

ESWA SUMMER IN THE WILDERNESS

September 2021

As the summer season peaks, our volunteers have been busy! Read the news from August - VWR patrols, TrailHead Hosts, sawyering, and more as we head into September.



BEFORE WE BEGIN

The delta variant has forced us to change plans. We now plan to hold our **Annual Party for VWRs** and our **Annual Meeting** for members and special friends **outside**, in late September. Invitees will receive detailed notices and updates in the weeks ahead.

If you are not an ESWA member, we urge you to join now and avail yourself of the fun of this party/meeting. You also will be eligible to enter the 3rd annual ESWA **Photo Contest** and nominate candidates for the **Currie Craven Award** for Wilderness Stewardship. Join ESWA [HERE](#) and we will be in touch with details.

VOLUNTEER WILDERNESS RANGERS UPDATED STATS COMING FROM GUY

August 2021 has proven to be a busy month in the Wilderness.

In August, a total of xx **VWRs** made xxx **patrols**. Altogether, they spent xxx **hours**, covered **xx miles**, and contacted xx **visitors** (xx (xx%) of whom were backpackers). Those visitors had with them xx **dogs**, xx (xx%) of which were properly leashed. There were xx **vehicles** counted at trailheads.



Read below (near the end of the newsletter) some of the amusing and interesting **comments** from VWR after-patrol reports.

As for individual honors, 7 VWRs had a year's worth of patrols in July: Tom Lawson (11patrols), Frances Hartogh (6), Brad Benz (5), Eleanor Finlay (5), Mike Browning (5), Glenn Hackemer (4), and Larry Edmondson (4).

Those who hiked the **MOST MILES** were Tom Lawson (73.75 miles), Brad Benz (68.2), Frances Hartogh (37), Bob Barrows (35), Mike Browning (33), Larry Edmondson (33), Eleanor Finlay (32), Michael North (31), Thomas Copper (30), and Steve Elder (25).

Who spent the **MOST HOURS** on patrols? Tom Lawson (39 hours), Brad Benz (32), Frances Hartogh (31), Eleanor Finlay (30), Mike Browning (28), Larry Edmondson (25), Scott Bebee (24), and Glenn Hackemer (22).

The **MOST POPULAR TRAILHEADS** (of 30 total) were: Acorn Creek (17 patrols), Other (13), Lilypad Lake (11), Lower Cataract Lake (10), and Gore Creek (8).

HUNTING: Big Game (deer & elk) archery (but not rifle) hunting seasons run through September.



VOLUNTEER SAWYERS

Our sawyers are working hard, led by Zach Kauk (Summit) and Ken Harper (Eagle), to keep Wilderness trails clear of deadfalls.

The Summit County Sawyer program had an active August. During the month, 13 volunteers (including 3 new recruits) donated 173 total hours and cleared 190 trees from trails during 8 different outings. ESWA has taken responsibility for ___ trails in Summit (see map).



This brings the season total to 536 volunteer hours clearing 570 trees during 30 outings.

Although most of the outings during the month were to clear new trees off of trails we earlier cleared, we cleared for the first time this season

127 trees from the South loop of the Lost Lake trail and 80 trees around Boulder Lake.

A long and busy day trip to Lost Lake (above Wheeler Lakes) - the crew cleared more than 120 trees from the trail.



BACKCOUNTRY WORK TRIPS

TIM TO WRITE ABOUT
SOPRIS/BRADY

ESWA 's final weekend trip into the deep backcountry to work on trails and campsites is scheduled for August 27-29 (Sopris/Brady). Our 2 llamas will

carry the tools. We need volunteers, no experience necessary. Contact



TRAILHEAD HOSTS

Our TrailHead Hosts meet and greet Wilderness visitors at trailheads. Many visitors, seeing the displays, maps, and swag, pause to learn about Wilderness.

We need hosts for the last THH day of the year, at Gore Creek Trailhead - **SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 4** - morning and afternoon sessions. Please sign up [HERE](#).



Here are some comments from the August reports:

- Just wonderful people, geared up for a great weekend at the backcountry lakes
- one couple coming out from backpacking enjoyed the light snow at Mirror lake "
- spoke to family whose parents were visiting from Germany - very excited about the scenery
- lots of conversations with young kids/would be great to have that TH hosted with handouts/stickers for kids ;)
- the couple whose dog was off leash/leashed him when they saw me / great conversation with them and suggested supporters ESWA as the woman was local from Dillon.
- conversation with 4 individuals doing a FDRD Ranger hike here. They asked a lot of questions about ESWA and gave them a flyer and card to sign up as volunteers.

