

# NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM CELEBRATES 100 YEARS

Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton was joined May 14th by thousands of wildlife enthusiasts, members of Congress and notable conservationists to celebrate the Centennial of the National Wildlife Refuge System, the only federal system of lands dedicated to conserving wildlife. Sebastian, Florida is home to Pelican Island, the first National Wildlife Refuge, created by President Theodore Roosevelt on March 14, 1903.

Secretary Norton presided over a special ceremony at Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge to honor the entire Wildlife Refuge System by installing the final plank in the Centennial Boardwalk, leading to a new viewing tower overlooking Pelican Island. Each plank in the Boardwalk is inscribed with the name of a wildlife refuge created in the past 100 years, 540 in all. The site was rededicated as a national historic landmark.

“President Bush is committed to carrying on the 100-year conservation legacy of President Roosevelt,” said Secretary Norton. “On this historic occasion, we invite every American to discover a wildlife refuge near their home and to join with us in protecting these natural treasures for the next 100 years.”

Centennial celebrations occurred simultaneously at wildlife refuges across America, and will continue throughout the year. National Wildlife Refuges are open to the public, with many having new facilities, such as the observation tower at the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge. The new observation tower offers, for the first time, views of the pelicans for which the island was named.

“The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is using this historic occasion to put the welcome mat out to every

American. There is a wildlife refuge in every state and one within an hour’s drive of most cities,” said Steve Williams, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service.

“Wildlife refuges are unique because we have struck a balance between the needs of wildlife and people. Wildlife refuges offer unprecedented opportunities for wildlife observation, school education programs, and fishing and hunting.”

At a public celebration attended by thousands of conservation enthusiasts, the United States Postal Service issued a new commemorative postage stamp celebrating the creation of the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge.

“This stamp will provide Americans with an opportunity to learn more about our natural resources and encourage people to help preserve the beauty and majesty of American wildlife,” said Patrick R. Donahoe, chief operating officer and executive vice president, U. S. Postal Service.

“As we celebrate the first 100 years of wildlife conservation we now turn our attention to the next 100 years,” said Centennial Commission Chairman William Horn. “All throughout this year we will reach out to outdoor enthusiasts from across America – hikers, hunters, anglers, birders, photographers and educators – to build and strengthen support for the National Wildlife Refuge System.”

For more information on the National Wildlife Refuge System, and the wildlife refuge near you please visit: <http://refuges.fws.gov>. National Wildlife Refuges near the Flathead include the National Bison Range in Moise and the new Lost Trail National Wildlife Refuge west of Kalispell.





# CHICKADEE CHATTER

The days of early spring pass swiftly and each day brings with it a new surprise. Each year I wait to see, with great anticipation, the first robin. This much loved member of the thrush family can be found year round here in the Flathead Valley in very small numbers. It is not until early spring that we see them in any numbers or hear the familiar song. This year the much anticipated bird landed in the top of a tall fir tree and sang his lovely song...my heart soared. Since that day several weeks ago, American Robins have visited by the dozens and I hear them singing late into the dusk and they are among the first to greet the sun as she rises in the eastern sky. Now I ask you, what is more wonderful in the early spring than seeing a fallow field full of red-breasted birds searching for lunch?

Each year I wait impatiently to hear the chatter of those swiftest of birds, the swallows. This year a Tree Swallow graced my yard on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March. He was alone but he flew into my sight, landed on a high wire, chattered a bit and my heart soared. Watching swallows is one of my very favorite pastimes; their sleek little feathered bodies can perform with an aerial agility that is quite simply remarkable. Some 90 species of swallows are found around the world and we can reliably find six species here in our little corner of the world. In my estimation we are very fortunate, what could be more wonderful in the early spring than a flock of swallows dipping high and low over the water in search of lunch?

Each year I can barely wait to hear the high pitched and lonesome calls of the killdeer as he wanders along the sandy beach beside the Flathead River near my home. This lovely member of the plover family is perhaps the most well known of the shorebirds that inhabit western Montana. The killdeer are the earliest of the shorebirds to arrive in the spring. I walked outside on a moonlit night a few days before the first day of spring and heard that distinctive call from the riverside and my heart soared. There beside the river the next day were several Killdeer running rapidly up and down the sandy strand looking for lunch, what could be better than that on a warm sunny day in early spring?

