



BOULDER COUNTY NATURE ASSOCIATION

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

SUMMER 2018

Volume 36, Number 2

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Sue Cass, BCNA President

Hello, BCNA members! As you are aware, the BCNA Board of Directors is making adjustments in the way we communicate on a regular basis that incorporates the social and technical aspects of our time or..., in other words..., BCNA is finally getting with the program!

The number of actual “newsletters” like the one you are currently reading will be reduced from four (4) quarterly issues to two (2) and will be augmented by the electronic BCNA “Buzz” that can be posted quickly when issues or events of import arise.

This action will have multiple impacts including reduced costs (paper, printing, postage) and, a big one, reduced time to reach out and inform on

topics of interest or concern to you, our valued members who help support BCNA’s mission.

It will be important for you to be on the alert for BCNA “Buzz” communications that will keep us tuned in to environmental concerns for our fast-growing community and region that continuously require our focused attention and action.

We thank you and value your support and suggestions for BCNA’s future good health and continued environmental relevance!

*Giant Red Indian Paintbrush
(Castilleja Miniata)
Photo By: Bridget Sandoval*



EDUCATION NEWS

2018 Classes Still Underway

By Mary Stuber, BCNA Education Coordinator

Oh my gosh, what a fantastic year of classes this has been! Almost all of them have filled up and you've given us rave reviews. Thank you for continuing to support our efforts to bring you quality outdoor education on subjects that interest you. Without you, there would be no education program. You keep our classes going.

This year, with Jennifer Frazer, we've examined the strange world of lichens – neither plant nor algae really – but a strange symbiotic conglomeration of organisms that make it possible for each other to survive. We see them all the time, but we never really get down and look at them. Magnification reveals more beauty and variety than we ever dreamed in this “crusty stuff” stuck on the rocks and trees all around us.

We were invited to ask ourselves



*Looking at lichen on a stromatolite along the NCAR trail with Jennifer Frazer.
Photo by: Mary Stuber*

how we approach the world before us, how we see it when we want to try and capture images with our cameras. Once we've seen something it enters our memory. When we see it next, those memories color our present vision.

How can we enter a new state of mind and see things as if for the

the first time, fool the demons of familiarity and expectations when we go out to practice not only the craft but the art of photography?

Chris Brown calls photography “the exploration of the familiar in search of the mysterious” and tried to teach us a little of what he means by that.

We took a deep dive into the warbler family learning about their general characteristics and songs, as well as their

evolution. Then we set out to find the western warblers that we have here, along with a few other species that were migrating through. We got great close-up looks at Virginia's, MacGillivray's, and American Redstart, in addition to our more common warblers. Thanks to our instructor, Paula Hansley, who persevered through a stretch of rainy weather and went above and beyond to get everyone out into the field.

*Right: Grassland explorers in Crow Valley, Pawnee National Grasslands with Steve Jones
Photo By: Steve Jones*

*Below: What the camera sees – sumac shapes along the Homestead Trail with Chris Brown
Photo By: Mary Stuber*





For those willing and able to camp, Steve Jones led us to a remote part of Pawnee National Grassland for a beautiful night on the prairie under the full moon. We enjoyed walks there and in Boulder, finding evidence of the Cretaceous seabed that once covered us, and looking for birds, animals, and plants unique to grassland ecosystems. We will join him again in August for his final field trips when grass seed heads are mature and the prairie is circling toward another winter season.

What can I say about Sue Riffe's Foothills and Montane Bird Identification classes that could describe the experience she provided those who signed up for either of these two new

classes? From my own experience of birding with her, I knew that people would be astounded by not only the depth of her knowledge and uncanny ear-birding capabilities but her ease in sharing what she knows so that you can begin to use these skills yourself.

She led us on walks where we not only found most of the birds we were looking for but where we got what she calls "A" looks at them. The photographers among us were ecstatic. I hope to share some of their photos with you in the future. And the best news is that she's interested in teaching more classes for BCNA!

So many of us are frustrated when it comes to distinguishing between the seemingly infinite variety of Asteraceae. And with grasses, we throw up our hands in defeat. It's not that we wouldn't like to be able to identify these species confidently. It's just hard.

