

# **Boulder County Nature Association Volume 17, Number 2 Spring 2000**

## **BOULDER COUNTY ECOSYSTEM SYMPOSIUM**

We hope everyone will be able to set aside some time on Friday, April 28 to attend the seventh Boulder County Ecosystem Symposium, and hear the details on the latest research in Boulder County. Registration, which is free and open to all, begins at 9 AM at the Boulder Public Library main auditorium (9th and Canyon). The symposium consists of 20 minute presentations, with additional time allotted for questions from the audience. Here is the schedule of speakers and topics:

9-9:15: Registration

9:20-10:40: Session 1

Jean Kindig, Prehistoric Alpine Game-Drive Walls; Jill Barron, Effects of Acid Rain on High Country Lakes; Joyce Gellhorn, Wild Basin Burn Area Plant Study

11-12:20: Session 2

William Jennings, Rare Plants of Boulder County; Southern Rockies Ecosystem Project, Mapping and Preserving Rocky Mountain Ecosystems; Ann Armstrong et al., GIS Mapping of Natural Resources in the Boulder Mountain Park

12:20-1:30: Lunch on your own

1:30-2:50: Session 3

Mike Figs and Rick Thompson, Dowe Flats Winter Raptor Study; Mark Gershman, Boulder Tributary Trails Plant and Wildlife Inventory; Steve Jones, Historic Trends in Boulder County Owl Populations

We are requesting assistance with registration in the morning, general help throughout the day, and session moderators. Those interested in volunteering should contact Tim Hogan (303-444-5577) or Steve Jones (303-494-2468). Thanks for your help, and we hope to see you there.

Steve Jones, Mike Figs, Joyce Gellhorn, and Tim Hogan--Organizing Committee

### **BCNA WEB PAGE**

Visit the updated Web site at [www.bcna.org](http://www.bcna.org). The site has been reconstructed and significantly enhanced. The *Calendar* includes late breaking field trips and events posted on the nature-net. So don't lose your temper if, on your e-mail application, you delete the information on that field trip you wanted to go on. It will still be on the Web site.

Under *News and Policy* natural history programs and resource management meetings in Boulder County will be announced. This section also includes the official positions of BCNA on various public land management and land use issues. The *Education* section lists available BCNA nature classes. A helpful feature is that filled classes are so noted.

The *Related Links and Sources* and *Land Trust* sections will soon be updated. Web sites previously reviewed in the newsletter will be included, in addition to good Web sites brought to our attention that have not been reviewed in the newsletter. Agency Web sites will be listed for easy access to management plans and announcements of public hearings. The Land Trust section will have links to the best information on private sector land conservation and land trusts operating in Boulder County. *Volunteer Opportunities* and *Publications and Research* are also retained on the Web site, and will be continually updated.

Put technology to work for nature, and use the BCNA Web site. Many thanks to Randy Gietzen and Joan Ray for constructing and maintaining the Web site. Comments and suggestions are welcome.

## BCNA Spring 2000 Calendar

Sunday morning, April 2: **Conjunction Bandit Field Trip #1.** Predawn hike to Woods' Quarry to view the conjunction of Mercury, Venus, and the old crescent moon. We'll try to locate small owls along the way. Meet at the Chautauqua picnic shelter, behind the amphitheater (at the end of 12th Street) at 5 AM (mountain daylight time!!! Set your clocks ahead before going to sleep). Return around 8 AM. You might want to bring some finger food to share for a sunrise breakfast at the quarry.° Since this is a ° "Bandit Field Trip", everyone is on their own as far as weather conditions, planning, and other details are concerned. We'll see what happens.

Thursday evening, April 6: **Conjunction Bandit Field Trip #2.** Evening walk along White Rocks Trail to view the conjunction of Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, and the new moon. Meet at Teller Farms Open Space parking lot, on the south side of Valmont Road, about a quarter mile west of 95th Street, at 6:45 PM. Return around 9 PM.

Sunday, April 16, 9AM **Winter Raptor Survey wrap-up meeting**, at the residence of Paquita Zuidema at 1060 35th St. in Boulder. (SE corner of Madison and 35th, where Madison is the street one block south of Colorado.) Paquita's phone number is 443-9448. Participants should either bringing raptor survey data to the meeting, or send it to Holly Devaul in advance of the meeting (her address is 3970-O Colorado Ave., Boulder 80303).

**The BCNA Ecosystem Symposium** will be held on Friday, April 28th at the public library in downtown Boulder. The symposium consists of 20 minute presentations covering the latest results of natural history and ecological research in Boulder County. Details are found on page one.

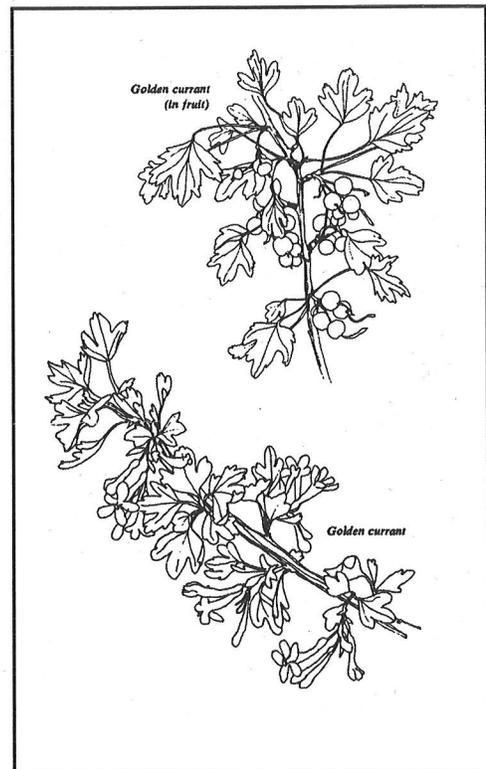
May 1-14, 19<sup>th</sup> annual **Indian Peaks Spring Bird Count.** If you need an assignment or want to be responsible for a count area, contact Dave Hallock at [eldoradh@futureone.com](mailto:eldoradh@futureone.com) or 303-258-3672.

