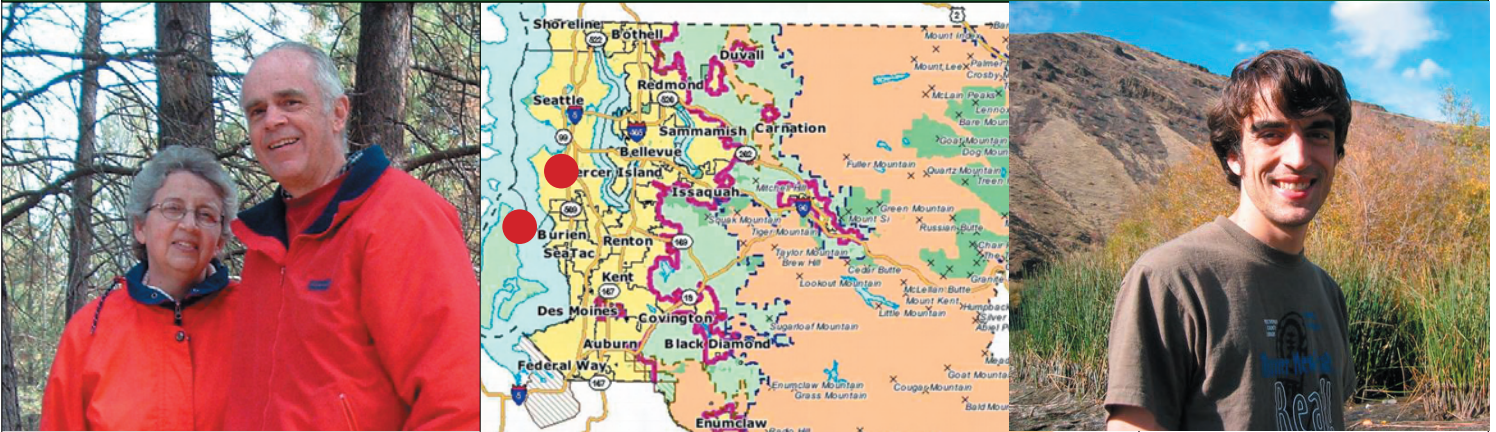


URBAN RURAL CONNECTIONS – A WHOLE KING COUNTY



Facing Each Other: The Fautleroy-Vashon Ferry Landings

Judy Pickens, Fautleroy Creek Neighbor

In 1989, when my husband, Phil Sweetland, and I became stewards of Fautleroy Creek, we thought we were saying “yes” to helping restore a small urban stream. Little did we know that we were about to step knee-deep into improving quality of life here and beyond.

One clue was a social-service agency’s interest in using creek projects to help get lives back on track. In what seemed like the blink of an eye, we were putting shovels in the hands of at-risk teens. Several summer projects later, Phil’s idea to pair an EarthCorps crew with a teen crew took root, and EarthCorps has been using this mentor model ever since.

Another clue was a teacher’s request to release salmon here. In short order, I was using funds from the former Metro to initiate a streamside education program that now engages 400 elementary students a year. Dozens of them - some as young as kindergarten - have had the rare opportunity to do real research that generates valuable data for our watershed council and agency partners.

Crewmembers from around the country and world have trained here many times over the past 15 years. As often as possible, we find ways for them to interact with community residents. Whether on the street, at a salmon release, or streamside watching spawners, they often tell me what an asset the creek is to the neighborhood.

I can’t think of an investment with a higher return.



Rob Anderson-Earth Corps, Vashon Island

One of my first projects with EarthCorps was building a set of box steps in Wingehaven Park near the ferry landing on Vashon Island. There was a small path that had been made by people’s dogs cutting a corner and running straight down the hill into the park.

We spent a week on the island, putting in steps to make it a formal trail and keep the hillside from eroding away. The steps were near the road, at the top of the park, and the trail continues down to the water. The property was formerly a fancy estate on the beach with interesting ornamental trees and landscaping.

It’s nice that the public can now use it to get to the water and look across toward West Seattle. We transplanted ferns and other plants around the steps so that people would stay on the trail and not damage the forest. We made “survival rings” on trees throughout the forest to kill the English ivy that was climbing up them and improve forest health.

We were working in the wintertime and it was snowing for most of one day, but there were still lots of people out walking their dogs and they were excited to see the work we were doing. Kevin Bacon walked past - he was playing a concert that evening on the island and was out walking dogs with some friends! A few days later and he could have been the first person to walk down our steps.

