



CONSERVATION ACHIEVEMENT RECOGNITION FOR THE FLATHEAD'S CITIZENRY: THE INVINCIBLE, INTRACTABLE MAYRE FLOWERS

Ask yourself... what would the Flathead Valley look like today if we did not have our very own Mayre Flowers working so tirelessly, effectively, and passionately, on behalf of all Flathead Valley citizenry over the last 35 years? Don't answer that question just yet. Join us on an awe-inspiring trip through the last four decades with Mayre and then ponder that question. We are confident that you will come to the same conclusion as Flathead Audubon: she is the epitome of the type of individual for whom this Conservation Achievement Recognition was created. There is no question that her work has made a significant difference in all of our lives.

Mayre was born outside of Atlanta, Georgia. She moved with her family to South Korea when she was 13 and lived there for five years. She returned to the U.S. to attend college at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, graduating from there in 1972 with a BA and secondary teaching certification. Mayre and her husband then moved to the Flathead in 1977 and built their home in the woods south of Tally Lake. They were one of the first landowners to place a conservation easement on their property with the Flathead Land Trust. While pursuing many community activities described below, Mayre also found time to earn a Masters Degree in Education and Curriculum Development from the U of Montana in 1989.

Mayre's bent for youth education and her influence in the Flathead began in the early 1980s when she started "Children for Wildlife", a wildlife-oriented

youth service club that was actually led by the kids.

With the help of their parents, the children designed their own wildlife projects, worked with local resource staff, and then implemented various projects together, such as building the first loon nesting platform in Montana, organizing a workshop on wolves at Lone Pine (this was the 1980s!), and counting sheep (real ones) on Wild Horse Island. The program was so well organized and impressive, it attracted attention from the National

Wildlife Federation who then helped create a PBS documentary on the program. Not long after starting Children For Wildlife, Mayre developed the "Young Naturalist's Program" curriculum for the Glacier Institute and then began to lead these week-long residential programs during the summer at Big Creek for students ranging from

elementary to high school.

Mayre is probably best known for her leadership and contributions to Citizens for a Better Flathead (CBF), a grass roots, non-profit community organization whose tag line is: "Working to Keep the Flathead Special Forever." Mayre was a founding member of CBF when it first opened its doors in 1992 and later hired its first staff person (Jan Metzmaker) for its Whitefish office. In 1995, CBF hired its first Director, Richard Cohen. Mayre became CBF's first Program Director. Their office is now located in Kalispell. At that time, it was clear that rapid growth and development, which directly affect water, air, land, transportation,

continued on page 3



Mayre raised two children here and now enjoys introducing four grandchildren to the wonders of the Flathead. A quote by Mayre's desk reads, "The best way to help predict the future is to help create it."

APRIL FLATHEAD AUDUBON CALENDAR

Monday, April 13, 2015. 7 PM. Flathead Audubon General Meeting, Gateway Community Center, US Hwy 2 West, Kalispell. See page 3.

Monday, April 6, 2015. 6 PM. FAS Board of Directors Meeting, 295 3rd Ave EN. All welcome.

Saturday, April 25, 2015. Wings, Tails, Tracks and Trails. See page 6.

Saturday, April 26, 2015. Mission Valley and Montana Waterfowl Foundation. See page 6.

BIRD OF THE MONTH

by Ben Long

THE BARRED OWL: WHO COOKS FOR YOU?

The first Barred Owl I ever saw appeared when I was sitting along the edge of a meadow, waiting for an elk to appear.

No elk did. But I did watch a brown, medium-sized owl swoop silently from the timber shadows, chasing a chipmunk as it spiraled down a trunk of a Christmas tree sized fir.

The chipmunk got away. I kissed the back of my hand, making a squeaking sound. In a flash, the owl swooped back at me, silently landing on a branch a foot or two from my head, as if pondering whether my mop of hair was prey, or not.

Up close, I saw a handsome, brownish owl, about the size and shape of a football. Barred Owls are named for the "barring" or horizontal streaks of dark feathers on their breasts. (They are also called "crazy owls" and "laughing owls," but more on that later.)

Barred Owls have no feathered tufts on their heads like the so-called "horned" owls. Barred Owls are midrange in size between Montana's smallest owls, the Saw-whet and Northern Pygmy Owl, and Montana's biggest owls, the Great Horned or Great Grey owls. Barred Owls also have distinctive brown eyes, while most other owls have yellow eyes. A yellow bill punctuates the middle of the Barred Owl's facial disk.

Barred Owl behavior also sets them apart. More than any other Montana owl, Barred Owls are likely to hoot during broad daylight. I've heard them do that, for example, at Ross Creek Cedars south of Troy and Estes Lake near Bigfork. Even so, Barred Owls are primarily nocturnal.

The hoot of the Barred Owl is distinct from that of other owls. It is sometimes translated into "who cooks for you?" although, technically speaking, the owl does not care in the least.

Barred Owls also have a secondary call that I can only describe as the sound you would expect from a drunken monkey. The first time I heard this, in the woods near Creston, I would have thought it was some deranged primate, except I was on an Audubon field trip full of owl experts. This sound is probably why Barred Owls have also been called "crazy" or "laughing owls."



Barred Owl pairs are loyal to each other and to a territory. Mated pairs often nest in a hollow tree and may return to that nest, year after year. Females lay 4-6 white eggs, and both take turns incubating them about 28 days. (Source *Audubon Society Encyclopedia of North American Birds*, John K. Terres.)

