

# THE MILLER BAY GUARDIAN

Volume 9, Issue 1

February 2004

## Why Give a Hoot about the Cowling Creek Project?

by Paul Dorn, Salmon Recovery Coordinator, Suquamish Tribe

Because owls care, and many of us North Kitsap citizens do too. It's not too late to save a little land for critters that don't vote. The Kitsap County Commissioners have listened to their constituents in the north end and have provided a loan of \$150,000.00 to the Friends of Miller Bay (formerly known as the Miller Bay Citizens Action Committee) to purchase 13 acres of twice-logged-over land next to the Suquamish Tribe's Cowling Creek Hatchery. The hatchery is also home to an amazing local legend known as Virginia Cowling, the spearhead of coordinated effort to protect Cowling Creek habitat for the benefit of our fish and wildlife.



16,044 adult chum salmon returned to Cowling Creek in the fall of 2003. These salmon were fertilized by Suquamish Tribal Fisheries staff three



Chris Endressen, Virginia Cowling, Niki Quester and Dick D'Arangel after the county Commission's decision to provide interim funding for the Cowling Creek Project.

## MB Community Supports Open Space

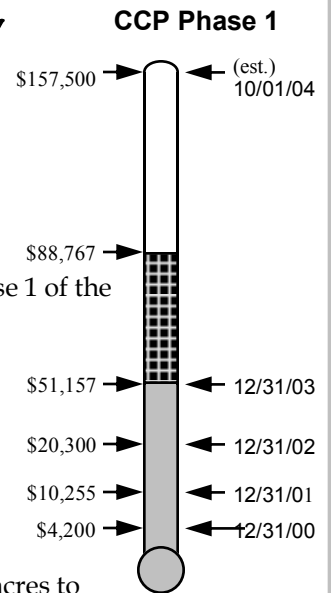
By Dick D'Arangel

The graph on the right shows our progress towards completion of Phase 1 of the Cowling Creek Project.

Contributions from hundreds of individuals and many organizations has convinced us that we can complete Phase 1 of the CCP late this year and began Phase 2 by 2005.

Phase 2 adds five more acres to what will be 50 acres of contiguous open space.

**We salute all contributors for their generosity and foresight.**



- Goal for 2004!
- Matching Pledges
- Donations as of 12/31/04

## Wisdom and Wit

### An Interview with Virginia Cowling

This is the text of a conversation between Niki Quester and Virginia Cowling. The questions were submitted by FOMB members and edited by Niki.

Q: At what age did you start identifying yourself as an environmentalist?

Virginia: "Probably at about 22 - after The Depression- I started looking around - going hiking. I could start thinking about the world after the Depression was over."

Q: Has your concept of what it means to be an environmentalist changed over the years?

Virginia: "Oh yes, I used to think it meant paying dues to groups who were working to save the environment. We hadn't thought about recycling as a way to protect the

(Continued on page 3)

# FRIENDS OF MILLER BAY

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## Its time to pay your dues

### Membership Dues

First, to clear up any confusion, we have changed our name from Miller Bay Citizens Action Group, to Friends of Miller Bay. The new name emphasizes our goal of preserving the natural environment of Miller Bay.

Membership dues pay for many of the activities sponsored by FOMB. This money goes a long way because most of the labor and know-how that our activities require are donated by members of our organization and members of the community. Area businesses have also been generous in providing merchandise and services. So you get a great return on your investment in an organization that has promoted conservation and preservation of Miller Bay for over fourteen years.

If you are not a FOMB member or if you need to renew, please take the time now to fill out and mail the form on the back page.

While you are filling out your membership application, consider making a donation to the Cowling Creek Project. We have a grant that will match all donations (up to \$20,000) so you can double the effectiveness of your contribution by giving now.

