



Grand County Wilderness Group



Spring Issue 2014

www.gcwg.org

Letter from the President: A Great Three Years!

As my three year term as president of GCWG draws to an end, I have been reflecting on all that we have accomplished, and our potential to expand our assistance to “THE US FOREST SERVICE IN THE PRESERVATION, PROTECTION, IMPROVEMENT AND PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF THE WILDERNESS AREAS IN GRAND COUNTY.” This year we are celebrating both the 20th anniversary of our Wilderness Group and the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act. Our accomplishments are many. Two years ago, TUTI (Totally Unauthorized Trail Improvement) was formed, under the fine leadership of Roger Shaw. In all, we removed hundreds of trees killed by the Lodge Pole Pine Beetle, resulting in clear and safer trails in Grand County. Last year the USFS asked us to replace TUTI with trail improvement projects it oversees. To that end the USFS provided training, and led several outings to our Wilderness areas. We were provided tools and guidance needed to make the trail repairs and/or enhancements.

We have also continued our commitment in other areas: hosting Junco and Monarch cabins, participating in “orientation hikes,” publicizing who we are at Art Affair, participation in the annual encampment backpacking trips, participation as a group in National Public Lands Day and the annual bird count. One of the greatest successes has been Daisy Demolition. Last summer we discovered we had been so successful in previous years eradicating the “daisies,” that we were able to attack other invasive species of plants in the Monarch Cabin area! All in all, we have been an active Group!

There is always potential for improvement, both in the variety of projects we undertake, and membership participation. By blending these two goals together, we should be able to accomplish both. Some of the members who have belonged to GCWG the longest are no longer able to participate in the more strenuous projects, e.g, swinging a McCleod all day long. Thus, different types of opportunities should be developed. For example, programs could be developed for presentations at schools, or even the social clubs in Grand County to foster interest in preserving and experiencing our Wilderness. Another “adaptation” is Roger Shaw’s idea of an annual “Senior Safari.” This would be a relatively short hike into the Wilderness Area for 2 or 3 day backpacking trip, thus allowing those no longer able to do the encampment, to still enjoy a Wilderness camping experience. For our younger members, we can expand participation in what was started last summer, the 2 or 3 day backpacking/trail maintenance trips.

My three years as president have flown by all too quickly! I have enjoyed serving as President of the GCWG, and thank you all for the opportunity. I look forward to sharing our Grand County Wilderness with each of you in the future.

Upcoming Events & Information

April 13: Sunday 5:30 pm. Our **Spring Meeting** will be held at the Snow Mountain Ranch Rawley Room, under in the administration building under the chapel. There are many activities planned for the summer. Make sure you come to the meeting so you don’t miss out on signups. This is a year of celebration. Not only is it **the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Bill**, it is the **25th anniversary of our own Grand County Wilderness Group**.

Below is a list of the activities currently on the schedule. More details will be discussed at the Spring Meeting.

April 25-27: The annual Spring Camping to Dinosaur Monument. There are two reserved sites with room for 50 people. Seventeen members also signed up for the rafting trip.

May 14: "Point Park Conservation Education Day". Volunteers are needed to help with 2nd graders and canoeing. If you are interested in helping, arrive 8 a.m. at Hill Top Boat ramp by Rainbow bridge. The project should be done by 2:30.

June 21: Wilderness Hike. Meet at at Monarch Lake, 8:30AM. For more information, contact Chris Lee at 708-990-5967 e-mail:

stephenchris@rkymntnhi.com.

June 28: Walk for Wilderness in Hot Sulpher Springs. Note: This hike will be focused on children. It will be a great opportunity to share the wilderness with any children in your life. Chris Lee is also the contact for this hike.

June 28: Nick, Miles and Doug Smith will be installing the Wilderness Kiosk/ Interpretive Signs for Byers and Vasquez. If you are interested in joining them, contact Nick Schade - 970-887-4100.

July 4: Anyone interested in displaying their support for the Wilderness Group by marching in the Parade. We will discuss more at the Spring Meeting. You can also contact Joan Shaw at 970-726-4626.

