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# Mule Deer Story

## Reference [cpw.state.co.us](http://cpw.state.co.us)

Mule deer are an icon of the American West, an economic resource and an indicator species for the health of important landscapes. Mule deer evolved in North America, so they are well adapted to western landscapes. Since the mid-19th Century, mule deer populations across the western U.S. have experienced dramatic swings, mainly in response to human activities, severe winters and drought. Wildlife managers across eleven western states have spent decades trying to understand and address swings in mule deer populations. A 2004 report, produced by Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' Mule Deer Working Group, concluded that habitat loss, declining habitat quality, weather, population management, predation, disease and interactions with elk all influence mule deer populations.

Currently, wildlife managers in Colorado and many other states are continuing research and adapting management with the goals of reversing multi-year population declines. The statewide, post-hunt 2012 deer population estimate of 408,000 is far below the current statewide population objective range of 525,000 - 575,000. On Colorado's West Slope, the post-hunt estimate of just over 300,000 deer was more than 100,000 deer shy of the desired target population range of 410,000 - 450,000 deer.

Colorado's Mule Deer Story is designed to frame a conversation between sportsmen and women, conservationists and the public with state wildlife managers. It provides a synopsis of the history of mule deer management in the state and seeks to define the broad set of issues that may be involved in the decline of deer herds in western Colorado.

In 1999, the Colorado Division of Wildlife produced a report to the Colorado Legislature, which discussed declining mule deer populations. CPW has completed many of the management and research projects and changes suggested in this report (institute mule deer survival monitoring areas, upgrade deer inventory, enhance data analysis, increase research, habitat enrichment, etc).

During the first decade of the 21st Century, Colorado's human population continued to grow rapidly, topping 5 million residents in 2010, with increasing impacts on wildlife habitat. Increased human populations require agricultural and food practice changes that shift land use away from family farming and ranching to more resource-intensive practices. While the construction of homes and subdivisions continue to displace wildlife and fragment habitat, other stressors, such as surging demand for outdoor recreation and expanding road systems also pressure the state's deer herds.

New drilling technologies have opened millions of acres of formerly un-economic oil and gas plays, bringing industrial development and heavy traffic loads to the state's empty quarters.

Habitat research conducted by the Division demonstrated that mule deer populations on the Uncompahgre Plateau were limited by the quality and quantity of winter range forage. A follow-up study found that removing pinyon-juniper trees and spraying weeds increased winter fawn

survival.

Idaho Fish and Game concluded their part of the joint collaboration in 2011. The Idaho Fish and Game Dept. spent \$249,000 on coyote control over a six-year period and found no evidence that mule deer populations increased as a result of coyote control. However, they did not detect a strong effect of coyote or mountain lion removal alone on mule deer population trend. Instead, the study concluded that winter severity and summer precipitation were the most important influence on mule deer population growth.

In the Piceance Basin, wildlife researchers have focused on implementing and evaluating habitat treatments and best management practices as strategies to maintain mule deer numbers in areas where energy development is occurring, with the cooperation and support of multiple energy companies. Specifically, they will determine the amount of deer habitat that has been lost to different types of human land uses (i.e. development), and potentially degraded due to fire suppression and long-term trends towards warmer, drier weather. The changes to western Colorado's habitat that have occurred from ~1970 to present will be quantified. The past 40 years includes a notable decline in deer numbers, and there are comparable habitat data available across this time period.

The severe winter of 2007-2008 created significant mortality for mule deer herds in western Colorado, especially in the Gunnison Basin and Eagle and Moffat counties. Population swings in response to periodic droughts and severe winters are a reality for mule deer management. Recent fires have converted thousands of acres of productive mule deer winter range to early stage grasslands that are often dominated by cheatgrass and have minimal benefit to wintering mule deer.

As more vehicles travel on Colorado roads at faster speed limits, deer mortalities from automobile collisions increase. In some areas, highway mortality is significant. CPW is examining ways to reduce or mitigate deer road kill mortality. Total road kill mortality surely exceed these totals as these data are for those deer actually on the roadway or involved with vehicle accident or damage.

Competition with resurgent elk herds has been mentioned as a factor that could be contributing to declining deer herds. While elk populations have boomed across the West, mule deer have declined, and *(Continued next page.)*

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## Highlander Wildlife

several pieces of circumstantial evidence suggest that the trends could be linked. In addition, observational evidence suggests that elk can displace mule deer from choice feeding areas.

The potential impact of elk on mule deer has not been rigorously analyzed through experimentation. Regardless, CPW has made considerable efforts to reduce elk herds to what habitat can support and to levels that are biologically and socially acceptable. These efforts may also benefit deer. Mule deer are susceptible to a variety of infectious, noninfectious, and parasitic diseases that can affect survival and/or reproduction. Death from diseases may mask ultimate causes of mortality. For instance, malnutrition can increase susceptibility of deer to both diseases and predation.

Several diseases could be symptomatic of more fundamental problems with deer habitats or populations: such underlying problems could include large-scale habitat loss or degradation, livestock encroachment on native ranges, and/or overabundance of deer relative to range capacity. Based on ongoing survival studies, diseases appear responsible for a relatively small proportion of the annual deaths in adult mule deer. Whether disease-related mortality simply replaces other forms of mortality or is additive to these other causes remains undetermined; consequently, the overall influence of disease on mule deer population performance is uncertain.

A few of the diseases documented in adult mule deer do appear capable of population scale effects. Epidemics of "hemorrhagic disease" are caused by multiple strains of either bluetongue virus (BTV) or epizootic hemorrhagic

disease virus (EHDV). Both viruses are transmitted by biting midges. Epidemics occur sporadically in Colorado, affect all age classes of deer, and typically arise in late summer and early fall after midge populations build to levels sufficient to transmit infections among large numbers of animals. Spring precipitation, summer and fall temperatures, and the availability of reservoir hosts all contribute to the likelihood of an epidemic.

Chronic wasting disease (CWD), a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (i.e., prion disease) of mule deer, white-tailed deer, and elk, and has been detected in portions of northwest Colorado but not in the southwest portion of the state. Transmission routes and management strategies for CWD are under investigation.

In a recent western Colorado study, malnutrition and/or some disease agent apparently caused at least half of the fawn mortalities examined. Because sick fawns are probably quite vulnerable to predators and scavengers, it is likely that illness also contributed to some proportion of fawn mortality proximately attributed to predation in the areas studied. Some of these pathogens probably could kill otherwise healthy deer fawns, but all likely would be exacerbated by malnutrition or some other environmental stressor.

The fact that no single pathogen has emerged as a common thread among summer fawn mortalities studied to date suggests one or more underlying factors may be increasing fawns' vulnerability to whatever pathogens they encounter in early life. It follows that identification of the underlying factor(s) could be critical to improving overall recruitment in Colorado's mule deer populations.

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## Caregivers Training

Dear Readers,

Training Programs for Family Caregivers Begin in February - Boulder County Area Agency on Aging, a Division of Community Services, offers two training programs beginning in February for family caregivers of older adults, one focused on the hands-on skills of caregiving and the other on caregiver self-care.

National Caregiver Training Program is a 21-hour course (meets once a week for 3 hours) that helps family caregivers acquire the skills needed to provide safe, confident home care for older loved ones. Classes, taught by a registered nurse, provide detailed instruction, demonstration, and hands-on practice. Topics include caring for someone on bed rest, providing personal care, using a wheelchair safely, managing medications, taking vital signs, controlling infection, preventing falls, reducing caregiver stress, using local resources, and more. Each caregiver receives Quick Tips for Caregivers, a home reference guide. Wednesdays, Feb. 18 – April 1, 1:30 – 4:30 p.m., in Longmont.

Powerful Tools for Caregivers is a 15-hour course (meets once a week for 2 hours) that gives family caregivers the tools to deal with the emotional challenges of caregiving. Classes, taught by trained leaders, help caregivers learn to reduce stress, improve self-confidence, communicate their feelings, balance their lives, increase their ability to make tough decisions, and locate helpful resources. Each caregiver receives The Caregiver Helpbook: Powerful Tools for Caregivers. Tuesdays, Feb. 24 – March 31, 1:30 – 4 p.m., in Boulder.

The courses are open to Boulder County residents providing local or long-distance care for a relative, partner or friend who is 60 or over, or of any age if the person has dementia. There is no charge, but donations are appreciated. Financial assistance for respite care (substitute elder care) during class periods is available.

Pre-registration is required. To register, or for more information, please call 303-678-6116 or email [infocaregiver@bouldercounty.org](mailto:infocaregiver@bouldercounty.org).

Dear Readers,

Letters from readers, non-profits, county organizations and/or just folks with something to say are welcomed by the Highlander Monthly at [news@highlandermo.com](mailto:news@highlandermo.com) - it is necessary to sign your letter, that's all that is required.

With 3,000 copies being printed and distributed every month, in the mail & businesses: plus our color online issue - we reach lots of folks in the four canyon and western suburb areas, not reached any other way. While advertisers that utilize our FREE Graphic Design should start around the 15th of the month before, letters should arrive no later than the 19th. Thank you, Editor

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# Antibiotic Resistance

## CSU

Researchers at Colorado State University are investigating the weighty topic of antibiotic resistance – an issue with ramifications for global food safety and public health – by tracking the genetic footprints of drug-resistant bacteria.

