

Pilchuck Audubon Profile



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New, greener direction for the Profile

By Kathleen Snyder, Secretary, Pilchuck Audubon Society

A combination of budgetary constraints and green initiatives has made the move to electronic delivery of our *Profile* newsletter a necessity. Printing and postage for 10 issues is expected to cost almost \$5000 in 2010.

Due to a decrease in donations and grant opportunities, this is money we would rather use for our programs and Smart Growth. Consequently, the Board has voted to discontinue the printed version and mail delivery of the newsletter to all but those who call and request it. This change is effective beginning with the January 2010 issue.

You will be affected in one of three ways:

If you cannot receive the newsletter electronically, you need to call 425.252.0926 and leave a message that includes your name and mailing address.

If you have internet access and an e-mail account, but are not on the list of members who are notified when the *Profile* is available online, you need e-mail to webmaster@pilchuckaudubon.org and include "Profile" in the subject line.

If you already receive an e-mail when the *Profile* is available online, no action is required. You are covered.

Please note: to read the online version of the newsletter, you need Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is a free download at www.adobe.com.

This change will use our limited funds more wisely, be more Earth friendly and allow more members to enjoy an expanded, full-color newsletter. The Board thanks those who have volunteered for the monthly mailing parties and hopes you'll look for other ways to support Pilchuck Audubon.

Christmas Bird Count fast approaching

By Jan van Niel

What is the Christmas Bird Count?

For the last 109 years, ordinary citizens like us have spent one day – between mid-December and early January – spread out over circles 15 miles in diameter to count birds from first light until dusk.

As the popularity of birding has grown, the number of circles and counters has increased. Last year, more than 1600 circles were counted in the United States alone, with more than 500 more in Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and Pacific Islands.

All circles are divided into sections with a team of counters assigned to each section. Counters can be of all skill levels as teams can use spotters and recorders, as well as identifiers. Also, people living within the count circle can contribute by noting the number of birds at their feeders.

There are two bird count circles in Snohomish County. The Edmonds circle covers Woodway, Edmonds, Mukilteo, south Everett, a corner of Snohomish and south to Bothell, Kenmore and the northern tip of Lake Washington.

The Everett circle includes north Everett, much of the Snohomish River delta, most of the Tulalip Reservation and Marysville.

This year, the Edmonds count is scheduled for Sunday, December 20. If you would like to participate, contact Jan or Colleen van Niel at 425.778.7568 or sjvanniel@comcast.net.

At the end of the day, we will meet at the van Niels' home in

Mountlake Terrace to collect the results (or they can be sent in, if that's easier).

The Everett count will take place on Sunday, December 27. To participate, please contact the count coordinators, Scott Atkinson (scottratkinson@hotmail.com) and Mary Teesdale (mteesdale@hotmail.com).

Important news

There are two important announcements on page 1 of this month's *Profile*. Please make sure you read about changes coming to this newsletter (above) and the upcoming Christmas Bird Counts (left).

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President's message

By Mike Blackbird, President, Plichuck Audubon Society



During the second weekend in October, Plichuck Audubon hosted the twice-yearly Audubon Council of Washington (ACOW) meeting in Everett. On Saturday, a one of the breakout sessions was presented by Dave Ward, of the Snohomish County Surface Water Management department. I can honestly say that I've never had an overpowering curiosity about scatology, but I was intrigued by the topic, as apparently were a number of attendees – the room was filled to hear what Dave had to say.

If Dave reads this column, he'll no doubt cringe at my misquoting of his statistics. But, for the most part, they're correct and emphasize the point of his fascinating presentation.

Although Puget Sound appears pristine above the surface, underneath it is in deep trouble. Pollution is poisoning wildlife and destroying habitat. Unfortunately, man's best friend is a major contributor. Employing sophisticated methods of analysis, Dave and his colleagues determined there are more than 126,000 dogs in Snohomish County, excreting more than 20 tons of waste a day! Whoa, doggies!

Dave then noted that the Everett area receives 36 inches of rain a year, resulting into a million gallons of rain per acre per year. Eventually, all the rain that falls in the region and doesn't evaporate ends up in Puget Sound.

