



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 13, 2012

Contact: Krystal Kyer, Executive Director, 253-565-9278 or kkyer@tahomaaudubon.org

Butterfly Expert Robert Michael Pyle

Headlines Tahoma Audubon's 44th Annual Membership Banquet: Take Wing

Tacoma, WA – On February 2, 2013 Tahoma Audubon will celebrate 44 years of local conservation and environmental education in Pierce County, Washington at its annual banquet. The event celebrates the Pacific Flyway, and includes a buffet style dinner, board elections, volunteer awards ceremony, Birdathon kick off, dessert dash, raffle, and keynote speaker.

This year's speaker, Robert Michael Pyle, is a popular butterfly expert or lepidopterist, naturalist and writer. He lives in southwest Washington. In 2008 he completed a Butterfly Big Year – much like the popular Big Year familiar to birders. A Big Year is when someone devotes a year to identifying as many species as possible, often strategically traveling around the globe. Books will be available for purchase from Kings Books during the event, and the author will sign books. More information on Mr. Pyle can be found here: http://www.terracommunications.net/author.php?author_id=rmp.

Awards Ceremony

Each year, Tahoma Audubon Society's board selects 3-4 outstanding volunteers to recognize at our annual membership banquet. This year's awards go to:

TAS Legacy Award: Kirk Kirkland. Kirk began his career with Audubon as co-president with Marcus Roening in 1994. Since then he says he has been "working his way down" to less responsibilities. He served as Conservation Chair in the 1990s during the formative years of the Growth Management Act. In stopping suburban sprawl, Audubon's role in the county was to preserve wildlife habitat. A successful program Kirk advocated and worked to achieve was county tax breaks for preservation of open space. The halt in the development of the Park Junction Resort and the Cross Base Highway are also a part of this legacy.

Kirk negotiated the agreements to set up the Morse Wildlife Preserve and with National Audubon to establish the Adriana Hess Audubon Center. He wrote grants and coordinated fundraisers which led to the hiring of Tahoma Audubon's first staff members. In recent years he brought groups together to preserve county shorelines

and wetlands, limit geoduck aquaculture and form the Open Space Task Force -- which set county goals for the next 10 years of open space land acquisitions.

TAS Distinguished Service Award – Membership: Darlene Forbes. Darlene wears many hats at Tahoma Audubon. She has a knack for stepping up when others need to step back. Darlene started volunteering as a front desk Receptionist many years ago in response to a notice from the University Place Volunteer Center. She later took over responsibility for doing the weekly deposits and monthly cash reconciliation. If you've been to a membership program at the Tacoma Nature Center in the last four years you have Darlene to thank for finding great speakers and presentations to connect you with nature. Thank you Darlene!

TAS Distinguished Service Award – Membership: Winnie Bjarke. Both Winnie and her husband Nels are founding members of Tahoma Audubon. Winnie, a retired elementary school teacher, helped form our chapter and joined others to save Snake Lake from development in the 1980's. Back then Tahoma Audubon operated out of a portable unit at the Tacoma Nature Center at Snake Lake. After we opened the Adriana Hess Audubon Center facility in December of 1999, she began volunteering as a receptionist – greeting park visitors, answering questions on the phone, and handling sales in our small nature shop. She continues to do this today once a month. When not volunteering with Tahoma Audubon, Winnie and Nels are avid world travelers and cyclists. They have been all over the world, including visiting both the Arctic and the Antarctic!

TAS Distinguished Service Award – Community: Christi Norman. Christi is being recognized for her leadership at Audubon Washington and work over the last ten years to engage chapters across the state in developing each of the seven Great Washington Birding Trail Loop maps. What started as a one-year grant grew to a decade long project! Tahoma Audubon also gratefully acknowledges the chapter members who helped with the final (and its favorite) map – the Puget Loop. This includes Diane Yorgason-Quinn, Rolan Nelson, Faye McAdams Hands, John Riegsecker, Rob McNair-Huff, Shep Thorp, and others.

Make your reservation by Jan.5th and save \$10. Tickets may be purchased at the Adriana Hess Audubon Center, by sending in the order form in the current issue of *The Towhee* or downloading the order form on our website at www.tahomaaudubon.org. Send check to: 2917 Morrison Road W., University Place, WA 98466 or purchase tickets online beginning Jan.6th at www.takewing.brownpapertickets.com. Members and the public are invited to attend.

###