



## Friends of Licton Springs wins Department of Neighborhoods Grant

Friends of Licton Springs have secured grant funding from the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods to update their 2001 vegetation management plan. SUNP will play a key role in this effort by surveying the current state of vegetation in the park, mapping the site and providing recommendations for future action. SUNP will also map previous restoration efforts at the park.

Many partners have contributed to efforts in the park, including the Friends of Licton Springs, the Parks Department, King County DNR, SPU, EarthCorps and the UW Restoration Ecology Network.

Special thanks to Friends of Licton Springs Members Liz Kearns, Lori Morgan and Lucy Richert for their commitment to this effort.

## Native Plants of Seattle



Creeping Blackberry  
(*Rubus ursinus*)

## Holly— An Emerging Threat

In the September 2005 issue of *The Understory* we presented an article about the impacts of invasive trees on our forests (*All weeds are not created equal*). Since that time, one of these species in particular has received considerable attention both in our work and from state agencies. In this issue, we would like to focus on English holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), and its impacts on Seattle's forests.



English holly is a common ornamental plant which grows in both shrub and tree form. As a tree, it can reach heights of 40 feet. Holly is a traditional Christmas plant, prized for its evergreen foliage and the red berries the female trees produce during the winter. These berries are the main pathway of infestation— birds eat the berries and deposit them in natural areas, often miles away.

The key to holly's success is the fact that it can grow and reproduce in low-light conditions, such as those found in the forest understory. *(continued on page 3)*



## SUNP's Elman speaks at UW Denman Series

Ella Elman, SUNP Ecologist was asked to give a talk at the prestigious Denman Series, hosted by the University of Washington College of Forest Resources. Elman covered the state of Seattle's urban forests in her talk, using SUNP data from the 1999-2000 survey and SUNP's Citywide Habitat Assessment (CHA).

## SUNP on the Web

[www.seattleurbannature.org](http://www.seattleurbannature.org)

- SUNP services
- Habitat maps of Seattle
- SUNP Publications—Invasive Plant Fact Sheets and Vegetation Management Plans
- Donate to SUNP with Paypal

## SDOT Vegetation Survey Update

SUNP's inventory of landscaped areas maintained by the Seattle Department of Transportation is now in full swing. For the last few months, SUNP staff have been surveying landscaped planting strips, medians, and traffic circles managed by the department. After vegetation types are delineated, horticultural species information is inventoried for each property. The data will be entered into the department's Hansen Database, which will allow for detailed maintenance reports and schedules to be created. This will provide the department with an accurate assessment of existing species and vegetation types, leading to a more efficient and comprehensive management system.

The vegetation type delineations will be represented spatially using GIS. This will give SDOT the ability to graphically illustrate the different types of vegetation present on their landscaped areas throughout the city. For example, it will be possible to display all the areas under their management where English ivy currently dominates.

In addition to the vegetation information, street tree data on these properties are also being updated. Information on trees currently in the city's street tree layer are being revised and new trees are being added or removed, providing a more accurate assessment of current tree numbers and conditions.

This effort will help provide SDOT with a detailed picture of the vegetation present on their parcels throughout the city. For additional information on this project, e-mail Nelson Salisbury, SUNP Ecologist at [nelson@seattleurbannature.org](mailto:nelson@seattleurbannature.org).



*Left: Nelson Salisbury of SUNP measures the diameter of a red maple tree on an SDOT managed traffic circle.*



*Right: SDOT property in North Seattle separated into different vegetation types.*

"Just a short note to say thank you for all of your efforts on behalf of Deadhorse Canyon. You and your crew have really done an outstanding job to make the project a success. I just wanted to let you know that the Friends of Deadhorse Canyon really appreciate all that you have done."

**Darrell Dobson**  
Friends of Deadhorse Canyon



## SUNP Annual Fundraising Campaign

Seattle Urban Nature Project will be initiating its first ever annual fundraising campaign this summer. SUNP's work is funded through a combination of donations, grants, and fee-for-service work. We need your help in order to monitor the state of Seattle's forests and continue providing technical assistance to community groups working to restore urban forests in the Puget Sound region. You can donate to SUNP through our website [www.seattleurbannature.org](http://www.seattleurbannature.org) or send a check to:

**Seattle Urban Nature Project**  
5218 University Way NE  
Seattle, WA 98105

We greatly appreciate your support!

