

A Handbook for Communities

How to add a new route to the Montana Birding and Nature Trail

www.montanabirdingtrail.org

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Purpose:

This step-by-step guide to creating a birding and nature trail is intended to give communities a framework for creating a new route linked into a statewide system of local trails that compose the Montana Birding and Nature Trail. While based on Montana’s designated pilot Bitterroot Trail, the handbook gives pertinent suggestions for communities outside the state as well. Note that this effort is a work in progress, to be refined and improved based on suggestions from within and outside of the state. As far as the author knows, this is the only birding and nature trail how-to guide in the country.

The handbook project was made possible thanks to the National Forest Foundation, the University of Montana Avian Science Center and the Montana Natural History Center.

Ten Keys to a Successful Birding and Nature Trail in Your Community

1. **Connect** with the Montana Birding & Nature Trail Committee to link your efforts to the statewide system and to get the help you need.
2. **Create** a core team of people willing to roll up their sleeves and dedicate time to the project.
3. **Assess** your birding and nature watching opportunities. Identify what’s special about your area and who might come to take the trail.
4. **Develop** a budget and seek funding, with help from the statewide committee.
5. **Reach out** to the Community—build local pride and ownership with meetings, field trips, local media, emails and website.
6. **Gather** and then review site nominations. Create a review team.
7. **Conduct** field reviews and site evaluations.
8. **Unveil** the draft trail and sites for public comment.
9. **Produce** a final trail—on website, and as a hard copy brochure.
10. **Market** the trail and keep the momentum going with signing, festivals, media tours.

PART ONE:

OVERVIEW OF THE MONTANA BIRDING AND NATURE TRAIL

The Montana Birding and Nature Trail is a network of nature tourism routes that form thematic itineraries for visitors and residents. The statewide system features a common website (www.montanabirdingtrail.org) and a golden eagle logo to identify sites as part of the overall trail. All local routes (also called trails or sections) feature carefully selected birding and nature viewing sites linked by roads.

While roads connect the sites into a “trail,” every site offers opportunities to be outdoors experiencing the elements. Many sites weave in culture and history as well. The Bitterroot Birding and Nature Trail (the pilot trail for Montana) features a float on the Bitterroot River, a hike to St. Mary’s peak, ski trails at Chief Joseph Pass, a public and private wildlife refuge, an urban park, and Traveler’s Rest State Park, an important Lewis and Clark campsite.

The beauty of the Montana Birding and Nature Trail is its ability to capture Montana’s best economic asset—nature. By showcasing the habitats important to birds and other wildlife, the Trail encourages the conservation and restoration of a full range of natural land conditions. The Trail lies lightly on the land, requiring little more than brochures, a website, and locator signs. The low impact character of the Trail also makes it easy to change routes and sites to reflect the dynamic nature of our landscape. To create local trails takes communities working together in tandem with statewide efforts to build a consistent network.

Every trail reveals an aspect of the statewide theme of “*Discover the Nature of Montana.*” For example, the Bitterroot Birding and Nature Trail theme is “*Discovering the Nature of Lewis and Clark.*” The Missoula Valley Birding and Nature Trail theme is “*Discover the Nature of Glacial Lake Missoula.*” The Northeast Birding Trail reveals the natural wonders of our rare prairie grasslands. Eventually, Montana will have a web of thematic birding and nature routes that link with each other, and across state and International borders.

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Explorers of the Montana Birding and Nature Trail will find more than fabulous birding and wildlife viewing sites on public and private lands. They will depart from the beaten paths to Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks to discover both nature and culture of Montana's small towns like Darby, Seeley, Libby, Westby, Malta, Terry and Glasgow.

World Class Nature

Montana has a world-class birding and wildlife resource—arguably the best in the lower 48 states in terms of charismatic species and easy access for viewing.

- *Largest population of nesting loons west of the Mississippi*
- *Hundreds of thousands of snow geese at Freezout Lake WMA during migration.*
- *Highly sought-after species such as the boreal owl, great gray owl and gyrfalcon.*

Charismatic wildlife species—grizzly bear, pronghorn, elk, bison, wolf, bighorn sheep, mountain goat

The Montana Birding and Nature Trail Steering Committee represents state, federal, university, tourism, conservation and other nonprofit groups that guide the growth of the Trail to help with consistency, funding, and a vision. However, local people are creating the routes that will eventually crisscross the state.

The Montana Natural History Center serves as the nonprofit host for the Trail, as well as the website (www.montanabirdingtrail.org) in conjunction with the University of Montana Avian Science Center.

Mission:

The Montana Birding & Nature Trail Steering Committee coordinates the development and promotion of a statewide birding and nature trail system that provides sustainable economic benefits to local communities and promotes conservation and stewardship of Montana's biological diversity.

A Nationwide Network of Trails

From Texas to Oregon, and from Florida to Minnesota, birding trails are a response to a rapid growth in birdwatching and wildlife viewing. Trails are flourishing because they link sites logically as itineraries to fit today's nature travelers. Birding trails are growing rapidly, with more than 35 trails either complete or in development.

Texas formed the first birding trail in 1996, the result of a partnership of public officials and private individuals who recognized that by making Texas birder-friendly,

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they could attract more nature tourists and dollars to rural parts of the state. They identified the conservation value, and predicted that local and state officials would be likely to protect habitats if they saw the economic tie to birders. The Great Coastal Birding Trail connects some 300 sites along the Gulf Coast via a birding brochure/map and signs on the ground. The lion's share of funding came from federal highway enhancement funds.

Florida, Georgia and Virginia quickly followed suit. Every year more trails come on board with accompanying brochures, maps, and websites. Idaho produced a statewide birding trail guide in 2006. The Montana Birding and Nature Trail eventually will link to those in surrounding states as well as to the north in Canada.

Conservation Success Story in Texas

Follow the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail along the Lower Rio Grande River bordering Mexico straight to the heart of a conservation success story. Enter a world where large ranch owners are thrilled to host endangered bird species on their land. Here's a place where town governments and chambers of Commerce work in concert with the mission of The Nature Conservancy to conserve and restore natural habitat. Nature tourists are important to a thriving economy, and the key to that economy lies in conservation.

Nancy Millar, vice president and director of the McAllen Convention & Visitors' Bureau (CVB), describes the popularity of birding as "snowballing" in her valley. Today, 11 chambers and CVBs have formed a valley-wide cooperative to market the birding destination internationally. Some city employees are required to go on field trips to learn birds. Nature outfitters and guides are thriving entrepreneurs. The valley features eight annual nature festivals that draw thousands of visitors.

Today, The World Birding Center forms a network of nine sites on 120 miles of river, opening up more than 10,000 acres to the public for prime viewing. The mission of the Center is to "protect native habitat while increasing the understanding and appreciation of the birds and wildlife.

Private landowners see rare birds and butterflies as a key part of keeping working lands in production by supplementing incomes. Ranchers have built photo and viewing blinds on their lands that rent for \$100 per day. An annual photography contest that matches photographers to landowners offers \$150,000 in first place prize money, divided between the photographer and the landowner whose lands and wildlife are featured.

Ecotourism and conservation are proving immensely successful in South Texas' lower Rio Grande. Every year, 125,000 visitors come to the area to watch bird, pumping in \$125 million into the local economy and providing 2,500 local jobs. Each rare bird species is responsible for \$100,000 in local spending. Birding and nature trails lay the groundwork for a wealth of conservation possibilities. With examples like this one,

there's no need to reinvent the wheel, but to adapt winning programs to fit Montana's special nature.

Websites:

A good place to find out about existing and developing birding trails is via the American Birding Association. See this link:

<http://www.americanbirding.org/resources/birdingtrails.html>

National Audubon Society supports birding trails and its many chapters often play large roles in birding trail success. See this link:

http://www.audubon.org/bird_trails/index.html

To find out more about the Texas success story, visit the world birding center website at www.worldbirdingcenter.org and also see this website:

<http://www.southtexasnature.com/>

The Montana Model: Birding AND Nature

In Montana, birds are the hooks and all of nature is the quarry for what makes a successful trail. Bald eagles soar over free-flowing rivers that are home to moose, beaver, cutthroat and bull trout, and a plethora of butterflies and dragonflies. Golden eagles grace the prairie skies above prairie dog towns, pronghorn, jackrabbits, and wildflowers. White-throated swifts dart above canyons that are home to bighorn sheep and mountain goats. In many ways, birds serve as emissaries to help people appreciate the wealth of diversity in nature.

Birding Trail components nationally:

- Natural Sites linked by Roads
- Thematic Itineraries
- Goals are Conservation, Economic and Social
- Community participation important
- Site selection by nominations, reviews, evaluation
- Emphasis on birding and wildlife viewing ethics
- Brochures and maps
- Website
- On-site location signs with state-specific logo
- Monitoring and evaluation

Montana Birding and Nature Trail adds these features:

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- Birding *and* nature (we have more than birds to offer!)
- Wide-ranging experiences—floats to peaks
- Nature tied to culture
- Fewer sites that are selected for quality over quantity
- Brochures take interpretive approach to foster understanding and conservation of birds and nature.
- Website with searchable databases and links to lodging, attractions, outfitters (in progress at www.montanabirdingtrail.org)
- Trail routes organized by Travel Montana “country”
- Golden eagle logo

Background

Montana’s Statewide Effort

Montana has an impressive list of “firsts” in the field of wildlife viewing. We were the first state to produce a wildlife viewing guide in the format that would become an established series of handbooks. The Montana Wildlife Viewing Guide, by Hank and Carol Fischer, is in its second edition and features 100 viewing sites across the state, marked by binocular symbols and designated on the state highway map. For every purchase of a guidebook, \$1 returns to Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks to fund wildlife viewing related projects.

Our state hosted the first national watchable wildlife conference in 1992. We were the first headquarters for the U.S. Forest Service national wildlife viewing program, today called Naturewatch. The Lolo National Forest was the first forest to develop a wildlife viewing program forest wide and to fund a wildlife viewing specialist position.

When it comes to birding trails, Montana is benefiting from the learning curve as other states flex their muscles. As might be expected, the movers and shakers in the field of wildlife viewing in Montana are aiming for more “firsts” in the evolving field of birding and nature trails—starting with the first “how-to” handbook.

The Montana Birding and Nature Trail Steering Committee formed in December, 2002, following an inspirational presentation in Missoula by Ted Eubanks, president of Fermata, Inc, a for-profit birding trail development company.

After reviewing the costs of developing a statewide trail system based on the Texas model, Montana opted to focus on a more modest effort with its limited funds—a pilot trail in the Bitterroot valley where grant money from the National Forest Foundation

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offered key matching funds. The pilot project offered the perfect opportunity to develop the tools needed statewide—a PowerPoint presentation, site evaluation criteria, nomination forms, field site reviews, a website and protocol for a process to use throughout the state.

The statewide committee gained more traction in 2004 when it became a focus team of the Montana Tourism & Recreation Initiative, joining a Lewis and Clark Bicentennial focus team. These teams are meant to be short-term to help support specific projects. After the completion of the pilot trail project, the group returned to its former status as a steering committee. The group continues to work to support a statewide Trail that's both cohesive and consistent, and locally developed and sustained.

The Montana Birding and Nature Trail promises to play a significant role in conservation. For instance, the sites can form study areas for citizen science to monitor bird and animal populations. Viewing sites can become the focus of restoration to improve habitats. Each local trail that's part of the statewide system can become the vehicle to raise funds to help with conservation, such as a birding and nature trail passport. In other states, ranch and farm landowners have sites on birding trails, and benefit financially from bird and wildlife viewing—enough to keep their operations in the black and prevent conversions of open lands to subdivisions.

Perhaps the simplest yet most important link to conservation is that the trails foster time spent outdoors in nature appreciating wildlife. Appreciation deepened by understanding of birds and wildlife habitat leads to more participation in conservation efforts.

As of 2006, Montana has trails for the Bitterroot and Missoula areas; a birding trail for the northeastern plains; for West Yellowstone area; and several communities ready to move forward, with Russell County (Great Falls and surrounding area) leading the way for a 2007 trail. The current Northeastern Birding Trail focuses on birding and follows the Texas format for a trail brochure. As Montana's statewide effort advances with more coordination and support, the statewide committee expects to fold in all efforts to become consistent as birding *and* nature trails, while honoring the individualism of communities.

