President's Corner
by Gudy Gaskill

Our last Tread Lines was a short eight pages long but packed with interesting upcoming events. The problem with a summer Tread Lines is that we who write the articles are all out “In the Field.” Our volunteer editor, Susan Junkin, is self-employed, and because her contracts have time deadlines, she needs to set her priorities. The rest of us need to plan a bit ahead so as not to be out in camp without an electrical plug to recharge the batteries in our laptops. Fat chance! We’re out there to get away from all of the toys. Of course, George Miller and I found that the work and mail just accumulate and await our return. Tonight, as the full moon is rising over the city lights, the desktop looks clean, thanks to a bulging

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What? The South Platte Bridge Is Gone? Big Deal! Let’s Just Replace It!
by Stan Ward

As the old saying goes, there’s good news and bad news. But first you’ve got to hear this story!

In early 1996, a devastating forest fire occurred in the Buffalo Creek area of the South Platte River basin just west of the Denver metro area. The Colorado Trail was burned in places. That was bad enough, but then torrential rains followed, and the water poured off the denuded ground into the North and South Forks of the River.

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Don’t forget to get your tickets for the John Fielder/Julie Davis medley, which will be held on Saturday, October 24, at 7:30 p.m. at the American Mountaineering Center, in Golden, CO. See page 4 for further details.
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trash can. What paper masses we accumulate!

The Bridge Is in Place!

I pulled together all the updates that board of directors member Stan Ward and volunteer engineer Morris Borene sent out to keep the board abreast of the progress on the bridge, and the file soon became over an inch thick. Kudos to Morris and Stan for a thankless job well done. The bridge placement was within a quarter of an inch of being perfect. Someone told me that Morris and Stan are looking for another bridge to replace since they have all of the data and have worked through all of the agencies and their requirements, put together all of the bidding contracts, and oversaw each minute detail. With two such good men, the job was flawless. We need to mention Lori Malcomb of the South Platte Ranger District. She wrote all of the contracts between the various agencies, smoothed out ruffled feathers, and met with the homeowner’s association, Denver Water Board, Corps of Engineers, Jefferson County planners, Douglas County inspectors, Jefferson County Sheriff’s officers, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife, as well as the engineers from the Regional Office. Lori took off for some much-needed and deserved R & R so missed the “Great Placement.” Lori, you are indispensable. Read all about the bridge in Stan’s article, which begins on page 1. Trail adopters Bill Lewis and Carey Jones from LaFayette built and welded the horse barriers. (They also rebuilt the utility trailer that George Miller uses on the supported treks.) Paul Newendorp will be building and routing the signs in time for our dedication on National Trails Day, June 6, 1999. We still need to raise nearly $100,000 to pay off the bridge. The proceeds from the Michael Martin Murphey concert that was held in early July will help reduce part of the outstanding debt. The John Fielder/Julie Davis medley benefit will also nibble away at

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our balance due. It was our biggest financial undertaking ever, one that we have no plans to do a repeat on. Don’t forget, June 6 is also the date for our 25th anniversary celebration. That’s bound to be extremely exciting with all our dedicated volunteers of 25 years.

CTF Volunteers at Work

Lois and Tracy Cochran are our newest volunteers to do the mailings, including sorting out the zip codes. Glenn Kepler passed the roll of stamps to Lois and Tracy after the instruction session. I’m sure that they could use help anytime.

Pat Nagorka did a bang-up job again with her food committee. The menus, the inventory of food in the boxes, the shopping list of fresh items to buy, and the list of quantities of staples to use for each meal takes all the challenge out of cooking for the hungry crews. It’s a great way to know that the crew is well fed if the directions are followed. Even the dumbest of us can put out a bountiful meal with Pat’s customized directions and instructions. The happy volunteer camping crew members thank you.

Have I mentioned Peggy Brackett? She does all of the filling of merchandise orders and mails them at the post office. She and her husband live in Boulder and often work on trail crews in the summer. Well organized, she keeps a running inventory on the merchandise that she has in her home and lets me know when it’s time to reorder T-shirts or pins or books before we run out and then have to back order. Peggy makes life much simpler for us—because of her up-to-date recording of the inventory, there is no more ordering and delivering at the last minute.

For those of you who have asked, Merle McDonald is in the peak of health again. He joined two trail crews at the tail-end of summer and has agreed to edit Tread Lines again. Our fortunes are looking up. Your good news is good news to all of us.

And Charlotte Briber is out hiking again after her second hip replacement. She attended the 10-year celebration reunion, hiking on Sunday, as well as taking part in the historic hike, and hiking the six miles to Camp Hale. My three-year-old grandson even made the hike. (It took us three hours longer than the slowest of the group.) Nora Jacquez had tasty food waiting for us when we arrived at Camp Hale. It was a beautiful day for hiking. With all of the rain lately, there were thousands of mushrooms to admire and pick. Two thru-hikers joined us for a while. They hope to get off the trail in mid-October. With any luck, the weather will hold up for them, although that is not the norm. The air is already brisk, the grass is beginning to turn brown, the aspen leaves are turning gold and red, and snow is appearing on the mountains.

Volunteers Needed

We are in need of several volunteers to help us make displays for the 25th anniversary celebration. We need a couple of chiefs with great imaginations and others who are willing to put the ideas into a visual image. Be part of the innovative team! We will try to meet in a central location for the hands-on projects; in addition, there are projects that can be done in your own home. This is the time to bloom and polish up your hidden talents. We also need volunteers to plan food, entertainment, and programs. Call Gudy Gaskill (303) 526-2721 or Charlotte Briber (303) 526-0809.

Mt. Kilimanjaro and Wildlife Safari

Stan Ward is organizing a group of Friends of the CT for a professionally guided climb of Mt. Kilimanjaro followed by a safari in the Ngorongoro crater—the proverbial Garden of Eden. The trip is scheduled for January 18–30, 1999. Please contact him promptly at (303) 770-4382 for more information.
John Fielder and Julie Davis will present “The Colorado Trail,” A Medley of Sight & Sound, a benefit for The Colorado Trail Foundation, on Saturday, October 24, at 7:30 p.m. The event will be held in The American Mountaineering Center, Foss Auditorium. Fielder, a renown landscape photographer, will show his beautiful pictures of The Colorado Trail, while Davis, nationally known storyteller and musician, narrates the story of her 1996 hike along The Colorado Trail. Two of the best people in their professions give you a gift of a most memorable evening. This rare performance (their 1998 performance at the Rocky Mountain Storytelling Festival was sold out) shouldn’t be missed! Their program will tickle your imagination of far-off vistas, deep cool forests, rushing mountain streams, and azure skies. John and Julie will both be available to autograph their Colorado Trail books and tapes.

Tickets are $12.00 and are available only through the office or mail when purchased by cash or check (sorry, credit card purchases not yet available). Doors open 6:30 p.m., and seating is unassigned so will be filled on a first come basis. (See map below for directions to the AMC.) If not sold out, tickets will be sold at the door. All concert proceeds will help fund the almost $100,000 balance from the new $250,000 South Platte River Bridge installed August 1998.

