

# FOREST

# EXPLORER'S GUIDE

## CLUES

1. Go through a great big parking lot  
And then look for a little spot  
With a sign that says Glen Garden.
2. Go down a little hill  
And you'll be closer still.
3. Look behind the bench  
To find lots of forest sense.
4. Now you're at your destination.  
Hope you like our rock creation!

## FOREST OR WOODS

We typically call a large area covered with trees a "forest." Since Fauntleroy Park is on the small side, "woods" is probably a better word. We use the words interchangeably here, though, to show their shared characteristics.

Created by a third/fourth-grade class at Arbor Heights School in the Seattle School District, with help from teacher Doug Swan and Fauntleroy elders Karen Farnsworth and David Galbraith.

Funded by King County Water and Land Resources.

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## FOREST LAYERS AND CYCLE

As a team, **follow the clues** until you locate the stone marker. **Take turns being the READER.**

**READER:** *Living systems are healthiest when they are diverse and in balance. To understand the diversity and balance of forests in our climate, think of four layers of a cake:*

*The top layer is **emergent trees**. They "emerge" from (or poke out of) the top of the forest. Red-tailed hawks and bald eagles prefer life at this high altitude.*

*The next layer is **canopy trees**. They form an umbrella with their leaves and branches. Stellar's jays, screech owls, robins, and woodpeckers like to live in the canopy.*

*The next layer is **understory bushes and small trees**. They grow in the shady middle of the forest. Trunk dwellers such as raccoons and squirrels are at home in the understory.*

*The bottom layer is **groundcovers**. "Transformers" live here on the forest floor - the bacteria, invertebrates, and fungi that help wood decompose and return to soil.*

**READER:** *The circle of words on the top of the stone summarizes the self-sustaining life cycle of the woods: **soil to seed to grow to fall to eat to rot and back to soil** again.*

## RIPARIAN ECOSYSTEM

As a team, **look at the woods** from the wide trail a few yards to the right of the glen garden sign.

**READER:** *This is an excellent example of the woods and forests that have formed in Western Washington around a source of fresh water. This woods is part of the "riparian" ecosystem associated with Fauntleroy Creek. Together the creek and woods create a rich home for plants and animals. **What do you see the creek doing for the woods? And what do you see the woods doing for the creek?***

## FINDING THE LAYERS

As a team, **take the wide trail across a bridge and into the woods**. Using the page of drawings, **try to find at least one plant from each layer of the forest:**

**Emergent layer** \_\_\_\_\_

**Canopy layer** \_\_\_\_\_

**Canopy layer** \_\_\_\_\_

**Ground layer** \_\_\_\_\_

# THE LIFE CYCLE IN PROGRESS

Walk until you find a nurse log or trunk along the trail.

**READER:** Remember that the self-sustaining life cycle of the woods is **soil to seed to grow to fall to eat to rot and back to soil** again. Fallen logs and rotting tree trunks play an important role in this cycle. Bacteria keep them moist even in dry weather, making them good places for new trees, bushes, and small plants to take root. A "nurse" log or trunk may look lifeless but be home to larva, spiders, salamanders, mice, or larger animals. Wood-boring beetles, termites, slugs, and carpenter ants may find food there. Along with mites, earthworms, and fungi, these "transformers" slowly transform rotting wood into soil. Using the page of drawings, **list the plants you can identify living on this nurse log or trunk:**

We identified \_\_\_\_\_ kinds of plants on the nurse log/trunk.

**Find a piece of wood** no bigger than a loaf of bread that has rotten to the point of being soft. **Break it open and describe anything you see that's alive.** Put it back where you found it.

# THE MARKER

SEED GROW FALL

EAT ROT SOIL

reminds everyone who sees this stone of the cycle of life in our forests.

Images on the front of the stone call out the **four layers of a forest**. We must protect natural forest habitat from destructive non-native plants, such as the **ivy** encroaching from the back.

The **alevin petro glyph** emphasizes the importance of healthy freshwater habitat to growing salmon and ties this site to other links in the chain of water-based habitats.

