

## EAGLE POST 38

The newsletter of **Friends of Eagles Nest Wilderness**, apprising you of important activities in and around Eagles Nest, Holy Cross, and Ptarmigan Peak Wilderness Areas.

[VIEW IN BROWSER](#)



Before we begin...

**1.** The FENW **PHOTO CONTEST** is officially OPEN! Submit your favorite photos (up to 3) from Eagles Nest, Holy Cross, or Ptarmigan Peak Wilderness. Send them to [photocontest@fenw.org](mailto:photocontest@fenw.org). Deadline is July 31. Read detailed rules [HERE](#).

**2.** SAVE THE DATE: **AUG 18** FENW's WILDERFEST as we **THANK YOU** for your support and *celebrate* our 25th year, new name, new logo, new Award, and more... Sunday, Aug 18. noon-3pm, Frisco Historic Park

**3.** Join us in July for **TRAIL & CAMPSITE Projects**

\*July 12-14 - Eagles Nest Wilderness **Overnight** with llamas to Slate Lakes. *NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY!* Meet Dom and Powell, our pack **llamas** who will schlep tools and gear deep into the backcountry for us. Learn more [HERE](#).

\*July 13 - Weed Pull with the Sierra Club at 9:30 at Acorn Creek. Expect to hike about a mile, work gloves will be provided. Contact [Jim Alexander](#).

July 2019

Dear \*|FNAME|\*

Greetings! Our topic this month is

**Lessons from Mt. Everest**

By Mike Browning

### INTRODUCTION:

We read the shocking accounts of the crowds on Mt. Everest this spring, and of the tragic deaths, eleven in all, including Coloradan John Kulish. The situation has changed mightily in the 29 years since 1990, when Mike Browning and his small team had the mountain almost entirely to



themselves. Mike's essay below is full of fascinating images, thoughtful reflections, and concrete proposals.

First, be sure to download the pictures, which show startling side-by-side images of his climb in 1990, and news media images of the crowds in 2019.

Second, Mike reflects on those changes and the messages they hold for Wilderness lovers right here in Colorado. His four suggestions are that we take seriously the dangers and challenges of wilderness, that we not focus so intensely on a few places, that we respect the resource (see our special appeal for Restop below his essay), and that we prepare for the inevitable restrictions that will be needed to protect the wilderness as the number of visitors soars.

Third, Mike offers a realistic plan for Everest itself, based on the four principles above, in which climbers must earn their permit to brave the world's highest peak.

We at FENW are glad that Mike, as he enters retirement from his law practice, has chosen to join us. His essay significantly enhances our ongoing efforts to think globally and act locally.

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## **LESSONS FROM EVEREST**

At 8:45 a.m. on May 10, 1990 I was fortunate enough to stand on top of Mt. Everest with five close friends. We were the only ones there. I was the 37<sup>th</sup> American ever to summit. In recent years hundreds of climbers summit each season, and even on the same day. You have probably seen the pictures of the long line of climbers waiting to get to the summit. Can we learn anything from this with respect to our local Wilderness Areas? I think so.



We applied for our Everest permit in 1983 after summiting Mount Shishapangma (the 14<sup>th</sup> highest peak in the world) without Sherpas, porters or bottled oxygen (it was the first American ascent). We had previously climbed over a hundred other peaks around the world. We thought we were ready to



Mike Browning on Everest  
1990

take on Everest. At the time, however, the Nepalese government was issuing only a single permit for a single team each season – one in the Fall and one in Spring. The first Spring permit was not available until 1990. We continued to hone our skills, climbing Makalu (the 5<sup>th</sup> highest peak in the world) in 1987, Aconcagua (the highest point in South America) in 1989, and other high peaks.

In 1989, the Nepalese government changed the rules and began issuing multiple permits for Everest. In 1990, there were two other groups on the mountain with us, still with a total of less than a dozen climbers. One of those groups was what I believe was the first commercial trip on Everest – four experienced Italian climbers guided by Rob Hall of “Into Thin Air” fame.

