

THE

CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN

STATE PARK

TRACKER



Friends of Cheyenne Mountain State Park Newsletter

Volume 9

Issue 2

June 2009



President's Message: The Park Needs You

From the President

Hello Friends. It has been a busy period since our last Friends' newsletter in March. Our Park is enjoying huge success in the new camping sites...reservations and occupation rates are phenomenally high...and feedback from the campers is consistently glowing. The Park has also recently hosted some very successful major events. A very recent example is the 13 June Mountain Bike race that featured professional teams from throughout the country...which completely maxed out the Park facilities (anybody else still fuming at the Channel 5/30 "investigative" report that questioned the need for world-class facilities?).

In This Issue

- 1--President's Message
- 2--PM continued
 - Park Manager's Update
- 3--Park Manager continued, Tales from the Ranger Station
- 4--Sand Creek Classic MB Race, Trail Crew Training
- 5--Take a Hike: Join an Expert
- 6--CMSP: For Real!, In Memorium: Jack Case, Trail Work Days Resume
- 7-- Board Bio: Jack Busher, Board Contact List
- 8--4th on the 3rd!
- 9--Membership Application Form



No, not NASCAR: Sand Creek International Classic MB Race fills the Trailhead parking lot.

Why are these successes important? Because they bring needed revenue to the Park, and they bring superb coverage of this great resource to folks across not just Colorado but also the nation. It is no secret that Colorado is facing tough times with the State budget. Our Park is taking funding cuts just as most of the rest of state enterprises are. Some of those cuts are painful...putting support of programs and Park staffing at risk.

How can we help? As a Friends Group we can help by supporting important Park programs and events. We helped directly support continuation of the Naturalist program earlier this year...and we are committed to supporting key programs going forward. Right at the top of the list of key programs is support of an active Park Volunteers organization. The role of Volunteers is critical to the operation of the Park...and importance of that support will only grow as the paid staff (full-time and part-time) deals with funding challenges.

What can you do to help? A number of things --

- Keep your membership current...that provides us a key funding source for program support.

- Spread the word...tell your friends about the Park...encourage them to visit the Park and join the Friends Group. At the back of the newsletter is information on membership.
- Pitch in directly. Many of you contribute time as a Park Volunteer. The Friends Group also sponsors or provides services at Park events and could use some extra hands. No time? Since we are a 501c(3), any donation you make to the Friends is tax deductible.

What is coming up in the near term?

- It looks like we will not have a major Friend's Group outing in July in the Park. The new State fiscal funding year starts July 1st...and there are just too many uncertainties out there.
- We will go ahead with our annual open membership meeting in the fall. That is also the time we will be looking for folks who are interested in joining our Board. If you are interested, then please email any of the current Board members or talk to them. More information to follow on that.
- Passes for Soldiers. As most of you know, we have an endowment to provide free Park day passes to soldiers. We will continue with that program this summer.

As a reminder, our Board of Directors meets the third Thursday of each month in the evening. If you have issues or ideas you want explored at that meeting...or if you want to present something yourself, then please step forward and let us know.

Glen Scott
m: 660-9719

Park Manager's Update: DISCOVERY-- CMSP

Hello to all our Friends out there! If you have been in the park at all in the past two months, you are no doubt aware of just how many people are using the park....it seems we have been *DISCOVERED*, and will continue to be discovered for the foreseeable future! Camping, hiking, mountain biking, shopping and just hanging out....you name it, we've got you covered.

Summer is truly here! Our campgrounds are really going gangbusters, which we expected would happen, just not this soon! As you may have heard, we are sold out for all weekends through Labor Day, and it seems we are nearing capacity almost every week night as well. What a great way to start our first summer of full operations!

To date, both our visitation and revenues are way up compared to previous years. Certainly we expected this given the fact that the park is completely open now, but we never anticipated we would reach these numbers so quickly. Camping fees contribute significantly to our revenue generation, but hosting large events like the mountain bike race help a great deal as well. Retail sales at our two stores (Visitor Center & Camper Services) have also done extremely well. Bernie Klatkiewicz has done a remarkable job in setting up these stores...I think she may be psychic because she sure seems to know what our visitors want! A cool addition to our retail sales program is the old style "penny candy" complete with small white bags to hold these treasures. Who doesn't have wonderful memories about buying your favorite candy growing up?

