



Wild Connections

FROM THE MOUNTAINS TO THE PRAIRIES

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



Wild Connections News

December 2018

Hi {FIRST_NAME}|to all our friends},

There is a lot going on this month on our public lands in central Colorado and for Wild Connections!

We are more than halfway through the Give! season. Your gift to Wild Connections helps us protect wildlife and wildlands in central Colorado to ensure rich, biologically diverse habitat for today and into the future.

Through our year-end giving appeal, you have the opportunity to ensure that our shared hope for the future is realized. You can make a donation today that will help Wild Connections meet the future challenges of protecting our public lands, water, air and wildlife. We hope you will support Wild Connections at this time so we can continue working long into the future to protect our wildlife and our wild lands, together.

Help us start 2019 with the funds for:

- More Restoration Projects
- More Protections for BLM Managed Public Lands
- More Backcountry Hikes
- More ID and Analysis of Climate Resilient Preserves
- More Wildlife Corridors Protected
- More Outreach to the Public
- More Input on BLM and USFS Management Plans



[You can make a contribution here anytime from November. 1 to December. 31, 2018.](#)

The Give! Campaign features Wild Connections and other Pikes Peak region non-profits.

Your gifts will be matched by \$3,100 from individuals on Wild Connections' Board of Directors.

If you prefer, you can always mail a check to 2168 Pheasant Pl. Colorado Springs, CO 809009.



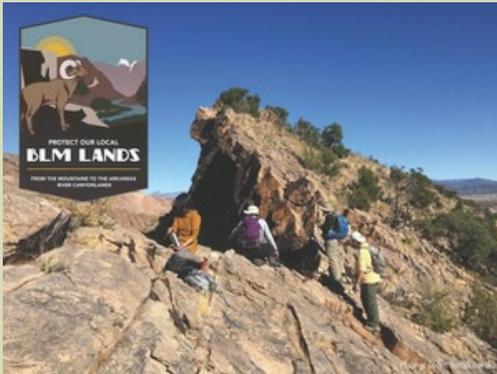
Upcoming Events...

Grape Creek Day Hike (Rescheduled),

A BLM Wildlands Outing to Ecology Park

Saturday, December 15, 2018

10:00 AM to 2:00 PM (Trailhead to Trailhead times)



Rescheduled from Nov. 17, 2018. Ecology Park, an area near Canon City and south of Royal Gorge, which is jointly managed by the Bureau of Land Management and Canon City, offers hiking trails and access to Grape Creek and Temple Canyon.

As a follow-up to our May hike, this hike of approximately 5 miles with 500 feet elevation gain will explore the western end of the area. This area is threatened by proposed BLM oil and gas leasing, as well as mining (see below), which we will discuss on this outing. We also will learn about the BLM's resource management plan revision, and how it could affect the area.

This hike is sponsored by Pikes Peak Group Sierra Club, Wild Connections, and Central Colorado Wilderness Coalition. Bring lunch, snacks, water, clothing and footwear suitable for the weather conditions. An optional carpool from Colorado

Springs will be arranged.

Maximum 15 participants. For more information or to register for the hike, contact Jim Lockhart at 719-385-0045 or jlock@datawest.net.

Open for Public Comment...

There are **two bad proposals on public lands at or near Grape Creek**, just southwest of Canon City and the Arkansas River that need your public comment.

See the map below for the locations of the mineral lease proposal at Grape Creek State Trust Land and oil and gas lease proposal at Temple Canyon, as well as their proximity and/or containment in valued areas, including the Grape Creek Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and the 2018 Grape Creek Proposed Wilderness. For an exhaustive outline of Grape Creek Area Characteristics for Protection, including more info on the ACEC and proposed Wilderness, go to: <http://www.wildconnections.org/home.html>

New Mineral Lease at Grape Creek Stewardship Trust Land

Public Comment Period: OPEN until Dec 15, 2018

The Colorado State Land Board (SLB) is considering an application for a new mineral lease, likely gold, on the 604 acre section of state trust land: Grape Creek-Horseshoe Mountain. This has a public comment period open until December 15, 2018

The Grape Creek-Horseshoe Mountain parcel is a SLB Stewardship Trust Land, allowing *"only those uses that will protect and enhance the beauty, natural values, open space and wildlife habitat of those lands,"* except for pre-existing uses or management practices.

