

*May 2007*  
*Volume 36 Issue 5*

*ASO is a Chapter*  
*of the National*  
*Audubon Society*  
*Serving Eastern*  
*Nebraska*  
*and Western Iowa*

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## **ASO Spring Banquet Features Jan Riggensch**

Our annual celebration, the Spring Banquet, will be held Thursday, May 10, at Johnny's Steakhouse on L Street. Please join us for a social gathering at 6:00 p.m. with dinner at 7:00. Photo contest entries will be displayed, with winners selected. A reservation form is included on page 7 of this issue. The deadline is looming (May 5), so send your reservation in now! All members are invited, along with spouses and friends.

Our program, "Great Gardens Nurture Nature." will be presented by Jan Riggensch, noted gardener and writer of the "Midwest Gardening" column in the *Sunday World-Herald*. Her wisdom and advice have benefited many of us over the years and introduced us to new and more hardy varieties for our gardening success.

Ms. Riggensch has many credits. Her syndicated column appears weekly in cities throughout the Midwest, including the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Chicago Daily Herald, Fort Dodge (Iowa) Messenger, Mason City

Globe-Gazette, Sioux City Journal and Dubuque Telegraph-Herald. She is also Garden columnist and feature writer for Midwest Living magazine, is author of Midwest Gardener's Handbook; and coauthor of Ortho's All About Perennials; author of plant chapter in Sunset Midwestern landscaping and tree chapter in Better Homes and Gardens New Garden Book; and plant writer for HGTV Landscape Makeover.

She describes herself as a "down-to-earth gardener," maintaining large test gardens and arboretum on an acreage near Glenwood, Iowa." Anyone visiting her gardens would judge her description an understatement. Visitors marvel at the talents, both artistic and horticultural, required to design and maintain the amazing abundance of beautiful flowers and other plantings providing a visual feast for the eye.

Please join us for an excellent program and an evening of sociability.

### **Bird Counts: DeSoto Saturday, May 5 Sarpy County Saturday, May 12**

The annual Spring Counts at DeSoto Refuge and in Sarpy County will replace our usual field trip. Help is needed to make these a success. You may count for a half or entire day. Any help is appreciated. All levels of expertise are needed.

To help at DeSoto, call Steve Van Riper at 642-5411. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the check station behind the Administration Building (near the entrance). Bring a lunch. To help at the Boyer Chute area, contact Jerry Toll, 453-9239.

The Sarpy Count is scheduled for Saturday, May 12, under the leadership of Clem Klaphake. To sign on and select one of the four areas, contact

### **2007 Birdathon**

If you help with either or both of these Counts, your findings may be tallied for our Birdathon. Alternately, you may choose another day to count or simply make a donation. Any help will be greatly appreciated. For complete information and a donation form, see Page 3.

#### **Help ASO With Cleanups - Page 3**

Something new for ASO. Cleanups at Papio Creek sites are desperately needed. Help to improve our city. Complete information - Page 3

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## **A Message to all Audubon Members from President John Flicker:**

### **Unleashing the Power of Audubon to Combat Global Warming**

Dear Colleagues:

I am writing to seek your feedback and ultimately your full engagement in Audubon's plans to enhance our ongoing response to the growing threat of global warming to birds and other wildlife, habitat, and humanity.

As you probably know, the world's top scientists recently produced the report of the United Nations International Panel on Climate Change that all but eliminated any remaining doubt that dramatic alteration of global climate is underway, that it is caused by human use of fossil fuels, and that it has crisis implications.

Serious effects are already being seen worldwide, with long-term impacts on birds, other wildlife, habitat, and humankind that threaten to undermine all that Audubon has struggled for more than a century to accomplish.

Numerous Audubon chapters, state offices and national programs have been responding to this unprecedented challenge for some time: Ongoing conservation efforts address both causes and likely outcomes; national, state and local-level policy work tackles a wide range of energy-related issues; and *Audubon* magazine has long chronicled the warming issue and its potential solutions.

