

Cheyenne Mountain State Park

Friends

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Making Significant Progress Towards Park Opening

By Rich Dudley, Park Manager

Finally.....there is some light at the end of the tunnel! After four long years of planning and politics, State Parks is in the process of awarding a contract for the construction of roads, utilities, trailhead and other assorted items. With any luck, we should be "turning dirt" sometime in October and have a construction window of 210 days to complete the scheduled work. Obviously, this timeline is subject to weather delays, and after the wet summer we've had, who is willing to predict what the winter holds!?! The bottom line here is that we are definitely heading in the right direction!

Adjacent landowner, Denman Investments, has been engaged throughout the spring and summer constructing roadway improvements and installing utilities. This work is part of an agreement between the State and Denman to provide roadway access and utilities to Cheyenne Mountain State Park's front door. There is a glitch, however, as Denman has stated a wish to push any further expenditures back until 2005. Effectively, this probably means a delay in getting the park open to the public. Our best guess now is that the park will be open for trail use sometime after July 2005. State Parks is continuing conversations with Denman in an effort to achieve an outcome suitable to all involved.

Architectural design of the park's Visitor Center and Event Center is all but done, and staff anticipates having construction documents available for

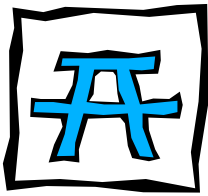
these buildings in the next month or so. It is our intent to bid out construction of the Visitor Center in January 2005 with an 8-10 month projected timeline for completion once a contract has been awarded. Existing designs for the park's other wet buildings (maintenance shop, restrooms, etc.) will be utilized and staff has diligently been working to suitably modify exterior components to reflect the appropriate "feel" of the park.

Trail work continues at the park with routine maintenance and weed control being an ongoing issue. Due to poor soil conditions (bentonite clay) covering much of the trail system, staff will be working with a contractor this fall to apply materials that will make the system more sustainable. In addition, benches will be installed this fall and next spring at key points along the trails. Finally, appropriate signing for the trail system is now being researched and considered so as to make use of the trails safe and enjoyable for all.

Stay tuned! The coming year promises to be full of exciting times as the process to get Cheyenne Mountain State Park built and open to the public unfolds.

New Lifetime Members!

Please join us in welcoming **John and Sharon Wallace** and the **Mitchell Family; Bob, Darla and Bobby, Jr.** as our newest, Friends of Cheyenne Mountain State Park lifetime members! Besides an allowable tax deduction for their lifetime membership fee, each lifetime member never has to worry about paying annual Friends dues and receives a 1-year State Parks Pass.



Friends 4th Annual Picnic

Saturday October 2nd will be a great day for a brisk walk or bike ride on one of Cheyenne Mountain State Park's most excellent trails, chow down on a burger or hot dog (or two) and get caught up on what's happening with the Park's progress as we get closer to opening.

Hike/Bike: Come early for a hike/bike (5 mile hike and a rigorous bike begin at 9 AM, 1-2 mile hikes begin at 10:30 AM). Enter the Park through the south gate just off Highway 115 South on Pine Oaks Road.

Food: As near noon as possible, your Friends Board will be cooking up burgers and hot dogs. Please bring a side dish, salad or desert to share with other Friends.

Park Update: Around 12:30 PM or so your Park Manager, Rich Dudley will update us all on Park progress and happenings.

What to bring: Water, raingear and sturdy shoes for hiking, a side dish and chairs for the picnic.

RSVP to Lori O'Hare 260-1391



Zen and the Art of Flower Identification

by Dick Taylor

The fourth in a series

If you were a flower how would you like to market yourself to potential pollinators? Would easy access be vital to success or perhaps being an early or late season bloomer be an advantage? Would more or less expenditure of energy and resources bring about the best investment to attract the right clientele? Will these be elements of a good business plan? As a flower therefor, how much of your finite resources should be devoted to advertising the nectar and pollen you may have to offer pollinator clients? Does it make more sense to appeal to exclusive clients or should you attempt to attract a wide variety of different pollinators? And remember location, location, and location. . Increase one factor and you must decrease another. The economist would say "guns or butter." Will you close up shop on rainy days to conserve nectar or only be open at night when you may attract the "night hawk" (moths)? Remember you may be vital to the success of your plant continuing in business. Supposing no one visits, are you set up to meet this disaster by having the ability to self-pollinate?