Sunday, May 21 **BCNA Board of Directors** meeting. All members are welcome. Board meeting starts at 4 PM followed by pot luck dinner at 6 PM at Mike & Naseem's residence (303-673-0933).

Thursday, May 27 **Spring Wildflower Walk** on the Foothills Trail. This a prime time for spring legumes, including members of Astragalus and Oxytropis. Other botanical attractions include plant species that prefer shale outcrops. Meet Mike Figgs (303-447-1899) at the Foothills Trailhead (just north of the North Broadway and US 36 junction) at 5:30pm. If there is interest, we can go out for dinner afterwards.

June 1 through July 15, 19<sup>th</sup> annual **Indian Peaks Breeding Bird Count.** If you need an assignment or want to be responsible for a count area, contact Dave Hallock at [eldoradh@futureone.com](mailto:eldoradh@futureone.com) or 303-258-3672.

**Please note: updates and spontaneous field trips will be announced on the BCNA Nature-Net, and on the BCNA web site. See details under the BCNA Directory on the inside page of the back cover of this newsletter.**



# BCNA EDUCATION PROGRAMS

## Spring 2000 Classes

### Education Program Update

The new classes for this summer are described in chronological order on the following pages. Registration is on a first come, first served basis. The previously announced Spring Wildflowers classes are included in the class descriptions again; however, please be advised that there are few openings available. The Birds of Foothills Forests and Canyons class is filled. The Education Committee is currently working on classes on tracking, prairie dogs and shortgrass prairie ecosystems, raptors, winter photography, winter plant identification, fire ecology, and winter ecology. Your comments and suggestions on future classes are welcome. Submit suggestions to Naseem Munshi, Education Committee chairperson (303-673-0933), or any of the instructors. We hope you enjoy these classes, and thank you for your support and participation.

### Registration Protocol

Instructors will be responsible for registering students. Where class size is limited, students can reserve a place by mailing the entire tuition amount to the respective teacher. Students who decide to drop the class and wish to receive a tuition refund must notify the instructor at least one week prior to the first class session. However, there will be a \$15 charge to drop a class. Only registered students may attend classes. A \$10 tuition discount will be given to BCNA members. Other discounts may apply to dual classes. A BCNA member is defined as anyone who belongs to the organization at the time they register for a class. Students who register for a class and pay initial membership dues simultaneously will receive the \$10 discount.



**Description:** This course focuses upon identification of trees and flowering plants on the East Slope of the Front Range in Boulder County. General principles of taxonomy will be taught along with identifying features of major plant families. Emphasis will be placed on learning to use taxonomic keys to identify native plant species. Taxonomic and ecological features of flowering plants will be examined during the all-day Saturday field trips.

**Instructors:** Dr. Joyce G. Gellhorn and Susan Parks Halabrin.

**Sessions:** Part I: April 26th to May 6th, 2000; Part II: May 10th to May 20th, 2000. Part I and II are both 2 three-hour evening sessions plus an all day Saturday field session.

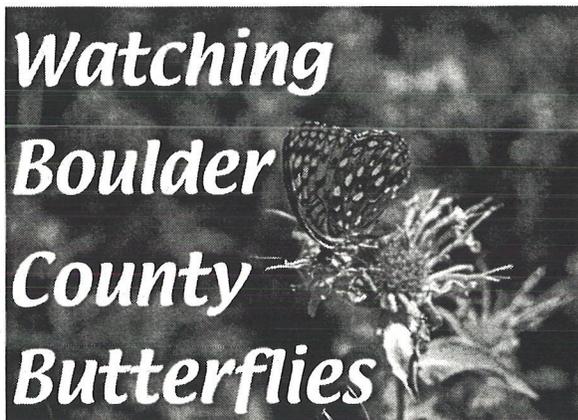
**Dates:** Part I: Evening Sessions: April 26 and May 3 from 6:30 PM to 9:30 PM; Saturday Field Trip: May 6 from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Part II: Evening Sessions: May 10 and May 17 from 6:30 PM to 9:30 PM; Saturday Field Trip: May 20 from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

**Texts:** Weber, Wm. A. Rocky Mountain Flora; Wingate, Janet L. Rocky Mountain Flower Finder; Nelson, Ruth A. Rocky Mountain Plants.

**Equipment:** A 10 x hand lens, dissecting needle, knife or razor.

**Cost:** \$65 for Session I or II; \$120 for both Sessions I and II. BCNA members \$10 off for Session I or II, \$15 off for Sessions I and II.

**Register:** Send check made out to "BCNA" to Joyce Gellhorn, 112 Deer Trail, Boulder, CO 80302, (303-442-8123), or to ask questions: [ygellhorn@sprynet.com](mailto:ygellhorn@sprynet.com).



# Watching Boulder County Butterflies

**Sessions, Part I:** Foothills Butterflies--Two 3-hr. eve. sessions at Foothills Nature Center from 6:30- 9:30pm, Thurs. June 15; Thurs. June 22nd; Field Trip: Sun. June 25, 8:30- 3:30pm.

**Description of Part I:** A checklist of 185 species of butterflies recorded in Boulder County is provided and used to teach group and species recognition. Biodiversity; ecology; foodplants; mimicry; life-history & metamorphosis; life-zones; 10 behavior patterns of butterflies which allow close-up photography.

**Part II:** Arctic and Alpine Colorado Butterflies--Two 3-hr. sessions Thurs., June 29; Thurs. July 6, from 6:30- 9:30pm; Field trip to 12,000 ft. on Mt. Evans Road, 8:00am- 3:30pm Sat. July 8.

**Description of Part II:** Boulder Co. Butterfly checklist is provided; species and group recognition by field techniques; biodiversity and population ecology of Boulder Co. butterflies; visiting arctic species stranded in high altitude refugia in Colorado since ice-ages; photographing ice-age butterflies.

