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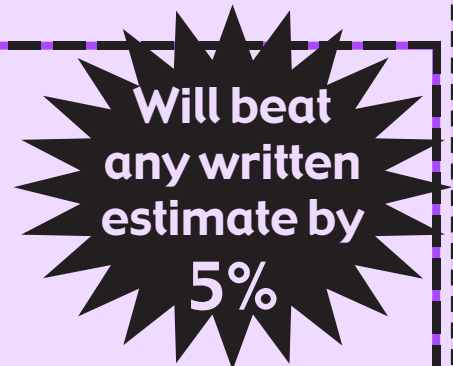
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Mother & Earth

By Omayra Acevedo
Nature and Wildlife Photojournalist

Mother: [muh-th-er] – noun: One person who does the work of twenty. For free.
(See also: masochist, loony, saint.)

Being a mother is no easy task. It's beyond exhausting in every possible way. I don't know this firsthand, but I do have eyes and tend to be pretty observant. My mother, like a lot of other women, had to not only fill the role of mom but dad as well. From the moment the idea of a child is conceived until her dying day, a woman's life is no longer her own. Every decision she makes, every action she takes, every word she speaks, every item added to the grocery list, every breath taken is not done so without first considering her child. This was always indisputable to me while watching my mother raise three children. How did she do it all? I have no idea.

It has been just over ten years since my mom passed away. Still, it seems like yesterday. Many of us know someone, if not ourselves, who has lost a mother. During my periods of grief, I tend to also think about those who have lost the strongest woman they will probably ever know. Then, I weep. I weep for myself and all of you. Even for the ones who have yet to experience the agony of such loss. However, just as quickly as I start to weep I begin to acknowledge all the reasons I should not. As my friend so cleverly put it in his song, "she laid to rest her deepest fears." I too should put my fears to rest. Like



the fear of having to live without her. So, I practice keeping her memory alive as best I can. How? I keep the connection to my other mother alive and well. A connection my own mother bestowed upon me.

Who's my other mother? I believe she is best known as Earth. Mother Earth is defined as a living being and the provider of all that is on the Earth. Granted my own mother did not provide for the entire world, but the amount of strength this woman possessed sure makes me think she

did. A mother, unlike anything else on this planet, comes at whatever you throw at her with full force. She is remarkably unstoppable. This should be obvious considering the disastrous changes we are facing in our own global system, and how passionately we have been working to correct it since 1970.

Ah, the seventies... The death of Jimi Hendrix, the last Beatles album, Simon & Garfunkel's "Bridge Over Troubled Water" hits number one, and of course the debut of Earth Day.

After the destruction left by the 1969 oil spill in Santa Barbara, California, over 20 million participants rallied for environmental protection on April 22, 1970. The spill is still considered in the top tier of the United States' human-caused disasters. Four million gallons of

oil – I repeat: four million gallons of oil - had emptied into the ocean turning its waters into a petroleum-stench of black filth littered with the dead bodies of seals, sea lions and seabirds. - Excuse me while I go vomit. - This was just the damage that could be seen with the naked eye. It was no wonder that the then U.S. (Continued on next page.)

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Highlander Memories

senator, Gaylord Nelson, and environmental activist, Denis Hayes, were inspired to bring the idea of Earth Day to fruition. Thanks, fellas! Nicely done!

According to data records, the first Earth Day was five times larger than any anti-war rally and 20 times bigger than any civil rights assembly that had come before it. It was the catalyst that spurred the passing of the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act and Endangered Species Act. What other than a mother could encourage such powerful and meaningful change? Not just in the world, but also within ourselves. Earth Day brought people together who were fighting against each other over political, religious and civil rights. How about that? A world gathering together for the same beautiful, peaceful cause. So, gather your friends around the firepit, hold hands and sway side to side as you all begin to sing Kumbaya. Okay, maybe not, but it's still a nice idea.

There are an endless number of people changing their practices to more eco-friendly habits. This is unimaginably inspiring. Nonetheless, we should not lose sight of the fact that our earth, our home, is still in much peril. Calm down. I'm not suggesting you attempt to save the world or start hugging trees one by one. We've got enough crazies on this planet. We sure don't need one more. What I am saying, however, is that if all of us, yes, each and every one

of us, did one simple, minuscule, positive thing every day to help protect our home, well, it would undoubtedly sum up to a world of difference.

Until this day I can still hear my mother tell me that by doing positive things I was feeding my soul with the conviction to be the best version of myself that I could be. So, how about you? Would you be willing to join the movement? Are you brave enough to not care if people call you a hippie? No one has to know. Interested? How can you get started? One word: GOOGLE. In this day and age, it is as simple as opening your browser and searching: how to be eco-friendlier. If nothing else, it will be worth that fuzzy feeling you get on the inside.

Speaking of fuzzy... My friend, the musician, wrote a song that constantly evokes memories of my mother. (Hence why I'm quoting it twice in this article.) Sometimes as I am hiking through a forest and up a mountain I can hear the lyrics in my head. I once confessed to him that I have an unhealthy love-hate relationship with his song. Though it does so happen to be my favorite song on his CD. He sings in the outro, "If you're waiting for her to arrive just point your eyes to the sun." The irony in this is that since my mother passed away, I've always greeted her via the sun. I inhale, I exhale, I close my eyes, search for the sun, smile and whisper "Hi, mom."

Even through the Colorado floods of 2013, I could feel the support of my mother (both of them) offering me strength. All I had to do was breathe, keep cool, and ask myself: what would she do? Well, she would kick a**. That's exactly what she would do. She would get off the couch, put her big girl shoes on, start cleaning up, figure out how to get food and water, find a way to work, and she would remind the world that she isn't a victim of some flood. She is as strong as the thriving force behind it! I'm pretty certain I get my stubbornness from her, and I think I like it.

I guess I feel that Mother's Day and Earth Day are in complete correlation. They're both as equally beautiful, determined, and if we misbehave she has no problem giving us a good whooping. Whether she is human, an animal, a plant or the earth itself. Mothers leave an impression on us that's undeniable even when it isn't obvious. I know this now more than ever as I struggle through some of my most difficult challenges in life. I ponder the ways of the world as I self-reflect and I'm constantly reminded to do well and stay strong. If nothing else so that I am the person my mother would be most proud of.

*Special thanks and credit to: <https://www.motherearth-news.com> <https://www.citylab.com>
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Starting Deluge

By Pat Foss

I'm not big on helmets; but when he was young I'd put on a helmet anytime I was going to be near Deluge...not to ride, just to put a halter on him. I've worked with a lot of rank horses but he was by far the toughest horse I'd ever been around. He was a young, fiery stallion and had hurt me many times. He would throw his head, rear, jump, spin and kick and try to bolt and break free...all just for fun.

When it came time to start him under saddle I was a little worried. My friend Scott LaFevers said he'd help me and I hauled three horses and a mule down to his place in New Mexico to pack in a wolf release in the Gila (that's another story) and to try to get Deluge ready to ride. Deluge bellowed, kicked and struck and terrified the other horses in the trailer for twelve hours nonstop. The mule was so frightened that he left his body.

That first morning Scott said, "Well, let's do it." "Oh God," I thought. Scott started him in the round pen but Deluge (Continued on next page.)



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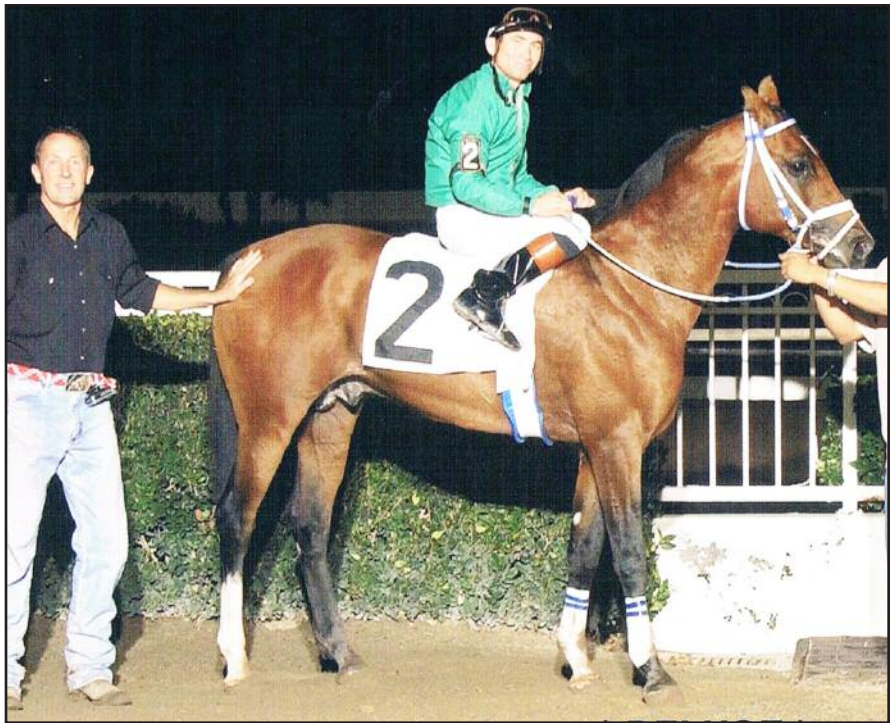
took off...full speed around the small circle, sometimes lunging at Scott with his teeth barred...Scott defended himself with a whip and after a while had Deluge changing directions and slowed down a little and he said "ok, he's all yours...I'm not getting on him...let's see if you can get him started."

