



BLACK FOREST TRAILS ASSOCIATION NEWS

President's Corner

Summertime and the Living is Easy



Greetings Black Forest trails users. It's suddenly Summer! Hard to believe after the cold deluge and hail at Meadowgrass. But as we all know -- that's Colorado weather.

I think we have another great newsletter for you with updates on The Great American Cleanup, Backyard Market and another guest article from Molly Clarke submitted by Rachel Gaffney on preserving nature while hiking. We love guest articles so please send your thoughts our way.

I've always liked Lewis Carroll's Cheshire Cat quote about 'if you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there'. To me, organizational goals are the roadmap. The BFTA board discussed goals at our last meeting and decided on the following in priority order:

1. Connect the Pineries Open Space to Section 16. BFTA will work with the county on the logical connection along Vollmer Road that will allow easy access from several neighborhoods.
2. Trail Mapping Initiative. Provide digital maps to our members for county and local trails.
3. Pineries Shelter. As the current trail is very long it's likely trail users doing the eight mile loop will get caught in our Summer afternoon monsoons. We are working with the county and seeking financial support to provide a weatherproof pavilion
4. Section 16 Definition. Many social trails and swampy shortcuts are evolving. We need to stop this and keep folks on the trail.
5. Friends Groups/Ambassadors. BFTA will help establish support groups for Black Forest Regional Park and the Pineries Open Space.

With respect to Goal 5, this newsletter includes the county's Adopt a Park agreement. It's no trivial task to organize an effective group. BFTA has adopted Section 16 and my wife, Cris & I adopted the Palmer

Divide Trail. John Walsh recently stepped up to adopt the Black Forest Regional Park. Thanks John! Now we need someone to adopt The Pineries Open Space.

Meanwhile the Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC) started an ambassador program to protect and enhance park experience through volunteer efforts. Aaron Rogers of TOSC provided some information on this program and offered training. Paint Mines and Rainbow Falls are leading the way but the Pineries and BFRP are next. Let me know if you're interested and I'll work with Aaron to provide training.

So these goals will be our focus for the next two years. Goals are like touchdowns and objectives are like first downs in football. Next we need to develop objectives and then specific actions (to take the analogy further-- plays) to make progress.

Our annual member's meeting will be held at the Black Forest Brewing Company on Tuesday, 20 July at 630 PM. Terry Stokka will be our guest speaker. He leads the Friends of the Black Forest Preservation Plan and has been in the news lately speaking out for our unique Black Forest lifestyle. Your first beer is on BFTA.

And we'll have a booth at the Black Forest fest an Saturday, August 7. Please stop by and talk trails.

Lastly BFTA is participating in the county parks master planning process. Now that the county overall master plan is complete they are focusing on subordinate plans and updating the 2013 parks plan. I participated in an internal SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis in early June. The county wants this to be a public process and they are interested in your opinion. Please take the time to complete a survey soon to be posted on the county parks website <https://communityservices.elpasoco.com/parks-and-recreation/> (scan the QR code on your phone to visit the county parks website).



As always please feel free to contact me at president.bfta@gmail.com with your thoughts, issues and ideas to keep Black Forest cool. Hope to see you on the trails this Summer with our new dog, Luna.

Sincerely, Rich Mock
President BFTA

The Black Forest Backyard Market

By Theda Stone

The Backyard Market is back for its second season in Black Forest with an impressive lineup of local farmers, ranchers, food producers, crafters and artisans. The market is run by Owner/Director Theda Stone and Market Manager Beth Alexander. Each week you can shop up to 60 vendors and buy your fresh produce, artisan breads, butter, eggs, cheese and more! We also have some amazing food items such as gourmet caramel sauces, dumplings, lumpia, and tamales! Throughout the season, which runs from May 22nd - October 23rd on Saturdays from 9am-1pm, over 100 unique vendors will join us, bringing something new to the market every week! This season we will also host various musicians, including an open mic day on July 31st. Other programs include our Chef at the Market, which the BFTA has generously sponsored, will make it's debut on July 10, our Kids Corner which focuses on educating our youth is hosted by Sustainable Educational Experience (SEE), The Girl Scouts of Colorado, and Boy Scouts Pack 70, and our Young Entrepreneur program which allows the youth in our community to

practice the skills of selling and running a business of their own. We are very grateful to all our sponsors and local non-profits that have joined us to make our market one of the "Best in the Springs for 2021".

On Thursday, August 5th the market will kick-off Black Forest Festival Days with a special evening market 4-8pm, live band, and food trucks. It's also National Farmers Market week so we plan to have lots of fun things going on! Shop all your favorite food items from the market and enjoy an evening in the forest with us! (Please note the market will not run on Saturday August 7th)

This year's theme is "localist" which means locals supporting local and shopping the market. The past year was a challenging one for all of us but our community's resilience shows with the support of all our small businesses and farmers every week. It is wonderful seeing all the smiling faces and building more relationships within the community. Thanks for being a #localist with us!

We invite you to follow us on Facebook or Instagram @backyardmarketinbf for all the latest on what's happening in your local farmers market!

Market Manager

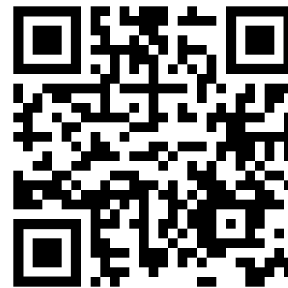
Theda Stone

719-306-3049

www.thebackyardmarkets.com (scan the code on the right)

www.facebook.com/BackyardMarketinBF

www.instagram.com/backyardmarketinbf/



Backyard Market

Black Forest & The Farm

manager@bfbackyardfarmersmarket.com

Annual Road And Trail Cleanup

By Cheryl Pixley

Many thanks to all who pitched in on April 24, 2021 for the annual Road and Trail Cleanup! Members of BFTA and Cavalier Trail Riding Club partnered to pick up 23 construction-size bags of trash from the Black Forest Section 16 Trail corridor & adjacent roadsides and an additional 6 bags from our adopted mile of Milam Road through Black Forest Regional Park. Our appreciation to Nancy Reinhardt and Gordon Limb for a well-planned event!

