

December 2012

Heron Habitat Helpers' HERALD

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

A Feather for Your Cap and Other Stories

By Donna Kostka

You are crunching through the beautiful autumn leaves in one of Seattle Parks. You spy a feather. What bird did it come from? You pick it up. Can you put it in your pocket and take it home? NO!

Collecting feathers is no longer a hobby for the nation's children. Various laws now make such activities illegal. But, when my kids were little, they started collecting the feathers they found. Each had a shoebox that eventually contained quite a few feathers. They would enjoy opening the box and touching the feathers. They would say: "This is from a bird," and then go on to the next.

I can see how lawmakers must protect birds, and the City of Seattle must go along with the law in its City parks. But, I regret that kids now days don't have the same fun with bird feathers.

The laws were written to prevent killing and collecting birds just for their feathers. About a hundred years back in time, in the early 1900's, it became quite fashionable to wear hats with feathers on them. Even a man's fedora had a small bird's feather stuck in its band.

And women's hats were adorned with feathers and silk flowers and veils of lace or net. The "plume trade" that supplied those feathers grew to some 64 species from 15 genera of native birds. Herons were favored. Great Blues were not the top favorite, though. It was the white feathers of the Great Egret and Snowy Egret that were especially loved by the ladies. These birds suffered great losses. According to a reference I found, in 1903 the price paid to hunters for plumes was \$32 per ounce. And that price later went up to \$80 per ounce! Feathers found on the ground brought only one-fifth the price that "fresh" feathers would bring.

The Audubon Society was formed about that time with one of its principal goals being to prevent WOMEN from being a major "bird enemy." By the time World War I came around, the fashion had changed.

In my family, my grandmother who was born and raised in a small town in Illinois, was sent by her father to the big city of St. Louis, Missouri to attend millinery school. There she learned to adorn hats with feathers and other baubles. She came back to work in her father's dry goods store where many customers kept the same hat but just changed the adornments from time to time.



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HHH Submits Comments on Draft Forest Management Plan

By Donna Kostka

October 1 was the deadline for the City to receive comments from the public about its new draft Forest Management Plan. Because trees are very important for herons, HHH studied the draft and sent in comments.

The draft proposed to eliminate the City's provisions for establishing "groves" of trees. HHH countered by declaring that groves of trees are necessary for Great Blue Herons and many other bird species. And we suggested an easy way we thought the City could establish groves.

The draft also did not provide enough consideration of wildlife as an important element in the various steps a permit must go through before the City approves it. HHH suggested that inserting a "wildlife question" into the process could fill that gap.

If you would like to take part in building good City regulations to protect our Great Blue Herons, please join the HHH Outreach Committee.

WE'LL BE WATCHING TO SEE HOW THE CITY RESPONDS TO THE COMMENTS FROM HHH AND OTHERS. WE HOPE THAT OUR EFFORTS "MAKE A DIFFERENCE."

Give Donna Kostka a call at (206) 283-7805 or write her at donna4510@comcast.net and add your voice to this important task.

heronnews

By Pam Cahn, Heron Monitor

HERON REPORT FALL 2012

The 2012 heron breeding season ended August 31st.

I identified 86 active nests in the main colony in Kiwanis Ravine and 7 nests in Commodore Park this season.

At least 47 young fledged from a visible sample of nests at both locations.

The herons have dispersed for the season and can be found foraging along shorelines and in wetlands and fields. Look for some herons gathering in loafing areas near the Ballard Locks and along the Shilshole Marina breakwater.

A Feather For Your Cap And Other Stories

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When hats and their baubles went out of style, she used her same sewing skills to make clothes for her children and for me – her first grandchild, soon followed by other grandchildren. Too bad she didn't live long enough to sew for her great grandchildren.

So, in the course of a century of American life and four generations in one family, we can see the evolution of attitudes about feathers. They've gone from consumables to objects so protected we leave them where they lie on the ground. They've become another adornment for the autumn leaves.

Reference: Ehrlich, Paul R.; Dobkin, David S.; & Wheye, Darryl; "The Birder's Handbook: A Field Guide To The Natural History Of North American Birds;" New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988, p. 37-41.

Restoring Forest In A Heron Rookery

By Barbara Selemon

In celebration of Martin Luther King Day, January 21, 2013, Heron Habitat Helpers will host a work party “Restoring Forest in a Heron Rookery”.

The work will take place in Seattle’s first official wildlife sanctuary, Kiwanis Memorial Preserve Park.

All interested volunteers will meet at 10:00am in the parking lot at 3360 West Commodore Park and spend four hours spreading wood chips and planting native shrubs and herbs. Plan to dress appropriately for working outside and possibly on steep slopes. Tools and gloves will be provided along with drinks and snacks. Bring your own water and lunch if so desired.

Sign up NOW to volunteer for this event:
<http://bit.ly/W7lXro> and search for this project

Got questions?
(Until December 25, 2012) Barbara Selemon,
Outreach Co-chair, baselemon@gmail.com
(After December 25, 2012) Mike Marsh,
Restoration Co-coordinator swamp@blarg.net

Lawton Elementary Gets Involved with HHH

By Marla Master

“Connecting class learning with the real world is the inspiration for this project”, says Lawton 5th grade teacher Peter Hubbard. “Our goal is to inspire kids to form community ties and teach them that their actions can make a difference”.