As you'll read elsewhere in this newsletter, the Sand Creek International Cycling Classic held at the park on June 13th was a huge success! Even the event sponsors were surprised at the number of participants. Staff has been tracking some of the blogs written by riders who competed at this event and all state that our trails are fantastic. All told, our revenues for Saturday, June 13th totaled around \$5,000. While this may not sound like a lot of money, let me assure you that it is definitely a big deal for CMSP. Oh yeah, race organizer Andy Bohlman has already signed up to do the races here next year! Senior Ranger Monique Mullis did a great job coordinating this event from our end...Congratulations!

Coming up is the 4th of July. Because the City has canceled its firework show this year and asked Fort Carson to have their 4th on the 3rd celebration designated as the official community fireworks show, CMSP is well positioned to help handle the expected crowds. At the current time, our plan leading up to the fireworks show is to do some interpretive programs, have some musical performers, sell hotdogs & ice cream. Everything will

take place at the Amphitheater. We will be closing the Prairie Falcon road to allow for visitors to view the fireworks in a nice, safe, comfortable venue. We really have no idea about how many people to expect, but are planning on a big crowd for what will hopefully be an annual event. Friends & Volunteers, we need your help to do this thing up right!

Lastly, I need to address our budget woes. Many of you probably saw the article on the front page of the Gazette yesterday, which proclaimed that the economic forecast for the state is dire. For fiscal year 08-09, which ends June 30th, the state is short roughly \$250 million. Predictions for FY 09-10 and FY 10-11 are looking pretty grim as well. While State Parks budget is only a small sliver of the overall budget pie, any cuts will have a big impact. Staff has submitted options for cost savings, which will certainly affect our ability to maintain our facilities, provide good customer service, be good stewards of our resources, etc. However, when you realize that the alternative to our proposal is losing a full-time employee, you can see that we are in a tough situation.

Ultimately, what this all means is that our Friends and Volunteers are all the more valuable to us. Your passion and desire to make CMSP a great place now and in the future is really our saving grace. I hope you all will take this opportunity to get more involved in your park because, now more than ever, we really need you!

Tales From the Ranger Station



Camp Hosts Begin Their Tenure

Now that the campgrounds are fully open, the park has added a pair of volunteer Camp Hosts to help keep things running smoothly. Jim and Darlene Hatley ran a home for disabled adults until their retirement in 2007. Since then they have fully enjoyed the RV lifestyle, spending half the year in Demming, New Mexico and the rest of the time RV-ing or with family in Colorado Springs. Having settled in to #28, Swift Puma Heights, they hope to spend a great deal of time right here enjoying the mountain life.

Their duties include checking on campsites after visitors have left, helping out in the Camper Services Building, making a daily circuit of the campsites in the evening to sell firewood, and just generally helping out campers in whatever

way possible. It hasn't taken long for them to feel right at home here in the park. Their final comment: "Come by and say Hi!"

So there you have it. An invitation to drop by for a chat. Don't forget the address--#28 Swift Puma. And while you're there, check out the radical changes they've made to the golf cart that the Friends donated for this purpose well over a year ago.



The Hatleys are at Home. Stop by for a chat.



Jim and Darlene

International Mountain Bike Race a Huge Success for “Blossoming” Cheyenne Mountain



Cheyenne Mountain State Park is gaining international exposure and the park's popular trail system was in the spotlight on Saturday, June 13, 2009 for the Carmichael Training Systems Sand Creek International Classic mountain bike race. The race, just one of seven UCI (International Cycling Union) cross country races in the US this year, was also the Western Final of the new US Cup Series as well as a USA Cycling National Qualification race. The race was a “must do” event for

all Pro Men and Women in North America, as all major pro riders and teams were present. Amateur riders were also welcome, which resulted in 381 participants. In fact, over 26 states and 5 countries were represented at the race. A Bike Expo, food concession, and plenty of opportunities for spectator viewing added to the festive event which gave the park staff its first opportunity to deal with capacity issues!



This mountain bike race is only one example of the large events drawn to the park. The park hosted 450 generous walkers at the American Cancer Society's Climb to Conquer Cancer and helped raise over \$60,000 for the worthy cause. Right now staff is coordinating with Fort Carson to provide prime viewing of the base's huge “4th on the 3rd” Independence Day celebration that brings in over 10,000 spectators (another capacity day?).

