PARTNERS IN FLIGHT

Oregon/Washington Chapter

www.gorge.net/natres/pif.html Spring 2001

Partners In Flight is an international coalition of government agencies, conservation groups, academic institutions, private organizations and citizens dedicated to the long-term maintenance of healthy populations of native landbirds

Easements will boost Methow Riparian Habitat

by Katharine Bill
The Methow Conservancy

The Methow Valley forms the eastern edge of the North Cascade Mountains, and it has some of the best remaining riparian habitat anywhere in the Columbia Basin. The Valley is in a transition area between shrub-steppe and subalpine forests, and it is home for a diverse number of bird species including bluebirds, red-eyed vireos, redstarts, dusky flycatchers, harlequin ducks, great gray owls and other fascinating species. The Methow Valley is fortunate to also have a vibrant population of conservation-minded landowners who want to protect songbird habitat.

The Methow Valley is the site of an innovative partnership between private and public land managers. The Methow Conservancy has joined with biologists from the U.S. Forest Service, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and Partners in Flight to protect songbird habitat with conservation easements and landowner education.

The Methow Conservancy is a non-profit land trust dedicated to community education and protecting land with conservation easements. The conservancy has used GIS mapping and aerial photos to create a database of the

(Continued on last page)

Latin American Biologists to Visit North-Central Washington

Three Latin American biologists will visit and work in North Cascades National Park June 2002 as part of an bird conservation exchange program sponsored by the National Park Foundation's Park Flight Program.

The biologists' expenses will be paid for by a grant from the foundation. The program encourages biologists in the U.S. and Latin American Partners in Flight chapters to exchange expertise and experience in bird conservation. The visiting biologists will evaluate U.S. projects on public and private land in the Methow Valley to see if they can develop similar programs back home to protect wintering grounds for migratory birds.

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Our Newsletter is now totally electronic!

The Oregon/Washington Partners in Flight semi-annual newsletter is now only available online.

We will no longer be distributing hard-copies of this newsletter, although it is easily printed out in this electronic format.

PIF encourages you to view this newsletter online and forward the web address to others.

Thanks!

New to Partners in Flight? Look inside to see what we do...

Ch-ch-ch-Changes....

Bob Altman, former chair of Oregon-Washington Partners in Flight, has taken a new position as coordinator for the Northern Pacific Rainforest Bird Conservation Region (BCR), encompassing northwestern California, western Oregon, Washington, British Columbia and southeastern Alaska.

Bob's position is under the umbrella of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI), which is dedicated to facilitating an Aall-bird, all-habitat@ approach to bird conservation in the region. NABCI is a coalition of international agencies and organizations whose goal is to facilitate the delivery of the full spectrum of bird conservation through regionally-based, biologically-driven, landscape-oriented partnerships. Currently, bird conservation in the region is driven by the goals of specific initiatives, programs, or projects. Bob will ensure bird conservation in the region under his responsibility will be successful because resources to accomplish conservation will be better integrated.

The BCR position is similar to joint venture coordinators. Bob will be the Apoint person@ to facilitate all bird conservation within the Northern Pacific Rainforest BCR and will work to develop all opportunities to advance bird conservation. Opportunities include seeking outside funding for projects, providing technical support, working with agencies on policy and planning issues relative to bird conservation, assisting in writing funding proposals for projects in his jurisdiction, developing technical products to support bird conservation, and conducting workshops to inform and assist organizations and agencies in promoting bird conservation.

The BCR works in conjunction with needs identified by bird-conservation partners in their plans and policy guidelines. The coordinator functions as an extension of each agency or organization to the broader community of conservation partners, and has the ability to work closely with agency and organization staff to develop those partnerships and secure additional funding for bird conservation activities.

Funding for the coordinator position comes from the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, Pacific Coast Joint Venture, and several forest products companies including Weyerhaeuser Corporation, Hancock Timber, Plum Creek, Port Blakely, and Willamette Industries. Funding has also been requested from several foundations to provide project implementation money to assist the position. Contact: Bob Altman alt8bird@aol.com

New Oregon-Washington PIF Co-Chairs....

Barb Kott, Landbird Coordinator for the U.S. Forest Service in Region 6, and Mike Green, Landbird Coordinator for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Region 1, will be the new co-chairs for Oregon-Washington Partners in Flight (PIF). The change became necessary when Bob Altman, current chair, moved into the position of Coordinator for the Northern Pacific Rainforest Bird Conservation Region (see article on this page). Barb was previously chapter chair in the mid 1990s, and Mike recently moved to the Pacific Northwest to take on the newly created landbird coordinator position at USFWS.

