

Puget Creek RESTORATION SOCIETY

Fall 2008

Fun Events

***Puget Creek
Restoration Work***
**2nd Saturday of
each month**
9:00 a.m. to Noon

Meet at
3505 North Alder Way.
Parking available along
Ruston Way and west
side of Alder. Walk half of
a block on N. Alder Way
to the entrance to
Puget Park.
Look for PCRS banner.
We will provide
refreshments, work boots,
and gloves.

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The Black-capped Chickadee

By Joan Ilacqua

The Black-capped Chickadee is a native bird found in the Puget Sound area. Within Washington State, it is a common resident year round. It receives its name from its distinct black cap, meaning that the entire top of its head has a black crown. The Black-capped Chickadee's very similar looking relative, the Mountain Chickadee, has a white eyebrow separating this black. The cheeks of the Black-capped Chickadee are white while the bib, the part of the bird's head under the eye and cheeks that continues down to the neck, is black. It is about 4.5 inches long and has a short bill. Its wings are gray and its stomach is grayish-white. There is no difference in appearance between the sexes or between adults and juvenile Black-capped Chickadees. The Black-capped Chickadee is also almost identical in appearance to the Carolina Chickadee. The only significant difference between the two species is a difference in call. The Black-capped Chickadee has a

two-note song whereas the Carolina Chickadee has a four-note song. The Black-capped Chickadee is an interesting, native member of Puget Sound's bird population, although it happens to be the state bird of both Maine and Massachusetts. It is preferential to deciduous woods, but can live closely with humans in residential areas. Its diet consists of insects, but it also feeds from bird feeders, eating suet and sunflower seeds. If you're an owner of a bird feeder in the Puget Sound area, chances are that you have seen the Black-capped Chickadee, and have helped it survive over the winter when its natural diet of insects is far less abundant.



The Black-capped Chickadee is a very active bird, even through the

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Watershed Protection

How the Chambers-Clover Creek Watershed Council is working to maintain pure water

By Henry Austin

As new construction continues and new retail stores are rising there is an effect on the watersheds that surround these areas. A watershed is a geographic area that drains water into a river, stream, or body of water. If debris from the new build-

ing area is not collected or picked-up, this garbage or construction material can find its way to a nearby stream, creek or drainage ditch. If it is a toxic agent this is especially dangerous. Building materi-

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The Puget Creek Restoration Society protects, enhances, and restores the Puget Creek Watershed and similar streams, wetlands, and green spaces. We serve the South Puget Sound communities and invite their participation through hands-on restoration, research, education, advocacy, and by promoting a sense of stewardship.

*A tax-exempt 501(c)(3)
nonprofit organization*



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Calling Future Board Members!

If you are interested in filling a board position, please contact us for an application. Board meetings are the third Monday of each month, at 6:30 p.m.

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winter. During cold nights, the bird can lower its body temperature down in order to conserve energy. This is called night torpor, and the Black-capped Chickadee can bring its body temperature down to 10 degrees Celsius nightly. Flocks of Black-capped chickadees have been known to feed upon several different bird feeders in a given area regularly. When the Black-capped Chickadee is not nesting, it is a very social bird. In the winter, it sometimes forms mixed flocks that consist of the chickadee along with woodpeckers, nuthatches, creepers and kinglets. It breaks from these flocks in the spring when it nests in order to breed. The flock of the Black-capped Chickadee has a very strict hierarchy, but non-breeding birds can be part of more than one flock. These non-breeding birds will often hold different statuses within these varied flocks. The Black-capped Chickadee is not a migratory bird. If there are shortages of food in the fall, the Black-capped Chickadee will wander. Some northern variations of the Black-capped Chickadee will take more regular migrations due to constant food shortages.

The Black-capped Chickadee often makes its nest in holes of rotting trees or rotting tree stumps. It can also be coerced to nest in a breeding box if the box is first filled with sawdust. The chickadee will then slowly remove the sawdust, thinking that it is clearing out a tree stump, and once that is completed, will then use the breeding box for nesting. The Black-capped Chickadee's nest is first insulated with moss, and then lined with fine hair, down or fur. The bird has also been known to reuse abandoned nests. The Black-capped Chickadee splits from its winter flock in February and March, where it begins to seek its prospective mates. The male and female birds pair off; they are monogamous birds and pair up for more than one nesting season. The female makes a nest while the

male guards the area that the female has chosen. The female will lay anywhere between 5 and 10 eggs. After laying the eggs, she incubates them for up to 12 or 13 days. In the early stages of the chicks' lives, the mother stays in the nest while the male brings food. After 16 days, the chicks leave the nest, although they stay in the breeding area for about a month before heading out on their own.