In the fall, the park will host an Xterra Trail Run, Colorado Series race. This inaugural event on October 3 will consist of a full marathon, half marathon and 5k races with spectacular views. In addition to big events, the staff is busy with a booked campground and busy picnic sites. All of this is proof that Cheyenne Mountain has come into its own and has truly blossomed in 2009.

Trail Crew Training Another Success Story



On May 30 and 31 Volunteer Trail Crew Coordinator Jack Busher taught another session of Trail Maintenance to new and returning volunteers. Brian Kerrigan, Parks Volunteer Coordinator started Saturday off with a brief orientation to the Park and its Volunteer Programs. The rest of Saturday's classes included an introduction to Basic Trail Terminology, Tools and Tool Safety, Tread and Corridor Maintenance, followed by a Trail Walk to observe both issues and solutions that can be utilized to resolve those problem areas.



As on Saturday, the group started Sunday with coffee and donuts provided by the Friends. After a brief Safety Talk, the crews spent both a morning and an afternoon session building Rolling Grade Dips and Waterbars on a section of Boulder Run, as well as opening the corridor to park specifications. This section of trail had been chosen because it would be used the following weekend during the CTS Sand Creek Classic. From the positive comments of many of the pro riders who raced, the work was successful and appreciated.

Congratulations to all the volunteers who continue to devote their time and energy to keeping the trail system fit. And also, thanks to the Friends for their continued support of the Park's many programs. Without your help, many of our park's best programs would suffer or disintegrate completely. Go, Friends, GO!



Take a Hike! Join an Expert and Learn About the Park

As spring dissolves slowly into summer, the trails at Cheyenne Mountain State Park have become portable classrooms for those who want to get outside and observe the best of Mother Nature. Do you want to know more about what's blooming in the park? Join a **Flower Walk** hosted by volunteers Linda Overlin or Lucy Bell. Both of them are Colorado Native Plant Masters and certified naturalists. Check the schedule at the park to find out when and where their weekly walks begin. After the bountiful moisture we've been blessed with, flowers are a highlight this season.



Can you identify these brilliant bloomers? Do you know which is actually an invasive weed?

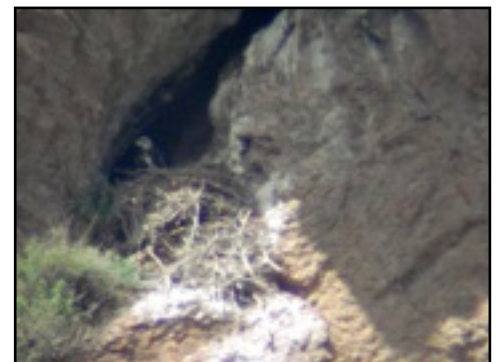
Thanks to local birder Charlie Campbell, those interested in learning more about the park's birds have had Charlie's expertise to guide them on weekly early morning birding sessions throughout May and June. Every week Charlie has lead a group of enthusiastic would-be Audubonites in search of who's-who in the bird world at CMSP. On a recent morning **Bird Walk**, the group spotted the following birds: Mourning Doves, Broad-tailed Hummingbird (male), Northern Flicker (Red-shafted race), Western Wood-Pee-wee, Tree Swallow, House Wren, Western Bluebird, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Western Tanager, Spotted Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Lesser Goldfinch, Brown-headed Cowbird, Meadowlark (heard), House Finch, Gray Catbird, Scrub Jay, Lazuli Bunting, Say's Phoebe, and a PART=probably a red-tail(hawk).



Our Red-tail Fledgling on the Nest

several week-old fledgling. The second is an impressive Golden Eagle aerie located on a rock-face at the southwest end of the park. Here the group sets up their scopes to observe the parents in nest-building, feeding rituals, and eventually the fledging of their youngster.

Another weekly highlight for a dedicated group of volunteers has been the Thursday morning **Raptor Monitoring Hikes** lead by Volunteer and Friends Board Member Janeen Igou. For over two years, this group has turned in weekly reports on two raptor nests located in the park. One is the nest of a Red-Tail hawk, currently home to a mated pair and their



*Young Mr. Golden Eagle
Awaits His Next Meal*

Cheyenne Mountain State Park...For Real! Really

Let's be honest. We have all waited a long time to finally see "our" park become a reality. Bit by bit, we've been rewarded, but it always seemed like there should be more. Well, I think we have become the park we've all waited for. Need proof? Stop by the Visitor Center, stroll into the Camper Services Building, wander past the amphitheater, roam around the campgrounds or trails. What do you see - and hear? Noise. You know, the good kind - kids and their parents laughing, running, playing, and learning.