## SUNP Barbecue in September

SUNP will be holding a late summer barbecue at Magnuson Park Picnic Shelter #3 (enter on NE 74th) on Sunday, **September 10th** from 12:00 Noon to 2:30 PM. All are welcome for free hot dogs, hamburgers and veggie burgers. Come meet the board and staff and learn about the work we are doing in Seattle and around the Sound. Please RSVP by completing a short form at [www.seattleurbannature.org](http://www.seattleurbannature.org) or e-mail us at [info@seattleurbannature.org](mailto:info@seattleurbannature.org) by 9/6. See you there!

## Become a SUNP Board Member

SUNP is looking to grow its board. If you are interested in joining, please contact Executive Director Jeff Bash at [jeff@seattleurbannature.org](mailto:jeff@seattleurbannature.org). Some areas of expertise we are looking for include:

- Accounting
- Fundraising
- Non-profit management
- Outreach
- Grant Writing
- Watershed Management

## Holly—An Emerging Threat

*Continued from front page*

In addition, holly has the ability to sucker from roots, and is thus very resistant to disturbance and removal. It is not unusual to see holly shrubs and trees with multiple stems. Once a tree is established in a forested area, it proceeds to form dense thickets and exclude native trees and shrubs.

How big is the holly problem on Seattle's public lands? Our 1999-2000 survey showed that holly is the fourth most prevalent invasive species, covering 75 acres. Although this is an impressive number, it does not tell us the full story of the impacts that holly is having on our forests.

To understand the full picture, last year SUNP launched the Citywide Habitat Assessment program to gather more detailed information about the state of our forests, including tree regeneration. The results, which were featured in the March 2006 issue of *The Understory*, were startling.

During the 2005 field season, we installed permanent monitoring plots in two forest types: conifer-madrone forests and conifer-deciduous forests. Our measurements included 1) density of mature and regenerating trees and 2) percent cover of other vegetation present. The results show that holly is a major component of tree regeneration in these two forest types throughout the city. In many cases, the amount of holly exceeds that of the native seedlings and saplings in the understory.

For instance, in the conifer-deciduous forests, holly makes up 50% of all regeneration present, and is present in most sampled plots (83%). In this forest type, only 37% of regenerating trees are native. In the conifer-madrone forest, holly comprises 22% of all regenerating trees and is present in all sampled plots. As a point of comparison, in the conifer-madrone forest type only 32% of all regeneration is native.

The impacts of holly on our forests are visible in almost every park in the city. The species present in the understory today will directly influence the composition of our forests in the next 30 to 40 years. When the current overstory trees die, what will come in to fill the gaps? If current trends continue and no action is taken, there is a high probability that it will be holly. If holly becomes the dominant tree species in our forests, it will fundamentally change how the forests function and the type of habitat they provide to wildlife. Already, we are seeing impacts such as low native shrub and tree density in areas dominated by holly.

To date, holly has not been listed on the noxious weed list in Washington State and is available for purchase in most plant nurseries. Therefore, the most important tools to deal with the problem are restoration and education.

Restoration efforts in our parks and open spaces to remove holly and replant with natives are vital. In

addition, an education campaign targeting plant nurseries and home owners must be undertaken to prevent further spread into our natural areas.

SUNP is bringing attention to this issue in several ways. On June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006, SUNP Ecologist Ella Elman spoke at the University of Washington Denman Forestry Series regarding the current state of our urban forests. Part of the talk focused on invasive species, including holly. SUNP has also provided specific data about holly to interested parties at the University of Washington and the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board. On June 21, we provided a tour of Deadhorse Canyon to Alison Halpern, Education Specialist with the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board, enabling her to document the presence and extent of holly in a natural area.

SUNP has also released a series of fact sheets which profile holly and other invasive species found in Seattle's natural areas. These fact sheets cover herbaceous plants, shrubs and tree species and are available for download at [www.seattleurbannature.org](http://www.seattleurbannature.org).

For questions or comments regarding this article, please contact Ella Elman at [ella@seattleurbannature.org](mailto:ella@seattleurbannature.org).



