

Friends of Mount Evans and Lost Creek Wilderness



October Newsletter 2022

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Note from the Chair By Peter Vrolijk



A NEW BEGINNING

I begin this note with the realization that it is my last – this month I retired from my role as FOMELC board chair. My 3.5-year tenure has been interesting. How was I to know that I would have to guide FOMELC volunteers safely through the complexities created by COVID while at the same time understand how our wilderness stewardship work would be affected by the vast increase in wilderness visitors? Despite these challenges, FOMELC volunteers have been ever more effective in wilderness stewardship.

While I recognize that my retirement will cause some disruption to FOMELC, I also know that challenges offer opportunities that may be difficult to anticipate. And while I will end my board leadership role, I hope to continue my volunteer contributions with FOMELC. I hope that the relationships and friendships developed during my time as chair will continue as we work together to address the tasks at hand.

But for now, I think we can collectively bask in the accomplishments of the last years and especially the past summer. No single person in FOMELC, regardless of her or his position, can succeed without the efforts of every volunteer. Each accomplishment is achieved together, and this recognition gives me confidence that FOMELC will thrive under new leadership.

Thanks to everyone for your efforts and support. We serve a greater good with a sense of humility and grace.



Sunrise touches the peaks in the lost creek wilderness near lost park. We wait for the first rays of sunlight to reach us and warm us from the cold night just ending.

- Peter

Lost Park Bridge and Trail Project

September 16-18

Ralph Bradt



It was the last major trail project of the season.

Sometime in 2013, probably during the storms that caused such heavy flooding elsewhere in Colorado, the bridge washed out at the Brookside/McCurdy trail across Lost Creek down the trail southwest of the trailhead. The bridge, a simple 15"x7"x14' timber, floated downstream almost 300' to a beaver pond. It rested there ever since, eventually stranded high and dry when the beaver dam failed. A few years ago, FOMELC and the South Park Ranger (SPKRD) met and created a temporary bypass to the missing bridge, but the trail location was muddy and one of the two bridges was sagging badly. Another alternative, the Wigwam Spur, was also very muddy and provided no horse crossing opportunities.



This spring, Peter Vrolijk, John Case (Front Range Backcountry Horsemen- FRBCH), Brandon Mitchell (South Platte Ranger District-SPLRD), and Alix Jensen (South Park Ranger District-SPKRD), and I met at the Lost Park Trailhead to look at a more permanent fix to the problem. We were hoping the FRBCH folks could drag the old bridge timber from its location back to the original location, but John didn't think they had the equipment to attempt this. We also looked at some other possible facets of the project, like redefining an earlier reroute of the trail north of the trailhead around the campground and possible ways to fix excessively muddy Wigwam Spur.

While we were uncertain how heavy the timber was or whether a bunch of people could move it, we decided it was well worth trying to move it back to its original location and improving the approaches, and improving the approaches and the original horse ford nearby. The second priority would be improving the trail north of the trailhead. The Wigwam Spur needed no work, as the district had decided a closure of that trail would be best.

On Friday afternoon, volunteers began arriving at the Lost Park Campground after bouncing down the washboarded 20-mile road in from US 285. Peter had taken care of planning and coordination with Alix, and he and Gordon Brown brought a load of tools from the FOMELC shed. Alix had reserved campsites for the crew in the campground. Dee Lyons had to work the next day, but came in for a couple hours to clear vegetation from the old trail to the bridge site.



The timber moved up to the trail



Sliding the bridge into place

Later, at the campsites, Joe and Kathleen O'Leary prepared dinner for the assembled crew of Peter, Gordon, Bob and Annie Legrand, Holly Myers, Elizabeth Motley, Jon Achuff, and Bob Hunter.

Next morning after breakfast, again prepared by Joe and Kathleen, we marched over to the site. Alix arrived soon after with a few folks from the Mosquito Range Heritage Initiative (MRHI) to help. I brought three log carriers, but Alix wasn't able to find any at the SPKRD. Still, we were able to improvise with austins Peter had brought along and we stationed ten people in place to carry the timber. After looking at the uneven hummocky ground and willows between the timber's resting place and the bridge site, we chose to carry the timber only 100' across more stable ground, then 75' or so up a hill to the trail. Once at the trail, carrying was much easier down to the bridge's site. At the creek, with four folks wearing waders in the water, we were able to slide the timber across and into place on the abutments. Success!

