



**SIERRA CLUB**  
FOUNDED 1892

# PEAK & PRAIRIE

SIERRA CLUB  
ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER

VOLUME 47, No. 4

[www.rmc.sierraclub.org](http://www.rmc.sierraclub.org)

FALL 2013

## Solar open house set for October 13

Mark your calendars: Sierra Club's Rocky Mountain Chapter (RMC) is hosting a solar house party/open house on Sunday, Oct. 13, 2013 from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. The event will be held at the solar home of Centennial, Colo., Sierra Club member, Jim Hart. Jim has taken advantage of a special program offered through the Sierra Club and Sungevity, a solar company that is installing solar panels on homes not only in Colorado, but in several states, using local installers

Whether you buy or lease your new solar power panels, you will—as part of a special promotion offered in October only—get a \$1,000 cash gift card back from Sungevity if you decide to go solar. A \$750 gift card is offered during the rest of the year. And here's another great advantage for you as a Sierra Club supporter: every solar system installed sends \$1,000 back to Sierra Club's local efforts—big benefits for your RMC.

If you would like to see Jim's solar panels firsthand, this will be the perfect opportunity. Join us to learn more about what it's like to go solar with Sungevity from a Sierra Club solar homeowner, get updates about the Sierra Club's local activity in Colorado, get all your solar questions answered by a Sungevity representative, and learn how solar can save you money on your utility bills.

"It was our intention to make the space we live in appropriate to the environment," Jim, whose solar panels were installed in July, said. "We wanted to use renewable energy as much as possible."

If you are interested in attending the solar open house, please contact Allison Weston, Sierra Club Business Partnerships Marketing Coordinator and solar

specialist at 415-977-5668 or [www.sierraclub.org/RMCSolarParty2013](http://www.sierraclub.org/RMCSolarParty2013) to RSVP.

For more information about whether your home would be a good fit for solar, go to [www.sierraclub.org/sungevity](http://www.sierraclub.org/sungevity).



**Jim Hart installed solar panels on his Centennial home.**

Photo provided by Jim Hart



## Browns Canyon slated for wilderness protection

### RMC hikers welcome Brune

By Carol Carpenter  
RMC Communications Team

Sierra Club Rocky Mountain Chapter (RMC) activists love to show off their beloved and beautiful Colorado. That's exactly what several of them did earlier this year when they escorted Sierra Club Director Michael Brune and his family on a short hike into Browns Canyon that could soon be designated as a national monument and receive wilderness protection.

A 20,000-acre wilderness region along the Arkansas River between Buena Vista and Salida,

Browns Canyon, managed by the Bureau of Land Management, is a scenic, natural place where wild-life live and thrive mostly undisturbed by humans. It is a whitewater, climbing, hiking, hunting and horseback-riding paradise. It is an unspoiled area where people can savor long stretches of solitude.

Many Sierra Club members already know that Colorado's Sen. Mark Udall ([www.markudall.senate.gov](http://www.markudall.senate.gov)) is working on the national monument designation that, if approved, would allow only legal existing roads and trails to provide public access while preserving the core of the canyon area.

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Photo by Michael Ace

**ELECTION ISSUE 2013**  
SEE PAGES 14 & 15  
FOR CANDIDATE STATEMENTS AND BALLOT

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## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR of the Rocky Mountain Chapter, Joshua Ruschhaupt

We are living in paradigm-shifting times. Some shifts are good, some are bad. Here's a big one: Colorado's climate and weather are completely unpredictable. We have:

- gone from record-setting massive winter snowpack to record-setting minimal snowpack—within two winters.
- gone from unsettling drought to unprecedented rains and flooding.
- seen many all-green forests turn to peppered and vastly red/brown to grey-dead from bark beetle damage (see forest health article on page 15).

What's going on? The climate is shifting, that's what. Nature finds balance and equilibrium, and when humans influence that, nature finds its own ways to re-balance. Sometimes there is a violent border between yin and yang. Rebalancing can take a long time, making that distance between yin and yang a turbulent no man's land of trouble. That's the bad paradigm shift. What about the good?

Your Sierra Club Rocky Mountain Chapter (RMC) is consistently working to improve itself in many ways. We are hiring a new conservation programs coordinator, and we are coordinating with the national Beyond Natural Gas Campaign to hire a Campaign representative. Along with several other improvements, including revitalization of the **Poudre Canyon Group** and **Roaring Fork Group Executive Committees**, and the creation of the **Denver Metro Network**, we are becoming stronger every day.

In the news recently are a couple of great paradigm shifts! The RMC **Indian Peaks Group** has been working diligently with the national Sierra Club Beyond Coal Campaign and the RMC to support the municipalization of Boulder's energy supply switch to increased renewables, casting-off an historically reluctant and coal-heavy Xcel Energy. Possibly because of this defection and pressure in favor of more renewable energy sooner, even Xcel energy is having an epiphany of sorts if this quote from their Sept. 10, 2013, press release is any indication: "for the first time ever, we are adding cost competitive utility scale solar to the system" (<http://goo.gl/cjpsk>).

Let that sink in for a moment... paired with a recent and unprecedented coal lease sale in Wyoming closing without a single bid from energy companies this summer, Xcel's statement that solar energy wins as a cheaper and more effective solution than traditional fossil fuels is the dawn of a new era!

Keep in mind the paradigm is just shifting, meaning we are still in the midst of the curmudgeons of yore, who will fight tooth and nail to drag us back into the fossil fuel era, or will ideologically mandate landscape-scale cutting and burning of our forests for biofuels, or to simply "drill, baby, drill!" And they'll justify that with very sneaky methods, new technology or pseudo-scientific reasoning. This is why your Sierra Club RMC does everything within our power to catapult us faster into the renewable energy paradigm.

If we don't, then the "all of the above" solutions being proffered by most of our decision-makers in leadership are simply keeping us heading for the maelstrom, caught in the turbulent and vast swirling boundary between nature's yin and yang.

Here is at least one highlight of progress made this year by our various committees and teams, with too little room to report everything:

The **RMC Executive Committee** formed a search committee to recruit, interview and recommend a completely new **Denver Metro Network (DMN)** leadership

team. The DMN has been appointed and is beginning to work on conservation issues as shown on page 6.

The **Legislative Committee (LegCom)** has been more active than ever, fighting "bad" bills, and helping legislators win the "good" ones. Please read the LegCom Chair's (Mary Edwards) May 2013 post-legislative session report on our newsletter archive (<http://goo.gl/tye2e4>). Though we weren't successful in getting our "setback loophole" bill to appear (the concept was attached to a bill that was never presented), which would have closed the loophole allowing oil and gas drilling to occur closer to inhabited buildings than the state's minimum standards, we did have big success elsewhere. One example is our lobbying to support SB 252, which doubled the rural electric Renewable Energy Standard from 10 to 20 percent by 2020! This committee is already planning for 2014 (page 4).

The **Legal Committee (LawCom)** tracks multiple Sierra Club legal cases, but one we worked on directly was settled out of court. LawCom, prompted and coordinated with the RMC **Blue River Group**, challenged Vail Resorts to defend lynx habitat north of the Breckenridge Ski Area, called "Peak 6." Represented by the DU Law Clinic and co-challenged with Rocky Mountain Wild, we forced Vail Resorts to think outside of the box about what they were doing. We negotiated with them on significant changes to their plans, with a few hundred thousand dollars going to local lynx habitat restoration efforts.

LawCom also works in tandem with our national Sierra Club **Environmental Law Program**, most notably with Boulder-based attorney Eric Huber. Eric has done excellent work coordinating with and supporting our oil and gas legal efforts, including some support of local citizen groups fighting the industry. We intervened in defending both efforts of the City of Longmont's improved regulations and citizen initiative to ban fracking from two separate legal attacks from the State of Colorado and the Colorado Oil and Gas Association. We have also defended the Roan Plateau from oil and gas drilling; we submitted comments on the White River National Forest oil and gas leasing plan; we wrote comments for the new lynx critical habitat rule and much more.

Our outings offerings have been increasing among the RMC groups, the RMC **outings leaders**, the RMC **Gay and Lesbian Sierrans** and the RMC's **Denver and Boulder Valley Inner City Outings** programs. The latter BVICO had an excellent service-learning trip to Mission: Wolf, a wolf sanctuary in southern Colorado, with the national Sierra Club's "Best Internship on Earth" program (video: <http://goo.gl/HCSAHG>). Our Meetup page (<http://meetup.com/sierraclubrmc>) has been resulting in waitlisted outings.

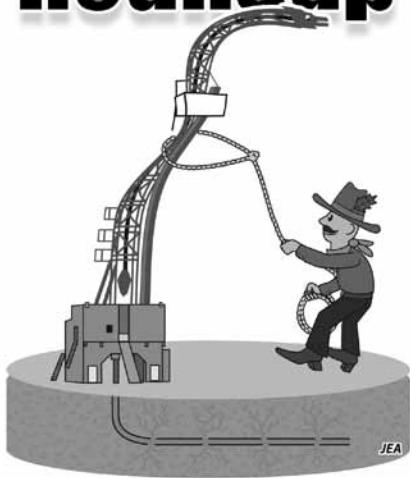
Pages 6 and 7 have great summaries of activities from the RMC's **DMN, Indian Peaks Group, Sangre de Cristo Group, Poudre Canyon Group, Roaring Fork Group, and Uncompahgre Group**.

The **Conservation Committee** continues to monitor and work on issues including agriculture, energy, environmental justice, federal facilities, groundwater, mining, pesticides, sprawl/affordable housing, toxics, transportation, water quality/habitats and wilderness.



