

CONSERVATION NEWS

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Helpful Websites:

- www.seattleschools.org/area/conservation
- www.seattlegreenschools.org
- www.airwatchnorthwest.org/anti-idling.htm
- www.walkingschoolbus.org

SEATTLE CLIMATE ACTION NOW AND SPS PARTNER FOR T-SHIRT CONTEST

Mayor Greg Nickels and a panel of judges from Seattle Public Schools, Seattle Art Museum, Nordstrom and the arts community announced the winners of the 2008 Seattle Public Schools Climate Action Now T-Shirt Design Contest. Winning designs will be featured on a Climate Action Now (CAN) Calendar and T-shirt. Students from across the city submitted designs along the theme: *what can you do everyday to be part of the solution to climate change?*

The awards ceremony at the Pavilion at the SAM Olympic Sculpture Park was packed with family, friends, and well-wishers. The mayor, Seattle School Board member Michael DeBell and other speakers congratulated and thanked all the students who participated. Their art will help inspire all of us to take action on climate change. The contest follows the School Board's unanimous commitment to join the Seattle Climate Partnership and pursue efforts to reduce



Mayor Greg Nickels Congratulates Contest Participants

greenhouse gas emissions (Resolution 2006/2007-18). Seattle Public Schools is the first school district to join the Partnership, which includes government, higher education, and private sector organizations. It is a voluntary agreement among local organizations to find ways to reach Seattle's community-wide goal of meeting or ex-

ceeding a 7% reduction in greenhouse gasses by 2012, based on 1990 emission levels.

The board resolution also calls for each SPS department to develop an action plan with measurable goals and identified steps that will help Seattle Public Schools reduce greenhouse gasses.

GREEN TEAM WEBSITE LAUNCHED

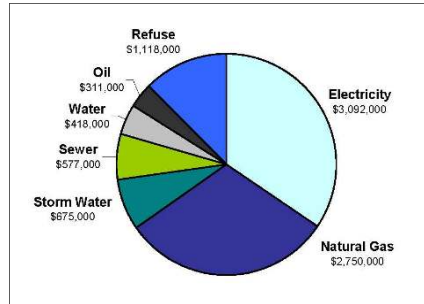
The Green Team has been working with the Northwest Environmental Education Council (NWEEC) to develop an interactive website for team members to share ideas, information, and events. The Green Team is a grassroots network of SPS

teachers, parents, school administrators, and community members who want to make Seattle a little bit greener. With the busy schedules of team members it was increasingly difficult for everyone to sit down together and share ideas. What to do?

The solution was a website that would allow for "online meetings" that members could access and add to at their convenience. Thanks to Peter Hubbard and NWEEC for their great new website at www.seattlegreenschools.org!

2006/07 UTILITY USE

In November 2006, the School Board unanimously passed the Natural Resources Conservation Policy (H25.00) and Natural Resources Conservation Procedures (H25.01) to reduce energy,



2005/2006 SPS Utility Budget

water, and natural resource conservation use, educate the District community about the importance of conservation, and lessen environmental damage. Since that time SPS staff, students and community members have been working hard to reduce wasteful and excessive resource consumption. In 2005/2006 the District spent nearly \$9 million on natural resources, including electricity, natural gas, water/sewer, storm water, oil, and refuse. Through resource conservation measures

outlined in the Natural Resources Conservation Policy and Procedures, the district saved over \$350,000 in the 2006/07 school year alone! Taking rate changes into account, the most dramatic savings were in electricity and natural gas which resulted in approximately \$72,000 and \$183,000 savings respectively. More information can be found at www.seattleschools.org/area/conservation (click on "Our Consumption", "District-Wide Use"

"This project is an excellent opportunity for students to translate their science knowledge into a visual design of environmental solutions", Superintendent Maria Goodloe-Johnson said of the Seattle CAN T-shirt contest.

CONSERVATION EMAIL UPDATES

If you've never been to the SPS Resource Conservation website before, now is a great time to visit! The website provides access to utility use graphs for each facility, information about our resource consumption as a district, information about where our schools get their energy, natural gas, and water from, tips

for conserving, ongoing and past conservation projects, information about the Shared Savings Program, and a comprehensive Seattle and school specific resources/links page. This information is update frequently and we understand that it can be difficult to keep up. In order to provide you with the most up-to-date infor-

mation, you can now sign up for periodic email updates. Simply visit www.seattleschools.org/area/conservation and complete the short form. Your information will never be shared and you can choose not to receive emails at any time.

