

For Immediate Release
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Snowmass celebrates publication of long-awaited field guide to Roaring Fork Valley at reception and book signing Feb. 25

Snowmass Village, CO. February 18, 2005. For decades, longtime local botanist Janis Huggins lugged a pack full of field books into the backcountry. She always wished someone would lighten her load by creating a book specific to the Roaring Fork Valley that included plants, animals, and birds. Little did she know that someone would be her.

Huggins will celebrate the release of her new book *Snowmass Village—Wild at Heart* on February 25 at 6 p.m. at the Schermer Meeting Hall at Anderson Ranch. The public is invited to attend this reception, talk, and book signing and find out more about this unprecedented new resource for the Roaring Fork Valley. *Wild at Heart* provides *the* definitive guide to the ecology, birds, plants, and mammals of Snowmass, Aspen, and the surrounding wilderness areas above 7,000 feet. Huggins spent nearly five years compiling fascinating stories and detailed descriptions on 423 plants, 112 birds and 49 mammals in our valley. The book also includes 670 stunning color photos and such useful features as a lay flat binding, plant color key, mammal track drawings, and an extensive appendix.

“No one has ever compiled a comprehensive guide to the plants, birds and mammals for the entire upper Roaring Fork Valley,” said Huggins, who calls the book a bridge between a coffee table book and a technical field guide. “I believe the text will be interesting, fun, and accessible for all levels of outdoors enthusiasts.”

After a reception honoring Huggins and the many other people who contributed to the book, Huggins and project manager Dawn Keating will talk about the process of creating *Wild at*

Heart and give examples of how best to use it. The evening concludes with a book signing, and books will be available for sale throughout the event.

Called *Snowmass Village: Wild at Heart* in a tribute to the town which funded the project, the book's origins can be traced back to 1994 when the Town of Snowmass Village required a developer to fund a book on local wildlife and native plants. Like Huggins, town wildlife specialist Dawn Barton Keating and Snowmass Land Company President Jim Wells saw the need for a much broader work and, along with additional major funding from the town, contracted Huggins in 2000 to create a guide that would apply to both residents and visitors of the Brush Creek Valley and the entire upper Roaring Fork Valley.

“This book wouldn't have been possible without the tremendous support of the Town of Snowmass Village, and it has absolutely paid off,” says Keating. “This ultimate resource on plants, animals, and birds in the Roaring Fork Valley is something Snowmass can be proud of. People will be using this book for decades to come.”

With chapters on Snowmass trails and geology in addition to almost five hundred pages of lore, ecology, medicinal and conservation information on regional plants, animals and birds, *Wild at Heart* offers readers a new reason to venture out onto local trails and into the wilderness this year.

“My hope is that readers will use this book to expand their understanding of the rich natural diversity around us, by delving further into the intricate world of each species,” Huggins says, while pointing out that “immense pleasure is often found in the details.”

Anderson Ranch is located on Owl Creek Road in Snowmass. From Hwy 82, take Brush Creek Road approximately 4 miles. Turn left on Owl Creek Road and take the first left, just

before the Firehouse, which leads to the parking lot. For more information on this event, please contact Allison Johnson at (970) 704-9988.

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