

Boulder County Nature Association



"Our mission: To educate, inform, and inspire for the purpose of conserving and promoting resilient natural ecosystems in our region."

Volume 33, Number 2
Spring 2015

Report from the President

Sue Cass

I can officially report that your BCNA Board of Directors has been productively engaged on your and "Mother Nature's" behalf since we last visited. Winter and early spring are busy times for our organization:

- The 32nd annual Wintering Raptor Survey concluded on March 15th. (see article on page 4)
- The Education Committee put forth a great winter/spring schedule of classes that filled quickly.
- Thanks to Steve Jones, BCNA's CD *Sandhills Serenade* was prominently featured in a gorgeous photo essay in the March/April issue of *Nebraska Life* magazine (Steve's photos of the Sandhills are hauntingly beautiful!).
- The Grant Committee reviewed and selected this year's recipients of BCNA research grant funds. (See report on page 4)
- Cindy Maynard and Native American flutist Earl Correy produced a beautiful and informative synopsis of BCNA's storied history and accomplishments (see www.BCNA.org).
- Our annual meeting was warm, friendly and "yummy" as always. We welcomed new Board member Dot Fears, and BCNA research grantee Jennifer Ress shared the results of her research on *Algal Communities of Two Rocky Mountain Front Range Streams* (Boulder and St. Vrain Creeks), an obviously thorough and important baseline study.
- Our biggest event of the year in terms of time, energy and imagination, the 23rd annual Ecosystem Symposium "*Recovery and Resilience*", was pulled off in a new venue without a hitch. (See article on page 2)

Whew!

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Ecosymposium 2015 – Summary

Peter Kleinman

This year our Symposium concerned “Restoration and Resiliency: Planning for the Future.” Those of us who were there were able to enjoy interesting presentations which were well-presented, timely, and unusually optimistic about some things that can be accomplished when resources are thoughtfully and scientifically put together. Of note is that many of the projects are labor and money intensive, even after a restoration is complete, requiring ongoing attention, and thus falling short of true sustainability in the natural world. That doesn't make projects any less important or interesting.

John Mack of the National Park Service placed these projects in perspective, taking an important educational perspective. Daylan Figgs of the City of Fort Collins Natural Areas Department and Will Keeley of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks talked about black-footed ferret and peregrine falcon recoveries. Lynn Riedel of OSMP talked about Ute ladies'-tresses orchids Management Program, especially in South Boulder Creek's drainage. Professor Andrew Martin of CU Biology spoke about genetic research on the Greenback cutthroat trout, a fascinating detective story tracking this interesting fish in the face of 150 years of stocking and hybridizing. Jake Ivan with Colorado Parks and Wildlife talked about the State's lynx reintroduction program, and Steve Jones and Susan Spaulding of BCNA and Boulder County Parks and Open Space talked about the growth of our nesting bald eagle populations.

We are deeply grateful to Boulder County for the collaboration and use of their Longmont facility, lending the conference a more intimate atmosphere. We hopefully can repeat that venue for next year. We are grateful to everyone for coming and actively participating.

We are now considering a theme for next year's conference having to do with the interface of conservation with other user activities. But we are open to other ideas that may intrigue people. Please feel free to communicate with Megan Bowes or Peter Kleinman. Go to our website, www.bcna.org, to read abstracts of the presentations given at the Ecosymposium.

Introducing New Board Member, Dot Fears . . .

By the time I first moved to Boulder County from the East Coast in 1975, my passion for nature was already deeply instilled. I learned everything I could about the flora and fauna of the Boulder area. I hiked the foothills and high country, took a wilderness survival course, and wrote letters encouraging the establishment of Indian Peaks Wilderness.

In 1982 my husband and I moved to Hawaii where, besides raising two children and operating our own business offering boat tours of the NaPali Coast, I was also a U.S. Fish and Wildlife trained volunteer at the Kilauea Lighthouse National Wildlife Refuge banding birds and interpreting to visitors. I was also a docent and gave tours of the National Tropical Botanic Gardens at Limahuli.



