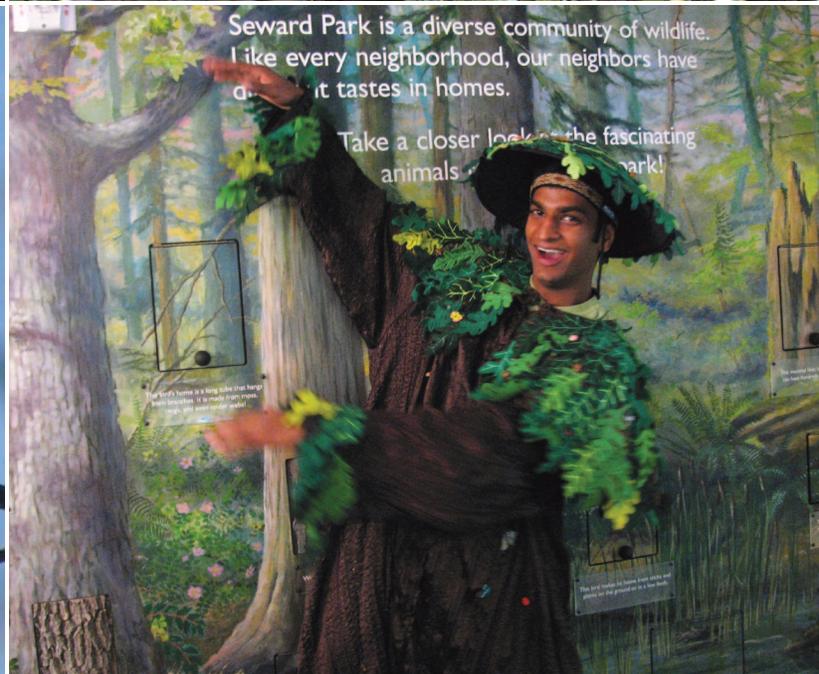


# SEWARD PARK ENVIRONMENTAL & Audubon CENTER

Annual Report to Our Community  
Fall 2011



**COMMUNITY: TWICE AS MANY TODDLERS DISCOVERED THE TALKING TREE**  
**SCHOOLS: 50% MORE STUDENTS INSPIRED BY SCIENCE AND NATURE**  
**HABITAT: CONSERVATION QUALITY OVER QUANTITY FOR LASTING IMPACT**  
**BIRDS: EXPLORING OUR CONNECTION TO THE PACIFIC FLYWAY**

## INCREASING OUR IMPACT: *Our community, schools, and habitat*



Gail with glass feathers by artist Michael Dupille.

After more than three years of operations, I am pleased to report that the Seward Park Audubon Center is often presented to the other 40+ centers in the Audubon network as a leading example for engaging people from widely different backgrounds in learning about and caring for nature.

Seward Park was chosen as an urban center site because of its rich diversity of natural habitat as well as human culture, with tens of thousands of people visiting this nearly 300-acre park, rich with old growth forest and freshwater shoreline, every year. We are proud to say that we have achieved what we set out to do: serving up to 15,000 people in our community each year with excellent free and low-cost science and nature programs. In the past year, we increased the number of students served by nearly 50 percent and helped restore more than 10,000 square feet of habitat here at the park.

This coming year we will explore how we deliver on a sharpened focus from National Audubon Society on providing the greatest conservation impact for birds and their habitats. We look forward to sharing with you how the Seward Park and Seattle ecosystems connect with the birds of the Pacific Flyway.

Best Regards,

*Gail Gattton*  
Center Director

## SUMMER CAMP SOARS

Our nature camps provide youth with great ways to connect with their community and natural world. Kids spend their summer exploring nature through field trips, hikes, games, and crafts. New this year was camp for 8- to 10-year-olds which made the summer even more energetic and exciting! Once again, we provided scholarships to all who asked.



Nature Photography campers rode public transit to Seattle Aquarium, Woodland Park Zoo, and parks around town to connect their passion for artistry and nature.

During one of our Explorer Camp night hikes, a Barn Owl flew directly over our heads and into a nearby tree. One of our shyest campers shouted in excitement, "I've never seen a real owl, I mean a real wild owl... this is so cool!"

campers. We also doubled the offering for this, our most popular camp. We think you will be as impressed as we are by the quality of the young artists' photos displayed below.

Thanks to a Youth Arts grant from the City of Seattle, we were able to provide instruction from six professional nature and wildlife photographers to our Nature Photography

## MANY MEET DOUG FIR AND GARRY OAK

This year we doubled the impact of our Talking Tree program by introducing an evergreen species in addition to our Garry Oak. Thanks to a grant from the U.S. Forest Service, our Talking Tree program expanded to public libraries throughout Seattle and King County to serve children who are not in a formal preschool program. Costumed naturalists taught nearly 1,800 children how trees are important to humans and animals, how we are the same and different from trees, and how we can help trees.



Our new Douglas Fir Talking Tree costume extended our reach, helping children discover the value of trees for birds and people.

