Ankeny Hill Nature Center Update

By Tim Johnson
Salem Audubon Society President

I have some major, exciting news. After much planning and effort by all the Nature Center partners yesterday, on behalf of Salem Audubon, I signed an agreement with Carlson Veit Junge Architects to create building plans for the Dave Marshall Classroom.

Because the new classroom construction is partially within a wetland delineation zone, special considerations to the design, construction, and permits were necessary. This process took some time and research. We determined we must obtain approvals from the Oregon Department of State Lands and the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers before construction can begin. Graham Evans-Peters, the refuge manager, has taken the lead on this aspect of the project.

Since the impact of construction on Peregrine Marsh seasonal wetlands will be minimal and well below the permit threshold, approvals should be straightforward but will still take time. If all goes as planned, the classroom construction will begin in late summer with completion in fall, ideally before the rainy season begins.

As with the construction of Gehlar Hall, Salem Audubon will serve as the builder/owner of the classroom and will provide the funds. Classroom ownership will be transferred to U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service when construction is completed. The Service will assist with contract management services.

Thanks to generous donations from our members and friends, we should have sufficient funds to design and build the Dave Marshall Classroom. Thanks to all of you for your incredible support of this great project!
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One of the goals of the Dave Marshall Classroom is to showcase ways to support environmental sustainability. With that in mind, we will seek additional funds to create a rainwater catchment system and a boot/shoe cleaning station (to control the spread of invasives). Salem Audubon will apply for the next round of the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund grant cycle. I think we have an excellent chance of being successful.

Salem Audubon will also be seeking funds for a new gate at the entrance to the Dave Marshall Classroom parking lot off Buena Vista Rd, similar to the gate currently used to access Gehlar Hall off Ankeny Hill Rd. Also, we will be seeking funds for an interpretive kiosk for the classroom and the wetlands node and a solar voltaic and battery backup system to provide electrical power to the Dave Marshall Classroom.

We have some funding sources in mind for these projects. Please let me know if you have any related questions or suggestions. I’m also happy to report that an interpretive kiosk and benches are being added to the Nature Explore Area. The printing of this newsletter should complete that work. Check it out.

Salem Audubon Board Needs Members!

The Salem Audubon Society’s bylaws specify that “The Board shall be comprised of four duly elected Officers of the Society, each of whom shall be a duly elected Director and up to nine additional Directors.”

Currently, we have only three Officers and three additional Directors. I am serving as both President and Treasurer. Michael Babbitt is Vice President, and Carolyn Homan is Secretary. Judy Brunkal, Mike Williams, and Jenny Ammon are the three other directors. All current Board members have been on the Board for multiple terms.

The Board has exciting issues to tackle, including the construction of the Dave Marshall classroom at Ankeny Hill Nature Center and the completion of Gehlar Hall. Connecting people with Nature is a mission more relevant than ever. Join us in fulfilling that mission.

Board membership includes meeting monthly for a couple of hours (we usually meet via Zoom). We expect Directors to bring skills and experience in carrying out our mission.

Particular skills and expertise currently being sought include strategic planning, accounting, Latino engagement, volunteer recruitment and management, and grant writing, to mention a few. Board members serve a two-year term. Please let me know if this is of possible interest.

tim@salemaudubon.org  (503) 507-8552

Zoom to Sustainability Series - Wednesday, April 12, 7:00 p.m.

Salem Environmental Education Ocean Energy Session

This Zoom online presentation, sponsored by Salem Environmental Education, will describe current efforts to harness energy from the ocean environment, including power from ocean winds, waves, and tides. Half the presentation will cover the emergence of floating offshore wind as a viable commercial-scale energy technology and the potential for its development in federal waters off Oregon’s coast.

The other half will cover the Pacific Marine Energy Center (PMEC) and its work to accelerate research and development of wave, tidal, in-river, and offshore wind energy technologies – including an overview of Oregon State University’s PacWave testing facilities.

Jason Sierman is a Senior Energy Policy Analyst with the Oregon Department of Energy. His focus areas span various power grid topics, such as utility power planning, transmission, storage, and offshore wind. Before his current role, he was an Energy Policy Analyst with the Department’s Siting Division, which supports Oregon’s Energy Facility Siting Council.

