

## Partnership Project Success Story

<b>State:</b>	<b>Colorado</b>	<b>FS Funds Used:</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>National Forest/Grassland:</b>	<b>White River National Forest Eagle/HX Ranger District</b>	<b>Other Funds Used:</b>	<b>\$</b>
		<b>Partners:</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>Project Name:</b>	<b>Friends of the Eagles Nest Wilderness (FENW)</b>	<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	<b>\$</b>

**Project Purpose/Objectives:** Friends of the Eagles Nest Wilderness (FENW) has provided outstanding support of designated wilderness and recreation opportunities for over twelve years. Their mission is to assist the Forest Service with management of the Eagles Nest, Ptarmigan Peak, and Holy Cross Wildernesses through Education, Outreach, Advocacy, and Stewardship. They have embraced the Chief's 10-Year Wilderness Challenge and taken the Four Threats to National Forest System lands to heart and into action. FENW are effective because they are community volunteers that have commitment and passion about wilderness and specifically the lands near home.

**Work Performed:** The strength of FENW is a membership that has embraced Education and Outreach. In the early years, they recognized that the wilderness trailhead boards were inadequate and secured grants for replacement boards and information signs. Additionally, they secured funding and installed wilderness portal signs for all of the wilderness system trails in Summit County. In 2005, they piloted a wilderness volunteer program in Summit County and in 2006, expanded the program into Eagle County. FENW hosts volunteer training, manages schedules, and collects monitoring data. Their work provides field-level contacts in wilderness and teaches Leave No Trace travel and camping practices to other visitors. In 2006, they contacted over 800 visitors, provided counts on numbers of visitors and violations observed. Their regular presence has greatly improved visitor compliance with regulations in problem areas, such as Lily Pad Lake and the Booth Falls trails. FENW and the Forest Service collaborate to assure that volunteers are well trained in all aspects of field patrol – from traveling safely in the backcountry to providing “good host” customer service. These volunteers are exceptional and bring with them a lifetime of skills and abilities that assist others in learning more about wilderness and how to recreate in the backcountry with minimum impact on the land.

From its inception, FENW has been a “hands on” group. They strategize with the Forest Service on trail construction and maintenance projects and each year host 3-5 volunteer projects. Their largest project to date secured funding for new construction of a sustainable route to the summit of Buffalo Mountain and restoration of the nonsystem trail. They have assisted with puncheon, turnpike, and bridge construction projects using their volunteers and securing grants from Colorado State Trails to fund the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps.

In 2005, FENW expanded their program significantly in the Stewardship area. They focused volunteer time and secured grant funding for inventory and treatment of noxious weeds in Eagles Nest Wilderness. Despite and healthy aversion to chemicals, they understood the threat to native plant ecosystems and assisted the Forest Service with monitoring and treatment. Accomplishments in 2006 include: 6 acres treated at 49 sites and in 6 drainages in Eagles Nest Wilderness. The FENW added campsite inventory and monitoring into their program in 2005 and have provided site specific information on over 63 high use wilderness camp sites in both Eagle and Summit counties.

**Benefits:** FENW demonstrates great integrity as they fulfill the wilderness Advocacy portion of their mission. This group, more than most, works to build bridges and understanding on the importance of wilderness and its many values. Many times they have “extended a hand” and worked towards common ground with chambers of commerce, county commissioners, resort second home owners, ranchers, and all types of recreationists. FENW has raised the level of knowledge about wilderness in the local community and assured that residents and visitors have accurate information. They are fluent in discussing native plants and noxious weeds and in the importance of allowing fire to play its natural role in wilderness when appropriate. Their length of service, commitment to recreation and wilderness, and extent of program are outstanding examples of what a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can accomplish.

**Additional Information**

**Partners:** Friends of the Eagles Nest Wilderness (FENW)

