



Pondering the Peak

Steve Jennings

As the weather gets warmer I'm sure that many of you are getting out on Pikes Peak. I also know that many of you have been getting out on Pikes Peak all winter long. We hope that you are going to include some of the FOTP workdays in your schedule for 2009.

This is already proving to be an exciting year for FOTP. First, we have seen the establishment of the Pikes Peak Corps through the collaborative efforts of FOTP and the Rocky Mountain Field Institute. There is a description of the Pikes Peak Corps on the next page of the newsletter by Eric Billmeyer who is both on the Board of FOTP and the Director of the Rocky Mountain Field Institute. FOTP feels that the Pikes Peak Corps is an excellent way to maintain trails on Pikes Peak and to instill in the youth of our community an understanding of our environment.

Second, we have welcomed two new members to the Board, Michael Cotter and Barry Dolan. They have written statements about what they think about Pikes Peak and what they can offer to FOTP. Their statements are on page three of this newsletter. The board welcomes their energy in doing the work of FOTP.

Third, the Barr Trail interactive web site is progress and should be online the first part of June. Keep checking our web site at www.fotp.com to see if it is up and going. This interactive site will allow you to report trail problems on Barr Trail. You can use a GPS to locate the problem or you can use landmarks to describe where the problem is. Either way this is a great tool for us to know where we need to do some work. You can be the eyes for FOTP and keep us apprised of trail conditions.

Speaking of Barr Trail, Spencer Johnston and Bob Bunch have taken the initiative in making major renovations on the lower section of Barr Trail between the trailhead and the connection of Barr Trail with the spur trail. They have been adding steps, widening the trail and fixing broken rails in that section of trail. We have two Barr Trail workday scheduled this year. One will be near the bottom and one at a higher elevation.

Fourth, with the completion of the Seven Bridges Trail work last summer Mary Burger is moving her Thursday get togethers to the St. Mary's Trail. This trail needs some attention so plan on coming out and doing some work here. Mary has planned a Saturday workday for May 23 to kick everything off this year. Even if you can't make it out on Thursdays you can still come

out for the first work day and help get things off to a great start.

Fifth, if you want something out of the ordinary come out for the Horse Thief Park or the Devil's Playground workdays. For the former we will be constructing a structure above a flooded section of trail and at the latter we'll be stacking rocks to define the trail. I hope that you will be able to come to some of our workdays this year. Fill out the form in the back of this newsletter or go to our web site to sign up for workday. We hope to see you this summer.

Pikes Peak Corps Summer Youth Program

Eric Billmeyer

This summer FOTP will be partnering with the Rocky Mountain Field Institute (RMFI) in the first annual *Pikes Peak Corps* program for local area high school youth. *Pikes Peak Corps* is a unique program that integrates environmental stewardship with environmental education. Over the course of 23 days from June 1st to July 2nd, students will learn stream restoration and trail building skills as they work on restoring areas within the Ski Creek Watershed and help repair damaged sections of the Barr Trail. The students will also gain an in-depth knowledge of the unique environmental systems found on the Pikes Peak massif through a series of one day seminars focusing on the area's geology, hydrology, and ecology.

Students who successfully complete the program will receive a \$1,200 award. In addition students who are at least 17 years old have the option of pursuing a supplemental \$1,500 education award from AmeriCorps and RMFI. To receive this award, students will complete at least

another 95 hours of volunteer time for RMFI or FOTP to be completed in a year's time.

The community response in support of the program has been outstanding. We had over 35 applications from throughout the Pikes Peak region for this summer's *Pikes Peak Corps*. Every applicant who met the minimum age of 16 for the program was personally interviewed by RMFI staff giving many of the students their first formal interviewing experience. We would have loved to been able to accept all the applicants into the program as they were all excellent candidates but in the end we could only choose 10. The ten students come from a diverse background and are evenly split between young men and women.

The *Pikes Peak Corps* program wouldn't have been possible without the financial support of the Pikes Peak Fund, which is solely dedicated to mitigating erosion and sedimentation damage to the watersheds adjacent to the Pikes Peak Highway. This fund was established through a court settlement agreement with the City of Colorado Springs and the Forest Service in response to a suit brought about by the Pikes Peak Chapter of the Sierra Club alleging that operations of the Pikes Peak Highway were violating the Clean Water Act. Now all three entities are working together in conjunction with RMFI to complete erosion control and restoration projects within the Pikes Peak Watershed. Additional funding for the stream restoration project has come for the Colorado Healthy Rivers Fund and the National Forest Foundation. Friends of the Peak are funding the *Pikes Peak Corps* for the trail work on Barr Trail through generous donations from the Barr Trail Mountain Race, the Pikes Peak Ascent and Marathon foot races, and individuals.

We are very excited about this program. We believe that through the *Pikes Peak Corps* program we are helping to develop the environmental leaders of tomorrow and instilling within the participants a lifelong love for protecting and caring for our special places in the Pikes Peak region. If you see the *Pikes Peak Corps* folks out on the trail or on the mountain please stop and say hi!

