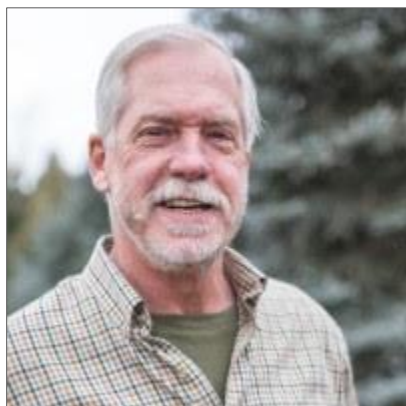


Floating Island International Technologies for Habitat Restoration



Bruce Kania

Floating Island International (FII) has developed two nature-based technologies that present numerous benefits to aquatic ecosystems. These are RAM- Reduction of Aquatic Methane, and BioHaven floating islands. The benefits include, but are not limited to:

- Habitat restoration and enhancement
- Reduction in algae blooms, mosquitoes, methane, and hydrogen sulfide
- Prevention of stagnation and fish kills.

RAM's horizontal aeration treats a much larger area than typical vertical aerators, providing oxygen-breathing species with a much larger habitable zone. Supplying oxygen at the sediment-water interface will support microbial depletion of methane, decreasing overall emissions from the waterbody. This is important because about 50% of all methane emissions originate from

impaired waterbodies, and methane is currently responsible for about 30% of the planet's warming. These numbers have been steadily increasing, and this is how FII is working to support and sustain the health of these fragile ecosystems by using nature-based models.

The patented innovation provided by **BioHaven** floating islands is an engineered, high-surface-area fibrous matrix (made from 100% recycled PET plastic and proprietary bio-matrix) that mimics natural floating peatlands and wetlands to supercharge microbial colonization and plant growth.

Floating Islands International is headquartered in Montana and is led by CEO Bruce Kania. Licensed manufacturers are now constructing and marketing BioHaven products worldwide, with more than 10,000 BioHavens launched to date. FII maintains a strong research and development focus that continues to result in issued and pending patents for environmental restoration.

Join us on **Monday, Nov 16**, for the YVAS monthly program. Bruce Kania will present on Floating Island International's contributions to wetland habitat restoration.

YVAS programs are free and open to the public, at the Mayflower Church on Poly and Rehberg Lane. A social with coffee and cookies begins at 6:30 PM; the program begins at 7:00 PM.



Restored Wetlands Photo from FII Website

Submitted by Bruce Waage

YVAS Events Coming Up!

Programs:

Monday, Nov 16: Bruce Kania, CEO, Floating Islands International, will speak about pond habitat and the company's patented systems to reduce methane emissions, support aquatic life, and provide a low-cost, nature-based solution to water management.

Birding Field Trips:

Sunday, Nov 1, Yellowtail Dam Afterbay. Meet up at Rocky at 8:00 AM. Ron Kuhler will lead. Raptors, overwintering songbirds, and a wide variety of waterfowl are to be found at this time of year since the Afterbay does not freeze over and fall migration is still underway for some birds.

New Trip!! Sunday, Nov 8th, Cooney Reservoir. Meet at 9AM at the Marshall Campground boat ramp at Cooney or 8AM at the NW end of the Costco parking lot in Billings for ride sharing. Mike Weber, Susan Hovde and Stan Heath will lead.

Saturday, Dec 19, Christmas Bird Count 2026. Jerry Dalton will coordinate teams of bird watchers for this annual survey and count of Billings birds. *See more about the event on page 3.*

Noteworthy: The Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival will feature **Marco Restani** as a keynote speaker in Harlingen, Texas Nov 11-15. *"The Yellowstone River Osprey Project: A Volunteer Effort Connecting Montana and Texas."*



Members of the Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society in Billings, Montana initiated a study of breeding Ospreys in 2009. They were interested in monitoring the abundance and productivity of the local population, and in assisting management agencies and electric utilities to reduce human-Osprey conflicts. Today over 40 volunteers monitor nearly 100 nests along the Yellowstone River. This presentation will describe Osprey reproductive success, mortality factors, and short- and long-range movements. As part of the project, over 1000 nestlings have been color-banded; 30 of those have been observed wintering in Texas. The locations and circumstances of those encounters demonstrate how the annual cycle of Ospreys links Montana and Texas.

For more information on this amazing festival, go to the website: rgvbf.org

Montana Audubon Center Calendar

Learn more about these and other activities on the website: mtaudubon.org/center

Nature Nuts: Every Tue, 10-11 am (Children ages 1-4 with accompanying adult.) Register in advance.