Need further proof? Check out the calendar of events: Saturday morning Cookie Burner hikes, Wednesday Bird Walks, Monday Flower Walks, and Thursday Raptor Monitoring. How about evening campfire programs: Big Cat Country; Hats, Chaps, Saddles and Ropes; The Way We Were-CMSP History; The Zebulon Pike Expedition; Walkin' and Talkin' Turkey; and Colorado Above Treeline. And those are just for starters.



"Have a Wonderful Colorado Day," said Jack

On June 14 over a hundred friends gathered at The Garden of the Gods to celebrate the life of a dynamic volunteer who spent countless hours giving of himself at both The Garden of the Gods and at Cheyenne Mountain State Park. His contributions to our park are hard to tally. Having honed his teaching, naturalist, and interpretive skills volunteering at The Garden, Jack Case redirected much of that energy to CMSP.

During 2006-07 he took charge of mentoring the then current class of volunteers, over forty-five strong. For well over a year-and-a-half he personally saw to it that this collection of neophytes would eventually become a well-trained group of volunteer naturalists, interpreters, trail gurus, Visitor Center aids, or whatever else might be needed of them. Each and every one of us probably best remember two special things when they think of Jack.

One is the regular series of familiarization hikes he led weekly for well over nine months throughout the park trail system. Much of what many of us learned about the park, we learned on those hikes. Secondly, when we think of Jack we see him in the prairie-dog colony, whacking away at any and all the Mullein he could find. Once someone told him they were an "invasive species," and each stalk could produce multi-thousands of seed-heads, he decided it was his job to stay ahead of that battle!

Thank you, Jack. You are still our mentor and our hero!

Trail Maintenance Work Days and Evenings Continue

A series of volunteer trail maintenance sessions on select evenings and

Saturdays resumed early in June. Already, the crew has completed erosion and corridor maintenance on a stretch of Boulder Run and about three quarters of a mile of work on Sundance. This last included 6 rolling grade dips, 1 rock waterbar, and two mono-walls, one of which was 57 feet in length. The group also dealt with a serious infestation of Musk Thistle and Mullein growing in or near the trail.



New Feature: Friends of CMSP Board



Kathleen and Jack on the trails.

As suggested at our latest board meeting, *The Tracker* has decided to add a new feature article each edition. We will give a brief biographical resumé of each of our board members. We begin with Jack Busher. His duties include: board vice-president, chairman of the Communications Committee, Volunteer liason to the board, and editor of *The Tracker*.

Jack grew up in Euclid, Ohio, just east of Cleveland. He attended high school in Cleveland, received his B.A. in English from the University of Dayton, and his M.A.T. from Colorado College. Married to Kathleen Cook, he is the father of three children and two grandchildren. He is a retired high school teacher and coach. He taught for forty-one years, the first eight in Ohio, and the last thirty-three for Cheyenne Mountain Schools in Colorado Springs. Besides teaching English and Video Production, he coached wrestling (29 years), as well as boys and girls soccer (25 years each).

Along with his duties with the Friends of Cheyenne Mountain State Park, Jack is also an active volunteer at the park. His "specialty" is trail maintenance. "I worked as a volunteer trail crew leader during the '70's, just after moving to

Colorado. I was trained by the U.S. Forest Service, working several projects on the Colorado Trail and Barr Trail on Pikes Peak. Later I was lucky enough to get to work projects for the National Park Service in the Grand Tetons for parts of two summers."

When Jack retired from teaching in 2006, he decided to re-ignite his interest in trail work. That led him to the newly opened CMSP, the Friends, and his trail crew experiences here at the park. Just to keep his skills up, he also volunteers on trail projects with Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado, the Colorado Fourteeners Initiative, Wildlands Restoration Volunteers, Continental Divide Trail Alliance, and Friends of the Peak.

Look for Jack on the trails. If he isn't working on them, he might be leading a hike, participating in a Raptor Monitoring Session, a birding hike or a flower walk.



