Rediscovering and Restoring the North American Prairie

Stephen Jones, co-author of the
Peterson Field Guide to the North American Prairie

The prairie holds a mythic place in North America’s history and sense of itself. During a period of less than 100 years, most of this magnificent ecosystem was destroyed. Only recently have many people come to appreciate the unique ecology and expensive beauty of the prairie. While researching their new prairie guidebook, Steve Jones and Ruth Carol Cushman encountered a growing wave of interest in preserving and restoring native grasslands. They also became acquainted with dozens of magical places, such as Alberta’s Writing on Stone Provincial Park, Nebraska’s Niobrara Valley Preserve, Kansas’s Konza Prairie, and Colorado’s Comanche National Grassland.

Steve will present an overview of the status of the prairie, including profiles of prairie preserves from Colorado to Illinois and Manitoba to Texas. Pre-autographed copies of The North American Prairie will be available for purchase.

Steve Jones is a Boulder teacher, naturalist, and environmental consultant specializing in breeding bird ecology and grassland ecology. He helped carry out the Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas project and organized the Boulder County Nature Association wintering raptor and small owl studies. More than 500 volunteers have participated in these studies. His recent book, The Last Prairie, a Sandhills Journal, celebrates the beauty and spirit of one of North America’s last wild landscapes. Steve and Ruth Carol Cushman are also co-authors of The Shortgrass Prairie, Boulder County Nature Almanac, and Colorado Nature Almanac.
**SEPT-OCT FIELD TRIPS**

All field trips are free of charge and open to the public, regardless of experience level. Attendees should dress appropriately for the weather. Bring snacks, water, and binoculars and/or spotting scopes if you have them. Carpooling is encouraged. A $2.00 (unless otherwise specified) contribution per passenger to the driver is suggested. Visit [http://www.fortnet.org/audubon](http://www.fortnet.org/audubon) for more information. Contact the leader for the field trip in which you are interested or Field Trips Coordinator, Gary Lefko at 970-897-2454 or lefkogt@greatpikespeakingbirdingtrail.org.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Leader, Contact Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09/11/2004</td>
<td>Larimer County Lakes and Migrants</td>
<td>Beth Dillon at 970-490-2610. 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. We will visit a number of area lakes and other sites to search for fall migrants. Plan on carpooling and contributing $2 to the driver. Bring lunch, water, and a scope if you have one. Limited to 10 participants.</td>
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<td>09/18/2004</td>
<td>F.E. Warren AFB, Cheyenne, WY.</td>
<td>Gary Lefko at <a href="mailto:lefkogt@greatpikespeakingbirdingtrail.org">lefkogt@greatpikespeakingbirdingtrail.org</a> or call 970-897-2454. Full day trip. We'll be looking for fall migrants. Diverse wetland, riparian and aquatic plant communities attract many migrants to the reservoir. Excellent for shorebirds (and an occasional Kelp Gull - 2003).</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/19/2004</td>
<td>Fossil Creek Reservoir Bird Survey</td>
<td>Bill Miller at (970) 493-7693 or <a href="mailto:5mcorp@verinet.com">5mcorp@verinet.com</a>. Monthly bird survey led by FCAS. All levels welcomed. Fossil Creek Reservoir is scheduled to open to the public in October.</td>
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<td>09/26/2004</td>
<td>Jackson Lake State Park.</td>
<td>Nick Komar at (970) 416-7527 or <a href="mailto:quetzal65@comcast.net">quetzal65@comcast.net</a>. Field Trip participants will tally as many species as possible (focus on shorebirds) between 9 am and 6 pm (Pack Lunch provided) in support of SALVANATURA, National Audubon's partner in El Salvador (through BirdLife International). Pre-register ($40) and limited to 10 participants. Funds raised will support the only year-round bird monitoring program in El Salvador, where millions of migrants winter. Pledges from non-participants also welcome.</td>
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10/02/2004 Saturday - "Where do I find birds in my town?". Leader: Gary Lefko at lefkogt@greatpikespeakingbirdingtrail.org or call 970-897-2454. Meet 7:30AM at Colorado Welcome Center parking lot. Join us for our new monthly bird watching field trip series. Once a month we'll be visiting your town to show you where to find your birds. This month's stop: Fort Collins, CO.

