



The Occidental Park renovation includes the installation of bocce ball courts.

# PRO PARKS

## Report to Citizens

### 2007 Annual Newsletter Pro Parks Levy

#### Mayor's Message

The Pro Parks Levy preserves and enhances important public spaces by allowing us to acquire and develop new parks, improve existing ones, increase maintenance, and offer innovative programming.

In the past year, the Levy partially funded the restoration of Occidental Park. The renovated park is like a jewel that's been polished, with throngs of people attending the grand opening celebration. Programming and amenities, including outdoor movies, Art in the Park Presented by Starbucks, bocce ball courts, and chess tables, continue to bring people into the park.

Some of our most exciting projects in the past year have focused on sustainability. The new Ross Shelterhouse has Seattle Parks' first green roof. Native grasses and plants planted on the building's roof help reduce stormwater runoff.

We opened Northgate Park adjacent to the new Northgate Community Center and Northgate Branch Library. This new park has a unique drainage system that collects water from the park, community center, library, and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, storing it for use as irrigation in the dry months.

The department's Levy-funded Environmental Stewardship group helped Parks trim paper use by 21 percent in 2006, in keeping with my Paper Cuts initiative to reduce paper use citywide.

We have many more great parks and programs to bring you in the last two years of the Levy.

I look forward to seeing you at the next Parks opening.

Greg Nickels  
Mayor, City of Seattle



# Managing the Levy

## Completed projects in 2006

1. Columbia Park
2. Chief Sealth Trail
3. Cottage Grove Park (formerly Brandon Mini Park)
4. Greg Davis Park
5. John C. Little Sr. Park
6. Maple Leaf Community Garden\*
7. Martin Luther King Jr. Park
8. Montlake Community Center
9. Northgate Park
10. Northlake Park (formerly 7th Avenue NE Street End)
11. Olympic Sculpture Park (Lower Queen Anne pedestrian connections)
12. Pinehurst Pocket Park\*
13. Occidental Park Improvements (Pioneer Square Area Parks)
14. Powell Barnett Park\*
15. Puget Boulevard Commons
16. Ravenna Creek daylighting at Ravenna Park
17. Ross Shelterhouse
18. Van Asselt play area\*
19. West Seattle Stadium

The Levy includes \$102 million over its eight-year life for 95 named projects that will improve parks and park facilities, create new parks on undeveloped sites, restore wetlands, enhance buildings, and improve ballfields and trails. During the first six years of the Levy, Seattle Parks has started 88 of the 95 named development projects, and completed 64. Our projects are on schedule and within budget.

\* Indicates an Opportunity Fund project. The Pro Parks Levy Opportunity Fund was a \$10 million fund allocated in two funding rounds that provided money to acquire and develop parks nominated by the community.

## Superintendent's Message

The Pro Parks Levy continues to add value to parks throughout the city. Every year, the Levy supports our mission to “be good stewards of the environment, and to provide safe and welcoming opportunities to play, learn, contemplate and build community.”

Through the Levy, we’ve acquired 41 new acres of open space, and completed 75 development projects, including projects named in the Levy and those nominated by the community.

New open spaces include the acquisition of property in the Kiwanis Ravine — Seattle’s largest great blue heron nesting colony and properties that preserve acreage along the Thornton and Mapes creeks, among others.

Park development continues to add important amenities to our neighborhoods. In Ballard, the new Ballard Commons Park features the first skate bowl built and managed by Seattle Parks and Recreation. In Northgate, community members now enjoy the new Maple Leaf Community Garden and Northgate Park.

We’ve also been enhancing the quality of the parks and programs that we offer. In 2006, we taught 1,406 third and fourth graders to swim, expanding the program this year to include home-schooled and privately taught children.

We reached out to more than 6,700 teens through our Teen Development Leader program, helping kids develop life skills and leadership abilities.

Our facilities are tidier than ever with enhanced cleaning schedules at peak-use bathrooms throughout the City, and more frequent pool and community center cleanings.

The breadth of the programs supported by the Levy is so great that no matter where you live in Seattle, it has touched your community.



Betty Jean “B.J.” Brooks  
Interim Superintendent

## Mayor Nickels' priorities for Seattle

-  Get Seattle moving
-  Keep our neighborhoods safe
-  Create jobs and opportunity for all
-  Build strong families and healthy communities



## The Big Picture: A Funding Overview

For this Levy, funds are collected and expenditures are made every year throughout its eight-year life. Amounts listed in millions of dollars.

