

# THE RED ROCK RAG

Volume 3, Number 8

News and Views on Red Rock Canyon

August, 2002

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P. O. Box 2352, Colorado Springs, CO 80901-2352

[www.saveredrockcanyon.com](http://www.saveredrockcanyon.com)

## We wait, with cautious optimism.

The dialog between the Trust for Public Land and representatives for the Red Rock Canyon interests of Joan Bock is continuing. While details of the dialog are of course confidential, we understand that the interaction continues to be positive and may be moving toward a possible sale agreement for the Red Rock Canyon property.

Seemingly, for the time being the best thing we can offer to the process is our patience.

### *Our Thanks*

The Red Rock Canyon Committee wishes to express its appreciation to the following people for their contributions toward the Red Rock Canyon Committee's operating expenses during the past month.

Jo Cervone  
Jillien Morga

We would also like to express our appreciation to the Village at Skyline for providing our meeting room.

## Please keep out.

In early July, Joan Bock contacted the Red Rock Canyon Committee to let us know in a cordial yet firm manner that she has hired a security team for her entire Red Rock Canyon property, and that anyone caught trespassing will be arrested.

Mrs. Bock noted that she'd had not only trespassers, but graffiti and fires on the property as well.

### EDITORIAL

## Will we merge?

Now that the Red Rock Canyon Foundation has been formed, some people have been asking whether the Red Rock Canyon Committee is going to merge with the Red Rock Canyon Foundation.

The answer, of course, will be up to the people who comprise the Red Rock Canyon Committee.

The Red Rock Canyon Foundation has been created as a formal nonprofit corporation which is seeking 501(c)(3) status, while the Red Rock Canyon Committee is an informal, ad hoc, citizens' group. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, the Red Rock Canyon Foundation will be required to abide by certain broad limitations on its political activity, whereas the Red Rock Canyon Committee has no such limitations. When the Red Rock Canyon Foundation was formed, it was formed as a separate entity because the Red Rock Canyon Committee had previously engaged in political activity, some of which may have been outside the limits imposed on 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations. And, it seemed appropriate to make the clearest distinction possible between the Foundation's future and the Committee's past.

So, we now have a nonpolitical Foundation and a separate organization which, at least, has been politically active in the past. The creation of such parallel organizations, where one is "political", is rather common and has been used by organizations as diverse as the National Federation of Independent Businesses and the American Civil Liberties Union.

Right now, we don't know whether the political flexibility of an ad hoc citizens' group will be valuable in promoting Red Rock Canyon open space in the future, or not. Since we don't know, it makes sense to preserve our dual identity for now, just as it often makes sense to take a raincoat when you don't know if it's going to rain.

In the future, and I hope the not too distant future, we may move past the potential need for political activity. Then, it will make sense for the Red Rock Canyon Committee to dissolve and transfer whatever assets it may have to the Red Rock Canyon Foundation. Until then, I suggest that we should keep our dual identity, and keep our raincoats handy.

Don Ellis

**CALENDAR****Meetings of Possible Interest:**

- August 1 **Red Rock Canyon Committee**  
7:00 P.M. Village at Skyline (off Lower Gold Camp Road), Activities Room, Building No. 4 (The Easternmost Building - enter from the parking lot north of the building)
- August 6 Manitou Springs City Council  
7:00 P.M. Manitou Springs City Hall  
606 Manitou Avenue
- August 13 Colorado Springs City Council  
9:00 A.M. City Council Chambers,  
The historic City Hall, Nevada & Kiowa
- August 14 **TOPS Working Committee**  
4:00 P.M. Colorado Springs  
Parks and Recreation Building  
1401 Recreation Way  
(East of I-25, 2 blocks north of Uintah)
- August 20 Manitou Springs City Council  
7:00 P.M. Manitou Springs City Hall  
606 Manitou Avenue
- August 27 Colorado Springs City Council  
9:00 A.M. City Council Chambers,  
The historic City Hall, Nevada & Kiowa
- August 28 **TOPS Working Committee**  
7:30 A.M. Colorado Springs  
Parks and Recreation Building  
1401 Recreation Way  
(East of I-25, 2 blocks north of Uintah)
- August 28 **Manitou Springs Open Space  
Advisory Committee**  
7:00 P.M. Manitou Springs City Hall  
606 Manitou Avenue

NOTE: Scheduled meetings can be subject to change or cancellation.

Check these web pages within a week of scheduled meeting for items of interest:

Colorado Springs City government:  
[www.springsgov.com](http://www.springsgov.com)

El Paso County government:  
[www.elpasoco.com](http://www.elpasoco.com)

Also, check the CONO web site for related announcements and links:  
[www.cscono.org](http://www.cscono.org)

**TIDBITS****Horned Lizards**

When I was in grade school at Midland School half a mile east of the Red Rock Canyon property, "horny toads" were a common creature to be contemplated during recess. Frequently, the "horny toads" arrived at the play ground in boys' pockets. But, they usually hadn't been transported very far. Bott Park just across the street, still native in its vegetation (or lack thereof), was a pretty good place to catch them. We all knew that you could turn a "horny toad" on its back in the palm of your hand and "hypnotize" it by stroking its belly. Some "horny toads" had white bellies, and some had yellow bellies. Folklore around school held that "yellow bellies" would give you warts.