Photos below by Youth Photography Campers (left to right): Ellie Malone, Marco Smulling, Elliot Hernandez-Sebastian, Ally Sorensen and Mikaela Lipsky



## FELLOWS BRING A FLOURISH

The Center was infused with the energy of four fresh Fellows this summer thanks to a grant from Toyota *TogetherGreen* Youth Fellowship program and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.



Ram Biyani, as the Talking Tree, trades high fives with spectators at the Rainier Valley Heritage Parade.

You many have seen them out by the park's fabulous playground with engaging nature and art activities, at the Columbia City Farmer's Market in the Talking Tree costume, or around town shepherding

young nature campers on

the bus as they headed off to Explorer, Adventure, and Nature Photography camp excursions. College students Ramanuj Biyani, Ashley Esgate, Shelby Cramer, and Bryan Reed were so stellar as camp counselors and community outreach enthusiasts that we hired all of them to continue on as staff naturalists this fall!

## SEWARD PARK CELEBRATES 100 YEARS!

We partnered with the Friends of Seward Park and the Seward Centennial Committee to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Seward Park in style this year. Events launched with a cherry tree-planting ceremony, attended by the Japanese consul, commemorating the role the park has played in diplomacy throughout the years and the inauguration of new basalt trail markers which encourage visitors to venture into the forest on newly-named trails honoring the park's Native American heritage.

The highlight of the summer was a community festival in the park in July featuring old-fashioned egg toss and pie-eating contests, historic costume promenade,



Antique cars parade in front of the Seward Park Audubon Center during July's community festival.

and antique car and hydroplane shows. The Center hosted a history and research exhibit, in partnership with Cornish College of the Arts and Seattle University, and will host a Centennial-inspired art show and the launch party for a book about the history of Seward Park later in the year.

## VOLUNTEERS EXTEND OUR REACH

By Ali McCarthy, Program Naturalist & Volunteer Coordinator

The 2011 Master Urban Naturalist (MUN) program successfully graduated a new group of local residents who turned their interest in learning about the flora, fauna, and natural history of Seward Park into valuable skills that enrich our programming. The knowledge and perspectives that each participant brought gave truth for me to the quote "to teach is to learn twice." I have become a better teacher naturalist myself by teaching and working with the MUNs.



One fantastic MUN project was the Play & Learn toddler program.

Laura Grow and Megan McArthur teamed up to provide this outdoor exploration of the natural world to more than 40 little ones and adults, with families drawn from throughout the community. The 2011 MUN class continues to benefit the Center and our community through their nature programs and volunteer work.

SPROUT volunteer Steve Polyak with Master Urban Naturalists Ozias Goodwin, Kristin Jones, and Virginia Tripp joyfully volunteer for a rainy day restoration.

## TRACEY SILVA-WAYLING'S LEGACY

Friends and family wished to honor Seward Park neighbor Tracey Silva-Wayling's legacy with a scholarship to inspire women to pursue a degree in higher education and a career in science, as she had later in life.

This summer we honored *TogetherGreen* Fellow Ashley Esgate with the first scholarship which Ashley will use to complete her degree at the



Ashley Esgate accepting check from Brian Wayling. University of Washington in education and environmental studies.

"I promise to keep working hard to reach my goals so that I can someday repay everyone for all the kindness, generosity and knowledge you have all given to me." - Ashley Esgate

# INCREASING OUR IMPACT IN SCHOOLS

By Annie Morton, Education Director

When Ms. Johnston, a 3rd grade teacher from Dearborn Park Elementary, called me last spring and said that not only did she and her 47 students want to come to the park for our Guided Nature Walk, but that they were going to walk to and from the park, I was quite concerned. Dearborn Park Elementary is more than two miles from the park, close to the top of Beacon Hill. I assumed that if the students made it to the park



We served 5,000 school children this year – an increase of nearly 50 percent! – with scholarships provided to over 60 percent of our students.

on foot they would be late, tired, and difficult to motivate.

Boy was I wrong. At 11:00 sharp a beautiful group of smiling, happy students charged down the hill and into the park to begin their picnic lunch.

At 11:30 on the dot, having left their picnic area immaculate, these same students lined up outside the

Center ready and excited to explore the forests of Seward Park. And explore we did. Each group of 17 students and chaperones hiked two

miles through the forests, along the lake, and by the meadow, learning all about the complex ecosystems and habitats of our park.

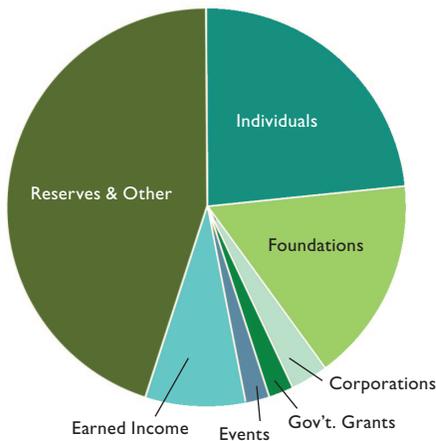
At the end of our walk, I asked my group to share their favorite part of the day. One little boy's hand shot up and he told me how much he enjoyed learning about pileated woodpeckers. Another child was thrilled to have seen a bald eagle, and another was very excited to know that Lake Washington has salmon in it. Every single one of the students wanted to tell me their favorite part of the learning experience.

