



Friends of Mount Evans and Lost Creek Wildernesses



IT HAS BEEN A GREAT SEASON!



Sept Newsletter 2023

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Are you signed up for the next event? OCTOBER 8th

<https://fomelc.org/volunteer-signup>



**GOING TO AWESOME PLACES TO DO A LITTLE
WORK AND HAVE A WHOLE LOT OF FUN**





Invasive



From the Weed Patch – Alan Rockwood

Saturday, September 2nd, was the final scheduled noxious weed project of the 2023 season. The treatment of upper Beartrack Lakes Trail Canada thistle with a thru-hike from Mount Evans Road to Beartrack Lake to Camp Rock concluded the regular projects. It was a great day for the event. The alpine tundra was in its finest autumn colors. I have never seen a greater abundance of Arctic gentian. I'm pleased to report that only a few Canada thistle plants were found along the upper trail. Most of our treatments were directed at the area just above the wilderness boundary – commonly known as the “Wilderness Burn.” This day was a good representation of our overall progress during the past few years. Many sites are progressing toward eradication, and others have pockets still requiring intense treatment. I want to personally thank all of you for generously giving your time and energy to preserve the native wilderness habitat this season and in seasons past. I hope you feel proud of what we are accomplishing. There is still much to be done.

In many respects, the end of one weed eradication season is the beginning of the next. Our final reports to financial supporters lay the foundation for the next grant cycle. The reports must genuinely convey our successes and understanding of the work to be done. The financial support we receive for the Invasive Species Program is excellent, but the most critical resource for the task is the corps of caring and committed volunteers. Without your help, there is no weed program. It is not lip service when I say thank you to the volunteers. The experience you gain this season and apply to the next is a critical asset.

I say thank you, but perhaps it is best coming from someone within our partner, the US Forest Service, who is also in the trenches fighting for native wilderness habitats.

“... Thanks so much for all your help and efforts this season! The Friends are an amazing group of inspired workers and it is a privilege to work with y'all during the year in the good fight against invasives! Jake, Monday, August 21, 2023

Jake Milford
Noxious Weed Program Leader
Boulder and Clear Creek Ranger Districts
Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forests

Thank you by order of SignUp.Com: Gordon Brown, Annie and Bob Legrand, Deb Grass, John Kruse, Martin Quinlan, Jim Shelton, Dahl and Loren Winters, Keith Kuhlman, Elizabeth Motley, Peter Vrolijk, Tara Kulp, Theresa Gilliland, Jan and Ron Schmidt, Bill Klink, Debbie Black, Ralph Bradt, Chris Sill, Dave Kraemer, Erin Kraemer and Sean Kraemer, Peter Bohm, and Lucy Bauer. Not forgotten are our essential shuttle drivers: Dee Lyons, Dahl Winters, Charlotte Wytias, and Candice Rockwood. My sincere apologies if I have missed anyone.

Ever Wonder What It Takes To Run FOMELC Financially?

As a volunteer organization, FOMELC has had to evolve and change the funding model as time has gone on. When FOMELC was initially started in 2005, a seed grant from the Wilderness Society for \$25,000 helped launch the Friends as the newest group to help steward the important wilderness lands of Mt. Evans and Lost Creek. In addition to the seed grant, FOMELC entered what is known as a cost-share agreement with the South Platte, Clear Creek, and South Park ranger districts, as these lands cross over multiple national forests. The essence of a cost-share agreement is that as a volunteer organization doing work on behalf of the Forest Service, each year we agree to complete certain levels of work in agreement with the Forest Service, and in return we receive a grant. Over the years, these amounts have ranged from \$1,500 to as much as \$5,000. Those funds dried up in 2019, but we were fortunate enough to get a cost-share agreement in place this year for the first time since 2019 as funds were made available by the USFS in the amount of \$12,000.