Each year I long to hear the courting calls of the chickadees and the nuthatches and the finches that live near my home. The 'phoebe' of the chickadee, this year the excited beeps of a pair of Pygmy Nuthatches, and the beautiful songs of the House Finches fill the air each time I walk out the door. I can't help but stand still for a few moments and listen. It is funny how such things can make the days of early spring less stressful and more joyful. These birds call our lovely Valley home

all of the year round. Our lives would simply not be the same without chickadees and I would be bereft of a name for my column if we didn't share our backyards with these sociable little birds. What more can one say about chickadees?

There are several species of nuthatches that come to visit my feeders but the ones that I will comment on today are the Pygmy Nuthatches. A small flock of this the most talkative of the three species we find in Montana has spent the past few winters here in my yard. One gloomy spring morning only a few days ago I watched the male pygmy nuthatch on a barren branch of the old birch tree singing to his 'lady fair', shortly thereafter a chase was on and I watched them fly hither and thither through the yard only to land back in the old birch tree. What could be more fun than to be a witness of such reckless abandon (...of course it was the height of seriousness for our nuthatch pair)?

The House Finch is a relative newcomer to northern Montana and each year on the Christmas Bird Count we find more and more of these colorful birds. In the early spring they bring some color and a joyous song to my yard that is difficult to beat. There is a small flock here with between 10 to 20 birds and they sit in the leafless lilac bush and eat sunflower seeds. Their song joins that of the robins in the early mornings and so the spring chorus at dawn begins and my heart soars, what could be better than that symphony at dawn on a cloudless early spring morning?

And so goes early spring...it is a time I so look forward to. It is a wonderful time of the year, the precious moments of daylight grow ever longer and the rains fall (sometimes mixed with snow just for interest), more and more birds find their way 'home' to our enchanted valley, tiny hardy green things poke their noses out of the cold ground and the cycle of growth and new beginnings starts anew. Each year I can hardly wait for all of these things to occur, and occur they do like clockwork. Each spring I see the same old things happening...the arrival of the first swallow, the frantic wanderings of the killdeer, the predictable songs of the robin. These are things that I have seen many times over the years and yet each spring they are new and hold delightful surprises. I can barely wait for each new day to unfold to find out what old and yet new thing will happen.

Please find some time to make your heart soar in these first precious weeks of spring.

Leslie Kehoe



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\* One of the nicest things about Spring around here is that, \*  
\* after months of dreaming about living in warmer climates, \*  
\* you're glad you stayed put. \*  
\* Burton Hillis \*  
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### KEEP THOSE FEEDERS FULL!

Welcome your returning migrants and keep your wintering birds happy with black oil sunflower seed from Flathead Audubon Society. Our chapter sells 50-pound sacks of ultra-clean seed, which is grown right here in Montana and delivered to us direct from the farm.

Sacks will be available at the FAS general meeting or you may call one of the following:

- |                  |               |          |
|------------------|---------------|----------|
| * Bigfork        | Neal Brown    | 837-5018 |
| * Columbia Falls | Jim Swab      | 387-4299 |
| * Kalispell      | Karen Nichols | 756-5763 |
| * Whitefish      | Jill Fanning  | 862-8070 |
| * Condon         | June/Rod Ash  | 754-2289 |

Your purchase helps fund local conservation and educational programs, as well as helping you create your own backyard habitat for our feathered friends.

### FAS CALENDAR OF EVENTS APRIL/MAY 2003

**MONDAY, APRIL 14, 2003 THE FAS GENERAL MEETING** Jim Rogers will present his slide show, "Galapagos of the North: The Pribilof Islands." Flathead Audubon will also honor Flathead Wildlife, Inc., at the April meeting to recognize FWI's long time commitment to conservation. The conservation award, which is given three times each year, recognizes the efforts of individuals and organizations that enrich our lives by improving, preserving or protecting the natural assets of the Flathead Valley community.