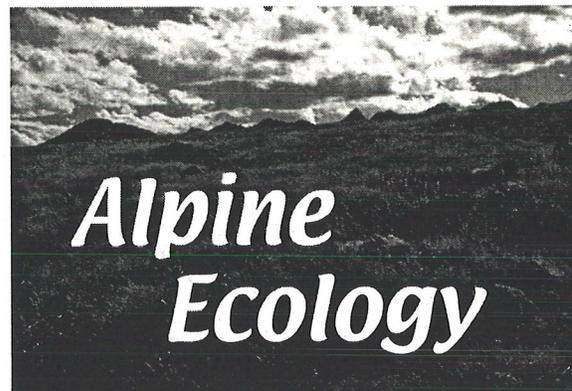
**Instructors:** Jan Chu and Charles Slater.

**Materials:** handbook, checklist, 7x binoculars, 35mm SLR camera; close-up lenses; 100-400 speed film.

**Recommended Texts:** Opler, Paul A. 1999. Peterson Field Guide to Western Butterflies (\$24.00 paperback); Pyle, Robert. Audubon Soc. Field Guide to North American Butterflies; Pyle, Robert, Handbook for Butterfly Watchers (\$14.00, paperback).

**Cost:** \$65 for Part I or Part II. BCNA Members \$10 discount for either Part I or Part II; \$15 discount for taking both Part I & II.

**Registration:** Send check made out to BCNA to: Jan Chu, BCNA, 964 Ravenwood Rd., Boulder, CO, 80303. For information, call Charles Slater at 303-232-0701. Participants limited to 15.



# Alpine Ecology

**Dates:** Thursday evening July 13th, 2000 from 6:30 PM to 9:30 PM; Saturday Field Trips: July 15th from 8:00 am to 3:00 PM to Mt. Evans, July 22nd from 8:00 am to 3:00 PM to Niwot Ridge.

**Description:** This field course focuses upon ecology of Colorado's alpine tundra. This land above the trees features environmental extremes and spectacular scenery, an extremely short growing season, and animals and plants that have unique adaptations suitable for survival in this life zone. During the evening session we will discuss the variety of ecosystems found in the alpine, their microclimates and interrelationships between plants and animals that live there. Even though most plants in the alpine are short in stature practically all are long-lived perennials. The alpine's harsh climate along with its brief growing season has led to a diversity of coping mechanisms for plants, insects, birds, and mammals. During the two all-day Saturday field trips, we shall have the opportunity to compare and contrast two different but easily accessible alpine areas in Colorado's Front Range.

**Instructors:** Dr. Joyce G. Gellhorn and Susan Parks Halabrin.

**About the Instructors:** Dr. Joyce Gellhorn has taught field classes for twenty-five years to students ranging in age from four to eighty-four. She teaches seminars at the University of Colorado's Mountain Research Station, through

## ***Alpine Ecology, continued***

Continuing Education, and has taught for Rocky Mountain Nature Association, Boulder Valley Schools, Colorado Mountain College, Elderhostel, Keystone Science School, and Teton Science School. Currently she is writing a book entitled *Song of the Alpine*. Susan Parks Halabrin teaches biology at Front Range Community College and has also assisted Joyce in teaching field courses during the past three years. In her master's thesis Susan examined the forest history around Jamestown, Colorado looking at the influence of fires, mining, and insect outbreaks upon ecosystem development.

**Optional Texts:** Zwinger, Ann H. and Beatrice E. Willard: *Land Above the Trees*. Wingate, Janet L. and Loraine Yeatts: *Alpine Flower Finder*.

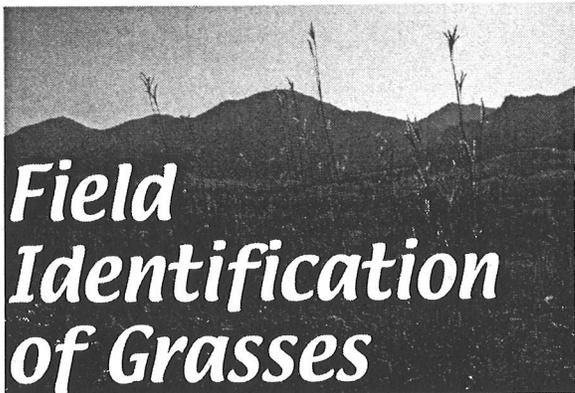
**Equipment:** A 10 x hand lens, dissecting needle, knife or razor.

**Cost:** \$65 for the three sessions; BCNA members \$ 10 discount.

**Register:** Send check made out to BCNA to Joyce Gellhorn, 112 Deer Trail, Boulder, CO 80302, 303-442-8123, or to ask questions [jgellhorn@sprynet.com](mailto:jgellhorn@sprynet.com).

### ***Thorne Natural Science School***

From forests and wetlands to prairie trails, students embark on a journey of scientific exploration as they learn the wisdom of the natural world. Visit a different ecosystem each day. Programs begin at 8:30 am, end at 12:00 PM in Boulder, Littleton, and Denver. Ages 6-14, one and two week programs. Full day options available. These are all outside, getting the kids into nature, and go to different field sites each weekday morning. Thorne has been running these programs for 43 years. We have space openings for volunteer teaching assistants, and also need one good teacher for the Biking and Birding class. Call Corby Connolly (303-499-3647), Director of the School, for more information, or e-mail her at [corby@thorne-eco.org](mailto:corby@thorne-eco.org).



## ***Field Identification of Grasses***

**Description:** This one-day outdoor class will focus on looking carefully at a sometimes intimidating family of plants—the grasses. We will examine many of the major groups within the Poaceae such as the wheatgrasses and fescues, and become familiar with some of the common genera and species. Grass morphology and terminology necessary to use taxonomic keys will be reviewed, and characteristics helpful in field recognition will be discussed. It's hoped that participants will discover grasses to be fascinating plants with lovely ligules, glumes, and lemmas deserving of our close attention. The exact location will be determined shortly before the class, but will be a piedmont area in Boulder County, with plains and foothills grass species. Registered students will be contacted about the site at least one week prior to the class. Class is limited to 12 participants.

