The Colorado Trail Crews Care for the Trail

The Colorado Trail is built and maintained by volunteers, funded primarily through private contributions. We could use your help. The Colorado Trail Foundation, 710 10th St #210, Golden, CO 80401, (303) 384-3729, www.ColoradoTrail.org
Thirty-five years after the inception of The Colorado Trail, many of its users – Colorado natives and newcomers alike – take it for granted, as if it’s always been part of this great state. But for those who were there at the beginning and for those of us who “live” the Trail and Foundation every day in our little one-room office in Golden, its completion and success continue to amaze.

At nearly 500 miles long, how did a group of volunteers ever create it in the first place? How is an organization as small as ours able to continue to improve and maintain it? Where does the funding come from?

The answer to these questions, of course, is the dedicated and giving people, folks like you, who cherish the outdoors.

The vision that became The Colorado Trail took shape in the 1970s. Recently, a 1974 article in Colorado Magazine surfaced describing the early efforts to bring it to fruition. (You can view it in its entirety at www.ColoradoTrail.org under Who We Are > Trail History.) The article described the work to identify a route and encouraged people to get involved. The goal, it said, was to build a family-friendly Trail, a “gentle Trail, not a back-breaker, so that anyone in modest physical condition can enjoy it.”

Trail backers, the article noted, believed it should take users “through a maximum variety of ecosystems, over all kinds of terrain, past historical sites from the bygone mining and pioneer days. Let them discover firsthand all the richness the Colorado mountains have to offer.” It was envisioned as a 350-mile path stretching from Denver to Durango.

Volunteers and supporters joined together. Students surveyed existing Trails looking for suitable routes. Leaders surfaced, including Bill Lucas, Merrill Hastings and Gudy Gaskill. Money was contributed by the Gates Foundation and others. Signs were placed. Many, many volunteers donated their vacation time and their labor to build connectors where suitable routes didn’t exist, and had so much fun they showed up year after year.

In 1987 the Trail was finally connected Denver to Durango. Immediately, the effort began to improve it. Volunteers moved sections that followed roads, building new Trail that users found more serene and enjoyable. Funding was secured from a great number of individuals. Volunteers took on the responsibility to maintain it. That effort continues today.

In 2009, the 35th year of The Colorado Trail, we look back on the wonderful “Colorado Trail” story. We remember the daunting challenge, the dedicated volunteers and the giving people who supported the effort. Just a dream in 1974, a family-friendly Trail from Denver to Durango has become a wonderful reality cherished by many.

**Contents**

1. The Colorado Trail Crews Care for The Trail
2. 35-Year Story, The Colorado Trail
3. Trail Crew Roundup
4. CT Volunteer in Wall Street Journal
5. CT Volunteer in Wall Street Journal
6. A Well Trained Crew
7. Adopters – Our Anchors
8. 35th Anniversary Colorado Trail Factoids
9. Lottery Winner!
10. From Day-Hiker to Dedicated Volunteer
11. CTF Picnic Brought “Friends” Together
12. Trek Talk
13. Twin Lakes Dam Opens to Trail Users
14. On The Trail with Anne O’Regan
15. Collage of Colorado Trail Photos
It was another successful season of Trail building and repair, thanks to the hard work of our crew leaders and volunteers. Fourteen weekend crews and two weekend crews, a total of 275 different volunteers from 27 states and 4 countries, worked to improve 25.9 miles of Trail between June 13 and Sept. 19. Here are some highlights from the crew leader reports:

(Also in this newsletter is “Friends Thank You 2009” where you will see listings of all the volunteers who participated in each Trail crew. For complete Trail crew reports including some photos, visit www.ColoradoTrail.org.)

Crew 0109 (Bill Carpenter and Gavin Bailey, June 13-20, Top of the World): Crew 0109’s week was very productive, according to Bill and Gavin, carving 306 yards of reroute and completing finish work on a total of 937 yards. But they say there was plenty of time to play as well: “A festive time was had by all in camp. A group yoga session was conducted and enjoyed by some of the more flexible members of the crew. Many a night was passed with Uno, Monopoly and Scrabble. Had the stove not melted halfway through the week, we might have had brownies, but a s’mores run and abundant cheesecake and ice cream provided ample solace.”

Crew 0209 (John Lipe, June 20-27, Squaw Creek): Work accomplished, according to John, included 3,430 feet of tread rebuilt or repaired, and a 15-foot bridge and horse crossing built across Squaw Creek.

Crew 0309 (Cindy Johnson, June 20-27, Kenosha Pass): “We improved two miles of Trail, removing rocks and roots, installed water bars, reworked switchbacks, and added a retaining wall,” Cindy reports.

