

Friends of Mount Evans and Lost Creek Wildernesses



**Projects happening now, see this newsletter on how you can be involved!
Volunteer with FOMELC.**

July Newsletter 2021

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FOMELC Board Members

Chairman: Peter Vrolijk
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Forest Service Liaison: Ralph Bradt
ralph.bradt@usda.gov

FOMELC WEBSITE: <https://fomelc.org/>

COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS:

The safety of our community is our top priority, and we are committed to doing our part to limit the spread of COVID-19 (aka coronavirus). We are closely monitoring guidelines from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment (CDPHE), and how these might affect our programs. We are also coordinating with our US Forest Service partners to remain in compliance with their COVID-19 response guidelines. Stay Safe and Healthy!

FOMELC Mission Statement:

The Mount Evans and Lost Creek Wildernesses encompass 194,400 acres with over 170 miles of trails in Colorado's Pike and Arapaho National Forests.

We work in partnership with the US Forest Service, engaging in education, outreach and stewardship activities to preserve the wilderness character of these lands for current and future generations.

*Friends of Mt Evans & Lost Creek Wildernesses
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<https://fomelc.org/>



"The clearest way into the Universe is through a forest wilderness."

- John Muir

Note from the Chair – By Peter Vrolijk



Projects Galore

Wilderness projects are at their peak during the summer season – trail maintenance, invasive plants, and trail patrol projects are available every week. After the third trail maintenance project on July 17, great progress has been made to address erosion on the western part of the Payne Creek trail (Lost Creek Wilderness), our adopted trail for this year. And invasive plant treatments, often two a week, hop back and forth between different trails in the Lost Creek and Mount Evans Wilderness areas, depending on the maturation of the invasive plants and their susceptibility to effective treatment. Continued trail patrols further reveal the state of wilderness, and education and outreach efforts occur with the return of outdoor mountain festivals and trailhead host outings.

What are we missing from this full schedule of wilderness activities? – **YOU!** Now is the time to realize that the summer is half done and to sign up for one of the many wilderness project opportunities. Procrastination dooms wilderness projects because of the short summer season.



Wilderness serenity – View to the SW from the eastern end of the Captain Mtn. trail. Although substantial work was undertaken last week to treat invasive thistles in the surrounding meadows, the setting offers tremendous views.

I encountered a couple on the Resthouse Meadows trail a week ago on their way to camp at Lincoln Lake for the weekend. I stopped and described the nature of my trail patrol – invasive plants, downed trees, and so forth. They told me about a big tree the couple had to climb over farther down the trail. After leaving them, I thought: “A lot of trees have already been cleared from other trails by volunteers. I should have told them that the only thing that stands in the way of trees being cleared faster are the volunteers who show up to do the work. Our only constraint is volunteer commitment.”

Please make your commitment today to participate in a FOMELC project. The Saturday July 17 volunteer project on Payne Creek Trail included four volunteers who had never participated in FOMELC field work, and each one contributed as much as the more regular volunteers. Please come help us and enjoy the fringe benefits that wilderness offers.

- Peter

NEW MEMBERS FOR 2021

WIN A NEW OSPREY BACKPACK WITH A HYDRATION PACK!

One lucky guy and one lucky gal will win a new Osprey daypack, details in the next newsletter!



Special thank you to Osprey for donating these 2 incredible daypacks!



Women's: Osprey Manta/Mira Series 18

- 3mm LightWire™ peripheral frame tensions the mesh against your back and transfers the load from the harness to the hipbelt
- 3D tensioned mesh comfortably wraps and conforms to your body while providing excellent ventilation
- Mesh-covered, die-cut foam provides ventilation and an active, contoured fit
- Convenient panel access to the main compartment and internal mesh pocket
- Zippered front pocket with an internal mesh pocket and key fob
- Heat-embossed, scratch-free zippered slash pocket; dual-access side stretch-mesh pockets; zippered hipbelt pockets
- Helmet attachment loop doubles as a blinker light attachment; dedicated light attachment loop at bottom of pack
- Zippered, direct-access hydration compartment contains a 2.5 liter Hydraulics™ LT reservoir
- Dual upper and lower compression straps
- Stow-on-the-Go trekking pole attachment
- Integrated raincover
- Magnetic bite-valve attachment on the sternum strap

Men's: Osprey Manta/Mira Series 36

- 3mm LightWire™ peripheral frame tensions the mesh and transfers the load from the harness to the hipbelt
- 3D tensioned mesh comfortably wraps and conforms to the body while providing excellent ventilation
- Mesh-covered, die-cut foam provides an active, contouring fit and ventilation
- Fabric shove-it pocket and large zippered pocket with internal mesh pockets on the front panel
- Panel-accessible main compartment with internal mesh pocket
- Heat-embossed, scratch-free zippered slash pocket; dual-access side stretch-mesh pockets; dual zippered hipbelt pockets
- Helmet attachment loop / blinker light attachment
- Direct-access zippered hydration compartment holds a Hydraulics™ LT 2.5 liter reservoir
- Dual upper and lower compression straps; Stow-on-the-Go trekking pole attachment; integrated raincover; magnetic bite-valve attachment on the sternum strap



FROM THE WEED PATCH

Alan Rockwood

In late July our noxious weed program is at its peak – musk thistles are “bolting”, orange hawkweed is beginning to flower, Canada thistle is developing rapidly above the undergrowth, and yellow toadflax is ready to “show its color”. These are triggers for the timing of treatments. There are a lot projects and volunteer activity required at this time of the season.

