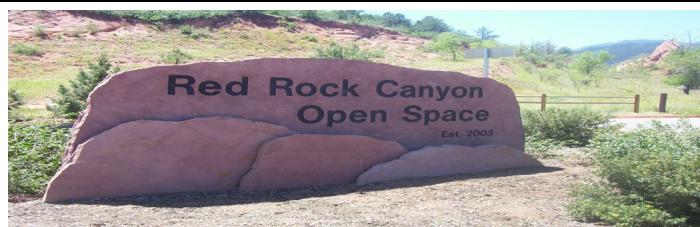


# The Red Rock Rag

Volume 12, Number 2

Summer 2011



## FRIENDS OF RED ROCK CANYON

### *The President's Report — Summer 2011*

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#### Events Calendar

|                     |                       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Educational Session | 7/27,<br>8/10<br>8/24 |
| FoRRC Board Meeting | 8/8                   |
| Public Meeting      | 9/7                   |
| FoRRC Board Meeting | 9/12                  |

My wife and I took up residence here in Colorado Springs in December 2000 and remember the wonderful adventurous runs and hikes in Garden of the Gods. The trails there were being 'loved to death' at that time as well as in the present.

Though some social trails on the North side of Garden of the Gods then seemed quaint and undiscovered, a mere 12" sliver trail in the grass, today that sliver trail is over two feet wide and growing. The ever present human impact on the trails, designated (signed) and unauthorized (social) has caused great concern for managers, ecologists, conservationists and user groups.

Red Rock Canyon Open Space is suffering the same problem as its brother park—Garden of the Gods. Though Red Rock Canyon (RRC) is considered an open space and has different restrictions, easements, and rules than Garden of the Gods, it does have a common thread—trails.

Trails and improvements to the land are not just cut out of the mountains without any thought. A Master Plan, which must take the habitat, animals, terrain and other things into consideration, is developed by professionals and vetted through public hearings before any changes to the land are made. The Master Plan is the roadmap for the lands. RRC had all of its trails designed and approved by experts and the public. Eight years after opening, we (Board of Directors and concerned citizens) are witnessing the 'Garden of the Gods' effect on our open space.

The once beautiful tract's design and plan are being ignored by some. Our open space is being '**loved to death**' – not by overuse of existing trails but rather by individuals creating new social trails (paths off the original trail). Often times the social trails are created by curious citizens that do not realize the damage that they are doing to the land. Social trails cause erosion and are

generally not planned so therefore not sustainable. Due to the creation of the social trails, parts of RRC are in a period of decline. Our trail volunteers put in a tremendous effort to close down social trails. Please do not remove the materials from those areas and re-open the trails. Parks & Recreation Department has had to install fence barriers in some areas of the open space to deny access to these areas so that the land can revegetate.

We must combat this degrading effect on our land by staying on the designated trails. We, (FoRRC) are poised on the spearhead of a new adventure. The Red Rock Canyon Open Space may increase in size and scope with the inclusion of Section 16 and White Acres. We need all citizens to help curb the use of social trails. We ask you to do your best to help protect and preserve the land of our open space.

Bob Johnson  
President  
Friends of Red Rock Canyon

## Palmer Land Trust

In 1977, a group of farsighted individuals formed the William J. Palmer Parks Foundation with the intention to advance the legacy of parks and open spaces left by Colorado Springs' founder, General William Jackson Palmer. After acquiring a number of important properties adjacent to the Garden of the Gods in Colorado Springs, the organization began to grow. It launched conservation projects in the Black Forest and on the north slopes of Pikes Peak. It began working with landowners in small mountain communities along the southern Front Range and with working ranchers throughout the shortgrass prairie of the Lower Arkansas Valley. Its [service territory](#) expanded across ten counties.

Palmer Land Trust's methods evolved as well during this growth period. The [conservation easement](#) became an effective conservation tool that could be used to protect wildlife habitat, scenic corridors, public open spaces, and historic agricultural lands.

A conservation easement is a binding legal agreement made between a landowner and a qualified conservation organization that protects lands with important conservation values, which provide public benefit. When placing a conservation easement on a property, the landowner gives up certain rights (development rights) in order to forever protect the conservation

values of the property. The rights that are transferred are conveyed to a qualified conservation organization, such as the Palmer Land Trust, which is bound by the law to hold the rights and enforce the terms of the easement. Land trust personnel will inspect or "monitor" the property on a regular basis, usually once each year, to ensure the landowner is in compliance with the terms of the easement.