I quaked a little and tried to act like it was no big deal. I threw the saddle over the rail and came into the round pen. Scott left and I went into the center. I sent Deluge out to the right and he bolted at first but then backed off to a big trot...I had him change directions and he did it perfectly. He focused on me just like you want...I dropped the whip and turned my shoulder away from him. He slammed on the brakes and wheeled to a stop...looked straight at me and snorted. I didn't know if I had his mind or he had mine, he walked right to the center and stopped inches away from me.

Scott said "better put a saddle on him while you've got him." Nervously I eased the saddle blanket up and rubbed him with it...I set it on his back. I had the saddle ready so that I could lift it on rather than swinging it, and I gingerly set the saddle on him. I heard Scott say "would've been nice if you'd caught him first" and I realized I was saddling a horse for his first time without even having a halter on him.

Too late now, I went ahead and tightened the cinch. He didn't move.

I sent him back out to the left...saddled but no halter, I remained in the center and directed him with the whip...first he ran fast...then slowed enough to buck...he bucked big, but it was beautiful. His remarkable athleticism transformed bucking into a huge swooping, arcing dance...so smooth and coordinated that it seemed like he wasn't touching the ground. I thought "I could stay on that." Scott from outside the arena says "He'll never make



a living as bucking horse, why don't you try to get on him?"

This time, when I turned my shoulder away from him he slid to a stop, turned and looked at me and trotted into the



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center. He focused on me so hard that I felt like I was caught in the gaze of a cobra. I was shaking but I picked up the bridle and put it on him...he seemed to like the bit in his mouth.

I tightened the cinch again, real tight, and led him a few steps...he didn't jump and I knew I had to try it now so I hung on the saddle a little to let him feel my weight...no problem. I put a foot in the stirrup and let him feel it bumping into his side...he jumped away a little but then controlled himself. While he was still moving I swung my leg over and I was on. I pulled him off to the right and we walked to the rail...he was pretty stiff and I thought any second he'll come unglued. Scott yelled, "trot him!" We trotted, both directions...stopped, walked, trotted some more. "How about a lope?" All three us knew that when I asked for a canter that we were going to have a rodeo. I urged him on, faster and faster trot, and then really pushed him into a canter. He didn't buck, he danced. It was like a dream, I have never ridden a horse with this kind of motion. I was sitting on a swirling wind, but it made sense, no move happened without a setup move first...it was as if he was trying to keep me right in the center of his balance. It was beautiful, we cantered both directions and he never missed a lead...We floated and turned through the center of the pen, trotted two steps, changed leads and cantered again, impossible for the first



time saddled...We stopped, I got off and back on, both sides...finally we called it a day. I was soaked with sweat...still shaking...and utterly, completely and forever in love. (Photos- Deluge:Retired in mtns & on racetrack).

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Tiny Warrior

By Valerie Wedel

Hummingbirds Coming Soon to a Flower Near You

Jewel of the bird world, tiniest bird on our planet...
Lovely, delicate, and fiercely protective...
Hummingbirds fly thousands of miles north each spring, to join us here in Colorado. Their iridescent beauty and amazing acrobatics are an enchanting celebration of life.

During late April or early May our tiny jeweled helicopters will be hovering by early flowers, or following woodpeckers to sip tree sap. Hummingbirds really love red blossoms that are shaped like trumpets. They also love Indian Paintbrush blossoms. Some plants, like the Paintbrush, completely depend on Hummingbirds to survive. Hummingbirds poke their long beaks into the blossoms to sip nectar, and then pollen sticks to their heads. As they travel from plant to plant, Hummingbirds make sure Paintbrushes are pollinated!

Throughout history people have been amazed by Hummingbirds. There is nothing like them in Europe. In the 1600's when we were the 'New World' to early European colonists, New Englander William Wood wrote ... "The humbird is one of the wonders of the country... glorious as the rainebow..." (p. 5, *Berger*). Wood only got to see one variety, the Ruby-throated Hummingbird, since all the rest like to live west of the Mississippi.

There are over 340 different species of Hummingbirds. They like to spend winters down south in South America, in countries like Guatemala, Ecuador, and as far south as

Argentina. Some live in jungles, some in deserts, and others every terrain in between. In the west, Hummingbirds like to migrate as far north as Alaska in the summer.

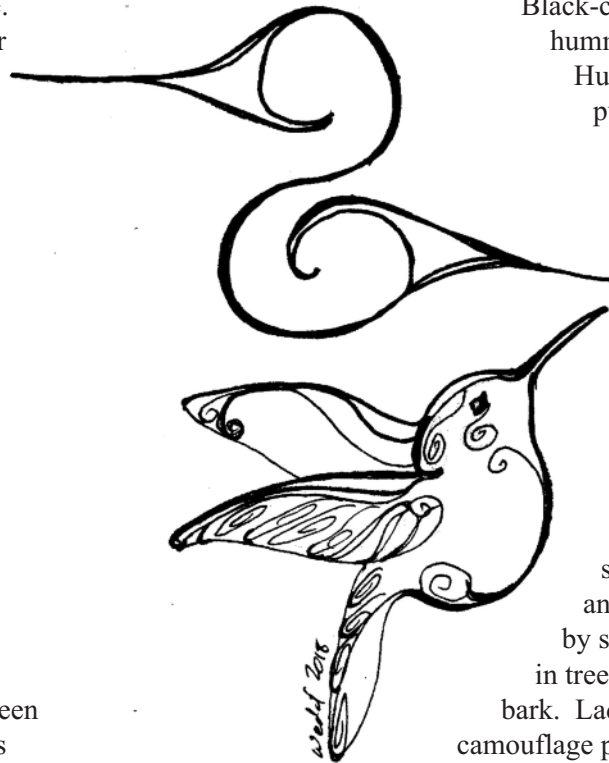
Hummingbirds who summer in our Colorado mountains include about fifteen species. The most often seen include: Rufous, Black-chinned, and Broad-tailed hummingbirds. The Calliope Hummingbird, who occasionally puts in an appearance here, is the smallest bird in North America.

The main difference between Hummingbird species has to do with color of feathers and variations in size. Usually the males are very colorful, with irredescent feathers they show off to attract female mates. Females prefer camouflage feathers.

Lady Hummingbirds build tiny nests the size of walnut shells, out of twigs, flower fluff, and their own spit, all held together by spidersilk. These nests are hidden in trees, camouflaged by lichen and bark. Lady Hummingbirds also dress in camouflage plumage, the better to raise their tiny chicks safely.

After choosing a male and mating, females lay about two eggs. Each tiny egg is about the size of a green pea. Hummingbird moms work hard, turning their eggs and sitting on them to keep them warm until they hatch. The hatchlings are unimaginably tiny, about the size of a raisin. Within a month or so of hatching, the babies are ready to fly; they say goodbye to mom, and venture out into the world.

Hummingbirds are voracious eaters. They become quite



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territorial when protecting their flowers. They need a mixture of bugs for protein, and nectar for energy. Hummingbirds also enjoy tree sap, and may live on sap until flowers bloom and they can sip nectar. They need so much fuel to keep flying, that they spend most of each day sipping nectar.

How marvelous to watch Hummingbirds hover and dart about! They move like helicopters, in all directions, and they hover in midair! To achieve these amazing aerobatics Hummingbird wings are unique. Hummingbird wings are hinged, and move in figure eights, unlike any other bird. This figure eight motion allows Hummingbirds to fly as they do. Their wings also move so fast, they appear as a blur to us humans.

Hummingbirds have better color vision than we humans do, and especially see the color red, which bees are blind to (*p.20, Berger*). If you ever want to attract Hummingbirds to your garden, plant red flowers. Once they arrive, Hummingbirds are happy to sip nectar from other colored blossoms as well.

Should you put out Hummingbird feeders, they must be kept very clean so as not to grow mold, and poison these little birds. One part sugar to four parts water is good, boiled for purity. In bear country, feeders can be brought inside at night. Experts advise putting out a few feeders in different locations, so the tiny guys don't get into big fights with each other over the feeders.


Hummingbirds can be so ferocious that one Native American culture, the Aztec, described their fiercest fighters as Hummingbird Warriors. Huitzilopochtli was the Aztec god of war and the sun. His name means "Hummingbird of the South." He is shown either as a Hummingbird, or as a warrior with Hummingbird feathers on his helmet.

Hummingbirds also have the amazing ability to go into "torpor" at night, if they are hungry and need to conserve energy and heat. Their heart rate slows, and they can seem to be dead. It takes them about an hour in the morning to fully wake up, as the sun warms them. This amazing ability in a warm blooded animal is perhaps part of what has led to them being seen as magical beings, who can die and then return to life.

