Membership Meeting - Thursday, May 19th

“The Role Of Fire in Landscapes of Eastern Cascades”

Presenter: Megan Walsh, CWU Geography Professor

accompanied by graduate student, Dusty Pilkington

Washington’s wildland-urban interface (WUI) of the eastern Cascades has begun experiencing larger, more damaging wildfire events. This reality became apparent when the Carlton Complex and Okanogan Complex fires burned during the summers of 2014 and 2015, respectively. As the largest fire events recorded in Washington state history, the fires burned over 240,000 hectares (almost 600,000 acres), consumed 300 homes, and caused infrastructure damage.

What is the role of fire in the landscapes of the eastern Cascades? Why is it beneficial......or why is it bad? How has it affected bird habitat? How have land management policies influenced the situation we are in today, especially during the past 100 years? And how do we put these recent large fires into perspective with long-term fire activity history during the past thousands of years?

Join us to learn how two lakes near Omak and Twisp give us clues to be analyzed in the form of sediment cores containing macroscopic charcoal fragments. What are the preliminary results? And how can the results be applied to fire management in the wildland-urban interface, while expanding our knowledge of long-term fire regimes in sagebrush steppe environments?

(Continued on page 4)
The Hooter

Send in your stories & photos!
The Hooter is the newsletter of Kittitas Audubon, published monthly except for July.

Submissions from members & other readers are most welcome and encouraged!
The editor reserves the right to edit for space, grammar, and/or suitability. Email text and/or photos to bobcat(at)kvalley.com or snail mail to Jan Demorest, Hooter Editor, 712 E 2nd Ave, Ellensburg, WA 98926. Submissions need to be in by the 20th of the preceding month.

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KAS Board Meetings are held at 4:30 PM on the 1st Thursday of each month in the PUD meeting room, 1400 Vantage Highway. These meetings are open to the public and all Audubon members; please come and join in the discussions. Meetings adjourn by 6:00 or 6:30, after which we all go out for a sociable dinner ~ NO business discussion allowed!

Board Notes
by Gloria Baldi

From the April 7th meeting:

Minute items from April 7th meeting:

- Secretary’s minutes & Treasurer’s Report were approved.
- Received a statement that KAS will be reimbursed for expenses regarding the lawsuit over ORV’s and the Forest Service, which was ruled in our favor.
- A thank you note was received from Blue Mountain Audubon in Walla Walla for the gifted Barn Owl box.
- Wild Horse Wind Farm is interested in kestrel boxes for the east end of their property.
- Tom & Diane Gauron will lead the May 7th First Saturday BirdWalk.
- Regarding membership, it was agreed that National Audubon members will automatically be local members.
- The last program of the fiscal year will be May 19th. Megan Walsh, assisted by our scholarship recipient, Dusty Pilkington, will speak on fire ecology, its history and ramifications.
- Tom Gauron attended two meetings of the Voluntary Stewardship Program. There is concern that it is an attempt to circumvent provisions of the Growth Management Act, and that environmental critical areas will suffer if the program is accepted.
- KAS meetings are receiving excellent press in the Daily Record and Northern Tribune.
- Nine applications have been accepted by the Biology Department for which two $2500 scholarships to CWU students will be awarded by Kittitas Audubon.
- Judy Hallisey has completed the huge task of preparing a native plant brochure, accomplished with a grant from National Audubon. More information is forthcoming on how to obtain a copy.
- Four presentations by the busy Climate Change committee are currently scheduled.
- KAS will have a booth on Earth Day at CWU on April 23rd.
- Four display windows in the foyer of the Ellensburg Public Library will be done by KAS for the entire month of May.
- KAS has obtained a film, The Messenger, for the Ellensburg Film Festival in October.

Do join the Board on any first Thursday of the month @ 4:30 at the PUD building on Vantage Hwy. All are welcome!
April 2 ~ First Saturday Birdwalk

Eleven birders met for a spring outing in the park, coming from Easton and SW Washington as well as locally. Courting and nesting activity is already evident as we saw many Downy Woodpeckers paired off and foraging on cottonwood catkins, show-off kingfishers flying to spectacular heights, Bewick’s Wrens singing high in the trees, geese and Mallards in pairs, a female Red-tail on a nest across the river, cowbirds looking for nests to prey on, and most beautifully, a pair of Wood Ducks resting close together on a branch in the woods. Other notable finds were Brown Creeper, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 8 Common Mergansers in the lower pond, and Rough-winged Swallows on the bank across the river, maybe just arriving. We counted 32 species. Seemingly conspicuously absent were: Yellow-rumped Warbler and Northern Flicker. We’ll see them next month.