The Zoom program is free and open to the public. Registration is required and can be found at the link below or on the Salem Environmental Education website at www.saleemee.org. Questions? Contact Jon Yoder at info@saleemee.org.

For eons, the night was lit only by the moon and stars, and life on this planet evolved under regular cycles of bright days and dark nights. All that has changed in the last 130 years, and the night we know now is liberally colonized with artificial light. Most of us live in cities that are ablaze—from billboards to parking lots to street lights—even while we sleep. Not only does this obscure the Milky Way from 80% of North Americans where they live, but the overabundance of light at night also has dire ecological consequences—not just for the millions of migrating birds that use the stars to navigate, but also for mammals, amphibians, fish and plants, as well as for human health.

Join us for an exploration of the night’s wondrous mysteries and the impacts of light pollution, and learn about how you can help in the effort to preserve our starry skies while simultaneously maintaining safety and vibrant nighttime cityscapes.

The in-person meeting will be in the Mexico Room of Broadway Commons, 1300 Broadway St. SE, Salem and on ZOOM. ZOOM attendees must register in advance at this link: https://bit.ly/april-birders-night

Mary Coolidge, April Birders’ Night guest speaker. Mary splits her time between Portland Audubon and the Oregon Zoo’s California Condor breeding program.
How Fighting Light Pollution Can Help Save Birds

The rapidly growing Portland metro region sits along the Pacific Flyway, a superhighway of migrating birds. Many birds migrate at night every spring and fall, using the moon and stars as guides. As birds pass over brightly lit cities, sky glow can disorient them and lure them into the maze of urban areas, where they face secondary hazards that can greatly impair their survival.

Without additional factors, migration is already an energetically demanding and dangerous feat for the millions of birds that make these journeys.

Night is Habitat

For 4.5 Billion years, there was no artificial light on Earth, and biological systems evolved under cycles of light and dark. Today the planet is awash in light, from streetlights to sports field lighting. According to the New World Atlas of Artificial Night Sky Brightness, more than 99% of people in the US live under a haze of light pollution.

When we light the night, we fragment the dark and impact ecosystems that rely on carefully timed patterns of darkness and light, whose rhythms govern sleep cycles as well as migration, hibernation, flowering, etc.

What You Can Do

1. Help Prevent Window Collisions at Home Window collisions kill up to 1 billion birds every year, making this one of the top three threats to wild birds. Birds do not perceive unmarked glass as a barrier and fly directly into reflections of sky and habitat. Nearly half of all collisions occur at 1-3 story residential buildings and over half occur at low rise commercial buildings! That means that we need your help at home to address this issue!

2. Choose Well-shielded, Warm LEDs to Reduce Light Pollution LEDs are long-lived and offer significant energy savings! However, some kinds of LEDs produce blue-rich white light which scatters very readily in the atmosphere and can impact circadian rhythms in humans, plants, birds, fish and wildlife. There are many LED products available today that provide energy efficiency without compromising ecosystem or human health. Warm LEDs are now readily available and cost effective. When converting to LED, make sure to choose warm light bulbs that are under 3,000 Kelvins. Always choose light fixtures that aim down.

For more information, contact Mary Coolidge, Bird Safe Campaign Coordinator at mcoolidge@audubonportland.org
A GUIDE TO

BIRD FRIENDLY LIGHTING

Birds remind us of the majesty of nature that surrounds us, even right here in the city! Many birds live and nest here, and others move through on a journey between their breeding and wintering grounds. Each year, millions of birds migrate using the moon and stars as their guides.

Skyglow from poorly designed exterior lighting can confuse them and lure them into the city, where they face hazards like window collisions, cats, and cars.

Light pollution affects birds, wildlife, fish, amphibians, plants, and human health as well as impairing our view of the night sky. In fact, today nearly 80% of North Americans live in places from which they cannot see the Milky Way!

You can help protect birds and conserve our view of the stars by choosing well-designed lighting

Low Color Temperature
Blue-rich white light (over 3,000K) obscures the stars and is dangerous at night for migrating and nesting birds, plants, wildlife, and humans alike.

