

The Red Rock Rag



Volume 14, Number 1

April 2013



The President's Letter

Dear Friends,

I know I use this statement a lot, but as we move into 2013, I find myself saying it more and more that "these are exciting times for Red Rock Canyon!"



Volunteer!

With our Tenth Anniversary plans, *Save the Red Rock Canyon Pond* campaign, continued upgrades and updates to our new website, things just seem to be getting more exciting each week. Yes, these efforts bring on new changes to FoRRC Board of Directors and, yes, this is my entreaty to all our members, visitors, and readers of this *Red Rock Rag* to step up and help! There are many details that I'm sure we haven't even thought of yet, and we could use new minds, ideas, and participation to help us continue to support our tremendous Open Space.

Our Board has made a lot of informational updates to the new website and we would like you to visit and give us feedback as to where we can make improvements or add additional information. Please visit RedrockCanyonOpenSpace.org and drop us a line using the "Get in Touch With Us" link at the bottom of every page.



My new focus as your Board president is access to Red Rock Canyon for all citizens. How and where can we improve access to all visitors to the Open Space? Yes, Open Space, which puts a different set of rules for



us to follow. We, Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation, & Cultural Services and Friends of Red Rock Canyon, are taking a closer look at access for all people to more parts of the Open Space. The balance between wilderness conservation and the access to allow all to venture to more places is something of a balancing act.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you that made donations to the Indy Give campaign to allow us to start our "Save the Red Rock Canyon Pond" with an extremely generous amount of \$10,579.00. This amount will serve as a springboard toward our final goal of \$100,000.00.

Let's keep the great momentum going, and Happy 2013!

Karl Klepfer, President

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Trail Beautification Day	4/20 6/15
Board Meeting	5/13
Tenth Anniversary	6/1
Board Meeting	6/10

New Red Rock Canyon Open Space Master Plan Adopted

Things always take longer than you would think. But in the case of the Red Rock Canyon Open Space Master Plan, the time was well worth it. All the user groups and the environmentalists have come together and collaborated with the City to create a strong Master Plan. The Plan is important because it protects the habitat and guides human usage into the future. It is a conscious balance of all the human needs and desires with the needs of the flora and fauna.

The biggest change represented in the new Master Plan is the doubling of size of the original Open Space to include Section 16 and White Acres. Now there will be one intercon-



nected trail system for this greater Red Rock Canyon Open Space. There is general consensus of what new trails need to be built, and what social trail need to be closed to protect and enjoy this precious wild land.

Another significant change is that there is agreement and cooperation of the different user groups and organizations to plan out and maintain trails. There will be a need for compromise to safely accommodate the different trail usages, but by working together, there will be better understanding. It will still be up to citizen runners, bikers, hikers, nature lovers, dog owners, rock climbers, and all the other Open Space users to volunteer. It is up to citizens to help keep our trails safe, clean and maintained.

With the Master Plan in place, we can

now begin doing some upgrades to our Red Rock Canyon. First and foremost, we can rehabilitate the Red Rock Canyon Pond. The pond near the Pavilion is part of the Master Plan! The City is committed to spending tens of thousands of dollars to make it happen. Citizens will also have to do their part to raise the additional money to make it happen. Without our support the pond will continue to dry up, depriving birds and animals of a major water source south of Highway 24. This year is the Tenth Anniversary our Open Space. The rehabilitated pond is a fitting gift back to the land that is our home and the home of future generations.

A few new benches will now be spread throughout Red Rock Canyon. For those of us who do less strenuous activities, additional shorter loops and benches will create more enjoyable ways to experience the natural beauty of our Open Space. Hopefully we can increase the access of the pond for people of limited mobility by changing the gates or paving the path to the pond's edge - Red Rock Canyon is for everyone.

We have come a long way in the ten years since we acquired this property. It is up to us to protect and steward it for our grandchildren and beyond. It is up to us to recognize and appreciate this beautiful habitat for healthy living for humans and all creatures who live there. Congratulations and thanks to all the people, who helped make the Master Plan a useful document for stewarding our natural treasure and legacy.

Shanti Toll
Vice-President

Trail Beautification Day



There was a great turnout for our first Trail Beautification Day, on 16 February. There were approximately 20 trash bags collected by over 25 volunteers on the trails close in to the main parking area!

The next Trail Beautification Day will be held on 20 April, Earth Day. We will meet at the 31st St parking lot at 9AM and finish at 12 noon. The dates and meeting place for future Beautification Days are as follows:

Time - 9AM-12 noon

15 June - Hwy 24 parking lot

10 August - 31st St parking lot

19 October - Hwy 24 parking lot

*Please leash and
clean up after
your pet!*



Things Are Looking Up!