People who are good at mimicking the "who cooks for you" sound can often lure a Barred Owl quite close during this nesting and rearing period. The call is bold and often repeated once.

Barred Owls are the same genus as the Spotted Owl and they look similar. (The dark markings on the front of a Spotted Owl are in a spotted, not barred, pattern.) Barred Owls live in Montana, whereas Spotted Owls don't.

Barred Owls and Spotted Owls have markedly different choices in habitat. Barred Owls happily live in forests that have been logged, burned or are mixed with meadows or pastures. Spot-

ted Owls are famously dependent on deep, dark old growth forests of the Pacific Northwest. As those forests have disappeared, so has the Spotted Owl.

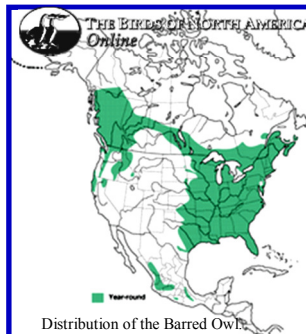
Conversely, the Barred Owl is doing quite well, expanding its range, in spite of chainsaws. Like skunks and coyotes, the meddling hand of man suits the Barred Owl just fine. This is one more piece of bad news for Spotted Owls, as Barred Owls have expanded their range to the point they are displacing their more sensitive cousins.

In Montana, Barred Owls are primarily found in the piney forests west of the Continental Divide.

Interestingly, Barred Owls are most often associated with eastern states. They are found from Florida to Maine, and in the forested Midwest States, as well as some parts of Mexico. The only western states to have Barred Owls are Montana and the Pacific Northwest. They are, however, found across the

southern tier of Canadian provinces. (Source fieldguidemontana.gov)

Montana is an owl-rich environment, with 14 of the 19 owl species found in North America. (Source: Cornell University) They are all part of what makes Montana such a rich place to live. This is true of the curious and handsome Barred Owl.



April Program

WILDLIFE SURPRISES IN URBAN MONTANA

Kalispell outdoor writer and naturalist Ben Long will present a photo-essay "Wildlife Surprises in Urban Montana" at our April meeting. Ben and his wife, Karen Nichols, have been watching and photographing wildlife in and around Kalispell's Lawrence Park for more than ten years. Ben will share what wildlife they have discovered lurking only a few blocks from the traffic of US Highways 2 and 93.



Ben has written books and magazine articles about Montana's wildlife for more than 20 years. His byline appears in publications, such as, *Montana Outdoors*, *Montana Quarterly*, *Outdoor Life* and others. He is Senior Program Director for Resource Media in Kalispell. Come and be surprised with us at 7 PM on Monday, April 13, in the United Way Conference Room at the Gateway Community Center, off US Highway 2 West in Kalispell.

continued from page 1 **Mayre Flowers**

waste, costs, taxes, private lands, and quality of life, were overwhelming local government. The Flathead had been discovered and it seemed that the public's participation in decisions affecting our future was completely lagging behind. CBF was formed to increase citizen participation in three community aspects: Land Use Planning, Waste Reduction and Recycling, and Supporting a Strong Local Economy.

Mayre became CBF's executive director in 2005 and over the last 20+ years, she has helped solidify CBF as strong and important community player, gained a huge respect from local citizenry and local governments, and helped change the interactions between local governments and the public from a traditional approach to a much more engaged approach. As Mayre explained to us, "CBF has been involved in almost every major land use decision and many, many, smaller ones as well. We research and analyze proposed policy changes or development proposals and identify best practices and pros and cons of a proposal. We often meet with residents most impacted by proposals and seek to understand their concerns and to help them get involved in providing input at hearings. Next we share this information with decision makers and encourage active citizen participation." Looking back, she adds, "Our focus has always been on not should we grow, but how. The small town character, world-class landscapes, and clean water that define our valley are the Flathead's greatest assets. Our economic future and our children's future all depend on us working respectfully together for a future that retains these assets."

Through CBF, Mayre has maintained a laser-like focus on innumerable efforts by cities and Flathead County to adopt and modify Neighborhood Plans, Growth Policies, and Zoning efforts and help CBF's capacity to reach about 2500 citizens around the County. She has also organized/supported countless public awareness activities such as: leading efforts to stencil messages on storm drains across the

county saying "Dump No Waste, Drains to Stream", hosting a three day workshop for decision makers on "Planning for Clean Water" or more recently a workshop on diverting septic waste from land application in the Flathead to turning it into an energy source at the landfill. CBF hosts regular community events including candidate forums, annual Earth Day events, and presentations by bringing in nationally recognized experts on topics like planning for walkable communities, ensuring growth pays its way with impact fees, or tools for preserving agricultural lands through transfer of development rights programs. She has provided the leadership for, establishing the Flathead Conservation Roundtable (collaborative meeting of the Valley's conservation organizations), completing numerous studies including a Flathead Cost of Community Services Study, a statewide review of Transportation Policies and Choices, and she helped found the Montana Smart Growth Coalition working statewide with groups on growth issues and organizing workshops known as "Big Sky or Big Sprawl?"

CBF has also continuously monitored state and local billboard and scenic highway legislation, followed development plans of DNRC lands just north of Kalispell, and increased public awareness of other big developments that could have irreversible effects on our environment such as the Valley Dome, Beaver Bay, Glacier Mall, North Shore Ranch, and policies like streamside set backs that shape how growth impacts our valley's rivers. Under Mayre's guidance, CBF helped sponsor "Repowering the Flathead," a project led by Lauren Casey (yes, daughter of Dan and Susannah Casey) to look at how the community could reduce power consumption and develop alternative energy options.