Hummingbirds have been known as messengers between humans and the gods, and helpers to us humans. Among some Pueblo peoples, hummingbirds carry messages of praise and requests to Mother Earth for shamans. Another plains people Native American story tells how Hummingbirds used their blazing speed to win a great race for humans. It seems buffalo used to eat us humans. So they were challenged to a great race. Whoever won got to decide who ate who. When Hummingbird won the great race, Buffalo had to stop eating humans and instead humans got to eat buffalo.

These tiny birds are so blazingly fast! They routinely reach speeds of 30 mph while flying. When diving for mating dances they can achieve 50-60 mph speeds! They are actually one of the fastest birds on our planet. A Cherokee legend of this swift, tiny bird also tells how Hummingbird used his speed and courage to help us. Hummingbird grabbed a piece of the very first, sacred, tobacco plant, to help heal Old Woman.

Thank you, Hummingbird – and welcome back!
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<https://www.beautyofbirds.com/attractinghummingbirds.html#down>

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A Way To Make Remote Work, Work!

By Leah Todd

A ‘micro’ economic development program bolsters a community of telecommuters.

This story is part of the State of Change project, produced in partnership with the Solutions Journalism Network.

Dilapidated motels line the entrance to Grants, New Mexico, signs of the boom that came and went in this town of 9,000 people. Reclamation work continues at the mines that once earned Grants the nickname “uranium capital of the world,” but federal figures show the mining industry employs a fraction of what it once did in the historic U.S. Route 66 town. “The uranium mines were good to us,” said Sarah Pena, 71, a lifelong Grants resident. “They brought the economy up, and there are a lot of people who are still here, who stayed.”

Today, finding consistent work is a challenge for Pena and scores of others in Cibola County, where the unemployment rate is higher than the state average and precious little besides a few private prisons powers the

local economy. To Pena, an 80-mile drive to an office job in Albuquerque started to sound like the best option.

It’s a predicament many rural workers face. Far from urban economic engines, rural communities don’t offer enough career advancement locally, forcing young people who might otherwise want to stay in their home community to seek jobs elsewhere. In New Mexico, traditional economic development efforts often lure big industries, favoring urban centers with high concentrations of workers, but leaving rural communities without a share of the benefits.

A fledgling state program is trying to change that, starting with Grants. Pena is one of about two dozen workers participating in **SoloWorks**, a kind of “micro” economic development program that trains and connects New Mexico workers via the internet to remote out-of-state jobs, one person at a time. The vision is to create a new economic base for rural communities, using an internet connection to bring new money into towns thirsty for a broader tax base. In its first year, the program showed mixed results: a pilot program in Grants trained about 25 workers and placed ten of them into online jobs. Of those, two are still working. The program is faring better so far in 2018, after tweaking the program to focus more on retention: Of 21 people trained, 12 found remote jobs so far. Two have started work, and the rest are awaiting more on-the-job training.

SoloWorks faces major hurdles amid its planned expansion to several other New Mexico communities. Chief among them are internet connectivity and a battle for funding that could threaten the program’s future. Many workers don’t have the broadband connection their employers require. And while the program’s champions hope this can create a new generation of remote entrepreneurs and knowledge-based workers, until now, the jobs created have been mostly low-wage customer service and transcription roles. That has made it a hard sell to the New Mexico legislature, which funded the program at a fraction of what the group asked for earlier this year.

Though advocates’ promises come with caveats, a program like **SoloWorks** could be another route to reversing population declines in rural communities across the West, where once-lucrative work in mines and other natural resource industries is harder to come by than a generation ago.

“If it works, it’d be one of the few programs that actually work in rural places, or places where there are people but not jobs,” said Mark Lautman, the **SoloWorks** program creator and founder of the non-profit Community Economics Lab in Albuquerque. “If this works, it’s going to stabilize a lot of rural communities that would otherwise

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disappear.”

Pena, for one, is optimistic about her prospects. “I like to work,” Pena said. “But I also want to stay here. Because my family’s here.”

Why Grants? The uranium boom hit the town fast. Population in Grants quadrupled between 1950 and 1960, and peaked around 1980 at 11,500 people. “It was all family and friends here,” Pena said. “The mines opened up, and all these new people came in.”

In the 1980s, the uranium market busted. By 1990, one in four people had left Grants. The town’s population has crept upward since then, but not to its boom-time size. The economic need, plus an enthusiastic local economic development director, made Grants a logical first stop for **SoloWorks** to test its ideas. “We wanted to choose a place where no one would accuse us of cherry picking,” Lautman said. “If we test this, let’s go to a place where no one would think we could do it. So, we went to Grants.”

On a recent Tuesday morning in March, Pena and a fellow **SoloWorks** participant, a former restaurant worker named Samuel Jack, finished job applications at desktop computers in the **SoloWorks** center, tucked in a former exercise studio at New Mexico State University. Motivational signs lined the walls around them. “I am self-driven and ambitious,” the signs said. “Not everyone is cut out to work remotely.”

SoloWorks is billed as a job creation program. It targets several kinds of workers: entrepreneurs with no central workplace, individuals who could work for remote employers and the chronically hard-to-employ. The program recruits local residents, trains them in online skills like how to tailor a resume to an online job, and helps them

apply for jobs with one of about seventy employers affiliated with **SoloWorks**. The program offers a co-working space and internet connection at a fraction of what it would cost workers on their own.


The Holy Grail is what Lautman calls economic base jobs — jobs that are paid for by someone out of state. “It’s really hard to recruit companies to small towns, especially if they’re shrinking,” Lautman said. It’s also tough to find work nearby in a shrinking rural economy. “If you think of everyone who walks into a local business development office, the local office has to find them something within about twenty minutes of where they live.”

Not so with remote work, which research suggests is a growing sector of the U.S. economy. In 2016, 43 percent of employed Americans spent at least some time working remotely, up from 39 percent in 2012, according to Gallup polling data. A 2017 survey of independent workers found that a third of the U.S. workforce spent at least some portion of last year freelancing. If a program like **SoloWorks** can create fifty jobs in a rural community, that’s like recruiting a medium-sized company.

“How do you make yourself attractive to people who work alone?” Lautman said. And, how to do it at a scale that actually makes a difference?

Rich Pearson, a senior vice president of marketing for a freelancing website called **Upwork**, said while there’s increasing demand for remote workers, there are also barriers to being an independent worker. “It can be relatively lonely work,” Pearson said. “The confidence needed to succeed requires a community, requires specific skills for marketing yourself.”

Indeed, most of the workers *(Continued next page.)*



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Highlander Issues

who dropped out of jobs they found through **SoloWorks** did so either because of a wage cliff, as they started earning too much and lost state or federal assistance, Lautman said, or because they realized they didn't want to do customer service work. In the past, **SoloWorks** had no other line of work to offer.

Pearson also said aggregating freelancers for call center jobs is not a new idea. But that's only part of **SoloWorks'** model. Where **SoloWorks** breaks the economic development mold is in how it's funded: The program only gets state money if it creates jobs.

How does it work? Too often, Lautman said, well-intentioned government programs become compliance-driven, more interested in following rules than lifting people and communities out of poverty.

"Unless you make the funding of the operation based on post-performance placements, it's too hard to keep staff motivated," Lautman said. "You need to go the extra mile to get each one of these candidates to the goal line, because that's the only way you get paid."

So far, the **SoloWorks** program has been funded by a mix of local, state and federal funding, about \$600,000 in all. The **SoloWorks** center in Grants receives \$3,500 per job after the worker receives their first paycheck. If the program doesn't hit thirty new jobs by the end of June, the

rest of the available funding reverts back to the state.

Over the next few years, other communities hope to adopt the model. Las Vegas launched a similar **SoloWorks** program in fall 2017, and the New Mexico state Legislature approved funding for programs in Raton and Mesilla in early 2018. Lautman's hope is that employers would one day pay for such a service.

But the same internet access that makes remote working possible also presents one of the program's biggest hurdles, said Eileen Chavez Yarborough, director of the Grants economic development foundation. Without the connection at the **SoloWorks** center, these jobs wouldn't be viable, as many participants lack access to reliable internet.

And even the program's advocates acknowledge **SoloWorks** won't be sustainable until they prove they can retain these new jobs over time, fixing the program's low retention rate – an issue raised in a critical report to the state legislature early this year.

Will Yarborough, 23, is one of the handful of **SoloWorks** graduates from 2017 still working. He's the son of Eileen Chavez Yarborough, the local economic development director, and works in medical equipment customer support and sales for a California-based call center from inside a large storage closet at the **SoloWorks** center. It's quiet, he said, and he has the internet connection his home office does not. He's working on a computer science associates degree at New Mexico State University and hopes to one day work in remote IT support.

By the end of the day on a recent Tuesday, Pena had finished her resume and practiced starting and stopping audio recordings while transcribing using a new foot pedal, under the eye of the program manager.

