



THE CHAT

Summer 2020 VOL. 49 #10

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Calendar

Please note that ASC takes a break from meetings and newsletters in June and July

Aug 27 - Submissions due for Sept. 2020 Chat
Sept 10 - ASC Board meeting on Zoom
Sept 17 - ASC General Meeting (electronic delivery)

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, all ASC in-person programs have been cancelled or postponed. But we are using other means, like Zoom webinars, to stay safe and connected. For the latest info, please visit our website at auduboncorvallis.org.

ASC General Meetings for 2020-2021

Since the Novel Coronavirus Pandemic continues to dictate changes to our normal activities, we cannot resume our traditional monthly gatherings this fall as we had hoped. That could change in 2021 but the future is still unclear. The Board will monitor

developments, and when it is safe to resume our normal meetings, it will be announced on the ASC website and in the Chat.

For the foreseeable future, we will continue to provide programs via Zoom as we did in April and May. Online programs will begin at 7:00 PM and be followed by the ASC Business Meeting when needed. The Board will discuss how best to handle ASC business as we go forward.



Keel-Billed Toucan in Panama - photo by Matt Lee

Audubon Speakers (and tentative programs) for the coming year are:

- September 17 - Rosabel Miró, Executive Director of the Audubon Society of Panama, *Birds, Wildlife and Habitats of Panama - Photos and Stories*
Rosabel will share some of the activities and initiatives of the Panama Audubon Society, as well as stories and photos of Panamanian wildlife.
- October 15 - Jamie Cornelius, *How birds and other wild animals survive unpredictable and changing environmental conditions*
- November 19 - Bill Origer, *Hummingbirds and How to Photograph Them*
- December 17 - Member Slide Show
- January 21- Randy Comeleo, *Update on the Benton County Predator Control Program*
- February 18 - to be determined
- March 18 - James Sumich, *Marine Mammals*
- April 15 - to be determined

- May 20 - Matt Lee/Sue Powell/Carla Olson/Mark Baldwin - *Birding in Kenya, a photo safari*

Worth Mathewson, Natural History of the Band-tailed Pigeon - will join us later this year if we are able to meet in person.

Check the ASC website: <https://auduboncorvallis.org> for updated information.

If you have questions or suggestions for future speakers contact me at [mark.baldwin2\(at\)comcast.net](mailto:mark.baldwin2(at)comcast.net).
Mark Baldwin, Vice President and Program Chair

President's Corner

'May You Live in Interesting Times.' Here We Are.

The current turmoil we are experiencing is astonishing and appalling. Pandemic, political, social, and economic chaos. Racial murders.

One of the many shocking stories was that of Christian Cooper's encounter with a person in Central Park, NYC. As you recall, Mr. Cooper is an accomplished bird watcher and black. While birding, he asked a white woman to leash her dog according to park rules. She responded aggressively and racially. In response, Mr. Cooper calmly started video recording the event. Fortunately, no one was injured. I was impressed and amazed at Mr. Cooper's poise during the event and in subsequent interviews. Somehow, he maintained a remarkable aplomb and objectivity after what must have been an exceedingly stressful encounter.

Several years ago, a friend of ours from the South who we travel and bird with, told us a story about an encounter he had. Our friend is white and a retired biology professor, i.e., well-privileged. The incident that follows shook him deeply. Given the killings and confrontations this spring, he decided to quit just shaking his head and tell his story. As he says, the color of his skin may well have saved his life.

“If I Were Black, I Would Be Dead”

The morning after a recent Thanksgiving, I left my mother’s house for a walk with a purpose. This was in a relatively small town in northwest Georgia, in a small subdivision with plenty of pine trees. Being an avid birder and being from a more northerly state, I was particularly interested in finding and seeing a Brown-headed Nuthatch, a bird that lives year-round in the area and is fond of pines. I walked about a half a mile into an adjacent subdivision, noting the birds I saw on the Birdwatcher’s Diary app I use so in the future I can recall what I have seen and when and exactly where I saw it. At a cul-de-sac that was circled by three houses and a woodlot, I finally heard then saw a nuthatch. It was flying between a tree in the front yard of one of the houses and several trees in the woodlot. I was following it excitedly and trying to find the location with the best views, but all the while in the circular street, never in any of the yards.

