

## The Adventure of the Four Queens (or) The Labor of the Four Dwarfs

....by LVAG

Marching off to work on a sunny morning in a high mountain valley, we four women were inspired by Virginia Evans's cheerful send-off: "Heigh-ho, heigh ho!" we whistled as we practiced swinging our weed whips and sickles. Little did we know that within a few hours, Dopey, Happy, Sneezzy, and Sleepy would be transformed into four Queens of Hearts: "Off with their heads!" became our rallying cry as we lopped the tops off the Canadian thistles and the musk thistles on every side.

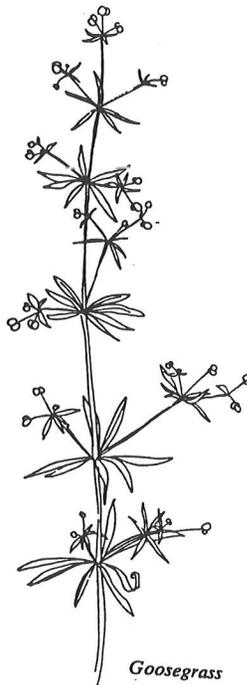
In fact, our job was not as tough as we expected. Lee and Virginia Evans have done a remarkable job of suppressing thistles--and other invading plants--as they have lovingly maintained Arapaho Ranch (near Nederland) through the years.

So although we had been a little apprehensive about working all day in the sun at the end of the hottest week on record this year, the gorgeous flowers and end-of-season birdcalls had us thanking our hosts for allowing us to work all day on their property.

Since this beautiful place has not been heavily grazed for decades, and has been nurtured continuously by the Evans family, native plants are re-establishing themselves. The thousands of multi-colored wildflowers blanketing meadow and mountain slope are magnificent. The baby dipper, squealing for food from his mom as he bobbed by the rushing creek; the elusive "pre-teacher pre-teacher" bird\*, the great blue heron leaving his ponds with dignity every time we approached, gave us pleasure while we worked.

Using a grant from Lee and Virginia, BCNA has been conducting an intensive ecological inventory of plant species on the Ranch. Over the

(cont. to page 7)



Goosegrass

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# BCNA CALENDAR -- FALL TO WINTER

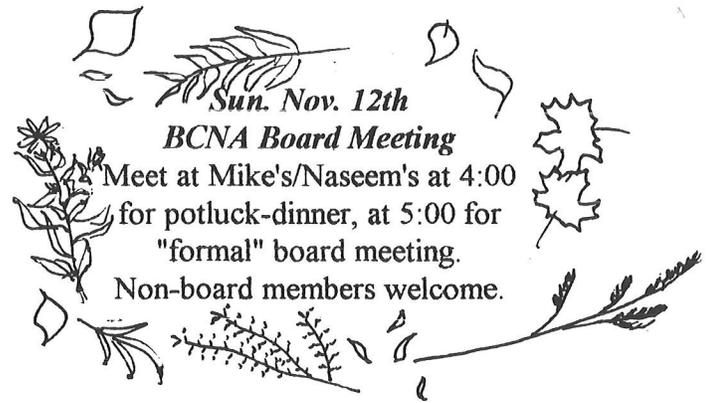
**Th. Oct. 12** ● **Screech Owl Organization meeting:**  
 Note: you do not have to be a screech owl to attend. Please see article page 7 for details.  
**Contact: Steve Jones, 494-2468.**

**Sa. Oct. 28** ● **Joy-trip with Boulder Audubon.**  
**8:00 a.m.--**  
**about noon**  
 Tripping on roots & rocks allowed; no drugs please. Hike up Doudy Draw to look for bears and birds. Optional brunch at Rudy's afterwards. Meet at D.D. trailhead, on Eldorado Springs Dr. 2 miles west of intersection with Hwy. 93.  
**Contact: Steve Jones, 494-2468.**

**Sun. Oct 29** ● **Winter Raptor Survey Kickoff**  
**10 a.m.**  
 at Jim McKee's house. Interested participants should attend or call. The data is used in various ways, including some land use planning. 2725 Juilliard St. (west on Table Mesa to Lehigh, so. to Juilliard).  
**Contact: Jim McKee, 494-3393**

**Sat. Nov 4** ● **Mediterranean Potluck & Bonfire**  
**5:00-**  
**11:00 p.m.**  
 at Naseem's & Mike's. Planned on purpose between Halloween and Guy Fawkes. See page 7.  
**Contact: Naseem, 673-0933.**

**Sa. Dec. 28** ● **Annual Winter Solstice**  
**7:00 a.m.--**  
**Sunrise Hike** on White Rocks trail. Meet at Teller Farms parking lot (on Valmont betw. 75th & 95th). If you wish, bring a poem, quotation, or thought to share during short celebration of the sun's return. Optional breakfast at Rev. Taylor's in Niwot afterwards.  
**Contact: Steve Jones, 494-2468**



**Sun. Nov. 12th**  
**BCNA Board Meeting**  
 Meet at Mike's/Naseem's at 4:00 for potluck-dinner, at 5:00 for "formal" board meeting.  
 Non-board members welcome.

## BCNA Abroad

Members of the Association are often active in varying educational forums. Here are a few that we know about:

*Marty Dick* is a volunteer hike leader in Rocky Mountain National Park, within the context of the National Wildlife Federation's Summit family camps. Some years this highly educational task is more challenging than others. See page 6 for an anecdote.

*Scott Severs* works for the Wild Bird Center managed by Steve Frye, and the newsletter they produce in conjunction with the national "mother store" is a treat. Scott is personally responsible for "A view from the Front Range," which is both entertaining and educational. His latest effort features the beautiful and pesky Steller's jay.

### 1995 BCNA Board

**President: Tim Hogan (444-5577)** ✓  
**V.P.: Scott Severs (442-1322)**  
**Treasurer: Dan Murphy (499-2771)** ✓  
**Secretary: Mary Dick (444-0743)**  
**Mike Figgs (447-1899)** ✓  
**Roger Jacoubek (449-3503)** ✓  
**Bev Johnson (938-8483)**  
**Cherie Long (447-0922)**  
**Jim McKee (494-3393)**

### BCNA Committee Representatives

**Prairie Dogs - Randy Gietzen (530-4355)**  
**Ind. Peaks Bird Count - Dave Hallock (258-3672)**  
**Bldr. Cnty Land Trust - Tim Hogan (444-5577)**  
**Field Trips - Steve Jones (494-2468)**  
**Col. Envir. Coalition - Jim McKee (494-3393)**  
**Bldr. Cnty Land Trust - Naseem Munshi (673-0933)**  
**Trails; Partners in Flight - Scott Severs (442-1322)**  
**Newsletter - Linda Andes-Georges (543-9404)**

# ISSUES AND REPORTS

## Mini-Reports (Updates on local issues)

Rabbit Mountain (9/14/95): the County staff-developed management plan for Rabbit Mountain Open Space looks quite reasonable, giving some access to recreationists and saving some space for golden eagles and other wildlife. So far, there is no serious opposition on the horizon .

