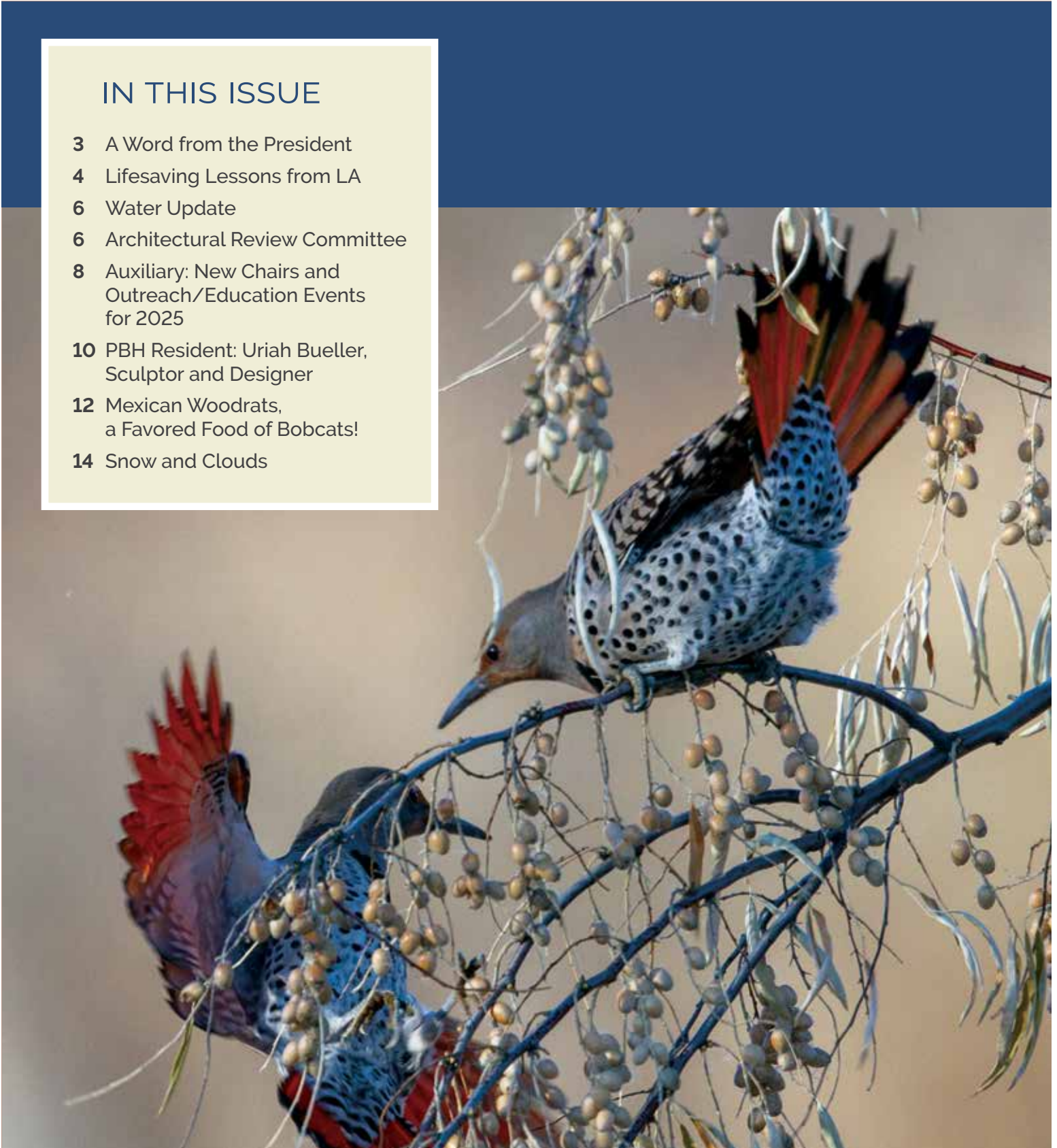


Pine Brook Press

A quarterly journal for, about, and by Pine Brook Hills residents | Winter 2025

IN THIS ISSUE

- 3** A Word from the President
- 4** Lifesaving Lessons from LA
- 6** Water Update
- 6** Architectural Review Committee
- 8** Auxiliary: New Chairs and Outreach/Education Events for 2025
- 10** PBH Resident: Uriah Bueller, Sculptor and Designer
- 12** Mexican Woodrats, a Favored Food of Bobcats!
- 14** Snow and Clouds



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Community Calendar

HOA MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Meetings are held quarterly at the Community Center/Fire Station (1905 Linden Drive) unless otherwise noted. All residents are welcome to attend.

