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[www.fomelc.org](http://www.fomelc.org)

## November 2019 Newsletter



Winter.....

And so it begins.....

You will find this November Newsletter will have more informative Wilderness news since our season is drawing to a close for 2019.

Your newsletter editor will be taking December and January off and will resume in February. Happy Holidays to all our Friends!

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## 2019 Website Fundraising Status

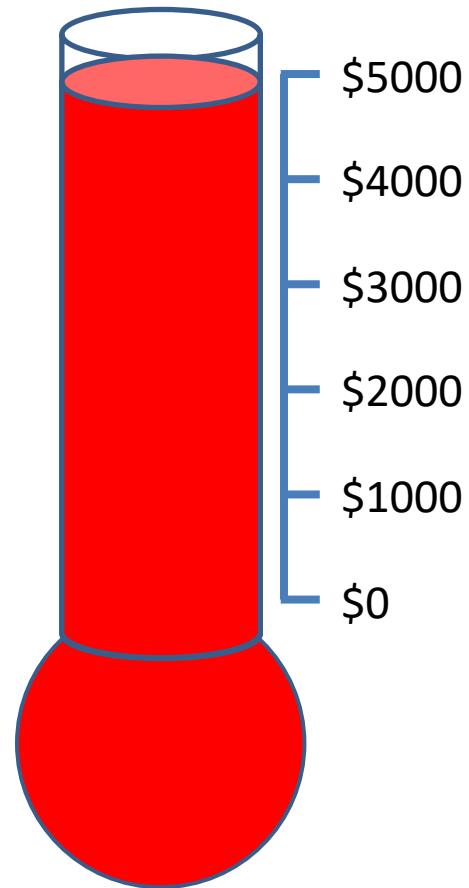
### Almost There!

Our \$5000 fund-raising goal is within reach! Thank you to all who have recently contributed, and for those who have been sitting on the fence, now is the time to make your contribution. Help us update our website so we can maintain access to the wonderful library of trails in the wilderness areas and introduce new and improved website features. This work is ongoing, but we need your contribution to make sure that other aspects of the program remain unaffected by this work.

Please help us keep our website running by making a donation to FOMELC:

<http://www.fomelc.org/contribute>

Your contribution to our 501(c)3 organization is tax-deductible.



## Note from the Chair – By Peter Vrolijk

I watch snowflakes from the current storm drift slowly from the sky, and I am reminded that while the snow may prevent us from much additional field work, other work to make sure that our Friends group will be as effective at helping to maintain wilderness character in 2020 as we were this past year and improve the impact of our efforts continue through the short days. Who can we partner with to realize the strengths of both organizations? Where can we seek funding for our work? What are the most important projects to undertake in 2020? All of these questions and more are under discussion so that every time a volunteer comes out, she or he leaves with the greatest sense of accomplishment.



**Pasque flowers await us in early spring, Lost Creek Wilderness**

If this kind of off-season planning is appealing to you, there are always opportunities to contribute even when you aren't hiking up 1000' to patrol a trail. Please consider lending a hand through the winter to help make sure that we all get the benefit of nature come spring. And don't forget our monthly meetings where we have some tremendous speakers lined up. We'll take some holiday breaks but will otherwise run through the winter.

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**Colorado contains over 3.5 million acres of federally protected Wilderness Areas.  
Contained within 41 separate wildernesses**

**The Wilderness Act Video: America's Wilderness (National Park Service Video 2:50)**

In wild places there is incredible natural beauty and also an opportunity for personal reflection, inspiration, and growth. Learn about the landscapes and ideals of the **1964 Wilderness Act**.

