



## BE A RAINMAKER FOR THE ENC

The silent auction at our Bat House Bash is an excellent opportunity to generate needed funds for Evergreen Nature Center. We need your help to brainstorm interesting and lucrative ideas for items, experiences and adventures to offer in the silent auction.

Since most of us are not looking for more “stuff” in our lives, we think our attendees will bid highest for unique adventures (even tame adventures) and experiences only we can offer.

- What can you offer or solicit that will appeal to our Bat House Bash audience? What would be fun for you to offer?
- Maybe you know a great birding spot that you would share with a donor.
- A fabulous hike that may be new to others, coupled with a picnic.
- Could you help create a feeding station in somebody’s yard? Help put up a birdhouse?
- Consult on gardening.
- Build a custom-designed birdhouse (replica of the owner’s house, maybe?)
- Offer a dessert a month for three, six or 12 months?

All ideas are welcome and much appreciated. With your unique contributions, the Bat House Bash will be memorable and provide much-needed funds for the ENC.

Please reply to [development@evergreennature.org](mailto:development@evergreennature.org) or Ginny at 303-674-7199 to let me know your ideas. I am happy to help flesh out your ideas and/or help make them happen.

- Ginny Ades

## Bats take over annual Bash Sept. 12

Did you know:

• In the wild, important agricultural plants, from bananas, breadfruit and mangoes to cashews, dates and figs, rely on bats for pollination and seed dispersal?

• A colony of 150 Big Brown Bats can protect farmers from up to 33 million rootworms each summer?

• Tequila is produced from agave plants that in the wild rely on bats as their primary pollinators?

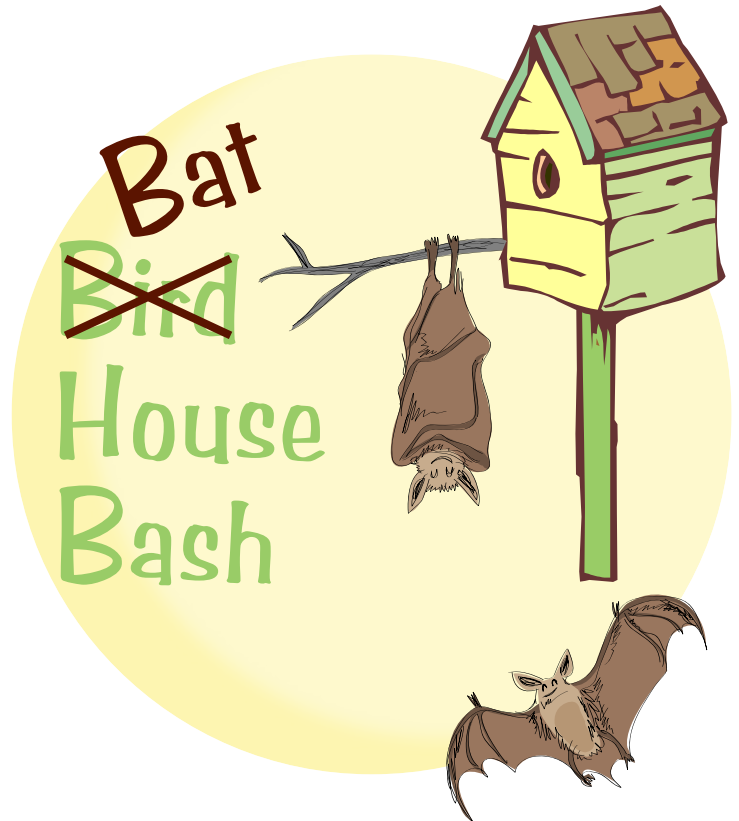
Bats play an essential role in our ecosystems, and they are extremely vulnerable to extinction, in part because they are the slowest-reproducing mammals on Earth for their size.

According to Bat Conservation International, more than 50 percent of American bat species are endangered or declining sufficiently to warrant special concern.

Losses are occurring at alarming rates and the White-nose Syndrome is a devastating new bat disease that is causing the most precipitous decline of North American wildlife in the past century.

Come to Evergreen Audubon’s annual fundraiser to benefit Evergreen Nature Center on Wednesday, Sept. 12, 5 to 8:30 p.m. at Evergreen Lake House.