They want to determine where infectious organisms originate and how they move through the food system and environment to people. The study, funded with \$2.25 million from the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, is one of the largest of its kind and is enabled by recent advances in DNA sequencing technology. The project is expected to provide insights about the factious topic of antibiotic use in food animals, chiefly beef and dairy cattle, and the degree to which the longstanding agricultural practice contributes to development of “superbugs” that infect people whose illnesses are difficult and expensive to treat.

“Antimicrobial resistance is one of the most significant grand challenges to human animal and food safety,” said Alan Rudolph, CSU vice president for research. “This award highlights how Colorado State University is poised as a premier land-grant research institution to pursue novel solutions to this important societal problem.”

Each year in the United States, at least 2 million people

become infected with bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics; at least 23,000 people die each year as a direct result of these infections, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Salmonella and Campylobacter, two of the many bacteria commonly transmitted through food, cause an estimated 410,000 antibiotic-resistant infections in the country each year, the CDC reports.

Antibiotic, or antimicrobial, resistance is gaining increasing attention as a global public-health threat: Just four months ago, the White House directed key federal agencies to coordinate on a “National Strategy to Combat Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria.” In November, the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities and the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges announced a new Task Force on Antibiotic Resistance in Production Agriculture to provide advice and education.

Food-animal production has been blamed for contributing to antimicrobial-resistant illness, but these suspicions are not well-founded in science, said Keith Belk, professor in CSU’s Center for Meat Safety and Quality, and Dr. Paul Morley, a CSU veterinarian and infectious-disease expert. With multiple collaborators, the two are leading the research project, *Paradigm Shift*:



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**Revolutionizing Our Understanding of Antimicrobial Resistance Ecology through Whole Genome Analysis of Microbial Communities.**

The scientists hope to gain a much better understanding of the role of production agriculture in antimicrobial resistance. It often is assumed that providing antibiotics in feed rations for livestock contributes to drug-resistant germs, but the practice also has a protective effect, Belk said.

“Most people believe they are consuming antimicrobial-resistant bacteria in their food because of intensive food production systems. In fact, those modern food-production systems are effectively controlling bacteria in food,” Belk said.

Antibiotics – used in agriculture and by countless people around the world – kill dangerous bacteria and other germs. Yet surviving infectious agents replicate, producing greater antimicrobial resistance, or AMR. “Use over time promotes increasingly resistant populations that may threaten public health because bacteria susceptible to the antibiotics die, while those that are not survive,” Morley explained.

In order to successfully solve the problem of antibiotic resistance, scientists must better understand where resistance originates and how drug-resistant germs move through the food system and environment to people, the CSU researchers said.

“There’s not a farmer in the world who doesn’t take pride in their product,” Morley said, adding that it is in agriculture’s best interest to understand if and how livestock production contributes to drug-resistant germs in people. “We are looking at production methods to see if they have an impact on AMR promotion, and if they do, we’ll need to change those production methods — within reason — as an industry.” Using DNA sequencing technology, the two professors will trace genes that cause resistance in bacteria. This will

allow them to determine sources and paths, including whether and how antimicrobial-resistant bugs move from livestock to humans.

The cost of advanced genetic-sequencing technology has dropped dramatically in the past decade, allowing researchers to conduct more thorough examinations of the hundreds of millions of bacteria that can be found in a single sample of cow feces, for instance. Belk and Morley will compare antimicrobial resistance in traditional and organic processes, and in different environments, to identify what resistant genes are present and how they are transferred. They also want to learn whether different production methods affect abundance of antimicrobial resistance.

“This is collaborative work,” Belk said. “It’s truly a team effort. We will use what we learn to help train a new generation of scientists in the power of using these new DNA sequencing capabilities to address societal issues.” Partners on the three-year project include the CSU departments of Computer Science; Environmental and Radiological Health Sciences; Education; and Food Science and Human Nutrition, along with several others.

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# Buffalo Field Campaign ~ [www.buffalofieldcampaign.org](http://www.buffalofieldcampaign.org)

## URGENT TAKE ACTION ALERT! YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK INITIATES BISON CAPTURE OPERATIONS!

Please contact Yellowstone Superintendent **Dan Wenk** and tell him to release the buffalo and to cease further capture operations. [dan\\_wenk@nps.gov](mailto:dan_wenk@nps.gov) [superintendent@nps.gov](mailto:superintendent@nps.gov) **307-344-2002**

America's last wild buffalo are right now being trapped for slaughter along Yellowstone's northern boundary. These capture for slaughter operations are happening even as state and treaty hunters are shooting buffalo that migrate into Montana. Such management actions are driven by Montana's bison-intolerant livestock industry, intolerance that is codified in the statute: MCA 81-2-120, a law crafted by the livestock industry that needs to be repealed.

**This is what takes place in Yellowstone's Stephens Creek bison trap**, where members of America's last wild buffalo population are being held: Gardiner were able to get a count of approximately 145 buffalo in an outer holding pen.

Yellowstone's press release states that they aim to remove 800 to 900 bison that migrate out of the park's northern boundary this winter to reduce population growth and to reduce the potential for a mass migration of bison into Montana.

"With all of the holes in their brucellosis argument, they are now killing ecologically extinct wild buffalo in the name of population control. The Yellowstone buffalo are



America's last wild, migratory herds and the most important bison population that exists. They are the last to identify as a wildlife species and are ecologically extinct throughout their native range.

**They've been added to the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List for being "threatened with near extinction,"** and even Montana designates the species "in greatest conservation need" with conditions "making [bison] vulnerable to global extinction."

Buffalo Field Campaign and Friends of Animals Wildlife Law Program filed an emergency rule-making petition (LINK) with the National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service to stop Yellowstone's planned slaughter before it had a chance to begin. This petition was filed in September, and, to date has been completely ignored by the government.

**TAKE ACTION TODAY** and please urge your friends, family and colleagues to do so as well. Thank you! **These are images of what wild buffalo suffer in Yellowstone's Stephens**

**Creek bison trap.** Go to Buffalo Field Campaign's website to use their **TAKE ACTION** steps and make your voice heard to help stop this violence against our wild bison.



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By Jim Plane – State Farm

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**At Home:** Have you... Cleaned the gutters? Clear debris from gutters and test downspouts for drainage to protect against water damage. Trimmed trees? Cut back dead or dying limbs and any branches that can touch the roof or siding. When it's windy, branches can rub or scratch the surfaces of your home and cause damage. They also could fall during a storm or break under heavy snow and ice.

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Scheduled a heating system inspection? Have your furnace professionally inspected and cleaned to reduce the risk of a breakdown and to keep the system running efficiently. If you have a fireplace, have your chimney professionally cleaned and inspected and ensure that your damper opens, closes and seals tightly. Winterized outdoor faucets? Remove all hoses or devices attached to outdoor spigots. Have in-ground sprinkler systems blown out, and turn off water to outdoor spigots. Be sure to drain any water left behind in the pipes.

**Your Vehicle:** Have you... Had your vehicle serviced? Ask your mechanic to perform an inspection: Test the battery and brakes, inspect the exhaust, check the cooling system, check fluids, change the oil, and make sure all components are working properly. Check the vehicle's owner's manual for information on the correct fluid types and recommended service intervals. Checked the wiper blades? Inspect your wiper blades to make sure they're functional and in good condition.

If you live in an area that typically sees lots of snow and ice, consider installing winter blades. Store an ice scraper in the car, and stock up on windshield washer fluid rated to withstand -30 degrees or lower temperatures.

Monitored the fuel line? Today's ethanol fuels remove small amounts of water from your fuel system to help prevent freezing. In addition, you can help avoid freeze-ups by keeping your vehicle in a heated garage, avoiding refueling while the tanker truck is at the station (water and deposits from the tanker could end up in your fuel line) and keeping your gas cap secured. Another solution: Always keep the tank at least half-full.

Inspected the tires? Check for uneven wear, cupping, sidewall cracking and other damage or deterioration. Also examine tire treads to make sure the grooves are deep enough to grip slick surfaces. If your tires fail any of these tests, replace them with all-season tires, or, in extreme winter environments, with winter snow tires.

Wonder if your tires have enough tread? Try the penny test: Stick a penny (Lincoln head first) into one of the grooves that goes completely around the tire. If you can see the top of Lincoln's head, your tread is worn down below 2/32 of an inch and should be replaced.

Stocked the trunk with emergency equipment?

Essentials include: Flares, jumper cables, a shovel, a first-aid kit, a flashlight, extra batteries, non-perishable snacks and cold-weather gear. By following these simple steps, you can insure that your home and vehicles will be prepared.

In the event that something does happen, please feel free to contact me or my team with any questions that may come up through your claims process. Whether a current client or not, WE ARE HERE TO HELP you through any questions or concerns that you may have. Stay warm and be prepared!!