The meeting begins at 7:30PM in the meeting room of the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks building in Kalispell. Everyone is welcome, but seating is limited, so arrive early to secure a seat.

**MONDAY, MAY 12 FAS GENERAL MEETING AND ANNUAL POTLUCK** Silent auction, dinner, meeting, and fun program. Watch for details in May's Pileated Post and BE THERE!

**FRIDAY-SUNDAY, MAY 30-JUNE 1: 2003 MONTANA BIRD FESTIVAL**, Malta, MT Keynote speaker Ed Harper, field trips, presentations on birds, dinosaurs, Bowdoin National Wildlife Refuge.

### FAS April Program: "Galapagos of the North: The Pribilof Islands"

There's an old adage that states the secret to success is location, location, location. This is as true for the sea birds and fur seals that breed in the Pribilofs as it is for business. The fog-shrouded Alaskan islands form a sanctuary that beckons like a siren call across the stormy Bering Sea. These volcanic outcroppings of towering cliffs, windswept tundra, and rocky beaches attract an amazing spectacle of puffins, kittiwakes, murre, auklets, fulmars, gulls, shorebirds, and cormorants, as well as a variety of marine mammals.

For the past two summers, Jim Rogers has worked as a wildlife specialist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture conducting wildlife assessments on St. George Island (in the Pribilofs) and Barrow, Alaska. During the school year, Jim is a science and geography teacher at Polson High School, a geography instructor at Salish Kootenai College in Pablo and conducts classes, workshops and field trips on area wildlife and birds.

Discovered by Gerasim Pribilof in 1786, the "Seal Islands" were for almost 200 years entirely the domain of commercial fur seal hunters. Today the local Aleuts harvest only a small number of seals and sea bird eggs for food from the islands' numerous rookeries. This sustainable relationship has made the Pribilofs home to the vast majority of the world's Northern Fur Seals, Red-legged Kittiwake, and Thick-billed Murres. Indeed, the remote "Galapagos of the North" are strategically placed to be one of the world's great natural wonders.

From Karen Nichols



*"If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant; if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome."*

Anne Bradstreet

# FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS: NEAL BROWN Mark Your Summer Calendar for a Weed Pulling Party!



**BEWARE:** plants on the loose! The Flathead and Mission Valleys are under attack by a nonnative plant capable of replacing native wetland flora and eliminating existing bird nesting habitat. Please circle your calendar for Saturday, August 9, this year's date for our annual Sandpiper Field Trip and Purple Loosestrife Pull. Meet at Ninepipes Lodge at 8a.m.

Purple Loosestrife is a hardy perennial with long flower stalks encircled by purple floral masses. Multiple shoots grow from a woody root crown, and an extensive root system provides ample nutrients to the sky-bound vegetation. Generally reaching a height of six feet, purple loosestrife may be found around any wet areas: lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, ditches, marshes, and wet meadows. To identify *Lythrum salicaria*, look for an edged or square stem; note its tapering leaves, which are most often oriented by two's or three's opposite each other on the stem; and from late June through August, observe the showy purple flowers.

Native to the continents of Europe and Asia, purple loosestrife was carried across the Atlantic on European ships in the early 1800's. From the Atlantic coast, it has spread to every state north of the 35th parallel and the southernmost Canadian provinces. Although the most abundant populations are present in the midwest and northeastern states, the weed's rapid advance in the Northwest is creating mounting concern.

Upon introduction to a region, *Lythrum salicaria* is capable of forming dense monotypic stands which replace vital wildlife habitat. As these stands flourish,

they block waterways and cause the degradation of forage and reduction in protective cover for wetland-associated fauna, such as songbirds, waterfowl, and muskrats.

In 1983 the presence of loosestrife in Lake County was first documented. To date, this noxious weed has not yet formed large wide-ranging stands throughout Montana's wetlands; the goal is to prevent its continual spread and consequent loss of habitat.