Crew 0409 (Tom Brooksher, June 27-July 4, Lost Park): Tom estimates that “a little more than a mile of Trail was improved, including a lot of major projects in the bog, which now should be in good shape for several years to come.” His “outstanding” crew, which he called a “great mix of ‘mature’ members and young people,” installed nine rolling dips, five culverts, seven drainage ditches, five rock French drains, and three turmpikes.

Crew 0509 (Phil Smith, July 11-18, Clear Creek): “The crew was able to complete 2,523 feet of tread,” according to Phil, mainly “such standard chores as removing rock and more rock, and widening the Trail to 36 inches, according to CTF standards.” Four switchbacks also were repaired. One minor glitch: Strong winds that blew through on Monday evening “broke all the joints of the footing that holds up the shower stall – so we had no shower stall the rest of the week. Some of the crew improvised by dipping into cold Clear Creek!” Phil reports.

Crew 0609 (Jodie Petersen and Dave Peters, July 13-17, Cataract Ridge): “Our Trail crew was very productive and fun, with lots of work done on what also happens to be our Adopter section,” Jodie and Dave report. The crew worked seven miles, widening Trail, building and repairing cairns, further delineating the newly rerouted Trail with short sections of new tread, making bench cuts in two shale areas, armorng two stream crossings, and completing 60 water diversions. “Segment 23 is in a much improved state this year, thanks to the hard work of this crew and the previous ones,” the crew leaders note.

Crew 0709 (Glenn Kepler, July 18-25, Raspberry Gulch): Glenn’s crew “reconditioned the Trail from Raspberry Gulch north to the ridge, rebuilt several water bars, widened some tread, and filled in other tread.” On the final day, he says, they “cleared rocks from the ridge to the county road before Chalk Creek.” A lesson learned by the kitchen crew: “One cannot make angel food cake at high altitude. We called it fallen angel cake,” agreed Glenn and Ruth Baker (crew chef).

Crew 0809 (Merle McDonald, July 18-25, Miners Creek): Long-time volunteer Joe Ozaki described this crew as more productive than anyone thought possible. First-time volunteers gathered with seasoned veterans; the interplay was interesting and the group morphed into a productive and fun work team. They built four new Trail bridges and were even able to improve the tread nearby.

Moving and placing loads of rock for the bridge abutments was a major feat.

Crew 0909 (Dale Zoetewe, July 25-Aug. 1, Cache Creek below Mt. Elbert, Leadville RD): 0909 – Dale says his crew members, who hailed from Colorado, Iowa, Oklahoma and Wisconsin, were “very productive,” removing and replacing a rotten bridge, removing another old bridge and replacing it with a 12-inch culvert, cutting and removing 35 dead aspen, and adding 60 rolling dip water bars and 20 drains, along with removing the berm, on five miles of Trail from Cache Creek to Twin Lakes to the north and Clear Creek to the south.

Crew 1009 (Paul Smith, July 25-Aug. 1, Rolling Pass): By the numbers, Paul’s crew added five new water bars and cleaned and rebuilt 45 others, created eight new check dams, cleared willows along a 600-foot corridor, installed or replaced nine confidence markers/signs, added 14 new rolling dips, repaired 135 feet of turns and switchbacks, and built 30 feet of new tread.

“...I am writing to thank you for placing timely signage and confidence markers. When I was wondering if I missed a turn, there would be a CT marker. Great job. I am 78 years old and did a solo unassisted hike, resupplying in towns along the Trail. I started at Waterton Canyon on June 27 and finished 46 days later in Durango on Aug. 11. I had a great hike and enjoyed the wildlife, wildflowers and your beautiful mountains. Thanks again for not getting me lost!”

– Roger Dunton, West Union, SC

continued on Page 4
Trail Crew Roundup, con’t.

Crew 1109 (Arthur Rankin, Aug. 1-8, Goat Wadi): Arthur says he will remember this crew as “The Dirty Dozen Overachievers – Goat Wadi ’09” for “accomplishing so much is such a short week.” The group removed rock, brush, trees and widened approximately three-quarters of a mile of Trail from 1 foot wide to 3 feet wide. Within the section they also repaired a broken 18-foot, four-log bridge, constructed a 500-foot horse reroute and creek crossing by sawing and removing 10 large downed trees and filling in a large triple-boggy area with rock and stream gravel, built 10 rolling dips and a French drain for erosion control, and built two rock cairns for better Trail identification. “This week rates extremely high as one of my very most pleasurable times in my 23 years associated with the CTF,” Arthur adds. To top things off, “(The crew received) a personal inspection and ‘A’ approval by Brett Beasley and an assistant from the Salida District of the U.S. Forest Service on Thursday afternoon!”

