



June 2010

Heron Habitat Helpers' HERALD

P.O. Box 99815, Seattle, WA 98139-0815

Celebrate Summer 'HERON WEBCAM' FUNDRAISER

Saturday, July 10 2:00 to 4:00 pm
4562 34th Avenue West

Join us for song, drink, laughter, herons – and for raising funds. Our Heron WebCam is breaking down too frequently and we need to update our equipment so we can keep an eye on the Kiwanis Ravine heronry. Check out the webcam at www.heronhelpers.org

Hosted in the beautiful backyard of Perry and Christine Atkins, we might even hear baby herons squawking. Our special treat will be listening to singer and songwriter, Danny O'Keefe, the musical genius behind *'Good Time Charlie's Got the Blues.'*

Let's raise money and have fun! Remember to bring your checkbooks!

RSVP: Christine at 206 286 1908 or email coopatkins1@comcast.net

If you must miss the fun, please send your tax deductible donation to:
Heron Habitat Helpers • P.O. Box 99815, Seattle, WA 98139-0815

'Wildlife Sanctuary' Planning Gets Started

By Donna Kostka

On May 19, the first meeting was held to plan how to implement "Wildlife Sanctuary" status for Kiwanis Ravine. The purpose is to give better protection to the Kiwanis Ravine herons.

Planners included representatives from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation, and HHH. A few additional monthly meetings will be held through the summer as the team puts together a Habitat Advisory Plan. And in the Fall, the team expects to hold a public meeting to explain what Wildlife Sanctuary status means. A big "value added" to ravine neighbors is that this public recognition of the Kiwanis herons is expected to increase the value of neighboring property.

An expected change could be the setting of "closed" times and places inside the park where people will not be allowed to enter – to protect the heron nesting season. As most people don't enter the steep ravine, that means few changes expected from ravine neighbors.

A newspaper announcement of Kiwanis Wildlife Sanctuary status is expected maybe next month. It will stress the herons need solitude for their nesting and people should watch the herons via HHH's website: www.heronhelpers.org

Join HHH's Road Trip To The Hood Canal

By Mary Beth Dols

HHH is sponsoring its first road trip to the Hood Canal's Theier Wetlands near Belfair, WA. Join the trip on Saturday, June 26, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Walk around the 135 acre trail system – maybe we'll catch a glimpse of a fox or a mink in the woods, or great blue herons along the water. Stroll the Theier Native Plant Demonstration Garden – we'll compare HHH work party notes with their restoration experts. We'll have a mid-day picnic lunch on the beautiful grounds of the Center.

Dress for the weather. We'll go rain or shine. Don't forget your binoculars and cameras. Bring a brown bag lunch, but HHH will provide drinks. Please leave your dog at home.

Plan on a 1 1/2 to 2 hour trip each way, but there will be plenty of stops. Sign up early. There are a limited number of seats in the van.

RSVP: Mary Beth at mbdols@comcast.net

A fee of \$15 per person will be your share of the van rental fee.

HHH Shares Info About Herons At Phillips Salmon Bake

Five HHHers contributed to a very successful "table" at the Larry Phillips Salmon Bake on May 22.

In addition to hobnobbing with the elected officials, our representatives had a chance to tell our "heron story" to anyone who'd stop at the table. Located near the bar, our table was well attended. Many thanks to Heidi Carpine, Giselle and Steve Lovekin, Connie Foster, and Mary Beth Dols.

Volunteer To Help HHH And The Herons

Please consider volunteering to assist the work of HHH. Our organization has no paid workers. We're all volunteers, and we never have enough volunteers. If you can help, please let us know how many hours you can contribute and what you are interested in by emailing us at: info@heronhelpers.org

Or if you'd like to get the straight scoop from a human being, call Donna Kostka at (206) 283-7805.

*Here are a few jobs
(and there are many more) –*

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

Coordinate the searching for and matching of interested people with our volunteer slots.

PUBLIC RELATIONS COORDINATOR

Coordinate sending press releases and articles about HHH activities to the press.

OUTREACH TABLE COORDINATOR

Coordinate the setting up and running of a table describing the Kiwanis herons and HHH activities at various events around the City.

TREE ORDINANCE ASSISTANT

Assist the Outreach Committee in attending City meetings on devising a new tree ordinance, that HHH hopes will be more protective of heron nests.

