



BLACK FOREST TRAILS ASSOCIATION NEWS

President's Corner

Reforestation Critical For BFTA

By Larry Fariss, President



That darn fire! Upfront, of course, it changed many lives and destroyed our own and our neighbor's property and possessions. However, it quickly became apparent, the lasting challenge was that it left victims with a seemingly overwhelming task to reclaim their lives and reconstruct their homes in the forest. Remarkably, after only five years, much has been accomplished. Our community rallied around the victims and markedly sped up the recovery. To date, over half of the nearly 500 homes lost have been rebuilt and much of the vacant land has been sold to new neighbors intent on building their own place in the forest. In the not too distant future (10-15 years) most of the homes will be rebuilt and the residual "black

sticks" will be gone. The land itself though, is operating under a much slower recovery timeline largely dictated by Mother Nature. Left to its own design, it will take many, many decades for the land and beloved forest to fully recover. What can we do to speed up that recovery? Just as we helped our neighbors return to normalcy sooner, perhaps we can also give Mother Nature a hand. Reforestation is one of the answers! Fortunately it is happening on many fronts!

Recently El Paso County Parks and District 20's School in the Woods sponsored planting of several hundred seedlings along Volmer Road. They went the extra mile to insure increased survivability by establishing shade barriers and plastic sheeting to draw water into the seedling. You can check out their handiwork next time you drive to town or hike section 16's Partnership Trail.

Black Forest Regional Park also recently received some much needed tender loving care. El Paso County Parks provided 1500 seedlings that Rocky Mountain Field Institute volunteers planted in the worst burned portion of the park. This effort covered over 10 acres and will jump start the forest's recovery and get our biggest park back on its feet much sooner.

Our own Black Forest Together has recently expanded their operations to include transplanting young 6-10 foot trees, donated from overgrown properties, directly to burned properties left without trees. This is a fantastic outreach that not only brings trees back to traditional forest ground but thins areas that need mitigation as well. Spreading these older trees around will also greatly facilitate cone production and natural reforestation on tree barren properties. BFT equipment allows them to move up to 11 trees at a time which keeps costs down for the recipient. Call them to set up a delivery and installation to jump start your own reforestation project.

Many individual landowners are also to be applauded for their effort to plant thousands of seedlings each Spring courtesy of the Colorado State Forest Service Seedling program. Every year hard working landowners plant many of these baby trees with an eye toward the future health of our forest!

In short, get on board via one of these programs, and do your part to reforest our Black Forest! If you are a burned property owner spend some time healing your land. If you were one of the “lucky ones” donate your time and help replant our parks and neighbor’s land. We don’t need to wait a 100 years to see a beautifully recovered landscape. With your help we can cut that time frame to less than 50 years. Your children and grandchildren will thank you!

Sincerely, Larry Fariss

President BFTA

Did You Know....?

Legal Protection For Landowners With Trails

By Cheryl Pixley



Colorado law encourages private landowners to make their land available for public recreational trails. The Colorado Recreational Use Statute, Title 33, Article 41 limits the liability of landowners who allow access across their property.

Section 103 of the Statute says: (1) Subject to the provision of section 33-41-105, an owner of land who either directly or indirectly invites or permits, without charge, any person to use such property for recreational purposes does NOT thereby: (a) Extend any assurance that the premises are safe for any purpose; (b) Confer upon such person the legal status of an invitee or licensee to whom a duty of care is owed; (c) Assume responsibility or incur liability for any injury to person or property or for the death of any person

caused by an act or omission of such person.

Section 104 describes instances in which protection from liability is not available. A couple of examples are if the property owner knowingly and deliberately fails to guard or warn against a known dangerous condition, use, structure or activity likely to cause harm or if there is an attractive nuisance on the property, such as a swimming pool.

For a copy of the Colorado Recreational Use Statute, go to <http://bit.ly/2A0AJBc>. A legal opinion letter written for BFTA by Ellen Koerner, attorney at law, can be found at <http://bit.ly/2Lduy1K>.

Black Forest Trails Association's mission statement is to create a safe, legitimate, non-motorized, multi-use recreational trail system that connects Black Forest neighborhoods to each other and to the El Paso County Regional Trail system. YOU CAN HELP by providing a legally recognized trail easement on your property. If you would like to learn more, email BFTA at contact@blackforesttrails.org.

Dogs In Our Parks

By Andy Meng



All of us love hiking in our Black Forest parks, and taking our dogs along with us can create a great time for both dog and owner. But nothing will spoil a great hike faster than stepping in a stinking pile of dog poo. It is the policy of the County Parks Department, and the BFTA strongly endorses the policy that all dog owners **MUST** clean up after their pets.

