

# LANDSCAPES

## NEWSLETTER



### Wild Connections

FROM THE MOUNTAINS TO THE PRAIRIES



In this issue we focus on large landscape conservation as our best chance for saving native species and diverse ecosystems.

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## Room to Thrive on the Continent's Spine

### *Large landscape conservation: a strategy for wild nature*

Our largest protected wildlands are not nearly large enough for North America's native species to survive, let alone flourish. Over time western North American National Parks, which were like islands in the midst of a sea of development, have lost species. The larger far-roaming animals such as grizzlies declined first. The smaller or more isolated the park was from other parks, the more was lost. In 1985 William Newmark studied the relationship between size and the numbers of native species and concluded that none of our most highly protected lands are large enough to maintain populations of native species over time.

In this issue of Landscapes, we highlight large landscape conservation as a visionary strategy, with wildways spanning the continent and even the hemisphere, to protect North American wildlands and native wildlife.



Michael Soulé chatting with Jean Smith, Misi Ballard, Jim Lockhart and Bob Ballard at State of the Rockies event. Photo Vickie Smith.

In April Colorado College culminated their 2014 State of the Rockies Project with a screening of the student-produced video *Spine of the Continent, the Call for Connectivity* and a talk by conservation biologist Michael Soulé that described the role of cores, corridors and carnivores in the wildlands network. (Watch this excellent [video](#).)

Conservation biologists have long proposed establishing networks of large protected core reserves with connecting corridors as our best chance for saving native species and diverse ecosystems.

For nearly 20 years Wild Connections has worked within this framework in south-central Colorado. In the face of massive conversion of natural lands to human uses, it seems that such a radical strategy is necessary and is increasingly promoted by concerned citizens, private land owners, public land agencies and governments at all levels. ☞

*I have been...a happy man in a terrible century... I have served as a close witness to fundamental changes in Nature.*



*When the century began, people still thought of the planet as infinite in its boundary. The highest mountains were still unclimbed, the ocean depths never visited, and vast wildernesses stretched across the equatorial continents. Now we have all but finished mapping the physical world, and we have taken the measure of our dwindling resources. In one lifetime exploding human populations have reduced wildernesses to threatened nature reserves. Ecosystems and species are vanishing at the fastest rate in 65 million years. Troubled by what we have wrought, we have begun to turn in our role from local conqueror to global steward.*

E. O. Wilson, Naturalist

## Beaver Creek and the Arkansas Links

by John Stansfield

I first came to Beaver Creek, the largest watershed on the "Wild South Slope" of Pikes Peak, in the spring of 1971. Where the dirt road dead-ended, the rugged canyons began, filled with sounds of rushing water. Like the trout anglers catch there, I was hooked by the place that day.

As the years go by, I get back to Beaver Creek as often as I can, though not often enough. The place has

*Continued on page 2*



John and Carol Stansfield crossing Beaver Creek, photo Scott Rappold

## Beaver Creek and Arkansas Links, cont from page 1



Beaver Creek lies in a rugged canyon on the south slope of Pikes Peak. Access is by foot trail.

not changed much, thanks to its protective designations as a BLM Wilderness Study Area and State Wildlife Area. No one has pushed to mine, dam, or extend that road beyond the spot it still dead ends.

That lack of easy access is good, I believe. Good for trout moving freely upstream; for the bighorn, eagle, and elk that migrate seasonally from tundra to lower forests and meadows. Good for year-round dwellers, the rattler, ringtail, coyote, and dipper. Good for us all.

Roads are bad for many animal and plant communities and the greater ecosystems they contribute to. Look at 150 years worth of road maps. See how the immense pie of central Colorado's biological diversity has been sliced and diced into ever smaller pieces. The pre-settlement mosaic of naturally-functioning connections across the landscape have been

weakened, if not severed, in large part by roads. An old adage applies to roads (and almost anything), "Too much of a good thing is a bad thing."

For humans and other opportunistic plant and animal species, roads are a great good. Think of the thousands of benefits that derive from them every day, year, century. Roads, blood vessels of human society, can foster networks of economic, educational, social, and spiritual well-being. They can also deliver disease, injustice, strife, and ecological dismemberment. And for better and worse, roads guide us hunters, hikers, riders, anglers, and bird watchers to our favorite wild land parks, lakes, and trailheads.

