

Friends of Seward Park

Minutes for Board Meeting 9 May 2026

Submitted by E. Van Volkenburgh

Attending: Lizabeth Collier, Chris Hollinger, Joey Manson, Paul Shannon, Paul Talbert, Liz Van Volkenburgh

Paul Talbert called the meeting to order at 9:38 am.

Announcements. Paul T mentioned that the Cheese Puff Wild Swimming Club is having its formal kickoff for the season today at the south beach of Seward Park. This was noted for the group's name (after the orange swim buoys) and earliness in the season (brrrrr).

Walk for Rice is a big event that will happen next Saturday, May 16.

Another anonymous donation was received on April 20, 2026 to be used "where needed most."

Monthly reports.

Treasurer's Report -- Lizabeth reported that we have \$93,670 in the FoSP bank account.

Secretary's Report -- Liz reported she will create minutes for February and April 2026 from Zoom recordings of those meetings, and suggested that in the absence of a recording or minutes for the March meeting, the agenda could be posted.

Audubon Update. Joey Manson noted today is World Migratory Bird Day. The Center will position 4 people around the park to provide information, along with providing activities at the Center.

Tuesday the Audubon Center will welcome Dave Updegrave, DNR Commissioner, to observe progress on the DNR's 3-yr grant to support Seward Park Audubon activities.

Summer Camp is all set up, fully registered.

Andrews Bay "Natural Area." Joey M reported that someone came to him to discuss how Andrews Bay is being used and maintained. This area, largely occupied by boats mooring overnight, is designated by Seattle Parks as a Natural Area. Management of Natural Areas sits directly within the Parks Superintendent's office. Joey referenced "Juanita Bay" in Kirkland. When a noise ordinance was passed by neighbors, boaters moved from Juanita Bay to Andrews Bay.

Joey proposed a general, incremental and positive approach to this issue. He drew our attention to a natural protected area established at Juanita Bay, suggesting a similar area be established around Andrews Bay. Joey listed declines in bird and other species over the past two decades. Joey asked if FoSP would like to present this to Seattle's Mayor Katie Wilson. Joey and Paul T mentioned limitations on our organizations with regard to shoreline and steep slope restoration.

Paul T mentioned a "Union Bay Natural Area" at the Montlake Fill. Paul S mentioned Tim Billo is involved in this. Paul T also mentioned the Arboretum's northern (Foster Island) natural area. Paul T mentioned that Kiwanis Gulch near the Locks is also a Natural Area. He suggested inviting someone associated with these groups to talk with us about how these Natural Areas were established and are managed. Two possibilities are: Bridget Kelsh, a journalist writing about Parks

and Wildlife and Dave Berger who has volunteered to protect the beaver bay area at Lakewood Marina.

Paul T mentioned that Parks signed off on an agreement several years ago to allow boats in Andrews Bay for 30 years. This will limit the extent of what we can do.

Joey offered to try to find out whom to approach in the Mayor's office.

Paul T offered to connect with leaders of other Natural Areas to see if they would come talk with us about forming one here.

Joey mentioned that Kathryn True is coming to Audubon "Science Nature and a Biscuit" with Maria Dolan. He suggested they might be interested in the topic of an Andrews Bay natural area.

Pacific Wren decline. Paul S mentioned that Jenny Dooley, Forest Steward who is renovating the Trillium Swale, noticed a pacific wren fly up from a surviving fern. Paul S speculates that the decline in the wren population might be due to the decline in sword ferns. Paul S and Joey discussed placing Swift devices in the park to listen to birds. This would need to be approved by the research team from Seattle Parks and Recreation.

There will be a presentation by Adrienne Wolfe on use of these instruments at the Royal Room on May 21, 6-7 pm.

Paul S offered to discuss with Danielle D at Parks to create a proposal for purchasing and installing these monitors.

Forest summer research projects. Paul S updated us regarding several projects related to the forest.

On the last Saturday in May Paul S and crew will census all restoration sites to [monitor fern survival] track survival of everything they have planted, in this and in recent years. Survival from previous years can be found at <https://sewardpark.org/restoration-tracking-data/>

Parks installed cisterns with long hoses; Jenny and Paul will lead the hoses to the sites they will water during the summer to see if there is enough hose.

Ben Schlipp and Nate Butcher, supervised by Tim Billo, will work part time this summer to add more FIA (forest inventory and analysis) plots to the eighteen completed in 2024. See <https://sewardpark.org/forest-survey-summer-2024/> for the project report.

Paul suggested he plant Douglas Firs rather than waiting for a fire to create a need for replanting. This idea was posed by Keith Posse, a member of Paul's work parties. In general this idea was met positively, although Liz asked how FoSP and the Forest Stewards are guided ecologically. The Vegetation Management Plan for Seward Park is outdated.

Paul is pleased to report having more confidence about knowing when in the year the sword ferns die (June; from analysis of photos). Nate Butcher offered to monitor ferns during May/June and sample actively dying ferns for the California Pathology Lab.

Paul drew our attention to Schmitz Park Restore, showed us a print ad in a brochure, and suggested we look into it and share our efforts with them.

The first FoSP-funded short video project will start at the end of the month. The first short video, a pilot project which may or may not be continued is a revision, with higher production values of the “Big Trees, Burned Bark” story, the original version available at <https://sewardpark.org/big-trees-burned-bark/>

Proposals/Funding. Joey Hulbert has asked for a ballpark estimate of funding available for research proposals on sword fern demise. Paul T will respond by telling Joey that FoSP has \$5-10K committed for preliminary data collection, and invite him to bring us a proposal for what he and his lab might like to do to engage with us.

Other business.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 am.

The next FoSP meeting is scheduled for June 13 (second Saturday of each month).