The Colorado Trail’s new “High 23” beckons hikers, backpackers and horse riders this summer not only with its breath-taking vistas and superb tread, but also with the opportunity of being among the first to walk its path. The 23-mile stretch between Texas Creek and Tin Cup Road on the west side of the Collegiate Range was completed only last year and officially opens to Trail users this summer. It is part of the 80 miles of Continental Divide National Scenic Trail between Twin Lakes and South Fooses Creek that were added to The Colorado Trail last year and designated the Collegiate West to distinguish it from the existing tread now known as the Collegiate East.

Prior to this year, the distance covered by the new “High 23” followed motorcycle trail and forest roads. After years of work by the Buena Vista Correctional Facility crews and others including The Colorado Trail Foundation, Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado, and Continental Divide Trail Alliance, the “High 23” has been completely moved off motorized and road routes onto single-track trail.

The result has been spectacular new trail for CT and CDNST trekkers alike.

CTF Board Chairman Steve Staley, said, “This new reroute is beautiful and the trail construction is magnificent. A group of us hiked it last summer and all agreed that it’s an absolute showpiece.”

Early this summer, the CTF and key CT volunteers will make sure the new reroute is well marked with both Colorado Trail and Continental Divide National Scenic Trail signage. Up-to-date maps already have been published in the 2014 Colorado Trail Map Book and Collegiate Loop Map Book, available at the online CT Store via ColoradoTrail.org. (See related article in this issue on the new map books.)

The 160-mile Collegiate Loop, which the CTF believes is destined to become one of Colorado’s premier backpacking hikes, combines the new Collegiate West and existing Collegiate East trails. In addition to eliminating the need for shuttling vehicles, the loop provides great access to several of the state’s 14,000-plus-foot peaks, which draw climbers and hikers from across the country and world.

Several volunteer trail crews will continue making upgrades to the Collegiate West this summer and nearly all 80 miles have been “adopted” by front-line volunteers who each perform regular maintenance of several miles of trail.

Staley indicated that, “With this newly rerouted High 23, the Collegiate West 80 belongs on anyone’s bucket list.”
Executive Director’s Update

This is Year 40 for The Colorado Trail, a tremendous milestone that makes us think back on the rich history of the Trail.

The CTF has long considered 1974 as the Trail’s inaugural year, when some of the earliest meetings were held and the CT was little more than a concept. Attending many of those early meetings was Gudy Gaskill, “Mother of The Colorado Trail,” who has continued her involvement over the decades and, at a recent CTF board meeting, reminded us of a little-known nugget in the Trail’s history.

She explained that the concept of The Colorado Trail came primarily from horsemen, many of whom were members of the Roundup Riders of the Rockies. I theorize that the idea may have come from the classic cowboy song, Along the Colorado Trail. It is easy to imagine a group of horse riders listening to this song around the campfire, dreaming aloud about such a route.

They imagined a long-distance trail crossing the Rocky Mountains that was suitable for multiday trips. The logistical challenges would be eased by having friendly host ranches along the way, each about a day’s ride from the last. Riders would bunk or camp at the ranches and refresh and feed their stock. The horsemen talked with key Forest Service personnel, lobbied for such a trail, and even offered assistance in funding its construction.

We owe a lot to these horsemen, and women, who pushed the trail concept. Though the host ranches never came to be, we can thank these visionaries for the thriving Colorado Trail we have today. And, of course, a number of horsemen venture out on the CT each year.

One such horse enthusiast is Carol Crisp, who, with her friend Debbie Smith, have been segment riding since 2009. Carol takes videos and writes about her rides, then shares them on the Internet.

She writes, “It has been a dream of mine to ride The Colorado Trail from Denver to Durango. So I started that quest and found a riding buddy to follow the dream with me.”

Of their ride on Segment 7 (Gold Hill Trailhead to Copper Mountain), she wrote, “The climb was so dramatic, the views so spectacular and (our horses) Smoke and Flame were simply amazing. We climbed to nearly 12,500 feet on a fairly narrow ridge of the mountains called the Tenmile Range. Even though it was August, snow still hung along the highest ridgelines. We mingled with the clouds looking down on Lake Dillon and Breckenridge. After reaching the top-out point at 12,494 feet, we could look just to the west and see Copper Mountain Ski Resort!

