



# Wild Connections

FROM THE MOUNTAINS TO THE PRAIRIES

Protecting and restoring wildlands in the Arkansas and South Platte watersheds...



## Wild Connections News

April 2018

Hi {FIRST\_NAME}|to all our friends},

Spring is upon us in the Southern Rockies!

Days are starting to get longer and Wild Connections is excited to give you some great opportunities to spend those days with us on Colorado public lands.

### Upcoming Outings & Events...

#### Cottonwood Creek, a BLM Wildlands Hike

Saturday, April 7, 2018

10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. (Trailhead to Trailhead time)



Cottonwood Creek near Crampton Mountain is a lush perennial drainage that meanders along Cottonwood Ridge, tucked into the hills near the Tallahassee Creek Valley north of Table Mountain and the Arkansas River Canyonlands. This easy-to-moderate hike of five miles round-trip and approximately 500 feet elevation gain follows a rarely used BLM non-motorized trail over a ridge and into the beautiful Cottonwood Creek drainage, closed in by steep ridges and dense mixed forests. The majority of the trail is an elevated old roadbed above the creek, which is now revegetated. There will also be a couple fairly easy creek crossings.

Learn about BLM Lands with Wilderness Characteristics and BLM's Resource Management Plan revision currently in progress. Bring lunch, snacks, water, suitable clothing, boots suitable for off-trail hiking, water crossings, and possible snow, and other

standard hiking essentials. This trip is sponsored by Wild Connections, Pikes Peak Group Sierra Club, and Central Colorado Wilderness Coalition.

Maximum 15 participants. For more trip and carpool information and to register, contact John Sztukowski, [817-939-4239](tel:817-939-4239) or e-mail [john@wildconnections.org](mailto:john@wildconnections.org).

#### March for Science - Denver

Saturday, April 14, 2018

9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

(March begins 10:00 a.m.)

Denver's Civic Center Park

The March for Science is a celebration of science and a call to support and safeguard the scientific community. March begins at 9:00 a.m. with the March for Science breakfast.

scientific community. Music begins at 9:00 a.m., with the March for Science itself beginning at 10:00 a.m. at Denver's Civic Center Park. This will be followed by speakers and musical performances and coincide with Teach-in Tables.

Look for Wild Connections, a science-based conservation organization, at Denver's March for Science Teach-In area, where scientists, educators, and leaders from a wide array of disciplines will gather to discuss our work, effective science communication strategies, and training in public advocacy through conversations, displays, and/or hands-on activities. Wild Connections will have a table with information on local conservation efforts on public lands and the role that science plays to help identify and protect our public lands, wildlife, and biodiversity.

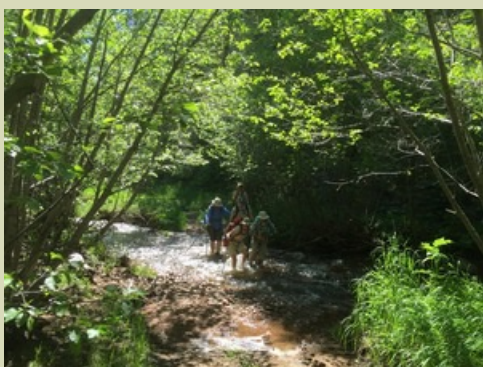
More info on the March for Science can be found at: <http://marchforsciencedenver.org/>.



## **Rarely-Visited Side Canyons in Beaver Creek Proposed Wilderness, a BLM Wildlands Hike**

**Saturday, May 5, 2018**

**9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (Trailhead to Trailhead time)**



Beaver Creek, the largest watershed flowing from Pikes Peak, has many interesting wooded tributary valleys. This moderately strenuous, mostly off-trail hike covers six miles while gaining 800 feet elevation. Two stream crossings are possible.

Learn about present and future protections for the proposed Wilderness and nearby BLM Lands with Wilderness Characteristics.

