



July 2020

Dear Colleague,

As we move into a new month, we have a lot of public lands updates and news for you this month. So without further ado, here is what you will find in this edition of our July Wild News:

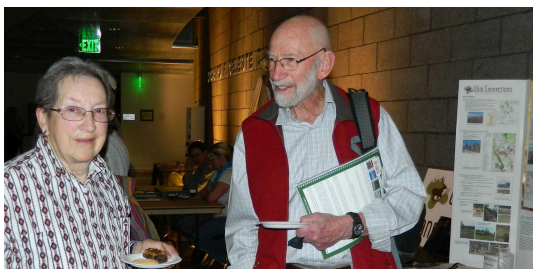
- Dr. Michael Soulé: Conservation Giant Gone
- July 22 Free Virtual Program: First Known Ascents of Pikes Peak by John Stansfield
- Parkdale Quarry Final EIS Released - Public Review until July 13
- Grape Creek Update & Congresswoman DeGette Support
- BLM Eastern Colorado Proposed Resource Management Plan still expected soon
- July 8 COGCC Rule-making & Wildlife Webinar by Audubon
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Dr. Michael E. Soulé: Conservation Giant Gone

Michael Soulé passed away at age 84 at his home in Paonia in June. He was co-founder of the [Society for Conservation Biology](#) and the [Wildlands Network](#).

"Michael's legacy and importance to the international conservation movement cannot be overstated—he created the scientific bedrock on which the community rests," said Katie Davis, Executive Director of Wildlands Network. "His visionary leadership will forever inspire us to think bigger and push harder to protect wild nature."

He served on the Board of the Southern Rockies Ecosystem Project for many years. His guidance is found in the Southern Rockies Wildlands Network Vision which was instrumental in the creation of many regional conservation efforts. The Wild Connections Conservation Plan for central Colorado was an outgrowth of that vision.



Jean Smith, also on the SREP board at that time, remembers, "Michael insisted on science as a basis for conservation, and his gentle but demanding spirit guided many of us on our journeys toward protecting wildlands."

Michael, one of the presenters at Colorado College's 2014 State of the Rockies conference, chatted with Wild Connections founder Jean Smith.

First Known Man's and Woman's Ascents of Pikes Peak Mountaineering History Recounted by John Stansfield, Storyteller and Writer

Wednesday, July 22, 2020, 7:00 to 8:15 PM
A free virtual program presented by Wild Connections



Which Native Americans might have first summited the 14,000' heights of Pikes Peak, we do not know. But the stories of the adventuring young European-American woman and man first known to reach the peak are well worth retelling.

Join Colorado storyteller, John Stansfield, to hear about the natural and personal discoveries when Edwin James, in 1820, and Julia Archibald Holmes, in 1858, made their climbs. Historic illustrations will

enliven the stories. Appropriate for school-age children to adults.

Register at: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJMQdO6tpjksE9IZfXAhHWluXyjVP-me94ZD>

BLM Releases Final EIS for Parkdale Quarry Proposed Expansion onto 700 acres of Echo Canyon Lands with Wilderness Characteristics

Public Review Period Ends July 13, 2020.



BLM released their Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed expansion onto BLM's Echo Canyon Lands with Wilderness Characteristics in Bighorn Sheep Canyon, west of Cañon City.

The BLM has identified Alternative A as BLM's preferred alternative, which will provide access to aggregate onto 700 acres of BLM identified Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC) and partially onto BLM's Arkansas Canyonlands Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). This was also Martin Marietta Materials preferred alternative and the alternative that had the least public support.

BLM's Alternative C had a smaller footprint and was drafted in response to stakeholder concerns regarding potential impacts, however was ultimately rejected. BLM's Alternative B, which had the most public support, would have denied the application outright and left this wilderness quality land intact. This area was proposed for wilderness numerous times in Congresswoman DeGette's Colorado Wilderness Act and as recently as 2018.

BLM has the Final EIS at: <https://go.usa.gov/xy6tn>. Public comments are to be sent to BLM's Stephanie Carter at: sscarter@blm.gov by July 13.

For more info and talking points, go to <http://www.wildconnections.org/conservation/parkdalequarrytablemtn.html>.

Update: Proposed Mineral Exploration at Grape Creek proposed Wilderness

The Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining & Safety (DRMS) approved Zephyr's mineral application proposal to expand onto the Grape Creek proposed Wilderness and Wilderness Study Area (WSA).

Wild Connections and INFORM have filed a joint appeal, which will be heard on July 22. The Canadian company Zephyr has delayed their 2020 mineral exploration by a few weeks due to this, and disparaged our organizations in their press release over it. Zephyr does still plan to do their self-described "no impact" exploration this summer, including drilling drill holes, constructing helicopter landing pads and conducting low flyovers, and laying pipes that will pump water out of Grape Creek to the exploration sites in BLM's Wilderness Study Area and Area of Critical Environmental Concern.

This proposal is illegal as the company does not have a valid existing right because these claims are recent and therefore violate the non-impairment standard of BLM's Wilderness Study Area Manual.

Alarming and **setting a terrible precedent**, the BLM is allowing the illegal exploration onto the BLM Grape Creek WSA without even requiring Zephyr to submit a plan of operations to them! **The BLM is also dodging the public and their management responsibilities** as they are choosing not to even do an environmental assessment or public input process for the exploration!

