



February 2011

Heron Habitat Helpers' HERALD

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

Welcome the Herons Home!

HHH Annual Meeting and Celebration

SATURDAY MARCH 5 • 10:00AM – NOON
DISCOVERY PARK VISITOR CENTER

Join Heron Habitat Helpers at our annual meeting. Accomplishments, goals and herons will be discussed and we will tour the edges of the ravine in hopes of seeing the herons. Light refreshments will be served. Everyone is welcome at this free event.



One Kiwanis Neighbor Cleans Up Her Backyard!

What About You?

By Donna Kostka

One Kiwanis neighbor, whom we will refer to as J.F., recently told HHH she was so inspired by our clean-up work in the ravine that she decided to clean up her yard, too. Way to go, J.F.!

She realized that her yard contained some of the invasive plants we are trying to get out of the ravine. Their seeds and roots have no boundaries. So, she was a “good neighbor” and helped us create an invasive free edge to the ravine – at least for her yard.

We hope the idea will grow around the buffer of the ravine. In fact, if neighbors plant native plants in their yards as well, this extends the ravine habitat for birds and other wildlife. What about you? Can you help? And can you help keep our ravine free of dumping materials like yard waste and trash? Do you know we even found a car chassis down there!

I was part of our first reconnaissance of Kiwanis Ravine 10 years ago. We had to cut our way

through with clippers. The invasives were so tightly tangled there was no place to walk.

HHH now organizes volunteer work parties to get rid of invasives on three shoulder sites of the ravine: Kiwanis Ravine Overlook, Kiwanis Wildlife Corridor, and Kiwanis Ravine at Stevens. And two things have happened down in the ravine. First, HHH got grants to hire EarthCorps’ trained workers to restore habitat. And, second, this work has now been joined by the \$600,000 Seattle voters approved in the last park levy for trained contract workers supervised by Seattle Parks.

The result is stunning. Kiwanis Ravine is coming back! But it will require much monitoring and weed pulling in years ahead. Those seeds and roots in the ground still can sprout. The edge of the ravine is a ripe source of new invasives.

So, please do your part in helping Kiwanis Ravine become a good habitat for our Great Blue Heron colony and other wildlife. Many thanks from HHH!

Kiwanis Gets Wildlife Sanctuary Status

On October 28, 2010, the Acting Superintendent of Parks, Christopher Williams, sent a letter to HHH announcing the formal approval of HHH’s application to have Kiwanis Ravine designated the City’s first Wildlife Sanctuary.

This status protects the City’s largest nesting colony of Great Blue Herons, a priority species listed by the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). A special celebration and open house was held November 3.

Planners from WDFW, Seattle Parks, and HHH have been working to develop a Habitat Advisory Plan. This will be a working document that keeps track of items requiring attention and their status. The planning group will continue to meet in 2011, but no meetings are scheduled yet. If you are interested in helping, please contact Barb DeCaro, Seattle Parks, at barbara.decarl@seattle.gov or (206) 615-1660.

You can view the Habitat Advisory Plan by going to: www.heronhelpers.org and clicking on “about HHH” on the left side of the home page.

Would You Like To Tour the Kiwanis Heronry?

If you have paid the 2011 HHH membership fee of \$10 per family, you and a guest are eligible to have a tour of the Kiwanis heron nests in a private backyard. These tours must be scheduled through our master tour leader, **Heidi Carpine, (206) 284-6489**. Tours for adults are only being given to members this year.

Best viewing is before the trees leaf out. Typically, in early February male herons start congregating at the Kiwanis Ravine colonial nest site. Each selects a nest and works to make it strong by taking out old sticks and putting in new sticks. It seems that they build a new nest only if there aren't enough old nests. They typically hang out at their nests only for short periods.

Some weeks later, the female herons arrive. They look over the nests and the males – and seemingly make their pick. Courtship follows, then mating and egg laying. Both parents take turns sitting on the eggs for about a month till the chicks hatch. And both parents take turns feeding the chicks 24-7 for about two months until the chicks fledge (fly away). If predators destroy eggs or chicks, the parents often start again on a second nesting.

If you're not already, become a member today by filling out the Membership Form on page 7.

heronnews

By Pam Cahn

WINTER NEST COUNT

I counted 87 nests in the main colony in December's winter nest count, but I estimate there were 99 active nests sometime or other during the 2010 heron season. There were many late nests – last feeding on a nest was reported on 9/13. The new satellite colony at Commodore Park had 8 nests in 2010.