Just using the numbers from Snohomish County, one of five counties surrounding the Sound, you can see we have a huge issue if people do not pick up their dogs' waste. Unfortunately only about 50% of dog owners are bothered to do so, while the rest are willing to allow their pets to

The Plichuck Audubon *Profile*, official newsletter of Plichuck Audubon Society, is published monthly September-April, and bi-monthly May-August. Plichuck Audubon Society (PAS) is a grass-roots environmental organization with members throughout Snohomish County and Camano Island, Washington. Our mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds and other wildlife, for the benefit of the earth's biological diversity. Through education, advocacy, and community activism, PAS is committed to bringing people closer to wildlife in order to build a deeper understanding of the powerful links between healthy ecosystems and human beings, and to encourage the involvement of our members in efforts to protect the habitat this wildlife depends upon for survival.

We serve as a local chapter of the National Audubon Society. PAS is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt non-profit organization incorporated in the state of Washington. **Newsletter submissions** Submit articles to annette.colombini@plichuckaudubon.org or mail to 1429 Avenue D, PMB 198, Snohomish, WA 98290. Submissions must be received by the fifth of the month preceding publication. We reserve the right to edit. **Monthly mailing party** Newsletter mailing parties are held the third Wednesday of the month. If you'd like to have some fun with other PAS members, contact Judy Lowell at organijudy@juno.com or 425.353.8150 for more information. **To contact Plichuck Audubon Society, call 425.252.0926.** www.plichuckaudubon.org

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become fecal coliform bacteria machines contributing along with *Toxocara canis*, *Giardia cryptosporidium* parvum and campylobacter jejuni in poisoning the Sound.

What to do?

One day, my wife's Uncle Raymond looked out his front window to see a dog making a deposit on his lawn – while the dog's owner looked on approvingly. Uncle Raymond went out to his garage, got a shovel, scooped up the dog's leavings and followed the fellow and his dog home. Uncle Raymond threw the dog's business on the dog owner's front porch.

While Uncle Raymond's approach might be satisfying, it's not particularly effective on a larger scale. Social marketing is the best way to educate a large group of recalcitrant poopers to become good citizens. Puget Sound Starts Here is such a social marketing program. More than 60 Puget Sound communities and cities have formed a partnership to educate people, among other things, on residential practices and behaviors that contribute to poisoning the Sound, asking for change. An element of Puget Sound Starts Here is to educate dog owners with an aggressive advertising program to scoop the poop, bag it and place it in the trash. Social marketing has proved successful in bringing about social change in the past and hopefully will be equally successful with dog owners.

It's rare I walk along Mill Creek's nature trail and don't see people walking their dogs, leash in one hand and a plastic bag of dog do in the other. I used to smile to myself wondering who the master was in those relationships. Now I smile, knowing how fortunate they are: they'll never have to meet Uncle Raymond.

Trip calendar

Check our web site at www.pilchuckaudubon.org for the latest information.

December 1

Samish Flats

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Quilceda Village Walmart west of Marysville (I-5 exit 200). Park away from the store, to the east, near Quilceda Blvd. and next to I-5. Let's look for waterfowl, seabirds, shorebirds and raptors in this world reknown birding locale. Pack a lunch.

Leaders: Virginia Clark, 360.435.3750; Art Wait, 360.563.0181

December 8

Reifel Bird Sanctuary, BC

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Quilceda Village Walmart west of Marysville (I-5 exit 200). Park away from the store, to the east, near Quilceda Blvd. and next to I-5. The refuge is in Canada, on Westham Island, at the mouth of the Fraser River. Expect waterfowl underfoot, chickadees and nuthatches fed in the hand, plus surprise species. Bring your passport or Enhanced Driver's License (the birth certificate and driver's license combo is no longer valid). Pack a lunch.

Leader: Virginia Clark, 360.435.3750

Dec. 15

Johnson-Debay Slough, Clear Lake areas

Meet at 8 a.m. at the Quilceda Village Walmart west of Marysville (I-5 exit 200). Park away from the store, to the east, near Quilceda Blvd. and next to I-5. In 2005, we saw four woodpecker species and both Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks. In 2006, Kestrel, Merlin and Red-tailed Hawks. In 2007, we rescued a female Bufflehead hooked on discarded fish line and watched a Merlin eat its prey. Think swans. Pack a lunch.