A paws in the debate on dog rules (9/18/95): the encouraging progress in formulating consistent dog rules for Open Space and Mountain Parks is at a--we hope--temporary standstill. However the majority of all parties concerned still seems to be holding on to a reserve of good will and optimism, as well as to the intention of lurching into positive action in the New Year. Keep your ear to the ground (and your nose in the wind) on this issue.

Look for an update on the Lakewood Pipeline Environmental Impact Statement, on which BCNA members are still working, in our Winter issue.

Environmental Conservation Areas in the County Comprehensive Plan (6/95): a very satisfying outcome to BCNA's interest in the preservation of natural places was the incorporation into the Comp Plan of key areas for protection, called "environmental conservation areas." These are recognized either as essential habitat or as wildlife corridors. This will provide us with a more objective basis for future land-use decisions.

Eldora Environmental Preservation Plan (7/17/95): BCNA sponsored the Environmental Report which served as a basis for this plan (adopted by the County Planning Commission), which recognizes (with a finer filter than the County Comp. Plan) a mini-area plan for Eldora, in order to protect its environmental resources.

In its turn, the City is now developing a Boulder Valley Ecosystems Map (drafted 7/95). The latter has a few puzzling blank spaces but is essentially sound. However, we feel that the concept may also occasionally work against preservation interests when, for example, developers glance at the map and assume that everything which is not green, as in "Ecosystem," may well be green as in "Dollars," therefore fair game.

## CEC Wildlife Issues Steering Committee

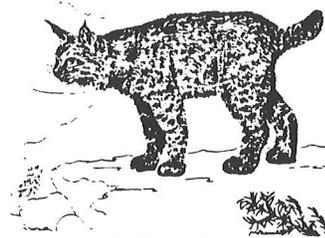
.....by *Jim McKee*

The Wildlife Commission, at their July meeting in Montrose, adopted, basically, the regulations described in the summer BCNA Newsletter. That is, seasons have been closed on all furbearer species except badger, beaver, bobcat, coyote, muskrat, raccoon, red fox, and striped skunk. Seasons have been shortened to protect females with dependent young. Humane trapping devices and techniques are required. One day trap check intervals are required except for, "furbearer predators which are causing damage," which are set for two days. This is hard to justify and we're working to change this back to one day for most species.

The daily bag limit for Abert's and pine squirrels has been reduced from five to two and the possession limit from ten to four. Open season on both species has been shortened to two months, November 15 through January 15.

Houndsmen in Colorado have proposed an emergency change to chapter 8 of the CDOW regulations to allow a pursuit season (not killing) prior to the opening of hunting seasons for coyote and raccoon. While I'm not opposed to pursuit seasons, this should have been proposed during the furbearer stakeholder process along with other regulations. As a result, I have written a letter to the Wildlife Commission opposing this change.

A major concern at this time is that the Wildlife Legislative Interim Committee, created during the last session by House Bill 1286, will introduce legislation to overturn the furbearer regulations adopted by the Commission in July. I attended two days of committee meetings in August and testified in favor of their leaving the regulations as written because I felt that a legislative over-ride would lead to a successful initiative by animal rights groups to ban trapping on public lands in Colorado. Additional meetings, which I plan to attend, are scheduled on September 18 and 25.



## Book Bin

Where the Bluebird Sings to the Lemonade Springs, by Wallace Stegner, *reviewed by Jeff Moline.*

The subtitle to Stegner's book is "Living and writing in the West"--a perfect nutshell summary of the essays in this collection. The sixteen pieces form three groups: Personal, Habitat, and Witnesses. The first section examines the author's life and how his family and its relationship to the West figure into his novels. We learn more about the autobiographical glimpses we get of Stegner in novels such as The Big Rock Candy Mountain; he gives us insights into weaving life into writing. He also includes an essay about an idyllic trip to a wilderness Eden in the Uinta Mountains of Utah in... 1923! An epiphany for the human joy found in wilderness, and a hopeful prayer for its continuity into the future.

In the Habitat portion of the essays, Stegner chronicles exploration, experience, history, public land agencies, and development in the West, all the while providing quotes and references to other writers. His conclusions about the human geography of the western landscape ring true: that we will learn to live within the resource limits of the land (especially its aridity) sustainably. He also looks at how the land has influenced western character and society, and vice versa: examining western myths such as cowboys, again pulling in many references. "A Capsule History of Conservation" is Stegner's account of the path environmentalism followed from American colonization to the passage of the Wilderness Act.

The "Witnesses" essays document the existence of a Western literature. His detailed looks at western writers George Stewart, Walter Clark, Norman Maclean, and Wendell Berry (one of his students), and a review of one of John Steinbeck's short stories, are invaluable. For me, Stegner lit an interest in Steinbeck including a read of The Grapes of Wrath (the still-relevant account of the exodus of people forced to move from the plains by their own land abuse)... Stegner's book was my inspiration and guide back to Steinbeck and other fiction

(cont. to page 10)

## Counting Feathered Flying Friends, Fowl Weather or Fair

Most Indian Peaks birdcount leaders try to set up their field trips in fair weather, as the birds are more active then, and easier to count. Although, from this leader's point of view, the weather on Niwot Ridge is often fairly foul. (Sorry).

Nevertheless, we persevere. The longevity of this program is now quite impressive, and the data can show trends over long periods of time (by Boulder County white-settler standards).

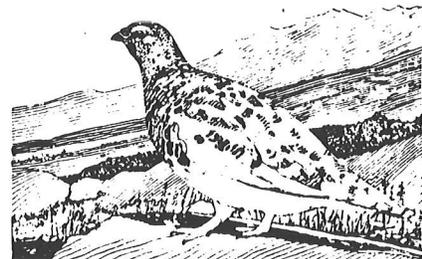
This fall, the data-gathering project will finish its 14th year, as small teams move into the 25 sectors during the period of Sept. 9th to 24th. **Dave Hallock should be congratulated and thanked for originating and developing the idea (along with Dave Alles and Mike Figgs), and for overseeing "operations" for so long.**

### How it works

At present, many of the sectors have team leaders with crews who agree to meet 4 times a year (winter, spring, breeding season, fall). Some leaders prefer small, intimate groups; others prefer to have more eyes and ears in the group. Some people like to move through their count-day nearly alone, acutely focused on the wilderness experience.

