

the **RED ROCK RAG**



President's Report

Volume 25 #1
Summer, 2023



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



<https://twitter.com/redrockcanyonCO>

Inside:

RRC TODAY.....	2
GREAT RESOURCE ON RRC..	2
SUMMER CLIMBING NEWS ...	3
RRC TRAIL UPDATES.....	4-6
ONCE A MONTH.....	6
NEW BOARD MEMBER.....	6
MEMBERSHIP FORM	7
LEAVE NO TRACE	7-8



This May the park ranger for Red Rock Canyon Open Space, Wes Hermann, and a few of our board members hosted over 150 enthusiastic kids and their teachers from Ute Pass Elementary. The kids ranged in age from pre-school to 6th grade. The group assembled at the Pavilion in the morning and the kids were given their mission, hike a mile up Red Rock Canyon Trail to the reclamation area at the beginning of Roundup Trail. The City had done extensive work in the area, so reseeding/replanting is going to be important to help the area recover. Once we all reached the reclamation area, Ranger Wes gave an excellent talk on how to use the tools safely and we spread out in small groups. The kids did the digging and planting of a variety of plants native to the area. It was a fun day for everyone and these kids will probably one day proudly show their contribution to the open space to their parents or even their own kids.



www.redrockcanyonopenspace.org

Red Rock Canyon - Today

It is wonderful to have our open space be appreciated by so many people. Citizens and tourists, old and young, physically fit and those who wish to be, and all different kinds of nature lovers.

FoRRC supports the Colorado Springs Parks Department as it tries to manage all the different user groups and maintain the natural environment of our park and its role as an urban-wildland interface. Finding the balance between human needs/uses and the needs/uses of all the wild animals and plants is a dynamic and ever-changing process.

People use the great outdoors and beauty of natural habitat to remind themselves of what it is to be alive. Some of us have time and the physical strength/skills to bike/run/hike and experience the

outback of Red Rock Canyon. Others of us only have an hour or two to enjoy the natural beauty of the land closer to the parking lots. Some of us have physical limitations or companions who are not fast walkers, so we need easier shorter trails. Others of us like to have a physical challenge of testing our skills with more difficult outdoor exercise.

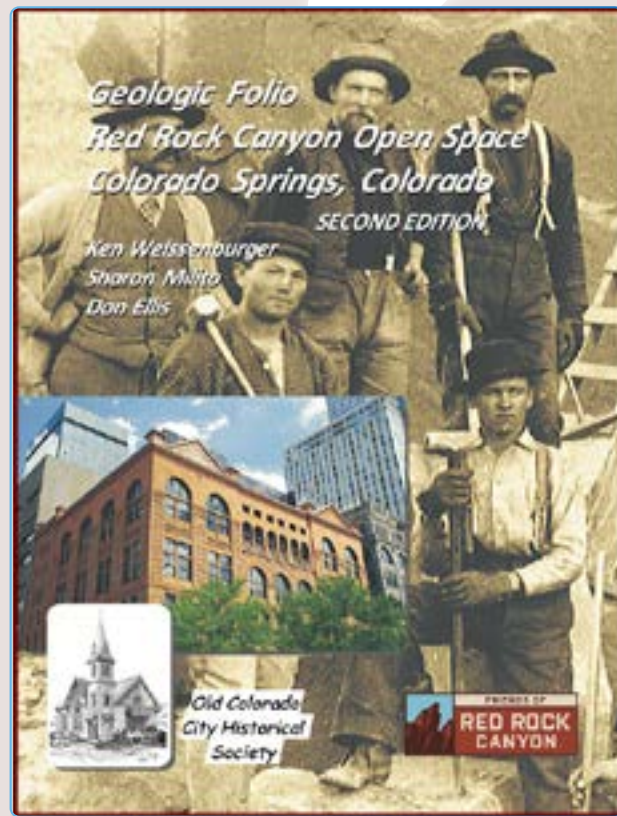
FoRRC supports the Parks Department to provide safe and beautiful trails for all kinds of user groups. The aesthetics of a trail are important, whether it be close to a parking lot or two miles in. Connecting to nature is one of the reasons why all people come to public open spaces. When we all stay on the trails and are considerate of others we allow others (both human and animal) to appreciate nature and safely enjoy being outdoors.