July 12: Wilderness Hike starting at 8:30. Contact Chris for more details. Make a day of it by attending the Wild by Law Video presentation at the Historic Fraser Church. The speaker will See ‘Activities’ page 2.

Activities *Continued from page 1.*

be Debbie Northcutt. Debbie started with Wilderness Volunteers in 1997. Wilderness Volunteer is a nonprofit organization created in 1997 to organize and promote volunteer service to America's wild lands. Check the website for exact times.

July 19-29: Winter Park Alpine Art Affair - We will need volunteers to host our booth. Contact Gary or Sue Perkins.

July 21-23: Construct a new trail near Broome Hut. Contact Doug Smith at 970-722-7680.

July 31: Daisy Demolition Day - Contact Beth Collins (970-726-5423) for more details

Early August: Fraser River Days - - We will need volunteers to host our booth. Contact Gary or Sue Perkins.

August 10: Walk for Wilderness. Check the web site or contact Chris Lee. This is the second wilderness walk geared towards children. Let's inform a new generation about wilderness.

August 24: 50th Anniversary Picnic at the Double AA Barn. Lots of fun and interesting activities will be happening. Stay tuned.

September 6-7: Trail work on the High Lonesome Trail. Contact Nick for details.

September 12: Wilderness Hike. More details later. Contact is Chris Lee.

Additional Volunteer Opportunities: Anyone interested in participating in a **Historical Wilderness Re-Enactment** at Monarch and/or Junco? We will discuss this more at the Spring Meeting. **We need a volunteer** to monitor the Devil's Thumb box registration. Contact Bob Saint if you can take on this task. Keep an eye out for the Cabin Hosting Survey. Al will be sending a second one soon. **Report all of your volunteer hours.** Don't know what to count? Check the Volunteer Hours link on the website. The official website for the Grand County Wilderness Group is <http://www.gcwg.org>. Make sure you visit the website often to make sure you have the latest information on these and other activities.

Grand County Wilderness Group - We are a group of individuals and couples who share a common interest in outdoor activities and are willing to put time and energy into helping the forest. Here are some opportunities for you to become involved. All you need to do is set aside the time and sign up. **NO ONE WILL CALL**, it is up to you to get out there and make a difference. Make sure to come to the Spring Meeting on April 13th to get more details on all of the exciting things going on this year!!!!

1. Host one day at Junco Cabin – set date with Mary Ann Groszold (970-726-4390). Signup sheets will be available at the Spring Meeting. Junco is hosted on Saturday and Sunday.
2. Host one day at Monarch Cabin – Hosting is Monday and Wednesday for Monarch - set date with Mary Ann Groszold (970-726-4390)
3. Don't worry about knowing how to host a cabin. Toni Wujek always gives us a training session to start the season.

4. Open up and clean either cabin to start the season - call names above
5. Hike the wilderness trails and report via website or USFS. You can do this on the weekends.
6. Lead a hike of your choice – We will designate a day in the Spring. Ingrid Anderson (970-726-8617) - Signup at the Spring meeting.
7. Adopt a registration box: provide registration sheets, retrieve them and tabulates the numbers for that trail . Bob Saint and Ann Steers.
8. Spreadsheet analysis of trail usage from registration boxes – call Roger Shaw.
9. Take digital photographs for our bulletin boards, newsletter and historian. - E-mail WPHolly@aim any cool picture you take and are willing to share.
10. Help construct signage – Jim Clair (970-887-9097)
11. Work on trail day once a year with the group – Doug Smith ((970-722-7680)
12. Join us for a Forest Service work day - Roger Shaw (970-726-4626)
13. Pay my \$20 dues to Grand County Wilderness Group – PO Box 206 Tabernash, 80478
14. Send change of email or address or phone – Mike Braddy – PO Box 206 Tabernash, CO 80478
15. Wear your wilderness tee shirt or sweatshirt more often. In particular, we will be wearing them in the Granby 4th of July parade. Check in at the Spring Meeting for more details.
16. Staff the booth at the Art Affair for 2 hours
17. Consider backpacking with the Encampment group
18. Uproot noxious weeds wherever we can find them – Beth Collins (970-726-5423)
19. Record and report volunteer hours – Dawn Schoen (970-887-9494)
20. Update trailhead bulletin boards -
Check out the new trailhead Bulletin Boards on the website.
21. Distribute our “business” cards
22. Contribute to this newsletter, next edition – Holly Whitten (WPHolly@aim.com)
23. Contact the Forest Service anytime – Nick Schade - 970-887-4100

