



The Mountain Chat

Newsletter of the Mountaineer Chapter of the National Audubon Society

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Fall 2009

Nature and Friends

LeJay Graffious, Mountaineer Audubon VP

Our first meeting this fall will be on Beginning Birding by Dr. Derrick Courtney. He is a beginning birder who has been perusing birds with his camera. He will review the basics of bird watching and introduce ways to identify our feathered friends.

Lately, I have been thinking about what birding means to me. I have read a recent report by the federal government, [Birding in the United States: A Demographic and Economic Analysis](#). It identifies who birders are. "To be counted as a birder, an individual must have either taken a trip one mile or more from home for the primary purpose of observing birds, and/or closely observed, or tried to identify birds around home." With this definition 21% of United States's citizens are birders and 18% of West Virginians are birders.

I have met all kinds of birders. I have met the scientific birders. The individual who exemplifies this type to me was George A. Hall. He was a local birder who observed birds, recorded data, analyzed the data and reported his works in national publications. This Morgantown man had a national reputation for his work and knowledge of Appalachian avian fauna.

I have met the listers who seek to have a long list of sightings for their yard, the county, the state, the United States or just a long Life List. I have met

the social birders who like to tag along with others and enjoy seeing the birds as part of a group. I have met the farmer who has not traveled far from home but knows the birds on his farm intimately. I have met the birder who just enjoys sitting in the living room watching the activity at the feeder.

No matter which type of birder you are, we share the camaraderie in birding. I have made friends, close friends, around the world through birding. There is something about being out in nature with someone that lends itself to intimate talk. I mourn for the folks who are disconnected from the natural world. You do not need to have a label for everything in the environment to enjoy it. If keying out flowers, birds or mosses is your thing that is great. To me, birding with a friend in the natural world is enjoyable whether we know every bird or not. To me the fun is the discourse when puzzling the bird song in the copse or discussing the identity from the brief glimpse as it flutters by.

The importance of birding to me is not knowing the bird, but being outside and experiencing life with a friend.

(For the full report, [Birding in the United States: A Demographic and Economic Analysis](#), go to the website, http://library.fws.gov/Pubs/birding_natsurvey06.pdf)

President's Message

Dear Chapter Members,

Since I have not met most of you, I would like to introduce myself. My name is Joe Super, and I am the new president of Mountaineer Audubon. I come to the Audubon Society through my general commitment to environmental and conservation issues, and through my belief that local Audubon chapters have the power to entertain, educate, and if they wish, to influence policies that affect all forms of wildlife. The history of Mountaineer Audubon proves this.

The program for this year promises to be very interesting, and builds on much of what has been accomplished in the past. One of the additions will be the introduction of neighborhood bird walks, which we will kick off in South Park, Morgantown, in May 2010. We also hope to develop an email list serve that will help us get out information on upcoming events. As of yet, we do not have a coordinator for the list serve. In the interim, please email me at jsuper@wvu.edu with your email address if you wish to be included.

We owe a special thanks to Sue Olcott and all of the other past presidents and board members who have contributed so much to our chapter. Fortunately, all of them have promised to stay actively involved this year. Thanks to all of them. I look forward to meeting you at some of the events this fall.

Best wishes,
Joe

Events Calendar

Sept 8 Introduction to Birding

Dr. Derek Courtney, MD

7:00 pm, Public Safety Building, Morgantown

This will be a special opportunity for those who have always been interested in birding, but do not know how and where to begin. Mountaineer Audubon will provide snacks and refreshments. Please invite family and friends.

Sept 19 Birds of Dolly Sods

Meet at Parking Lot at Blackbird Knob Trail (between Blackbird Knob Trail and Red Creek Campground). Meet anytime on the hour between 8 and 11 am.

Contact: LeJay Graffious
(lejay@frontiernet.net)

Oct 13 International Birding Experiences

Dr. Larry Schwab, MD

7:00pm, Public Safety Building, Morgantown

Nov 10 Winter Birding in North Central WV

Sue Olcott

7:00pm, Public Safety Building, Morgantown

Dec 19 Christmas Bird Count

Contact: LeJay Graffious

Mountaineer Audubon Chapter Membership Application

Enter or renew my membership (family or individual) to the Mountaineer Audubon chapter.

I understand that this category of membership does not include membership in the National Audubon Society.

I will receive information on all chapter activities, and have voting rights in Board elections.

I'd like to join, renew or extend my current membership.

My \$15 payment is enclosed.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Make check payable to Mountaineer Audubon Society and mail to: Mountaineer Audubon Society P.O. Box 422, Morgantown, WV 26507-0422

Audubon Activities

At the national level the Audubon Society continues to expand, offering members and others many opportunities to stay informed about decisions that affect not only birds but the general health of the planet. Global warming, recycling, wetlands, coastal erosion, power plants, roads, and much more are on the agenda. You can stay current by logging on to Audubonaction.org You can also, if you wish, support Audubon by buying coffee from the Auduboncoffeclub.com. (I have not tried it yet, but will and report back in the next newsletter.)

