



Wachiska
Audubon Society

Wachiska Audubon Society's vision:
To share the experience and love for nature—and help protect its diversity

The Babbling Brook

Our 53rd Year of Protecting Nature 1973 - 2026

MAY 2026

Volume 35 - Issue 5

Wachiska Program and General Meeting — Thursday, May 14, 7:00 PM, Unitarian Church, 6300 A Street, and also via YouTube link: <https://youtube.com/live/6yv2ald0t8k?feature=share>

WATER: LAKOTA SPIRITUALITY AND SCIENCE with Jerome Kills Small

Living with his grandparents, Jerome Kills Small gained personal experience being around Lakota sacred sites in southwestern South Dakota. Kills Small is an Oglala Lakota from Porcupine, South Dakota, on the Pine Ridge Reservation. A 1997 graduate from the University of South Dakota, with an M.A. in Selected Studies, he retired after 20 years at USD. He taught Lakota Language, American Indian Thought, Siouan Tribal Culture, and Early Native American History. He's featured in the book, *Wounded Warriors: A Time for Healing*, and has a story in the *Silver Anniversary Anthology* published by the SD Humanities Council. Jerome is a storyteller for public schools, museums, and colleges. He translates, explains, and sings Lakota



Jerome Kills Small

The Lakota language represents the importance of water to the Lakota community and traditions. The root word that means water is in many of their words, such as their word for "create." Kills Small believes water rewards us and makes things grow for us, which is reflected in his words: *"The culture feeds on the language, and, for us, the philosophy too, because we have a lot of sacred instances in our culture. It's a beautiful language in that it contains philosophy and spirituality. It's a parallel existence."*

Kills Small says he hopes people can find the significance of the space around them and how the spiritual and science combine to provide value and

significance. He hopes to keep the language and oral tradition alive.

Wendy Bantam, our newsletter editor, applied for a grant from Humanities Nebraska to bring Jerome Kills Small to Lincoln from South Dakota. Special thanks to the Nebraska Humanities Council. The mission of Humanities Nebraska is to help people explore what connects us and makes us human.

Please plan on sharing this event with friends and attending this very special free public event: **Thursday, May 14, 7:00 PM, at the Unitarian Church, 6300 A St.** STREAM LIVE: <https://youtube.com/live/6yv2ald0t8k?feature=share>



ceremonial, sweat lodge, powwow, rabbit, round dance, warrior, vision quest, and sundance songs. He sings with the Iron Wing Singers of Wagner, SD. He's a powwow organizer, announcer, arena

director, helps in conducting Lakota ceremonies and is on the board of Directors for the Native American Advocacy Program.

WACHISKA'S MAY CALENDAR

- 3 PUBLIC VOLUNTEER DAY: 10AM/ Prairie Pines
- 11 Conservation Committee: 6:30PM/ZOOM
- 14 General Meeting: JEROME KILLS SMALL. 7PM/UU Church
- 17 COMEDY IN THE PINES/Celebrating Give to Lincoln
- 19 Board Meeting: 7PM
- 28 GIVE TO LINCOLN DAY:
givetolincoln.com/nonprofits/wachiska-audubon

MAY PRAIRIE PINES PARTNERS EVENT

- 30 Free as a Bird! 1- 4 PM
Celebrate Nebraska Bird Month with Wachiska Audubon and Prairie Pines Partners. Join us in the arboretum for fun activities and hands-on learning for all ages.
From guided bird walks to children's storytime or building a human sized bird nest, there will be something for everyone!



Executive Director's Message by Mark Brohman

If you'd like to help on **Volunteer Day, May 3rd**, contact Mark at 402.525.1504.

Our spring bird seed sale was a great success! Limited extra bags are available—contact us if interested. We also have *Vote with Climate in Mind* yard signs for \$10. Let us know if you want one.

Thank you to Kendy Angle, Elizabeth Cisne, Mary Jensen, and Bruce Wendorff for donating seed, and Kathleen Wingard and board member Alyx Knight for supporting the Prairie Pines electrical project! We also appreciate everyone who volunteered for recent workdays, including our community partners, Friends of Wilderness Park, who brought people and bowsaws!

