

Pine Brook Press

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

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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

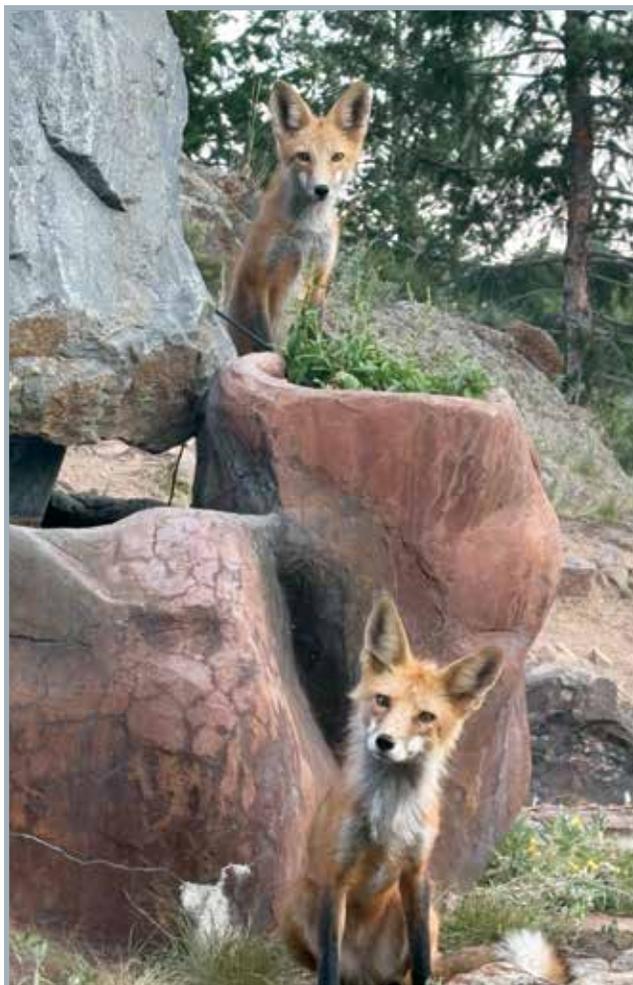
Meets quarterly on Sundays. Please check www.bouldermountainfireauxiliary.org/calendar-1 for the next meeting or contact aharsh@comcast.net.

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.



SHARE YOUR PHOTOS!

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

ON THE COVER:
Cute... but don't encourage them.
Photo by
Mark Cronshaw

*Foxes Photo
by Susan Schiff*

A Word From the President

By Ethan Lake



Season's Greetings, Pine Brook Hills! As the year and my tenure leading the HOA come to a close, I want to reflect on what we've accomplished for the community these last two years, as well as thank those folks who've made these things possible.

It has been an eventful last couple of years; the HOA seed funded the largest mitigation work in its history with over \$30,000 of your dues and additional charitable donations of more than \$32,000, a first for Pine Brook Hills. Thanks to the prodigious grant writing by Mike Palamara and Boulder Mountain Fire, that \$60,000 turned into approximately \$300,000 of paid work on some 46.5 acres of land to our west, with potential for work on 11 more acres starting in December. The HOA also requested and received the first dues raise in 20 years, which returned our finances to the black in this year's budget. We've funded and installed safety mirrors on several community roads, replaced the parking lot lights with motion-activated LEDs, put up neighborhood little libraries, hosted guest speakers ranging from our own wildland mitigation professionals to insurance experts and Marshall Fire survivors. None of this would have been possible without the volunteer efforts of the past and present board members: Kevin Smith, Andy Minden, Cory Tann, David Downing, Art Markey, and Brandon Saltmarsh. The community also owes a debt of gratitude to the volunteer work of Rob Quinn, Joyce Colson, Bob Loveman, Megan Shields, Peter King-Smith, Matt Ladwig, Mark Cronshaw, Rob Mohr, and Cindie Baker for publishing this periodical, reaching out to new residents, organizing the directory, making sure the neighborhood is Firewise accredited, and fighting the county tirelessly for two decades for additional funding for our roads — as well as many other things.

