



On The Wing

Volume 37, Number 4

Boulder County Audubon Society Newsletter

Sept-Oct 2007

Global Warming and Audubon

George Oetzel (OTW editor)

The effort to combat global warming (GW) is a major focus for the National Audubon Society (NAS). I attended a weekend NAS retreat on the topic in Park city, UT in May.

Let me introduce the topic with two quotations from Paul Hawken's recent book (2007), *Blessed Unrest*.

We live in a faith-based economy, and by that I do not refer to religious practice. People are asked to place their faith in economic and political systems that have polluted water, air, and sea; that have despoiled communities, sacked workforces, reduced incomes for most people in the world for the past three decades, and created a stratosphere sufficiently permeated with industrial gases that we are, in effect, playing dice with the planet. One does not have to demonize the corporate system to recognize that it has no means to account for its negative impacts, except as a charitable footnote to its annual reports if it is inclined to donate a small part of its earnings. [Page 174]

On one hand, the practical implementation of hands-on energy reduction needs to be implemented on a local scale. But the major policy changes and initiatives that must be undertaken at the national and international levels with respect to public transportation, oil company subsidies, and renewable energy are stymied by the corruption of politicians and special interests; as yet there has been no coming together of organizations in a united front that can counter the massive scale and power of the global corporations and lobbyists that protect the status quo. [Page 19]

In support of the focus on GW, I plan to incorporate articles on the topic in this and future issues of OTW. My goal is to focus on needed actions and current science—new material appears almost weekly. (I have subscribed for more than 40 years to *Science*, where much current news and research about climate change is published.)

Global Warming Political Action, page 3.

Wedges for Global Warming Mitigation, page 4.

BCAS 4th Tuesday Program Series

September 25, 7:30 p.m.

*Wildfire and Insect Outbreaks
in the Forests of Northern Colorado:
Implications for Policy and Management*

Tom Veblen, Univ. of Colorado

The dominant fire management issues in the western U.S. at the beginning of the 21st century are centered around the past and future roles of wildfires in forest ecosystems. Most scientists believe that fire exclusion in the West has promoted an unnatural increase in forest density, increasing the risk of high-severity fires. A corollary of this theory is that fire suppression and associated changes in forest structure have resulted in a decline in forest health that contributes to increases in outbreaks of forest insect pests. Tom Veblen will examine how fire exclusion/fuels buildup models apply to Colorado forests, where climatic variation, including global warming, strongly influences fire frequency and forest health.

Tom Veblen has been Professor of Geography at the University of Colorado since 1981. He taught silviculture and forest ecology at the Universidad Austral de Chile from 1975-79 and continues his research in Chilean forests. Since the early 1980s, he and his collaborators have developed a cross-scale research program aimed at understanding the effects of climate variation and land-use changes on disturbance regimes and forest dynamics in the Colorado Rockies and southern Andes.

October 23, 7:30 p.m.

Born to Be Wild in Colorado

Perry Conway

Multimedia wildlife presentation, see page 3.

Refreshments and Socializing

before the meetings at 7 PM

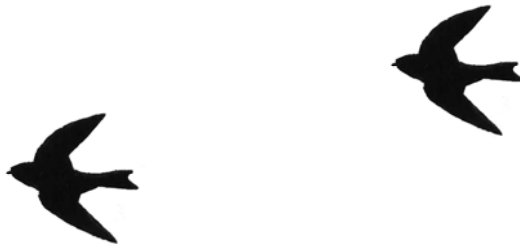
Program at 7:30

Meetings are held at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Boulder, 5001 Pennsylvania Ave. (west off 55th St. between Arapahoe and Baseline)

Autumn Field Trips

Friday-Saturday-Sunday Sept. 21—23: Rocky Mountain Moose & Elk Tour
Join outdoor naturalist and birder John T to watch and learn about moose and elk in the Kawuneeche Valley. Both elk and moose will be in full rut and photo opportunities will be great. You can expect to see numerous moose, elk, deer, and coyotes. You have the option of camping, or, you can join the tour on Sat or Sun at 7:00am at the Bowen Baker Trailhead parking lot. Contact John for details: 303-926-8779 j.electus@worldnet.att.net

