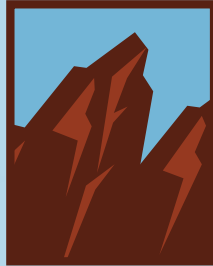


the RED ROCK RAG



FRIENDS OF
**RED ROCK
CANYON**

Volume 26

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

Inside:

- MONTHLY TRAIL PROJECTS 2
- WHITE ACRES.....2
- ANNUAL MTG FORRC 3
- RRC NEEDS YOUR HELP!3
- VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR...3
- RRC CLIMBING UPDATE.....4
- BIKING IN RRC5
- DANTE'S CORNER.....5
- MANY PONDS6-7
- DON ELLIS TR PROPOSAL....8
- MEMBERSHIP PAGE9
- THOUGHTS FROM RANGER ..9
- ONE BAG CHALLENGE 10

Reflections

It's hard to believe it's been over 20 years since the City purchased Red Rock Canyon Open Space- originally about 800 acres. It was a dream come true for the many people who worked tirelessly for years to advocate for the purchase of it and for the extension of the open space tax to pay for it. Since the original purchase, White Acres and Section 16 were also purchased bringing the total open space to almost 1500 acres. The open space experienced a devastating flood in 2015 that caused extensive erosion but also filled the ponds to the very top. The original trails were built by hand by volunteers. What eventually lead me to being a board member began when my wife and I volunteered for the very first trail building event in Red Rock Canyon: a three-day event put on by VOC, Volunteers Outdoor Colorado, establishing the first east-west trail from the quarry to Sand Canyon.

President's Report

We were amazed at what a hundred volunteers could accomplish in three days. It was incredible how we stumbled along a path defined by red flags, tools in hand, at times unable to see the person we were following due to the thick growth. Then to walk back out at the end of the day on a smooth and well-defined trail. Now the majority of trail work is done by machines but still require volunteers for the finishing touches. Trail erosion, corridor clearing, planting, trash pickup and other work are still done by volunteers. So this year if you feel up to it and want to give a little back to our precious open space, consider volunteering for some of the events that will be coming up. If trail work isn't your thing, **we are always looking for new board members.**



www.redrockcanyonopenspace.org

Monthly Trail Projects

Join FoRRC members, as we help improve Red Rock Canyon trails and habitat.

Friends of Red Rock Canyon is working with Ranger Wes to fix some trail problems he doesn't have time for, but they need to get done. The work projects are from 5:00 pm to about 7:45 pm, so we can do it after a day of work or play. Red Rock Canyon Open Space is a blessing for those who need to get out in nature on a regular basis. However, it takes work to maintain trails and the natural environment, especially as more and more of us recreate in the parks and open spaces. Working on trails is a good way to be outside, help the habitat, be with good people, and find a proper balance in life.



We have set up the following workdays this summer and fall.

You need to sign up for the volunteer work/afternoons, so we have enough tools and follow city procedures.

To sign up as a volunteer, go to:

www.redrockcanyonopenspace.org

- May 23 [Thursday]
- June 26 [Wednesday]
- July 25 [Thursday]
- August 28 [Wednesday]
- September 25 [Thursday]
- October 30 [Wednesday]

BEER and Snacks Party after each workday!



White Acres

The City is in the process of purchasing a house and 2.5 acres at the corner of 26th St. and Gold Camp Rd. The parcel and house were part of White Acres since 1955.

The parcel was separated and sold when the City acquired White Acres in 2010 so it could continue to be used by the caretaker as the caretaker's home. The owner of the parcel recently moved and offered it to the City. The purchase has been approved by the TOPS Working Committee and the Parks Advisory Board. It will go to City Council in the near future for final approval. Neighbors will be notified of the sale after the City acquires the property and a public process will be organized.

The City envisions using the house as a Park Ranger office and/or a maintenance facility. An educational center has also been mentioned. In addition the City has suggested a trailhead and public parking lot. The neighbors who have informally learned of the City's plans have spoken out against a public parking lot at that location because it could be a nighttime catch basin for bad behavior.

The current owners moved, in part, because of unpleasant activities taking place outside their home. The final use of the property will be decided after the public process.

Stay tuned for notice of the public meeting.

