

## Blue Lakes Trail Colorado

The Colorado Fourteener's Initiative (CFI) works to preserve natural Colorado landscapes while also creating accessible trails for hikers and backpackers of all kinds. They emphasize the importance of "Leave No Trace" principles and participate in sustainable trail design practices. Blue Lakes trail is a heavily trafficked trail outside of Ridgway, CO nestled in the Mount Sneffels Wilderness Area. This was taken on my first backpacking trip in August 2023 and holds such a special place in my heart. When we first arrived at the trail there was an informational tent where rangers and volunteers educated people before leaving to hike or camp in the area. People on the trail were respectful of the mountains, these beautiful lakes, and this behavior is what allows for all of us to enjoy ourselves for many years to come.



To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: BLUE LAKES** to (719) 624-4979



**Copper Mountain  
Colorado**

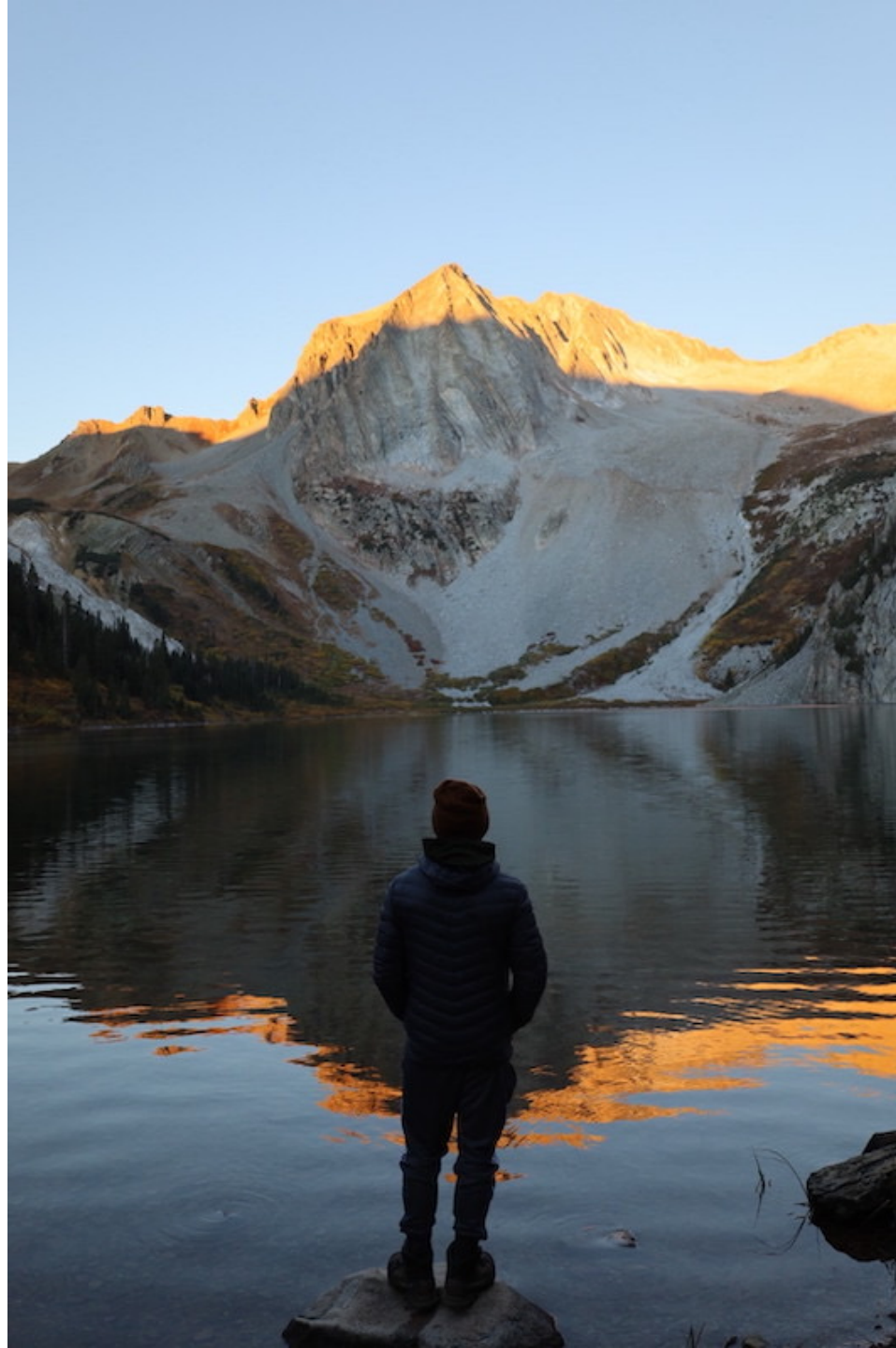
To **VOTE** for this  
photo **Text:**  
**COPPER** to (719)  
624-4979



The photo was taken at Copper Mountain during a long day of skiing. Climate change effects winter in the Rockies arguably more than any season. The historic snowfall this season will not last. We must take extreme measures to combat carbon emissions if we ever want future generations to experience this euphoric sport. Conserving our winters is something that everyone needs to get behind before it's too late.

## Alpine Glow

Each morning provides us with the opportunity to change our own and others lives. The Alpine Glow reminds us of that beauty.



To **VOTE** for this photo **Text:**  
**ALPINE GLOW** to  
(719) 624-4979

**Long Run  
Rampart Range Road  
Colorado**

The Conservation of public trails and parks is of particular importance to me. Running is one of the ways I connect with nature and I want people to be able to enjoy trail running throughout the Rockies-- and American West-- for generations to come. The commodification of public land saddens me, conservation is necessary



To **VOTE** for this photo **Text:**  
**LONG RUN** to  
(719) 624-4979



## Crystal Clear Creek

A crystal-clear creek running through a quaint shopping district. We ought to continue designing urban areas that are minimally disruptive to local habitats like this one.