Saturday October 27: Scoters & Loons Leader: Bill Kaempfer, Co-leader: John Vanderpoel Meet at 6:00am at the Meadows Branch Public Library (located behind Safeway in meadows shopping ctr) Destination: Park County to look for scoters and loons at Elevenmile, Spinney Mountain and Antero Reservoirs. Plan to return late afternoon. Bring water, lunch and scopes. William.Kaempfer@Colorado.edu



BCNA Classes

Quaking Aspen and Bugling Elk

Instructor: Joyce Gellhorn

In autumn, aspen trees turn gold and elk begin their rutting season. Learn how elk interact with aspen. Visit Rocky Mountain National Park to explore aspen groves in different stages of coloration and to observe elk courtship behavior.

- Monday, September 24, 7–9 p.m., indoor class
- Tuesday, September 25, 2:30–9 p.m., field class

Tuition: \$60 (\$50 for BCNA members). To register Call Joyce at 303-442-8123, or e-mail her at jgellhorn@sprynet.com

Raptor Ecology

Instructors: Steve Jones, Sue Cass, and Jim McKee

Improve your raptor identification skills while observing wintering eagles, hawks, and falcons on the plains of Boulder County. Class discussion will focus on raptor behavior, habitat use, and conservation.

- Thursday, December 6, 6:30-9 p.m., indoor class
- Saturday, December 8, 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m., field class

Tuition: \$55 (\$50 BCNA members). To register call Steve at 303-494-2468, or e-mail stephen.jones@earthlink.net

Note: BCNA offers partial scholarships for field classes. For more information, visit www.bcna.org

Boulder County Audubon Society

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Alex and Gillian Brown (303)494-3042

On the Wing © 2007

Boulder County Audubon Society

On the Wing — five issues annually:

Sept, Nov, Jan, March, and May.

Next issue:

Deadline for materials for the Nov 2007 issue is Fri., Oct 19. To contact the editor, use the link in <http://www.boulderaudubon.org/newsletter.htm>



BCAS 4th Tuesday Program Series

Presented with support from SCFD

October 23, 7:30 p.m.

Born to Be Wild in Colorado

Perry Conway

Colorado supports a remarkably diverse wildlife population. "Born to Be Wild" highlights many of our most charismatic species, including bighorn sheep, black bear, lynx, and mountain lion. This multimedia presentation addresses behavior, raising of young, and conservation issues. Perry also plans to bring a peregrine falcon and update us on the conservation status of falcons and other birds of prey in Colorado.

Boulder's Perry Conway has photographed nature locally and around the world for more than 30 years. As creator and producer of the Aerie Nature Series, Perry has entertained and enlightened millions of schoolchildren and adults with his educational programs. His photographs and articles have appeared in every major natural history magazine in North America, including *National Geographic*, *Audubon*, *National Wildlife*, *Smithsonian*, *Time*, and *Newsweek*. He has won four national awards for his wildlife filmstrips, including *Best of the Year* at the National Educational Film Festival.



Cougar, from

<http://www.photography.perryconway.com/BornWild.pdf>

Boulder Audubon Holiday Art Sale

Prints by Perry Conway, gorgeous Audubon nature calendars, hand-blown Egyptian glasswork, and books and artwork by local naturalists will be featured at our holiday art sale, before and after the October monthly program. Artists and authors will donate up to 50% of receipts to Boulder County Audubon. Plan to bring your checkbook and stock up on handcrafted and personally autographed holiday items.

Global Warming Political Action

What can we do locally to combat global warming? We can insist that our representatives in Congress support legislation that will reduce U.S. greenhouse emissions.

Two areas of current consideration by Congress :

- **Fuel economy mandate for vehicles**

The Senate has passed the first bill since 1975 that mandates an increase in fuel economy. Under that bill, automakers will have to boost the average mileage of new cars and light trucks to 35 miles per gallon by 2020, compared with about 25 miles per gallon today.