You’ll learn a bit more about bats and their unique niche in nature while enjoying good friends (old and new), a delicious dinner by Fresh Tracks Cater-



ing, and a lively evening of support for the Evergreen Nature Center.

This year’s unique event celebrates five successful seasons for the Nature Center as well as Bat Conservation International’s declaration of 2012 as the “Year of the Bat.”

To date, more than 10,000 visitors annually enjoy ENC’s evolving exhibits and hands-on activities. With your support, ENC has plans to expand the opportunities it offers for children and adults to connect with nature. Watch for your Bat House Bash invitation in the mail in August.

The Bat House Bash planning committee is seeking volunteers, sponsorships (\$250), auction items and ideas (batty or otherwise). Please contact Ginny Ades at [development@evergreennature.org](mailto:development@evergreennature.org) or 303-674-7199.

**EVERGREEN AUDUBON**  
www.evergreenaudubon.org

**2012 OFFICERS**

<b>President</b>	Brad Andres	303-670-0101 president@evergreenaudubon.org
<b>Vice President</b>	Jean Thayer	303-670-9066 vicepresident@evergreenaudubon.org
<b>Secretary</b>	Heather Johnson	303-670-0101 secretary@evergreenaudubon.org
<b>Treasurer</b>	Joan Ridgely	303-526-2250 treasurer@evergreenaudubon.org

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

<b>Bird Monitoring</b>	JoAnn/Bill Hackos	303-670-8517 birdmon@evergreenaudubon.org
<b>Communications</b>	Lisa Wald	303-674-0417 communications@evergreenaudubon.org
<b>Conservation</b>	Chuck Aid	303-674-3331 conservation@evergreenaudubon.org
<b>Development</b>	Ginny Ades	303-674-7199 development@evergreenaudubon.org
<b>Education</b>	Kathy Madison	303-670-0209 education@evergreenaudubon.org
<b>Social Events</b>	Marge Petersen	303-670-4310 socialevents@evergreenaudubon.org
<b>At Large</b>	Barbara Klaus	303-674-1102 atlarge1@evergreenaudubon.org
<b>At Large</b>	Peggy Linn	303-674-2239 atlarge2@evergreenaudubon.org

**COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

<b>National Audubon</b>	Dick Prickett	303-674-0217
<b>Bear Creek Atlas</b>	Brad Andres	303-670-0101
<b>Bird Box Sales</b>	Bud Weare	303-679-8889
<b>Bird Business</b>	Marilyn Rhodes	303-674-9895 cloverlane@aol.com
<b>Conservation</b>	Chuck Aid	303-674-3331
<b>Dipper Editor</b>	Debbie Marshall	303-674-3752 marshallpublish@gmail.com
<b>Education</b>	Kathy Madison	303-670-0209
<b>Field Trips</b>	TBD	
<b>Hospitality</b>	Rachel Hutchinson	303-679-1503
<b>Land Acquisition</b>	Polly Phillips	303-674-7744
<b>Membership</b>	Jean Thayer	303-670-9066
<b>Nature Center</b>	Vanessa Hayes	303-330-0489 encdirector@evergreenaudubon.org
<b>Program</b>	Kathy Madison	303-670-0209
<b>Publicity</b>	TBD	
<b>Ways &amp; Means</b>	Irma Wolf	303-670-3402 irmasonny@aol.com
<b>Weeds</b>	Cathy Shelton	303-674-8610 sheltonpublicaddress@hotmail.com
<b>Webmaster</b>	Lisa Wald	303-674-0417

Meetings first Thursday except January, June, July, August  
7 p.m., Church of the Hills, 28628 Buffalo Park Road, Evergreen

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE** BRAD ANDRES

Although shorebirds are already heading south and the stores are advertising back-to-school sales, there are still plenty of summer things to enjoy with Evergreen Audubon.

Despite the dry weather, we have had great productivity in the nest boxes in Elk Meadow and Alderfer/Three Sisters. I believe it will be a great year for swallows and bluebirds!

This summer, we started a more serious collaboration to study bluebird ecology with Dr. Michael Wunder of the University of Colorado Denver. Mike and his student, Jessica Fish, have been up banding adults and young and attaching geolocators to adults in Elk Meadow and Three Sisters.