One program that is very close to Mayre's heart and one that sets the Flathead apart from all other Montana communities is the WasteNot program. In 1993, Mayre joined forces with Fern and Richard

continued on page 4

continued from page 3 **Mayre Flowers**

Cohen to develop community and youth-oriented educational programs about recycling and waste reduction. This program established a unique collaboration between CBF, Flathead County Solid Waste District, and the Flathead Valley Community College's Service Learning Program. WasteNot now provides in-class, hands-on, presentation to over 2,000 to all these accomplishments, Mayre and CBF have helped establish Montana's first students each year. In addition, permanent programs for the systematic collection/safe disposal of household and business hazardous waste, annual collection and recovery E-wastes (which now are accepted year-round at Pacific Steel and Recycling and several other businesses), and free drop-off collection boxes for unwanted/unused prescription medicines located at the County Sheriff and other police offices that help prevent drug abuse and protect ground water by discouraging flushing such products down the drain. Recently, in collaboration with the County, recycling programs at local green box sites have become more cost effective and recycling collec-

tion more simple for sorting: one bin for mixed metals and mixed plastics (only #1 and #2), one bin for mixed paper including magazines, junk mail, and office paper, and one bin for cardboard, cereal box paper board, and brown paper bags. There is no question that these programs have dramatically increased public awareness of our collective waste, reduced our valley's risk of toxic pollution, and avoided the usual high costs associated with inadequate landfill room and pollution of ground water.

We cannot thank Mayre enough for her thousands of hours attending evening and early morning public meetings, her constant search for accurate data and information, and her abilities to share all of this with us openly and publically. How many of us could do this for one year, let alone decades? It is sobering to think that Mayre may want to someday retire after a lifetime of public service. To sum this all up, we just can't imagine a Flathead Valley without Mayre and we can't imagine a future without CBF. Congratulations and thanks Mayre!

Conservation Education Corner

by Patti Mason

The FVCC Senior Institute class is in full swing with a maximum enrollment this year. Hundreds of 3rd-8th grade students participated in the two local science fairs as well. Flathead Audubon gifted one amazing fourth grader, Sydney Mann from Glacier Gateway, with our Naturalist's Award and one of our awesome phenology calendars.

Our education trunks got a makeover in preparation for the spring. These boxes contain teaching materials like books, photos, puppets, bird mounts, CDs and lots of activities and lessons. Many teachers use them to introduce birds to their K-12 grade stu-

dents every year. They featured prominently at Science Day for K-8 at Bissell School last month and at two Head Start schools. This month, I will celebrate Arbor Day at Lawrence Park with local third graders and Earth Day at Depot Park in Whitefish.

Flathead Forestry Expo is on the horizon, and I am looking for help to staff the wildlife station there. If you would like to spend some time outdoors sharing your love of birds with enthusiastic fifth graders, contact me at auduboneducator@gmail.com.



Beauty of Birds

by Patti Mason

In April, we will be offering the adult education class "Beauty of Birds" at Flathead High School. Learn about our local birds through a series of workshops and field study. Topics include: general bird anatomy, habitat and behavior, the importance of birds and how to identify birds by sounds, markings, and silhouettes. Class Dates: April 8, 15, 22, 29, 2015. Students need to mail in or drop off a \$10 registration fee. Checks

should be made out to School District 5, mailed to Flathead High School, 644 4th Ave West, Kalispell, MT 59901, Attn: Debbie. She will send out a confirmation letter with class information on it.



John Winnie

George Darrow Remembered

George Darrow, 90, died February 25, 2015, in Kalispell. He had been a geologist and was a former Montana legislator, farmer and gallery owner in Bigfork. He was a pioneer in Montana Environmental Policy and Wilderness Advocacy. In 2013 he was awarded the Conservation Achievement Recognition by Flathead Audubon.



June 5-7, 2015
Helena, Montana

Montana Audubon's Annual Bird Festival

The annual Bird Festival is fast approaching. You should have already received your registration brochure, so please register early by mailing the registration page or by going online at www.mtaudubon.org. Rooms have been blocked at the Red Lion Colonial Inn. Call 1-406-443-2100 and mention you're with Montana Audubon Bird Festival to get the rate, or book online with the booking code MONT0604.

Each year Montana Audubon recognizes individuals who work for the conservation and protection of birds and other wildlife by presenting Awards at the Saturday evening banquet. We are currently seeking nominations in the following categories: Lifetime Achievement Award, Educator of the Year, Conservationist of the Year, Citizen Scientist of the Year, and Special Achievement Award. To make a nomination, download a nomination form from www.mtaudubon.org/about/awards.html. Nominations are due at the office by May 22, 2015. Mail completed forms to Montana Audubon, PO Box 595, Helena MT 59624.

CHIRPS & SQUAWKS

Highlights from March 2015 Board Meeting:

- ◇ Steve Hoffman and David Cronenwett from Montana Audubon reviewed their programs and activities.
- ◇ Announced the receipt of a \$1500 grant from Soroptomists and other financial actions including a \$1000 donation from Flathead Audubon to MT Audubon.
- ◇ Heard from the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area Weed Committee that they are developing a more active weed control plan involving mechanical, biological, and chemical controls.
- ◇ Reviewed and approved construction plans and costs for the Wiley Dike Observation Blind.
- ◇ Discussed and approved the Education Strategic Plan.
- ◇ Approved a contract with Patti Mason for work on the Flathead Audubon website.