**Instructors:** Tim Hogan and Nan Lederer, Assistant Curators of the CU Herbarium.

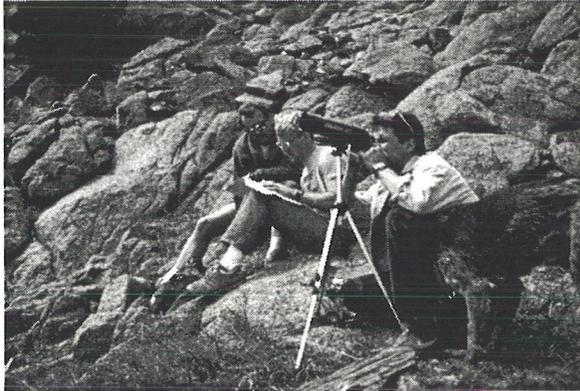
**Date:** Saturday, August 19, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Rain date — Sunday, August 20).

**Books and Equipment:** Weber, W.A., *Rocky Mountain Flora* (1976), Weber & Wittmann, *Colorado Flora: East Slope* (either 1990 or 1996 edition), and/or Wingate, J., *Illustrated Keys to the Grasses of Colorado* (1994). Copies of Wingate will be available for sale at the class. 10X hand lens, notebook and pen/pencil, water, lunch, snacks, sunscreen, rain jacket.

**Cost:** \$40 for BCNA members; \$50 for nonmembers.

**Registration:** Send check made out to BCNA to Nan Lederer, 2635 Mapleton Ave. #77, Boulder, CO 80304. For more info. call Nan or Tim at 303-492-3216, or email one of them at [lederer@colorado.edu](mailto:lederer@colorado.edu), or [hogant@colorado.edu](mailto:hogant@colorado.edu).

## **Volunteer Opportunities**



### **Magnolia Area Long Term Bird Study**

Our study up here is entering its third year. In addition to the original transects, another transect will be added in anticipation of Forest Service vegetation management the following summer. Participation involves coming up to the designated transect three times during the breeding season--June 1 to August 15. There are 5 to 9 points on each transect, at which one looks and listens for 5 minutes, recording all birds seen or heard during this period. Birds observed between points or before and after are recorded separately. Good birders needed for solo or duo participation. Cherie Long is the contact person at 303-447-0922 or [cherielong@uswest.net](mailto:cherielong@uswest.net).

### **Mountain Parks Bird Study**

Steve Jones will conduct a workshop on Saturday morning, May 20, for anyone who would like to help out with the Boulder Mountain Park breeding bird study. This is an exciting project which will track bird populations at 50 locations (point count stations) throughout the Park. Each volunteer will be responsible for three point count stations, to be visited three times between June 1 and July 15. Most or all are in beautiful locations. Volunteers will be provided with checklists and tapes of forest birdsongs. If you have a working knowledge of forest birds and would like to help out, please give me a call at 303-494-2468.

## **Cliff Nesting Raptors**

Late season monitoring opportunities may be available. Contact Nan Lederer at 303-447-1899.

### **Boulder County Parks and Open Space Spring Volunteer Work Projects**

#### **Nature Detectives**

*Immediate need - On-going project*

Nature Detectives is the educational children (and adult!) section of the Boulder County Parks and Open Space (BCPOS) quarterly publication *Images*. A volunteer is needed to help write, edit, and layout the section. Nature detectives meet periodically to do layout for each issue, but most of the work is done by e-mail. If you're interested in writing fun material for young children, sharing your love of the outdoors, and learning more about producing a publication, call Pascale at 303-441-4559.

#### **Park Host**

Training: Tuesday, April 25 and Thursday, April 27, from 6-9pm Saturday, April 29 or Sunday, May 7, from 9am - 3:30pm. (Volunteers must attend both evening sessions and one weekend session.) Volunteer Park Hosts hike, mountain bike, or ride horse on BCPOS trails, providing park visitors with information about the cultural and natural history of parks, recreation opportunities, park facilities, and park regulations. An important part of the BCPOS team, Park Hosts keep visitors updated about current resource management issues, and answer visitors' questions about the parks. Volunteers must be friendly, approachable, and have a general knowledge of local parks, open spaces, and flora and fauna. Call Megan Davis at 303-441-1645 for an application and more information. Application deadline Friday, April 7.

#### **River Restoration on Earth Day!**

Saturday, April 22 8:30am to 2:00pm, Beech Open Space. Help heal a river on Earth Day! Volunteers will celebrate Earth Day by planting native willows and cottonwoods along a damaged section of Left Hand Creek. Trees

## More Volunteer Opportunities

### River Restoration Continued

along this section of Left Hand Creek were removed before it was a Boulder County Parks and Open Space property. The river corridor has been fenced and willows are coming back, but most of them are non-native trees. Volunteers will remove non-native willows and plant in their place native willows and cottonwoods. Volunteers will be working in the river channel, so bring gloves and boots or shoes that can get wet. Bring a sack lunch, and we will have an Earth Day celebration at the end of the event. A shuttle will be provided to the work site. Kids 10 years and older welcome with adult supervision.

Please call 303-441-1643 ext. 3 to register no later than April 20.

### Bat Monitoring

One day training in May (date and time to be announced) Bat monitoring is a summer project beginning in May. Bat monitors learn to identify, locate and record bat activity on BCPOS and other local public lands. Learn more about these fascinating nocturnal mammals and their importance to our ecosystems while studying their patterns of activity. Volunteers are needed at least 2 consecutive evenings per month, June through August. Call Mark Brennan for more information about the training and program at 303-441-1647.

