

**Date:** October 9, 2012

**To:** Parks & Community Services Board

**From:** Alexandra DySard, Environmental Program Coordinator  
Geoff Bradley, Environmental Programs Supervisor

**Subject:** 2012 Well KEPT Program Brief  
*(Information only, no Board action requested)*

## Introduction

The City of Bellevue’s Well KEPT (Kids Environmental Project Training) Program has completed another successful summer serving the Bellevue community. For 26 years, the Parks & Community Services Department has engaged youth and invested in our future by providing valuable employment opportunities to Bellevue teens through the Well KEPT Program.

The Well KEPT program is a summer youth employment program offered through the Bellevue Parks Natural Resource Division. The program is designed to provide Bellevue youth with education, job skills, and career development training in the field of park resource management. The work focuses on parkland renovation and maintenance and typical projects include forest enhancement, wetland restoration, and trail construction. The Well KEPT program combines on-the-job work experience with environmental education and career development training to instill strong self-esteem, good work habits, and sound environmental ethics.



The 2012 Well KEPT Crew included 10 Bellevue youth trainees and two supervisors.



## 2012 Projects and Accomplishments

Each year the Well KEPT program works on a variety of projects throughout Bellevue parks. A brief summary of the 2012 accomplishments include the following:

- Received training in trail design, construction, and maintenance while renovating over one mile of trails throughout Bellevue's open space trail system and constructing a new trail in Chism Beach Park.
- Learned about the detriments of noxious vegetation while clearing nearly 1 acre of invasive weeds including Himalayan blackberry, Morning glory, Japanese knotweed and English holly throughout Bellevue's park system.



- Gained an understanding of hydrology and storm water management while helping control the spread of purple loosestrife, jewelweed and policeman's helmet in the Kelsey Creek drainage.

Team member Sam Cohen shows off the size of his Policeman's Helmet root while working in Kelsey Creek Park.

- Learned about the ecological benefits of trees and native vegetation while planting 30 trees in Killarney Glen Park.
- Learned about Bellevue's cultural and agricultural heritage while working at the Mercer Slough Blueberry Farm.

Completed trail and native planting in Killarney Glen Park.



## Supplemental Education Workshops

In addition to on-the-job training the program partners with outside agencies to develop and present educational workshops to enhance the contextual understanding of the work, increase environmental knowledge, and help develop essential career skills. Below are some examples of 2012 workshops.

### Educational Workshop

Native Plant Identification  
Noxious Weeds  
Recycling/Composting  
Tree Health and Management  
Stream Health and Water Quality  
Soils Survey and Analysis  
Wetland Ecology and Management  
Wildlife Ecology  
Personal Financial Management  
Resume Building

### Instructor, Organization

Lara Vyas, City of Bellevue  
Patrick Sowers, King County Noxious Weeds  
Janet Prichard, Republic Services  
Melissa Brown, City of Bellevue  
Laurie Devereaux, City of Bellevue  
Chuck Natsuhara, USDA/NRCS  
Alex DySard/Geoff Bradley, City of Bellevue  
Jen Syrowitz, City of Bellevue  
Writu Kakshapati, Washington Society of CPAs  
Katy Kouche, Lake Wash. Institute of Technology

Laura Devereaux from Bellevue Utilities teaches trainees how to use benthic macroinvertebrates to monitor water quality in Coal Creek Natural Area.



Chuck Natsuhara from the US Department of Agriculture instructs trainees on soil science and management.

Evaluation is an important component of the Well KEPT program to help measure success and implement adaptive management to increase the effectiveness of future programs. Below is a table showing responses to some of the questions asked on the post program evaluation questionnaire.

<b>2012 WELL KEPT PROGRAM</b> Evaluation Question Responses				
<b>Evaluation Question</b>	Did the program increase your understanding and appreciation of the environment?	Do you feel the program was a good first job that helped you develop career skills?	Would you recommend the Well K.E.P.T. Program to a friend?	How would you rate the overall program?
<b>Percentage of Yes Responses</b>	100%	100%	100%	90% said Excellent

**Conclusion**

Employment opportunities for youth are limited. The Parks Department Well KEPT program is a unique and innovative program that provides an exceptional first employment opportunity for Bellevue youth. The program is an integral component of the Natural Resource Division environmental education and community outreach program that inspires and involves citizens to make a difference in the care of Park resources. By instilling strong environmental values and positive work ethics in tomorrow’s community leaders the Well KEPT program provides cost effective stewardship of our City in a Park.