Gaskill Open House

Oct. 24, 4:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Relax before the show! Meet old friends. Have a bite to eat, something to drink, and meet the friends that you have been reading about in Tread Lines. This get-together will be informal. Call Charlotte at (303) 526-0809 if you are planning to come. To get to the house, follow I-70 west to exit 254. Turn north and drive under the Mt. Vernon Country Club sign (1/3 mile). Take the next road on the left and follow the signs. Parking is limited, so you may have to park at the playground area and walk up the hill. Dave and Gudy Gaskill are looking forward to seeing you there!
1996 The water raced down the North Fork and wiped out the century old, 20’ bridge at the old town of South Platte just upstream of its confluence with the South Fork. With the bridge gone, wading was the only way to cross the river without a 15-mile detour. But it was a dangerous undertaking. Instances of near drowning were reported, and many complaints were directed at the Foundation simply because the public believed that we were solely responsible for the lack of a safe crossing.

This bridge crossed the first water hazard on The Trail. And, as many of you know, walking and bicycling across it had become ever more dangerous as the wood deck rotted and holes opened up. Attempts to get the owner, the Denver Water Department, to repair it were futile. We were not permitted to repair it.

1997 Gudy, the USFS, the Denver Water people, and other CTFers met many times to figure out how and where to replace the bridge. The first meeting with the USFS staff to set criteria was held in February. It was really starting from scratch: for example, the CTF had to find out how high the water got historically (1926) at all possible alternative sites because Denver Water would not allow it to be rebuilt in the same place, let alone on any of their property.

In early 1997, an application for a matching grant of GOCO (Colorado Lottery and State Trails) money was made in the hope that the bridge could be built that year. However, the level of detail and information required by the State could not be satisfied that quickly, and no grant was awarded. So, it was back to the drawing board and the emergence of other extenuating circumstances.

As the owner of the bridge, Denver Water had been responsible for any problems, such as accidents and even fatalities, and the disappearance of the bridge fortuitously made those responsibilities vanish. They were not about to accept rebuilding in the same place, but they would allow The Trail to be rerouted across their property. Progress? Yes. But to make this possible, a multipage, very fine-print lease had to be negotiated and agreed to by the USFS and Denver Water. We’re talking months and months folks! As of this date, it still is not executed. But we go on!

1998 It was time to again prepare an application to the State for a grant. Late in 1997, we found and got approval for a location on USFS land that is directly across from the existing trailhead.

Talk about “silver linings”: no longer would users have to trek a half-mile along a dusty County road to cross the river!

The USFS and Denver Water agreed to provide in-kind (that is, no cash to us) work and materials. The USFS said they would rebuild the parking lot at the trailhead and build a toilet and two horse trailer spaces. They also provided invaluable assistance in the preparation of the grant application and in acquiring permits from the United States Corps of Engineers and Jefferson and Douglas Counties so we can work in the stream corridor. Denver Water agreed to provide the materials for fencing along the river where The Trail crosses their land. Why? Well, a neighbor objected because he thought he would have to see fishermen on the riverbank across from his property!

The Foundation’s responsibilities included

1. arranging for the payment of the total cost of the bridge and the trail improvements,
2. the joint application with the USFS and the presentation of the grant request to GOCO (we asked for $95,000),
3. locating and initially surveying the site,
4. providing all cost estimates and design considerations,
5. finding bridge manufacturers, getting bids, and negotiating the purchase of the bridge,
6. supervising the engineering of the foundation structures (they are massive—over 18’ high),
7. securing the approval of the USFS every step along the way, and
8. bidding, contracting, and managing the construction of the bridge and the trails. This would have simply
been impossible without the expertise and many, many hours given by our volunteers and the donation of engineering services.

The application for $95,000 in grant funds was made in early 1998. We made good progress. We had an approved site. We located bridge fabricators, secured bids, and awarded the contract to Continental Bridge of Minnesota. We got soils engineering advice, determined that the Douglas County bridge at the confluence of the two forks could hold the crane needed to lift the bridge in place, started the foundation engineering, firmed up our estimates, and looked forward to a construction start in May. In April we were awarded $76,000. Hooray! Let’s go.

April  But . . . it was really a no go. Based on the USFS advice to us that horses would not be allowed to use the bridge, the bridge was designed for a live load of 65 pounds per square foot. The horse people were not happy with that decision, and the award was pulled back until and unless we could demonstrate that the bridge would permit horses.

We did, however, reach common agreement that the bridge was to be 6’ wide, and Mother Nature dictated that it had to be 144’ long to span the river. Using the nationally accepted design factor of 65 psf, the bridge weighed in at 26 tons. We then learned that there is only one crane in the entire region that is large enough to pick up 26 tons, swing it out over the river, and place it on the foundations. But if we used the USFS “horse” requirement of 100 psf, the bridge would weigh over 32 tons and the cost would jump another $18,000 to $20,000! No crane could lift that. What could we do? Well, we demonstrated that the bridge could hold 25 horses and their riders, if you could somehow crowd them each into a space of less than 5.5 feet. Fortunately, that logic was enough to justify a waiver of the higher design factor.

Then another major problem popped up. The specified bearings, the “plates” on which the bridge sits on the foundations, were deemed to be insufficient. Instead, bearings used in highway bridges were now specified! The cost: another $10,000 to $12,000! But thanks to the tremendous assistance of our bridge builder’s engineers, we finally surmounted that hurdle.

Want to hear more? Nah. Suffice it to say that the approval process was long and drawn out. By the time approval was finally received, we were about three months behind our original schedule to have the bridge ready for use on July 4th.

June  We authorized the start of the bridge fabrication at the end of April. On June 15th, all the foundation and bridge design and fabrication drawings were finally approved by the USFS! In the meantime, we had prepared all the contract documents, so . . . on June 16th we were ready to begin the bidding process. But yet another oops popped up! We learned the same day that (the infamous “404” permit) approval of the United States Corps of Engineers to cross the river with construction equipment and personnel and to build a ramp down to the water level had not been received by the USFS. Back to zero? We thought so for a while, but more weeks of delay occurred before the approval was acknowledged.
July  However, we plunged onward, and on July 1st we received bids from five contractors for the turnkey
construction of the foundations and the placing of the bridge. The low bidder was Ward Construction of
Englewood, Colorado. However, because of the river crossing approval delay, the contract could not be signed
until July 21st.

Nevertheless, construction started on July 23rd! The contractor expected to complete the work by
September 1st. However, the first problem quickly (un)surfaced. It became necessary to over-excavate the
width and depth of the foundation holes on both sides of the river and to reengineer the footings because of
unknowable water and soil conditions. A massive concrete pumping machine was needed to span the river,
and the concrete was placed underwater in the holes.

August  But then everything went right! The 18'-high piers were formed and finished before the prefabricated bridge arrived on August 19th from Minnesota after a three-day journey. And the bridge was lifted into place at 1:50 p.m. on Monday, August 24th—a week ahead of schedule thanks to the careful planning and supervision of the contractor.

We invited the media to the “lifting event.” Imagine the bridge as being almost half a football field long and only six footballs wide and you can guess how nervous the crane operator and contractor were! But it fit perfectly, and we received press coverage from two TV stations and both major Denver-based newspapers.

During the last week of August, trail crew volunteers led by Gene Cash installed a layer of wood “running” planks to absorb the punishment of horseshoes and built a motorized-vehicle barrier.

We accepted the work as “Substantially Completed” from the contractor as of August 25th and, when the one-year warranty period expires in 1999, we will “deed” it to the public at no cost.

DEDICATION
A formal opening will be held next June as a part of the Foundation's 25th Anniversary celebration. The setting is magnificent and very photogenic. Nestled against giant cottonwood trees on the east bank, the bridge soars 17' above the roiling waters of the South Platte River to a granite outcrop on the west bank immediately below a sheer cliff covered with evergreens. Bring lots of film!

