

A Salmon's Guide



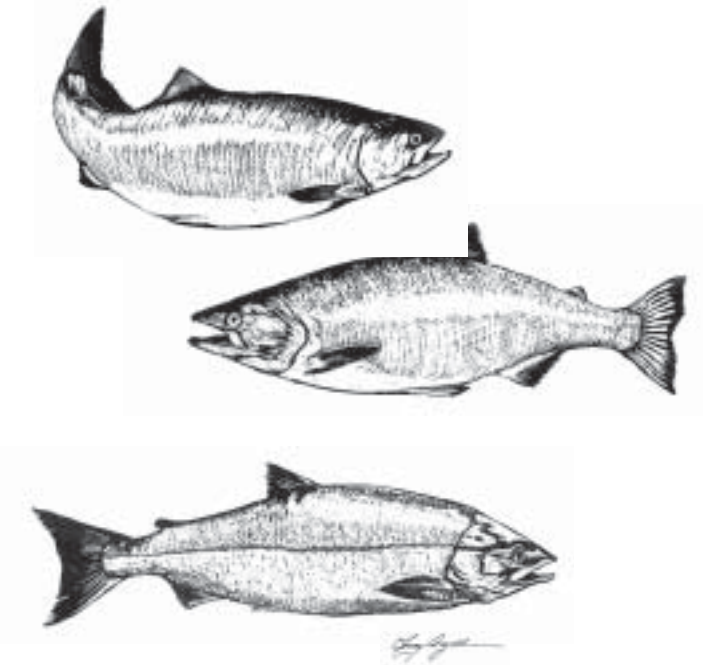
to
Lake Forest Park



“If there is magic in this world, it is to be found in water.”
-Loren Eisely, *The Unexpected Universe*

A Salmon's Guide to Lake Forest Park

A brief geography of the streams, wetlands,
woodlands and parks of an extraordinary city.



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Maps—parks, streams and wetlands of Lake Forest Park

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Introduction

We who live in Lake Forest Park inherit some special blessings. Clear, singing streams criss-cross our city. Wooded bluffs and wetlands teem with birds and other creatures who embellish and brighten our lives.

Some of the creeks are home to salmon and trout. All of them used to be. Time, and our ways of using land, have not been kind to them.

More people are becoming aware – perhaps more than at any time in our city’s history – of the extraordinary beauty and importance of our green and wet landscape. Hundreds of local citizens focus their energy on our shared natural treasures and give their time and money toward protecting them.

Perhaps this little book can give that movement a boost. It’s a brief geography, with some history, of the streams, wetlands, bluffs, public parks and open spaces in your city. There are maps to help you locate these special places. State Fish and Wildlife biologists have contributed suggestions for improving our streams, and ways in which you can help.

We hope you’ll find something here you didn’t know, and perhaps be moved to join your community’s effort to stay green and grow greener.

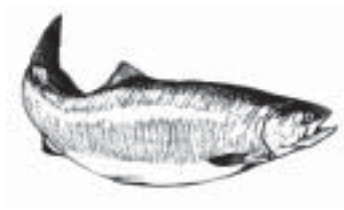




photo by Casey Dougherty

McAleer Creek

“We just called it ‘Big Creek’ in the 1930’s. We’d ride our bikes down there and watch the sockeye spawn. They turned the creek red. Bank to bank, solid with red fish.”

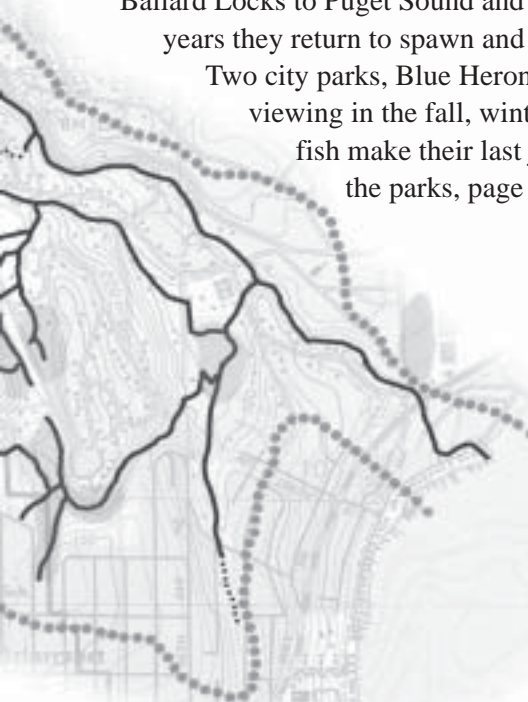
– Bill Schoening, Lake Forest Park

McAleer Creek is a wonder.

Despite years of abuse – flooding, siltation, pollution – the salmon still live here. Not in anything like the numbers Bill Schoening remembers from the 30’s, but sockeye, coho and the magnificent chinook still hatch and grow in Lake Forest Park. Salmon sightings offer a glimpse of nature’s resilience. Their presence is a symbol of renewal, and a metaphor for the wildness that remains.