See website: www.pinebrookhills.org

BOULDER MOUNTAIN FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Meets the second Monday of every month at 4:00 PM. Call 303-440-0235 for specifics.

BOULDER MOUNTAIN FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT AUXILIARY

Meets quarterly on Sundays. Please check www.bouldermountainfireauxiliary.org/calendar-1 for the next meeting or contact aharsh@comcast.net.

PINE BROOK HILLS WATER BOARD

Meets the third Thursday of every month at 12:00 PM. Call the Water Office at 303-442-5394 for more information.

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

Meets the second Tuesday of every month at 7:00 PM by Zoom. Contact arc@pinebrookhills.org for the link.



Golden Eagle by Gabrielle Naglieri

SHARE YOUR PHOTOS!

Email your high resolution PBH images to press@pinebrookhills.org

ON THE COVER: Flickers by Kevin Smith

A Word From the President

By Ethan Lake



Hello Pine Brook Hills. I am writing this President's Letter the day after a very important public HOA meeting, which covered the 2025 Budget as well as the long-term finances of the HOA. The

good news is that we will endeavor to contribute the same amount of funding to the Wildfire Mitigation Crew as last year (approximately \$20,000 dollars) and hope that the level of grant funding available last year continues. The hard news is that our expenses have gone up dramatically in recent years due to the spike in inflation we are all feeling. Without raising our revenues, we'd be looking at an approximately \$10,000 shortfall, which would consume our reserves (built over the COVID years when the HOA had income but little to spend it on) in 5 to 7 years. Acknowledging this, the members present at the meeting on Jan. 28th agreed that the HOA should raise its dues ask to \$125 dollars, in line with CPI. The last time the dues ask was raised was in August of 2007, so this raise was overdue (that \$75 then is equivalent to \$116 today). I recognize that this may be a challenging ask for some in the community but would like to stress that approximately 50% of the budget has gone towards fire mitigation. For those who can, please also consider making an additional tax-deductible contribution (TIN 82-1516892) to the community fund for additional

fire mitigation. Its legal information is Pine Brook Hills Community Fund. (PayPal to "Pine Brook Hills Community Fund" or checks marked "For Fire Mitigation Support" and mailed to HOA, 1907 Linden Dr., Boulder, CO 80304.)

COMMUNITY FUND

The community members present had a very thoughtful discussion from which sprang two questions I'd like the neighborhood at large to ponder. First, what is the total amount of money we ought to be spending on fire mitigation annually so that the board doesn't have to come back and ask again and again for more money? Last year the community spent around \$175,000 on mitigation due to the abundance of matching grants for our \$20,000 contribution. I imagine that Mike Palamara would love to be able to count on six figures of community contributions annually before grants, as this would give the Mitigation Crew far more certainty as to their funding. The HOA will have someone from the Mitigation Crew speak at the spring meeting, when we can ask what ideal, perpetual mitigation looks like and how much it would cost.

The second good question raised at the meeting regards this publication. Other than fire mitigation, the Press represents the largest expense the HOA pays. Is this something the community wants to continue spending on in this magnitude? Do we like having the hardcopy booklet to flip through, or can we publish some editions digitally? Previous digital copies of the Press can be seen at <https://pinebrookhills.org/pbp-archive>. Please ponder this ahead of the upcoming meetings, and show up in Q2 to hear from the Mitigation Crew and to express your opinion.

