



Grand County Wilderness Group



Spring Issue 2017

www.gcwg.org

Letter from the President *Bob Saint*

After this Spring Members Meeting I will have completed three years as your president and will be stepping down. It's been a rewarding, uplifting and educational experience. Two significant events that occurred my first year were the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Wilderness Act and the 20th anniversary of the Grand County Wilderness Group. Both milestones heightened my awareness of the profound importance of safeguarding the precious wilderness that exists in our country and our county. The Wilderness Act formally and permanently established areas where untrammeled and undeveloped wilderness will retain its natural condition and "primeval character and influence". This protection also continues to offer individuals opportunities for solitude. As a group dedicated to assisting the Forest Service toward this end, we need to remain ever vigilant in countering the ongoing efforts to degrade the wilderness character for short term economic gain or development.

During the past 3 years, we've been able to do some great wilderness stewardship work with the help of the Forest Service. This includes clearing the downed trees on the Knight Ridge trail that accumulated during the Forest Service moratorium on doing any work on that trail. Also, our adopted trail, the very popular Columbine Lake Trail, has been nearly completely relocated to a very sustainable route that minimizes the impact to the wetland area and eliminates the maze of social trails towards the lake.

We have another summer upon us and plans are being made for another season of stewardship opportunities for the wilderness areas of Grand County. Hopefully we'll have another great day of Wilderness Stewardship Training which celebrates the first annual Colorado Public Lands Day on Saturday, May 20th. We'll be doing all of our usual activities, including hosting the Monarch Lake and Junco Lake Cabins, continuing the Trailhead hosting at other popular trailheads leading to wilderness, orientation hikes, and expanding what used to be called Trail Hosting into "Trail Ambassadors".

We're also continuing our fun events such as the Spring Camping Trip, summer picnic at the AA Barn, and an encampment in August. There have been some changes within the Forest Service in the past few months. In February, Nick Schade who has been the major Forest Service point of contact with me during my tenure as president of the Wilderness Group, accepted a position as Recreation and Design Program Manager for the Salmon and Challis National Forests in Salmon Idaho. He has been very accessible and a true advocate for wilderness within the Sulphur Ranger District. Because of the Federal hiring freeze, his position will not be filled this summer. For the time being, our point ..*Continued on Page 2.*

Upcoming events

4/9/17: Spring Meeting, 5:30pm Rawley Room Snow Mountain Ranch.

5/20/17: Colorado Public Lands Day: In 2016, the legislature passed a bill declaring May 20th as Colorado Public Lands Day. As part of this celebration, GCWG and the Forest Service will host the Wilderness Stewardship Training. This has been very informative training presented by Forest Service employees in the past few years. Miles Miller has taught us to cut a tree with a tiny handsaw and other very important information – like Leave No Trace is discussed.

May 21 – Sept 17, 2017: Monarch Lake Cabin Hosting, (contact Doris Klein at the April Meeting)

June 24- Sept. 11, 2017: Junco Cabin Hosting, (contact Bob Drickey at the April Meeting)

July 22-23: Alpine Art Affair

8/6/17: GCWG Annual Fall Picnic, 5:30 PM: FS Double AA Barn

August 3, 2017: Daisy Demolition Day

Trail Hosting Days: Jul 1, 8, 29, and Aug 12 & 19.

Trail Work Days: Trail work days are coordinated by Jack Reichert. GCWG would like to establish a core group for trail maintenance that Jack can count on when the need for trail work arises. If you are not a CORE trail maintenance person, no problem, you can still volunteer for individual projects.

9/23/17: National Public Lands Day

More Events: Check online for more opportunities.

<http://gcwg.org> and see *More Volunteer Opportunities* on page 2.



Spring is in the air! Don't miss the meeting April, 9.

Presidents Letter *continued from page 1*

of contact is Jon Morrissey who became the District Ranger for the Sulphur Ranger District late last summer. Jon comes to us from the White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire. He was also formerly a District Ranger in Leadville.

