

EAGLE POST 56

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

www.EagleSummitWilderness.org



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BEFORE WE BEGIN:

How embarrassing! We inadvertently omitted identifying two generous members in the list of 2020 ESWA donors in our hard copy newsletter (mailed in November)

Helen Barker, long time member/supporter, gave \$1,000 in September. Thanks, Helen; we apologize for not listing your donation in the November printed newsletter.

Barbara & John Schuette donated an additional \$10,000 in January for the construction of the [Mesa Cortina boardwalk](#) in memory of their son, Beau. Thanks, Barb and John, and we apologize for the omission in the newsletter.

These oversights have been corrected in the ESWA [archive](#).



January 2021

Dear *|FNAME|*

Greetings! Our topic this month:

Where we've been, where we're going in 2021

Mike Browning

Chair, ESWA



A NEW YEAR MESSAGE
From ESWA Chair Mike Browning

While 2020 has been called many things (most of them unprintable here), it's also the year many of us came to realize how essential Wilderness is to our sanity. Despite the challenge of a pandemic, ESWA had notable successes and laid the foundation for an even better 2021. This January newsletter normally has two parts – a review by the outgoing Chair and a preview by the incoming Chair. Since the Board unanimously decided to continue our 2020 Officers into 2021, I get to do both.

LOOKING BACK ON 2020

1. TO members (donated since 1/1/2020)

First, a special thanks for donating to ESWA during 2020 and thereby becoming an official member for the 2021 calendar year. Your contributions make all of our work possible. Hopefully I will get to thank you personally sometime in 2021. And maybe by then we won't be required to wear our masks!

2. TO Lapsed (donated, but not since 1/1/2020)

MEMBERSHIP ALERT! Our records indicate that you have donated to ESWA in the past, but not in 2020. As we shift back to a member-based organization, a donation is required to become a member for the 2021 calendar year. Please consider joining to ensure that you will continue to receive our newsletters, as well as acquiring some additional perks. We need you! Just click [HERE](#).

3. TO VIPs

We appreciate your ongoing support of ESWA, whether through your generous donations, volunteering, or advocating, or all of the above!

4. TO All others

MEMBERSHIP ALERT!! We are shifting back to a member-based organization. A donation of as little as \$25 will make you a member and bring some perks, like the 12 newsletters sent by email, the 2 sent by mail, plus other special ones that concern important updates to our boots on the ground work, advocacy campaigns, and social activities. We need you! Just click [HERE](#).

Boots on the Ground. ESWA made remarkable contributions to the protection of our three Wilderness Areas – Eagles Nest, Holy Cross, and Ptarmigan Peak. Although we waived the minimum four patrols for our Volunteer Wilderness Rangers, **42 VWRs undertook over 330 patrols, logged over 2,000 trail miles and contacted nearly 9,000 hikers and backpackers!** Thanks to Ken Harper and Mike Mayrer for their ongoing management of this signature ESWA program.

Even with the challenges of social distancing and masking, we trained over a dozen new cross-cut sawyers and **cleared over 500 trees** from Wilderness trails. Our volunteer work crews removed over 50 illegal fire pits. Under Ken Harper's able leadership, ESWA volunteers performed three workdays maintaining our Adopt-a-



Trail, Deluge Lake. And to cap our season, Dave Brewster led a sawyer outing on October 23 that cleared over 100 downed trees on the Meadow Creek/Lily Pad Lake trail in a single day!

Weeds. ESWA WeedCzar, Jim Alexander, directed our successful WeedSpotters program, hosting webinars, and organizing training trips, seed gathering, and weed pulls. Our trained VWRs informed the USFS of nearly 50 new noxious weed-outbreak areas, and raised funds for the USFS to treat many acres of previously identified infestations.

The Beau Schuette Memorial

Boardwalk. This long-needed improvement on the Mesa Cortina trail became a reality! Funded by the Schuette family and friends and by The Summit Foundation, the ESWA-managed project involved close partnering with the US Forest Service and the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps. A photo essay of the work is [HERE](#). A little bit of finish work will be necessary in 2021, and then we'll hold the official grand opening ceremony.



Membership. ESWA launched its revitalized membership program. If you haven't donated to renew your membership for 2021, now's the moment! Our biannual hard copy newsletter will be sent only to current members, so join today (and membership comes with other benefits). Just go to our [website](#) to make a donation and become a member, or you can send a check to ESWA, PO Box 4504, Frisco, CO 80443. Memberships start as low as \$25 a year.



Swag. 2020 also debuted ESWA's first new swag - T-shirts, ball caps, stickers, lip balm, and note cards featuring winners of our Photo Contests. Just email mfbrowning@pbblaw for more information or to order. Thanks to Chris Turner and Dave Owens for leading this effort and to Ellie Finlay for being our new Swag Fairy Godmother.

Media. To promote our new name and logo, ESWA published ads in the Summit Daily and Vail Daily and had a full-page spread in the Vail Bike and Hike Magazine. I did a radio interview with Radio Free Minturn that was aired on December 7 as part of our Colorado Gives Day promotion. Bill Betz continued to organize and publish outstanding monthly newsletters, as well as the biannual hard

copy newsletter, all with editorial support from Frances Hartogh, Joan Betz, and Dave Owens.

Advocacy. ESWA continued its advocacy efforts, including opposing the proposed Berlaimont development, Homestake III (Whitney Reservoir) project, and Lower Blue Gravel Pit, and supporting passage of the Core Act, protecting East Vail Bighorn Sheep, and renaming the Gore Range. For details, see ESWA's November 15 [Newsletter](#).

