

# Eagle Post

June 2016

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**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.

## Greetings!

Our **topic this month:**

### BIRDS OF EAGLES NEST WILDERNESS

By Dr. Susan Bonfield in **THREE DIFFERENT VENUES:**

- The essay below
- An illustrated talk: Wednesday **June 15, 5PM**, Silverthorne Library [MAP](#)
- A guided walk: Sunday, **June 26, 9AM** to the A.M. Bailey Bird Nesting Area on Rock Creek [MAP](#)
- [Video of bird hike](#)



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**Introduction:** Sue Bonfield's roots in Summit County, like her passion for birds, go deep. She has had a home adjacent to Eagles Nest Wilderness for several decades, and in the 1990s she directed educational and research activities at the **A.M. Bailey Bird Nesting Area** on Rock Creek.

At present, Sue is Executive Director of **EFTA** (Environment For the Americas), "conserving birds by connecting people" ([www.birdday.org/](http://www.birdday.org/)). In the autumn, when our migratory birds funnel down south, Sue is there, working to protect their habitat in Mexico and Central America, aiming especially to recruit local young people to the cause.

After reading Sue's essay (below), please join us on **June 15** (see sidebar) for an informal, illustrated talk - "Birds of Eagles Nest Wilderness" by this dedicated and inspiring leader.



**JUNE 15, 4:30PM** (talk at 5PM) - ILLUSTRATED TALK BY DR. SUSAN BONFIELD: "BIRDS OF EAGLES NEST WILDERNESS" - SILVERTHORNE LIBRARY [MAP](#)



**JUNE 26, 9AM** - GUIDED BIRD WALK WITH DR. SUSAN BONFIELD. ROCK CREEK [MAP](#)

## The Birds of Eagles Nest Wilderness

Dr. Susan Bonfield



Spring is a short, indecisive season in Summit County. One day sunny, the next day snowing, it toys with our patience as we put away our skis and pull out our hiking boots. If you aren't paying attention, it's easy to miss the willow catkins emerging, followed by their long, oval leaves. One day, you look out and suddenly notice that the aspen have leafed and that the first of the spring flowers have emerged. It is also easy to miss the return of the birds, until the first of the American Robins awakens you at an early hour.



Hermit thrush

It's on those mornings that I think of the Eagles Nest Wilderness Area, nearly 133,500 acres of pristine wilderness in the heart of the Gore Range. This area has long been recognized by birdwatchers and ornithologists for its rich diversity of bird life, including the

Hermit Thrush, whose flute-like song often rings through the thin, clear air, and the American Dipper, which exhibits its aquatic prowess in the cold mountain streams.

Within this wilderness is an especially important place, the Alfred M. Bailey Bird Nesting Area, located on North Rock Creek. Roughly 4,000 acres in size, this nesting area is known for its great diversity of Southern Rockies habitats, including lush meadows, damp bogs, and dense spruce-fir, lodgepole pine, and aspen forests, which support many different species of birds. In a short stroll through the grassy meadows, you may see several of the 29 migratory bird species that have been observed here, including a Red-naped Sapsucker as it drills its sap wells into the willows; you might hear the bold song of a White-crowned Sparrow; and, if you're fortunate, you could catch a glimpse of a Fox Sparrow kicking up leaves as it searches the forest floor for food.



red naped sapsucker



This rich nesting area is named for Alfred Bailey, one of North America's most accomplished ornithologists, who served as the director of the Denver Museum of Natural History for more than 30 years. A devoted member of the Denver Field Ornithologists (DFO) and skilled photographer, Bailey was a prolific researcher who co-authored *Birds of Colorado*, an impressive two-volume set published in 1967

Make a donation



Make a difference!

Visit the FENW **website** for in-depth information at [www.fenw.org/](http://www.fenw.org/)



Become a **Volunteer Wilderness Ranger!**

Applications close June 1 -> extended to **JUNE 5**. [Details](#)

2016 **Trail projects:**

**Day Projects** Saturdays:  
June 4, June 18

**Pack-in** weekends (Fri-Sun):  
July 15-17 and August 12-14.  
[Details](#)

We also need volunteers **outside the Wilderness**

- **Member Relations** - **HELP** develop and implement communications plans to keep FENW members informed and involved... and maybe have some fun too.
- **Volunteer Recruitment** - **HELP** devise and deliver plans to greatly expand the field volunteer base through publicity, community outreach and partnerships.
- **Public Relations** - **HELP** plan and implement ongoing PR programs to raise the public profile of FENW in the community.
- **Advocacy** - **HELP** preserve and protect our backyard wilderness areas by developing and promoting FENW wilderness public policy

that remains an authority on the state's birds to this day.

