



COLORADO MOUNTAIN CLUB

WESTERN SLOPE GROUP

Canyon to Crest Call Western Slope Group March 2025



Winter hiking on Charlie Winger's trip to the Gunnison Gorge. Photo by Charlie. [See below on how to submit your favorite photo for the newsletter!](#)

Montrose Between Seasons Outdoor Expo March 15,

10am - 6pm, FREE

MARCH 15TH *Free Event!*
10 AM - 6PM



Join us at the Montrose County Event Center for the inaugural Between Seasons Outdoor Expo! A celebration of local innovations and outdoor recreation.

The Montrose County Events Center is premiering a "Between Seasons Outdoor Expo" to showcase the innovation and opportunities that exist on the Western Slope. The CMC Western Slope Group has been invited to host a booth to provide information and to teach a short class on Hiking Safety. **If you are interested in helping staff the booth or want to help with programming, please contact our new Membership and Marketing Chair, Tom Maceyka at tom.maceyka@gmail.com.**

Hiking the Camel Back Trail



The following was submitted to the WSG Facebook page by WSG member Doug Hemken. Doug has said that if anyone needs more details on finding the correct access road or tips for finding the trail, they are welcome to contact him directly at d_hemken@yahoo.com.

After visiting the Juan Rivera panel last fall, I wanted to hike the Camel Back as well. Finally went back, yesterday.

Looking at the summit register I found that only two non-CMCers have signed in since 2022 (there were also some recent footprints most of the way up). I was delighted to see the 2022 names included Charlie Winger, An Keil, Babs Schmerler, as well as Cynthia Adams.

This seems to be a CMC West Slope thing.

Challenging route-finding, since the trail disappears in a number of places ... but lots of cairns. Class 2, I'd say, with patient route-finding.

After a bit of experimentation, I think the best approach road is the "Canyon Rim Cutoff", starting from Banner Road/CO 348. Not named on any maps I have, but signed here and there as you drive. You need moderately high clearance - Tow-me-home Road and Roubideau Rim Road both require really high clearance. Tow-me-home starting from Cedar Rd is more direct, if you have the vehicle for it.

Gorgeous country - I'd go back!

2025 In State Outing at Snow Mountain Ranch

The 2025 ISO will be held at Snow Mountain Ranch near Fraser, Colorado, on September 1-5. The CMC will be occupying two 8-room lodges that will comfortably accommodate 40. Participant fees cover all meals,

entertainment and lodging. [Click here for more info and on how to register.](#) Space is still available. Activities include 4 days of hiking in and around Winter Park, Fraser and the west side of Rocky Mountain National Park, lots to do for the non-hikers, Happy Hour every night, live music, guest speakers and CMC trivial pursuit. Note that only 1 session will be run this year so register early!

Conservation Corner

by **Claire McCullough, WSG Conservation Chair**

"Distress flag" hung by climbers from El Capitan in Yosemite National Park. Photo by Tracy Barbires, San Francisco Chronicle



It seems as if every day there is another news story involving efforts by the current administration to desecrate our public lands - national treasures that generations of Americans enjoy. According to Politico, over 4,400 federal public lands stewards have been or will be fired. The U.S. Forest Service is firing 3,400 employees (10 percent of its workforce.) The Department of Interior is terminating 2,300 employees including 1,000 Park Service employees. Additionally, 370 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employees have been dismissed. The USFWS firings disproportionately targeted biologists and natural resource professionals.

This government sponsored cruelty is putting our public lands at risk of harm and resource exploitation. A New York Times reporter spoke with a wilderness ranger in the Cascade Mountains who lost her position as part of this effort to "trim the fat." The ranger, along with six coworkers, cared for 500 miles of popular trails. In one recent season they monitored 70 backcountry toilets disposing of more than 1000 piles of human waste and carried out 600 pounds of trash. The firings have also disrupted the lives of the patriotic caretakers of our public lands leaving some without housing and many without future employment plans.

The importance of protecting our beloved public lands is not a partisan issue. According to the 2024 Conservation in the West Poll conducted by Colorado College, 52% of Republicans, 72% of Independents and 89% of Democrats favor conservation efforts over energy production. National Parks and other incredible landscapes are shared and enjoyed by all Americans, regardless of age, background, political beliefs or religion.

Also of importance are the economic benefits of caring for our public lands. The Durango Herald reported that Mesa Verde National Park generated 75.6 million dollars in economic output in 2023. Visitors in nearby communities spent 60 million dollars in the same year. The economy has changed in western Colorado. Data collected by Colorado Mesa University revealed that outdoor recreation directly accounts for 8.4% of employment in Mesa County and 4.8% of gross domestic products.

