



COLORADO MOUNTAIN CLUB

WESTERN SLOPE GROUP

Canyon to Crest Call Western Slope Group October 2024



CMC members Diane, Anne and Jill are gesturing "peace" and "hang loose" on Charlie's hike to Upper Powderhorn Lake. Photo credit: Charlie Winger. [See below on how to submit your favorite photo for the newsletter!](#)

COLORADO MOUNTAIN CLUB
WESTERN SLOPE GROUP

Annual Dinner,
Potluck & Meeting

featuring author and traveler

DIANE WINGER

Love long treks but hate carrying a heavy pack? You're not alone. Join longtime CMC member, Diane Winger, as she reflects back on a variety of multi-day outings which were "supported" hikes. Whether the loads were carried by porters and guides, by mules, or by luggage transport services; or when the loads could be lightened because of the provisions provided at each night's destination, she and her travel companions found ways to travel light. From the Pacific Crest and John Muir Trails in California, to the Milford Track in New Zealand, to a trek in Patagonia, to the South West Coast Path of the United Kingdom, to a trek in the Everest region of Nepal, join Diane and friends for a range of beautiful experiences that didn't require carrying a heavy load.

Ute Indian Museum

17253 Chipeta Rd, Montrose

Admission: \$10 per person

Guests welcome!

Bring a dish to share (appetizer, main, side dish, dessert) and serving utensil. BYOBeverages.



Saturday
November 2
2024



EVENING SCHEDULE

- 4:30pm: Socializing
- 5pm: Dinner / potluck
- 6pm: Annual meeting
- 6:30pm: Diane's presentation
- 7:30pm: Evening conclusion

SIGNUP & CONTACT

www.tinyurl.com/wsg2024dinner

WSGofCMC@gmail.com



[CMC members, please login first to register.](#)

If you're interested in volunteering at the annual dinner, please let us know at WSGofCMC@gmail.com. We're needing help with table & kitchen set-up (4-4:30pm), check-in (4:30-5:30pm-ish) and tear-down & clean-up (7:30-8pm). Thanks!

Interested in Joining the Western Slope Group Council?

We're looking to fill two WSG Council volunteer positions -- Outings Chair and Vice Chair -- with two additional WSG members. Four WSG members restarted the WSG in June 2020. Three of us are still on the Council -- Anne Keil, Brenda Leach and John Broadbooks. We later added Jill Mattoon and Claire McCullough. We meet every other month, usually in person at a Council member's house. We all work together well and we enjoy each other's company. We've been consistently plugging away since 2020 at enhancing the Western Slope Group by adding more trips, activities and members. We now want to expand the WSG Council with two new members. Contact us at WSGofCMC@gmail.com if you're interested. Here are descriptions for the [Vice Chair](#) and the [Outings Chair](#).



Welcome New Trip Leader Marsha Pritchard!

I'm a Colorado native and recently moved to Montrose from the Boulder area. I've been hiking on the Western Slope for many years, yet feel I've only scratched the surface of what the area has to offer. I look forward to hiking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing new and familiar trails in the surrounding area.

Montrose Daily Press Hiking Safety Article

WSG Chair, Anne Keil, was recently interviewed by the Montrose Daily Press for hiking safety information. Check out the article below -- "How to stay safe on the trail".

How to stay safe on the trail

By KYLEA HENSELER
KYLEA.HENSELER@GMAIL.COM

When a Canadian hiker went missing near Norwood last week, local volunteers, search and rescue teams and the sheriff's office leapt into action, launching a days-long search party that included helicopters, ATVs and boots on the ground.

It's exactly the kind of search most outdoor enthusiasts hope to never be the subject of, so we chatted with Anne Keil, Western Slope group chair of the Colorado Mountain Club, about some basic trail safety tips to keep in mind before, during and after a wilderness experience.

The goal, she said, is for hikers to "educate yourself so you don't have to meet search-and-rescue."

Because, she noted, as was the case in the Nor-

wood incident, it can take days for a search team to find a missing person.

Missing in action

The hiker in this case, Victoria Chase, was among a group of clients with the Animas Valley Institute, based out of Durango, who embarked on an outing that entailed them spending time alone in nature, without cell phones, and fasting "to maximize" the experience, the San Miguel County Sheriff's Office said.

