

THE RED ROCK RAG

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News and Views on Red Rock Canyon

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www.redrockcanyonopenspace.org

Developer plans to seek White Acres annexation

On December 3, 2008 a Pre-application Meeting on the proposed annexation of White Acres was held at the Midland Elementary School gym. Following a description of the annexation process by Colorado Springs' Senior Planner David Litzelman, consultant John Maynard of NES, Inc. described his firm's preliminary analysis of the property as a potential residential development. Then, Paul Howard, president of Infinity Land Corporation, further described the project which could include 27 single family homes and 16 to 22 attached housing units on the eastern 23 acres of the property. John Maynard noted that the present County zoning would allow lots no smaller than 5 acres if the property is not annexed. Bethany Baptist Church, which had owned the property for around 40 years, has partnered with Infinity to either develop or sell the White Acres property. The church together with Infinity formed a new corporation, Proverbs 35 LLC, for that purpose. This past June the church transferred title to the property to Proverbs 35 LLC.

Referring to a "Save White Acres" sign which someone in the audience had brought to the meeting, Mr. Howard said that he and the church would prefer to see the property preserved as open space and that he is willing to back down from his development plans at any point if an open space deal can be reached with the City. He expressed frustration at the City's rejection of a proposal to sell White Acres to TOPS for a price of \$1.375 million which he had negotiated with TOPS staff, and went on to cite two appraisals which TOPS had obtained, \$850,000 and \$2,081,000, and one which Compass Bank had commissioned, \$1,500,000. Mr. Howard, in fact used the meeting to promote a TOPS open space purchase (seemingly at the \$1.375 million price) by encouraging those present to attend TOPS

and City Council meetings to encourage the City to purchase White Acres.

Nonetheless, the stated purpose of the Pre-application Meeting was to allow the public to bring up issues to be considered in drafting the development plan. Several people brought up concerns about traffic, wildlife corridors, trail connections, raptor habitat, and viewscape. It seemed, though, that the greatest concerns of many citizens at the meeting were that any development of White Acres was inappropriate, and that development would violate the intent of the White family heirs who had donated the property to Bethany Baptist Church as a place for youth activities and worship in a natural setting. No one among the 90 or so citizens at the meeting spoke in favor of development.

Merrilyn Caduff spoke especially passionately of her experiences on the property and of her late Uncle Chloe and Aunt Pearl White's love and stewardship of their land and its wildlife. She said that her aunt and uncle would be devastated if they were to see what had been their property turned into a development. She added, "And, so would I."

Either Infinity Land Corporation or Proverbs 35 LLC is expected to submit a petition for annexation sometime in January. Once the petition is submitted, the studies, planning, and approvals which would be required prior to annexation would be expected to take at least 9 to 12 months. During the process, there would be several more public meetings.

Our Thanks

Friends of Red Rock Canyon wishes to express our special appreciation to Robert Houdek, Brandon Vogt, and Laura Reilly for sharing their special interests and expertise with us in our fall series of Red Rock Canyon talks and walks.

Friends of Red Rock Canyon meetings:

Friends of Red Rock Canyon holds regular meetings at 7:00 PM in the Academy Room on the lower level at the historic Colorado Springs City Hall, 107 N. Nevada Avenue. People attending the meeting use the entrance at the southeast corner of the building and sign in at the security desk. Our forthcoming meetings are:

Thursday, January 8, 2009

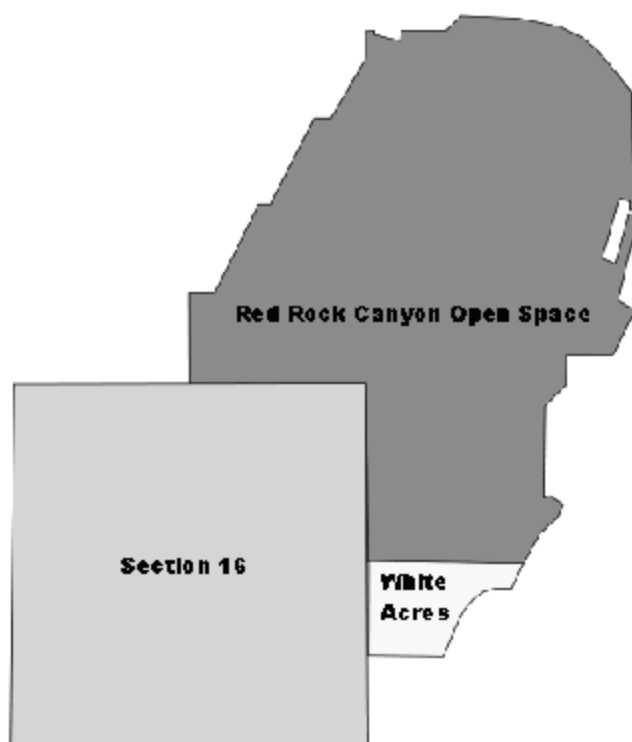
Thursday, February 5, 2009

Thursday, March 5, 2008

Citizens oppose White Acres annexation

Even before the Pre-application Meeting an ad hoc organization of citizens, including open space advocates and people living near Bear Creek Park, had created an on-line petition to "strongly urge the City of Colorado Springs to protect its scenic backdrop by rejecting annexation of White Acres." Up to now, over 850 people have added their names to the on-line petition at <http://SaveWhiteAcres.org>. About 70 more have signed hard copy petitions in and around the Midland district in Old Colorado City.

