



**10TH MOUNTAIN DIVISION**  
**HUT SYSTEM NEWSLETTER**  
**SUMMER HUT SEASON**  
**2024**

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

# Partnership of Hut Owners

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**10**TH MOUNTAIN constructed its first huts (McNamara and Margy's) in 1981. These two huts were immediately popular, and over 1,500 user nights were recorded that first year. Since then, more huts have been built and added and, today, there are forty huts in the Hut System and over 74,000 user nights recorded annually. Much of this success can be attributed to visionary leaders, generous donors, dedicated staff, volunteers, supportive agencies and—most important—hut visitors who embrace the ethic, etiquette and stewardship of the backcountry and the huts.

*Of the 40 huts  
in the System,  
10th Mountain  
owns 14;  
the other 26  
are owned by  
other entities.*

Another reason for this success is that 10th Mountain made the early and crucial decision to develop partnerships with other non-profit organizations and private parties interested in providing huts. Of the forty huts in the System, 10th Mountain owns fourteen; the other twenty-six are owned by other entities. These partners give their time, energy and resources to fund, build and maintain these huts which add capacity, variety and greater access. Multiple hut owners also bring varied governance, business models, and ways of operating huts—all of which add resilience. These partnerships also add to the collective intellect of the hut community which yields better ways of doing business and a better hut experience.

The remarkable thing about these partnerships is that, while legal agreements and formality provide structure, they essentially exist because of trust, mutual benefits, and firm commitments to providing a first-rate backcountry hut experience. This shared ethos of hut owners is like that of hut visitors: i.e., common interests, shared responsibilities and resources, and willingness to work hard toward a common goal. It is, frankly, an extraordinary alliance.

Summit Huts Association, Grand Huts Association, Friends Hut, Alfred Braun Hut System, and 10th Mountain Division Hut Association are the nonprofits within the hut System. The Shrine Mountain Inn, Polar Star Inn & Seipel Hut, High Lonesome, Broome, Continental Divide & Point Breeze, Vance's, and Emmelyn are all owned privately. More information on each partner is at [www.huts.org](http://www.huts.org).

It's important to point out that the economic realities of owning and operating the huts can be quite stark for all owners, but particularly for private owners who cannot rely on tax-exempt donations to offset capital and operating expenses. As you visit the huts, please keep these partnerships in mind and—in addition to taking good care of the huts—consider giving your time, expertise and/or tax-exempt donations. Every partner contributes to the strength of the hut system, and every partner merits your support. 🦋

—Ben Dodge | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
10th Mountain Division Hut System

# Huts for Vets

The **Huts for Vets** 2024 season, our 11th consecutive year in healing our nation's veterans, comes with a new look. We collaborated with Nowhere Land Supply, a Colorado-based artist and designer, to craft a fresh logo representing **Huts for Vets'** unwavering commitment to supporting veterans through the healing power of nature. This marks our first logo update since our inception in 2013, and we are thrilled to share a look that truly represents our values and vision.



This year, we are thrilled to announce a unique collaboration with **Sky's The Limit Fund**. This partnership will provide an exclusive opportunity for **Huts for Vets** alumni and their families. The program, a blend of nature therapy and communal support, will be guided by licensed parent coaches and therapists from Colorado.



Save the date—August 6, 2024—for the **Veteran's Cup** at the stunning Aspen Glen Club. This annual event is not just a day of golf; it's a crucial fundraiser that enables **Huts for Vets** to continue its operations. By participating, you are not only enjoying the camaraderie and scenic beauty of Roaring Fork Valley, but also directly supporting vital services for veterans.

Lastly, we can never thank the 10th Mountain Division Hut Association enough for their continued support in hosting our veteran programs. If you know a veteran in need, or would like to contribute to our mission in healing veterans—at no cost to veterans—please visit [hutsforvets.org](https://hutsforvets.org) for more information. 🦺

—Erik Villasenor | Executive Director

## Welcome Kara LaPoint

**Kara LaPoint** comes to 10th Mountain Division Huts Association with more than 15 years of public relations, marketing and communications experience under her belt. She has worked with a vast array of brands and organizations across the outdoor industry, leading strategy and execution to help them tell their unique stories and engage effectively with their respective communities.

