

PO Box 3431  
Evergreen, CO 80439  
[www.fomelc.org](http://www.fomelc.org)

## August 2020 Newsletter

### COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS UPDATES:

The safety of our community is our top priority, and we are committed to doing our part to limit the spread of COVID-19. We are also coordinating with our US Forest Service partners to remain in compliance with their COVID-19 response guidelines.

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#### **Chairman:**

Peter Vrolijk  
[peter@fomelc.org](mailto:peter@fomelc.org)

#### **Trail Projects Coordinator:**

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

#### **Weed Projects Coordinator:**

Alan Rockwood  
[alan@fomelc.org](mailto:alan@fomelc.org)

#### **Secretary:**

John Kruse  
[john@fomelc.org](mailto:john@fomelc.org)

#### **Treasurer:**

Matt Komos  
[matt@fomelc.org](mailto:matt@fomelc.org)

#### **Webmaster Team Lead:**

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

#### **Marketing/Education Team**

**Lead:** Gordon Brown  
[gordon@fomelc.org](mailto:gordon@fomelc.org)

#### **Membership:**

Kay Hoisington  
[kay@fomelc.org](mailto:kay@fomelc.org)

#### **Newsletter:**

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

#### **Forest Service Liaison**

Ralph Bradt  
[ralph.bradt@usda.gov](mailto:ralph.bradt@usda.gov)

## Note from the Chair – Spot of Light – Peter Vrolijk

For anyone who has been on a Wilderness trail this past summer, the number of hikers and campers is far greater than previous years. On the one hand, it is wonderful to see so many people enjoying a Wilderness experience, but too many people come into Wilderness without a full appreciation of the responsibilities we bear to adhere to Wilderness and Leave No Trace principles. Regular readers of Alan's column will realize that actions taken today can have long-term consequences as the treatment of invasive plants introduced decades ago continues every year.

A couple of weeks ago I went on an early Sunday morning run with some friends up to Beartracks Lake, and the number of people camping around the lake made a small village. I came across a group camped only feet off the trail as you come into the lake and stopped to talk with them about selecting good campsites and Wilderness principles. I found a receptive group, and they expressed frustration about having arrived late to find so few campsites available. I empathized with their concern, suggested some alternative locations to camp, and pointed out how others had moved logs around a fire ring, an act incompatible with Leave No Trace.

After enjoying the view across the lake into the cirque, my friends and I started on our return run, and I found the group at the campsite moving the logs out of the site to partially restore it. The short discussion I had undertaken with them had made a difference, and they made a decision to rectify a problem created by others.

I hope many of our members are able to enjoy the Wilderness this year, and I encourage you to take the time to talk with other users and help inform them of Wilderness and Leave No Trace principles. As with the invasive plants, that action can have long-term benefits if you can change someone's appreciation of the environment, and missing an opportunity to inform someone could lead to damage that could take years to recover. In this year when so many of our activities are limited by the global pandemic, this could be the biggest contribution any of us can make.



**Campsite with fire ring immediately off trail leading into Beartracks Lake, Mount Evans Wilderness**

# Forest Service COVID-19 Related Closures in Our Area

## Mt Evans Road Closure :

This road is access to the following Mt Evans Wilderness Trails: Summit Lake Trail, Chicago Lakes Trail and the Mt Evans Ridge Trail. The Weed Teams use the Mt Evans road to access Lincoln Lake and Beartrack Lakes to spray noxious weeds.

According to the USDA Forest Service Public Affairs, CDOT and Denver Mountain Parks Press Release:

**The Mount Evans highway will not open for cars at all this year.**

**CLEAR CREEK COUNTY** — Due to issues associated with COVID-19, USDA Forest Service and Denver Mountain Parks will not be able to provide services for visitors on Mount Evans this summer, and the Mount Evans Highway (Colorado Highway 5) will not open to motorized vehicles for the 2020 season. The Colorado Department of Transportation, the USDA Forest Service, and Denver Mountain Parks — the agencies that jointly manage Mount Evans — have reached this decision after careful consideration of both health and safety risks and economic feasibility.

