



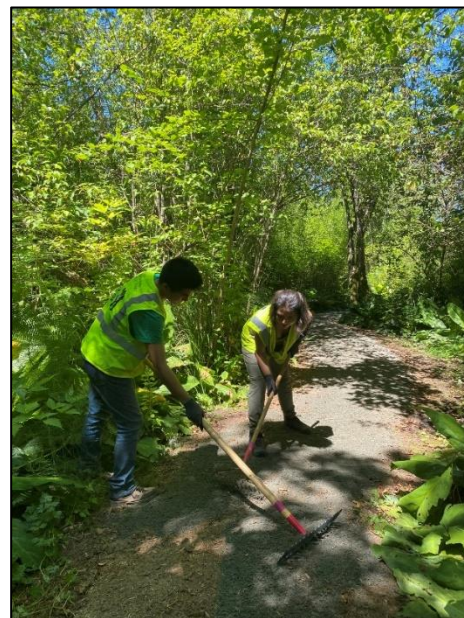
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Date: September 2022
To: Bellevue Parks & Community Services Board
From: Curtis Kukal: Park Ranger & Environmental Programs Coordinator
Jammie Kingham: Environmental Programs Supervisor
Subject: 2022 Well Kids Environmental Project Training (K.E.P.T.) Program Brief

INTRODUCTION

The City of Bellevue's Well K.E.P.T. (Kids Environmental Project Training) program has completed another successful summer serving the Bellevue community. For 34 years, Bellevue Parks & Community Services has engaged youth and invested in our city's future by providing valuable employment opportunities to Bellevue youth through Well K.E.P.T.

The Well K.E.P.T. program is a summer youth employment opportunity 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 restoration and maintenance. This summer, typical projects included forest enhancement, trail construction, and farm maintenance. Well K.E.P.T. combines on-the-job work experience with 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.



Well KEPT 2022 was funded by a King Conservation District (KCD) Member Jurisdiction Grant.

2022 PROJECTS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Trail Projects: *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.*

- Renovated **2,785 ft** of hiking trails throughout the Bellevue Park System. This included regrading, graveling, and mulching trail.
- Removed and replaced a damaged agricultural drainage pipe in Mercer Slough Natural Area's Overlake Blueberry Farm.

Noxious Weed Removal Projects: *Removing unwanted 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 **19,928 ft²** of noxious weeds throughout the Bellevue Park System. This included species such as orange spotted jewelweed, tansy ragwort, English ivy, and Himalayan blackberry.



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 2022 season are listed below:

- Forest management
- Resume & cover letter workshop
- Mock interviews
- Native plant species
- Invasive plant species
- Aquatic invertebrates & stream health
- Wildlife science

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 2022 Well K.E.P.T. program addresses the following city outcomes.



Responsive Government:

- Addressed community needs including park maintenance and career development.

Improved Mobility:

- Maintained and improved 2,785 feet of hiking trails.

Economic Growth & Competitiveness:

- Trainees gained technical and professional skills for future employment
- Provided local youth with a first job opportunity and career development education

Healthy & Sustainable Environment:

- Worked to restore natural ecosystem functions and values by removing noxious weeds
- Fostered environmental awareness in Bellevue youth and their parents

Safe Community:

- Maintained trails to the highest standards of safety and useability.
- Fostered a productive and safe summer activity for local youth

Innovative, Vibrant, & Caring Community:

- Mentored local youth dedicated to improving sustainability and environmental stewardship
- Engaged young adults in community pride through local park improvement projects

Quality Neighborhoods:

- Local youth became more active members of their community
- Helped to slow the spread of noxious weed species that degrade neighborhoods
- Improved quality of local greenspaces adjacent to neighboring communities

CONCLUSION

Bellevue's Well K.E.P.T. program is an innovative program that provides an exceptional first employment opportunity for Bellevue teens. The program serves many adolescents who may otherwise have limited opportunities for career development. 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.



Well KEPT Project Sites

