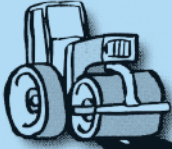




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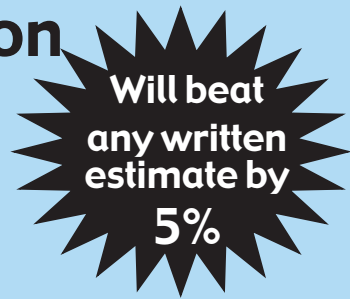
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# Spring Wildlife Advice

From CPW website [cpw.state.co.us/](http://cpw.state.co.us/)

Colorado Parks and Wildlife is the agency tasked with managing wildlife for the state of Colorado and for future generations. The agency often hears from citizens who want to “help” wildlife, however helping means keeping “hands off.” By allowing our wildlife to retain their natural, healthy wild instincts, we show our respect for their wild lives.

## Reporting Wildlife Concerns

Concerned citizens are welcome to call the CPW Denver Headquarters at 303-297-1192, or any CPW Office. If they suspect an animal is injured or abandoned, or to report incidents of feeding or other illegal wildlife activity. If you wish to remain anonymous, contact operation game thief at 877-265-6648. Rewards may be offered if the information leads to a citation.

## Young, “abandoned” wildlife

Each year, CPW receives scores of calls from concerned humans about wildlife that has been “abandoned” by adult animals. Many are tempted to “help” a young animal by picking it up or trying to feed it, however it is critical that people understand there is no substitute for their natural parents.

Wildlife experts agree that it is quite normal for adult animals to leave their young in safe places while they go forage for food. And often baby birds are fledging, or learning to fly, near their nests when they are deemed “abandoned.”

While well-meaning people sometimes gather up this baby wildlife and bring them to wildlife rehabilitation facilities, it is most often the wrong thing to do.

“Baby mammals are scentless in order to prevent predators from finding them,” said Janet George, senior terrestrial biologist for CPW. “When humans touch these animals, they are imparting them with a scent their adults will not recognize. This can result in true abandonment of healthy offspring.”

If you find young wildlife, enjoy a quick glimpse, leave the animal where it is, and keep pets out of the area. Quietly observe the animal from a distance using binoculars and don’t hover so close that the wild parents are afraid to return to the area.

“If 24 hours go by and the parent does not return, it is possible the newborn was abandoned or the parent is dead (hit by a car, for example),” said Jenny Campbell, customer service expert with CPW. “Call our office and we will work with certified wildlife rehabilitation center to get aid for the wildlife if possible. Don’t move the animal yourself!”

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# Golden Memories

By Pat Foss

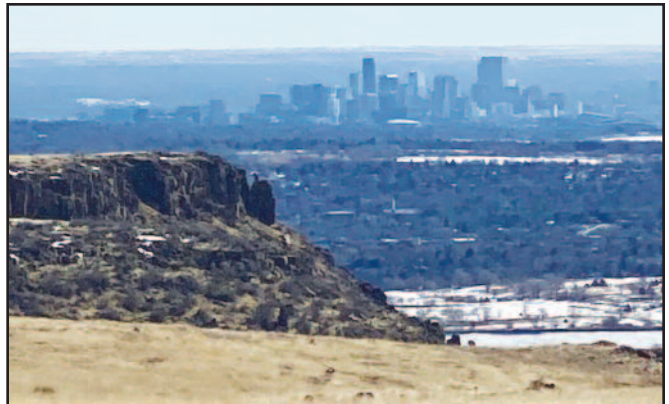
I walked up the old quarry road today...I spent my childhood up here on North Table. There were entire decades that I never saw another person here. Today, on a cold and windy morning, there were probably fifty people on top. It's okay, the top is big and I really like seeing the world class athletes train here.

The guy in front of me ran the entire way up the mesa and apparently kept on running...he was nowhere to be seen. A couple years ago I was up on top at dusk, -10 degrees and snow...a guy came by me on a bicycle. I love that. I've seen old ladies on cross country skis in weather that few would venture out in.

My old stomping grounds have become one of the best public parks I've ever seen...it breaks my heart that I can't be alone up here but that is offset by what awesome people train and recreate on this old worthless mountain.

My dad had some acreage up here, it cost him \$50 an acre and he was pretty sure he'd been

swindled. We've carried newborn calves down off the top in blizzards, swam in the grossest cow ponds, filled ditches to stop erosion, planted grass and learned to drive as small children. I used to sneak out with my Dad's horse and race



him on the mesa with a friend from the north side ...We climbed all the cliffs with no ropes that people are claiming first ascents on now. I belayed Kurt Papenfus one black night while he was trying to rappel down the biggest cliff on the mountain in a 60mph wind...when he leaned

back to start the rappel the wind would blow him back up. It took a while. I used to have a rope that was six feet too short for the big cliff...didn't matter but the last six feet were very fast.

If you go up on the mesa treat it kindly. Grass doesn't grow easily up there and damage and scars last for decades.

The open space staff still drives up there and I find their tire tracks all over off the road...I get a little angry and wonder why they can't walk up there like everyone else. They wanted to be park rangers, right?

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# Clean Water Act Turns 50

By Theo Whitcomb March 24, 2022 HCN

## Over half of U.S. waters are too polluted to swim or fish

Back in 1972, U.S. legislators passed the Clean Water Act with a 10-year goal: Make it safe for people to fish and swim in the nation's waters. Fifty years later, around half of all lakes and rivers across the country that have been studied fail to meet that standard, according to a recent report by the Environmental Integrity Project, a D.C. watchdog and advocacy nonprofit. Instead, they're classified as "impaired" — meaning that their fish are inedible, their water undrinkable, they're unsafe for humans to swim in and

inhospitable to aquatic life.