Annual Meeting of FoRRC June 11th

At our annual meeting you are invited to talk with FoRRC Board of Directors about issues and ideas you have with Red Rock Canyon Open Space. The Board will give updates of what they are working on, the budget of FoRRC, and what needs to be done in the future.

We will also be electing new board members for 2024 & 2025.

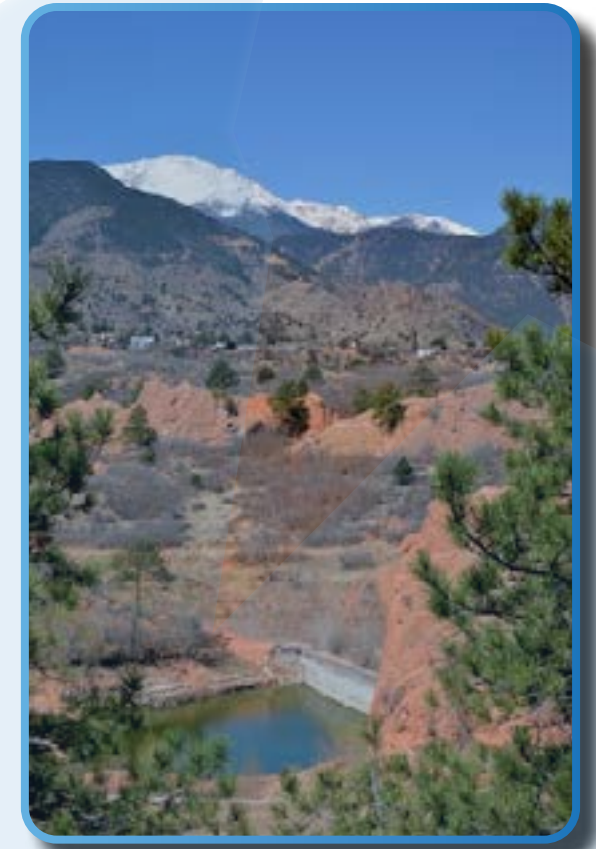
The Meeting will be held at the Manitou Springs Library (515 Manitou Ave.) **at 6 pm on Tuesday June 11th** [use outer steps entrance to the building]

Red Rock Canyon needs your help!

This year some of our Board members are retiring, so if FoRRC is to help provide citizens support to nature and the city government which manages the park, we must get some new Board members. The service you can give to the natural habitat and the Pikes Peak community by being on our Board is important and rewarding.

FoRRC is in the forefront of protecting/guiding the urban/wildland/interface in our part of the planet. Board activities takes only a few hours a month. *Is it time for you to step forward and help?*

Contact Shanti at (719)321-5354 to get more information.



Volunteer of the Year



Congratulations to Friends of Red Rock Board Member **Dan Downs!** He was awarded the Volunteer of the Year by Parks Director Britt Hailey.

Dan has been a valued member of FoRRC for years and his commitment and dedication are truly appreciated

Red Rock Climbing Update

This past winter, a couple members of the Pikes Peak Climber's Alliance (PPCA) received permission to update and replace some of the anchor bolts and lowering/rappelling hardware in Red Rock Canyon. During a mild December spell, they replaced most of the hardware on The Whale with new stainless steel bolts and replaced short lengths of forged steel chain with Mussy hooks.

Mussy hooks are simply steel hooks with a wire gate that opens and closes, allowing a climber to slip the rope into the hook without untying from the rope, and then lowering back to the ground.

The hooks have become popular at climbing areas like Red Rock Canyon that have mostly single-pitch routes. The use of construction-style Mussy Hooks haven't been successful since repeated lowering causes the edges of the steel to get sharp, which can possibly cut a climbing rope. The company Climb Tech reinvented the Mussy hook as a climbing anchor by using zinc-plated hardened steel and a smooth wire gate, making them safer.

The jury is out for at least a year to see how Mussy hooks will wear at Red Rock Canyon. Sand at the bottom of climbing routes works into a rope so that it is more abrasive when running through metal hardware like chains, Mussy hooks, and aluminum carabiners. Also, the wire clip gates on Mussy hooks wear out, break, become difficult to open, or fall off. Use caution if the hooks are missing their gates since the possibility exists that the rope can slip off the hooks.



