



Don't Go With The Flow:

Swiftwater Safety

By Simon Young, Seasonal Park Ranger

As all of the kiosks at Open Space trailheads will tell you, there are inherent dangers to any recreational use of our parks. Some of these, such as chance encounters with wildlife, are largely unavoidable, but other risks result directly from the behavior of park visitors. One of these is the danger from “swiftwater” in fast-flowing creeks and streams.

In late spring and early summer, runoff from mountain snow accumulation greatly increases the water flow in these waterways. Creeks which run as small streams at other times of the year become raging torrents.

Swiftwater is powerful, relentless and predictable.

Powerful: when creeks and streams are flowing fast, it takes very little to get swept away. As a rule, you are beginning to enter the danger area when the water gets deeper than your ankles. The overall force of the creek is proportional to the square of its flow, so doubling the flow of the creek increases that overall force by four times. For example, Clear Creek typically average less than 50 cubic feet of water per



Ranger Mike Morin participates in swiftwater rescue training, photo by Rachel Murray

second (cfs) in winter months, but this often increases twenty fold to over 1,000 cfs in the peak runoff weeks. Clear Creek drops approximately 1,200 feet in altitude over the 11.5 miles between the County line and the mouth of the canyon in Golden—major swiftwater.

Relentless: a swiftwater creek cannot simply be turned off; the forces pushing you downstream will continue to do so without letting up. Once you have been swept away there is no way to elude this force; you will just need to ride it out.

Predictable: defensive swimming techniques can be used against swiftwater’s consistently powerful nature to lower your risk of injury if you are swept away.

As Rangers, we receive swiftwater rescue training every year. In addition, many of us are

trained to the higher Swiftwater Rescue Technician standard. Our Rangers’ swiftwater activity is usually focused on Clear Creek Canyon Park, but we ask that Volunteer Park Hosts and Patrollers not serve in Clear Creek Canyon Park.

Several of our other Parks have substantial creeks running through them; but volunteers are most likely to encounter swiftwater safety issues along Bear Creek at Lair o’ the Bear Park (LOB) and the North Fork of the South Platte River at Pine Valley Ranch Park (PVR). Entering the water is not permitted at Pine Lake.

Volunteers there will frequently see visitors entering the water to fish, wade or simply splash around. You can provide valuable customer service by reminding visitors of the dangers of swiftwater. The safest way

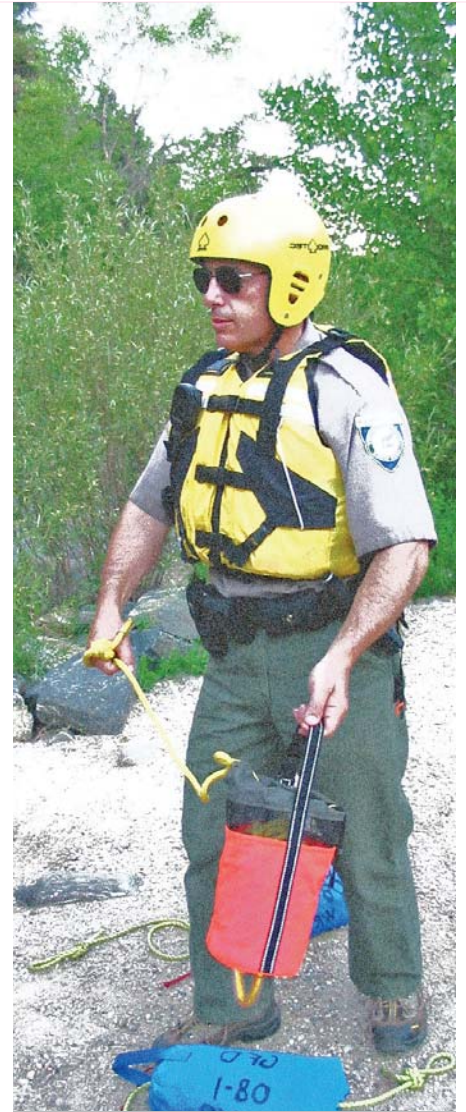
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to enjoy swiftwater is to remain on the shore, but if park visitors insist on entering the water, warn them that they should go no further than ankle-deep in the water.