*(See Jim's Ad on the Inside Front Cover of this issue.)*

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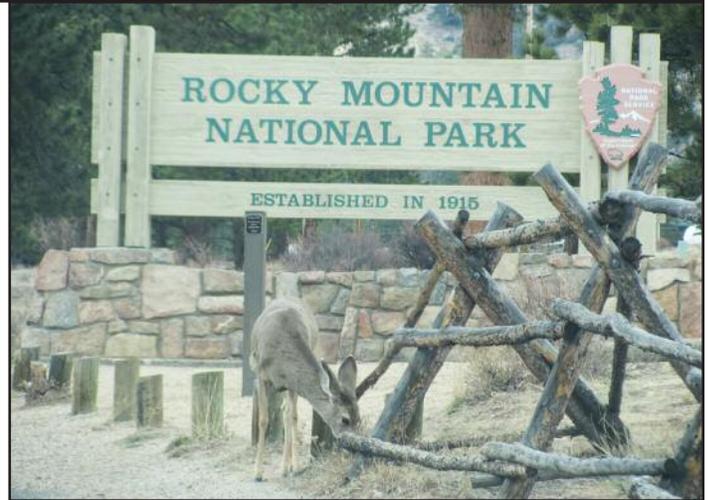

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# Celebrating Rocky Mtn National Park's Centennial

Article and photographs by Diane Bergstrom

The courage of John Muir, his vision and determination, shaped Enos Mills' commitment and drive to protect the area we now know as Rocky Mountain National Park. The founding father and preserver of Rocky Mountain National Park credited John Muir, environmentalist and father of the National Park Service, for being his example. He stated that he doubted he could have accomplished what he did without John's influence, nor would he had the confidence to do what he thought he could not do. Eleanor Roosevelt once said, "You must do the thing you think you cannot do." As I type this on Martin Luther King Day, I feel tremendous gratitude for those who have strived to protect nature, shape culture, and improve the world. Often they faced, and still face, seemingly insurmountable public pressure against change, progress, and preservation, in an effort to save us from ourselves. By the beginning of the 1900's, tourism was taking hold in the Rocky Mountains and the frontier was starting to disappear. Mining, logging, dude ranches, market hunters, fur traders and trappers were devastating the natural resources in the RMNP area. Wolves and grizzly bears were over-hunted and their populations never



recovered. Joel Estes, for whom the town is named, raised cattle and sold elk and deer meat to the growing people population. Enos Mills championed the cause to preserve the land as a national park, and in 1915, Rocky Mountain National Park was established. 3,000 people attended the dedication! He said, "These are our fountains and gardens of life. Kindly assist in keeping them." 10,000 years ago, Paleo-Indians inhabited the regions, barely leaving a trace,

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followed by the Ute, 6,000 years ago who lived off the land without stripping the resources. They believed the message from the Creator, pronounced Sin-ah-wah, was, "I will place you high in the mountains so you will be close to me." Arapaho, Cheyenne, and other plains tribes summered in the mountains, following game with respect for the balance of nature.

Many improvements have been made in the park over the last decade so that visitors may have an easier time being closer to nature, and their impact on nature is minimized. The Bear Lake Road reconstruction concluded in 2013, finalizing 47 miles of critical park road improvements, including increasing pullout parking, rerouting road sections to preserve wetlands and riparian habitats, bridge repairs, and installing retaining walls for better drainage and visitor safety. Over 3 million visitors enter the 415 square mile park every year to traverse 350 miles of trails. Park personnel and volunteers have been working to improve their park experience, despite fires, floods, and pine beetles. (The apocalyptic theme hasn't escaped their humor either!) In the fall of 2012, an illegal campfire ignited a blaze in Forest Canyon, where fire hasn't been evidenced in 800 years. Long term drought in the area, along with a buildup of downed trees and foliage, some areas 20 feet deep, made conditions for a tinderbox. Half the trees in the canyon were killed by mountain pine beetles. High winds quickly spread the fire through the canyon and across Moraine Park, covering 3,500 acres. Over 600 firefighters from around the country were mobilized to fight the fire for over two months. Wildfire experts predict more high level fires as droughts continue. That November had been the driest November on record for 100 years and 2012 was the warmest year recorded (to that date). The record flood of the fall, 2013,



*(Continued next page.)*



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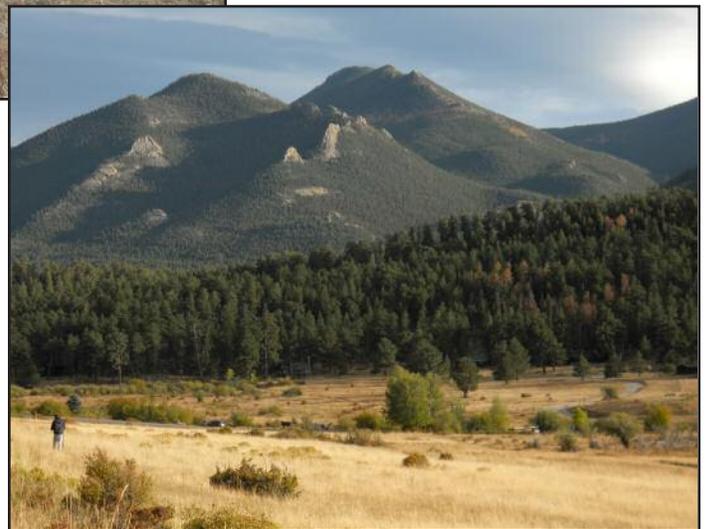
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Fall River Road is closed as sections of the road collapsed and tumbled down slope. Repairs are slated to begin this year with an end date to be determined. The Alluvial Fan also sustained damage and more rockslides. Repairs began in 2014 to the road and trailhead. Take care while hiking as some trails; signage and footbridges throughout the park have been affected. Ask at the Visitor Centers for more information. Charred trees and shrubs still stand along Cub Lake and Fern Lake trailheads and nature's restorative power can be observed in the lush grasses, sedges, willows and

surged through the park, town of Estes, and many neighboring communities. The tremendous effects on the park can best be observed safely from Rainbow Curve. Old



flowers flourishing in Moraine Park. Herds of elk fattened themselves during the rut last fall on the rich flora in the meadow. The road repairs and improvements on Highways 36, 7 and 34 are complete, *(my previous articles on the Hwy 36 road construction can be found under Archives, 2014, at highlandermo.com)* so travelers should have no delays.

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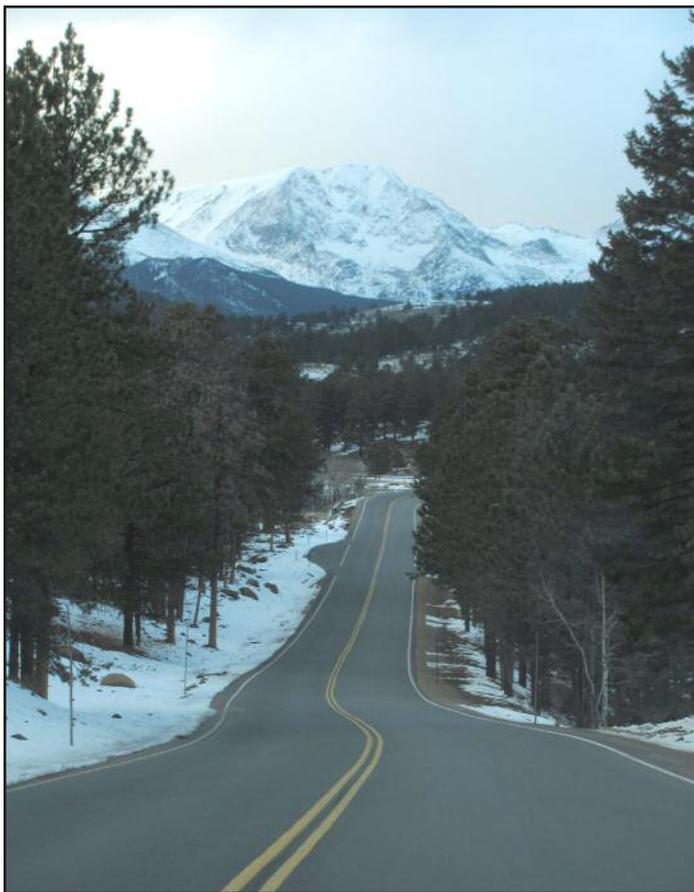
RMNP, and its partners, have planned activities every month throughout the centennial for everyone to participate. The National Park Service provides free days this year, waiving entrance fees to every national park: Feb. 14-16; April 18-19; Aug. 25; Sept. 26 and Nov. 11. A seven-consecutive day automobile pass for RMNP is available for \$20. An annual pass is \$40 and a national pass is \$80. Senior lifetime passes cost \$10. Free passes are available for

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Grand Lake Winter Carnival will be held in Grand Lake on Main Street from 9:30 am to midnight. The Grand Lake Chamber and Visitor Center is (Continued next page.)

military personnel and persons with permanent disabilities, after they have submitted the appropriate paperwork. Check requirements at [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov). To check the ongoing list of centennial events, follow [nps.gov/romo](http://nps.gov/romo). Every Saturday night, the east side of the park will offer Centennial Saturday Night presentations, celebrating wilderness and wildlife. The title for Feb. 7 is *Sparks, Smoke and Silver Linings*; the theme for Feb. 14 is *100 Years of RMNP: History and 100th Anniversary*; the subject for Feb. 21 is *Evening with Isabella Bird*. In 1873, she was the first recorded Caucasian woman to climb Longs Peak, guided by Rocky Mountain Jim. In her book, *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains*, she noted that the mountain area was "no region for tourists and women." At a rare time for women to travel alone, this genteel adventurous Englishwoman went around the world, documenting her experiences in numerous books. On Feb. 28, the discussion will be *Mountain Lions: Magic and Mystery*. All programs are 45 minutes long, begin at 7 pm, and are held at the Beaver Meadows Visitor Center. Various park partners are also offering centennial events. On Feb. 7, the



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providing walking tours, geo-cache adventures, and more; visit [www.grand-lakechamber.com/100](http://www.grand-lakechamber.com/100). The Estes Park Museum at 200 Fourth Street is hosting a presentation on *Pioneers of the Park*; describing how local climbers have made history, on Feb. 23 at 7 pm. They also have an ongoing rock-climbing exhibit. The YMCA is offering centennial hikes and their schedule can be found at <http://www.y-hikes.com>. The Colorado Mountain Club, which helped form RMNP, is offering trail hikes, snowshoe hikes, and wildflower hikes. Find their schedule at [www.cmc.org](http://www.cmc.org). The Rocky Mountain Conservancy, a non-profit that supports projects, research, and educational programs of RMNP, including the Junior Ranger



Headquarters/Moraine Park Discovery Center, is offering a Centennial Seminar Series depicting the wilderness, wildlife and wonder of the park. Seminars are interactive and involve some hiking with instructors. Fees apply. Call 970-586-1206 for details or pick up a catalog at one of the Park Visitor Centers.

