



Wilderness Act turns 60!!!

Grand County Wilderness Group celebrates 30 years

Fall Issue 2024

www.gcwg.org

Gary Piper - President, GCWG

It has been a year since I took office as the Board President. I have learned a lot about "Wilderness" and our group. The year was successful, and we provided great service to the Forest Service. We had challenges and learned from them. The board has been working hard all winter to develop a strategic plan for the group. We had many discussions on what the focus of the group should be. We developed a great top-level strategic plan focused on our mission statement and have begun on the details. The document has been a work in progress for some time.

The one thing this effort reinforced for me is that we are a service group and that all the documents on our WEB site support this; our mission statement, our bylaws, and our activities of the past. I found that many of the things we were discussing were already documented on our WEB site. I believe that our best way forward is to emphasize our past and put our energy into the following; Cabin Hosting, Trail Ambassador, Trail maintenance, and all the other things documented on our WEB site and in the Handbooks written in the past.

Most members remember Roger Shaw and his compassion for the "Wilderness" which was infectious to all around him. I would like the group to get back to that level of devotion to the wilderness and support our projects. I challenge all to reflect on the wilderness: and why you think it is important to protect it while helping the public enjoy and respect it. In the last year, I have discovered that many people visiting our wilderness have no idea what the significance of it is and how it is different from other public lands. I believe educating the public and making sure they understand how they can enjoy the wilderness while reducing their impact on the Wilderness is our main mission. Cabin Hosting and Trail Ambassador programs are critical to this.

The main areas the board is focusing on improving this year include; easier signup, more social media presence, more public events, retaining members, recruiting new members, and making sure all activities are rewarding and fun.

We are working on our signup procedures with the intent of making them easier to use. We will work with the wilderness ranger to determine where and when it would be most beneficial for us to have Trail Ambassadors and will work with HTA on our Trail Maintenance program.

Upcoming Events

Spring Training Meeting – April 28, 2024

Training and opening dates are as follows (times are TBD):

- GCWG Ambassador Training – May 18th at the Sulphur Ranger District Office
- Monarch Cabin Orientation – May 21st (pending conditions)
- First day of Monarch Cabin Hosting – May 22nd (pending conditions)
- HTA Ambassador Training – June 1st (make-up day for those unable to attend May 18th)

Summer Picnic -- August 11, 2024

Fall Meeting - TBD

Winter Meeting - TBD

The GCWG will be shifting their hosting dates:
Monarch - Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday;
Junco – Monday, Wednesday, Thursday.

Gary Piper - President, GCWG (Cont)

This is the 60th anniversary of the Wilderness Act and the 30th Anniversary of the GCWG. Andy Borak is planning the Summer Picnic for us and has great ideas to make it special to include a guest speaker. Make sure you save the date, 11 August, and bring a friend. Headwaters Book Club has invited us to co-host a meeting on 25 April at 6 PM. Bob Saint will be giving a short presentation on "Wilderness" followed by a discussion.

We will present our 2024 schedule of volunteer opportunities and open the signup at the spring meeting. As always this may change based on weather conditions and needs. All GCWG members are asked to commit to 4 days of service each year. If all our members do this, it would be over 400 days of service for the group. What an impact on our wilderness that could make!



All In the Spirit of Teamwork

By Eric Sandstrom

If a bull moose runs for president this year, he gets my vote no matter which human candidates are up against him in the election. Ditto for a cow moose. She'd be my president if I had anything to say about it. Unfortunately, I don't. The fact is I would rather we discuss your favorite colonoscopy than your favorite presidential candidate. Sure, voting is essential to our democracy and the American way of life. However, like religion and underwear, I try to keep my political preferences private.

With some trepidation, I pitched in at the Wilderness Goup's winterizing project at Junco Cabin last year and hoping peaceful conversations would prevail. I was not disappointed.

None of the 10 or so WG members who showed up that morning talked politics – at least not within earshot of me. Instead, they discussed which was their favorite paintbrush and how best to hammer a nail without splitting wood or smashing your thumb.

This well-organized labor of love was accomplished to preserve the integrity of the Forest Service cabin, a traditional "hosting" place for WG volunteers to inform hikers about trails, weather, and naturally, moose.

The project reflected the group's own integrity: people working in concert for a greater good and enjoying each other's friendship while they're at it.

Teamwork was everywhere. People chinked logs and gave the cabin's exterior a fresh coat of paint. Old doors had to be refitted so amateur carpenters unhinged them, sawed them to size and rehinged them for a tighter fit. To prevent the roof from caving under heavy snow, supports were erected inside the cabin as braces between floor and ceiling. Sofa and chair cushions were bagged in plastic and hung from rafters to fool cabin mice. A massive naked log, destined to replace a rotting foundation, required a protective coat of moose-brown paint. A team of painters had to rotate the horizontal beast in order to brush every square inch.

It was a remarkably warm day in the mountains though signs of approaching autumn were everywhere you looked. Wildlife ran about, their jaws bulging with berries and nuts. Aspen leaves were looking rusty. The season's first snowfall could barge in any old time.

