The Colorado Trail is spectacular. Outdoor enthusiasts cherish it. We hope you enjoy your next excursion!
Behind the Scenes...

by Bill Manning, CTF Managing Director

The Colorado Trail Foundation office in Golden has been a busy place this year. The tasks of coordinating volunteers, assisting Trail users, communicating with partners and the multitude of other duties have kept me and our part-time staff person, Laura Becker, jumping. In addition to the ongoing operations, we have succeeded in outsourcing the CT Store and launching a new database to better serve the Foundation and Friends of the Trail. Challenges lay ahead, of course. An example right now is our bookkeeping that needs more attention, including a revised system and additional expertise—we’re working on it. There is a lot of positivism and we’re getting tremendous help from our volunteer Board of Directors and other CTF volunteers. Laura has just begun working full time, which will help us keep on top of all the “to-dos” that arrive in the Golden office.

Of particular note this year was the Clear Creek project reported on separately in this newsletter. What a fantastic success for The Colorado Trail and great source of pride for all those involved. On behalf of the CTF, I extend a well-deserved “thank you” to everyone who contributed to this success story. Establishing this reroute and new bridge was crucial to keeping The Colorado Trail connected as a single 500-mile trail. With the Clear Creek valley crossing being located near the midpoint of the CT, had we not succeeded with this big project, the Trail would have become more like two disconnected routes, each about 250 miles long. Our volunteers and partners, though, brought together what seemed like a million interconnected pieces and made it happen.

CTF Position on Proposed Rules for the Continental Divide Trail

The Forest Service has proposed a new policy for managing the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, the Congressionally mandated trail that runs from Canada to Mexico through the Rocky Mountains. The CDNST Proposed Directive could greatly affect The Colorado Trail, as approximately 200 miles of the CT are co-located with the CDNST. Even though the CT was completed first and well established first, the rules for the CDNST control. Because this plan for CDNST impacts the CT, Board and staff members of the CT Foundation studied the proposed FS policy carefully before submitting our comments to the government. In a nutshell, we hope the CT becomes fully non-motorized as has been our goal and agreement with the Forest Service since inception. We consider The Colorado Trail a multiple-use trail open to hikers, bikers and equestrians, the user groups that are currently allowed. If you’d like to read the complete CTF comment and/or the Proposed CDNST, visit www.ColoradoTrail.org and, on the home page under “Trail News . . . CTF Comment . . . ,” use the link provided.

Tread Lines is the newsletter of The Colorado Trail Foundation. It is published three times a year.

The Colorado Trail® is 500 miles long in the Rocky Mountains between Denver and Durango. It has been described as one of the best trails anywhere, one of the most scenic and among the best maintained. The Trail is a favorite of enthusiasts who hike, mountain bike and ride horseback.

The Colorado Trail Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation funded almost entirely by private sector individuals and companies. Our mission is to keep The Colorado Trail in good condition, maintaining and improving it with the help of many volunteers. We recruit and train volunteers, provide leadership, organize Colorado Trail (“CT”) work crews, supply and support the crews, and manage the Adopt-A-Trail program to accomplish annual maintenance on the entire Trail. We also conduct week-long supported treks on the CT, offer educational classes at our mountain cabin facility, and distribute information about Colorado Trail activities and Trail Crews. We work in cooperation with public agencies. Donations are needed, much appreciated and tax deductible.

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The Colorado Trail Foundation is no boat or ship. Certainly it’s no prairie schooner. But in some ways it is a vessel that requires someone to steer it in the right direction. For the CTF, it is our Board of 15 volunteers whose names are listed on Page 2. These Board members not only participate in our three meetings each year—an annual meeting in January, planning retreat in April and a fall meeting in October—but are hands-on leaders in the organization.

George Miller, for example, directs our volunteer crews for work on the Trail each summer. Pat Nagorka manages our food program for feeding crew members. Gudy Gaskill directs our outdoor workshops. Jerry Brown hiked the whole Trail just to gather current Trail conditions and improve signage. Some Board members are crew leaders. A number have adopted sections of the Trail.

At our latest meeting in October we dealt with numerous administrative matters to keep the Foundation run on a solid business basis with our Managing Director Bill Manning. We reviewed and assessed our summer programs—trail crews, classes and treks—and began planning for the summer of 2008.

If you have questions about the Foundation, please contact any of the Board members for we believe that transparency is important for the success of a volunteer organization like The Colorado Trail Foundation.