PART TWO:

Steps to a Successful Birding and Nature Trail in Your Community

You've heard the news. Birdwatching and wildlife viewing are the fastest forms of outdoor recreation, generating billions of dollars nationally. You learn that the hottest way to attract nature tourists is to develop a trail, connecting sites to form an itinerary that will assure people will stay for one night or perhaps two or three in your community. You've heard, too, that birding and nature trails are a key step to conserving the habitats wildlife needs to live. You care about wildlife, open lands and your community. Sounds like a perfect fit.

Here are 13 steps to take for success. Don't be daunted by the details. You will be able to pick and choose among the components to build a process that works best for you. If you don't have the budget right away to print a brochure, then take advantage of a website trail (that's what the Missoula Valley trail has done). Remember that the statewide committee is there to serve as a sounding board and a guide. And finally, you may not get everything done according to the calendar but just keep working away at it. The results will be worth the effort!

Sample Two-Year Calendar for Developing a Birding and Nature Trail

Year One

Summer/Fall

- Contact the state birding and nature trail committee.
- Assemble core team.
- Do some preliminary scouting of sites and routes.
- Draft vision, goals, objectives, and steps to success.
- Draw up a preliminary budget and start fundraising—writing grants, looking for sponsors.

Winter

- Continue fundraising.
- Plan for spring meetings.
- Contacting more key players—natural resource agencies, conservation groups, tourism providers.
- Develop interactive website for exchange of information related to the new trail section—as a special section of the official Montana Birding and Nature Trail website.

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- Plan for ways to monitor the selected sites and to evaluate economic benefits.

Spring

- Solicit nominations for trail sites—community meetings, presentations, and outreach.
- Review nominations.
- Hold review team meeting and additional nominations
- Start field reviews of proposed sites.

Year two

Summer

- Continue field reviews.
- Begin second fundraising phase—focus on advertisers and sponsors for publication.

Fall

- Draft selection of sites and organization into loops.
- Integrate site manager/owner and public comments on proposed trail and sites.
- Write text and review.
- Design and lay out the brochure.
- Submit a website-ready version to the Montana Birding and Nature Trail website.
- Print and start distributing brochure/map
- Marketing and media for spring opening of birding and nature trail

Spring

- Officially open the birding and nature trail.

Future Activities

- Third fundraising phase
- Evaluation and monitoring
- Trail stewardship projects
- Nature tourism training
- Continued outreach to service providers to promote trail and enhance experience

Step One:

Contact the Montana Birding & Nature Trail Committee

Let the state committee know that you are interested in creating a trail to add to the system by contacting the nonprofit host for the trail and website—the Montana Natural History Center. This is your place to answer some of the basic questions—like how much will it cost? What resources can the statewide committee provide? What grants are out there? What geographic area should you try to cover to logically connect to other trails? Who might be available from the state committee to come meet with you? The Natural History Center can serve as the nonprofit host for your trail as well.

More information

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Montana Natural History Center
120 Hickory Street, Missoula, Montana 59801
P: 406-327-0405 F: 406-327-0421
Email: info@montananaturalist.org
Website: www.MontanaNaturalist.org

Step Two

Create a Core Team

Contact a few key people who can help develop a vision, draft a theme and make initial suggestions for sites and loops in your areas. This core team should consist of a small group of people who have the passion, natural history expertise, tourism background and time to be involved throughout the process. As your trail project grows, you will involve many more residents but it's important to have a few at the heart of the effort. You may decide to pay a trail coordinator for some or all phases. The core team can help make that decision as well.

Who should be on that team? There's no hard and fast rule, except that every person should be willing to go the extra mile to keep the trail effort going. Ideally, a committee would include a naturalist (knowledgeable of the area's birds, other animals, and plants), a person with business and tourism background, and an educator who can communicate well in writing and in person.

Likely places to find naturalists include local Audubon chapters, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, the Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, the local Extension Service office, and nearby schools and colleges. In Montana, Audubon chapters are listed on the Internet at www.mtaudubon.org. Audubon chapters are located in Hamilton, Missoula, Kalispell, Helena, Polson, Twin Bridges, Miles City, Bozeman, Great Falls, and Billings.

Look for a person connected to the business community with a spark for nature tourism. Convention and Visitors' Bureaus (CVBs) are a good source. Talk to owners of businesses that sell outdoor equipment, native plants for landscaping, birdseed and bird feeders. Hunting and angling outfitters are recognizing that more and more of their clientele are interested in viewing wildlife. One of the attractions of the birding and

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nature trail concept for businesses is that some of the best times to view nature are considered shoulder seasons—especially spring migration.

Finally, try to involve someone who has skills in educating the public about wildlife and nature—a park interpreter or ranger, a teacher, or a media person. Most important is to find people who have the time, energy and enthusiasm to stay with the project from start to finish.

As soon as you have your team, set up an initial meeting with the main public land managing agency in your area to let them know of your ideas and intentions. The Bitterroot Birding and Nature Trail project marked its first meeting with the Bitterroot National Forest—involving biologists, recreation planners and district rangers, with communication to the Forest Supervisor.

Lessons Learned: Make sure that both biologists and recreation staff of federal or state land managing agencies are communicating with each other and involved throughout the process, not just at the beginning. While biologists know and appreciate the wildlife and habitat, the recreation specialists have knowledge about visitor use and whether some areas can handle additional visitation. To avoid setting off alarm bells for staff concerned about overuse, clarify from the beginning that the type of visitation you expect is low impact.

Step Three

Who's Your Audience?

Who is most likely to take your trail—locally, regionally and nationally? According to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service data, nature tourists tend to be middle aged, well-educated, fairly affluent, and with the highest interest in birds, followed by land mammals, and other wildlife like butterflies and dragonflies. Butterfly and dragonfly watching are drawing increasing numbers of enthusiasts, and open the door to appreciation for the conservation role of insects.

Nature tourists tend to travel as couples, families or in small guided groups. They look for solitude and non-motorized forms of recreation. Some may not stray far from their cars, while others combine wildlife viewing with vigorous hikes, paddles, and bike rides. Birdwatchers as a subgroup range from advanced birders who keep life-lists and

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are looking for certain species, to beginners who might want to see large flocks of ducks or a heron rookery, or common species for Montana that are not found in their state—like yellow-headed blackbirds and magpies.

Nature tourists usually expand their visits to take in art, culture and history. They look for authentic experiences that reflect the heritage of a place.

While nature tourists offer a source of revenue to your area, remember that trails add to the quality of life for communities. Montana, in fact, has the highest percentage of residents participating in birding—44 percent watch birds compared to a national state average of 22 percent (USFWS 2001 data).

Profile of a Birder

(From USFWS, 2001 survey)

- 40 million birders identify birds around the home.
- 18 million birders take trips away from home to watch birds.
- One in five people are birders.

What does a birder look like? On average, a birder is 49 years old with a better than average income and education, is slightly more likely to be female and likely lives in the northern half of the country in a small city or town.

Montana Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research

Montana's Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research offers helpful data for pinpointing the visitors you can expect and would like to attract to a birding and nature trail. This source is important for marketing and promotion as well. The Institute is based at the University of Montana and is supported in part by state bed tax revenues.

Wildlife watching is consistently one of the most popular activities for visitors. The Institute found that 1.84 million nonresidents come to Montana for a primary reason of watching wildlife.

How might you use information about visitors to your Travel Region and County to help shape your trail? Here's an example for Glacier Country and Ravalli County, the location for the Bitterroot Birding and Nature Trail.

Glacier Country lists the top five visitor attractions as Glacier National Park, open space, rivers, wildlife and Yellowstone National Park. Ravalli County's top five

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attractions are mountains, open space, rivers, family and friends, and hiking. Wildlife comes in sixth and Glacier ninth. This information suggests that a birding and nature trail featuring mountains, open space, rivers and hiking will be most likely to attract visitors to Ravalli County. The positioning of Glacier National Park as first in Glacier Country overall, yet ninth in Ravalli County suggests that promoting a birding and nature trail for the Bitterroot could draw some of those visitors to spend a few days in Ravalli County instead of the park.

Day hiking, wildlife watching and visiting historic sites are listed as the top three activities for Ravalli County. The theme for the trail, “Discovering the Nature of Lewis and Clark,” effectively captures visitor interests in history and wildlife. The majority of sites have day hiking opportunities.

The Institute’s findings also point to the Internet as the most useful planning source for visitors coming to all parts of Montana. During their trip, visitors to Ravalli County rely on highway signs and brochure racks for more information. This offers a second chance to capture visitor interest.

Contact:

Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research
The University of Montana
32 Campus Drive #1234
Missoula, MT 59812-1234, USA
(406) 243-5686, Fax: (406) 243-4845
Email: itr@forestry.umt.edu
Website: www.itrr.umt.edu/

Step Four

Assess Your Birding, Nature Watching and Cultural Opportunities

Start by taking stock of your natural and cultural assets. Gather your core team for a brainstorming session. What kind of opportunities does your area feature for birding and nature viewing? Think of unusual species and habitats, or congregations of birds and wildlife, and migration routes. Where do the history of the area and the wildlife story intersect? What are the premier places for nature observation? How about the little known ones? Do you have Important Bird Areas? (Check with Audubon). What kind of recreational opportunities might appeal to nature tourists? How about cultural attractions?

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What's special in each season? What natural amenities would attract YOUR attention if you were traveling through that part of Montana?

Consider the dynamic forces that affect and shape the wildlife habitats in your area. This can help lead you to a theme. What's the role of natural fire, floods and free-flowing rivers, wind, snowstorms, or earthquakes?

After you've compiled this inventory, look for common threads and intersections. Work with a big map and start highlighting places and drawing loops to connect them. Review the demographic information again to see how your resources and visitor interests match up.

Step Five

Craft a Proposed Theme and Objectives

Composing a theme and objectives may seem like an exercise you'd rather skip and go straight to the fun part—site selection. But taking the time to craft a theme and accompanying objectives will help you clearly share your initial vision for a birding and nature trail with a wider community and generate funding.

Theme development

Select a topic that makes your birding and nature trail special. In the Bitterroot, the group selected the Lewis and Clark Trail, because the Expedition traversed the entire length of the trail area, from Lost Trail to Lolo Pass—covering the route twice, on their way to the Pacific and half the party upon their return after the leaders divided up forces at Traveler's Rest. (William Clark retraced steps south up the Bitterroot River valley and Meriwether Lewis set out into new country up the Blackfoot River.) The trail project also coincided with the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial.

Next, answer the question, "How can you tie the topic to viewing birds and nature in a way that's interesting to people who will take the trail? "

The topic "Lewis and Clark Trail" led to the theme for the trail, "Discover the *nature* of Lewis and Clark." The Bitterroot Birding and Nature Trail offers history buffs and nature viewers alike the chance to become explorers, witnessing the birds, plants and animals that the Corps of Discovery recorded, and even to see some of the wildlife that the Expedition missed. While not reflected directly in the title, the team also aimed to

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illuminate the nature of the people who came long before the Corps of Discovery—the Salish and in some places the Nez Perce. One of the volunteers drew up a list of wildlife seen by the Lewis and Clark Expedition two hundred years ago that can still be seen today in the trail area. The list is impressive, when so much of what they recorded on their journey has dwindled or vanished in the wake of progress.

Objectives

What do you want a birding and nature trail to accomplish for your community? What do you want participants on the trail to see, feel, and do as a result of their experience? This is a chance also to define the geographic boundaries of your trail and to estimate the number of sites needed to create visitor travel loops where sites are not too far apart, but not too clustered either. The pilot trail core team proposed 25 sites—with the caveat that the site number could change during the process. That number proved to work well and served to showcase what's best for birding and nature viewing.

Here's an example of objectives for the state pilot trail that were listed on the successful matching National Forest Foundation Grant:

- To expand and enhance recreation opportunities through a designated highway-based Trail covering approximately 150 miles of roads, 100 miles of trails, 70 miles of river
- To bring people closer to nature and thus encourage a greater appreciation for, and conservation of, the natural resources of Montana.
- To build support for conservation, including Important Bird Areas (a project of Audubon underway in the Bitterroot area) and a growth plan for the Bitterroot Valley that focuses on sustainable lifestyles and incomes dependent on healthy National Forest resources;
- To add stable, nonpolluting and growing sources of revenue to the economy through direct visitor expenditures and new jobs as well as monitor and evaluate the resulting positive economic impact;
- To complement and build on the Lewis and Clark Trail 2003-2006 Bicentennial for a long-term nature route.

Step Six

Develop your budget and seek funding

At a minimum, you will need money for printing your finished brochures at approximately \$1/brochure for 20,000 copies or more. Review the list of coordinator tasks in the sidebar to see how much of that list can be done without costs, and check with the state committee for sample budgets.