Of course plants never took economics 101 and such decisions are dictated over lengthy periods of time by genes and evolution and the luck of the draw. Having the right genes or a mutation at the right place and time may make the plant's adaptation to a change in the environment successful. Not having the right genes may result in extinction. Think about global warming and what effect it may have on both flora and fauna. Global warming or another ice age is likely to bring about rapid changes to the environment and the composition of species inhabitants.

When you start checking out flowers you may find that there is a lot more to

their identification and biology besides the color of the flower. What is the shape of the flower? There are about six basic shapes and feel free to name the shapes anything you want. I like to call the flower shape, which is accessible to most any pollinator, the McDonnell type. It would have a serving dish or soup bowl look. These might be daisy like or most any flower of the composite family. There are bell and funnel shaped flowers, trumpet shaped, long and tapered tube shaped, shaving brush like and flag flowers having one or more wider petals than the others as in the pea family. One last type would be the gullet or trap door shape like a snapdragon. Some flowers may span the types having characteristics of more than one. Each different shape may attract a different type of pollinator. Some of the trap door types allow access only to bumble bees that have the weight to trip the flower opening. Take some time to try and classify what the shape of a flower is. You could even make simple drawings or sketches.

I never have seen a field guide arranged by pollinators but there are charts for different types of pollinators. These will show the preferences of the pollinator to everything from color to smell, to flower shape. To give a simple example hummingbirds are attracted to red flowers generally with a tube shape and high in nectar content. This is called the syndrome or flower preferences of the pollinator. While you're at it learn to identify the parts of the flower. Where does the pollen come from and where is it deposited? How about nectar? What pollinators are visiting the flower, a bee, a butterfly, fly, a moth a bird, a bat or beetle? Is what appears to be a pollinator really there for pollen and or nectar or looking to make a meal of another insect or the plant itself? What tricks may the flower be using to attract a type of pollinator without any reward to the pollinator? Smell may be a potent lure or a shape imitating a sexual part of an insect. Insects are not above playing dirty tricks on flowers like drilling a hole in the spur of a columbine to steal the nectar.

CMSP Resource Summary: Wildlife

This is the second excerpt from the CMSP Stewardship Plan, printed with permission. This issue focuses on a sample of Park wildlife.

Significant Features

- ❖ **High quality wildlife habitat**- The park connects with other wild land areas to form a large, contiguous tract of land, which supports healthy and diverse wildlife populations of significant value in the Front Range. Bears, mountain lions, bobcats, coyotes, gray foxes, red foxes, turkey, black-tailed prairie dogs, elk and mule deer frequent this park.
- ❖ **Prairie falcon nesting site on SW border of park** – May also be other active raptor nesting sites, including peregrine nesting sites, in the cliffs that run along the western edge of the park.
- ❖ **Important turkey breeding area** - The park is home to a large and healthy breeding population of turkeys and also provides important wintering habitat for turkeys.
- ❖ **Rare animal habitat**- The Park provides habitat for black-tailed prairie dogs, a candidate species for federal protection, as well as potential habitat for the Mountain Plover, also a candidate species for federal protection. Federally threatened burrowing owls may be likely to be found near the prairie dog colonies within the park and the park provides potential foraging and nesting habitat for the federally threatened Mexican spotted owl. The park also provides habitat, or potential habitat, for a number of other rare or state-

threatened species including; Townsend’s big-eared bats, fringed-tailed bats, ferruginous hawks, yellow-bellied cuckoos, Lewis’ woodpeckers and the dusted skipper and cross-line skipper (two rare butterfly species). See the appendix for a complete list of rare or threatened wildlife species at the park.

The grasslands and oak scrublands at Cheyenne Mountain are in good to excellent condition and support a wide variety of wildlife, including a large number of rare or threatened species. The western border of Cheyenne Mountain State Park consists of unfragmented wild areas that connects to the Pike and San Isabel National Forests, creating a large, contiguous, and relatively undisturbed, tract of land through which wildlife can move and live. The wildlife populations at Cheyenne Mountain are diverse and appear healthy and abundant primarily due to this substantial, unfragmented, available habitat.