Brock McCormick, Wildlife Biologist Arapaho-Roosevelt NF, will be working on the following projects this year. He would love to have as many of us as possible join him in these:

- Osprey Nest Adoption: spring thru fall
 - Monofilament Recycle Bin Adoption: spring thru fall
 - Bluebird Box Survey and Maintenance: October
 - Berthoud Pass Lynx Habitat Restoration: August/Sept
 - Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Fence Removal Project: Williams Fork July 26
 - Save the Frogs – Amphibian Education Days: Kremmling May 1, Granby April 24, April 15 Evergreen
 - Bat Surveys – Acoustic Monitoring: spring thru fall
 - Remote Camera Monitoring: spring thru fall
 - Monarch Lake weed pull – Late July/Early August
- You can contact Brock at: Voice: (970) 887-4108
Fax: (970)887-4102 Email: bmccormick@fs.fed.us

Wilderness Act 50th Anniversary

Nick Shade

2014 marks the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act of 1964 and 20th anniversary of the GCWG. In Grand County we are lucky to have nearly 80,00 acres of Wilderness to enjoy in their natural beauty and that offer a retreat from modern civilization. In celebration of the 50th anniversary of Wilderness and the 20th anniversary of the GCWG we have a large number of special events and projects planned for the summer. There are too many to list here but some of the highlights include former representative David Skaggs who sponsored the 1993 Colorado Wilderness Bill as a guest speaker, a video presentation of Wild by Law, a trail work party (complete with a free stay at the Broome Hut) to extend the Second Creek trail to the Mt. Nystrom trail, a work party to reroute the muddy section of the Columbine Lake Trail, and the installation of our new trailhead kiosk signs at trailheads serving Byers and Vasquez Wilderness Areas. Stay tuned to the GCWG website (www.gcwg.org) and the Sky High Daily News for a complete events list that should be coming in the near future. In addition to the planned events; I am pleased to announce that we once again received \$21,500.00 in grant money, thanks to the ever so important matching contribution value of the GCWG volunteer time. The grant money will be used to fund new wilderness trailhead kiosks (the things the new signs go on) and a full time seasonal wilderness ranger. Izzie Ditmarson will be returning in that role this season. In addition to the grant money we received a small amount of money for 50th events which we have decided to spend designing and fabrication three interpretive displays regarding wilderness and the 50th anniversary. One will be displayed in the Forest Service lobby, one will be given to GCWG to be displayed at community events, and one will be available to travel throughout the community. I hope to see many of you throughout the summer at the numerous events we have planned and encourage everyone to at least get out and enjoy and appreciate Wilderness and how important it is to our society in honor of the 50th.