"But before you celebrate, pay attention to some fine print in the Senate bill. If the Transportation Department determines that the fuel economy goal for any given year is not "cost-effective" — that is, too expensive for the car companies to meet — it can ease the standard" [Tom Friedman, N.Y. Times, June 24,2007]

- **Cap and Trade or a Carbon Tax**

The advantage of a cap and trade system is that it provides mandates for a specific level of emissions at particular future times. The advantage of a carbon tax is that it provides immediate economic incentives for change. However, the political reality is that no new tax will be approved in the near future.

There are currently several cap and trade bills currently being proposed in Congress. The Senate has a recurring strong cap-and-trade bill, sponsored by John McCain (R-AZ) and Joe Lieberman (I-CT). The first time around, it got enough votes to constitute a moral victory for those supporting mitigation, but the next year it missed passage by a wider margin (*Science*, 27 July 2007). Sen. Feinstein (D-CA) has introduced legislation to establish a cap and trade program for the electric utility industry (S. 317). It has received the support of six major electric energy producers. Sen. Feinstein plans a cap and trade bill for the industrial sector and an energy efficiency bill modeled after California's programs as well.

Cap-and-trade systems create a financial incentive for emission reductions by assigning a cost to polluting. An environmental regulator establishes a "cap" that limits emissions from a group of polluters, such as power plants, to a level lower than their current emissions. The emissions allowed under that cap are then divided up into individual permits for the right to emit that amount.

Because the emissions cap restricts the amount of pollution allowed, permits that give a company the right to pollute have financial value. Companies can buy and sell permits in order to continue operating in the most profitable manner available to them. So, those that are able to reduce emissions at a low cost can sell their extra permits to companies facing higher costs.

Wedges for Global Warming Mitigation

Elementary analysis leads rapidly to the conclusion that there is no "silver bullet" that will satisfactorily limit global warming. A number of approaches must be combined. This led Stephen Pacala and Robert Socolow [*Science*, 13 Aug 2004] to propose the concept of stabilization wedges to stabilize the CO₂ content of the atmosphere at about 500 parts per million (ppm). That goal is slightly less than double the pre-industrial level of 280 ppm and a 33% increase over today's 375 ppm.

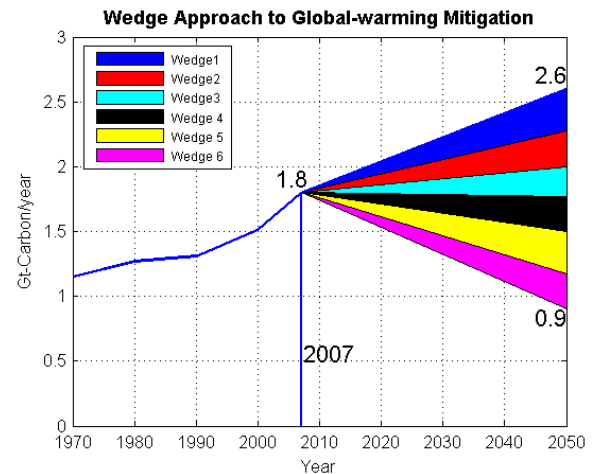
Because the United States currently generates about 25% of the global CO₂ budget, we must actually reduce the carbon we contribute to the atmosphere if global stabilization is to be achieved. A convenient measure is the weight of carbon emitted into the atmosphere in a year, measured in billions of tons of carbon (gigatons abbreviated Gt-C). To achieve stabilization at about 500 ppm CO₂, world emissions must be limited to about 7 Gt-C/year. Following a study involving a number of experts, the National Audubon Society (NAS) has decided to work toward a U.S. goal of 0.9 Gt-C/year by 2050, about half our current level. That would reduce the U.S. contribution to the global carbon budget to about 13%.

That goal can be achieved if we reduce our carbon emissions by about 2% per year, beginning immediately. That doesn't sound very difficult, but the annual improvement must be maintained for a long time. It is inescapable that some substantial changes will be required within the lifetimes of many who are currently alive.

The stabilization-wedge concept involves selecting a number of areas in which changes are likely to be feasible and assigning each the same 2% annual change. Future experience will dictate that some should be more heavily weighted. Different people and organizations have chosen different wedge descriptions.

The chart in the next column illustrates the wedge concept graphically. The top line, at 2.6 Gt-C/year is an estimate of U.S. carbon emissions if we continue business as usual and make no attempt at reduction. The different colored wedges reflect the NAS choice of categories that, combined, would lead to a 50% reduction in U.S. carbon emissions by 2050.