Your help is requested. Flathead Audubon has adopted 2 ponds at Ninepipes Wildlife Refuge. Each summer we manually remove the existing *Lythrum salicaria*. Neal Brown may be contacted for more information. We encourage you to help us contain this nonnative aggressor. Prevent a purple loosestrife takeover



## OH, SAY CAN YOU SEE?

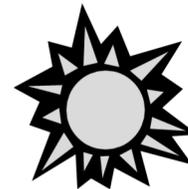
FOUND at Owen Sowerwine Natural Area: A pair of prescription, color-adjusting eyeglasses with silver frame and brown upper trim and stems. To claim, contact Linda Winnie at 755-1406 or email at [lindawin@cyberport.net](mailto:lindawin@cyberport.net)

## YOU'RE INVITED!

### EARTH DAY IS APRIL 22

A special Earth Day invitation has been extended to Flathead Audubon members and their friends to tour Glacier National Park Native Plant Nursery. Joyce Lapp, Nursery Director, will guide us from 10 am to noon. She will identify plants, shrubs and trees suitable for planting in Glacier's climate and elevation. She will advise us as to areas needing revegetation. Attendees will observe seeds and seedlings for early identification of young plants. Participants should wear work clothes and bring gloves in order to assist in opening the nursery for the season. An introductory film will be shown, and refreshments will be available.

Directions: From the entrance to Glacier National Park, turn right to the Administrative area. Take the second right at the Nursery sign and park by the greenhouse. Please advise Joyce Lapp of your attendance by calling 888-7817.



Also, from April 21 to May 2, you may visit the Flathead County Landfill on Highway 93 between Kalispell and Whitefish. The Waste Not Project will be conducting educational tours and activities to illustrate recycling, waste reduction and composting of yard and vegetable waste to make rich soil. The Hazardous Waste Collection facility will also be available for tour. Call Kaia Peterson at 862-3606 or 756-8993 for further information.

Enjoy! Preserving habitat for the enhancement of wildlife is our Flathead Audubon Mission.

From Ferne Cohen

## BIGFORK TO HOLD A BIRDING FESTIVAL

The Bigfork Chamber of Commerce is going to hold a birding festival on the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> of June this year. A series of field trips and seminars featuring the birds of northwestern Montana will be held for amateur and expert birders alike right here in our front yard. There will be something for everyone, from guided trips led by our very own Flathead Audubon experts to a number self-guided tours, from seminars on birds and birding to a keynote speech by noted birding expert Dick Hutto on fire ecology and birds.

Springtime in this part of Montana is an extraordinary time to greet migratory bird species and awaken to their lovely song. And Bigfork is the place to be in June. Members of the Flathead Audubon Society will lead all of the guided field trips for the Festival. It will be used as our spring fundraising event, instead of Birdathon this year. There will be thirteen guided field trips. The Bigfork Chamber of Commerce will give FAS \$1000 for our help in leading the field trips.

The Festival should be very exciting as all of our resident 'experts' will lead trips to many of the birding hotspots in and around the Flathead Valley. The field trips will include several to Glacier National Park, one in search of the Harlequin Ducks and a myriad of songbirds that inhabit the Park in early June. Two field trips will focus on the area of the Park where in 2001 the Moose Fire burned its way through acres of forest. They will be fascinating trips of discovery to see what kinds of new life are springing from the ground two years after the fire. One of the trips will focus on fire ecology and native plants. The other will focus on fire ecology and how the animals have been affected with a focus on birds. The trips will give us a good chance to see an Olive-sided Flycatcher or even a Black-backed Woodpecker.

There are field trips to the Lost Trail National Wildlife Refuge, the Smith Lake area, a trip into the Mission Valley focusing on waterfowl at Ninepipes and songbirds at the National Bison Range. Trips are also planned for the Tally Lake area and several will be led into the Swan Valley. We will visit these areas and many more interesting places around Northwestern Montana, all in the search for spring birds.

If the field trips aren't enough to keep one occupied, there will be a number of interesting seminars to select. Perhaps you would like to learn more about journaling, or maybe starting a bluebird trail. A banquet is planned for Saturday evening at Marina Cay and the Festival will feature the well known host of PBS's "Bird Watch" and University of Montana professor Dick Hutto who will speak about "The Ecology of Fire and Birds".