Now that you have a proposed theme and objectives for your trail, you are in a good position to apply for grants and to seek local sponsors for the Trail. You should already have an idea of costs and grant opportunities from your initial contact with the statewide committee.

Select a nonprofit group to receive funds

You will need a nonprofit entity to be the recipient of grant funds. One option is the Montana Natural History Center, the statewide birding and nature trail host. If you prefer, you may have a local nonprofit you've already worked with, such as a refuge friends group or one of Montana's Resource Conservation & Development Areas. Note that a nonprofit needs to charge an administration fee to cover costs, usually between 10 and 20 percent. Some grants have stipulations about how much administration costs will be covered.

Consider a paid coordinator

A key question to ask is whether you need to pay a coordinator to see your trail through from start to finish, and potentially to play a continuing role. You may have someone with the time, energy and skills to take on the trail coordination as a volunteer, or can be assigned to the trail coordination as part of regular employment (perhaps through a state or federal agency).

Take a look at the list of coordinator tasks and identify what you can handle on your own, and where you might need outside help. Whether you pay for a coordinator or not, you will need a person to be the main point of contact and to lead the charge.

Sample Coordinator tasks

- Serve as main point of contact
- Organize and facilitate all meetings
- Give presentations
- Solicit partners and sponsors

- Maintain email lists and website updates
- Gather nominations
- Assemble review team
- Lead and participate in field reviews
- Propose draft trail
- Facilitate public comments and changes to draft
- Write the brochure
- Coordinate design and photographs
- Coordinate printing, distribution, marketing, signing
- Serve as liaison to community for continued trail efforts

The state's pilot trail required two phases of matching National Forest Foundation grants and included funding to develop products for a statewide system, including developing the logo, nomination and evaluation forms, and this handbook. To carry out many of the tasks, the budget included funding for a coordinator.

Tips on Setting Your Budgets

Divide your Trail project into three phases for funding:

1. Planning the trail and gaining community support
2. Producing the trail products—brochure and map, signs, publicity;
3. Promoting, monitoring, evaluating and assuring the trail lives up to its potential

The state's pilot trail lacked the full match for its National Forest Foundation grant when it started, which meant the coordinator had to spend considerable time writing grants and raising the match. Find out who has the time and skill to write grants and to track down local and statewide funding sources. Can you divide up tasks? Most important, who has the time and commitment to steer the trail across the bumps in the road to drive the project to completion? Remember, you can divide up the trail into the website phase followed by the brochure and signing phases. Remember to tap into the resources of the statewide steering committee for assistance and suggestions.

Step Seven

Nominations: What Qualifies as a Site?

The statewide steering committee dedicated many hours to developing a nomination form to fit the goals of the Montana Birding and Nature Trail. The resulting form (see appendix) is streamlined, easy to use and will give consistency to the site

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nomination process for new routes that become part of the Montana Birding and Nature Trail.

To come up with the site criteria, the state committee reviewed several potential versions of site nomination forms from other states. Some appeared too technical and overwhelming. Others had too much of a bird-only emphasis.

The Montana nomination form focuses on the question of what makes this site SPECIAL for birding AND nature viewing? The point is early on to identify the stand-out qualities of a site that will help reviewers glean the best sites for the final trail. Note also the components of the form on habitats, cultural connections, and educational opportunities.

Step Eight

Reach out to the Communities

The best case scenario is to go public with funding secured for the first phase of your birding and nature trail. Whether you have funding for the first phase or not, always be looking for sponsorships, potential advertisers and new sources of funds. Look, too, for more volunteers willing to help in all phases.

Why go out to the communities to pitch trail benefits and to nominate the sites? You could take your core group and pick the sites and save time and money, but you would be missing an essential ingredient to why birding and nature trails succeed. The trails represent grassroots efforts that have the support and enthusiasm of local people. Building ownership and pride is critical to the success of a lasting birding and nature trail. By inviting residents to participate, share ideas, and nominate sites, you will create a trail that reflects great natural areas for viewing as well as those with popular local support. After completing the brochure/map and trail signs, you should have people in the community willing to continue efforts to promote, enhance, monitor and improve the trail. Note that it still takes one person leading the charge for communities to remain energized and focused on fully meeting the trail potential.

As you meet with community members, remain open-minded to all suggestions. You may revise your proposed theme or cross out some of your initial site ideas if the local opinion is that they should remain off the map. You might also find private land

sites that you wouldn't have considered without a landowner coming forward and wanting to be part of the trail. The state's pilot trail includes the Broad Axe Lodge where wildlife viewers combine fine dining with viewing bighorn sheep, elk and mule deer—clearly visible from the restaurant windows during winter months. The private Teller Wildlife Refuge is on the trail with stipulations of calling first for permission.

There are at least four ways to reach your local communities:

1. Hold community meetings to generate enthusiasm for the trail and to start nominating sites.
2. Go to existing organizations and present the trail and nomination requests at their meetings;
3. Publicize the trail in newspapers, radio and TV—contact your local paper's editor immediately to fill them in on the project. Take a reporter or editor into the field for a feature story.
4. Use the Internet effectively. Set up an email network. Work with the Montana Natural History Center to set up your website area within the overall Montana Birding and Nature Trail website. Your trail link becomes a place for news, site nominations, updates and a contact by email where people can join an email list for news. When complete, the webpage will feature the trail and maps and ties into the growing statewide network.

One of the joys of Montana lies in the interweaving of natural and cultural diversity. Tailor your strategy for reaching people based on your knowledge of how residents like to connect with each other. For example, if you live in a sparsely populated region, holding a slate of community meetings might draw too few people to be worthwhile. Find out instead where you need to show up to contact people and go to them with the proposal. The section below on community meetings also has ideas that would be relevant to presenting the project at various clubs and chapter meetings.

Tips for Community Meetings

- **Meeting locations and times**

Hold your meetings in the communities that lie within the geographic boundaries of the trail area. The state's pilot trail hosted meetings in Darby, Hamilton, Missoula,

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Lolo and Stevensville. The meetings ran from 7 to 9 pm on weeknights, and were held over the course of two weeks at public libraries, a school cafeteria and a state park.

To find the best dates for highest attendance, check local calendars for upcoming events and try to avoid conflicts with other meetings and popular activities. You might opt for weeknights to avoid interfering with weekend plans and to make it easy for working people to attend after dinner.

Make sure the meeting dates work for the key people you'd like to attend some or all of the meetings. Invite representatives from land management and wildlife agencies to help answer questions and assist people as they pour over maps, potential sites and lists of species. Work closely with your travel country staff and chamber of commerce to enlist business and tourism participation. Contact nearby tribal representatives and invite them to participate in creating the trail.

Finally, you might want to plan for snacks and drinks as an added draw, and enlist your local grocery stores, bakeries or cafes for contributions. Then promote “refreshments provided” in all your publicity.

- **Preparing for the meeting—PowerPoint, maps and handouts**

Every meeting should include a presentation to define the trail project, benefits and connections to Montana's overall trail. The statewide PowerPoint presentation developed for the pilot trail can be easily adapted.

After the presentation and questions (about 30 minutes), give a brief overview of how you hope to gain initial nominations that evening. Allow the rest of the evening to circulate and brainstorm—reviewing maps and naming potential sites and exceptional viewing opportunities.

The pilot trail community meetings featured large national forest maps mounted on foam core. On a numbered sheet of paper, participants wrote their name, phone number, recommended site and a couple wildlife species associated with that spot. Next they wrote the nomination number and site name on a sticky note and placed it on the map on the correct spot. At each meeting, people added more notes and ideas. They were encouraged to take nomination forms home and fill them out in detail to mail in. The

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coordinator also collected other suggestions for sponsors, partners, and comments on the proposed theme.

Plan to provide handouts that describe the trail proposal, as well as nomination forms. (For sample handouts delivered at the pilot trail meetings, please see the appendix. Feel free to copy or adapt the Bitterroot handouts.) Prepare a sign-in sheet and make sure you collect addresses, emails and phone numbers to create a mailing list, and to find out who might be willing to volunteer. That email list allows you to send out the nomination form online for people to easily fill out and return.

Lessons Learned: Sticky notes fall off. Secure the notes with extra tape after each meeting. Another option is to place a clear plastic layer over the map and have people simply write directly on the plastic overlay. Note also that people do not take the time to fill out the nomination forms fully at the meeting. In many cases, the Bitterroot coordinator followed up with phone calls to gather remaining information. That's why it's essential to get names and phone numbers associated with site recommendations.

- **Promoting the Meetings**

One month or more ahead: As soon as you set the meeting dates, write a press release and send it to newsletters for local groups that may need the longest lead time before the meetings to make deadlines for Audubon chapter newsletters, wildlife chapters, etc. Follow-up the written press releases with phone calls to answer any questions.

You can also send out a postcard mailing using lists from groups such as the local Chamber of Commerce, Audubon, and hunting and fishing organizations. Send invitations to the land managing agencies, tribes, and other potential site managers and owners. Make personal calls to key people you would like to attend. Definitely invite representatives of the closest travel country and chamber of commerce, and a representative from the statewide birding and nature trail committee.

Solicit volunteers assigned to each meeting—people who know the local folks and businesses, can hang flyers, and talk up the gathering to their friends and neighbors

Two to three weeks ahead: Call your local newspaper reporter and editor (some small local papers only have an editor). Ask them to consider writing a feature story about the proposed trail that also promotes the meetings. If you have local TV and radio

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stations, suggest a feature story and interview. Set up a time to take the press into the field to one or more potential sites. To prepare for interviews, jot down one page of key messages on trail benefits, sponsors, partners and meetings details. Recommend other people in the community to interview that are supportive of the trail. Try to represent a diversity of partners for interviews-- businesses, county commissioners, mayors, tourism, hunting and conservation groups.

Send press releases to all local news and radio stations. Write public Service announcements (PSAs) to submit for community calendars and send in advance to meet deadlines. Design a simple flyer to promote the meetings and enlist volunteers to post flyers at public libraries, schools, businesses, and other prominent gathering places. (See the appendix for a sample press release, PSA and flyer.)

One week ahead: Meet with your core team to go over meeting tasks. Call key people you think would be interested in helping develop and support the trail and personally invite them to come to a meeting. Have all handouts copied, maps ready, and the PowerPoint complete and tested to make sure the technology is trustworthy. Make sure the flyers are posted.

Day of meeting: Send out an email reminder. You should have your event appearing in a daily calendar in the local newspaper, on the radio, and perhaps TV. Post a large sign at the meeting location advertising the event, time and title.

Community Meeting Checklist

- Handouts (see appendix)
- Sign-in sheet—name, address, phone, email, interest in volunteering
- Name tags and markers
- Display materials--birding and nature trail brochure examples; field guides, local brochures, newspaper articles about the trail.
- PowerPoint—ready and tested
- Maps—foam core mounted
- Sticky notes or plastic overlay for map; site name/contact info sheets to go with maps.
- Formal nomination forms that can be filled out and returned later

Beyond Open Houses--Tips on Taking the Trail to the Community

Once you have your presentation and handouts, it's easy to take the show on the road to luncheon club meetings and other gatherings. Definitely extend your efforts to conservation, tourism and local government. Here's a list of potential groups that might well be interested in hearing about the trail and joining in:

Chapters of conservation groups:

- Montana Wildlife Federation
- Ducks Unlimited
- Trout Unlimited
- Audubon
- Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
- Native Plant Society or other Plant/Garden Group
- Friends group for a local refuge or park
- Land Trusts

Local government

- County Parks Board
- City or town council

Chapters of ranching, agriculture, groups

- Montana Stockgrowers; Association
- Montana Cattlemen's Association
- Montana Grain Growers Association
- Montana Organic Association

Civic Clubs

- Kiwanis
- Elks
- Lions

Tourism

- Chamber of Commerce
- Outfitters and Guides
- Travel Country
- Convention and Visitors' Bureau

Step Nine

Nominations and Review

Allow a month after the community meetings to gather nominations by mail and on the Internet. Send out reminders as you approach the deadline. The nomination form should be available on the website as a PDF file to print and mail, as well as a Word document that can be filled in on line and sent via email to the coordinator. Nominations should contain photos and a map, if possible. Some participants may send those items separately from an online submission. Meanwhile, your core team should also be visiting sites and making their own nominations. Contact people who submitted preliminary nominations at meetings to complete those suggestions as formal nominations. Note that while you need a deadline to keep on track, you can still receive late nominations. It is critically important to have all information on nomination forms provided by the nominator, especially information related to why that particular site represents a special or unusual viewing opportunity.