A youngish man came out of the front door of the house with the aforementioned tree and bird and somewhat aggressively asked what I was doing. I told him I was looking for and now watching a particular bird. He stated no, I was on his property and why was that. I said no, I am in the street, have been all along, and am simply watching a bird. By now he was about 15 feet from me and said NO, you were in my yard and were going through my mailbox. Totally shocked, I laughingly said something like what in the world are you talking about and why in the world would I go through your mailbox. At this time, I happened to notice he had a holster with a gun in it, so I became quite nervous and further conversation was with a shaky voice from me and no more laughter. I said Sir, I am watching birds and I will show you on my phone how I am recording those I see including the one I am watching in your yard as proof of this. I stepped forward to show him the map and markings in the app, and he drew his gun

and shouted DO NOT COME ON MY PROPERTY and what are you doing in my mailbox. Literally shaking in my crocs, I backed off and again said Sir, I am only watching birds and am in a public road doing so. Not knowing what else to do and seeing it was obvious where this was going if I kept arguing, with much trepidation I slowly began walking away out of the circle and back along the road.

After I had walked a short distance, I noticed he had gotten in his car and was slowly tailing me. I kept walking at what I hoped was a normal pace and also kept looking in the shrubs and trees along the road but not stopping, even if I saw a bird. As I neared the end of the subdivision, two police cars and three sheriff’s cars pulled in from the main road and stopped me. Several of the officers went and began talking to the man in his car, and others talked to me. They were polite and nonthreatening, although I was scared to death, shaking badly, and not able to answer very coherently as I had never had a gun pulled on me nor been surrounded by a host of armed officers. I could not recall the address of my mother’s house, and even called her my grandmother, but I was able to point to the direction where it was. I also showed them the app, which listed when and where I started and marked the position of all the birds I had seen.

While the officers were pleasant enough, they did respond, when I said the guy pulled a gun on me, that well, you can understand that as he was just protecting his home and property. I responded that no, I cannot understand that and it was quite clear to me that he REALLY was looking for any excuse I might give him to use that gun.

So while this adventure ended well for me, except for me shaking most of the rest of the day, it was clear to me that if I were black . . .”

Bill Proebsting, Retiring Chapter President

Please Support Hesthavn

For many years, ASC has sponsored a Spring Birdathon to raise funds to support Hesthavn, our nature preserve and education center near McDonald Forest. Because of changing (read aging) membership and the Covid-19 pandemic, the Birdathon did not happen this year. Nonetheless, maintenance needs continue, so we are soliciting donations for Hesthavn.

Hesthavn and its facilities are the major expense for ASC. Over the years, the leadership and sweaty commitment of Ray Drapek and many other devoted volunteers has steadily built the property into a facility that supports a variety of wildlife, our Education Program, and wider community. The dedication of these volunteers has been remarkable.

As any property owner knows, maintenance is a perpetual motion machine. The barn, bridge, parking lot, trails, and vegetation require regular attention to keep the facility running. Examples of projects on Ray's to-do list include rebuilding the south ramp to the barn, staining the barn siding, repairing the parking lot, shoring up the bridge approaches, and adding a non-slip surface, as well as routine equipment maintenance.

Once these items are addressed, a new set will crop up next year. Therefore, in lieu of a Birdathon, the ASC Board is asking our members to contribute an extra donation to the Hesthavn account to support these efforts. Thank you in advance for pitching in.

Bill Proebsting

Help ASC with Amazon Smile donations

Audubon Society of Corvallis is now a beneficiary of the Amazon Smile program. The donation rate is 0.5% from "qualified" purchases. Amazon will pay ASC quarterly, approximately 45 days after the end of each calendar quarter.

Here is a link to read about the program and sign up to support a charity of your choice (Audubon Society of Corvallis). <http://smile.amazon.com>

Once you sign up for Amazon Smile, save the bookmark and start from there for every order to make sure the Audubon Society of Corvallis receives a donation for each of your orders. There is no charge for you or the charity to participate. This will really help cover our ongoing expenses at Hesthavn and for developing Outreach and Education alternatives.

