

# Spring 2021

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Photo by Joni Denker 2014  
**Redwing Blackbird**

## THE NATURALIST

# GRAS Donates Sunny Peace Prairie to Parkview School District

**By Joni Denker**  
*President*

The Sunny Peace Prairie in Orfordville has been donated to the Parkview School District to be used as an outdoor laboratory and will support science and art education for the district. The conservation easement placed on the property to ensure it remains in conservation into perpetuity will remain with the Groundswell Conservancy in Madison. This transfer will allow GRAS to continue to focus their land conservation activities on their properties west of Beloit.

The land, donated and managed by Norm and Carol Aulabaugh, will continue to be restored from farmland into a prairie and oak woodland, and will feature nature trails and a pavilion for visitors and an earthen peace dove mound. As the name implies, the preserve will serve to allow all visitors to find peace and contemplate nature amongst its beauty.



**Sunny Peace Prairie**

**Groundswell Conservancy**

You can find more information in the following article in the Janesville Gazette, February 25, 2021:  
[https://www.gazettextra.com/news/local/couple-donate-75-acres-to-parkview-school-district-for-outdoor-lab/article\\_566ba3f4-9dd2-59dd-885f-85e4eed1fc0b.html](https://www.gazettextra.com/news/local/couple-donate-75-acres-to-parkview-school-district-for-outdoor-lab/article_566ba3f4-9dd2-59dd-885f-85e4eed1fc0b.html)

## In memory of Ted O'Dell

We received word that Ted Odell died on January 2, 2021. He was a long-time friend of Green-Rock Audubon Society and gave a conservation easement on his riverside property in Brodhead to G-RAS. He lived very simply in his cabin on that land. He faithfully attended the G-RAS annual meetings. Ted was a student of history, especially the original inhabitants near the Sugar River. He was an avid reader and enjoyed a good conversation about weighty matters. He got much satisfaction from being an investor in the Three Waters Reserve which is in the process of transforming nine holes of the golf course near his land to native prairie. His own home for many years is now a part of that Land Trust. You may access his obituary at <https://www.dlnewcomerfuneralhome.com/obituary/TheodoreTed-Odell>

## Book Review: A Siege of Bitterns by Steve Burrows

When we lived in Cleveland, my best friend and I shared an interest in birding. We still keep in touch and when we talked a few weeks ago, he asked me if I knew the Birder Murder Mysteries by Steve Burrows. I confessed not, so he mailed me a copy of the first in the series. It was a fun read.

The protagonist is DCI (Detective Chief Inspector) Domenic Jejeune. His passion is birding, but he's also quite good at crime solving. His partner, Lindy Hey, keeps reminding him of that – and she has to. He has newly arrived in the Norfolk (England) town of Saltmarsh as the DCI. Having emigrated to England from Canada, he is an outsider in more than one sense.

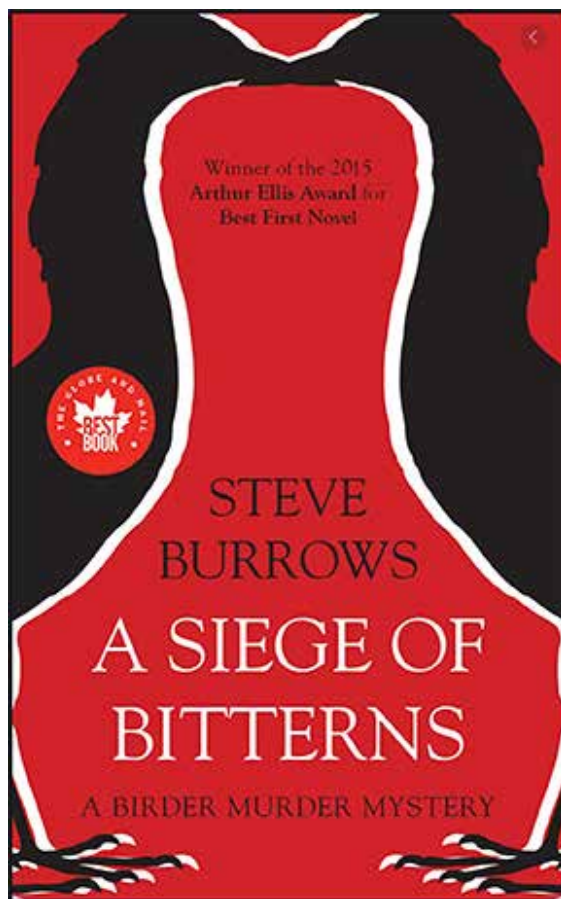
The murder of a prominent environmentalist and avid birder is his introduction to the local community and to his staff of detectives. Birds are a focus of the investigation from the beginning. Is competition to be the first to reach 400 birds on a local list enough of a motive? Another question mark is a note on the victim's desk about an American Bittern. Hence, the title.

