Plans Moving Forward on Field Operations Center

As hikers, bikers and riders gear up for summer adventures on The Colorado Trail, the Foundation itself is making great strides toward the construction of a planned Field Operations Center in Poncha Springs, including a fund-raising effort unlike anything the CTF has seen since the early days of the Trail’s creation.

The Poncha Springs land, construction of two buildings on the site, and other improvements are expected to cost between $350,000 and $450,000, along with another $10,000 in estimated annual operating expenses. The CTF Board of Directors hopes to raise most of those funds through grants and large donations, internally generated funds, and the sale of a cabin and land owned by the Foundation near Lake City. Volunteer labor also is expected to offset some costs.

“Construction should hopefully commence in 2017 following a 2016 fund-raising campaign,” said CTF Board Chairman Steve Staley.

The Poncha Springs site was selected because of its proximity to the midpoint of the CT. It will be used as a central storage location for the Foundation’s trail-building equipment, including a truck, six tool and equipment trailers, two water tank trailers, and other equipment.

“This location is also strategic because the bulk of the remaining trail realignment construction on the CT – to move the trail off of motorized sections – will occur in the middle section of the CT within the next 20 years,” said Brent Adams, who became the Foundation’s first full-time field operations manager last June. Motorized vehicles are still allowed on 104 of the CT’s 567 miles.

For years, trailers and tools used by trail crews have been stored at various volunteers’ properties, including the Manitou Springs home of longtime volunteer Field Operations Manager George Miller. In 2015, as Miller began transitioning to a more advisory role, the board moved to hire a third full-time employee to take over Miller’s duties and began looking for a location to consolidate the CTF’s equipment in one convenient location.

Staley, Adams, Miller, and Board Member Mal Sillars, a Buena Vista realtor, spearheaded the effort to locate and purchase a 50,000-square-foot lot in Poncha Springs near the intersection of U.S. Highways 50 and 285.

Adams, a civil engineer turned trail builder, has taken the lead in developing plans for the “base camp” site, which will include a main building with a shop and maintenance area and a storage building with capacity for eight trailers.

Having indoor storage for the CTF’s equipment will protect it from the weather and extend its useful life, Adams said. In addition, the Field Operations Center will have an office and meeting space, where he and other CTF leaders can work and meet with volunteers, Forest Service staff, and others involved with the Trail.

Meanwhile, another group led by Steve Stadler, longtime board member and trail crew leader, began meeting last year to develop a strategy to raise funds from large corporate and philanthropic donors. That included creating marketing materials and a PowerPoint presentation.

“Over the years we’ve built a strong base of hundreds of small contributors, which along with the U.S. Forest Service, REI and Roundup Riders of the Rockies, fund the CTF’s year-to-year operations,” said Staley. “But this new project, aimed at enhancing the Foundation’s ability to maintain and improve the Trail for years to come, requires a whole new level of fund-raising.”

The CTF anticipates beginning the final design phase in October 2016, with award of the project in March 2017 and construction complete in August 2017, Adams said.
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 The 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 and distribute information about The Colorado Trail and Trail Crews. We work in cooperation with public agencies and acknowledge great support from the U.S. Forest Service, Department of Agriculture, Rocky Mountain Region. Donations are needed, much appreciated and tax deductible.

Executive Director’s Update

Field operations is creating quite a buzz here at The Colorado Trail Foundation as we move forward on new strategies to sustain our mission. There have been numerous conversations, loads of collaboration, and careful planning aimed at building a Field Operations Center (FOC) in Poncha Springs.

Core overseers of the project have been our Operations Committee, made up of Board Chairman Steve Staley, VP Jerry Brown, George Miller, Mal Sillars, and Steve Stadler, and CTF staff. Part of our agreement with Field Operations Manager Brent Adams when he came aboard last June was that he relocate from Cortez to the Salida-Poncha Springs area, where we planned to buy land for a future FOC.

Subsequently, an ideal location was found near the intersection of U.S. Highways 50 and 285, about 10 miles from the midpoint of the CT, and the purchase was completed.

More recently, the Board approved preliminary plans to construct two buildings at the site: a main building that will include an office/meeting area, a maintenance area to work on the trailers and other equipments, and storage, and a secondary building to house six equipment and two water tank trailers used by our summer trail crews.

Now comes the next big task on our agenda: raising the funds to see the project through. It’s no small task. Including the land purchase, estimates to complete the Field Operations Center run as high as $450,000, as well as another $10,000 in annual operating expenses.