Volunteers from the community arrive to help with Sunday Cedar Cut. One Sunday a month we have volunteer day! Our next is May 3.
Photo by WJ Bantam



Hi Friends! April was a busy month with events like our *Sunday Cedar Cut*, *Return of the Thunderbirds*, *Earth Day*, *Arbor Day*, and *Nature Nights*. May is just as active, with **Volunteer Day on May 3**, 10 AM–Noon and our **Comedy in the Pines: Celebration of Give to Lincoln Day on May 17** at 6 PM.

We're grateful for the community support we receive through **Lincoln Community Foundation's Give to Lincoln Day**, which makes us eligible for valuable matching funds! We're celebrating in community partnership with Friends of Wilderness and Pepe's Bistro through our event, *Comedy in the Pines*, with generous sponsorship from Moku Landscaping.

Give to Lincoln, is our largest fundraiser, and runs May 1–28. Donations during this time qualify for matching funds and support our mission.

GIVE TO LINCOLN DAY and COMEDY IN THE PINES HERE ARE THE WAYS TO GIVE (MAY 1-28)

1. Lincoln Community Foundation Online:
GIVETOLINCOLN.COM/NONPROFITS/WACHISKA-AUDUBON
2. Check, mailed or delivered to either address
(Check must be dated **May 1–28**, payable to **Lincoln Community Foundation; "Wachiska Audubon" in memo**):
 - Wachiska Office: 3100 N 112th St, Lincoln, NE 68527
 - Lincoln Community Foundation: 215 Centennial Mall S., #100, Lincoln, NE 68508
3. If you would like to donate through your investment or retirement account, contact **Lincoln Community Foundation staff at 402.474.2345** to initiate.

COMEDY IN THE PINES/GIVE TO LINCOLN CELEBRATION

May 17 at Prairie Pines (3100 N. 112th St.). Gates open at 6 PM. **Tickets are \$25, limited, must be purchased in advance and are available on our website:

WACHISKAUDUBON.ORG/PRODUCT-PAGE/TICKET

Bring your own chair and whatever you want to drink, alcohol is allowed. (This is a 21+ event) Pepe's Bistro will have food available for purchase! Rain date: June 7.

Proceeds from ticket sales go to support the touring comedians and the remainder supports Wachiska's outreach in education and events.

Our April meeting featuring Dr. Allison Johnson was very well attended and wonderful!

On May 14th, Oglala Lakota linguist, storyteller and Distinguished Scholar from South Dakota Humanities Council, Jerome Kills Small will present "Water: Lakota Spirituality and Science" at the Unitarian Church. His visit is sponsored by the Nebraska Humanities Council.



Come visit! Don't forget to get your tickets for **Comedy in the Pines** and join us for some laughs under the stars!

2026 LEGISLATIVE WATCH by Mark Brohman

The session ended with mostly bad news and some good news for conservation.

First, the bad news. **LR298CA** failed to pass. This Legislative Resolution would have protected the **Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET)** from future raids by placing the issue on the fall ballot, allowing voters to decide. It also would have limited NET funds to competitive environmental grants and administration. Conservation groups plan to reintroduce it next year. LR298CA fell two votes short of the number needed for Speaker Arch to allow floor debate on the final day, despite having enough support just two days earlier.

Another concern is **legislation favoring large data centers, passed with few safeguards**. Some facilities could use more energy than the City of Lincoln during a summer heat wave. Plans include building their own power plants using natural gas, which could increase demand and raise local gas prices. Water use is also a concern, despite claims of closed-loop systems. Fourteen states have enacted moratoriums on large data centers until more is known about their impacts.

Here's some good news. **LB1072**, a mainline budget bill that initially proposed taking \$40.7M from NET, was amended to reduce the amount to \$13.52M.

