

# THE CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN STATE PARK



## TRACKER



Friends of Cheyenne Mountain State Park Newsletter    Volume 8    Issue 3    December 2008



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## Park Manager's Update: An Eventful 2008 Wraps Up

Friends, I can't believe I'm saying this, but here goes.....We're finally done....No more construction....No more contractors or punch lists....No more large trucks hauling asphalt, or giant track hoes tearing things up....Done!! The barricades are gone and visitors can finally drive up to enjoy the picnic areas, camp-ground, amphitheater, etc! It's about doggone time!

I still vividly remember my first visit to the park in 1999, and remember feeling very thankful that the City of Colorado Springs had the foresight to target this beautiful property as its highest priority for acquisition. A few months later after a staff meeting, Region Manager, Dave Giger, brought all of the managers from our region to check out this beautiful property. As we were standing on a knoll just off Pine Oaks Road, gazing out over an amazing view, one of the managers quietly said, whoever becomes manager for this park has a tremendous amount of work ahead of him. Well, I'm here to tell you that he was absolutely dead on with that comment! I could not have begun to imagine what I was getting into, let alone how much time and effort we would all collectively put into this getting this park open....a truly staggering amount of work on behalf of many people!

But all of that is in the past and it is time to focus on the here and now! Unfortunately, I have some not so good news to share with you concerning our budget. A few weeks ago, Acting Region Manager Heather Dugan and I were summoned to Denver to meet with our leadership team regarding budget issues. As an outcome of this meeting, I have been directed to cut this fiscal year's operating budget by roughly a third....not an easy task almost half way through the fiscal year! Our operating dollars include funding for seasonal employees, utilities, as well as day to day operational needs (nut & bolts, toilet paper, gas, etc.). Just when we thought we were finally over the hump and hoping to open all our facilities! They say timing is everything, but in this instance it certainly has not worked to our benefit!

These cuts have caused us to lay off most of our winter staff.

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*King of the Mountain*

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We are also in the process of winterizing the Camper Service building and Comfort Stations until late March or April. The only exceptions will be the Trailhead and Prairie Falcon Comfort Stations, which will remain open through the winter. Because the Visitor Center is our hub of operations, we will continue to keep it open seven days a week. Our desire to provide quality customer service while maintaining the ability to collect revenue will surely be compromised to some extent. Certainly not the best of circumstances for a park opening new facilities, yet it is indicative of the direction our economy is headed. It goes without saying that our Friends and volunteers will continue to play a huge role at Cheyenne Mountain State Park!

OK, now onto more positive things! Our Holiday Open House took place on December 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup>. Sales, refreshments, gift wrapping, geocaching, and lots of fun, fun, fun! Even larger than last year's successful event, this weekend proved to be very popular with both visitation and retail sales making a big jump! Thanks to Bernie Klatkiewicz and her elves for making this such a great weekend.

On November 18<sup>th</sup> we hosted an open house, which wrapped up our process to gather public input regarding potential uses for our new property on top of Cheyenne Mountain. Two well attended workshops facilitated by consultants Keziah-Watkins preceded the open house and produced a wide range of ideas and potential uses for this incredible property. Next summer we will be conducting natural resource inventories to learn more about the top of mountain, which will help guide the development of a master plan for the property.



Our very first official campers arrived at the park around 4:30pm on November 13<sup>th</sup>! These folks live in northeast Colorado Springs and had been checking out our website everyday, as well as calling the front desk routinely to see when the campground opened up. The following morning, Bernie presented the couple with Cheyenne Mountain cups and t-shirts. We also made sure to take their picture and plan to celebrate our first campers with a framed photo beside their camping permit, which will hang proudly in the Camper Services building.

## President's Message: As Things Change, They Really Stay the Same

Hi everyone. Your Friend's Board would like to wish you all a great Christmas and Holiday period. Things have been busy since our last newsletter. In October we elected new Board Members and Officers. Here's the new makeup of the Board:

President - Glen Scott (new)	Vice President - Jack Busher (new)
Secretary - Lori O'Hare (re-appointment)	Treasurer - Barb Scott (re-appointment)
Members: Jerry O'Hare, Jim Purdy, Nan Scranton, Pam Scott (new), Janeen Igou (new)	

Rick Upton departed the Board (and the position of President) to (as he described it), "become a super volunteer." Rick has made tremendous contributions as a Volunteer, Friend, and Board Member since the founding of the Friends' Group in early 2002. Fortunately for all of us, he's not going very. We know Rick will continue to support Park Programs and the Friend's Group.

