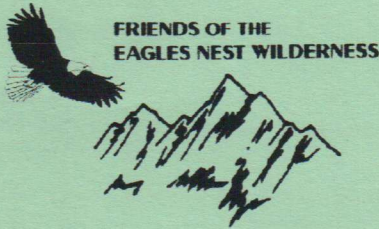


Forty-Fifth Official Newsletter

January 2004



Introduction to Friends:

The Friends of the Eagles Nest Wilderness is an apolitical nonprofit corporation (501(c)3) formed in May 1994 to raise in-cash, in-kind, and in-service goods to help the Dillon Ranger District of the White River National Forest maintain the Summit County portions of the Eagles Nest and Ptarmigan Peak Wilderness areas. The Eagles Nest Wilderness consists of 82,484 acres of Summit County while the Ptarmigan Peak Wilderness has 13,175 acres. Two Wilderness Rangers cover this area in the summer (47,830 acres each). We presently raise money through membership dues, donations, and grants.

BUFFALO MOUNTAIN TRAIL DAY

by Jonathan Kriegel

On August 23 a strong group of 15 FENW members, local volunteers, and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) personal assembled for a successful workday on Buffalo Mountain. Buffalo Mountain is home to one of Summit County's poorest trails. Above 10,200 feet the trail is really just a climber's route or routes winding steeply up the mountain. Until now the higher part of the route has never been maintained in any way by the USFS. Duplicate routes headed up steep grades creating significant erosion problems and unsafe conditions on this very popular trail.

Powered by donated coffee from Abbey's and bagels, our group rambled up the trail encumbered by crosscut saws, pry bars, pulaskis, and other implements of the non-motorized fashion. We cut down many trees that had fallen across the trail, revegetated duplicate trails, and installed a whole lotta check dams above treeline. The trail is now more of a trail and less of a climber's route — particularly above treeline. Hikers will be safer, fewer people will get lost, and erosion problems have been greatly ameliorated.

In summer 2004, depending upon pending grant applications, an entirely new trail is planned for the Buffalo Mountain summit (see below). Much of the work done was in preparation for the anticipated future improvements. We hope that this is just the beginning of significant improvements to this very visible and popular trail.

GRANT FROM THE SUMMIT FOUNDATION

by Maryann Gaug

On Dec. 22, 2003, FENW received a \$3,000 check from The Summit Foundation! The award is for design and development of a web site and support for Buffalo Mountain Trail project. TSF has given us almost \$22,000 since 1996, and we didn't ask for a grant in two of those years.

Many thanks to The Summit Foundation for their generous support and thanks to those of you who contribute to TSF!

We'll be starting work on a web site some time soon and will let you know when it's up and running.

GRANT FROM THE MERRIMAN FAMILY FOUNDATION

by Jim Anthony

The Merriman Family Foundation donated \$1,550 toward the Buffalo Mountain Trail project. FENW thanks the Merriman Family for this donation toward the building of this much-needed Buffalo Mountain Trail.



Kurt Morscher places a dead tree to block one of the braided trails on Buffalo Mountain. Photo by Maryann Gaug

GRANT PROPOSAL TO STATE TRAILS/PARKS

by Maryann Gaug

After about five years of talking and studying and flagging a new trail, the USFS and FENW have started improving the trail up Buffalo Mountain. A USFS crew picked the best trail out of the braided mess and created check dams at about treeline and above. As you read in Jonathan's blurb, a FENW's crew helped finish the work before winter snows came.

The USFS has only enough trail funds to pay their trail crew for four weeks next summer instead of the eight estimated to complete the construction and revegetation. So FENW submitted a grant proposal to State Trails/Parks for money to hire the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps to do four weeks of the work.

The project budget rings in at \$50,085. That means FENW needed to come up with at least \$25,042.50 in matching funds. Luckily work already done in the last six months by the USFS and their crew planned for 2004 counted in the match. FENW raised \$7,350 in cash or pledges for matching funds from three foundations, six businesses, as well as our own treasury.

Many thanks to The Summit Foundation, The Merriman Family Foundation, The Colorado Mountain Club Foundation, Buffalo Mountain Metro District, 1st Bank Silverthorne, Wilderness Sports, Wilderrest Property Management, Omni Real Estate, and J. Henry's. Silverthorne is donating in-kind services.

BUFFALO MOUNTAIN TRAIL PROJECT

by Maryann Gaug

Now that you know all about our fundraising and workday, you might be wondering what the heck is the Buffalo Mountain trail project.

As Jonathan mentioned, hikers created the trail up Buffalo with no regard for good trail design or maintainability. For those of you who have hiked up there, you know how very steep the trail is. Not to mention that to avoid slip-sliding down on your behind, people have created numerous trails which have become just as slippery. So much so that the trail is 0.5-mile wide in places. Erosion has slithered in to make matters worse. See photo below for a visual.



photo from the USFS

After all the USFS "ologists" and a restoration expert did their analysis and recommendations, the USFS has flagged 7,738 feet of new trail starting at Buffalo Cabin that zigzags its way up the mountain. The trail will be easier to maintain and more hiker friendly, but still steep. Then 4,900 feet of the old braided trail will be closed and revegetated.