The Clean Water Act delivered a major win — it laid the groundwork for essential enforcement on industry — but there were key failures. Most notably, legal loopholes continue to allow fertilizer runoff from farmland and manure runoff from factory farms. The pollutants, which are washed into watersheds, are considered the top cause of water pollution in the U.S., said Eric Shaeffer, executive director at the Environmental Integrity Project. The law's inability to regulate this is its **single biggest program failure**, said Shaeffer. **"The Clean Water Act doesn't have effective regulation for dealing with cropland."**

*(Continued on next page.)*



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## Highlander Issues

And powerful industrial groups continue to resist and delay implementation of further regulation.

Western states, particularly Oregon and California, figure heavily in the report. Their waterways and lakes are threatened by everything from pollution to warming temperatures. While rivers and lakes have significantly improved in the 50 years since the legislation passed, the fight to make sure all waters are safe continues. “We can’t take it for granted,” Shaeffer said. “There is an awful lot of work that has gone into healing and protection.” He added that the legislation only exists because its supporters were willing to rattle the political status quo. “We are going to need to do that again.”



*A glossy ibis feeds in the Los Angeles River, California. Sections of the river are contaminated with DDT, PCBs, oil, trash and other toxins. David Welling/Minden*

The Environmental Integrity Project analyzed water data gathered from states through the Environmental Protection Agency.

### A few notable numbers highlight the report’s findings:

27% of U.S. river and stream miles that were studied by state authorities in the recent assessment cycle.

50% of those river and stream miles that were classified as “impaired.”

55% of lake acres that were similarly classified.

25% of estuary square miles too polluted to swim or fish in.

### Number One:

California’s rank in the U.S. for river and stream miles too polluted for drinking (37,209 miles).

The state ranks third for miles too polluted for fish consumption (24,934 miles).

17,619 Miles of rivers and streams assessed in Oregon that were classified as unswimmable. Oregon has the most miles of waterways considered “impaired” for swimming and recreation and the most miles impaired overall for aquatic life.

67% of industry-specific water pollution standards yet to be updated. Even though updates are mandatory every five years, they have not been changed in 30 years.

700 years - Time it would take to achieve full restoration of currently impaired waterbodies under current pace of remediation, according to an EPA report from 2011.

4 - Number of Western states that top the list for the most river and stream miles impaired for aquatic life: Oregon, California, Utah and Idaho.

73% of rivers and stream miles that were not studied by state authorities.

*Theo Whitcomb is an editorial intern at High Country News.*

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# Focused Positivity

By From Justin Loeber

Psychological research has confirmed that we would all be happier and more successful if we could think more positively. Yet, as many of us are aware, thinking positively can be a challenge - ***Focused Positivity: The Path to Success and Peace of Mind*** (Rowman & Littlefield; ISBN: 9781538153284), from author John F. Tholen, Ph.D., presents a science-based program that makes positive thinking accessible. Cognitive therapy (CT) has become recognized as the “gold standard” of psychological treatments, and the most efficient form of CT is the focused positivity strategy.

Over his 40-plus years in practice as a clinical psychologist, Dr. Tholen created thousands of messages to improve the self-talk of clients whose motivation and emotional well-being had been disrupted by excessive attention to dysfunctional thoughts—those that cause distress without motivating constructive action. After retiring in 2017, he began compiling and categorizing alternative thoughts that are functional—likely to inspire hope and self-assertion. The result is ***Focused Positivity***, a user-friendly manual for overcoming counterproductive thought patterns to permit a more fulfilling life.

***Focused Positivity*** integrates psychological philosophy with research discoveries about the relationship among our thoughts, feelings and actions, as well as about assertiveness, relaxation, habit change and even the competition that occurs between the two sides of the brain. The book presents a unique set of easy-to-follow steps that can be accomplished in a few minutes each day. Dr. Tholen’s focused positivity strategy employs the closest thing we have to a “superpower”—our ability to shift the focus of our attention—to diminish anxiety, inspire self-assertion and gradually attain a more balanced view of our circumstances, capabilities and potential.

In the book, readers will learn: How to counteract our inherent negativity bias—the disproportionate attention we pay to whatever most angers or frightens us—so that we can attain a more balanced and reasonable perspective on both ourselves and the world around us.

How to recognize the dysfunctional thoughts that spontaneously pop into our minds and disrupt our emotional state and motivation—even though they are almost always unreasonable, incomplete or completely wrong.

How to find—and focus on—reasonable alternative thoughts that are more functional; balanced, reassuring and motivating.

How to use our own personal belief system—whatever that may be—to create functional thoughts that can be powerful for each of us, even in what seems the worst of times. Strategies for managing excessive self-criticism, reprogramming prejudicial self-talk, taming dysfunctional fear, reframing trauma and creating the illusions that we think of as personal strengths, such as willpower, self-discipline and even resilience. How to become comfortable being respectfully self-assertive to enhance self-esteem and establish balanced relationships.

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# BLM Claims About Wild Horse Numbers

By Laura Leigh on April 13, 2022

April 12, 2022 the BLM released their 2022 population estimates of wild horses and burros on BLM designated public lands. The BLM estimated approximately 64,604 wild horses and 17,780 wild burros as of March 1, 2022.

The agency continues to claim a numbers game that this level of animals is three times the “appropriate” number on all of BLM land. The agency continues to push toward a politically-set “27,000” as a claim of what the land can sustain. The agency has used the “27,000” number since the 1971 Act passed and the first survey done.

Even though BLM has changed inventory methods multiple times, the agency still compares that number to the number set in the 70s. In fact, the massive population explosion

“by-the-numbers” back in 2014/15 came at the exact time the agency changed how they count horses and how they pad the number through terrain modeling. “If the same survey was done in the 70s it could result in the exact number represented by the agency today.” Laura Leigh, Wild Horse Education founder. “It is astounding that the agency continues the claim that ‘chronic overpopulation and ongoing drought causes a scarcity of food and water on the range’ as they rapidly continue to fragment existing wild horse habitat approving fencing project after project for livestock and accelerate mining expansion.” said Leigh, “If the drought is demonstrating a fragile landscape, why the race to expand mining in the most arid states in the nation? I know of not a single wild horse herd out there that, in a year, even uses one-tenth the water a single mine can consume in a day.”