Barb will be responsible for coordinating PIF chapter activities and involvement in landbird conservation issues. This includes activities such as organizing and leading chapter meetings, promoting PIF as an important initiative in bird conservation, and seeking ways to advance landbird conservation through projects, policy, and implementation of the PIF Bird Conservation Plans. Contacts: Barb Kott bkott@fs.fed.us and Mike Green Michael_Green@fws.gov

IMBD 2001: Shade the Coffee, Shelter the Birds

This year's International Migratory Bird Day will be celebrated nationally on May 12. The theme is "A Taste of the Tropics" focusing on shade-grown coffee and what coffee plantations mean to neotropical migratory birds. This year's poster features art by Terry Isaac.

If you are hosting an event, please register it on the IMBD website so that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service can keep track of this event's effectiveness as a teaching tool. The website also features a store with education materials, t-shirts, tattoos, press kits and more.

The event's national coordinators are Jennifer Wheeler in Washington D.C., (703-358-2318), and Sue Bonfield in Colorado (866-334-3330). Jennifer is handling general information and materials, and Sue is handling sales.

Click Here to Register Your Event

Click Here to Visit the IMBD Homepage

Western Bluebird Recovery Efforts Paying Off

During the year 2000 breeding season, volunteers monitoring nest boxes for the Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project in Oregon's Willamette Valley documented 456 nesting attempts by western bluebirds. Seventy-seven percent of these were successful, fledging 1,467 young bluebirds. The average clutch size was five eggs. On average four eggs hatched per clutch and 3 young fledged.

Licensed banders banded 1629 nestlings and 104 adult birds and recaptured 361 previously banded adult birds. All birds were banded and recovered at artificial nest boxes located in Clackamas, Marion, Multnomah, Washington and Yamhill counties.

One of the recovered birds is a new longevity record according to the Bird Banding Laboratory. A male Western Bluebird (1511-37296) that had been banded as a nestling by Brenda McGowan in Sherwood OR on 11 July 1994 was recaptured by Marilynne Keyser as a breeding male at a nest box near his natal site on June 14, 2000, making him 5 years, 11 months old.

The Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the recovery, restoration, and enhancement of the Western Bluebird and other native cavity nesting birds. The Western Bluebird is on the Oregon Sensitive Species List as "vulnerable." Habitat loss, pesticides and competition from the European Starling and House Sparrow have been the primary factors contributing to the decline of this once common songbird.

The Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation recently awarded a $2,000 grant to the project to do even more intense data-crunching.

Visit the Prescott Project

Monitoring Program In Place for Washington's Declining Burrowing Owls

Burrowing owl populations appear to have declined dramatically in Washington and a program to examine their decline has come together in Washington. Objectives of the overall effort are: 1) to initiate a state-wide standardized monitoring program for nesting burrowing owls in the state to determine status, distribution, and population trend; 2) to evaluate survey methodologies and develop effective survey protocols by measuring detection probability and the environmental factors affecting detection probability; 3) to evaluate the habitat features that influence reproductive success, burrow fidelity, post-fledging dispersal, juvenile and adult survival; 4) to evaluate the effectiveness of using artificial burrows to help restore local populations; and 5) to identify the ultimate causes of presumed population declines in Washington. Project partners include Washington State University, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, USGS-BRD, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, University of Arizona, U.S. Golf Association, Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and eight local golf courses. For more information contact any project partner: Courtney Conway (USGS-BRD, 520-626-8535), Joyce Whitney (BLM, 509-536-1244), Don Larsen (WDFW, 509-734-7444), Charlotte Reep (LCBAS, 509-547-9087), Heidi Brunkal (USFWS, 509-371-1801).

Terry Rich Goes National

Terry Rich has joined the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Migratory Bird Management Branch of Bird Conservation as the new national coordinator for Partners in Flight.

Terry has been involved with PIF since its inception and was formerly the PIF staff coordinator for Bureau of Land Management , chairman of Western Working Group, and chair of the national management steering committee. He will supervise PIF regional coordinators, provide technical assistance to other bird initiatives, including NABCI, and will help coordinate PIF's national working groups.

Terry's new office with USFWS is in Boise, Idaho, 208-378-5347 (Terry_Rich@fws.gov)

Video Illustrates Riparian Value

Whether it's along a coastline or a desert stream, riparian areas play an important role in the health of watersheds.

A new 12-minute video, "Life on the Edge: Improving Riparian Function," produced by Oregon State University Extension Service illustrates that importance by highlighting the function of transition zones, the role of land-use practices and techniques everyone can use to improve and protect riparian areas.