Jack-of-all-Trails?

Friends of Cheyenne Mountain State Park Board

Have questions or want to find out how you can help support Cheyenne Mountain State Park? Contact a Board Member for more information.

Officers:

President Glen Scott gscott06@gmail.com
 Vice Pres. Jack Busher jbusher@qwest.net
 Secretary Lori O'Hare lajohare@msn.com
 Treasurer Barb Scott bscott03@gmail.com

Programs:

Jerry O'Hare lajohare@msn.com

Finance:

Barb Scott bscott03@gmail.com

Members:

Jim Purdy jpurdy@aol.com

Nan Scranton NanScranton@elpasoco.com

Janeen Igou jwigou@comcast.net

Pam Scott pscott1644@comcast.net

Committee Chairs:

Communications Jack Busher jbusher@qwest.net

Membership Lori O'Hare lajohare@msn.com

Non-Voting Members:

Park Manager Rich Dudley rich.dudley@state.co.us

Park Ranger Monique Mullis monique.mullis@state.co.us

This newsletter represents the opinions and views of the Board of Directors of the Friends of Cheyenne Mountain State Park. Except as specifically identified in an article, the views and opinions do not necessarily reflect official policy or endorsement by the State of Colorado or Colorado State Parks.

Cheyenne Mountain State Park Celebrates the Fourth on the Third; Come Join the Celebration!



DATELINE (COLORADO SPRINGS) – Cheyenne Mountain State Park is hosting its first annual Fourth of July celebration on Friday, July 3rd, 2009. Come watch Fort Carson's magnificent fireworks show from a front row seat at the park's amphitheater high up on the side of Cheyenne Mountain with a commanding view of Colorado Springs. Come early and stay late! Hotdogs, ice cream, and soda will be available, so join us for dinner! Remember, this is a busy holiday weekend so get here early! A parks pass is required to enter the park...call for more information or visit our website at www.colorado.gov/parks.

Local musicians will also perform on what will no doubt be a memorable evening. Adam Gardino is an acoustic artist who was a finalist at the 2005 International Fingerstyle Guitar Competition in Winfield Kansas. Adam plays blues, ragtime, funk, and contemporary music. Colorado Springs own Acme Bluegrass Band will also perform. Acme Bluegrass plays traditional and contemporary bluegrass, as well as a wide variety of non-bluegrass music from popular artists to keep a diverse listening audience entertained. Come join us for a star spangled evening under the stars listening to great music and watching amazing fireworks!

Kid's activities and Naturalist led hikes will also be available throughout the day. Join us for our Balancing Butterfly craft activity or learn how to Fashion a Frog origami style. Kids young and old can also make plaster replicas of animal tracks, or construct an instrument called a turkey caller. Patriotic trivia and games will also be featured in the evening with prizes for our knowledgeable visitors.

Throughout 2009, Colorado State Parks is celebrating its 50th anniversary as a leader in providing opportunities for outdoor recreation, protecting the state's favorite landscapes, teaching generations about nature and partnering with communities.

Attracting more than 11 million visitors per year, Colorado's 42 State Parks are a vital cornerstone of Colorado's economy and quality of life. Colorado State Parks encompass 242,531 land and water acres, offering some of the best outdoor recreation destinations in the state. Colorado State Parks also manage more than 4,000 campsites, and 57 cabins and yurts. For more information on Colorado State Parks or to purchase an annual pass online, visit www.colorado.gov/parks.



Friends of Cheyenne Mountain State Park Membership Application

I / We wish to join the Friends of Cheyenne Mountain State Park

New / Renewal (circle one)

- _____ **\$30** **Annual Individual Membership**
- _____ **\$40** **Annual Family Membership**
- _____ **\$60** **Annual Supporting Membership**
- _____ **\$100** **Annual Contributing Membership**
- _____ **\$100** **Annual Small Business Membership**
- _____ **\$500** **Annual Corporate Membership**
- _____ **\$500** **LIFETIME MEMBER: Never pay dues again!**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Phone _____

E-mail Address _____

Help us save postage! Please check here to receive "The Tracker" newsletter via e-mail _____

Make your check payable and please mail your application to:

Friends of Cheyenne Mountain State Park
P.O. Box 51453
Colorado Springs, CO 80949-1453

Thank you for your support of Cheyenne Mountain State Park!