As we look toward next year, it seems appropriate to briefly review our (I use the word "our" because I really consider victories and achievements by the Park staff and volunteers to be central to our success as a Friends' Group) accomplishments over the past year...

- The Park is now formally open not only to hikers and bikers but also campers!
- The top of Cheyenne Mountain has been secured for expanding the Park.
- The Park Volunteer program was recognized as the outstanding volunteer program in the region.
- Jack Busher's Trail Guide to the Park was published...and is actively selling at the Park visitor center (and generating revenue to plow back into supporting Park programs!).
- We established our first endowment fund thanks to an anonymous contribution. (More on that later in this issue.)
- We met our budget goals for 2008...while providing the highest level of support to Park programs in our history.

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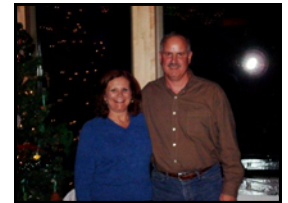
2009 looks to be a year of both opportunities and challenges. The range of Park services and facilities available to the public will grow...at the same time the impact of budget cuts due to the economic downturn is cutting the Park budget. Rich Dudley and the Park Staff are working hard to stretch the resources they have...but they need help. So the importance of the Friend's Group in helping the Park continue to grow into the crown jewel of the Colorado State Park system is more critical than ever. We need all your ideas and support during the coming year as we seek take on yet a larger role in supporting the Park programs.

## **Friends Sponsor 2008 Volunteer Awards Banquet**

On November 4, the Park staff, in conjunction with the Friends, honored volunteers at the third annual Volunteer Banquet. Brian Kerrigan MC'ed the affair. Quest speaker was Vicki Leigh, the Volunteer Resource Officer from Colorado State Parks. She applauded the park's staff for their continued effort to keep a healthy volunteer base. Once again, Cheyenne Mountain State Park led the region as their volunteers accumulated just under 5000 hours of service this past year.

Brian also handed out the annual Volunteer Awards. **Jack Busher** was presented the award for Most Hours. **Bob Orr** received the Newcomer of the Year Award while **Janeen Igou** received an award for heading up the park's Raptor Monitoring Program. **Lee Tatum** was presented a certificate and a plate of cookies for his dedication to the very successful weekly series of Cookie Burner Hikes. **Kyle and Ken Klatkiewicz** were honored for their many volunteer hours in support of the park's retail program. Finally park naturalists **Cheryl Holling and Pat Grove** were presented special recognition for the outstanding work they have done organizing the park's Naturalist Program.

Next on the agenda was the presentation of a plaque to honor out-going President Rick Upton, who has been a Friends Board member since the inception of that group in 2001. Rick has been a mainstay in much of what the board has accomplished since it was organized. He plans to continue as a very active volunteer, something he has been doing since he organized some of the park's very first volunteer projects. These involved bringing in Boy Scouts who worked in the park clearing miles of barbwire fencing as part of their Eagle Scout Badge Program. Rick will be missed by the board, but we expect to see even more of him out on the trails and in the campgrounds. Thanks so much.



*Sandy Upton Accepts  
Rick's Award from  
Rich Dudley*



*Janeen Igou & Joy Benson  
Present Rich Dudley  
The flying Pig*

Joy Benson and Janeen Igou next made a special presentation to Rich Dudley and the entire park staff. This was the very prestigious "Flying Pig Award." It was given in response to all they have accomplished since the park was established in 2000, but especially the fact that the park, its trails, infrastructure, and campgrounds have finally opened. We join Joy and Janeen in thanking the staff for their untiring efforts to give us a first-class operation.

The evenings festivities concluded with Kerrigan's slideshow of park volunteers and their accomplishments over the past year. It was a well appreciated by the audience, especially for the many wonderful photos of the park, its inhabitants, and its activities.

