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Nesting Bald Eagle  
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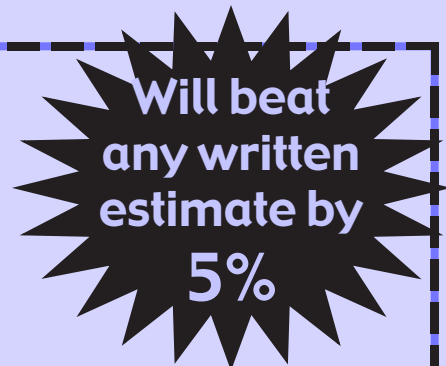
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**About the Cover:**  
**Front Range Nesting Bald**  
**Eagle Studies by Dana Bove.**



*Dedicated to Positive News whenever possible!*  
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# CO Court Vacates Eagle Permit

By Brooke Wahlberg on December 18, 2018  
 Posted in Court Decisions, Fish & Wildlife Service

On December 13, 2018, the United States District Court for the District of Colorado vacated an eagle take permit issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (“Service”) authorizing a construction company to disturb a pair of nesting bald eagles. **Front Range Nesting Bald Eagle Studies v. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service et al., No. 1:18-cv-00356.**

The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (“BGEPA”), prohibits the disturbance of bald eagles or golden eagles.

**The Service’s regulations define disturb to mean:**

to agitate or bother a bald or golden eagle to a degree that causes, or is likely to cause, based on the best scientific information available, (1) injury to an eagle, (2) a decrease in its productivity, by substantially interfering with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior, or (3) nest abandonment, by substantially interfering with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior.

50 C.F.R. § 22.3. The Service established an eagle permit program in 2009 (amended in 2016) whereby activities that disturb an eagle can be authorized upon meeting certain criteria. 50 C.F.R. § 22.26. Pursuant to these regulations, Garrett Construction Company, LLC applied for and the Service issued an eagle take permit for disturbances that may arise from the construction of an apartment complex across the street from two nesting bald eagles.

**Front Range Nesting Bald Eagle Studies** (“Front Range”), a local conservation group, challenged the Service’s issuance of the eagle take permit on both BGEPA and National Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”) grounds. The Service had originally issued the eagle take permit without conducting a NEPA analysis, but upon the filing of Front Range’s lawsuit, the Service moved for voluntary remand to perform the analysis.

Front Range nonetheless continued its challenges under both NEPA and BGEPA. Ultimately, the court deferred to the Service’s conclusions under BGEPA, but held in favor of Front Range on two of its NEPA claims: (1) the Service failed to perform a cumulative impacts analysis under NEPA; and (2) the Service failed to respond to comments criticizing the short comment period and requesting an extension. The court remanded the eagle take permit to the Service for further consideration.

Dana Bove, founder of **Front Range Nesting Bald Eagle Studies**, said the ruling is an important victory and, as far as he knows, the first instance of a judge vacating a take permit since a new rule regarding permits came into effect more than a year ago.

Bove said, however, that roosting and nesting bald eagles are not receiving the necessary protections afforded them under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, including nests and roosts in Boulder County.

“We have a long way to go in this state to protect eagles,” Bove said. “Unfortunately, most Coloradans still have no idea that eagles in our state have any issues, and certainly few are aware that protections for eagles in these types of instances are essentially nonexistent.”

“You continue at this pace (*unsustainable growth, development and resource extraction activities*), what’s going to happen to the land bald eagles need? It is going to go away. They are going away. That is from development,” said Dana Bove, a retired federal geologist and vice president of the 12-member volunteer nesting bald eagles group. “Why does this matter? These birds are our national symbol. They are remarkable. They are remarkable to be around.”

**Editor’s Note:** Thanks to Dana Bove for his photographs on the cover this month. A related issue for eagles is the ‘Use of Land’ by Diane Bergstrom continued from May’s article re: development near Hygiene in Boulder County. See page 22 for the next installment.

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# Free Activities ~ The Jeffco Toll Road

Dear Editor:

I'd like to inform readers of some free give and take opportunities. Free days at Rocky Mountain National Park and all National Park sites for the rest of the year are: August 25, September 28, and November 11. If your child just finished fourth grade, s/he can apply for a free family national park pass at [www.everykidinthepark.gov](http://www.everykidinthepark.gov). It will expire at the end of August. Then incoming fourth graders can apply. Denver Botanic Gardens' free days are: July 10, September 3, and November 11. Chatfield Farm's free days are: July 2, August 6 and November 5. To find more free opportunities, check [www.scd.org](http://www.scd.org). Please donate to your local food banks if you are able. Nearly 1 in 7 Colorado kids don't know where or when their next meal will be. If you are in need of food assistance, please call the free bilingual hunger hotline at (855) 855-4626 or go to [www.hungerfreecolorado.org](http://www.hungerfreecolorado.org). They will help you locate food. Anyone needing non-emergency **help for health and human services can call 211** or [www.211Colorado.org](http://www.211Colorado.org). Finally, I recently took a free one-hour class, held worldwide, to learn how to stop major bleeding in three simple ways. The non-profit **Stop The Bleed** developed after the Sandy Hook Elementary school shooting. Over 600,000

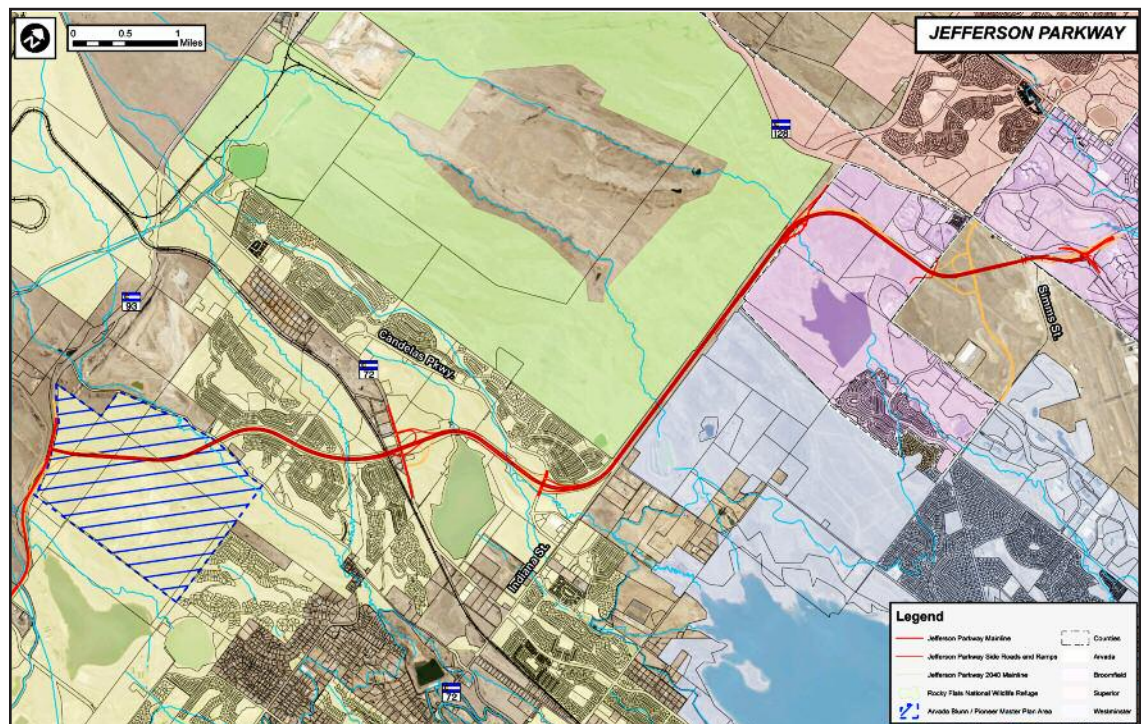
people have been trained so far. Their goal is to train every American. Find an upcoming class near you at [www.bleedingcontrol.org](http://www.bleedingcontrol.org), look for the How To Stop The Bleed box and click on the print under it, "Find a Class." You can enter your zip code, city or state to locate classes. They offer simple invaluable information and knowing it, you might save a life. Have a rich and safe summer. Diane Bergstrom

Dear Readers, The Jefferson Parkway

Public Highway Authority (JPPHA) held a Special Board Meeting June 27th with a public hearing immediately following at **Arvada City Hall, 8101 Ralston Road. There will be another Executive Session July 18th at 3:00pm** – same place with a public meeting immediately following, Council Chambers, 2nd floor. **The next Board Meeting for JPPHA is August 15th – same place.**

Regarding the JPPHA's efforts to push through the Jeffco Toll Road even though numerous studies costing millions of dollars have proven the toll road is not needed, wanted or can eliminate the congestion on the arterial roads of Indiana, Hwy 93 or McIntyre Road east of Golden. **This Master map clearly shows a toll road WILL NOT CONNECT** the Northwest Parkway with C470 south of Golden. **So all reports saying this proposed portion will finish the bypass around the Denver Metro are false and purposely misleading.** What the map shows is that the proposed Toll Road is from the Northwest Parkway west of Broomfield to Highway 93 south of Hwy 72. **See next page for CINQ's Pres. Rob Medina's letter regarding this issue. And below questions from a former canyonte to the Jeffco Commissioners.**

