



BISON PEAK GAZETTE

JOIN US FOR AN UNFORGETTABLE ADVENTURE

SUMMER 2024 by LILY FERNANDEZ AND JOHN KESSEL & TEAMBPL


Our Mission

Bison Peak Lodge at Puma Hills is dedicated to facilitating the emotional and physical healing of veterans, first responders and their families by providing premiere facilities and programming in a pristine natural environment.

Everytime you stay at Bison Peak Lodge, you are contributing to our ability to host veterans, first responders and their families free of charge.

The co-founders, Lily and John, have varied backgrounds working with military and first responders that inspired this non-profit at Bison Peak Lodge. They want to recognize those who have served as veterans and first responders by providing a rejuvenating and tranquil space that supports physical and emotional healing.

A Look Back in Time



Utes have been here for over 1,000 years, and we have Prayer trees and more Culturally Modified Trees to show you. When gold was found in the 1860s in Tarryall Creek, over 1,000 prospectors lived about eight miles downriver from the lodge, and they took out over 2 million dollars of gold, worth over 60 million today. Second Creek and the ten beaver ponds and 200 year old aspen are on the south side of our valley first was used as a potato farm, and then as ranchland for cows. The cabin at our entrance is nearly 100 years old. The Mormon Church built the vault toilets in the 1950s as a church retreat.

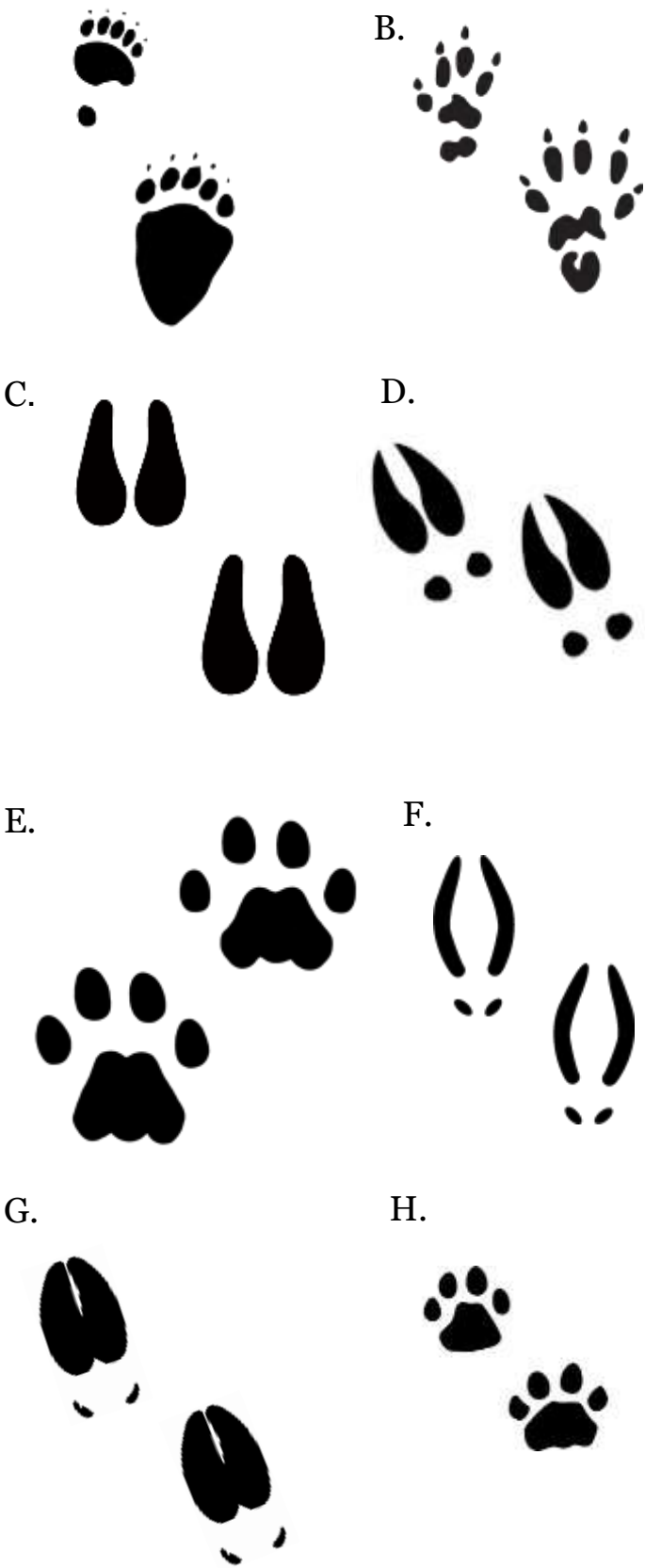
In the early 1980s, David Appleton ran his Outpost Wilderness Adventure program for teens during the summers with mountain biking, rock climbing, fly fishing and backpacking in the half a million acres of national forest and wilderness surrounding this valley. On September 21, 1998, his log lodge burned down from spontaneous combustion of rags being used to weather-proof the wood deck. He rebuilt it in concrete and steel. We have changed the lodge to what it is today, updated the cabins and added over 6 tipis, 15 Safari Tents and other structures to be able to be open year round to serve veterans, first responders, their families and other guests and events. We hope you enjoy it!

