



Wild Connections News August 2017

Hi {FIRST_NAME}|to all our friends},

We think your passion combined with our dedication to protecting and restoring public lands in the Arkansas and South Platte watersheds will overcome the challenges posed by special interests to use wild areas for short-term profit. Read about [stopping illegal riding in Packer Gulch](#), the [arc of resilient forests](#) across central Colorado, joining the teams of [hikers to Green Mountain or Sheep Mountain](#), updates on [monuments, methane and wolves](#), and how you can [help spread the word](#) to family and friends.

Thanks for your concern,

Jim, Misi, John, Kristin, Alison, Claude, Deb, John and Jean

All of us at Wild Connections

Stopping illegal off-road riding in Packer Gulch and Farnum Peak

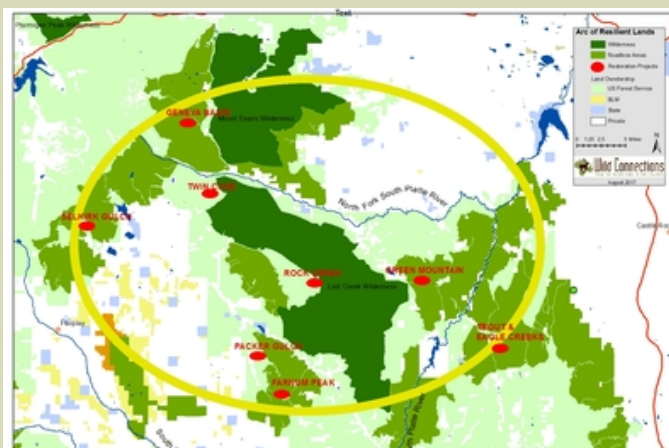


Volunteers and South Park Ranger District staff blocked illegal routes that lead from Packer Gulch into the west side of Farnum Peak Roadless Area. We're out to stop these illegal uses that destroy wildlife habitat, trespass through private property, and cause erosion into tributaries of the South Platte River that is the water supply for local towns and Denver's Front Range.

Post holes were augured by a local contractor and the work teams set the posts and poured cement. The damaged areas behind the closures were scarified; native seed was scattered and brush was pulled in to protect new growth. One of our usual monsoon storms rolled after lunch, so some of the concrete will be completed later. After the concrete has cured, the Forest Service will return to string the steel cable.

Resilient and protected forests are important to combat climate change, provide major sources of clean water, allow for quiet recreation, and protect habitat for wildlife and rare plants. When linked together with high quality connecting lands, a network of wildlands that lies across Colorado is our best legacy for the future.

An Arc or an Ark?



The Packer Gulch project continues several years of habitat restoration work in the Pike-San Isabel National Forest.

Looking at the big picture, Trout and Eagle Creeks, Green Mountain, Geneva Basin, Selkirk Gulch, Farnum Peak, Packer Gulch and coming this fall Rock Creek and Twin Cone form an arc of core areas anchored by Mt. Evans and Lost Creek Wildernesses.

They are also an ark for central Colorado's treasured species: mountain lions, lynx, moose, deer, elk, pikas, Preble's meadow jumping mice, Pawnee montane skippers, peregrine falcons, resident and migrating birds, countless amphibians, arthropods, insects, common and rare trees, shrubs, grasses and wildflowers.



As the effects of climate change, energy development and his intensity human use rise, the ark here and across the world may be - as Michael Soule said – “our last, best chance to preserve biodiversity.”

You can be part of the team

Protecting these wild places depends on people like you. We invite you to get your feet on the ground with these events.



Green Mountain Restoration Project Hike

Saturday, August 19, 10 am-3 pm

We'll return to the west slopes of Green Mountain in Pike National Forest, near Bailey, to discover the progress of our ongoing restoration of the area, last monitored in 2015.

Though a short 4 mile round trip, the hiking is challenging because the roadway has been obliterated, so we'll follow its remnant off-trail.

