabs, sea anemones, and more! Due to the long walk and rocky beach, this program is best suited to ages 6 and up. Dress for the weather and be sure to wear shoes that can get wet. Free

Saturday, June 26 Course code #53083 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Saturday, July 10 Course code #56812 9 a.m.–11 a.m.

Sunday, July 11 Course code #56813 9:30 a.m.–11:30 a.m.

Sunday, August 8 Course code #56816 8:30 a.m.–10:30 a.m.



continued on page 5

Summer Events at Discovery Park

continued from page 4

Snakes Alive!

Ages 8 and older

Discover reptiles and amphibians of the Pacific Northwest in their natural habitat with Nick Sutton, local zookeeper and explorer extraordinaire.

Adults \$8 and children \$6

Sunday, June 27 Course code #56810 1 p.m.–3 p.m.

Sunday, July 25 Course code #56811 1 p.m.–3 p.m.



Discovering Discovery Park: Military Fort to City Park

Ages 12 and older

Explore the history of the land now known as **Discovery Park**. Join a guided metaphorical dig into the history of Fort Lawton and how it

became **Discovery Park**. What kinds of stories will be found beneath the military history? What was the importance of this land during those times? Please be prepared to leave the Discovery Park Environmental Learning Center promptly at 1 p.m. to tour the park and search for clues to the past. Free

Sunday, June 27 Course code #53096 1 p.m.–3 p.m.

Twilight Adventures in the New Moon

A Special Event at Carkeek Park

The *Twilight* story series is a love story with nature as the backdrop. It is nature, though, that gives *Twilight* its exciting edge. Hunt among the trees in the new moon as the true nature in *Twilight* is revealed. This is a team adventure that calls for you to get your wolf pack together. Is it a scavenger hunt? Maybe. Is it a baseball game in the woods? Could be. Will fire be involved? More than likely. Wolves and bats will definitely have a presence.

continued on page 6

Summer Events at Discovery Park

continued from page 5

Bring a team of 5 or build a team when you arrive. Youth 16 and younger bring at least one adult with your team to await you at the central depot.

Use course code #56808 to register. **\$5 per person donation requested.**

Saturday, August 14 6 p.m.–10 p.m.

Tot Treks

Ages 2–3

Adults– share nature with your children! In a local park where the grass and ferns grow, there is a special place for you and a child to explore. Look beneath the tall, old trees to discover life in the park and make new friends. \$7 for each child/adult and \$3.50 for each additional person. All tot treks take place 10:30 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

Sand and Sea

Tidepool Travels

Wed, June 23 Course code #56818 Wed, August 11 Course code #56822

Sat, July 10 Course code #56819 Sat, August 21 Course code #56823

Froggy Frolic

Bug Safari

Wed, July 21 Course code #56820 Wed, August 25 Course code #56824

Sat, July 31 Course code #56821 Sat, August 28 Course code #56826

Bees, Bugs, and Berries

Sat, Sept 11 Course code #56827

Wed, Sept 15 Course code #56828

West Seattle Wildlife Outing

Ages 50 and older

Experience parks along Longfellow Creek, the Puget Sound, and the Duwamish River that are beautiful to visit and great for watching wildlife. Discover some of Seattle's summer visitors and other animals that are here year-round. Bring binoculars if you have them. This program involves climbing in and out of a van at several stops and walking short distances at each stop. We travel from the **Discovery Park Environmental Learning Center** by van and return to the ELC at noon. \$5 per person. Course code #58201

Thursday, July 15 9 a.m.–12 p.m.

continued on page 7

Summer Events at Discovery Park

continued from page 6

Summer at the Beach

Ages 50 and older

Experience the sandy South Beach at **Discovery Park** during a low tide. Search for some intertidal animals; enjoy a walk along the sand with views of the Puget Sound; share some stories about West Point Light Station and the early years of Seattle. \$3 per person. Course code #58200

Thursday, August 19 10 a.m.–12 p.m.

