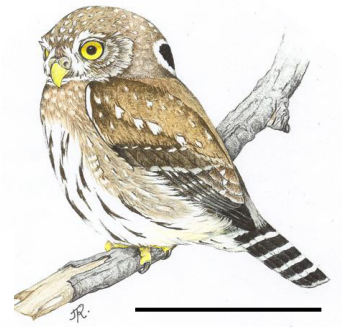


The Pygmy Owl

Volume 28
Issue 3
November 2019

The Newsletter of the
Spokane Audubon Society



**Spokane Audubon's next meeting will be:
Wednesday, November 13th at 7:30 p.m.
Riverview Retirement Community, Village Community Bldg
2117 E. North Crescent Avenue**

Birds and Bears: An Alaska Birding Adventure

Presented by Curtis Mahon

Denali. It is truly one of the most magnificent places on our planet and is an icon of our continent. It is, after all, North America's highest peak. Hundreds of thousands of tourists from all over the world come to visit the park and see such amazing wildlife as Alaskan Brown Bears and Dall Sheep. What many of those people overlook, however, are the birds. There have been 159 species of bird seen within Denali National Park and Preserve, many of which travel from all over the globe to do so.



Denali

I had the opportunity this summer to work in Denali National Park from June 15th until the end of September. In my spare time, I visited the park as often as I could. On these trips I got to see my fair share of bears, moose and caribou, though my eyes were always trained for a northern specialty bird. On many of the trails closer to my workplace, I became very familiar with all the local birds. Through close observation, I noticed how many of the same species from home behaved differently in the north of Alaska and was able to see it all change in the three months (and three seasons) that I was there. I'll go over all these trips and observations with you in my program at the next upcoming Audubon meeting.

Spruce Grouse



(Cont. on p. 2)

**All photos by
Curtis Mahon**

The Pygmy Owl

Volume 28 Issue 3 Nov. 2019

The Pygmy Owl, the newsletter of the Spokane Audubon Society, is published monthly, September through June.

Spokane Audubon Society
P.O. Box 9820
Spokane, WA 99209-9820

Owl illustrations on pg. 1 and pg. 8 © Jan Reynolds.



Officers

President

Alan McCoy ahm2352@gmail.com

Vice President

Lisa Langelier langelier.lisa@gmail.com

Treasurer

Lindell Haggin lindell4118@comcast.net

Secretary

Dave Plemons davep_nublado@me.com

Elected Board of Directors

Bob Cashen mjaycashen@aol.com
Marlene Cashen mjaycashen@aol.com
Mary Jokela bmjokela@msn.com
Gary Lee bird_fan@aol.com
Madonna Luers madwoodmel@centurylink.net
Jenny Michaels jemichaels@ieee.org

Committee Chairs

Field Trips

Alan McCoy ahm2352@gmail.com

Programs

Gary Lee bird_fan@aol.com

Education

Joyce Alonso jbalonso3@msn.com
Lindell Haggin lindell4118@comcast.net

Conservation

Greg Gordon fightingbull63@gmail.com

Hospitality

Jan Strobeck jandeeperpark@aol.com

Membership

Dave Plemons davep_nublado@me.com

Publicity

Madonna Luers madwoodmel@centurylink.net

Pygmy Owl

Joanne Powell jopowell39@aol.com

Volunteer Coordinator

Website

Jenny Michaels jemichaels@ieee.org

December Pygmy Owl
Deadline November 20th

Curtis Mahon is an 18-year-old birder who's been birding since he was 15. He was born in Anchorage Alaska, which prompted him to travel there. Currently, he is a student at EWU working on a Bachelor's degree in wildlife biology.



Curtis Mahon



Spotted Sandpiper

Membership Report

by Dave Plemons

Update of Members' Nesting through October 17, 2019:
Welcome to our new nesters: David Goss & Regina Thornton.

Many thanks to our returning nesters: Jane Banks & Family, Dan & Donna Burt, Harold & Karen Cottet, Buck & Sandy Domitrovich, Earl & Marilyn Elias, Nita Hamilton, Fran & Brad Haywood, Mary Jokela, Chuck Kerkering, Brenda Klohe, Mike & Eileen McFadden, Jenny Michaels, Julie Nesbitt, James & Mary Prudente, Theresa Puthoff & Larry Deaver, John & Amy Roberson, Debbie Stempf and Pam Wolfrum.