Unfortunately, challenges remain for the neighborhood which will require thoughtful consideration and community collaboration to meet. Sadly, despite the heroic efforts of Peter King-Smith, it does not look like Boulder County will

address our road maintenance in any timely manner, if at all. What to do about the roads will be a big community decision that must be made sooner rather than later. Our insurance guest speaker for the fall meeting, Tyler Harrington, revealed that Allstate has finally adopted a new insurance model that takes into account community-wide fire mitigation, as well as individual property characteristics. We must keep up the robust mitigation efforts of these past few years so that we remain accredited and insurable. As the neighborhood changes over and new faces arrive, we must strive to continue to build community and social ties with our fellow residents.

I would like to close with a call to action for the community. Many of the volunteers listed above have retired or are retiring or leaving the neighborhood. **We need new faces and new ideas to lead this community forward.**

We desperately need volunteers for the following roles:

- a **web designer** to rebuild our community website (the HOA has agreed to pay for this),
- a **Social Chair** to continue the work of community building,
- an **Enhancements Chair** to help improve and beautify our neighborhood,
- and finally, a **new President** to lead us for the next two years. **Without a leader, on January 1st, 2026, the work of the HOA board will be suspended and all those vital projects listed above will be halted. Please don't let that happen.**

FROM THE EDITOR:

Many thanks to Ethan for his service as president of the HOA!

Fireside Chat: A Final Farewell

By John Benson



As stated so many times before, "All Good Things Must Come to an End," and this will be my last ever Fireside Chat. As all of you are aware, December 31st will be my last official day with BMFPD. The next edition of the Pine Brook Press will be after I am gone from the agency.

It is hard to believe that on December 17th 2002, I stepped into the office for my first day as Fire Chief of this great organization. Yet twenty-three years later here we are. It is amazing to think about how fast those years flew by.

I want to say thank you from the bottom of my heart for all the love, support, friendships, relationships, and times we have spent together in one way or another. This is truly a community of great people. The support you have shown not only to me, but also to the fire department has been absolutely wonderful. You cannot put a price tag on such love and support.

You took in a western slope boy and his family and treated us with love, kindness, compassion, and respect. For that, I will always be grateful and humbly say thank you. Your acts have meant a lot to us.

Over the past few months, I have thought a lot about what Pine Brook Hills and BMFPD have been through together. You have evacuated due to wildfires; you have moved to higher ground due to flooding; you have rebuilt your homes after the floods of 2013. We cried together and laughed together throughout the years. Yes, your neighborhood has been through several emergencies, but one thing has always been constant: you may have bent, but you never broke. We worked to mitigate the incidents and always came out the other side, both stronger and more resilient. You have trusted me to lead our fire department and your community through those very tough events throughout the years, for which I thank you for your trust and am very humbled.

I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to give A GREAT BIG THANK YOU for supporting BMFPD.

Support has come to us in many forms: food, water, money, goods. No matter the form of support, you have all been by our side and have always been willing to provide us with whatever was needed. Again, I say thank you and I am very humbled.

As I bring this letter to a close, I will always cherish the relationships that we have built together, and I am grateful for every one of those relationships. I will miss my open-door policy and all the times that you would come in and just visit, talk, or offer suggestions on how we could make our community safer.

This is truly a great community and my only ask is that you continue to support our agency and your new Fire Chief Mike Palamara. You are in very good hands not only with Chief Palamara, but also a team of highly dedicated members, ready to respond to any emergency and to mitigate that incident to the highest level of success.

Thank you, thank you. Please take care of yourselves and each other.

I bid you all a fond farewell.

Water Update

By Andrew Churnside

This year the Pine Brook Reservoir dropped to its lowest level since being put into service in 2006. This has prompted several inquiries about how much water we have remaining and if we are concerned about running out of water. This article explains where our water comes from, how our water rights work, how much water we have remaining (and why we aren't worried).

WHERE DOES OUR WATER COME FROM?

Pine Brook Water owns rights to take approximately 330 acre feet of water annually. One acre foot is the amount of water it would take to cover an acre of land one foot deep. The majority of these rights allow us to divert water from a pond on Four Mile Creek, a few miles up from Boulder Canyon. The pond is connected under the roadway to an old mine shaft where we have two pumps. Water from these pumps is moved up to an intermediary pump station in Sunshine Canyon where it is pumped again up to the top of Pine Brook Hills near the top of Bristlecone. From there, it flows in Two Mile Creek down into the reservoir. Water is treated at the filter plant and pumped back up to a series of five tanks throughout the neighborhood, from which it flows by gravity to each house.