### A few faithful folks

Most of the sectors still "open" are those which are difficult to access in at least three of the four count seasons! But if you are interested in participating, please call Linda Georges (543-9404), Bev Baker (530-9334), or Dave Hallock (258-3672).



WHITE-TAILED PTARMIGAN

## Heresy in the Prairie

.....by LVAG

The BCNA Prairie Project began five years ago on a humble acre of land outside Lafayette, about where millions of acres of prairie probably began their eastward roll, long before white settlers arrived with their notions of cultivation and livestock-grazing.

The original idea was to attempt a small shortgrass prairie restoration project, with the cooperation of landowners Naseem Munshi and Mike Tupper. Recently viewing the current state of affairs, some of us are tempted to call this the Don Quixote Project instead, but the record-setting wet spring can be blamed for the impressive crop of weeds. If next year is more normal, the tiny Prairie may yet be saved.

The actual sowing of the buffalo grass for the project, partly funded by Boulder County Science & Cultural Arts, was such a popular idea, with so many volunteers, that an equitable plan was needed to give everyone the feeling of full participation. The seeds were piled on a concrete floor, divided into portions by volume (weight?) and placed in paper bags. The plowed receiving ground was divided into squares. Each volunteer received a bag and was assigned to sow a square.

The first true trial of the experiment (the first of many, we emphasize) was the outbreak, several years later, of bindweed in pestilential quantities. Since most participants in the project were die-hard organic gardeners, poisons were *verboten*. Pulling the cursed weeds seemed ineffective, as did mowing, but when in desperation the gardeners tried Weed-B-Gone, it killed the grass as well as the weed. A combination of mowing and handweeding seemed to work best.

This year, after torrential rains of a lengthy spring gave the weeds a head-start (again), the heresy of chemical control again rears its ugly head. Certain radical elements are muttering words like "Round-Up." On the other hand, some disillusioned idealists have been heard to say the unthinkable: "Cancel it!" ("Cancel it!" exclaims part-owner Mike Tupper. "I can't cancel it--this is my yard!") (cont. to page 6, col. 1)

## The Prairie Party

.....by LVAG

We had gathered for the purposes of "weeding" the one-acre experimental shortgrass prairie (see col. 1). But the prairie proved unweeable at this point in time (as the media like to say). The soil was baked hard, and the taproots went deep, very deep. Without much protest, the participants resigned themselves to sitting on the deck, enjoying the breeze, and sniffing Mike Tupper's barbecued chicken, while Naseem Munshi and her parents bustled around, laying out the feast.

The group benefited from the usual BCNA potluck luck: all five food groups were represented (chicken and four kinds of dessert). But Roger Jacobek's superb red lentil salad added the *je ne sais quoi* to complete the menu (for his recipe--more or less as accurate as we could establish--(see page 11).

Among the many good stories related, and the belly-laughs we shared, here are a few small moments:

Exchanging Russian tales, we learned that some time ago Mike T. was sailing in San Diego Bay with two visiting Russian scientists. As they sailed blithely and without challenge past nuclear submarines and aircraft carriers, the guests were more and more amazed. Finally they had the courage to ask if photos were possible. "No problem!" Mike assured them. And it was so. Unable to resist a little extra prod, one of the Russians then shouted toward a Navy carrier: "I am Russian scientist!" There was no reply.

However, the antidote to this casual attitude was experienced by Jim Knopf this year. Jim is a landscape architect and teacher of xeriscape classes. Ever in search of photographic material for his archives, he approached the Ball Corp. in Broomfield recently, to take a picture of their lovely Buffalo grass. He was standing on the street (a public street) when he noticed a company truck which left the corporate building and raced around the drive to intercept him. "You can't take pictures here," he was informed authoritatively. "This is a public property!" Good thing it wasn't private; he might have been hung! (cont. to page 6, col. 2)

(Heresy, cont. from page 5)

The debate rages. Cooler heads advise water--which should encourage the native grasses to revive in the heat, while the weeds are less likely to prosper. A truly healthy tiny Prairie on 119th Street may be a goal we cannot achieve--or at least not in a tiny human lifetime. But if, as they say, education is not a goal but a process, then this process is teaching us a lot.



**Rocky Mountain Marty**  
(cartoonist wanted)

Please read BCNA Abroad on page 2. Now imagine these scenes: when Marty Dick began leading hikes in RMNP in July, the trails to almost all the most interesting places were still blocked with snow. It was tough to find a good place to take hike with the wilderness pilgrims, let alone find a place with wildflowers to identify. On July 4th, her group was hiking across a snowfield to Mills Lake. One hiker quipped, "They'll never believe this in Houston," as he drew his hood tighter to keep out the wind-driven snow.

Scene 2: as befits the leader of the group, Marty brings up the rear to shepherd the puffing lowlanders as they slowly straggle upwards on another cold, wet day. The tourists are short of breath and moving in eternal slow motion, which effectively prevents any core-temperature warm-up due to activity. Marty's nose icicle grows longer, and her feet wetter, as the hours go by. The idea that begins to obsess her is that she might try dog-hiking, that is, running ahead of the group to get warm, then running back to them to see if they're OK; then repeating the cycle again, and again.....

The editor earnestly wishes that some cartooning member of this group would come forward to illustrate such moments with a simple, funny drawing. LVAG's stick drawings are not adequate illustrations of the good stories she hears in this club. **Please call Linda to volunteer to draw a cartoon from time to time: 543-9404.**

(Party, cont. from page 5)

As one foreign thing led to another in our conversation, we began to talk about language purity. Since the French are notorious for championing the purity of their language with respect to invading linguistic weeds, we began naming English expressions that are currently used by the French. "le drugstore, le software, le footing (jogging), le shampooing..." Wait a minute! Shampoo sounds like a French word, n'est-ce pas? Why did they export it and then corrupt it? Mike rushes to the dictionary. What do you know! "shampoo" is of East Indian origin, from Gujarati, which Naseem speaks with her parents (and about 5 million other people).

