OCTOBER 2020

Sacajawea Audubon News

Sacajawea Audubon Society builds on an interest in birds to promote the conservation of our natural environment through enjoyment, education, and action.

Monday, October 12th, 2020 VIRTUAL PROGRAM:

"How beaver fit within the plans for the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve"

with Rich McEldowney, Sr. Wetland Scientist

Rich McEldowney, Sr. Wetland Scientist and Vice President of Confluence Consulting Inc. will be our speaker on **October 12, 2020, 7:00 pm**, at our virutal monthly meeting. Rich, along with the team of experts at Confluence, is generating the overall design for the restoration of wetlands at SAS's Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve (IAWP) in East Bozeman.

Rich will be describing how wetlands perform several vital functions that operate at different capacity levels depending on a plethora of factors. Those factors include the type of wetland, the position of the wetland within the landscape relative to other features of the landscape, the level of intactness—or lack thereof—within a wetland complex, and the degree of disturbance exhibited by the wetland within the surrounding watershed. Numerous methods have been developed to evaluate these critical wetland functions. In his presentation Rich will provide an overview of these wetland functions and an overview of the most commonly used method for their evaluation in Montana—the Montana Wetland Assessment Method (MWAM). Rich will then discuss how Confluence is applying the MWAM to the IAWP wetland site and describe how this might be applied to the wetland mitigation banking scenario proposed for the IAWP.

And of course, Rich will discuss how the much maligned American Beaver, *Castor canadensis,* will once again be welcomed to the "hood" as critical and respected inhabitants of the IAWP wetlands. So, if you are a believer in all things beaver, be sure and join us for Rich's presentation.

If you wouldl like to attend the October 12 Virtual Program, please register at https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3623415690264857355.

SAS programs are free and open to the public. Our programs feature a special guest speaker the 2nd Monday of each month, September through May. Join us for a ***virtual social at 6:30 pm. Announcements and the program begin at 7:00 pm.***

Safely continue to meet with other SAS members during this COVID-19 crisis!

by SAS President Chris Nixon

Sacajawea Audubon Society is happy to announce that we will continue to host virtual monthly program meetings through December of 2020. Due to COVID-19, this method of hosting monthly meetings is proving to be the best means to continue providing excellent programs for our members.

Our September program by Beth Madden was a smashing success to say the least. Praises for Beth's presentation continue to pour in through our e-mail. More than 100 members attended virtually and were wowed by Beth's knowledge and ability to impart her enthusiasm for the prairie ecosystem. Beth shared info concerning the prairie-dependent avian fauna that cling to our remaining prairies and how critical Montana's prairies are to these increasingly rare bird species. Montana really is "The Last Best Place" for many of these beautiful and vocal prairie bird species.

Information on how to register and attend our upcoming virtual meetings will be on the SAS website. Check there monthly for the latest updates and instructions on how to attend. You don't want to be that member that missed out! So be sure to join us virtually for the upcoming meeting on October 12th.

SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY

INDRELAND AUDUBON WETLAND PRESERVE UPDATE: OCT. 2020

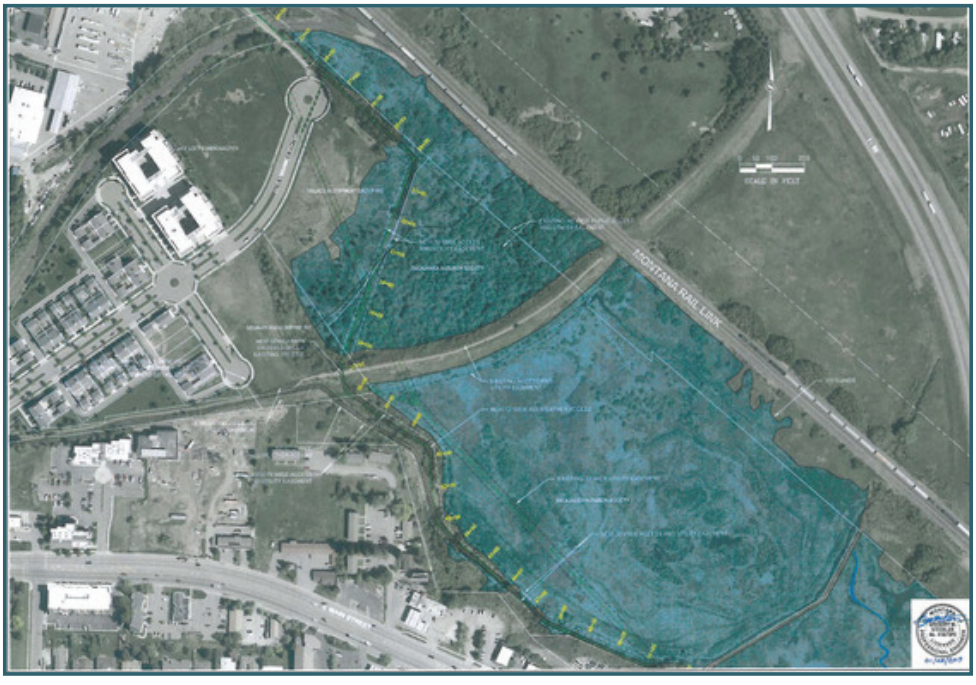
What's all that diggin' going on?
IAWP Sewer Line Construction Updates

For the next several months The City of Bozeman will continue the process of upgrading the sewer main that runs through Sacajawea Audubon Society's Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve (IAWP). COP, the sewer construction contractor, has cleared trees on our property. In the portion of the sewer route that is outside the wetland area, which is more than 90% of the sewer route, they have removed trees along a 30-ft-wide zone to accommodate the construction equipment. In the wetland area, which is only a small portion of the sewer route, the clearing is only about 15 feet wide. Temporary dewatering wells were installed to draw down the water table during the new sewer installation. After the new sewer main is installed and is put into use, there will be additional minimal disturbance along the old sewer line as it is capped off and left in place under the wetland.

SAS member Andy Epple and SAS Vice President John Edwards are monitoring the sewer construction process to make sure COP is following the requirements of the sewer construction plans and the federal wetland permit. Disruption of bird life is unavoidable, but the tree removal company worked to minimize the impact where possible. This disturbance was necessary for the installation of a new, larger capacity sewer main that runs from E. Bozeman all the way to N. Rouse Ave.

The timing of the donation of the 32 acres of wetland to SAS by Mike Delaney, Illeana Indreland, and the John W. Murdoch Revocable Trust was truly golden. Had the donation not taken place before the design and construction of the new sewer main, many acres of wetland would have been destroyed to construct an all-weather access road above the new sewer in order to service and maintain the sewer. The new sewer main would have been installed in the former sewer easement which cut directly across and through the wetland. With this timely donation, SAS was able to provide the City of Bozeman a new sewer easement, largely outside the delineated wetlands, below the bluff along E. Main. Thus, the IAWP has already proven to be a win/win for the numerous bird and wildlife species that inhabit the wetland, as well as for the taxpayers in Bozeman by lowering the cost of installing the new sewer infrastructure and preserving wetland. Important wetland functions will be preserved here in our local drainage of the E. Gallatin River rather than mitigated and replaced within a distant river drainage. And indeed, the wetland functions will be increased and the wetland enhanced with the implementation of the wetland restoration project planned for the near future *(see page 1 for the upcoming SAS October monthly meeting).*

It is an incredible occurrence when a local, citizen-based, not-for-profit such as SAS and a municipality such as the City of Bozeman can work together to better the services provided to the local community, cut cost to the local taxpayers, AND improve habitat for wildlife at the same time. You can be proud of your membership in SAS!



Map showing the sanitary sewer main layout, courtesy Stahly Engineering & Associates.

Burdock by the Numbers

4,600 pounds of burdock plants and burs removed in 2020. WOW!!!