Friends of The Colorado Trail are the Best

In 2007 you:

- volunteered an astounding 22,250 hours
- provided volunteer value of $401,610
- contributed over $100,000
- sustained the CT Foundation
- preserved the 485 mile Colorado Trail

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Volunteers worked hard improving The Colorado Trail this year and again reported that they had fun. Our crew lists show that 340 volunteers came to work and labored a total of 13,094 hours.

They camped, cooked together, organized into work teams, and were gratified to see their accomplishments. Volunteers were both young and old, some of whom have been on crews for many years and others who were first-timers. Most were from Colorado but, again this year, many came from other states. Roy Semyard came from Fayetteville, Arkansas, to work on 5 crews! Mark Seklemian, an engineer from Virginia who installs electronic gear on submarines, comes every year and often from distant places under the sea.

There were 19 Trail crews this year—13 week-long and 6 weekend. Volunteers made improvements on 29,127 feet of the Trail and constructed new tread for reroutes totaling 21,727 feet for an astounding total of 9.5 miles of Trail care!

The 2007 Crew season got a good start with a new type of effort called the Father-Son Crew. Twenty-year-old Kyle Brooksher tried his hand at crew leading, serving as co-leader with his dad, Tom. They recruited people from their church and worked a weekend atop Kenosha Pass. There were nine father/son pairs and not only did they improve the Trail, according to Kyle, they were able to “grow their relationships in the way that can only be done by doing good, hard, hands-on labor and being able to look back at what has been accomplished.” Kyle was pleased “new people could experience Trail work with the possibility of life-long volunteering opened to them.” The crew constructed almost two-thirds of a fifteen-hundred foot reroute through rocky terrain.

The next group was another first for the CTF, an All-Women Crew. Cindy Johnson organized the weekend effort and volunteered as crew leader. “There were 10 of us ladies,” she said, and, “only 2 had been on a CT crew before. Our goal was to complete the ¼-mile reroute east of Kenosha Pass to bypass a rocky, washed out portion of the Trail, the work started the weekend before by the father/son crew.” Cindy adds, “The women accomplished a great deal of Trail work and it was a great social weekend as well: new card games were played, new friends were made, new recipes were tasted, new muscles were found, new blisters appeared, new skills were learned, new tales were told, and limits were stretched.”

The first week-long crew of the year, led by Jon Greeneise, began work on the CTF’s biggest project of the season, constructing the reroute and building the bridge at Clear Creek. Jon reports, “Our crew really set the pace for constructing Trail on the project. Our group of 22 volunteers built close to a mile of new Trail under challenging conditions on a steep, rocky hillside. Everyone was pleased with the result.”

Michael Mesdag, 15 years old, came on his first crew “on his own.” He’s been doing Trail work for years with his mom, Julie Mesdag, including work on their adopted section. Michael said of his experience at Clear Creek with crew leader John Lipe, “I really loved this . . . I’ll be coming back for a long time.” Michael, writing about the dedication of the volunteers, reported, “On Sunday the crew voted to go up and work instead of [recreating] on the traditional work-free day.” He also was impressed by the food and said, “The meals were absolutely fantastic. Eileen Lipe was a fabulous cook and the breakfast, lunch, and dinner crews all did a great job. No one left hungry. We had great fun . . . Several nights we had a campfire and two of those nights Joe “Grey Owl” Barrett treated us to some excellent harmonica playing.”

Ernie Norris’s crew faced an unplanned challenge related to their goal for the week to reconstruct the Wall’s Gulch bridge. When they got to the site, the task already was substantially complete. An energetic CTF Adopter group,
Trails 2000, had already almost finished the job. Ernie’s crew reached the bridge on the first day and accomplished what little work was left before they walked back up the long hill to camp. But the situation worked out just fine because, as Ernie said, “I think all of us who walked down to the bridge were happy we didn’t have to do it again. The almost 8-mile roundtrip (vertical – 1,600 ft down and 1,600 ft. UP) was a killer and would have made for a very exhausting week.”

Instead, the crew spent the rest of the week working on the Trail near camp, which was in need of attention. Ernie tallied up that, “for the week we completed 57 new waterbars, reworked 4 existing waterbars, built and improved 19 rolling dips and drains, debermed 607 feet of Trail, removed rock from 110 feet, reworked 3 switchbacks and removed 1 giant stump. We covered almost 3 miles. What a tremendous effort by a great team!”