The local marsh is a birding hotspot, and the local birders are passionate. (Will Lindy become at least a willing companion on Dom's outings?) Jejeune doesn't miss the chances to admire the local birdlife, even though he is committed – reluctantly – to his investigations. Local Important People clearly play a part, and they are not particularly happy with the Inspector's inquiries.

The story line is as complex as I could wish. It reminds me of novels by Louise Penny and Donna Leon, with Chief Inspector Armand Gamache and Commissario Guido Brunetti. There is tension with Jejeune's boss and impatience among his colleagues. There are blind alleys and false suspects. There is the question of the health of the marsh ecosystem.

The best part of all from an Audubon standpoint is that the murderer is ID'd by the birds.

We have already checked out the next in the series, *A Pitying of Doves*. The books are available through the Arrowhead Library System. I know you like birds. If you also like mysteries, I think you're in for a treat.



## Do you know?

What do you call a group of bitterns?  
What do you call a group of geese?  
What do you call a group of turkeys?

What do you call a group of penguins?  
What do you call a group of owls?

The names are sometimes fanciful and sometimes obscure. You can find them several places on the internet. The earliest listing of these group names seems to have been *The Book of St. Albans*, partly attributed to Dame Juliana Barnes, first published in 1486. With imagination and creativity, you can make up your own group names for the birds – or other animals, like a flamboyance of flamingos, a prickly of porcupines, a romp of otters or a stench of skunks. Or you can just say “a flock of birds”.

Answers on page: 6



# Got swifts? Pilot Project Seeks to Preserve Chimneys Providing Bird Habitat

*Editor's note: The Wisconsin Chimney Swift Working Group has partnered with G-RAS for their previous project with the Besadny Grant. We are looking forward to working together again on the following effort.*

**Sandy Schwab**  
Bid City

The Wisconsin Chimney Swift Working Group and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources conducted an online survey in 2020 to gather information about chimneys in Wisconsin that are being used by chimney swifts and that are also in need of repair.

There was an overwhelming response to the survey. The working group has evaluated the responses and has chosen one chimney in greatest need of repair for a pilot project. The group will work with an agency to help with repair costs. After this pilot project is completed, the working group will reach out to other agencies to help with repairs on additional chimneys. The mission of the WI Chimney Swift Working Group is to keep Chimney Swifts common in Wisconsin. More information about the group can be found on their website [www.wisswifts.org](http://www.wisswifts.org)

Brick and other masonry chimneys may be a key component to conserving the acrobatic, fast-flying chimney swifts. Sadly, chimney swifts, like many other aerial insectivores such as whip-poor-wills, nighthawks and swallows, are in decline. No definitive answers for this decline have been identified yet, but we know that chimney swifts depend on masonry chimneys as nesting and roosting habitat.

