

River Hero: John Beal, 1950–2006

continued from page 1

Throughout 2005, John carefully monitored the planning for the City's Joint Training Facility at the creek's headwaters. He himself had painstakingly reconstructed much of the wetland pools that formed the headwaters, and wanted to make sure the City proceeded with caution. But he watched in defeat as the City's contractors filled in the wetland. He lodged warnings, complaints and legal threats as the headwaters dried up. Eventually, he gained the ear of the Army Corps of Engineers, but it was too late to stop the damage to the creek. The City was issued a stop work order, cited for illegally filling a wetland, and is now facing up to \$1 million in mitigation costs to offset the damage done to Hamm Creek. As he watched his decades of work on Hamm Creek undermined, John told his close friends and colleagues, "My heart is broken."

On June 16, 2006 John suffered his final heart attack. He passed away on June 23.

Many thought that John was "unreasonable" in his defense of Hamm Creek. To those of us who admired his work, the words of George Bernard Shaw come to mind:

"The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man."

The members of DRCC will continue John's efforts to rehabilitate Hamm Creek, and to ensure that the City repairs the damage done, but no one can fill John's shoes. We all must take up the challenge of restoring the environment – in our own neighborhoods, on the Duwamish River and throughout Puget Sound.

John will be sorely missed by his friends, his colleagues, and all the creatures that can again call Hamm Creek home because of John's tenacity, passion and tireless dedication.

PEOPLE YOU SHOULD KNOW!

DRCC steps up bilingual community outreach

Lorena Jimenez-Sepin is the newest member of the Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition team. She joins DRCC as our Bilingual Community Outreach Coordinator, educating and involving Spanish-speaking members of the community in the river cleanup. Lorena was previously an Americorp Vista volunteer and Latino Outreach Worker at King County Public Health, where she honed her skills in social service and community outreach.

Since joining our staff in April, Lorena has been busy reaching out to Latino communities in neighborhoods surrounding the Duwamish River, making sure they know about the health



of the river, and about opportunities to help shape the cleanup. She played an important role in making sure there was representation of the Latino community at the EPA's public meeting on the Malarkey cleanup

and is helping to organize the Duwamish River Festival on August 12.

If you haven't met Lorena, one place you can find her on Wednesday afternoons at the new ECOSS Bilingual Information Center in South Park, at the corner of 14th Ave S and Cloverdale. Lorena has a Spanish-language phone number: (206) 382-7007, x208, or you can email her at lsepin@pugetsound.org.

PLACES YOU SHOULD GO!

Georgetown: Community Reconnects to River

The Georgetown Riverview Restoration Project is a community-based habitat restoration and public access project, resulting from a community visioning process 2005. The Georgetown community identified Gateway Park North, on the Duwamish River at the end of 8th Avenue S., as a prime riverfront park and the only place people can get close to the river in their neighborhood. The community has stewarded the park since 1990, and transformed it from bare ground to a lush landscape covered in native plants. During the day, employees from local businesses come to the park for breaks, and Georgetown residents visit after work to relax and walk their dogs.

While the waterfront park has been positively transformed, 8th Avenue S., the only access to the park, has been neglected. The sidewalk is covered with

gravel and trash, the road is potholed, and rain puddles create an oily, muddy mess.

Georgetown residents, with support from the Department of Neighborhoods, have conducted a Feasibility and Design process to determine how to make 8th Avenue S. safer and more attractive for pedestrians and more functional for the businesses that use the street. The community wants its design ideas to mesh with the future expansion of Gateway Park North, when it becomes the property of the Parks Department in the coming years.

The project will continue with the creation of a Friends of Gateway Park group, that will host work parties and social events at the park and seek funding to implement their design ideas. To visit the park, turn west off E. Marginal Way onto 8th Avenue S. and go three blocks to the Duwamish River.

GET INVOLVED. The Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition works to involve the public in the river cleanup. Let us know if you want to be added to our mail/email list, would like a presentation for your group, or if we can answer your questions about the cleanup. Check out our website, www.duwamishcleanup.org, or call 206-954-0218 for more information on these opportunities, upcoming events, and more!