Many nesters chose to not receive a hard copy of the Pygmy Owl. If you could help us to reduce costs and save paper and energy by switching to our electronic full-color publication, please contact me. You already have access to the newsletter on the Spokane Audubon WebSite on the Pygmy Owl page. To receive a personal PDF copy for your own file, we will need your Email address. Mine is davep_acer@msn.com. Legibility is critical. Occasionally I cannot clearly make out some Email addresses.

Field Notes

Bird Sightings for the Inland Northwest, compiled by Jon Isacoff

We had a pretty good migration this year both in terms of quality and quantity. Uncommon to rare waterfowl and shorebirds were seen in many locations. Migration seems to have come to abrupt halt these last two weeks as we have already had not one but two measurable snowfalls! Let us hope that the weather does not progressively worsen through winter. Though if it does, then let it bring us a bounty of rare winter visitors from the Arctic! Especially rare sightings are in CAPS.

Greater White-fronted Goose: Boundary Creek WMA (8/30-CL); Genessee (10/12-CL); University of Idaho (10/13-KD)

Surf Scoter: Diamond Lake (10/3-TL); Heyburn State Park (10/6-DE and NP); Sprague (10/6-JE and MW); Evans Campground (10/11-TL); Priest Lake (10/11-JI and TL); Chase Lake (10/11-JI and TL); Rock Lake (10/12-JI and TL)

White-winged Scoter: Evans Campground (10/11-TL); Priest Lake (10/11-JI and TL); Rock Lake (10/12-JI and TL)

BLACK SCOTER: Priest Lake (10/10-BB)



Black Scoter
© Tim Bowman

Anna's Hummingbird: Little Spokane River (9/12-LH); Spokane (9/20-CL); Viola (9/24-NM); Bonner's Ferry (9/29-JR and SE); Moscow Mountain (10/2-KD); Lenville (10/13-SG); Viola (10/15-NM)

Sandhill Crane: Genessee (10/12-CL)

American Golden Plover: Colville (9/21-TL); Texas Lake (9/21-PO and KS); Riverbend (10/3-TL); Clark Fork (10/6-FF)

Black-bellied Plover: Sheep Lake (10/10-KT and AS); Texas Lake (10/5-JI)

Sanderling: Potholes SP (9/7-JI, TL, MW, MY)

Short-billed Dowitcher: Potholes SP (9/7-JI, TL, MW, MY)

Sabine's Gull: Sprague (TL); Potholes SP (9/7-JI, TL, MW, MY); Brook Lake (9/21-LK)

Lesser Black-backed Gull: Clark Fork (9/2-CL); Kettle Falls (9/21-TL)

ARCTIC TERN: Potholes SP (9/7-JI, TL, MW, MY)

Pacific Loon: Rock Lake (10/12-JI and TL)

Ferruginous Hawk: Swanson Lakes (9/13-TL)

Arctic Terns
© Carl Wilhelmy



BROAD-WINGED HAWK: McCroskey SP (9/22-NP) Little Spokane River (10/6-GM and RS)



Broad-winged Hawk
© David Brown

American Three-toed Woodpecker: Northwest Peak (9/2-CL); Bunchgrass Meadows (9/21-TL); Salmo Pass (9/21-MW)

Black-backed Woodpecker: Round Lake SP (8/30-CL); Northwest Peak (9/2-CL)

Blue Jay: Mullan (9/20-BK); Bonner's Ferry (9/21-CN); Paradise Prairie (9/26-AM); Moscow (9/28-CC); Mead (9/28-LH); University of Idaho (10/1-CL); Sandpoint (10/3-JR); Little Spokane River (10/8-LH); Rice (10/8-TD); Bonner's Ferry (10/10-MR); Sandpoint (9/14-MM)

Lesser Goldfinch: Spokane (9/9-JI)

Clay-colored Sparrow: University of Idaho (9/6-CL); Flying Goose Ranch (9/20-TL)

White-throated Sparrow: Sandpoint (9/12-FF); Leclerc Creek (9/21-TL); Clark Fork (10/4-TL); Mead (10/8-TL); Spokane (10/12-RH); Mill Canyon (10/17-TL)

Golden-crowned Sparrow: Mt. Spokane SP (9/22-MW); Cusick (10/3-TL);