Carolyn Peterson, ASC Treasurer

ASC Website, Facebook & Instagram for Current News

Conservation of native Willamette Valley wildlife and habitats is an important ASC mission, and you might be surprised how many projects we have undertaken. For instance, restoring native habitats while allowing people to access nature is a goal of our trail work at Hesthavn, Finley NWR, and the Mulkey System. Check out our projects for protecting species and habitats on the Conservation pages of the website—auduboncorvallis.org. Meet local conservation dynamos and the recipients of the Homer Campbell Conservation Award. The website is also a handy place to find current ASC news before your monthly Chat issue arrives. We are trying to find safe ways to help you connect with nature in the coming weeks, so check in periodically. And guess what is the perfect activity for social distancing—birdwatching! To send a message email us at audubon.corvallis@gmail.com.

Sue Powell, ASC Website

Learn about what's new with ASC, and help us spotlight nature in Benton County backyards! Share your questions, photos and best bird sightings: at Audubon Society of Corvallis or tag us on [Facebook@corvallisaudubon](https://www.facebook.com/corvallisaudubon).

Kai Frueh and Nancy DeMasi, ASC Facebook

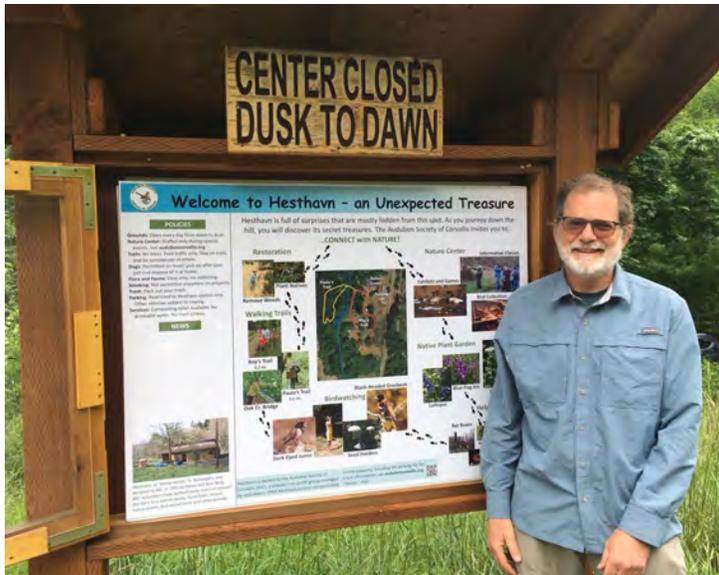
Check us out on Instagram at our handle, which is [@auduboncorvallis](https://www.instagram.com/auduboncorvallis).

Christina Linkem, ASC Instagram

Hesthavn News

New Sign Welcomed at Hesthavn

On June 7, 2020, a new 4 ft. by 3 ft. sign was installed in the mostly empty kiosk of the upper Hesthavn parking lot. The sign welcomes visitors and entices them to explore Hesthavn's secrets down the gravel drive. It also provides contact information, an area for announcements, and guidelines for use of the trails and the rest of the property. Ray Drapek assisted Eagle Scout Philip San Romani who designed and constructed the kiosk in 2018. The large, wooden kiosk is well-built and weatherproof. Sue Powell led the sign design and production, with help from Education Team members Mikaela Lea and Teri Engbring. This fun and informative sign should encourage more people to explore Hesthavn and Connect to Nature.



Ray Drapek with the new kiosk sign at Hesthavn

A second sign is in production, led by Mikaela Lea, a new ASC Board member for 2020/2021 and also a student at Oregon State University. This second kiosk sign explores the mission and goals of Hesthavn,

including Restoration, Conservation, and Green Solutions. Soon it will be installed on the kiosk on the south side of the Nature Center.

Ray Drapek has directed the restoration of Hesthavn since 1997. He continues to spend countless volunteer hours researching, planning, and caring for the buildings and 5.5 acres of former horse pasture and wooded trails. Most weekends will find him pulling weeds, which he wholeheartedly enjoys. His paid work is as a GIS Specialist with the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Northwest Research Lab. He works indoors using computer models to simulate ecosystem changes. "It's an interesting job, but it is 40 hours a week in front of a computer, so this is my recreation. I am happy for opportunities to experience real ecosystems first hand," says Ray". Ray is usually joined by his wife, Kim, and they welcome more volunteers to combat the energetic weeds and maintain the buildings.