The easiest way to control this is to select exterior lighting that is below 3,000K. This is also better for human health, as night-time exposure to blue-rich white light has the potential to disrupt our circadian rhythms.

Converting to LED is great for energy efficiency, and today, LED's are efficient across the range of color output.

Low Intensity Light
Don’t overlight! Overly bright lights waste money, waste energy, create glare, and result in light pools adjacent to areas of deep shadow. Glare creates a safety issue for people when the dilated pupil has to re-adjust to dark areas after leaving an overlit area on foot or while driving.

Good Directionality
Lighting should also have good shielding and point down to where light is needed and not up into the sky. This is a smart choice for reducing light pollution and preserving our view of the stars. Look for the term “full cut-off” to identify exterior fixtures that don’t send any light in an upward direction.

Exploring the Dragonflies and Damselflies of Oregon

Sunday, May 7, 2023 – 1:30 PM to 3:00 PM

Dragonflies and damselflies make up the insect order Odonata and are the focus of Salem Audubon Society’s new class. There have been nearly 100 verified species recorded in Oregon. In this class, we examine the life cycle, natural history, and diversity of these remarkable insects, focusing on species found in Oregon.

We will cover key characteristics for identification, habits, and species, focusing on those found in the Willamette Valley. We will also cover when and where to see these magnificent insects.

The class will be held at the Ankeny Hill Nature Center at 130 Ankeny Hill Road SE, west of the Ankeny Hill exit on I-5. Participants will also have the option to attend the class via Zoom.

The course costs only $10, with all proceeds going to the Salem Audubon Society. Advanced reservations are required for this class (registration will not be accepted onsite).

Please register in advance for the in-person class or Zoom option using this link: https://bit.ly/sas-dragonfly

Widow Skimmer Dragonfly

After the class, we will have a short field trip to look for dragonflies and damselflies at the nature center. A limited number of binoculars will be available if you do not have a pair of binoculars.

Our presenter, Mike Unger, is a volunteer with Salem Audubon who leads field trips, conducts bird surveys, and teaches classes on birds and nature. Contact Mike at salemaudubonsociety@gmail.com
Salem Audubon Society Field Trips

Compiled by Cynthia Donald

Salem Audubon field trips are open to the public, and we have a mix of experienced and new birders. Our field trips are an excellent way to familiarize ourselves with Oregon birds, experience new places, and meet new friends. We don't charge for our trips, but a small fee may be involved, such as a parking pass, depending on our destination. Carpooling is encouraged to reduce our carbon footprint, and if you do a carpool, please contribute to your driver to help cover costs.

SAS-SHORTS are abbreviated versions of our popular field trips. These trips are in the local area, typically last 1 to 2 hours, and cover up to 2 miles on generally even surfaces. New and experienced birders are welcome! Please arrive before the start time as these trips will begin precisely at the listed time.

Some of our field trips meet at the Airport Park and Ride on the east side of Airport Road, between Mission and State streets, next to the State Motor Pool, and just south of the bridge over Mill Creek. Take Mission Street to Airport Road (the first signal light east of 25th Street), turn left, and proceed north one block to the park and ride. There are no facilities at this location.

SAS MONTHLY FIELD TRIPS

Monday, April 3, 2023, 8:00 AM – Minto-Brown Island Park
(Upcoming – Wednesday, May 3 at 8:00 AM and Sunday, June 4 at 7:30 AM. Please note the time change!)
Leaders: Mike Unger (503) 930-8998, Tim Johnson (503) 507-8552

The winter dormancy now awakens with resident and migrating species adjusting and settling into nesting territories. This 1200-acre park has many available walking loops, with both soft and challenging trails through micro habitat areas excellent for birds.

The park's restoration area plantings are showing maturity. These provide immediate spring pollen and nectar for migrating Rufous Hummingbirds, especially Oregon Grape and Black Twinberry. They also provide shelter for birds in thick grasses, summer seed for finches, and berries in summer and fall.

We will watch for cavity nesting interest from birds pairing among ponderosa and cottonwood plantings. The evergreen and deciduous strands of woodland provide perch and following areas for raptors, including accipiters and Red-tailed Hawks. These woodlands attract cavity nesters such as woodpeckers, nuthatches, and chickadees. We anticipate the Ospreys have returned and hope to see the rebuilding of last year’s nest.