And as one heady subject led to another, Linda G. mentioned using egg instead of shampoo, and how people used to use soap. "I still use soap!" Roger exclaimed indignantly. "Anything wrong with that?" (to participate in the laughter that this retort provoked, one has to see Roger... ) Join us at the next potluck. We guarantee wit or weeds, or both.

### Quick Outrageous Quotes

- In a discussion at a city Trails Committee Meeting, Scott Severs broaches the subject of knapweed control, and of the cooperation (or lack thereof) between City and County agencies. He is informed that the citizen "weed pull" seemed to be quite successful. "Well," Scott says thoughtfully, "Is there a fundamental plan in place, or are we just going to continue having weed-pulling parties?"
- On another occasion, where the subject is again trails, the participants are brainstorming about ways to keep people from anarchistic off-trail clambering, creating water erosion and damaging fragile organic stuff. Roger Jacoubek offers an interesting idea, as he often does. "Leg-hold traps should discourage that," he suggests helpfully.
- During a board meeting, Mike Figgs attempts to provide reasons for all the delays in the "dog negotiations" (see page 3). "At bottom it's really a simple question of recreational access, anywhere, any time," he says with frustration. "That's the reason for all this tail-chasing!"

## Whoooo wants to look for Screech Owls? Whooo?

Steve Jones is organizing an ad hoc group to search for screech owls along the South Boulder and North St. Vrain creeks in early winter.

Occasional field trips will take place evenings, Oct. through March. According to Steve, this in-between season is often "too soon for good skiing, too late for good hiking." But elusive-bird hunting will still be fun.



Those interested should call, or attend informal planning meeting on Thurs. Oct. 12th, at 3543 Smuggler Way (near the end of the street), 7:00 pm. **Contact: Steve Jones, 494-2468.**

(4 Queens, cont. from page 1)

past two years, Nan Lederer has identified 357 wildflowers, trees, shrubs, and grasses, including some rare species. Wildflowers accounted for approximately 240 of the total species.

Our lunch that July day was a sandwich banquet, with entertainment by Tommy the Trained Feline. Lee told us stories of the days when travel to Eldora from Louisville was a two-day wagon trip. He was once a dude wrangler and outfitter taking tourists on scenic and fishing trips to the high country above Eldora. He spend one entire summer packing equipment and supplies for three Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) trail-building camps. The crews sult many of the mountain trails, such as the one to Arapaho Pass and the one climbing Mt. Audubon, which are slowly deteriorating because of lack of maintenance.

You could say Lee's stories were dynamite (you had to be there to get the joke), but Tommy's act was hard to beat. (When I got home I mentioned this to my own cats, who looked very skeptical).

(cont. from previous column)

The Arapaho Ranch is currently operated under a Colorado Open Lands Conservation Easement, which means its beauty is protected in perpetuity. (BCNA has helped in this effort over the years, by tree-planting and weeding; in return, the Evans are strong supporters of the Association).

**The ranch is not, however, open to the public.** So we suggest that next year when you are invited by the BCNA to a Thistle Party at this location, you should set aside all preconceptions of what the experience might be like, pack a lunch and go. In 1995, the Four Queens had a wonderful time dealing out death and destruction to invader plants. But next year we'd love to be... the Seven Dwarfs (or more).

\*the common yellow-throat, not so common at this altitude

## Mediterranean Potluck and Bonfire (Three years makes it a tradition!)

....by *Naseem Munshi*

BCNA will celebrate its 3rd annual international potluck and bonfire "extravaganza" on Saturday, Nov. 4th at Naseem's, Mike's & family's, 2595 N. 119th St., Lafayette.

Bring something flammable\* and small, that you want your spirit to be rid of, or something fragrant and cleansing, that you want to share with friends, to burn in a modest bonfire. The costume theme is "wild things" (fruits, mushrooms, party animals, etc.)

Bring your music, your voices, your instruments, and your appetite for the feast that will follow. If you need recipes (for the Mediterranean cuisine theme), call Naseem at 673-0933 or Linda at 543-9404.



**Coasting,  
or, another puzzling chapter in the  
Flammulated Owl Saga**

.....by Randy Gietzen

If you're going to have car trouble, you may as well have it at a relatively convenient place and time. Holly Devaul, Jeff Hicke and I were driving up to the Sugarloaf area to survey goshawks and flammulated owls for the Lakewood Pipeline EIS. We left Boulder about 4:00 PM. We decided to go via Nederland because Barker Dam had just started spilling over earlier that day. After an uneventful drive up the canyon we stopped at the dam and watched the waterfall over the spillway. Ten minutes later, back in my car, I turned the key and absolutely nothing happened. At first I couldn't comprehend this. I pressed harder on the clutch and turned the key again. Nothing. No radio, no lights, just silence.

How could my car be working fine and a moment later be totally dead? We opened the hood and checked the battery connections. No problem there. We decided to push the car back on to the highway and aim it down hill to get it started. With Holly and Jeff pushing, the engine turned over, but it would not continue running. Well, I thought, the engine won't run if the electrical system is totally dead, because the computer controls the fuel injectors.

We stood around looking at each other for a few minutes. I'm not sure whose idea it was but we decided to try and coast down the canyon, all of the way back to Boulder. I couldn't remember any places along the route that required us to go up hill, so I thought, why not?

It was an adventure. No power steering, no power brakes, and no brake lights. Just a silent vehicle rolling on four wheels. Much to my surprise, we had no problem maintaining speed. In fact, in order to avoid burning-up the brakes, I placed the car in gear to allow the engine to do some of the braking.

Towards the bottom, the canyon becomes a little more level. We were now going only 30 MPH. Cars were starting to back up behind us. I asked

(cont. page 9, col. 1)

**Moonlight Madness  
The traditional annual weirdness and fun**

.....by LVAG

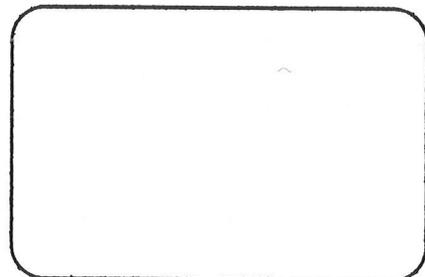
On Saturday evening, Sept. 9th, as you were advised in the summer newsletter, the annual climb and picnic on Mt. Audubon took place. Two international teams attempted the summit, although the second team didn't really care if they only made it to the picnic area on the tundra, which is what happened, so everything was cool.

The summer heat and dryness having just recently veered violently toward rain, wind, and fog, those who left the Brainard "base camp" at 5:30 pm were a little apprehensive about what would happen as all shelter was left behind. In the dense fog, there was also some suspense as to where and how to rendezvous with Team One, already at the summit.

