



The Stilt

Volume 36, Issue 1
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Newsletter of Bridgerland Audubon Society

Our New Year's Conservation Resolutions

By Bryan Dixon
BAS Conservation Chair

Local Wetlands

- Complete a third annual census of the **White-faced Ibis rookery** in Cutler Marsh (over 5% of the world's population).
 - Make sure that Utah's Division of Parks and Recreation protects the **south part of Cutler Reservoir** from inappropriate motorized recreation.
 - Complete the conservation easement between PacifiCorp and TNC to secure and enhance 2,000 acres of bottomlands habitat along 30 miles of the **Bear River Bottoms**.
 - Update our **Wetlands Maze website** on Cutler Reservoir.
 - Ensure that birds are an important consideration in the science being used in the **Bear River/Cutler Reservoir TMDL Project**.
 - Work with Logan City to create bird watching areas at the 153-acre wetland mitigation project just west of the **Logan Landfill**.
 - Develop a better **response to wetlands mitigation** plans in Cache Valley as development increases in sensitive areas; consider sponsoring a **local wetlands conference** to identify the most important local wetlands.
- ### Forest
- Encourage the Forest Service to implement sugges-

tions by the Western Watersheds Project to analyze the **Little Bear Sheep Allotment** (and other allotments) for capability (from grazing standpoint) and suitability (from other users' standpoint) before agreeing to new lease arrangements. Work with the Wild Utah Project to document grazing conditions.

- Help the Bear River Watershed Council inventory (GPS/GPS) and analyze opportunities for responsible management of motorized use (**MUD Project** Motorized Use Documentation).
- Review the documentation behind Cache County's **RS2477** claims of rights-of-way on federally owned forest roads. The County Attorney is willing to work with us – there are both positive and troubling aspects of County ownership of forest rights-of-way.
- Work with the Forest Service to implement reasonable controls on snowmobile use in **Franklin Basin** – we've made some innovative proposals that the Forest Service is seriously considering.

Air Quality

It's OUR Habitat: Become more involved in promoting activities that **protect our ability to breathe** in Cache County. Citizens can be doing so much more...

Open Space for Habitat

- Take a more active role in the **Critical Lands Task Force**, a citizens' initiative to enact a local tax to support a conservation easement fund.

Environmental Education

- Continue **interesting programs at monthly meetings** on birds and wildlife that have increased attendance at monthly general meetings.
- Continue diverse field trips to teach and inspire.
- Find a way to participate in **environmental education at Hardware Ranch**.

Water Development

- Monitor state efforts to develop **Bear River water** for the urban Wasatch Front.
- Analyze and comment on the proposal to construct a new dam at the mouth of **Oneida Narrows** (which would destroy miles of narrow canyon habitat and recreation opportunities).

Lots to do, but "many hands make light work." Make these YOUR resolutions, too. Contact a BAS Board member or Bryan Dixon, Conservation Chair, to get more involved.

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Chapter Notes

A Slew of Grasses at the Barrens

By Jim Cane
Sanctuary Manager

When Bridgerland Audubon first acquired the property west of the town of Amalga that is now our Barrens Sanctuary, there were two parcels that had been used to cultivate dryland barley. One is northeast of the bridge that crosses the slough on the southeast side of the Sanctuary. The other is north-central, along the dirt road southeast of the gate to the Duck Club. Our wooden sign used to dedicate our Sanctuary is in the middle of that one. These two upland parcels amount to 15-20 acres. Cultivation ceased with our acquisition. During two fallow years, a groundcover of exotic broadleaf Eurasian weeds spread thickly about. Since our Sanctuary is meant to conserve native species, not proliferate exotic ones, we have undertaken to eliminate these weeds and replace them with native grasses.

This past growing season, we commenced to eliminate those weeds. That's the royal "we," for the work was largely by Craig Rigby, a young local farmer and USDA range-



Craig Rigby harrows the land at our Barrens Sanctuary in preparation for seeding of native grasses.

land grass specialist contracted for the task. I learned the general strategy from Andy Huber at the Growiser Preserve (near LeGrande, Oregon). First we identified the weeds; few were formidable. Beginning last spring, Craig sprayed the entire area with a short-lived herbicide, following Nature Conservancy application guidelines. Craig continued to control weeds mechanically, disking three times over the course of summer. Another spray was necessary on the south side to control late-summer bindweed and mallow. I sprayed out one tiny patch of cheatgrass. My wife Linda and I pulled individ-

ual exotic thistles and Dyer's woad that popped up on the north parcel. But removal is only the first half of the restoration equation.