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Lifesaving Lessons from Los Angeles

By Cindie Baker, BMFPD Public Information Officer Captain

As I'm writing this article, the death toll from this winter's wildland fires in and around Los Angeles is 24, and the final number is likely to be higher as many other people are still missing. What happened in LA — and in all wildland fires where people have died — is a sobering reminder of the risk of living in areas prone to wildfire, such as Pine Brook Hills.



You probably already spend lots of time and resources mitigating your property to help save your home, but how prepared are you to evacuate at a moment's notice to save your life?

HERE ARE SOME PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS TO TAKE TODAY AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO FOLLOW IN THE EVENT OF AN EVACUATION THAT COULD LITERALLY HELP YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONES SURVIVE A FAST-MOVING WILDFIRE:

- **Register to receive emergency alerts**, including evacuation orders, from Boulder County at www.bocoalert.org
- **Prevent your cell phone from blocking emergency alerts.** The caller ID for all emergency notifications is 303-441-1400. Make sure that number can bypass your phone's do not disturb and silent settings. Information on how to do that is available here: <https://www.bmfpd.org/evacuation-preparation>
- **Know your evacuation routes.** Download district evacuation maps, print copies, and put them in every vehicle: <https://www.bmfpd.org/evac-maps>
- **Evacuate ASAP.** If you are told to leave by local authorities, do not hesitate!
- **When in doubt, get out.** You do not need to wait for an evacuation notice to leave. If you feel threatened, trust your gut and evacuate.
- **If you cannot evacuate independently, register with our Special Needs list.** Information about the list can be found here: <https://www.bmfpd.org/special-needs-list>
- **Educate teenagers, babysitters, and caretakers about evacuations.** Make sure everyone knows what to do and where to go if evacuations are ordered and you're not home.
- **Have your go bag at the ready.** Gather important documents and supplies in a backpack now so you can grab it and go in a moment's notice. More info on go bags can be found here: <https://www.bmfpd.org/evacuation-preparation>
- **Know how to manually open your garage door.** Because power outages often coincide with the most threatening wildfires, it's critical to be able to open your garage door without power. If you cannot do that, then park your vehicles outside on high-risk days.
- **Top off your vehicles' gas or charge.** On red flag days, fill up your vehicles' gas tanks and top off your EVs' charge to avoid running out of gas or electric charge.
- **Cover up to protect against heat and flying embers.** If time permits you to change clothing before evacuating, wear long pants, a long-sleeve shirt, heavy shoes or boots, and a hat. Ideally, clothing should be 100% cotton or wool. Also keep KN95 masks or dry bandanas in vehicles for every individual to help with breathing in smoky conditions.

For more in-depth information about preparing for evacuation, please visit the Evacuation Information section of our website. <https://www.bmfpd.org/>



EVACUATION ETIQUETTE

To increase the chance of everyone being able to evacuate Pine Brook Hills in a safe and timely manner during a wildfire event, please follow these tips:

- Leave with as few vehicles as necessary to reduce congestion and evacuation times across the community.
- Drive at a safe and steady pace, and with headlights on.
- Do not stop to take pictures.
- Yield to emergency vehicles.
- Follow directions of law enforcement officers and emergency responders.

Pictured on page 4 and above: Boulder Mountain Fire sent a crew and engine to LA to work on the Palisades Fire. Experience gained working in California will help us be better prepared for fires closer to home.

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Water Update

By Andrew Churnside

ELECTION YEAR: BOARD MEMBERS' TERMS UP FOR ELECTION

As we move into the new year, we want to remind our community that 2025 is an election year for our Water District's Board of Directors. Three of our board positions are up for election, each serving a four year term. If you're interested in serving your community and helping to guide the future of our water district, now is the time to act.

Interested candidates must submit a self-nomination form to run for a position on the board. Please contact the Designation Election Official, Kurt Schlegel at kurt@specialdistrictsolutions.com to obtain this form. The election will be conducted by mail, with ballots sent out to all eligible voters. The election date is set for May 6th, 2025. Your participation in this process is crucial in shaping the future of our water services.

