

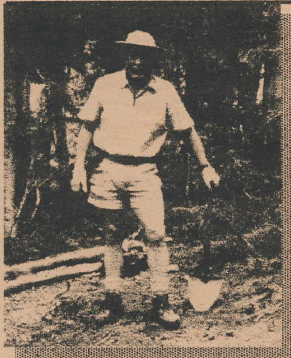
POUDRE TRAILS

The Poudre Wilderness Volunteers Newsletter

<http://www.fortnet.org/pwv>

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August 1997



FROM THE CHAIR

Chuck Bell

Good, Better, Best

My original intent for this column was to congratulate everyone for making such a huge difference in the conditions of the wilderness. But after a weekend on the West Branch Trail in the Rawah Wilderness, I have had to temper my enthusiasm.

There is indeed clear evidence that things are better in many of the areas we patrol. Brown's Lake, one of the most popular destinations in our area, is much cleaner, and for the first time, backpackers are using the designated sites rather than the traditional sites right on the lake shore that are severely impacted from over use. Where fire rings once proliferated, those old sites are beginning the slow process of revegetation.

A trip I took in mid-July through the Rawah provided further evidence of how our presence is beginning to make a difference. A few years ago, on the same route, I found nearly two dozen fire rings, lots of

This is Lion Country

Are there more mountain lions in Roosevelt National Forest? Or does it just seem that way because the increase in people visiting the forest brings more sightings of these elusive creatures and their sign?

"It's a combination of both," says Gene Schoonveld, regional wildlife biologist for the Colorado Division of Wildlife. "Twenty years ago, sightings were rare. Now they're frequent."

That's why you might have seen an "Entering Lion Country" sign at some trailheads.

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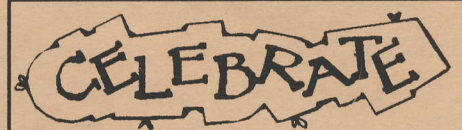
people camped on lake shores and enough trash to fill a large garbage bag. This year, I found only three fire rings, traditional lake shore sites empty, and very little trash on the trail. I was really thrilled.

But I went back to the Rawah three weeks later and found we still have a lot of work to do. On the West Branch Trail alone we tore up seven fire rings, most of them new, and were dismayed at the number of candy wrappers and other small bits of trash on the trail. The hundreds of hikers that had been on the West Branch in those three weeks between my visits had left their mark. We also had reports of backpackers camped on the shores of the Rawah Lakes, and of a horsemen's camp, complete with huge fire ring, on the very edge of McIntyre Lake.

On the plus side, we found another horse camp at Twin

Crater Lakes which was well back from the water and trail, and the campers were cooking breakfast over a small gas stove. They understood and respected

See BEST, Page 2



Sylvan Dale Guest Ranch, at the mouth of the Big Thompson Canyon, will be the site of this year's season-end celebration. Mark your calendar for Sunday, October 5 from 1-6 pm and check the next issue of **POUDRE TRAILS** for more information.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."
Margaret Mead

LIABILITY PROTECTION

— Ken Owen

At the mid-season meeting, co-chair Art Bunn announced that this year the PWV Board of Directors was able to provide liability insurance protection for the membership while on duty.

The Colorado Good Samaritan Law protects us from legal judgments as long as we stay within our own "level of competence" and do not commit "gross negligence". Unfortunately, those terms are subjective, and as volunteers we can still be sued. This is where our new liability insurance comes into play.

We can first and foremost protect ourselves with the knowledge and skills learned in the PWV training sessions and from materials made available to us by the organization and the USFS. But if, in spite of our good intentions, we are sued, the Executive Risk Company steps in to defend our actions. This saves us, our spouses, the board and their spouses from defense financial costs.

While this insurance is a step in the right direction, it's not perfect. Art said that the search criteria was to find a reliable company that could provide affordable coverage. The more we all get involved with improving the organization's finances the better our situation will be in many aspects, including insurance coverage.

LION — Continued from Pg 1



The DOW has posted these signs to alert trail users that lions definitely are in those areas. "No question about it," says Schoonveld.

The biologist says his department is "not concerned" about the situation, because it's highly unlikely anyone will be attacked. The signs are just a precaution, advising trail users how to react in case of an encounter.

No Poudre Wilderness Volunteers have reported encountering a lion but **Frank Lilley** did see track. lion tracks.

But hikers certainly are thinking more about lions. Member **Ray Sons** reported that three parties of trail users asked him about lion danger one recent Saturday while hiking Lion Gulch. A coincidence perhaps?

BEST — Continued from Pg 1

the campfire ban in alpine areas. Another group of hikers reported seeing other Poudre Wilderness Volunteers earlier in the day and had been briefed on where and how to camp.

There's no doubt that the presence of so many Poudre Wilderness Volunteers in our region is beginning to have an impact. People are clearly more aware of the need to take care of

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our back-country and are better informed about how to do so. But we still don't have enough volunteers to provide really thorough coverage in most areas.

Compared to previous years, conditions at many popular sites in our region are good. But most of them certainly could be better, and our ultimate goal must be to reach enough hikers and riders to make our areas the best they can possibly be!

