Kevin Cook, Naturalist and Author, will be signing copies of his newly released book, Good Birders Don’t Wear White: 50 Tips from North America’s Top Birders. He will also share some of his personal birding experiences.

Houghton Mifflin, the book’s publishing company, describes the book as “50 light and fun original essays, where the biggest names in birding dispense advice to birders of every level, on topics ranging from feeding birds and cleaning binoculars to pishing and pelagic birding.

Whether satirizing bird snobs or relating the traditions and taboos of the birding culture, each essay is as chock-full of helpful information as it is entertaining.”

Kevin is one of 50 authors who wrote essays on birding experiences and tips for this book. He will be graciously donating all book sale proceeds that evening to FCAS. Kevin explained that he received a flat fee for his contribution to the book—so he receives no future royalties from book sales. We appreciate his generosity to FCAS!

While earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in biology (1978) and a Master of Science degree in wildlife biology (1989), Kevin served with the National Park Service and did consulting for the Colorado Division of Wildlife. Since beginning his writing as a college student in 1975, he has published 6,000 newspaper and magazine articles, contributed to several books, and edited nearly 1,000 technical articles about wildlife for scientific publication. Besides writing he conducts seminars, teaches classes, and leads tours, all based on wildlife or natural history themes. Though birds are his specialty, he studies all wildlife and uses his writing and teaching to help people enjoy the natural world more by coming to understand it better.

Kevin is familiar to FCAS members through the birding, wildflower, and natural history classes he offers, and the weekly column he writes for local newspapers.

Don’t miss the opportunity to add a signed copy of this new book to your birding book collection.
**SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER FIELD TRIPS**

All field trips are free of charge (unless otherwise noted) and open to the public. All experience levels are welcome. Participants should dress appropriately for the weather. Bring snacks or lunch, water, binoculars, and spotting scopes. Carpooling is encouraged. A $3.00 (unless otherwise specified) contribution per passenger to the driver is suggested. Visit [www.fortnet.org/Audubon](http://www.fortnet.org/Audubon) for more information. For all field trips and surveys, please contact the trip leader for sign up and trip details. Field Trip Coordinator: Eric DeFonso, yoeric@yahoo.com or 970-472-1761.

**9/08/07, Saturday. Second Saturday Natural History Walk.** Leader: Joann Thomas (970-482-7125). 7:45 to 10:00 a.m. Join us for the first of a yearlong series of nature walks along the Poudre River on the second Saturday of each month. Meet at Nix Farm Natural Area, 1745 Hoffman Mill Rd. From Lemay (between Riverside & Mulberry), turn east onto Poudre River Dr. just north of the RR tracks. Follow Poudre River Dr. as it curves, changes names to Hoffman Mill Rd., and eventually dead-ends at Nix Natural Area. This first walk will introduce the concepts, journaling, observation techniques, and the topics we'll study over a year's span: birds, wildflowers, mammals, river morphology, and the effects of time and human habitation on the riparian area. Bring a notebook, binoculars if you have them, and your enthusiasm. Call for details about location and parking. Open to everyone; handicapped accessible; no registration required.

**9/09/07, Sunday. Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey.** Leader: Sol Miller (eagleye1029@yahoo.com). Meet at 7:00 a.m. FCAS performs a monthly bird census for the city of Fort Collins. All levels welcomed.

**9/15/07, Saturday. Eastern Plains Reservoirs.** Leaders: Beth Dillon (970-490-2610 or dillon_b@hotmail.com) and Peter Gent. This full-day trip will focus on shorebirds at Jackson and/or Prewitt reservoirs, depending on shorebird numbers and mudflat conditions. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Harmony Transfer Center at the northwest corner of I-25 and Harmony Rd. Carpooling required. State Parks pass required for drivers to Jackson Res., CDOW habitat stamp required for each participant to Prewitt Res. Limited to 12 participants.

**9/22/07, Saturday. Coyote Ridge Weather Walk.** Leader: Eric DeFonso (yoeric@yahoo.com or 970-472-1761). 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Come along for an Audubon trip of a different sort as we interpret the sky conditions during a pleasant walk up the hogbacks between Fort Collins and Loveland. We'll also explore what makes Colorado weather and climate the way it is, and how it affects the land and animals around us. Meet in the Coyote Ridge Natural Area parking lot. Limited to 10 participants.