10/03/2004 Sunday - Fundraiser Field Trip For Migratory Birds In Central America. Leader: Nick Komar at (970) 416-7527 or quetzal65@comcast.net. Field Trip participants will tally as many species as possible (focus on shorebirds) between 9 am and 6 pm (Pack Lunch provided) in support of SALVANATURA, National Audubon's partner in El Salvador (through BirdLife International). Pre-register ($40) and limited to 10 participants. Funds raised will support the only year-round bird monitoring program in El Salvador, where millions of migrants winter. Pledges from non-participants also welcome.
SAN LORENZO PROTECTED AREA  
Achiote, Panama  
A special trip co-hosted by the Panamanian Center for Research & Social Action (CEASPA)  
and the Fort Collins Audubon Society  
March 11-20, 2005  
$1798 (from Panama City)

Join us over spring break on a natural and cultural adventure as we explore the incredible diversity found throughout Panama. The primary focus of our trip will be to provide volunteer assistance to the community of Achiote in the San Lorenzo Protected Area. The village of Achiote is located along the world-renowned birding site, the Achiote Road. This is the site of the famous Atlantic Christmas Bird Count held by the Panama Audubon Society every year. The number of species in this area consistently exceeds 340 in a 24-hour period, the No. 1 or No. 2 spot worldwide. Unfortunately, most visitors to the area stop just short of the village, at the forest's edge, and the community has seen little financial benefit. CEASPA is working to help the villagers attract ecotourists, while maintaining the integrity of the village. CEASPA has purchased a small parcel of land on the edge of the village and recently built a community center that also can double as an ecotourist center, Centro El Toucan, where visitors can get a meal, use the facilities, and make some purchases. During the winter of 2004, a design workshop was held at Colorado State University with Panamanians, CSU faculty and students, and many interested community members working in a variety of related fields. A second design workshop was held with the community members of Achiote. After much discussion, there is consensus that a freestanding lookout tower on the Centro El Toucan property should be built. This trip allows us to volunteer time preparing the landscaping and gardens at El Toucan and constructing the free standing lookout tower. We will be working daily at a relaxed pace with local community members. In between work sessions we will take advantage of the incredible resources in and around the San Lorenzo Protected Area. We will visit old town Panama City (Panama La Vieja), bird in Barro Colorado Island Natural Monument, Soberania National Park, the San Lorenzo Protected Area, and visit the San Lorenzo Fort. After our trip is complete, there will be an optional extension to visit the northern Panamanian highlands in search of the Resplendent Quetzal.

Itinerary
Day 1 - March 11 (Friday) Arrival in Panama City
Day 2 - March 12 (Saturday) Panama City and surrounding area
Day 3 - March 13 (Sunday) Trans-continental train en route to Achiote
Day 4, 5, & 6 - March 14-16 (Monday-Wednesday) Project work days
Day 7 - March 17 (Thursday) Final project work day and inauguration
Day 8 - March 18 (Friday) Departure for Soberania National Park
Day 9 - March 19 (Saturday) Barro Colorado/Smithsonian Institute Tropical Research Center
Day 10 - March 20 (Sunday) Departure

Trip Highlights
Helping CEASPA and the Community of Achiote  
Participating in a team community development project
Birding along the Achiote and Pipeline Road  
Visiting Barro Colorado Island
Discovering the San Lorenzo Fort  
Walking through Old Panama City
Hiking Soberania National Park  
Crossing the continent by train
Exploring the San Lorenzo protected area 
Meeting local conservation organizations
Experiencing travel that makes a difference

Trip Details
This trip covers a wide variety of activities from urban to rain forest exploration. We will be both on foot and in boats, and there is always the possibility of rain. Accommodations will be a bit rustic during our stay in the Achiote area. We will be in male/female dormitory rooms, each with 10 beds. Outside of Achiote our accommodations will be very comfortable. Throughout the trip we will be driving in an air-conditioned mini-bus. It should be noted that the climate this time of year (March) is generally nice with temperatures in the mid- to upper eighties. A detailed trip packet will be provided with a suggested packing list.

Financial Arrangements
The fee for the tour is $1798 per person based on double occupancy and dormitory style accommodations. Single rates are not available on this trip. This includes: a detailed pre-trip packet including a reading list, country bird list, packing suggestions, and some background reading and conservation project information; all food, three meals per day, from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 10; all lodging for 9 nights during the tour; ground transportation; and guide services provided by the tour leader and local guides. The tour fee does not include international airfare, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, passport fees airport departure taxes or items of a personal nature.

Tour Size
This tour will be strictly limited to a maximum of 16 participants and a minimum of 14 participants.

For More Information
Please see: http://www.emeraldplanet.com/html/panamaitinerary.html
Good evening. My name is Carol Fiore and I am a resident of Loveland.

I possess a Master's Degree in Environmental Science with a major emphasis in ecology. I have studied and researched habitat loss and destruction, and I am a former bird zoo keeper and zoo education specialist.

I am concerned about the declining habitat in and along the Platte River in Nebraska and support Colorado's participation in a basin-wide recovery program that will improve the river for wildlife and people.

As the Conservation Chairperson for the Ft. Collins Audubon Society, I am here in an official capacity to represent the interests and concerns of our organization.

Protecting and restoring wildlife habitat in the Platte River Basin is not just an important regional issue, it has global implications as well. Restoring and protecting habitat for threatened and endangered species along the Platte River in Nebraska will also benefit a host of other species that depend upon this habitat, including millions of ducks and geese and almost a half a million sandhill cranes--a beautiful and majestic bird that is loved by people around the world.