**Questions sent to Board County Comm. 4-24-19.** There are a number of things I would like to know: 1. How much has Jeffco invested in the JPHA (dollars and staff time)? 2. How much more (dollars and staff time) does Jeffco anticipate investing? 3. What liabilities has Jeffco acquired as a member of JPHA? 4. Has Jeffco and the other members entered into any non-competition agreements with JPHA or any tolling/ bonding entities? 5. Jeffco BCC



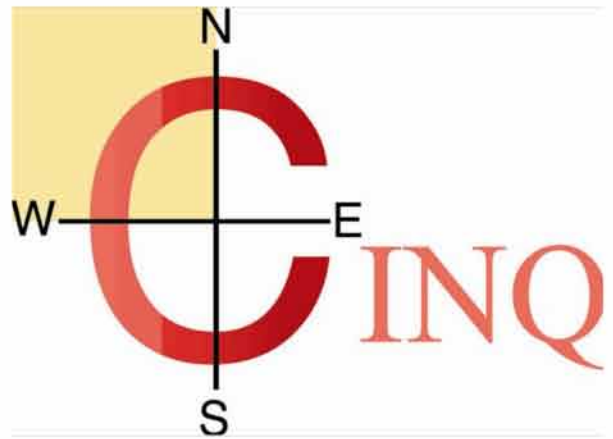
promised an updated test of the Rocky Flats buffer zone (Wildlife Refuge), especially those areas which would be disturbed by proposed construction of the JPHA toll road - what is the status of this testing? The community groups I work with think it is crucial that the type of testing and procedures must be transparent and known to the public.

Tom Hoffman

Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners  
100 Jefferson County Parkway  
Golden, CO 80401

May 17, 2019

**Topic: No Tax Dollars to the Tollroad**



**CITIZENS INVOLVED IN THE NORTHWEST  
QUADRANT**

Dear Commissioners:

It has come to our attention that Jefferson County has in its 2019 budget another \$2 Million (perhaps \$2.5M) of our tax dollars for the tollroad being proposed by the Jefferson Parkway Public Highway Authority (JPPHA). This will be in addition to the approximately \$3 Million of our tax dollars previously allocated to the JPPHA.

We strongly urge you to be fiscally responsible and divert these funds to a use that would be beneficial to the citizens of this county. All public studies, including the recent West Connect Planning Environmental Linkage Study (PEL) in which Jeffco was a participant, show very little traffic would use the proposed tollroad as far out as the year 2040. Little traffic equals little toll income. Will taxpayers have to pay the shortfall? Sounds like Broomfield and the failed Northwest Parkway. Another issue is the hazards from Rocky Flats plutonium, especially during highway construction, to workers and neighborhoods. Previous studies have not addressed these issues.

You are a new Board of Commissioners and may not be aware of the history of the tollroad. CINQ knows the history. We were formed in 2000 during the Northwest Quadrant Feasibility Study when citizens' views were disregarded by many elected officials and the supporters of a tollroad from Broomfield to Golden. We have been shocked and disgusted by the unethical and at times outright untruthfulness of this cabal.

Much of the process to this point has lacked transparency and openness. We hope you will do better.

Continued participation and financial support of the JPPHA has very high risk and almost no possibility of any reward for Jeffco taxpayers. Please do the right thing and do not waste any additional taxpayer dollars on the JPPHA.

Regards,

Rob Medina  
President  
Citizens Involved in the Northwest Quadrant

# Travel Season

By Valerie Wedel

A bittersweet moment arrives. My beloved friend of many decades traveled to Colorado for a conference and stayed with me for a week. It was a great joy to reconnect. The house now feels rather empty with my old friend flown away back east. A really great thing about travel is this gift of connection, as well as new experiences.

Earlier this spring, I was the one traveling. My destination was Bellingham, WA. This is the very furthest northwest dot on the United States map, just before one crosses the Canadian border, or falls off into the Pacific ocean. It is land's end.

The occasion of this trip was my youngest child performing her first paying aerial dance gig. Becoming a professional performer has been her ambition. I was very fortunate to be able to go and cheer!

To reach Bellingham, I flew out of DIA. Has anyone else experimented with various ways of reaching the airport? One of my personal favorites is to drive to Table Mesa in

Boulder, and there pick up the AB bus straight to the airport.

It costs about \$2 / day to leave your car at the Table Mesa Park and Ride, with covered parking. The airport bus takes about 30 minutes and drops you at the terminals. Easy! No worries about driving crazy Denver roads when you might be tired or jet lagged, and no worries about losing your car to hail while traveling, or missing a flight because you didn't allow enough time to get from remote parking to the departure gate.

On this recent trip, I found great prices but odd flying hours on the return trip. The bus would not be running when I returned to DIA. The easiest parking at the airport, the covered garage next to the terminals, would have cost the price of an additional airline ticket! Remote parking would have cost about half the price of another ticket. Plus it is, well, very remote. So what about the light rail that now runs to the airport?

To get to DIA from our foothills, the park and ride recommended to me turned out to be at Blake and 38th Street, in Denver. This was said to be a pretty safe and quiet location. Unfortunately it also meant driving into a part of Denver I didn't know. The parking price was only \$2 / day, with the first day free. The train cost about \$8 one way. So very affordable, downright cheap actually, compared to the additional gas to get to, and find parking at, the airport!

Our wonderful light rail does not run 24/7, but for my flights it did work. So, that meant figuring out how to find the park and ride. For this I used the computer to google driving directions. Which – almost – worked. NOT! Note to self – triple check directions in the future.

The computer routed me down *(Continued on page 10.)*

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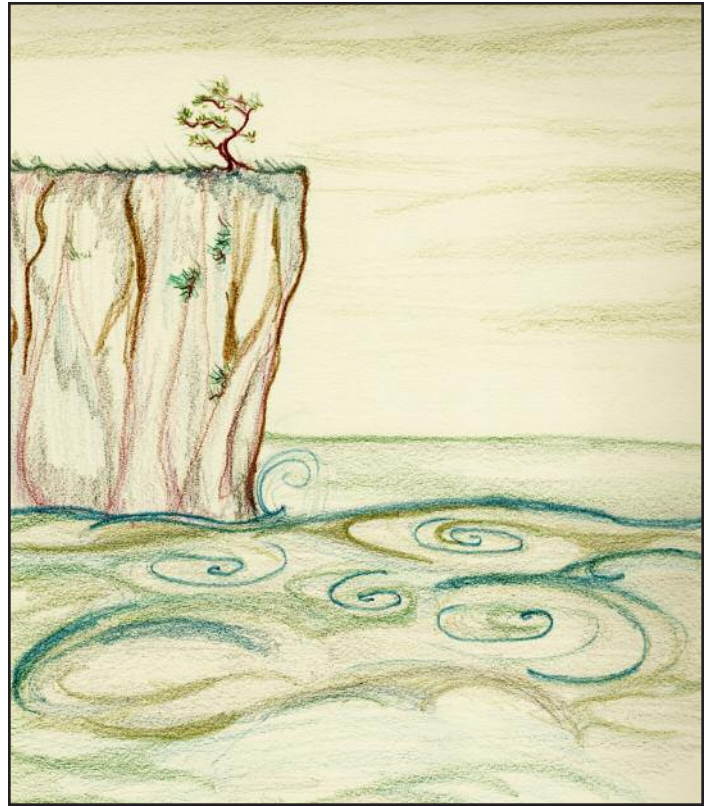


## Highlander Travel

out of the foothills, south on 93 to Hwy 58, east on Hwy 58 to I-70, to Park Avenue exit. In theory this turns into 22nd Street (correct) and intersects with Blake St. (also correct) which you then take north to 38th Street. That last bit was an Epic Fail! At that part of it's existence, Blake is one way going south. Stupidly trusting the computer, I turned south. And ended up in the middle of Denver, completely lost.

Enter cell phone! Mine is old and does not talk to the web. I had written out directions in my travel note book, along with a phone number for RTD. So I called and was oriented by a fabulous person at the other end of the RTD phone line. It took her a while to really grasp I actually don't have a smart phone. However, she was finally able to get me to the park and ride the old fashioned way – with verbal directions. She was also very courteous and reassuring!

So, the park and ride... which was not covered... was it really safe? I found myself wondering this, when it was a



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bit too late to do anything else... As I pulled in I spotted a small herd of security vehicles in one corner. So I left my trusty turbo Saab tucked in next to them, and locked up (or so I thought).

Getting lost in Denver ate up all my spare time, so I hit the ground running. It was a long haul to a stair and pedestrian bridge, up and over freight tracks. There was an elevator, which wasn't working. So up and up and up, over the bridge, and down the other side.

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No sign of a parking kiosk to get a ticket to leave with the car though! Actually, it was there but I missed it. I called in my parking fee and license plate with a credit card from Seattle the next day, which worked very well. Again, the person at the other end of the phone was very courteous and helpful.

On the side of the tracks where the light rail for people runs, there was a ticket kiosk. It did not work either! Apparently the power was down. Oi!

Happily, the light rail runs rather frequently. I caught an airport train about 7 minutes after making it onto the train platform. Conductors walk

through the train cars collecting tickets. I hoped I might be able to hand the conductor some of the cash in my pocket in lieu of a ticket.

Meanwhile, being new to this train route, I watched the stops like a nervous hawk. Actually, it was easy once I was on the train. The train line literally ends at the DIA terminal. You walk up a flight of stairs and are in the terminal, exactly at the security lines for entering the flight departure areas.

