

# Voice of the Canyon

A Quarterly Newsletter

Summer-2021

## New News on Wildcat Canyon Bridge

See Dale Campbell's update on how this important project is progressing.

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## Park Manager Brent Lounsbury Reports

There's lots of good news from the park manager. Exciting things are ahead.

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## Get this on Your Calendar

HawkQuest will come again with a live turkey vulture who will show off for visitors and pose for pictures. International Vulture Day is Sept. 4.

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## Sign Up to Help with the Dam Run on Sept. 19

Board Member Travis Brown is calling for helpers.

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## Butterfly Interpretation Sign to Be Installed

After months of work by a talented committee visitors will soon be able to study the park's butterflies.

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## DALE'S DISPATCH

By Dale Campbell  
Friends President  
and Volunteer Naturalist

Stop a minute and take a deep breath. Exhale... Now take one more deep breath. And then realize that it really seems like things are getting back to normal. Or at least a new normal, somewhat different than we had in 2019. But, if you think about it, that's the way it works. Prior to 2020, our lives were changing a little bit every day. We probably didn't notice it as the changes were of a gradual nature. Then comes 16 months of pandemic and **Change** with a Capital C!

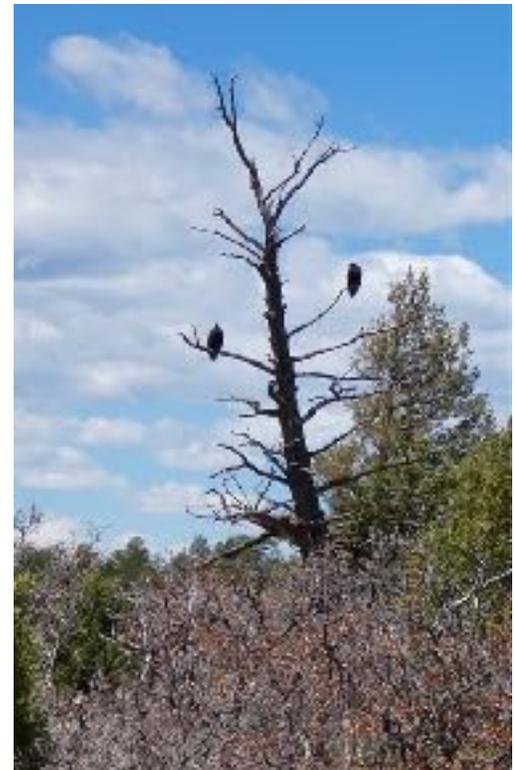
Castlewood Canyon State Park and Friends experienced the impact of **Change** and adjusted to continue supporting visitors and the park's needs. Now, as we've moved through the first half of 2021, we're getting back to normal. In fact, this edition of the Voice of the Canyon is focused on getting back to normal. You'll be able to read about one school discovering the Wonders Program, about moving ahead with a normal Dam Run at Castlewood Canyon in September, and about merchandise sales increasing with an increasing number of visitors.

There's also good news about the Wildcat Canyon Bridge Project!

Based on the updates you've received through the recent newsletters, what Friends has been able to accomplish in the last 16 to 18 months is pretty phenomenal, given the constraints we had to operate under.

But we'd also like to hear from you. See page 6 where I ask for your input.

With summer upon us, I hope that you get out to the park, sooner rather than later. While you're there, take that deep breath and take in the wonder that is Castlewood Canyon State Park. And think about how **your** organization – Friends of Castlewood Canyon State Park – continues to help make so many things possible at the park!



One thing that didn't change last summer. The turkey vultures came and they raised their young and then they flew off south when cooler weather arrived. They are here now and Rolf Asphaug found a couple roosting in their favorite tree.

# Wildcat Canyon Bridge – An Update!

**By Dale Campbell**  
**Friends President and**  
**Volunteer Naturalist**

As you may recall, we officially kicked off our fundraising project on August 1, 2020. Planning for the bridge and the fundraising project actually began in November 2019. During that time, we reached out to the engineering team from the northeast region of CPW; we reached out to the park visitors and public through the various levels of our fundraising campaign and we've worked with the park staff to help the bridge planning take steps forward.

