



Flathead the Post

Newsletter of the Flathead Audubon Society

Volume 22

Number 3

March 1997

Flathead Audubon leases the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area

On March 1, the Flathead Audubon will assume the lease on the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area. The Board of Directors had voted to pursue the sponsorship of the pristine area, which consists of 443 acres, including an island in the Flathead River, and the agreement was finalized in February.

"The main purpose of assuming this lease is to keep the area in public ownership," Past President Brent Mitchell said. "We have plans to clean up some of the game trails and will widen them somewhat. Field trips will be scheduled in the Natural Area in the coming months."

The Flathead County Parks & Recreation Dept. was the former leaseholder.

For complete registration information, contact Flathead Community College.



Grants & Scholarships Available

The FAS Board of Directors announced the availability of grants and scholarship money, to be used for educational and scientific purposes pertaining to ornithology, environmental and similar areas of study.

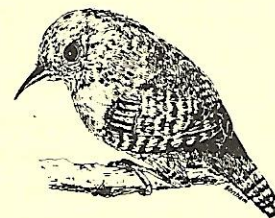
For further information or to submit an application, contact Susan Hitchcox, treasurer of Flathead Audubon, at 4755 Foothill Rd, Bigfork, MT 59911, 837-4645.



Birding Course Offered

The Flathead Community College is offering an advanced birding course for birders who are already somewhat experienced in the nature pursuit.

Beginning on April 2, the course will last six weeks and will be taught by Dan Casey, wildlife biologist with Fish, Wildlife and Parks.



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The editor's spotting scope

One more tradition has been dealt the ultimate blow in the name of the environment. The *Missoulian* recently reported that the daisy has been added to the noxious weed list in Flathead County.

The noxious weed list! The daisy a noxious weed! That's incomprehensible! They might as well have declared Mom's apple pie off limits.

You may have noticed, as I have in recent years, that there seems to be more and more prolific fields of daisies and that was their undoing. The powers that be said nothing much will eat them. They charge that the daisies are driving out the native grasses and contributing to erosion, so "off with their heads!" The daisy is now falling to the spray gun in Flathead County and in Glacier National Park.

Nothing will eat them, they say. You aren't supposed to eat them. You're supposed to use a daisy to find your true love. He loves me - he loves me not - he loves me - he loves me not, etc. etc. What will a lovesick soul do to determine true love — come right out and ask him? That'll never work. It's better to ask a daisy.

If the author of *Driving Miss Daisy* had known what was in store for the daisy, don't you think the heroine would have been named something else, like *Driving Miss Holly* (short for hollyhock). Obviously, Miss Daisy is better.

Think of the repercussion to future generations. Many children are named after wildflowers: Rose, Violet and (of course) Daisy. No parents in their right minds would call their child Ragwort or Hawkweed, but Daisy is a nice name and their innocent child will be named after a noxious weed. It's incomprehensible.

The daisy was my mother's favorite flower. They grew in her backyard and she put fresh bouquets of them in her home and office. Since I am my mother's child, there is a bed of Shasta Daisies in my yard. In the wild, the daisy may be obnoxious, but in my yard it is a flower of choice, and it doesn't bother me at all that the deer won't eat them. ***

Spring is fast approaching and I'm heading to Reno, for my part time spring job. Since I'll be editing the newsletter from there, the deadline for copy has been changed to the 15th of the month for the next two issues. You can send a Fax to me at (702) 323-8228 or write c/o WIBC Media, P.O. Box 837, Reno, NV 89504. **Sharon Bergman**

Hotline highlites ☎ ☎ ☎

Snowy Owls were the big news for the past couple of months, with regular sightings in the Lower Valley area south of Kalispell. **Snowy's** were also reported in the area between Pablo and Ninepipe reservoirs. **Northern Pygmy Owls** and **Northern Shrikes** were seen quite regularly perched on power lines and trees along the roadside and hunting from the tops of haystacks. **Golden Eagles** were spotted flying over the Somers cut-across road and in the area south of Creston. **Bald Eagles** were a somewhat common site along the rivers and roadsides. There is a large flock of **Clark's Nutcrackers** in the Bigfork area, feeding on Ponderosa pine seeds and the fruit on Hawthorn bushes.

Remember, if you have started feeding the birds, keep it up, and keep your feeders clean to avoid the spread of disease. And don't forget to give or gain information on the Flathead Audubon Hotline at 756-5595.

Liz Hill

Take note!