*continued on page 5...*

# Colorado Oil & Gas Roundup



By Lauren Swain, Chair  
RMC Beyond Oil and Gas Team

Do you want to help stop toxic hydraulic fracturing (fracking) operations from expanding into more areas across our beautiful state, damaging public and environmental health with chemical spills and harmful air emissions? If so, here are

## Front Range fracking fight heading to November 2013 ballots

two things you can do:

1) vote, 2) contact me at [lauren.swain@rmc.sierraclub.org](mailto:lauren.swain@rmc.sierraclub.org) to help Sierra Club address oil and gas impacts in Colorado.

Yes, please vote and encourage your friends and neighbors to vote and join our RMC Beyond Oil and Gas Campaign to protect Colorado's land, air and water from drilling and fracking impacts and promote a renewable energy future.

Sierra Club has endorsed ballot measures in the cities of Boulder, Loveland, Fort Collins, Broomfield and Lafayette that would place a moratorium or ban on drilling or fracking in city limits, and we need your help to pass these critical measures. If the initiatives are not adopted, Colorado law allows oil and gas operators to bring trucks, heavy equipment and toxic chemicals onto landowners' property and drill as close as 500 feet from homes and even closer if they are re-entering an old well.

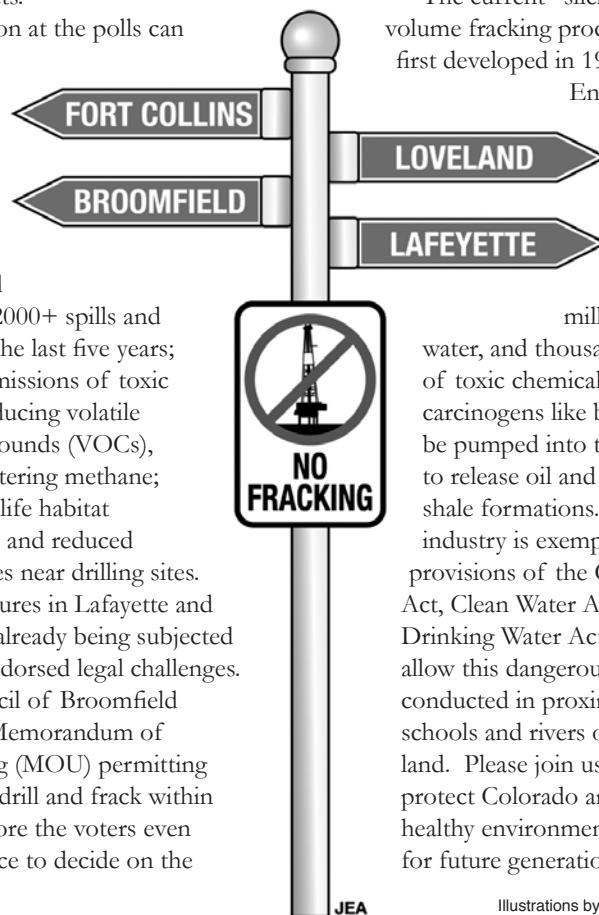
We encourage our Sierra Club members to look for every opportunity to support your local ballot initiatives that foster renewable energy and reform the laws, regulations and agencies we depend on to protect our land, air and water from oil

and gas impacts.

Your decision at the polls can make a huge difference in holding the industry accountable for its terrible record

in Colorado: 2000+ spills and releases over the last five years; ongoing air emissions of toxic and ozone-inducing volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and climate-altering methane; as well as wildlife habitat fragmentation and reduced property values near drilling sites.

Ballot measures in Lafayette and Loveland are already being subjected to industry-endorsed legal challenges. The city council of Broomfield has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) permitting operations to drill and frack within city limits before the voters even have the chance to decide on the measure.



The current "slickwater" high-volume fracking process, which was first developed in 1997 by Mitchell

Energy, requires approximately 1,000 truck trips, over 1

million gallons of water, and thousands of gallons of toxic chemicals, including carcinogens like benzene, to be pumped into the ground to release oil and gas from shale formations. Because the industry is exempt from major provisions of the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act, we cannot allow this dangerous process to be conducted in proximity to homes, schools and rivers or on federal land. Please join us in the fight to protect Colorado and promote a healthy environment and climate for future generations.

Illustrations by James E. Anderson

## West Slope grapples with BLM leasing and toxic spills

By Lauren Swain, Chair  
RMC Beyond Oil and Gas Team

First, the good news. A recent settlement in a lawsuit, brought by Sierra Club and other groups in 2011 to address air quality impacts of oil and gas production in the Roan Plateau area, could save thousands of acres of federal land from harm caused by new drilling projects. The federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) agreed to re-evaluate the impact of 34 projects it had previously approved, which would have allowed for drilling of roughly 1,300 new wells.

"We're pleased that BLM is reconsidering these projects and finally addressing the smog and toxic air pollution they cause," Earthjustice attorney Michael Freeman said in a statement. "This settlement will allow the agency and the public to better protect the health of Coloradans, and to preserve the remarkable scenic vistas in our state."

"This settlement is a solid first step towards holding the natural gas and oil industry responsible for the air pollution it causes while drilling and fracking," said Deb Nardone, director of Sierra Club's Beyond Natural Gas Campaign. "Taking a hard look at the air pollution that results from drilling will further demonstrate why the

federal government should be focusing on clean energy rather than climate disruptive fossil fuels."

Colorado is fortunate to have been granted this limited reprieve given that about 95 percent of new wells will be subject to fracking techniques that involve the introduction of thousands of gallons of toxic fluid into shale formations a mile underground, and storage of toxic produced water on the surface in holding ponds or in deep injection wells, which has contributed to earthquakes in Colorado and elsewhere.

Since the oil and gas industry is currently exempt from major provisions of federal laws such as the Clean Air Act and Safe Drinking Water Act, the BLM has recently proposed weak new rules to manage fracking on federal lands. According to a Sierra Club press release, over 900,000 people submitted comments on the rules to the Obama administration asking for "an end to the assault on our public lands and to protect our air, water and communities."

Nardone announced, "the Sierra Club is alarmed and disappointed that the Obama Administration is putting the American public's health and well-being at risk with these proposed rules. Although no amount of regulation will make fracking acceptable or safe, there is no excuse

to let drillers pollute our water and air, while degrading our public lands. The proposed BLM rules fail to take all of the obvious and critical steps necessary to address these basic health and environmental concerns. The hundreds of thousands of public comments the agency is receiving send a strong message to President Obama and Secretary Jewell that dirty and destructive drilling and fracking do not belong in our national climate plan, on our public lands or next to our communities."

This year, near the foot of the Roan Plateau, one of the most damaging toxic spills from oil and gas operations that have been reported in recent years contaminated groundwater near Parachute Creek, a tributary of the Colorado River, for months on end. The cleanup operation continues, just four miles from the town of Parachute. Since December 2012, toxic fluid released by a faulty pressure gauge at the Williams Midstream gas processing plant has polluted soil, air and water. The plant handles large volumes of "natural gas liquids" (NGL) from nearby wells scattered across the flanks and base of the Plateau, including many drilled and fracked on federal property leased by the BLM.

Western Colorado Congress (WCC) reports that "Colorado Department

*continued on page 9...*

# Legislative Forum planned for February

Save the date! On Saturday, Feb. 22, 2014, Sierra Club Rocky Mountain Chapter and the Audubon Society of Greater Denver will co-sponsor their annual Legislative Forum.

The forum will be held at First Plymouth Church, 3501 S. Colorado Blvd. (Hampden and Colorado Blvd.), Denver. The price is \$12 if you sign up on the RMC Website in January or February or if you send a check to the RMC office (1536 Wynkoop Street, 4-B, Denver, CO 80202). The cost is \$15 at the door.

This event is a fun opportunity to meet like-minded folks and learn about what is going on in our state legislature. A continental breakfast and lunch are included in the price of your ticket. ♻️

## Pesticide Committee to address GMOs in 2014

By Angela Medbury  
RMC Pesticide Committee

The Rocky Mountain Chapter Pesticide Committee in 2014 will include work on genetically modified organisms (GMOs) labeling. GMO's can cause negative environmental effects. Since we are paying attention to our diet and to the ingredients in our food, why not include food product labeling for GMO ingredients? We already list sugars, fats and allergens. We have a right to know this information for our health.

In February petitions for the GMO food labeling issue will be available for the Colorado November 2014 ballot.

We will also review the Pesticide Applicator's Act, which will be up for sunset in 2015. This year the Colorado Department of Agriculture and Department of Regulatory Agencies will be reviewing possible changes to the state Pesticide Applicators Act. If you have had incidents that need addressing, please let our committee know.

Finally, our committee will also address bee colony collapse disorder. For more information contact Angela Medbury, 303-433-2608 or amedber@juno.com. ♻️

# And justice for all

By Mary Coday Edwards, Chair  
RMC Legislative Committee



While you may sense holiness as you climb, meander, hike, bike, snowshoe, river raft, fish or whatever you do to immerse yourself in the wild environs of nature—an

aggressive, fearful and grasping predator of the two-legged kind lurks in the shadows and waits for the opportunity to extract, develop and subsequently plunder and ravage that same piece of earth.

The planet can't defend itself. Yes, it bursts forth from its skin occasionally in the form of floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, hurricanes, tornadoes, cyclones, typhoons and the occasional plague. But the two-legged predator rarely resurfaces from such experiences with humility. Rather, it shakes its fist at the heavens, declaring, "I will conquer you! I will control you!"