COST
Our current estimate of the total cost of just the bridge and trail improvements is $250,000. The CTF volunteers are contributing $62,000 in labor and expertise (assuming very nominal hourly rates), the initial GOCO cash grant and a supplement will provide $95,000, leaving a balance of approximately $93,000 that the Foundation will need to pay from Friends’ donations, benefits, and sales of books and clothing.
Summer Benefits for The Colorado Trail

It was a beautiful week of surprises and new experiences born from the wonder of The Colorado Trail!

Trail Ride

For five days Michael Martin Murphey and his trail/outfitter partner Willard Forman (with additional horse and logistic support from Claire Gamble) hosted a special trail ride to benefit The Colorado Trail. Riders came from the west coast, east coast, north and south to ride from Waterton to Kenosha Pass, in the first of five years in Michael’s plan to ride the entire 500-mile trail.

Benefit Concert

Then, at the end of the fifth day on the night of July 2, trail riders and over 150 other supporters attended the first Michael Martin Murphey Colorado Trail benefit concert. It was a special evening!

This year’s concert participants were delightfully entertained and especially enjoyed the close, intimate seating just a few short feet away from performers Lyle Lovett, the R. Carlos Nakai Quartet, and of course Michael. Tickets for the night sold at $35.00/person. Final results are still being determined.

Besides the 8,000 special invitations Gudy Gaskill, Pat Nagorka, and Glenn Kepler sent to CT Friends and Colorado Mountain Club members, the WestFest eight-page, full-color insert was distributed throughout the state and Denver papers. Here, Michael prominently described his support for The Colorado Trail, encouraging the public to also show their support and attend the concert—Wow! Michael said, “Our longer, special trail ride this year benefits one of the greatest projects in the world, The Colorado Trail. Twenty-five years ago, a visionary woman named Gudy Gaskill brought into reality a 471-mile trail over the Rockies for all to enjoy. The Colorado Trail has never taken a penny of government funding and is maintained by public donations. We at WestFest are awestruck by the people who have given us the gift of The Colorado Trail.”

But Gudy too was soon awestruck. Michael presented a special gift to Gudy that night. To honor her monumental achievement over the past 24 years, a special fund, born out of support from this year’s trail riders, was being developed to ensure The Colorado Trail will be sustained for years and years to come. Thousands of dollars had already been pledged, and riders were committed to helping this fund grow significantly over the years. It was such a magical evening, basking in the appreciation and support of so many new friends “high” on The Colorado Trail.

Silent Auction

But that’s not all! Over 50 businesses contributed items and services for a silent auction, with all proceeds benefiting The Colorado Trail. Additionally, that night many WestFest concessionaires generously came forward, adding even more items for auction. The auction continued through Friday and Saturday with volunteer staff support from Dan Cheezum, Gudy Gaskill, Gail Leary, Denise Wright, and Dan and Debra LaClair (and two young women who helped on Friday morning—we’ll let you know their names in the next issue of Tread Lines). The generosity of dozens of businesses helped raise over $7,000 for The Colorado Trail Foundation! See Silent Auction Donators List.

This is just the first year, folks, so stay tuned for Michael’s pre-WestFest Colorado Trail benefit ride and concert next summer! 1999 celebrates The Colorado Trail’s 25-year anniversary, and this event, preceding July 4th, promises to be one of the highlights. You won’t want to miss it!
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<td>Anaconda Printing (Denver, CO)</td>
<td>Gift Certificate, New Printing</td>
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<td>Arvada Army-Navy Surplus (Arvada, CO)</td>
<td>Camptrails Night Song Backpack</td>
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<td>Australian Outback Oilskin Jacket</td>
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<td>Bonnie Brae Liquormart (Denver, CO)</td>
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<td>Show Halter, Hand-Tooled Leather</td>
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With assistance from seven CT volunteers, REI (who provided display fixturing), and the Colorado Mountain Club (who shared one-half of their booth space with us), the CTF had the opportunity to share the special beauty of The Colorado Trail with the metro community at the People's Fair, which was held on National Trails Day weekend, June 6–7, 1998. Numerous trail groups, outdoor organizations, and governmental agencies gathered together to talk about the importance of trails throughout Colorado. On Saturday, board member George Miller, staff member Denise Wright, and trail crew leader Art Rankin talked with many new people about the trail, upcoming trail crews, classes, treks, and supporting The Colorado Trail Foundation. Art (what a great salesperson!) was able to sell 13 copies of our old third edition guidebook for the special fair price of just $5! Sunday we saw even a larger crowd and were helped by long-time trail crew member and 1988 trail-a-bration hiker Tracy Cochran, board member and Trail Crew Food Coordinator Pat Nagorka, board members Stan Ward and Sam Guyton, and trail crew volunteer and trek staff member Marilyn Eisele. These special volunteers were the key to our success. Thanks for giving your time to share The Colorado Trail with others!

Diane Parker has once again presented The Colorado Trail Foundation with a gift—this time, two checks totaling $1,100. Six hundred dollars were given to Diane by US WEST through their matching gift program. The corporation matches funds with hours volunteered by the employee. For the first time ever, Diane also was presented with a check for $500 by a US WEST CEO for her outstanding performance in having given more than 250 volunteer hours in one year to an organization. The CTF is the winner in both cases—Diane’s generous donation of time and effort, and US WEST's generous funding. Once again, thanks, Diane.

Note: Diane is also the adopter of Section 10.1 of The CT, which begins at Georgia Pass.

*Diane Has Done It Again!*

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Westcliffe Publishers (Englewood, CO)
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Westcliffe Publishers (Englewood, CO)
Whole Body Health Center (Lakewood, CO)
Jan Wilkins (Denver, CO)

Book, *Along The Colorado Trail*
Book, *Photographing The Landscape*
Book, *Rocky Mountain National Park*
Poster
Book, *Along The Continental Divide Trail*
Therapeutic Massage
3 Nights at Mountain Home in Breckenridge

*Some last-minute donations from WestFest participants will be listed in the next issue of Tread Lines.*
I’ve been on the job since early April and, with the busy summer season right around the corner, it’s been nonstop ever since.

As Administrator, Volunteer Coordinator, I’m both learning and helping the board and volunteer coordinators with program administration, marketing and outreach, public and media relations, communications, and special projects. With the help of the Colorado Mountain Club and REI, I furnished our beautiful new office with furniture, files, phones, faxes, and computer, all just for the price of a computer and phone. The Colorado Mountain Club generously provided used furniture (REI also helped here) and some initial filing supplies in addition to office and storage space to help us get started.

Larry McDonald (yes, Merle’s son), with the law firm of Brownstein, Hyatt, Farber & Strickland, contributed a most excellent HP laser printer that’s a real workhorse, with no software limitations!

The Office is easy to reach: Many people are now reaching our business office via phone (24-hour voice mail), fax, e-mail, the Internet, or just by walking in!

Just call directory assistance, and you’ll now find The Colorado Trail Foundation listed! And have people been making the connection! Just for the summer months of June, July, and August, the office received over 400 phone/fax calls, 340 e-mails (and I’ve sent out over 300), and 100 letters (and I’ve sent out over 170).