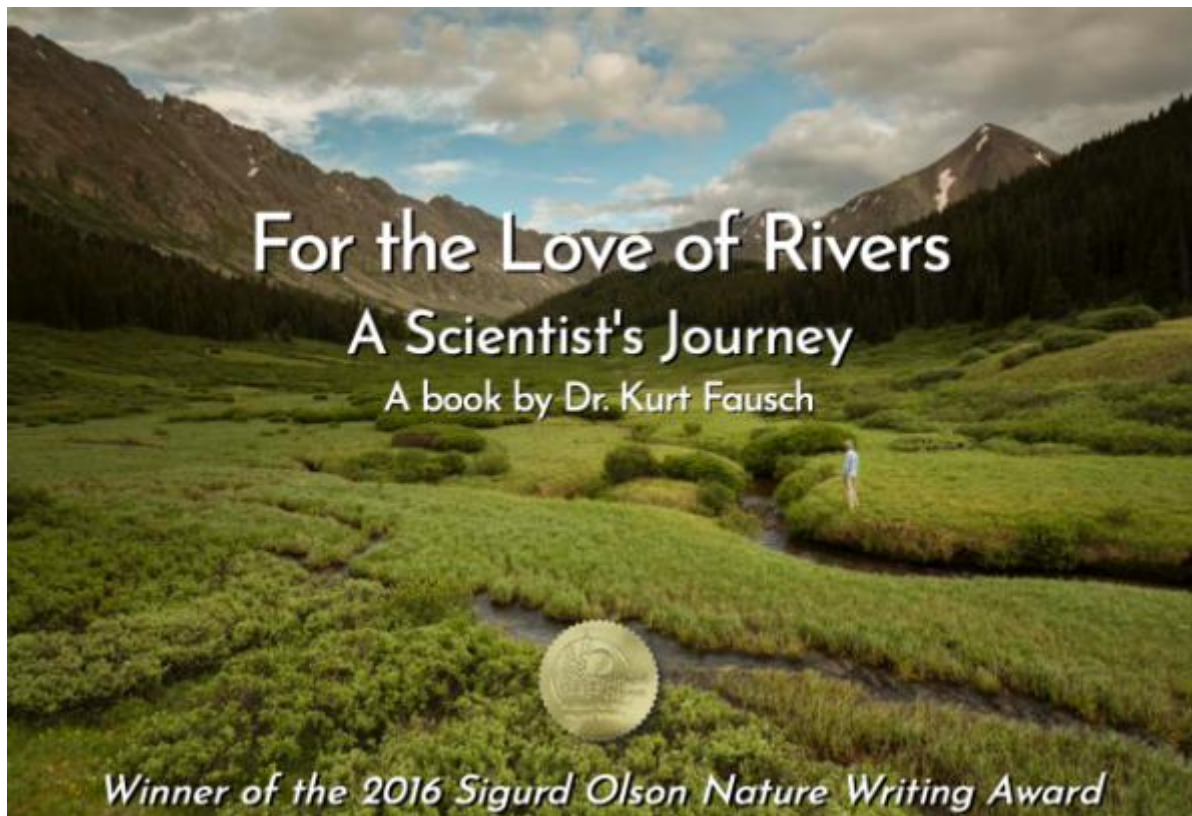
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-xBeYyc-lR0>



# December 4<sup>th</sup> Special Presentation

Evergreen Fire & Rescue , 1802 Bergen Parkway, Evergreen 6:30-8pm

For our last monthly meeting of the year on December 4 (6:30-8:00 pm), we will have an honored speaker, Dr. Kurt Fausch, talk with us about conservation from the perspective of rivers. Kurt is an emeritus professor at Colorado State University and the author of *For the Love of Rivers*, a book that won the Sigurd Olson Nature Writing Award. Please plan to join us for a very special evening of interesting, soul-searching, and provocative ecological discussions.



# Did You Know That Drones Are Prohibited In Wilderness areas?

(Article from Wilderness Connect, <https://wilderness.net/learn-about-wilderness/stewardship/drones-wilderness.php>)

As drones, formally known as Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), have increased in popularity, land management agencies and the FAA have begun regulating their use on public lands. In 2014, the National Park Service identified this new type of aircraft as prohibited in National Parks and wilderness areas. Later, other wilderness agencies did the same. Drones are prohibited from launching, landing or being operated within designated wilderness areas. In 2019, Tread Lightly partnered with AirMap and the Forest Service to promote the Respected Access is Open Access campaign for responsible UAS use. Avoiding wilderness areas is among the tips for responsible recreational drone use.



## Why are drones prohibited in wilderness areas?

Howard Zahniser, author of the **Wilderness Act**, could never have forecast the invention of remote-controlled flying quad-copter robots. But he and other wilderness advocates wanted to ensure that wilderness areas remain free from increasing mechanization. Aircraft were specifically identified as prohibited by the **Wilderness Act**, which includes all forms that may eventually come about through human ingenuity. **The Wilderness Act** also prohibits motorized equipment and mechanical transport—broad categories of devices and gizmos that include drones. Prohibiting drones, and other forms of motorized recreation, in wilderness continues to ensure that we have sanctuaries on public lands to protect wildlife from drone disturbances and for us to seek solitude and refuge from today's mechanized world.

