

# EAGLE POST 12

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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**: ***REQUIRED PERMITS IN WILDERNESS?***



**Introduction:** Bill Reed's 'Cry From the Wilderness' ([link](#)) last month poignantly laid out the problem - trammled lakeside campsites in our Wilderness Areas. This month, we learn about our neighbor Maroon Bells/Snowmass Wilderness, no less clobbered, where the Forest Service has proposed a new management plan ([link](#)) to address the problem there. **Kay Hopkins**, US Forest Service Outdoor Recreation Planner and co-author of the draft plan, writes about the proposal - the extensive background data gathering, the input from multiple stakeholders, the components yet to come. It is a journey at once exhilarating and exhausting to read about, and we are facing something similar, if not identical, in the Wildernesses of Summit and Eagle counties. We'll hear about our local plans, rising from the shoulders of giants like Kay and her colleagues, in the next FENW newsletter.

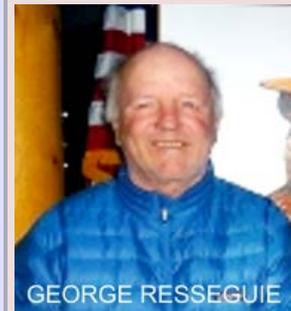
## Managing today's HIGH USE AREAS for tomorrow

By Kay Hopkins

Managing *high use* wilderness - balancing preservation with increased demands - has long been a challenge for public land managers. The Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness (MBSW) is one of many Wilderness Areas across the west that are experiencing alarming damage from increased use. From 2007 to 2015, overnight visitors on the ten most popular trails in MBSW more than doubled; some increased nearly four-fold. Signs of overuse include denuded campsites, vegetation loss, braided trails, exposed human waste, trash, wildlife habituation, and more. Visitor conflicts reflect the increasing demand for the finite wilderness resources.



US Forest Service (USFS) wilderness rangers are increasingly



GEORGE RESSEGUIE

Our Secretary-Treasurer, George Resseguie, is stepping down after a decade of exemplary service. HELP US FIND A REPLACEMENT! Send us your suggestions ([link](#)).

Make a donation to FENW



Make a difference!

### 2016 Trail projects:

We spent two long weekends - one at Upper Cataract Lake, and one on Slate Creek - improving trails and campsites. We obliterated a total of **54** illegal rock-ringed campfire pits at lakes.

*Day Projects* Saturdays:

June 4, June 18, July 9

**Pack-in** weekends (Fri-

Sun): July 15-17 and August

diverted from their traditional roles, such as clearing trails and maintaining structures, and are becoming *backcountry janitors*. For

Habituated bear attacking camp



example, in MBSW in 2016 wilderness rangers packed out 438 pounds of trash, buried 273 incidences of exposed human waste, obliterated 327 illegal campfire rings and issued hundreds of violations for things like dogs off leash, illegal fires, exposed human waste, and lack

of bear canisters - all this in addition to contacting directly more than 9600 individual visitors.

Since the mid-'80s the White River National Forest (WRNF) has been following a *minimum tool philosophy* to preserve wilderness experiences. The toolbox included vigorous education and interpretation efforts, increased visitor contacts, and focused special order regulations, restrictions, and closures. In 2006, the last tool was put into service: **mandatory, no-fee overnight registration**. Now all of the tools in the agency's tool box are in use, but still problems persist, and grow.

The Draft Overnight Visitor Use Management (VUM) Plan (released in November 2016) looks to the next step - limited permits - but with a carefully monitored *adaptive management strategy* that defines how and where monitoring will be done and what adjustments can be made in the future to ensure that desired conditions are being met.



What's next? This month (March 2017) we (WRNF & Gunnison NF) will release an Environmental Assessment and an updated VUM Plan for public comment. The VUM Plan applies only to *overnight* visitors. The goal of the plan is to reclaim and maintain the natural condition of some of the high use corridors while preserving opportunities for wilderness experiences and visitors related socio-economic benefits to our communities, all within the guidelines of the Forests Land and Resource Management Plans (LRMP).



**Adaptive Management.** The VUM Plan seeks to implement an *adaptive management* strategy, that is, one that sets *threshold* values

12-14. [Details](#)

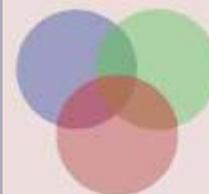
Interested in becoming a **Volunteer Wilderness Ranger?** [Details](#)

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 positions.
- **Grant Writing - 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**)

for the defined capacity (maximal sustainable number of visitors) to *each one* of the many different identified camping zones. If the threshold is exceeded at one area, then a mandatory permit system will be implemented for that area.

