

MEMORANDUM



Bellevue Parks &
Community Services

Date: November 19, 2025

To: Parks & Community Services Board

From: Dustin Van Nieulande – Park Ranger, Parks and Community Services Department

Subject: 2025 Well K.E.P.T. (Kids Environmental Project Training) Program Brief
For information only - no Board action requested

Background

The Well K.E.P.T. (Kids Environmental Project Training) program is a summer youth employment opportunity offered through the Bellevue Parks' Natural Resource Division. The program is designed to provide teens in Bellevue area high schools with education, job skills, and career development training in the field of park resource management. The work focuses on parkland restoration and maintenance. This summer, projects included noxious weed removal and trail building. Well K.E.P.T. combines on-the-job work experience with workshops on environmental education and career development to instill strong self-esteem, good work habits, and sound environmental ethics. Trainees developed and strengthened technical experience related to natural resource best management practices and trail construction techniques.

The City of Bellevue's Well K.E.P.T. program has completed another successful summer serving the Bellevue community. For 37 years, Bellevue Parks & Community Services has engaged youth and invested in our city's future by providing valuable first-job opportunities to Bellevue youth.

Well K.E.P.T. in 2025 was funded by a King Conservation District (KCD) Member Jurisdiction Grant. Funding was used to cover all labor costs as well as vehicle rentals, tools, supplies, and safety equipment for the crew.

2025 Projects and Accomplishments

Trail Building: In addition to providing a valuable service to the Bellevue Park System, trail projects provide trainees with a hands-on opportunity to make a difference in their community. Through this experience, trainees gain a deeper understanding of the pivotal role integrated trails have in the holistic management of Bellevue's green spaces. Trainees developed a deeper understanding of Bellevue's natural environment while improving access within the park system.

- Built a trail in Ardmore Park of approximately **560 ft**, which included clearing vegetation, grubbing soil, leveling the surface, mulching the trail, transplanting ferns, building a footbridge, and moving a bench from an old trail to the new trail.



Forest Management Noxious Weed Removal Projects: Removing noxious weeds from the Bellevue Park System helps develop an understanding of plant physiology, encourages a conservation ethic, introduces techniques of plant identification, and conveys the importance of urban forest management.

- Cleared 10,062 ft² (1/4 acre) of thick English ivy in Wilburton Hill Park and 56,192 ft² (1.29 acres) of orange spotted jewelweed in Kelsey Creek Park.



Professional Development Workshops: The Well K.E.P.T. training program provides valuable educational opportunities to participants. Educational seminars and workshops provided the students with deeper knowledge regarding their projects, developed their environmental awareness, and honed their professional skills. Seminars and workshops completed during the 2025 season are listed below:

- Urban Forestry
- Resume & Cover Letter Workshop
- Mock Interviews
- Botanical Gardens tour
- Trail Building 101
- Stream Ecology
- Wetland Ecology



Conclusion

Bellevue's Well K.E.P.T. program is an innovative program that provides an exceptional first employment opportunity for Bellevue teens. Well K.E.P.T. is an integral component of the Natural Resource Division's environmental education and community outreach that inspires citizens to engage in the stewardship of Bellevue's Parks. By instilling strong environmental values and a positive work ethic in tomorrow's leaders, the Well K.E.P.T. program provides cost-effective stewardship of our City in a Park.



Quality Community Outcomes: The City of Bellevue's Well K.E.P.T. program is committed to providing exceptional public service and community stewardship. The 2025 program addressed the following city outcomes:

EXCEPTIONAL PUBLIC SERVICE

- The Ardmore Park trail project started as a recommendation from a neighbor to the park. The Well K.E.P.T. crew was a perfect fit to provide the staff and resources a project like this needed. Teamwork and collaboration with the trail crew allowed this project to be completed ahead of schedule and was commended by the citizen who suggested it.

STEWARDSHIP

- Removal of invasive, non-native species of plants in our parks continues to be an essential part of protecting our parks. The size of the Well K.E.P.T. crew allowed a large area to be cleared of noxious weeds quickly, before flowers could produce seeds, limiting future infestation.

