

The Red Rock Rag



Volume 14, Number 2

July 2013



The President's Letter

Dear Friends,

As we get closer to the 10th Anniversary of Red Rock Canyon Open Space, I am amazed at the Colorado Springs community's responses for help and assistance! I guess that shows the love that Red Rock Canyon has from its visitors.



There is a quote from an old movie *Star Man*.... "You are at your very best when things are worst" and with all the disasters we've seen in Colorado I think that holds true; we all are willing to help.

I hope you all can make it to Red Rock Canyon to celebrate the 10th Anniversary on August 17th from 10AM to 4PM! Please see inside for a detailed schedule of events and a description of the cel-

ebration. A special thanks to several of our Board members and loyal supporters – Courtney Hopkins, Dave & Carol Schell – on their great work setting up the event and coordinating with the City. I'm excited that the Mayor will be stopping in to help us celebrate!

I'm excited to see such great turnouts for our recent Talk & Walk educational series! Deb McDonald gave a great talk on invasive weeds, Sharon Milito gave another on the geology of Red Rock Canyon, and we have a couple more planned, one from Don Ellis on history on August 13th and another from Deb as the fall weeds bloom. Please continue to join us to learn more about our great Open Space!

As always, we are looking to welcome additional members to sit on Friends of Red Rock Canyon Board of Directors; please drop us a line if you are interested.



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Events Calendar

Board Meeting	8/5
Bristol Karma Hour	8/6
Trail Beautification Day	8/10
History Talk & Walk	8/13
10th Anniversary	8/17
Board Meeting	9/10

Karl Klepfer, President

Geology Talk & Walk

Over 35 people were lucky enough to take part in the Geology Talk & Walk on Wednesday, July 17th. Another 60 or so people had called or emailed wanting to attend, but sadly they were told the session was over-subscribed. Sharon Milito, a local educator, knows the geology of Red Rock Canyon. She referred to her handout, "A Survey of Fossils and Geology of Red Rock Canyon Open Space," tying the rock in the Open Space to the stratigraphic section of rocks layers found in the Colorado Springs. Pikes Peak granite gradually pushes upward, exposing the geologic layers of history. The oldest layers, starting with the Fountain formation (just on top of the Pikes Peak Granite), are found at the western edge of the open space; as one heads eastward through the open space, the rocks are younger.

The group hiked a couple of miles as Sharon pointed out features in the rocks, like the Lyons formation once made by wind and sand, which still looks like sand dunes today. She shared how rock layers are generally named by the location where they are first found, such as the Fort Hayes Limestone first being identified in Fort Hayes, Kansas. (This is the stone many fence posts in Kansas are made out of because of a lack of wood.) The Fountain formation was named for being first identified near Fountain Creek. Some of the group continued with Sharon past the planned two-hour hike to look at fossils in the youngest rocks near the 31st St trailhead.

Sharon is hoping to offer another Talk & Walk in the fall. She will let us know as her teaching schedule is confirmed. Don Ellis, who with Ken Weissenburger and Sharon,



authored the book, "Geologic Folio, Red Rock Canyon Open Space, Colorado Springs, Colorado," will offer our next Talk & Walk on history in Red Rock Canyon on August 13th. The book, offered for sale at the Old Colorado City Historical Society, donates a percentage of its proceeds to the Friends of Red Rock Canyon.

Why Am I Receiving this Issue of the Rag by Mail?

Unfortunately, a computer glitch in our Friends database has result in the loss of the email versus print delivery preference of our members. As such, we have decided to send out this issue by old-fashioned mail to our entire membership. If you prefer to receive an email with an electronic copy of the Red Rock Rag in the future, please drop us an email at friends@RedRockCanyonOpenSpace.org with your name and we'll get you back on the email delivery rolls. Sorry for the inconvenience!