~ Steve Moore

KAS Photo Club Field Trip - April 23rd, 2016

Neither the small turnout nor the wind discouraged Steve Moore and I on our first photo field trip in the Columbia Basin. We started at “Birder’s Corner” (Frenchman Hills Rd and Dodson Rd) with a Great White Egret, Yellow-headed Blackbird, and a couple of Cinnamon Teal. Now we might expect a crowd on this pond, but the water was a bit too high to provide the usual overwhelming range of birds that can be seen here. We proceeded on to Othello and a Burrowing Owl. Then a stop at the ponds that run under Highway 26. This is where the shore birds were hanging out. Black-necked Stilts and American Avocets, along with more Cinnamon Teal, Green-winged Teal, Redhead ducks, Northern Shovelers, Pintails, Gadwalls, and the usual selection of Mallards and Canada Geese. We did a bit of exploring but the wind was keeping most of the birds down, so we headed home. Made one last stop at a pond on the frontage road near the Silica Road exit and found more Redheads, a Pied-billed Grebe, some more Pintails and Mallards. The final bird was a Wilson’s Snipe. On a windy day, it’s a good trip that starts with an egret and ends with a snipe!

~ Cricket Webb report & photos

April 24 ~ Douglas Creek ~ Four from Ellensburg traveled east and north to southern Douglas County (1½ hours by car) for a scenic walk through a green and watered desert canyon. Douglas Creek drains a large part of the flat Waterville plateau before cutting a deep canyon southward as it courses into Ice Age flood-scoured Moses Coulee. The names honor Senator Stephen Douglas (Lincoln’s debat-
Climate Comments: Judy Hallisey, KAS Climate Change Committee

Conserving water, Preserving birds, Protecting homes - oh my!

KAS Climate Change Committee just produced a shiny brochure with quick tips on using native plants in our area to help birds transition during climate change. Pick one up at the next couple meetings or from a board member.

If you are an eager gardener who wants to convert more lawn and garden space to native plants while landscaping with firewise practices, then the new guide, "Using Native Plants To Preserve Birds and Protect Homes" is for you! It is a detailed guide that includes pages of drought-tolerant, fire-resistant plants that also feed birds. Inquire about getting a copy from your climate change committee members, Barry Brunson, Judy Hallisey, or Jim Briggs.

If you can’t wait until next meeting, the brochure and the guide are in the process of being uploaded onto KAS website. Look for it soon and print your own copy!

Spread the word! Climate change is real and is affecting birds. Do your part to help.

Note: All photos in the guide and the brochure are from KAS members! Thanks to Judy for her concerted efforts in getting this put together and printed.

(Continued from page 1) Program - Fires & Landscape

Megan Walsh, PhD, is an associate professor in the Geography Department and the Cultural and Environmental Resource Management Program at CWU, where she is also the director of CWU’s Paleoecology Lab. Walsh is a biogeographer (the biology that deals with the distribution of plants and animals) and paleoecologist (the ecology of prehistoric conditions regarding fire) interested in the late Quaternary (epoch since the Ice Age) environments of western North America and Central America, specifically the role of fire on the landscape. Walsh uses high-resolution macroscopic charcoal and pollen analysis to reconstruct past changes in fire activity and vegetation. Her fieldwork has taken her to many western states, and most recently Belize, with current research projects ongoing in the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area (north-central Washington), Mt. Rainier National Park, the Willamette Valley, the Cascades of Oregon, the Blue Mountains, and southern Belize. Walsh earned her PhD from the University of Oregon.

All Audubon meetings, held on the 3rd Thursday of each month at the Hal Holmes Center next to the Library, September through May (except December), are open to the public. Please come and meet with us. A brief business session precedes the program. Stay afterwards for juice, treats, and conversation.

Many thanks to the Ellensburg Public Library for sponsoring our meetings here!
The canyon was sheltered from the wind that made for a wild, windy Sunday afternoon back home.

Views from the canyon begin with massive walls of basalt across which White-throated Swifts and Violet-green Swallows gave their chirpy calls. Farther up the canyon the contours smooth out into rounded green hills cut by side canyons. Birding by ear as we followed the jeep road up the creek in the sunshine, we identified Say’s Phoebe, Chukar, Rock Wren, Spotted Towhee, quail and flickers. More visible were Red-tailed Hawks, a kestrel, goldfinches, White-crowned Sparrows, Mallard pairs flushed from the creek, and a beautiful male harrier combing the canyon walls. Later in the day we were able to lock the binocs onto small flocks of birds flying up-canyon; these were American Pipits in migration. A fire last year swept into the canyon destroying trees along the creek; we feel that the kingfishers we read about in our hiking guide were discouraged by this and have left – although an enthusiastic fly fisherman we met proved that small fish are still abundant in the creek. Our bird tally was 27 species, including 9 while traveling in the car (not with us in the car, but seen from the car....)

