



Meadows-Ferndale Homeowners' Association Quarterly Newsletter

JAN 2022 (Q1/Winter)



LIFE IN OUR WETLANDS

This section features photographs and descriptions of native flora and fauna in our Native Growth Protection Area -- recently submitted by our residents and neighbors. If you have a topic and/or a photo for a future edition of our newsletter, please submit it via email to meadowsferndalehoa@gmail.com.

HUMMINGBIRDS

According to the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service, Anna's hummingbirds (pictured) are the only hummingbird species to stay year-round on the Pacific Coast in Washington.



Other migratory visitors include the Rufous, Calliope (rare), and Black-Chinned (very rare) hummingbirds. Hummingbirds feed on flower nectar and very small insects, which makes it difficult for them to find a good meal this time of year. They get their name from the "hum" their wings create with a very rapid wing beat.

Anna's hummingbirds are named after Anna Massena, Duchess of Rivoli, whose husband was an ornithologist in France during the time of Emperor Napoleon III. She was also Mistress of the Household to Empress Eugenie.

Anna's hummingbirds are the largest in our region and are well known for their territorial behavior. The male makes elaborate dive displays at other birds and sometimes even at people. At the bottom of their dives, they produce high-pitched loud popping sounds with their tail feathers. Despite this, however, the local



hummingbirds sometimes manage a social gathering at a nearby nectar pub. See photo.

Anna's hummingbirds are the most vocal hummingbird in the United States. Males often produce a complex series of scratchy noises, sounding like a sharp "chee-chee-chee". However, when moving from flower to flower, they emit toneless "chip" vocalizations. All other hummingbirds in the United States are mostly silent. The males have glossy dark rose-red throats and crowns, which may appear black or dark purple in low light. The underside is mostly greyish, and the back is metallic green. Females have light grey chests with white and red spotting on the throat, greenish back and white tipped tails.

Unfortunately, the recent period of unusually cold weather was very hard on the local population and recent observations suggest that only a few hummingbirds survived.

For more information about Anna's hummingbirds look [HERE](#).

PONDWATER STARWORT

Callitriche stagnalis has been sighted in our ponds. It is a perennial aquatic vascular plant species that thrives in a variety of aquatic and subaquatic habitats, especially those that have slow or non-moving water. Although this species does not pose a threat to humans, its high reproductive rate may pose a threat to native vegetation in areas where it has been introduced because the resulting dense vegetative mats frequently out-compete native species and block essential sunlight from sub-surface species. The issue has been referred to our ecology experts for guidance.



DEER

Although some may label them as pests or nuisances because they nibble rosebushes and shrubs, many of our neighbors enjoy seeing the deer wandering through the Meadows. The dominant species in our area (west of the Cascade Mountains) is the Columbian Black-Tail (see photo), but the Rocky Mountain Mule Deer, and the Columbian White-Tail are also here in lesser numbers. These deer are the most common large wild animals most of us will ever see. The lifespan of a deer is about 12 years. A doe will fawn (i.e., give birth) once annually and will typically bear two fawns each time, but it is fairly common for them to fawn either one or three. Breeding happens in the fall. After a seven-month gestation, fawns are born in the spring or early summer. The doe's milk contains three times more protein and fat than that of domestic cows, resulting in the newborn deer typically gaining 5-10% of their birth weight for each day of their first few weeks of life.

Twins are the norm in most deer populations but 15-20% of does will have triplets when numbers are in balance with high-quality habitats (food and shelter). It has commonly been thought that fawns have no scent, enabling them to be safe from predators, but this misconception has been dispelled. It is essential to avoid disturbing fawns (or any baby animal) you encounter – even if you do not spot the mother.



Courtesy of Kathy Young

A doe will often let her babies forage alone, but will likely be watching from a safe place, ready to return should the need arise. For more information about how to deal with a lost, injured, or distressed fawn, look [HERE](#).



Courtesy of Kathy Young

Enjoy our Native Growth areas and the wildlife that live or visit there – and do all you can to keep them (and yourself) safe.

BEAVERS, MUSKRATS, AND NUTRIA

Our neighborhood wetlands and protected areas are an attraction to all sorts of wildlife, as they were intended to be, but not all critters are welcome. Just before Christmas, a large creature with a rat-like tail that was initially believed to be a Nutria was spotted under a footbridge on the trail system. Then, about a week later, a beaver was spotted near the same bridge, it's damage to a nearby tree clearly visible. The embedded photographs of tree damage were taken on January 12th.



Acting on the advice of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, we then consulted with a Wildlife Control Officer (WCO) with Whatcom Wildlife Management in Bellingham. He explained that the invasive and highly destructive Nutria was introduced to Washington state by the fur trade in the 1930s, but to his knowledge has never been spotted in Whatcom County, though they do exist in counties further south. He suggested it might be a large muskrat. The Nutria ranges in size from 10 to 20 pounds, while the muskrat is generally 4-5 pounds. In this case it was impossible to make a positive identification, so his advice was to wait and see if it returns, and if it does appear to be a Nutria (based on size) he will trap and remove it from our wetland/pond system.