The diversity of animal species present is also a consequence of the variety of vegetative communities at Cheyenne Mountain and the transitional location of the park between plains and mountains. The Front Range is home to a unique blend of mountain and plains species, both in terms of vegetation and wildlife (Weber 1990). Numerous wildlife corridors are found throughout the park and appear to receive heavy use by many different species.

The most notable wildlife corridor follows along the north fork of Limekiln Creek in the Limekiln drainage. The migration route for many of the large mammals found within the park, including elk, runs approximately west-to-east along the Limekiln Creek wildlife corridor (per. comm. Trina Lynch, CDOW Division Wildlife Manger for Colorado Springs region).

Large mammal species found within the park include; mule deer

(*Odocoileus hemionus*), elk (*Cervus canadensis*), black bear (*Ursus americanus*), mountain lion (*Felis concolor*) and coyote (*Canis latrans*). The Division of Wildlife have reported swift fox (*Vulpes velox*) along the southern edge of the park, and bobcats (*Lynx rufus*) are also known to occur in the area. White-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) may be present in small numbers, but suitable habitat for this species is somewhat limited within the park (per. comm. Trina Lynch).

Mule deer living near Cheyenne Mountain are resident throughout



Courtesy of King’s Outdoor World



Courtesy Nat. Wild Turkey Fed.

the year and do not make seasonal migrations to higher or lower elevations (per. comm. Trina Lynch). Home ranges of mule deer

in the Front Range are relatively small, ranging from about 290-800 acres (117-324 ha), because of habitat conditions and abundant food supplies (Kufeld et al 1989). *The oak shrub lands on Cheyenne Mountain are important summer and winter habitat for mule deer and elk*, and the entire park lies within a state concentration area for mule deer (CNHP, 2000). Wild turkeys (*Meleagris gallopavo merriami*) are abundant at Cheyenne Mountain, as *the gambel’s oak/ponderosa pine habitat found at Cheyenne Mountain is well suited to turkeys* (Hoffman 1962). Cheyenne Mountain provides critical habitat for large concentrations of turkeys during the winter season (CNHP, 2000), as well as *two large, and very active, turkey breeding areas in the northwestern area of the park*. Due to the proximity of the park to the NORAD military facility and several residential communities, hunting is not permitted in the park.

Our next excerpt will highlight birds of prey and prairie dogs found in the Park.

Renew Your Membership Now

Have you already renewed your Friends membership? If you joined our Cheyenne Mountain State Park Friends before October 2003 you should renew for the next eventful year (the Park should be opening to hiking/biking in 2005!). Already we have all enjoyed 3 Friends of CMSP picnics, a rare members only moonlight hike, along with many guided daytime hikes and been kept abreast of the latest Park progress and issues through our Newsletters and Community and Board meetings.

Take this opportunity to stay involved, help your community and preserve this “near pristine” parcel of land for all time. Consider making the one-time tax-deductible donation of \$500 to become a lifetime member.

Complete the membership renewal application on page 6, attach your check, send it in and let’s get going on a banner year for our newest State Park!



Coming Events

For more information email a Friends Board Member or call Jerry O’Hare (260-1391) or Rick Upton (576-9141).

4th Annual Friends Picnic

October 2, 9 AM – 1 PM. Enter the Park via the south gate on Pine Oaks Road. RSVP to Lori O’Hare 260-1391

Prefer Email?

Would you prefer receiving your Friends of CMSP newsletter via email? You would be saving the Friends group the cost of postage and receiving your newsletter in a timelier manner. Email your preference to Rick at uptonrus@adelphia.net.

Friends of Cheyenne Mountain State Park Board

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Annual Membership Dues

Individual	\$ 25.00
Family	\$ 35.00
Supporting	\$ 50.00
Contributing	\$100.00
Small Business	\$100.00
Corporate	\$500.00
Lifetime	\$500.00

Make check payable to:
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Become a member of the Friends of Cheyenne Mountain State Park!

Help to ensure that your State Park provides the best possible environment for you, your family, your friends and all people to learn and enjoy.

Complete the application to the left, detach this page from the newsletter, fold this page in half so that our address (page 5) is visible and mail the application, along with your check.

Contact a Board member and find out how you can provide time and talent in support of your newest State Park.

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 the State Department of Parks and Recreation.

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