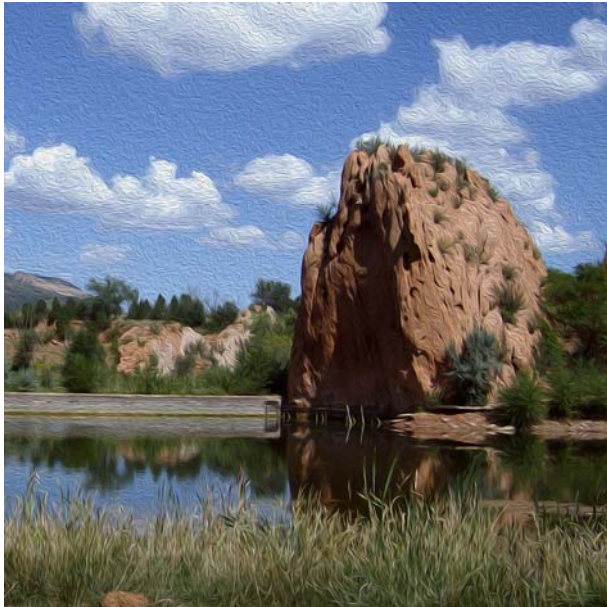


OR



Construction on Red Rock Canyon Pond Delayed

The City of Colorado Springs plan to construct an outlet pipe in the lower pond's dam has been delayed.; the bids to do the actual construction have been higher than projected. The City is looking at reengineering the project, possibly bringing down the cost, and rebidding the work. Costs could be higher right



now as many of the contractors, which work with this type of work, are now busy working with fire damage and flood mitigation work in our area.

Installing an outlet pipe in the lower dam will allow any water collected to freely flow downstream. As the Friends of Red Rock Canyon move forward to **Save the Red Rock Canyon Pond**, the City needs to be in compliance of the State Water Laws. (This water is not owned by the City, but by others with senior water rights.) The design will allow runoff water to overflow back into the Fountain Creek drainage.

The plan is to build a water supply line to the upper pond from Highway 24, which will

be used to fill the pond. The water source will also help in fire mitigation as well as fighting fires. The pond will be reestablished as an oasis, not just for visitors, but for wildlife, too. Working with our recent Talk & Walk series on Invasive Weeds and Geology, we have seen how much wildlife depend on the pond. A small coyote visited the pond for a drink, during our Invasive Weed session. While leaving the Geology session at dusk, we watched deer preparing to jump the fence along Highway 24. They were heading towards Fountain Creek for water; the pond is the lifeblood of the wildlife in Red Rock Canyon.

We are continuing our efforts to raise money to **Save the Red Rock Canyon Pond**; many people have sent in donations. We have raised \$11,000 of the \$100,000 we project will be needed. We are continuing our fund raising outside of our membership, based on a mass mailer. We are also talking with organizations about possible grants and have been approached local businesses to help as well. If you can help, let us know. Donations can be made online at our website: RedRockCanyonOpenSpace.org, or mailed to: Friends of Red Rock Canyon, PO Box 6754, Colorado Springs, CO 80904. Thank you!



Pond Donation Page

10th Anniversary Celebration

From 10AM-4PM on Saturday, August 17th, at the Bock Pavilion, The Friends of Red Rock Canyon is teaming up with the City of Colorado Springs Parks and Recreation Department to celebrate the 10-Year Anniversary of Red Rock Canyon Open Space. We are opening the event to the public, so please bring your family and friends! One Nation Walking Together, a local group that focuses on improving the lives of Native Americans, will open the celebration as we all come together as a community to celebrate our Westside gem. They will also have their tipi set up and have Native American dancers, flute players, and cultural displays.

There will speakers, including Colorado Springs Mayor Steve Bach, rock climbing and paragliding demonstrations (weather conditions permitting), guided walks, musical entertainment, and many other forms of entertainment. Come be a part of celebrating an important milestone for Red Rock Canyon! There will be free cake and lemonade along with food for purchase. We can't wait to see you there!



Schedule of Events	
10:00	Open to the Public
10:30	Native American Blessing & Performance
11:00-12:15	10 th Anniversary Celebration, Speakers & Awards
12:30	Music & Entertainment
1:30	Historical & Nature Guided Walks
2:00	Rock Climbing Demonstration
2:30	Mountain Biking Demonstration
4:00	Close of Activities



Invasive Weeds Talk & Walk

On Wednesday evening, June 19th, over 25 people attended the Friends of Red Rock Canyon event, "Invasive Weeds Talk & Walk" at the Pavilion. Deb McDonald presented several examples of local, common noxious weeds. A noxious weed is officially designated by the State of Colorado and refers to a plant that is injurious to agriculture, horticulture, natural habitats, humans/livestock, or ecosystems. Deb brought in some plants, some in bloom and some not quite there, to show everyone firsthand how to recognize a couple of examples of weeds. There are three categories (or official lists) of weeds in decreasing priority for control. Only one on the "A" list (the most offensive) is known to be in Red Rock Canyon Open Space at this time.



