

# Friends of Mount Evans and Lost Creek Wildernesses



June Photo Contest Winner: **Teresa Golden**

## Golden Renewal

*"The mountain goat Nannie and Kid were licking the minerals in the dirt by the Summit House. What a special, special experience to see and get close to these peaceful and beautiful animals."*

- Teresa

**Congratulations!**

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# FOMELC Board Members

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**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  
PO Box 3431  
Evergreen, CO 80439*

<https://fomelc.org/>



***“Wilderness is not a luxury but a necessity of the human spirit, and as vital to our lives as water and good bread.”*** ***- Edward Abbey***

## Note from the Chair – By Peter Vrolijk



### Summer is Here!

Summer arrived in force recently, and we went from coats and hats to shorts and fans. With that came the start of field projects – we have already had two successful trail maintenance outings on our adopted Payne Creek trail, primarily addressing tread erosion issues. The task can seem daunting after too many years of trail maintenance neglect, but nevertheless a deep sense of satisfaction arises from each step of improved trail. Please come and join us on one or more of the future outings this summer.

Trail patrols are also off to a great start, and all trails benefit each year from more than one patrol. The current map of patrol observations can tell you what kinds of observations have already been made and help you customize your patrol for the most beneficial data. For example, invasive plants are now starting to emerge, and some species will only become apparent in a few weeks. To gain experience identifying invasive plants, please consider participating on an invasive plant treatment project.

One thing that those who contribute to volunteer activities will notice is the push to get all member volunteers to sign a volunteer agreement. This is new – in the past we only signed the volunteer agreement once at the in-person spring training. Now we ask everyone to sign it each year. Why? For me the important reason is to provide the opportunity to review and think about the underlying safety documents. We want everyone who contributes to be able to return home without incident. I hope that I complete my role as chair having never received a call that one of our volunteers was injured on a project. Much of the work goes into thinking about how to undertake activities in a way that minimizes the risk of injury, and asking members to sign the volunteer agreement provides the opportunity and motivation to revisit the ideas contained within those documents. In this way, I look forward to ending each field project with a group of happy faces, enthused with the experience of having contributed to wilderness.



*Lush aspen grove on the Meridian trail, Mount Evans Wilderness. The wet spring has set the stage for a vibrant and uplifting wilderness.*

-Peter

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## UPCOMING EVENTS IN THIS NEWSLETTER

- Weed Eradication in July:** Mt Evans Wilderness: Indian Creek, Captain Mountain, Beaver Meadows, Wigwam Creek and Beartrack Lakes. Watch your email for specific dates.
- Trail Maintenance:** July 17
- Trail Patrols:** Survey123 Reports are coming in! Check the interactive map on our website. Keep them coming! [FOMELC Interactive Map](#)
- Trailhead Host:** July date TBD, watch your email

# FROM THE WEED PATCH

Alan Rockwood

## FOMELC's 10 Most UNWANTED Plants

The cornerstone of FOMELC's weed program is surveying for invasive weeds – keeping an eye out for the plant that isn't "right". With hikes/patrols we try to recognize a non-native plant and then identify it to determine whether it is considered an "invasive weed". The State of Colorado classifies over 100 plants as "invasive". Not all of these are actually present in Colorado, and a smaller number still are likely to survive in our ecological zones. Even if they could survive, are these wilderness lands likely to be the first place for the "alien" plant to show up? We anticipate hearing about them from more heavily trafficked areas.

Thus, to be efficient with our survey efforts, FOMELC has decided to keep it simple. We learn to recognize and identify a few high probability invaders. Six species are known to be present in our wildernesses or trail-corridors accessing these lands: orange hawkweed, Canada thistle, musk thistle, yellow toadflax, common mullein and cheatgrass. We have identified four other invasive species known to infest similar habitats near Mt. Evans and Lost Creek that could be easily spread to our Wildernesses. The most likely threats would come from leafy spurge, oxeye daisy, scentless chamomile and the newest species, **hoary alyssum**. We have a set of 10 identification cards that are easy to carry on your hikes. Members can request a set free of charge.



*Hoary alyssum infestation*

in diameter. An individual flower has four deeply notched white petals – think of rabbit ears. As the stem grows and matures, there are many flat, pear-shaped seeds attached.

So, what does the newest threat look like? The plant may grow from 1 to 3 feet tall. It has basal leaves with alternating, lance-shaped leaves on stems. The flower stem may branch topped with a

cluster flower of 1 to 2 inches



*Look for the "rabbit-ear petals"*

Hoary alyssum is a member of the "mustard" family, and can grow as an annual, biennial or short-lived perennial. It will outcompete native plants in drier areas – disturbed trail sides, meadows and pastures. Hoary alyssum is known to be toxic to horses.

