



# Fall Newsletter 2005

## **Pondering The Peak**

By Mary Burger

We celebrate another year of high energy work and great accomplishments. The trails are looking better and better, the highway is being re-engineered to handle the run off with less erosion, and the tundra is being restored. The hardest struggle occurs when there appears to be no opposition. It is easier to find the effort to fight when something we love appears to be threatened. But, when everyone agrees, and there is no threat, where does the energy to continue come from? We must realize the work we do will not be done, if we do not continue to do it. There is no budget in the USFS system for trail maintenance on Pikes Peak. What little they had has been cut. When we restore a trail or vegetation, we are making a statement. That statement is "We respect this land. We love this mountain. And, we want to leave it in better condition than we found it." I am proud to be a part of this organization and I am proud of you. See you on the mountain.

## **Devil's Playground Trail**

We have received permission to perform the maintenance re-route required to repair the Devil's Playground Trail in

the middle. Two miles down from the top, and two miles up from the bottom the trail deteriorates into chutes. The repair process is going to require about 100 volunteer days to complete. This translated to several days of commitment from a group of about 25 to 30 volunteers. The way I figure it, we can get the USFS to drop our supplies the day before the project. We then ask everyone who can, to hike up to the project, and set up camp that same day. The project will take about 5 days with this number of volunteers.

Here is the catch: at this time, we cannot support the food for this remote project. Anyone who is interested in helping out, by either finding a support group, or caterer, or by assisting in planning and preparing the food on a backcountry project should call the office. We will be holding a meeting about February to consider our options.

### **Help Wanted**

All those who would like to assist in preparing and serving food on projects should call the office, 471-3145. We will have a planning meeting in March.



## The 2005 Year in Review

We had some great times, and did some great work. Here is an overview. Hope you were able to join us. If not, your support is appreciated. Maybe, you will be able to come out next year. You do not have to be extraordinarily healthy or physically fit. The only requirement is that you show up. We can use all the help we can get, even if your 'job' for the day is to patrol the camp for security.

### Red Rock Canyon Park

May 15, 2005

This project was a substitute for a RTP project when the snow did not melt fast enough for us to work at 10,000 ft. We helped reclaim an old gravel pit. While the work was not highly visible, it was highly satisfying. This area of the park is not yet open to visitors. Once it is open, they will not be able to tell we were there or that the area was stripped either.



### Bear Creek Trail repair

(USFS666)

Alternate Thursdays starting June 2 through Sept. 22

This is my personal favorite activity, and currently, my favorite trail. Last year we had improved about the first ½ of the trail, installing steps, and drains and new

stream crossings. This year we completed the maintenance on the rest of the trail to the intersection with USFS667.



About a dozen volunteers showed up most Thursdays. Each week the walk to the work site became longer and longer. But, by the end of September, we had reached our goal.

I have since spoken to bike riders, and horse people who use this trail, as well as many hikers. They all agree the work is excellent, and a great improvement to an historic route.



### Ring the Peak Trail construction

Saturday June 18, and Sunday June 19, and Saturday August 27, and Sunday August 28 and Saturday September 17.

FOTP continued the effort to connect existent trails on Pikes Peak to form an urban access ring around the mountain. This year we focused on Putney Gulch

Trail: the connection of USFS road #383, (Four Mile Road), to USFS 708, (Horsethief Park).



The new segment of trail runs through heavy forest and descends a ridge in several long switchbacks. Teams worked tirelessly to remove roots, and rocks. By the end of the season, we were to the base of the ridge, and have 'only' to follow the drainage down to the creek, to complete this section.



It will probably take several work days next year to complete this important connection. A trailhead sign will be

installed thanking the volunteers and our sponsors, and a dedication ceremony will take place upon completion of the trail segment.

### **Barr Trail workdays**

Saturday July 2, and Sunday July 3, and Saturday August 6.

FOTP has worked with the Pikes Peak Trail Dogs in maintaining Barr Trail since 1997. The Trail Dogs have subdivided the trail into ownership sections, and perform normal routine maintenance. This plan works well and will continue. Every year or so, FOTP joins the trail dogs in some activity which goes beyond the normal scope of work expected of the trail Dogs.

