

Wilderness Workshop

January, 2004



2004: KNOWNNS & UNKNOWNNS

Each year, as we develop our work plan for the coming year, we try to take to heart that immortal dictum of Donald Rumsfeld:

“As we know, there are known knowns - there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say, we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns - the ones we don't know we don't know.”

Rummy may not be in charge of the environment, but his words describe conservation

groups' predicament nicely. There are certain bureaucratic and legislative assaults that we know we'll have to respond to in 2004. We also know that we'd better save some room on our plate for a few other crises that we don't know about yet. And, knowing this administration, even preparing for the worst unknowns



we can think of probably won't be enough, because there are bound to be some *unknown* unknowns that are even worse.

Here, though, is a rundown on the activities we're pretty sure the Wilderness Workshop is going to be working on this year:

🔴* With the Colorado Environmental Coalition, the Colorado Mountain Club and other groups, WW is a partner in a statewide effort to counter our legislators' anemic wilderness bills with a more ambitious and meaningful alternative, the **Citizens' Wilderness Vision** (see next page for more details). In the first half of 2004, we'll make numerous presentations to citizen groups in communities in and around the White River National Forest to build grassroots support for the vision. Later in the year, we plan to gain support from potential allies such as hunters, anglers, ranchers and recreation organizations, and finally to urge members of Colorado's Congressional delegation to sponsor legislation to enact the vision.

🔴* The long-awaited **White River National Forest travel management plan** - a crucial planning document that will determine (among other things) which parts of the forest will remain roadless and which will be open to motorized travel - is

expected to be released in late spring or early summer. Its release will trigger a three-month public comment period. During that period we'll be very busy ground-truthing the travel routes proposed in the plan, assessing their impacts, and mobilizing grassroots opposition to any that are harmful to the forest's ecological integrity.

🔴* The Wilderness Workshop is one of several groups that appealed the 2002 **White River National Forest Plan**. Our concerns related to the designation of "management indicator species" for certain ecosystem types in the forest, the criteria used to establish roadless areas, the results and methods used in ski area analysis, and timber suitability in certain areas of the forest. The appeal decision will probably come down in the first half of this year; if it's unfavorable, we may have to take our challenge to court.

🔴* Time permitting, we hope to launch a local **wildfire mitigation project** this year, ideally before the summer fire season. What with all the misinformation swirling around in the wake of the so-called Healthy Forests Restoration Act, it's important to demonstrate that protecting people and homes from wildfire means

Insider's Election-Year Strategy Briefing for WW Members

Just as sure as February has 29 days, 2004 is a presidential election year. And just because we're a local organization doesn't mean we're going to wait till November to find out how our forests are going to fare from a new balance of power in Washington.

WW executive director Sloan Shoemaker has been invited to participate in an election-year strategy summit of forest and conservation groups in Washington, DC Jan. 12-13. He'll be one of about 100 regional representatives who will channel

the views of their constituents up to the national level, and then deliver the national strategy back to the grassroots.

Sloan will give an insider's briefing on the summit to WW members on Tuesday, Jan. 20 at 5:30 p.m. at the home of board member Connie Harvey.

Attendance for this briefing must be limited to 20, so if you'd like to attend you must RSVP ASAP by calling the office at 544-0733. If there's enough interest, Sloan will repeat the presentation at a later date.

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reducing fuel loads near where people actually live, not giving timber companies sweetheart deals to log the backcountry. In this first year, we hope to gather volunteers and maybe a couple of professional sawyers for a day to thin one manageably sized high-risk area.

🎉 This year is the **40th anniversary** of the Wilderness Act, and it's also kinda sorta the 40th anniversary of the Wilderness Workshop. (In 1964, Aspenites Connie Harvey and Joy Caudill started their letter-writing campaign for local wilderness, although they didn't actually found the organization and give it a name until 1967.) We intend to mount a whole week's worth of special events to commemorate the anniversary - and to honor Connie, Joy and fellow wilderness veteran Dottie Fox - in late August or early September. We're looking for members to serve on an organizing committee - if you're interested, please contact Dave at 544-0733.