With the bridge in place, the team broke up into smaller groups, some slashing in the temporary trail and removing the bridges and signs, others improving the approach trails at either end of the bridge, and another crew placing trail signs and signposts. The bridge was secured in place with T posts driven 4' deep. The remaining lengths of T post sticking above the top of the bridge were flagged for safety, to be cut flush with the top of the timber later. By 4:30, the work at the bridge was drawing to completion and Alix and her MRHI folks packed up and headed back to Fairplay. It was great having her come out and work with us.

At the end of a long productive day, we retreated to the campground, where refreshments awaited and dinner was soon served. Jon and his guitar provided us fine musical entertainment until well after dark fell, and tired folks retired to their tents.

Sunday started with plenty of coffee and another good breakfast. Tents and gear were packed up to be ready to leave. Peter took most of the crew to the north end of the rerouted trail around the campground and I went with the rest to the south end at the trailhead. Working toward each other, the two groups cleared and defined the trail, opened up the corridor, and improved some steeper sections. By noon the project was considered complete and we all headed back to the campground and began the long drive home after a very productive and satisfying weekend.

On a later trip, Dee and I removed the junction sign at Wigwam and the now closed Wigwam Spur, rerouted the names and arrows, and returned it to its original location at the Wigwam-Brookside/McCurdy junction.

It was great having Alix Jensen and her volunteers from the South Park Ranger District on the project and we look forward to working with her again.



2022 PCCP and FOMELC Partnership Grant

For the past five years, FOMELC has been given grant money from Platte Canyon Community Partnership (PCCP) Resale Boutique in Bailey, Colorado. PCCP is a totally volunteer run organization that supports non-profit organizations and local initiatives along the HWY 285 Corridor. Their purpose is to promote community partnerships through financial contributions primarily through sales at the Resale Boutique and to utilize the expertise of volunteers.

Without their generous support, FOMELC couldn't accomplish all that we do.

During the month of December, FOMELC will receive a portion of the sales revenue from the boutique as a Grant for our participation. In order to receive this grant FOMELC is required to provide service hours. There are many ways you can help: provide clean up around the outside of their building, do miscellaneous repairs as needed, deliver donations to ARC in Lakewood if not sold by the boutique and this year, help prepare for the Christmas season by decorating the Christmas Tree, change the store to holiday-themed merchandise as needed.



FOMELC will be volunteering at the Resale Boutique throughout the month of December. There's a brewery and winery just across the street in case you want to hang around for a while and grab a drink or late lunch.

2021 GRANT. GORDON BROWN & CHARLOTTE WYTIAS

On Sunday, November 27th (weather permitting) we'll need at least three volunteers to decorate an outdoor live Christmas tree. Time will be 1:00pm. Please contact or text Gordon Brown to sign up for this event at 713-725-5318.

When you volunteer, remember to sign in on the **FOMELC Volunteer Log at the Front Desk** so we can credit your hours to both to FOMELC and to the National Forest Service for community participation. Please consider giving a few hours during the month of December. **And remember, Santa is watching!**

When you travel to the mountains on US 285, please stop by the Resale Boutique and help support the PCCP and FOMELC during the month of December. Look for our display as you enter the store.

[Sign Up Event Calendar](#)

Volunteer Appreciation Day October 22

A beautiful, sunny, and warm fall day at Staunton State Park for FOMELC volunteers to gather and celebrate the end of a great successful season. A few went for a hike before lunch; a great BBQ and special awards were on the agenda.



LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD - STEVE WEST



VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR - BOB & ANNIE LEGRAND



UNSUNG HERO - LOREN WINTERS

End of Season for the FOMELC Newsletters

This will be the final newsletter for 2022 as our season comes to a close after the final project with the Platte Canyon Community Partnership (PCCP) Resale Boutique in Bailey. Email notices will still go to you through Constant Contact for Special Zoom Speakers this winter so watch for those. Your editors Dee Lyons and Loren Winters will be taking time off and looking to make your newsletter even better for 2023.

2022 Wilderness Stewardship Online Training Program

This online training program is temporarily offline due to access issues to be corrected. We will be working on getting this available for this winter.

SIGN UP Activity Schedule

Sign up for Zoom meetings and other upcoming activities.

[Sign Up Event Calendar](#)

FOMELC Board Members

Chairman: Peter Vrolijk
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Trail Projects Coordinator: Wyatt Stanland
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Secretary: April Jones
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Newsletter/Wilderness Training Program:
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Forest Service Liaison: Ralph Bradt
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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.



Friends of Mt Evans & Lost Creek Wildernesses
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