



Pileated

the Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

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Public Land for Sale

(From Montana Audubon)

Imagine that your favorite acres of public land become the property of timber and oil corporations and that "No Trespassing" signs prohibit your access to land where you previously hiked, fished, camped and watched wildlife. This is exactly what could happen if three proposed bills pass in the 1995 Legislature.

Senate Bill 145, introduced by Senator Tom Keating (R-Billings), would transfer millions of acres of public lands to state control and ownership. Although without legal evidence, the bill declares that national forests and BLM lands are unconstitutional. It instructs the State to force the Federal government to relinquish these lands through litigation.

The bill does not try to "take back" wilderness areas, national parks, Indian reservations and most wildlife refuges, although it specifically states that the Charles M. Russell Wildlife Refuge should be given to the state.

HB 483, sponsored by Rep. Ellis (R-Red Lodge) is similar to Senator Keating's bill. The main difference is that it seems to claim all federal land for the state of Montana - including wilderness areas, national parks and wildlife refuges.

The final public land bill is HB 218, which is sponsored by Rep. DeBruycker (R-Floweree). It proposes to sell most state lands in Montana with the exception of tracts with government buildings and designated state

parks. The obvious concerns of recreationists are supposedly addressed by the bill in the following statement: "public lands considered valuable for recreation or lands subject to rapid appreciation" are also exempt from this land sale. However, the State Lands Board will define what is "valuable" and, depending on the state's financial situation, could decide that the profit from selling these lands overrides public access.

Together, these bills would put up for sale to the highest bidder approximately one-third of Montana. Therefore, millions of acres of formerly public land would then be available only to wealthy people and corporations.

If this all sounds familiar, you're right. The "Sagebrush Rebellion" of the late 1970's and early 1980's proposed similar actions and was supported by President Reagan and his Secretary of the Interior James Watt. Grassroots opposition defeated those measures then and must do it again.

Although the legality of SB 145, HB 218 and HB 483 are questionable at best, the conservation community cannot afford to stand idle. Your legislators need to hear from you to ensure that these lands remain public.

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The Editor's Spotting Scope

Spring can't be far away. Just this morning I saw Robin II in the yard. The first robin of the year was here in January, looking very confused as if he'd made a big mistake. He stayed three days and was gone. But Robin II looked more like a bird with a purpose.

There are many other signs of spring. The geese are becoming restless on the lake. Big Red is taking up his Pileated position in the swamp, preparing the snag with vigorous jabs of beak. The Chickadees are calling for that elusive Phoebe. When I hear the call "Hey, Phoebe" I whistle back, albeit a little off key, and we have our pre-springtime conversation. The tulips and daffodils are pushing their way out of the damp earth and, like in seasons past, I inwardly rejoice that I am a part of this ecosystem as it springs to life.

With the arrival of spring the part-timers return, followed by the tourists, and we year-rounders prepare to share our bountiful niche. We are not the only ones who must adjust and share. The grizzly, the mountain lion, the wild turkey, eagle, osprey and all the bird etcetera. And, yes, the fish in the streams and lakes.

It's an ever-learning process, this business of sharing. It started when you were a kid and maybe had to share a bed with a sibling and, for sure, had to share toys and precious possessions. In the work place, you shared with fellow employees, and in a marriage, there was no end to sharing. It's one of the reasons why you married in the first place.

We tend to be possessive about "our Montana". We work hard to protect the water and air purity, and make valiant attempts to control the growth in our communities, yet all the while recognizing that somehow we have to share.

We can't build an elk fence around

the state, freeze all subdivision development and charge a fee for a tourist permit. We can't keep it all to ourselves. Dammit, we have to share.

There are still undeveloped areas in Montana that we share as citizens: state lands, wilderness, state and federal forests, etc. With our penchant for being protective, we can continue to do what is needed to protect those areas from the contamination of unwarranted development — for our sake, for the sake of our offspring and for the sake of our feathered, furred and finned friends.

Sharon Bergman

Take Note! —

→ March General Meeting

Monday, March 13, 1995

Fish, Wildlife & Parks Bldg.