Here are the August stats: 9 rangers staffed 12 sessions (each 3 hours) at 3 different trailheads (Booth, Surprise, Gore). They contacted 441 visitors (66 were backpackers) who were accompanied by 53 dogs (only 1 was off leash). They counted 189 cars in the parking lots.

Individual highs for Number of Sessions: Pam Crine (2 sessions), Jim Crinedj (2), Bill Betz (2), and for Number of Hours: Pam Crine (6 hours), Jim Crinedj (6), Bill Betz (6).

NOXIOUS WEED MITIGATION

WAITING TO HEAR FROM JIM

WeedSpotters have been busy in July. We had two weed pulls - one at Hunters Knob and one at Martin Creek - and thousands of Musk and Plumeless Thistle were removed. Also our National Forest Foundation Ski Conservation Grand funds allowed the USFS to attack another half-dozen noxious weed infestations across Summit and Eagle Counties. The sharp eyes of our WeedSpotter team have also reported several infestations to the USFS for eradication later in the year.



ESWA IN THE NEWS

ESWA Board member **Karn Stiegelmeier** (right) hosts a column every Friday in the **Summit Daily**. Each "**Get Wild!**" article touches on a topic of interest to lovers of Wilderness. The first 16 weeks have dealt with a host of topics, including wildflowers, bluebirds, bears, beavers, moose, flyfishing, sawyering, and more. You can access them all [HERE](#).



Below, we present a sample article from week #15 for your enjoyment.

Get Wild: Tips for wild mushroom hunting

Joan Betz



A variety of mushrooms are collected in August in the Pebble Creek area of Summit County. Photo by Joan Betz | Eagle Summit Wilderness Alliance

On a hike into our local wilderness after warm days and rain, you might be treated to the sudden appearance, or "fruiting," of a variety of mushrooms. Mushrooms are the fruits of their plant's network of tiny fibers (mycelium) in the soil or rotting logs, and their spores (like seeds) can disperse to create new plants.

Picking a mushroom doesn't destroy the underlying plant just as picking an apple doesn't destroy its tree. In Summit County, mushroom season is often mid-July through early September, depending on rainfall, which is why we hadn't seen many mushrooms in recent drier years.

Learning to identify different mushrooms can provide extra enjoyment to a hike.

Wild mushrooms are essential to the well-being of our forests and wilderness areas. Without them, fallen trees would just pile up. Mushrooms are fungi and differ from green plants in that they lack chlorophyll to make their own food by photosynthesis. Mushrooms are scavengers, decomposing organic material in leaf litter, logs or even dung, and recycle nutrients in the soil. While some are parasites and kill living trees, other mushrooms form beneficial relationships with

specific trees, their mycelium in close contact with tree roots.

It is permissible to pick mushrooms for personal use in the White River National Forest, but not in wilderness areas, with a free yearly permit from the Dillon Ranger District. I suggest using a basket for collecting, to avoid squashing in a backpack. Be sure to leave many for wildlife and avoid destroying the underground mycelium.

It's important to appreciate the beauty of diverse shapes, sizes and colors as well as the important role they play in our forest ecosystem, but it's also important to know which ones are safe to eat. While some wild mushrooms are edible and quite prized, others are deadly toxic. There is no simple way to distinguish, so the main rule of collecting is know your mushrooms! Take a class, consult guidebooks for Colorado mushrooms (Vera Evenson's "Mushrooms of the Rocky Mountain Region"), or learn from experienced mushroom hunters.

Be sure to learn the unique Latin names of mushrooms, too, because common names can vary in different areas and because Latin names indicate relationships among different species. The name *Amanita muscaria*, for the fly agaric, indicates a pretty red-capped mushroom with white dots belongs to the poisonous *Amanita* group.

This image shows the gills and cup of *Amanita*, left, versus pores of *Lecclnum*.