With the guidance of Howard Horton (another grass specialist) and Craig, a seed mixture of grasses was developed and purchased. Eve Davies of PacifiCorp added ideas from her Cove, Idaho revegetation project. The grass species that we chose are adapted to the site's heavy clays, moderate alkalinity, shallow water table, and seasonally soggy then parched soils.

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Audubon Calendar

January 2007

- 1 Two-Hundred Club Birding.** Is it possible to see 200 species of birds in Cache County in the calendar year (January-December)? It is not only possible but several local birders do it every year. This trip will be led by local birding expert Reinhard Jockel, who is not only good with visual birding, but also a gifted birding-by-ear expert. Anyone is welcome to attend the field trip, especially those who want to set a New Year resolution to get out of the house to see 200 of the great natural beauties in Cache Valley. Meet Saturday at 9 a.m. in the parking lot between Caffé Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 East 150 North). Bring something to munch on, because the trip will run into early afternoon. For more information call Buck Russell at (435) 512-9641.
- 3 Birding Hawaii.** Those staunch Bridgerland Audubon members, who are willing to go to any lengths to find new birds, even to visit some of the most hostile environments on earth, will be checking out the beaches...errr...birds...in Hawaii January 3-10. We look forward, with envy, to their trip report.
- 4 BAS Board of Trustees Meeting.** Bridgerland Audubon's Board of Trustees meets at 7 p.m. Thursday at the Cache Valley Learning Center, 75 S. 400 West, Logan. Enter through the building's west doors. All are welcome to attend.
- 11 BAS General Meeting - Birding Down Under: Six Months of Tropical Discoveries in Queensland.** Alice Lindahl and her husband, Jim Haefner spent six months in Queensland on a sabbatical leave from USU. During that time, they spent many long hours in search of koalas and the elusive paradise riflebird. Along the way they met many species that live only in Australia: bowerbirds, kookaburras, Albert's lyrebird, and the long-anticipated tawny frogmouth. They were able to see behaviors that are even more amazing than the unabashed gaudy plumage: grey-crowned babbler extended families all waiting on one clutch of young, satin bowerbirds carefully arranging blue tourist leavings (such as sunglasses) in their bower grounds, flying foxes wrapping their wings around all their young in a communal roost, and green tree ants using the pupae from their colony as glue guns. Join us this Thursday evening at 7 p.m. at Cache Valley Learning Center, 75 S. 400 West in Logan. Enter through the building's west doors. Our January bird identification workshop will focus on the differences between our local cedar waxwing and the winter migrant, Bohemian waxwing.
- 18 Conservation Committee Meeting.** Coordinate BAS responses to environmental challenges and proactive initiatives regarding our local environs - wetlands, forest, air quality, open space, water development. Open to any BAS member interested in local conservation. Meet Thursday at 7 p.m. at the home of Bryan Dixon, 10 Heritage Cove (255 East 700 North), Logan. For more information, contact Bryan at 752-6830 or bdixon@xmission.com.
- 20 Bear River Bird Refuge Bald Eagle Day.** Friends of the Bear River Refuge is sponsoring Bald Eagle Day this Saturday at the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge Education Center, 2155 W. Forest Street in Brigham City (I-15 exit #363, turn west one block to the education center), with day-long activities, including presentations, birding, and a photographic exhibit. Here is a schedule of events:
 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. **Bald Eagle I.D. Made Easy or Not.** Join Jen Hajj of HawkWatch International as she takes you through the many plumages bald eagles go through as they grow up.
 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. **Guided car caravan tour to look for eagles in the wild.** Bring binoculars!

2 - 3 p.m. **Eagles of the Great Salt Lake Region.** Ted Steinke, local wildlife photographer, will show you his stunning images of eagles taken around Great Salt Lake. Also enjoy a photographic display of Ted's images, which will be on display at the education center.

Fee is \$1.00 per person or \$5.00 max. per family. You must pre-register! (435) 723-5887.

