

## EAGLE POST 44

The newsletter of **ESWA - EAGLE SUMMIT WILDERNESS ALLIANCE** (formerly Friends of Eagles Nest Wilderness) appraises you of important activities in and around Eagles Nest, Holy Cross, and Ptarmigan Peak Wilderness Areas.

[EagleSummitWilderness.org](http://EagleSummitWilderness.org) or [fenw.org](http://fenw.org)

[VIEW IN BROWSER](#)



### BEFORE WE BEGIN...



**Kim Fenske:** We lost a great friend, Kim Fenske, on December 13. Just this year, Kim led a work trip, donated more than a dozen copies of his popular hiking guides, and signed on for more work trips in 2020. He will be always remembered and missed greatly. An [obituary](#) appeared in the Summit Daily on December 31.

January 2020

Dear \*|FNAME|\*

Greetings and Happy New Year! This month, our 2019 Chair **Bill Betz** reviews our activities during the past year, and our incoming Chair **Mike Browning** introduces himself and lays out an agenda for 2020.

2019 Chair **BILL BETZ** writes:

Dear members, donors, and friends,

Thank you for your splendid support of FENW - now ESWA - in 2019. You made my job as Chair almost easy, and my gratitude to you runs deep. Whether you go out on the trails, help in the backroom, or support us with a financial contribution - or all three - your efforts matter vitally to an all-volunteer organization like ours. Below I summarize some highlights of 2019, and identify a few challenges for 2020.

One matter before I get started - A hearty welcome to our



new Chair, **Mike Browning!** He brings deep experience in the wilderness, in Vail Valley, and in the law firm that he founded, all skills that will serve us, and Wilderness, well in 2020. Now back to 2019:

**Finances:** Our unrestricted cash balance increased by **fifty percent** (to \$30,000) in just one year, thanks largely to an increase in end-of-year donations, including via Colorado Gives. The Board will need to consider carefully what prompted that upswing (and how to nurture it), and what to do with all that money. Should we devote it to Forest Service projects in the Wilderness? Invest in new Wilderness ventures? Hire paid staff and other professional services? Deposit in our Endowment Fund? If you have ideas to share, please get involved. Send us an [email](#) and we'll be in touch.

Speaking of the Endowment Fund, it has topped the magic **\$50,000** mark, which means that we can start spending the income (if we so choose). Half of the Endowment Fund derives from the Schuette family, in memory of their son, Beau (see below).

For the first time in a long time, we have a bona fide **wish list** - to fund a new boardwalk on the Mesa Cortina Trail in honor of **Beau Schuette**, a lover of wilderness in general and the Mesa Cortina Trail in particular, who died much too young. His family and friends have contributed nearly \$19,000 to the project, *plus* an additional \$25,000 to the Endowment Fund, the income from which is to be used for different projects in Beau's honor. The Summit Foundation has also recently funded a grant application (for \$10,500, written by **Jim Alexander**) for the boardwalk project, leaving us within striking distance of fully funding the project in 2020.

**Anniversary:** Naturally, our new name, *Eagle Summit Wilderness Alliance*, was a notable presence as we celebrated our 25<sup>th</sup> year at WilderFest, our Annual Meeting with special add-ons, which included keynote addresses by **Bill Jackson** and **Maryann Gaug**, the first annual Currie Craven Award for Wilderness Stewardship (to **Currie Craven**), our first Photo Contest (created by **Dan Siebert** and won by **Maria Leech** - winning photo below), and our first Silent Auction (organized by **Chris Turner**). Since then, we also selected a new logo.



**Boots-on-the-Ground:** We mustered some much-deserved help for **Mike Mayrer** and **Ken Harper**, directors of our VWR program. A call for help to administer the VWR program brought forth a host of volunteers, which led to the creation of a permanent committee with nearly a dozen subcommittees. It is amazing to think that Mike and Ken

had been doing it all by themselves.

Past Chair **Tim Drescher** stepped up to rescue two scheduled overnight work trips into the backcountry (Upper Cataract and Gore Lakes), and led them both. Tim has agreed to lead two more in 2020, as has **Dave Brewster**, so we should be set for a great year in the deep backcountry.

**Jim Alexander** continues to revitalize our Noxious Weed Program, recruiting volunteers to the Weed Spotter task force, and raising funds (\$15,000 from NFF) for the Forest Service to hire trained weed sprayers, guided by the Weed Spotters.

Through all of this, our Forest Service liaisons - **Cindy Ebbert** and **Mike Beach** - provided vital advice and guidance on all aspects of this work, and we are proud to have helped their teams clear 3,400 trees from trails, clean off nearly 100 illegal campfire rings, contact 13,000 Wilderness visitors, and more.

**Publications:** In addition to sending our biannual newsletter (by mail in May and November) and our monthly eNewsletter (by email), we sent out our first **Advocacy Newsletter** in November, in which we provided updates about the local environmental campaigns that we support.