Your donation goes directly to the Great Peninsula Conservancy, our fiscal agent for the CCP. GPC is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, so your donation is tax deductible. Consider the added benefits of donating appreciated assets to avoid

Companies and Organizations  
Who Support FOMB  
Corey Sign and Display  
Poulsbo Rotary  
Thriftway Marketplace  
Blue Sky Printing  
Suquamish Congregational Church  
The Suquamish Tribe



Photo credit: David Caley

*"To conserve and preserve the waters, wetlands, wildlife habitat, timberlands, undeveloped land, and scenic space in the areas around or near Miller Bay, Washington." - Friends of Miller Bay Mission Statement*

*Virginia*(Continued from page 1)

environment; although, during the Depression, reusing things and recycling were a way of life. I hadn't realized the many ways an environmentalist can be of service: as an individual, you can watch what you buy, what you eat, where you invest your money."

Q: Whose work in the environmental conservation movement do you admire most?

*Virginia*: "Greenpeace has been active over many years. I don't agree with everything they do, like spiking trees; however, they are one of the strongest voices for the environment." (Ed. note: Currently, they are leaders in educating the public about the devastation caused by PVC plastics (#3), i.e., the manufacture and disposal of PVC plastic is the major source of dioxin in the world).

Q: What is your vision for the use and management of the Open Space that you have worked to create?

*Virginia*: "I hope it will be a park with passive use to allow people to get out in nature. What we are doing now is just a start. I understand that Kitsap County is the fastest growing county in the state. We could be to Seattle like Northgate is to Seattle, just an extension of that city. Trees are said to be the lungs of the earth, contributing oxygen to the atmosphere. There is so much more traffic now contributing to the pollution. The trees will help with that. I started by protecting the 14 acres that contains the hatchery, selling it to the Tribe at a bargain sale price, they agreed to maintain it in Open Space forever. Then I bought the adjacent 5 acre parcel that I am in the process of donating to the Great Peninsula Conservancy. I have already donated a 21/2 acre parcel to the GPC and still have a 21/2 acre parcel to donate. We will have a larger and larger parcel. It will be a wildlife corridor as well as walking trails."

Q: How will the community benefit from the Cowling Creek Project?

*Virginia*: "I like to tell the story of Apollo who challenged the son of Gaia to a fight. Every time he would knock him down, Gaia's son would get right back up and pummel him again. Apollo realized the son was getting his strength from his mother, the Earth. He picked him up and held him over his head until every ounce of energy faded away. We are like Gaia's son; we need contact with the Earth so that we do not fade away. In addition, that piece of land contains a section of the creek that supports the hatchery. The hatchery provides protein for our community and employment (it is often the first job for young Native kids, it gives them a start)."

Q: Explain your interest in inviting school groups to visit the hatchery?

*Virginia*: "The younger we catch our human race and teach them about the environment, the better chance

we have of teaching them to respect the earth. We talk about the interconnectedness of all life from the microscopic to the large animals. We are all part of the web of life."

Q: What do you think we have been blessed with in the United States?

*Virginia*: "I think of two things: land and our constitution. We live in an incredible place on the earth. We are blessed with the unimaginable abundance of this land. And, in the beginning, we had a group of wise people who formed the constitution: the men who created that document, and of course, their wives, who gave them good advice!"

Q: What do you think we need to learn?

*Virginia*: "Our environmental movement is still in its infancy. When I was growing up, our US postal stamps had pictures of smokestacks with black smoke pouring out of them. This was supposed to represent a booming economy. This was progress. Now we know that smoke causes lung disease in our population. We need to learn to value our environment. Some people act as if there is an unending supply of gasoline, buying bigger and bigger gas-guzzlers. Our resources can be exhausted. We need to be wise stewards of the earth."

Q: What is one thing my generation will have to finish that you started?

*Virginia*: "I would say continue, rather than finish. I believe the setting aside of special places is very important. Every good city planner includes the creation of parks and Open Spaces. The pioneers in New York City set aside Central Park. We would never be able to buy that today. People are renewed by touching the earth, both physically and mentally."

Q: What do you think has been the greatest accomplishment of the United States?

*Virginia*: "We have made progress with the integration of minorities. There are opportunities that just were not here a generation ago. I have seen tremendous change. I marvel at that though we need to do more."

Q: Some people say we can have a strong environment or a strong economy. How would you respond to that?

*Virginia*: "I think they are wrong. We need to factor in environmental costs in our GNP. If we keep recklessly using up our resources, we will bankrupt our society."

