

Friends of Mount Evans and Lost Creek Wildernesses



July Newsletter 2022

- Page 1 Bighorn Sheep in Lost Creek Wilderness May 2022, picture by Ralph Bradt
- Page 2 Note from the Chair – Make the Commitment to Volunteer
- Page 3 Wilderness Stewardship Training Program/Fire Restrictions
- Page 4 From the Weed Patch
- Page 5 Boot Brush Installation at Abyss Lake Trailhead
- Page 6 Adopt-a-Trail Program
- Page 7 Special Project in Lost Creek Wilderness
- Page 8-9 Emergency Responders In Arapaho National Forest
- Page 10 Board Members and Mission Statement



Note from the Chair *By Peter Vrolijk*

Make the Commitment to Volunteer

Last month I used the same title as this month – continued volunteer efforts are crucial for the second half of our field season. With the arrival of August, the stump in this month’s photo is a metaphor for those volunteers who have been showing up regularly, somewhat worn by the efforts but resilient despite the encroaching fatigue.

We undertook an ambitious plan this year of trail patrols, invasive plant treatments, trail maintenance, and public education efforts, and the results from that plan are impressive. We have never achieved such complete wilderness coverage in trail patrols so early in the season. Never before have we attempted such a broad portfolio of invasive plant treatments. Never has there been such a focused trail maintenance effort on such a popular trail like the Abyss Lake Trail. And we have never contacted as many Wilderness visitors as we have this year with our Trailhead Host program.

Our ultimate success depends on volunteers continuing to show up to complete our plan. Signing up is easy on our [Sign Up Project Calendar](#). Become a part of the effort to help sustain Wilderness. We can see that we are making a difference, like in places where thistle infestations have been treated in previous years and are absent or much reduced this year or maintained trails that handle nature’s weather with less erosion. Help us make Wilderness more accessible to more people while at the same time helping reduce the impact of human visitors on the Wilderness environment. And please consider the special weekend project at Lost Park described for the first time this month.

Rekindle that feeling of success that comes from a good day as a volunteer. Make a difference for Wilderness and for your own peace of mind. I look forward to seeing you out on a project.

- Peter



This polished, weathered stump at treeline below Rosedale Peak, Mount Evans Wilderness, attests to the forces of nature and the durability of Wilderness.

2022 Wilderness Stewardship Online Training Program

New or interested in becoming a member with the Friends of Mount Evans and Lost Creek Wilderness Organization? A great way to begin is with an online training program beginning now. Be ready to jump into projects to protect these two wildernesses this summer.

We offer this training to help make the volunteer experience more enjoyable and rewarding, both when working in teams and individually. The training modules consist of three basic components:

- Modules 1-3: Discussion on wilderness protection and how the federal law came into being
- Modules 4-6: There are many ways volunteers can contribute
- Modules 7-9: How to collect data for the forest service and patrol training hike

Register now for this self-paced training. Contact Dee dee@fomelc.org

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 project for **member safety** with using weed spray and trail tools. Project PPE is:

- 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



From the Weed Patch – Alan Rockwood

The noxious weed eradication program is in its peak season now, with two projects a week at the moment. The efforts of FOMELC weed volunteers have received new outside recognition. In the winter, Dee Lyons sent this photography (below) of Joe O’Leary to Osprey Packs, a long-time corporate sponsor of FOMELC. They responded to the extraordinary labors of weed program participants by contributing six Seral 7 waist packs, which work well with backpack sprayers. We are giving these packs to volunteers that demonstrate an exceptional commitment to this wilderness stewardship initiative.



Photo by Dee Lyons

Beginning late in the 2021 weed treatment season and continuing this, Annie and Bob Legrand (below) have become stewards of the program, signing up for challenging projects like Pedee Creek and Indian Creek. They also initiated a follow-up of Rolling Creek Trailhead when a late afternoon shower threatened the



Photo by Alan Rockwood

effectiveness of our treatment completed on June 29th. They did this all the while signing up for all the trail projects and obtaining their sawyers certifications. It was easy to award the first Osprey pack to Annie and Bob. They are wilderness stewardship “rock stars.”

Of note, on July 16th, we finished our first joint weed project with Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado (VOC). (See photos at bottom) The treatment site was Captain Mountain South Meadow, infested with musk and Canada thistle. VOC provided 17 volunteers who perhaps more casually get involved with weed eradication. FOMELC had six experienced members sign up and provide leadership for

combined teams of 3 or 4 individuals. Over a few years, FOMELC’s treatment area at this site had increased as densities declined, and new patches were identified. However, with the additional support of VOC, we could follow up on scouting reports and double the area treated to more than 15 acres. The new area was infested with musk thistle. I was impressed by the commitment of the VOC volunteers. We have two more projects with VOC at the larger Pedee Creek site on August 10th and 13th. Looking back, we need more experienced FOMELC volunteers relative to the number of VOC volunteers on August projects. Combining our skill sets creates a very potent force for the restoration of natural habitats!