**9/29/07, Saturday. 3rd Annual Northern Colorado Birding Fair.** Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space, Larimer County. 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. For more information, visit [www.larimer.org/parks](http://www.larimer.org/parks).

**10/06/07, Saturday. High Plains Environmental Center at Centerra.** Leader: Silja Knoll (silja@suburbitat.org or 970-622-9676; leave message for Silja). 8:30 to 11:00 a.m. Meet at the HPEC, 1854 Piney River Dr., Loveland. From Hwy 34 and I-25, go west on Hwy 34, past Target, Bed Bath and Beyond, and the Loveland RV Park. Turn right (north) on McWhinney Blvd. Immediately west of the RV Park. Take the second left onto Piney River Dr., go past the fire station and we are the first house on the right. We will walk the nature trails around two lakes looking for waterfowl, raptors, migrants, and other critters, including amphibians and reptiles. All levels welcomed. RSVP appreciated but not required. For more info about the HPEC, see their web site at [www.suburbitat.org](http://www.suburbitat.org/).

**10/13/07, Saturday. Second Saturday Natural History Walk.** Leader: Joann Thomas (970-482-7125). 7:45 to 10:00 a.m. Join us for our yearlong series of nature walks along the Poudre River each month. Meet at Nix Farm Natural Area, 1745 Hoffman Mill Rd. From Lemay (between Riverside & Mulberry), turn east onto Poudre River Dr. just north of the RR tracks. Follow Poudre River Dr. as it curves, changes names to Hoffman Mill Rd., and eventually dead-ends at Nix Natural Area. Our walks and studies will focus on birds, wildflowers, mammals, river morphology, and the effects of time and human habitation on the riparian area. Bring a notebook, binoculars if you have them, and your enthusiasm. Call for details about location and parking. Open to everyone; handicapped accessible; no registration required.

**10/14/07, Sunday. Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey.** Leader: Sol Miller (eagleye1029@yahoo.com). Meet at 7:00 a.m. FCAS performs a monthly bird census for the city of Fort Collins. All levels welcomed.

**10/13/07, Saturday. Second Saturday Natural History Walk.** Leader: Joann Thomas (970-482-7125). 7:45 to 10:00 a.m. Join us for our yearlong series of nature walks along the Poudre River each month. Meet at Nix Farm Natural Area, 1745 Hoffman Mill Rd. From Lemay (between Riverside & Mulberry), turn east onto Poudre River Dr. just north of the RR tracks. Follow Poudre River Dr. as it curves, changes names to Hoffman Mill Rd., and eventually dead-ends at Nix Natural Area. Our walks and studies will focus on birds, wildflowers, mammals, river morphology, and the effects of time and human habitation on the riparian area. Bring a notebook, binoculars if you have them, and your enthusiasm. Call for details about location and parking. Open to everyone; handicapped accessible; no registration required.

**10/19/07, Monday. Centerra.** Leader: Silja Knoll (silja@suburbitat.org or 970-622-9676; leave message for Silja). 8:30 to 11:00 a.m. Meet at the HPEC, 1854 Piney River Dr., Loveland. From Hwy 34 and I-25, go west on Hwy 34, past Target, Bed Bath and Beyond, and the Loveland RV Park. Turn right (north) on McWhinney Blvd. Immediately west of the RV Park. Take the second left onto Piney River Dr., go past the fire station and we are the first house on the right. We will walk the nature trails around two lakes looking for waterfowl, raptors, migrants, and other critters, including amphibians and reptiles. All levels welcomed. RSVP appreciated but not required. For more info about the HPEC, see their web site at [www.suburbitat.org](http://www.suburbitat.org/).