An Introduction From a New Board Member

Michael Cotter

Five years ago I answered an announcement about being a Team Leader for FOTP. The training was great and I worked some fabulous sections of trail around Crystal Reservoir, the Craggs and Devil's Playground. These were great experiences and taught me a lot about leadership and motivation which I was able to use in my 9-5 job. It also taught me a lot about how to build a trail which I have found harder to apply in that day job.

Then my daughter was born and I took the next 2 years off from volunteering for FOTP. In that time, I did a lot of running on local trails and thinking about the future of those trails and by extension the natural resources in the region. Then my daughter started to walk and I started thinking more about her future. I decided to get more involved in the local long-term conservation and protection of the Pikes Peak Region. I looked into the board of FOTP after seeing a call for board members in the fall newsletter.

I feel that FOTP is one of a few organizations in the area that lives up to its mission. You can literally see the impact that the group has on the trails and people who visit Pikes Peak, no matter how they try to hike or run up, around or near the Peak.

Another New Board Member Introduction

Barry Dolan

Having been a runner and hiker most of my life, I've used the trail system extensively over the years. As a member of the Nature Conservancy, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and a past committee member for the Trails and Open Space Coalition, I've seen the good works these organizations have done. However, the organizations mentioned above involved either a monetary contribution or committee meetings for fund-raising purposes and not direct contact with the actual stewardship of the topography.

My interest in Friends of the Peak has been more from the perspective of a hands-on involvement. Although I started working with this organization late this past summer, I received excellent guidance from our crew leader, Mary Berger, on proper trail maintenance. Although not exactly sure where my efforts and talents would fit into the Board's overall picture regarding expertise, I am very interested in becoming more involved in the decision-making process of the Board, as well as continuing my voluntary trail maintenance efforts.

I see stewardship through Friends of the Peak as a way of preserving the trails in our area as well as a means of protecting the mountains and other areas for use by both present and future generations. One area of involvement I'm particularly interested in is that of providing additional signage to both prevent additional "short cut" trails and to assure no one becomes lost when hiking these trails. I'm looking forward to becoming a productive part of the Friends of the Peak Board.

Mail – In Registration form 2009

Return this form to either P.O. Box 2494
Colorado Springs, CO 80904-2494
Or Fax: (719) 471-3145

Name:

Address:

Phone Number:

How many people are being registered with
this form? _____

Are you a member? _____ (You do not
need be a member to participate.)

Please select your project(s)

Barr Trail Workdays

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 year, FOTP will sponsor two work days to address areas along the trail where additional work is needed. The first work day will be on the lower portion of the trail. The second work day will be higher up.

Sat, July 18 — Barr Trail Workday 1

Sat, Aug 1 — Barr Trail Workday 2

Horse Thief Park

The trail currently is affected by standing water and wet soil. FOTP will install structural supports to elevate the trail surface over the wet area. This is part of the Ring the Peak system, and sees a lot of traffic. The wet part of the trail is not long, but in dire need of repair.

Sat, June 27 — Horse Thief Park

St. Mary's Falls Trail

The St. Mary's Falls Trail follows Buffalo Creek about $\frac{3}{4}$ the way up Mt. Rosa. It is a vigorous climb with views well worth the effort. It has been ignored from a maintenance perspective for about 30 years. However, much of the trail is still in great shape. Troubled spots, where the grade is too steep, and the water cannot get off the trail due to berms or rutting, occur intermittently. On Monday May 11th and May 18th Mary will lead discussions on how to repair this trail. Then on Saturday May 23rd, we will hold our season opener and begin work on maintaining this trail. We will continue working on Thursdays throughout the summer to repair the trail by allowing appropriate drainage which will prevent further rutting. USFS will allow volunteers to access the trail head on the currently closed portion of Gold Camp Road to accomplish this work.

Sat, May 23 — St. Mary's Falls Trail 1

Thur, June 4 — St. Mary's Falls Trail 2

Thur, June 18 — St. Mary's Falls Trail 3

Thur, July 2 — St. Mary's Falls Trail 4

Thur, July 16 — St. Mary's Falls Trail 5

Thur, July 30 — St. Mary's Falls Trail 6

Thur, August 13 — St. Mary's Falls Trail 7

Thur, August 27 — St. Mary's Falls Trail 8

Thur, Sept 3 — St. Mary's Falls Trail 9

Thur, Sept 17 — St. Mary's Falls Trail 9

Devil's Playground Trail

FOTP will hold a one day work project to install cairns above tree line to clarify the route of this highly popular western approach to the summit of Pikes Peak. Currently, hikers are crossing the tundra on about a half dozen routes. The damage to the high alpine is becoming worse. By installing cairns, we will ensure most hikers follow the same route and eliminate the damage to the tundra.

August 8 --- Devil's Playground Trail

Thank you, 2008 contributors!

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