West Valley Naturalists

"What is growing in those Yellow Fields?" is the title of the next West Valley Naturalist Program on Thursday, April 9. It will begin at 7 PM in the Science Room of West Valley School, 2290 Farm to Market Road. Mark Lalum, General Manager of CHS in Kalispell, will provide information about the canola crop that is gaining an agricultural foothold in the Flathead.

How and why it is grown here and the way it is processed after harvest will be discussed. Emily Cleveland, a student at West Valley School will also present the results of her award winning science fair project on the effect of road deicers on soil organisms. For more information, contact Linda DeKort at 755-3704.

CELEBRATING EARTH DAY IN THE FLATHEAD

Earth Day 2015 Celebration, a festival of food, music, and student presentations, will be held on **Saturday, April 25, 10AM-2PM at Depot Park in Whitefish**. It will feature up to 50 activity and information booths. The theme of the event is centered on four pillars: **Grow It, Fix It, Save It, and Live It.**

Gardening for the Birds! will be the topic of Flathead Audubon's booth. Stop by for information about how to make your backyard more bird friendly. Learn how to create habitat that your whole family can enjoy year round, and get answers to all your questions about bird-friendly gardening.



The celebration will wrap up with an evening of music and photos presented by the **Crown of the Continent Choir**, from 6-8PM at the O'Shaughnessy Center in Whitefish.

This will be a **Zero Waste event**. The organizers are working with vendors and activity booths to ensure everything distributed at the event is locally recyclable, compostable, or reusable. Citizens for a Better Flathead and Seasons of Change (a group of local businesses and organizations focused on environmental stewardship) are partnering to host this Earth Day Celebration.

TAX TIME ALREADY

Be sure to check the "Watchable Wildlife" box on your Montana tax form to support our feathered friends!

SPRING/SUMMER FIELD TRIPS FOR YOU!

All FAS field trips are free and open to the public and are geared for all ages and levels of field experience. They are led by area biologists, retired professionals, and some of the best birders in the region. For all Field Trips, dress for the weather, bring binoculars or spotting scope if you have them, wear sturdy footwear, and drive and pull off the road safely. All drivers must have their own vehicle insurance. For more information, contact Kathy Ross, 837-3738, or Gael Bissell, 261-2255, or the individual field trip leader listed below. Also, a free brochure, "Birding Hotspots of the Flathead" is available at the FAS general meetings and on www.FlatheadAudubon.org.



Birds and Mammals--McWenegar Slough to the Flathead River. Saturday Evening, April 18. Join Pete Fisher exploring the protected marshes, ponds and forests of this major wildlife corridor, home to 20 species of mammals and 170 species of birds, including Trumpeter Swans, Sora, Virginia Rails, Great Horned Owls, along with river otters and beavers that could be present during this evening walk. Knee high rubber boots are recommended. The trip is limited to 15 people, so please contact Pete at 250-9624 or email fisherpete88@yahoo.com. Field trip will meet at 5 PM at the McWenegar Slough Fishing Access Site along Highway 35 east of Kalispell with a return around 7:30 PM.

Wings, Tails, Tracks and Trails at Owen Sowerwine Natural Area. Saturday, April 25, 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM. This field trip is co-sponsored by Montana Wilderness Association, Montana Audubon, and Flathead Audubon. Join professional wildlife tracker and field ornithologist Brian Baxter for a full day of spring birding with focus on birds of prey! We'll discuss habitat components, terrestrial species occurring in the area, and tips on tracks and sign. We will also cover distinguishing characteristics of eagles, hawks, owls, harriers, herons, dippers, waterfowl, and swans. Our hike will take us into optimum habitats, where we will look for signs of presence, tracks, and optimistically observe birds of prey and other species. Meet at 9:00 AM at the Montessori School off Willow Glen Rd.; we will wrap up at approximately 4 PM. Please come prepared for a full day moderate hike, bring lunch, good footwear, rain gear, camera, binoculars, spotting scopes, smiles and curiosity! To register or for more information, email Amy Robinson, MWA: arobinson@wildmontana.org or call Brian: 406-291-2154. You can also register at www.wildmontana.org (go to wilderness walks/winter walks).

Mission Valley and Montana Waterfowl Foundation. Sunday April 26. Join Janene Lichtenberg and Amy Cilimborg of Montana Audubon to learn more about birds and conservation initiatives in the Mission Valley. First stop will be the Montana Waterfowl Foundation where we will take a walk through the spruce fen forest and visit Trumpeter Swans and other waterfowl in the aviaries. From there we will tour some of the surrounding habitats where we should find a variety of bird species. Meet at the large Salish Kootenai College parking lot in Pablo, corner of Highway 93 and Silver Fox Lane at 9 AM. We plan to return around 1 PM. Parking during the field trip is limited, so carpooling from Kalispell and SKC is recommended. To sign up or to get more information, contact Janene by email at janene.lichtenberg@skc.edu or call (406-212-5473).

Family Forestry Expo. Saturday, May 9. This is a traditional and wonderful outdoor program for all located at the Trumbull Creek Experimental Forest owned by Stoltze Land and Lumber Co. located northwest of Columbia Falls. This family-oriented event features a short forest walk through educational stations with demonstrations and hands-on activities that allow participants to learn about the important values of our forests from aquatics to loons, fiber to paper-making, and from tree growth to rehabilitated owls and eagles. You can try your hand at using a cross-cut saw or bring home a seedling for your back yard. The Expo will demonstrate use of logging equipment and the packing of a mule string as well as provide a free logging camp lunch between 10:30 AM and 1:30 PM. For more information, go to <http://www.familyforestryexpo.org/> or contact Teresa Wenum at 406-758-5218.