Under guidance of the Wilderness Act of 1964 and other laws and regulations, land managers and groups, like Wild Connections, now inventory public lands for roadless areas with significant natural and recreational values, like Beaver Creek. They also identify redundant, uneconomical, illegal, polluting, or dismembering roads and trails and work to restore them to natural condition.

The idea behind these inventories is simple, if sometimes controversial: by protecting our remnant roadless lands and by restoring a small, damaged portion of our huge travel network, we can maintain or even expand wildlife and plant populations and habitat connectivity, healthy airsheds and watersheds, and do our part to preserve the biological diversity on which all life depends.

I have discovered something remarkable while participating in roadless inventories and restoration projects from Beaver Creek in the 1970s to Wild Connections' current BLM Lands with Wilderness Characteristics project. Flying, like a crow, over the north side of the Arkansas River for more than sixty miles from Beaver Creek west to Browns Canyon near Salida, we would cross mostly roadless public land with only one major highway, Colorado 9. The same thing is true on the river's south side for a distance of more than twenty miles. No other part of Colorado's Front Range contains so much roadless land. Nor as much potential for connecting habitats to enhance biological diversity. ☺

### Beaver Creek

*The trail begins where the prairie, desert and foothills meet, barren hills that seem devoid of life or moisture. One could imagine dying of thirst in such a place.*

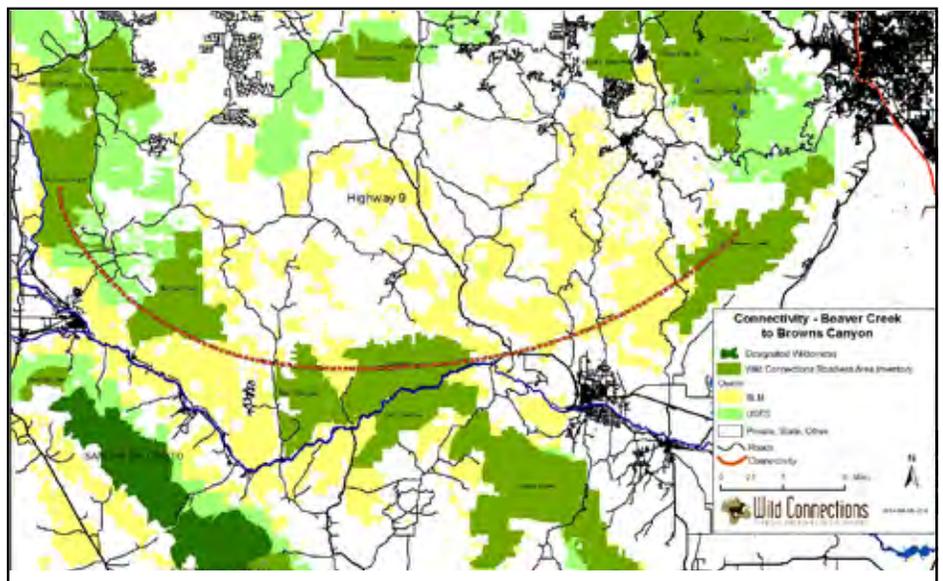
*But first impressions are deceiving. Snow and rain that falls on the south slope of Pikes Peak - at least whatever is left after drinking-water diversions - rolls down these canyons.*

*As we hiked, heading clockwise on the loop along Beaver Creek, the desert gave way to pinon-juniper hillsides where every rock or hole threatened to produce a rattlesnake. When the path dipped along Beaver Creek, pleasantly cool glades provided a break from the heat, and I didn't mind getting my feet wet during a stream crossing. When the trail climbed on the bluffs, the creek was just a whisper in the deep canyon below...*

*Passing the many pleasant campsites near the forks of east and west Beaver Creek, I wished for a tent and sleeping bag and some time to linger here, free from the city life just 20 miles away.*

R. Scott Rappold

Excerpts from Colorado Springs Gazette, May 3, 2012



# Expanding BLM Wilderness

by John Sztukowski

Wild Connections' BLM lands mapping project is off to a strong start in 2014. Two successful volunteer mapping trips are already completed, with more in the works. We plan to map over 100,000 acres of Bureau of Land Management land for wilderness characteristics this year, building on nearly 200,000 acres inventoried in 2013.