BLM continues the charade that massive removals are needed to ‘save horses from themselves’ when absolutely no effort has been made to stop habitat fragmentation by industry. “Not only do massive removals increase population growth levels making any removals akin to running up an escalator,” Leigh continued, “None of this is based in any actual management planning for wild horses. When advocates say horses are removed to suit industry it is not rhetoric; the paperwork bears the statement.”

The agency claims that the number of wild horses represents an overpopulation. The claim of overpopulation is based on “Gather Environmental Assessments (EA)” that carry over a number from a planning document called a Land Use Plan (LUP). The LUP incorporates the planning documents for mining and livestock and goals outlined in those documents. The LUP does not include any Herd Management Area Plan (HMAP) that outlines the goals, how population levels are set, critical habitat, etc. In other words, horses are removed to suit planning for profit. The HMAP is the only planning document

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private care, finding homes for more than 26,500 animals in support of its efforts to reduce overpopulation on the range.” Record numbers of mustangs are landing in kill-pens through the lack of oversight in the

actually called for under law, the Code of Federal Regulation (CFR). The HMAP is omitted discounting any pretense of any actual management. Omitting the HMAP also omits any opportunity wild horse advocates have to address population numbers, boundaries, etc. set by backdoor deals and politics.

BLM is desperately pushing the 2020 plan agreed to by corporate interests (Path Forward). The 2023 fiscal year budget will push the plan to near completion. The remainder of the 2022 budget will see over 11,000 targeted for capture. The 2023 budget is set to push an additional 25,000 onto the roundup schedule. This push to complete the 2020 plan is in full swing without any attempt to reform a broken program and create actual management planning. “By the time BLM pushes through FY 2023 the 2020 will have completed the promise to corporate interests and ignored the need to responsibly reform the program.” Leigh said. “By the end of 2023, with all the new livestock fencing and mining expansion being approved, the actual number the land could have sustained will likely suit the number set by politics, not science. If the public ever wants to see a herd of 500 or more wild horses in any lifetime to come, this insanity of basing management on unsound and politically driven numbers games needs to stop now.”

We need BLM to craft open HMAPs, where the public can actually have input on management (goals, numbers, habitat preservation) immediately and halt removals now. The agency claims they “significantly increased the number of animals placed into

BLM Adoption Incentive Program (paying people to adopt) and the ongoing sale program. The stockpiling of pens, without reform, will lead to calls to kill horses in holding rather than foot the costs to house them in the near future. **Editor’s Note:** Concerned voters need to make contact with their elected officials regularly to apply pressure on BLM in D.C. for a halt to the roundups now, as they are officially illegal.

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# Ecoscience Is Rare For Cannabis Farms

By Theo Whitcomb HCN April 7, 2022

Phoebe Parker-Shames is, as far as she knows, the first Ph.D. ecology student to concentrate solely on cannabis. Since she arrived at U.C. Berkeley six years ago, she's been collecting data on wildlife and the cannabis industry in southern Oregon, where she's from, focusing on the farms that operate in the shadow of federal prohibition. The plant's legal status has long made it difficult for researchers to assess the impact of cannabis farming's impacts, and Parker-Shames is the first to gather data on how the industry's patterns and practices impact area wildlife.

In March, she published a landscape study of cannabis farms in Josephine County, Oregon. The first study to take a serious look at the growing industry's extent, it revealed that, at a conservative estimate, cannabis is produced on 6% of all private parcels. Parker-Shames believes her mapping work and ecology research will not only help cannabis farmers, but also their communities, which are grappling with the

industry's trade-offs. "For the first time, an opportunity is emerging for communities to openly discuss what cannabis means to them, their local economies, and the environment," she writes in her recent report, from increased water demands to impacts on local wildlife. But the industry remains an opaque one, and conclusive answers to key questions are hard to come by.

Recently, High Country News spoke with Parker-Shames about the role of science in policymaking, and what might best help Western communities that are navigating a "green rush" for the first time.

**High Country News:** The cannabis industry has been under a prohibition for generations. In some counties in the West, growing permitted cannabis is legal, in others, it's not. What has your research experience been like under prohibition?


**Phoebe Parker-Shames:** There were logistical questions like, "Am I even going to be able to do this work at all?" Then there were more of the impediments to day-to-day research — and obstacles to the type of research that I wanted to

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conduct — because of it being an illicit substance at the federal level. Most students, when they are stepping in to study an industry or system, they have decades of research and previous studies to build off. I have none of that for cannabis. That makes it really hard, and part of why I'm limited in the sort of conclusions that I can draw as a scientist. I must make the baselines myself.

**HCN:** Given climate change and the aridification of the West, many of our readers associate illicit cannabis with increasing demands on scarce water and possible environmental harm. What makes it tricky to draw such conclusions about the industry?

**PPS:** The very first thing I must point out is there is no one standard cannabis farm. That makes researching the impacts of cannabis extremely difficult. I don't think I appreciated just how hard that would be until I started, but you've got huge variations in size. Everything from four plants all the way up to thousands: That's an impossible range to make any sort of ecological conclusions about general impacts. Then you have things like differences in practice. Some people are using hoop houses, some people are growing in native soil, and most people are growing in bags. The use of fencing is pervasive, but also inconsistent in how permeable the fences are to local wildlife. Some people are using intensive irrigation systems, while some people aren't. Some build in vegetation that could otherwise be wildlife habitat, clearing it and forming their farm there. Some people are coming into places that have already been set for agriculture. It goes on. It's an incredibly difficult question to answer. It can range from being perfectly compatible with local flora and fauna, all the way to being extremely detrimental to air, water, wildlife and people. I have been focusing my work on how we keep it at "most sustainable" and get people away from the large-scale industrial, super-high input with lots of disturbance.