*Overall design and petro glyph detail by Tom Jay*

## FOREST STEWARDSHIP

Urban forests face a big challenge if they are to fight off invasive non-native plants and sustain a diverse population of native trees and other plants. If invasives are not weeded out, all the large trees in our urban forests could be gone in 50 years.

As a junior forest steward, you can help prevent this destruction:

- ✓ Find out if a group of volunteers exists to help take care of a woods near where you live. If it does, join it and participate in work parties! If it doesn't, talk with parents and neighbors about organizing a group.
- ✓ Learn the difference between native and non-native plants.
- ✓ After you know the difference, pull non-natives when you walk in the woods.
- ✓ Identify which invasive non-native plants are a problem in your woods.
- ✓ Replant weeded areas with native species that will encourage wildlife and restore a naturally diverse habitat.

# FOREST

# HELPER'S GUIDE

## GETTING THERE

Fenton Glen is at the east end of the Fautleroy Church/YMCA parking lot at 9140 California Ave. SW. Short-term parking is usually available in the upper lot. Call the church office at 932-5600 if you will be bringing several cars. By bus, take Metro 54 to the stop just beyond the church. Follow the clues from near the glen entrance.

## PREPARATIONS

1. Preview what you will be doing on this field trip, go over the "Explorer's Guide," and answer any questions.
2. Assemble for each youngster
  - a of the "Explorer's Guide" for this site
  - a copy of "Forest Plants in Fautleroy Park"
  - a pencil
  - a clipboard or heavy cardboard for support.
3. Bring a couple of field guides to forest plants in the Pacific Northwest to be able to answer questions.

## SEASON AND SAFETY

The park is a safe and pleasant place to visit most days. Advise youngsters to dress for the weather and wear comfortable walking shoes or boots. **If high wind is forecast, postpone your field trip because of the danger of falling limbs or trees.**

For safety and help focusing in a very stimulating setting, we suggest **one adult for every four youngsters, third through fifth grades.**

## APPROXIMATE TIME

In the woods: **45 minutes**

At this site, young "explorers" will

- explore the forest's role in riparian habitat.
- see what the layers of a forest look like and how they relate.
- discover what each stage of the forest life cycle looks like and how they relate.
- understand how to help take care of our forests.

## STEWARDSHIP

The upper glen is intended as a quiet place for rest and reflection. If others are there when you arrive, decide as a group what "rules" should apply to behavior.

To avoid overwhelming the riparian area, start half the teams on "Forest Layers and Cycle" near the creek and the other half on "Riparian Ecosystem" along the trail, then rotate.

## EXPLORING THE WOODS

Go south on the wide trail behind the church, cross the wooden bridge, and head up the trail until it flattens out. You will quickly be surrounded by the woods.

## A FEW MORE TIPS

If you can, introduce the topic of forests and riparian ecosystems prior to the field trip so that youngsters will know what to expect and not be dependent on what is read to them near the creek. Even a loud voice can be difficult to hear beside flowing water.

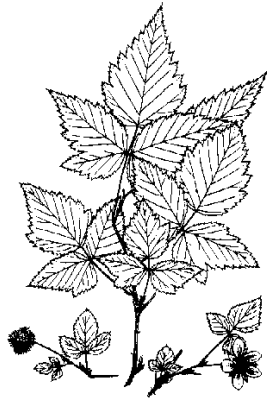
Encourage youngsters to take turns being the reader.

In answering questions about the relationship between woods and creek, youngsters should understand that the woods is an important link in the watershed chain. In addition to providing food and shelter for wildlife, trees, bushes, and forest debris

- absorb and slow rainwater
- hold the soil with their roots to check erosion
- shade the water (juvenile salmon need cold water)
- attract flying insects (a major food source for juvenile salmon).

In turn, the creek is a constant source of water and nutrients to root systems.

The page of drawings ("Plants Common to Pacific Northwest Forests") has many of the species you are likely to find here. You will discover others, though, which is why we advise bringing field guides. Using them will demonstrate their value for providing information on the spot *and* enhancing a nature experience.