Crew leader Glenn Kepler reports his crew was, “the sixth crew of seven to work the major Clear Creek reroute that camped in the elaborate base camp. We were 17 strong and most of us chose to set up our tents on the edge of Clear Creek. The creek was swift running and named properly. The babbling water made for a gentle background as we retired each evening after a hard day’s work on the Trail.” Glenn complimented his crew by saying, “The college students on this crew were of the utmost help. Gregg Janecky and sisters Melissa and Katie Yahr teamed up with Roy Kepler and constructed a French drain on the lower portion of the north slope.” After rains and runoff in the next days, “the French drain held up.” Glenn says, “The youngest of our crew Ryan, age 9, and Kalen, age 12, the Meyer brothers, were a joy to the rest of the team. To watch these two brothers pitch in on the hard work was remarkable. Good job guys.”

A first-time crew volunteer was Lauren Kovalessi who’s in her 20’s. After reading about volunteering on the CT in the flight magazine Delta Sky, she was intrigued. Lauren decided, spur of the moment, to join a CT crew and volunteer on The Colorado Trail. She sent us a nice report of how much she valued the experience on the season’s final Clear Creek crew with Stan Ward as leader.

Lauren writes that, “I thought it might be fun to work for a week. So, as soon as I got home, I signed up on the internet and then loaded up my little Jeep and started across the country. Coming from Florida, I drove across Texas, through the Carlsbad Caverns, into Mexico, up to the Grand Canyon, and then made my way to the campground in Colorado. I thought maybe there would be about 10 people there and we’d just work during the day and then retire to our tents at night. I had no idea that I would have the pleasure of meeting 28 of the most delightful and hard-working people that I’ve ever met. Having never camped before, I got lots of advice on where and how to set up my tent, in addition to several generous offers of blankets and jackets . . . We’d wake up every morning and watch the sunrise during breakfast and then hit the Trail. In just one week I had the opportunity to fell trees, cut firewood, move rocks, improve switchbacks, clear new Trail, and learn how to think like water (very important!). We got a lot of work done in just four short days, but the fun didn’t stop there. In the evenings there were ultimate Frisbee games, horseshoe matches, Phase 10 marathons, puzzles to be put together, cribbage . . .”

continued on page 6
The CTF values each of you—our Friends of the Trail—and we thank you for your volunteerism and every contribution you make. It takes money to sustain the effort and your donations also help us preserve the Trail. We are grateful for your support.

The CTF works hard to properly acknowledge each contributor and contribution. Still, it is a challenge to find ways to communicate adequately our thanks to large donors. Their financial support has been crucial to maintaining the CT. We can’t thank them enough. In recent months the CTF has received more than $50,000 from these five Friends of The Colorado Trail:

- Roundup Riders of the Rockies, Heritage and Trails Foundation
- John and Jane Wilson
- Clear Creek Ranch and Richard Adkerson
- CoBank
- REI

This money helped fund the new bridge across Clear Creek. The bridge and 3-mile reroute were crucial to keeping the Trail connected and preserving the integrity of the 500-mile CT.

REI provided funding to equip Adopters with pocket chainsaws. These handy tools help volunteers clear the many fallen trees, a constant challenge in Trail maintenance.

Thank you big donors! Δ
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Martha Comment
Jessica Cooper
Katie Cooper
Stephen Cooper
Nathaniel Drake
Kaylee Fanganello
Connor Fox
Jon Greeneisen
Debra Grove
Rosemary Harris
Marilyn Bartlett Hebenstreit
Jan Howbert
Linda Kay Lawson
Cynthia Lockhart
Jim Malone
Loretta J Martin
Nancy Martinets
Lynn Mattingly
Bryce Mawhinney
Connor Mawhinney
Linda Mawhinney
Paige Mawhinney
Lynn McCanse
Virginia McCanse
Dan McMonigle
Debbie McMonigle
Betty Jane Meadows
Harold Meadows
Carol Montgomery
Mickey Mouse
Brooklyn Murphy
D. Todd Murphy
Jasmine Murphy
Mikayla Murphy
Sara Winter Nye
Paulette Schmalz
Kathleen Shadell
Bea Slingsby
John Snitzer
Philip Snitzer
Richard Snitzer
Susan Spaulding
Jeanine Stone

2007 TREKKERS
Raydean Acevedo
Mary Blue
Donna Brockman
Sandra Burbank
William Cartwright
Celia Clewe
Nina Cowen
Susan Craw
Randi Dyson
Vicki Earnshaw
Rich Enenstein
Keith Evans
Jim Faler
Mike Fields
Susan Fischer
Betsy Fitzpatrick
John Fitzpatrick
Julia Garrett
Terri Gasaway
Judy Gerling
Graham Gibbard
Rob Gilchrist
Robert Gill
Richard Gore
Bob Griffith
Carol Hadl
Pat Hagerty
Tom Hagerty
Mark Hall
David Harrison
Keith Harrison
David Hurst
Joseph Johnston
Norm Levy
Marjorie Lundy
Steven Miller
Janet Monahan
Anne Muench
Barb Munk
David Munk
Leila Murphy
Bryan Neaves
Audrey Nelson
John Patton
Pam Patton
Al Paugy
Linda Pfingsten
Wendy Phillips
Kate Pritchard
Kelly Pritchard
Max Reed
Renda Restrepo
Kenneth Roth
Vicky Santibanez