If you would like registration information on The Bigfork Bird Festival, you may call the Bigfork Chamber of Commerce at (406)837-5888 or log on to their website at [www.bigforkbirdfestival.com](http://www.bigforkbirdfestival.com)

From Leslie Kehoe

# TEACHERS-ON-REZ

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THE ROBINS ARE BACK AND SPRING IS HERE WHICH MEANS THAT MANY TEACHERS WILL SOON WANT TO BE STARTING THEIR BIRD UNITS FOR THE SPRING. THE FOLLOWING FLATHEAD AUDUBON MATERIALS ARE AVAILABLE FOR YOUR USE: BIRD COSTUMES, COMMON BIRDS OF THE FLATHEAD SLIDES AND SONGS ON CDS, CLASS SETS OF BINOCULARS AND FIELD GUIDES, ADDITIONAL TEACHING AIDS. IF YOU WISH TO USE ANY OF THESE ITEMS, PLEASE CALL SONJA HARTMAN AND RESERVE THEM IN ADVANCE. HER PHONE NUMBER IS 387-4150; YOU CAN LEAVE A MESSAGE. HER EMAIL IS [prather@digisys.net](mailto:prather@digisys.net).  
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THESE EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS ARE NO LONGER HOUSED AT GLACIER INSTITUTE, WHICH HAS BEEN GRACIOUS TO ALLOW US TO USE THEIR LIMITED STORAGE CLOSET THESE PAST TWO YEARS. BUT WE HAVE BOTH OUT GROWN THAT SPACE. THANKS GLACIER INSTITUTE!  
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THE NEW HOME FOR FLATHEAD AUDUBON MATERIALS IS ARARAT DESIGNS AT #42 VILLAGE LOOP, LOCATED OFF WHITEFISH STAGE JUST NORTH OF WEST EVERGREEN DRIVE. JOHN HAYNES HAS OFFERED US A LARGE SECTION IN THE BASEMENT OF HIS ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN OFFICE. IT IS ROOMY, EASY TO ACCESS, AND WE ARE GRATEFUL AGAIN TO JOHN AND MELODY HAYNES FOR THEIR GENEROSITY AND HOSPITALITY.  
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BE SURE TO CONTACT SONJA HARTMAN BEFORE YOU PICK UP ANY OF THE MATERIALS. SHE WILL EXPLAIN THE CHECK-OUT PROCEDURE TO YOU. HAPPY BIRDING WITH YOUR STUDENTS.  
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From Linda deKort

# HOW CAN I HELP?

The **GLACIER PARK VOLUNTEER SENIOR RANGER CORPS** is seeking senior adult volunteers to help with native plant restoration projects in Glacier National Park. This is a great opportunity to learn more about the native plants of Glacier and to teach the younger generation about sound stewardship principles. Experience or knowledge about plant restoration is not necessary. The program is looking for volunteers to work as: administrative assistants, nursery aides, green house attendants or field project aides. Please call Val at the Kalispell City Parks and Recreation department (758-7848) for more information or to arrange an orientation. The Volunteer Senior Ranger Corps is a cooperative effort between the National Park Service, National Park Foundation, UPS, EASI and the City of Kalispell Parks and Recreation. From Karen Nichols

The annual **FAMILY FORESTRY EXPO**, which aims to educate local students and families on the many issues of forest use and management, will be May 10th and May 11th. The student portion runs May 5th through Friday, May 9th. The expo is sponsored and created by a diverse group of organizations, including Flathead Audubon, so that a wide range of issues can be explored from varying points of view. The expo features stations on archaeology, fisheries, plant identification, forest management, wildlife issues, riparian areas, low impact camping, fire and logging practices as well as mill tours and ORV demonstrations.