If, despite your warnings, you see someone in trouble in swiftwater, first (as in any emergency) call 911. Second, if you are willing to do so and if have been appropriately trained, use the swiftwater rescue equipment on hand. At LOB, a throw rope is located in the Clivus. At PVR, a throw rope and PFD (personal flotation device, a life vest) are located in the Depot. Use these only if you have received training and remember that under

no circumstances whatsoever should you enter the water yourself. You cannot be part of the solution if you become part of the problem! Third, be prepared to use your training to give CPR if someone is recovered from the water and needs this level of help.

But, as we all know, the best way to avoid these situations is to discourage the behavior that causes them. With more education, we look forward to a time when all of our Park visitors can enjoy the unique environment that being beside swiftwater provides, without involving themselves in the great danger that it can present.



JCOS Ranger photo collection



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Lookout Mountain Nature Center
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Hiwan Homestead Museum
John Steinle, 303-674-6262
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upcoming event



WHAT: *Volunteer Trail Building Project*

WHEN: *Saturday, July 16th
8:00am -- 1:30pm*

WHERE: *DOG OFF LEASH AREA
ELK MEADOW PARK*

Pre-register today!

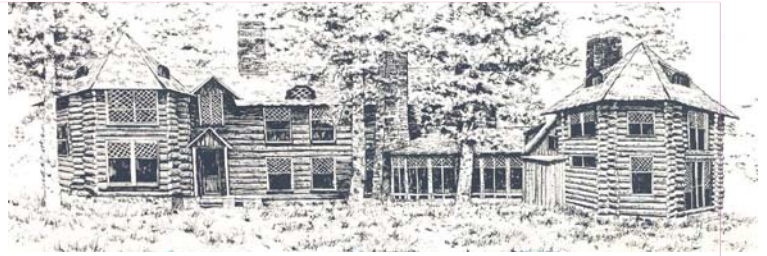
No experience necessary; project is limited.

EMAIL: ctibbles@jeffco.us PHONE: (303) 271-5992

Phantom in the Grove!

By John Steinle, History Education Supervisor

FIRST ANNUAL MOVIE IN THE GROVE: "THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA"



HIWAN HOMESTEAD MUSEUM

On Saturday, July 23, 2011 Hiwan Homestead Museum will present its first ever Movie in the Grove, the silent film classic "The Phantom of the Opera," starring Colorado's own Lon Chaney. Hiwan's historic Heritage Grove will be the setting for this outdoor movie; attendees should bring lawn chairs or a blanket to sit on. The program will begin at 8:30 PM with a short introduction followed by the 1925 film. Famed pianist Hank Troy will provide the accompaniment for the film. The audience can enjoy the movie for free, and popcorn and other treats will be available. For information call the Museum at 720-497-7650. This movie event is sponsored by the Jefferson County Historical Society and Evergreen National Bank.

"The Phantom of the Opera" was the most famous portrayal by Lon Chaney, "The Man of a Thousand Faces," who became one of the world's biggest movie stars in the 1920s through his incredible skill with makeup and pantomime. Chaney was born and grew up in Colorado Springs before his career in theater and the movies. Tragically, Chaney died of throat cancer in 1930, just as his career in talking films was beginning.

Note: The Volunteer Park Host Summer Trimester Meeting will be held in the Grove on July 23rd at 7:30 p.m., providing a quick Parks Update followed by "The Phantom of the Opera." Carpooling with other Hosts will add to your evening's enjoyment!

News from



Lookout Mountain Nature Center

Nature Lessons Are Never Rained Out

By Alicia Vermilye, LMNC
Program Coordinator

Due to the recent rainfall, flowers are blooming all over the Lookout Mountain Nature Center Preserve. The school groups that attended



Photo by Greg Kats

programs in April and May weren't lucky enough to enjoy these blooms, but they braved all kinds of weather conditions and made discoveries all their own. With their Naturalist leading the way, they braved the weather and went exploring. The students often looked at animal signs and tried to determine which species left the sign. Hiking quietly after a stop allows students time to look for these animals. They were often rewarded with a sighting of a deer.

The school year has come to an end, but that doesn't mean we stop leading programs. Organizations like YMCA, day care, home school, and scout groups will keep us busy all summer. With the change of the seasons, kids will have different observations on the trail. Students will be pointing out the flowers blooming, Stellar's jays squawking and butterflies fluttering. That's when we know that summer is officially here...that and a line of 10-year olds outside the bathroom doors!