The first area we addressed was below Barr camp. There was a nasty tree root in the trail causing users to either jump over it, or take a social re-route around the area. There were also several areas below this where the trail was steep and narrow.



We removed the root, closed the social re-route, and repaired the other problems on this tricky bit of trail.



The next day, we returned to remove unwanted fencing from the top of the incline. And, the final day, we carried over 50 rails up the trail to be installed on the switch backs to replace old, and broken ones.

### **Crags to Devil's Playground**

Saturday July 23, and Sunday July 24

The trail from the Crags Campground to Devil's Playground starts out as an old logging road. Just below tree line, it becomes a single-track trail. FOTP began maintenance on the historic route four years ago. We have completed maintenance to the top of the old logging road. This year, we addressed the trail from the top, (Devil's Playground), down.



The work consisted of restoration of the current trail alignment as far down the

trail, from Devil's Playground as we could complete. This work has been planned for the past two years, and has been snowed off each time. This year we scheduled the work for earlier in the season. And, it worked. We got in two fine days of work, and finished about 1000 feet of trail.



We installed repaired the trail tread, installed steps and rock bars, and replanted as much of the tundra as we could salvage.

### **Mary Burger Honored**

The 2005 Colorado Land Stewardship Award was presented to Mary Burger, founder and president of Friends of the Peak. Mary was recognized for her tireless work inspiring volunteers on Pikes Peak.

The CLSA, annually honors an individual or group who demonstrates leadership, vision and personal engagement in the stewardship of Colorado's public lands. The award includes a \$1,000 cash donation to Friends of the Peak.

## HELP WANTED

Like to talk about the fun you have had with FOTP? Help spread the word by becoming an outreach spokesperson. Several dates are available. Call the office 471-3145 to find out when the next opportunity is.

### Celebrating Our Tenth Anniversary

Ten years have come and gone since we began our efforts to provide sound stewardship of Pikes Peak. What has Friends of the Peak, (FOTP) accomplished in this impressive amount of time? Let me tell you.

1) We demonstrated successful re-vegetation practices for up to 14,000 feet elevation. Our methods were accepted by the US Forest Service, (USFS) as appropriate for the elevation. These areas of restoration provided examples which the USFS, and the Pikes Peak Highway Managers (PPH) used when they established a restoration methodology for the highway corridor. Which, I am happy to say, is being followed. The re-engineering of the highway and the restoration of the native species along the corridor appears to be progressing. We may continue to work with the Highway on this project. The restoration of Devil's Playground is also, progressing. After 5 years, the triangle of vegetation we installed appears to be growing into one massive clump. At this altitude, restoration proceeds at the pace of growth on the tundra.

2) We initiated sediment trapping work which has been expanded upon by the PPH.

Several sediment traps have been installed along the highway. The latest work (on the Ws above Glenn Cove), seems to be more environmentally sound than the previous design. We need to go up during the melt next spring, to verify that the new drainages function as designed. These guys are professional engineers. They seem to have done their job correctly. Our members are encouraged to view the work and report your opinions of the progress.

3) We have built new trails along the Pikes Peak Highway corridor. We connected highway parking areas to overlook points, and created a nature trail near the Crystal Reservoir amphitheater. We also performed maintenance of existing trails near the Pikes Peak highway corridor.

4) We assisted the start-up of the Trail Dogs as our arm in the maintenance of Barr Trail. We sponsored training, and continuously assist in maintenance on this trail. We proudly support the Trail Dogs and congratulate them on their excellent work. We continue to support them in any way we can.

5) In 1997, FOTP joined our partners, Colorado Springs Utilities, (CSU) and USFS and other agencies in creating a public forum for discussion of a master plan for Pikes Peak. During the planning process the viewpoint of all agencies who own or manage land on Pikes peak and over 100 different user groups were taken into consideration. The Master plan was published in 1999. FOTP accepted the Pikes Peak Master Plan as 'our' Master Plan. From this diverse group of users, there was a 99% agreement on the need for hiking opportunities. The focus on hiking

opportunities lead to the proposal for the Ring the Peak (RTP) trail which provides opportunities for hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians. The citizens' advisory group identified and mapped the ring including four spokes to the summit. FOTP participated at all levels of this process, and is currently attempting to implement the suggestions in the plan.