To **VOTE** for this photo **Text:**  
**CLEAR CREEK** to (719) 624-4979

## Arapahoe Basin Ski Area Colorado

Arapahoe Basin is one of many popular ski areas in the great state of Colorado, world-renowned for its phenomenal repertoire of winter recreation opportunities. But, like many other ski areas, the threats posed by climate change are threatening the vast amounts of snowfall that the Rockies receive every year. It is projected that as the world warms, snow levels in many locations across mountain ranges are poised to decrease overtime if current emissions continue.

To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: A BASIN** to  
(719) 624-4979



## The Colorado River Utah

The Colorado River is a symbol of the changes being experienced in the Rocky Mountain West due to climate change. Ideally, it sustains people, plants, and animals over thousands of miles. Instead, though, it is stressed by increased aridity and extended droughts. It is an indicator of the disappearing snowpacks. Because of these stresses, the life of the West is being treated as a commodity. We need to ration it and sell it. The Colorado River and everything it represents is why the Rocky Mountain West needs to be preserved.



To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: RIVER** to (719) 624-4979



**Delicate Arch**  
**Arches National Park**  
**Utah**

A photograph of Delicate Arch on a windy spring day. Delicate Arch within Arches National Park in Utah is a phenomenal natural landmark. However, with such places come loads of crowds. It is important to maintain the levels of visitors coming to Arches and other national parks so that they don't get overcrowded. When I went to Arches, for example, they had a gated entry to get into the park, even during spring break, to control the park's traffic. However, I believe that more needs to be done by the National Park Service to alleviate overcrowding at popular national parks, such as Arches.

To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: ARCH** to (719) 624-4979





## Hooves on the Trail

The outdoors are a gateway to a plethora of exciting activities, and without a healthy environment, we may lose these picturesque experiences.

To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: HOOVES** to (719) 624-4979





## **Grand Teton National Park Wyoming**

Grand Teton National Park is one of the most popular tourist destinations, however, during my time there I was struck by the contrast between the natural beauty of the surroundings and the negative effects of the flood of visitation to the site. The influx of tourism has led to an increase in pollution, human waste accumulation, and many other issues. Therefore, in order to manage overuse, conservation must balance protection of the natural environment and access to these natural surroundings.



To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: GRAND TETON** to (719) 624-4979

## Mars Arizona

"My dad said this picture looks like it was taken on Mars, and it is hard to disagree. The dusty red Arizona sand combined with the distant yet foreboding rock formations create an almost otherworldly feeling. In a sense, it is hard to imagine that this was even taken on planet Earth. However, this is an image that has grown accustomed to the American Southwest, for better or for worse. While the Wile E Coyote and Roadrunner style landscape conjures other imaginative American stereotypes about the Southwest - cowboys, saloons, and tumbleweed, just to name a few - it is actually the direct result of a major environmental issue plaguing the region: the lack of water. According to the 2023 State of the Rockies Poll, 91% of Arizonans describe the current shortage of water in the West as a problem and 85% believe that urgent action needs to be taken on the Colorado River in order to prevent its rapid decline. I'll admit, when we drove to the top of this hill and took a picture, I was more enveloped with the beauty of the shot rather than the implications behind it. However, there is a reason that this image of rocks and sand features no trace of civilization, save for the highway splitting it in half and the cars on the road. And while many (such as myself) can be enamored with these sorts of sights, the reality is that these sights could soon become more abundant if not enough emphasis is placed on delivering adequate water to the region.

So yes, the red rocks and dry sands do make this image beautiful. However, this area's rugged beauty comes at the price of being uninhabitable. Mars may look cool, but also, we can't live there."



To **VOTE** for this photo Text: **MARS** to (719) 624-4979



## Mount Antero Colorado

This photo was taken at sunrise on a 15-mile expedition up the summit of Antero this summer with a resilient group of 13-year-olds. On this ridge, layers on and wind whipping, we stopped to admire the beauty of the ranges around us and the relentless sunrise that finally came after our grueling climb. Earlier on the expedition, our group did trail work for several days to fix a steep, rocky trail. We learned how difficult it is to create trails. Rugged places in nature must be protected; they have so many lessons to teach us about shifting winds, fragility, and toughness.

To **VOTE** for this photo Text **ANTERO** to (719) 624-4979

**After the Storm**  
**Arches National Park**  
**Utah**

Desert deluges are what bring life to these parched landscapes. Creating little oases that only last for a few days at best, these storms also bring vast beauty to the desert. The fleeting sunlight catching on the towering rock mirrors the fleeting presence of the water in the foreground. As drought becomes more and more of an issue in the desert southwest, moments like these may become even more fleeting, potentially to disappear altogether.

To **VOTE** for this photo  
**Text: AFTER STORM** to  
(719) 624-4979



## Lake Mead Nevada

Lake Mead's water levels are still decreasing, and that trend is unfortunately likely to continue as the world warms and the western United States dries up. That is why it is important to conserve water so that people who live in relatively dry places, like the Lake Mead area, can survive there, as water is a basic necessity for life anywhere. People in the southwest especially rely on Lake Mead and the Colorado River for their main water supply. Without it, it would be much harder to survive in the west.



To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: LAKE MEAD** to (719) 624-4979

## Perspective

The bright flowers and pungent colors of the spring and summer provide us with a happy feeling, but finding beauty in the rustic and often bleak shades of fall is far more powerful. Each environment, no matter how pretty or ugly to you or I, deserves consideration when planning conservation efforts.

To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: PERSPECTIVE** to  
(719) 624-4979



## High Lake Wyoming

This photo was taken during a hike in Jackson Wyoming. Like running, hiking has bridged the connection between myself and Nature. I was born in raised downtown in the concrete metropolis of Chicago and haven't experienced anything more peaceful than long hikes in the mountains. Conserving these spaces for posterity will allow everyone to appreciate nature-- something that is arguably needed in an increasingly urban world.



