

## EAGLE POST 37

The newsletter of **Friends of Eagles Nest Wilderness**, apprising you of important activities in and around Eagles Nest, Holy Cross, and Ptarmigan Peak Wilderness Areas.

[VIEW IN BROWSER](#)



Before we begin... SAVE THE DATE -  
**FENW's WILDERFEST**  
Sunday, August 18, noon-3pm, Frisco Historic Park

Join us in 2019 for **FENW TRAIL & CAMPSITE WORK**

\*June 8 - National Trails Day with FDRD (Salt Lick Trail)

\*July 12-14 - Eagles Nest Wilderness Overnight with llamas (Slate Lakes, Summit County)

\*July 13 - Weed Pull with the Sierra Club at 9:30 at Acorn Creek. Expect to hike about a mile, work gloves will be provided. Contact Jim at [jimofcolorado@gmail.com](mailto:jimofcolorado@gmail.com)

\*August 9-11 - Eagles Nest Wilderness Overnight with llamas (Gore Creek, Eagle County)

\*Aug 24 - Lily Pad Lake Trail Bridge Construction.

*NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY!* Meet Dom and Powell, our llamas who will pack in tools and gear to the backcountry. Learn more [HERE](#).

June 2019

Dear \*|FNAME|\*

Greetings! Our topic this month is

OVER & UNDER - Building safe highway crossings for wildlife in Colorado

Part 1: ([LAST MONTH](#)): State Highway 9 in Grand County (completed in 2016)

Part 2 (THIS ISSUE): Safe Passages on Vail Pass in Summit County

### INTRODUCTION:

In [last month's eNewsletter](#), PAIGE SINGER described the incredible success of State Highway 9 Wildlife and Safety Improvement Project ([SH9 Project](#)) in the lower Blue River Valley. Designed to minimize wildlife-vehicle collisions (WVCs), a series of five underpasses and two spectacular overpasses, plus an array of wildlife fencing, escape ramps, and wildlife



guards has reduced WVCs by nearly 90% since its completion in 2016.

As they continue to monitor the SH9 Project, Paige and her colleagues are also turning to a new challenge, this one on I-70 between Copper Mountain and the summit of Vail Pass (highlighted on the map below). It's called the Vail Pass Wildlife Byway and was identified as a priority in the Summit County Safe Passages Connectivity Plan for Wildlife.

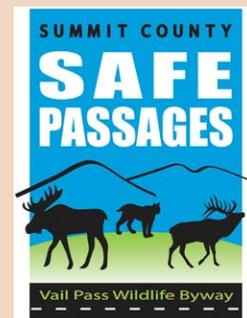


As Paige describes below, I-70 bisects important wildlife habitat between Eagles Nest and Holy Cross Wildernesses, with tens of thousands of vehicles per day zipping along the 4-lane highway. The plan calls for wildlife over- and under-passes, like the SH9 Project, with some new twists. Fundraising has begun, with \$200,000 in the bank to fund the planning stages.

Also included is an exciting citizen-science project led by [Rocky Mountain Wild](#) and [Denver Zoo](#); it's called the Colorado Corridors Project. Read about it, and get involved in wildlife monitoring with remote-triggered cameras! (Photos below from CO Corridors Project - Rocky Mountain Wild & Denver Zoo)

### Summit County Safe Passages and the Vail Pass Wildlife Byway By PAIGE SINGER

Summit County is unrivaled in its outstanding beauty and outdoor recreation opportunities. As a result, new residents are moving into the county at an unprecedented rate – up 10% in 8 years - and visitation has skyrocketed with over 7.4 million visitors a year. Wildlife in Summit County appeals to residents and visitors alike, drawing hunters, anglers, photographers and wildlife watchers from across the globe. As the population in Summit County grows, so does the amount of traffic on the county's roadways. More vehicles on the road mean more challenges to wildlife as they seek food and water, presenting a heightened risk of wildlife-vehicle collisions. Each year in Colorado, 3,600 wildlife related crashes are reported, with an additional 2,000-4,000 unreported incidents with deer and smaller animals. Moreover, collisions with wildlife pose a serious safety concern for motorists, resulting in property damage, injuries and fatalities, at a cost to society of \$66.4 million per year in Colorado.