While languishing earthbound in the Red Rock Canyon Open Space or Bear Creek Park, you may have noticed a new breed of wild life gliding gracefully over the landscape, unencumbered by the restrictions of gravity; *Raptorus Paragliderii I* (Paragliders). With wing spans up to 13 meters, these magnificent creatures soar on the warm thermal updrafts of the foothills area of Section 16. With their brightly colored plumage, they light up the sky with color. On a warm sunny day throughout the year, you may catch sight of one of these elusive creatures.

Paragliding has been an officially recognized sport in the Section 16 area since 2007. With the completion of the Master Planning process, Paragliding has become a permanent feature of the expanded Red Rock Canyon Open Space. When earthbound, Paragliders prefer the habitat afforded them at their launch site on the eastern most point of the mountain overlooking Section 16 and Bear Creek Park, or their landing meadows in Bear Creek Park. For those with an eye keen enough to detect it, an orange windsock can be seen at the very

top of the mountain marking the location of their launch.

The weather conditions and terrain of the Red Rock Canyon Open Space offer unique habitat for this rare species. The



Friends of Red Rock Canyon are happy to support the efforts to provide a safe environment for this sport to grow and develop in the Pikes Peak region.

So if you are ever out there in the Open Space and you detect a large shadow swooping overhead, look up and enjoy your rare glimpse of one of these majestic creatures!

Ted Smith

Trail Closures

When we hear the words “trail closure”, what comes to mind? One of our favorite hiking or bike trails, a social trail, or an old stream bed? It could also be deer path going somewhere we want to see or go to. Why does it need to be closed? Yes, there are city ordinances stating the trail is illegal (Ord. 97-96; Ord. 01-42; Ord. 03-69), but what are the environmental concerns?

Recently, an illegal bike trail was made between the Upper Off-Leash Dog walk area and the entrance to the Lower Off-Leash Dog Walk area. Witnesses noted the perpetrators digging up bushes going down a ravine and carving out a trail up the other side. So what is so bad about building a new trail?

Social or unplanned trails can damage sensitive and fragile plants, disturb wildlife habitats, and can cause erosion on steep slopes. When we build approved trails, they are constructed to certain specifications to take into account slope, erosion control, protection of sensitive areas, connections to existing trails, and the destination. We want the hikers, riders, horseback riders, and runners to enjoy the journey, but we also want everyone to respect the environment and be stewards of the Open Space we are fortunate to have to enjoy.

If you see anyone working on a trail, do not be afraid to ask them what group they are with. I know the CATS (Colorado Addicted Trail-builders Society) would be more than happy to let you know who we are and what we are doing. If something seems wrong, take

a picture. There is an iPhone App called GOREquest that lets you report an issue. It sends the location, lets you pick an issue such as Park/Trail Maintenance, and allows for a photo to be attached to it. If you do see something wrong in any Park or Open Space call the non-emergency phone number for the Colorado Springs Police Department CSPD (719-444-7000) or El Paso County Sheriff EPCS (719-638-2141). Do not wait to call the Parks & Rec Department, as they cannot report the issue to CSPD or EPCS (it would be hearsay only).

Let us all help to protect the trails and open space by being good stewards of the land!

Dave Dombach



Scenic Colorado Cleanup

Join volunteers from Scenic Colorado for trash pickup on Saturday, May 18. It will take place from 10 AM to Noon along US 24 in front of Red Rocks Canyon Open Space and extend into Manitou Springs. Volunteers should meet at US 24 and Ridge Road, northwest corner. Please bring gloves and a strong back. Trash bags and vests will be provided. If rain is forecast, the event will be put off a week. If you have questions, contact Larry Barrett at 719-634-4468 or barrettlarry@comcast.net.



Red Rock Canyon Pond Update

Since our last *Red Rock Rag* (Nov 2012), the Friends of Red Rock Canyon completed the 2012 Indy Give Campaign to raise money to *Save the Red Rock Canyon Pond*. The campaign was a great success, with about 175 contributors donating over \$10,500 to the cause. This is truly a local project, with over 75% of our donations coming from the zip codes in the vicinity of RRCOS (see picture), and 98% of the total coming from Colorado Springs and Manitou Springs.