Photos by Loren Winters

Boot and Brush Dedication at Abyss Lake Trail June 2022

Give Invasive Species the Brush Off!

In most issues of our newsletter, we talk about FOMELC's weed treatment programs in Mount Evans and Lost Creek Wildernesses and motivate members to volunteer. Humans have introduced invasive plants (noxious weeds) to our wilderness lands, and humans have to work to eradicate those species actively. We can also prevent new infestations of noxious weeds from becoming established.

Increasingly popular tools for doing this are boot brush kiosks placed at trailheads. The program is often called "Give Invasive Species the Brush Off." Through generous donations from private individuals we have installed two kiosks on popular wilderness trailheads – May 21st, Goose Creek TH (Lost Creek Wilderness), and June 18, Abyss Lake TH (Mount Evans Wilderness). The kiosks will educate hikers on the problem of noxious weeds and induce them to clean their boots before starting their hike. The educational message is targeted to the situation of each location. Education is inevitably the first step toward solving invasive weed problems.

But will brushing boots make a difference? Evidence strongly suggests they do. Early adopters of kiosks have carefully examined soils from the boot brushes. They propagated the seeds captured from below the kiosks and compared those plants to other samples of soil taken from areas along the trails. The plants grown from the boot brush samples were heavily weighted toward invasive species compared to the other samples. Brushing seeds from your hiking boots is an effective way to reduce the distribution of many noxious weeds

The boot brush program was made possible by gifts from the family and friends of the late Fred Hampel. FOMELC is matching their gifts with unrestricted gifts to acquire a total of four kiosks. Two more will be purchased and installed at trailheads in the Bear Creek Watershed later this season.



Alan Rockwood (left) Leslee Hampel (right)



Photos by Dee Lyons



Adopt-a-Trail Program

Abyss Lake Trail

*Wyatt Stanland
Trails Coordinator*

Greetings from the trail! We have a lot of fun work left to do on the Abyss Lake Trail during our August and September projects. The Abyss Trail is a beautiful trail that starts in the southwest corner of the Mt. Evans Wilderness, passing through expansive aspen groves and alpine tundra before ending at the picturesque Abyss Lake.

Check out the full schedule on [SignUp.com](https://www.signup.com), where you can easily sign up for all of our exciting projects!

[Sign Up Event Calendar](#)

During the July project, we will move further up the trail, building water management features including check steps, water bars, and drain dips. There are also a number of sections of braided trail that we will repair. This is vital work for the health and longevity of the trail and will include skills building in bucking and preparing logs, and moving lots of dirt!



*Drain dip construction
by volunteers*

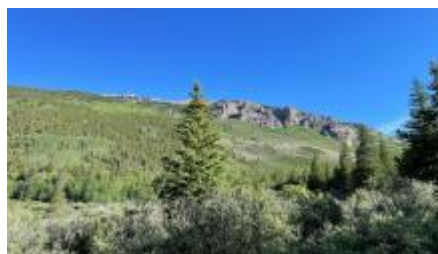


This bridge could use an update!

During the August project, we will be undertaking two exciting flagship projects on the Abyss Trail. There is an existing log bridge that we will replace. This will be a complex job over a rushing creek that will involve advanced woodworking skills. Anybody and everybody will have an opportunity to learn new skills and take part in an exciting and lasting improvement to the trail!

Additionally, if we have enough volunteers, following this creek crossing is a steep and rutted section of trail that we will improve with a series of rock and log steps. This will greatly improve erosion and durability of the trail. Volunteers will learn and hone intermediate to advanced rock skills and will create a useful and durable addition to the trail. This section of trail is 3.25 miles up from the trailhead.

*This is all aspen, and will be the
backdrop of our September
project!*



The September project will see us completing any remaining work leftover from the August project, as well as moving further up the trail constructing vital drainage structures through the aspen groves at the peak of leaf season!

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



Bison Peak, the highest peak in the Lost Creek Wilderness, is often accessed from Lost Park.