For more information and actions to take, see: <http://www.wildconnections.org/conservation/goldmininggrapecreek.html>.

Learn more on EcoFlight's Grape Creek Virtual Tour, Now with NEW Intro from Congresswoman DeGette!

Wild Connections and EcoFlight had a chance to virtually sit down with Congresswoman DeGette and discuss the values and threats at the Grape Creek proposed Wilderness.

To see the updated video, click the photo or go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v9CR-fPdFJE>



Enjoy!

BLM Eastern Colorado Resource Management Plan Proposed Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement still expected soon



The proposed ECRMP and final Environmental Impact Statement is expected any day now.

The proposed ECRMP will come with a 30-day public review and protest period (for those who have previously commented on this plan) and a 60-day governor's consistency review process.

Wild Connections and partners will analyze the plan and work with the public and elected to help shape the best final ECRMP that we can get.

For more info on this plan, see <http://www.wildconnections.org/conservation/blmrgfo/managementplan.html>.

FREE COGCC Rule-making & Wildlife Webinar July 8, 2020 6:00 - 7:00 PM



The Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC), the state board that approves drilling permits and regulates the oil and gas industry, is undergoing important changes that will impact Colorado's wildlife!

This free webinar will give you the inside scoop from local experts. Our friends at Audubon are hosting the webinar, and have organized it with other conservation and hunting/angling groups.

Register at: https://audubon.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_1Z3RZoZzTxuDdG1-FsYkLQ

Wildcat Canyon Metal Removal Project Funded for 2020!



We are excited to announce that our Wildcat Canyon Metal Removal Project proposal was recently fully funded by Park County!

Wild Connections will be working with the USFS South Park Ranger District and contractors to remove the partially-buried posts and cable, as well as outdated signs, in Wildcat Canyon.

This project will take place later this summer, and we hope it is just the beginning to restoring this wild and scenic area at the South Platte River.

Many thanks to Park County Land and Water Trust Fund (LWTF) for their continued support!

Sept 12 Wild Connections La Salle Pass Restoration Project with the USFS South Park Ranger District near the Farnum Roadless area



Wild Connections is excited to be partnering, once again, with the South Park Ranger District. For this project, we will address illegal motorized tracks that threaten the roadless lands on the south side of the Farnum Peak and Schoolmarm Mountain.

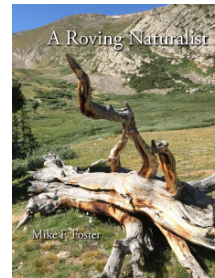
With solid planning and strong emphasis on all official health guidelines and recommendations, we hope to hold a one-day volunteer restoration project on the west side of La Salle Pass, just north of Badger Mountain and US 24. This project will continue our long-time efforts to protect the wildlife and wild lands of the area.

Please save Saturday, Sept 12, 2020 on your calendars and plan to join us for another great day in the outdoors!

Creative Writers Corner: New Publications from Wild Connections Members!

Creative People Nourish and Challenge Us...

Mike Foster's *A Roving Naturalist* is a guide to nature at sites in or near metro Denver. Personal experiences with animals and birds, science, joy in being in nature, environmental awareness and conservation ethics make a good read. It is available as a free download at www.BirdingWithMike.com



In Lee Patton's novel, *Every Summer Day*, history teacher Luke Devlin starts school vacation determined to record every summer day of backcountry adventures in the Rockies and sun-splashed days in Denver. But the season veers into crisis when his older brother faces life-threatening illness and Luke becomes entangled in a love affair that's possibly as fatal as his brother's diagnosis. Get it at <https://www.boldstrokesbooks.com/books/every-summer-day-by-lee-patton-3273-b>



Mike and Lee have mapped roadless areas for Wild Connections!

Wild Connections is Seeking Your Help for Restoration Monitoring or Video Project

Wild Connections has begun 2020 monitoring for our past restoration project areas. Normally we would host public outings to these project areas, however our public events and outings are still postponed due to COVID-19 concerns. Nevertheless, if anyone is interesting in doing any monitoring hikes and reporting for Wild Connections to previous restoration areas, let us know at the contact info below.

As mentioned last month, Wild Connections is interested in developing a short 2-3 minute video portraying its conservation activities in Central Colorado. We have a need to collect more video of field activities and interviews, hopefully to be obtained this summer. We are seeking a volunteer who has the necessary video experience who would work on this project during the summer-fall seasons of 2020, including attending some of our hikes and restoration projects, depending on coronavirus restrictions. A stipend can be paid to cover expenses.

For more information, contact John Sztukowski, Conservation Director at John@Wildconnections.org.

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

Wild Connections Board and staff

Photos: *Wild Connections* banner: Jean Smith (Green Mountain, John Stansfield), Michael Soulé and Jean Smith: John Stansfield, View of James Peak in the Rain: Samuel Seymour (1820), Parkdale Quarry at the Arkansas River: EcoFlight, Congresswoman DeGette Intro to Grape Creek Virtual Tour: EcoFlight, Bighorn Sheep Canyon: EcoFlight, COGCC Wildlife Webinar Graphic: Audubon, Partially buried posts/cables at Wildcat Canyon: Misi Ballard, 2020 Restoration Project Area on the West Side of La Salle Pass: John Sztukowski, A Roving Naturalist book: Mike Foster, Every Summer Day book: Lee Patton.

Our Contact Information

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