DUWAMISH RIVER CLEANUP COALITION



SUPERFUND FOCUS SHEET

SUMMER 2006 UPDATE

"Visioning" the future Duwamish River

John Beal, a founding member of the Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition (see memorial below) had a vision for the river, and we all cheered him on as he turned that vision into a reality at his beloved Hamm Creek. Let John be an inspiration to us all as we put our best minds and hearts together to create a united future vision for the Duwamish River.

Around the country, there are hundreds of Superfund sites, that when cleaned up, have resulted in a cleaner, healthier

piece of land or water. It is almost guaranteed, given the extent of contamination at most sites, that some improvement is made. But there are only a handful of sites that have succeeded in not only making an improvement in the site, but also improving the future health of the entire community. Looking holistically at environmental health, the local economy, public arts, habitat restoration and redevelopment through the lens of a Superfund cleanup can have amazing results. The Duwamish

is heading down that exciting path.

Regulating agencies, local governments, community groups and individuals are working together to make cleanup plans for the Duwamish; it would be a missed opportunity not to leverage this coordinated involvement to make the neighborhoods surrounding the Duwamish better places to live, work and play. DRCC is now in the early planning stages to collaborate with community partners on a river-wide master

planning project to realize this vision.

Components of the "Master Plan" will include: open space, habitat, public access, development, housing, diversity, art, transportation, environmental health, recreation and other community needs.

Please help us begin this visioning process by visiting our web site and filling out the scoping survey at www.duwamishcleanup.org!

River Hero: John Beal, 1950–2006



In 2005, the City of Seattle's Fleets and Utilities Division built a new Joint Training Facility for its fire, transportation and utility departments. The site – at the headwaters of South Seattle's Hamm Creek – was a delicate wetland, one that Seattle, with its keen environmental ethic, had to handle with all appropriate care during construction of the facility. The creek had history. It had been brought back from the brink of destruction – some

would say beyond it – by the tenacity and stubborn love of one man: a Vietnam veteran by the name of John Beal.

A resident of South Park, John returned from the war suffering from PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) and had a series of heart attacks. John's doctor told him that he could expect another attack, and that he likely wouldn't survive it. John's doctor suggested he get a hobby, something he could enjoy for the few months he had left. Hamm Creek, then the trashed remnant of an old neighborhood creek, became that hobby. Foot-by-foot, John removed trash from the creek's remaining ditches, pulled weeds, filtered oil by placing straw bales in its trickles of water, planted native species, and even turned his home into a wildlife rehabilitation center to care for and eventually return

birds and wildlife to the creek's slowly re-emerging habitat.

Once the ditches were once again recognizable as a creek, John and local schoolchildren planted the creek with salmon. Upon their return, the salmon would stop short where the creek spilled out of a 300-foot long pipe that separated the restored stream from the Duwamish River. John would carry the salmon around the pipe so they could continue upstream to spawn. Then, in 2002, after nearly 25 years, Seattle City Light donated a portion of their riverfront property to "daylight" Hamm Creek, reconstructing an open stream channel to reconnect the creek with the Duwamish River and allow salmon free access to their spawning grounds for the first time in more than 50 years. John credited the creek itself with keeping him alive

through all those years.

John has received awards from the United Nations Environmental Program and dozens of other prestigious institutions for his years of work. But more importantly, he was rewarded with his neighbors' appreciation, eager-to-learn school children, and hard-earned respect from all who worked on the river. He was barely supported by his disability checks, but continued to divert what he could into building a healthy Hamm Creek. He founded the IM-A-PAL Foundation to house his work, and co-founded the Green-Duwamish Watershed Alliance and the Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition, while raising four children with his wife, Lana Beal, in their South Park home.

continued on page 4

Duwamish River
Cleanup Coalition
5410 First Ave NE
Seattle, WA 98105

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SEATTLE, WA
PERMIT NO. 1234

Community Involvement Works!

See these Site Updates for proof....