The Wilderness Workshop's youngest member, Stella Elizabeth Shoemaker, was born November 6. Congratulations, Beth and Sloan!

2003: OUR ANNUAL REPORT

Here's a roundup of what the Wilderness Workshop did in '03:

The first thing you should know, if you don't know already, is that we changed our **name** - we've dropped the "Aspen" part to reflect our expanding sense of ourselves and our mission. Our turf has grown beyond the landscape immediately around Aspen to include most of the White River National Forest region, and in the coming years we'll be working to broaden our membership accordingly.

Meanwhile, to raise WW's profile, we opened our first publicly accessible **office**, in the Yellow Brick Building (y'all are welcome to drop in anytime!); hired a full-time **development director** who will be putting WW's organizational house in order and increasing our capacity to meet future conservation challenges; and changed our **logo**, which we hope reflects the Workshop's evolution into a full-time professional organization while remaining true to our funky grassroots past.

Moving on to our actual conservation work... We couldn't support wilderness bills floated in 2003 by U.S. Reps. Scott McInnis and Mark Udall because they were based on inventories that significantly shorted the true extent of roadless areas in the White River National Forest. Instead, we and a coalition of other groups developed our own **Citizens' Wilderness Vision**, based on our own inventories that found more than twice as many roadless acres on the forest. Since launching the vision last winter, we've been working to hammer out some of the more contentious issues associated with two of the flagship areas, Red

Table Mountain and Deep Creek.

An important part of our work every year is **wilderness monitoring**. With the Forest Service we continued to share responsibility for maintaining an air-monitoring station on top of Aspen Mountain once a week; once again in 2003 we posted a 100% collection record. We collected water from five alpine lakes (Capital, Avalanche, Moon, Brooklyn and Taber) three times last summer to test for acid deposition - so far so good, none showing up. We also monitored campsite conditions as a way of gauging human impacts, and monitored the occurrence and spread of noxious weeds in wilderness.

Last year was a busy one for **timber sale challenges**. We won a settlement with the Forest Service to reduce the sale volume of its Baylor Park salvage project, southwest of Ski Sunlight, to one tenth of the original proposal. As reported in the last newsletter, the FS subsequently tripled the volume, but after a further objection by us they backed down again. We also filed extensive comments that helped drastically downsize the Big Fish salvage project, near Trappers Lake on the border of the Flat Tops Wilderness, and filed comments objecting to the proposed South Quartzite roadless-area timber sale.

Wildfire is an example of how our work can have national significance. Ostensibly to address the threat of wildfire, President Bush proposed his Healthy Forests Initiative. Rep. Scott McInnis converted it into legislation as the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, a law universally regarded by the con-

servation community as a giveaway of public resources to enrich private timber companies, while doing little to protect our communities threatened by wildfire.

WW actively weighed in on this legislation in an attempt to shift its focus away from logging valuable yet fire-resistant large trees in the backcountry toward thinning accumulated brush and small trees in the wildland-urban interface that threaten our homes and communities. We researched the issues and analyzed the legislation so we could be a valuable source of information and alternative perspective to the local media and elected officials. We led a effort to get local elected officials to write letters asking McInnis to emphasize community protection, not logging in the backcountry. The Glenwood Springs City Council's letter was read on the floor of the House of Representatives during the debate, and a large map of Colorado that we initiated, showing communities throughout the Red Zone that wrote letters asking for more protection, was also displayed on the floor of the House that day.

In addition, we've been working to identify projects that we can hold up as positive examples of appropriate community-protection fire-mitigation activities. Projects we support in our area are the two fuel-reduction projects on the side of Basalt Mountain conducted by the DOW and WRNF. Also in this proactive vein, Sloan has been sitting on the Pitkin County Wildfire Mitigation Steering Committee, working to ensure that efforts target areas closest to vulnerable homes.

Since local **ski areas** occupy

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public lands, we take an active interest in how they're managed. Sloan sits on the Aspen Skiing Company's Environmental Advisory Committee, where he gets regular updates on ski area issues and provides input to help the SkiCo stay on track with its green intentions. Two of the issues we tracked in 2003 were ongoing improvements at Snowmass Ski Area and the Buttermilk/Snowmass Gondola, the bad idea that will never die.