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

When: September 16-18

Where: Lost Park trailhead & campground, Lost Creek Wilderness

Lost Park is a remote, idyllic trailhead for the Colorado, Wigwam, and Brookside-McCurdy trails. Because it is the most remote trailhead for FOMELC volunteers, it receives less attention than other locations. We have agreed to host a volunteer weekend to support the South Park Ranger District in three main trail maintenance efforts:

- Restore a large timber bridge to the Brookside-McCurdy trail over the South Fork Lost Creek just outside the campground that was washed away a few years ago.
- Improve the trail from the trailhead parking lot around the campground to the point where it joins the North Fork Lost Creek.
- Improve the Wigwam spur trail into the campground (time permitting).

Given the remoteness of this location, we will stay at the Lost Park campground on Friday and Saturday nights, work all day Saturday and Sunday morning, and finish mid-day on Sunday. Volunteers can participate from Friday night to Sunday noon, arrive Saturday morning, or leave Saturday afternoon. FOMELC will provide all meals for volunteers, and we will work in close coordination with USFS rangers.

Please consider joining us for the special weekend of work!

Registration is available in the [Sign Up Event Calendar](#)

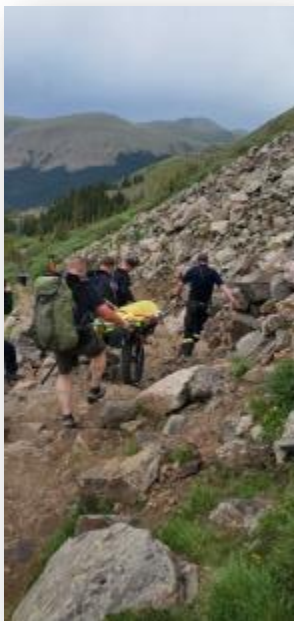
Emergency Responders Have an Unfortunate Busy Day Arapaho National Forest on July 10, 2022

A UTV accident with fatalities, a bicyclist accident resulting in a serious head wound, and a hiker above timberline with a possible dislocated ankle were all unfortunate events unfolding during the day. A heart wrenching comment from an emergency responder during a rescue “There are not enough emergency responder resources to keep up with all the calls.” The potential for accidents escalates during the summer as the forests are flooded with people recreating on National Forests. Due to the high volume of people, response time for an emergency can be delayed. Thinking about how you can be safe in the forest will hopefully keep you out of the hospital.

There was a happy ending for the injured party who potentially dislocated or broke her ankle and fell on the Silver Dollar Trail above timberline. Jen Medina-Gray, a Forest Service Clear Creek Ranger District trails employee, was in the area surveying the trail when she heard a yell and went to render aid. She used her Spot Unit to call 911 for help after realizing the victim could not walk and was in pain. Jen stayed and waited for Clear Creek EMS.



Upon arrival the EMS crew carefully wrapped her ankle to stabilize the leg and moved her to a stokes litter, which has one wheel underneath in the middle. Lightning began to flash over the mountain accompanied with light rain. As they moved her down the extremely rocky trail and a snow field, Alpine Rescue Team arrived to help with transporting.



Transporting across rocky tundra & digging a safe path for the wheel on the stokes litter through the snow.





The entire medical team kept a conversation going with the injured party on how she was doing. It was amazing to watch the rescue unfold in a precise manner of expertise. There was a shout for joy from victim's family when the crew and the injured party arrived at the trailhead to the waiting ambulance.



Pictures by Dee Lyons



Not all stories end in this way. Taking a few minutes to talk safety and about the “what ifs” can make a difference on how the day will play out. Do you have a first aid kit? Is your activity above timberline during Colorado afternoon lightning storms?

The ever increasing number of people heading out for a day of fun can quickly turn into a day of disaster.

If you are a FOMELC member and enjoy patrolling Mt Evans and Lost Creek Wilderness trails, it is a good idea to have some first aid training.

Thank you Clear Creek EMS and Alpine Rescue Team for all that you do!

- Dee Lyons, FOMELC Newsletter Editor

FOMELC Board Members

Chairman: Peter Vrolijk
peter@fomelc.org

Trail Projects Coordinator: Wyatt Stanland
wyatt@fomelc.org

Secretary: April Jones
april@fomelc.org

Membership Coordinator: Joe O'Leary
joe@fomelc.org

Web Information Tech Lead: Deb Grass
lildeb@fomelc.org

Noxious Weed Projects Coordinator: Alan Rockwood
alan@fomelc.org

Marketing/Education Team Lead: Gordon Brown
gordon@fomelc.org

Newsletter/Wilderness Training Program:
Dee Lyons dee@fomelc.org

Treasurer: Matt Komos
matt@fomelc.org

Forest Service Liaison: Ralph Bradt
ralph.bradt@usda.gov

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/>

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