They leave home as small fish and come back as very big fish. They travel from McAleer Creek through Lake Washington, through the Ballard Locks to Puget Sound and the Pacific. After three to six years they return to spawn and die in the creek and its tributaries.

Two city parks, Blue Heron and Animal Acres, offer salmon viewing in the fall, winter and early spring, when the big fish make their last journey up the creeks (more on the parks, page 26).



McAleer is also home to a tenacious population of colorful cutthroat trout, including some of the big sea-run cutthroat, that make the same trip as the salmon. The stream is open for trout fishing from June to October.

McAleer is the larger and more southerly of our two salmon-bearing streams that drain into Lake Washington near the shopping center. It flows under Bothell Way between the two gas stations at the end of Brookside Boulevard. The other major creek is Lyon, which enters the lake a short distance to the northeast. (For more on Lyon Creek, see page 13).



(Editor's note: to simplify the text we've dropped the designation "NE" from all locations. All streets mentioned here carry the prefix "Northeast" and all avenues have the suffix "Northeast.").

McAleer rises at the west edge of the Nile Country Club near 205th Avenue (Ballinger Way) in the city of Mountlake Terrace. Its upstream sources are Hall's Lake, Hall's Creek and Lake Ballinger. All three carry high levels of silt, pesticides and fertilizers. The cities of Edmonds, Mountlake Terrace, and Lake Forest Park have tried in recent years to reduce the pollutants flowing into McAleer Creek. The sources are so numerous and varied – from highways, parking lots, lawns and industrial sites – the best local governments can offer currently is to *slow the increase* in pollution.

A large number of small sources in Lake Forest Park add to the pollution of McAleer Creek, according to King County samplings. The federal government lists the entire McAleer watershed as contaminated by fecal coliform bacteria, a product of human and animal waste, often related to failing septic tanks.

After crossing the golf course, McAleer passes under Interstate 5 and enters Lake Forest Park at 196th Street, between Forest Park Drive and 15th Avenue, where it flows through a flood control system and a fish ladder. Huge chinook salmon have been known to make it at least this far upstream.

The creek meanders through residential streets and a wild, wooded ravine before crossing under Perkins Way downhill from the old Cedarbrook School grounds. The City of Lake Forest Park owns about one acre at the lower end of the ravine, where it meets Perkins Way. A prime birding area, this canyon is home to a family of Cooper's Hawks, fledged in the spring of 2001.

A vigorous tributary rises just above Lago Place, to join this reach of McAleer. You can see Whisper Creek as it flows southward under Perkins Way, just below the old Cedarbrook School. It bends northward, picks up Forest Spring and Sarah's Creek, and enters McAleer at the bottom of the hill. Young salmon were found in Whisper creek in the Spring of 2001.

Bluffs above Perkins Way and 180th Street slumped and eroded severely in the past several years, dumping tons of silt onto the stream gravels essential to salmon spawning. A major landslide blocked the creek in 1981. Eagle Scouts and the Environmental Quality Commission, a volunteer agency of the City of Lake Forest Park, helped to restore it.

Biologists consider this shady, brushy section of McAleer Canyon to be the healthiest water in Lake Forest Park, so far as salmon and trout are concerned. It also provides a serenity fix for walkers and for those drivers who slow down enough to see and hear it, as it winds along Perkins Way and 180th Street. It enters Animal Acres Park at 178th Street, across from the Presbyterian Church.

The sidewalk where the creek flows under 178th Street provides a good fish viewing spot; a few big salmon spawn each year in the shallows just downstream, and others school up just below 178th Street to rest before entering the culvert.

Downstream, the creek is exposed to the sun (bad for fish) as it crosses backyards and lawns on the way to Blue Heron Park, at the intersection of Brookside Boulevard, Hamlin Way and Bothell Way. Leaving the



photo by Casey Dougherty

An alder (these are on McAleer Creek) can be a salmon's best friend. They protect the stream from summer heat, provide insect food for the fish and, on falling into the stream, create pools and hiding places for trout and young salmon.

park, the creek flows under Bothell Way into a series of flood control devices and fish ladders. A high water by-pass takes part of the winter flow through a culvert under 170th street and Shore Drive, to join the main creek just before it empties into Lake Washington near 168th Street and Shore Drive.

In the winter of 1996-1997 so much storm water rushed into the creeks from roofs, driveways and streets that McAleer Creek flooded severely, with extensive property damage.

Long time Lake Forest Park resident Bill Schoening uncovered old government documents that explain the name of the creek. The Hugh McAleer family owned the land around what was then McAleer Lake, now Lake Ballinger, in the late 1800's. Not much is known of the family except that they were in the timber business and gave their name to the creek.

A few years later, Richard Ballinger, for whom the lake and highway are now named, turned McAleer Creek into a narrow wooden flume. Apparently Mr. Ballinger speeded the creek through a "box" of logs and planks to form a fast-moving channel to carry logs from McAleer Lake (now Ballinger) to Lake Washington. It seems to have been used for only a few years, while his company was clearing what is now the city of Edmonds, storing the logs in Lake Ballinger and sending them down the flume which we know as McAleer Creek.

