

Trails For All (TfA) Board Meeting Minutes
October 10, 2023, 5:30 pm
Approved: November 14, 2023

a) Board Members Present

Paul Parsons (PP) Sally Strom (SS) Andrew Todd (AT)

b) Board Members Absent

Doris Keene (DK) Chuck Ziehr (CZ) Herb Kober (HK) Karen Foley (KF)

b) Others Present

Shelly Larson (SL) Rob Bidner (RB) John Van Doren (JVD) Debi Van Doren (DVD)
Janet Smith (JS) Jeff Outhier (JO) Jess Franta (JF) Mickey Beyer (MB)
John Anderson (JA)

Due to four Board Members being absent, we did not have a quorum for this meeting. Therefore, no actions may be taken, but we did review items for further discussion at next month's meeting. Sally Strom took notes to create these minutes.

Consent Agenda:

There were no corrections or additions to the Minutes and Treasurer's Report for September 2023. We will recommend approval at the meeting in November.

Reports:

Paul announced that Ellen Glover of the Wet Mountain Tribune has requested an interview to discuss Trails for All in late October.

1. Trail Maintenance

Chuck Ziehr will be providing a report to summarize the trail crew season. Mickey Beyer joined the meeting and announced that he and five other volunteers will be working on the Rudolph trail on Wednesday, October 11th, weather permitting.

[Note from TfA Secretary (CZ). Since I was unable to attend the meeting, there was some confusion about the availability of the trail maintenance year-end report which was sent to Jeff Outhier and the TfA board on September 18. That report is enclosed at the end of these minutes.]

2. Evaluation of the Volunteer Event. SS recommended that we continue to use the All Aboard Westcliffe venue for this event. She also recommended that we add the event as a line item on the budget to capture the cost of the venue rental and raffle prizes. SS asked the group to think about alternative raffle prizes for next year. She also

recommended we select a date for the lunch and reserve AAW as soon as the trail crew schedule for 2024 is determined so that the lunch can be held when more volunteers are available.

3. Update on the Submission of Trail Stories. AT has the template ready to go live and will share it with the group prior to adding it as a sub website.
4. Request from the USFS for Comments on a Vegetation Management Project. Jeff Outhier explained the project is primarily major thinning on roads in the Wet Mountains for fire mitigation. The government requires a request for public input (NIFA). PP will respond to Destiny indicating TfA is fine with the proposal.
5. Trails for All Stickers. SS said she took the last roll of stickers as hand-outs for the Volunteer Lunch; she will return the extras to Karen Foley. JS said she has a stack as well that she will give to Karen. We will revisit this in the Spring; AT and SL recommended we choose a different color scheme for the next printing of the stickers.
6. GOCO as a potential Grantor for S.E.E.K. JS presented the article she found showing a list of recipients for grants for the Generation Wild program. PP and SS and HK will discuss this when they meet with All the Range to see if additional funds are needed (perhaps hire someone to run the program?). RB said he will ask KF if she has a contact at GOCO who could explain more about the grant.

AT brought up the broader question TfA needs to address: “what do we want to be when we grow up?”. Are we content with our current role or do we feel the need to expand? We will have further discussion at the meeting in November.

7. Hiking Guide Review. SL reported that HK has reviewed the first half of the guide and will finish the second half when he returns from his trip. JS has reviewed and provided SL feedback on the text (grammar and consistency). SL asked for comments from the group about what they liked and didn't like. Shelly will prepare a second reading to share with the group, and will also share this with Jeff Outhier.

AT commented that the trails were organized alphabetically instead of the order you would encounter them moving North to South on the Rainbow. He used Comanche/Venable as an example. Although the trails are next to one another and actually connect, they are in different parts of the hiking guide. PP and SL suggested we address this in the Third Edition of the guide.

PP was pleased to see the increased number of Wet Mountain trails in the guide, and asked that we continue to expand this in future guides. He specifically would like to see Lions Canyon trail included.

SL said we are still on track to have the guide printed in early December in time for placing orders for Christmas.

8. Regional Partnerships Initiative. AT reminded the group that Colorado Parks & Wildlife is sponsoring a grant program to encourage regional partnerships between stakeholders focused on recreation and conservation. AT expressed concern that we need to address the increased trail usage in the Sangres and not wait for a catastrophic event to drive the conversation (fire). Key discussion points:

JO said the USFS is at maximum usage capacity in the San Carlos Ranger District; their two options for managing this are charging fees and requiring reservations.

Is Custer County government ready (and willing) to be involved in a partnership? General consensus is “no, not yet”.

Who should lead this initiative? TfA seems to be the best group, but again we need to address what direction the organization would like to go.

