



Audubon Minnesota News March 31, 2007

Audubon Minnesota's NEW *Spring* Bird Seed Sale! Order Your Seed Today!

We know how much people love the Fall bird seed sale – so, we've added one for the Spring, as well.

Over 100 North American bird species supplement their natural diets with birdseed, suet, fruit, and nectar obtain from feeders. Bird feeding can benefit birds and also provides great bird watching from your own backyard.

This spring, you are invited to stock up for backyard bird feeding through the Audubon Minnesota bird seed sale. All proceeds support Audubon's bird conservation work in Minnesota. Seed quality is excellent, and many seed varieties, including the popular Audubon Minnesota Mix, will be offered. Orders must be placed and prepaid by April 16, 2007. Seed will be available for customer pickup on Saturday, April 28 at various locations around the Twin Cities.

See bird seed sale [order form](#) for seed types and pickup information.

Mudder Trucks Take a Hit

Score one for the birds. Yesterday, the House Environment and Natural Resource Finance Committee passed a prohibition on mudder trucks in Beltrami, Cass, Crow Wing, and Hubbard counties. In 2006, both the House and Senate passed legislation that prohibited new mudder truck trails in state forests. When the bill went to conference committee, the committee removed the mudder truck language despite that fact that the measure passed both the House and Senate floors.

Mudder trucks are 4x4 regular, road-worthy vehicles that the state registers for recreational use on state forest land. Although all vehicles are permitted to use forest roads, recreational truck owners prefer to go into the forest with their truck. The state collects a registration fee and a percentage of the gas tax for each of the approximately 1500 recreational mudder trucks in

the state. This revenue is used to build and maintain truck trails. Interestingly, only 11 miles of these trails exist – all of them in the Paul Bunyan State Forest, in central Minnesota, an upland deciduous and coniferous forest that was home to many bird species of concern, including flycatchers, warblers and northern goshawks. These 11 miles of mudder truck trails have proven disastrous in the Paul Bunyan State Forest. Mudder trucks have ruined hillsides, causing deep erosion and forest fragmentation – and destroyed habitat, ultimately, driving out birds and other wildlife and changing the character of the forest.

Audubon will continue to work with lawmakers to expand that prohibition to the rest of the state. Audubon's position is that the State can continue build trails for mudder trucks land – just not in state forests. A more appropriate venue for these vehicles are challenge-area parks, designed specifically for trucks and other OHVs, usually located in only mining or quarry pits.

Please consider sending a "thank you" to the Committee Chair – Jean Wagenius at rep.jean.wagenius@house.mn for her excellent leadership on this issue.

Lights Out/Bird Safe Needs Volunteers – Bird Pick-Up Training 9 am on Saturday, April 14!

Bird Safe's current focus is on two important activities to address bird-window collisions: A Lights Out program, which enlists building owners to dim their lights during migration periods; and a research and monitoring program to quantify the collision problem in Minnesota and add data to the existing knowledge base. To learn more about this Bird Safe/Lights Out [go to Audubon Minnesota's website](#).

The Lights Out list of buildings that participate in dimming their lights during Spring and Fall migratory bird times has grown: Wells Fargo, Accenture, U.S. Bank Plaza, U.S. Bankcorp Center, I.D.S Center, 225 South 6th Street, and Riverplace – ALL located in Minneapolis. Come on St. Paul! If you know of a building owner or manager, please forward a link to our website to them – we have a building participation form located [here](#).

You yourself can help, too! The Lights Out research and monitoring effort needs volunteers to monitor individual buildings and pick-up birds during migration periods. Training will be provided at a three-hour training session to be held on Saturday, April 14, 2007, beginning at 9 a.m. in Room 130 in the Ecology Bldg, on the University of Minnesota's St. Paul campus. Complete the [volunteer form](#) and fax or e-mail to the address on the form.

Dedicated Funding Update

Folks – the dedicated funding bill is moving! House Majority leader, Representative Tony Sertich (DFL – Chisolm) and Senate Majority Leader, Senator Larry Pogemiller (DFL – Minneapolis) introduced companion bills last week on dedicated funding (House File 2285 and Senate File 2146). These appear to be the bills that will be amended and eventually, and hopefully, passed.