**HCN:** What are you and other scientists still unable to study?

**PPS:** I would love to study the so-called "cartel" farms on public lands. We only have access to researchers who are partnering with law enforcement, and go and study them after a bust. Surveys and questions to farmers don't end up reaching that community

*(Continued on next page.)*

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**Highlander Ecology** either. I think it matters because they're in this vacuum of actual research. We don't know how many there are, we don't know what their most common farming practices are, and we don't know how they feel about this topic or where they're getting their information on how to cultivate.

Because of that, they become the boogeyman. Everybody else says this is the scariest, worst form of cannabis. Probably, but I don't know; they only get studied after they've already been busted, which is not the same as studying an active farm. It's also not feasible to do an interview with someone as they're being arrested. That's a whole population of farmers that I would love to know more about.

**HCN:** You write that your research is a tool to



*A private cannabis farm in unincorporated Siskiyou County, California. The farm pumped water from a well, implementing a combination of drip irrigation and hand watering. Parker-Shames says an effective way to encourage farmers to adopt sustainable practices is to get them into the legal market. Kate Harnedy*

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inform communities in making decisions about how and where cannabis is grown. What kinds of trade-offs do communities face?

**PPS:** For a long time, a lot of rural communities have depended on cannabis for their livelihoods, and at this point it is really embedded. So you've got some fundamental trade-offs, especially in a place like Josephine County, Oregon, where

the cannabis industry is essential for the functioning of the county. It's deeply entwined into the economic system. So really, a more effective way to change this is to get them into the legal market, and then make policies about how you want them to grow and where you want them to grow — but not “don't grow.”

*Theo Whitcomb is an editorial intern at High Country News.*

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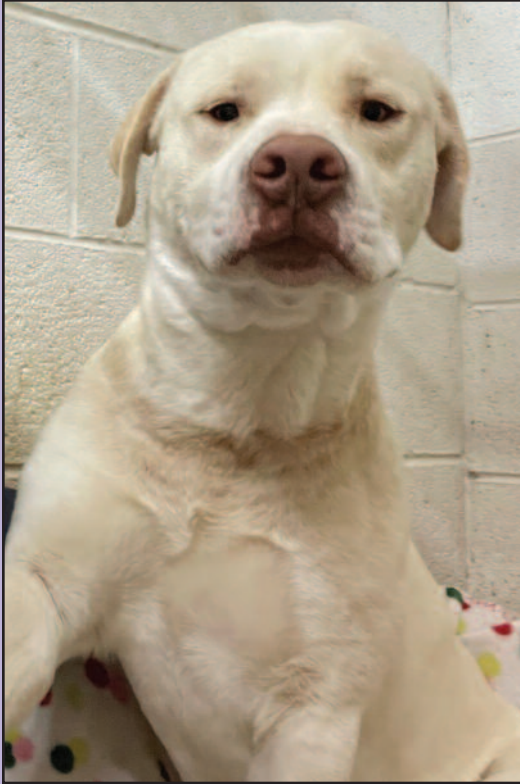
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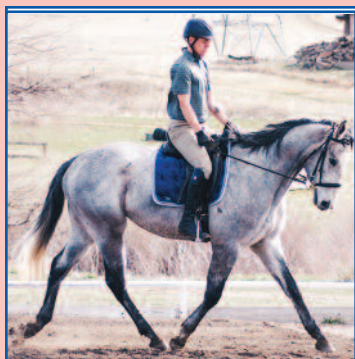


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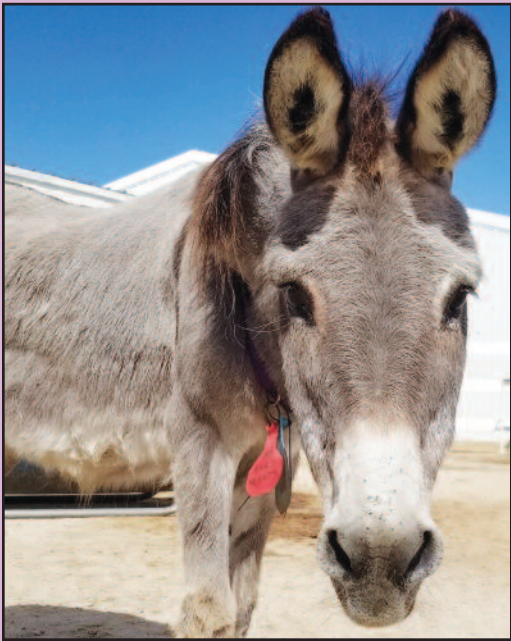
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# Emergency Alert Notification Lists

Article by Diane Bergstrom

## Emergency Alert Notification Lists to Be On

A friend was driving back to Boulder from south Denver on March 26, the day the NCAR fire started. After the 2013 flood, she had signed up for the Boulder County Emergency Alerts and has been very glad she did. Especially on March 26 as that day she was south of Denver when the fire started, and lives in Boulder. On her return, she saw white smoke billowing up from the foothills but couldn't determine exactly where the fire was. While on Hwy 36, she received a cell phone alert that the fire was at NCAR (National Center for Atmospheric Research). By the time she passed the C.U. football fields, she received a message to prepare for evacuation. Two minutes later, she received the message to evacuate. They spent 15 minutes packing their priority belongings on the top of their evacuation list and left the county. Very pleased with the notifications, she later mentioned they were good updates and timely. With the changes in weather we've had already this year, drought, fire danger, and consistent high wind warnings, and evacuations, it just makes good common sense to put yourself on a notification list. My favorite grandmother used to say, it doesn't matter how smart you are—it's common sense that gets you through life.