GRANT WRITING ASSISTANT

Learn how to write grant applications and share the thrill of "winning the money" when we finally get awards.

HERON WATCHING FACILITATOR

Help monitor and run the equipment that beams out the pictures of our Kiwanis herons over our website.

RESTORATION ASSISTANT

Assist the Restoration Committee in planning and running small work parties for the shoulder areas of the ravine.

WEB ASSISTANT

Assist our Webmaster in preparing information for HHH's website.

heronnews

By Pam Cahn

Heron Report

The Kiwanis Ravine heron colony has grown to nearly 80 nests again this year, with new nests still starting up in mid-May. Bald eagles have been in and out of the heron colony since late March, disturbing the herons off their nests and eating eggs. Crows have also been seen eating eggs when the herons are off their nests. The herons re-laid eggs and with fewer disturbances from the eagles, settled down late in April and are mostly incubating eggs. First hatch was heard on May 20th. The herons have expanded this year to a new location on the south side of the Ballard Locks, with 5 nests hidden away in maples in Commodore Park.

Update on the Heroncams

Watch both heroncams through Heron Watching on our Web site. The two heroncams have been plagued by technical difficulties this season. We had only one camera in the heron colony when we bought the computer two years ago, but now we've expanded to two cameras and sound streaming around the clock. This heavier load is more than the computer can reliably manage and our computer advisor at Olympia Systems recommends reconfiguring to a system with one dedicated server with audio (\$725.00 per server) for each camera. You can make a contribution to HHH through the How You Can Help Web page.

HHH Heron Tours – The Birds Were the Stars and They Never Disappointed Their Fans!

160 Tour Takers from far – Vancouver, BC – and near – a neighbor of the ravine on 34th Ave. W.

They were passionate about, and excited to see the Kiwanis Ravine's Great Blues and to learn about HHH and its preservation and restoration efforts to safe keep the birds' habitat. They'd been advised that they'd be able to see the heronry and nursery, in the ravine's towering alders and maples, because they'd read the wonderful Seattle Times April 1st Weekend Edition article, by reporter Kathryn True and photographer Alan Berner, and reserved a space on one of the scheduled April and early May Heron Tours noted in the article.

A Garden Club came from Edmonds because they were interested in our restoration efforts. Residents from Covenant Shores Retirement Home, on Mercer Island, chose a Heron Tour for their weekly outing. They were thrilled to be able to see the nest building and courtship activities of several herons because they enjoy the visits of a lone heron to their facility. The couple from Vancouver, BC was on a cruise ship that had docked in Seattle. They were joined by a family member from Edmonds who had advised them about the tour. They decided our Heron Tour was the best tourist attraction in Seattle!

Heidi Carpine, Connie Foster, Pam Cahn, Carol Burton, Mike Marsh, Kathy Smith and Mary Beth Dols led the tours. The tours commenced in Heidi's wonderful living room in her 100 year old farmhouse. Folks learned facts about the Ravine and its history, the Great Blues and their use of the Ravine, and HHH. The contents of our Heron Kit were passed around which promoted more Q & A about the herons.

The tour takers then walked 4 blocks to the beautiful backyard of HHH members Christine and Perry Atkins to view the herons' activities and nests.

Every tour provided a variety of heron activity and excitement...mostly due to eagle presence near or in the heronry. With the naked eye or binoculars, folks could easily see 20 – 30 herons building nests, courting each other, sitting on the nest or flying to and from the heronry. On one tour a juvenile eagle flew over the heronry thrilling the folks when the 20 – 30 herons we could see turned into 40 – 50 herons flying out their nests. We had not seen these additional herons and their nests further south in the ravine. On another tour folks saw an adult eagle fly into the heronry again prompting the herons to fly off their nests. It then ate the eggs in one abandoned nest as the heron parent screamed and squawked, only inches from the eagle, and then proceeded to another nest to eat those eggs before sitting on the nest. The herons returned slowly to the heronry – providing folks with breathtaking views of their awe inspiring landings, "Kodak" moments but also the heart wrenching competition and survival in nature.

The tour takers were very appreciative of the tour guides (hugs & many thank you notes received) and of the Atkins offering their backyard to view the heronry. We gained 29 members, many advising a desire to volunteer, and \$611 in donations. The tours spaces were filled 3 days after the article and we had 30 folks on a wait list.