The hike was both ghostly and jolly, and pit stops were unusually simple, since a few steps away from the trail, all shapes blurred into the mist.

About an hour from the summit, Team One's voices were heard as they descended, and they were duly congratulated for their exploit. Their most interesting experiences involved near encounters with a pika, and with a ptarmigan and chicks (see photo).

The picnic was princely. Then just as the group descent began, the great banks of gray-white clouds parted to reveal deep navy sky with the lights of Boulder in the center: it appeared as though the city were suspended above the earth, like Shanghi-la, or Brigadoon. The moon peeped around a cloud, then strutted out to stay, and the rest of the hike proceeded under its brilliant glow.



White-tailed ptarmigan in the mist (photo by Mike Tupper).  
For view on a clear day, see page 4.

# A Passion for the Wild

thoughts from BCNA president, Tim Hogan

We had backpacked into the high country on the east side of the Sangre de Cristos the day before. Our camp was on an exposed knoll overlooking the valley, and just below a series of glacial lakes that marked the upper basin. Dinner was cooking on the stove after a long day of exploring the lakes and ridges above our camp. While stirring the pot, I noticed a couple fishermen coming down a rise near our site, and we exchanged a casual wave. A few minutes later they walked into our camp and I got a closer look.

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(Coasting, cont. from page 8)

Holly and Jeff if I should pull over and let them by. Their answer was a resounding "No". At this point Boulder was getting closer and I knew that at the first stoplight we'd be stuck. We started to think about the best place to pull over so that we would not be blocking traffic.

We emerged from the canyon with plenty of speed. I thought about making it to the Justice Center parking lot. We made a high speed right turn, then an immediate left (in front of on-coming traffic) into the parking lot and coasted all of the way to the eastern most part of the lot. We stopped and marveled at our accomplishment.

Jeff left on foot to get his truck, which was about a mile away. During our trip down the canyon, I had had time to think up a diagnosis: the only thing that would cause the entire electrical system to fail was an internal short in the battery. We decided to pull the battery and take it to the auto parts store. They confirmed it was shorted, and I got a new one.

We installed the new battery and headed back up to Sugarloaf Road, and we were able to do the flammulated owl transect.

We were happy the battery died where it did. It could have failed somewhere above Sugarloaf at 12 a.m.

The older one wore cowboy boots and a Stetson; lean and weathered, his nose looked like it had been broken half a dozen times. Along with his spinning rod, he packed a revolver on his hip. The younger one, who may have been his nephew or grandson, wore shorts in spite of the mosquitos, and carried a .22 rifle with a scope.

We exchanged greetings and as is the custom in such places, began to talk of from where we had come and the nature of the mountains about us. The old man let us know that he owned property in the valley below and had walked directly up into the drainage from his land. We, being outsiders, had walked several miles along the base of the range in order to gain access to the drainage. Along with his stories of fishing and hunting, the cowboy gave us some gratuitous advice on what to do if we met any bear or lion ("don't ever run"). He let it be known that this was his neighborhood in spite of any dadgum Forest Service designating it as Wilderness. He took some pleasure in deliberately ignoring the rain that began to fall, teasing his young charge for pulling out a rain jacket. They had walked into the basin on this trip, but next time they would ride in as they usually did. After a while the two of them set off for their camp in the meadows about a mile below our knoll.

My wife, who abhors violence of any kind, was a bit unsettled by these denizens of the wild West, and wondered what the hell they were doing with guns in this mountain wilderness. I assumed they carried them as much out of habit as anything, and that if they had the opportunity to shoot a marmot, coyote, or any other varmint they wouldn't miss the chance.

The rain that had started as a shower whipped itself into a good storm with a fair amount of thunder and lightning. It blew itself out, so around dusk I went for a stroll on the granite slabs that led away from our camp. Thinking about the cowboy, I found myself recognizing in him a passion for the mountains that I see too rarely in my environmentalist friends. In spite of the violence that

(cont. on page 10)

(Passion, cont. from page 9)

tainted his relation to the land and his unquestioned belief to do whatever he pleased, I couldn't help but admire the emotion he showed for the mountains now cast in the aplenglow of evening. I am left with the question of how such an ardor might be evoked in those who carry a gentler hand into the wilderness? How might those with an ethic cultivated by Leopold, Muir, and Thoreau be persuaded to take a stand in the political battles that lie ahead? More importantly, how can the necessary social and cultural transformation be affected if those who carry a wilderness ethic characterized by a reverence for life do not have the same passion as my cowboy friend?

We are currently witnessing a backlash against environmentalism from the halls of Congress to the hills of the rural West. It is an understandable response from those who see their lives threatened by a world changing in a way that no one warned them about as children. But North America is no longer the world that offered its abundance to those Europeans who first trapped its beaver and broke its sod, nor to their descendants for whom the range was free and plenty of native trout ran in the streams. Indeed, it is not longer the world that many of us knew when we could backpack into a favorite haunt and not see anyone for a week. To blame conservationists for the constraints placed on the worst abuses to our land and waters overlooks the complicity we all share in fostering those constraints. It is a source of anguish that the West is no longer as wild and free as it was only a short moment in time ago--if one has any questions about the tragedy of seeing the loss of one's world, ask a Native American.

It is time for those who care deeply for what the West *might be* to take a stand. Those with a vision of human communities placed gently in a matrix of large wild areas and vibrant populations of native species must speak out. This vision must be infused with as much passion as that carried by those who have entrenched themselves in a world view that looks back to a time of exploitation as the good ol' days. Gary Snyder, the poet and essayist, has written that it is time for those who can imagine a more lightly peopled world in harmony with wild nature to begin the transformation toward becoming

indigenous to Turtle Island, the ancient name for North America. Only in becoming truly native to our place, both in our hearts and minds, will we find the fervor to defend our homes.

There are those who will argue that the old cowboy I met in the mountains has as much right as any Sand County Almanac backpacker to enjoy the wilderness in his own way. I would like to say that is true, but really I am ambivalent. Returning to the tent at last light, I heard the yipping and howling of coyotes on the slopes above our camp. Peering up, I saw two of god's dogs working their way across a small snowfield and on to the scree, moving rapidly and with a measured ease. I was glad it was late and too dark for anyone with a gun and scope to get a clear shot. That was when I knew that as much as I might admire that old West passion for the wild, the time has come to move on to a passion rooted in a view that sees those coyotes not as varmints to be shots and reviled, but as fellow pilgrims of the wild.