Walking Door-to-Door

Article and photos by Geoff Tibbles,
Volunteer Nest Box Monitor

Walking door-to-door has recently taken on a whole new meaning in my life. I've just become an Open Space Volunteer Nest Box Monitor, assigned to monitor 14 nest boxes on the Ranson/Edwards Homestead, an Open Space property near Coal Creek Canyon. In the past I've worked as a volunteer walking door-to-door delivering newsletters and pamphlets. Nest box monitoring is a whole different kind of walking door-to-door!

Sean Kluesner, Natural Resources' Volunteer Nest Box Monitor Supervisor, took me to Ranson/Edwards, and we hiked around, and up, and down, and around some more to locate the 14 nest boxes I'd be monitoring. Unlike most Open Space nest box "routes," Ranson/Edwards is not officially open to the public, and has no parking lot, picnic area or restroom. It does offer great views, abundant birdlife, diverse wildlife, and a good workout!

Every week I hike my route, making notes as does a census taker. The nest boxes are actually cut into the trees on Ranson/Edwards, rather than being a box mounted on a tree or a post, as in most Open Space Parks. I hike through an area that was burned by a fire about five years ago, picking my way between the burned and broken trees, around fallen branches, and up and down the hillside.

Once I've arrived at the right tree, I literally knock on the door! If

nobody flies out of the opening, I knock a second time, and wait for a minute before I unlock the door to peek inside. I check to see if a nest is under construction, or has been finished already. I feel a little disappointed if nobody's started building a nest in the littlehome that the Natural Resources staff (mostly Bryan Posthumus) have carved out of the dead tree.

The birds that Nest Box Monitors observe are called "secondary cavity nesters," meaning they don't make their own cavity, as does a woodpecker. They take over holes that others have created. Natural Resources staff create the nest boxes to enhance the nesting resources available to birds on Open Space, to gradually increase the bird populations for desirable birds.

The nest box trees aren't conspicuous (at right), and they're not vividly marked to make them easy to spot. This is important so that predators and curious passersby don't come exploring, disturbing or destroying the nest, or interfering with the successful nesting and fledging of healthy babies.

On most nest box trails, those babies generally include Western Bluebirds; Mountain Bluebirds; Pygmy Nuthatches; Chickadees; Tree Swallows; and House Wrens. On the Ranson/Edwards route, you also have a chance to see some Violet-Green Swallows and White-breasted Nuthatches!

I've been checking my nest boxes for seven weeks now. As I open each nest box, I carefully photograph and make journal en-



tries about what I've seen. Sean Kluesner made a really great handbook to carry while I'm monitoring, with lots of information and color photos to help Nest Box Monitors identify what kind of nest it is, which kind of bird is likely to have built it, how many eggs are typical of each bird species, what the eggs will look like, plus photos (many taken by Nest Box Monitors in previous years) that



show what the adult bird looks like. This book has been really helpful to me, as a complete

novice at bird identification. Things got off to a slow start because of the late snow and heavy, wet weather we had early in May, but now the Ranson/Edwards nest boxes are getting pretty busy. There are nests in most, with one egg per day being laid as soon as construction is complete. Some of my nests have 8-9 eggs in them now! The female adult begins "incubating" once the last egg has been laid, sitting on the eggs continually to help them develop into a healthy clutch of nestlings.

New nestlings aren't pretty, to say the least. Their mouths are prominent and generally outlined in vivid yellow, making a better "target" for delivering the anxiously anticipated food. When the nestlings hatch, they have bright pink skin, and are naked except for a little bit of fuzz; they have no feathers yet. They can't regulate their body temperature, so the mother bird sits hunkered down on the nest constantly and begins "brooding" to keep them warm. The brooding lasts for about six days. Soon their eyes are fully open, but it will be a week or so before their feathers are fully developed.

Estimating the age of the nestlings is very important, because nestlings grow quickly, filling the nest to overflowing. Around 13 days after the eggs hatch, Nest Box Monitors must be very careful when opening the nest box as a nestling may fall out, or become so confused or startled that it may even fledge prematurely.

Within two to three weeks from

hatching, the nestlings will "fledge," taking their first flight from the nest. The fledglings will stay under cover and may be seen hopping around on the ground near the nest. In a few more days they will fly strongly, and follow their parents for food. Within 30 days of hatching, they will be feeding unassisted and the nesting cycle will be completed.

Over the years we've had lots of birds nest in the various trees in our yard, so I was surprised to learn that as soon as one nest cycle is completed, a second and sometimes a third nest cycle often occurs in the nest boxes. Sometimes the new nest, generally built on top of the first nest, is made by the same pair of adults; other times the new nest is built by a pair of adults from a different species. While I'm still trying to figure out which birds are currently using each of my nest boxes, I'm also curious to see who may move in as the summer progresses.