Ballard Wildlife Outing

Ages 50 and older

Experience some parks along the Lake Washington Ship Canal and the Puget Sound that are beautiful to visit and great for watching wildlife. Discover how animals make the transition between the seasons. Bring binoculars if you have them. This program involves climbing in and out of the van at several stops and walking short distances at each stop. Travel from the **Discovery Park Environmental Learning Center** by van and return to the ELC at noon. **\$5 per person.** Course code #58199

Thursday, Sept 16 10 a.m.–12 p.m.

Discovery Park Discoveries

ELC, Education Programs Safe–For Now

Discovery Park Environmental Learning Center (ELC) will stay open throughout 2010. **Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR)** had to make \$2.5 million of midyear reductions in order to help with the \$12 million shortfall in the city budget, but when **Mayor Mike McGinn** announced his midyear cuts, the ELC was not on the list.

The mayor and acting Parks Superintendent Christopher Williams worked hard to come up with cuts that did not close facilities. Some of the savings came from not filling positions in grounds maintenance and the superintendent's office, not opening some wading pools, cutting back on utility costs and other measures.

While the **Discovery Park ELC** made it through this phase of cuts, the situation for 2011 will be more serious. The mayor's proposed 2011 budget is scheduled to be presented to the City Council on Sept. 27, after which the council will hold another round of budget hearings. The **Discovery Park** staff appreciates all the support park patrons have shown for keeping the ELC open, keeping a grounds crew on site, and maintaining environmental education programs.

continued on page 8

Discovery Park Discoveries

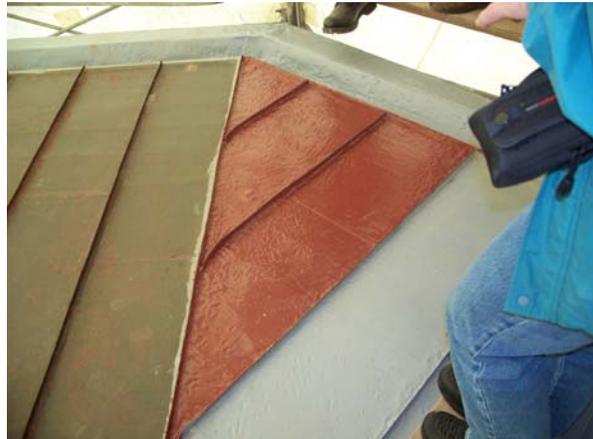
continued from page 7

Lighthouse Work Continues

Cherry Street Builders and painting contractor **Long Painting** continue to make slow progress at the **West Point Lighthouse**, under restoration since fall 2009. The good news is that the wrapping came off on June 16, so it won't look shrink-wrapped this summer.

Work continues, inside and out. Moisture within the walls had soaked the masonry and wood, and new coatings cannot be applied until the wood dries. The contractor is using heat and dehumidifiers to lower moisture levels, but moisture content on low levels of the exterior walls is still high.

The deck around the base of the lighthouse lantern was also soaking wet, adding more time to the project. Fortunately, an oilcloth layer below the deck had trapped and held the water, protecting the original timber deck underneath. Water dripped through only in a few places, and now that plywood has been removed, a new deck and coating can go in its place to keep things dry.



Primer (left) and top coat (right) applied to section of lighthouse's copper roof.

Up on the copper roof, paint has been stripped and many damaged areas repaired. **Coppersmith Doug French (a.k.a. "the Ballard Tin Man")** rebuilt sections and patched holes in others. In June, coating work is scheduled for the roof, exterior wood and metal. The primer is gray, but the top coat on the roof and trim will be red and green.

Beach Shuttle Returns for Summer

Van service between the **Discovery Park Environmental Learning Center** and the beach at West Point runs every Saturday and Sunday afternoon, noon to 4:15 p.m., June 19 through Aug. 27. There will be no shuttle service July 3, July 4, July 31 and Aug. 1.

Indian Days Pow Wow Celebrates Milestones

[United Indians of All Tribes Foundation](#) will commemorate two historic milestones at its [Seafair Indian Days Pow Wow](#) July 16-18, at the [Daybreak Star Indian Cultural Center](#) at the northern end of **Discovery Park**: the 40th anniversary of the takeover at Fort Lawton by Native activists that led to the founding of the organization, and the 25th anniversary of the annual pow wow itself. The three-day cultural celebration, featuring contest dancing and drumming, traditional Native crafts and foods and other intertribal exhibits, is one of the largest Native American pow wows in the Pacific Northwest.



