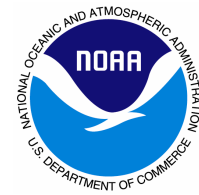




NEWS RELEASE



For Immediate Release

March 2003

Contact:

Steve Dubiel, Executive Director
EarthCorps
steve@earthcorps.org
206.322.9296 ext. 201 (w)
206.730.3794 (cell)

Dr. Perry Gayaldo, Marine Ecologist
NOAA Restoration Center
perry.gayaldo@noaa.gov
206.526.6029

Pieter Bohlen, Programs Director
EarthCorps
pieter@earthcorps.org
206.255.4160 (cell)

NOAA, EARTHCORPS JOIN FORCES FOR COASTAL HABITAT RESTORATION

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Restoration Center and EarthCorps are combining forces to restore habitat vital to the conservation of coastal fisheries in Washington State. Under the new partnership, the NOAA Restoration Center is slated to provide up to \$600,000 over a three-year period to support EarthCorps habitat restoration projects through the NOAA Community-based Restoration Program (CRP). The purpose of this grant is to support habitat restoration projects that benefit living marine resources in the Puget Sound region.

“NOAA is committed to restoring habitat vital to our nation’s fisheries and is proud to partner with EarthCorps as well as state and local entities to accomplish this,” said Dr. William T. Hogarth, director of NOAA’s National Marine Fisheries Service. “These projects represent a real win for Pacific salmon and a great example of how government can work hand in hand with volunteer groups to achieve similar goals.”

The CRP-funded projects provide strong on-the-ground habitat restoration components that offer educational and social benefits for people and their communities in addition to long-term ecological benefits for marine resources.

EarthCorps will request proposals from the community one or more times annually under this partnership. Once projects are selected for funding, EarthCorps will work with NOAA Fisheries staff to provide technical assistance to the project proponents including advice on project design and engineering, identification of funding match, compliance with permitting requirements, and communications with the neighboring communities.

“The matching federal funding NOAA is providing to EarthCorps through this partnership serves as a catalyst for local government agencies and community-based organizations to prioritize vital coastal habitat restoration projects that would otherwise not be completed,” according to EarthCorps Executive Director Steve Dubiel. “NOAA funding is generating significant excitement in the community which is resulting in new and expanded partnerships.”

Initial partners and project sites selected for this program include:

- Friends of the Cedar River Watershed: Cedar River Watershed Riparian Restoration.
- City of Redmond: Conrad Olson Site Restoration.
- Friends of Hylebos Wetlands: Brooklake Restoration Project.
- Maple Leaf Community: Maple Leaf Reach (Thornton Creek) Restoration.
- Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust: Issaquah Creek.
- EarthCorps: Squally Beach and Mowitch Shoreline Restoration- Commencement Bay, Tacoma.
- Seattle Public Utilities: Thornton Creek Park 6, Fauntleroy Creek, and Carkeek Park.

EarthCorps is a Seattle-based nonprofit organization dedicated to engaging youth and community volunteers in restoring local parks and open spaces. EarthCorps leads 10,000 volunteers in providing 100,000 hours of

service in the region annually including salmon habitat, shoreline, riparian, and wetlands restoration; hiking trail construction; invasive plant removal; and native plantings. For more information on EarthCorps visit our website at <http://www.earthcorps.org/>

The NOAA Community-based Restoration Program has been working with community organizations to support effective habitat restoration projects in marine, estuarine and riparian areas since 1996. Since inception, CRP has provided financial and technical assistance to over 650 projects nationwide. For each project, NOAA Fisheries regional staff works closely with communities to aid in project development and implementation. For more information on the Community-based Restoration Program, see the website at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration>.

####

Project Summaries

Friends of the Cedar River Watershed: Cedar River Watershed Riparian Restoration.

Provide labor and volunteer management services for loading coarse woody debris into streams, underplanting forest stands, and managing weeds in lower Cedar River Watershed.

City of Redmond: Conrad Olson Site Restoration.

To address an infestation of Japanese Knotweed by cutting and treating the knotweed, planting densely to out-compete the invasives, and monitor progress to adaptively respond to any unintended or undesired outcomes.

Friends of Hylebos Wetlands: Brooklake Restoration Project.

The project will improve salmon spawning and rearing habitat in the Brooklake Channel and restore a functioning riparian and upland plant community. Work will include clearing a new area of blackberry for future planting, replanting previously cleared area with native trees and shrubs, installing woody debris structures into stream channel, and conducting regular maintenance and monitoring.

Maple Leaf Community: Maple Leaf Reach (Thornton Creek) Restoration.

Complete development of a plan to realign the stream channel to allow the stream to reestablish natural meander patterns consistent with its bed slope for the purpose of improving fish habitat.

Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust: Issaquah Creek.

To complete restoration of 14 acres of habitat along Issaquah Creek by maintaining previously planted trees, planting additional native trees and shrubs, stabilizing stream banks with native staking, and eradicating invasive plants. Additionally, the planning process will begin for restoring the additional 9 interspersed acres along Issaquah Creek.

EarthCorps: Squally Beach and Mowich Shoreline Restoration- Commencement Bay, Tacoma.

Squally Beach: To enhance the Squally Beach Restoration Site to obtain optimal plant survivorship. To increase native plant productivity, these sites are in need of soil amendment and mulch, enhanced low maintenance goose/woody debris exclusions, and supplemental planting.

Mowich Shoreline Restoration: To enhance the Mowich Estuary Restoration Site to obtain optimal plant survivorship. To increase native plant productivity, these sites are in need of soil amendment and mulch, enhanced low maintenance goose/woody debris exclusions, and supplemental planting.

Seattle Public Utilities: Carkeek Park, Fautleroy Creek, and Thornton Creek Park 6.

Carkeek Park: Woody debris and rocks will be added to the 650' long, 15% grade stream channel to stabilize banks, provide grade control and create a "boulder cascade" to handle high flows and reduce sediment sources within the park. Improvements to fish passage over two minor barriers will also be made in Pipers Creek. The project will include planting native plants along the creek corridor, stewardship, and monitoring the creek.

Fautleroy Creek: To restore natural processes to improve sediment transport, reduce erosion, and create more diverse in-stream and corridor habitat by (1) adding structure in the stream (to reduce energy and assist in creating pools, riffles, and refuge), (2) improving crossings where public trails intersect with the creek, and (3) redirecting street-end and trail runoff. The project will also improve the riparian corridor by adding native plants along the stream and in adjacent wetlands.

Thornton Creek Park 6: Large woody debris and rocks will be added to the 350' long stream channel to add structural complexity and stabilize banks. Invasive species will be removed from the riparian zone and replaced with native vegetation. Trails will be rerouted to minimize disturbance in riparian zone.