And about the conductor... I was not thrown in jail for not having a ticket! Amazingly, he was able to fish a spare one out of a pocket. Apparently the light rail conductors take their reputations very seriously. The station being out of power, and myself receiving bad directions to the park and ride, meant that by way of apology, I rode to DIA as a courtesy.

I would absolutely take the light rail again! On my way back to DIA everything worked beautifully. It was incredilby easy. Also, in a surprise move by the airline, my ticket was upgraded due to mother's day weekend, to the big, squishy seats where you can really stretch out. Bonus! We arrived at DIA exactly on time, and I easily made it to the train depot by the terminal. The train ran quickly and happily back to the park and ride.

Now this return happened in the wee hours – close to the last train of the evening. I was a bit unsure of the safety factor. So I called DIA and asked if they might have an escort, or people at the park and ride. They did two things that were really wonderful. First, they alerted the train conductor to keep an eye on me. He was great - kind of like having a protective nephew.

Next, they asked me to call from the train station, which I did. They could not send a car due to another call. However, it turns out there are cameras all over the park and ride, and the dispatcher stayed on the phone with me until we could both see my car and she had eyes on me. (I waved to her.) So I returned to my car very easily. And... discovered I had not locked every door. An

excellent winter coat and boots in the back seat were undisturbed, despite my car being unlocked in the park and ride for several days!

And Bellingham? It was gorgeous. It is really amazing to walk through giant trees, with ferns in the understory as tall as myself. The ocean rolls in its beautiful, eternal way. My daughter and I and her boyfriend, with a couple other friends, sat for hours by the ocean, just talking, and watching the sky and water. I loved watching the light change on the water.

My daughter danced beautifully! The crowds went wild. All in all, it was a really great trip. Oh – and the food! Everything just tasted really fresh and wonderful. Back in Seattle I played music with friends, and walked to the corner bakery for breakfast, before heading back to Seatac Airport.

Do you have travel plans this summer? Somewhere near? Somewhere far? May all your travels be safe, fun, and bring new adventures! As the late, great Tolkein wrote, one never knows what will happen when one steps foot on the road outside one's door... "The road goes ever on and on..." May the wind be at your back, and the sunlight light your steps.



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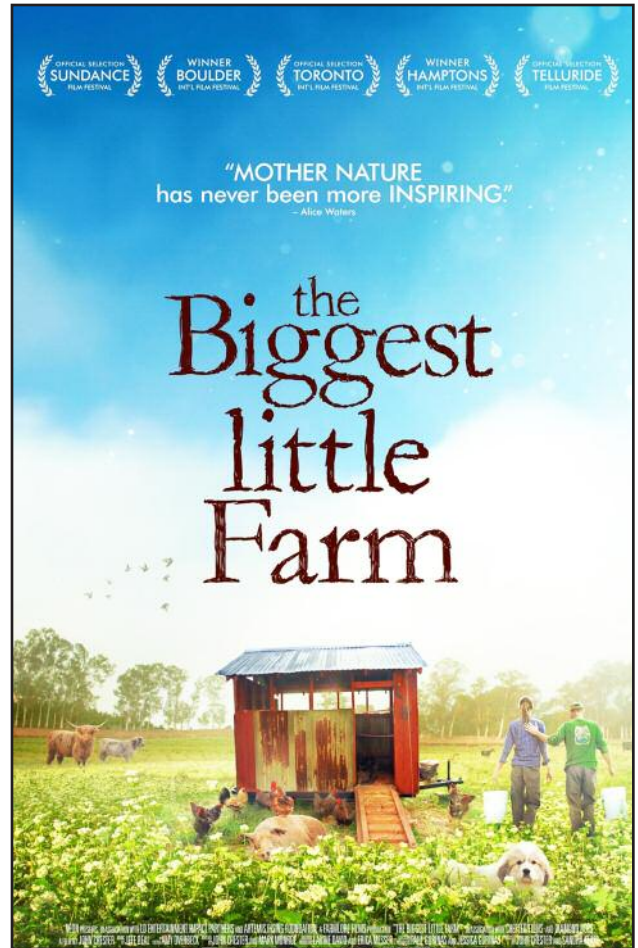
<b>JULY 6</b> LIVE MUSIC HALF PINT & THE GROWLERS 4pm - 8pm	<b>JULY 7</b> LIVE MUSIC Spirit Ridge 3pm - 7pm	<b>JULY 13</b> LIVE MUSIC The Vindicators 4pm - 8pm
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# The Biggest Little Farm

By Diane Bergstrom

To highlight the best of this documentary, from the photography to the dialogue to the unfolding story to the characters—I couldn't figure out which to write about first. So I decided on what I respected the most; the realization of a dream happened because a young couple promised a rescued dog that their home would be his last. John and Molly Chester lived in a tiny Santa Monica apartment and that promise bounced, not catapulted, them toward their dream of farming in harmony with nature. Molly, a culinary chef specializing in traditional cooking methods, embodies, "The health of our food is determined on how it's farmed." Her infectious enthusiasm for everything associated with her statement is a permeable thread throughout the film. With the help of investors who also saw the old way of farming as the way of the future, they purchased neglected Apricot Lane Farms, 40 miles north of LA, in Moorpark, CA ([www.apricotlanefarms.com](http://www.apricotlanefarms.com)). Then they realized neither had any idea how to farm. The viewers, and the helpers they enlist, go along with them and grow along with the farm. They hire Green Guru Alan York, who baffles John by showing up in linen and sandals, and likens worm poop to the Holy Grail. What he wanted most for the barren, monoculture (single crop) farm was a process billions of years old; to have 9 billion microorganisms churning away at life forms, alchemizing



death into life. His projects and ideas are injected with Zen sageness like, "Co-existence with the land can't be formed, it's more of a delicate patient dance with no guarantees," and "It all circles back to the health of the soil," and with humor, "You may think it's a crazy idea, and it very may well be!" His unshakeable persistent stance bolsters and bewilders the Chesters through their steep learning curves and trials that stem from 90,000 snails killing their 70 varieties of stone fruit trees, 18 inches of rain, 900 digging gophers, and the worst drought in 1,200 years. To name a few. The film spans seven years of a continual cycle of

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problems, solutions, more challenges, more solutions, and we learn together along the way.

The filming is amazing. This isn't a documentary that started with a passionate idea and then filmmakers were sought. John is an Emmy-winning filmmaker and director. The camera angles capture close-ups of ladybugs lifting off the tips of leaves to aerial shots of the planted concentric circles that follow rises in the topography to reduce runoff and maximize beauty to the soulful eyes of a pig. Hand-held home movie shots also intersperse with animated cartoons to carry the story line. The minimal narration while being peppered with sharp humor, dry wit, and poignant silences doesn't overpower the images, allowing them to speak for themselves. The musical scores accompanying the animal footage are brilliant. How does one pick the perfect music background to ducks slow-motion snatching snails off trees, or sitting piglets falling asleep, leaving the audience laughing en masse? The people become the supporting cast as the domestic, farm and wild animals become the stars and the star cast is huge: pigs, puppies, highland cattle, barn owls, cats, snakes, coyotes, badgers, goats, chickens, hawks, weasels, bees and bats. Their roles are never fixed as they can portray both friend and foe. John summarizes as the biodynamic farm develops, "Wildlife returns to the land and the farm is becoming a habitat for them too."

After I saw it twice, the movie came up in several conversations with friends whom had already seen it. Barb

posted, "Definitely in the must see category! Beautiful and difficult all at the same time. I love what they did, but all they had to deal with was a lot. The end result is a total inspiration."

Amy reflected, "I liked the way the movie shows how important it is that we help nature maintain its equilibrium: the ducks eat the snails, the owls eat the gophers and starlings, etc."


Sue said, "The movie did a great job of showing the reality of taking on a project like that, with its unbelievable numbers and scope of challenges. A realistic depiction and educational."

Mitzie, who will be visiting the farm when she returns to California, commented, "I would like to know more about the mentor, Alan York: where he trained, where he got his experience. The movie is very inspirational and food for the soul!"

Don summarized, "That had everything in it. It was a love story, a science film, a war drama, a romance, a comedy, a documentary, and a horror film too....Really glad we saw it." Put this documentary on your Must See list, and I urge you to watch through the end of the credits for wonderful still shots and a heartwarming final clip. Don't miss it!

*Release Date: May 10, 2019 - Length, one hour and 31 minutes, rated PG. Check for local theater times and dates.*

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## *Flux Of Alkaline Waters*

*By Aya Okawa High Country News May 8, 2019*

Two million years ago, as glaciers carved much of North America, torrential rains flooded what is now the Western United States, forming vast lakes across the region. The only remnants of that era are millions of saline ponds, some so small that over a hundred can be concentrated into a square kilometer. These lakes are now quickly shrinking. With less runoff from snowpack, and more water being diverted for agriculture, the lakes' levels are rapidly decreasing, becoming even higher in salt content.

These saltwater landscapes of the West are in a constant flux, transforming from low salinity chartreuses and cyans to alkaline magenta, finally settling into evaporated salty white wastelands. Soaring in a small plane above the landscapes, photographer Aya Okawa captures these unique ecosystems at different stages of their progressions, as salt becomes more concentrated.