As a result of those efforts and the efforts of our Park Manager and the NE region CPW staff, the Park has been able to secure funding for the construction of the bridge. The announcement came on May 15<sup>th</sup> noting that the funding would be provided as part of the CPW Fiscal Year starting 1 July 2021. Half of the funds will be provided by CPW and the other half through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), a federal funding resource. Past history of LWCF funding indicates that this portion of the project funding will come later in calendar year 2021.

At this point, CPW is working to finalize the design documents, assign a construction project manager and estimate when the project will get into the construction schedule. Nothing has been finalized yet. Though funding is now secured, you won't see construction start until fall 2021 at the earliest.

As soon as we learn more details, we will pass them along through blast emails to Friends members and donors. In the meantime, be proud that we have accomplished what we set out to do, secure funding for a bridge across Cherry Creek. Yes, Virginia, there will be a Wildcat Canyon Bridge!

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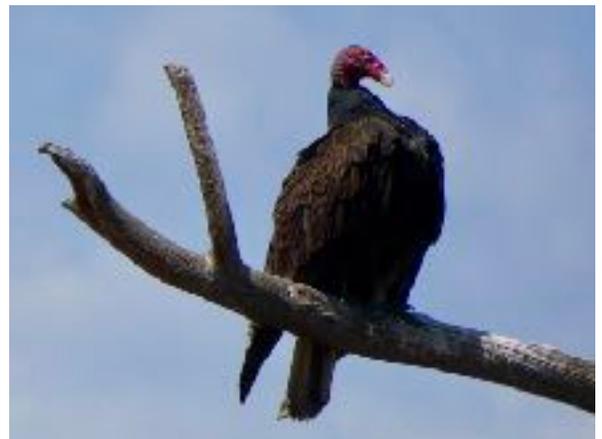
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Friends meetings are held by Zoom the 2nd Saturday of the month. The next meeting is Aug. 8 at 9:30 a.m. Send an email to [dale\\_campbell\\_co@msn.com](mailto:dale_campbell_co@msn.com) for connection details.



*This is a zoomed-in version of one of the birds from page 1. Rolf Asphaug says his modest camera has a built in telephoto lens.*

# Wonders of Castlewood Canyon is Back!



*Photo: Teacher Kaley Carter*

**By Liz Bade**  
**Friends CO-treasurer and**  
**Volunteer Naturalist**

Sixth graders from Big Sandy School in Simla came to the park in May for a Rock N Roll school program led by Clay Conner, Scott Knight, Skip Pumfrey, and Randy Penn. This is the first school group we've been able to sponsor in over a year due to COVID restrictions and we're so happy they came. The photo shows them holding up the cave ceiling during their hike.

As you may know, Wonders pays up to \$300/school/year to pay for bus transportation. To qualify, a majority of the students at the school must be on a free/reduced breakfast/lunch program; field trips are not in the budget for many families in these schools. Friends has been helping bring kids to the park for over five years to participate in our school environment education programs. Program content coordinates with school district grade level standards. We offer:

- Cherokee Trail – Role play as part of an early pioneer wagon train.
- Cycles Go Round – Nature reuses and recycles everything (PreK – 2<sup>nd</sup>)
- Home Sweet Habitat – Where do Park critters live; what do they eat? (3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>)
- Rock N Roll – Geology (3<sup>rd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>)
- Skins and Skulls – What do skins and skulls reveal about the animal.
- Webs of Life – How our four ecosystems interconnect

As of today, we have built up project funds for Wonders that can bring at least eleven schools to Castlewood. The funds have come from grants by Castle Rock Kiwanis, Liberty Community Giving, National Environmental Education Foundation; individuals' donations; and the proceeds from the painted canvas bags we sell in the Visitor Center store. Please spread the word about our Wonders Program to friends and family to help make schools and teachers aware of what we offer.



**By Brent Lounsbury**  
**Park Manager**

# Nothing “Normal” at Castlewood Canyon State Park, But Some Exciting Days Ahead

Hello Friends of Castlewood!

Well, I'd throw out terms like "new normal" or "return to normal," except I don't know what normal is anymore! So far in the second quarter of 2021 our visitation is down from 2020 but still up from 2019. This holds true for the first half of 2021 as well, with YTD 2019 visitation having hit 109k, our YTD 2020 visitation having peaked at 152k, and our YTD 2021 visitation sitting right around 123k. This includes an unseasonably slow May of this year when it rained on Mother's Day and each day over Memorial Day weekend. This left May with about 1/3 less visitors than in either '19 or '20.

