The Colorado Trail has taken some big steps to ensure the Trail will be well taken care of far into the future. The first was the hiring this spring of the CTF’s first full-time field operations manager (see story below). The second was purchasing land in Poncha Springs for a “base camp” to consolidate the foundation’s now-scattered trail building and maintenance equipment and serve as a base of operations for future projects.

The 50,000-square-foot lot is about two blocks from the intersection of U.S. Highways 285 and 50, about 13 miles east of Monarch Pass, very close to the midway point on the Trail between Denver and Durango. The CTF board of directors envisions erecting a storage and maintenance building on the site in the coming months.

“This part of an exciting new chapter for The Colorado Trail Foundation, along with the hiring of Brent Adams as our new field operations manager,” said Steve Staley, chairman of the CTF Board of Directors.

The idea to create a centralized “base camp” gained impetus following the retirement earlier this year of longtime volunteer Operations Manager George Miller. During his 20-plus-year tenure, Miller maintained and stored some of the equipment, including trailers containing the tools, kitchen tents, stoves and utensils, and other items needed to provision summer trail crews, at his home in Manitou Springs. The rest was kept at other locations, often creating logistical problems in shuttling equipment to and from crew work sites along the Trail.

The Poncha Springs site, just outside Salida, proved an ideal location, especially after Adams and his wife, Anne Englert, decided to relocate from Dolores to Salida. Furthermore, most of the CTF’s major projects over the next 10-15 years are within proximity of the new base camp.

According to Adams, “Plans are still in development, but the facility will likely include one or more buildings to house the trail crew equipment and water trailers, which are currently stored outside year round, a workshop for drying and working on field equipment, storage facilities, and a small office.”

The new field operations truck will also be housed in the building,” he explained. “Other features may be added as needs are identified.”

Cost of the project is expected to total $250,000-$300,000. The board hopes to cover most of those costs through a fund-raising effort targeting large foundations and corporate givers. The potential sale of The Colorado Trail Foundation cabin near Lake City (see story on page 3) may also help in covering the added expenses.

“The foundation is fortunate to have the solid financial footing necessary to make this land purchase possible,” Staley said. “That’s thanks to hundreds of small annual donors, a few large contributors, and a carefully managed investment portfolio. Most of all, though, it’s due to our many, many volunteers who enable us to keep our operating costs low. Our thanks to all of them.”

A ‘Base Camp’ to Build On

A HOLIDAY HIT  It may be a little early to start celebrating the holidays, but it’s not too early to mark your calendar for this year’s Colorado Trail Holiday Reception on Thursday, Dec. 3. Last year’s event drew a record 340 guests, including both longtime and new friends of the CT.

Please join us between 4:00-7:00 p.m. at the American Mountaineering Center in Golden and enjoy the wine, beer, food, slideshow, prizes and, best of all, the camaraderie. Invitations will be forthcoming soon. See you there.
Executive Director’s Update

It’s always a big deal when The Colorado Trail Foundation and its publisher, the Colorado Mountain Club Press, put out a new Colorado Trail Guidebook or Databook, as we plan to do in time for the next trail season.

But this go-round it’s even more significant because for the first time both the official Guidebook and Databook will be published in the same year and be totally aligned with each other.

The map of The Colorado Trail is constantly changing. New single-track is built to move the trail off road and motor routes. Existing tread is realigned for various reasons, causing waypoints to shift and maps to become outdated. Improvements in GPS and other mapping devices require tweaks to current descriptions. Most dramatically, new trail is added – as the CTF did in 2013, when it added 80 miles of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail on the west side of the Collegiate Range to the official CT route. Now known as the Collegiate West, the route features some of the most spectacular terrain on the entire CT. And in conjunction with the original trail on the east side of the Collegiates, called the Collegiate East, it forms a 160-mile loop that has become a premier multi-day backpack.