**10/20/07, Saturday. Larimer Lacustrines.** Leader: Eric DeFonso (yoeric@yahoo.com or 970-472-1761). 7:00 to 11:00 a.m. Meet at the HPEC, 1854 Piney River Dr., Loveland. From Hwy 34 and I-25, go west on Hwy 34, past Target, Bed Bath and Beyond, and the Loveland RV Park. Turn right (north) on McWhinney Blvd. Immediately west of the RV Park. Take the second left onto Piney River Dr., go past the fire station and we are the first house on the right. We will walk the nature trails around two lakes looking for waterfowl, raptors, migrants, and other critters, including amphibians and reptiles. All levels welcomed. RSVP appreciated but not required. For more info about the HPEC, see their web site at [www.suburbitat.org](http://www.suburbitat.org/).

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Don’t Throw Away That Empty Inkjet Cartridge!
Your copy of this month’s Ptarmigan may include a mailer to recycle inkjet cartridges. Fort Collins Audubon is continuing a recycling and fundraising program with Empties4Cash.com. Here is how it works:

- The empty inkjet cartridges that we usually throw away as trash can be recycled and remanufactured.
- Use the postage-free mailer included with this newsletter, or pick up a mailer at the next Fort Collins Audubon program. Feel free to pass these along to anyone with cartridges to recycle!
- Send in your empty cartridges. Fort Collins Audubon gets paid up to $4.00 for each empty inkjet cartridge that has a print head, regardless of the brand or type.
- Accepted are any inkjet cartridges that have print heads for all of the following brands of printers:
  - HP
  - Lexmark
  - Xerox
  - Compaq
  - Brother
  - Dell
  - Canon
  - Apple

No Epson print cartridges can be accepted since they are just ink tanks without a print head.

Scholarship recipients report back!
From Maya Serrano, age 7. Scholarship recipient for ELC “Habitracking” Day Camp, June 18–22.

I loved camp. I learned habitracking and got to track animals that had radio collars. I went on lots of hikes and saw many birds. My favorite was the blue heron. They are really cool. My favorite day was when we learned to make casts from the prints. It was a great week at camp. I had a great time. Love, Maya.

Please see the Fort Collins Audubon website for Maya’s drawing of a blue heron!

Rosa Serrano, age 5, also went to camp at the ELC. She went to the Dirty Dozen Garden Club.

Please see the website for Rosa’s drawing of herself gardening!

Want less paper mail?
Walk your environmental talk—Get your newsletter online!

Would you like to reduce the amount of mail you receive? Use less paper? If you have access to the Internet, you can choose to receive e-mail notification when the Ptarmigan is available on the Fort Collins Audubon Society’s website! The current issue of the newsletter is available online to members only, is available a week or two earlier than the paper copy, AND is in COLOR! If you’d like to receive an e-mail notification, please e-mail your name and address as it appears on your newsletter’s mailing label and the e-mail address you wish to use to sktupper@earthlink.net. Please indicate whether you want just e-mail or if you would prefer both e-mail and the paper newsletter. We’d be happy to accommodate. Here’s an opportunity to practice what we preach! A BIG thanks to those who have made the switch!
Restoring protection to our nation's waters:  
Because of the passage of the Clean Water Act in 1972, we have made great progress in cleaning up our nation's waters. While much remains to be done, the law has protected the nation's lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands from unregulated pollution and destruction. However, since a Supreme Court ruling in 2001, polluters have argued that the law no longer protects numerous wetlands, streams, rivers, lakes, and other waters historically covered by the Act. Ambiguous federal agency guidance has helped these attacks. And a 2006 Supreme Court split decision added greater confusion to the issue, putting even more waters at risk of pollution and destruction. The Clean Water Authority Restoration Act of 2007 is needed to restore the longstanding protections originally intended by Congress.

What is at stake?
- The EPA itself estimated that a policy directive it issued with the Army Corps of Engineers in 2003 could place as many as 20 million acres of the nation's remaining wetlands at risk.
- Based on agency records, a wide variety of waters have been denied Clean Water Act safeguards as a result of the policy, including a 150-mile-long river in New Mexico, thousands of acres of wetlands in one of Florida's most important watersheds, a 69-mile long canal used as a drinking water supply in California, and an 86-acre lake in Wisconsin that is a popular fishing spot.
- An estimated 53–59% of America's stream miles outside of Alaska are seasonal waters or headwater streams, representing nearly 2 million river miles.
- These small streams contribute to the public drinking water supplies of over 110 million people.
- Over 14,000 industrial facilities have Clean Water Act permits that establish the conditions under which pollution may be discharged into these streams and rivers—permits that would no longer be required by the Clean Water Act if the law is not enforced to safeguard all waters.
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The Supreme Court's ruling in SWANCC:
In 2001, the Supreme Court ruled in Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County (SWANCC) v. Army Corps of Engineers that the Clean Water Act did not extend to an "isolated" Illinois water body simply because it was used by migratory birds. Although the Court's decision was quite narrow, some industry groups, as well as some government officials and regulatory staff, immediately sought to use the ruling to deny safeguards to many more of the nation's waters.

