

OUR BACKYARD

The Newsletter of Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers

Winter 2008



Smiles were the order of the day as hundreds turned out to tour the Rio Grande trail from Aspen to Basalt.

A GRAND CELEBRATION OF OUR WINTER TRAILS

First Annual Town to Town Tour: a huge success

In the spring, summer, and fall when locals and visitors are exploring our trails and enjoying the beauty of our valleys, it's easy to see Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers at work fulfilling our mission. When the snow covers our mountain towns in winter white, the chairlifts are filled, and everyone is talking about new ski gear, it gets a bit tougher.

So we got an idea—a celebration of winter on the Rio Grande Trail, which links our communities all year long. This fun, family-oriented cross-country event is a great way to remind everyone that **RFOV** supports our trails year-round. And it provides another opportunity to serve for the many volunteers who share our vision throughout every season.

This fun, family-oriented cross-country event is a great way to remind our community that RFOV supports our trails year-round.

The inaugural Town to Town Tour was a huge success, with over 320 participants and 42 volunteers. We were blown away by the interest and support **RFOV** received for this event.

Skiers and a few snowshoers of all ability levels toured the 14.8-mile course under a clear blue sky – about half starting from Stein Park in Aspen and the other half from Woody Creek. We met in Basalt for a spirited celebration at the Roaring Fork Club River Cabin.

Smiles were to be had by all, as the sky was clear and sunny until mid-afternoon when the wind picked up and temperatures dropped. A warm outdoor fire, beverages, food, and some great giveaways welcomed the crowd.

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**WE DO TRAILS—
together!**

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OUR MISSION

To promote stewardship of our public lands
by creating volunteer opportunities for trail
work and conservation projects

PRESERVING THE CROWN

One question I get a lot from folks is “David, what to you do in the winter time?” My usual response is that I write grants, start planning the next year’s project season, and enjoy a little bit of slow time over the holidays. But not this year!

In addition to putting on the new Town to Town Tour this winter, **RFOV** facilitated the development of a citizen’s alternative plan for the future management of the local area known as the Crown. This distinct 9,103-acre parcel southeast of Carbondale is administered by the Bureau of Land Management, and is currently open to all users. As the population of the mid-valley has increased dramatically, so has recreational use of The Crown.

With the BLM starting to update the resource management plan for our area—a process occurring only once every 20 years—the opportunity came up to look at the future of The Crown. Due to current impacts and the projected increase in use of this close-by area, the BLM wanted to see if the community would support creating a Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) that would encompass The Crown. The only other local SRMA is Red Hill/Mushroom Rock.

Our contacts at the BLM suggested **RFOV** convene a series of public



A note from DAVID HAMILTON

... the overwhelming unifying factor of this disparate group was the desire and goal to preserve The Crown. All were concerned that the human pressures on The Crown were already significant . . .

input, that was the primary motivation for **RFOV** to host these meetings—the chance to act as a catalyst for a group of citizens to become active stewards of this public land.

The meetings were very successful, drawing good numbers of participants from a broad cross-section of interests. We estimate more than 100 people attended at least one of the meetings, including ranchers with grazing rights, representatives from the Colorado Division of Wildlife, neighboring property owners, and the full range of users (motorized, cyclists, equestrians, hikers, and hunters). I have to say that the overwhelming unifying factor of this disparate group was the desire and goal to preserve The Crown. All were concerned that the human pressures on the Crown were already significant, and

more at right >

SNEAK PEAK: 2008 PROJECTS!

The 2008 season looks like a perfect ten, with a great selection of projects from Silt to Aspen. Dates will be finalized soon, so look for your project announcement in the mail soon, and check out our website for updates and signup info.

