



WILLAPA WHISTLER



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Update on Proposed Mt. St. Helens Copper Mine

By Charlotte Persons

At a June 1 meeting of groups in opposition to the mine, Ryan Hunter of Gifford Pinchot Task Force said that the U.S. Forest Service had given permission for Idaho General Mines Inc. to go on the proposed lease area to survey the land. The company cannot do anything that would harm the environment, such as drilling. An Environmental Assessment draft will be issued sometime before the end of 2006. This EA must look at “foreseeable future development” of the site. At that point there will be a 30-day comment period for the public—those of us Auduboners who have already written comments or letters will need to write them again!

Because the mountain will be covered with snow when the draft EA is issued, at the meeting the group planned three tours to the Margaret site area (in addition to the already scheduled July 1 WHAS field trip and the July 15 Sierra Club field trip). The three tours, which will be in July and August, will target groups: (1) city officials, especially water engineers, whose cities would be affected by Acid Mine Drainage in the Cowlitz and Toutle Rivers; (2) elected federal officials in the district and state; and (3) representatives from groups in opposition to the mine. Meanwhile, we will keep you posted about any other news.

WHAS Annual Picnic

Ruth Deery has once again invited Willapa Hills Audubon members to have the traditional annual pot luck picnic at her home in Longview. She said Sunday, July 9, or Sunday July 16, would be the best dates. If one of these dates is better for you, please e-mail bmayfield@opusnet.com so a date can be set. Driving directions and the preferred date can come by e-mail later.

Field Trip Report

By Pamela Wright

Special thanks are in order to recent field trip leaders for their time and energy. Andrew Emlen gave a great slide show of area shorebirds followed the next day with an outing to shorebird hotspots full of migratory and resident shorebirds. Special finds included a snowy plover (listed as threatened by the federal government), a male ruddy turnstone in full breeding plumage and a flock of 40+ common loons.

Russell Koppendrayer led a hike to birdie spots of the Mount St Helens area that included a search for an elusive but audible blue grouse. More cooperative (visible) creatures included meadow larks, Barrow's goldeneye, a host of vocalizing warblers (yellow, orange-crowned and Wilson's) and an elk herd.

Finally, Carlo Abbruzzese led hikers to a small ancient grove of trees at South Nemah NRCA where participants pattered looking at plants, insects, snakes and birds and then still managed to fill all of his pots with salvaged plant materials for a road decommissioning. All three field trip leaders managed to pick beautiful days nestled in weeks of rain. Participants enjoyed the expert guidance on identifying characters of different species as well as learning new locations to visit on future outings.

As Audubon activities slow down for a summer breather, consider connecting with other groups that offer outings in our region. Most organizations offer activities open to nonmembers and require participants to register in advance. If the link has changed, just type the name of the organization into your favorite search engine.

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