Very few, if any, water bodies are truly "isolated." Even where wetlands, seasonal streams, and other waters are not continuously connected to other surface waters, they typically have important connections to those waters, as well as biological and chemical connections that sustain healthy conditions in other wetlands, lakes, streams, and rivers. These systems help maintain and protect drinking water supplies, and provide critical flood water storage. In addition, many of these so-called "isolated" waters, such as vernal pools, prairie potholes, playa lakes, and bogs, provide critical habitat for a wide array of migrating and resident bird and wildlife species.

The Army Corps and EPA confuse the issue:
In January 2003, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers directed their field staff to stop applying Clean Water Act protections to virtually all so-called "isolated" waters without prior permission from agency headquarters in Washington, D.C. This policy directive far exceeds the scope of the SWANCC ruling, effectively denying protection to many waters that still warrant it under existing regulations.

The EPA and the Corps were strongly criticized for this policy. When the agencies asked for comments on this policy and a related rulemaking effort, a large majority of state agencies, as well as water and wildlife experts, sportsmen and women, floodplain managers, public health officials, conservation organizations, and several EPA regional offices wrote in opposition. Just last year, the House of Representatives—in a strong, bipartisan fashion—voted to halt this misguided policy. Today, however, the policy remains in place, and water bodies continue to be denied legally warranted Clean Water Act protections.

The Supreme Court's ruling in Rapanos and Carabell:
Those opposed to Clean Water Act protections were able to convince the Supreme Court to hear two other cases—Rapanos v. U.S. and Carabell v. Army Corps of Engineers—which questioned whether the law protects non-navigable tributaries and their adjacent wetlands. The result was a messy split decision: The Court did not invalidate the existing rules, but the various opinions suggested different tests. Justice Kennedy, who provided the swing vote, would require the agencies to show a physical, biological, or chemical linkage—a "significant nexus"—between a water body and an actually navigable one to protect it. Four other justices read the law very narrowly to protect water bodies that are continuously flowing or standing, and only those wetlands with a continuous surface connection to protected waters. In the wake of this decision, courts have dealt with the opinions inconsistently, and polluters are again arguing that a Supreme Court decision requires Clean Water Act safeguards to be rolled back.

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Legislation is the best solution

The Clean Water Authority Restoration Act of 2007 would restore the traditional scope of protection intended by Congress. Americans need these safeguards to achieve the goal of restoring and maintaining the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters. Specifically, the legislation would:

1. Adopt a statutory definition of "waters of the United States" based on the longstanding definition in regulations 40 CFR 122.2 (EPA) and 33 CFR 328.3 (ACE);
2. Delete the word "navigable" from the Act to clarify that the Clean Water Act is principally intended to protect the nation's waters from pollution, and not just maintain navigability;
3. Make findings that provide the basis for Congress's assertion of constitutional authority over the nation's waters, as defined in the Act, including so-called "isolated" waters, headwater streams, small rivers, ponds, lakes, and wetlands.

This legislation would restore the regulatory status quo prior to the SWANCC and Rapanos rulings; it does not create "new" Clean Water Act requirements.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION!

