

THE RED ROCK RAG

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News and Views on Red Rock Canyon

December, 2003

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

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It's a done deal!

In authorizing certificates of participation up to \$15.5 million for the Red Rock Canyon purchase on October 28, the Colorado Springs City Council made the last official decision they need to make in order for the City to purchase Red Rock Canyon. The authorization passed by a 6 to 2 vote. Mayor Rivera recused himself because a financial service firm he works for could be involved with the certificates of participation.

The authorization for \$15.5 million assures that money from the certificates of participation will cover all acquisition costs, which are actually expected to be closer to \$14.8 million.

The City closed on its purchase of Red Rock Canyon from the Trust for Public Land on November 25. So, **It's a done deal!**

Our Thanks

The Red Rock Canyon Committee wishes to express its appreciation members of the Colorado Springs City Council for their support for Red Rock Canyon Open Space.

We also wish to express our appreciation to the Red Rock Canyon Foundation for its support for the Red Rock Rag and to the Village at Skyline for providing our meeting room.

Give us your thoughts

The January issue of the Red Rock Rag will celebrate of the success of the effort to preserve Red Rock Canyon Open Space. We will look forward to the future of Red Rock Canyon and back to the effort which has brought us to where we are. We would like to present a variety of viewpoints and hope that you will contribute yours with a short essay, poem, editorial, story, or whatever you are moved to contribute. (E-mail to rag@saveredrockcanyon.com or mail to Red Rock Canyon Committee / P.O. Box 2352 / Colorado Springs, CO 80901-2352)

Thank you.

Passing the torch

About a year and a half ago, advocates for Red Rock Canyon Open Space created the Red Rock Canyon Foundation. The Red Rock Canyon Foundation was incorporated as a nonprofit entity patterned after Cheyenne Commons. The Red Rock Canyon Foundation anticipates making ongoing contributions in the same way as the Friends of Cheyenne Canyon or Friends of the Garden of the Gods.

Even after the Red Rock Canyon Foundation was incorporated, though, advocates for Red Rock Canyon Open Space anticipated that the effort to preserve Red Rock Canyon might still involve political activities which would be unseemly for a nonprofit foundation. Such activities, if any, would continue to be the province of the existing ad hoc citizens' group, the Red Rock Canyon Committee.

Now that the creation of Red Rock Canyon Open Space is assured, the Red Rock Canyon Committee has recognized that there no longer appears to be a need for a separate ad hoc citizens' group. So, at its November meeting the Red Rock Canyon Committee voted to dissolve effective in January of 2004 and to transfer its residual assets to the Red Rock Canyon Foundation.

Thus, the torch of advocacy for Red Rock Canyon will pass completely to the Red Rock Canyon Foundation.

December meeting to review trail plan

The last issue of the Red Rock Rag featured a draft version of a trail plan for Red Rock Canyon Open Space. Our intent is to present our suggested trail plan to the Colorado Springs Department of Parks Recreation and Cultural Services as a resource for their development of the Master Plan for Red Rock Canyon. Since we published the trail plan, we have received several suggestions and comments which will be incorporated into the plan which we will offer to the City.

At the December 4 joint meeting of the Red Rock Canyon Foundation and Red Rock Canyon Committee, we will review the updated plan and discuss any additional suggestions for the plan.

At the December meeting, the Red Rock Canyon Foundation will also set the time and date for its 2004 Annual Meeting.

Directors Needed

To date, much of Red Rock Canyon Foundation's emphasis has been on facilitating and encouraging the passage of the TOPS Extension and the subsequent acquisition of Red Rock Canyon by the Trust for Public Land, and ultimately the City of Colorado Springs. As our focus turns from ensuring public ownership of the property, it is our intent that Red Rock Canyon Foundation will continue to play an important role in the protection of Red Rock Canyon. We anticipate that the Foundation will remain actively involved in planning, fund raising efforts, and maintenance projects related to Red Rock Canyon on a long term basis.