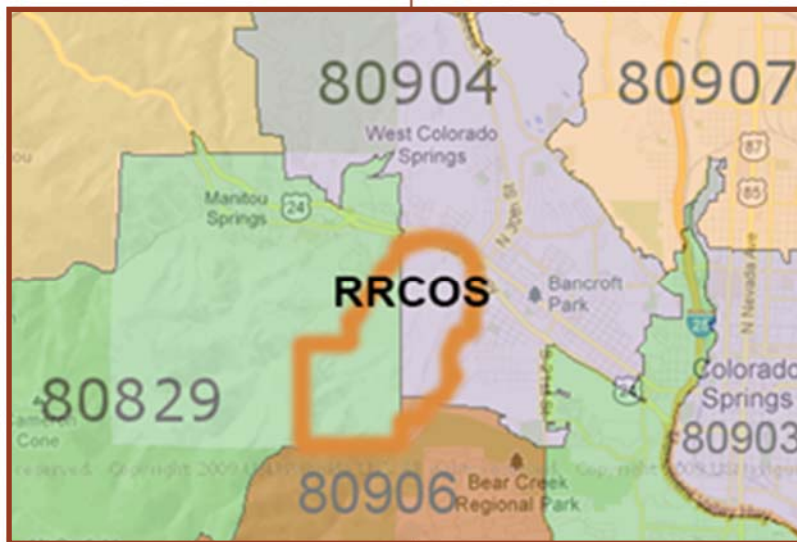
Mountain

Chalet generously awarded a \$1,000 challenge grant as part of the campaign.

Thank you all for making our 2012 Indy Give Campaign a success!

The great news is that the City has committed to a partnership with us and the community to begin the pond restoration project, as identified in the recently adopted Red Rock Canyon Master Plan. The City is working on installing an outlet pipe in the lower dam at a cost of \$75,000, allowing water in the lower dam be released to its owners downstream; this will enable the City to obtain the permits needed to legally store water in the upper pond by the pavilion. Expect to see heavy equipment on site over the next few months.

The challenge is where the Friends and the community comes in – the estimated cost to finish the restoration work is \$100,000. The project will install a water supply line to the pond and secure the upper pond dam to safely hold water. Finally, a liner will be installed to hold the pond water more efficiently before buying the initial water fill from Colorado Springs Utilities.



The Friends is actively working a new campaign to help restore the pond. Our goal is to raise the money before next winter so we can complete the work to have a fully, functional pond by the

spring of 2014. We need your help with continued donations and community/business outreach. If you can help, please let us know, or you can donate on our website (RedRockCanyonOpenSpace.org/red-rock-canyon-pond-restoration).



Pond Donation Page

National Trails Day - 1 June 2013

Our big trail project of the year in Red Rock Canyon Open Space will be Saturday, 1 June 2013, when we will build a second trail to access Section 16 from Gold Camp Road. This coincides with the American Hiking Society's 2013 National Trails Day. For too long, our eastern entrance to south Red Rock Canyon has been overused. The extensive traffic by bikers, runners and hikers has created tension and some safety issues. The steps, that were put in a few years ago for walker



safety were disliked by some bikers and horseback riders.

The solution is to rebuild and upgrade the old trail from the Section 16 Trail Head to the Intemann Trail in a way more conducive to bikers. Two access points to the Section 16 area will alleviate overcrowding and increase safety.

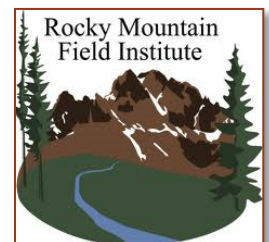
It is a big project, so we will need lots of help. Runners, hikers, bikers and others will all need to pitch in to get the

job done. So on National Trails Day, many user groups will join with the City to work together to make it happen (Friends of Red Rock Canyon, Medicine Wheel, Friends of the Peak, RMFI, and REI volunteers). Special thanks to REI for helping to sponsor this event. We will need over 100 volunteers to show up for this worthwhile project.

Please go to REI.com to sign up to be a volunteer. Plans are still being made about the logistics and other sponsors, so more information will follow later. It should be a wonderful day of work, friendship and stewardship of the land.

REI volunteer page URL:

www.rei.com/stewardship/community/volunteer.html



Membership Form for Friends of Red Rock Canyon

Are you interested in preserving our Open Space?

Are you a biker, hiker, climber, interested in plants, flowers or animals, or a person that enjoys the beauty of the outdoors?

Join *Friends of Red Rock Canyon* and help us keep our Open Space beautiful.

Don't forget to check your renewal date on the back page of the newsletter.

Name: _____ Home Phone: _____

Address: _____ Work Phone: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Email Address: _____

Newsletter Preference: Deliver via email Deliver via postal mail

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

Individual member (\$10)

Family membership (\$15) Other Family Member(s): _____

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

Serve on Board of Directors Advocacy & Community outreach

Other (please describe): _____



Our website

Please mail this membership for with your check to:

Friends of Red Rock Canyon

PO Box 6754

Colorado Springs, CO 80904-6754

Note: Should you want to pay by credit card, go to our website: www.RedRockCanyonOpenSpace.org

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

The Red Rock Rag

Friends of Red Rock Canyon

P.O. Box 6754

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We're on the Web

www.RedRockCanyonOpenSpace.org

Email address

friends@RedRockCanyonOpenSpace.org

Facebook

www.facebook.com/redrock.canyon.54



Our website