In addition to the cost-share agreement, FOMELC had traditionally relied on member dues as well, but the Board voted to do away with member dues starting in 2019, wanting to provide a way for more people to participate without financial obligation and realizing that volunteer time was a significant source of payment in itself. Finally, FOMELC has increasingly competed for and received significant restricted grants to enhance our field programs. This is a trend that is likely to continue in the future. But as "restricted grants", they can only be used for projects with little or no funding for organizational expenses. At the same time, they tend to put pressure on those expenses - recruiting volunteers, communication platforms, training, uniforms, and insurance. These grants we receive require "matches" from volunteer time and it is a competitive process with other grant applicants. The more volunteers who are involved the projects, the more hours they contribute, the better chance we have of being funded.

While our expenses are not exorbitant by most standards, FOMELC has had to turn to other funding sources and grants to help with ongoing expenses. The reality is that FOMELC does need to rely on the community in which we do our work, which is why you will see our end-of-year fundraising appeal over the coming months.

Revenues and Expenses

Though a non-profit organization, FOMELC still operates as a business, and as any business, we take in revenues and incur expenses to operate the business. At the beginning of the year, the Board meets to discuss and approve a budget for the year, which includes estimates for our revenues and both fixed and variable expenses that we anticipate for running various programs. Based on how revenues come in through the year, we make adjustments to variable expenses and decide where we might have to make cuts or can expand what we do. Let's take a deeper look at some of the numbers:

In 2022, we took in \$23,516 in revenue, with more than half of that coming from state weed grants that gets passed directly to Foothills Vegetation for a lot of the spraying work and in support of the weed work led by Alan and his weed teams. Our annual fundraising appeal last year brought in over \$2,700, so thank you for your donations! Additionally, for the last few years, we have also benefitted from a grant from the Platte Canyon Community Partnership which brought in \$4,000 last year. Finally, we received over \$3,800 in corporate donations as well as over \$1,800 from donations through the year not tied to the annual campaign.

Looking at the expense side of the equation, we incurred expenses of \$16,067, leaving a surplus of about \$7,449. A few years back, we intentionally cut down on some of our expenses to be prepared for economic shifts and to ensure we have a healthy cushion in the bank. We do have some set, fixed expenses which include items for running the business, such as our subscription to Constant Contact (\$600/year), Insurance (\$1,400/year), and most importantly our work with Foothills Vegetation, who takes care of a lot of weed spraying for our grants.

| Fixed Expenses | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Constant Contact | \$ 600.00 |
| Insurance | \$ 1,412.50 |
| Foothills Vegetation | \$10,838.81 |
| Website | \$ 335.92 |
| Total Fixed | \$13,187.23 |

With regard to variable expenses, in 2022 we focused on items such as new hats and shirts, member events, and all-hands days, and various other expenses that help support our mission and our members, but don't necessarily cover the day-to-day running of the organization. For many of the grants we secure, we actually have to incur some costs to make them happen, such as additional insurance or project-based expenses, which go to these variable expense items as well. These are the areas where the Board makes adjustments to the budget, which we did for 2023 with some conservative adjustments to our variable expenses.

| Variable Expenses | |
|---|--------------------|
| Weed Grant Expenses/Other Grants | \$ 203.26 |
| Marketing | \$ 975.01 |
| Registrations & Membership Dues | \$ 150.00 |
| Training | \$ 60.00 |
| All Hands Days | \$ 359.13 |
| Other Member Events (End of Year) | \$ 821.95 |
| Trails & Weeds | \$ 120.16 |
| Tools | \$ 200.00 |
| Total | \$ 2,889.51 |
| | |
| Total Fixed and Variable Expenses | \$16,076.74 |
| | |
| Pass through expenses for grants: | \$10,838.81 |
| FOMELC Operating Expenses, Less Grants | \$ 5,237.93 |

This was before COVID-19 hit, which had a longer lasting impact on both expenses and revenues. However, people are getting back on the trails and we were able to adjust our budgeting for 2023 to allow for more projects and activities. As previously mentioned, we are excited that the cost-share agreement and associated funds are again available from the Forest Service, though we never know how long that might last. And, while we do have money in the bank, we have gotten to a place where we can't rely on cost-share agreement grants or some of the traditional sources of funding and we are looking to build on the great foundation we have as an organization. **And though we can't do all of the great work we do without our volunteers on the ground, we hope in addition that you can add FOMELC to your annual giving considerations.**

2023 Wilderness Stewardship Training Program

Dee Lyons

Online training for new and existing volunteers is now available. You need to have a Google email account to access the Google Drive training.