**Business sponsors:** In our November [newsletter](#), we expressed our thanks to the many businesses that donated to us in 2019. Of special note are major donors **A-Basin, Elite Therapeutics, and Restop. Thanks!**

**Oops...** Not all projects made it to completion: we have been delayed in seating an Advisory Board, something that will need our attention in 2020.

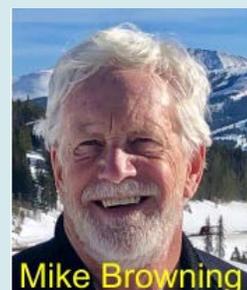
Finally, I would like to express my personal thanks to **Dave Owens**, who has contributed in many ways to virtually all of our programs (there has never been a better proofreader), and to **Chris Turner**, our Treasurer, for igniting that role in multiple creative ways, and for his generous in-kind donations. Other non-board members have gone beyond the call with their involvement, including **Ellie Finlay, Joan Betz, Merry Lynne Hamilton**, and, as noted above, Mike Mayer, Jim Alexander, and Dave Brewster.

A year ago as I began my stint as Chair, [I wrote](#) about the curious nature of my experience with ESWA: it seems that no matter how much I give, I always emerge with more. It is the ultimate guaranteed return on investment, and it's downright magical. Thanks,

Bill

## COMMENTS FROM OUR NEW CHAIR **MIKE BROWNING**

I am excited and honored to become the Chair of the Eagle Summit Wilderness Alliance (ESWA), until recently known as the Friends of the Eagles Nest Wilderness. In the two years since I joined the Board, I have been impressed by the great programs run by our many dedicated volunteers, including the Volunteer Wilderness



Ranger (VWR) program, invasive weed control program, and community outreach. Thanks to all those who make those programs possible.

In 2020, we need to maintain our momentum, broaden our base, and increase our public visibility in both Summit and Eagle Counties. This will take the continued efforts by our existing volunteers and enlisting new members to grow our capacity. I hope to increase the number of volunteers in the VWR and weed programs and get our name out to the public through additional news articles, flyers and other means. I also have formed a committee to explore re-establishing ESWA as a member-based organization, and increasing the tangible benefits to our members, including new swag and member social functions, in addition to our outstanding publications.

The challenge of protecting our wilderness areas is increasing with Colorado's population. Many newcomers and younger users are not aware of the special land use status of "wilderness" and the reasons for the use restrictions that are necessary to protect it. We are blessed to have three easily accessed wilderness areas in Summit and Eagle Counties, but their ease of access sometimes leads people to treat them as town parks. We must increase not only the physical work we do in our wilderness areas, but also our efforts to educate the public about the values of wilderness and need to protect it, both for the current and future generations. All too often, users are not aware of – or choose to ignore -- the cumulative impact of their individual actions.

As for my background, I grew up in Great Falls, Montana and got my B.A. in Liberal Arts from the University of Montana in Missoula. I spent as many weekends as possible during high school and college backpacking in Glacier National Park, where I learned to love our wild lands. After getting a law degree from Yale in 1977, I moved to Colorado where I spent over 40 years as a water attorney. My wife, Frances Hartogh, and I were married in 1988 and have two grown daughters, Katie and Sophie, who are also outdoor enthusiasts.

I have spent as much time in wilderness as career and family allowed. After summiting all the Colorado Fourteeners, I started doing high peaks around the world, summiting Mt. Everest in 1990 [see the July newsletter [HERE](#)] and finishing the Seven Summits (the highest peak in each of the seven continents) in 2012. My current goal is to climb the highest point in each of the 50 States. I've completed the Western high points so far (including Alaska and Hawaii) and am looking forward to completing the remainder. It's a great way to see the country and keep in shape!

Frances and I live in Boulder, but we have had a humble duplex in East Vail for over 25 years, which has served as a great base camp from which to ski and hike. We hope to spend more time in the mountains now that we are both retired.

Bill Betz leaves big shoes to fill, and it will be a tremendous challenge to step into the leadership of the great organization he has done so much to advance, but I look forward to working with all those who have helped make ESWA what it is today, and those who will help make it even better in 2020.



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!

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The Fall 2019 hard copy newsletter was mailed a few weeks ago. If

you didn't receive one, then we don't have your mailing address. Please send it to us at [info@fenw.org](mailto:info@fenw.org).

The newsletter contains about two dozen fun and informative articles about us - past, present, and future.

Follow us



Join us! Next **Planning Meeting**

**Thursday, January 9, 5:30 PM,**

**NEW VENUES:** A video link between

\* SUMMIT COUNTY: (REI, Dillon)

and

\* EAGLE COUNTY (Eagle River Water District, 846 W Forest Rd, Vail)

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

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Please [register](#) your City Market Value Card, linking it to FENW, which will send rebates to FENW without compromising your earned fuel points.

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