▶ Lake Christine Wetland

Basalt • April or May

Wetland planting

▶ Forest Hollow & Scout Trails

Glenwood Springs • May

Construct trail reroute and major trail maintenance

▶ Red Hill Trail Maintenance

Carbondale • National Trails Day, June 7

Three trails on Mushroom Rock

▶ Town of New Castle Trail

New Castle • National Trails Day June 7

Maintenance project on the Colorow or River Park Trail

▶ Maroon Lake & Scenic Loop Trails

Near Aspen • Date TBA

Major repairs and improvements

▶ Arbaney-Kittle Trail

Basalt • July

Trail maintenance

▶ Hunter Creek Trail

Aspen • July or August

Major repairs/improvements up to Benedict Bridge

▶ Ashcroft Boardwalk

Near Aspen • August

Replace wooden boardwalk with crusher fines

▶ Wulfsohn Trail

Glenwood Springs • September

Finish and improve trail

▶ Tamarisk Removal

Silt • October

Tamarisk removal on Silt's island in the Colorado River



PRESERVING THE CROWN . . .

continued from left

believed that supporting this SRMA will be the best—and perhaps only—shot at achieving this goal.

In the end, every group made compromises, yet all agreed to the citizen's alternative plan. And, the second achievement was the significant number of meeting participants who signed up for the ongoing effort. I expect the BLM will adopt the citizens' plan in general and I look forward to helping with future related efforts and projects. My thanks to all the participants for stepping up and getting involved, and for demonstrating how real public dialogue can benefit our public lands!

For more details on the plan, please go to www.rfov.org and click on The Crown icon.

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MAPPING THE FUTURE

New strategic plan keeps our mission fresh, growing

RFOV enters its 14th project season in 2008. One reason our organization has grown to be so successful is that we've been very purposeful in setting goals and having a plan to achieve them. **RFOV's** evolution continues as we prepare to finalize and adopt our third revised Strategic Plan to guide us over the next three to five years.

The key question: "What can and should **RFOV** do to increase the number of volunteers and engage more of our community in the stewardship of our trails and public lands?" The discussion began with two very enlightening focus group sessions in the summer of 2006. Their purpose was to gauge the public's perception of **RFOV** and our value to the community. We invited several distinguished people from the community who for the most part did not have an existing relationship with **RFOV**. We learned two significant things:

- There is little public knowledge of how or by whom our trails are maintained, or even that it ever needs to be done. This is also true for other types of conservation projects **RFOV** does, like Tamarisk removal or riparian restoration plantings.
- The public is unaware of the distinctions between the numerous but varied conservation non-profits in our area.

After learning a bit more about **RFOV**, our work, and the numbers of volunteers we've engaged, both focus groups thought **RFOV** has an opportunity to build on our success. This is predicated on our doing a better job of connecting with all those who love and use our trails,

informing the public about what we do, and generally raising our profile in the community. If more people are aware of **RFOV** and our work, we will generate enough support to build on or add new volunteer programs.

We've already made some significant strides in raising our profile: the successful new Town to Town Tour winter event, hosting the recent public meetings on The Crown, the new tagline "We Do Trails Together," and working harder to explain what we do. We are also working on providing more informative signage at existing trailheads.

Our Board of Directors, with help and input from **RFOV's** committees and Crew Leader Corps (more than 100 individuals all told), has honed a list of eight different ideas to further pursue our mission. In no particular order:

- **Increase the number of Adopt-a-Trail groups**—find more groups in the area that may be interested and able to adopt a trail: businesses, service organizations, churches, homeowner associations, etc.
- **Build a Youth program**—get the kids (and their parents) involved in volunteer conservation projects.
- **Increase education**—develop programs to provide more education on associated stewardship values (in addition to a Youth Program)
- **More and/or larger projects**—we need a larger number of volunteers in order to make more of an impact.
- **Advertising**—increase advertising to raise awareness of **RFOV**, our work, and our mission to increase volunteer numbers and community support.

more at right >

What can and should RFOV do to increase the number of volunteers and engage more of our community in the stewardship of our trails and public



2007 SEASON STANDOUTS

On October 25, **RFOV** honored seven outstanding volunteers at our annual Volunteer Recognition party at ACES in Aspen. The awards are a fun way to recognize top volunteers for their hard work and dedication to stewardship of our public lands.



Michael Hutton of Basalt received the 2007 Volunteer of the Year Award. “Mike the Bike” has worked with **RFOV** in numerous roles since 1995. In 2007, he served as a crew leader teaching other volunteers how to be crew leaders and to build trails; as **RFOV**'s first-aid instructor; and as a project technical adviser.

