

Letter from the President.

It seemed like a short summer. Hopefully everyone had a good one and most of us were able to put in our 4 service days.

Again the Cabin hosting slots were filled at the Spring Meeting, thanks so much for this cooperation. Forest Service again asked us to do additional days at Monarch and we were able to fill most of those. We sold quite a few ANRA passes. Next spring I will be looking for someone to help coordinate the cabin hosting and ANRA pass sales.

Everyone had a good time on Trail Maintenance Day and Daisy Days. We will hope for more participation next year.

The birding trip to Arapaho National Wildlife Area was well attended. The other bird hike and wildflower walks had only a few people, but those that did attend had a good time. I participated in the Colorado Breeding Bird Census this year, and did the area around the North Inlet Trail. It turned out to be a great birding area. Hiking the trail about once a week in late May and June we spotted 39 species of birds. I will probably be leading a bird walk there next spring.

Membership remains steady at 140, and we currently have about \$2000 in the bank. We will be looking for projects that need funding next Spring.

The fall members meeting is set for November 8th. It will be time to pay your 2009 dues.. Hope to see you there.

Al Rothenbach

Some Camping Tips

When using a public campground, a tuba placed on your picnic table will keep the campsites on either side vacant.

Old socks can be made into high fiber beef jerky by smoking them over an open fire.

Lint from your navel makes a handy fire starter. Warning: Remove lint from navel before applying the match.

You can duplicate the warmth of a down-filled bedroll by climbing into a plastic garbage bag with several geese.

When smoking a fish, never inhale.

USFS Report – Mike Ricketts

We had a good summer with Andrew Sauthoff, wilderness ranger, and Zach Hipkens, our volunteer student intern. They did a great job completing or nearly completing the campsite inventories for all wilderness areas in our District. In addition, the wilderness trail crew did some great work on the Pawnee Pass trail completing a creek crossing and clearing trail across scree slopes. In terms of district work, Hazard Trees are a priority. We are continuing to clear our developed recreation sites and beginning to replanting them. We'll be clearing around dispersed sites and along roads and trails in earnest beginning next summer. And, as always, the work that the GCWG did cabin and trail hosting, pulling weeds, maintaining trails, and managing volunteer hours is much appreciated. We couldn't do it without your team at our side. Looking forward to enjoying our winter wonderland once again. Mike Ricketts, your server in the Forest Service.

Public Events – Joyce Clair

Two successful summer activities!! The Art Affair and Fraser River Days. Both booths provide the public with information about the work of our organization and both provide a little income from the sale of shirts and bags. The Art Affair made \$222 which included two new memberships and Fraser River Days made \$123 although the main intent of this booth is not to make money but rather provide a fun way for children to appreciate nature by completing a scavenger hunt. They are sent down the Vasquez River Trail to find items and 34 were returned to the booth to receive a prize of rock candy. The real prize is seeing how excited the children were to tell about what they found---their eyes were opened to the world around them! The organizer of the event personally thanked the GCWG for taking the time to do this every year and said it was a very important part of Fraser River Days. Thanks to all the members who spent time at one of the booths this summer!!!

I thought I saw an eye doctor on an Alaskan island, but it turned out to be an optical Aleutian .

Trailhead Signs – Jim Clair

The Forest Service had a change in personnel with Andy Sauthoff taking the place of Ray Miller as Wilderness Ranger. With vacation conflicts and budget controls no new trailhead signs were put up this season. However, Miles Miller will be in charge of making assessments and ordering needed materials for the work that needs to be done. Volunteer work schedules will be set up in June to prepare posts and display boards for selected trailheads. Keyser Ridge will be of first consideration. A special thanks to the volunteers who signed up for trailhead sign preparation this year. We will need your help in June!!

