

# CITY OF BONNEY LAKE SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROJECT

## Education/Encouragement Program

The education program was accomplished through a partnership amongst the City of Bonney Lake, Sumner School District, Bicycle Alliance of Washington (BAW), and Feet First (FF) beginning with the grant application and extending through project completion. BAW and FF, both 501(c)3 nonprofit corporations, previously partnered to form the Center for Safe Routes to School in Washington State in 2006.



The education program was funded by two grants, a Safe Routes to School grant and a Pedestrian Safety grant. The Safe Routes grant focused on two schools: Victor Falls Elementary School and Mountain View Middle School while the Pedestrian Safety grant included all of the remaining Bonney Lake area schools. This report covers programs undertaken at all Bonney Lake area schools.

There are several aspects to the education/encouragement element of Bonney Lake's Safe Routes to School education program. Except for a City of Bonney Lake open house, all of the

education programs were based out of local schools.



City and District administrative staff performed numerous functions throughout the education program but those salaries were not charged to the grant or counted as grant match. School-based teams made up primarily of certified staff are described in the next section. BAW and FF provided project support at a cost-based contracted rate.



City staff and community outreach volunteers sponsored an Open House on June 12, 2010, which included a Powerpoint presentation describing all phases of the

project and numerous displays and aerial photos.



All homeowner associations in the Bonney Lake area were extended invitations to the Open House with the goal of reaching out to the parents of students attending local schools. The general public was also welcome to the meeting and was promoted on the City of Bonney Lake website and covered by the local newspaper.



The rest of the education/encouragement program focused on six of the seven Bonney Lake area schools. One school, Lakeridge Junior High, has a very limited walking area directly east of the school campus. This limited walking area has been a mandatory walking zone for many years (i.e., no bus service), so an education/encouragement program for those students would not likely generate increased numbers of students walking and biking to school. The main entrance to the school campus, which faces

west, has limited pedestrian shoulders along routes to other nearby residential areas, and the school principal indicated that promoting walking and biking along those routes to the school would amount to encouraging unsafe practices. Furthermore, the road is under Pierce County's jurisdiction, and Pierce County will not install a crosswalk unless it is staffed with a crossing guard. Therefore, education efforts focused on the remaining six schools in the Bonney Lake area where promoting walking and biking to school could generate a positive outcome by encouraging students who live more than a block or two from their school to walk or bike instead of taking the bus. It is noteworthy that some other program efforts exceeded minimum grant requirements.



Each of the remaining six schools school participated in one or more of the following. Four of these schools are located inside the city limits of Bonney Lake and two are located in residential areas just south of the city limits.

- 1) Willie Weir bicycling presentations during school assemblies
- 2) Walk-and-bike-to school events
- 3) Bike rodeos
- 4) Walk-and-bike safety audits
- 5) Poster contest featuring safe street-crossing behaviors
- 6) Updated walk route maps

7) Bike and walking safety audits at each school



In addition to traditional Safe Routes education/encouragement programs, this particular grant program promised to include middle and high school students to learn more about the Fennel Creek corridor and how the trail will avoid negative environmental impacts. An eight-grade honors class from Mountain View Middle School served as judges for the poster contest and also heard a presentation from a Community Services Director Gary Leaf regarding the Safe Routes trail and how it accommodates the sensitive Fennel Creek Watershed.



Three tenth-grade classes from Bonney Lake High School participated in a school-sponsored field trip to Fennel Creek to learn about its environment in which the Safe

Routes trail is constructed and also how environmental mitigation works.



An added bonus to the program was a similar school-sponsored field trip of four second-grade classes from Victor Falls Elementary to a site along Fennel Creek. The eastern terminus of the Safe Routes trail is located on the Victor Falls Elementary School site.