We'll check for revegetation, wetlands revival, wildlife recovery (we spotted elk on our last visit) and any illegal intrusion, and discuss our findings. What did volunteers accomplish with digging, raking and dragging? Are the closures secure? Are the critters moving through? Are hikers enjoying the solitude and sounds of just the wind and water?

Contact Lee Patton to RSVP and for trailhead directions: lee_patton@hotmail.com or 303-777-4396.



Sheep Mountain Day Hike

Saturday, August 26th Time TBD

Located southwest of Fairplay, the area is a gap in the mountain ridges that has attracted dirt bikes and ATVs. This will be a strenuous 8-10 mile hike with 2000 feet elevation gain and a high point of 12,500 feet. Learn about the impacts of motorized trails and proposed motorized trails to high mountain tundra areas.

Contact Jim Lockhart at jlock@datawest.net or (719) 385-0045 for more information and to register for the trip.

Coming this fall: Rock Creek and Twin Cone routes, a walk into the wild in Wildcat Canyon

The route closure projects will help reduce erosion on the edges of Lost Creek Wilderness. Rock Creek is the site of reintroductions of endangered greenback cutthroat trout. The South Platte River runs through Wildcat Canyon just upstream of Cheesman Reservoir. Routes to the former ATV river crossing were closed after the Hayman Fire, but there is pressure to reopen them to motorized use. Watch the [Events](#) page for dates and detailed information.

Trips are sponsored by Wild Connections, [Pikes Peak Group Sierra Club](#), and Central Colorado Wilderness Coalition.

Good things happen when citizens weigh in...

Over the past several months many of you wrote to decision makers about conservation issues. Here are just a few results.



- **Canyon of the Ancients National Monument**, one of 27 National Monuments and Marine Sanctuaries under review by the administration, is safe for now. Secretary of Interior Zinke concluded that the Native American archeological sites here deserve protection and that the boundaries would not be changed. The decisions on the rest are pending. Read more from [The Daily Sentinel](#)

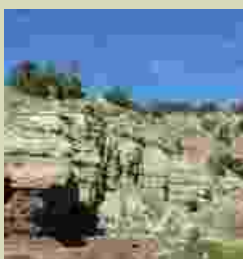


- **EPA ordered to enforce Obama-era methane pollution rule.** The EPA must enforce Obama era pollution limits for the oil and gas industry, said nine of the 11 judges of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. The rule sets limits for greenhouse emissions for the energy industry, and requires companies to identify and fix leaks. Read more from [CNN](#).



- **Gray wolves win** "The U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, arguably the nation's most important appellate court after the Supreme Court, upheld a lower court's decision that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, a division of Interior, has the authority to group wolves in the western Great Lakes region into a segment as it did in 2011, but does not have the power to simply remove them from the endangered species list without considering the move's impact on the entire species of gray wolves in their range." Read more from the [Washington Post](#)

Spread the word to your friends and family



It's not too late to [send your contribution](#) that will help cover the costs of restoration projects, back country excursions and community efforts to protect wildlands in our region. Click on the Donate Now button to go to our secure web page at Colorado Gives. Or mail a check to 2168 Pheasant Pl., Colorado Springs CO 80909.



We rely on people like you to give back to the forests, canyons and critters that give all of us clean air and water, quiet recreation, views of nature's beauty and places of spiritual renewal.

Word of mouth works! Share with your friends and family.



[Forward this E-News to a friend](#)



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www.instagram.com/wildconnectionsorg/

Thanks for the photos

Top to bottom: Packer Gulch work day, Jim Lockhart; Arc map, Jean Smith; Green Mountain, Jim Lockhart; Browns Pass at Sheep Mountain, Karst Postma; Canyons of the Ancients, BLM; gas flare and gray wolf, public domain; Cucharas Canyon, John Sztukowski.

Contact Us

Website: www.wildconnections.org

Email: info@wildconnections.org

Phone: 719.686.5905

Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Wild-Connections/22893378049895

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Wild Connections
2168 Pheasant Pl
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80909
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