To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: HIGH LAKE** to (719) 624-4979





## **Big Horn Sheep**

### **New Mexico**

A herd of bighorn sheep are grazing on high alpine grasses near Wheeler Peak, NM. With this season's deep snowpack, only the windswept sections are accessible to them. Vegetation at high elevation is very fragile, so It's important that people stay on trails and don't interfere with the fragile habitat. Since there are few other options for big horn sheep this time of year, it's important that we don't disturb the areas they're dependent on.

To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: SHEEP** to (719) 624-4979

**Climber**  
**Clear Creek**  
**Colorado**

A constant reminder of the importance of conservation of nature comes through engaging in outdoor recreation which provides us with reflection on our place within these natural environments. Climbing presents a problem with balancing access to these outdoor spaces and preservation of these environments. When we engage in outdoor recreation, it is crucial to acknowledge how our interactions with nature threaten their existence. This photo captures the beauty of the balance between public access and the rugged elegance on the mountains that we are blessed to enjoy. (Clear Creek Canyon, Colorado).



To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: CLIMB to**  
**(719) 624-4979**



**Encroachment**  
**Colorado National Monument**  
**Colorado**

Photography is the art of light, which makes it a powerful tool to capture the true scope of light pollution. The light encroaching from nearby Fruita was just enough to illuminate the canyon walls, making this photo possible. Even this much light was more than enough to begin to snuff out the night sky, which presents challenges to many flora and fauna that rely on dark skies. Photography also creates opportunities to capture motion. In this case I was able to catch the light encroaching into the monument, flowing along the canyon's walls.



**A Red Tailed Hawk Flies Overhead  
Palmer Park  
Colorado**

Hawks are considered bioindicators, meaning their presence or absence can indicate the overall health of the environment. Monitoring hawk populations in the Rockies can provide important data on the status of the ecosystem and help us identify potential threats such as habitat loss, pollution, and climate change. Hawks also regulate populations of smaller birds, rodents, and other small mammals, thus helping to maintain a balanced ecosystem. This hawk was photographed flying over Palmer Park, in Colorado Springs.

To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: HAWK** to (719) 624-4979

**Alpine Mountains  
Mount Democrat  
Colorado**

Alpine mountainous lands such as this one are especially vulnerable to the devastations of climate change. At high altitudes, cold temperatures, snowmelt, and glacial runoff are essential parts of their ecosystem.



With the gradual increase in global temperature that snow is now gone, disrupting many species of plants and animals that call these places their home. We must make sure that locations like this don't lose their biodiversity.

To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: ALPINE MOUNTAINS** to (719) 624-4979



## Arizona Snow

### Arizona

In early April, I walked through a burnt area along the central Arizona Trail, covered in a thin layer of snow. As I walked, it was sunny and snowing. The scene captured the harsh juxtaposition of intense weather that forests must increasingly withstand due to climate change. The burnt trees surrounded by snow reminded me of the intimate, compounding relationship between wildfires and snowpack: As wildfires increase, cleared forests hold a larger snowpack, but without trees and other foliage to stabilize the ground, intense erosion and run-off occur when this snow melts. The run-off increases the likelihood of drought, as less water is absorbed in the soil. This makes forest restoration harder and promotes further burns.

To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: ARIZONA SNOW** to (719) 624-4979

**Capitol Lake  
Colorado**



This picture was taken about halfway through the hike to Capitol Peak, a 14er generally accepted as the hardest in Colorado. The difficulty of the second half of the route must have driven the crowds away, because even though my hike to the lake was an almost entirely flat six miles, it was deserted. I thought that I recognized what an overused trail looked like, but this hike made me realize I have never given enough credit to just how different a lightly traveled landscape looks.

To **VOTE** for this photo **Text:**  
**CAPITOL LAKE** to (719) 624-4979

To **VOTE** for this photo **Text**



To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: 10 MINUTE DRIVE** to (719) 624-4979

**10-minute Drive**  
**Garden of the Gods**  
**Colorado**

This incredible natural work of art, located just a ten-minute drive from downtown Colorado Springs, is an exhibition of the strange vivid colors, dramatic cliff faces, and stateliness of rock formations. It has remained preserved through the hard work of local nature conservancies. This photo demonstrates the wild weather contrasts of sun and rumbling thunder on the same day; it captures the unpredictable beauty of the Rocky Mountain West.



## Sunbeams in Frasier Colorado

Many people come to Colorado for the 300 days of sunlight, but often forget to look up. During 2021, the West coast was ablaze with fires, bring smoke, smog, and pollution into the front range, obscuring the sun behind fiery red plumes. The Colorado sun shoots through the clouds beautifully, but fills smoke with a red anger, reminding us of the importance of preserving our skies.



To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: SUNBEAMS** to (719) 624-4979



**Rio Grande Gorge  
New Mexico**

This photo depicts the Rio Grande Gorge, cut by the Rio Grande over thousands of years. The bits of green vegetation visible in the photo are like all the other life in the Southwest: totally dependent on the water that flows of the Rockies into a few key rivers. The low level of the river in the gorge reminds us of the megadrought that plagues the Southwest right now and the precarious state of the water we all drink.

To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: RIO GORGE**  
to (719) 624-4979





**Backyard View**  
**Jackson Hole**  
**Wyoming**

A photo from my friend's backyard in Jackson Hole, Wyoming features the Teton Mountain Range in the background. The presence of the Tetons is crucial because they serve as a reminder of the powerful presence of nature. Appreciating views like these may seem simple, but they are especially important because they allow us to feel connected to our surroundings. This connection reminds us of the importance of preserving nature so we do not have to rely on past photos for spectacular views.

