



## *Winter Newsletter 2008*

### **Pondering the Peak**

Steve Jennings

I hope that you are having a good winter. The Board of FOTP is looking forward to this summer and working on what we will be doing. Those of you who have been working on the Seven Bridges Trail for these last three years probably know that the work is done on that trail. See more about that in Mary's article later in this newsletter. Don't despair that you won't be working on alternate Thursdays come summer. Mary is gearing up to start work on the St. Mary's Falls Trail. There are several safety issues on that trail so we hope that those issues can be addressed so that everyone who uses the trail will be able to do so safely.

Last year I told you about an initiative of FOTP to establish an interactive web site so that users of Barr Trail would be able to send us messages on trail conditions and to get up to date information about the trail. This fall FOTP contracted with the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs to gather the information and set up the web site. Assistant Professor Paddington Hodza supervised Dan Sweeney, an undergraduate Geography student, in the collection of data. Dan hiked the entire length of Barr Trail with a GPS and gathered a great deal of information about trail features. Paddington

is now in the process of building the web site and we are excitedly awaiting its debut sometime this spring. Once the web site is up and running we want you to test it out so we will let you know when it is ready.

One of the biggest uncompleted projects of FOTP is the Ring the Peak (RTP) Trail. As you have read in these newsletters there has been a big effort over the last few years to complete sections of the RTP. The longest uncompleted section is in the southwestern section of the trail between Horsethief Park and the entrance to the South Slope watershed. This portion of the trail has been very challenging for a variety of reason. Those of you who attended the Annual Meeting in the fall heard an excellent presentation about the bighorn sheep on southwest slope of Pikes Peak. There is great concern about preservation of critical habitat in this location for these sheep since this is an important calving location and human activity can easily disrupt the sheep population, possibly separating ewes from lambs. This is just one of the considerations in planning the route of the RTP. We know that there will not be any quick fixes to the establishment of the route, so be patient as we explore the options.

Lastly I would like to thank Karl Stang who this fall stepped off the board after several years of excellent service to FOTP. He is the one who kept the web page up to date

and kept everyone on the right page for each work day.

## **Seven Bridges Trail Completion**

By Mary Burger

This year saw the completion of the work to maintain the North Cheyenne Canyon Trail, also known as the Seven Bridges Trail. This work has been a three year project with as many as many as 20 and as few as 6 people working every other Thursday throughout the summer months.

For the past two years, whenever I said we were working on this trail. Someone would ask “What are you going to do at the waterfall?” And then, someone else would ask “What are you going to do to get across the scree?” These were indeed two problematic areas which required special efforts from the team. In both cases, the ‘old’ trail had washed out, and the hiker was required to make their way straight up the boulders with no apparent trail. But, everyone can now hike the trail and discover how we solved these issues. We could not have made these improvements without the dedication of the volunteers who came out, and worked together to resolve these issues. I am humbled by the consistent and energetic support we receive on these projects.

In one area, we did have to resort to a sign. As we all know, there are people who don’t like signs, and take it upon themselves to remove them. We put a sign up on Thursday, and the next Saturday it was gone. We replace it, only to have it disappear again. We replaced it a third time and this time we included this sentence: “For the safety of your fellow hikers, and the protection of the environment, please do not remove this sign.” The sign is still there. Go figure. I don’t like signs either. They are ugly. But apparently, someone thought we

were just putting up signs for no reason. And, once the reason was explained, they let the sign be. Anyway, if you had tried to hike this trail and got lost, there is now one crucial sign to tell you to turn uphill before the scree field.

As we walked further and further each week, I would always reflect that no one could say we are taking the gnarly out of this trail. If you have never hiked this trail it is gnarly. It starts about 7,000 feet elevation and goes to about 10,000 feet in about 2.5 miles. That is a lot of climb. I don’t know how many steps we installed, but it was worth it. This trail has probably been around for a hundred years. And, with the work we did, it will be around for another hundred. So, whether you have never hiked it, or just haven’t hiked it in awhile, it is ready for you to try again. Give yourself some time. Enjoy the views, and enjoy the hike. Once you arrive at the top, at Jones Park, you will know you have accomplished something.