Propelled by her deep passion for the outdoors and adventure, Kara competes as an elite



mountain biker, triathlete, runner and Nordic skier. She loves spending long days playing in the mountains, and sharing her love of trails with her pup, Hugo, and her family and friends.

Kara is so excited to be able to help get more people outside and into the wilderness through her work with 10th Mountain. 🚴

### 10TH MOUNTAIN DIVISION HUT ASSOCIATION | JULY 2024

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10TH MOUNTAIN DIVISION HUT ASSOCIATION © 2024

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The 10th Mountain Division Hut Association is a privately funded not-for-profit organization located in Aspen, Colorado. The purpose of 10th Mountain is to plan, finance, build and manage, for public use, a mountain hut system that promotes understanding and appreciation of the natural mountain environment while developing individual self reliance. We welcome any comments or suggestions you may have. 10th Mountain Division Hut System Newsletter (Vol. XXXXII, No. 1) is published twice/year (January and August) by the 10th Mountain Division Hut Association, a 501(c)(3) organization, 1280 Ute Avenue • Suite 21 • Aspen, Colorado 81611. Printed with soy-based ink on recycled paper.



# How to have a **Zero-Waste** Hut Trip

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**M**Y HUSBAND AND I like to take hut trips a couple times a year, and we do a lot of camping, hiking and climbing in between. For us, it's all about the great outdoors, the health and meditation that goes along with it, the empowerment and joy of "roughing it" with the simple and minimalist living that goes along with these kinds of adventures, and time spent with our friends. With our passion for wild open spaces and wildlife, over the years we've taken many steps to reduce our impact on the wild lands that we love. This is important to us because our planet is heading down a bad path, with climate change accelerating, and we are losing wildlife at unprecedented and alarming rates. We know that we own this as humans, so our practices are all about reducing our carbon footprint, and treading as lightly as possible on this planet.

At home, we are a zero-waste household. This means that we avoid single-use containers and paper as much as possible, and we recycle what we can't avoid. We've managed to avoid landfill items for the most part in the past few years.

For hut trips, we've found that we can easily avoid waste to landfill. And, the good news is, it doesn't really require any extra work, it's just "this not that," and there's less trash to haul out. Reducing our waste is one of the simplest things we can do, and it makes a huge difference to our planet and wildlife because single-use containers and paper comprise nearly 10% of our carbon footprint in the U.S. It's important to realize that when we consume unnecessary, single-use containers, we may not see the underlying impacts, but an enormous amount of energy, raw materials and water go into extracting, manufacturing and transporting all this, in addition to massive scraping of forests that robs yet more land from wildlife. All this for things we don't even need.

So, on a hut trip, what can we do? Following are some things that we do to avoid waste:

- **Separate the trash:** We separate ours into four streams; we take two big bags for the recyclables and trash, a bucket for the compost, and a small bag for landfill trash, with simple signs written on the back of used paper with a magic marker. It's very important to properly rinse the recyclable materials before putting them in the bags.

- **Single-stream items:** You can check and see what your local recycling service accepts in single-stream, but generally this includes tin and aluminum, glass, plastic bottles and tubs, paper and cardboard.

- **Miscellaneous kitchen plastic:** We purchase a kitchen recycling box from [www.terracycle.com](http://www.terracycle.com) for kitchen waste at home, and we bring back any plastic that can't be recycled in single stream. We do this for the entire hut because no one else in our group has a Terracycle box.

- **Compost:** There can be a lot of food residue on a hut trip, so and we bring a 5-gallon bucket to collect it separately. That's big enough for a weekend with 12 people.

- **Trash to landfill:** We bring a separate bag, just in case, but we haven't had much of that in recent years.

- **Avoid single-use paper:** Bring your own towels, dishcloths and cloth napkins. The huts are stocked with paper towels, but that doesn't mean we have to use them. Paper is the biggest single-use footprint that we have and is therefore the most important to mitigate.