Wheelbarrow – Carolyn Stahl

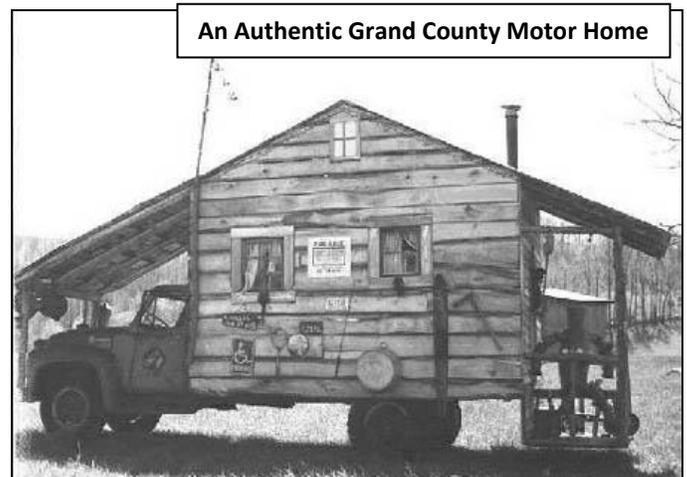
Jerry & I were Cabin Hosting at Monarch this summer. On a busy day, a couple passed by, she, with a walker and he by her side. She had difficulty on the gravel surface but wanted to walk out to the dam. It was very hot and a short while later, we saw the gentleman walk from the parking lot with two bottles of water. We chatted as we proceeded to walk towards the dam. His wife was kneeling on the path, hanging onto her walker. We got to her side, gave her some water. We needed to get her out of the sun and back to her car. I knew her husband and I could not budge her, so I looked up to summon Jerry and here he came around the corner of the cabin with a wheelbarrow (it is under the cabin) couple of pillows, blanket from the cabin.

Jerry asked her if she would be offended if we gave her a ride back in the wheelbarrow. She was so grateful, for the help that she said "Of course not". So Jerry & I, with help of another couple passing by, escorted her in the wheelbarrow to her car. She insisted on getting our names & addresses. A short while later, we received a very nice thank you note from her. Don't forget that wheelbarrow for emergencies!

Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.

A Jim Creek hike – Joyce Clair

An August hike on Jim Creek Trail was enjoyed by 15 people up to the falls --- what some of us thought were the falls --- only to learn that the real falls were further up after the trail ends. A few brave souls went on but did not have time to reach their goal. For most of us, the falls we did reach were fine and a great spot to have lunch. However, we did go across the stream to get a better view and this required a treacherous log transit. But no one fell in! Beautiful day, great company and only a few fallen trees to climb over!



Monarch Cabin Report – Ann and Jim Feucht

Another wonderful summer at Monarch Cabin, the cabin hosts loving it as much as the hikers, backpackers, fisher-folks and the well behaved, leashed dogs. It is a well used and beautiful place and very popular with locals, Front Rangers as well as visitors from around the world!

Once again, on our watch, we enjoyed talking with a Continental Divide hiker who had started in Canada and was on his way to Mexico. He and his travel mate had spent the previous night in Grand Lake but the mate had a bad ankle so was walking on the highway to Silverthorne where they would meet and decide whether the ankle would make the rest of the trip. Just walking the road to Silverthorne sounded amazing to us - ah youth!

Looking forward to another great summer in 2010 at Monarch. - Ann and Jim Feucht

What's With the Beetles? – Joan Shaw

Interview with Jeff Underhill - Timber Management Specialist USFS

The beetle epidemic is not over, however they have attacked all of the best they can find in our area. Now there is a residual population still around including secondary beetles, the Ips and Twig beetles. They like some of the smaller diameter trees and logging slash.

If you have been spraying your trees, continue to do so. Don't be surprised if you lose a modest fraction. The live trees still standing may also topple in high winds since they have less protection as the dead trees are taken down.

The USFS has completed 40% of treating target trees and has clear cut several campgrounds. They plan to revisit sites, especially around our towns and camping areas as part of an on-going process. Much of the thinning and removal work has been done through contracts and timber sales. Some seedlings have been planted in recreational sites, however typically the USFS does not plant but prefers natural conditions.

Presently you can see the undergrowth flourishing as more sunlight reaches the forest floor. The aspen trees benefit tremendously. Don't expect to see any new species but watch for growth of our old friends like the subalpine firs.

Wildlife struggles with this new environment due to loss of corridors from downed trees but the good news is that they have more forage.

Christmas Trees – Chris Lee

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR CHRISTMAS TREE CUTTING/SMOKEY BEAR
Saturday and Sunday – Dec 5,6 & Dec. 12,13

As in previous years, Grand County Wilderness Group volunteers will help out at this event. It has been a very popular event with many people attending and cutting trees. There are three or four check points where folks may park their car and then go look for their perfect tree. At the last check point is Smokey, the Bear. After getting their tree, many people (especially those with small children) will stop at this last checkpoint and get their picture taken with Smokey Bear. This is complimentary and the Forest Service even has little picture frames for the photos.

