

Black Forest Trails Association Newsletter

Connecting Our Community!

Volume 35, Summer 2012

President's Corner

~Larry Fariss

I just returned from Great Britain in the United Kingdom, where my wife and I had the opportunity to hike and bike 1200 miles throughout the length of this wonderful country. We biked through some beautiful countryside and quaint villages. I also hiked the largest peaks in England and Scotland as well as several long walks along the Scottish coastline. But these great opportunities were not the highlight of my trip... it was something far simpler that reminded me of what we trail users have in Black Forest!



Here I am walking a neighborhood trail through privately owned pastureland in sunny Bristol England!

Throughout England, communities large and small, have established paths throughout the neighborhoods that are open for the public to walk, ride or bike whenever they wish without objection by the land owners. This open access concept is embraced by land owners and organizations that keep paths clear and maintained. The paths run along fence lines and right of ways, through pastures and forests, and

through rural and urban settings. In addition to encouraging members of the community to exercise in the outdoors, the paths serve to strengthen community bonds as neighbors get to know each other better and folks “from the next street over” encounter folks from the next neighborhood.

Walking those paths brought to my attention we have something similar right here in Black Forest! Of course, like many American communities, we have a series of parks that allow us to move about in the woods, but we have something else that is more like an English community! We have civic minded property owners that have allowed Black Forest Trails Association to establish a series of trails across private properties to link the neighborhoods and roadways throughout Black Forest.

To date, approximately ten non-motorized trails have been established. They vary in length but they allow transit to our unpaved roads without encountering heavy traffic. For instance I live nearly two miles from Section 16 trails but can get there entirely by using community trails across private property and unpaved roads. This is a wonderful concept the BFTA is seeking to expand in several ways:

1. We are mapping the existing trails so our members and fellow citizens can access them easily.
2. We are offering free BFTA membership to those who open their property to trail users.
3. We have obtained permission from the county for land owners with trails to receive a tax break.
4. We are approaching land owners who have strategic properties that would link unpaved roads.

5. We are openly soliciting all property owners to evaluate their holdings for possible linking trails.

To jump start this expansion though, we need it to begin within the BFTA membership. I am asking each of you to join me in examining your property and if you see an opportunity for a linking path across your (or a friendly neighbor's) property to contact me directly. At your invitation, a BFTA Board member will swing by to meet with you to review your concept. With your help we seek to expand the community trails tenfold in ten years! With our larger land holdings and rectangular shaped acreage, Black Forest is in position to have the best trail linking net in the state and rival our friends from Merry Old England! Please feel free to contact any board member if you have ideas that help us meet our mission: *To create a safe, legitimate, non-motorized, multi-use recreational trail system that connects Black Forest neighborhoods to each other and the El Paso County Regional Trail System.*

Sincerely, Larry Fariss
President BFTA
719-495-0724

Section 16 Noxious Weeds Destroyed by Scout Troop

-Ruth Ann Steele

On June 20, 2012 Scout Troop #506 and friends, in four hours, gathered 11 30-gallon garbage bags of diffuse knapweed, *Centaurea diffusa*, (one bag had a little trash) from Section 16 in the Black Forest.

The group of 14 youth and adults, plus two toddlers covered about a fifth of a mile, from the west gate of the Trailhead to the gas line on the Equine Trail. They covered at least 20 feet either side of the trail except where fences limited the footage. They also destroyed common mullein, *Verbascum thapsus* and other noxious weeds but did not bag them. Organized by Isaac Donnelly, age 18, a potential Eagle Scout, the group, with keen observation skills and a willingness to work, set to the task with fortitude and joy. I

loved it. Even the tiny tots went right along with the crowd and played in the sand and had a wonderful, messy time in the dirt.

Many noxious plants had their seed destroyed but the danger still is there. Persistence pays. The area needs to be watched, even this year. But next year another assault is needed. Noxious weeds don't give up.

Thank you, Weed Killers, for your tireless efforts. You are much appreciated. Isaac Donnelly, Logan Woodward, Regan Enright, Amik Enright, Hayden Lange, Alicia Carlston, Ryan Kartis, Harmony Donnelly, Tom Donnelly, Rhys Enright, Brad Tyra and his toddlers, Bennett and Geneva, Patti Donnelly, and Jared Burton. Mr. and Mrs. Donnelly provided snacks and lunch, water, wheel barrow and charm.