This month I want to feature our project on July 14th – Captain Mountain Trailhead and the Lost Creek Trail. These adjacent trailheads are key access points to the Mount Evans Wilderness and vectors for the transmission of noxious weeds. The tide of human activity spreads noxious weeds “in and out” on these trails and adjacent lands. We had a crew of 10 treating noxious weeds on July 14th – three from the US Forest Service, one from the State Wildlife Area and six FOMELC volunteers. The lands involved “belong” to the State, National Forest and federally designated wilderness. Our objective is to treat all these areas.

On Wednesday July 14th we had an enthusiastic crew, and were able to treat more than 13 acres by early afternoon. The moist hazy morning provided a different perspective on the array of colors from the native vegetation as we searched for invading plants. That scene added to a special atmosphere of the event. There was an expectation that we could accomplish something significant. Unfortunately, the fear that afternoon rains would dilute the herbicide before it could be effective ended the day a bit early. But in the end, we did have major impacts on the trailhead meadow and along Bear Creek. The following Friday, I was able inspect the meadow. The early returns would confirm those optimistic expectations. It will still take many more treatments to effectively eradicate the musk and Canada thistles we found. But this was a great and satisfying start.



I don't want to be a whiner, but there was one negative on the day. All of our volunteers were “veterans” of three or more seasons. **We need new volunteers engaged with the restoration of wilderness and native habitat.**

It starts with the eradication of harmful non-native species. The inherent problem of invasive species is that the natural ecosystem cannot heal itself of the damage caused by these invaders. We have to surgically remove them. **It requires our persistent actions.**



“Trail patrollers”: we need intelligence on the status of certain noxious weeds. At this point we are interested in the development of yellow toadflax. In some parts of this area, toadflax is beginning to flower much earlier than normal. It needs to be treated when the flowers are developing. Here are places to look for the “yellow spike flower”

Mount Evans Wilderness: Beartrack Lakes Trail – left (south) side, approximately 400 yards past the Wilderness Boundary and before the first switchback.

Lost Creek Wilderness: Hankins Pass Trail – large meadow, ~2 miles up from the Goose Creek Trail junction.

Payne Creek Adopt-A-Trail Project June Progress Report

Wyatt Stanland

The Friends of Mount Evans and Lost Creek have adopted the Payne Creek Trail to perform trail maintenance for the 2021 project season.

We had a very successful June trail work day on the Payne Creek trail. A huge thank you to Chris Sill, Dee Lyons, and Peter Vrolijk who came out to volunteer! We built five check steps to slow down water to prevent erosion, built four drain dips to divert water off steep sections of trail, repaired a washed out creek crossing, repaired two sections of braided trail, and cleaned a drainage ditch. We are moving our way up the Payne Creek Trail and there is a lot of fun work left to be done!

We are making great progress and need more volunteers to meet the goal of reaching the saddle of aspen on this trail.



Check Steps



Drain Dip Water Diversion

Upcoming Trail Project Workdays:

- August 21
- September 4

To register contact: Dee at dee@fomelc.org

Volunteers receive a free trail crew shirt!

Where: Payne Creek Trail

Directions: US Hwy285 South to Bailey, Turn left onto CR64. **We currently have another access which cuts off 3 hiking miles to the work site. Registered volunteers will be given directions to that access point. Meeting at 8 AM.**

Work Day Plan: Trail work 8-12:30, lunch 12:30-1:00, trail work 1:00-3:00.

What to Bring/Wear: Long pants, sturdy hiking boots, gloves, long sleeve shirt, lunch, 2 quarts water. Be prepared for all kinds of weather conditions (raincoat, jacket).

FOMELC Training Program Now Online!

For New and Returning Volunteers

Dee Lyons

The FOMELC Virtual Online Wilderness Training Program

Many people come to this training with an appreciation for Wilderness and a desire to help preserve it, and we hope this training provides you with a better opportunity to launch your involvement and contribution to the mission of sustaining wilderness character.

A Wilderness patrol with a FOMELC mentor is a part of the program.

The training is designed to be accomplished at your own pace.

Are you registered?

Contact: dee@fomelc.org

FOMELC Volunteer Trailhead Hosts Needed

Volunteers are needed to participate as Trailhead Hosts at various Mt Evans and Lost Creek Wilderness trailheads. Table, FOMELC banner and information materials are provided. Volunteers will answer questions to hikers and provide information regarding Leave No Trace. This is great way to interact with the public and let them know that FOMELC is a volunteer organization in partnership with the Forest Service in maintaining trails, eradicating weeds, wilderness education and many other supporting tasks.

There is no hiking involved, so for those volunteers who would be interested in sitting at a trailhead making public contacts, this is perfect.

Please contact: Wyatt, wyatt@fomelc.org
or Peter, peter@fomelc.org



2021 Fire Restrictions

Know before you go! Colorado Fire Bans:
<http://www.coemergency.com/p/fire-bans-danger.html>



2021 Summer Projects Photos

Are you missing the fun?



Mixing the brew for weed spray



Payne Creek Trail



Tree Removal - The BIG One!



Who would ever thought that spraying weeds was actually fun!



The flowers along the work sites are amazing!