To help ensure that Congress does the right thing, write a Letter to the Editor of your local newspaper in support of HR 2431. Then write a letter to Representative Musgrave. Letters may be sent to: Congresswoman Marilyn Musgrave, 3553 Clydesdale Pkwy, Suite 110, Loveland, CO 80537; Fax: 970-663-5270; Phone: 970-663-3536; Website contact form: http://musgrave.house.gov/contactform/

SAGA OF THE GUNNISON SAGE-GROUSE

It was at the Chapter Rendezvous in October 2005 that I first got to hear Dr. Jessica Young, Associate Professor of Biology at Western State College in Gunnison, talk about the Gunnison Sage-Grouse (GUSG). Dr. Young, along with Dr. Clait Braun of the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW), first proposed in 1995 that the Gunnison Sage-Grouse was a species distinct from the Greater Sage-Grouse. Following the publishing of a paper in 2000 by Dr. Young and others (www.western.edu/bio/young/ Gunnsg/gunnsg.htm), the American Ornithologists’ Union (AOU) recognized the Gunnison Sage-Grouse as a distinct species based on physical, behavioral, and genetic traits. It was also in 2000 that the GUSG was given candidate status for listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), a designation that had afforded the species some minimal protection.

Some background information may be helpful at this point. Prior to 2005, National Audubon Society (NAS) discontinued the dues-sharing program and then implemented a Collaborative Fund program that delivered limited funds to state Audubon organizations which, in turn, distributed the funds to chapters in those states in the form of grants. Three alternative proposals for distribution of the collaborative conservation funds were offered: (1) a competitive grants program; (2) an equal distribution grants program; and (3) a single all-chapter project.

Following a telephone conference call with chapter leaders in August, proposal #3 was selected, with the stated condition that the project would be for the purpose of conservation of the Gunnison Sage-Grouse. Following much additional e-mail and telephone conversations that fall, it was announced that Audubon Colorado and Black Canyon Audubon had been researching the most efficient way to spend the chapters' collaborative funding on preserving the Gunnison Sage-Grouse. It was felt that the best use of the collaborative funds was to help fund a new Gunnison Sage-Grouse Coordinator position. This position would be funded by Audubon Colorado, San Miguel County, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), CDOW, The Nature Conservancy, and The Telluride Foundation, and would be responsible for the continued viability for the San Miguel Basin GUSG population, the next largest population of GUSG after the Gunnison Valley population.

In March 2006, Leigh Robertson was hired as the coordinator of the San Miguel Basin Working Group. As the only paid staff member, Leigh was able to greatly enhance the effectiveness of the group as it worked to protect GUSG habitat from oil and gas development. In addition, some of the collaborative funds were used to fund a small project using solar-powered pumps on existing wells to bring water into a meadow on the Dry Creek Lek. The lek, or grouse mating ritual paradise ground, had been hit hard by drought in 2002 and was struggling to recover.

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What about the grouse? Sage grouse hens nest in the sagebrush areas on the slopes above riparian corridors. When GUSG chicks first leave the nest the hen moves them down into the riparian corridors where their diet consists mostly of insects for the first four or more weeks of their existence. As they mature their diet changes to include primarily the buds and leaves of the sagebrush. By flooding the meadows in the vicinity of the Dry Creek Lek, it was hoped to rejuvenate that brooding habitat. Unfortunately, these riparian corridors and wet meadows are the first places livestock, deer, and elk head for in the spring, and many of these areas have historically been overgrazed. Many land managers and wildlife biologists now feel that the biggest loss of sage grouse occurs during their first few weeks, not over the winter as previously believed. So we need to restore and protect these brooding habitats as much as possible.

On March 27, 2006, NAS published its report: Audubon’s Top Ten Endangered Birds. The report states that Audubon supports the listing of the Gunnison Sage-Grouse under the ESA. Justification for such listing is based on a small population, ranging from 2000 to 6000 individuals. The small overall population is furthermore fragmented into seven populations and is very genetically homogeneous. The mating system of this species, as well as other open land grouse, is very susceptible to disturbance, such as from oil and gas disturbance or too much human intrusion during the spring when the males are displaying on the leks. The GUSG is truly “one of the most vulnerable and threatened species of bird in the US……” in the opinion of Gary Graham, Executive Director of Audubon Colorado.

