



Wild Connections

FROM THE MOUNTAINS TO THE PRAIRIES

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



Wild Connections News

May 2018

Hi {FIRST_NAME} to all our friends},

As we flip the calendar to May, the weather is getting more pleasant, birds are out singing, and flowers and trees are beginning to bud on our local public lands.

It is one of the best times of year to get outside in central Colorado, so consider joining Wild Connections for one of our upcoming hikes or projects, including May 19th to celebrate Colorado Public Lands Day!

Upcoming Outings & Events...

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 jorcstan@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.



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 by 5:00 PM, Friday, May 25.

Celebrate Colorado Public Lands Day - Saturday, May 19, 2018

In May 2016, Colorado became the first state to establish a holiday for our public lands. The third Saturday in May is now recognized as Colorado Public Lands Day, a day to celebrate how our public lands are central to our economy and quality of life.

Colorado Public Lands Day is a chance to get outside and enjoy our unparalleled wild places and to give back to the public lands that provide us with so much. Our public lands connect people to nature, challenge us to grow, and to learn more about the world around us.



Please consider joining Wild Connections for our Colorado Public Lands Day South Park Stewardship Project, detailed above. However if you cannot make it out to join us, consider an event closer to you. Whether you are interested in a stewardship project, hiking, photography, storytelling, or even heading to a brewery, Colorado Public Lands Day has you covered. For a complete list of events see: <http://copubliclandsday.com/events/>.



Take Action...

GMUG National Forest Plan Revision Scoping Comment Deadline Extended



Scoping began April 3rd for the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison (GMUG) plan revision. Due to public support, USFS has extended the public comment period an additional 30 days, **extending this comment deadline to June 2nd, 2018**.

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

For more information and public comment talking points, see this great blog post by Rocky Mountain Wild's, and Wild Connections' board member, Alison Gallensky:

<http://rockymountainwild.org/gmugscoping>

Additional information from the USFS can be found at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/gmug/landmanagement/planning/?cid=fseprd500301>

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 or 817-939-4239.

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:

John Sztukowski (header), John Sztukowski, Misi Ballard,

John Sztukowski, John Stansfield, Dan Novakoski via fs.usda.gov/main/gmug/home

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