

EAGLE POST 16

EAGLE POST - The newsletter of **Friends of Eagles Nest Wilderness**, apprising you of important activities in and around Eagles Nest, Holy Cross, and Ptarmigan Wilderness Areas.

Dear *|FNAME|*,

Greetings!

Our topic this month:

The Continental Divide Wilderness & Recreation Act

UPDATE: 24 JANUARY 2018: The bill was introduced in both the House (by Rep. Polis) and Senate (by Sen. Bennet). The Vail Daily wrote about it [HERE](#).



INTRODUCTION: The title of Congressman Jared Polis' bill - *The Continental Divide Wilderness and Recreation Act* - is a mouthful to say and an even more challenging proposal to wrap your head around. We'll break it down for you here (see also this [MAP](#)). There are three different designations of the dozen parcels of land comprising 58,500 acres:

- * Wilderness (9 parcels)
- * Special Management Areas (3 parcels in two different flavors, one similar to Wilderness with a bit more flexibility and two focused especially on mountain biking and other forms of outdoor recreation), and
- *one brand new designation: *National Historic Landscape* (Camp Hale).

All of the areas are on the Western Slope in Summit and Eagle counties; three touch the continental divide near Hoosier Pass and the Eisenhower Tunnel.

The 9 Wilderness parcels break down into **three brand new, free-standing Wilderness Areas** (one at the top of the map (Williams Fork) and two at the bottom (Tenmile and Hoosier Ridge)), and 6 *additions* to existing Wilderness (one parcel to Holy Cross Wilderness, 2 parcels to Eagles Nest, and 3 parcels to Ptarmigan).

What about Camp Hale? As the [Denver Post reported](#), Senator Bennet "wants Camp Hale, already on the National Register of Historic Places, to be the nation's first *National Historic Landscape*, honoring its legacy with interpretive and educational elements, while maintaining the area's diverse recreational amenities and uses and protecting it from future development."

If you look at the map, just ponder all of those boundaries - they were drawn with exquisite sensitivity and exhausting inputs from many stakeholders. The bill is a model of cooperative input. But the challenge is just beginning, as Josh Kuhn explains below.

The Continental Divide Wilderness & Recreation Act

By Josh Kuhn, Wilderness and Public Lands Organizer
Conservation Colorado

When working to build support for the [Continental Divide Wilderness and Recreation Act](#) (CDWR Act - an effort to protect about 60,000 acres of the White River National Forest in Eagle and Summit Counties), I'm often asked, "Why do this, what's wrong?" I answer,



"Nothing, nothing is wrong," and that's the point. The lands contained within this bill are home to unique wildlife habitat, contain valuable water sources, and are important to the outdoor recreation economy. I often compare the campaign to taking care of one's health: it's best to be proactive, and not wait for illness to strike. The same applies to these areas: let's not wait until a logging project, for example, is proposed before we mobilize to protect these landscapes. Overall, the CDWR Act is about ensuring that we keep select areas free of the impacts of human development so that others can share in the multitude of benefits offered by Nature's beauty.

Since its inception about 9 years ago, the CDWR Act has evolved in a dynamic, community-driven process. The boundaries for the units were crafted through many hours of deliberations, taking into account a variety of interests, including wilderness preservation, mountain biking, fire mitigation, and protection of water resources and wildlife habitat. All of this has been taking place as the Colorado front range population grows and grows, relentlessly increasing demand on our mountain resources.

My job involves visiting businesses - hundreds of them - explaining the CDWR Act and seeking support for it. I also organize hikes into the proposed landscapes, and plan a

variety of events to increase awareness and continue building support. Along the way I meet people with a broad range of opinions on land conservation, and they are usually impressed once they understand the collaborative compromises that have gone into creation of the Act.

Finally, another unique land designation - one of my personal favorites - is slated for Camp Hale; Senator Michael Bennet wants to make it our nation's first *National Historic Landscape*. Although not finalized yet, this designation will protect all existing uses while honoring and protecting the lands that birthed the modern ski industry, and served as a training ground for the 10th Mountain Division in World War II.

I'm sure you're wondering what's next. The bill remains in committee, and it is not clear at present when it will be sent up for a vote. I'm often asked, "How do you expect to get this bill passed through an anti-conservation-majority-Congress and a Trump White House?" The answer is through **widespread community support**. This is a win-win proposal, and we must highlight this fact in order to gain bipartisan support.



You can help me in my efforts at grassroots outreach, education, and organization. The most urgent need is securing additional business support, and identifying business owners and employees willing to advocate for this effort. We need folks willing to write letters to the editor, place phone calls to decisions makers, and periodically meet with elected officials. If you're able to help with any of this, please contact me (Josh@conservationco.org).

