

THE RED ROCK RAG

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News and Views on Red Rock Canyon

Winter, 2004-2005

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Red Rock opens Oct. 29

(From October 21, 2004 issue of *Westside Pioneer*, updated for the current issue of Red Rock Rag)

At dawn Friday, Oct. 29, Red Rock Canyon Open Space opened permanently to the public.

"It's certainly going to please a lot of people who've been wanting to get in there and use it," Terry Putman, City Parks development manager, told the *Westside Pioneer*.

Hours will be dawn to dusk.

He said the only access initially will be at High Street/Ridge Road off Highway 24, where grading has been completed for a temporary parking lot for 20 to 30 vehicles. Usage is limited to the lower portions of the 7881-acre property - where rock-climbing routes in the area of the old sandstone quarry and some multi-use trails connecting three canyons have been created.

Among the areas off-limits for now is the former landfill in one of the property's upper canyons, which

health officials have deemed unsafe for public use for the next 17 years.

The open space, purchased last December by the city's Trails, Open Space and Parks (TOPS) program, is located just west of Colorado Springs, between the old Midland area and the Crystal Hills neighborhood in Manitou Springs. To the south, it abuts Section 16, which is leased as park space by El Paso County and in turn borders Pike National Forest.

The opening had been on hold while climbing routes and trails were developed this fall. Other chores accomplished by TOPS/City Parks since last December have included relocating former tenants, conducting a public master-planning process, demolishing or fixing various buildings, organizing volunteer trail construction workdays and hiring full-time park ranger Scott Abbott (who is at the park Mondays through Fridays).

Climbers need to register at the Garden of the Gods Visitor Center. A publication listing the climbing routes is also available at the center.

An official opening, with a dedication ceremony, is anticipated sometime next summer, Putman said. There is no timetable as yet for other master-planned features at the park, including a dog run, a "free ride" (thrill-seekers) bicycling area, full development of the High Street trailhead, the addition of two other trailheads and the remainder of a 1.7-mile trail system.

Westside Pioneer Article

In Remembrance

Hal Prostka

Hal was a long time supporter of Red Rock Canyon Open Space. As a consulting geologist he devoted his talent to Red Rock Canyon by making a preliminary geologic assessment of the property and by providing information and criticism for the geology maps and articles which appeared from time to time in the Red Rock Rag.

Hal was devoted to preserving our landscape in numerous other ways and had been active in the Intemann Trail Committee and Friends of the Peak.

All of us who value our natural environment owe a dept of gratitude to Hal.

Our deepest sympathies to those who miss Hal the most.

Our Thanks

The Friends of Red Rock Canyon wish to express our appreciation to the Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado, the City of Colorado Springs Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services, and all of the volunteers who have devoted their efforts to making Red Rock Canyon Open Space available.

We would also like to express our appreciation to the Village at Skyline for providing our meeting room.

Friends of Red Rock Canyon President's Report, December 2004

Lots has happened since the last Red Rock Rag edition. The Red Rock Canyon Open Space has been opened to the public and it is getting lots of use. We have completed the process of becoming a city recognized "Friends of Red Rock Canyon" organization. That means we are working with the Park and Recreation Department of Colorado Springs in the planning and monitoring of what needs to happen on the land. To accomplish this new role the board of directors has implemented the following:

YEARLY MEMBERSHIP POLICY

We now have \$10 (individual), \$15 (family), and a \$30 (business or organization) annual dues to help pay for the quarterly Red Rock Rag and other expenses. Every interested person may continue to receive the email notices and access the website even if you do not pay the annual dues. If you have received the Rag for some time, your membership will extend until May. Otherwise the membership will renew on the anniversary date of your joining the Friends of Red Rock Canyon.

OUR NEW WEBSITE: www.redrockcanyonopenspace.org

We are pleased to announce our new website will soon be up and going. There you will be able to receive current information about what is happening in Red Rock Canyon. Thanks again to Don Ellis the new website has a new look with lots of pictures and useful information. This is a dynamic site for now so we appreciate your thoughts and suggestions.

IMPORTANT ANNUAL MEETING

-THURSDAY, MARCH 3RD 2005

We will be having a report from the City of their 2005 plans for the Red Rock Canyon Open Space. We will be reviewing our past and future goals of Friends of Red Rock Canyon. We will also be electing a new Board of Directors. This will be both a substantive and social meeting open to all, so please come. The meeting is held at the Village at Skyline on Lower Gold Camp Road between 21st and 26th streets (after going through the gate, go right to the farthest east building, enter on the north side and look for signs).

OPENINGS FOR THE BOARD

We have a number of openings for the Board of Directors of Friends of Red Rock Canyon and we encourage you to consider being on the board. You can have a significant impact on the future of the land just at the time when the plans are being made. Call 634-1810 or email Shanti at shantitoll@hotmail.com if you are interested.

Shanti Toll

Freeriding Red Rock Canyon

As Red Rock Canyon continues to expand its resource to the public there is a group of individuals with a very specific focus. Approximately 20 volunteer members of the local mountain bike advocacy group, Medicine Wheel, have gathered to share ideas and offer their time and energy to help plan and build a technical skills riding area (Freeriding) within Red Rock Canyon.

The group has independently met numerous times to determine not only what they want the park to provide, but also to seek ways to assist the City of Colorado Springs Department of Parks and Recreation in bringing this much needed venue to fruition. The group has been working within the guidelines of the City to assure not only the safety of park users is addressed, but they are also focused on a responsible approach to the resource with trail sustainability and environmental protection as primary concerns.

