

Reopening Leque Island to the Public

by Allen Gibbs, Conservation Chair

Leque Island will reopen to birders, hunters, and other recreationists in mid-October per current plans. Closed to the public this past year for Phase I restoration of wetlands by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), the work is now complete. I and others who have served on the recent advisory group went on a WDFW tour of the island on Friday, September 22.

Pilchuck Audubon Society (PAS) and Audubon Washington, and other interested constituencies, have been on advisory groups suggesting ways to enhance a portion of the former privately-owned farm lands into improved habitats for birds, fish, and other critters.

PAS and Audubon WA first provided comment in 2004 when only a portion of the island was owned by WDFW and Ducks Unlimited, and focus was mostly on developing that portion for waterfowl hunting and viewing. Over the years, with continued deterioration of dikes due to lack of funds for maintenance by private landowners and WDFW, plus litigation opposing removal of dikes, WDFW continued to acquire island parcels with encouragement by Ducks Unlimited.

Today, WDFW is the sole owner of Leque Island excepting right-of-way by Washington State Department of Transportation for SR 523. Ducks Unlimited helped with initial land acquisition, and the Stillaguamish Tribe has sought to restore Chinook salmon habitat in the Stillaguamish River estuary of which Leque Island is a part. Restoration from the beginning was to be more wetlands than to maintain the habitat diversity with

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OCTOBER PROGRAM MEETING

Blair Bernson

GREAT BIRDING ON TOUR:

Insights and Reflections from Tours Far and Near

Friday, October 13, 2017

7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Everett Firefighters' Hall

2411 Hewitt Avenue, Everett ([map](#))

Are you thinking about a bird tour somewhere but not sure how it would be “in the field”? Are you trying to sift through the many available options for exotic locations or famous hotspots or that special location for that specially needed/wanted “lifer”? Or would you just enjoy stories and photos from some tours joined by a local birder?



Blair Bernson has been birding the U.S. and the world for almost 50 years. After taking Dennis Paulson’s Master Birder Class in 2012, he has spent countless hours (“too many” in his own words) doing various forms of “Big Years” in Washington, but he has also travelled to many bird-rich areas around the U.S. and the world. He has birded on his own, with fellow birders (including many Pilchuck members), private guides, and numerous tour companies, large and small. His birding trips have been to 16 countries on every continent except Antarctica. His trips have ranged from “life changing” to “incredible” to “just okay”. There have been many, many highs and relatively few lows.

In this program, Blair shares photos, experiences, stories, and some analyses that are applicable to long-time travelers or first timers, and for experts or beginning birders, and for birders interested in big tours or focused guided trips. ✧

Autumn Seed Sale

October 18



Twice yearly, Pilchuck Audubon sells bird seed in bulk as a fundraiser. The 2017 autumn sale will be Wednesday, October 18, between 4:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Seed pick-up will be in Everett; there will be volunteers to load the seed into your vehicle.

Types of seed available include sunflower seed (shelled or unshelled), peanuts (shelled or unshelled), cracked corn, millet, safflower, mealworms, niger thistle, suet, and mixes. The most popular seeds are sunflower and the mixes; all will lure many species to your feeders.



You must pre-order the seed you want. If you are new to the seed sale and would like to see a price list, send an email to Carolyn Lacy, newsletter@pilchuckaudubon.org.

Payment is by credit card, check, or cash. If paying with a credit card, you'll need to pay 48 hours before seed pick-up. If paying with cash or check, pay at the time of picking up your seed.

Price List will be available soon after October 1.
Feed the birds and support PAS!!



About Pilchuck Audubon Society

The Pilchuck Audubon Profile, official newsletter of Pilchuck Audubon Society, is published monthly.

Pilchuck 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 newsletter@pilchuckaudubon.org or mail to 1429 Avenue D, PMB 198, Snohomish, WA 98290. Submissions must be received by the 21st of the month preceding publication. We reserve the right to edit.

To contact Pilchuck Audubon Society, call 425.610.8027.