Finances. We ended an otherwise tumultuous 2020 in good financial shape. Our bank balance was about \$40,000 at last report and our Endowment was over \$54,000. We can now start thinking about if and how we want to use the income/increase over \$50,000. Donations to the Endowment are always welcome. Thanks to our Treasurer, **Chris Turner**, for all his great work and to everyone for their financial support.

Whew, all that in the face of a pandemic. Not bad - but stay tuned for an even better 2021!

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2021

We are looking forward to 2021, when we can expand some of our programs that were interrupted and try to remember what we all look like under those masks!

VWR Training. Although the pandemic forced us to cancel last year's VWR training program, we will hold the training this summer and mint some brand-new VWRs. The hundreds of hours spent last spring preparing for our training program will be put to good use! Joan Betz, Dave Owens, and Frances Hartogh completely rewrote and digitized our Training Manual and updated and reprinted the educational cards our VWRs hand out to hikers.



Trailhead Hosts. We will expand our Trailhead Host Program. Volunteer hosts set up a table at a trailhead and day of their choosing, just as VWRs sign up for patrols. Hosts meet, greet, and educate hikers before they hit the trail. This spring, look for Dave Owens' inspiring article on his trailhead hosting experience, including details for how you can sign up to be a host this summer.

Backcountry Camp Hosts. Do you like to backpack and camp near beautiful lakes? If so, you've noticed that a lot of other people do too. Many of our popular backcountry camping areas have become overused, and often abused. We will enlist our VWRs to serve as



overnight hosts to educate campers and explain backcountry camping rules and restrictions. Just like trail users, campers tend to behave better if they see a VWR in uniform nearby!

Advocacy: Several of our advocacy campaigns may be heating up in 2021. One is the proposed Homestake III-Whitney Reservoir. The USFS hasn't yet acted on the permit application filed by Aurora and Colorado Springs to drill test holes for a new reservoir on Homestake Creek. The reservoir would result in up to 500 acres being withdrawn from the Holy Cross Wilderness. The USFS may approve the drilling permit in 2021. ESWA will work with other groups to oppose the project and rally public and political opposition.



Llama Trips. Although we had to cancel our four llama-supported back country overnight work trips in 2020 due to COVID-19, we plan to resume them in 2021. Members will receive priority for the limited spaces. Potential members will be offered any remaining spots. These trips are a great way to get to know other ESWA members and to introduce possible new

members to our work.

Membership Growth. We will continue to attract new members through media channels, social events, and outings. We also hope to have stands at local fairs and farmers markets. But our best salesperson is **YOU!** So please tell your friends about ESWA and encourage them to join.

WE NEED YOU!!!

ESWA's boots-on-the-ground, Wilderness advocacy, noxious weed, and other programs happen only with a lot of work behind the scenes. We are a small all-volunteer group with no paid staff. ESWA needs our members both to participate in our programs, and to work behind the scenes to help make them happen. Consider joining our Board, Planning Committee, Advisory Panel, and many other committees. We also need folks to help with our website, newsletters, and



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JOIN ESWA!

other media efforts, and people to plan and run social events - and even stuff envelopes. The more people who step up to help, the more we can do to preserve Wilderness. Contact me at mfrowning@pbblaw.com to see how you can help KEEP WILDERNESS WILD!

A happy, healthy, and fulfilling 2021 to the entire ESWA family!

Mike Browning, Chair

ABOUT MIKE BROWNING

Mike Browning grew up in Montana and spent his youth backpacking in the Bob Marshall Wilderness and Glacier National Park, getting hooked on Wilderness at an early age. He continued going higher and deeper into the mountains – summiting Mt. Everest in 1990 and completing all the



other Seven Summits in ensuing years. He moved to Colorado in 1977 after graduating from Yale Law School and practiced water law for over 40 years. His wife and fellow outdoor enthusiast Frances Hartogh is ESWA's Secretary. They have two grown daughters who have also developed a love of the outdoors (but only after being dragged into it kicking and screaming when younger). He and Frances now spend their time between Boulder and East Vail trying to do good deeds and get outside as much as possible.

Follow us



Join us! Next **Planning Meeting**

Thursday, January 14 at 5:30 PM via [Zoom](#). Questions? Send us an [email](#).

CITY MARKET COMMUNITY REWARDS PROGRAM

Please [register](#) your City Market Value Card, linking it to ESWA, which will send rebates to us without compromising your earned fuel points. Please note that each card holder may only sign up for one tax exempt organization. **THANKS!**

Make a donation to ESWA...



... make a difference!

FINALLY, THANKS TO OUR BUSINESS AND FOUNDATION SPONSORS



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 ESWA has been a steady beneficiary. Last year, more than 150 employees donated, led by A-Basin Director **Alan Henceroth**. Our enduring THANKS to them.

And thanks as well to the following for their generous financial support of ESWA's work:

- **The National Forest Foundation** for their continuing support of our Noxious Weed Program, awarding ESWA funds to help ESWA hire contractors in coordination with the USFS to treat noxious weed outbreaks in our Wilderness Area.
- The **Schutte Family** and **The Summit Foundation** for donations and grants that helped turn the Beau Schutte boardwalk into a reality.
- **The National Wilderness Steward Foundation** for their continuing support of our trail projects and other on-the-ground efforts.

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