Fear not — while the hikers were primarily venturing out alone, they did have a buddy system in place that consisted of communicating with rocks, according to the sheriff's office. When Chase's partner found her rock unmoved they alerted the group, who alerted the authorities after finding Chase's tent unslept in.

Luckily, and journalists do use this word sparingly, Chase emerged safely from the forest four days later after seeing a helicopter searching for her. The sheriff's office still does not know how much the search effort cost.

"Obviously, this is the outcome we were hoping for, and we couldn't be happier for Ms. Chase and her family. The ultimate success of this mission is a real testament to our responders' tenacity, perseverance and dedication," Sheriff Bill Masters said on Sunday.

The institute later said Chase was carrying at least water and a cell phone, as well as other essentials including a flashlight, ground insulation and rain gear that helped her survive in the forest for four days.

Preparing for the trail

It's hard to nail down hard-and-fast rules for hikers and adventurers to follow, when so much of preparation depends on research and individual situations. For example, going for a walk on a trail near town doesn't require the same preparation as a multi-day overnight in the Maroon Bells Wilderness.

However, that brings us to one of the most important steps in preparing for a safe journey—research.

According to Keil, hikers should make sure they have a plan, and familiarize themselves with the route they plan to take. This includes checking the mileage and elevation gain of the trail, as well as any obstacles or danger elements like exposure or scrambling. Hikers would also do well to check weather forecasts, and find out, if they can, where and whether they will have cell service on the route.

"Be prepared, know where you're going and what you're getting yourself into," she said.

Hikers should also be aware of their own abilities, and build up to steeper and more difficult trails.

Whether you're planning a day hike in the front country of a weeklong backcountry camping trip, she recommends everyone carry the "ten essentials" in their hiking packs for a trek of any length.

"You never know what's going to happen," she said. "Even if it's not you, you could encounter someone on the trail who's lost or injured."

The list can be customized per trip, and



It's important to check the weather and bring plenty of food and water for any hike. (Kylea Henseler/Montrose Daily Press)

includes categories such as shelter, which could be as simple as an emergency blanket, sun protection, nutrition and navigation, which can range from maps to compasses to cell phone apps. Check out the sidebar for the full list and examples.

Aside from pack essentials, Keil stressed the importance of having the right gear for the job, noting it gets colder at high altitude, and that hikers should think twice before wearing street running shoes on 14ers.

She also noted the importance of communicating before, or sometimes on, a trek, including signing in and out of trail registers when they're available.

She also suggested letting someone who's not going on the trip know where you're going, what you're doing, and when you plan to return so they can alert the authorities

if you don't get back when you should.

She always tells people to be prepared to spend the night outside, as even if they or someone else are able to alert the authorities, it can take hours to days depending on location for a team to actually locate a hiker who's strayed off the grid, especially one without a communication or GPS device.

"Don't plan on search and rescue coming right away," she said.

While we encourage not banking on search and rescue, we credit our local teams and volunteers for saving many lives and limbs on our trails.

But, these rescues incur a cost, and many of these teams consist of volunteers and are funded by a combination of grants, donations and public funds.

Masters suggests that anyone who spends time outdoors secure a Colorado Outdoor Recreation

Search and Rescue Card.

The cost — \$5 for one year, for residents or \$20 for five years — provides reimbursements to search and rescue teams for costs incurred while searching.

Keil recommends everyone take basic first aid and CPR classes, and said those who plan on significant backcountry outings should consider a wilderness first aid course, which the CMC offers.

On Thursday, Sept. 5, the group is also hosting a free hiker safety talk at the Montrose Library meeting room at 6 p.m., where adventurers can meet the group, learn more tips and ask questions.

Registration is not required, but encouraged as the event is capped at 30 participants.

More information: <https://www.cmc.org/groups-sections/groups-around-the-state/western-slope-group/events/wsg-cmc-info-night-hiking-safety-talk>

The 10 Essentials

According to the Colorado Mountain Club, these 10 items should be in your hiking bag at all times—and they just might save your life.

