



# Puyallup River Tales

A newsletter of the Puyallup River Watershed Council

Volume 3, Issue 1

October 2007

## Hard Fight to Rid Clarks Creek of Invader



*Elodea, and invasive weed that harms salmon habitat, is removed from Clarks Creek every summer.*

Just like a trick candle flame that won't go out, Brazilian Elodea keeping rebounding in Clarks Creek. Pierce County and the city of Puyallup share the cost to cut elodea. This occurs during the last two weeks of June and August. The two cutting periods are synchronized with the release of chinook from the Puyallup Tribe's hatchery in June and the return of chinook to spawn in September.

Elodea is an invasive aquatic weed that was most likely introduced when someone dumped the contents of their aquarium into the Creek. With enough sun and nutrients, elodea can grow up to 5 inches a day and grow to 25 feet long. Presently, the only portions free of elodea are the well shaded areas at both ends of Clarks Creek.

The damage done by elodea:

- Nitrogen storer
- Lowers dissolved oxygen

- Catches sediment
- Causes erosion
- Traps pollution
- Destroys spawning beds
- Lowers property owner expectations
- Takes resources

This year's elodea cutting was an excellent job. The ongoing effort to remove garbage and rock dam is beginning to take effect. We are starting to see a nice increase in velocity and sediment movement. The large woody debris and deep pools are reappearing in the lower creek.

The large amount of money and volunteer hours are showing results that make it all worthwhile. A round of applause to the Watershed Council, the City of Puyallup, Pierce County, Friends of Clarks Creek and the Boettcher Brothers Construction Company for joining together to improve Clarks Creek.

*The Puyallup River Watershed Council is a forum which promotes and implements programs that restore, maintain, and enhance the watershed in order to protect its environmental, economic, and cultural health.*

# Coming Together for Lake Bonney

The Lake Bonney Conservation Association (LBCA) formed in February 2004 with the mission to preserve Lake Bonney for the enjoyment of residents and the public and has joined forces with the City of Bonney Lake and Stream Team to address challenges to its preservation. Current concerns include:

- Stormwater entering the lake unfiltered.
- The impact of new development on shorelines and wetlands, including stripping of tree life.
- Sedimentation/muck accumulation and nutrient pollution.
- Protection for the water source that feeds Lake Bonney (aquifer origination unknown).
- Invasive aquatic plants including identification of possible exotic species (e.g., Eurasian water milfoil).
- Noxious weeds (e.g., reed canary grass, purple loosestrife).
- Introduction of non-native fish into the lake.

Previous activities to support the conservation of Lake Bonney include:

- Promotion of stewardship of the lake by encouraging responsible pesticide and fertilizer usage on lakeshore watersheds and adjoining communities.
- Monitoring of the lake May-October twice per month.
- Manually harvesting of submersed weeds.
- Installation of filters in stormwater drains and oil/water separators in response to runoff concerns due to paving (paid for by the city).
- Painting stencils with messages at stormwater drains to promote awareness.
- Installation of shoreline fences to discourage goose habitat.
- Distribution of native trees and information to residents in the watershed.
- Joined Adopt-a-Street program with the city for the street surrounding the lake.
- Hosting of educational event by Pierce County Noxious Weed Control Board to identify and prioritize removal of noxious weeds.
- Instigation of white water lily control by the city.

These activities have resulted in recognition and support from local businesses to enhance the local park with native plantings and landscaping. Grassroots organization and teamwork has led to the development of a viable voice for Lake Bonney's ecosystem in our community. Our vision is to secure an active and positive ongoing partnership with the City of Bonney Lake for future stewardship.



## *Welcoming Salmon Home to Swan Creek*

"Welcoming" returning Swan Creek salmon is on our minds this September as Friends of Swan Creek Watershed (FSCW) members prepare educational and stewardship activities for this fall and winter. We are particularly excited about our new Swan Creek Salmon Guides pilot project which will train volunteers to serve as public educators and salmon monitors in Swan Creek Park.