We can only guess at the effect on the salmon runs. Where the water was diverted into a separate flume, the salmon redds (nests of eggs) would have dried out. Or, if an existing channel was boxed in, the rushing water would most likely have scoured out the spawning gravels and wrecked the pools. However by the early 1930's, when Bill Schoening and his boyhood companion John Clayton were playing on the streams, McAleer Creek was again clogged every year with thousands of spawning salmon.

If they recovered once in such numbers, couldn't we hope it could happen again, if we learn what to do and work at it?



Brookside Creek



A mossy, forested wetland stretches along both sides of 28th Avenue between 166th and 178th Streets. It is Lake Forest Park's last large, undeveloped green corridor, only 20-plus blocks from the Seattle city boundary. Two small creeks rise here and flow in opposite directions. Both contribute importantly to the life of McAleer Creek.

Hillside Creek, the smaller of the two, flows northwest, then changes its mind and makes a long loop among hillside houses, turning toward the lake near 178th Street and 29th Avenue. It joins Brookside Creek in the lowlands, near Brookside School.

Brookside Creek, the focus of hope and controversy for the past several years, begins in a couple of spring-fed ponds at the base of some sand bluff, and flows easterly, toward Lake Washington. It winds through a large wetland for a few hundred feet, then enters a long briar-tangled ravine that carries the creek to 35th Avenue near Brookside School. In a wetland near the school it merges with Sheridan Creek, a short tributary that flows from 162nd Street and 36th Avenue in Sheridan Heights.

The combined main stream enters McAleer Creek in a heavy thicket across from the school, at the south edge of Animal Acres Park. This water provides a superb "off channel" growing place for small salmon.

At the east end of the school parking lot you can find a short trail leading to an attractive bend in the stream. This is where Brookside School children have for many years released the salmon hatched in their school aquarium, and watched for adult fish to come back from the sea. It's part of a continuing effort by teachers and students of Brookside and Lake Forest Park Elementary, Kellogg Middle School and Shorecrest High School, who for more than thirty years have

removed trash from the streams, renewed native plants, hatched and planted salmon.

A state Fish and Wildlife biologist described the upper reaches of Brookside Creek and its associated wetland ponds as classic coho salmon waters that have suffered mightily from human activity. Tons of trash and dirt were dumped into the wetlands as late as the 1970's. A series of backyard dams and culverts create stream barriers blocking the passage of young coho that would otherwise venture all the way to the headwaters, to grow there until they're ready to seek their fortune in Lake Washington and the salt water.

The Lake Forest Park Stewardship Foundation has taken on the Brookside Creek drainage as a special project. Working with the City of Lake Forest Park, StreamKeepers, the Environmental Quality Commission, Scouts, Trout Unlimited, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and Shoreline School District teachers and students, the Foundation has set as its goal a free-flowing, salmon-friendly creek from the wetland ponds to McAleer Creek.

In 2001 the Stewardship Foundation and the City of Lake Forest Park joined to seek a King County Conservation Futures grant and to recruit private donors, to help buy Brookside wetland, bluffs and stream. When this happens, the people of Lake Forest Park will own an extraordinary nature preserve named for Grace and Carl Cole, long-time Brookside area residents and citizen activists. This is a critically important wildland, not only to the salmon and trout of the McAleer Creek watershed, but for hundreds of songbirds, hawks and owls that depend on the wetland forest for nesting and food, and for a huge frog chorus of Chorus Frogs.

Grace Cole served for years on the Shoreline Board of Education and represented Lake Forest Park and Shoreline in the Washington State Legislature. The proposed nature preserve, as U.S. Senator Patty Murray puts it, "will provide a fine outdoor science classroom for Shoreline District school children, who were so much a part of Grace Cole's life."



Lyon Creek

“It was a tiny creek, not more than two feet across, through our backyard. It was packed with big silver salmon every year.”
—John Clayton, Lake Forest Park.

“The marsh was so big, like a jungle. You could get lost in there, you really could.”
— Bill Schoening, Lake Forest Park

Until you’ve studied a map, it’s sometimes hard to know if you’re looking at McAleer Creek or Lyon Creek. The two streams enter Lake Washington only a few hundred feet apart, in what was once a wild, 17-acre marsh that comprised the lake shore where the Lake Forest Park shopping center now stands.



photo by Asahel Curtis

Early Lake Forest Park developer Ole Hanson dipped his drinking cup in Lyon Creek for this 1910 real estate promotion photo. Note the woody debris in the stream, a boon to the trout and salmon present in Lyon Creek in astounding numbers until mid-century.

—Courtesy of Shoreline/Lake Forest Park Historical Museum, Barbara Bender Collection

All creeks meander across their landscapes, and very early maps indicate that the streams we know as Lyon and McAleer intertwined in a shifting, changing puzzle of oxbows and bogs, and may have entered the lake as one stream, in the 1800's.

Today's Lyon Creek is the one that flows around and under the shopping center to meet Lake Washington on city-owned property just to the left (as you're facing the lake) of the Lake Forest Park Civic Club. It was named for a family who owned several adjacent lakefront properties in the late 1800's.