Q: What is the most beautiful site you have seen in nature?

*Virginia*: "I love roaring waterfalls!"

Q: What do you want to be remembered for?

*Virginia*: "I want to be remembered as a good person, a kindly person; although, not a perfect person. I do tend to like people. I often quote an old Greek who said: 'We live, not as we wish to be but as we can.' After I'm gone, as I look down on earth, of course, I'll be an angel (she chuckles), I always wanted to fly, without wings, just soar....."

**HOOT** (Continued from page 1)

to five years earlier and were briefly reared in the pond below Virginia Cowling's house. They were released from this freshwater sanctuary at an early morning hour, on high tide, and found themselves acclimating to an invigorating new saline world. This new world included a rich diversity of small, wiggling food, acres of silts and eelgrass beds, and a

**T**heir journey followed a path repeated for millennia but whose memory dies with each adult returning to Cowling Creek, to be reborn with the new generation.

surge of tidal currents that they quickly adjusted to. As the days became weeks and months the young chum journeyed far from Virginia's creek out into the north Pacific. Their journey followed a path repeated for millennia but whose memory dies with each adult returning to Cowling Creek, to be

reborn with the new generation.

Don't grieve for these salmon. Praise them! Like all salmon, it is eat and be eaten, with only a few adults returning for every hundred young entering the estuary. The salmon that don't return nourish the western grebes, kingfishers, osprey, and other diving birds of Puget Sound, the "wolf packs" of sea run cutthroat trout that patrol the nearshore with other hungry fish, the heron, the eagles, seals, and orca. It's called Nature. The salmon carcasses that lay spent in Miller Bay feed the crabs, seagulls, and an astounding array of wildlife that nibble on their North Pacific nutrients. Songbirds, red tail hawks, deer, raccoon, river otter, and, of course, seagulls, are but some of the wildlife that seek trace elements, salts, and nourishment from the end of the salmon's life cycle.

And People. Don't forget us. Fishermen, both sport and recreational, Indian and non-Indian: we all depend on salmon in one way or another. The salmon have supported Native cultures for millennia, and have been an important part of our "modern" economy for the past century. Cowling Creek salmon are harvested by all fishers during their journey home. Virginia would also be quick to point out the benefit for Tribal employment and to Tribal smokehouses. Maybe she's most impressed by the tremendous number of Cowling Creek salmon fry that were released from, and now colonize, the streams around East Kitsap County. Cowling Creek Hatchery was founded with native Chico Creek broodstock and has been operating continuously

since 1977.

Ultimately, like all salmon's journeys, valuable ocean nutrients are bequeathed our terrestrial and estuarine landscapes. Cowling Creek chum nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, and other trace elements lace the green of the stream banks and Miller Bay shoreline. The tiny plankton that feed the young hatchery chum are, in fact, nourished by the gift of their parents returning to Cowling Creek.

The Cowling Creek Project's growing "salmon fertilized" forest is home to a host of other species: bats, moles, woodpeckers, mountain beavers, humming birds, coyotes, salamander, and frogs. Rainfall into this forest is slowly released into the ground and Cowling Creek purified by the microbial world and the action of plant roots. Salmon and people both depend on clean water. Please join the Friends of Miller Bay in protecting Cowling Creek watershed as our legacy to the future. Give a hoot!

## Another Wake Up Call

*By Lane Holdcroft*

The December 30<sup>th</sup> oil spill that spread bunker fuel oil along the shoreline from Point Jefferson to Miller Bay is another "wake up call" to the citizens and officials of North Kitsap. Although Miller Bay was spared from the brunt of this disturbing incident, our beautiful bay may not be so fortunate in the future.

This oil spill is another example of what results from lax government regulation and wide spread citizen apathy. Such incidents, in addition to the impact of rapid urbanization, suggest that we are losing the battle to protect and conserve the fragile ecosystems of our North Kitsap community.

We must continue and even increase our individual and group efforts to inform and educate our fellow citizens to support measures to avert incidents, such as the oil spill, that severely and quickly impinge upon our water, land, marine and wildlife resources. Equally important are efforts to implement smart growth policies and programs that reduce the impact of residential and commercial development on the air, water and land resources of our community.