Volunteers are needed to help tend the FAS station at the Expo. Anyone who can contribute a few hours on May 10th or 11th should contact Sonja Hartmann, 387-4150 or [prather@digisys.net](mailto:prather@digisys.net). From Karen Nichols

## AN EVERYDAY, EARTH DAY REMINDER

Do a service to the environment and Flathead Audubon at the same time. Take your recyclables to Valley Recycling. Their hours are 8-5 Monday through Friday and 9-1 on Saturday. They are located at 1410 Highway 2 West, next to Fun Beverage. They take aluminum cans, plastics Pete 1 and 2, newspapers, cardboard, mixed office papers and now light metals as well.

Valley Recycling will make a donation to Flathead Audubon when you tell them, "I'm a member of Flathead Audubon." From Ferne Cohen

## ARTISTIC? TALENTED? GREEN THUMB?

Take a minute to consider what you can contribute to Flathead Audubon's silent auction, held each year at the May meeting. Do you have framed nature art or photography? Healthy starter plants for someone's garden? A piece of outdoor gear in good condition? Wildlife or bird books? Birdhouse or feeder? All items are welcome!

## OWEN SOWERWINE NATURAL AREA NEEDS YOUR HELP

Spring at the Owen Sowerwine NA means the sounds of returning waterfowl and kingfishers, the drumming of pileated woodpeckers, the first appearance of tree and violet-green swallows, great blue herons fixing up their old nests, and much more – including the need to once again pay the yearly license fee for the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area.

The fee for 2003 is \$655. Flathead Audubon will pay \$567 of this. Montana Audubon will pay the rest, and also will buy the insurance for the Natural Area.

Flathead Audubon often mounts a special fundraiser to pay for its portion of the Owen Sowerwine license fee – a raffle or a birdathon. But in some years we are fortunate to simply receive enough donations marked "for the Owen Sowerwine Fund" to cover the fee.

This year we have already received almost half of what is needed in donations, so we are well on our way to covering the Flathead Audubon portion of the fee in this way. Can you help finish the job?

In order to maintain the "State Natural Area" status for Owen Sowerwine, the State School Trust must receive fair compensation for withholding this piece of land from other uses – uses that could well erase the natural character of the area.

Your donation will help ensure the continued preservation of this piece of state land as a State Natural Area.

Donations should be sent to Bruce Tannehill, Flathead Audubon Treasurer, 239 Deer Trail, Whitefish, MT 59937. Make your check out to Flathead Audubon Society and include a note that it is "for the Owen Sowerwine Fund."

Your contribution is tax deductible.

From Linda Winnie, President

## HELP PROTECT MONTANA'S SONGBIRDS

When you file your Montana income tax return, please consider making a contribution to our state's non-game program, which works year-round to protect Montana's many "critters" that are not hunted. Just check the box with the eagle in it and share a few of your dollars with the wildlife who depend on us. You'll feel more like smiling when

*Welcome, SPRING!*

April's the month when the green returns to the lawn, the lilac, and the IRS.

Changing Times magazine

**FLATHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY:**  
**March 20-June 20**



**2003 SPRING FIELDTRIPS**  
**The Public Is Invited**

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**SUNDAY, APRIL 27. SMITH LAKE BIRDING.** The Smith Lake Waterfowl Production Area this time of the year will have many varieties of ducks, including grebes, buffleheads, and ruddy ducks. We will search for sandhill cranes, March harriers, eagles, and osprey. We will certainly see and hear western meadowlarks and bluebirds. It will be an enjoyable morning of bird watching. Meet at the Fish, Wildlife & Parks building in Kalispell at 8:00 a.m. Sunday morning. For more information please contact Leslie Kehoe at 837-4467 or [likehoe@digisys.net](mailto:likehoe@digisys.net)

**SUNDAY, MAY 4. HARLEQUIN DUCKS AND AMERICAN DIPPERS.** See first hand the amazing adaptations of Harlequin Ducks, one of Montana's rarest birds. We will watch them courting in the rapids alongside the American Dipper, a hearty year-round resident. Easy, all morning trip with short level walks. Glacier National Park entrance fee or pass required. The number of participants is limited to minimize disturbance to these shy ducks. Please contact Jim Swab, 387-4299 or [suejim@bigsky.net](mailto:suejim@bigsky.net) for more information.