To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: VIEW (719) 624-4979**

This photo was taken during the peak of the Covid Pandemic. Days like this held me together and impressed upon me the importance of access to public lands and outdoor spaces, no matter the circumstances. The mountains pictures are my home mountains, the Bridgers, just outside of Bozeman, Montana. Just as important as difficult-to-access places are the ones that are familiar and comfortable.



**Looking South**  
**Bridgers Mountain Range**  
**Montana**

To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: LOOKING SOUTH**  
to (719) 624-4979



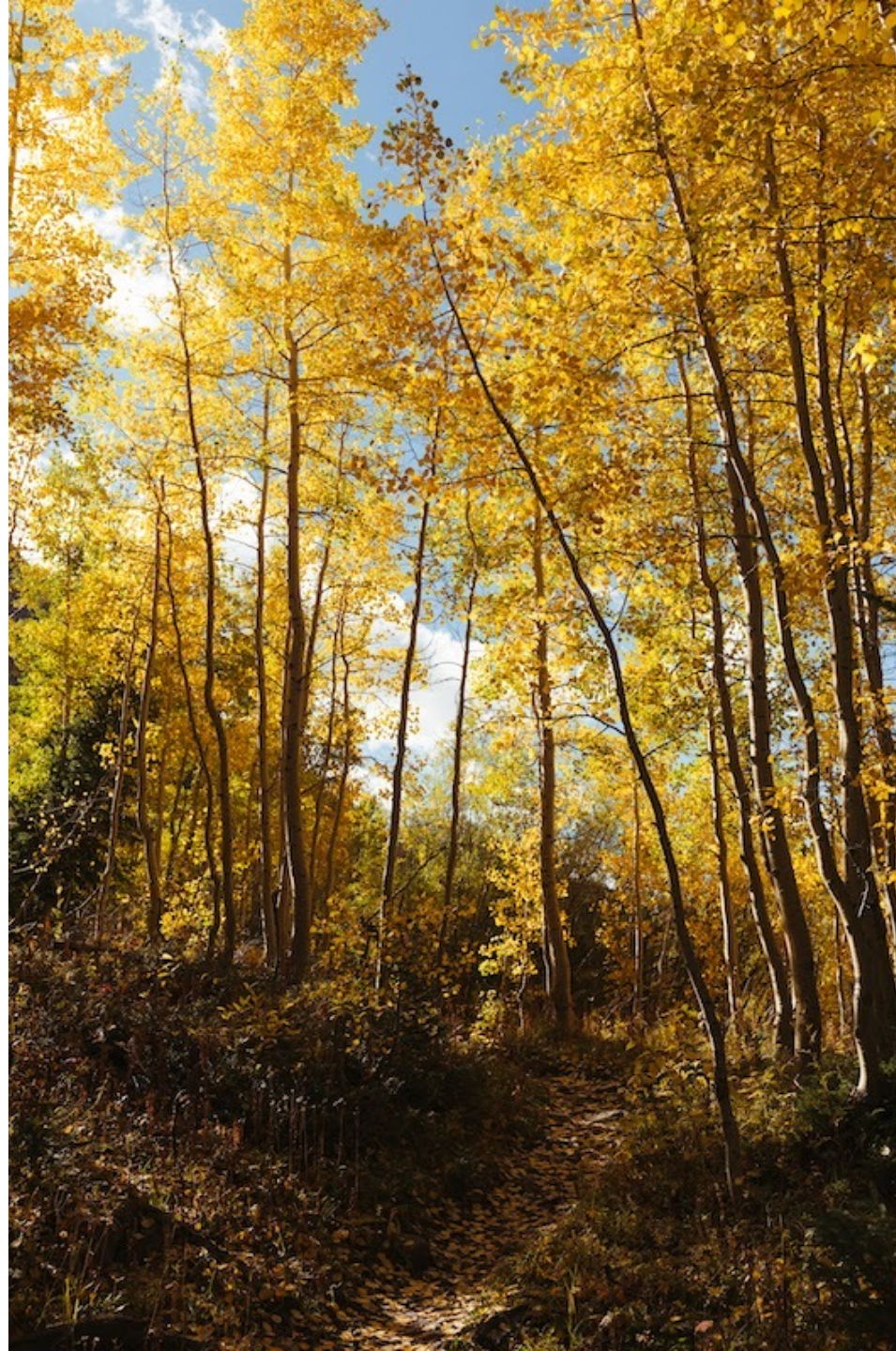
## Stormy Clouds Rolling Away Colorado

Petrichor: the pleasant smell after rain, when the land is dry from drought. This smell that reminds me of my childhood is all but gone now, with Colorado remaining drier than it has in years past. However, this cleansing smell after the rain serves to remind us that, despite our mistakes, life will improve.



To **VOTE** for this photo **Text:**  
**STORM CLOUDS** to  
(719) 624-4979

To **VOTE** for this photo  
Text: **SNOWMASS** to  
(719) 624-4979



## **Snowmass Wilderness Colorado**

The glow of the sun through golden Aspen trees is a staple of Colorado fall. In fact, Aspens are special in that they let this light through, creating prime conditions for this phenomenon, and nurturing many types of forest life. Yet this beautiful and unique scene is threatened by climate change. Consistently drier soil is causing increased mortality in groves all over the United States. Specifically in Colorado, Aspens are found to have the highest mortality rates in groves located on dry, south-facing slopes, leading researchers to believe that drought should be credited for this decline. Conservation of these special ecosystems is critical not only for the golden landscape of Colorado Octobers, but also for global biodiversity.

**Bison**  
**Yellowstone National Park**  
**Wyoming**

By 1992, there were less than 30 bison in Yellowstone. On the brink of extinction, the recovery of the American bison is one of the most impressive feats in wildlife and conservation management. However, during my time in Yellowstone, I felt grateful for the preservation of this beautiful, stoic animal and concerned with the zoo-like attraction that tourism has created. Despite the history of near extinction of the American bison, tourists are often seen invading the space and forming crowds around these animals. For me, the bison is a constant reminder of the importance of wildlife conservation and a warning for the fragility of their species.