HOW OUR WATER RIGHTS WORK

Colorado uses a system called Prior Appropriation. This system essentially means “first in time, first in right.” Whoever first claimed and used a water source for a beneficial purpose has the highest legal priority to use that water. Water rights are considered real property and can be bought and sold. Over the years, Pine Brook Water has made considerable investments in senior water rights with the oldest dating back to 1862. We also own these rights to “extinction” — meaning we own the water even after it has gone through your septic system and returned to the streams.

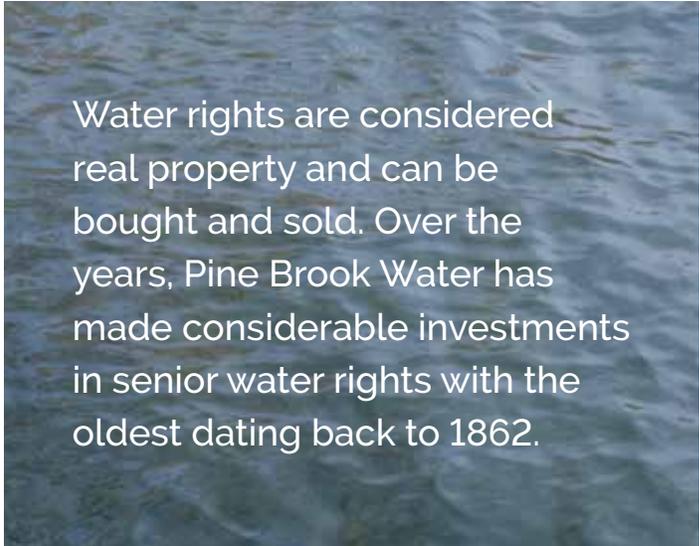
Despite possessing these senior water rights, there are times when we can't pump water. When the reservoir was built, we made agreements that we would not pump water if flows in Four Mile Creek reached certain minimums. The creek historically reaches these minimums in the summer months as things dry up and creek-side vegetation soaks up water. The 2011 Four Mile Fire changed the landscape and a lot of the vegetation in our watershed was gone. Creek flows through the summer increased and there were years when we were able to divert water all year. As vegetation comes back, naturally and due to restoration efforts, we are starting to see a return to historic summer flows.

HOW MUCH WATER DO WE HAVE LEFT?

Though it's quite visually shocking to see so much shoreline exposed, the reservoir is 65 feet deep and holds approximately 100 acre-feet of water. At its lowest point this year it was down 12 feet from full capacity and still had approximately 62 acre feet of water stored. We had a 10-day window in early October where there was adequate flow in the creek and our water rights were in priority and we were able to move a bit of water over. November 1st was the date that the new year starts for water rights in Colorado and we began our winter refill. We expect to be full again by spring to start the cycle over!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to acknowledge and thank the district employees and board members of years past for their incredible foresight. Pine Brook Water is incredibly well positioned in its ability to move and store water and most of us take that for granted. Since construction of the dam there have never been any watering restrictions within Pine Brook Hills and never a concern about running out of water.



Water rights are considered real property and can be bought and sold. Over the years, Pine Brook Water has made considerable investments in senior water rights with the oldest dating back to 1862.

Auxiliary: Thank you — and please

By Ann Blonston

As I write this quarterly report, Boulder Mountain Fire Auxiliary is in its final preparations for Boulder Mountain Handmade Market, a long-running art and gift market that is Auxiliary's main fundraiser. Boulder Mountain Handmade engages 80+ community volunteers, in leadership and event roles large and small.



Volunteers at Auxiliary's 2025 Community Safety Fair including Ruby, the long-time dog volunteer.

Boulder Mountain Handmade is one of Auxiliary's two most visible events; the other is the spring Community Safety Fair which, since 2013, has been the fire district's primary safety promotion effort. This year's Fair involved 40 fire department and Auxiliary volunteers plus a team of volunteers from Boulder County Parks and Open Space.

