

THE CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN STATE PARK

TRACKER



Friends of Cheyenne Mountain State Park Newsletter Volume 7 Issue 2 December 2007



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President's Message: A Time to Rejoice, A Time to Enjoy!

What an incredible year 2007 has been for Cheyenne Mountain State Park and our Friends group! We began the year with a reorganization of the Friends of CMSP into the Communications, Programs, Finance, and Membership committees. We have involved several Friends members in this new structure and each committee has been working hard on long term goals and plans. We sponsored many exciting and fun events culminating with a potluck barbeque and moonlight hike that included the first ever presentation in the Park Visitors Center. We added a new Board member, Jim Purdy, and said goodbye to Pam Karr, who had served on the Board for over 6 years. Trails have been completed, roads have been paved, and the Visitors Center and several "comfort stations" have opened to the public. The CMSP volunteer program has become second to none in a very short time. The Park is becoming more available, more beautiful and more utilized every day. And the crowning glory is that we have recently added a good portion of Cheyenne Mountain to CMSP!



The Friends (you) played a very important role in nearly every accomplishment of CMSP this past year. From volunteer support to citizen awareness campaigns to City Council presentations, the Friends were always there. And we intend, with your help and guidance, to continue supporting CMSP, its staff and volunteers for a long time to come.

Thank you for all you do financially, physically and emotionally for CMSP. Thank you for your passion of the outdoors and helping to enhance that experience for Park visitors. You are the strong base on which the Friends of CMSP operates. We ask for your continued dedication, interest and support for 2008 and always.

Rick Upton

Park Manager's Update: More Good News

Greetings Friends, and Happy Holidays! While the fall colors have faded away, and we are now mired in what, for all appearances, seems like a real Colorado winter, I am pleased to report that progress is being made on many fronts!

First and foremost, the acquisition of the top of Cheyenne Mountain is becoming a reality! As most of you are aware due to word of mouth or media coverage, on October 26th, Colorado State Parks and the City of Colorado Springs closed on the first phase of this important acquisition. We are scheduled to close on the second phase sometime in January, 2008, and all funding is in place for this conveyance to take place. Unfortunately, I was notified recently that Burt Reisig, one of the heirs of this property, had a massive stroke, and it is unknown at this time whether or not he will be able to sign during the second phase acquisition, or just what impact to the process this news will have. After years of patiently waiting for the State and City to get their acts together, this has to happen to Burt....just as he was realizing his dream! Our prayers are with him, and we hope he achieves a full recovery!



A view from the top of Cheyenne Mountain; soon we can all enjoy this wonderful panorama

On December 3rd, Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) held a press conference at Cheyenne Mountain State Park to announce funding for several local projects. Foremost among these (at least from my perspective!) is the third phase of the acquisition of the top of the mountain. This funding will allow State Parks to pick up the final two parcels in January, 2009 to complete the acquisition of the top of the mountain. Many thanks to our friends and partners at GOCO!

Along the same vein, I have spoken with PJ Anderson and requested that he share with us all of the amazing historical stories he has amassed regarding the top of the mountain over the past 10 years or so. I feel strongly that it is incumbent upon us to be the "keepers" of all of the amazing stories associated with the homesteads and other

history surrounding the top of our new mountain! I know that our dedicated volunteers cannot wait to sink their teeth into this treasure trove of history, and feel confident that together, we can develop high quality interpretive stories to chronicle the hearty people who called the mountain home!

Phase 3 of construction is just getting underway, and staff has high hopes that we can stay on schedule as winter ensues. During this phase of work, Golden Triangle will be finishing site work around the Camper Services building and Comfort Stations. Additionally, our "Activity Area" will be constructed, including the amphitheatre, and trail connections made to our existing systems. Also, the pavilion for the Group Picnic Area has been ordered and should be here and installed in March. Just today I met with GTC to discuss construction of our entry sign, monument, and fencing. I've got to say that I am excited about this and hope that our visitors will find this feature a nice welcome to the park! Otherwise, we are shooting for Memorial Day weekend to have our campground open. **(Continued on page 3)**

(From page 2)

Last, but not least, we have a new Director! Dean Winstanley was appointed Director of Colorado State Parks in late November, and staff is excited about working with Dean for years to come! Dean has a great deal of experience with Colorado State Parks, having worked for us for approximately 10 years as a legislative and GOCO liaison prior to moving up to join Executive Director of Natural Resources, Harris Sherman's team for the last 4 or so years. Welcome aboard, Dean!

On behalf of all of our staff here at Cheyenne Mountain State Park, I wish each and every one of you a very Joyful & Merry Christmas!

Park Manager, Rich Dudley



Don't let the weather keep you away from the park. This is one of the quietest times of the year--And it makes for great wildlife viewing, as you can see! Get out the snowshoes or Yaktraks if need be, but get outside yourself!