Pike National Forest, the wilderness area surrounding the lodge, was established in 1892.



For over 1,000 years Native Americans of the Ute tribe lived off this land as hunter gatherers.

Who Left These Tracks?



Can you guess which animal left these tracks? These tracks and the animals they belong to can be found here on our property! Answers found on page 4.

ACCOMODATIONS

CONESTOGA WAGONS

Journey back in time in our Conestoga Cabins. Equipped with queen beds and luxurious decor, you are sure to enjoy a lavishly rustic experience.



TIPIS /Safari Tents GEO DOMES

Experience one of our hand-painted tipis & tents furnished with sheepskin furs and cowhide rugs and electricity



New in 21, from Harmony Buckmister Fuller proud. All season domes, great views on special platforms on our property.

BUBBLE TENT

Enjoy the comfort of the indoors with an uninhibited view of the surrounding Colorado forest and night sky.



THANK YOU FOR STAYING WITH US



BISON PEAK GAZETTE

Fire Safety



This picture was taken from the front porch of Bison Peak Lodge in June 2002. The Hayman fire, which began about 12 miles down CR 77, ultimately burned over 138,000 acres of our Pike National Forest. This cost over 40 million dollars to fight as it burned 133 homes and forced over 5,000 people to evacuate.

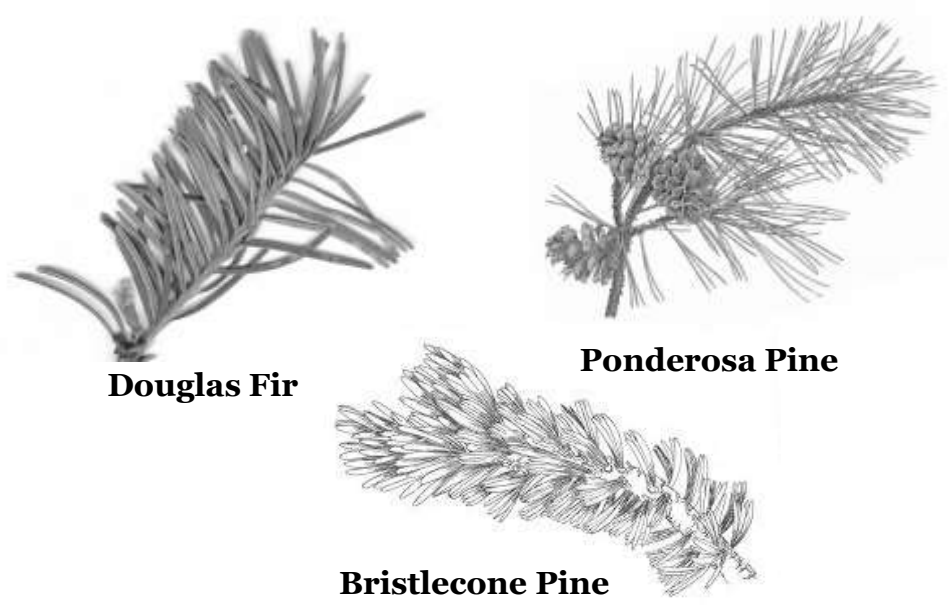
We take fire prevention very seriously here in our valley – starting with informing you about the current Fire Stage. We will provide you with a safe fire ring, wood, and a shovel to properly put out any fire you make. Please take time to learn about how prevention starts with you.