Beyond these two key public events, Auxiliary members serve in community-facing and behind-the-scenes roles to conduct the New Resident Welcome program, provide food and drink to responders on incidents, operate the online Community Safety Store, host recognition events for our volunteer responders, and do the nitty-gritty work of maintaining websites and membership rolls, bookkeeping and cashiering, and more. Through the work, we get to know our neighbors, which can be a challenge in mountain communities.

Auxiliary members bring so many different skills to the effort of maintaining the connection between responders and district residents! Auxiliary is an open organization and welcomes residents who can bring their enthusiasm and talents to our support mission, whether as a casual event volunteer or in an ongoing role.

Are you thinking about tangible ways to give back to your community and build its resilience? Please consider raising your hand for Auxiliary in 2026.

For example, Auxiliary has a list of public education topics suggested by residents and needs teams of organizers and does to develop and conduct the programs, and then to share the programs online with the community. Think: researcher, trainer, educator, writer, publicist, greeter, videographer.

Please consider raising your hand for Auxiliary in 2026!



Go to <https://bmfpdaux.org/interest> and fill out the simple Google form to express your interest, whether specific or general. An Auxiliary representative will be in touch to get to know you and help find your spot.

Thanks for considering volunteering with Auxiliary!

Coming Soon: The 2026-27 Pine Brook Hills Directory

By Rob Quinn

It is time for Pine Brook Hills residents to think about the biennial update of the HOA Pine Brook Hills Directory.

We have begun compiling the 2026-2027 edition of the Directory, but we need your help. Please take a minute today to provide us with the information that you would like printed in the Directory. As in past years, an easy-to-use web form is available to provide that information on the Pine Brook Hills HOA website here: <https://pinebrookhills.org/pbh-directory/>, or you can point your camera at the QR code here.



Please give us your information on or before **DECEMBER 31, 2025**. Please note that if we do not get any input from you by that date, we will not be able to add you to the Directory or, if you have an existing listing, we will not be able to make any additions, deletions, or other changes to the listing. If you have **NO** changes to your existing listing, you do not need to do anything.

Your presence in the Directory is a great benefit to you, your family, and your neighbors. The Directory assists first responders (such as BMFPD and Boulder County) in locating you and your family in the event of any emergency. Your listing can also be a first step in you or your neighbor contacting each other. Getting to know your neighbors in advance for those living in the wildland urban interface is an excellent wildfire safety tool. Wildfires do not recognize property lines. If you know your neighbors, the odds of your learning of evacuation notices are increased. It is also a great way to save your pets if an evacuation occurs when you are not at home. You and your neighbors can also plan mitigation projects together. If you effectively mitigate your property, you may help save your neighbor's home and vice versa. Linked defensible spaces are a key community protection strategy.

The front part of the Directory will, as always, contain an indispensable Guide to Mountain Living. It contains loads of useful and practical advice about living in the Boulder County foothills. Information on emergency preparedness, wildfire mitigation, managing wildlife, aging in place, PBH Covenants, plus much more, is all in there!

NOTE FOR NEWCOMERS: If you have contacted the HOA Newcomer Committee during 2024-2025 and provided contact information for PBH Alerts, we appreciate it. However, that will **NOT** be adequate to add you to the Directory. For that, we will need you to fill out the web form on the HOA website link above.

Thanks to all for your help.



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Architectural Review Committee

