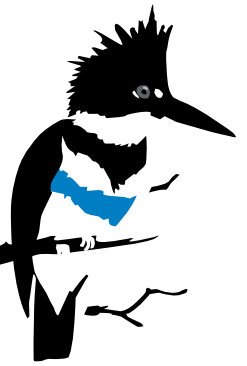


Nature Notes

Summer
2010

NEWS FROM DURANGO NATURE STUDIES



Do it Yourself Nature Resting with the Land



Rest is an important natural cycle for all living things.

Marmots

hibernate for the winter, the cactus will enter a state of dormancy during dry seasons, and even water rests during the winter.

This summer, try to reinforce your connection to the land by resting with it. The following exercise will guide you and will encourage a quiet presence in the outdoors:

Instead of heading outdoors and attempting to forcefully quiet the mind, take a timed hike with intentional periods of rest and activity. Begin with a 5-minute rest period (lying down if you choose,) paying close attention to external sounds, as well as internal ones (your heartbeat, respiration, etc.) Follow this with a vigorous 15 minute walk. Rest again for 5 minutes and continue listening. During the next 15 minutes of activity, incorporate the listening exercise. Complete the exercise with a final rest. Compare the differences between the rest and active periods. Did you hear more when you were resting? Did the nature of the rest periods change as you became tired? Rest is not always the same – it changes with your needs and awareness. Make sure to process and record your findings
(Continued on Page 3)

Nature Center a Community Resource

From Sally Shuffield, Executive Director



Nature Centers come in all shapes and sizes. Some are open to the public, some are used as natural laboratories, some are used in conjunction with school systems, some are used as tourists draws, some have museums on site, some are primitive land preservation systems. The list is long and varied. But, the one thing that all Nature Centers have in common is that they add value to a community. According to John Flicker, President of the National Audubon Society, "Every community needs a nature center just like it needs a school, church, and library. Nature centers teach environmental values."

Durango Nature Studies owns and operates its own 140-acre Nature Center along the Florida River near Bondad. Acquiring the land was a labor of love for many of the founders of Durango Nature Studies. Like many who spend time there, I find it to be a magical place. Parking is on top of the mesa and to get to the heart of the Center, one must hike down a self-guided trail, cross the bridge over the river to find oneself surrounded by pinion-juniper forests, a vast variety of bird and animal life, and trails marked by educational displays.

The Nature Center is truly a community effort, as evidenced by the sign thanking the High Noon Rotary Club for their funding of the footbridge, the majestic pavilion donated by the Lion's Club, and the plaque displaying each year's volunteer of the year. We continue to host many projects that involve the community, the most recent being the addition of a solar water pump, designed and donated by Kee Blackwater as part of his Senior Project at Fort Lewis College.

There are many other exciting projects going on at the Nature Center that create partnerships and provide important scientific data for our area. I would like to list some of the projects that have gone on only this year so far:

-Ben Powers attained his Eagle Scout badge by designing and installing a floating dock in the Nature Center's pond (See picture below).



-The Southwest Conservation Corp has used our site for their adult crews to get training, as well as a service site for its high school crews.
(Continued on Page 3)

Mission

Durango Nature Studies is dedicated to providing nature, science, and environmental education to students and communities of the Four Corners.

Vision

As an integral member of our community, Durango Nature Studies inspires a positive personal relationship with our natural world through outdoor learning, thereby promoting enhanced respect for nature.

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- Gretchen Lamar
Program Director
- Jess Bordenaro
Grants Coordinator
- Kara Collins
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Summer a Time to Rejoice!!!

by Gretchen Lamar, Program Director

No season is missed and longed for more than summer. Every living thing, from the smallest plant to the largest animal, seems to join together in a celebration of life. On a personal level, it is hard to not favor the season that allows me to spend the entire work week in the great outdoors. Thanks to Durango Nature Studies' immensely popular Junior Naturalist Field Camp, which has expanded from three to six sessions of summer camp in just three years, I am spending as little time as possible in my office.

