



# Taking Wing

Klamath Wingwatchers, Inc. Newsletter, P.O. Box 251, Klamath Falls, OR 97601-0359

## Forest Education Connects Community with Nature in the Klamath Basin

In 2005, Klamath Wingwatchers, Inc. received a Title III, Forest Education Grant (Forest Education along the Klamath Basin Birding Trail Project) from Klamath County under the PT 106-393 "Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000."

Title III funds were used to educate residents and out-of-town visitors about the first bi-state birding trail in the west, the Klamath Basin Birding Trail (KBBT), created in 2003. KBBT is a self-guided auto tour route, approximately 300 miles long, that includes 47 birding hotspots in a variety of habitats in the upper Klamath Basin. Grant funds paid for four different forest education kits, which are available for free checkout, a 48-page full color brochure, installation of 43 signs at various KBBT sites, and establishment of a website to make the birding trail accessible and educational for all (see [www.klamathbirdingtrails.com](http://www.klamathbirdingtrails.com)).

The Klamath Bird Observatory and OSU Klamath Basin Research and Extension Center created kits and provided after-school program events and field trips to over 1,167 children and adults in 2006.

These Title III funds in Klamath County have helped offset the loss of timber receipts by promoting tourism in the Klamath Basin, in addition to providing much needed science based educational materials on birding and various habitats to numerous school-age children. This project has been a win-win opportunity for all!

Photos: #1. Field trip to Moore Park students learning to use spotting scope; #2. Darrel Samuels, volunteer, teaches students about habitat. #3 Students working on field journals during field trip to Moore Park. #4 Bird houses arrive at Veteran's Park for installation. #5 Student learns to clean bird houses along Klamath Wingwatchers Lake Ewauna Nature Trail. #6 Students on their way to binocular class at Moore Park.



Photo by: Andrew Mariman



Photo by: Cindy Deas



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## Birding Worth 45 Billion Annually in the U.S.

The Klamath Basin Birding Trail is part of a statewide project to develop organized birding trails throughout the State of Oregon. Such birding trails not only provide a great birding visitor experience, they also boost local economies, especially important to remote rural areas. Birders are an incredible niche market and their spending can generate tremendous income. According to the *2006 US Fish & Wildlife National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation* report, birders spend almost 45 billion dollars a year on travel, gas, food, lodging, and equipment. A 19% increase in spending is documented in the report between 1996-2006. Of the 71 million people who participate in wildlife viewing annually, almost 23 million of them travel away from home.

The upper Klamath Basin boasts some of the best birding opportunities in the lower 48 United States. It is listed as number One in the "Fantastic Five" birding hotspots in the west by *Sunset Magazine*, and is "One of the top ten best birding places north of Mexico in all of the Northern America" by the US Geological Survey (on George H. Harrison's list.) It can also be found on Roger Tory Peterson's Dozen Birding Hot Spots.

### More Highlights of the Klamath Basin Birding Trail Project:

- 50,000 KBBT brochures were printed in April 2007, and less than 500 are left after 5 months of distribution. The brochure provides maps, birding list, information, and directions to the 47-sites along a self-guided auto tour.
- Over 28,800 KBBT brochures were mailed to upper-income birders in the Western United States to encourage tourism.
- Over 4500 children and adults in Klamath County have utilized the four, custom designed and site specific, KBBT Forest Educational Kits that were created by Klamath Bird Observatory in April 2006. These kits include a curriculum that meets Oregon Science Standards, books, teacher reference materials, binoculars, and supplies. The kits are available for free checkout at the OSU Klamath Basin Research and Extension Center in Klamath Falls, and they often have a waiting list for their use. The kits inspired a similar program in Alturas, California by Klamath Bird Observatory and The Central Modoc River Center along the Basin & Range Birding Trail.
- The KBBT website [www.klamathbirdingtrails.com](http://www.klamathbirdingtrails.com) has had 39,699 unique visitors in the last 14 months, and those visitors have viewed 116,257 pages on the website.
- With the assistance of a Cow Creek Umpqua Indian Foundation Grant, over 500 children and 23 teachers were provided demonstration classes on how to best utilize the educational kits and materials. Field trips to KBBT birding sites were provided to over 160 children and teachers.

The faces of the children to the right are a strong indication of the impact the *Forest Education Along the Klamath Basin Birding Trail Project* has had on our youth. Today we offer our thanks for the Title III funds that helped to make this project a success. Thanks to all the volunteers, students, and teachers who participated. And thanks to the legislators who have the foresight to fund projects like this which connect our youth, along with many adults, to the joys of exploring nature.

**For more information contact Cindy Deas, KBBT Project Coordinator and Manager at 541-892-0596 [cindy@fireserve.net](mailto:cindy@fireserve.net)**



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