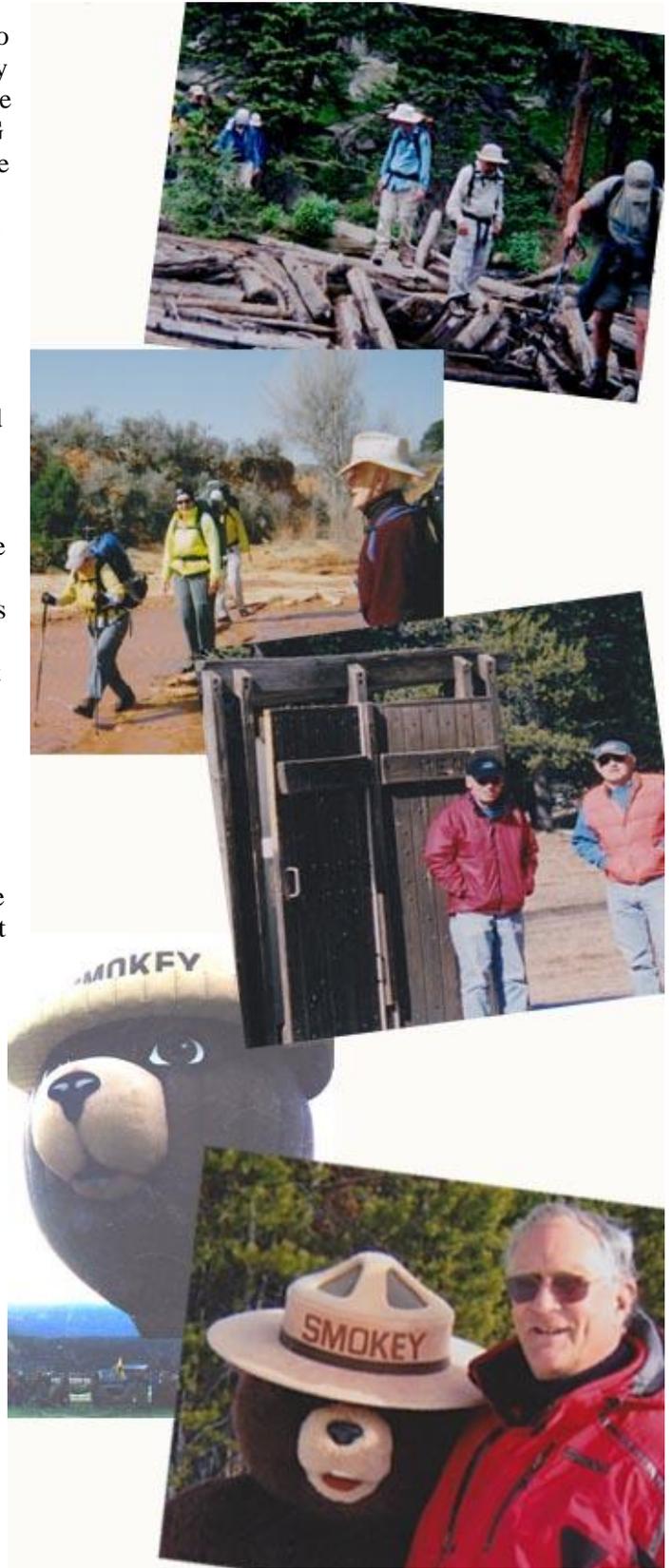
All Work and No Play!

The GCWG members have always taken this to heart. One of the great things about this group is not only do they work hard, but they play just as hard.

A couple of the instigators of this play were Joan and Roger Shaw. Way back in 1997, they were forming the Slacker Backpacker subgroup. They are still going strong. Each year they are involved in what has evolved into Encampment week. Reading through the old newsletters you see, interspersed with all the great work projects, how much fun this group has together.

Here is a list of trips Sue Ellis remembers

- 2000 – Arches
- 2001 – Grand Canyon and Canyon Lands
- 2002(Jan)– Jackson Hole and Yellowstone
- 2002(April) – Capital Reef
- 2003 – Capital Reef
- 2004 – Bryce and Zion
- 2005 - Highline State Park, Loma, Colorado
- 2006 – Arches Fiery Furnace – left early because of wind
- 2007 – Dinosaur National Monument – Fish hatchery Jones Hole Creek
- 2008 – Great Sand Dunes
- 2009 – Black Canyon of Bunnison
- 2010 – Kodachrome Basin