From 1988 to 1998, the Colorado Bird Observatory, now the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, monitored migratory birds at this site. Using mist-nets to safely capture the delicate animals, researchers placed tiny metal bands on their legs to study their breeding success and longevity. This painstaking research revealed the compelling story of one Swainson's Thrush who returned each spring from wintering grounds in South America to the same area within the meadow to nest. The studies also recognized Wilson's Warblers as the dominant warbler species, compared to the more elusive McGillivray's Warbler, and completed difficult measurements of slight differences in bill width and wing length that showed that flycatchers previously identified as Hammond's were actually Dusky Flycatchers.



Dusky flycatcher

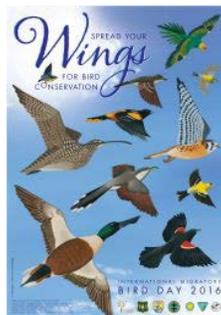


Bailey Bird Nesting Area

In the early 1990s, a sign was erected at the Rock Creek Trailhead identifying this site as the Alfred M. Bailey Bird Nesting Area. The Colorado Division of Wildlife later recognized the area as a Watchable Wildlife Site, and in 2013, the

National Audubon Society designated it an Important Bird Area due to the significant role it plays in conserving bird populations. Even in summer, the Bailey Nesting Site is not easy to find; it is located just far enough off the Rock Creek Trail that spruce and fir trees obstruct a view of it, and researchers no longer hike to the site to avoid leaving paths that could lead others there. This very seclusion contributes greatly to the wonderful diversity of bird life found at this jewel of a nesting site, a wonderful thought to ponder the next time an American Robin's song calls you outside into the chilly mountain air.

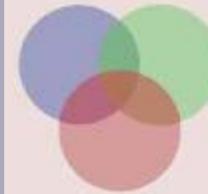
**About Dr. Susan Bonfield:** After studying Black-legged Kittiwakes in Alaska, she returned to the lower 48 where she has since gained more than two decades of experience in bird research and education. She has conducted bird surveys, run banding stations, and been a part of bird research in Maine, 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. 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



positions.

• **Fund Raising - HELP** apply for grants to raise funds for FENW and Forest Service stewardship programs and special projects.

**Details:** contact **Bill Reed** (billr412@icloud.com).



**Friends, Friends, Friends!** Check out our sister 'FRIENDS'

- Friends of Dillon Ranger District (FDRD)
- Friends of the Lower Blue River (FOLBR)

#### Newsletters

- April: "**After Malheur**" by Currie Craven
- May: "**Bikes in Wilderness**" by Tim Drescher
- Next Month: Colorado: A Summer Trip by Bayard Taylor - 150th anniversary celebration on Ute Pass

## Upcoming events

Join us! for our next  
**MONTHLY MEETING**  
Thu June 23, 5:30 PM,  
Silverthorne **MAP**

Details at [www.fenw.org/](http://www.fenw.org/)

- Wednesday, **June 15**: "Birds of ENW" talk by Dr. Susan Bonfield, 5PM, Silverthorne Library **MAP**
- Thursday, **June 23**: FENW Monthly planning meeting
- Saturday, **July 2**: Ute Pass party 10 AM
- Saturday, **July 9**: Day trail project
- Fri-Sun, **July 15-17**: Pack-in trail project
- Monday, **July 18**: Dedication of Memorial Kiosk
- Thursday, **July 28**: FENW Monthly planning meeting
- Fri-Sun, **August 12-14**: Pack-in trail project

courses, and led a course for the USFWS National Conservation Training Center. Susan holds a B.S. in Biology from Randolph-Macon 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.

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**WE\*** have identified you as someone who will value our news updates. But if you do not wish to receive further emails from us, just click **unsubscribe**. \*The FENW Board: Currie **Craven** (Pres), George **Resseguie** (Treas/Secy), Bill **Reed**, Bill **Betz**, Ken **Harper**, Cyndi **Koop**, Mike **Mayrer**, Frank **Gutmann**, Tim **Drescher**.

- Thursday, **August 25**: FENW Monthly planning meeting
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### CITY MARKET COMMUNITY REWARDS PROGRAM

Please register your City Market Value Card in 2016. This year, City Market will once again make a contribution to area non-profit organizations. The program allocates funds (rebates) to the organizations based on purchases made using the City Market Value Card.

Organization members must go online at [www.citymarket.com](http://www.citymarket.com) to register their Value Card, and link their card to FENW's organization name and/or registration number - **46910**. Individual purchases will be counted towards FENW's rewards allocation without compromising your earned fuel points. Please note that each card holder may only sign up for one tax exempt organization.

**THANKS!**