

WILLAPA WHISTLER

A Publication of the Willapa Hills Audubon Society

Volume 38 // Issue 4

July /August 2012



Cedar Waxing Colony -- Image Royce Craig

Invitation to the WHAS Annual Summer Picnic

By Larry Brandt

Make new acquaintances and join your friends at the Willapa Hills Audubon's **Annual Picnic** to be held **Sunday, August 5, 2012** from 1 until 4 pm at the Longview School District's Wake Robin nature facility.

Participate in hiking, bird watching or just sitting around and chatting. Please bring an item (entree, salad, dessert, side) that will serve 6 to 8 people. WHAS will provide drinking water. Please bring your own plates and utensils and, if you like, other beverages.

Directions: From the intersection of Hwy 4 and Coal Creek road, drive north on Coal Creek road approximately 1.5-miles. Turn left on Carlon Loop road and cross the bridge over Coal Creek. Proceed straight ahead through the gate into the Wake Robin compound. There is plenty of parking.

See you on August 5th!

The Wood Ducks of Lake Sacajawea... and Other Feathered Friends

By John Green

It would appear that the wood duck boxes set out this spring by Bob Arnsdorf and John Green have reaped benefits for local wild life. They placed 3 boxes in addition to two already on the North Island near Ocean Beach Highway. Also 2 new boxes were placed on the South Island near the Elks Building. There have been numerous females with ducklings seen at the lake with one mother fledging ten ducklings, the most seen in the last few years.

Crows are also fledging their young around the lake. There have been numerous reports by patrons who have been dive-bombed by the adult crows protecting their young.

Three Green Herons (one of which appears to be a juvenile) have been seen fairly frequently which is a sign of their continued summer nesting here.

WHAS Newsletter Editor

By Larry Brandt, President

It is with some regret that I announce the leaving of Ludger Woehrmann as our long-time *Willapa Whistler* newsletter editor. You, our readers, can attest to the *Willapa Whistler's* high standards over these past few years.

Ludger has served the Willapa Hills Audubon Society as webmaster, board member, project volunteer and newsletter editor. His contributions and dedication to WHAS will certainly be missed. He is moving out of the immediate area and feels that his newsletter editing tasks can no longer be performed up to his normal standards. We are fortunate that he will continue to be our webmaster.

So, Willapa Hills Audubon is looking for a new editor for the *Willapa Whistler* newsletter. We need a volunteer or two to come forward and take on the task of preparing our bi-monthly publication. I understand from Ludger that each issue requires 10-15 hours of preparation every other month. Training and software will be provided to the willing participants.

If you are interested in becoming an Audubon volunteer editor, please contact:

Larry Brandt, (360) 200-4580

lbrandt@centurytel.net

In this issue of the *Whistler*:

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Bird Photos by Royce Craig throughout

Support our mission, join WHAS today!

Check type of Membership:

- ☐ New Chapter Membership **WHAS** (\$20 check for annual membership)
- ☐ Renewal Chapter Membership **WHAS** (\$20 check for annual membership)
- ☐ I would like to support the work of Willapa Hills Audubon Society.

Enclosed is my additional donation of \$_____

Membership includes 6 issues of our newsletter *WILLAPA WHISTLER* annually.

We are a 501(c) (3) non-profit corporation. All dues and donations are tax deductible

For membership in National Audubon Society visit <http://www.audubon.org/>.

Please make your check payable to:

WILLAPA HILLS AUDUBON SOCIETY or WHAS and mail to:

WHAS-Membership, PO Box 399, Longview, WA 98632.

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____ Email _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Y14:7XCH rev. 2007

Thank you for supporting your local Audubon chapter -- Willapa Hills Audubon Society!

We will not share your contact information with anyone.

*) To announce **occasional** reminders and to communicate last minute schedule changes due to weather or other issues for WHAS programs and field trips.

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Please indicate any **new** information:

I prefer you contact me by:

- ☐ Phone
- ☐ Email
- ☐ Mail

Other options:

- ☐ I prefer to receive the *WHISTLER* by email
(Add your email address below)
- ☐ Contact me about volunteer opportunities
- ☐ Add me to your announcement email list*

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OTHER

WHAS Board Meeting Highlights

By Charlotte Persons, Secretary

Summer Quarterly Meeting, June 15, 2012, Longview

This meeting at St. Stephen's Baird House mostly involved discussion of new business and board members stepping up to do it:

- Redman Hall NW Birds Exhibit, Skamokawa, Aug. 2 –Sept. 27 (Carol Carver will ask how WHAS can help);
- finding a newsletter editor (Larry Brandt/Charlotte Persons);
- Seattle Audubon lawsuit against DNR regarding logging effects on Marbled Murrelet in Wahkiakum Co. (Steve Puddicombe will explore/report to board);
- proposed berm of dredge spoils on Graveyard Spit on Western Snowy Plover habitat (Larry Brandt will follow up/report);
- Ridgefield, WA, Birdfest Oct. 13 and 14 (Margaret Green will contact Vancouver Audubon Soc.);
- taxidermied bird collection--study skins vs. mounts (Darrel Whipple/Charlotte Persons).
- Some old business was tabled until task force committees can meet:
 - 2013 WHAS Calendar;
 - Donation policy, bylaws.

Any WHAS member who has energy or ideas to volunteer for any of these projects should contact the appropriate board member. The next board meeting will be in late September so we can discuss state-wide proposals for Fall ACOW, which will be Oct. 5—7 in Poulsbo.

The Whistler Online

Did you know that you can see all the beautiful bird images in this *Willapa Whistler* in color online on our website? Go to <http://willapahillsaudubon.org> and just click on the *Whistler* in the top menu for this and past issues.

CONSERVATION ISSUES HIGH ON AGENDA

By Steve Puddicombe

The area encompassed by Willapa Hills has many important issues in the works. From coal export to LNG, and the protection of several iconic bird species, the WHAS Conservation Committee has recently had a plethora of activity, with more to come. These are some of the main concerns we have and action we have taken or propose.

Marbled Murrelet

We are monitoring the current Washington State DNR conservation plan that is in process and should be completed by December for DEIS review and comment. The plan covers only DNR lands. These have been covered only by an interim plan since the listing of Marbled Murrelet (MAMU) as threatened, so this plan will set in place a more permanent strategy to be followed for the future. MAMUs are declining precipitously and this is an important step in securing their survival in SW Washington. Recently DNR has set aside 67 acres in Wahkiakum County as permanent protected habitat, which we supported. However, the issue in protecting DNR lands is that the timberlands have a mandated highest priority in funding schools and county governments. As part of the protection deal for the 67 acre tract legislation made it possible for the county to be reimbursed for the earnings lost, and this continues to be an issue as DNR struggles to meet its mandate while still ensuring the old growth habitat MAMU needs is adequate for its conservation and, hopefully, resurgence. SW Washington poses a difficulty in this, as most of the land is in private timber holdings with little to no Federal lands and a relatively small percentage of State-owned tracts. So far, private timber interests have been mostly

exempted from responsibility for preserving MAMU habitat.

Coal Export Update

Climate change and its impacts on all Earth's life forms, with its connection to burning of fossil fuels is the underlying premise for the WHAS opposition to coal export. However, many other compelling reasons, previously summarized and including quality of life do exist to support this position.

Currently, the Longview project proposed by Millennium Bulk Terminals (MBT) has two parallel timelines. One is for the cleanup of the old Reynold's site being conducted jointly by Alcoa and MBT. There will be a period of public comment and a public hearing to review the proposed cleanup plan. We will be pushing for a high level of cleanup. Secondly, MBT has applied to the county for its shoreline permit, but the application was rejected as incomplete. A complete Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is being prepared and when submitted will be open for written and oral public comment. A most important recent action was taken by the Longview City Council, which voted to send a letter to federal agencies requesting a comprehensive review of the cumulative impacts of all the terminals proposed for the Pacific NW. They join many municipalities across our region requesting this review.

There are 2 additional projects proposed for Columbia County across the river at Port Westward, Clatskanie. There is a strong coalition involved in this fight. If you wish to become involved minimally or to the max, please contact the Greens at jgreen2317@aol.com or 360-575-9238

...continued on page 4 Northern
Spotted Owl



Spotted Towhee -- Image by Royce Craig



Lazuli Bunting -- Image by Royce Craig

Continued from page 3: Conservation Issues...

Northern Spotted Owl

Northern Spotted Owls continue to decline at 2.9% per year across their range. The Northwest Forest Plan has successfully protected the old growth and late successional forests that these owls need for nesting, foraging, and dispersal. However, many decades of poor stewardship of these forests have left Northern Spotted Owls vulnerable to disease, invasive



Bushtits -- Image by Royce Craig

species, and weather events.