To achieve these goals Medicine Wheel is researching current standards that are used throughout the country and internationally. With the assistance of the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA), the group has secured a wide range of "best practices" that are already being used, thus providing assurances that our area will fit everyone's needs. Additionally, Medicine Wheel recently traveled to Breckenridge with Chris Lieber, the TOPS coordinator for Colorado Springs Parks and Recreation, Jim Schwerin of Parks Board, and landscape architect Priscilla Marbaker to meet with Danica Rice who is the Open Space and Trails Coordinator for the City of Breckenridge. This meeting explored the ways that Breckenridge has already approached Freeriding and took a tour of their Freeride Park.

On site, Medicine Wheel recently spent a Saturday morning picking up a dumpster's worth of trash and other debris from the area, and allowed the participants to begin laying out options for the park. Included are a family area, a "trials" riding arena, and multiple areas for stunts and jumps. In addition, the designers intend to assign ratings for degrees of difficulty such as ski slopes have used throughout the years.

As the process moves forward, Medicine Wheel has officially adopted this portion of the park and is also assisting with fundraising and technical expertise required for the appropriate design for the structures.

Anyone wanting to participate in this process is invited to play a part with Medicine Wheel as we continue to give something back to our community and the environment. For more information call Josh Osterhoudt at 633-2555 ext 20, or email to medwheeljo@aol.com.

Josh Osterhoudt

Volunteers add to Red Rock's trail mileage

(From Sept. 23, 2004 issue of *Westside Pioneer*)

Through the labor of nearly 100 volunteers, roughly 1 mile of trail was added to Red Rock Canyon Open Space Sept. 18.

Chris Lieber, City Parks trails coordinator and project supervisor, was pleased with the turnout. "It was a great day. It's amazing what can be accomplished with a lot of people working together," he said.

Including the two-day inaugural project Aug. 28-29 with the Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado (VOC), the effort brought the total of new trail in Red Rock Canyon to about 1 1/2 miles. Combined with 1 1/2 miles of roads already on the property which Lieber said is usable for trail, a total of three miles of hiking/biking/horseback riding surface now exists at the site.

"Three miles down and 14 to go," Lieber said, referring to the 17 miles called for in the trails master plan for Red Rock Canyon.

He said he plans another project day Friday, Oct. 22. The date coincides with the annual Make a Difference Day, in which City Parks has partnered with volunteer groups in past years on such efforts as planting and revegetation projects. People wanting to sign up should call Kim King, volunteer coordinator for City Parks, at 385-6509.

For the most part, the Sept. 18 work was less technically challenging than the August project, which had involved two tricky canyon crossings. Workers spent much of their time delivering wheelbarrows of crusher fines (a type of crushed gravel that retains some soil so as to make a good trail surface) to raise the trail bed along relatively even, gradually uphill terrain that a bobcat machine had pre-cleared.

The most even terrain was a grassy segment, about 350 yards long by maybe 75 yards wide, swinging up the canyon to a raised, flat area. Some people commented that it looked a lot like a golf hole. That's because, according to Lieber, it had actually once been intended to be a golf hole. The Bock family, the

previous owners of the property, had used it as a showpiece for potential investors, to help them imagine a scenic, full-size course up and down the canyons as part of a vast housing and commercial development of the site.

The trail work was between the old Bock family house and the quarry trail to Greenlee Canyon that had been built Aug. 28-29.

Among the volunteers Sept. 18 were members of the Intemann Trail Committee, which redirected its forces to Red Rock Canyon for the second month in a row.

The 788.1-acre open space property, which was purchased by the City of Colorado Springs last December, is not yet open to the public. City Parks plans a limited opening after a temporary parking lot is built at the Ridge Road / High Street access, possibly by mid-October, Lieber said. (Since this was written, the northern part of Red Rock Canyon Open Space has been opened with access from High Street.)

CALENDAR

January 6 Friends of Red Rock Canyon

7:00 P.M. Village at Skyline (off Lower Gold Camp Road), Activities Room, Building No. 4 (The Eastemmost Building - enter from the parking lot north of the building)

February 3 Friends of Red Rock Canyon

7:00 P.M. Village at Skyline (off Lower Gold Camp Road), Activities Room, Building No. 4 (The Eastemmost Building - enter from the parking lot north of the building)

March 3 Friends of Red Rock Canyon

ANNUAL MEETING

7:00 P.M. Village at Skyline (off Lower Gold Camp Road), Activities Room, Building No. 4 (The Eastemmost Building - enter from the parking lot north of the building)

Opinions expressed in **THE RED ROCK RAG** are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Friends of Red Rock Canyon.

WE WANT YOUR INPUT!

Letters, articles, comments may be sent to:

Rag Editor
Friends of Red Rock Canyon
2211 W. Colorado Avenue
Colorado Springs, CO 80904

Electronic submissions may be sent to:

ellisd@pcisys.net

Please send electronic text in plain ASCII (.txt) format

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Join Friends of Red Rock Canyon

Name: _____
Address: _____
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

2211 W. Colorado Ave
Colorado Springs, CO 80904

(**Friends of Red Rock Canyon** is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Contributions are tax deductible.)

For more information, contact **Linda Hodges** at the **Trails and Open Space Coalition**: 633-6884,
or e-mail: help@saveredrockcanyon.com

THE RED ROCK FLAG

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