Please let us know if we missed listing your contribution or volunteerism. Thanks again for your involvement with The Colorado Trail Foundation.
Adopters Again Keep the Trail in Great Condition

You no doubt already know about the CTF Adopt-A-Trail (AAT) Program that has been ongoing for 20 years. The Trail is divided into 57 AAT sections and adopters both maintain their sections of the CT tread and report Trail conditions to the CTF. Adopted sections average 8½ miles which mean adopters make a major commitment to help maintain The Colorado Trail.

While the work is challenging, adopters find it rewarding and many of them have continued for many years. Gudy Gaskill, the mother of The Colorado Trail, created special awards this year for long time Adopters and found that 20 had maintained their adoption for 10 years or more.

Janet Farrar, our volunteer AAT Program Coordinator, reports that in 2007 adopters worked more than 2,000 hours in maintaining the Trail. Janet distributes handbooks to adopters to guide their tasks in Trail maintenance. This year the CTF also supplied more than 80 pocket chainsaws to adopters to make the task of removing fallen trees on the Trail easier.

The efforts of some adopters become large projects and at least one this summer turned monumental. Trails 2000, a long-term adopter group from Durango, took on the task of rebuilding the Wall’s Gulch Bridge that had been ripped from its abutments by a flash flood last fall. Mary Monroe, the director of Trails 2000, who camped and worked with her crew says, “The Forest Service thought it would take 10 days to rebuild the bridge but we rebuilt it in only three.” The group moved some 40 tons of rock to rebuild the gabion-basket abutments. Then they disassembled the large steel and wood-plank footbridge, moved it, and reassembled it on the new foundation. In a story a few days later the Durango Herald described the big project in glowing terms and concluded, “After what the Durango-based organization accomplished on The Colorado Trail in July, its crew of volunteers is acquiring a reputation that borders on the legendary.” The “Bridge Brigade” article can be found online at www.durangoherald.com by typing in the term “brigade.”

The 2007 adopter season was a great success and invaluable in our task of keeping The Colorado Trail in good condition for all Trail users. ▲

Teams Open the Trail Closed by 300 Fallen Trees

The U.S. Forest Service closed Segment 1 of the Trail in June but hard-working CTF volunteers soon got it open again. Here’s the story.

In early May, a heavy spring snowstorm combined with strong winds to bring huge numbers of healthy trees down across the Trail between Waterton Canyon and the South Platte crossing. Segment 1 became impassible. Large trees had fallen on top of one another and many “leaners” could crash at any time. Even scouting the mess was difficult and risky. Best estimate was that 300 trees were either down or about to come down on the Trail.

The CT Foundation called on the US Forest Service for help and the agency responded with a team of fire fighters that began sawing the corridor clear. But their efforts were cut short because of their fire fighting duties. The Forest Service said it wouldn’t be able to clear the Trail and encouraged us to tackle the task. If the Trail was to be passable in 2007 CTF volunteers would have to clear it.

Fortunately, we were able to assemble a team of volunteers—retired smokejumpers, CTF board members and bicyclists—including individuals skilled with chainsaws. Doug Wamsley of the National Smokejumpers Association agreed to coordinate the clearing effort. He collaborated with the CTF office and together we found volunteers and equipment. Doug spent a long day scouting the problem and returned to report that, even after the Forest Service clearing work, 245 downed trees were still on the Trail and about half of them were up to 24 inches in diameter.

In mid-May the Forest Service officially closed The Colorado Trail (Segment 1) to cyclists and horseback riders and recommended hikers not attempt to make it through due to the risks.

With the cooperation of the Forest Service and the Denver Water Board, Doug and CTF Managing Director Bill Manning organized volunteers and equipment for the urgent project. In addition to Doug, the team included Warren Pierce, Mike Thayer, Ray Carter, Ken Swierenga, Derek Swierenga, Herm Ball, Bobbie Borowski, Dennis Wamsley, Terry Terpstra, Joe Lord and Scott Dollus. In three long days of work, this team completed the task. On June 7 the last chainsaw work was accomplished and the Trail was again passable to all. ▲
"The new bridge is in!" exclaimed ecstatic Jon Greeneisen, CTF Board Chairman. During the first week in July, Stan Ward’s “bridge brigade” built the gabion abutments as well as a temporary bridge to facilitate the work. Then on July 6 the huge crane came back to Clear Creek to lift the 9,000-pound bridge into place. Everyone held his breath as we watched to see if the two ends of the bridge would fit down over four bolts on each side—80 feet apart—and it did.” Not bad for a bunch of volunteers.