This spring the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released two draft proposals that will affect the Northern Spotted Owl: the Critical Habitat Designations rule and an Environmental Impact Statement on lethally removing Barred Owls on an experimental basis. In the last twenty years Barred Owls have invaded Northern Spotted Owl territory and are believed to have a direct effect on populations of Northern Spotted Owl. WHAS made no comments on this EIS, which is controversial among Audubon chapters because it requires shooting thousands of Barred Owls, a protected species, to keep Northern Spotted Owls from going extinct.

WHAS is in the process of creating comments on the Critical Habitat Designation. The proposed amount of acreage is about twice what was proposed in 2008, but there are problems in some of the language, which is designed to allow more logging. There is no definition of “management” of forests, “ecology forestry,” and “adverse modification”, so there may be multiple lawsuits to stop timber sales on federal lands. The proposed Critical Habitat Designation also fails to note the other major purposes of protecting these forests: watershed enhancement, recreation, cultural heritage, and protection of the many other rare and endangered species in these ecosystems, for which Northern Spotted Owl is just a “indicator” species.

Update on Oregon LNG Proposal In Warrenton Oregon

By Carol Carver

At an informational open house on June 12th, Oregon LNG (OLNG) unveiled their latest proposal to enter the LNG market. As anticipated, they are no longer proposing an import terminal and instead are applying to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to be a “bi-directional” terminal.

Their public relations materials describe their proposal “to construct, own and operate a LNG peak-shaving, liquefaction, and export facility” on the peninsula at the mouth of the Skipanon River. They anticipate the proposed terminal to be completed in 2017, to “operate as a tolling facility, leasing peak-shaving and liquefaction capacity to industry partners.”

An affiliated company called Oregon Pipeline is proposing to construct an 86 mile pipeline from Warrenton to connect to the Williams Pipeline in Woodland, WA. OLNG has withdrawn the plans to put a pipeline through the Willamette Valley and has sent a letter to potentially impacted families apologizing for “the inconvenience” of the pipeline plans across their property for about 5 years.

OLNG has a suit against Clatsop County in the Oregon Court of Appeals because when the new county commission was seated, with a majority opposed to LNG development in the county, they were within the timeline set for county action and rescinded their predecessor’s decision to allow pipeline construction for LNG in Clatsop County. This decision was in keeping with a county initiative in which 67% of voters opposed such a pipeline. The new proposed pipeline will still cross Clatsop County setting the stage for another decision by the same county commission and perhaps further litigation.

FERC begins the formal public hearing process in coming months. Audubon members may want to inform themselves of the details of the proposed plan. Columbia Riverkeeper and Columbia-Pacific Common Sense will be holding their own informational meetings in early July, details to be announced. Current available information about the OLNG proposal is available on the <http://columbiariverkeeper.org> website.



Image courtesy of C. Carver

Backyard Birding Surprise

By Larry Turner

When you feed birds, as we do, it is not too surprising to see a new bird, even if it is not the kind to come to a feeder. After all, a presence of birds itself will attract birds. This year we have had our first Lazuli bunting and Cliff swallow – and we don't have anything like cliffs nearby.

But the other day, I looked across our property and saw at a distance what appeared to be a pheasant, feeding on a flat spot on the ground. Very unusual I thought; this is not pheasant country. Then my wife, Joanne, got her binoculars and said that it did not look like any pheasant she knew. So I got my binoculars and looked. It had a white top of the head, a broad black stripe below that, and then white around its neck. This could not be the well-established, but non-native Chinese ring-necked pheasant.

While we were baffled at first, this is what the internet is for. And it did not take long to find out that it was a Reeve's pheasant, *Syrnaticus reevesii*, whose habitat is forested mountains in central China. It is larger than the ring-necked and has a very long tail, up to 6 feet long. We did not know where it came from, but central China seemed highly unlikely. So I contacted some exotic bird breeders in Washington and they

knew of no one in southwest Washington who was breeding them. But one person said that the Washington Fish and Wildlife Department had tried releasing them for hunting in the past, but the attempt was unsuccessful. We have only four neighbors in

our vicinity and did not see any evidence of them raising birds.

We were careful not to disturb such a beautiful creature as we did our yard work, but we soon found it was not afraid of us. And after a while it even started following us around. So we fed it, and it became friendly. It



Reeve's Pheasant - Image: Joanne Turner

rested under the dogwood trees. It would follow me out to the mailbox, and Joanne around the property as she was mulching. It would come up and "cluck" at us and came when whistled (which usually preceded food). After two weeks of this, we left town for an overnight trip to pick up grandchildren, and when we came back, we saw it no more. The grandkids were disappointed since we had talked about it.

Just like we don't know where it came from, we don't know where it went. But we sure had a grand time enjoying it while it was here.