Bike and Bird the Smith Lake Area. Saturday, May 16, from 9 AM to noon. Join us for a bike and bird trip in the Smith Lake Area hosted by Flathead Land Trust, Flathead Audubon, Flathead River to Lake Initiative, Rails to Trails, and Bike Saturdays. We will bike about 8.5 miles around the Smith Lake Waterfowl Production Area highlighting conservation projects that expand the protection of the wetland complex and important migratory bird habitat. Craig Hoenberger of Flathead Audubon will be the bird expert to help lead this trip. We will meet for the trip at the Kila Pub, allowing us to end the bike loop there for lunch. Relax after the bike ride at the Kila Pub on their deck overlooking the wetlands with pizza for \$5 each and a beer or drink of your choice from the cash bar. Because we will be traveling on both paved and gravel roads we recommend mountain or fat tire

continued on page 7

continued from page 6, Field Trips

bikes which can be rented from Wheaton's (Kalispell) or Glacier Cyclery (Whitefish) for the day. Wear a bike helmet and appropriate clothing and bring water and binoculars. Please RSVP to Laura Katzman of Flathead Land Trust at 752-8293 or lkatzman@bigsky.net.

COONSA CREEK FIELD TRIP: Birds, Bears and Native Plants. Saturday, May 23, 7:00 AM - 2:00 PM. Jointly sponsored by Flathead Audubon and the Flathead Chapter of the Native Plant Society, this field trip will be lead by wildlife biologist, Steve Gniadek, and botanist, Betty Kuropat. We will bird the rich riparian habitat along Coonsa Creek near the Firebrand Pass trailhead and look for wildflowers on the ridge. Willow wetlands and aspen groves, contrasting with open, rocky talus east of trail, create a large diversity of flora and fauna. Meet at the Columbia Heights Park N Ride at 7:00 AM to car-pool up to Firebrand Pass Trailhead (drive takes about 1 to 1.5 hours). We will return to Park N Ride around 2:00 PM. To sign up and get more information, contact Steve at 892-7406.

The Annual Warbler Weekend at Tally Lake. Friday afternoon through Sunday, May 29-31. Come join FAS at the Tally Lake Campground for an extraordinary weekend of birding and relaxing. The pavilion campsite at the campground has been reserved for the weekend and camping is **FREE**, courtesy of FAS. Throughout the weekend, we will be focusing on bird identification, birding by ear, and photography. See page 9 for more details. Call Jill or Mike Fanning at 862-8070 if you have questions about this outstanding adventure into the world of birds.

TOBACCO VALLEY BIRDING. Saturday, June 6, 8:00 AM—noon. Join wildlife biologist Lewis Young to tour portions of the Tobacco Valley near Eureka and search for species such as Lewis' Woodpecker and Long-billed Curlew as well as visit a riparian area along the Tobacco River where a host of species are expected including Black-headed Grosbeaks, Lazuli Buntings, Catbirds, various warblers, and many other species. Hiking 1-2 miles on easy terrain is expected. We will meet near Eureka at 8:00 AM and expect to be finished around noon. Contact Lewis Young at 406-889-3492 to sign up and get details.

LAWRENCE PARK BIRD WALK. Sunday, June 7, 8:00-10:00 AM. Kalispell's Lawrence Park is home to a wide variety of migratory and resident songbirds, woodpeckers, small raptors, and water birds. Join amateur naturalist Karen Nichols and wildlife biologist Jane Adams for a two hour bird walk. We welcome families with young children, those who may have difficulty walking or driving long distances, and those with busy schedules who want to learn about our birds and their habitats. Bring binoculars but if you do not have them, we will provide some for your use. The walk will follow the main paths along the Stillwater River to the north end of Lawrence Park and back. Meet at the Lawrence Park Picnic Shelter. To sign up or get more information, contact Karen Nichols at karenben@montanasky.net or 406-261-6230.

COMMON LOONS AND LOON CHICKS. Saturday, June 20, 8:30 AM—2:00 PM. Join Loon Ranger from MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks to see recently hatched common loon chicks and adults on several local nesting lakes. Actual destinations will depend on timing and success of this year's loon hatch. Trip is ideal for people of all ages and young families. Walking may be necessary for short distances and down hills or trails to observation points. The Loon Ranger intern will provide an excellent spotting scope and information about northwest Montana loons, loon behaviors and loon interactions with each other and humans, the result of years of banding efforts, as well as other little known facts about our local loons. Meet at 8:30 AM at MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks, 490 North Meridian Road in Kalispell. Bring lunch, binoculars, warm clothes, boots and rain gear. Return will be between 12:30 and 2:00 PM, depending on distance to the lakes. To sign up or for more information, contact Gael Bissell at 406-751-4580 or gbissell@mt.gov.