Our dedicated phone and mail volunteers: Besides contacting the office, you can still reach us the old way! Charlotte Briber answers The Colorado Trail information phone number (303) 526-0809, and besides being a wealth of information for me, her kind and knowledgeable assistance helps dozens and 100s of callers each month! Also, Tom Grover still faithfully (for over five years now) opens an average of 100 pieces of mail a month coming through our Lakewood P.O. Box (he’s got some great stories!). Tom’s planning a six-month sabbatical to England this December, so I would love to discover some new volunteers to help lighten the office load. If you like being “on the inside” and can give a few hours a week to help serve our mail customers and friends, then give me a call! What a wonderful way to help those great fellow volunteers who make it all happen!

My office hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, so if planning a visit, please call first to ensure I’m not “out to lunch”—eating, that is. Do stop in and visit, pick up a Colorado Trail store item, or say “hi” when visiting our other outdoor partners in the American Mountaineering Center. I’m looking forward to seeing or hearing from you soon!
The Mighty Nine Food Packers
by Pat Nagorka

We had a smaller crew packing up food this year, but boy could they get things done. It was just the right number, because we had only 13 crews to pack for.

We had two new faces, Glenn Kepler’s mom, Mabel, who was visiting from the East Coast, and Collette Lottor, who has been on several of Merle McDonald’s crews. She came down from Fort Collins. They both did a great job—thanks for the extra hands. I had every intention of calling the “old regulars,” but Alzheimer’s has set in, and I couldn’t find my list of phone numbers. A mix of new faces in with the experienced makes a good team. Denise Wright, the real organizer, Marilyn and Rick Eisele, Phil and Mae Smith, and I filled out the “Mighty Nine.”

The weather was perfect, and packing went smoothly. Phil took home all the boxes for his four crews. Glenn took his crew’s food. Boy, did my storage room seem empty with only eight piles of boxes left.

The menu stayed unsettled until the very end. Last-minute changes took spaghetti off and put tapioca pudding on. There will be the possibility of more baking this year (cook’s choice) because of the nice ovens that equipment manager George Miller fabricated last year. Availability, expense, and donations sometimes dictate what is on the menu. Spaghetti will be back next year.

Menu changes are difficult but desired. Everyone has a favorite meal, so items that are deleted are missed. But isn’t it nice to have a change? So expect changes—favorites may be gone one year and back the next.

Suggestions are always welcome. Let’s hear some new ideas for lunches and breakfasts. Give me a call at (303) 841-2777, or write to Pat Nagorka, 6796 E. Pine Lane, Parker, CO 80138.

Hope you had an enjoyable crew and a good summer. See you next year.
THE FOLLOWING COMPANIES
VERY GENEROUSLY DONATED FOOD FOR
THE COLORADO TRAIL CREWS:

Alamo Distributors—John Amerman
Tortilla Chips

Archway Cookies—Robin Roberts
Cookies

Early Bird Foods—John Roitsch
Granola

H J Heinz Co.—Mike Helegson
Tuna

King Soopers—E. John Burgon, Pres.
Gift Certificates

Kuner Empson Co.—Bob Siefert
Corn ’N Peppers

Madhava (Mountain Gold Honey)—Greg Gerbore
Honey Bears

Nestles Food Co.—Karen Olson
Candy, Instant Coffees, Creamer, Flavored Teas

Rocky Mountain Foods—Dave Greenhouse
Trail Mix, Swedish Fish (Candy)

Peaberry Coffee, Ltd.—Chiquita Felitti
Coffee

Stokes/Ellis Foods—Linda Mathews
Beef Stew, Corned Beef, Green Beans, Corn

Please show your appreciation by buying products from these companies. They have shown their
support for us—we need to show our support of them.

It is such a pleasure to work with these people at these various companies. They are always
helpful, pleasant, and cooperative when I call for donations. THANK YOU!

Food Chair, Pat Nagorka
The Adopt-A-Trail Program is one mighty program of The Colorado Trail Foundation, and I am learning that first-hand. I took over as the Adopt-A-Trail Coordinator from Merle McDonald in June and am gradually learning all the work our good friend Merle did as the Adopt-A-Trail Coordinator. It has been a challenge to keep up with the program, and I appreciate the patience all you adopters have shown me.

Trail Log and Condition Surveys and Colorado Trail End of Season Reports have been coming in right and left from our more than 50 adopters. And informal reports of trail conditions have been coming in all summer from a wide variety of users. It is amazing how much information comes to the Adopt-A-Trail program. Earlier this year Board Member Stan Ward made a great suggestion to get this information out on our Web Site for all to use. I hope to be able to work out the details of this suggestion now that a very busy summer has come to an end.

A list of adopters appears on page 15, with names and sections those people or organizations cover. I’d like to say thanks on behalf of The Colorado Trail Foundation to all of you for working so hard to keep The Colorado Trail in such great condition.

We continue to have some turnover on sections, which are then available to adopt. At present I am working to fill one section and possibly move some adopters around to other sections. If you are interested in adopting, please contact me through our Golden office, or I can be reached at my e-mail address: GlennWKeplerSr@msn.com. Thanks again for the help everyone has provided. I know I can get better at this, and I will with experience.
### Adopters of Sections of The Colorado Trail

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Thanks for all your hard work!
Golden Moments with Merle McDonald

by Larry C. White

I appreciate the opportunity to say a few things about golden moments with Merle. I’d like to highlight some of Merle’s hiking and climbing feats. I guess I’ve been privileged to share more of these miles with him than anyone.

As a result of these many, many miles, which included more than a few very difficult times, I can say that in spite of anything nature could throw at us, Merle never missed a beat, never once whimpered discomfort, never asked for a “time out”—and never lost his cool. That is to say, hiking partners don’t come any finer!

One of our memorable “Merle Mile” hikes was the CT thru hike a few years ago. Merle and I decided to do the hike in June so trail-building commitments could be met. This, of course, meant some serious snow in high places.

The first of June that year found us at the N terminus (Waterton Canyon), and noon of June 28 found us sharing mounds of chow in Oscar’s Cafe in downtown Durango. In stomping out an average of over 19 miles a day, Merle gave up 15 lbs of body weight. (I suffered along with one extra pound of food a day and lost 2 lbs.) We would have been in a day earlier but found ourselves wrapped up in a severe storm a few miles before reaching Snow Mesa and wound up really lost. When we mutually admitted this and decided we were no longer on “glide path,” we quietly foraged out a nearly level spot, crawled into our wet tents, and waited for a better day.

The next morning the clouds broke up enough to get some real estate figured out. Now, Merle and I will often hike days and not have 30 minutes of conversation—we just seem to have this silent communication that suffices. Anyway, that particular morning, Merle commented rather dryly, as he came out of the tent, that “that sure is something one doesn’t see very often.” When I looked up from my oatmeal, I asked what that was. Merle kinda leaned back and scratched and pointed behind me and said: “The sun coming up in the South . . .” I guess like Daniel Boone answered when questioned if he had ever been lost, he replied, “No, but I’ve been in some strange country for 2–3 days.” This was us. We were in some strange country. No problem.

I don’t know if anyone has hiked the trail with a full backpack in less time, even after June, but I believe Merle (then 62 years young) may have the record.

In the fall of ’95, I started working on Merle to climb Mt. McKinley (high point in North America) with me. We’d done some winter stuff together and had a lot of fun, but Merle knew the hourglass was sure getting a lot of sand in the bottom. When he agreed, I eased him into raising the ante—that is, we climb McKinley via the West Buttress, but we’d descend off the north side to Wonder Lake in Denali National Park. This was the way the mountain was originally climbed. Well, we almost pushed the envelope too far. We really got beat up and had two days of crevasses and storms neither of us would ever want to go through again. When we finally hit the tundra and sleds plus gear went up on our backs for two days of serious mosquitoes, bogs, and river crossings, ole Merle shouldered his 100-pound pack with an acceptance that made everyone else fall into place and voice not a single whimper. Tough.

