



**COLORADO MOUNTAIN CLUB**

**WESTERN SLOPE GROUP**

**Canyon to Crest Call  
Western Slope Group  
December 2023**





Photo of WSGer, Jennifer Roach, and her climbing partner/friend, Cynthia Adams, from Peak 12,986' (U 4) directly west of Coxcomb Peak in the West Fork Valley. Note the hole in the rock and the impressive spires. Photo taken by Charlie Winger. [See below on how to submit your favorite photo for the newsletter!](#)

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## Conservation Corner

by Claire McCullough, WSG Conservation Chair

### OURAY RANGER DISTRICT SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENT ON PROPOSED BLUE LAKES VISITOR USE PLAN

Due to increased popularity over the last decade in the beautiful and cherished Blue Lakes area, the GMUG Ouray Ranger District is proposing to limit the number of visitors that may camp or day hike. These efforts will hopefully restore, protect and reduce the environmental impact of recreation on the 16,200 acre Mt. Sneffels Wilderness and surrounding areas including Mt. Sneffels Peak, Blaine Basin, Yankee Boy Basin and the Lower East Dallas area. It is estimated that 35,000 individuals recreate in the Mt. Sneffels Wilderness area annually with most of the visits occurring between June and October. The highest recorded number of hikers present on the Blue Lakes Trail in one day was 509 people. A draft Environmental Assessment was recently released and proposes a permit system for overnight and day use. GMUG has prepared a [helpful fact sheet outlining the details](#). On November 6, 2023, a public hearing was held, and the proposed plan received overwhelming support from Ouray County residents. Concerns were raised regarding enforcement, the number of permits available for hiking and camping, parking, and waste management. Please consider submitting a comment about your experiences in the area or opinion about the proposed permitted use. [Comments may be made online by following this link](#). They may also be mailed or hand delivered by December 3, 2023 to Ouray Ranger District Attn: Dana Gardunio, 2505 South Townsend Ave., Montrose, CO 81401.

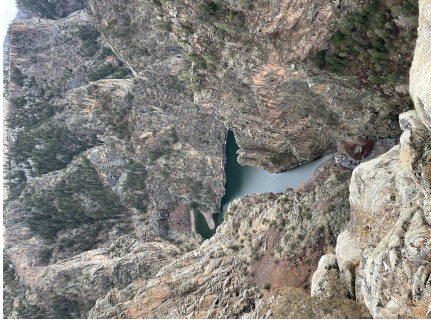
### ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT TURNS FIFTY THIS MONTH

The Endangered Species Act was passed fifty years ago on December 28, 1973. This powerful tool was crafted to protect and conserve endangered and threatened species and their habitat. The ESA has prevented the extinction of 99% of the animals and plants under its care. Sadly, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife recently finalized a rule removing 21 species from the list due to extinction. The forever lost species include eight birds and a flower from Hawaii, a tropical lowland bird and fruit bat from Guam, and several freshwater mussels. They are now a part of a list of 650 species in the United States that are most likely lost due to extinction. This is a wakeup call for swift action that must be taken to protect more natural habitat, address climate change and stop the exploitation of species.

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## Trip Report: Curecanti Creek Trail Hike

Here are some photos from a recent CMC hike on the Curecanti Creek Trail downstream of Blue Mountain Reservoir. The weather was less than ideal, but it made for some good photo ops. Photos by Brenda Leach.





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## Durango Area CMC Members Update

We currently have 2 Durango members getting trained to become leaders!!

We're looking for Durango area volunteers to help plan activities (for which one does not have to be a leader) and we're also looking for trip leaders. Trip leader school is free and online! We will be updating happenings in this newsletter monthly. Contact us at [WSGofCMC@gmail.com](mailto:WSGofCMC@gmail.com) for more info or to get involved!

