

EAGLE SUMMIT WILDERNESS ALLIANCE



June 2022 Newsletter



SUMMER IS JUST THREE WEEKS AWAY...REALLY

Just when the risk of May wildfires was causing a few of us to lose sleep, Mother Nature came to the rescue with much-needed snow. If only she could have waited a day to allow our May 21 new Volunteer Wilderness Ranger training...but we are not complaining. Mike Browning has been

working hard to reschedule our 38 new trainees to one of the two new training dates: June 11 and July 9. The good news--some of our would-be trainees who couldn't make the May 21 training can now be trained this summer!

VIDEO HELP WANTED!

We would like to video one of the half-day VWR trainings on Saturday, June 11. Do you or someone you know have that capability? Please contact Steve Elder if so (steve.elder8@gmail.com). We are willing to compensate for a professional job.



THANKS TO ESWA VOLUNTEERS FOR ASSEMBLING VWR TRAINING AND TRAILHEAD HOSTING KITS

ESWA volunteers prepared 12 kits for our new Trailhead Hosts and 37 kits for new Volunteer Wilderness Rangers. Thanks to Joan and Bill Betz for hosting at their beautiful cabin above Pebble Creek. Proof that many hands make light work – and a great time was had by all!



Over a dozen ESWA Volunteers (some young, some seasoned) met at the Betz cabin on May 15. [More photos](#)

LLAMA-SUPPORTED TRAIL WORK TRIPS **by Krista Hughes**

When one thinks about the different four-legged animals one might run into on Wilderness trails, llamas may not be the first that comes to mind. Each summer, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), with financial support from ESWA, rents several llamas to help with trail-maintenance projects. This summer, ESWA and the USFS are hosting four overnight llama trail-

work trips (two in Summit County and two in Eagle County). These trips allow volunteers to assist the USFS over a long weekend with all sorts of projects to keep our trails and Wilderness in great condition. Some of the more commonly performed tasks involve removing illegal fire rings, restoring illegal campsites, repairing/adding signage, removing noxious weeds, and trail maintenance such as trimming vegetation and erosion control.

Llamas help make these trips possible and have many unique characteristics that make them a great pack animal. To start, llamas can carry up to 100 lbs, which allows ESWA and the USFS to bring in tools, protective equipment, and additional gear to help with the work. Llamas require less feed and do not need to stop and graze like other pack animals. One of their most unique characteristics relative to other pack animals is their feet: They have soft, padded feet with two toes that do much less damage to the ground than hooves do. These feet make them surer footed, which is a desirable quality in the steep, rocky terrain of our local Wilderness Areas. As a result, llamas can go places that are inaccessible to other pack animals.

Without the help of llamas, it would be much more difficult to carry tools and equipment to harder-to-reach sites, particularly in Wilderness Areas that may be far away from a trailhead!



Krista Hughes is an ESWA Volunteer Wilderness Ranger and a resident of Dillon. She is coordinating the 2022 llama-supported work trips for ESWA. If you're interested in joining one of the trips this year, please email Krista at krista.a.hughes@gmail.com.

TRAILHEAD HOSTING

ESWA's Trailhead Hosts provide a valuable service to the USFS and our local Wilderness Areas. They can contact and help educate many more people than Rangers on patrol. Please help support this important ESWA program by being a Trailhead Host at one or more trailheads this summer. See Dave Owens' article below about his experience as a TH Host.

This year any VWR can host at any trailhead, on any day, and during any hours they wish. Signing up is easy on the [Volunteer Opportunities](#) page of the ESWA website. Not a VWR? No problem, as long as one of the two hosts is a VWR the other can be a friend, family member, or non-VWR. Try it and see how fun and rewarding it can be!



TRAILHEAD HOSTING - A REWARDING EXPERIENCE
by Dave Owens



Labor Day weekend 2020 arrived with blue skies and mild temperatures - a welcome respite from smoky skies from forest fires and a stark difference from the three inches of snow we had just two days later!

On Sunday, September 6 of that weekend, I spent four hours at the North Tenmile trailhead, which is located at the end of West Main Street in Frisco. With the great

weather we had, I expected it to be a very busy day and that's what it was! I counted 273 hikers in 75 different groups, which was not so many that I couldn't keep track of the numbers, but not so few that I got bored sitting at the trailhead.