In 1998 the City of Lake Forest Park bought the one-acre property at the mouth of Lyon Creek to use as an environmental study center, and to give the City a strong position to help restore the once-great salmon runs. As of autumn 2001, the City was still working on the site to make it suitable for public use.

You've most likely encountered Lyon Creek at Towne Centre or at the neighborhood business center once known as Five Corners, where Ballinger Way intersects with 35th Avenue and 185th Street. That's where Lyon Creek blew itself out of a concrete culvert in the December storm of 1996. The summer flow disappears briefly at this point, into an underground pile of debris in the remains of a privately-owned culvert. It's a summer barrier to salmon, but winter flows appear to allow passage upstream.

The main stem of Lyon Creek rises in a small wetland at Terrace Creek Park in the City of Mountlake Terrace, at 232nd Street and 48th Avenue. Because its watershed is smaller and flatter, Lyon is a smaller and swampier creek than McAleer, and fed by many small wetlands and tributaries as it makes its way through our neighborhoods. It is largely a creek of backyards and lawns, although several wooded wetlands remain and some are publicly owned.

One of the city-owned wetlands, at the end of 26th Avenue at its intersection with Forest Park Drive, is open for hiking and bird watching (expect a serious blackberry briar challenge). A good-sized pond feeds a tributary shown on early maps as Brueger's Creek, but more recently as West Fork Lyon Creek.



Photo courtesy of John Clayton

Six-year old John Clayton with his mother Mary Clayton, in their front yard on the West Fork of Lyon Creek in 1934. The location is near what was then called Horse Road, now Forest Park Drive. Huge salmon runs clogged the stream.



Photo by Doug Mitchell

John Clayton in the same location as above, in 2001. Salmon are scarce, but the present owners, Dean and Lucy Logen, have found the skeletons of fish apparently eaten by a family of otters from a nearby wetland.

John Clayton recalls nostalgically this little creek as it flowed through the back yard of his childhood home, just off 185th Street, shortly downstream from the wetland.

“We had a small dam on the creek for a backyard pond. My dad built a bypass so the salmon could get around it. They’d come up there by the thousand. Dad would watch for a nice bright one and grab it, and we’d have it for supper.”

The landscape was dramatically “open” as compared to today’s cloistered aspect. Timber companies had left the area nearly devoid of large trees.

Two other good-sized neighborhood creeks feed into Lyon:

McKinnon Creek, from a wetland near 45th Avenue and NE 187th Place, flowing under 40th Place to Lyon Creek midway between 40th Avenue and 178th Street.

Schoolhouse Creek, from the intersection of 40th Place and 45th Place, crossing in a pipe under the Lake Forest Park Elementary school grounds, under Ballinger Way, and into Lyon Creek just upstream from 40th Avenue.

Some Lyon Creek puzzles

- Three years ago, naturalist and educator Tony Angell found the spawned-out body of a large steelhead trout on a sandbar in Lyon Creek. Steelhead are not supposed to inhabit our streams. Fish go where they go, heedless of our expectations.
- An early Lake Forest Park resident, Ernie Raymond, recalled catching 49 trout from Lyon Creek after school, before dark (the legal limit was 50). That was in 1926. Last year’s volunteer fish count turned up no trout and only 16 salmon in the entire length of the creek.
- We know streamside trees are good for salmon. They cool the streams, hold the soil, provide habitat for the insects which fish

live on. But in the bare, cut-over landscape of the 1930's, salmon still clogged the local creeks. Today the trees are back and most of the salmon are gone.

- In the 1930's, a hog farm stood where the apartment complex of Ballinger Estates now sits, on the north side of Ballinger Way, on 195th Street. Hog manure washed into the Lyon Creek drainage every winter and spring. Yet the salmon endured that pollution to return yearly in great numbers. (This is not to be taken as a call for more hog farms, but an indication of the endurance and resilience of the fish).



And some clues

- Lyon Creek contained the highest amounts of the insecticide diazinon, a popular lawn insecticide, among a dozen King County streams studied in 1998. Recent tests at the University of Washington indicate that diazinon interferes with the sense of smell salmon depend upon to find their way home from the salt water. (Aside from its effect on salmon runs, there are other problems with using this compound. The Environmental Protection Agency says diazinon kills more birds than any other pesticide. Also, traces of this and other lawn chemicals were found in the urine of 109 out of 110 toddlers tested in a Seattle clinic).
- Many square miles of asphalt roads, driveways and roofs now concentrate storm water into punishing torrents, damaging creek banks and carrying pesticides and chemical fertilizer from hundreds of backyards.
- Fisheries biologists believe a long list of destructive forces —over-fishing, stormwater runoff, the “hardening” of stream banks with stone or concrete, siltation from upstream development, pollution from lawns, the loss of wetlands, changes in the temperature of ocean currents – all have converged to kill off the fish in urban streams around Puget Sound.

