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www.fomelc.org

June 2019 Newsletter



We welcome Madelyn Gaharan as our 2019 Summer Intern for the invasive species project in Lost Creek Wilderness.

See Article in this Newsletter

It may be 90 degrees in Denver, but the snowpack in the Mt Evans, and some of Lost Creek Wilderness Trails still have up to 10 feet of reported snow.

Check with your local Ranger District Office before heading to the high country.

As FOMELC volunteers begin the patrol season, we will have more information at: admin@fomelc.org

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Contact Project Lead:

Project Weeds: alan@fomelc.org

Project Trails: steve@fomelc.org

Project information will be updated with each newsletter

June:

29: Trail Project: **ALL HANDS DAY & Monthly Meeting BBQ** Upper Rolling Creek Trail
(Lost Creek Wilderness) Corridor Work and Weed Control Contact steve@fomelc.org

July:

6: Indian Creek Weed Project. Mount Evans Wilderness

TBD: Beartrack Lakes/Cub Creek/Resthouse Meadows Weed Project. Mount Evans Wilderness

9-13: Weed project (one day during the week) Beaver Meadows/Captain Mountain East. Watch your email for date

13 or 14: Mount Evans Geology Hike peter@fomelc.org See more in this newsletter

27: Beartrack Lakes Trail, Weed project. Mount Evans Wilderness

31: Monthly Meeting at Evergreen Fire & Rescue , 1802 Bergen Parkway, Evergreen 6:30-8pm

August:

1-3: Date to be determined. Goose Creek Yellow Toadfax Weed Project. Lost Creek Wilderness

10: Trail Project- **ALL HANDS DAY** & Monthly Meeting BBQ (Mount Evans Wilderness) Beaver Meadows and
Beartracks Lakes Trail Work and Weed Project. Camp Rock Trailhead.

Additional project to include an all ladies project crew team. More info to follow.

14-17: Date to be determined. Beartrack Lakes Orange Hawkweed Project. Mount Evans Wilderness

September:

25: Monthly Meeting at Evergreen Fire & Rescue , 1802 Bergen Parkway, Evergreen 6:30-8pm

Additional Projects will be updated for this month at a later date.

Note from the Chair – Regarding Patrols

By Peter Vrolijk

The calendar tells us that summer has arrived, but the weather continues to object. However, the time is upon us to begin patrolling the wilderness in earnest. Why do we undertake patrols? We take the pulse of the wilderness with our observations, we apply remedies when possible, and we engage with wilderness users to help convey the special qualities of wilderness that we share with each other and the ecosystems within wilderness. Patrols associated with our new trailhead host program have done a phenomenal job of promoting user encounters and interactions.

The ideal patrol would devote effort to all 3 components of patrols, but time and the distances involved in some of the more remote trails often require us to focus any particular patrol on one aspect or another. If I intend to cover a long distance on any particular day, I will limit the time I spend in encounters and will leave my handsaw at home. If I have more time or can afford a more leisurely pace, I will bring my saw to clear small trees from the trail. If I focus a patrol on encounters, I will go out on a popular trail on the weekend.

We need to make observations along all trails, repair trails when possible, and engage with other wilderness users. Given that we might be unable to do all of them on any given patrol, we need to make sure that we as individuals and as a group are addressing all of the components of patrols over the course of the season. In the end, patrols should be fun and rewarding, and we achieve this by working together in the Friends Organization.



Fairy Slipper Orchid observed on the Lost Creek Trail, Mt. Evans Wilderness

Chain Saws Allowed in Wilderness

By Steve West

On May 9th, 2019 the United States Forest Service (USFS) Regional Forester authorized the use of chain saws in both



the **South San Juan and Weminuche Wilderness Areas**. The authorization was for a limited six-week window to clear trails of hazard trees to enhance safety, access and recreation opportunity for Wilderness visitors. The use was authorized was limited to a six-week period, June 1 through August 17, 2019.

The Wilderness Act, which was passed by Congress in 1964, prohibits the use of the following: “... no use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment or motorboats, no landing of aircraft, no other form of mechanical transport, and no structure or installation within any such area.” (Prohibition of Certain Uses (c).

In the same referenced paragraph, there is an exception “... and except as necessary to meet minimum requirements for the administration of the area”. This exception would seem to allow for the use of chain saw in Wilderness. This statement was the basis for allowing chain saw use in the two Wilderness Areas.

