

## Accomplishments 2011

- 3.5 miles of route corridor ripped, seeded and protected.
- 6.6 acres of habitat reclaimed, including a 5-acre wet meadow.
- 6,000 square feet of erosion mat hold soil on steep slopes.
- Brush and logs protect new vegetation and prevent motorized use.
- Pawnee montane skipper butterflies verified in the lower reaches of Pine Creek.
- Four species of bats identified in the meadow and at the mine adit.
- Abandoned mine shaft filled and bat gate installed in adit.

- Mud holes recovered in the meadow for elk wallows and water sources for all wildlife.
- Restored wildlife movement corridors across Green Mountain and between Lost Creek Wilderness and the South Platte River valley.
- Increased quiet recreation opportunities.
- 21 volunteers contributed nearly 225 hours of restoration work.
- Invested \$23,500 in cash, in-kind and the value of people's time.
- Strengthened the partnership with the Forest Service, volunteers, Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Cheyenne Mountain Zoo and donors.

Thanks to the volunteers, agency staff and funders who made this a stellar project.



Volunteer work crews

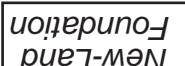
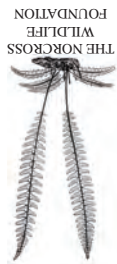
Photos: Eric Dec, David Hannigan (COW), Lee Patton, Jean C. Smith and Vickie Smith. Design by Earth and Seascapes



Wild Connections works with our partners to plan and implement Reclaiming Wildways, a habitat restoration project in the mountain reaches of the South Platte and Arkansas Rivers.



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## Reclaiming Wildways 2011



**R**eclaiming Wildways is recovering wildlife habitat and linkages in selected roadless areas on the Pike-San Isabel National Forest. Wild Connections began this program in 2009 in Trout Creek Roadless Area on the Rampart Range. Our work improved habitat in riparian and upland areas unscathed by the Hayman fire.

In 2011, Reclaiming Wildways completed restoration in the Green Mountain Roadless Area.

### **Green Mountain**

A rugged landscape sweeps eastward from the alpine peaks of Lost Creek Wilderness across two forested roadless areas and into the South Platte River canyons. With 14,300 acres now returned to total roadlessness, Green Mountain forges an even stronger link in the wildways network.



Green Mountain is a mosaic of mixed conifers, ponderosa pines, aspen, montane meadows, and seasonal grassy wetlands with gigantic rock outcrops punctuating the skyline.

Animals common to this elevation and forest type thrive here, including two Pike-San Isabel management indicator species: Abert's squirrel and elk. Abert's scolded from the tree tops and elk bugled in the distance on the work days.



Little brown bats, hoary bats, long-eared myotis and silver-haired bats frequent the forest and meadows.

The far south end of Green Mountain was burned in the Hayman fire. This year's Pawnee montane skipper census in a severely burned plot in lower Pine Creek contributed additional data to the ongoing study of these threatened butterflies.

### **Recovering the route and meadow**

The project closed a forest road and non-system extension that led from Stoney Pass into the Pine Creek headwaters. Prior to this project 1.5 miles of

the route was still open to motorized travel as far as the large wet meadow.

However, ongoing motorized trespass continued along the entire route including mud-bogging in the wet meadow and cutting green trees to cover camping pits.



### **Site preparation**

The Forest Service ripped the old road beds with their small dozer, dropped off erosion mat, felled trees and cut branches for later use, and seeded most of the route with native grasses. They filled in an old mine and installed a bat gate in an adjacent adit.



The user-created tracks around the meadow perimeter and to dispersed campsites were ripped and some mud holes were left for elk wallows and wildlife water sources.



### **Volunteer work days**

The first September work day focused on the meadow and shutting the southbound route to the mine area and Pine Creek headwaters. The second work day closed the route from the meadow to Stony Pass.



Volunteers sowed additional grass seed, put down erosion control matting in the steeper areas, and pulled in slash and logs to cover the corridor.

The gate at Stony Pass is now locked, and the corridor is impassable to motor vehicles. Hikers and horsemen can follow game trails for an unparalleled back country experience. ↻