INNOVATION

- The crew was given basic instruction for the tasks they performed. They were then free to make decisions, problem solve, and work together to build a work plan that they all agreed on to get the work done. The crew leads gained an incredible amount of leadership skills and the trainees were able to take ownership of the work plan.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

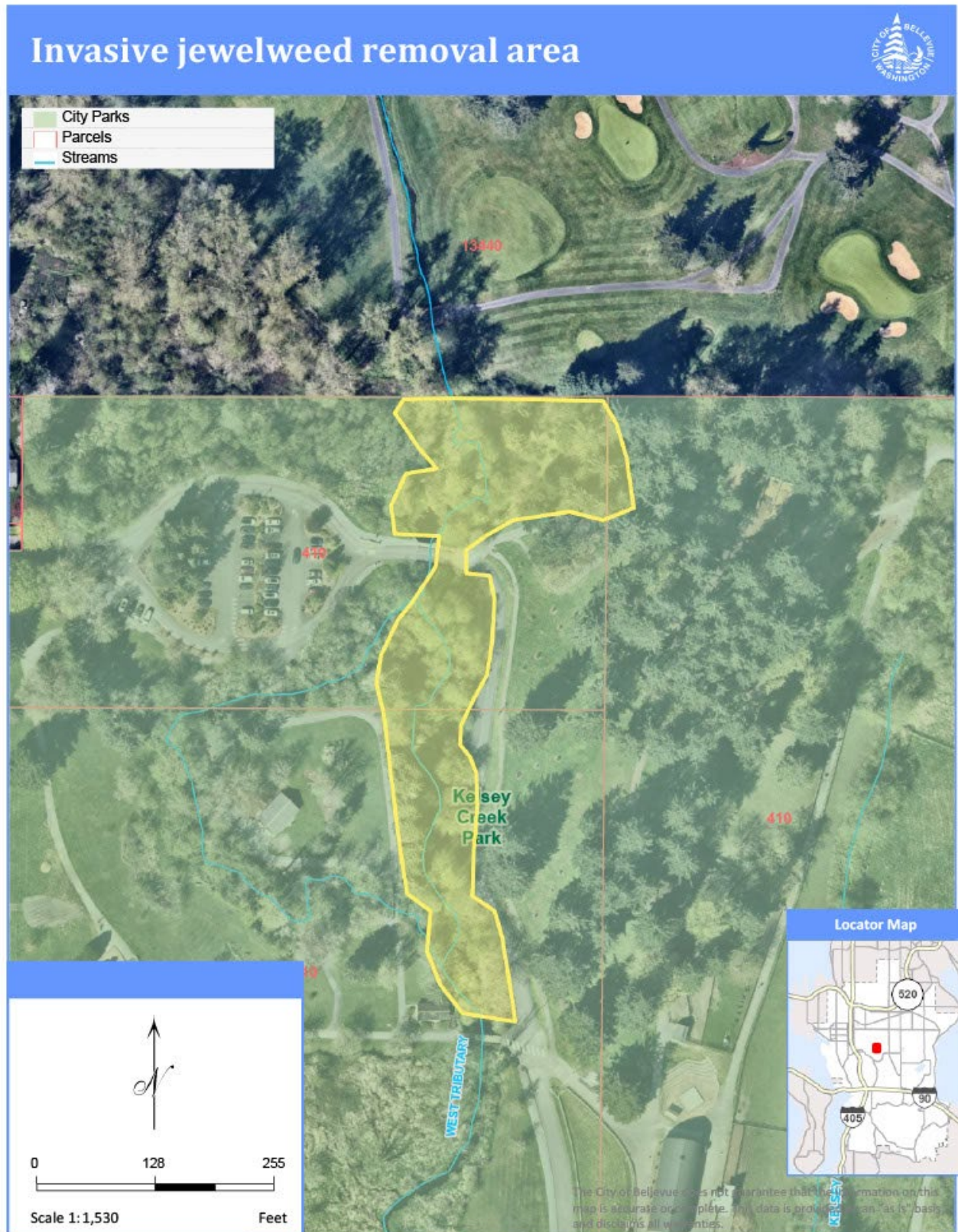
- The crew, including leads and trainees, was diverse in age, ethnicity, and gender. Hiring was completed using methods that used blind ranking to eliminate bias, discrimination, and barriers to access. The diverse background of the entire Well K.E.P.T program gave the team a broad perspective of viewpoints to work with.

