

# Field Note

May 15<sup>th</sup> -30<sup>th</sup>



By Jeff Clarke





On a sunny afternoon, this great horned owl glided from tree to tree in the small aspen grove of partridge alley. Upon takeoff, the resident ground squirrels squealed and ran for cover. The magpies paid little attention. Starlings scolded.





Winter took a toll on the MPG North exclosures. We replaced 1000 old bamboo stakes with new, thicker and longer, stakes. Many protected trees continue to flourish, free from deer.







Deer will browse most protected trees once they reach the top of their four foot tall enclosures (bottom). Many exclosed aspens at MPG North will be approaching this height in 2010. This week we replaced their shorter stakes with new, six foot tall, sturdy, bamboo. The new stakes can increase the height of each enclosure by nearly two feet (top). This should allow the trees to grow out of their enclosures, free from browse.





Tongue Creek, on the ranch, has a diverse deciduous plant community near the stream. Ungulate browse hinders their spread up the steep valley walls. Exclosures, placed on outer suckering trees, will encourage their upward growth and expand the existing forests.







Indian paint brushes are in bloom on both properties. There are nearly 200 different types and identification can be quite difficult. I've seen red and orange brushes in both locations.





The death camas blooms all over the ranch. As its name implies, mass consumption can kill.



A photograph of a yellow warbler perched on a bare, thin branch. The bird is bright yellow with a small black eye and a thin beak. It is surrounded by a dense network of bare, brown branches. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue-grey.

Yellow Warbler

The yellow warbler spends most of its time in the brushy thickets near water. This little fellow was singing an energetic, beautiful song along the Bitterroot river. Cowbirds are a major brood parasite of the yellow warbler's nests. If this occurs, the warbler will build another nest atop the infected clutch.