But with every trail change, the current Guidebook and Databook become more outdated. In the past, we’ve alternated publishing the two books, each disagreeing with the other in some fashion. For instance, the 5th edition of the Databook, which came out in 2013, contains the Collegiate West route as it stood at that time. The 8th edition of the Guidebook, which was published in 2011, does not.

Furthermore, even as the current Databook was being published, it was already out of date. The following year 23 miles of new trail in the Collegiate West were opened to users, moving those miles off road – and rendering useless the descriptions of those miles in the Databook.

As we prepare the new publication, trail crews are in the process of moving more trail off roads and motorcycle trails. Do we include the new routes in anticipation that they will be open by the time the books are published, or do we leave in the current alignments, which we know are open? That’s just one of dozens of decisions that have to be made to improve clarity and minimize confusion.

It’s a never-ending quest, but we know that when the new books come out, they will be the most up-to-date and accurate as possible. We’re also making refinements to the elevation profiles and campsite information that users find so handy.

Meanwhile, other CTF publications are also being brought up to date, including the CT Mapbook, the Collegiate Loop Map Book and the Colorado Trail Hiker phone apps.

Each will be available in time to plan your 2016 Colorado Trail adventure, though specific dates are still elusive. The excitement is building.

WooHoo!!

Bill Manning

BE CLASSY, BUY COASTERS

You know that set of four Colorado Trail pint glasses you bought last year from the CTF’s online store to impress your friends and family? Well, you wouldn’t want to leave a ring behind while enjoying your favorite quaff, would you? Of course not – CT users are much too civilized for that.

The solution – also now available at the online store – is a set of hand-stitched leather coasters bearing the CT logo. A set of four, enclosed in a reusable, muslin drawstring bag, is available for $19.95. Proceeds go to support The Colorado Trail.

Other commemorative items, as well as guidebooks, tools, T-shirts, hats, and other items, can be found at ColoradoTrail.org. Click on CT Store on the left side of the home page.
Meet Field Operations Manager Brent Adams

Facing the impending retirement of longtime volunteer operations manager George Miller, The Colorado Trail Foundation knew it had some big shoes to fill. How fortunate, then, that Brent Adams threw his hardhat into the ring.

Adams, a civil and environmental engineer, is a longtime outdoor enthusiast and trail builder. He has headed the trail committee for the Kokopelli Bike Club in Cortez since 2012 and has done trail work for many years for the CTF, REI, Trails 2000 and Velo de Animas in Farmington, N.M.

He and his wife, Anne Englert, an engineer and energetic trail volunteer herself, were looking for a change of pace when CTF Executive Bill Manning and the CTF Board put out feelers looking for a replacement for Miller.

“We’re lucky they were in a position to follow their hearts and their love of the outdoors when we went looking to fill this crucial position with a full-time staffer,” Manning said. “Brent had all the qualifications we were looking for and more.”

Such as being an engineer with lots of project management experience.

“And while the foundation wouldn’t presume to think that we got ‘two for the price of one,’ Anne has been a tremendous help and asset this past trail season,” Manning said. “As often as not, when you see Brent hauling gear from crew site to crew site, you’ll see Anne alongside helping him.”

It’s been a hectic four months since Adams began on June 1, but we were able to get him to pause long enough to answer a few questions about his first weeks on the job.

TREAD LINES: It has been a busy summer for you with a new job, a move, and working with 15 CT trail crews. How has it gone?

ADAMS: It has actually gone quite well. Living out of our van for the first six weeks, and the quick sale of our house in Dolores and purchase of land for a home in Salida, complicated the transition to the new job, but George Miller had everything prepared in terms of crew schedule and equipment, so that was a big help. As the summer progressed, things became a little less chaotic and I had more time to spend with crews and start scoping out crew projects for next year. I’m looking forward to putting together the schedule for next year’s crews.

TL: When did your interest in The Colorado Trail begin?

ADAMS: Although I knew of The Colorado Trail when it was being constructed in the mid-’80s due to friends who worked in the Forest Service, I really became involved in 2000, when I worked with Bill Manning (then the head of Trails 2000 in Durango) on the trail just north of Durango as part of their adopter work days. After that, I began hiking and biking the sections near Durango and Salida, bike-packed the CT in 2010, participated in a number of CTF trail crews, and adopted Section 26.1 in 2013. It’s definitely been an escalating interest of mine!