Last summer, after helping Tom Bowser and me on our adopted trail section, Merle (at 65), Richard Nolde, and I caught the Continental Divide Trail at Wolf Creek, and seven days later we were hiking through Silverton (100 miles), and I can assure you the high CT with all the snow was no easy stroll. Merle doesn’t do this to set records or gain any recognition—he is just one of those folks who thrives on adversity.

His hiking uniform and equipment are always the same in spite of technology. That is, long-sleeved poly shirt with a T-shirt underneath; long pants; and a large, green Kelty external frame pack, with two ‘biners holding a plastic 1 qt. measuring cup on the back—no fancy Gore-tex, just a $29.95 green poncho, and oh yes, the leather gloves. About three years ago he finally agreed with me on hiking sticks—he uses two, I still use one. In the hottest trips in the Grand Canyon to the high cold CT, this is Merle.

Well, this past spring we were going to start our hike across Arizona (south to north), but Nature threw another obstacle in front of Merle, and we have to wait a spell until Merle figures this one out, too. Merle—I’m ready when you are . . .
It’s the summer of 1988. After leading crews in 1986 and 1987, I’m leading my third trail crew for The Colorado Trail Foundation above Creede and below San Luis Pass. A couple weeks before the crew gathers I get a call from a Merle McDonald (who’s he?) asking questions about the equipment I expect to have in camp and asking whether I could use a couple more tables (he’d be willing to make some!). Well, with 50 (the most ever!) crews working on The CT the summer before, leaders always entered camp with a hope we’d have some basic supplies but be flexible enough to work with whatever we received.

From my first encounter with Merle and to this day, I’ve always known Merle as a helper extraordinaire! Merle and his daughter Anne worked with 18 others that week, and both McDonalds were truly a pleasure to be around. It was great fun watching him that first Saturday afternoon pilot his “well-experienced” VW bus confidently through a long stretch of hubcap deep mud. No matter where he went with his VW pal (and they surely seemed inseparable), I’m confident Merle knew he and his “trusty” bus could conquer any road condition crossing their path.

When working on the trail Merle came with this same determination and commitment to giving his all. Always the first to leave and the swiftest of foot, father and daughter were an inspiration to the rest of us, who wished we too were in such top-notch condition to climb so rapidly to the top. And, around camp, if something didn’t quite work right, Merle would retreat to his faithful “mobile home” and return with a tool or part to solve the problem. What a treat!

What first comes to mind when you hear the name Gudy Gaskill (The Colorado Trail!), or Randy Jacobs (The Colorado Trail!), and Merle McDonald (of course, The Colorado Trail!)? There are many, many invaluable volunteers who have contributed over the years, but I suspect few have been more deeply involved in every facet of The Colorado Trail than has Merle.

In 1989 he adopted the S Cottonwood to Mt. Princeton section of The CT (he still maintains that trail today) and began leading those wonder trail crews so many of us have enjoyed. He also took over as Coordinator of the Adopt-A-Trail program, a position he dedicated himself to for nine years.

In 1990 he joined the board and began many years actively working with The Colorado Trail’s Master Plan committee besides addressing numerous “behind the scenes” operational needs. He’s designed and maintained our database, mail logs, and accounting systems. For years our summer trail crew projects have been coordinated by Merle. He formalized and computerized our crew information packets to simplify the entire information distribution and registration process. He’s just been an incredible workhorse! There is literally no operational area that doesn’t have Merle’s stamp of excellence. Merle and I served the same tenure on the board, and it has truly been a privilege and honor to work with him over the years. My job in the office is much easier because Merle preceded me in these important operational areas. His energies and dedication will pay dividends to The Colorado Trail Foundation for years to come!

Merle McDonald, who’s he? Well, do you have a few hours . . . ?
I can’t think of The Colorado Trail without Merle McDonald’s image flashing before my eyes. With trepidation, I enlisted for one of his crews in the late 1980s. Rumor had it that he was a “retired military man.” These words evoked a small twinge of terror and the mental picture of a stiff-backed, order-barking drill instructor. At this stage of my life, I had no intention of deferring to anyone, on trail or off. However, at that moment, I was willing to negotiate anything to get out of the Phoenix heat and into the San Juans for a week. So I gave Merle a chance.

It was one of my best decisions. Instead of the gruff, order-giving martinet I had envisioned, our crew leader turned out to be a kind and gentle person, with finely honed people skills. In fact, these skills were so well tuned that no one was aware he or she was being led. During our Sunday evening orientation, just after the safety lecture, Merle would remind us that we were on the trail crew to “enjoy ourselves and build a little bit of The Colorado Trail. If you get tired or don’t feel well, it is OK to go back to camp.” Of course, no one ever did. We didn’t want to disappoint Merle or lose face with other crew members. We all thought hard work was our idea. This was just one example of Merle’s masterful skills.

Evenings with Merle and the crew around the campfire were wonderful. We told stories, sang gospel songs, and freed ourselves from all the cares of the modern world. We learned a lot about each other. Merle confided that he once had considered being a Baptist minister. Each year new members gravitated to the crew. I found myself calling Merle prior to publication of the Trail Crew Schedule to ensure a spot on one of his San Juan teams. In such demand, his crews were filled even before the schedules were mailed.

When in a weak moment I agreed to serve as Assistant Leader for a Sierra Club Service Trip on the Arizona Trail, Merle bailed me out by sending proven recipes and supply lists. CT delights such as Mexican Buildup and canned ham appeared magically in the wilds of Arizona’s Superstition and Rincon Mountains to 30-member crews thanks to Merle’s help.

When Merle’s wife Uta (see photo page 19) retired, she joined Merle on the trail. She made the crew experience even more delightful. Some summers Ann and the pups came along, too. My treks to Colorado seemed more like a family reunion than a work detail. I could count on seeing the McDonalds, Shirley and Win Wolvington, Paul and Sandy Njaa, Sue Palmer, Barb Hill, Laura Farmer, Ruth Rose and Laurie McCanne, Art Porter, Larry Mack, and so many other old friends. It was like kids going away to camp. The campers were only a little more mature, some graying, but their glee and sense of adventure were like that of teenagers. Merle made the trail crew experience meaningful for hundreds of us. We have been enriched by his wisdom, blessed by his presence, and thanks to Merle, we managed to “build a little bit of The Colorado Trail,” too. Life offers each of us many surprises and blessings. Things are not always the way we suppose. One of the best decisions I ever made was to take that chance on a “retired military man” and sign up for that first Colorado Trail crew at Indian Trail Ridge.
Two years ago, I joined Merle McDonald along with George Miller and three other people (Vince, Rita, and John) for a week-long yurt trip in the area of Lake City.

Our first night was uneventful, but the second night in the Rambouillet yurt, there was a fierce snowstorm. The wind was blowing so hard, we didn’t know if the yurt would withstand the gales of wind. We had all bedded down for the night, and the wind came up and awakened Rita, Vince, and me. We climbed out of our sleeping bags and sat by the wood-burning stove telling stories. We were having a great time talking, and Merle was sawing logs to beat the band. As some of you know, Merle can go to sleep at the drop of a hat. He starts snoring in about two minutes once his head hits his pillow. (Incidentally, his pillow is a wine bladder from a box of wine, which he blows up! It is kind of squeaky but a great idea.)