Northern Flicker female leaving her nest for more caterpillars at Rocky Mtn National Park with Sue Riffe.

Photo By: Mary Stuber

Studying plant families and keying them out takes a commitment and someone in the know who can help you get started.

We moved along that path this year with Jennifer Ackerfield from CSU.

No, we're not botanists yet. But she gave us some good tools and tips to unlock the mysteries of perianths and ligules. If botanists hadn't felt the need to create an entirely new language of their own terminology, it might have been easier! But then, that's half the fun.

By the time you read this, we will have studied Front Range butterflies and their habitat needs with Amy Yarger. Unfortunately, we had to cancel our look back on 300 million years of Boulder's geologic history with Roger Myers until a future date.

What a range of subjects we've covered, and what an amazing amount of knowledge has been shared with us through the generosity of instructors who are willing to do even more than the jobs they already have.



*Jennifer Ackerfield helps students key out a grass along the NCAR trail.
Photo By: Mary Stuber*

Thank you to every one of you – people who helped me with the program, people who took the classes, and people who taught them – for another great year of Boulder County Nature Association's Ecological Field Classes.



BUTTERFLY COUNTS

within Boulder County

By Janet Chu

We invited those scientists who were awarded BCNA research grants to tell us about their work.

BCNA awarded a 2018 Grant supporting the transportation and equipment for volunteers to complete two transects counting butterfly species and populations in Boulder County Open Space parks.

Presently, there are four volunteers hiking and using the Pollard transect method; Venice Kelly near Caribou, Dan Fosco in Walker Ranch Loop Trail, Sue Hirschfeld in Heil Ranch Geer Watershed and Cathy Comstock in Anne U. White (by special permit). Over time transects produce verifiable data because of defined, repeatable-count areas and data-gathering techniques.

This data will be scientifically valuable when the butterfly counts are repeated year-to-year, in 10 or 20 years. Early in March, these enthusiastic Citizen Scientists were in the field using GPS and Google Earth to choose the transects for this summer.

Our inventories during the past 14 years have helped us gain expertise discerning among the possible 200 Boulder County species sighted historically. We thank you for providing this opportunity to further know these delicate, yet beautiful butterfly species.



*Weidemeyer's Admiral
(Limenitis weidemeyerii)
Photo By: Paul Schultz*



LOVING DRAGONFLIES

at High Altitude

By Katrina Loewy

Photo By: Katrina Loewy

Lack of knowledge threatens the Hudsonian emerald (*Somatochlora hudsonica*), a dragonfly found in Boulder County and listed as sensitive both by Colorado Parks and Wildlife and the USDA Forest Service.

We visit three ponds, arrayed around 9,500 ft. above sea level, hoping to fill gaps in understanding for one species: the Hudsonian Emerald dragonfly.

This uncommon dragonfly has the dubious honor of being listed as a USDA Forest Service

species of conservation concern. The southernmost peninsula of its range places it right in our backyard.

Our goal is to uncover the species' habitat needs, providing that valuable information to land managers who want to protect the Hudsonian Emerald and the delicate ecosystem that supports it.

When I reached the first pond a full two weeks before our start date in 2017, there was no crust of snow ringing the pond.

Intern Chris Scott at work monitoring dissolved oxygen, water conductance, pH, and temperature at one of the pond sites on Boulder County Parks and Open Space land. June 21, 2018.

The water level was noticeably lower than the previous year, nowhere near where it had been lapping at the trunks of the surrounding aspens. I knew it would only get lower as the season wore on. The dragonfly community was different, too, and more active.

There were no Hudsonian Emeralds. But a couple weeks ago, I was rewarded. As we packed to leave for the day, a dragonfly with emerald eyes

floated straight up from the tall aquatic vegetation.

He came closer to examine me, casually, fearlessly, and I saw his white rings. "They're here!" I called to Chris, "They exist!"



THE COLORADO TAX RETURN CHECKOFF to Support Colorado Wildlife

Please considering helping threatened and endangered wildlife with a voluntary contribution through the “nongame and endangered wildlife cash fund” on your Colorado tax returns this year.