It is hard to stay grumpy or tired in the presence of the Junior Naturalists as they marvel at a cicada shedding its skin, finding fresh black bear tracks, or revel in the cool relief of an afternoon dip in the Florida River. Children are better than anyone at filling a summer's day with activities and adventure, and there is little need for structured activities or overly-planned daily schedules. Give a child a field, a grove of trees, or a riverbank of mud, and they will show you how to spend an afternoon digging for treasures in the dirt, hanging from tree limbs, or hunting for bugs and reptiles in the tall grass. Because children are experts on all things summer, I sought out the current Junior Naturalists for their assistance on the creation of a column dedicated to the season. In the hopes that their words might inspire a few of us grownups to not only appreciate, but to get outside and experience more warm and sunny summer days, I asked the campers to share what they love most about summertime. Here are just a few of their responses:

- Going out into the woods and building forts
- Playing in the grass like a tiger
- Watching clouds and brightly colored sunsets

- Going dirt biking
- Catching lizards or snakes and getting muddy
- Swimming in the river and smelling the air after it rains
- Watching cool stuff that flies, like birds
- Going on hikes
- Listening to the river and catching horny toads
- Digging in the dirt and gardening
- Seeing snakes and playing in shallow pools
- Having longer days
- Visiting my cousins and jumping on the trampoline
- Going camping and rafting
- Watching wildlife
- Drawing pictures of wildflowers and swimming
- Catching garter snakes
- Playing outside without having to be bundled up in coats

Like a cold during flu season, it is next to impossible to avoid the infectious nature of a child's enthusiasm for the summer. I am writing this column at camp, on a piece of construction paper, during a very important part of our daily schedule, free play time. As I watch campers play and run in the field at the Nature Center, a John Muir quote from his book, *The Story of My Boyhood & Youth*, keeps running through my head: "Young hearts, young leaves, flowers, animals, the winds and the streams and the sparkling lake, all wildly, gladly rejoicing together!"



Look for Durango Nature Studies' monthly column in the Durango Herald's Good Earth section.

Nature Briefs

Nature Center (cont. from page 1)

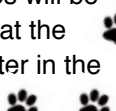
- Graduate students from Colorado State University have used our site to collect mouth swabs and audio recordings from boreal chorus frogs, of which the Nature Center has an abundance.
- Volunteers from the Colorado Bird Atlas have recorded more than 42 species of birds at the site, and found three species that they had not seen before in their study block.
- Fort Lewis College students have conducted stream sampling and also set up a weather station at the site.
- And, perhaps the most exciting, graduate students are mapping an archeological site that has been found on our property to determine its historical relevance.

All of this is going on at Durango Nature Studies in addition to the approximately 3,000 school children we bring to the site for our fall and spring programs and the over 300 kids we bring to the site each summer for our summer camps and field trips.

The Durango Nature Center has traditionally been used as an outdoor learning laboratory for our programs. Although almost all the area's kids have been there at one time or another, many adults in the community may not have had the opportunity to visit. We want as many people as possible to come see the Nature Center, so we have added monthly workshops for families and adults. Sign up for these workshops and you can also take some time to explore our trails and facilities.

Durango is a community that values and supports its Nature Center. And, the Nature Center gives back to the community in so many different ways.

Common Earth Nature Series

Durango Nature Studies has teamed up with the Center for Southwest Studies, the Colorado Division of Wildlife, La Plata County Living with Wildlife Advisory Board, the San Juan Mountain Association, San Juan Public Lands, and the Durango Public Library to present a series of educational events on living with wildlife. The 2010 series is entitled, "People and Predators: Who's Eating Whom?" It follows on the success of the Center for SW Studies' Mountain Lion! Exhibit and the desire to continue educating the public about predators and living with wildlife. There will be seven weeks in the fall series, starting in September. Durango Nature Studies will be hosting a field tracking and archery workshop at the Nature Center in October. Visit our website later in the summer for a full list of panels and activities. 

Summer Partnerships

One of the wonderful things about the Durango-Farmington area is the number of wonderful people and organization to partner with. We are excited to be working with many groups to help enhance our summer programs. This summer, the Division of Wildlife is offering fishing and archery programs at our Jr. Naturalist Field Camp. We are also happy to bring the Wolfwood wolves down to the site this summer, as well as the clean energy vehicle from the Elements Tour. We appreciate the opportunity to gain visibility through participating in other organizations' events. We are grateful for the opportunity to have had a presence at the Farmer's Market, Ignacio Project Wild Day, and Animas River Days this summer so far.

DNS forms Regional Network

Durango Nature Studies has formed a Regional Network for the Colorado Association for Environmental Education (CAEE). In May of this year, the state of Colorado passed a bill to help fund environmental education programs in the state. Part of what needs to happen next is for Colorado to adopt an Environmental Literacy plan. The group that has formed will help CAEE in this part of the state to collect data on the value of environmental education, as well as look at ways for DNS to be involved in training teachers on how environmental education can fit into the new state educational standards. Participation in the regional network is open to all that are interested. To get involved, contact Sally Shuffield at 769-1800.