The monthly Profile is available online at

www.pilchuckaudubon.org

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President	Cynthia Easterson	president@pilchuckaudubon.org
Vice President	Terry Nightingale ..	vice-president@pilchuckaudubon.org
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Secretary	Kathy Piland	253.736.4937
Conservation	Allen Gibbs.....	conservation@pilchuckaudubon.org
Membership	Jim Beneteau	membership@pilchuckaudubon.org
Avian Science	Vacant	
Development	Open	develop@pilchuckaudubon.org
Members at Large	Laurel Cheap ...	classroom.awards@pilchuckaudubon.org
	Kathy Johnson.....	forest@pilchuckaudubon.org
	Jay Ward	425.418.3226
	David Gladstone	

Consultant

Committee Chairs

Bird Sightings	Mara Price	360.722.5752
Citizen Science Coord.	Sherrill Miller	field.birds.pas@gmail.com
Communications	Kristin Kelly	execdirector@pilchuckaudubon.org
Conservation Awards	Laurel Cheap ...	classroom.awards@pilchuckaudubon.org
Donations	Judy Chapman.....	donations@pilchuckaudubon.org
Education	Jim Beneteau	membership@pilchuckaudubon.org
Field Trips	Art Wait	360.563.0181
Forest Practices	Kathy Johnson.....	forest@pilchuckaudubon.org
Hospitality	Virginia Clark	360.435.3750
Newsletter Editor	Carolyn Lacy.....	newsletter@pilchuckaudubon.org
Programs	Susie Schaefer.....	garden@pilchuckaudubon.org
Webmaster	Terry Nightingale	webmaster@pilchuckaudubon.org

Staff

Smart Growth/PAS ExecDir	Kristin Kelly	execdirector@pilchuckaudubon.org
Everett Backyard Habitat Prgm	Jed Holmes.....	habitat@pilchuckaudubon.org

SWIFTS NIGHT OUT – Oh, Yes! We had Swifts

Smoke filled the skies and ashes rained down the entire week before Swifts Night Out, held this year on September 9, 2017, and those conditions kept the swifts from their typical southbound migration. So many wondered if we'd have any birds to celebrate during Pilchuck Audubon's annual event. The day of Swifts Night Out was cool and included intervals of smattering rain so it was anyone's guess as to what would happen with our birds (and our typical crowd of onlookers). Would the people come? Would the swifts show up? As the afternoon began to turn toward evening we truly wondered about both.

But by 6:00 p.m., the lawn of the Frank Wagner Center was filling with chairs and binocular-wielding folk began to point out the swifts that were coming to check out the chimney roost site. More and more birds were joining the swirling flock above the school, and we



moved up our special talk by swift expert Larry Schwitters so folk could hear about his important work and not miss the highlight of the evening, the swifts' swirling descent into the chimney. Even at that, Larry had to suspend his talk so everyone could rush outside and watch as nearly 3000 swifts swirled into their roost for the night. For newcomers, the sight elicited exclamations of delight and several, who have seen it dozens of times, remarked how the experience never grows old.

It takes a village to put on this event, and our appreciation goes out to our exhibitors, supporters, and volunteers for helping make this a wonderful experience. Seattle and Eastside Audubons, along with PAWS and Return of the Salmon Celebration team, always bring such educational and interesting exhibits. We were extremely grateful for the support of the City of Monroe and the Monroe Arts Council for providing us with a venue and the amenities for the event. The Monroe Downtown Association kicked off their new Swift Quest program, which will continue to endear this amazing bird to the community. To our own PAS volunteers who cooked, hauled, set up, cleaned up, and worked as docents or points of information, THANK YOU for your valuable time and talents. ✧



PUGET SOUND BIRD FEST: A celebration of birds and birders

Every chair was filled and even standing room was getting scarce as the keynote speaker, Steve Shunk, kicked off the Puget Sound Bird Fest with his talk titled "How Woodpeckers Can Save the World (or at least a local forest!)." His long-awaited *Peterson Reference Guide to Woodpeckers of North America* was just released in May 2016 and, after his informative talk, people rushed to buy his book and secure his autograph.

That was just the start of a successful weekend that engaged kids and adults with birds. The Fest offered talks, field trips, including the ever popular boat trips out for seabirds, and a citizen science symposium, all focused to help participants better understand our local birds.