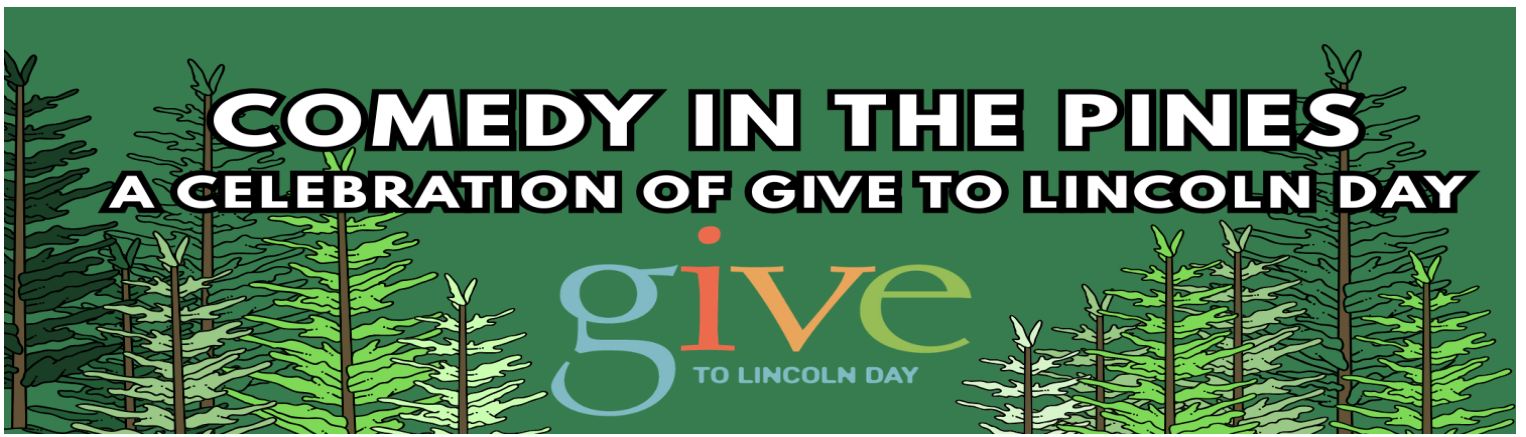
We'll continue monitoring Legislative Resolutions and prepare for the next session in January. Thank you to everyone who contacted your State Senators—your efforts helped reduce the amount taken from NET.

As inscribed on the north side of the Capitol, attributed to Harley Burr Alexander:

"THE SALVATION OF THE STATE IS WATCHFULNESS IN THE CITIZEN."

Nebraska Legislature page here:
NEBRASKALEGISLATURE.GOV/BILLS/
Monitor our Facebook page where we post important updates.





COMEDY IN THE PINES: GIVE TO LINCOLN CELEBRATION

EVENT DETAILS

- Join us for the first Comedy in the Pines at Prairie Pines Nature Preserve—an evening of nature, food, and laughter supporting conservation during Lincoln Community Foundation’s Give to Lincoln!

When & Where:

- Sunday, May 17 at 6:00 PM
- Prairie Pines Nature Preserve (South Gate)
- 3100 N 112th St, Lincoln

Tickets & Entry:

- Purchase: www.wachiskaadubon.org/product-page/ticket
- Bring email confirmation + valid I.D.
- 21+ event



Bring Your Own:

- Chair
- Drinks (alcohol allowed, 21+)
- Flashlight
- Dress for outdoors

Food:

- PEPE’s Bistro onsite available for purchase (Vegetarian)

Why You’ll Love It:

- Outdoor comedy experience under the stars
- Support local performers & conservation efforts
- Featuring Friends of Wilderness Park
- Part of Give to Lincoln Day
- Limited tickets—buy early

Volunteer Opportunity:

- Help with parking, set-up or cleanup
- Volunteers receive a free ticket
- Contact Alyx: 402.730.8676

Extra Details:

- No refunds
- Proceeds support performers and Wachiska Audubon programs
- Rain date scheduled for June 7.

GIVE TO LINCOLN:

If you can’t attend, please remember that between May 1 and May 28 is Lincoln Community Foundation’s Give to Lincoln month and every donation to Lincoln’s non-profits counts!

Visit www.givetolincoln.com to show your love and support of your favorite non-profits!

Come for the laughs, stay for the sunset, evening stars and community. We can’t wait to see you!



MEET THE COMEDIANS

ZACH PETERSON

Winner of the 2025 Omaha Entertainment and Arts Awards for Best Comedian. Owner of Broken Magic Comedy.

LAUREN VANA

Stand-up comedian and improviser; co-writer and co-director of the short film *Cry Night*, premiering at the Omaha Film Festival.