Leaders: Virginia Clark, 360.435.3750; Art Wait, 360.563.0181

December 29

Anacortes area

Meet at 8 a.m. at the Quilceda Village Walmart west of Marysville (I-5 exit 200). Park away from the store, to the east, near Quilceda Blvd. and next to I-5. A nice town with lots of birdy parks, piers, heights, lakes and beaches. Lunch at a restaurant.

Leader: Virginia Clark, 360.435.3750

Notice to field trip participants: Field trips are open to members and non-members alike. No advance notice required unless otherwise stated in the trip description. Trips go, rain or shine. However, in case of snow or ice, contact trip leader! Bring a sack lunch, beverage, binoculars, scope and field guide if you have them. If not, we'll share. Please, no perfume or cologne. Be prepared to share gas money with carpool drivers. Pets, even leashed, are prohibited on field trips. Please leave them at home.

Plan to join 2010 Olympic BirdFest in Sequim

Grab your binos and join the Olympic BirdFest 2010 celebration at the Dungeness River Audubon Center, April 9-11, 2010.

The stage is set ... bays, estuaries, sandy beaches, a 5-mile sand spit and an island bird sanctuary on the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Wetlands, tidepools, rainforests and lush river valleys.

The players are ready ... Marbled Murrelets, Rhinoceros Auklets, Harlequin Ducks, Black Oystercatchers, Peregrine Falcons and Pygmy Owls in their fine spring plumage for this celebration. Enjoy guided birding trips, boat tours and a traditional salmon bake at the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribal Center.

Come experience the spectacular landscapes of the Olympic Peninsula ... you just might go home with a new bird for your life list! Check out the offerings by visiting the official web site www.olympicbirdfest.org, or by calling 360.681.4076 for a brochure.

Also in 2010! Follow your BirdFest weekend with a three-day, two night birding cruise of the spectacular San Juan Islands on April 11-13, 2010. Visit San Juan and Sucia Islands and more. Stay at the historic Roche Harbor Resort. Get program information and registration forms online at www.olympicbirdfest.org.

Murrelets, porpoise top Bird Fest sightings

By Jonathan Blubaugh

During last month's Puget Sound Bird Fest, several festival attendees and I joined Sharon and Wally Croasdill on their boat for an on-the-water birding trip. We were thrilled to score looks at pelagic birds, as well as harbor porpoise - which most of us hadn't seen before. Marbled Murrelets, still in summer breeding plumage, topped the sightings list for many.



Harbor porpoise, by Leigh Robert Hilbert

On Sunday, I led a birding walk in Yost Park. It was a kick to have a young birder - a fourth grader armed with a Peterson's Field Guide - in our group.

Here's a partial list of what we saw during Bird Fest: 40 Western Grebes, six Double-crested Cormorants, a Great Blue Heron, an Osprey, a Bald Eagle, a Sharp-shinned Hawk,

a Killdeer, four Bonaparte's Gulls, four Herrmann's Gulls, two Common Murres, a Pigeon Guillemot, nine Marbled Murrelets, a Rhinoceros Auklet, a Belted Kingfisher, three Northern Flickers, a Steller's Jay, two crows, a Black-capped and a Chestnut-backed Chickadee, a Brown Creeper, a Winter Wren, a Golden-crowned Kinglet, four Cedar Waxwings, a Spotted Towhee, two

Song Sparrows and a House Sparrow.

There's no Weekend Bird Hike planned for November, as past experience taught us it rains more often than not. However, my mom and I are heading San Diego, so I'll post a trip list. And, I'll see you all for the Christmas Bird Count.

State office news, resolutions from ACOW

By Jan van Niel, Conservation Co-chair, Pilchuck Audubon Society

There were several important developments at the recent ACOW gathering, hosted by our chapter. First, it was announced that National Audubon would not hire a new state office director and the state office is essentially closed. As a result, we wanted to determine what the most essential functions of the office were.

As far as the chapters in attendance were concerned, trying to maintain some kind of coordinated presence in Olympia during the legislative session was the top priority. The estimate was that this would cost about \$60,000, which would cover the costs of a lobbyist, administrative help for tracking bills, preparing and sending alerts to the chapters and other interested parties, plus office supplies, internet access, insurance and miscellaneous costs. How these funds could be generated or how the budget reduced is still under discussion.