Chimney swifts nest in eastern North America (east of the Rockies) in the summer and migrate to South America in the fall. Historically, the birds congregated in large standing hollow trees in old-growth forests before they began their migration. However, as old-growth forests disappeared from North America, chimney swifts discovered that brick chimneys served as an easy and abundant replacement. Unfortunately, the demolition or capping of chimneys has removed suitable nesting and roosting locations for these birds. As more of these chimneys disappear, it becomes more crucial to save the structures that remain to keep them as viable options for the birds into the future.

For more information, go to: [wisswifts.org](http://wisswifts.org)



# Revealing the Past to Create the Future

*Editor's note: This article appeared in the Audubon Magazine last fall. We are reprinting it here, in case you missed it. We have included the links for the referenced articles, which reflect the same concerns and issues.*

As Audubon deepens its commitment to antiracism, we owe members and others a full accounting and reckoning with John James Audubon himself.

[By David Yarnold](#) President and CEO, National Audubon Society

Fall 2020

Over the last few months, we've committed to [making Audubon an antiracist institution](https://www.audubon.org/news/a-moment-reflection-and-determination) [https://www.audubon.org/news/a-moment-reflection-and-determination] – a commitment built on years of learning and action. Audubon's presence in hundreds of communities across America gives us a responsibility to help correct centuries of racial injustice by changing our internal and external practices. And that includes a reassessment of our own history.

We're not alone among conservation organizations in taking these steps. A [Washington Post article](https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2020/07/22/liberal-progressive-racist-sierra-club-faces-its-white-supremacist-history/) [https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2020/07/22/liberal-progressive-racist-sierra-club-faces-its-white-supremacist-history/]... detailed the Sierra Club's extraordinarily candid reckoning with the racist legacy of the iconic John Muir and other founders. That same piece details the equity and justice efforts of several well-known environmental non-profits—as well as the experiences of some staff of color in a largely white, male-dominated field.

Audubon's founding stories center on the groups of women who came together to end the slaughter of birds for their feathers (mostly for fancy hats), but we have glossed over the actions of the American icon whose name we bear, as well as the racist aspects of our organization's history.

It's fair to describe John James Audubon as a genius, a pioneer, a fabulist, and a man whose actions reflected a dominant white view of the pursuit of scientific knowledge. His contributions to ornithology, art, and culture are enormous, but he was a complex and troubling character who did despicable things during his life. And, he's a person that some researchers have argued was part Black himself, which would mean that the most famous American bird artist was a man of color. Black contemporary artist Kerry James Marshall [reflected on that possibility](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/29/arts/design/kerry-james-marshall-audubon.html) in The New York Times .... [https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/29/arts/design/kerry-james-marshall-audubon.html]

Audubon did not found the National Audubon Society or any of the other organizations that bear his name; they were named after him posthumously beginning in the 1880s and 1890s because of his deep association with North American birds.

While most have come to know the National Audubon Society for its conservation and policy leadership, its science and its community-based education efforts, we owe our members and others a full accounting and reckoning with John James Audubon himself. As you'll see in a piece [https://www.audubon.org/news/the-myth-john-james-audubon]... by John James Audubon historian Dr. Gregory Nobles, there is a lot of John James Audubon's personal history that must be laid bare. In the strongest possible terms, we condemn the role John James Audubon played in enslaving Black people and perpetuating white supremacist culture. We're partnering with leading historians and journalists to grapple with John James Audubon's legacy on Audubon.org, in Audubon magazine, and in the physical places we steward. We've taken down the biography of John James Audubon that has existed on this site for many years because it largely ignored the challenging parts of his identity and actions. We'll be replacing that content altogether soon.

This is a time when Audubon magazine's journalistic integrity, which allows us to examine our field and ourselves, will help air out our closets and illuminate the future. We're committed to working with partners and our network through this process...