Crew 1209 (Phil Smith, Aug. 8-15, Twin Lakes): As Phil reports, “This was the annual crew from Daniel C. Oakes High School in Douglas County. They have been doing a week’s Trail crew for the past 14 years! The teens learned quickly how to construct Trail. They were able to reconstruct 1,689 feet of tread. They also fixed a stream crossing by cleaning out the stream below the crossing, channeling it between rocks placed on either side.” Furthermore, the Oakes students are already looking ahead to next summer. “The school group is planning to return next year to continue fixing this portion of the Trail which extends to Highway 82,” Phil reports.

Crew 1309 (Ernie Norris, Aug. 8-15, Animas River): There were no slackers in this group. “We completely rebuilt nine switchbacks and refurbished another 30,” Ernie reports. “In addition, the entire length from switchback No. 6 to No. 39 (about three miles) was cleared of rocks, 5,000 feet of Trail was cleared of vegetation and 300 feet was debermed, 14 water diversions were rebuilt, and two fallen trees were removed. There was also a major engineering project – replacing the bridge over Molas Creek. (See related story on page 6 for more on this crew.)

Crew 1409 (Paul Smith and Bill Bloomquist, Sept. 12-19, Janet’s Cabin): The last crew of the year built four turnpikes of approximately 50, 35, 25 and 8 feet in length, Bill and Paul report. “All of the turnpikes were bordered with site-cut logs or rocks. Foundations were of multiple layers of rock covered with a mixture of gravel, sand and clay, all obtained in the immediate area.” In addition, the turnpikes were drained with trenches, rock culverts and French drains. Minor drainage improvements also were made to 50 feet of Trail.

Crew WE1 (Merle McDonald, June 20-21, Avalanche TH): Erosion control was the order for this weekend crew as the team de-burmed and fixed water diversions on a lengthy portion of Trail. Rain dampened their efforts some but Merle was pleased about the Trail improvements that will limit future tread erosion.

Crew WE2 (Cindy Johnson, July 18-19, Camp Hale): This popular ladies-only crew had a productive weekend. “Two miles of tread widened, one wet area worked, did a small bypass, and placed stepping stones,” Cindy reports. ▲
The Colorado Trail Foundation’s

HOLIDAY PARTY!

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2009

Come any time between 4:00 and 7:00 pm
American Mountaineering Center, 710 10th Street, Golden, CO

Appetizers, Wine, Displays, and Good Company
There will be a short presentation at 5:30 and door prize drawings at 6:00

Pick up a free 2010 Colorado Lottery calendar featuring The Colorado Trail

Come Early: The Bradford-Washburn American Mountaineering Museum will be open prior to the CTF party. Discounted admission for CTF guests is $3.25

Parking: Free spaces available in the rear (north and east) of the building

Bring your friends and family. Please RSVP to the CTF office at 303-384-3729 or e-mail ctf@coloradotrail.org with names of all attending for name tag preparation

---

CT Volunteer in Wall Street Journal

Longtime Colorado Trail volunteer **Gavin Bailey** was featured in a Nov. 9 article in the *Wall Street Journal* (“Brother, Can You Spare Some Time?”) about young adults “who have been inspired to sacrifice their social lives, sleep or precious vacation days to help support organizations in which they strongly believe.”

“Young adults, struggling with student loans and small salaries, often can’t afford to write checks to their favorite causes,” the *Journal* reports. “And many who can aren’t satisfied just making a financial contribution.”

“So instead of – or in addition to – donating money, a number of people in their 20s and early 30s are giving back to their communities by donating time, often their most valuable asset.”

Among them is Gavin, 30, of Fort Collins, who “has spent what amounts to almost a year clearing hiking trails in Colorado” since 1995.

As the *Journal* reports, Gavin “first teamed up with The Colorado Trail Foundation on a whim for a two-week stint as a teenager. Now . . . he still spends at least one week a year rerouting hiking trails that have been overused, pulling tree stumps and moving boulders to make the . . . Trail more hiker-, biker- and horseback rider-friendly.”

Gavin’s plan for a three-week outing this summer was detoured by “the birth of his first child in July,” the article notes, but he “still co-led a crew just weeks before his wife’s due date.”

“I’ll do at least one crew a year until I’m too old to pick up a pack,” Gavin told the *Journal*.

Gavin, who describes himself as a staunch environmentalist, told the newspaper that “he takes more pride in working for a charity than just giving money to it.”