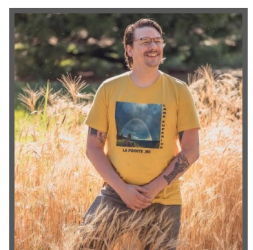
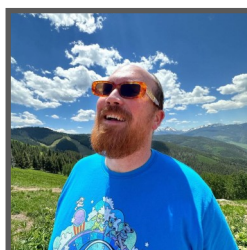
NATHAN HULTS

San Diego Comedy Festival and Gilda’s LaughFest; co-founder of the Sno Jam Comedy Festival and Boss’ Comedy Club; host of The Town Crier Podcast; Winner of Last Comic Standing.

NATHAN HULTS

LAUREN VANA

ZACH PETERSON



WACHISKA AUDUBON'S UPCOMING EVENTS

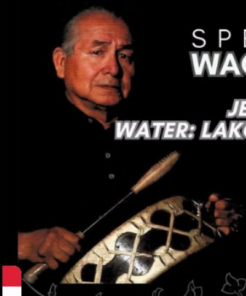
MAY-JULY 2026

**SPEAKER SERIES
WACHISKA AUDUBON**

JEROME KILLS SMALL
WATER: LAKOTA SPIRITUALITY and SCIENCE

MAY 14 7PM **6300 A ST LINCOLN**


HN HUMANITIES NEBRASKA



**SPEAKER SERIES
WACHISKA AUDUBON**

Gabriel Rivera Ph.D. & Jennifer Blankenship Rivera
THE BIRDS OF NEBRASKA: THROUGH OUR LENSE

JUNE 11 7PM **6300 A ST LINCOLN**



HOME OF WACHISKA AUDUBON: PRAIRIE PINES NATURE PRESERVE
11211 & ADAMS, LINCOLN

WACHISKA AUDUBON PRESENTS

COMEDY IN THE PINES **TICKETS \$25**

SUNDAY, MAY 17 6PM

FEATURING COMEDIANS
ZACH PETERSON, LAUREN VANA AND NATHAN HULTS

FOOD BY PEPE'S BISTRO FOR PURCHASE. BRING YOUR OWN DRINK AND CHAIR!


RAIN DATE: JUNE 7



**SPEAKER SERIES
WACHISKA AUDUBON**

**TOBIN BROWN:
NEBRASKA BIG YEAR**

JULY 9 7PM **6300 A ST LINCOLN**



BIRD SIGHTINGS



Dark-eyed Junco. Photo by Nancy Simmons



Bald Eagle. Photo by Nancy Simmons

WACHISKA AUDUBON BIRDATHON

BIRDING HIKES

For 20 years Wachiska has been scheduling birding hikes during Spring Migration. Join us!

SATURDAY, MAY 16. 8AM-11:30AM

WILDERNESS PARK.

Meet at 14 th street entrance to the park

SUNDAY, MAY 17. 8AM-11:30AM

PLATTE RIVER STATE PARK.

Meet at the observation tower parking area



We'll have some of our best birders leading the hikes.

Whether you're beginner or experienced you'll have a chance to see warblers, flycatchers, grosbeaks, Indigo Buntings and other migrating birds.

For example; at Platte River State Park we regularly see Scarlet Tanagers, Great Crested Flycatchers, Vireos, Northern Water Thrushes, and hear Kentucky Warblers!

If you can't make it to the hikes please make a record of the bird species you see on your hikes (*especially shorebirds*) on May 16 th and 17 th Keep a record of where you saw these birds, and send your list to Tim Knott's email at:
wachiskaoffice2@gmail.com



At Wachiska's office, we created once-a-month **Sunday Volunteer Day**, open to the public! We kicked things off in March with a Sunday Cedar Cut that drew over 20 participants, followed by a general clean-up in April. **Our next Volunteer Day is coming up on May 3!** These events take place once a month on Sundays for two hours. We're thrilled with the turnout! A regular gathering has proven to be a great way to build community. And a great way to meet old friends and new!

WACHISKA AUDUBON'S VOLUNTEER DAY

SUNDAY, MAY 3 10AM-12PM

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Join us!

3100 N 112th

Questions? Call Mark
402.525.1504

HOW I BECAME A BIRDER

by Mary Campbell

My story began in September of 1971 when my husband of one year, Doug Campbell, and I embarked on a nearly one year of travel in the United States and Canada. We resigned our positions in Chicago, purchased a new camper van, stocked it with often woefully inadequate equipment and clothing, and a copy of Peterson's *Field Guide to Birds*.