In other news, we're going to be seeing some major changes with the passage of Senate Bill 21-249, the Keep Colorado Wild Annual Pass. This bill, signed by Governor Polis on June 21st, will go into effect between January of '22 and January of '23. It will automatically load an Annual Park Pass onto every Colorado motor vehicle registration at a dramatically reduced cost, somewhere between \$20 and \$30. While the pass can be opted out of, we are expecting revenue from this source to exceed even our 2020 pass revenue by 50 percent or more. This means significantly increased funding for our operating and capital projects. It also likely means even more visitors, but at least we'll have more resources to manage them.

Speaking of which, with the increased revenue from increased visitation, and the passage of House Bill 21-1326 that made a one-time transfer to CPW from the general fund, all State Parks and Wildlife Areas are getting a 20 percent budget increase starting July 1st. This is unprecedented for Castlewood Canyon, and I plan to put most of that money in increasing our wages for seasonal staff with the intention that they be the highest paid in our Region.

Similarly, in more good news, we've had several projects funded: the completion of our Resident Volunteer Campsite at the Klienert property, an asphalt overlay for our main entrance road and parking lots, and the Wildcat Canyon Bridge over the creek crossing at Lake Gulch and Inner Canyon. The bridge is a fantastic success story for Friends fundraising, as their cost-sharing efforts were a huge piece for our getting the rest of the money from CPW! I'm expecting these projects to be in place by summer of 2022, though our asphalt work may happen in 2023. We are also getting our two new vault restrooms installed later this year, which will be yet another big improvement for our park.

So, all in all, while we've been under significant strain with visitation during the COVID-19 pandemic, things in the future are looking really good for staffing and infrastructure. There are exciting days ahead!

For staffing:

Our new Park Resource Technician, Jordan Boge, started in June. Jordan was a transfer from Boyd Lake State Park, where he worked for 3 years as a facilities technician, and also did 5 summers as seasonal maintenance at Lory State Park. Jordan has a Bachelor's in Natural Resources Management, and has jumped straight into trail work, digging out weeds and running our water plant. He's a great guy and we're incredibly fortunate to have him!

Our Summer 2021 seasonals are:

Dale Mee is our Seasonal Maintenance Tech

Katie Herbel and Kate Haskins-Burrows are our seasonal Visitor Center Techs

Mindy Thompson and Jaimi Mostellar are our Seasonal Rangers

# What We Don't Take for Granted



**By Liz Bade**  
**Friends CO-treasurer and**  
**Volunteer Naturalist**

*Left to right Linda Staehler, Bridget Milnes and Liz Bade.*

Whenever park management asks Friends' help to fund a park need, our grant team, Linda Staehler, Bridget Milnes, and I, will research potential funding resources. From modest sums, like new furniture for the Visitor Center, to large capital requests, like this year's Wildcat Canyon Bridge, it's important to find a source where our need fits their mission. Both the grantor and Friends, the grantee, want to make certain that the purpose for the request is well thought out and will provide a worthwhile benefit.

Many organizations support their local community by providing greater opportunities in a wide variety of areas. Our grant requests in this vein often target environmental education and other concrete ways in which Friends can foster stewardship of Castlewood Canyon's resources. The grants we've submitted and received on behalf of updating our interpretive signs and our Wonders program are examples of these grants. Very few foundations have funds to support big ticket projects like Wildcat Canyon Bridge. We did, however, find a couple and submitted grant requests to them this year.

Whether the request is small or large, we must adhere to stringent grantor requirements that will provide them with facts about the Friends organization and our ability to complete the project. They want very specific details including a project budget and plan. That means the grant team, CPW, and Friends board must do their homework and have solid info to substantiate the grant request. Sometimes a one page letter will do; other requests entail many pages of information plus attachments related to our finances (for example, 3 years worth of balance sheets and income/expense reports), prior accomplishments, the communities we serve, our mission, how we will measure success, who in our organization will be leading the project, etc, etc. In addition, most foundations will require a percentage of matching funds from us – these we obtain via membership dues and individual donations. Some in-kind labor, such as volunteer efforts, might count as part of the matching funds.