Great Resource on Red Rock Canyon

The best resource on Geology in Red Rock Canyon is found in the book **Geologic Folio, Red Rock Canyon Open Space, Colorado Springs, Colorado** Authored by Ken Weissenburger, Sharon Milito and Don Ellis.

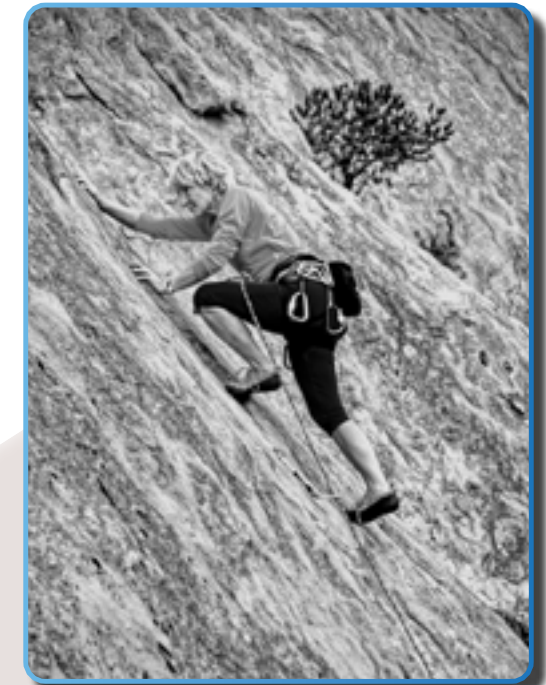
The second edition is still available at a great price, at Books a Million. Link:

<https://www.booksamillion.com/p/Geologic-Folio-Red-Rock-Canyon/Ken-Weissenburger/9781734174922?id=8300052360528>



Summer Climbing News

The Pikes Peak Climber's Alliance (PPCA) has been in discussions with the parks department this past spring to formulate a plan to evaluate the existing bolt anchors, especially the top anchors used for belaying, rappelling, and top roping, and possibly replace ones that have loosened in their holes or exhibit signs of rust or damage, at Red Rock Canyon Open Space. Almost all the existing anchors were placed in 2004, nineteen years ago, by a crew of climbers, including Ric Geiman, Brian Shelton, and Stewart Green, before the open space park opened to the public.



Hopefully, a complete inventory of the park's climbing hardware will be finished later this year and a decision made on what needs to be upgraded now.

Also, the new seventh edition of *Climbing Red Rock Canyon Open Space* by Stewart Green, a comprehensive guide to rock climbing routes at the park, was released on July 1. The book, first published in 2004, is completely updated with detailed route descriptions, photo topos of the cliff sectors, a map of the cliffs, and action photographs. It's available on Amazon and at REI and Mountain Chalet.

While most of the current equipment is still safe, some anchors show signs of wear and fatigue due to the popularity of rock climbing at Red Rock Canyon, which is now one of the most popular climbing areas in Colorado's Front Range. Advances in bolting technology, including the invention of glued-in Climb Tech Wave bolts, allow for greater safety margins in both pullout and shear strength and the new stainless steel equipment should have a longer life span than the existing gear.



Red Rock Canyon Trails Update

Our team and contractors have been hard at work throughout Red Rock Canyon, performing a number of improvements to trails throughout the Open Space. Work has focused on several distinct areas, with the goal of addressing damage to existing trails, re-routing unsustainable trail segments which cannot be improved, and improving the safety and overall user experience of these trails while maintaining the character of these trails. Overall, the goal is to create more sustainable, resilient trails which better withstand damage caused by traffic and weathering, and provide a great user experience. Improvements are expected to be completed sometime this fall.

The design of sustainable, enjoyable trails can be a complex process. Considerations include examining the conditions of the terrain (including slope, drainage, soil composition, etc) to determine what is appropriate for the area, as well as soliciting input to explore what various user groups desire and would enjoy.

We performed multiple walkthroughs with FoRRC and other advocacy groups, exploring several concepts for areas like the Section 16 project area or Chamberlain/Codell Trails.

The input provided helped shape and refine the trail design, and we are very excited for the improvements that have been performed, and that are to come!

Trails Improvements Project Updates:

- Work has begun on improvements to trails in Section 16: **Palmer Redrock/Section 16 Trail, Parallel Trail, Waterfall, and Intemann Trails.** Visitors can expect to see crews working on these trails for the next several months. We expect minimal impact to visitors, although visitors may see some detours to avoid entering work areas.