2014 is going to be a very important year for our BLM Wilderness Mapping Project. The Royal Gorge Field Office that manages BLM public lands in Central Colorado should announce their Notice of Intent to begin their new Resource Management Plan (RMP) this summer. The RMP determines how BLM land in this region, some 680,000 acres, will be designated and managed for the next twenty to thirty years. It will include wilderness designations. This is part of an overall national effort by the BLM to update Resource Management Plans, as Royal Gorge is one of 160 BLM field offices currently constructing a new RMP.

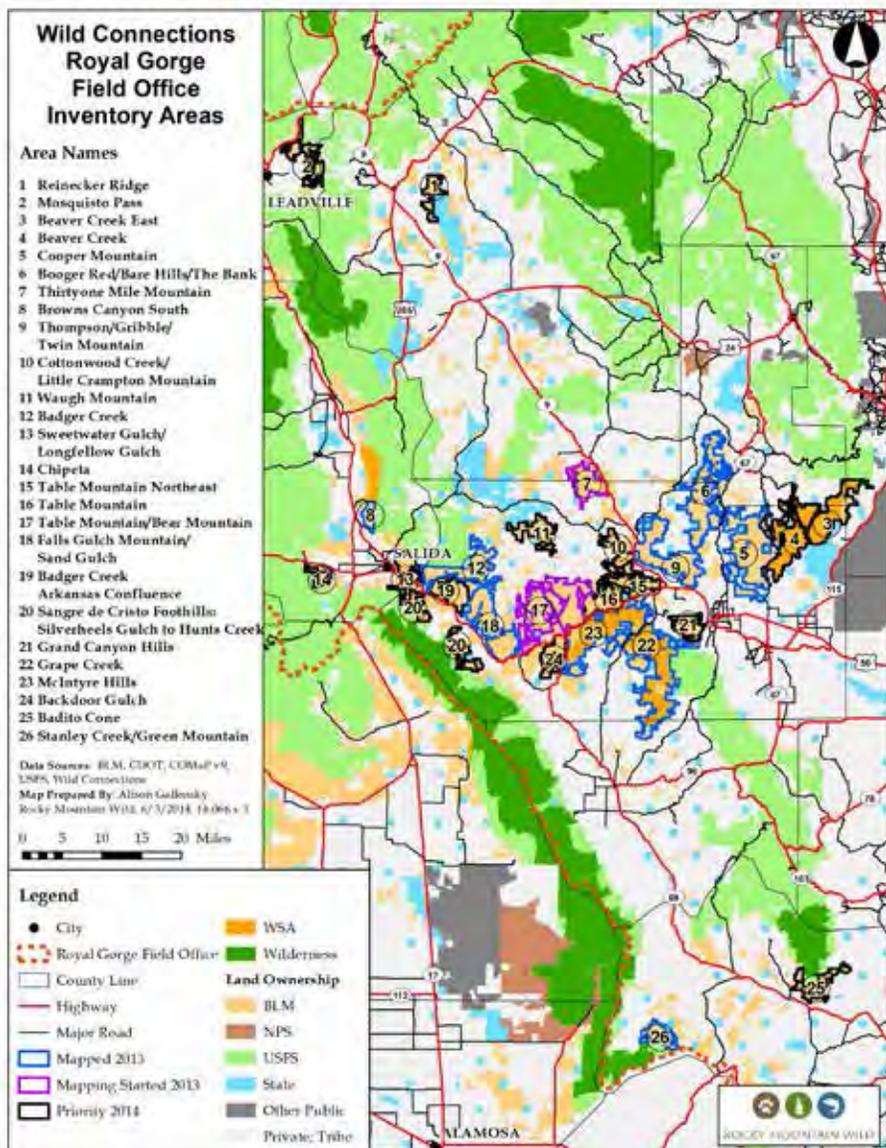
The announcement of the Royal Gorge Field Office's RMP this summer will be accompanied by a public comment period, which will give Wild Connections our first opportunity to share our lands with wilderness characteristics inventory reports with BLM's Royal Gorge Field Office (RGFO). The RMP is typically a three-to-five year process; however the BLM very recently announced plans to expedite the plans.

Nevertheless, Wild Connections will have the opportunity to share valuable data and information at the forefront of RGFO's planning process, allowing us initial input before the Draft RMP is constructed. The RGFO has inventoried their lands for wilderness characteristics over the past couple of years, and recently reported approximately 75,000 acres can qualify as wilderness. While this is a substantial figure, Wild Connections estimates much more, over 300,000 acres, can qualify for wilderness in this region.