TL: What is your favorite aspect of the new job?

ADAMS: There are many great aspects to the job: being out on the trail as much as possible, meeting thru-hikers and segment hikers and bikers, working with great staff in various Forest Service districts, working with the CTF staff and board. But the best part is getting to work with the CTF crew leaders and crew members (and FS field staff) to improve the existing trail and build new trail.

Looking for a beautiful cabin in the woods?

With some reluctance, the CTF Board of Directors voted earlier this year to sell a cabin and 10-acre property belonging to the foundation near Lake City. Gudy Gaskill, who spearheaded the effort to create The Colorado Trail, engineered the purchase in 1998, and for several years used it for summer educational programs. Those ended in 2010 and since then the cabin has been largely unused.

Located on County Road 30 between Lake City and Silverton, the cabin is nestled below three 14,000-plus-foot peaks and is a short distance from Cinnamon Pass and the scenic American Basin. In July, a volunteer crew spent a week at the property getting it in shape for potential sale.

In addition to the 256-square-foot Swedish cope mountain cabin, there is also a bunkhouse/storage building, patio with fire ring, and two large tent platforms. A stream runs adjacent to the cabin.

The sale is being handled by Team Murphy Realty in Lake City. More information is available at teammurphyrealty.com/listings/colorado-trail-foundation-cabin. Included is a spectacular drone video of the property and surroundings.

Or call Dan Murphy, (970) 209-1514, or Michael Murphy, (719) 849-1441.
FOR THIS BLIND HIKER, 
stunning vistas aren’t required

(This article by reporter Mary Shinn is reprinted with permission from the July 30 edition of the Durango Herald. Photo courtesy of Herald photographer Jerry McBride.)

Trevor Thomas and his guide dog finished the Colorado Trail on Thursday, 42 days after they started.

As part of the almost 500-mile hike, Thomas, a blind long-distance hiker, and his black lab, Tennille, also summited Mount Elbert, the highest peak in Colorado.

For the duo, the accomplishment was one of many treks they have completed since Thomas lost his sight and started hiking professionally.

“I always deemed hiking to be too tame of a sport,” said Thomas, who is from Charlotte, N.C.

Before Thomas, now 46, lost his sight to an incurable eye disease in 2005, he was more interested in extreme sports, such as skydiving, backcountry skiing and racing Porsches.

But he became inspired to start hiking while buying poles to replace his walking stick. The salesman told him of torrential rainstorms and bear attacks he faced on a hiking trip, and Thomas, with a sense of adventure, was sold.

“From the start of my hiking, I wanted true independence,” he said.

In 2008, he finished the Appalachian Trail, which is about 2,180 miles from Georgia to Maine, then he was approached by a sponsor who wanted to support his adventures in exchange for promotion. Since then, additional sponsors have allowed Thomas to continue professionally.

While he can’t see the vistas, he enjoys other sensations, such as the warm sun, that many don’t appreciate because they are relying so heavily on sight.

“My memories and my impressions of things are more robust,” he said.

His attention to sound has also gotten more acute by necessity. For example, he can gauge a room’s dimensions based on echoes. Outside, it’s a little harder, but it’s still possible to locate things, such as trees, by their sound, he said.

Tennille, his 4-year-old lab, has also been key to keeping him on the path and alive along 6,000 miles of trails over the last few years.

She enjoys a place in the tent, her own sleeping bag and her own air mattress while they are on the trail.

Thomas also takes good care of the pads on her feet, which have turned thick after so many miles.

Thomas’ sense of space is so sharp that when Ned Sterne, another Colorado Trail hiker, crossed paths with him and Thomas’ friend, Dave Baumgartner, Sterne had no idea Thomas was blind.

“My first impression was, ‘There go two guys, walking really fast,’” Sterne said.