In the **2018 Report on the Health of Colorado Forests**, published by Colorado State Forest Service give a perspective on the severity of the effect of the Spruce Beetle in the San Juan Mountains, West Elk Mountains, Sawatch, San de Cristo and Culebra Ranges and Mountains. The report states “... approximately 40 percent of the state’s spruce-fir forest ecosystems have been affected since 2000.” Or “1.84 million cumulative acres in Colorado from 2000 to 2018.” In others words there are an abundance of standing dead or downed trees in the South San Juan and Weminuche Wilderness Areas that are affecting the recreation value to Wilderness users.

Wilderness Watch, San Juan Citizens Alliance and Great Old Broads for Wilderness have filed a lawsuit to challenge the chain saw authorization (Civil Action No. 1-19 cv-1449). The complaint states “authorization disregards the plain language and purpose of the Wilderness Act and will inflict noise, pollution, and motorized disruption on the untrammeled landscape and quiet solitude Congress mandated.” This lawsuit is challenging the use of chain saws in the affected areas and was filed in the US District Court for the District of Colorado.

The Durango Herald on June 11, 2019 reported that the USFS Regional Forester had rescinded the chain saw authorization due to the heavy snowpack that would prevent crews from completing the cut out of down trees on the Wilderness trails. The article goes on to quote from a letter from the Region Forester to his staff to “...explore working with groups interested in helping clear trails with non-motorized equipment. He asked staff to research whether the groups can provide “sources of skilled labor that would reduce the need to perform trail maintenance with chain saws.”

It now becomes imperative for organizations like FOMELC develop a cadre of skilled and USFS certified sawyer to eliminate the Regional Forester need to authorize the use of chain saws in Wilderness areas in the future.

The Wilderness Act defines a wilderness as” in contrast with those areas where man and his works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. Traditional use of crosscut saws adheres to this thought. Chains saws don’t.

FOMELC Marketing/Education *By Gordon Brown*

During June FOMELC members participated in the Evergreen Rodeo and Bailey Day events. Despite spots of rain and threatening thunderstorms, both events had a great turnout. The FOMELC booth at both events had tons of traffic with outdoor enthusiasts wondering who we are and what we do in the Wilderness. We were thanked many times for our stewardship in protecting and maintaining the wilderness.

At the two events, we had 25 visitors sign up for our newsletter with several planning to join our organization. Thanks to Alan, Dee, Dave, Peter and the Brown family for volunteering at the events.





FOMELC WEED ERADICATION PROGRAM

From the Noxious Weed Patch – *Alan*

Our weed eradication program will begin in conjunction with **All Hands Days, June 29th** at the Rolling Creek Trail. This will be our first treatment on Rolling Creek Trail and the first organized treatment in Lost Creek Wilderness to my knowledge. With the help of Madelyn Gaharan (New 2019 Summer Intern) Loren Winters and Dan Garrow, I surveyed the Rolling Creek to the Wilderness boundary on June 20th. There are two larger areas infested with mullein and musk thistle. However, the weeds are just scattered in the meadows. We also found small patches of Canada thistle in other locations. My plan is to use herbicide primarily on the thistles and pull the mullein if we have the volunteers. Since the invasive species are not well established this is a great opportunity to work for early eradication. If you are going to participate in the treatments, wear long sleeves and bring work gloves appropriate for pulling mullein. If you have question please contact me at: alan@fomelc.org

With these late season snows our program in Mount Evans Wilderness is fluid! I hope to survey some of the lower elevations of Mount Evans before June 29th. Stay tuned for more information!

2019 Summer Intern

We welcome Madelyn Gaharan as our 2019 Summer Intern for the invasive species project in Lost Creek Wilderness. Madelyn is a senior at the University of Denver in their Geography and Environmental Sciences program. She will graduate at the end of their fall 2019 quarter. This past winter quarter Madelyn was involved in a research program on the impacts of invasive species near Cape Town, South Africa. To keep herself balanced, she has a minor in art. She is also an avid climber and backpacker. Funds to provide a stipend for this project were provided by a grant from the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance with funding from the National Forest Foundation.



Madelyn eagerly began her 10-week internship June 17th. With a program parallel to FOMELC's 2018 comprehensive invasive species inventory of Mount Evans Wilderness, she will focus on invasive species in Lost Creek Wilderness. Again, we anticipate that non-native invasive plants will be the priority for Forest Service management. Madelyn will take the lead in surveying for invasive weeds in Lost Creek Wilderness. However, with 100 miles of trails, this will be a collaborative with other FOMELC volunteers to ensure that system trails and other priority areas will be covered at different times over the growing season. Those volunteers that like to identify invasive weeds on your hikes, please plan more trips to Lost Creek. This project is expected to increase the score of the Wilderness Steward Performance index for Lost Creek Wilderness.