HERONCAM UPDATE

WDFW's Watchable Wildlife Program, in partnership with Olympia Systems, Onenetplace, and Canopy Conservation, upgraded the heroncam for the 2011 heron season. One new Pan-Tilt-Zoom webcam has been installed in the heronry, along with new cables and microphones. Stay tuned for another season with up-close views and sounds inside the heronry.

When nests become active, access the cameras through www.heronhelpers.org

RESTORATION WORK PARTIES

Small Second-Saturday Work Parties:

- March 12, 2011, 9-noon
- April 9, 2011, 9-noon
- May 14, 2011, 9-noon
- June 11, 2011, 9-noon

Large Work Party to Celebrate Earth Day:

- Friday, April 22, 2011, time TBD

*Save these dates and just show up.
For information on location, check HHH website: www.heronhelpers.org or contact sluchessa@environcorp.com*

Do you hear the Herons Calling?

By Barbara Selemon, HHH Volunteer Coordinator

Heron homecoming is just around the corner. Now is a perfect time to step up and help out the herons who call Kiwanis Ravine their home. Heron Habitat Helpers is seeking volunteers in the following areas:

*"I always wondered why somebody didn't do something about that. Then I realized I was somebody."
– Lily Tomlin*

RESTORATION OF THE HABITAT Come join our group and help maintain a healthy environment in and around the heronry. You will become a part of a group effort led by one of the long-standing HHH members who can share expertise about the various sites and heron activities. Now that the herons will be back, you'll be able to see and hear them as you help restore the area to a native environment. Volunteer work parties are held the 2nd Saturday of every month. There will be a grand effort made on Earth Day, Friday, April 22nd in conjunction with EarthCorps Seattle as well as other co-hosted work parties later this year.

RESTORATION FACILITATOR Are you someone who likes to put on parties? How about work parties? This is much easier than cleaning your house and inviting guests. This position needs someone to contact volunteers and do the set-up and prep for the work parties. The actual work itself will be led by a long term HHH restoration volunteer.

NATIVE PLANTS SPECIALIST HHH needs someone who knows the cultural requirements of native plants and is interested in selecting and purchasing native plants for the various restoration sites in Kiwanis Ravine.

CARING FOR THE HERONS IN MANY OTHER WAYS The Kiwanis Ravine was recently named the first wildlife sanctuary in Seattle. There has been a great deal of effort and diligence put forth by HHH volunteers and board members to help secure this special naming. The heronry is growing in numbers of nests and there are a variety of activities slated for the future to maintain this special place for the Kiwanis Ravine Sanctuary. HHH is seeking assistance in the following areas. All positions listed below are ongoing.

PUBLIC RELATIONS COORDINATOR Are you a heron lover and enjoy writing? Be the "go to" person for contacting local publications and community organizations telling them about Heron Habitat Helpers' accomplishments and activities.

OUTREACH ASSISTANT HHH is looking for someone who would like to advocate for protection of the Kiwanis Ravine. This position entails getting the word out through emails and newsletter articles as well as city of Seattle meetings involving the Kiwanis Ravine supported by this organization.

MEMBERSHIP ASSISTANT Are you someone who enjoys sharing their passion about the herons? HHH is seeking someone who is fun-loving and enjoys getting involved with others to boost the membership.

HERON MONITOR ASSISTANT Are you a birder? Do you enjoy tracking the comings and goings of wildlife? If so, you are invited to join the Heron Monitor of the Kiwanis Ravine in following the life in the Kiwanis Ravine.

HERON HABITAT HELPERS BOARD MEMBERS HHH is seeking knowledgeable, fun-loving and dedicated volunteers to serve on the board. Quarterly meetings are held throughout the year and members provide guidance of the ongoing activities of the organization.

For more information about volunteer positions, please contact [Barbara Selemon@selemon@uw.edu](mailto:Barbara.Selemon@selemon@uw.edu)

*"Discover why some of the richest people in the world are not millionaires, they are volunteers."
– Jobail Brcelona*

Ravine Reconnaissance

By Mike Marsh

A Survey of conditions in Kiwanis Ravine has been taken annually by the HHH restoration committee. The Ravine has no formal trails, and we do not encourage members of the public to climb down into it. Entry is especially forbidden during the heron nesting season from February 1 through the summer.