### Wildlife Studies: Adopt-a-Transect

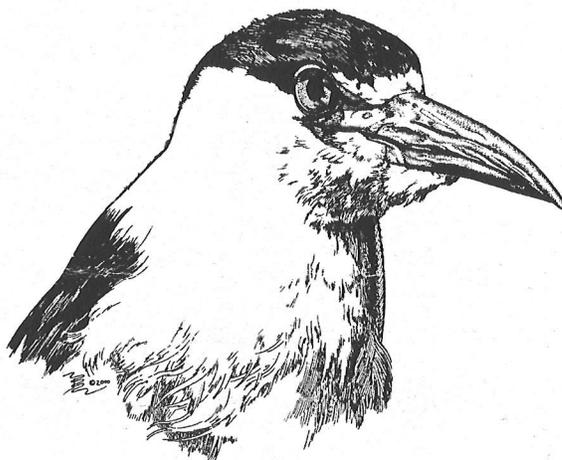
*On-going throughout the year*  
North Foothills Open Space Properties BCPOS is conducting extensive bird and small mammal studies in northern Boulder County. Volunteers are needed to observe established transects for wildlife activity and signs. The commitment is

year-round, requiring monthly visits to your assigned site. Volunteers must have wildlife and bird identification experience. Call Mark Brennan for details at 303-441-1647.

### BOOK REVIEW

#### *Acting for Nature What Young People Around the World Have Done to Protect the Environment*

Caroline, an eleven-year-old English girl with a passion for barn owls, convinced the local telephone company to build owl boxes on telephone poles, and walked 210 miles to raise awareness and money for the owls. Vincent, who grew up in the slums of Nairobi, Kenya, learned to identify more than 150 species of birds, organized field trips to local nature preserves, and led other youths in tree-planting and recycling programs. *Acting for Nature* contains these and other stories of "ordinary" kids doing remarkable things. Clearly written for readers 9 years old to the adult reading level. Inspiring and empowering. With illustrations, 112 pages, \$8.95 each. Send order to Action for Nature, 2269 Chestnut St., #263, San Francisco CA 94123; phone 415-421-2640; e-mail [action@dnai.com](mailto:action@dnai.com). A check with Boulder Bookstore found no copies in stock, but they were convinced to order a few, and will make special orders for customers.--Mike Figgs



### In Appreciation

BCNA greets two new members of the Board of Directors: Rachel Lee, who is taking over the challenging job of BCNA Treasurer, and Bev Gholson, a Board member serving in an at-large capacity. We look forward to working with Rachel and Bev.

# LAND CONSERVATION UPDATE

## Private Sector Land Conservation

Last year, the State Legislature approved a new law that provides a credit against state income tax liability for up to \$100,000 for gifts of conservation easements. This credit is in addition to those credits available for federal income and estate taxes.

## Public Sector Land Conservation

**Recent County Open Space Acquisition Highlights.** With the voters' approval last November to extend the 1993 0.25% sales tax an additional 10 years to 2019, the County issued a revenue bond in the amount of \$38 million in early 2000. The county has been busy pursuing significant wildlife habitat, among them many of the properties identified by BCNA.



**Mayhoffer/Singletree:** These properties comprise approximately 220 acres of land adjacent to old Town Superior, and will be a joint City of Boulder/Boulder County purchase. These properties are important for visual resources and wildlife habitat protection. The Mayhoffer property comprises much of the hillside on the south side of Superior, visible from Louisville, Superior and Highway 36. They include almost a mile of the Coal Creek riparian corridor. Local residents have reported the presence of a pair of Golden Eagles and many species of birds and mammals. A pre-development study on the Singletree property found Prebles Jumping Mouse. The County will likely take the management lead with consideration for the City's efforts related to the Coal Creek Riparian Corridor Restoration

Project. Since these properties are in the Superior Influence Area, the success of the deal depended on the cooperation of the sellers and the Town of Superior to approve the deal.

**Becky:** Totaling 426 acres in two parcels, a portion of this property lies east of Panama Reservoir in eastern Boulder County and contains a quarter mile of Boulder Creek and significant gravel resources. The second portion lies at the northwest corner of Niwot Road and Highway 287, surrounded on all sides by preserved County open space. The purchase price for the 426 acres is \$6,325,000. The Hwy 52 property is a part of the East County Environmental Conservation Area, and the Boulder Creek corridor also enhances the

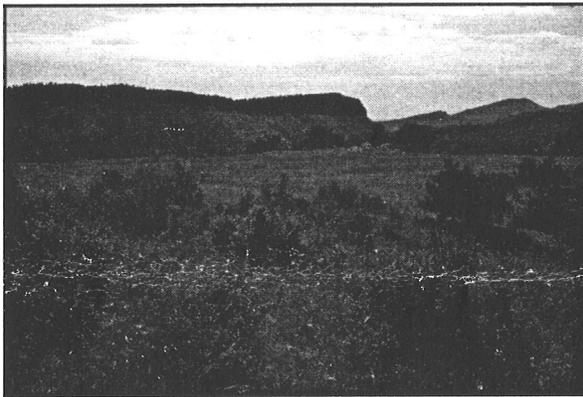
property's value for wildlife. The property is adjacent to the Panama Reservoir Critical Wildlife Habitat, with nesting habitat for several rare and restricted species including Great Blue Heron, Wood Duck and

Double-Crested Cormorant, and with roosting Bald Eagles.

**Sutherland:** The 118 acre Faivre/Sutherland property was first owned and farmed by Ron Sutherland's grandfather in the 1870s. The irrigated agricultural property is located along the east side of North Foothills Highway between Nebo Road and Plateau Road. This will be a joint purchase between the City of Boulder and Boulder County, and is important for its views and wildlife habitat. Lefthand Creek runs through the northeast corner of the property. This creative deal has the city and county purchasing the fee interest in the Faivre property along with its water rights, and simultaneously exchanging them for a conservation easement and undivided 50% share of water rights in the Sutherland property. The total cost is \$626,000 which the City of Boulder and Boulder County will share equally.

## ***Land Conservation Continued***

**Forsberg:** Located at the northeast corner of Highway 36 and Blue Mountain Road north of Lyons, this 85.5 acre property could have been subdivided for two building lots. The county paid \$600,000 for the property. Rising gradually at first then steeply from Blue Mountain Road to the east, the Forsberg property encompasses a portion of the Steamboat Mountain Critical Wildlife Habitat, a designated significant natural community, designated overland habitat connector, archeologically sensitive area and prehistoric travel route. The cliff bands on the southeast portion of the Forsberg property are home to a prairie falcon eyrie. Peregrine falcons have also used the cliffs for nesting in recent years.