We humans recognized the sense of urgency but deserved a lunch break. We washed down sandwiches, chips and fruit with Gatorade and soda while sharing stories about favorites, either grandkids or camping trips. Had you brought up Biden or Trump, we'd have looked at you as though you'd just cut the cheese (and we don't mean swiss).

Winterizing ended as the afternoon cooled off. Junco Cabin was locked up at last, now in far better shape to withstand another fierce winter. People said their so-long's. Tools and trash were hauled away. Say what you will about how divisive our country has become, our Wilderness Group knows how to throw a successful workday without any nasty politicking. In case you're wondering, I'll be voting for Bullwinkle.

What is a Trail Angel? Submitted by Holly Whitten:

"Successfully thru-hiking the entire Continental Divide Trail takes an average of five months. The definition of a thru-hike is left to the judgment of the hikers. The purists hike a "continuous and unbroken footpath between Mexico and Canada," but about 50 percent of the thru-hikers admit to having skipped small sections of road-walking or because the trail was closed, mostly due to forest fires or snow. All hikers must replenish their food every few days, often [hitchhiking](#) from a road crossing of the trail into a town to buy food and supplies. Most hikers occasionally take a "zero", a day without hiking, or a "nero", a day with little hiking, to rest and recuperate. "Trail angels" (volunteers) at locations along the trail assist hikers with food, water, and transportation to and from resupply points to trail heads." - From wikipedia.org

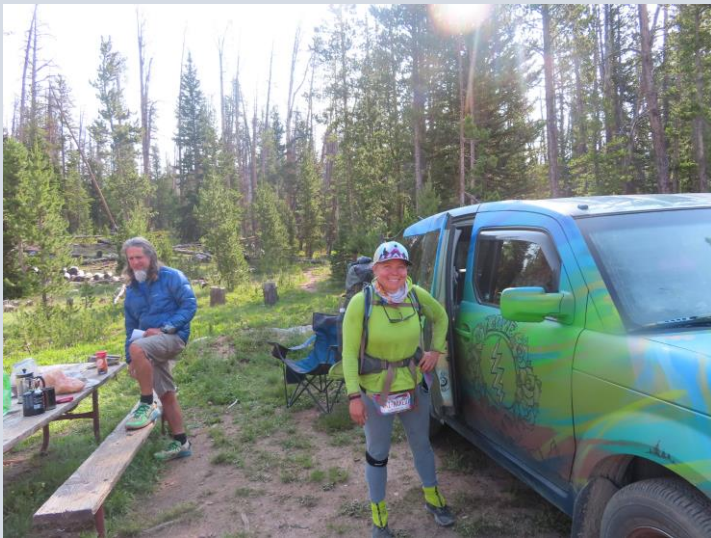
Grand Lake is a Gateway Community and Fraser may be looking to become one.

During our years of hosting at Junco, we have encountered many thru-hikers. They can be very interesting to talk to. In the Fall 2016 newsletter: [fall 2016 newsletter.pdf \(gcwg.org\)](#) we shared the story of Buddy the Backpacker. Check out the link in the newsletter to see his further adventures. (Did you know you can read all of the past editions of the newsletter on the website?). I met another Trail Angel when hiking the CDT north of Steamboat. He was transporting a group of x-military guys from Rabbit Ears Pass to the next trailhead.

I have met only one Trail Angel. He agreed that I could share his picture with the group:

Cheshire Cat shared with me that he often meets thru-hikers who are working on some personal trauma. He mentioned one hiker was recovering from a personal tragedy. The young man I met near Steamboat had just graduated from college and was celebrating. Just keep in mind that each hiker has their own story as we encounter them passing by Monarch or Junco. Interested in being a Trail Angel - you can here

[Continental Divide Trail - Trail Angel List](#): Connecting Hikers with Trail Angels



Through hiker, Montana(green), and Trailg Angel, Cheshire Cat(blue).



Buddy the BackPacker passed through the Roaring Fork trailhead in Fall 2016. He allowed us to share his story in the Fall 2016 Newsletter. It is available on GCWG.org.

Like us on Facebook:

<https://facebook.com/grandcountywildernessgroup>

As we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Wilderness Act, let's think about our mission.

WHY PROTECT THE WILDERNESS

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Protected wilderness exists within the National Wilderness Preservation System. This wilderness is the wildest of the wild. It has no roads, no development. It is the last remnant of pristine wildlands that once stretched from coast-to-coast.

Why we need wilderness

The benefits of wilderness are numerous. Wilderness provides so much more than a place to camp, hike or fish. Wilderness cleans our air and filters our water. It provides a home for wildlife and an economic driver for local communities.

Why we should protect wilderness

There are many reasons we need to protect wilderness:

Wilderness protects watersheds that provide clean drinking water to surrounding communities.

Wilderness filters and cleans the air we breathe.

Many animals we love call wilderness their home.

People depend on wilderness for their favorite recreation opportunities, such as: nature walking, wildlife watching, hiking, hunting, fishing, canoeing and camping.

