



Audubon Minnesota News

March 7, 2008

photo by Laura Erickson

Audubon's First Metro-Area Global Warming Symposium Attracts over 100 Attendees!

Audubon Minnesota and the St. Paul Audubon Society co-hosted "Climate Change in Minnesota: What Next?" on Saturday, March 1st, attracting nearly 100 Audubon members and friends AND special guest, Senator Amy Klobuchar!

Senator Amy Klobuchar kicked-off the symposium with an update on federal legislation and observations of her recent trip to Greenland. Sven Sundgaard, KARE-TV meteorologist and producer of "Strictly Science" gave an overview of climate change impacts in Minnesota. Barbara Freese, author of "Coal: A Human History" and consultant to the Union of Concerned Scientists simplified the beauty of the cap and trade process which creates market-based incentives electric and industrial carbon emission reductions. And, Professor Clarence Lehman from the University of Minnesota's Department of Ecology presented information on the benefits of prairie grass biomass and carbon sequestration. Global climate change has had profound effects on birds and other wildlife and this event focused on cutting-edge global warming solutions that we can all support.

Bonding Bill heads to Conference Committee!

Audubon's state legislative priorities include several bonding measures. Both the House and Senate bonding bills passed in the last week. The House passed their by with a vote of 99-34 and the Senate voted 57 to 9. Each bill includes both big and small victories and some big disappoints (see alert below). Here's how our priorities are faring.

Forest Legacy Easements Bonding - protects environmentally important forests that are threatened by development. Contiguous tracts of forest land are good bird habitat. State, federal funds and local funds purchase development rights and permanent easements in targeted forests.

Audubon: \$30 million, Governor: \$9 million, House: \$0, Senate: \$9 million

Native Prairie Conservation and Protection Bonding - allows landowners to protect native Minnesota prairies that have never been plowed. Native prairies are Minnesota's most endangered ecological community and represent an important part of our state's natural heritage.

Audubon: \$10 million, Governor: \$3 million, House: \$5 million, Senate: \$3 million

Reinvest in Minnesota/Clean Energy (Grassland Biomass) Bonding - will help farmers switch their corn fields to grassland for bio-fuel production. Farmers would get incremental incentives and be coupled with power facilities. Ethanol production from grass uses less water and energy to produce and saves bird habitat. *Audubon: \$46 million, Governor: 3.3 million, House: \$0, Senate: \$3.3 million*

Great River Park Bonding – Envision a 26 mile park, located in an Important Bird Area, along the banks of the Mississippi River, protecting and restoring bird habitat and providing metro-wide recreational opportunities. Dollars will go to the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary and preserve Indian mounds. *Audubon: \$6 million, Governor: \$0, House: \$4 million, Senate: \$3.8 million,*

Other issues we follow:

Springbrook Nature Center: *Audubon: \$2.2 million, Governor: \$0, Senate: \$2.8 million, House: \$2.5 million*

Cedar Avenue Bridge: *Audubon: \$2 million, Governor:\$0, Senate:\$1.5 million, House: \$2 million*

Bell Museum: *Audubon: \$24 million, Governor: \$0, Senate: \$0, House: \$1 million*

Scientific and Natural Areas: *Audubon: \$5 million, Governor: \$1 million, Senate: \$1 million, House: \$1 million*

Metro Greenways: *Audubon: 5 million, Governor: \$0, Senate: \$0, House: \$0 million*

ALERT! Do you Live in a Bonding Conference Committee Member's District?

The Bonding Conference Committee will be meeting over the next week and you MUST call or e-mail if your legislator is on the conference committee. We have TWO BIG CONCERNS right now – Forest Legacy and the RIM/Clean Energy proposals are zeroed-out in the House bonding bill (see above). Please ask your member to fund these programs at \$9 million for Forest Legacy and at least \$10 million for RIM/Clean Energy. Both of these programs are instrumental in protecting bird habitat in Minnesota.