2019 Wilderness Ranger Academy

By: Steve West

I had the privilege of attending the USFS Wilderness Ranger Academy in Winter Park recently. The Academy was primarily to train the USFS Seasonal Wilderness Rangers how to meet the users of the Wilderness.

Ralph Swain, Regional Wilderness and Rivers Program Manager for the Forest Service, presented a six-step process on how to meet and greet the public with an acronym called WISDOM. While the WISDOM concept is presented at Spring Training, this may provides an alternative thought process that might be beneficial to you.



WISDOM

SIX STEP PROCESS

RANGER (Volunteer-Partner-Cooperator) SAFETY and PUBLIC CONTACTS

Where are you coming from?

Understand where you are coming from. Did you have a late night out? Did you have a hurried morning before arriving at the trailhead to begin your patrol? Are you ready for that first encounter? Our visitors deserve the best of us. Take a deep breath, collect yourself and be ready to make your first contact without additional “baggage.”

Introduce yourself

Professionally introduce yourself. Begin your introduction from a distance. Do not break the space of the visitor. Their tent is their home. Say hello and get acknowledgement from the visitor before entering their camp. Take off your sunglasses. State your name, a member of the Friends of Mt. Evans and Lost Creek Wildernesses and a volunteer for the CCRD, SPRD or SPRD. Be properly dressed. Your name tag should be visible. Do not initiate a handshake. Do not make eye contact with just one person in the group. Scan and communicate with your eyes to the whole group.

2019 Wilderness Ranger Academy Continued

Size up the situation

Yes, you have sized up the situation from the beginning, but now you assess your mental notes and “red flags.” Why is there movement in the tent? Is that a rifle leaning against the tree? Situational awareness is vital volunteer safety. If you have a partner, then let them be “your eyes and ears” while you make the contact. Work as a team.

Know when to walk away for your safety.

Discuss appropriate behavior or skill

As a volunteer you need to know what the regulations of the Wilderness Area and be able to discuss the appropriate behavior for the area. Dogs on leash, camping 100 feet from water and trails, the seven principles of Leave No Trace, etc.

Outline/explain how it benefits the resource

Outline the regulation and explain the intent of the rule. This is a good time to incorporate the “Authority of the Resource” approach

Make a positive impression

Leave a positive impression. Conduct yourself professionally and you will make a lasting, positive impression. Remember we represent FOMELC and the USFS.

Moose Encounters in Mt Evans and Lost Creek Wildernesses

More moose sightings are occurring in these two Wilderness areas. Due to the rapid increase in the Moose population, more encounters are happening with conflicts regarding dogs off leash. A dangerous situation for the dog and the owner. The Colorado Parks and Wildlife has developed a great you tube video regarding the increase in moose attacks.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q6Qj9K_eJJE

If the link does not connect, do a cut and paste

Website Members Only - Area Access

While the new website is being built, do you have access to the member's area of the current website? To complete trail reports and view the most recent reports, and to access the forums, you need to be able to log into the members area. If some of our active members are unable to log in, please contact ralph@fomelc.org to be added.

Data Collection App and Maps

In the member's area, at the bottom of the sidebar on the right, there is a link to information on installing and using the survey app. Please contact ralph@fomelc.org if you have questions or need help.

Also, maps of the data collected by the data collection app are now available through the Wilderness Data Maps link at the upper right of the web site.

Data Collection Progress

There have been a bunch of people using the phone app, either recording data or practicing data collection. We're off to a great start this season! It's all good information. Record as much as you can but, at the very least, try to record the start and end of your patrols so we can keep track of the hours you put in on your efforts.