It's important for Red Rock Canyon climbers to safely use Mussy hooks by following these guidelines:

- Use Mussy hooks only for lowering or rappelling.
- Don't top-rope routes by running your rope directly through the anchor; in this case the Mussy hooks. It leads to unnecessary wear to the hardware and causes them to wear out faster.
- Instead, clip carabiners directly into the anchor bolts and rig an equalized anchor with either slings or quickdraws. As always, use locking carabiners whenever possible for safety.
- Do not climb above the Mussy hooks if that is your only anchor. The rope can become unclipped from the hooks, leaving you unprotected. If you insist on climbing above them, clip the rope into a quickdraw.



Biking in RRC

A new breed of bicycle is gaining popularity on our local trails and roads, and no, we're not talking about e-bikes. With curved-drop handlebars, a traditional double-diamond frame, and a (usually) rigid fork, a gravel bike could easily be mistaken for a road bike (or for those over a certain age, a "10-speed"). But modern gravel bikes have some subtle but important differences that separate them from their road brethren, making them more suitable for off-road adventures.

Gravel bikes borrow some cues from the mountain biking world: wider, knobbier tires, typically on wider, more durable rims; powerful hydraulic disc brakes; "relaxed" frame geometries that are more stable on technical/steep terrain; and sometimes even a little bit of suspension. These modifications create a bike that's easier and more efficient to pedal on paved surfaces than a typical mountain bike (making the commute to the trails more pleasant), but also much more capable than a traditional road bike on dirt roads, paths, and even narrow singletrack.



With dozens of miles of multi-use trails, stunning views, and easy access off of US Highway 24, Red Rock Canyon Open Space has long been a great place to explore with a mountain bike. And while there are a few trails (like Upper Codell and Upper Section 16) that are technical enough to really take advantage of full-suspension trail bikes, a majority of the trails in Red Rock Canyon lend themselves to gravel bike riding.

Mesa Trail, Red Rock Canyon Trail, Red Rock Rim Trail, and Upper Hogback Valley Trail are the obvious places to start, given that they are essentially old dirt roads with plenty of width and relatively modest grades. Similarly, easier singletrack trails such as Lower Sand Canyon, Greenlee, and the newly rerouted (and narrowed) Lower Hogback Valley are excellent choices to explore and to get a feel for what a gravel bike can handle. As skills and confidence grow, steeper, more challenging options open up for gravel riders, such as Round Up, Palmer Trail, Overlook Trail, and the newly rebuilt Waterfall Trail. And for those with strong mountain biking skills and experience, Intemann Trail, Parallel Trail, and even the rocky Ridgeline Trail are viable on a gravel bike.

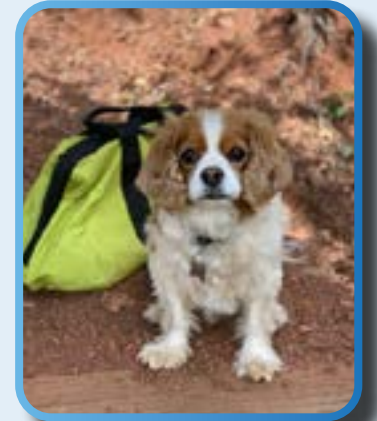
So if you see a cyclist riding a slightly odd-looking drop-bar bike with wide tires in Red Rock Canyon, don't assume they're lost. They might be a mountain biker looking for a new challenge on familiar trails, or a roadie who prefers getting away from cars and off the beaten (paved) path.

Dante's Corner

As a dog I can say, "I love Red Rock Canyon". My fellow dogs are friendly and smell good when we get to sniff each other.

I really appreciate it when our human partners pick up our poop and carry the poop bags away. I wish I could do that myself, because I like nature that is kept clean and beautiful to smell. Thank you, humans, for taking care of us dogs and our Red Rock Canyon.

PS: The dog park is a great place to hang out with friends.



Many ponds over the years

**Most of this article is taken directly from the writings of Don Ellis, (the community leader most responsible for having RRC being saved as a public open space. Don passed in 2018.



We all know the pond near the pavilion in Red Rock Canyon, which many treasure and hope to restore, is man-made. "It is far from being the first man-made pond in Red Rock Canyon.

