

Forty-third Official Newsletter

May 2003



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. Three Wilderness Rangers cover this area in the summer (31,886 acres each). We presently raise money through membership dues, donations, and grants.

Annual Membership Party!

Come join us for the Friend's Annual Membership Party! Enjoy an evening of beer, food, a slide show and annual update on Friend's activities.

Date: Thursday, June 5
Time: 6:30 p.m.- 9:00 p.m.
Location: Carter Park Pavilion, Breckenridge.
Come sunshine, rain, or snow! Carter Park has picnic tables outside if the weather is nice and a snuggy, warm building to escape to in case of bad weather or as evening chill sets in.

Directions: Drive to Breckenridge, from Main Street turn onto Adams Street (Left if coming from Frisco, right if coming from Blue River). Drive two blocks. Turn right on High Street. High Street runs into Carter Park. Park and join us in the park pavilion.

Food and Beer - donated by local sponsors.

Election of Board members

Slide Show: Clare Bastible of the Colorado Mountain Club will do a slide show on proposed Colorado Wilderness Areas.

FENW Alive and Active

If you've noticed a lack of newsletters in the last year, you're very observant.

Board members have been busy with the Travel Management Plan and with a citizens' Wilderness proposal for the White River National Forest. See articles later in this newsletter. We also keep an eye and ear open for issues affecting the Eagles Nest and Ptarmigan Peak Wilderness areas and take any action necessary to protect our backyard. We've been quiet but busy!

If you're wondering if you're still a member and if your dues are up-to-date, buy yourself a beer or glass of wine or treat yourself to a great hike! Dues renewal notices are included in this newsletter. We hope you continue to support FENW in its mission 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

Tentative Trail Dates For Summer

In conjunction with local Forest Service rangers we have scheduled three trail projects for this summer season. The dates and projects are somewhat tentative at this point due to staff issues for the Forest Service and availability of Wilderness staff as well as budgetary constraints. The Buffalo Mountain project remains a high priority with both the board and the Forest Service but is unlikely to be started in 2003 because of budget cuts. See information on Buffalo, staff, and budget later in this newsletter.

June 21: Gateway Project — clear downed timber and brush, general maintenance at local Wilderness trailheads (date firm).

July 19: Wheeler Trailhead — relocate and improve parking at the popular Wheeler trailhead near Copper Mtn.

August 23: Project to be determined depending on needs and funding

Please mark your calendars and try and reserve some dates to come out and work on trails in the Eagles Nest Wilderness. We will keep you updated as these dates get firmed up and more details are available.



FENW work project on Lily Pad Lake Trail August 2002.

A-Basin Employees Donate \$1,778

In observation of Earth Day, Friends of the Eagles Nest Wilderness recognized and thanked Arapahoe Basin employees and management for their significant contributions to FENW which help support our great Wilderness.

"It's all about protecting what you think is important and what is right outside your own back door," said Alan Henceroth, Director of Mountain Operations at Arapahoe Basin and contributor to the fund.

Arapahoe Basin ski area employees have developed the employee-sponsored A-Basin Employee Environmental Fund. The ski area matches employee donations dollar for dollar up to \$1,000. Since its conception two years ago, this fund has donated \$1,778 to FENW. An equal amount has been donated to Continental Divide Land Trust.

On April 21, Alan Henceroth presented Currie Craven and Jim Anthony a three-foot long symbolic check. The duo then presented a framed certificate of appreciation to the employees for their contributions.

FENW will use the donations from A-Basin toward local wilderness education and trail reconstruction and maintenance projects.

A-Basin wants to set an example in Summit County. Henceroth challenged other businesses to start similar programs.

A hearty thank you to A-Basin employees and management!



Alan Henceroth, Jim Anthony, and Currie Craven on April 21

Mud Season Hiking

With the snow now melting faster than it accumulates, trails are re-appearing. When hiking, please remember to GET MUDDY!

To preserve our trails and prevent them from becoming bigger, muddier messes, please practice a few skills.