2011 - Yellowstone – Jan 15th

2011 – May - Bandeleer

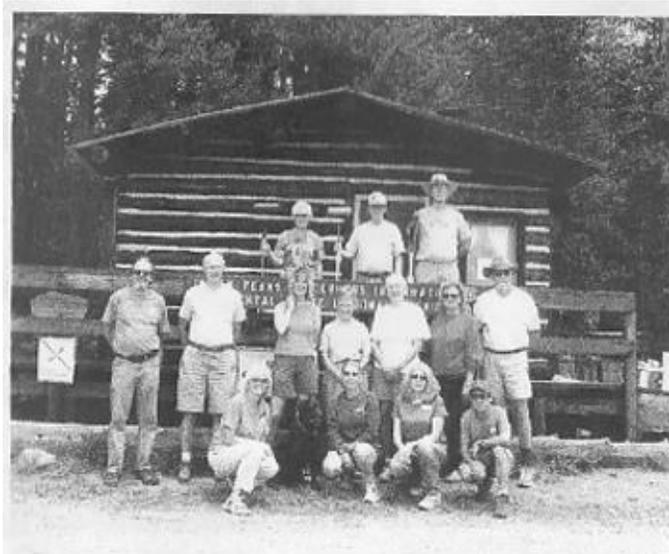
2012 – Arches

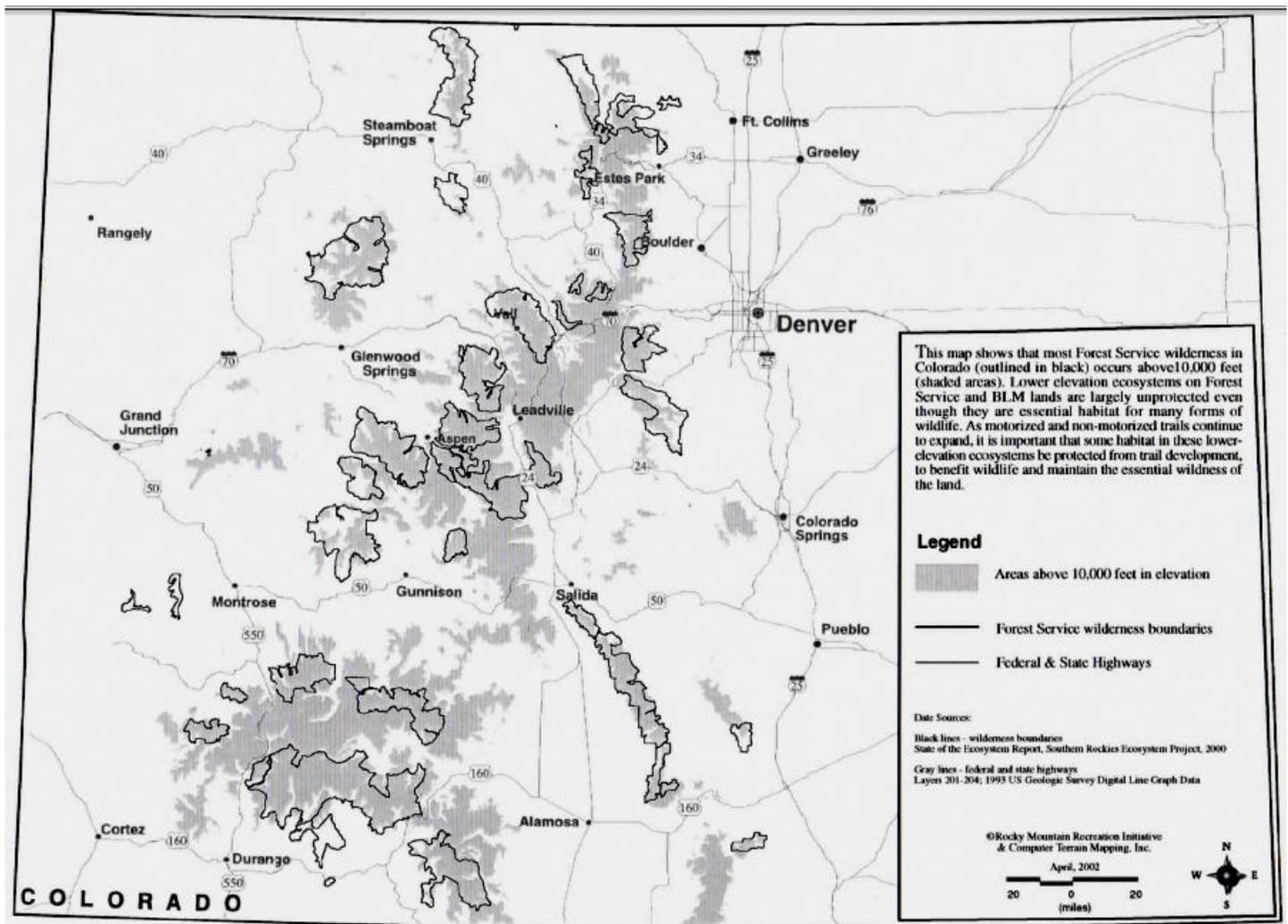
2013 – Zion National Park

Don't these pictures make you want to join in on the fun. Make sure you look at your schedule and check in on the Wilderness Group Web page to join both the work and the fun events.

What Year is This?

Can you find yourself in one of these pictures? Bring your newsletter to the Spring Meeting, identify yourself and tell me what year this is.





Wilderness and Grand County

Holly Whitten

“Wilderness --- just the thought of these vast, vacant spaces inspires many to awe, reflection and even poetry. To those devoid of imagination a blank place on the map is a useless waste; to others, the most valuable part.”¹

“The Wilderness holds answers to more questions than we have yet learned to ask.”² “... there's a silent voice in the wilderness that we hear only when no one else is around. When you go far, far beyond, out across the Netherlands of the Known, the din of human static slowly fades away, over and out.”³ In the not too distant past, most of North America was wilderness. How much of our history is tied up in taming the wilderness?

“The whole concept of 'wild' was decidedly European, one not shared by the original inhabitants of this continent.

¹ [Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac: With Other Essays on Conservation from Round River*](#)

² [Nancy Wynne Newhall](#)

³ [Rob Schultheis, *Fool's Gold: Lives, Loves, and Misadventures in the Four Corners Country*](#)

'abiding loveliness' in Salish or Piegan. The land was not something to be feared or conquered, and 'wildlife' were neither wild nor alien; they were relatives.”⁴ What does “wilderness” mean today? When did we decide to stop taming it and start protecting it? Where are our protected Wilderness Areas?

What does “wilderness” mean today? Most of the time, in today’s language, wilderness refers to specifically designated areas. There may be other areas with wilderness like characteristics, but they are not designated as “Wilderness”. The references in this article to Wilderness are those protected within the National Wilderness Preservation System.

When did we decide to stop taming it and start protecting it? The first National Park was Yellowstone, which was signed into law by U.S. President Ulysses S. Grant on 1 March 1872. The United States was the first See ‘Wilderness’ Page 6.