“Some trails will always remain with me. This is one that had so many metaphors for difficult challenges, for overcoming fears and not giving in to life’s worries. I have climbed a few fourteeners on foot and this was every bit as challenging and exhilarating! The fact that your horse and you are a partnership, he carries you, and you must make good decisions in his behalf, has the effect of forever melding your hearts, and minds, together.”

Carol’s horse videos and trip reports can be seen at teamcolorado.typepad.com/equine_explore/colorado-trails

Continued happy trails to you all!

— Bill Manning
New Faces Join CTF Board

The Colorado Trail Foundation Board of Directors welcomed two new members and said goodbye to two veterans at its February meeting in Golden.

Joining the board are Diana Bristol of Bayfield and Mal Sillars of Buena Vista. Departing were Jack Berryhill of Black Hawk and Carolyn Burtard of Centennial.

Berryhill, a Colorado district court judge and avid outdoorsman, served on the board for nine years, providing invaluable counsel on numerous legal and other issues. A framed map of The Colorado Trail is proudly displayed in his courtroom.

Burtard, also a nine-year veteran of the board and its secretary for several years, began her involvement with the CT more than 26 years ago, working on numerous trail crews, working in the office, running mailing parties, and organizing annual social events, including the Friends Picnic and Holiday Reception.

Bristol, a nurse and Colorado native, grew up in Steamboat Springs, developing a lifelong love of the outdoors, participating in activities ranging from skiing to kayaking, backpacking to rock climbing.

A longtime employee of the San Juan Regional Medical Center, Bristol has served in various capacities, including pediatrics nurse and surveillance nurse for infection control and employee health. A 30-year member of La Plata County Search and Rescue, she has also taught mono and bi-skiing in adaptive sports. She started doing trail work in 1987 on a Colorado Trail crew. “I have come to believe that healthy trails translate to healthy people and healthy communities,” she says.

Sillars grew up in Connecticut near the Appalachian Trail, and earned degrees in physics, with graduate work in meteorology. He worked as a college instructor and weathercaster in Michigan and is now a real estate broker in Buena Vista.

In Colorado, he has been a member of the Continental Divide Trail Alliance, working on numerous trail projects, including scouting and cutting in new sections of the current CT Collegiate West. He is a founding member of the Upper Arkansas Wilderness Volunteers, serving as its chairman from April 2012 to September 2013 and currently on its board.

Sillars is also a member National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance and has been a Colorado Trail Adopter since July 2012.

Front-Line Volunteers Needed

The Colorado Trail Foundation is looking for a few good Adopters.

People like Jon and Marylin Greeneisen, who for the past 16 years tended an 8-mile section of the Trail from South Cottonwood Creek to Mount Princeton Road, southwest of Buena Vista. Their duties included checking their stretch trail at the beginning of each trail season – and sometimes during – clearing out downed trees, maintaining drainage features, and performing other needed repairs.

If a job proved too big for them and their friends to handle – such as a massive blowdown two years ago that left some 60 huge trees blocking their section of Trail alone – they alerted the CTF office and U.S. Forest Service to send in reinforcements.

The Greeneisens, whose involvement in The Colorado Trail dates back decades, decided to retire at the end of last season, but fortunately there were others ready and willing to take up a Pulaski and pocket chainsaw in their place.

Currently, the CTF has 78 Adopter sections, which range from 2 to 17 miles in length, and nearly every one is in good hands. But more help is always needed.

“The Adopter roster has changed a lot,” notes Janet Farrar, volunteer coordinator of the CTF’s Adopt-a-Trail Program for the past 10 years. “In February 2004, the roster stood at 58 Adopter sections. Today, with the addition of the Collegiate West’s 80 miles, we have 78 Adopter sections. Of the 58 Adopters in 2004, only 15 are still in the program.”