The bills dedicate 3/8 of one percent of a sales tax increase. The increase should raise about \$290 million and the distribution of the revenue follows:

- At least 25% goes to natural heritage fund and may be spent only on fish, habitat and other natural resources (\$72.34 million)
- At least 25% goes to clean water fund and spent only on lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands and groundwater (\$72.34 million)
- At least 15% goes to parks and trails fund and spent only on parks and trails (\$43.41 million)
- At least 15% goes to sustainable drinking water fund to protect drinking water sources(\$43.41 million)
- At least 10% goes to arts and cultural heritage fund (\$28.94 million)
- Up to 10% of remaining money gets divided between the funds (\$28.94 million)

The Natural Heritage Council created in the legislative branch will have 16 members, including 3 senators, 3 representatives, 4 public Senate appointees, 4 public House appointees and 4 public Gubernatorial appointees. The Council recommends advisory expenditures from the Natural Heritage Fund to the Legislature and Governor. The Clean Water Council will recommend expenditures from the Clean Water Fund.

The bill will be effective on July 1, 2009 and will end on June 30, 2034. The question on the 2008 ballot will read:

“Shall the Minnesota Constitution be amended to provide funding beginning July , 2009, to restore, preserve, and enhance the state's fish and wildlife habitat and other natural resources; to protect the state's drinking water sources; to protect and restore the state's lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands and “groundwater; to support the state's parks and trails; and to support the arts and cultural heritage of the state by increasing the sales and use tax rate by three-eighths of one percent on taxable sales until the year 2034?”

Although Audubon commends both Senate and House leadership from introducing this legislation, our position remains the same: the State needs \$100 million for habitat protection, \$100 million for Clean Water Legacy and \$30 million for “Nature Nearby” a bonding land protection program for localities. Watch for upcoming alerts on this issue!

Audubon Joins Sierra Club in Protecting Roadless Areas by Appealing the Echo Trail Decision

Audubon Minnesota has joined the Sierra Club North Star Chapter (Lead Appellant), Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness, Defenders of Wildlife, The Wilderness Society, and Friends of the Boundary Waters in filing an administrative appeal with the USDA Forest Service for their January 29, 2007 decision to adopt the Echo Trail Area Forest Management Project Final Environmental Impact Statement.

The appeal objects primarily to the project's potential impact on the boundary waters wilderness area and surrounding inventoried roadless areas. Timber stands identified in the Echo Trail project are directly adjacent to the wilderness boundary and could pose problems if they are clear cut by the Forest Service. The other concerns include the failure of the EIS to consider direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the Project on the boundary waters wilderness area; the lack of wilderness character preservation; and, most bothersome is the violation of the 2001 Roadless Rule by allowing temporary roads and timber harvest in inventoried roadless areas.

Folks – Don't Forget! 6TH Annual Great River Birding and Nature Festival

The festival is brought to you by volunteers from Mississippi Valley Partner communities. Audubon endorses the Great River Birding and Nature Festival as a unique educational experience to connect people with nature.

Guided Birding Hikes for both beginners and advanced birders will take you along the river shoreline, to bluff land, grasslands, bottom lands, Mississippi River backwaters and the Weaver Dunes Nature Conservancy, in search of migrating warblers, raptors, and waterfowl, as well as, area fauna and flora. There will be special evening hikes to explore nocturnal animal sounds.

Additional field trips will be offered all three days to explore the waterways and include: birding by motor boat, by mini-railroad cars, kayak or canoe on the Mississippi backwaters and sloughs.

[Click here for more information and to register for the event.](#) The registration deadline for reserved events is May 5.


Come to the Global Warming Action Day at Noon to 4 pm on Saturday, April 14 on the Minnesota Capitol Lawn

This is your chance to be a part of moving Minnesota on to a clean energy path! Join us on April 14 at the Minnesota State Capitol Mall as we gather to learn about positive solutions we can take as individuals and as a state that will reduce global warming pollution, create jobs, strengthen our state's economy, and improve our shared environment.

The event includes leading environmental, labor and religious speakers will include Senator Amy Klobuchar, Congressman Keith Ellison, Mayor Rybak and more.

Live music and dance from exciting local bands and performers. Including [Cosmic Railroad](#), [Jenny Dalton](#), and [Gold Standard](#).

Booths with resources that will help you and your family take action to reduce your global warming footprint. Join in to create the "World's Largest" footprint petition!

 [A message from Will Steger](#), calling from the Global Warming Expedition on Baffin Island

Don't Forget about the 6th Annual Living Green Expo – Saturday and Sunday, May 5th and 6th

The 6th Annual Living Green Expo, May 5th and 6th, is just around the corner and if you haven't had the opportunity to attend in years past, here's your chance.

The Expo which features over 70 workshops and 200 exhibitors is an event to behold. If you'd like to do more than simply attend the event, many volunteers are needed for the Expo, held at the State Fairgrounds, (Grandstand Building) in St. Paul.

Come and connect with others, find resources, and get in on the latest green technologies.
For more information, go to www.livinggreen.org.

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Audubon Mission: Working with others to conserve and
restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats,

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