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The adequate winter rainfall provides essential water to the oxbows and ponds, allowing close looks at herons and waterfowl. We will watch for Wood Ducks seeking cavities in the trees for their nests.

**Meet at 8:00 AM at Parking Lot #3** (the last parking lot in the park). Dress for the weather. Bring water, snacks, and binoculars! Trails may be uneven, so wear appropriate footwear and plan for considerable walking. We plan to be finished around noon.

**Directions:** From River Road South, turn west at the signal at Minto Island Road and proceed to the last parking lot. Please do not leave valuables in your vehicle, and confirm anything inside is out of sight.

**Sunday, April 16, 2023, at 8:00 AM – Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge**
(Upcoming – Sunday, May 21 at 8:00 AM and Tuesday, June 13 at 7:30 AM. Please note the time change!)

Leaders: Mike Unger (503) 930-8998, Tim Johnson (503) 507-8552

April is an exciting time with the spring opening of refuge gates allowing berm access to the back ponds and hedgerows. There are signature areas for shorebird, warbler, and flycatcher arrivals. With plenty of water, the refuge has had exciting visitors, including Tundra Swan, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Northern Harrier, and other wintering hawks. Young Bald Eagles have been honing their hunting skills.

High numbers of winter waterfowl include Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler, Green-wing Teal, Ruddy Duck, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Canada, and Cackling Goose. Now is a time of change; other visitors will arrive while some waterfowl leave for prairie pothole nesting. In past Aprils, we’ve seen nuptial displays by American Bittern, and we will look and listen for returning Sora and Wilson’s Snipe that nest here. Join us to enjoy sightings along the waterway berms.

**Meet at Ankeny Hill Nature Center (AHNC) Parking Lot at 8:00 AM.** There are facilities at this location, and the trails are now open! We will start here before visiting Pintail Marsh and other locations. Bring water, binoculars, and a snack. Trails can be uneven, so please wear appropriate footwear. We anticipate finishing by noon.

**Directions:** From Salem, take I-5 south to the Ankeny Hill Road exit (Exit 243) and turn right (west). At the Ankeny Hill Road/Wintel Road intersection, bear right and continue on Ankeny Hill Road straight (west), approximately 2.2 miles to the AHNC Visitor Center entrance, which will be on your left. An alternate route from Salem is to take Liberty Road south to Ankeny Hill Road, then turn left and continue about 0.4 miles to the AHNC Visitor Center entrance, which will be on your right. Please do not leave valuables in your vehicle, and confirm anything inside is out of sight.

**SAS-SHORTS**

**Monday, April 10 at 9:00 AM – Keizer Rapids Park**

Leader: Dominic Valenti (503) 507-7008

This short walk on both paved trails and dirt paths will cover about 1.5 miles and should take us between 1.5 to 2 hours to complete. This park is situated along the Willamette River and includes shaded woods and open fields. Bald Eagle, White-breasted Nuthatch, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Pileated Woodpecker, and White-crowned Sparrow are just a few resident species. We'll also look for early spring arrivals such as Osprey, Rufous Hummingbird, Orange-crowned Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Chipping Sparrow, and various swallows. When you add to these the ducks that can be seen on the river (Mallard, Lesser Scaup, Common Merganser, Hooded Merganser) and the overwintering sparrows and thrushes that will still be hanging around, it makes for a nice diversity of species. Hope to see you there!

**Meet in the public parking lot near the boat launch area.**

**Directions:** From Salem, take River Road N, turn left onto Chemawa Road N, turn left onto Walsh Way N, and proceed to the parking lot at the end of the road near the boat ramp.
Monday, April 24 at 8:00 AM – Illahe Hills Country Club
(Upcoming – Monday, May 15 at 8:00 AM)
Leaders: Paul Evans, Roxy Evans

Please contact the leader at paulevansdo@gmail.com to confirm your registration for this trip.

