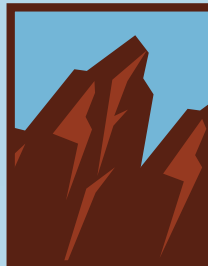


the **RED ROCK RAG**



FRIENDS OF
**RED ROCK
CANYON**

President's Report: Respect

I love this place! I hear this sentiment from nearly everyone I meet that uses or visits Red Rock Canyon Open Space.

As our population grows and so many of the people who move here do so for the love of the outdoors it's not unusual now for the parking lots to be packed on weekdays and not just on weekends. With the arrival of tourists it's bound to be a record year for the number of people enjoying the open space. The property has so much to offer for such a diversity of users. A contemplative walk in nature, the challenge of a sheer rock wall, the thrill of a downhill single track, running, searching for fossils, watching birds, just a handful of the countless activities people come to enjoy. So I have to remind myself sometimes when the crowd seems large to respect all the people who are there enjoying all the various things they love. We all pay the sales taxes, tourists included, that took this open space from a dream to the reality we all love.

Volume 24 #1
Summer, 2022



<https://www.facebook.com/redrockcanyon.54>



<https://twitter.com/redrockcanyonCO>

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www.redrockcanyonopenspace.org

Their Way or the Highway

Earlier this year, the Parks Department sent out the Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department and Friends Groups and Partners Cooperative Agreement and requested that all Friends Groups sign it. The Cooperative Agreement was incomplete and did not accurately reflect the working relationship between the Friends of Red Rock Canyon and Parks Department staff. We were concerned that the Cooperative Agreement had no provision requiring the Parks staff to notify us when significant trail layouts and realignments are being proposed and to seek our input and feedback. We believe providing such input and feedback has been and continues to be very important in our role as a Friends Group. We consulted with other friends and advocacy groups who also had concerns, some of which have still not signed the Cooperative Agreement.

Our board signed the Cooperative Agreement and sent it back with some changes that reflected our concerns. Parks staff rejected it. They refused to discuss or consider any modifications to the Cooperative Agreement. They gave us an ultimatum: that we sign it, without changes, or else our relationship with the Parks Department will be severed. We were informed that Parks staff could not talk to us and discuss future projects unless we signed their version of the Cooperative Agreement. It was their way or the highway.

Needless to say, the Parks Department's ultimatum did not sit well with the members of our Board. The Friends of Red Rock Canyon and its predecessor organization have been working in RRC for over 20 years. Our members and supporters donated thousands of hours to build and maintain trails. We have a membership list of five hundred people who receive the Red Rock Rag and an email list of over one thousand citizens. Our website averages 6000 hits a month.

We raised \$83,000 to help purchase White Acres and raised \$100,000 to build the Bock Pavilion.

This included a \$50,000 challenge grant from a previous Board member. We always considered our relationship with the Parks Department a partnership. Given this history, Board members were upset that the Parks Department refused to consider or even discuss our proposed changes. Some of the comments from Board members:

"It's hard to help the natural land if we're not wanted and ignored or basically told what to do. The partnership that once existed is gone. It suddenly feels uncomfortable."

"I am not interested in partnering with an organization that is inflexible and unreasonable and treats us poorly."

When the Parks Department refused to negotiate, a slim majority of the Board reluctantly voted to sign the Cooperative Agreement so the Friends could continue to advocate for the open space. The sentiment of one board member is expressed here:

"Yeah, the City is running roughshod over the Friends groups. Yeah, the agreement is a bunch of BS. But for now we need to grit our teeth and sign the [darn] thing...We know that they can and will do whatever they want, regardless of what FofRRC...or any other public group thinks. But the Friends group needs to continue to advocate for what we see as the right direction of the parkland."

Unfortunately, the relationship between the Friends of Red Rock Canyon and the Parks Department is seriously damaged. Most board members are not interested in doing trail work and other similar maintenance tasks requested by Parks staff.