Create a Review Team

Once you have a list of nominated sites, call together a group of reviewers to make a first cut on sites, and to identify missing gaps. Please invite a representative from the statewide committee to this meeting as well. The point is to gather a group of people who know the sites and wildlife, as well as someone familiar with the statewide goals of creating trails that reflect wildlife and habitat diversity, a range of outdoor experiences, and connect with each other in logical, thematic loops.

The pilot trail evening review session included representatives from Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge, Bitterroot National Forest, Lolo National Forest, University of Montana Avian Science Center, Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks, Montana Audubon, Bitterroot Audubon, and the Lewis and Clark Discovery Writers. The trail coordinator facilitated the session.

Plan for three to four hours of rolling-up-your-sleeves time for reviewing the nominated sites. As a group, list each site into a habitat category. Use markers and large pieces of paper to post on easels or the wall. Decide on categories that make the most sense for your area. The pilot trail placed its 60 nominated sites in these categories:

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riparian (primarily river), wetlands, east side (dry sites), Canyons, Lewis and Clark, Alpine, Conifer, Burned Areas. Some sites appeared in more than one category.

The lists tell the group immediately where some habitat types are under-represented. The point is to find the missing holes and brainstorm additional sites to nominate. Next, look at where the sites fall on the maps. Will they make good travel loops or are there some geographic holes where sites are needed? Are there any Important Bird Areas in your region and are they nominated as sites?

In addition to looking at habitats, have the group focus on birds and wildlife species that will attract visitors. Where are the best places to see great gray owls? White-throated swifts? Pikas? Moose? What about wildlife in different seasons? Do some sites feature winter viewing? Migrations?

Next, take a critical look at the nominations to see if any need to be dropped for clear reasons, such as safety issues, lack of parking, poor access, too long a drive to the site, or incompatibility with the overall trail goals. There may be creative ways to incorporate viewing experiences that don't work as sites. For example, nominations for the Bitterroot trail included scenic drives for raptor watching. Those drives became a separate section in the trail brochure, rather than official sites.

Once the review team approves the slate of nominations, make sure to post them on the website and send out an email to the group.

Field Review

At last, it's time to grab binoculars, field guide, digital camera, GPS unit, filled-out nomination forms, and a field review sheet (see appendix). Time your field reviews to start in late spring and end in the fall.

Who should review the sites? It's best to have more than one pair of eyes and ears in the field. Whoever reviews the sites should be a competent naturalist and familiar with the goals of the trail. The Bitterroot Birding and Nature Trail Coordinator participated in almost all field reviews—teaming up with the wildlife interpretive specialist for the Lolo National Forest, as well as an Audubon representative.

Before you head out, check in with the site owner or manager to let them know of your review and to find out pertinent information. (One nominated site in the Bitterroot could not be reviewed as planned because of logging truck traffic on the access road).

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Plan to fill in the field review form and to make any corrections to the nomination form. Don't forget to clock mileages from main roads to sites to double-check directions, and to obtain a GPS coordinate for the site parking area (and walking loop, if there is one). Consider inviting a reporter to come with you to a couple site reviews to keep the publicity flowing during all phases of the trail.

The field review consists of five basic questions:

1. What conservation story can be told at this site?
2. What are the main bird and wildlife species here? Seasons? Viewing opportunities? What is so special about this site that someone from elsewhere would clearly want to visit that spot?
3. What are the main habitats?
4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the site?
5. What is your overall opinion of the site?

After the field reviews are complete, the core team makes their draft selections for the trail. Revisit your estimate on the total number of sites. The answer depends on the size of the area and diversity of choices. The Bitterroot trail could have selected 50 sites instead of 25 for a 100-mile-long river valley with sites also higher up in the peaks and on both passes—Lolo and Lookout. Why not put 50? The Montana model calls for birding and nature trails that profile the best places for visitors and residents. It takes some close analysis to decide, for example, which of the many Bitterroot canyons to select. Each one offers birding and wildlife viewing and hiking guides include all of them. But by using the nomination form, review team meeting and field evaluation, it's best to narrow the choices because swamping the trail with too many sites will dilute the value of work already done in other trail sections...BE PICKY!

After completing field reviews and consulting among your core team, write up a list of all selected nominations sites and a separate list for sites not selected. Write a one-sentence explanation for each site to explain the choice. Post this on the website for more comment and send out to your email group. Be prepared to make a few more changes before unveiling the draft trail.

Examples of why some sites were not selected in the Bitterroot included

highway noise, site was too small, no parking, too similar to another site that has better viewing, off- road vehicle damage, and poor road conditions. In one case, a portion of a site was left out because of nesting goshawks that could be disturbed.

Step Ten: Unveiling the Draft Trail

You have your draft trail in hand and you are now ready to put all sites forward to the community and land managers for another round of review. One of the best ways to promote the draft sites and solicit feedback is through the newspaper. Ask the local reporter covering your project to run a story with an overall map showing the site locations, with a short description of each site. The description you provide should give a quick sketch of what's special about the site as well as site ownership. For example:

- Lolo Pass—camas bloom in June, boreal owls in winter, Nez Perce and Lewis and Clark connection, cross-country skiing. Lolo NF
- Bear Creek Canyon –winter wrens, peregrines nesting in cliffs, pikas in talus, high diversity, scenic, hike into wilderness. Bitterroot NF.

At the same time post the map, sites and descriptions on your website and send out an email to your list with the official proposed trail.

Call each of the site managers or owners to have them carefully review their site for inclusion and for any comments they want to make sure are included in a final description—such as respecting nearby private land.

Allow a month for comments to come back in. The core team should look at the proposed sites attentively as well, answering these questions:

Do the proposed sites:

- Reveal a diversity of habitats? Elevations? Conservation issues?
- Offer outdoor recreation experiences that are compatible with nature viewing?
- Feature outstanding birding and wildlife viewing?
- Feature multiple ownerships—state, federal, county, private, tribal?
- Include cultural sites?
- Offer seasonal diversity?

- Geographic spread for logical 1/2 day, full day, multi-day loop trips?
- Include enough accessible sites?
- Represent the interests and support of the community?

Even at this stage, you may opt to add an entirely new site based on the feedback. As soon as your team is satisfied with the final selection, post the revised map/list on the website, send out emails, and contact the newspaper for a follow-up piece on the final selection—highlighting changes from draft to final.

Step Eleven: Produce the Trail Brochure and Map

The Bitterroot Birding and Nature trail brochure is the state model. Eventually, all trail brochures for the Montana Birding and Nature Trail will form a collectible set. For this phase, you will need a writer, a designer, someone to track down photographs, and a person lined up to find advertisers and more sponsors. To make the best use of step 11, pull out a copy of the model trail brochure and follow along (copies are available through the Montana Natural History Center).

Website:

As you enter the writing and design phase, make sure the work will be web-compatible. Putting the final trail up on the website allows you to be up and running more quickly and cheaply if you don't have all your funds in place for printing. (By this time, you should have made good use of the website, so this will be easy).

Photographs:

Don't wait until the writing is completed to look for photographs. With enough sleuthing and networking, you may be able to avoid paying for photos either by selecting photos in the public domain or by the kind permission of photographers supportive of this worthy cause. You should have digital photos from the site visits already. The trickier part is finding high quality wildlife and bird photos. This is where the multi-partnership represented by the state committee is also very helpful. Many of those partners have excellent sources for wildlife photos, especially the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, the U.S. Forest Service, and the University of

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Montana Avian Science Center. The Montana Natural Heritage Program has an excellent set of plant photos.

Advertising

The advantages of advertising are the clear link to the nature tourism economy of the area, funding for the brochure publication, local business support, and useful information for nature tourists.

When soliciting for ads, ask businesses that would most likely benefit from nature tourism: outfitters and guides, lodges, B&Bs, dude ranches, restaurants, bakeries, coffee shops, art galleries, souvenir shops, and stores that sell binoculars and field guides. Look at the demographics of nature tourists for more ideas to fit your area.

Before you head out to ask for advertisers, make sure you have the costs for full, half or quarter pages. Let them know how many copies of the brochure you plan to print, and your strategy for marketing. As an added bonus, offer the advertisers a link on the website under nature tourism services. You will need to have a website hosted by a nonprofit or private entity to be able to advertise online. Before you get to the nitty gritty details, sell them on the birding and nature trail as you have to the community, but with an emphasis on the economic angle. Encourage businesses to be “birder-friendly” in their offerings and ads.

Give advertisers the choice of creating their own ad or paying the brochure designer to create the ad. The designer should have some leeway to alter ads so they will be complementary. To keep the integrity of the birding and nature trail intact, ads should be clustered together.

Maps:

A good map of the whole trail is the centerpiece of your brochure. We suggest following the approach for the Bitterroot Birding and Nature Trail map—showing the topography of the area on the map, and only selected roads.

Then create individual site locator maps. In some cases, these maps can include more details like a loop driving tour in a refuge, or a featured hiking trail. You may want to use aerial maps if available. Again see the pilot trail example.

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The Bitterroot Birding and Nature Trail hired a professional mapmaker to create the maps. For more information and costs, see the appendix on budgets and contact the Montana Natural History Center.

Writing and Format

Take an interpretive approach to writing. Writing should be clear, relevant and meaningful to your audience. Provoke their interest so they want to head out to the trail. Tie the sites to the overall theme. Write with active verbs and use descriptions that reveal the nature of your place. Avoid bureaucratic jargon, passive voice and long text sections. Interject some fun facts and superlatives.

Within the pilot trail are some written components that the statewide committee would like to see in all brochures, and other parts that might vary. For example, all brochures should include “The Wildlife Watcher’s Code of Ethics” (see appendix) and follow the individual site format.

Here’s a quick guide to writing up the sites, based on the model.

What’s Special

Take your first site and write a one or two sentence description of what sets it apart from others. Then come up with a subheading to the site location that gives visitors a little more information about what’s special. For example:

- Site name: *Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge*
- What’s special subheading: *Wetland Jewel*

Write a one sentence description explaining what’s special: “*The refuge rests in the heart of the valley on the banks of the river and along a necklace of ponds that are invaluable for migrating and nesting waterfowl.*”

To hone the “what’s special” sections for the pilot trail, the writer/ coordinator met with two members of the core team for a brainstorming session.

Field Notes

Describe the birds, animals, wildlife signs, and scenes you might expect at this site. You can write as if you are a naturalist on the site taking in the sights, sounds and fragrances-- “Scents of vanilla waft from big pines.” Write about wildlife in context of their favored habitats—“Swallowtail butterflies flit among bee balm flowers.” Avoid just listing birds and animals in a paragraph. Save lists for the Species of Note section.

Habitat Link

The Bitterroot model uses the term “Habitat Link” to represent the connections of species to their habitats. Another option recommended by reviewers is to use the term “Conservation Link” for the same purpose (used in the Missoula Valley trail). This is a chance to educate visitors to the trail about important ecological connections. If birders want to add a brown creeper to their list, they need to know that these birds nest between loose bark and a tree—something you only find in large diameter trees.

If you peruse the pilot trail “habitat link” section you will find concepts that may be adapted to yours sites, such as wildlife diversity at the edge of two habitats, the benefits of a flooding and a free-flowing river; and the significance of wetlands as refueling stops for migratory waterfowl. This is a place, too, to emphasize restoration of stream habitats and native grasses, and the connection between management and good wildlife habitat. The Teller Wildlife Refuge, for example, features the role of private land stewardship in the valley where there is little public land and an increasing level of development.

Cultural Connection

Telling the cultural story of a place enriches and adds meaning to the natural history. The Bitterroot theme of “Discover the Nature of Lewis and Clark” threads the two together, and many sites offer chances to illuminate the historical part of the theme under the “Cultural Connection” heading. This is a key place to tie in tribal history and culture. The Cultural Connection sections of text for the Bitterroot were reviewed by a Nez Perce historian from Traveler’s Rest State Park who also suggested the following text content for Lolo Pass:

“The Nez Perce still go to Packer Meadows today to harvest the roots of camas for food. Lolo Pass was known to the Nez Perce as the Trail to the Buffalo and to the Bitterroot Salish as the Trail to the Nez Perce.”

Viewing Tip

Give visitors tips on best viewing seasons and times of day, and where to find certain kinds of birds, animals and wildflowers. You can note places en route to the site as well. Here’s an example from Crazy Creek Campground/Trail:

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“On the drive to Crazy Creek Campground, you’ll pass through one of the fires of 2000. Watch for flycatchers, bluebirds and woodpeckers (but note that there are no safe pull offs on this stretch). Once at the campground, walk across the footbridge, and along the trail below the talus cliffs. Stop often to scan the willows for birds, moose or beaver.”