One of Okawa's shots features the pale, barren expanse of Owen's Lake. Once bright blue, the lake was a haven for migratory birds. Birds use saline lakes as crucial stopover points on their long migrations, refueling there by gorging the plentiful brine flies and brine shrimp. But since the 1913 diversion of Owens River, Owen's Lake has become an expansive wasteland. Lake bed dust, as much as four million tons a year, carries carcinogens like cadmium, nickel and arsenic on the wind and into the lungs of nearby residents.

Mono Lake, just over 100 miles to the north, narrowly avoided a similar fate. But thanks to a 1994 order from the California State Water Resources Control Board that required the Los Angeles Department of Power and Water to stop withdrawing water until the lake's surface rose 17 feet, Mono Lake is slowly recovering. Still, at 10 feet under that goal, the ecosystem remains vulnerable, and its levels are at an historical low.

Step further back into a salt lake's lifespan and you'll reach the Great Salt Lake. The natural habitat offered by the lake is rapidly decreasing as snowmelt and river inlets are diverted by development up basin from the lake. Utahns consume more water than other arid regions. Consequently, the Great Salt Lake has half the amount of water it did in the 18th century. Okawa captures both pink and green in San

Francisco's salt ponds. Before the 1940's, the salt ponds were green marshland. Over 50 years they were coaxed by developers into shades of rust to concentrate salt and produce ice-melt for our roads, taste to our foods. But in 2003 the ponds, so bright that NASA used them as a marker from space, became part of a massive conservation project. 15,100 acres were sold to a group of federal and state resource agencies and private foundations to be reverted to marshland. Today the marshland supports a variety of species, including pelicans, seals and salmon. From brick red to a vibrant green, San Francisco's salt ponds are one of the few saltscapes that has reversed its trajectory.

But the many land-locked salt lakes of the West likely won't fair as well. As they dry and become even more alkaline, the lakes phase from emerald tones into residual basins of bubblegum. In the near future, many of these saltscapes could look like the dried-up Owen's Lake, empty, monochromatic veins weaving across a desolate landscape. —Luna Anna Archey, associate photo editor.

### Highlander Environmental

*Aya Okawa is an award-winning photographer and visual anthropologist who enjoys shooting environmental transformation, abstract patterns, and*



*documenting human impact on the natural world. Her work has been printed in National Geographic, the Washington Post, The Guardian and the book **Spectacle**.*

*Mono Lake, California - photo by Aya Okawa.*

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# BLM Fails To Consider Water Use Fracking Chaco

By Jonathan Thompson High Country News June 3, 2019

When locals in northwestern New Mexico’s Chaco region give directions to places on the maze of roads out in the high desert here, they often refer to “the cornfield,” as in: “Turn left at the cornfield.” While that wouldn’t be much help in a corn-covered place like Iowa, a single field can serve as a landmark here. There are very few since rainfall is scant, irrigation ditches don’t exist, and farming is of the dryland variety.

So it’s disconcerting to see truck after truck pass that same cornfield loaded down with water, bound for newly drilled oil wells that will be hydraulically fractured. Over a few days, the frackers shoot 1 million or more gallons of water — at least twice as much as that cornfield needs in a year — mixed with sand and chemicals into each of the hundreds of horizontal wells here. When the water bubbles back up, it is tainted with hydrocarbons, fracking chemicals and brine.

This water gluttony now has the industry, and the federal agency charged with overseeing it, in trouble. In May, the 10th District U.S. Court of Appeals ruled that the Bureau of Land Management had failed to consider cumulative water use when it allowed drilling in the Chaco region, therefore violating federal environmental law. Yet the agency continues to issue new drilling permits, in defiance of the court’s decision.

The court’s ruling concerns the BLM’s Farmington Field Office’s 2003 resource management plan for the San Juan Basin, a 10,000-square-mile geological bowl replete with natural gas, oil and coal. The plan gave the preliminary go-ahead to 9,942 natural gas wells, drilled vertically,



*Navajo Nation Council Delegate Daniel Tso overlooks a well pad close to his family’s land near Chaco, New Mexico. The BLM has issued 40 new drilling permits, despite losing a lawsuit centered on previous permits. Nina Riggio*

primarily in the northeastern corner of the office’s jurisdiction, far from Chaco Culture National Historic Park.

But several years after the plan came out, “fracking” — the horizontal drilling and multistage hydraulic fracturing used to extract oil and gas from shale formations — arrived in the San Juan Basin. Armed with bigger, shale-busting drill rigs, companies shifted their attention south, toward the oil-bearing Mancos Shale near Chaco Canyon and



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several Navajo communities. The BLM predicted that 3,960 new horizontal wells would be drilled in coming years, and in 2014, it launched a multi-year process to amend the old plan with regard to the shift in drilling techniques and geographical and geological targets.

Environmentalists and community advocates begged the agency to hold off on issuing any new permits for horizontal drilling until the amendment was complete. But the Farmington office, which has a reputation for kowtowing to industry, paid no heed. BLM officials told me in 2014 that they would keep permitting under the old plan until they hit the 9,942 well limit, with or without an amendment. They've already leased out more than 50,000 acres and issued over 500 permits over the last decade. "If they (critics) think it's illegal," said David Mankiewicz, assistant field manager of the Farmington office, "then sue us and lose."

In 2015, four environmental groups, including local nonprofits Diné CARE and the San Juan Citizens Alliance, did just that, alleging that the 2003 plan did not adequately account for the effect the new horizontal wells would have on the cultural resources, land and communities in the Chaco area. They lost in one court, and lost again. Then, last year, the case made it back to the Court of Appeals, which handed down its ruling on May 7. Although the environmentalists lost on two other issues, the court ruled in their favor when it came to water.

Virtually every oil and gas well drilled over the past several decades, whether conventional or not, has been hydraulically fractured. The BLM's plan took that into account. But the multi-stage hydraulic fracturing conducted in horizontal wells that extend for miles underground requires far more water — upwards of 1 million gallons (enough to fill two Olympic-size pools) compared to just 200,000 gallons for a typical vertical well. Multiply the difference by the number of horizontal wells expected to be drilled in coming years, and the oil companies will end up gulping down some 3 billion gallons of extra water, all water that the BLM failed to consider in its 2003 plan.

The court issued a stern rebuke, concluding that the federal agency "needed to — but did not — consider the cumulative impacts of water resources associated with the 3,960 reasonably foreseeable horizontal Mancos Shale wells." The permit approvals were therefore "arbitrary and capricious and violated NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act)."

Kathleen Sgamma, president of the Western Energy Alliance, told KJZZ

Radio that the ruling's impact is limited to the 25 permits that were presented in the case, so it only requires the BLM to redo those particular analyses. But the court's language contradicts her words. The ruling refers to the "cumulative impacts" of all the horizontal wells expected to be drilled, and therefore implies that any permits issued for horizontal wells under the 2003 plan — the update is scheduled to be released sometime this year — also violate federal environmental law.

That apparently isn't stopping the BLM, however. The Farmington office is moving forward, permitting 40 new wells, 22 miles of pipeline and 6 miles of access road in the Crow Mesa Wildlife Area some 30 miles from Chaco Canyon. It's as if BLM officials are, once again, daring environmentalists to sue. But this time, given the precedent set in May, the environmentalists are likely to win.

*Jonathan Thompson is a contributing editor at High Country News. He is the author of the new book, **River of Lost Souls: The Science, Politics, and Greed Behind the Gold King Mine Disaster.***



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*Previous page top left: Maine Coon kitten.  
Top right: Cross Fox.  
Bottom left: Black bear peeks into door.  
Bottom right: Little girl laughs riding pony.  
This page top left: Shepherd pup in cart.  
Top right: Game of Thrones Cat.  
Bottom left: Denali poses with Julie.  
Bottom right: Tracy on Bella from Denise.*

# Pelicans

By Ingrid Winter

*Ponderous  
Is the first word  
That comes to mind*

*That those of us  
Who are weighted down  
With stuff*



*Plump  
Pot bellied  
Ponderous  
Pelicans  
And if you've ever watched  
Pelicans  
Taking off  
From the water.*

*Such as  
Worry  
Fear  
Sadness  
Can also  
With patience  
And perseverance  
Lift off  
And fly.*


*You know  
What I mean –  
It takes a long time  
For them  
To become airborne  
Rather like  
A 747  
Taking off.*

*Taking wind like the  
Beautiful  
Buoyant  
Benevolent  
Blessed Pelicans!*

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*But once  
I watched  
A flock of Pelicans  
High in the sky*

*Circling  
Gliding  
Dancing  
Ever so gracefully  
Which gives me hope.*



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# What Not To Store In The Garage

From Jim Plane - State Farm Insurance

## What's safe in your garage - and what should be kept elsewhere.

Skis, bikes, sports balls -all sorts, lawnmowers, old toys.

It's easy for a garage to turn into a catchall storage unit. For most items that's fine, but some things simply don't belong in a garage, and they can even become a home hazard without proper storage protection. This list of common red-flag items can help identify what doesn't belong in the garage.

### Extra fuel.

Stashing portable gas cans and propane tanks in the garage can be dangerous: Highly flammable fuel poses a leaking risk. If you store any fuel in the garage, do so only in dedicated, leak-proof containers out of the reach of children and pets and away from potential sources of ignition such as water heaters or power tools. A shed away from your home is a better storage spot.