Since last summer, I’ve been working with another Board committee focused on securing this funding. Headed by Steve Stadler, it includes Steve Staley, Treasurer Carol Foster, Secretary Tim Burroughs, and Blake Welch. We’ve developed some great marketing materials and a PowerPoint presentation to take to potential big donors — corporations, philanthropic organizations, and foundations. Based on initial inquiries, things look promising.

We’re not overlooking those of you who have gotten us to where we are today either. We hope you’ll pitch in as well because we want our many loyal supporters to feel part of this effort too. In the coming months we’ll be making that appeal to you directly.

As Steve Staley is fond of saying about the visionaries who conceived and created our wonderful Trail: “We stand on the shoulders of giants.” We hope that in the years to come the future generations of CT builders and supporters will say the same about us.

WooHoo!!

Bill Manning

MARK YOUR CALENDAR
SAVE THE DATES FOR THESE UPCOMING ANNUAL CTF EVENTS:

SEPT. 10 – Friends of The Colorado Trail Thank You Picnic, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., Bear Creek Lake Park, Lakewood.

OCT. 8 – Durango Friends Soirée, 5:00-7:00 p.m., Carver Brewing Company, Durango.

DEC. 8 – HOLIDAY RECEPTION, 4:00-7:00 p.m., American Mountaineering Center, Golden.
Among the hundreds of early volunteers who made The Colorado Trail a reality, Merle McDonald, who died Jan. 9 at age 83, was “one of the four or five people we couldn’t have done without,” according to “Mother of the Colorado Trail” Gudy Gaskill.

“There wasn’t anything Merle wouldn’t do for you,” Gaskill said. “He was a real catalyst in getting things moving again (after the Trail was connected between Denver and Durango in 1987.)”

McDonald’s involvement with the CT dates back to the late 1980s, when a newspaper article calling for Colorado Trail volunteers caught his eye. He became an Adopter early on and later coordinated the Adopt-A-Trail program. He hiked the trail end to end and was a trail crew leader for more than 15 years. He was instrumental in the production of the sixth and seventh editions of the Official Guidebook of The Colorado Trail.

A member of the board of directors for many years, McDonald served as the third president of The Colorado Trail Foundation – after Gaskill and George Miller – from 2000-2003.

“He was active in every area of the Foundation,” noted Miller.

In 2008, McDonald was recognized for his service by an award presented by the CTF and U.S. Forest Service at the annual Friends Thank You Picnic in Lakewood. The citation noted that he was “truly one of the great friends of The Colorado Trail.”

At the time, McDonald summed up his volunteerism with same thoughts he had some 30 years before. “What I like the most are the people and working on the Trail,” he said.

He is survived by his wife, Uta, of Denver, herself a longtime volunteer, five children and their spouses, and nine grandchildren. Uta is planning a celebration of Merle’s life; for details contact the CT Foundation. His family requested that memorial donations be made to the CTF in his name.

“Merle dearly loved the CT. I’m going to miss him,” said Gaskill. It’s a sentiment echoed by many involved with the Trail.
Eighteen volunteer Trail Crews, ranging from one to eight days, will work on projects large and small this summer. Seven of the crews will be three days or shorter.

“With our shorter crews we’re hoping to attract volunteers who don’t have the time to commit to seven or eight days on the Trail,” said Field Operations Manager Brent Adams. “Many Colorado Trail supporters are looking for volunteer opportunities that don’t take away too much from their vacation and family time.”

No experience is necessary to join a crew. Training, tools, hardhats, meals (except for backpack crews), group camping equipment, and leadership are provided. Volunteers are responsible for their own transportation to the crew location and for their personal equipment, including tent or camper, sleeping bag, sleeping pad, eating utensils, work clothes, and other personal items. Participants must be at least 16 years old and in good physical condition.

Crews are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Forms, waivers and additional information are available at ColoradoTrail.com.

**CREW SCHEDULE Has Something for Everyone**

**CREW 0116, MORRISON CREEK.........$20**
May 21-22 (2-day) **Leader:** Cindy Johnson

DRIVE-IN 2WD. This crew will clear a half-mile realignment corridor in the Buffalo Creek Recreation Area in preparation for Crew 0216 trail construction. The work site is a half-mile from the campsite beside Morrison Creek. Elevation 7,600 feet.