Helpful Hint

This is a catch-all category for providing visitors additional advice to help them appreciate the site. You can use this place for logistics, safety tips, regulations, and noting accessible trails. For example, site #15 on the Bitterroot Trail combines two sites within the town of Hamilton—River and Hieronymus Parks. The Helpful Hint section reads: *“River Park offers the choice of wide accessible paths by the river and narrow foot trails through 65 acres of floodplain forest. At Hieronymus Park, the trails are unpaved but wide and easy to follow. Dogs must be leashed at both parks.”*

Species of Note

Compiling a checklist for the site takes some consulting with experts on which birds and animals to include. The point of the checklist is to choose about 10 representative species for the site. This is your chance to highlight species that advanced birders are hoping to spot. But don’t forget to add other wildlife as well, and to strive for diversity—including frogs, toads, dragonflies, and butterflies.

To Capitalize Bird Names or Not?

Many birdwatchers prefer to capitalize all bird species—Great Horned Owl and Dark-eyed Junco. The Bitterroot birding and nature trail follows the journalistic practice of capitalizing names only when the species is named after a person or a place, like MacGillivray’s warbler and Canada goose. In contrast, these birds would not be capitalized—yellow warbler and snow goose.

The bird checklist at the back of Bitterroot Birding and Nature Trail brochure was reprinted courtesy of the Bitterroot National Forest and in this case does capitalize all names—a common practice for long checklists.

Why not then extend capitalization of bird names everywhere? This hotly debated subject may not yet be resolved, but the decision was made in this model to stay with the

journalistic style, partly to avoid entering the debate of whether to then capitalize mammal, reptile, insect, or plant names, which are not customarily capitalized. Note that the ornithological community capitalizes all bird names, because they consider them proper names, unlike those for mammals and plants.

Tips on remaining components for site descriptions

Always double-check the written directions to the site and contact phone numbers. It's very easy to transpose numbers or copy mileage down incorrectly. Similarly, proof the names on maps, road numbers, and captions under photos. All photos should have a photo credit. Finally, use the facilities and viewing season symbols.

Design Notes

Rather than go into many details on design, note the importance of a clear, consistent readable, and aesthetic layout. The Bitterroot Birding and Nature Trail brochure provides a template for how to do that. You may want to make some changes to best fit your trail, but do keep the individual site formats fairly consistent with the state model. Note how every site features a prominent photo of the site in the upper right, and then has three photos (mostly of individual species) on the left in a column. If you don't have enough species' photos, you can alter the layout by making photos larger. It's definitely worth it to take site photos—very helpful to trail users.

Final Phases

When the brochure is completely designed with advertising, proof every aspect of the brochure—and by more than one set of eyes. Look at photo captions, map details, contact names, and species names. Check to make sure all sponsors are recognized.

While you've come up with a number of copies to print in earlier phases, you may be able to adjust your printing depending on how much advertising revenue you have generated or other funding from sources such as your local travel region or a state recreation trails' grant.

How many to print? To give a sense of numbers, Glacier Country prints 150,000 travel guides, which are requested and distributed within a year. The Bitterroot Birding and Nature Trail sought funding for 30,000 brochures and the Northeast Birding Trail,

20,000. A distribution plan is critical to put the brochures in the hands of the people who want it.

Lessons Learned: Obtaining photos is a challenging part of completing the brochure. Keep the photo needs in mind from the very beginning and start a file. Remember the resolutions need to be 300 dpi for adequate reproduction. Also, ask biologists to check the images of birds and animals to make sure the photos show wildlife that is not stressed by the photographer. The cover photo of the Bitterroot Birding and Nature Trail features a pygmy owl that unfortunately did turn out to show stressed behavior. That has been corrected on the website and the photo will be replaced in the next printing run.

Step Twelve

Marketing and Promoting the Trail and Brochure

Now that you have a beautiful trail brochure, how are you going to make sure it gets into the hands of your audience? Turn to the experts in tourism marketing. You should already have good connections with representatives from your travel region. They can help you sketch out a simple marketing plan. Here are a few components and suggestions to consider.

Promoting the Trail at the “Hub” or “Portal

The Lee Metcalf NWR is at the heart of the Bitterroot Birding and Nature Trail, and is staffed year-round. That’s the official portal for the trail, where people find out more, then head out to check out sites. In addition, the Montana Natural History Center—as the nonprofit host—serves as the northern portal to the trail, supplies trail guides, and answers visitor inquiries.

Promoting the Trail at Each Site

To keep costs down early on, you can label each site on the ground inexpensively by laminating the site page from the brochure and posting it on a bulletin board or other available structure. Add a header with the trail name and a footer with information on where visitors can pick up a brochure

Ideally, visitors would be able to locate a brochure at every site on the trail. Considering the expense of each brochure (about \$1 apiece), it’s too risky to leave

publications unattended. However, on-site staff, such as a campground host or ranger, can give out brochures to respond to visitor interest in birding and nature viewing.

Rather than handing over a stack of brochures to site managers, strive to create birding and nature trail ambassadors everywhere you go. Take that extra time to turn them on to the thrill of this nature tourism endeavor. These ambassadors can spread the message to other staff who will help to promote the trail and its opportunities.

Promoting the Trail Locally and Across the State

As soon as your brochures roll off the press, plan on more local media coverage through staging an event—whether part of a birding and nature festival or a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Make sure your local advertisers and sponsors receive brochures and help them devise ways to display a copy prominently for visitors. To help raise funds for a second round of printing, you can place a box next to brochures in businesses with a suggested donation of \$1 or more. (This system is working in the Blackfoot valley to help raise funds for reprints of a Lewis and Clark trail brochure).

Provide copies of the brochure to visitor information centers, museums, and places nature tourists would most likely visit. Encourage them to put out a display copy.

Staging a Birding and Nature Trail Opening Event

You can plan a trail-opening ceremony featuring a mayor, county commissioners, local legislators and even the governor or Congressional representatives. Find a hook to make your ribbon-cutting event something not to miss. Live wildlife always draws people—the release of a rehabilitated eagle, a presentation by a wildlife educator with birds, mammals or reptiles. Invite and recognize all trail sponsors and partners.

The Bitterroot Birding and Nature Trail opened as the signature event of a birding and nature festival at Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge in June 2005, and featured talks about the trail and field trips to sites.

Promoting the Trail Out-of State—free

Use your niche marketing information to find out where most visitors come from. If say, 65 % of out-of-state visitors to your county come from Washington, then make sure to send press releases to the newspapers in that state. Place a few follow-up calls to reporters. After sending out press releases regionally and contacting reporters, keep your

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eye out for articles that may come out months later—they do continue to appear. As articles appear, post the link on your website and send out announcements to your local trail network via email.

Send press releases to birding and nature publications like Birdwatchers Digest, Audubon magazine, and National Wildlife. Definitely plan to promote the trail and new brochure in your travel region's guide—but make sure to give them plenty of lead time.

Promoting the Trail for Residents

Start a dialogue with school teachers to fuel interest in students adopting a site nearest to their school for projects—bird, animal and plant lists, restoration, and interpretation.

Sign up to speak at local civic clubs, senior groups, and other organizations to let them know about the finished trail and opportunities.

Internet Marketing

Promote the completed trail and brochure on the state birding and nature trail website, as well as on the travel region, and Travel Montana's website. Contact the American Birding Association to be listed on their site. Do some sleuthing to find other outlets on the Internet for publicity.

Investigate ways to incorporate tasteful advertising on the website for lodging, dining and local points of interest. You can provide a service to people planning a trip, and raise funds to continue to update the website and promote the trail.

Lessons Learned:

The Bitterroot Birding and Nature Festival proved to be a little too ambitious in size and scope. Participants decided to scale down on the number of events for the subsequent year and to adjust pricing lower.

After the initial rush of publicity, follow-up is important. It's essential to figure out ways to keep an active committee and a lead person for a trail to reach its full potential.

More information

- See the appendix for a list of Travel Regions and CVBs in Montana.
- For a handbook on how to create a birding and nature festival, see this website: <http://www.festivalsandevents.com/resources/festival-planning/nature1.shtml>

Step Thirteen

Keeping the Trail Alive and Thriving

Volunteer energy ebbs and flows. That's why it's important to engage community members who have the energy and time to keep the trail alive and to meet its full potential. Ideally, the trail coordinator should continue to be active beyond the publication of brochures. If not, someone needs to take that leadership role.

Cultivating trail sponsors for the long-run is the key to complete a number of vital tasks for trails to take flight in all kinds of amazing ways, as exemplified by the Texas success story.

Enhancing Sites

Drawing attention to the natural worth of trail sites as special places elevates those sites as candidates for restoring habitats and improving education and recreational opportunities. A word of caution here...just because a site is on the trail doesn't automatically mean that there should be additions of signs, more parking or paved trail loops. It's critical to preserve the special character of a site. Sometimes less is more. Here are a few examples to illustrate possibilities for site enhancement:

Habitat restoration

- Plant willows on a stream that's recovering from past overgrazing.
- Control exotic weeds and restore native vegetation.
- Prescribe fire to restore natural processes.

Education and interpretation

- Add a wayside exhibit featuring birds and butterflies.
- Set up a regular seasonal ranger program on site.
- Create a self-guided nature trail.

Recreation examples

- Build an accessible viewing blind or platform.
- Add a parking space or widen a pullout if needed.
- Improve a trail to reduce soil erosion.

Adopt-a-site: Trail stewardship and citizen science

One way to keep the community alive is to enlist volunteers to adopt sites. These sites become their special places to visit, record the birds and animals they see, the visitors along the way, and to record changes. In other words, they become volunteer monitors of the trail. And they can take the next step to actually assist in projects that benefit the site. Citizen science is a growing field that gives people the chance to make invaluable contributions to scientists. Montana Audubon has several citizen science projects in the Bitterroot, for example. Most likely, every site has one or more people who have a strong affinity already for the place and would be willing to help out with some guidance.

Monitoring is an important component of creating a trail, and the easiest step to overlook. From the start, make sure monitoring is part of the plan. The Bitterroot Birding and Nature Trail is still working on funding this phase of the project, including an economic survey to look at who's coming to visit the trail, how long they are staying and how much they spend while they are here.

Website Updates

Remember that most visitors plan their trips using the Internet. Plan to keep the website updated with news about the trail. Continue to improve the website to add bird and wildlife sightings and wildflower blooms. Eventually, the Montana Birding and Nature Trail website will be interactive—allowing visitors to post sightings and other helpful information. This can be useful for adding new sites, or perhaps dropping a site if conditions change. Birders and wildlife viewers will be able to search sites by species, and customize loop trips over a series of days. To afford a user-friendly, exciting website will take advertising and sponsorships and statewide commitment to improvements.

Annual Bird and Nature Festival

Festivals are a terrific way to promote your birding and nature trail. They are also a lot of work, as organizers of the Bitterroot's annual birding and nature festival will tell you. It's easy to start with too grandiose a plan and then end up scaling back. The best advice is to start with a modest festival and make it bigger and better every year. (See www.bitterrootbirdingfestival.com for updates on this festival).

Nature Tourism Trainings

Training sessions can help existing businesses better capitalize on the birding and wildlife viewing visitor's interest and help develop new businesses like bird guiding trips. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has an excellent website resource: [wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/ tourism /](http://wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/tourism/)

Returning Dollars to Conservation

Now that you have a completed trail and a coordinated partnership between tourism and wildlife interests, you have opened the door to a realm of possibilities for conserving the special nature of your place—not just the sites on the trail. The sites are only representative of the habitats important to birds, wildlife, water quality and soils. They can't stand on their own, but can only function in relation to the lands and waters around them.

Montana is experiencing exponential growth in 31 counties, mostly in the western part of the state. From 1970 to 2004, those 31 counties saw a 45 percent rise in population and a 196 percent increase in developed lands (Sonoran Institute, 2006). In other words, not only are we growing in numbers, we are sprawling into open lands with serious impacts to the very nature so important to birds and wildlife—and nature tourism. Even the sparsely populated regions are experiencing ranchlands subdivided for vacation second homes.

The Texas conservation example in the handbook should inspire Montana to follow suit with coordinated efforts to conserve private lands and to help large landowners keep their operations in the black through wildlife viewing economic revenues.

