



## Volunteers clean Tacoma salmon habitat

By Tiffany Richards  
For Tacoma Weekly  
Published on: April 24, 2008

A FAMILY AFFAIR. (From left to right) Carly Herrmann, her granddaughter Amelia Rose, son-in-law John Scholbe and daughter Lara Herrmann, who is president of Walk The Waterfront. PHOTO BY TIFFANY RICHARDS

Through rain, hail, wind, even an occasional splash of sunshine, about 20 Tacoma-area residents answered the call on the morning of April 19 to clean up one of the city's best-kept secrets, Tahoma Salt Marsh.

Nestled between the Chinese Reconciliation Park site and the Burlington Northern railroad tracks just south of Old Town, this area of land is just one of five sites designated by the city for the purpose of salmon habitat restoration.

"We're here at the park to bring attention to the opportunity of the salmon habitat," said Lara Herrmann, president of Walk The Waterfront. "Salmon is the new spotted owl of Tacoma."

According to Ken Miller, executive director of the organization, the site was established by Tacoma six years ago through a joint agreement. "The city made a deal with the federal government and the Puyallup and Muckleshoot tribes to restore the habitat of the still-vulnerable salmon," he explained.

Walk the Waterfront is a non-profit, citizen organization dedicated to restoring the Tacoma waterfront to its natural environment for the fulfillment and co-habitation of animals and people alike.

Herrmann explained that Walk the Waterfront is the first community group to adopt one of the five remediation sites along Commencement Bay. The sites are managed and monitored by the city's Environmental Services Division.

<http://www.tacomaweekly.com/article/1870>

Walk the Waterfront's efforts involve weeding around native plants, removal of invasive species and picking up garbage. "It is important to balance urbanization and conservation," Herrmann said.

Leslie Ann Rose, the policy director for Citizens for a Healthy Bay, echoed a similar mission statement toward the conclusion of the clean up. "We believe the urban and natural environments can work together if we think outside the box," she remarked.

The event was geared to do just that, to get average citizens out and involved in the community and environment around them.

"It did feel good to do something for our waterfront," said Carly Herrmann, Lara Herrmann's mother, "It gave me some satisfaction. I've never done anything like this before. It was rewarding."

"It's perfect. Come out here and pull weeds with all my friends, make new friends, and help the waterfront," said Todd Donato, an anesthesiologist at Mary Bridge Children's Hospital.

Miller reflected on an even larger picture for the future of the waterfront. "This is a seven-mile stretch, from the Tacoma Dome to Point Defiance. Our goal is to make the entire stretch fully accessible to pedestrians, to connect the whole stretch from one end to the other."