**CREW 0216, MORRISON CREEK.........$60**
June 4-11 (8-day) **Leader:** Glenn Kepler

DRIVE-IN 2WD. A half-mile of realigned trail will be built in the Buffalo Creek Recreation Area to replace a rutted section with poor drainage. The work site is a half-mile from the campsite beside Morrison Creek. Hike or bike the extensive Buffalo Creek trail system on your day off. Elevation 7,600 feet.

**CREW 0316, JUNCTION CREEK.........$60**
June 11-18 (8-day) **Leader:** Tom Broooks

DRIVE-IN 2WD. This crew will rebuild rocky, eroded switchbacks along Junction Creek near the southern terminus of The Colorado Trail. The work site is a 1.5-mile, mostly level hike from Junction Creek Campground near Durango. Wednesday-off opportunities include Mesa Verde, a train ride, rafting and hot springs. Elevation 7,400 feet.

**CREW 0416, MIDDLE FORK.........$60**
June 18-25 (8-day) **Leaders:** Scott Smith and Laura Brieser-Smith

DRIVE-IN 4WD. Crew members will build new trail, relocating a portion of the Collegiate West off road. Camp will be at the Boss Lake trailhead, approximately 1½ miles up a rough 4-wheel-drive road. The worksite is a 1-mile hike from camp. Hike to Boss or Hunt lakes, or climb one of the area peaks, on your day off. Elevation 10,500 feet.

**CREW 0516, HORSESHOE GULCH.........$10**
June 18 (1-day) **Leader:** Brent Adams

DRIVE-IN 2WD. This crew will build and clean drainage structures on this section of trail near Breckenridge. Lunch provided. Elevation 10,000 feet.

**CREW 0616, WOMEN-ONLY, WINFIELD..............$30**
June 24-26 (3-day) **Leader:** Cindy Johnson

DRIVE-IN 2WD. This year’s women’s crew will maintain tread on one of the newer sections of the Collegiate West. Camp will be in the Clear Creek Valley near Winfield. Worksites will be up to 3 miles from camp. Elevation 10,000 feet.

**CREW 0716, MIDDLE FORK.........$60**
June 25-July 2 (8-day) **Leader:** Bill Carpenter

DRIVE-IN 4WD. See description for Crew 0416

**CREW 0816, SOUTH CLEAR CREEK.........$60**
June 26-July 2 (7-day) **Leader:** Cindy Johnson

DRIVE-IN 2WD. This crew will construct drains and check steps through a wet and entrenched section of trail in the Collegiate West. Camp will be in the Clear Creek Valley near Winfield. The worksite is accessed via a rough 2-mile, 4-wheel-drive road, followed by a 1-mile hike. Crew members without 4-wheel-drive can carpool with others. Climb Mount Huron or hike to Lake Ann or the Three Apostles Basin on your off day. Elevation 10,800 feet.

**CREW 0916, LA GARITA.........$30**
July 2-9 (8-day) **Leader:** Loren Woods

BACKPACK. Crew members will cut brush from overgrown sections of the trail and construct and clean drains west of San Luis Pass in the Mineral Creek Basin. This will be a strenuous week at high elevation, much of it above timberline, with camp moving more than once during the week. On Wednesday, enjoy a day off by climbing a nearby peak or hiking in the area. Elevation 12,000-plus feet.

**CREW 1016, FLUME CREEK.........$10**
July 9 (1-day) **Leaders:** Scott Smith and Laura Brieser-Smith

DRIVE-IN 2WD. This crew will remove and replace rotting planks on the bridge over Flume Creek, near the Interlaken historic site at Twin Lakes. It requires a 2-mile, mostly level, hike to the worksite. Lunch will be provided. Elevation 9,200 feet.
CREW 1116, SOUTH COTTONWOOD CREEK..........$30
July 15-17 (3-day) Leaders: John and Elayna Lipe

DRIVE-IN 2WD. Crew members will remove and replace planks and rebuild the approaches to the bridge over South Cottonwood Creek. They also will build a short trail realignment where South Cottonwood Creek has undercut the bank along the trail. Camp will be at the Avalanche Trailhead near the CT crossing of Middle Cottonwood Creek, a short drive from the worksite. Elevation 9,000 feet.