6) Upon completion of the plan, we began immediately to maintain the "western approach" to the summit: The Devil's Playground trail. Since then, we have held several project weekends and maintained the first two miles up from the bottom, and about one mile down from the top. Because the only route we were allowed to use, was a drainage created by previous use, we implemented the rarely used method of raised trail and trench technology for much of this trail.

7) At the same time, we began planning trails to connect links and create Ring the Peak.

a) We maintained Mt Ester trail and completed a connection to the top of Crystal Falls. We maintained two accesses to this historic trail. One link comes from the PPH at Crowe Gulch, the other from Mountain Road in Chipitta Park. 2 miles of trail maintenance were performed, including 150 steps. 1½ miles of new trail were built, including 3 switchbacks, a small rock wall, and several drainage features. The only thing this trail needs now is more users. It really is a lovely hike.

b) We built Raspberry Mountain trail from the access road to an old firebreak road. This one mile of new trail construction was basic trail with several switch backs. Opening this short

connector created access to 14 miles of trail which had not had legal access for some time.

c) We are currently working on the connection between the USFS road to Craggs, and Horsethief Park. This new trail uses an historic access point from the USFS road and adds about a mile and a half of new trail to connect the two existing trails. We hope to complete this segment next year, and complete the restoration of the historic trail the year after that.

d) In 2004, we received a generous grant from Wild Oats Markets to provide trail markers along the RTP. We installed the signs along the entire existing route in 2004, and replaced damaged and stolen ones in 2005. We are 100% committed to establishing this route around the peak.

With the continued generous support of the community and our volunteers and members, the next 10 years will be as productive as the first ten.

### **Bob Bunch Honored with Volunteer of the Year award.**

At our annual meeting and awards event this year, Robert Bunch received the Volunteer of the Year award for his leadership, initiative, and dedication to the Pikes Peak.



# Thank you Volunteers, 2005

Heidi Arbury  
Carol Beckman  
Bill Brown  
Bob Bunch  
Mary Burger  
Anna Marie Campbell  
Matt Carpenter  
Bruce Cary  
Michael Cotter  
David Cummings  
Linda Cummings  
Greg Davies  
Janice de Chadenedes  
Sarah Diver  
Alycia Doctor  
Bruce Doctor  
Carol Donachy  
Charles Donachy  
Eric Dude  
Kelly Dude  
Anna England  
Thomas Fowler  
Bill Gardner  
Baily Gearhart  
Linda Gearhart  
Thomas (Randy) Gearhart  
Ann Gerber  
Hodge Hartley  
Erik Henriksen  
Chuck Hill  
William Hilton  
Benjamin F Hooper  
Connie Johnson  
Robert Johnson  
Spencer Johnston  
Dale Kemmerer  
Cameron Kickert  
Joe Kickert

Laura Kurica  
Marty Kurica  
Stephanie Kurica  
Brett Lindley  
Robert Lindley  
Connie Lorig  
Ed Lynch  
Marc McClure  
Gary Michels  
Larry Miller  
Lissa Moore  
Maryse Moore  
Bob Oliver  
Leslie Payne  
Logan Payne  
Bill Ransom  
Micky Simpson  
Stacy Sloan  
Kevin Smiley  
Mike Smiley  
Gordon Smith  
Wanda Snell  
Joan Stang  
Karl Stang  
M. Ellen Strand  
Jim Strub  
Cindy Swinarski  
Ken Swinarski  
Tom Taylor  
Bill Tiedt  
Coreen Toll  
Shanti Toll  
Greg Tumbush  
Jared Veteto  
Jonathan Veteto  
Beverly Weaver  
Darrell Weaver

**Mail-In Friends of the Peak Membership Form — Fall 2005**  
Complete this form and return to Friends of the Peak at the address below.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal? \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/ State/ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my membership donation:   \$10 individual    \$15 family  
  \$35 sponsor       \$150 + life zone contributor

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Webmaster	Matt Carpenter	<a href="mailto:matt@skyrunner.com">matt@skyrunner.com</a>	685-5654

## FOTP

P.O. Box 2494  
Colorado Springs, CO 80901-2494

Friends of the Peak  
Preserving, Restoring, and  
Appreciating Pikes Peak