*Mammal drawings in this issue are from Guide to Mammals of Colorado by Hugo Rodeck (U. of Col., 67). Owls from Owls of the Northern Hemisphere by Karel Voous & Ad Cameron. Plants from Enchanted Mesa by Margie Lanham.*

(Book Bin, cont. from page 4)

The "Witnesses" essays document the existence of a Western literature. His detailed looks at western writers George Stewart, Walter Clark, Norman Maclean, and Wendell Berry (one of his students), and a review of one of John Steinbeck's short stories, are invaluable. For me, Stegner lit an interest in Steinbeck including a read of The Grapes of Wrath (the still-relevant account of the exodus of people forced to move from the plains by their own land abuse)... Stegner's book was my inspiration and guide back to Steinbeck and other fiction writers of the West with great, easy-to-read stories prompting us to reflect on ourselves and our surrounding landscapes.

*Jeff offers to lend his copies of these books, as well as Steinbeck's The Long Valley, to BCNA members. Of the latter, he remarks, "In 'Johnny Bear,' the narrator works on a dredge draining a swamp for cultivation. As the story unfolds, the noise of the dredge seems always in the background, letting the life out of the wetlands."*

# POT FRAIS AND POT-POURRI

## The Green Network

Do you have Internet access? Randy Gietzen is assembling an e-mailing list for special BCNA announcements. This would be more rapid than a telephone grapevine, and could be useful, for example, if we learn at the last minute that a certain issue will be brought up at a city or county committee meeting, or if someone wishes to communicate a date after the latest newsletter has appeared.

Please e-mail your address (and indicate if you are able to access the World Wide Web):  
**randyg @ csn.net**

### Roger's No-Deli Lentil-Balsamic Salad

Salad ingredients:

1 c. red (or other) lentils (cooked a little firm), chopped carrots, scallions, spinach (ab. 4 c.), and (opt.) roasted pecans to taste.

Sauce ingredients:

1/2 c. orange juice concentrate, *thawed*  
1/4 t. salt, 1/2 t. black pepper, 1/8 t. allspice  
2 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar  
2 Tbsp. Dijon mustard  
1 1/2 Tbsp. olive oil

Toss together. Take to BCNA potluck. Collect compliments.



### Creature Feature

Resident broad-tailed hummers customarily have to defend their nectar sources (feeders) from the aggressive rufous hummingbirds who migrate through in the late summer.

However, the resident female broadtail at Don and Marty Dick's feeder had additional trouble recently: However, the resident female broadtail at Don and Marty Dick's feeder had additional trouble recently: she was buzzed away from her own bee-proof (!) feeder by a large bee.

## Are YOU a Biophile?

Harvard University biologist Edward O. Wilson has coined a word for the feeling of need for staying in touch with worm-rich soil, the sight of deer peering at you under spruce boughs, the smell of woods or of sage-covered hillsides, and the sound of birdsong and animal-footfall. This "innately emotional affiliation of human beings to other living organisms" can now be called "biophilia." Are you a member of the Club?

### Are you a Biophile, Part II

In a recent column entitled, "Americans are forgetting how to speak the language of nature," essayist Ellen Goodman writes: "Today, most of us and most of our children have the most *un*-natural of educations. The average American child knows a thousand brand names before she is 8 or 9. But how many leaves can she name? A 10-year old can tell Pepsi from Coke. But can he tell Queen Anne's lace from yarrow?"

"Teen-agers all know a Nike sneaker from a Reebok. But there are few who can name the "weeds" that surround the playground--the blue cornflower or the lowly pliantain.

"... We are likely now to visit nature as a zoo, a park, a television show, a video, a software program, a summer vacation. We no longer think of nature as our native country." \*

To which I add, is it any wonder that so many of our fellow outdoor-lovers see the outdoors as a commodity, to be consumed? I meet many people in Boulder who haven't noticed that birds don't sing much in the fall and--this frightens me--who don't miss the music. If the birdsongs were not to resume in the spring, these people might not notice or grieve. We must help them learn to care.

\* From Goodman's column in the Boston Globe, reprinted in the Daily Camera, Sept. 1, 1995.

*Unless otherwise indicated, quotes and text about Boulder County are from the Boulder County Nature Almanac by Ruth Carol Cushman, Stephen R. Jones, and Jim Knopf (Pruett, 1993).*

# POT FRAIS AND POT-POURRI, cont.

## The Little Dipper

The water ouzel (American dipper) is an amazing bird. I learned that from my mother. It is virtually unaffected by weather and sings throughout the winter. As John Muir noted, 'The Ouzel sings on through all the seasons and every kind of storm. Indeed no storm can be more violent than those of the waterfalls in the midst of which he delights to dwell. However dark and boisterous the weather, snowing, blowing, or cloudy, all the same he sings, and with never a note of sadness.'

Once my mother snowshoes up Shirley Canyon in midwinter to see how the birds were doing. She was gone all day. When she returned at dusk she was as happy as I'd ever seen her. 'The falls are frozen,' she said, 'and through the ice you can see the nests. Like looking through glass into someone's home at night.' Later, she told me, a water ouzel had poked out through a hole in the ice and disappeared downstream. When it returned it was carrying a little tuft of moss. 'Piling on the blankets,' she said.

*From "A place worth fighting for," by Colin Chisholm in Audubon magazine, July-August 1995.*

## Poetic Prairie Prose

As the last strips of cirrus stream from the sun, like sparks from fireworks, the sky accelerates into an endless curve, leaving you perched on a small mound of earth, aloft in the luminous blue. And the wind kicks up, and the bison tense and gallop, and it suddenly feels as if the whole place is galloping: switchgrass, indiangrass, big and little bluestem racing toward the horizon, the hills rippling like muscles beneath the unbroken turf.

There are only 37,000 acres at the Tallgrass preserve [Osage Hills, OK]--a last embattled piece of the prairie's once-vast middle kingdom--but in the right light it can still seem limitless. Bald eagles and short-eared owls, Henslow's sparrows and northern harriers seem to return every year in greater numbers, as the land recaptures the rhythms of fire and hoof. When the first 300 bison arrived here a year and a half ago, they had never seen a pasture without fences. But their blood must have sensed a homecoming.