The first man-made pond was not intended to be a pond at all. It was simply the lowest level in one of the quarries, an enclosed rectangular area which filled with water and looked much like a swimming pool. Once the quarry had shut down, this pool came to be used as a swimming hole by some of the local kids. One of those kids, 13 year old Harrell Ross, drowned in the pool in 1904. "The pool was still there when I visited Red Rock Canyon in the early 1950s. By then, it had become home to quite a few mudpuppies, large and memorably strange looking with their prominent external gills. They might have been perfectly content to share their pool with me, but I had little inclination to swim with them."

The location of this pond today is most likely the upper parking lot off Highway 24, by the picnic area. This was once Snyder Quarry.

An old newspaper story states "His (John G. Bock's) first improvement project when he bought the property was to build a four-hundred foot wide earth dam across Red Rock Canyon in back of his home, which is on the south side of Fountain Creek. . . . During the past eighteen years he has built seven other dams in Red Rock and Greenlee Canyons. They range in size from twenty to four hundred feet wide. Bock says they are small dams, but are essential to maintaining the beauty of the land. They have proved practical and have stood the test of time, Bock said. He added that he has never had one of his dams wash away." John Bock built eight dams. Except for the "quarry hole", these probably impounded only shallow ponds, which filled after a storm and soon dried out again. One could have been a low dam built between today's pavilion and the Quarry Pass Trail, which today is dry and full of vegetation. John Bock's sons, John S. and Richard, developed a grandiose plan in their "Red Rock Canyon Project" development. Their plan included 13 perennial lakes and ponds, 5 in Sand Canyon, 3 in Red

Rock Canyon, and 2 in Black Bear Canyon, which is the side canyon off Red Rock Canyon south of the large Kenmuir (Greenlee) quarries.

Though the "Red Rock Canyon Project" was never developed, dams were built for 5 ponds. Along with these ponds was The South Pond, which was created by the former landfill in Gypsum Canyon. The landfill acted to impound the water flowing in Gypsum Canyon, and at times still does today. Many of these ponds have been breached over time and no longer exist today. During heavy rain storms in 2015, a small earth filled dam in Sand Canyon was breached causing a flood.

Red Rock Canyon Open Space was closed because of this flooding. The City needed to drain the West Pond to prevent another dam failure. Recently the West Pond was filled in and upper Red Rock Canyon was reformed and landscaped.

John S. Bock did use a valve located off the West Pond to control the release of water into the pond by his home, the



(Continued from previous page)

Pavilion Pond. He was able to make a one time purchase of water for his pond in 1976, during a time of drought. Water was purchased from the City of Colorado Springs and pumped from Fountain Creek up to the pond.

Another way the pond was kept filled during the Bock years was by a well that was drilled in 1976. In 2000, the 500' well was backfilled, leaving a 39' deep well producing 1-2 gallons per minute. The City has since sealed the well. Their reasons were the water was "bad" and problems with vandalization of the well and solar equipment running the well.

The Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services decided to abandon the water tap and water line which had previously served the Bock residence. This water line could have helped fill the Pavilion ponds during times of drought. While our immediate problem is to fill and save the Pavilion pond, the entire array of dams that were built catches the storm water and reduces storm water run-off into Fountain Creek. The Red Rock Canyon dams did help the City to meet its obligation to avoid downstream flooding. In 1999, the South Pond, above the former landfill, was close to 30 feet deep and retained nearly 25 acre feet of water.