The highlight this fall will be our fourth annual, Salmon Saturday in Swan Creek Park, December 8, 2007 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Pioneer Way East entrance to Swan Creek Park (located between Barker's Barn and Waller Road). The event will include tours of the park to see the spawning salmon, children's activities, salmon-friendly home and gardening information, and more. We always look forward to this public education event and to sharing the wonder of watching the salmon make their way upstream, especially in such an urban setting.

## **Friends of the Lower White River Celebrates 6 months!**

Friends of the Lower White River was started by three King County residents on Earth Day 2007. We began as proponents of the Lower White River Biodiversity Management Plan, a voluntary plan to preserve the rich biodiversity of the Lower White River Corridor, from Buckley to Sumner. The goal of preserving biodiversity is to "keep common animals common". Riverside landowners will be encouraged to improve their chunk of habitat for wildlife. In exchange, LWRBMP Area property owners can get lowered tax rates from Pierce County for voluntary participation in LWR Biodiversity Management. Any community resident can participate in the upcoming public review and comment for the Draft LWR Biodiversity Management Plan. Contacts: John Garner, Pierce County Biodiversity Alliance, johng@tacomaparks.com Michele Tirhi, WDFW, mtirhi@DFW.wa.gov

Healthy salmon and steelhead runs indicate a healthy watershed. White River salmon, steelhead and char runs are far below historical levels. In Auburn and Pacific, the river is polluted with fecal coliform, high temperature, and pH imbalance (DOE 2004 "303 (d) polluted waters lists). These Class 5 pollutants were also found in 4 water quality test sites in Sumner (Temp, pH), and in Trout and Five Mile Lakes (Fecal Coliform). Clean, cold water and high quality wildlife habitats are inseparable. Habitat "area" is also very important to water quality.

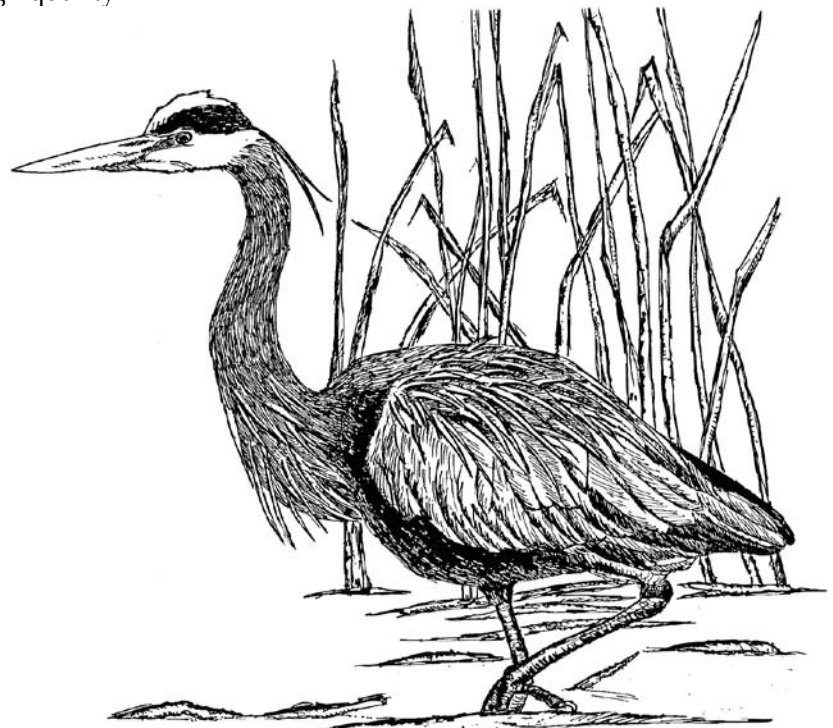
FLWR is helping to restore habitats, and clean water, in several ways.