Four resolutions were proposed for representatives to take back to their respective chapters. At the PAS board meeting on November 2, the PAS board endorsed a resolution to support the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) in a ban on the use of small (less than 1 ounce) lead fishing weights and lures (less than 2 inches long) on loon breeding

and wintering lakes in Washington. The resolution further encourages the WDFW to extend this ban to all fresh waters in the state. Lead fishing tackle has been shown to account for more than half of all loon deaths on state waters.

The second and third resolutions concerned the Hanford Reservation in eastern Washington. One resolution asks the US Department of Energy to turn over any surplus land to the Department of Interior so it can be added to the Hanford Reach National Monument.

The second resolution asks senators Murray and Cantwell to support the designation of seven national environmental research parks – including Hanford – and return Hanford to those funded by the bill. A member of congress from eastern Washington had Hanford removed from the national budget, which designated annual funding of \$5 million for each park.

The fourth resolution involved a proposed wind turbine farm on Radar Ridge in the Willapa Bay area of southwest Washington. There was confusion on this issue around Marbled Murrelet breeding grounds, so it was tabled pending more information.

ACOW conference recap from lead organizer

By Collen van Niel

Last month, Pilchuck Audubon hosted the Fall Audubon Council of Washington (ACOW) Conference. This twice-yearly conference takes place each spring and fall, and PAS hosts every 13 years.

Nearly 50 people attended the conference, but there is concern as attendance at the ACOW meetings has declined in recent years. Charlie Kahle, Washington Audubon Chairman, and leaders of local chapters are investigating possible solutions. A survey of chapter leaders is underway to determine interest and to pinpoint which issues are most important to members and chapters. The survey results will be shared when they're available.

The fall conference was headquartered at the Holiday Inn, Everett, and began with a presentation by Larry Schwitters, detailing the Monroe Swift Project, on Friday evening. Peter Goldman, of the Washington Forest Law Center, discussed forestry issues at a banquet Saturday evening.

For attendees interested in experiencing birding in Snohomish County, various fieldtrips were offered Saturday morning. Bill Lider, leader of the PAS Osprey project, discussed the effort and led a tour to view the nesting sites.

There were five options for morning breakout sessions:

fundraising/membership, Fun with Pet Waste, Puget Sound Starts Here, low-impact development and community wildlife certification. Most of the sessions were led by PAS members, including Laura Sepher, Dave Ward and Ileen Weber.

The Fall ACOW Conference was successful because of the hard work of volunteers. The PAS board worked on the event since the spring meeting. Sue Ward, co-chair, deserves a big "thank you" for her coordination, enthusiasm, organization skills and for being flexible, motivated and positive – even when things didn't go as planned.

In addition to the members already mentioned, I'd like to thank the following people who helped make our ACOW conference a success: Jon Baker, Wilma Bayes, Mike and Florence Blackbird, Jonathan Blubaugh, Margaret Bridge, Virginia Clark, Annette Colombini, Ed Cushing, Al Eliot, Allen Gibbs, Carolyn Lacy, Bill Lider, Judy Lowell, Kerry Marl, Kathy Piland, Susie Schaefer, Kathleen Snyder, Art Wait, Jay Ward, Ileen Weber, and my husband, Jan, who has been a great resource for information and guidance from the beginning.

Rainier Audubon will host the Spring 2010 ACOW conference April 9-11. Please watch for information and plan to attend. You'll be glad you did!

Seed sale a success

Thank you to Art Wait for organizing another successful birdseed sale. Thanks, also, to those who helped deal with all the big bags that had to be picked up or transported. This is always a good fundraiser for PAS. We will have another sale in February. Watch for more information in the *Profile* and on our web site.

PAS board meetings

The Pilchuck Audubon Board meets on the first Tuesday of each month, at the Sno-Isle Natural Foods Coop meeting room (2804 Grand Ave., Everett), beginning at 6 p.m. All are welcome to attend to learn more about the chapter's goals and priorities. For more information, contact Kathleen Snyder at 425.438.1505.