Also we tinker. Humans decided we didn't want angry bees attacking when their hives were disturbed. So what did we do? We tinkered out that meanness—and then we wonder how in the world those wasps were able to destroy an entire bee colony. And as we tinker further by modifying seeds, using more pesticides and fungicides or adding chemicals to the water we drink and the air we breathe in our extraction process, we forget—or ignore—physics and the wisdom of Sierra Club founder John Muir: that we are all linked together.

I'm not a Luddite. I like my cell phone, computer and microwave—most of the time anyway. And as an eight-year-old, I obediently swallowed the sugar cube soaked with polio vaccine, which didn't come soon enough for my friend who was struck with the crippling disease and would cry and scream in anger at her unwieldy leg brace.

Technology and tinkering have advanced humanity in marvelous ways, but, unfortunately, ethical and moral dialogs haven't always accompanied these technological wonders. We remain enthralled by technology without looking at the big picture, without asking questions such as

where our tinkering might lead and if this is the direction we want to go as a planet.

In addition, justice is often denied: to wetlands when water is diverted to agricultural sectors upstream; to orangutans when their jungles are destroyed for palm tree/oil plantations. and to citizens when politicians and industry decide communities will be fracked.

### What can you do now?

Colorado's state legislators—*your* elected officials—are already proposing bills for the 2014 legislative session, which runs from January to May. Have you contacted them, telling them of your environmental legislative priorities? If you are unsure who your Colorado state representatives and senators are, go to: <http://votesmart.org/>.

E-mail, call, attend town hall meetings. Tell them, "I am your constituent and I care about . . ."

Once the session starts and bills are introduced, time constraints can limit changes to a bill. Thus, by working as a team with legislators now,



Photo by James E. Anderson

conservationists can bring a united front to Colorado's pressing environmental issues. And we want your feedback. Let us know your ideas that you plan to pursue with your legislators, and after you meet with them, tell us how it went. When community members form relationships and communicate with their state legislators, they get insight into the cares and concerns of their constituency.

Please remember, however, that any advocacy done in the name of the Sierra Club must first be approved by the RMC Legislative Committee. This is to ensure that the Club presents a united and professional front on environmental issues. Any person can speak to a legislator or the

media as an individual; problems may arise when s/he lobbies as a representative of the Sierra Club.

### What can you do during the 2014 session?

Legislative Committee members Kirk Cunningham, Karen Dike, Becky English, Jodi Jones, Myrna Poticha, Lauren Swain and Ross Vincent provide valuable leadership and expert bill analyses, along with RMC's legislative advisors and many conservation issue volunteer leaders.

If you are passionate about a conservation area and want to participate in relevant legislation with other like-minded individuals within the Club and from other organizations during the session, contact us at the e-mail below. The Legislative Committee is always looking for people to testify at the Capitol, contact their elected officials and send letters to friends asking for help in passing or killing a bill. Want to stay informed during the session via e-mail? Contact us at the same e-mail address and we'll add your name to our e-mailing list.

### RMC's 2014 legislative priorities

Unfortunately, at newsletter press time, that question was yet to be answered. However, peering into my crystal ball, I see more legislative attempts at curtailing the abuses inflicted upon the citizens and natural environment of Colorado by the oil and gas industry. Water resources will certainly be on the table; will legislators continue to let this limited and valuable resource be polluted so much by fracking that it is removed from the hydrological cycle and injected into deep underground wells? And what about volatile organic compounds our children are breathing?

H.R. 2692, Saving America's Pollinators Act of 2013, is currently before Congress' House Committee on Agriculture. The proposed bill directs the EPA administrator to take action regarding the use of neonicotinoid insecticides, which have been linked to the failing health and subsequent death of pollinators. If 2692 doesn't succeed, will Colorado legislators take matters into their own hands?

We're not limited to jobs that create a wasteland for our planet. This is where human genius and the marvels of technology are needed.

Watch for updates from the Legislative Committee as the year unfolds. For additional resources or information, contact RMC's Legislative Committee at [rmc-legislative-comm@lists.sierraclub.org](mailto:rmc-legislative-comm@lists.sierraclub.org). ♻️

# Chimney Rock: an awe-inspiring adventure

By Kathy Glatz  
RMC Outings Leader

Our Chimney Rock National Monument outing this past August was a true adventure! It was a six-hour trip in JoLynn Jarboe's Prius, but Marty Lordier and I helped drive. We set up camp at Ute Campground in San Juan National Forest near Chimney Rock, our newest national monument.

Andy Butler joined us for a hike along beautiful Ice Ridge, a trail that followed a huge crevice in the ground, caused by forming-and-thawing ice cycles. Apparently it contains ice for many months, but it was gone this August. The trail wanders up to an overlook on Williams Creek just before it empties into the Piedra River.

After lunch in the car at the Williams Reservoir, watching the rain fall, we ventured to the Piedra Falls trail, where the sun burst out as we started hiking. We could see where the trail had been washed out in places from water surging during recent downpours.

That evening we attended the "Night Skies" presentation at Chimney Rock. A volunteer ranger told us why Chimney Rock (referred to by locals as Fire Mountain) is so special. Buildings were constructed here long ago, occupying the site we now call Chimney Rock. Apparently folks came from all over to view early 13th Century lunar standstills. This is when the moon actually stands still for a period of three years during all its phases. It occurs every 18.6 years (and I want to see it again in 2024-25).

I am awed that ancient people observed heavenly bodies, which are now difficult to see due to light pollution. Our volunteer astronomer explained which planets and star systems we'd see in the night sky.

San Juan National Forest has the advantage of little light pollution, so when it got dark, we looked through telescopes to see Saturn's rings and the Big Dipper. We also looked into distant galaxies, a very humbling experience. With our naked eyes, we saw the International Space Station which passed overhead, in and out of the clouds.

Saturday morning was our guided tour of Chimney Rock. A volunteer explained that the site was believed to be inhabited only between 950-1150 Common Era (CE). We saw the remains of a great kiva (a large, circular, usually subterranean structure designed and used by Pueblo Indians for ceremonial and/or political gatherings). I am in awe of the persistence these early civilizations had to build such structures.

One volunteer explained that even though Chimney Rock is now a national monument, the government hasn't provided additional funding; hence, the site is still run by



Photo provided by Kathy Glatz

JoLynn Jarboe, Kathy Glatz and Marty Lordier at Chimney Rock

the mostly volunteer, non-profit Chimney Rock Interpretive Association, which has led tours for years. There are only two part-time paid staff and countless volunteers. When our country considers alternatives to a war budget, funding more staff for our national treasures should be high on the list.

Saturday afternoon we hiked along the Piedra River past a short waterfall through tall Ponderosa and other pines. Unfortunately, our hike was cut short as wet weather moved in, dumping rain and even hail. After we reached our car, we changed into dry clothes and began the 13-mile drive along the narrow, gravel forest road that dead-ends at trailheads.

Alas, at one point the road was blocked by a huge Ponderosa that had been struck by lightning. No human-power could move that tree. We decided, stuck there, we might as well eat, so we cooked supper. Fortunately, two horse outfitters eventually joined us with radios and called for help, who came with chain saws to remove the tree and free us.

We then decided we'd earned a trip to the Overlook Hot Springs in Pagosa to warm up and shower. We recommend this experience; besides indoor pools of varying temperatures, there's an outdoor roof pool and a Jacuzzi. What a relaxing way to end an adventure.

## letter... *continued from page 2...*

Our **Political Committee** continues to endorse worthy candidates in state level elections (as do our group-level political committees in several areas of the state), most recently endorsing against recalls of Angela Giron and John Morse—two environmental champions challenged for their unrepentant votes to strengthen a gun registry law. Unfortunately, both were recalled despite the Sangre de Cristo and Pikes Peak Groups' best efforts.

New this fall is the **RMC Awards Committee**, formed to solicit nominations of Sierra Club volunteers and others who are doing spectacular work! The awards ceremony will be held in Golden on Dec. 6, featuring Sierra Club Executive Director Mike Brune as keynote speaker. You might hear Brune speak about his visit in June, participating in an EcoFlight overview of the Roan Plateau, as well as the launch of the Club's Our Wild

America campaign from Browns Canyon (proposed for national monument status), and Chimney Rock National Monument (winning national monument status earlier this year with our help), as well as from stops in other southwestern states. There will also be a silent auction at the event; get your ticket from our Website ([rmc.sierraclub.org](http://rmc.sierraclub.org)).

The **Fundraising Team** just finished the "Step Strong Colorado" hike-a-thon benefit event at Roxborough State Park, and is now planning the aforementioned winter event in Golden.

The **RMC Nominating and Elections Committees** make sure you have a highly effective, productive and democratically elected Executive Committee. Please vote in the election—your ballot is located in this newsletter on page 15.

A word of appreciation for **Jim Van DeWege**, who has been RMC **treasurer** for more than three years. Jim

has done a superb job keeping the Chapter's books in order and also working with our group treasurers. He did such an excellent job that when our Chapter was audited as one of five randomly selected among 63 chapters this past year, we came out with flying colors.

Last, and certainly not least, the **RMC Communications Team** has won the 2013 national Sierra Club Communications Award! Formed in the summer of 2011, they have clearly worked hard, efficiently and effectively and deserve this recognition "for the best use of communications... to further the Club's mission." Please congratulate them at: [rmc-communications-team@lists.sierraclub.org](mailto:rmc-communications-team@lists.sierraclub.org). If you're not receiving our monthly, award-winning, e-newsletters, sign-up (<http://goo.gl/lyte2r>)!

Thank you for all you do!