490 N. Meridian Rd, Kalispell

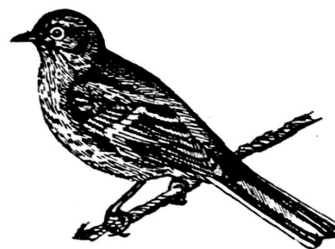
Mtg: 7:30 pm - Program: 8:15 pm

March Program: Dan Casey will present a program on "Partners in Flight: Songbirds and Elk?" Dan, who is the regional nongame biologist for Fish, Wildlife & Parks and is chairman of Montana Partners in Flight, will describe the efforts of the group to conserve the migratory songbirds of Montana. The presentation will be illustrated with slides and will include a report on songbird monitoring in big game habitat enhancement areas in northwest Montana.

→ First Field Trip of the Season

Saturday, March 25, 1995

See page 3 for details.



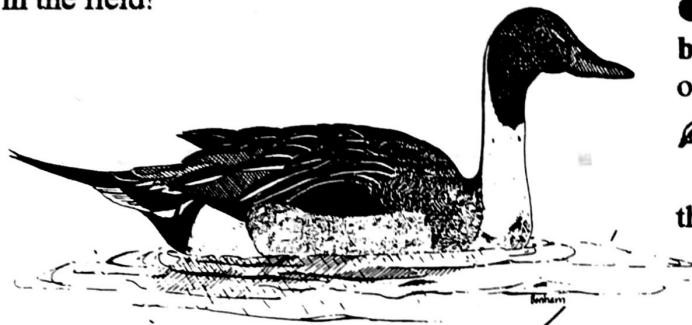


First Field Trip Scheduled

The Lower Valley Waterfowl Tour on Saturday, March 25, will be the first field trip of spring. The 4-hour tour of wetland sites in the Somers area should feature large numbers of dabbling ducks, as well as early spring arrivals.

According to Dan Casey, Field Trip Leader, the touring group will meet at the Ramada Inn parking lot, at the intersection of Highways 93 and 38. The tour will start at 8:30 am. Birders may want to bring along a sack lunch or snacks along with their binoculars or scopes.

Members and non-members alike are welcome to participate. Join us and get out in the field!



☎ Make the Call

The following are useful numbers for communicating with the Legislature from outside the Capitol:

- **Leave a message for a Legislator:** 1-406-444-4800 — subject to regular long distance charges.
- **Questions related to the Legislature:** 1-406-444-4800.
- **Fax message to a Legislator:** 1-900-225-1600. Toll is \$2 for the first minute and \$1 for each additional minute.
- **"On-line" computer service to track bill status:** 1-900-225-4300. Toll is \$2 for the first minute and \$1 for each additional minute.
- **Access to the computerized state bulletin board:** 1-800-962-1729 toll-free outside Helena.

✉ Send a Letter or Telegram

Letters and telegrams can be sent to the following address:

Senator or Representative _____
Capitol Station
Helena, MT 59620

❁ Bird Seed Still Available

If you are out of sunflower seeds for your bird feeders, or about out, there is still a supply available in the valley. The following can take care of your bird feeder needs.

Geoff Poole, Bigfork 837-4645
Rod Ash, Condon 754-2289
Kent Miller, Kalispell 257-4100
Lynn Kelly, Polson 883-5897
Vi Starks, Whitefish 862-5560

Buying your bird seed through Flathead Audubon contributes toward the chapter's special projects and we thank you for your support.

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Flathead Audubon Gets Ready

Plans are going forward for Flathead Audubon to play host to the Montana Audubon Spring Council Meeting, which will be held May 5, 6 and 7. It is anticipated that the eight Montana chapters will have representatives present when the meeting convenes in Whitefish at Grouse Mountain Inn. The meeting is open to all interested people.

The theme for the three-day event is "Creating a Balance: Making a Place for People; Saving a Place for Wildlife." Serving on the planning committee are Leo Keane, Gail Leonard, Ferne Cohen, Neal & Patti Brown and Robin Maggadino.



The President's Page >>

I belong to two organizations which are as diametrically opposed as yin from yang. One is the National Association of Homebuilders; the other, of course, is the National Audubon Society.

Darn near everything I believe in and work for with Audubon goes against the grain of the Homebuilders. From wetlands protection to the Endangered Species Act to the "takings" issue, the editorial content of my monthly *Builder* magazine is the opposite of our semi-monthly *Audubon*. If I were an unconcerned bystander, the magazines would simply cancel each other.