Amber Alerts and Weather Service notifications that are delivered to cell phones and land lines come through FEMA and their system. On the local front, county chiefs of emergency services/first responders, i.e. fire chiefs, sheriffs, police chiefs, have to get federal approval to use that system so many choose to hire private contractors. Jefferson County uses CodeRED. Boulder uses Everbridge. Gilpin has hyper-reach. You may want to sign up for several county alert systems if you work in one county and live in another,

or if your property borders two different counties, as many do in Coal Creek Canyon. You can also register several different addresses within the same county and some sites require separate registration forms for each. It is also very important to read each county's website as their definitions of alerts can vary slightly in meaning, and you'll want to be familiar with the options and alerts within your chosen county.

To opt-in for alerts in any Colorado county, go to:

<https://dhsem.colorado.gov/emergencyalert>.

This is a comprehensive site listing each county with a link to each one's emergency alert system. Each county is listed in BLUE and you click on the RED "Alert" next to it to link to an account page. Each one differs in format so spend the time now when you are not in emergency mode to understand the *(Continued on next page.)*

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**Highlander Alerts** offerings and to create your account. Jefferson County Alert takes you right to the CodeRED page to create an account. Boulder County Alert first provides an explanation of the Everbridge system including definitions of messages. You must scroll to the Sign In box and then go the small last line, “Don’t have an account,” to create one. Larimer County Alert takes you to general NOCO Alerts page and you must look for the red tab labeled, “Sign up for alerts.” During the 37E fire, just contained at the time of writing, Larimer County also offered updates by texting LCEVAC to 888777, which showed maps of impacted areas.

The Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management wisely suggests on their website, “To best stay informed before, during and after a disaster you are encouraged to

monitor a number of information sources, including systems such as local emergency services websites, warning sirens, SMS or text alert systems, local/national media outlets, and local government sources.” No system is fail-proof so it is best to rely on several information sources in the case of an emergency. My evacuated friend received a final alert message at 11 pm on March 26 stating that it was safe to return to her home. She said one of the information sources she relied on for accurate updates and timely reporting was the local, independently owned radio station, KGNU. Because they control their own programming, they excel at reporting on updates of urgent local issues. The DHSE site also adds city and town-level emergency management site links to their page, organized under the counties, so consult these local resources.

In reflection of her experience with the alert system, my friend took into consideration the alerts and her own professional experience and knowledge. She is a retired meteorologist so she evaluated the changing wind patterns including speed and direction and deduced the fire might not be directed to her area. (Don’t try this at home.) While many evacuated, many chose to stay in her area. She said her family left because of the anticipated delays that would be caused by the number of evacuees using limited evacuation routes. She considered traffic jams would be an evacuation factor, and they indeed delayed them being able to quickly leave the area. Knowledge, planning, and common sense! My grandmother would have approved. Stay safe out there and be prepared. A future article will cover evacuation lists, tips, and options. As always, our immense gratitude to the emergency response personnel who work so hard to keep our homes, wildlands, and all of the inhabitants safe.

**Editor’s Note:** YOU would never want to be responsible for the damage and/or loss of life a wildfire could cause, so work hard to prevent starting any fire by being careful with grills or cigarettes, etc. all year long. **And look for smoke after a thunderstorm to report a fire.**



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# Fire Mitigation Can Be A Tax Deduction

Letter to the Editor:

With another year of below average snowfall and fire season past approaching, I thought I would make you and your readers aware of a tax deduction Coloradoans can claim for fire mitigation expenses they incur. Taxpayers can reduce their taxable income for Colorado by deducting certain expenses they incur for fire mitigation.

The information here is from the **Colorado Department of Revenue's FYI Income 65: Wildfire Mitigation Measures Subtraction** publication:

Certain taxpayers can claim a subtraction for 50% to 100% (depending on the tax year) of qualifying costs for performing wildfire mitigation measures. The total subtraction is limited to \$2,500.

## Who Can Qualify:

Individuals, estates and trusts with a qualifying interest, including fee simple interest, easement, right-of-way or lease to the property being mitigated. Corporations and partnerships do not qualify and there is no deduction for mitigation on public lands.

Land must be located in a wildland-urban interface within Colorado. This is defined as an area where structure and other human development are built close to or within natural terrain and flammable vegetation, and where high potential for wildland fire exists.

## Mitigation that qualifies:

- Creating a defensible space around structures.
- Establishing fuel breaks.
- Thinning vegetation to reduce risks to structures or Secondary treatment of wood fuels by lopping, scattering, piling, chipping, removing from the site or prescribed burning.

## Qualifying Costs

- Payments to contractors for fire mitigation;
- The cost of a chain saw if purchased primarily for wildfire mitigation measures; or
- The cost to rent an all-terrain vehicle, truck, tractor, or trailer if rented primarily to perform wildfire mitigation measures.

There are some additional restrictions and taxpayers will have to submit a receipt for work performed with their tax return.

Karen Schwimmer, CPA, EA



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# Coal Seam Fires In Colorado

By Valerie Wedel

What is a “coal seam fire?” These are also known as “underground mine fires.” Coal mines can ignite and smolder or burn outright – underground – for decades, and even for centuries. This is a direct by-product of coal mining. Coal seam fires start in mines dug by humans.

In Pennsylvania and West Virginia, entire towns have been abandoned due to coal seam fires underground. Examples include Centralia, one of the more notorious abandoned towns in Pennsylvania. Coal mining began in Centralia in 1854. In 1962, rubbish was being burned by the city in an old mining pit, and ignited a coal seam beneath the rubbish pit. The fire is still burning today, 60 years later, emitting poisonous gases, heating the ground in some areas to above 800 degrees F, buckling and melting roads, destabilizing building foundations, and randomly opening sinkholes. All this destroyed the town.