The Clear Creek project was the heftiest CTF project undertaken in many years. Clear Creek is in the Collegiate Peaks Range and midway between Buena Vista and Leadville. To preserve the connectivity of the 500-mile Trail, we needed to move the CT off private lands. Our challenge was to reroute 3 miles of the Trail and build a new 80-foot-long steel footbridge, solely with CTF volunteer labor.

The project required us to obtain and coordinate the authorization of six partners: the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Pueblo Board of Water Works, Army Corps of Engineers, Colorado Division of Wildlife and Clear Creek Ranch. Nearly every aspect seemed intertwined and the logistics and timing required careful orchestration. George Miller, CTF Operations Manager and overall manager of the project, began more than a year before to develop a project plan acceptable to the various agencies and to organize volunteer crews to accomplish the work. George enlisted Stan Ward as one of his crew leaders and to serve as bridge construction manager.

Stan’s project brief began, “The call came from George Miller: ‘We need to build a bridge over Clear Creek.’” He assembled 13 skilled CTF volunteers at a meeting in early February that he described as “productive and consequential” where they divided the project under three responsibilities: gabions, temporary bridge and steel bridge.

Bob Hunter took on the gabions (according to Webster, a hollow wickerwork or iron cylinder filled with earth and used in building fieldworks or in mining) and learned all he could about the assembly and installation of 12-foot-long, wire baskets. Bob oversaw procurement and delivery of the wire baskets and supervised their filling with 40 tons of 4-inch to 6-inch rocks, mostly by hand.

Bob Miner took on the temporary bridge and negotiated a donation of special joists that simplified the design and construction. He handled the purchase of materials and contributed significantly to the fabrication and installation of the wood bridge.

John Lipe took the assignment of installing the steel bridge and arranged to meet with Larry Ballantyne on such problems as how to install anchor bolts in wire baskets filled with large rocks.

Project leaders met at the site in May to verify field conditions, make final decisions and set the construction schedule. It was agreed that it would take a crew 10 days to install the bridge, probably without a day off.

The bridge came from Minnesota, the gabions from Tennessee, and the lumber and gravel from Buena Vista; all were delivered on time. Crew volunteers began arriving on Thursday but due to a family emergency John Lipe was not able to be in camp so Larry Ballantyne stepped in to supervise the bridge installation. The bridge was successfully set in place on July 6.

This project had many aspects: preparing a plan and gaining its approval, raising funds to pay for the project, designing and purchasing the bridge and materials, lining up the crane, and organizing 9 work crews—weeklong crews 0107, 0307, 0407, 0507, 0707, 0907, 1107, and weekend crews WE3 and WE4, employing nearly 200 volunteers—to build the new Trail and install the bridge.

Thanks to the leadership and resourcefulness of five guys—George Miller, Stan Ward, Bob Hunter, Bob Miner, John Lipe and Larry Ballantyne—a graceful 80-foot, steel bridge spans Clear Creek and is a testament to the professionalism and generosity of the CTF and its volunteers. The bridge is in. △
Feeding our Trail Crews

Trail crew volunteers dedicate a significant block of time from their busy lives to improve The Colorado Trail each summer. For a weekend, a week, and sometimes longer, they provide the manual labor for creating reroutes, building bridges and improving drainage—“keeping the Trail.” The least we can do is feed them . . . and we do. A lot of work goes into feeding our crew volunteers, all 350 of them. Trail crew members eat on average 15 meals, which adds up to more than 5,000 meals every summer.

Volunteer Pat Nagorka has managed the food program for Trail crews for more than ten years. She plans the food and purchases all the non-perishables. She prepares menus for the week-long, weekend and backpack crews and turns them into shopping lists. From September to May, she clips discount coupons, shops sales, and finds best prices for the Foundation. This creates such a mountain of food that she soon can’t see over it and that fills a room in her home nearly to the ceiling. Each spring she organizes the food to be picked up by crew leaders.