1. *Electricity conservation* is the easiest avenue to immediate gains. You've surely read about compact fluorescent light bulbs and energy-efficient appliances.
2. *Other conservation*, including temperature control and lighting in buildings and improvements in manufacturing efficiency. Reducing water use saves energy use and provides other important benefits as well.



3. *Passenger vehicles*. If we suppose that the cars on the road today average 25 mpg, and the same number of cars are driven the same average annual distance in 2050, then they must average 50 mpg to achieve the goal of reducing emissions by half. There may be more vehicles by then, so either the mileage must improve still further, or they must be driven less on the average. Improvements in vehicle manufacturing efficiency are a factor to consider as well.
4. *Other transport*. Long-distance transport of goods is a huge contributor to our current carbon emissions. Improved mass transit consumes less fuel per passenger mile, and it can help to reduce the mileage driven in personal vehicles. Air transport of fresh produce from places as distant as Australia and Chile is notoriously wasteful, even though we may like with the results.
5. *Alternative electric power generation*. Included in this are wind, hydro, solar, and nuclear, along with a number of others with limited potential for significant contributions. Each of these has limitations for its potential contributions to reducing carbon emissions. Most of the top sites for hydroelectric and wind power generation are already being utilized. For example, it is estimated that only about 9% of Colorado's need for electricity can be met by wind generation within the state. Solar is currently very expensive. Nuclear has its own set of well-known problems: capital cost, safety, and waste treatment.
6. *Fossil-fuel electric power generation*. The big hope for power generation from coal is carbon capture and storage (CCS). The technology is still under development. Generating plants must be located near suitable storage sites, such as deep saline aquifers. Natural gas emits less carbon for the same energy generated, because it contains hydrogen. However, natural gas supplies are already limited, so it can't be substituted on a large scale.

BOULDER COUNTY WILDLIFE INVENTORY, FEBRUARY - MARCH 2007

Gillian and Alex Brown, 4560 Darley Avenue, Boulder, CO 80305.

Coverage for March 2007 was rather poor with such common birds as **Pied-billed Grebe** and **Wilson's Snipe** not reported. Consequently only slightly more bird species were seen in March than in February, despite the arrival of quite a few spring migrants in March. Altogether 96 bird species were seen in February and 98 in March. Any March where less than one hundred species are seen may be considered poor. All three types of **Bluebird (Eastern, Western and Mountain)** were reported in February, although it was unclear whether all of these were migrants or whether some had spent the winter in the county. A **Greater Yellowlegs** seen at Walden Ponds on 23 February was a most unusual sighting; this might conceivably be the same bird that was reported on the Boulder Christmas Count. The first **American Avocets** were reported on 18 March which is on the early side with the average arrival date being 28 March. At least one, and quite possibly two, **Trumpeter Swans** were reported moving around the lakes to the west of Longmont.

Since **Cackling Goose** is a relatively new species – it was split from **Canada Goose** in 2004 – we do not have enough data to follow any trends in this species. However, it appears, from what data we have, that **Cackling Geese** winter in Boulder County arriving towards the end of October and leaving about mid-March. This is a species that tends to be under reported, since it is often hard to distinguish from the smaller sub-species of **Canada Goose**. **Cinnamon Teal** appear to be migrating earlier than in the past with February arrival dates not being abnormal; while this year's arrival on 23 February is not the earliest recorded (19 Feb), it is much earlier than the historical average of 7 March. Once again a Cinnamon X Blue-winged Teal was seen at Walden Ponds; this bird was first sighted in spring 2002 and has been seen every year since except spring 2004.

The Fawnbrook Inn at Allenspark remained a good spot to watch for **Rosy Finches**. All three types (**Black, Gray-crowned and Brown-capped**) were reported with the most prevalent being **Brown-capped** and with just a few **Black**. Feeders are always the easiest place to see **Rosy Finches** but in early March we also had a few reported up at Brainard Lake. The mountain feeders also attracted other finches such as **Cassin's Finch, Pine Siskin** and **Evening Grosbeak**. A **Broad-tailed Hummingbird** was reported in Boulder on 28 March; this is by far the earliest arrival date we have had since our records began with the previous earliest being 10 April and the average being 22 April. **Say's Phoebe** was another bird that arrived early enough to break all previous records with the first being sighted on 12 March while the previous early record was 22 March and the average arrival date is 11 April.