It can take some time to collect the data, and to write and rewrite and rewrite the narrative portions of the requests, until we think we've described our projects and will convince the grantors that we are worthy of funding. We are grateful to those who have reviewed our grant requests for sanity before we submit them. Finally, if our grant requests are successful, many grantors require periodic progress reports so that they can ensure their money is being spent wisely and that the project is moving along as expected.

This year we were fortunate to receive \$3,125 from Liberty Community Giving towards Wildcat Canyon Bridge. A \$100k request we submitted to the Gates Family Foundation was unfortunately denied. Though not written by Friends, the grant Brent submitted for the bridge (see bridge update), was successful and we were able to withdraw our \$100k request from El Pomar. In both these cases, the work we did was still worthwhile as we established a relationship with the foundations and learned a great deal by preparing and submitting the requests. We're optimistic that we'll be more successful the next time we may need to approach them for one of our projects. In the meantime, Friends continues to support the park – dollar by dollar.

# We Need Your Input – Please Help!

**By Dale Campbell**  
**Friends President and**  
**Volunteer Naturalist**

Friends of Castlewood Canyon State Park has a wonderful group of volunteers who serve as Board members, committee leaders and as support for special projects and events. Its these volunteers who have kept the organization going since 1997. I thank each and every one of them!

But we also need your help. Sometimes, it's easy for us to get too close to the daily operations of the organization to make sure we're still headed in the right direction. That's where we need your help.

We encourage YOU – our Friends' members - to provide YOUR thoughts about Friends, the Park or just being outdoors. Just send us a note at [focwcsp@gmail.com](mailto:focwcsp@gmail.com) We'll use your input to help in our planning efforts and in the continuing improvement of the organization. Any and all comments, suggestions and ideas are welcomed!

We know that we've been able to accomplish so many things since 1997. With your help, I also know that we can be just that much stronger and more effective to help us Preserve, Protect and Promote Castlewood Canyon State Park. Take a few minutes and let us hear from YOU!



*Before and after lopping. Nature just continues on her way; pandemic or not.*

## Pandemic Didn't Slow Down Nature

**By Cathy Fischer**  
**Friends Member,**  
**Volunteer Naturalist**

Volunteers wore masks and stayed 6 feet apart, but there was still jobs to be done in 2020.

This trail was starting to fill in before volunteers started trimming.



Empty hangers bring a big smile to Cherie Holverstott's face because it means merchandise sales are increasing. Husband Charles at right, shows off some of the new shirts for summer.

Photos: Cherie and Charles Holverstott

# My Favorite Things

**By Cherie Holverstott**  
**Friends Board Member and**  
**Volunteer Naturalist**

Happiness might be raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens.  
Maybe it's copper kettles and warm woolen mittens.  
Possibly it's brown paper packages tied up with string.  
Could these be a few of my favorite things?

Most definitely empty plastic hangers stacked in the cabinet  
Mean weekly sales have been good and about that I'm passionate!  
Those unopened brown boxes from Ouray Sportswear secured with tape?  
All that new merchandise nearly makes me go ape!

These *really* are a few of my favorite things!

A word of explanation might be in order! Merchandise sales, particularly clothing, have been steadily increasing during the past few weeks. My husband, Charles, and I are at the Visitor Center every Friday to restock and organize merchandise. The first thing I do upon arrival is check for empty hangers in the cabinet under the cash register. The more there are, the more excited I am because that indicates the amount of merchandise that has sold. So much so that it has become necessary to order additional merchandise.

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## International Vulture Day

Friends would like to give you a head's up that International Vulture Day is scheduled for Sept. 4. in the Visitors Center. Hawk Quest will be on hand with live birds including a turkey vulture. There's need for at least a dozen more volunteers to teach the public about the importance of vultures through out the world. Let Rachel know if you can help.



# Dam Run at Castlewood Canyon 2021

**By Travis Brown**  
**Friends Board Member**  
**and Volunteer Naturalist**

The Dam Run is on for 2021! The planned date is Sunday, Sept. 19 at daybreak! We will be in need of a host of volunteers! So please keep the run on your fall calendars'

We are currently looking for a few leadership positions if you have been the lead before and would like to take it on again, please let us know. The focused tasks are for the 5k and 10K runs— set up, staffing and sweeps, the awards process, and the parking area management! Please send me an e-mail at [TravisPost1992@outlook.com](mailto:TravisPost1992@outlook.com) if you can help out.