⁴ [Doug Peacock, *Grizzly Years: In Search of the American Wilderness*](#)

Wilderness *continued from page 5.*

country to officially designate land as "wilderness" through the Wilderness Act of 1964. The Wilderness Act was—and is still—an important part of wilderness designation because it created the legal definition of wilderness and founded the National Wilderness Preservation System.⁵

The Wilderness Act of 1964 is well known for its succinct and poetic definition of wilderness:

"A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain."⁶ According to the

[Wilderness Act of 1964](#), Wilderness is...

- *"...lands designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition*
- *"...an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man*
- *"...an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvement or human habitation.*
- *"...generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable..."*
- *"...has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation..."*
- *"...shall be devoted to the public purposes of recreation, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation and historic use."*

According to a survey done in 2008, How do Americans View Wilderness, Part-1, "Most Americans, whether urban or rural, also ascribed high importance to six additional benefits including the scenic beauty of wild landscapes, the knowledge that wilderness is being protected (existence value), the choice to visit wilderness at some future time (option value), the opportunity for wilderness recreation experiences, preserving nature for scientific study, and spiritual inspiration." Wilderness.net⁷

Where are our protected Wilderness Areas? This Act has had a significant impact on wilderness protection in the United States and in Grand County. When the Wilderness Act was passed in 1964, 54 areas (9.1 million acres) in 13 states were designated as wilderness. Since Congress passed the Wilderness Act in 1964, over 130 individual wilderness bills have designated more than 680

Wilderness Areas. These areas total over 106 million acres in 44 States.⁸ Although this is an impressive growth in land protected as wilderness, the location of the wilderness is mostly in Alaska. More than 57 million acres are in Alaska and over 49 million in the contiguous United States and Hawaii. This represents about 2.5 percent of the land in the lower 48 states.