“I feel more productive actually being out there, seeing things get done, leaving a mark that I know is going to last, that people are going to use and appreciate,” he said. “Not only do you leave a mark, but you leave a sentiment behind, you set an example.”

---

*Photo by Bill Bloomquist*
A Well Trained Crew

(Crew 1309, which worked a Trail section in the San Juans from Aug. 8 to Aug. 15, reached their base camp in style this year. Here’s a report from crew leader Ernie Norris and his wife Ann.)

Ken Marshall, the former adopter of the section from the Animas River to Molas Pass, thought it would be appealing to potential crew members if we could camp in Elk Park and use the railroad to get us in and out. The hike down from Molas, although only five miles, drops 1,940 feet and has 39 switchbacks. The problem is GETTING BACK OUT after a hard week of work! Thanks to The Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad and, more specifically, Evan Buchanan, Vice President and Superintendent of Operations, Ken’s idea came to life.

On Friday, Aug. 7, the D&SNGRR took our seven-person set-up crew, along with all our camp gear, to Elk Park using their diesel and a flatcar. On Saturday, the remaining 19 crew members, with all their personal gear, left Silverton for Elk Park on the 2:00 p.m. train. We all had a ball on the train and were a great curiosity to the tourists riding the train with us.

The fact that our week in camp coincided with the railroad’s annual Rail Fest event provided some special memories. In addition to the three regular trains going to and from Silverton every day, we got to see the Galloping Goose; the Eureka, a beautifully restored wood-burning steam engine; and many “track cars” or “motor cars” (that hold two to four people).

It was a great week! Our heartfelt thanks to every crew member – you are special people.

Ernie & Ann

Ernie Norris

Photo by Kyle Riffle

Photo by Ernie Norris
Early July."

The Indian Trail Ridge from Grindstone to Kennebec, was clear and we plan to get out there and do some tread and drainage work in weather has really slowed the thaw. We noticed more snow than we did last year at this same time. Nevertheless, "Our section, impacted work sites, and had a great time doing it!"

Over 600 feet of new Trail, spread a truckload of gravel, built a 50-foot rock wall, set a culvert, replaced 60 feet of silt fencing, rehabbed San Juan Forest and worked on the CT at Little Molas Campground," Art reported. The collection of enthusiastic Trail workers built Back Country Horsemen volunteers joined forces with a crew of eight from the SW Conservation Corps, along with three from the clear our section on July 7."

His group didn't stop there. "Twelve Four Corners

Steve was doing his spring maintenance survey. Some excerpts from Mr. D's trail journal: "The Creede Forest Ranger Station has received no information from anyone on snow conditions on the trails north, no one has gone out to check the conditions themselves. . . . While I am peering over maps, Steve Stadler, a retired physician from Colorado Springs, asks me if he can answer any questions I might have about trails north! It turns out he knows more about the CDT and Colorado Trail (the two overlap for some distance) and their conditions than anyone I have met in three weeks. He is a volunteer with The Colorado Trail Foundation and has personal responsibility for a 12-mile section of Trail running from the San Luis Pass to Eddiesville. . . . Conveniently for me, Steve is heading up the mountain to spend the night, and then hike the Trail tomorrow to evaluate its condition, and offers me a ride. . . . I set up my little tent, then offer to help Steve. He pulls out a humongous 12-by-12-foot tent, and the weight of it snaps one of his fiberglass poles. It's duct tape to the rescue, and we're back in business. . . . Next Steve pulls out his Coleman stove and pots and pans, and sets them up on the tailgate of his truck. He makes me an offer I can't refuse: to stay for a beans and franks dinner . . . but then adds a mixed salad and a canister of oatmeal cookies his wife made for dessert. Still not done, Steve pulls out two boxes of wine and offers me red or white! So here I am in the middle of nowhere sitting in a lawn chair, drinking wine, and eating beans and franks on a big plate with real silverware."

Jeremy Bock, AAT Section 13.3: Responding to report from hikers who'd had trouble following the Trail near Mount Princeton Hot Springs, Jeremy scheduled an additional visit to his section. He hoped to identify places users might find confusing and brought along Trail confidence markers. "I believe I found the area of confusion and was able to place five signs along this section last weekend," he reported.

Bill Vicary, AAT Section 27.2: Bill also made a second trip this year in response to a user report. He wrote, "Yesterday my wife and I rode our entire section (Big Bend Trail to Grindstone Trail), 18.8 miles on the Trail (round trip) and about 10 hours. We located and removed one 6-inch log at about mile 7. The rest of the Trail was completely clear." As big of a trip as this was, it was dwarfed by his first visit, about which he wrote, "Because of snowpack and other commitments, we were unable to clear our section until July 17 and removed 90 trees from the Trail at that time."