So please join Wild Connections in advocating for more wilderness in Central Colorado. The BLM promotes citizen input for their RMP process, and Wild Connections plans to utilize this opportunity. Whether it be volunteering on one of our mapping trips or participating in the public comment periods, your contribution matters! ☺



Volunteer Rosemary Brinko, at the May volunteer mapping trip in Chipeta and Pahlone Foothills, can't begin to reach around this Douglas fir that is nearly 22 feet in circumference and 82 inches in diameter. It is thought to be Colorado's largest diameter Doug fir, but there are several that are taller. (Google "Champion Trees" for more)



## Volunteer Mapping Trip Saturday June 21 East of Texas Creek Gulch

This 2,400+ acre area is contiguous with BLM's McIntyre Hills Wilderness Study Area (WSA). No experience needed. Join us for a great day in the field and help document BLM wild areas and wilderness qualities. Contact John Sztukowski (mapping @ wildconnections.org ) for more information or to register.

# Large Landscape Scale Conservation in the Southern Rockies

by Jean Smith

Less than 200 years ago Americans thought there were so many bison and passenger pigeons that we could kill them indiscriminately. Actually, the question of whether or not these animals were indestructible probably was not even asked. And certainly the land west of the Mississippi seemed endless and, not knowing much about the low rainfall west of the 100<sup>th</sup> meridian, homesteads of 160 acres were awarded to anyone who dared to make the trek.

We still do not understand many aspects of the land and relationships among ecosystems and native plants and animals, but we do know they are limited. We do know that our ever expanding human population with its demands for energy, roads, recreation, water diversions, mining and hundreds of other activities will displace elk, mountain lions, bears, pikas and other wildlife from their natural settings.

## Space

Animals need space. They need enough space in their preferred habitat to find food, shelter from heat or cold, and a secure place to give birth to young. The larger the animal, in general, the more space it needs. And many are restricted to certain elevations or types of habitat. A lynx needs dense upper elevation forest with openings and a generous supply of snowshoe hares, but a pronghorn needs open parkland where he can graze and avoid predators through his keen eyesight and exceptional speed.

The fewer human activities in these animal spaces, the better the animals will fare. A few species will learn to live in our neighborhoods – crows, pigeons, squirrels, peregrine falcons, a few coyotes and foxes, white-tailed deer can do it – but most cannot. For example, sage grouse avoid areas with oil



*This bear, her two cubs, and another sow with cubs were removed (shot, that is) from Colorado Mountain Estates by the CDOW because of conflicts with some homeowners. Photo Jean Smith*

wells and thus many of their traditional breeding leks are no longer functional. Bears are routinely “removed” from suburban neighborhoods that have intruded into what was once undisturbed bear habitat. Countless deer and elk, badgers, skunks and all manner of critters are killed each year as they try to navigate the maze of roads.

## Connections

But space alone is not enough. None of our North American protected areas, even so vast a land as the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem, is large enough to insure the long term survival of native species and the complex of ecosystems that support them.

Animals need connections. Linkages allow animals to move between cores according to seasons or in response to climate change, to find better food sources or new mates, and to

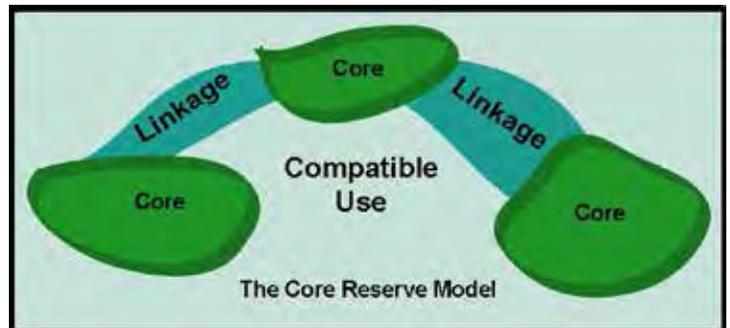


disperse young animals to new territory. If the human impacts are relatively low or mitigated – say wildlife overpasses on roads or fence removal – they can be the life-saving, species saving link in a wildlands network.

## Wildlands Networks

Scientists and conservation organizations generally subscribe to a model of core reserves connected by wildlife corridors as a means of providing the needed range of habitats. Large protected roadless such as Wilderness, National Parks or other conservation areas are a key element in this strategy.