The USFS crew will do the hardest work followed by the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps (RMYC), which will be funded by the State Parks/Trails grant (if we get it — keep your fingers crossed).

Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado (VOC) will be doing a weekend of restoration work August 7-8, 2004. FENW will schedule two workdays (TBD) for construction and/or restoration.

SALT LICK TRAIL NEWS

by Jim Anthony

Mountain bikers are currently riding illegally in a section of the Eagles Nest Wilderness between the Scenic Overlook trail and the Salt Lick Trail. This area is located near the Wildernest subdivision.

The Friends of the Eagles Nest Wilderness (FENW) and the Summit Fat Tire Society (SFTS) will partner with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to build a trail that will skirt the Wilderness boundary. All three groups conducted an on ground survey and GPS of the proposed route on Nov. 4, 2003. The project is planned for the summer of 2005. The FENW and SFTS will each solicit grant dollars in 2004 to support the project. The USFS will perform the planning and determine an approximate

cost of the project. The cost estimate and plan are expected to be completed in the summer of 2004 with grant proposal submissions to follow.

OFFER FOR FENW MEMBERS

from Rebecca McCreery

In cooperation with Friends of the Eagles Nest Wilderness, Community First Mortgage (CFM) invites you to look into our *Sharing Advantage* program. With this program: CFM helps you realize your home ownership and financial goals. CFM helps support our local community in the process.

Through the CFM *Sharing Advantage* program, when you purchase or refinance a home with a Community First Mortgage loan, CFM will make a \$300.00 contribution to Friends of the Eagles Nest Wilderness.

CFM offers: Home Equity Loans, 100% financing, Renovation Loans, Reverse Mortgages, Self Employed, First Time Homebuyers, Bridge Loans, Low Competitive Rates, and more.

Contact Rebecca McCreery at 970-547-5277 for more information. Thanks, Rebecca, for this generous offer!

RICK NEWTON NEW DISTRICT RANGER

by Maryann Gaug

After many months of advertising and checking out candidates, Rick Newton was chosen the new District Ranger for Dillon Ranger District. Rick had been acting district ranger from March through May. He officially took his new position in early November 2003.

Rick was previously district ranger of Leadville Ranger District. During Oct. to end of Dec., Beth Boyst, our Wilderness manager, became acting district ranger in Leadville, but her stint is now over and she's back to watching out for the best interests of the Eagles Nest, Ptarmigan, and Holy Cross Wilderness areas and the proposed Red Table Mountain Wilderness south of Eagle.

Welcome to DRD, Rick!

NEW AND RETURNING MEMBERS

from Jim Anthony

Returning members: Tom Aguirre, Copy Copy, William Greene, Marge Josephson, John & Connie McKeague, Michael Miller, David Owens, Todd Robertson, Richard Rowley, Martha Jo & Robert Sani, Irwen & Barb Strauss, Kim Fenske.

New members: James & Elaine Bennett, Bob & Linda Hrycaj, Sally Liu, Roy & Joyce Piskadlo, Marie Roberts, Marshall Rutz.

Thanks for joining/rejoining FENW and helping us be Wilderness stewards!

SILVERTHORNE PROVIDES IN-KIND

by Maryann Gaug

The Town of Silverthorne has graciously donated showers and one day of daily admissions for the four RMYC crews at the Silverthorne Rec Center during the Buffalo Mountain trail project work in summer 2004. Value of this in-kind donation is \$1,571.

VOC will receive two days of camping at Rainbow Park, use of the Rec Center kitchen, and free showers one night.

Thanks, Silverthorne! Those showers will be appreciated as well as the nice camping area!

STATE OF FENW MESSAGE FROM OUR PREZ, CURRIE

by Currie Craven

Greetings of the seasons to all Friends of the Eagles Nest Wilderness! Thanks to all for a great and productive field season. We got a lot accomplished and have exciting plans for the future. We have many volunteers to thank for our success, but I would like to express heartfelt thanks to long time board member Anne Robinson.

After well over four years of dedicated service to FENW as Secretary of the Board, Anne has to step aside in order to further career goals. Anne's enthusiastic approach to her duties and terrific sense of humor will be sorely missed and difficult to replace. One example which comes to mind (of many which I recall with great joy) is the suggestion Anne posed in a light-hearted frame of mind, and falls in the "I wish I said that" category. The FENW board was having a potluck dinner/meeting a couple of years ago and in the context of discussing the (in)famous White River Forest Plan's moving target of a release date, Anne had a stroke of brilliance. In her usual insightful manner, she cut to the chase and asked if the Rotary Club can do an Ice Melt Contest, why can't FENW suggest a "Guess the Forest Plan Release Date Contest"? Immediately, the concerned conversation was interrupted for a hearty laugh, followed by a moment of "why not?" The result was a very successful fundraising project supported by our long-time supporters and Friends at Wilderness Sports. The contest was reportedly a terrific ice breaker comment during a meeting of the White River National Forest's Leadership Team. Those of you who know Forest Supervisor Martha Ketelle are aware she possesses a very good sense of humor, much needed during the Plan's evolution. Thanks to Anne, glad we could help.

