



SUMMER NEWSLETTER

Hello COWPL Members,

This summer, we are feeling the heat of the weather, and continuing pressure on our Public Lands. Colorado Wild Public Lands is working hard to keep these lands open and accessible to all. We are excited about the work we have done so far this year, and the enthusiasm and participation from our members.

We'd like to give a big shout out and thank you to the Krueger family, the Rio Blanco Herald Times and community members of Meeker. Also, this spring we were contacted by Travis Wright about a pending land exchange on Rollins Pass near Winter Park. Thanks to his unrelenting efforts the proponent has withdrawn the proposal for now, but we'll stay vigilant! And thank you to all our members for your engagement and support!

Our grantors Pitkin County Healthy Community Fund, Alpine Bank, Town of Snowmass Village and Colorado Academy, help make possible the special projects and outreach, described below.



Project Updates



Meeting in Meeker, June 3, 2021. Photograph: Caitlin Walker, Rio Blanco Herald Times

Buffalo Horn Land Exchange

On January 15, 2021, the BLM issued approval of this exchange per the modified Environmental Assessment. Although this seemed like a done deal to some, COWPL submitted a protest to the decision on March 8. COWPL's concerns included:

- Privatizing critical habitat for a local elk herd, thereby eliminating public access and lucrative outfitting permits.
- Reducing the permitted grazing rights of several local family ranches.
- Removing Parcel F-5 from the BLM's preferred alternative based on local concerns, then including it in the final exchange.
- Providing an appraisal process that seems to favor the land exchange.

On June 3, 2021 COWPL, with assistance from Albert and Mary Kay Krueger, coordinated a meeting in Meeker. Anne Rickenbaugh and Franz Froelicher, COWPL board members, spoke to a group of about 20 interested citizens and area landowners about that protest. One primary concern is a lack of transparency about the process. Adjacent landowners said they were unaware of the deal until it was nearly too late to comment, and were not given an opportunity to bid on parcels adjacent to their ranches. COWPL and local community members are working together on outreach and ways to make the BLM aware of their concerns. Read more in the Rio Blanco Herald Times, on our Facebook page, or on our website: coloradowildpubliclands.org

Sutey Ranch - Motion for Reconsideration

On March 25, COWPL received the disappointing decision that the court had ruled against COWPL's challenge to the BLM's approval of the Sutey Land Exchange. COWPL's challenge addressed the BLM's violations of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), including the BLM's deficient analysis in its Environmental Assessment.

In late April, COWPL filed a motion requesting that the US District Court for Colorado reconsider the decision because the Court misapprehended the law, facts, and COWPL's position on six identified matters. These included that: "upon concluding that BLM did not err in discounting the Sopris Parcel's property value, the Court misapprehended the facts by completely ignoring one the highest and best uses BLM expressly identified for this parcel—assemblage with the Two Shoes Ranch". See the motion at: <http://coloradowildpubliclands.org/pdf/Doc-46-1-Mot-For-Reconsideration.pdf>

The Defendants and Intervenor-Defendants opposed the motion. COWPL submitted a reply brief in support of our motion for reconsideration on May 27, 2021. The matter is now under consideration.



Valle Seco - FOIA Releases

Matt Kenna of Public Interest Environmental Law and of Counsel, Western Environmental Law Center is assisting COWPL with obtaining the appraisal information that COWPL requested via the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Based on responses from the Forest Service, we are anticipating receiving the actual appraisals soon, as well as less redacted versions of the Technical Appraisal Reports (TARP).

ACTION ALERT: Valle Seco Roadless Area Changes, Comments Due July 29, 2021

The Valle Seco Land Exchange (that COWPL has opposed) is dependent on the Forest Service approving the proposed Roadless Area changes. COWPL is against this proposal as it would modify three Colorado Roadless Area (CRA) boundaries on the San Juan National Forest in order to privatize lands currently included in them. Removing lands that were previously prioritized for inclusion in protected areas defies years of extensive planning and public engagement – specially protected publicly accessible lands that would be made private. Specifically, the Forest Service proposes to modify the South San Juan Adjacent, Turkey Creek, and Winter Hills/Serviceberry Mountain Colorado Roadless Area (CRA) boundaries on the San Juan National Forest to remove Federal land to be privatized for the Valle Seco 2019 Land Exchange and to add acres to the Winter Hills/Serviceberry Mountain CRA.