JS suggested we start small and involve other like-minded groups to identify issues: Community Foundation, SAR and the Tourism Board were identified as possible partners.

JVD suggested that TfA might use grant funds to lead a feasibility study on programs to support Custer County’s economy, especially in the Winter season (perhaps a National Wildlife Refuge).

The cycle for the grant application is annual, and the documents are due in early November. The group concluded we should continue discussions with the intent of applying in 2024.


9. The need to resign from the Board. PP informed the group of Doris Keene’s decision to resign from the Board. She prefers to support TfA through trail maintenance. We will officially accept her resignation at the November meeting; in the meantime, PP asked that we email him with suggested nominees.

SS reminded the group that we have three more Board members who will be leaving in April, 2024. We should consider nominees for those positions as well.

Next Meeting: The next board meeting will be Tuesday, November 14, 2023 at 5:30 pm MT.

Adjournment: PP adjourned the meeting at 6:53 pm.

Minutes were taken by Sally Strom on behalf of Chuck Ziehr.

Minutes prepared by:  Chuck Ziehr, Secretary, Trails for All Board of Directors
[SS did an excellent job recording the minutes; CZ extends his sincere thanks.]

NOTE: The Treasurer’s Report that is normally attached to the minutes is not included this month since the September Treasurer’s Report still needs to be approved (since there was not a quorum at the October meeting).

2023 Trails for All Trail Maintenance Summary

Emailed to Jess Outhier (USFS), September 18, 2023

- Trails for All volunteers worked on six (6) USFS trails (Lion's Canyon, Venable Creek, Comanche Lake, Rudolph Mountain (three workdays), Cottonwood Creek, and North Taylor Creek.
- There was a total of 61 volunteers (33 different individuals) on those eight workdays who contributed 397.5 hours of work.
- There were 15 females and 20 males in the following age groups: 30s 3, 40s 7, 50s 5, 60s 7, 70s 6, and unknown 7
- I believe all would identify as Caucasian (white), and none had identified disabilities.
- Veterans: I can only confirm that three were veterans, but I don't know about most of the volunteers.
- No USFS equipment or funds were provided to Trails for All this year. Two USFS employees assisted--Megan Lynch and Jeff Franta on one workday.
- Lion's Canyon Trail, June 7, 2023
Eight (8) volunteers led by Paul Parsons worked 5.25 hours (42 total volunteer hours) clearing all deadfalls and daylighting most of the trail up to Locke Park (2.4 miles).
- Venable Creek Trail, June 22, 2023
Fifteen (15) volunteers were split into two groups led by Shelly Larson and Andrew Todd and worked seven (8) hours (120 total volunteer hours). One group daylighted up to the falls, and one group daylighted down from the lower lake; all deadfalls were removed.
- Comanche Lake Trail, July 13, 2023
Nine (9) volunteers by Doris Keene and Chuck Ziehr worked 6.75 hours (60.75 total volunteer hours) up daylighting and clearing deadfalls up to the lake; particular attention was given to the avalanche chute.
- Rudolph Mountain Trail, July 13, 2023
Two co-leaders (Mickey Beyer and Herb Kober) cleared small deadfalls from the kiosk to the ridge, working 7 hours (14 total volunteer hours).
- Cottonwood Creek Trail, July 29, 2023
Nine (9) volunteers led by Karen Foley and Rob Bidner worked 7.25 hours (65.25 total volunteer hours) clearing deadfalls and daylighting up to about 2.5 miles beyond the junction with the Rainbow Trail. One deadfall was removed and some daylighting was done on the Rainbow Trail while getting to the Cottonwood Creek junction.

- North Taylor Creek Trail, August 12, 2023
Ten (10) volunteers led by Rob Bidner and Karen Foley worked 3.5 hours (35 total volunteer hours) before getting rained out. Daylighted completed up about 1.5 miles and limited daylighting up to the Colleen Meadow.
- Rudolph Mountain Trail, August 21, 2023
Two co-leaders (Mickey Beyer and Todd Skrdlant) worked 5.5 hours (11 total volunteer hours) cutting some of the remaining deadfalls up to the ridge.
- Rudolph Mountain Trail, August 23, 2023
Six (6) volunteers and two USFS employees—Megan Lynch and Jess Franta) led by Mickey Beyer worked 8.25 hours (49.5 total volunteer hours). One group daylighted thoroughly about 1.2 miles up from the kiosk. A second group (with two USFS chainsawyers) cleared deadfalls up to the ridge and about .75 miles along the ridge.

Report prepared by Chuck Ziehr, Trails for All trail maintenance coordinator, September 18, 2023