Along with the Greeneisens, longtime Adopters Dawn Barton and Ted La May also retired last year. And so it goes, veterans turning over their duties to younger hands.

To respond to that turnover, Farrar turns to people who have expressed interest in taking part in the Adopt-a-Trail Program. If you are interested in becoming one of these front-line volunteers, email Farrar at wildjc@juno.com or the CT Foundation at ctf@ColoradoTrail.org. Training and tools are provided as needed.

More information on the program is also available at ColoradoTrail.org.
The 2014 Colorado Trail Map Book and Collegiate Loop Map Book are now on sale at ColoradoTrail.org’s online store.

They are the only books available showing the lastest rerouting of the Collegiate West section of the Trail, some 80 miles of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail added to The Colorado Trail last year. That includes the new “High 23” realignment that officially opens this summer.

While The Colorado Trail Map Book covers all 567 miles of the Trail from Denver to Durango, The Collegiate Loop Map Book focuses on the 160-mile loop created by combining the newly designated Collegiate West section of the Trail with the existing trail on the eastern side of the Collegiate mountain range, now known as the Collegiate East. The loop includes breath-taking views of, and convenient climbing access to, several of Colorado’s famous fourteeners, peaks towering above 14,000 feet.

Compiled by professional surveyor and mapmaker Jerry Brown of Durango, a longtime Colorado Trail Foundation board member and six-time completer of the Trail, the highly detailed, full-color topographic maps help users track their location and find water and campsites.

As an added convenience, the spiral-bound books can be disassembled so users need carry only the maps they need. For bicyclists, the books include maps showing detours around wilderness areas.

Also available from the online store are The Official Guidebook to The Colorado Trail and The Colorado Trail Databook. Published in 2011, the Official Guidebook does not include the Collegiate West route. The Databook, published last year, includes the prior alignment of the Collegiate West, but not the new “High 23” opening this year. Both are still invaluable resources, but only the new map books are completely up to date.

The 92-page, 8½-by-11-inch Colorado Trail Map Book is available for $46.95. Packaged with the Official Guidebook ($24.95) and Databook ($12.95), the cost is $75.

The 24-page Collegiate Loop Map Book sells for $26.95. Packaged with the Databook and Latitude 40°’s Salida/Buena Vista Trails Map ($11.95), the cost is $45.

For more information, go to: ColoradoTrail.org and click on CT Store.
No two journeys are the same.

The moments that define a journey often blossom unexpectedly. These temporal blossoms unveil unique experiences and teach distinct lessons. These are the lessons I learned while hiking from Denver to Durango on The Colorado Trail.

Every day is a new adventure; each day a new breath of crisp air, a new view, a new struggle, a new lesson. Unpredictably, the Trail unfolds before my feet. The hope of Durango leads me through the next mile, through storms and snowbanks. I remain steadfast in my goal, yet focused on the beauty of the moment.

Packing light is a choice. I packed no phone, GPS, music player, or tablet. I minimized pack weight, but more importantly I left behind distractions of modern life. The clutter of life is more than extra ounces in a pack, it burdens the soul, hinders creativity, and limits our potential.

Life on the Trail is simple. I wake up when the early morning light illuminates my tent. I pack up my belongings, eat, and make miles. I filter water at creek crossings, eat, and make miles. When the sun drops low I unpack, eat and study my maps for tomorrow’s journey. The Trail reveals clarity. Each day I progress toward a defined goal.

We are made to move. No great story is told of stationary individuals. Stories are journeys and journeys are stories. Life is defined by movement; once we stop, life will pass us by.

At times the Trail wanders through wooded valleys with views limited by the density of the trees and the curvature of the Trail. In the woods the big picture is obscured. Yet at times the Trail traverses alpine ridges with limitless views. Behind me the horizon sits saturated with memories and the horizon ahead foreshadows adventures and obstacles to come.

The Trail teaches patience. With the threat of dry creeks, forest fires, and detours, I keep my head up and my eyes fixed on the western horizon. Dwelling on circumstances beyond my control will not get me any closer to Durango.