Our valley is a no smoking valley – as a discarded cigarette can cause a wildfire and litter our beautiful land. Our parking lot is a safe place to park – know that we should never drive or park our vehicle on tall dry vegetation as the heat from the vehicle can start a wildfire. Fireworks are never allowed on public lands or on our property. Not only is it illegal to light them on public lands, it is illegal to possess them here in Colorado. Leave your fireworks at home!

Remember, once you start a campfire you are legally responsible for making sure it doesn't escape and is completely out before you leave. If your campfire starts a wildfire, you WILL be held responsible for the cost of fighting the fire.

Trees at Bison Peak

We have all kinds of trees here at Bison Peak! Take the nature trail up to the ridgeline tipi and see how many different types of trees you can spot. A few species you can see include: lodgepole pine, bristlecone pine, quaking aspen, Douglas-fir tree, sub-alpine fir, Rocky Mountain juniper and more! To tell each species apart, take a close look at the needles or leaves, the shape, color and pattern of the bark, and the elevation where the trees are growing. Can you spot the subtle differences between the needles below? If you find a ponderosa pine, lean in close and smell the bark! They naturally smell like vanilla or butterscotch.



FUN TREE FACT: Did you know that aspen trees are the largest organism on Earth?! You will find aspen trees all over Bison Peak at Puma Hills.

Staying Safe in Lightning

Lightning storms in the mountains of Colorado can be very dangerous. Make sure you follow the following tips to stay safe in the case of a thunderstorm:

- If hiking in the mountains, go early in the day, before thunderstorms develop. If you are in the mountains during a lightning storm, go into a cave or get below treeline in a large group of small trees.
- Use the “flash to bang” technique. Sound travels about 1 mile every 5 seconds. When you see the lightning count the seconds until you hear thunder. If 5 seconds elapse, the thunderstorm is one mile away. While there is no “safe distance” from lightning, take precautionary action if the storm is less than 3 miles away.
- You do not want to be the tallest thing around during a storm. If you are caught in a storm, crouch down or kneel but do not lie flat on the ground.

We hope you have many clear-skied days and nights like the one pictured below, but in the case of stormy skies, we hope you stay aware and safe!



Family, RockWall & View Cabins



Our new ADA accessible cabin and the Beal View cabin are ready for summer 2023 use!

Ridgeline Meeting Tipi & Labyrinth



Just an 800 walk up the Yellow trail to our meeting tipi, comfy chairs and 48 foot labyrinth, built for the 2020 Gold medal USA Women's Water Polo team on their 10 day silent retreat preparing for Tokyo



BISON PEAK GAZETTE

A Journey in the Tarrayalls

We hope you enjoyed every curve in the road and each sweeping view on your drive up here. In our opinion, the journey to Bison Peak Lodge is magical for so many reasons. The words of Isabella Bird, English horsewoman and world traveler from her book A Ladies Life in the Rockies, sum up the view of our valley well. In her book, which was about a solo journey by horse through snow up Tarryall Creek in 1873, she recorded the moment when she saw the vista of Bison Peak and said:

“I rode up one great ascent where hills were tumbled about confusedly; and suddenly across the broad ravine rising above the sunny grass and deep green pines, rose in glowing and shaded red against the glittering blue heaven a magnificent and unearthly range of mountains as shapely could be seen, rising into colossal points, cleft by deep blue ravines, broken up into sharks teeth with gigantic knobs and pinnacles rising from their inaccessible sides, very fair to look upon a glowing, heavenly, unforgettable sight, and only four miles off.”

Please let us know if there is anything we can do to make your time with us as “glowing, heavenly, and unforgettable” as it can be. We hope you enjoy the untouched national forest surrounding us on three sides, the endless activities listed on page 4, and more during your stay!

Wood Carvings Galore

Can you find all the wooden carved creatures on the property? Each piece was carved by Sheldon Roberts of Canon City, Colorado using a chainsaw. There are EIGHT animals in total! When you think you have spotted them all, check the answers below to see if you’re missing any.

