

EAGLE POST 7

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

Greetings!

Our **topic this month**: *LOVED TO DEATH*



Introduction: "Nobody goes there anymore, it's too crowded." Yogi Berra wasn't referring to popular hiking destinations in the White River National Forest, but the quote is appropriate today. While **Hanging Lake** and **Conundrum Hot Springs** are not in designated Wilderness Areas, their growing traffic (~1000 visitors per day!) does seem to portend a similar future for parts of Eagles Nest Wilderness. In fact, even deep inside our Wilderness, a recent FENW trail crew found lakes surrounded with illegal campfire rings, human-browsed trees, bare packed dirt at tent sites, braided trails around the lakes, and woods dotted with white T.P. leavings. What to do? Send us your thoughts - info@fenw.org and we'll post them on the FENW website.

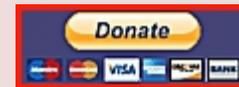
The essay below, by Jackie Fortier (reporter for Public Radio station KUNC - 90.7 MHz in Dillon), is part of a five part series, "How Colorado's outdoors are being loved to death," created by Jackie and her colleagues at KUNC (see the complete project [HERE](#)). Jackie's article concerns Hanging Lake, just outside Glenwood Springs. After reading it, send us your thoughts and we'll post them on the FENW website - info@fenw.org.

Is Social Media Spoiling Colorado's Hanging Lake?

By Jackie Fortier, printed with the permission of KUNC
KUNC Growth & Economic Issues Reporter
All Things Considered



Make a donation



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 campfire rings at lakes. The final project (Eaglesmere Lake) is scheduled for later in October.

Day Projects Saturdays: June 4, June 18, July 9

Pack-in weekends (Fri-Sun): July 15-17 and August 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

Clear mountain water cascades into a greenish blue lake, with pines dangling over the edge. Even for Colorado, it's unique. Hanging Lake is described as a jewel in the White River National Forest. For many years, it was an unspoken secret that only Coloradans knew.

But there's a problem. The secret is out.



In the past eight years, visitation to the site just off Interstate 70 west of the Continental Divide has tripled. In 2015 more than 130,000 people visited Hanging Lake. The 2016 hiking season is on track to beat it.

Social media is exacerbating that trend - not just at Hanging Lake but at other sites around Colorado. Pictures and articles go viral and become synonymous with a particular place - making more and more people want to replicate it.

A search of Instagram yields 44,000 pictures with #hanginglake. Sometimes that quintessential shot breaks the rules and leads to the eventual destruction of the area, a fate officials hope to avoid at Hanging Lake.

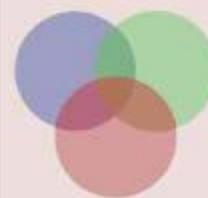
"It's not going to last much longer, if people keep walking on it," said Aaron Mayville, acting ranger at the White River National Forest. People walk right past the sign saying "Please Keep Off The Log" to stand on the downed tree that juts across the water. It's become for many a must-have social media picture.

It wasn't as much of a problem when it was just a few errant visitors. But the popularity of places like Hanging Lake in part driven by their fame on social media is degrading the rare

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**)

2016 Newsletters

- 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
- May: "Bikes in Wilderness" by Tim Drescher
- April: "After Malheur" by Currie Craven

Upcoming events

Join us! for our next
MONTHLY MEETING
Thu October 27, 5:30 PM,
Silverthorne >> **MAP**

Details at www.fenw.org/

Visit the FENW **website** for in-depth information at www.fenw.org/



travertine rock, the water quality and the infamous log.

"With that number of people, you increase the number of people breaking the rules like jumping in the lake, walking out on log - even though it's not allowed, it's really popular," Mayville said.

Hanging Lake is an economic driver for nearby Glenwood Springs and Garfield County, making protecting it, while keeping it accessible a delicate balancing act.

"No one wants to close Hanging Lake," Mayville said. "We're putting together a long term management plan so we can manage visitation more effectively. In the interim, we are trying to educate people about better times than others to visit [Hanging Lake] and have them be responsible visitors."

But why take and share the same photo as everyone else?

"We need the public to start thinking about putting the collective experience first."

"Places are symbolic and they have symbolic value and there are culturally shared meanings of particular places," said Germaine Halegoua, assistant professor of film and media studies at the University of Kansas.

"Visiting these places have some sort of value within social networks," she added. "Although it's the same picture, it doesn't hold the same type of value and meaning for everyone... it might be that a travel blog said, 'that's the place to go' that year, or your best friend went and you want to share that experience with her, or an image has become iconic and has come to stand in for Colorado."

How we share these images has evolved. Instead of slide shows in a room of friends or photo albums, social media presents us with potentially tens of thousands of people - most of them complete strangers - who can access and replicate personal images. That in turn makes places like Hanging Lake too popular for their own good.

It's so crowded at the lake that fist fights break out in the parking lot when frustrated drivers find it full, Mayville



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 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!

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**.

said. People park illegally and sometimes even back up onto I-70, causing traffic and safety problems.



"We need the public to start thinking about putting the collective experience first. There is value in unplugging on the forest, but there is also value in snapping a beautiful photo memory and sharing it on your news feed. It's really fun," said Kate Jerman, social media coordinator for the forest.

"The White River National Forest isn't here to say how people should or shouldn't experience the outdoors," she said.

But not everyone is indifferent to the destruction caused. According to Jerman, they've seen social media users call law enforcement and object online by shaming rule breakers and their pictures.

In 2017 forest officials will use social media to ask people what they think should be done about the overcrowding problem at Hanging Lake. Ideas include a shuttle from Glenwood Springs, about 10 miles away to control crowds. Tickets may also be required.

The Forest Service hopes that the public will understand the need to restrict access for the good of the ecosystem - even though it may make those photos even more desirable when they are harder to get.



About Jackie Fortier: One of my earliest memories is listening to Car Talk and eating a cinnamon roll at the breakfast table. I grew up with my ears full of NPR, but it wasn't until I reached high school and started paying attention to the media landscape that I realized how unique it is.

I graduated from Windsor High School and earned my bachelor's degree at Colorado State University in English. I

decided to pursue a career at NPR and graduated from the University of Colorado, Boulder with a Master of Arts in journalism. I am very excited to be a part of such a well respected and award winning station.