- **Bring your food in re-usable containers.** Plastic is the second biggest single-use carbon footprint, after paper, and is just as easy to avoid.

Instead of buying individual plastic bags of food or sealing food in single-use freezer bags, pack the food at home into re-usable containers. Pouches of dressing, condiments and meals can easily be packed into re-usable snap tops or more flexible silicone "stasher bags" that can be purchased at most outdoor gear stores.

Instead of individually wrapped snack bars, try making a batch of cookies or bars.

At home, try to buy in bulk as much as possible. There are more and more bulk stores around the state, such as Nude Foods in Denver and Boulder, Minimal Market in Loveland, and Simply Bulk in Longmont, that allow us to buy pretty much everything we need in bulk. Nude foods even has bulk potato chips!

We all need to reduce our waste, and it's not hard if we think about it. Doesn't it feel so much better to know that our actions are helping our beautiful planet and wildlife, rather than contributing to its destruction and demise? Let's work together to take care of the great outdoors that we love! 🌿

—JULIE SMITH

# Greg Guevara

**S**UMMIT HUTS operates Francie’s Cabin, Janet’s Cabin, Sisters Cabin, Section House and Ken’s Cabin in Summit County. This winter, they hired Greg Guevara as Executive Director. Greg’s background in education, leadership and backcountry travel made him an ideal fit for Summit Huts.

“I couldn’t be happier to join the Summit Huts team,” said Greg. “Francie’s, Janet’s and Sisters are such beautiful, popular and iconic huts. Section House and Ken’s have a rich history and incredible restoration story. I am humbled by the opportunity to steward our cabins into the future and to provide opportunities for users to have a wonderful backcountry experience.”

Summit Huts had a great winter season, with over 9,000 visitors to their cabins! Francie’s regularly logs the most users because of its proximity to Breckenridge, shorter approach, amazing ski terrain

and great views. It is also popular among our BEP (Backcountry Explorer Program)

which made it possible for 460 students and non-profit users to stay at Francie’s last winter. Learn more about our BEP at [www.huts.org](http://www.huts.org).

As you may know, Francie’s Cabin was recently renovated. New hickory flooring, stainless steel kitchen, and some bedroom reconfiguration are the main upgrades. Summit Huts will now be completing the exterior projects, and Francie’s is getting a new roof, decks, and the logs will be refinished and re-chinked. Janet’s Cabin is next on the list for remodeling. That work will be very complex as all access to Janet’s is by ski, foot or helicopter. Both Francie’s and Janet’s are open in the summer, and reservations can be made at [www.huts.org](http://www.huts.org). 🏃



## THE POWER OF WALKING

**I**t’s been seven years since I crossed the United States on foot, from South Carolina to San Francisco—a journey that I no longer think about everyday but, no doubt, shapes my every day, consciously or not. Today, I’m digging a trench in the backyard to lay garden hose. In my ears drones the deep, Bavarian voice of film maker and writer, Werner Herzog, recalling his three-week walk from Munich to Paris across the Alps in the early winter months to visit a dying friend. He believed that the act of walking would stave off his friend’s imminent death (it did not).

I thought back on my time crossing the Rockies and the good will of the 10th Mountain Huts giving me permission to stay at the huts in late spring when they are normally closed to the public. The parallels of our walking adventures

across a mountain range through the snow gave me space to reflect on the power of walking—how the pace of it is truly the only speed the human spirit can truly comprehend.

My path across the Rockies took me on a familiar route—that of my guided “Hut Run Hut” trip, but in reverse. As I wasn’t going for any sort of record, I gave myself permission to cover fewer miles than I had been averaging—time to walk, but also time to sit in front of the fire, sipping countless cups of coffee.

One thing I’ve learned from thirty years of running and walking is that the body is capable of much more than we think it is and that walking into distances unknown is where growth occurs. 🏃

—RICKY GATES

# Jenifer Blomquist Hangs Up the Phone

**M**ANY 10TH MOUNTAIN hut trippers rely on phone calls to book huts, learn about conditions, or simply to chat with someone in the know about which hut might best suit their needs and expectations. **Jenifer Blomquist**, a familiar voice at 10th Mountain to perhaps thousands of hut users, filled that role. She is hanging up the phone after 20-plus years of loyal service.