We've received overwhelming support for our antiracist commitments from Audubon members, staff, and volunteer leaders. They understand that questions of birds and conservation and questions of racial equity are not separate, though they've been treated that way for far too long. The artificial division between those concerns came crashing down when birder and New York City Audubon

✱See REVEALING, Page 6

# Revealing

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board member Christian Cooper was threatened in a racist incident in Central Park this spring, and when Black birders, scientists, and outdoor enthusiasts came together to share their stories during #BlackBirdersWeek shortly afterward.

It's clear to us that the work Audubon does in the world—from our environmental advocacy in Washington, D.C., and state capitals, to on-the-ground conservation, to community engagement from coast to coast—must actively advance racial equity. A lift-all-boats approach is not enough and in fact often deepens existing inequities.

From incorporating inclusion and equity in our staff's goals to the creation of an equity task force within our very supportive board, our commitment runs deep. But words are only that if actions don't follow. We expect to be held accountable.

## THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT

We appreciate your financial contributions and your encouragement for our efforts to protect birds and the places they live.

**Thank  
You!**

Memberships and Donations since Christmas

Linn & Ann Duesterbeck  
Richard Schmutzler  
Steve Eager  
Tom Evert  
Bette Lang  
Peter Lamar  
Dean & Jayne Paynter  
Denise VanFleet  
John Waelti

Mary Margaret O'Connell Hosler  
Christine Nelson  
Frederick Thinnies  
Gary & Penny Shackelford  
Donna Johnson  
Donald Hanneman  
Phil & Olive Holmes  
Kurt & Linda Buggs

We are also grateful for the Arthur & Lela Gibbs Fund Annual Distribution of \$3566.

It is managed by the Stateline Community Foundation.

The G-RAS board annually determines what activities it will support.

### Answers to "Do You Know?"

A siege (or sedge) of bitterns  
A flock, a gaggle, a skein or a chevron of geese  
A rafter of turkeys  
A colony of penguins  
A parliament of owls





## GRAS - Lands Spring 2021

*Prepared by Victor Illichmann*

**Androne Woods** We have been burning fallen trees and brush. We need to do this so we can get at the garlic mustard. Until a few years ago we torched garlic mustard fall and spring. Now, there is very little in the fall so we only do this in the spring. Killing the seed tolerant trees allowed regeneration. There are many more forbs, sedges, ferns, and native grasses. We are having red oak and hickory regenerating. Unfortunately, we are also getting hackberry, elm, and an explosion of raspberries. We will be getting money from our DNR grant this summer. We have a CSP contract for herbaceous weed and brush control. This will pay \$1500 a year for the next 5 years. The prior 3 years we had a contract that paid \$1400 a year. This is substantially more than our cost. That contrasts with the first ten years when we were struggling with garlic mustard with no financial help. It was a money pit. From 2011 we had DNR grants that paid for tree planting and fallen trees and brush removal. This spring we have 1000 white oak to plant and more fallen trees and brush removal and garlic mustard torching to do.



**Cleophas Reserve** We have seeded 10 acres in 3 patches. The plan is they will spread from the nuclei. This is a more cost effective method. Next spring we need to kill more canary grass and keep the seed areas mowed to 6 inches. We need to plant 125 bur oak for our EQIP contract. In 2022 the whole 36 acres will be burned. This will be an opportunity to kill more canary grass.

**Gabower-Reilly Reserve** We have mowed about 30 acres here. We need to spray this for canary grass. We have 75 bur oak to plant here for our EQIP contract. With the mowing and spraying we should have some spectacular color this year. In 2023 we will seed 15 acres across the south end. Some of this will be visible from the road for people that have difficulty walking.

**Gabower-Reilly East** The buildings are gone and most of the fencing. When the snow goes down, we'll get some contractors and the Fish and Wildlife Service in to get bids on the removal of trees and brush.