While we will still advocate for park users with respect to trail design and realignment proposals, our focus going forward will be to promote educational opportunities, better citizen communication

New Trail Realignment

The Parks Department trail designers have been busy this spring planning realignments of several well-used trails in Red Rock Canyon. If you see red, pink or green flags tied to bushes and trees or stakes in the ground, please leave them be. We believe that work on these trails will begin in the fall, or sooner (or later).

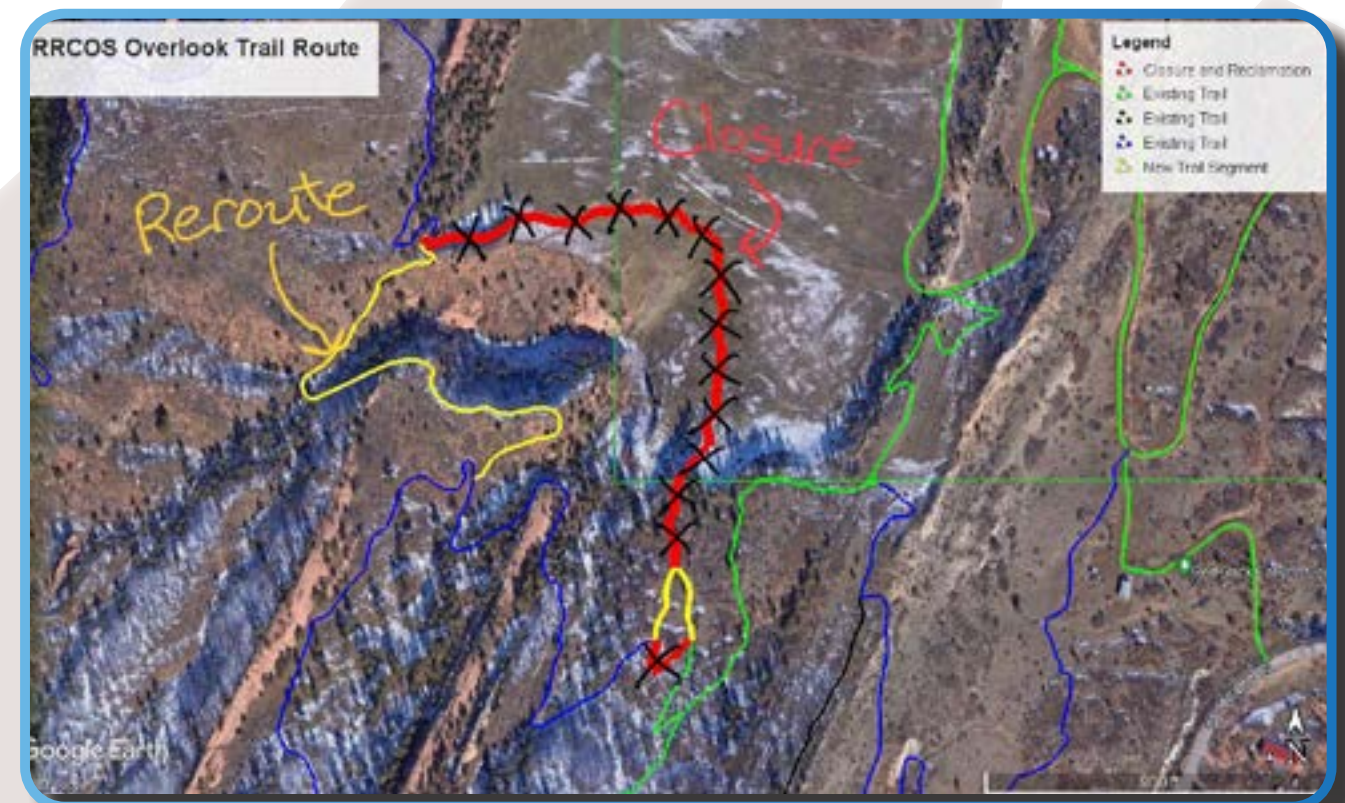
Representatives from Friends of Red Rock Canyon and Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates have walked these trails with Parks staff (on more than one occasion) and provided input and feedback. However, if our readers have any concerns, comments or suggestions, please send them to us at friends@redrockcanyonopenspace.org and we will pass them along to Parks staff.