The geolocators are devices that register sunrise and sunset to determine where our Evergreen bluebirds spend the winter. Over the next year, Jessica will be developing detailed research questions that will include using our nest boxes.

I know some of you have been out with Jessica and Mike, and I hope more of you will get an opportunity to participate in this research project next year. Jefferson County Open Space has again been very accommodating and supportive of this project.

If you haven't been by the Evergreen Nature Center yet this summer, it's not too late! Stop by to see what's changed and meet Natalie, who is our summer intern.

If you enjoy the stars, mark down Friday, Aug. 10, to spend 8 to 9:30 p.m. with Pam Little on the lawn at Evergreen Lake House. And of course, get ready to celebrate the Year of the Bat at our annual ENC fundraiser, the Bat House Bash, on Sept. 12.

Vanessa, Natalie, and all the Visitor Assistants have done a great job this summer. Thanks to Carmon Slater, Philip Newsom is creating a series of panels that depict the life zones encountered in the Bear Creek Watershed. The first painting of Bear Creek Lake is already installed, and he will be working on other scenes throughout the summer and early fall.

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**VIP VOLUNTEERS** BRAD ANDRES

- Thanks to **Linda Fisher, Ed Furlong, JoAnn and Bill Hackos, Tory Hurst, Kathy Madison and Steve Garman, Dick Prickett, Lynne Price, Jack Salter, David, Lisa, Aaron and Emily Wald, and Janet Warner** for their efforts at the Triple Bypass. Tory, Heather, Dick, Lisa, and David pulled double shifts on Saturday and Sunday. David even drove one of the rental trucks back to Evergreen with aid station supplies and coerced Aaron into helping him unload it!

- A big thank-you to **Debbie Marshall** for her tremendous effort in creating our new Evergreen Audubon/Nature Center brochure.

- Our gratitude also goes out to the talented photographers whose work added so much to the brochure: **Alistair Montgomery** for his beautiful cover photo of a Pygmy Nuthatch, **Marilyn Rhodes** for her awesome Western Bluebird and wildflower photos and **Lisa Wald** for her perfect photo of the Nature Center.

- ENC director **Vanessa Hayes** and **Lisa Wald** also deserve credit for getting the project under way and seeing it to completion.



# Hot weather, hard ground can't deter weed pullers

It was hot—really hot! The ground was hard—really hard! But that didn't deter 26 volunteers who weeded around Evergreen Lake at the 15th Annual Community Weed Day on June 23.

And while the 15th anniversary celebration with cake, snacks and door prizes was fun, the best part of the day was the shortage of weeds.

Only a few areas of Canada thistle remain a problem, proving that our past efforts have indeed made a difference.

We also had a record turnout of people stopping by the weed exhibit and at least a half-dozen brought plants in for identification by our weed experts, Sylvia Brockner and Alicia Doran of Jefferson County Weed and Pest.

As part of the 15th anniversary festivities, certificates of appreciation were presented to Alicia Doran, Clear Creek

County Weed Specialist Ted Brown and the Evergreen Lake House staff for their support throughout the years.

It is impossible to name all of the people who made Weed Day a success, but please know how much we appreciate you!

Thanks also go to the local businesses that donated to Weed Day, including Wal-Mart, King Soopers, Home Depot and Jared's.

Door prizes were provided by the Community Weed Awareness Campaign committee, and Pulling for Colorado provided the cooler bags given to each volunteer.

A special thanks to the Canyon Courier for its front-page story about Weed Day.

It goes without saying that all of our weed work is made possible by the support of Evergreen Audubon.

## Another grant received

Two days after Weed Day, we were advised that the Community Weed Awareness Campaign had received a 2012 Pulling for Colorado Weed Grant for \$1,130.

These funds will be used for educational materials and publicity. This is our third Pulling for Colorado Grant.

Fifteen years is a long time to sustain volunteer commitment to a project, especially one that requires hot, dirty work. It is no surprise to us that we have the best volunteers in the state.

## Wake Up and Weed coming Aug. 18

Our next big event will be Wake Up and Weed on Saturday, Aug. 18. Weeding begins at 8:30 a.m., followed by brunch at the Nature Center. Please plan to join us.

