



April 7, 2026

Dear Colleague,

We have an exciting lineup of upcoming events, highlighted by our Jean Smith Celebration of Life on May 9 and our volunteer restoration project on April 25.

You'll find more details on these meaningful events—and everything else we have coming up—below.

Puma Hills Phase II Volunteer Restoration Project Saturday, April 25, 9:30 AM - 2:00 PM

Restoration Project
April 25, 9:30 AM - 2 PM
VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Wild Connections & Forest Service South Park Ranger District
Colorado Springs carpool available

LEARN MORE  wildconnections.org/events

 817-939-4239  North of 11 M Canyon Reservoir

Wild Connections is excited to announce our rescheduled Puma Hills Volunteer Restoration Project, in partnership with the Forest Service's South Park Ranger District.

The project site is located just a few minutes north of Elevenmile Canyon Reservoir and south of US-24 in South Park. It lies about half a mile north of our 2024 Puma Hills Roadless Area seeding restoration project, where we successfully closed approximately 2.5 miles of illegal routes.

Volunteers will install one-third mile of wildlife-friendly fencing along a Forest Service/BLM property boundary that experiences frequent illegal motorized trespass. We will also seed and restore unauthorized routes entering this portion of the Roadless Area.

In addition to supporting elk, pronghorn, and mule deer, the Puma Hills Roadless Area provides important nesting habitat for American peregrine falcons and production areas for wild turkey.

No experience necessary! A carpool or caravan from Colorado Springs will be coordinated.

For more information and to register, contact John Sztukowski at (817) 939-4239 or john@wildconnections.org.

Earth Day Urban Corridors hike at Sondermann Park & Mesa Springs Greenway

Wednesday, April 22, 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM



Sondermann Park by Colorado Springs Trails and Open Space Coalition.

Some of the Pikes Peak region's most important "wild connections" are our urban parks and trails, which serve both as human and wildlife corridors.

Sondermann Park on the west side of Colorado Springs is one of these. It is a 97-acre natural park which follows a shallow valley between urban neighborhoods. It is noted both for its wildlife and its birdwatching opportunities. Like many of our urban green spaces, it faces the threat of encroachment by housing and street development. Mesa Springs Greenway is a paved, multi-use urban path located just to the west of I-25 and Monument Valley Park, which parallels the Pikes Peak Greenway, and serves as a connecting link in the Colorado Springs urban trail network.

By preserving these corridors for human recreational use, we also preserve habitat for wildlife, including the species that have learned to coexist with humans even in the most urban of settings.

For more information, including parking and meeting place location, and to sign up, contact Jim Lockhart, 719-385-0045 or jllock@datawest.net.

Great American Cleanup at Fountain Creek Watershed

Saturday, May 2, 9:00 - 11:15 AM



Fountain Creek Regional Park by Colorado Springs Trails and Open Space.

Wild Connections will be joining with Pikes Peak Sierra Club and Roswell Neighbors to do a cleanup of Monument Creek on Saturday, May 2nd as part of the Great American Cleanup.

For more information, including how to sign up, contact Jim Lockhart , 719-385-0045 or jllock@datawest.net.

Find more information on the Great American Cleanup at Fountain Creek Watershed District at fountain-crk.org/great-american-cleanup-f0de636.

Jean Smith Celebration of Life
Saturday, May 9, 2:00 - 4:00 PM (doors open at 1:30 PM)
Palmer Lake Town Hall

A CELEBRATION OF LIFE

JEAN SMITH

February 1933 - November 2025

Please join us to honor the life of Wild Connections founder Jean Smith.

Saturday, May 9, 2026

🕒 2:00pm-4:00pm
(doors at 1:30pm)

📍 Palmer Lake Town Hall
28 Valley Crescent St
Palmer Lake, CO 80133

Celebration of life service with memories shared by friends and family.

Please RSVP Here:
<https://forms.gle/L2NpLdSCGognPqht7>

Join us in honoring Jean Smith, founder of Wild Connections, who dedicated 30 years to protecting Colorado's wild places. Jean founded Wild Connections at age 62 and led the organization until her passing at 91, working until her last day. Through her vision and leadership, Jean mobilized over 100 volunteer mappers, protected 2.78 million acres of public lands, and built "the little organization with outsized impact."

We invite Wild Connections members and the conservation community to share memories, stories, and celebrate Jean's extraordinary legacy of advocacy, dedication, and love for wild connections.

The afternoon will feature light hors d'oeuvres and beverages in a setting that celebrates the life and legacy of Jean Smith.

RSVP at <https://forms.gle/L2NpLdSCGognPqht7>

RSVP here!

Pikes Peak Birding and Nature Festival
May 14 - 17



Registration opens April 11 for the [Pikes Peak Birding and Nature Festival!](#)

Wild Connections is sponsoring the festival and we will be celebrating with fellow bird and nature lovers at the festival's Birds, Bites & Brews social event on May 16 from 5:00-7:00 pm. Look for our table!

Browns Canyon National Monument Hike,
Colorado Public Lands Day, Saturday, May 16, 2026, Time TBD



Hiking at Browns Canyon National Monument

For more information and to register, contact John Sztukowski at (817) 939-4239 or john@wildconnections.org.

Celebrate Colorado Public Lands Day with Wild Connections and Friends of Browns Canyon!

We are currently coordinating with FOBC on the Browns Canyon hike details.

On this hike, you will learn about the history of Browns Canyon, why it ranks as one of the best areas in the region for climate resiliency and why now is more important than ever to stand up for our public lands.

Colorado was the first state in the US to dedicate a state holiday to public lands, recognizing the importance of Colorado's 22 million acres of federal and state public lands. This year we will be celebrating the 10th anniversary of Colorado Public Lands Day!

Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Rule 30 Day Public Comment Period coming in April

On June 23, 2025, [the U.S. Department of Agriculture \(USDA\) announced the rescission of the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule](#), opening nearly 45 million acres of undeveloped backcountry Forest Service public land to road construction, logging, and development.

This represents nearly 1/3 of all FS managed land. These areas support our wildlife and outdoor recreation opportunities such as hunting, fishing, camping and other activities.



The FS received over 625,000 comments, 99% in favor of keeping the rule, in the Sep 2025 scoping period.

Later this month, the FS is expected to release draft options for the proposed rescission, which will be accompanied by a 30 day public comment period.

You can find more info, and submit your comment at saveroadlessforests.com

Fortunately for Colorado we have our own state Roadless Rule that will not be affected by this proposed rescission, however it is still important to speak up for our National Forests and their inhabitants!

From all of us,
John, India, Jim, Alison, Claude and Kristin
Wild Connections Leadership Team

Our Contact Information

{{Organization Name}}
{{Organization Address}}
{{Organization Phone}}
{{Organization Website}}

{{Unsubscribe}}



Donate

We recognize our area as the ancestral lands of the Ute, Cheyenne, Jicarilla Apache, Arapaho and other indigenous peoples.