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Maps of 2025 Worksites:



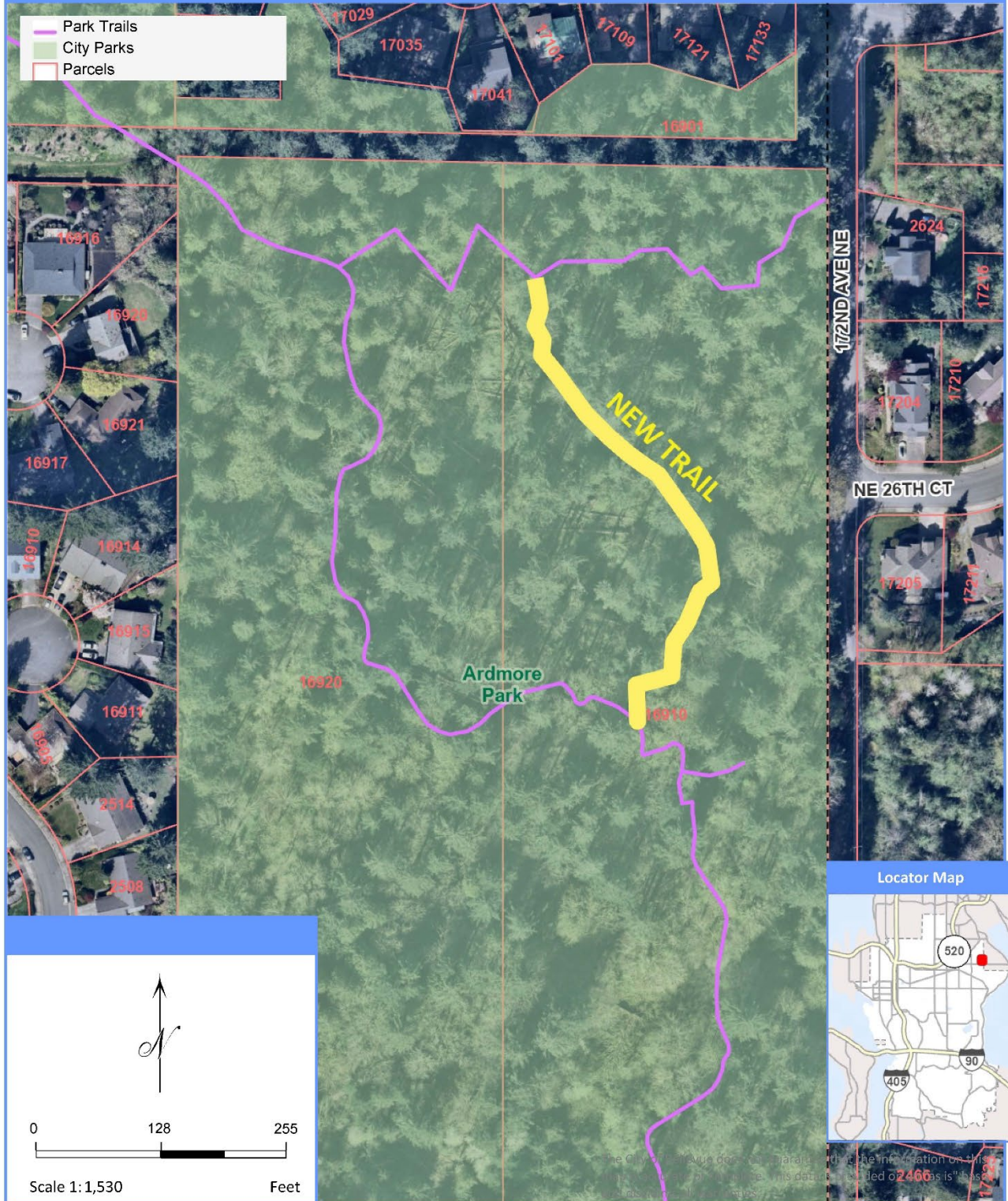
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Well KEPT Ivy Removal Area



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New loop connector at Ardmore Park



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