BFTA Receives Donation of Tools

--Cheryl Pixley

On May 26 a generous contribution of lopping tools and supplies was made to BFTA by Eagle Scout candidate Preston Cole after he and his crew finished a forest thinning project at BF Section 16.

The loppers, shears, gloves, safety glasses and tarps were acquired by Preston with donations from the Black Forest Business Group, The Home Depot Monument, The Home Depot Woodmen and Powers, Dr. Russell Swan-Chiropractic in the Black Forest, Michael F. Reynolds P.E - Foundation and Structural Engineering-Mibar Engineering LTD., Tim Kealy- Farmers Insurance and Chuck Milligan P.E.- Geoquest LLC.

Many thanks to all the contributors! The tools will enable BFTA to outfit more volunteers to help with our ongoing "Lop Out" project at Section 16.

Fox Run Park Friends Group

-Judi Tobias

On June 13 Bob and Elly Hostetler hosted a meeting at their regarding forming a “Friends” group for Fox Run Park. The Hostetlers, who live off Higby Road, have been active in several support groups including Red Rocks and Garden of the Gods.

Dana Nordstrom and Jeremy Symes of EPC Parks were there to explain the program and answer questions, as was Susan Davies of Trails and Open Space. Jeremy explained his limited maintenance budget doesn’t allow anything but the most basic services.

He pointed out the things that BFTA has accomplished at Section 16 and Black Forest Regional Parks as examples of things that volunteers could do, such as periodic trash pickup and weed pulling.

The groups that attended were all park users and very enthusiastic. They agreed to try to form a group and have a workday at Fox Run scheduled for June 23. They will focus on raking up pine cones and needles that are clogging drainages with the help of a youth hockey group that has volunteered to help.

Be Prepared for Wildfire

-Judi Tobias

If you are concerned about the current fire danger, as many of us are, there are a couple of steps you can take to be prepared. To get reverse 911 notifications on your cell or email, go to the following web site and follow the directions:

www.elpasoteller911.org.

Take a disaster preparedness class through the Colorado Springs Office of Emergency Management by calling 385-5957.

Get a free wildfire mitigation consultation for your home by calling the Colorado Springs Wildfire Mitigation Office at 385-7342.

Have your medical records and enough of your medications ready to go, in one place. If you have pets or other domestic animals, have their records available too. Especially with large

animals, find out the nearest safe shelter where you can evacuate them in case you need to do that.



BFTA and Colorado State Forest Service Chip Slash

-Andy Meng

Volunteers from the Black Forest Trails Association, in conjunction with volunteers with the Colorado State Forest Service, spent several hours on Saturday May 5th chipping slash in Black Forest Section 16. CSFS brought their massive Morbark chipper (12” diameter log capacity) down from Ft. Collins and used it to show the volunteers how to safely use it to grind piles of slash into valuable mulch. The weather was perfect and a lot of work was accomplished. The BFTA will be conducting more wood chipper training sessions in the future, so be sure to visit our website often to check out the calendar for upcoming slash removal and chipping.

One of the most important techniques for fire prevention in the Black Forest is thinning and trimming. Thinning is removing trees so they don't grow too closely together. Trimming is removing dead and low hanging limbs and branches to prevent fire from climbing up into the crown of the tree. A crowning fire is the most dangerous and can spread the fastest and cause the most damage. Thinning and trimming in the forest is important, not only for fire prevention, but for the overall health of the

forest too. Trees that are properly thinned and trimmed will grow healthier and have a greater capacity for fire and bug / disease resistance.

The main by-product of thinning and trimming are generally large piles of slash. A great way to get rid of slash is to chip it into fine wood chips and mulch. Most of us know we can haul our slash to the Black Forest Slash / Mulch facility (<http://www.bfslash.org/>), but if you have a lot of slash from a major thinning and trimming effort, you might want to consider renting a chipper. There are a few equipment rental businesses around town that rent wood chippers. The rental chippers generally come in two sizes - 6" or 12" - the dimension referring to the max diameter of the log that the chipper can ingest. A 12" chipper is big and can grind up pretty good sized trees, but the 6" chipper is less costly and easier to use, although both of them will give you a good workout! I recently rented a 6" chipper to grind about 15 large piles of slash in a day. We found it worked best with 3 people - one person to man and feed the chipper and two to drag slash to the chipper. Rotating positions keeps the workers fresh. We found that it's beneficial to leave the trimmed trees and branches as long as possible and feed the butt end into the chipper. Even the 6" chipper can easily chew up a 30 foot tree by just feeding the butt end into the chipper.

