

Friends of Mount Evans and Lost Creek Wildernesses



March Photo Contest Winner: **Chris Sills**

"Refrigerator Gulch - For years I had read and heard a lot about this area in Lost Creek Wilderness. It did not disappoint! Breathtaking wilderness and mind-bending geology unite." - Chris

Check our website for who is the Runner Up for March - <https://fomec.org/gallery>

March Newsletter 2021

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FOMELC Board Members

Chairman: Peter Vrolijk
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Secretary: John Kruse
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Membership: Kay Hoisington
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Web Information Tech Lead: Deb Grass
lildeb@fomelc.org

Newsletter/Annual Spring Training: Dee Lyons
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Trail Projects Coordinator: *Vacant*
Qualified Trail Boss needed: Contact: board@fomelc.org

Treasurer: Matt Komos
matt@fomelc.org

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

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

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

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 effect 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
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Wilderness is not a luxury but a necessity of the human spirit. - Edward Abbey

Note from the Chair – Wilderness Degradation

By Peter Vrolijk



Vegetation recovers from the Shawnee Peak fire the summer after the burn. This fire affected only a small portion of the northern Lost Creek Wilderness in 2019, and the extent and intensity of the fire was consistent with fires occurring in the natural ecosystem. Photo from Craig Park Trail, summer, 2020.

This month's newsletter focuses on degradation to Wilderness, both through direct human actions (see the Litter and Graffiti article on page 6) and through indirect human effects (massive wildfire brought on by human-induced changing climate). Both of these issues violate the "untrammelled" character of wilderness.

Graffiti seems to represent a need for humans to leave a mark in nature, the antithesis of Leave No Trace. I fail to understand what motivates people to this need – perhaps it reflects a feeling of being overwhelmed by nature and a desire to reassert control over the environment, even if that solution is ineffective. The trash problem seems inexplicable, in wilderness or any other setting. The only solution to these problems is persistent and continuous education, taking the time to stop and talk with other wilderness users about better ways to act in this privileged environment.

Fire is a more complex issue because fire is an essential component of the natural ecosystem. Yet the scale and intensity of fire now exceeds that upon which natural systems are based. The solution to the problem requires global action that too many remain unwilling to accept. In the meantime, those who care deeply about wilderness are left with trying to implement effective healing programs once a fire devastates an area. While nature will find a way to heal itself, it needs help to overcome the worst effects of catastrophic fires. Please consider the appeal from our compatriots in the Cache la Poudre Wilderness as they take the first steps toward healing from the Cameron Peaks Fire.

- Peter

PHOTO CONTEST

By Deb Grass (FOMELC Volunteer)

Show off your Mount Evans & Lost Creek Wilderness Photos.

We thought a photo “contest” would be a fun way to engage FOMELC volunteers and our newsletter readers as a way to promote the pristine beauty of Mount Evans and Lost Creek Wildernesses.

Each month the Board committee will review submitted photos to determine that month’s winner and runner-up. The winning photo will be displayed on our newsletter. Both the winner and runner-up photos will be displayed on our website.

Submission Guidelines:

- You must be signed up for our [newsletter](#) to submit photos.
- Each individual may submit no more than 2 photos (in .jpg format) per month. Photos should be submitted to photos@fomelc.org and should include photo location and any personal thoughts you may have about the photo or area.
- Photos may not include people or dogs (landscape and flora/fauna only).
- The submission deadline is the **13th of each month.**
- Winners will be determined based upon the review of judges of how well the photos represent the wilderness characteristics of the Mount Evans or Lost Creek Wilderness areas.

There will be no payments made to individuals submitting their photos.

By submitting your photos, you allow FOMELC to use them as the Board deems appropriate. Submissions do not have any copyright protection. Your name and comments will be displayed with the photo on the FOMELC Newsletter and website.

Thanks in advance for your submissions and Happy Photographing!



Poudre Wilderness Volunteers GoFundMe Campaign “Reopen Your Favorite Trails” March 30 – April 30

(Website not open prior to March 30)

The Cameron Peak Fire started August 13 and was declared 100% contained on December 2, 2020. In the end it



became the largest fire in Colorado history, covering over 208,000 acres. In the aftermath of this fire, the Poudre Wilderness Volunteers (PWV)

Organization became actively and aggressively involved in developing trail restoration plans in the Roosevelt National Forest. They are currently working with the U.S. Forest Service to specifically evaluate certain at-risk trails and

bridges and determining the priorities and plan of attack. Given their long history of supporting the Forest Service, they intend to leverage past experiences, particularly, the 2012 High Park Fire. They all too well recall seeing the damage of the Young Gulch Trail and the effort it took to restore it to use.