A small number of salmon, cutthroat and at least one steelhead have found their way up Lyon Creek in the past few years. But the great runs live only in the memories of those who, like Bill Schoening and John Clayton, are lucky enough to have lived here when Lyon Creek was packed with fish.



It has a rock

In the summer of 2001 the Lake Forest Park City Council officially adopted the name Bsche'tla for a previously unnamed stream that flows into Lake Washington in the southeastern corner of the City.

Three young people, Callie, Betsy and Alec Wade, researched the history of the stream and presented their findings to the Council. They had conducted a poll among local residents at the Picnic in the Park, resulting in a tie among three proposed names: Bsche'tla Creek, Glacier Rock Creek and Red Fish Creek. They submitted the names to the Environmental Quality Commission and the City Council, who agreed with their preference, Bsche'tla (pronounced bs-cheh-tlah). It's a term from the Lushootseed Indian dialect, translated as "it has a rock." A large boulder from the glacial period sits near the stream.

Bsche'tla rises near the Briarcrest Elementary School, flows past Acacia Cemetery and quite directly east, under Lake City Way and the Burke Gilman trail, entering Lake Washington just south of 155th Street.



Creeks with no names

Here are some "no name" creeks you may have wondered about. Most, but not all, are tiny drainages that rise in wetland springs and flow only a short distance before joining a fork of Lyon or McAleer. We've numbered some of them on the map with the notation NN:

NN 1) Sometimes known as “Terrace Creek,” it flows from Mountlake Terrace into Lake Forest Park at 205th Street between 30th and 33rd Avenue. It drains into Lyon Creek at about 196th St. near 35th Avenue.

NN 2) Sometimes known as Janiki Creek, it rises in springs just off 40th Place, at about 193rd Street, to flow south and west, entering Lyon Creek at 35th Avenue, at 190th Street.

NN 3) A short drainage born in springs north of 40th Court at the equivalent of 202nd Street, joins Lyon Creek at 200th Street and 40th Place. (Public Services Director Frank Zenk remembers catching fish here as a child, in the 1960’s.)

NN 4) Flows through a steep ravine north of Ballinger Way and Towne Centre, drains to Lake Washington under Bothell Way and the Burke Gilman trail.

NN 5, 6, 7) Short, year round tributaries to the South fork of Hillside Creek, part of the McAleer watershed.

These and other tiny streams, often no more than a foot across, are quite likely to be salmon homes. Look carefully. Very small coho venture up very small streams to find quiet waters where they may spend a full year, before beginning their long journey to the sea.

The drainage ditch along the road in front of your home may in fact be a live salmon stream, and deserves to be kept free of the grass clippings and garden trash that sometimes wind up there, along with lawn chemicals.

“Salmon make fools out of all of us,” says Kurt Beardslee, executive director of Washington Trout, a statewide organization dedicated to preserving fish habitat. “They show up in places where common sense tells us they can’t be.”

Problems with being a salmon

Winter problem: storm water

The runoff from your roof doesn't seem to amount to much, but add it to your neighbors' and their neighbors' and it adds up to millions of gallons, rushing down the street and into the storm drain. And then into McAleer or Lyon Creek as a huge slug of water.

Storm water rolls the gravel and flushes out the fish eggs; it scours the stream bottoms, wrecking the spawning areas. It erodes the banks, dumping silt on the eggs. Tiny fish that have already hatched are washed out of the streams into Lake Washington, where they become a snack for predators.



Summer problem: low flows

Wherever water enters and leaves the stream in a winter flood, there's not much left to keep the small fry alive during the summer.

The shallow water warms up, especially if the streamside vegetation has been cleared away. A few degrees of warming and the fish are in serious trouble.

Although young sockeye salmon move to the lake soon after they emerge from the gravel, young coho need to spend a whole year in the streams and ponds, before they can safely migrate to the lake. Sea run trout spend several years in the stream before they go to the lake or Puget Sound and some trout spend their whole lives in the stream.

Wetlands are especially critical to the survival of these fish. Wetlands are the reservoirs providing summer flows when the rains are few.

Help a salmon home

Reduce runoff

“One of the most important things you can do for local fish is to control storm water,” says Doug Hennick, a Lake Forest Park resident and biologist with the Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife. “Get as much of it into the ground as possible before it leaves your property.”

Some engineers suggest digging tiny dry wells filled with gravel at the end of the downspouts on your house. Others prefer the use of perforated underground pipe to carry water from the downspouts. Either way, the idea is to help the water penetrate into the ground and reach the streams slowly, through natural wetlands and springs.

“If everyone would do this, you’d be surprised how much it would help the fish,” Hennick says.

Keep it shady

A rock-lined brook, shining in the sunlight across a tailored lawn, can be a mighty pretty sight unless you’re a salmon. For them it’s devastating. Stone-lined banks increase the speed of the water, creating flooding and bank erosion downstream. Cleared, grassy banks allow the sun to warm the water to a level that quickly becomes lethal to fish. Rainfall carries lawn chemicals into the creek.

“We need to change our way of appreciating streams,” Doug Hennick says. “Let’s hope people are willing to appreciate the true health of the stream by keeping it shaded and leaving the stream banks natural.”