*Alison Halpern, Education Specialist for the Washington State Noxious Weed Board tours Deadhorse Canyon (SE Seattle) with Ella Elman, SUNP Ecologist.*

## Madrona Park Creek: A New Beginning

In the next couple of months, the ravine in the north end of Madrona Park will be undergoing some dramatic changes. For decades, a small creek that surfaces just east of 37<sup>th</sup> Ave has been diverted from its natural course and managed as part of the City's storm water runoff system. Unlike many streams that encountered similar fates in the not so distant past, the natural streambed of Madrona Park Creek remains to this day largely undeveloped.

The Friends of Madrona Woods saw this as a unique opportunity to restore an urban creek from its source to its outflow. In a joint effort between the local citizens of Madrona Woods neighborhood and the City of Seattle, the creek will be rescued from the drain and once again allowed to run its natural course into the shallow waters of Lake Washington. The mouth of the newly diverted creek, currently a grass lawn abutting a row of weeds along the shoreline, will be transformed into a near-shore estuary. This wetland cove will create a rare oasis of cold-water fish and wildlife habitat in an otherwise urbanized setting.

The daylighting of Madrona Creek represents an attempt by neighbors and the city to restore some degree of natural function to a degraded system. As more of these projects are implemented in urban areas, measuring and monitoring the work takes on added importance. We need to be able to evaluate restoration techniques and make adjustments as needed.

The Friends of Madrona Woods recognized this and have partnered with SUNP to 1) collect baseline vegetation information for the site and 2) establish a long-term monitoring plan. SUNP will document the current pre-construction condition of the ravine and establish monitoring protocols following construction and revegetation.

These efforts will provide the Friends of Madrona Woods with the means to compare and evaluate the changes to vegetation in the project area during and after the daylighting process. This exercise also helps the group to meet grant requirements for monitoring.

We hope that providing scientific documentation to projects such as this will increase the knowledge and awareness of restoration efforts throughout the region and help to make future projects increasingly successful. It is important to learn from our mistakes as well as celebrate our successes, and monitoring plays a key role in this ongoing process.

For more information on the Madrona Park Creek daylighting project, see the Friends of Madrona creek website at [www.madronawoods.org](http://www.madronawoods.org) and stay tuned for future *Understory* installments as the SUNP inventory and monitoring project is implemented. If your organization has a project that requires vegetation monitoring, please contact us at (206) 522-0334.



*Peggy Gaynor (left), SUNP board president and Polly Hicks, NOAA Restoration Ecologist discuss water monitoring techniques by the shore of Lake Washington.*

## Citywide Habitat Assessment Update

This is the year of the madrone. Madrone-deciduous and pure madrone forests will be surveyed and analyzed this year as part of our Citywide Habitat Assessment. SUNP will produce a report highlighting the state of the city's madrone forests in late 2006.

Madrone forests account for less than five percent of Seattle's forests. They are a species thought to be in decline in urban areas, and are of special interest to people around the Sound.

Last season, SUNP surveyed Conifer/Deciduous mixed forest and Conifer/Madrone mixed forest. The results from this effort are available at our website: [www.seattleurbannature.org/Projects/citywide.html](http://www.seattleurbannature.org/Projects/citywide.html)



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Order SUNP T-shirts and mugs. Go to our website for a link to the store.

A portion of the purchase price helps to support Seattle Urban Nature Project.

## SUNP Services

SUNP offers a number of services to assist public, private, and non-profit organizations.

### Ecological Services

- Habitat Mapping and Assessment
- Vegetation Inventory and Management
- Restoration Planning and Monitoring
- Vegetation Monitoring