The members of the Ft. Collins Audubon Society urge you to adopt a recovery program that provides at least as many benefits for fish and wildlife as the Governance Committee 2 scenario outlined in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

The state and federal water depletion plans designed to protect river flows need to be strong, understandable, and enforceable. Nebraska needs to ensure that Colorado and Wyoming water designated for the recovery program is used for the recovery program.

The most critical habitat for the bird species at risk is the Platte River channel and nearby areas. The program should focus first on purchasing, protecting and restoring this important habitat for the long term.

Creating important sandbar habitat for roosting and nesting requires sand and river flows. With the river's sand and gravel trapped behind large dams upstream, the program needs to provide an adequate supply of sediment, combined with properly timed river flows, to build new sandbar habitat for the birds.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak here this evening. We at the Fort Collins Audubon Society take our commitment to wildlife and habitat (particularly birds) seriously. All of us have a responsibility to insure that future generations will have the chance to enjoy one of the greatest wildlife spectacles in this country, including the gathering of the beautiful sandhill crane, by supporting a strong recovery program for the Platte River.

Again, thank you.

Carol Fiore  
Conservation Chair - Ft. Collins Audubon Society  
rockyzoo@earthlink.net
CONSERVATION CORNER - Carol Fiore, Chair

The first fall meeting of the Conservation Committee will be held just before the regular September program meeting at 5:45 p.m. in the Ludlow Room at the Lincoln Center. Everyone is invited; just come by and hear about the exciting issues we are getting involved in.

For more information or to get a copy of the agenda, email Carol Fiore after September 1.

Results for May 2004 Fort Collins Audubon Birdathon
Phil Friedman - Birdathon Coordinator

The 2004 Birdathon held Saturday, May 15, 2004 was a huge success! We fielded 5 teams with 23 team members who spanned out over the Larimer and Weld county landscape to see, hear, and count well over 100 species each. The winning team saw more than 160 species! A new record we believe for FCAS Birdathon. Team members and independent pledges raised almost $2,900 for FCAS. There were more than 70 individual contributions, the average being approximately $40. Our largest donation was $350. I would like to extend a hearty and heartfelt thanks to the 5 team leaders, the 23 team members, and to all those who made pledges and contributed. We really do appreciate your efforts and contributions to FCAS. We'll see you again next May.

PRESIDENT’S CORNER – Bill Miller

I hope you all had an enjoyable summer, but it is time to become more active again. Over the summer the Conservation Committee worked on several issues. The Membership and ad hoc Fiscal Policy committees also met during the summer. Now, as September arrives we will resume our newsletter as well as our program meetings. And we will be scheduling field trips more frequently. Chapter elections will take place in January. With the exception of the President, all Board members are eligible to succeed themselves. We are always looking for new volunteers to either serve on our committees or stand for office. If you are interested in so serving please contact the chairman of this year’s Nominating Committee, Phil Friedman, at phifri@frii.com or at (970) 493-2959.

Several other events are on the FCAS schedule so far. Details are still pending, but will be announced in subsequent issues of the Ptarmigan. But you might want to reserve these dates on your calendar.

NATURAL AREA CLEANUP Saturday, October 16, 2004. 9:00 12:00 AM Contact Bill Miller to participate at 5ncorp@verinet.com or at (970) 493-7693

OPENING OF FOSSIL CREEK REGIONAL PARK Saturday, October 23, 2004. Details of time are still pending, but will appear in the October Ptarmigan.

POTLUCK AND SLIDE SHOW December 9, 2004. Set-up at 6:00 PM. Potluck at 6:30 PM. YOUR slide show begins at 7:00 PM.

ANNUAL MEETING January 13, 2005

GOOD SAMARITAN PROGRAM MEETINGS RIDE SERVICE

We have members who are not comfortable with driving themselves at night but would still enjoy attending our FCAS programs. If you would be willing to bring someone to our meetings who otherwise wouldn't attend, or are someone who would appreciate a ride, please contact Bill Miller at 5ncorp@verinet.com or at (970) 493-7693. If you would like to coordinate this effort, please let me know.
FCAS CHAPTER CONTACTS

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Birdathon:  
Phil Friedman  
970-493-2959  
phifri@frii.com

National Audubon Society Chapter Membership Application

_____ YES, I’d like to join.  
_____ YES, I’d like to renew (by phone 1-800-274-4201)

Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and of my local chapter. Please send Audubon Magazine and my membership card to the address below.

_____ My check for $20 is enclosed.  
_____ STUDENTS/SENIORS My check for $15 is enclosed  
_____ Or charge my credit card: ________________  
Expiration date: _______

Please make your check payable to Audubon and send along with this form to:
National Audubon Society  
Chapter Membership Data Center  
PO Box 51001  
Boulder, CO 80322-1001

Name _______________________________________
Address _______________________________________
City ___________________________________________
State _________________________ Zip ___________

Local Chapter Fort Collins Audubon Society D06  
Local Chapter Code: 7XCHA