CREW 1216, HANCOCK..........$60
July 16-22 (7-day) Leader: Glenn Kepler

DRIVE-IN HCV. This crew will build new trail above the old railroad grade near the ghost town of Hancock, moving the trail off of a 4-wheel-drive road. Camp will be near the Hancock townsite. On your day off, hike to the historic Alpine Tunnel or bike to the Tincup Pass Road. Or for a more relaxing outing, soak in Mount Princeton Hot Springs. Elevation 11,500 feet.

CREW 1316, SEARLE PASS..........$30
July 23-30 (8-day) Leader: Paul Smith

BACKPACK. Campsite for this crew requires a moderate 1-mile off-trail backpack to Searle Gulch. Projects include repairing entrenched tread and constructing drains on wet sections of trail in the basin south of Searle Pass. Strenuous off-trail hikes to work locations above timberline will be required. On Wednesday, you can relax in camp, climb a nearby peak, or photograph wildflowers. Elevation 11,500 feet.

CREW 1416, HANCOCK..........$60
July 31-August 6 (7-day) Leader: Loren Woods

DRIVE-IN HCV. See description for Crew 1216.

CREW 1516, MORRISON CREEK..........$10
August 6 (1-day) Leaders: Scott Smith and Laura Brieser-Smith

DRIVE-IN 2WD. This crew will reclaim the existing trail that was realigned by Crew 0216. Lunch will be provided. Elevation 7,600 feet.

CREW 1616, MOLAS PASS..........$60
August 13-20 (8-day) Leaders: Betsy and John Sylvester

DRIVE-IN 2WD. Crew members will construct approximately 0.7 miles of realigned trail to replace an eroding section above Molas Pass. It requires a 1.5-mile hike to the worksite above timberline. Camp will be at Molas Lake Campground. On Wednesday, visit Silverton, take a train ride, or climb one of the peaks above camp. Elevation 11,000 feet.

CREW 1716, MAXWELL CREEK..........$20
August 25-28 (4-day) Leader: Paul Smith

BACKPACK. This requires a moderate 3-mile backpack to a streamside campsite above the Arkansas River Valley. Projects include rebuilding two failing retaining walls and repairing two primitive bridges. Elevation 9,800 feet.

CREW 1816, KENOSHA PASS..........$10
Sept. 24 (1-day) Leaders: Brent Adams and Cindy Johnson

DRIVE-IN 2WD. Join us on National Public Lands Day as we build and clean drains on the CT east of Kenosha Pass. Lunch will be provided. Elevation 10,400 feet.

After 12 years as Coordinator of the CTF’s Adopt-A-Trail Program, Janet Farrar has passed on the job to Brent Adams, who took over as field operations manager in June.

“Janet has done a fabulous job with the program,” said Executive Director Bill Manning, pointing to her year-round efforts to make sure all 80 sections are adopted and that Adopters file annual reports on the condition of the Trail that are so helpful to the Foundation.

“Many of our Trail Crews and other remedial work are based on what those on the ground are telling us,” Manning said.

During her tenure, Farrar greatly improved communications. She oversaw updates to the Adopter Handbook and the conversion from filing hand-written reports to filling out the forms online. Those changes along with Janet’s friendly prodding resulted in a big improvement in reporting compliance, Manning said.

“Adopters are critical to our mission and the CTF is always in need of interested volunteers,” Manning noted. “Annual turnover is typically five to ten sections.”

Most sections range from 3 to 10 miles in length. Adopters – which include single individuals, couples, groups of friends, and Trail user groups – are responsible for caring for their sections soon after the snow clears, removing downed trees, cleaning out water diversions, and performing other minor maintenance work. Many return in the fall for another check. They report their findings and repair work to the CTF office.

Those interested in becoming Adopters can find more information at ColoradoTrail.org.
HOPING TO TAKE PART IN THE COLORADO TRAIL TREKKING PROGRAM THIS SUMMER? SORRY — MAYBE NEXT YEAR.

Program Managers Jeanne and Chris Szczech said all of the spots for the nine guided treks beginning in June were filled by Feb. 1, the earliest in the 14 years their company, Colorado Mountain Expeditions, has been involved in the program. They credit the increase in popularity of the treks to the growing popularity of the CT itself, positive word-of-mouth advertising, more returning hikers, and the opening of registration two weeks earlier this year.

“Some hikers are choosing to repeat certain trips,” they reported, “because of the great time they have had in the past.”

In response to the increasing demands, the Szczechs are converting to a multi-year registration process that will allow hikers to reserve a spot up to two years in advance. Currently, reservations can be made only six to eight months ahead.