**Jenifer** started with 10th Mountain in August 1998. She took time off, now and then, for key life experiences, like a round-the-world honeymoon with husband Paul Perley, and, later, when their two children, Spencer and Andrew, were born.

"10th Mountain always welcomed me back into the fold," said **Jenifer**, "and it was important for me to have time with my children when they were very young."

Born in Pueblo, Colorado, **Jenifer** was six years old when her family moved to Aspen in 1973. Resolved to stay in the mountains, Carol and Allan Blomquist purchased the Chalet Lisl in 1977, a small, family-oriented ski lodge where **Jenifer's** parents and her four siblings lived and worked.

"The office was in our living room, so answering the phone at the lodge was my first reservationist job," recalled **Jenifer**, who said that the whole family pitched in with chores. "That was a neat upbringing, living in the family quarters at the lodge from age nine until I went to college."

**Jenifer** said her first hut trip was with friends when she was in high school. "I have a picture of myself skiing up to the Lindley Hut in full cotton clothes. I remember the skis I was on...and the blisters."

Later, in her 20s and 30s, **Jenifer** visited huts all over the world, starting with teahouses in Nepal, then huts in New Zealand, Italy and eventually Spain—often following the tracks and sometimes questionable advice of her adventurous brother Craig!

Back in Aspen, she served as conference coordinator for the Aspen Global Change Institute. "I wanted a new experience," reflected **Jenifer**,



Jenifer, Spencer, Andrew and Paul Perley

"and that's when 10th Mountain was advertising the reservationist position."

With her background in outdoor pursuits, **Jenifer** was drawn to 10th Mountain for hut trip opportunities, but also for the tight, familial bond 10th Mountain has always provided.

"It was awesome to have a job in a small community in Aspen," said **Jenifer**. "I loved going on hut trips, and I needed to get to know the huts in the system so I could

describe them to customers. For the first 15 years, I took multiple trips each season—familiarizing myself with the huts while sharing adventures with family and friends."

**Jenifer** has always enjoyed the regular communication with private and third party hut owners whose bookings come through 10th Mountain. She and the other reservationists also run the annual hut lottery. "The reservations staff works really hard each spring to fairly allocate bookings for the following winter season," she said.

Perhaps **Jenifer's** most engaging work has been with the **Backcountry Exploration Program** where she has offered guidance to schools and non-profits that receive discounted hut trips.

"I have worked with school groups, recreation centers, environmental clubs and more," explained **Jenifer**. "I want to make sure they have a great experience by helping with hut and route selection, providing suggestions on logistics, and occasionally organizing service projects. I have also worked with families and inexperienced customers who are hesitant to commit to a hut trip. I like getting those folks started in the right direction."

For many hut trippers, a friendly, encouraging voice on the phone can open a new world into the 10th Mountain hut system. **Jenifer Blomquist** has been that voice for more than two decades.

"I didn't anticipate staying this long, but the customers and amazing crew at 10th Mountain made for a great run," **Jenifer** concluded. 🧡

—PAUL ANDERSEN

# Lightning is Frightening

**L**IGHTNING IS FRIGHTENING. It can strike 10 miles in front or 10 miles behind a storm. A bolt of lightning can contain up to a billion volts of electricity. Lightning can heat the air around it to 50,000° F or five times hotter than the sun!

And as Coloradans know, lightning is common in the Centennial State. Colorado is in the top five of states reporting lightning fatalities. In an average year there are 90-100 days of lightning just in the areas of the 10th Mountain huts. And huts get hit; in 2009 a lightning-triggered fire destroyed the Fowler-Hilliard Hut.

Given the raw power of lightning and its frequency in Colorado, how do we stay safe? To be honest, no place is entirely safe from lightning.