Ongoing park activities offer everything from the creative to the familiar. If

you have a personal park story or memorable family history with the park, you are invited to share them in the

online Centennial Family Photos Album. [www.rmnp100.com](http://www.rmnp100.com) to upload your stories and photos corresponding to the appropriate past decade. They will become part of the park's virtual time capsule and document our park connections formed over the past 100 years. Junior Rangers are the future of the park! They can pick up a special Centennial Junior Ranger Activity Sheet and complete it for a Centennial sticker. These are only available at the Beaver Meadows, Fall River, Alpine, and Kawwuneeche Visitor Centers. (See my Junior Rangers article under Archives, [highlanderemo.com](http://highlanderemo.com), August 2014, pg. 20) Free ranger-led programs are held throughout the week on both sides of the park. Check schedules at [www.nps.gov/romo](http://www.nps.gov/romo). Full moon walks are scheduled for Feb. 3 and Mar. 5.



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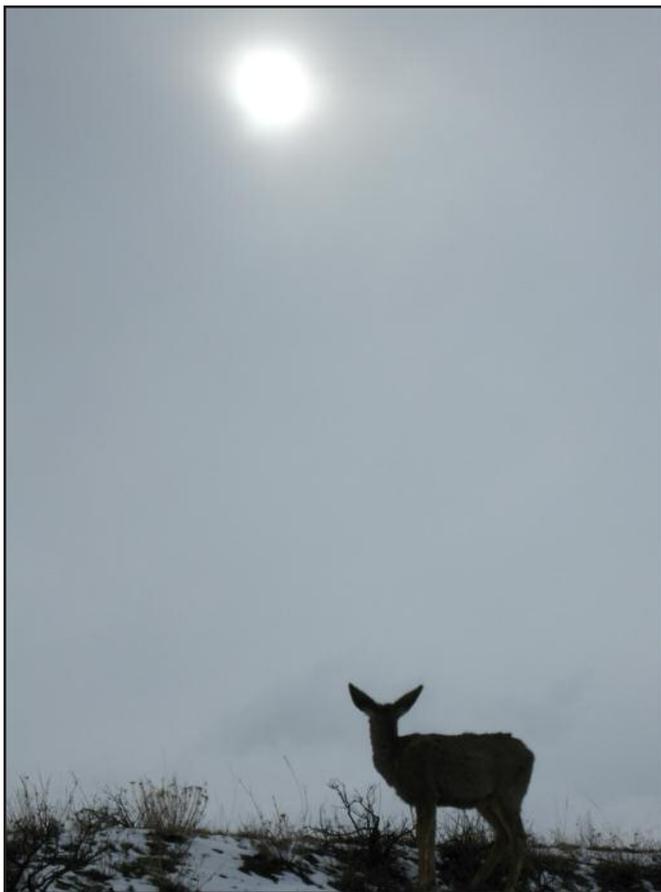


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The walks last 1 to 1.5 hours, with varying times and locations. Reservations can be made no earlier than 7 days in advance by calling 970-586-1223 between 8 am and 4 pm. Of particular note on March 24, professional Colorado photographer/author John Fielder will be speaking at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. Tickets are required. For further information on any park event, call the Information Office at 970-586-1206. If you are planning on camping in the park this summer, I suggest you make your reservations early. Call 877-444-6777 or visit [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov). To follow events through the Park's social media, search Instagram for #rmnp, like them on Facebook, follow them on YouTube, use the twitter handle @Rockynps, and upload photos on flickr. (Thanks, Liz and Jeffrey, for improving my social med cred!) I hope everyone will find their way up to our precious park and join in on the Centennial celebrations! What we appreciate, we will preserve, for generations to come.

I am often asked for park area dining/shopping recommendations so here are my completely biased choices. For the best breakfast and service, The Egg and I on East Elkhorn Avenue. For the best meal under \$10 in a simple,



scaled down setting, Chicago's Best, on West Elkhorn Avenue, for their calzones, sandwiches, and pizza by the slice. For a more extensive menu and family atmosphere, Poppy's Pizza and Grill in the Barlow Plaza on East Elkhorn Avenue. For more upscale options and ambience, Waterfront Grille and Lounge at the Estes Park Resort on the lake, Big Thompson Avenue. Since the flood, I try to buy local from affected communities as many businesses are still trying to recover. I highly recommend the Native American owned, little freestanding octagonal jewelry shop in Barlow Plaza on East Elkhorn, Sierra Small Bird. Sierra is known for her unparalleled inlay work with natural turquoise and other stones. She buys stone direct, cuts her own designs, and does repairs. The winter is a great time to visit the park to enjoy quieter, less populated trails and programs, and then tour Estes Park, where many merchants offer deals on merchandise and meals before the summer season begins.



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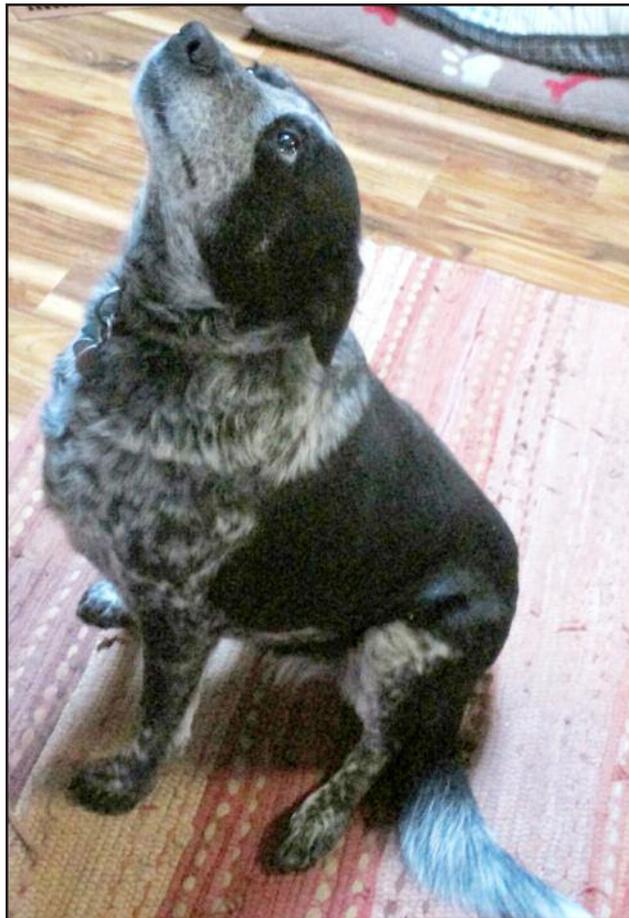
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*Top Left: Ashes loves her heated bed! Right: Shia begs for a rub from Shelly, of Hand, Hoofs, & Paws!*

*Bottom Left: Bogey so serious...*

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*Top & at Left: Chanel dodges Lil'Bit's right hook, action so fast it is a blur...  
Bottom Right: The two lovely Underground Liquor dogs!*

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### **Membership Requirements**

Membership to the CCCFPD is open to anyone who meets the following qualifications:

- Is between 18 and 60 years old
- Resides within the District
- Has a current, valid Colorado Driver's License
- Has a high school diploma or equivalent
- Is in good physical health (e.g., able to lift and carry up to 100 pounds at waist height)

### **General Membership Benefits**

**Free Training:** All firefighting, rescue, and emergency medical training is provided. Learn new skills that will benefit you for the rest of your life.

**Pension Benefits:** Volunteer firefighters with ten or more years of service are eligible to receive a Retirement Pension (the amount is based on length of service).

**Leadership Skills:** Benefit from the opportunities for advancement and leadership responsibilities on the operational and administrative side of the CCCFPD.

**Social Gatherings:** Enjoy socializing with the other CCCFPD members at the annual Firefighter's Recognition dinner, the summer barbecue picnic, and potluck holiday party.

**And much more:** Be active in your community, meet new neighbors and friends, and learn new areas of Coal Creek Canyon.

**Go to the above website for the complete CCCFPD Membership Application Packet.**

All applicants must pass a Driving Record and Criminal Background check, a Pre-Service Physical Examination (including a drug screen test) by a physician designated and paid for by the CCCFPD.