Friends and Park Staff Honor Volunteers at Second Annual Awards Dinner

Thanks to the sponsorship of the Friends of Cheyenne Mountain State Park and the hard work put in by park staff in setting up the event, the CMSP Volunteers were honored at a dinner and celebration. This year's event was held at the historic Penrose House at Turkey Creek Ranch on Tuesday, December 11. Like last year, a blast of winter weather provided just the right conditions to create a truly festive atmosphere at the ranch.

The local park staff, Rich Dudley, Monique Mullis, and the evening's M.C., Brian Kerrigan, were in attendance to honor the volunteers. The Denver office was represented by Faye Koeltzow, the statewide Volunteer Programs Manager. The volunteer program here at Cheyenne Mountain has gotten off to a flying start under the tutelage of Head Ranger Monique Mullis and Ranger Brian Kerrigan, as well as our GOCO naturalist/interpreters, Cheryl Hollis and Pat Grove. **(Continued on page 5)**

A Tribute To Our Friend, Dick Taylor

By Rich Dudley

Sometime ago, staff received news that Dick Taylor, a former volunteer, and member of the Friends of Cheyenne Mountain State Park Board of Directors, had passed away after experiencing years of poor health.

Dick was well known amongst the Colorado Springs interpretive and environmental education community, and will be sorely missed! He had a deep, abiding love for nature, and was dedicated to teaching others to appreciate the wonderful resources we have all around us. Dick lived a simple lifestyle and expressed dismay at our society's obsession with consumerism. "What else do you need?", he would say, spreading his arms wide and gesturing at the incredible beauty all around us!

Another passion Dick had involved geology. His considerable, and varied rock collection was a sight to behold, and countless people benefited from his insights and vast knowledge of Colorado geology. Early on, when the planning process was still underway and there were no buildings at CMSP, our Friends group regularly had hikes and picnics at the park. Dick would display his wares for all to see, taking particular interest in children who would stand wide-eyed, staring at his amazing collection of "cool" rocks! "I absolutely love helping kids develop a sense of wonder about nature!" Dick would say on these special occasions.

While not a rich man by any means, Dick was kind enough to sponsor a number of local interpreters and educators to attend the National Association for Interpretation's annual conferences held each year in a different region of the United States. I was lucky enough to have Dick sponsor me to attend the conference in Reno, Nevada a few years ago....it was an experience I won't soon forget! As a result of his willingness to act, rather than just talk, a number of Colorado Springs interpreters have had the opportunity to learn and enhance their skills at this incredible conference.

We will miss you Dick! You will always be one of our true Friends!

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.

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All photos in this issue were provided by Monique Mullis and Jack Busher. Would you like to see your photo published in a future edition of the *Tracker*? Send your favorite park photos to Jack Busher at jbusher@qwest.net

2ND Annual Volunteer Awards Dinner

(From page 3)

As both Kerrigan and Koeltzow mentioned, our group of volunteers has truly helped the park achieve many of its opening year objectives. A few of the projects they made possible were the herbarium notebooks, the development of visitor services notebooks, the xeriscaping of the VC gardens, utilization of Visitors Center volunteer hosts, and the training of volunteer trail crews, who then spent many hours putting into practice their new skills.

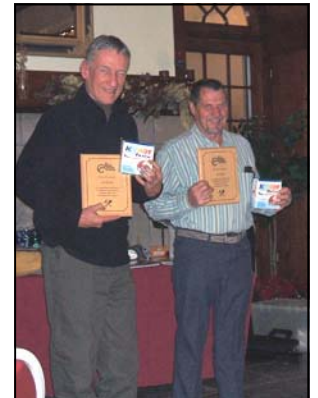
In 2006, the volunteers amassed 3937.25 hours of volunteer time. This past year they've bettered that by devoting 4441 hours of time to the park. As Dudley, Kerrigan and Koeltzow each reiterated, those are remarkable numbers for any park, let alone one that has been "open" less than two years.

Thanks to GOCO Naturalist Pat Grove, attendees were entertained by his "Trail Aliases" Game. Given a list of alternative names for the park's trails, the diners were asked to connect the pseudonym with the actual trail name. Many of you would have guessed "masked bandits' crest" as "Raccoon Ridge," but how many of you know what "Animal keeper's food preparer circuit" is? I'll leave that for you to ponder.



Ranger Kerrigan concluded the evening's festivities by handing out special awards to honor several of the park volunteers. Linda Overlin (*in the picture to the left*) was awarded a plaque for her development of the park's herbarium. Anyone who has had time to sit in the Visitors Center and peruse those notebooks filled with clear and concise information about the park's flora will marvel at the obvious time commitment that Linda and her crew put into this project. Next, Kerrigan presented "Icy Hot Heat Packs" and

plaques to Paul Smith, Jim Purdy, and Jack Busher (*Purdy and Busher are shown in the picture to the right*) for their "outstanding leadership and commitment to the Cheyenne Mountain State Park Trail Maintenance Program." Again, those who walk or ride the park's trails are surely aware that the park has made an effort to keep its trails fully usable, and thanks to these ambitious leaders and their crews, the trails at the park are constantly praised for their well-kept condition.