They also have expanded their hiking operations to include “shoulder season” trips to Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado’s San Juan Mountains. Some spots for those trips are still available. There also are waiting lists for the Colorado Trail Treks should any registrants cancel.

Check ColoradoTrailHiking.com for more information.

CTF Welcomes New Office Manager

There’s a new face in the CTF office at the American Mountaineering Center in Golden. Victoria Klinger took over as office manager in October, replacing Lauren Shockey, who moved on to a job with the Colorado Mountain Club.

A business owner for seven years, Victoria’s professional background includes office management, product development, market research, bookkeeping and administrative support. She has a degree in business administration from Western Michigan University.

Victoria also has a strong volunteer resume. She has served three terms as president of Team Evergreen Bicycle Club and an additional four years as a board member; was a course marshal for the USA ProChallenge bicycle race for several years; and is a trained and certified trail builder.

“Victoria’s wealth of experience in business and nonprofit work has been a big plus to the CTF,” said Executive Director Bill Manning. “We are lucky to have her.”

Victoria and her husband, David, live in Evergreen.

Cartwright, Hoban retire from the Board

Two big supporters of The Colorado Trail have retired from the CTF Board of Directors. Bill Cartwright of Durango had been on the board since 2010; Bob Hoban of Evergreen joined the board in 2013.

Cartwright, a property manager, completed The Colorado Trail in 2012 after a series of annual treks with the CT’s Trekking Program beginning in 2007. He has participated in volunteer trail crews dating back to 2007 and became an Adopter in 2014 after helping others on their sections near Durango. His current Adopter section is between Molas Pass and the Animas River. Cartwright also was in charge of distributing Colorado Trail brochures to public and private outlets across the state.

Hoban, an attorney, stepped into the shoes of former Board Member Jack Berryhill, providing legal counsel on issues involving the Foundation. An avid hiker, backpacker and mountain biker, Hoban is also a member of the Colorado Mountain Club. During his tenure, he was helpful in rewriting the contract for the CT’s Trekking Program and in completing the purchase of property in Poncha Springs for the CTF’s future Field Operations Center.

“We’ll miss them both and their many contributions to the Trail,” said Board President Steve Staley. “Such volunteer commitment is key to the Foundation’s success.”
There is a new *Colorado Trail Databook* available to guide hikers, bikers and horse riders on their journeys this summer. It’s the one guide you’ll see in nearly every thru-hiker’s pocket because of its compact size and comprehensive information on significant Trail features, resupply points, water sources, campsites, bicycle detours, and elevation profiles.

The Sixth Edition of the *Databook*, published by the Colorado Mountain Club Press, is available now from the CTF’s online store (ColoradoTrail.org) and retail outlets around the state. The most significant change to the new edition is the addition of 23 new miles in the Collegiate West part of the Trail.

Nearing completion is the Ninth Edition of *The Colorado Trail Official Guidebook*. Its publication (a date has not yet been determined) will mark the first time in the history of the Trail that the information in both the *Guidebook* and *Databook* is aligned. In the past, the books have been updated in different years. The Guidebook, for example, was last updated in 2011 and doesn’t include the Collegiate West segments added in 2012.

The CTF’s other publications – the *Colorado Trail Map Book*, *Collegiate Loop Map Book*, and *Colorado Trail Hiker* phone apps – also have been brought up to date.
Many Ways to Lend a Hand

Moving in the right direction.

The Colorado Trail Foundation saw a significant increase in donations on Colorado Gives Day last December (see below). The $20,043 contributed by supporters was about $7,000 above than on that day the previous year.

It’s a trend the CTF hopes will continue, but it’s just one of many ways to offer your financial support. Other options, in addition to returning the donation envelope included in this edition of Tread Lines, are:

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 via PayPal by checking the box “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.

COLORADO GIVES DAY: A program of the Community First Foundation, Colorado Gives Day, held in December each year, is an annual event to celebrate and increase philanthropy to more than 1,600 Colorado nonprofit organizations. Watch for CTF e-mails or check on Facebook for the date of this year’s event. Donating opportunities actually exist all year long and include recurring donations; for more information, go to ColoradoGives.org.

AMAZONSMILE: Through its AmazonSmile philanthropic program, the online retailer Amazon.com contributes a half percent of the price of eligible purchases to the buyer’s designated charity. Go to Smile.Amazon.com when buying through Amazon and select The Colorado Trail Foundation as your designated charity.

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 goes 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.