### **Trainee Firefighter Requirements**

Trainee firefighters have 24 months (2 years) to complete and pass the following initial training requirements:

- Firefighter I Course and HazMat Operations (approximately 200 hours to complete)
  - First Responder Course (approximately 80 hours to complete)
  - Basic Wildland Firefighter S-130/190 Course (approximately 40 hours to complete)
- Ambulance ride-along with a designated ambulance service provider (an 8 to 12-hour shift)
- Qualification on assigned station vehicles and the Ambulance. (This is also ongoing training to verify a member's proficiency in the driving and operation of these vehicles.)

### **Active Firefighter Requirements**

Upon successful completion of the probationary requirements, members then become active firefighters who must meet the following response and training requirements annually in order to retain their active membership:

- Incident Response: Active members must respond to a minimum of 20% of ALL incidents in each calendar year. CCCFPD is summoned to approximately 250 calls a year. About 75% of these calls are medically-related. The average duration of a medical incident is 60 minutes, which includes cleaning, restocking, and refueling the vehicles after each call. Structure and wildland-type fires vary in length.
- Training: All members must have a minimum of 36 fire training hours and 12 medical training hours annually. Fire classes cover structure fire, wildland fire, SCBA, and HazMat training. Medical classes cover basic life support skills, CPR, AED, bloodborne pathogens / contaminants, and ambulance training.

### **Wildland Team Member Requirements**

Wildland team members respond to incidents involving wildfires within the District, as well as mutual aid requests to support wildfire suppression efforts in Jefferson, Boulder, Gilpin, Clear Creek & Larimer Counties. Wildland incidents can be large in scale and complexity, and wildland team members are expected to commit to 12 to 24 hour shifts when responding to an incident.

All Wildland Team Members must meet the following:

- Complete a 40+ hour basic training course (S-130/190)
- Maintain a current American Heart Association (AHA) CPR certification
- Pass an arduous level physical agility test (pack test) annually. The pack test is a three mile walk carrying a 45 pound pack that must be completed in 45 minutes.
  - Attend an 8-hour wildland refresher course (RT-130) annually
- Attend an additional 4 hours of relevant in-district training annually

### **Ongoing in-house training classes are provided as follows:**

- Fire Training is generally held on the first Saturday of the month at 8 a.m. during the winter (November through April) and on the first Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. during the summer (May through October). This training covers a wide range of topics necessary for dealing with structure fires and motor vehicle accidents.
- Station Training is held on the second Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. This training helps you become familiar with the trucks, people, and equipment at your assigned station.
- EMS (Emergency Medical Service) Training is held on the third Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. This training covers a wide variety of topics necessary for performing basic life support (BLS) skills.
  - Wildland Fire Training is held on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. This training covers a wide variety of topics necessary for dealing with wildland fires.

**Go to [www.coalcreekcanyonfd.org](http://www.coalcreekcanyonfd.org) for a CCCFPD membership application today.  
The application period ends February 28, 2015.**

# Progress Report On Colorado River Pulse

From Tay Wiles

It's been months since a coalition of scientists, water managers and lawmakers from the U.S. and Mexico opened the Morelos Dam at the Arizona border, releasing a massive, one-time pulse into the parched Colorado River Delta. The Colorado is lifeblood to seven states and has failed to reach the ocean since the 1990s, due mainly to over-allocation to a growing population; the pulse was an attempt to revive a much-struggling ecosystem. And despite much fanfare, most of the 70-mile stretch - where 107,000 acre-feet of water either swept across desiccated stretches of the channel or sank into the soil where the existing water table was healthier and closer to the surface - dried up within weeks.

In general, the pulse has jumpstarted native vegetation and acted as scientists expected: like a spring flood would if the river were healthy. But experts warn not to get too excited quite yet, before all the data's analyzed. Recently, researchers are giving a progress report of environmental changes they've seen at the delta since last spring's release.

Among the positive stories, for example, was a change in overall greenness. Satellite images beginning in 2000 have shown a decrease in delta vegetation, but over the last nine months, scientists have seen a 23% uptick in greenness. Karl Flessa, a professor of geosciences at University of Arizona and co-chief scientist of the monitoring program, says some of that new growth is invasive salt cedar, a competitor of the more desirable cottonwood and willow. But still, it's progress. Flessa says some kind of vegetation

rest stop, even if it's invasive, is better than nothing for birds migrating between Central and North Americas.

Francisco Zamora, director of the Colorado River Delta Legacy Program at Tucson-based environmental nonprofit Sonoran Institute, says he was somewhat underwhelmed by the amount of inundation as a result of the pulse. The institute oversees the Laguna Grande restoration site in Mexico. "I want to say about 60% of what we thought would be inundated was," Zamora says. And yet since the experimental flow, the site has made significant progress with native vegetation. Zamora's team collected native seeds and sprayed them onto wet soil - in a process known as hydro-seeding - just before the release. Their hope was that the flow would raise the underground water table and keep surface soil wet long enough that seeds would germinate with roots deep enough to hit the table. Zamora says the hydro-seeding is working. Since the pulse, willow and cottonwood saplings at the Laguna Grande have sprouted, some as high as six feet.

According to the progress report, "Minute 319 Colorado River Delta Environmental Flows Monitoring," the water tables rose along the entire stretch of the river, from the Arizona border to the Gulf of California. They also lowered in the weeks following the pulse, but Flessa and Zamora say that mimics natural cycles of spring floods. Whether the water would recede wasn't the big question on everyone's minds, but rather the speed at which the tables receded: If tables shrink too quickly, seeds don't have a chance to germinate. In the Laguna Grande restoration area, scientists used additional base flow from Mexican

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Tommy Knockers

irrigation canals to keep levels high even after the pulse had finished.

Scientists also saw an increase in birds gathering in the delta as the pulse inundated the channel, though the long-term return of migratory birds will depend on whether vegetation makes a significant comeback. One of the most surprising outcomes of the pulse, though, was less ecological than it was social. Last spring, residents of Mexican towns near the channel gathered at the river to celebrate its inspiring - if temporary - revitalization. "Most of the time we think about the birds and wildlife," Zamora says, "but in this particular case, the benefits and the connection of the local communities with the river was very evident. There's new hope."

The pulse perhaps got the most attention for connecting to the sea, but Flessa says that was beside the



point. The real purpose of the international agreement to release the pulse - contained in a document called Minute 319 - was to breathe life into the larger ecosystem and to gather data on how to most effectively use water in the future.

Still, some of Flessa's colleagues couldn't help but put bets on whether the release would reach the sea "Though I didn't put any money down, I didn't think it would," Flessa said. Long-term effects of the pulse will be studied in the months and years to come. A more comprehensive report is due in 2016 and a final evaluation in 2018.

*Tay Wiles is the online editor of High Country News.*

*Photo of the Colorado River Delta by F. Zamora, courtesy of High Country News.*

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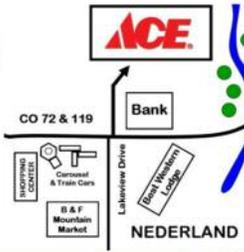
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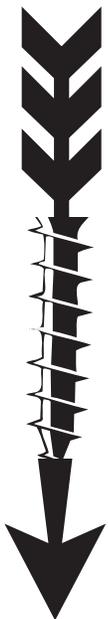




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## *Wearing Wrong Color*

*By Andy Gulliford*

I knew we were in trouble when I saw the third snowshoe hare. It was almost noon on the first day of elk season back in early November. I had a knife, hunting rifle and adequate ammunition. Yet what I realized made the hair stand up on the back of my neck. I felt immediately threatened. As we all are.

Here in Colorado, we have so far been spared the most dramatic consequences of climate change. No oceans are lapping at the shores of Denver and no glaciers are calving off Grand Mesa near Grand Junction. Yet scientists warn that humans are responsible for creating a new geological era some have labeled the Anthropocene, whose warming atmosphere is tipping our world toward a more chaotic climate.

“It was taken for granted that the process was not something that could be observed in real time, an assumption that has now been proven false,” writes Elizabeth Kolbert in *Field Notes from a Catastrophe: Man, Nature and Climate Change*. In Ithaca, New York, she notes that four out of six frog species have begun to mate 10 days earlier every year, and at an arboretum in Boston, spring-flowering shrubs have advanced by eight days. In California’s Sierra Nevada, a butterfly named Edith’s checkerspot now lives 300 feet higher than it did a century ago.

Kolbert adds, “The planet has often been colder than today, but rarely warmer, and then only slightly.” She cautions, “It is only in the last five or ten years that global warming has finally emerged from the background ‘noise’ of climate variability. And even so, the changes that can be seen lag behind the changes that have been set in motion.”

Elk hunting in Colorado’s magnificent high country, the last thing I had in mind was climate change. There had been a little early snow. My partner and I had topped the ridge by 9 a.m., seen elk tracks though not fresh ones, and we’d gone our separate ways.

I was on my way downslope when I saw my first rabbit. Pure white, the snowshoe hare quivered in a snowdrift next

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to fallen timber. He was doing his bunny best to be camouflaged but on that south-facing mountain the previous week's snow had melted fast. Forty yards farther I spied bunny number two, with his nose twitching and pink ears swiveling. He ran off and hid near more snow, but he had to cross bare ground to do it. That was when I found the third rabbit, almost at my feet. He glared white against tan pine needles. Snowshoe hares should know better. Why were they white in early November with limited snow on the ground? What was happening?



