

## watershed stewardship



*Stewards learn restoration planting techniques with EarthCorps.*

*Photo: T. Zimmerman*

### Program Goals:

Increase public awareness of the value of healthy watersheds and natural systems.

Support citizen volunteers in their efforts to bring natural resource information to their communities.

Educate, train, and empower stewards as community leaders and educators.

### Program Snapshot:

Over 1,700 volunteer hours and 1,010 contacts were reported by active Stewards in 2009.

Active Stewards are volunteering throughout western King County, from Algona to Kirkland.

**Situation:** Ever-increasing urbanization coupled with the many impacts imposed by a growing population is challenging the integrity of Puget Sound-area watersheds. These impacts include reduced habitat quantity and quality for wildlife, degraded water quality in our streams and rivers, and reduced natural functioning of valuable landscape features such as groundwater recharge by wetlands. Agency personnel actions and regulations alone will not solve these challenges. Increased involvement by citizens in educating the community will be needed to restore and maintain our area watersheds.

**Program Description:** In an effort to meet this need, the WSU Extension Watershed Stewardship Program was created to promote a stewardship ethic towards our land and water resources among rural and urban residents of King County. The first Watershed Stewardship Volunteer Training (known then as Land/Water Stewardship) was held in 1990 and was designed to educate and provide tools to volunteers who were then able to reach out to their communities with a message of stewardship. Since that time, in addition to several short-courses and public conferences, the volunteer training has continued each year and has resulted in an ever-growing group (now nearly 300 strong) of skilled volunteer educators promoting stewardship and providing leadership in King County.

**Program Legacy:** The final Extension Watershed Steward new steward training took place in spring of 2008 and, due to budget limitations, the program was discontinued in spring 2009. Though staff support for volunteers will no longer be provided and no new training will be offered, Extension Watershed Stewards continue to give of their time and expertise to improve the health of the watersheds we live within. The final call for volunteer hours reports yielded over **1,700 volunteer hours reported and 1,010 reported contacts made with members of the public for the first half of 2009**. Further reports will not be collected but no doubt countless hours will continue to be spent restoring our riparian areas, teaching our children about salmon, and protecting our nearshore habitats, among many other activities. Though they no longer report to WSU Extension, Extension Watershed Stewards continue to make lasting impacts.

### 2009 Mid-Year Program Accomplishments

- Stewards have received local acclaim for their projects and class offerings this year. Already stewards have been asked back to teach repeat classes in the community due to their popularity with participants and full registrations.
- Stewards have expanded their contacts and partners to state and local government agencies, and have signed agreements for community based partnerships to occur over the next several years.



*Short course attendees work on a restoration planting project in Seattle.*

*Photo: EarthCorps*



*2008 Stewards learn soil testing in local wetlands.*

*Photo: T. Zimmerman*



*2008 stewards discover local rivers and salmon.*

*Photo: T. Zimmerman*

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## 2009 Finding Funding Workshop

On March 5<sup>th</sup>, we hosted a Finding Funding Workshop especially for Stewards at the Redmond Regional Library. Jeanette Privat, Resource Specialist with the Philanthropy Center, taught the workshop. With a small audience, Jeanette was able to answer more specific questions on funding for particular projects and give stewards a tour of the library resources available, including the four databases to search for funding.

### Rave Reviews for the Finding Funding Workshop

*"The whole thing was excellent. Enjoyed the presenter and the content very much."*

*"Finding the Non Profit Resource Center and how readily available access to finding grants and information to approach funders through the databases was very useful"*

*"Jeanette provided clear and concise information that was easily understandable (with her packet) and was great to show us how to access the web pages and databases."*

## Stewards Make a Difference

*Extension Watershed Stewards come from all walks of life and contribute to their communities in a wide variety of ways. Below is a sampling of volunteer impacts.*

- Many Stewards have a passion for civic engagement. The Executive Directors of several local non-profit organizations are past graduates of the Extension Watershed Stewardship Program including Seattle Tilth (former E.D. as of 2008), Friends of the Cedar River Watershed (both current and former E.D.'s are graduates), The Nature Consortium, and the Black River Watershed Alliance. Even the Mayor of Burien is a Steward. Stewards have also shown their leadership skills by serving on numerous non-profit boards of directors, citizen advisory boards, Friends and Sustainable city groups.

- Independently leading and partnering in habitat restoration and monitoring projects are steward specialties. In 2009, stewards worked on projects in Redmond, Woodinville, Maple Valley, Renton, Burien, Des Moines, Normandy Park, and the Seattle neighborhoods of Ravenna, Maple Leaf, Roosevelt, and Magnuson. They have also worked along the Sammamish River, Totem Lake, Lewis Creek, the Raging River, the Black River, the Cedar River, Miller and Walker Creeks, Clark Lake, and the Green River.

- Stewards deliver outreach programs in schools and local communities, especially in Burien, Renton, Kirkland, Seattle, and outdoors along the Black River, Cedar River, and Puget Sound Shoreline.