**Steamboat Mountain from Sisk Conservation Easement.**

## ***Boulder County Parks and Open Space Celebrates 25th Anniversary in 2000***

To mark its 25th year of official existence, the Boulder County Parks and Open Space Department is planning a series of special events. The March 17th Heil Valley Ranch Grand Opening was the kickoff event. The County Commissioners will host a banquet on April 10th to thank and honor long-time volunteers, coinciding with National Volunteer Week. In June, a ceremony is planned to dedicate the "Carolyn Holmberg Preserve/Rock Creek Farm". The final event planned is the grand opening of the Agricultural Heritage Center at Lohr-McIntosh Farm in late fall.

## ***Websites of Interest***

### ***American Birding Association***

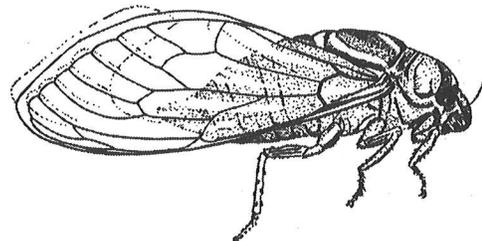
This is North America's largest membership organization for active birders. The organization's goal is to provide leadership to field birders by increasing their knowledge, skills, and enjoyment of birding, and by contributing to bird conservation. Of particular value is the Code of Birding Ethics found at <http://www.americanbirding.org/abaethics.htm>.

### ***A Naturalist's World***

Run by former long time Boulder resident Jim Halfpenny and Diann Thompson, this program is dedicated to providing educational programs and materials about natural history and ecology. Classes include tracking, carnivore ecology, wildlife observation, rare species, northern lights, and winter ecology. Instructional programs vary from 2 days to 2 weeks. Programs are provided at a variety of locations across North America. Visit the Website at [www.tracknature.com](http://www.tracknature.com).

### ***Restoration Projects Presentation***

The Central Rockies Chapter of the Society for Ecological Restoration (CeRSER) is hosting a general membership meeting open to the public on Wednesday, April 26, 7:30 P.M. at the Lafayette Public Library, 775 W. Baseline Road, Lafayette. Don D'Amico from City of Boulder Open Space will speak on the restoration of Sombrero Marsh, an important wetland in Boulder, as well as restoration along Coal Creek. For more information or for directions, call Rita Berberian 303-455-8422.



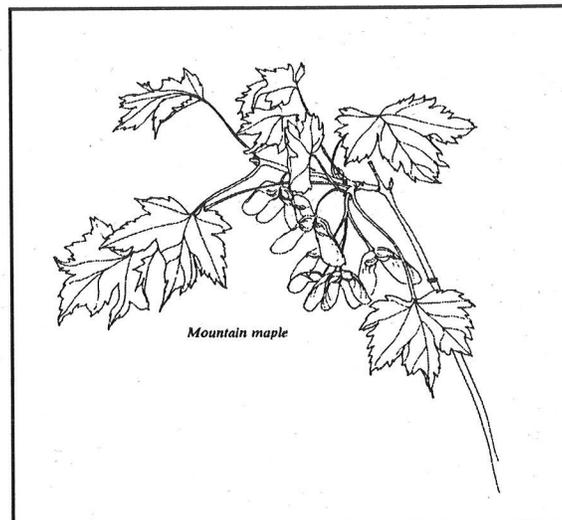
# BCNA HISTORY & MILESTONES

## PART ONE: THE HISTORICAL SETTING

The early 1980's were a time of uncertainty in the preservation and management of the natural resources of Boulder County. Property owners, developers, government agencies and environmental organizations were constantly at loggerheads on controversial land use issues. Resolution of these issues by means of comprehensive planning was a relatively new process, having started for the most part in the mid to late 1970's. County staff struggled at times with the scientific justification and policy implications of the Environmental Resources Element of the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan, first adopted in 1978.

In the wake of the failure of the open space sales tax initiative in 1978, the Boulder County Parks and Open Space program was primarily funded, in a significantly reduced manner, by a highly political allocation of property taxes. After the initiation of the acquisition of the Walker Ranch and Betasso properties, the program appeared to be languishing. The City of Boulder Open Space program was just beginning to take off in a big way, but had to shoulder a heavy burden by acquiring lands that were originally envisioned being acquired by the County. This became painfully evident after the City condemned the System Development Corporation property along Highway 93 near the Jefferson County border in 1980 (now known as the Flatirons Vista parcel).

Local environmental organizations were often preoccupied with responding to the latest development proposal, typically in a frantic and uncoordinated manner, and usually participated only late in the agency review process. Close communication and cooperation between these organizations was the exception, not the rule. There was little communication between these organizations and the staff of the land use and land management agencies. Other than the Colorado Mountain Club (CMC), local



environmental organizations generally failed to make substantive and effective comment on the first Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests Land and Resource Management Plan, approved in 1982. One of the first plans completed by the Forest Service in the entire country, this plan was to guide the management of approximately 25% of the surface area of Boulder County. The plan was driven by commercial timber sales, and was appealed by CMC.

Astonishingly little was known about many aspects of the natural history of Boulder County. Apart from favored birding areas around Boulder, and research sites used by the University of Colorado, such as Niwot Ridge, large areas of the County had not been investigated and assessed for their potential value to biodiversity. Some attempts to address this situation were made by volunteers from environmental organizations, such as the Boulder County Wildlife Inventory compiled by the Boulder County Audubon Society, but many areas were poorly covered and the "big picture" had not emerged.

In addition to these difficult issues, the County Volunteer Naturalist program had been threatened to be dissolved by one of the County Commissioners. Necessity being the mother of invention, the time was ripe for the emergence of a new vision in the preservation and management of natural resources. There was a yearning for a more effective, strategic, and comprehensive approach to these issues.