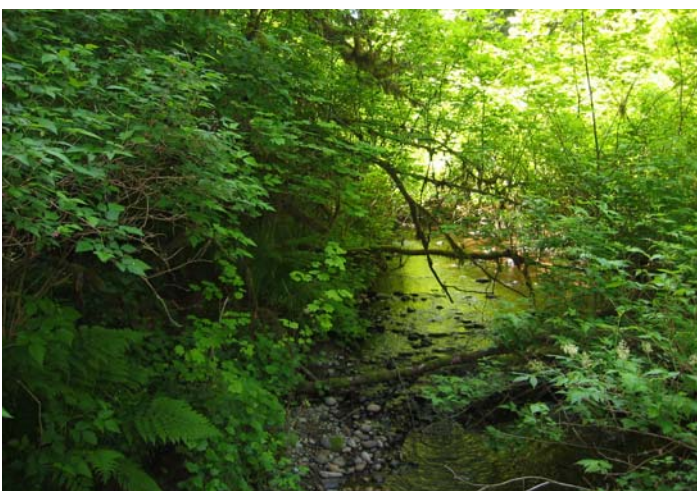
### GIS Services

- Custom Mapping of Project Sites
- Mapping for Grant Reporting Purposes
- GPS Data Collection
- Printing Large Size Maps or Posters

### Training and Education

- Habitat Survey and Assessment Methods
- Monitoring Restoration Sites
- GPS and GIS Training
- Plant Identification
- Habitat Restoration Techniques

Please contact us at (206) 522-0334 for more information.



## Board Member Update

SUNP would like to welcome Randi Shaw of EarthCorps to the Board of SUNP. Randi has extensive experience working on restoration projects in Western Washington. She has also worked with the Student Conservation Association and as a volunteer with Passages Northwest, an organization that provides outdoor experiences for girls and women.



## SUNP Outreach

SUNP staff is providing outreach to the public. Recently, staff tabled at three events, the Tukwila Wildlife Festival, the Cleveland Forest Open House and the U-District Farmers Market. SUNP plans to set up booths at other events in the Seattle area to get the word out about the need to protect and maintain our urban forests.

*Right: Kayla Salisbury at the Tukwila Wildlife Festival with friend.*

*Below: Board Member Josh Wozniak and Ella Elman at the U-District Farmers Market.*



**Interested in a Habitat Map of your part of Seattle? SUNP Maps cover the entire city of Seattle.**

For additional details, contact us at (206) 522-0334 or download a form to order individual maps at [www.seattleurbannature.org](http://www.seattleurbannature.org)

## SUNP Calendar

### July 19

SUNP Board Meeting  
University Heights Center

### September 10

SUNP Barbecue  
Magnuson Park—Picnic Area #3  
12:00 PM—2:30 PM—Please RSVP at  
[www.seattleurbannature.org](http://www.seattleurbannature.org)

### Summer 2006

- SDOT Vegetation Survey
- Citywide Habitat Assessment—  
Madrone-deciduous and Pure  
madrone forests
- Licton Springs Project

**SUNP's Mission is to enrich the  
quality of life in the Puget  
Sound region by engaging  
communities to improve  
urban forests.**

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April Mills	<b>Vice President</b>
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Josh Wozniak	
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Ella Elman	<b>Ecologist</b>
Nelson Salisbury	<b>Ecologist</b>

Seattle  
Urban  
Nature  
Project



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## Help SUNP Achieve its Mission!

Consider contributing to the Seattle Urban Nature Project.

A contribution to the Seattle Urban Nature Project helps SUNP provide technical services to community groups working to restore urban forests. With your donation, you will receive a quarterly newsletter with important information on the state of Seattle's forests. For a donation of \$100 or greater, you will receive a 2' x 3' SUNP color map of your choice from our catalog (see our website).

SUNP is a 501(c)3 non-profit—contributions are tax deductible.



Yes, I would like to help the Seattle Urban Nature Project to enrich the quality of life in the Puget Sound region by engaging communities to improve urban forests. Here is my donation.

\_\_\_\_\_ \$100    \_\_\_\_\_ \$75    \_\_\_\_\_ \$50  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$25    \$\_\_\_\_\_ Other

**Please make your check out to Seattle Urban Nature Project**

And mail to:

**Seattle Urban Nature Project  
5218 University Way NE  
Seattle, WA 98105**

**Or donate at [www.seattleurbannature.org](http://www.seattleurbannature.org)**

Comments, questions, or submissions? Please contact Jeff Bash, Executive Director via e-mail at [jeff@seattleurbannature.org](mailto:jeff@seattleurbannature.org). If you would like to receive this newsletter in a different format or would like to be removed from the mailing list, please let us know. Learn more about SUNP at [www.seattleurbannature.org](http://www.seattleurbannature.org). **Seattle Urban Nature Project © 2006**