255 volunteer hours cutting and hauling burdock for disposal in the landfill

35 dedicated volunteers doing hot, prickly, challenging work

3 birds found entangled and dead (1 black-capped chickadee and 2 pine siskins)

1 warbling vireo rescued from a burdock and successfully released

Each year our Sacajawea Audubon volunteers work to rid our trails, parks, and neighborhoods of invasive burdock which otherwise would take over choice habitat for birds. Besides suppressing beneficial vegetative species, burdock actually entangles birds in Velcro-like burs while the birds are foraging, often causing their deaths. By removing the flowering plants before they disperse seeds we are diminishing and even eliminating burdock patches. Some of our most noteworthy successes have been in Glen Lake Rotary Park, Story Mill Community Park, Sypes Canyon, Sourdough Nature Trail, Story Hills, and Bogart Park, where burdock are getting more scarce every year. This year our volunteers spread our influence further yet by finding, adopting, and cutting new patches in their neighborhoods.

Thanks to all the volunteers who brought their good humor and great work ethic to our burdock cutting events. You made the effort fun and so highly successful!

TOP: The burdock cutting team during a pandemic [left to right]: Paulette Epple, Jim Belli (hiding behind the burdock!), Felix Spinelli, Leo Freeman, Mary Keefer, Beth Madden, Woody Martyn, Betty Martyn, Bill Klenn, Lynn Mugaas, and Andy Epple. Photo by Kyle Moon. ABOVE: Gina Carolan (left) and Sarah Devitt (right) haul out burdock. Photo by Paulette Epple.

This year's volunteers: John Ansley, John Backes, Jill Beck, Jim Belli, Susan Bilo, Nancy Blake, Gina Carolan, David Cole, Hobart Collins, April Craighead, Sarah Devitt, John Edwards, Andy Epple, Paulette Epple, Pat Fowlie, Leo Freeman, Lou Ann Harris, Deborah Hines, Hilary Johnson, Jim Keefer, Mary Keefer, Peggy Kimmet, Ron Kimmet, Bill Klenn, Beth Madden, Betty Martyn, Woody Martyn, Kyle Moon, Lynn Mugaas, Don Murdock, Peggy Osborne, John Parker, Anne Ready, Gretchen Rupp, and Felix Spinelli. And thanks to all the others who are working to stop the spread of burdock.

THE BIRDS AND OTHER WILDLIFE THANK YOU!

National Audubon's 8 Ways to Reduce Plastic

If there's one material we can't seem to live without, it's plastic. And there's a reason for that: It's cheap, durable, and lightweight, making it perfect for everything from iPhones to eyewear.

But what makes plastic so useful for humans is exactly what makes it a nasty environmental contaminant—it spreads easily and takes forever to degrade, finding its way to our lands and oceans where it wreaks havoc on wildlife. To date, at least 700 species of marine animals, including shorebirds, have been entangled by plastic or mistaken it for food. The result is often suffocation or starvation.

Since the 1950s, we've generated 8.3 billion metric tons of the stuff, of which a scant 9% has been recycled. And by 2050, scientists predict the oceans will stock more plastic than fish.

But as problematic and worrisome as all of this is, completely cutting plastic from our lives is impossible at this point. Reducing your plastic use, however, is surprisingly easy and pain-free. You're not going to end the problem overnight, but here are some simple tricks to waste less.

1. Cut Out Plastic Cutlery—Especially When Ordering In

Have you ever tried to cut a piece of broccoli with a plastic fork? Yeah, not fun. And yet Americans use 100 million plastic utensils every day, much of which comes wrapped in even more plastic.

When ordering food online, opt out of receiving plastic utensils—it's often as easy as just checking (or unchecking) a box. That's it. And if you're ordering takeout in person or over the phone, ask the restaurant to skip the plastic flatware. Better yet: Try cooking for yourself. Although the idea is radical, home-cooked food is often healthier and produces way less waste.

2. Party Plastic-Free

Let's be honest, no post-college party needs those red Solo cups, which may take 450 years to decompose. So why not use real cups?

Whether you're hosting a dinner party or bridal shower, one great way to reduce plastic waste is to simply use real tableware. If you don't have enough, ask friends to bring extras (people tend to care more about food than whether or not the plates match).

The downside, of course, is cleanup, but there are even guides for that! And if you've got a dishwasher, well, you've really got no excuses. If you still feel that the burden of cleanup is too great (or you're serving booze, which might lead to wobbly hands), avoid the plastic tableware and at least opt for sustainable products instead.