The wind continued to blow, and the yurt was a little drafty that night, but it never collapsed. In the meantime, John and George were awake, and we all eventually returned to our bunks. Merle never woke up the entire evening, and when we talked to him in the morning, he said that he didn’t hear a word!

The first yurt trip on which my son, Clint, and I joined Merle was three years ago. As you all know, we were all responsible for a meal during the week in which we were on the trip. Merle surprised us the night he was in charge and opened a can of smoked oysters for hors d’oeuvres. What a treat that was after eating freeze-dried food for a week. They tasted so good!!

Merle is a great crew leader, something I can attest to after having been on three of his crews. And he is a man who lives for the day. He has a great sense of humor, is a hard worker, and is the ultimate of what I would describe as a true mountain man. His last climb of McKinley was an adventure that only he and an elite few have done. He was the oldest man ever to complete the buttress route of McKinley. He is a man with many wonderful characteristics, and I look forward to working with Merle on The Colorado Trail next year.

Merle and Uta McDonald

Merle McDonald is the embodiment of a rare and admirable style of leadership, one which all of us can do well to learn.

He doesn’t seek the limelight, but is content to lead by getting everyone to focus on the job at hand and on the well-being of fellow crew members. He is always a good example, working harder and longer than anyone else and patiently teaching the trail-building tasks while never talking down to new recruits, nor disdaining the primer-level techniques of which some of us are so proud.

He shows us how to stay at it until the job we are attempting is far beyond merely acceptable, a product we learned to believe would stand the test of time. He has the uncanny ability of seeing a job that needs to be done on the trail and/or in the camp, and simply doing it. He sets a pace that can see a task accomplished but that never damages the health or the morale of us lesser mortals. He has the desire to know each member of the crew—to meet each member at his/her level of interest and experience. He refuses to yield to the tricks or gimmicks that might artificially make “community” happen, but he is quick to pick up on the naturally occurring moments that enable the disparate individuals to say at the end, “look what we accomplish!”

He led us to build Colorado, community, and personal trails, which will last.
I first heard about The Colorado Trail in an article in the Denver Post, during the spring of my junior year in college (1987). It sounded like fun to me, and so I called my dad to see if he’d be interested in working on a trail crew with me that summer. As they say, great minds think alike, because he informed me that he’d already registered for a crew that summer. So it was a simple matter for me to arrange to be on that crew with him.

The crew was to be at Road End Canyon, just seven miles from the southern terminus of the Trail. We headed down to Durango in my dad’s trusty old brown VW bus. Not exactly the speed mobile. We had to hike from Junction Creek campground to Road End Canyon, but somehow my dad managed to get himself elected to help the Forest Service pack in our gear in pickup trucks, so he was able to make sure he could sneak along a box of wine. I think Charlotte Briber was the only person on that crew who is still active with the Foundation, and I remember being overwhelmed at her knowledge of botany. It seems like there wasn’t a flower you could point out to which she didn’t know the name.

The weather was perfect that week, and in our camp we were surrounded by magnificently huge aspen trees and enormous delphiniums. We’d come home from work covered with fine red dust, and I don’t think anything was quite as welcome as our daily shower.

From the first day, my dad kept whispering to me about how they’d never do such-and-such in an Army camp; he was full of ideas from the very beginning about how everything in camp could be run more efficiently. A future crew leader was born.

That week was also the first time either of us ever saw Gudy Gaskill. Word reached us that she would be coming in to camp on Friday to check out our work, and everyone was abuzz with excitement. I’d never even heard of her and couldn’t understand what the excitement was about. Little did I know.

My dad and I worked together on another crew the following summer, down by Creede. Somehow my dad managed to get that old bus up a harrowing logging road that was ankle deep in mud. That crew was full of CTF diehards: Denise Wright (the leader); Helen Newell, Bob Boblette, Harriet Patton, La Veda Bermudez, Dick Hackman and one of his sons, Mike.

On that crew we had a moment that is, to my mind, quintessential Merle. I forget what we were doing for drinking water, but halfway through the week, someone discovered a small spring 40 or 50 feet above the road that was part of our camp. I remember everyone standing on the road below the spring, and Harriet, I think, commented how convenient it would be if we had a hose that we could stick into the spring and stretch down to the road. Without a word, my dad disappeared back to our bus, only to return moments later with 50 feet of garden hose. I can honestly say that never in a million years would it have occurred to me or, I imagine, most people to bring a garden hose on a crew, but not so my dad. His early Boy Scout training has stuck with him for all of his adult life, I suppose.
The location of this crew was in the Rio Grande Forest, out of the Saguache area. This was a continuation of the section of trail we’ve been working on for several years. Our camping spot wasn’t the one we had planned, but it was very nice though extremely dry and hot. It meant that the crew had to be transported about three miles to the trail every day, but that worked out OK. The weather this week was the hottest we’ve ever experienced on a crew! We drank water like it was going out of style—even took two extra five-gallon containers of it up to trail. But the evenings were mild and most enjoyable.

We had an energetic, mostly experienced, and companionable crew, and accomplished 2,500 feet of tread in a very rough, rocky area, where the trail was almost straight downhill. One switchback was constructed. Two large rocks had to be removed to make the switchback work. These rocks were about 2 x 2 x 4 feet each, and most of their bulk was buried.

We were able to have evening campfires. But on Wednesday, when the crew returned from their day off, a fire ban was put in place, so no more campfires. One nice thing about this camp area was that there is a spring within 50 feet of base camp. This provided plenty of water for showers.

Our team this week consisted of Bea Adams, Bob Ballou, Lois and Tracy Cochran, John, Sherri, and Laura DeShano, Elsie Dickert, Linda and Weldon Hyde, Rachel Klauber, Ryan Lewis, David Nevin, Storme Rose, Marianne Zwosta, plus my wife Mae Smith (the cook), and me.
The crew met in Gunnison and drove to the Powderhorn Wilderness boundary to begin their backpack into base camp. The camp had been transported (with difficulty, as the horses bolted and scattered goods everywhere) the day before, so upon arrival, the group became busy with setting up camp and putting everything back in order. Camp was at an edge of a meadow overlooking a huge beaver encampment. A small stream uphill from camp was the cooler for the week as well as the water source. **David Nevin** and **Dan Wolfe** became the “water and produce” carriers.

A number of long re-routes were completed during the week. The ground was fairly easy to work with, so work progressed very quickly. There were a number of drainages to be repaired and dried out as well as log bridges to construct. It was a push to get everything completed during the week and work around the rain. To the very end, it was a job well done . . . and much needed. Kudos to the following people for having put in such long hours and having completed so many miles of trail: **Sarah**, **Nathan**, and **Dianne Christianson**, **Jonathan Huie**, **Linda** and **Weldon Hyde**, **Jackie Keller**, **Rachel Klauber**, **Ryan Lewis**, **Pamela Lurz**, **David Nevin**, **Teal Warthan**, **Dan Wolfe**, **Adam Seal** and **Sarah** and **Jenny**. **Arden Anderson** was the BLM coordinator.
Once again we worked in the Rio Grande Forest, out of the Saguache District—seems almost like home, since we’ve been working in that area and with Ranger Jim Jaminet for about five years now. We camped in the same spot as our first crew this year, so the crew had to be transported by vehicle every day to the work site—or the trail leading to the work site.

