



The Colorado Trail Foundation

Fall Newsletter 1999

President's Corner

by George Miller

Summer Trail Crews

With signs of fall in the air and the changing of the aspens, we can look back with appreciation on the accomplishments of the summer trail season. We had a total of 13 crews in the field doing maintenance and rerouting. One of our important accomplishments was to eliminate walking on about six miles of four-wheel-drive road in the area between Spring Creek Pass and Carson Saddle. The other projects along the trail continue to improve and keep our trail the premier long-distance hike in Colorado. We owe a large vote of thanks to the leaders and volunteers who continue to devote their time and efforts to this undertaking each summer.

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An Event to Be Remembered!

by Gudy Gaskill

The **25th Anniversary Celebration** at Mount Vernon Country Club was a gala event, packed with old acquaintances in their best bib and tucker, with happy faces and great anticipation for seeing items on display that have never before been viewed by the public, for learning unknown facts about the CT, and for revisiting the historic years that saw The Colorado Trail to its fruition. There were new videos, a host of panel displays, walls covered with honors and awards, and photo displays of times, crews, and famous faces. The whole Colorado Trail was shown on a colorful series of maps, with a paneled and descriptive legend. The CT was even traced on a relief map, winding its way over mountain passes and along valley floors. It was truly a historic display. Neither these displays nor the anniversary celebration could have been possible without the help of a great many enthusiastic and talented volunteers. Kudos to the follow-

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Cutting of the cake at the 25th Anniversary Celebration in Golden

G.P.S. Survey

Another important achievement this summer was the G.P.S. survey of the trail. This information will be included in our new guidebook, which will be published sometime in the near future. A complete report of the survey begins on page 28.

Data Book

For those of you who like to know the detailed information about mileages, elevations, etc., and have it in a very concise and compact form, we now have a data book, which was written by **Michael Hibbard** and is available through the office or by mail order. *See* article on page 30.

Web Page

Finally, I want to bring your attention to our web page, which is so well crafted and always has the latest information on many aspects of the Trail and the activities of the Foundation. A big thank you to our webmaster, **Richard Nolde**, for his hard work to bring this valuable resource to all of us.

Thank you

In closing, I would like to again thank all the volunteers who have made this such a successful year and to wish all of you a wonderful and happy fall and winter season.

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ing volunteers for a job SO WELL DONE! You made it a success.

Thanks to **Ken Marshall**, who was the overall mastermind and recruiter. He was responsible for personally making the cherry wood bases for the ceramic logos; he chose and designed the commemorative poster, designed and printed the programs, helped **Ted La May** with the Durango celebration, and wielded a heavy stick from his home town of Durango. **Melanie Barvitski** took over for Ken when he was out of town at a critical time, coordinated building displays, and coordinated the display locations with the available space. **Paul Berteau** was in charge of designing and ordering the Forest Service plaques, **Peggy Bracket** arranged inventory of items for sale, **Lois Cochran** composed lyrics for a new song for the 25th Anniversary celebration ("The Dreamers and the Doers"—*see* page 5), and **Rick Tronvig** and **Dave Good** were the official photographers for the event, with two outstanding photo albums for the archives. **Dave** also put together a new video about the CT. **Liz Truitt** and **Shirley Martin** mounted two historic photo displays on wooden panels. The displays were professionally done. **Richard Nolde** updated the website to include the celebration and helped with deliveries and cleanup. **George Miller** and **Merle McDonald** created the outstanding relief map display. Merle also constructed a couple of panels. **Tom Hettler** created the full-length map and picture display out of plywood, with the back-

ground cut into a mountainous panorama. **Stan Ward** created the excellent South Platte Bridge display, which included construction photos, while **Denise Wright** and **Suzanne Reed** were in charge of publicity and registrations. **Tracy Esslinger** put the awards display together, both on tables, walls, and panels, with **Jon Greeneisen** helping set up the program. **Gudy Gaskill** and **Ken** were in charge of setting up the arrangements, menu, etc., at the country club, as well as hand making all of the ceramic logos, ordering and designing pins, making all the VIP and speaker connections, obtaining door prizes, hand making the special 25th year awards, and other stuff. Thanks also to **Dominic Graber** for designing and building the beautiful porch chairs, and to **Pat Nagorka** for being in charge of check-in, sale items, and name tags. Thanks to **Phil Smith** for printing the name tags on his computer, and to **Sharon Freeman** for contacting our major benefactors. Thanks to **Andy DeNaray** for the use of his slide for the poster and to both **Lois** and **Tracy Cochran** (and their helpers) for mailing the invitations out. Thanks to **Darla DeRuiter** for doing such a great job at the Gunnison celebration. And lastly we would like to thank both **Carol Johnson** and **Julie Davis** for entertaining us with their stories and songs. Wish there had been more time to hear more!