Shortly after returning to Colorado I trained to be a Volunteer Naturalist with Boulder County Parks and Open Space and have been delighted to lead interpretive hikes for the past six years. I find nature to be endlessly fascinating and love sharing my knowledge and enthusiasm with others. I feel it is through the experience of nature and learning about its wonders that we may discover a kinship and interest in preserving and stewarding our precious wildlife and wild lands.

As a Board member I hope to offer my skills and enthusiasm to further contribute to this important service.



Black-footed Ferret. Credit: J. Michael Lockhart /USFWS

SPRING CALENDAR

Why is a Rose a Rose and Not a Mustard?

Dot Fears and Claudia Van Wie
 Saturday, May 2, 9:00 AM to Noon



Join Dot Fears and Claudia Van Wie to hone your wildflower identification skills. This short course will introduce and review the patterns and similarities of several of the local early season wildflower families, followed by a hike to practice with the wildflowers we find. This will be a great start to enjoying the new wildflower season! Meet Saturday, May 2, at 9:00 AM at the Rabbit Mountain trailhead northeast of Lyons on North 55th Street. Be prepared for a muddy trail and typical May changeable weather. We will provide morning treats and ask you to bring your own drinks. Please register by sending an email to BCNAhikes@bcna.org.

**International Migratory Bird Day
 Fifth Annual "Walk in the Wild" at Walden Ponds**

Saturday, May 16, 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Environment for the Americas (EFTA) is a non-profit based in Boulder that focuses on environmental issues regarding migratory birds. This event is a family day where the local community can visit Walden Ponds and learn about the nature and wildlife around us through fun and educational activities, including guided bird walks, wild raptors, education stations, prizes, and a silent auction, as well as free food. The event is also a fundraiser (donations are welcome) for habitat restoration at Walden Ponds. See the event website for additional information, www.boulderbirdday.dojiggy.com.



Green-Tailed Towhee

Scott Severs

Sandhills Serenade

Steve Jones
 Tuesday, May 26, 7:15 PM

Covering more than 20,000 square miles, the Nebraska Sandhills comprise the largest remaining expanse of native prairie in North America. From trumpeting sandhill cranes and booming prairie-chickens in early spring to dramatic thunderstorms and wailing screech-owls in late summer, these new recordings capture the wild beauty of this breathtaking landscape. Steve will present his most recent images of wildlife, wildflowers, and dramatic landscapes, accompanied by sounds recorded during more than 400 nights of camping out alone in the Sandhills. He'll also give tips on when to visit and how to access remote wildlife-watching spots. Copies of Sandhills Serenade and other recent BCNA publications will be on sale after the program. Sponsored by Boulder Audubon at Boulder Unitarian Universalist Church, 5001 Pennsylvania Ave.



Flower Adaptations to a Harsh Environment

Dot Fears and Claudia Van Wie
 Sunday, June 28, 9:00 AM to 1:00 AM

Strong winds, intense sunlight, short summers. How do so many plants survive and bloom so vigorously? Join Dot Fears and Claudia Van Wie as we look at various strategies local wildflowers have developed to survive in our sometimes challenging environment. We will observe these adaptations first hand as we climb Caribou Hill and revel in the variety and abundance of wildflowers on this rocky, windblown hilltop. Bring your lunch and beverage for a picnic break to take in the views.

Meet Sunday, June 28, at 9:00 AM at the Park and Ride in Nederland. We will carpool up to Caribou Townsite on a dirt and gravel road suitable for two-wheel drive vehicles, returning to Nederland at 1:00 PM. Wear sturdy shoes, bring a warm jacket and rain gear for unpredictable weather at 10,000 feet elevation. To register email BCNAhikes@bcna.org. Please let us know whether you plan to meet us at the Park and Ride in Nederland (9:00 AM) or at Caribou Townsite (9:30 AM).

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**Connect with nature:
nature-net-subscribe@yahoogroups.com**

BCNA Grants Awarded for 2015

Peter Kleinman
Chairman, Grants Committee

This year the Grants Committee of BCNA is awarding four grants which should be of interest to everyone. Janet Chu will continue her butterfly inventory research and take a look at the affects of the flood on butterfly populations. Megan Mueller of Rocky Mountain Wild will continue their research on the pika, an important indicator species for climate warming; their project combines good science methodology with a large volunteer group trained to do observations. Vanessa Diaz will receive funds for looking at the genetics of lichen diploidy, since their biological survival depends on the combination of two species. And, finally, Nora Covy from Northern Colorado University will be looking at the impact of rock climbing on a variety of avian species.