What happens to all this food? Pat explains that, “After all the purchases are made and donations are picked up, supplies are counted and recounted to make sure there is enough. Then CT volunteers come on ‘food packing day’ to pack and label food for each crew.” This year Pat was a little nervous that not enough strong helpers would show for the Memorial Day event. But, with the dedication that’s common among CT volunteers, 13 people arrived and there was plenty of muscle power for the job.

Volunteers carry everything into Pat’s yard and make quick work of dividing the food mountain into a separate pile for each crew. Cans of green beans, jars of peanut butter, jugs of juice, taco mix—every item is carefully sorted so each crew will have the needed ingredients when they get out on the Trail. Items are inventoried and repacked into boxes that Pat stockpiled through the winter. “This year we had fantastic weather and another fantastic bunch of people—a great day of food packing for the Trail,” Pat reports.

Why does Pat do this? Because, she says, Colorado Trail volunteers are, “some terrific people who love the outdoors, believe in making the world better for others, don’t mind hard and dirty work, pitch in when there’s a need, and they are happy to do it.”

But this is only half the story of feeding the CT crew volunteers. This is only the planning and providing the non-perishables. Crew leaders take it from there to purchase all the perishables and other supplies. But that’s another story altogether.
Gudy Gaskill, the “Mother of The Colorado Trail” and director of CTF Outdoor Workshops, again welcomed knowledge-lovers who learned, laughed and enjoyed each other’s company at the CT cabin in the San Juan Mountains this summer. Taught by skilled educators, the participants immersed themselves in a variety of classes: Music in the Mountains, Kids’ Natural World, Hiking with the Colorado Mountain Club, Learn Your Wildflowers, Plein Air Watercolor, and Hike and Climb With the Best.

Every year Gudy begins the season by leading a volunteer cabin work crew and this year 13 energetic volunteers came to help prepare for the classes. They erected the community tents and canopy, stacked wood, organized supplies, cleaned, and even helped improve nearby trails.

Sara Winter Nye was one of the volunteers and wrote about some of the things she learned about the CT cabin. “We learned that the sturdily-built cabin had come into the hands of the CTF by a stroke of luck, a chance word-of-mouth about its availability. Gudy told us about how it had escaped catastrophic damage in an avalanche because of its setting below a natural rock barrier that diverted tons of debris on both sides of the cabin. We also learned of a microburst which had uprooted huge trees nearby and narrowly missed the cabin.”

The CTF office receives notes from a number of the class participants expressing their appreciation for the opportunity to be a part of this program. They enjoy the outdoors, the instructors, and learning in a unique environment. Nearly every one of them mentions how much they valued being with Gudy Gaskill who, besides being a great cook, always provides a week that’s fun and educational.

Gudy has already planned next year’s classes and the 2008 schedule has been posted at www.ColoradoTrail.org. We encourage you to consider attending and to register early.

CT Friends Keep on Trekking

During 5 weeks of July and August, 65 hikers trekked down the CT supported by the CTF trekking program. One of the groups happened on the unique opportunity of being the first hikers to walk over the new Clear Creek footbridge when only a few minutes old.

If you haven’t been on a CTF trek, you should plan to go. Trekkers get to experience The Colorado Trail for five days only carrying light daypacks. Camping equipment is shuttled by vehicles to the next night’s campsite. The group of hikers has a leader and a sweep hiker to guide the group and provide for safety. At the end of each day, camp staff members greet the hikers with hors d’oeuvres and a top-notch dinner. Trekkers say this is a great way to experience the CT.

This year was the last trek season for managers Pete and Lisa Turner. The Foundation is grateful to them for directing and enhancing our trek program for the past five years.

Our new trekking managers beginning next summer are Chris and Jeanne Szczech (pronounced “Zeck”). Chris was a staff member on each of this year’s five treks and Jeanne participated too. They are completely checked out and ready to provide fun and safe experiences for all CT trekkers beginning next July. They also have taken over all business of Colorado Mountain Expeditions (CME) including the website where trekkers register, www.coloradoexpeditions.com. (This link can also be found on the CTF website, www.ColoradoTrail.org.) It won’t be long before the CME website shows the 2008 trekking schedule and the opportunity to sign up for an ’08 trek is expected to begin in January. If you’re interested in trekking, make your plans and register early. Spaces on the 2007 treks were filled in less than 3 weeks.
Jerry Brown Surveys the CT End-to-End

Someone was needed with the right skills, interest and time to survey The Colorado Trail from Durango to Denver this summer and Jerry Brown volunteered AGAIN. As Jerry explained, “Well, somebody’s got to do it.”

Surveying The Colorado Trail is good work if you can get it. At least Jerry thinks so. Prior to this year’s trek Jerry had completed the CT four times. Jerry, a CTF Board member and licensed surveyor living in Durango, always brings information about the CT that is of great benefit.