Pow Wow dance contest, July 16-18.

Natural History Notes: Come to Your Senses

By Penny Rose, Discovery Park Naturalist

A cacophony of sound filled the forest. Robins and crows were going mad with alarm and cries of distress. Following this chorus of sound along the North Loop Trail, I watched amazed as a barred owl flew into a maple just feet from the trail with a robin grasped in its talons. Convinced that the owl would only be hunting during the day to feed its young, I remained stationary, waiting and watching. Surely it would take the



Hairy woodpecker adults gather insects for their greedy young.

streaming by without any inkling of the life-and-death drama that surrounded them. Families taking a stroll, a hiking group socializing, joggers exercising and dog walkers enjoying their canine company were all oblivious to the young woodpeckers in the snag, the waves of Wilson's warblers filling the canopy, the barred owl's brunch, all the fringe-cup blooming trailside and many other wonders of the natural world surrounding them. It is much like choosing a fine dining establishment to enjoy the ambiance, drinking in the fine aroma and then not partaking of the excellent cuisine.

prey to its nest. I gazed as it slowly plucked and fed upon this huge meal. Bit by bit, the robin disappeared, until the last foot slid out of sight. Apparently today's meal was for adults only, but still I waited until the owl cleaned its beak against a branch, roused its feathers and settled in for a mid-morning nap.

Meanwhile, tiny begging sounds coming from the forest on the south side of the trail caught my attention. Who was so hungry? Following the cries, looking for movement, I discovered a nest filled with hairy woodpecker young. The adults were working frantically, carrying insects back to the cavity in a snag to stuff their greedy young with essential protein.

All in all, it was one fantastic moment in **Discovery Park**—but the most remarkable thing about the whole experience was watching wave after wave of park visitors

continued on page 10

Natural History Notes

continued from page 9

The next time you visit **Discovery Park**, challenge yourself to truly “discover” it. Take a moment to use your senses and get in touch with this urban jewel. As city dwellers, our senses have been dulled in order to survive the continual onslaught of sights, sounds and smells of our harried lives. In order to get back in touch with our senses and truly experience the natural world, a focused moment can often help.

Choose a quiet place in **Discovery Park** such as the Wolf Tree Nature Trail. Sit and relax on a bench and take a moment to check in with your senses. How many different birds can you see and hear? Realize how many shades of greens exist in a forest habitat. Lean down and squeeze the leaf of a bleeding heart, then smell the light scent of powdered donuts. Run your hand gently over the bark of a cedar, then contrast that with the gnarled, rough, thick bark of the Douglas fir.

For your next senses visit, choose a different habitat. The beach at low tide is filled with ample opportunities. Crouch quietly next to a tide pool, and as if by magic a new world will appear. The tiny legs of the barnacles are kicking away, bringing food into the protective shell. Tidepool sculpins, completely camouflaged when still, begin to swim and reveal their locations. Shells suddenly become hermit crabs skittering among the rocks. Gently touch an anemone and marvel at its soft fragility. Pet a sea star and discover its rough outer layer.

If discovering these sensory wonders has become too much of a stranger, join a naturalist-led walk or class. These guides will awaken your senses and show you new ways to experience the park. Perhaps you will be as fortunate as participants in a recent Birding by Ear class: Walking through the park, we were all alerted to the presence of an Anna’s hummingbird by her ticking sounds and rapid movements. Pausing our walk, we watched as she gathered a spider’s web and a moment later took the silk back to her nest, barely 5 feet over the loop trail. Once your senses are awakened, such magic awaits.



Bleeding heart: Crushed leaves carry the scent of donuts.

Discovery Park News Staff

Writers: Anne Bentley, Penny Rose, Grant Farrell

Editor: Mike Greenstein, mikegreenstein@aol.com, www.mikegreenstein.com