### Paint or home-improvement chemicals.

Some liquids, such as latex, freeze at the same temperature as water. Others may need a temperature-controlled environment. Check the manufacturer's directions for guidance.

### Furniture.

Unless your garage is climate-controlled, its interior is subject to wild swings in heat and humidity. This, in turn, can warp wood, and pests such as rodents may root (and ruin) upholstery, fabric or mattresses. If the garage offers your only option for furniture storage, find a clean, dry spot that's elevated off the floor. Then thoroughly clean and take apart furniture before wrapping or covering.

### Clothing.

A better spot for out-of-season clothing is a sealed container in an attic, basement or the back of a closet. In a garage, clothing may soak up fumes and dust and be at risk of insect or pest damage.

### Food.

This means any food - food for birds, for pets and for humans. Perishable items are far too tempting for rodents and vermin, and canned food may spoil more quickly in temperature extremes. And think twice about that extra fridge in an unheated and un-air-conditioned garage: The appliance may struggle to operate efficiently as temperatures fluctuate.

### Anything fragile or valuable.

Photographs, artwork and electronics: These are just a few of the items that need the stability of climate control so expensive or delicate elements aren't damaged.

Remember: If you couldn't bear to see it lost or destroyed, then it probably shouldn't be in the garage.

### Items safe to keep in the garage:

**Lawn care tools and equipment**

**Gardening supplies**

**Plastic storage bins (rather than cardboard boxes)**

**Hoses (after draining)**

**Sports equipment**

**Cars, of course.**

**Editor's Note:** For those of you in the mountains lucky enough to HAVE a garage... please be aware that bears see an open garage door as an invitation. Somewhere, sometime they may have eaten in a garage - even if it wasn't yours. You don't want to encounter a bear there.



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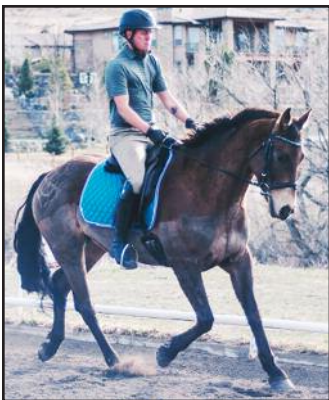
# The Use Of Land... Continued

By Diane Bergstrom

My initial article covering the threats to one of our few remaining natural flood plains along the Front Range in Boulder County, titled *The Use of Land*, appeared in the May issue of the **Highlander Monthly**. This is a follow up to the piece but I will start with a summary for those readers new to the subject. **Save Our St. Vrain Valley (SOSVV)**, a grassroots non-profit organization based in Boulder County, has spent years mounting a defense and progressive offense to preserve the environment, public health, and economies threatened by local plans of first Martin Marietta and now Cemex. Martin Marietta is proposing to resurrect a 20 year old expired permit to dig a 640-acre open pit gravel mine on the St. Vrain River flood plain in a large rectangular area west of Hygiene, east of Hwy 36, and south of Lyons and Hwy 66. Some of Boulder County's oldest working ranches are in the area, as well as archeological evidence of indigenous peoples, and extensive wildlife. The mining operation would create devastating effects on the riparian ecosystem, including migrating wildlife, local businesses and the human population. Amanda Dumenigo, Chief Executive of the SOSVV Board, summarized, "We're definitely at a crossroads and special use permits are expired or expiring so before us is the complete industrialization of the St. Vrain Valley or conservation of the least developed river valley in the Front Range." Water, air, and land quality will all be adversely if not dangerously affected, while an estimated 200+ daily truck trips could launch during the operation. Cemex, the cement plant east of Lyons on Hwy 66, is also running out of some of their natural materials

(limestone) and will be proposing to extend their operation beyond their permit period and import materials by truck and train.

I hadn't listened to the land. I listened to local activists, therapists, educators, geologists, politicians, community leaders, land owners, healers, small business owners, veterans, and farmers but I hadn't truly listened to the land. So I went out to the flood plain area at sunset and stayed for hours. The first thing I noticed was a mature bald eagle roosting in a dead tree, near its nest, with healthy prairie dogs below barking their warnings across the meadow. As I walked through tall native grasses and purple blooming Dame's rocket, I recognized wild asparagus, which I thought had become a distant legend told by friends who grew up in the county. They told tales of their families gathering the wild plants along country roads to supplement their food budgets. The few stalks, a symbol of the pure integrity of the land around me, filled me with hope. A fat robin pulled up a fat worm, and watched me ponder the plants. As dusk descended, a symphony of sound rose. Calves of cattle grazing on leased Boulder County land bleated for their mothers. A coyote pack howled and yipped together in the distance. The rumbling roar coming from Cemex was muffled by occasional jets flying toward DIA. Bats, in their frenzied flight pattern, chased aerial bugs. By 9 pm, the frog choir crescendo with the combined voices of Chorus frogs, Leopard frogs, and others. Their singing almost drowned out the rising roar from Cemex. What you focus on, expands. The frogs sing for their mates and survival. I'm overwhelmed with the sheer volume of sounds in this relatively undisturbed riparian habitat, and



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I wonder where else in the Front Range have I ever heard the sounds of nature eclipse the sounds of man?

Two months and 20 years ago, then Gov. Bill Owens and Great Outdoors Colorado announced that Boulder County would receive \$3.275 million in Lottery proceeds (tax payer money) to fund land acquisition habitat improvement and recreation projects planned for a 15-mile stretch of the St. Vrain from Lyons east to the county line (*Eric Frankowski/John Fryar, Daily Times-Call, 5/20/99*). The governor stated, "This project will protect land and wildlife habitat and minimum stream flows. It will also provide miles of new recreational trails as well as fishing spots." Chris Leding, GOCO, said Boulder County was selected for the scope of land preservation and commitment the county had already made to the St. Vrain. Division Of Wildlife (now CO Parks and Wildlife) aquatic biologist Randy Van Buren studied the highest biodiversity in the St. Vrain, of the Colorado South Platte drainage, and recommended to GOCO that the St. Vrain "is not only deserving of protection, it is demanding protection." Now flash forward 20 years when the price of gravel is at a premium because of fracking conducted in Boulder County. "We would expect Martin Marietta would want to extract as much of the resources as they can under their current permits," explained local professional geologist Ric Breese, who also has a biology degree and education of hazardous materials management. "The public isn't getting numbers so it's hard to get a handle on it," he said, "The public doesn't have access to any assessment of the value of the gravel in the valley or plan of the rate of extraction which equals the life of the mine." As a member of the SOSVV Steering Committee, he has repeatedly petitioned the County to study the ecosystems and amphibian habitats that would be greatly affected. The global amphibian populations are already experiencing the greatest population decline due to the climate crisis. "It's a way of measuring the health of our entire planet," Ric said.

This summer, SOSVV supporters and area residents await a decision by Boulder District Judge Nancy Salomone on a lawsuit filed in Boulder District Court by SOSVV and individual plaintiffs. Boulder County Land Use Department has no history of upholding the five-year lapse provision which specifies that if there's not been any activity related to the approved special use permit for five years, the approval lapses. The Department determined Martin Marietta's special use gravel mining permit was still applicable 20 years

after it was approved. The judge is not allowing oral arguments. We'll wait and see, and then you can be sure SOSVV has Plan B. They are the voice of the homeowners, business owners, landowners, wildlife, air, river and land. In a county that was among the national pioneers of establishing the open space concept, and funded a preservation plan for the St. Vrain Valley 20 years ago, it's incomprehensible that this fight exists today. Lisa Rollo's article title in the Longmont Times-Call (06/02/17) aptly summed it up, *A Vision of Boulder County Gone Wrong*.

How can you get involved? Rich Cargill, Chairman of the SOSVV Board, is managing a petition that he will send to the regional president of Martin Marietta, asking them to forego mining, and donate the mining rights along with the 640 acres to Boulder County Open Space for protection.

To sign the petition, please go to the website, [www.SOSVV.wordpress.com](http://www.SOSVV.wordpress.com), and link to the petition. You can also like SOSVV on Facebook and be notified of upcoming meetings and developments. Appreciated donations to their legal fund can be made through their website. (*Original article can be found at HighlanderMo.com in the Archives - May issue.*)



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# After Near Extinction...Pygmy Rabbits Need Room

By Carl Segerstrom May 31, 2019 High Country News

In the rolling hills of the Columbia Basin in central Washington, a tractor kicked dust from a wheat field as an early May breeze filtered down from the Cascade Mountains rising in the west. In a patchwork of sagebrush and bunchgrass, Jon Gallie searched for the newest generation of North America's smallest rabbit, the state and federally endangered Columbia Basin pygmy rabbit. When not moving by memory through this reclaimed farmland, Gallie, an endangered species project leader for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, traced his footsteps to dots on his phone marking den sites. In a city, he could easily pass for a Pokémon Go player, chasing fictional creatures in an imaginary digital realm. But the grapefruit-sized animals he was seeking are real, though elusive; after more than two hours of searching, all we found were empty burrows and an abundance of scat.

Still, the salmon egg-sized droppings were an encouraging sign. That's because a century of farming, development and increasingly frequent and intense wildfires has fractured the habitat of the Columbia Basin pygmy rabbit; by the late 1990s, just a handful were left. In 2001, biologists captured 16 of the last few dozen rabbits. Nearly two decades of direct human intervention followed, a multi-pronged effort that saved the animals from being banished to stories, screens and natural history textbooks. Pygmy rabbits now

number in the hundreds in the Columbia Basin — but they remain far from a resilient and healthy population.