## Don't Miss An Issue!

The Sierra Club Rocky Mountain Chapter's Peak & Prairie is published 10 times a year as an electronic newsletter.

Send us your e-mail address at:  
<http://rmc.sierraclub.org/pandp>  
and we'll send every electronic Peak & Prairie to your e-mail in-box.

## Your Chapter Needs Volunteers!

Would you believe that the Sierra Club runs more from volunteer leadership than staff leadership? It's true! Some of the critically important volunteer opportunities you can sign up for are:

Webmaster with experience in HTML and Drupal, fund-raising volunteers unafraid to "make the ask," reporters and oil and gas leaders, and many, many more.

You can fill out, cut out and mail us the form on page 11 along with your ballot on page 15 or you can fill out the volunteer form on the RMC Website at: <http://rmc.sierraclub.org/volunteer.shtml>.



# Rocky Mountain Chapter Groups Report Activities

## Denver Metro Network aims for growth

By Mathew Elsner  
Denver Metro Network Chair

The Denver Metro Network (DMN) was created in Spring 2013 to provide Sierra Club members and supporters in Denver and the surrounding communities with new opportunities to explore, enjoy and protect our natural world.

A leadership team of new volunteers was recruited, vetted and interviewed before eight members were appointed to lead the Network in April. Since then, the DMN has focused on creating the infrastructure needed to communicate and engage with members, such as setting up listserves and social media such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. We're also working on a new Web

presence that will dovetail with the Rocky Mountain Chapter's new site.

Now that the DMN is finally up and running, we're focused on finding out what our members want us to be. While we're still establishing our conservation priorities, we are already actively working on issues like getting a fracking moratorium passed in Broomfield, one of Denver's suburban areas.

The DMN is also working to put together engaging and educational programs to be held both indoors and outside. For example, we're hosting "Hike and Write" outings this fall in local parks and open spaces, as well as scheduling sustainability-themed movie screenings to keep our members informed and entertained.

As more local Sierra Club members become involved in the DMN, we expect to expand our offerings to include more outings, activist events and engagement with elected and appointed officials representing Denver and beyond.

The DMN may still be in its infancy, but we're planning for tremendous growth in the next year. Ultimately, the DMN aims to advance the Sierra Club's mission in



**DMN to address environmental issues in and around Denver.**

Photo courtesy of Global Denver

Denver while expanding the size and scope of our membership to include people from all the myriad communities that make up this thriving and unique area.

## Indian Peaks Group fights fracking, road expansion

By Rebecca Dickson  
Indian Peaks Group Co-Chair

The Sierra Club Indian Peaks Group (IPG) has several issues that we're working on this year, including working to stop fracking in Boulder County. Several IPG leaders and members are active in leading this effort: Deirdre Butler, IPG co-chair; Ken Bonetti, IPG ExCom member; Kirk Cunningham, IPG ExCom member; Lauren Swain, RMC Oil and Gas Team chair; and Neshama Abraham, RMC Oil and Gas Team member.

We've also been working to help Boulder municipalize its electric supply. Xcel Energy has not been working as quickly to incorporate clean energy as we'd like to see; we feel the city can be more flexible and speedy in embracing green energy because the city would focus on



Photo courtesy of Denver's 9News

### IPG's Rebecca Dickson speaks publicly against Jefferson Parkway.

efficiency, reliability, cost control and green alternatives. Xcel has invested heavily in coal-fired power plants here in Colorado and elsewhere, and, as an investor-owned utility, Xcel is heavily profit-driven.

IPG leaders and members think a non-profit municipal utility would serve Boulder and our environment better. Those active in leading this effort are Steve

Welter, IPG Political chair; Kirk Cunningham, IPG ExCom member; Crystal Gray, IPG ExCom member; and myself. Steve Welter worked with Sierra Club's national Beyond Coal campaign to secure a \$60,000 contribution to the Indian Peaks Group and partners, to support Boulder's efforts to municipalize.

The IPG has been opposed to the Jefferson Parkway for years; this year I spoke out against the project for the Sierra Club on Channel 9 News. Bill Roettker, who has long worked on transportation and sprawl issues for the IPG, is heading our opposition to Jefferson Parkway.

The IPG is also opposed to genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and pesticide use in Boulder County; we've been working on curtailing this in the county for years. Kirk Cunningham and Cosima Krueger-Cunningham are leading this effort for the IPG.

The IPG is currently selling organic peaches from Colorado's Western Slope; we do this to promote local, sustainable agriculture and to raise funds for the IPG. Deirdre Butler; Karen Harrison, IPG secretary; and Steve Welter are working on this project. If anyone wants to buy some peaches, please contact me at [rebecca.dickson@comcast.net](mailto:rebecca.dickson@comcast.net).

## Sangre de Cristo Group pursues environmental justice

By Kiera Hatton Sena  
Sangre de Cristo Group Executive Committee

The Sangre de Cristo Group (SdCG) is busy fighting for environmental justice and protecting the communities we serve. Our Group has been focused on the water quality of Fountain Creek, the potential Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) superfund listing of the historic Colorado Smelter site and decades-long efforts at the Pueblo Chemical Depot.

Fountain Creek, flowing from Manitou Springs to Pueblo, has had high levels of E. coli and increasing selenium levels due to increase flows, continuing sewage discharges and inadequate storm

water systems. Unfortunately, the Waldo Canyon fire burn scar has increased flow and pressure on the storm water system, creating a perfect storm for accidental sewage discharges. Additionally, chemical fire suppressants and chemicals from burned homes are new concerns. Fountain Creek flows through two of Pueblo's most at-risk neighborhoods, exposing underprivileged children to E. coli, selenium and other unknown contaminants.

Our Group has been actively working with residents of Eiler's neighborhood, elected officials, EPA, Colorado Department Public Health and Environment, and the Pueblo City-County Health Department to address high lead and arsenic levels in the soil throughout the neighborhood and potentially surrounding areas. The Eiler's neighborhood was built on and surrounds a former American Smelting and Refining Company Colorado Smelter that deposited heavy metals into the area.

Our Group is looking to grow and develop new leaders to protect the communities we serve.

### Water quality in Fountain Creek is one focus of SdCG.



## Poudre Canyon Group seeks active volunteers

By Will Walters  
Poudre Canyon Group Executive Committee

The Poudre Canyon Group (PCG) has about a dozen volunteers actively involved in campaigns related to

fracking in northern Colorado. We are now looking for a dozen or more individuals so we can be more effective on this and a myriad of other local issues—air quality to zero waste—in our area of the state.

We tabled at local events such as the New West Fest and the Sustainable Living Fair, and held a member event in September. For more information or if you are interested in volunteering, please contact Will Walters at 970-690-3543 or Kelly Giddens at 503-866-5962. ♻️

**PCG works, for example, to protect the Poudre River.**

Photo courtesy of PCG



## Roaring Fork Group promotes community action

By Jennifer Moore  
Roaring Fork Group Executive Committee

Thanks to major input and assistance from Rocky Mountain Chapter Director Joshua Ruschhaupt and a host of others, the Roaring Fork Group (RFG), located in western Colorado, is reviving and ready for increased environmental action.

We coordinated an amazing event on June 12 to host Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune on an EcoFlight fly-over project to see the damage in the Parachute Creek area west of Rifle. Then we took him to the top of the pristine, semi-roadless areas of the Roan Plateau that is still being threatened with drilling (court battles continue).

Another big project as a group was to host the July RMC Executive Committee (ExCom) meeting in Glenwood Springs. We pulled the meeting together quickly,

and it went very well.

Currently, we are concentrating on a few events to get our RFG name out and bring focus to our desire to work with the community to provide projects and events that appeal to area residents.



**RFG members Tom Rutledge, Elliott Branson and Mark Stevens escort Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune (second from left) at the EcoFlight over the Roan Plateau.**

Photo by Jennifer Moore

The RFG participated in a celebration on Aug. 25 in Redstone with several local organizations that worked to prevent a dam on the Crystal River. We anticipate working with these groups in the future as we seek “Wild and Scenic” designation for the upper Crystal River.

Several of our members joined the Thompson Divide Coalition on their float during the Strawberry Days Parade in June, and our Conservation Committee has preliminary ideas for a community water conservation program.

Our first big community event was Sept. 12 with Jonathan Waterman, a local who is a nationally known, award-winning photographer and author who presented his new book, *Northern Exposures: An Adventuring Career in Stories and Images*. Other projects are in the works for the coming year.

Our new RFG ExCom has been appointed and functioning as of June this year. ExCom members and committee chairs are: Elliot Branson, chair; Tom Rutledge, vice chair; Jennifer Moore, secretary and Outings, Events, and Activities Committee chair; Mark Stevens, member at large and Conservation Committee chair and Tom Rutledge, alternate representative and Oil and Gas Committee chair. Maggie Pedersen is serving as treasurer, but is not on the ExCom. ♻️

## Uncompahgre Group works for wilderness protection

By Carole Chowen  
Uncompahgre Group ExCom Co-Chair

A small band of Uncompahgre Group (UG) activists have accomplished quite a lot in a year. Along with other environmental groups, UG studied, researched, explored and commented on the Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM) Resource Management Plan. We attended and presented at open houses. Our voice was strong for preserving identified “Lands with Wilderness Characteristics” and habitat for wildlife.

Our involvement continues on the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area and will continue as the BLM studies other areas. The proposed drilling in the Whitewater area south of Grand Junction is of high concern.

In September 2012, members joined a crew from Pick

Up America to clean a stretch of highway near Colorado Mesa University. We also helped sponsor the film “Bag It,” presented by Grand Valley Peace and Justice (GVP&J). A group member was on the panel to discuss the plastics problem.

