



2020 Healthy Environment Impacts

This unprecedented year challenged us in many ways—as individuals and organizations. The importance of parks and recreation to our health and well being was even more apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic as people went outdoors to seek recreation, connection, and sanctuary. We kept our parks open. SPR staff worked as Social Distancing Ambassadors to keep people healthy and our parks safe, and we only closed the system for two days during the pandemic. Many resources at Seattle Parks and Recreation shifted to support city priorities during the pandemic, causing us to adapt our expectations on some environmental initiatives. And yet, we continued to support a healthy environment and identified new opportunities that arose from this new challenge. This report shares some of what we accomplished in 2020 toward our goal of creating a Healthy Environment for all.



94%
of households
live within a 10-minute
walk to a public park



57,568
native plants
added in urban forests
including 12,337 trees



64 new acres
of urban forest
in restoration



45% less water
than estimated
on 575 irrigated acres



4,515 storm
drains inspected
and 1,359 cleaned



1 new park
opened
and 3 expanded



45,000+ yards³
of estimated waste diverted
through recycling and
composting



25 trail projects
completed in natural
areas improving
16,033 feet of trail



9 buildings
improved
reducing energy
use by 30%



45 electric tools
purchased, including
leaf blowers, chainsaws
and trimmers

Meadows Grow

Reduced staffing for mowing opened an opportunity to see how meadow-like conditions would be received by the public. Many people, not just the birds and bees, loved the natural fields, and we also saved time, money, and water on maintenance. We are now updating our Turf Best Management Practices to support more meadows and passive turf areas in our parks, improving habitat and saving resources.

Carbon Cuts

The pandemic changed how and where we work, with many staff working remotely in 2020. Since transportation is responsible for 60% of Seattle's greenhouse gas emissions, the City has encouraged trip reduction for years. In 2020, we estimate that SPR employees worked remotely for a total of 56,143 days, reducing our carbon emissions and helping the City achieve its climate change goals.

Educators Learn

Nature walks and summer camps were a little tricky this year, so SPR's environmental education team adapted to their new habitat. Naturalists created 19 educational videos in 2020, with a total of 864 views. We also connected with 374 children in our Summer in the Parks program, which brought Nearby Nature Kits to eight parks throughout Seattle.