MacGillivray's Warbler Could Be Our Newest Mount

By Darrel Whipple

Our next addition to WHAS's assortment of mounted specimens could be a MacGillivray's Warbler. I am soliciting your donation to make this happen!

The bird was an inadvertent mortality on May 29th at the residence of WHAS members Russ and Ann Kastberg near Castle Rock.

The MacGillivray's Warbler is a ground nester in dense undergrowth, a fairly common breeding bird in California, Oregon and Washington, but seldom seen – at least in my experience. It is marked by a gray hood, yellow belly and white crescents above and below the eye.

If you would like to donate \$10 or \$20 or more to help us raise the \$310 needed to pay for first-class professional taxidermy for this excellent specimen, please make your check to WHAS, indicate it is for "Mac Warbler," and mail it to

WHAS,
Mac Warbler
PO Box 399,
Longview, WA 98632.

For more information, you may contact me at 503-556-9838 or dwhipple@opusnet.com.

2012 Kid's Day Was a Huge Success

By Bob Arnsdorf

On Saturday, June 2nd, members of the Willapa Hills Audubon Society hosted a booth at Kids' Day at Bob's Merchandise in Longview. Several hundred children and their parents enjoyed the activities.

Together we dissected barn owl pellets and found lots of regurgitated rodent remains, mostly from unlucky or unwary voles. Many fortunate children were able to find vole skulls to take home.

With lots of "Kid Power" manning the screwdrivers and hammers, we built ten wood duck nesting boxes to be installed around local wetlands to enhance our wood duck populations. Several large broods of wood ducklings were spotted this spring at Lake Sacagawea, likely hatched from boxes WHAS installed, so hopefully we'll be seeing even more of these beautiful ducks in the future.

The kids also constructed bird-themed book marks to take home, with expert artistic assistance from WHAS youth



Image by Larry Brandt

member Alli Arnsdorf. Prizes were also awarded to the astute youth who were able to correctly identify mystery duck wings.

Thanks to all WHAS members who volunteered at Kids' Day including Ann Cordero, Larry Brandt, Margaret and John Green, Charlotte Persons, Darrel Whipple and Alli Arnsdorf. Hopefully you will join us again next year in teaching the youth of our community more about the natural world and how to preserve it.

Volunteer to Help Western Snowy Plover

By Charlotte Persons

Can you spend a few hours this summer helping an endangered bird? Western Snowy Plover, which nest on flat beaches, are threatened in Southwest Washington. In the past WHAS volunteers helped survey these birds and improve their habitat.

The U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife is again looking for volunteers to help with surveys of breeding Western Snowy Plover on **Leadbetter Point in Pacific County**. Volunteers must be able to walk three miles on sand, and someone in the group must be able to carry a spotting scope and tripod.

If you are interested, contact Charlotte Persons, Conservation Chair, 360-431-1174

Annual ACOW Metting

Save the date for the annual ACOW (Audubon Council Of Washington) meeting.

October 5-7, 2012
Poulsbo, WA

Keynote Speaker: David Yarnold
National Audubon Society President & CEO

For more information check our website and/or contact our president Larry Brandt.

Exploratory Drilling at Mt. St. Helens

By Charlotte Persons

Your Comments Needed by July 31 against Exploratory Drilling at Mt. St. Helens

On June 28 the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) released an Environmental Analysis (EA) for Ascot Resources' permit for exploratory drilling for molybdenum, copper, gold, and silver on Goat Mountain. This Skamania County area borders Mt. St. Helens National Monument on the northeast and is about 10 miles from the crater.

The EA proposes three possible alternatives: (1) no action; (2) the Ascot drilling proposal; and (3) a modification of the Ascot proposal, based on scoping comments received this spring.

Alternative 2 includes an estimate of Ascot using 18 to 20 workers during the drilling period from early May to late October 2013 to drill 23 holes for core samples. The EA concludes that using existing roads or re-commissioned abandoned roads to get to drilling sites and careful cleanup of the sites themselves would mean little long term impact to soils, water, or wildlife.

Alternative 3 includes:

- Capping all drill holes with cement after drilling is completed, not just those holes that "found water" during drilling. Capping all holes would follow Washington State regulations and possibly prevent Acid Mine Drainage developing over the years from uncapped holes.
- Drilling only after July 1, the end of Northern Spotted Owls early breeding season, at six northern drill sites that are within the owls' habitat.
- Sound baffling of drilling platforms and directional lighting on drilling to reduce disturbance of animals such as birds, elk, deer (and people).
- Suspension of drilling at two drill sites near the Green River Horse Camp during the day the week before Labor Day and completely after Labor Day.
- Bringing by water truck from the City of Randle the 5,000 gallons per day or more needed for drilling—to avoid depleting underground reserves.