Meanwhile Pena's colleague, Samuel Jack, was ecstatic. Just hours after submitting his application, so carefully vetted by both him and the site manager, he received an email back from the company.

He had landed an interview.

Leah Todd is a freelance reporter living in Taos, New Mexico, and the Mountain States coordinator for the Solutions Journalism Network. She has covered education for The Seattle Times and Casper Star-Tribune.

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BoCo Asks Feds To Deny Gross Dam Expansion

With the deadline for comment looming, Boulder County weighed in with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on the merits of a significant expansion proposed for Gross Reservoir, and in doing so has challenged whether the project is even necessary.

Citing the success of Denver Water’s conservation efforts since it first issued its “purpose and need” statement for the project, and the fact that no service shortfall has yet materialized for its 1.4 million customers in the metro area, Boulder County Attorney Ben Pearlman said that based on prior environmental reviews, “Boulder County does not believe Denver Water has shown that the project’s purpose and need have been met and the FERC must deny Denver Water’s application to amend its permit.”

Denver Water sent out the usual “broken record” emails consisting of plans to mitigate the catastrophic detrimental effects their proposed project will have on the State of Colorado, the Colorado River, Coal Creek Canyon community and Boulder County at large. Referring to the project as a done deal along with the plans to make stakeholders happy by taking into consideration all of our comments but without disclosing the monetary payments planned for the most affected by the project as the rest of us suffer daily health, noise, traffic, etc. monumental consequence’s from their unneeded actions for more water storage.

A proposal to raise Gross Reservoir’s dam by 131 feet and add to the reservoir’s capacity by 77,000 acre feet was approved by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers last July. The next significant benchmark needed for Denver Water to go forward in a 2019-to-2025 timeline for design to completed construction is an amendment to its hydroelectric permit that is pending a ruling by FERC.

Referring to Pearlman’s letter, Assistant County Attorney Conrad Lattes said, “It’s a lot of the same concerns that we’ve had all along. We don’t think they have been addressed by the Army Corps of Engineers. “We don’t think they have undertaken the duty they have (under federal environmental law) to analyze this problem thoroughly,” Lattes said.

Push for ‘nonstructural strategies’ - After federal regulators issued a supplemental assessment of the Gross Reservoir project on Feb. 6, deadline for comments to FERC were extended to April 9. Pearlman’s five-page letter on behalf of the county devotes some detail to challenging the need for greater capacity in the reservoir. While a Denver Water analysis in 2004, based on 2002 data, projected that it would be facing a 34,000-acre-foot shortfall in water supply in the “near-term time frame,” the agency has actually - according to a 2015 project fact sheet

- reduced overall water use from pre-2002 by 22 percent. “Twenty-two percent of Denver Water’s water supply portfolio of approximately 345,000 acre feet is 75,900 acre feet - more than twice as much as Denver Water expected its shortfall to be in 2035 and more than four times as much as Denver Water set out to save through conservation,” Pearlman wrote.

“Before the largest construction project in the history of Boulder County is imposed upon us, the FERC should require Denver Water to provide more detailed data regarding its water savings over this period of time and how that compares to what it predicted.” “The Gross Reservoir Expansion project represents an enormous amount of work, input and collaboration to ensure it is done in the most responsible way possible,” Jim Lochhead, Denver Water CEO/manager said in a statement.

“Nonstructural strategies” for proving water security should be examined, Pearlman wrote, “so that FERC can make a more informed decision about whether Denver Water actually needs new storage space in Gross Reservoir.” Denver Water takes issue with Boulder County’s assertion that there is no proven need for the expansion, which could require *(Continued next page.)*

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the removal of somewhere between 200,000 and 650,000 trees along 12.5 miles of shoreline. According to Denver Water spokesman Travis Thompson, “The purpose and need statement addresses both a shortfall in Denver Water’s supply as well as the imbalance in our water collection system. Which are both inaccurate statements verified by Denver Water’s own statistics stated in both DEIS and the FEIS.

Thompson said that the Army Corps of Engineers re-evaluated the 2002 projections in its Final Environmental Impact Statement based on more recent population and demographic projections from the Denver Regional Council of Governments and the Colorado State Demographer’s Office, and stated in its July 2017 Record of Decision that it independently verified the purpose and

need and found the updated projections to be reasonable. But without any scientific basis including actual urban water conservation or recent climate change science.

Environmental activists have vowed to file a federal lawsuit to block Gross Reservoir’s expansion, and Save the Colorado Director Gary Wockner did not back off that threat. “The FERC permit process is ongoing right now, and we expect that to end probably by the beginning of June,” Wockner said. “So when the FERC decision comes out, we are going to take a good hard look at it and make our final decision at that point. We don’t expect anything to change. We are still adamantly opposed to the project and we are actively planning to challenge this decision.”

References: Charlie Brennan Daily Camera, TEG, Gary Wockner. Photo by Michael Bandow. By A.M. Wilks

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*Above: Heather on Kirby.
Top right: Mooch guards his yard.
Bottom right: Amos.*

*Next page: Doe nose to nose with cat.
Greyhound comfortable contortions
and cat - all photos from Diane.*

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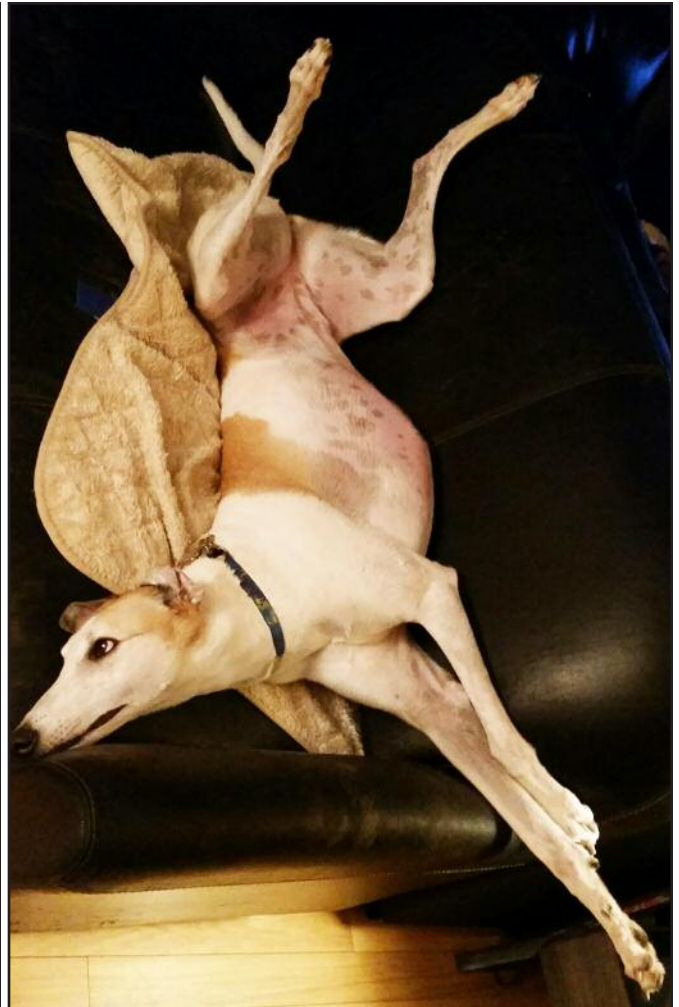


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How To Prevent Heat Related Issues

From Jim Plane - State Farm Insurance

Spending time outside is nice, but too much sun can put you at risk for developing a heat related illness. Learn how to help prevent heat cramps, rashes and more and how to treat them.

Help Stop Heat Related Illness Before It Starts

If the forecast points to excessive temperatures and sunshine:

Stay hydrated. Drink water even if you don't feel thirsty to help your body keep up with increased sweating.

Avoid sugary, caffeinated or alcoholic drinks. They can cause your body to lose more fluid than normal.

Stick close to air-conditioned areas, especially during the warmest part of the day. No AC at home? Head to the library, movie theater or mall to stay cool.

Dress for the weather. Loose-fitting and lightweight clothes are best. Stick to light colors. Darker colors trap heat.

Heat Illness Symptoms and Treatments

Learn what to look for if you or someone else might be at risk.

Heat Cramps

Recognize it: Muscle cramps in the abdomen, arms or legs during heavy exercise or strenuous activity.

Treat it: Stop exercising immediately. Rehydrate with water.

Heat Rash

Recognize it: An area of red pimples or small blisters caused by sweat ducts becoming blocked and swelling.

Treat it: Keep the area dry and head inside where it's cooler and less humid.

Heat Exhaustion

Recognize it: Heavy sweating, pale skin, muscle cramps, dizziness, nausea and more.

Treat it: Rehydrate with cool beverages and head inside. If symptoms get worse or last longer than an hour, call 911.

Heat Stroke

Recognize it: Hot, dry skin or heavy sweating, flushed skin, high body temperature, rapid pulse, confusion and more.

Treat it: Call 911, and try to lower the person's body temperature by getting them to a shady area and placing ice packs or cool wet towels on their neck, armpits and groin or immersing them in cool water.