Pilchuck Audubon volunteers were everywhere making sure the planning and execution of this event went smoothly. A special thanks to those who served on the planning committee and to those whose time and support made this year's event one to remember. ✧



Photo Credits: Cindy Easterson

SMART GROWTH REPORT

by Kristin Kelly

Executive Director, Smart Growth



Education, outreach, activism, and advocacy are the pillars of the Smart Growth Program, and when the parts are combined, effective positive change can happen. And that is my challenge as the Smart Growth Executive Director—to engage our membership to help ensure our elected decisionmakers adopt ordinances that will best protect our environment.

First, our membership and supporters need to be educated. They need to know about and understand the issue. This does not mean knowing every detail, but to understand how a policy or regulation will affect the short- and long-term future of our communities. Education and outreach techniques to our membership include Smart Growth reports in the newsletter, email updates, action alerts, website and twitter postings, and summits. It also includes answering many emails and phone calls. I educate not only on the substantive part of an issue but also on the process. Government processes for land use are messy and many times unpredictable, and usually controversial.

But education is not a one-way street. As your Smart Growth Executive Director, it is important that I hear from you about your concerns and questions. The more you know, the more likelihood you will want to be engaged. Which brings me to activism.

Activism consists of efforts to promote, impede, or direct change and, in the case of the Smart Growth Program, environmental and land-use change. Activism can take many forms such as writing letters to newspapers or our elected leaders, or calling your elected officials, attending public hearings, working on political or issue-oriented campaigns, being involved in rallies, strikes, sit-

ins, or other types of passive protest, and now, with social media, being active can be done by just signing petitions or reposting information and sending out emails. When a big issue is before me where I think more public involvement is needed to encourage our elected decisionmakers to make the right vote, I again will use emails, action alerts, our newsletter, the media, phone calls, and social media to inform you of the issue, and then will call on you to act. The power of people absolutely makes a difference in an elected's decision. The more people taking time to attend a public hearing and speak to the county, city council members, or the planning commissions, and tell their stories and why they support a position, makes a lasting impression on our decisionmakers. Writing comment letters, taking action on action alerts and emails, making a phone call (even if you need to leave a voice message), writing a letter to the editor, sharing the action with your friends, this is activism at its finest, and it absolutely can make the difference between a good and bad vote.

When people become active and engaged, it helps me, as your Smart Growth Director, to advocate more successfully for good land-use planning and environmental protections. With another 200,000 people expected to arrive here by 2035, our membership and supporters need to keep being educated and actively engaged so that I can continue to be a strong advocate for smart land-use planning for the future of Snohomish County. ✧

Leque Island Reopening, *continued from Page 1*

which we are most familiar.

What did I learn on the tour? Well, much more than space allows here to describe. Look for a detailed report in the November PROFILE about Phase II, which will include dike breaching. Perhaps of most interest is that walk-in access will continue off Eide Road from the parking lot. Davis Slough parking lot will also reopen.

The island's flatness is now very obvious, as are newly dug channels. Trees and brush have been removed from most of the island south of SR 532 and west of Eide Road. Recall that much of that land has been cultivated in past years for corn and other grains to attract birds, especially game birds. There are scattered mounds of soil from

construction of the new channels.

Trees and brush still line the eastern part of the island along most of Eide Road, the parking lot, and dikes.

The major channel system has been constructed. Tidal channels are not yet connected. The connections will be made in Phase II, as funding is available. Until connected and dikes breached, the new channels will become ponds. Seeding of cleared land may be completed in early October. The land retains grasses and marsh plants, now dried out due to the long dry summer. ✧

TRIP CALENDAR

Check our website at www.pilchuckaudubon.org for the latest information



Tuesday, October 3

Silvana Roads

Meet at 8:00 AM at Quilceda Village Walmart lot west of Marysville (I-5 Exit 200). Park away from the store, to the east, near Quilceda Blvd and next to I-5. Past years we had Northern Shrikes, a Pectoral and a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, and three falcon species. If time allows, we may visit the Port Susan Nature Conservancy site. Pack a lunch. Trip Leader: Virginia Clark, [360-435-3750](tel:360-435-3750)