BCNA is delighted to help with support for a variety of county projects. We encourage people to spread the word about the BCNA grant program so we can continue to bring in a variety of ideas and play a role in the citizen-based research we treasure.

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Introducing Gerry Kelly,

New BCNA Rep for State and Regional Wildlife Issues

I have a BS in Biology and MS in Environmental Management. I had a 39-year career in Environmental Management, concentrating on impact and risk assessment, pollution control, environmental remediation, and regulatory compliance. Much of my professional experience involved strategic planning with a wide variety of stakeholders, including state and federal agencies and citizens groups. I have been a Boulder County Volunteer Naturalist since 2006 and have been monitoring eagles for the County for at least five years. I am a member of BCNA and Audubon, and have been an active hiker, birder and wildlife enthusiast all of my adult life.

Note: We thank Gerry for his gracious and generous offer to assume this important position, tracking state and regional wildlife issues. We also extend our thanks to Jim McKee and Peter Kleinman who previously filled this position for many years.

BCNA Wintering Raptor Survey
Sue Cass, Raptor Survey Coordinator

The 32nd annual BCNA wintering raptor survey season wrapped up on March 15, 2015 just as all the previous seasons had with one big exception. The piles of maps and report forms were missing and the sometimes difficult job of deciphering what was scribbled on those report forms had evaporated with the forms. Woohoo! Or more precisely, wufoo! We've gone electronic! Thanks to Michelle Durant, Wildlife Specialist with Boulder County Parks and Open Space (BCPOS), our wintering raptor survey efforts have been folded into the county's data gathering system and our monitors made a seamless transition to the process. My job of coordination and the job of deciphering data are now much easier. Thank you Michelle and BCPOS! Thank you volunteers!

Do you remember last winter? Some of us were introduced to a new meteorological term...., polar vortex. Polar vortices were responsible for a mass influx of Rough-legged Hawks into our area. Well, similar meteorological conditions existed in much of the upper Midwest and Northeast this winter with a much different outcome. It actually appears we experienced fewer Rough-legs than we would in a normal year. When we figure out why and where they went we'll let you know. Oh, and have you heard? We apparently are in the midst of an unprecedented vole irruption which should be good news for our birds of prey as they enter the breeding season. Stay tuned!

A total of 140 reports were submitted by 62 monitors contributing over 400 hours. They are: John Adams; Kari, Chuck and Skylar Armstrong; James and Dale Ball; Ben Blaugrund; Liza Boyle; Barbara Brandt; Kerrie Bryan; Sue and Alan Cass; Karen Clark; George Coffee; Pat Cullen; Michael and Jean Delaney; James Duesenberry; Fern Ford; Alli Fronzaglia; Robert and Sheila Frost; Bernie and Marlyn Gay; Linda Gathany; Brinda Henley; Jennifer Hyypio; Amy Iwata; Sam Jaffe; Dianna Johnston; Carol Kampert; Elena Klaver; Kristin Laubach; Viki Lawrence; Joe Lupfer; Topiltzin Martinez; Cindy Maynard; Carol McCasland; Doyle McClure; Heidi Meyers; Becky Neumann; Joe and Beccy Pem; Sue and Mark Ponsor; Karen Prisby; Ira and Tammy Sanders; Carol Sazama; Wendy Sydow; Darin Toohey; Mark Venzke; Mort and Lysa Wegman-French; Maribel Williams; Howard and Pattiann Witkin; Kristi and Kevin Winseck; Tom VanZandt; George Young and Greg Young.

(Calendar, continued from page 3)

Birds and Butterflies of Upper Gregory Canyon

Steve Jones

Thursday, July 9, 7:00 to 11:00 AM

Savor the songs of two dozen forest bird species, and then observe fritillaries, crescents, sulphurs, and skippers nectaring on blooming mints and sunflowers. This ecosteward-led trip will provide information about how you can adopt your own wild area for study and protection. Limited to 15 participants. Contact Steve (curlewsj@comcast.net; 303-494-2468) to sign up. For more information about the Ecostewardship program see www.bcna.org.