## As a responsible drone operator, how do you know where wilderness areas are so you can avoid them?

AirMap is helping drone operators find designated fly zones as well as areas where drone use is restricted, such as wilderness areas. Their easy-to-use fly mobile and web applications help drone operators plan and conduct drone flights in compliance with regulations. By being aware of the designated fly and no-fly zones, drone operators can prevent the impact of drones to wildlife and to wilderness visitors by flying only over non-wilderness public lands where drone use is acceptable.

### [Mt Evans Wilderness Drone Use Information](#)

**The Mt Evans Road to the summit prohibits the use of drones due to Wilderness location on both sides of the road.**



## Re-creation or Wreckreation?

By Gary Macfarlane

Many wilderness advocates, scientists, and public land experts and professionals have recognized, for decades now, the growing problem of too much recreation use in Wilderness. Howard Zahniser, the Wilderness Act's author, recognized the purpose of the Wilderness Act is to protect Wilderness, not establish any particular use. As far back as 1956 he warned the threat "from development for recreation," which applies to overbuilt trails, unnecessary bridges, and other "improvements" made in Wilderness in response to demands from recreationalists. Thus, he emphasized the need for restraint in our dealing with Wilderness.

The 1978 edition of *Wilderness Management*, the definitive professional work on managing recreation and other human uses in Wilderness, summed it up, "There is a real danger of loving wilderness to death." Too many visitors trample vegetation, compact soils, displace wildlife, destroy solitude, and degrade recreational experiences of those same visitors.

This is truer today than it ever was, in part due to pressures from a much larger population, but also due to our inability and unwillingness to practice restraint when, in this case, it interferes with our desired recreational activity.

Case in point, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is considering allowing a 400 percent increase in daily visitors to visit *the Wave*, a small, fragile, and unique rock formation in the Paria Canyon-Vermillion Cliffs Wilderness, a remote place straddling the Arizona/Utah border. Due to the internet and other marketing, including marketing by BLM, that agency now claims the, "increase in public demand dramatically underscores the need to consider increasing visitor access" to this part of the Wilderness. Really?

The law requires BLM to preserve Wilderness, yet the agency is promoting excessive use that degrades it. Nearly a quarter of a million people wanted to visit that area in 2018! Does BLM seriously expect Wilderness can be preserved by allowing 96 people per day at one small feature, let alone nearly 1,000 to meet the desires of all who supposedly want to go there? What ever happened to loving wilderness to death as a management concern?

Since the **Wilderness Act** passed, expressing worry “that an increasing population” could overwhelm all wildlands, hence the need for the Wilderness Act, the US population has grown by 137,000,000. The authors of the Act were rightly concerned about future population growth—size and numbers matter when considering impacts to wild places and wildlife.

Wildlife too, is harmed by the lack of restraint in recreational use and numbers, and it is not just from motorized users. Recent research suggests all trail recreation displaces wildlife. One study found the sound of human voices alone, including recordings, cause wildlife to flee, stop eating, or become nervous. That study found, “Humans have supplanted large carnivores as apex predators in many systems, and similarly pervasive impacts may now result from fear of the human ‘super predator.’” Mountain lions fear our voices, even our soft voices. In another example, an elk herd in and around Vail, Colorado decreased from 1,000 to only around 50 mostly due to biking in the summer and backcountry skiing in the winter. That herd could easily disappear because of excessive recreation use.

In spite of recreational use levels that have exponentially increased on public lands, including Wilderness, since the early 1970s, there has been extensive hand-wringing by agency bureaucrats, politicians of both parties, and especially representatives of the recreation industry proclaiming a dire future for public lands due to supposed declines in outdoor recreation. Of course their answer is antithetical to the preservation of Wilderness and other wild places—more marketing, commodifying, commercial outfitting, fees, and access, all with little or no regard to impacts. Wilderness isn’t being spared.

Recent bi-partisan legislation to boost outfitting (and user fees) on public land—going by the innocuous names of the “Recreation Not Red Tape Act” or “Simplifying Outdoor Access for Recreation Act”—suggests a recreation industry-controlled future of ever increasing numbers and commodification of recreation on public land, for which we all shall be charged and for which wildness, wildlife and Wilderness will all suffer greatly. Say goodbye to the outstanding opportunities for solitude.