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St. George Bird Festival. Field trips, presentations, live display, workshops, fun for beginners and experienced birders, evening banquet with KUTV Reece Stein, and a special presentation with Bobby Harrison who helped with the rediscovery the **Ivory-Billed Woodpecker** in Arkansas. This fourth annual St. George Bird Festival is presented by the Red Cliffs Chapter of the Audubon Society. For additional information contact: Red Cliffs Audubon Society: www.xmission.com/cldavis/, the City of St. George: www.sgcity.org/birdfestival, Utah Birds: www.utahbirds.org, or Marilyn Davis: (435) 673-0996



Please remember that the price of gasoline remains high. Carpooling riders should plan to reimburse their drivers \$2-3 for shorter trips, \$5 for longer trips

A Slew of Grasses

Continued from p.2

Most are short-statured, limiting cover for foxes or coyotes that would enjoy an omelet from the nests of our ground-nesting birds (e.g. ducks, shorebirds and short-eared owls). That harsh lesson was learned when tall native vegetation was restored to marshes around Walker Lake in Nevada. Six of the seven grass species that we seeded are native to northern Utah: Western wheatgrass, thickspike wheatgrass, slender wheatgrass, bluebunch wheatgrass, alkali sacaton, and Basin wild-rye. A small fraction of the seed mix consists of intermediate wheatgrass, a non-aggressive Old World grass already established around here that we intended to help with early stand establishment.

Seeding these native grasses requires patient timing and some luck. The soil should be cold to retard grass seed germination until spring, but the soil must be dry enough for heavy machinery and a final thorough harrowing, so that the seed can be drilled no more than ¼" deep. Craig caught the brief time window just before Thanksgiving, tucking our \$2000 worth of seed into a well-prepared seed bed. Craig added some old seed of our local globemallow to the mix too, as it is also well-adapted for the site. In general, though, our strategy is to first seed just grasses, with scattered native shrubs and wildflowers in later years. This leaves us the option to use a safe broadleaf weed herbicide that won't harm the grasses but can set back any resurgence of those broad-leaved weeds. The native grasses are expected to grow slowly, taking up to 3 years to establish a full stand.

If you walk out at the Barrens Sanctuary, try to walk around these seeded parcels, not across them. Pass through or over the smooth wire fences without standing on the wire, as the wires break down under your weight. Linda and I added fencing and signage to the southeast road entrance to discourage further poaching of waterfowl and limit access to foot traffic. Above all, enjoy the beauty and solitude of the place this winter.

Welcome to BAS

New Members

Loren W Richardson
Dick Spencer

Renewing Members

Linda F Baker
Windsor Copley
Rebecca S Echols
Jane Erickson

Transfers Into Our Chapter

Alene S Fornoff
Al Forsyth
Mr & Mrs T J Gordon
Karen Wood

W E Saul

Bridgerland Audubon contacts

Trustees

2004-2007 Dave Drown, 752-3797; Jack Greene, 563-6816;
Reinhard Jockel; Stephen Peterson, 755-5041
2005-2008 Jim Cane, 713-4668; Richard Mueller, 752-5637;
Dick Hurren 435/734-2653; Jennifer Hoffmann, 713-
4935
2006-2009 Ron Goede, 752-9650; Bret Selman, 435/257-5260;
David Liddell, 245-2705

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Membership in the Bridgerland Audubon Society includes a subscription to *The Stilt*, as well as *Audubon* magazine. The editor of *The Stilt* invites submissions, due on the 15th of each month. Send to stiltnews@hotmail.com.

National Audubon Society Chapter Membership Application

Yes, I'd like to contribute to Audubon and receive the Bridgerland Audubon newsletter, *The Stilt*, and the *National AUDUBON* magazine, as a:

_____ **New** member of the National Audubon Society and Bridgerland Audubon.

My check for \$20 is enclosed (this is a special first-year rate).

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____



Please make all checks payable to National Audubon Society and send with this card to:

National Audubon Society
Membership Data Center
PO Box 51001
Boulder, CO 80322-1001
W-52 Local Chapter Code: 7XCHA

National Audubon occasionally makes its membership list available to selected organizations. To have your name omitted from this, please check this box.

Note to new National Audubon members: To get on *The Stilt* newsletter mailing list without the usual 8-week delay, contact Susan Durham, 752-5637, sdurham@cc.usu.edu.

Prefer the local newsletter only? Send \$20 (make checks payable to Bridgerland Audubon Society) and this form to: Bridgerland Audubon Society, PO Box 3501, Logan, UT 84323-3501 for a subscription to *The Stilt*.



The Stilt

Newsletter of Bridgerland Audubon Society

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