Please join COWPL in voicing your concerns!

Comments to be submitted by July 29. Submit electronically to <https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public/CommentInput?Project=NP-2434>
Address written comments to Becca Smith, San Juan National Forest, PO Box 310, Pagosa Springs, CO 81147.

Recent Happenings

VIDEO CONTEST WINNER!

Congratulations to Barry Stevenson for winning the COWPL's Video Contest - Capture your Public Lands. Watch his beautiful video on our website at: <http://www.coloradowildpubliclands.org/> Thank you to all who entered other enjoyable videos including young skiers, waterfalls, and dogs running snowy trails!

BASALT BIRDWATCHING AND GRIZZLY CREEK ART HIKE

Thank you to Mark Fuller, the Audubon birdwatchers and COWPL participants, for a great morning out watching warblers, ospreys, swallows and many more birds on the Crown Mountain Riparian Area. This was an excellent way to connect with our public lands on Saturday May 15, Public Lands Day!

Thanks to Melissa Daniels, Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers and all the participants for an interesting morning on June 3, hiking Grizzly Creek, and learning about the Grizzly Creek Fire. Suzanne (from COWPL) led the art activity that was enthusiastically embraced!



Upcoming Summer Events



Next Board Meeting Wednesday July 7

Join the COWPL Board sitting outside our office by the river, at 23272 Two Rivers Road, Basalt at 5:30 pm on Wednesday July 7. RSVP to coloradowildpubliclands@gmail.com. Also, please let us know if you'll be there in person or if you'd like to attend remotely.

COWPL is hiring - Community Engagement Director

Colorado Wild Public Lands (COWPL), based in Basalt, is an exciting nonprofit working to keep public lands open and accessible. Our growing organization is seeking a Community Engagement Director to expand and elevate its mission. A successful job applicant demonstrates a high level of dedication and a willingness to learn and grow in the position.

The Community Engagement Director will work with the COWPL team and the Board of Directors to increase public participation, membership, leadership, and fundraising. This is a contract position for 20 hours per week, offering flexible time, and hourly pay in the range of \$30-\$40 per hour depending on experience. There are strong opportunities for growth.

Submit your application to coloradowildpubliclands@gmail.com by July 6, 2021. For further information, see our website: <http://www.coloradowildpubliclands.org/>

Recreate Responsibly Outreach

COWPL has prepared information on how to "Recreate Responsibly on Public Lands". This work was funded by grants from the Town of Snowmass Village and the Pitkin County Healthy Community Fund. Look for our poster at local trailheads. You'll receive a personal copy in COWPL's next mailing.

Aspen Farmers Market

Stop by to say hello and learn more about COWPL's activities and how you can get involved at the Aspen Farmers Market on **Sunday July 25**.



Art at the River

August Date TBD - Join us for a creative evening sketching and painting beside the Roaring Fork River in Basalt. All levels welcome.

Alpine Bank Facebook Challenge

This is in honor of non-profits and **Colorado Day on August 1**. We need you to help Colorado Wild Public Lands be awarded \$1,876!

1. Find the video that Alpine Bank will post on **Facebook** on July 5 about the \$1,876 cash giveaway.
2. "Like" the video.
3. Comment with **Colorado Wild Public Lands** to be entered to win.
4. Encourage your family, friends and other supporters to vote for COWPL too **by Saturday, July 31**.

Please continue to keep your membership current, consider additional donations if possible, and share our work with friends. We encourage and appreciate our volunteers - we'll match you with your preferred activity! COWPL can receive donations from your Amazon Smile and City Market purchases. Please register online on their websites. Thank you for your support!

If you'd like more information feel free to contact us at coloradowildpubliclands@gmail.com
Sincerely, Anne Rickenbaugh, Franz Froelicher, Jean Perry, Stef Davis, James Katzenberger & Hawk Greenway
Colorado Wild Public Lands Board of Directors