After her talk and demonstration, the group walked about the canyon, iden-

tifying several noxious weeds in Red Rock Canyon within about 300 yards of the Pavilion. She also pointed out native and good plants, from *Indian Rice Grass* to an apple tree. The group had a chance to see a young coyote getting some water from what little is left in the pond, as well as several ducks splashing about, emphasizing how the wildlife depends on the Red Rock Canyon pond. Deb commented that all wildlife in the Open Space uses the dwindling pond for their water needs.

The Friends of Red Rock Canyon hope to present additional educational opportunities this summer. Deb has volunteered to do another event on Invasive Weeds in the fall, when the plants have a different look.

See the article on Page 6 for a more detailed description written by Deb herself! Thank you Deb!



Myrtle Spurge

Drink Beer for a Good Cause!



Our great friends at Bristol Brewery, in their new location at the former Ivywild Elementary School at 1604 South Cascade, will be hosting another Karma Hour for the Friends of Red Rock Canyon. On **Tuesday, August 6th** from 5-9PM, Bristol will donate one dollar per pint sold to the FoRRC. Bristol does this to help the community, instead of a traditional happy hour. The FoRRC Board and other invited guests will be on hand to informally talk about our efforts to "Save the Red Rock Canyon Pond" and other issues affecting Red Rock Canyon Open Space. We hope you can come in and share a beer for a good cause with us.

Invasive Weeds in Red Rock Canyon

Deb McDonald, Program Coordinator, City of Colorado Springs Regional Parks, Trails & Open Space

This article offers a brief overview of a Talk & Walk presentation held in June on the spring and early summer blooming noxious weed species identified in Red Rock Canyon Open Space. This fall, a second presentation will cover mid-summer to autumn blooming noxious weed species found in the park.

Growing in the wrong place

Nearly every gardener has heard the saying, “a weed is a plant growing in the wrong place.” The term *noxious weed* is a legal designation which indicates that because of the harm a plant species is capable of inflicting on a landscape, the plant is on a local, regional, state or federal list which recommends or mandates management.

The state Department of Agriculture tells us that to be designated as a noxious weed by state or local governments in Colorado, “...The species must be non-native to the state and meet one or more of these criteria:

- (a) Aggressively invades or is detrimental to economic crops or native plant communities;
- (b) is poisonous to livestock;
- (c) Is a carrier of detrimental insects, diseases or parasites; or
- (d) The direct or indirect effect of the presence of this plant is detrimental to the environmentally sound management of natural or agricultural ecosystems.”

But it's so pretty – why isn't it considered a wildflower?

It is true that many of the plants on the state and county noxious weed list are very attractive – a good number of them are escaped landscape and garden plants. Unfortunately, in spite of their physical attractiveness, noxious weeds threaten natural resources and wildlife habitat, cause

According to a recent study by Cornell University, noxious weeds have a \$40 billion impact upon the U.S. economy.

The State of Colorado's Strategic Plan to Stop the Spread of Noxious Weeds

economic loss or hardship to agricultural producers, and create a significant nuisance for recreational activities.

As land managers, our concern is primarily the protection and preservation of native biodiversity. Noxious weeds have evolved reproductive strategies which out-compete and displace our native plants, changing the way ecosystems work and degrading food sources and habitat for native pollinators, wildlife, and fish.

Noxious weeds also increase soil erosion and soil sedimentation in rivers and streams; Montana State University researchers found that runoff is 1.5 times higher and sediment yield was found to be 3 times higher on areas dominated by spotted knapweed than on areas with native grasses.

According to the Colorado Weed Management Association's 6th edition of "Troublesome Weeds of the Rocky Mountain West", “Many animal species that co-evolved with native plant communities... cannot readily adapt to rapid changes in these plant communities caused by noxious weeds.”