Another interesting thing I've learned is that both Tree Swallows and Violet-Green Swallows tend to get kicked off of their early nest attempts by more aggressive Mountain and Western Bluebirds, but, rather than giving



up, the Swallows actually pitch in and help the Bluebirds to feed their young, which speeds those babies off the nest! Then the Swallows take their nest back and start a new nest of their own on top.

Birds have a hard life. In addition to predators and intruders, the nest boxes are subject to extremes of wind and weather. In fact, the third week I went out on my route I found one nest box had been snapped off; the nest with two blue eggs at my last visit was now gone with the wind! The nest boxes on my route are cut and chiseled out inside wildfire-killed trees, which makes them very prone to wind damage. Natural Resources staff try to build the boxes inside big tree trunks that have already had their crown snapped off. It must have been quite a wind that hit that tree!

So far, the two biggest challenges of being a Nest Box

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Jefferson County Open Space Adopts Mobility Device Guidelines

By Carolyn Tibbles, Administration and Education



HELPFUL
INFORMATION

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was first adopted in 1990 to ensure people with disabilities received comparable access to services and activities in their community. The Act was amended by a final Rule of the Department of Justice published on September 15, 2010, regarding the use of Other Power-Driven Mobility Devices (OPDMDs) on state and local public lands to enhance access for persons with mobility disabilities.

The phrase “Other Power-Driven Mobility Device” refers to any mobility device (other than wheelchairs) powered by batteries, fuel, or other engines that is used by persons with mobility disabilities for the purpose of locomotion.

As a result of the new ruling, on March 15, 2011, Jefferson County Open Space adopted important new guidelines to be in compliance with the new ADA Rule for OPDMDs. The guidelines are designed to allow persons with mobility disabilities greater access to areas of Open Space parks and properties through the use of certain OPDMDs, while considering the Open Space Mission, current Open Space regulations, public safety requirements, and the potential natural and cultural resource impacts.

The end result of all of this is that you may see some new motorized vehicles visiting the Parks and volunteers should be prepared to explain the changes to our park visitors.

The most important points for Open Space volunteers to remember are:

1. OPDMDs are only allowed in certain areas of Open Space Parks. OPDMDs are not allowed in areas where resource damage or public safety would be compromised.
2. There are specific criteria for what qualifies as an acceptable OPDMD on Open Space properties. The complete list of criteria is provided in the Guidelines (available on the Open Space website). A summary of the criteria for types of allowable devices is as follows:
 - OPDMDs must remain on trails and follow the yielding requirements
 - They may only be operated on trails with grades (slopes) of 12% or less
 - Devices may be up to 32” wide and up to 6’ long
 - OPDMDs may weigh up to 150 lbs. (excluding the user’s weight).
 - Devices must be electric powered
 - Safe speeds must be maintained at all times. The maximum speed for an OPDMD is 5 miles mph when other trail users are present and a maximum of 10 mph when other users are not present.
3. If a volunteer sees a device in a park that does not meet the above criteria, they should contact a Park Ranger or call 303-271-5995 to report it.
4. Since mobility devices are new to Open Space parks, volunteers should note any sightings of them on the Park Patrol or Park Host Report, including date/time/place and a brief description of the device (if possible).
5. Remember that Open Space volunteers must not ask a person using an OPDMD questions about the nature and extent of the person’s disability.
6. The Guidelines and the Appendix are available to the public on the Jefferson County Open Space website (jeffco.us/openspace). A person may also request a copy by phone (303-271-5995) or by mail (Jefferson County Open Space, 700 Jefferson County Parkway, Golden, CO 80401). If a member of the public has a question concerning these guidelines he or she may contact Colleen Gadd, Visitor and Resource Protection Supervisor, at cgadd@jeffco.us.

READER'S CORNER

Two in the Far North

By Margaret E. Murie

From Rosanna Janzer,

Open Space Executive Assistant

Alaska fascinates me! Do you have anywhere that speaks to your soul and says you're home? That's what Alaska does for me. It's beyond fascination; it's in the blood. So, of course, you catch me reading about my favorite subject, Alaska. The book is called **Two in the Far North**. If I could pick someone's life to have lived, this would have been an amazing ride! I'm coming back as Margaret Murie in my next life, because she has had such a wonderfully adventurous life, and it was all done in Alaska! So many adventures, so much love and so much wisdom! The best authors couldn't think of stories like her life was lived!