As for beavers, they are the second largest rodent (capybaras) and can weigh as much as 60 pounds. Their destructive habits and ability to build dams are of great concern. This is because we wish to protect our native plants and trees, and also because our drainage system requires the unimpeded movement of water, to which beaver dams would be very detrimental. Once they settle, beavers tend to colonize an area quickly. We have recently noticed a continuation of beaver-like damage to our Native Growth areas and have contacted the WCO for guidance and assistance. If the damaging behavior

persists, it will likely be handled in the same manner as for a Nutria.

If you see either of these creatures in our wetlands, please contact the HOA board right away. Any observational details (where, how many, damage, etc.) and especially photos will be most helpful.

As for the muskrats: they are whimsical creatures that should be left alone and enjoyed as part of our native fauna. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated!



Muskrat



Nutria



Beaver

PROJECT UPDATES

PLANTING STRIPS

We expect to complete contracting for this by early February. Work should commence shortly thereafter, weather permitting.

BRIDGE HANDRAILS AND NON-SKID

We have received permission from the City to proceed with this project. Bids are being solicited and work should start in the spring. This will make the pedestrian bridge on the walking trail much safer for all.

OTHER TOPICS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting for the Association was conducted by Zoom™ video conferencing on December 20th, 2021. We had a quorum, ratified the budget, elected a slate of officers for the Board and survived the annual messages from the Board members. The minutes of the meeting may be found on the HOA Website under the MEETINGS menu. The Website URL is provided at the end of this newsletter.

BUDGET

We ended fiscal year 2021 in strong financial shape, with healthy balances in the Reserve and Operating Cash accounts. We have several fairly expensive projects planned for 2022 (see the Project Updates section) but have ample funds to pay for them.

MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS

The Board of Directors will soon resume monthly Board meetings using video conferencing (Zoom™ or equivalent) rather than the library meeting room. About time, you say – and we agree. We suspended our in-person meetings when the COVID pandemic started but miscalculated how long it would last. Fortunately, a teleconferencing tool will enable us to resume having the meetings. We will announce details about the meeting schedule and process as soon as we select a tool and have it set up and are ready to start.

PREPARING FOR SPRING

They say the best time to plant trees is in the fall, but soon the nurseries will be loaded with new young trees and other plants eager for a new home. It's never too early to prepare, and the next newsletter (April) would be too late, so here are just a few tips for spring:

- Make sure no utility lines exist where you intend to dig (Call 811 or go [HERE](#) for information).
- The best time for planting is early spring, especially for non-evergreens -- before they start sprouting leaves around mid to late march.
- Adding soil additives such as compost, manure, or other organic materials into the planting hole is generally not recommended because they tend to alter natural root development (but if you do, be sure to mix with native soil).
- Holes should be shallow and about 2X wider than the root ball.
- Keep soil loosely compact when you fill the hole, do not stomp.

- Water immediately, then every 2-3 days through dry weather in spring and summer. Keep the ground moist but don't saturate.
- Mulching helps prevent moisture loss and allows water to "percolate" into the root zone.
- Most websites recommend not fertilizing for the first year, but then fertilize every spring with a nitrogen-rich mix. Nitrogen is part of the chlorophyll molecule, which gives plants their green color and is involved in creating food for the plant through photosynthesis. Lack of nitrogen shows up as general yellowing (chlorosis) of the plant.
- You may wish to stabilize trees in high wind areas like ours using two stakes, one on each side. Stakes should be removed once the tree is able to support itself or else the tree may fail to become stable on its own.
- Please be sure you are planting trees and shrubs that are compatible with our planting zone and with the character of our neighborhood, and that they will not impact your neighbor's property or views.
- Most trees plantings require approval of the Architectural Review Committee. See Exhibit D (pages 11-13) of the CC&R Design Guidelines which may be accessed [HERE](#).

Thanks to the following resources for this article:

- Extension.WSU.edu: Master Gardener Program
- Emeraldology.com: How to Buy and Plant Trees in the PNW.
- Seattle.gov: Planting and Care of Trees

MEADOWS BUILDOUT STATUS

House/Lot Status	Number
Occupancy permits issued*	144
Homes under construction	7
Vacant lots	6
TOTAL UNITS	157

*Includes 3 rentals

CONTACT INFORMATION

HOA Website:

▶ <https://www.meadows-ferndale-hoa.org>

HOA Email:

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Windermere Property Management

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IN CONCLUSION

This Newsletter is being distributed by both email and USPS. If you get one but not both versions, please contact Windermere Property Management to update your contact information.

If you have a topic that you would like covered in a future newsletter, please let us know through the HOA Email identified above.

And finally ...

These are difficult times because of the persistent Coronavirus (Delta and Omicron) and the recently harsh weather – but we can still be good neighbors. In fact, it is even more important now than in "normal" times. We can help each other by such simple things as helping with the snow around sidewalks and driveways, helping to keep the trash picked up when it blows from construction sites or trash cans, obeying traffic regulations, and simply (but importantly) offering to help where there are indications that help is needed.

Until next quarter ... stay safe.

Board of Directors

Meadows-Ferndale

Homeowners' Association