I am not, however, and all too often I find myself getting real hot under the collar when I read in *Builder* of the tremendous 'horrors' of wetlands protection laws or the unimaginable 'burdens' of developing around endangered species. You'd think the greatest misfortune that could befall a landowner is to be visited by a Red-cockaded Woodpecker, a Golden-cheeked warbler or a California Gnatcatcher.

I prefer to think of it as a joy, a privilege and a great responsibility to share the land with her original inhabitants. This morning while working on the roof of the home I'm building, a brace of Canada Geese whizzed by, honking loudly. Meanwhile, a Magpie flashed across the river and yammered at our busy work. And then the Pileated Woodpecker, always surprisingly large, paid a visit, alighting in the 300-year-old Ponderosa Pine up the road. At that moment it occurred to me how much the presence of these birds added to the beauty of this homesite, and that this would indeed be a nice place to live among the junipers, pines and wild birds.

But beyond that I reminded myself of the absolute responsibility for us, the land-owners: that we are stewards more than owners. The natural life of our communities

— the birds, the trees, all the flora and fauna — rightfully belong to the place every bit as much as we do. It is nothing less than our responsibility to insure their survival.

This is a point often missed by environmentalists when we argue for the protection of species and habitats. Typically we fall back on the "fight fire with fire" approach. When confronted with the costs of species protection, we point to the costs of losing species — the salmon fishery in the Columbia Basin, for example, or medicinal plants in the tropical rain forest. All very true and utilitarian, but it misses the point: simply, the *right* of every creature to its place on earth.

This is the "land ethic" championed by Aldo Leopold 40 years ago and which seems even more relevant today. The land ethic compels us to protect the earth because it is the right thing to do.

In an effort to affect some change within the Homebuilders Association with regard to its environmental policy, I have written to express some of those opinions. Undoubtedly others did as well.

Guess what? February issue, *Builder* magazine, cover story: "Building Green: Environmentally Sensitive Development is the Wave of the Future". Hope springs eternal.

Leo Keane

Natural Gas Concerns to be Discussed

The Montana Environmental Information Center (MEIC) and Greenpeace will be holding an evening of information and discussion about the risks of natural gas use and development and how these risks fit into our region's energy future. The meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 14, 7 pm at the Fish, Wildlife & Parks Bldg on Meridian Rd, Kalispell. For more information, contact Lila Cleminshaw, 543-4773.



ESA Headed Toward Rough Waters *(From Wild Forever)*

The recent change in the political climate has drastically changed the approach of environmentalists working to strengthen the Endangered Species Act (ESA), which is up for reauthorization. The election results have spurred activists to prepare for major battles over the ESA. Several Republican leaders have sent clear signals that gutting the ESA would be the centerpiece of their industry-funded campaign to weaken major environmental laws.

Many candidates included ESA-bashing in their campaigns, and the platform which many House candidates signed, the Contract With America, indicated strategies to roll back environmental protection.

On the morning after the election, some Republican leaders were even more blunt. Sen. Phil Gramm (R-TX) emphasized his desire to target the ESA as one of his highest priorities. Sen. Alan Simpson of WY was brutally candid about his intentions:

"I'm talking about making the Endangered Species Act work by not trying to save the squawfish humpback chub, or whatever the hell we were trying to poison 25 years ago.... This is crap and the people are tired of it....Of course, I can hear the howl, oh, can I hear the howl, that we are out to dismantle the greatest laws that have ever been on the books."

Simpson specifically targeted grizzly bears. "They're out here galloping all over... people can't even go to their favorite camping ground because these damn things are all over the place. That isn't what [the ESA] is about. Stick them back in [Yellowstone] Park and say 'You are hereby recovered and you are no longer listed as an endangered species or a threatened species', and move on. This is nuts."

Sen Simpson's remarks are particularly troubling in light of the fact that he is now number two in the Senate behind Bob Dole, and also second in line (possibly first) to head the Environment and Public Works Committee, formerly headed by Montana Sen. Max Baucus.

Things could be equally challenging in the House of Representatives. Two possible chairs with jurisdiction over endangered species will be Don Young of Alaska and Jack Fields of Texas, both of whom have League of Conservation Voters scores of 0%.

The implications for environmentalists are clear. We must continue working to educate the American public about the many benefits of the Act, to both wildlife and people. For more information, call a Wild Forever contact or the ESA Coalition, at (202)547-9009.

It is critical that environmentalists redouble efforts to uphold our nation's most important species protection law.