Field Crews at the Nature Center

This summer, DNS has served as a Community Partner for the Southwest Conservation Corp (SCC). SCC has been working with crews of 12-15 year olds to complete service projects in their community. Three crews have done service projects at the Durango Nature Center. As part of their training, DNS has provided education connected to the natural history of the area. Part of the program seeks to develop a connection to the environment where the service project is being done.

Resting (continued from page 1)

before heading home. Continue the practice of resting throughout the summer, increasing the length of the rest periods each time. Eventually you may find you do not need physical exertion in order to quiet your mind. Looking back over your findings, you will find your awareness of the world around you has sharpened dramatically.

Call 970.382.9244 for more information

Community Support

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Volunteers

Congratulations to 2009 Volunteer of the Year Kat Albarella



Ever since moving to Durango last year, Kat had been an amazing contributor to DNS. She has participated in our fall and winter trainings, and quickly rose to the ranks of Senior Naturalist through her ongoing participation in our programs. In addition to her volunteer teaching with Children Discovering Nature and Surviving and Thriving in Winter, she has helped us with our after school Nature Club and our Summer Camp. She has logged more hours than any other volunteer for the past three seasons. As a former elementary school teacher, she has much to add to our

programs beyond her joyful disposition and love for kids and the outdoors. We are so grateful to all Kat's hard work and are proud to have a plaque with her name on it join the list of volunteers of the year hanging at the Nature Center.

Thank You New Spring 2010 Volunteers!!!!

We never cease to be amazed by the talents that new individuals bring to our programs. We had some amazing people adding their enthusiasm to our work this spring. Thank you to:

Sabrina Buckley
Diane Pesman
Kristina Romano
Andrew Spivack
Kathy Sutterfield
Terry Sutterfield

Our next Volunteer Training will be September 15, 17 & 18 for the fall season. Check our website for details.

Senior Naturalist Program

Our Senior Naturalist Program is growing. One of the perks of staying involved as a volunteer with Durango Nature Studies is the chance to continue honing skills as a naturalist. Coming this year for Senior Naturalists:

Training and certification as a Project Wild and Project Learning Tree instructor. We are planning these classes for the fall. So, if you are interested in becoming a Senior Naturalist next season, let us know.

Senior Naturalists

Kat Albarella	Ty Henderson
Erika Bach Good	Linda Herz
Calixto Cabrea	Karen Hickerson
Liz Cahill	Orien McGalamery
Karen Carver	Estella Moore
JJ Colman	Kim Skinner
Gay Grossman	Cindy Smart
Amy Haggart	Andy Spivack

A special thanks this month to Senior Naturalists **Karen Hickerson and Linda Herz** for helping out at Animas River Days!



2010 Volunteer Appreciation Social



Durango Nature Studies held our Annual Volunteer Appreciation Social at the Rochester Hotel courtyard on May 21. These wonderful naturalists really are at the heart of Durango Nature Studies, and we couldn't do our work without them. In 2009, volunteers contributed more than \$35,000 to DNS through their donation of time. Volunteers received t-shirts and certificates. It was a great opportunity to reflect on the year and enjoy each other outside of the work that we do.

A special thanks to Diane Wildfang and Kirk Komack for so generously donating the Rochester Courtyard for the event. Thanks also to Star Liquor, Ska Brewing, and Cocina Linda for their donations.

Above, board members Eilene Lyon and Erika Good. Right, staff and volunteers enjoy the evening.



Call (970)-382-9244 for More Information

Events

Second Annual Bluegrass and Beer

Date: Thursday, August 5th

Place: Rotary Park

Time: 5:30 - 7:30

Cost: \$5 per person

Bands: Sally Shuffield and Pat Dressen and Waiting on Trial



Join Durango Nature Studies for our second annual bluegrass and beer fundraiser. This year we have moved it to Rotary Park. It should be a great way to relax with the family on the lawn and listen to some good music while supporting Durango Nature Studies. Thanks to donations by Sunnyside Meats, James Ranch, and City Market, there will be brats and burgers available, as well as beer donated by Carver's.



The music will start off with Durango Nature Studies' own, Sally Shuffield, accompanied by Pat Dressen from the Badly Bent on mandolin. Sally's third CD, "Something in the Water," charted nationally on the folk and american roots radio charts. According to *No Depression Magazine*, "Although she shares a regional home and vocal style with Iris Dement, Shuffield's decades-long stay in the Western states has tinged her songwriting with themes of coyotes and canyons, as well as lost love and rambling songs... There are plenty of reasons to be glad Shuffield rode west." To hear her music, visit www.sallyshuffield.com.