March General Meeting

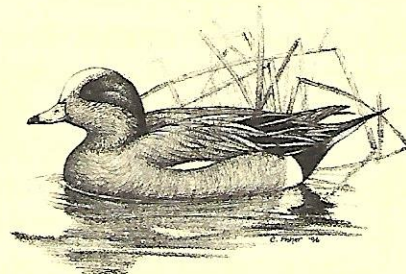
Monday, March 10, 1997

Fish, Wildlife & Parks Bldg.

490 N. Meridian Rd, Kalispell

Meeting starts at 7:30 p.m.

Program: Amy Eaton O'Herren, Managing Director of the Glacier/Flathead office of Montana Land Reliance, will present a program on "**Private Land Conservation: A Partnership with Permanent Results.**" It will feature an in-depth look at conservation easements, and she will moderate a discussion on MLR's work. A graduate of MSU, her degree in Geology and Geographical Planning aids in her work with both individuals and the land.





About the population —

The Immigration Connection. Last month this column outlined some of the background on the issue of immigration, hopefully enough to introduce an approach being pursued by folks concerned with the soaring human population in this country. In summary, immigration accounts for about 50 percent of population growth, is very costly, is adding to our overpopulation crisis and, therefore, is unsustainable and severely damaging our environment and our quality of life.

Since the United States is the leading culprit in contributing to pollution, exhausting resources and wasteful consumption, it seems clear that we must deal with issues like immigration before we can expect other countries to handle their overpopulation problems.

Quite simply, this approach would totally ban immigration for an initial five years. After that, immigration would be limited to 200,000 people a year (or 100,000 per year to speed the process), which is about the number that voluntarily leave the country each year. Thus, immigration would serve as a replacement-level device, assuming illegal immigration also can be eliminated. The initial moratorium would provide a critical five-year "time out" for dealing with the consequences of our current policy.

Strong medicine! In some ways it unfortunately panders to those who have other agendas that are questionable, such as slowing the rate of increase of nonwhites in our racial mix. But, otherwise, is this a perfect solution?

Probably not, but it would undeniably be an effective start towards solving the very real population problem in this country. For instance, someone calculated that if immigration had been held to replacement level (about 200,000 per year) since 1970, the US population would have stabilized by 2030 at 247 million. That would be over 18 million *below* our current population and over 100 million less than conservative projections showing our 2030 population at 350 million and still growing. Should congress pass this approach, it is estimated that it also would cut taxpayer immigration costs by 80 percent.

This proposal was advanced in the 104th Congress, but it did not get enough support. It will be pushed vigorously in the present Congress. If enough people let their senators and representatives know they are for it, there is a good chance it (or something like it) could pass. We could then be much more optimistic that our wildlife and habitat, and the work we do to protect them, will endure.

**Bob Ballou, Montana Audubon Habitat
& Human Connection Committee**



Lecture on Clark's Nutcracker Scheduled

A lecture about the Clark's Nutcracker and Whitebark Pine and their dependency upon one another is scheduled for March 11.

Professor Ronald M. Lanner of Utah State University will describe the intriguing relationship between Whitebark Pine and the Clark's Nutcracker as well as between the Eurasian Nutcracker and other members of the stone pine family.

The lecture will be held at 7:30 p.m. in room 356, Soc. Sci. Bldg., University of Montana, Missoula. It is being sponsored by the Five Valleys Audubon chapter, U.S.F.S. Intermountain Research Station and U of M School of Forestry and Dept. of Biological Sciences.

The wide sponsorship is in recognition of an interesting "web-of-life" that needs attention by those concerned with wildland resources because of the decline of Whitebark Pine. Seeds of this high elevation species were once a principal food of native Americans. Whitebark Pine remains a critical food source for Clark's Nutcracker, Grizzly Bear and Pine Squirrel.

On Wednesday, a book signing reception for Professor Lanner will be held at the UC Bookstore from 12 to 2 p.m.. At 4 p.m. that day, a lecture on the co-evolution of corvids and stone pines will be hosted by the Dept. of Biological Sciences. For more information, contact Jim Brown at 549-8052.



President's Page >>

Explorer, map-maker, geographer extraordinaire, David Thompson was among the first Caucasians to lay eyes on Flathead Lake. He was, most likely, *the* first to pen a description of that view.

In late February of 1812, Thompson embarked from Salish House, his outpost on the lower Clark Fork River, with his Kootenai guide Left Hand. They paddled a canoe upstream, visiting several Flathead encampments en route and, after acquiring a couple of horses, set out cross country toward the lake.

From Thompson's journal: "came smartly on trot & hard Gallop to 1:25 PM., when we alighted on the top of a bare Knoll, commanding a very extensive View of the Lake & Country far around... a fine sheet of water... the haunt in all seasons of aquatic fowl." Thus begins the White Man's love affair with the Lake of the Flatheads.