Bring sturdy boots, water shoes, and clothes appropriate for the weather forecast, water, lunch, and usual day-hike essentials.

This trip is sponsored by Pikes Peak Group Sierra Club, Wild Connections, and Central Colorado Wilderness Coalition. Maximum 15 participants. A Colorado Springs carpool will

depart at 7:30 a.m. For more trip and carpool info, and **required registration**, please contact John Stansfield at [303-660-5849](tel:303-660-5849) or [jorstan@juno.com](mailto:jorstan@juno.com) by 5:00 p.m. Friday, May 4.

## **Colorado Public Lands Day Stewardship Project**

**Saturday, May 19, 2018**

**8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.**

**South Park (near Fairplay)**

Celebrate Colorado Public Lands Day by giving back to your public lands. Join Wild Connections and South Park USFS Ranger District to remove old barbwire fencing on National Forest land, which creates obstruction for migrating wildlife. This community stewardship project will improve wildlife habitat for our neighboring herds of elk, deer, moose, and pronghorn.

We will meet at 8:30 a.m. in the Fairplay area and work until about 3:00 p.m. We will celebrate public lands and our National Forest Service who manages these lands for us.

Wild Connections will provide ice cream, beer, sodas, water, and nibbles for our post-project celebration. Please bring personal lunch, snacks, and water for the work day.

"Barbwire defensible" clothing is required (heavy jeans/canvas pants, close-toed boots, thick long sleeves, and thick leather gloves), in addition to the standard list of personal outdoor gear (warm layers appropriate for the weather, hat, rain gear, sunscreen, eye protection/sunglasses, water, bug spray). An up-to-date Tetanus shot is preferable as well for this project.

This is a family-friendly project (for engaged kids 12+). For more info and/or to register, please contact Wild Connections' Misi Ballard at [misi.ballard@gmail.com](mailto:misi.ballard@gmail.com).



## Thirtyone Mile Mountain, a BLM Wildlands Hike

Saturday, May 26, 2018

9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (Trailhead to Trailhead time)



Thirtyone Mile Mountain is a peak along Currant Creek at the south end of South Park and northwest of Cañon City. The area contains an interesting mix of habitats, from a riparian corridor to high montane grasslands, as well as spruce, aspen, and bristlecone pine forests.

This will be a moderate hike of about eight miles with 1000 feet elevation gain. This hike will be mostly along a couple of old, unmaintained roads which at one time had OHV use, but have since been closed to motorized use. Learn how wildlands such as these promote connectivity and wildlife movement across the landscape and provide wildlife with refuges from more intensively-used land parcels. Bring lunch, water, raingear, and clothing suitable for the weather conditions.

This trip is sponsored by Pikes Peak Group Sierra Club, Wild Connections, and Central Colorado Wilderness Coalition. Maximum 15 participants. A carpool will meet in Colorado Springs. For more trip and carpool information and to register, contact Jim Lockhart [719-385-0045](tel:719-385-0045) or e-mail [jlock@datawest.net](mailto:jlock@datawest.net) by 5:00 PM, Friday, May 25.

## South Park Alpine Restoration Project Registration is Open...

Wild Connections is excited for South Park Alpine Restoration Projects that we are cohosting later this summer (Aug 18-19 and Sep 08).



Join us for a weekend or one-day event in spectacular high country at three sites within 10 miles northwest and southwest of Fairplay. The headwaters of North Tarryall Creek, Sheep Creek and Beaver Creek have been impacted by illegal motorized activity and social trail development, which has damaged the alpine habitat and sent sediment into the watershed. After equipment preps the sites, volunteers will seed and mulch the area.

We'll be camping in a beautiful location with views across a meadow toward the continental divide. These are the first and second projects in a series extending through 2019. Wild Connections is pleased to be working with long-time partners, USFS South Park Ranger District, Mosquito Range Heritage Initiative (MRHI) and Wildlands Restoration Volunteers (WRV).