So that was it: Snowshoe hares have adapted not to the amount of snow but to the length of daylight. That first weekend in November, there should have been more snow on the ground, but there wasn't. The rabbits had planned on winter snow cover that had already begun to melt. I had seen climate change in action, or so I thought. Scientist Scott Wait wasn't sure: "Are the mismatches seen by many elk hunters in recent years due to

"I've seen and had many reports the last three years about mismatched hares and habitat, mostly in the fall when hares are turning white before much snow cover," says Scott Wait, the southwest region's senior biologist for Colorado Parks and Wildlife. "But I've also seen white hares in the spring when some of our snow has melted from dust storm deposition leading to early snowmelt."

Snowshoe hares survive by mimicry or camouflage, the species evolving to be brown in summer and white in winter. Wait told me, "Color change is initiated due to daylight length, which might be related to snow accumulation on an evolutionary timescale. If snow accumulation varies from normal, the hare continues to change color but might find itself wearing the wrong color, white on a brown background, or brown on a white background."

climate changes, annual variation, or merely an increase in hare abundance?"

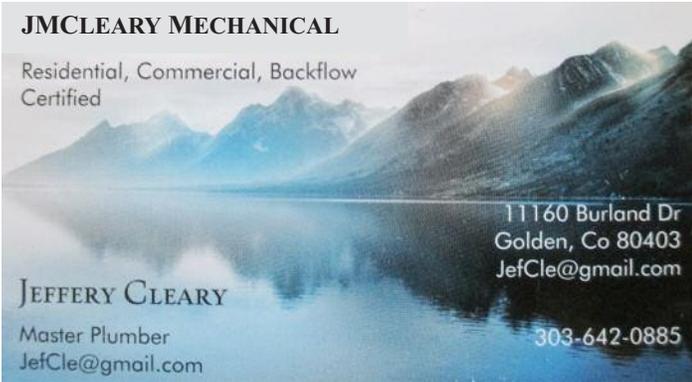
No one knows for sure. Dr. L. Scott Mills at the University of Montana says that genetic variation may already be resulting in rapid rabbit adaptation to our changed environment.

Maybe, though not where I was hunting. I saw three bright white bunnies in small snow patches on an otherwise dull brown turf. I hope the rabbits make it through the winter, and I hope they can adapt to climate change. Us, too.

*Andy Gulliford is a contributor to Writers on the Range, a column service of High Country News (hcn.org). He is a professor of history and environmental studies at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado (gulliford\_a@fortlewis.edu).*

  
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# Social Work Blues

From Jenny Shank – High Country News

*Fourth of July Creek* - Smith Henderson, 470 pages, hardcover: \$26.99. Ecco, 2014.

*Fourth of July Creek*, the robust debut of Portland-based novelist Smith Henderson, follows the life of Pete Snow, a state social worker in the fictional town of Tenmile, Montana. At work, Snow is steady and skillful, able to calm frightened children and parse messy domestic situations. But after hours, he's an alcoholic prone to unbridled benders, alienated from his own land-baron dad and fugitive brother. He has lived in an isolated cabin ever since he left his cheating wife.

One day in the early 1980s, a disheveled child named Benjamin wanders into the town, west of Glacier National Park. Pete buys Benjamin new clothes and medicine for giardia and scurvy, and returns him to the remote spot the boy calls home. Benjamin's father, Jeremiah, a wild-bearded, scripture-quoting,

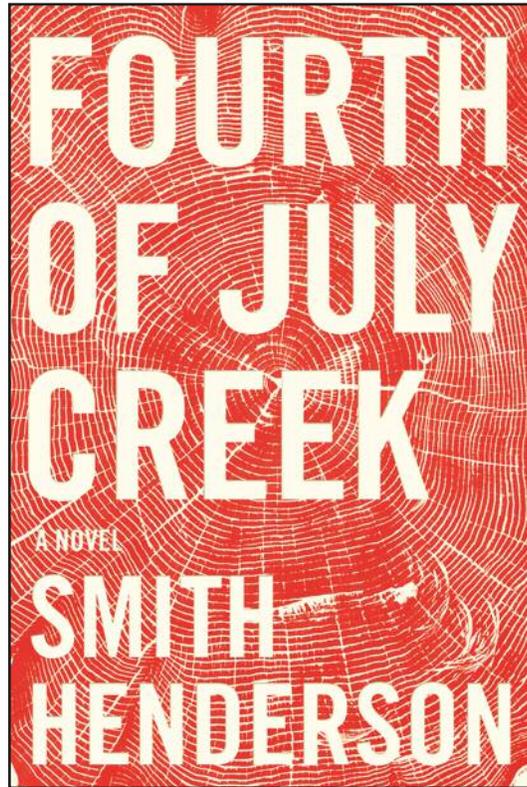
shotgun-toting survivalist, collects his son while threatening Pete with a "fatal wrath." But Pete refuses to give up on this odd family, gradually befriend them as you might a pair of skittish wild animals.

Meanwhile, after Pete's hard-partying wife moves to Texas, their 13-year-old daughter, Rachel, runs away. Pete, who blames himself for neglecting his daughter, takes off on a cross-country mission to rescue her. As he tells his estranged wife, "I take kids away from people like us." We learn what's happening to Rachel through question-and-answer sessions interspersed throughout the novel, in which she details all she endures as she drifts.

*Fourth of July Creek* is rife with painfully honest, hard-won insights about kids out on the street or caught up in the system; the author once worked at a group home for juveniles in Missoula, and his

experience brings a unique authenticity to the story.

At times, the novel is so bleak that only the precision and beauty of Henderson's language keeps you from flinching away: *Medallions from the quaking aspen lay about in a golden hoard, blowing up in parade confetti as he drove through them.* But keep reading, and you'll find yourself caring about the wounded people who stagger through this book too much to ever want to leave them. It seems as if Henderson felt the same way — he ends the book in mid-sentence, the fate of one character not fully revealed. Expect the hosannas for this rich, heartbreaking novel to continue for years to come.



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# Part 4 - Overpopulation

By Frosty Wooldridge

## Immigration policy without population policy illogical

“To establish immigration policy without first establishing population policy is both illogical . . . and undemocratic!” Edward C. Hartman author of *The Population Fix: Breaking America’s Addiction to Population Growth*.  
www.thepopulationfix.com

In 1965, our U.S. Senate passed the Immigration Reform Act that changed annual migration into America from 175,000 annually to 1.2 and as high as 1.5 million immigrants from all over the world every year. Within 40 years, the United States blasted from 196 million people to 300 million in October of 2007. From that point in 1965, we added 104 million more problems to our civilization. We haven’t begun to solve the problems of that many people impacting our cities, our environment and our way of life. We fantasize that our civilization can avoid the results now impacting other



overpopulated countries: China, Mexico, Haiti and India. If the 1965 immigration bill continues in place, America expects to add 138 million people by 2050 while it accelerates to over 625 million by the end of the century. Ultimately, we will exceed one billion people. When the current amnesty bill passed, another 20 million illegal alien migrants now enjoy instant citizenship, which will, in turn, allow chain migration of 10 members each of their families to add a possible total of over 100 million more people.  
*(Millions of Americans line up for food at food banks daily. Over 47 million Americans subsist on food stamps. Over 13 million American children live below the poverty line. Poverty has become entrenched in America and grows worse with endless immigration out of the third world.)*  
Photography by John Partipilo

Congress passed the immigration bill without any

understanding or the consequential ramifications to adding over 100 million people to the United States. They thought not one second about environmental degradation, energy depletion or resource exhaustion. They gave no thought to degraded quality of life or standard of living.

*(Countless Americans and illegal migrants live in tent cities and in abandoned warehouses around the United States. They lack toilets, clean water and heat. We can expect millions more as we import millions of third world refugees. We cannot keep up with the numbers nor can we provide jobs.)* Photography by Joakim Eskildsen



Today in 2015, we drive millions of cars through toxic, air polluted cities with endless honking, sirens, concrete jungles and human compaction. We separate ourselves from nature via steel, glass and asphalt. We face endless emotional, physiological and neurological diseases  
*(Continued next page.)*

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engendered by fast paced modern living. Hartman said, "Population growth in America may not be a physiological addiction, but it has become an economic, political and psychological addiction negatively affecting virtually every American."

*(Millions of poverty stricken Americans live in trailers. Two of Adell White Dog Johnson's grandchildren sleep in their strollers near their family's burned-down trailer in Eagle Butte, S.D. Adell, 45, had complained about the wiring the previous week. No one was hurt in the fire, but her family lost everything they had, including a computer they had recently bought. Adell, who also lost her previous trailer to an electrical fire, makes less than minimum wage as a dishwasher at a local restaurant. FEMA sells Native Americans condemned trailers, which are dangerous to live in. Residents also have little incentive to buy their own home, since it disqualifies them from*



*receiving general assistance. The system on the reservation, created in part by the Federal Government, has created a dependent society, the antithesis of Native Americans' desire to be a self-reliant and sovereign nation.) Photography by Joakim Eskildsen*

Today, yet another U.S. Congress not only huddles to give 20 million illegal aliens instant citizenship, they may include adding another one million immigrants to the 1.2 million that already legally migrate into the USA annually. At our current 315.5 million, Hartman points out our current problems: Rising housing prices - Urban sprawl - Horrifically gridlocked traffic in all our major cities - Rising infrastructure costs and rising taxes - Deterioration of public and social services - Impact of massive housing developments - Worsening air quality and water quality - Polarizing local politics and gridlocked government - Rising unemployment - Spreading pavement and attendant problems with runoff - Failing water supplies with seven states suffering water shortages today - Destruction of farmland, wilderness and rivers - Lost quality of life.