Birds and Insects of Boulder's Tallgrass Prairies

Steve Jones and Janet McLachlan

Saturday, August 15, 7:30 to 10:30 AM

Join ecostewards Steve Jones and Janet McLachlan on a leisurely stroll through the tallgrass and mixed-grass prairies of the South Boulder Creek State Natural Area. We should see monarch and wood nymph butterflies, along with blue grosbeaks, waxwings, milkweed beetles, mantids, and lots of other insects. Meet at the South Boulder Creek west trailhead, on South Broadway one mile south of Greenbriar Blvd. at 7:30 AM. We will finish up around 10:30 AM. Limited to 12 participants. To reserve a space contact Steve at curlewsj@comcast.net; 303-494-2468.



Variegated Meadowhawk Dragonfly, South Boulder Creek
by Howard Witkin

'Tis the Season to Purge Your Spurge

Morgan Crowley, Wildland Restoration Volunteers

As winter draws to a close, spring, at last, is beginning to peak through the leaf litter with its harbingers of bloom! One of these early-to-rise flowers is not the spring beauty we once wished it to be and has made a name for itself as a very unwelcome guest. I'm talking about Myrtle Spurge (*Euphorbia myrsinites*) folks. Most of you have by now heard the name if not spent many years battling its ranks in your own back yards.

If you're new to it, it may deceive you with its drought tolerant growth and, some say, pretty yellow flowers that are indeed early on the scene. DO NOT be deceived! This Mediterranean native is a dangerous invader. Myrtle spurge has a highly toxic milky sap that can cause skin to burn and blister; if ingested the plant can cause nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Especially harmful to children and pets, it's no friend to wildlife either and is not only inedible, but aggressively out-competes the wildlife supporting native plants in our ecosystem. Myrtle spurge is known to replace entire landscapes creating a toxic monoculture. Sounds like bad news right? The State of Colorado would agree and has designated Myrtle Spurge a List 'A' Noxious Weed that is legally mandated for statewide eradication by the Colorado Department of Agriculture. Indeed Spurge is more illegal in Colorado than another "weed" making headlines these days.

If this all sounds bleak, fear not, there is hope! Last year, several non-profit organizations, including BCNA and Wildlands Restoration Volunteers (WRV), partnered with local governments to create a Myrtle Spurge Coalition aimed at stepping up the efforts to eradicate this truly obnoxious weed.

Through a combination of direct mail campaigns, social media, press coverage, community workshops and presentations, door to door canvassing, and technical assistance through volunteer weed-pulls, the Myrtle Spurge Coalition dramatically expanded public awareness of myrtle spurge and reached out to a conservative count of nearly 800,000 people by the end of 2014. We organized multiple volunteer weed-pulls to assist homeowners with Myrtle Spurge removal last year.

One participant in the program last year said; "We had a hard time getting the myrtle spurge under control with other methods recommended. This program has helped us get a fresh start."

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(Message, continued from page 1)

Due to a major snow storm on February 21st, the date of our annual meeting was originally scheduled, we wisely postponed the meeting to the next available date of March 7th. This prudent decision contributed to one of the busiest weeks I can remember in my many years of BCNA service: the annual meeting on Saturday, March 7th, a regularly scheduled Board meeting on Sunday, March 8th, followed by a very busy week of preparation for the symposium the following Saturday, March 14th and a looming newsletter deadline. To all the Board and committee members who contributed to this amazing list of accomplishments and to the "marathon" week in March, THANK YOU!

Treasurer's Report
Howard Witkin

We ended last year, 2014, with a negative cash flow of just over a \$1,000.00. This was due to two events; we paid for the publishing and printing of the Dragonfly book and Dawn Chorus CD with a combined cost of over \$8,200.00. We had anticipated a greater loss, but with the surprising number of sales of the Butterfly and Dragonfly books and the Dawn Chorus CDs we exceeded our income expectations.

This year looks promising as our classes continue to be well-attended. To keep our books and CDs sales up we are experimenting with on-line sales through our own web page and the two books through Amazon.