Photo by Joan Betz | Eagle Summit Wilderness Alliance



Other identifying factors include whether mushrooms have a cap situated on a stalk (stem) or, like puffballs, have no stalk. Notice the cap's color and shape, and the presence underneath of gills (like storebought mushrooms) versus pores or teeth. Does the bottom of the stalk have a cup? (Deadly *Amanita* mushrooms do.) Compare the white gills (white spores), thin

stem and cup of the poisonous panther cap *Amanita pantherina*, with the pores (brown spores), thick white stem with black dots of *Leccinum insignae*, the aspen orange cap.



This image shows a dark brown spore print.

Photo by Joan Betz | Eagle Summit Wilderness Alliance

Spore color is critical for identification and can range from white to yellow, brown to black or even pink. To prepare a spore print, place a cap upside down on a sheet of white paper and check later to see the color of fallen spores.

Note the habitat where you found favorite mushrooms - on the ground, on rotting logs or on dung piles and if in aspen or pine forests or meadows - which can help you find similar specimens in the future. Enjoy your mushroom sleuthing, don't eat anything you're not positive is safe and leave lots for the wildlife!

"Get Wild" publishes on Fridays in the Summit Daily News. Joan Betz is a board member of Eagle Summit Wilderness Alliance, an all-volunteer nonprofit that helps the U.S. Forest Service protect and preserve wilderness areas in Eagle and Summit counties. For more information, visit EagleSummitWilderness.org.



Joan Betz

VWR COMMENTS - August 2021

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

- Wheeler Lakes had a lot of salamanders in them, which delighted one angler.
- Moose 1/4 mile up Royal Buffalo
- Marmots galore! One backpacker was interested in joining ESWA!
- We have a very friendly Mountain Goat at Pitkin Lake who knows how to beg for food!No bueno!!
- Came across a 4 adults in a group, one of whom had twisted her ankle on her hike out, we gave them a ride to the Summit Stage.
- A few folks were mushroom hunting
- Spoke with a dad who was camping with young daughter. She told me "I caught lots of fishies""
- Saw four Mtn Goats, including one young, at lake
- Deconstructed a fire ring 40 feet from Gore Creek.
- The Myrtle Whortle berries were abundant and delicious!
- Amazing flowers and Monarch butterflies !!!
- one gentlemen was a private pilot from Michigan who came up from Centennial for the day to Hike to Ptarmigan summit. pretty impressive. Was at 600 ft elevation the day before and above 12,000 the next day :)
- numerous trail runners
- 1 individual was upset that he had to have his dog on a leash
- I had planned on hiking Gore Creek to Red Buffalo Pass, but the parking area was completely full when I arrived in the early morning. Cars were parked off road and in No Parking zones. I've never seen it so crowded on a Saturday morning. In contrast, I had the Big Horn trail nearly all to myself.
- So many! I camped near Lost Lake with a couple who are mutual friends with Allison Dunlap, the world champion and 3-time Olympian mountain biker. They had just been on a Grand Canyon trip with Allison and her family. Allison was my coach in a different life, and remains a friend. They were a delightful couple, a business owner and teacher in Breckenridge.
- I also met two people interested in getting involved with ESWA that I will follow up with. One was a woman who was going in for a solo night -- she had left her young family at the TH :-) -- and then girl friends were coming in to meet her for another night. We walked

together for a while and she expressed an interest in the VWR program. I got her email....

- Never seen so many mushrooms!
- lots of berries!
- Trail users reported mountain goats at Gore Lake were being harassed by hikers, including a hiking guide from a local outfitter.
- fire burn site on trail stimulated multiple conversations about fires, clean-up, etc.
- Not one dog!
- very sweet couple from Kansas who was well informed by stopping at the Dillon RD
- people I talked to were from Front Range, didn't know the area well, tried to convince the off leash dog owners of the moose danger
- The sign up .75 mi used to have good info, now is empty, it needs to be on a list for LNT and Map and other info by FDRD or ESWA, AND especially when CORE passes, and Wilderness is closer down
- Met a 3 week old on her first hike, she was sleeping
- Also pulled another bag of Oxeye daisies from the overlook meadow that was treated 2 years ago. There are spotty clumps of daisies in the meadow and around the edge.
- Met a CDT thru-hiker and his dog, Birch, at dusk on the GRT. Day 65 from Canada on the way to Mexico! He was very appreciative of our work and commented on the number of trees on the trail in Colorado compared to other states. "Beatle kill." "Oh! I had no idea."



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