Proponents of White Acres preservation have begun working to promote awareness of White Acres in other ways. Recently, they held a widely publicized "Tree of Hope" celebration on the winter solstice. A symbolic "Tree of Hope" was decorated expressing hope for White Acres preservation. Despite temperatures in the teens, more than 30 people participated. Among them was State Representative Michael Menifield who stated, "It is important to do everything we can to preserve this kind of property so that we have a high quality of life in Colorado Springs. ... It's going to be a tough battle, or we wouldn't be out here in 15 degree cold. So, I'm very excited to see this number of people who are willing to come out on a cold day like this to support it. ... I think the next step would be for people like (those) who are gathered here to go to City Council and ask them to not annex this into the City..."



Several videos, including one of the "Tree of Hope" party, have been posted on YouTube.

Presentations highlighting White Acres have been scheduled for interested groups during the next two months; and more will be scheduled in the future.

The ad hoc organization of citizens promoting preservation of White Acres is, indeed, reminiscent of the Red Rock Canyon Committee which worked for several years to promote the preservation of Red Rock Canyon. And, the key issues of annexation and water are exactly the same as they were for Red Rock Canyon when Richard Yates was proposing his Red Rock Canyon development.

TIDBITS

Mullein

While much of last summer's plant growth lies scattered on the ground, the dried brown stalks of mullein stand proud and erect, up to six feet tall. These stalks are the second year's growth for the mullein plant. The first year mullein grows as a rosette of large, fuzzy leaves. The second year, a single, tall, stout stalk grows and bears one or more long flower spikes with many small yellow flowers. After mullein goes to seed, its two year life cycle is normally complete.

Mullein is a native of Asia and reached North America by way of Europe. In Asia and Europe magical powers have sometimes been ascribed to mullein. In India it was once considered a safeguard against evil spirits and magic. In the Greek classics, Ulysses took mullein to protect himself against the wiles of Circe.

Torches were at one time made from mullein dipped in tallow.

More commonly, mullein has been used in herbal medicine for treating both people and cattle. Among its uses, herbalists have described using mullein flowers or leaves to treat diarrhea, earache, mucus membrane inflammation, and sore throat. Mullein root has been used as a diuretic. Chopped mullein leaves have been smoked for centuries as a mild sedative and to treat chest infections and asthma.

Some American Indians have adopted mullein as one of the herbs which they include in the mixture which is smoked ceremonially.

Mullein is widely distributed in Red Rock Canyon Open Space. In a few places it grows in dense stands crowding out other vegetation. Its invasive character has earned mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*) a place on Colorado's list of noxious weeds. One good way to control unwanted mullein is to pull the plants early in their second season soon after the stalks have started to grow. Attempting to pull mullein before stalks develop is unproductive because the leaves break off leaving the roots undamaged, while pulling plants with fully grown stalks becomes a challenging test of strength.

Don Ellis

Friends of Red Rock Canyon President's Report, Winter 2008

Greetings,

What a great year Friends of Red Rock Canyon has had with all the volunteers that participated in our workday projects in Red Rock Canyon! It was amazing the number of volunteers who showed up and worked hard on trail maintenance along the Round-up Trail, maintenance and new steps on the Contemplative Trail and restoration (removal of elms) along the frontage property and in between the Main and Family Picnic Area parking lots.

There were also the volunteers who spoke at our Educational Talks held at the Old Colorado City Historical Society Building and those who guided the corresponding Educational Walks in Red Rock Canyon. A special "thanks" to Don Ellis who coordinated this series again this past year! This is a wonderful way to educate our community to the many aspects of Red Rock Canyon! This series will be continued for the 2009 year.

As well there were the volunteers who guided a variety of hikes in RRC for out of town visitors when FoRRC partnered with Gravity Play. Gravity Play made a generous donation to FoRRC for each volunteer guide. You are all greatly appreciated for the time, energy and knowledge you shared! Look for announcements regarding volunteer opportunities and the educational series 2009 on our website <http://www.redrockcanyonopenspace.org> and in our newsletters. If you are not on our email list and would like to be, send an email to:

friends@redrockcanyonopenspace.org

We are all well aware of the cutbacks the City of Colorado Springs has had to make due to the state of the economy. The Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services is no exception. Beginning this year FoRRC will be looking for an additional kind of volunteering to help fill in the gaps where the city can no longer provide service. We need you to come to us with your ideas as to where you can help. We invite you to come to our meetings and share your thoughts on any aspect relating to Red Rock Canyon. We invite you to come and see what we are about and see if perhaps you might have an interest in being on the FoRRC Board of Directors. This is your opportunity to give back to your community and share your individual talents and skills! During our March 5 Annual Meeting elections will be held for officers of the FoRRC Board of Directors. We look forward to meeting you. FoRRC needs you to help us fulfill our Missions.

The Open Air Pavilion is almost complete. At this time the projected date for the project being finished is January 23, 2009. The cold weather has called the shots on this one, folks, and we need to be just a little more patient. Cold weather and masonry work just don't mix well. Plans for the Opening Dedication are being discussed. As soon as we know when that will be we will notify those on our email list. FoRRC looks forward to this long awaited event. It is a Happy way to begin this New Year!

And a prosperous New Year to You All,

Karlee Thompson,
President, Friends of Red Rock Canyon

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Friends of Red Rock Canyon

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City / State / Zip Code _____

Email: _____ Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Yes, I want to join Friends of Red Rock Canyon for the coming year

____ Individual Member (\$10)

____ Family Membership (\$15) Other Family Members: _____

____ Organization / Business Membership (\$30)

____ I would like to help even more with a contribution of \$ _____

I would like to be involved in volunteer efforts:

____ Trail and stewardship volunteer ____ Educational Programs ____ Brochure or grant writer

____ Advocacy & Community outreach ____ Other (please describe) _____

My main interests in Red Rock Canyon Open Space are: _____

Please mail this membership form with your check to:

Friends of Red Rock Canyon

P.O. Box 6754

Colorado Springs, CO 80904 -6754

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