The crew consisted of Bob Ballou, Marge Burgess, Carol Clapp, Richard Conger, Beverley Gherardini, Roger Gomas, Allen Kallenbach, James Kleckner, Larry Mack, Jill Ozaki, Annemarie Sierks, Mae Smith (the cook), and me. Also on this crew were three teens who left on Wednesday: Rachel Klauber, Gerald Montoya, and Jordan Sherrill. Most of the adults were experienced trail workers and/or hikers. Some even chose to walk the three miles back to camp after work each day! And some even took a long hike toward Baldy Lake on their day off!

A total of 2,066 feet of trail were completed this week—a job well done, and a hearty thanks to all who helped accomplish this!

Again, this part of The Colorado Trail is very rocky, and almost straight downhill. Slanting the trail to make the water run off was a tough job. Another portion of the trail was very flat, and a large area had to be cleared to get the water off the trail. The crew also had to take out several stumps.

Roger Gomas and Jim Kleckner caught some fish in the beaver ponds, with Roger catching the most. The total fish count was 42. So one afternoon, Roger and Jim wrapped the fish in foil along with some oranges and spices. Each foil packet contained two or three fish, depending on size. Then they cooked the packets over the fire. Each of us had his or her own serving of this delicacy as the appetizer that night! Boy, were they good! Thanks, guys!
What a lucky crew this was! A week of perfect weather, a beautiful campsite at 10,000' next to the river and close to the work site—and a bridge to build!

My crew consisted of me and eight other Summit County, Colorado, residents: Ray and Ruth Bezanson, Ruth and Bill Cannon, Bill Moller, Karen and Peter Rex, and Dick Rozehnal. Other Coloradans were Paul Newendorp, from Estes Park (who makes all of the signs for The Colorado Trail); Laura Farmer, from Palisade; and Lynda Morris, from Durango. Out-of-staters were Lester Longmire, from Nebraska, and the Texans, John Wilson, Sam and Adele Junkin, and Kayla Hefner. Daphne Brennan came all the way from Wellington, New Zealand. She had read about The Colorado Trail volunteer work in a travel magazine and found the idea so intriguing that she devoted two weeks of her first trip to the United States to working on CT trail crews rather than just visiting the tourist sites.

We had excellent support from Holly English of the Dillon Ranger District and her crew. They kept us well supplied with water, tools and materials, chain saw support, advice, and even a picnic table.

Our main job was to replace the existing footbridge consisting of two 30-foot-long, springy logs with a solid planked bridge for foot and bicycle use. In addition, we were to repair and improve the nearby trail by putting rolling dips, french drains, and causeways through muddy and badly worn areas.

The bridge foundations were rock-filled cribs built from 6” x 6” treated timbers, rebarred and spiked together. Two average 15-inch, 30-foot logs comprised the bridge stringers. These were moved to the location on long rollers, using come-alongs and a lot of muscle power. Finally the bridge was planked with 3” x 12” four-foot treated lumber supplied by the Dillon Ranger District. The new bridge is 30 feet long and 4 feet wide. Ray, Sam, Dick, Holly, and I, and last year’s crew member John Taylor returned the following Thursday to plank the bridge because the materials had not arrived by the end of the crew week.

Ruth C., Ruth B., Karin, Laura, Daphne, Les, Bill, and Adele had the less glamorous job of building french drains, causeways, and rolling dips over several hundred feet of badly deteriorated trail. They diligently carried dirt, rocks, and gravel to accomplish their dirty tasks, and did rock work that they could view with great pride.

Bill Cannon ran a fine kitchen and provided excellent cuisine. Since the camp was so close to the job site, we could all return to camp for the lunch that Bill always had laid out for the crew.

Lynda and Kayla, who proved to have very strong hands, raised $115 for the CTF giving $5 foot and shoulder massages to the weary bridge builders and rock haulers. We had good happy hour each
evening before dinner, and some hotly-contested horseshoe games. Friday night was awards night, and Paul Semmer and Holly of the Forest Service gave patches to all of the crew. Crew members picked names from a hat early in the week for a gift exchange and had the week to think up some very creative gifts made from nature’s bounties. The Friday night party topped off a great week of hard work, good fun, and fine companionship for all the crew.

Crew #6 on bridge stringers.

Peter, Dick, Ray, and Sam building foundation cribbing.

Adele, Peter, and Paul at old bridge.

Crew #6 moving log stringers.

Ernie, Holly, Ray, Dick, and John Taylor at new bridge.
This crew took over where Joe Slack’s crew left off. Our main assignments were to finish building new trail to hook up with the old route and to shore up the talus slope along the river.

We quickly got to know each other by figuring out exactly how we were to get across the swiftly flowing and high South Platte River. Lori Malcomb of the U.S. Forest Service South Platte District Office provided us with a raft and life preservers and a pump. We pumped up the raft and carried it down to the riverbank OK. Then we had to figure out a rope system to pull us back and forth across the river. Fortunately for us all, crew member Doug Donato knows his ropes—with carabiners, a pulley, plenty of rope, and an existing cable stretched across the river, we set up a ferrying system for both equipment and supplies. Nathan Roth braved the cold waters to guide us all across safely.

Now, many of you experienced crew volunteers know that a campsite in the forest seldom offers anything in the way of modern conveniences. Well this wasn’t one of those campsites. The South Platte Trail Crossing Crews 1 and 2 had the use of a house purchased by the Denver Water Board after the old bridge was lost to flooding; the third crew at the site had two houses. Although we didn’t trust the water in the house well and the rest of the plumbing didn’t work, we did have electricity for house lights and an electric stove, two bedrooms, kitchen cabinets, a nice big living room complete with a stone fireplace, and a shady porch with a beautiful view of the river. Gordon Lacy and Sarah Taylor-Arnold served as our main chefs, although all of us took turns. Gordon’s brisket on Wednesday night was especially tasty.

After checking out our work site, Sunday was pretty much a free day for us all. Some of us drove over to the Devil’s Head Fire Lookout trail and hiked to the tower—what a great view from the top. Others hiked The Colorado Trail to check on conditions. Although Monday and Tuesday were so extremely hot that we had to quit early each day, we still were able to build a great durable trail. Michael Roth and Daniel Gargan took out two very large trees the first crew had left for us. Todd and Carolyn Sherwood, serving on their first volunteer crew, looked like pros turning out some great tread.

Nephew Brendan Egan taught another first-timer, Sarah Townsend, all the right moves, or was it the other way around? Our good friend Daphne Brennan was our specialist on back slopes, showing all of us the right technique in between her fun-filled stories. And daughter Sandra (Sandie) kept our spirits up on the trail and in camp. We all missed her smiling face when she left Wednesday for a soccer tournament. We hooked up to the old trail by Tuesday afternoon.

Wednesday the crew was all over the area—shopping for more food in Conifer, hiking the CT, tubing the South Platte, and rock climbing by the Bucksnort (Thanks again, Doug.) A dinner at the Bucksnort was a good way to top off the off day.

Thursday was spent shoring up the talus slope by the bridge site and building water bars. Norm Brooke and Jim Storjohann headed up the shoring detail, which included Erik Donato, Gordon, Nathan, Michael, and Dan. They used some old lumber and fence posts to check the scree. The trail was a lot easier to travel when they were done. That rock isn’t going anywhere fast now. The rest of the crew, including my little sister Jan, worked on water bars that I can attest have stood up to the test of hard rains.