To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: Bison** to (719) 624-4979





## Baca Campus Colorado

Though the beauty of the San Luis Valley shines through in this photo, the lack of precipitation in the area is causing pressing issues for residents of the area, especially people working in agriculture. In order for people to be able to continue to live there with their current livelihoods, the way water is used will need to change drastically.

To **VOTE** for this photo  
**Text: BACA** to  
(719) 624-4979



## Lost Creek Wilderness

### Colorado

Hiking through Lost Creek Wilderness, it's hard not to be compelled by the aesthetic of the ruined landscape. The curious boulders and rock domes left bare by the Hayman Fire elicit a voyeuristic excitement; granite that once barely peaked out over treetops suddenly stands tall in a beautiful yet twisted way. There's a broader truth being revealed by the forest fire, too; in a world that is increasingly hard to grasp, scorched trees make intelligible an otherwise inarticulate sensation of something gone wrong—the forest fire speaks plainly of inadequate response to climate disaster. It does away with any pretense of alienation, making clear the connection between disaster and the banality of our day-to-day consumption of excess. Only in the image of the forest as something irreconcilably in ruin are we forced to consider how wilderness comes to be reified as a pristine space. The beauty of the forest fire is radically different from the static image of the romantic alpine scene; the ashes of flora, fauna—*asbestos* from old houses—do not prompt us to merely gaze, but require of us a choice between submission or resistance in the face of climate disaster.



To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: LOST CREEK** to (719) 624-4979

## Backyard in Loma Colorado

Panoramic photograph of a backyard in Loma, CO after a summer rain. The greenery and color of natural features prevail even as uglier aspects of land use—wind-swept garbage from highway traffic, rotting old sheds—crop up over the area.



To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: BACKYARD** to

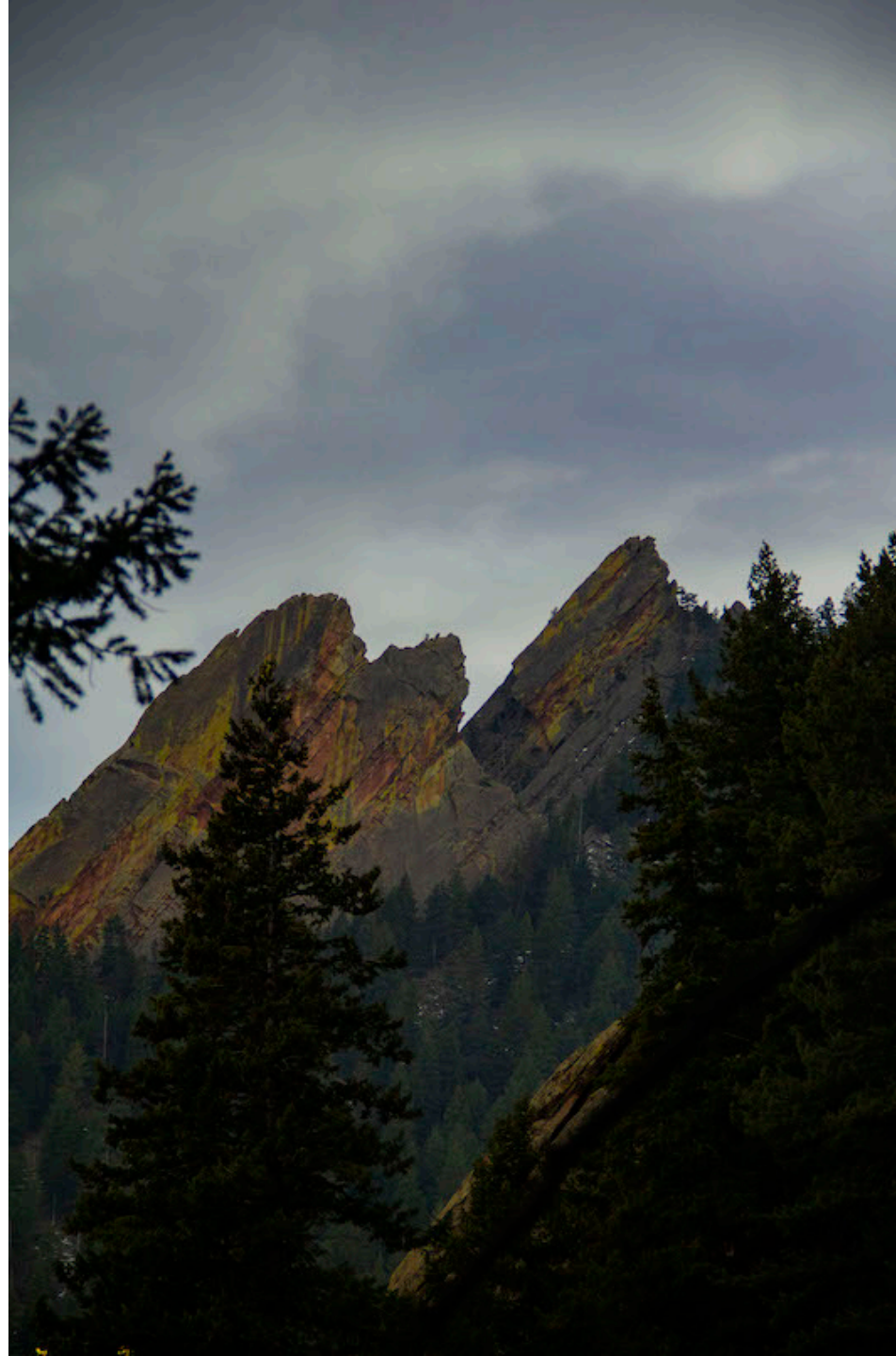
## Summit Manitou Incline

This photo is of the summit of the Manitou Incline. Including an image of a hike that is in our own 'backyard' is important because it demonstrates that conservation issues affect everyone and it shows an area Colorado Springs residents frequently enjoy is also at risk. There are plenty of hiking trails on the way down from the incline and it is important to respect the surrounding spaces. The demarcation of the trails is an effort to preserve the nearby wildlife habitats and to protect against unnatural rates of erosion.