## **Friends First Endowment Brings Funds to Support Fort Carson Troops and Their Families**

A highlight of the year 2008 was the establishment of the Fort Carson Enlisted Soldier and Family State Parks Pass Fund.

The purpose of this fund is to provide State Park Day Passes to the enlisted soldiers of Fort Carson and their family members. The Donor to this fund wishes to remain anonymous and has designated Stewardship to the Friends of Cheyenne Mountain State Park Board. An initial gift was made to this fund by the Donor. \$500 was designated to be utilized to purchase and provide State Park Passes during the first year of the agreement as stated above. The remaining funds shall be invested by the FCMSPP Board and the interest income earned annually shall be used to purchase additional State Parks Passes as stated in the agreement. There are other legal Terms and Conditions listed in the agreement but the main intent is that the principle shall be invested in perpetuity and the interest earned shall be used forever to buy Day Passes for our Fort Carson soldiers.

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## Naturalist Programs Continue to Highlight Park Activities



Park Naturalist Cheryl Holling certainly doesn't let any grass grow under her feet. Go to the park website to see the many activities she planned and carried out the past few months. One of the many successful October events was her take on a national program called "No Child Left Inside," designed to encourage kids to get outdoors.

To celebrate this, Cheryl and her busy crew of park volunteers Janeen Igou, Jerri DeCarolis, and Lucy Bell presented four different programs. During the first, they helped the participants become "junior naturalists," studying one of the park's prairie dog colonies. From all reports, it was hard to tell who was more fascinated, the kids or their parents.

The next activity was called Trail Savvy. Using a silent follow-the-leader format, the kids toured Zook Loop, emphasizing all their senses to observe Nature's best. Each child then took a photo of something that had amazed them along the trail. These would later become a part of their Nature Journal.

While Cheryl raced back to the Visitors Center to print their pictures, Jerri kept them involved with "Un-natural Trail," another activity to get them to observe more closely. The kids were surprised to find it so difficult to find all the objects hidden "in plain sight."

Next Janeen entertained her audience with Talkin' Turkey. The kids enjoyed watching a Dad transformed into a turkey with some adaptation props as the group discussed their habits and lifestyle. Later the group hiked out to a meadow on Zook where turkeys had been seen. They then hid in the brush and used turkey callers to try and entice them to make an appearance. Obviously these kids had fun while being OUTDOORS!

On October 24 Cheryl and her crew presented another interesting program called Creatures of the Night. With an estimated crowd of close to 100 visitors, the evening seemed to be a big hit. One of the highlights was a visit from Ellicot Wildlife, accompanied by several owls, including the crowd favorite, a great-horned. The evening was capped off with a wonderful night hike. Volunteers who helped make this program such a success were Ann Gerber, Bob Orr, Linda Overlin, Joy Hellman, Jerri DeCarolis, Lucy Bell, Ann Brown, and Jerry and Lori O'Hare.

November was filled with another series of popular programs. Along with volunteer Lee Tatum, Cheryl continued to sponsor the Cookie Burner series, as well as weekly Wildlife Walks. The latter were very rewarding because they always spotted animals and the anticipation generated by hiking quietly and alertly can be exciting.

Other enjoyable opportunities were "Tracks and Scat" and "Reading the Trail" programs where everyone had fun learning the finer points of basic trail reading. Of course, everyone wants to tell their stories.

The best attended program was the "Thanksgiving Without Superstores" presentation the last weekend of November. Lucy Bell was absolutely engaging and believable as an early settler in the Cheyenne Mountain region. Cheryl performed as a Native American woman, and the two friends sat in Lucy's settler kitchen (set up in front of the VC fireplace) discussing the food they would prepare for their upcoming celebrations - just as women do all the time comparing notes on menus and methods. Every item mentioned in the dialog at her kitchen table was one that could be found in CMSP. As they talked, a PowerPoint presentation played over their head where the visitors could see a picture of the species they were talking about as well as some interesting facts about it. At the end of the skit, the players shared some rosehip tea, pinon nut bread and berry cobbler with the visitors. Lots of fun!



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.