Why do we need a Trail survey? Well, Trail users expect the CTF Guidebook and Databook to be accurate and kept up to date. This is especially important when we make such major route changes as recent ones on Cataract Ridge in the San Juans and the new bridge crossing at Clear Creek. Operations Manager George Miller uses Jerry’s Trail condition report in determining where to assign crews next summer. And the Foundation staff uses the survey report for passing along current conditions to Trail users.

For his fifth passage of the CT, Jerry took his professional survey equipment with the latest technology and high accuracy. He took his laptop for note taking and to store GPS readings. He packed CT confidence markers, the small white, eco-friendly triangles, for posting to help users find their way. Jerry planned for months and recruited volunteers to resupply him along the Trail. Then he convinced his brother, Carl Brown from California, to come along.

They began the survey from Durango on July 7 and hiked long distances each day while gathering valuable data. Along the way Jerry and Carl encountered 84 thru-hikers and believe they may have missed 20 more. Many had completed the Appalachian Trail or other long-distance trails, had light equipment, expected to average almost 25 miles a day and planned to complete the CT in 20 days.

Jerry gave CTF Managing Director Bill Manning a detailed Trail report on the night Jerry and Carl arrived in Denver. But the report was given only on the condition that Bill would provide the hikers with a hot shower, comfortable bed and a hearty dinner. The deal was struck and everyone ate well.

Here’s a portion of Jerry’s Trail report: “My brother and I finished our hike of the Trail on August 4, in 29.5 days. It was a good opportunity to look at the entire Trail in detail and consider the good and the bad. I think we resolved most signage issues without overdoing it too much. Placing 340 markers seems like a lot but when you consider the Trail length of about 485 miles, it’s really not.

“I had the opportunity to look at the work of the adopters section by section, and for the most part, the work is excellent. We have a few adopted segments here and there, however, that need more attention. There are some particular problems in the motorized portions of the Gunnison National Forest where adopters aren’t clearing the fallen trees promptly. Motorcyclists and equestrians are creating alternate routes around downed trees.

“The best maintenance I observed was the section adopted by the Summit Fat Tire Society. That section is absolutely perfect, with no down trees, excellent drainage, and a smooth and consistent surface. This observation was repeated in other sections maintained and used by mountain bikers. Mountain bikers have become a reliable and valuable labor force for the Trail.”

The Colorado Trail Foundation is grateful to Jerry and Carl for their invaluable contribution to the management and upkeep of the Trail. ∆

Confidence marker along The Colorado Trail.
Photo by Jerry Brown
On August 18, two weeks before my 57th birthday, my son, Jay, and I completed a thru-hike of The Colorado Trail. It was seven weeks of an incredible adventure. For several months we planned and prepared for this trip. We gathered our trail gear keeping in mind weight and functionality. We made the decision to dehydrate our meals which took several weeks of preparation. Finally, Jay and I worked on a schedule: when to leave, where to camp, where to resupply, and how many miles a day. I had no doubt in my mind that I would be able to hike 15 to 20 miles a day; however, carrying a 40-pound-plus backpack would change that a bit. In the end, my 37-year-old son and I decided that to average 12 miles a day would work for both of us; giving us the opportunity to enjoy our surroundings, explore our camp area, read and relax. Then we arranged resupply points with our trail angel, my husband Barry.

From inception, the idea of hiking with my son was a dream-come-true for me. I have always had a great relationship with my children. A few years ago my daughter, Kim, and I went to Europe together for a month, and now I had the opportunity to do something that I loved—hiking/backpacking—with my son. Sharing in the beauty of the Colorado mountains, having philosophical discussions, and meeting new friends were all part of the wonderful adventure with Jay. But there was more.

Jay and I, along with Richard D. whom we met at Kenosha Pass, struggled with grueling elevation gains and losses of several thousand feet, some very long days of 15-17 miles, several hours of freezing rain and sleet, and lightning on Jarosa Mesa which struck a few feet behind Jay and left him on the ground, stunned and shaking. At times we weren't finding it easy. Each section of The Colorado Trail was proving unique and difficult in its own way.

When I read over my journal, I relive that incredible hiking adventure with my son. I close my eyes and I am there again. I can see the beauty of the mountains, I can feel the satisfaction of having completed our goal for the day, and I can feel that sense of accomplishment, pride, and love between a mother and son.