LOST TRAIL NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE. Sunday, June 21, 8:30 AM—2:00 PM. Join refuge wildlife biologist Beverly Skinner and tour the incredible wetlands and grasslands of this hidden jewel west of Kalispell. See restored Dahl Lake with nesting Trumpeter Swans, Black Terns and an abundance of waterfowl as well as many bird species associated with Palouse prairie, riparian/wetland, and larch/pine forest habitats of the 9,000+ acre Lost Trail National Wildlife Refuge. The trip should include seeing one of the Refuge's rarest plants, the threatened Spalding's catchfly, and finding/viewing boreal toads. We will drive and walk along some of the refuge's closed roads with short hikes to the best viewing sites. Carpoolers should meet at Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Regional Office, 490 N. Meridian Rd. in Kalispell between 7:00-7:15 AM and carpool to the Refuge Headquarters, about an hour+ west of Kalispell. Or you can meet at the Lost Trail Refuge Headquarter between 8:15-8:30 AM. We will return to Kalispell early afternoon. Bring snacks, foul weather gear, and binoculars. For more information and to sign up for the field trip, contact Beverly at 406-858-2286 or beverly_skinner@fws.gov.

continued on page 8

continued from page 7 **Field Trips**

MONTANA WILD WINGS RECOVERY CENTER. Sunday, June 14, 10:00 AM – noon. Get close and personal with eagles, hawks, owls, and other injured or recovering birds at the only federally permitted rehabilitation facility in the Flathead, the Montana Wild Wings Recovery Center. We will tour the recently remodeled facility, located at 37 Panoramic Drive off Highway 35 east of Kalispell, and visit with “ambassador” raptors commonly used for education. You will see how these birds are fed, exercised, cared for, and eventually released (if possible) and learn how this organization serves the wildlife of the Flathead Valley. Families and people of all ages are welcome. The field trip is limited to 25 individuals; to sign up, contact Beth Watne 406-250-1070. Due to parking limitations onsite, we will meet at the Shopko parking lot on Highway 2 east of Kalispell and carpool from there.

GOING BATTY! Saturday, August 15, 8:30 PM -11:00 PM. Join wildlife biologists Lewis Young and Lisa Bate to learn more about the bats in the Flathead Valley. We will go to a site with known bat activity where we will have electronic equipment to detect the ultrasonic calls of bats flying overhead and have mist nets set up to capture bats for closer inspection. Lewis and Lisa will demonstrate the equipment, handle bats captured in mist nets, and talk about the amazing adaptations bats have for navigating, catching food, and hibernating. Participants will not be allowed to touch or handle bats. Headlamps or flashlights are necessary and come with suitable clothing for the evening temperatures and possibly mosquitoes as the day cools. We will meet at 8:30 PM in the lower Flathead Valley area and travel to the site, with plans to be finished around 11 PM. Call Lewis Young (889-3492) to sign up and get details on the meeting site.

WEST VALLEY SANDHILL CRANE BIKE/WATCHING. Saturday, September 19, 4:00-7:00 PM. Come learn more about sand hill cranes around many unique West Valley wetlands and see up to 100 of these magnificent birds with Flathead Land Trust, Flathead Audubon, the West Valley Naturalist's Association, and Bike Saturdays. Meet at 121 Crane Drive (off Clarke Dr. between Stillwater Rd. and West Valley Dr., the home of a Flathead Land Trust board member and then bike about 7.5 miles on mostly gravel roads to view these spectacular birds, standing four feet tall with a wingspan over six feet, at close range. Bruce Tannehill of Flathead Audubon will be the bird expert to help lead this trip. After biking (6:00 PM), you can view the cranes from the home, enjoy hors d'oeuvres, and socialize as the sun sets. Come for the bike tour and/or the evening crane watch. We recommend mountain or fat tire bikes which can be rented from Wheaton's (Kalispell) or Glacier Cyclery (Whitefish) for the day. Wear a bike helmet and appropriate clothing and bring water and binoculars. Please RSVP to and obtain maps from Laura Katzman of Flathead Land Trust at 752-8293 or lkatzman@bigsky.net.

MAY FLATHEAD AUDUBON MEETING

Monday, May 11, 2015

Whitefish Community Center, 121 Second Street,
Whitefish.

Doors Open 5:00 PM, Potluck Dinner 6:00 PM,
Meeting Begins 7:00 PM.

Be sure to arrive early enough to look over
and bid on silent auction items! Officers and Board
Members will be elected (see page 9).

Program: Steve Hoffman, Executive Director,
Montana Audubon.

SILENT AUCTION

It's Coming! - The annual Silent Auction at
the Flathead Audubon May Potluck. Now's the per-
fect time to gather all of the valuable “stuff” that you
might be able to live without. Popular items at past
Silent Auctions have been bird books, outdoor gear,
art work, live bedding plants, homemade pies and
cookies and bird houses and feeders of all kinds.
This is your opportunity to be a Primo Recycler!



FLATHEAD AUDUBON MISSION STATEMENT

THE FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY IS A LOCAL CHAPTER
OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY.



- ⇒ OUR MISSION IS TO CONSERVE BIRDS, WILDLIFE HABITAT, AND ECOSYSTEM DIVERSITY.
- ⇒ WE PROMOTE AWARENESS AND APPRECIATION OF THE NATURAL WORLD THROUGH EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND ADVOCACY PROGRAMS.
- ⇒ WE WORK WITH DIVERSE GROUPS AND AGENCIES TO ACHIEVE SOUND DECISIONS ON NATURAL RESOURCE ISSUES.
- ⇒ WHILE FOCUSING OUR EFFORTS IN NORTHWEST MONTANA, WE BELIEVE IN THE PROTECTION OF THE EARTH AND ALL OF ITS INHABITANTS.

WARBLER WEEKEND at TALLY LAKE

Friday afternoon through Sunday: May 29-31

Come join Flathead Audubon at the Tally Lake Campground for an extraordinary weekend of birding and relaxing. The pavilion campsite at the campground has been reserved for the weekend. Throughout the weekend, we will be focusing on bird identification, birding by ear, and photography. This is an ideal time of year to find a wide variety of migrant and resident birds; most notable is that all of the warbler species which can be found in NW Montana are found here.