Overlook Trail

The portion of the Overlook Trail that crosses the landfill will be permanently closed and a reroute will be built to the south of the landfill. Parks staff is closing the landfill trail for health and safety reasons.

The new trail crosses two scrub oak and evergreen covered hills and connects to existing sections of the Overlook Trail. The new trail section should be much nicer and more challenging than the current landfill section and is only a short detour.

See map below.



Hogback Valley/Chamberlain Trail

Parks staff is proposing a realignment of the Hogback Valley Trail because they do not believe the existing trail/road is sustainable. The existing road will be covered with soil and replanted after the new trail is built. Parks staff plans to rename Hogback Valley Trail to Chamberlain Trail. It will become a section of the Chamberlain Trail that will run from Cheyenne Mountain to Blodgett Peak.

The new trail will be designated green and will be 4 to 5 feet wide. Beginning at the south end, it will cross the existing road 2 to 3 times as it snakes downhill to the north. At the intersection of the Codell and Upper Codell trails, the new trail will move to the east of the existing road for several hundred feet before it again crosses the road and snakes down the hill to intersect the Rim Trail (road from 31st street parking lot). See map on right:



Parallel/Waterfall/Palmer Red Rock-Section 16 Trails

These three trails have generated a lot of discussion about their historic use and designation on the Master Plan as black and blue trails. A final decision regarding the trail realignments has not been reached but we can share with you the favored routes. See map on next page. We use the names Palmer Red Rock and Section 16 interchangeably because both names appear on the Master Plan map. The Parks Department plans to rename the Waterfall and Parallel trails as future segments of the Overlook Trail. (This explains references to the Overlook Trail on the attached map)

The Palmer Red Rock trail, near its current intersection with the Parallel and Waterfall trails is in poor condition. The plan is to reroute this trail a short distance to the east to bypass and close the worst sections of the existing trail.

The new Waterfall Trail will probably connect off this rerouted section. The Parallel trail will start just above the reroute. In addition several lower sections of the trail, beginning at the Section 16

parking lot, will also be rerouted or repaired. The realigned trail will maintain its current designation as a blue trail.

The existing Waterfall Trail will be closed due to its steepness and unsustainability. A new trail will be built a short distance to the southeast of the current trail, connecting with the Palmer Red Rock trail. The new Waterfall Trail will snake down a hill, through the scrub oak, where it will connect with the Intermittent Waterfall. There will also be a cutoff to access the Intermittent Waterfall. It will be designated a black trail.

The existing Parallel Trail will have minor reroutes to bypass eroded sections, but much of the existing trail bed will be saved. This trail is designated black on the Master Plan and will probably have some black bike features built into it. The top of the trail will probably connect to the Palmer Red Rock Trail slightly north of its current intersection.

See map on next page.



Parallel/Waterfall/Palmer Red Rock-Section 16 Trails

State of the Parks, by Aaron Rogers, TOSC

Every spring, the Trust for Public Land comes out with their annual ParkScore. The ParkScore ranks the park systems of the 100 biggest cities based on different categories including access to parks, equity, investment, amenities and acreage. Living in Colorado Springs, we view our outdoor spaces as the heart and soul of our community; yet, Colorado Springs ranked #58. Although 76% of Colorado Springs lives within a 10-minute walk of a public park (nearly 2,000 people live within a 10-minute walk of Red Rock Canyon Open Space), spending per capita falls under the national average. In Colorado Springs, park spending is roughly \$92 a person and in cities ranked in the top ten, the spending per person is

nearly doubled (Denver spends \$151 per person). Inadequate resources result in fewer amenities, like bathrooms and dog parks, for the public to use. Quality well-funded parks are essential to the health and economic wellbeing of our community. In addition to increasing property values, parks counter urban heat and reduce flooding and runoff from heavy rains. When there is more funding to boost per capita spending, we will see upgrades to all of our favorite trails and parks.



More information:

<https://www.tpl.org/city/colorado-springs-colorado>

Education in Red Rock Canyon



We are, at times, available to do guided tours of the Open Space. Recently, five of our Board Members helped the entire school of Ute Pass Elementary explore Red Rock Canyon.