Tricolored Blackbird: Sprague (9/6-JI); Texas Lake (10/6-JE and MW)

MAGNOLIA WARBLER: Ephrata (9/8-MY)

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER: University of Idaho (9/8-CL)



Magnolia Warbler
© Ian Davies



Chestnut-sided Warbler
© Tringa

Observers: DB-Don Baker; MB-Missy Baker; RB-R.J. Baltierra; RaB-Rachel Barton; BB-Bob Bond; DB-Donna Bragg; BB-Ben Bright; JC-Janice Ceridwen; MaC-Marlene Cashen; WC-Warren Current; RDC-Rich Del Carlo; CC-Christopher Claudill; KD-Kas Dumroese; TD-Tim Durnell; SE-Shannon Ehlers; JoE-Johnna Eilers; JE-Jacob Elonen; CE-Carol Ellis; FF-Fred Forssell; MF-Marian Frobe; SG-Stacy Gessler; LH-Lindell Haggin; RH-Randy Haglund; JI-Jon Isacoff; SJ-Steve Joyce; BK-Bob Kemp; LK-Louise Kreemer; TL-Terry Little; CoL-Courtney Litwin; CL-Carl Lundblad; CM-Curtis Mahon; MM-Marcea Marine; AM-Alan McCoy; GM-Garrett McDonald; NM-Nancy Miller; CN-Carson Neil TO-Tim O'Brien; PO-Peter Olsoy; NP-Neil Paprocki; ER-Eric Rasmussen; MR-Mary Rumble; ShS-Shane Sater; SS-Sandy Schreven; KS-Katie Sorenson; CS-Charles Swift; AS-Andy Stepniewski; MS-Mark Stromberg; RS-Rose Swift; KT-Kerry Turley; JV-Joe Veverka DW-Doug Ward; NW-Nancy Williams; MW-Michael Woodruff; DY-David Yake; MY-Matt Yawney

Lindell Haggin

by Madonna Luers

Lindell Haggin, our veteran board member who has become synonymous with Audubon in the Spokane community, is following in the footsteps of her in-laws, who always felt like family and then she made it official when she married their son.

Morey and Margaret Haggin (AKA “Mr. and Mrs. Audubon”), helped found the Spokane Bird Club in the 1950’s that became the Spokane chapter of the National Audubon Society in 1969. With their home on the Little Spokane River, they were passionate about that ecosystem, and were instrumental in the county’s acquisition of the Little Spokane River Natural Area.

Lindell Bergman Steele met the Haggins when she joined the chapter in 1970, shortly after moving to Spokane. Lindell and Margaret became Christmas Bird Count partners, and Lindell was soon serving as the chapter’s secretary, then president. When she married the Haggins’ son Bart in 1978, she stepped back from active leadership for awhile, raising the three children they have between them. But by the early 90’s she was on the chapter board, and has served as treasurer since 1991.

Lindell was born in 1944 in Cleveland, Ohio at the same hospital she ended up working in after earning a nursing degree from the Francis Paine Bolton School of Nursing that is now part of Case Western Reserve University. When she moved to Spokane with her first husband, she became a school nurse and realized her interest in education. She earned a Master’s degree in Health Science/ Health Education from Whitworth University and her teaching certification at Gonzaga University. She taught at the Intercollegiate School of Nursing, but also young students, mostly third graders, starting in Spokane’s District 81 at Regal Elementary School. She had flexibility with the science curriculum so she was able to focus on birds and other wildlife, leading kids on field trips to the Painted Rocks area. Now retired, after some 12 years in nursing and 18 years in the classroom, Lindell says she likes to think she helped spark birding interest with youngsters.

Lindell began birdwatching in the late ‘60’s when she would tag along on her first husband’s nature

photography trips. She started getting into photography herself and many of her beautiful bird photos have been included in our annual calendar. She finds reviewing photos a good way to closely examine field marks to learn subtle differences between genders, juveniles, and similar species.

Through Audubon and its collaboration with government natural resource management agencies, she’s participated in many projects, including songbird banding, waterfowl surveys, and public land surveys. She most recently lead the Spokane chapter’s contributions to the state’s multi-year Sagebrush Songbird Survey. She often represents the chapter at state and regional Audubon conferences.