We plan to have a few adjustments for Covid-19 considerations, but look forward to a great run!



## Mark Cormican Draws a Crowd Again

*Photos: Ron Claussen*

**By Steve L'esperance**  
**Friends Vice President**  
**and Volunteer Naturalist**

On a cold, blustery June evening, Mark Cormican brought his magical, folksy music from yesteryear into CWSP! Mother Nature threw a curveball during the day, so the event was moved undercover into our Pavilion area. However, this didn't discourage folks from coming into the park.

Somehow Mark's music warmed those attending, in fact someone said "hearing his music is like opening a fine wine..... it get's better with each song/sip"! We enjoyed being out and seeing fellow volunteers and Friend's members. It had been a while. We look forward to seeing you at the next Steve Cormican concert on Sept. 12 at 5 p.m. Hopefully this time taking advantage of our new benches in our amphitheater!

# It's Done! The Butterfly Poster will Soon Be Mounted in the Park

**By Liz Bade**  
**Friends Co-treasurer**  
**and Volunteer Naturalist**

A lot of work from many hands went into the new interpretive sign — the butterfly panel, that will soon be mounted in the park.

The committee, led by Pam Steinman did a terrific job finding excellent photographs of our butterflies. You'll note (and it helps to enlarge) that some butterflies have different patterns on the open vs closed wings. If that was the case, the committee chose to have an inset to illustrate the differences. The life cycle photos are also amazing.

Pam sends her thanks to Friends for funding this project. The sign will go somewhere on Lake Gulch trail near the event center — a location that a lot of park visitors pass by. The committee consisted of project lead and butterfly monitor Pam Steinman, butterfly monitor Carole Stapleton, butterfly expert and photographer, Mary Ann Friedman, wordsmith Linda Pohle, and computer whiz Linda Vincent who patiently produced many versions of this sign as the committee fine tuned the photos, arrangement, and text. We hope to get the sign back from Fossil Graphics by the end of July!

## Butterflies of Castlewood Canyon State Park

**Life Cycle of All Butterflies:**

- Egg:** Caterpillar = Chrysalis = Adult. The egg rests for a few days.
- Larva:** The caterpillar (larva) emerges and eats the host plant, molting (shedding its skin) several times as it grows.
- Chrysalis:** After a final molt, the caterpillar transforms into a chrysalis.
- Adult:** When almost fully formed, the butterfly is visible in the chrysalis. The adult emerges 2-3 days after egg is placed.

**Butterflies love Castlewood Canyon State Park!** More than 40 species thrive on the park's rich diversity of native plants and trees that serve as hosts and food for every stage of their life cycle.

Lock closely and you may see their tiny eggs on a leaf, colorful caterpillars climbing a stem, bi-colored butterflies sipping nectar from a flower and doing the important work of pollination as they fly from flower to flower.

Help keep the park a butterfly paradise by protecting the plants and trees they rely on throughout their short, amazing lives.

**Wingspan in inches:**  
 (S) Small - less than 1 1/4  
 (M) Medium - 1 1/4 - 2 1/4  
 (L) Large - 2 1/4 - 3 1/2  
 (XL) Largest - greater than 3 1/2

**Photos by:**  
 Mary Ann Friedman  
 Pamela Steinman  
 Carole Stapleton  
 Lizzy Cantor  
 Carole Stapleton

**Species and Photographers:**

- Aphrodite Fritillary (L) May - mid-September
- Orange Sulphur (M) April - October
- Red Admiral (M) April - September
- Melina Blue (S) April - August
- Siva Juniper Hairstreak (S) July - June
- Mourning Cloak (L) March - mid-September
- Hoary Comma (M) March - September
- Colorado Hairstreak (S) Late June - August
- Black Swallowtail (L) April - July
- Cabbage White (M) March - September
- Wедemeyer's Admiral (L) June - mid-September
- Large Marble (S) April - August
- Painted Lady (M) May - September
- Common Buckeye (M) May - October
- Dainty Sulphur (S) May - September
- Woodland Skipper (S) Mid-July - early September
- Common Wood Nymph (M) Late May - mid-September
- Silvery Blue (S) April - late July
- Western Pine Elf (S) April - July
- Penins Dawkwing (S) May - early August
- Rocky Mountain Parnassian (M) Late May - mid-September
- Field Crescent (S) April - September
- Two-tailed Swallowtail (XL) April - August
- Common Ringlet (S) July - September
- Monarch (XL) June - September
- Arachne Checkerspot (M) April - October