Engineers have been unable to develop working methods to extinguish the Centralia, PA and other coal seam fires. According to Mark Clemente, 80 or more underground mine fires – coal seam fires – are burning right now in

Pennsylvania (1). There are expensive strategies – more on those to come. And yet, still the fires burn. In West Virginia alone it is estimated that it would cost \$1 billion to put out the underground fires burning, just in that one state. (2)

Here in Colorado we have a history of mining also. There are coal seam fires burning underground here also. Two of them are extraordinarily close to Boulder and the University, and right at Marshal Drive where the Marshal Fire started. They have been investigated as one of the possible causes of ignition of the Marshal Fire.

Another large coal seam fire burns extraordinarily close to Glenwood Springs. This is the South Canyon Mine Fire. It burns 6 miles west of Glenwood Springs. Between 1902-51, over 1 million tons of coal were pulled from the earth there, and turned into coke for the smelting industry nearby in towns like Aspen. In 1907 the Wheeler Seam began to smolder. Poisonous gasses from the burning coal caused the entire coal seam to be abandoned. Miners “blockaded” the fire and turned their attention to the east side of the canyon for mining. By the 1950’s, the underground fire had burned to the east side of

the canyon also, and the entire mining project was simply abandoned (3). The story goes that miners appeared for work one morning, to see flames and poisonous gasses shooting out of the mine opening. So they simply walked away.

This South Canyon coal seam fire is now being worked on by people at the Inactive Mine Reclamation Program, which is part of Colorado Department of Natural Resources. Federal funds are used

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to manage and, one hopes, eventually extinguish this and other underground coal seam fires (3).

Engineers and scientists involved acknowledge it is nearly impossible to extinguish these underground fires. As a coal seam fire ignites, it builds tremendous heat and begins to consume the coal seam and create fractures in the surrounding rock. The fractures lead to cracks and underground rubble collapsing into what had been the underground coal mines. These rubble loads hold tremendous air pockets, ensuring a more-than-adequate supply of oxygen to keep those underground coal fires burning.

In a steep canyon such as South Canyon near Glenwood Springs, canyon vent openings create perfect chimneys that suck air in by the bottom of the canyon and pull it out near the top. This air flow fans underground fires indefinitely, helping them burn hotter, until the entire seam is consumed. As the fire burns hotter it heats the air and speeds up the chimney effect. These coal seam fires can burn for decades and centuries (3). Temperatures of the earth above parts of these fires have been measured at 1000 degrees F.

What can you do? One action is to check with your power company. Make sure you do not heat your house with coal energy. Wind energy is pretty clean, and an abundant renewable resource

## Highlander Environmental

here in Colorado. Solar panels could also be an option for some of us.

Another action is to lobby our local and federal governments to keep looking at this huge problem. Follow the numbers – if we spend more than a billion tax dollars – from your pocket and mine - to clean up underground fires emitting poisonous gases in just one state, consider the possibility that energy from coal is a huge net loss.

Another action is more creative lobbying. Coal mining is a dangerous trade. Miners run huge health risks from their occupation. We can lobby our representatives to support healthy, lucrative and sustainable community alternatives to coal mining. What could those be? What can we dream up that will actually be healing for our earth and people?

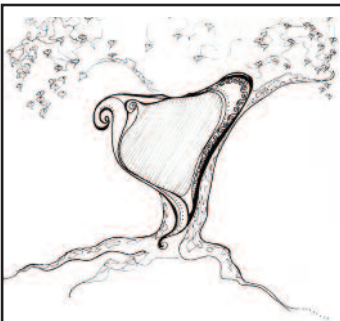
References: 1. <https://youtu.be/BeynZtqstQ>  
“Scorched: Mine Fires in Pennsylvania Coal Country,” premiered on Youtube 9/22/20.

2. <https://youtu.be/nAOllQ360Vo> “Work to Contain Underground Mine Fire Enters New Phase,” published on youtube by Environment Matters, 6/7/2017.

3. <https://youtu.be/ccHskGMNhu4>

Video: *Managing the South Canyon Mine Fire*, published by Col Div of Reclamation, Mining and Safety.  
Excellent introduction to coal seam fires.

*Coal Seam Fires in Colorado*



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# The Link Between Drilling & Racism

By Julia Kane, *Grist* April 14, 2022 HCN

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Neighborhoods that were redlined have nearly twice as many oil and gas wells as neighborhoods that were historically considered “desirable,” a new study has found. The findings underscore the connection between structural racism and polluting oil and gas infrastructure. The analysis is the first of its kind, the work of researchers at the University of California, Berkeley, the University of California, San Francisco, and Columbia University. They compared data on the location of plugged and active oil and gas wells to data from maps generated by the Home Owners Loan Corporation, the federal lending program created to prevent home foreclosures during the Great Depression. The program excluded Black people — as well as Jews, other people of color, and immigrants — from opportunities by creating maps which labeled white neighborhoods as *desirable*, shading them green, and labeled Black neighborhoods, in particular, as *hazardous*, shading them red hence the term *redlining*. This new analysis “clarifies the role of systemic environmental racism in creating disparities,” said Kyle Ferrar, a program director with FracTracker, a group that provides data on the health effects of oil and gas development.

“We know from other work that marginalized people — especially Black people, Latinx people, and low-income people — are more likely to live near oil and gas wells,” said David J.X. Gonzalez, lead author of the study. “But we don’t know the processes that led to these disparities, and I think it’s really important that we understand those.” To determine whether redlining made a community more likely to have new wells drilled and operated near where people live. While they did not have enough data to prove a causal relationship, “we’re seeing a signal that redlining may have been part of why

some neighborhoods had more wells compared to similar neighborhoods that weren’t redlined,” said Gonzalez.