We had no preconceived route, other than to stay ahead of the seasons. We avoided cities, opting instead for State and National parks, forests, and monuments. We were a 1970's oddity to many people; we drove a new van, not a day-glow VW bus; we had Nebraska plates; we were not hippies.



Roger Tory Peterson's
A Field Guide to the Birds

My daily journal noted species we identified. Most were very recognizable birds. As we inched further south, however, we began to see fewer familiar birds. Then one day in Florida I saw my first Roseate Spoonbill.



Roseate Spoonbill. BirdNote.

It is a most cartoonish, flamboyant, ridiculous looking creature—a “you can't-make-this-up bird!” This addition to our life list hooked me! This discovery made the slogs through mud, the sticky, hot, itchy hikes all worth it.



Roseate Spoonbills in a South Florida nature preserve.

This helped our trip evolve into a way of life, an educational pursuit—a year to remember for a lifetime. And our final bird count was 175 different species!



Roseate Spoonbill in flight. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



Coastal Conservation in Georgia. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Public Officials

President Donald Trump

1600 Pennsylvania Av NW, Washington DC 20500-0001
Comment line: 202-456-1111
Phone: 202-456-1414 Fax: 202-456-2461
E-mail at website: <http://whitehouse.gov/contact>

Senator Deb Fischer

1248 O St Ste 1111, Lincoln NE 68508
Lincoln phone: 402-441-4600 Fax: 402-476-8753
Wash. DC phone: 202-224-6551 Fax: 202-228-0012
E-mail at website: <http://fischer.senate.gov>

Senator Pete Ricketts

1248 O St Ste 1000, Lincoln NE 68508
Lincoln phone: 402-476-1400 Fax: 402-476-0605
Wash. DC phone: 202-224-4224 Fax: 202-224-5213
E-mail at website: <http://ricketts.senate.gov>

Congressman Mike Flood (1st District)

301 S 13th St Ste 100, Lincoln NE 68508
Lincoln phone: 402-438-1598
Wash. DC phone: 202-225-4806 Fax: 202-225-5686
E-mail at website: <http://flood.house.gov>

Congressman Don Bacon (2nd District)

13906 Gold Cir Ste 101, Omaha NE 68144
Omaha phone: 888-221-7452
Wash. DC phone: 202-225-4155 Fax: 202-226-5452
E-mail at website: <https://bacon.house.gov>

Congressman Adrian Smith (3rd District)

416 Valley View Dr Ste 600, Scottsbluff NE 69361
Scottsbluff phone: 308-633-6333 Fax: 308-633-6335
Wash. DC phone: 202-225-6435 Fax: 202-225-0207
E-mail at website: <http://adriansmith.house.gov>

Capitol Hill Switchboard

888-436-8427 or 202-224-3121

Governor Jim Pillen

Capitol Bldg, PO Box 94848, Lincoln NE 68509-4848
Phone: 402-471-2244 Fax: 402-471-6031
E-mail at website: <http://governor.nebraska.gov>

State Senator _____

District ____ State Capitol, PO Box 94604, Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

State Capitol Switchboard

402-471-2311

Lancaster County Commissioners

County-City Bldg, 555 S 10th St Rm 110, Lincoln NE 68508
Phone: 402-441-7447 Fax: 402-441-6301
E-mail: commish@lancaster.ne.gov

Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird

County-City Bldg, 555 S 10th St Rm 301, Lincoln NE 68508-2828
Phone: 402-441-7511 Fax: 402-441-7120
E-mail: mayor@lincoln.ne.gov

Lincoln City Council

402-441-7515
E-mail: councilpacket@lincoln.ne.gov

Lincoln Journal Star

Letters to the editor, 21st and N St, Lincoln NE 68508
E-mail: oped@journalstar.com

Join now! Become a Friend of Wachiska Audubon Society!