We are all indebted to the above volunteers for the good time we had. **VOLUNTEERS MAKE IT HAPPEN!**

Colorado Trail GIS Project

by Richard Nolde

***Editor's Note:** The purpose of the GIS Project is to produce a very accurate digital map of the CT. Then anyone with a GPS receiver can accurately locate any point on the CT. Once the military security feature is removed (about year 2002), the positional error should be less than 10 feet. Currently the small hand-held GPS receivers used by hikers can have a positional error of up to 200 feet, but it usually is less than 100 feet. Once the project is completed, we will publish a list of key points along the CT for use in conjunction with a GPS receiver.*

Richard Nolde, our webmaster, is spearheading this project and has put an untold number of hours into it as well as more than \$600 dollars of his own cash. The following is his account of the progress made this summer. Jerry and Frank are donating all of their time, effort, and equipment.

The Colorado Trail GIS (Geographic Information System) and mapping project moved into high gear recently as expert mountain bikers **Jerry Brown** and his friend **Frank Floyd** undertook to ride as many of the non-wilderness portions of The Colorado Trail as possible with a professional grade GPS (Global Positioning System) unit. Jerry, owner of Bear Creek Survey Service in Durango, has ridden The Colorado Trail twice before. His friend Frank Floyd, a drywall contractor from Fredericksburg, Texas, is a top-10 NORBA competitor in his home state, and

has ridden numerous times with Jerry in a variety of places. Frank has ridden sections of the CT on several occasions, finally completing the trail in 1995. Jerry and Frank make yearly pilgrimages to ride in such places as Costa Rica, Central America, and Copper Canyon, Mexico. Both Jerry and Frank are 49 years old.

Jerry describes Bear Creek Survey Service as "a quality control and software company that is incorporated in the State of Colorado. Bear Creek designed and markets the coordinate geometry programs which are used by the majority of geophysical exploration surveyors in the USA, Mexico, India, and Russia. The company is owned and operated by Jerry Brown, who travels to field camps in such places as Turkmenistan, Siberia, the Indian Himalayas, Nepal, and Bolivia to provide technical assistance and training to geophysical surveyors. Bear Creek is not a land surveying company and is not involved with boundary surveying on a local level."

"The trail mapping project is being conducted using a Trimble Pathfinder Pro XRS GPS receiver which receives differential corrections from the Omnistar satellite network. It is capable of determining map positions with an accuracy of three feet or better. The receiver can collect positions at a rate of once per second as Jerry and Frank ride the trail. The resulting track file may be then layered onto a digital map image, resulting in an extremely accurate picture of where the trail is."

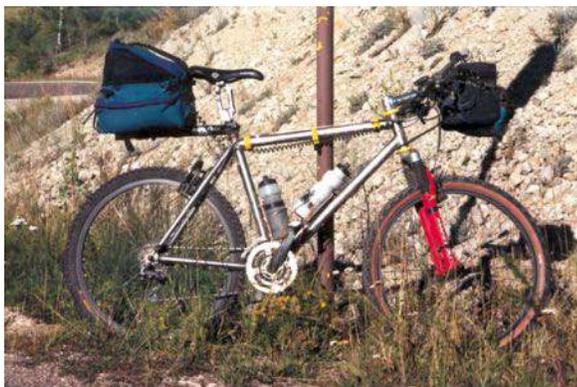
Jerry was working in Mississippi earlier this summer and

only returned to Colorado in the middle of August. This left only a few short weeks to get back in shape for the rigors of an extended two-week ride with lots of elevation gain. He and Frank arrived at my apartment in Littleton on August 27 to meet **Merle McDonald** and finalize the logistical support requirements. Our late-night session, including a last-minute trip to REI to replace a worn-out jacket and stock up on Cliff bars, ended at 1:00 a.m., but Jerry was raring to go at 5:00 a.m., and we set out for Waterton Canyon by 6:30 a.m. After all the gear was loaded and checked out, the bikers set off at 7:20 a.m. in the early morning light. Merle and I provided sag-wagon support and shuttles around the wilderness areas, with Merle doing the lion's share of the work since I had to return to work following the first weekend. Merle's RV camper made an excellent supply vehicle, and Frank's 4x4 Toyota pickup came in handy a number of times when the route to a meeting point was too rough for the RV to negotiate. Some nights were spent in campgrounds, others in motels, and two at the home of longtime Colorado Trail supporters, **Larry and Dawn White** in Nathrop, and two more cold and rainy nights were spent in **Ernie Werren's** warm and dry place in Breckenridge. I rejoined the riders and Merle the following Friday and stayed with them until we reached the last access point before La Garita Wilderness, just north of the Eddiesville trailhead, on September 8. Jerry and Frank were able to ride the section of the trail from Kennebec Pass to Durango the

following day.

Jerry and Frank rode for 13 days and followed the schedule below:

- Day 1 Waterton to Meadows Campground
- Day 2 Meadows CG to beginning of Lost Creek Wilderness; other side of Lost Creek Wilderness to Kenosha Pass
- Day 3 Kenosha Pass over Georgia Pass to Gold Hill trailhead near Breckenridge
- Day 4 Gold Hill trailhead to Copper Mountain over Tenmile Range
- Day 5 Copper Mountain to Marshall Pass over Searle and Kokymo passes
- Day 6 Hope Pass to Cottonwood Creek
- Day 7 Halfmoon Campground to Twin Lakes; Cottonwood Creek to Mt. Princeton Hot Springs
- Day 8 Hot Springs to US Hwy 50
- Day 9 US Hwy 50 to Marshall Pass
- Day 10 Marshall Pass to Sargents Mesa
- Day 11 Sargents Mesa to Hwy 114
- Day 12 US 114 to La Garita Wilderness
- Day 13 Sliderock to Durango.