Finally, WW joined several other conservation groups to engage attorney Lori Potter through Public Counsel of the Rockies to **challenge bogus mining claims** in wilderness areas surrounding Aspen. Thus far, it appears that these threats have been averted by our successful legal challenges. We hope to be able to report more on this in due course.

Tell Us What You Think

What do you think of the job WW is doing? Are there things you think we could be doing better? What things are we doing really well? Any feedback you can give us prior to our board's annual retreat at the end of this month would be helpful.

Newsletter: Twice as Good, Half as Often

Thanks to those of you who gave us feedback on the question of color vs. black-and-white newsletter. Most people who expressed an opinion preferred color, but only if we could do it economically. Printing in full color does cost quite a bit more, so we can't afford to do it on every page, but we'll try to do it at least on the cover.

Meanwhile, to offset the cost of color (and to save paper and staff time), we're reducing the newsletter's frequency from

monthly to bimonthly.
Get On Our List

With the newsletter going out less frequently, it's all the more important for WW members to get onto our email list. Besides WW news and event updates, list members receive conservation advisories (useful information on conservation issues and science) and conservation alerts (time-sensitive information on crucial issues requiring immediate action). Please sign up by sending an email to dave@wildernessworkshop.org.

Volunteer Ops

One of our goals this year is to give our members more opportunities to get involved in our activities. Not all of the volunteer opportunities are glamorous, but, heck, it's fun just hanging out with us. We need people to:

- ♦ put up blinds and assemble a bookshelf in our office
- ♦ help with mailings
- ♦ print out color copies of the newsletter on their home computer
- ♦ do research for our film project.

Winter Slide Show Series

Please come if you can to hear these fine speakers this winter:



Tuesday, Feb. 19, 7 p.m. (check local papers for venue) - **"National Energy Policy and Gas and Oil Drilling on the Roan Plateau,"** by **Steve Smith** of the Colorado Wilderness Network. The Roan Plateau, just west of Glenwood Springs, is the site of some of the most intense oil and gas exploration in the United States, and is also home to some of the state's most amazing natural features. This talk is timed to coincide with the anticipated release date of the BLM's draft management plan for the plateau, which is likely to be controversial.



Tuesday, March 2, 7 p.m. at ACES - **"The Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative"** by **Harvey Locke**. Harvey is one of the founders of this effort to ensure that wildlife habitat is effectively connected from the Yukon down through the Canadian Rockies to Yellowstone National Park. A lack of habitat connectivity on this scale will result in genetic isolation (and eventual extinction) of distinct populations of grizzly bears and other wide-ranging wildlife. Cosponsored by WW, ACES and the Aspen Skiing Company.

STOP PRESS!

LAST-MINUTE ENGAGEMENT!

Vijay V. Vaitheeswaran, energy and environmental correspondent for *The Economist* and author of *Power to the People: How the Coming Energy Revolution Will Transform an Industry, Change Our Lives and Maybe Even Save the Planet*, will speak on **Friday, Jan. 9** at 6 p.m. at ACES. Presented by the SkiCo and cosponsored by WW and ACES.

New! WW Gift Memberships and Cards

The big gift-giving season has come and gone, but what are you going to give to your outdoorsy friends and relatives on their birthday? Give them something that adds no weight to their backpack, contains no artificial ingredients and helps preserve the environment that we all love - give them a membership in the Wilderness Workshop.

That's right, we now have snazzy gift membership certificates which can be made out to anyone you think would appreciate learning about and being part of the work of the Workshop.

What's more, you can present the certificate in



a gorgeous greeting card produced exclusively by WW. We've had eight cards printed: a series



of four paintings of local landscapes by WW board member and renowned artist Dottie Fox, and a series of four photographs that were featured in last fall's "Images of Wilderness" show at the Metaphor Gallery by local photographers Burnham Arndt, Riccardo Savi and Dan Bayer.

Some members have asked if they can buy the gift card sets separately. Yes... but we'd much rather you buy a gift certificate to go inside, too!



Wilderness Workshop

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The Wilderness Workshop's mission is to protect and conserve the wilderness and natural resources of the Roaring Fork Watershed, the White River National Forest, and adjacent lands.