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE LAUREATE PLANTS TREES WITH SPS STUDENTS

On September 19, Chief Sealth High School hosted Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Professor Wangari Maathai, for a ceremonial tree planting at Pelly Place Ravine as part of Project Earth Care, an environmental project created by Chief Sealth High School students. To launch the event, Chief Sealth High School hosted the Seattle Earth Summit II where renowned nature photographer Art Wolfe

served as the keynote speaker. Professor Maathai is the founder of the Green Belt Movement, a group that provides income and sustenance to millions of people in Kenya through the



Professor Maathai assists with plantings. Photo by Emily Tanner, courtesy of Seattle Arts & Lectures

planting of trees. Through the Green Belt Movement Maathai has assisted women in planting more than 20 million trees on their farms and on school grounds and church compounds. She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in

CENTRAL KITCHEN COMPOSTS, JOINS SEVERAL SPS SCHOOLS

The Central Kitchen at the Stanford Center has joined a dozen SPS schools in composting their food waste. Food waste is separated from garbage and recycling and put into red containers with biodegradable bags. The bags of food waste are then taken outside to a compost dumpster provided by Cedar Grove Organics. The dumpster is picked up once a week and taken to their processing facility where it is made into a variety of products, including topsoil, potting soil, and compost for the garden. Not only does recycling food waste divert it from landfills, it provides nutrient rich food for

plants, costs less than garbage, and has increased mixed recycling rates. Commercial, or "off-site", composting programs at the schools are student run and teach them about the importance of reducing waste at a local level. The program, which was developed from the ground up at Lawton Elementary, now includes Laurelhurst, Concord, Salmon Bay, West Woodland, John Muir, TOPS at Seward, Gatewood, Loyal Heights, Sacajawea, Montlake, and Ballard High School. They are expected to be joined by Stevens, Lowell, Greenwood, and Pathfinder at



Students at Laurelhurst sort food-waste

Genesee Hill shortly. Visit www.seattleschools.org/area/conservation and click on "Resources/Links", "How to Begin a Composting Program" for more information.

ANTI-IDLING POLICY IS ADOPTED AT JSCEE

The Maintenance Department is working towards protecting public health and conserving resources by committing to reduce vehicle idling. Idling is no longer permitted in the parking lots at the Stanford Center either. Vehicle exhaust is the leading source of hazardous air pollution in Washington. According to the American Lung Association,

toxic air pollutants account for an additional 700 cases of cancer for every 1 million Washingtonians. Asthma symptoms also increase as a result of vehicle exhaust. It is the most common chronic illness in children and the cause of most school absences. Contrary to popular belief, idling is not an effective way to warm up a vehicle. Excessive idling is

actually hard on your engine because it isn't working at peak operating temperature and fuel does not undergo complete combustion. Frequent restarting has little impact on engine components like the battery and starter motor. Small costs in component maintenance will likely be recovered several times over in fuel savings.

"...there are vital connections among peace, democracy and good management of the environment", said Professor Wangari Maathai

WALKING SCHOOL BUS

One of the biggest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution is vehicle exhaust. In order to mitigate some of those effects, Lawton Elementary organizes a Walking School Bus every Wednesday and Friday. Students are escorted by parents, teachers, and staff from five separate locations about a mile from school. 125 students participated on the inaugural day. Not only did

this reduce the amount of pollution and traffic congestion around the school, but the students arrived at school refreshed and ready to learn. One 2nd grader commented "I used to think walking to school would be



Students on a Walking School Bus at Bailey Gatzert.

really really boring, and long, and tiring, but it was really FUN!" Cool Moms, a neighborhood environmental group, received a grant to enhance the project with route signs and other promotions.

Bailey-Gatzert and Laurelhurst also have similar programs.

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The Seattle Public School District is committed to modeling environmental stewardship, wisely managing the use of natural resources, and supporting conservation. As outlined in the Natural Resources Conservation Policy (H25.00), Seattle Public Schools strive to:

- *Reduce the use of energy, water and other natural resources and encourage recycling.*
- *Educate students, teachers and staff about the importance of conserving natural resources.*
- *Lessen environmental damage attributable to natural resources consumption*



GOATS HELP CLEAN UP INVASIVE PLANTS

“SPS staff members and students have embraced the need to implement resource conservation measures,” said former Superintendent Raj Manhas. “Some creative, practical, and sustainable ideas have been implemented.”

With a strong focus on environmental education, stewardship and science, Gatewood Elementary School hosted around 60 weed-eating goats on Oct. 18-21. The goats helped clear overgrown ivy and blackberry bushes as part of the school’s playground renovation project, *Operation Imagination*. The Gatewood PTA, in partnership with Local Union 609 and SPS Grounds staff, sponsored this event after many attempts to address years of overgrowth.

Now that the invasive ground-covers and thorny bushes that cover the steep hillsides in the west and south areas of the school are cleared, volunteers will remove the remaining roots (without pesticides), plant more environmentally



Pinky the goat munches ivy at Gatewood Elementary

friendly trees, lay down recycled burlap (donated by Starbucks) and spread mulch.

Gatewood principal Rhonda Claytor said “Gatewood is a school that actively teaches environmental stewardship and learning by doing. As an educational community that embraces a holistic approach

to learning and service we are excited about the positive impact this entire project has on children and helping them become active stewards for our environment.”

Operation Imagination began about three years ago when a group of PTA parents, students, and community volunteers came together to plan and renovate the school’s playground and equipment. The plans include a multi-

generational learning garden, student art on the entryways, a second play structure for older children who use the playground, a new playfield, and new trees.