Children are especially vulnerable in the warm summer months because their body temperatures increase three to five times faster than adults. In fact, KidsAndCars.org

found that an average of 38 kids die each year from heatstroke after being left in a vehicle. Help keep your kids safe in and around hot cars with these tips.

Never leave a child unattended in a car,

no matter how briefly. The interior temperature can rise almost 20 degrees within the first 10 minutes of shutting the vehicle off.

Don't be fooled by mild temperatures. Even when it's 60 degrees Fahrenheit outside, a car's interior can reach 110 degrees.

Always check your back seats before locking your car. Put your cell phone or wallet in the back seat to help you remember to check.

Keep vehicles locked so children can't accidentally crawl in. Keyless entry and ignition systems make this a greater risk, so it's important to keep key fobs in a safe place.

If carrying child passengers, use drive-through services when available, such as at the bank, fast-food restaurants or the dry cleaner.

Call 911 if you see a child alone in an unattended vehicle.

In hot weather, it may be legal in your state to break the glass to rescue a child. And don't forget pets can be just as vulnerable to the heat. Be sure to take similar precautions when traveling with pets.



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Wildfire - Sort Yards Open - Gardening Choices

With wildfires burning homes and causing evacuations throughout Colorado recently the Colorado State Forest Service wants to remind homeowners living in the wildland-urban interface to prepare for wildfires before they arrive. While there is no guarantee firefighters will be able to save a home from a wildfire, the odds increase if homeowners and communities take proactive steps to reduce their fire risk, says Lisa Mason, CSFS forestry education specialist.

“Fire risk reduction efforts are much more effective when neighbors work together to reduce hazardous fuels around their homes and throughout the community,” Mason said.

Remove all flammable vegetation within at least 15 feet of any part of a home or other structure, including decks.

Reduce the density of standing trees within 100-200 feet of all structures. Ensure adequate access for fire and emergency equipment and be sure that the house number is posted and easily visible to emergency responders. Keep grasses and weeds surrounding the home mowed to a height of less than six inches, through regular and ongoing maintenance. Regularly clear pine needles and leaves from gutters and decks, and trim overhanging branches. Stack firewood and locate propane tanks at least 30 feet from and uphill of structures.

Have an evacuation plan and a designated meeting place that all family members are familiar with. Prepare a “grab and go” disaster kit with necessary family/pet items including important documents/photos, clothing, medications, food/water, phone charger, etc. so you are ready for immediate departure. Contact your county sheriff’s office and ensure that your telephone number appears in the Reverse 911 or other emergency notification database. “Remember that addressing wildfire risk is not a one-time effort, and that flammable vegetation grows back over time,” Mason said. CO State Forestry Service

Boulder County Community Forestry Sort Yards to open for the 2018 season in May

County residents can drop off tree branches, logs, and yard waste free of charge in Nederland and Allenspark Boulder County, Colo. - The Boulder County Community Forestry Sort Yard program, a free log and slash disposal service for Boulder County residents. Nederland Area Sort Yard - 291 Ridge Road, Nederland -Open Wednesday, May 2, through Saturday, Oct. 13 -Hours of Operation: Wednesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Allenspark/Meeker Park Area Sort Yard - 8200 Hwy 7, Allenspark - Open Wednesday, May 23, through Saturday, Oct. 6 - Hours of Operation: Wednesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information about the sort yard program please visit the Community Forestry Sort Yards webpage or contact Wayne Harrington at

wharrington@bouldercounty.org or 303-678-6368.

Slash Days Coal Creek Canyon June 2, 3 Fire Station 2

Dear Readers,

As the weather and soil warm, our thoughts turn toward gardening, planting and purchasing, and I’d like to encourage readers to choose plants and seeds that are not genetically modified and are free of neonicotinoids, the pesticides whose name literally means new, nicotine-like insecticides. The same ones killing bees, which pollinate one third of our food supply. They are in a class of nerve-disabling insecticides that attack the nervous and immune systems, disrupting the neural circuitry. What’s bad for the bees is bad for us, in addition to 1,700 other plants and animals.

Seeds are being coated with neonics and therefore contaminating every part of the plant including the flower, nectar and pollen, and anything coming in contact with the plant. Pollinators landing on your beautiful flowers to consume nectar and your family eating your home-grown produce are also consuming dangerous toxins.

Consult www.beeaction.org, www.beyondpesticides.org, and www.beesafeboulder.org for more information.

Question your local suppliers to confirm your purchases are strictly neonicotinoid-free seeds and plants.

Happy growing! Diane Bergstrom



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Safeguarding Friends

By Frosty Wooldridge

It's been said that a "best friend" constitutes a miracle of the universe. During your lifetime, you attach to certain individuals who "mesh" with you mentally, spiritually and physically. At first, you share the weather, sports, latest boyfriend or girlfriend and the latest event on the local or national scene. As time passes, you become attached because you share deeper feelings, concerns, triumphs and fellowship. Your friendships may revolve around a beer, wine or dancing. You might go for a walk, a bicycle ride or the movies. You might backpack, ski or raft a river. You share moments of danger, serenity or wonder at a sunset. During those times, you develop feelings through laughter, stories and shared opinions on an array of topics. Friendships develop for a short time, a long time or a lifetime. Each friendship provides you with life energy, inspiration, fellowship or companionship. You might enjoy wise advice. You may enjoy laughter.

Your friends pull you through good times, bad times, heartache and heartbreak. Most individuals don't think about their friendship—until they face loss of one. At some point, you may lose a short term friendship because you didn't nourish it. Friendships need watering or emotional deposits into the "heart bank." This inquiry revolves around examining the character of your various connections. You may value solid relationships so you periodically watch the dance within your relationships to make sure you maintain your part of creating a solid, equitable bond. Obviously this requires being able to step back to witness your behavior within that friendship. For example, you might ask: Are you monopolizing the dialogue and thus not aware of the tone of the energy field between you and your friend, thus not actually present to the message of your friend? You may have done this with the result of a drain in the sweet energy and feeling between your friend and you, yielding disconnection.

Are you not speaking your opinion or feelings in order to keep the peace and avoid their anger or sadness? Are you gauging your sharing and truth-telling only on what you think safest to share? Do your actions exhibit your authentically showing up in the friendship? At times we choose the 'low road' simply due to lacking skill-sets for how to negotiate conversations that will ruffle another. Anyone who does not 'stand in our own moccasins' will certainly bring opinions and feelings that clash with ours at some point. When we do not understand another's position, the more authentic and honorable offering may be to just say we do not know how to handle the disparity but are committed to exploring so we can understand.

In this time of cell phones, emails and other electronic "coldness," you must decide on face-to-face time in order to fulfill a deep friendship that lasts longer than a "tweet" or "stumble." Direct communication creates wholesome connection. Who of us does not know that connections lose playful energy when issues are swept under the rug and the other person not well listened to? The emotional account becomes strained. Do you want real connection? If so, are you willing to become more aware? The result will be the safeguarding of precious created friendships.

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Fish & Wildlife Reconsiders Protections

By Maya L. Kapoor - High Country News

Fish and Wildlife reconsiders protections for rare species- Susan Combs, who will oversee the service, has likened endangered species to incoming missiles.

In March, Susan Combs became temporary assistant secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, in charge of overseeing both the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Parks Service. Combs, a Texas rancher and politician with a history of hostility toward protected species, fought to avoid protecting dwindling Texas species when she served as comptroller. Her appointment happened quietly on a Saturday and had been not announced on the department's website as of this writing. Environmental advocacy groups believe her appointment invalid, because Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, not President Donald Trump, appointed her. The nonprofit Natural Resources Defense Council commented, "In typical Trump administration fashion, (Combs) now oversees what she hopes to dismantle."

Combs' controversial appointment comes as the Fish and Wildlife Service is quietly but radically altering its approach to the Endangered Species Act, from species protection to habitat management.

According to a draft document obtained by *E & E News*, the agency is considering tossing blanket protections for threatened species. Currently, almost 1,300 federally protected species are considered "endangered," or at imminent risk of extinction, while almost 400 are

"threatened," or almost endangered. In 1978, Fish and Wildlife began giving threatened species the same protections as endangered ones, although people affected by this could apply for exemptions.

In April, the Louisiana pinesnake, one of North America's rarest snakes, received threatened status. But landowners and timber producers may still conduct activities – including forest management and herbicide applications – that could harm the dark-patterned reptiles, which are imperiled by habitat loss.

The changes worry Brett Hartl, government affairs director with the nonprofit Center for Biological Diversity. The original policy was intended to prevent threatened species from becoming endangered. "Effectively, what the Trump administration is doing, for all threatened species moving forward, is making it harder to recover them," he said. But Timothy Male, executive director of the nonprofit Environmental Policy Innovation Center, says that because the changes would mean less uncertainty for private landowners, they might become less antagonistic to threatened species on their property.

"Especially in the West, it's often federal action that's really the threat, and ranchers or other private landowners or land interests get caught up in the middle," Male said. Long-term, the changes could even encourage conservation: "If you know that, once an endangered species reaches threatened status, it's going to be managed or regulated differently, that can be a really powerful incentive," he said.