The rabbits have shown that they can rebound, however, as long as they have enough habitat to call home. The efforts to save these diminutive mammals illustrate a hard lesson: Even when scientists can breed an endangered species back to healthy numbers, protecting land and building bridges between dispersed populations remains a continuing challenge for recovery. For central Washington's pygmy rabbits, humans have been the agents of both destruction and salvation. Now, the challenge is to also play the role of nurturer, giving the rabbits — and other endangered species — the space they need to reclaim a place on the landscape.

WE LIVE IN AN AGE OF EXTINCTION, driven by human contributions to climate change and habitat destruction. Facing these crises has meant making compromises that save some species, but also change them. Hundreds of vertebrates have blinked out in just the last century. When biologists captured the last known wild Columbia Basin pygmy rabbits in 2001 to start a captive breeding program, they hoped to keep the species from joining their ranks. And in a sense, they've succeeded, as the burrows and scat in the sagebrush show.


But early on, inbreeding produced sickly offspring and low reproductive rates. In 2004, (Continued on page 26.)

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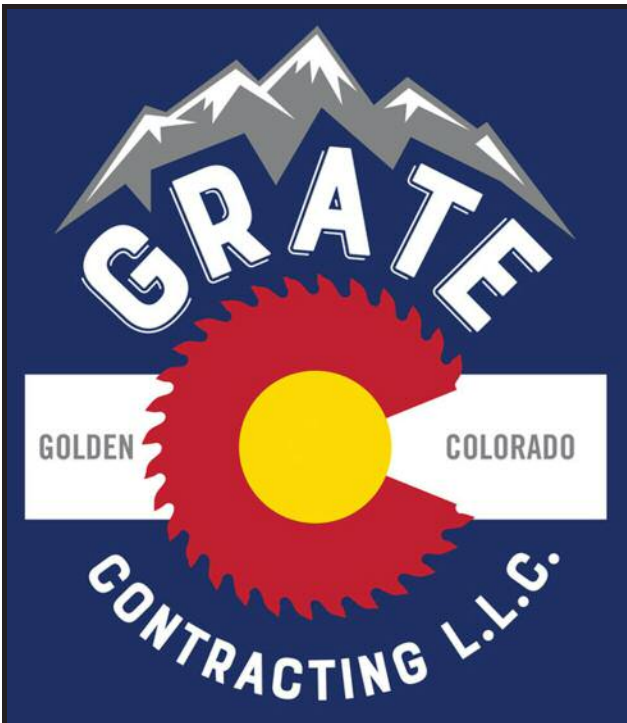
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## Highlander Wildlife

the scientists — part of a collaborative effort between universities, zoos and state and federal agencies — had to breed them with a closely related population, the Great Basin pygmy rabbit. This was a matter of “genetic rescue,” explained Stacey Nerkowski, a University of Idaho doctoral student who leads a team studying pygmy rabbit genetics. The new genes staved off the complete loss of the population. While the last pure Columbia Basin pygmy rabbit died in 2008, unique genes that arose over millennia live on in the rabbits now munching sagebrush in central Washington. On average, about 25% of each rabbit’s genome comes from the wild rabbits collected in 2001. Nerkowski said the resilience of those genes — they continue to show up, generation after generation, because they help the rabbits survive there — shows the value of recovering local rabbits, rather than simply transplanting other pygmy rabbits into the Columbia Basin. “This isn’t just a rabbit we picked up in Wyoming; it has the unique genetics of this area,” Nerkowski said.

AFTER TROMPING THROUGH UNFENCED stands of sagebrush for most of the morning, Gallie and I hopped in his truck and headed south to another rabbit recovery area, in the Beezley Hills west of Ephrata, Washington. Here, sagebrush and bunchgrass, flourishes of wildflowers, wheat fields and the dreaded invasive cheatgrass all intermix. In

the Beezley Hills, land protected by The Nature Conservancy and a private landowner who has dedicated his property to pygmy rabbit conservation provide habitat for reintroductions.



*A pygmy rabbit seeks shelter under sagebrush within a protective enclosure. The few hundred wild Columbia Basin pygmy rabbits are the descendants of 16 that were captured and bred by biologists. Rajah Bose for HCN.*

Biologists have been trying to re-establish the rabbits on the landscape since 2007, when wild reintroductions failed. After that unsuccessful attempt, the recovery team turned to semi-wild enclosures in 2011, to ease the transition from captivity to the starker realities of the rabbits’ natural habitat. Solid fences, irrigation systems, artificial burrows and supplemental food provided the animals the amenities project leaders thought they needed to survive. The rabbits proliferated, but then, in the confined and artificial space, disease did as well, and in 2016, reproduction in the enclosures dropped by about 75%.

For the last two years, the recovery team has been using different enclosures, more mobile

and spartan in nature, both to avoid disease transmission and better prepare the rabbits for life outside the fences. No supplemental feeding is offered, and other than some water laced with medicine to fight off an intestinal disease, the sagebrush-blanketed hillside is left in its natural state. As we walked through the main enclosure at Beezley Hills, both adults and baby rabbits scattered in blurs of fur,

zig-zagging through the chest-high sagebrush. When caught against a fence line, the rabbits froze, blending into the gray bushes and light brown soil.

The changes have produced kits that survive better in the wild, allowing the recovery team to distribute them across the landscape. That’s vital to bringing back the rabbit, with the risk of population-decimating fires haunting its future — and its recent past. In the summer of 2017, the 30,000-acre Sutherland Canyon Fire wiped out the majority of rabbits in the area. As strong winds pushed the blaze over ridges and through draws, Gallie and his team quickly reconfigured the irrigation system in the Beezley Hills enclosure. They were able to save about one-third of the hundred-plus



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rabbits living there. But the threat to each of the three recovery areas remains in the fire-prone sagebrush, showing how important maintaining a wider swath of habitat is for the animals.

FIRE DOESN'T JUST SCORCH pygmy rabbit colonies; it also imperils the ecosystem they depend on. Repeated fires that both propel and are fueled by the spread of invasive species like cheatgrass deliver a one-two punch of destruction to native species in sagebrush habitat.

Corinna Hanson manages more than 30,000 acres in central Washington for The Nature Conservancy with an eye toward preserving native habitat. That's a constant challenge now, as summers get hotter and fires occur twice a decade instead of less than twice a century, the historical norm. "When I think about restoration, it's almost like we can't keep up," she said. "But we're not going to give up." In talking about endangered species recovery, the focus is usually on the species itself. But, she said, "when you work to conserve a species, it always comes down to habitat management."

Expanding open space to connect the reintroduction areas, which are spread over about 40 miles and divided by roads, fields, sheer cliffs and houses, would be the ultimate sign of success for the project, Gallie said. Tools to stitch together the fractured landscape include land preserved for habitat protection by The Nature Conservancy, and U.S. Dept. of Agriculture grant programs that pay farmers to take land out of production so wildlife can use it instead.

Gallie said communicating the goals of the recovery effort and building trust between people in town, farmers in the country, nonprofits and government partners is key to the program's success. "You can have the best scientists and the best habitats and the best approach in the world, but if everyone out here is skeptical and oppositional, it's going to make things very difficult." When he appears at community events and at farmers' doors, Gallie said, the familiarity and trust he's built show locals that the pygmy rabbit program isn't some big government overreach happening in a faraway office. "It's just me, the same guy you wave to everyday, with the same dirt on my boots."

COLUMBIA BASIN PYGMY RABBITS are far better off today than they were two decades ago, but their future remains tenuous. One fire could wipe out most of the population. And until they inhabit continuous corridors, where they can meet new mates and be less vulnerable to catastrophic fires, they'll remain on the precipice of extinction.

Still, the species is gaining ground in

a time when conservation is pervaded by stories of loss. The world is losing species. It's losing habitat. And humanity is losing time to try to save the current biome from the worst impacts of climate change. But perhaps our biggest deficit, and greatest challenge, is our apathy toward that loss. "When I get asked — 'Why do we need pygmy rabbits?' — I don't always have the best answer," Gallie said, as fine dust kicked up with each step we took through the sagebrush. "You either value biodiversity or you don't, and if you don't, there's pretty much nothing I can say that's going to make you go, 'Oh, now I agree.'"

As a society, it's often hard to agree on which species to save, which organisms are necessary to make an ecosystem whole, or if it even makes sense to try to prevent extinctions. In all of those debates, Gallie pointed out that we often forget the current moment is a blip in evolutionary history, and, regardless of human interventions, nature will continue to shape this landscape. In the end, he said, "Life always wins. It's more our loss."

*Carl Segerstrom is an assistant editor at High Country News, covering Alaska, the Pacific Northwest and the Northern Rockies from Spokane, Washington.*

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# Range Fires Threaten Sagebrush Habitat

By Nick Bowlin High Country News June 13, 2019

Between the town of Elko, Nevada, and the Idaho border stretches some of the most remote land in the Lower 48, rolling hills and arid basins as far as the eye can see. Last July, this section of the Owyhee Desert was scorched by a fierce, fast-moving blaze with 40-foot flames, the largest wildfire in state history. In the end, the Martin Fire burned 435,000 acres, including some of the West's finest sagebrush habitat. Now, the raw range wind whips up the bare earth into enormous black clouds that roil on the horizon.