For several years UG has represented a cause at the Alternative Christmas Fair put on by GVP&J. This year’s fundraising was for “Solar Energy for Tribal Families, Western Reservations USA.”

We staffed a booth at the annual Earth Day celebration. We also participated in the BLM Heritage Day, designed to get children and youth outdoors. We partnered with Western Colorado Congress and Grand Valley Peace and Justice to bring the film *BIDDER 70*, the story of environmental hero Tim DeCristopher, to Grand Junction. Over 100 people attended and stayed for a discussion led by members of Peaceful Uprising from Salt Lake City.

For the second year, UG worked with Child and Migrant Services to facilitate recycling at their benefit concert at Grand River Vineyards. Many of our recycling projects have been so successful that the groups we helped are now doing it on their own. Hence we are looking to where we can help next to improve efforts to recycle.

We will continue with annual events and keep abreast of environment and wildlife concerns in the area, acting where needed. We are reviewing possible locations and events where we can encourage and assist with recycling. With less than a dozen active members (usually between two and six members come to meetings), we do what we can. ♻️



**UG members Christina Hoagland (far left) and Eric Rechel (far right) join the Pick Up America crew.**

Photo by Carole Chowen

# RMC volunteer serves through graphic design, cartooning

By Carol Carpenter  
RMC Communications Team

Some people have the knack and willingness to make lemonade out of lemons, while others might simply bemoan their fate and ask, “Why me?” When Jim Anderson, Rocky Mountain Chapter’s (RMC) Communications Team volunteer graphic designer and cartoonist, lost his corporate graphic design job to outsourcing in 2011, he decided to start mixing lemons with sugar.

A member of Sierra Club since 1996, Jim, a Denver resident, saw an inviting opportunity at the crossroads of his now semi-retired life. His goal: to volunteer his artistic skills and energies for an organization that mirrored his values and interests to protect and improve the natural environment. “It was good, once again, be involved in a sort of advocacy journalism, to use my skills in the service of a good cause, beyond simply making a living,” Jim says of his ongoing Sierra Club involvement.

The experience is also working for him in a practical way. Not only is he collaborating with “intelligent, hard-working volunteers,” he continues to upgrade his computer design and illustration skills by doing projects for the RMC.

## Love for cartooning

Even more important is restarting his love for cartooning, which had taken a long hiatus while working in the “mind-numbing” corporate world that was required for him to make money to raise his family. He did cartooning and illustrating as a freelance artist and staff member of several publications, including Boulder’s

progressive Colorado Daily newspaper, in the 1970s and 1980s.

“Working with the RMC has been very, very good for me,” Jim states enthusiastically. “Having an outlet for my cartoons has been especially gratifying. My cartooning had been on hold for a very long time. Having an audience has been motivating in my efforts to reboot this facet of my career.”

Earlier this year, Jim was recognized for his unique, original “True Tales of Eco-Disasters” cartoons in *The Planet*, a National Sierra Club blog at <http://sierraclub.typepad.com/planet/2013/04/colorado-activist-tooned-in.html>. The cartoons are also featured in *Peak and Prairie* every month.

Always explicit and sometimes mildly disturbing, the cartoons feature Jim’s take on the dire consequences of the planet’s natural environment gone awry.

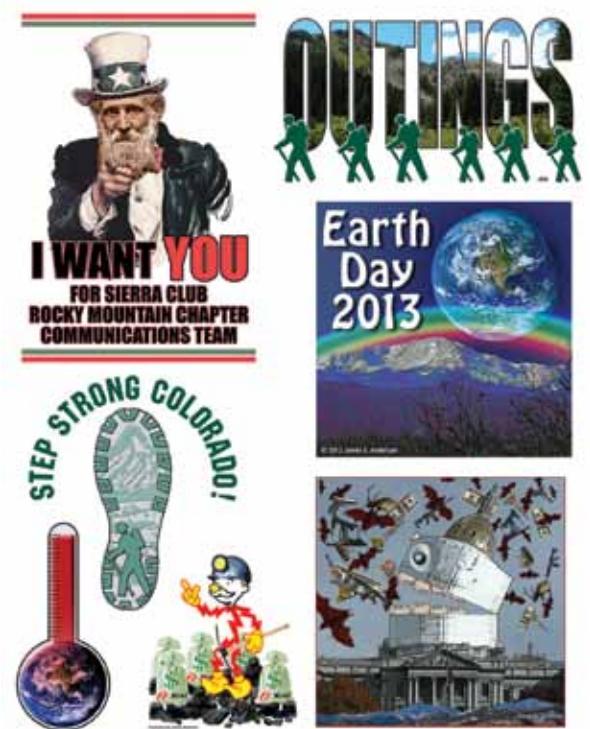
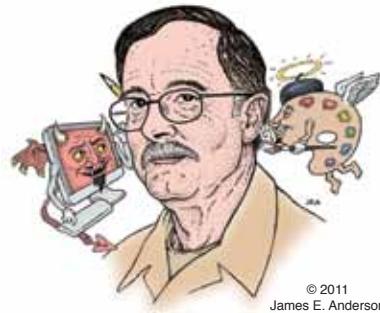
“Creating environmental editorial cartoons for the Sierra Club is sort of preaching to the choir,” Jim notes. “Hopefully, Sierra Club readers can look at my ‘toons, have a chuckle and continue on with their activism with a bit more enthusiasm.”

Cartoons, and humor in general, can be a way to raise issues while also being entertaining, Jim believes. “Hopefully some people who are not presently environmentally concerned will see my cartoons and become more aware of pressing issues. That’s a good first step to becoming involved. We all need to be involved. Saving the environment is not only a moral issue, but also one of enlightened self-interest.”

## Other communications work

But cartooning is not the only thing Jim does for RMC’s Communications Team. He also creates flyers and advertisements for Sierra Club events, takes photos as needed, designs logos for various outings and other events and serves as the sometime Facebook administrator.

Designing the 2012 print *Peak & Prairie* was both a joy and challenge for Jim. The job took longer than expected and included many frustrations, but at



Illustrations: © 2013 James E. Anderson

## Some of Jim’s graphics produced for the electronic *Peak & Prairie* newsletter and for RMC promotional projects.

the same time, he was able to tap his creative design and communication skills in a way that produced one of RMC’s finest print newsletters ever—one that helped the Communications Team win a national Sierra Club award.

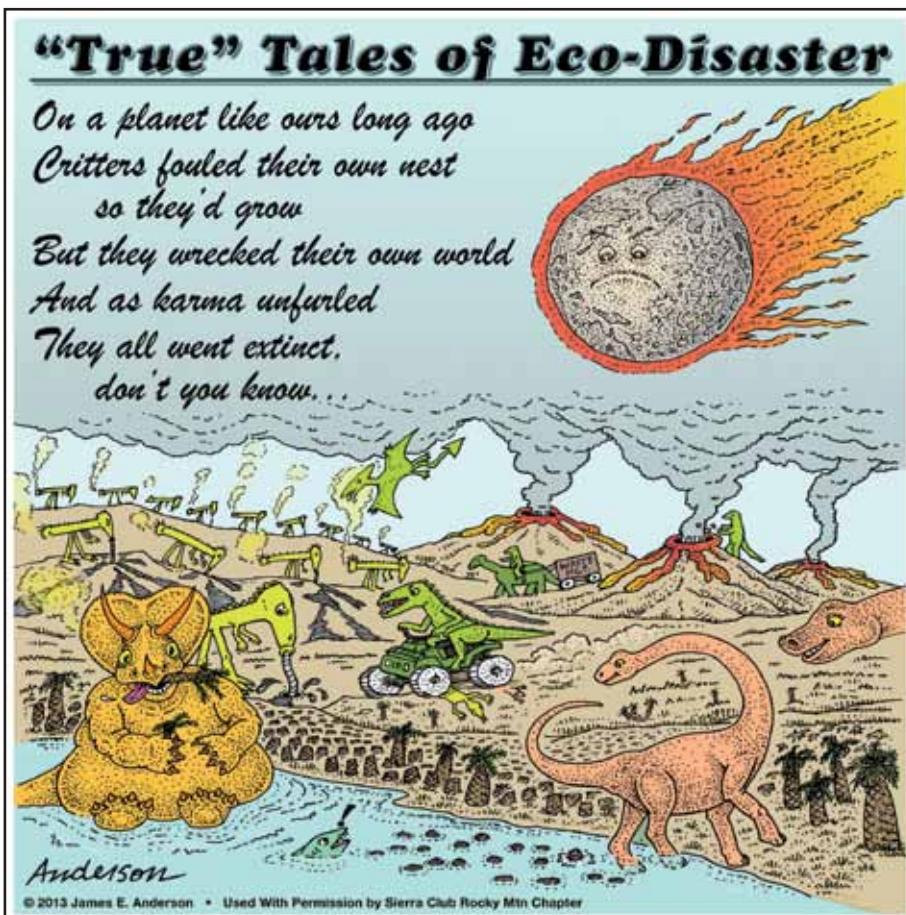
“In a volunteer organization, with many teams and geographical groups with different areas of responsibility, focus and diffuse lines of responsibility, it can be difficult to put all the pieces together to get a newsletter out on time,” Jim states. “But the team pulled together and we got it done. I think we produced a nice-looking little newspaper with a wealth of well-written, informative content.”

The award Jim and the Communications Team members won is Sierra Club’s Communications Award for 2012-2013. The award is given annually to honor the best use of communications by a Sierra Club group, chapter or other entity to further the Club’s mission. “I’m very proud to be part of this dedicated and hard-working team, and I’m also pleased that my environmental editorial cartoons are appreciated and help the Communications Team to do its thing.”