A **Gray-cheeked Thrush** seen in Boulder in February was a first winter sighting of this unusual species. The previous three sightings were all in May during migration; this bird was last seen in May 2003. Both **Mourning Dove** and **Eurasian Collared Dove** are wintering in the county with the number of the latter increasing significantly this year. I think it would be safe to say that **Eurasian Collared Dove** is now our commonest winter dove. **Chihuahan Ravens** were again reported in February, although notoriously difficult to identify where their range overlaps with **Common Raven**.

February is traditionally an excellent month for observing gulls on our eastern lakes and reservoirs. This is the time when the lakes usually thaw and sometimes release great quantities of frozen fish. **Great Black-backed Gull** and **Glaucous Gull** were both reported in February and **Lesser Black-backed Gull** (which is becoming so normal as to be hardly worthy of note) was reported in March. We would expect to see **Franklin's Gulls** in March, but they were not reported this year.

For the full listing of sighted species go to www.boulderaudubon.org/inventory.htm.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THE FEBRUARY AND MARCH 2007 INVENTORY

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Color pictures in the Web version of *On the Wing*: www.boulderaudubon.org

BOULDER COUNTY WILDLIFE INVENTORY, APRIL - MAY 2007

Gillian and Alex Brown, 4560 Darley Avenue, Boulder, CO 80305.

It is difficult to say whether this spring migration seemed lackluster because of a lack of exciting birds or because of a lack of excited birders. Certainly the lack of any concerted birding effort – such as a spring count, Birdathon or Big Day – must have contributed toward this. Coverage was spotty, particularly in the mountains, and many species which were surely present were not reported. Altogether 147 bird species were seen in April and 170 in May. This is the lowest May total for fifteen years. It will be interesting to see whether the year can recover from such a poor May – my guess would be that the annual number of species recorded will be significantly down from previous years.

Shorebird migration was well under way by the last week of April. The most unusual sighting was a group of six **Long-billed Curlews**, a **Whimbrel**, several **Willet**, and a group of **White-faced Ibis** with one or two possible **Glossy Ibis** all inhabiting the fields approaching Stearn's Lake. **Glossy Ibis** is always a difficult bird to identify and it was thought that these might be a crossbreed of **Glossy** and **White-faced Ibis**. **Black-necked Stilt** were reported both months, but reports of sandpipers were sadly lacking. A late **Sandhill Crane** was seen at Marshall Reservoir at the beginning of May.

Warbler migration was generally slower than normal. This may have been due to the fine weather which caused many birds to go straight to higher elevations. Boulder Creek at the university campus was once again a hot spot for warblers with a **Black-throated Green Warbler** (last seen in 2005) probably being the most unusual sighting. A **Worm-eating Warbler** and at least one **Chestnut-sided Warbler** were also seen on campus. An **Ovenbird** was found a little further upstream outside the Boulder Public Library. A **Tennessee Warbler** was found at Sawhill Ponds; this species was last seen in 2003. Perhaps, even more notable than the warblers that were seen were those that were absent. Only a single **Orange-crowned Warbler** and two **Wilson's Warblers** were reported. Numbers of **Yellow-rumped Warblers** seemed very low as well. Several observers commented on how quiet Gregory Canyon, a former favored hot spot, seemed.

Lewis' Woodpecker was reported for the first time since 2004. This is a bird which used to regularly breed in the county and is now a species of some concern. **Chimney Swifts** were reported in several urban locations from the center of Boulder, Longmont and Lyons. This is a bird that frequently gets missed. **Least Flycatcher** and **Gray Flycatcher** were two of our less usual flycatchers that were reported. Empidonax flycatchers are notoriously difficult to distinguish, although easier in spring plumage than in fall, and there were several observers who wanted to know how abundant **Gray Flycatchers** are in Boulder County. For **Gray Flycatcher**, identification by call is the most reliable method. Since our records began in 1979 we have had eight sightings in spring and two in fall. This is the third consecutive spring that **Gray Flycatcher** has been reported. An **Orchard Oriole** was reported after a gap of one year. **Dickcissel** was one of our less usual sightings.