## Top of the Mountain Meetings Come to a Close

Now that the purchase of the top of Cheyenne Mountain has been assured, the park staff has moved forward in the process of developing this rare jewel of the Front Range. Part of the process included several open meetings held over the past several months to collect input from the public.

All three of these meetings were held at Cheyenne Mountain Junior High School. At the final meeting, held on November 18, the consulting group of Kezziah-Watkins, hired to facilitate this procedure, presented their findings. Next in the process the State Park board will consider the ramifications, continue their environmental assessments of the property, and eventually present a plan for usage of this new section of the park.

Thanks to those Friends Board members who took the time to add their "two cents." And also thanks to the Friends for supporting this major capital expenditure. Its approval, in retrospect, came just in the nick of time, as we can all see as our economy has tightened dramatically in recent months.

## Adopt-A-Trail Program Continues to Support Park's Maintenance Program



Ranger Brian Kerrigan's Adopt-A-Trail Program continues to pay dividends for the park as both the Bechtel Corporation and Cheyenne Mountain Resort and Country Club have completed their first full year as participants in the program.

CMR/CC sent 18 volunteers to the park on Saturday, September 13. The biggest part of their work involved armoring two trail crossings where Coyote Run crosses JL Heights Ranch Road. Recent heavy rains had created serious erosion problems at this site as well as many areas along Coyote Run above where it connects with Zook Loop. The group installed several water bars there and cleared some outflows to prevent water from pooling on lower sections of the trail.

The Bechtel group spent most of Friday, September 26 and the morning of September 27 completing their tasks. Under the leadership of volunteer crew leader Jim Purdy, the group of 12 tackled Talon Trail near where North Talon branches from it. They concentrated on resolving erosion issues that were eroding parts of the trail by eliminating some built-up berms and constructing water bars for much of the day. On Saturday 10 volunteers continued the erosion work by starting near the Trailhead parking lot and working about a mile of trail to the west and south.

## Volunteers Contribute 240 Hours of Labor During 2008 Trail Work Days

Though the trail maintenance season never actually ends, much of the organized projects of the year have come to a close. Supported by both the Friends, who donate meal money for the volunteers, and the park staff who help organize these outings, the second year of this program wrapped up in October. Over the summer the volunteers worked on five different Saturdays, spending 5-6 hours on each of these days, and added two Wednesday evening sessions, which usually lasted 2-3 hours. The time this devoted group contributed totaled close to 240 man-hours of labor. Certainly they have played a significant role in keeping the park trails and campgrounds ship-shape for our visitors. Good work!

Get rested, because we have plans for you next season, too.



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On June 11, 2008, the Friends purchased 83 CMSP Gift Certificates to be exchanged for Day Passes. FCMSP Board members and Park staff worked together to get the Certificates out to Fort Carson enlisted soldiers and their families.

Visiting the CMSP is a beautiful way to relieve the stresses incurred by the war. This is a great way to say "Thank you!" to our Fort Carson soldiers. The Donor has invited other citizens who would like to support our Fort Carson soldiers, to contribute to this fund. This would increase the amount of interest earned and we could buy more Certificates/Day Passes. Additional donations to this endowment would be restricted to the same Terms and Conditions detailed in the original agreement. If you would like to contribute to this fund, I will be glad to send you a list of the Terms and Conditions. My email address is listed below.

If you would like to write a check, please address it to "Friends of Cheyenne Mountain State Park". Please include a note that you would like the funds applied toward the "Endowment Fund".

Checks can be mailed to:

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

Barbara Scott  
FCMSP Treasurer  
Bscott03@gmail.com

**What's Going on at the Park?****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	glenscotto6gmail.com
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Pam Scott pscott1644@cpmcast.net

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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

All photos in this issue are compliments of Ranger Ryan Downing. 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](mailto:jbusher@qwest.net)

# Friends of Cheyenne Mountain State Park Membership Application

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

**New / Renewal** (circle one)

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

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**City** \_\_\_\_\_ **State** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail Address** \_\_\_\_\_

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

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P.O. Box 51453  
Colorado Springs, CO 80949-1453

**Thank you for your support of Cheyenne Mountain State Park!**