- Cathy Shelton



Above, longtime volunteer Barb Smith displays her door prize. At right, Sylvia Brockner, left, and Sylvia Robertson cut the anniversary cake. Photos by Cathy Shelton



## ***Wildfires—a blessing and a curse***

In less than a month, Colorado fires consumed more than 100,000 acres and forced tens of thousands of people to flee their homes. Precious wildlife and wildlife habitat perished. Still, many fire effects are not only beneficial, they are necessary and natural for ecosystem health.

Most readers of this column live in an ecosystem where fire will occur. In Colorado, the area where wildlands prone to fire and expanding mountain subdivisions overlap is called the red zone. It is also referred to as the wildland/urban interface.

Since fire is common in the red zone, special precautions are necessary for homeowners and land managers. Fire-Wise, a homeowner education program, was developed by the Colorado State Forest Service.

It's very important that we educate our neighbors and ourselves. Go to this link for information: <http://csfs.colostate.edu/pages/are-you-firewise-program.html>.

Although wildfires dominated the landscape, headlines and our thoughts in Colorado in June and July, a few members posted Local Sightings to the website or to evergreenbirders.

With their permission, I've also included perspectives from prominent Colorado birders Joe Roller and Dave Leatherman that they posted on the Colorado Field Ornithologists site, assessing the damage in two beloved birding areas.

To see their complete comments, visit <http://cfobirds.org/>.

We appreciate their generosity in sharing their insights with our readers.

*Last Chance migrant trap totally devastated. Posted June 26 by Joe Roller*

I drove out there today, and my worst fears were realized. It was not a heart-breaking sight, but more like a punch to the gut.

What was burned, what was not:

- The short-grass prairie is black in every direction. The bridge on High-



*A watering hole near Last Chance is threatened by runoff from post-fire rains. Photo by Joe Roller*

way 36 a mile west of Last Chance was passable, and road crews were repairing some minor damage. Trees burned partly and I suspect that the owls that breed there will be able to return next year.

- Northeast quadrant of Highways 71 and 36. Motel, Dairy King and the houses and juniper stand north of that appeared untouched.

- Southeast quadrant: Skeletal remains of the old railroad cars are smoldering. All else burned down.

- Northwest quadrant: The church and other buildings there appeared untouched. The riparian area and prairie north of the bridge over Highway 36 are totally burned up.

- Southwest quadrant. Although the greenery, trees around the rest area and portable toilets were fine, I am sorry to report that all is black west of the chain-link fence behind the potties—burned up, burned down.

The larger elm trunks were partly charred, with some green leaves at their

tops. May survive, may not. I am not an expert assessor.

But that was a mere token of unburned vegetation, as EVERYTHING except the green scum on the tiny water hole was gone, burned to the ground. The landforms of our favorite swales and draws were laid bare. The tiny drainage (valley) that comes in from the east, crossing under 71, is OK.

My biggest gut ache is that with the least rainfall, tons of black ash and soil will FILL UP the water hole. I just can't imagine what this will be like, unless there are funds to dig it out with bulldozers (and put it where?). Yes, the grass and shrubs will return, but without a drop of surface water, I know not what the birds will do.

It was pathetic seeing all of the thirsty resident birds coming to the water's edge. The pair of Brown Thrashers would come in for a sip, then fly a few yards up along the valley to the south, as if they were going to hide, like usual.

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But there was nothing to hide in. Western Kingbirds, Robins, all came in for furtive drinks.

### *Buteo behavior during Last Chance fire Posted July 6 by Joe Roller*

I visited Last Chance again today and chatted with a nearby rancher I got to know during my atlas work on his spread.

He told me that while inspecting the land right after the fire, he came upon a stock tank, full of water, some ashes, a few dead Starlings and the carcasses of two “hawks.” (Out there Swainson’s Hawks predominate in the summer hawk department.)

I had not heard of this behavior before, but guessed that they had dived into the stock tank in desperation amid the flaming fields and the smoke.

### *High Park Fire (Larimer) impressions Posted July 6 by Dave Leatherman*

Yesterday I took a drive through the west half of the recently contained High Park Fire west of Fort Collins.

