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Sweetwater

A Newsletter of the Sweetwater Alliance



Patricia Johanson to Design Bayfront Living Water Garden

On May 4th we will host Patricia Johanson at Hartley Nature Center at 7 PM. Patricia will give a slide show and discuss her previous work, along with her early thoughts on the Bayfront Project.

We have the honor of working with Patricia Johanson who will be the lead designer of our project. For over twenty years Patricia Johanson has patiently insisted that art can help to heal the earth. Her designs

for sewers, parks, and other functional projects not only speak to deep human needs for beauty, culture, and historical memory. She also answers to the needs of birds, insects, fish, animals, and microorganisms. Her art reclaims degraded ecologies and creates conditions that permit endangered species to thrive in the middle of urban centers. Her work blends perfectly with our vision for the Bayfront Living Water Garden.

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Patricia Johanson's Fair Park Lagoon in Dallas, Texas.



Patricia Johanson, continued from page 1

Patricia has a wonderful web site (patriciajohanson.com) where she describes one of her projects called Fair Park Lagoon located in Dallas, Texas. "On my first visit to Dallas it was clear that the lagoon was environmentally degraded. The shoreline was eroding, and the water was murky. The Parks Department had been fertilizing the lawn, and every time it rained fertilizer would wash into the lagoon, causing algal bloom. A green slime covered the water. There was no food chain; there were hardly any plants, animals, or fish. Basically the lagoon was dead. I began to develop my own list of concerns, which included creating a functioning ecosystem for a wide variety of plants and animals. I also wanted to control bank erosion, and create paths so that people could cut across the lagoon.

I began to do research on what different animals eat, because I knew that the right plants would attract wildlife. The project evolved from many different perspectives at once. I knew that the structures had to not only solve a host of environmental problems, but also had to be acceptable to scientists, engineers and city planners."

Patricia chose native Texas plants as models for the sculpture. The Delta Duck-Potato (*Sagittaria platyphylla*) has a mass of twisted roots that were arranged to prevent water from eroding the shoreline, while spaces between the roots became microhabitats for plants, fish, turtles and birds. The roots were built as five-foot wide paths that people could walk out on, while thinner stems rose out of the water and became perches for birds. Leaves further out in the

lagoon became islands where animals could rest. Other leaves along the shore became step-seating and overlooks.

Patricia was also commissioned to design a sewer along San Francisco Bay. "Endangered Garden" creates a one-third of a mile baywalk along the sewer's roof, with tidal sculpture, butterfly meadow, endangered species habitat, and restored shellfish substrate, all within the image of the endangered San Francisco Garter Snake.

Her Park for a Rainforest is a sculpture interwoven with the Amazon jungle that provides public access to every level of the rainforest. As ramps, seating, walkways, and

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Students conducting water quality monitoring at Fair Park Lagoon



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viewing platforms thread through the trees up to the height of a fifteen-story building, the vertical garden is revealed with its unique communities of life at every level: orchids and butterflies, mazes of vines, chattering monkeys, bats, iguanas, tree-frogs, sloths, toucans, king vultures, and harpy eagles. The sculpture will not alter or destroy the existing ecosystem, but it will reveal the forest by focusing on the complexity and minutiae of nature, allowing scientific research, exploration, and discovery in a zone where humans and nature co-exist.

Is there any doubt that Patricia is the perfect person to lead us through the design of the Bayfront Living Water Garden?

Be sure to check out her web site!
patriciajohnason.com

Progress Report

Sweetwater Alliance is moving steadily forward on raising the funds needed for the design phase of this project. The Minnesota Lake Superior Coastal Program has approved the grant proposal put forth by the City of Duluth and Sweetwater Alliance. This is a 50:50 matching grant for design. As of this writing, we have raised \$16,000 and need to raise an additional \$45,000 to receive the matching funds. Therefore, we are working very hard to raise this match by July of this year.

Meanwhile, we were pleased to hear our new Mayor, Herb Bergson, mention our project in his state of the City address on January 5, 2004. He stated that his administration... “will work to build a water garden and arboretum at the Bayfront.” We are excited to have the support of our new Mayor and look forward to working with him and his administration.

Finally, we welcome Candy Harshner as our Board President. Candy is the Executive Director of Program for Aid to Victims of Sexual Assault and brings with her skills in nonprofit management and arts administration. Candy feels that, “the Living Water Garden presents a unique opportunity to enhance the beauty of Bayfront Park, while educating the public to the importance of water quality.”



Meet Patricia Johanson

For a
Slide Show and Discussion

Tuesday, May 4th

7:00 PM

Hartley Nature Center
3001 Woodland Avenue, Duluth

Call 728-5392 for more info

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A NEWSLETTER OF THE
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A Word About Sweetwater Alliance

Sweetwater Alliance was incorporated in 2002 as a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. The work we do is a fusion of ecological restoration, art and environmental education. Currently, our major emphasis is to fund, design and build a Living Water Garden on Duluth's Lake Superior waterfront. We hope that this first project in Duluth will inspire other communities to join in collaboration with Sweetwater Alliance to undertake similar projects around the world.

Who we are:

Candy Harshner – President
Tiss Underdahl – Vice President
Ellen Lindgren – Treasurer
Xia Ji – Secretary
Jill Jacoby – Executive Director

A Special Thanks To:

- Our Major Funders:
- Duluth-Superior Community Foundation Unrestricted Fund
- Marbrook Foundation
- Western Lake Superior Sanitary District
- Cargill
- River Network
- Over 150 individuals and businesses
- Ellen O'Neill for organizing our kick off fund raising event
- Hartley Nature Center for hosting our kick off fund raising event

Sweetwater Alliance



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