Overall, however, only about 5% of the entire United States—an area slightly larger than the state of California—is protected as wilderness. Because Alaska contains just over half of America's wilderness, only about 2.7% of the contiguous United States—an area about the size of Minnesota—is protected as wilderness.⁹

Another interesting fact about the wilderness areas in the Lower 48 is that of this 2.75%, a large portion of it is above 10,000 feet in altitude. The wilderness area is shown in the map above. The grey areas are above 10,000 feet and the boundaries show the designated wilderness area.

Grand County encompasses 4 of these areas consisting of approximately 80,000 acres; about 6.7% of the county. Each of these areas offers a different opportunity for us to experience the benefits of wilderness. As you explore, take time to notice these wilderness characteristics: Naturalness, Opportunities for solitude, Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation, Ecological aspects such as wildlife and plants, Biodiversity, and Geological features. Check out the wilderness website (<http://Wilderness.Net>) to find descriptions of these areas:

Byers Peak Wilderness: The United States Congress designated the Byers Peak Wilderness in 1993 and it now has a total of 8,801 acres. Byers Peak contains several scenic lakes and 23 miles of trails offering panoramic views along some of the finest ridge hiking in the state. Views worth the effort are available from atop the peak itself, accessible via the Byers Peak Trail, a distance of 8.6 miles round-trip from the trailhead. Watch out for Billy Goat Gruff and his family along the trail. I have met him personally.

Indian Peaks Wilderness: The Indian Peaks became part of the National Wilderness Preservation System in 1978. The over 75,000 acre wilderness is located primarily within the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forest. Elevations range from 8,300 to just over 13,500 feet. There are a total of seven peaks over 13,000 feet, and approximately 35% of the land area is above tree line. See 'Wilderness' on page 7.

⁵<http://wilderness.net/index.cfm?fuse=NWPS&sec=legisact>

⁶http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilderness_Act

⁷<http://warnell.forestry.uga.edu/nrrt/nsre/IRISWild/IrisWild1rpt.pdf>

⁸http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/blm_special_areas/NLCS/wilderness2/Wilderness_FAQ.html

⁹http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/blm_special_areas/NLCS/wilderness2/Wilderness_FAQ.html

Wilderness *continued from page 6.*

There are 28 maintained trails covering about 133 miles, and over 50 lakes. The icy remains of the last glacial period sculpted out the rugged terrain of the Indian Peaks. The Indian Peaks is one of the most popular and heavily used wilderness areas in the country due to its close proximity to the Denver/Boulder metro area. The Grand County side, however, has much less use.

Vasquez Peak Wilderness: The United States Congress designated the Vasquez Peak Wilderness in 1993 and it now has a total of 12,300 acres. "Along the southern boundary of the relatively small Vasquez Peak Wilderness and over Vasquez Peak itself, you'll find that seven miles of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail offer two distinct and worthy opportunities. First, you'll encounter less crowded conditions than most Colorado Wildernesses, and second, you'll be blessed with extravagant views over a dramatic area, two-thirds of which lie above timberline. Below timberline sits a region of Krummholtz (or twisted wood), the result of icy temperatures and fierce winds that keep the spruce and fir dwarfed and confined into low-lying mats. Healthy spruce, fir, and pine cloak the lower mountainsides. Vasquez Creek flows heavily off Vasquez Peak to form the main drainage of the area. "

Rocky Mountain National Park is the best known of the wilderness areas around. Don't forget to take advantage of all of the opportunities there.

