



Aspen Wilderness Workshop  
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## AWW Newsletter February/March 2003

*“Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature’s peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves.”* John Muir

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**March 4<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday, 7:30pm at ACES:** AWW and Sister Cities will present an educational slide show by Katey Buster on her climb to the summit of Mt. Blanc, highest peak in Western Europe, from Chamonix, France (Aspen’s Sister City). She will also include many beautiful hikes in the Chamonix area and around Zermatt, Switzerland. Refreshments will be served after the presentation.

**March 6<sup>th</sup>, Thursday, 7:00pm at ACES:** Sloan Shoemaker, the Conservation Director for AWW, will be giving a presentation at the ACES Naturalist Night. The title of the talk/slideshow is “An Incendiary Topic. What do we do about Fire?” Sloan will explore fire ecology with some exciting pictures of fire and fire fighting.

**March 18<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday, 7:30pm at ACES:** Amy Gulick will be doing a slideshow on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). Amy Gulick a a photographer and writer specializing in conservation, wildlife, natural history, outdoor recreation and travel. Amidst the current oil drilling debate Amy ventured to ANWR and made a stop in Prudhoe Bay to see arctic oil development. Her Internet story “Arctic National Wildlife Refuge: Wilderness or Wasteland?” won a 2002 Lowell Thomas Travel Journalism Award.

### MUCH AFOOT ON THE WHITE RIVER NATIONAL FOREST

It is a dynamic and fluid situation on the WRNF these days. Within the next year, many decisions will be made that will have a long lasting effect on the Forest. The Workshop's resources are fully activated to ensure that these decisions will be made with the long term health of the land in mind.

The Forest is in the midst of developing its draft travel management plan (TMP). The TMP will determine the disposition of all the roads and trails on the Forest and has enormous implications for the Forest's ecological integrity. As you may recall, the TMP was the most controversial aspect of the Forest Plan Revision. In fact, it was so controversial that the WRNF had to separate it out of the revision process so they could continue moving forward with the Forest Plan. The draft TMP will probably be released sometime this summer, triggering an immediate 'all hands on deck' effort to analyze and comment on it. We'll also need to be out in the field 'ground-truthing' information in the draft TMP—a great opportunity for our members to get involved and help us out.

At the end of the last day of the 2002 Congressional Session, Congressman McInnis introduced a WRNF Wilderness Bill that would designate 58,000 acres on the WRNF as Wilderness. The most significant aspect of this bill is a new, free standing, 49,000 acre wilderness area—the Red Table Mountain Wilderness Area. Red Table mountain is the long, bald, red ridge between Reudi reservoir and the Eagle/Gypsum area. While Congressman McInnis' interest in Wilderness is quite welcome, there were several aspects of his bill that the wilderness community found unacceptably troubling. For starters, it allowed unrestricted helicopter landings by the Colorado National Guard within the new Red Table Wilderness. High altitude helicopter training is immensely important and we do not want to deprive the Guard of training opportunities. But, helicopters landing in Wilderness undermines the spirit and letter of the Wilderness Act that expressly prohibits motorized vehicles. Allowing helicopters here could set bad precedent for the entire National Wilderness Preservation System.

Congressman McInnis' bill also contained some other language we determined would be harmful to the idea of Wilderness. The Town of Gypsum gets its water from Red Table Mountain and is understandably concerned about how a Wilderness designation would affect their water rights. The Congressman's bill addresses this concern by including language that would permit the Town of Gypsum to construct any sort of water developments using motorized equipment within the Wilderness at any time in the future. Again the wilderness community found this language to be a threat to the very Wilderness Act itself and therefore felt obligated to oppose it.

Lastly, Congressman McInnis' bill contained a network of motorized routes that effectively cut the Red Table Wilderness Area into three distinct segments. Cherry-stemming, or drawing wilderness boundaries around roads like Lincoln Creek Road, is a long-used technique to deal with dead end roads leading into wilderness areas. But, creating Wilderness that is fragmented by motorized through-routes is simply creating a motorized Wilderness. Furthermore, the routes opened to motorized use in McInnis' bill

are currently closed. In other words, this bill would actually decrease the level of protection afforded to Red Table Mountain. This too was found to be an unacceptable affront to the land and the Wilderness Act.

After an initial round of tit-for-tat bashing in the press, we began a dialog with McInnis' office to discuss our concerns and explore possible solutions. At a face to face meeting in January, we agreed with the Congressman's staff to draw up our own set of Wilderness recommendations, a WRNF Wilderness Vision, and bring it back for discussion.