To **VOTE** for this photo  
**Text: SUMMIT** to  
(719) 624-4979

To **VOTE** for this photo **Text:**  
**FLATIRONS** to (719) 624-4979



## **The Flatirons** **Colorado**

The Flatirons lie just West of Boulder and provide the residents of the city an easy escape from corporate life. The jagged and striking nature of the Flatirons reminds us that in Colorado, the line between wilderness and industry is becoming less stark as cities and town start to creep into undisturbed ecosystems.

## A Watchful Gaze Colorado

This young mountain goat seemed almost as curious of me as I was of them – they never took their eyes off me. I think curiosity and intrigue are fundamental steps to build recognition and urgency for combatting climate disruption. In order to begin working towards a sustainable future, it is essential that we all hold vast curiosity, awe, and respect for our world.

To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: WATCHFUL GAZE** to  
(719) 624-4979



**The Beartooths**  
**Yellowstone National Park**  
**Wyoming**

Indian Paintbrush and other wildflowers frame The Beartooths Mountain Range near Yellowstone National Park. These mountains are some of my favorites in the world and feel truly wild. Although parts of the range are in a national park, the deeper you travel into the mountains, the fewer people you see. You are instead accompanied by pika, mountain goats, grizzly and black bears. Plus, a healthy mosquito population. These are the kinds of wild places that must be preserved.



To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: BEARTOOTHS** to (719) 624-4979



## Mount Sherman Colorado

A group of ten and eleven-year-olds stands on this ridge! They have climbed for a few hours and are blown away by this sunrise. Bringing children into nature helps them connect with themselves and the greater world. I will never forget this sunrise. I hope these kids never will either.

To **VOTE** for this photo **Text:**  
**SHERMAN** to (719) 624-4979

## Mount Sopris Colorado



This photo was taken at sunrise on top of Mt. Sopris in Basalt, Colorado at the end of summer 2020, during a time plagued with wildfire, heat waves, and political uncertainty. While walking along the ridge, it seemed like some foul weather might catch us, but as we reached the summit, it was clear that the sun had broken through the thick cloud cover to shine down on the town I'd always called home. The same town I'd stood in as ash rained down on my backyard from the Lake Christine Fire in 2018. The same place that was about to become gravely threatened by the Grizzly Creek Fire. Time spent without serious, concentrated efforts to increase forest health and diversity and spread wildfire awareness is time that offers an opportunity for destructive fires to ignite, and tear through wild and residential areas alike. This photo serves as a reminder of the places we have a responsibility to protect through conservation and proper wildfire management.

To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: SOPRIS** to  
(719) 624-4979



## Rainbow After Downpour Colorado

Frasier is a beautiful county in Colorado, filled with clear water, green trees, and blue skies. Yet, due to the tourism of Winter Park Ski resort, Frasier is being overused, making land polluted. Even though recovery has been strong after the Frasier fires, we need to continue to protect Frasier.



To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: RAINBOW** to (719) 624-4979

## Wet Tents

Sangre de Cristos  
Colorado

This photo was taken in the early morning after a night of rain in a forest in the Sangre de Cristos, the southern tip of the Rocky Mountains. Outdoor recreation, like the camping this photo depicts, has a powerful ability to make people feel connected to the land, a key step in getting them to help protect it. Sleeping in the outdoors and being the whim of the elements reminds us that humans are a part of nature, not masters of it, and that we must treasure and preserve it.

To **VOTE** for this photo **Text:**  
**TENTS** to (719) 624-4979





**Rocky Mountain Gold**  
**Tennessee Pass**  
**Colorado**

An aspen grove near Tennessee Pass, Colorado holds on to its fall leaves in late September. Spending time in the wilderness of Colorado, the state where I was born and raised, always invokes in me an increased vigor to sustain and protect natural spaces. I yearn for the generations that come after me to be able to experience the magic and wonder of these spaces and to be nourished by their peace and beauty.

To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: GOLD** to (719) 624-4979

**Moose in Burn Area  
Rocky National Park  
Colorado**

A moose grazes on vibrant grasses within a charred forest in Rocky Mountain National Park. The stark contrast serves as a reminder of how fragile, yet resilient, nature can be. While the recent burn has allowed the undergrowth to take advantage of redistributed nutrients, it will take a while for the pine forest to fully recover. Prescribed burns may be an effective and controllable solution.



To **VOTE** for this photo **Text:**  
**MOOSE BURN AREA** to  
(719) 624-4979



## Dawn at Lake Dorothy Colorado

Lake Dorothy is a popular hiking spot outside of Boulder but is far less popular for camping. There is an extraordinary difference between the 12pm crowd and the completely deserted lake at 6am, when this picture was taken. It exacerbates the effect that people have had on the area, even though it retains so much of its natural beauty. Many of the rocks in this photo are smoothed over by thousands of rouge hikers trying to get a slightly better spot to eat their lunch, which serves as a reminder that the effect people have on landscapes is most evident when they are not there.

To **VOTE** for this photo Text: **LAKE DOROTHY** to (719) 624-4979

**Paint Mines**  
**Paint Mines Interpretive**  
**Center**  
**Colorado**

The beauty of the Paint Mines is the product of a well-balanced, yet very vulnerable, ecosystem. The vibrant colors come from different iron oxides in the clay and the unique slopes are formed by erosion over many years.



