

## Stepping out of Bounds in Billings on the Yellowstone River

20<sup>th</sup> AVA Biennial Convention

By Sherry Sayers

Our first convention walk in Billings will be the Yellowstone River trail on Wednesday June 7<sup>th</sup>. The walk will start at the Red Lion, our convention hotel, and goes through an industrial area (be sure and check out all the farm equipment), a residential area, then through a field until we come to Norm's Island. This island is named for Norm Schoenthal (pronounced Shane-thal), who was a biology professor at Eastern Montana College and a Natural Resources Instructor at Montana State University in Billings. He served in the Army Reserve in the 592nd Ordnance Company, and was instrumental in the development of the Audubon Center building and grounds, as well as the trail system on Norm's Island. There are over two miles of trails on Norm's Island. The Montana Audubon Center's site is a 54-acre former gravel mine bordered by 115 acres of city-managed park land and is beautifully situated along the Yellowstone River. The Audubon Center includes three ponds for scientific research and a permanent place in the community for birds and wildlife, the aforementioned island on the river, and City parks. This location within Montana's largest urban center provides easy access to a diversity of habitats and wildlife along the Yellowstone River for people to learn and study wildlife habitats. The trail does not go to the Audubon Center, but is visible from the trail (a big building with a metal green roof) and you are certainly welcome to check it out. We hope to have Norm available at the walk to answer questions and give a short talk.

The 10K trail will then go on to Riverfront Park, a beautiful park with many trees, picnic tables, a bridge and beautiful trails, which are a mix of asphalt/concrete and natural trails. Both the 5K and the 10K trails are relatively flat in a natural setting. The trail will then come back through the residential and industrial area. We have to walk a short distance back to the finish on Mallowney Street where there are no sidewalks, so please be careful here. Come on out and enjoy Montana's natural beauty along the Yellowstone River – you'll be glad you did!