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March 2020 Newsletter



Snow in the high country first day of Spring 2020

NEW WEBSITE!

www.fomelc.org

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Note from the Chair – Wilderness in Unusual Times

This edition of the newsletter addresses how the Friends of Mount Evans and Lost Creek are addressing an unusual time – a time when we are unable to work together as a group to help preserve and maintain the wilderness areas in our back yards. As you will see in the articles published here, we are unable to approach the field season with the normal activities we pursue to prepare for summer.

In my opinion and experience, though, every challenge like the one we now face presents



opportunities. It only takes creativity and imagination to discover where those opportunities lie. One challenge will be how we attract and train new volunteers. Perhaps relying on more personal in-the-field mentorship training will result in more committed volunteers. We are going to need individuals to be more self-sufficient in the field because we may have fewer opportunities for group projects.

Wilderness also offers us the opportunity to soothe our anxieties and help us find a sense of peace in these tumultuous times. Contributing to wilderness will help sustain those feelings. Committing ourselves to wilderness this year is the opportunity that will help us get through this crisis. I encourage everyone to think about how you might contribute this year and thus reap the rewards of peace and balance that those efforts create.

- *Peter Vrolijk*

Eroded spires near the crest of the Lake Park Trail, Lost Creek Wilderness. The contrast in colors and the fragrance of the pines in summer contribute to a unique wilderness experience.

FOMELC in a Period of Self-Isolation

Normally at this time of year, the existing volunteer population is busy planning and attending volunteer recruitment events, spring training for new volunteers, and all the activities that go into preparing for a successful field season. Public health concerns prevent us from undertaking these activities this year. We grow anxious about our ability how we might be able to complete the wilderness stewardship tasks that are important for the continued health of the Mount Evans and Lost Creek Wilderness areas. This note summarizes the current status of FOMELC events, lists some alternate activities that we are considering to help sustain our stewardship activities, and ends with an appeal to everyone to increase her or his FOMELC involvement in the summer.

Current Status

- Monthly FOMELC meetings are suspended until it is safe to resume gatherings like this one.
- Recruitment events at the Foothills Home, Garden & Lifestyle Show are unavailable since those events are postponed.
- **The Spring Training weekend in May is cancelled for 2020.** Any plausible postponement would only detract from necessary field activities, but we are considering alternative ways to engage new volunteers (see below).
- Multi-person field activities, like All-Hands Days, remain in flux as we consider how the public health environment progresses into the summer.

Alternate Activities

- For every person receiving this newsletter who remains on the sidelines, please consider becoming a volunteer this year. For those who are already volunteers, look around at your friends and neighbors and think about whom you might introduce to this privileged work.
- There is nothing more rewarding than spending a day in Wilderness and making a difference, either by improving a trail or conducting a trail patrol. This requires training. We intend to undertake training this year by in-the-field mentorship in limited groups of 1-4 people.
- Please contact admin@fomelc.org if you wish to take a mentorship-training hike.

Appeal to Volunteer

The Mount Evans and Lost Creek Wildernesses require our efforts this summer, and everyone who contributes to wilderness activities will find some degree of satisfaction in helping out. Ironically, as with so much else these days, those efforts will likely need to be alone or in small groups. We must all make volunteer efforts on our own rather than waiting for someone to organize an event. Please consider how you might increase your wilderness volunteer efforts this year and how you might undertake those efforts on your own. Contact admin@fomelc.org for suggestions and ideas about how to do this.

Wilderness Solitude

Solitude is an essential element of Wilderness. When public health concerns force us into a kind of solitude through self-isolation, we grow uncomfortable, anxious, and out of sorts. However, self-isolation results from a natural system that has become unbalanced by the introduction of something that has never existed in the human environment before.



Wilderness was created to set aside areas where natural eco-systems could evolve without human influence. We enter into wilderness to observe it and participate for a while in that eco-system but always with the intent that we will leave no trace of our presence. Even when outside forces disrupt part of that eco-system, like a wildfire or storm that damages the local plant and animal populations, the natural system has mechanisms to heal itself again.

Perhaps we can take lessons from those natural wilderness eco-systems. Our current state, which at the moment seems dire, will pass and our population will heal itself from this virus wildfire. It will take time, but the natural systems we find in Wilderness can offer us reassurance that healing will occur.

Our current state reminds us also of the value of Wilderness. We seek ‘normalcy’ in our daily lives. Wilderness represents a ‘normal’ state of natural eco-systems that we should never abandon. In the coming days, weeks, and months, take a trip into Wilderness either on foot or in your memories to find the sense of peace and calm that solitude in Wilderness provides. Take a moment to smell the Earth, hear the wind, and feel the surrounding spaciousness and find the resilience to make it through another day.

- *Peter Vrolijk*

Vernal Equinox, 2020



News from Marketing – Gordon Brown



FOMELC and Spangalang Brewery held its first ever event to promote FOMELC recruiting and fundraiser growth.

Special thanks to Taylor Rees, Darren Boyd and Mike Israel of the Brewery for hosting our group.

There are additional events planned and announcements will be in the newsletter once bars and restaurants are back open.

Authority of the Resource

Now that the first day of spring, March 19th has come and gone, it is time to start thinking about the 2020 FOMELC season. I know there are many snow covered trails, weeds are not growing yet, and temperatures are still cold but one topic to think about as we begin trail patrol and trail hosting to provide visitors a great experience is **Authority of the Resource**.

How do you approach someone whose actions are “Less than Leave No Trace”, maybe they are littering, feeding wildlife, dogs not on leash, hiking off trail, carving their name into a tree, or taking an antler shed out of the environment.

Whatever the issue is, there is a technique that you can use called the **Authority of the Resource**.

Using the Authority of the Resource technique can influence a person that is doing something that damages the environment, wilderness, or other people’s recreational experiences.

- Give the person the benefit of the doubt.

It could have been someone else that caused the impact.

People will be more responsive to you if you show them consideration and tact.

- Build rapport with the person that you are approaching.

Get to know the person. They may be new to traveling and camping in the outdoors and do not have experience minimizing their impact.

- Stand side by side.

Never confront someone eye to eye. Stand off to the side so the problem is out in front of both of you.

- Educate.

Teach people the reason why their impacts affect the environment.

- Give an alternative.

Lastly, try to provide them with an alternative like taking pictures of an antler shed versus taking it out of the environment.

- Remember, Authority of the Resource cannot always be used. In situations that may be dangerous, law enforcement officials should step in. Never get yourself into an argument or confrontation with anyone.

Next month we will discuss **Leave No Trace** to help educate our future trail hosts. In the meantime, find a way to impact our environment by getting out there and enjoying our beautiful wildernesses.

**The idea of wilderness
Needs no defense.
It only needs more defenders**
- *Edward Abbey*



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 **NEW website** to sign up. www.fomelc.org