## **WAAG Update**

By Mary Burger

The Watershed Access Advisory Group met twice a month all year this year. We are making some progress toward advising Colorado Springs Utilities in an access policy which will balance recreational uses with protection of the watershed. In that balancing act, we, the WAAG, created a list of all potential uses, and then categorized them as yes, no, and maybe. At the FOTP annual meeting, each person was given two red dots, and two green dots. Red, of course, means stop. And green means go. The participants were then asked to comment on the Yes/No/Maybe tables. Here are the results:

We received a lot of reinforcement that the Yes and No tables were correct. There were a few green dots on a couple items on the

No table. But for the most part, FOTP agreed with WAAG on these decisions. That is great feedback for the WAAG. As we move along this path, it is comforting to know that FOTP approves of the general direction the WAAG is taking.

On the Maybe list, you told us not to consider automotive uses, hunting, commercial enterprises, or bicycle races. And you agreed we should allow Rock Climbing, non-motorized boating, ice fishing, Foot races, and Camping with Huts. This is all good information and gives us a clearer picture of where the public may wish us to go with our policy formation.

All the information gathered went back to the WAAG, and is being considered and incorporated into our discussion. We have a long way to go before any of this is implemented. But your opinion counts. Thank you for taking the time to help us in this effort.

## **Ring the Peak Trail Website**

Eric Swab

Three minor changes have been made to the website this year.

1. The wording on the home page about signage has been revised to explain why trail signs are important and why they should not be removed or destroyed.
2. Portal 4 has been reduced from 3 to 2 entry points, one at the Limber Pine trail gate and the other at the end of the Vayhinger trail. The center entry point has been removed because it crosses a wetland.

3. An information link on trail segment 10-1 has been added to the point where the trail crosses Crystal Park Road. This explains to the user traveling counter clockwise that the Intemann Trail dead ends in ½ mile, and they should follow Crystal Park Road to the north.

The board is considering the publication of an 8 ½ by 11 inch 3-fold brochure for each of the trail segments. On the first panel would be an overview of the Ring the Peak Trail with a map of the whole system, and a plug for the Friends of the Peak. On second panel would be a description of the signs and their purpose as well as a description of the trail segment. On the last panel would be directions and maps to the trailheads for the two portals for that trail segment. On the reverse side would be a full page print-out of this trail segment on a topographic map, similar to the web page. These would be distributed at sporting goods stores, probably for free.

## **Help Wanted**

FOTP still needs more board members. The board meets the second Tuesday of each month to discuss how to further the goals and objectives of FOTP. We added one new face this year, but we could use two or three more people who are interested enough to assist in ensuring sound stewardship of Pikes Peak. Duties are not overwhelming, but the joy of working on something this worthwhile is!

# Thank you, 2008 volunteers!

Ann Barden  
Jeffrey Barden  
Jessica Barden  
Katherine Barden  
Richard Battersby  
Cindy Beal  
Carol Beckman  
Eric Billmeyer  
Karen Brandenburg  
Bill Brown  
Neil Brown  
Bob Bunch  
Mary Burger  
Jack Busher  
John Chittenden  
Rich Compton  
Alycia Doctor  
Bruce Doctor  
Barry Dolan  
Ron Essex  
John Fuller  
Anne Hart  
Hodge Hartley  
Erik Henriksen  
Kathie Hendricks  
Tom Hendricks  
William Hilton

Spencer Johnston  
Steve Jennings  
David Jones  
Dale Kemmerer  
Adam Kujat  
Spencer Lane  
Connie Lorig  
Marc McClure  
Petter Michelin  
Mike Miller  
Jason Moore  
Gary Michels  
Ed Polsdofer  
Cliff Poulton  
Roger Sajak  
Julie Siegel  
Bob Smithwick  
Mark Spinuzzi  
Adam Vasilakis  
John Vasilakis  
Renee Walker  
Katie Whitford  
Leslie Wirpsa  
Chris Zenger  
Helmut Zenger  
Klaus Zenger  
Nick Zenger