Oil and gas wells release a slew of air pollutants, including volatile organic compounds, smog-forming compounds, and fine particulate matter. Numerous studies have found that living near oil and gas wells increases a person’s risk of cardiovascular disease, impaired lung function, anxiety, depression, preterm birth, and impaired fetal growth — serious concerns for the estimated 17 million people in the U.S. who live within a mile of at least one active well.

It’s not news that redlined communities tend to experience worse health outcomes, there are higher rates of gun violence and less green space.

*Julia Kane is an environmental justice fellow at Grist.*

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# Update: [BuffaloFieldCampaign.org](http://BuffaloFieldCampaign.org)

Buffalo Field Campaign's field patrols continue to document and monitor the status of Buffalo returning to their calving grounds in Hebgen Basin. Six Buffalo were taken by hunters on Horse Butte. Three of the buffalo killed were pregnant females. Hunting has disrupted the herd's social family structure and the buffalo are responding by migrating away from National Forest land towards Buffalo safe zones on private property and back into Yellowstone National Park.

The impact of the members having the loss of their relatives provided a trigger of instinct to traverse back into the remaining protected areas. Resulting in learned movements back through high-risk highway crossing areas, where they will be met by our volunteers on patrol with warning signs for traffic. The coming spring days will see an increased need for our



field Volunteers who will continue to provide safe passage for Buffalo crossing highways 191 and 287 to find grass for calving. Patrols have been keeping an eye on Buffalo along the highways where the green-up of grass draws them into traffic.

While buffalo are being hunted on National Forest, there are several safe havens for buffalo on private lands owned by Buffalo advocates on Horse Butte who provide refuge for Pregnant Mothers. These Buffalo, members of the Central herd, have returned to their birthing grounds in search of the spring grasses that make the mother's milk needed for females to calve and feed the next generation. A heartfelt thank you to all of the Buffalo advocates who offer their land as a haven for Buffalo seeking a safe place to calve. Patrols have been thoroughly documenting the impacts of the National Forest logging buffalo habitat on Horse Butte. More logging and road building is planned in the buffalo's habitat across Hebgen Basin. Securing habitat for the buffalo to calve is a long-term priority we have shared with local residents in our community. Buffalo Field Campaign has been closely documenting the ecological impacts of logging critical wildlife habitats in a threatened migration corridor.

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## Obituary

It is of great sadness we announce the sudden tragic passing of **Anthony Green** on March 10th, 2022 of Coal Creek Canyon.

Anthony Michael Green was born on June 30th 1991 in the beautiful state of Colorado. He stayed in the Golden area and settled in at Coal Creek Canyon where he could enjoy the mountains year round. Anthony is survived by his parents Candi and Brian Green, younger sister Tanner Green. He is also survived by his grandparents, Glen and Jeanine Wickersham and Maxine and Ivan Green.

Anthony was a wild child boy that tried to ride everything with two wheels, motor or not. His pride and joy at a young age was his yellow yamaha dirt bike, a dirt bike he took out on the trails with his dad and adopted uncles. He crashed that dirt bike more than a few times.

From a young age, Anthony was introduced to camping and spent many years enjoying the beautiful area of Marble, Colorado riding dirtbikes, atv's, and fishing.

His family was very proud of Anthony graduating from McClain Community High school in 2010. He then went on to find he had a passion for working in construction and held positions in the field since his graduation.

One of the proudest moments of Anthony's life was becoming ordained and conducting a marriage ceremony in 2014 for his parents in Marble, Colorado after being together since he was 5 years young. During the wedding, he shared his mementos of how proud he was to be raised by his 'adopted' dad Brian from a very young age.

Anthony and his dad Brian shared a mutual love of working on vehicles spending many days together under the hood of a jeep covered in grease. Anthony learned to love spending his time and money working on getting project jeeps

ready for the trails. He was involved in jeeping clubs that recreated near Rollinsville and the surrounding areas. He was an avid jeeper, loved the trails, and driving through the mountains. He recently settled into a new house in Coal Creek with his girlfriend to start the next chapter where he could continue working on his cars and have the freedom to continue to build his life.

Anthony was a kind soul that would have given the shirt off his back to a stranger. He had a giant smile, gave big bear hugs, and offered help to anyone in need. He will be remembered as generous and giving, he always offered a helping hand for any friend or neighbor before they could ask.

Gone at 30 years young, he leaves a large hole in the hearts of anyone that knew him well.

He is loved and will be greatly missed.





# Tax Return Money

By Nathan Liao - [www.cmaexamacademy.com](http://www.cmaexamacademy.com)

Before you get an online shopping order ready to submit the moment your tax return hits your bank account, consider this: wouldn't it be much wiser to use the money to bolster your financial health? I bet your future self would really thank you if you made a concerted effort now to be much smarter with your tax return!

If you are wondering how you can use your tax return funds to improve your finances, no need to start Googling! In my experience as the CEO and founder of CMA Exam Academy (a Certified Management Accountant exam review program), I have discovered a number of effective ways that tax return money can be used for overall financial betterment.

## Pay Off Unsecured Debt

Did you know that most Americans carry unsecured debt? From high credit card balances they racked up during their carefree college years to bills for medical procedures they didn't plan for, this debt is not safeguarded by collateral and can plague these individuals for years, possibly the rest of their lives. So take a look at your own finances — do you also have a high credit card balance that you've been paying the minimum payment on for months? Other unsecured debt that you've been meaning to pay off? Well, don't let it bring you down any longer!

It's time to be proactive in eradicating your debt so that you can maximize your long-term financial standing. And with inflation picking up steam and the federal government planning on

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increasing rates, those credit card fees are going to go up and make it even harder to pay off debt quicker for those who only make the monthly minimum payment. Therefore, my number one piece of advice is to get rid of all unsecured debt as soon as possible.

