

Friends of Mount Evans and Lost Creek Wildernesses



August Newsletter 2022

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Note from the Chair By Peter Vrolijk

Wilderness Experience

In the last months I have used this space to beseech readers to volunteer on projects. By the time you read this note, most of the projects for the year will be complete, and we will step back and consider our successes for the year. Our last projects are in early to mid-September so don't miss out on these final opportunities.

Thinking about project wrap-ups led me to wonder why volunteers show up and spend the time on our projects. Why do I commit my time in this way? For me the answer is clear – for me to enjoy wilderness, I must be willing to commit time to serving the needs associated with maintaining wilderness ideals. Steve West summarizes this viewpoint best: anyone who volunteers for a day can use all trails in Colorado for the year with a clear conscience.

But why is wilderness important to me? Answering this question requires putting the feelings I experience into words, something that will turn out to be neither precise nor complete. As the article later in the newsletter suggests, some seek wilderness for the wildlife. For me, tranquility comes from getting far off the beaten track, often alone and sometimes with one other person. Part of my contribution is doing patrols, and I have a few favorite places I like to visit each year for the expansive views and tranquility they offer. Hearing tumbling water in Craig Creek calms my soul in a way that little else can. I volunteer so that others can experience something similar.

I would like to hear how others answer my two questions – why volunteer, and why is wilderness important to you? Please send your responses to: peter@fomelc.org

If I get a few responses, I will compile them into a short article for the next newsletter. I hope that by looking deeper at our own motivations and sharing them with others, we can deepen our appreciation for the wildernesses we serve and strengthen our community.



Craig Creek flowing through Craig Park where the Brookside-McCurdy Trail crosses the creek, Lost Creek Wilderness

- Peter

2022 Wilderness Stewardship Online Training Program

This online training program is temporarily offline due to access issues to be corrected.

2022 Fire Restrictions

Know before you go!

Colorado Fire Bans:

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

“Only You Can Prevent Wild Fires!”



All Work Projects Require PPE

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is required at all work projects for **member safety** with using weed spray and trail tools. *Project PPE are the following:*

- Long pants
- Leather gloves for trail work
- Chemical resistant gloves recommended for weed spraying
- Long sleeve shirt
- Sturdy hiking boots
- Eye protection
- Hard hat for trail work/sun protective hat for weed spraying

Invasive Weeds & Adopt-a-Trail Program

Projects are still ongoing and will soon be completed for the season.

Sign up for final projects at: [Sign Up Event Calendar](#)

Special Trail Maintenance Project: Lost Park (Lost Creek Wilderness)

Weekend Trail Maintenance Project – Lost Park Trailhead

A special weekend trail project is planned for the Brookside-McCurdy trail at the Lost Park trailhead Friday, September 16th to Sunday, September 18th. The remoteness of this trailhead requires the additional time to make this work effective, and the idea of camping together at the Lost Park campground should be fun.

[Sign Up Registration](#) for the project is required to help plan logistics.

Our primary goal for the weekend is to replace a bridge timber on the Brookside-McCurdy trail over the South Fork of Lost Creek. The bridge timber previously crossed the creek but was washed downstream in a flood several years ago. Once that work is completed, we intend to improve the trail section that bypasses the campground, which may include rerouting the trail to a more natural path.

Meals for the weekend will be provided by FOMELC.

Participation for part of the time is possible, but we will need the greatest number of volunteers on Saturday to help replace the bridge timber.

Contact peter@fomelc.org for more information about this weekend, and visit the project description to appreciate how you might contribute.



Wigwam Trail approaching the Lost Park Campground, Lost Creek Wilderness.

What: Special weekend trail maintenance project on Brookside-McCurdy and Wigwam trails.

When: September 16-18

Where: Lost Park trailhead & campground, Lost Creek Wilderness

Registration required for meal planning and logistics.

The Burning Question: How Close is Too Close for Wildlife?

Wildlife encounters have been mentioned in the news and on television a lot as hikers and visitors are enjoying the trails in National and State Parks. This article appeared in the Leave No Trace (LNT) July Newsletter online and is worthy of publishing in our FOMELC Newsletter again as a reminder. FOMELC has LNT approval for publishing their articles in our newsletter as required. There are some helpful tips in how to protect yourself and the wildlife. Enjoy! – **Gordon Brown (FOMELC Education)**.



Julia Oleksiak-July 21, 2022

If you follow outdoor news, you've likely heard the oftentimes too familiar story: a visitor finds themselves too close to wildlife, the wild animal reacts, and some unfortunate consequences follow. So far this summer, there have already been three incidents of visitors getting too close to and subsequently gored by bison in Yellowstone National Park. That's why this month we're covering the burning question, how close is too close when it comes to wildlife?

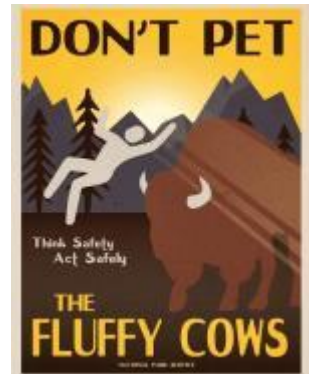


First and foremost, it is important to research what type of wildlife you may encounter on your outdoor adventures. Different wildlife requires different responses upon encounter. If you are traveling to an area that is specifically managed by any type of land management agency, such as the National Park Service in the case of Yellowstone, make sure you follow their specific guidelines for wildlife encounters. The guidance in Yellowstone National

Park is to “stay more than 25 yards (23 m) away from all large animals – bison, elk, bighorn sheep, deer, moose, and coyotes – and at least 100 yards (91 m) away from bears and wolves.” If you do not know who manages the area you plan to visit, a good place to start is the state's local fish, wildlife, and game agency as they generally will have information on wildlife commonly found in that specific state.

At times when guidance cannot be found or you forget the guidance during a surprise wildlife encounter, use the thumb trick. Do you know the thumb trick? [The Thumb Trick](#)

The thumb trick is a good general guideline for when you find yourself in the presence of wildlife outside. Make sure your arm is fully outstretched, give a thumbs up, cover up one eye, and point your thumb in the direction of the animal. If your thumb fully covers the animal you are looking at, this means you are likely far enough away to observe them safely. If you encounter a family of animals, make sure your thumb covers the entire group. Not only is this a good way to respect wildlife in their natural habitat, it's also important to note that animals with their young can act more territorial and protective, hence the extra space that's often needed. Leave No Trace also continues to conduct research on this important topic.



Source: National Park Service Instagram

Even as you are practicing the thumb trick, if the animal you are observing notices you and stops doing what it was doing, you are too close. That means that it's time to move away further or move along the trail and let the animal get back to its normal habits. This is why we recommend bringing a pair of binoculars or a zoom camera lens on every trip. Using binoculars or a zoom lens to view wildlife from a much further distance is the best way to ensure both their and your safety. This helps to keep the animals from feeling threatened, stressed, or scared by our presence and allows us to view them safely in all their wild glory.



Let's protect and enjoy our natural world together.



Thank You Volunteers FOMELC/VOC, You Made a Difference at Pedee Creek Invasive Weed Project !

August 10th
Photos by Phil Demosthenes



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.



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Of all the paths you take in life, make sure a few of them are dirt.

- John Muir