Talk and Walks

We also offered a series of “Talk and Walks”, where subject-matter experts give a short presentation and then lead a short hike. These Talk and Walks are done by volunteers. We usually start around 5:30pm and end before dark. We will be doing Talk and Walks again this summer, after a two-year hiatus caused by Covid concerns.

Really, we are open to any other topics dealing with the open space, as we do enjoy learning more about it. Walk and Talks this summer will limit

the number of people able to attend for the benefit of the attendees and the presenter. RSVPs will be mandatory. Sessions will be announced by emails and will be posted on our website. Do not miss out on these sessions. You can sign up for emails at our website:

redrockcanyonopenspace.org.

On the home page, at the bottom, is a quick way to add your email to our Friends of Red Rock Canyon email list.

We are always looking to find the new experts willing to volunteer their time to present on topics in Geology, Plants – wildflowers and invasive species, Leave No Trace, and History – early people, industrial uses (ie: quarry), and more recent histories.

Web Page/Books/Tours

The Friends of Red Rock Canyon are always interested in ways to share knowledge about the land, whether it be geology, plants, history or archeology. We share much information on our website, redrockcanyonopenspace.org. Under the Education tab you will find information and maps covering geology, biology, and 12 unique stories on the History in Red Rock Canyon. Check out the website, not only to learn about the open space, but it helps as a great resource in planning your visits to Red Rock Canyon.

The main book which we helped republish is *Geologic Folio, Red Rock Canyon Open Space, Colorado Springs, Colorado*. At one time proceeds from the sale of the book, at Old Colorado City Historical Society, helped the Friends financially. Another book on how Red Rock Canyon developed as a public open space is *History in Stone: The Story of Red Rock Canyon*. Now you can buy both books on Amazon and other retailers.



If you know of someone who is considered an expert, and would be willing to volunteer to do a Talk and Walk, let us know. Please leave an email at:

friends@redrockcanyonopenspace.org,

or call David at 719.685-4792. Thanks!

RRC Ranger Report *by Wes Hermann* Give Back, Get Dirty- Volunteer Season 2022

Summer is here, and warm sunny days are drawing many of us to spend more time outdoors. I am reminded frequently how fortunate our region is to have such convenient access to the outdoors, as well as so many natural spaces to choose from. Perhaps this is in part why people from our community visit parks at a higher rate than any other city according to the Trust for Public Lands; leading them to dub us “ultra-users”. But our love of the outdoors also takes a toll: more people means more impacts. In order to protect the places we love, our ultra-users also need to be ultra-stewards. There is a lot we can do to help support the places we recreate, like adopting Leave No Trace Ethics (visit coloradosprings.gov/parks/page/leave-no-trace for more info) and of course: volunteering.

Volunteering is a powerful tool which achieves far more than a land manager could on their own. It isn't a one-way relationship, though; volunteers benefit too! Volunteering helps strengthen our community, promotes growth and learning, and can reduce stress and improve our overall health. Last of all, it feels good! I still hike on trails I helped build as a volunteer and feel a sense of pride when I see those areas: “hey, that's our armored drain!”

This summer, the Parks Department will be hosting volunteer events on the second Saturday of the month, June through October. Projects all start at 8AM and will last between four and six hours. In addition to the events listed below, we will be offering afternoon/evening volunteer opportunities throughout the summer- check the websites at the end of this article for the most up-to-date information.

City Volunteer Project Schedule:

- **June 11th** : We will work on improving and armoring drainage along the trail to protect timber steps along Contemplative Trail. Rockwork projects like this are great for volunteers who like puzzles and building! You can register and find more information here: cerv.is/0132x3582
- **July 9th**: We will continue work to improve drainage along Contemplative Trail. If work has been completed, we will work on the Quarry Pass Trail (see below). Event link: cerv.is/0132x3578
- **August 13th**: We will work to repair washed-out sections of trail near the Historic Quarry and install drainage structures to keep water from damaging the trail. Event link: cerv.is/0132x3580
- **September 10th**: We will construct an armored rock crossing to replace a culvert along the Quarry Pass trail. If you like rockwork, this is the project for you! Event link: cerv.is/0132x3581
- **October 8th**: This volunteer day is our wild card- we will work to complete any remaining areas from earlier projects this season along the Contemplative/Quarry Pass trails. If work from all projects is completed, another project will be selected. Event link: cerv.is/0132x3582

For a list of other volunteer opportunities in the city, please visit:

coloradosprings.gov/parks-recreation-and-cultural-services/page/volunteer-events-registration.