Adam Ruben

NOTE: Wild Forever is a collaborative effort by the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, National Audubon Society, The Wilderness Society, Sierra Club and Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund. Wild Forever works to protect and fully restore the grizzly bear and its habitat in the wildlands of the lower 48 states.

Adam Ruben is from Missoula and inquiries can be directed to him at 549-1656- (phone and fax).





Flathead Audubon Society Directory

OFFICERS

President	Leo Keane, 514 Pine Place, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-5807
Vice President	Susannah Casey, P.O. Box 7922, Kalispell, MT 59904	857-3143
Secretary	Kent Miller, 781 1st Ave. EN, Kalispell, MT 59901	257-4100
Treasurer	Susan Hitchcox, 4755 Foothill Rd, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-4645
Past President	Brent Mitchell, 960 Kienas Rd, Kalispell, MT 59901	756-8130

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1993-96	Elaine Corrigan, 7405 Valley View Rd, Polson, MT 59860	883-6895
1993-96	Carol Purchase, 781 1st Ave. EN, Kalispell, MT 59901	257-4100
1994-97	Sharon Bergman, 354 LaBella Ln, Big Arm, MT 59910	849-5286
1994-97	Neal Brown, 560 Wolf Creek, Dr, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-5018
1994-97	Dan Casey, P.O. Box 7922, Kalispell, MT 59904	857-3143
1994-97	Ferne Cohen, P.O. Box 1782, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-2028

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Audubon Adventures	Kim Davis, 1230 Rhodes Draw, Kalispell, MT 59901	755-1311
Conservation	Geoff Poole, 4755 Foothill Rd, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-4645
Field Trips	Dan Casey, P.O. Box 7922, Kalispell, MT 59904	857-3143
Hostess	Carla Prach, 110 Goat Trail, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-1350
Librarian	Gail Leonard, 514 Pine Place, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-5807
Membership	June Ash, P.O. Box 1129, Condon, MT 59826	754-2289
Newsletter	Sharon Bergman, 354 LaBella Lane, Big Arm, MT 59910	849-5286
Program	Ed Prach, 110 Goat Trail, Whitefish, MT 59937	862-1350
Publicity	Liz Hill, 888 McCaffery Rd, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-1444
Refuge Projects	Lynn Kelly, 6525 Rocky Point Road, Polson, MT 59860	883-5797
Schools, Clubs	Jean Robocker, 1655 Montford Road, Kalispell, MT 59901	756-6344
Wetlands/Waterfowl	Neal Brown, 560 Wolf Creek Drive, Bigfork, MT 59911	837-5018

Montana Audubon Council

OFFICE

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

BIRDING HOTLINE: 756-5595

The Flathead Audubon Society is affiliated with the National Audubon Society and meets on the second Monday of each month from September through May. A business meeting is held at 7:30 p.m. followed by a special program at 8:15 p.m. The regular monthly meeting is preceded by the Executive Board meeting. Both meetings are open to all those interested.

THE PILEATED POST is published September through May and is sent to members of the Flathead Audubon Society as a membership benefit. Subscriptions for non-members are \$10.00 per year.

Deadline for newsletter copy: the 20th of each month.

National Audubon Society Membership Application



Enjoy full National Audubon Society benefits and AUDUBON magazine, as well as PILEATED POST newsletter.

Check your category rate from the following:

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N54 7XCHA

Send this application and your check to:

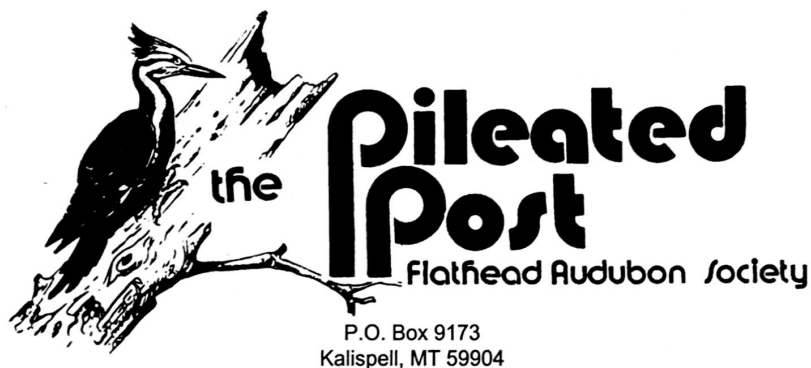
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Boulder, CO 80322-1001

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