Signe Wheeler and Pam Doverspike, AAT Section 16.1: “Signage good throughout the section,” they reported. “Removed deadfall and pruned back trees and bushes for horse/rider clearance.”

Adopters - Our Anchors

Our 61 Adopters are the anchor in our efforts to maintain The Colorado Trail, covering all but one 10-mile stretch of its 488-mile length. Some are new, many others are veterans, and all are invaluable resources not only to the Foundation but to the thousands of hikers, cyclists, backpackers and horse riders who use the Trail each year.

These Adopt-A-Trail (AAT) volunteers agree to perform four main duties each year: clear fallen trees as early in the Trail season as possible, clean water diversions to prevent erosion, help supplement signage and communicate with CTF officials about the condition of their part of the Trail. Many go above and beyond, making the CT experience richer for everyone.

Without them, there would be no Colorado Trail as we know it.

Here is a sampling of reports from our Adopters this year:

Carol and Bob Drew, AAT Section 5.2: “How delightful that everybody is so pleased with the condition of the Trail. We are very proud of the Trail and our part in keeping it in good shape.”

Mark and Joellen Fonken, AAT Section 22.2: “We have been successful in necking down the alignment, and with compliance and re-growth, the old jeep road is now a trail.”

Jerry Brown, AAT Section 24.2: “The Elk Creek adopter crew went in on June 25 and returned June 28. We removed a total of 64 downed trees and cleaned the drainage structures. We were able to make it to the divide and the upper portions of the Trail were serviced as well. The Trail is open and clear.”

Art Berg and the Four Corners Back Country Horsemen, AAT Section 25.1: “The snow came off a little earlier than usual this year and we were able to clear our section on July 7.” His group didn't stop there. “Twelve Four Corners Back Country Horsemen volunteers joined forces with a crew of eight from the SW Conservation Corps, along with three from the San Juan Forest and worked on the CT at Little Molas Campground,” Art reported. “The collection of enthusiastic Trail workers built over 600 feet of new Trail, spread a truckload of gravel, built a 50-foot rock wall, set a culvert, replaced 60 feet of silt fencing, rehabbed impacted work sites, and had a great time doing it!”

Ian Altman and the CT Jamboree, AAT Section 27.3: Ian reported in June that his group was “surprised to see that the cool weather has really slowed the thaw. We noticed more snow than we did last year at this same time.” Nevertheless, “Our section, the Indian Trail Ridge from Grindstone to Kennebec, was clear and we plan to get out there and do some tread and drainage work in early July.”

Steve Stadler, AAT Section 20.1: Steve showed up in a trail journal posted by a hiker calling himself “Mr. D.” The two met up while Steve was doing his spring maintenance survey. Some excerpts from Mr. D’s trail journal: “The Creede Forest Ranger Station has received no information from anyone on snow conditions on the trails north, no one has gone out to check the conditions themselves. . . . While I am peering over maps, Steve Stadler, a retired physician from Colorado Springs, asks me if he can answer any questions I might have about trails north! It turns out he knows more about the CDT and Colorado Trail (the two overlap for some distance) and their conditions than anyone I have met in three weeks. He is a volunteer with The Colorado Trail Foundation and has personal responsibility for a 12-mile section of Trail running from the San Luis Pass to Eddiesville. . . . Conveniently for me, Steve is heading up the mountain to spend the night, and then hike the Trail tomorrow to evaluate its condition, and offers me a ride. . . . I set up my little tent, then offer to help Steve. He pulls out a humongous 12-by-12-foot tent, and the weight of it snaps one of his fiberglass poles. It’s duct tape to the rescue, and we’re back in business. . . . Next Steve pulls out his Coleman stove and pots and pans, and sets them up on the tailgate of his truck. He makes me an offer I can’t refuse: to stay for a beans and franks dinner . . . but then adds a mixed salad and a canister of oatmeal cookies his wife made for dessert. Still not done, Steve pulls out two boxes of wine and offers me red or white! So here I am in the middle of nowhere sitting in a lawn chair, drinking wine, and eating beans and franks on a big plate with real silverware.”

Jeremy Bock, AAT Section 13.3: Responding to report from hikers who’d had trouble following the Trail near Mount Princeton Hot Springs, Jeremy scheduled an additional visit to his section. He hoped to identify places users might find confusing and brought along Trail confidence markers. “I believe I found the area of confusion and was able to place five signs along this section last weekend,” he reported.