You can also view a calendar of local volunteer opportunities at www.trailsandopenspaces.org/get-involved/volunteer/, and you can sign up to receive volunteer opportunities at Red Rock Canyon at redrockcanyonopenspace.org/volunteer/.

So let's do this and get our hands dirty- for a good cause!

Don't Climb on Wet Rock

"Can I climb on wet rock after it rains?" is a common question asked by climbers. At Red Rock Canyon Open Space, the answer is usually an emphatic "No!" The canyon's climbing cliffs are composed of sandstone, basically recycled rock fragments, including sand, silt, and pebbles, that were deposited millions of years ago.



Sandstone becomes saturated after thunderstorms and snowfall with the porous rock surface absorbing water like a sponge and dissolving cementing agents, which causes the sandstone to fall apart under a climber's hands and feet. Geologists estimate that wet sandstone loses as much as 75% of its strength when wet. After prolonged rain, the rock's interior, as much as two inches below the surface, will be wet. Sandstone can be dry on the surface but still wet beneath.

Climbing on wet sandstone erodes the rock and damages routes because hand- and footholds break apart and fragile flakes fall off. It's difficult to gauge when sandstone is dry enough for climbing without damaging the rock surface. The rule at most sandstone climbing areas is "Don't climb in damp areas less than 24 hours after rain" and "Wait at least a week when there is high humidity, cold temperatures, and moist conditions."

Here are six guidelines to assess wet rock before climbing at Red Rock Canyon:

- Eyeball the cliff and look for moisture and wet rock. Look for damp areas and note if flakes have moisture behind them. Look for fresh sand liberated from the sandstone on holds.
- Consider where you plan to climb. Does the cliff get sunlight that will dry the rock? Is it shaded so the rock stays damp? Do trees shade the route and keep it from drying?
- Wait at least 24 hours after rain before climbing. Rainwater usually runs off the surface and soaks into rock at the cliff base or on ledges. Most cliffs dry in 36 hours with sunlight. In winter, wait three or four days for the rock to dry.
- If the ground and stone at the cliff base is wet on the day after a storm, then there is probably subsurface moisture and you shouldn't climb.
- Don't climb a route if it is still wet. You risk breaking handholds, damaging footholds, and wearing grooves in the sandstone with your rope.
- Consider the weather conditions. Sandstone dries quickly on sunny days as well as on windy days. It dries slowly if there is high humidity, overcast sky, little direct sunlight, and little wind. Snow, which melts slowly, wets the rock, and then freezes at night, creating soaked surfaces that are susceptible to damage when climbed.

The Next Generation of Mountain Bikers Come of Age in RROS

Mountain biking has become an increasingly popular sport on our local trails, and this includes younger riders who are growing up with the sport. My own kids' first experience on the trails in RROS was riding in a Burley trailer that I towed through the park behind my mountain bike.



They were only 4 and 2 at the time, but they loved the adventure of the ride and I loved introducing them to the trails on two (well, four) wheels.

As they grew older and learned to ride their own bikes, we would return time and again to RROS to tackle new trails of increasing difficulty as their skills progressed. Eventually they were skilled enough and confident enough to ride without me, a bittersweet moment for sure.

To them, having been exposed to the sport from an early age, it's no more "extreme" than soccer or basketball or skiing.

Mountain biking's popularity with Generation Z is on full display with the local school mountain bike teams who use RROS for their training. I have been a volunteer coach with the Manitou Monsters

(<https://manitoumtbteam.com>), a team which is open to local kids in middle and high school.