Carl Moak, who owns Summit Canyon Mountaineering in Glenwood Springs, received the Project Partner award. His generous assistance with the work on Scout Trail above Glenwood Springs was what made that project such a success.



Paul Boyer of Glenwood (at left) was honored as Crew Leader of the Year. Paul who, has been a very active crew leader since 2003, worked on four projects in 2007. New Crew Leader of the Year went to Jamin Heady-Smith of Glenwood Springs (at right), who worked on



seven projects during 2007 and somehow managed to look clean, no matter what.

A new award, the Trail Steward, was given to Sarah Werner of Aspen for having participated in at least one project each year for the past nine years. Sarah is definitely a long-term steward of our public lands.



The Pulaski Award is named after a fire-fighting tool and goes to the volunteer who works on the most projects in a season. This award went to Brandon Pollard of Basalt for his work on eight out of ten **RFOV** projects last season.

The Food Sponsor of the Year Award went to Melinda Ness of Basalt for personally catering a project at Wulfsohn Mountain Park in Glenwood Springs despite cold, rainy weather. Lucky attendees at the volunteer recognition party were treated to a selection of Melinda's fabulous individual dessert cakes. Yum!

MAPPING THE FUTURE, *continued from left*

- **Make user contacts on trails and at trailheads**—connect with our prime constituency – trail users.
- **Hire a part-time or full-time seasonal trail person**—a person with “Instructor Level” skills to work with Adopt-A-Trail groups, youth groups, and on **RFOV** field work.
- **Consider one or more fundraising activities** that would complement

RFOV's stewardship mission and values.

Which ideas do you think would be most effective? Maybe you'd like to help us implement one of these ideas? Please let us know. Our hope is to have our new Strategic Plan completed this spring. We'll keep you posted!

► *David Hamilton*

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.... A GRAND CELEBRATION

continued from page 1

We owe many thanks to many people: our volunteers who helped with permitting, organizing, publicity, staffing the stations and acting as crossing guards; our sponsors and donors who provided funding, groomed the trail, and provided in-kind donations as well as prizes and goodies; and the participants who supported the Tour and provided lots

of great feedback that will help us make next year's event even better.

"...the weather was great, the course was terrific, and with all the enthusiastic volunteers, this really turned out to be a great ski."

—Anthony Todaro

Oh, and thanks to everyone who carpooled, and to all those who really got into the spirit with a creative costume or accessory (no doubt we'll see more next year). And we hope to see all of you next year, too!