The Senate conference committee members are

Keith Langseth (DFL- Glyndon): 651-296-3205 or sen.keigth.langseth@senate.mn

Sandra Pappas (DFL-St. Paul): 651-296-1802 or sen.sandra.pappas@senate.mn

David Tomassoni (DFL - Chisholm): 651-296-8017 or sen.david.tomassoni@senate.mn

Linda Scheid (DFL-Brooklyn Park): 651-296-8869 or sen.linda.scheid@senate.mn

Paul Koering (R - Fort Ripley): 651-296-4875 or sen.paul.koering@senate.mn

The House conference members are

Alice Hausman (DFL-St. Paul): 651-296-3824 or rep.alice.hausman@house.mn

Jean Wagenius (DFL-Minneapolis): 651-296-4200 or rep.jean.wagenius@house.mn

Loren Solberg (DFL - Grand Rapids): 651-296-2365 or rep.loren.solberg@house.mn

Bev Scalze (DFL - Little Canada): 651-296-7153 or rep.bev.scalze@house.mn

Kathy Tingelstad (R- Andover): 651-296-5369 or rep.kathy.tinglestad@house.mn

This Weekend! The National Eagle Center's Soar with the Eagles Festival in Wabasha, Minnesota - March 7 - 8 - 9, 2008

Join the new National Eagle Center and the heated festival tent for a fun filled weekend in Wabasha, Minnesota. A unique festival celebrating eagles along the scenic Mississippi River. A venue of exceptional nature programs and educational seminars providing an opportunity to experience, connect, enjoy and learn about nature, from the birds in the air to life in the Mississippi River. Here are some of the educational programs this weekend:

Hawk Identification or Three to ID - This fast-paced program has every participant making their own field guide to hawks in flight. Participants will illustrate silhouettes while the naturalist draws them on an overhead. An excellent introduction for beginners or a refresher for hard core bird watchers. Times: Saturday and Sunday at 9:00am

New Life in a Dead Zone - An urban river's redemption describing native mussel life-history, ecology and importance to river health. Times: Saturday and Sunday at 10:00am

Eagle Banding - Report on Audubon's partnership with the National Park Service to locate all eagle nest on the Mississippi River in the Twin Cities area. Hear how they capture the new young eagles for banding and taking blood samples. Learn how this work helps to identify the relationship between the eagle nest and water quality. Times: Saturday and Sunday at 11:00am

What Do Birds Have to Teach Us? - Human-kind has been fascinated by birds for centuries perhaps because they are a window to our soul. We will reflect on our own quality of life with Aldo Leopold's writings and consider our "sense of place." We will meet an injured red-tailed hawk and consider our own conservation actions. Times: Saturday and Sunday at 1:00pm

Bald Eagle Wildlife Photography - Lisa Loucks Christenson, a national award-winning author and photographer, will be sharing her stories while covering her bald eagle wildlife documentary, now in its fourth year, on a pair of bald eagles private lives. She began year four on January 9, 2008, and has expanded to covering six eagle nests this year. Hear the stories about the eagles who endure blizzards, winter storms, temperatures to -45 below zero with wind chill, floods, wind, rain, heat, and thunderstorms all while building a nest and raising their eaglets.

DNR Commissioner Ignores Public Opinion on the Last Wild Stretch of the Mississippi River

The namesake of the Mississippi Headwaters Audubon Chapter is in jeopardy. Minnesota DNR's draft management plan for the Mississippi Headwaters State Forest proposes to allow motorized recreation across and near the river. Chapter member Jerry Maertens, a Bemidji resident, knows the headwaters of the Mississippi River well. "We all thought the proposed plan would come up with a closed forest,"

said Jerry Maertens. "The last thing we need is to have is a bunch of ATVs buzzing up and down each side of the river."

Despite that fact that nearly 85 percent of the people who commented on DNR draft forest plan asked that this small and pristine forest be closed motorized recreation, DNR recently announced that the forest will remain open to ATVs. Quiet forest advocates are disappointed, but not surprised. "It's a complete farce," said Maertens, commenting on the decision and public comment process.

The state needs better management and protection of the last truly wild stretch of the Mississippi river, a portion of national significance and located on state land in Minnesota. This portion of the river alternately flows between boreal forests and vast wetlands, providing habitat for three bird species – the trumpeter swan, bald eagles and Wilson's phalarope – species also on Audubon Minnesota's "action list", a list of 60 birds that are vulnerable and need special attention and protection. These three species are also "birds of conservation priority" for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife and "birds of concern" for DNR. Since illegal motorized damage of this part of the river has already caused extensive wildlife habitat damage, including forest fragmentation and shoreline destruction, the forest cannot afford more damage from motorized vehicles.

A final plan removes Coffee Pot Landing as a proposed ATV-crossing. This spot in the forest is a canoe landing and campground directly on the river that has been destroyed by illegal motorized riders in the last few years. Previously, this sensitive shoreline has been rutted and eroded and native riparian vegetation and habitat has been replaced by invasive species.

Please! Call DNR Commissioner Mark Holsten

and let him know how disappointed you are that he ignored public comments on this forest.