Bill Vicary, AAT Section 27.2: Bill also made a second trip this year in response to a user report. He wrote, “Yesterday my wife and I rode our entire section (Big Bend Trail to Grindstone Trail), 18.8 miles on the Trail (round trip) and about 10 hours. We located and removed one 6-inch log at about mile 7. The rest of the Trail was completely clear.” As big of a trip as this was, it was dwarfed by his first visit, about which he wrote, “Because of snowpack and other commitments, we were unable to clear our section until July 17 and removed 90 trees from the Trail at that time.”

Signe Wheeler and Pam Doverspike, AAT Section 16.1: “Signage good throughout the section,” they reported. “Removed deadfall and pruned back trees and bushes for horse/rider clearance.”
35th Anniversary Colorado Trail Factoids

• The CT is 488.1 miles long, according to an updated survey this year. Four new sections of the Trail plus a mileage correction added 2.7 miles to the former official distance. (That’s also more than 20 miles longer than the Trail was in its inaugural year.)

• The CT shares 216 miles with the Continental Divide Trail, which spans more than 3,000 miles between the U.S. borders with Mexico and Canada.

• 64.8 miles of the CT pass through six wilderness areas. Can you name all six? (Answer below)

• The CT also passes through six national forests, crosses five major river systems and enters eight of the state’s mountain ranges.

• The highest point on the Trail is Coney Summit, in the San Juan Mountains south of Lake City, at 13,334 feet.

• The lowest point is Waterton Canyon, at the eastern terminus of the Trail, at 5,522 feet.

• The biggest change since 2000 involves segments 23 and 24 in the San Juans, which added 17.1 miles to the Trail. The new Cataract Ridge route is awe-inspiring and eliminates the Pole Creek-Bear Town sections where motorized use was allowed.

Lottery Winner!

No, we didn’t hit the big numbers, but The Colorado Trail Foundation is a big winner nonetheless. The Colorado Lottery’s 2010 calendar, displayed at vendor locations across the state, features The Colorado Trail in its full-color glory.

“‘Don’t Forget to Play.’ It’s not just the tagline for the Colorado Lottery, (it) is what the Lottery is all about. We remind people to play our games, but we also encourage all the citizens of Colorado to take advantage of the Colorado lifestyle and to get out and enjoy the great outdoors,” the Lottery writes in its introduction to the calendar.

“Colorado premier long-distance Trail, The Colorado Trail, provides citizens the opportunity to enjoy the state’s breath-taking views and scenic beauty. Completed in 1987, it is one of the leading hiking, biking, and equestrian Trails in the world,” it continues.

The calendar features photos by Carl Brown and others, as well as a map and information about the Trail.

Pick yours up at the CTF’s annual holiday party in Golden on Dec. 10th (details on page 5 of this newsletter).

Answer to Wilderness Area Question Above:
Lost Creek Wilderness (CT Segs 4 & 5)
Holy Cross Wilderness (CT Seg 9)
Mount Massive Wilderness (CT Seg 10)
Collegiate Peaks Wilderness (CT Seg 12)
La Garita Wilderness (CT Segs 19, 20 & 21)
Weminuche Wilderness (CT Seg 24)

“I met Steve and Pete from board of directors this summer while backpacking near Cascade Creek with my daughters. Their Trail crew welcomed and fed us and were so kind as to leave a lasting impression on my daughters. I appreciate the generous spirit of the CTF and hope to support your efforts to maintain this beautiful Trail until I am again dust.”

– Chris Healey
Castle Rock, CO
From Day-Hiker to Dedicated Volunteer

Thousands of people hike sections of The Colorado Trail each year. Few, though, pay as close attention as George Neserke, algebra and statistics teacher at Colorado Academy in Denver.

Or take notes to share with CTF Managing Director Bill Manning and other keepers of the Trail. Bill says that, “Trail-conditions info provided by users is of great value to the Foundation and we forward it to Adopters and operations volunteers who act on it to improve The Colorado Trail.”

In an e-mail to Bill in July, for example, George noted that the “Highline sign at mile 7.7 [of Segment 10] is falling off the sign post. It needs some longer screws (2 inch should do it) and a drill gun (or a really strong arm). Don’t know if we care about this sign as it has nothing to do with the CT, but it is clarifying where to go at an intersection of the CT and the Highline Trail. I forced it back onto the post, but I doubt that will last a week.”