### School-Based Teams

Seven school staffers from six schools served as Safe Routes to School organizers throughout the 2009-2010 school year. On November 16, 2009, representatives from the Bicycle Alliance and Feet First trained City of Bonney Lake and school staff regarding the types of programs available to encourage students to bike and walk to school, including Willie Weir, safety audits, and special events. Each team member received a \$500 stipend for program efforts. Together these team members spent hundreds of hours coordinating efforts between the City and the District. Following is the list of school-based team members:

Don Weber and Julie Gustafson, Liberty Ridge Elementary School  
Grant Sulham, Bonney Lake High School  
Laurie Dent, Mountain View Middle School

Kay Helgath, Bonney Lake Elementary School  
 Mark Holme and Karen Harris, Emerald Hills Elementary School  
 Andrea Landes and Lisa Devaney, Victor Falls Elementary School

A local nonprofit organization, the Fennel Creek preservation Group (FCPG), also participated in the education program. Its Executive Director, Marian Betzer, attended the 11/16/09 Safe Routes training and also assisted with the student field trips to the Fennel Creek Watershed. Several FCPG members also volunteered to help with those events. FCPG is a local nonprofit agency whose mission is to preserve and restore the Fennel Creek Watershed

In addition, Assistant Superintendent Craig Spencer, Administrative Assistant Joyce Bickle, music teacher Laurie Selle, school Principals Margie Belmer (LRES), Chuck Eychaner (EHES), Linda Masteller (BLHS), Sandy Miller (BLES), Laurie Dent (MVMS), and Beth Dykman (VFES) and Assistant Principal Jeff Gardner (BLHS) all provided critically needed support for this project.



Middle school teacher Jessica Emery involved her eighth grade honors class in the poster contest while also learning about Fennel Creek and the Safe Routes trail, and high school teacher Andrew Sage (with

assistance from Grant Sulham) and elementary school teachers Lisa Crinklaw, Shannon Papcun, Chuck Williams, and Lois Rogers involved their classes in educational field trips to Fennel Creek.



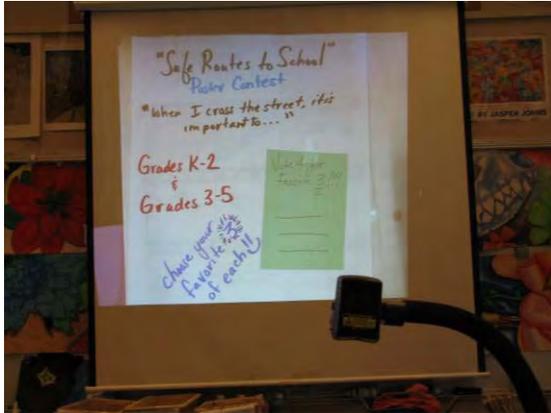
### **Poster Contest**

Poster contest forms featuring an emphasis on safe street-crossing behavior were distributed to approximately 1,650 students from four Bonney Lake area elementary schools. A total of 151 posters were submitted to the City of Bonney Lake as contest entries. Participation varied by school.



The number of poster contest entries by school were:

Bonney Lake Elementary	45
Emerald Hills Elementary	57
Liberty Ridge Elementary	43
Victor Falls Elementary	6



An eighth grade honors class taught by Ms. Jessica Emery at Mountain View Middle School rated the posters to determine the winners. The winning posters are displayed on the City of Bonney Lake website.



Ms. Emery's class also heard a presentation by City of Bonney Lake Community Services Director Gary Leaf regarding the sidewalks and trail constructed through the Safe Routes program and also a discussion of the use of porous asphalt as a low-impact development practice utilized during trail construction. Mr. Leaf also distributed a Fennel Creek Watershed flyer produced by the Fennel Creek Preservation Group.



### Willie Weir Presentations

Willie Weir, a Seattle-area bicycling enthusiast and writer, provided 45-minute presentations to five Bonney Lake area schools regarding bicycle safety, the health benefits of exercise, and tales he has experienced during his more than 60,000 miles of bicycling around the world.



Some 1,850 students heard Mr. Weir's encouraging and entertaining stories of how fun it can be to ride a bike instead of other modes of transportation. Mr. Weir practices what he preaches and does not own a motor vehicle.



Mr. Weir addressed assemblies at the following schools:

- Bonney Lake Elementary (5/27/10)
- Emerald Hills Elementary (4/7/10)
- Liberty Ridge Elementary (4/7/10)
- Mountain View Middle (6/2/10)
- Victor Falls Elementary (4/30/10)



Bonney Lake High School does not hold assemblies. The High School's school-based team member suggested a better alternative to holding an assembly in a school that does not have them. This alternative involved students in his Life Skills class engaging in a three-month effort to monitor the number of students dropped off by motor vehicles near the main entrance to the school. That particular effort is described later under "Safety Audits." In addition, expanding the High School's walk-

and-bike-to-school effort from a single-day event to a month-long event exceeds grant requirements.