To address this problem in Summit County, the Dillon Ranger District of the White River

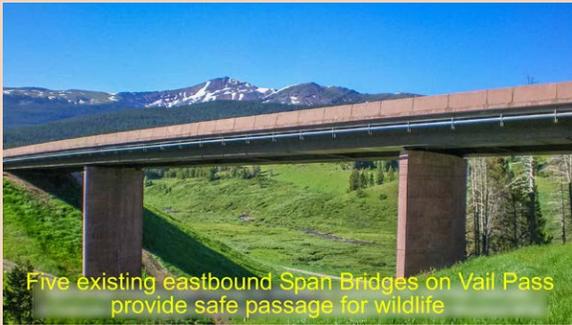
National Forest, in coordination with a diverse group of stakeholders, developed the [Summit County Safe Passages Connectivity Plan for Wildlife](#) to provide a common vision for multi-species landscape connectivity throughout the county. [Summit County Safe Passages](#), the vision of which is to create collaborative solutions for safe wildlife passage across Summit County roadways through active participation from community stakeholders, emerged in 2017 following the year-long planning effort. Summit County Safe Passages is organized by Ashley Nettles with the U.S. Forest Service and Julia Kintsch with ECO-resolutions and has [24 partner organizations](#), including local, state and federal agencies, open space organizations, county and town planning departments, ski areas, recreation groups, conservation organizations and interested community members.

The Vail Pass Wildlife Byway on Interstate 70 (I-70), between Copper Mountain Resort and the top of Vail Pass, was identified by Summit County Safe Passages as a top priority area in which to focus wildlife mitigation efforts in the near term. The Byway lies entirely within the White River National Forest and connects two important wilderness areas - the Eagles Nest Wilderness to the northeast of I-70 and the Holy Cross Wilderness to the southwest. It provides important habitat for several wildlife species including mule deer, elk, moose, black bear, mountain lion and one of the few known breeding populations of Canada lynx in Colorado outside the southwest corner of the state. Yet up to 22,000 vehicles a day on this stretch of I-70 present a significant barrier to wildlife movement, with many animals no longer attempting to cross the roadway. Those that do, often do so unsuccessfully.



Wildlife crossing structures, such as overpasses and underpasses, are the most effective way to create safer roads for wildlife and people, providing access to habitat and resources for wildlife and reducing wildlife-related vehicle collisions by upwards of 95%. To restore connectivity in the Vail Pass Wildlife Byway, the Summit County Safe Passages Plan recommends three wildlife crossing structures – one overpass and two underpasses – to allow for the safe passage of wildlife over or under I-70 (see MAP above). This section of I-70 is divided by a wide median and the three proposed wildlife crossing structures need to span only the westbound lanes of traffic. Once over or under the westbound lanes via the proposed structures, wildlife can pass under one of the five existing eastbound highway bridges to complete their safe crossing of I-70.

An effort to implement the mitigation recommendations in the Vail Pass Wildlife Byway is underway, co-led by Cinnamon Levi-Flinn with the Colorado



Department of Transportation and Paige Singer with Rocky Mountain Wild, with support from the U.S. Forest Service, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Denver Zoo,

Wilderness Workshop, Copper Mountain Resort, ECO-resolutions, Friends of the Dillon Ranger District, Summit Eagle Wilderness Alliance, Walking Mountains, Vail Resorts and Arapahoe Basin Ski Area. This inter-organizational team aims to implement these recommendations through community outreach and [fundraising](#) for design and construction. Already, local ski areas have contributed nearly \$200,000, which is targeted for a design and engineering study slated to begin in the summer of 2019.

In addition, the Colorado Corridors Project has been engaging the local community in wildlife monitoring at the proposed overpass location since 2015. The CCP is co-led by Paige Singer with Rocky Mountain Wild and Erica Garrouette with Denver Zoo in coordination with the U.S. Forest Service, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, the Western Transportation Institute and Walking Mountains. Wildlife monitoring is an essential step in determining whether wildlife crossing structures are effective in restoring connectivity for wildlife.



Through stakeholder visits and citizen science monitoring, the CCP aims to build broad community awareness and support for the Vail Pass Wildlife Byway implementation effort.

Volunteers help maintain remote-triggered cameras in the field and identify and catalog species captured on the cameras through an online platform developed by [Zooniverse.org](#). Sign up [HERE](#) to help out in the field this summer.

#### ABOUT THE TEAM:



**Paige Singer** is a conservation biologist with Rocky Mountain Wild where she specializes in transportation ecology and geospatial information systems analyses. She co-leads the implementation effort in the Vail Pass Wildlife Byway and the Colorado Corridors Project. She has been working with partners around the state to collect and analyze data related to wildlife-road interactions, wildlife linkages and the effectiveness of wildlife crossing structures.

**Ashley Nettles** is a wildlife biologist with the Dillon Ranger District of the White River National Forest, and a lead organizer of Summit County Safe Passages. Her

interests are in landscape connectivity for multiple species as well as habitat restoration, but she gets the most enjoyment out of working collaboratively with community groups, finding innovative solutions to complex environmental problems. A huge part of this is building trust and strengthening partnerships among agencies and the public.



