Public Health reports sixth case in county

Chaffee County Public Health Director Andrea Carlstrom reported a sixth case of COVID-19 in the county Thursday. The patient, a 68-year-old man, has been hospitalized. The case is being investigated.

Churches find alternatives through technology

by Brian McCabe
Mail News Editor

During this time of quarantine due to the COVID-19 pandemic, everyone is looking for ways to deal with changes in their lives. Many in the United States at least identify with a religious group, as reported by a 2019 Gallop poll, which found almost eight of 10 people identified as religious, mostly Christian.

With current “stay-at-home” orders in Colorado, however, local churches are having to find alternatives to traditional services, and most are going online.

“There are several great things about attending church online,” the Rev. Dr. Michael Fay, rector of Episcopal Church of the Ascension, said. “You can stay in your pajamas, you can drink coffee during the service, and if the sermon gets boring, you can just mute it.” Fay said the church has been using Zoom, a teleconferencing service alternatives.

Churches offer service alternatives

Cotopaxi Community Church
Church suspended until further notice.

Episcopal Church of the Ascension
Offering online services; contact the Rev. Dr. Mike Fay at 719-239-4039 for more information.

Temple Baptist Church
Daily devotions and Sunday service through its Facebook page.

St. Joseph Catholic Church
Church open for prayer; Mass broadcast on EWTN channel.

Upper Room Church of God
No services, working on putting sermons online; follow through salidaupperroom.org.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
No services, members encouraged to hold home church.

Peace of Mind Prayer Ministry

Citizen science project aims to conserve game habitat, corridors

by Cody Olivas
Mail Staff Writer

Rocky Mountain Wild invites volunteers to contribute to bighorn sheep conservation by joining the Go Big Central Colorado Bighorn Sheep Survey.

Volunteers will collect data needed to inform collaborative efforts to conserve bighorn sheep habitat and migration corridors in Colorado.

“We don’t have a ton of data (on bighorn sheep): where they are and how they interact with domestic sheep,” said Tehri Parker, executive director of Rocky Mountain Wild.

In general, however, she said 58 percent of the state’s bighorn sheep are within the Bureau of Land Management’s Royal Gorge Field Office, which includes the Bighorn Sheep Canyon east of Salida.

Seeing how and where they interact with domestic sheep is also important because Parker said bighorn sheep have a 90 percent mortality rate when they come into contact with infected domestic sheep.

The citizen scientist volunteers are completely self-regulated, meaning they can participate once on a weekend hike or go out regularly to monitor bighorn sheep.

“They are really great for this project,” Parker said. “If they’re out there a lot, they can record a lot of data for us, which is really helpful.”

Parker said they’d take as many volunteers as they can get.

“It’s a good activity to get outside and do something for the environment at the same time,” she said.

The effort is a response to Gov. Jared Polis’ executive order aimed at conserving big game winter range and migration corridors.

“Gov. Polis has launched an important collaborative effort to address the pressure that Colorado’s growing population is putting on habitat and migration corridors big game need to survive,” Parker said. “We are excited to support the governor’s effort by giving wildlife enthusiasts and hunters an opportunity to collect data on bighorn sheep and contribute to their conservation.”

The Go Big project area focuses on Central Colorado, and volunteers who frequent public lands near Salida, Colorado Springs and Pueblo are needed.

To get involved, visit RockyMountainWild.org/bighornsheepsurvey and begin by watching the 18-minute volunteer training webinar. Volunteers then need to download the iNaturalist app to record observations. To record data, participants simply need to take a picture of bighorn sheep, wherever they spot them. The program will automatically know the animals’ GPS location.

Parker also said visual data from the pictures is important so they can determine whether it’s a male or female, among other things.

“It’s a really exciting opportunity for people to get outside, do something they love, hone their scientific observation and research skills and provide real data,” Parker said.

The project is currently underway.