**Please watch for Constant Contact messages and the webpage announcing the upcoming invasive weed treatment projects.** The messages will describe the upcoming project and how to participate. It will also give the dates and location of the next two projects on our schedule. If you have any questions, or to register for upcoming events, email me at: [Alan@fomelc.org](mailto:Alan@fomelc.org)

# Payne Creek Adopt-A-Trail Project Gets Kicked Off for 2021

Steve West and 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. The project was kicked off on May 22<sup>nd</sup> with 8 volunteers working to construct needed water drainage structures. Some trail folks commonly refer this type of work as “trail plumbing”. Working until the afternoon, as the pending drenching rains rolled in, volunteers constructed 4 check steps (these are rocks or logs set perpendicular to a gullied trail, each step rising to approximately 6-8”), 2 drainage dips and reconstructed a 100-foot drain that was filled with debris.

We had an excellent turn out for the May trail project. A huge thank you to Kay and Guy Hoisington, Bob Hunter, David Lehr, Dee Lyons, and Peter Vrolijk for coming out to volunteer! Volunteers also repaired two sections of braided trail, which occurs when trail users try to avoid an obstacle, like a muddy spot or rocky area and over time more visitors repeat this behavior and the trail splits into several smaller trails. The Payne Creek Trail is already looking

better and we are looking forward to the next work day! No experience is necessary, and all tools will be provided with hands on instructions. Join the fun and make a difference! **We are making great progress and need more volunteers.**



## Upcoming Trail Project Workdays:

- July 17
- August 21
- September 4



## To register contact:

[steve@fomelc.org](mailto:steve@fomelc.org) or [wyatt@fomelc.org](mailto:wyatt@fomelc.org)

**Where:** Payne Creek Trailhead, County Rd 64 Bailey.

**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

Spring Training has transitioned to a new title: **The FOMELC Wilderness Training Program.**

A virtual online program for our new and returning volunteers.

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](mailto:dee@fomelc.org)

If you are a returning FOMELC previous member and would like to brush up on a few training opportunities, we would love to see you back!

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## Purchasing Items from Amazon?

Go to <https://smile.amazon.com/> and order from that site. Before ordering, select your charity to be "Friends of Mount Evans & Lost Creek Wilderness." From then on, all of your shopping will generate 0.5% of the purchase to FOMELC. Thank you!

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## Mt Evans Scenic Byway – Reservations Required

Some folks will enter the Mt Evans Wilderness via the Mt Evans Scenic Byway. The road was closed in 2020 due to Covid19 restrictions. **Access on the road is by reservation vehicle ticket only. There is a fee.** Without a vehicle ticket, you will be turned away. Vehicle tickets will be available through Recreation.gov <https://www.recreation.gov/>

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## FOMELC ZOOM MEETINGS

We have set aside our Zoom Presentations for the summer so that we can focus on volunteer projects. There are several dates to choose from in this newsletter, come out and join us on the trail.

# 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. The first Trailhead Host was on June

20<sup>th</sup> at Goose Creek Trailhead with Peter Vrolijk, Charlotte Wytias and Dee Lyons. Approximately 77 contacts were made and several were interested in becoming members of FOMELC.

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@fomelc.org](mailto:wyatt@fomelc.org)

or

[steve@fomelc.org](mailto:steve@fomelc.org)

**July Date TBD, watch your email.**



A Wilderness Celebration – This happy couple became engaged in Lost Creek Wilderness!

# Forest Fires are a Real Danger as you Hike and Camp in the Wilderness Areas

By Gordon Brown

The hiking and camping season is in full swing and you will find various skill levels of participants. It's important for all of us to be cognizant of the impact of camp fires and the risk of starting a fire that gets away from you starting a forest fire. (Parts of this article are taken from the Red Cross).

## Have you ever heard the term 'Campfire Impacts?'

I never had until I started learning more about [Leave No Trace](#). I might date myself a little here and even admit that when I first learned how to go backpacking we were taught to dig out a big old hole in the ground to build a campfire in when backpacking through wilderness areas. You should definitely **not** do that anymore, by the way! I'll explain why below.

The location of a campfire irreparably changes the chemical composition of the soil beneath it, essentially burning it and turning it to ash. This prevents the forest floor, healthy bacteria and vegetation from repairing and replenishing itself in that spot. And this becomes a big issue in well-traveled areas with a lot of campers coming through and building fires all over the place.

Another big impact campfires have on their surrounding environment is a severe lack of wood and natural debris. Hikers and campers come through and eventually pick out every possible stick, branch, shrub, any piece of nature they can burn, and then there are not enough sticks and branches around to provide a healthy habitat for birds, small animals, bugs and those healthy bacteria (the decomposers) of the forest floor.