Tuesday, October 10

Point No Point

Meet at 7:10 AM at the Edmonds Wade James Theater parking lot. The theater's address is 950 Main St., Edmonds, 98020, just east of 9th Ave. on the south side of Main St. We'll take the ferry to Kingston and bird the voyage, the docks, Point No Point, and Foulweather Bluff. Always lots of surprises, both in the air and on the water. Pack a lunch. Trip Leader: Virginia Clark, [360-435-3750](tel:360-435-3750)

Saturday, October 14

Parks in Eastern Edmonds

Meet at 7:30 AM at the entrance to the Mountlake Terrace Freeway Station's parking lot (near I-5 Exit 178, northbound). We'll carpool to several parks along the eastern edge of Edmonds: Mathay-Ballinger, Sierra, Seaview, Southwest County, and Haines Wharf. We'll do a moderate amount of walking as we look for birds at these different sites.

Trip Leader: Douglas Resnick, [425-776-4811](tel:425-776-4811)

Tuesday, October 17

Smith and Spencer Islands

Meet at 8:00 AM at Langus Riverfront Park, Everett. Go North on SR529 (Broadway) over the Snohomish River; turn right onto 28th Pl. NE. Follow signs to Langus Waterfront Park. Continue past the Shell House and Everett Animal Shelter, making a left turn onto 4th St SE to a parking lot on the right side of the street. Trying for raptors and returning waterfowl. Walk the trails, view the Everett sewage ponds. Lots of walking. Pack a lunch. Trip Leader: Virginia Clark, [360-435-3750](tel:360-435-3750)

Tuesday, October 24

Blackie Spit

Meet at 7:00 AM at Quilceda Village Walmart lot west of Marysville (I-5 Exit 200). Park away from the store, to the east, near Quilceda Blvd and next to I-5. Expect to see waterfowl, raptors, gulls, shorebirds, songbirds, and scenery, and to do some walking. This is a trip to Canada so bring your US passport or enhanced driver's license. Pack a lunch. Trip Leader: Virginia Clark, [360-435-3750](tel:360-435-3750)

Tuesday, October 31

Fir Island Area

Meet at 7:30 AM at Quilceda Village Walmart lot west of Marysville (I-5 Exit 200). Park away from the store, to the east, near Quilceda Blvd and next to I-5. Expect almost anything. Pack a lunch. Trip Leader: Virginia Clark, [360-435-3750](tel:360-435-3750)

Saturday, November 4

Parks in Central Edmonds

Meet at 8:00 AM at the entrance to the Edmonds Park and Ride's parking lot (near I-5 Exit 179). We'll carpool to the first of several parks that we'll visit in central Edmonds: Pine Ridge, Yost, Hummingbird Hill, and Emerald Hills. We'll do a fair amount of walking as we look for birds at these different sites.

Trip Leader: Douglas Resnick, [425-776-4811](tel:425-776-4811) ✧



Burrowing Owlets

Photo Credit: Mick Thompson

BIRDING CLASS

OWLS AND RAPTORS

Class participants will learn more about the most common owls, hawks, and eagles that live here at different times of the year—or all year long. We will also discuss the habitats in which to find them.

Tuesday, October 17, Edmonds

at Frances Anderson Center

6:30-8:00 p.m.

\$17 for residents, \$19 for non-residents

To register, call 425-771-0230 ✧



Short-eared Owl /
Rex Guichard

ZALESKY CLASSROOM CONSERVATION GRANTS—APPLY NOW

PAS is starting its 12th year of supporting conservation projects in Snohomish County elementary school classrooms with the Zalesky Classroom Conservation Grants. If you are an elementary school teacher in Snohomish County, please apply. If you know an elementary school teacher in Snohomish County, encourage her/him to apply!

We will be giving out multiple grants of \$400 for conservation- and science-related learning activities and/or materials that enhance and enrich a classroom program.

For an application and more information about the grants, please go to the PAS website, pilchuckaudubon.org (find us under “Programs”). Applications must be received by November 1, 2017. ✧

ANNUAL MUSHROOM HIKE WITH GREG HOVANDER

Saturday, November 4



Call or email Kathy to reserve your place on this hike, limited to 12 participants. Please include your phone number in case of last-minute changes.

