

Thank you, Highlands neighbors, for restoration work and more

This month I have the pleasure of thanking many people for many things. It's been a busy spring here in the Highlands!

Have you noticed the newly painted guardrail on the corner of 116th Ave. N.E. and N.E. 87th? Thank you to Kevin Keller and his son Liam for applying badly needed coats of primer and metallic silver paint. What an improvement!

Cub Scout Pack 550 pitched in yet again at Cedar View Park, giving it a thorough spring scrubbing. They pulled weeds, pruned, swept, and mulched, and it looks so nice. Thank you to organizers Andrea and Randy Gerth, and the 15 scouts and others who volunteered their time. The Parks Department does not have adequate staffing to fully maintain the park, and really appreciates our neighborhood's help.

Thursday evening I attended the final project presentation by the UW students who spent this school year restoring a section of Cotton Hill Park. Thank you to Marian Hanson, Kinsey Burke, Robyn Mushkin, Kelley Govan, Josh Jackson, and Reed Keagle for the hundreds of hours they devoted to transforming a large section of the park from a blackberry jungle to a native plant oasis. If you haven't seen it, you must go look - you won't believe the difference.

It was a real pleasure working with, and learning from, these enthusiastic, intelligent, future environmental leaders, and I will miss them.

Part of their project involved building a small "amphibian" pond. It's intended as a spawning ground for frogs and salamanders. Please



Some of the Cub Scouts and other volunteers who gave Cedar View Park a spring cleaning on May 31. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

do not allow dogs to walk in the pond.

Speaking of dogs, remember that dogs must be on leashes at all times in the park. And please clean up dog piles. The students found a number of them while working, which wasn't very pleasant.

We will be installing educational signs in the park soon. The money for the signs and plants comes from our city grant money, which we earn through volunteer hours.

The UW restoration project also owes its success to Green Kirkland Program coordinator Sharon Rodman, Parks Department employee Collins Klemm, and all the volunteers from the Highlands and beyond who helped at many work parties this year. Thank you to all of you too numerous to name! I hope we'll be selected for another UW restoration project next year.

When you go down to Cotton Hill park, you may see Highlands resident Dave Ramsay hacking away at blackberries. He has single handedly cleared a sizeable area. He says he finds "the work and the before and af-

ter difference' great therapy." Prior to this, Dave cleared the blackberries from Highlands Park! It took him about 9 months and 50 hours. Thank you Dave!

Every Friday night, the Kirkland Teen Center feeds about 60 teens. Most of these kids are from difficult circumstances. For many of them this is the best meal they get all week. The center relies on donations to provide the meals. Thank you to Kim Lowe, who coordinated a sub sandwich meal on Friday night, as well as to the many generous Highlands residents who donated buns, meats, cheeses, condiments, desserts, and beverages, and to the nine volunteers who served the food. The kids were extremely appreciative, and it was a very gratifying experience. I hope we'll be able to do it again, and I encourage other neighborhood groups to try it.

The Highlands will be having its first ever Neighborhood Garage Sale on Saturday, June 27, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. More information will be available via our e-mail list and Web site: kirklandhighlands.org.

Karen Story is a longtime Kirkland resident.



HIGHLANDS
Karen Story