Dear Colleague,

We have a packed Wild News for you this month, including indoor and outdoor outings! Find out more about these events and everything else below the headlines:

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**The US House Approves Landmark Public Lands Bill!**

On Feb 26, the US House passed the Protecting America’s Wilderness and Public Lands Act, with the Colorado Wilderness Act as the lead bill!

This would protect nearly 3 million acres of public lands across 4 states, including over 1 million acres in Colorado!

The next step is the US Senate. Please urge Colorado Senators Bennet and Hickenlooper to sponsor this bill!

More info and on this bill and contact info can be found at: [www.wildconnections.org](http://www.wildconnections.org)

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**Upcoming Events**

**March 9 Colorado Trail Indoor Outing**

Join us next Tuesday, March 9 from 6:30 to 7:30 PM for Wild Connections Board member Karl Ford’s presentation of the Colorado Trail in Wild Connections Area.

He will show slides of his 2020 250-mile hike along the Colorado Trail and also discuss the status of protected and proposed Wilderness Areas and other Wild Connections activities along this segment of this world-class Trail.

For more info and to register, go to: [https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJwodOyhrTsuE9NMyB9uWn4wjqZUITEwMXF](https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJwodOyhrTsuE9NMyB9uWn4wjqZUITEwMXF)
March 27 Ecology Park Day Hike, A BLM Wild Lands Outing

Join us Saturday, March 27 for a day hike (10:00 AM - 2:30 PM) at Ecology Park, an area near Cañon City and south of Royal Gorge which is jointly managed between the BLM and Fremont County, and offers access to Grape Creek.

More info is available at: www.wildconnections.org/events.html

To register for the hike, contact Jim Lockhart at 719-385-0045 or jlock@datawest.net.

March 4 Colorado 2020 Fire Season by Wilderness Workshop

Our Friends at Wilderness Workshop are hosting an online event this Thursday, March 4 at 6:00 PM about Colorado’s Record-setting 2020 Fire Season in the Context of the Past 6,000 Years.

For more info and to register, go to: http://org2.salsalabs.com/o/5857/p/salsa/event/common/public/?event_KEY=89715

Regional Updates

Outside 285

As referenced in previous Wild News, there is a major trail planning process in progress considering possible trail and trailhead development in the US 285 corridor, from Waterton Canyon to the top of Kenosha Pass, from Mt. Evans to the southern reaches of Lost Creek Wilderness. Late last Fall, Wild Connections shared the Outside 285 (O285) Survey with our members and you all responded! 850+ responses from multiple groups were received by the project contractors and that data has been reviewed and combined into a list of potential projects.

The O285 Steering Committee, including Colorado Parks & Wildlife, the Forest Service, JeffCo Open Space and a myriad of stakeholders are now reviewing the potential projects in detail. Over the next 3 weeks, many Steering Committee zoom calls will look at each of the proposals in fine detail to determine their appropriateness, feasibility and impacts to our Front Range wild lands and wildlife.

If you participated in the survey and provided your email, be on the lookout for a newsletter from O285 with further details on the anticipated timeline of this major planning process. And, Thank You for participating in this important plan that will guide wild land protection and trail planning in the Front Range for years to come.

We have more info available at: www.wildconnections.org/conservation/outside285.html

USFS Pike-San Isabel Travel Management Plan

The USFS PSI recently held a formal objections meeting for the Travel Management Plan, following up on the public objections period for this plan, which wrapped up in December 2020.

Wild Connections found the analysis mostly well done. We submitted objections on some specific trails, participated in the objection resolution process, and defended the USFS decision to continue to keep motorized use out of Wildcat Canyon.

Barring litigation, the USFS Pike-San Isabel Travel Management Plan Revision should likely be finalized this summer.

BLM Eastern Colorado Resource Management Plan

The long awaited BLM ECRMP Final plan was never released last year, likely for the better. Now this and other agency plans are being
reviewed by BLM National under the new administration before anything is released.

Wild Connections and our partners are working with state agencies to ensure that this plan better protects our public lands and reduces climate impacts, in line with Colorado’s and the Biden administration's climate and 30x30 goals.

New administration nominations and appointments

Wild Connections supports President Biden’s nomination for Rep. Deb Haaland to be Secretary of the Department of the Interior. Rep. Haaland, an enrolled citizen of the Pueblo of Laguna, would be the first Native American to lead the Department of the Interior (DOI), which manages approximately 75% of federal public lands and nearly 9 million acres in Colorado. A Senate confirmation vote should take place later this month. You can show your support at: http://org2.salsalabs.com/o/5857/p/dia/action4/common/public?action_KEY=27179

Wild Connections was excited to hear that Nada Culver has been named Bureau of Land Management’s Deputy Director, a position formerly occupied by William Perry Pendley. Wild Connections has worked with Nada in her previous capacities with the National Audubon Society and The Wilderness Society’s BLM Action Center and look forward to seeing her help lead the BLM under the Biden Administration. Read more at: https://www.gjsentinel.com/news/environmental-attorney-named-to-pendley-s-former-blm-post/article_8b5c7970-752b-11eb-beae-dbb71a9af32a.html

2021 State of the Rockies

Conservation Colorado recently released their 2021 Conservation in the West survey results, taken from polls conducted in the 8 Rocky Mountain West states.

Of note, 81% of Coloradans support a national goal of protecting 30 percent of America’s lands and oceans by 2030.

Click on the adjacent graphic for Colorado’s 2021 State of the Rockies Fact Sheet.

All of the results can be found at: https://www.coloradocollege.edu/other/stateoftherockies/conservationinthewest/2021/

Jim, John, Alison, Claude, Karl, Misi, Kristin and John

Wild Connections Board and staff


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