### Acquisition

Neighborhood Park . . . . .	\$16.0
Greenspace . . . . .	\$10.0
<b>Total:</b> . . . . .	<b>\$26.0</b>

### Development

Neighborhood Parks . . . . .	\$52.8
Major Neighborhood Parks . . . . .	\$23.1
Playfields and Facilities . . . . .	\$17.9
Trails . . . . .	\$9.0
<b>Total</b> . . . . .	<b>\$102.8</b>

### Acquisition and Development Opportunity Fund. . . . . \$10.0

### Environmental Stewardship, Maintenance and Programming

New Park/Green Space Maintenance . . . . .	\$7.6
Environment Stewardship . . . . .	\$9.7
Enhanced Park and Facility Maintenance . . . . .	\$5.3
Recreational Programming . . . . .	\$16.9
Zoo Programming . . . . .	\$21.8
<b>Total</b> . . . . .	<b>\$61.3</b>

### Use of Funds Total . . . . . \$200.2

### Projected Funding Sources

Levy Proceeds . . . . .	\$198.2
Interest Earnings . . . . .	\$2.0



# Serving our communities

*Children participate in the Levy-funded Forest Explorers program at Woodland Park Zoo.*



## Woodland Park Zoo

The Pro Parks Levy is essential to Woodland Park Zoo, funding a number of vital programs, projects and people in 2006.

The Levy provided free transportation and admission to the zoo to more than 6,500 low-income children via the School-to-Zoo program. Levy funds also supported educational programs for school children of all ages. Programs such as Forest Explorers, Wild Wise and Save Our Amazing Raptors (SOAR) reached more than 10,500 children.

The Levy also provided staffing for on-grounds public programs, educational program animals and the Contact Area in the zoo's Family Farm.

The new Zoomazium complex houses the Levy-funded, teen-based Zoo Corps and served more than 325,000 visitors. A Levy-funded Information Technology position also developed and maintained Zoomazium's many high-tech features.

In addition, the Levy funded new interpretive signs for the nocturnal exhibit, an overall facilities assessment at the zoo, and critical staff positions in animal management and security.

The Pro Parks Levy funds programming at Woodland Park Zoo and within Seattle Parks and Recreation. It supports and maintains an Enhanced Maintenance program and an Environmental Stewardship program.

These programs are aimed at improving awareness of the environment and our role helping reduce the impacts of climate change, expanding or enhancing park maintenance, and offering valuable life-skills education or community-enhancing recreation.

## Environmental Stewardship

### *Programming and outreach*

The Environmental Stewardship Unit works to change the internal culture and business practices of Seattle Parks and Recreation to be more environmentally responsible. The unit also works closely with our community centers and environmental learning centers to ensure environmental education is available to all youth and families in Seattle.

In 2006, the unit led Parks staff to reduce overall paper use by 21 percent and provided external education opportunities for citizens. This unit led the department through the development of a Strategic Utility Conservation Plan, which increased recycling efforts and elevated environmental stewardship-focused decision making in the field.

Other successes include the **Naturalist program**, which provided education services for the public at Carkeek and Seward Parks. More than 1,350 people participated in environmentally focused classes and tours.

### *Asset management and maintenance*

Several crews are funded by the Pro Parks Levy. Their goal is to clean up and restore natural park areas and urban forests, and to provide supplemental maintenance to high-use athletic fields.

In 2006, the **Tree Maintenance** crew worked with more than 975 trees to restore balance to the urban forest, which was a 61 percent increase over the previous

year. This unit played an exceptional and significant role in cleanup and maintenance following the December 14, 2006 storm.

The **Natural Area Crew** led 71 volunteer projects, which restored 12 acres of park space and added 1,200 new native plants to our parks. More than 4,800 volunteer hours of service show a 60 percent increase over the previous year.

The **Landscape and Athletic Fields** crews completed 49 athletic field enhancement projects, 119 landscape enhancement projects and 22 volunteer projects.