The agency — which declined to comment — is also

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reconsidering critical habitat, another core part of the Endangered Species Act. Whenever a species is federally protected, the landscape it needs to survive is supposed to become “critical habitat.” Federal agencies must go through permitting for projects that might harm critical habitat, while private landowners need permission for projects that receive federal funds.

In 2016, the Obama administration clarified how critical habitat worked, partly in response to lawsuits from conservation organizations. Previously, land use could occur as long as it didn’t nudge species toward extinction. Under the 2016 policy, actions that could stop a species from recovering enough to be delisted could be regulated, too. “If environmentalists can go to court and challenge federal actions – things like timber harvests, mining, grazing, all the things the feds can be involved in permitting – and just show that it’s going to adversely modify habitat, not jeopardize the species, that’s a big stick,” University of Vermont Law professor Patrick Parenteau said. The 2016 policy also loosened requirements for designating critical habitat where a species does not currently live, if that unoccupied habitat is essential to its survival. Future habitat matters, said Parenteau. “Climate change is moving species poleward and upward. The idea of unoccupied habitat for climate change is migration corridors, adaptation and relocation.” But soon after Trump’s inauguration, 20 states joined a lawsuit challenging these changes, dropping it only in March, when the administration agreed to reconsider them.

The lawsuit called the Endangered Species Act “present-focused,” applying only to places where protected species could currently live, not possible future habitat. For that to be designated, the plaintiffs said, all available occupied habitat had to first be designated and found inadequate. Only then could unoccupied habitat be designated. Otherwise, they warned, entire states could become critical habitat. “The states made wild, outlandish claims you could designate anywhere in the U.S. That’s foolish nonsense,” Parenteau said. “(The agency) would be sued for sure if they did.” In reality, Parenteau said, critical habitat’s main harm may be lowering property values because of stigma.

Some question critical habitat’s effectiveness. A 2015 study found that, for seven years, more than 88,000 projects affecting such habitat went ahead largely unaltered, even when they threatened endangered species’ survival. And according to the Center for Biological Diversity, the agency has yet to designate critical habitat for more than 600 species. That task now will be overseen by Combs, who, according to the Austin American-Statesman, once referred to proposed endangered species as “incoming Scud missiles.”

Maya L. Kapoor is an associate editor for HC News.



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Spring Brings Buffalo, Birds, and Bears to the Hebgen Basin

The snow is rapidly melting, exposing south-facing slopes, and the re-greening of the earth will soon commence. More buffalo have arrived from Yellowstone's interior to their calving grounds on and around Horse Butte. So far, patrols estimate that there are upwards of about 150 buffalo who have made this spring migration, which is a fraction of the number we typically see here this time of year. Up until about three years ago, the Hebgen Basin would be teeming with 400-600 buffalo, all of who are from the imperiled Central herd. Over the past few springs, this number has significantly declined, and with the massive slaughter conducted by Yellowstone this winter, we don't expect that we'll see more than 200-300, and that's being generous. Nevertheless, groups of buffalo continue to arrive nearly every day. This is keeping our rove patrols — especially night roves — very busy along the highways, helping to warn motorists and attempting to keep buffalo safe as they make this important journey.

Migratory birds have been making their return journey to the Hebgen Basin as well. Bluebirds, Sandhill cranes, osprey, and others have already started to arrive, and more will come soon. Once the ice melts from Hebgen Lake, we will see the return of white pelicans, loons, coots, and others. It is a joyful time of year, witnessing the return of all of these relatives after a long winter absence. Grizzly bears are also emerging from their long winter naps. Patrols found fresh tracks just a couple of weeks ago, but no other sightings as of yet, but if you pay attention, you can feel them there. Just as when the buffalo arrive, after everything they must endure in this industrialized culture, it always



feels miraculous that they continue to come. In our hearts we sing them all welcoming songs and give thanks that they are still here.

There is one special friend who we still have not yet seen: the first buffalo calves. We anticipate the beginning of their arrival any day now. So many of the buffalo who are now in the Basin are huge with calf and look like they are quite ready to give birth. It's also interesting the way buffalo families assist pregnant mothers: Often times, we will see small groups of pregnant adult females, no youngsters or other buffalo with them. This is because they will ask adult

females — who are not pregnant — to babysit, so that they may give birth without having to worry too much about other family members. As we see the pregnant groups, we also see groups that have a few adult females with lots of little ones in their care, nursery groups might be an appropriate term. Buffalo never cease to teach us about themselves and everything we learn is always fascinating, and as we say, every time we think we know all there is to know about buffalo, they teach us something new.

What we learn from the buffalo, we try to apply to our own lives, trying to become better human beings. We also apply what they teach us in our advocacy for them, sharing their stories with the decision-makers who currently control their lives, and usually make bad decisions. Roam Free!

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Squirrels

By Ingrid Winter

*I know
many people who
regard them
as a nuisance
and spend a lot of money
to keep them away
from their bird feeders*

*As if
helping birds survive
the cold winter months
were somehow nobler
than feeding squirrels*

*I know
people who
refer to them
as rats with bushy tails
and transfer
their feelings of
repulsion
and disgust
about rats
to squirrels*

*I know
people who
never give them a thought
having more important
things
to think about*

*But I also know
people whose only joy in life
is to feed squirrels
to watch them
and to love them*

*These are people
(I could name them)
who live
in institutions
nursing homes to be exact
and who have lost
almost everything
their homes
their pets*

*sometimes
even their families*

*and the only thing
that keeps them alive
even happy
is feeding and
watching squirrels*

*So you see
for them
squirrels are not
a nuisance at all
but
patron saints
of life
ambassadors
of love
and
messengers of God!*



Photo Courtesy Alexa Boyes.

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Make Everyday An Earth Day

By Tim Lydon

In 1970, the first Earth Day began as a call for change. The nationwide day of protest erupted with all the verve and passion of the recent March for Our Lives demonstrations. But instead of asking for protection from guns, citizens were seeking to halt environmental degradation — especially air pollution. The day’s remarkable turnout helped inspire the Clean Air Act, which still saves lives and reduces health care costs today.

Just as in 1970, there’s plenty to howl about this Earth Day, so here are a few ideas for some West-specific resolutions that I hope are drenched in the activist spirit of the original event.

Stand Up for Public Lands.

America’s public lands are the soul of the West. They are what lured so many of us to this wild and vibrant landscape, and they enrich our lives daily. But today the land needs us. While Congress tries to subject land-management agencies to starvation budgets, the Trump administration trades monuments for drill rigs and pushes to sell off the land. We can recommit to the land by lending support to one of the many local public-lands advocacy groups. Their work helps us raise our voices for the places we love.

Fight Climate Change Every Day.

Above all, climate change is an air-quality issue, so it’s especially fitting fodder for everyday. In the West, warming steals our snow, stresses our forests, and intensifies droughts and wildfires. In Alaska, we are losing the cold that defines our landscapes and cultures. Meanwhile, our leaders push for aggressive drilling and undermine public access to clean energy. But every day, we can do our part to fight for a stable climate, by reducing emissions at home, divesting from fossil fuels, and resisting local fossil fuel development. We can also support successful groups like Colorado-based **Protect Our Winters (POW)** or 350.org, dedicated to a clean energy future.

Kill Plastic

Plastic waste clogs municipal waste streams, kills marine mammals, poisons the fish we eat, and leaves our children with a toxic legacy. Research shows that by 2050, more plastic will fill our oceans than fish. But we can break our addiction to plastics. Everyday is a good time to stock your backpack or car with canvas shopping bags. We can also join the growing efforts in Alaska, Oregon, Colorado and elsewhere to ban single-use bags. Or join broader campaigns, such as Earth Day Network’s “End Plastics Pollution” drive.

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Reduce Food Waste

As a nation, we throw away up to 40 percent of our food. Let this be the year you start composting. It makes us happier people, and the dirt and worm tea provide steroids for your plants and trees. We can also get involved in local food-rescue programs and community gardens or composts. Or support municipal programs like the ones in Washington that offer curbside compost pick-up or waste-to-energy facilities.

Get Fire Wise

Everyday is also a good time to bust out the saws and loppers to reduce fire danger around the home. This protects property and reduces the fire-fighting costs depleting public lands funding. Across the West, state and federal programs provide guidance, funding, and may even send foresters to assess fire danger on private properties. But we can also take being fire-wise to the next level. To protect communities and public lands, local governments need to hear from the public about mapping and zoning needs to inform fire-wise development. Too often, developers more concerned with profit than safety dominate local discussions.

Promote Media Literacy

It is not normal that millions of Americans still reject basic climate change science! Research and investigative journalism show how fossil fuel interests and their surrogates actively spread disinformation. Media Literacy Now promotes laws that guarantee students access to media literacy curricula that can help them discern legitimate from bogus news. Legislation has recently been enacted in California, New Mexico, Utah and Washington and is

Highlander Conservation

under consideration elsewhere. These laws also often address other issues, such as online bullying.