Jim would love to see the Communications Team grow in size. “We have a small core of dedicated, talented people. With more folks on the team, we could increase our outreach to the public at large and within the RMC, and hopefully further the Sierra Club’s mission.”

The Sierra Club mission, Jim fervently believes, is worthy of every member’s or friend’s active support. “Volunteering for Sierra Club is an opportunity to better the world. Threats to the environment are the most serious long-term existential issue humanity faces. The Sierra Club balances activism and working within the system to address these dangers.”

*Note: Jim’s cartoons are now being posted on the national Sierra Club Facebook page. Readers can also go to Jim’s public Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/JamesEAndersonArtist> to see more of his work.*



## BLM... *continued from page 3*

of Public Health and the Environment officials estimate that 48,300 gallons of NGL were released into the environment. Williams officials say that 80 percent of spilled liquids evaporated into the air and that 10,122 gallons entered soil.” The Post-Independent newspaper reported Williams’ crews eventually reduced benzene levels in Parachute Creek itself using “sparging” booms that dispersed the toxin from the water into the air. Now groundwater contamination is being addressed with a “vertical sparge” system as well.

Here are more grim facts, provided by WCC:

- 7,664 gallons of hydrocarbons have been extracted from water and soil, as of Aug. 1.
- 369,000 gallons of contaminated water has been brought to the surface, as of June 20.
- More than 1,700 tons of contaminated soil have been disposed off-site.
- The plume of pollution is estimated to be 1,500 feet long, 308 feet wide and 10 feet thick (about 10.6 acres in area).
- Chemicals found: benzene; toluene; ethylbenzene; all three xylenes (M, O and P); cyclohexane; hexane; methylcyclohexane; isopropylbenzene; acetone; bromoform; heptanes; 1, 2, 3-trimethylbenzene; 1, 2, 4-trimethylbenzene; 1, 3, 5-trimethylbenzene; and tetrachloroethene.

We are looking for volunteers interested in addressing BLM leasing issues in Colorado. In February alone, despite successful protests deferring leasing of over 20,000 acres near farms, homes, water supplies and national parks in Colorado, the BLM leased over 88,000 acres to



Photo credit: EcoFlight.

### Rulison Gas Field below Roan Plateau

the oil and gas industry. Nationwide, over 6 percent of all land is leased by the industry, an area the size of California and Florida combined, according to the Natural

Resources Defense Council. Please contact me at [lauren.swain@rmc.sierraclub.org](mailto:lauren.swain@rmc.sierraclub.org) if you would like to volunteer.

## Browns Canyon...

*continued from page 1*

### RMC hikers welcome Brune

One RMC member taking part in the Brune visit and hike was Jim Lockhart, Outings chair for the Pikes Peak Group (PPG).

Brune had driven the 1,000-plus-mile trip to visit Colorado and the Southwest to see some of America’s most

treasured and threatened wild areas, including Browns Canyon and the recently designated Chimney Rock National Monument.

Lockhart, who had planned to attend the hike only as a participant, was called in at the last minute to co-lead after intended PPG hike leaders, John and Carol Stansfield, were prevented from attending by the devastating wildfires in the Colorado Springs area.

currently features mainly high mountains and western canyon lands.

“Although the proposed wilderness does not include the Arkansas River, the river would be part of the proposed national monument,” Lockhart pointed out, noting that its scenic values, enjoyed by thousands of rafters every year, would be protected by the national monument designation.

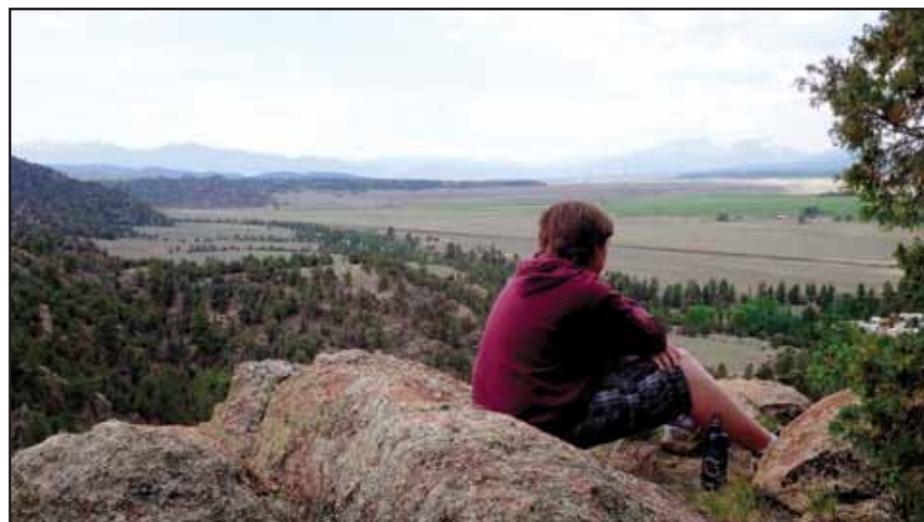
### Only a portion protected

Unfortunately, the proposal protects only a portion of the Browns Canyon Wilderness Study Area as wilderness. “It could be improved by protecting everything with the wilderness designation. A national monument designation would provide considerable protection, but would not necessarily rule out more intensive and intrusive activities, such as motorized recreation,” Lockhart said.

RMC leader Alan Apt, who also was on the hike, encourages all Sierra Club members and supporters to take immediate action to protect Browns Canyon. “Protection of this stunningly beautiful place is long overdue. Please join us in asking for wilderness or national monument protection ASAP,” he said.

*Note: Supporters can visit the following Website to sign the Browns Canyon petition: <http://goo.gl/885brm>.*

*Comments can be personalized by adding the suggestion that wilderness designation encompass the full 20,000 acres proposed by the Friends of Browns Canyon and other state-wide groups.*



Zach Singer takes a moment to take in the view from a Browns Canyon overlook.

Photo by Joshua Ruschhaupt

## A NY Yankees fan in King Hickenlooper's court

By Mathew Elsner  
Denver Metro Network Chair

We define ourselves in many ways: race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, political views, favorite sports team(s) and even by what we choose to eat (or not).

Like most others—including native Coloradans—one major way I define myself is by geography. For me, that has always meant being a New Yorker. (Sorry, did I just lose half of you?) Born and raised in the shadow of New York City, I naturally became a big New York Yankees fan, too. (Who else was I going to root for? The Mets?) During my entire adult life, the only hat I've ever worn is a Yankees cap.

I moved to Manhattan right after high school and spent 20 years shuttling between schools, jobs and apartments in three of the five boroughs. By my estimate, I rode the subway some 10,000 times during that period, which is a lot of time underground if you're not, for instance, a coal or salt miner.

In the mid-1990s, I visited Colorado for the first time. By then I was jaded about the New York skyscrapers and 24-hour buzz of my hometown (not to mention the aforementioned subways). I was awestruck seeing the Rocky Mountains for the first time. After just a few days breathing clean mountain air, hiking through Rocky Mountain National Park and meeting friendly, sun-browned locals, I swore that someday I would live

here. Why *wouldn't* anyone want to live here? The natural wonders of Colorado are almost limitless.

In 2008 when the financial crisis struck, I had been living in the Greenpoint neighborhood of Brooklyn for more than a decade. Although it vies for the title of hipster-central today, when I moved there it was mainly a quiet, Polish immigrant neighborhood and hometown to Mae West, Mickey Rooney and Patricia Mae Andrzejewski (A.K.A. Pat Benatar).

Greenpoint was long overlooked by many New Yorkers as a viable place to live because it was widely considered one of the most polluted parts of the city. Home to a wastewater treatment plant and toxic waste "transfer stations," the really scary part of Greenpoint was the infamous Newtown Creek, one of the most polluted industrial sites in America.

In 1950, some 30 million gallons of oil were spilled there by Paragon Oil (now Chevron), and more than 60 years later, half of that is still in the ground, with many locals reporting adverse health effects from the vapors. In 2010, it was finally declared a Superfund site, but by then I'd had enough; I wanted to live someplace with mountains and trees, not concrete and oil spills.

### Move to Colorado

So I moved to Colorado and settled in Lakewood.



Photo provided by Mathew Elsner

### Mathew Elsner moved, hopefully, from East to West.

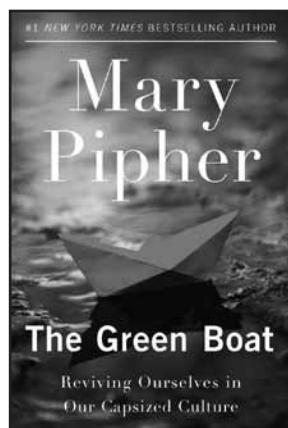
(What a bucolic name. Lakes! Woods! All in one place!) I had previously been active in environmental issues, so it was only natural that I'd do the same here. What I found really amazed me. Someone else might own the mineral rights under the land your house is built on? That's crazy, but that's Colorado. You can't put a rain barrel in your backyard because it diverts water from streams and the aquifer? But someone else can pump millions of gallons of water into a gas well, making that water unusable for anything else and could potentially pollute those same streams and aquifers? Inconceivable, but that's Colorado.

*continued on page 11*

## Book Review The Green Boat: Author Mary Pipher

By Karen Dike  
RMC Communications Team

Have you ever been dismayed when someone becomes angry whenever you bring up the topic of climate change? Most environmentalists have experienced that sudden negative reaction when we mention, for example, fracking, as though it can't be discussed in polite company. Do you wonder why so many people believe the deniers?