By Rob Mohr and Natasha Bodorff

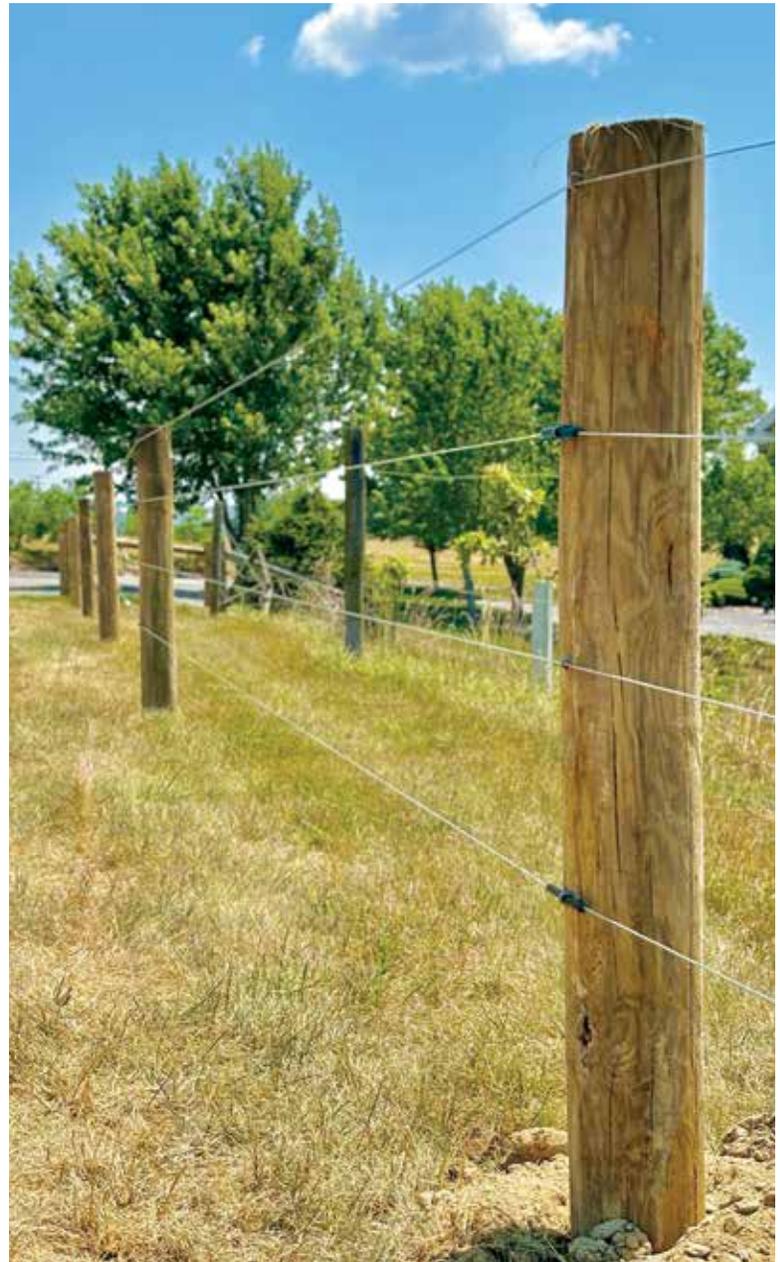
One of the thorniest issues that the Architectural Review Committee deals with is fences. Many of our neighbors would prefer to see no fences at all because they can be harmful to wildlife. For example, a deer's antlers can become entangled in a fence. A fence that is designed to be "wildlife-safe" is an option that can reduce this danger.

Boulder County has a policy of requiring new fences to be wildlife-safe if they are located in what they call mountain wildlife movement corridors. Some parts of Pine Brook Hills are designated as such areas, and some parts are not. Boulder County's Community Planning and Permitting Department can help you determine if your lot is in one of these areas. If you are thinking of putting up a new fence, you may be interested in making it wildlife-safe even if your lot does not require it.

SO, WHAT CONSTITUTES A WILDLIFE SAFE FENCE? BOULDER COUNTY HAS THE FOLLOWING SPECIFICATIONS WHEN SUCH FENCES ARE REQUIRED:

- A. Fences should be kept as close to the developed portion of the site as possible.
- B. They should be made from materials like woven wire or tightly strung, single-strand wire. Chain link fencing is not permitted except for small kennels, since wildlife can be easily entangled in mesh fencing.
- C. Top and bottom wires must be smooth, with wire spacing at 16, 22, 28, and 40 inches from the ground. The bottom wire must be at least 16 inches from the ground for the passing of young animals. The top two wires must be 12 inches apart to reduce entanglement. Because fences over 40 inches high may be lethal, they are not permitted.

To determine if your lot is located in a mountain wildlife movement corridor, contact Boulder County's "Ask a Planner" service at planner@bouldercounty.gov or 303-441-3930.



Boulder County has a policy of requiring new fences to be wildlife safe if they are located in what they call mountain wildlife movement corridors.

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

Ways to apply:

- Go to pinebrookhills.org/hoa/architectural
- Email ARC@pinebrookhills.org
- Or scan the QR code



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PBH Neighbors: Jean and Baxter Vieux



In 2012, after many evenings of wondering where life's next chapter might take us, we decided to trade midwestern suburbs for the foothills and bought a fixer-upper in Pine Brook Hills.