If you have any questions or would like more information about the election process, please contact the Designated Election Official, or Andrew Churnside in the water office, or any current member of the board.

WATER SUPPLY AND FIRE SAFETY: PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITY

The recent devastating wildfires in California have highlighted the importance of water supply and fire preparedness. Our district had the forethought to include fire hydrants into the domestic water system. This is a huge asset, but it has limitations due to water main size and the number of dead ends. Our five storage tanks hold a total capacity of approximately 550,000 gallons of water.

This storage can quickly be overwhelmed by the intense demands of firefighting efforts. In the event of a fire emergency, we ask that you be mindful of your water usage. If you need to evacuate, please do not leave sprinklers or hoses running. Firefighters need all available water for battling the blaze in targeted areas, and conserving water during an evacuation allows them to make the best use of our resources.

Your cooperation and attention to this matter can make a significant difference in our collective ability to protect life and property in the event of a wildfire. Let's all do our part to help keep our community safe.

Thank you for your ongoing support and for being an active part of our district. If you have any questions about the election, water supply, or fire safety, we are here to help. Stay safe and hydrated in the year ahead!

Architectural Review Committee

By Natasha Bodorff and Rob Mohr

The Pine Brook Hills Architectural Review Committee is an integral part of our community, reviewing and approving new houses, additions, and all exterior work on homes.

If you have an interest in keeping the architecture of Pine Brook Hills in harmony with our beautiful natural surroundings, you would be just the right kind of person to join us on the committee. At this time, we are seeking to add at least two more people to the committee. The requirements on your time would be minimal — there are scheduled meetings on the second Tuesday of every month where we discuss any proposed new houses or large additions. You would also need to be available to look over and vote by email on simple "fast track" matters such as paint colors, new siding, or new roofing. That's it. The only other requirement is a desire to keep the architecture in Pine Brook Hills faithful to the guidelines set out in the 2010 Pine Brook Hills Unified Covenants, which is that all houses should be in harmony with the natural surroundings and with each other. It's an important mission that we take seriously.

We would love to hear from any fellow Pine Brook Hills residents who would like to join us in this endeavor.

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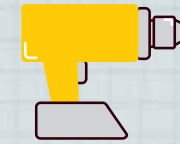
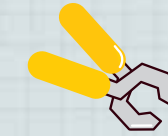
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ARE YOU PLANNING ONE OF THESE PROJECTS?

- New siding
- Exterior painting
- New roof
- Deck replacement
- Solar panels
- Fence
- House addition or new structure
- Anything on the house exterior

Don't forget to apply to the **Architectural Review Committee (ARC)** for approval

Apply at pinebrookhills.org/hoa/architectural or email ARC@pinebrookhills.org



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Auxiliary: New Chairs and Outreach/Education Events for 2025

By Ann Blonston

CHAIRS

The Community Room at the fire station on Linden has all new tables and chairs! The furnishings are largely courtesy of BMFPD Auxiliary's Nancy Callis Memorial Fund, which honored the long-time Auxiliary member who passed away last spring. The PBH HOA chipped in for some chairs, and long-time residents Gail and Bob Loveman helped the Auxiliary meet its goal of 35 chairs.



OUTREACH/EDUCATION

At its first meeting of 2025, on January 19th, Auxiliary members met via Zoom to review its 2024 programs and finances and to discuss some of the outreach and education programs planned for this year.

BOULDER MOUNTAIN HANDMADE MARKET

We were delighted that attendance and revenue were about 75% of those of the normal two-day market event, despite having to reduce the event to one day due to winter weather. Funds raised from the market enable Auxiliary to pursue goals in its other three mission areas: Volunteer Recognition, Incident Provisioning, and Outreach and Education.