Yet the ever-worsening crisis demands that we ramp up our response as never before. And we can accomplish far more by working together.

Building on the Global Warming and Energy framework adopted by the National Audubon Society Board last year and on the efforts of network partners nationwide, staff are now proposing plans for a coordinated Audubon response that can add value to the great work already being done at the chapter and state level.

Together we can work to achieve overarching greenhouse gas reduction goals defined by science and adopted by the entire conservation community, while continuing our vital work for birds and habitat. Working at every level, the Audubon network can:

Many groups are crafting the specific policy and technical solutions for controlling greenhouse gas emissions. However, Audubon can collectively make a vital contribution by using our nationwide expertise in science, education, and policy to inform and mobilize our unique shared constituency of advocates, educators, scientists, and bird and nature lovers to take both personal and political action.

• Using *Audubon* magazine, web sites, coordinated media outreach and other tools, our broadest collective efforts will build a foundation of awareness and inspiration that fuels a growing national movement, promoting better individual choices and mass political support from members, web visitors, supporters, and every individual we reach.

• Those more fully engaged with Audubon through chapters, centers, state programs, and activities (i.e. IBA & CBC) will receive increasingly tailored information and opportunities such as program-focused materials, training, and events—to move them along a continuum toward more powerful individual and political actions.

• In concert with select states and chapters, the most intensive outreach, on-the-ground organizing activity, and political deployment efforts will focus on key leaders and advocates from a pool of targeted states whose members of Congress may control the fate of vital federal global warming legislation.

Similar multitiered approaches recently fueled Audubon's essential contributions to successful campaigns that protected the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and maintained the vital safeguards of the Endangered Species Act. As in those efforts, we will work with both network partners and key external organizations. One such partnership, with the National Wildlife Federation, will enable Audubon to co-present and customize their well-established global warming training program and materials to meet the needs of our audiences without incurring substantial development costs. Some of our Audubon efforts will be new. But most will represent an important dimension of the education,

1. Help pass federal legislation to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 60-80% by 2050

2. Encourage federal and state adoption or enhancement of a suite of renewable energy measures, including Renewable Portfolio Standards

3. Inspire voluntary actions to reduce the carbon footprint of individuals and communities

4. Promote responsible energy development and conservation strategies consistent with protection of birds and habitat.

science and policy work already underway to protect birds and habitat. For example, in-depth analyses of Christmas Bird Count data will permit Audubon to inform the global warming discussion and our own conservation efforts with critical information about the impact warming has already had

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### **Cleanups of Papio Creek Sites:**

**Saturdays May 19 and June 9**

Civic pride has motivated ASO to conduct two cleanups: Saturdays May 19 and June 9 at Papio Creek sites where trash has accumulated to a disgraceful amount. It is time for a cleanup. Starting time will be 8:00 am. Trash bags and gloves will be provided, along with cold drinks and cookies. You may work for as much time as you can give.

We would greatly appreciate your help. The spring weather should make for a pleasant experience along with your service toward making our city cleaner, more aesthetically pleasing.

**If you can help, call Laurine Blankenau, 451-3647, for directions to the site, possible change of plans because of weather, or for other information. Keep both dates.**

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### **Gardens Needed!**

By Jackie Scholar

ASO will once again present a summer Garden Walk and hope that you would be willing to volunteer your garden for this year's event.

If you are willing or if you know someone who would be willing to be part of this year's Walk, please contact Jackie Scholar at 551-5045, Laurine Blankenau at 451-3647, or Jackie at 451-3647.

Also, if you would like to volunteer at one of the gardens, please call one of the above individuals.

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## Mid-West Power Plant Accessibility

By Elliott Bedows

After considerable effort by many, the annual problems surrounding access for birding at the Mid-West Power Plant are now resolved. The ban on birding at the plant has been (i.e., they have 'relocated' the list). Same rule as always, though. You have to check and get a "pass in" before you begin to bird the South pond.