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## February WSG Social Gathering in Delta

Starting in 2024, the WSG will be organizing social gatherings on even-numbered months. We'll hold them in brewpubs or other similar venues in Grand Junction, Paonia, Montrose, Ridgway or Durango. February will be in Delta with details forthcoming. If you have a venue or town that you'd like to recommend, please let us know at [WSGofCMC@gmail.com](mailto:WSGofCMC@gmail.com). Stay tuned!

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## WSG Facebook Group

We have a private Facebook group called "CMC Western Slope Group". This group is available to post photos, announce last minute trips, trip reminders or activities. If you're interested, send a request in Facebook to join the group.

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## ALL CMC OUTINGS : [The CMC Trips List & Map](#)

Guests must now create an account and sign a waiver before signing up for trips and may attend up to 2 trips. If a trip is full, please sign up on the waitlist as there are participants that may cancel.

**TRIPS:** All of our activities are in one place at [Western Slope Group Calendar](#)

Sunday, 12/3. [Hiking - Kokopelli Loops Trail \(Mack Ridge\)](#). Moderate. Daniel Glatter

12/3-16. [Patagonia](#). Adventure travel, fee.

Saturday, 12/9. [Hiking - Electric Hills](#). Moderate. Anne Keil.

Friday, 12/15. [Basic Snowshoe - Grand Mesa, County Line](#). Moderate. Anne Keil.

Friday, 12/15. [Nordic Skiing - Grand Mesa](#). Moderate. Brenda Leach.

Monday, 1/15. [Backcountry Nordic Skiing – Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park](#). Moderate. Gore Range Group.

2/8-12, 2024. [Yellowstone](#). Adventure travel, fee.

2/16-25, 2024. [Guatemala](#). Adventure travel, fee.

4/25-28, 2024. \*Re-added from member feedback\* Capitol Reef tent/car camping and hiking, for more info and to register: WSGofCMC@gmail.com. Space limited.

8/19-23, 2024. [In State Outing, YMCA of the Rockies Estes Park](#). State CMC, fee.

\*\*All members and guests must sign a new liability waiver with the new website

COVID policy for trips: [updated Dec 9, 2022](#)

## PRESENTATIONS / COURSES / EVENTS

**CMC Schools & Classes Webpage:** \*\*For some classes and schools that are offered on the full CMC calendar (typically on the front range or via ZOOM), we can arrange field days on this side of the state but need a minimum number of participants between the various CMC groups. Please let us know if something interests you.

**Trip Leader Training: We are seeking trip leaders!** The free training consists of self paced online modules and one training hike plus Wilderness First Aid. Leader training online is also available to current leaders as a refresher.

**AIARE:** Available from CMC on the Front Range. Click [here](#) and scroll down to see the schedule.

**Wilderness First Aid:** Coming in 2024. Schedule for other state locations [here](#).

**WFA Instructors Wanted:** Are you WFA or higher (WFR, medical professional, etc.) certified and interested in helping recertify/teach WFA to our members and leaders locally in 2024? More information [here](#). Teaching also renews your certification and the training is free.

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## Seeking Monthly Newsletter Content

We'd like your help! If you have requests for newsletter content or would like to contribute, let us know! The deadline to submit information, articles or photos is the **25th of each month** for the following month's newsletter. Email the WSG newsletter editor, Brenda Leach, at WSGNewsEditor@gmail.com. Here are our [past newsletters](#).

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## Western Slope Group Council

Chair & Outings Chair: Anne Keil (Montrose)

Vice Chair & Newsletter Editor: Brenda Leach (Ridgway)

Treasurer: John Broadbooks (Montrose)

Secretary: Jill Mattoon (Ouray)

Conservation Chair: Claire McCullough (Grand Junction)

We're on the CMC website at [Western Slope Group, CMC Groups - Colorado Mountain Club](#). Upcoming WSG Council meetings will be held January 22, March 18 and May 6. Zoom availability, time and location will be determined closer to the meeting dates. WSG members are welcome to attend.

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