Boulder Mountain Handmade Market, Nov. 2024

SESSIONS AT THE UPCOMING ANNUAL COMMUNITY SAFETY FAIR – SATURDAY MAY 3

Perennial topics of interest to residents are scheduled for the next Community Safety Fair. The multi-faceted event to be held at BMFPD Station 1 will include:

- **Safe Mountain Living** (formerly New Resident Welcome Briefing). This talk by Chief John Benson covers topics including winter driving, calling 911, wildlife encounters, power outages, how to evacuate, reflective address signs, and so much more. Designed to bring newcomers up to speed, the session has been a helpful refresher for longer-term residents, too. PBH newer-comer Lisa Lujan said, "The education seminar for new residents was extremely helpful. I attended a year after we moved in and found it even more beneficial because I knew what was being talked about."
- **Mitigation Update.** Members of BMFPD's Wildland crew will show scary slides about fire spread and discuss home hardening, the latest research on mitigation, lessons learned from fires elsewhere, and financial incentives to mitigate.
- **Living with Wildlife.** Volunteers from Greenwood Wildlife Rehabilitation Center and Boulder County Parks and Open Space will bring furry specimens and share knowledge about wildlife habits and human-wildlife encounters.

WILDFLOWER HIKE – MAY 31

Our fire district is home to good hiking trails. Knowing more about wildflowers helps us appreciate our special environment. This free wildflower hike for district families will be hosted by the Auxiliary at Chautauqua.

NEW TOPICS FOR 2025

Two new topics are under development for 2025:

- **Aging -in-Place.** It's harder to age in place in the foothills, with disparate access to support services and challenging weather conditions. The Auxiliary and members of the Pine Brook Hills Aging-In-Place group will present a discussion of resources, preparing for our own prospective needs, the role of first responders, and how to fill the resource gap.
- **Before the Power Goes Out.** Back-up power is a regular topic of interest on the community forums. The Auxiliary will assemble a panel of resident experts to discuss generators, power walls, solar systems, and novel ways for residents to keep the lights on. Staying safe during scheduled or emergency power outages will also be covered.

If you have knowledge to share about aging in place or back-up power, please contact Sue Brundege, Outreach and Education Coordinator at gsd@bouldermountainfireauxiliary.org



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PBH Resident: Uriah Bueller, Sculptor and Designer



I have lived at 1901 Linden Drive with my wife, Diane, for 25 years now. The house was one of PBH original, Kirk Hendricks', last houses he built with architect Don Gipe, who submitted the design of the detached art studio for architectural competitions after it was completed by neighbor, Ken Larkin of Rocky Mountain Construction in 2001.

As soon as we moved in, I joined the volunteer fire department for a few years and worked several wildland fires, trained with the team, and even put the wrong fuel in the old wildland truck after a first responder call. And while our voicemail message still mentions our kids, all three are now grown and have their own lives, careers, and households in Denver, Longmont, and near their hometown back in Kansas.

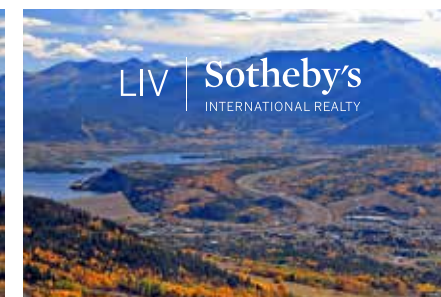
The studio was built bridging a seasonal drainage stream as a metal shop and art studio. My first concept in sculpture was to design and construct a five-foot-tall birdcage in copper. It was never intended to house birds for two important reasons. First, it was sculpture to hold and frame space, and secondly, copper kills birds. So, in either case, the piece would be empty. And no other

bird cages were ever built after that. I created a line of furniture for art galleries in Aspen and another on West Pearl. The furniture didn't sell particularly well, and both art galleries closed. Aside from my sculpture, I was also involved in arts curriculum development for schools and travel. As a chaperone for my middle son's cultural immersion trip to Thailand, I met and later started a travel guiding organization with Pine Brook Hills resident and friend, Mike Imperi, taking families up remote rivers to build schools, climbing Kilimanjaro, and cooking and dancing in Indonesia. But in 2005, Distant Destinations would have to go on hold for a bit while Mike's commitments and my artwork took different directions.