Once rare, fires that large, hot and destructive are now common in the Great Basin, a 200,000-square-mile region of mountains and valleys that includes all of Nevada and much of Utah, as well as parts of California, Idaho and Oregon. But despite the rising fire risk, a general lack of attention is putting the rangeland in growing danger.

The fire problem "risks permanent loss" of the ecosystem, according to Jolie Pollet, a fire ecologist and the Bureau of Land Management's division chief for fire planning and fuels management. This is a genuine crisis, she said, and it demands greater urgency and attention than it is currently

getting.

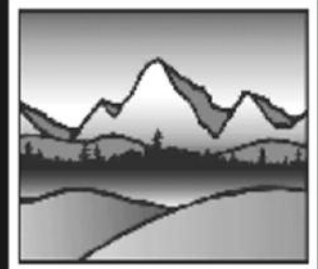
"The general public, especially urban areas, doesn't seem to have an appreciation for the impacts on these landscapes, since the areas are so sparsely populated," she said. The new ferocity of rangeland fires has an old culprit:

cheatgrass, an annual originally from Eurasia that was brought to this country in cattle feed, packing material and ships' ballast in the late 1800s. It has since proliferated through overgrazing and development. The grass burns easily and often, and it thrives on fire. In intense blazes, when native shrubs perish, cheatgrass simply drops its seeds and then expands into the burned areas. The areas of greatest fire risk in the Great Basin have a high correlation with the areas of highest cheatgrass incursion, and the increasingly dry and arid climate brought by climate change is encouraging its spread. The Great Basin now has the nation's highest wildfire risk.

Historically, sagebrush habitat burned about once every century or less, but now it happens around every five to ten years. Over the past two decades, more than 15 million acres of sagebrush have been permanently lost to fire, according to the BLM, 9 million of them since 2014.

Overall, since 2000, more acres of shrubland or grassland

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have burned than forest.

If sagebrush decline continues, the approximately 350 species that depend on it are in serious trouble. The Martin Fire burned some of the best sage grouse habitat in the country and destroyed more than 35 grouse mating grounds, or leks. The fires also harm watersheds, cause erosion and destroy wildlife corridors used by pronghorn antelope, mule deer and elk.

The impact on rural Americans is equally severe. Counties and ranchers must deal with infrastructure loss, including troughs, fencing, and damage to roads and powerlines. Many ranchers struggle with the additional costs, said Ron Cerri, a rancher and commissioner in agriculture-dependent Humboldt County, where the Martin Fire burned. Ranchers may lose hayfields in a blaze, for example, and six months of hay for 500 cattle costs about \$216,000, according to Cerri. Cattle often die in the flames, and ranchers have to put down animals crippled by the smoke. Jon Griggs, a Nevada rancher whose land burned in 2007, called it the worst part of the job.

Because sagebrush ecosystems are neglected, they get less funding, making the fire threat even worse. Indeed, the BLM receives even less money than the already-underfunded Forest Service. For 2019, the Forest Service got about \$400 million in annual funding for fuel

management, and about \$1.3 billion for firefighting preparedness. The BLM received \$85 million and \$180

million respectively, even though it manages about 50 million more acres of public land. The BLM also received \$11 million for fire recovery, a microscopic amount, given the scale of the problem. When the BLM runs out of firefighting money, it's forced to raid other programs, as the blazes quickly burn through agency budgets.

“The agencies run out of money and all the other programs get gutted,” said University of Montana wildlife biology professor Dave Naugle. “In the long term, it really hurts conservation.” Last year, Congress passed a measure that allows the BLM to access emergency fire funds without draining other initiatives. But the provision doesn't kick in until next year, and even when it does, the BLM will remain seriously underfunded for firefighting, prevention and restoration. Meanwhile, wildfires are already burning across the West, and the cheatgrass is beginning to dry up, turning from its spring purple to the yellowish hue that signals its readiness to burn. Pollet put it succinctly: “I'm scared for 2019.”

*Nick Bowlin is an editorial intern at High Country News*  
**Editor's Note:** Maybe that idea to let wild horses and burros forage for fire prevention isn't so bad huh, BLM?



Since 2014, 9 million acres of sagebrush have been permanently lost to fires like the Artesian Fire in 2018. Austin Catlin/BLM

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# Always Sit Downwind Of Flowers

By Frosty Wooldridge

Susan Schutz said, “Let us dance in the sun, wearing wild flowers in our hair.”

Years ago, I backpacked in Nepal, Tibet and other parts of Asia. I distinctly remember the peace and quietude of the Himalayas and the stunning beauty of Mount Everest, K-2, Mount Dhaulagiri and other 8,000-meter peaks. At such times, my eyes gifted my soul and body with spiritual feelings never before felt in my life.

Tibetan mountain flowers beckoned me with their colors, scents and ever-present butterflies dancing upon the petals. Upwind, I saw the flowers, but down wind, their magnetizing scents wafted into my nostrils. With such a combination of olfactory senses and vision, Mother Nature transported me into a state of well-being I hadn't reached previously in my life.

Years later, I pedaled my bicycle through Holland, Michigan in the springtime when their tulips flowered over hundreds of acres of brilliant colors. Riding up from the south, I saw them blanketing the fields before me. Once I “entered” those fields, the tulips gifted me with their special flower aroma. Once their mesmerizing fragrances



*(Frosty Wooldridge, bicycling Norway, stopping to inhale the fragrances of flowers along your journey.)*

*Photo by Frosty Wooldridge.*

hit my brain, a certain combination of bliss carried with me for days afterwards as I made my way up to the top of Michigan. Of course, along the way, millions of flowers reached out to my eyes and nostrils as I pedaled by them at 12 miles per hour. As I completed my bicycle journey

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around the “mitt” of Michigan with the Great Lakes by my side, a mystical aura of flowers made my passage incidental as to the pedaling effort of each glorious mile. Emerson said, “God laughs in flowers.”

I can attest that a huge smile and a great deal of laughter crosses my face with the advent of flowers on my journeys around the world. Once in the Brazilian rainforests, I arrived at Falls de d’Iguazú. Waterfalls exceeding anything I ever saw at Niagara Falls in the USA and Canada—exploded out of the jungle. Toucans with their large beaks flew everywhere. Unique birds flew right into the waterfalls to feed their young on the inside cliffs. Butterflies graced the rainforest jungle canopy with unimaginable colors.

At one point, I rolled up on a flower-field replete with yellow-black monarch butterflies dancing on the pink flower petals. The science fiction writer Robert Heinlein said, “Butterflies are self-propelled flowers.” He nailed it with that statement.

I watched 10,000 butterflies dancing-pollinating on the flowers as perfumes wafted into my lungs like a magical elixir. On the side of the field, a harpist played enchanting tunes that danced to the movement of the butterflies. Either he played a song to their dancing on flowers or they danced to his magical fingers playing on the harp’s strings. I sat down in the midst of Nature’s phenomenal magic. I felt a certain addiction to the sights, smells and sounds before me. I learned to sit down-wind of flowers.

Once I learned the magic of sitting down-wind of flowers, a whole new aspect of living via the vibrations of the universe entered my mind. I share it with you: turn your eyes, mind and spirit toward the highest vibrational frequencies of the Natural World in everything you do each day. Set your mental and emotional ambiances toward your highest and best. Years ago, Jonathan Livingston Seagull by Richard Bach said, “You will reach heaven when you reach the perfect speed, Jonathan.”

“What’s that speed?” Jon asked the wise old seagull. “It’s not the speed of light or the slowness of a butterfly,” Chian said. “The perfect speed, Jonathan, is being there.”

Years later, on a backpack trip into Chicago Basin in the San Juan Mountains of Colorado, I camped out in a field of wildflowers screaming across the tundra at 12,000 feet high in the Rocky Mountains.

My friends and I decided to pitch our tents in a nook blooming with purple-white Columbine flowers. That night, the campfire’s smoke curled into the ink-black of space toward a starlit sky. Shooting stars punctured the stillness as if to put an exclamation point on the day.

As I lay back in my tent to fall asleep, the distinct perfume of wildflowers caressed my nostrils, flooded into my lungs and lulled me into aromatic slumber. To this day, I always sit down-wind of flowers.

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# Close Encounter With The Bear Kind

By Paige Blankenbuehler June 14, 2019 High Country News

**The very places that attract visitors and newcomers for their proximity to wildlife grapple with a spike in bear-human incidents.**

At the height of the tourist season at Rocky Mountain National Park in 2018, a plump black bear ambled into the lobby of the nearby Stanley Hotel. It climbed onto a large, cherry wood table, examined an antique couch, gave it a deliberate sniff and then sauntered back out the door it had come in.

Estes Park, Colorado, the gateway community to Rocky Mountain National Park, has what most would consider a problem. Overzealous bears regularly wander into unexpected and inappropriate human places: the warmly lit kitchens of residents, inviting alleyway garbage cans; they commonly thrash their way into tourist vehicles to investigate a scent.

As the population of Colorado's Front Range swells, visitation to Rocky Mountain National Park, too, has spiked. That's only meant more encounters with wildlife and increased reports of "problem" bears that have become

highly accustomed to humans and consistently rummage for scraps.

But it's the very possibility of encountering these animals that encourages so many people to move to places like Estes Park and to visit its surrounding wildish areas. As much as our proximity to wildlife confounds our natural resource managers, it continues to delight a great many humans.

