

RESUME OF COLORADO TRAIL MEETING

November 16, 1973

Denver, Colorado

Overview

The concept for the Colorado Trail is to provide enjoyment for an area population of 20 million plus 8-10 million visitors and is generally set forth in the Colorado Magazine of July/August 1973.

Our daylong meeting centered around a concept panel discussion in the morning and action planning in small groups in the afternoon.

Colorado Trail concept panel:

Youth Conservation Corps - Pat Kennedy

Past summer was spent as one of four Youth Conservation Corps team leaders on Pike National Forest. The four teams gathered inventory data for the Colorado Trail and learned a lot about trail design if it is to be a meaningful experience. They felt the trails should travel through various ecosystems, take advantage of unusual or unique scenic attractions and geological formations. To avoid conflict with other users there should be no roads built where trails will pass; other uses could run parallel but kept separate. Existing trails should be used when possible and avoid building new trails.

Senior Citizen - Mike Curran

The group that Mike related desires for (people over 50) wish to see maximum use of Trail but want the environment protected. They are interested in one-day trips (light load) for exercise and enjoyment. They would like the Trail well-marked and for it to consider fishing, scenery, and history. They would like bridges over streams. Not too sure of hut concept - possibly for the young, and they do not want any motorized traffic on the Trail.

Interested individual - Bob Neff

The Trail should be able to meet the need for solitude but also companionship at the end of the day, if it is desired. Hut shelters are a necessity and should be placed on winter portions of Trail and designed to house 10-40 people. There should be separate systems for hikers and motorized and horse users, although hikers and horse users could be compatible. The Trail should be divided into sections with assigned responsibility for proper maintenance and if necessary to regulate use if trends show capacity limits are being exceeded.

Horseman - Hal Dahl, Roundup Riders of the Rockies

To fit needs of a group as large as the three R's, trails should be below timberline because lightning is a hazard, avoid snowdrifts, water areas free of debris, and ground packed to stop horses from bogging the soil. Large acreages are needed for their campsites (at least five) because of amount of gear and feed for horses which is hauled in. Their unusual needs would not be compatible with the concepts of the Colorado Trail, but this should not disqualify small groups or individual horseman from suitable sections.

Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation - Don West

State legislature has made available \$150,000 for trail right-of-ways acquisition cost. To qualify to use funds, trail application must be within a 30-mile radius of major population. Local government must initiate a 50/50 matching of funds. Trails must be recreation oriented and non-motorized.

Winter ski touring - Hugh McCaffrey, Colorado Mountain Club

There is need for properly built and maintained trails. Ski touring necessitates huts - 90 percent of hut use would be in winter. Some conservation groups may oppose trail and hut concept, i.e., Olympic conflict. Possible some sections of the Trail will be compatible for use of snowmobilers. Emergency assistance by snowmobilers - injured skiers could be miles from trailhead - should be considered when trail routes are selected. Routes should be more practical than Continental Divide Trail - lower in elevation.

Forest Service - Tom Williams, White River National Forest

Concept is a Trail with lots of trailheads. The Forest Service role will be to cooperate with a "Colorado Trail Association" and provide expertise where needed. It is hoped that a "Colorado Trail Association" will take the lead and responsibility for development of needed trails rather than the Forest Service.

Action planning in small groups:

Public Involvement Planning (how to involve all the publics)

First priority to define goals/objectives. Trail system Denver to Durango. Recreational opportunity for a full cross-section of people to hike a trail system at a lower challenge level. Public education at the beginning will be a key to success of project. Determine user groups and get representatives together to formulate definite concept. After they have informed groups of concepts we can aim at involvement - i.e., press release, article in EMPIRE magazine, Channel 6 TV. Trail Users Council of Colorado should be contacted and involved. Volunteer committee from this group should pursue ways to inform and involve public and report back to entire group.

Nonprofit association (foundation) (to organize and operate the Trail)

The Regional Forester should appoint a steering committee and ask the committee to give serious consideration to:

- A. Establishing a foundation which would be the governing body of the Colorado Trail.
- B. The Board of Directors of the foundation establishing an Advisory Coordinating Council of all possible trail user organizations to advise the foundation.
- C. A time frame of January 1 be set for the steering committee to recommend or establish a formal organization.

It is recognized by the group that fund raising will be a major part of reaching goals.

Continuing the inventory/evaluation process (winter use)

It was determined that the Trail will be used by the average hiker who wants to enjoy the out-of-doors. Should be coordinated with summer use inventory to determine what portions, if any, can be used for both seasons. Should consider objections to snowmobilers by cross-country skiers because of noise, odor of exhaust fumes, and speed. Group feels these could be resolved and snowmobilers be permitted as part of winter recreation users. Volunteers will have to be recruited to look at sites and evaluate the winter trails and determine which summer trails will not be suitable for winter users.

Continuing the inventory/evaluation process (summer use)

The recommended criteria for trail inventory/evaluation are:

- A. For the existing trail system
 1. Condition of trail
 2. Type of trail
 3. Terrain
 4. Life zone
 5. Existing facilities
 6. Obstacles
 7. Private land
 8. Access points for supplies
- B. For points of interest
 1. Geological formations
 2. Ecosystems
 3. Historical sites
 4. Scenic vistas
 5. Endangered sites
 6. Man's management - timber thinning/clearcut
 7. Archeological

C. For connecting trails and trail maintenance

1. Impact

D. Projected use

E. Monitoring programs

Hut potential

Huts should be a part of and on the Colorado Trail. Placement will depend on routes selected to accommodate all season use. Permits will probably be necessary. Old mining patents could be bought so that land could be used for huts by the operating entity. Huts should not be on Trail - with careful placement will avoid vandalism and overuse. Counties will have to make decisions on structures and sanitation facilities individually. Avalanche paths should also be considered when deciding on hut locations.