February
2010

PRAIRIE
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Missouri Breaks Audubon Chapter Newsletter

February MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Legislative Update
This being the season for all things legislative, here is an abridged version of a legislative review by Michael Melius for the SD Resources Coalition, Friday Feb.12:

Code: SB = Senate Bill, HB = House Bill
To see the full text of the bills, go to http://legis.state.sd.us/sessions/2010/BillList.aspx
See http://sdrcworks.org/action-alerts/government/state/ to contact your legislators

Priority Bills:
SB 58: Provides for a real property tax exemption for renewable energy projects. Amended to include passive solar. Passed Senate 26-7, now goes to House State Affairs Comm., no date set.
SB 161: Crude oil pipeline spill recovery bill. Assesses a 2 cent/barrel fee on crude oil piped through state, for a spill cleanup fund that will max out at $30 million. Senate State Affairs, no date set, possibly Feb. 19

Bills in Upcoming Committees:
Senate Transportation, Feb. 17, 7:45 am:
SB 175: Provides for registration and rules, trails and land rehab for off-road vehicles. GF& P to administer.
House State Affairs Feb. 18, 4:00 pm:
HB 1194, 1268, and 1263: All relating to wind easements and/or leases for wind development. The first two are good, protective of land owner rights, have bi-partisan sponsors. Last is all Republican, and removes the five year time limit to develop a lease, which protects landowners from being locked into long-term leases that go undeveloped. House State Affairs, Feb. 17, 7:45 am:
HB 1218: Provides for statewide election of the Sec. of Agriculture. (State Affairs)

NEW Bill: SB 172:
This was "hoghoused" in committee this week, meaning the sponsor totally changed the original bill. This now specifies environmental upgrades for coal-fired power plants that qualify for tax exemption can include Clean Air/Clean Water Act requirements, other fed and state laws. This may actually be an improvement over current statute, or maybe not change it much at all. Proponents included lobbyists from Otter Tail Power and NW Energy.

Bills Passed and Pending Further Action:
HB 1202: Feb. 9. Provides for native prairie and Conservation Reserve Program lands to be taxed as grassland, not cropland. A good bill we supported in committee. Passed 48-21. Most opposition was from Sioux Falls, Huron, Rapid City reps. No Senate action yet.
SB 192: Modifies distributions from the wind energy trust fund based on township roads formula. Passed Taxation Comm., 8-0.

Thursday
February 18

First United Methodist Church
(Relocated from Media Center – follow sign)
117 N Central Ave
7:30pm

Outdoor Education in South Dakota
A conversation with Game, Fish and Parks new outdoor education coordinator, Maggie Lindsey.

Bird of the Month
Rex Riis will present a “Mystery Bird”
Other Bills, Still No Action:
SB 184: Reins in taxation authority for water development districts, apparently in response to excesses of the James River WDD. Excesses we’re concerned about are environmental, such as tree clearing for farmland.
HB 1222: Frees up farmers’ markets from onerous state regulations.
HB 1113: Adds prairie dogs, skunks, raccoons and beavers to the list of “injurious” animals that GF&P is to control.
HB 1114: Adds two “animal industry” representatives to the policy review committee for animal damage control, as well as reps from Fish & Wildlife Service and county commissioners assoc.

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As a member of the National Audubon Society in Hughes and Stanley counties, you receive a copy of this newsletter as part of Your national membership. If you get this newsletter by regular mail, you will notice this mailing includes two newsletters. Our last newsletter was returned to us due to new mailing regulations that require a different format and sticky tags to support machine readability at the post office. This adds to our handling time for paper copies of the newsletter.

If you would like to receive this newsletter by e-mail instead of hard copy (saving trees, postage, handling and trash), send your e-mail address to info@MissouriBreaksAudubon.org. We won’t share your address with anyone, and you can unsubscribe at any time. Of course, if you don’t want the hardcopy either, let us know and well take care of that, too.

Website Location
This newsletter, a downloadable calendar, and other valuable birding links are all available at our website, MissouriBreaksAudubon.org