- Navigation (phone apps, maps, compass, GPS device)
- Sun Protection
- Insulation (extra clothing, sleeping pad)
- Illumination (headlamp, flashlight)
- First Aid Supplies
- Fire Starter (lighter, matches)
- Repair kit
- Nutrition (food, protein gels)
- Hydration (extra water, filter electrolytes)
- Shelter (tent, blanket)

Conservation Corner

by Claire McCullough, WSG Conservation Chair

Utah State of Mind – The popularity of our Western Slope Group's hiking and camping trips to Utah, including an upcoming trip to the San Rafael Swell, warrants an update on recent developments impacting public lands in Utah.



Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument

The GSENM was established in 1996 by President Bill Clinton pursuant to the Antiquities Act. Originally 1.7 million acres were included, and later expanded to almost 1.9 million acres. In 2017, the monument was reduced in size by half because of a succeeding presidential proclamation. In 2021, President Biden restored the monument to its original size. This necessitated the development of a new resource management plan by the BLM. Last year, the BLM solicited comments from the public. In November of 2023, the CMC Western Slope Group submitted a comment regarding the proposed Resource Management Plan for the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. A link to the comment may be found in the January 2024 newsletter. On August 29, 2024, the BLM announced the release of the final resource management plan for the restored Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. According to the plan, core principles would emphasize “the protection and maintenance of intact and resilient landscapes using an area management approach to selectively allow for discretionary uses in appropriate settings.” Four management areas – front country, passage area, outback area, and primitive area – would be established. Photo credit of Grand Staircase - Escalante National Monument: BLM.

San Rafael Swell Travel Plan Comment



In July, we submitted a comment to the BLM regarding a draft travel management plan for the San Rafael Swell region. Currently 1,429 miles are open to motorized use in the 1.1 million acre area. Two of the BLM’s proposed alternatives would significantly increase the miles open to motorized use. We supported the alternative that prioritizes the protection of resources yet still leaves many of the existing routes open for motorized users. [You can read the comment here.](#) Photo credit of Crack Canyon, San Rafael Swell: BLM.



The State of Utah's Attempted Land Grab of Federal Lands

Recently, the State of Utah including the governor and state attorney general filed a lawsuit with the United States Supreme Court claiming that it is unconstitutional for the federal government to retain 18.5 million acres of land located within the state of Utah. Utah is alleging that these lands are “unappropriated” meaning that unlike national parks and forests, national monuments, military installations and Native American reservations, they have not been put to uses that the Utah leaders feel are “proper.” Utah Governor Cox is hoping to gain local control over these lands. Included in this attempted land grab is much of the San Rafael Swell, as well as land near Lake Powell and the Bears Ears National Monument. The Wilderness Society characterized the lawsuit as “a brazen and undemocratic attempt to force the handover of millions of acres of American’s public lands to the state — and ultimately to private companies planning to develop them.” The lawsuit has been described by the Editorial Board of the Salt Lake Tribune as a “total fantasy.” Photo credit of Lower Calf Creek, Grand Staircase - Escalante National Monument: Claire McCullough.

Heads-up on Hunting Season

Hunting season has started in Colorado. [Check out this CMC article which lists the dates for this year.](#) Be safe out there!





Durango Area CMC Update

At our September WSG Council meeting, we voted in Dan King as the new Durango Area Chair. Congrats Dan!

We're looking for Durango area volunteers to help plan activities (for which one does not have to be a leader) and we're also looking for trip leaders. Trip leader school is free and online!

Contact us at WSGofCMC@gmail.com for more info or to get involved!

WSG Facebook Group

We have a private Facebook group called "CMC Western Slope Group". This group is available to post photos, announce last minute trips, trip reminders or activities. If you're interested, send a request in Facebook to join the group.

ALL CMC OUTINGS : [The CMC Trips List & Map](#)

Guests must create an account and sign a waiver before signing up for trips and may attend up to 2 trips. If a trip is full, please sign up on the waitlist as there are participants that cancel. [Click here to find out about new trips after they're posted.](#)

TRIPS: All of our activities are in one place at [Western Slope Group Calendar](#)

Thursday, 9/26. [Hiking - Thomas Lakes](#). Moderate. Jennifer Rhamy.

Friday, 9/27. [Hiking - Crystal Mill Fall Colors Hike](#). Moderate. Anne Keil.

Saturday, 9/28. [Hiking - South Baldy, Middle Baldy and North Baldy Mountains](#). Challenging. Charlie Winger.