A good selection of owls were reported with no fewer than six **Flammulated Owls** in four different locations. A **Short-eared Owl** was reported at Union Reservoir; this has been a species that has become increasingly difficult to find. Hawk migration was strong with six **Broad-winged Hawks** reported in April, as well as many accipiters. **Osprey** and **Bald Eagle** continue to nest in the county, and were well reported. Gulls were very poorly reported with a single **Bonaparte's Gull** being the only gull sighting in May. However, **Common Tern**, **Forster's Tern**, **Caspian Tern** and **Black Tern** were all reported.

For a complete list of sightings please go to www.boulderaudubon.org/inventory.htm

CONTRIBUTORS TO THE APRIL & MAY INVENTORY

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John Gould Prints—October

Two beautiful framed original antique prints of a Wedge-bill Hummingbird and a Black-tailed Hermit Hummingbird by John Gould have been donated to the Boulder Audubon chapter for our use as a fundraiser. John Gould was a bird collector and illustrator in England in the 1800's on the parallel with John Audubon. We are offering them first to the readers of *On The Wing*, then they will be offered at our Silent Auction in October, then, if we do not get a buyer, will be advertised on E-bay to collectors.

The two prints are of differing quality, but both have the iridescent coloring of the birds which was a technique that John Gould perfected. They also have gum Arabic finishing, a sign that they are originals and not reproductions. The prints were appraised by Mary Williams of Mary Williams Fine Arts gallery. The prices are: Wedge-bill--\$750; Black-tailed hermit--\$400.

To see the prints, or for more information, please contact Mary Balzer, marybalzer@qwest.net or 303-499-0662.



Red Crossbill male — Steve Jones

Wild Bird Center
"Your backyard birding specialists"



www.wildbird.com/boulder
 On 28th Street south of Canyon
 Boulder, CO 80301
303-442-1322
 M-F 10-6, Sat 9-5, Sun 11-4



GROCERY COUPONS SUPPORT BCAS

Every time you buy food (or wine or beer), you could be supporting this chapter and its goals of backyard habitat creation, school-room programs for kids, and protection of important bird areas in our own county.

Cards and certificates are used exactly like cash. You are whisked through the check-out line as though you were handing over greenbacks. Every \$100 you spend puts \$5 or \$10 into the BCAS piggybank for our local chapter needs at no cost to you.

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If you would like to receive your coupons or cards through the mail, we will double-enclose them and post them after receiving your check. A number of people are now doing this regularly. Use the order form below.

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Wild Oats: # at \$100 _____

Liquormart: # at \$25 _____

Make checks payable to Boulder County Audubon Society and mail to BCAS, POBox 2081, Boulder, CO 80306

Successful Raptor Nesting

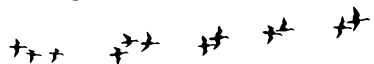
Another successful raptor nesting season in the City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks has concluded. The monitored nests yielded the following fledgling totals:

Peregrine Falcon	6
Prairie Falcon	13
Golden Eagle	3
Bald Eagle	5
Osprey	4

Thanks go to the volunteers who monitored the nests, and to the hikers who respected the trail closures.

Boulder County Audubon Society

On The Wing



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Tom Veblen

Wildfire and Insects in the
Forests of Colorado:
Implications for Policy

Program Oct 23

Perry Conway

Born to be Wild
in Colorado

Multimedia presentation



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Printing *On the Wing* since Jan. 2004

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Use this form to join, renew, or change address with Boulder County Audubon and/or the National Audubon Society (NAS). With membership in the NAS you receive *Audubon* magazine and become a member of BCAS as well. However, BCAS receives only a small amount of your dues from NAS to support local activities. We encourage you to join our local BCAS chapter to help support local activities. (NAS membership is not required.)

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

To join or renew both BCAS and NAS, please duplicate the form and send separately.

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 - \$ _____ Additional contribution
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