Plenty of other activities can be enjoyed at Tally Lake as well: you can bring canoes and kayaks, play volleyball or horseshoes, go hiking on one of the numerous trails found close to the campground, or bring board games. There is a covered pavilion for rainy weather.

Expert birders will be available to lead us around the campground. We are also looking for someone to give a lecture on a subject of general interest Saturday afternoon. We like to have an optional potluck meal Saturday evening around 6 PM. Please bring something to share if you want to join in. All other meals are up to you. Someone will show up Friday afternoon to get a fire going, scout the area and start creating a bird list. Bring camp chairs for sitting around the fire and firewood if you have them.

Cost of camping is **FREE**, courtesy of FAS. Just tell them at the gate that you are with Flathead Audubon at the pavilion. Contact Jill or Mike Fanning at 862-8070 or shrdlu@centurytel.net if you have questions about this outstanding adventure into the world of birds.

A Garden on Sylvan Drive—Integrating Native and Ornamental Plants in Home Landscapes

A presentation by Kathy Ross, will be featured at the April meeting of the Montana Native Plant Society. The meeting will be April 15, 2015, 7PM, at Teakettle Community Hall, Columbia Falls.

Kathy will share what she has learned from her 25 years of hands-on experience landscaping with and around native plants. From her experience and with a deep appreciation for native plants, Kathy will make suggestions on valuable native species to plant in home gardens, encourage leaving the native landscape when possible, and talk about what noninvasive ornamental plants to use with native gardens. "Deer proof" plants will NOT be discussed.

UPCOMING ELECTIONS

In May, FAS will elect the President, Vice President and several Director positions. It is not too early to start thinking about who you would like to see guide FAS for the near future. The person sitting next to you at the last meeting is a good choice, and the person sitting in your seat is also a good choice! If you know of

someone who would be a good leader, please contact Bob Lee (270-0371 or RML3@centurytel.net); the Nominations Committee will talk with them about roles and responsibilities and get them on the ballot. If you would like to be on the Nominations Committee, please contact Bob.

A FEW SNOW GOOSE FACTS

Cornell Lab of Ornithology

- The creamy white eggs of Snow Geese stain easily. People can sometimes tell what order the eggs were laid in, just by the color of the shells (the dirtiest shells belong to the oldest eggs).
- Snow Geese make epic journeys by air, but they are impressive on foot, too. Within the first three weeks of hatching, goslings may walk up to 50 miles with their parents from the nest to a more suitable brood-rearing area.
- Molting Snow Geese can outrun many predators.

Save the Date!

Join us on Tuesday,
July 28, 2015 for
Waterton-Glacier
Science & History Day!



This year's Science & History Day will take place at the West Glacier Community Building in Glacier National Park from 9:30 to 3:30 p.m. See you there!



Owen Sowerwine
NATURAL AREA



VOLUNTEER MONITORS NEEDED AT OWEN SOWERWINE NATURAL AREA

Volunteers are needed to make monitoring visits to the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area (OSNA) throughout this coming summer.

Here are **2 ways you can help**:

- 1. Take an OSNA Volunteer Monitoring Form** with you **whenever you visit OSNA**. Record what you see and hear, and mail the form to Rick Mace (address on form).
- 2. Do a scheduled monitoring visit.** Scheduled visits ensure we will get timely reports. Volunteers are still needed for:
May 16-31 June 1-15 June 16-30 July 16-31 August 1-15.
 The job is simple: Make one monitoring visit during the period you choose. Record your observations on a Volunteer Monitoring Form, and mail it to Rick.
THANK YOU to all who have already signed up to do a scheduled visit this summer!

For more information or to sign up for a scheduled visit, contact Linda Winnie (755-1406 or lindawin@centurytel.net). You can also sign up at FAS meetings. The OSNA Volunteer Monitoring form can be printed from the FAS website www.flatheadadubon.org or picked up at FAS meetings. A trail map that shows the places referred to on the form is also available on the FAS website and at FAS meetings. Or contact Linda if you want them emailed or mailed to you.



IS IT SPRING YET?



Time To Prepare For The Bears

Friday, March 07, 2014, MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Montana's hibernating black bears and grizzly bears will soon be stirring. Adult males usually emerge first from winter dens in mid-March. When bears emerge from their dens, they are physically depleted and food is a priority. Bears are often tempted to go where raccoons and domestic dogs are getting into garbage. If these animals are already causing problems nearby, consider it an early warning that food attractants are available and need to be removed.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks' bear experts stress that conflict prevention steps can greatly reduce the chances of attracting black bears and grizzly bears.

FWP recommends bear resistant bins in communities and on ranches; electric fence systems to protect bee yards and sheep bedding grounds; random redistribution of livestock carcasses each spring; and educational programs in schools and communities.

FWP's [Be Bear Aware](http://www.fwp.mt.gov) website at [fwp.mt.gov](http://www.fwp.mt.gov) is an easy way for homeowners and landowners to assess what they need to do now to prevent bear conflicts. Go there [for tips and tools](#) on obtaining and using bear spray, safe camping and hiking, access to bear resistant products and a guide to other items that attract bears to a property.

It's also time to empty your bird feeders!



defenders.org



"A land ethic, then, reflects the existence of an ecological conscience, and this in turn reflects a conviction of individual responsibility for the health of the land. Health is the capacity of the land for self-renewal. Conservation is our effort to understand and preserve this capacity."

[Aldo Leopold](#)



Thank You!

to those below who have made donations to Flathead Audubon through March 17, 2015.