Duwamish/Diagonal Combined Sewer Overflow & Stormdrain

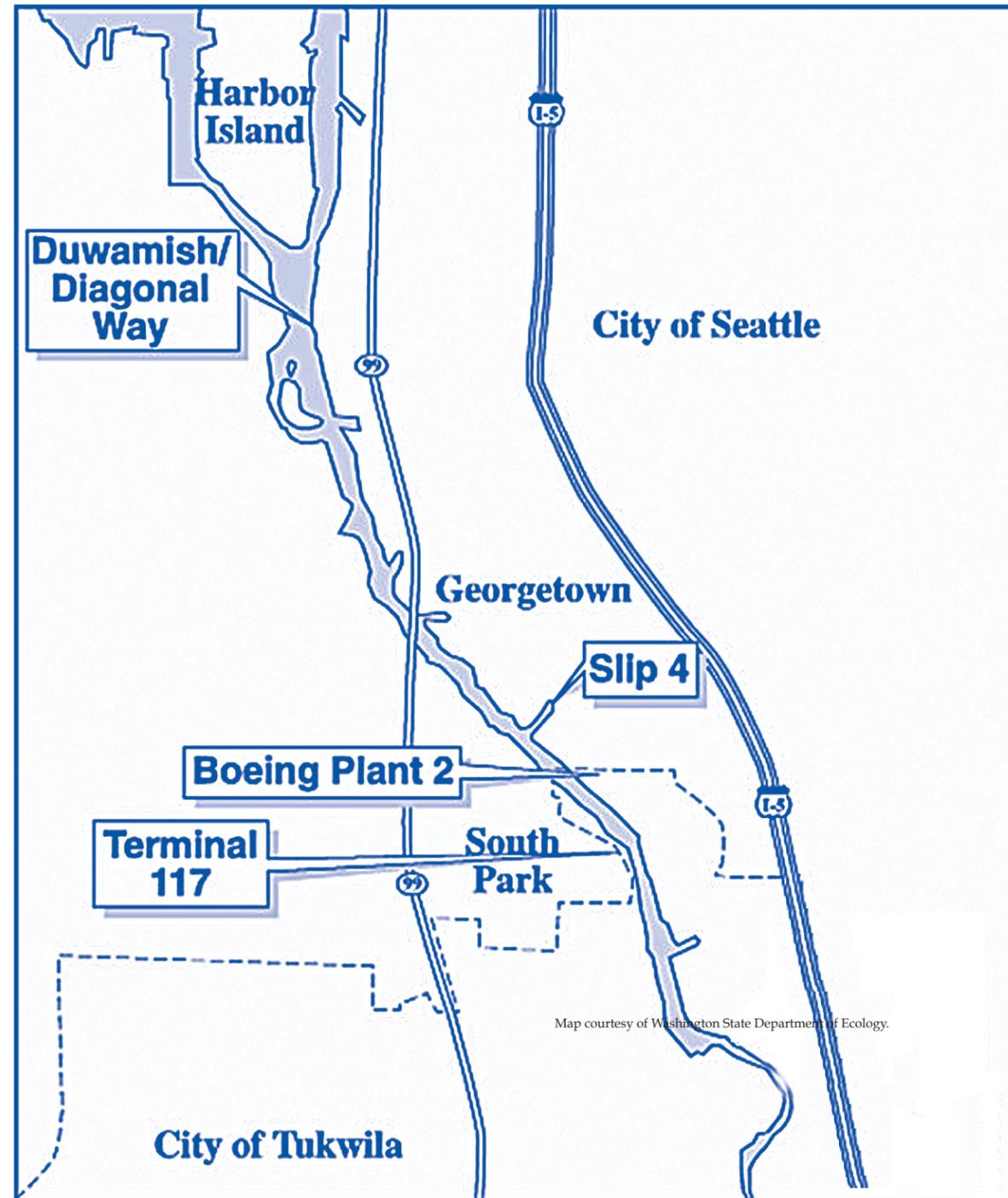
Seven acres of contaminated mud containing mercury, PCBs and phthalates were removed from this area in 2003. Original plans called for disposing of the toxic mud in an in-water site in Tacoma, but **public opposition from both communities kept the material out of Puget Sound**. However, the mud was removed using an open dredging bucket and sloppy operators, resulting in spills of toxic mud, which was then carried by the river's currents and tides to previously cleaner areas, and 65 million gallons a year of untreated sewage and stormwater continues to discharge to the site. Just a few years after cleanup, tests show the area is being recontaminated with PCBs and phthalates.