We must forgive David Thompson his lack of flourish, his obvious understatement in describing what nowadays many of us consider nothing less than world class scenery. "A fine sheet of water." Indeed!

Having just completed a remarkable book, *Sources of the River: Tracking David Thompson Across Western North America*, by Jack Nisbet (Susquatch Books, Seattle, WA), I'm compelled to regard this description of Flathead Lake in the context of Thompson's life. Here was a man who spent 38 continuous years exploring the width and breadth of this wilderness continent. From Hudson Bay to the Great Lakes, from the North Saskatchewan to the Missouri and westward to the Pacific Ocean — he saw it all.; the new, untamed, aboriginal heart of America. Views like that overlooking Flathead Lake must have been, in those days, a dime a dozen.

In spite of Thompson's restraint, it's equally evident that the Salish/Kootenai lands and people were his favorites. He seemed to be most at home here. In fact, Salish House, the trading fort he built on the Clark Fork River near

present-day Thompson Falls, quickly became his western headquarters. From here he mobilized most of his Columbia River explorations — his lifelong mission to discover a trade route to the Pacific.

I frequently pass within a mile or two of Salish House on my way to and from Thompson Falls. Once I hiked to the river and searched for clues or artifacts, some sign of its location. There is nothing.

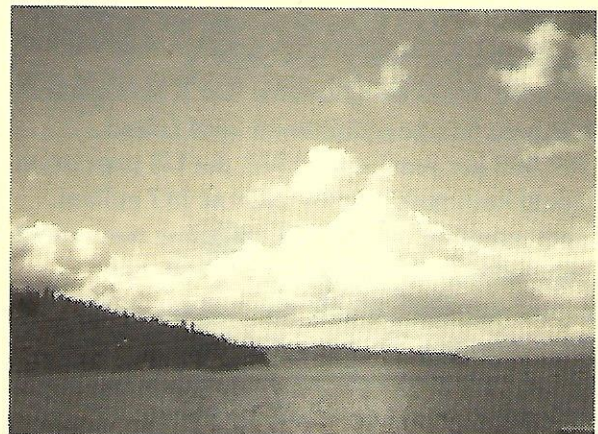
After nearly 200 years the echoes of the voyagers, furtraders and Salish tribesmen have irrevocably faded into the earth at Salish House. Still, shouldn't we honor the site? Shouldn't we enshrine it somehow for its historical significance, and as the "home away from home" of the West's greatest geographer?

But we are an amazingly short-sighted people, so readily blind to the natural and historical features of our land. I've just learned Salish House has been subdivided — ironically, into house sites — while its singular location was lost or simply ignored in the survey. Could we possibly diminish the echoes of our forefathers any further? Somebody's three-car garage: is that the best we can do?

And what if David Thompson could gallop smartly back to his "bare Knoll" overlooking Flathead Lake two centuries later. Even Thompson could muster some superlatives to describe what we've done. Inconceivably, the foreground of one of the world's great places will soon be despoiled further with a WalMart Store.

If this 'extensive view' is not sacred, certainly nothing is.

Leo Keane





Science **potlight: Non-native Fish Management**

In a warm-water fisheries management plan currently being considered, The Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks proposes to manage some rivers and lakes to favor non-native, warm-water fish species.

A paper published in 1996 by Peter Moyle and Theo Light summarizes 22 years of research at the University of California investigating the interactions between native and non-native fishes. The paper suggests that encouraging the expansion of non-native fish populations in Montana could have dramatic impacts on native fish species and could potentially further limit land-use activities in the state.

In their paper, Moyle and Light drew the following conclusions. 1) Extinction of native fish species following the introduction of a non-native fish is not common.

However, when it occurs, extinction due to invading non-native fishes is generally the result of a) non-native fish preying directly upon native fish species, b) non-native fish interbreeding with the native fish species, or c) human caused habitat disturbance placing additional stresses on native species. 2) A much wider range of non-native species can survive in aquatic systems with high levels of human disturbance. 3) Successful invasions in aquatic systems are most likely to occur when native fish populations are temporarily disrupted or depleted by natural or human-caused disturbances.

Montana's native Bull Trout has been in decline for the last few decades.

Although they have not yet been officially listed, Bull Trout meet the qualifications for protection under the Endangered Species Act. Bull Trout populations are currently

being disrupted by, among other things, predation by and interbreeding with non-native fishes. Based on Moyle and Light's conclusions, that's two strikes against Bull Trout in their attempt to avoid extinction.