PAS welcomes Judy Alles, Publicity Chair

By Susie Schaefer, Vice President, Pilchuck Audubon Society

The Board of Pilchuck Audubon is happy to welcome Judy Alles as our new Publicity Chair. If Judy's name sounds familiar to you, it's probably because she is the *mother of all swift counters!* Judy has been the main swift counter and in charge of training and coordinating our counts in Monroe.

Judy and her husband live between Monroe and Sultan and have recently retired. She will work on PAS publicity between their motor home adventures, counting swifts, painting their barn and other activities.

In September, Judy attended the national meeting of TogetherGreen in West Virginia on behalf of our swift project.



She did a great job representing us (no one else there had been on the ground counting thousands and thousands of Vaux's Swifts).

She also reminded the organizers that she and others would like to see a local birds while in West Virginia. So, thanks to Judy, everyone had opportunities to see a few birds. She was, indeed, a popular person! She also attended sessions on communication, planning and evaluation which she can put into practice in her new position.

Welcome, Judy Alles!

Be a volunteer scientist for local birds

By Kerry Marl, IBA Project Leader

PAS was recently awarded part of a grant from the Boeing Company to support our citizen science component of the Port Susan IBA. It will help fund training and materials in the spring. The rest of the grant is going to citizen science projects with the Seattle Audubon and Tahoma Audubon chapters.

It's exciting to see so many opportunities available to anyone who has the desire and time to contribute to science. For our Port Susan project, there would be no way to collect so much data if it weren't for our volunteers on the ground. This data may someday be useful in ways that we cannot predict.

When the project started, our IBA action team knew they wanted to collect baseline data on the shorebird species using the bay during migration. However, we want citizens



to be able to continue to monitor the species in the area. As changes occur in and around the bay, it will be valuable to see if any changes occur to the shorebirds.

Our data may be also a resource to other researchers. In addition to sharing our data with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), we have started including our data into eBird, an online database begun by Cornell's Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society. It will be accessible to scientists, educators, land managers and citizens throughout the world.

Anyone can add to and view this database, and I encourage all birdwatchers to consider submitting their observations.

You can visit www.ebird.org to learn more.

Swifts head south, committee still at work

Although our little friends, the Vaux's Swifts, have headed south for the winter, the Save our Swifts committee is busy implementing its 2010 plans for this project – thanks to our TogetherGreen grant from Audubon and Toyota.

The Monroe group had its final meeting of 2009 to discuss the very successful Swift's Night Out in Monroe and to begin planning for next year. The first meeting of 2010 is scheduled for March 9.

A group of volunteers is already planning a new kiosk at Frank Wagner Elementary School in Monroe.

The committee is also working on a new web site for the swifts. Local swift expert, Larry Schwitters, has gathered a lot of information about the 2009 spring and fall migrations. This information is available to everyone on his web site, www.vauxshappening.org. Check it out and you'll understand the importance of the old chimney in Monroe.



Speaking of the chimney, the Monroe School District is moving ahead with plans to retrofit the chimney. The work will be done next summer – between the spring and fall migrations.

The TogetherGreen grant will allow installation of a camera in the chimney. Hopefully, this will be a reality in time for the fall migration.

Paulette Hunter, Candy Brown, the wonderful Robin Fitch (principal of Frank Wagner Elementary) and six teachers are working on a new curriculum for the first and second graders. This is also a part of the multi-faceted TogetherGreen grant.

If you are interested in working on the kiosk or the new web site, or if you want to be part of the Monroe listserv, please contact Susie Schaefer 425.771.8165 or susie.schaefer@pilchuckaudubon.org.

Birding highlights

September 26, 2009–October 25, 2009

By Mara Price, Sightings Coordinator

As cooler weather sets in, the number of **Dark-eyed Juncos** we see increases. **Cedar Waxwings** have been spotted from Brier to Camano Island, but not the inland areas. I used to see them in the late fall eating the last of the blackberries, but not this year.

Carole and Larry Beason have a great viewing area near Lake Bosworth. This month, their species count of 35 included 18 **American Goldfinches**, 2 **Kingfishers**, 9 **Dark-eyed Juncos**, 2 **Golden-crowned Sparrows**, 3 **Hutton's Vireos**, 5 **Northern Flickers** on the suet feeder, 6 **Mourning Doves**, a **Red-breasted Sapsucker**, 6 **Spotted Towhees** and 5 **American Coots**.