Lindell has traveled to see birds in Costa Rica, Peru, Columbia, Ecuador, Galagapos Islands, and many parts of North America. But she especially loves birding in her own backyard of more than 20 years -- the same Haggin family place on the Little Spokane River – where she’s found about 110 species. Spring through fall she walks the property every morning for about an hour with the family dog Nina, a herding breed mix that sometimes helps her find birds. Just this past year she found three new yard birds – fox sparrow, swamp sparrow, and yellow-shafted flicker.

One of her most memorable experiences was watching river otters on the family’s stretch of the Little Spokane River shoreline. She witnessed them fishing, eating, grooming, and mating. Her photographs of them include a bald eagle that unsuccessfully attempted to steal their fish. (Eagles in the area now, she notes, are probably why she doesn’t see as much waterfowl variety anymore.)

She maintains bird feeders to get close-up views of seed-eaters like pine siskins and black-capped chickadees, both which she has fed from her hand. Her favorite species overall, in fact, is the chickadee.

“They have such attitude,” Lindell said, recalling getting pecked by chickadees during banding work where birds have to be carefully extracted from the fine mesh nets that catch them on the fly. Once in hand for examination and banding, the birds are

(cont on page 6)

comfortably calm, and then are released unharmed. But Lindell remembers at least one young chickadee that took the opportunity upon release to have the last word, so to speak, with a farewell peck!

Lindell's tips to new birders are start with your own backyard, try to get out with experienced birders, get a decent pair of binoculars, and try to learn songs first and verify them with birdsong audio smart-phone applications. She cautions against using audio apps in the field to attract birds, however, since that can be disruptive, confusing, and ultimately harmful to some birds.

As a board member she hopes to encourage more active involvement by members and the general public in issues threatening birds and other wildlife, from insecticide use to habitat loss and overall climate change.

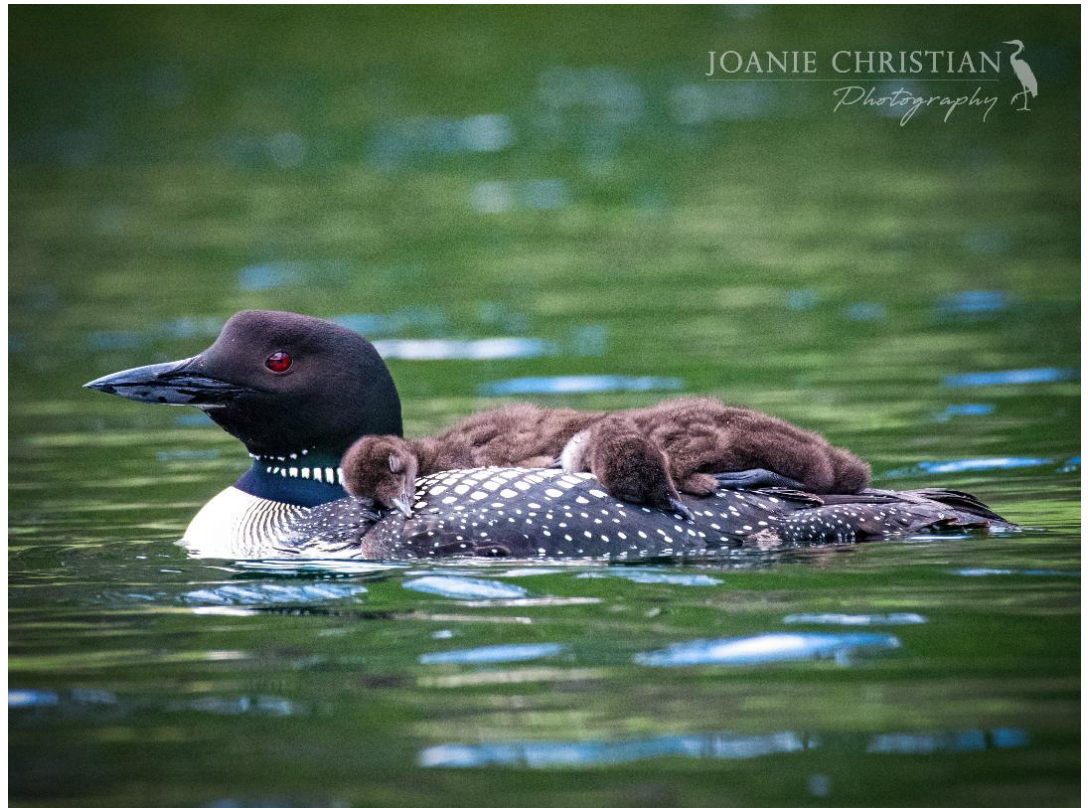
"I hope we can do more citizen science work with management agencies to help provide the data needed to identify problems and address them," she said.