Expecting the worst, I must say I was pleasantly surprised. Certainly, there is plenty of human heartbreak and tragedy within the almost 90,000-acre burn area.

And there will be plenty more human and ecological impacts in the weeks, months and even years ahead. If we get strong rain events, the erosion of ash, sediment and slurry could be very problematic for the Poudre River and other tributary streams.

I certainly don’t mean to minimize the tremendous pain and costs of this fire, and the other “big” fires. Maybe emotion is still too raw, but there is still plenty of green up there. The High Park Fire, despite being a bunch of light fires that could/should have occurred over the last century rolled into one, still burned in a patchy fashion.

Plenty of ecological benefit in the form of diversifying the landscape, giving early succession organisms a new start, cleaning out some overcrowded closets and just shaking up the system in general, will happen. Immobile birds (eggs, nestlings, individuals caught by surprise

### **Local Sightings**

**Birch Hill.** It was HOT June 23, so Sherman Wing and company started a bit earlier on their Birch Hill survey. As expected, the group saw only summer residents.

They confirmed breeding for **Yellow-rumped Warbler, Hairy Woodpecker, Dark-eyed Junco, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Chipping Sparrow, Mountain Chickadee and White-breasted Nuthatch.**

**Evergreen Lake.** June 25, at dusk, 9 p.m., Karel Buckley “heard and saw two Common Nighthawks flying over Evergreen Lake! Have not seen this in well over 15 years . . . close to 20, for me anyway. Very exciting!”

**Mount Falcon.** June 30, at the western end of Mt. Falcon Park, Sherman reported **Golden Eagle, Prairie Falcons, Lazuli Buntings, Plumbeous Vireos, Western Tanagers and Black-headed Grosbeaks.**

### **Yardbirds**

On June 27, Dick Prickett had a **Green-tailed Towhee** feeding on the ground under his feeders. “First time for this bird. Possibly the fires may be causing a redistribution of birds?”

JoAnn and Bill Hackos saw their first-of-the-season **Rufous Hummingbird** July 1 at their feeders in Soda Creek. “Summer is truly over when they show up,” JoAnn said.

while sleeping, or slow ones), no doubt perished in many areas.

But the great, great majority of individual birds survived. My guess would be the survivors adapted, and will continue to adapt, in myriad ways, most of them involving relocation to sites providing what they need: food, water and shelter.

One negative will be the profusion of many exotics like knapweeds and pernicious thistle species we’d be better off without.

My primary reason for going into the fire area, besides general curiosity, was



*Marilyn Rhodes saw a Cordilleran Flycatcher on her deck for the first time July 6. Sherman Wing photographed this individual in his yard June 24.*

The same night Jonelle Balais had her first **Rufous**.

At my house, the **Violet-green Swallow** eggs hatched just before the Fourth of July and they are Yankee Doodle Dandies!

The morning of July 6, a new yard bird appeared on my deck—a **Cordilleran Flycatcher!** Didn’t drink, didn’t eat, just checked things out. Wonder if they nested around here.

a personal concern for one particular place, a U.S. Forest Service-owned section formerly a picnic area in lower Rist Canyon.

This area is special. It has five-plus orchid species including Yellow Lady’s Slipper and Wood Lily, has had three species of small owls nest, low-elevation American Three-toed Woodpeckers nesting in aspen, breeding Ovenbirds, etc.

Although I am a firm believer in the genius and inevitability of the marvelous manifestation of evolution called “suc-

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Because I am tardy with this column, I am able to thank David Wald for orchestrating our volunteer effort for the Triple Bypass bike ride.

We met our commitment to Team

Evergreen to fill our allotted slots, and I believe all the volunteers had a good time marshaling (despite some heavy downpours on Saturday).

We hope we can continue our effort with this event, and we will report back

on the contributions we receive from the race organizers.

As a nod to one of our non-profit partners, the Mountain Area Land Trust will be holding its "A Night in the Park" event on Aug. 4 at Alderfer/Three Sisters Park.

## BIRD BUSINESS

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cession," the High Park Fire admittedly put the strength of these beliefs to the test.

And I must also admit it was great to round the bend and see the old picnic area mostly intact. It will burn someday, and that's as it should be, but I selfishly was glad to see that postponed for a while.