Annette Colombini reported 9 **Dark-eyed Juncos**, a **Northern Flicker**, 3 **Hairy Woodpeckers**, 3 **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, 12 **Black-capped Chickadees**, 3 **Chestnut-backed Chickadees**, 3 **Steller's Jays**, 13 **American Crows**, 2 **Spotted Towhees** and an **American Robin** for a species count of 10.

Gail Dibernardo reported 15 **Cedar Waxwings** eating crabapples in her yard in Brier. She also reported 2 **Pileated Woodpeckers**, a **Swainson's Thrush**, 2 **Downy Woodpeckers**, a **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**, 3 **Northern Flickers**, a **Cooper's Hawk**, 2 **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, 5 **Spotted Towhees** and 12 **American Goldfinches** for a species count of 24.

Hilkka Egtvedt had a busy month in Mukilteo. Her species count of 30 included 21 **Dark-eyed Juncos**, 12 **Canada Geese**, 3 **Golden-crowned Sparrows**, 2 **Fox Sparrows**, a **White-crowned Sparrow**, 8 **American Goldfinches**, 15 **Band-tailed Pigeons**, a **Townsend's Warbler**, 2 **Bald Eagles** and a **Red-breasted Sapsucker** working a dogwood tree.

Kriss Erickson's September report from Everett included 8 **Black-capped Chickadees**, 3 **Chestnut-backed Chickadees**, 16 **Bushtits**, a **Northern Flicker**, a **Bewick's Wren** and 5 **American Crows** for a total species count of 6. Her October species count of 14 included 3 **American Robins**, 6 **Cedar Waxwings**, 2 **Mallards**, 3 **Dark-eyed Juncos**, a **Western Gull**, a **Great Blue Heron** flying over, a **Pileated Woodpecker**, a **Spotted Towhee** and 22 **Bushtits**.

The highlight of Adeline Gildow's report was a **Western Kingbird** spotted at Juniper Beach. Her species count of 30 also included 11 **Bald Eagles** eating dead salmon on the beach, 30 **Canada Geese**, a **Peregrine Falcon** checking out her birdfeeder, 5 **Cedar Waxwings**, 11 **Great Blue Herons** along the tide line, a **Killdeer**, 6 **Mourning Doves**, 3 **Ring-necked Pheasants**,

2 **Anna's Hummingbirds** and 100 **Snow Geese** flying over.

More problems at Shelia and Michael Huber's Machias location. They got their feeders up again after the bear visit and wind blew them down. They were able to send a report with 11 species. Their report listed 11 **American Goldfinches**, 2 **Black-capped Chickadees**, a **Hairy Woodpecker**, a **Northern Flicker**, 3 **Steller's Jays**, 3 **Spotted Towhees**, 5 **House Finches**, 3 **Mourning Doves**, a **Dark-eyed Junco** and a **Cooper's Hawk**.

Two **Varied Thrush** appeared early at Julie O'Donald's Brier location. Her species count of 21 also included 20 **American Crows** in the trees, 8 **American Robins**, 3 **Band-tailed Pigeons**, 18 **Bushtits**, 3 **Bewick's Wrens**, a **Cooper's Hawk**, 2 **Golden-crowned Kinglets**, 2 **Northern Flickers**, 2 **Spotted Towhees** and a **Western Screech Owl** along the greenbelt.

Mary Sinker's report from Stanwood included 4 **Cedar Waxwings** and 50 **Dark-eyed Juncos**. She also listed 4 **American Goldfinches**, 9 **Band-tailed Pigeons**, 14 **Mourning Doves**, 11 **American Robins**, 7 **Pine Siskins**, 12 **Steller's Jays**, a **Brown Creeper**, a **Sharp-shinned Hawk** and a **Winter Wren** for a species count of 27.

Also reporting from Stanwood, Dick Vanderhoff's report included 25+ **Western Grebes**, a **Red-tailed Hawk**, 2 **Bald Eagles**, a **Hairy Woodpecker**, a **Red-breasted Nuthatch** and 20 **Steller's Jays** at the feeder for a total species count of 7.