*From "Tallgrass Prairie" by Burkhard Bilger, in Heart of the Land (excerpts published in the 1995 Nature Conservancy magazine).*

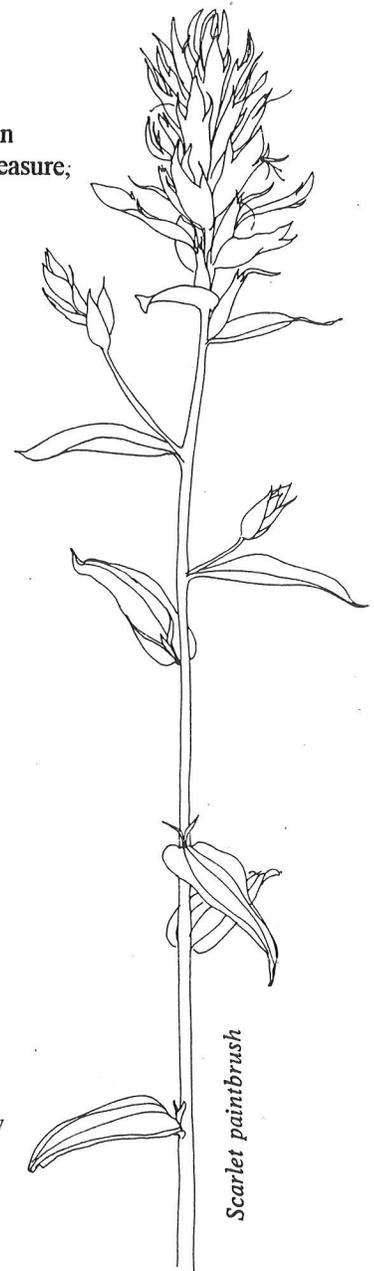
## To submit material to the BCNA newsletter

Please call editor LVAG at 543-9404, or write to Linda Andes-Georges, 5684 Aurora Pl., Boulder 80303. Or drop by, entering Meadow Glen from 50 meters east of the 55th and Baseline intersection, and taking the first right to reach our court. Or try faxing to 543-0051. Or send a 3.5 in. disk in Wordperfect, using the extension ".doc" after your file title (simplifies my task). Please don't use Word, my computer spits it out in gibberish.

This newsletter is printed on recycled paper. Save and treasure; or recycle again.

Remember that all memberships are for the calendar year. Check the label on your newsletter: "95 genl member" means dues are paid through this year. You will continue to receive your newsletter until you forget to pay your dues well into 1996. Please don't keep our treasurer chewing his nails. Try renewing the day after Christmas.

Did you know that if you joint at the supporter level (\$30), or above, you will receive free copies of all BCNA publications for the year--including those you missed if you joined in mid-year? This year's publications include: Decade of Indian Peaks Bird Count by Dave Hallock, Annual Cliff Nesting Raptor Summary by Nan Lederer, and Peak to Peak Checklist of Birds by Dave Hallock.



Scarlet paintbrush

BCNA member Steve Jones, looking unusually but appropriately glum, was featured on the pages of the Daily Camera on September 4th, 1995.

# ENVIRONMENT

Tell us what you think of today's paper. Call the Comment Line. 473-1615

EDITORIAL ■ 2  
COMICS ■ 4

Editor, Sandra Fish

## Raptors' habitat disappearing

■ Hawk, eagle populations declining along Front Range as developments rob them of food.

By CHRIS ROBERTS  
Camera Environment Writer

If developments like Rock Creek in Superior continue to grow along the Front Range, the majestic soaring golden eagles and their brethren could become a rare sight, according to state and local wildlife experts.

A winter census in the Rock Creek area performed for the past six years by the Boulder County Nature Association shows precipitous declines in the area's raptor population.

Sightings of ferruginous hawks have dropped the most, with an 85 percent decline, said Stephen Jones, author and nature association member. He said the study was conducted with strict controls and will add to the scientific data on the issue.

The number of bald eagles has dropped 70 percent; red-tailed hawks 55 percent.

Bald eagles are listed as a threatened species, both federally and in the state.

As habitat and prey base — Rock Creek had been home to a large prairie dog colony — are destroyed to provide homes and amenities for the growing human population, Boulder's signature cliff dwellers may be forced to move on.

"They've pretty much devastated the habitat," Jones said of Richmond Homes, the Rock Creek developer. "I stood on the corner of McCaslin Boulevard and Coalton Road about five years ago in November and I saw 12 ferruginous hawks and two bald eagles.

"Now you can stand there and there's nothing."

Jones said he sat down with the developers before the project started to find a way to ease the impact, "and they weren't interested."

"We're responsible developers," said Carol Raznick, general counsel/real estate for Richmond Homes, who added that the company would be interested in talking with association members about the issue.

### No more hunting grounds

Jones is even more concerned about the cliff-dwelling raptors to the west. The Rock Creek prairie dog town was a relatively close source of food for those raptors, one that is no longer available.

"Wintering raptors can move — they will eventually run out of places



CHRISTOPHER MADDINO / For the Camera

**RAPTOR LIFE:** Stephen Jones, with the Boulder County Nature Association, says data collected over the past six years show the destruction of a prairie dog colony to build homes at Rock Creek in Superior is forcing out the raptor population.

to hunt," Jones said. "But the (local) cliff-dwellers, the prairie falcons and the golden eagles, they are running out of places to hunt."

Steve Armstead, with the city of Boulder's Mountain Parks, confirms that the cliff-nesting birds have had a problem this year. The golden eagles never settled in, he said, and peregrine falcon eggs never hatched.

Peregrine falcons are endangered on the federal endangered species list and, because of a local recovery, were recently downlisted from endangered to threatened on the state list.

Armstead and Jones said there are other factors causing the problems besides development. Those include the late winter and wet spring, plus an outbreak of plague in some of the other prairie dog towns. However, the loss of habitat is an ongoing threat to the birds.

Ferruginous hawks — Jones calls them prairie dog specialists — have a North American population of from 2,000 to 4,000.

"A couple hundred or more come here each winter," Jones said. "That's

5 to 10 percent of the (hawk's) world population."

"Rock Creek is a classic example of what's going on on so much of the Front Range, from Fort Collins on south," said Jerry Craig, the Colorado Division of Wildlife's raptor expert. "It's insidious. We're losing the grocery stores."

### A dlot of prairie dogs

Craig said there is evidence of a decline in raptor populations along the Front Range. Not so long ago "almost every cut in a cliff used to harbor a pair of golden eagles," Craig said.

Although the birds eat a variety of mammals and other animals — such as porcupines, marmots and blue grouse — a look at the traces left in nests shows the largest portion of the diet is prairie dogs.