**Use “Aging Buckets”**

You can optimize this process through the use of aging buckets — sort your bills according to whether they are late by 30-60 days, 61-90 days, etc., then gather the oldest bills and sort them from the highest outstanding balance owed to the lowest. Then use your tax return money to pay off the largest bills in the oldest “aging bucket” and make your way down the list. Taking this calculated, strategic approach will help make the process of paying off your unsecured debt much more efficient and a lot less stressful.

**Rainy Day Fund**

If all of your unsecured debt is paid off (or you didn’t have any to begin with), you can be wise with your tax return money by placing it in a rainy day fund. You really can never know exactly how the future will pan out — the unforeseen and devastating COVID-19 pandemic is just one example of the need to always be prepared for any situation. So use your tax return to start a rainy day fund or

enhance one that you **Highlander Finance** already have. An adequate rainy day fund should cover 8-12 months of expenses (monthly rent or mortgage, utilities, other bills, etc.) or whatever amount would give you the greatest peace of mind.

**Invest, Invest, Invest**

If you aren’t currently carrying any unsecured debt and you already have a hefty rainy day fund, consider investing your tax return money to get an even bigger payout later on. From strong blue chip stocks that pay great dividends to mutual funds and retirement plans, there are so many investment opportunities to choose from. Using a long-term approach with your tax return money could really help to bolster your future financial standing. To be more motivated to invest your tax return rather than spend it, treat the money as if it never hit your bank account.



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Carl A Vair - OWNER



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# Power Update

May  
2022

## 2022 Annual Meeting Recap

### First In Person Meeting Held Since 2019

United Power hosted a hybrid Annual Meeting on April 13, allowing members to gather in person for the first time since 2019. The cooperative was pleased to return to an in-person format this year. Nearly 450 members and guests attended the meeting either in person or online. The meeting included a video recap highlighting the cooperative's accomplishments over the last year, an annual financial report, and the certification of the director election.

The addition of more than 4,600 new meters pushed United Power beyond 100,000 meters early last summer. It became just the 31st electric cooperative nationwide to surpass this mark and only the second in Colorado. In the past year, the cooperative has conducted targeted maintenance to improve operational efficiencies and reduce outage times, expanded its electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and installed an emergency generator in Gilpin County to provide a back-up power solution to members at the ends of its lines.

Most significantly, United Power announced its intentions to pursue a change in its wholesale power supplier effective January 2024. Wholesale power costs account for approximately 75% of United Power expenses and attempts to negotiate the cooperative's existing contract have failed. The availability of self-generation and storage options combined with existing contract limitations no longer meet the needs of United Power members. Based on the broader economic landscape, leadership believes it is in the best interest of members to find an alternate supplier moving forward.

One of the cooperative's primary accomplishments last year was Our Cooperative Roadmap, a long-term action plan to maintain United Power's strength and competitiveness in the evolving industry. Members can read the roadmap at [www.unitedpower.com/roadmap](http://www.unitedpower.com/roadmap).

Voting in the director election was conducted via mail-in and electronic balloting. The cooperative introduced electronic balloting this year to provide members with a fast, secure, and convenient way to submit ballots and avoid delays in mail handling. More than 6,000 member ballots were cast in the election. East District incumbent, Elizabeth "Beth" Martin, retained her seat, receiving 2,728 votes. Steven "Steve" Douglas received 2,536 votes and Naptali A. Lucks received 700 votes in the race for the East District. Ursula J. Morgan, West District, and Keith Alquist, South District, ran unopposed and will retain their seats with 5,341 and 5,337 votes, respectively.



**KEITH  
ALQUIST**  
*South District*



**URSULA J.  
MORGAN**  
*West District*



**ELIZABETH "BETH"  
MARTIN**  
*East District*



### Capital Credits Coming in May

United Power is more than your local utility and you are more than a customer. The moment you activate electric service, you become a member and an owner in the cooperative. Membership provides you with unique privileges, such as voting in the annual director election or the principle of economic participation.

Capital credits are funds remaining after all expenses have been paid. Each year, the Board of Directors determines if a capital credit retirement is feasible and what amount is eligible.

### How Much Is My Refund?

Refund amounts are based on your length of membership with the co-op and the amount of power used during the period retired.

Watch our website and follow us on social media for updates.

**For more information, go to**  
[www.unitedpower.com](http://www.unitedpower.com).

**United Power Coal Creek Office**  
5 Gross Dam Road | Golden, CO 80403

**Member Services:** 303-637-1300  
**Coal Creek Office:** 303-642-7921



**Payment Kiosk Location**



**EV Charging Site** (CHAdemo, CCS/SAE)



[www.unitedpower.com](http://www.unitedpower.com)





# Mother's Day Pancake Breakfast

Saturday May 7th 7:00am - 11:00am

CCCIA Hall 31528 Hwy 72



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Wonderful Log Home - .89 Acre  
3 BD/ 2 BA 1,900 sq.ft. **\$589,000**



**33492 Coal Creek Canyon Drive**

Wondervu Cafe - Canyon's Favorite  
Mexican Restaurant



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Wonderful Southern Exposure- Fiber Optic  
Internet available - .99 Ac. **\$120,000**



**261 Evergreen Road**

Beautifully Updated Mtn Home  
3 BD/ 4 BA 2,792 sq.ft. **\$795,000**



**32077 Sylvan Road**

Lovely Home on Sunny 1 Acre  
3 BD/ 2 BA 1,627 sq.ft. **\$575,000**



**126 Signal Rock**

Lovely Landscaping/Divide Views  
2 BD/ 3 BA 2,024 sq.ft. **\$600,000**



**11965 Vonnie Claire**

Gorgeous Log Home, Views, Solar  
3 BD/ 3 BA 1,808 sq.ft. **\$876,000**



**31040 Hwy 72**

Sweet Mountain Cottage  
2 BD/ 1 BA 1,007 sq.ft. **\$465,000**



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