

THE RED ROCK RAG

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News and Views on Red Rock Canyon

Winter, 2010

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"supporting Red Rock Canyon Open Space through stewardship, education, advocacy, fundraising and volunteer projects"
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www.RedRockCanyonOpenSpace.org

Ten years!

This year we mark the Red Rock Rag's tenth anniversary.

The first Red Rock Rag in 2000 was a one page flier which was handed out at a public meeting held by the potential Red Rock Canyon developer in the Manitou Springs City Hall. Almost as an act of faith, the first issue proclaimed, "Published monthly by the Red Rock Canyon Committee." ... Every month for almost 4 years, the Red Rock Rag was published monthly. In that time there were many twists and turns in the plan to develop Red Rock Canyon. The developer finally backed away, and Red Rock Canyon became available. With the Trust for Public Land as an intermediary, TOPS acquired Red Rock Canyon and was awarded a million dollar GOCO grant to help pay for it. Through all of this the Red Rock Rag was advocate and reporter for what proved to be a very effective citizen effort.

Once Red Rock Canyon Open Space was secured, news flowed more slowly; and the Red Rock Rag became a quarterly publication. The Red Rock Canyon Committee dissolved into the Red Rock Canyon Foundation which became Friends of Red Rock Canyon. Emphasis shifted from advocacy to stewardship.

For Friends of Red Rock Canyon, the Red Rock Rag has reported on volunteer trail and stewardship projects, educational programs, and major fundraising efforts for the pavilion and

White Acres.

It has been quite a decade!

For all of that amazing decade I have been the editor of the Red Rock Rag. From time to time, I have taken on other jobs, too: creating the website, serving on the Board, acting as its treasurer, and organizing educational programs. Now, it feels like I am carrying several torches which should be passed to others over the coming year.

Don Ellis

TOPS buys White Acres Parcel 1

On December first the City of Colorado Springs TOPS program closed on the \$100,000 purchase of parcel 1 of White Acres. Friends of Red Rock Canyon's fundraising effort which was carried on in cooperation with the Palmer Land Trust contributed over \$77,000 toward this purchase. Also, on December first TOPS leased the remainder of White Acres for \$1 making all of White Acres effectively TOPS open space.

TOPS is scheduled to close on the purchase of Parcel 2 on January 19. The remaining two parcels will be purchased in 2011 and 2012.

The former White residence and 2.5 acres on which it sits were sold separately to the tenant who had rented the house for the past several years.

Wondering about those heavy trucks?

For over a month there has been quite a bit of heavy truck traffic from 26th Street to the former landfill. Those trucks have been hauling clay to repair and improve the landfill cap. The clay has come from an excavation for a new pond at Patty Jewett Golf Course. The pond will store water for more cost effective watering. The clay from the excavation is ideal for improving the landfill cap.

Our Thanks

Friends of Red Rock Canyon thanks everyone who has contributed toward the open space realization of Red Rock Canyon and White Acres during the past decade!



EDITORIAL

Seize this moment!

Some bemoan the defeat of 2C in Colorado Springs. None of us relishes the possibility of brown parks and closed community centers. And, we just hate to see friends lose their jobs.

Still, where others see gloom, I see positive signs and a great, once in a lifetime, opportunity. Sale of the former White residence to its previous tenant represented a new kind of win-win situation. Pikes Peak Urban Gardens will be establishing community gardens in more parks and expanding neighborhood participation. The City will be expanding the scope of volunteer projects. Master Planning for White Acres will be delayed giving citizens a better chance to explore the property before the Master Plan process, and hopefully avoiding mistakes and omission suffered by Stratton Open Space and Red Rock Canyon.

With both City and County parks standing at the back of the line for funding from cash strapped budgets, there could never be a better time to work toward sustainable, independent funding for parks. The Trails and Open Space Coalition has been at the forefront of just such an effort, the Sustainable Parks Initiative which could create an independent Parks Authority for the entire county. The idea is hardly new. General Palmer established a separate parks entity for Colorado Springs. El Paso County established a County-wide Parks and Recreation District funded by its own mill levy in 1972. Voters had approved the County Parks and Recreation District by a 4 to 1 margin. By the end of its first year the County Parks and Recreation District owned Bear Creek Regional Park and leased Manitou Section 16 which it intended to buy in the near future.

Unfortunately, both General Palmer and El Paso County failed to make parks independent enough. Palmer's parks entity was part of City government and lost its status as a separate entity through a charter amendment. The El Paso County Parks and Recreation District was part of County government. It was simply transferred to Public Works and lost its autonomy and its dedicated funding. Now we have a great, once in a lifetime, opportunity to create a separate, truly independent Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Authority governed by an elected board which would be directly responsible to the voters.

Let us seize this moment!

Don Ellis

Friends of Red Rock Canyon President's Report, Winter 2010

2010: A New Year- A new Decade of Volunteerism in the Pikes Peak Community - And it brings a Time for Friends of Red Rock Canyon to play a bigger role in Stewardship in Red Rock Canyon Open Space. As FoRRC steps up that role there is now an even greater need for volunteers and this includes You.

Friends of Red Rock Canyon has been asked by The City to recruit volunteers not just for the building and maintaining trails and removal of Invasive Chinese Elm Trees in Red Rock Canyon but for maintaining all that the entire open space encompasses. This calls for what some may see as the more mundane aspects of maintenance yet there is this great need for that which has become our new priority. We will be removing noxious weeds.

Early Spring Friends of Red Rock Canyon will list the volunteer work days and what they entail on our website (RedRockCanyonOpenSpace.org). In the meantime we will be setting up a network of volunteers to help remove those noxious weeds. Please email us and let us know you will help. Red Rock Canyon Open Space needs You!

We will refer to our previous survey volunteer recommendations for what days and hours will work

best. We can now choose the days and times more freely as our connection with The City is not restraining. We will be doing all the planning as to what we will do and when.

The City is in the process of creating a booklet we can share with our volunteers to educate them about noxious weeds and their removal. Any weed specialist reading this needs to join in our task to help educate the community. Pass the word on.

The Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC) is currently holding community meetings regarding Sustainable Parks. Included on that agenda is the new role all Friends Groups will be having. There will be meetings for Friends Groups with similar terrain to meet and discuss how we can collaborate and work together. A System of Volunteers will be created and used to call upon volunteer for our projects. There is a Community Stewardship Initiative in the works by TOSC. To find out when the next Sustainable Parks Meeting is call TOSC at 719-633-6884. Your input is greatly needed and appreciated. The Pikes Peak Community needs to pull together now more than ever.

Looking forward to creating this new role for Friends of Red Rock Canyon with You,

Karlee Thompson
President, Friends of Red Rock Canyon

- MEMBERSHIP FORM - 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 ____ 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

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***Renew your Friends of Red Rock Canyon membership now
and be sure to keep getting the RED ROCK RAG***

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:

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Electronic submissions may be sent to:

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