Slip 4

EPA approved a cleanup plan for Slip 4 in May 2006. The City and County worked extensively with DRCC and the Georgetown community during development of the cleanup plan, which **now includes salmon habitat restoration and public access opportunities requested by the neighborhood**. Some toxic mud will be removed and deeper contamination will be covered by an engineered "cap." Because the design of the cap is so important to its eventual success at containing the contamination, the City has committed to ongoing dialogue with the community about the cap design and cleanup operations. Removal will begin in 2007.

Malarkey Asphalt (Terminal 117)

EPA approved a cleanup plan for the riverbank and sediments (mud) at Malarkey in July 2005, but ordered the Port of Seattle to conduct additional testing in the upland part of the property. The new tests showed extremely high levels of PCBs and oil, leading to a new cleanup order for the uplands. However, the EPA plan allowed the Port to leave enough toxic soil behind to severely restrict future land uses, and did not meet state standards for a final site cleanup. At the end of June 2006, **the Port of Seattle Commissioners responded to community concerns by voting to exceed EPA's cleanup plan and meet stricter PCB cleanup levels to allow for all future uses**. The Port and the community are now discussing future uses of the property, which may include a new neighborhood riverfront park.



Riverwide Cleanup

While the Early Action, or "fast track" areas are being cleaned up, planning and data collection for the riverwide cleanup continues. A full, riverwide cleanup decision is expected in early 2008. Once approved, design and cleanup will begin.

We are still in the early stages of this cleanup process, and we need your help. To get involved in these and other Duwamish River cleanup efforts, contact DRCC at (206) 954-0218 or info@duwamishcleanup.org.

Boeing Plant 2

The Boeing Company manufactured 17 airplanes each day here at the height of WWII. Over half a mile of waterfront in front of the former plant contains PCBs, oil, heavy metals and phthalates. Draft cleanup documents for the site are expected in late 2006, with cleanup scheduled to begin in 2008. Stay tuned!

THINGS YOU SHOULD DO!

River Calendar

August 12, 2006, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

2nd Annual Duwamish River Festival!

Duwamish River Park, 7900 10th Avenue South, in South Park.

Learn about the river while you enjoy food, live music, tribal and folkloric dancers, children's activities, kayak tours and much more! Ride the free water taxi between Georgetown and South Park. For more information visit www.duwamishcleanup.org or call (206) 954-0218.

October 14, 2006, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

"Duwamish Alive!" Volunteer Day.

Help clean up and restore habitat at several Duwamish River sites. Individuals, civic clubs, school groups or groups of friends are welcome! Call or email DRCC to sign up: (206) 954-0218; info@duwamishcleanup.org.

October 29, 2006, 10 a.m. - 12 noon

Public Boat Tour

Tour the Duwamish River with local experts, learn about the cleanup and search for eagles, osprey, seals and otters. Space is limited, so reserve your space today! (206) 954-0218; info@duwamishcleanup.org.

DRCC MEMBERS

Community Coalition for Environmental Justice, Duwamish Tribe, IM-A-PAL Foundation, Georgetown Community Council, ECOSS, People For Puget Sound, Puget Soundkeeper Alliance, South Park Neighborhood Association, Washington Toxics Coalition, Waste Action Project

This product funded in part by the Washington State Department of Ecology; this does not necessarily constitute endorsement by the Department. Additional funding provided by the U.S. EPA, Bullitt Foundation, Ben & Jerry's Foundation and Neighbor to Neighbor Fund.

This newsletter is printed on 30% post-consumer recycled material