When this relatively easy source of prey is eliminated, the birds have to fly farther and work harder to get food. That not only threatens the individual's health, but when females are tending the nest, the pressure is even greater to find enough food to feed the family, Craig said.

Also, when there are fewer prairie dog towns, a bout of plague can eliminate one of the few remaining food sources in a particular year.

"We're just eliminating a lot of that diversity out there," he said.

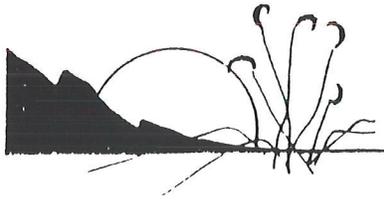
Protecting prairie dog colonies might be the answer, Craig said, pointing out that Boulder is studying such a plan now. Cooperative efforts among municipalities will help. Craig also points to the importance of relatively undisturbed places such as the Rocky Mountain Arsenal and the Rocky Flats buffer zone.

Set-asides, where a developer protects a certain area with a prairie dog colony or trades to protect the prey base, also are recommended.

"Population trends are not on the increase," Craig said. "Common sense dictates that. Along the Front Range in the past 20 years, yes we've had a decline."

As far as Boulder's cliff dwellers, Craig said, "It's too soon to say. We will have to watch it for a couple more years. But I guarantee it, our cliff-nesting raptors are going to continue to decline." ■

Copies of BCNA correspondence penned by pres. Tim Hogan are as follows:



Boulder County Nature Association  
P.O. Box 493, Boulder, Colorado 80306

20 July, 1995

City of Boulder Planning Board  
Dept. of Community Design, Planning  
and Development  
Box 791  
Boulder, CO 80306  
Attn: Stephanie Wilkes

Members of the Board,

I am writing for the Boulder County Nature Association (BCNA) with regard to the proposed adoption of the Boulder Valley Natural Ecosystem Map and Description for the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan. Our organization has been involved in developing a Boulder County ecosystem plan for over a decade and welcome this proposal by the City. A similar development occurred at the County level when the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan was amended on March 22 of this year to include changes in the text of the Environmental Resources Element concerning Environmental Conservation Areas.

Both the proposal by the City and the adopted changes by the County reflect an awareness of developments in the science of Conservation Biology. The identification and mapping of important natural ecosystems, buffering them from deleterious human impacts, and linking them with a system of corridors is viewed by ecosystem scientists as a critical strategy in the preservation of biological diversity [see: *Saving Nature's Legacy* (1994) by Noss & Cooperrider and *Ghost Bears* (1992) by Grumbine for further discussion of these and other concepts]. Criticisms that the identification of critical natural areas should wait for further study ignores a basic tenet in conservation that recognizes the need to use the best available information and to build on that information through a program of inventory and monitoring.

BCNA hopes the Planning Board will adopt the proposal as an essential step toward preserving the natural integrity of the Boulder Valley. Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.

Sincerely,

Tim Hogan  
BCNA President

Tim Honey, City Manager  
City of Boulder  
Box 791  
Boulder, CO 80306

20 July, 1995

Dear Mr. Honey,

We understand that Staff and Council are currently discussing whether to include funds for the acquisition of private lands west of Bear, Green, and Flagstaff Mountains in the proposed 1995-96 Parks and Recreation bond package. Although we do not have enough information to comment on the relative merits of various conservation strategies for these lands (i.e. TDRs, conservation easements, fee title purchase), we can comment on their ecological value.

The canyons on the west side of the Boulder Mountain Park are among the wildest remaining lands in the City of Boulder Parks and Open Space system. Wintering elk regularly visit these areas. In late summer and early fall black bear use these canyons as foraging habitat and movement corridors. Northern goshawks, a Rocky Mountain species of special concern, nest in Lost Gulch; this is the only active goshawk site within Boulder's Parks and Open Space. Mountain lions depend upon this untrailed habitat for refuge and prey. These canyons harbor a number of uncommon plant associations and rare species such as the wood lily, twayblade orchid, and white veined pyrola. From a landscape perspective, the area west of the mountain backdrop serves as an important link in the chain of connectivity between Boulder's Parks and Open Space and Forest Service lands.

We believe additional development in the Tramhull and Pine Needle Notch area will result in:

- 1) Increased fragmentation of forest habitat connecting city lands with federal lands to the west, adversely impacting wildlife populations.
- 2) Increased degradation of the habitat due to residential construction, road construction, forest clearing, and fire suppression.
- 3) Increased recreational pressures on the fragile canyons and associated ecological communities that occur west of the Mountain Park.
- 4) Increased predation and harassment of wildlife by domestic pets.

The Boulder Mountain Park is a significant natural area that serves as an important refuge for plants and animals of special concern. However, the Park encompasses a relatively small area and is increasingly isolated by human development. Conservation Biology stresses the vulnerability of habitat islands and the pernicious effects of fragmentation on native species. The Boulder County Nature Association (BCNA) feels that the relatively small portion of the bond proposal earmarked for acquisition of wildlife habitat is a modest step toward protecting these lands. BCNA would have difficulty supporting a tax increase that is devoted almost exclusively to urban parks and recreation and ignores the need to protect critical natural habitat.

We urge you to include these funds in the bond proposal. Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.

Sincerely,

Tim Hogan and Steve Jones  
for the BCNA Board

cc: Chris Dropinski  
Jim Crain



**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION  
BOULDER COUNTY NATURE ASSOCIATION**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

|                                                                               |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student or senior citizen (65 and over)              | \$10 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> General member                                       | 15   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family or household                                  | 20   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporter                                            | 30   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Land Trust/subscriber (\$20 to Bldr Cnty Land Trust) | 50   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Founder (\$70 to Boulder County Land Trust)          | 100  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life member                                          | 300  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate member                                     | 500  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder (\$700 to Boulder Country Land Trust)    | 1000 |

Membership year is Jan. 1 to Dec. 31. Members who have joined since October 1 are considered paid through the following year. Members receive a quarterly newsletter and discounts on BCNA publications. Subscribers receive a complimentary copy of each BCNA publication that is published during the membership year. New Boulder County Parks and Open Space Dept. Volunteer Naturalists receive a one-year free general membership. Newsletter content information is available from Linda Georges (543-9404); subscription status from Marty Dick (444-0743).

Please make check payable to "Boulder Country Nature Association" or "BCNA," and mail to:  
BCNA, P.O. Box 493, Boulder, CO 80306.

Boulder Country Nature Association  
P.O. Box 493  
Boulder, CO 80306



Figure 23. Pine Squirrel or Chickaree