**Spring Creek Reserve** We have mowed some 30 acres here. This will need to be sprayed for canary grass this spring. We have cleared the trees and brush along our west boundary back about 3/8 of a

\*See GRAS REPORT, Page 8

# GRAS Report

Continued from page 5

mile from the road. We have 11 brush piles yet to burn and some fallen trees and brush to remove along the west side of the creek to the north. We have 7.5 acres of seasonal bee habitat to plant this spring. That will pay \$2437 a year for 3 years. The plan was to put this CRP in 2023. It is too small an area. Dave Gundlach suggested we combine it with the 25 acres we are renting out. We could be looking at somewhere in the \$40,000 range up front to do this. The CRP payment would pay this back in about ten years or so and then it would be a money maker. When we start restoring farmland, these will be the costs to look at. We have a new CRP contract for the 17.9 acres that has been in CRP since before 2000. This will pay \$151 per acre or \$2704 a year. The USDA will no longer pay for the burns there. Our 1st one will be the fall of 2021. As part of this, we need to plant 2.1 acres of pollinator habitat. The most that will be paid towards that is \$1259. The rest, we pay for. We need to improve access. We're looking at laying 10 or more 6-inch drain pipes and covering them with 3-inch lime rock so we can get equipment back to work even when it's wet.

**Bass Creek** We had 3 guys from ecological service working here. They have removed brush and fallen trees from more than half of this 2 acres. We need to spray for canary grass there this spring.

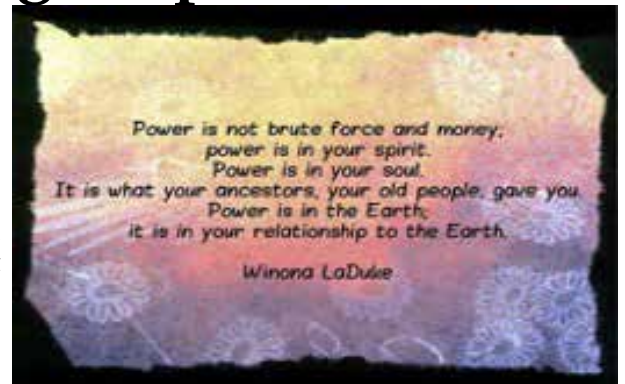
## Water Protectors of Enbridge Pipeline #3

**Susan Johnson**  
*Natural Resources*

On February 10, 2021, a virtual forum was held educating Wisconsinites about the environmental dangers of tar sands pipelines, such as Enbridge Pipeline #3, to our wildlife and birds. Enbridge is a multi-national energy company headquartered in Alberta, Canada. It operates the longest crude oil transportation system in North America. Constructed during the 1950's, (when many Americans were distracted with the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and Joseph McCarthy's Red Scare), the original Line #3 cuts through the Leech Lake and Fond du Lac Reservations of northern Minnesota, as well as, treaty lands of the Red Lake, White Earth, and Mille Lacs tribes, on its nearly 400-mile path, diagonally over to Superior, Wisconsin. Tribes were offered very little, often as little as \$1500, in compensation for the right to run pipelines through some of the most pristine habitats in Minnesota.

From Superior, a four-pipeline corridor carries that oil and tar sands on a diagonal path through central Wisconsin, all the way down to Illinois, on its way to New Orleans, Louisiana, and the Gulf of Mexico. Line #61 of that corridor crosses the Rock River near Edgerton, and Lake Koshkonong. It is a 42-inch- pipeline operating at over 1,000 pounds of pressure per square inch. This pipeline has carried a mixture of oil, including toxic tar sands oil, since it began operation in 2009. Originally carrying 400,000 barrels per day, it received ever-increasing pressure from the company, which eventually tripled that amount.

In 2013, Enbridge announced plans to expand Line 61. By 2017, Line #61 carried up to 1.2 million barrels each day. In addition to the Rock River and Lake Koshkonong, the four-line corridor endangers Lake Superior, St. Croix River, Flambeau River, and the Wisconsin River, along with their wetland habitats. Any spills would devastate their area's wildlife and birds, as well as, the economy and jobs there. Enbridge Pipeline #3 is of great interest to the residents of Wisconsin, as it is to residents in Minnesota. The replacement of Line #3, which began in 2013, crosses under the Mississippi River



✧ See WATER, Page 9



headwaters on its way to Superior, thereby potentially adversely affecting the habitats of all birds along the Mississippi Flyway.