Darlene Walker reported 25 **Mourning Doves** in her yard. I can't even imagine the sound of 25 **Mourning Doves**! Her total species count of 20 from Camano Island also included a **Common Raven**, 20 **Black-capped Chickadees**, 8 **Fox Sparrows**, 4 **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, 25 **American Crows**, 4 **Brewer's Blackbirds**, a **Purple Finch**, a **Pileated Woodpecker** and a **Great Blue Heron**.

I only had one **Mourning Dove** in my Marysville yard this month. My total species count of 27 included 12 **Dark-eyed Juncos**, 17 **California Quail**, 6 **Black-capped Chickadees**, 2 **Common Ravens** in the trees, 3 **Northern Flickers**, a **Bewick's Wren** on the deck, a **Red-breasted Nuthatch**, a **Song Sparrow**, 15 **Canada Geese** flying in formation and a **Pileated Woodpecker**.

Comments and suggestions are always welcome. Please e-mail me at pricemara@clearwire.net or leave a message at 360.722.5752.



Dark-eyed Junco, by Don Metzner



Western Kingbird, by Don Metzner

Smart Growth report

By Kristin Kelly, Smart Growth Director

I spent four beautiful late-October days in Washington, DC, to attend a conference for the TogetherGreen Leadership Fellows grant I received last year. It was wonderful to reconnect with the other 40 grant winners I met last year and to receive more training and education on topics related to being a successful environmental leader.

I wasn't able to do much sightseeing – given our agenda – but, the meetings took place in the newest Smithsonian museum, the National Museum of the American Indian. So, I was fortunate to see the exhibits there. If you're traveling to DC, I highly recommend this fantastic new museum.

The National Audubon staff put together a host of presentations which made the year-long experience rewarding, fun and inspirational. We learned how to more easily balance life and work (something most non-profit employees have trouble with) and to be more effective fundraisers with individual asks and foundations.

We learned the importance of creating partnerships to get projects funded and accomplished. We learned how to diversify our membership, audience and connections in the environmental world. And, we heard from John Lash, CEO of World Resources Institute, about global warming and the importance of the United States' leadership role in Copenhagen on December 10.

The Fellows shared stories about the work they set out to accomplish. The Fellows program was not just about making a difference in our communities when it comes to environmental work. It was about making connections with people who have the same passion for trying to save the world.

As I write this column, next year's Fellows have been selected and are in training. There will be three more years of the Fellows program, and I encourage any who feel they qualify to apply. You learn more about the TogetherGreen programs at www.togethergreen.org.

I recently attended Snohomish County's Focus on Farming conference. The Agriculture Land Use and Water Policy Summit was informative in regard to how Snohomish County needs to deal with the protection of both salmon and farming. During the Q&A, I asked how many in the audience had eaten salmon in the past four months and how many purchased produce from local farmers this summer.

Almost all had done both. People want both. They want leaders to create policies for sustainable farming and they want habitat restoration in local river basins for salmon! I believe we can have both. But, all stakeholders must agree to work together. I am optimistic we can do this. It should not be "fish versus farming." It must be "fish and farming."

Some in the farming community are pushing for a no-net-loss of farmland. In layman's terms, that means if farmland is designated for another use (like salmon habitat restoration or wetland mitigation), then the county must find other rural land (currently used for farming) and designate it to be protected as farmland forever. This sounds like a great idea, but it is not clear how or if it'll work.

People living in rural areas have at least 5-acre residential zoning, which means the value of their land is great since it can be used for housing. It would take a program to urge rural folks who currently farm their land to continue the farming

operations indefinitely. This might mean a lower property tax, too, but none of that is set in stone yet.

Right now, Snohomish County has a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program for the Arlington area and has a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program in the Tualco Valley east of Monroe. Next year, the county will work on policies and codes for a county-wide TDR and PDR program.

TDR and PDR share a goal – to protect farmland – but they differ in how they work. With the TDR program, developers buy credits from farmers. These credits allow developers to build more homes than would otherwise be allowed. As the developers buy credits from farmers, farmers agree to place a conservation easement over their property. The program is a way to transfer homes that could be built on farmlands to more urban areas. The result is saving farmland.