Trailhead hosts act as representatives of the U.S. Forest Service as well as for ESWA and as such, they have several responsibilities. These include:

1. Appear as a knowledgeable and professional representative of the Forest Service,
2. Answer questions by hikers about the trail,
3. Advise hikers of any potentially hazardous situations (such as falling trees if it's windy or lightning if it appears a possibility), and
4. Submit a report with statistics recorded during the period of hosting.

In a normal year, which 2020 was definitely NOT because of the pandemic, an additional responsibility would be to hand out any desired literature to interested hikers, such as a copy of the trail map, wilderness

regulations, reasons for leashing your dog, camper registration cards, and even altitude-sickness brochures if a hiker may be concerned about it. The Forest Service has given ESWA permission to hand out business cards and/or brochures if we desire, and I always do so when appropriate.

As an aid to answering hiker's questions, I've found that it's very useful to have hiked the selected trail and have notes available on trail conditions, distance and elevation at important points on the trail, and any scenic or notable points along the trail. Those are the most common questions that I've had from hikers and they are always very appreciative of the information.

During the four hours I spent at the trailhead, I answered questions by 41 people and/or groups. The most enjoyable conversation I had was with a group of six people from the Midwest. They had never been up that trail before and were very appreciative of all the information. My favorite question, and one several people asked, was, "Will I [or we] see any moose?" I tell them they might, but that I can't guarantee it. And I tell them that if they do, keep a safe distance and do not try to take a selfie with it!

So if you've never taken the opportunity to be a trailhead host, I encourage you to give it a try. I'm sure you will discover it to be a very rewarding experience!

**MEMBER HIGHLIGHT: VWR ADAM FENTON AND VVF'S
YOUTHPOWER365**

Our VWR Adam Fenton is initiating a new program this summer for ESWA

volunteers to engage youth with our Wilderness Areas and Wilderness principles. Adam is the Elementary Programs Manager for YouthPower365, a Vail Valley Foundation initiative that provides programs to help youth through 12th grade in underserved communities. This summer, a few select VWRs will guide hikes for summer camp classes of 4th and 5th graders.

Adam told us that early in his career he was on an academic track, conducting research on the impacts of environmental experiences on young brains. His findings were so compelling that he came out West to dive into the work directly. We are thrilled to be a part of Adam's life work to help provide kids great experiences outdoors, particularly those who might not have the opportunities many of us had when we were young(er)!



IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

- **June 1**, 4:30 to 6 pm: Eagle party for VWRs and Sawyers, E-Town Kitchen and Bar, in the Riverfront complex at 295 Main Street in Edwards
- **June 8**, 4 to 5:30 pm: Summit party for VWRs and Sawyers, Highside Brewery, 720 Main Street in Frisco
- **June 10-12**: Training for new Sawyers
- **June 11**: Training for new VWRs
- **July 2**: Joint Trailhead Hosting Day with FDRD
- **July 9**: Alternate training date for new VWRs
- **July 9 & 12**: Noxious and invasive weed pulls - July 9 and 12 in Summit County. Additional dates and locations to be announced. Interested? Contact Jim Alexander at jimofcolorado@gmail.com
- **July 15-17**: Llama-supported Work Trip – Nolan Lake
- **July 22-24**: Llama-supported Work Trip – Willow Creek
- **August 12-14**: Llama-supported Work Trip – Lake Charles
- **August 19-21**: Llama-supported Work Trip – Upper Constantine

HELP WANTED: WEBSITE MANAGER



ESWA is seeking a **website manager**. We use Wix, the friendliest program imaginable. It's all copy-and-paste with no coding, ever. If you can use Word, you can learn Wix. We'll teach you. Bonus: With Wix, you can easily and for free make your own website for weddings, family reunions, and so forth. Please email info@eaglesummitwilderness.org with your interest.

Donate

TWO MORE WAYS TO SUPPORT ESWA:

Sign up for Amazon Smile

Amazon Smile offers the same products and same prices as the Amazon site. Amazon will donate to ESWA 0.5% of every purchase you make – and it costs you nothing. [CLICK HERE](#) to sign up. All you do is log in to Amazon using smile.amazon.com instead of amazon.com. Sign in through smile.amazon.com each time you shop, so you might want to bookmark that page.

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If you don't yet have the card, please [sign up for one here](#). Then go to your [Community Rewards](#), choose your local store as your preferred store, and set ESWA as the charity to which you want to donate (search for Eagle Summit Wilderness Alliance or use ESWA's code VX077).

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Eagle Summit Wilderness Alliance

P.O. Box 4504

Frisco CO, CO 80443-4504

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