- 1. Bison 2. Bighorn Ram 3. Black Bear 4. Brown Trout 5. Great Horned Owl 6. Cougar 7. Beaver 8 Bald Eagle



Newest in the valley is out our spectacular Nueche (the peoples’ in Ute) Pavilion/Event Center – 13 insulated glass garage doors to bring the outside in, four indoor/outdoor fireplaces, a loft and room inside and outside the two covered porches for nearly 150 people. On the east side you can dance under the stars on our large paver space, plus a stream, fire features & unique alligator juniper benches leading up to the entrances.

Bison Peak Wordsearch

I	I	W	C	M	V	Q	D	S	I	O	B	T	D	U	D	K	B	N	W
X	Y	X	T	B	E	J	D	R	A	C	N	L	E	L	O	H	T	S	E
K	P	P	L	B	T	C	F	O	Z	E	L	S	A	K	P	K	F	V	T
A	O	J	E	P	H	P	D	O	D	H	V	Y	H	C	M	R	H	W	J
O	M	D	E	R	K	F	J	D	E	M	F	W	Q	M	K	C	V	W	O
B	U	F	A	M	I	L	Y	T	C	Q	E	S	K	L	M	B	T	S	W
I	R	Y	W	B	B	F	Z	U	L	R	R	J	B	T	X	Y	E	I	J
S	I	S	R	J	T	S	P	O	Z	K	Q	W	E	H	R	A	A	A	B
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N	F	Z	B	Y	K	O	O	U	A	O	K	K	H	B	S	L	B	F	A
P	H	I	A	F	L	L	I	Z	J	C	X	C	C	J	Q	C	W	E	T
E	E	K	O	O	G	G	S	F	P	L	R	U	M	U	J	Z	E	Z	X
A	B	C	R	U	A	I	N	F	E	A	Y	Y	K	M	P	I	H	T	L
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O	Y	Z	P	F	W	I	E	W	C	S	M	Z	X	A	O	Z	L	A	Y
T	K	P	V	N	H	L	Z	F	T	S	R	V	C	G	E	B	N	Y	V
G	N	I	P	M	A	L	G	K	V	C	I	H	E	L	I	L	N	E	A
U	O	H	H	F	V	E	Y	W	F	G	G	P	L	J	P	R	C	X	Q
S	R	L	O	V	A	M	L	G	X	T	E	U	B	F	M	B	C	Y	A

Can you find the hidden words?

- ARCHERY
BISON PEAK
BLACK BEAR
- COLORADO
FAMILY
FLY FISHING
- OUTDOORS
GLAMPING
CAMPFIRE

How to Play Pinecone Putt-Putt Golf - and we have 9 holes of Disc Golf!

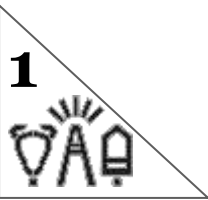
Step 1

Pick out your club and pinecone



Step 2

Walk uphill to the wooden triangle labeled “1”



Hit your pinecone as many times as it takes to get it into the pot (hole)



Step 3

Collect your pinecone and move on to the next hole



Step 4

Continue playing downhill! If you lose track of your pinecone - do not worry. The forest has many more to offer



THANK YOU FOR STAYING WITH US



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An Alphabet and More of Things To Do

A. Archery - Both compound and recurve bows from kids to adult levels, and a life size 3D target course with a marmot, turkey, howling coyote and buck all to surprise and hit).

B. Biking – Mountain & Road - Our valley has several great rides in three of the four directions. Two miles down valley and more are many other mountain bike and ATV trails.

C. Cornhole – TWO competition lanes and bags, one is even lighted blue for nighttime battles.

D. Discover the “Animals” – Eight chain-saw wooden carvings by Sheldon Roberts of Canon City dot the property. Find all eight! There is even a fly fishing sasquatch lurking around too.

E. Estimate the Number of Stars – In the Milky Way which is out every night it is clear.

F. Fly Fishing – We have stocked our largest pond with big rainbow and brown trout. Beaver ponds of various sizes and Second Creek wind down the valley of the property. Off property we are just four miles from Tarryall Reservoir and public areas of the Tarryall River.