The wildlands network must represent the full range of ecosystems. Our currently protected lands were often



designated for their scenic beauty or lack of utility for agriculture and tend to be high elevation rock and ice. In the Southern Rockies Ecoregion, for example, approximately 70% of the protected lands in National Parks and Wilderness Areas are above 10,000 feet, while low and the mid-elevation ecosystem types, such as grasslands and shrublands which support a high number of vertebrate species, are not sufficiently represented in protected areas (SREP, 2000). Species that depend on low and mid-elevation habitats commonly have little protected habitat.

[Continued on page 5](#)

In the in the Pike-San Isabel National Forest's Subalpine zone habitat, where about 18 per cent is covered by Engelmann spruce/subalpine fir, more than 32 percent is protected as Wilderness or Research Natural Areas. In contrast, the lower altitudes of the PSI National Forest's Montane zone habitat, where ponderosa pine comprises 16 percent, less than 2 percent is so protected. Proportionate representation of all ecosystem types is needed if all species are to survive.

### The vision

If one is interested in preventing the continued loss of species and their habitat, it soon becomes obvious that changes need to be made in how we treat the land. More roads and more houses, more oil derricks and more cut-over forests, more CO<sup>2</sup> and more water diversions will chomp away piece by piece at the remaining wildlands. And the native plants and animals will continue to be devoured.

A radical vision is needed, and the concept and implementation of large-scale landscape conservation is one answer to the future of a reconnected land. The Wildlands Network's Wildways campaign applies this strategy across North and Central America.



By accident of geography and history, we are lucky here is the west. The Continental Divide with its high rugged peaks has been inhospitable to many of the intensive uses of agriculture and industry found in the east, south and mid-west. I don't mean to make light of the massive changes in natural functions that have taken place: grazing the ground to the bare dirt, damming rivers and streams, digging holes to get at minerals, plowing prairies to dust, inserting our homes into river canyons and forests, and crisscrossing the land with roads and trails. These are serious alterations with enduring consequences, but there is still the possibility that cooperation among conservation groups, ranchers, local, state and national governments, home owners, hikers and sportsmen will knit together relatively unaltered lands and lands that can be recovered in a network of protected areas.

The Spine of the Continent Wildway is an example of this broad vision. From Mexico to Alaska, across at least 3 countries, and over terrain that ranges from desert to mountain top, this vision is being enacted by hundreds of organizations. Many are "officially" partners with The Wildlands Project; others are partners in spirit and deed.

Wild Connections looks at the regional scope of this wildlands network vision. For nearly twenty years we have been building a mid-scale network that encompasses 1.2 million acres of



existing and proposed Wilderness cores. Perhaps our most important contribution to the Spine of the Continent is the mapping of more than one hundred roadless areas. Prior to 1995, the Pike-San Isabel National Forest had identified 688,000 acres ( out of more than 2 million acres) as roadless. Wild Connections' volunteers however, went out in the field and looked at what was actually on the ground and "discovered" much more. This extensive documentation in maps, narratives and photos was submitted to the Forest Service and was instrumental in changes in the official roadless boundaries when 107,400 acres were added to the PSI official inventory under the Colorado Roadless Rule in 2012.

Last year and continuing this year Wild Connections initiated a new mapping project on Bureau of Land Management areas which will identify more lands with wilderness qualities. These can be recommended for protective status, in addition to the existing BLM Wilderness Study Areas. ( See [BLM Mapping article on p. 3](#))

As we revise the Wild Connections Conservation Plan, we will depict future management for the Pike San Isabel and adjacent BLM lands that will significantly build our portion of the Spine of the Continent western wildway. We'll be asking for your input later ☺

# Badger Flats Habitat Restoration Project Begins

by Misi Ballard

Work on the much anticipated Badger Flats Habitat Restoration Project began in mid-June with a volunteer workday. The South Park Ranger District shared information at a public meeting in Lake George in April on this multi-year project focused on closing and restoring illegal, user-created non-system routes that have caused significant habitat degradation and heavily impacted wildlife populations.

Wild Connections has a strong interest in Badger Flats because this area forms the eastern border of the Wild Connections Conservation Plan's Farnum Roadless Area. The proliferation of illegal OHV routes in the area threaten the natural characteristics of this important winter and summer range for elk, mule deer and big horn sheep.

The 50,000 acre project will need the help of many volunteers to be successful. Colorado Mountain Club (CMC) is taking the lead by organizing several volunteer opportunities this summer. Wild Connections and the Great Old Broads for Wilderness, along with other quiet use and motorized groups are working together to support the Forest Service with this major restoration project.