The safest place is in a substantial building with four walls, closed windows and doors, and, ideally, plumbing and wiring. The next safest place is in a hard-topped vehicle. When hiking or skiing into a 10th Mountain Hut, obviously the vehicle is not an option, but the huts definitely are. Stay away from the pumps and sinks, the solar power, and the stove pipe, and enjoy the show from inside.

When in the wilds, the safest place to be is in a forest of relatively uniform-sized trees. While there may not be a totally safe place, there are a number of places you totally want to avoid in a lightning storm. As you no doubt already know, get off peaks and other high places, including ridges. Do not take cover under an isolated tree or small group of trees, under an open picnic pavilion, or beneath a shallow overhang. Stay away from open bodies of water.

As experienced Coloradan outdoors enthusiasts know, in the summer most lightning occurs in the

afternoon to early evening. Plan your travels to be off high places, below tree-line, and away from water that time of day.

If caught in a lightning storm your best bet is to retreat to the safest place you can. The classic lightning position (crouching down with your hands over your ears to protect them) is no longer emphasized. If you can't get to a safer location, separate by 20-30 feet and keep an eye on one another so that you are not all hit by the same blast. If necessary, you can go to one another's aid. Sit down on your pack or whatever you have to insulate yourself from the ground, keeping your feet together and keeping your hands over your ears to protect your hearing.

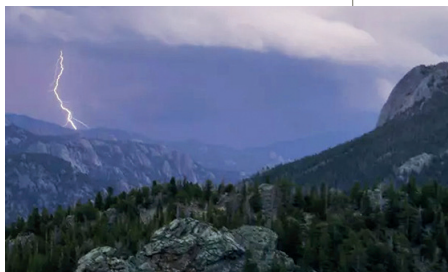
Surprisingly, only 3-5% of lightning deaths occur from direct strikes. The most common way people are killed is from ground current. That's why insulating from the ground is key. The second most common fatality is from side splash, when the electrical charge jumps from an isolated tree(s) or from the posts of an open shelter to ground out through the victim, who is largely made of water, a much easier path for the electricity to follow.

If a person is struck, there can be death or injury from disruptions of the heart and/or brain, burns, trauma, and psychological impacts. Of these, by far the most lethal is when the heart goes into a dysrhythmia and the brain's respiratory drive is interrupted. This patient needs CPR, with rescue breaths, which thankfully can save lives. Burns, trauma, hypothermia, and psychological impacts may also need treatment.

So, yes lightning may be frightening, but it is also part of Colorado's outdoors. Follow a few simple rules to stay safe, and marvel at nature's power and fury.

To learn more about lightning (and much more) take a wilderness first aid class. For a good read, we recommend *Lightning* by John Gookin and *Lightning Strikes* by Jeff Renner.

— DR. TODD MINER | EdD, FAWM  
University of Colorado School of Medicine



## CU Wilderness First Aid Course

November 23-24, 2024

Anschutz Medical Campus

December 13-15, 2024

January 10-12 and 24-26, 2025

Sangree's Hut

SIGN UP: [www.huts.org](http://www.huts.org)

# FFROGS visits Sangree M. Froelicher Hut

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**WHAT IS FFROGS?** We started our club in 2019. The club has changed quite a bit throughout the last five years, but as our club began to grow, we rebranded with the name **FFROGS** which stands for **Fighting For Restoration of Green Spaces** (we also love frogs, which are the unofficial mascot of our club). Our club has a teacher advisor, Nicci Condon, but is entirely student-led with our president, Tal Sheleg, vice-president, Indigo Olsen, and co-organizer, Amara Olsen, taking the lead. The club meets every Monday at lunch to participate in fun environmental-themed activities or to plan events. As a club, our mission is to educate those in our community about the how and why of environmental stewardship in fun and engaging ways!

Our main focus of the September 2023 trip to the Sangree M. Froelicher Hut was on engaging young people in climate action. We planned this hut trip to build community while also teaching about the environment through an experiential learning process. We live in an amazing place with so many fascinating and beautiful ecosystems! We wanted to give kids first-hand experience with this while being able to connect with other like-minded individuals. We hope to grow this experience for more students in other communities in the future! The hut trip consisted of nature art, Leave No Trace (LNT) games, and natural scavenger hunts. The main activity of the trip was walking down to the river crossing and studying insects in the water.