Author Mary Pipher's *The Green Boat: Reviving Ourselves in Our Capsized Culture* assisted me in understanding the human emotional aspects related to changes in society. Pipher, a psychologist, brings knowledge from her field of study to bear on understanding

reactions of people to the environmental crises we face. She describes how she feels the earth is breaking down with a "tsunami of urgent and life-threatening planetary changes." In her view, the problem is made worse by not

being able to face the issues at hand.

The author states: "In *The Green Boat* I explore a process that allows us to face the situation and cope with it in a resilient manner. It is within our power to make our lives less stressful and more joyful. Once we find a way to break down the barriers, we can begin work on issues."

### Daily trauma

Pipher describes the daily trauma facing most of us: day-to-day stress, financial concerns and a rapidly changing world. We are also faced with global climate change, wars and other problems little understood by most Americans. She describes her own sense of trauma and concern for the environment she loves.

Pipher says that inaction often results from denial and the anxiety that is created within us. "Loving the world... creates an intense combination of anguish and amazement. In particular, in America because of our history, politics, media and culture it is easy to despair. But since America is one of the most stunningly beautiful... it is also easy to be amazed," she writes.

She also describes how we are tuned into media outlets that feature short sound bites, the daily Dow Jones financial report and much misinformation. Pipher discusses a new word, "agnotology," referring to the study of ignorance that is deliberately manufactured or politically generated. It is the intentional suppression of truth by corporations and politicians. Targeting people who already mistrust scientists and environmentalists gives rise to labeling climate change as a hoax. This allows people to deny the harsh reality facing them.

After going through her own despair when she understood what was happening to the earth, Pipher learned

about the Keystone XL pipeline crossing her home state of Nebraska and delivering dirty tar sands to the gulf. Beginning with a small meeting of friends concerned about the pipeline, they began a movement called Bold Nebraska. The movement partnered with conservative farmers and ranchers to fight the pipeline industry and the politicians. At this time, Bold Nebraska is continuing that fight with a lawsuit that is stopping the pipeline (for the moment).

### Effecting change

Reading how this small group is making a big difference is an inspiration as well as a guidebook for those who are working at the grassroots level to effect change. According to Pipher, "Any group can come together for a common cause and combine the diverse gifts and divergent points of view of its member to create something transcendent."

The book ends on a much more optimistic note. Moving into acceptance of a crisis allows us, Pipher opines, to deal with our emotional paralysis and move toward acceptance and action. "This phase allows us to overcome the grief and stress to take positive steps and develop joy again," she states.

Sometimes a book comes along when we need it. Reading Pipher's book helped me understand why others were resisting my passionate cry to action. My love of this book is probably partly related to being from Nebraska and relating to the pipeline crisis. I also love the personal and caring stories Pipher tells about her friends and family to deliver a difficult message. I find myself going back to the book for knowledge, comfort and companionship.

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**Sierra Club Rocky Mountain Chapter's**  
**Annual Winter & Holiday Celebration**  
 Featuring Guest Presenter, Sierra Club Executive Director, Michael Brune  
**Friday Evening, December 6, 2013 • 6:30 TO 10:00 P.M.**  
 • American Mountaineering Center in Golden •  
 Information on tickets, dinner and other festivities coming soon.  
**MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW!!!**  
 ~ And Watch Our Website at [RMC.Sierraclub.org](http://RMC.Sierraclub.org) ~



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**NY Yankees fan...** *continued from page 10*

I continued to learn astounding things. If a majority of folks in a town or city don't want filth—i.e., fracking—in their community, too bad, says Gov. John Hickenlooper. Apparently, the state is going to *force* us to accept it by suing communities until they all say “uncle.” That's just not right. Colorado is too wonderful to let that happen. I moved here to get *away* from a massive oil spill, not watch helplessly as it happens again (and all over the state). If New Yorkers could keep the behemoth Wal-Mart out of their city all these years, why couldn't Coloradans keep things like fracking out of theirs? Apparently they can't, a fact that continues to amaze me.

What to do, then? My answer is simply this: keep fighting. Which is why earlier this year, I decided to volunteer for Sierra Club's Rocky Mountain Chapter (RMC). It's

been a heck of a ride so far, starting up a whole new organization—the Denver Metro Network (DMN)—here in the metropolitan area.

While the DMN has been a major undertaking, it has been truly inspirational as well. Every single day, I am impressed by the passion, dedication, knowledge and tenacity of the RMC and DMN members. They are some of the finest folks around, and I'm immensely proud to

be one of them. I know I can never be a native Coloradan, but it probably won't be too long before Coloradans see me at a Rockies game—without my Yankees cap!



**VOLUNTEER!**

Thank you for your interest in volunteering for the Rocky Mountain Chapter of the Sierra Club. Please complete the following form so that we can find the best opportunity for you, and mail it to us. Or, you can fill out our online form here:

<http://rmc.sierraclub.org/volunteer.shtml>

\* = required.

Name\*: \_\_\_\_\_

Email\*: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address\*: \_\_\_\_\_

City\*: \_\_\_\_\_

State\*: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip\*: \_\_\_\_\_

(Circle one) Are you a member of the Sierra Club?

Yes                      No

(Circle one) I'm interested in volunteering:

Locally      RMC Chapter      Both

If you picked three or less from the entire list below, which would they be?

**General:**

- Student Internship
- Denver office work on a fixed schedule

**Specialized skills:**

- Fundraising
- Accounting
- Legal
- Lobbying/Legislative
- Campaign/Community Organizing
- Reporting/Editing
- Webmaster
- Social Media

**Outings:**

- Take inner-city kids on outings.
- I want to go on conservation outings, then I want to do something about it.
- I just want to get out for fun—from museums to mountains (general outings).

**Conservation issues:**

- Farmers are our friends, responsible **agriculture** is paramount.
- Fighting for **renewable energy** is our future! Sign me up!
- Justice for all—**environmental justice** needs me.
- Some **federal facilities** are ravaging the surrounding ecosystems, and I want it fixed.

- The proposed **Jefferson County Parkway** is irresponsible and dangerous.
- Mining** causes serious and extensive environmental damage—how can I help?
- I want to work on a nationally coordinated **Move Beyond Coal** campaign!
- The **oil and gas** industry doesn't know what's coming... just lemme at 'em!
- Pesticides**... Rachel Carson summed it up in *Silent Spring*. 'nuff said.
- Political** campaigns make some people queasy, but not me!
- What the world needs now is to slow the human **population** growth.
- Public lands** need public protection... I'm stepping forward.
- Reduce, re-use, **recycle!** We can never do enough.
- Sprawl makes me shudder, but **affordable housing** makes my heart flutter!
- Let's get **toxics** cleaned-up!
- Colorado's **transportation** systems need my attention.
- Water** is the life-blood of Colorado, and we need to treat it as such.
- Edward Abbey says: “**Wilderness** is not a luxury but a necessity of the human spirit.” Let's explore, enjoy and protect it.
- Colorado's **wildlife**: threatened and endangered. We can do better with our wildlife management.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_



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# ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER 2013 CONTRIBUTORS



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The Sierra Club Rocky Mountain Chapter (RMC) thanks all of our wonderful 2013 contributors, including all of our anonymous contributors (you know who you are). Your contributions are what enable the Sierra Club RMC and local groups to be effective at our mission to Explore Enjoy, and Protect the Planet. Whether you give individually or monthly at a level that works for your budget, you help Sierra Club make a difference.

If you would like to see your name added to this list of thanks next year, find us online at: [www.rmc.sierraclub.org/contribute](http://www.rmc.sierraclub.org/contribute).

Also take a look at "Care for the Environment Today and Tomorrow" on page 11 to find out from our many options about how you can plan to give in your will.

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Carter and Diana Wright  
Patricia Wynne  
Robert And Stephania Yuhnke  
K Zeller & J Rickards  
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Richard Zimmermann  
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# ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER CONTACT LIST



## Staff



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## Executive Committee

### Officers



**Chair:** Dave Bryan  
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**Vice Chair:** Betsy Kelson  
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**Secretary:** Alison Gallensky  
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**Treasurer:** Jim Van DeWege  
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**Political Treasurer:**  
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Myrna Poticha  
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Mark Stevens  
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Will Walters  
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## Groups

*A great way to get involved in your Chapter is by participating in a local group. Each group has a Website. For maps and additional information on each group, visit the Website:*

<http://rmc.sierraclub.org/local.shtml>

## ExCom Group Delegates



**Blue River Group**  
*Serving Summit, Grand, Eagle Counties*  
Rick Warren  
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**Indian Peaks Group**  
*Serving Boulder County*  
Linda Batlin  
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**Mount Evans Group**  
*Serving Evergreen, Conifer, Park County*  
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**Pikes Peak Group**  
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**Poudre Canyon Group**  
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**Roaring Fork Group**  
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**Sangre de Cristo Group**  
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**Trappers Lake Group**  
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**Uncompahgre Group**  
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## Elections Committee

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# ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CANDIDATE STATEMENTS



**SIERRA CLUB**  
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**Mark Stevens**

Growing up in a ranching family in western Colorado allowed me to experience

the flora and fauna of the old west. My greatest satisfactions have been the outdoors, feeding my curiosity, pondering the mysteries of life, riding my bike, and my relationships with people and animals. Volunteer work for the Roaring Fork Group and the Rocky Mountain Chapter in the past 10 years has been a wonderful opportunity to work for the environment. This summer I was asked to help manage the Chapter by becoming one of the RMC Executive Committee co-chairs. I am pleased to work with this group whose knowledge and dedication I admire greatly. I need your support to continue. Your vote to elect me as one of your at-large representatives will allow me to continue in my current capacity. I want to help a great team improve our capacities to support our environmental goals.