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Pres. John Flicker, *Continued from page 2*

## Papillion Creek and Its Watershed

on birds, potentially prompting enhanced action from birders and creating new opportunities to keep the issue on the media and public radar.

Julia Levin of Audubon California has agreed to take on the temporary post of global warming campaign director to help coordinate efforts across the network and other partner organizations. Julia will be seeking your input and your cooperation.

The input and help of chapters, centers, state offices, and individuals throughout the Audubon family are urgently needed to improve and execute the plan. Together we can build on and broaden the success of work already underway in Florida, Ohio, California, and in so many other places.

Beyond our targeted legislative mobilization efforts, we must work together to communicate the issues and solutions of global warming to all Audubon audiences. Consider: How can we showcase them for center visitors? What will motivate IBA and CBC participants to take global warming action? How do we measure and address the implications of global warming for landscape conservation initiatives?

New outreach to some of our audiences is already underway through recent magazine features and the addition of significant global warming content to Audubon.org. With your help, the web content will grow in scope, depth, and linkage to other partners; stories of what you are doing will enable us to inform

By Marian Maas

In the April *Meadowlark*, Marian Maas, Project Manager of the Water Quality Cooperative Agreement Grant Program from the EPA, informed our readers about the Papillion Creek Watershed, its water quality and other issues. Her article continues, outlining methods to improve the quality of the Creek's water and its effect on our city.

Our neighboring cities of Des Moines and Kansas City have recognized the value of Low Impact Development (LID) practices towards reducing storm water and are incorporating them into their urban areas. Kansas City has established a "10,000 Rain Gardens Initiative" as a way of reducing storm water runoff and addressing the problems of Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs), the same type of problems that affect Omaha.

Here are things homeowners, neighborhoods, commercial properties, churches, schools and communities can do:

• **Rain gardens** - These are perennial gardens strategically located to capture runoff from impervious surfaces such as roofs, driveways, and patios. Native species have more ability to be drought-tolerant, requiring less watering during dry spells than nonnatives, but can also withstand wet soils 24 - 48 hours. Redirect downspouts from the house to flow into the rain garden.

• **Porous paving/permeable paving alternatives** - Interlocking pavers,

and empower others. Yet this is only a beginning. Together we can exploit the countless opportunities to inspire and motivate those already connected to Audubon to take new and essential action. Working in concert, we can help ensure that global warming does not undermine all that we have long worked to achieve together.

The initial thinking on this evolving plan to just now being shared with National Audubon Society staff and chapters nationwide. This first message to inform and, more importantly, seek feedback from all of you, is our next essential step. Please send any initial thoughts to [globalwarming@audubon.org](mailto:globalwarming@audubon.org).

In the weeks to come, we will be more directly soliciting ideas and involvement, especially from chapters in targeted states. Opportunities for discussion and sharing of ideas will be identified and communicated.

Meanwhile, I welcome your feedback and your questions. Most importantly, I greatly appreciate your assistance in implementing this crucial aspect of our shared Audubon mission.

porous concrete and asphalt, and reinforced gravel and grassed surfaces all allow for rainfall to infiltrate into the substrate layer beneath. Utilization of porous paving can yield a tremendous reduction in the amount of storm water runoff. Pervious materials are suitable alternatives for parking lots, firelanes, off-street parking, residential streets, driveways, paths and private roads, trails and shopping area walkways. Zoning and city regulations should include provisions to reduce the amount of paving in city areas.

“ **Bioretention cells** - These are shallow, linear depressions that can handle large volumes of water from extensive impervious surfaces found in commercial, institutional, industrial, or residential settings. Bioretention cells are constructed similarly to rain gardens except that they generally have a more engineered substrate.

“ **Bioswales** - Bioswales are similar to bioretention cells but lack the engineering. These are vegetated linear shallow ditches that handle the first flush of runoff as

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page 4*

**Papio  
Creek,**

well as some infiltration. Of the different LIDs, this is the one most often used by developers because natural swales can be utilized.