## Dam Day Will Be Close to "Normal"

Dam Day has been scheduled, for Aug. 5th and Friends Board member Chris Glaeser is in charge. He's looking for helpers to staff the educational games, lead hikes to the dam and portray the folks of the time. Want to be a Dam Player and dress up as Nettie Driskill, Rufus Clark, Aunt Louisa or Margaret Lucas? Let Chris know what you are up for at [chris.glaeser@comcast.net](mailto:chris.glaeser@comcast.net)

# The Cicada Chorus: A Joyful Noise

**By Josette Mastra**  
**Former Friends President and**  
**Volunteer Naturalist**

Cicadas live in Colorado. Should you have any doubts, just listen! According to Colorado State University Extension we have 29 species in 11 genera. There are over 190 species in North America, and over 3,390 worldwide.

Forget what you think you know about these arthropods. Colorado does not have the Brood X periodical cicada. Three species in the genus *Magicicada* are the 13-year and 17-year periodical cicadas. Those species have not traveled west of the Mississippi River. And, no, cicadas are not “locusts”, they will not infest your home, bite you, nor are they disease vectors. They will probably not kill your plants. They are not ugly.



Photo: Linda Staehler

If you have been hiking recently you have probably heard our most common Colorado cicada “singing”. The song is a series of soft clicking sounds. You are listening to Putnam’s cicada (*Platypedia putnami*). They favor montane shrublands of Gambel oak and mountain mahogany here in the foothills, so Castlewood Canyon is ideal habitat, but they will find homes in irrigated landscapes.

In most species, only male cicadas “sing” their characteristic song to attract females. They produce sound using a tymbal, a structure located on the abdomen of the insect. Putnam’s cicada males lack tymbal organs and produce their songs by striking their wings together producing a soft rustling click. In this species, females also can make return calls.

Cicadas pass through three major life stages: egg, nymph, and adult. After mating, the adult female lays eggs in tree branches by making slits with her ovipositor. This is the only true harm cicadas do, and while it may damage young branches it rarely kills an entire, healthy plant. A few weeks later the nymphs emerge, drop to the ground and burrow in. They go through several more instars during their three to five years underground, feeding on plant fluids from the roots. Because they develop so slowly, they cause no real harm to the plants.

The full-grown nymphs emerge from the soil, climb on the branch of a nearby plant, and shed their exoskeleton. The new adult will then hang for several hours, extending the wings and allowing the new exoskeleton to harden. The adult flies off, leaving behind its nymphal skin. If you are looking for these cicadas, you may find some of these skins still adhering to tree branches.

The adults live about four to six weeks, depending on environmental conditions. They sing, find mates, and the cycle begins again.

Cicadas have several enemies, including humans, who consider them pests. Their natural enemies, include the cicada killer wasps (*Sphecius spp.*) of southeastern and southwestern Colorado, and the cedar beetle, (*Sandalus niger*), found in eastern Colorado. Because of geography and possibly size (Putnam’s cicadas are about one inch) they are more likely to be prey for several species of birds including American Kestrels, American Robins, Western Kingbirds, Wild Turkeys, and likely other larger insect-eaters.

Go for a hike and enjoy the “Cicada Chorus” while it lasts. Putnam’s cicada songs last from late spring through early summer, so you have a few more weeks to enjoy the joyful noise.

*Note: If you want to enjoy the songs of this and other cicadas, here is a link to western species:*  
[Song Recordings and Information on Cicadas of the Western United States \(insectingers.com\)](http://insectingers.com)

Scientific information from CSU Extension Fact Sheet by W.S. Cranshaw and B. Kondratieff, revised 2/19 and *Insects of Western North America. 2. The Cicadas of Colorado*, 2002. Kondratieff, B.C. A.R. Ellingson, D.A. Leatherman.