We are currently seeking individuals interested in assisting with those efforts by serving on Red Rock Canyon Foundation's board of directors. At this vital juncture, Red Rock Canyon Foundation is presented with an opportunity to serve the City of Colorado Springs as an important steward of one of the Pikes Peak region's greatest natural treasures. In large part, the Foundation's role will be defined and carried out by board of directors. Those interested in the possibility of serving on the board of directors should call Shanti Toll at (719) 634-1810 or Brad Bufkin at (719) 227-0689.

Red Rock Canyon Foundation will select its new Board members and officers at its 2004 annual meeting. Those interested in learning more about the future of Red Rock Canyon Foundation are encouraged to attend. The time and location of the annual meeting will be determined at the December 4 joint Foundation / Committee meeting and announced by e-mail and in the January Red Rock Rag.

Brad Bufkin
Vice President
Red Rock Canyon Foundation

CALENDAR:

Meetings of Possible Interest

December 4 **Red Rock Canyon Committee / Foundation**
7:00 P.M. Village at Skyline (off Lower Gold Camp Road), Activities Room, Building No. 4
(The Easternmost Building - enter from the

December 10 **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)

December 22 **Manitou Springs Open Space Advisory Committee**
7:00 P.M. Manitou Springs City Hall
606 Manitou Avenue

Red Rock Canyon Foundation President's Report, December, 2003

We congratulate the City of Colorado Springs for the purchase of the Bock property.

The Foundation is advocating for substantial access to the Red Rock Canyon. While we recognize that the city has security responsibilities and that the city's planning process may take a long time, we encourage the Park and Recreation Department to find creative, safe and abundant ways for the citizens to see this wonderful land. The Foundation has offered its services and people to the city to make public access possible next year.

The Foundation also strongly advocates open public process in the planning and development of the Red Rock open space park. We encourage the Park and Recreation Department to listen to the suggestions of the Red Rock Canyon advocates, recognizing that they are the people that care and have organized to protect the land for future generations.

Hikes on the Land

It does our hearts good to see the hikers these Saturdays of October and November exploring the beauty of Red Rock Canyon (figuratively and literally). The enthusiasm of the hikers is genuine as they share and experience the wonders of this land. We wish to thank Linda Hodges, Don Ells, Joe Fabeck and all the others who have volunteered to supervise the hikes and make public access possible. If you missed the guided hikes this fall, the city has expressed willingness to have guided hikes next year. We will keep you informed.

December Red Rock Canyon Advocate Meeting

December 4th will be the next meeting of the Committee and Foundation. This will be the last meeting of the Red Rock Canyon Committee. Don Ells will lead a review and public input session on suggested trail plan for Red Rock Canyon. Please come and give your thoughts. We will also choose the time for the Red Rock Canyon Foundation's 2004 annual meeting. Please think about what you would like to see the Foundation do during the coming year.

2004 Annual Meeting coming up

The annual meeting of the Red Rock Canyon Foundation is important for a number of reasons and we ask you to attend. We will set our yearly goals for the Foundation. The Red Rock Canyon Foundation could go in a number of helpful and meaningful directions. We would like your feedback. With the usage of the acreage near highway 24 up in the air, we will need strong advocates with vision to make this open space park be truly outstanding. At our annual meeting we will also be electing a new board and setting up working committees to help guide the planning and development process of the open space park. Please consider volunteering for the Red Rock Canyon Foundation. It is a worthy public service that will help nature and benefit future generations. Call Shanti at 634-1810 if you are willing to be on the Red Rock Canyon Foundation Board or would like to nominate a person for the board.

Shanti Toll

ESSAY:

Hogback Memories

My parents wanted a home of their own, but couldn't afford a thousand dollar house in town. So, in 1944 my family spent \$100 to buy three acres of land a couple miles south of Colorado Avenue. Our first home there was a "house on wheels" with no plumbing of any sort. Our house had wheels with wooden spokes and was only 6 by 12 feet. We lived in the "house on wheels" while my father built the garage for our real house. Then, we lived in the garage while we built the rest of the house.

West of our new home was a lot of wild country. So, my mother and I had a lot of exploring to do.