**Myrna Poticha**

I seek re-election to Sierra's ExCom because my talents and activities have been beneficial

to many goals of the organization. I wrote the first wetland ordinance in Colorado, while an elected official. I wrote and enacted the first numeric soluble uranium standard in the U.S. during my 10 years on the State Water Quality Control Commission, among other accomplishments. While appointed to the Platte River Advisory Commission by Mayor Webb, I worked to adopt its master plan, management strategies, and Natural Areas Program to develop a continuous wildlife corridor along the Platte. I was one of 30 National Environmental Heroes of the Clean the Water Act by National Clean Water Network. I was co-chair

of the RMC ExCom; and presently serve on the Political, Legislative, Conflict Resolution, and Administrative Committees. I am a national board member of Clean Water Action, and am on the Cherry Creek Reservoir Authority.



**Dave Bryan**

I have been an active leader with the Sierra Club since 2001 and was elected chair

of the Chapter's Executive Committee this year. I serve as co-chair with Mark Stevens and have experience on several non-profit and corporate boards. My goals for the Chapter are to vigorously support our anti-fracking efforts and establish a campaign to address bee colony die off in Colorado. I believe it is vital to work with and recruit from the vibrant and dynamic single interest groups that have coalesced around these and other issues. These activists bring energy and ideas that, if integrated with the Club's existing capacity and strengths will add to our effectiveness. I bring an ability to listen to members and colleagues, empathize, evaluate and then act collaboratively within the Chapter to achieve our diverse conservation goals. Respectful dialog within the Chapter is key to our success and satisfaction as volunteers.



**Gail Bell**

I have been an environmentalist for decades. Today's divisive political

atmosphere requires critical action by the Sierra Club and its members. We are at a crossroad with regard to the Earth. Climate change, fossil fuel extraction, habitat loss, species vulnerability, and polluted air and water are just some of the monumental issues facing our country and the world. My professional

experience as a museum educator enabled me to develop and implement public programming, and to interact with volunteers. My interest in politics has provided a forum to engage and challenge politicians both locally and in Washington on many issues. As a teacher, I have empowered children to find their voices and to utilize them to affect change. America's children care about the future of our planet. Their voices, along with ours, can make a difference in the world. Our children are counting on us. Are we up to the challenge?



**Will Walters**

I have enjoyed serving with others on the Rocky Mountain Chapter ExCom for the

past few years and would be honored to continue to be of service to the Club in this way. I also serve on the Chapter's Political and Personnel Committees and the Poudre Canyon Group ExCom, so if there are other good folks interested in serving on the Chapter ExCom, then I am also happy to take a hiatus and serve in other needed capacities/roles at the Chapter and Group level.



**Richard Fleck**

Richard F. Fleck began his career as a seasonal park ranger naturalist in Rocky Mountain

National Park in the late 1950s and early 1960s. After receiving his Ph.D in English from the University of New Mexico in 1970, he taught at the University of Wyoming for 25 years, such classes as the Wilderness in American Thought, Literary Naturalists, Native American literature and creative writing. His books include Henry Thoreau and John Muir Among the Indians, A Colorado River Reader and the forthcoming Desert Rims to

Mountains High (September 2013) that has been nominated for the National Outdoor Book Award. Aside from the statement, what I would like to do is teach outdoor writing to interested people in the Sierra Club and/or lead nature hikes in the Front Range area.



**Pam DiFatta**

I have been a member of Sierra Club since 2007 and am involved in Environmental

Issues in the region. I currently live in Pueblo Colorado. We have worked with a group called Better Pueblo that's an environmental coalition. I've been aware our environment impacts all of us, and we must take care of it. I've been concerned about the presence of lead and arsenic in our community. I've worked at the Colorado State Capitol, in the Third Congressional District Office. Currently I'm employed by The Pueblo County Commissioners who are an environmentally friendly board. I look forward to making our state a better place to live, by doing my part to take care of the environment. I believe the Sierra Club is the leader in the environmental sustainability and I look forward to assisting in building, educating, organizing, and bringing awareness to others on how important a healthy environment is.

*Any Sierra Club member interested in serving on the Sierra Club Rocky Mountain Chapter Executive Committee for a two-year term is welcome to submit their name to the Nominating Committee.*

*The Fall 2014 election will be for the 2015-2016 term. If interested, contact your Nominating Committee chair: Angela Medbery: [amedber@juno.com](mailto:amedber@juno.com).*

# Sierra Club OFFICIAL BALLOT 2013

Rocky Mountain Chapter Executive Committee At Large Election

Please do not tear/split ballots • Only valid ballots will be counted



Ballots must be received at the Chapter Office:  
Elections Committee - Sierra Club  
1536 Wynkoop Street #4B • Denver, CO 80202  
by November 11, 2013

## Single Ballot

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mark Stevens (N)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Will Walters (N)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Myrna Poticha (N) | <input type="checkbox"/> Richard Fleck (N) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dave Bryan (N)    | <input type="checkbox"/> Pam DiFatta (N)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gail Bell (N)     |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____             |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____             |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____             |  |

## Joint Ballot

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mark Stevens (N)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Will Walters (N)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                   | <input type="checkbox"/>                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Myrna Poticha (N) | <input type="checkbox"/> Richard Fleck (N) |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                   | <input type="checkbox"/>                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dave Bryan (N)    | <input type="checkbox"/> Pam DiFatta (N)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                   | <input type="checkbox"/>                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gail Bell (N)     |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____             |  |

The Single Ballot should be used by households with one RMC membership.

The Joint Ballot should be used by households with two RMC memberships.

Please note membership status indicated by the mailing label  
on the back of this page: SGL=single member DBL=joint member

**Please vote for not more than FOUR candidates apiece.**

(N) Nominating Committee Candidate

Petition Candidate



## If all you have is a hammer... chainsaws, fire, beetles, and 'forest health'

By Joshua Ruschhaupt  
Chapter Director

As the old saying goes, if all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail. Often, environmentalists see that mentality in forest managers, with a chainsaw replacing the hammer.

What does "forest health" really mean? To some, it means a green forest and Smokey the Bear's mantra: "only YOU can prevent forest fires." It might mean "park-like settings" of trees aesthetically dispersed and very little undergrowth that has been eradicated with chainsaws and manual brush-clearing. To others, including myself, forest health has almost nothing to do with human perception of a healthy forest—a healthy forest is healthy because it isn't actively "managed" or impacted by us.

What I mean is represented in Sierra Club's "fire management on public lands" policy (<http://goo.gl/x9hu6k>). This policy makes me proud to work at Sierra Club. Without repeating too much, fire, a natural evolutionary and reproductive partner for most tree species, is necessary in a healthy forest.

Think of fire as similar to the evolutionary partner-

ship of predators and prey, or, specific to Colorado, wolves and deer or elk. We killed wolves over a century ago in Colorado. Now the ungulate population and the ecosystems themselves in Rocky Mountain National Park and elsewhere are becoming biologically "unhealthy." Overpopulation of deer and elk. Overgrazing of riparian zones (vegetation near waterways). Unhealthy aquatic systems due to damaged banks. Songbird population decline due to lack of habitat. In short, the ecosystem unravels.

John Muir, our founder, famously said, "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe." Wolves, fire, doesn't matter. If you remove one or the other, it may take decades or a century, but it has drastic results.

We must balance the "chainsaw for every problem" mentality. Modern forest management is improving. Yosemite National Park, which just had the third-largest fire in California history, has a management plan that is guided by a quote from author Stephen J. Pyne: "...we can't cut our way out of the problem. We can't burn our way out. We can't simply suppress. And we can't walk away. But maybe, we can cut a little, burn a little, suppress a little, and sometimes just back off from a fire that we can't hope to stop. The process will take decades, not years, but taken together, a lot of small steps could make a big difference" (<http://goo.gl/iq6y25>).

This does seem to be a human-intensive plan. Like it or not, humans are spread across the landscape, and we must take actions to protect infrastructure and lives, but not use that protection as an excuse to invade the forest with desires of landscape-scale "treatments" where human infrastructure doesn't exist. Most such motives are economically derived, not ecologically.

Our poor decisions cause our worst disasters, including: rewarding fire-prone homes with artificially low insurance rates and public services, allowing fire-prone building materials and designs in homes built in fire-prone areas and not mandating property owner responsibility for defensible perimeters (clearing vegetation on and near structures). These poor decisions also endanger the lives of firefighters charged with being society's selfless heroes and protectors.

One major concern in Colorado are ongoing efforts to turn beetle-killed trees into biofuel for cars, electricity, or heat for buildings. Biomass plants, large or small, require vast and continuous forest "feedstock" to be economically viable.

Bark beetles are native to Colorado, not an invasive species taking over the forest. We are living in perfect storm conditions for beetles to thrive.

Trees are weaker than they should be due to forest crowding and competitive nutrient availability. Many forests are "even-aged" due to historic mining-era clear-cutting. Climate change is warming the coldest winter temperatures needed to keep bark beetle populations in check. So the beetles are reproducing with higher success rates and more frequently.

Instead of fighting the beetles, we should be rejoicing for the free landscape-scale forest thinning they're performing, which has the added benefit of being a positive biodiversity impact, not negative. Instead of suppressing fires, we should carefully and methodically use prescribed fires throughout Colorado. Instead of lamenting lost homes in two recent worst fires in Colorado history, we should exemplify homeowners who were prepared and escaped damage.



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