Winona LaDuke, noted environmentalist, economist, writer, and industrial hemp grower was one of the forum's presenters. She grew up in Ashland, Oregon, and graduated from Harvard University. After college, LaDuke moved to the White Earth Reservation in Minnesota, where her father was born, and was living at the time. She worked as a reservation high school principal, and earned a Master's Degree in Community Economic Development. It was also where she started her activism. LaDuke labeled our current time as an epic moment in the history of the earth. We are metaphorically standing at a crossroads. One path leads to a "scorched" future, while the other leads to a green, and healthy one. Her tribe is "going solar," and yet there is still a tar sands oil pipeline running through their land! "Oil was last century! It is time for the just transition."

Between 1990 and 2013, the old Line #3 experienced fifteen large spills, each one consisting of fifty barrels, or more. (One barrel is equivalent to forty-two gallons of oil). On March 3, 1991, Line #3 ruptured near Grand Rapids, Minnesota, spilling over 1.7 million gallons of oil flowing into the Prairie River, a tributary of the Mississippi River. It was crude oil, and not tar sands, so it was easier to clean up than the spill in the Kalamazoo River in 2010. Enbridge has spent 1.2 billion dollars on the Kalamazoo spill, and the clean-up is not complete in 2021!

Tar sands are composed of a mixture of sand, clay, and a sticky molasses-like substance called, bitumen. Chemicals used to extract the tar sands and move it along the pipelines include ammonia, benzene, cyanide, hydrocarbons, arsenic, copper, and chloride, which are all toxic, and many are known to cause cancer. These are the chemicals, which would contaminate all ground water near the pipeline leaks. The rule of thumb for tar sand spills is, it won't be an if for a large pipeline spill, but it will be a when. Even for new lines, there is a constant drip outside the pipe, according to the forum speakers. It is the reason why some protestors have risked their lives to fight against the pipelines. Clean water is a necessity for all creatures on earth!

Running south of the original Line #3, the new Line also cuts through Native American lands. Reservation leads agreed to the deal, if Enbridge removed the original pipeline. Currently, there are six Native encampments along its pathway, located in Park Rapids, Backus, Hill City, Palisade, Cloquet, and Carlton, Minnesota. Native water protectors were successful in slowing construction throughout 2020. However, in November, Enbridge received its final necessary permits, in spite of the fact that the state of Minnesota does not hold rights to the land in contention. On February 2, 2021, a Minnesota Appeals Court denied protestors' request to stop construction. Since then, Enbridge is pushing full speed ahead to complete the new Line #3 by the end of this year.

Winona LaDuke spoke to her Wisconsin audience from the camp in Palisade, Minnesota. She was joined by Paul DeMain, Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Oneida/Ojibwe News, Tania Aubid, and ally Shanai Matson. Aubid is a Native-American and Matson is European-American from the Palisade area. Aubid works as a volunteer at the Water Protection Center and Matson joined the group early in the fall of 2020. Matson said she was in it for a "spiritual" experience, and she wanted to serve as a counter-narrative to the power of Enbridge. She lives in the encampment with her three children, because she wants to teach them how to care about important issues like clean water, and how to fight for their rights, and the rights of others. Aubid and Matson started a hunger strike this past Valentine's Day. They will survive only on water. The shelters in the camp appear to be simple, temporary structures, holding only a modest amount of personal items and clothing. However, since Enbridge is forging ahead on construction of the new pipeline, the protests are attracting many young volunteers from around the state, as well as, from other states.