The Black-capped Chickadee's diet has historically consisted of insects. It is a particularly ravenous bird; and tends to spend most of its day foraging for food. The birds flit around on tree branches, mainly birch or alders, looking for spiders and other insects. It will search every niche of any particular tree searching for anything edible. The birds can hang upside-down on twigs in order to get better access to insects and insect eggs. They easily come to bird feeders, which is an example of positive human interaction with these birds. Black-capped Chickadees will also hover or probe to get food, and in more rare cases, fly after and catch prey in mid-air. During winter, the Black-capped Chickadee will eat mainly seeds and fruit. During warmer months where insects are more prevalent, this aspect of the diet decreases. Caterpillars are also a common summer food of the Black-capped Chickadee. During the fall, the Black-capped Chickadee hoards food in up to a thousand different hiding places. They can remember each of these distinct places for up to 28 days after initially hiding the food. Another very interesting fact about the Black-capped Chickadee is its complex song. This song is one of the most complex of any species in the animal kingdom, not only birds. It has varying calls, some sounding like "chick-a-dee-dee" or "fee-bee", which can signal danger or alarm, or can signal recognition of another group of Black-capped Chickadees. These birdcalls are available to listen to in the Puget Creek Restoration Society office, or online at: birds.cornell.edu, Whatbird.com and Birdweb.org.



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als such as paint, varnish, oil and gas can do tremendous damage to the surrounding watershed if they leech through the topsoil and filter down into the aquifer that may provide drinking water to the surrounding neighborhood. Pollutants that accumulate in water bodies from unknown sources are referred to as nonpoint source pollution. Nonpoint source pollution also includes runoff from asphalt and cement roadways, broken septic systems, grass fertilizers, pet waste, hazardous household waste and cleaning solutions. All of these can pollute the watershed if not disposed of properly.

Storm drains are becoming a tremendous source of pollution in outlying communities. Many people believe that if they pour house cleaning liquids or used engine oil into storm drains that it is out of sight and out of mind. This could not be further from the truth. As this toxic material works its way down the storm drain pipes and often simply drain into the nearest stream or creek. This polluted surface water eventually ends up in the watershed and subsequently in the drinking water that is drawn from that source. Many of the larger urban areas and cities have a separate water system based on large reservoirs and pipe the pure water into the communities for use. Many outlying communities do not have any other option but to draw water from the local watershed and aquifer. If this valuable water resource is polluted with toxins and impurities then the consumers of that

water can become ill or worse.

Salmon and migrating fish runs have dramatically decreased as the spawning streams and creek become clogged with garbage and pollutants. Many of these pristine rivers have become cesspools that the spawning salmon can no longer use. It is shameful that this situation continues. Native migratory fish are disappearing due to human negligence

Many citizens have become aware of this threat to our watersheds and drinking water. The CHAMBERS-CLOVER CREEK WATERSHED COUNCIL is an organization that is tackling this pollution of our drinking water head on. Al Schmauder is a spokesman for this group that lectures to other environmental groups and any organization that will listen about the importance of keeping our watersheds safe and drinking water pure. He involves schools and neighborhood groups in the cleanup of streambeds and watershed areas. He travels and gives PowerPoint presentations concerning the deterioration of the watershed and steps that can be taken for their recovery. He also works with Pierce County agencies to identify and cleanup the storm drains that empty into Chambers and Clover creek.

This organization and others like it help foster a sense of ownership for communities that rely on drinking water from the watershed surrounding the aquifer. They perform a valuable service to the rural areas by making everyone aware of the danger of polluting the watershed. 

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!

We would like to thank all businesses, interns, members and volunteers that have participated with us. Your work is essential to the restoration of the Puget Creek Watershed.

CenterForce
Keystone
Young Professionals Network
Charles Wright
School of the Arts
Doty, Beardsley, Rosengren & Co.
United Way of Pierce County
PCRS Dive Team 1 & 2

NEW MEMBERS WELCOME AND THANK YOU!

John Corso
Nancy Davis
Stephanie Dunning
Bill Evans
Kevin Kunka, Trex Company
Christian Wheat
Anne & Pat McI tire
James & Bernita Sorensen

VOLUNTEER NEEDED!

PCRS needs someone to donate bookkeeping services.

Please contact Scott if you can help with this vital service. Scott can be reached by telephone, 779-8890 or e-mail, pugetcreek@yahoo.com

Join the Puget Creek Restoration Society

Note: The PCRS is a 501c(3) organization and your dues are tax deductible.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Membership Dues - Please choose one:

_____ Business - \$50/year

_____ Family - \$30/year

_____ Individual - \$20/year

_____ Work nine or more volunteer hours

_____ Other

Which of the following types of activities are you interested in? *Please check all that apply.*

_____ Office work

_____ Research

_____ Restoration activities

_____ Education/Outreach

_____ Legislative issues

_____ Salmon enhancement projects