The video is available online for $19.95 by e-mailing puborders@orst.edu, or writing OSU Publication Orders, 422 Kerr Administration Building, Corvallis, OR 97331-2119.

For more information, contact Jeanne Bush at Jeanne_Bush@orst.edu

Sagebrush Leaflet Available

A 16-page color leaflet, "Keeping Birds in the Sagebrush Sea" is now available. It is a shortened version of "Birds in a Sagebrush Sea: Managing Sagebrush Habitats for Bird Communities."

Order copies from the Nongame Program, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, P.O. Box 25, Boise Idaho, 83707, 208-334-2920. For more information e-mail jbeals@idfg.state.id.us, or Bob Altman, alt8bird@aol.com

Register early for the PIF national conference March 20-24, 2002 in Monterey, California. Space is expected to be limited.

Information and conference topics are available online at

www.prbo.org/PIF/NPIF2002.htm

“Partners in Flight? What’s that?”

A primer from the national website that helps demystify Partners in Flight...

Partners in Flight was launched in 1990 in response to growing concerns about declines in the populations of many land bird species, and in order to emphasize the conservation of birds not covered by existing conservation initiatives. The initial focus was on species that breed in the Nearctic (North America) and winter in the Neotropics (Central and South America), but the focus has spread to include most landbirds and other species requiring terrestrial habitats.

Strengthened linkages with other conservation efforts is leading, at least in some cases, to comprehensive conservation for all native birds. The central premise of Partners in Flight has been that the resources of public and private organizations in North and South America must be combined, coordinated, and increased in order to achieve success in conserving bird populations in this hemisphere.

Partners In Flight is a cooperative effort involving partnerships among federal, state and local government agencies, philanthropic foundations, professional organizations, conservation groups, industry, the academic community, and private individuals. Currently partners include 16 federal agencies, 40 non-government organizations (NGOs), over 60 state and provincial fish and wildlife agencies, numerous universities, and the forest industry, and the list is growing daily. A complete list of contacts is available in the Directory section of the national website. All Partners In Flight meetings are open to anyone interested in bird conservation and we eagerly seek your contribution.

Partners In Flight's goal is to focus resources on improving monitoring and inventory of native birds and on research, management and education programs involving birds and their habitats. The strategy is to stimulate cooperative public and private sector efforts in North America and the neotropics to meet these goals. The power of Partners in Flight lies in the synergy that builds when diverse, committed groups who care about birds work together for a common goal.

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State Gives Nod to PIF Priority Areas

The Washington State Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has included in its 2001 Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) plan priority habitats identified by Partners in Flight.

Applicants for WHIP compete for limited cost-share funds through one of two ranking forms used in the state. Western Washington's ranking form gives priority to projects that restore or maintain one or more priority habitats , such as oak woodland, prairie, and riparian habitat. Projects also receive bonus points for being included in a Bird Conservation Area mapped by Partners in Flight.

The State of Washington received $300,000 for restoration activities to be allocated by June 1. Western Washington will receive $100,000 to promote implementation of the priority habitat types listed above. NRCS is also working closely with USFWS to fund some applications through the Washington State Ecosystems Program.

Plans will be installed over the next five to ten years on private and public lands and may nclude removing invasive woody vegetation on prairies, planting native prairie grasses/forbs, establishing of new oak woodlands, removing Douglas fir from existing oak woodland stands, and various riparian improvement practices. NRCS is also looking to promote federal/state threatened, endangered, and sensitive plant species through this year's WHIP program.

Erick Campbell Moves to Nevada

Erick Campbell, former Wildlife Program Manager for the Bureau of Land Management's Portland office, and one of Oregon/Washington PIFs original and most supportive members, has taken a new position with BLM in Reno, Nevada.

Erick was chairman of the Oregon/Washington PIF chapter in the mid 1990s, but will long be remembered for his ability to provide support for nearly every important project taken on by the chapter, and many other bird-related monitoring, research, and education projects in the Pacific Northwest. His bird conservation legacy lives on here in many of the projects we are working on now in which he provided the initial support.

Erick's move is a loss for our chapter, but the birds won't suffer since we all know he will be doing the same great things he did here for the birds of Nevada. Adios, amigo!!

— Bob Altman

Valuable Conservation Tool...