We are there to do a couple of things. First, keep the traffic flowing so that if there are a lot of people who want to park there we show them where to park and make sure they don't block anyone who is driving through. Second, and most important, we need to have someone be Smokey. The Forest Service will have a handler who will explain or answer any questions but we, as volunteers, can put on the Smokey costume and help in that manner.

We would like to have volunteers for two shifts each day, two or three volunteers for each shift. The Forest Service and the County will have the Elk Creek Road plowed (one way in and out). However you would be wise to have a four-wheel drive vehicle to get in and out. To volunteer or ask questions contact me, Christine Lee, stephenchris@rkymtnhi.com or call me at 970-725-3910

2009 Trail Day Report – Jim Moat

On Monday, June 22, fourteen volunteers from the Grand County Wilderness Group met at 8:30 am at the Monarch cabin for the annual GCWG trail maintenance day. Representing the USFS were Andrew Sauthoff, a new hire, and Jed and Henry, a pair of USFS llamas. It was our first time working with Andrew, and the llamas and we had a wonderful experience. Great job, Andrew! After sign-in and a short safety briefing, we loaded up the llamas and hiked 4.5 miles up the trail to Cascade Falls on a beautiful clear day.

On the way up, we brushed up an unauthorized camp site area that was too close to the creek and trail. We arrived at our main project site, the bridge just below the Falls at 11 AM and starving so we had lunch before starting to work. Everyone dived in whole heartedly and we finished the rock ramp approach to the bridge in an hour. When Andrew and I walked the trail last week, we estimated it would take about three hours. Way to go, Geezers! We brushed up the trail beyond the bridge and built five small water diversions.

By 2 pm we had finished our work. Several decided to walk up a couple of miles, while others chose to nap in the shade. During the day, we passed a dozen hikers with dogs, all on leashes. The word is getting out. We got the llamas back to Green Ridge and the trailer parked about 5:30 pm. It was a great day, and I think our 158 hours of work completed a valuable project for the Forest Service.

Wilderness Group Does a “Winter” Backpack Trip – Ron Sears

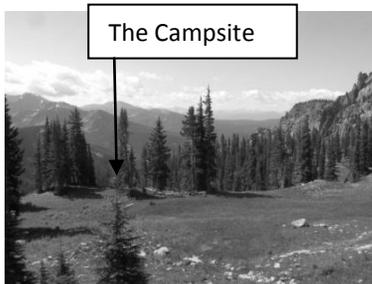
Roger Shaw has developed a well deserved reputation for laying out and leading some pretty challenging backpacking trips and encampments (ask Joan for her story on backpacking and marriage). Usually the challenge is limited to steep ascents, bushwhacking and longer than advertised routes. This year Roger was even able to control the weather to add to the excitement.

Ten people set out on Monday, July 27 and ten (but not the same ten) returned on Thursday, July 30. That’s right – **JULY!** By the time we returned we had endured rain, 40+ mph winds, more rain, and sleet and snow.



Not shown: Beth Collins and Jim Magill

On Monday Al and Toni Rothenbach, Marshall Haith, Ron Sears, Jim and Jeri Moat, Roger and Joan Shaw, Beth Collins and Jim Magill, set out from the east end of Lake Granby on the Roaring Fork trail that leads to Hell Canyon. The map showed the trail as being steep at the beginning and then becoming more gradual. Maps lie! It started out steep and stayed steep. About three quarters of the way to our encampment site it started to rain. Not a downpour but enough to bring out the rain gear and make the rocky trail a little slippery. Beth Collins and Jim Magill were equipped with more common sense than the rest of us and had planned to join us only for the day. They headed back just before the rain hit.



We found a beautiful camping spot with fantastic views at the base of Mt. Irving Hale. The rain broke for just a short while allowing us to pitch our tents. We began

to fix dinner when the rain started up again along with huge winds (we estimated 40+ mph so that makes it official). Some people tried to complete

dinner under a less than effective tarp and the rest of us ate in our tents to keep them on the mountain. Later in the evening the wind left us and we were able to enjoy a wonderful campfire and tell ourselves how lucky we were to have enjoyed such a wonderful day. (A discovery we made that evening was that the beautiful and perhaps only group camp site we picked was a long way from a source of good water. This gave us even more respect for the pioneers.)