### South Park Alpine Restoration Project Pt 1

Saturday, Aug 18 - 19, 2018

Registration and more info can be found here: [https://www.wlrv.net/index.php?section=events&action=list&type=792&filter\\_date\\_type=after&filter\\_date\\_1=yesterday#event2485](https://www.wlrv.net/index.php?section=events&action=list&type=792&filter_date_type=after&filter_date_1=yesterday#event2485)

### South Park Alpine Restoration Project Pt 2

Saturday, Sep 08, 2018

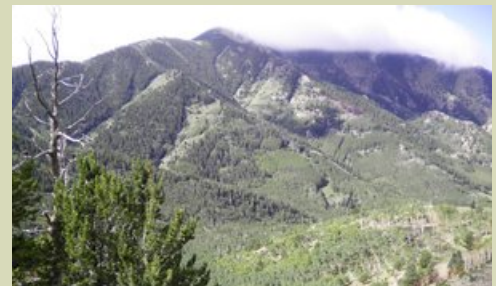
Registration and more info can be found here: [https://www.wlrv.net/index.php?section=events&action=list&type=792&filter\\_date\\_type=after&filter\\_date\\_1=yesterday#event2486](https://www.wlrv.net/index.php?section=events&action=list&type=792&filter_date_type=after&filter_date_1=yesterday#event2486)

## Take Action...

### Oil & Gas Lease Sales near Great Sand Dunes National Park

Last week, the BLM Royal Gorge Field Office released an Environmental Assessment (EA) for oil and gas lease sales east of the Great Sand Dunes National Park on the eastern side of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in Huerfano County of the Wet Mountain Valley.

11 parcels, totaling more than 18,000 acres of split-estate land in Huerfano County, are available for oil and gas leasing this September. Some of these parcels are bordering designated Wilderness in the Wet Mountain Valley, and also located within a few miles of the Great Sand Dunes National Park boundary.





The release of the EA came with a 15-day public comment period, which runs through Friday, April 6, 2018. The EA and more info from the BLM can be found

at: <https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/eplanning/projectSummary.do?methodName=renderDefaultProjectSummary&projectId=92394>



**Send comment letters by April 6 to:**

Royal Gorge Field Office

Attn: September 2018 Lease Sales

3028 E. Main St.

Cañon City, CO 81212

via e-mail: [blm\\_co\\_rg\\_comments@blm.gov](mailto:blm_co_rg_comments@blm.gov)

For more information and talking points see: <http://slvec.org/>

## Scoping begins for the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison (GMUG) National Forest Plan Revision



Scoping began April 3rd for the GMUG plan revision, which opened up an official 30-day public comment period.

The GMUG forests, located in western Colorado, border Wild Connections' region along the Collegiate Peaks and Swatch Range of the Upper Arkansas River Valley.

More information can be found at:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/gmug/landmanagement/planning/?cid=fseprd500301>,

including an upcoming scoping webinar that will be held this Friday, April 6th at 9:00 a.m. MST.

## Seeking Volunteers...

For all the work that Wild Connections achieves, we are primarily supported by a volunteer board and members and are always seeking additional volunteers to sharpen our organizational aspects and help us grow.

Currently, Wild Connections could assuredly use volunteer assistance with regard to social media, videography, and publication. Or if you have another unique skill that you would be willing to donate to our cause, please contact Wild Connections' Wildlands Conservation Coordinator, John Sztukowski, at [john@wildconnections.org](mailto:john@wildconnections.org) or 817-939-4239.

*Jim, Misi, John, Kristin, Alison, Claude, Deb, Karl and John*

- All of us at Wild Connections

### Share with your friends and family

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*Thanks for the photos! Credit from top to bottom:*

*Kate Spinelli (header), John Sztukowski, marchforscience.org, John Sztukowski, Misi Ballard, John Sztukowski, Misi Ballard, summitpost.org, Dan Novakoski via fs.usda.gov/main/gmug/home*

Contact Us

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