## **Fire Restrictions**

Know before you go! Colorado Fire Bans:

<http://www.coemergency.com/p/fire-bans-danger.html>

This site will also have the August 19<sup>th</sup> Colorado Statewide Open Fire Ban information



View from the top on Tanglewood Trl looking South - Photo by Peter Vrolijk

## FOMELC Member Crew Shirts & Hats for Sale

Shirts (Dark Green only): \$15      Hats: \$10



Contact Gordon at :  
[gordon@fomelc.org](mailto:gordon@fomelc.org)

or Dee at:  
[dee@fomelc.org](mailto:dee@fomelc.org)

To order your shirt and/or hat.



## A LESSON LEARNED, Again!

Usually in this space I write about the weed projects, and all the great things FOMELC volunteers are accomplishing which they have continued to do in August. But this month I will offer a different story. This past week we were treating the Canada thistle in Ralph's favorite area – Bear Creek "Magic Valley". We worked diligently through the little meadow along Bear Creek - there seemed to be fewer plants to spray, no thistles were found south of the Creek, and herbicide use was obviously less than last year. All was great – right?

We all know the adage "You never know what you had until you lose it!" There is a corollary in weed control. "You never know what you have, until you try to get rid of it". Last week we had a good-sized crew leaving one person (Peter Vrolijk in this case) to help 'spot', check for outlying plants and the find the perimeter of the infestation. Magic Valley, if you haven't seen it, has a well-defined eastern edge – large rock outcroppings on either side of the Creek, the forest closes in but you can hear water cascading down rocks somewhere beyond. Peter decides to see if there is a view down toward the Beartrack Lakes Trail a mile and a half away. What he saw was one of the nastiest infestations of Canada thistle we have yet had the 'pleasure' to treat! Thankfully, it wasn't too large but the plants were large and dense, often over head-high and spread across the steepest terrain we've ever had to navigate.



It is another reminder that you cannot separate the treatments from weed surveys and inventories. We have to continually check the perimeters of the infestation and think about how the infestation could migrate from its known location.

We survey for infestation to treat them and treat the sites to confirm and extend the survey. This scenario has played out before at the Resthouse Trail, South Captain Mountain and Indian Creek, to name a few cases. Our problem is systemic and open-ended. It requires our constant attention and persistence. (Shown to the right: Debbie Black, Chris Sill, Alan Rockwood and Dee Lyons; photo by Peter Vrolijk)

As a final personal note as the weed season winds down, I cannot say enough about our 2020 volunteers. With COVID-19 and limits on project size and times, we knew participation would be lower this season which it has been by half. But there is a small core group of volunteers that are accomplishing incredible things. By doing more Lost Creek sites in 2020, we were increasing the number of projects.

## FROM THE WEED PATCH Continued

Our volunteers are meeting that challenge and going beyond. They have added on their own initiative treatments to areas not on the original plan - Brookside/Payne Creek Junction, Indian Creek Trail and Cub Creek Trail above Truesdale Creek. I signed on to the weed program a long time ago. The other participants are true “volunteers” week after week, project after project. As a reader of FOMELC’s Newsletter, you care about “Wilderness Character”, and can surely appreciate the efforts of these volunteers to eradicate disruptive non-native invasive species from our Wildernesses restoring their native habitat.

Photos from various weed spraying projects this summer photos by Dee Lyons:

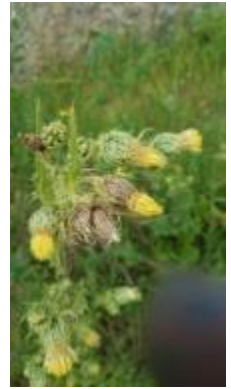


# Who Was This Guy “Parry”?

By Alan Rockwood



We see many wildflowers in Colorado attributed in some way to “Parry” like the ‘good thistle’, noted in July’s newsletter. It was the yellow-flowered (Parry’s) thistle (picture on right). There is also Parry’s Hare Bell, Primrose, Penstemon. All told, more than 76 native Colorado plant species are named for Charles Christopher Parry. He also contributed to the naming of Colorado’s geographical features, such as Torreys Peak, Grays Peak, James Peak, Mount Eva, Mount Engelmann and Parry’s Peak to name just a few. I became familiar with Parry’s name in trying to differentiate invasive weeds from native plants – Parry’s thistle prefers moist soils similar to Canada thistle; Parry’s owl clover looks very much like yellow-toadflax in late spring. What is his story.