The Colorado Wilderness Act of 2018 features this Trust parcel within its proposed Grape Creek Wilderness. In addition to wilderness qualities and great backcountry recreation access, the land's identified natural values include "rare plants (Arkansas Canyon stickleaf, *Nuttallia densa*, potential for Degener beardtongue), wildlife/wildlife habitat, open space connectivity, and beauty." Grape Creek's pristine waters and downstream water supplies, including the Arkansas River, are at risk from mining activity.

The SLB designated this Stewardship Trust parcel in 1998, nominated by strong supporters, the Sierra Club and Wild Connections. Under State Land Board policy, the Director *"shall review and evaluate whether the new use will adversely affect the natural values of the property."*

Through the processes of mapping, surface sampling, ground exploration, drilling, and, if the mining is approved, road building, tunneling, and massive mine waste disposal, **there is no way that the land's identified natural values can survive.**

Your comments in support of protection for the Grape Creek-Horseshoe Mountain, Stewardship Trust land are needed SOON, BY DECEMBER 15, 2018.

Contact:

Mari Johnson, Colorado State Land Board
Stewardship Trust Manager

1127 Sherman Street, Suite 300, Denver, CO 80203-2206
(303) 866-3454 ext. 3337; mari.johnson@state.co.us

The proposed new mineral lease application will be presented to the State Land Board at its January 10, 2019 meeting. If you can, please attend and speak out in favor of Stewardship Trust protection for the Grape Creek-Horseshoe Mtn. State Trust parcel. For

details: www.colorado.gov/statelandboard.

BLM RGFO March 2019 Lease Sales

Public Comment Period: OPEN until Dec 14, 2018

The BLM Royal Gorge Field Office (RGFO) is seeking additional public comments on two parcels totaling 602 acres of federal oil and gas leases on public lands around Canon City, available for public lease in the upcoming March 2019 competitive oil and gas lease sale. This follows up a recent public scoping period that was from Oct. 1 to 16, 2018.

The primary parcel in the RGFO, Parcel ID: 8423, is adjacent to Canon City's popular Temple Canyon City Park at Grape Creek, just southwest of town, which is also adjacent to BLM's Grape Creek Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), Colorado Natural Heritage Program's Grape Creek Potential Conservation Area (PCA), and Dianna DeGette's 2018 Grape Creek Proposed Wilderness.

The BLM analyzed impacts for this lease proposal but did not apply any stipulations to minimize or mitigate the impacts. They did not even evaluate for an alternative to mitigate these impacts, despite the ongoing Eastern Colorado Resource Management Plan (ECRMP) revision.

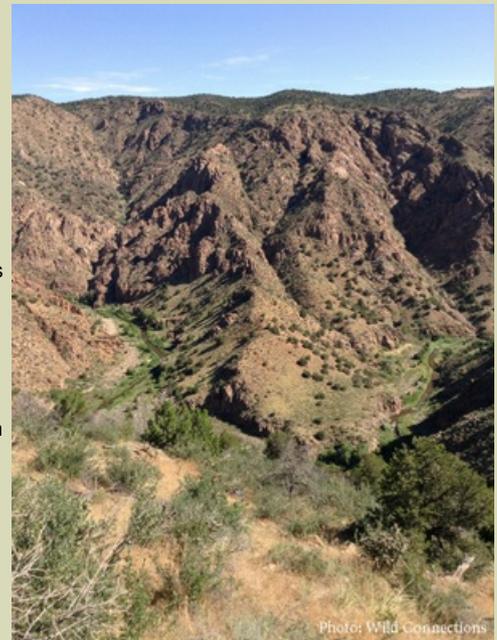
Based on the local conservation, recreation, and wildlife in this area, **please recommend in your comments to the BLM to defer the parcel altogether, or at least apply a Non-Surface Occupancy (NSO) stipulation.**