How is capacity determined? Extensive usage data have been gathered for more than a decade for more than 700 impacted campsites across the entire MBSW. Data sources include required overnight registration (with 96% compliance), ranger patrol logs, violation notices, incident reports, and campsite inventories. About half of the campsites were illegally situated (usually closer than 100 feet to a lake, stream, or trail); the others, numbering 374, meet LRMP standards and form the baseline of the overnight "**Groups At One Time**" (GAOT) campsite capacity. GAOT is a new descriptor: the number of groups at any moment per camping zone.



Next, *thresholds* were determined: the entire MBSW was divided into thirty camping *zones* according to watersheds and visitor use patterns, and LRMP Management Areas (MAs) were mapped over the camping zones. Camping zones may have one or more MA's within them that prescribe densities as follows: **Pristine** (low density of occupied campsites), **Primitive** (moderate density), and **Semi-Primitive** (camping restricted to designated sites). Application of these prescriptions created the final allocation of campsites per zone.

Thresholds serve as the minimum acceptable condition for indicators and serve as triggers for management action when exceeded. As an example, if annual monitoring shows the GAOT indicator has been exceeded in a zone, the overnight permit system would be triggered for that zone for the following season. The permit would be used to limit the number of "groups at one time" that can camp overnight in that zone.

Implementation details how a permit would be issued and managed will be determined later based on a number of considerations, including legal authorities, feasibility, internal expertise and USFS physical and financial capabilities.

**Fees:** The VUM Plan will authorize implementation of the management tools described in the plan but does not include a decision or methods of implementation of associated fees if a permit system is triggered. A separate process will be necessary to address any potential fees. Permitting could be implemented a variety of ways. For example, we could use the government's reservation system ([link](#)), which charges a small reservation fee, much like how campgrounds operate today. Under this alternative, fees are strictly for the reservation and do not come back to the site. Alternatively, permits could be issued out of a local office for no fee. Another option could be to charge a fee to cover USFS on-site management

#### Recent Newsletters

- 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
- August: "[Save the Colorado River](#)" by John Fielder
- July: "[150th anniversary](#)" by Bayard Taylor
- June: "[Birds of ENW](#)" by Dr. Susan Bonfield

**Join us!** for our next **Planning Meeting**

Thursday, February 23, 5:30 PM, Silverthorne >>

**MAP**

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



#### CITY MARKET COMMUNITY REWARDS PROGRAM

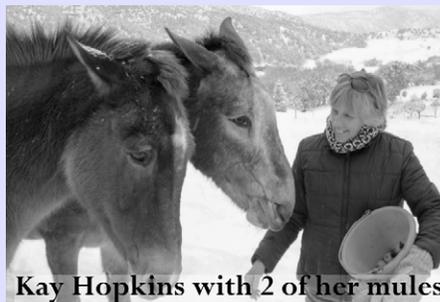
Please register your City Market Value Card in 2016. This year, City Market will once again make a contribution to area non-profit organizations. The program allocates funds (rebates) to the organizations based on purchases made using the City Market Value Card. Organization members must go online at

[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

needs and associated costs. This option would have to be implemented in accordance with the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) and would necessitate an additional public input process.

You may be wondering - with similar issues in Eagles Nest Wilderness - when will planning begin here? Hopefully as we and other agencies move forward in setting management direction for some of Colorado's "hot spots", the path for sustainable long term management scenarios will become more common and supported by local communities, visitors, stakeholders, and other interested parties. The Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness Draft Environmental Assessment and updated Draft Overnight VUM Plan are scheduled to be released later this month. Another round of public comments will follow. More details are at the project website ([link](#)).

**About Kay Hopkins:** Kay Hopkins has been the Outdoor Recreation Planner for the White River National Forest since 2008 and is based in Glenwood Springs, Co. Prior to working for the USFS she worked as a recreation planner for 16 years for BLM in Colorado, ran a bike shop in Grand Junction and worked for both Colorado and California State Parks. Her degree is a BS - Parks and Recreation Resource Management. She lives on a small ranch with her husband Brian and her 4 mules north of New Castle. Kay's passions include horse and mule riding and packing, fly-fishing, boating, hiking, biking, snowboarding, painting, welding and gardening.



Kay Hopkins with 2 of her mules

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!**

**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**.

March 2017