Illahe Hills Country Club has been graciously hosting limited guided bird walks. Walks are open to Illahe Hills CC members, their guests, and limited Salem Audubon Society guests through registration with the leader. The course is close to Minto Brown Island Park and abuts local farms. Over 90 bird species have been recorded to date. Ospreys, Bald Eagles, and Great Horned Owls nest here and are regularly seen. New birders are welcome!

Registered participants should meet in front of the Country Club entrance at 8:00 AM. Please park in the main parking area, not in front of the clubhouse! Dress for the weather and bring water, sun block, a hat and binoculars. Restroom facilities are available. We will be finished before 11:00 AM. Please contact the leader at paulevansdo@gmail.com to confirm your registration for this trip.

Directions: From Salem, proceed south on River Road to Country Club Road South and turn right (west) on Country Club Road South. Proceed a short distance and the country club with ample parking area will be straight ahead.

Wednesday, April 26 at 5:30 PM – Fairview Wetlands
Leader: Mike Unger (503) 930-8998

Fairview Wetlands is a natural preserve located in the Fairview Industrial District. It features a walking trail, information signs, and good opportunities to see waterfowl, songbirds, woodpeckers, raptors, and even an occasional Virginia Rail.

Location: Fairview Wetlands is across the street from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) Headquarters at 4034 Fairview Industrial Drive SE (south of Madrona Avenue).

Meet in the ODFW parking lot 5-10 minutes before 5:30 PM.

Upcoming Special SAS Trip
Tuesday, June 13 through Friday, June 16 – Great Gray Owl Trip
THIS TRIP IS NOW FULL BUT CONTACT HARRY IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE ADDED TO A WAIT LIST.
Leader: Harry Fuller (971) 312-1735, anzatowhee@yahoo.com

UPCOMING SPRING BIRDING FESTIVALS
Thursday, April 13 through Sunday, April 16 – MIGRATORY BIRD FESTIVAL, Burns OR
From the website https://migratorybirdfestival.com.

We've been busy planning for an exciting festival experience in 2023! Spend an amazing weekend witnessing the spectacular spring migration in the Harney Basin of Southeast Oregon. View thousands of migratory birds as they rest and feed in the open spaces of Oregon's high desert. Held annually in April in Harney County.

The Harney County Migratory Bird Festival was first held in 1981 to celebrate the large annual migration of birds passing through Harney Basin on the Pacific Flyway. Harney Basin is one of the three most essential areas left in the western United States for spring migratory birds stopping on their way north.

Over 300 species use the refuge each year, making Harney Basin a bird watcher's paradise. Today, we celebrate the migratory birds' return each year with guided tours led by experts, workshops, and fun activities for youth and adults.

Continued on next page >
Friday, May 5 through Sunday, May 7 – GRAY'S HARBOR SHOREBIRD AND NATURE FESTIVAL, Gray's Harbor NWR, Hoquiam, WA From the website: www.shorebirdfestival.com.

Each spring, hundreds of thousands of shorebirds stop to rest and feed along the Washington Coast and in the Grays Harbor estuary during their migration northward. Coming from as far south as Argentina, these Arctic-bound shorebirds are among the world’s most significant migrants. Some birds travel over 15,000 miles round trip! The concentration of birds during spring migration offers people a great chance to view a number of shorebird species.

Shorebirds you might spot include plovers, turnstones, sandpipers, dowitchers, and others. Some shorebirds can be found in Grays Harbor County all year; others only during migration. The shorebird spectacle happens yearly at Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuge and other parts of the County. People from around the world come to view this event of hemispheric importance. The Festival works to bring people together for this incredible natural phenomenon.

Check our website for more specific information.

Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuge is open Sunrise to Sunset, 7 Days a week, and we invite you to enjoy our year-round trail. Should you have questions, concerns, or comments, please contact us at shorebirdfest@gmail.com.

11th Annual Dean Hale Woodpecker Festival, June 1 through June 4, 2023, Sisters, OR

From the website Dean Hale Woodpecker Festival | All About Birds

Online registration opens in April.

Headquartered in beautiful Sisters, Oregon, This festival in Sisters, is an excellent opportunity to explore new areas and meet other local birders, with a good chance of seeing 11 species of woodpeckers. As it is very popular, most tours fill quickly, sometimes within a day of registration opening. There will be twenty tours over four days in search of 11 different woodpecker species and 200 other birds. The trips are affordable, limited in size, and guided by local volunteers.

