Dear Colorado Wild Public Lands (CWPL) Members,

Long, hot days are upon us already and we continue to feel the pressure of private interests driving public land exchanges. CWPL works hard to keep our lands open and accessible to all, and we couldn’t do that without your continued support. We are energized by all our members’ enthusiasm to Keep It Open and Keep It Ours, and look forward to continuing the public land protection we have already undertaken so far this year, with your generosity and passion filling our sails.

Thank you to all our members for your engagement and support! Additionally, our grantors so far this year — Pitkin County Healthy Community Fund, Alpine Bank, and Aspen Thrift Shop— help make possible the special projects and outreach described below. Thank you!

Upcoming Summer Events

- **Willow Creek & Valle Seco Land Exchange Info Sessions**
  - Details still TBD (In the Winter Park and Pagosa Springs areas, respectively). Stay tuned!

- **Public Lands & Pizza!**
  - Join CWPL for an evening of public lands discussion and more in-depth updates on current exchanges & projects.
  - Details still TBD (Plan for August or September, in the Roaring Fork Valley)

- **(Past)* Board Meeting Wednesday July 8**
  - We just had our regular board meeting at 23272 Two Rivers Road, Basalt at 5:30 pm on Wednesday July 8.
  - Email us at coloradowildpubliclands@gmail.com if you’d like to check out the minutes from this meeting!

Got Printer?

We are still looking for a printer! If you have one that you no longer need and that’s still functional, please shoot us an email at coloradowildpubliclands@gmail.com
Project Updates

Blue Valley
We have been engaging with this one since June 2016 and await the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) response to comments as well as the Final Decision on the Land Exchange.

BLM has continued to deflect CWPL's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. When all 91 pages of a public document release look like this (see right), we take action. We are considering how to challenge these redactions and the agency’s withholding of other exchange materials.

Buffalo Horn
We are still waiting for the BLM’s response to our March 2021 protest. At minimum this indicates our efforts have stalled the exchange, if not altogether halted it.

Valle Seco
On June 28, the Forest Service (USFS) announced they had reached a decision to move forward with the Valle Seco exchange. We are working with partner groups and local stakeholders to prepare a response.

CWPL and others’ comments on the problems with original Valle Seco appraisals led USFS to reconsider them, extending the decision process and allowing for more critical examination.

We submitted a FOIA complaint over the Forest Service’s failure to release the appraisals in this exchange and questioning the legitimacy of the agency’s regular practice of withholding this kind of information.

Willow Creek
Recently proposed in the Winter Park area, Willow Creek is an exchange at its beginning stages. Our engagement focuses on achieving extended and/or additional comment periods for public involvement. Read more about the exchange on our website.

Mt. Emmons (A.K.A. Red Lady)
CWPL is working with the High Country Conservation Alliance to review a recently proposed land exchange in the Crested Butte area. This exchange would convey 625 acres around Crested Butte’s Red Lady (Mt. Emmons) in exchange for 551 acres of federal land adjacent to the Red Lady Mine on Kebler Pass. The proposal includes complexities regarding the parcels’ historic and ongoing use in the mining operations, issues surrounding water rights and future water quality, and the necessity of conveying the federal lands subject to restrictive conservation easements.

New Forest Service office
CWPL has made it a priority to work with land management agencies like BLM and USFS whenever opportunities arise — we want to be more proactive participants in the land exchange process. We are having discussions with a newly created USFS office targeted at land exchanges and are partnering on a land exchange database; something we’ve been working on for years.
Photo Contest Winner!
Cameron P. of Denver won this year’s photo contest, themed *Public Lands, My Way*. Check out his amazing shot here!

Public Lands: Conservation vs. Recreation
In April, CWPL hosted the first of hopefully many speaking events centered around various public lands issues. This one, titled *Public Lands: Conservation vs. Recreation* focused on often conflicting objectives promoting safe and appropriate public lands use without “loving them to death”.

Have ideas of topics and/or speakers for our next installment in this series? Let us know at coloradwildpubliclands@gmail.com!

Bilingual Birdwatching
Despite the late season snow flurries on the morning of Colorado Public Lands Day (May 21), we had a great turnout for our bilingual birdwatching tour of Glassier Open Space with Roaring Fork Audubon and English in Action! We saw 41 unique species, including some amazing up-close exposure to beautiful western tanagers pictured here.
Fundraising Drive

We’re thinking about ways to engage in more targeted fundraising to support some of our specific projects such as...

- Developing a land exchange and/or FOIA request reserve fund to help us offset the heavy increase in costs when new land exchanges are proposed;
- Creating a new short documentary film to highlight the process of land exchanges as they impact public lands users. This would be a key tool in helping distribute knowledge about the less obvious ways we lose access to public lands;
- Organizing land exchange impacts into a public database that can be used as a means for us to be more proactive with public lands protection in the land exchange process.

If you’d like to learn more, sponsor, or become more involved with any of these projects, please don’t hesitate to reach out!

As always, we also depend on and deeply appreciate your membership and general fund giving, and welcome you to reach out at any time with input, questions, or just to say hi!

With the utmost gratitude for our members, we thank you.

The Colorado Wild Public Lands Board of Directors:
Franz Froelicher, Jean Perry, James Katzenberger, Anne Rickenbaugh, Stefanie Davis, Nina Itin, Hawk Greenway, and Neil Levine.