

# Bison Reservoir MINUS Orange Hawkweed

## EQUALS A Success Story in the Making

Late-season wildflowers—particularly gentians—were the star attractions of a half-day Wildflower, Weeds & Water hike at Bison Reservoir on August 27. This second annual event was hosted by Teller-Park Conservation District (TPCD) and Newmont Mining Corporation (Newmont) as part of a State and Private Forestry (SPF) Grant to manage and eradicate noxious weeds.

Fifteen people (including a representative of a non-profit who owns a large adjacent property) accepted the challenge to hike through pristine bogs, Aspen forests, and dense willow stands to eventually end up at the high-altitude beaver ponds that naturally filter the water that drains from Pikes Peak to Bison Reservoir. The reservoir is owned by the City of Victor, which uses the water to supply its residents, and as an important municipal revenue source with sales to Newmont for use in mining operations at its Cripple Creek & Victor Gold Mine (CC&V). In addition, over the years, Newmont CC&V has supported Victor with infrastructure investments to increase the efficiency of its water storage systems. Only Victor residents who own a water tap may apply for membership to access the property and fish at the reservoir.



Participants enjoyed lunch pond-side.

During the hike, participants discovered that an orange hawkweed infestation identified onsite in 2014 was eradicated. Orange hawkweed (*Hieracium aurantiacum*) is a perennial flowering plant that was introduced to the U.S. from Europe. It spreads fast quickly via stolons (runners), rhizomes, and seed, and can be challenging to banish. Early detection and rapid response is critical as the pretty little flowers displace beneficial, native plant species that work within the ecosystem to filter the water of a pristine wilderness area. TPCD and Newmont worked together in 2014 and 2015 to ID and manage this species. Monitoring and management will continue in the coming years to ensure it remains controlled and stamped out. It may take a few years of monitoring to ensure that any remaining seed bank in the soil does not make a comeback in the coming years. A plant list of more than 30 flowering or fruiting species was created to document sightings during

the hike. You can view or download the list at [www.TellerParkCD.org](http://www.TellerParkCD.org). The list includes six gentians found on the hike, including the somewhat elusive Marsh Felwort (*Lomatogonium rotatum*). The Marsh Felwort is reportedly seen in fewer than 15 counties of Colorado.

In addition to this annual event, the City of Victor and TPCD hosted a Before & After yard beautification effort. Residents were encouraged to pull, mow, or crowd out noxious weeds in an effort to learn more about weeds, learn how to manage them, and work to beautify their properties in the process. The population of Victor, a quaint mining town located at 9700', is 455. The event ran through mid-September. Participants were treated to generous sack lunches, beverages, and t-shirts.

TPCD and its cooperative weed management partners in the Upper Arkansas River Watershed work together annually to obtain grants like the SPF grant to manage noxious weeds in the nine-county area. Check out their website at [www.UpperArkCWMA.weebly.com](http://www.UpperArkCWMA.weebly.com). Find out more about noxious weeds in Colorado at [www.colorado.gov/pacific/agconservation/orange-hawkweed](http://www.colorado.gov/pacific/agconservation/orange-hawkweed).



Marsh Felwort (*Lomatogonium rotatum*) was an excellent find in the bogs.



Parry's Gentian (*Gentiana parryi*) was abundant during the August 27 hike.



Queen's Crown (*Rhodiola rhodantha*) was also present in the boggy areas.



Orange Hawkweed (*Hieracium aurantiacum*) was NOT found at the site this year!