Major tasks they have accomplished include transforming the original barn into a small nature center, removing invasive weeds that compete with hundreds of native plants, installing a solar-assisted composting toilet, building a bridge over Oak Creek, and devising a rainwater runoff system for watering plants during the summer.

Sue Powell, Education Team

Volunteer Opportunities at Hesthavn

Please check the ASC website for current status on work parties and other events. Trails at Hesthavn are open to responsible visitors from dawn to dusk every day, but the Nature Center building will be closed to the public until it is safe for us all to reopen. If you visit our grounds, please practice safe social distancing and common courtesy. This includes keeping all dogs on leash in this wildlife-friendly space, and cleaning up their mess and your trash before leaving. No bikes on our trails please, as they cause soil erosion and damage sensitive plants. Please note that our parking lot is private property and only for visitors while they are using Hesthavn. The lot may look empty, but we often need those spaces for our volunteers and

program participants. It is never allowed to be overflow parking for Mac-Dunn or other activities.

ASC volunteers may be working inside or on the grounds during this time, but we ask that you give us space. We may be working on the grounds upkeep on many Sundays. There will be no formal work parties for the time being, but if you want to come some Sunday and help out we can give you instructions (from a safe social distance). Send me a note for more details (raydrapek@gmail.com). In any case, we look forward to meeting you in future.

Ray Drapek, Hesthavn Chair

Directions to Hesthavn

8590 NW Oak Creek Drive, Corvallis. Take Harrison west from downtown Corvallis; after you cross 53rd, it becomes Oak Creek Drive. Pass Bald Hill farm and follow the signs for 'Nature Center.' Hesthavn will be on your left shortly before the end of Oak Creek Dr.

Conservation Update

Compared to our current coronavirus concerns, it seems of small note that continued climate change and human population growth spin the positive-feedback loop that degrades our human habitat at an ever-increasing rate. It doesn't matter which might be causal, our most important contribution now is to decrease the inputs that feed this run-away system-gone awry. Whatever you can do towards climate and environmental justice, health and habitat protections are welcome.

Besides our own choices, such as reducing fossil fuel use and personal consumption and avoiding purchase and disposal of non-recoverable materials, we can collectively advocate for community and government-wide actions that also reduce the inputs that fuel run-away climate conditions. Groups that advocate for lower atmospheric carbon (Corvallis CCL: citizensclimatelobby.org), protection for water resources (Marys River and Luckiamute Watershed Councils: www.mrwc.org; www.luckiamutelwc.org),

environmental awareness and education (Audubon: auduboncorvallis.org) all can use help—your volunteer time and your financial support.

Currently our local public forest lands are managed with little to no direction towards buffering carbon sequestration and storage, though we know Oregon Coast Range forests have enormous carbon storage capability. The Corvallis Forest, in its municipal watershed on the east slope of Marys Peak is due for revision, as are the Benton County forested natural areas of Fitton Green, Beazell, and Fort Hoskins. OSU College of Forestry research forest plans are suspended and well-out of date, but now under new leadership. Oregon Department of Forestry lands in western Oregon planning is demonstrably bankrupt, even while ODF attempts to develop a Habitat Conservation Plan agreement that could better protect listed species concerns. Our regional national forests (Willamette and Siuslaw) are now approaching forest plan revision—already 16 years overdue—with the July 8th release of the Bioregional Assessment. To date none of these above public forests address how they can be managed to buffer ongoing climate change, yet all of them continue logging and selling timber without regard to its exacerbation.

I remain committed to tracking our local and regional public forest planning and management activities, and welcome your comments, questions, and assistance.

Jim Fairchild, alderspring@peak.org

Atop the Bluebird Nest Box

Monitors Don't Always Get the Blues

Each year, volunteers for the Bluebird Trail monitor nearly 400 nest boxes in Benton and Linn counties. But Western Bluebirds aren't the only users of these boxes. Other cavity nesters, including Tree Swallows, Violet-Green Swallows, and House Wrens, find the boxes very attractive, and there is intense competition

for this limited resource among all these species. As a result, when you're checking boxes during the nesting season, you never know what you'll find in a box until you open the door and peek inside.