Montana's statewide steering committee has discussed a range of possibilities to directly help conserve bird and wildlife habitats. One idea is to create a Birding and Nature Trail Passport that visitors and residents would purchase for \$20. That passport would feature a page for each site on the local trail route. To add a stamp, the visitor would go to the business listed as the passport sponsor for that particular viewing site. In addition, the passport would contain discount coupons for savings on lodging, food, and other items. The participating businesses would pay for all the costs of the printing of

passports and for marketing. All profits would go toward conservation projects. Let's make it happen!

APPENDIX

NOTE: The Appendix is divided into four parts. Part one consists of forms for nominating, reviewing and evaluating sites. The nomination form is particularly important and reflects efforts from birding and nature, and tourism specialists from across the state to come up with the best form. Part two shows useful handouts from the Bitterroot Birding and Nature Trail planning process, including an "Adding it Up" form that we encourage to be circulated widely. Part three features site examples from the Montana Birding and Nature Trail website. Part four lists statewide birding and nature trail committee members, Montana Visitor Information Centers, CVB Contacts, and Regional Contacts for every tourism country.

Part 1. Forms

1. Site Nomination Form (for anyone to contribute sites)
2. Review Form (for review committee to check for what's missing)
3. Field Review Form (for field-checking the sites that qualify).
4. Final Site Evaluation Form (for review committee to give one more look at the draft system of sites before submitting for public review).

Part 2. Community handouts

1. Adding it Up
2. Frequently Asked Questions
3. Become a Sponsor

Part 3 Sites

1. Blue Mountain site on web: Missoula Valley Birding and Nature Trail

Part 4 Useful Contacts

1. Montana Birding and Nature Trail Steering Committee
2. Regional Tourism Contacts
3. CVB Contacts
4. Montana Visitor Information Centers

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- 5. Birding and Nature Watching Contacts
- 6. Helpful Resources

APPENDIX PART 1, #1

Site Nomination Form
Montana Birding and Nature Trail

The Montana Birding and Nature Trail is a network of outstanding birding and nature viewing sites along thematic routes that stretch across Montana. We're creating a pilot route in your community. The Bitterroot Birding Trail will run from Lost Trail to Lolo Pass and will showcase the natural and scenic sites in your area. Each site along the route must be open to the public or open with permission, be able to accommodate wildlife watchers, and be easily and safely accessed. We're soliciting nominations for potential sites through public meetings, on-line and mail-in applications. Completed applications will be reviewed and site visits made to each nominated site. Nomination does not guarantee acceptance as a site along the trail.

To nominate a site, please complete the application as soon as possible and to the best of your knowledge. Return it to _____ email: debrichi@montana.com Nomination deadline: _____

Please Print or Type (Please fill in all areas marked with an *)

1. Site

*Name of location:		
*Site Owner/Agency		
Owner/Agency Street Address		
Owner/Agency City	Owner/Agency Zip Code:	
*Contact person or manager of site:		
Phone # of above person:	Fax #:	
Email of contact:	Web address(if available)	
Size of Site	County	Latitude/Longitude
Nearest Town to site		
<input type="checkbox"/> Map attached Please provide a map if you can and detailed directions to the site from nearest town or major road. Include distances between turns and direction of travel.		

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*Your Name(Nominator)	*Your phone
*Your email:	
*Your address:	

Any additional Contacts/People Knowledgeable about the Site?

Name	Address	Phone	Email
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Is there safe and legal access to the site? If no, please explain.

2. Site Information

*Please describe what makes this site a special place for viewing birds and other wildlife.

List the most easily viewed birds and wildlife at the site. Is it known for a particular species? If the site has a checklist(s), please attach.

Is there a special story or theme for this site?

List any special viewing tips for this site. Attach a site map if available.

What are the best times for visiting this site? Check all that apply.

- Morning Evening Night All Day
 Spring Summer Fall Winter

Other: (describe): _____

Habitats found at the site. (Check all that apply.)

Habitat	Habitat	Habitat	Habitat
Deciduous woods		Slough	
Coniferous woods		Sagebrush	
Mixed woods		Marsh/Wetland	
Old-growth forest		Alpine	
Burned forest		River Riparian	
Shrub/scrub		Residential	
Grassland		Cliff/Talus	

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Crop field		Lake/Pond	
Aspen Grove		Other (describe)	

Describe any additional unique or unusual features of the site:

Are there other forms of outdoor recreation on the site? (Check if present.)

- Hunting
- Fishing
- OHV/ATV
- Horseback Riding
- Organized Sports
- Other

Is the site safe for visitors? _____

Is the site or wildlife sensitive to disturbance? _____

3. Facilities

Does the site have any of the following facilities?

(Check if present)

- Parking
- Restrooms
- Trails
- Boardwalks
- Campgrounds
- Picnic Areas
- Other _____
- Picnic Areas
- Visitor Centers
- Interpretive materials
- Boat Ramps
- Viewing Blinds
- Concessions/rental

Does the site have any of the following services nearby?

(Check if services available and note proximity to site if possible)

Lodging		
Restaurants		
Campgrounds		
Gasoline		
Grocery		
Other (list)		

Does the site have specific regulations? If so, please include.

4. Programming

Does the site have other attributes?

Check all that apply & describe briefly.

- Historical
- Scenic beauty
- Cultural
- Other _____
- Geological
- Botanical
- Museums, visitor centers

Does the site offer:

- Guided tours or interpretive programs

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- Self-guided tours or interpretive programs
- Customized birding or wildlife viewing
- No formal programming
- Environmental education programming
- Potential for services or programming

Please list any special nature-based events/festivals at or near site. Include name, theme, date/time of year.

We value your time and expertise. THANK YOU for your participation.

#

APPENDIX, PART 1, #2

Review of Birding Trail Sites as a System For Bitterroot Birding and Nature Trail—Lost Trail to Lolo Pass

Please check all that apply. Add comments and suggestions at bottom of page.

Date:

Reviewer name, ph., email:

- Best birdwatching sites featured (as long as safe, accessible, etc.)
- Diversity of habitats represented
- Diversity of wildlife—not just birds
- Several elevations featured
- Varied experiences offered—hiking, canoeing, solitude, etc
- Easy and hard birding or wildlife viewing
- Distribution of nearby sites to towns and sites off the beaten path (but not too far)
- Geographic distribution

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- Seasonal viewing diversity
- Mix of ownerships and partnerships

Comments: What's missing? What loops do you recommend? Other suggestions?

APPENDIX, PART 1, #3

FIELD REVIEW FOR BITTERROOT BIRDING AND NATURE TRAIL SITES

Reviewer name:

Site name:

Recreational opportunity: (pullout, hike, float, bike, etc.)

Date, time, weather:

Photos taken: (note and attach later –or send digital via email)

1. What conservation story can be told at this site? Please be specific. (Example of topic possibilities—keystone species, fire ecology, bird species dependent on multi-story riparian canopy, flooding, edge effect, declining grasslands, native plants vs. weeds).

2. What are the main bird and wildlife species visible here? What about wildflower blooms? Butterflies? Dragonflies? Note seasons and viewing opportunities.

3. What are the main habitats here? Be specific (example: lodgepole pine forest, and willow, alder riparian)

4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the site? Please be specific—scenic vs. impacted, quiet vs. highway noise, safety, access, seasonal viewing opp., unique or

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unusual habitats vs. typical, conservation story potential, bird species from hot list, native species vs. weeds, ecological health, etc. (Use other side of paper to go into detail)

5. What is your overall opinion of this site as a candidate for the Bitterroot Birding and Nature Trail?

Return form to: Bitterroot Birding and Nature Trail Coordinator, Deborah Richie Oberbillig, 503 Linden St., Missoula, MT 59802, email: debrichi@montana.com

APPENDIX PART 1, #4

Site Evaluation Criteria DRAFT FOR PILOT PROJECT

The following criteria will be used in reviewing sites for inclusion in the Bitterroot Birding and Nature Trail. Please check the criteria met by the site described in this nomination and provide additional information if requested. The sites you are reviewing have already gone through a nomination process and a field review. This evaluation is a critical final step for the land managers and local review team to make sure each site passes muster. The community will have a say as well on what they think of the sites suggested.

Please check off all attributes that apply. Look over sheet. Based on the checklist, answer the question of whether the site passed the evaluation test for or not with explanatory comments.

Date:

Site Name:

Reviewer name, ph., email:

Bird and Wildlife Watching Characteristics:

- High scenic and birding and wildlife viewing values

Habitat Significance:

- Site features habitat in good condition

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- Site is ecologically significant (Important Bird Area, native grassland, old growth trees, etc).
- Site has visible restoration activities or opportunities for restoration

Site resiliency: (Fragile ecosystems or habitats with sensitive species should not be included unless wildlife officials deem use acceptable)

- The site can support public use.
- The site can support visitation most of the time, but should be limited for certain time periods or managed carefully (explain).
- The site has adequate maintenance

Site cultural/historical connection: (not essential, but adds to site's positive features)

- Site includes a cultural/historic component.
- Added visitation will not impact cultural/historic component.

Access:

- Site has legal access
- Site and physical access to site is safe.

Educational significance:

- Site has educational signage or programming relating to birds and other wildlife.
- Site lacks on-the-ground signage or programming but good potential.

Site partnership/community support:

- Site has local support/partnerships
- Site has high potential for partnerships

Recommendation for Inclusion of Site in Birding and Nature Trail:

- Yes
- No

Comments?

Contact for more information: Deborah Richie Oberbillig, Bitterroot Birding and Nature Trail Coordinator, 721-6609

APPENDIX, PART 2, #1

**Adding it Up:
Economic Value of Birding and Wildlife Viewing to
Montana**

“If Wildlife Watching were a company, its sales of \$38.4 billion would rank it 33rd in the Forbes 500 list for 2001—placing it just ahead of Motorola and Kmart.” (2001 National and State Economics of Wildlife Watching, US Fish and Wildlife Service).

Nationwide—

Millions of birdwatchers and wildlife watchers

- 66 million Americans actively participate in wildlife watching (USFWS 2001 data)
- 46 million Americans are birdwatchers (conservatively defined as having taken a trip a mile or more from home for the primary purpose of observing and identifying birds or tried to identify birds around the home—USFWS, 2001 survey).
- Birdwatching is the fastest growing form of outdoor recreation-- a 236% increase in participation from 1982 to 2001, from 21 million to 71 million (National Survey on Recreation and the Environment 2000-01).

Adding revenues to local economies—

- Wildlife watchers spent \$38.4 billion in 2001-- resulting in a \$95.8 billion contribution to the nation’s economy and producing more than one million jobs.
- Birdwatchers spent \$32 billion in 2001 that in turn generated \$85 billion in economic benefits, produced \$13 billion in tax revenues and 863,406 jobs (USFWS, 2001).

Spending billions on bird seed, feeders and wildlife viewing gear annually—

- Wildlife watchers spend \$3.1 billion on food for birds and other wildlife; \$733 million on bird houses and feeders; \$2.6 billion on cameras and

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associated photographic equipment; \$507 million on binoculars and spotting scopes.

And willing to pay more to see wildlife—

- The net economic value (willingness to pay above what is actually spent) for the chance to see wildlife outside the state is \$134 per day, and \$35 per day for wildlife in state. (USFWS, 2001 study).

In Montana—

Wildlife viewing tops the list

- Wildlife viewing is the number ONE reason people visit Montana (2001 Univ. of MT Institute of Tourism Recreation Research study).
- 325,000 nonresidents and 362,000 residents actively participated in wildlife watching in Montana in 2001.

Adding millions of dollars into the Montana economy--

- Wildlife watching expenditures total \$350 million annually, supporting 10,302 jobs (2001 USFWS survey).

Montanans love birds

- Montana has the highest percentage of birding participation in the nation-- 44 % of Montana residents watch birds—compared to an average of 22 % in the nation (USFWS, 2001 study).
- Wildlife viewing is the third most popular activity among Montana households—52% of the state's population participates.
- Montanans spent \$10 million on wild bird food in 1996.

Cases in Point—values of birding trails, festivals, birding destinations:

Birding trails capture the birdwatching and wildlife viewing market—

- Travelers on the central coast portion of the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail devoted an average of 31 days per year viewing wildlife on the trail. They spent an average of \$78 per person per day, while traveling the trail, resulting in a direct expenditure of \$2,452 during the past twelve months. (from Avitourism in Texas survey, 1999).

Birding festivals are moneymakers—

- Nature tourists visiting the HummerBird Festival in Rockport, Texas contributed \$1.4 million in direct expenditures to the local economy in 1995.

