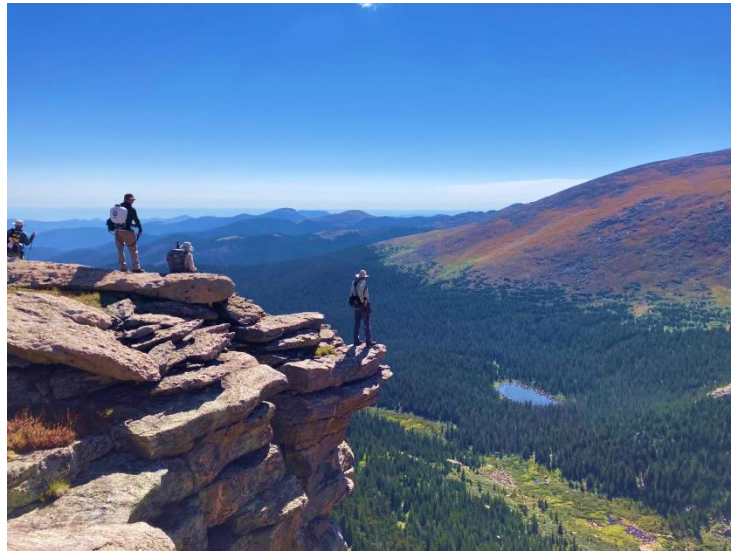


Friends of Mount Evans and Lost Creek Wildernesses



September Newsletter 2022

- Page 1** Beartrack Lakes, last weed project for the season. A quick pause to reflect. Photos by Lucy Bauer & Peter Vrolijk
- Page 2** Note from the Chair – Seasons Change
- Page 3** Wilderness Stewardship Training Program/Fire Restrictions/PPE/Sign up for Activities
- Page 4** Volunteer Appreciation Day October 22, 2022
- Page 5 -7** Adopt-a-Trail Program- Abyss Lake Trail
- Page 8** From the Weed Patch
- Page 9** Board Members and Mission Statement



Note from the Chair By Peter Vrolijk

Seasons Change

I write this note as we prepare for the last field project of the year – work on the Brookside-McCurdy trail around the Lost Park Campground. Nature is signaling the completion of our work as plants give up the bright greens of growth that reflect the summer season. Aspen leaves are fringed in yellow in anticipation of the blazing colors they will soon put forth.

Wyatt summarizes the tremendous amount of work accomplished on the Abyss Lake Trail, a popular trail in the Mount Evans Wilderness, including replacement of a bridge 3 miles in that previously made many people uncomfortable to cross. Given the wet mid- to late-summer, invasive plants like yellow toadflax flourished this year, and tremendous efforts were made to keep these plants in check and knock down their occurrence in some areas. Eight trailhead host outings helped bring greater understanding of wilderness to trail users.

For these 3 activities alone, 272 individual volunteer days were spent, not counting the time spent by individuals on trail patrols and the 40-50 volunteer days contributed by VOC volunteers in a new collaboration. Seven individuals were out on 10 or more project days. This reflects the breadth and depth of our volunteer contributors.

Thank you to everyone who showed up to help us out. As Steve West was fond of saying, that first day of work entitled you to hike all of the trails in Colorado for the year with a clear conscience.



Red fireweed next to the Beartrack Lakes Trail (Mount Evans Wilderness) reminds us that summer growth has ended, and nature prepares for the impending winter.

To further express our thanks to all our volunteers, we are hosting a **Volunteer Appreciation Day at Staunton State Park on October 22.** Please see the announcement later in this newsletter, and please join us for a day without any work!

- 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

SIGN UP Activity Schedule

Sign up for Zoom meetings, Volunteer Appreciation Day and other upcoming activities.

Want to do a small part in helping FOMELC obtain a grant? Sign up for the November Platte Canyon Community Partnership Resale Boutique Grant program. Help an hour or help a day.

[Sign Up Event Calendar](#)



Volunteer Appreciation Day

October 22, 10am – 3pm

Staunton State Park

Morning: Hiking

Noon: BBQ Lunch provided by FOMELC

Bring your favorite dessert

Afternoon: Volunteer Recognition

Please RSVP at [SIGN UP](#)

Adopt-a-Trail Program

Abyss Lake Trail



Wyatt Stanland
Trails Coordinator

Greetings from the trail! FOMELC finished up their last two work days on the Abyss Trail in August and September. Thank you to all the dedicated volunteers who joined a project this year! This was a fun and productive year that saw the construction of two bridges, multiple stone steps, drainage on a steep and eroded section of trail, and 35 drainage structures in all. Volunteers also repaired multiple sections of braided trail, rehabbed two illegal campsites, and removed two illegal human-made tepee structures. We really improved the Abyss Trail for hikers and vegetation for years to come!