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.

Membership Committee Report

Just a quick reminder to all our members, its not too late to update your membership while there's still time to take advantage of the tax break for donating to a non-profit cause. Just do it before Jan. 1. And if you are asking, "so, what do I get out of this?" Just look to our president's message and the park manager's update to see what the Friends have already helped accomplish. That's what you get out of your membership. Your dues are used for a wide variety of park support, everything from helping to acquire the top of the mountain to helping defray costs of special programs and to keep our volunteers well fed. So, go to page 8 and fill out those forms!

A special welcome to our newest member:

Gwen Pratt

And new LIFETIME members:

**Jim and Donna Purdy
and**

Janeen Igou and Don Fortenberry

TALES FROM THE RANGER STATION: VOLKSMARCHING WE WILL GO

On Saturday and Sunday, October 27 and 28, CMSP hosted a volksmarch. It was sponsored by the Colorado Springs Walking Club and organized by Lynette Reagan. It was the second time the group planned a volksmarch here at the park, but the first time it was actually held (last year the volksmarch was cancelled because the park was closed for paving). Reagan reported that almost 100 people registered and participated. She mentioned that many of the participants were first-time visitors and were very impressed with the trails. Again, she was pleased with the number of participants for a first year event. We intend to have the volksmarch become an annual event and expect it to grow every year. In addition, the Colorado Springs Walking Club will be sponsoring a year-round volksmarch at the beginning of the year. This is a self-guided walk available any time for volksmarchers, but when they register at the Visitor Center they can get credit with the AVA. If people want more information about volksmarching, they can go to www.ava.org.



Once again, this is a season not to be missed. Don't let the snow keep you away. A good pair of skis, some gaiters, a pack full of goodies, and you are ready for winter.

Fall Activity: Young Naturalist Program at Cheyenne Mountain State Park

If you still have doubts about whether our park is up and running, check out this description of the Young Naturalist Program that ran through October and November:

Children ages 3 – 5, accompanied by an adult, were welcomed to visit Cheyenne Mountain State Park on Thursdays at 9 a.m. in the Visitor Center for the Young Naturalist program. These young naturalists were prepared to hit the trails for engaging, hands-on, crawl around, get dirty opportunities while interacting with nature. They were happy to explore, investigate, learn and wonder as a young naturalist at one of the following events at Cheyenne Mountain State Park.

Oct. 18, *Bird Song* – Hear a legend about how birds got their songs, make a bird call, and creep quietly into the forest to listen.

Oct. 25, *Fall Leaves* – Explore the anatomy of leaves, make gorgeous fall leaves, and grab a hand lens to discover the many different leaves along the trail. Create and take home a leaf man.

Nov. 1, *Sharpen Your Senses* – Join in on a series of in the field and on the trail activities and games designed to improve a child's observation skills and appreciation of nature. Take home a naturalist's journal.

Nov. 8, *Prairie Dog Party* – Prairie dogs are important animals at the park. They love to hang out with their families, and the young naturalists will investigate the prairie dog colony to see what they're up to. Make a prairie dog puppet and use it in a prairie dog play.

Nov. 15, *Tracking Turkeys* – Learn about wild turkeys and their adaptations, hit the trail to try to call up some turkeys with your new turkey caller, and play a fun game to discover how wild turkeys get their groceries.

All programs are free with a \$6 daily vehicle pass or a Colorado State Parks annual pass. Call Park Ranger Brian Kerrigan at 719-576-2251 for more information or to reserve a space in any of the programs. Please make reservations one week ahead of program date. When in doubt, check our website at www.parks.state.co.us/Parks/cheyennemountain.

Guided Weekend Hikes at Cheyenne Mountain State Park

Meet at the visitor center. Daily or annual park pass is required. All hikes will be conducted regardless of sunshine or snow flurries. Come dressed for winter conditions. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

“Cookie Burner” Hike: Saturdays (December 22 and 29) 10:00 a.m.

A one to two mile hike in the park with less talkin’ and more walkin’ for those who want more of a workout (not a jog or run but a moderate walking pace.) Recommended for adults and children 12 and older.

“A Trek to Observe Winter Survival Strategies”:

Sundays (December 23 and 30) 2:00 p.m.

A one to two mile, easy pace, hike on park trails to explore the way plants and animals deal with the harsh realities of winter. Recommended for everyone age 9 and older.

Contact: Pat Grove-(719) 576-2016 or <http://parks.state.co.us/Parks/CheyenneMountain/>

Friends of Cheyenne Mountain State Park Membership Application

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

New / Renewal (circle one)

- _____ **\$25 Annual Individual Membership**
- _____ **\$35 Annual Family Membership**
- _____ **\$50 Annual Supporting Membership**
- _____ **\$100 Annual Contributing Membership**
- _____ **\$100 Annual Small Business Membership**
- _____ **\$500 Annual Corporate Membership**
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Thank you for your support of Cheyenne Mountain State Park!