The views of Boulder Reservoir and the wide Colorado plains sealed the deal; it was the perfect blend of rugged beauty and thoughtful tranquility. The house, crafted of wood and stone, appealed to our sense of practicality and adventure. We rolled up our sleeves, tackled the improvements one project at a time, and built not just a home, but a place that reflected the best of both of our worlds.

Both of us hail from Kansas, where the wind sweeps across the plains and childhood dreams of mountain vacations often came true amid the Colorado peaks. Those memories of crisp air and star-filled skies stayed with us. Years later, those same mountains called us back—not just for vacations, but for the chance to live among them.

Our shared story began at the University of Kansas, where we enrolled in the same humanities program and quickly found more in common than just studies. Jean's father suggested that she was focusing on 'Baxter-iology' and he on 'Jeanie-ology'.

Even so, Baxter's academic path led toward engineering and hydrology, while Jean's interests flowed toward nursing and environmental science. Baxter's academic focus on weather radar and water monitoring eventually made him a recognized expert in hydrology and earned him the title of Professor Emeritus at the University of Oklahoma.

Jean earned her BSN degree and balanced part-time work in nursing with running a busy household that included juggling the activities of five children. Once all the children were in school, she and Baxter decided to form a company. Not content to let life slow down, Jean later pursued an advanced degree in environmental science. That decision set the stage for the next big chapter in our shared career. Together, we founded a company that served water agencies across the country, providing distributed rainfall data and flood forecasting tools—a perfect marriage of Baxter's scientific precision and Jean's management and environmental talents.

Welcome: Marya and Tony Rose

After selling and transitioning our company, we didn't stop to rest. Instead, we picked up new paddles and discovered pickleball—a sport we enjoy both for its friendly competition and community spirit. But the curiosity that had driven our academic and entrepreneurial ventures soon drew us into a new field: snowpack monitoring for water supply forecasting. Today, we are deeply engaged in developing satellite and radar technologies to better understand and manage snow resources—work that connects us both to our scientific roots and to the mountain landscapes that we love.

While our research and technology development keep us intellectually active with travels to scientific conferences, family remains at the center of our universe. Our nine grandchildren and five grown children travel frequently to Denver and across the country. The launch point for family visits starts in Denver, where we keep a condo for easier travel and urban adventures. Still, after every trip, we find ourselves most at home on Timber Lane—where the pines (and newly planted aspens!) remind us of why we chose these hills, this view, and this community as home.

We are thrilled to be new members of this vibrant community!

We are both retired lawyers—Marya was a corporate executive with Cummins Inc. and Tony worked as an entertainment and music lawyer. We moved to Boulder five years ago after living in the Midwest. We love hiking, gardening, art and design and are avid live music fans.

We are grateful to share this special part of Boulder with our new neighbors.



Bats in Our Neighborhood

By Carron Meaney

Photos courtesy of Dan Neubaum, Colorado Parks and Wildlife



Big Brown Bat

Bats are mammals that have been extremely misunderstood and persecuted throughout time. Twenty percent of mammal species are bats.

It was only in the 1930s that a scientist discovered that they use echolocation to navigate and to capture food by emitting high-frequency calls that bounce back to their large ears. Unlike mice, they have only one pup per year and some bats live more than 40 years. The largest colony of bats in Colorado, where a quarter million Mexican free-tailed bats spend the summer, is at the Orient Mine in the San Luis Valley. It is open for public viewing. Although bats can carry rabies, it is a very rare occurrence with less than 0.5% in natural populations.

Bats in the U.S. have a problem: White Nose Syndrome is killing millions of them. It is caused by a fungus. It made its way to Colorado recently as it spread west and south from New York. Millions of bats have died, and their losses are estimated to cost U.S. agriculture three billion dollars annually due to the loss of their insect-controlling capacity. Resulting increases in pesticide usage are linked to increased infant mortality.

There are 19 species of bats in Colorado; 10 live in Boulder County. The newest immigrant is the tri-colored bat, which loves to use folded-up patio umbrellas to roost. Bats typically seek water when exiting their day roosts at dusk. They forage for a broad range of insects and may take a nap during the night. Many of us have had night-roosting bats under our eaves. They deposit mouse-sized droppings containing insect parts. Bat researchers are documenting the individual personalities and complex social lives of these animals, which are similar to primates and dolphins.