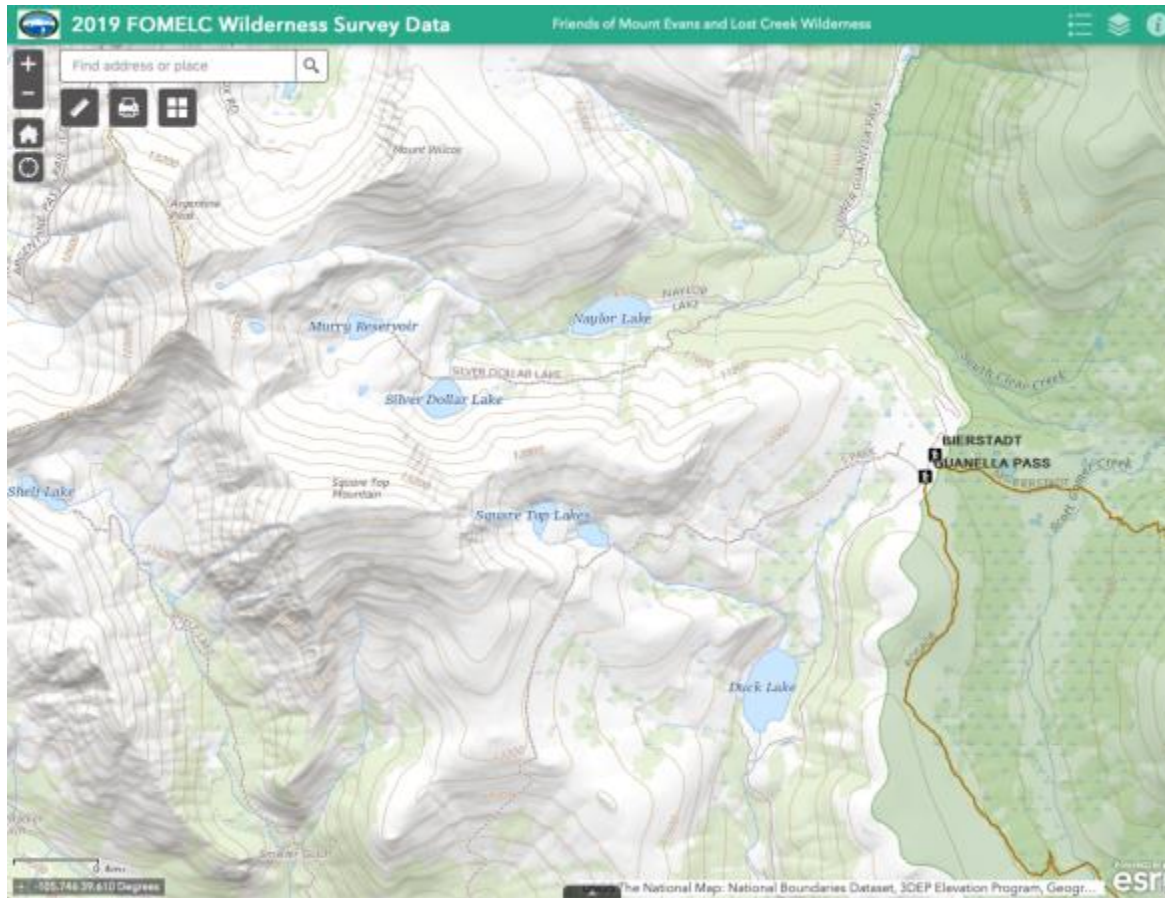
Thanks, everyone!

Mount Evans Geology Hike

July 13 or 14 (Dates for Weather Dependent)

What: FOMELC is sponsoring a geology hike in collaboration with **Yvette Kuiper**, structural geology professor at Colorado School of Mines, and students **Logan Powell and Asha Mahatma**. The purpose of this excursion is to discuss the bedrock geology of the Mt. Evans area for all interested participants, including those with no geology background.

Where: South Park Trail and off-trail to outcrops west of Guanella Pass (accessed from the parking lot).



When: July 14 (or July 13 if weather demands). We will likely start early in the morning (8 a.m.) so we can be off the trail by early afternoon.

How: Although we will be west of the Mount Evans Wilderness, we will respect Wilderness and Leave No Trace principles on our hike. Our group will be limited to 15 so please RSVP peter@fomelc.org if you wish to join us. Participation will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

Thank You to Our Sponsors & Supporters

For Spring Training 2019



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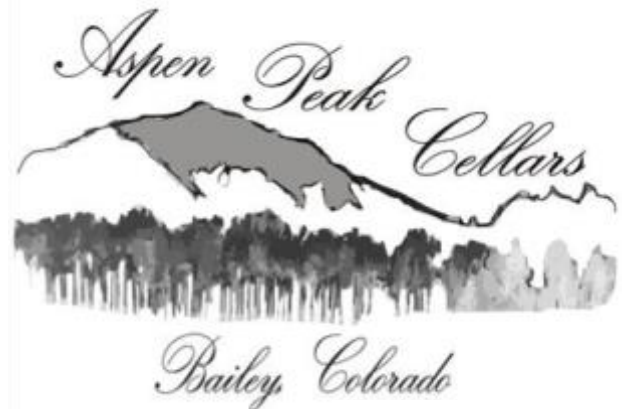


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FOMELC Mission Statement:

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.

I Have a Question!

Got a general or specific trail question? Admin@fomelc.org email will go to all board members and one of us will get back to you.

How do I become a volunteer with FOMELC?

Check out our website to sign up. www.fomelc.org

Like your Newsletter?

Let Us know!

admin@fomelc.org