Lastly, besides the extent of green, the biggest surprise, and maybe it shouldn't have been if one thinks about it, was seeing that the hottest, nastiest, won't-recover-for-a-long-long-time places were north-facing slopes clogged with 100-year-old thickets of Douglas-fir.

This tree likes the north side of mountains where the norm is more moisture and cooler temps. When such sites get dry, and the trees get dry, the thinner bark (compared to Ponderosa Pine) and the finer needles of Douglas-fir make for a combustible, vulnerable, intensively-hot combination.

It is worth mentioning that it appeared the worst areas (remember this was a rolling, anecdotal "biological assessment" and not a proper, long-term study of transects and plots) were NOT necessarily those heavily populated with old pine beetle trees.

*Postscript from Dave July 9, 2012*

I would emphasize that my post was an anecdotal, one-day cruise through the fire, before the recent rains that created rock slides, mud flows, necessitated flash flood pre-evac notices, etc. The true playing out of all the impacts of the fire won't be over for years.

As for Last Chance, by nature of the primary fuels involved, the fire was quick and light. Recovery of the grasslands will be rather rapid if the area receives adequate rains.

## NAS/F&WS partnership

Dear Chapter Leaders,

In the face of truly epic challenges to birds, habitat and human health, we know that large-scale action is needed to complement local conservation efforts. In order to do that, we're committed to building powerful partnerships.

And we can't imagine a more potent partner than the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service itself. So, here's the big news: Audubon's innovative conservation approach is being adopted by the F&WS as a national model.

This is proof of concept: that our strategic plan can draw partners who can provide leverage that leads to results. We're already reaching out to current and potential funders with this important news.

What persuaded the F&WS was the core-habitat strategy we pioneered to protect Greater Sage-Grouse and the vulnerable sagebrush ecosystem. That concept has been embraced by the F&WS for expansion to other imperiled species and habitat. Audubon chapters, which provide a large-scale framework for focused collaboration across our network, will play a vital role in the implementation of this effort.

Audubon's work has already led to protection of 15 million acres (and growing) in the American West, and laid the groundwork for shaping responsible energy development in the region. This fall, it will be the focus of a forum of conservation leaders Audubon is hosting in collaboration with the F&WS as well as the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

Our policy, science and conservation teams are leading identification of additional Audubon priority species that fit the Sage-Grouse model. Like the Greater Sage-Grouse, each will 1) be an effective environmental barometer and ambassador for critical habitat, 2) have the potential for landscape-level outcomes, 3) possess strong data that can guide conservation, 4) be able to generate motivation for key stakeholders seeking conservation solutions.

Audubon's Flyway science leads have identified nine key species:

Western Sandpiper and Black Brant (Pacific), Lesser Prairie Chicken and Mountain Plover (Central), Wilson's Plover and Cerulean Warbler (Mississippi), Golden-winged Warbler and Piping Plover (Atlantic), Yellow-billed Cuckoo (Western Rivers).

The F&WS's response to this proposed list of species was enthusiastic. And the agency's director, Dan Ashe, has shared the following in a recent letter to me: "I see great potential in cooperating with Audubon to develop common species-based objectives, and to work together to ensure landscape-scale conservation is achieved."

(Read Dan Ashe's letter here: [www.audubonaction.org/site/DocServer/Dan\\_Ashe\\_letter.pdf?docID=361](http://www.audubonaction.org/site/DocServer/Dan_Ashe_letter.pdf?docID=361).)

This is an inspiring demonstration of how Audubon's new strategic plan is helping to define, drive and deliver conservation impact at scale. We look forward to working with you as it unfolds.

- David Yarnold  
President & CEO/NAS



# NATURE CENTER KIDS PROGRAMS

Register by calling 303-330-0489 or online at [evergreennaturecenter.org](http://evergreennaturecenter.org).

**Wednesday Wild Ones:  
Not So Little Brown Bat  
Wednesday, Aug. 1, 10–11 a.m.  
Evergreen Nature Center**



This tiny flying mammal has a mighty big impact! From super skin to mega appe-

tites, bat neighbors are fantastic plant and people protectors. Ages: 2–5 with adult.