We learned a lot about the limitations of the GPS technology in a mountainous environment during Jerry's initial work prior to the actual ride. In areas of heavy forest cover or steep canyon walls, the constellation of GPS satellites overhead at any given moment may not be adequate to give a differentially corrected three-dimensional position with a high degree of confidence. A new data point was collected every 5 seconds during the ride and all significant intersections identified and tagged individually in the data files. Jerry has already sent me a CD of data collected on the ride with a number of post-processing options reflecting different confidence levels in the positional accuracy. By the time you get this newsletter, I will have begun looking at the data and working with our GIS software.

Jerry's bike with the equipment weighed 47 pounds, and his backpack weighed 13 more. Frank did yeomen's duty as the spare equipment and battery carrier, with as many as 6 or 8 camcorder batteries in the pack on the rear of his bike. Frank said that the added weight gave his bike extra stability coming down the steep hills and added to the training effect of the ride for his upcoming racing season. Merle and I met them as frequently as possible with fresh supplies of batteries and energy drinks (Has anyone



heard of Warp-Aid before?) and replenished the food supplies for each night's camp. I was amazed at the amount of food these fellows put away every night and morning. Frank is an excellent cook and did double duty on the portable grill, while Jerry dutifully checked and backed up the data to one of the two laptop computers that Merle carried for him in the RV. Many stories of hiking, biking, and climbing trips were recounted over brews Merle and I found in the local grocery stores during the day. The summer rains that soaked Durango did not beleaguer our riders too badly, and aspen were already showing color at the lower elevations in some of the areas from Marshall Pass onward. The riders reported a light dusting of snow on some of the Collegiate Peaks during the first week and several mornings saw a light frost on the grass by our tents.

The GIS project is solidly under way thanks to the efforts of Jerry, Frank, Merle, and **David Sears**, but there remains much to do. We will analyze our initial data this winter and work on software development for producing new maps and the actual database for The Colorado Trail. Next summer, we will attempt to map the

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Introducing *The Colorado Trail Data Book*

by Michael Hibbard

There's now a lighter way to stay found and know what's beyond the next pass while traveling along The Colorado Trail. It's called *The Colorado Trail Data Book*. At 4" x 5.5" and weighing less than two ounces, this 30-page quick-reference booklet will fit easily into the smallest of pockets and compartments and provides at a glance what lies ahead on the trail. Using it along with the appropriate maps is the lightest way to be "in the know" while on a journey along the trail.

The book's format is largely based on *The Appalachian Trail Databook*, the one resource found in the packs of more AT hikers than any other. It contains distances and elevations of water sources, potential campsites, road crossings, re-supply points, and other landmarks along the trail and as a bonus includes elevation profiles for the entire

route. Other sections include hiker safety and awareness, the ten essentials, and lightning concerns.

Tailored for long-distance backpackers, though also desirable for bikers and equestrians, the impetus for the book was to present Colorado Trail users with a lighter weight alternative to lugging around *The Colorado Trail: The Official Guidebook*. The data book is in no way meant to take the place of the larger guidebook, which is invaluable for the planning of a trip and quite appropriate for shorter trips along the CT. The guidebook also provides a wealth of history and background information about the trail.

1997 CT through-hiker and author of the data book Michael Hibbard donated his time and efforts in compiling the data contained in the data book, requesting that any

proceeds generated by the book's sales go toward the continued protection, maintenance, and any further construction of the trail (i.e., The Gudy Gaskill Endowment Fund). At \$5 a copy, the data book is available through the Colorado Trail Foundation's store.

So instead of taking that very handsome copy of *The Colorado Trail: The Official Guidebook* and piecemealing it to be sent to mail drops along the way (a tactic often employed by weight-conscious long-distance backpackers), pick up a copy of *The Colorado Trail Data Book* and keep the guidebook intact to add to your collection of quality reference books to other natural areas that enrich your life.

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remaining sections of the trail, including the wilderness areas and the spurs. We will also need to remap short sections where we detect problems with the data collected this year. This will have to be coordinated with Jerry's schedule and available support personnel and presents additional problems since mountain bikes are not allowed in the wilderness areas. I would like to find a way to purchase a Trimble GPS unit for the Colorado Trail Foundation so

that we can continue the project from year to year and add additional landmarks and points of interest to the database. However, these units are VERY expensive and the differential correction satellite service requires an annual fee. If you know of anyone who is interested in helping underwrite this project or has experience writing grants, please contact me via e-mail at nolde@ctf.coloradotrail.org or call me at (720) 283-8752 in the

evenings. Anyone with experience using the GRASS GIS or GMT mapping software packages would be particularly welcome on the team as well. Full details about the project are posted on the CTF website and will be updated as we make progress with our data analysis. I am also interested in speaking with individuals who have collected data about sections of the trail that they might have measured with a mileage wheel or tracked with a GPS unit.