Activites at The Nature Center Keep Volunteers Busy

By Bobbie Allaire
Volunteer Coordinator

Ankeny Hill Nature Center volunteers and guest volunteers from Oregon State University, Chintimini Wildlife Center, Luckiamute State Natural Area, and elsewhere greeted visitors with various activities during March’s Winter Wildlife Field Days.

Visitors experimented with a model bioswale, dissected owl pellets, and built an osprey nest as part of the event.

Save the date! Everyone is invited to the Ankeny Hill Nature Center for the April 29th Arbor Day Celebration. There will be activities for all and free native plants while supplies last! Check the ankenyhillnaturecenter.org website for more information.

Would you like to know more about being a ‘regular’ Ankeny Hill Nature Center volunteer? Contact Pat (he/him/his) and Bobbie (she/her/hers) Allaire, Volunteer Coordinators, at volunteers@ankenyhillnaturecenter.org or call (541) 760-3700.

Ankeny Hill Nature Center Volunteer Report

Volunteers Barbara Jaxel (seated in green vest) and Florence Hall (standing in green vest) help visitors find out what is on the owl menu by dissecting owl pellets.

Photo courtesy of Bobbie Allaire
Audubon Reserve Work Parties

Every Wednesday 9:00 – 11:00 AM

- Plant and nurture native trees and shrubs.
- Attack invasive plants and help keep our Reserve looking great.
- Maintain trails. Eliminate litter.
- BYO work gloves; tools provided or bring your favorites.
- FREE! No background check required!
- On-the-job training!
- Possibilities for advancement!
- Coffee and conversation after at Urban Grange, on Edgewater St. NW

Call Lee Slattum, (503) 364-9325, with any questions.

Audubon Nature Reserve
Eola Drive, off Edgewater, in West Salem
http://www.salemaudubon.org/nature-reserve
See our Facebook Page at
www.facebook.com/Audubon-Nature-Reserve-1636890073202471

How to Join a ZOOM session

- Participants must “Pre-Register” by clicking on a link provided in the Kestrel, the Salem Audubon website, and the SAS Facebook page. Once registered, you will receive a confirmation email including the link to use to join the meeting. You will receive a reminder email on the day of the program.
- At the start time for the program (or a few minutes before), you may click on the meeting link using a PC, Mac, or smart device to enter the Zoom session. It’s that easy. As a participant, you do not need ZOOM software, microphone or camera.
- Participants may type questions, comments or seek technical assistance using the ZOOM “Chat” button at the bottom of the ZOOM screen. The program leader will share your questions during the Q&A at the end of the presentation. Technical issues – if any – will be addressed during the ZOOM session.
- For any technical questions, please email Tim Johnson, tim.the.fisherman@gmail.com. For other questions, email Harry Fuller, chair, Birder’s Night Committee, atowhee@gmail.com.

Board of Directors

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- **SAS Woodshop**: John Jorgenson
- **Bluebird Project**: Vacant
- **Birding Workshops**: Mike Unger
- **Kestrel and Web Editor**: Mike Williams
- **Conservation**: David Harrison
- **Chapter Meetings**: Vacant
- **Christmas Bird Count**: Tim Johnson, Mike Unger, Gretchen Johnson

SAS Office Information

- Laurie Buswell, Administrator
- Office Visits by Appointment Only
- Monday-Thursday, 9:00 am - 2:00 pm
- PO Box 2084  Salem, Oregon 97308
- 408 N 3rd Ave, Stayton, OR 97383
- (503) 588-7340
- Email: laurie@salemaudubon.org
- Website: www.salemaudubon.org

Bird & Wildlife Emergencies

- Contact: Chintimini Wildlife Center
- (541) 745-5324  chintiminiwildlife.org

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We are always interested in learning how members experience the many ways to enjoy nature.

We are looking for new contributors to provide stories, images or ideas to help make *The Kestrel* even better.

Please send me an email to find out how to add to our coverage:

**Mike Williams**, editor
editor@salemaudubon.org