

Helena woman gets grant to help protect wetlands

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Janet Ellis of Helena has received a \$10,000 grant to be used to protect streams and wetlands in Montana through the national TogetherGreen fellowship program.

The fellowship is a five-year joint program launched in 2008 by the Audubon Society and Toyota, and issues 40 fellowships each year.

Ellis currently is the program director for Montana Audubon.

“Janet is the kind of person who can make a real difference in the health of our environment and the quality of our future,” said Audubon President John Flicker. “Each of our TogetherGreen Fellows demonstrates exceptional environmental understanding and commitment, combined with tremendous potential to inspire and lead others. Together, they represent the talented and diverse leadership the environmental community will need to tackle the huge challenges and opportunities confronting us now and in the years to come.”

For her fellowship, Ellis will work to protect some of Montana’s most important wildlife habitat: streams and wetlands. These critical areas occupy less than 4 percent of the state, yet about one-third of the Montana’s wildlife species depend upon these areas during their life cycles.

Her TogetherGreen grant will support her work to assist local governments in their efforts to adopt stream protection measures. Ellis understands the science behind stream and wetland protection, as well as the pros and cons of various strategies used by Montana local governments to protect these areas. She has also worked with numerous local government officials around the state.

“I’m honored to be a TogetherGreen Fellow,” Ellis said. “I have been working on stream protection issues for almost 20 years now. Receiving a TogetherGreen conservation fellowship will enable me to broaden my skills so that I become more effective in my conservation work. Living in a rural state like Montana, we don’t always have the resources we need to support our work.”

Ellis has been affiliated with Montana Audubon since early 1989. Half of the TogetherGreen Fellows come from within Audubon’s national network; the other half channel their environmental efforts through other organizations.

Ellis received her bachelor’s degree in biology from the University of Montana in Missoula. Ellis previously worked for Yellowstone and Zion national parks as a naturalist and backcountry ranger.

Qualified applicants must have at least six years of experience in conservation, environmental education, policy or environmental issues, as demonstrated through current and past work experience, academic studies related to conservation, and/or volunteer work. Candidates also must have a passion for conservation, the desire to learn and grow, and demonstrate a proven ability in reaching previously unengaged audiences.

A complete list of the 2009 TogetherGreen Fellows can be found at www.TogetherGreen.org/fellows.