A 400 percent increase in use, as BLM proposes in the Paria Canyon-Vermillion Cliffs Wilderness, is not good for the Wilderness, bighorn sheep in the area, or even the visitors who will have a degraded wilderness experience. For Wilderness and life forms dependent on wild country to survive, we need humility and restraint in our wildland recreation. Indeed, those same qualities will be needed if we are to survive at all.



*Gary is the Secretary of the Board of Directors of Wilderness Watch and Ecosystem Defense Director for Friends of the Clearwater, where he is responsible for tracking public land issues in the Clearwater Basin of Idaho. Gary has over 30 years of activist experience and has been recognized as one of the most effective activists in the northern Rockies.*

[wildernesswatch.org](http://wildernesswatch.org)

WILDERNESS WATCH is America’s leading organization dedicated to defending and keeping wild the nation’s 110 million-acre National Wilderness Preservation System. Our work is guided by the visionary **1964 Wilderness Act**.

## **Being Involved In Protecting Your Wilderness Areas**

You can check with your local wilderness friends group or land management agency office to see what stewardship or volunteer projects you can become involved in. You can also get involved with any of the many organizations involved in wilderness protection and advocacy.

**Help protect your local Mount Evans and Lost Creek Wildernesses  
Join FOMELC today!**

**You can also help by donating to FOMELC through our website:**

**<http://www.fomelc.org/contribute>**

**(FOMELC is a 501(C)3 Volunteer Organization)**

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

## **FOMELC Member Volunteers Needed**

**Interested in taking an active part in FOMELC operations?**

**There are many behind-the-scenes tasks where administration help is needed.**

**Board Secretary position also available.**

**Contact [admin@fomelc.org](mailto:admin@fomelc.org)**



# The History of the Original Mount Evans Trail

By: Ralph Bradt (USDA Forest Service)

There have been three official trails to the summit of Mount Evans. The most recent is the 2½ mile Mount Evans Ridge trail, from Summit Lake to the top, built in the mid 2000's by the Colorado Fourteeners Initiative. The Mount Evans Summit trail is the short .3 mile trail from the parking lot at the end of the road to the top of the peak, undoubtedly the busiest trail on the mountain.

The third trail, the original one, no longer exists as it was, although parts of it are incorporated into today's trail system. On a 1938 trail plan, the trail length is given as 10 miles. As with most of the trails in the upper Bear Creek Basin trails, it was constructed around 1917 as part of an agreement between the Forest Service and the city of Denver. In exchange for the city dropping its support of making the Mount Evans area a National Park (very unpopular with the Forest Service), the Forest Service agreed to construct recreational trails and facilities in the Bear Creek basin.

The trail began at the Bear Creek Ranger Station, the site of which is ¼ mile down the Lost Creek trail from the trailhead, and travelled west to Bear Creek, crossing private land at Camp Rock (not today's campground, but a 1905 homestead downstream). Then continuing west via an uncertain route to the junction with the Beartrack Lakes trail at today's Camp Rock campground.



1922 Bear Creek Ranger Station



1917 Mount Evans from Camp Rock

From there, the trails followed today's Beaver Meadows and Cub Creek trails, past the shelters constructed in Beaver Meadows, to the Mount Evans Resthouse. The Resthouse was a cabin built by the Forest Service and furnished by the Colorado Mountain Club for public use. It burned in 1968, leaving only a chimney. The trail from a mile west of the Camp Rock campground to Beaver Meadows was widened in 1962 by bulldozers fighting the 1050 acre Resthouse Fire.



1917 Beaver Meadows shelters



1924 Mount Evans Resthouse

## The History of the Original Mount Evans Trail Con't

Turning south at the Resthouse, the trail followed today's Cub Creek trail to a point just south of the bridge over Bear Creek, then turned west, following Bear Creek, but on the higher ground above Resthouse Meadows. After ¼ mile the trail joined what is now the Summit flats trail and climbed south onto the ridge between Bear and Tumbling Creeks. Just north of the Tumbling Creek cirque, the trail what is left is now today's Summit Flats trail and continued climbing in a series of long switchbacks onto the southeast shoulder, then on to the summit.