The next day was perfect weather. The group headed out on the trail leading to various lakes with different people taking different routes. We were joined by Marion Barry and Bud Crawford who hiked up a day later than the rest carrying over 40 pounds of gear **each**. The day finished with a wonderful evening dinner preceded with happy hour supplied with Roger’s new discovery of freeze dried alcohol. We also had a small taste of ice cream.

The third day started again with beautiful weather and we began the ascent of Mt. Irving Hale. The wildflowers were simply spectacular as were the views. About 2/3 of the way up the weather began to change and three or four of us decided to stay where we were while Jim Moat, Marshall Haith, Al and Toni Rothenbach finished the climb to the top, signed the book (for all of us!) and came down as the rain began.



Lake Granby from Mt. Irving Hale

Those of us who didn’t go all the way to summit did make an interesting discovery. As we looked for trees to shelter us from the rain, we found a

tight little grouping of trees that almost made a natural room. Inside that “room” we found the remains of a complete campsite destroyed by a bear. There were demolished food containers, ripped stuff sacks, and the shredded remains of a sleeping bag. We took naps during the afternoon rain and then had another wonderful happy hour, evening meal and campfire as the weather cleared.

The next morning began the day for which Hell Canyon must have been named. Before we got up, the wind and rain began in earnest. Just after sun rise the rain quit for a short time and we hurriedly

took down our tents, packed our gear and tried to eat some breakfast. We set off for the trail and we hiked back in **winter**. The rain was fierce and then turned to snow and sleet. Even when dry the trail was steep and slippery with a lot of loose rocks. The rain turned the trail into a stream about two feet wide and 6 to 12 inches deep in spots. The sleet and snow was enough to cover the surrounding ground in white and we accumulated about 3 inches of it on our packs. We all knew, however, that we had cars with heaters waiting for us at the bottom and warm houses after that which made us respect even more the early pioneers and the Indians who had gone this kind of route before us.

Our hats are off to Roger once again as we (from hindsight) can honestly say that we had a very special and enjoyable trip that lived up to all that we expect from one of his encampments.

A chicken crossing the road is poultry in motion.

Treasurer's Report 9/27/09 By Marshall Haith

Beginning Balance April, 19, 2009 (Report at Spring Member's Meeting) \$1,863.60

Expenditures:

Indian Peaks Maps	\$ 114.66
18 Canvas Bags`	117.00
ANRA Passes	90.00
Name Tags	10.00
Copy Membership Applications	24.00
Main dish for Spring Meeting	<u>98.98</u>
	\$ 614.64

Income:

Dues	\$ 240.00
Shirts/Bags/Vests/Baked	
Goods (River Days)	756.00
ANRA/Backpack passes sold	142.00
Milk Can Picnic Guests	<u>30.00</u>
	\$1168.00

Interest adjustment .42

Current Balance 9/27/09 \$2417.38

Summer at Junco Cabin

Hosting here doesn't start until the snow melts so it's a great day in July when hiker's can first take advantage of this beautiful area with help from the cabin hosts. Driving to the cabin area was easier due to some road improvements and parking went smoothly. ANRA passes were available at the kiosks so our group had less to sell according to the Wilderness hosts Mary and Jim England. They reported that excellent maps were sold and appreciated.

Hiker's were greeted with a freshly painted cabin (On one side), screen door removed (lack of bugs) and a new lock box system. Many spotted more moose than usual and an active beaver dam which they had to bypass by going upstream.

The cabin has been winterized and Ingrid Anderson hosted her traditional season-closer parking lot party with plenty of food for all. The Forest Service applauds her efforts. Ask her about it.

By attending the meeting November 8th you will hear more about the adventures that took place up there as extracted from the journal. Thanks everyone for representing the wild side of Wilderness and being perfect hosts.

Group Hikes – Ingrid Anderson, Hike Coordinator

What a wonderful summer on Grand County hiking trails with 11 people average on the weekly hikes! This was a great opportunity to become familiar with or reminded of trails in Grand County, depending on how many miles members have hiked in the area. People enjoyed the camaraderie and sharing with fellow group members.