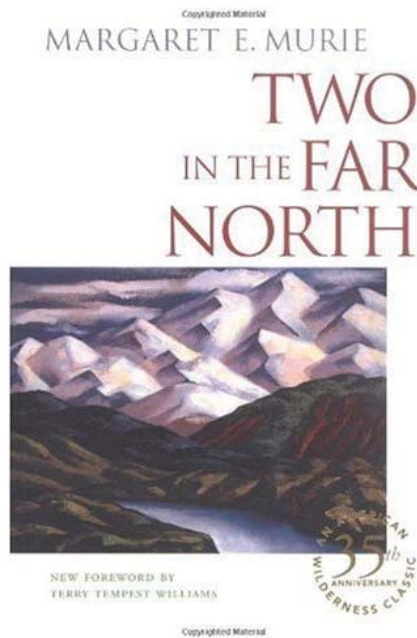
Two in the Far North is the life story of Margaret Murie, who grew up in Alaska before it was a state, tramped its wild lands before they were mapped, and

has worked hard to preserve its wild places. She went North at the age of nine to a new life in a log cabin in Fairbanks. Her childhood was filled with the dangers and thrills of life on the frontier. She vividly describes dramatic events, such as the night the town caught fire and her father and the other men burned the town's bacon supply to keep the water pump going, and the dazzling weekly arrival of the mail sleigh with its flam-

boyant driver. When Margaret graduated from college, she married – at three a.m., just before the Arctic sun rose – a young biologist named Olaus Murie.

Margaret and Olaus spent the next fifty years together exploring and mapping the wilderness of Alaska. They also researched, studied, and counted its wildlife by dogsled, snowshoes, skis, boat, and floatplane – sometimes with a baby in tow.

Her entire life was the most interesting adventure! Late winter dog sled trips over thawing rivers, helping to preserve millions of acres of Alaska, spending 50 years working next to your husband – there are just too many wonderful adventures to highlight just one! Margaret Murie received the Presidential Medal of Freedom for her environmental work. Whatever Margaret loved, she protected and nourished. She never said, "Yeah, someday I'll go do that." She did it.

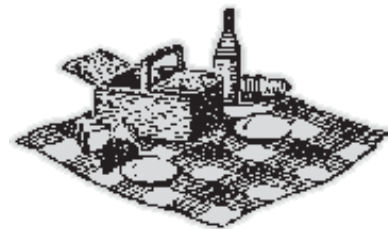


Come one, come all ...

Save the date and plan to join us...

Open Space All-Volunteer Summer Potluck and Social
Hiwan Homestead Museum, in the Heritage Grove
Sunday, August 7th, 12:00 – 3:00 p.m.

All Open Space Volunteers are encouraged to bring a dish to share and come relax and converse in the cool of the Grove! Watch for your invitation in the mail in early July.





JEFFERSON COUNTY OPEN SPACE

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Golden, Colorado 80401-6018

<http://openspace.jeffco.us>

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Monitor have been finding the right trees (until I became more familiar with my route) and identifying the birds (a process of weighing all of the evidence gathered). No one piece of information, say egg color, is conclusive on its own, unless you actually get to see an adult bird flying into the nest box, which rarely happens. If the bird flies out, it's usually going too fast to see more than a blur. I got a nice photo of a female sitting on its nest – a Bluebird (photo, page 5) but I can't tell which species.

A blue egg can mean either a Mountain Bluebird or a Western Bluebird. If you get to see the adult, Western Bluebirds have a patch of orangey-red on their chests, while Mountain Bluebirds are all blue, but if the bird is sitting on a branch facing away from you, it's really hard to know which species it is.

One time I got really lucky and a White-Breasted Nuthatch flew out of its nest box when I opened the door. It sat facing me on a branch about three feet away for about three seconds, not long enough to grab a photo but enough to confirm it was this unusual little bird.

Among the species Nest Box Monitors observe on Open Space routes, there are several kinds of small brownish birds that lay small brown-speckled eggs. So far I've seen birds at about half of my active nests, but the birds are usually about 40 feet away, so it's been very useful to take lots of photos of the birds (to enlarge on my computer screen later) and of the eggs, to get a second opinion based on the egg size and shape, and a closer look at the speckling.

Being a Nest Box Monitor is a lot more involved than I'd expected, but I'm finding the nesting cycle to be a very interesting process to observe! In fact, I can't wait to go walking door-to-door again tomorrow morning!