Currently, there is one area in Snohomish County – near Arlington – where farmers can sell development rights to developers. Both farmers and developers interested in participating in the program believe the program needs to be revised. The City of Arlington and Snohomish County are responding to these concerns.

The PDR program also preserves farmland by purchasing "development rights" from landowners. The value of a development right is the difference in land value between the current agricultural use and the highest and best use of the land. Under the PDR program, the county would purchase the development rights of a property from the landowner, then place a conservation easement on the property to prohibit non-agricultural activities. The property would remain in private ownership and be available for agricultural use.

The county benefits from this program by securing the long-term presence of agricultural land. The program has been implemented only in the Tualco Valley east of Monroe. Participating landowners benefit by maintaining the right to farm the land while gaining some of the profits they would have earned by redeveloping the land for non-agricultural use.

Participation in the program is voluntary, requires an application and is expected to be competitive due to limited public funds. Applications are scored and ranked by criteria evaluating the agricultural value of a property and the risk of it being converted to non-agricultural uses. This program is grant-funded.

These two programs are important tools in preserving farmland and farming heritage, and I will work this issue with the county council to ensure its success. However, it will take a true commitment from farmers and developers to make the TDR program successful. And, it will require more and new money for the county to make the PDR program successful.

On another subject, the PowerPoint presentations from the Livable Snohomish County Summit can be found on the new Livable Snohomish County Coalition web site: www.livablesnohomish.org.

I'm grateful for all you do for the future of our all living things, great and small. Happy Thanksgiving.

Initial planting complete at Edmonds native garden

Despite a little rain, on Saturday, November 7, a hard-working group of volunteers spent the morning planting more than 400 native plants in our new garden at the Willow Creek Hatchery.

Thanks to our main native plant leader, Gary Smith, and garden designer, Nancy Moore, the planting went well. We were done in less than two hours!

A big thank you to everyone who helped. The next planting will be in February. And, the final planting will be in April.

In the meantime, the education

committee met in October. The next meeting is Dec. 1, 6:30 p.m., at the home of Laura and Paul Spehar in Edmonds. Please call 425.672.2150 for directions.



Photo by Laura Spehar

Everyone is welcome to join this very important committee. We will work on a brochure, signs, workshops and training activities for the new garden.

The garden's official grand opening is scheduled for April 25, 2010.

But, please watch the PAS web site for activities planned between now and then.

Audubon membership information

Joint membership in National Audubon Society (NAS) and Pilchuck Audubon Society (PAS) includes National Audubon Society's quarterly magazine *Audubon* and Pilchuck Audubon Society's *Profile* newsletter for one year. Cost is \$20 for an Introductory Membership or \$35 for renewals. When you join National Audubon Society, you automatically become a member of Pilchuck Audubon Society.

However, PAS receives *none* of your national dues to support its programs. Local membership in Pilchuck Audubon Society includes a one-year subscription (10 issues) to Pilchuck Audubon Society's *Profile* newsletter. Cost is \$25. A special limited income category is also available for \$16.

Local PAS membership

- New member\$25
- Renewal\$25
- Lifetime PAS member..... \$1000
 - 10 monthly payments of \$100
 - 4 quarterly payments of \$250
 - 1 payment of \$1000
- Donation..... \$_____

Make check payable to:
Pilchuck Audubon Society

Mail your check and this form to:
PAS Membership Chair
1429 Avenue D, PMB 198
Snohomish, WA 98290

NAS membership

(includes PAS membership)

- Introductory membership \$20

Make check payable to:
National Audubon Society

Mail your check and this form to:
PAS Membership Chair
1429 Avenue D, PMB 198
Snohomish, WA 98290

NAS renewal

(includes PAS renewal)

- Renewal \$35

Make check payable to:
National Audubon Society

Mail your check and this form to:
NAS, Membership Data Center
POB 52529
Boulder, CO 80322-2529

- I'd like to save PAS money and read the *Profile* on the web at **www.pilchuckaudubon.org**. Please don't mail it to me. I've included my email address at right so you can let me know when each issue is available.
- Please contact me about volunteer opportunities.
- I am interested in the Conservation Committee.

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