In recent years, Colorado Parks and Wildlife managers have worked with the city of Estes Park to adopt practices to better cohabitate with our non-human neighbors. In 2015, the town passed a wildlife ordinance that's lessened a hungry bear's access to its greatest temptation: trash. Residents must use either a wild-resistant container or put trashcans outside only on pickup days. Beyond efforts among the residential streets, the city also replaced all of the public trash containers in 2016. And though it was an expensive project, a whopping \$1,200 for each individual canister, the community pitched in through an innovative sponsorship program.

The city continues to educate newcomers and visitors through a regular "Bear Booth" at the weekly farmer's market, and provides tip sheets for behavior to keep wildlife safe that are enclosed in city utility bills and newsletters. Residents are advised that all bird feeders must be suspended and out of reach of a clawing bear. Police department volunteer auxiliary officers help patrol garbage cans and dumpsters with weekly driving rounds and provide information to rule-breakers.

While the town has made progress, there are still challenges ahead. More people visited the area during the 2018 season — more than 4.5 million people — than ever before, a trend that is expected to continue, and many tourists are unaware of safe wildlife interaction practices. It's also an ongoing challenge for wildlife managers and town officials to police the many new small-scale vacation rentals that pop up.

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And while chubby black bears awkwardly navigating the ever-intruding human world are undeniably endearing — wildlife encounters frequently go viral online, after all — the best advice wildlife managers offer is painstakingly

simple: Ignore them and let them be wild.

Paige Blankenbuehler is an assistant editor

for High Country News.



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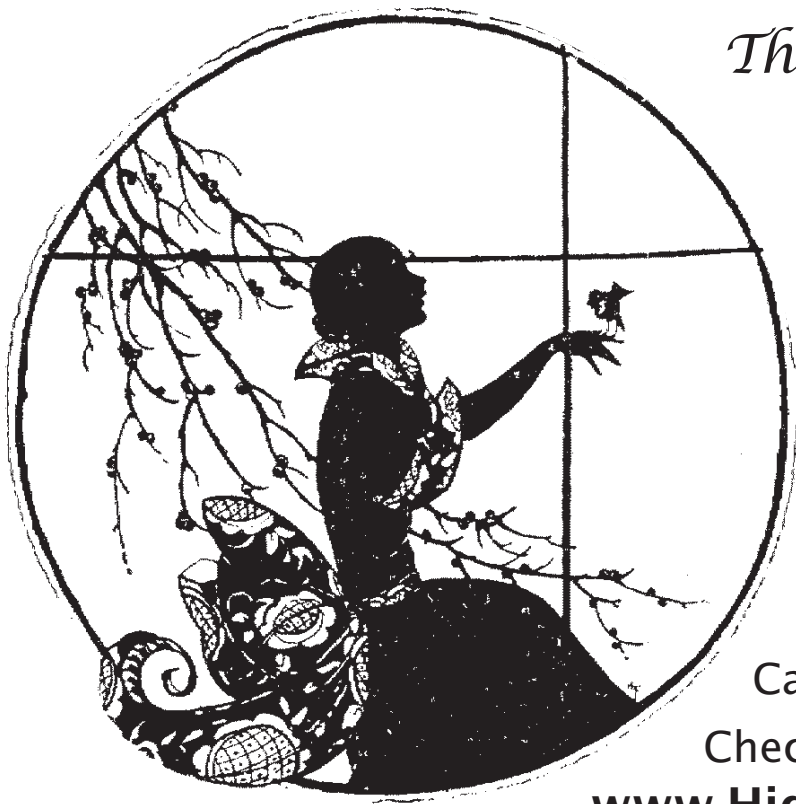
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# Power Update

July  
2019

## Common Causes of Summer Outages

Summer is a time to relax, enjoy family, plan vacations and have some fun in the sun. It's not a time when we'd ideally like to worry about the possibility of power outages, but they are still possible. United Power monitors its system for outages, and potential outages, 24/7 so it can immediately respond when one occurs to quickly restore power to affected members. Here are some common causes of summer outages:

- **Wildlife** — Despite United Power's best efforts, animals seem to have the innate ability to locate, and interact with, substations, poles and electrical boxes. The cooperative takes proactive measures to guard against animal related outages, including avian protection on its wires and deterrents to protect ground equipment. These measures not only help prevent outages, but also protect the wildlife. Unfortunately, some animals are small enough to sneak by these defenses and get into equipment. Rodents and snakes like to hide and nest in equipment, creating the potential for outages.
- **Weather** — Severe weather can spring up at any time in the mountains. High winds and lightning storms may contribute to outages. Most of United Power's poles are equipped with technology that helps redirect lightning current away from transformers. In situations where these are not present or fail, other elements down the line will "break," hopefully containing the outage or preventing it entirely. However, it does not guarantee an outage will not occur.
- **Falling Trees/Branches** — United Power contracts with Asplundh to monitor trees near primary power lines throughout its territory. These proactive measures help to minimize outage risks where possible, but cannot prevent them entirely. Falling tree limbs are yet another potential outage risk for our members. If you notice a limb hanging dangerously close to primary power lines in your area, please contact United Power immediately.
- **Vehicle Accidents** — It's impossible for United Power to account for the behavior of drivers traveling through its service territory. Occasionally, an accident may temporarily interrupt service to members when it involves one of the cooperative's poles, utility boxes or, very rarely, a substation.

**Members can report an outage by calling our outage line at 303-637-1350 or by logging into their account via SmartHub.**

## Energy Star Rebates



To help you make the most of your energy, United Power members can receive rebates on the purchase of NEW Energy Star® qualified appliances. Rebates are available on select refrigerators, freezers, clothes washers and dishwashers. United Power will also provide a recycling credit when you have your old refrigerator or freezer hauled away and recycled. To learn more, visit [www.unitedpower.com](http://www.unitedpower.com). Please review program details very carefully.

Energy Star Appliance	Rebate
New Energy Star® Refrigerator/Freezer	\$30
Refrigerator/Freezer Recycling	\$75
New Energy Star® Clothes Washer	\$40
New Energy Star® Dishwasher	\$20



## Save Trees with Paperless Billing

United Power members who no longer wish to receive a printed bill in the mail can sign up for Paperless Billing with SmartHub. If you are not currently a SmartHub user, the registration process is simple and allows you immediate access to view your account details, make payments online, make account updates and sign up for services like Paperless Billing.

### Sign up for Paperless Billing:

- From SmartHub, select My Profile from menu options
- Select Update My Printed Bill Settings from options
- Toggle Printed Bill Status button from ON to OFF to stop receiving printed bills
- Click Yes to confirm

Once you are enrolled, a paper bill will no longer be mailed to you. To sign up without SmartHub, call our Member Services department at 303-637-1300.



# CCCIA 4th of July Celebration

## Pancake Breakfast, Parade, Festivities

Starting at 7 am CCCIA HALL 31258 Coal Creek Canyon



**30154 Spruce Canyon Drive**  
Gorgeous & Secluded 3 Acres  
3 BD/ 3 BA 3,153 sq.ft. **\$600,000**



**333 S. Taft Court**  
Townhouse Style Condo  
2 BD/ 2 BA 884 sq.ft. **\$349,900**



**266 Aspen Drive**  
Remodeled Thruout, Engulfed in Aspens  
3 BD/ 2 BA 2,036 sq.ft. .95 Ac. **\$445,000**



**269 Olde Carter Lake Road**  
Snowcapped VIEWS! 1.87 Acres  
3 BD/ 2 BA 2,475 sq.ft. **\$515,000**



**Coal Creek Canyon**  
Gorgeous Updated Log Home - 1.82 Acres  
4 BD/ 4 BA 3,817 sq.ft. **\$1,100,000**



**221 Aspen Drive**  
Nicely Remodeled - VIEWS! .76 Acre  
2 BD/ 1 BA 1,667 sq.ft. **\$384,000**



**33588 Lyttle Dowdle**  
Beautiful Building Lot! Lots of Sunshine  
1.04 Acre **\$59,900**



**2184 Steele Street**  
Fantastic Tri-Level  
3 BD/ 2 BA 1,649 sq.ft. **\$359,000**



**2 Ronnie Road**  
Remodeled Mtn Home - VIEWS  
3 BD/ 2 BA 2,109 sq.ft. .54 Ac. **\$419,000**



**900 Camp Eden Road**  
Amazing Custom Remodel  
3 BD/ 2 BA 2,358 sq.ft.



**10241 Thorodin Drive**  
Beautiful Mtn Contemporary 1.83 Acres  
3 BD/ 2 BA 2,100 sq.ft. **\$475,000**



**76 Wonderland Avenue**  
Adorable & Updated Cabin - Wondervul!  
2 BD/ 2 BA 1,674sq.ft. **\$309,000**



**181 Hummingbird Lane**  
Nicely Updated - Theater Room 1.28 Ac.  
3 BD/ 2 BA 2,129 sq.ft. **\$515,000**



**Coal Creek Canyon**  
Custom Log Home - 4.2 Acres  
3 BD/ 4 BA 3,300 sq.ft. **\$900,000**



**19 Leon Lane**  
Amazing Remodel-Horse Prop -Views  
2 BD/ 2 BA 1,500 sq.ft. **\$399,000**



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303.642.1133

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