3. Say Bye Bye to Balloons

Many balloons are made of plastic, and when they get away, they can travel for thousands for miles before touching down. Some birds mistake them for food, and others mistake them (or their ribbons) for nesting material.

"We see this all of the time," says Steve Kress, executive director of Audubon Project Puffin. "One time, I found a ribbon tangled around a puffin in its burrow. It said on the balloon, 'Angry Birds.'"

Birds aren't the only animals that balloons harm either; they pose dangers to all other manners of wildlife. So, go ahead and ditch the balloons at your next big celebration. And if you're worried about deflating the fun, try some other options. If you're feeling crafty, make tissue garlands or paper lanterns. And if you're feeling lazy, just buy a banner instead—non-plastic, of course.

4. Take Advantage of Tap Water

Evian. Fiji. Smart Water. They all sound special—but are they really any healthier or tastier than tap?

Not really. In most parts of the world with public, potable water, tap is just as safe to drink as the stuff that comes in plastic. It's also often as tasty—or tastier. Globally, we spend more than $100 billion each year on bottled water, a sharp contrast to the pennies you pay to turn on a faucet. Yet another reason to love tap.

So how can you take advantage of this incredible public resource? Find a reusable bottle that you love, and don't let it leave your side. If you have trouble finding a place to refill it, check out WeTap or Dopper, Smartphone tap maps.

If you still occasionally fall victim to Big Water's advertising ploys—who doesn't want Jennifer Aniston's Smart Water glow?—try to reuse the bottles as much as possible. No one will ever know.

5. Skip the Plastic Straws

Ah, the humble straw: American staple, transporter of sodas and iced coffee, an entertaining bubble machine—and also a major threat to wildlife, as anyone who's seen an impaled sea turtle can attest.

Ridding straws from your life is no easy feat. Americans alone use 500 million of them each day, after all. Most of the time they are provided without consent and thrown out thoughtlessly. But they can also be necessary—especially if you suffer from certain medical conditions.

If you don't need these suckers, don't use them. Tell your server to skip the straws as soon as you sit down at a restaurant, or use a refillable cup at your local coffee shop. And if you do need to use a straw, try a sustainable alternative. There are straws made of bamboo and paper, stainless steel and titanium. Heck, there are even straws made from straw!

6. Buy Bulk Foods

Food and packaging containers account for nearly half of all trash in landfills, according to the EPA, and buying bulk can help stem that stream.

So, go ahead, instead of picking up that small jar of peanut butter, spring for five pounds of the salty goodness. If you do, you'll save money, trips to the grocery store, and plastic waste. According to NC State University, buying peanut butter in bulk, for example, can save families seven pounds of landfill waste per year. Other items that will yield large savings in plastic waste when bought in bulk include staples such as noodles, rice, and beans, according to One Green Planet.

7. Get Better at Recycling

While everyone knows they should be recycling by now, even the best of us still don't always get it right.

Turns out, we recycle only a fraction of the plastic waste we produce, and that's partly due to poor recycling techniques. You do, in fact, need to rinse out your containers, for example. Otherwise they might contaminate plastics around them and end up in a landfill. Also, avoid tossing out recycling in a used plastic bag. What might seem like a smart twofer turns out to be potentially damaging to recycling machinery.

And now that China stopped accepting our recycling, try to avoid buying plastics numbered 3–7, which include common food products like single-serving yogurt cups (another reason to buy bulk!). Many U.S. municipalities can no longer recycle them.

"People think that they've done their good deed for the day by throwing plastic in the blue bin," says Shilpi Chhotray, the senior communications officer for Break Free From Plastic. But in reality, she says, much of that "recycling" just ends up as trash due to human error.

8. Actually Remember Your Reusable Bags

Look, you probably already have plenty of reusable bags, but the tricky part is remembering to take them anywhere.

"Bringing your own bags is a no-brainer, but a lot of people don't do it," Kress says. "And those little plastic bags are a big problem."

Here's your solution: Store one in everything you take with you—your purse, backpack, gym bag—and if you drive to the store, in your car. You want bags everywhere. There's just one hard part: When you return from home, don't forget to put them back.

