

THE RED ROCK RAG

Volume 4, Number 5

News and Views on Red Rock Canyon

May, 2003

Published Monthly by THE RED ROCK CANYON COMMITTEE

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

www.saveredrockcanyon.com

TOPS meetings focus on Red Rock Canyon

At its April 23 meeting, the TOPS Working Committee passed a resolution recommending that "the City take the necessary steps to enable TPL to secure a contract to purchase the Red Rock Canyon property on behalf of the City" The resolution (see below) will go before the Park Board on May 8 and is expected to be presented to the Colorado Springs City Council at its May 12 work session.

In order to have more discussion of Red Rock Canyon before the May 8 Park Board meeting, the TOPS Working Committee has rescheduled its next meeting for Wednesday, May 7.

The May 7 TOPS Working Committee meeting is expected to be devoted largely to Red Rock Canyon. The meeting will be at 4:00 P.M. at the Colorado

Springs Parks and Recreation Building at 1401 Recreation Way. The Parks and Recreation Building is located 2 blocks north of Uintah just east of I-25 and is reached by taking Glen Avenue north from Uintah.

Our Thanks

The Red Rock Canyon Committee wishes to express its appreciation to the Red Rock Canyon Foundation for its support of the Red Rock Rag.

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

Resolution

TOPS Working Committee

Whereas the acquisition of the greater part of the Red Rock Canyon property has long been one of the TOPS program's highest priorities, and,

Whereas The Trust for Public Land (TPL) has an option on this property that is due to expire shortly and allowing the property to fall out of contract could jeopardize TPL and the City's ability to purchase it, and,

Whereas the due diligence on this property is expected to be completed successfully soon, therefore,

The TOPS Working Committee recommends the City take the necessary steps to enable TPL to secure a contract to purchase the Red Rock Canyon property on behalf of the City with the understanding that the greater part of the land would be purchased as public open space using TOPS funding.

The TOPS Working Committee also recommends the initiation of a public process to determine the best uses of the remaining portions of the Red Rock Canyon property (primarily the land adjoining US Highway 24) in terms of compatibility with the open space and including the use of public funding, private funding, or a combination of the two.

TIDBITS**Spiderwort**

One of the lovely Spring flowers which bloom in our foothills is the spiderwort. Spiderworts form the genus *Tradescantia*. The flowers of various species of *Tradescantia* can be pink, white, or purplish.

Our spiderwort (*Tradescantia occidentalis*) blooms from mid-May through June and into July. The flowers grow in clusters and are a purplish blue. Each flower is about an inch across and has three petals.

To some, the name spiderwort seems strange or whimsical. "wort" comes from an Old English word "wyr" which simply means plant, herb, or root. Spiders don't seem to have any special affinity to spiderwort. So, perhaps "spider" refers to the shape of the plant, as it does for the spider plant which grows in many of our homes. It is easy to imagine the cluster of spiderwort flowers as the body of a spider with the grass-like leaves as the legs.

One species of spiderwort has found a very unusual scientific application ... as a radiation monitor. The stamen hairs of this spiderwort are each a chain of single cells, like beads on a string. The stamen hairs grow by the successive addition of cells to the chain. In this particular species, the cells of the stamen hairs are usually pink. But, there is an occasional blue cell. The blue color is the result of a single point mutation in the cell's genetic material. The likelihood of this mutation occurring is proportional to the radiation to which the cell is exposed. So, counting the number of blue cells in the stamen hairs gives an estimate of the radiation to which the flowers were exposed. Since the cells in each hair grow sequentially, the location along the stamen hairs of the blue cells tells when the radiation exposure occurred. This species of spiderwort was once planted around a nuclear power plant in Japan to monitor the release of radioactive material from the nuclear plant. Not only did the spiderworts tell how much radioactive material was released and when, they also told how the wind dispersed the radioactive material.

Don Ellis

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

- May 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)
- May 6 Manitou Springs City Council
7:00 P.M. Manitou Springs City Hall
606 Manitou Avenue
- May 7 **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)
- May 28 **Parks & Recreation Advisory Board**
7:30 A.M. Colorado Springs
Parks and Recreation Building
1401 Recreation Way
(East of I-25, 2 blocks north of Uintah)
- May 13 Colorado Springs City Council
9:00 A.M. City Council Chambers,
The historic City Hall, Nevada & Kiowa
- May 20 Manitou Springs City Council
7:00 P.M. Manitou Springs City Hall
606 Manitou Avenue
- May 27 Colorado Springs City Council
9:00 A.M. City Council Chambers,
The historic City Hall, Nevada & Kiowa
- May 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)
- May 28 **Manitou Springs Open Space
Advisory Committee**
7:00 P.M. Manitou Springs City Hall
606 Manitou Avenue
- June 5 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)

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

El Paso County government: www.elpasoco.com

Also, check the CONO web site: www.csono.org

Red Rock Canyon Foundation President's Report, May 2003

The passage of the TOPS extension is a testament to our city's continued commitment to the preservation of open space. With the TOPS extension in place, we are one very big step closer to seeing our vision for Red Rock Canyon become a reality. As is usually the case, progress has presented new and exciting challenges. We are confident that advocates for the preservation of Red Rock Canyon will address these challenges with the same integrity that has been employed in advocating for the TOPS extension.

The Red Rock Canyon Foundation Board has identified the following objectives which it believes should be the immediate focus of its support:

- Supporting the Trust For Public Land in its purchase of the entire Red Rock Canyon property.
- Ensuring confidence that that the City of Colorado Springs will ultimately purchase the property from TPL.
- Encouraging the city to make a firm commitment to allocating TOPS funds for the purchase of the prime land for open space.
- Ensuring a continued vision for the preservation of the whole property in a way that any non open space use be compatible with and enhances the nature and

beauty of the land. Time is needed to look at all options, but this should not interfere with the quick sale of the property.

- Encouraging the city to make a firm commitment to TPL that when TPL purchases all the land, the city will take responsibility to determine the best use of the acreage near Highway 24, and help resolve any issues in a timely way. This will allow TPL to conclude final negotiations and purchase of the Bock property.

- Encouraging TPL to work with Mrs. Bock and her representatives to keep the property under contract until the purchase negotiations are complete and the land is sold.

Clearly, the next important step is for the land sale to successfully take place. We would like to express our gratitude to Mrs. Bock, the Trust for Public Land, and the City of Colorado Springs for their continued efforts in that regard. Additionally, we would like to thank the TOPS Extension Committee, the voters of Colorado Springs, and the many donors and volunteers who have generously contributed to this project.

We are pleased to announce that Red Rock Canyon Foundation Board has voted to fund the next three publications of the Red Rock Rag, by paying for space in the newsletter. We hope to fund subsequent editions of the Rag as well.

Brad Bufkin, Vice President

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)

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___ Do ___ Don't acknowledge my contribution in the **RED ROCK RAG**.

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Mail to: **Red Rock Canyon Committee / P. O. Box 2352 / Colorado Springs, CO 80901-2352**

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

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