The conservation easement is ideally suited to support voluntary land protection efforts driven by private citizens, and numbers of conservation minded landowners have partnered with Palmer Land Trust to preserve their properties.

In 2007, Palmer Land Trust was awarded the El Pomar Award for Excellence, Colorado's most prestigious award for high-achieving nonprofits. In 30 years, it had grown to become the largest, private, local conservation organization in the United States based on conserved acreage holdings. To date, the organization has protected over 70,000 acres throughout Colorado's southern Front Range, in mountain, plains, and urban communities. Palmer's [current efforts](#), involve some of its most ambitious conservation projects to date.

Besides holding conservation easements on private lands, Palmer also uses conservation easements in partnership with local governments to protect newly established

public open spaces that would benefit a growing populace and provide connections to the natural world. Palmer Land Trust's responsibilities are outlined in the conservation easement governing uses on each public property.

Palmer Land Trust's Public Open Space Initiative continues the legacy left by Palmer's namesake, General William Jackson Palmer, who gave more than 2,000 acres of parks, bridle and foot paths, and tree-lined streets to the City of Colorado Springs. Palmer Land Trust holds eleven conservation easements on city and county owned properties, providing permanent protection for lands that offer area residents open space and recreational opportunities.

Red Rock Canyon and Section 16 are among the public open space properties on which Palmer holds conservation easements. These conservation easements assure that the conservation values of Red Rock Canyon and Section 16 will be permanently preserved even in the unlikely event that the City of Colorado Springs conveyed the properties to some other entity. We now have a unique opportunity to have White Acres protected by conservation easement as well, at no cost to the City. When White Acres is protected, we would have a contiguous 1329 acre open space protected by conservation easement.

Written by: Don Ellis

### TRAILBUILDING

## CATS—Trail Building Wildcats

Red Rock Canyon Open Space is the home of a unique trailbuilding social group of guys and gals. A few Tuesday nights each month they get together after work and volunteer their time to fix problems in

RRC and other beautiful places. After dark they grab some pizza and have a few beers together to unwind.

This year CATS has done a variety

of projects that has saved the city over \$1000 and donated over 60 hours of work. The Project included:

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## Master Plan and Management Plan Process for Red Rock Canyon, Section 16, and White Acres Is Underway

In 2004, hundreds of area residents came together to develop a plan for use and protection of 787-acre Red Rock Canyon on the City's southwestern edge. The high-profile property had just recently been purchased by the City of Colorado Springs through the Trail, Open Space and Parks (TOPS) Program.

Fast forward to 2011 and the TOPS Program has come through again with purchases in the last two years of the White Acres property which abuts Red Rock Canyon Open Space and of nearby Manitou Section 16. The City Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department is inviting the community to help build upon the Red Rock Canyon plan by producing an integrated approach to conservation, management and use of the three popular open space properties.

The planning and public involvement processes will continue into 2012. This summer, technical studies of existing conditions on the property will be conducted, as well as online and on-site surveys of users and others interested in the

properties to identify key issues related to the properties.

In July and August, those interested in the properties will be encouraged to get some "hiking boots on the ground" experience with the properties by attending a series of public educational sessions followed by self-guided hikes in specific areas of the properties.

The sessions will kick off with a "Fossils and Footprints" session on July 13, followed by "Into the Wild(life) and Vegetation" on July 27. "Healthy Forests, Healthy Lands" is the topic for the August 10 session, with "Archeology—Dig It!" wrapping up the series on August 24. All sessions will begin at 6:30 p.m. at the Red Rock Canyon Pavilion.

The first public meeting will be held beginning September 7 to provide information about conditions of the three properties and to confirm the list of key issues to be addressed through the master planning effort. Another public meeting will follow on October 5 to review and discuss possible approaches to creation of a combined master and management

plan to open and maintain the three open space areas.

Based on public response and on technical analysis, City staff and Tapis Associates, hired by the City to assist with the planning effort, will prepare a draft master, amendment and management plan for public review and response on November 16.