And if you're still worried, you'll forget them, just add "reusable bag" to your shopping list.

Take It to the Next Level

If you've already mastered these tips, it might be time to up your plastic-free game. Chhotray calls this the culture of "leveling up."

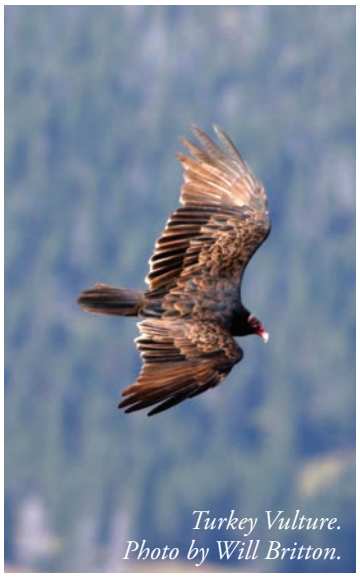
These tips are "a good place to start," she says, "but a terrible place to stop."

If your favorite restaurant gives out single-use plastics, for example, ask them to switch to sustainable alternatives. If that doesn't work, try circulating a petition in your community. The next step is to engage at the civil level to put local laws on the books that reduce plastic waste. (Seattle, for example, enacted a ban on plastic straws and cutlery.)

"Take your practice and get people involved in your cause," she says. "The idea is that we have to move away from individual change to this culture of leveling up."

Taken from the "National Audubon's Eight Ways to Reduce Plastic"

Bridger Mountain Raptor Migration Project Temporarily Halted due to Fire



Turkey Vulture. Photo by Will Britton.

by Jojo Morelli

The Bridger Mountain Raptor Migration Project began this year on August 27th, marking its 29th season of the project. Counters Will Britton and Joanna Morelli will be living in the ski patrol hut ("the penthouse") and counting at the site's typical spot, the helipad at the top of the Bridger Bowl Ridge trail. Due to fire closures, the watch has been suspended for now, but visitors can expect a re-opening in a week or so when trail access is renewed.

So far, there have been 98 migrants counted at the site. An unusual number of Turkey Vulture migrants have been counted (21 this season, compared to a total of 15 seen in August and September of 2019). Other notable sightings include the season's first Swainson's Hawk, seen in our last hour of counting on September 3rd. Aside from migrant activity, the local raptors in the area always keep us entertained; although Golden Eagles are maybe the easiest to spot, we have been documenting regular activity by local American Kestrels, Prairie Falcons, Peregrine Falcons, Sharp-shinned Hawks, Cooper's Hawks, Red-tailed Hawks, and Turkey Vultures.

We would like to thank all of the firefighters working diligently for our safety. We also would like to give a big shout out to all members of Sacajawea Audubon Society for their continued support of the project (and for housing us in these strange times). We can't wait to see all of you up at the count once the trail has been cleared to use again! Check out our daily count updates at hawkcount.org.

GALLATIN VALLEY EARTH DAY PRESENTS THE FILM "2040"

On **Monday, October 5th at 7pm**, the City of Bozeman, Dee O Gee, and Gallatin Valley Earth Day present the film **"2040"** as an online streaming event. Award-winning director Damon Gameau embarks on a journey to explore what the future could look like by 2040 if we simply embrace the best solutions that exist today. After the film, find out more and comment on the **City of Bozeman's draft Climate Plan**. In addition, learn about the Bozeman High School Solar Schools Club's efforts to put solar panels on our schools and how you can donate. Register for this **FREE** online event on the Gallatin Valley Earth Day website at gallatinvalleyearthday.org.

SAS Book Club selection for October: *The Geese of Beaver Bog*

In the summer of 1998, award-winning writer and biologist Bernd Heinrich found himself the unwitting—but doting—foster parent of an adorable gosling named Peep. Good-natured, spirited Peep drew Heinrich into her world—one he found to be filled with as much color and drama as that of her human counterparts. Heinrich takes his readers through mud, icy waters, and overgrown sedge hummocks into a seemingly impenetrable world. He does so with deft insight, respectful modesty, and infectious good humor.

The Geese of Beaver Bog is part love story, part science experiment, and wholly delightful.