We already see the horrendous consequences in America with our current 315 million population. Hartman asks us to reconsider what it will be like when we reach one billion. China didn't ask the question until too late and India refuses to ask it. It shows the power of culture and religion over common sense and rational thinking. Hartman said, "America's population pushers have a variety of motives.

However, many have one trait in common: they have never asked themselves the question, "How many Americans are enough?"

Instead, they push for "exponential growth" that leads to ultimate collapse as discussed earlier in this series. How can such persons be so myopic? You might call it our national heritage to harness capitalism, manifest destiny and a religious conviction to "go forth, multiply and take dominion over everything." Unfortunately, that makes for a deadly combination of destruction of the air, land and water.

Today, yet another 535 congressional critters huddle to expand mass immigration. Again, they lack the intellectual talent or environmental understandings of the impacts of

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with the carrying capacity of this planet. “To establish immigration policy without first establishing population policy is both illogical...and undemocratic!” Edward C. Hartman, author of *The Population Fix: Breaking America’s Addiction to Population Growth*.

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*Frosty Wooldridge has bicycled across six continents - from the Arctic to the South Pole - as well as ten times across the USA, coast to coast and border to border. In 2005, he bicycled from the Arctic Circle, Norway to Athens, Greece. In 2014, he bicycled coast to coast across America. He presents **The Coming Population Crisis facing America: what to do about it.** [www.frostywooldridge.com](http://www.frostywooldridge.com) . His latest book is: **How to Live a Life of Adventure: The Art of Exploring the World by Frosty Wooldridge**, copies at 1 888 280 7715/ Motivational program: *How to Live a Life of Adventure: The Art of Exploring the World by Frosty Wooldridge*, [www.HowToLiveALifeOfAdventure.com](http://www.HowToLiveALifeOfAdventure.com)*

millions of added people. They prove the following statement: “The First Basic Law of Human Stupidity asserts without ambiguity: always and inevitably everyone underestimates the number of stupid individuals in circulation. At first, the statement sounds trivial. Closer scrutiny reveals its veracity. No matter how high are one’s estimates of human stupidity, one is repeatedly startled by the fact that: people whom one had once judged rational and intelligent turn out to be unashamedly stupid. Additionally, day after day, with unceasing monotony, one is harassed in one’s activities by stupid individuals who appear suddenly and unexpectedly in the most inconvenient places and at the most improbable moments.” (Source: Carlo M. Cipolla, *Professor of Economics, UC Berkeley*)

As you read this series, you cannot help but scratch your head as to our ongoing folly as a civilization. It’s as if we cannot help ourselves. Nonetheless, we must discover the courage and fortitude to save ourselves. Economist Kenneth Boulding said, “Anyone who believes in indefinite growth on a physically finite planet, is either mad or an economist.” At the end of his book, Hartman offers 13 methods for you to take action. You must remember that a constitutional republic demands citizen participation. We must take action to make sure those congressional critters take the right action. Our destiny is not a matter of chance, it’s a matter of our choosing to act and fulfill a positive outcome. You cannot wait for your future to unfold positively; you must make it a positive future for yourself and your fellow creatures that share this planet with you.

Hartman urges “A U.S. Population Policy” that will move us viably into the future. We may avoid the fate of countless civilizations before us by taking action to balance our numbers

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# Have Returning Wolves Really Saved Yellowstone?

From Warren Cornwall

Some come for the geysers and grizzlies, but I've traveled hundreds of miles to Yellowstone National Park simply to stand in the drainage of Elk Creek, stooped over a stunted willow bush. Tan branches, tinged with red, just reach my thighs, and narrow pale-green leaves blend into the wheat-like stalks of timothy grass and smooth brome filling this humdrum meadow.

Nearby, David Cooper, a Colorado State University ecologist, inspects one willow like a doctor examining a patient. The diagnosis isn't good. "This plant has obviously got a lot of problems," Cooper says. "It's just stuck." This willow could be 30 years old and should be 12 feet tall, but it looks as if I could uproot it with one swift jerk. It's a clue to the mystery that drew me to the park: Have wolves saved Yellowstone?

National Geographic, Scientific American, countless newspaper articles, documentaries, even a TED talk, have all marveled at the transformation wrought by the re-introduction of wolves to Yellowstone in the mid-1990s. The story goes like this: After a 70-year absence, returning wolves put elk on the run, depleting their numbers and scattering the remainder. Freed from relentless browsing, the region bloomed with fresh vegetation, inviting songbirds, beaver and other animals. Wolves were bringing Eden back from the brink.

It's a lovely tale, but researchers like Cooper warn that the reality is more complicated. For him and fellow Colorado State professor Tom Hobbs, Elk Creek is key to understanding north Yellowstone's ecosystem, and to telling a truer story, one of an older, more vibrant landscape that may already be lost, perhaps irrevocably.

Cooper, who is stocky and has a trim white beard, has spent his career as a plant ecologist, tracing water and its role in Western landscapes from the Sonoran Desert to the Rocky Mountains. Hobbs, lanky and loquacious, specializes in mathematically modeling how large mammals shape ecosystems. In 2000, the duo came to Elk Creek, drawn by talk of intriguing changes rippling through the ecosystem as wolf packs grew. They wondered what was happening in the smaller streams that lace the

area, particularly to the willows that are the linchpin to their health.

"It's not like the wolves came in and everything has readjusted to normal," Cooper says. "Some sites may recover more quickly, others may never recover." Much of north Yellowstone falls away from the park's high central plateau in a series of broad valleys, steep canyons and rolling sagebrush hillsides. Its lower elevation and drier climate make it a winter haven for elk. In the wolves' absence, plants like willow and aspen declined, as expanding elk herds browsed on them in winter.

On a hot summer day, there's little sign of elk in the creek named after them. Cooper lets go of his stubby willow branch, strides down to the stream and points to a wall of dirt carved away by the water, revealing layers of fine-grained gray and brown sediment, the traces of vanished ponds. Less than a century ago, we would have been underwater. "This was a pond environment for thousands of years," Cooper says. "This whole valley was just full of beaver dams."

In fact, in the early 1920s, a naturalist named Edward Warren spent two summers here, photographing and cataloguing beaver colonies near the Yellowstone River. On Elk Creek's North Fork, Warren counted 17 dams, the largest a 350-foot-long bulwark worthy of a medieval castle. In all, he guessed there were more than 200 beaver in the streams he surveyed. Back then, the concern was that too many beaver, with too few predators, were devouring too many plants. Today, in those same places, there are no beavers at all.

Populations of the flat-tailed rodents naturally ebb and flow in a creek. Nature's engineers, the beavers gnaw down aspen and willow, move on to other places when they're gone, then return when new plants grow in the soft, moist soil created by the abandoned dams. As we walk downstream, Cooper and Hobbs explain that the loss of wolves appears to have short-circuited this natural cycle in places like Elk Creek. Exploding elk numbers destroyed the willow and aspen, driving the beaver away. Over time, the creek eroded into a steep-banked gully, lowering the water table. A wet meadow became a dry valley, inhospitable to plants like willow, even after wolves

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Paul Forbes

returned and elk numbers fell. This became clear in experiments the two have run at Elk Creek and several other streams. They built dams in the creeks to simulate beaver and fenced off patches of willow to keep elk out. In most cases, the willows only rebounded when they were fenced off and grew near the dams, where the ground was moist. In other words, without the dams, it didn't matter about the elk — or the wolves that might have chased them.

Cooper thinks Elk Creek and similar streams have undergone such profound changes that recovery might require the return of both the wolf and the beaver. But it's not that simple, either. "Until there's enough willow that the beavers can come back, it's going to be stuck," he says. "So the question is, what's it going to take for the engineers to come back?"

For Doug Smith, the head of Yellowstone's wolf reintroduction program and the park's main beaver biologist, Elk Creek is a sobering reminder that some of the damage wrought in the wolves' absence might never be repaired — that Eden may never fully return. "This has changed to a site that can't go back," he says later, when I take him to the creek. "There's no water."

But there is another story unfolding elsewhere, he says: Go to the West Fork of Blacktail Deer Creek. If Elk Creek is Exhibit A for the wolf skeptics, Blacktail Deer Creek, just nine miles to the west, is a shining example for wolf champions. Slightly bigger than Elk Creek, it's hidden in a forest of willows, which sway in the breeze like seaweed in the tide. Over the last 13 years, Robert Beschta, an Oregon State University hydrologist, and his colleague, ecologist William Ripple, have used this creek to document what they see as a wolf-driven revival of north Yellowstone.

Before the predator's return, Blacktail Deer's willows looked much like those in Elk Creek. But by 2003, a growth spurt had begun: The tallest willows were roughly six feet longer than in 1997. As these tallest plants grew, the number chopped by animals fell from 100% to 55% or less. In the last few years, beaver have begun making

summer forays into the creek. "Come back in 15 years and ask the question, 'Where are the beaver?' and I bet you they're going to be everywhere," Beschta tells me.