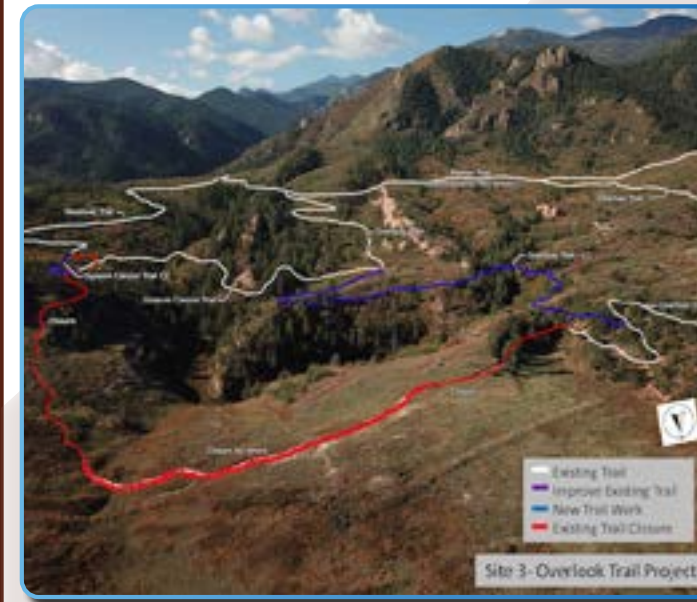
Work will address the severe erosion issues along the Palmer Redrock Trail, including severely incised or otherwise unsustainable sections of trail. Work will be done to make improvements to Parallel and Waterfall trail, improving drainage and reducing issues caused by erosion, and improving access to the intermittent waterfall.

(Continued on Next Page)



(Trails Improvements Continued)

- The new **Chamberlain Trail** (formerly Hogback Valley Trail) has been completed, and the old Hogback Valley Trail has been decommissioned. The old Hogback Valley Trail was susceptible to erosion damage, particularly after heavy rainfall. The new Chamberlain Trail is placed along the sides of the valley floor to avoid this problem. The alignment of Codell Trail was also adjusted to improve the trail experience, and create a more consistent trail experience.



- The new **Overlook Trail** alignment has been completed. The new alignment moves the trail off the old landfill, and now takes visitors through a small drainage to a hillside with views overlooking unique rock features and a spectacular view of the formations in Red Rock Canyon and Garden of the Gods. This section of trail lives up to its name and matches the experience along the rest of the trail.

- Work on **Mesa Trail** has been completed, with additional revegetation work still to come on the old trail corridor. The new trail alignment is less steep, more sustainable, and retains less snow after snowfall.

For high resolution maps, visit: www.RedRockCanyonOpenSpace.org

Roundup Reclamation Project Updates

As of the writing of this article, Parks Staff is actively re-seeding the reclamation site at the intersection of the Roundup and Rim Trails. This location was the site of a pond created by the former landowner, which was found to be unlawfully impounding water, necessitating its removal. The pond was filled in over several years, providing our department with the unique opportunity to convert the site into a more natural landscape. Throughout July visitors can expect to see the spreading of topsoil and additional work to re-seed the area with native grass and wildflowers.

In May, our department and Friends of Red Rock Canyon lead a volunteer project with students from Ute Pass Elementary School to plant native shrubs, grasses, and forbes in the area, kick-starting the revegetation efforts for the site. We will be offering more volunteer opportunities to reintroduce native plants into the site-stay tuned! For this and other volunteer opportunities, visit:

<https://coloradosprings.gov/parkvolunteers>

(Continued on Next Page)

(Continued from Previous Page)

Other Trail News:

After a year-long closure, the Palmer Redrock/ Section 16 Trail (National Forest System Trail 775) has re-opened. This trail was closed in cooperation with the USFS after a significant rockfall damaged a section of the trail in Hunter's Run, on a parcel of USFS property between Section 16 and Bear Creek Cañon Park. A geotechnical assessment was required by the USFS, and when performed found the rockslide area did not require additional work to mitigate.



Installation is expected to occur later this year.

Recent rainfall also caused some ponding along the landfill, and the cap continues to require ongoing maintenance. For the safety of visitors and to prevent erosion to the landfill cap, we want to remind visitors that the landfill is off-limits. Red Rock Canyon will be receiving a system-wide upgrade to its wayfinding, similar to the wayfinding packages that were installed at Palmer Park and Stratton Open Space.