In the mean time, Congressman Udall floated what he termed a discussion draft of another version of a WRNF Wilderness Bill (recall the redistricting that put Eagle and Summit Counties in Udall's district.) For a number of reasons, we found Congressman Udall's draft bill a bit more to our liking. It incorporated all the acreage in McInnis' bill plus an additional 22,000 acres. It got rid of the motorized corridors fragmenting Red Table Mountain Wilderness. It reached even further to give Deep Creek Canyon a Wild and Scenic River designation. And lastly, it directed the WRNF to retain the roadless character of all the inventoried roadless areas on the Forest, codifying a recent court decision that upheld the Clinton era Roadless Initiative. Unfortunately, Udall's bill retained the same helicopter language found in McInnis' bill. More disturbingly, it expressly denied a federal reserve water right for a Wild and Scenic Deep Creek. A federal reserve water right may be the most important provision of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, a provision that has withstood the test of time. In short, Congressman Udall's bill has some really great stuff in it that we applaud, but ultimately, it's a mixed bag that from our perspective needs some tweaking. We'll be sharing our WRNF Wilderness Vision with Congressman Udall's office too.

So, expect to hear much more about all the issues in the coming weeks and months as they play themselves out. We'll maintain our vigilance to ensure protections for both the special places around us and the integrity of important legislation that give us the tools we use to protect these places.

## **MID-EAST OIL**

Something to think about (sent in): We CAN buy gasoline that's not from the Middle East. Why didn't George W. think of this? Gas rationing in the 80's worked even though we grumbled about it.

The Saudis are boycotting American goods. We should return the favor. An interesting thought is to boycott their GAS. Every time you fill up the car, you can avoid putting more money into the coffers of Saudi Arabia. Just buy from gas companies that don't import their oil from the Saudis. Nothing is more frustrating than the feeling that every time I fill up the tank, I am sending my money to people who are trying to kill me, my family, and my friends. I thought it might be interesting for you to know which oil companies are the best to buy gas from and which major companies import Middle Eastern oil (for the period 9/1/00 – 8/31/01): IMPORTERS OF MID-EAST OIL: Shell (205,742,000 barrels); Chevron/Texaco (144,332,000 barrels); Exxon/Mobil (130,082,000 barrels); Marathon/Speedway (117,740,000 barrels); Amoco (62,231,000 barrels). If you do the math at \$30/barrel, these imports amount to over \$18 billion!  
NON-IMPORTERS OF MID-EAST OIL: Citgo, Sunoco, Conoco, Sinclair, BP/Phillips, Hess (all import 0 barrels from Mid-East).

## **AWW GETS A NEW HOME**

On the first of April, AWW will begin moving into its new office in the Yellow Brick Building in Aspen's west end. This new home will be the first official AWW office since our brief residency in the Wheeler Opera House many moons ago. This is a very exciting event as it marks the Workshop's evolution from a purely volunteer organization to one staffed by full-time environmental professionals operating out of a permanent, publicly accessible office. The light and spacious Yellow Brick office will allow AWW's dusty archival files stored in various board members' closets and garages to be assembled in one place for the first time ever. The office will also give AWW a publicly accessible and identifiable 'place,' raising our community profile and strengthening our presence. Ultimately, this move into a new permanent home will simply empower us to do an even better job at what we do—keeping wild places wild.

We are planning an open-house office-warming celebration around mid-April once we get settled in. Details will be announced in our April newsletter and local media. Keep your eyes peeled and come help us celebrate!

## **COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR HIRED**

The Aspen Wilderness Workshop is pleased to announce the hiring of Delia Malone to fill the newly created position of Communications Director. Delia's responsibilities will include fundraising, membership development, general office management, care and feeding of the board, grassroots organizing, special events, and development of a strong donor program. Delia's position officially begins in mid-March. The April newsletter will carry a more in-depth introduction of Delia, so stay tuned.

## **IT'S A GIRL!**

Rachel and Jamey Fidel (our previous Conservation Director) are the proud parents of a beautiful baby girl! Ayla Sky joined us early on February 9<sup>th</sup> at 3:40am. She is a lightweight 5 lb. 8 oz. with a tuft of hair and loving support from all of her grandparents who are by her side. Rachel, Jamey and Ayla are all home and doing well. We know they are looking forward to hearing from you.

## **THANK YOU MEMBERSHIP!**

AWW member were exceedingly generous in their response to the holiday fundraising letter. We thank you all! Member financial support is a major part of our budget and we couldn't make it without you.