Let sleeping logs lie

There was a time when people went about “improving” streambeds by clearing them of logs and stumps. Now we know that was not an improvement, says Eric Pentico, Area Habitat Biologist for the Washington Dept. of Fish & Wildlife.

“Logs in the streambed slow down the moving water so it doesn’t scour out the gravels from the stream bed during high water,” Pentico explains. “That gravel is where the trout and salmon lay their eggs. Without it there’s no more fish.”

The logs also create small dams providing pools of deeper water where fish can live. Logs and branches give them a place to hide from predators. Some erosion of the bed and banks may happen next to the logs, as the force of the water concentrates around and under the wood. But the wood also reduces the energy of the flowing water, so that overall there’s *less* erosion in streams that are loaded with logs and stumps.

“We’re not in danger of putting too much wood in the streams,” Pentico observes. “In the early days when the salmon were thick, it appears that as much as a quarter of the stream surface was covered with fallen trees.”

To contact Doug Hennick or Eric Pentico, call DFW at Mill Creek, 425-775-1311).



photo by Casey Dougherty

Go natural with the lawn

The King County Department of Natural Resources crusades on behalf of “natural” lawns, hoping to persuade us to stop using harmful chemicals including Dursban and diazinon. Both were banned by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, but their use will be phased out over a number of years. In the meantime they’re widely sold in our area to kill the crane fly, an unappealing creature that looks like a huge mosquito but does little or no damage.

Birds do a good job of controlling the crane fly, but it’s the birds that die first, when you apply poison to get rid of the insects. For information on maintaining chemical-free lawns and gardens, contact the DNR at 206-296-6500 or on the web at dnr.metrokc.gov.



Be heard

Question, loudly, the filling or draining of wetlands and their buffers. King County and Lake Forest Park exhibit a strong environmental ethic in today’s land use policies, but they weren’t always that way. Parts of our leafy little city, including the shopping center, are built on what once were wetlands. Filling and destruction were commonly permitted as late as the 1950’s and 1960’s. Many of these decisions were made before Lake Forest Park was incorporated as a city in 1961.



A walk in the Park

Short on hiking trails, our city does offer some charming street walks and bird watches along leafy streams. StreamKeepers chair Bill Bennett has walked them all. Here are three of his favorites:

Park to Park (one mile)

Animal Acres Park, south along Brookside Boulevard. Cross Hamlin Street bridge, curve back into Blue Heron Park. (See Page 26). Curve west along forested Hamlin Street and then back down 37th Avenue to 178th Street and your starting point.

The Green Valley (two miles)

From Animal Acres, walk west on the shoulder of 178th Street as it curves up the hill. Turn left on 28th Avenue through the valley. Notice the wetlands on either side with tiny streams gurgling north into Hillside Creek or south into Brookside Creek.

Walk 166th Street up the hill following the steep canyon. Return to 178th along 33rd Avenue. At 35th you may notice a project which diverted Hillside Creek from the culvert that formerly took it under Brookside School's playground. In 1994 the City of Lake Forest Park and the Environmental Quality Commission created a new open channel where young salmon can thrive after being hatched and planted by the children of Brookside School.

Perkins Way/Forest Park Drive (three miles)

Walk upstream along McAleer Creek from Animal Acres Park up 180th Street and Perkins Way, accompanied by brook and bird song.

Just beyond a massive retaining wall on the right hand side of the street, McAleer Creek crosses under Perkins Way from a wild canyon, the habitat for great, endangered chinook salmon who return to this reach in lucky years.

Turn right on 23rd Avenue just short of Whisper Creek, where it crosses under Perkins Way and curves through a wooded ravine to join McAleer Creek at the bottom of the hill.

Approaching 15th Avenue, turn sharply to the right onto 196th Street. From the bridge you can enjoy a fine view up and down McAleer Canyon. Under the bridge there's a flood control structure and a fish ladder.

Turn right on Forest Park Drive. At 26th Avenue, watch for a sign on the left indicating the Forest Park Wetland, a brushy wild area purchased by the city a few years ago. Follow the grassy path into the wetland but please don't cross the neighbor's lawn. The pond helps to feed the west branch of Lyon Creek.

Return to 26th Avenue and curve onto 185th Street. At 30th Avenue turn right and follow it to 182nd Street. This winding leafy street leads you back to 180th Street at McAleer Creek. Follow it back to Animal Acres Park.



photo by Casey Dougherty

Blue Heron Park provides shade and food for young salmon on their way out, and gravel spawning beds for adult salmon coming home.

Speaking of parks

For all its leafiness and great, green vistas, Lake Forest Park is short on parks. Less than one percent of the area of the city is in public parks and open space. This is far less than any other city in the region. Comparable numbers for surrounding cities range from four percent to ten percent. With the addition of Pfingst Animal Acres Park, dedicated in August 2000, there are now four public parks within Lake Forest Park.