The 2010 survey was scheduled for December 12, but was re-scheduled because of rain. Scott Luchessa, who was unfortunately not notified of the re-scheduling, went anyway, and his report follows:

“Clearly all you sane people decided to stay in, a wise decision. Getting a late start, thought I had missed you. So, I walked first the West Fork and then the East Fork. Suffice it to say that it was quite wet. Parks’ contractor did a nice job removing invasive species. We really need to get the adjacent property owners on board to take it to the next level. Dense invasive species, including ivy and laurel remain sources of propagules to cleared areas. Lots of turbid water running down the creek. Many of the plantings are living and doing well and it is clear that the mountain beaver population is quite healthy. It was a very instructive walk through.”

On January 9, our group, assisted by Rob Anderson of EarthCorps who has led much of the restoration work in the Ravine, walked the lower part of the Ravine not visited by Scott. We saw the results of extensive clearing of invasives, including ivy and blackberry by contractors including EarthCorps, and the plantings of shrubs and of coniferous and deciduous trees, done by these same folks.

The plants seem to be surviving well on the slopes, But some live staking along the lower creek bottom did not fare as well. EarthCorps recruits and trains volunteers from around the world in restoration and leadership skills.

It was especially interesting to have a clear view of the heron nests in the main colony. It was possible to count about 80 nests in that area alone.



President's Corner

The end of the calendar year is an exciting time with the coming to a close of the old year and the birth of a new one. December was a sweet month for the Heron Habitat Helpers. The Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation awarded HHH the coveted Denny Award for an outstanding effort in restoring the lands of Kiwanis Ravine Park and championing the interests of the Great Blue Herons that use the park for their heronry. The awards ceremony featured good music, good food, and good company that inspired, encouraged, and supported all our efforts. Our founders, Heidi Carpine and Donna Kostka, were there to help me accept the award.

In early January ten eager HHH'ers trekked through Kiwanis Ravine as part of our annual reconnaissance tour. The rains abated for that day, but the ground was soggy and very muddy near Wolfe Creek and especially at the bottom of the ravine. As we climbed up through the ravine, we could see how steep the slope is on both sides of the ravine, and we could appreciate why the city requires specialty contractors to work there, trained for these conditions. Being so close to Mother Nature was quite inspiring!

The FAA has proposed lowering the ceiling that aircraft must stay above when flying over Magnolia. The current "Class B" ceiling is 3000 feet, and the proposal would drop this to 2000 feet over Magnolia, Queen Anne, and parts of Ballard. Current flights over Magnolia are already dramatically low, as you know. If the FAA proposal is successful, we can expect much louder noise levels and more pollution from jet fuel. This proposal is very upsetting! Heaven help the Great Blue Herons! I have written to city councilwoman Sally Bagshaw and US Congress representative Jim McDermott, but the Magnolia Community Club has sent a defining letter to the FAA, shooting holes in their arguments and proposing alternative possibilities. The FAA is quite autonomous and usually gets whatever it wants, so I am not hopeful.

If any of this work interests you, please feel free to join us.

Contact us at Volunteer@heronhelpers.org.

JOHN "HOOPER" HAVEKOTTE, *President*



HHH's President Hooper holds Denny Award, along with co-founders Heidi (left) and Donna (right).

January 9 Ravine Reconnaissance.





Heron Habitat Helpers



WE EDUCATE.
WE COLLABORATE.
WE RESTORE HABITAT.
WE ADVOCATE.

HHH is an all-volunteer group.
Contributions directly support
conservation initiatives, educational
programs and outreach efforts.

Annual Membership Drive

Join or renew today!

www.heronhelpers.org

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

** HHH is an IRS 501(c)(3) organization under the umbrella of the Associated Recreational Council (ARC). Membership and donations are tax deductible.*

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP • \$10

Mail your check to: Heron Habitat Helpers • PO Box 99815, Seattle, WA 98139-0815

Donations are welcome!

NAME	<input type="radio"/> \$10 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP PER FAMILY
MAILING ADDRESS	<input type="radio"/> DONATION
	TOTAL
PHONE NUMBER	E-MAIL

WOULD YOU LIKE TO VOLUNTEER? YES ☐ NO ☐ check field of interest(s)

<input type="radio"/> conservation programs	<input type="radio"/> fundraising	<input type="radio"/> strategic planning	<input type="radio"/> public relations	<input type="radio"/> habitat restoration
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