Starting around April 1st Andy Borek will be back as our Wilderness Ranger during the summer (previously approved summer positions are not affected by the Federal hiring freeze). My understanding is that our District has obtained a grant for another summer employee, plus two summer interns for wilderness patrol this summer. Our group's volunteer hours plus a \$1,000 contribution from GCWG helped to obtain this grant. While this is less than last year, we are fortunate to have any summer staff at all. Everyone should take tremendous pride in the contributions and hard work that we made last year and every year.

It has been a privilege to serve as your president and it wouldn't have happened at all if it weren't for the dedication of the rest of the Board and all the members that have done such great work.

New Member Cabin Hosting

Dates for Orientation:

- Monarch Lake Cabin Hosting Orientation is scheduled for Wednesday, June 3rd 10 a.m.
- Junco Cabin Hosting Orientation is scheduled for Saturday, July 15th 10 a.m.

These orientations are for new members, and anyone who has not hosted a cabin, or feels they need a refresher.

Everyone who has not attended an orientation in the last couple of years should consider attending.

In Cheryl Strayed's book *Wild*, she summed up her feelings about the people who had worked to establish and maintain the Pacific Crest Trail in the following words: "...preposterous as it was, when Catherine Montgomery and Clinton Clarke and Warren Rogers and the hundreds of others who'd created the PCT had imagined the people who would walk that high trail that wound down the heights of our western mountains, they'd been imagining me." "It had nothing to do with gear or footwear or the backpacking fads or philosophies of any particular era or even with getting from point A to point B." It had to do with how it felt to be in the wild. With what it was like to walk for miles with no reason other than to witness the accumulation of trees and meadows, mountains and deserts, streams and rocks, rivers and grasses, sunrises and sunsets. The experience was powerful and fundamental. It seemed to me that it had always felt like this to be a human in the wild, and as long as the wild existed it would always feel this way." -- Cheryl Strayed, *Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail*

As we in the GCWG look forward to our summer work with the Forest Service to help maintain and protect our wilderness areas, we can help others to know what it feels like to be human in the wild. One part of the definition of wilderness is that it "...has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation..." Section 2(c).

There are few places other than the wilderness that people can experience this primitive recreation. Let's all pitch in this summer to help by joining the Group in one of our volunteer opportunities. Come to the **Spring Meeting on Sunday, April 9, 2017** to hear about the summer projects and pick your favorites to work on.

Volunteer Opportunities

Please Contact Doreen Sumerlin, the Southwest Zone Wildlife Biologist if you would like to help with any of these ongoing projects: **Osprey Nest Monitoring:** This nest is closed for the winter, but will be active and ready for a monitor soon .



Help a Homeless Bird: In addition to blue bird box monitoring, Doreen needs help to building new bluebird next boxes to replace many that are falling apart along the road sides.



Monofilament Recovery & Recycling Program: Adopt a bin, visit it 2-3 times each summer and take the material to the Forest Service for recycling.



Volunteer Hours

Remember these interns from last year:



REPORT YOUR HOURS!!!!

Your volunteer hours helped the Forest Service obtain a grant to support these great resources. Our reported volunteer hours were about 625 less in 2016 than they were in 2015. It is very important that as you do our projects in 2017 you record and REPORT the hours you spend. Any hours you spend on these activities are reportable: Trail Ambassador, Trail Head Hosting, Registration Boxes, Bird Counts, Osprey Monitoring, Bluebird Box Maint/Monit, Monofilament Let's keep our interns coming to help.

Grand County Wilderness Group - You have joined a service organization. There are plenty of ways to be of serve.

We hope that you became part of GCWG because you care about wild places with wild creature in Grand County and intend to help preserve them. NOW is the time to make choices for your involvement. All you need to do is set aside the time and sign up. NO ONE WILL CALL, it is up to you to get out there and make a difference. Here is a summary opportunities for your reference:

1. Host one day at Junco Cabin - sign up at the Spring meeting.
2. Host one day at Monarch Cabin - sign up at the Spring meeting
Don't worry about knowing how to host a cabin. Toni Wujek always gives us a training session to start the season.
3. Open up and clean either cabin to start the season
4. Hike the wilderness trails ANY DAY - even on weekends -- and report via website form.
5. Lead an orientation hike of your choice – Joyce Clair
6. Adopt a registration box and retrieve the reports – Stephen Lee (stephenchris@rkymtnhi.com, [708-990-5967](tel:708-990-5967))
7. Spreadsheet analysis of trail usage from registration boxes – Stephen Lee
8. Take digital photographs for our bulletin boards, newsletter and historian. - Holly Whitten (WPHolly@aim.com)
9. Help construct signage and update trailhead bulletin boards – Jack Reichert
10. Work on trail maintenance and other projects - Jack Reichert
11. Pay your \$20 dues to Grand County Wilderness Group – PO Box 206 Tabernash, 80472
12. Send change of email or address or phone – Mike Braddy – PO Box 206 Tabernash, CO 80478
13. Wear your wilderness tee shirt or sweatshirt every time you hike in the forest and report your hours.
14. Staff the booth at the Art Affair for 2 hours
15. Consider backpacking with the Encampment group or joining the Spring Camp
16. Uproot noxious weeds wherever we can find them – Beth Collins ([970-726-5423](tel:970-726-5423))
17. Record and report volunteer hours – Toni Wujek
18. Distribute our “business” cards
19. Contribute to this newsletter, next edition – Holly Whitten (WPHolly@aim.com)
20. Work on National Public Lands Day
21. Purchase shirts, sweatshirts and hats.
22. Adopt an Osprey nest –USFS ([970-887-4100](tel:970-887-4100))
23. Monitor a blue bird box – USFS ([970-887-4100](tel:970-887-4100))
24. Contact the Forest Service anytime - USFS ([970-887-4100](tel:970-887-4100))

Portal into Presence Ann Steers

The frozen river draws us on and we are folded into its untrammled world of ice and snow.

A windless reverie moves through the sheltering spruce and ephemeral white filling the granite-edged sanctuary with a reverence reserved for holy places.

Looking closely, tracks from a nocturnal dance between cloven hoof and padded claw weave along the riverbank.

Closer still, earthen fractals of frost crystal and ponderous catkin mirror the spiraling patterns of the cosmos.

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Dippers dart in and out of open pockets in the river where rushing water can no longer be contained by the thickened layers of cold.

Glimpses of polished ice glint like hidden garnets, reflecting the grayish-brown and blue of earth and sky.

Upstream, river otter slides leave snowy traces of efficiency and whimsy reminding all that within the struggle there is much rejoicing.

Above, the pale oculus of a waxing moon, visible in mid-day, watches over this perfect portal into Presence.



**Want to lead a hike?** Come to the April 9th meeting. Tell Joyce Claire your favorite hike. Pick a Thursday between 6/21 & 8/30. Lead the hike! Get involved. It's easy and FUN!

**Like us on Facebook!**

<https://www.facebook.com/grandcountywildern>

**2016 Membership.** Join Today. Pay your \$20 dues to Grand County Wilderness Group PO Box 206 Tabernash, CO 80478. Send change of email, address or phone information to Mike Braddy at this same address. If you've already paid your 2016 dues at the August picnic or Fall meeting, please don't pay again.

(Application to Join: Fill in information below and send this form with payment or pay on-line at GCWG.org.)

Name:

Address:

Email:

Phone:

Special Thanks to Chas McConnell at [McConnell Printing](#) for his help with printing this newsletter.

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**Grand County Wilderness Mission Statement:** To Assist the US Forest Service in the preservation, protection, improvement and public understanding of the wilderness areas in Grand County.

**Preservation**

- Patrol shores for fish line filament and recycling
- Work on a National Public Lands day project
- Adopt an Osprey nest
- Monitor a blue bird box

**Improvement**

- Adopt a registration box
- Build a bluebird nest
- Join a Daisy Days project and help eradicate noxious weeds

**Public Understanding**

- Cabin Hosting (Junco and Monarch)
- Hike wilderness trails
- Lead a group hike
- Take digital photos to share
- Staff the booth at the Art Affair
- Wear your tee shirt, hat, vest to bring awareness

**Protection**

- Construct signage
- Update trail bulletin boards