As the statement on Deckers Creek notes, our chapter is involved in important local and state conservation issues. It also donates money to groups such as the Oglebay Junior Nature Camp and the Mon River Trails Conservancy. This year our chapter will be considering specific plans for the future. Please let any of the board members or me know of projects or interests that you might have. Thanks, Joe

Mountaineer Audubon and Conservation

Ten years ago Martin Christ asked me, as secretary of Mountaineer Audubon, to write a letter to NRCS in support of water quality restoration in Deckers Creek. If I remember correctly, it was about the time Mountaineer Audubon funded 2 campers to the Youth Ecology Camp at The Mountain Institute. That summer I was teaching a Reptile & Amphibian class on Spruce Knob and the campers were also writing and urging the state government to attend cleaning the AMD (Acid Mine Drainage) source for Deckers Creek.

Now it is 2009 and Friends of Deckers Creek is again petitioning the Governor of West Virginia to support restoration of the water quality in Deckers Creek by treating AMD sources in the watershed. As Conservation Chair of Mountaineer Audubon I mailed the requested letter to Governor Joe Manchin. . . .and it was returned stamped 'unknown'! Then I hand delivered the letter to Martin Christ at FODC to include our letter with their collected letters, some from BoParc summer campers. Let's hope the DEP will swing into action for a Clean Deckers Creek.

Katherine Payne, Conservation Chair

Help Save Deckers Creek!

Please print and sign the letter below and mail to:
Friends of Deckers Creek

P.O. Box 877

Dellslow, WV 26531

We'll compile your letters and postcards and deliver them to the Governor.

Thanks for your support!

Governor Joe Manchin
1900 Kanawha Boulevard, E.
Charleston, WV 25305

Dear Governor Manchin:

The abandoned Richard mine dumps 300,000 gallons of acid mine drainage including 800 pounds of metals and over one tone of acidity into Deckers Creek **every day**. It kills aquatic life in Deckers Creek for its lower 5 miles and turns it into a red-orange, eyesore all the way through Morgantown.

FODC has been working toward cleaning up the Richard mine for 10 years. In 2002, NRCS committed \$4.8 million dollars to treat AMD discharges in the Deckers Creek watershed. In 2002, WVDEP also committed \$4.8 million in matching funds including \$2.1 million specifically to clean up the Richard mine. In fiscal year 2004 and in following years, Senator Robert C. Byrd appropriated funding for NRCS to realize the plan formalized in 2002.

The NRCS has a design and funds NOW to build the treatment plant, but can not, by law, pay for operation and maintenance (O&M) costs. In 2008, WVDEP committed to providing O&M funds, but has recently wavered in its commitment. The money is available NOW through the Abandoned Mine Land Trust Fund and you ultimately decide how the Trust Fund will be spent. If the Richard mine is treated, water chemistry and aquatic life in Deckers Creek will rebound and include a smallmouth bass fishery through Morgantown. The success of the entire Deckers Creek watershed clean-up project will ultimately be judged by this remediation project.

You have an opportunity to **commit funds NOW** for a treatment facility at the Richard mine, honoring Senator Byrd, hardworking organizations and agencies, and hundreds of volunteers as well as capitalizing on the state's best opportunity to replace a painful environmental legacy with a vibrant recreational and economic resource.

However, if you do not direct the state Department of Environmental Protection to help pay for treatment at the abandoned Richard mine, Deckers Creek will remain dead, orange, and a public eyesore all the way through Morgantown – a regional tragedy for too long!

Respectfully submitted,

Name/s Printed _____

Address _____

Signature _____

Date _____

National Audubon Society

A gift membership to Audubon will be enjoyed for the entire year. First year dues of \$20.00 include local chapter membership.

National Audubon Society
Chapter Membership Application

___ YES, I'd like to join. Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and the Mountaineer Chapter. Chapter code:C92Y5107. Send Audubon magazine and my membership card to the address below.

___Please send a gift membership to the national Audubon Society and the appropriate local chapter to the person and address below.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS _____

Please make checks payable to the National Audubon Society

Send this application and your check to:
National Audubon Society
Chapter Membership Data Center
PO Box 422250
Palm Coast, FL 34142-2250

Mountaineer Audubon Directory

President	John Super	292-4336
Vice President	LeJay Graffious	379-4492
Secretary	Vicky Shears	296-7249
Treasurer	Bill Kennell	296-4853
Fundraising	Sue Olcott	825-6787
Publicity	Alan Clark	724/ 437-2524
Education	Norma Venable	328-5128
Conservation	Kathryn Payne	284-9127
Membership	Mary Ann Tokarz	599-7683
Field Trips	vacant	
Newsletter	Sally Wilts	379-7567

www.mountaineeraudubon.org

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