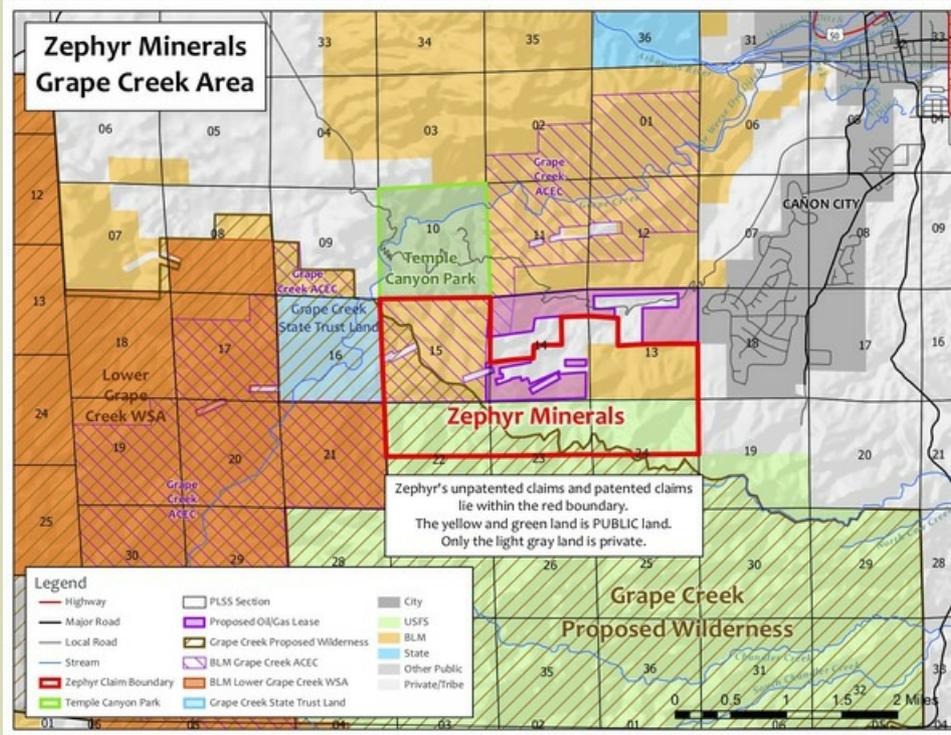
For more information on BLM Colorado's March 2019 lease sales, and helpful tips when submitting comments, please visit [BLM's e-planning website](#), with BLM's RGFO three-page scoping parcel list, brief info, and map PDF [here](#).

To submit comments, follow the appropriate links on BLM's e-planning website above, or **go directly to [BLM's e-planning page here](#)**, and click on "Comment on Document" in the lower Right Corner for the "RGFO_EA_Comment_March2019" Document.

If you are interesting in making a public comment on oil and gas lease sales, however need more guidance or info, Rocky Mountain Wild has a great O&G Toolbox for Activists available here: <http://rockymountainwild.org/ogtoolbox>. Additionally, Rocky Mountain Wild has info on all upcoming Colorado Oil and Gas Lease Sales available at: http://rockymountainwild.org/oil_and_gas/colorado.

Note, for Wild Connections' exhaustive Outline of Grape Creek Area Characteristics for Protection, and below Map, please go to: <http://www.wildconnections.org/home.html>





Wild Connections On the Air and in the News!



Wild Connections received some great press last week, including on television, on the radio, and in the news!

Wild Connections' President, Jim Lockhart, and Vice President, John Stansfield, were interviewed last week (11/25) on Fox 21 News!

Fox 21 News is highlighting local nonprofits and chose to sit down with Wild Connections, promoting our organization, causes, as well as opportunities to give to Wild Connections via [Indy Give!](#)

[See the full four minute video here.](#)



Wild Connections' board members Alison Gallensky and Karl Ford Ph.D. provided great content on KGNU Community Radio on Friday morning, 11/30/2018.

They were featured on KGNU's Connections radio show, hosted by Roger Wendell.

Check out the complete show at: <https://www.kgnu.org/connections/11/30/2018>.



Wild Connections was also quoted and referenced in recent news articles, including in the 11/27 Pueblo Chieftain regarding the proposed mineral lease at Grape Creek: [Conservation Group Concerned About Mining Exploration Near Wilderness Area](#)

And in the 12/3 Colorado Springs Gazette regarding the oil and gas lease proposal near Canon City: [It's Outdoor Recreation Vs. Gas and Oil in Southern Colorado](#).

USGS Releases Long-Awaited Climate Report

A new federal report confirms public lands are a significant source of US greenhouse gas emissions, and further exemplifies why public lands must be part of any climate solution.

Colorado was among the states with the highest CO2 emissions from fuels produced on Federal lands and emissions estimates released from CH4 on Federal lands.

The Federal Lands Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sequestration in the United States: Estimate for 2005-2014 Report can be found at: <https://pubs.er.usgs.gov/publication/sir20185131>

Jim, Misi, John, Kristin, Alison, Claude, Deb, Karl and John
- All of us at Wild Connections

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*Thanks for the photos! Credit from top to bottom:
EcoFlight (header), Wild Connections, Indy Give! Logo,
John Sztukowski, Wild Connections, Rocky Mountain Wild (Map),
Fox21News, KGNU Community Radio*

Contact Us

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