We have partnered with HelpNW.com for a 2007 King County Small Change grant to improve wildlife habitat in the Pacific West Hill Nature Park. The grant will help Pacific Algona Scout Troup 385 "adopt" the Nature Park as a stewardship project. The grant will buy tools, supplies, plants, water testing kits, and field guides, and to hire a licensed herbicide applicator. The scouts are will first control invasive plants: Himalayan Blackberries along the stream and on the hill, English ivy vines climbing up the

100 year old Douglas Firs, stream-side canary reed grass. Then they will replant the areas with native trees and shrubs to improve wildlife habitat. The grant will also pay for professional herbicide application to a small but highly invasive patch of knotweed. West Hill Nature Park stewardship is a long term project. Scout Troop 385 voted to spend 2 to 3 years as stewards of the park. If you want to help the scouts, or become a steward yourself, contact Scoutmaster Jim Brass at drbrass@msn.com orl 206-334-5977.

The upcoming NWF Pacific Community Habitats Project is another way to improve wildlife habitat. The National Wildlife Federation is working to create Community Habitats throughout the Puget Sound region. Pacific is their newest project city. FLWR signed on to help get Pacific certified as a Backyard Wildlife Habitat Community. We will have a meeting of community "movers and shakers" to brainstorm about how to reach friends and neighbors. Many of you have already registered your yards with the NWF or WDFW as Backyard Habitats. We need your help and experience. FLWR would like to register several city parks and schools, as well as many, many backyards with the NWF and WDFW. Get on the FLWR E-News list to receive

**continued, Page 4**





## Puyallup Tribe Builds New Salmon Pond

The Puyallup Tribe of Indians is building a new acclimation pond for juvenile chinook in the upper White River to replace two ponds that were destroyed during winter floods.

Every year the Puyallup Tribe transfers thousands of juvenile spring chinook from the Muckleshoot Tribe's hatchery on the White River and raises the young fish in five acclimation ponds in the upper watershed. In some years the Puyallup Tribe transfers as many as 800,000 young chinook in the hopes that some will return as adults.

"Thousands of adult chinook return to the upper watershed of the White River," said Blake Smith, hatchery biologist for the Puyallup Tribe. "There is a lot of great habitat up here, we want them to take full advantage of it."

White River chinook have been rebounding from historical lows of only a few dozen twenty years ago. In recent years, those runs have consistently averaging 1,565 a year since 2000. Puget Sound chinook are listed as "threatened" under the federal Endangered Species Act.

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## Corridor, from page 3

more information: [PacificNaturalist@clearwire.net](mailto:PacificNaturalist@clearwire.net).

FLWR's next target is to move upstream and down with restoration projects. From Mud Mountain Dam to the mouth of the River in Sumner, and on all the tributaries, there are lots of opportunities for riverside and upland habitat restoration and/or protection. The LWRBMA Plan will be a guide. Coincidentally, King and Pierce Counties are leading the way with the Inter County floodplain restoration project across from the Pacific Park. Floodplain restoration will increase habitat for salmon, though the project is primarily to provide more channel "volume" for floodwater storage.

How about expanding this concept to create a Big Wetlands Mitigation Bank/ Outdoor Recreation /Nature Park, along the Left Bank (east side) of the River, and west of the thousands of homes of Lakeland, Auburn? FLWR envisions a 200 to 300+ acre "working" Park which encompasses the Sumner Meadows golf course and land to the north and south for floodplain restoration, storm

water planning, habitat restoration, and tourist and residential recreation. The Big Nature Park would be a model for other progressive communities with river "resources" in Washington's Urban Growth Areas.

FLWR's motto is "Water for Life". Our "mascot" is the river otter. Water sustains us. Clean water is needed for our families, our jobs, growing local food, and a healthy, sustainable environment. Clean water is taken for granted... it comes out of the tap at a turn of the handle. But clean water is not guaranteed unless we work to keep contaminants out of surface and ground water. Rivers and streams, like people, need care. Stormwater runoff needs to be free of contaminants. Groundwater needs to be protected from pollution. River tributaries need shade to keep water cool. Invasive plants need to be controlled. Onsite septic sewage systems need to work. Healthy fish populations in the White River WOULD indicate the White River System is healthy. It would also mean people are no longer using the White River as a sewer or as a garbage dump.