However, this slow process is accelerated by storm runoffs and human interaction. In addition, the parks natural grasses are being invaded by noxious weeds that are blown in from the highway nearby. To protect gorgeous natural landscapes like this, we must preserve the preexisting ecosystem whilst limiting our own human impact.

To **VOTE** for this photo **Text:**  
**PAINT MINES** to (719) 624-4979

## Three Dry Thistles Stand Still

Many species of bees, butterflies, and other pollinators rely on thistles for nectar and pollen. Protecting and conserving thistle populations can help preserve pollinator populations and promote biodiversity in the Rockies.



To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: THISTLE** to (719) 624-4979



## St. Mary's Glacier Colorado

Screams echo from across the glacial lake, freezing cold water splashes up against my legs, and boots crunch under the gravel and scree covered trail. St. Mary's Glacier, a famous spot to hike to just outside of Boulder, CO, has lost 52% of its mass over the past 100 years and is still receding, according to MSU of Denver. As the summers get hotter and hotter out west, the glacier continues to shrink, threatening its very existence. As this resource continues to deplete, so does just another water resource within the Rocky Mountain region.

To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: GLACIER** to (719) 624-4979





**The Oasis  
Hamburger Rock Campsite  
Utah**

This photo was taken in the late evening just outside of Canyonlands Utah. For decades, this location has served as a sanctuary for those in need of a break from the rest of society. However, nearly every aspect of this environment, from the soil to the sandstone, is incredibly fragile. One small misstep could dislodge a rock from the perch upon which it had rested for millennia. This exemplifies not only people's need to be in and interact with nature, but also our overwhelming ability to damage it.

To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: OASIS** to (719) 624-4979

## Roadside Wyoming

One of the most striking and rare traits of the Rocky Mountain West is its accessibility beauty. This photo was taken of the side of the road driving near Jackson, WY. In every direction not captured, there were herds of bison grazing. We did not need to pay an entrance fee or hike to see this view. We couldn't have escaped the beauty of it if we tried. It was magical.

To **VOTE** for this photo **Text:**  
**ROADSIDE** to (719) 624-4979





**Grazing Moose**  
**Rocky Mountain National Park**  
**Colorado**

A moose grazes by a river in Rocky Mountain National Park. Although this land is protected, it's not an undisturbed habitat. People watch from a nearby rock. The surrounding area seems to have been cleared of trees recently. In the background, there's evidence of forest fires: There's a strong orange haze covering the sun and the distant mountains, as well as charred and dying pine trees with brown needles.

To **VOTE** for this photo **Text:**  
**GRAZING MOOSE** to  
(719) 624-4979

## Local Favorite Places

### Garden of the Gods and Pikes Peak Colorado

This a shot of Garden of the Gods and Pikes Peak, at sunrise. As grateful as I am for the incredible wilderness of Colorado, my favorite places are the ones in my backyard. These spaces are just as important to conserve and protect as any other.

