

**Birding is Included in Washington Outdoor Women's
Annual Weekend Workshop**
by Ronni McGlenn

Women from all over Washington, as well as from Oregon and Arizona, raised their confidence levels as they re-connected with the outdoors over the course of three days to learn 18 different skills at Washington Outdoor Women's annual weekend workshop September 15-17. One of those introductory skills was Birding, taught by ELWAS member **Mary Frances Mathis!** In it's ninth year, 'WOW' as it's affectionately called, is an outreach program of the Washington Wildlife Federation, a non-profit conservation organization that is this state's affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation. Through hands-on workshops taught by 34 volunteer instructors, women 18 to 70, gather with other like minded women to investigate how to get started Backpacking, Fly Fishing, Dutch Oven Cooking, Flatwater Canoeing, Using Herbal First Aid orBirding!

Since 2000, WOW has offered a course in Birding during its weekend workshops held at North Bend's Camp Waskowitz on the south fork of the Snoqualmie River. Past ELWAS members/instructors who have volunteered their time are Mike and Diane West, Len Steiner, and Tim McGruder. Since 2004, **Mary Frances Mathis** has instructed this popular class that includes constructing a cedar birdhouse. Her extensive and up-to-date knowledge of local birds, along with her enthusiasm, leads to how and why birding has become so popular in Washington. A slide show, accompanied by mounts and specimens, heightens the participants' interest before they head out on a morning bird walk to test their new powers of observation! This is followed by the pounding of hammers as each participant constructs her own birdhouse. This year and last, **Sidonia St. Germaine** generously agreed to cut all the cedar pieces. Prior to her, Tim McGruder cut the pieces. Without their prep work, the birdhouses would not happen!

WOW places a premium on teaching women the right skills at the right pace. Our hands-on learning style develops confidence. New knowledge invites stewardship. Thanks to Mary Frances and Sidonia and ELWAS, women are re-connecting with the outdoors and learning how they, and the backyard wildlife habitat they create, make a difference.

On behalf of Washington Outdoor Women, THANK YOU!!

*To learn more about the WOW program, visit their website at www.washingtonoutdoorwomen.org
Ronni McGlenn co-founded the WOW program in 1997 and serves as it Program Director.
She and Sidonia sit on the Wetherill Nature Preserve Commission together.*

Photo: WOW's Birding class with their newly constructed birdhouses. Structural help provided by Andrew McGlenn.