**Julia Kintsch** is Senior Ecologist and Principal at ECO-resolutions ecological resource consulting, and a lead organizer of Summit County Safe Passages. She specializes in transportation ecology, wildlife connectivity, and the collaborative processes needed to achieve conservation objectives across large landscapes. In addition to working with Summit County Safe Passages, she is leading the research effort evaluating the effectiveness of wildlife crossings mitigation on State Highway 9 in Grand County, and is helping to develop Colorado's Wildlife and Transportation Alliance.

**Cinnamon Levi-Flinn** is a biologist with the Colorado Department of Transportation and co-leads the implementation effort in the Vail Pass Wildlife Byway. Within her organization, she is responsible for biological assessments, and project development and NEPA management, which includes inter-agency collaboration and coordination. She participates on panels for numerous research studies across the western slope such as the State Highway 9 wildlife crossing mitigation research and the Western Slope Wildlife Prioritization Study, as well as other local efforts to minimize wildlife-vehicle conflicts.



**Erica Garroutte** is the Community Engagement Manager in Denver Zoo's Field Conservation Department and co-leads the Colorado Corridors Project. Applying expertise in landscape ecology and community engagement, Erica provides support for the Colorado Corridors Project's collaborative efforts to engage community stakeholders in efforts to mitigate the impacts of I-70 on wildlife populations along Vail Pass.

**CAN WE TALK?** It's not something people like to talk - or even think - about, but it's a growing reality: human poop in the wilderness is a problem, and it's getting worse. For example, in 2016, Rangers removed 273 PILES OF HUMAN POOP from the Maroon

Bells Wilderness, where a mandatory permit system for overnight backpacking is now in force. Here in Eagle & Summit Counties, we are headed in that direction - our volunteers report increasing signs of improperly disposed human waste in the Wilderness.

Enter [RESTOP](#), the leader in personal sanitation and hygiene in the backcountry, as well as other venues. They have **GENEROUSLY DONATED 200 WAG BAGS** to us, which our Volunteer Wilderness Rangers will be exhibiting (not demonstrating!) and handing out to backcountry visitors this summer.



THANKS [RESTOP!](#)

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. To open, tear along perforation line.
2. Gently unfold the foil bag and remove toilet paper and antimicrobial wipe.
3. Set foil bag on ground.
4. After use, lift bag with drawstrings...

- Holding straps together, slide liner closed and tie straps. Tuck liner inside foil bag and firmly seal zip-top. Waste is safely contained by solidifying polymers and enzymes.
5. Dispose in trash receptacle. Landfill safe.



A huge thanks to [ARAPAHOE BASIN SKI AREA](#). For more than two decades, A-Basin staff have donated generously to their **Employee Environmental Fund**, of which FENW has been a steady beneficiary. Last year, more than 150 employees donated, led by A-Basin Director **Alan Henceroth**. Our enduring THANKS!



Business Sponsor SPOTLIGHT on  ELITE THERAPEUTICS  one of our major business sponsors. Developed by an oncologist for post-radiation skin therapy, [Elite](#) products provide soothing anti-aging benefits that are of special use in our intense, high altitude sunshine. Supplier to  Support ELITE - support FENW.

#### CORRECTION

We regret that, in our recent [hard copy newsletter](#), we misidentified the year that BEAU SCHUETTE (right) died, and his age.



He died in 2017 at age 35. His

#### Follow us



The Spring 2019 hard copy newsletter was

mailed in mid-May. It contains two

family and friends have established two significant funds for Wilderness preservation and protection in his honor.

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Make a donation to FENW....



... make a difference!

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### Volunteer Wilderness Rangers

met more than 12,000 wilderness visitors in 2018. It's too late to sign up this year (training is June 8), but you can learn more about the program [here](#).

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### Join us! Next Planning Meeting

**THURSDAY JUNE 13, 5:30 PM,**  
USFS offices in Minturn & Silverthorne  
(video link)

Details at [www.fenw.org/](http://www.fenw.org/)

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Check out other [recent monthly eNewsletters](#)

dozen fun and informative articles, all of them about FENW - past, present, and future. If you didn't receive a copy, then *we don't have your mailing address* - please send it to us at [info@fenw.org](mailto:info@fenw.org).

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### CITY MARKET COMMUNITY REWARDS PROGRAM

Please [register](#) your City Market Value Card, linking it to FENW, which will send rebates to FENW without compromising your earned fuel points. Please note that each card holder may only sign up for one tax exempt organization. **THANKS!**



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# Colorado Corridors Project

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Citizen Science as Rocky Mountain Wild and the Denver Zoo team up to capture photos of wildlife on Vail Pass via remotely-triggered cameras.