Calling for Board Members

Of course, the loss of such a critical human asset such as Anne prompts me to issue another call to interested Friends to step up and go over the usual volunteer measure and join the Board. We do have an enormous need for Board of Directors members. The time commitments are not as onerous as may be misperceived. We meet monthly, usually on the third Thursday, at 6 p.m. We have reserved a room at the County Commons in Frisco. That said, we are a fun loving bunch, not above a potluck or rendezvous at a local watering hole. Please do consider taking a few moments to reflect on what a vibrant FENW means to you, call a Board member, and chat about your potential contributions to the cause of effective stewardship of Summit County's Wilderness.

New White River Wilderness Area Proposal Status

As reported in previous newsletters, FENW has been involved with other conservation groups on the White River in promoting additional Wilderness designations in the context of implementation of the Selected Alternative "K." As the Forest Plan has been chosen and obviously covers National Forest System Lands and not Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands, decisions made in Utah regarding designation of additional Wilderness should not impact our efforts. The loose coalition of conservation groups will soon be publicizing our areas proposed for congressional action as Wilderness. This important matter will

be discussed at greater length in future newsletters. Please contact me if you would like me to share information in-depth. You can also check out the proposals at www.aspenwildernessworkshop.org.

Two Celebrations in 2004!

Next year will give cause for celebration! The landmark Wilderness Act will be 40! Working with the USFS Region 2 Wilderness Stewardship Network, we are planning opportunities for showcasing the positive impact of volunteerism. As usual with such celebration, planning will be essential for getting the "bounce for the ounce." However, the party has been postponed by Washington, D.C. cats until after Nov. 2004 election!

Additional merrymaking and joyous celebration will be observed in May, 2004. For those counting our years of dedication to public land stewardship, Friends of the Eagles Nest Wilderness will be 10 years old in May. We have made a difference! Stay tuned for FENW's celebration party.

This is yet another reason to issue a call for additional Board members and volunteers with needed skill sets to prepare for the celebratory opportunities such as our new and improved traveling interpretative display. This display will be of great assistance as we take the message of the joys of getting down and dirty on the trail to vast and (hopefully) adoring throngs of potential volunteers.

Thanks to Supporting Businesses

Once again, I have greatly exceeded allocated time and space. Thanks again to our terrific Board, fabulous volunteers, and invaluable supporters. Please patronage our business supporters with your business, and say a great, big Gracias for backing FENW. Go see the wonderful folks at Wilderness Sports, Abbey's Coffee, City Market (Dillon and Breck), Breckenridge Brewery, The Boatyard in Frisco, Mountain Outfitters, Arapaho Basin Employee Environmental Fund, 1st Bank of Silverthorne, and BigHorn Materials. A very special nod to the incomparable The Summit Foundation, the Merriman Family Foundation, the Colorado Mountain Club Foundation, the Summit County Board of County Commissioners, the Towns of Silverthorne and Frisco, and our beloved Frank Smith and the Bayou Fund.

Hope you had a memorable holiday, and please accept my deepest thanks and personal indebtedness to our members and supporters.

Let it snow, let it snow!!

JIMMY GAUDRY LEAVES WHITE RIVER N.F.

After many years as a seasonal Wilderness ranger and then Lead Wilderness Ranger, Jimmy found a full-time, permanent job with the USFS. He's now the Outdoor Recreation Planner for Leadville Ranger District, just up and over the hill.

Jimmy sent the Board an email: "Just wanted to send a thanks for all the work accomplished in the Eagles Nest and Ptarmigan Peak by you. Being here just a short time has already clued me into what an amazing group you are and how great it is that Wilderness has your support."

Good luck, Jimmy, and thanks for all of your hard work!

Friends of the Eagles Nest Wilderness
P.O. Box 4504
Frisco, CO 80443-4504

MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION

Please note your membership expiration date located below your address on the envelope. If your membership has expired a "We miss you" sheet is inserted in this newsletter. Please use the membership form below to renew your membership. Please help us with new membership by passing this form along to friends and family.

FENW BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Currie Craven, Chairman/President, 453-9056
Jonathan Kriegel, VP, Travel Management Task Force, Trail chairperson, 262-2399
open, Secretary — any volunteers?????
Jim Anthony, Treasurer, 262-0984
Maryann Gaug, At-Large and grant proposals, 468-6219

FRIENDS OF THE EAGLES NEST WILDERNESS MEMBERSHIP FORM

Yes! I want to join Friends and help preserve Summit County Wilderness. Sign me up at the:

Trailhead level (\$10 per year)

Buffalo Mountain level (\$20 per year)

Cataract Lake level (\$30 per year)

Red-Buffalo Pass level (\$50 per year)

Eagles Nest level (\$100 per year)

Mount Powell level (\$500 per year)

Name: _____ Mailing Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Are you willing to work on volunteer projects? _____

Email Address: _____ I can best work _____ weekdays _____ weekends

Please mail your membership form to: Friends of the Eagles Nest Wilderness, PO Box 4504, Frisco, CO 80443-4504.

For more information, call 970-453-9056 or 970-262-2399.