Or this one in June: “I was up in Segment 11 yesterday and between Miles 5 and 15, the Trail is in simply excellent condition. However, there is a signed post down . . . in the sage around Twin Lakes, east side. It might be tall enough to just have a hole dug and replaced, but since it was broken off at the bottom, it might be too short – I’m not sure of the specifications on post height. At any rate, if the Trail adopter wants help digging the post hole, I’ll be in the area next week and would be happy to assist.

Not content to just offer suggestions, George also pitches in when and where he can.

“I was out in Segment 13 yesterday, this time between the North Cottonwood Creek Trailhead and about one mile down from the Yale ridge on the South side (about Mile 5),” he wrote Bill in June. “Ken Stagner and I had cleared trees from the Avalanche TH to that point a couple of weeks ago as part of a weekend Trail crew and I wanted to finish the job over to the North Cottonwood TH.”

So that’s what he did.

George’s interest in the Trail as a user has turned him into an avid volunteer.

“The way I’ve always looked at my work is to reconnoiter the Trail as best as possible while I’m out there, since the adopters can’t possibly be covering their section all of the time,” he says. “Trees often fall when no one’s looking!”

Because he has a young family, George says, “I tend to spend my time on the CT day-hiking. That allows me to get back to Bill before the memory of some problem has faded. But I’ve also found that taking notes is a big help toward getting the information right, which might be something that could be encouraged in other day-hikers.”

George stresses the importance of being specific.

“It does little good to tell an adopter that a tree is down somewhere in their section, but if you can give them a GPS fix or at least a fix based on mileage from the guidebook, then their job is made that much easier.”

And, he adds, “It never hurts to carry a pocket chainsaw around!”

Warm CTF Friends

The 2009 Annual Friends Picnic brought together hearty CTF supporters. It took place at Bear Creek Lake Park near Morrison on Saturday, September 4th, which was the summer’s very first cold, damp day. CTF Friends braved the weather and came in great numbers to socialize with other Trail lovers and share a nice meal. We’ll never cease to marvel at the dedication of our CTF folks as 122 showed, nearly as many as last year.

Friends of all types were recognized, including Trail crew volunteers, Adopters and our essential CTF donors. Pat Nagorka was given an award for her decades of service including the CTF Crew Food Program she managed until this year. Lois and Tracy Cochran were recognized for their service that began with Trail Crews 20 years ago and, more recently, as Trail Crew Registrars. As they accepted their award, they made a crowd-quieting announcement that 2009 would be their last year as registrars. This triggered a heart-warming moment when, from the crowd, Bob Wandel raised his hand and voice and volunteered to succeed the Cochrans in this crucial volunteer assignment. Bravo!

The picnic lunch was simple and yummy, though we would have gone through gallons of hot chocolate if it had been on hand. The dessert cakes seemed to contribute to group warmth; they were award-winning scrumptious.

Popular again this year was the Pocket Chainsaw Cutting Contest. We put these handy, micro, muscle-powered tools to the test for fun and to champion their usefulness. Teams raced each other to cut through the 7-inch diameter pine log and the contestants really “got after it.” Spectators cheered. Among the speediest sawyers were Gary and son, Kyle Riffle, who made sawdust the quickest. Both have been on Trail crews for a couple of years and really enjoy their involvement.

Friends compared Trail stories, consulted the maps and enjoyed old CTF scrapbooks and photo albums. There were big smiles and it was great fun. Friends of The Colorado Trail are the best friends that an organization could have.
CT Trekking is a 5-day guided, “We Haul It, You Hike It” vacation on The Colorado Trail. There is more information available at www.ColoradoTrail.org as well as www.ColoradoTrailHiking.com. Participants in this year’s CTF-supported trekking trips were asked to fill out a survey on their experience. Following are some of their comments:

On the overall trekking experience

- Of all the vacations I have taken, The Colorado Trail trips have always been my favorite and most memorable. I look forward to seeing you next year.

- The most pleasurable hiking experience I have ever had.

- Could not have been better. Just the kind of hard hike I wanted, without a heavy pack. Hope to do Section 7 next year.

- Amazing high country, ample support, competent guides, terrific food, assurance of safety (as far as one can be in the high country), patient and friendly co-hikers, super Trail tread – and more. Thanks for offering this terrific access to those of us who love the CT, but who can’t hike it on our own.

- In my opinion, the supported treks have only gotten better. Your customer service is incredible. That, along with your knowledge of the Trail and of the outdoors, make these trips the highlight of my summer. All I can suggest is that you keep up the great work!

- Once again I had a great time. Getting away from the heat, pollution, noise and stress of summer in the city is great for the body and soul. I always meet interesting people (guests and guides). For the price, I don’t think anyone could expect more. You do a great job!