When I'm weary of making phone calls or knocking on doors, I'm reminded of something that Margaret Mead said: "*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.*" I hope you'll join me in this effort. To learn more please visit www.continentaldivide.org.

ABOUT JOSH KUHN: When I made my first trip into the wilderness 25 years ago, it didn't seem like a great fit for the awkward, pudgy kid I was then. My first experience in a Wilderness Area occurred at summer camp, where I was encouraged to sign up for a multi-night canoe trip into Minnesota's Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. I had watched the cool older kids head off on their trips, and I wanted to be like them, but I had no idea how difficult a portage is, how monotonous a paddle across a lake can be, or how many mosquito bites I'd receive. When the trip ended, I wasn't chomping at the bit to sign up for another trip.

However, as summer turned to fall, I began to appreciate the experience. For example, when playing soccer I knew I could push myself a bit further, or when working on a math problem I had a bit more confidence to stick with it and see it through. The following summer I signed up for multiple trips, and although I didn't know it at the time, I was igniting a passion that would help define my life.

Twenty-five years later, I'm the Wilderness and Public Lands Organizer for Conservation Colorado. I wouldn't be the person I am today without wilderness. For me, being in nature is the only time I'm not distracted by some other aspect of life. It gives me an opportunity to be with my thoughts and challenge myself both physically and mentally. When I need motivation to make another hour of phone calls or visit another block of businesses, I think about the fact that I'm working to protect something that will have lasting effects for generations to come.



Last summer, my wife and I gave birth to our first child. This has added another layer of meaning and motivation to my work, because those "future generations" now have a face and a name. We've already had our first successful family camping trip, and I feel



confident as Jack grows so will his appreciation of the natural world. After the political landscape shifted last November the future of the CDWR Act became a bit more murky. Passing this piece of legislation will be more challenging, but as I think back to the challenges of my first camping trip and then about my son's future, I know that we can't give up fighting for the protection of the Continental Divide landscape in Eagle and Summit Counties. I encourage you to join us for an FENW-sponsored trail [project on Aug 11th](#), and please don't hesitate to

contact me to learn more about how you can help support this effort (Josh@conservationco.org).



- Become a **Volunteer Wilderness Ranger** in 2018. [Details](#).

Volunteer for our **2017 Trail projects:** [Details](#)

In 2016, more than 50 VWRs contacted more than 12,000

Thursday July 20: Day project:
Colorado Outward Bound School
Joint Project. Piney River Trail.

Thu-Sat, July 27-29: Pack-in
project: Wilderness Society Joint
Project. Location TBD. Reservations
necessary (Bill Reed: 970-513-
9741).

Friday August 11: Day project:
Conservation Colorado Joint
Project. Silverthorne area of Eagles
Nest. Reservations necessary (Bill
Reed: 970-513-9741).

Thu-Sun, Sept 14-17: Pack-in
project: Missouri Lakes Project. Two
work days Holy Cross Wilderness.
Reservations necessary (Tim
Drescher: timdcy@gmail.com).
In 2016, we spent two weekends at
alpine lakes and
obliterated **54** illegal campfire rings.
Join our crews in 2017!

hikers. *Greet & teach!*

We also need volunteers **outside the Wilderness**

If you're a **writer, social media
advisor, website manager,
marketer, event planner,
meeter/greeter**, we need you! [Email
us](mailto:info@fenw.org) (info@fenw.org)

Make a donation
to FENW



Make a difference!

Recent Newsletters

- June: "[The American Beaver: An Icon of the West](#)" by Elissa Slezak
 - May: "[Meet Wilderness Manager Mike Beach](#)" by Mike Beach
 - April: "[Future of Eagles Nest](#)" by April Phule
 - March: "[Managing High Use Areas in Wilderness](#)" by Kay Hopkins
 - February: "[A Cry From The Wilderness](#)" by Bill Reed
 - January: "[Public Lands at Risk](#)" by David Lien
 - December: "[My life as a Wilderness Manager](#)" by Cindy Ebbert
 - November: "[Saving Native Cutthroat Trout](#)" by Matt Grove
 - October: "[Loved to Death](#)" by Jackie Fortier
 - September: "[Toward a Natural Forest](#)" by Jim Furnish
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Join us! for our next **Planning Meeting**

Thursday, June 27, 5:30 PM,

USFS Silverthorne >> [MAP](#)

Details at www.fenw.org/

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REWARDS PROGRAM

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



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