By Connie Foster and Heidi Carpine

Join 2nd Saturday Of Month 9:00 – noon Work Parties at Kiwanis Ravine Overlook

By Scott Luchessa

Please come and join Scott Luchessa, a certified ecologist, and others help to continue to restore native plant communities at the Kiwanis Ravine Overlook site. Work parties are the second Saturday of each month from now through November. This site is now seven or so years old and well on its way. We have quite a variety of native trees, shrubs, and herbs.

Come learn how to identify and see native plant communities in the heart of Seattle! There are almost always a few things blooming. A few of the native perennial forbs in flower now are early blue violet (*Viola adunca*), fringecup (*Tellima grandiflora*), and western starflower (*Trientalis latifolia*).

Activities vary but almost always involve removal of persistent invasive species, including seedlings of English ivy, holly, non-native grasses, and other undesirable species. Renewing/spreading mulch, light pruning, and digging up/potting native plants for latter transplanting to other sites are other regular activities.

We start at 9 and end at noon but folks are welcome to come for part of that time too. When you are done, traipse down to the locks past the heron rookery or over to Discovery Park. You won't regret it!

Check the HHH website for site location if you are not familiar with the area. It is perhaps 1,000 feet north of the east entrance to Discovery Park, which is located at the intersection of 36th Ave W and Government Way.

MISSION

To help Seattle enjoy, learn about, and protect its largest nesting colony of Great Blue Herons in Magnolia's Kiwanis Ravine Park.

WEB

www.heronhelpers.org

EMAIL

info@heronhelpers.org

TO VOLUNTEER

volunteer@heronhelpers.org

TO BECOME A MEMBER

Send your check for \$10/year to:

Heron Habitat Helpers • PO Box 99815, Seattle, WA 98139-0815

NAME

MAILING ADDRESS

E-MAIL

PHONE NUMBER

WOULD YOU LIKE TO VOLUNTEER?

YES

NO

IN WHAT CAPACITY?

Donations are welcome!

Reflections

HHH and the surrounding world are embedded in a world of change. Many folks are looking at financial challenges, and governmental priorities and policies are shifting to respond to those challenges.

Within the Heron Habitat Helpers, we are looking at change, also. The size of the Board has diminished from 12 a few years ago to 7 for the past two years to 5 at the current moment with no representation of the Restoration committee.

HHH's role in helping the herons has changed, too. Where we used to pursue grant money to hire Earth Corps workers to restore the steeply sloped hillsides of Kiwanis Ravine, we now provide advisory services to the City of Seattle and hospitality to workers hired by the City, as provided by a Park Levy recently passed in Seattle. The winds of change are blowing. Where will they take us?

One thing is clear to me: HHH is a service organization. We are here to help those herons in Kiwanis Ravine, and we'll do whatever we have to do to accomplish that goal. We have been focusing on restoring the habitat of Kiwanis Ravine, but the ravine is just part of a larger eco-system that supports the birds. Perhaps we need to broaden our scope? Education and outreach would also be supportive.

Our scope may be changing, but our organization needs to change as well. If we want HHH to be around in the coming years, we need to find ways to make our cause more magnetic, more vibrant and meaningful to people of all ages, so that they join our team and help work toward our goals.

Being part of a service organization and doing the service is wonderfully satisfying. Some folks find satisfaction in working with the Earth and planting trees and shrubs, while others find their satisfaction facilitating the folks who work with the Earth or educating others about the herons and their needs.

There are many ways to find satisfaction with HHH. Our organization is like a diamond with many facets. What are your ideas for making HHH more vibrant and meaningful? If you have ideas, call or write someone that you know who is on a committee. Heck, become a member of one of our standing committees and help out!

Who knows what might lie ahead for the Heron Habitat Helpers? We are alive and changing, and that is good!

JOHN "HOOPER" HAVEKOTTE
President

Budget Squeeze Hits Seattle

These depressed economic times are having an impact on City government. The Mayor and City Council are working on a mid-year correction for 2010, as well as the budgets for 2011 and 2012. Some cuts in services and staff are expected.

Kiwanis Ravine is expected to feel some impact. However, HHH's work in restoring forest habitat in the ravine with levy funding is expected to have no change, as levy funds are in addition to the City's general fund. The restoration work generally is on hold through the nesting season and is expected to resume in the Fall.