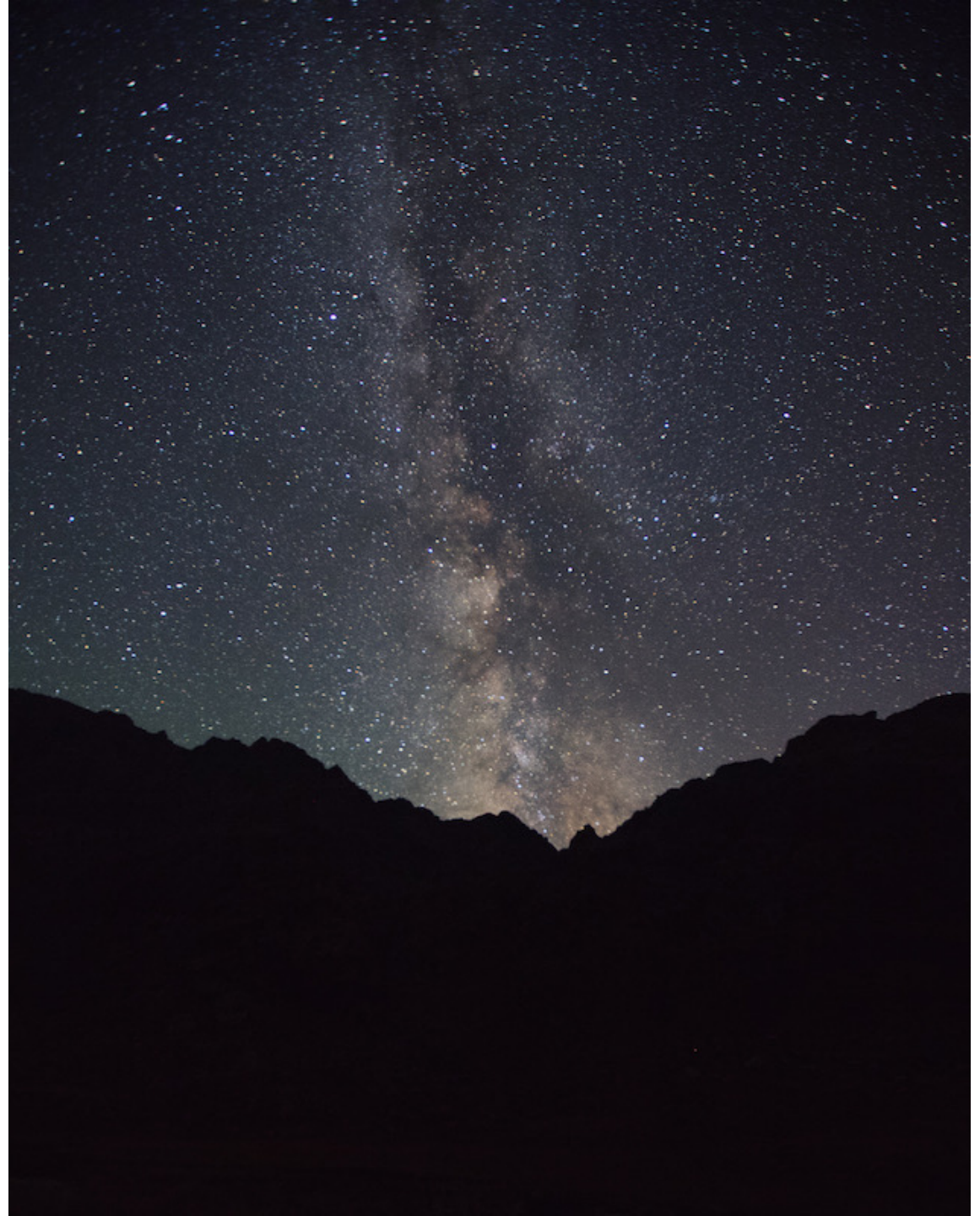


## Strawberry Lakes

### Colorado

Light pollution has become an increasing issue as cities, neighborhoods, and people expand into our natural spaces. Before artificial light sources existed, everyone could look up and gaze at the Milky Way. Light pollution has disrupted the natural balance between night and day in environments around the world. The International Dark-Sky association works to protect the night sky so that today's population can begin preserving it for generations to come and continue to enjoy its beauty. This photograph was taken on a three-day backpacking trip outside of Basalt, CO, I witnessed the brightest stars I had ever seen. As we listened to "Big Black Car" play, my close friend, Hayley, pointed out constellations one by one. It is moments like this one that make me especially grateful for outdoor spaces that are still wild, beautiful, and filled with surprises.

To **VOTE** for this photo **Text:**  
**STRAWBERRY** to (719) 624-4979





**Golden Sun**  
**New Mexico**

This photo of a stunning sunrise was taken from the top of Urraca Mesa in New Mexico. The deep golds and oranges are beautiful, but they are also hauntingly similar to the darkened and orange skies that raging wildfires cause. This parallel is especially poignant because Urraca Mesa was almost consumed by a wildfire just a few months after this photo was taken, and the vegetation only survived because of the rapid response of wilderness firefighters.

To **VOTE** for this photo **Text:**  
**GOLDEN SUN** to (719) 624-4979

## Mule Deer Watches Cautiously

Deer serve as seed dispersers, aiding in the spread of plant species and promoting biodiversity. Their foraging and browsing behaviors shape the structure and composition of vegetation communities in the Rockies, which in turn impacts other wildlife species that rely on these habitats. Deer are also a primary food source for predators such as mountain lions and wolves. Conserving deer populations and their habitats in the Rockies is vital for preserving the overall health and biodiversity of the ecosystem.



To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: MULE DEER** to (719) 624-4979



## Night in Aravaipa Canyon Arizona

My last night backpacking in Aravaipa Canyon: a 10-mile-long gorge in a larger BLM Wilderness Area northeast of Tucson. This area was originally occupied by the Aravaipa Apache peoples: hunter-gatherers who tended the land until it was violently seized by the Spanish. Recalling the past Indigenous presence on this land helps me get in touch with the sacredness of natural spaces. During my time in this beautiful area, I encountered javelina, frogs, coatimundi, a wild turkey, and many other birds and insects. The abundance of wildlife reminded me of the importance of public lands in maintaining wildlife habitats.



To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: NIGHT** to (719) 624-4979



## Delta Lake Overlook Wyoming

This photo is of the area surrounding Delta Lake, Wyoming; a sought-after spot for hikers. After a long, hard hike, the view of the lake and its surroundings feel well deserved. However, this beautiful area is subject to litter and wildlife damage due to its popularity. This photo serves as a reminder of our human impact and presence within natural areas and encourages conscientious actions regarding the environment.

To **VOTE** for this photo **Text:**  
**DELTA LAKE** to (719) 624-4979



**Landscape Holds Memory**  
**Grand Teton National Park**  
**Wyoming**

This photo was taken across from Grand Teton National Park on a backroad that Henry Hodde (left) had driven before. He was telling us the story-- of the almost impassable road to get up there and of the sunset they found when they turned the treacherous corner--*it was one of those sunsets that couldn't decide which direction to set, so it set all around you.* Quietly, we watched this sunset frame the Tetons. We made a new memory. This photo serves as a reminder of the millions of stories that are connected to landscape across the Rocky Mountain West. These stories are a reason why this land is worth protecting.



To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: MEMORIES** to (719) 624-4979

## Indian Peaks Sunset Colorado

Like so many hikes close to Boulder, the hike over Arapahoe Pass is slightly jarring for the first couple hours. It takes 45 minutes to go from the Tesla bespeckled, yoga pants wielding city to a view that looks completely untouched by people. To the right of this extraordinary view is the Arapahoe Glacier, which previously covered much of the area but is melting so fast it was claimed by the city of Boulder as an official municipal water source. Though it will be hard to restore the glacier, it's looming absence serves as a reminder to do our absolute best to preserve the rest of the area, as we have already changed so much of the landscape.



To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: INDIAN PEAKS** to (719) 624-4979

## Peaks 1 and 2 Colorado

Across Lake Dillon peaks 1 and 2 tower over the water and the town of Frisco. The majesty of these peaks hides a whole town below, which goes to show that society and nature can coexist. These snowcapped peaks and reservoir also remind us of the importance of our water resources and their increasing scarcity.



To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: PEAKS 1 AND 2** to (719) 624-4979

## Driving West Glenwood Canyon Colorado

Taken from the inside of my car while driving from Colorado to Utah, the landscape becomes lonelier and more barren. The interstate system has connected so many people and allows us to explore places in the West, yet also cuts through lands that were once pristine. We must be careful to not let this system exploit the mountains in the name of more highways.



To **VOTE** for this photo **Text: DRIVING WEST** to (719) 624-4979