We will hike through old growth forest on the Deception Falls trail off SR 2. Meet at the Sultan Park and Ride at 9:00 a.m. This will be an all-day hike with expert mycologist and pharmacist Greg Hovander. Greg is a walking encyclopedia of mycological knowledge, from identification of hundreds of fungal species, to medicinal qualities, to nutrition and cooking methods. We'll proceed at a leisurely pace at first, locating and learning about all types of fungi.

Trip leader: Kathy Johnson, [360-659-7252](tel:360-659-7252) or forest@pilchuckaudubon.org ✧

UPCOMING EVENTS, CLASSES, and FESTIVALS farther afield

Compiled by Rick Brauer

Scavengers and Bluegrass, Eagles and Ski Bowls, Cabaret and Horror Movies, Rails and Rice: this month's theme seems to be "strange bedfellows". Enjoy the autumn colors!

Birdfest & Bluegrass

October 6-8

Ridgefield, WA

Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge bring you this unique 3-day event exploring wildlife and music. The festival's official emblem is a vulture playing a banjo! Canoe trips and Bluegrass music: deliver yourself to Ridgefield and squeal with delight. <https://ridgefieldfriends.org/events/birdfest-bluegrass/>

Bridger Raptor Festival

October 6-8

Bozeman, MT

This Bozeman, Montana, festival centers on the largest known Golden Eagle migration in the United States. Since 1991, a raptor migration count has taken place every fall at the Bridger Bowl ski area in the Gallatin National Forest just north of the city. This year, the fest kicks off with a showing of the BAFTA-nominated film “The Eagle Huntress”. <http://www.bridgerraptorfest.org/>

Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden Bird Festival

October 7-8

Coral Gables, FL

Are you sick of left-coast birds? You can pretty much be certain that you won't see any birds from Western Washington at this Miami-area garden's autumn bird soiree. Different plants, too! <http://www.fairchildgarden.org/bird-festival>

Movie Night: “The Birds”

October 27

Edmonds, WA

Just in time for Halloween! The Edmonds Center for the Arts presents a special showing of Alfred Hitchcock's 1963 classic film. You'll never turn your back to a gull (or a crow for that matter) again. <http://www.edmondscenterforthearts.org/events/eca-film-cabaret-the-birds-1963>

Yellow Rails and Rice Festival

November 1-5

Jennings, LA

YRARE calls itself “A festival like no other”. (They also call themselves YRARE, which is a festival acronym like no other). The Yellow Rails and Rice Festival is designed with fun in mind; its primary goal is to provide participants a unique venue to view Yellow Rails while at the same time bringing birders and farmers together to realize the value to birds of the area's “working wetlands”.

[https://www.snowyegretenterprises.com/Snowy Egret Enterprises/Yellow Rails %26 Rice Festival.html](https://www.snowyegretenterprises.com/Snowy_Egret_Enterprises/Yellow_Rails_%26_Rice_Festival.html) ✧

BACKYARD BIRDING HIGHLIGHTS

by Mara Price, Sightings Coordinator

July 26, 2017 to August 25, 2017

Swallows sightings are really down this year. I usually see them all lining the wires along 100th Street in August, but not this year. At least some were spotted by Carole and Larry Beason.

Carole and Larry Beason reported a large number of swallows near their home at Lake Bosworth. They listed 30 Barn Swallow and 19 Violet-green Swallow over the lake. They also listed 2 Bald Eagle over the lake, 35 Brewer's Blackbird, 8 Mallard Duck on the lake, 2 Common Raven over the road, an Osprey, 3 Red-breasted Nuthatch, 28 Red-winged Blackbird, 5 Spotted Towhee, 2 Turkey Vulture over the road, a Western Tanager, and 2 Muscovy Duck, for a total species count of 34.

Debbie Dern, who reports from Snohomish, was able to report only 6 species this month. Her report included 3 Anna's Hummingbird, a Pileated Woodpecker, a Rufous Hummingbird, 2 American Goldfinch, a Golden-crowned Sparrow, and 3 Black-capped Chickadee.

Reporting from Mukilteo, Hilka Egtvedt listed a Cooper's Hawk, 2 California Quail, a Rufous Hummingbird, 2 Pileated Woodpecker, 4 Black-capped Chickadee, a Western Tanager, 3 Black-headed Grosbeak, a White-crowned Sparrow, 6 American Crow, 5 House Finch, 3 Purple Finch, and 3 American Goldfinch, for a total species count of 21.