The SAS book club will meet on Wednesday, October 21st, from 4-5 pm, at the Pilgrim Congregational Church (2118 S. 3rd Avenue)

PLEASE NOTE. Due to Covid-19 regulations:

1. All participants MUST wear a face mask or you will not be permitted to join.
2. We will also be required to sign a waiver both for the church and SAS.
3. We will be social distancing.

We want everyone to feel safe and comfortable. Feel free to call Sherry Staub with any questions at 563-370-0757.

SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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Photo by Paulette Epple.

Showy Fleabane (Aspen Fleabane)

- **Scientific Name:** *Erigeron speciosus* (Asteraceae Family)
- **Height:** 1 to 2 feet tall
- **Hardiness:** Zone 2
- **Wildlife Value:** Wonderful pollinator plant. Birds and small mammals eat the seeds.

Showy fleabane is a native perennial wildflower that is widespread in the western United States. It's a mound-forming plant and sometimes grows into colonies that produce masses of color. The woody stems have several flowers and each flower has hundreds of light purple to lavender-blue ray florets that surround a soft yellow disk. These flower colonies are favorites of pollinators such as butterflies and native bees and they attract a variety of other insects and spiders. With more than 90% of our songbirds relying almost entirely on insects to feed their young, it's important to plant flowers that will attract insects as a way to provide food for songbirds raising their young. Showy fleabane also provides seeds in the fall that are eaten by American goldfinch, pine siskin, and numerous sparrow species.

This plant grows in a variety of environments such as meadows, woodlands, dry slopes, grasslands, and open forests. Hundreds of these plants will carpet mountain meadows in the summer. Its hardy nature makes it useful for soil stabilization and the restoration of disturbed sites.

Showy fleabane prefers full sun to part shade and grows best in dry to moist sites with well drained soils. It tolerates a variety of soil types and, once established, is very drought tolerant. It grows 1–2 ft tall and 1–2 ft wide, is mostly disease free, and is great in beds, borders, and natural gardens. It is adapted to rocky sites and does well in parched south facing flowerbeds. Showy fleabane easily reseeds itself and is easy to propagate from seed.

Showy fleabane is a beautiful native plant that will add layers of lavender color to your garden, attract pollinators, and nourish birds and their families. If you would like to see mounds of showy fleabane blooming in July and August check out the Langhor Park Pollinator Garden as you walk the Gallagator Trail between East Mason and East Garfield Streets in Bozeman. *~ Leslie Eddington*

Correction: The September Plants for Birds article on Showy Goldeneye was written by Leslie Eddington, not Paulette Epple.

Sacajawea Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1711
Bozeman, MT 59771-1771

Change Service Requested

Sacajawea Audubon Society, affiliated with the National Audubon Society, meets on the second Monday of each month, September through May.

Sacajawea Audubon Society Monthly Newsletter is available electronically to all Sacajawea Audubon Society members September through May. Members and non-members can receive a mailed paper newsletter for an annual $10 subscription fee. Please send your check to the address above.

Deadline for article submission is the 15th of the month preceding the month the articles will appear. Send articles electronically to newsletter@sacajaweaaudubon.org.

Change of Address: If you have a change of address or are away, please notify membership@sacajaweaaudubon.org. Undeliverable mailed newsletters are returned to us for an extra fee.

Find more at the **Sacajawea Audubon Society website** at sacajaweaaudubon.org

BECOME A MEMBER OR RENEW YOUR ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP TODAY!

Sacajawea Audubon Society Membership 2020

Individual or Family

☐ Basic Membership $25

☐ Supporting Membership $50
(Supporting local conservation & education project)

☐ Thank You for Considering an Additional Donation .....$_____
- ☐ *Bridger Raptor Study*
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- ☐ *Wetland Campaign*
- ☐ *Wherever is Needed*

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❖ We do not share your information except with National Audubon, so your contact information is safe with us. Please check the boxes is you do not want your information shared with... ☐ National Audubon Society ☐ Montana Audubon

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Mail to: *Sacajawea Audubon Society*
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Thank you for your membership and donation. We look forward to birding with you!

newsletter 10/20