Dear Friends,

Someone recently asked, “Just what is The Colorado Trail Foundation?” I thought the answer was easy. It’s a great group of people who volunteer their time and financial support to maintain and improve The Colorado Trail, the best high-mountain, long-distance trail in America. But that doesn’t say it all. There really is more to it than that. A lot more!

When you realize how many people give freely of their time and money to preserve the CT, it truly is amazing. There are 54 groups and individuals known as CT “adopters” who go out to check, recheck and maintain their adopted sections each year. In addition, this year 279 youths and adults came from 21 states plus Colorado to camp out and work on The Trail. Ted La May and Ken Marshall’s crews in the San Juans carried 80 45-pound, 7-foot treated posts 3 miles up the trail (a 1,300 feet elevation gain) to build log water bars. Merle McDonald’s crew at Copper Mountain manhandled 15 tons of gravel a quarter-mile up the trail by bucket, wheelbarrow and ATV to construct a horse-proof section. Julie Mesdag’s crew of 15 packed up to tree line below Kokomo Pass where they built 7 check dams, 10 rock water bars, 31 rolling water bars, 5 log water bars, rebuilt cairns and widened 1-2 miles of trail. Twenty-one volunteer crews worked on the CT this summer, all with similar accomplishments.

And then there are all the folks behind the scene. Pat Nagorka spent all winter rounding up and organizing food for our hungry laborers. George Miller prepared all the camp gear and tools—three trailers full—and then drove 6,687 miles moving equipment around the state to facilitate the work. Liz Truitt volunteered all year long as our bookkeeper. Linda Lawson sorted out and handled our insurance needs. Gudy Gaskill gave seven weeks of her summer to supervise the Foundation’s educational program. The list goes on and on and on.

Yet none of this would have been possible without the generous donations from people like you. We’ve tried to list all your names in the following pages as a small way of saying thanks. Your financial contributions were vital.

Yes, we had a great time this summer of 2003. And we are deeply grateful to all of you keepers of The Trail.

Jon Greeneisen, President
“All For a Vanilla Coke”

An activity at the CTF Natural World for Kids Week taught by Dean Thurston in June was climbing Handies Peak. Nine-year-old Michael Schroeder wrote the following account.

“Almost there,” I croaked. My friend Jesse said “I ... don’t ... think ... I ... can ... take ... a ... nother ... step,” as he took another step. “Hey, look. It’s just over this hill,” called another one of my friends, Wesley. “He’s joking,” joked Jessie. “I certainly hope he’s not,” I replied. He wasn’t. “Yippee!!!” I yelled collapsing on the snow. “Finally, we get to go fishing,” I said getting up. “Wait this lake is FROZEN!” “Frozen!!?” asked Dean, our teacher, as he came up the hill. “FROZEN!” repeated Jesse, completely in shock. “Well,” I said stepping out on the lake, “maybe we could go ice fish ...” SPLOOSH! “Then again ...” “I’m the maddest man you ever saw,” said Jesse, throwing a rock on the lake, breaking the ice. Me, Jesse, Wesley and Hannah all started throwing rocks out on the ice. Luke, Dean, his 12-year-old daughter Becca and her friend Louise camped out on a rock and started to take out their lunches. “You can come up here and start eating your lunches,” Dean called down to us. “I’m the maddest man you ever saw,” repeated Jesse, and we all kept throwing rocks on the lake.

In the middle of lunch Dean asked, “Do you want to climb up the rest of Handies?” “NO!!!” we all shouted. Acting like he was changing the subject, he asked another question, “Do you guys like Vanilla Coke?” “Yeah,” we said. “Would you climb up Handies for one?” he asked. “If we wanted one, would we have to climb up the rest of Handies?” Jesse asked. “You’d have to make a pretty good effort,” said Dean. “If we took one step and we couldn’t make it, would we still get a Vanilla Coke?” I asked. “No, you’d have to get to the top,” said Dean. “Oh fine, let’s go!” groaned Luke. “You’d climb a mountain for a Vanilla Coke!!” exclaimed Dean. “Sure,” I said, it didn’t seem that far up. (BOY, was I wrong.)

Before anybody could change their minds, we were heading up. Soon we were going along a narrow path up the mountain. I was second to last in line so I decided I’d better get ahead. We came to a snow bank about 36 inches across, and I saw my chance. Jesse kept falling down in the snow. Dean and Luke let me pass them, because they were waiting for Hannah; and Jesse did stay behind to rest. Soon I was second in line, and that was good enough for me. “Take a break and wait for Dean, Jesse, Luke and Hannah,” Becca told us. We didn’t argue. When they caught up with us we continued. We noticed a few butterflies and a rather noisy bumblebee. “I didn’t know bugs lived up here,” exclaimed Jesse. It was mostly going straight up now, and we were getting tired. Now the order was Wesley, Jesse, me, Becca, Dean, Louise, Luke and Hannah, but I could have cared less. “I’m gonna rest,” I told Jesse. He plopped down beside me. About eight minutes later, we started again. We passed some friendly hikers who said, “Keep going guys, you’re almost there!” “That was encouraging,” I said. The encouragement lasted about five minutes. Finally we were 7 yards away ... 6 yards ... 5 yards ... 4 yards ... 3 yards ... 2 yards ... 1 ... more ... yard. WE WERE THERE!!! I was the third one up. When Dean got up to the top, I said, “We got our Vanilla Coke, you cannot deny it!” Then he scared us. “Oh, didn’t I tell you, I don’t have any more Vanilla Cokes.” “WHAT !!!!” I yelled. “I’m kidding,” he laughed. “Good,” said Jesse. We all looked at a marmot that was really close. We drank from our canteens and looked at the wonderful view of mountains, until finally Luke and Hannah came up. Then we started back down.

We could see the frozen lake from the top of the mountain. Luke looked at it in disgust. We got a running head start down the mountain. We couldn’t stop ourselves unless we sat down or skidded. I did it the hard way: by sitting down. A little while later we arrived at the lake. Dean, Jesse, Luke and Hannah were sort of far behind. I went gibbering on about snow, ice cream, rocks, and grape juice while Becca and Louise jabbered on about bubble gum, shoes, Italy, and croutons. Dean caught up, and we kept going. By the time I got down, Becca and Louise were a few yards behind. We headed for Dean’s truck. We had reached our goal! All for a Vanilla Coke.

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Jonathan Krauss
Bill Manning
Ken Marshall
Ernie Werren
Gudy Gaskill, President Emeritus

Contributions are through November 30. Please contact the CTF office with any comments or if we missed your name. 303-384-3729

PHOTOS NEEDED ....
Gudy Gaskill is in need of good quality photos of people on The Colorado Trail: backpackers with their packs, horseback riders, mountain bikers, goat and llama packers. Contact Gudy at 548 Pine Song Trail, Golden, CO 80401, gudyct@ecentral.com; or the CTF office at 710 10th St., #210, Golden, CO 80401, ctf@coloradotrail.org.
CTF Summer 2004 Program “Preview”

Volunteer Trail Crews
13 weeklong crews, 3 weekend crews

Supported Treks
Sections 2-7 (Kenosha Pass to Durango) to be offered

Outdoor Workshops
Kid’s Natural World
Landscape Painting in Oil or Watercolor
Mountain and Digital Photography
Watercolor in the San Juans
Storytelling
Geology
Wildflowers
CT High Altitude Class

Complete schedules, program descriptions and registration materials will be mailed in early February.