But it's important to know that chipping slash can be dangerous. The best way to learn how to chip is to attend a BFTA chipper training session. But if you can't do that, make sure that the rental agent shows you how to use the chipper safely. There are several safety mechanisms built into the chipper, but they are not foolproof, so you need to have high situational awareness when you're operating a chipper. You should definitely wear hearing protection, eye protection, good gloves, sturdy work boots, a safety helmet and long sleeved shirts and pants.

As I write this article, we are into day 7 of the Waldo Canyon fire, which is burning just west of Colorado Springs. Already, this fire has become the most destructive in Colorado history with 347 homes destroyed and one person

confirmed killed to date. But it reinforces just how important fire mitigation and prevention are - especially for those of us who live, work and play in or near dense evergreen forests.

A great reference for forest maintenance is the FIG (Forestry Information Guide) published by El Paso County. You can access it online at <http://www.bfslash.org/figbook/index.php>

We urge all of you who maintain property in one of our precious forests to thin and trim your land, and doing so with a chipper can be fast, rewarding, and even fun!

Would you like to be in the Black Forest Festival Parade?

-Nancy Reinhardt

We like to make a good showing of our members for the Festival Parade. We need hikers, bikers, horseback riders and any other trail users to participate. Well mannered dogs on leashes are welcome. Horses must also be well mannered and able to deal with tractors, baby buggies, goats and many other scary things. We ask that one member of each group of participants is a member of Black Forest Trails Association.

Generally we assemble along Shoup Road at about 9 am and organize the group. Please call **Nancy Reinhardt at 495-2605 by August 1** as we need to let the parade organizer know what our group will be made up of. Please join us- it's really a lot of fun!

Fall Section 16 Trail & Road clean up

-Cheryl Pixley

The fall trash pickup date is tentatively set for **October 13** (please check our website).

Meet in the parking lot on Burgess, just west of Vollmer at 9:00 AM. We will finish by 11:30 if we have a good turnout.

Bring gloves, hats and water. A grabber tool is very useful as well. Trash bags are provided. Information is on our website or you can call 495-9295.

June 16 trail ride group was small, but fun
-Nancy Reinhardt

Paul & Lisa Douglass took part in the June 16 Trail ride on Palmer Divide trail. That made only four of us with guest Nancy Bee and leader Nancy Reinhardt.

Understandably people are busy but what's good about going on a ride like this is you can learn where the trails are.

A lot of times at the festival booth, people come up and ask us "where are the trails", or study our map. Going on an organized trail ride or hike is a great way to learn the trails in a new area, plus meet new people with similar interests. Hope to see you at the next one August 12.

Black Forest Trails Association Board	
President	Larry Fariss
VP - Administration	Cheryl Pixley
VP - Parks/Government	Barbara Remy
Secretary	Judi Tobias
Treasurer/Membership	Hank Hoover
Board	Lisa Dorr
Board/Newsletter	Nancy Reinhardt
Board	James Kruse

Upcoming Meetings:

July 7	Picnic – 12 pm	Black Forest Regional Park
July 12, 2012	Board meeting	BF Community Center
August 11, 2012	Black Forest Festival	Shoup & BF Rd
August 12, 2012	Horse Trail Ride – 4:30-5pm	Palmer Divide Trail-Hodgen & Woodlake Rds.
September 13, 2012	Board Meeting	BF Community Center

October 11, 2012	General membership meeting/election of officers	Black Forest Fire Station 11445 Teachout Rd.
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New Website

-Larry Farris

The Black Forest Trails Association (BFTA) has a new website at www.blackforesttrails.org ! The new site is designed to provide both members and visitors with the latest news and information about parks and trails in the Black Forest including upcoming events, trail and park maps, sales of BFTA gear, and photo galleries. BFTA President Larry Fariss is excited about the new site, "Our goal was to design the best website in Black Forest. The new site now allows people to apply and pay for their BFTA membership and gear ONLINE using a credit card or their PayPal account. Please take a moment to visit our new website at www.blackforesttrails.org - let us know what you think and take a moment to Join Now! Our membership is only \$15 per year for individuals and families, and \$30 per year for a business sponsorship with an ad and link on the website".

If you would prefer not to receive paper newsletters, let us know. They can be emailed to you instead. If so, email your preferences (and also if you have changed your email address) to hhoover@pcisys.net

BFTA is now on Facebook and Twitter

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