While rafting down the upper Grand Canyon, a clarity for

developing one particular product, metal shade panels with patterns cut through them, came to mind. Similar to bird cages, they frame space and filter light that allows for dappled shadows and more inviting spaces with airflow. Hand-cut prototypes morphed into developing patina powdercoats, designing geometric and fractal-inspired patterns, engineering structural systems for wind loads, and working with commercial architects to clad the outside of hospital parking garages, shade rooftops of hotels, and screen off municipal mechanical areas with public art. The studio moved to Westminster in 2015 and partnered with a fabricator in Denver. The decorative railing for the PBH flood memorial at the bottom of South Cedar Brook was donated and installed by that company. Now with installations at the Denver Botanic Gardens and other fun places (see Parasoleil.com), I decided to step down from running the company at the end of 2023 to focus on travelling more with Diane, working with the new Groundworks Art Lab non-profit in Boulder to provide creative experiences for anyone who wants to learn and play (see Groundworksartlab.org),

and babysitting our first grandchild (no website yet). That last one gives us endless joy and many excuses to keep adding to our outdoor improvement ideas around our home. We don't currently have pets of our own, but you'll often see some of our kids' dogs in their backyard pen looking for deer and turkeys while I'm out giving tours of the Groundworks studios.



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Mexican Woodrats, a Favored Food of Bobcats!

By Carron Meaney



A Mexican woodrat running for cover (by James Beissel). Note white belly and feet.

Mexican woodrats are common in Pine Brook Hills. They are native, handsome rats with big ears, white bellies, and sparsely haired tails. They are primarily nocturnal and weigh 5 to 9 ounces. Woodrats are very different from Norway rats, which are common in cities (including Boulder) and throughout the U.S.



Bushy-tailed woodrat

I have conducted hundreds of nights of live trapping of small mammals for my work as a biologist. I often captured Mexican woodrats, who are easy to handle. In contrast, Norway rats are so strong and aggressive that if I saw one in a trap, I just let it go and did not handle it at all!

The Mexican woodrat is one of six woodrat species in Colorado. The bushy-tailed woodrat occurs higher in the mountains and likely can be found in Pine Brook Hills. Woodrats are often called packrats, due to the behavior of the bushy-tailed woodrat: They pick up bones, feathers, dung, and objects to bring back to their nests. They are well-known for stealing shiny objects such as spoons and jewelry!

Mexican woodrats occur along a narrow band on the Front Range and in southeastern and southwestern Colorado. Their international distribution includes Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras.

They eat berries, fruits, seeds, nuts, acorns, mushrooms, green plants, and leaves; 90 percent of their diet is leaves. And they are happy to eat the potted plants on our decks. Drat! They gather food from late summer to autumn for sustenance during winter months.

Mexican woodrats generally don't build dens, unlike many other woodrat species. They build nests in rock crevices, tree cavities, as well as in buildings and sheds. I once found a female with young in her nest under a piece of plywood. I quickly lowered it to leave her in peace! We had a male woodrat who made a nest in an old man's sneaker. They are solitary and stay close to their nest with forays out to about 200 feet.

Mexican woodrats communicate by scent marking and foot stomping although not much is known about these behaviors or their vocalizations. Males have a gland on their belly that they rub against objects. Both sexes have perineal glands that they use for marking by lowering their rump and dragging it. They also roll around on their backs, which may deposit scent. In experiments, both males and females were more attracted to odors of their own species than those from other woodrat species.

Their preferred habitat includes rocky areas (slopes, cliffs, and outcrops) in open woodlands or shrubby areas. They can climb vertical surfaces, including trees. Females are sedentary, whereas males move more. They breed from March through early July, and females can have two litters of 3-4 young per year. Young of the year can also breed as "teenagers." They are nocturnal and are a favored food of bobcats! They are also preyed upon by bullsnakes, rattlesnakes, coyotes, foxes, and owls.



A red fox with a Mexican woodrat for dinner (by James Beissel)

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Snow and Clouds



Photos by (clockwise): Brett Kingstone, Dan Pears, Sarah Zervos, and Katie Odom



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Morning View by Dan Pears