If the box contains a nest with eggs, you can usually tell what species built the nest and laid the eggs even if you don't see the parents. House wrens construct nests of small sticks piled almost to the top of the box, whereas swallows and bluebirds build shallower nests of grasses and varying numbers of feathers. Grass nests with lots of feathers and white eggs are generally the work of Tree Swallows or Violet-Green Swallows (Figure 1). Grass nests with few or no feathers and pale blue eggs belong to bluebirds (Figure 2).



Figure 1. A typical Tree Swallow nest.



Figure 2. A typical Western Bluebird nest.

It was a great surprise, then, when Bluebird Trail monitor Bev Clark opened a box near Oak Creek in May and found a grass nest with five white eggs and one pale blue egg (Figure 3). What was happening? Were swallows and bluebirds sharing the same nest? No, two observations indicate that these were all bluebird eggs in a bluebird nest. First, Bev saw a female bluebird come out of the box as well as a male bluebird nearby. Second, the rounded shape of the eggs is characteristic of bluebird eggs. If you compare Figures 1 and 2, you can see that swallow eggs have one end that is more pointed.



Figure 3. A very unusual Western Bluebird nest.

According to sialis.org, about 4–5 percent of female bluebirds lay white eggs. Normally, a blue pigment is added to the eggshell as an egg passes through the female's oviduct. When this process is disrupted, the eggs come out white.

But what's the story with that one pale blue egg in the nest? One possible explanation is that it was laid before the female developed an infection that blocked pigment addition in her oviduct. However, we can't evaluate that idea because we don't know when the blue egg was laid. When Bev first discovered the nest, there were already five eggs—one blue and four white. A more likely explanation is that the blue egg was laid by a different female. This behavior, called egg dumping (or conspecific brood parasitism when the dumping female is of the same species), may occur in females that are unable to find or hold onto a nest site.

If you're wondering whether white bluebird eggs produce albino bluebirds (or Western Whitebirds), they don't. The color of the eggs has no bearing on the color of the birds that hatch out of them. Bev reported that this nest produced six chicks that left the box in late June as normal-looking Western Bluebirds.

Matt Lee, Bluebird Trail Chair

Education News

ASC Education Programs Learning to Adapt to Covid Distancing

With Covid-19 rates rising, and no vaccine or cure yet, we are unable to return to our popular in-person, interactive, and fun education programs. But that doesn't mean our Education Team has been idle. In fact, we are gearing up now for safe ways to plan programs and outreach to help our members and neighbors Connect with Nature during the pandemic. Our new Board member, Mikaela Lea, and teammates Nancy DeMasi, Phyllis Bailey, and Teri Engbring are developing ways to inform and involve our community throughout the isolation period.

Some of the ideas we are working on are Virtual Tour/Nature Walks, a Bird Coloring Contest, Benton Backyard Ecosystem Spotlights with photos throughout the seasons, mini-videos on local ecosystems and habitats, Info-graphs (visual online posters), and a local birds map of our favorite local birding sites. We will also reach out to local schools to see if we can assist in their coming education challenge. Your technical help and creative ideas are welcome.

You can support local wildlife and conservation behind the scenes now, and have some fun, by sharing your latest local Nature photos, tales, and birding news with ASC's Facebook page or Instagram now. Let us know if you have other ideas by emailing Teri at chateditors@gmail.com. Stay tuned to the CHAT, ASC website, and our Facebook and Instagram pages! Then, join in the fun! Thanks.

For Your Happiness and Inspiration, Keep Connecting with Nature

For your own enjoyment and inspiration, keep connecting with nature in safe ways. Observe and listen to the bird songs and watch them raise their

summer families in our backyards. Wildflowers and neighborhood flower beds are still prime, so keep your eyes open and soak it all in.

Teri Engbring, ASC Education Team

Community Notes

The 2020 Corvallis Sustainability Coalition Town Hall has been rescheduled. The virtual event will take place on Wednesday, August 26, 2020 from 12 noon to 1:15 pm.

The theme of the Town Hall will be “Bold Action: Communities Respond to the Climate Crisis.” Keynote speaker will be Kristin Eberhard, Director of Climate and Democracy at Sightline Institute. Sightline is working to make the Northwest a model of sustainability practices that strengthen our communities by supporting green economies and healthy and sound environments.