I drive Cooper to Blacktail Deer Creek. We walk a mile up its West Fork, through sagebrush punctuated by fledgling aspen groves. This section of stream has witnessed some of the most dramatic growth. "If you're wondering why the plants here look so different," Cooper says, "we're wondering that, too." Were these willows simply more resilient when the elk reigned, and therefore poised to rebound? Or was the ground here simply wetter? What lessons do this creek and Elk Creek hold for the broader region?

For Smith, the conclusion seems to hinge partly on where scientists decide to look. After two decades at the park, he's convinced he sees real improvements in some larger streams and rivers. And he credits wolves for playing an important part. "Elk are key, but so are site characteristics," he says. "You need both." Yet Yellowstone is a massive ecosystem, and we don't know everything about it. Some of its watersheds could be blossoming out of sight, even as others languish, never to return. Yellowstone is recovering. And Yellowstone is stuck. There is more than one Yellowstone, and more than one story it can tell us. *(Photo by Dan Hartman.)*



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## *Adult Bullying Is Common Too!*

As the verb to bully is defined as simply “forcing one’s way aggressively or by intimidation,” the term may generally apply to any life experience where one is motivated primarily by intimidation instead of by more positive goals, such as mutually shared interests and benefits. As such, any figure of authority or power who may use intimidation as a primary means of motivating others, such as a community center manager, board members for community organizations, a national dictator, a childhood ring-leader, a terrorist, a terrorist organization, or even a ruthless business CEO, could rightfully be referred to as a bully. According to psychologist Pauline Rennie-Peyton, we each face the possibility of being bullied in any phase of our lives. Simple gossip or exaggerations with a goal to alienate a person or even their business from a community group is a common act of bullying in adult populations.

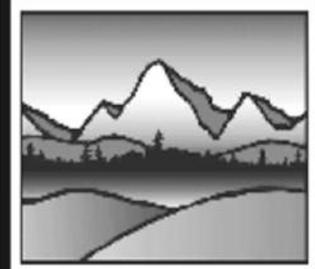
**Of bullies and accomplices** - Studies have shown that envy and resentment may be motives for bullying. Research on the self-esteem of bullies has produced equivocal results. While some bullies are arrogant and narcissistic, they can also use bullying as a tool to conceal shame or anxiety or to boost self-esteem: by demeaning

others, the abuser feels empowered. Bullies may bully out of jealousy or because they themselves are bullied.

Researchers have identified other risk factors such as depression and personality disorders, as well as quickness to anger and use of force, addiction to aggressive behaviors, mistaking others’ actions as hostile, concern with preserving self-image, and engaging in obsessive or rigid actions. A combination of these factors may also be causes of this behavior. In one study of youth, a combination of antisocial traits and depression was found to be the best predictor of youth violence, whereas video game violence and television violence exposure were not predictive of these behaviors.

Bullying may also result from a genetic predisposition or a brain abnormality in the bully. While parents can help a toddler develop emotional regulation and control to restrict aggressive behavior, some children fail to develop these skills due to insecure attachment with their families, ineffective discipline, and environmental factors such as a stressful home life and hostile siblings. Moreover, according to some researchers, bullies may be inclined toward negativity and perform poorly academically. Dr. Cook says, “a typical bully has trouble resolving problems

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with others and also has trouble academically. He or she usually has negative attitudes and beliefs about others, feels negatively toward himself/herself, comes from a family environment characterized by conflict and poor parenting, perceives school as negative and is negatively influenced by peers.”

Contrarily, some researchers have suggested that some bullies are psychologically strongest and have high social standing among their peers, while their targets are emotionally distressed and socially marginalized. Peer groups often promote the bully’s actions, and members of these peer groups also engage in behaviors, such as mocking, excluding, punching, and insulting one another as a source of entertainment. Other researchers also argued that a minority of the bullies, those who are not in-turn bullied, enjoy going to school, and are least likely to take days off sick. Research indicates that adults who bully have authoritarian personalities, combined with a strong need to control or dominate. It has also been suggested that a prejudicial view of subordinates can be a particularly strong risk factor.

**Of typical bystanders** - Often, bullying takes place in the presence of a large group of relatively uninvolved bystanders. In many cases, it is the bully’s ability to create the illusion that he or she has the support of the majority present that instills the fear of “speaking out” in protestation of the bullying activities being observed by the group. Unless the “bully mentality” is effectively challenged in any given group in its early stages, it often becomes an accepted, or supported, norm within the group. Unless action is taken, a “culture of bullying” is often perpetuated within a group for months, years, or longer.

Bystanders who have been able to establish their own “friendship group” or “support group” have been found to be far more likely to opt to speak out against bullying behavior than those who have not. In addition to communication of clear expectations that bystanders should intervene and increasing individual self-efficacy, there is growing research that suggests interventions should build on the foundation that **bullying is morally wrong**. Among adults, being a bystander to workplace bullying was linked to depression, particularly in women.

Children who bully typically show signs of an aggressive behavior, a need to dominate others, and have a positive attitude towards violence.

**Of victims** - Dr. Cook says, “A typical victim is likely to be aggressive, lack social skills, think negative thoughts, experience difficulties in solving social problems, come from a negative family, school and community environments and be noticeably rejected and isolated by peers.” Victims often have characteristics such as being physically weak or they may be successful and the object of envy. They may also have physical characteristics that make them targets for bullies such as being attractive in some way, overweight or having some type of physical deformity. Just about anything that could set them apart from the crowd. Boys are more likely to be victims of physical bullying while girls are more likely to be bullied indirectly, such as name calling or gossip.

The results of a meta-analysis conducted by Cook and published by the American Psychological Association in 2010 concluded the main risk factors for children and adolescents being bullied, and also for becoming bullies, are the lack of social problem-solving skills. Children who are bullied often show physical or emotional signs, such as: being afraid to attend school, complaining of headaches or a loss of appetite, a lack of interest in school activities and spending time with friends or family, and having an overall sense of sadness. Adults that are victims of bullying often resort to isolation and staying away from the chance of being bullied again. *Source: Wikipedia.org*

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FEBRUARY  
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# POWER UPDATE



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begins at 4:30 p.m.

Meeting begins at 6:30 p.m.

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## Tandem Efforts Improve Response to Mountain Outage

On January 5<sup>th</sup> United Power members in the mountains braced themselves for outages when winds whipped up the canyons. The high winds and cold day promised to cause havoc with electric service, and teams were put in place to respond as quickly as possible. Trees, especially pines affected by the Mountain Pine beetle infestation, were anticipated to fall into lines due to the high winds. It was Mountain District Manager, Bryant Robbins, who developed a simple strategy that helped to reduce both the length of outages and helped us to respond more efficiently.

“Trees and high wind are always a concern in the mountains, and this wind event was no exception,” stated Robbins. “I made a decision to not only activate additional line crews to standby for repairs; I contracted to have tree crews dispatched to outage areas in tandem.”

Once crews reported to the first outage, the wind began to cause numerous, smaller outages throughout the territory. Tree trimming crews were dispatched ahead of the line crews and were able to clear trees so the line crews could immediately make repairs rather than spend time removing trees.

“The coordination of the crews worked extremely well,” stated Robbins. “It was a huge time saver when our line crews could simply repair the broken poles, lines or cross arms when they arrived and move onto the next site. Handling trees is extremely time consuming, and we had the real tree specialists do that work before our team came to make the repairs.”

## Look Up, Stay Alert During Outdoor Work & Play

***As kids and adults alike head outside to perform winter clean-up and play, be alert for power lines and other electrical hazards. It's the best way to stay safe from electrocution—and even death.***

### Safety Tips For Kids

- Never fly a kite on a rainy day or anywhere but an open space. A high point in the sky makes a kite a grounding point for lightning, and kites could become tangled in power lines.
- Don't climb trees that are near power lines and poles—evergreens can disguise dangers this time of year; leaves during the spring and summer.
- Stay far away from power lines lying on the ground. You can't tell if electricity is still flowing through them. If there's water nearby, don't go in it. Water is the best conductor of electricity.
- Obey signs that say “danger” and “keep out” around large electrical equipment, like substations. These signs aren't warnings; they're commands to keep you safe.
- Never climb a power pole.

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# Pancake Breakfast February 14th 7am-11am



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2 BD/ 2 BA 1,674 sq. ft. **\$187,500**



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**13749 W. 61st Lane**  
Lovely townhome w/dual master suites  
3 BD/ 4 BA 3,098 sq.ft. **\$374,500**



**140 Outlook Drive**  
Magical mountain retreat - Total remodel  
2 BD/ 2 BA **\$222,000**



**19 Ronnie**  
Well and Septic already installed  
.7 Acre lot **\$74,000**



**7552 Pierce Street**  
Gorgeous Remodel  
3 BD/ 2 BA 1,764 sq.ft. **\$267,700**



**30 Wonder Trail**  
Charming Mountain Cabin!  
1 BD/ 1 BA VIEWS! **\$129,000**



**0 Hilltop Road**  
Great Solar Lot!  
2.8 Acres **\$84,000**



**10 Leon Lane**  
360 Degree Divide & City Views  
3 BD/ 2 BA 1813 sq.ft. **\$369,900**



**33966 Nadm Drive**  
City lights twinkle below this gentle sloping Lot!  
1.08 Acres **\$75,000**



**0 Damascus Road**  
Flat building site, beautifully wooded!  
1.86 Acres **\$44,900**



**11547 Shimley Road**  
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1.15 Acres **\$29,000**



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Breathtaking Views of Blue Mtn Valley!  
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**29538 Loomis Way**  
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