Given the current state of disruption, many of us fear for the future and feel helpless. Ecological grief can be overwhelming especially for those of us who love and cherish our backcountry experiences. How can we heal ourselves and protect our fragile public lands? Please consider taking action. There has never been a more important time to get involved. Aspen Public Radio recently interviewed Senator Michael Bennet and he made it clear that the voices of the people in western communities and throughout the Rocky Mountain region must be heard.

There are many ways to get involved. [The simplest way is to send a message to Congressman Jeff Hurd via this Wilderness Workshop](#). Another way is to call Representative Hurd. He may be reached at 202-225-4676. Finally, if you prefer "boots on the ground" involvement, non-profit organizations such as the [San Juan Mountain Association](#) and [Colorado Canyons Association](#), vital partners of the San Juan National Forest and local BLM offices, are continually recruiting volunteers.



Durango Area CMC Update

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!

Join Mike Foster & SJMA for 2 birding trips May 10 & 24, see below!

Contact us our Durango Area Chair, Dan King, at WSGofCMC@gmail.com for more info or to get involved!

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. This Facebook group is for CMC members only.

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

Guests must 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 cancel.

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

Thursday, 2/27. [Nordic Skiing - Trout Lake](#). Easy - Moderate. Brenda Leach.

Saturday, 3/1. [Intermediate Snowshoe - Old McClure Pass Trail](#). Moderate. Denver Group.

Wednesday, 3/5. [Nordic Skiing - Priest Lake](#). Moderate. Brenda Leach

3/11-14. [Resort Skiing/Snowboarding - Purgatory Ski Resort](#). Moderate. Pikes Peak Group.

Sunday, 3/16. [Resort Skiing/Snowboarding – Monarch Mountain Resort](#). Moderate. Boulder Group.

Sunday, 3/23. [Hiking - Kokopelli Loops Trail - Horsethief Bench Loop](#). Moderate. Anne Keil. WAITLISTED
looking for second trip leader, please contact Anne

Saturday, 3/29. [Hiking - Electric Hills](#). Easy. Anne Keil.

4/23-27. [Hiking - Escalante UT Multi-Day Hiking](#). Waitlisted. Sign up for trips as they are posted or during the camping trip.

Thursday, 4/24. [Hiking - Grand Staircase- Escalante National Monument - Escalante Canyon](#). THIS TRIP IS FOR ESCALANTE MULTI-DAY CAMPING PARTICIPANTS ONLY. Moderate. Victor Ketellapper.

Friday, 4/25. [Hiking - Grand Staircase- Escalante National Monument - Cosmic Ashtray](#). THIS TRIP IS FOR ESCALANTE MULTI-DAY CAMPING PARTICIPANTS ONLY. Moderate. Charlie Winger.

4/25-27. [Backpack - ADV BKP: Dominguez Canyon Wilderness](#). Difficult. Denver Group.

5/9-11. [Backpack - Canyonlands - Elephant Canyon Loop to Druid Arch](#). Difficult. Denver Group.

Saturday, 5/10. [Seminar - Bird Hikes Along the Florida River South of Durango](#). Easy. Mike Foster via the San Juan Mountain Association.

Saturday, 5/24. [Seminar - Bird Hikes Along the Florida River South of Durango](#). Easy. Mike Foster via the San Juan Mountain Association.

10/1 or TBD [Palisade Plunge Hiker Shuttle](#). Difficult. Anne Keil.

PRESENTATIONS / COURSES / EVENTS

SAVE THE DATE! Saturday, 11/1. Join us for the CMC WSG Annual Dinner in Montrose featuring mountaineer and author Dave Cooper! Dave wrote [Colorado Scrambles](#) and [Colorado Snow Climbs](#). At the Annual Dinner, Dave will entertain us with his "Travels on the Wilder Side" presentation. Stay tuned!

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 and avalanche training. Leader training online is also available to current leaders as a refresher.

ATA and AIARE: ATA- Tentative for January 2026 on Grand Mesa. Schedule for avalanche training courses by CMC in other locations see [cmc.org](#), Avalanche Education.

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](#).

Western Slope Group Council

Chair & Outings Chair: Anne Keil (Montrose)

Vice Chair, Newsletter Editor, Annual Dinner Organizer: Brenda Leach (Ridgway)

Treasurer, State Council Rep: John Broadbooks (Montrose)

Secretary: Jill Mattoon (Ouray)

Conservation Chair: Claire McCullough (Grand Junction)

Durango Area Chair: Dan King (Durango)

Marketing & Membership: Tom Maceyka (Ridgway)

We're on the CMC website at [Western Slope Group, CMC Groups - Colorado Mountain Club](#). 2025 WSG Council meetings will be held on 3/13, 5/19, 7/10, 9/4 and 11/13. Zoom availability, time and location will be determined closer to the meeting dates. WSG members are welcome to attend.



Colorado Mountain Club
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