### **Fennel Creek Field Trips**

Three Bonney Lake High School tenth-grade classes (92 students in all) participated in a half-day field trip to Fennel Creek. Teacher Andrew Sage incorporated the field trip to Fennel Creek into his ecology unit. The students visited two WSDOT mitigation sites along Fennel Creek adjacent to the Sumner-Buckley Highway.



One mitigation site was planted fifteen years ago, and the other has not yet been planted. The point of showing both sites was to contrast a restored and an unrestored site, providing students an opportunity to see how the environment can be restored through positive action. Marian Betzer

showed the students a Fennel Creek Watershed map and how the Safe Routes trail utilizes porous asphalt as a Low Impact Development measure in order to minimize environmental impacts to Fennel Creek. Wetland Biologist Carl Ward described how environmental mitigation works and that the students would see this on their trip. Students then broke into three groups and heard presentations from four WSDOT representatives: Wetland Biologists Carl Ward and Jodie Beall, Archaeologist Roger Kiers, and Site Development Technician James Criswell. Mr. Kiers showed the students some examples of artifacts that have been found by his team at the site.



Students planted sample mitigation plants and trees supplied by WSDOT staff. Students received Safe Routes to School t-shirts and hand-outs prepared by the Fennel Creek Preservation Group and the City of Bonney Lake.



City staff provided traffic control to ensure a safe event. Fennel Creek Preservation Group volunteers developed handouts and joined WSDOT staff in the presentations. The handouts included a four-page overview of the Fennel Creek Watershed prepared by volunteer Marian Betzer and aerial photos of the two mitigation site. Grant Sulham coordinated transportation and logistics at Bonney Lake High School.

An added bonus was a field trip of four Victor Falls Elementary School second-grade classes (95 students in all) in a field trip to a site along Fennel Creek. The actual destination was the residence of Victor Cissell and Judy Eagle, both members of the Fennel Creek Preservation Group. This residence borders the east side of Fennel Creek near the site of the Safe Routes to School Trail.



Volunteers included Victor Cissell and Judy Eagle, Marian Betzer (Fennel Creek Preservation Group), Bonney Lake City Council Member Laurie Carter, Heather Harris, Lynn Maloney and Tralone Clark. They were joined by City staffers Gary Leaf and Mary Ann Barcom. Teacher Lisa Crinklaw and Marian Betzer planned the event and prepared learning materials for the students with assistance from Sheri Runyon. Other teachers participating were Shannon Papcun, Chuck Williams, and Lois Rogers. Prior to the field trip, students received a pre-assessment prepared by Lisa Crinklaw.



After the students exited the bus they first heard an overview of the Safe Routes project from Marian Betzer and Gary Leaf and saw a large Fennel Creek Watershed Map. Mr. Leaf explained how trail construction will use porous asphalt as a Low Impact Development measure.



Students visited five learning stations containing exhibits of plants and trees found along Fennel Creek: Western Red Cedar; Trillium/Devil's Club; Nursery Log; Sword Fern, Bleeding Heart, Vine Maple, and Skunk Cabbage; and Licorice fern and freshwater Mussels. After participating in the fifth learning station, students walked to the edge of Fennel Creek and saw where the trail will be constructed on the other (western) side of the creek.



A student activity was included at each learning station such as using a magnifying glass for observation, fern rubbings, coloring pages, and harvesting tree seedlings. Including elementary school students in the Fennel Creel education effort exceeded the minimum requirement of the grants.



### **Walk-and-Bike-to-School Events**

The City's original grant application suggested having "Walking Wednesdays" and "Biking Tuesdays" to promote walking and biking to school. The school-based teams felt that these events would work better if they were customized to fit each school's needs. Mountain View Middle School and Bonney Lake High School each decided to have a "walk/bike-to-school" month in May 2010. Liberty Ridge Elementary and Emerald Hills Elementary Schools chose to have two separate "walk/bike-to-school" events while Victor Falls Elementary School chose to have a single day event.