Sally will be followed by one of Durango's hottest new bluegrass bands, Waiting on Trial. According to David Smith from KDUR, "As a collective whole, Waiting on Trial is a welcoming addition to the Durango acoustic scene. Not quite bluegrass and not quite old time – they're the Animas River in a spring flood; they're the La Plata Mountains in a dusting of October snow; they're a grove of Ponderosas in a summer fire – you know it's going to happen eventually, but you never really know what it'll be all about. All you can do is sit back and take it in." To hear their music, visit www.myspace.com/waitingontrial.



First Annual Earth Day Celebration and 5K a Fun Time for All

Our first annual Earth Day Event and 5k was a nice success. We had lots of kids and families participating and listening to music from Wild Mountain after the race. We plan to grow the event each year with more booths and displays to connect to Earth Day. So, put it on your calendar early as a must attend for next year's Earth Day weekend. A special thanks to our major sponsors: Backcountry Experience, Alpine Bank, Durango Nursery, Your Running Store, Durango Kid, and Homeslice Pizza. We were thrilled with the participation in the 5k. Congratulations to the following winners:



Save the Date
DNS is again bringing Telluride Mountain Film back to Durango by popular demand. Save the date of November 5th on your calendar for another great film festival. Details will be available soon

TELLURIDE
MOUNTAINFILM
ON TOUR

1. Gerry Garaghty
2. Brian Beer
3. Grant Kenzie (1st place female)
4. Danny Quinlan
5. Doug Reynolds (with twins in stroller)
6. Ingrid Alt (2nd place female)
7. Samantha Smith (3rd place female)
8. Dio Cifuni
9. Peter Marshall
10. Jesse Bopp (with child in stroller)

Kevin and Garnet Oliver tied as the winners of the 1-mile fun run.



Visit www.durangonaturestudies.org

Junior Naturalists



SCENES FROM SUMMER CAMP 2010

What a fun-filled summer it has been so far!!! Our five sessions are full of campers who love to learn and play in the outdoors. A few favorite activities have been river tromping, bow and arrow building, fort building, finger knitting, and hiking on Rattlesnake Ramble. And we still have half the summer to go! Thanks kids and parents for an amazing group of Jr. Naturalists.



NEW THIS SUMMER!!! NATURALIST BACKPACKING CAMP

Many graduates of our Junior Naturalist Field Camp have been asking, "What's Next?!" Well, we have come up with a wonderful next step to follow up on the weeks spent as Junior Naturalists at the Nature Center. The first week of August, (August 2-6), DNS will be offering a camp for kids entering 6th through 8th grade that will teach about wilderness skills and camping preparedness, and culminate with a 1 night overnight. The camp will be led by program director, Gretchen Lamar. She will be assisted by two other staff members. We have lots of exciting things planned for the week, including instruction from the Division of Wildlife, Leave No Trace Activities, Map and Compass, River Exploration and much more. To find out more, call our staff at 769-1800. We are only taking 8 – 10 kids this first year and we'll see where it goes from there. Visit the Backpacking Camp button on our website to register.



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Call (970) 382-9244 for more information

Workshops and Events

- JULY 10 YOGA AT THE NATURE CENTER**
Saturday, 9:30-11:00
Taught by Kara Collins
\$10 members/\$15 non-members
- JULY 26 FULL MOON HIKE - FULL BUCK MOON**
7:45-9:45
Location TBA
Free for members, \$10 nonmembers
- AUG 5 2ND ANNUAL BLUEGRASS FUNDRAISER**
5:30 - 7:30
Rotary Park
\$5 per person
- AUG 21 NATURAL JOURNALING
WILDWORDS LECTURE**
Saturday, 2:00-5:00
Durango Nature Center
Taught by Erika Good
\$10 for members, \$20 for nonmembers
- AUG 24 FULL MOON HIKE - FULL STURGEON MOON**
7:30 - 9:30
Location TBA
Free for members, \$10 nonmembers

- AUGUST 24TH-31ST
2ND ANNUAL ONLINE AUCTION**
Visit Website
- SEPT 15, 17, 18
FALL VOLUNTEER NATURALIST TRAINING**
Wed, Sept 15, 6:00 - 8:30 pm
Friday 17th and Saturday 18th
8:30 - 4:00 at Nature Center
- SEPT 11 NATURE CENTER OPEN HOUSE**
Saturday, 10:00 - 2:00
Durango Nature Center
Free for members and camper families,
\$5 nonmembers
- SEPT 23 FULL MOON HIKE - FULL HARVEST MOON**
7:00 - 9:00
Location TBA
Free for members, \$10 nonmembers



Details and registration available at
www.durangonaturestudies.org or
(970) 382-9244

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