1921 Mount Evans from the trail at timberline



1925 Visitors on the trail on the shoulder of Mount Evans

The section along the south side of Resthouse Meadows was badly burned in the 1962 Resthouse Fire. Following the fire, and with most visitors going to the Mount Evans summit by the highway, the burned section of the trail was rerouted around the west and north sides of Resthouse Meadows, and the upper section rerouted northwesterly across Summit Flats toward Summit Lake, today's Summit Flats trail. The final climb to the summit was abandoned.

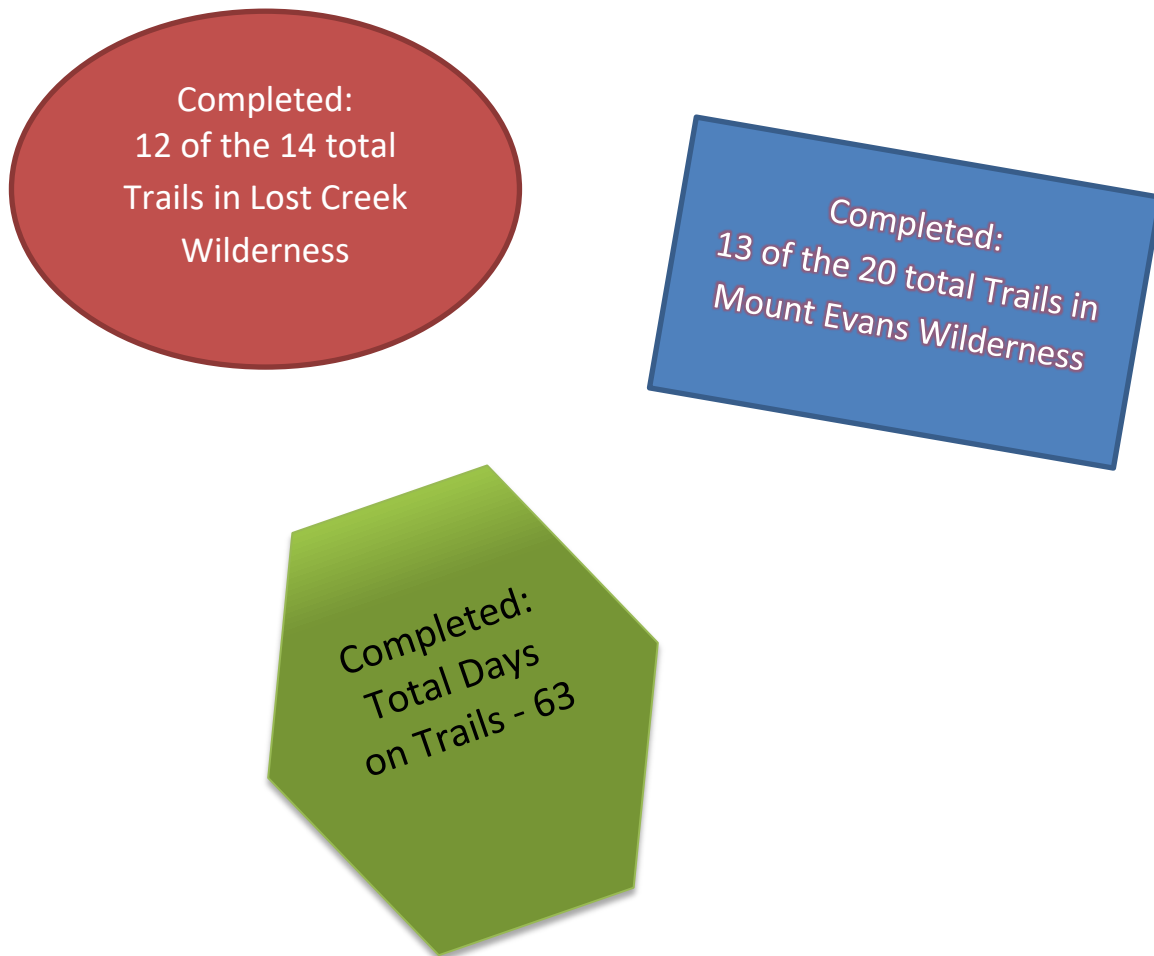
# 2019 “By the Numbers”

By Gordon Brown

FOMELC had a terrific year delivering the Wonder of the Wildernesses, Leave No Trace principles, Trail Hosting education and conducting major improvements of trails and weed eradication. Thanks to Ralph Bradt (Clear Creek Ranger District - Forest Service Ranger) tracking the many hours and days spent on the trails by our volunteers. We determined our presence in the Mount Evans and Lost Creek Wilderness resulted in almost two months of improvements.