The Workshop is a non-profit organization that engages in research, education, legal advocacy, and grassroots organizing to protect the ecological integrity of local landscapes and public lands with a focus on the monitoring and conservation of air and water quality, wildlife species and habitat, natural communities, and lands of wilderness quality.

Board of Directors

Susy Ellison
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Cindy Houben
Warren Ohlrich
Mike Stranahan
Toni Zurcher

Staff

Sloan Shoemaker
Executive Director
Dave Reed
Development Director

WW's Wish List

- ◆ Dictionary and thesaurus
- ◆ Wall-mounted magazine rack with 8+ vertical slots
- ◆ Photoshop software
- ◆ Digital camera
- ◆ Digital slide projector
- ◆ New(ish) computer that runs Windows 2000

WW Video: Challenge Grant Received

WW has teamed up with First Light Films to develop a one-hour educational documentary video celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Wilderness Act.

And "Wild By Nature" - the project's working title - is already off to a great financial start with a \$2,500 challenge grant from WW members James and Hensley Peterson. If you would like to make a donation to the project over and above your regular WW donation, please contact Tim McFlynn at 923-2391.

"Wild By Nature" will weave archival footage with contemporary images of wilderness and interviews with three Colorado women - WW founders and longtime stalwarts Connie Harvey, Joy Caudill and Dottie Fox - to demonstrate the power of the individual to make real the lofty promises of national wilderness legislation and truly to change the world.

Local filmmakers Chelsea Congdon and James Brundige (the makers of the award-winning PBS documentary "Subdivide and Conquer") spent several days last fall shooting scenes, including a wonderful session of Dottie, Joy and Connie poring over old maps and clippings at the famous kitchen table where it all began, recounting successes and failures, and walking together along Maroon Creek between the Caudill and Harvey home places.

Keep Saving Those Stamps

Thanks to all who stuffed the box at Clark's Market in Aspen with Cash Saver stamps during the Wilderness Workshop's week in late October. Despite the short notice, you earned us nearly \$200.

Next October we promise to give you more notice. In the meantime, keep saving those stamps!

Grants Received

Huge thanks to the following organizations that have recently awarded grants to the Workshop:

- ◆ The Aspen Skiing Company Environment Foundation - \$4,000 for general support.
- ◆ Thrift Shop of Aspen - \$4,000 for general support.
- ◆ The City of Aspen - a three-year Community Service grant providing \$4,500 a year to support our wilderness monitoring, plus \$500 worth of photocopying privileges a year.

Thanks to Our (In-) Kind Donors

"Images of Wilderness" show:

Thanks to Roy Toma, owner of Metaphor Gallery, for providing such a splendid venue for the show and for all his help in mounting it; Burnham Arndt for the countless hours he put into organizing the show; and the many photographers who donated their images

Conservation is to a democratic government by free men as the roots of a tree are to its leaves. Wilderness is an anchor to windward. Knowing it is there, we can also know that we are still a rich nation, tending our resources as we should not a people in despair searching every last nook and cranny of our land for a board of lumber, a barrel of oil, a blade of grass, or a tank of water.

Senator Clinton Anderson, former Secretary of Agriculture, 1965

to benefit WW. Photogs, we will thank you all personally by letter.

Silent auction items and door prizes donated for the WW Annual Dinner:

Dottie Fox
Char Bloom
Bruce Gordon
Polly Ross
Bob Wade
Aspen Sports
Explore Booksellers
Connie Harvey

Other in-kind donations:

City of Aspen (photocopying privileges)
John Emerick (fax machine)
Joanne Lyon (fax machine)
Kelly Alford/Words Pictures Colours (design services)
David Richie (air-quality monitoring)
Dave Tolen (computer and network support)
Sharon Ostreicher (Dream Weaver software)
Sarah Guttman (Quark software)
Chelsea Congdon & James Brundige/First Light Films (videography for "Wild By Nature")

Donor Honor Roll

We would like to start acknowledging donors in the newsletter. All our future fundraising mailings and donor cards will ask donors whether they want to be acknowledged or would prefer to remain anonymous. In the meantime, please tell us your preference.