Close to home, a mile and a half south of Midland School we had a lot of lizards. They were slender, very fast and adorned with turquoise colored bits. But we had none of the pancake shaped, awkward lizards called "horny toads." It seemed strange to me that somewhere half way between school and home I stopped finding "horny toads" and found other lizards instead.

Informed by a little maturity and education, I surmise that the range of horned lizards in my old neighborhood was limited by differences in the color of the soil. The "soil" around Midland School is Pierre Shale which is a slightly brown shade of medium gray, almost the color of our horned lizards' backs, which provides a good background for the lizards' camouflage. But, as the horned lizards might venture onto the yellow shale and white limestone of the Niobrara formation or the somewhat orange colored alluvial gravel they would be easily seen by potential predators. My recent reading of the little book *Horned Lizards* by Wade Sherbrooke has tended to confirm this. Sherbrooke devotes considerable attention to the horned lizards' camouflage and its importance to their survival: Color is one important factor, and different populations living in environments with different soil colors have developed different skin colors. The low profile of the pancake shaped horned lizard also helps to make the lizard less visible to predators since it casts very little shadow. The edges of any shadow which would indicate the shape of the lizard are softened by the effect of a fringe of enlarged scales along the margin of the abdomen of most horned lizards. And, the patterns of darker coloration on their backs makes it more difficult for predators to recognize horned lizards by their shape.

Horned lizards, which belong to the same family as iguanas, are native only to western North America. Their range extends over the arid and semiarid regions from southernmost Mexico to southernmost Canada. In all, there are 13 species of horned lizards. All are found in Mexico and 7 live in the United States. Our

local horned lizards are short horned lizards (*Phrynosoma douglassi*). The name short horned lizards refers to the "horns" around the back of the head being shorter than those of other species. Short horned lizards are also characterized by a single row of fringe scales along the borders of the abdomen and a deep, wide central notch between the horns on the back of the head. This notch is unique to the short horned lizard. All other horned lizards have a more or less continuous collar of horns across the back of the head.

Whether the horns of horned lizards are short or long, they offer another defense against predators, making horned lizards difficult for birds and snakes to swallow. One more defense which some horned lizards have is the unusual ability to squirt fine streams of blood from their eyes. Only a few species are able to do this, and our short horned lizards are not among the species endowed with this capability.

In the evening, horned lizards wiggle their way into the soil or sand and spend the night buried for protection and warmth. Winter, to the horned lizard, is like a very long night during which the buried lizard hibernates.

Horned lizards mate in the Spring after coming out of hibernation. Our short horned lizard mothers carry their fertilized eggs to term and give birth to baby lizards after a gestation period which can last up to three months. A mother short horned lizard gives birth to her babies one after another with only a few minutes between births. And, she may give birth to as many as

four dozen babies. At birth the babies are surrounded by liquid encased in a transparent membrane. A minute or so after birth, they struggle to break through the membrane and take their first breaths. Within half an hour after birth the baby short horned lizards are fully active and on their own.

Short horned lizards are unique in having live births. All other species of horned lizards lay eggs in well concealed underground nests, instead. Because of this, the other species are limited to hotter climates than the short horned lizard.

Of course, the common but erroneous name "horny toad" refers to the toad-like appearance of horned lizards with their broad bodies and lumpy skin. Horned lizards are also toad-like in the manner in which they pick up insects (mostly ants) with a flick of the tongue and in the way they inflate themselves when molested. And, like toads, horned lizards have a rather awkward gait, though they don't hop. The genus name, *Phrynosoma* actually means "toad bodied."

With Bott Park now covered by sod and the horned lizards' roadside homes having been usurped by curbs and sidewalks, the Westside urban habitat of the horned lizard has been reduced over the years. The eastern edge of the Red Rock Canyon property, along the base of the hogbacks, is still a place where we will be likely to find horned lizards when we are able to go there.

Don Ellis

## Red Rock Canyon Foundation - MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership dues: \_\_\_\_\_ (\$25 suggested)

Membership level (8 month commitment - check one)

- Supporter (willing to write occasionally e-mails or letters)
- Helper (willing to volunteer 5 to 10 hours a month)
- Leader (willing to volunteer 3 to 6 hours a week)

Areas of interest for volunteering

- Computer support
- Brochure or grant writer
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_
- Worker
- Community outreach

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Send this membership form to:

**Red Rock Canyon Foundation**  
2207 W. Colorado Ave  
Colorado Springs, CO 80904

**YES, I WANT TO SUPPORT THE RED ROCK CANYON COMMITTEE!**

- Enclosed is my contribution to the Red Rock Canyon Committee for operating expenses  
(Check payable to "Red Rock Canyon Committee", not tax deductible)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Do \_\_\_\_\_ Don't acknowledge my contribution in the Red Rock Rag
- I want to be involved  
My efforts could best be used for: \_\_\_\_\_
- Keep me informed with the **RED ROCK RAG**.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

For more information, contact **Linda Hodges** at the **Trails and Open Space Coalition**: 633-6884,  
or e-mail: [help@saveredrockcanyon.com](mailto:help@saveredrockcanyon.com)

**Opinions expressed in THE RED ROCK RAG are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Red Rock Canyon Committee.**

**WE WANT YOUR INPUT!**

Letters, articles, comments may be sent to:

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Electronic submissions may be sent to:

[rag@saveredrockcanyon.com](mailto:rag@saveredrockcanyon.com)

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