Finally, record rainfall this year has meant that some trails experienced damage due to runoff, but most of the RRC trail system seems to have fared fairly well. Visitors can always report trail maintenance, safety, or any other issues using the **GoCOS! App**, or at coloradosprings.gov/gocos.

Once a Month

As fellow lovers of Red Rock Canyon Open Space, we invite you to help maintain and beautify our park once a month by picking up trash. This includes plastic water bottles, mylar wrappers, dog poop, and cigarette butts that are left by careless visitors. Unfortunately, to keep our city parklands and open spaces attractive and inviting, it's important for those who care about Red Rock Canyon to devote a bit of time to picking up after visitors who intentionally or unintentionally leave litter along our trails.

Red Rock Canyon to do their part and follow the dictum—if you see it, pick it up.

We suggest that once a month when you do your Red Rock hike, take a plastic bag and gloves and stop at places you like that need some TLC—tender loving care—and pick up any trash left by careless users. If you own a dog, you know all about picking up dog poop.

Doing these simple acts feels good. You're giving back to our wonderful natural parks and making Red Rock Canyon a better and cleaner place.

With their limited time, the park rangers can't do the job alone. It's up to those who care about

New FoRRC Board Member

Hi, my name is Jennifer Vaillancourt, I am the newest member of Friends of Red Rocks Canyon. My husband, Eric and I moved to Colorado Springs 22 years ago and fell in love with the westside, the mountains, parks and community. We share that love of the outdoors and community with our

daughter, Ella and Border Collie, Izzy. I am an avid mountain biker, hiker, and trail explorer. I look forward to sharing my love of the outdoors, trails and community! See you on the trails.
Jenn

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 Tuesday of each month beginning at 6:00 pm, weather permitting.

Leave No Trace

Stick to the Trails, Please! Leave No Trace Principle, Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

Sticking to designated trails is one of the most important and easiest things you can do to protect your favorite natural spaces. Some areas get trampled by thousands of footsteps every day. Trails help concentrate these impacts, protecting the ecological health and scenic beauty of the surrounding area. Some reasons to stay on the trail:

- Undesignated trails (also known as social or user-created trails) suffer from poor design, which leads to greater erosion, poor drainage, and damage to sensitive plants and habitats.
- "Social" trails near rivers have led to increased bank erosion, channel width, and sediment transport.
- Shortcuts are often less safe than the designated trail, increasing the chances for bruises, bumps, and twisted ankles.
- Trail restoration is expensive, takes a long time, and is extremely hard work! Sticking to trails is a way to say "thank you!" to trail-builders.
- Animals quickly learn that trails are not good places to build homes or protect their young,

and will avoid them. Traveling off-trail can frighten wildlife away from vital food and Pwater sources, and cause them to abandon their young.

- What's worse than muddy feet? Ten-foot wide trails that resemble mud pits! When hikers continually hike around, rather than through muddy spots on the trail, trails get wider and muddier, and destroy plants and animal habitat.
- Fewer than 25 passes over sensitive vegetation can permanently damage sensitive plants.

So, whenever in doubt, stick to trails! If you frequently travel in areas without designated trails, watch our video to learn to recognize durable off-trail surfaces like rock, sand, gravel, dry grasses, dry leaves and pine duff. If you can't avoid sensitive areas, be sure to disperse your group so you don't step on the same plant twice. Enjoy your world, and Leave No Trace.

*Adapted from: Team West Leave No Trace's Jessie Johnson and Matt Schneider

The Red Rock Rag

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

NONPROFIT
ORG.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit # 434
COLO SPGS

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



**MEMBERSHIP
RENEWAL DATE**

Board of Directors

President: Dave Schell
Vice President/City Liaison: Shanti Toll
Treasurer/Education Director: David Valier
Secretary: Glenn Pressman



Facebook Editor: Sean McKeown
Daniel Downs: Webmaster
Stewart Green
Jennifer Vaillancourt
Newsletter Editor/Board Alternate:
Jenny Montague

Leave No Trace Seven Principles

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare
 2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
 3. Dispose of Waste Properly
 4. Leave What You Find
 5. Minimize Campfire Impacts
 6. Respect Wildlife
 7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors
- © Leave No Trace: www.LNT.org



friends@RedRockCanyonOpenSpace.org



www.RedRockCanyonOpenSpace.org



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