Badger Flats is popular for recreation. A network of roads and OHV trails provide a range of challenges for riders and the forest lends itself to pleasant dispersed camping, which is limited to one vehicle length off an open route.

Regulations and paper maps are posted at the main access roads. Many routes that were deemed unnecessary or causing unacceptable resource damage were closed several years ago and thus are not shown on the map. However, these routes were not physically barricaded or restored to natural conditions, and many are still in regular use. Open routes are clearly signed with route number and allowed uses. Any route without a sign is de facto closed.



Illegal camping far beyond the "one vehicle length" limit. The ridge on the skyline is part of Lost Creek Wilderness is. Photo Jean Smith



Closed routes may be short spurs or, like this one, long trails back into the forest. On a quick trip along county 31, all but one of eight unsigned/closed routes showed clear evidence of tire tracks. Photo Jean Smith



Riding on one of the legal loop trails. The brown sign gives route number and allowed uses. Photo Jean Smith

## Volunteers needed this summer

Volunteer crews will help address wildlife habitat degradation by inventorying and closing non-system roads and trails. Work is suitable for all abilities and will include GPSing, photographing resource damage, installing signs, constructing natural barriers and fences, re-seeding and transplanting vegetation.

CMC will provide camping areas, food, tools, and project leadership. Take this opportunity to give back to the public lands we all love and volunteer to help. Check at CMC's [Stewardship page](#) or Wild Connections' [Events page for the workday dates](#). ☺

# Hunkered Under the Great Divide

Snowy peaks ring three sides of the South Platte and Arkansas basins while the eastern side slides down onto the prairies where bison, pronghorn, elk and grizzlies roamed before the deep-rooted short turf was plowed more than 150 years ago. The headwaters of these two great rivers are born in the high alpine snows and then flow across what is essentially a desert eventually to the Mississippi and the Gulf of Mexico. Because of this water, diverted multiple times for irrigation, the lower lands were soon taken up for agriculture, leaving the high peaks for timber and grazing under the guidance of the Forest Service. So it is not surprising that many of the basins' Wildernesses and roadless areas are high and cold.

Jefferson Roadless Area, typical of these high wildlands, is grasslands (10,400') on edge South Park but soon rises to the Continental Divide, topping out at Whale Peak at 13,078'. Tod Bacigalupi and Lyn Yarroll first mapped it in 1995. Excerpts from their notes still apply almost 20 years later.

*Vegetation is primarily spruce-fir, with bristlecone pine on practically every ridge in the area (sometimes up to 100%), and lodgepole pine esp. at lower elevations. Much of the lodgepole is infested with mistletoe. The Forest Service has been attempting to manage it at lower - elevations (around the CGs and Jeff. Lake Road) by cutting off branches and/or more often entire trees.*

*I counted 18 stream valleys, many of which are undisturbed, in this area. The ones we explored all have willow/riparian communities of varying size.*

*We think we found old growth/mature forest in some areas. All of these areas are obviously where it was too difficult to get at them to cut them down.*

*The area has one road cutting into it, which leads up to Jefferson Lake, a very popular fishing reservoir that is owned by the city of Aurora. This is a special-use fee area, which limits access somewhat, but we still saw 80+ cars in the 2 parking lots at the lake on a cold and rainy Sunday afternoon. Tod and Lyn*



*Tod in old growth forest.  
Photo by Lyn Yarroll*

Ongoing inventories by Wild Connections clearly established that the roadless area was larger than the Forest Service 2001 inventory recognized, and more acres were added to the final Roadless Rule. In 2013 Lee Patton and his team went to the high tundra to check the east boundary road - what they found at the stream headwaters inspired his poem *Everlasting Trespass*. ☺



*Jefferson mapping team - George Ware, Lee Patton, Jim Lockhart and Aaron Eyeman. Photo Kristin Skoog*

## EVERLASTING TRESPASS

### Slag Pile at the Source

As wilderness, the top of this glacial valley was pretty hopeless. Stunted spruce, tortured at timberline, lined a two-track path into defunct mining camp. Hunkered under the Great Divide, 1850s shacks collapsed side by side with 1950s steel outbuildings. Silver mine, we guessed, then uranium. Rusted warning signs, Cold War symbols, dark triangles within black circle: DANGER. RADIOACTIVE! The wire fence beaten, ignored. KEEP OUT.