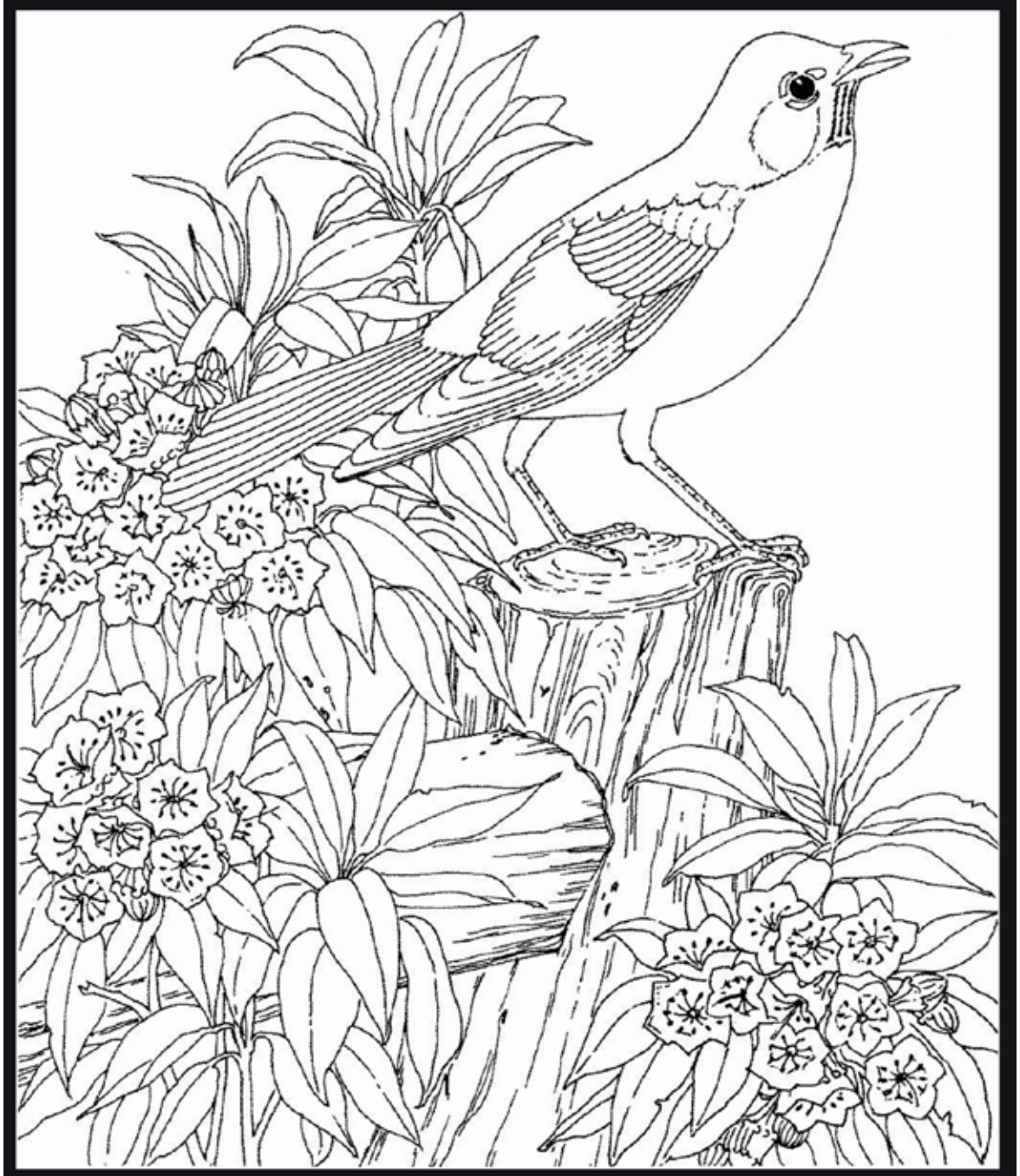
On Thursday, February 25, 2021, starting at 11:00 AM CST, the camp will engage in a digital rally