# Helping Protect Fennel Creek

The Fennel Creek Preservation Group was formed in March 2004 by Bonney Lake citizens concerned about land use issues and development proposals along the Fennel Creek Corridor Watershed. Our goal has been to acquire information and education about this watershed and increase visibility pertaining to the numerous environmental values which exist along its eight-mile long channel.

As the largest tributary in the Mid-Puyallup Basin, Fennel Creek flows eight miles through Bonney Lake from headwaters located East of Bonney Lake near Buckley down to the mouth of Fennel Creek where it enters the Puyallup River near Alderton-McMillan.

Unique Fennel Creek begins on a plateau near the Cascade Mountain foothills and is sustained as a perennial stream from Mt. Rainier snowmelt and rainfall events.

The Fennel Creek watershed is home to National and County wetlands, acres of critical and sensitive habitats, valuable aquifer recharge areas, FEMA and Pierce County mapped flood zones, and flows along much of its channel in a green watershed valley between steep slopes. The Fennel Creek Watershed corridor sustains all five species of salmon below stunning Victor Falls and provides a wildlife corridor which sustains a heron rookery, deer and the occasional elk, small animals and is home to Rufous hummingbirds, red-tailed hawks and Bald Eagles which soar on wind currents above its remaining forests, wetlands and watershed landscapes.

This year we organized our first booth committee and began meeting and planning in April. Fennel



*A young winner of the Fennel Creek Preservation Group shirt drawing.*

Creek chairpersons created a diverse booth. We displayed a wall-size Fennel Creek Watershed Ortho map which was one of the biggest draws as local citizens discovered this watershed or pointed out where they lived in proximity to unique Fennel Creek.

The Fennel Creek headwaters contain acres of sensitive and critical areas and mapped wetlands, 4 seeps and springs, and Fennel Creek tributaries which support the hydrology and habitats of Fennel Creek. The Creek provides Bonney Lake and Pierce County citizens a connection to its History, its Pacific Northwest Habitats, Salmon, bird and wildlife populations and Pacific Rim Geology. It is our hope that these sights and sounds can be experienced and enjoyed by Bonney Lake and Pierce County citizens for generations to come. The Fennel Creek Preservation Group will continue in its efforts to bring visibility of the value of the Fennel Creek Watershed to the Bonney Lake community and Pierce County citizens.



Pink salmon returned to the Puyallup River watershed in historic numbers for the third straight spawning season. Pink salmon return every two years. This year close to a million pink salmon are expected to return to the watershed, up from around 600,000 two years ago and 250,000 four years ago.

### *Volunteer groups involved in watershed health*

**Citizens for a Healthy Bay**

<http://www.healthybay.org>  
[chb@healthybay.org](mailto:chb@healthybay.org)

917 Pacific Avenue, Suite 100, Tacoma  
(253) 383-2429

**Friends of the Hylebos Wetlands**

<http://www.hylebos.org>  
[chinook@hylebos.org](mailto:chinook@hylebos.org)

(253) 874-2005

**Friends of Clarks Creek**

(253) 864-6042

**Fennel Creek Preservation Group**

<http://www.fennelcreek.org>

(253) 826-1079

**Pierce Stream Team**

<http://www.piercecountycd.org/streamtm.htm>  
[streamteam@piercecountycd.org](mailto:streamteam@piercecountycd.org)

(253) 845-2973

**South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group**

<http://spsseg.org>  
[spsseg@spsseg.org](mailto:spsseg@spsseg.org)

(360) 412-0808

**Friends of Swan Creek Watershed**

(253) 472-7264

[sueb@prodigy.net](mailto:sueb@prodigy.net)

**Friends of Lower White River**

<http://flwr.wetpaint.com/page/Home>

For more information and volunteer opportunities, visit the Puyallup River Watershed Council Web site: [www.piercecountywa.org/PRWC](http://www.piercecountywa.org/PRWC) or, send an email to: [PC-PRWC@co.pierce.wa.us](mailto:PC-PRWC@co.pierce.wa.us)  
The Puyallup River Watershed Council meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month, 5-7 p.m., at Sumner City Hall, 1104 Maple St.