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Marmot Creek Proposed Wilderness: Keeping it Wild

by John Stansfield, Pikes Peak Group Wilderness Chair

MEETINGS

GENERAL MEETINGS

General Meetings are usually held at the Colorado Division of Wildlife, 4255 Sinton Road in Colorado Springs, approximately one block south of Garden of the Gods Road on the east side of I-25. Use the rear entrance to the building.

No January General Meeting

Tuesday, February 13 7 pm

Please join Roger Ratcliff and Donna Young as they discuss their two years working on wildlife conservation in China. Tuesday, February 13th, 7 PM, Colorado Division of Wildlife.

Tuesday, March 13 7 pm

Come and hear about the Wild Connections Conservation Plan and how it will protect the Pike-San Isabel National Forest for biodiversity, wildlife and sustainable human uses. Wild Connections is the citizen's management recommendation for the upcoming forest plan revision that will decide the future of the Pike-San Isabel for the next 15-20 years.. Pikes Peak Group has been involved in this citizen-scientist effort from the beginning, working with the Upper Arkansas and South Platte Project to inventory roadless areas and apply both common sense and science to forest management. A slide show will be followed by discussion and suggestions on how you can be part of the Forest Service planning process.

Coming in April: Paul Bell, Environmental Psychology researcher.

Conservation and ExCom Meetings

Tuesday, Jan 16 6:30 pm

(Continued on page 2)

The Central Colorado Wilderness Coalition (CCWC), co-sponsored by the Pikes Peak Sierra Club, is promoting ten pristine roadless areas, known as the Wild Ten, for congressional wilderness designation. Marmot Peak is a proposed addition to the existing Buffalo Peaks Wilderness. See Calendar for details on the winter Wild Ten hikes.

The 9,300-acre Marmot Peak proposed wilderness is directly adjacent to the Buffalo Peaks Wilderness, with 11,729 foot Marmot Peak just south of East Buffalo Peak. Scenic views of rugged and rocky Marmot Peak, the rounder

twin-Buffalo Peaks, and the high Collegiate Peaks to the west are seen from the area. Opportunities for backcountry recreation in solitude abound, with hiking featured from spring to fall.

The predominate vegetation in the Marmot Peak roadless area is lodgepole pine with areas of aspen

on the northeast, ponderosa pine, and pinyon-juniper woodlands on the south, areas of bristlecone and limber pine in the north and Douglas-fir in the center and on the southeast. Located on a river divide, the headwaters of Salt Creek flow easterly through the Salt Creek roadless area and on to the South Fork of the South Platte River, while Four-mile

Creek is a tributary of the Arkansas River to the west.

In addition to black bear, mountain lion, elk, mule deer, and bighorn, boreal toads, a candidate for listing under the Endangered Species Act,

are found here. There is a proposed Research Natural Area, and proximity to the Heckendorf State Wildlife Area and adjacent wildernesses to the west across the Arkansas River provides good wildlife linkages. See www.roadless.net for a map and more information.

See **Calendar** for details on the January, February and March Proposed Wilderness Area Hikes



Update: Browns Canyon Wilderness Status

by John Stansfield, Pikes Peak Group Wilderness Chair

Sadly, the Browns Canyon Wilderness bill did not make it under the lame duck wire before Congress adjourned late Saturday night, December 9, 2006. Jeff Widen from Colorado Environmental Coalition has some pertinent thoughts on the matter: "When it became clear late Friday afternoon that Brown's Canyon wasn't going to be part of the last legislative package in the 109th Congress, I and I'm sure many others felt a sharp sense of both disappointment and finality. After countless hours of organizing citizen and interest group support, focused lobbying in Washington and here in Colorado, and intense negotiations over boundaries and water language, victory seemed so close, yet in the end eluded us.

"So what snatched victory from us weren't shortcomings on our part, but rather political events--intraparty squabbles, unexpected last-minute opposition from the National Rifle Assn, and more. In some ways, the past year indeed looked like the subtitle of the Lemony Snicket movie -- 'A Series of Unfortunate Events.' Therefore, everyone who worked on this campaign should feel a healthy sense of pride and accomplishment. Enacting wilderness legislation is never easy, and the fact that Browns wasn't signed into law (this year) should in no way diminish our sense of achievement. Not only have we as a team accomplished great things; we've also set the stage for future victory for Brown's Canyon, hopefully in the 110th Congress."

Thanks to all who spoke up for Browns Canyon. Please keep your pens handy. The 110th Congress should be very interesting.