**Evergreen Nuthatches:  
Colorado Bats!  
Saturday, Aug. 11, 6:30–8:30 p.m.  
Please note the “batastic” time  
Evergreen Nature Center**  
Noses that hear and fingers that steer?  
Bats are the most finely tuned mammals around. Learn about the 18 species that

call Colorado home. Anyone 10 and over is welcome! Ages: 10-plus.

**Bear Creek Dippers:  
Amazing Bat Hands!  
Saturday, Aug. 18, 10 a.m.–noon  
Evergreen Nature Center**  
Amazing, stupendous bats eat about 2,000 bugs every night. How do they do it? With wings for hands, of course. Come explore their wonderful adaptations. Ages: 6–10 with adult.

# FIELD TRIPS AND PROGRAMS

**Stargazing at Evergreen Lake  
Lawn in front of Lake House  
Friday, Aug. 10, 8–9:30 p.m.  
Pam Little**

Join amateur astronomer Pam Little for a tour of the current night sky. Listen to ancient star stories and learn to use a star chart. Make a star clock like the ones ancient travelers and sailors used.

Dress warmly, bring blankets and

chairs for your comfort—telescopes and binoculars if you have them. Telescopes will be available to share.

For families. Maximum class size: 25. Call 303-330-0489 to register.

**Wildflower Walk  
Reynolds Open Space Park  
Sunday, Aug. 26, noon–2 p.m.  
Local naturalist extraordinaire Pam**

Little is eager to show off the beauty and variety of wildflowers in the Colorado Front Range.

Learn historical uses of native plants by the settlers, Native Americans and wildlife.

Join her to discover what’s in bloom! A handout will be provided.

For ages 10 and up. Maximum class size: 20. Call 303-330-0489 to register.



*Checkerspot butterfly along the Genesee Braille Trail on June 12. Photo by Marilyn Rhodes*



*Arnica along the Genesee Braille Trail on June 12. Photo by Marilyn Rhodes*

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Aug. 1	Wednesday Wild Ones	10–11 am	Nature Center
Aug. 10	Stargazing	8–9:30 pm	Evergreen Lake House lawn
Aug. 10	Newsletter deadline	5 pm	
Aug. 11	Evergreen Nuthatches	6:30–8:30 pm	Nature Center
Aug. 18	Wake Up and Weed	8:30 am	Evergreen Lake
Aug. 18	Bear Creek Dippers	10 am–noon	Nature Center
Aug. 23	EA Board Meeting	6 pm	Church of the Hills
Aug. 26	Wildflower Walk	Noon–2 pm	Reynolds Open Space Park

*Coming soon:*

Sept. 12 Bat House Bash 5–8:30 pm Evergreen Lake House/ENC

Please submit newsletter content by the 10th of the month to Lisa Wald: [communications@evergreenaudubon.org](mailto:communications@evergreenaudubon.org). Contact *Dipper* editor Debbie Marshall with questions or comments: [marshallpublish@gmail.com](mailto:marshallpublish@gmail.com), 303-674-3752.

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**Audubon Colorado Office, 303-415-0130, [www.auduboncolorado.org](http://www.auduboncolorado.org)**

## Evergreen Audubon Local Membership Application

I/we would like to join the Evergreen Audubon. I/we may participate in all chapter activities, receive *The Dipper* newsletter electronically, and vote (two Family members may vote) on chapter issues. Dues remain locally.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

	Individual	Family	Student
Annual dues	\$ 20	\$ 30	\$ 10
Electronic <i>Dipper</i>	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
Hard-copy <i>Dipper</i>	\$ 10	\$ 10	\$ 10
Additional donation	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Family member(s) name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**(must include for electronic *Dipper*)**

Enclosed is my check payable to: **Evergreen Audubon, P.O. Box 523, Evergreen, CO 80437.**

I DO NOT want solicitations from National Audubon.

If you would like to join or donate to the National Audubon Society directly and receive the AUDUBON Magazine, use chapter code C9ZD090Z and call 1-800-274-4201.

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

Artwork: Sylvia Brockner, Mildred Keiser

ENC Kids Programs Go Baty  
Bird Business: Wildfres  
Weed Celebration

**IN THIS ISSUE**

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Evergreen Audubon

**THE DIPPER**

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