Colorado's bats make short migrations to hibernation sites during our winter, often in caves and mines higher up in the mountains. The exception is the Mexican free-tailed bat, which migrates to Mexico and Brazil, where insects are plentiful while it is winter here

Three common bat species in Pine Brook Hills are described here.

BIG BROWN BAT *(pictured on page 12)*

Big brown bats are relatively large (with a wing span of 13 to 16 inches), commonly live near humans and consequently are well understood. They occur throughout the U.S. Females spend the summers in maternity colonies in buildings, barns, and other structures, whereas males form small colonies or roost singly. They mostly eat flying beetles but also dine on other insects such as Miller moths. During winter they migrate to higher elevation and hibernate in caves and mine sites.



Silver-Haired Bat

SILVER-HAIRED BAT

Silver-haired bats have white tips on their fur, giving them a frosted appearance. They are solitary and roost under tree bark, although females form maternity colonies in tree hollows. We don't know very much about them as they can travel long distances. They migrate to hibernation sites: one may exist below Jamestown along James Creek. Silver-haired bats eat a broad range of insects.



Fringed Myotis

FRINGED MYOTIS BAT

Fringed Myotis bats live at 5,000 to 8,000 feet in elevation. They roost in caves, mines, and buildings in forested areas of Ponderosa pine and Douglas fir west of Boulder. They feed on beetles and moths. They are a species of special concern as their population is rapidly declining.



Fringe on the trailing edge of the fringed myotis tail membrane



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Blue Jay

COLORADO GIVES DAY

Greenwood Wildlife Rehabilitation Center is a local nonprofit providing compassionate care to orphaned, injured, and sick wildlife. Over 5,000 animals have already come through our doors so far this year. Help critters in need Colorado Gives Day, December 9th.

bit.ly/GWColoradoGivesDay



Bobcat



greenwoodwildlife.org

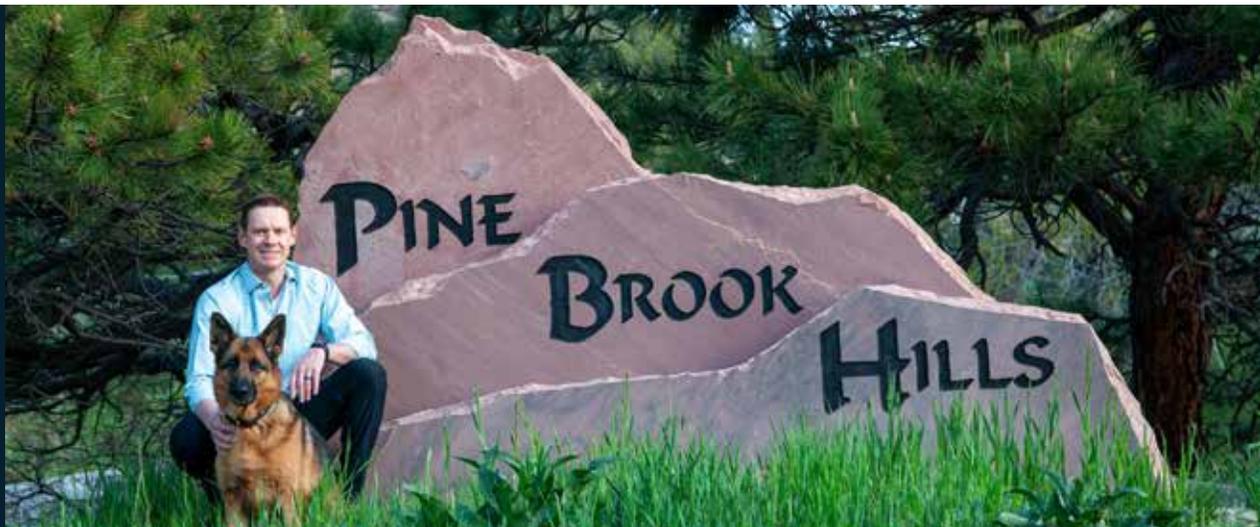
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Juvenile Male Broad-tailed Hummingbird by Jim Adams