The first part of Red Rock Canyon we explored was the south end in Section 16. I walked along the crest of the ridge of red sandstone. Found a little arch that I could reach through and shake hands with myself. Saw a twisted dead tree that had grown in a crack in the rock and been bent by the wind. Watched mosquito larvae in a bathtub-size rain water pool in the rock on top of the ridge. Experienced joy and wonder. Marveled at it all. I was no more than eight the first time we went there.

In the early 1950's we drove up Red Rock Canyon. In the bottom of one of the quarries we found a deep rectangular pool, like a swimming pool, with large mud puppies swimming in it. By that time, Mr. Bock had already removed the remnants of the railroad and the "town" which had supported the quarries. But, the large company safe from one of the quarry companies was still lying in Red Rock Canyon below the Snider Quarry. When we walked through the Snider Quarry, we found the one remaining building from the quarry operations, a small stone building in Greenlee Canyon. My mother thought it might have been a depot. Hiking on an old wagon road from Red Rock Canyon, we came to a narrow canyon between two red cliffs. On the wall of this canyon, as high up as a grown man could reach, was a carefully carved inscription: 1900. The monumental quarries, the safe, the stone building, the inscription led me to imagine that wild west time so long, long ago in 1900.

Now that I'm close to half as old as the state of Colorado, 1900 doesn't really seem like it would have been so long, long ago.

Once, hiking along the cliff of white Fort Hayes limestone on the lower hogback, we found a slot in the cliff just wide enough to slip through. Behind the slot softer stone had been eroded into a ramp which let me walk to the top of the ridge unseen. ... And, another wild west fantasy unfolded in my mind.

A white haired gentle man named Mr. White owned 45 acres on the hogback where he grazed his horses. He gave us permission to hike on his land. We weren't entirely conscientious in observing his property lines and often explored quite a bit of his neighbors' property, too. I found some arrowheads and carefully recorded where I'd found them, in my little green grade school notebook.

A wagon road had once gone through the Dakota Hogback where the landfill road is now. But, the wagon road had become a ravine. In that ravine, I found well preserved leaf fossils in the Dakota sandstone. This route through the hogback was guarded on both sides by Ute fortification walls. I didn't know what the walls were until a few years later when I read about them in a newspaper article. To the west, this dip opened into a beautiful little valley with a backdrop of white Purgatory sandstone. A magical place. Beyond the white sandstone wall the land leveled out into a small sloping mesa before dropping away into the canyon. Once, when I came to the crest of the white wall, I saw a herd of 13 deer bounding down the west side. Deer weren't so common then; and I felt almost like I had been blessed to see a herd of 13.

Near the bottom of the canyon beyond this little mesa, I found a deep hole three or four feet across. I couldn't see the bottom; and the sides sloped away from the entrance as the hole got bigger further down. The rock there was gypsum. I thought the hole might go into a gypsum cave. But it was probably a gypsum mine instead. This was Gypsum Canyon where gypsum had been mined in the 1800's. I could never figure out how to go down the hole to explore, and always wished I had.

The quarry company safe has been removed from Red Rock Canyon. The small stone building is no longer in Greenlee Canyon. The inscription from 1900 is hiding under a few feet of landfill material. The floor of my magical valley has been bulldozed. No one will ever explore that mysterious hole in the gypsum which is now 100 feet below the reclaimed landfill surface.

Still, the hogbacks, the ridges of Red Rock Canyon Open Space, remain magical for the young soul. Now, their magic will be there for your grandchildren and their children. Their beauty will be there for everyone. Their history and geology will inform generations of students.

And, now, at last, these ridges will be reclaimed and preserved rather than damaged and desecrated.

THANK YOU to everyone who has helped to bring us to this point!

Don Ellis

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.

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Red Rock Canyon Foundation - MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

_____ Membership donation: (checks payable to Red Rock Canyon Foundation)

Membership level

Supporter (wanting to be kept informed)

Helper (willing to work on occasional committee or help with work projects)

Leader (willing to volunteer a few hours a month)

Areas of interest for volunteering: _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Send this membership form to:

Red Rock Canyon Foundation

2207 W. Colorado Ave

Colorado Springs, CO 80904

(Phone 634-1810)

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

THE RED ROCK FLAG

Red Rock Canyon Committee

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