Thomas, Baumgartner and Tennille averaged about 13.4 miles a day on their journey, which started June 19 on the third segment of the trail in the Pike National Forest. Flooding closed the first two trail segments, so Thomas hiked to the seventh segment in the White River National Forest before running into too much snow to continue.

That allowed him to finish the first two segments, while waiting for snow to clear.

They also faced harsh weather along the way, but the trail itself was well-maintained.

“This is truly a world-class trail,” he said.

He reached the end about 12 pounds lighter, hungry for breakfast burritos and bacon cheeseburgers. www.DurangoHerald.com

“I traveled with my hiking buddy Trevor Thomas and his guide dog Tennille. We were supported along the trail by the gracious volunteers from Guide Dogs for the Blind. The CT is truly one of the premier trails in the U.S., if not the world. It offers stunning beauty, challenging terrain, an abundance of wildlife and wildflowers, geological diversity, altitude, hints of history, and the many challenges offered by Mother Nature. I was not disappointed in any segment; however, my favorite has to be Segment 25, especially in the Cascade Creek area. I promised my wife, Jane, that we’ll revisit this special place together, hopefully sometime in the near future. As a trail building volunteer with the Forest Service in California, I appreciate the enormous effort that it takes to maintain a trail such as this. Thanks to all those who have given so much for making this experience a possibility!”

— Dave Baumgartner, Aug. 3, 2015
The Colorado Trail is seen by many as mainly a hikers’ trail, with a growing mountain bike presence. But horse riders, too, have been using the Trail steadily from the very beginning.

Among them are David and Beth Wolfe of Albany, La.

“We have had the opportunity to enjoy The Colorado Trail for the past 20 years,” Friend of the Trail David Wolfe wrote to the CTF in May. “We live in south Louisiana and I use horses and mules professionally in my capacity as a forester. A number of years ago my uncle, who lives in Denver, suggested I bring my horses to Colorado and travel the many trails throughout the Colorado Rockies. I did and the rest is history.”

Over those years, Wolfe said, the couple have completed all but the 80 miles of the CT – “as well as numerous trails in New Mexico, Wyoming and Idaho” – and wanted to thank “the countless volunteers who so generously give of their time, energy and resources to make our travel experiences so enjoyable.”

Wolfe said his goal now “is to complete a solo thru trip from Denver to Durango on horseback. I am now 67 and plan to make that trip next summer.”

Happy trails, David. Be sure to tell us all about it.

Notes and Quotes:

‘Luckiest Girl Alive’

“70 days ago I left the East Coast in search of an adventure. I was to hike 900 miles through the Sierra Nevada and Rocky Mountains via the Pacific Crest Trail/Sierra High Route and Colorado Trail. I didn’t know what I’d see, who I’d meet, or who I would be at by the end of this trip. This morning I arrived at the southern terminus of The Colorado Trail with 900 miles at my back. Feelings from the past two months poured over me as I joyously cried at the sign labeled ‘Durango.’ My heart is full! I have been humbled, blinded by beauty, and feel like the luckiest girl alive. For all the extraordinary people I’ve met on this journey, thank you for making this experience what it is – all in your own way. Every one of you made an impact on me, and I love you for it.”

– Felecia Dora Moran, Aug. 21, 2015
Trail Crews Leave Their Mark

Fourteen trail crews were in the field this summer, building new trail, upgrading existing tread, and performing other important work to keep the CT in good condition.

HERE’S A RUNDOWN OF WORK ACCOMPLISHED IN 2015:

**CREW 0115, JUNE 13.** Leader Loren Woods and 26 crew members worked on Segment 1 just east of the Gudy Gaskill Bridge, repairing five switchbacks and fixing, cleaning or building 54 drainage features, as well as other routine maintenance.

**CREW 0215, JUNE 26-28.** Leaders Laura Brieser-Smith and Scott Smith and 20 crew members completed one 30-foot turnpike, one 5-foot turnpike, and redirected water flow off the trail in 10 spots in the Jefferson Creek area near Segment 6 west of Kenosha Pass.