**MAY & JUNE. BIGFORK WILD MILE CORRIDOR WILDFLOWER & BIRD WALKS.** Each Tuesday of May and June, 10 AM to Noon (May 6, 13, 20, 27 & June 3, 10, 17, 24). Join Anne Morley (Montana Native Plant Society) and Neal Brown (Flathead Audubon Society) for a gentle morning of wildflower and bird identification along the Old Swan River Road. Meet in front of Showthyme Restaurant in downtown Bigfork. Contact: Neal Brown at 837-5018 or [nealpatt@cyberport.net](mailto:nealpatt@cyberport.net)

**SATURDAY, MAY 10. INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY AT THE BISON RANGE.** The birds brought spring back, and here's your chance to enjoy it by celebrating International Migratory Bird Day at the National Bison Range. A variety of bird activities are planned, including an advanced birding hike and a beginning bird walk (space is limited, so pre-registration is required). There will also be a variety of other activities, including a talk about bluebird habitat and houses, information on backyard bird feeding, special bird video showings, giveaways, contests, coloring pages, and a book sale. The National Bison Range is also planning to open the 19-mile Red Sleep Mountain Drive in time for this celebration (fees are charged for the drive). The Range will open at 7:00 a.m. Please call the National Bison Range at (406) 644-2211, extension 207 to register for activities.

**SATURDAY, MAY 17. SPRING LOON CENSUS DAY.** The Montana Loon Society and the Montana Common Loon Working Group need volunteers to help look for and count loons on the lakes in northwest Montana on this day. The need is especially great for people to help in the North and Middle Fork areas, the Thompson Chain of Lakes, and the Troy and Libby areas. If you can help, please contact one of the following: for north and west of Kalispell or the Swan Valley, Jane Ingebretson, 837-5081, or Gael Bissell, 752-3874; for the Libby/Troy area, Joni Manning, 295-7495.

**SATURDAY, MAY 17. GLACIER NATIONAL PARK ASSOCIATES VOLUNTEER DAY.** Join members of GNPAA for their annual Volunteer Day in Glacier National Park. Volunteers will meet with park officials at 9:15 a.m. in front of the GNP Community Center to select from a list of work projects ranging from trail clearing (bird watching opportunities) to working in the park nursery. For additional information, contact Jim Swab at 387-4299 or [suejim@bigsky.net](mailto:suejim@bigsky.net).

**SUNDAY, MAY 18. LOST TRAIL NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE TRIP.** Join us for a trip to the new National Wildlife Refuge in Pleasant Valley near Marion. This is a very exciting time to visit this wonderful place. The fields and marshes and woodlands are alive with bird song not to mention birds. The habitat is very diverse, and we will have a chance to see everything from shore birds to ducks to warblers to raptors. We will meet at 7AM at the Fish, Wildlife & Parks Building in Kalispell. To sign up, please contact Leslie Kehoe at (406) 837-4467 or [lkehoe@digisys.net](mailto:lkehoe@digisys.net)

**SUNDAY, JUNE 1. BIRDING IN THE NORTH FORK.** Join Jim and Sue Swab on a North Fork hike in Glacier National Park. We will meet at the Polebridge Mercantile store at 9:30 a.m. and car pool to the Quartz Creek Trailhead on the Inside North Fork Road. We will hike about 3-4 miles to the Cummings Meadow area in search of birds and other wildlife. Please RSVP if you are interested in joining us. Contact Jim at 387-4299 or [suejim@bigsky.net](mailto:suejim@bigsky.net).

**SUNDAY, JUNE 15. OWEN SOWERWINE CANOE TRIP.** Join Susannah & Dan Casey for a half-day exploration of an island park in the Flathead River near Kalispell. Canoe to the island (easy flat-water paddling) and bushwhack through the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area. Features breeding birds and a close-up look at the diversity of endangered cottonwood communities. Bring canoe and life jackets (one jacket for each person). Contact Susannah and Dan Casey at (406) 857-3143 or [caseys4@centurytel.net](mailto:caseys4@centurytel.net) to sign up for this trip.