Next time: Part Two, 1982-1984, Getting Started.--Mike Figgs

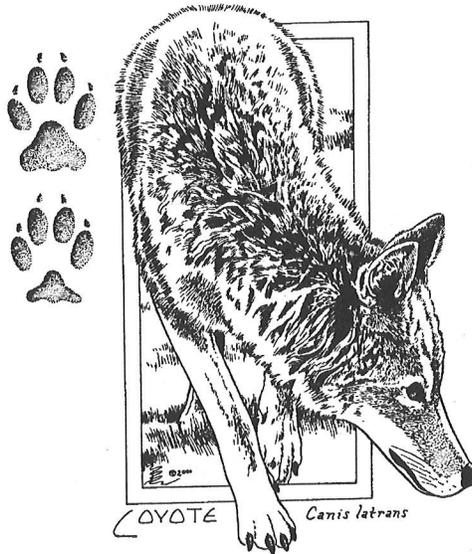
# Wild Steps

## Milestones in Boulder County Resource Management

### Lynx & Predators

The Lynx restoration effort will continue this year. Approximately 52 animals will be trapped and brought from Canada and Alaska to the San Luis Valley. All will be held for at least 3 weeks and none will be released before April 1. This was the third and most successful protocol used in last year's lynx release. All Lynx released this year will be fitted with satellite transmitter collars so that they can be tracked on a real time basis and thus provide much better information as to the travels of individual animals.

Rumors keep surfacing about the possible creation of a state board to monitor predator management policies. With this administration, I worry that the emphasis will be on predator control rather than management. One of the big concerns for the environmental community is whether predators will be controlled to enhance big game hunting. This is something the Colorado Division of Wildlife would prefer not to do. However the director of the Department of Natural Resources now has a great deal of authority over the division and could direct them to do so.--Jim McKee



but that the states involved have a little time to take actions that might preclude the need to list.

The Colorado Department of Natural Resources has initiated a Request for Procurement (RFP) asking for an environmental consultant to make a map of the prairie dog towns in eastern Colorado using all available aerial photographs and then to perform ground truthing on 1/4 of the towns to obtain an estimate of the number that are currently occupied. If followed by aerial surveys of the sort developed by John Sidle of the U.S. Forest Service, this would provide a reasonable estimate of both prairie dog acreage and distribution which, in turn, would be the starting pointing for future work directed toward protection and restoration to desired population levels.

The state prairie dog Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) has been signed by most parties and we are starting to develop the supporting work plan. I volunteered to work on this (work plan), along with one person each from the Colorado Division of Wildlife, Colorado Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Once the work plan is established, I plan to continue to work on public involvement and landowner incentives.

### Black-tailed Prairie Dogs

On February 3, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determined that listing as threatened was warranted, but precluded because of lack of sufficient resources and other, higher priority species. This means that the status of the Black-tailed Prairie Dog must be reviewed every year

Today there is no protection whatever for the Black-tailed Prairie Dog. They can be shot with almost any weapon, poisoned, or whatever. On Thursday, March 9, I made a presentation to the Colorado Wildlife Commission requesting that a daily bag limit of 5 and a seasonal closure from March 15 until July 1 (to protect females with dependent young) be instituted. The purpose of this request was to help ensure that there are still

## ***Wild Steps Continued***

### ***Black-tailed Prairie Dogs Continued***

some prairie dogs around when we decide what we want to do to protect and restore the necessary population(s). John Mumma strongly supported this request and also asked that the commission and the Colorado Department of Agriculture jointly review policies regarding the use of toxicants. Since the BCNA board was not comfortable with my proposal, I pursued it as a private citizen, and not as a representative of BCNA

If you have any questions regarding my efforts or the status of state activities in general, call me at (303)494-3393 or send an e-mail to [jimmckee@prodigy.net](mailto:jimmckee@prodigy.net)--Jim McKee.

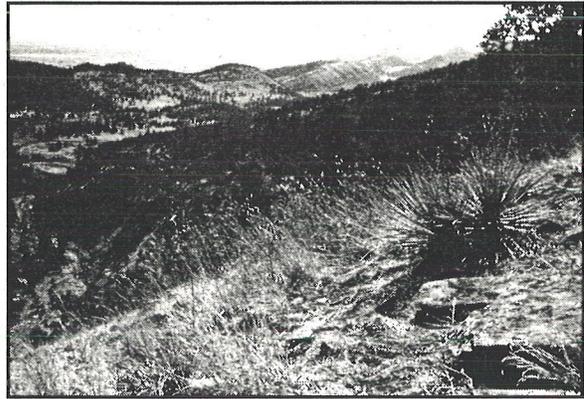
### ***POSAC Action on Proposed Dog Ban from North Foothills Open Space***

The Boulder County Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee (POSAC) voted 10-2 to recommend that the DOG moratorium be extended for an additional five years on Hall and Heil Ranches. The staff recommendation was for a permanent ban.

Hall Ranch has been off limits to dogs since it opened. In mid-1997, the combination of low leash law compliance on comparable properties and significant wildlife values were cited by many members of the North Foothills Open Space Advisory Committee (NFOSAC) and POSAC, as well as the Board of County Commissioners, to extend the moratorium for some period of time while wildlife studies continued to gather information, trail development could be completed and recreational uses became established at Hall Ranch. Currently, all Boulder County Parks and Open Space properties are open to dogs on leash.

The Board of County Commissioners has the final decision making authority on this issue; they will hold a public hearing on Thursday, May 4 at 2:00 p.m. to consider this matter. Letters and public testimony on this issue have been split roughly 50-50.

## ***Heil Valley Ranch Grand Opening***



The Heil Valley Ranch officially opened to the public on Friday, March 17. The Heil and Hall Ranches were among the first land purchases following passage of Boulder County's 0.25% open space sales tax in 1993. Together they comprise nearly 11,000 acres of protected land known as the North Foothills Open Space that contributes to a large block of undeveloped land including the North St. Vrain Canyon, part of U.S. Forest Service's Roosevelt National Forest, and the Trevarton Conservation Easement.