Birding benefits rural communities--

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- Visitors to the popular birding areas of Ramsey Canyon and San Pedro River Basin, near Sierra Vista, Arizona, spend between \$10 million and \$17 million annually, generating between \$17 to \$28 million in local economic activity, and creating between 350 and 590 jobs. The study also showed a marked increase in birdwatchers choosing lodging locally in Sierra Vista in the past decade instead of staying in Tucson. (Univ. of Arizona 2002 study).
- Birding at Florida's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary in southwest Florida had an economic impact of \$9.4 million in 1993-94 alone.
- In a 1993-94 study of visitors to Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge, Texas, results showed that they spent an average of \$347/person and a total of \$14 million in local communities.
- In 1997, from Aug-Oct., 27,885 elk viewers visited Colorado's Rocky Mountain National Park to see rutting elk, contributing more than \$2.3 million to Estes Park and surrounding communities.
- Alaska's wildlife viewing visitors spend more than twice as much in-state as other visitors (\$1051/visit vs. \$465/visit), according to results of a 1994-95 survey.
- The 100,000 plus birders who visit the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge in Virginia spend more than \$10 million each year in local communities. This income comes outside the beach season and is in addition to income generated by beach lovers.
- People observing sandhill cranes along the Platte River in Nebraska generate \$40 million in tourism dollars for local economies each year.
- In 1992, visitors to the Hawk Mountain Sanctuary in Pennsylvania supported a minimum of 150 restaurants and more than 65 motels, campsites and bed and breakfasts.
- A 1993 study of birders who visited Cape May, NJ, documented that they contributed more than \$10 million to the local economy, generating a \$266,000 economic impact on the local area. In 1996, participation in the same festival doubled and generated an economic impact of \$1.6 million.

Information collected and assembled by the Montana Birding & Nature Trail Steering Committee, 2004

APPENDIX PART 2, #2

BITTERROOT BIRDING & NATURE TRAIL
Frequently Asked Questions

What will the Trail look like?

The Trail will consist of 25 prime sites for viewing birds and other wildlife in the Bitterroot watershed—from Lost Trail Pass to Lolo Pass. The Trail will form a *thematic itinerary* that organizes the way visitors and residents experience the nature of the Bitterroot. The sites will be arranged as suggested loops in the southern, middle and northern parts of the Bitterroot. These itineraries also encourage visitors to “stay and bird,” similar to the marketing idea of “stay and ski.”

What’s the Proposed Theme?

Explore the “nature” of Lewis and Clark in the Bitterroot.

The Trail will add to the depth and value of the Lewis and Clark experience as people make their own discoveries of birds, animals and plants observed by the Expedition. Visitors will explore, too, in the footsteps of Salish and other tribes who knew the animals long before Lewis and Clark arrived.

What does the Bitterroot offer?

From the Sapphire range to the east, to the Bitterroot River flowing through the valley, to the jagged Bitterroot Range to the west, every habitat is home to different kinds of birds and animals, either year-round or seasonally. Bighorn sheep clamber the cliffs above the East Fork Bitterroot. Elk graze in summer in the high peaks and winter in lower foothills. Moose feed among willows. Birds of prey grace the river’s edge—bald eagles, osprey, great horned owls and hawks.

Who will choose the sites?

The people who know and care about the Bitterroot are nominating sites now! Attend a community meeting to find out more and pick up site nomination forms—or click on “nominate a site” for a form. The coordinator will collect nominations through the end of April—submit by snail mail or email. Sites will be reviewed and assessed by local experts.

What are the tangible products?

By 2005, we anticipate thousands of copies of full-color brochure/maps featuring all the sites. A website (under construction) will also host the Trail in an easily downloadable format. Sites will be identified on the ground with a bird logo—to be developed as a statewide symbol for the birding trail.

What are the benefits of the Trail?

Successful birding trails in more than 20 states are demonstrating that trails are bolstering economies, bringing people closer to nature, linking nature with culture, and creating support for conserving habitats.

Conservation Benefits

The Trail will infuse dollars into local communities from nature tourism, a source of revenue that relies on the wise stewardship and conservation of habitats for bird and wildlife species. Nature tourism is defined as travel to natural areas that conserves the environmental, social and cultural values while generating an economic benefit to a local community. The Trail will also help residents appreciate the values of open spaces and caring for habitats that support a diversity of wildlife—from the river bottoms to the valleys, foothills and high peaks.

Economic benefits

The communities of Sula, Darby, Conner, Corvallis, Hamilton, Victor, Stevensville, Florence and Lolo will benefit from expanding tourism shoulder seasons and adding jobs, while preserving traditional rural lifestyles. Tracking the economic return to the area is part of the project. Wildlife viewers on the Texas Birding Trail spend \$78 per day, a measure of what to expect in the Bitterroot.

Cultural Benefits

Lewis and Clark enthusiasts may extend their stay in the Bitterroot to follow sites where they have a chance of seeing birds and animals recorded by the Corps of Discovery, and to better appreciate the homeland of the Salish people. Birders and wildlife viewers may similarly linger to take in more of the history and culture offered by the Lewis and Clark and Nez Perce Trails.

Social Benefits

Birding and nature trails offer hope to farmers, ranchers and loggers who are seeing their traditional way of life disappear in the wake of rapid growth and less revenue from natural resource extraction. A higher percentage of Montanans watch birds than any other state in the country. The Trail adds to quality of life for residents and individual sites can serve as outdoor learning centers for schools.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Deborah Richie Oberbillig
Bitterroot Birding & Nature Trail Coordinator
503 Linden St.
Missoula, MT 59802
Ph. (406) 721-6609
Email: debrichi@montana.com

CALENDAR FOR TRAIL COMPLETION

Ongoing:

- Fundraising
- Develop evaluation program to track economic benefits. (ongoing)
- Develop monitoring system to track progress of bird trail development.

March 2004

- Hold community meetings to build support and gather nominations.

April 2004

- Review Team checks nominations for accuracy, relevancy, assured public access, etc (following criteria developed by Montana Birding & Nature Trail Steering Committee.

May-July 2004

- Train local volunteers in site assessment to help with reviews.
- Field reviews of sites based on protocol (developed by Montana Birding and Nature Trail Steering Committee)—including safety, desirability as a nature tourism destination, impacts on sensitive ecosystems or species, needed infrastructure, accessibility, and suitability of site to conservation mission focus.

August 2004

- Draft selection of sites and organization into loops and subthemes within the Bitterroot area.

September 2004

- Hold focus group to supply feedback on proposed loops and sites—
- Interactive website for additional feedback
- Finalize site choices

October-November 2004

- Text development and review
- Design and layout

(End of National Forest Foundation Grant phase)

December 2004 and beyond

- Print and distribute map
- Conduct evaluation and monitoring
- Marketing and media
- Training for those interested in leading birding and naturalist tours
- Training in positive viewing experiences and interpretation for managers
- Continued outreach to service providers to promote trail and enhance experience
- Maintain and update website—recent sightings, changes to sites, etc.

BITTERROOT BIRDING AND NATURE TRAIL COMMUNITY MEETING SCHEDULE

All meetings begin at 7 PM

Tuesday, March 9: DARBY--Darby School cafeteria

Wednesday, March 10: HAMILTON--Hamilton Public Library

Monday, March 15: MISSOULA--Missoula Public Library

Tuesday, March 16: LOLO: Travelers Rest State Park

Thursday, March 18: STEVENSVILLE: North Valley Library

APPENDIX, PART 2, #3

Become a Sponsor of the Bitterroot Birding & Nature Trail



From Lost Trail to Lolo Pass, from the crests of the Sapphire and the Bitterroot Ranges, and along the free-flowing Bitterroot River -- something wild is happening. Montana's pilot trail for birding and nature viewing is taking shape—linking and connecting prime places to view birds and all of nature. The Trail is much more than a route—it's a nature tourism project, a conservation endeavor, and a Trail shaped by the people who know and care about their home.

We need your help to make it happen! The National Forest Foundation is providing funding in 2004. The \$55,000 grant requires matching funds —that means for every dollar you contribute, it will be

doubled. Your \$50 gives us \$100. Beyond that, an investment in the birding trail is a strong investment in a sustainable economy. We know from other state birding trails that visitors spend at least \$78 per day, which in turn generates funding throughout communities. Birdwatchers and wildlife viewers tend to spend their money at Bed & Breakfasts, cabins, at cafes and other family businesses. The timing couldn't be better to dovetail with the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. This new Trail enhances and deepens the experience by focusing on the *nature* of Lewis and Clark on their travels through the Bitterroot. Beyond the anticipated revenues, the Trail will add to the high quality of life here by offering color map and brochure leading to all the sites with

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suggested loops and details on what makes the site special for wildlife.

All contributions are tax-deductible. Individuals and businesses will be credited under the sponsor levels of their contributions and featured in publications and on the birding trail website:

www.montanabirdingtrail.org

Tax-deductible contributions should be sent to the address below with project name on the check, payable to:

National Forest Foundation

Send to:

Bitter Root RC&D

RE: Bitterroot Birding and Nature Trail

1709 N. 1st St.

Hamilton, MT 59840

Golden Eagle sponsorship: \$2500 and higher

Lewis's Woodpecker sponsorship: \$1000- \$2499

Clark's Nutcracker sponsorship: \$500 to \$999

American Dipper sponsorship: \$100 to \$499

Sandhill Crane sponsorship: up to \$100

APPENDIX, PART 3, #1

MISSOULA VALLEY BIRDING AND NATURE TRAIL:

SAMPLE SITE AT WWW.MONTANABIRDINGTRAIL.ORG

Blue Mountain Nature Trail

Fire Story: Wildfires shape the Northern Rocky Mountain landscape

This is the best place to see fire-dependent plants, insects, and birds including the Black-backed Woodpecker in the Missoula valley.

Within 15 minutes from downtown Missoula, you can see first-hand the restorative effect of fire on a ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir forest community. This is an exceptional opportunity to see woodpecker species, including the Black-backed and Three-toed, foraging together on bark and wood-boring beetles in fire-killed trees. In the spring and throughout most of summer you can walk along established trails that wind through hillsides carpeted with arrowleaf balsamroot, fireweed, pinegrass, and a host of other unique flowering plant species.

Field Notes

Look for woodpecker species, including the Black-backed and Three-toed, foraging together on bark and wood-boring beetles in fire-killed trees. Be sure to take some time to walk the Blue Mountain Nature Trail. Pick up a Black Mountain Fire Trail brochure and learn how plants and animals are adapted to fire. Even a few years after the 2003 fire, you can still see blackened trees, bark beetles, lots of woodpecker sign, and abundant wildflowers. Try to find evidence where the fire burned, which trees survived, and which plants might have benefited from the fire.

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Conservation

Whenever you visit a forest that has recently burned, you'll see amazing evidence of fire's role in creating conditions that many organisms find nowhere

else in the Rocky Mountain landscape. A number of native species depend on wildfires or wildfire-created habitats and are nearly restricted in their distribution to these habitats. Here you'll find some of these plant and animal species, including Black-backed Woodpecker, black morel mushroom, fire moss, and Bicknell's geranium that occur only after a fire.

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Cultural Link

The 2003 Black Mountain Fire started on August 8th as a lightning strike and burned slowly until it blew up on August 16th when it spread across 3600 acres in two hours. The fire prompted the evacuation of 130 homes and eventually burned about 7,000 acres. Although fires near urban areas can be threatening, the closeness and accessibility of such burned areas also provide us with a ready-made classroom to learn about fire ecology and to see unique plant and animal species.

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Viewing Tip

Resident woodpeckers can be seen throughout the year; however, June is the best time to find nesting Black-backed, Three-toed and other woodpeckers. In winter, you may find foraging flocks of woodpeckers as they feast on beetle larvae. Throughout spring and early summer, wildflowers make a spectacular showing.

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Helpful Hint

On the Blue Mountain Forest Road #365, the gate is locked during the winter months (Dec-March) one-half mile before the nature trail. You can still access the site by walking about a half-mile up the Blue Mountain National Recreation Trail to reach the burn.

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Getting There

From Highway 93, turn north onto Blue Mountain Road and travel about 1.3 miles and turn west onto Forest Road #365. The Blue Mountain Nature Trail is about 1.5 miles up Road #365.