Contact Dee Lyons at: dee@fomelc.org to register for the free training. All new volunteers are encouraged to attend the online training.

Success Stories!

New volunteers completing the training program!

And out on projects!

Theresa Gilliland (L)

Marilyn Lawson (R)

Peter Bohm (Center)



We are very proud of our new volunteers completing the training and each attending a mentor hike.

New volunteers this year also include: Jan and Ron Schmidt, Martin Quinlan, Kim Stammer, Bob and Tara Kulp, and Peter Bohm.

These folks jumped right into several projects and made a difference in Mt Evans and Lost Creek Wildernesses, eradicating weeds, All Hands Days, helping to maintain trails for the hundreds of trail users, and helping to pass on Leave No Trace Principles at the many trailhead host tables.

Thank you!

FOMELC EVENTS & NEWS

Latest alerts, trail conditions, campfire restrictions, reservations and pass information:

Know Before You Go -

Clear Creek County Fire Restrictions -

<https://www.co.clear-creek.co.us/AlertCenter.aspx?CID=Fire-Ban-4>

Know Before You Go -

Pike-San Isabel National Forest & Cimarron & Comanche National Grassland:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/psicc/fire/?cid=fseprd667413>

Know Before You Go -

Park County Fire Restrictions:

<https://www.parkco.us/alertcenter.aspx>

Know Before You Go -

Colorado Parks and Wildlife:

<https://cpw.state.co.us/>

FOMELC Volunteer Needed

Interested in volunteering to track FOMELC membership and monitor the website inquires?

Contact Steve at: steve@fomelc.org

It is official!

This article from the Denver is reporting on the **Mt. Evans name changed to Mt. Blue Sky**. The article also mentions that Congress will need to take action to change the name of the Mt. Evans Wilderness.

https://enewspaper.denverpost.com/infinity/article_popover_share.aspx?guid=9e0d3652-5fb2-4b4f-884e-bd830d9caa34

Priority Trails to Patrol: Mt. Evans Wilderness

BEAR TRACK LAKES
CAPTAIN MOUNTAIN
CHICAGO LAKES
CUB CREEK
HELLS HOLE
INDIAN CREEK

LINCOLN LAKE
MT EVANS RIDGE
RESTHOUSE MEADOWS
ROOSEVELT LAKES
SOUTH CHICAGO CREEK

End Of Season Volunteer Appreciation Celebration

Save the Date

October 8, 2023

End of Season

Volunteer Celebration

October 8th, Staunton State Park

Come join us for a BBQ and a wrap up for the season.

Please Sign up for a head count for food.

<https://fomelc.org/events>

We will meet at Ranch Hand Group Picnic Area, which is a covered picnic shelter. For those who would like to go for a hike, meet at 10AM. BBQ and festivities at noon.

BBQ will be hamburgers, brats and veggie burgers, salads of various kinds, and if you have a favorite dessert you would like to share, bring it.

FOMELC Board Members

Chairman: Steve West
steve@fomelc.org

Trail Projects Coordinator: Wyatt Stanland
wyatt@fomelc.org

Secretary: Loren Winters
loren@fomelc.org

Membership Coordinator: Vacant - Volunteer Needed

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

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

Outreach & Trailhead Hosting: Gordon Brown
gordon@fomelc.org

Newsletter Assistant Editor: Loren Winters

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

Treasurer: Matt Komos
matt@fomelc.org

Forest Service Liaison: Ralph Bradt
ralph@fomelc.org

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! As of April 2023, According to the Forest Service as of April 2023, there are **no restrictions** and all counties in Colorado are in low status.

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.

<https://fomelc.org/>

Friends of Mt Evans & Lost Creek Wildernesses
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“And Into the Forest I Go To Lose My Mind and Find My Soul”

– John Muir