During the August project, volunteers constructed a 16-ft log bridge across a difficult and dangerous creek. For this project, FOMELC teamed up with Dale Franchina of the South Platte Ranger District, U.S. Forest Service, who did most of the log prep work and finalized the bridge with re-bar. FOMELC spent a day with Dale completing the log prep, building out the rock embankments, and hoisting the new stringers into place. It was a rewarding and exciting day that produced a flagship bridge that will last for decades! **A huge thank you to Dale for helping us through this project and completing a lot of the work on his own.** Hopefully we will collaborate again in the future!



The original bridge on the left, and the new bridge on the right!



Thank you to the crew! Now that's a strong bridge!!!

L to R: Annie Legrand, Chris Sill, Bob Hunter, Bob Legrand, Wyatt Stanland, Dale Franchina. Peter Vroljik was taking the photo



During the September project, volunteers constructed two stone steps and drainage structures on a steep, loose, and eroded section of trail that was very hard for hikers and equestrians before. Volunteers moved large rocks into place and completely transformed the water drainage on this section of trail. This is a huge improvement to the usability and longevity of this trail!



Before (left) and after (right) the installation of stone steps and erosion mitigation



As always, FOMELC and the U.S. Forest Service greatly benefit from trail patrol data collected in Survey 123 by our volunteers. FOMELC will look to trail patrol data from this and past years to understand which trails need the most work so that we can focus our attention there next year! If you are new to trail patrols, contact Wyatt wyatt@fomelc.org for more information on how to get started!

See you all in 2023!

- Wyatt



Invasive



From the Weed Patch – Alan Rockwood

On September 5th, we concluded the 2022 weed eradication season. Those familiar with the program's history would say it was a successful year. We are reassured by seeing progress with the old infestations, but the more work we do, the more infestations are discovered - better to find them now than later. When we find new smaller infestations, the treatments can be highly effective.

I want to thank all the volunteers who participated in the projects, spraying, pulling, or helping with logistics. What you do is fantastic. This year I want to give special mention to a few individuals. First, I thank **Ralph Bradt** and **Dee Lyons**, who stepped up to lead three projects while my wife and I got away for a summer vacation to Alaska – the first time in five seasons. Second, I want to thank **Annie and Bob Legrand**, who are the “iron man and woman” of the weed program. They missed only two projects during the season but made up for it by adding one of their own. Finally, I want to highlight the new weed program volunteers in 2022 -- **Lucy Bauer, Gary Finley, Dave Kraemer, Brian Parsons, and Robyn Thompson**. We look forward to seeing you in 2023. I greatly appreciate all the volunteers.

The U.S. Forest Service land managers greatly appreciate your efforts. Let me share this comment from Nick Race, the new invasive species manager for the Lost Creek Wilderness.

“.....I cannot express how happy it made me to have such a motivated group of volunteers go out and do that kind of work. It definitely gives me a bit of hope when it comes to managing some of these invasive species, especially in the wilderness areas. Thank you and everyone in your organization for all of the hard work you put in. I look forward to working with you again in the future.” Email August 25, 2022

This was my tenth season of weed treatments with FOMELC. The capacity of the organization has changed a lot over that time. That first project was at Pedee Creek. Ironically, the most memorable project this year was again at Pedee Creek. You could argue that is a problem; where is the progress? I would say that it is a sign of maturity. We are working our way up the learning curve. We are treating more infestations than ever before, making consistent progress in the control of noxious weeds. However, the extensive infestations of musk thistle like Pedee Creek require crews of 20 or more volunteers. We have used our knowledge of the lands and expertise in treatment methods to build powerful partnerships like the one we had with Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado. It will be a watershed in protecting the natural wilderness habitat if we can sustain the effort. Similarly, our inter-agency project at the Captain Mountain Trailhead, which includes crews from the Boulder Ranger District, Colorado Noxious Weed Program, the State Wildlife Area, and FOMELC, has made significant gains in eradicating musk and Canada thistle from the area.

FOMELC's noxious weed program has grown up a lot since 2013 because of your continued support.

Thank You!

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.



Friends of Mt Evans & Lost Creek Wildernesses
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“Between every two pine trees there is a door leading to a new way of life.”

- John Muir