What challenges did the group face? We had a lot of difficulty with student interest, which was disheartening and caused challenges with timing. We ended up having to postpone the trip to maximize student participation which put unnecessary stress on the club. Once the trip began everything came together wonderfully and ran smoothly.

As a group, we ran across some trouble with the rain. We were in the midst of our outdoor activities when it began to rain! We had walked about five minutes away from the hut to play "Meet a Tree." It is a partner game, where one person is blindfolded and the other person leads



them to a tree. The blindfolded person is supposed to "meet" their tree and really get it know it. They are then brought back to the original starting spot, and then they need to re-find their tree. Because of the rain, we were forced to adapt our schedules and activities to

accommodate for the rain but we ended up creating new activities and fun things to do while we were trapped in the hut, away from the rain.

What was the most memorable or cherished part of the experience? We had a lot of fun exploring the land surrounding the hut. We hiked down to a nearby river to collect, observe, and learn about the macro-invertebrates living there. This was such a cool activity because we engaged with habitats we might not have previously noticed. We also played a lot of unique nature and team-building games together, including nature art, funny LNT skits, and Meet a Tree. We also loved being at the campfire and playing "murder in the hut" at night.

We had an amazing few hours the night before we left. At our last campfire we made s'mores and shared land acknowledgments we had written in the afternoon. Everyone created a personal land acknowledgement—a written statement acknowledging the native people on the land before us, and our appreciation for the land—and shared them with each other under the starlight. **FFROGS** continues to share our love of the land and engage high school students in environmental literacy. 🌿

**Lyra Colorado**—an innovative community-based educational organization—sponsored the **FFROGS** hut trip, and a discount was provided through 10th Mountain's **Backcountry Exploration Program**. **FFROGS** is a student-run climate action club in Lake County High School, Leadville, Colorado.



Tenth Mountain Division Hut Association  
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 Aspen, Colorado 81611

Moving? Please give us your new address  
 by calling 970/925-5775, through our web site: [www.huts.org](http://www.huts.org) or  
 by mail. Thanks

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WELCOME 10TH MOUNTAIN HUTS 2024

# Summer Interns



**Bradley Elkins** | I grew up on a ranch in Central Texas. I came to Colorado to go to school at CMC for Outdoor Rec Leadership and will be starting my second year there in the fall. As a 10th Mountain Intern I'll get to be outside working in a beautiful environment (and not 100° F Texas heat).



**Caden Klein** | I am a fourth year Mechanical Engineering student at the University of Colorado, Boulder, and I grew up in the Roaring Fork Valley. Since I was eight years old my family and I have gone on at least one hut trip each winter season.



**Taiga Moore** | I am a 4th generation Aspenite, and I am going into my senior year at Colby College. I am the captain of the Nordic Ski Team. I have made trips to the 10th Mountain Huts since I was a toddler, and feel a strong connection to the huts.



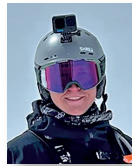
**Willow O'Hara** | I've lived in the Arkansas valley my whole life. I've spent the past few months at High Mountain Institute attending their spring semester program. I look forward to being a senior at Lake County High School and taking concurrent enrollment classes with CMC.



**Andrew Perley** (Fall 2023) | I was born and raised in Aspen, Colorado. I plan on studying construction management at San Diego State University. The outdoors has always played a huge role in my life, from a young age going to the huts, especially trips to Sangree Froelicher and Opa's Taylor Huts.



**Cooper Rees** | I grew up in Leadville and worked for the huts as an intern for a few years in the past, and I'm back at it and ready to do it again. I just love being immersed in nature and working with my hands, so this really is the perfect thing for me.



**Cody Worrell** | I grew up in the Vail Valley and recently attended my junior year of high school at VSSA. I love freeride skiing, enduro biking, and climbing. I am currently working on skiing all the Fourteeners and pursuing my educational prowess. 🧗