Vote

Get informed and get involved. In November, Westerners will have the opportunity to support candidates who fight climate change and protect our lands and oceans.

Get Out

Love yourself and the Earth by committing to more time outside. Unplug for even an hour to walk or run down your favorite trail. Play hooky with your kids at the local park. Teach them how to properly hug a tree, with arms stretched out as wide as they can go, young cheeks pressed against scaly bark, and a deep inward breath that fills lungs and hearts with the thrilling vibrancy of our world. Adults can — and should — do this, too.

Tim Lydon is a contributor to Writers on the Range, the opinion service of High Country News (hcn.org).

He writes in Alaska.



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Frackin' On Heaven's Door

By David Gilbert

How many people over the centuries have loved the Pawnee Buttes, only to see them ravaged?

On a blustery day last winter, I dodged a parade of semi trucks to pay my final respects to the Pawnee Buttes. The Buttes are a pair of sandstone-and-clay ramparts that rise out of the vast, choppy sea of shortgrass prairie in northeastern Colorado's Pawnee National Grassland. I fell in love with them back in the early 2000s, when the most recent Front Range housing boom was still in its early stages. I had a brand-new driver's license, and heading out to explore the still-wild landscape of the Buttes felt like entering Outer Mongolia.

Spring days were the best: Bumblebees wrestled lazily with wildflower blossoms, and lark buntings floated on a light breeze. Summer brought the great thunderheads, explosive with fury, ripped open by the stratosphere. Lizards entwined themselves in the sagebrush, and smug prairie rattlers lay on the soft white sand. The Buttes

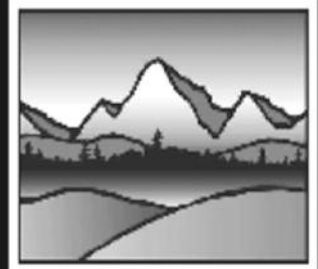
loomed over the plains, immense as a double Uluru, the great red rock of the Australian outback.

I can't count how many times I pitched my tent along a nearby escarpment, or woke to a Pawnee sunrise, an arpeggio of blue to pink to orange. I can't count how many miles I hiked, beers I drank, cans I shot at. I remember lying on my back, watching sparks flit skyward to join the constellations, a friend's gentle guitar chords fading away with them. Tracking a racing cumulonimbus as it roiled with lightning. Grinning at nobody as my girlfriend and I snuggled closer under a midnight moonbow.

In the spring of 2015, I made another visit, only to discover that the Buttes had been sacrificed, their eternal grandeur swapped for the oil and gas beneath them. Methane flares burned at their bases. Tank farms and evaporation ponds littered the prairie. The empty roads I once flew along had become muddy ruts clogged with oilfield traffic.

The Buttes were no longer secret gems adored by a handful of birdwatchers and me; they had become an industrial worksite. That year, the Bureau of Land Management, which has the final say over oil and gas

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bar now. Coffee has doubled in price, from a quarter a cup to 50 cents. The cash register didn't stop ringing.

Over my table was a picture of the Buttes in springtime, the prairie green with life. You couldn't take that picture today — the background would be full of derricks, tanks and trucks.

Someday, the wells will run dry. Depending on what remains of our government by that time, the pump jacks and tank farms may be removed, or left to rust in place. If they remain, they will join the arrowheads and homesteads in the immense reliquary of the Great Plains.

David Gilbert is a freelance journalist, forklift operator and occasional hitchhiker. He reports on growth and development for Colorado Community Media and writes from Englewood, Colorado.

An oil well pad, storage tanks, and the lights of distant wind turbines glowing at night near the Pawnee Buttes in the Pawnee National Grassland in Colorado.

MileHighTraveler/Getty

activity on Forest Service lands, including Pawnee National Grassland, held a few more rounds of leasing auctions. The lease sales were met by citizen protests, which were swiftly brushed aside, and an additional hundred thousand acres were leased for drilling.

How many people over the centuries have loved the Pawnee Buttes, only to see them ravaged? I wonder. After all, the landscape is named for its former inhabitants, Indigenous people decimated by genocide only a few generations ago. Their sorrow must have been incalculable. The cowboys who followed them surely ached inside as homesteaders unrolled barbed wire. Not long after, God punished the homesteaders' hubris by devouring their topsoil and leaving them adrift in a wasteland of dust.

It was this seeming wasteland I fell in love with, a land that had frustrated so many enterprises that it was left to recover until someone developed another way to extract commodities from it. I was blessed to enjoy the waning years of this interlude — though of course my own access to the Buttes, my roaring old pickup, was only possible thanks to the defilement of someone else's desert.

On my recent visit, I watched the sun set over the grasslands, the evening redness in the west backlighting a bank of pump jacks, bowing to kiss the prairie. I came across a shard of a bottle I shot more than a decade ago. I have left my own filth here.

Down the road, I pulled into the Pawnee Station Café. In the old days, the place was always dead, just me and a bored waitress. This time, oil company drivers shuffled in and out, buying Gatorades and cigarettes. The café has an expanded dining room and



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Never Build A Road Through A Wilderness

By Jamie Williams

You may never have heard of Izembek National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska, but it is a place of global importance. At the very southwestern tip of the mainland, it is vital to the survival of virtually the world's entire population of emperor geese and Pacific black brant, as well as to other bird species from multiple continents. It's also important habitat for caribou, brown bears and marine mammals.

But if the Trump administration gets its way, the roar of diesel engines will soon drift across this landscape as bulldozers scour a new road across the fragile tundra of a wilderness area.

Development here would set a terrible precedent for all the places across America that Congress has designated as wilderness areas — the highest level of protection for public lands. If a road is built through Izembek, what would prevent acts of future destruction in California's Joshua Tree National Park, Minnesota's Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness or Colorado's Rocky Mountain National Park?

In January, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke signed an agreement to transfer about 500 acres of high-value habitat

within Izembek and its designated wilderness to the King Cove Corp., which has long sought to build a road connecting the communities of King Cove and Cold Bay. Zinke's move dovetails with the Trump administration's goal of selling off and giving away federal lands for development.

The for-profit King Cove Corp. was established by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, which allowed such corporations to select lands to be managed for the benefit of shareholders. The corporation has advocated for the road for decades because of its potential to boost commercial fishing and seafood processing. Last year, Independent Alaska Gov. Bill Walker sent a letter to the Trump administration describing a purpose of the road as the "movement of goods and people between King Cove and Cold Bay."

In recent years, however, the purported purpose of the road has changed: Proponents started selling it as a "lifesaving" measure for ambulances to drive the more than 40 miles from King Cove to the jet-capable runway in Cold Bay. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers estimates that, even in good weather, such a trip would take 90 minutes to two hours.

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There are alternatives, but the King Cove Corp. and its supporters have rejected every single one of them. The corporation was given a taxpayer-funded, multimillion-dollar hovercraft that could successfully transport ambulances across the bay — less than 27 miles — in just minutes, but it chose to give it away to the nearby community of Akutan, which used it for a couple of years to transport mail and seafood workers. The corporation also was not interested in a proposal to start a marine ferry, something that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers determined would be more than 99 percent dependable.

King Cove will accept only a road, even though it would destroy wilderness on an isthmus containing a biologically rich lagoon. This was the first area in America to be recognized as a “wetlands of international importance” by the Ramsar Convention, an international treaty for conserving wetlands.

The road would set a precedent that threatens all wilderness areas and undermines bedrock environmental and conservation laws, including the Wilderness Act, National Environmental Policy Act, National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act and Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. Worst of all, the residents of King Cove would not be made any safer; the gravel road would be unreliable, given the fierce storms of winter.

In a 2013 letter to then-Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell, Pete Mjos, a longtime physician with the federal Indian Health Service and medical director for the Eastern Aleutian Tribes, wrote, “With all due respect to my many friends and former patients in King Cove, I submit that the proposed road is the Great Irony — that construction of this road to ostensibly save lives, and for health and safety, in reality poses grave dangers, and is a very real threat to life itself.”