On April 12, 2006, we received the bad news that the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) announced that they were denying the emergency petition by several environmental groups to list the Gunnison Sage-Grouse. Even worse, they also removed it from candidate status for listing, a designation that had afforded the species some protection since being placed on this status in 2000. Justification for their decision was based, erroneously or not, upon “A new analysis of data from Colorado and Utah state wildlife agencies showed that the number of Gunnison Sage-Grouse increased to an estimated 4,500 to 5,000 birds from about 3,000 in 2003, ….” Never mind that this species once covered northern New Mexico and parts of northern Arizona, as well as most of Colorado’s mountainous border with New Mexico and considerably more of Utah than currently. Candidate status had helped to steer oil and gas development away from occupied habitat in the San Miguel Basin. It was also a critical tool for raising money from Great Outdoors Colorado, CDOW, and others for habitat protection and restoration. But now these minimal protections had been stripped by the USFWS decision.

Shortly after the USFWS decision to not list GUSG and to also remove it from the ESA candidate list, Black Canyon Audubon joined in a lawsuit against the federal government over the decision. They were joined in the lawsuit by San Miguel County, The Sagebrush Sea Campaign, Center for Biological Diversity, Center for Native Ecosystems, Forest Guardians, The Larch Company, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, Sheep Mountain Alliance, and Sinapu as co-plaintiffs in the lawsuit. The Western Environmental Law Center is representing Black Canyon Audubon and the other organizations in the lawsuit. So far, the lawsuit has yet to be resolved. Meanwhile, the GUSG and its habitat remain unprotected.

On May 1, 2007, Deputy Assistant Secretary Julie MacDonald resigned from her position at the Department of the Interior just eight days before a Congressional oversight committee hearing on political interference by Bush Administration officials in scientific decision-making. A graduate of UC Davis in 1978, MacDonald is a civil engineer by training and served at the California Resources Agency before joining the Department of the Interior. She was appointed as Deputy Assistant Secretary by George W. Bush in 2002. According to an October 2006 report by the Union of Concerned Scientists, a nonprofit group that advocates scientific integrity, McDonald "... personally reversed scientific findings, changed scientific conclusions to prevent endangered species from receiving protection, removed relevant information from a scientific document, and ordered the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to adopt her edits." Francesca Grifo, who directs the Union's scientific integrity program, said MacDonald's actions are "not business as usual but a systemic problem of tampering with science that is putting our environment at risk." In March 2007, the Interior Department Inspector General, Honorable Earl E. Devaney, reported (www.sagebrushsea.org/sp_gunn_grouse_interference.htm) that MacDonald broke federal rules by giving non-public, internal government documents to oil industry and property rights groups, and manipulated scientific findings to favor Bush policy goals and assist land developers. Now, fast-forward to June 2007. Audubon had been asked by the BLM office in Gunnison to help out with some of their vegetative surveys in the riparian brooding habitats found in the Gunnison Valley. This was the best time of year to do this, as the vegetation wouldn’t have been grazed off by that time, and the weather would be less risky than in the fall.  

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"They took all the trees and put 'em in a tree museum, Then they charged all the people a dollar and a half just to see 'em. Don't it always seem to go, That you don't know what you got till it's gone... They paved Paradise and put up a parking lot."  

-- Joni Mitchell, Singer-Songwriter
There are considerable public lands managed by the BLM in the lower elevations of the Gunnison Valley. Streams and their riparian corridors originate on the surrounding mountains and extend down to the Gunnison River. These riparian corridors are the critical habitat for the young GUSG chicks after they hatch. The BLM has reduced the cattle grazing allotments by 75% over the last decade in the efforts to manage the lands for GUSG. Unfortunately, budgetary constraints meant that they couldn’t adequately monitor the quality of the vegetative habitats in the riparian corridors. That is where Audubon volunteers came in.

From June 21 through June 24, up to 30 volunteers received training from grateful and pleasantly surprised BLM staffers on how to conduct vegetation survey transects. Teams of 2 and 3 people were formed, with each team being provided with appropriate maps, GPS units, and a 6-foot folding ruler. We were instructed in how to measure just the grasses and forbs within 6-foot diameter circles, and record the information. By the time the long weekend was over, the volunteers had surveyed about 70% of the riparian corridors that it usually took seasonal employees several years to survey. The BLM staff was very grateful for all data provided by the volunteer help and which they could factor into the grazing management plans.