His phone number is 651-296-6157 or 1-888-646-6347 or e-mail him at mark.holsten@dnr.state.mn.us

Come to the Wetlands and Waterfowl Weekend April 11 – 13, 2008, Best Western Kelly Inn, Plymouth, Minnesota

The Wetlands and Waterfowl Weekend theme is *Together for Wetlands*. Presentations will be made by leading wetlands and waterfowl experts from Minnesota, neighboring states and provinces, and Washington, DC.

This event will combine the previous Wetlands Summit, Minnesota Waterfowl Symposium and a new wetlands initiative being launched by the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP), emphasizing critical federal and state legislation and new funding sources needed to enhance wetland and waterfowl conservation programs. This joint effort recognizes the importance of solid cooperation between all entities involved if sound and lasting wetlands and clean water policies are to be achieved. The primary purpose of this venture is to better educate and issue an earnest call to

action. Time is growing short for wetlands and clean water, and all creatures that depend on such, to survive the unrelenting encroachment of human civilization.

Refuge, state wildlife areas, and wetland restoration projects in the northwest metro area counties. TRCP will hold a special meeting of wetland teams from seven states on Friday afternoon. There will be an "Open House" for all on Friday night, featuring poster sessions and displays on management of wetlands and waterfowl. A field trip is scheduled Friday afternoon, April 11, 1-5 pm, to visit the Sherburne National Wildlife

The Saturday sessions will feature the new wetlands initiative by TRCP; an update on the Clean Water Act by Representative Oberstar; agricultural program impacts on wildlife habitat in the U. S. and Canada; overview of other pending legislation affecting wetlands; current status of wetlands nationally and Minnesota's Clean Water Legacy program. The banquet on Saturday night will feature a full course dinner; with Doug Inkley, National Wildlife Federation, addressing climate change and potential impact on the Prairie Pothole Region.

The Sunday morning sessions will be waterfowl oriented; including presentations on the present status of waterfowl populations at the national and state level, current waterfowl management issues of concern, and viewpoints of waterfowl hunters.

Wetlands and Waterfowl Weekend is a cooperative effort sponsored by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Waterfowl Association, Izaak Walton League of America-Minnesota Division, Ducks Unlimited, Delta Waterfowl, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, Minnesota Conservation Federation and the National Wildlife Federation, with support from other participating conservation organizations and individuals.

The registration fee is \$60.00 for all events, including the field trip, receptions, lunch and banquet on Saturday. There is a reduced registration fee of \$35.00 for attending sessions only, and \$25.00 for banquet only. Attendance will be limited to 200 so make your reservations early. Lodging is available at the hotel at conference rates of \$79.00/night + tax, single or double. A block of 50 rooms has been reserved. There will be free parking. When making reservations refer to *Wetlands and Waterfowl Weekend*. Reservations should be made as soon as possible, but no later than April 2, to obtain special rates (Phone 763-553-1600). You will be responsible for making your own travel and lodging arrangements. Please return the registration form and payment no later than April 2 to: Minnesota Waterfowl Association, 901 First Street North, Hopkins, MN 55343 (Phone: 952-767-0320 / Fax: 952-767-0324). For further information contact Harvey Nelson, Program Coordinator, at 952-831-8333, (harvnel@msn.com); MWA State Office at 952-767-0320, luci.patch@mnwaterfowl.com); or Izaak Walton League, Minnesota Division, at 651-221-0215 (ikes@minnesotaiikes.org)

Mark your Calendar! The Third Annual Ramsey County Bird Festival and Important Bird Area Dedication – *Where Birds and People Meet* May 1-4, 2008

This free, volunteer-run festival highlights the many interesting birds found in St. Paul and suburbs and is designed to attract families and others to birding, America's most popular outdoor activity. In

addition, we'll tour the rarely open Arden Hills Army Training Site (formerly known as the Twin Cities Arsenal) and dedicate the site as an Important Bird Area.

Hikes are scheduled to give a bird's eye view of areas where swans, eagles and loons nest and where migrating warblers feed. Other tours will look at resident birds like cardinals, blue jays and chickadees. A low-cost dinner will feature nationally known bird expert, speaker and humorist, Al Batt.

Also on the festival's schedule is a day full of displays, demos and hikes at Harriet Alexander Nature Center in Roseville, a birding adventure by canoe and more. Hikes and events, most of which are free and open to everyone, will be led by the area's birding enthusiasts. For additional information contact: John Moriarty (651) 748-2500

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