Walk through the mud or around it on the snow instead of on the trail edges. Walking around kills vegetation and widens the trail. Wear water-proofed boots and gaiters and bring extra socks. If the mud is sinky, gooey, turn around and return after the trail dries.

Wilderness Staff Information

by Jimmy Gaudry

The East Zone Wilderness Ranger Staff will consist of Cindy Ebbert, Lisa Smith, and Jimmy Gaudry. We will also be given much assistance from the East Zone Wilderness Trails Crew led by Don Dressler and a seasonal Wilderness Trails crew member based out of the Dillon office. [editor's note: the East Zone consists of Holy Cross, Eagles Nest, and Ptarmigan Peak Wilderness areas.]

Cindy Ebbert is returning to Dillon for her fifth season. We are grateful to have her back as she brings a wealth of knowledge with her that only a seasoned ranger can have. She will be the only Wilderness Ranger dedicated to the Ptarmigan Peak Area and the Dillon side of the Eagles Nest.

Lisa Smith is returning for her fourth season. She brings to the program a broad field level knowledge of the Wilderness Areas on the East Zone of the White River. She has worked as a Wilderness Ranger in the Holy Cross, Eagles Nest, and Ptarmigan Peak areas and worked out of both the Eagle and Dillon Ranger districts. Although she will continue to reside in Summit County she will be based out of the Holy Cross office. After this season she will have seen more terrain than any other Wilderness Ranger working here.

A few of the benefits Lisa and Cindy provide us with is experience and training in Wilderness Management, law enforcement, environmental education, and wildland firefighting. All of these skills allow them to contribute to the White River National Forest East Zone Wilderness Program. It's a great asset to the Wilderness to have them both working in our local areas.

Jimmy Gaudry will be back for his eighth season in Dillon. He will be working in the Holy Cross, Eagles Nest, and Ptarmigan Peak areas. In addition to his work here, he continues to participate in the [Forest] Chief's Wilderness Advisory Group as the Region 2 representative. They are presently working to provide the Chief of the Forest Service with an accurate picture of what is needed to get the ground level work in Wilderness accomplished.

Elk Calving During May and June

Elk and deer will be dropping their calves and fawns in the next two months. With little ones in tow and trying to recover from a long winter, elk and deer are both more vulnerable to disturbances by humans and dogs. Please Keep Your Dogs On Leash to avoid unnecessary stress to our resident ungulates and their newborns.

Trail Maintenance Reports Requested

As spring blossoms and you start venturing farther into our Wilderness areas, please report any trail problems such as erosion or downed trees to either Jimmy Gaudry, 262-3452 or Jonathan Kriegel, 262-2399. Your input will be used to plan the Gateways project on June 21.

A Short (?) Note from the Prez O' the Board

by Currie Craven

Wintry April greetings. I hope this finds you and yours well and none too sore from all the drought-inspired snow shoveling. Personally, it will be along time before I grouse about too much snow or rain. Everyone I've engaged in conversation about weather is apparently unanimous, a return to the blessings of afternoon rain showers, abundant wildflowers, the opportunity to build a campfire (where permitted and consistent with Leave No Trace), and the experience of vistas free of forest fire smoke and smell will be essential to the joys of summer as we know and love it.

Stewardship and Volunteer Opportunities

As in days of yore, real winter inspires us to seek warmer climes and perhaps a bit of sand between one's toes. Well and good. Travel safe and happy. Upon your return, please consider opportunities for active stewardship of our local Wilderness Areas. Given the great snow, great avalanches will no doubt have deposited great debris along some of our favorite trails. Please see the notes about volunteer projects and mark your calendars accordingly. We will be challenged to provide plenty of willing hands and strong backs to this year's trail clearing efforts. I encourage all of you to become aware of other challenges.