As of March 7, 2015 our account balances were:
First Bank (checking account) \$21,687.34
First Bank (CD) \$27,955.75

1st National (checking) \$2,036.68
1st National (savings) \$9,438.52

Have you renewed your membership for 2015?
The strength in BCNA
lies in active membership support!

We invite you to report your sightings to
www.coloradofrontrangebutterflies.com

BCNA Board of Directors

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(Spurge, continued from page 5)

We also organized "Purge Your Spurge" exchange events across the Front Range to provide free native plants to residents that brought in their own pulled and bagged Spurge. Both of these programs will continue in 2015 as we look to continue growing the Coalition and decreasing the populations of Myrtle Spurge along the Front Range.

How you can help

This spring we'll be focusing our educational efforts on some new neighborhoods. Informational letters and applications to participate in the volunteer assisted pulls have been sent out to residents in the Wonderland Lake area of Boulder, North Table Mountain in Golden and along Olde Stage Road and Wagonwheel Gap in Boulder County. We'll be hosting several volunteer pulling events in these areas, in addition to holding nearly twice as many "Purge Your Spurge" Exchange events this year as last. Myrtle Spurge Education and Outreach Canvassers will hit the ground in coming weeks to continue the education efforts.

If you want to help rid our state of Myrtle Spurge:

Volunteer for WRV on one of our Myrtle Spurge projects! Projects are scheduled for April 18th, May 2nd, May 6th, May 17th and September 15th.

Pull and bag your Myrtle Spurge and bring it to one of the scheduled "Purge Your Spurge" exchange events below.

When Purging Spurge it's important to remember to follow these safety precautions!

- Remember that Myrtle Spurge is highly toxic and the sap from the plant can seriously harm you.
- **Always wear eye protection, rubber or latex gloves and long sleeves when pulling the plant.**
- Bag any plants you pull and dispose of them in the trash. **Do not compost Myrtle Spurge.**
- Myrtle Spurge is a perennial; be sure to pull up the entire taproot to prevent regrowth.
- Pull Myrtle Spurge every spring! Myrtle Spurge seeds can be viable for up to nine years, so remember to check every year for any new growth.

To sign up for volunteer pulling events go to www.wrv.org or call Morgan Crowley, Weed Campaign & Restoration Project Coordinator for WRV, at (303) 543-1411 X 3#.

"Purge Your Spurge" Exchange Events

Bring in your bagged Myrtle Spurge to any of these events and receive free native plants in exchange! You can find more information about these events and get involved by visiting "Purge Your Spurge" on Facebook.

Sat, April 18: Longmont, CO - 9am-Noon @ The Boulder County Fairgrounds.

Sat, April 25: Louisville, CO - 9am-Noon @ Daughenbaugh Open Space located on West Cherry St. East of McCaslin Blvd.

Golden, CO - 9am-2pm @ 900 Jefferson County Pkwy, in the Jefferson County Human Services Lot.

Sat, May 2: Boulder, CO - 9am-Noon @ 6400 Arapahoe Rd. in conjunction with the Center for Resource Conservation's "Garden-in-a-Box" Program.

Saturday, May 16: Denver, CO - 9am-Noon @ 888 East Iliff Avenue Denver, CO. The Denver Natural Area's Program will be hosting the first of two Purge The Spurge events at the CSU Extension Denver office in conjunction with the "Plant-a-Palooza" plant sale.

Saturday, June 6: Denver, CO - 9am-Noon @ the Denver City Park Greenhouse.



Myrtle Spurge

Support the Boulder County Nature Association

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____ required if you wish to receive the BCNA BUZZ

Type of Membership:

_____ Student/Senior (65 or over)	\$15
_____ General Member	\$20
_____ Family or Household	\$30
_____ Supporter	\$40
_____ Founder	\$100
_____ Life Member	\$300
_____ Corporate	\$500

- _____ Donation to General Research Grants
- _____ Donation to Evenson Big Cat Research Grants
- _____ Donation to General Research Fund

The membership year is January 1 to December 31. Those who join after October 1 are considered members in good standing through the following year. All members receive this quarterly newsletter. Supporter-level members and higher also receive a complimentary copy of each BCNA publication.

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

For online renewals, please visit <http://bcna.org/member.html>

Boulder County Nature Association
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