Did I ever cry? Yes, three times: once when I finally made it to the top of the Collegiate Peaks, then when I saw the lightening strike so close to my son, and sadly when I knew we were at the end of The Colorado Trail. Seven weeks may seem like a long time to be on the Trail, but in the end, it was too short. Thru-hiking The Colorado Trail with my son was an adventure I checked off my list of “things I want to do before I get too old.” Hooray! We did it! 🎉
The CTF Volunteer Recognition Picnic this fall was, in the words of Jon Greeneisen, “a fine CTF gathering.” He described it as “a genuine atmosphere of love for the Trail and support for the Foundation.”

Carolyn and Doug Burtard, Sam Davis, Gudy Gaskill, the CTF staff and others made it all come together.

As in previous years, the event took place on a mid-September weekend but this year it was at Bear Creek Lake Park, west of Denver near Morrison. The turnout was exceptional, biggest ever, with 101 CTF volunteers! Volunteers of all ages attended including a number of kids who help maintain our Trail. Roy Senyard may deserve the “most dedicated” award, having traveled all the way from Fayetteville, Arkansas. There were long-term CT volunteers, more recent recruits, and even newcomers who want to get involved. Name tags helped everyone mix and mingle.

The food and drink went over well with lemonade the drink of choice. But the highlight was the cake which had been decorated with a Trail scene similar to the artwork at the top of Tread Lines, and it was really yummy.

Every volunteer in attendance was identified and recognized for the ways they have been involved. It is incredible how many different tasks our CT volunteers perform. Top honors went to volunteer bookkeeper, Liz Truitt, who has helped in the CTF office multiple days each week for many years. Gudy Gaskill presented Liz with a “Gudy original” watercolor of an enchanting scene along The Colorado Trail. Liz said that painting had long been her favorite and glowed with happiness.

As we were winding up, the approach of a classic Colorado rainstorm hastened our cleanup and chased us to our vehicles. It was nearly a perfect day. The CTF received several notes of thanks including one from Nancy Martinets who wrote, “Thank you for the very nice picnic and the delicious food. It was nice to meet and talk with others whose faces I had seen before and about whom I’ve read over the years.”

Liz Truitt receives top honors for her bookkeeping volunteerism from Gudy Gaskill. Photo by Judy Bolis

A full house of Friends at the CTF Picnic. Photo by Judy Bolis
“There’s a Bear in Camp!!”

Volunteers on the Wall’s Gulch week-long crew led by Ernie Norris are still smiling and telling stories. As sometimes happens, they encountered challenges beyond Trail work. No doubt the most memorable was that they had an uninvited visitor in camp.

The way Ernie tells it, “the good sleeping ended Friday night when the bear arrived in camp at 1:00 a.m.! My wife, Dee, who had a well-earned reputation for talking in her sleep, was the first to hear the sneaky bruin. She loudly announced arrival of Yogi but, to her dismay, there was no response. Everyone thought she was, once again, talking in her sleep. Dee finally, quite agitated, said in her loudest voice, ‘Doesn’t anyone care that there is a bear in camp?’ That finally got some attention.

After several visits by our bear we managed to scare him away by parking our car next to the remaining recyclable bags and blowing the horn when the bear returned. That worked. The bear took off like a bullet and didn’t come back.”

CT Hiker turns CTF Volunteer

A note received in the Golden office of The Colorado Trail Foundation:

Hello,

My name is Nate Karpowicz. Earlier this year I was hiking from Durango to Breckenridge. Just before I reached the approach up to Kennebec Pass I happened on a group of (CTF) volunteers. I offered them my help thinking I might carry a few waterbars and then be on my way. This group of great people ended up convincing me to spend the day helping them in return for hot food and good company that night. I promised them all that I would volunteer next year, bringing as many of my young friends as I could.”

Help Wanted

“C” Sawyer. Downed trees could be removed from the Trail more promptly if the CTF had a few chainsaw and crosscut-saw-trained volunteers certified by the Forest Service. We need a C-class-rated sawyer who could train CTF volunteers to be approved for using chainsaws and crosscut saws on The Colorado Trail.

Environmental Resource Specialist. Projects to improve the Trail are often delayed for two or three years until the Forest Service can complete required environmental studies. In some cases the process could be expedited if The Colorado Trail Foundation assisted the Forest Service with the assessments. We need a person familiar with environmental assessments who might help us in our work in this area with the Forest Service.
The ‘Friends of The Colorado Trail’ are you volunteers and contributors who chip in to care for this wonderful asset. The CTF thanks each and every one of you for your involvement. We couldn’t preserve the Trail without you.

The Colorado Trail Foundation
710 10th Street, Suite 210
Golden, CO  80401

Volunteers Make It Happen!