Of course, we let ourselves in, tamping down the wire with our boots. Sandwiches on a dead miner's imploding porch. Vista of the whole valley, subalpine fir giving way to lodgepole and aspen, woods punctured with orange slag, mine tailing piles wherever some seeking soul with a shovel thought to punch a hole.

We spotted a slag pile just down the path. A snowpatch seeped orange-brown slush, a trickle spurting who-knew-what, arsenic, uranium juice? The slag heap fed dead pools, cascading into toxic stream, then coursing down valley. "The stinkin' source," one of us knew, "of the South Platte River. The wellspring of the water we drink down in the city"-- source of the rapids feeding pine canyons, fresh with everlasting trespass, tainting the mess we have made.

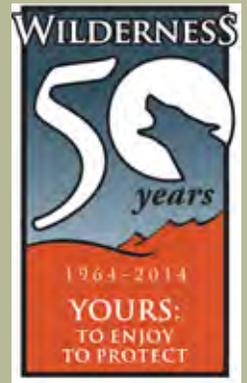
By Lee Patton in *FutureCycle Environmental Poetry anthology, forthcoming 2014*



*The slag heap, photo Kristin Skoog*

## 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Wilderness Act Events

With the year 2014 marking the 50th Anniversary of the signing of the Wilderness Act, many events are planned in central Colorado. Hikes, slide shows, family-event days, Walks for Wilderness and much more are being scheduled by agencies and conservation groups. Mark your calendars as our country celebrates this important land protection legislation.



### 50 Wilderness Miles for the 50th Challenge

As part of the national celebration of the 50th Anniversary of The Wilderness Act, the Great Old Broads for Wilderness challenge you to accumulate as many Wilderness miles as you possibly can in honor of the 2014 year-long celebration. Take this opportunity to get into as many designated National Wilderness Areas as your calendar allows, or get all 50 Miles in one great adventure! Whether you hike, x-country ski, snowshoe, or paddle, the miles will add up as you come to know and love America's spectacular national wilderness treasures. The South Park Broadband will be sponsoring several wilderness hikes this summer to help you meet the challenge. Please contact Misi Ballard for more information.

### South Park Ranger District and the Great Old Broads Celebrate the 50th

The South Park Ranger District will be hosting a family Wilderness Celebration Day in August 2, 2014, with a StoryWalk, Junior Ranger activities, a storyteller, wilderness skills demo's and other fun outdoor activities.

### Fairplay's Plein Air Celebration and the 50th

The focus of Fairplay's 2014 Plein Air Celebration, taking place Sept. 2-6, 2014, will be on South Park's beautiful Buffalo Peaks Wilderness Area. A highlight of the week's events will be a reception and slide show with Colorado's respected landscape photographer, John Fielder. Hikes into Buffalo Peaks and Lost Creek Wilderness Areas are planned for that week, and lots of beautiful original art will be available at the Friday, Sept. 5, 2014 Plein Air reception and sale.

### Walks for Wilderness – Evergreen and Leadville

Both Evergreen and Leadville will be hosting Wilderness 50th events Saturday, Sept. 6, 2014. Family-friendly Walks for Wilderness, along with various wilderness demo's and activities will be taking place in both towns. For more information, please contact the Leadville Ranger District at 719-486-0749, and here for Evergreen

### Wild Connections, Central Colorado Wilderness Coalition and Pikes Peak Sierra Club Wilderness Hikes

Join in this long-standing series of monthly adventures into designated and proposed Wildernesses in central Colorado. No Name Canyon in McIntyre Hills, Black Gulch in Grape Creek, Powerline Loop in Beaver Creek, Turret Trail in Browns Canyon and North Peak in Greenhorn Wilderness have been visited already this year. In addition to the summer hikes below, watch Wild Connections' web site for the fall schedule.

#### ***Sangre de Cristo Wilderness Goodwin Lakes Backpack Saturday July 19, 7:30 AM to Sunday July 20 6:00 PM***

Less visited than the Comanche-Venable Loop to the south, the Goodwin Lakes occupy a glacial valley headed by a Thirteen-and-a-Halfer. Learn how the Wilderness Act protects Colorado's most beautiful areas, and habitats ranging from thick forest to open tundra. This 10-mile round trip overnight backpack is rated moderate to strenuous, moderate trail, but approximately 2400 feet in elevation gain. Participants can choose to be on their own for meal arrangements or to share a communal dinner Saturday night. Maximum 15 participants. For details or to sign up, contact Jim Lockhart at 719-385-0045 or [jlock@datawest.net](mailto:jlock@datawest.net).