The Heil Valley Ranch was purchased in three parts, from 1994 through 1996. The Heil family leased the property back from the county until June 1999, during which time the North Foothills Open Space Management Plan was formulated and Hall Ranch was developed and opened for recreational access.

Three Conservation Areas were designated on the property by Colorado National Heritage Program, reflecting globally rare plant associations and globally and state rare butterflies. The mix of habitats provides an abundance of food, cover and denning sites for wildlife: up to 60 species of mammals could potentially use this area, and nearly 100 species of birds were counted during one observation season.

Currently, visitor activities are restricted to the picnic area and 1.3 mile Lichen Trail, accessible from Lefthand Canyon Drive. The trail is open to pedestrians only; no mountain bicycles, horses/pack animals or dogs are permitted. Additional multiple use trails are in the planning phase and will be coordinated with wildlife studies.

# BCNA Directory

## 2000 BCNA Board of Directors

President: Scott Severs (442-1322)  
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Tim Hogan (444-5577)  
Joan Ray (444-5011)  
Naseem Munshi (673-0933)  
Jacob Smith (443-5518)

## BCNA Online

BCNA's online access includes a web site: <http://www.bcna.org>, which posts the newsletter, publications, research results, and other BCNA related information; e-mail: [mail@bcna.org](mailto:mail@bcna.org); and the BCNA nature-net. To post messages on the nature net: [nature-net@telelists.com](mailto:nature-net@telelists.com), and for subscribing, [join-nature-net@telelists.com](mailto:join-nature-net@telelists.com). If you have questions regarding online access, please contact Randy Gietzen at [randyg@boulder.net](mailto:randyg@boulder.net).



## Committees and Contacts

Allegra Collister Nature Preserve and  
Birdbanding Site--Joe Harrison 772-3481  
Cliff Nesting Raptors--Nan Lederer 447-1899  
Education Committee--Naseem Munshi 673-  
0933  
Indian Peaks Bird Counts--Dave Hallock 258-  
3672 or Bill Kaempfer 939-8005  
National Forest Management--Tim Hogan 444-  
5577  
Newsletter--Mike Figgs 447-1899  
Open Space Liaisons--Jacob Smith 443-5518,  
Scott Severs 442-1322  
Parties, Special Events--Naseem Munshi 673-  
0933  
State and Regional Wildlife Issues--Jim McKee  
494-3393  
Winter Raptor Survey--Holly Devaul 415-0464

## Artwork Credits, Acknowledgements, Etc.

Page 1: Steve Jones, Joyce Gellhorn and Tim Hogan have worked on most of the details of the conference agenda, and provided a copy of the agenda for the newsletter. Page 2: Golden currant (*Ribes aureum*) line drawing by Margy Lanham. Page 3: Rocky Mountain phlox (*Phlox multiflora*) photo by Joyce Gellhorn. Page 4: fritillary on horsemint (*Monarda fistulosa*) by Nan Lederer; alpine fellfield on Mount Audubon by Mike Figgs. Page 5: big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*) on South Boulder Creek tallgrass prairie by Mike Figgs. Page 6: eagle nest monitoring photo by Nan Lederer. Page 7: black-crowned night heron portrait by Pat Redmond. Pat has granted use of these beautiful drawings for the newsletter. His artwork is for sale (303-926-9605). And thanks to Naseem Munshi for working with Pat to make his artwork available to BCNA. Page 8: eastern Boulder County scene, with Indian Peaks in the background, by Mike Figgs. Page 9: Steamboat Mountain photo by Mike Figgs. Linda George found and has promoted the American Birding Association Birding Code of Ethics. Nan and I visited with Jim Halfpenny and Diann Thompson during our February trip to Yellowstone. Jim provided perfect directions that allowed us to observe the Rose Creek wolf pack watch, in turn, a large herd of elk. Cicada by Caroline Lanham, mother of Margy Lanham. Margy was incorrectly credited with the caddis fly line drawing in the previous newsletter; it too was drawn by Caroline. Page 10: Rocky Mountain Maple (*Acer glabrum*) by Margy Lanham, really and truly. : Page 11: coyote by Pat Redmond. Page 12: Heil Valley Ranch photo, looking to the southeast, by Mike Figgs. Tina Nielsen with the Boulder County Parks & Open Space Department supplied the public sector land conservation information, and was helpful with much of the Wild Steps material. Page 13: white breasted nuthatch by Carl James Freeman, 2485 Herring Rd, Arcadia, MI 49613.

## **Membership Application for Boulder County Nature Association**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

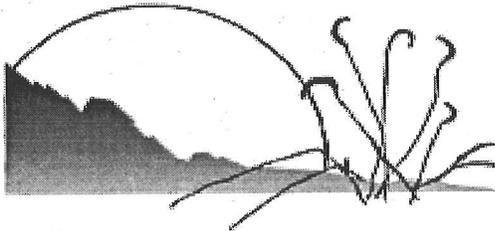
Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone, Fax or E-mail Address (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Student or senior citizen (65 and over) \$10  
\_ General Member 15  
\_ Family or Household 20  
\_ Supporter 30  
\_ Subscriber 50  
\_ Founder 100  
\_ Life Member 300  
\_ Corporate 500  
\_ Stakeholder 1000

Membership year is January 1 to December 31.  
Members who have joined since October 1 are considered paid through the following year.  
Members receive a quarterly newsletter.  
Supporting members (and above) also receive a complimentary copy of each BCNA publication that is published during the membership year.  
Please make check payable to Boulder County Nature Association or BCNA and mail to P.O. Box 493, Boulder, CO 80306.

Extra copies of the newsletter are available from the editor or sometimes at the Wild Bird Center. To submit BCNA-related material to the editor, e-mail to [m.figgs@prodigy.net](mailto:m.figgs@prodigy.net) or send a 3.5 or zip disk to Mike Figgs, 2635 Mapleton Ave. #77, Boulder, CO 80304.



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