What wilderness designation prevents

Wilderness designation protects wildlands from the negative effects of over-development, like pollution and habitat destruction. It also protects fragile ecosystems from:

Logging

Mining

Oil and gas drilling

Road building

Off-road-vehicle use

Industrial or other development

(Reprinted from: <https://www.wilderness.org/articles/article/why-protect-wilderness>)

Remembering

This Spring, we lost two of our very active members of the Wilderness Group.

John Hughes passed on Feb. 4, 2024. John was on the current board as the secretary. We are feeling the impact of his loss as we continue with the planning for our summer activities. He is sorely missed. The family had requested that contributions can be made in his name to the Wilderness Group.

It was with great sorrow that we shared the news of the death of Douglas Smith on March 28th. Doug was a longtime GCWG member, previous board member and a friend. Doug and wife, Pat Potter, delighted in hosting Junco Cabin; usually on holiday weekends. If you wish to send a card or note to Pat, her address is PO Box 774311, Steamboat Springs, CO 80477



The clearest way into the Universe is through a forest wilderness

John Muir

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HOW TO BE INVOLVED

There are plenty of ways to be of service. We hope that you became part of GCWG because you care about wild places with wild creatures in Grand County and intend to help preserve them. NOW is the time to make choices for your involvement. 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 MADE A DIFFERENCE. Here is a summary of opportunities for your reference:

1. Pay your \$20 dues to GCWG
2. Host days at Junco Cabin – Beth Collins -
3. Host days at Monarch Cabin – Monica Sandstrom
4. Open up and clean either cabin to start the season
5. Hike a wilderness trail ANY DAY. REPORT your hours via website form.
6. Lead an Ambassador trail hike
7. Adopt a registration box and retrieve the reports – Stephen Lee (stephenchris@kymtnhi.com)
8. Help calculate the data from the spreadsheet analysis of trail usage from registration boxes – Monica Sandstrom
9. Take digital photos and contribute articles and photos for the newsletter - Holly Whitten (news1@GCWG.org)
10. Help HTA/USFS update signage and trailhead bulletin boards as needed.
11. Work on trail maintenance and other projects with HTA
12. Wear your wilderness tee shirt or sweatshirt every time you hike in the forest and report your hours.
13. Staff the booths at community events
14. Staff the Thursday in the Park booths. Andy Borek
15. Staff Grand Lake Regatta booth - Andy Borek
16. Report information for the group to share of website and social media – Oliver Davis and Al Rothenback
17. Uproot noxious weeds wherever we can find them – Beth Collins
18. Record and report volunteer hours – Mike Braddy
19. Distribute our “business” cards
20. Work on National Public Lands Day or Colorado Public Lands Day – Monica Sandstrom
21. Purchase shirts, sweatshirts and hats.
22. Pick up monofilament line and put it in the bins.

Make sure to check the activity calendar for current activities: gcwg.org/actschd.html

Special thanks to McConnell Printing for helping print this newsletter

Night Sky – Submitted by Doris Klein:

The fall 2023 issue of GCWG newsletter featured an article by Jeremy Krones, Executive Director of the Colorado Headwaters Land Trust, regarding the values of preserving our night sky. We wanted to follow up in this issue with some practical guidelines for reducing light pollution. Here are 5 guiding principles suggested by DarkSky, an international organization focused on advancing responsible outdoor lighting. Outdoorlighting should be:

1. Useful: Use light only if it is needed: All light should have a clear purpose. Consider how the light will impact the area, including wildlife and their habitats.
2. Targeted: Direct light so it falls only where it is needed: Use shielding and careful aiming to target the direction of the light beam so that it points downward and does not spill beyond where it is needed.
3. Low Lever: Light should be no brighter than necessary – Use the lowest light level required. Be mindful of surface conditions, as some surfaces may reflect more light into the night sky than intended.
4. Controlled: Use light only when needed – Use controls such as timers or motion to ensure that the light is available when it is needed, dimmed when possible, and turned off when not needed.
5. Warm-colored: Use warmer color lights where possible – Limit the amount of shorter wavelength (blue-violet) light to the least amount needed.

<https://darksky.org/resources/guides-and-how-tos/lighting-principles/>

DarkSky is a wealth of additional information on this topic. Let's educate ourselves, in order to act and



Grand County Wilderness Group 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
- Wilderness monitoring

Improvement

- Adopt a registration box
- Eradicate noxious weeds
- Work on a maintenance project

Public Understanding

- Host Junco and Monarch cabins
- Hike wilderness trails
- Become a trail ambassador
- Take digital photos to share
- Staff the booth at a community event
- Wear your tee shirt or hat to bring awareness

Protection

- Help to maintain trails
- Construct signage

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2023-24 Membership. Yearly membership renewals of \$20 per household were due at the Fall Meeting. New members, please complete the following form and mail to Grand County Wilderness, PO Box 4116, Granby, CO 80446. You can also join on-line at www.GCWG.org.

Name:

Address:

Email:

Phone:

Interests (Please refer to the activity mentioned in this newsletter and make contact accordingly):

Grand County Wilderness Group
PO Box 4116
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