As you can see from this chart, together FOMELC volunteers made a big impact in our wilderness areas as we worked on our **core values of Trail Maintenance, Weed Eradication, Trail Hosting and Education.**

Special thanks to all of our wonderful volunteers for their participation. Your value to FOMELC is unprecedented. Your dedication and commitment to FOMELC makes our organization successful. You will see future “By the Numbers” results as we dive into Ralph’s report. Enjoy the rest of the season and remember, “the mountains are calling and I must go”.





The House of Representatives recently passed The Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act and the bill has been sent to the Senate for a vote. Below is information taken from Senator Michael Bennet's Website. Complete information concerning the act can be found at: <https://www.bennet.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?p=COREAct>

Colorado U.S. Senator Michael Bennet and U.S. Congressman Joe Neguse's *Colorado Outdoor Recreation & Economy (CORE) Act* protects approximately 400,000 acres of public land in Colorado, establishing new wilderness areas and safeguarding existing outdoor recreation opportunities to boost the economy for future generations.

Colorado counties, in close coordination with businesses, recreation groups, sportsmen, and conservationists, helped write each element of the CORE Act over the last decade.

Of the land protected, about 73,000 acres are new wilderness areas, and nearly 80,000 acres are new recreation and conservation management areas that preserve existing outdoor uses, such as hiking and mountain biking. The bill also includes a first-of-its-kind National Historic Landscape to honor Colorado's military legacy and prohibits new oil and gas development in areas important to ranchers and sportsmen.

The CORE Act unites and improves four previously introduced bills: the Continental Divide Recreation, Wilderness, and Camp Hale Legacy Act, the San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act, the Thompson Divide Withdrawal and Protection Act, and the Curecanti National Recreation Area Boundary Establishment Act.

## FOUR CORE ACT ELEMENTS

### **Continental Divide Recreation, Wilderness, and Camp Hale Legacy Act**

The *Continental Divide Recreation, Wilderness, and Camp Hale Legacy Act* establishes permanent protections for nearly 100,000 acres of wilderness, recreation, and conservation areas in the White River National Forest along Colorado's Continental Divide. It also designates the first-ever National Historic Landscape around Camp Hale to preserve and promote the 10th Mountain Division's storied legacy. In crafting the bill, Senator Bennet and then-Congressman Jared Polis collaborated with community leaders, veterans, and businesses in Eagle, Summit, and Grand Counties.

- **Wilderness Areas:** The bill creates three new wilderness areas in the Tenmile Range, Hoosier Ridge, and Williams Fork Mountains, totaling 21,033 acres. It also adds 20,196 acres to three existing wilderness areas by expanding Eagles Nest, Ptarmigan Peak, and Holy Cross wilderness areas. Input and support from community leaders in Eagle and Summit Counties led to these designations.

- **Camp Hale National Historic Landscape:** The bill designates 28,728 acres surrounding Camp Hale as the first-ever National Historic Landscape. This unprecedented designation speaks to the storied legacy of the Army's 10th Mountain Division in Colorado and around the world. The 10th Mountain Division that trained at Camp Hale led our nation to victory in World War II, then went on to create the outdoor industry as we know it today. The National Historic Landscape designation would ensure Camp Hale's historic preservation, secure existing recreational opportunities, and protect natural resources.
- **Wildlife:** The bill creates two new wildlife conservation areas totaling 11,668 acres. The Porcupine Gulch Wildlife Conservation Area would protect Colorado's only migration corridor over Interstate 70 for elk, bear, mule deer, and other wildlife. The Williams Fork Wildlife Conservation Area would enhance wildlife habitat for the Greater Sage-Grouse and other species.
- **Recreation:** The bill creates a recreation management area in the Tenmile Range totaling 16,966 acres. This would protect access to world-class outdoor recreation, such as mountain biking, hiking, and hunting.
- **Other Land Management:** The bill addresses a number of management issues in specific areas along the Continental Divide. It adjusts wilderness boundaries around the Trail River Ranch in Rocky Mountain National Park to ensure ongoing access to the property for youth and community education programs. It authorizes special use of the Bolts Ditch headgate in the Holy Cross Wilderness Area to ensure the town of Minturn, Colorado, can use its existing water rights to fill Bolts Lake. Lastly, it allows the Forest Service to acquire "the Wedge"—several parcels of land in Grand County—to protect wildlife habitat and the landscape near Rocky Mountain National Park.

