

many of the nation's most flammable areas. With this edition he uses all his years of fire experience to create a comprehensive resource that homeowners and at-risk communities nationwide can use to create more fire-

resistant landscapes and structures. Kent also has more than 30 years of gardening experience and has worked on hundreds of landscape projects.

Until next month, happy reading.

The staff at Covered Treasures can be contacted at books@ocn.me.

March Library Events

Adult Reading Program continues; Take and Make Kits available

By Harriet Halbig

Beginning in mid-January, the Monument Library reopened to a limited number of patrons at a time. Patrons are welcome to come in and retrieve their holds and browse the collection for new reading and viewing materials. Computers are available and, although a reservation is no longer required, they must be booked with a staff member before use.

Copying and printing services are also available on a self-serve basis. Those with a library card can print or copy 10 pages per day for no charge.

For your convenience, tax forms and information on tax preparation help from such organizations as AARP are available on our website. Although we do not stock paper forms, they can be readily printed from the website ppld.org. Again, patrons can print or copy 10 pages per day for free.

The 2021 Winter Adult Reading Program continues through March 31.

A limited number of Take and Make kits is available each week for children (ages are specified on the package), teens, and adults. These are craft items packaged with all needed materials.

Curbside service remains available. You can call 488-2370 ahead of your arrival and find your materials outside or simply drop by and ring the doorbell on the shelf near the door and we will come to you.

Some furniture has been reintroduced for those who might wish to come and read a newspaper. We do, however, request that you keep your visit relatively brief.

A limited number of donated materials is now being accepted. Please limit these to 10 or fewer items at a time because we lack storage space due to material

quarantine requirements.

All programs are cancelled until further notice, and meeting rooms remain unavailable. Water fountains and children's play areas are also unavailable.

Masks are required for all patrons age 3 and older, and social distancing is also required.

There is now an indoor book drop available for your returns.

The hours for the Monument Library are 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. The library is closed on Sunday.

We hope to see you soon at the library.

Harriet Halbig may be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me.

On the Trail (in memory of Tim Watkins)

Santa Fe Open Space to open later this year



Above: Ben-Lomond Mountain. *Courtesy of El Paso County Parks Department.*

By Steve Pate

In the fall of 2004, Tim Watkins wrote the first of several "On the Trail" columns for *OCN*, encouraging the responsible use of Tri-Lakes area trails by hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians. He urged the

respectful use of the beautiful land in our area and encouraged trail users to treat private landowners and the U.S. Forest Service with courtesy and respect. Watkins worked with Friends of Monument Preserve (FOMP) and others to design and maintain our area

trails.

FOMP has publicized a new area, the Santa Fe Open Space (SFOS), which is scheduled to open to the public in late summer or early fall of this year. This area was formerly known "informally" as the Elephant Rock Open Space.

In 2017, El Paso County purchased 65 acres of pristine land just off the New Santa Fe Regional Trail. The county Parks & Recreation Department has developed a Master Plan for the area, which includes trail design, conservation, cultural considerations, and capital projections.

The SFOS includes ponderosa pines, scrub oaks, and rolling meadows that will allow hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians to get off the well-used Santa Fe Trail. Most of the single-track trails will be relatively easy but still allow great views of Elephant Rock, Ben Lomond Mountain, and mountains along the Front Range—Sundance, Chautauqua, Raspberry, Mount Herman, and others. Around 2 miles of trails are planned.

FOMP has published some excellent information and links to get more details about the SFOS Master Plan and the county write-up laying out features of this open space. The SFOS Master Plan includes cultural and historical timeline, including: The only known inhabitants were Native American tribes that date to the Folsom period 10,000 years ago; more recently the Mountain Ute, Arapahoe, Kiowa, Sioux, Cheyenne and others have been present; and in 1820 an Army expedition led by Major Stephen H. Long camped at the base of what is now known as Elephant Rock—at that time it was called Castle Rock, then Phoebe's Arch, and so on.

Go to fomp.org. The FOMP site provides direct links to the SFOS Master Plan and the SFOS web page.

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High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

Gardening for bird safety: ditching the feeders

By Janet Sellers

Our gardens can keep Colorado wildlife wild

Ours is a bird-friendly garden of seed plants and fruiting trees in the bountiful forest environs. With our frigid spring snows, we watch birds from a nearby window. Available resources frequently change in nature and birds adjust; even when we offer winter feeders, the birds exhibit cautious behaviors, landing and leaving abruptly.

Offering feeders seems like an innocent practice, but Colorado Parks and Wildlife actually discourages people putting out feeders between March and November because it attracts bears and other animals. So, what are the bird lovers among us to do to attract just the birds? Parks and Wildlife has these suggestions:

- Add brightly colored, trumpet-shaped flowers around your home to attract hummingbirds, butterflies, and a variety of beneficial insects.
- Water sources, especially running water, do a better job of attracting a wider variety of birds year-round than a bird feeder.
- Keep your water sources small. Bears don't sweat, so larger ponds and uncovered hot tubs can actually attract bears looking for a place to cool off.

Bird feeders are only appropriate when placed outside in the winter months when bears are hibernating. Being responsible in these ways about attracting birds means we're doing our part to keep Colorado's wildlife wild.

Hummingbird male scouts arrive soon

Many of us have long enjoyed watching humming-

birds and putting out feeders. Hummingbirds don't rely on feeders, requiring blossom nectar and insects in their diet, and hummers must visit 1,000 to 2,000 flowers per day, so planting flowers optimizes their garden visits. Besides feeders attracting bears, Salmonella bacteria are spread at feeders contaminated by feces, or by eating feed off the ground. Salmonella bacteria can also cause illness in humans and domestic animals. Sick birds cannot swallow feed because of an infection in the throat.

Birds care about their people neighbors

For decades, we had a family of magpies living in our pine tree. Daily, one would peer in the window to check on my children napping. Another time, "our" magpie came to the door and started squawking loudly. I opened the door and it hopped along to show me