Charles Parry was born in England in 1823 and immigrated with his family to up-state New York before he was ten. He received a medical degree from Columbia University where he studied with John Torrey, one of the pre-eminent botanists of the time. He also developed a close professional and lifelong friendship with another of Torrey’s students, Asa Gray (Harvard University professor). After receiving his degree, Parry started a medical practice in Davenport, Iowa. It would serve as his “home base” for the remainder of his life. But botany had become his passion. He soon traveled to St. Louis, Missouri to learn more from the German-American botanist, George Engelmann. Parry subsequently named the spruce tree for his friend and colleague. Parry also first identified the Colorado Blue Spruce.

(Right: Parry’s Mountain Gentian - a favorite “photo op” on higher elevation projects.)

Parry’s defining professional experience came when he was selected as surgeon and botanist with the Mexican Border Survey (1849-52). The expedition stemmed from the treaty ending the Mexican-American War. Crossing the Sonoran Desert nearly ended in disaster for the survey party. Never-the-less, this experience generated his keen interest in the high mountain and dessert flora of the western United States. The specimens Parry collected were preserved and sent to his friend and mentor, John Torrey, for official classification and publication.



While in San Diego, Parry identified a new and rare conifer species which he named “Torrey Pine”. California remained a favorite area for his expeditions. However, in 1861, Parry began his love affair with the alpine and subalpine flora of Colorado; he acquired a cabin on the banks of Clear Creek at the base of Gray’s and Torrey’s Peaks. He and his wife would return again and again to the cabin over a twenty-year period. The collections from these surveys that he shared with the world led a British botanist, Sir Joseph Hooker, to call Parry “the King of Colorado Botany”.

## Who Was This Guy “Parry”? Continued

Parry’s career as a scientific explorer of the new U.S. boundaries began with him as strong advocate of western expansion. He looked for the commercial opportunities of its development like most of those in his time, and often wrote articles to a general audience. However, his skills in the field gave him a highly respected position among 19<sup>th</sup> century botanists. He became close to John Muir on his travels and expeditions in the west. By the end of his career Charles Christopher Parry saw that commercial and private interests needed to be balanced with preservation of the natural habitat. In identifying and describing their uniqueness, Parry has given voices to the flora that compose the exceptional native habitat of our western wilderness areas. We know these areas provide the life blood to the species in less protected lands.

Sources:

“Colorado Flora of Charles Parry”, Al Schneider, [www.swcoloradowildflowers.com](http://www.swcoloradowildflowers.com)

“Parry and the Pines”, Elizabeth Adelman, Fremontia, Vol. 44, No. 2, May 2013, California Native Plant Society

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**More Weed Spraying 2020 Project Photos:** Always up for an adventure with the Weed Spraying Program! Our trip to the Resthouse Hawkweed via beautiful Lincoln Lake was a beautiful and productive day eliminating the hawkweed infestation. Our day was highlighted by the incredible find by Alan, a pile of moose poo in the willow branches almost 6 feet high! The last picture was a reminder to me that something somehow, always blooms something beautiful, out of the crap in our lives. Dee Lyons





# LOST CREEK WILDERNESS HISTORY

BY RALPH BRADT

## A Brief History of the Ben Tyler Trail

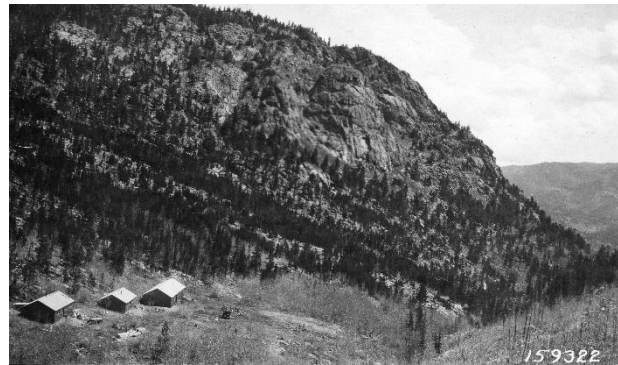
Just when the Ben Tyler trail came into existence is a bit uncertain. According to Harold Warren, a former Park county historian and once an employee of the Forest Service, both ends of the trail show evidence of prehistoric habitation but, as a trail, its beginnings were with the logging operation of Ben Tyler, for whom the gulch was named.

