

Happy New Year from ESWA!



Photo courtesy of Richard Seeley Photography

NEW YEAR MESSAGE FROM 2024 CHAIR ZACH KAUK

Happy New Year to all my fellow Wilderness lovers! As the incoming Chair of ESWA for 2024, I would like to thank Karn Stiegelmeier for her leadership of ESWA in 2023. See our tribute to Karn, below in this newsletter.

We appreciate your donations and support - and we especially appreciate our volunteers. With your help, we intend to grow our programs further in 2024. It's never too late (or too early) to start volunteering. One of the side benefits of volunteering is meeting new people and developing lifelong friendships. If you're not already one of our volunteers, please check out some of the opportunities [here](#).

On behalf of the entire ESWA board, I wish you an adventurous and prosperous 2024!



Zach Kauk
2024 ESWA Chair

THANK YOU KARN STIEGELMEIER!



ESWA was fortunate to have a Chair during 2023 who is a passionate and experienced advocate for the environment, a former Summit County commissioner, and an avid Wilderness Ranger patroller. Under Karn’s leadership, ESWA comes into 2024 stronger than ever.

Under her leadership, ESWA volunteers donated many hours of their personal time to educate visitors about Wilderness, fought noxious weeds, cleared more than 570 trees, hosted four llama-supported work trips, and helped build a new trail to Surprise Lake. Karn continued to work her magic to find excellent contributors to our weekly “Get Wild!” column in the Summit Daily (as well as authoring articles herself), and pushing forward many advocacy projects, including the renaming of the Gore Range, which she has been working on tirelessly for years.

In 2023, Karn was also instrumental in founding the ESWA/A-Basin Wild & Scenic Film Festival, which was a big success and generated more than \$12,000 to benefit Wilderness.

All of this underlies why the High Country Conservation Center honored Karn in March 2022 with its [Tim McClure Lifetime Achievement Award](#).

We are grateful to be part of her lifetime of achievement!

DID YOU FORGET ESWA ON COLORADO GIVES DAY?

DONATE/RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY!

You can still donate/renew your annual membership through ESWA's [website](#), or mail us a check to ESWA at PO Box 4504 Frisco, CO 80443. Your support is essential to ESWA's mission to protect and preserve our four beautiful Wilderness Areas in Eagle and Summit counties! This year, we are using email confirmations of donations, but are happy to send ESWA stickers upon request. Donors of \$250 and more may choose from any of our swag items - the lovely photo notecards, T-shirt, knit cuffed cap or ball cap, or the adorable stuffed llama.

WHAT TO DO NEXT WITH WEEDS?



A major part of the ESWA WeedSpotter program has been the eradication of weeds in several major infestations: Harrigan Creek, Slate Creek, Dead Dog, and Lake Creek, just to name a few. Five years into the program, we've successfully fought back weeds in several of these locations. Unfortunately, our major funding source, the Ski Conservation Fund (primarily funded by Vail Resorts) has dropped ESWA as an organization they are willing to fund - due to ESWA's [opposition](#) to Vail Resort's planned housing development project on the native [Bighorn's winter habitat](#). While we recognize the critical need for housing in Eagle County, the many alternate sites offered to Vail Resorts by the

Town of Vail makes destruction of the Bighorns' winter habitat unnecessary.

Without the NFF-SCF grant-funded eradication program, ESWA's WeedSpotter program still includes:

Annual weed pulls

Weed-education events

Ongoing efforts by trained Volunteer Wilderness Rangers and other ESWA members to (1) adopt and treat individual infestations in our Wilderness Areas, and (2) report (and where possible treat) infestations detected during our outings.

We are hoping that the NFF may take on ESWA's previously grant-funded weed-abatement efforts. Meanwhile, we are always looking for inspiration for new ways to expand and reinvigorate the program. If you have ideas and enthusiasm for the WeedSpotter program, please let us know! Email Jim Alexander at jimofcolorado@gmail.com.

And please take a moment to let Vail Resorts know your feelings about their decision to block our weed-eradication funding in reprisal for ESWA's efforts to save the Bighorns' winter habitat. You can call Vail Resorts at 970-754-0004 and/or email comments@vailresorts.com.

WILD AND SCENIC FILM FESTIVAL ONLY 2 MONTHS AWAY - MARCH 2!



Mark your calendars! March 2, 2024 will be our second ESWA Wild and Scenic Film Festival at the Riverwalk in Breckenridge. There will be

many amazing and inspiring films showcasing our interests in protecting Wild places. Please contact Karn Stiegelmeier karnstieg@comcast.net if you have interest in volunteering for watching some of the remarkable films we get to choose from, or if you would like to volunteer to help the evening of the Festival.

UPDATE – TO BOLT OR NOT TO BOLT (IN WILDERNESS)

ESWA's Advocacy Committee continues to monitor the misnamed "Protect America's Rock Climbing" (PARC) Act, which is pending in Congress (more [here](#)). Now the USFS and National Park Service have weighed in with their own (and better) proposal.

The 2021 Consolidated Appropriations Act required the USFS to develop a general guidance on rock climbing (and fixed anchors like bolts) in National Forests and Wilderness Areas. In coordination with the National Park Service, the USFS issued a [draft Guidance](#) on November 17, 2023. The Guidance properly finds that the drilling and cementing of bolts in Wilderness Areas violates the 1964 Wilderness Act's prohibition against "installations" - even if their purpose is for climber safety.

The Guidance does allow bolting in other portions of the National Forests, but finds that bolting is inherently contrary to various goals of the Wilderness Act, such as solitude, resource preservation, and maintenance of primitive character. But the Guidance also recognizes that bolts were placed and in use in some Wilderness Areas prior to the congressional Wilderness designation, and in special circumstances could provide opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

The Guidance provides that existing bolts can continue to be used, but no new bolts can be placed, pending development of individual climbing management plans by local forest superintendents in a public process. ESWA will submit comments on the proposed USFS guidance by the January 15, 2024 deadline. You can also submit your own comments in support [here](#).

ENJOY WRITING ABOUT WILDERNESS AND WILDLIFE?



ESWA is fortunate to have a column each Friday in the Summit Daily on topics concerning Wilderness and its inhabitants. Entitled “*Get Wild*,” topics vary from mushrooms to pikas. We are always looking for volunteer authors for these 600-word columns. We are happy to help with editing and topic suggestions. Interested? Contact Frances Hartogh frances.hartogh@gmail.com or Karn Stiegelmeier karnstieg@comcast.net.

HELP ESWA GET \$\$\$\$\$ FOR FREE!!

There is an easy way for you to give money to ESWA at no cost to you. City Market and King Soopers offers this opportunity. They will donate a percentage of every dollar you spend at their stores when you use your normal Loyalty Club Card. Here is all you need to do:

Go to the Community Rewards page on the King Sooper’s website: <https://www.kingsoopers.com/i/community/community-rewards>.

Click “Enroll Now.”

If you already have an online account, sign in using your email and password and skip to step 6.

If you don’t have an account, click “Create Account” at the bottom of the page.

Enter the requested information and click “Create Account.”

Under “Find an Organization” search for Eagle Summit Wilderness Alliance.

Click Enroll.

THAT’S IT. NOW EVERY TIME SHOP YOU GIVE BACK TO WILDERNESS. THANK YOU.