But it was not all work for the volunteers. The Chapter Rendezvous filled up Friday and Saturday afternoons and evenings. We had the opportunity to attend a BBQ dinner at Jessica Young’s house Thursday evening. Friday evening we attended presentations on Plants, Climate Change, and other things by Dr. David Inouye, University of Maryland, and Avian Responses to Mechanical Treatments in Sagebrush by Dr. Pat Magee, Western State College. There were two workshops on Saturday afternoon: The Gunnison Sage-Grouse Collaborative Conservation Project: Update; and Audubon’s Rangewide Sage-Grouse Strategy. Following dinner at Garlic Mike’s, Ken Strom gave a presentation on The State of Common Birds in Colorado. He was then followed by a very informative presentation by Dr. Jessica Young, titled, Gunnison Grouse: Science, Society, and Species Conservation. Sunday morning we participated on a bird walk at Neversink and McCabe's Wetlands, west of Gunnison.

If you missed the wonderful opportunity this year to enjoy the small west-slope community of Gunnison, meet some great people from all over Colorado, attend some highly informative presentations, see some fantastic country and scenery, and do some valuable and important habitat monitoring in support of the imperiled Gunnison Sage-Grouse—don’t despair. It is looking like there will be a chance to do it again next year!

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FCAS Pocket Guide to Local Birds is now available at the following retailers, who are supporting our organization with the sales:

- **Wild Birds Unlimited**
  
  248 E Monroe Drive
  
  (970) 225-2557

- **Ranch-Way Feeds**
  
  546 Willow Street
  
  (970) 482-1662

- **The Matter Bookstore/Bean Cycle Coffee**
  
  144 N College Avenue
  
  (970) 472-4284

- **Jax Farm and Ranch**
  
  1000 N Highway 287
  
  (970) 484-2221

- **Jax Outdoor Gear**
  
  1200 N College
  
  (970) 221-0544

- **Bath Garden Center & Nursery**
  
  2000 E Prospect Road
  
  (970) 484-5022
Two Great Outdoor Education Events

September arrives with two great outdoor events: our new series of Audubon’s “Second Saturday Natural History Walks” begins on September 8, and the 3rd annual Northern Colorado Birding Fair will be held on September 29. The Denver Post reports that “wildlife-watching pumped $1.4 billion into Colorado’s economy last year” and “nationwide, wildlife-watchers spent $45 billion.” Birdwatching is second only to gardening as Americans’ favorite outdoor pastime. Here in Colorado we have myriads of opportunity to recreate, enjoy, and contribute. So…step outdoors in September.

The first of our year-long series of Second Saturday nature walks occurs on Saturday, September 8. Eager beavers will meet at the Nix Farm parking area at 7:45 a.m. Parking at Nix Farm will only be available on the Second Saturday walks. We’ll begin the tour at 8:00 a.m. and end at 10:00 a.m. We’ll be introduced to the concept of journaling to record the seasonal changes in nature over a year’s span and examine the impacts of time and human habitation on the environment. And, remember our walk is handicapped accessible, so everyone can join in. I will host the first walk and introduce the concepts. Then, throughout the year we’ll be joined by naturalists who will discuss various topics: birds, wildflowers, trees, mammals, and river morphology. Along with these natural elements, we’ll discuss the aspects of human habitation and impact on the riparian corridor. No registrations are required, but if you want more information and directions for parking, call Joann Thomas at 970-482-7125.

The second great outdoor event of September is the Northern Colorado Birding Fair held at Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space on September 29 from 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. It’s a day filled with birding activities. There will be lots to see and do; try out new binoculars and scopes; join bird walks; attend programs; watch bird releases; and lots more. This is the third year of this great event and promises to be more informative and fun than ever. For more information, check out the ad for the Birding Fair below.

So no excuses…get with it…join us in the great outdoors this month!

3rd Annual Northern Colorado Birding Fair

Crazy about birds, or just curious?

Gather your friends and family and flock to Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space on Saturday, September 29, for the third year of FREE fun and learning for the entire family! The Northern Colorado Birding Fair has quickly gained in popularity with youth, parents, and birders alike. Come out and see what is new this year.

