

Streamers...

An information bulletin from the Lake Forest Park StreamKeepers (June 2004)

Stream Monitoring Update

We've had two stream water testing sessions so far in 2004. On January 17, a rare sunny winter day, 11 volunteers tested water at 12 sites on McAleer and Lyon Creeks and their tributaries in LFP. On April 17, 15 testers revisited those same sites. As the charts on the reverse side show, the results of the observations and tests we did – temperature, turbidity (cloudiness), pH (acidity), and dissolved oxygen – are generally very good.

Of the 12 locations, 9 are regular sites that have been tested many times in the past. One is a new site on 35th Avenue north of Ballinger Way, intended to help us gather data on the main branch of Lyon Creek. Two locations are temporary sites that StreamKeepers is monitoring at the request of the LFP Stewardship Foundation, in conjunction with stream restoration projects.

Future Directions

The tests we do (temperature, turbidity, pH, and dissolved oxygen) measure water factors that are important for sustaining fish and other stream creatures. The fact that our testing consistently shows positive conditions for those factors is good. However, there is increasingly reason to believe that those tests alone are inadequate for a full understanding of the health of our streams. For example, both McAleer Creek and Lyon Creek appear on the State Department of Ecology's 303(d) list of polluted waters, along with most of the streams in the Lake Washington watershed. That list includes "waters in which beneficial uses are impaired due to water quality problems." (More information on this can be found at www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/303d/2002/2002-index.html.) So, one of our future directions is to identify additional tests and data collection that should be part of our stream monitoring program. One may well be an annual inventory of macroinvertebrates ("bugs," worms, etc.) living in our streams. Experts at the UW and other citizen monitoring groups feel that biological inventories give a broader and more direct indication of stream health.

Another of our future directions is to learn more about the federal, state, and local water quality resources that exist, and how we can effectively use them to benefit our LFP streams. We want to know more about allied streamkeeper groups around the area, so we can learn from them and be more plugged in to regional stream improvement efforts.

You Can Join Us!

Our next stream monitoring will be on Saturday, July 17, and you are welcome to join us. We gather in the lower level of the mall at 9:00, and are done by 11:00. Stream monitoring is a great activity for young environmentalists, too, and a good way for students to earn community service credits. If you would like to get involved beyond water testing, there are 5 or 6 of us who meet monthly to discuss StreamKeeper goals and plan activities. We could use your help! Please contact Mark Phillips (206-362-8964) or Don Fiene (206-888-3648) for meeting details.