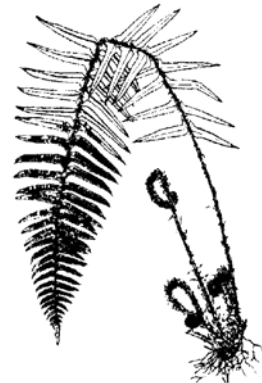
**SALMONBERRY**

5'-7' tall in shade or sun; early bright-pink flowers and raspberry-like fruit



**INDIAN PLUM**

An airy bush in shady areas; early small white flowers and hard fruit



**SWORD FERN**

Holds the soil on shady slopes; fronds stay green all year



**FRAGILE OR LADY FERN**

Likes cool, damp soil; easily broken fronds die back in fall



**RED ELDERBERRY**

Big, tall bush in light or shade with cluster of white flowers and red berries

**FOREST PLANTS  
IN FAUNTLEROY PARK**

**CIRCLE THE PLANTS YOU FIND IN THE WOODS,  
FROM TALL TO SMALL.**

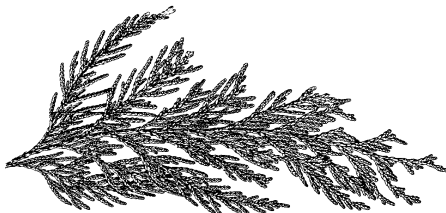
TEAM MEMBERS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



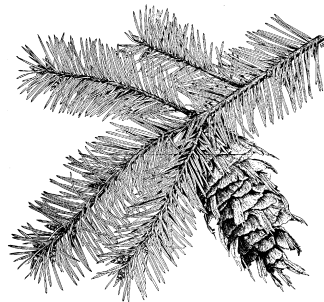
**RED HUCKLEBERRY**

Airy bush growing from rotting stumps; small red berries



**WESTERN  
RED CEDAR**

Red-brown bark; starts in shade and reaches for the sun



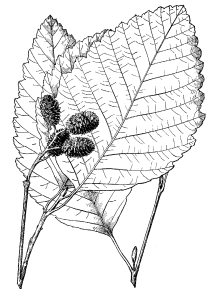
**DOUGLAS FIR**

Grows tall in almost any light and soil; gray, rough bark



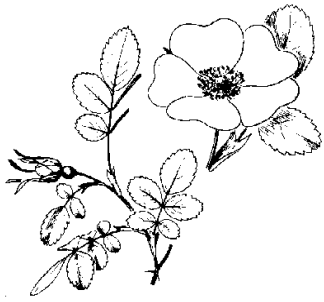
**WESTERN HEMLOCK**

Grows tall and airy in almost any condition; soft needles and small cones



**RED ALDER**

Gray, smooth bark; grows almost anywhere



**NOOTKA ROSE**

Prickly stems and pink flowers; given enough sun, multiplies to form thickets



**SKUNK CABBAGE**

Large yellow flower in early spring, followed by giant leaves where soil says damp



**HERB ROBERT**

Purple-stemmed "stinky bob" weed in cool or damp areas



**WESTERN HONEYSUCKLE**

A vine draping over other plants in a mix of sun and shade; leaves under flower are joined



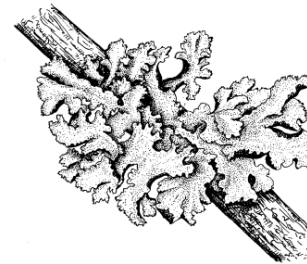
**CREeping BUTTERCUP**

Bright yellow flower and roots that hold damp soil



**FRINGECUP**

Low to the ground everywhere it finds light



**RAGBAG LICHEN**

Rubbery, curly, nearly white growth on rotting wood



**WESTERN TRILLIUM**

Three leaves and three white petals tucked away on the forest floor; an early bloomer



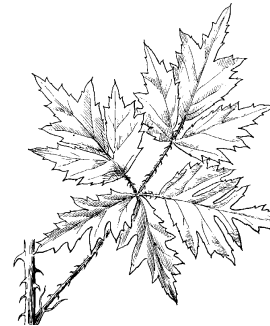
**WATER PARSLEY**

Holds the soil at water's edge



**RED ROOF MOSS**

Grows into low, lush mats on rotting wood



**DEWBERRY**

Prickly, shade-loving vine draped over other plants



**STINGING NETTLE**

3'-4' tall in mix of sun and shade. Do not touch!