While Alternative 3 includes some better modifications of this exploratory drilling project, the strongest message to the BLM is to urge Alternative 1 – NO ACTION.

More important, exploratory drilling on the "Margaret Deposit" is the first step in the process to develop a large mine, covering as much as 1,000 acres. The possibility of actual mining cannot be considered in the EA, which can only assess the exploratory drilling process. However, the larger issue of mine development is the most important focus for us citizens.

There are many reasons why a mine on Goat Mountain is a bad idea:

- The value of this site for wildlife habitat has long been recognized. All of the area is forested; most is young forest

planted after harvesting the Mt. St. Helens eruption blow down, and a northern portion was sheltered during the eruption and is 127 years old. An old growth stand is just outside the drilling area. The EA lists ten endangered or sensitive bird, mammal, and amphibian species that may be found in the area—no actual plant or animal survey has been done. The effects on these species from a mine—traffic, toxic dust, stream destruction, and so on—have not yet been assessed.

- Developing a mine in the Green River valley would also impact recreation destinations such as hiking trails, popular fishing lakes, and the horse camp.
- A large mine has strong possibility of contaminating the Green River over time. The Green River flows into the Toutle River, which joins the Cowlitz River. The Green River is an important spawning area for endangered salmon and trout, and all these rivers are used for agriculture. Constant seismic activity, especially earthquakes and land deformation, makes the possibility of failure of a mine tailings dam more likely. Acid Mine Drainage, already documented from old mines in the area, is also possible.
- Mine development may be misuse of public lands. Part of the mineral rights area was bought through the Trust for Public Lands to protect the Green River. Another part is Inventoried Roadless Area.

Denying the permit for exploration would stop the process of creating a mine in its tracks. That is why comments urging adoption of Alternative 1, No Action, will be most effective.

You may remember that in 2008 the BLM denied a lease permit to General Molybdenum, the previous mineral rights owner, a lease permit that would have allowed exploratory drilling at Goat Mountain. The BLM received 33,900 public comments, over 99 percent opposed to the mine and lease. BLM acknowledged that this public outcry was a major factor in their 2008 decision. This shows that your voice is important! Send your comments by email to:

Email: BLM_OR_Prospecting_EA@blm.gov

(Note: an underscore (_) must be placed in each blank space)



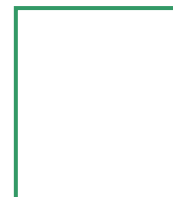
Black-throated Gray Warbler -- Image by Royce Craig

The June 29 press release from the BLM includes this advisory: "Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, please be advised that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so."

The BLM website with the Environmental Analysis, maps, press release, and so on, is at http://www.blm.gov/or/programs/minerals/prospecting/document_s.php



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The *Willapa Whistler* is the bi-monthly publication of the Willapa Hills Audubon Society (WHAS), a chapter of the National Audubon Society.

TEMP -- RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Complimentary copies are sent to organizations and prospective members. All WHAS activities and programs are open to the public.

Articles, information, wildlife sightings and artwork are welcomed. The deadline for inclusion of material in the *Whistler* is the 15th of each even-numbered month. Send your contributions to:

WHAS *Whistler*, PO Box 399, Longview WA 98632

or email them to

newsletter@willapahillsaudubon.org

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or pass it on to a friend.

WHAS Programs and Field Trips

WHAS events are free and open to the public (Unless otherwise noted). Check the website calendar for the latest information and updates.

The WHAS Field Trips and Program Chairs are on a summer break. This is a traditional break taken yearly since it is a slower time for bird watching as most birds are going about their business of nesting and raising young and many of our members are out of town enjoying the summer.

Fall Preview: Beginning in September we will team with Longview Parks and Recreation to conduct a monthly bird walk around Lake Sacajawea in Longview. These 1 ½ hour walks will take place at 8:00 AM on the second Saturday each month and will be publicized in the local papers and other media, as well as the “Whistler.” These walks will be an addition to our other Field Trips planned for the fall.

Watch the September Whistler and/or our website for our schedule of WHAS fall Field Trips and Programs.

The Mission of the Willapa Hills Audubon Society is to support ecologically responsible ways of life, to help maintain biologically diverse habitats, and to promote environmental understanding and enjoyment of nature.

Check out our website at www.willapahillsaudubon.org