“ **Rain barrels/cisterns** - Collection of rainwater from roofs is an excellent way to conserve water, store, and use it at a later time. Rain barrels are reasonably priced and don't have excessive setup requirements. The stored water is especially appreciated during times of drought.

“ **Native vegetation and landscaping** - Native plants have extensive rainwater-absorbing root systems which restore the natural hydrology of the groundwater, rather than letting it run off into the storm sewer. Native plants can be incorporated into nearly any site, including home lawns, parks, commercial sites, and require less maintenance and less watering than bluegrass. Birds, butterflies and wildlife thrive in native species habitats.

“ **Stream buffer strips** - Native grasses planted in 50 - 100 foot swathes along streams reduce the velocity of runoff from agricultural fields; remove pollutants, nutrients and sediment; and provide wildlife habitat. Similar strips of vegetation should be left as a buffer

from one to the next. Citizens and municipalities need to recognize the civic responsibility of each of us to protect our natural resources.

Streams serve as linear corridors for wildlife. Indeed with the conversion of much of our landscape to agriculture and urbanization, very little area is left for wildlife, and the stream systems are nearly the only thing left that (1) provides habitat and (2) connects habitats and prevents fragmentation. Scientists have stated that fragmentation of habitat (patchiness or separation of habitat into isolated parcels) is the single largest reason for loss of species.

The current philosophy of watershed managers is to use the streams to send the water downstream (out and away) as quickly as possible. A change in this philosophy is needed. The water itself needs to be recognized as having its own value. A healthy stream free of pathogens, sediment and chemicals, accompanied by a restored stream corridor vegetated with a diversity of plants, grasses and trees would be a tremendous asset to the greater Omaha community.

Other cities have recognized the value of improving and restoring their urban streams and providing access to the stream itself. Ease of accessibility increased opportunities for enjoyment of the stream by young and old for fishing, birding, nature appreciation, stress

between construction sites and stream corridors, and left in place to protect urban streams, ponds and wetlands after construction is completed.

“ **Small wetlands** - Naturally occurring wet areas connect surface water with groundwater, reduce flooding, and are excellent in removing nitrates, phosphorus and sediment. Wetlands are legally protected, yet many continue to be lost. A variety of species of amphibians, birds and plants depend on wetlands.

“ **Trees/shrubs** - Tree roots extend deeply and have very important roles in absorbing rainwater and holding soil in place. Trees provide windbreaks, shade for homes, and habitat for many species of birds. Native trees and shrubs in riparian areas along streams are vital for maintaining natural wildlife areas.

“ **Preservation of natural areas and streams** - Urban landscapes are often void of natural settings. Conservation Design and/or Green Development, methods that value natural features and work to keep rainfall on site, incorporate topography, natural features, and maintain increased aesthetics, property value, and quality of life for its residents.

Streams connect communities. Historically, rivers have served as transportation routes and as means of connecting with other settlements in the region. Even today neighboring communities share this resource flowing

reduction, exposure of children and young people to the natural world, picnicking, and more.

These natural corridors and green spaces contribute to a quality of life that is valued by many residents in urban settings. These influence choices for where young professionals and others choose to live and work. The environment and economy are closely linked. With the improvement of natural areas within the city, businesses can attract workers and trained employees, and thus increase revenue from commercial interests and the work force.

For more information, visit [www.papillioncreek.org](http://www.papillioncreek.org) or contact [marian.maas@cox.net](mailto:marian.maas@cox.net).