As I watched them leave to walk the two miles uphill back to school, I was reminded that this is why I do what I do. So that amazing students, from amazing schools, with amazing teachers can experience the beauty of urban ecosystems and be inspired by nature.



"We loved having the opportunity to learn about the different plants, trees, and animals. It was the perfect science experience!" – Shmuel Rubinstein, Teacher, Friends of Youth

## FY11 FINANCIAL SUMMARY July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011

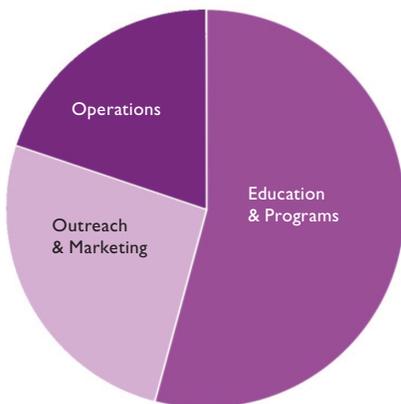


### REVENUE

Individuals	\$96,539	23%
Foundations	\$68,176	17%
Corporations	\$12,692	3%
Government Grants	\$ 7,899	2%
Events	\$ 7,925	2%
Earned Income	\$33,107	8%
Reserves & Other	\$185,761	45%

### TOTAL

**\$412,099**



### EXPENSES

Education & Programs	\$223,105	54%
Outreach & Marketing	\$106,934	26%
Operations	\$82,060	20%

### TOTAL

**\$412,099**

# THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS!

Gifts received 7/1/10 - 6/30/11

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Thank you to the 82 supporters who made gifts of \$5 to \$99, totaling \$3,415!

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Seward Park Audubon Center connects our community to nature and the power to protect birds and their habitats. The Center is a partnership between National Audubon Society and the City of Seattle, Department of Parks & Recreation, and is part of National Audubon Society's vision to make conservation the path to a better future by building a constituency as diverse as nature to help protect nature.

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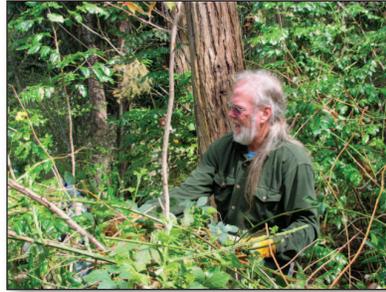
### STAFF

Gail Gatton, *Center Director*  
Annie Morton, *Education Director*  
Kimberly Bowen, *Development Director*  
Joseph Manson, *Nature Store Manager*  
Ali McCarthy, *Program/Volunteer Coordinator*  
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Bryan Reed, *Naturalist*

## CONSERVATION IMPACT: QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

*By Annie Morton, Education Director*

In the short-term, restoration is very rewarding for our students and volunteers. They don gloves, grab a few hand tools, and tackle some of Seward Park's most damaging invasive species, including blackberry and ivy. Thirty 8th graders can clear a large patch of ivy threatening to strangle our old growth trees in a shockingly short amount of time.



Master Urban Naturalist Flip O'Reilly clears Himalayan blackberry behind the Center.

In the long term, however, ivy can re-root from a single dropped leaf and very quickly re-take the area our students worked so hard to restore. This year we implemented a new strategy for attacking these invaders which we call Quality over Quantity. As we explained to a few thousand school children and hundreds more community volunteers, we'd rather do an exceptional job clearing 500 square feet of ivy than a less thorough job clearing three times as much.

And it worked! After leaving no leaf behind, no root un-composted, and no tendrils tenaciously hanging on trees, our restoration plots have remained clear of invasive ivy. We look forward to working with students to re-plant the areas we cleared with native plants, which are better for our ecosystem.

## BIRDS, OF COURSE!



Naturalist Ali McCarthy greets a Barred Owl just off the newly-renamed Sqebeqsd Trail.

What better place to learn about birds than your local Audubon Center? Hundreds of aspiring birders join us on the first Saturday morning each month for Birding Basics. After a briefing by one of our staff naturalists on the how-tos of bird identification, the group heads out to the shoreline and old growth habitat of Seward Park to spot some of the more than 100 species of birds that visit our park or call it home.

In the coming year, Center staff will explore how the local and visiting birds of our community and region connect with the Pacific Flyway and how we can impact vulnerable birds and their habitats with our conservation actions.



Nature Store manager Joey Manson helps neighbors select feeders and seed to make their backyard habitats a great home for birds, such as the Anna's Hummingbird that visits the feeder outside our store window.

We raise all of the funds from our community to operate the Center and provide free and low-cost programs. Donate on our web site, send a check to the address below, or contact Kimberly Bowen at 206-652-2444 x111 or [kbowen@audubon.org](mailto:kbowen@audubon.org).