This local chapter membership provides you with voting privileges and access to all our events, programs, and committees, **plus 100 percent of your membership donation goes directly to the Wachiska chapter. In addition, Friend members receive our monthly newsletter, *The Babbling Brook*, in their choice of print or electronic form.**

Friends of Wachiska (local membership)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ County _____ State _____ Zip _____

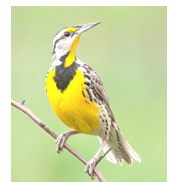
Phone _____

Email _____

- ___ \$25 Individual/Friend
- ___ \$35 Family Friend
- ___ \$50 Black-capped Chickadee Friend
- ___ \$100 Northern Cardinal Friend
- ___ \$250 Western Meadowlark Friend
- ___ \$500 Bald Eagle Friend
- ___ \$1,000 Peregrine Falcon Friend

Select the level of support that is right for you and make your check payable to **Wachiska Audubon Society**. All funds will remain with our local chapter and are tax deductible. Mail to:

Wachiska Audubon Society
Attention: Membership Committee
3100 N 112th Street
Lincoln, NE 68527



Eastern Meadowlark

___ **I prefer to receive my newsletter by email.**

Please note: If you are already a member of National Audubon Society (NAS) you automatically become a member of Wachiska, but not a Wachiska Friend member. Only Wachiska Friends receive the printed newsletter each month. If you wish to join NAS or receive *Audubon* magazine, please contact the National Audubon Society directly.

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3100 N 112th St, Lincoln NE 68527.

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Send address changes, newsletter submissions and requests to our office of publication, listed above. You may also email: office@wachiskaaudubon.org



The Babbling Brook is printed on recycled and recyclable paper.

REMEMBERING WACHISKA'S HISTORY

Wachiska means "stream" or "creek" in the languages of Indigenous people of eastern Nebraska, the Omaha and Ponca.

The environmental stewardship efforts of the Wachiska Audubon Society take place on the past, present, and future homelands of the Pawnee, Ponca, Otoe-Missouria, and Omaha Peoples, as well as those of the relocated Ho-Chunk, Sac and Fox, and Ioway. We humbly join our efforts with theirs in honoring and stewarding this land of prairies, rivers, and streams.

WACHISKA AUDUBON LEADERS - 2026

Executive Director Mark Brohman
Office Administrator WJ Bantam

OFFICERS

President *Theresa Pella
Vice President..... *Ann Briggs
Secretary *April Stevenson
Treasurer/Finance *Carol Bodeen

STANDING COMMITTEES/POSITIONS

Director at Large *Dakota Altman
Director at Large *Andrea Faas
Director at Large *Al Davis
Director at Large *Ethan Freese
Director at Large *Nancy Bare
Director at Large *Tom Lynch
Director at Large *Roxanne Smith
Director at Large *Alyx Knight
Conservation *Ross Scott
Education/Outreach *Tim Knott
Membership Linda Brown

*Denotes voting Board member

For contact information of officers and committee chairs, call or email the Wachiska office.

Mission Statement of the Wachiska Audubon Society

The mission of the Wachiska Audubon Society is to bring people together to preserve and restore tallgrass prairies and other natural ecosystems, promote birding, support native wildlife, provide nature education, and advocate for the sustainability of our natural community.

Wachiska Audubon Society

3100 N 112th Street
Lincoln, NE 68527
402-486-4846
office@WachiskaAudubon.org
www.WachiskaAudubon.org

If you missed a monthly program or want to view again, Wachiska Audubon's programs are available on YouTube via the homepage at www.WachiskaAudubon.org.

COMEDY IN THE PINES

**Proceeds Support the Performers
and Wachiska Audubon**

Gate Opens 6PM/Show 7PM
SUNDAY MAY 17

ORDER TICKETS ONLINE NOW:

WWW.WACHISKAAUDUBON.ORG/PRODUCT-PAGE/TICKET

BRING YOUR OWN CHAIR AND DRINKS.

21+ UP EVENT

PEPE'S BISTRO on SITE for FOOD PURCHASES

LOCATION:

**WACHISKA at PRAIRIE PINES NATURE PRESERVE
3100 N 112, LINCOLN, NE**

RAIN DATE: JUNE 7

Wachiska Audubon Society's financial records available for examination in the office.

A GIFT TO THE FUTURE: A bequest to *Wachiska Audubon Society* is a gift to future generations, enabling our natural heritage to continue. For wills, trusts, and gifts, our legal name is **Wachiska Audubon Society**. Our Federal Tax ID number is **51-0229888**.

DONATIONS: To make a simple donation and support our work, **VENMO** us @*Wachiska-Audubon* or **SCAN CODE** here:



STAY CURRENT! Follow WACHISKA AUDUBON on FACEBOOK.