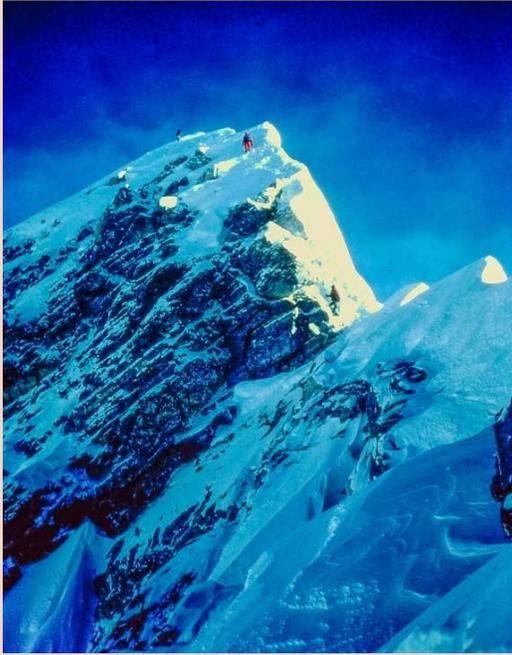


This year, the Nepalese government issued 381 permits. With porters, Sherpas and camp staff, there were well over 1,000 people in Base Camp. It is now a much different experience than in 1990.

1990

## SUMMIT RIDGE

2019



In 1990 Everest was still pretty much a wilderness. We had no cell phones or satellite phones. There were no helicopters for rescue or otherwise. We camped in tents during the two- week trek to Base Camp, whereas nowadays there are Tea Houses all along the way. Once in Base Camp we were cut off from the outside world, except for a mail runner carrying in letters (remember those?) every couple weeks. No party tents, no shower tents, no gourmet food, no calls home, no weather forecasts. No crowds.

1990

## CROSSING THE YELLOW BAND

2019



But wilderness is fragile and all too often fleeting. That applies both to Everest and Wilderness Areas in the United States. We tend to love to death the places we love. Easy transport, commercial trips, light-weight equipment, social media, increasing affluence and the other conveniences of modern life make venturing into wilderness a lot easier, so more and more people do it. But to what end?

Perhaps Everest should teach us some lessons. First, take wilderness seriously. People still die on Everest. People can still die in the Eagles Nest Wilderness. Nature doesn't care whether you live or die, so *you* must. Just because it's easy to get there doesn't mean that it will be a walk in the park.



Second, we need to spread our love out. There are thousands of mountains other than Everest. If you want bragging rights, give to charity. If you want to prove yourself, pick a mountain without fixed ropes and oxygen tanks all the way to the top. Pick a trail other than Lily Pad or Booth Lake. And create more Wilderness areas, both in Colorado and elsewhere.

Third, respect the resource. If Everest can succumb to garbage, so can Cataract Lake and Booth Falls. One person's presence may seem to have no impact, but cumulative impacts can be destructive. Remember that and tread lightly.

Fourth, the day may come when we need to issue permits or use reservation systems to protect our most favorite areas —e.g.. Hanging Lake. Not everyone can have everything they want whenever they want it when there are so many of us. Demographics are destiny. Donate to Planned Parenthood.

As for Everest, powerful forces

## ALL ALONE ON EVEREST

have led to the increase in climbers. It brings money into the coffers of the Nepalese government. It provides jobs for hundreds of local people who have few other opportunities. It is big business for guiding companies, both local and foreign. Any solution to the Everest problem will fail unless it recognizes and works with, rather than against, these economic forces.



Here is my solution to “the Everest problem.” Require that anyone wanting a permit to climb Everest first summit some other 8,000 meter peak. There are thirteen others in the Himalaya, eight of which are in Nepal. The five others are in equally poor areas in Pakistan and Tibet. This would spread out the crowds and actually increase permit revenue for the Nepalese government. It would encourage and allow guiding companies to offer trips to other wonderful mountains, provide more work for Sherpas and porters, and help develop the tourist industry in other parts of Nepal. And it would ensure that those attempting to climb Everest have the requisite experience and skills to not be a danger to themselves and others. Many super strong people don’t acclimate well above 20,000 feet. The only way to know if you will is to have climbed and lived at high altitudes for extended periods before. Figure this out before you go to Everest, not once you get there. Finally, it would help weed out the “one off” climbers who just want bragging rights. Everest should not be your first big mountain. Earn the right to be there. My proposal flows with the economic forces, not against them, so it would seem to have a chance of adoption.

Having inexperienced people on Everest not only ruins the aesthetics of the place, it is dangerous for everyone else on the mountain, both climbers and Sherpas. A conga line moves only as fast as its slowest member. So do people clipped into a fixed line. Earn your opportunity to be on Everest by proving your skills, not just writing a check.

Back home let’s recognize the fragility of our own wilderness areas. Take care of them. Respect them. Increase them. Once they are gone, they are gone forever. Help educate others about the value and fragility of wilderness. One way of doing so is to support FENW.

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ABOUT MIKE BROWNING:

Mike Browning is one of our newest Board members. He was born and raised in Montana. After graduating from Yale Law School in 1977, he returned to his beloved Rocky Mountains and put down roots in Colorado. Mike practiced water law in Boulder for 40 years. He has done an extensive amount of high-altitude mountaineering throughout the world, beginning with all the Colorado 14ers.