PWV is a volunteer group of over 300 individuals, with twenty-five years of experience working the trails. Their involvement includes serving as rangers for the USFS, launching both foot and stock patrols to survey trail conditions, removing dangerous and fallen trees, repairing bridges and recruiting members of the local communities to safely assist crews in trail building.

Dealing with the impact and magnitude of this fire is way beyond normal everyday efforts and they need all the help they can get to restore these trails. To financially assist their efforts, they are launching a GoFundMe campaign: [Reopen Your Favorite Trails](#) on March 30. The goal is to raise \$25,000 and all donations will be devoted to hiring additional labor and buying supplies. They have well-trained members who are focused on trail restoration. These folks will manage the additional labor. All of the bridge repairs require custom cut lumber, which has doubled in price, due to COVID driven home renovation projects.



Please click on the link to view the video that is the focal point for the campaign -

<https://youtu.be/b1MMQhxxxAc>

Many, many people were impacted by the severity of the Cameron Peak fire. After the High Park restoration experiences, we all learned it takes a community to rehabilitate the forests. PWV has excellent relationships and will work closely with the Canyon Lakes Ranger District, other land stewardship groups and the local communities. We know there are several years of effort ahead of us, but the goal is to get to work as quickly as possible and help all outdoor enthusiasts get back on the trails.

- Jeff Randa, Poudre Wilderness Volunteers

Litter, Graffiti and Vandalism are Increasing at State Parks, National Forests across Colorado

Due to the pandemic, day use in the wilderness areas has increased dramatically. More and more hikers are visiting areas where they can practice social distancing and have some solitude. The National Forest Service forecasts an increase of 24% in visitors over the next nine years. Over 237 million visitors visited national parks in 2020. Many are becoming concerned about the damage to the areas from too many people. It should be pointed out that a wilderness area needn't be overused to suffer from visitor impacts. A small number of hikers and campers who fail to practice Leave No Trace principles can damage soil, vegetation, water and campsites.



Visitors have been dumping trash on the ground rather than packing it in and packing it out in wilderness areas. Trash containers are filling up quickly in state and national parks, so people just stack their trash next to the containers for bears and other wildlife to get into. Graffiti is increasing on trees, bridges and informational signs.

What can you do about it?

- Practice **Leave No Trace** principles, pack it in and pack it out, <https://lnt.org/why/7-principles/>
- Stay on designated trails, Stay OFF social trails
- Camp in designated campsites
- Don't spread graffiti on rocks, signs, trees and bridges
- Read and understand signs



Please be a great steward of the Wilderness, National Forests and National Park areas, they need your help to protect all of our Wilderness areas for future generations.

More on this article is well worth your time, in the Denver Post:

<https://theknow.denverpost.com/2020/08/07/litter-graffiti-vandalism-colorado-parks-forests/242965/>

We Want to Hear from You!

Help us make this newsletter educational as well as informative. Send us your suggestions for articles or subjects that will educate us on the way to our mission. Examples of educational pieces that we have included in past issues are “What is Wilderness” and history articles on the Colorado Trail, Charles Parry, Ben Tyler Trail, Mt. Evans, and Abyss Lake Trail. We have had informative articles regarding areas of forest closure due to COVID-19 and input from the South Platte and Clear Creek Ranger District on how these two districts are coping with the pandemic and forest overuse. In addition, we have had a number of success stories of weed eradication by the Noxious Weed Program managed by Alan Rockwood.

Please let us know what else you would like to see in the Newsletter and whether the articles we’ve been publishing have been helpful. dee@fomelc.org

We had a request for history on cattle grazing in Lost Creek Wilderness – Watch for this article in the April Newsletter!

PLEASE JOIN US FOR OUR APRIL ZOOM MEETING!

We will be sending out a separate email regarding our meeting and who the speaker will be. Have you enjoyed them so far? Let us know! Maybe you have an idea for an interesting speaker? Contact Kay: kay@fomelc.org

Wilderness Degradation/Devastation: You can be a part of the solution.

Join a volunteer group in your area committed to making a difference.

Friends of Mt Evans and Lost Creek Wilderness : <https://fomelc.org/>

In the Fort Collins area: Poudre Wilderness Volunteers: <https://www.pwv.org/>