### **San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act**

The *San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act* provides permanent protections for nearly 61,000 acres of land located in the heart of the San Juan Mountains in Southwest Colorado. It designates some of the state's most iconic peaks as wilderness, including two fourteeners: Mount Sneffels and Wilson Peak. The bill is the result of more than 10 years of collaboration among local leaders, businesses, and ranchers in San Miguel, San Juan, and Ouray Counties. It has passed out of both Senate and House committees with bipartisan support.

- **Wilderness:** The bill designates 31,725 acres of new wilderness areas near Telluride, Norwood, Ouray, and Ridgway. Approximately 23,000 acres are additions to the existing Lizard Head and Mount Sneffels Wilderness Areas. The bill also designates 8,884 acres surrounding McKenna Peak, an existing Wilderness Study Area, as a new wilderness area in San Miguel County.
- **Special Management:** The bill designates 21,663 acres as the Sheep Mountain Special Management Area between the towns of Ophir and Silverton, which includes Hope Lake and Ice Lakes Basin. The bill also creates the 792-acre Liberty Bell East Special Management Area near Telluride.
- **Mineral Withdrawal:** The bill protects 6,590 areas of mineral withdrawal outside of Norwood at Naturita Canyon, prohibiting future mineral development in the canyon.

## **Thompson Divide Withdrawal and Protection Act**

The Thompson Divide Withdrawal and Protection Act protects the Thompson Divide—one of Colorado’s most treasured landscapes—by withdrawing approximately 200,000 acres from future oil and gas development, while preserving existing private property rights for leaseholders and landowners. It also creates a program to lease excess methane from nearby coal mines, supporting the local economy and addressing climate change. Since joining the Senate, Senator Bennet has worked with ranchers, sportsmen, and elected officials to ensure the bill reflects the wishes of Gunnison, Pitkin, and Garfield Counties and local energy companies.

- **Mineral Withdrawal:** The bill permanently withdraws around 200,000 acres in the Thompson Divide near Carbondale and Glenwood Springs from future oil and gas development, while preserving existing private property rights for leaseholders and landowners. It also provides the option for leaseholders to exchange existing Thompson Divide leases for credits that could be used to bid on new leases elsewhere.
- **Methane Leasing:** Based on a request from Gunnison County, Delta County, and natural gas producers, the bill creates a program to lease and generate energy from excess methane in existing or abandoned coal mines in the North Fork Valley—supporting the local economy and addressing climate change.

## **Curecanti National Recreation Area (NRA) Boundary Establishment Act**

The *Curecanti National Recreation Area (NRA) Boundary Establishment Act* formally establishes the boundary for the Curecanti NRA. Although created in 1965, the boundary has never been designated by Congress, limiting the ability of the National Park Service to effectively manage the area. The bill improves coordination among land management agencies and ensures the Bureau of Reclamation upholds its commitment to expand public fishing access in the basin. Since 2011, Senator Bennet has worked closely with counties, federal agencies, landowners, and sportsmen to craft the bill.

- **Boundary Establishment:** The bill formally establishes the boundary of the Curecanti National Recreation Area, currently one of only a handful of NPS units without a formal designation by Congress.
- **Land Management:** The bill improves the efficiency of public land management in the area by initiating a series of administrative jurisdiction changes—a step supported by all of the relevant land management agencies that will save taxpayer dollars. It also ensures Bureau of Reclamation jurisdiction over the three dams in the area that play an important role in the Colorado River. Lastly, the bill allows nearby landowners to voluntarily receive assistance from the NPS to conserve natural resources on their property.
- **Fishing Access:** The bill ensures that the Bureau of Reclamation upholds its commitment to expand public fishing access in the basin, which was lost when the Aspinall Unit was created.



### **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](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 website to sign up. [www.fomelc.org](http://www.fomelc.org)

Like your Newsletter?

Let Us know!

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