In August of 1903, as another logging company was working in the gulch, a fire started and burned for two weeks. There were claims the fire was intentionally set, as burned timber could be had much more cheaply than unburned. In any case, ten days after it was reported out, the fire took off again and burned out the entire watershed, also hopping over the ridge to the west and burning out the heads of Foster and Shutetown Gulches.

W. W. Hooper, the Bailey district ranger at the time, estimated the size of the fire at 3,000 acres. Ingwall Horgen's 1924 history of the Pike National Forest, says the ground in Bailey was white with ash and the fire wasn't completely out until after an early snowstorm in September. It's that fire that's responsible for today's huge aspen stand and brilliant fall colors.



1921-Trees on the Jacot Sale - head of Ben Tyler Gulch.



1921 Jacot's camp in Ben Tyler Gulch.

Following the fire, the burn was sold as a salvage sale to an outfit named Jacot, who logged out the burn.

An article in the Fairplay Flume in October of 1912 spoke of C. L. Fitzsimmons (whose brother, Jesse, was later the Bailey district ranger) and E. R. Varderbeck "assisting Ranger Couch in blazing a new government trail into Craig Park." Likely, this is today's trail from 285 to the Craig Park trail.

The trail first appears to show up on Forest Service maps in 1917, although the depiction on the 1925 is somewhat more accurate. The south end of the trail doesn't appear on maps until 1930.

Dates and history of logging on the south end of the Ben Tyler trail are unknown, although there certainly was a logging camp along the trail. The remains of it can be seen a mile and a half or so up from the south end of the trail. Cut nails and cans nearby indicate a likely date around the turn of the century.

The meadows along Rock Creek at the south end of the trail have been used for grazing for years, as evidenced by the old Rock Creek cow camp found near the south end of the trail.

# What is Wilderness? Dee Lyons

The **Wilderness Act** of 1964 was written by Howard Zahniser of The Wilderness Society. It created the legal definition of wilderness in the United States, and protected 9.1 million acres of federal land.

“In order to assure that **increasing population**, expanding settlement, growing mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas within the United States. For this purpose there is established Wilderness Areas where the Earth and its community of life are...untrammled. Where man himself is a visitor, who does not remain, where land retains its primeval character and influence.”

*-Wilderness Act of 1964*

**How is COVID19 affecting our trail uses?** Increasing population on our National Forest Trails in Colorado has become a concern to many public lands managers. Currently the Forest Service Offices for Mt Evans and Lost Creek Wildernesses are temporarily closed. You can still reach them by phone for information. South Park: 719-836-2031 South Platte: 303-275-5610 Clear Creek: 303-567-4382.

- **Practice social distancing.** Avoid crowding at trailheads, scenic overlooks, parking lots and other areas. If a recreation spot is crowded, look for a less crowded spot. Maintain a 6-ft. physical distance from others.
- **Follow guidance and orders.** Take the precautions recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and county, city and state public health authorities.
- **Be cautious.** Avoid high risk or backcountry activities that may increase your chance of injury or distress. Law enforcement and/or search and rescue operations may be limited due to COVID-19 response efforts.
- **Prepare for limited services.** All restroom facilities are closed on the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland. Visitors are encouraged to take their trash with them when they leave. Follow [Leave No Trace Principles](#), particularly when dealing with human waste.
- **Keep pets on a leash.**

*The Denver Post Jul 2, 2020:*

“(Maxwell Falls) This popular waterfall hike joins the list of Colorado trails being loved to death. One day in May, more than 900 cars parked along the road near the Maxwell Falls trailhead, resident says.”