Working with volunteer extraordinaire Monica Wooten, president of the Magnolia Historical Society, students formed groups and chose a local non-profit community group to focus on throughout the year.

We’re thrilled that Lawton students Eli Wichert (left) and Justin Theriault (right) have chosen HHH as their focus for outreach and fundraising efforts.



**On December 10,
Lawton students
presented their
community service
projects to the
District Council
Meeting in
Magnolia.**



Big Cranky Open House a Resounding Success

By Sue Gillespie

Our Big Cranky Open House held on September 22, was a fun and educational event, attended by many who came to learn more about herons and Heron Habitat Helpers.

Guests were intrigued by the artifacts on loan from the Burke Museum, including a complete heron skeleton, real heron eggs, and a mounted heron. It was wonderful to have the opportunity to examine the artifacts up close.

Kids were busy creating heron art at our crafts table. Everyone nibbled on a fabulous array of snacks. A huge thank you to Metropolitan Market Magnolia, Top Pot Doughnuts-Ballard Blocks, Einstein Bros Bagels-Queen Anne, and Starbucks-Dravus for their generous donations. We are truly grateful for the support of our local community.

The highlight of the event was a fascinating presentation on herons by Washington State Fish & Wildlife biologist, Chris Anderson.

Thank you to all who attended and to those that became new members. Looking forward to seeing you again soon.



Second Saturday Work Parties

By Hooper Havekotte

Participation in our Second Saturday work parties has been less than uplifting this year. Often no one showed up other than the host, but we could be turning the corner on that. We now have a presence on Facebook, and we are broadcasting notice of these work parties to a larger email group.

These Second Saturday work parties are your opportunity to see up close the work that HHH is doing to restore and maintain Kiwanis Ravine Park. Most of the park is off limits because of the steep slopes, but Kiwanis Ravine Stevens (KRS), Kiwanis Ravine Overlook (KRO), and Kiwanis Wildlife Corridor (KWC) are the three areas where we common folks can do the restoration and maintenance work to make the park a better place for the herons. These work parties often involve planting new shrubs or trees, trail maintenance, and weeding the invasives between our plants. No one is expected to do anything that they do not want to do. Working together on a common project is actually lots of fun.

During the spring and summer months these work parties run from 9:00 am to noon on the second Saturday of each month, but late in the year (October, November, and February), we start at 10:00 am. We take December and January off for holiday festivities. Hope to see you there one of these days.

We're on Facebook!

Like us and keep up to date on news and special events. Feel free to post your own stories and photos related to our herons. Pass this info to friends and help keep our community growing.

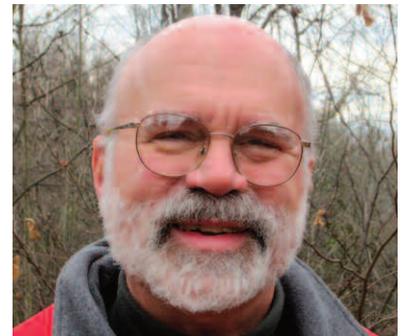


www.facebook.com/HeronHabitatHelpers

President's Report

2012 has been a good year for the Heron Habitat Helpers. Early in the year we seemed desperate to find anyone who wanted to sustain the work of HHH, but with luck and getting the word out to a wider audience, we now have "new blood" in the Outreach committee and on the Board.

Welcome to the new folks! We are looking forward to a stronger year in 2013 with more wonderful achievements.

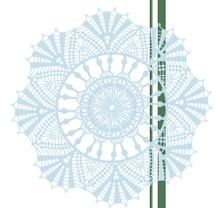


The Outreach committee has a long slate of active projects and the Restoration committee has achieved great success in getting both KRS and KWC planted with new specimens of native plants. Stop by and check out the progress. We lost a few cedar trees at KRS over the summer, but for the most part, we were able to nurture everything else through the hot summer months.

Hooper

*Happy Holidays
from all of us at
Heron Habitat Helpers!*

*We wish you
all the best
for 2013.*





Make your donation soon to qualify for a 2012 tax deduction

HHH is an all-volunteer group. By joining and supporting Heron Habitat Helpers, you enable us to directly support conservation initiatives, educational programs and outreach efforts.

Become a MEMBER or make a DONATION today

Every membership and donation – regardless of size – truly makes a difference! Thank you for your support!

Donate online (under membership) at www.heronhelpers.org or by mail: Heron Habitat Helpers, PO Box 99815, Seattle, WA 98139-0815

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP • \$15

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

NAME _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

\$15 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP PER FAMILY _____

Donation \$10 \$25 \$50 \$75 _____

TOTAL _____

E-MAIL _____

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

conservation programs fundraising strategic planning public relations habitat restoration

HHH is an IRS 501(c)(3) organization under the umbrella of the Associated Recreational Council (ARC). Membership and donations are 100% tax deductible.