

EAGLE POST 26

EAGLE POST - 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.



Dear *|FNAME|*
Greetings!

May 2018: **PROTECTING EAGLE NEST'S MIGRATORY BIRDS**

by **Dr. Susan Bonfield**

Executive Director, [Environment for the Americas](#)

INTRODUCTION:

It's May, and while the spring breakers have left the high country (to the relief of some), the brown creepers and many other beings – little feathered ones - are arriving (to the delight of bird lovers). Their migrations are arduous, and their habitats – both north and south - are increasingly threatened. Conservation organizations in the US have been active for a century protecting North American bird habitats, but less was done south of the border. Enter Dr. Susan Bonfield, who saw a need to expand efforts to protect **winter habitats** of our birds. Thus, Environment for the Americas ([EFTA](#)) was born, aiming especially to recruit local Mexican and Central American young people to the cause.



Sue, the founder and Executive Director of EFTA, was planning to write for this newsletter about EFTA's inspiring educational outreach programs in Latin America. Unfortunately, just as the bird world was celebrating the centennial of an historic treaty to protect migratory birds, they received a nasty gut punch from our own government, and Sue's focus shifted – in her essay below she wants to alert us to a new, potentially devastating development in the US.

Protecting Migratory Birds

by **Dr. Susan Bonfield**

Executive Director, Environment for the Americas (EFTA)

For a century, the 1918 international [Migratory Bird Treaty Act](#) has been the cornerstone of efforts to protect migratory birds. But as the Washington Post reported

in an [article](#) last month, the wings of the Bird Treaty were officially clipped by the Department of the Interior, just as bird enthusiasts were celebrating the Act's 100th year. Diminishing its authority is a serious blow to conservationists and many avian-friendly organizations, including EFTA.

We founded EFTA at our cabin - nestled close to boundary of Eagles Nest Wilderness. Through our keystone education program, [International Migratory Bird Day](#) (IMBD), we have addressed a variety of topics, such as the importance of shade coffee, reducing window collisions, keeping cats indoors, and recycling. In 2016, IMBD focused on the anniversary of the 1918 Act and celebrated the signing of the Treaty between the U.S. and Canada, and subsequently with Mexico and Japan.



The need for protections for migratory birds was clear since the early 1900s, when the trade of bird feathers fed the millinery industry and women's fashion, leading to the decline of some bird populations. The elegant egret, for example, with its long white feather plumes, was at risk of extinction because of this industry. An array of other species, from songbirds to gamebirds, were harvested for display on hats. Feathers were often just part of the decorations: eggs and even entire nests were also used as adornments!



A movement was born when women, appalled by the use of wildlife as a fashion statement, helped launch the Audobon Society, which urged a stop to the use of feathers and helped pass the landmark Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which has protected nearly all migratory bird species in the U.S. and Canada. This type of national and international cooperation is essential to safeguard migratory birds, whose long-distance flights often cross political borders, exposing them to widely varying cultures, conservation philosophies, and laws.

The new opinion weakens the Act by making it permissible to harm migratory birds if the action that causes it is not directly associated with the "take" of birds. This includes disasters that impact many birds across larger geographic areas, such as oil spills, to local actions, such as pesticide use and construction. Where once a company would have been required to wait until swallows nesting beneath a bridge had successfully raised their young, as of April 15th, it can choose to move forward, destroy nests, and kill the young of a bird that has journeyed as many as 1,000 miles to nest.



In 2017, EFTA joined with conservation partners at the United Nations Environment Program to create a new, joint effort, [World Migratory Bird Day](#) - this Saturday, May 12, 2018. It is a bitter irony that as we celebrate at more than 600 sites our first year

promoting a unification of our voices for bird conservation, the challenges to protecting migratory birds along the migratory routes that span the Americas are significantly heightened.



As spring returns to the high country, many of us delight in the arrival of Wilson's Warblers, diminutive Broad-tailed Hummingbirds, Hermit Thrushes with their beautiful melody, and White-crowned Sparrows that sing from the willows. As we welcome them back, we must also heed the achievements of the past 100 years and work to ensure that our migratory birds are protected as they return to our rapidly growing counties.

Help restore the integrity of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act by contacting your federal representatives.

About Dr. Susan Bonfield: After studying Black-legged Kittiwakes in Alaska, Sue returned to the lower 48 where she has since gained more than two decades of experience in bird research and education. She has conducted bird surveys, run banding stations, and participated in bird research programs in Maine, Virginia, California, and Colorado. Because of her interest in education and bird conservation, she enjoys applying her knowledge of birds to programs that involve people of all ages and cultures. She has created education programs in the U.S. and Mexico, assisted with workshops on bird monitoring and conservation in both countries, taught basic identification courses, and led a course for the National Conservation Training Center of the US Fish & Wildlife Service. Susan holds a B.S. in Biology from Randolph-Macon



WELCOME USFS INTERNS!

The USFS will deploy five Wilderness Ranger Interns this summer on a variety of projects. We'll be introducing you to them in our newsletter. Here is the first: **Ron Culver:** Born and raised in El Dorado, Arkansas, Ron is currently a student at the University of Kansas. From an early age he learned from his father wilderness ethics and a respect for wildlife.



Ron is an Eagle Scout, and the summer of 2016 he worked at Philmont Scout Ranch as a program counselor specializing in interpretation and fly fishing.

During his free time he enjoys playing guitar and mandolin and getting into the backcountry to fish and observe wildlife. He hopes his

Woman's College, an M.S. in Ecology, Fisheries, and Wildlife from the University of Michigan, and a PhD in Human Dimensions of Natural Resources from Colorado State University.

summer in Holy Cross and Eagles Nest Wildernesses will give him meaningful experiences towards a career in wilderness conservation. Welcome, Ron!

Make a donation to FENW....



... make a difference!

Just in time to add to your summer calendar, here's the **2018 Trail Projects schedule:**

- Gateways Trail Day – June 16 & 17
- National Trails Day – June 2
- East Vail Overnight – Aug
- Deluge Lake Trail with VOC – Sep
- Overnight registration box installation – TBD
- Lily Pad Lakes Plank Bridge Project – TBD
- Salt Lick Connector Trail with VOC – Aug 11-12
- Adopt-A-Trail on Deluge, potentially Bighorn – TBD
- FENW/Colorado Outward Bound, Piney Lake – Aug 2

Learn about trail work [here](#).

Join us! for our next
Planning Meeting
THURSDAY, May 10, 5:30 PM,
USFS Minturn & USFS Silverthorne
([MAP](#))

Details at www.fenw.org/

Be sure to follow us on facebook and twitter!



DENVER GROUP? Jim Alexander is interested in forming a group of Denver residents who love Wilderness in Summit & Eagle counties. If you are interested in a meet and greet get-together, email Jim at info@fenw.org.



Our **hard copy newsletter** - the first in 3 years -

went into the mail on April 30. It contains two dozen fun and informative articles, all of them about FENW - past, present, and future. If you haven't received your copy, then *we don't have your mailing address* - please send it by replying to this email. Here are Mike, Joan, and Bill at the mailing party on a sunny spring day.



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