

## ***ESWA SUMMER IN THE WILDERNESS***

We are off to a great start in 2021! Read the news from June - VWR patrols, sawyering, and more as we head into July.



### **BEFORE WE BEGIN**

We want to alert you to a few upcoming events:

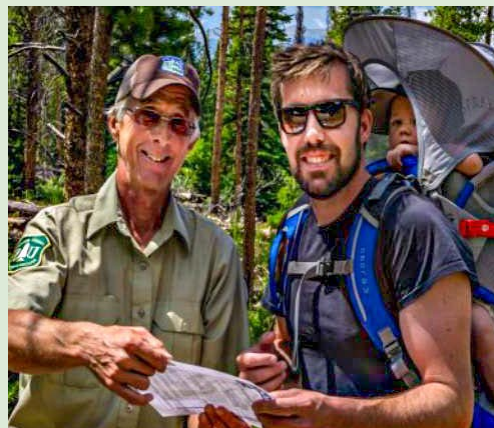
- **Photo contest** - Snap those photos! The 3rd annual ESWA Photo Contest will get underway in August. Details [HERE](#).
- **Currie Craven Award** - Honor someone with a nomination for outstanding Wilderness stewardship. Details [HERE](#).
- **Annual Meeting** - Get ready to party with ESWA members and friends at our Annual Meeting. Details TBA.

### **VOLUNTEER WILDERNESS RANGERS**

June 2021 has proven to be a busy early summer in the Wilderness. June 5 saw the training of 35 new volunteers (photos [HERE](#)) and recertification of current VWRs, bringing the total to more than 100 certified rangers! Many wasted no time hitting the trails.

In June, a total of **38 VWRs** (20 newly certified) made **84 patrols**. Altogether, they spent **406 hours**,

covered **515 miles**, and contacted **1890 visitors** (only 61 of whom were backpackers - typical for early season). Those visitors had with them **231 dogs**, 176 (76%) of which were properly leashed. There were **482 vehicles** counted at trailheads; **10 illegal campfire rings** were observed (and some dismantled).



Read below (near the end of the newsletter) some of the amusing and

interesting **comments** from VWR after-patrol reports.

As for individual honors, those with the **MOST PATROLS** in June were Tom Lawson (9 patrols), Frances Hartogh (9), Mike Browning (9), Dave Brewster (5), and Zach Kauk (4). Those who hiked the **MOST MILES** were Tom Lawson (68 miles), Frances Hartogh (46), and Mike Browning (46). Who spent the **MOST HOURS** on patrols? Frances Hartogh (46 hours), Mike Browning (46), Tom Lawson (37), Dave Brewster (29), and Zach Kauk (26). The **MOST POPULAR TRAILHEADS** were Pitkin Creek (12 patrols), North Rock Creek (9), Ptarmigan Peak (7), Bighorn Creek (6), Lower Cataract Lake (6), Lilypad Lake (5), Gore Creek (5), North Ten Mile (5), and Surprise Lake (5).

**AND WE ARE JUST GETTING STARTED!  
JULY WILL BRING MORE VISITORS -  
ESPECIALLY BACKPACKERS, SO KEEP ON  
RANGERING!**



## **VOLUNTEER SAWYERS**

Winter brought down many beetle-killed pine trees across the trails, and ESWA sawyers are helping the Forest Service clear those deadfalls.

June 11-13 saw intensive training and certification of 12 new crosscut sawyers, plus recertification of existing ones. Photos are [HERE](#).

Our Sawyer co-chairs, Ken Harper and Zach Kauk, report that ESWA crews spent 183 hours clearing 182 trees from 13 trails in June. ESWA has recently accepted responsibility for more than 22 miles on 12 Wilderness trails that involve more than 6,000 feet of total elevation gain. To volunteer (you don't need to be certified), send an email to [Ken](#) or [Zach](#).