Many thanks to our hike leaders for their expertise and willingness to share favorite trails with others- Ron Sears, Harry Kottcamp, Chris Lee, Stephen Lee, Ed Jackson, Sue Jackson, Donn Manly, Ingrid Anderson, Roger Shaw, Joyce Claire, and Jerry Stahl.

The group hiked Table Mountain, Elk Mountain, Berthoud to Winter Park Ski Area, Moffat Road Old Railway, Little Yellowstone, Keyser Ridge, Jim Creek, and Bottle Peak. Hope to have you join us on the trails next summer! Start thinking of hikes you'd be willing to lead!

Noxious Weeds - Beth Collins

Monday GCWG members Al, Marcia, Barb, Beth, and Kaye joined Rangers Doreen Summerlin, Neilie Tibbs, and summer intern Zack for a great day of noxious weed pulling at Monarch. First we tackled a batch of yellow toad flax along the lake about 200 yards past the dam. The roots were nestled into the rocks and willows, but with grit and determination we cleared them all out. Next, a few mulleins and canada thistle that were near the dam.

Then we went on a search and destroy mission along the banks of the river. We ferreted out ox-eye daisys and chamomiles- bagged them and dragged them. Ranger Summerlin pointed out a rare orchard hidden in the river wetlands. It was a beautiful and productive morning. The rangers commented that there used to be many many more whites (daisys and chamomiles) but thanks to previous years' efforts, they are about 95% eradicated. Next year we plan to set a date before the spring meeting so that more people can mark their calendars and sign up for a day spent conquering the terrorist weeds and admiring the beautiful wildflowers.



Don't try this at home!

Birding Trip I- Chris & Stephen Lee

Led by Al Rothenbach and Toni Wujek, ten Grand County Wilderness Group members journeyed to Arapaho Nat'l Wildlife Refuge near Walden. The group counted 51 species of birds as well as four moose, half dozen pronghorn, and quite a few prairie dogs and ground squirrels. Among the larger species were two black-crowned night herons, a golden eagle, and Swainson's and Red-tailed hawks. We identified 12 kinds of ducks, including many attractive Cinnamon Teal and Ruddy Ducks. There were also American Avocets and two rarely seen Marbled Godwits. That was a tough identification with much debate and discussion.

The Wilson's Phalarope, with its weird "going around in circles", behavior, was fun to see and, to our delight, we also sighted its rarer smaller cousin, the Red-necked Phalarope. A rowdy Marsh wren sang for us from the reeds and we finally spotted a Western Meadowlark which had been tantalizing us with its song for a long time. As in past years we adjourned for lunch at the River Rock Café in Walden. On the way home we stopped to see the bald eagle nest on the river. Both adults were in the tree and, on the nest, a downy eaglet clamored for food. What a great ending to our trip.

Birding Trip II at Monarch Lake - Leaders: Stephen & Chris Lee

The night before it had rained and the day began with clouds and fog. By the time we arrived at Monarch Lake on June 15th the weather had changed to Colorado sunny. Ten people participated in this birding walk, ages ranging from the 60's to pre-teen. (Susan Ellis' grandson, Liam, was our youngest participant). We birded around Monarch Lake cabin finding a Wilson's warbler and ruby-crowned kinglets. The resident flycatcher seemed to be there again, building a nest under the eaves of the cabin. Sharp-eyed Liam spotted a woodpecker flying onto a tree ahead of us. It turned out to be a three-toed woodpecker – not rare, but uncommon. We all saw the osprey on its nest on the island in the lake and most of us saw the female broad-tailed hummingbird as she hovered among the flowers. On the way back a few were fortunate to see a warbling vireo. They sing loudly but are very hard to see since their green color makes them hard to spot among the green leaves. In the mammal department there was a sighting of a moose on the other side of the lake and upon returning to the cabin we were privileged to have a moose walk right by the outdoor privy so we all got a very close look. It wasn't a bird but we'll put it on our list anyway.

Milk Can Dinner Another Success

Thanks to the Cahalanes and their helpers for cooking in large milk cans with their famous recipe of meat, potatoes, vegetables and friendship. Even though our "Round Up" meetings are only twice a year we do have a fabulous picnic every August and a White Deer party in January. Check our website for details anytime.