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## Addresses to Remember

President George W. Bush

The White House, 1600  
Pennsylvania Ave NW

Washington D.C. 20500-0001

Comments: 202-456-1111; fax:  
202-456-2993

Senator Ben Nelson

U.S. Senate, Washington DC  
20510; 202-224-6551; fax 202-228-  
0012; Lincoln: 402-437-5246;  
Omaha 391-3411; Omaha address:  
7602 Pacific St, #205, 68114

Senator Chuck Hagel

U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C.  
20510-2705

Omaha Address: 9900 Nicholas St,  
Suite 325,

Omaha 68114

Phone: (202) 224-4224; Fax: (202)

## Audubon Society

### Membership Application

The *Audubon Magazine* and your membership card will be sent to this address:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### Introductory Membership

### National Audubon & Local Chapter

(1st & 2nd Year \$20)

Make check payable to National Audubon Society

Mail to Audubon Society of Omaha

19612 Ridgeway Road

Plattsmouth NE 68048

PO 3

Omaha phone: (402) 758-8981

Representative Lee Terry

U.S. House of  
Representatives, Washington, DC  
20515

Phone: (202) 225-4155 ; Fax: (202)  
226-5452

Omaha Address: 11717 Burt St,  
Omaha 68154

Omaha phone: (402) 397-9944

Representative Jeff Fortenberry

U.S. House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC 20515 Phone:  
(202) 225-4806

Lincoln phone: (402) 438-1598

Lincoln Address:

Governor Dave Heineman

Capitol Bldg, Box 94848 Lincoln,  
NE 68509

Phone: (402) 471-2244; Fax: 471-  
6031

Mayor Mike Fahey

Omaha/Douglas Civic Center

1819 Farnam St, Omaha NE 68183

Phone: 444-5000 Hot Line: 444-  
5555

## Banquet Reservation

**Johnny's Steakhouse on L Street**

**Thursday, May 10, Cash Bar 6:00 p.m. Dinner 7:00 p.m.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Number and Street City Zip

Enclosed is \$\_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ persons.

The cost is \$20.00 per person. Make check payable to ASO. Mail to Laurine Blankenau, 3808 Grebe, Omaha  
68112

**Reservations must be received by May 5.**

**Audubon Society of Omaha, Mailing Address: P. O. Box 3542, Omaha  
68103-05**

**Phone: 451-3647 - <http://audubon-omaha.org>**

### **Elected Officers:**

**President Elliott Bedows....292-5017**

**1st Vice President Jackie  
Scholar.....551-5045**

**2nd Vice President Nelli  
Falzgraf.....292-9687**

### **Standing Committee Chairpersons, cont.**

**Natural Areas Mgt. Eric Scholar.....551-5045**

**Program Nancy Leonard.....330-3888**

**Publication Laurine Blankenau.....451-3647**

Treasurer Patty Albright.....323-1966 Publicity Jackie Scholar.....551-5045

Past President Nelli Falzgraf.....292-9687 Other Activities:

Bird Seed Sale Co-Chairs Kathleen Rose..... 292-8912

Corresponding

Secretary Pauline Dickey.....932-8205 Carol Rasmussen.....731-3939

Elected Directors Laurine Blankenau.....451-3647

Speakers Bureau Eunice Levisay.....393-0545

Historian Kathleen Rose.....292-8912

Linda Dennis.....733-6548 Mace Hack.....934-5040

ASO State Board Rep. Mace Hack.....934-5040

Urban Lehner.....330-3888

NAS Board Member Peter Cannon, Jr ...608-251-1276

Nancy Leonard.....330-3888 Eric Scholar.....551-5045

**Standing Committee Chairpersons:**  
Conservation Mace Hack.....934-5040  
Education Clem Klaphake.....292-2276

*The Meadowlark* is published monthly September through May, plus a summer issue. The newsletter may be accessed on our web site, <http://audubon-omaha.org>

Field Trip Elliott Bedows.....292-5017

Send address changes to Kathy Schwery, 19612 Ridgeway Road, Plattsmouth NE 68048.

Finance Nelli Falzgraf.....292-9687

Fund Raising Mace Hack.....934-5040

Hospitality DwanDean Leach.....346-5769

Membership Kathy Schwery.....296-4788

Audubon Society of Omaha

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