



## Groups Partner to Clean Up Lake Union and Portage Bay

**May 13 is the 4th annual 'Lake Union Sweep' volunteer cleanup event**

On Saturday, May 13, 2006, volunteers representing environmental and community groups, Lake Union area businesses and associations will gather at Seattle's South Lake Union Park, 860 Terry Ave N, to take to the water and pick up trash and other debris that has accumulated in the lake and along the shoreline.

At 9:00am, Seattle-based Puget Soundkeeper Alliance will welcome volunteers in boats and at the docks of the Maritime Heritage Center at South Lake Union Park. The Alliance, along with Center for Wooden Boats, Seattle Parks and Recreation and Seattle Public Utilities, organized this event that draws volunteers from the Lake Union and Portage Bay communities and surrounding businesses. The event is made possible by support from local businesses.

More than 150 volunteers are expected to participate in the cleanup. They will work from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at locations throughout Lake Union and Portage Bay, scooping up water-borne trash from kayaks and other small boats and then transferring the material to larger boats that will take it to offloading points around the lake. Garbage crews from Seattle Public Utilities will take the trash away once it is on-shore. Shoreside cleanup and stormdrain stenciling projects are scheduled for the South Lake Union neighborhood. The event will conclude with a celebration at South Lake Union Park from 12 -2pm, to recognize the hard work of the volunteers.

In addition to several tons of anticipated trash removal, the participants also hope to use the event to demonstrate a community commitment to keep the water clean and to create awareness for prevention of other unseen forms of pollution such as stormwater runoff. Lake Union and Portage Bay provide habitat to a surprising array of wildlife including salmon, herons, eagles, muskrat, beaver and turtles.

"Trash and other debris can really accumulate in this urban lake" says Chris Wilke of the Puget Soundkeeper Alliance. "Winter storms and rainfall bring a lot of it from land. People need to understand that this is as much a water-quality problem and not just unsightly." Wilke says that bits of polystyrene, fast food containers and wrappers are very common. But they also recover building materials and the occasional vehicle battery or television set, which are sources of heavy metals.

Sponsors include: Adobe, Brown Bear Car Wash, the Floating Homes Association, Kenmore Air, Starbucks Coffee, Vulcan, and West Marine.

Paddling crews from the 40-foot long Tacoma Dragon Boats and Seattle Outrigger Canoes will add a colorful flair to the event. Additional local support for the event includes kayaks from Aqua Verde Paddle Club and Cafe, Moss Bay Paddle Club, and Northwest Outdoor Center, as well support from Aquatic Weed Control, Duke's Chowderhouse, the Electric Boat Company, Friends of the Trail, Fremont Avenue Ice Cream Boat, King County Labs, Lake Washington Rowing Club, and the Native Forest Council.

For more information about the Lake Union Sweep, please contact Chris Wilke of Puget Soundkeeper Alliance at 206-297-7002 or visit [www.pugetsoundkeeper.org](http://www.pugetsoundkeeper.org).