63 Mountain View Middle School students participated in a month-long walk-and-bike-to-school event during the month of May 2010. Students tracked their miles on postcards designed by Feet First



Eleven Bonney Lake high School students participated in a month-long walk-to-school program during the month of May 2010. These students logged a total of 73 miles walking to school. As with the middle school students, they tracked their miles on postcards designed by Feet First. Safe Routes to School t-shirts and modest prizes were provided to participants.



Both middle and high school events were publicized in their respective school newsletters, posters, signs, and announcements. Stretching the walk-and-bike-to-school events from single-day efforts to month-long efforts exceeds grant requirements for both Mountain View Middle School and Bonney Lake High School.



On April 28, 2010, 106 Liberty Ridge Elementary School students participated in a walk-and-bike-to-school event. The school's PTA donated water bottles, and enough were on-hand to supply all participants. Pamphlets supplied by Feet First ("Parents Make Choices"), the City of Bonney Lake, and the PTA were handed out to all students. All participants received an "I Walked to School" sticker. The first 60 participants received a "Safe Routes to School" t-shirt.



On Friday June 4, 2010, 61 Emerald Hills Elementary School students dodged a constant rain to participate in a walk-and-bike-to-school event. The first 20 participants received a Safe Routes to School t-shirt. The unexpected success of these two events motivated City and District staff to plan for three additional events in Fall 2010.



On October 20, 2010, more than 100 students participated in a second walk-and-bike-to-school event. Each participant received a "Safe Routes to School" t-shirt.

### **Safety Audits**

Feet First and City and School District staff performed a parking lot safety audit at Liberty Ridge Elementary School on March 16, 2010. Staffers were placed at key locations in the parking lot to tally how and where students enter the school grounds and buildings. Particular attention was paid to the number of near-misses between students and motor vehicles, driver behavior, and whether or not students use proper crosswalks. The audit was done both in the morning and the afternoon.



The Bonney Lake High School Life Skills class did a class project from March 2010 through May 2010 that focused on parking lot safety. Students in the Life Skills class have mild learning disabilities and learn best from hand-on experience. These students reviewed security videotapes of cars dropping off students in the roundabout at the main entrance of the school. They watched the videos, counted cars, and assembled data for a chart. There is a four-second delay in the video so they could see the car pull up, then a break, then see a student getting dropped off. The purposes of this assignment were to highlight the notion that walking or biking to school should eventually reduce the number of student drop-offs and also to raise student awareness of parking lot safety. Results of the survey do not show a clear trend over the nine weeks of monitoring, but long-term reduction in the number of students dropped off can be expected. The appendix includes a graph based on the students' observations.

City and District staff joined Feet First and the Bicycle Alliance to complete safety audits for walkers and bikers at each school. Detailed reports were prepared for each school listing improvements needed to improve safety. Conclusions and recommendations from these reports will be incorporated into the next update of the Non-Motorized Plan contained within City's Comprehensive Plan which is scheduled in 2014. The attached consultant reports were presented to the Bonney Lake City Council on April 5, 2011.

### **Bike Rodeos**

This project funded three bike rodeos. The first was held at Victor Falls Elementary School on May 1, 2010. Some forty young students participated along with their parents.



The Pierce County Sheriff's Office and East Pierce Fire & Rescue participated, along with the Bicycle Alliance, school staff, and volunteers. EPF&R fitted and sold high-quality bike safety helmets at cost.



Students improved bike safety skills by maneuvering through a traffic simulation course set up by school staff and volunteers.



A second bike rodeo took place at Liberty Ridge Elementary School on October 20, 2010. 115 students participated in the bike rodeo. Each participant received a “Safe Routes to School” t-shirt.

### **Walk Route Maps**

Walk Route Maps provide recommended routes for students to walk or bike to school. These recommendations are based on existing traffic controls such as crosswalks, stop signs, and sidewalks, and on other conditions such as visibility and speed limits. Feet First worked with Sumner School District’s Transportation Department and City staff to develop updated walk route maps. These maps are attached to this report.

### **Student Clean-Up Day at Fennel Creek**

Bonney Lake High School and Mountain View Middle School students participated in a clean-up day at two sites along Fennel Creek on September 18, 2010. One of those sites is the location of the Safe Routes to School trail below Victor Falls Elementary School.



Students created walking paths, picked up garbage and debris along Fennel Creek, and planted cedar tree seedlings.