

## Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District Celebrating Earth Day Through Leadership

By Andrea Takash

The modern environmental movement hit the world 35 years ago on April 22, 1970, marking the first Earth Day, which is now celebrated in over 100 countries.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Seattle District, recognizes the historical importance of Earth Day and how the sustainability concepts that grew out of Earth Day are reflected in the Corps Environmental Operating Procedures (EOPs).



Seeing the significance of the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Earth Day, part of this year's USACE Leadership Development Program (LDP) class took on the task of organizing various events to educate employees about personal and professional commitment to the environment as promoted by Earth Day and the EOPs.

The LDP Earth Day team started in February by hosting lunch sessions focused on the environment. Topics ranged from the history of Earth Day to transportation alternatives. They even got the local daycare children involved with the festivities by showing the film Dr. Seuss' *The Lorax*.

When April 22<sup>nd</sup> rolled around, the team prepared to host several events on different days.

"It was hard work, but the team enjoyed doing it and having it all come together in the end," said Gwyn Puckett, biologist with the USACE Dredged Material Management Office.



To kick off the official Earth Day, the team hosted a fair at Federal Center South. Numerous organizations from all over the Seattle area provided exhibits.

"I was impressed by the quantity and quality of vendors at the Earth Day fair. I learned a lot

about the environment,” said Beth Townsell, USACE Public Affairs clerk.

The Earth Day team also organized two volunteer work parties on April 23, one at Seahurst Park in Burien, Wash., and one at the Union Bay Natural Area at the Center for Urban Horticulture at the University of Washington.

More than 25 Corps employees and their family members came to Seahurst Park to remove ivy strangleholds from trees, plant almost 100 dogwood and maple shrubs, and learn about recent Corps beach restoration activities at the park. The mountains of detached ivy and empty plant pots at the end of the event testified to the hard work of all the volunteers.

A total of 36 volunteers participated in the work party at the Union Bay Natural Area, which assisted with the ongoing restoration of a wetland and prairie/oak savannah at a former landfill site. Volunteers worked to plant oak trees, remove invasive plants and apply mulch.

“The large turnout of volunteers allowed us to expand the event to include a second work area at the site,” said Ken Brettmann, USACE hydraulic engineer with the Water Management Section.

“Both events provided an opportunity for Corps employees and their families to have some fun and to make a positive contribution to the local environment,” said Evan Lewis, fish biologist with the USACE Environmental Resources Section.

The USACE Seattle Earth Day team members included Gwyn Puckett, Sheri Moore, Evan Lewis, Scott Lemons, Steve George, William Daniels and Ken Brettmann.