Cindy Ebbert, USFS Wilderness Manager for Summit County, and her teams are gearing up for multiple projects. They will clear the segment of the Gore Range Trail (GRT) from North Rock Creek south towards Upper Willow Lakes junction (about 100 trees are reported across the trail). Cindy's crosscut crew from the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps arrives this week and they will be clearing trails in the Cataract Creek drainage before moving on to the Boulder Creek Trail and then to the GRT towards

Slate Creek and eventually to Brush Creek. The actual Slate Creek trail will be tackled by the ESWA crew on their llama-supported backpack weekend July 16-18 (send an email to [DAVE BREWSTER](#) to sign up). Wildland Restoration Volunteers will be camping at Brush Creek TH and clearing the Lost Lake Loop July 10-11. This week a 14 person USFS crew will be hiking in from Elliot Ridge and then breaking into smaller groups to help clear the trails in that area (Upper Cataract/Mirror, Eaglesmere, Surprise, GRT to Black Creek, GRT to Spring Creek Road, etc) and will also clean up all the fire rings at lakes (Upper Cataract, Surprise, Eaglesmere, Griffin). They will also be doing basic trail maintenance, mostly drainage work. Cindy is eager to go on the backpack trip after a spring spent at the computer making all of these complex arrangements! Cindy writes, "Collectively, with USFS, RMYC and volunteers we are getting a lot of trails cleared!"

## BACKCOUNTRY WORK TRIPS

ESWA plans 3 weekend trips into the deep backcountry to work on trails and campsites. Our 2 llamas will carry the tools. We need volunteers, no experience necessary.

Contact [Dave Brewster](#) to sign up.

July 16-18: Slate Lakes

July 30-August 1: Lake Constantine

August 27-29: Sopris/Brady



## TRAILHEAD HOSTS

June 26 saw the first day of our new TrailHead Hosting program. Staffed by VWRs, the program is designed to educate visitors - especially backpackers - before they head into the Wilderness, focusing on fire safety (no open fires in Wilderness) and proper disposal of human waste (use of "wag bags"). Learn more [HERE](#). The first day at Booth Lake Trailhead, Frances Hartogh (right) and Mike Browning, and then Tom Copper (right) and Larry Edmundson, contacted more than 200 visitors in 6 hours. More to come in July!



## NOXIOUS WEED MITIGATION

- ESWA received a grant from the NFF Ski Conservation Fund for the third year in a row for treatment of weed infestations.
- A dozen **WeedSpotters** met in Minturn to learn and review noxious weeds. They found 12 species. The team will be searching and reporting weed infestations through the summer.
- An intern is working with the Strategic Trails team to evaluate the trails above the timberline around Uneva, Eccles and Red Mountain Passes.
- Upcoming weed pulls will be in Summit County (July 10) and Minturn (July 31).
- A seed gathering day is planned for late August or September. Contact [Jim Alexander](#) to volunteer for any activity.



How many **LEAVE NO TRACE PRINCIPLES** can you name? These helpers have learned all 7 principles, just by memorizing 7 words. On the back of each tee shirt (which they designed) is the 7 word mnemonic; for a little more information, click [HERE](#).



**COMMENTS.** Our VWRs fill out a report after each patrol, and they are asked to share their more memorable encounters. Below are some examples, which illustrate the breadth of experiences and challenges that our rangers face.

- Encountered 2 moose, informed dog owners, especially those off leash, about why to use leash for one's and the animals' safety.
- We had one negative encounter with a woman whose dog was off leash. She was not receptive and got very angry.
- Man across river after falls on north side resting in a hammock, removed it and continued on trail. When encountered him later on the trail, we learned that his wife died less than two months ago and he decided he needed to clear his mind and find solitude to move on in his life. We had a meaningful talk with him and felt deeply for his struggle to find peace.
- Wildflowers at their peak! Early this year.
- patrol time 11 hrs including sawyering - whew
- Frank did an awesome job playing the role of Botanist. I learned a ton. [from a mentor hike]
- PERSONS VERY HAPPY
- more mosquitos than ever encountered before. First portion had lots of great flowers.
- Incredible to find the TH without cars and no one on the path, compared to last year! Trail has a lot of downed trees to clear out.
- 3 adjacent fire rings and a stack of cut wood. Lots of partially burned wood. Located about 75 yards north of the first Wheeler Lake.
- 5 equestrians looking for a lost pony. No registration forms for campers at wilderness
- About 1/3 of folks I asked reported they did not see the signs (braindead?), and about half of those that reported they saw the signs reported they did not stop to read them (illiterate?).....parenthesis are only meant to make you laugh!!
- the box for overnight tickets is full, cant get anymore slips in..
- UPON LEAVING, TWO DOGS FOUND IN A LOCKED AND CLOSED WINDOWED SUBARU, REPORTED TO SUMMIT COUNTY ANIMAL CONTROL

## BEFORE WE GO

New Board member **Karn Stiegelmeier** (right) scored a great victory for Wilderness when she arranged to host a column every Friday in the **Summit Daily**. Each "**Get Wild!**" article touches on a topic of interest to lovers of Wilderness. The first 9 weeks have dealt with wildflowers, bluebirds, bears, beavers, and more. You can access them all [HERE](#). Below, we present a sample article from week #4 for



your enjoyment.