The environmental havoc alien species wreak is staggering. Forty-six percent of all federally-listed threatened and endangered species are considered at risk primarily due to competition with or predation by invasive species. Alien invaders are considered the top threat to wildlife refuges across the United States.

National Wildlife Refuge Association

“Noxious weeds [can change ecological relationships].... Cheatgrass [for example] can change the frequency of fire in Sagebrush communities from approximately 50-75 years to 3-5 years. This suppresses the establishment of new Sagebrush plants and other native species but provides ideal growing conditions for Cheatgrass, an annual grass.”

Some noxious weed species impact water availability and water quality. Tamarisk (Salt Cedar) now dominates plant communities in many Southwestern riparian areas. This deep-rooted tree depletes water tables and displaces native Cottonwoods and Willows which [normally would provide habitat for other native species of plants and animals].”

Experts believe that invasive plants already exist in all 50 states on more than 100 million acres of land and water – an area roughly the size of California – and that they continue to spread at a rate of about 14 million acres per year.

National Wildlife Refuge Association

How you can help

Prevention is the first line of defense against invasive species. Often the most cost-effective approach to combating invasive species is to keep them from establishing in the first place.

Noxious weed seeds can be unintentionally carried on boots, clothing, on vehicle undercarriages, and in pet fur. Park users can help prevent noxious weed seed spread by:

- Not picking wildflowers; very often seeds form while a plant is still in bloom, and carrying a bouquet while hiking can drop seeds into new areas.
- Minimizing soil disturbance; staying on designated trails reduces the risk of creating new bare ground for invasive weeds to colonize.
- Keeping dogs on leash and on trail, rather than allowing them to run freely through underbrush. Many weeds have seeds adapted to hooking onto animal fur; and by
- Working on habitat reclamation projects with land managers and your Friends group to detect and eradicate noxious weed infestations.

Resources

Colorado Weed Management Association: www.cwma.org

Colorado Department of Agriculture

http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/ag_Conservation/CBON/1251618780047



Canada Thistle



Dalmatian Toadflax



Tamarisk



Chinese Clematis

Trails Update

National Trails Day

June 1st, National Trails Day: 70-80 volunteers, gathered at the trailhead of the Red Rock Canyon Open Space formerly known as Section 16. On hand were REI (event co-sponsor) and dignitaries from the Mayor's office.

After the generous "swag" donated by REI was handed out and sun-block was liberally applied, the volunteers split into several teams and began work. The task, to build about one quarter of a new trail in the Section 16 area as prescribed by the recently adopted Master Plan for the Open Space.



Work paused for lunch, which was generously catered by Chick-fil-A. By the afternoon, we had completed a new section of trail that bypasses some of the muddier and more rutted parts of the current main trail, and also provides a beautiful outlook facing Bear Creek Park to the East.

Thanks to everyone who came out to help. And a very special thanks to REI and Chick-fil-A. See you all next year.

VOC Work Day

On a hot Thursday, June 20th, the VOC (Volunteers Outdoor Colorado) came down from the Denver area to help work on trails in Red Rock Canyon Open Space. The group, sponsored by the Energy Generation Leadership Program (EnGen, a Colorado Oil & Gas Association (COGA) leadership group of young people in energy jobs), joined us for the day to work on the Quarry Pass Trail, east side. Everyone became involved in the heavy work moving

rocks and dirt, creating new rock steps, widening the trail and closing off the many



©Dave Dombach Photography

"rogue" trails causing erosion on the hillside. Our local CATS (Colorado Addicted Trail-builders Society) and Friends of Red Rock Canyon helped to act as crew leaders for this project. Heavy and hot work would be the best description of what it took to make this popular trail even better. Thank you to all participants!

FINALLY – Intemann Trail Connecting to Manitou

The missing link that connects Red Rock Canyon Open Space to Manitou Springs is being built this summer/fall. The Intemann Trail Committee is building the east part and the City of Manitou Springs is building the Iron Mountain section down to Pawnee Ave.

Volunteers are needed to make this happen this year. It will take many days of work to complete the trail. Call 719-321-5354 or email mcats@outlook.com to register to help as soon as you can. Sunday, August 11th will be the next trail building day. Please help if you can!

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
Please describe your interest: _____



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

Colorado Springs, CO 80904-6754

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RENEWAL DATE



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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