

Some Conservation-related Information & Contacts - Spring 2019

There are many dedicated and capable agencies, organizations and individuals working on conservation projects, issues and problems. Below is a list of some of those that YVAS is routinely involved with. This information will also be included on the YVAS web site <http://yvaudubon.org/conservation/> and will be updated periodically.

Montana Legislature tracking 2019 - some quick references:

- **Montana State Legislature:** <https://www.leg.mt.gov/> then Bill Lookup at <https://www.leg.mt.gov/bill-info/>, and 2019 Session Info and Legislator Messaging <https://leg.mt.gov/session/>. To contact your Legislators <https://www.leg.mt.gov/legislator-lookup/>
- **NPRC - Northern Plains Resource Council** web site <https://northernplains.org/issues/legislature/> and https://northernplains.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/2019_LegBulletin_04_2019-02-28.pdf ,
- **Montana Audubon** <https://mtaudubon.org/news/>
- **Montana Wildlife Federation** <http://montanawildlife.org/get-involved/capitol-report-2019-bills-and-budgets/>

Montana Dept. of Fish Wildlife and Parks (MFWP) <http://fwp.mt.gov/>

MFWP Region 5 (Billings) visit <http://fwp.mt.gov/regions/r5/>

- YVAS and MFWP Region 5 have a number of shared activities scheduled for 2019. Keep an eye on the Flyer, web site <http://yvaudubon.org/> and monthly meetings for further details.

US Forest Service, Custer Gallatin National Forest <https://www.fs.usda.gov/custergallatin>

Forest Plan Revision updates: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/custergallatin/home> .

Also, some US Forest Service news close to home:

- Red Lodge Creek Road #2141 is now closed for spring break up.
- West Rosebud Road #2072 is now open to the Mystic lake Trailhead. It is single lane through big drifts from Emerald lake on up and the trailhead is still snowed in so no parking there for a while. Recommend 4WD for this road until it dries out. It will be pretty soft and sloppy in places, especially in the afternoons.
- April 15th is the next date for opening and closing roads on the Beartooth Ranger District - e.g. Open the low roads and close the high ones in the Pryors for spring breakup.
- In addition to continuing visits to USFS-managed lands YVAS and the Custer Gallatin National Forest plan to carry out some activities of mutual interest and benefit in 2019.

US Bureau of Land Management - For Montana/Dakota regional updates and information see

<https://www.blm.gov/montana-dakotas>

Also, some US BLM news close to home:

- The Billings Field Office and Pompey's Pillar National Monument are excited to continue their partnership with the MT Audubon Conservation Education Center's Audubon Naturalists in the Schools (ANTS) program. This year, students from 5 different schools will be visiting local recreation sites, including Sundance Lodge, Four Dances Natural Area, and Pompey's Pillar, as part of the field trip component of this popular program.
- In addition to YVAS continuing visits to BLM managed lands YVAS and BLM plan to carry out some activities of mutual interest and benefit in 2019.

US Fish and Wildlife Service <https://www.fws.gov/>

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society submitted comments on the USFWS Refuge Planning Process Mountain-Prairie Region in March of 2107. For current status of that Process please refer to: <https://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/refuges/cmrwmd.php>

Current status of Final Comprehensive Conservation Process: https://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/refuges/mt_Plan.php - The Plans for Montana refuges and Waterfowl Protection Areas near Billings have not yet been completed. For an example of what those plans may look like see the Bowdoin Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CPP) document: <https://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/refuges/refugesUpdate/bwd.php>

Berkeley Pit Waterfowl impact mitigation.

See <http://yvaudubon.org/conservation/> “Projects” tab for some up to date information:

- Berkeley Pit Waterfowl Report for 20 March 2019;
- November 15, 2018: BUTTE MINE FLOODING SITE CD, CV 02-35 Bu-RFC, 2018 Third Quarter Report <https://semspub.epa.gov/work/08/1902950.pdf>
- Phase 1 Programmable Laser Unit Demonstration Work Plan

Montana Wildlife Federation <http://montanawildlife.org/>

- Garden for Wildlife: Certified Wildlife Habitats <http://montanawildlife.org/garden-for-wildlife-certified-wildlife-habitats/> transform backyards, school grounds, places of worship, businesses, and community spaces in Billings into Certified Wildlife Habitats.
- YVAS and MWF ally on common issues and efforts.

Montana Wilderness Association <http://wildmontana.org/> and <http://wildmontana.org/about-us/local-chapters/eastern-wildlands-chapter>

- YVAS and MWA ally on common issues and efforts.

Pryors Coalition <http://www.pryormountains.org/>

- YVAS and PC work on common issues, e.g. <http://www.pryormountains.org/management-issues/cnf-travel-plan/> .

Arbor Day

- Billings City Parks is hosting an Arbor Day educational program open to area 4th grade classes at Central Park Thurs May 2, 2019. YVAS will be participating again this year.
- Other Arbor Day events are scheduled in the area - keep an eye on the Billings Gazette and other new outlets for details.

Earth Day 2019 - April 22, 2019 - <https://www.earthday.org/earthday/> “Earth Day is now a global event each year, and we believe that more than 1 billion people in 192 countries now take part in what is the largest civic-focused day of action in the world.”

Global Big Day - May 4, 2019 - <https://ebird.org/news/global-big-day-4-may-2019> On **4 May**, join more than 30,000 others and become a part of Global Big Day. You don’t have to commit to birding for 24 hours—an hour or even 10 minutes of watching birds makes you part of the team. Visit your favorite spot or search out someplace new; enjoy a solo walk or get some friends to join in the Global Big Day fun.

YVAS 2019 field project work includes:

- Bluebird nesting boxes monitoring and maintenance
- Osprey nest monitoring, Osprey rescue, baling twine recycling
- Public lands trail and habitat projects and weed control work
- Bird information signs installed at some parks and public places

Bird data and conservation

Some great sources for bird data that everyone can readily use and that YVAS contributes to:

- Cornell Lab of Ornithology (Cornell Lab of Ornithology <https://www.birds.cornell.edu/home/> and eBird <https://ebird.org/home>),
- MT Natural Heritage Program <http://mtnhp.org/> and <http://fieldguide.mt.gov/>;
- iNaturalist <https://www.inaturalist.org/>
- Patuxent USGS <https://www.usgs.gov/centers/pwrc>
- Yellowstone Audubon Society <http://yvaudubon.org/birding-hot-spots/>