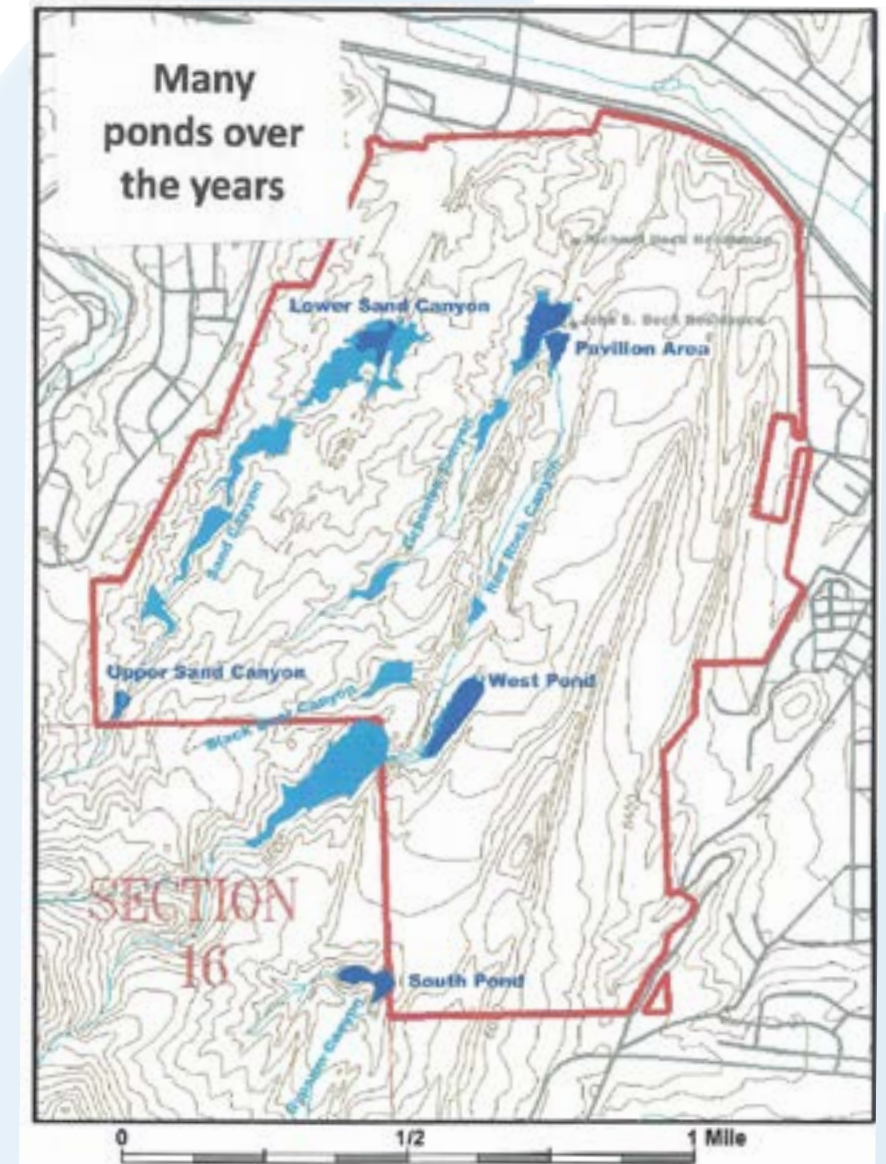
Most of these ponds are gone today.

The only remaining ponds are the Pavilion Pond and the Lower Pond below the dam. Today both ponds are very shallow and look much like mud pits.

To save these ponds for the future, much work needs to be done. Work on one or both ponds, similar to what work has been done to the ponds in Monument Valley Park, can only be done at considerable expense, whether it be from



City funds or from donations. Thus, the City has the power to determine which ponds are left in Red Rock Canyon today and in the future.



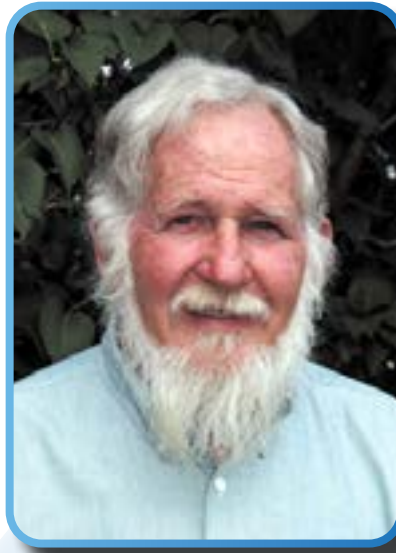
Don Ellis Trail Proposal

The Board of Directors (BOD) of Friends of Red Rock Canyon (FORRC) has been advocating a trail name change with the city since March of 2021.

We have requested the White Acres Trail be renamed to the **Don Ellis Trail**.

The reason for this name change for those of you who knew Don or knew of him would be obvious. For those of you who didn't know Don, he was a local historian who played a key role in saving Red Rock Canyon and White Acres open space areas, being involved in the exploration and mapping of the geology of Red Rock Canyon, as well as the preservation of its historic buildings.

His contributions are commemorated in the Second Edition of *Geologic Folio Red Rock Canyon Open Space*. Don co-authored this book, which covers the geology, history, and preservation efforts related to Red Rock Canyon and Colorado Springs.