The premiere edition of the Conservation Assistance Tools (CAT) e-newsletter is now circulating

CAT is being updated to reflect changes in the funding priorities and other information provided for the foundations and agencies listed in the searchable database. CAT is striving to make this the most up-to-the-minute sources of information about grants, cost sharing, and technical assistanc available for naturalresources projects in the western United States. Visit CAT and subscribe to the e-newsletter at
http://www.sonoran.org/cat/

Oregon Senate Bill Takes Aim at Juniper

by Gary Ivey

Western juniper woodlands are important wildlife habitats. In particular, old growth junipers provide habitat uniquely important to a variety of birds, especially certain raptors and cavity nesting birds. On the other hand, over the last 130 years juniper encroachment has reduced ecosystem diversity and productivity in many areas of central and eastern Oregon. Junipers have displaced shrub steppe habitats, reducing habitat for important sage brush birds including sage grouse and a wide variety of other birds; a large percentage of today's juniper stands are less than 100 years old. It is a scenario of good juniper-bad juniper where birds are concerned.

It appears there is increasing interest in using prescribed fire to eliminate junipers for various goals and also for harvest for commercial purposes such as firewood, to produce logs for log homes in Oregon, pellets for wood stoves in Nevada and as fuel for co-generation electrical plants in California. With the current electricity shortage, demand for juniper as fuel for power generation could increase, and more juniper may be removed from the landscape. That might be okay if the *right* junipers were removed.

Proposed Oregon Senate Bill 315 would would revise definitions of forest tree species and operation under the Oregon Forest Practices Act (FPA) which covers forestry practices on private lands. The bill would exclude the management or harvest of juniper species on private lands from the FPA. Wildlife professionals should be concerned over this change because removal of junipers may not be regulated in the future which could have negative consequences for wildlife and the quality of Oregon's environment. SB 315 would transfer the authority for juniper management to the Department of Agriculture and DOA regulations may not be sufficient to maintain important ecological characteristics of some juniper communities on private land. The Oregon Chapter of The Wildlife Society (TWS) recently provided testimony on this bill and expressed concerns about unregulated removal, structural diversity and damage to fragile arid ecosystems.

TWS also offered "to assist a working group in formulating an action plan and in pointing out the advantages and disadvantages of various management systems, including a decision to not have any management plan." If a working group is established, it may provide an opportunity to integrate Partners in Flight goals into juniper management decisions on these private lands.

Regarding bird conservation, the issue of juniper management is much broader than the private lands of Oregon. Threats to important juniper habitats exist in all western states on both public and private lands while there is no standard for juniper management on public lands. It would be very timely for the Western Working Group of Partners in Flight to coordinate this issue between states and Chapters to help develop a protocol for management of junipers for bird and other wildlife conservation.

For more information, contact Gary Ivey, ivey@oregonvos.net

Methow/ (cont'd from front page)

best songbird areas, and is in the process of contacting landowners who may be interested in easements and songbird conservation.

Where landowners are interested, the Methow Conservancy's stewardship biologist will visit the property with a "songbird habitat scorecard,' which includes Partners in Flight focal species, to identify and prioritize songbird habitat. All landowners who participate receive a detailed songbird habitat management packet, and once areas on their property have been prioritized the biologist will start work on conservation easements.

Currently the Methow Conservancy covers transaction costs of establishing easements, and in some cases pay for portions of the total value of development rights. In many cases conservation easements qualify landowners for significant federal or estate tax deductions. Meanwhile the land stays in the hands of private owners, a long-term management plan to enhance or protect songbird habitat is written, and important habitat is permanently protected from threats of fragmentation and development.

For more information contact Methow Conservancy Stewardship Biologist, Katharine Bill, at conserve@methow.com.

Check out the Methow Conservancy website

Latin American/ (cont'd from front page)

The visiting biologists will spend about two weeks in the national park participating in a variety of monitoring, management, education and outreach projects, including: Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Citizen Science study of thrush populations near campgrounds; a high elevation special species monitoring project of Oregon-Washington PIF; working with park staff to develop interpretive exhibits that promote migratory bird conservation, and working with cooperating partners to give presentations to park visitors and the local Latino community on bird conservation and the value of the park as habitat for migratory birds.

The exchange program is part of a larger regional project that seeks funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to extend the biologists' stay in the Methow Valley and continue the program with the Forest Service and private landowners through a partnership with the Methow Conservancy, a land trust organization. Other cooperators in the project include American Bird Conservancy and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. For more information, contact Bob Kuntz Robert_Kuntz@nps.gov or Bob Altman, Alt8bird@aol.com

The Oregon/Washington Partners In Flight newsletter is published twice yearly in April and October. To submit an article for consideration, please e-mail Jenny_Valdivia@fws.gov

We are always interested in hearing what YOU are doing to conserve native landbirds. Drop us a line today!