*The leadership provided by the Levy-funded Environmental Stewardship group resulted in the reduction of paper use in Seattle Parks by 21 percent. That amounts to 70 tons of paper, which avoids 125.4 tons of Greenhouse Gas Emissions (CO2 equivalent).*



# Serving our communities

## Enhanced Maintenance

The Pro Parks Levy funds more and better maintenance for our parks and facilities.

The **Peak Use Maintenance** program provided direct support for 158 special events while focusing on picking up more litter and garbage, doing more pressure washing, and taking on beach fire oversight.

The **Comfort Station Cleaning** program visited 87 comfort stations for a second cleaning during the peak use season.

The **Cleaner Pools** program provided more than 4,000 hours of supplemental cleaning with most time directed to cleaning and maintaining swimming pools, as well as 700 hours in support of fountains, water spray and wading pools.

The **Cleaner Community Centers** program restructured itself to create a roving “Clean Team” crew that is better able to meet the varied demands of 24 recreation centers, focusing cleaning efforts where they are most needed.



*Levy-funded pool maintenance staff clean the pool deck, locker rooms, windows, family changing rooms, under bleachers, bleacher seating and lobbies.*

## Recreation Programs

Recreation programs funded by the Pro Parks Levy are aimed at providing a better quality of life for people who live in Seattle with a focus on the City’s most vulnerable populations, including children and seniors.

The **Teen Development** program provided successful outreach to more than 6,700 teens in 2006, offering programs and strategies that increase development of life skills and leadership.

The **Kids Program Access** supported low-income families by providing financial assistance to more than 40 needy children through scholarships for before and after school care. Every childcare program in our system had eligible children who received benefits from the program, with the majority of scholarships given out in the southeast sector.

The **Youth/Teen Development Fund** gives Levy-funded Teen Development Leaders an opportunity to expand services, programs, events and activities for teens through partnerships with the community. In the past year, the Levy has provided grants totaling \$153,500, with matching contributions of more than \$180,000.

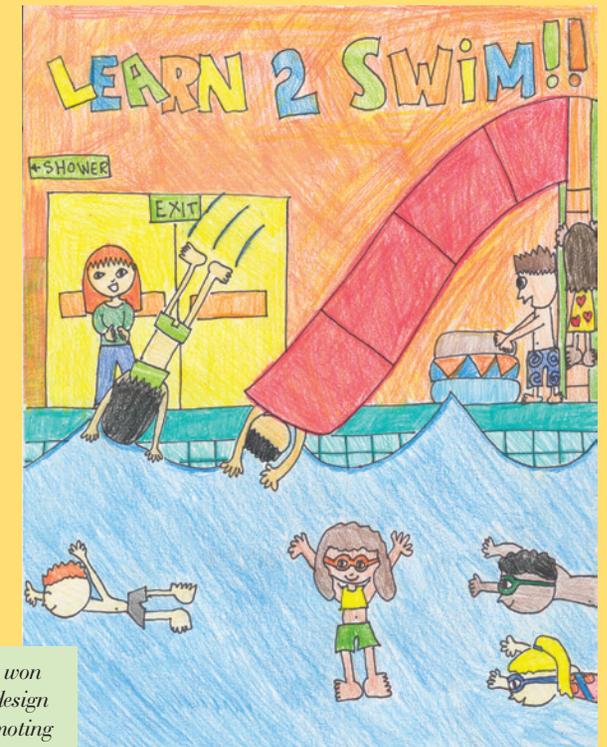
**Youth Transportation** assures children have access to vans, buses, ferries and trains to visit parks, attend events and participate in field trips. The program funded more than 19,000 transports in 2006, plus 180 field trips for 24 community centers during school breaks.

Levy funding for **Wading Pools** provided almost 80 extra days of operation at 10 sites, and extra hours of operation at five community center sites. In 2006, daily

attendance at the wading pools was nearly double of the previous year.

In partnership with Seattle Public Schools, the **Learn to Swim** program provides free instruction for children in third and fourth grades.

The **Senior Adult** program worked to improve and increase programming for adults over the age of 50 in targeted geographic areas. The program offered 289 activities with more than 5,600 individuals enrolled.



*Melissa Carter won the contest to design the poster promoting the Learn to Swim program.*



# Adding to the legacy

## Seattle Parks Foundation

The Seattle Parks Foundation is a private non-profit that supports the Pro Parks Levy and Seattle Parks and Recreation by working to increase private donations to Parks projects.