*The Denver Post Apr 30, 2020:*

“Front Range open spaces plead with visitors to stop destroying parks, trails. Heavy traffic during the coronavirus outbreak is leading to damage at local open spaces”

*Denver Post Aug 7, 2020:*

“Litter, graffiti and vandalism are increasing at state parks, national forests across Colorado”

**“Trouble on the Trails: Forest Service Grapples with Crowds, Trash and Human Waste”**

**By [Sean Hurley](#) • Aug 2, 2020**

*The Denver Post July 30, 2020:*

“Huge jump in popularity at Brainard Lake leads to extreme crowding despite pandemic restrictions. Visitation is running two to four times more than normal at one of the most picturesque spots in the Front Range”

*The Denver Post March 21, 2020*

“Colorado parks and trails fill up as coronavirus leads to cabin fever. Rocky Mountain closes after Estes Park says visitors pose a health risk for community”

# News from Marketing & Education – Gordon Brown

## Hiking Etiquette

(National Park Service Article)

Hiking is one of the best ways to spend time in the great outdoors. With more than 17,000 hiking trails in Colorado alone, 40 wilderness areas and 4 National Parks, the opportunities to get out and take a hike are nearly endless. Whether you're hiking alone or in a group, be sure to follow the written and unwritten rules of the trail. Proper hiking etiquette helps instill respect for other trail users, and it promotes stewardship of the land.

The best thing you can do when hiking is to remember the “golden rule”: treat others the way you would want to be treated.

Here are some main points of hiking etiquette.

- **Know your right of way.** Check signage for the trail you are hiking, and follow the correct right of way yields. Signs may vary from trail to trail, but these are the general guidelines of yielding on the trail
  - **Hikers coming uphill have the right of way.** If you're descending the trail, step aside and give space to the people climbing up.
  - **Bicyclists yield to hikers and horses or other pack stock.** Come to a full stop and step to the side to give the right of way. Be mindful of the plants or animals that are near the trail if you must step off the trail. Bicyclists should always ride within their abilities. Before your visit, check individual park regulations to see if biking is allowed.
  - **Hikers yield to horses and other pack stock.** Slowly and calmly step off to the downhill side of a trail. If you approach from behind, calmly announce your presence and intentions. Horses and other pack stock can frighten easily, so avoid sudden movements or loud noises.
- **Make yourself known.** When you encounter other hikers and trail users, offer a friendly “hello” or a simple head nod. This helps create a friendly atmosphere on the trail. If you approach another trail user from behind, announce yourself in a friendly, calm tone and let him/her know you want to pass.
- **Stay on the trail.** Don't step off trail unless you absolutely must when yielding. Going off trail can damage or kill certain plant or animal species, and can hurt the ecosystems that surround the trail. Always practice **Leave No Trace** principles: Leave rocks, vegetation, and artifacts where you find them for others to enjoy.



- **Do not disturb wildlife.** They need their space, and you need yours, too. Keep your distance from the wildlife you encounter. Some parks require you to stay a certain distance from wildlife, so check park regulations before your visit. Never leave the trail to try and get a closer look at an animal because it can hurt the habitat and the animal and put you in danger.
- **Be mindful of trail conditions.** If a trail is too wet and muddy, turn back and save the hike for another day. Using a muddy trail can be dangerous, damage the trail's condition, and damage the ecosystems that surround the trail.
- **Take time to listen.** When hiking in the great outdoors, let nature do all the talking. Be respectful of both nature and the other users, and keep the noise from electronic devices at bay. Not only will other visitors appreciate the peace and quiet, but so will the wildlife. Many wildlife species rely on natural sounds for communication purposes, and disrupting those sounds can hurt their chances of survival.
- **Be aware of your surroundings.** Always be aware of your surroundings when hiking in our national parks and trails. It will help keep you and any members of your group safe, and it will help keep wildlife and their habitats safe and healthy. Know the rules for hiking in bear country, and know what to do if you encounter a bear on the trail.

These are some hiking etiquette guidelines that will help you have a safe, fun, and relaxing trip next time you go hiking in a national park, wilderness area or trail. When in doubt about something just remember the "golden rule" — treat other trail users how you want to be treated, and respect the wildlife and lands of our great country.

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.

Got a general or specific trail question? [Admin@fomelc.org](mailto: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](http://www.fomelc.org)