Fires for ALL – Open air each nite at the community area (Propane area only when we are at Fire Stage Two) and *inside* the white “Medicine Man” Tipi, with cots, cowhides and sheepskins to circle around and share.

Frisbee Golf – Discs by the Puma Tipi number five separate disc catchers for 18 different holes up and down valley.

G. Gold panning - The area’s ripe w/ quartz & gold “pyrite” not gold, stories say over two million was hauled out in the 1860s. Two panning kits to borrow for a river or creek. **Giant Jenga** – Who will be the one to make it fall?

H. Horseshoes – Both adult and junior weight shoes to play with! **Horses** – contact us about bringing your trailer.

I. Ice Fishing – Yes, we can loan you our hut, rods and ice auger – you just need to provide the heat, bait & seats.

J. Joyful Pinecone Putt Putt Golf –Using putters made from aspen trees with pine cones as golf balls... nine holes in total!

K. Kids Magic Carpet Ride – Just past Tipi Six to the right you can see it waiting to be ridden. **Kite Flying** – We have F-35 Stealth Fighter, Bald Eagle, Hawk, Butterfly, Red Dragon, Giant Dolphin, Rainbow Delta, and Sailing Ship kites to fly.

L. Lots of Games – Play countless games including giant Tic-Tac-Toe, a memory game of valley animals and images, giant Jenga, giant connect four, giant dominoes, giant chess, the ladder toss, and more! **Labyrinth** – a 48 foot 6 circle on south ridge.

M. Music – Ten guitars, a mandolin, a keyboard, an autoharp, 3 ukuleless a tambourine, maracas, conga drums, two banjos (for dueling), two fiddles, a trumpet, a hammered and a mountain dulcimer, and a dozen kinds of harmonicas are available to play around the campfire at nite. Just ask staff to borrow something.

N. New Sports – Spike ball =badminton & VB can be played anytime over the net in our communal gathering areas. Football and soccer can be played on the astroturf field when it is not covered.

O. Open Air Showers & Washbasins – Solar heated under the Colorado skies as your roof (*tree & bubble tents too!*)

P. Painting – Easels, paints, canvases for acrylic, watercolor and pencil drawing when inspired.

Puppets – Over 40 Folkanimals of all the creatures in the valley, beavers, bear, elk, moose and goats included.

Q. Quartz “Waterfall” – Up the hill to the right behind Tipi #6 – please enjoy and take pictures but leave the rocks for others to enjoy!

R. Rock Climbing – All up and down the valley - The book Tarryall Granite, which you can borrow from our library, shows many of the climbs in the area (Provide your own gear).

S. Sand Box – With shovels & dinosaurs. **Slacklining** – 60 ft slackline for you to use “**Steer**” **Roping** – We have both a large steer and a small calf to practice your lariat skills. **Sling shotting** (kids and adult “pro level” triple band shots).

T. Telescopes – Two Celestron computerized telescopes (one is 12”!) to take advantage of the night sky and meteor showers at 8,800 feet and the National Audubon Night Sky book or Starwalk app if needed.

U. Unbelievable ATVing – In the open valleys area just 3 miles to the south of our entrance, plus the China Wall, Badger Flats and many other entrances (ATVs not provided – see a staff member to arrange).

V. Vault Toilets Like No Others – Discover the four different animals guarding the vaults.

W. World Class Outdoor Gym - Dead lift, Elk Antler Pull down, barbell, dumbbells, ab roller, climbing rope, slack line, obstacle course,

X. Xcellent Snowshoeing/cross country skiing – Enough shoes for a family of various sizes to trek.

Y. Hunting – This is DOW are unit 50 for elk, deer, bear, turkey etc. – bow & arrow, muzzle loading and rifle.

Z. Zillions of Things – That happen when you disconnect from your phone, internet & tablet. Just know we have a landline in the lodge for any emergencies 24/7 (719) 748-1270 is the lodge landline.

Answers to the Animal Tracks on Pg 1:

A. Black Bear B. Squirrel C. Bighorn Sheep D. White-Tailed Deer E. Mountain Lion F. Moose G. Elk H. Bobcat

THANK YOU FOR STAYING
WITH US