9/30-10/3. [Backpack - Conundrum Hot Springs](#). Challenging. Backpacking Section.

Friday, 10/4. [Hiking - Ribbon Trail, Bangs Canyon Recreational Area](#). Moderate. Victor Ketellapper.

Saturday, 10/5. [Hiking - Curecanti Creek Trail](#). Moderate. Jay Johnson.

Sunday, 10/6. [Hiking - North Vista Trail, Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park](#). Moderate. Daniel Glatter.

10/10-13. [Camp - WSG 5th Annual Green River Camping / San Rafael Swell Hiking Trip](#). Fee. Waitlist.

Thursday, 10/10. [Hiking - Old Woman Wash \(Green River Camping Participants Only\)](#). Easy. Anne Keil.

Friday, 10/11. [Hiking - Little Wild Horse Canyon \(Green River Camping Participants Only\)](#). Moderate. Jill Mattoon.

Friday, 10/11. [Hiking - Little Wild Horse & Bell Canyon \(Green River Camping Participants Only\)](#). Moderate. Jennifer Rhamy.

Saturday, 10/12. [Hiking - Straight Wash/Eardley Pool \(Green River Camping Participants Only\)](#). Easy. Bud Tasch.

Sunday, 10/13. [Hiking - Sego Canyon \(Green River Camping Participants Only\)](#). Easy. Jennifer Rhamy.

Saturday, 10/19. [Seminar - Late Migrating Birds at Pastorius Reservoir SWA \(Durango Area\)](#). Easy. Mike Foster via Sierra Club.

Sunday, 10/20. [Scramble – Leon Peak, Grand Mesa](#). Challenging. Daniel Glatter.

Saturday, 10/26. [Seminar - More Fall Birds along the Animas River \(Farmington NM\)](#). Easy. Mike Foster via Sierra Club.

Sunday, 11/10. [Hiking - Kokopelli Loops Trail](#). Moderate. Anne Keil.

TBD Sept/Oct 2025. [Palisade Plunge Hiker Shuttle](#). Difficult. Anne Keil.

COVID policy for trips: [updated Dec 9, 2022](#)

PRESENTATIONS / COURSES / EVENTS

Monday, 9/30. [Webinar- Moving from the American Mountaineering Center](#). CMC staff.

Saturday, 11/2. [2024 WSG Annual Dinner in Montrose](#). See above for more info. Fee.

[CMC Schools & Classes Webpage](#): **For some classes and schools that are offered on the full CMC calendar (typically on the front range or via ZOOM), we can arrange field days on this side of the state but need a minimum number of participants between the various CMC groups. Please let us know if something interests you.

[Trip Leader Training](#): **We are seeking trip leaders!** The free training consists of self paced online modules and one training hike plus Wilderness First Aid. Leader training online is also available to current leaders as a refresher.

[ATA and AIARE](#): Description and schedule for avalanche training courses, ATA curriculum is being updated and hopefully available online only this winter!

[Wilderness First Aid](#): Schedule for [front range locations](#).

[WFA Instructors Wanted](#): Are you WFA or higher (WFR, medical professional, etc.) certified and interested in helping recertify/teach WFA to our members and leaders locally? Teaching also renews your certification and the training is free.

Seeking Monthly Newsletter Content

We'd like your help! If you have requests for newsletter content or would like to contribute, let us know! The deadline to submit information, articles or photos is the **25th of each month** for the following month's newsletter. Email the WSG newsletter editor, Brenda Leach, at WSGNewsEditor@gmail.com. Here are our [past newsletters](#).

Western Slope Group Council

Chair & Outings Chair: Anne Keil (Montrose)

Vice Chair, Newsletter Editor, Annual Dinner Organizer: Brenda Leach (Ridgway)

Treasurer: John Broadbooks (Montrose)

Secretary: Jill Mattoon (Ouray)

Conservation Chair: Claire McCullough (Grand Junction)

Durango Area Chair: Dan King (Durango)

We're on the CMC website at [Western Slope Group, CMC Groups - Colorado Mountain Club](#). The next WSG Council meetings will be held 11/4. Zoom availability, time and location will be determined closer to the meeting dates. WSG members are welcome to attend.



Colorado Mountain Club
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