► Kathleen Wanatowicz

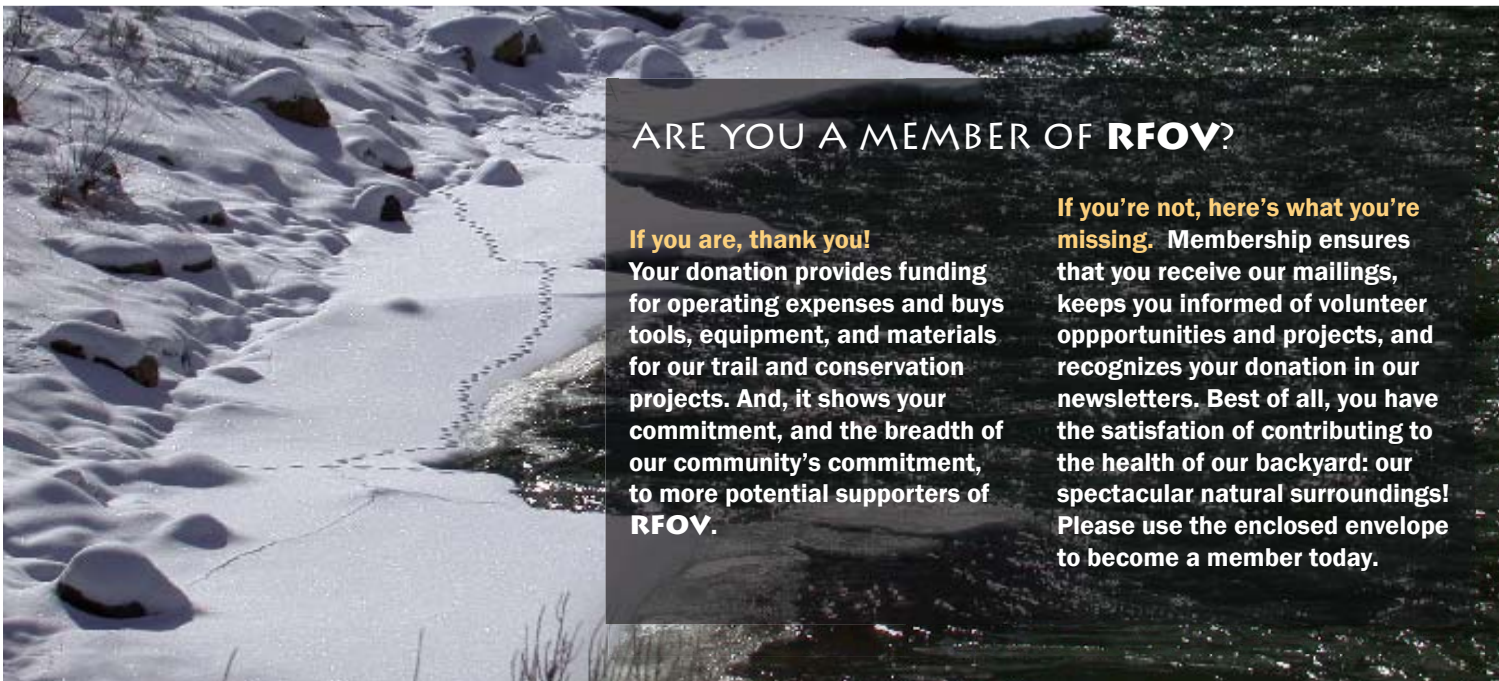


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Kristine Tracz & Laurie Spakanik
Ruth Trowbridge
Bruce Upton & Sara Boulet
Lindsey Utter
Donna Van Hoy
David Vtipil
Peter Waanders
Robert & Juliana Walker
Steve Warden
Melissa Waters
Mary Watson
Scott Weagraff
Doug & Lynda Weiser
Sylvia Wendrow JD Sturgill
Patricia Wheeler
Walter White
Judith Whitmore
Laura Whittemore
Hans Widmer
Jack & Bonnie Wilke
Susan & Perry Will
Pierre & Beth Wille
Susan Wilson
Jeff & Gay Wisch
Dottie Wolcott
George & Edith Wombwell
Jo Ann Yacko



RFOV TOOLBOX

great opportunities to get involved
in the future of our public lands

The fact that it's winter doesn't mean **RFOV** is taking a rest! We're hard at work year-round, and we need your help. Our seven active committees offer something for everyone.

Volunteer Development: Help recruit and promote volunteerism in our organization and its various programs. This committee creates recognition events, promotes business involvement, and supports the project ambassador program and board member nomination. *Contact:* Eileen Wysocki 984-9705, ewysocki@holycross.com or Jamin Heady-Smith at 420-658-1471, jheadysmith@hotmail.com

Development: Help support and create a development strategy for the future of **RFOV**. Coordinate our mission and involvement in the business community, and target new funding sources and opportunities. *Contact:* Tony Battaglia at tony.battaglia@att.net

Projects: Help solicit and select prospective projects in the valley! Research potential projects, evaluate their merit, and discuss their benefits to our mission and our community. *Contact:* David Hamilton at 927-8241 or rfov@sopris.net

Marketing and Publications:

Enjoy creative writing or public speaking? This committee develops marketing pieces for the organization: written, oral, and visual! We produce the newsletter, project announcement, and various publications; help manage the website; and have created a video about **RFOV**. *Contact:* Linda Schuemaker at 945-5776, or Ljschuemaker@cs.com

Tools: Help maintain **RFOV**'s tools to ensure each project's success. *Contact:* Mark Schuemaker at 945-5776 or Ljschuemaker@cs.com

Town to Town Tour: Help organize the event, Tour stations, food, publicity, prizes, kids' activities, costume contest, and find sponsors and donors. *Contact:* David Hamilton at 927-8241 or rfov@sopris.net

Youth: RFOV needs someone dedicated to getting youth involved in volunteer projects to head this new committee, and connect with local schools and youth programs. *Contact:* David Hamilton at 927-8241 or rfov@sopris.net



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