If You See a Mountain Lion

- ◆ Stay calm and don't run away. Lions sense "flight" as an invitation to attack.
- ◆ Scream or shout.
- ◆ Make yourself appear larger by picking up a stick, waving your arms, or putting your pack over your head.
- ◆ Back away slowly.
- ◆ Keep children close to you for their safety.

TiD BiTs

THE VANISHING VOLUNTEER

Caution: Do not leave your Poudre Wilderness Volunteer name badge face up on the dashboard of your car. One of our volunteers did so and his name nearly vanished. If he wanted to go incognito, he got his wish!

The firm that supplies the badges explains that they are slightly sensitive to ultraviolet light. Under normal conditions pinned on your shirt, even in bright sun, they won't be affected. But face up on a dash board for an afternoon can cause them to fade.

AND SPEAKING OF CARS...

Believe it or not you can get a parking ticket for parking your vehicle behind the Forest Service visitor center — unless you park in one of a handful of spaces clearly marked for visitors.

The lot is owned and controlled by Colorado State University, and they will ticket cars without a permit. If, while on Poudre Wilderness Volunteer business, you need to leave your car parked for several hours, please see **Martha Moran** for a temporary parking permit.

HIKING SOLO

Some of our members have been hitting the trails solo this season, and Cho-chair Chuck Bell hopes to eliminate that practice next year.

Bell feels we are safer and

PWV CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM

— Ken Owen

Many of us get asked questions on the trails that we wish we could answer. With your help during this coming off-season, PWV will host programs to enhance your knowledge and experiences as wilderness volunteers. **Dan Wethington**, who's heading up the winter programs committee, is in the process of looking for ideas, guest speakers, and help.

What subject areas would be most helpful to you? Some ideas for topics and classes are: role playing; tree, shrub, and flower identification; animals and their signs; map and compass; fishing in the wilderness; first-aid; and CPR training.

Dan, who lives in Fort Collins with his wife, 2 dogs and 2 horses, comes to the PWV with a variety of wilderness and conservation experience. His back country experiences range from southern Colorado to Alaska, but admits that northern Colorado is somewhat new to him. While his profession now is as a home health physical therapist, Dan has spent past summers working for the Colorado Division of Wildlife and has a strong interest in conservation.

If you have any ideas about subjects, guest speakers, or are willing to participate in any way, please contact Dan evenings at 686-0207. Thanks!

more effective when we work in pairs, especially on long backpacking tours and horse patrols. Lone hikers resulted because our computer program could accommodate only some of our wishes about dates and trails. We may have to surrender some of our preferences in 1998 to get everyone hiking with a partner.

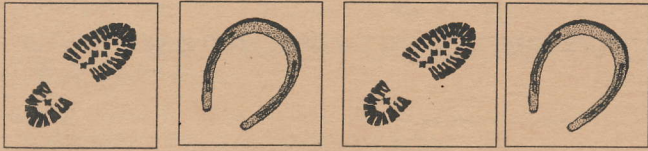
If you are currently assigned to hike solo, phone volunteers who are not on duty that day. If that fails, leave a message on Martha Moran's answering machine (970) 498-2776, and she may be able to help.

STONE LION TO "SHARE THE PROFIT" WITH PWV

Get a start on your holiday shopping or pick-up the latest best-seller Sunday, October 26, from 2 - 4 pm at the **Stone Lion Book Store**, 107 N College Ave., Fort Collins.

As part of its "Share the Profit" program, Stone Lion will donate 15 percent of total sales in the store during those two hours to Poudre Wilderness Volunteers! Refreshments will be served.





NOTES FROM THE TRAIL

Sue Whitman went beyond the call of duty in filing her report on a patrol of the Roaring Creek trail. So disgusted was she at the trash strewn within 50 yards of the trailhead that she submitted photos of two bags full of the debris she'd gathered there.

"Maybe we could have a contest for the most trash collected by a volunteer," Sue suggested. If we have such a contest, Sue holds the early lead!

Aside from the usual tidings of campsite violations, fire-rings destroyed, blown-down trees, dogs off leash and inadequate signage, our members have filed glowing reports of wildflowers and wildlife — information of great value to the Forest Service personnel who

dispense info to the public at the visitor center at Pitkin and College in Fort Collins.

Rasmus Erdal was recently hiking on the Grey Rock trail where he was captivated by the sight of his first rattlesnake in the wild. "Real Beautiful," he called the fat critter he found sunning itself near the top of the rock. The snake's warning rattle kept Ras from enjoying its beauty too closely. On another day, **John Lamb** also met two hiking parties who'd seen rattlers in the same vicinity.

Chuck Bell was surprised to spot a female whitetail deer in Hausmer Park on the Medicine Bow trail. While the whitetail population in Colorado is increasing, sightings are still relatively rare.

A large bull moose was sighted by **Tony Parent** and **Dave Hake** on the Comanche Lake trail. Dave also had the good fortune to encounter a family of three moose at the end of the Trap Park trail.



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