FW&P currently proposes to increase populations of non-native fish species, including highly effective predators like Northern Pike and Tiger Muskellunge. Once these non-native fish are established, there is no way to remove them. Non-native species often spread beyond the "intended" areas where they are stocked. This range expansion continues to prime the pump for the extinction of Bull Trout and other native fish species. Moyle and Light's research suggests that the spark which might subsequently cause the extinction of localized Bull Trout populations could be natural or human-caused habitat disturbance.

The one-two punch of competition from non-native fish species and habitat disturbance has been proven to cause the extinction of native fish species. *Preventing* the spread of non-native species will allow native fish species to be more tolerant of human-caused habitat disturbance and should be the goal of FW&P. Encouraging the expansion of non-native fish populations is nothing but bad news for native fishes and may necessitate additional restrictions on our land-use activities in an effort to further reduce disturbance of fish habitat.

For a copy of Moyle and Light's paper, write to Dr. Peter Moyle, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Biology, University of California, Davis, CA 95616. Request "Fish invasions in California: do abiotic factors determine success?" published in the 1996 journal *Ecology*, volume 77, number 6, pages 1666-1670.

Geoff Poole, Conservation Chairman





Flathead Audubon Society Directory

OFFICERS

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|----------------|---|----------|
| President | Leo Keane, 514 Pine Place, Whitefish, MT 59937 | 862-5807 |
| Vice President | Geoff Poole, 4755 Foothill Road, Bigfork, MT 59911 | 837-4645 |
| Secretary | Gail Sullivan, 932 Columbia Avenue, Whitefish, MT 59937 | 862-5775 |
| Treasurer | Susan Hitchcox, 4755 Foothill Road., Bigfork, 59911 | 837-4645 |
| Past President | Brent Mitchell, 960 Kienas Rd, Kalispell, MT 59901 | 756-8130 |

DIRECTORS

| | | |
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| 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 |
| 1996-99 | Sonja Hartman, P.O. Box 1388, Columbia Falls, MT 59912 | 758-8516 |
| 1996-99 | Jim Rogers, Polson, MT 59860 | 883-3611 |

CHAIRS

| | | |
|--------------------|--|----------|
| Audubon Adventures | Kim Davis, 1230 Rhodes Draw, Kalispell, MT 59901 | 755-1311 |
| Conservation | Geoff Poole, 4755 Foothill Road, Bigfork, MT 59911 | 837-4645 |
| Field Trips | Betty Winzenburg, 1436 Rogers Lane, Kila, MT 59920 | 755-1697 |
| Hospitality | Betty Winzenburg (see above) | |
| | Debbi Rossi, 480 5th Ave. EN, Columbia Falls, MT 59912 | 892-1317 |
| 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 | Linda Winnie, P.O. Box 220, Kila, MT 59920 | 755-1406 |
| Quality of Life | Ferne Cohen, P.O. Box 1782, Whitefish, MT 59937 | 862-2028 |
| Refuge Projects | Lynn Kelly, 6525 Rocky Point Road, Polson, MT 59860 | 883-5797 |
| Wetlands/Waterfowl | Neal Brown, 560 Wolf Creek Drive, Bigfork, MT 59911 | 837-5018 |

Montana Audubon

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| OFFICE | Janet Ellis, P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624 | 443-3949 |
| PRESIDENT | Rod Ash, P.O. Box 1129, Condon, MT 59826 | 754-2289 |

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. The regular meeting starts at 7:30 p.m. and includes a featured guest who will present a conservation or nature program. 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. Newsletter Fax: 849-5486.

National Audubon Society Membership Application



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

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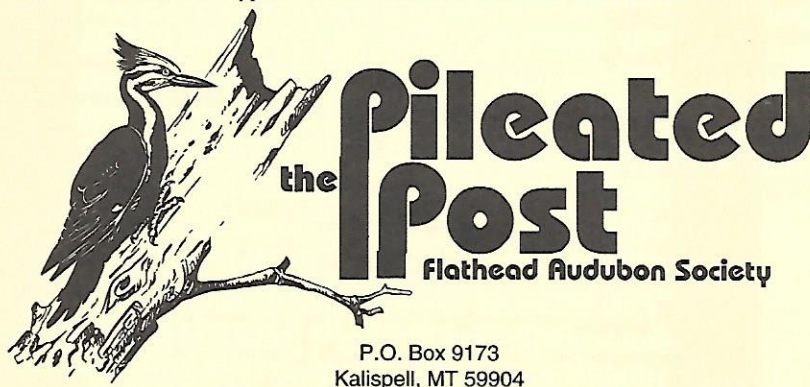
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Send this application and your check to:

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