My muscles become fatigued after steep climbs and long days, but it’s the psychological climbs that make or break a thru-hike. The mental challenges characterize the journey. With each challenge the Trail refines weakness into strength, uncertainty into confidence, discomfort into satisfaction.

Even though I’m solo on the CT, in the end it’s all about the people. The people who thru-hike the same narrow tread, the people I briefly interact with, the people I think about while hiking each mile, and the people I share my stories with.

What once was an ambitious dream materialized like wildflowers for a brief season that then faded into mere memories. Over time, I will slowly lose vivid details of the adventure, but the lessons I’ve learn will remain. Committing to the trail and all of the unknowns is risky, but the rewards are as vast as the mountainous landscape through which the trail traverses.

Mile by mile, moment by moment, Colorado whispers truth in the thin breeze, defines extravagance with the hillside, and beckons timeless adventures. Colorado is forever.
Come Party With Us

Save the dates for these annual Colorado Trail Foundation events:

- **Sept. 13** – Friends of The Colorado Trail Thank You Picnic, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., Bear Creek Lake Park, Lakewood.
- **Oct. 11** – Durango Friends Reception, 5:00-7:00 p.m., Carver Brewing Co., Durango.
- **Dec. 4** – Holiday Reception, 4:00-7:00 p.m., American Mountaineering Center, Golden.

Last year’s Holiday Reception drew more than 275 supporters of the trail, a tremendous turnout considering the evening’s cold, snowy weather.

Event planners, led by CTF board members Steve Stadler and Carolyn Burtard, weren’t as lucky with the 2013 fall Friends Picnic. Heavy rains and flooding that devastated parts of northern Colorado (luckily, The Colorado Trail emerged unscathed), shut down Bear Creek Lake Park in Lakewood, forcing cancellation of the event.

Team up this summer with The Colorado Trail Foundation and volunteers from around the country on one of the trail crews dedicated to keeping The Colorado Trail in top condition for hikers, cyclists and equestrians.

Volunteers not only build and maintain trail, but often lasting friendships, while camping, working, and eating together in Colorado’s high country. Many return year after year.

Eight weeklong and three weekend crews are on this summer’s schedule thanks to longtime operations volunteer George Miller. All of the weeklong (Saturday to Saturday) sessions are either jeep-in or backpack crews. The weekend crews are all automobile accessible. Work is tailored to each crew member’s abilities, so you can participate if you’re between 16 and 160.

You needn’t be experienced. Come learn new skills in trail building and more.

**THIS YEAR’S SCHEDULE:**

**June 21-28 - Crew 0114, Sargents Mesa,** leaders John and Betsy Sylvester. This crew will rebuild a section of trail, now an old jeep road, while camping on Sargents Mesa near the “Soldierstone” memorial honoring veterans of the Vietnam War years. Jeep-in, elevation 11,616 feet.

(FULL) **July 12-19 - Crew 0214, Tincup Pass Road,** leader Bill Carpenter. This crew will “toughen” part of a new 23-mile section of the Collegiate West trail for its first official hiking season. Jeep-in, elevation 11,000 feet.

**July 19-26 - Crew 0314, Windy Peak,** leader Steve Stadler. Volunteers will restore a steep, rocky section of trail between Windy Peak and Tank Seven, camping south of the Chester ghost town site. Jeep-in, elevation 10,900 feet.

(FULL) **July 19-26 - Crew 0414, Tunnel Gulch,** leader Loren Woods. This is the first of two backpack crews. Volunteers will work along the abandoned Midland Terminal Railroad grade, which is part of the CT’s Collegiate West route and the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. Elevation 11,600 feet.

**July 26-Aug. 2 - Crew 0514, Texas Creek,** leader Bill Carpenter. This team will upgrade the old Texas Creek trail for its opening this year as part of the CT/CDNST’s Collegiate West route. Jeep-in, elevation 10,000 feet.

**Aug. 2-9 - Crew 0614, Middle Fork,** leaders Tom Brooksher and Scott Smith and Laura Brieser-Smith. Crew members will build new trail near the Boss Lake Trailhead to move more of the Collegiate West trail off road. Jeep-in, elevation 10,500 feet.