**CREW 0315, JUNE 25-28.** Leader Cindy Johnson and her all-women crew of 22 rehabbed 1.75 miles of trail in Segment 9 north of the trailhead at Turquoise Lake outside Leadville. This included reworking two major springs and putting a 60-foot raised turnpike across a marsh.

**CREW 0415, JUNE 28-JULY 4.** Leader Glenn Kepler and his 27 crew members built 20-foot, 40-foot and 120-foot turnpikes over boggy areas south of the Segment 10 trailhead at Turquoise Lake. A number of water features were also cleaned and improved.

**CREW 0515, JUNE 27-JULY 4.** Leader George Miller and 10 crew members cleaned and painted the Colorado Trail Foundation cabin outside Lake City to prepare it for sale. Other work included tree removal, shrubbery pruning and repairs to the water system.

**CREW 0615, JULY 11-18.** Leader Cindy Johnson and a crew of 22 improved 2.5 miles of trail from the trailhead near Copper Mountain toward the Ten Mile Range ridge. Work included tree removal, water bar construction and repair, and the building of a 30-foot turnpike.

**CREW 0715, JULY 11-18.** Paul Smith led a backpack crew of 10 that performed maintenance and drainage work on 2.5 miles of trail between Kokomo and Searle passes in Segment 8, including filling in several hundred feet of deeply rutted trail, and did maintenance on 2.5 miles of trail below Kokomo Pass toward Camp Hale.

**CREW 0815, JULY 18-25.** Leaders Laura Brieser-Smith and Scott Smith and 22 crew members completed 600 feet of new trail and roughed in another 70 feet on a Collegiate West section near Garfield on the Monarch Pass Highway.

**CREW 0915, JULY 25-AUG. 1.** Leaders John and Betsy Sylvester and 22 crew members reconstructed 800 feet of trail south of the Gold Hill Trailhead near Breckenridge that had been heavily damaged by logging. Work included dismantling and rebuilding two turnpikes and building 30 water bars.

**CREW 1015, AUG. 8-15.** Leader Loren Woods and 18 crew members completed 300 feet of new trail near the Hancock Trailhead on the Collegiate West route. Another 60 feet was 80 percent completed; 40 feet was 50 percent completed; and an additional 100 feet roughed in.

**CREW 1115, AUG. 22-29.** Leader Bill Carpenter and nine crew members built more than 100 feet of new trail near the Hancock Trailhead in Segment CW04 of the Collegiate West. Construction included 20-foot and 8-foot retaining walls and dozens of grade dips and drains.

**CREW 1315, SEPT. 5-11.** Leader Glenn Kepler and 14 crew members performed finish work on new tread built by others crews between Hancock town site and Hancock Lake in Segment CW04. A step drain was installed and several curve mono walls designed to withstand mountain bike traffic.

**CREW 1415, SEPT. 8-11.** Leader Dave Callais and 14 crew members upgraded 500 feet of tread in various locations from Searle Pass to Janer’s Cabin, including berm removal, adding fill material, building check dams and other water diversions, and widening the trail. In addition, thousands of feet of willows were trimmed back.

**THE 14TH CREW** was a group of 12 students from Douglas County’s Daniel C. Oakes High School led by teacher Kelley Gorham. They spent a week in June reworking 22 drains in Segment 7 and building two turnpikes, one 50-feet in length, the other 8 feet. Colorado Trail crews are used to hearing praise from Trail users passing through. But when it comes from one of their fellow caretakers, it’s even more rewarding.

“A huge thanks to you and your CTF trail crew for all the hard work to make some much needed improvements to Section 7.2 of the CT,” Adopter Suzanne Reed wrote in an e-mail to Cindy Johnson, whose eight-day trail crew in July worked on Reed’s section from Copper Mountain Resort to the Ten Mile Range ridgeline overlooking Breckenridge to the east.