- Incredible beauty. I didn’t realize it could be so beautiful above treeline. The Elk Creek view from the ridge was one of the best mountain scenes I have ever seen.

On staff and guides

- The best: always friendly, cheerful, helpful. You know how to pick them.

On camp set-up

- This was the most “luxurious” camp set-up I’ve ever experienced. A huge cooking/dining/lounging tent, a SHOWER, and a toilet seat to sit on -- what else is there?

On meals

- This was my sixth supported trek over the last seven years, and the food was the best yet, especially the chocolate cake. Even though I completed the Trail this year, I’m considering next year just for the cake.

Photos by Chris Szczech, Trekking Program Manager
Twin Lakes Dam Reopens to Trail Users

The Colorado Trail Foundation and Continental Divide Trail Association got some good news in October when the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation announced it was reopening the Trail across Twin Lakes Dam near Leadville.

That section of the Trail, shared by the CT and CDT, had been closed since shortly after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001 because of security concerns.

CTF volunteers worked to establish a temporary route east of the dam, which while “much better than nothing” still “proved troublesome,” according to CFT Managing Director Bill Manning.

In an e-mail to Friends of the CT, Manning said, “For years now, the CTF, including key CTF volunteers Chuck Lawson and George Miller, have worked with authorities to re-establish the top of the dam as the official route for The Colorado Trail. . . . We appreciate this accommodation and the work of all the authorities and volunteers.”

“As soon as our volunteers are able, we’ll eliminate the signs on the temporary route and re-establish the dam as the Trail,” he added. “This will benefit Trail users and volunteers. The route atop the dam is much less confusing and easier to maintain.”

In order for the Trail to remain open, Bureau of Reclamation officials cautioned, the public needs to be vigilant about activity at the dam.

“We ask that the public use the Trail only to cross the dam,” said Howard Bailey, Safety and Security Manager for the agency’s Eastern Colorado Area Office. “We need your help keeping this facility safe.”

Photo by Dan Milner

On The Trail with Anne O’Regan

Colorado Trail hikers know that a surprise can await around almost any bend – a majestic peak, a white-capped cataract, a broad, tree-carpeted valley. But it was a rare surprise that greeted thru-hiker Anne O’Regan after she topped Kokomo Pass between Copper Mountain and Camp Hale on June 26: a mountain lion.

Anne, of Newtonville, Mass., described the encounter in an e-mail to the CTF:

“At first I saw its tail waving from behind a crop of rocks (about 30 feet away); then it walked out from behind the rocks. . . . I was startled. We looked at each other, and then I began to sing very loudly and walk slowly away. The mountain lion ran off across a snowfield. It was not aggressive; I did not feel at all threatened. Startled – yes; threatened – no.

Anne solo hiked the Trail, except for 30 miles in the Collegiate Range (which she says is a “long story”), but hopes to get back soon to make up those missing miles. She began her hike on June 16, two days after arriving in Denver, and finished on July 20, taking seven days off during the trek.

Anne says she was greeted on her arrival in Denver with “monsoon-like” rain, moth ball-size hail, thunder and lightning. “The weather did make me wonder what I was getting myself into,” she writes. “But by Tuesday the 16th the weather shifted and I started the hike with a wonderful series of sunny mornings combined with moments of light rain in the afternoon.”

After that, she says, “for the most part the weather was great.” She encountered hail, rain and lightning on and off from San Luis Pass for the next 50 miles. “But after that I got lucky – the weather for the last 10 days of the hike was sublime.”

Some additional comments:

– “The Trail was very well marked. The only place I had a problem was before reaching (finding) Chochetopa Creek. Since this was a long dry stretch it was unfortunate that the signage was an issue. Other than this area, the Trail was remarkably well blazed.”

– In addition to the mountain lion, O’Regan saw “one rattlesnake, tons of birds, a few deer, several herds of elk.”

– In my mind the most gorgeous sections of the Trail were: the first 20 miles, the Ten Mile Range, the 30 miles or so just after Highway 50 near Salida, and the section between Creede and Silverton.”

– “There were amazing, incredible flowers everywhere from start to finish!”

She concluded her e-mail by thanking the Foundation and volunteers “for all the work you do both on and off the Trail.”

Photo by Anne O’Regan
The Colorado Trail

The Colorado Trail Foundation
710 10th Street, Suite 210
Golden, CO 80401
Non-Profit Organization

Current Resident or

Biker photo by Dan Milner;
Hiker photo by Lawton
“Disco” Griner;
Horse photo by Roy Berkeley;
Flower photo by Bill Bloomquist;
Women at Picnic photo by Judy Bolis