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Contact

MONTANA BIRDING AND NATURE TRAIL HANDBOOK

Lolo National Forest
Missoula Ranger District, Building 24
Fort Missoula, Missoula, MT 59804
(406) 329-3750.
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Facilities

parking, hiking, interpretive trail, horseback riding
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Species of Note

Black-backed Woodpecker
Three-toed Woodpecker
Western Tanager
Townsend's Solitaire
Western Bluebird
Mountain Bluebird
Pileated woodpecker
Rock Wren
Abundant wildflowers: glacier lily, arrowleaf balsamroot, heartleaf arnica,
fireweed
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APPENDIX, PART 4 #1

Montana Birding & Nature Trail Steering Committee Members

Participants in Montana Birding and Nature Trail Focus Team of the Montana Tourism & Recreation Initiative

Bitter Root RC&D Area
Blackfoot Challenge
Bureau of Land Management
Bureau of Reclamation
Montana Arts Council
Montana Audubon
Montana Department of Commerce
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation
Montana Department of Transportation
Montana Natural History Center
Montana Governor's Office

MONTANA BIRDING AND NATURE TRAIL HANDBOOK

Montana Heritage Preservation & Development Commission
Montana Historical Society
Montana Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Commission
Montana Outfitters and Guides
Montana Partners in Flight
Montana State University Extension
Montana Tribal Tourism Alliance
National Forest Foundation
National Park Service
Trail of the Great Bear
Travel Montana
Tourism Advisory Council
University of Montana - Institute for Tourism & Recreation Research
University of Montana – Avian Science Center - Division of Biological Sciences
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USDA Forest Service
US Fish and Wildlife Service

APPENDIX, PART 4, #2

REGIONAL CONTACTS

February 2006

Custer Country

Original to:
Jim Schaefer, Exec. Director
Custer Country
Box 904
Forsyth, MT 59327
406-346-1876
406-346-1876 (fax)
custer@rangeweb.net

Carbon Copy to:
Sandy Watts, President
Custer Country
7th Ranch Reno Creek Road
Garryowen, MT 59031
406-638-2438
7th ranch@historicwest.com

Glacier Country

Original to:
Linda Anderson, Exec. Director
Glacier Country
PO Box 1035
Bigfork, MT 59911-1035
406-837-6211
406-837-6231 (fax)
glaciercountry@montana.com

Carbon Copy to:
Jim Hollenback, President
1339 Mullan Road East
Superior, MT 59872
406-822-3033
419-858-6699 (fax)
jim@ownmt.com

MONTANA BIRDING AND NATURE TRAIL HANDBOOK

GOLD WEST COUNTRY

Original to:
Sarah Bannon, Exec. Director
Gold West Country
1155 Main Street
Deer Lodge, MT 59722
406-846-1943
406-846-1943 (fax)
goldwest@bresnan.net

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Barb Reiter, President
Gold West Country
PO Box 930
Boulder, MT 59632
406-225-4339
406-225-4345 (fax)
bhs@boulderhotsprings.com

Missouri River Country

Original to:
Carla Hunsley, Exec. Director
Missouri River Country
PO Box 387
Wolf Point, MT 59201
406-653-1319
406-653-1319 (fax)
2mtmrc@nemontel.net

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Dave Miller, President
Missouri River Country
Box 703
Malta, MT 59538
406-654-1051
no fax
7davem@mtintouch.net

RUSSELL COUNTRY

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Gayle Fisher
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PO Box 3166
Great Falls, MT 59403
406-761-5036
406-761-5085 (fax)
russell@visitmt.com

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Tucker Hughes, President
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Stanford, MT 59479
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YELLOWSTONE COUNTRY

Original to:
Robin Hoover
Yellowstone Country
1820 W. Lincoln
Bozeman, MT 59715
406-556-8680
406-556-8688 (fax)
yellowstone@montana.net

Carbon Copy to:
Mike Chulyak, President
Yellowstone Country
Box 1502
Big Timber, MT 59011
406-932-5318
406-932-5353 (fax)
bthi@tc-cmc.net

APPENDIX, PART 4, #3

CVB CONTACTS

February 2006

Big Sky

Big Sky Chamber of Commerce

PO Box 160100
BIG SKY, MT 59716
406-995-3000
406-995-3054 (FAX)

ORIGINAL TO:

MARNE HAYES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
BIG SKY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
marne@bigskychamber.com

Carbon Copy To:

DAVID O'CONNOR, CHAIR
BEST WESTERN BUCK'S T-4
PO Box 160279
doconnor@buckst4.com

Billings

Billings Area Chamber of Commerce
PO Box 31177
BILLINGS, MT 59107
406-245-4111
406-245-7333 (FAX)

Original To:

JOAN KRONEBUSCH
Director Sales & Marketing/CVB
BILLINGS CVB
joan@billingschamber.com

Carbon Copy To:

JOHN BREWER, PRESIDENT/CEO
BILLINGS AREA CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE
john@billingschamber.com

Bozeman

BOZEMAN AREA CHAMBER COMMERCE

2000 COMMERCE WAY
BOZEMAN, MT 59715-7500
406-586-5421
406-586-8286 (FAX)

ORIGINAL TO:

CYNDY ANDRUS, EXEC. DIR.

BOZEMAN CVB

406-922-0450
candrus@bozemanchamber.com

CARBON COPY TO:

DAVID SMITH, EXEC. DIRECTOR
BOZEMAN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
dsmith@bozemanchamber.com

Butte

Butte-Silver Bow Chamber of
Commerce

1000 GEORGE
BUTTE, MT 59701
406-723-3177 RANDY EXT 14
406-723-1215 (FAX)

Original To:

RANDY RAFISH, CVB
COORDINATOR/CHAMBER MARKETING
DIRECTOR BUTTE SILVER BOW CHAMBER
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rrafish@buttecvb.com

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MARKO LUCICH, EXEC. DIRECTOR
BUTTE-SILVER BOW CHAMBER OF
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Great Falls

Great Falls Area Chamber of Commerce

PO Box 2127
GREAT FALLS, MT 59403
406-761-4434
406-761-6129 (FAX)

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JANET MEDINA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
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jmedina@greatfallschamber.org

Carbon Copy To:

RICK EVANS, PRESIDENT
GREAT FALLS AREA CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE

MONTANA BIRDING AND NATURE TRAIL HANDBOOK

rick@greatfallschamber.org

Helena

**Helena Area Chamber
OF COMMERCE**
225 CRUSE, SUITE A
HELENA, MT 59601
406-447-1530
406-447-1532 (FAX)

ORIGINAL TO:

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CATHY BURWELL, EXEC. DIR.
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cburwell@helenachamber.com

Kalispell

Kalispell Area Chamber of Commerce

15 DEPOT PARK
KALISPELL, MT 59901
406-758-2800 - CHBR
758-2805 (FAX) - CHBR

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JOE UNTERREINER, E.V. PRES.
Kalispell Chamber of Commerce
joe@kalispellchamber.com

CARBON COPY TO:

DORI HAMILTON, EXEC. DIRECTOR
FLATHEAD CVB
4170 US HWY 2 EAST, #14
406-756-9091- FCVB
406-257-2500 (FAX) - FCVB
fcbv@fcbv.org

Missoula

MISSOULA CVB
1121 EAST BROADWAY, SUITE 103
MISSOULA, MT 59802
406-532-3250
406-543-2304 (FAX)

ORIGINAL TO:

BARB NEILAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MISSOULA CVB
director@missoulacvb.org

CARBON COPY TO:

MARY MUSE, PRESIDENT
DIR U OF MT ADAMS CENTER
32 CAMPUS DR
MISSOULA, MT 59812
406-243-4261
406-243-4265 (Fax)
musem@mso.umt.edu

West Yellowstone

West Yellowstone Chamber of
Commerce

PO Box 458
WEST YELLOWSTONE, MT 59758
406-646-7701
406-646-9691 (FAX)

ORIGINAL TO:

MARYSUE COSTELLO, EXEC. DIR.
WEST YELLOWSTONE CVB
director@westyellowstonechamber.com

CARBON COPY TO:

KAY MATHEWS, PRESIDENT
PO Box 1110
406-646-7656
kay@wyellowstone.com

Whitefish

Whitefish Chamber of Commerce
P.O. BOX 1120
WHITEFISH, MT 59937
406-862-3501
406-862-9494 (FAX)

ORIGINAL TO:

SHEILA BOWEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
WHITEFISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
sbowen@whitefishchamber.org

CARBON COPY TO:

JOAN EHRENBERG
WHITEFISH CVB
PO Box 991
406-862-4942
406-862-9494 (FAX)
jve@centurytel.net

APPENDIX PART 4, #4:

MONTANA VISITOR INFORMATION CENTERS

Culbertson VIC
Ruth Mattelin
Hwy 2 East
PO Box 95
Culbertson MT 59218
(406) 787-6320
Email: culbertsonvic@nemontel.net
Open May - September

Email: broadusvic@hotmail.com
OPEN MAY - SEPTEMBER

Dillon VIC
Carly Anderson
125 South Montana
PO Box 425
Dillon MT 59725
(406) 683-5511
Email: chamber@bmt.net
Open Year round

Hardin VIC
Diana Scheidt
I-90 Exit 497
PO Box 1206A
Hardin MT 59034
(406) 665-1671
Email: hardinvic@bhwi.net
Open Year round

LOLO PASS VIC
Mile Post 162
Highway 12
Lolo MT 59847
(208) 942-1234
Email: lolopassvic@hotmail.com
Open May - September

Powder River VIC
Michaeleen Groff
119 E Wilson St
PO Box 484
Broadus MT 59317
(406) 436-2992

MONTANA BIRDING AND NATURE TRAIL HANDBOOK

Shelby VIC

Randi Lenhardt
100 2nd Ave South
PO Box 865
Shelby MT 59474
(406) 434-9151
Email: vicshelby@hotmail.com
Open May - September

St Regis VIC

Kathy Dunn
39 Lobo Loop
PO Box 200
St Regis MT 59866
(406) 649-2290
Email: stregisvic@blackfoot.net
Open May - September

West Yellowstone VIC

Marysue Costello
30 Yellowstone Ave
PO Box 458
West Yellowstone MT 59758
(406) 646-7701
Email:
vicmgr@westyellowstonechamber.com
Open Year round

Wibaux VIC

Lonnie Bacon
500 N 2nd Ave E
PO Box 453
Wibaux MT 59353
(406) 796-2253
Email: wibauxvic@middrivers.com
Open May - September

APPENDIX, PART 4, #5

BIRDING AND NATURE WATCHING CONTACTS IN MONTANA

American Bird Conservancy
Attn: Dan Casey
Montana Field Office
33 2nd street E.
Kalispell, MT 59901
(406) 756-2681
dancasey_abc@centurytel.net

Avian Science Center - HS209
Division of Biological Sciences
The University of Montana
Missoula MT 59812
Phone: (406) 243-2035
Email: info@avianscience.org
<http://avianscience.dbs.umt.edu/>

Bureau of Land Management
Attn: John Carlson
Montana/Dakotas State Office
5001 Southgate Drive
Billings, MT 59101
John_Carlson@blm.gov

Lolo National Forest
Attn: Sue Reel

Bldg 24. Fort Missoula
Missoula, MT 59804
(406)329-3831
sreel.fs.fed.us

Montana Audubon
Montana Audubon
PO Box 595
Helena MT 59624
(406) 443-3949
mtaudubon@montana.com
<http://mtaudubon.org/>

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Atn: Kristi Dubois
3201 Spurgin Road
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Montana Natural History Center
120 Hickory Street
Missoula, MT 59801
(406)327-0405
www.montanaturalist.org

MONTANA BIRDING AND NATURE TRAIL HANDBOOK

Montana Tourism and Recreation
Initiative
Attn: Margaret Gorski, US Forest
Service
PO Box 7669
Missoula, MT 59807
(406) 329-3132
mgorski@fs.fed.us

National Forest Foundation
Attn: Mary Mitsos
Building 27, Suite 3
Fort Missoula Road

Missoula, MT 49804
(406)542-2805. ext. 15
mimitsos@natlforsts.org

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Wildlife Refuges
Attn: Bob Danley
Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge
4567 Wildfowl Lane
Stevensville, MT 59870
(406)777-5552 X 203
Bob_Danley@fws.gov

Appendix, Part 4, #6

HELPFUL RESOURCES

American Birding Association

www.americanbirding.org

(links to birding trails, birding festivals, how to organize a birding festival manual)

Oberbillig, Deborah Richie, Providing Positive Wildlife Viewing Experiences, A Practical Handbook, Colorado Division of Wildlife, and Watchable Wildlife, Inc. 2002. Order from www.watchablewildlife.org

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation
<http://federalaid.fws.gov/surveys/surveys.html>