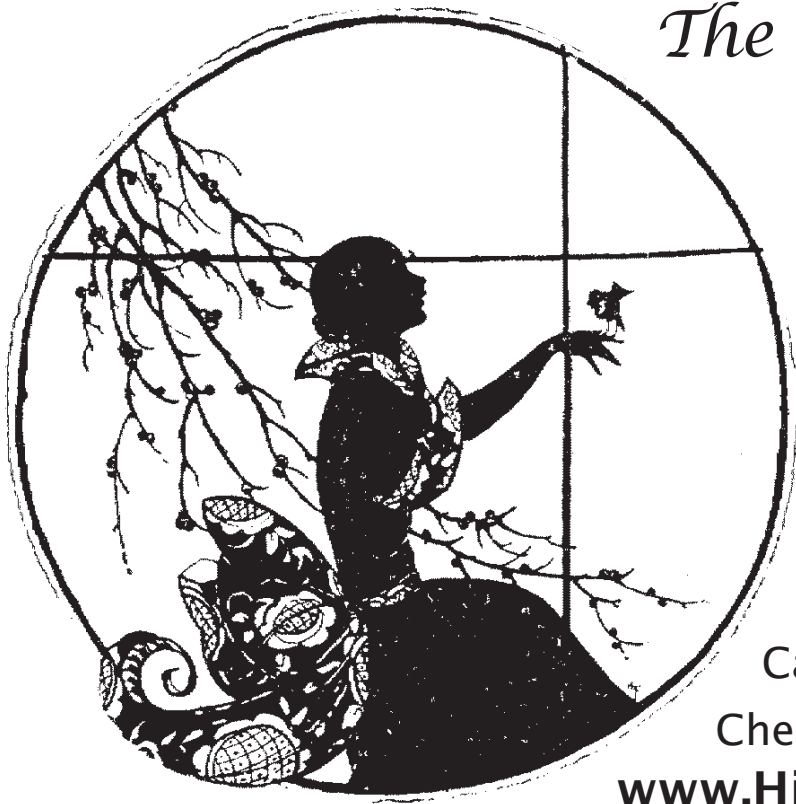
This January, nine environmental and conservation groups, including The Wilderness Society, filed a lawsuit challenging the legality of Zinke’s land exchange with the King Cove Corp., arguing that it violates the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act.

These groups will not be silent as the Trump administration attempts to destroy wilderness and sell off our public lands for development. I hope all Americans support our efforts to preserve places like Izembek National Wildlife Refuge for future generations, and for all those species whose survival depends on wild places remaining wild.

Jamie Williams is a contributor to Writers on the Range, the opinion service of High Country News (hcn.org). He is president of The Wilderness Society, which works to permanently protect 109 million acres of wilderness.

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 Wondervu Gift Shop pg 17 303.642.1258

GROCERIES

B & F Moutain Market pg 29 303.258.3105
 Golden Chamber Farmer's Market pg 7

HEALTH & FITNESS

Hands, Hoofs & Paws pg 12 303.503.6068
 Nederdance pg 24 303.258.9427

HOME IMPROVEMENT

ACE Indian Peaks Hardware pg 11 303.258.3132
 Caribou Painting pg 9 303.641.7964
 Colorado Water Wizard pg 16 303.447.0789
 Grate Contracting pg 22 303.579.9519
 Meyer Hardware pg 3 303.279.3393
 Red-Tailed Tree Service pg 21 941.879.3942
 Pruins Pruning/Tree Care pg 15 303.653.7967
 Redpoint Construction pg 26 303.642.3691

HORSE BOARDING

Rudolph Ranch, Inc. pg 10 303.582.5230

INSURANCE

Jim Plane-State Farm- pg 20 720.890.5916

LIQUOR

Mid-County Liquors pg 16 3093.642.7686
 Underground Liquor pg 13 303.582.6034

MUSIC LESSONS

Piano Lessons in CCC pg 24 303.642.8423

PLUMBING

Keating Pipeworks, Inc. pg 11 720.974.0023

PROPANE

Carl's Corner pg 18 303.642.7144

REAL ESTATE

Byers-Sellers Mtn Properties pg 28 303.642.7951
 Mock Realty-Kathy Keating -Back cov 303.642.1133
 Summit Up Property Mgt. pg 26 303.618.8266

RESTAURANTS

Last Stand Tavern pg 14 303.642.3180
 Wondervu Cafe pg 17 303.642.7197

RETAIL

ACE Indian Peaks Hardware pg 11 303.258.3132
 B & F Moutain Market pg 29 303.258.3105
 Meyer Hardware pg 3 303.279.3393
 Mountain Man Store pg 15 303.258.3295
 The Silver Horse - pg 32 303.279.6313
 The Rustic Moose - pg 32 303.258.3225

REVERSE MORTGAGES

Universal Lending Corp. pg 5 303.791.4786

ROOFING

Independence Roofing pg 3 720.399.0355

SNOW PLOWING

Bill Hutchison pg 3 720.352.9310

STEEL STRUCTURES

Steel Structures America ins cov 970.420.7100

TAXES

Karen Schwimmer, CPA pg 5 303.642.0628

WATER & WELL

Arrow Drilling pg 23 303.421.8766
 Colorado Water Wizard pg 16 303.447.0789
 Doctor Water Well pg 7 303.438.6669

Power Update

May
2018

2018 Annual Meeting Recap, Director Election Results

United Power has spent the past year engaging in innovative solutions to bring members more reliable and efficient energy to *Power the Future*. On Wednesday, April 18, members gathered with the cooperative to celebrate these and other achievements at its 79th Annual Meeting, held at the Adams County Fairgrounds in Brighton, Colo. Members also elected incumbents Brian A. McCormick, Rick Newman, Susan Petrocco and Tim Erickson to serve another term as directors of their respective districts.

The Annual Meeting brought together nearly 1,000 attendees representing nearly 500 registered members and included dinner, exhibit booths, live entertainment, cooperative reports (including a special video report from CEO John Parker), director elections, and a member forum followed by a special member Q&A session.

Complete annual meeting details, full election results and video presentations can be found online at www.unitedpower.com.



Brian A. McCormick
West District



Rick Newman
Mountain District



Susan Petrocco
South District

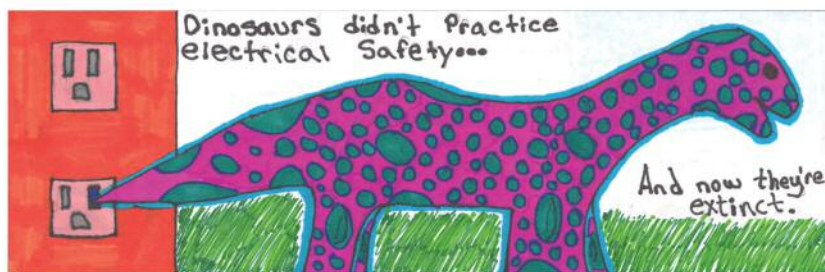


Tim Erickson
East District

Safety Poster Contest Winners

United Power recently asked elementary students in its service territory to help demonstrate electrical safety in its annual Electrical Safety Poster Contest. Kids in grades K-5 submitted creative and educational posters designed to teach family and friends how to stay safe around electricity.

The winners each received a \$50 cash prize and their posters will be displayed on bus benches around the service territory. Look for other designs in the May *United Newsliner* or online at www.unitedpower.com.



Electrical Safety Poster Contest Winner

Kaydence States, age 11, Bromley East Charter School



Severe weather may damage or down power lines. Even with winter on its way out and summer approaching, it's good to know how to stay safe around downed power lines.

Power lines carry high voltage electricity and can be deadly. Always assume utility lines are "live" - or energized - and keep far away from them.

If wires fall on or near a vehicle you're in, remain inside until emergency responders indicate it's safe to get out - unless other hazards require you to leave. When leaving a vehicle near "live" wires, remember not to touch the car and ground at the same time. Jump clear of fallen lines, land with both feet together and hop away with both legs together.

Immediately report any fallen, low-hanging or smoking wires to United Power, the police or the fire department. United Power has dispatchers and lineworkers prepared 24 hours a day.

**UNITED
POWER**
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Pancake Breakfast May 5th

7am - 11am

Canyon Clean Up May 26th

8am - 10am

CCCIA Hall : 31258 Coal Creek Canyon



941 Indian Peak Road

Fabulous Mtn Retreat w/5 Car Garage
5 BD/ 3 BA 1.09 Acres **\$724,900**



1720 Gross Dam Road

Exquisite Home VIEWS - Pool - 4 Acres
4 BD/ 4 BA 5,913 sq.ft. **\$899,000**



805 29th Street

Convenient Spanish Towers Condo
1 BD/ 1 BA VIEWS **\$290,500**



7592 Nikau Avenue

Nicely Remodeled Niwot Home
4 BD/ 3 BA 2.096 sq.ft. **\$514,000**



29373 Spruce Canyon

VIEWS - Remodeled - Over 3 Acres
3 BD / 3 BA **\$564,000**



10712 Twin Spruce

Charming Cabin / Seasonal Stream
822 sq.ft. **\$189,000**



15 Debra Ann

Beautiful-Raised Ranch w/Private Pond
4 BD / 3 BA .8 Acre **\$522,000**



33848 Ave De Plines

Fantastic Mtn Home w/City Views
4 BD/ 3 BA RV Garage **\$484,000**



29845 Spruce Canyon

Amazing Updated Mtn Hm w/VIEWS
3 BD/ 3 BA 2.37 Acres **\$499,000**



722 8th Ave., Longmont

Circa 1910 Old Town Charmer!
2 BD/ 2 BA Oversized Garage **\$349,000**



91 Wagon Wheel

Privacy w/Lots of Potential - Well
800 sq.ft. Cabin 1.45 Acres **\$84,000**



11536 Coal Creek Heights Drive

Panoramic Divide/City Views!!
3 BD/ 3 BA 3.3 Acres **\$599,900**

Kathy Keating,
CRS, ABR, GRI
EcoBroker,
Broker Associate
303.642.1133



For additional information
and photos:
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