His notable summits include the first American ascent of Shishapangma in Tibet in 1983 (the 14th highest peak in the world), Mt. Everest in 1990, and each of the other Seven Summits (the highest peak in each of the seven continents). He and his wife, Frances Hartogh, have spent 30 years hiking throughout both the Eagles Nest and Holy Cross Wilderness Areas. Now that they have both retired they hope to spend even more time in their second home in Vail and do even more hikes in our fabulous Wilderness Areas.



What do we want? NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS! That's right, we're talking how you do your business in the Wilderness - *that* business - specifically NUMBER TWO. Exposed human waste is a seriously growing problem, especially around backcountry lakes, and it's high time to start **packing it out**, just like rafters do in the Grand Canyon. So make a new **business plan** for your next Wilderness trip - check out [RESTOP](#), the leader in personal sanitation and hygiene in the backcountry, as well as many other venues. They have **GENEROUSLY DONATED SAMPLE WAG BAGS** to FDRD and FENW, which our Volunteer Wilderness Rangers will be exhibiting (not demonstrating!) and handing out to backcountry visitors this summer. THANKS [RESTOP](#)!



By the way WAG is an acronym for **W**aste **A**lleviation and **G**elling. Yeah, someone got paid to come up with that. A powder absorbs the moisture (and the smell). The bag fits conveniently inside another bag and is good for 2-3 uses.

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. To open, tear along perforation line.
2. Gently unfold the foil bag and remove toilet paper and antimicrobial wipe.
3. Set foil bag on ground.
4. After use, lift bag with drawstrings...

- Holding straps together, slide liner closed and tie straps. Tuck liner inside foil bag and firmly seal zip-top. Waste is safely contained by solidifying polymers and enzymes.
5. Dispose in trash receptacle. Landfill safe.



A huge thanks to [ARAPAHOE BASIN SKI AREA](#). For more than two decades, A-Basin staff have donated generously to their **Employee Environmental Fund**, of which FENW has been a steady beneficiary. Last year, more than 150 employees donated, led by A-Basin Director **Alan Henceroth**. Our enduring THANKS!



Business Sponsor SPOTLIGHT on  ELITE THERAPEUTICS  one of our major business sponsors. Developed by an oncologist for post-radiation skin therapy, [Elite](#) products provide soothing anti-aging benefits that are of special use in our intense, high altitude sunshine. Supplier to  Support ELITE - support FENW.

Make a donation to FENW....



... make a difference!

### 2019 TRAIL & CAMPSITE WORK SCHEDULE

Join a crew this summer and help maintain trails and campsites in the Wilderness. No training required!

**OVERNIGHT PROJECTS** head deep into the backcountry. Gear is packed by our two llamas - Dom and Powell. Contact Trail Boss [Kate DeMorest](#) to reserve a spot.

**July 12-14** - Eagles Nest Wilderness Overnight with llamas (Slate Lakes, Summit County)

**August 9-11** - Eagles Nest Wilderness Overnight with llamas (Gore Creek, Eagle County)

**DAY PROJECTS** (no reservation necessary)

**June 8** - National Trails Day with FDRD (Salt Lick Trail) (contact [Laurie Alexander](#))

Follow us



Join us! Next **Planning Meeting**  
**THURSDAY JULY 11, 5:30 PM,**  
USFS offices in Minturn & Silverthorne  
(video link)

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

Check out other [recent monthly eNewsletters](#)



The Spring 2019 hard copy newsletter was

mailed in mid-May. It contains two dozen fun and informative articles, all of them about FENW - past, present, and future. If you didn't receive a copy, then *we don't have your mailing address* - please send it to us at [info@fenw.org](mailto:info@fenw.org).

CITY MARKET COMMUNITY  
REWARDS PROGRAM

Please [register](#) your City Market Value

**June 28** - Deluge Lake Trail (contact [Ken Harper](#))

**July 4** and **July 10**- Gore Creek Trail (contact [Tim Drescher](#))

**July 13** - Weed Pull with the Sierra Club on Acorn Creek (contact [Jim Alexander](#))

**July 26** - Deluge Lake Trail (contact [Ken Harper](#))

**August 13** - Gore Creek Trail (contact [Tim Drescher](#))

**August 23** - Deluge Lake Trail (contact Ken Harper)

**August 24** - Lily Pad Lake Trail Bridge Construction (contact Laurie Alexander)

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Card, linking it to FENW, which will send rebates to FENW without compromising your earned fuel points. Please note that each card holder may only sign up for one tax exempt organization. **THANKS!**



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