- 1) **Horizon View Park:** six and a half acres in the 198th block of 47th Avenue, in the northeastern section of the City. The City's only active park, it was closed for a time in 2001 for a major upgrade. The renovated park will include new playground equipment for toddlers and elementary school children, a walking trail, playfield, playground, basketball half-court, tennis courts, and picnic tables. A permanent restroom is planned.
- 2) **Pfingst Animal Acres Park:** Brookside Boulevard and 178th Street, across from the Presbyterian Church. Nearly four acres of maintained meadow and tall, arching shade trees, a lovely area for low-intensity recreation. There are picnic tables, a children's garden, and a walking trail. McAleer Creek winds through a forested corridor with good salmon-viewing points.
- 3) **Eagle Scout Park:** 178th and 180th Streets, across from Animal Acres Park and the Presbyterian Church. A "pocket" pedestrian park with exercise equipment.
- 4) **Blue Heron Park:** a one-third acre jewel at a busy intersection, Hamlin Road and Brookside Boulevard. Recently refurbished with help from Seattle Tilth, the City of Lake Forest Park, and scores of local volunteers. Lush native landscaping gives way to a primitive path where McAleer Creek winds through a thick grove of alder, cottonwood and poplar. Flower beds with native drought-tolerant plants and a compost fence serve as a demonstration garden. It's a good spot to meditate in summer and watch the salmon in winter.

Getting involved

Our city depends heavily on volunteer commissions to help make decisions affecting the environment. These are official agencies who advise the Mayor, City Council, and city staff. Each has nine members, appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council. They offer a great way for you to become directly involved in policies that affect the future of streams, wetlands and parks. To contact any members of the city commissions, leave a message at Lake Forest Park city offices, 206-368-5440

- **Planning Commission**

Makes key decisions concerning the size, shape, appearance and character of the city. Develops land use policies which – when adopted by the City Council – become the “road map” for growth and change. At the time of publication, the Planning Commission was rewriting the Lake Forest Park Comprehensive Plan and seeking ways to meet state-mandated growth targets while preserving the natural qualities of the community.

- **Environmental Quality Commission**

Recommends policies and actions to the Mayor, City Council and city staff on a wide range of natural resource issues including streams, wetlands, watershed management, water and air quality. The EQC also works with community groups and schools on educational projects.

- **Parks and Recreation Commission**

Advises the Mayor and City Council on park policies and monitors the City’s management of recreation programs, parks and open space. For example, the PRC and EQC jointly persuaded city officials to eliminate pesticide and herbicide spraying of parks and street sides, and helped Lake Forest Park become the first in King County to be named an “Earth City” in 2001, in recognition of the City’s efforts to protect the environment.

If you'd like to serve on one of the commissions, write a letter to the Mayor expressing your interest. Include any pertinent background that fits the position. The letter will be held on file for reference when openings occur.

Other ways to get into the action

StreamKeepers

Lake Forest Park has no city officer in charge of streams; an organization of volunteer citizens handles that responsibility. StreamKeepers works with the Environmental Quality Commission to monitor and improve the health of local streams. It measures water quality, undertakes stream restoration projects (such as the rerouting and "daylighting" of Brookside Creek from a culvert to an open stream around Brookside School). To get involved call Bill Bennett at 206-362-6503.

The publishers of this booklet, the Directors of the **Lake Forest Park Stewardship Foundation**, are always in need of volunteers to work on a variety of special projects aimed at protecting and improving our parks, waterways, wetlands, fish and wildlife. Call the Foundation at (206) 361-7076, or one of the Foundation Board members. Their names are listed on page 32.



What to do if you see a violation

Streams and wetlands fall under the jurisdiction of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. If you believe that you see a pollution incident, illegal dumping in or near a stream, an apparent fish kill, or other event involving the health of streams, call the Department of Fish and Wildlife Emergency Hotline at (360) 902-2537. They can dispatch an officer immediately. The City of Lake Forest Park should also be notified at 368-5440.

Preserving the common wealth

Our city has ordinances meant to prevent mistreatment of streams, wetlands and steep slopes, referred to in the city laws as Sensitive Areas.

For example, undisturbed natural buffers are required between wetlands, streams and steep slopes, and any grading or land development. The size of the required buffer depends on the size and quality of the wetland or stream, with minimum buffers of 25 feet between stream banks and human activities.

