

## **A Progress Report on the Luther Goldman Birding Trail**

A few months ago, a group of friends and former colleagues of the late Luther Goldman detailed plans for a memorial tribute to Luther Goldman, renowned wildlife biologist, photographer, nature tour leader and beloved longtime Prince George's Audubon Society member, by proposing a birding trail on public lands in his name. We are pleased to share the news that on September 21, 2006, the Prince George's County Planning Board unanimously approved designating a portion of existing trails of the Anacostia Tributary Trail System at Lake Artemesia near College Park, MD, as the Luther Goldman Birding Trail. This 2-mile trail, which is on parklands of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC), will begin at the entrance to Lake Artemesia, loop around the lake and its wetlands, and extend up Indian Creek, returning to the parking lot at the entrance to the park.

Lake Artemesia is an unusual and interesting site. Historic goldfish ponds once present on the site were reconstructed into a large lake with shallow water wetlands as part of the excavation of track bed material for construction of Metro. Lake Artemesia is situated near the floodplain of the upper Anacostia River, and this beautifully landscaped and environmentally diverse site is excellent bird habitat and draws a diverse range of species on a year round basis. Luther Goldman lived in nearby College Park and loved to bird this area regularly. He contributed many records to the bird checklist for this site.

A number of volunteers from local birding clubs and conservation organizations are donating their time and talents to making the project a reality. The Luther Goldman Birding Trail committee is working with Park and Planning staff on design of signs, a trail map, a brochure and a comprehensive bird checklist. A dedication ceremony is planned for the late spring or early summer of 2007. Dave Mozurkewich, with support from other knowledgeable birders, has committed to writing a detailed birding site guide. Don Messersmith is already researching a history of birding in Prince George's County which will be incorporated into the guide and other educational materials for the trail. Rich Dolesh and Maureen Blades are working with Park and Planning on text for interpretive and entrance signs.

The birding trail will be signified by an entrance sign commemorating Luther's life and work. It will include a map of the 2.2 mile trail, and there will be brochures and bird checklists available at the entrance to the trail. The MNCPPC, in support of this project, will install nine interpretive signs along the trail on songbirds, waterfowl, mammals, fish and other natural history topics of interest at this site. This first-of-its-kind birding trail in the Anacostia watershed could serve as a catalyst for a larger Anacostia River Birding Trail. Many birders in the

metropolitan DC area have expressed interest in an Anacostia Birding Trail. If you are interested in this concept, please contact Rich Dolesh.

The members of the Luther Goldman Birding Trail committee (Don Messersmith, Matt Perry, Greg Kearns, Mike Donovan, Rich Dolesh, and Maureen Blades) are extremely grateful to those groups and their members who have donated time and funds for this project, including the Prince George's Audubon Society, the Montgomery Bird Club, the Anacostia Trails Heritage Area, and Washington Biologists Field Club. Since the project began, owners of the Old Town Bowie Wild Bird Center, Chris and Lisa Garrett, have pledged their support. A number of individual donations have been received.

Now that the Luther Goldman Birding Trail has been officially approved and a tax-exempt charitable organization has agreed to accept donations for the project, your donations will be welcome. Contributions are needed to help cover the expected expenses to see this project through to completion. No contribution is too small. Want to help? Individuals and groups may mail a check to: Prince George's Audubon Society, P.O. Box 2598, Laurel, MD 20709-2598. Please mark your memo line: Luther Goldman Birding Trail or LGBT. In the meantime, the committee is also applying for grants to fund individual components of the project, as well as for research. For more information, contact Maureen Blades at 301-262-5148 or Rich Dolesh at 202-887-0290.

If you, your club, or your school are interested in conducting research or monitoring studies of birds, wildlife, or habitat on the site, a possibility exists to submit such projects for small grant funding to the Washington Biologists Field Club. Contact Rich Dolesh for more information.

While there is much work yet to be done, we are buoyed by the interest and support shown for this fitting tribute to a truly fine man. We will keep you apprised of the progress on this project through this website, hosted by Prince George's Audubon Society. There will be many opportunities for volunteer leaders to conduct birding and nature walks on the trail. This effort will be coordinated through the MNCPPC and more information will be available soon on opportunities for volunteering. So plan to join us at the dedication ceremony at a late spring or early summer date to be announced, and make plans to add the Luther Goldman Birding Trail to your field trip destinations!

Rich Dolesh and Maureen Blades  
Luther Goldman Birding Trail Committee