

BOULDER COUNTY BUTTERFLIES: SUMMER, 2014

Janet Chu

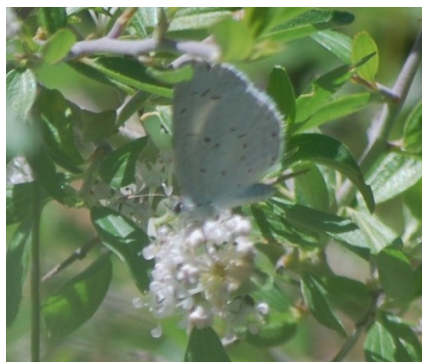
Butterfly Inventories in Boulder County Open Space properties continued in 2014, completing eight years of data collecting in Southeast Buffer, Heil Valley Ranch (Geer Watershed), Walker Ranch (Meyer's Homestead Trail), and Mud Lake-Caribou. Of these there were lower numbers of Species in 2014 (15% to 26% lower) when compared with each area's eight-year average on these four properties. On the other hand Heil-Geer had higher numbers of Individuals than its eight-year average; Southeast Buffer and Walker-Meyer's had lower numbers of individuals. The Mud Lake-Caribou complex had numbers of individuals equal to its eight year average. In the four preceding open space study areas the habitat remained intact following the 2013 flood. There was a loss of three open space study areas because of the flood.

Heil Valley Ranch had two rare butterflies: Dusted Skipper (*Atrytonopsis hianna*) in the Geer Watershed and Hops Azure (*Celastrina humulus*) in Plumely Canyon. Dusted Skippers also flew in Rabbit Mountain, and the rare Ottoe Skipper (*Hesperia ottoe*) was sighted in Southeast Buffer.

Subsequent to our designated inventory dates, March through August, late flying Purplish Coppers (*Lycaena helleoides*) were numerous this year at the Walden Lake (Duck Pond), on Boulder City Open Space Teller Lake (October 19) and Shanahan Ridge (October 25) nectaring on gumweed and white aster.

The Butterfly Inventories project was completed by volunteer naturalists who drove almost 1,200 miles and contributed about 110 research hours on site in 2014.

Below: Photos (if not identified by the photographer, were taken by Jan Chu)



Dusted Skipper (left) on the Anne U. White Trail and Hops Azure (right) at Heil in Plumely Canyon.



Ottoe Skipper – Cal-Wood Education Center by Karen Kincy



Purplish Copper, male, Rock Creek



Purplish Copper, female, Steve Jones