Our able and talented Forest Service land managers tell the Board that FENW may be of considerable help by revisiting the counting of noses. This is fairly easy, and does not involve detailed public contact. Funding for our friends in the Wilderness Ranger line of work is in part dependant upon those with the power of fiscal disbursement having accurate usage figures upon which to allocate resources (dollars and people). Early in the history of FENW, we did participate in social monitoring. As the data was collected, it was difficult to determine where it finally landed, and to what use it was employed. I understand Congress (and therefore Forest Service decision makers) now expresses interest in more fully understanding how many hiking boots, hooves, and paws actually travel our trails and enter our Wilderness.

Some long time members remember our social monitoring efforts. If this volunteer opportunity does appear on the radar scope and individuals participate, please know I have been assured the information will be considered beyond useful in making the case for a responsible level of ranger presence and essential trail crew staffing.

Funding Issues

Once again, allocations from those who control the purse strings of the Forest Service are not sufficient to adequately maintain our public lands, locally, regionally, and nationally. Please take time to consider this as a priority for concerned lovers of the lands and communicate your concern to our elected representatives. I have been fortunate to be able to have met with our Congressman, Mark Udall, on a few occasions recently. I have informed Mark of our organization's concerns regarding funding levels for Wilderness programs in general and for the abysmal level of funding which reaches the Dillon Ranger District. If the

system for allocating funds were tweaked even slightly, some of the fee dollars generated on the District that goes directly to the Treasury [*editor's note: think ski area fees in particular*] could go along way to properly administrating National Forest System lands here in Summit County.

One possible form of assistance FENW can render will be discussed at our annual General Membership Meeting and Party and will be touched on below. Please see specifics regarding this gala event earlier in this newsletter.

Wilderness Additions Update

You fine members of FENW did endorse the Board's active participation in the Forest Plan Revision Process. Part of this effort led us to become involved with a loose association known as the White River Conservation Coalition. Formation of this Coalition was precipitated by requests for input from Congressmen representing communities and citizens near the White River National Forest. Please see the update on this Wilderness Proposal penned by our own Jonathan Kriegel in this newsletter. Check out the link to the Aspen Wilderness Workshop and further information on this exciting proposal. Being a lover of aspen forests, I can't wait to have the chance to go hike areas such as the East Willow parcel. This is an example of a needed addition to the Wilderness Preservation System as underrepresented vegetation type and critical connectivity between core habitat areas linking the White River and Gunnison National Forests.

Wilderness Stewardship Network

One of FENW's primary tenets has been to promote active stewardship of our Wilderness Areas and if given the opportunity, assist similar organizations become a reality. I was invited to participate in a Forest Service Region 2-wide "steering committee" and help explore possibilities to establish a network of volunteer organizations dedicated to precisely this. The Wilderness Stewardship Network (WSN) has met at the Regional Office (RO) in metro Denver, and Durango. Participating organizations include; Indian Peaks Wilderness Alliance, Poudre Wilderness Volunteers, the Cloud Peak Chapter of Wilderness Watch, the San Juan Mountains Association, the Friends of the Mt. Zirkel Wilderness, and Black Hills Parks and Forest Association, and FENW. WSN is actively seeking an executive director to organize, write grants, and coordinate outreach efforts to encourage Wilderness stewardship across the USFS Region 2 (Colorado, Wyoming, South Dakota, Kansas, and Nebraska).

This could be precedent setting across the entire National Forest system. One potential boost for organizing will be the 40th anniversary of the Wilderness Act and celebrations in Washington, DC and Denver next year. A theme of these celebrations will be volunteerism, and participants will be scheduled to make forays into the hinterlands and see the positive effect of volunteer efforts such as ours.

Many issues are still being sorted out regarding this new entity. The next meeting of the WSN steering committee is on May 19 in Aspen during the Wilderness Ranger Training Academy.

(cont'd on page 4)

(cont'd from page 3)

Board Members Needed

Please check out the rest of our extensive happenings provided elsewhere and in more enjoyable form in this keepsake edition of the FENW newsletter. Plan on continuing your tradition of volunteers without equal during our trail projects, social monitoring, Act II, and, if you feel so moved and inspired, consider joining the Board of Directors. We are a fun loving bunch and could use some good people to help get even more done for the preservation of Wilderness, the enduring soul of America.