A couple of Lindell's favorite photos



This great loon picture is the cover of the 2020 bird calendar produced by Joanie Christian, Birds of the Inland Northwest. The photos were taken in Stevens, Ferry, Pend Oreille and Spokane counties. Since SAS is not producing a 2019 calendar, the board invited Joanie to come to our November meeting and offer her calendar for sale.



Birders and nature enthusiasts of all ages are invited to attend the 21st Annual Snow Goose Festival of the Pacific Flyway, one of the premier birding events in California. This action-packed 5-day event celebrates the millions of waterfowl and thousands of raptors that migrate along the Pacific Flyway and call the Northern Sacramento Valley their home during the winter months.

This is one of the least explored and most amazingly diverse areas of California, with habitats that include rivers and wetlands, sweeping plains and grasslands, rolling foothills, sheltered canyons, and mountain peaks. The festival also gives our local community an opportunity to rediscover the abundant treasures the North State has to offer all year round, from wholesome foods and delectable wines to inspirational artists and gifted musicians.

Wild Adventures, Wild Birds!
21st Annual
Snow Goose Festival of the Pacific Flyway
January 22 - 26, 2020
Chico, CA

REGISTRATION BEGINS IN EARLY DECEMBER.

We highly recommend getting on our email list as soon as possible. Emails will go out to notify you when registration opens, of various deadlines, and of any changes and additions to the program along the way. You can follow us on Facebook, too!

For more information visit www.snowgoosefestival.org
or contact: Jennifer Patten, Event Coordinator
info@snowgoosefestival.org
(530) 592-9092



The low-pitched trumpet came from behind us. Turning, I spotted two large white birds that then flew right over us. Their translucent flight feathers glowed in the early morning sun. Their wingspan, more than 6-foot, created a moving shadow across Fir Island. Long white necks extended in front of solid bodies, and elephantine black legs and feet were tucked tight against their underside. More than 25 pounds each, these Trumpeter Swans flew with grace, style, and dignity.

The pair circled the field a quarter-mile east of our location, then set their wings, dropped their black feet, and landed without a stumble among several hundred swans. A few trumpets and calls drifted toward me from the crowd. Most of these largest of North America's waterfowl seemed to be resting on the green grass.

The trachea in these birds is more than three feet long, about a half-inch in diameter, and has a volume three to four times what one might expect for a bird this size. The trachea folds back and forth in the chest and creates the resonating chamber for the beautiful call that caught my attention.

In the summer of 1968, I flew with my sister from Pennsylvania to Yellowstone National Park. Finding a Trumpeter Swan was a priority, I wanted to be able to brag to my high school birding buddies about the western birds we discovered, including this rare swan. In the 1800s and early 1900s, hunting decimated Trumpeter Swan populations. They were shot for their skins, flight feathers and, undoubtedly, meat.

In 1935, only 69 birds were known to exist, although probably some undiscovered flocks occurred in remote parts of Canada and Alaska. In 2005, a continent-wide survey estimated that the population had grown to more than 34,000, a conservation success. Stopping the hunt and protecting habitat were critical, but also the birds adapted to wintering on agricultural lands, accessing novel food items. In winter, lead poisoning and collisions with power lines are now the major mortality issue.

These birds looked stunning through my spotting scope. Dirty-gray, full-grown cygnets accompanied many pairs. We had seen half a dozen flocks of similar size already that morning. In 1968, my sister and I searched Yellowstone for several days and found only two individuals. They swam on the far side of a small river, and our view was through thick vegetation.

Managers have introduced the species into several eastern states where they now breed. A few even winter in birding spots that I visited in Western Pennsylvania and Ohio as a high school student. Scientists at Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology have analyzed eBird data to provide a much more refined abundance map than are currently available in birding guides or on other websites.