Morning Bird Stroll: Sat, Nov 14th at 10:00 am - Enjoy a stroll by the river and learn a few birds on the way. Great for beginning birders!

Holiday Wreath Workshops

Discover local conifers while gathering juniper boughs to create your own holiday wreath to take home. We'll provide all materials, but feel free to bring any additional decorative items or bows. You can work with friends or family, or independently.

Please dress appropriately for the weather, as we will be outside collecting boughs.

Cost: \$35/wreath or \$30/members

Saturday, November 7th, 2:00 pm- 4:00 pm

Purchase your ticket on the Center website

-OR-

Saturday, November 21st, 2:00 pm- 4:00 pm

Purchase your ticket on the Center website

Submitted by Emily Chilcoat, Montana Audubon Center Director

2026 Audubon Christmas Bird Count

All Volunteers Are Welcome - Please Sign Up

Save Saturday, December 19, 2026, on your calendar for the Billings 2026 Christmas Bird Count (CBC). Sign up for a free birdwatching adventure! When you sign up, you won't know whether to expect a sunny sky or fresh snow. Meet some new birdwatching friends or reconnect with some birding buddies. Learn some new places to find birds, and spot that species no one else sees that day.

The CBC is long term citizen science started in 1900 by National Audubon and conducted in Billings for the first time about 1940. Billings count area is a circle of 7.5-mile radius, centered on the Billings Par Pacific Refinery, formerly Exxon. The extent of the circle area reaches the Huntley bridge across the Yellowstone River on HWY 312, to six miles north of HWY 312 on HWY 87 N, the east edge of Zimmerman Park, Rehberg and Grand, King Ave West and South 24th St West, ¼ mile West of Norm Schoenthal's Island, Blue Creek Road at Briarwood Golf Club, HWY 87 S at Pryor Road, I-90 at Pryor Creek Road, and back to Huntley, including Lockwood, Billings Heights, and the close in part of west Billings.

This year we will plan to meet for a no-host breakfast from 7:00 – 8:00 am at Perkins, 825 N 27th Street. To compile the species observed, plan to meet after the count at about 5:00 pm at the Montana Audubon Center, 7026 S Billings Blvd, for free pizza and beverage provided by Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society (YVAS). Treats and desserts would be welcome.

Each person will be assigned to an area with specific boundaries and a leader by the count organizer/compiler. Maps and recording sheets will be distributed the morning of the count, or in advance to group leaders. Birders will walk and/or drive to count the number of birds of each species observed. Please return results of the count to the Montana Audubon Center, 7026 S Billings Blvd, around 5:00pm on count day or to the compiler as soon as possible afterward.

Feeder watchers are also needed on count day, December 19. Birders living in the count circle can tally and report the species and numbers of birds they see at their feeders and from their home. You may be the lucky one to add a species to the count total. More feeder watchers would be welcome.

Please contact one of the count organizers well before December 19. Let them know you want to help. New this year, you may sign up online to CBC counts across the United States on the National website: <https://www.audubon.org/community-science/christmas-bird-count>.

Contact: Lois Dalton, feeder watcher organizer, 406 656-3656, daltonlois921@gmail.com

Contact: Jerry Dalton, Billings CBC organizer/compiler, 406 656-3656

2255 Darcy Lane, Billings MT 59102

jerrydalton96@gmail.com



Christmas Count 2023 Photo by Tom Turley



Other Taxa? Photo
by Cathy Fitzgerald

Submitted by Jerry Dalton

One Step Closer to Dover Lakes

Submitted by Carolyn Sevier, YRPA Executive Director



*Dover Ponds in Fall
Photo by Carolyn Sevier*

With a twenty-minute final inspection and two signatures, one more piece of John H Dover Memorial Park is now officially and fully turned over to the Yellowstone River Parks Association. The “Lakes” area, which is adjacent and to the North of the current “open” part of the park, was donated by the Sindelar family in 2021 and has been an active gravel mine since the 1980’s. Mining ceased a few years ago, and though the batch plant and some minimal operation will continue for at least another year, YRPA was able to work with Knife River and Montana DEQ to secure a partial release of all but 54 of the 265 bonded acres.

YRPA has now moved into full-on planning mode, adding details and adjustments to the 2022 Master Plan. In the next few months, Knife River will be fencing and adding

signage around the non-released areas and YRPA will be doing a lot of on-site walking around and arm-waving to map out trails, bench and bridge locations, and cleanup needs. Even better, access to this area makes continuous trail connection from the upper “bench” parts of the park to the lower floodplain and cottonwood groves more practical.