Saturday, September 29, 2007, 7 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space

On Carpenter Road, 1 Mile west of the I-25/Hwy 392 Windsor exit

Compete in the Bird Olympics or other birding activities, go on an intermediate or beginner bird walk and scavenger hunt, or listen to presentations from experts in the field. No matter what tickles your fancy, birders young and old, beginner to experienced, will find something at this exciting event to fit the bill. Event vendors will discuss and sell the latest in bird viewing equipment and resource materials.

T-shirts will be given away to children 12 years of age or under who complete their Birding Fair passport, and numerous door prizes (complements of event sponsors) will be given away hourly. Friends of Larimer County Parks and Open Lands will serve free, shade grown Daz Bog coffee and sell bake goods. Food and drinks will be for sale from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., proceeds will be donated to a local nonprofit.
Welcome to our newest members: Dorinna and Rich Ruh!

We have also had many renewing members over the summer!

We look forward to seeing everyone at our first program meeting of the new season!

Better Living, Better Birding
by Lynne Hull

After Wally Van Sickle said he had never had as big a turn-out for a first time event, and after I walked into the Idea Wild garden and saw a woman sitting at the edge of the tiny pond, a child in her lap, both looking quietly at the water and soaking up the calming atmosphere of the garden, I realized our garden tour was a success. The evaluations bore that out. “Better than the Jr. League tour!” “The owners built these gardens themselves and were there to talk to us about them!” The second was the most frequent comment listed on our response form. And the owners, Audubon members and board members, spent the entire day talking to people who wanted to know—about plants, about animals and birds, about how they designed the garden, what encouraged them to make it, how they learned to do it right. Some asked questions about plants and birds and other places to get information, not realizing it was in their guidebook when they got time to read the whole ticket/guidebook. Some offered gardens for “next year’s tour,” which we will check on soon. Will we have enough volunteers to run another tour? It was a lot of work for a few people who believed in the idea. My heartfelt thanks go to committee volunteers Ruth Grant, Joann Thomas, Jesse Meschievitz, Joyce Carlson, Jean Deiteman, and several others who joined us in the last push. Also, of course, our garden owners Bill Miller, Larry Griffin, Hildy Morgan, and Wally Van Sickle, and our wonderful sponsors, Fort Collins Nursery, Ranchway Feeds, Bath Nursery, and Wild Birds Unlimited. We hope our members will patronize these sponsors for all their bird and garden supply needs.

Oh, and we also raised slightly over $2000 for FC Audubon! I hope to see some of this money used to help fund the spread of bird gardening in our area. Right now I am mentoring two Eagle Scouts and collaborating with them and the Fort Collins Parks department to create demonstration bird gardens in City Park and Rolland Moore Park. I envision FCAS helping create bird gardens for other public and corporate spaces, and for nursing homes, assisted living facilities, habitat homes for humans, and more. As habitat disappears to development, the least we can do is share our outdoor space with birds, butterflies, and other small animals. Could all of Fort Collins, Loveland, and beyond be a “wildlife habitat garden community”?
Receive regular news posts on FCAS events
Get timely monthly meeting reminders
Hear of volunteer opportunities as they arise

Go to www.fortnet.org/Audubon/fcaudubon.htm to learn more and to subscribe to the fcaudubon e-mail news service.

Membership Application

Join the Fort Collins Audubon Society (FCAS) directly, or automatically become a member by joining the National Audubon Society (NAS). Choose one below:

- New or Renewing Member of FCAS (annual dues) $15
  (Receive the Ptarmigan newsletter)
  FCAS may share my name with NAS

- New Member of NAS & Chapter $20
  (Receive Audubon magazine and Ptarmigan)

- Renewing Member of NAS & Chapter $35
  (Receive Audubon magazine and Ptarmigan)

Did you know? Less than $1 of your NAS dues is left for FCAS funds. FCAS serves NAS members through its own fundraising efforts. We appreciate your financial support!

Additional donation to FCAS $______
Total enclosed $______

Name: __________________________________________
Address: ________________________________________
City: ___________________ State: ____ Zip: ___________
Phone: ______________ E-mail: ______________________

I prefer to receive the Ptarmigan via the FCAS website. Please e-mail me when posted.

Please make your check payable to FCAS and send along with this form to: Fort Collins Audubon Society, PO Box 271968, Fort Collins, CO 80527-1968