The final plan will be unveiled for public review and response on January 18, and once in final form, will be presented the City's Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board for review and approval.

All public meetings will begin at 6:30 p.m. and will be held at the Westside Community Center, 1628 W. Bijou St.

For information about the master planning process, please contact Kim Reeves at the City Parks Department at 385-6516 or visit the City's website at [www.springsgov.com](http://www.springsgov.com) and go to the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department page.

### CATS—Trail Building Wildcats—CONT.

- New steps and repair of the Garden of the Goddesses trail
- Watering and weed removal at the Red Rock Canyon Pavilion
- Social Trail closure

- Historical Preservation and fence installation
- Tool shed organization and up grade

For more information about CATS,

see the FoRRC website.

By: Shanti Toll

## Red Rock Canyon, Section 16 and White Acres Planning Process Schedule at a Glance

### Educational Sessions and Self-Guided Tours

|                 |                                    |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| July 13, 2011   | Fossils and Footprints             |
| July 27, 2011   | Into the Wild(life) and Vegetation |
| August 10, 2011 | Healthy Forests, Healthy Lands     |
| August 24, 2011 | Archeology—Dig It!                 |

All educational sessions will begin at 6:30 p.m. under the Red Rock Canyon Pavilion.

### Public Meetings

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| September 7, 2011 | Learn more about the properties and identify key issues |
| October 5, 2011   | Discuss and evaluate possible approaches                |
| November 16, 2011 | Review and respond to a Draft Plan                      |
| January 18, 2012  | Review and respond to the Final Plan                    |

All public meetings will begin at 6:30 p.m. at the Westside Community Center, 1628 W. Bijou St.

Please visit [www.springsgov.com](http://www.springsgov.com) and go to the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department page for additional information and updates throughout the planning process.



### BOTANY

## Boulder Raspberry (*Rubus deliciosus*)



Walking in Red Rock Canyon Open Space during late spring and early summer, you may notice a handsome shrub called Boulder Raspberry (*Rubus deliciosus*). This deciduous Shrub is normally 4-5' tall with bright green leaves and large, showy, 5 petalled, white flowers about 2" across. The flowering period of May and June is followed by the red raspberry fruit in July.

Although tasty, the fruit is fairly dry with lots of seeds. However the birds and mammals are delighted to include it in their diet and butterflies are drawn to the blooms. Browsing this shrub is made easier by the fact that, unlike most raspberries, this variety lacks thorns.

Sometimes referred to as 'Thimbleberry', it was first collected at the mouth of Boulder Canyon in 1820 by Edwin James with the Long Expedition. The Boulder Raspberry grows in a fairly narrow range, which is centered in Colorado. You may see this western, native perennial currently along the streambed at the bottom of Sand Canyon. It's worth a peek!

Coreen Toll

Colorado Master Gardener

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.**

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

### Friends of Red Rock Canyon

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Newsletter Preference: Delivered via Email ☐ Delivered via Mail ☐

☐ 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    \_\_\_\_ Serve on Board of Directors

\_\_\_\_ Advocacy & Community outreach    \_\_\_\_ Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail this membership form with your check to:

**Friends of Red Rock Canyon**  
P. O. Box 6754  
Colorado Springs, CO 80904-6754

FRIENDS OF RED ROCK CANYON

## FORRC NEWS

### Trail Building Event

On July 30th, ForCC, REI and Parks & Rec will be sponsoring a trail cleanup day. The event starts at 8am and goes to 1:00. Lunch will be provided. Please go to

[www.redrockcanyonopenpace.org](http://www.redrockcanyonopenpace.org) to sign up or to the REI website at: [http://](http://www.rei.com/stores/68)

[www.rei.com/stores/68](http://www.rei.com/stores/68).

### Photo Contest

The results of the photo contest are in. Look for the beautiful picture in our next edition of the RAG.

**Geologic Folio**  
**Red Rock Canyon Open Space**

That is the title of a book by Ken Weissenburger, Sharon Milito, and Don Ellis about the geology of our open space. For more information on the book or to purchase the book, contact the Old Colorado City Historical Society.



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 **MEMBERSHIP  
RENEWAL DATE**

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# *Friends of Red Rock Canyon*

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We're on the Web

[www.redrockcanyonopenspace.org](http://www.redrockcanyonopenspace.org)