The Town Hall is co-hosted by the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition and the OSU Sustainability Office. Audubon Society of Corvallis is a co-sponsor. Registration will open the week of July 13th. Please check the ASC website for registration info.

Suzanne Ortiz, ASC Sustainability Liaison

Field Trip Schedule

Weekend Field Trips

As noted previously, all our 2020 weekend field trips are CANCELLED until the Coronavirus problem is solved.

For more info, check the ASC website.

Fred Ramsey, Weekend Field Trips Chair

Second Saturday Field Trips are also CANCELLED for now

Using an abundance of caution (as opposed to an abandonment of caution) we will NOT hold any Saturday field trips until community spread of the virus is better understood and under better control.

Duncan Evered and Caryn Stoess

Swallow Youngsters

Photos by Teri Engbring



Violet-green Swallow fledglings in Corvallis



Barn Swallow fledglings in Airlie, OR



Barn Swallow fledgling in Airlie, OR

Board Meeting Summary

For May 14, 2020

The meeting was held online via ZOOM.

1. ASC-funded Finley summer intern, Gabriella, began June 1 with Streaked Horn Lark field research.
2. The ASC FY 20-21 budget was approved.
3. The Chat now is only printed for members without internet access, as we transition to an electronic version.
4. Hesthavn: Sandwich boards are working to keep out Mac Forest overflow parking. No work parties currently, but projects coming – from south-side ramp replacement to ongoing mowing and weed control.
5. Revising bylaws: Karan, Kai, and Christina will work this summer to suggest ASC bylaws updates.

Beth Boroson, Acting Secretary

Please Note that since Beth was elected Board secretary in May, she has had to resign, and a replacement is needed by September to take minutes at monthly board meetings. Thanks to Marcia Cutler for filling in this month.

Open Board Meetings

ASC Board of Directors meetings are open to all ASC members, and the board encourages you to come and see what we do. Our monthly Board meeting is on Thursday, one week before the General Meeting. See the Board meeting minutes or ASC website for location and time.

Membership Corner

Welcome to new members:

Talia Neely

Martha and Steve Ham

Gabriel Aron (in honor of his father Mark Aron)

Courtney Morris (in honor of John Morris)

General Membership Renewal Information

For membership renewal online go to the ASC website (<https://auduboncorvallis.org/membership/>) and renew via PayPal. To renew by USPS, mail a check to ASC, PO Box 148, Corvallis, OR 97339.

Email Notifications/Meeting Cancellations

We encourage members to join the ASC listserv to receive emergency email notifications about meeting cancellations related to weather conditions, updated information about ASC events, fieldtrip locations, and volunteer work parties. Send an email to the listserv administrator (Karan Fairchild, alderspr@peak.org) and request to be added.

Have You Changed Your Contact Info?

If you have moved or changed your email/mail addresses please update your contact information.

Thank you for your generosity and support!

Paul Adamus, Membership Chair

Contributors to this Chat

William Proebsting, Mark Baldwin, Teri Engbring, Karan Fairchild, Jim Fairchild, Don Boucher, Ray Drapek, Matt Lee, Sue Powell, Christina Linkem, Paul Adamus, Carolyn Peterson, Beth Boroson, Duncan Evered, Caryn Stoess

Chat Articles

The Chat editors, Teri Engbring and Naomi Weidner, welcome articles from all members of the Audubon Society of Corvallis. Please submit articles to the Chat editor by the fourth Thursday of the month. Submit text using Microsoft Word and photos to:

chateditors@gmail.com.

Please note that we are now producing an electronic version of the CHAT, which we can email to our members much quicker and with more photos and links. Due to other volunteer commitments, **we do not have Field Notes in this issue**, but they will be in the September CHAT.

Officers

Co-President	Dave Mellinger	dmell3.14159(at)gmail.com	
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Treasurer	Carolyn Peterson	chinstrapdreams(at)comcast.net	

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Corvallis Sustainability Coalition	Suzanne Ortiz	ortizsv(at)gmail.com	917-273-4917
Education Team Coordinator	Teri Engbring	engbring(at)hotmail.com	
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Facebook	Kai Frueh	kaifrueh2(at)gmail.com	
Instagram	Christina Linkem	cnlinkem(at)hawaii.edu	
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Interested in volunteering?

Please let us know:

volunteerasc@gmail.com

Find us online



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