“Honestly, I had considered giving up this Adopter section as I felt I could not keep up with the maintenance, but now I know that with the work done, the Trail will be in good shape for years to come,” said Reed, of Silverthorne. “So I will give it a few more years as the Adopter. I just love this section.”

“I enjoyed meeting your crew – an interesting group of people, as all CT crews are!” she added.
After an unsuccessful attempt to hike the CT in 2014, former Denver Post photo editor Dean Krakel rededicated himself to the task in 2015. To give himself some added incentive, he decided to share his adventure with a few hundred thousand Post readers.

“There was a moment on The Colorado Trail last summer when I thought I was going to die,” Krakel wrote in the first of a bi-weekly series of articles earlier this year. “As I climbed a small, timbered ridge, my heart started missing some beats. A lot of beats. Thump thump thump … long pause … thump thump thump. I had a minor freak-out for a few minutes, right there in the woods: Should I hike to the next trailhead, hitch out and find a clinic? Should I end the trip, go home and make an appointment with a cardiologist? “I was one week into a three-week solo trip. It’d rained every day. Blood and smashed mosquitos smeared my legs. I’d been sandblasted by a dust devil, pounded by hail and had a come-to-Jesus moment with lightning. In that moment, I didn’t think nature was going to do me in. My heart was.” The lesson Krakel learned?

“Instead of last year’s more casual approach, I’ve grown serious about conditioning, nutrition and gear,” he wrote.

In subsequent stories, he explained his training regimen, his food plans, and his efforts to trim down his pack weight. But the true test of all his preparation began in early August when he left Durango for a thru-hike to Denver, including both the Collegiate East and West routes – 567 miles in total. (He’d planned to leave earlier in the season, but work commitments delayed his start.) His dispatches from the Trail will connect with anyone who has spent time on the CT.

You can read the entire series, and view the master photographer’s beautiful images, online at Krakel’s blog, dpo.st/coloradotrail, or at DenverPost.com/fitness.
Not everyone has the time or the opportunity to volunteer for The Colorado Trail Foundation. But there are plenty of other ways to support the foundation’s ongoing mission of improving and maintaining 567 miles of trail.

The easiest way for most is simply to write a check in response to one of our periodic appeals, including our program and newsletter mailings.

**THERE ARE OTHER OPTIONS AS WELL:**

**ONLINE DONATIONS:** You can donate online on our website, ColoradoTrail.org. Simply click the “Donate Now” button on the left side of the page to give via a credit card or PayPal. Better yet . . .

**MAKE A RECURRING GIFT:** You can do this by checking the box on the donation page to “Make This Recurring (Monthly).” Many donors find that giving $10, $15, $20, or more in a regular monthly withdrawal is much more convenient than making one big donation once a year.

**COLORADOGIVES.ORG:** A program of the Community First Foundation, ColoradoGives.org is a year-round, online giving website featuring nearly 1,600 Colorado nonprofit organizations. Now in its sixth year, Colorado Gives Day, held in December each year, is an annual event to celebrate and increase philanthropy. Last year, in its second year as part of Colorado Gives Day, the CTF saw donations of nearly $14,200, more than double the previous year. Watch for CTF e-mails or check on Facebook for the date of this year’s event.

**APPRECIATED STOCK:** As one recent appreciated-stock donor explained, “...the giver has the advantage of avoiding the tax implications of the appreciation without giving up the tax benefits of a gift.”

**CT STORE:** Purchase any of the many CT-related items – maps, guidebooks, clothing, tools and commemoratives – from the CTF’s online store and the profits from the sale go to the foundation. You can access the store through the ColoradoTrail.org home page.

**LEGACY GIVING:** Help ensure that the Trail will be here for future generations after you are gone by including The Colorado Trail Foundation in your will or living trust. Your financial advisor, attorney or accountant can help you set up a charitable gift to the foundation in the form of cash, stocks, bonds, as well as proceeds of insurance policies and the sale of property. Another way is to name the CTF as beneficiary of an insurance policy, IRA or pension plan.

**THANK YOU!**