See you on the trail, and at the annual "Wilderbash" on June 5.

Currie



Buffalo Mountain from Gore Range Trail in April

Buffalo Mountain Trail Project Update

by Anne Robinson

Buffalo Mountain is probably the most recognized mountain in the county. Many people are motivated to hike up the deeply eroded, braided paths to the top. In some places there are up to five concurrent trails and waist-deep gullies caused by hikers.

This summer, for two weeks, a forest service trail crew will work rehabilitating the trail. Some of the multiple trails will be eliminated. Drainage will be improved on the existing trails.

This summer's trail project will be part of a much larger long-term project to improve the Buffalo Mountain trail. The forest service is having wildlife biologists, a high alpine trail specialist and others contribute toward an overall plan to reroute and rehabilitate the trail to reduce the harm currently being done to the environment. By the end of the summer the Forest Service expects to have a comprehensive plan ready. FENW may be able to contribute to the project through volunteer trail projects and working on sources of funding.

The larger long-term project will reroute the trail more into the trees and include switchbacks to be more hiker and environmentally friendly.

Update On Colorado Wilderness Proposal

by Jonathan Kriegel

FENW has been extensively involved with a broad coalition of local environmental and recreational groups to promote a proposal for several new Wilderness areas in Colorado. This work has resulted in a Citizens 2003 White River Proposal which was released at a press conference at Two Rivers Park in Glenwood Springs on April 21, 2003. The proposal can be viewed at www.aspenwildernessworkshop.org/future.html. Also feel free to contact Jonathan Kriegel for copies or further information.

The proposal names 26 new or additions to existing areas (750,000 acres) for consideration by Congress for inclusion in the Wilderness system in Colorado. All of the suggested areas meet Federal criteria for Wilderness designation and were specifically selected for their value as wildlife habitat. One of the priorities of the proposal was to add a variety of different habitats at different elevations to our Wilderness system.

In Summit County, Acorn Creek and Ute Pass are proposed as additions to the Ptarmigan Peak Wilderness. These areas were also recommended in our earlier Forest Plan Revision comments which were adopted in the final revision. Of potential interest to many of our members, the Citizens Proposal nominated Spraddle Creek as an addition to the Eagles Nest Wilderness. Spraddle Creek is a popular ski touring destination in the vicinity of Eiseman Hut just outside of Vail.

Press release packets have been sent to our state Congressional and Senate representatives. It is our hope that our legislators will use this proposal as an aid in advocating for more Wilderness in Colorado and Summit County.

Changes at Dillon Ranger District

Last January, changes happened quickly at the Dillon Ranger District office. First Jamie Connell, District Ranger, accepted a position as Field Manager of the BLM's Glenwood Field office. This position is roughly equivalent to the White River National Forest Supervisor (Martha Kettle). Jamie left in mid-January.

Rick Newton came on board in early March as acting district ranger until Jamie's permanent replacement can be found. Rick has been district ranger in Leadville Ranger District and is now commuting to work in Summit County.

Next Angela Glenn left for a job with the National Park Service in Denver. Angela had taken care of campgrounds, non-wilderness trails, and outfitter/guide and special use permits. In the interim, Penny Wu, who oversees the recreation program for both the BLM and Forest Service in Dolores, is spending March through May helping out.

Sue Miller, snow ranger, and Tom Healy, law enforcement officer, left in May for positions with Pike Ranger District in Colorado Springs.

Replacements for all are in process.



Wilderness Portal sign on North Willow Creek Trail on April 13. Just one week earlier, the snow was just below "River" on the sign.

Board Members and Helpful Hands Needed

Since the last newsletter in May 2002, two Board members have resigned and two have returned.