11 images, 1 video

1.



2.



3.



4.



5.

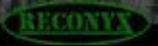
2017-06-29 7:30:17 PM M 4/5

59°F



© Colorado Corridors Project - Rocky Mountain Wild and Denver Zoo

CO CORRIDOR



6.



7.

2016-08-20 3:09:27 PM M 5/5

100°F

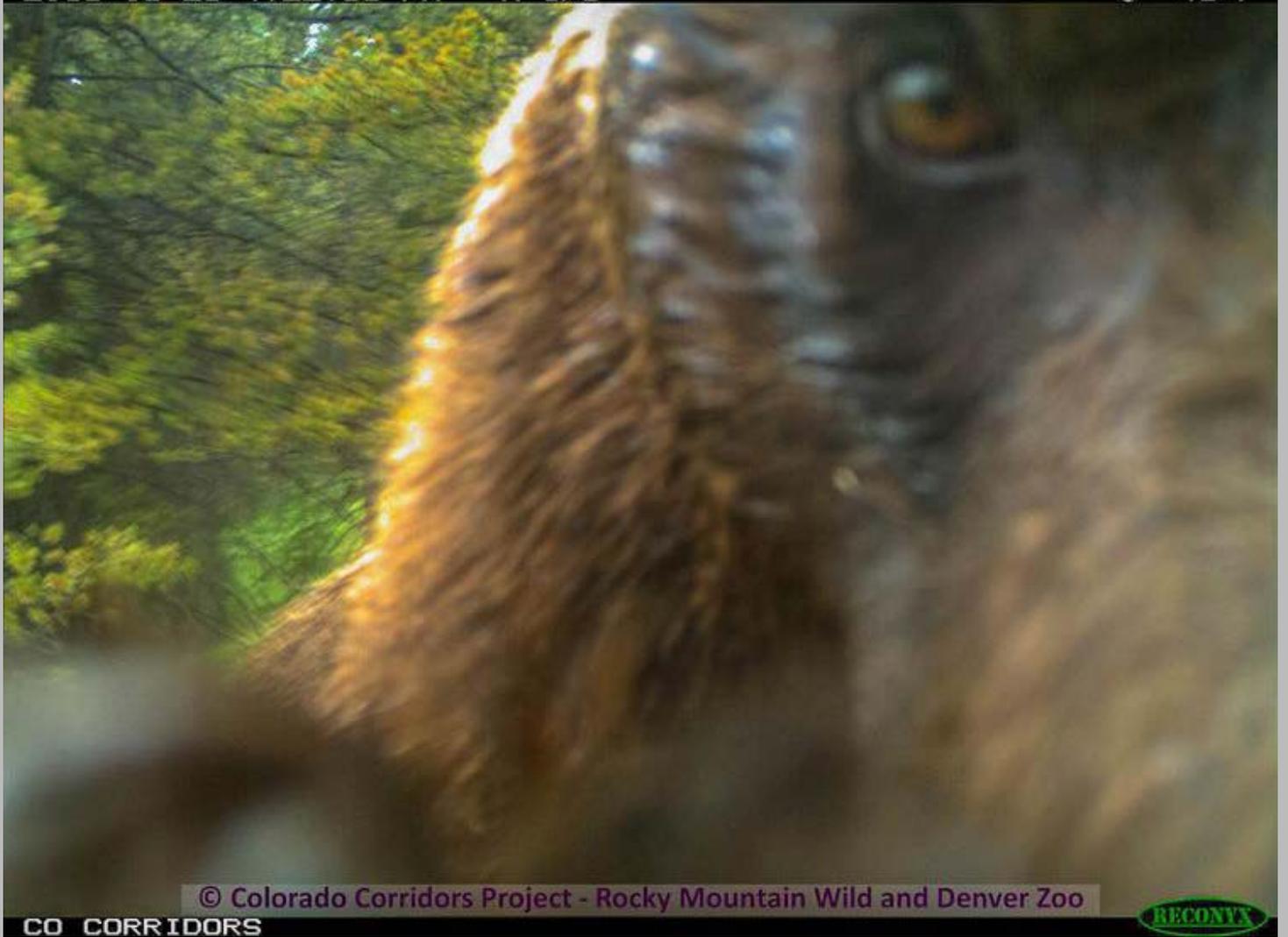


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CO-CORRIDORS

RECONYA

8. What is this? Owl? Bear? Coyote? (answer below)



(black bear)



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10.



11.



12. VIDEO (12 seconds)