Always remember to follow the seven standard *Leave No Trace* principles when you visit any of these great areas: (1) Plan Ahead and Prepare (2) Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces (3) Dispose of Waste Properly (4) Leave What You Find (5) Minimize Campfire Impacts (6) Respect Wildlife (7) Be Considerate of Other Visitors. If you are interested in joining group of individuals and couples who share a common interest in outdoor activities and are willing to put time and energy into helping the forest contact the Grand County Wilderness Group: GCWG.net.

Thank You Volunteers: 2013

Accomplishments! Holly Whitten

WOW - 2013 was a busy, valuable year for the Grand County Wilderness Group (Wilderness Group). I have summarized the activities from the information Nick provided at the Fall Meeting in November.

We normally think of the group's involvement in cabin and trail hosting, managing the trailhead registration boxes, Daisy Demolition Days and working on trails as the benefit we give to the forest and wilderness. Last year Wilderness Group members participated in other activities as well. Here are some of those accomplishments from the summer of 2013.

The Forest Service received a grant for new signs, but only enough to cover the cost in one wilderness area. The Wilderness Group stepped up and provided the money to cover the costs of the signs for Byers Peak Wilderness

In **June**, the GCWG assisted the Forest Service with a trails training day with over 25 attending

In **July**, eight members attended the first Trail work Tuesday. They worked on rebuilding a section of turnpike, improving drainage and brushing back vegetation on the Cascade Creek Trail. Later in the month, a group joined Nick on a three day, two night trip. The purpose of the trip was to complete the Recreation Site Inventory and Trail Clearing survey.

In **August**, Nick and crew rebuilt a bridge on the Bowen Gulch Interpretive trail. They also cleared some of the trail. Another project in August was clearing the Caribou Lake Trail and re-establishing designated campsites around Caribou Lake Signs were installed for these campsites.

In **September**, another group installed new drainage on a portion of the Devils Thumb Trail. They also completed trail brushing and clearing the trail from the trailhead to the junction of the High Lonesome Trail. Along the way, they worked on rehabbing some areas where trail braiding had occurred. The Vasquez Peak Wilderness Recreation site inventory was completed along part of the Mt. Nystrom Trail

Here's a summary of the volunteer hours that were reported

- 818 hours cabin hosting and assisting wilderness visitors
- 271 hours maintaining trails
- 634.5 hours of trail hosting, hiking, and educating wilderness visitors
- 725 hours assisting wilderness and the Forest Service in other ways
- Daisy demolition days at Monarch Lake
- Helping on sign committees
- Osprey monitoring
- And many other projects

Don't forget the Smokey the Bear project. This is a fun one that you can do to easily contribute hours.

A total of 2534.25 hours were reported . This represents a total of \$54,131.58 real dollars for the Forest Service.

The Forest Service uses the value of the volunteer hours to match those they request through grants. Last year the value of your volunteer contribution allowed them to receive funding for two summer wilderness rangers, Izzie and Lisa. YEAH! We are so happy Izzie Ditmarson and Lisa Behmke are here.

Let's work hard this summer to get enough hours to keep them here. **Make sure to report your volunteer hours. It's important!**

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2013 dues are due. Only \$20: Send to Grand County Wilderness Group – PO Box 206 Tabernash 80478

Application Form (Fill in information below and send this form with payment.)

Name:

Address:

Email:

Phone:

Interests (Please circle interests listed above and make contact accordingly):

Grand County Wilderness Mission Statement: To assist the US Forest Service in the preservation, protection, improvement and public understanding of the wilderness areas in Grand County.

Preservation

- Patrol shores for fish line filament and recycling
- Work on a National Public Lands day project
- Adopt an Osprey nest
- Monitor a blue bird box

Improvement

- Adopt a registration box
- Join a Daisy Days project and help eradicate noxious weeds
- Join TUTI
- Pollinator seeding project

Public Understanding

- Cabin Hosting (Junco and Monarch)
- Hike wilderness trails
- Lead a group hike
- Take digital photos to share
- Staff the booth at the Art Affair
- Wear your tee shirt, hat, vest to bring awareness

Protection

- Construct signage
- Update trail bulletin boards

Special Thanks

We would like to thank Chas McConnell of McConnell Design and Printing Co for sponsorship of the newsletter.