In the five years since it was founded, private donations and grants have enabled Seattle Parks Foundation and community partners to complete 18 park projects, including four brand new parks, nine improvement projects, and three restorations of historic park features.

Notably, the Foundation is working to help make the new Lake Union Park a reality. The Seattle Parks Foundation has launched a \$20 million capital campaign to develop the park, which will augment \$5 million in Pro Parks Levy funds, and \$4.6 million in City funds. To date, the Foundation has raised more than \$16 million in private funds.

## Acquiring new parks

A key focus of the Levy is purchasing land for new parks and preserving green space and wildlife habitat.

To date, 41 acres have been acquired, and the Levy has leveraged \$21 million in additional funds for park acquisition. The following properties were purchased in in 2006:

-  Thornton Creek: an acre of creek frontage in northeast Seattle
-  East Duwamish Greenbelt: .3-acre site in southeast Seattle
-  Kubota Garden: .5-acre along Mapes Creek, which flows through the garden
-  St. Mark's Greenbelt: .3-acre along the Blaine Street public stairs on Capitol Hill
-  Duwamish Head Greenbelt: .3-acre along Admiral Way in West Seattle
-  International District/Chinatown Community Center: additional space for a new fitness room
-  Morgan Junction: .2-acre for a new park in West Seattle

*Volunteers research the number of salmon on Parks property in Thornton Creek. Photo credit: Jay Anema*



*The design for the Columbia Park renovation included solar-powered lighted blue tiles as a reminder of the creek that once ran through the park.*

## Art in the parks

Part of the lasting legacy of the Levy is new art throughout the City. Art in the parks includes everything from projects by professional artists implemented through the Mayor's Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs to artfully designed landscapes to community-driven art, such as tiles made by children and installed at playgrounds.

Art administered by the Mayor's Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs is made possible through the 1% for Art program.

The mission of Seattle's Public Art Program is to integrate artworks and the ideas of artists into a variety of public settings. Artworks commissioned through the program are intended to be an expression of our time, displayed in spaces accessible to community members as they participate in City-related activity and engage in public life.

Check out a park near you to enjoy some public art.



# Partnering with the community

Since the start of the Levy, Seattle Parks and Recreation has worked to engage the community in the decision-making processes that have led to project implementation.

Parks staff are focused on conducting fair, thoughtful and balanced involvement. Partnerships with the community are integral to the success of the Levy. Our processes focus on answering the needs of the community, staying within our allocated budget and schedule, and implementing sustainable features whenever possible.

To date, we have compiled a database of more than 12,600 individuals who have participated in our public processes. We have conducted public involvement on 117 projects.

Inclusiveness is a key tenet of the plans. Parks staff have worked with communities to translate project materials into languages other than English in an effort to bring immigrants and non-native English speakers into the process.

In addition, at the beginning of the Levy, Parks established the Pro Parks Levy Oversight Committee. The committee is a group of volunteers who advise the Superintendent, Mayor and City Council on issues related to Levy fund expenditures. The Committee meets regularly to:

-  Advise on expenditures and allocations for each budget year.
-  Review expenditures of Levy proceeds and interest earnings.
-  Provide annual reports to the Mayor and City Council on progress of expenditures and prepare a mid-point report to Seattle citizens.
-  Provide a final report at the end of the eight-year levy cycle detailing accomplishments and making recommendations for future funding for parks, recreation, open space, boulevards, trails, athletic fields, Woodland Park Zoo and neighborhood park development.



*Sistah 2 Sistah performed at the Delridge Parks grand opening. The group performed in the Meditation Garden, which was funded in part by the King County Chemical Dependency Board.*

## Kudos

### *On the Ravenna Creek Daylighting project:*

I've lived here 15 years on the Ravenna Ravine. I've never seen wildlife like this — an eagle; the crows are going bananas; there are two ruffed grouses in my yard. It's very exciting. There are lots more birds than I can ever remember. There are very persistent northern flickers and bushtits. It is amazing, and I think it's because of the creek, which has fish in it! Thanks to everyone who had a hand in this project.

Molly Walton  
Ravenna resident

**Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor, City of Seattle**

**Betty Jean "B.J." Brooks, Interim Superintendent, Seattle Parks and Recreation**

**Erin Devoto, Director, Parks Planning and Development**

**Donald Harris, Manager, Parks Acquisition**

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