While trails and amenities for humans are still to come, the good news is that the birds, deer, turtles, muskrats, dragonflies, and other creatures have been taking full advantage of the groundwater ponds here for years. Plenty of willows, cottonwoods, cattails, and rushes have grown up around the edges, as well. There’s additional restoration work to do on the habitat side, for sure, but in the spirit of Norm Schoenthal, we’ll be working hard to turn this former industrial site into another flourishing green space for the community of Billings.

An Exciting Partnership

After closing the Twine Collection & Recycling Site in late 2023, the hard-working volunteers agreed that the remaining fund money should be used to benefit birds, promote enjoyment in nature and to be available to the public. YRPA was first on our list! So, in 2024, YVAS reached out to YRPA to see if the funds could be put to good use at the Dover Lakes. A group site visit confirmed a great location or two for bird blinds and interpretive signage. Now that YRPA can move in, the plan is to finalize those locations as well as design and install considerations and then get started with work on the ground.

Submitted by Deb Regele



Dover Lakes in transition from Knife River gravel operation Aerial photo courtesy of Ryan Willett

YVAS MEETINGS & PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Next Board of Directors Meeting: Monday, Nov 9, 2026 —The YVAS meeting of the Board of Directors will be held from 4pm to 6pm. Board of Directors meetings are held on the second Monday of the month. Board meetings are open to all members.

In-Person Program: Monday, Nov 16, 2026. Programs are held on the third Monday of the month at the Mayflower Church on the corner of Rehberg Lane and Poly Drive in Billings. YVAS programs are free and open to the public. Doors open at 6:30 for coffee and cookies; the program begins at 7:00 pm.

Board of Directors

President: Open

Vice President: Open

Secretary: Sue Weinreis granpeak47@gmail.com

Treasurer: Pam Pipal ppipal@charter.net

Board Members

Kris Decker krisdecker4@gmail.com

Carolyn Jones carolyn684@gmail.com

Kristin Neva ksneva@gmail.com

Bernard Quetchenbach bquetchenbach@gmail.com

Deb Regele debregele@gmail.com

Bruce Waage bruce.waage@outlook.com

Ginny Waples waplesv@gmail.com

Committees and Assignments

Christmas Bird Count: Jerry Dalton jerrydalton96@gmail.com

Facebook: Ginny Waples waplesv@gmail.com

Field Trip Chair: Carolyn Jones carolyn684@gmail.com

(Committees, continued)

Flyer Editor: Kristin Neva yvasflyer@gmail.com

Injured Raptors: Montana Raptor Conservation Center

406-585-1211

Membership Data Admin: Kris Decker

yvas.membership.data@gmail.com

Mt Bluebird Habitat Project: Carolyn Jones and Angus Fulton

carolyn684@gmail.com

angusfulton@gmail.com

Osprey Nest Monitor Coordinator:

Ginny Waples waplesv@gmail.com

Osprey Research Coordinator:

Marco Restani restani@stcloudstate.edu

Program Committee: YVAS Board of Directors

Publicity: YVAS Board of Directors

Recycling (aluminum): Recycle to Reforest Containers in

Stewart, Veterans, and Clevenger Parks

Website: Deb Regele debregele@gmail.com

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society**Application for New & Renewal Membership**

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Our federal tax ID number is 51-0206955.

Please enroll me as a supporting member of Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society (YVAS). I understand I will be supporting local Chapter activities and receiving the YVAS newsletter. I will enjoy full family Chapter benefits.

YVAS is affiliated with the National Audubon Society, but membership payments and benefits are independent. YVAS cooperates with the Montana Audubon Center in some projects, but membership is separate.

Make check payable to **Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society** for \$25. If applying for a new or renewing student membership, make check for \$15 and indicate academic affiliation.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Do you want to receive the YVAS Flyer electronically?

___ YES ___ NO

Send this application and your check to:

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society

P.O. Box 1075

Billings, MT 59103-1075



**YELLOWSTONE VALLEY
AUDUBON FLYER**
P.O. Box 1075
Billings, MT 59103-1075

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Black-capped Chickadee Photo by Ginny Waples



Membership Updates

September reminders: Lou & Bridget Hanebury, Laurie Neuman, Kim Small & Jamey Schaub, Gail Speck, Borden Thomas

October renewals: Deb Drain, Steve Linder, Robin Manfredi, Mary Ellen Schlosser

November renewals: Ed Gillig, Carl & Virginia Kimmel, Lauri & Mark Miron, Susan Weinreis

If you have any questions regarding your membership, please contact the Membership Administrator at YVAS.membership.data@gmail.com.