The Monsters do an awesome job of teaching kids all aspects of the sport, from etiquette to technique to training and fitness and even to bike maintenance and trail stewardship. The high school age kids are able to compete against other teams across the state in races sanctioned by NICA, the National Interscholastic Cycling Association. At last count there were over 50 kids on the team - notably more than some of the more traditional school team sports. Some of the Monsters have done exceptionally well at the state level, against extremely strong competition. No doubt having such an incredible trail system practically out their back door has been a major contributor to their successes.

So next time you're out the trails, keep an eye out for the



young ones and encourage their development and love of the sport (and model good trail etiquette for them). And if you see some kids sporting the tell-tale green team jersey, give 'em a friendly "Go Monsters!" shout to boost their spirits and their love for a sport that will hopefully continue their whole lives.



(Their Way or the Highway, Continued from Page 2)

and advocacy for the right direction of RRC. In this regard board members helped with a field day for 180 students from Ute Pass Elementary School in April and we are restarting our Talk and Walk programs on RRC geology and history.

We hope that over time our relationship with the Parks Department can be rebuilt into one of true partnership and mutual respect. Our Board and members are committed to the future of RRC. We will continue to advocate for the betterment of RRC.

Website Update: www.RedRockCanyonOpenSpace.org

The Friends of Red Rock Canyon website continues to present an updated, vibrant and accurate picture of our open space.

- We have had a total of 72,500 visits in the last twelve months.
- The average number of visits per month is 6,058.
- In July of 2021 we experienced our greatest number of hits at 10,300 and in December of 2021 we had our fewest number of visits at 2,200.

Our visitors are quite diverse. People from the five countries that visited our website the most in the preceding 12 months were 1) United States, 2) Canada, 3) China, 4) Germany and 5) United Kingdom. People from other countries such as the Philippines, Turkey, India and France have also looked at the site within the past year.

Mobile devices made up 60 percent of how users accessed the site. Desktops (including laptops) made up 38 percent and tablets comprised 2 percent of users. On a monthly basis, 85 percent of people visit the site for the first time and 15 percent are repeat users.

There is a wealth of information on this site that can be accessed from the home page. Browse through the tabs at the top of the page where you can find many photos, information about trails, history of the open space, biology, geology and activities available for visitors to our open space. This website is for your information and enjoyment and we are always open to suggestions of what you would like to see on your website.

You can send suggestions to friends@friendsofredrockcanyon.org.



Membership Form for Friends of Red Rock Canyon

Name: _____ Home Phone: _____

Address: _____ Work Phone: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Email Address: _____

Newsletter Delivery Preference: Via email (full-color, recommended) Via postal mail

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

Individual/Family membership (\$15) 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:

Please mail this membership for
with your check to:

Friends of Red Rock Canyon

PO Box 6754

Colorado Springs, CO 80904-6754

Board Meetings are held at the Red Rock Canyon
Pavilion on the second Monday of each month beginning
at 6:00pm, weather permitting.

Leave No Trace for Dogs

Sometimes, do you not pick up your dog's poop or you don't go back to pick up the plastic poop bag? It happens sometimes for various reasons. Instead of just feeling guilty, you can do something about it.

Once a month you and your dog can go out with a larger plastic bag and find a way to pick up all the poop you see (probably you already know areas in need of some poop clearing). In a relatively short time you can pick up 3 to 5 times more poop than you had left on the trail in the last month. It feels good to know you are part of the solution, not part of the dog/human pollution problem. You and your canine friend are part of the Leave No Trace movement.



The Red Rock Rag

Friends of Red Rock Canyon
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Many people do not realize that the shopping they do on Amazon can also be used to support many of their favorite non-profits. Simply by using AmazonSmile, you can purchase the same products you get through Amazon with a certain percent going to the charity or charities you choose. If you would like to support the Friends of Red Rock Canyon using AmazonSmile, simply go to smile.amazon.com and add us by our founding name: **Red Rock Canyon Foundation** (not the Friends).

We appreciate your support!



friends@RedRockCanyonOpenSpace.org



www.RedRockCanyonOpenSpace.org



<https://www.facebook.com/friendsofredrockcanyon/>