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# **Upstream battle**



Workers from the city of South Portland and volunteers breached a manmade berm along the bank of **Trout Brook on** Friday, Sept. 28 to allow the brook to access a floodplain when storms cause the water levels to rise. The work is part of what Fred **Dillon of Water** Resources **Protection** called a "modest but meaningful" project to restore the water quality of Trout Brook. (Marc Filippino photo)

# Volunteers get hands dirty to help Trout Brook

By Jack Flagler Staff Writer

SOUTH PORTLAND — Fred Dillon sat against the back of a truck bed, his boots, jeans and T-shirt splashed with mud. He, along with a handful of other volunteers, had just finished work for the day to restore Trout Brook, a stream he said suffered a "death by

Dillon is the stormwater program coordinator with

the city of South Portland's Water Resources Protection department. For the last two years he has worked to erase the brook's label of "impaired" that the Maine Department of Enivronmental Protection (DEP) applied because Trout Brook does not meet the state's water quality standards.

Dillon and educators from Portland Water District helped a group of middle school students release baby an oil spill nearby. By the end of the week, rain had washed the spill into the water.

The issues that affect the brook's water quality didn't appear overnight. Dillon said the slow buildup of the residential area around the brook, and the rooftops and parking lots that came with that development, negatively impacted water quality.

You go back 40 years and the watershed was a lot less

#### Nuisance houses get second look at city council

By Jack Flagler Staff Writer

SOUTH PORTLAND — The South Portland City Council moved another step closer to strengthening the ordinance that governs public nuisances in the city.

The council voted 6-0, with Councilor Tom Coward absent, to pass the first reading of the proposed ordinance change submitted by Sally Daggett, corporate counsel, and Pat Doucette, code enforcement officer. A second reading and final action on the ordinance change is set for Monday,

The council first discussed the issue at a Sept. 24 workshop, where a number of residents frustrated with the conditions of their neighbors' properties voiced their concerns to the council.

The council discussion at a meeting Monday, Oct. 1 meeting took a broader tone. Councilors focused mainly

brook trout into the stream in May. At the beginning of See TROUT BROOK, page 5 the week the students spent there, Dillon showed them Input sought on fort garden

By Jack Flagler

CAPE ELIZABETH – With one project under its belt, the Fort Williams Foundation is wasting no time, and is moving forward with the arboretum project at Fort Williams Park.

This time, they want some help from the public. Design plans for the Children's Garden, the next phase of the arboretum, are currently on display at multiple locations around the Portland area. Residents in Cape Elizabeth can see the designs from five different landscape architects at the town's

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This area of Fort Williams Park near the pond and tennis courts may not look like much now, but next summer work will begin to install a Children's Garden as part of the Fort Williams Foundation's Arboretum Project. Designs are currently on display from five competing landscape architecture firms at various locations around the Portland area. (Jack Flagler photo)

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### <u>A Window on the Past</u>

# First annual Bug Light 5K Run/Walk this Sunday

By Kathryn DiPhilippo South Portland Historical Society

The South Portland Historical Society, the South Portland Land Trust and Anthem BlueCross and BlueShield are excited to collaborate on a new community road race. The Bug Light 5K will start at 9 a.m. on Sunday, Oct. 7. More than 400 runners and walkers will begin at the boat launch area at Bug Light Park and will follow the coastal course around the city's historic east end. The course will have a view of both of South Portland's lighthouses, Fort Preble and the Southern Maine Community College campus, and then will run through Willard Square and back to Bug Light Park to finish in front of Bug Light.

In addition to volunteers from both nonprofits, the Coast Guard group Portland Division Naval Sea Cadets will provide much of the volunteer help needed to make this a smooth-running event.

Our thanks to all of them and to the many sponsors of this year's inaugural run: presenting sponsor, Anthem BlueCross and BlueShield; media sponsor, Big Hits Y100.9; lightkeeper sponsors, Snap Fitness and Maine Mall; harbor watch sponsors, Soma Massage & Wellness and Noyes Hall & Allen Insurance; and fleet sponsors, Hannaford Supermarkets and the city of South Portland. Race promotions have been provided by 19 Oaks Strategic Marketing. Thanks also to Coca Cola, Mister Bagel (Mill Creek and Maine Mall), and McDonald's in Mill Creek for additional donations of product for participants.

Proceeds from the Bug Light 5K will benefit both the South Portland Historical Society and South Portland Land Trust to support park, trail and historic preservation projects in the city. For more information on registering for the event, viewing a map of the race course, or other information, visit http://www.buglight5k.com/.

#### **Trout Brook**

Continued from page 1

developed. Now, this is a really highly developed residential area," Dillon said.

To improve the water quality and promote more aquatic wildlife in the stream, the city and volunteers took on a series of what Dillon called "modest but meaningful" projects over the week of Sept. 24 at Trout Brook, which runs from Casco Bay near Mill Creek to Mitchell Road in Čape Elizabeth.

They cleared rocks from a section of the brook that acted as a dam to increase the flow of water and the oxygen levels of the stream.

At various points along the brook, they also placed upside down tree roots into the water. Those provide a habitat for macroinvertebrates to live. Those bugs then serve as both the bottom rung of the aquatic food chain, as well as a useful barometer of the health of the stream

Dillon called the tiny bugs "canaries in the coal mine." According to the Cumberland County Soil & Water Conservation's website, their response to chemical pollution or physical disturbances can help identify what the problems are with the brook.

Finally, Dillon and others worked to breach a small portion of manmade berm in Trout Brook. That will help the stream access the floodplain when its water level rises during a rainstorm, which will reduce flooding and erosion downstream.

of individuals and variety organizations have helped in the work efforts on Trout Brook. Volunteers from the South Portland Land Trust have worked to improve both the brook itself and surrounding paths and they added a small footbridge near the entrance to the nature preserve last month.

The Casco Bay Estuary Partnership also provided the city with a \$5,000 grant in May to fund improvements to Trout Brook and Kimball Brook, which is also on the DEP's Urban Impaired Stream list.

The process to improve Trout Brook started, said Wendy Garland of the DEP, when she walked along the brook last year with Matt Craig of the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership to identify the problems that were preventing wildlife

from flourishing in the stream.

They noticed problems from grass

growing along the embankment to rocks damming up the flow of the stream to a cluster of branches and rocks near the stream's culvert. The grant funded the recent work and a project to install a series of step pools near the culvert that will improve the flow of the stream. Garland said the exact date to install those step pools is unknown, but the project has taken on added importance because the step pools will be directly in front of the newly installed footbridge.

Craig said the community's involvement in the work at Trout Brook made it an easy project for the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership to support, and he hopes surrounding communities follow South Portland's example.
"One of the reasons the estuary

partnership was so attracted to this type of a project was because there's town and community coming together to steward a resource," Craig said.

That's really what we're trying to cultivate. South Portland is a city that is interested in stewarding their resources, and bringing people together to do that is to the community's benefit.

The South Portland Land Trust will host an opening celebration for the Trout Brook Nature Preserve to show off the work done to both the surrounding trails and the stream. That celebration will take place Saturday, Oct. 27 at 1 p.m. at the intersection of Marsh Road and Providence Avenue.

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#### **Notice of Public Hearing** City of South Portland

A Public Hearing will be held on Monday, October 15, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in City Council Chambers, 25 Cottage Road, on the application of SoPo Catering, 171 Ocean Street, for a FE/Class A Catering License.

Susan Mooney, City Clerk

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