Did you know?

- Stormwater carries pet waste and other pollutants directly into waterways.
- Animal waste adds nitrogen to the water. Excess nitrogen depletes the oxygen in water necessary for beneficial underwater grasses, wildlife and fish.
- Animal waste may contain harmful organisms such as Giardia, Salmonella and E. coli that can be transmitted to humans and other animals by ingesting contaminated water.
- Roundworms and hookworms deposited by infected animals can live in the soil for long periods of time and be transmitted to other animals and humans.
- It's the law! Many urban and suburban areas require you to pick up after your pet. Even if there is no restriction, cleaning up after your pet is always the right thing to do.
- No one likes to step in pet waste and spread it into homes, cars and businesses.
- It's easy to clean up by carrying plastic baggies and paper towels in your pocket. The baggies can be secured and thrown away in the garbage.
- Your neighbors will appreciate your good manners.
- We'd like to encourage our members and non-members alike to pick up after their dogs. You can get dog poop pick up bags in bulk on Amazon at <https://amzn.to/2JNuVue>

BFTA Board Supports “Reverse the Retreat” Effort

By Larry Fariss

The Black Forest Preservation Plan was established in 1974 as the first El Paso County Small Area Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of this longstanding plan has been to focus on and respond to the particular land development opportunities and constraints of the Black Forest Region. Recently the plan has been threatened by an El Paso County zoning decision supporting the Retreat at TimberRidge.

In response, the “Friends of The Black Forest Preservation Plan” (FOBFPP) have filed a lawsuit seeking a reversal of the county’s decision. The Black Forest Trails Association supports that lawsuit.

The BF Preservation Plan has a long history of endorsing the precepts championed by our Black Forest Trails Association—the development of trails and preservation of open space in the Black Forest Region. In fact, in 1999, a Trails Addendum (<http://bit.ly/1KH3jFD>) was added to the Preservation Plan. This document was a critical step in establishing the county wide recognized legitimacy of your Black Forest Trails Association. Ever since this date the BFTA has had a “seat at the table” in any forum that affects or impacts our network of trails here in Black Forest. Consequently your BFTA Board commonly expresses concern when the Preservation Plan comes under fire. The BFTA Board saw the recent establishment of a Friends of The Black Forest Preservation Plan as a positive step to support the Preservation Plan and unanimously passed a motion in 2015 to join the FOBFPP and encouraged all our members to do likewise. Now FOBFPP need help as they seek to collect \$25K to pay for the lawsuit aimed at Reversing the Retreat. Specifically the lawsuit benefits BFTA and its members by:

- Strengthening the Preservation Plan
- Protecting the rural residential character of Black Forest
- Minimizing Traffic Congestion and Preventing Leapfrog Development

To that end the BFTA Board unanimously voted to forward a \$500 donation to FOBFPP as they seek to reverse the county’s decision. Additionally we encourage our membership to consider making personal donations via check or online at <https://www.fobfpp.org>.

We at Black Forest Trails Association want to thank our entire membership for supporting efforts that preserve our rural character and provide a network of trails throughout the Black Forest region. Without your ongoing support and membership, this action on behalf of our community would not have been possible. We want to thank you for you membership and wish each of you Happy Trails!

See You At Our Booth At The Black Forest Festival!

Saturday August 11th at the Black Forest Community Club

6:30 – 9:30 AM: Pancake breakfast sponsored by the R&R Café

8 AM – 3 PM: Booths, children’s games, crafts, demos, music, expanded food venues, and more

10:30 AM: Parade

11:40 AM (estimate): Outhouse Races

There will be music, delicious food, and unique selections for shoppers throughout the day.

Please Support Our Sponsors

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BFTA Membership

By Andy Meng

By supporting BFTA with your annual membership, you help provide the funding and support for a whole range of issues that affect Black Forest trails and the lifestyle we all want to protect. The Black Forest Trails Association is a non-profit organization under IRS Code Section 501(c)(3). Donations are fully deductible to the extent permitted by tax law.

There are 4 tiers of BFTA membership (Dues are tax deductible):

- 1) Individual / family (\$15 per year),
- 2) Business / club (\$30 per year),
- 3) Donor (\$50 per year)
- 4) Lifetime (\$150 one time).

Membership runs from April 1 to March 31, and if you become a member now, your membership will be good through March 31, 2019. We use PayPal, which is easy and secure, to accept online payments, or you can print out an application and mail your payment in via US Postal service – either option can be completed via our website at **<http://www.blackforesttrails.org/joinrenew>**

Black Forest Trails Association

P.O. Box 88041

Colorado Springs CO 80908