#### ***Collegiate Peaks Wilderness Wildflower Day Hike Sunday, August 10, 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM***

We will see what's blooming on the South Texas Creek trail. This gently-paced moderate hike will cover a maximum of 5 miles with 800 ft. of climbing, all at high elevations near 12,000 feet. Learn about this wilderness and help celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act. Optional overnight camping at lower elevation on Saturday, August 9. Maximum 15 participants. For more information and to register, contact John Stansfield, 303-660-5849 or e-mail [jorcstan@juno.com](mailto:jorcstan@juno.com) by 5:00 pm, Friday, August 8.



### Across the country

Hundreds of events are planned across the United States. Find them at <http://www.wilderness50th.org/events.php>

# Welcome to summer interns.

Four university students are taking on major mapping responsibilities this summer. Working with John Sztukowski, they will spend much of their intern time in the field gathering information on wilderness qualities in the BLM priority areas.



## **Kristoff Church**

I am from Colorado Springs and have lived here most of my life. I graduated from the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs May of 2014 with a Bachelors of Arts in Geography and Environmental Studies with a certificate in GIS. Conservation is something I have wanted to be involved in for much of my adult life and it is a pleasure to be involved in this project.

## **Larkin McCormack**

I'm a Senior at the University of Denver majoring in Environmental Science and minoring in International Studies and Business. I'm originally from Santa Barbara and moved out to Colorado 3 years ago. I'm excited to be apart of the effort to conserve Colorado's beautiful wild places.

## **Jacob Twersky**

I am from Memphis Tennessee, and I am a senior at Colorado College in Colorado Springs. I study Biology with a focus on Ecology and am particularly interested in stream ecosystems. In my free time I like to go fly-fishing, hiking, skiing, or whatever gets me outside. I am very excited to be interning with Wild Connections this summer and hope to help protect some beautiful wilderness.

## **Brian Smith**

I'm a Senior at MSU Denver studying geology and an army veteran of the 10th Mountain Division. My hobbies include playing music, gardening, using my imagination, spending time at the Arkansas River, and searching for the most eye-catching rocks around Colorado.

## Please Support Wild Connections

*June is when we ask you to support Wild Connections program work.*

Conservation of wildlands gets done by many people and in many places. You may go on a hike this summer or write one letter to the editor. Maybe you are a champion of a new Wilderness, protected elk corridor, wolf recovery advocacy or any other of the endless opportunities to save wildlands. Or are you a mapping volunteer? Anyone can play a part.

***One obvious thing that you can do is donate to organizations that reflect your passion for wildlands. I hope Wild Connections is one of those you trust to carry out this important conservation work.***

Will you help? Here are two things I hope you will do:

- **Send a donation to Wild Connections today.** We are grateful for any amount, of course, but please consider something over and above your usual gift. You can give online through Colorado Gives from Wild Connections donation page on our [website](#). Or send a check to 2168 Pheasant Pl., Colorado Springs, CO 80909

- **Go online.** Facebook users, please like Wild Connections and encourage your friends to do the same. And you can always find out about events, recent conservation news, or Wild Connections programs on our [web site](#) [www.wildconnections.org](http://www.wildconnections.org).



We hope to hear from you soon. Wild Connections depends on contributions from individuals for more than one-third of our income. Your gift will support programs that move us all ahead on the grand vision of our part in the Spine of the Continent and carry out day-to-day activities in south-central Colorado.



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719-686-5905  
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Mission: Wild Connections, a science-based advocacy organization, works to identify, protect and restore lands of the Upper Arkansas and South Platte watersheds to ensure the survival of native species and ecological richness. We focus on designing, implementing and defending the Wild Connections Conservation Plan – a vision for the future of this region that embodies the results of many years of roadless area mapping, citizen input and conservation science.

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Kristin Skoog,  
Manitou Springs, Software  
programmer

John Stansfield  
Monument, Storyteller/writer

*Ex officio*  
John Sztukowski  
Salida, Wildlands Inventory  
Coordinator Staff

John Chapman  
Littleton, Conservation specialist

Jean Smith  
Colorado Springs, Nonprofit  
administration/founder ret.