



The Pileated Post

Volume 5, Number 3 March, 1981

The Flathead chapter of the Audubon Society meets on the second Monday of each month in the meeting room below the Flathead Bank of Bigfork. The business meeting begins at 7:30 pm and the program at 8:00 pm.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- March 3 - FVCC Natural Resources Lecture Series - 7-10 pm.
Topic: Residential development
- March 9 - Monthly meeting - Guest, Ursula Mattson will present a program on the Mountain Goats of Glacier Park.
- March 10 - FVCC Lecture Series - Topic: Agricultural lands
- March 17 - FVCC Lecture Series - Topic: Resource management philosophies

WEATHER ABERRATIONS - A MIXED BLESSING

The Swan River ski-field trip has been "desnowed" twice. Cross-country ski conditions were perfect two days before the second try, but by Saturday it was raining so much the snow was slush, and the visibility was terrible.

The Swan Refuge field trip was plagued with problems and got off to such a late start only three birders made it out. They saw few birds and, to add insult to injury, Elly Jones reports that a few days later she saw several blue herons, the nesting eagle, pintails and a grebe (he must have skipped a page or two on his calendar!)

Speaking of early birds, Elly reports that the red-winged blackbirds are arriving. She has had a young yellow-rumped warbler at her feeders since early December. And Cheri Seli saw a robin in mid-February! Have you seen any unseasonal sightings?

We are still trying for a Glacier Park or Essex field trip. If you have any ideas for trips, let us know. A weekend trip has been suggested; there are good refuges to be explored just east of the mountains. Freeze-out Lake, north of Great Falls has pelicans and other birds not common to the Flathead. Let us know what you think.

CHAPTER LIBRARY FINDS A HOME

At the February meeting, it was decided to keep the Flathead Audubon library stored in the Bank meeting room. Jack Whitney is going to make a rolling cart for the books so that they will be available at the regular meetings. The books specifically for children will be on loan to the grammar schools in the immediate area (Swan Lake, Swan River and Bigfork) on a rotating basis.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

January 22, 1981

Dear Members,

In the past month I have received two separate letters from the national organization concerning different fund-raising projects. I would like to pass them on to you in abbreviated form.

The first letter, dated Feb. 2, 1981, begins: "Each year your National Audubon Society spends millions of dollars to fulfill its historic commitment to the protection of wildlife, the conservation of the habitat necessary for wildlife survival, and the education of our citizenry to the need to preserve our wildlife heritage. These traditional goals of the National Audubon Society lie behind all that the Society is today.

To help assure that these time-honored activities will endure, I have established the John James Audubon Wildlife Fund."

The letter goes on to describe some history on the J. J. A. Wildlife Fund and explains that contributions will only be used in the three above-mentioned areas. Russ Peterson is asking that each club try and contribute one dollar for each of its members. We have about 200 members in Flathead Audubon Society.

At the January meeting we cited our opposition to the proposed Wanigan development as fitting the above categories on a local level. We then decided to accept contributions from individual members for the J.J.A. Fund which is the purpose of this note. We will also inquire about national support for our local effort.

April is Audubon Society Month. The second letter and program describes a new fund-raising project called the National Audubon Society Bird-a-thon. Let's have some feedback on this one. We will discuss it further at the next meeting. Basically it works like a Walk-a-thon or Bike-a-thon; participants gain pledges and on April 26 birders go into the field for a 24-hr. period. Prizes can be given locally for the most pledge dollars collected and the most species seen. One third of the funds collected stays with the chapter, one third goes to the region, and one third to national headquarters. The reason for the April 26 date?....John James Audubon's birthday, 1785! To do, or not to do, that is the question.

Thanks,

Dave Hudak, pres.

WANIGAN - VOTE NOW, VOTE NO

As of this writing, the Flathead County commissioners have not come to a decision on the Wanigan project. The developers have requested a hearing before the commission before it decides, although there is no new evidence and all the proper steps have been taken. Whereas in the past, letters in opposition have been directed to the planning board, stating our positions and the reasons for them, the criteria have been established. It is now imperative that we write letters to the commissioners again, urging them to come to a decision without further delays and vote to turn down the Wanigan development.

The Holt Preservation Committee has been formed, mainly by neighboring residents opposed to Wanigan, with Arnie Dillard as it's chairman. If you have any questions about Wanigan they may be directed to him at 837-4471 or to Lori Percival, who is acting as co-ordinator, at 837-4274.

Whether the commissioners vote in favor or opposition to Wanigan, legal fees have to be payed. If you wish to help, send your contribution to Flathead Wildlife Defense Fund, P.O. Box 4, Kalispell, MT 59901.

Flathead Audubon will channel your tax-deductable contributions anonymously to the Flathead Wildlife Defense Fund. Make checks payable to the Flathead Chapter of the Audubon Society with a note indicating your intentions.

The Flathead Wildlife Federation is having a raffle to help raise funds for legal fees. The \$1.00 tickets may win you a Fenwick fly rod built by Art Radar, a mackinaw fishing trip with Dallas Ekland, an uncut Montana agate from Kehoe's, a wildlife painting by G. Bennett or the grand prize, a wildlife painting by Elmer Sprunger. Tickets will available at the March Audubon meeting.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Non-Game Bill - killed on the floor
Fish and Game Funding - passed the House - raises hunting and fishing fees
Clean Air Bill - killed in the House - clean air regulations maintained
Nuclear Initiative repeal - passed the House
Land Use Bills- passed and sent to Senate

NOTE

HB715 - closes loopholes in Subdivision and Platting Act (narrowly defeated two years ago) increases minimum acreage subdividable from 20 to 40, requires occasional sale to be owned by seller for over 5 years, allows only one family conveyance per family member without review.

HB777 - gives conservation districts the power to have development rights for agricultural lands.



GARDENERS - GO NATIVE

If our changing weather has you bouncing between the seed catalogues and your garden, remember to plan for the birds and other wild residents. Your "weeds" are home to them. Let as many of the native grasses and shrubs as possible remain for good wildlife habitat. (You didn't want to mow and hoe anyway!) Be especially aware of growth along streams and ditches. Keeping livestock out and allowing the native plants to grow there will not only provide cover and food for wildlife, but will also prevent erosion and help insure clear, clean water for all us "critters".

1981 FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY DIRECTORY

- President - Dave Hudak, 3100 Hwy 35, Bigfork, MT 59911.....755-3752
- Vice President - Jack White, 1235 Swan River Rd, Bigfork, MT 59911.....837-6157
- Secretary - Barbara Baxter, 255 Oldenburg Rd, Somers, MT 59932.....857-3738
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- Director - Rob Seli, Box 151, Bigfork, MT 59911.....837-6916
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- Field Trips - Elly Jones, Swan Lake Rt, Bigfork, MT 59911.....886-2244
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Non-Profit
Organization
Postage Paid
Permit No. 3
Bigfork, Montana
59911

1981 Flathead Audubon Society Directory
Printed and Published by Dave Hudak
Bigfork, Montana