Eagle

Whitefish Soroptimist Club

Merlin

Debra MacLaine



Do You eBird?

eBird is a free, web-based tool for sharing your bird observations, and is revolutionizing how citizen scientists contribute to our knowledge of birds. Currently, there are large geographic and species gaps within eBird for the state of Montana. To fill in these gaps, Kate Stone and Eric Rasmussen from MPG Ranch challenge you to share more of your observations. The goal is to promote and incentivize eBird use in Montana. There will be fun prizes for monthly challenges and the eBirder with the most species and most counties at the end of the year. We'll also share tips for how you can use eBird to learn more about birds in Montana and elsewhere. For more information, contact Kate and Eric at montanachallenge2015@mpgranch.com.

Old Wisconsin Bat

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

No, not your mother-in-law! Wisconsin researchers have discovered one of the oldest little brown bats ever recorded.



This male little brown bat was banded in April 1983 making it at least 32 years old in February 2015 when it was last recovered. There is no way to age bats after they reach adulthood (several months after birth), so this bat could have been a yearling born in the summer of 1982, or already several years old in 1983. The bat was banded at the same site as it was recovered.

Over the years, he has eaten a lot of insects. Assuming this bat has eaten its weight (6 grams) in insects every night during its active period for the past 32 years, it has consumed roughly 13,977,600 mosquito-sized insects.

The record for the oldest little brown bat in the wild is 35 years in Alberta, Canada. That bat was banded in 1975 and was recovered as recently as 2009. Of note, the oldest bat on record is a Brandt's myotis who was last recovered in Siberia at the age of 41.

SPECIAL GIFTS

I wish to help make Flathead Audubon's vision a reality. Here is my contribution to the continued success of our chapter.



- ☐ Eagle Donation, \$1000+
- ☐ Osprey Donation, \$500+
- ☐ Snowy Owl Donation, \$250+
- ☐ Merlin Donation, \$100+
- ☐ Kestrel Donation, \$50+
- ☐ My Own Vision, amount of my choice

The FAS activity which most interests me is:

- ☐ Education Programs
- ☐ Owen Sowerwine Natural Area
- ☐ Scholarships and Grants
- ☐ Field Trips and Outdoor Events

☐ I want my gift to recognize another:

In memory of _____

In honor of _____

Please send a notification of this gift to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

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☐ Please do not acknowledge my gift in the Pileated Post

Please make checks payable to:

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The Flathead Audubon Society is affiliated with Montana Audubon and the National Audubon Society. Flathead Audubon meets on the second Monday of each month from September through May. Meetings start at 7 PM and include a featured guest who presents a conservation or nature program. The Board of Directors meet the Monday preceding the general meeting, at 6 PM at 295 3rd Ave. EN, in Kalispell. Both meetings are open to all those interested.

THE PILEATED POST is published September through May and is sent to members of Flathead Audubon Society as a membership benefit. For membership information or address change, please call Mike Fanning at 862-8070. **To receive this newsletter electronically, email your request to: lindawin@centurytel.net.** Deadline for newsletter copy is the 18th of each month. Contact newsletter editor at 755-1406; email submissions to: lindawin@centurytel.net

Website: www.FlatheadAudubon.org

Conservation Educator - Patti Mason: auduboneducator@gmail.com

FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY DIRECTORY

OFFICERS

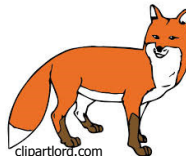
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Treasurer	Bruce Tannehill	tanneland239@gmail.com	862-4548
Past-President	Paula Smith	paulabobsmith@centurytel.net	837-0181

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2014-2017	Jim Rychwalski	james_rychwalski@yahoo.com	755-3229
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2012-2015	Steve Gniadek	gravjavbro@yahoo.com	892-7406
2012-2015	Lewis Young	68 Garrison Dr., Eureka 59917	889-3492
2014-2015	Kathy Ross	mtkat@montanaport.com	837-3837
2014-2015	Jill Fanning	shrdlu@centurytel.net	862-8070
2014-2015	Mike Fanning	shrdlu@centurytel.net	862-8070
2014-2015	Bob Lee	rml3@centurytel.net	837-4467

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Christmas Bird Count	Vacant			Refuges	Kathy Ross	837-3837
Conservation	Lewis Young	889-3492		Website	Paula Smith	837-0181
	Steve Gniadek	892-7406		Wetlands	John Hughes	261-2506
Education	Denny Olson	249-3987				
Field Trips	Kathy Ross	837-3837				
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Finance	Mike Fanning	862-8070				
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Owen Sowerwine	Rick Mace	755-8709				
Natural Area	Linda Winnie	755-1406				
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	Kay Mitchell	756-8130				
	John Hughes	261-2506				
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Nominations	Bob Lee	837-4467				
Program	Richard Kuhl	257-5793				
Publicity	Paula Smith	837-0181				
Sales	Jill Fanning	862-8070				



MONTANA AUDUBON

P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624
443-3949

www.MTAudubon.org

Executive Director: Steve Hoffman

shoffman@mtaudubon.org

Board President: Fred Weisbecker
443-4229

FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY

Membership

Individual or Family

Basic Membership \$20

(Pays for newsletter and operating costs)

Supporting Membership \$35

(Extra \$15 funds local projects such as Conservation Education and Owen Sowerwine Natural Area)

Additional Donation of \$ _____

to Education Fund ☐

Owen Sowerwine Fund ☐

Wherever needed ☐

Name _____

Address _____

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State _____

Zip Code _____

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Whitefish, MT 59937