

SAMMY AWARD WINNERS FOR 2004

KIM KLEIN

Ridgefield High School biology Teacher Kim Klein has gone to extraordinary lengths to involve her students in local environmental issues. Especially noteworthy are her efforts to reestablish the presence of salmon in Gee Creek. She oversaw the development of a trail from the school to the creek, enabling students to monitor water quality. After they determined that Gee Creek could support salmon, students raised young fish for release into the creek. At the science symposium she coordinates each semester, Kim invites experts to give presentations on salmon. In recent years, Kim has brought students to the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge to undertake volunteer habitat restoration projects. A former student, now in college, says Kim has inaugurated a new era of ecological service and environmental awareness at Ridgefield High School, creating a cutting edge biology program. Kim devotes many hours of her own time to her students' projects because she believes in the importance of salmon recovery and the potential of her students to bring about positive change.

FRIENDS OF TREES

Friends of Trees is a Portland-based organization with a regional vision for the value of trees and healthy ecosystems. Since the fall of 2001, Friends of Trees has conducted restoration activities at Friendship Park, restoring native vegetation and improving fish habitat along Burnt Bridge Creek. The twenty-eight-acre park was once a horticulture garden that, over the years, became overrun with non-native invasive plant species. Working with government agencies and hundreds of community volunteers, Friends of Trees has removed Himalayan blackberry, English Ivy, Scots broom, and other invasive plant species from nearly three acres, replacing them with 4,000 native trees and shrubs. Summer monitoring and maintenance ensure the survival of the seedlings. Friendship Park is an educational resource for schools such as Discovery Middle School, whose students have been involved in the plantings. Friends of Trees has shown residents the positive impact they can have on riparian areas, giving them hope that healthy urban salmon populations are a very real possibility.

PAM LEHRMAN & JUDY BUFFORD

For several years, Pam Lehrman and her students have been monitoring water conditions at Cougar Creek through the Student Watershed Research Project, known as SWRP. These efforts have given hundreds of students firsthand knowledge of the profound impact of human activities on watersheds and salmon. In 2001, Judy Bufford, a Watershed Steward volunteer, helped Pam expand the project. Through Pam and Judy's efforts, more than 200 students each year perform monthly tests on Cougar Creek. They monitor the creek for physical and chemical characteristics, fecal coliform bacteria, and benthic macroinvertebrates. They also map the stream to assess habitat characteristics. The enthusiasm with which the students present their results at the annual SWRP Watershed Summit and in other public forums are testimony to Pam and Judy's skill and dedication as educators. Judy and Pam give students just the kind of motivation that's needed to restore salmon populations and protect environmental health.

JOE HYMER, BOB ELSKAMP, ROGER SHAW, CARL DUGGER

Woods Landing is one of the few major chum spawning grounds on the Columbia River. Part of that area was smothered recently by a plume of sand. Fisheries biologist Joe Hymer estimated that without quick action, the sand deposit would have killed at least twenty thousand juvenile fish. Joe contacted Carl Dugger of the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife. They came up with the idea of using small portable dredges to redistribute the sand into deeper water. They enlisted the volunteer support of Bob Elskamp and Roger Shaw of the Northwest Mineral Prospector's Club. Carl got quick permit approval from state and federal agencies. On March 12th, the miners and volunteers waded into the chilly Columbia River and used their equipment to vacuum sand. They worked tirelessly for two days, removing 74 cubic yards of sand from the site. Results were immediate. Juvenile salmon began emerging as soon as the sand was removed. With the enthusiastic support of local landowners, volunteers, and government agencies, this innovative project helped to save a generation of a threatened species.

JIM MALINOWSKI

Jim Malinowski grew up in Clark County along Cedar Creek at a time when salmon were plentiful and the creeks were full of woody debris from fallen trees. Salmon have been a lifelong interest for Jim and he has spent considerable time and energy in recent years trying bring them back to our waterways. As a member of the local conservation group Fish First, Jim has been the project manager for six in-stream habitat restoration projects. His engineering background and knowledge of stream complexity are great assets for this highly technical work. Jim's role includes project design, getting approval from government agencies, overseeing funding sources, and working with private landowners to encourage their cooperation. Since 1999, Jim has served on Clark County's ESA Advisory Committee, helping to provide citizen input into the county's response to the listings of fish under the Endangered Species Act. Jim knows how to put ideas into action, making him an effective and committed advocate for salmon recovery.

BILL DOTY

Bill Doty takes pride in his land, a 480-acre tree farm in north Clark County. When Fish First contacted him about restoring forty seven hundred feet of Cedar Creek that runs through his property, Bill went out of his way to ensure the success of this project. The project was designed to improve habitat for the steelhead, Chinook, and Coho salmon that use the area for spawning and rearing. It was the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board's highest ranking project for 2002. Fish First placed a number of instream structures and large woody debris in the stream and planted native trees along the streambank. Bill provided easy access to his property. He donated large rocks for instream work and provided 38 high quality root wads at a very reasonable price. He also worked with the Clark Conservation District to restore other stream bank areas, and he is encouraging his neighbors to allow habitat restoration on their land. Thanks to Bill and other property owners, the cumulative impact of restoration in this area is beginning to make a significant difference for fish in Cedar Creek.

MOTHER NATURE'S GARDEN

The best way to reach the hearts and minds of an audience is to capture its imagination. Clark County's Solid Waste Program has been doing just that with Mother Nature's Garden, an entertaining and zany puppet show that has reached almost 25,000 school children since it was implemented four years ago. The show conveys the importance of clean water, healthy soil, and safe habitat for diverse species. It shows how individual actions can make a difference to the environment. The plot involves a gardener named Sally who learns about gardening naturally with the help of Mother Nature, a talking tree, and Sammy, a talking salmon. Supporting materials are provided to each classroom. Mother Nature's Garden has been presented 310 times at more than 100 county locations. In addition to schools, these free performances have been given at libraries, fairs, and other events. The show was developed by county staff in collaboration with Metro staff and Vancouver's Tears of Joy Puppet Theater. Its salmon-friendly gardening messages make lasting impressions on children and adults alike.

JEFF WITTLER

As Clark Public Utility's Environmental Services Manager, Jeff Wittler works with private landowners to implement habitat restoration projects in environmentally sensitive riparian areas of Clark County. Jeff's work furthers CPU's goal of protecting water quality. Getting buy-in and trust from landowners isn't always easy, but Jeff's good nature, people skills, and patience usually pay off. By educating people about the benefits to salmon and water quality, Jeff makes landowners feel good about their decision to set aside part of their land as wildlife habitat. Frequently, people contact him after seeing the restoration project of a neighbor. For each project, Jeff develops plans and specifications, obtains permits if required, supervises the installation of native plants, and monitors the completed project. Jeff uses volunteers, property owners, Ameri-corps workers, and correction crews to keep costs low. He provides recognition to the volunteers and landowners for their efforts. Although Jeff works a 70-hour week, he says protecting water quality for people and fish is more than just a job—it's a calling.

2004 Certificates of Merit

Larry Snyder

For working with the Vancouver Wildlife League to restore habitat for fish and wildlife in ecologically sensitive areas of Clark County.

Randall Pearl and Mary Kay Moskal

For working with the community to reclaim a creek for salmon in Pleasant Valley Park.

Mike Moss

For many hours of volunteer service helping to replenish diminished stocks of salmon in the North and East Forks of the Lewis River.

Rosemary Boardman and Discovery Middle School students

For helping to plant native trees and shrubs along Burnt Bridge Creek in Friendship Park.