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November 2019

Dear Friend,

Do you remember the “I touch the future. I teach” quote from Christa McAuliffe, chosen to be the Teacher in Space in 1985? She died in 1986 aboard the space ship Challenger, 73 seconds after launch. This story of soaring hope and crushing tragedy seems very relevant to today’s conservation movement in general and to Black Hills Audubon in particular.

First there are our beacons of hope: the young people we touch. One example is Dalton Spencer who is our youngest BHAS board member and just beginning his college career. He is bright, accomplished in birding, and eager to make a career in avian science. He is one of the many young people that BHAS has mentored and educated in conservation over the years.

Then there is the crisis coming their way. Climate change will overwhelm their future unless massive changes are made. Unlike the hindsight that eventually revealed the cause of the Challenger disaster, we know what we need to do to prevent our implosion. With the recent National Audubon report on the effects of climate change on bird populations, we know birds are experiencing declines and are facing much worse.

That’s why you are being asked to take action with a year-end donation. This is the time to reaffirm your commitment to Audubon. Birds have never needed you more. The birds are telling us something is dangerously wrong and their future is not assured.

Right now, you can touch the future. You can do this through Black Hills Audubon.

- We **TEACH**. BHAS has started an Adopt-A-School program in Mason County. Regular visits from our volunteers open up new vistas to children who learn to cherish the natural world as we do and work towards its conservation.



- We **ENGAGE**. Adults and children benefit from our field trips, monthly speaker programs, and birding classes. Whether it's shore birds, nature walks, or overnight trips, Black Hills Audubon is bringing opportunities to anyone who is willing to participate. Olympia Youth Audubon Society field trips offer monthly outings. The goal is to foster community members who are educated and committed to preserving our environment.
- We **ADVOCATE**. Our Conservation Committee is second to none. Its members each bring passion and expertise to advocate for local birds and their habitats. You will find them engaged in state and local governments, even with private business. These folks are dedicated to using the best science available to strengthen the protections for your favorite birds.
- We **PROVIDE**. Completed this year, over 40 library backpacks were delivered to Timberland Library branches and will provide library patrons with the means to discover our birds and the places to find them. Who knows what positive repercussions will result?



- We **ASSIST**. Birds need us and BHAS is there to help. The Purple Martin breeding colony in Boston Harbor benefits from our ongoing efforts to provide and maintain nesting boxes. Vaux's Swift migration numbers increased in the Chehalis area once BHAS modified a chimney there. We eagerly await seeing what species will adopt our newly installed nest boxes in Lewis County.



- We **OBSERVE**. Community science is a hallmark of Audubon chapters and BHAS is right there. We run two Christmas Bird Count Circles. We count Vaux's Swifts at their roosting chimneys in Chehalis. We submit eBird data from our field trips. We assist the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife when they need bird surveys done. We encourage

our members to participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count. All these data are essential for avian research.

- You **SUPPORT**. You can help keep all of this going. We are an all-volunteer organization and your donations are what makes these programs, projects and advocacy efforts possible. Every dollar you donate becomes part of the Black Hills Audubon effort to shape the future into one that treasures birds and wildlife habitat.

Take a look at some of the ways BHAS has worked in the past year to bring about the change we seek.

- ❖ 7 evening programs with approximately 350 attendees
- ❖ 1 annual dinner and 1 annual picnic with 160 participants
- ❖ 20 classroom visits reaching 20 - 25 students each time
- ❖ 7 adult classes with 180 attendees
- ❖ 2 Christmas Bird Counts with 125 volunteers counting or assisting
- ❖ 18 Purple Martin nest boxes maintained in Boston Harbor
- ❖ 30 nest boxes made by 20 teen students at Adna High School and installed near Chehalis
- ❖ 85 field trips involving over 2000 participants
- ❖ Arranged mitigation for Marbled Murrelet flights during breeding season through the Chehalis wind turbine project

Even if you are not an astronaut or a national figure, you can, in fact, touch the future. Here and now you have the opportunity to shape what comes next. Give Dalton, our children, and grandchildren the opportunity to know how wonderful this place and its birds are.

We thank you in advance for your unfailing commitment to protecting birds.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Rodrick, Vice-President

P.S. You can make your gift to Black Hills Audubon by using the enclosed envelope or by visiting our secure giving site at [www.blackhills-audubon.org](http://www.blackhills-audubon.org).