Filling out line No. 1 of Colorado tax form 104CH (the Voluntary Contributions Schedule form) supports wildlife rehabilitation and preservation of threatened and endangered species in the state through Colorado Parks and Wildlife programs.

Colorado Parks & Wildlife is one of the organizations included on Colorado state income tax form 104A as part of Checkoff Colorado, which allows taxpayers to make voluntary contributions to the organizations of their choice when filing their state

income tax returns. Contributors specify the amount of their donation. Donations are tax deductible and help support around 750 species of wildlife that cannot be hunted, fished or trapped. Funds go to projects that manage or recover wildlife including birds of prey, lynx, river otter, black-footed ferret and others.

Please consider donating something to the nongame voluntary contribution program on Line 1 of your form 104CH this year. If you use a tax preparer, please ask how you can donate to the Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Cash Fund.

[Learn More](#)

*Black-footed Ferret
(Mustela Nigripes)*



BCNA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT

Sue Cass
720-684-6922

VICE PRESIDENT

Vicki Braunagel
303-746-6039

TREASURER

Claudia Van Wie
303-494-2250
webmaster@bcna.org

SECRETARY

Viki Lawrence
303-913-2534

Mary Stuber
303-720-9547

Larry Arp
720-505-0876

Terry Escamilla
303-888-1510

Paul Schultz
303-818-3261

BCNA COMMITTEES

Conservation Committee

(chair position open)

Education Committee

Mary Stuber, Chair, Megan Bowes, Vicki Braunagel, Mary Ann Hartigan, Bev Postmus

Ecosymposium Committee

Claudia VanWie, Chair, Sandra Laursen, Tim Seastedt, Viki Lawrence, Karen Hollweg, Deborah Price, Linda Andes-Georges, Sue Cass

Publications Committee

Steve Jones, Sue Cass, Lysa Wegman-French, Jan Chu, Ann Cooper

Communications Committee

Vicki Braunagel, Claudia Van Wie, Paul Schultz

Research Grants Committee

(chair position open)
Peter Kleinman 303-554-5320;
Megan Bowes, Kerrie Bryan,
Viki Lawrence

Finance Committee

Claudia Van Wie

State and Regional Wildlife Issues

Gerry Kelly 720-839-5210

BCNA RESEARCH PROJECTS

Allegra Collister Bird Banding Project

Maggie Boswell, Coordinator
picab@qwest.net

Avian Species of Special Concern

Dave Hallock, Coordinator
dheldora@rmi.net
Steve Jones, Coordinator
curlewsj@comcast.net

Burrowing Owls Survey

Sue Cass, Coordinator
720-684-6922

Butterfly Surveys

Jan Chu, Coordinator
2chuhouse2@gmail.com

Ecosystem Stewardship Project

Steve Jones, Coordinator
303-494-2468

Indian Peaks Bird Count

Dave Hallock, Coordinator
303-258-3672
Bill Kaempfer, Coordinator
303-954-8998

Wintering Raptor Survey

Sue Cass, Coordinator
720-684-6922

OUTREACH

Facebook Moderator and BCNA Buzz Editor

Vicki Braunagel 303-746-6039

Membership Committee

Terry Escamilla 303-888-1510

Nature Net Moderator

Scott Severs
scottesevers@gmail.com

Newsletter

Paul Schultz 303-818-326
pschooter@gmail.com

Webmaster

Claudia Van Wie 303-494-2250
webmaster@bcna.org



MEMBERSHIP SEASON IS HERE!

Memberships run from January 1 to December 31 each year.

All members receive our quarterly newsletter.

Supporter-level members and higher also receive a complimentary copy of each BCNA publication (notify Membership Chair if you want one of these).

If you are unsure of your membership status or have

questions, please contact Terry Escamilla at terryesca@comcast.net or 303-888-1510.

The easiest and best way to join is by using our website.

[Join Now](#)

Prefer to pay by check? You can join or renew by mail. The membership form is on the back of the newsletter.

Support the Boulder County Nature Association

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____ Phone _____

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:

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

The easiest and best way to join is to go to <http://bcna.org> and click on "JOIN" at the top of the page. Then just follow the directions. You can pay using your PayPal account or another credit card. Thanks!