**Aug. 2-9 - Crew 0714, South Texas Creek,** leader Paul Smith. This backpack crew will hike 3 miles from Cottonwood Pass, camping alongside a lake, while upgrading the old South Texas Creek trail. Elevation 10,500 feet.

**Aug. 9-16 - Crew 0814, Middle Fork,** leader Glenn Kepler. See description for Crew 0614.

(FULL) **June 15 - Crew WE1, Gudy Gaskill Bridge,** leader Loren Woods. This one-day crew close to Denver will perform work on the trail just west of the Gudy Gaskill Bridge across the South Platte River. Picnic lunch will be provided.

(FULL) **June 20-23 - Crew WE2, Winfield,** leader Cindy Johnson. This popular women-only crew will repair a water-damaged section of the CT/CDNST, camping near the ghost town of Winfield.

(FULL) **July 11-13 - Crew WE3, Avalanche Trailhead,** leader Paul Smith. Camping near Cottonwood Pass Road, this crew will refurbish trail north toward the saddle of Mount Yale and replace a small bridge near the trailhead.

Cost of the weeklong crews is $60 per person. Weekend crews cost $30 per person. Fees for those working multiple crews are discounted. Participants must be at least 16 years of age and in good physical condition.

For more information on what to expect and what to bring, and to get registration and waiver forms, go to ColoradoTrail.org.
Trekking Spots—Going, Going, Almost gone...

Spots are filling fast for this summer’s 9 Colorado Trail Treks, led by guides from Colorado Mountain Expeditions.

These always popular six- and seven-day trips allow hikers to travel light for maximum enjoyment of the Trail. Guides lead the way and support crew members prepare meals and haul gear ahead to the next campsite. Groups are limited to 12 people and average hiking days are about 15 miles. The cost for Section 1 is $1,025; the others are priced at $1,125.

Summarizing the 2013 season, Trekking Manager Chris Szczech (pronounced “zeck”) wrote that there were 106 hikers residing in 20 States and Canada. Over half the trekkers were from Colorado, with others from California, Texas, Arizona, the eastern seaboard, the south and the Pacific Northwest.

When surveyed about their trip, trekkers reported:

“The staff went out of their way to make us feel comfortable, welcome and that we had everything we wanted or needed. We were always confident that whatever might arise they would handle it.”

“CME does a great job with “wilderness gourmet,” very tasty and healthy meals and lots of options for lunches.”

“Compares very favorably to an African safari we did a few years ago - but at a MUCH lower price.”

“The camp facilities were excellent. Very clean, extremely well organized, beers and margaritas located in a very convenient location.”

“I often “sing the praises” of Colorado Mountain Expeditions and readily recommend their trips.”

At press time the 2014 season shows 1 trek with limited availability and 8 are listed as Full - waitlist available. For more details on individual hikes and the Trekking Program, go to ColoradoTrailHiking.com.

Notes and Quotes . . .

“Many times I reach out to touch a confidence marker when I pass it. It may sound sappy (it may actually be sappy, depending on where the marker is mounted), but I feel the support of the people who work on the Trail and it always lifts my spirits.”

— Matt Messinger, Boulder, 2012 Trail Completer

“Before moving (from Colorado) to fulfill a longtime dream of living on a sailboat in San Diego, I hiked 265 miles of The Colorado Trail. In so many ways it was my way of saying goodbye to Colorado. What I saw, the people I met, and the exhilaration I felt daily was worth every moment. I walked off the trail a different person.”

— Chuck Anderson, San Diego
The Facebook 5,280

Do you like The Colorado Trail?

Then you should “like” The Colorado Trail Foundation’s Facebook page. More than 5,280 fans already have.

It’s a great resource for updates on the Trail — conditions, reroutes, lastest news — as well as dozens of photos taken by backpackers, hikers, cyclists, equestrians, and the volunteers who keep it going.

We’re on Twitter and Instagram, too. We’re at @TheColoTrail on Twitter; for Instagram, go to Instagram.com/colorado_trail, post a photo and become a follower.