I’d like to thank the entire crew for making my first time as a leader a successful and memorable experience. See you next year.
Twenty-three Elderhostlers arrived on Sunday morning to begin a full hard week of trail maintenance at Molas Pass. Later, I arrived, after having had two flat tires on the CT pickup while driving over Cinnamon Pass in the rain. Still later, the Columbine District Ranger, accompanied by Ted LaMay, arrived with the tent and equipment, having been delayed by a mud/rock slide on their way over from Joe Slack’s trail crew. The rain stayed with us for the rest of the week. To join an Elderhostel program, one must be at least 55 years of age, and the group that worked on The CT were a young, hardy, 60- to 80-year-old age group. We will call this crew the “Water Bar” crew because they built about 72 needed water bars above the lake, around the lake, and into Animas Canyon as well as debermed several miles of The CT. There were long days and hard work carrying all of the treated posts to their destinations. The group had great talent and lots of fun. The enthusiastic campers drove from the east and west coasts to help us repair our trail. I can’t thank the group enough. We enjoyed evening campfires, meteor showers, dinner wines, and tales of fabulous lives. Channel 6 came up and filmed interviews for a “Spirit of Colorado” program to be aired next spring. Participants were Jack Mayer (Ohio), Mary Salmon (Iowa), Harry Button (Colorado), Bill Lord (Arizona), Austin Rishel (New Mexico), Jean Smith (Missouri), Lim Howlin (Colorado), Bill Caslin (Illinois), Bob McKinney (Florida), Helene Schaefer (Colorado), Lois and Ken Prestrud (Washington), Harlele Gildon (Michigan), Wayne Wagener (Colorado), Joanne Fuchs (Illinois), Ken Hughes (Colorado), Jane Millrt (New Mexico), Janet Sample (Colorado), Sandy and Larry Dunlap (Oregon), Marjorie Mueller (Colorado), and Jerry Major, Forest Service.
Crew # 12 was lucky enough to be working when the new bridge was placed across the river August 24, 1998, quite a historic occasion. A couple of the local TV stations were there, and Gudy did the “ribbon cutting.”

It was awesome to watch that huge crane place the bridge across the river, but it also meant that our work was just beginning—work we never thought we’d do on a trail crew. When the term “trail crew” is heard, a certain scenario comes to mind. Mostly trail maintenance with shovels, Pulaskis, McLeods, and saws.

Well, that vision did not hold true for Crew #12.

We ran about 1/4 mile of new barbed wire fence along the South Platte River (the reason for the fence is a story in itself), cut, drilled, and bolted down horse planking over the length of the bridge, laid down seed and erosion matting near the bridge, and transplanted willow trees.

This was a wonderful crew. We had members from all walks of life, all ages, from 13 to retired, and from Denver to Japan. Mitsuo Nakadaia came from Tokyo to work with us. He should get a real kick out of the pictures of himself stringing barbed wire fence.

The food was great, thanks to Ed and Peggy Hawkinson. The peaches were great, too, courtesy of Laura Farmer from Palisade, Colorado.

Laverne Nelson, from Gooding, Kansas, is a real pro when it comes to barbed wire fences. I’ll bet he didn’t know he’d be using that skill on a trail crew!

Sam House, from Texas, was sort of “second in command.” He’s also pretty allergic to poison ivy, which, unfortunately, there is a lot of in this section. Gene’s grandsons, David and Eric Hughes were with us. They pounded a lot of metal fence posts into the ground. Thank goodness for earplugs.

Don Brewington was our “outspoken” Texan. He’s really feisty and kept us on our toes. Don and Gene never cut each other any slack. It’s easy to tell they’ve known each other a long time, because you can only get away with talking to each other like that when you’re fond of each other.

Dave Isenberg came to work with us right after walking the entire Colorado Trail, nonstop, end to end. He’s a “minimalist” backpacker, so when he split his pants hauling boards, there went half his wardrobe.

Bob Etter came all the way from New York for our crew. After this trip he can call himself a “professional post-hole digger extraordinaire.” Larry White was one of the few locals on the trip, a drawback if there’s an emergency at work and they can find you. He missed a little of the excitement but pulled through for us in the end.

Russell McFarland and I showed up with our camper. We had to cross the river in our vehicles because the bridge was washed out. It was a real hair-raising experience to watch the Nissan truck and camper cross the river, water coming up over the hood. It only stalled a couple of times but thankfully didn’t float; some of the trucks actually floated down the river before getting across.

Our living conditions were great. We actually felt a little guilty because we could stay in houses. Thanks to the Denver Water Board for letting us use them. All that we lacked was running water, but we had plenty of solar showers and drinking water courtesy of the U.S. Forest Service.

Shawn and Sam from the Forest Service were great. They worked as hard as we did, right along with us. We really appreciate all that they did for us.

We did a little hiking during our time off. The trail is so beautiful! The wildflowers this year are unbelievable. I gave up writing down the different ones at about 50. They just carpeted the ground in many places.

This project will surely stand out in our minds. The unusual tasks, the historic occasion, and, most importantly, the wonderful people you always meet on a Colorado Trail Crew!
Watercolor Class Production

by Gudy Gaskill

The Colorado Trail Foundation had a very successful watercolor session at the CTF Education Center above Lake City during the latter part of August. Margaret Barge from Durango was the instructor of a group of 15 aspiring artists from Colorado, New Mexico, New Jersey, and New Zealand. Field trips were taken to American Basin, Cinnamon Pass, and a local waterfall. Quite a bit of painting had to be done under the overhanging eaves to avoid the persistent rains. The enthusiastic students painted the entire week without taking a break from their work. Gudy Gaskill managed the camp, assisted by Jan and Dan Wolfe. Friday evening climaxed with a mass critique and show. Next year’s class will be held the third week in July, so mark your calendars now.

“Critique” during Watercolor Class, August 1998.

Join Us for Some Trekking in Summer 1999!

Having completed a successful summer of trekking for 1998, we are planning the summer of 1999 trekking program on The Colorado Trail. Due to new Forest Service regulations on the number of hikers allowed as a group in wilderness areas, we will not be taking as many hikers next summer as we have in the past. Mark your calendars to watch for the January issue of Tread Lines with the complete schedule of treks for 1999. And sign up to join us next summer!
The Colorado Trail Completion Awards

You finally did it! You fulfilled that lifelong dream, completed The Colorado Trail, and now want a memento to commemorate your accomplishment. A FREE Completion Certificate is yours for the asking, listing your completion date and whether you hiked, biked, or rode horseback on The Colorado Trail! Or a beautiful Completion Plaque could adorn your wall for just $39.00! You can also purchase the “I Completed The Colorado Trail” completion patch, available through The Colorado Trail Store for $2.75. For those who are still working on completing The Colorado Trail, we offer 200-mile club and 300-mile club pins ($2.50 per pin). Retain the memories—contact the CT office about ordering your plaque, pin, or certificate today!

If you are hiking The Colorado Trail or maintaining the trail, we have cards for you to pass out to trail users. We’ll mail you some if you’ll use them. Glenn Kepler, our new Adopt-A-Trail “Chief,” will be mailing some to adopters. This would be a service to the CTF to get the word out to the trail users that The Colorado Trail is theirs to use through a labor of love.
The Colorado Trail Store
All proceeds provide important support for The Colorado Trail.

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Winston Churchill

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