~ Steve Moore
WASHINGTON STATE AUDUBON CAMPOUT

The Hazel Wolf Bird Sanctuary
at the Wenas Creek Campground

Memorial Day Weekend
May 27-30, 2016

A Washington State Discover Pass is required

EVERY Memorial Day Weekend, members of Washington State’s Audubon Chapters and their friends gather in the Wenas Valley, located on the east slope of the Cascade Mountains between Ellensburg and Yakima. With a variety of natural history and recreation opportunities, the Wenas Valley is a beautiful area that supports a fascinating assortment of spring flora and fauna, and offers the spiritual fulfillment of simply being outdoors in the spring. Everyone, whether members of Audubon chapters or not, is welcome to join us for this outing, which is attended each year by around 200 men, women and children and a large number of birds which, we like to think, enjoy being watched ever as much as we enjoy watching them.

Schedules of field trips and programs will be posted at:
http://www.wenasaudubon.org/

LEAVENWORTH SPRING BIRD FEST

May 19-22, 2016

Celebrate the return of migratory birds in the midst of peak wildflower season while enjoying field trips, events and free family activities for all ages and abilities in Leavenworth, Washington and throughout the Wenatchee River valley!

http://www.leavenworthspringbirdfest.org/

Come enjoy the beauty of the Leavenworth area!
GET “THE HOOTER” ONLINE

Save paper, printing, postage. If you would prefer to receive the electronic version, send your name, mailing address, & email address to:

kittitasaudubon@hotmail.com

At the beginning of each month, we’ll send you an email with a quick link to the new Hooter.

The mission of Kittitas Audubon is to develop an appreciation of nature through education and conservation, with a focus on birds.

BECOME A KITTITAS AUDUBON MEMBER!! (Or renew your membership)

Receive The Hooter ~ help support education and conservation activities and projects!

Two options are available:

OPTION 1: Membership in National Audubon includes a subscription to the magazine, Audubon, membership in the local chapter (KAS), and KAS monthly newsletter, THE HOOTER

_____ Join as a new National Audubon member $20 (includes KAS membership)
_____ Renew a National Audubon membership $35

Make check payable to: National Audubon Society Include this form and mail to: Membership Data Center, P.O. Box 420235, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235

Name ___________________________ Address __________________________________________
City _____________________________ State, ZIP _________________________________________

Chapter Code COZY220Z

OPTION 2: Membership in only the local chapter, KAS, includes the monthly newsletter, THE HOOTER

_____ Join the local Kittitas Audubon Society (KAS) chapter $20
_____ Renew your KAS membership $20
_____ Make a donation to KAS $_____ (amount)

Make check payable to KAS and mail to: KAS, P.O. Box 1443, Ellensburg, WA 98926

Name ____________________________________ Phone _____________________________
Address ___________________________________ Cell _______________________________
City _______________________________________ Email _______________________________
State, ZIP ________________________________ Would you like to receive The Hooter electronically?

May we print your name in The Hooter as a new, renewing, or donating member? Yes ___ No ___

Kittitas Audubon is a 501(c)(3) non-profit educational organization. All memberships and donations are tax-deductible.

Membership forms are also available on our Website: Kittitasaudubon.org.
For membership information contact Membership Chair, Tuck Forsythe ~ forsythe@fairpoint.net

See The Hooter in COLOR on our website ~ http://www.kittitasaudubon.org
Upcoming KAS Field Trips

MAY

7th, Saturday ~ First Saturday Bird Walk, Irene Rinehart Park. By now, spring migrants like Yellow-rumped and Nashville Warblers should be passing through our woods; other possibilities are vireos & tanagers. 3-hour walk. Meet at 8 AM at Irene Rinehart parking lot off Umptanum Rd. Tom Gauron and Diane Bullock lead; call 509-968-3175 for more info.

14th, Saturday ~ Global Birding Day ~ see Page 5 for details!

19th-22nd, Thurs-Sun ~ Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest ~ see page 6 for details!

27th-30th, Fri-Mon ~ Washington State Audubon Campout ~ Wenas Campground ~ see page 6 for info & details!

June

4th, Saturday ~ First Saturday Bird Walk, Irene Rinehart Park. Nesting season for waxwings, warblers, woodpeckers, pewees, orioles, swallows and cowbirds! Just because it’s June! Meet at 8 AM at Irene Rinehart parking lot by the river for a 3-hour walk. Leader TBA.

“Rare Bird” ~ River Otter spotted by Joan & Gordon Crane on Huntzinger Road near Wanapum Dam in late April. Photo by Gordon Crane

Are your hummingbird feeders out hanging in a shady spot? Spring is here and so are the hummers! Remember to use a white sugar mixture of one part to four parts water.

The Hooter ~ May 2016
The Newsletter of Kittitas Audubon - http://www.kittitasaudubon.org

THANK YOU.....TO KITTITAS COUNTY BUSINESSES SUPPORTING KAS!
Inland Internet, Roslyn ~ donates Internet service for our Website: http://www.kittitasaudubon.org
Old Mill Country Store, Ellensburg ~ Provides a discount on bird seed to KAS members. Get your bird seed here!