We have had another "wake up call". For the sake of the present and future generations, it can not go unheeded.

"Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul alike." - John Muir



Site photos: The Cowling Creek Project - Barbie Brookings

*Status Report*

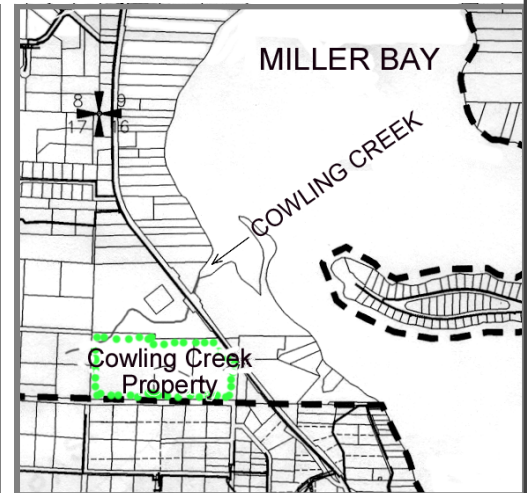
The Cowling Creek Project

Phase 1

Area - 13 Acres  
 Sales Price - \$157,500  
 Donations - \$57,157  
 Matching Pledges - \$37,565  
 Donations Needed - \$68,733  
**2004 Fundraising Goal \$78,733**

Phase 2

Area - 5 Acres  
 Sales Price - \$126,000  
 Donations - None yet  
 Matching Pledges - \$10,000  
**Est. Completion Date- 9/15/06**



"This land is critical to the health of the Miller Bay watershed. Even within the existing laws and regulations, development would contribute significantly to the deterioration of Cowling Creek."

"Up to 30,000 chum salmon return to Cowling Creek each fall. Bear, eagle, and river otter feed on these salmon and find refuge on the land."

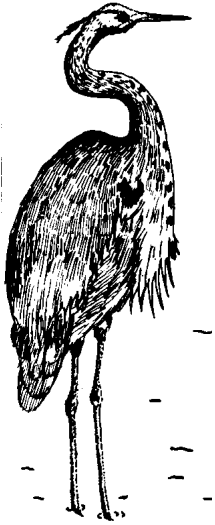
"It is our hope that this land will be permanently protected." - **Lane Holdcroft**, Miller Bay Citizens Action Group President & Board Member since 1988.

**Friends of Miller Bay has made a commitment** to support the Great Peninsula Conservancy in the purchase of 18 acres of land adjoining Cowling Creek. The acquisition of this beautiful acreage for open space will assure its preservation as woodlands for the community and for future generations to

FRIENDS OF MILLER BAY  
c/o Great Peninsula Conservancy  
3721 Kitsap Way, Suite 5  
Bremerton, WA 98312

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**Save the Date!** Saturday, April 10 **Poetry Reading Benefit** for Cowling Creek Project at Indianola Clubhouse. Poets include **Anna Linzer, Holly Hughes, and Mike Dillon**. More information on our website: [www.friendsofmillerbay.org](http://www.friendsofmillerbay.org)  
**Check for dates and time for all our events and projects on our website or call (360) 598-6564.**

**Join Friends of Miller Bay and make a donation to the Cowling Creek Project.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email adr. \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. \_\_\_\_\_

**FOMB Memberships**

I include \$25 for a one year, \$45 for a two year, or \$65 for a three year membership.

Check or money order enclosed. Make check or MO to: *Friends of Miller Bay*

**Mail membership dues to FOMB, PO Box 37, Suquamish, WA 98392**

**CCP Donations**

I would like to donate \_\_\_\_\_ to the Cowling Creek Project.

I would like to help with fundraising \_\_\_\_\_

Check or money order enclosed. Make check or MO to: *GPC/Cowling Creek Project*.

Mastercard c Visa *Call the GPC office (360 373-3500) to make a credit card donation by phone.*

Acct. # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail CCP donations to FOMB, PO Box 37, Suquamish, WA 98392**