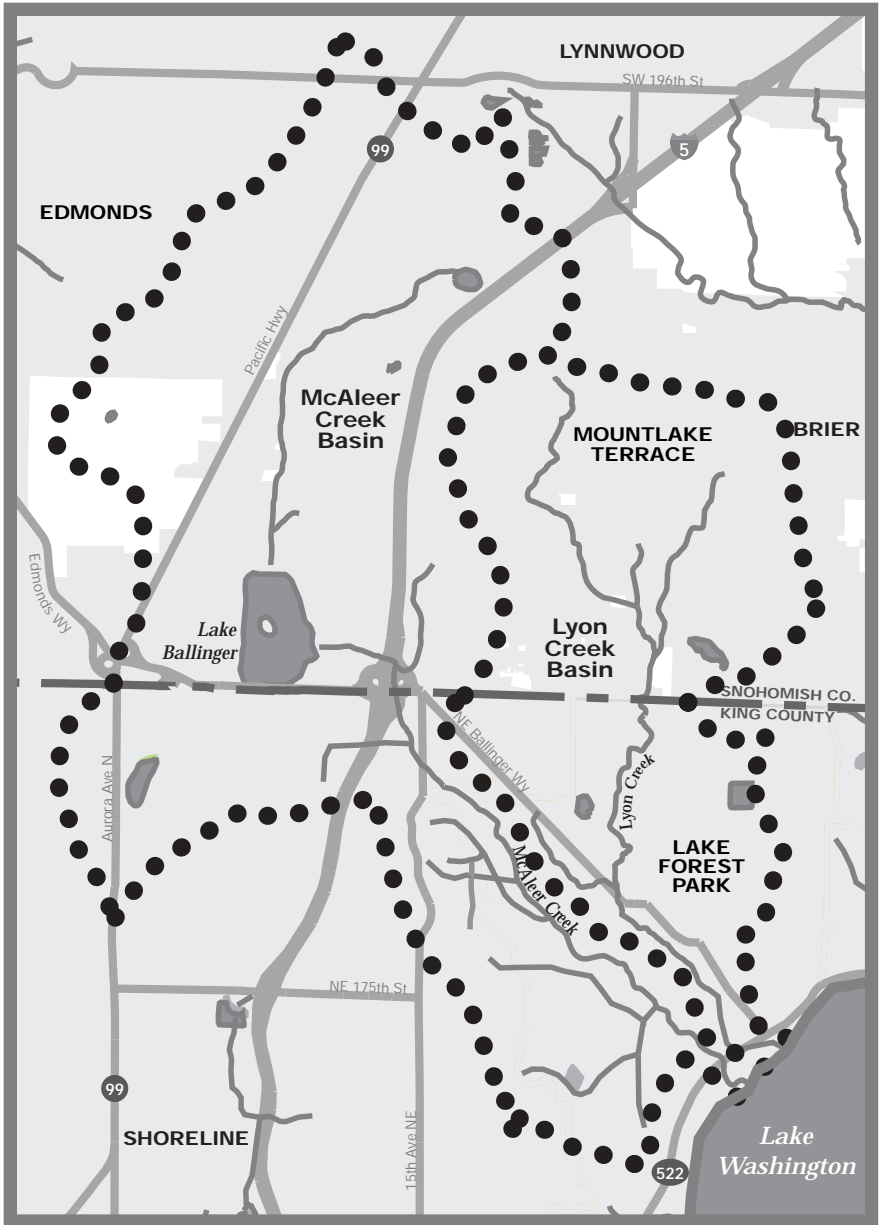
The ordinances also require 15-foot setbacks from streams and steep slopes, in addition to the buffers.

These measures were adopted long after most of the city was built. Therefore many homes, businesses and parking lots exist, quite legally, adjacent to streams and wetlands.

The tree ordinance

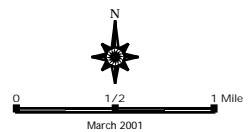
Recent changes in the city's tree removal ordinances require permits before you may remove "significant" trees. The ordinance defines these as any healthy tree six inches or more in diameter; or any with a minimum diameter of four inches but with an age, height, value or function determined to be significant.

You can pick up "Customer Information Bulletins" at City Hall that explain the environmental ordinances in more detail. Or look up the city codes on the web at www.mrsc.org and click on "Database search" to bring up municipal codes, then scroll down to Lake Forest Park.



McAleer Creek and Lyon Creek Basins

- Basin Boundary
- Stream
- Lake
- Wetland
- Incorporated Area



Map produced by:
GIS & Visual Communications Unit
King County Dept. of Natural Resources
010SLPmap WGC

About fins, feathers, and foundations

The Lake Forest Park Stewardship Foundation, who produced this booklet, needs your help. If you haven't already done so, we urge you to fill in the enclosed contribution form and mail it with your contribution, in the return envelope.

We'll be forever grateful to the Northwest Fund for the Environment, whose generous grant helped to pay for this publication.

We've had excellent help in this and other endeavors from the citizens who govern and administer our city; and from the wise, energetic efforts of StreamKeepers, the Environmental Quality Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, Trout Unlimited, Washington Trout, Boy Scouts of America, Seattle Tilth, and the students and faculties of the Shoreline School District. We may have overlooked some organizations who helped. Our apologies and sincere thanks.

Thanks also to Tony Angell, artist, sculptor, author and educator, for generously allowing us to decorate the book with his art images. To Casey Dougherty for his fine photos. To Victoria Stiles of the Shoreline/Lake Forest Park Historical Museum, John Clayton and Bill Schoening for guiding us through the history of our streams. To Jack Rogers for guiding us through the mystery of page layout. To Bill Bennett and Frank Zenk for proof-reading our maps and narrative. Any errors are ours, not theirs.

Thanks to you for taking time to read this and becoming involved in your city's future. We do believe this is an extraordinary place to live. With enough wisdom, passion and luck we can keep it that way.





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