## Get Wild: The Wilderness Needs You

Dave Brewster

Summit Daily: 28 May 2021 [LINK](#)

Our wilderness areas in Summit County are wonderful places to visit, and every year thousands of people hike, camp, fish, admire the wildlife and wildflowers, and enjoy the solitude.

Unfortunately, every year, nature and people cause trails to be eroded and bridges to break, trees to fall and brush to grow over trails. In addition, illegal campfire rings and camps are built in overused and delicate areas, sensitive vegetation is trampled, non-native noxious weeds are introduced and trash is left behind.

Thank goodness for the work of hundreds of volunteers, who work with the few professional U.S. Forest Service wilderness rangers to restore and nurture the forest and educate the public to enjoy and respect the wilderness.



There are numerous opportunities to volunteer in Summit County and many groups participate. For example, the Summit County Senior Center works with Friends of the Dillon Ranger District to restore illegal campsites, the Summit Mountain Biking Club works with Friends of the Dillon Ranger District to build new biking trails, and Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado and Wildlands Restoration Volunteers have projects to restore and improve trails in the county.

The **Eagle Summit Wilderness Alliance** works with the U.S. Forest Service and offers a wide variety of volunteer opportunities from weekend backpacking trips to trailhead hosting at the more popular trailheads.

Do you like to hike? While you are out hiking in the wilderness, you might see the wilderness alliance's volunteer rangers in their Forest Service shirts and hats. They are happy to stop and talk about the importance of "Leave No Trace," the benefits of having dogs on leash (required in wilderness areas), and wildflowers and wildlife. They also collect valuable

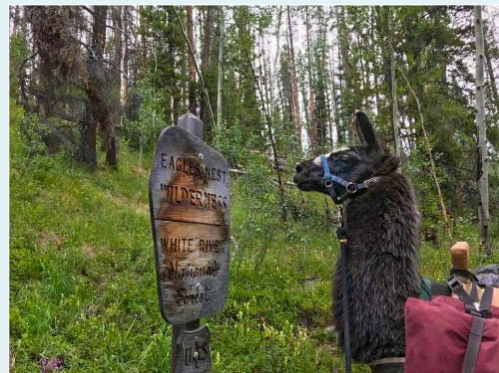
information for the Forest Service. Friends of the Dillon Ranger District also has a volunteer ranger program for all the forests.

Perhaps you would prefer to sit outdoors with fellow volunteers, enjoying the sunshine and talking with hikers and backpackers? Then trailhead hosting is for you. Volunteers will be at some of the more popular trailheads to talk with recreationists about appreciating and respecting the wildlife and wilderness before they begin their trips.

Would you like to learn how to safely clear trees from trails? You might see certified sawyers clearing fallen trees, using two-person, crosscut saws on the big trees (chain saws are not allowed in wilderness). The sawyers enjoy this so much that they often go out on skis in the winter to help keep the trails open yearround.

Do you love wildflowers? Weed spotters locate noxious weeds and pull them when appropriate. Pulling some weeds can cause them to spread even more, so the alliance funds controlled spraying for those. This work ensures wildflowers can prosper and that wildlife has edible forage.

If you like to work with tools and move rocks and dirt, volunteers are needed for day projects building, restoring and rerouting trails. Reaching deeper into the wilder parts of the wilderness, the alliance has llama-supported weekend backpacking trips with Forest Service wilderness rangers. These are fun work trips, and the hikes to the campsites are fairly short at about 3 to 5 miles.



Volunteering is easy; just check the websites of the nonprofits listed for more information. We would love to see you, and the wilderness areas you love so much could use your help.

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"Get Wild" publishes on Fridays in the Summit Daily News. Dave Brewster (right) is a ranger for Eagle Summit Wilderness Alliance, an all-volunteer nonprofit that helps the U.S. Forest Service protect and preserve the wilderness areas in Eagle and Summit counties. For more information, visit [EagleSummitWilderness.org](http://EagleSummitWilderness.org).



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