Treasurer Liz Bidinotto resigned at the end of 2002 due to personal reasons. Thanks, Liz, for your help!

Long-time Board member Carol Padlick also resigned. She is very active in Canine Partners of the Rockies, which trains service dogs for people with disabilities other than blindness. She and her husband will be moving to Salida in a year or so. Carol still helps FENW whenever possible, especially in the grant proposal writing arena. Many thanks to Carol for her years of helping FENW.

Luckily Jim Anthony, former treasurer and newsletter editor, returned from about a five year sojourn in San Francisco and Hawaii (must be tough!). Jim has resumed his previous role as treasurer. Welcome back, Jim!

Maryann Gaug, former newsletter editor and secretary also returned. She's been active behind the scenes making sure the interpretive poster and bulletin board projects reached completion.

FENW currently has five active Board members. Our by-laws allow for nine total. Additional Board members are needed to help with projects and to share the workload. More people mean less work per person and will allow FENW to accomplish more than we already are.

Helping hands are also needed. Carol Padlick is a good example. If you don't have time to be a Board member with monthly meetings and regular tasks, please consider helping out within an area of your expertise.

The Board would like to update FENW's traveling poster board, scope out some ideas on Wilderness education and awareness, etc.

If you're interested in helping in any way, please contact Currie at 453-9056 or Jonathan at 262-2399.

Permits Required in Holy Cross and Maroon-Bells Snowmass Wilderness Areas

Starting June 1, 2003, wilderness use permits will be required year-round for all use in both the Holy Cross and Maroon-Bells Snowmass Wilderness areas.

The self-issued permits are free and unlimited and can be obtained at any official trailhead or certain Forest Service offices (not Dillon). One copy is dropped at the trailhead box while the other stays with the person or group.

One person in each group will be required to carry a permit. Locals who frequently use the same trailhead in the Holy Cross may obtain a monthly permit.

Why a permit system? Monitoring wilderness status is mandated by the Wilderness Act of 1964. It's no secret that the Forest Service does not have adequate use data. In order to protect and preserve the Wilderness, managers such as Beth Boyst (East Zone Wilderness manager) need accurate and reliable data upon which to base decisions.

The purpose of the permit is to (1) obtain accurate wilderness visitor use data and (2) to educate visitors. The Forest Service is expecting a high level of cooperation and compliance. For those not so inclined, lack of a permit could result in a fine.

The information to be filled out on the permit includes begin and end dates, entry/exit points, destination/camp locations, group leader's name and zip code, number of people, livestock, and dogs. Outfitters, educational groups, and clubs have an additional box to fill out.

The back of the permit that stays with the person contains the regulations specific to the particular Wilderness area.

Several drainages in both Wilderness areas are crowded during peak periods. The data gathered from the permits will be used to evaluate impacts from recreation and help determine which management strategies to implement, if any.

The permit system is also in effect in the Cloud Peak Wilderness in Wyoming. A modified version may also start in Lost Creek and Mt. Evans Wilderness areas. The Indian Peaks Wilderness area near Boulder has had a permit system since the mid-80s.

Beginning in a few wilderness areas, the permit system will eventually (goal is 2005) be implemented in all wilderness areas in Region 2, which includes Colorado, Wyoming, South Dakota, and Nebraska.

Forest Service Budget Tidbits

by Maryann Gaug

The bottom line is that the Forest Service budget doesn't vary much from year to year, meaning no adjustment for inflation (or raises). From 1992-2002, the budget is down 52% in terms of real dollars inflated to 2002 dollars.

The White River is the most heavily used recreation area in the US but the recreation budget receives less money than timber. Congress does not fund recreation.

We can really help by volunteering, adopting trailheads, and finding grant opportunities and obtaining grants or other funding. (from a longer article that didn't fit!)

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
Anne Robinson, Secretary, 468-6758
Jim Anthony, Treasurer, 262-0984
Maryann Gaug, At-Large, 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.

Call (970) 453-9056 or (970) 262-2399 for more information