Here is a link from the West Side Pioneer that details his history on the west side: <https://westsidepioneer.com/Articles/111218/DonEllis.html>

Our efforts to change this trail name began in March 2021. Shortly thereafter, we were advised that the parks department supported this change and would bring it to the Parks Advisory Board for a decision. This never happened, and over the next year and a half we were not advised of any status on the matter. Calls and emails to the city were not answered. In early 2023 we were finally advised that the city had no trail naming policy.

We were asked to make a presentation to the TOPS Working Committee. Our presentation received positive responses but we knew the TOPS Working Committee was not the approval authority. We were told a park policy on memorial trail naming would be developed. Keep in mind, currently there is the Lori Cohen Trail, Edwin Carter Trail, Spencer Penrose Trail, Helen Hunt Jackson Trail, and others. There are also parks named after individuals such as Lu Lu Pollard Park, and a host of others.

In July of 2023 FORRC wrote a letter again asking for this change and again, no response to date. The lack of a City policy has not stopped Parks staff from renaming several trails in Red Rock Canyon. We also knew there was a wayfinding process in place for Red Rock Canyon (now almost complete) and we urged the city to make this name change before new signage was installed and new maps developed, all to no avail. The Board of Directors of Red Rock Canyon Open Space has not given up on this endeavor and will continue to urge the city to complete this simple task of renaming the White Acres trail to commemorate Don Ellis.



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

Thoughts from your Park Ranger

On a hike several weeks ago, I was enamored by one of my favorite Spring sightings: pasqueflowers. The site of these early-budding flowers is a sure sign that Spring has sprung and that summer is just around the corner. As our park staff gear up for the busiest part of the year, I want to reflect and share some of our recent accomplishments, as well as updates for our open space enthusiasts.



- Work on the 2023 Red Rock Canyon Improvement was completed this Fall/Winter, with improvements made to the Section 16, Parallel, Scenic Overlook, Chamberlain (formerly Hogback Valley), Sand Canyon, and Roundup Trails.
 - The weather has warmed up enough for decals to be applied to wayfinding posts which were installed earlier this year, which will help with navigation for newcomers and frequent visitors alike.
 - This project also included the removal of an illegal pond on the property, and naturalization of this site. The site was revegetated with native plants, and is greening up nicely! Our staff and partners will be continuing to monitor and work in the area. A huge thanks to the hard work from our friends at FoRRC, Ute pass Elementary, and Rocky Mountain Field Institute for their hard work.
 - On this note, I'd like to remind all visitors of the importance of using designated trails. A few of the old trail alignments remain in use, despite being closed due to their unsustainability. Continuing to use these old trail beds undoes much of the hard work put into them, requiring we re-close them- this prevents us from working on other improvements. Old trail alignments are closed with purpose.
 - We have also recently improved trail connectivity between Section 16 and Bear Creek
- This last year was a banner year for volunteerism at Red Rock Canyon: Volunteers helped repair the connector trail between Mesa and Intemann Tr, construct new features in the MTB skills park, improve climber access, plant nearly 600 native plants in the aforementioned reclamation site, and adopt/improve the downhill bike jump line! Volunteerism is a "force multiplier" which enables our staff to do far more than they could alone. This year, FoRRC will host several workdays; we hope to see you there! Lastly, our department is welcoming four new rangers to our staff, to fill vacant positions. If you happen to see us out and about, please say "hello"!

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



Board Alternate

Newsletter Editor: Jenny Montague



TOSC's One Bag Challenge

Will you take the "One Bag Challenge?" The Trails and Open Space Coalition is challenging everyone who visits a trail or park to take a bag with them

to pick up a few piece of litter. Any bag. An old shopping bag, chip bag, fast food bag, a ziplock bag. It doesn't matter what the bag looks like, TOSC wants the community take a couple minutes to pick up trash on each adventure they go on. At Red Rock Canyon Open Space, just having a

bag with you to pick up a little bit of litter around your car or at one of the main trailheads in the park will make a difference.

Removing this litter will protect sensitive habitats, protect water quality and enhance the recreation experience for visitors. When you go out and pick up trash, take a picture of what you find and DM TOSC on Instagram ([@TrailsandOpenSpace](https://www.instagram.com/TrailsandOpenSpace)).

Want more information?

Visit trailsandopenspaces.org/onebag.

 friends@RedRockCanyonOpenSpace.org



www.RedRockCanyonOpenSpace.org



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