<https://ebird.org/science/status-and-trends/truswa/abundance-map>

It shows that the Salish Sea and south into Oregon are important wintering areas for our west coast population. These birds then migrate through British Columbia to breeding grounds in Canada and Alaska. The Central Rockies population had expanded substantially from the range in 1968, and birds are found in a band from the northern prairies across the Great Lakes.

A pair and two full-grown gray cygnets began running, head and neck extended while flapping their wings. They quickly became airborne, banking to the left while climbing up over the flock, before turning to fly north away from us.

See: Fink, D., T. Auer, A. Johnston, M. Strimas-Mackey, M. Iliff, and S. Kelling. Ebird Status and Trends. Version: November 2018. <https://ebird.org/science/status-and-trends>. Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, New York.

Photo by Thomas Bancroft

2019 Field Trips at a Glance

December 15, 2019, Sunday

Cheney Christmas Bird Count

Leader: Sandy Schreven

December 29, 2019, Sunday

Spokane Christmas Bird Count

Leader: Alan McCoy

Details of the field trips will be found on our website

<https://www.audubonspokane.org/upcoming-events>.



Spokane Audubon Society Membership Form

Local Membership Dues:

Student (under 21): \$10 per year _____

Individual: \$20 per year _____

Family: \$30 per year _____

Supporting: \$50 per year _____

Contributing: \$100 per year _____

Lifetime: \$500 _____

Your local membership supports your local chapter's many conservation and educational activities..

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip Code: _____ Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Are you a member of the National Audubon Society?

Yes _____ No _____



Please make check payable to: Spokane Audubon Society

Send this form and your check to:
Audubon Membership
Attn: Dave Plemons
1224 W Riverside Ave #1101
Spokane WA 99201

Join us, or renew your membership, online at our website:

<http://audubonspokane.org>

Click "Support Us"

Receiving duplicate newsletters? Errors or other changes needed on your mailing label? Contact Dave Plemons at davep_nublado@me.com or 509-413-1524



The Pygmy Owl
Spokane Audubon Society
 P.O. Box 9820
 Spokane, WA 99209-9820

November 2019

To:

The Spokane Audubon Society advocates for birds and their habitats in the Inland Northwest and connects people with nature.

Visit our website: <http://audubonspokane.org>

Directions to the General Meeting

Riverview Retirement Community, Village Community Bldg
 2117 E. North Crescent Avenue

From West Spokane & South Hill

- 1-90 East to Exit 281 toward US-1 E/US-395 N (Newport/Colville)
- Follow US-2 E/US-395 to E. Mission Ave
- Turn Right at E. Mission Ave.
- Turn Left at E. Upriver Drive

From Spokane Valley

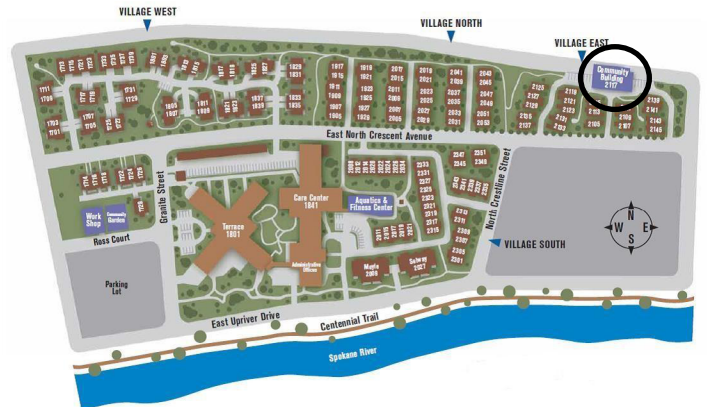
- I-90 West to Exit 282A
- Follow N. Hamilton St. to E. Mission Ave.
- Turn Right at E. Mission Ave.
- Turn Left at E. Upriver Dr.

From North Spokane

- Take US-395 S to E. Mission Ave.
- Turn Left at E. Mission Ave.
- Turn Left at E. Upriver Dr.

Once you're on E. Upriver Drive (see map below)

- Follow E. Upriver Drive to N. Crestline Street
- Turn Left on N. Crestline Street
- Turn Right on E. North Crescent Drive
- Proceed to entry on left showing numbers 2015-2145



Limited parking is available by the Village Community Building. Overflow parking is along E. North Crescent Ave.

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 Thin Air Community Radio
 88.1 & 92.3 FM
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