## \* Water

Continued from page 8

called, "Tell Joe Biden: People, Not Pipelines." Ever since, the Biden Administration revoked Keystone XL's border-crossing permit through an executive order, environmental activists have been encouraged to hope for similar actions on Line 3 and Dakota Access Pipelines. However, with the absence of Keystone, other trans-Canadian lines have become more valuable to the industry. Plus, Biden needs to reestablish positive relations with Canada, and has not yet indicated what, if anything, he will do regarding the other pipelines.

There is still time to help the Water Protectors! Write letters to President Biden, and our Senators, and Representatives, urging them to intervene and stop construction on the new Enbridge Line #3. Write to the Governor of Minnesota, Tim Walz, and urge him to intervene on behalf of the Water Protectors. If at all possible, please join the protestors at one of their camps, or send your support. After all, clean water is a right for all!



Green-Rock Audubon Society



Protecting Wildlife for Tomorrow

# Join Green-Rock Audubon Society

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Your E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you prefer to receive the newsletter electronically? \_\_\_\_

## Two Ways to Join

\_\_\_\_ I wish to join Green-Rock Audubon Society, I understand that I will not receive the Audubon Magazine, but all dues will go to G-RAS. Dues: \$10 Senior or Student, \$15 Single Membership, \$20 Couple

• To pay by mail, make checks payable to G-RAS, and mail this form along with the check to this address:

Green-Rock Audubon  
Attn: Treasurer  
P.O. Box 1986  
Janesville, WI 53547-1986

• To pay online visit <https://www.greenrockaudubon.org/donate>

\_\_\_\_ I wish to join the National Audubon Society's normal membership of \$35 per year which includes the Audubon Magazine. (Please visit <http://audubon.org/> to complete this membership.)

## Volunteering Interests

### I would like to volunteer for...

- ☐ Whatever is Needed
- ☐ Burning
- ☐ Brushing
- ☐ Spraying
- ☐ Seed Collecting
- ☐ Planting

### I can volunteer at:

- ☐ Whenever is Needed
- ☐ Androne Woods
- ☐ Cleophas Reserve
- ☐ Spring Creek Reserve
- ☐ Gabower-Reilly Reserve
- ☐ The Pond (Janesville)
- ☐ Sunny Peace Prairie

### Times I can usually volunteer:

- ☐ Monday
- ☐ Tuesday
- ☐ Wednesday
- ☐ Thursday
- ☐ Friday
- ☐ Saturday
- ☐ Sunday

## Donate Beyond Membership

### I would like to donate to...

- ☐ Whatever is Needed
- ☐ Purchasing
- ☐ Herbicides
- ☐ Purchasing Spray Equipment

### I want my donation to support G-RAS's efforts to manage or maintain...

- ☐ Androne Woods
- ☐ Cleophas Reserve
- ☐ Spring Creek Reserve
- ☐ Gabower-Reilly Reserve
- ☐ Sunny Peace Prairie

## Volunteer Coordinator:

Victor Illichmann  
[viccarol@sbcglobal.net](mailto:viccarol@sbcglobal.net)  
608.752.8342

(Please mail checks according to the directions above or visit our website.)



# Membership Form Inside

Green-Rock Audubon Society (G-RAS) membership for one year with quarterly newsletter Green Rock Naturalist from Green Rock Audubon Society (all dues go to G-RAS).

- Senior or Student membership \$10
- Single person membership \$15
- Couples membership \$20



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[www.greenrockaudubon.org](http://www.greenrockaudubon.org)

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Membership Chair, Steve Reischel

Advocacy Chair, Susan Johnson

## Your Articles are needed!

It will soon be time to assemble the summer issue of the Naturalist. As Editor, I would greatly appreciate your submissions.

Thank you very much.

Carol Herzig, Editor