Kriss Erickson's report from Everett listed 7 American Robin, 5 Steller's Jay, 4 Song Sparrow, 12 Northwestern Crow, 3 Mallard Duck, 12 Black-capped Chickadee, a Hairy Woodpecker, 25 Bushtit, 2 Northern Flicker, 18 European Starling, 2 Lincoln's Sparrow, 5 Anna's Hummingbird, and 8 Canada Goose, for a total species count of 21.

Reporting from Stanwood, Mary Sinker listed 15 American Goldfinch including several fledglings, 11 Anna's Hummingbird, 5 Barn Swallow, 2 Brown Creeper, 2 Brown-headed Cowbird (1 likes to sit on a horse's back), 2 Cedar Waxwing, 4 Downy Woodpecker, 2 Killdeer in the pasture, 20 Mourning Dove, 2 Olive-sided Flycatcher, 2 Pileated Woodpecker, a Red-breasted Sapsucker, a Sharp-shinned Hawk, 12 Steller's Jay, and 2 Wilson's Warbler, for a total species count of 35.

My report from Marysville included 5 American Crow, 3 American Goldfinch, 4 Black-capped Chickadee, 2 Dark-eyed Junco, 9 Mourning Dove, 5 Northern Flicker, 2 Downy Woodpecker, 3 Spotted Towhee, 3 Song Sparrow, a Great Horned Owl in the woods, 5 Steller's Jay (I think they live in my backyard; they are there from morning to night), a Red-breasted Nuthatch, 2 Purple Finch, and 5 House Finch (including 3 juveniles), for a total species count of 20.

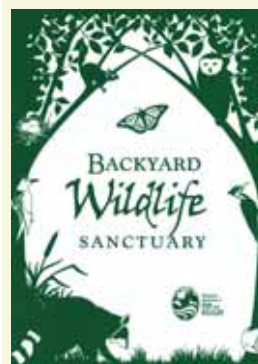
If you are interested in participating in our Backyard Birding count, please email me at pricemara1@gmail.com or leave a message on my cell phone at (425) 750-8125. ✧

Don't Forget to Certify Your Yard!

Jed Holmes, PAS Everett Backyard Habitat Coordinator

The Backyard Habitat Program is winding down, and we are hopeful about reaching our milestone of 200 yards certified by the end of the year. If you haven't yet started on this, please download the application from the PAS website or WDFW website. It's a self-certification process; by participating and posting your yard sign, you can help generate more interest in habitat creation and protection in your community.

As a part of this program, Pilchuck Audubon Society is supporting the creation of a



demonstration wildlife garden that is beginning to take shape at Everett Community College. This project is particularly interesting in that it involves a substantial lawn conversion component, where grass is being turned under and replaced by native plants and trees; it

will even include a nurse log and an old snag. The Snohomish Conservation District is also supporting this project. We will be posting pictures and updates on the PAS website.

If you are committed to getting your yard certified, we have a limited number of native plants left to help you enhance your habitat, including salmonberries, thimbleberries, mountain ash, salal, and Oregon grape. These are available free of charge. Please contact me with any questions you have: habitat@pilchuckaudubon.org; 360-421-8423. Hope to see you at the October program meeting! ✧



Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary certification sign near Howarth Park.

Pilchuck Audubon Society
 1429 Avenue D, PMB 198
 Snohomish, WA 98290-1742



**Pilchuck Audubon Society
 Membership Information**

Support your local Audubon chapter by becoming a member. PAS dues are tax deductible (consult your tax professional for details). The PAS tax ID number is 91-6183664.

- New Member \$28
- Renewal \$28
- Lifetime Member \$1,000
 - 10 monthly payments of \$100
 - 4 quarterly payments of \$250
 - 1 payment of \$1,000
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 My employer's gift-matching form is enclosed with my contribution

Make checks payable to **Pilchuck Audubon Society**

Mail to: Pilchuck Audubon Society
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Send me these via e-mail (check all that apply & include your e-mail address above):

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- Program Announcements
- Action Alerts

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