A less common, but even more hazardous campfire impact is a root fire. A root fire is when part of a tree's root system catches fire, smolders and spreads underground for weeks or even months. It can then pop up and cause a forest fire nearby or could have traveled quite a distance away from the original campfire.

These are the main reasons we don't dig out a hole to build a fire in anymore – this could likely lead to a root fire, and it also scars the earth, preventing vegetation from growing there. For a while, this was how people were taught to build backcountry campfires, but after many years of research, we realized that after digging a hole, burning a fire, and covering it back up, it was still just a totally dead empty patch of dirt and ash, nothing would grow there again.



*There are smarter ways to minimize your campfire impact.*

Mound Fire (photo courtesy of "Leave No Trace: Centre for Outdoor Ethics")

- **Use Existing Fire Rings** – and by existing, I mean do not create new ones. Do not create fire rings within 200 feet of water resources or trails.
- **Build a Mound Fire** – if you're camping in a wilderness area that allows fires, but there are no designated fire rings, a mound fire is a great low impact alternative. This involves using a fire blanket, see above photo.
- **Use a Camp Stove and Skip the Fire All Together.** While we understand that campfires can be enjoyable, we want to keep in mind what is best for the Wilderness. We want to lean toward discouraging campfires altogether and instead suggest using camp stoves.



## **Before You Get Started**

Start by seeing if a campfire permit is required. Check with your U.S. Forest Service, or BLM station or office. Permits are required to have campfire or portable gas stoves on public lands. Check to ensure there aren't any local fire restrictions in the area. During periods of high fire danger, campfires may be restricted. Also, keep a shovel and bucket of water nearby at all times.

## **While the Fire is Burning/Open Fire Safety**

Always keep a shovel and bucket of water nearby at all times. While the fire is burning, be sure there is a responsible person in attendance of the fire at all times. Never leave children around a fire unattended.

## **How to Completely Extinguish an Open Campfire**

Use the "drown, stir and feel" method: drown the fire with water, then stir around the fire area with your shovel to wet any remaining embers and ash. Be sure to turn wood and coals over and wet all sides. Move some dirt onto the fire site and mix thoroughly to fully smother it. And finally, feel the area with the back of your hand to ensure nothing is still smoldering. Please always make sure your campfires are 110% extinguished and never build or burn a campfire in restricted areas. They are prohibited for a reason, anything from trying to recover an already damaged and delicate habitat to preventing forest fires during dry, windy conditions.



Enjoy your time in the Wilderness areas and remember, as Smokey the Bear says:

**"Only You Can Prevent Wild Fires!"**



## **2021 Fire Restrictions**

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

## ***Update to the Poudre Wilderness Volunteers GoFundMe Campaign “Reopen Your Favorite Trails”***



Last March, this newsletter ran an article for a “GoFundMe” for the Poudre Wilderness Volunteers (PWV) as they take the first steps toward healing from the Cameron Peaks Fire. Thanks to those of you who donated; PWV received considerably more than their goal--\$37,000 in donations against their goal of \$25,000. Here is part of the Press Release from PWV:

### ***Media Release***

### ***POUDRE WILDERNESS VOLUNTEERS CONCLUDES ROOSEVELT NATIONAL FOREST TRAIL RESTORATION GOFUNDME CAMPAIGN***

***Fort Collins, CO – May 10, 2021***

The Poudre Wilderness Volunteers (PWV), a wilderness trail stewardship organization, concluded a GoFundMe campaign, “Reopen Your Favorite Trails.” The Cameron Peak fire, Colorado’s largest wildfire, destroyed and burned over 208,000 acres of the Roosevelt National Forest. There are 122 miles of trails within the burned area, of which over 42 miles are severely damaged. Through the generous contributions totaling over \$37,000 from 34 Colorado communities and 13 different states, we will begin working with the United States Forest Service on rebuilding these trails, reconstructing bridges, removing dangerous trees, and re-opening access to the wilderness.

“We are humbled by the support from across all of Colorado,” said Mike Corbin, PWV Board chair and Trail Restoration committee chair. “While we surpassed the financial goal, what was equally important was the outpouring of requests by both individuals and organizations to participate in trail restoration workdays,” said Corbin.

*For more information on volunteering to help restore trails contact: Jeff Randa [jeffreyranda@gmail.com](mailto:jeffreyranda@gmail.com) 630-561-8121*

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## **FOMELC Member Trail Crew Shirts, Hats and Gators for Sale**

Shirts (Dark Green only) - \$15

Shirts - 100% Lightweight Polyester

Hats - \$10

**\*NEW** - Neck Gators \$10 Blue or Gray with FOMELC decal

**Contact Dee: [dee@fomelc.org](mailto:dee@fomelc.org)**