Additionally, BFTA President Rich Mock coordinated our participation in the Great American Cleanup project and headed a crew to clean the Palmer Divide Trail in Woodlake. John Wallace organized a group of volunteers and removed refuse from the southernmost parts of Black Forest Regional Park.

Kudos to all the caring folks who help keep our parks and trails beautiful!

Come See Us At The Black Forest Festival, August 6 and 7, 2021!

Check out the festival website for details: <https://weareblackforest.com/festival2021/>

El Paso County Parks Adopt-A-Park/Trail Program Description

By Dana Nordstrom

1. PURPOSE

To provide opportunities for organized groups to make specific volunteer contributions in time and talent for the purpose of enriching their County Regional Parks and Trails.

2. GOALS OF THE PROGRAM

- Provide fun volunteer opportunities that contribute to the beautification of El Paso County's regional parks and trails.
- Increase awareness of County parks and trails.
- Encourage and recognize volunteer contributions and efforts.

3. GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPATION

In consideration of the mutual benefits received by the County and the Group from participation in the El Paso County Parks Adopt-A-Park/Trail Program, the parties agree to the following:

- This Agreement begins in April and ends in March of each year. Upon the mutual consent of both parties, the agreement can be extended.
- The Agreement may be terminated by either the County or by the Group with ten (10) days written notification.
- Members of the Group agree not to modify any park facilities, amenities, landscape, or natural features without the written consent of El Paso County Parks.

Group agrees to the following tasks:

- Do a cleanup at least twice a year, Spring and Fall
- Volunteers provide services for a minimum period of one year.
- Volunteers are encouraged to visit their adopted area at least once per month for the period April-October each year and thereafter as weather permits.
- The volunteer group provides bags and assures trash is deposited in appropriate receptacles (if available) or taken off-site for proper disposal.
- Inspection for Maintenance or Safety Concerns – Volunteer groups complete and return an inspection checklist documenting the date, number of volunteers, and hours worked for each visit.

The inspection checklist is an important tool to evaluate facilities and document volunteer contributions to the El Paso County Park system.

- Volunteer groups are encouraged to identify and coordinate special projects within their adopted area with El Paso County Parks. Please use the Project Request Form to coordinate with the Community Outreach Coordinator and Park Supervisor.
- A designated Group Leader will be required for each organization to serve as the liaison with the El Paso County Parks Community Outreach Coordinator and Park Supervisor. Group Leader will be responsible for signing the Agreement, scheduling work dates, and ensuring compliance with the Agreement.
- Groups will provide Volunteer Waivers for all volunteers throughout the term of the adoption.
- An adult must supervise groups with members under the age of 18.

Benefits to the Adoptive Group in exchange for meeting the minimum responsibilities as outlined above, each adoptive group will receive:

- A designated County Parks liaison to communicate with the assigned volunteer group leader regarding the performance of their regular duties and special workdays.
- Staff coordination and assistance as needed in the accomplishment of optional special projects.
- One sign posted at the adopted site for identification and recognition of the volunteer group. Signs will be ordered once the group has served with the program for twelve months.
- Removal of any excess trash collected by the group if trash receptacles are filled or not available on site. The group leader must contact the Community Outreach Coordinator or Park Maintenance Supervisor following clean-up and to notify of retrieval site.
- Recognition on the County Parks website at www.elpasocountyparks.com
- One free pavilion rental each calendar year upon availability.

Thank You,

Dana Nordstrom
Community Outreach Coordinator
Community Services Department
El Paso County Parks
2002 Creek Crossing
Colorado Springs, CO 80905
Office: 719.520.6983S



Scan the QR code on the right to download a printable volunteer waiver form you'll need for volunteer work.

Best Ways to Preserve Nature While Hiking

Hiking is one of the best outdoor activities that you can do. It's easy for anyone to do no matter what type of shape they're in and there are some big physical and mental health benefits that come from hiking. But even though hiking is great for people, people are not great for the natural world. There are millions of hikers walking on thousands of miles of trails through the natural world every year and those hikers can do a lot of damage if they're not careful. Make sure that when you hike, you're taking these steps to avoid damaging the fragile ecosystems that those hiking trails go through:

Leash Your Pup

If you want to get some quality time with your dog a hike is a great way to do it, but you need to keep your dog on a leash. Unleashed dogs can cause havoc in the natural world. They can chase or attack animals, trample grass and plants, chew up and scratch trees, and scare or attack other hikers. Keeping your dog on a leash is the best way to keep your pup and the natural world safe. Just make sure that you clean up after your dog also.

Clean Those Boots

When was the last time you cleaned your hiking boots? Every time you hike your boots collect soil on the soles. That soil is filled with bacteria, seeds, and other debris. If you don't clean your boots between hikes, your boots will drop all that debris from one trail onto another trail. This can cause invasive plant species to grow in an area where they shouldn't be, or it can spread diseases between plants and trees. Take a few minutes to wash off your boots between hikes to make sure that you aren't accidentally causing damage to the natural world.

Take Only Photos

There are so many beautiful and interesting things in the natural world that it's normal to want to take some of them home with you. But if every one of the millions of hikers that uses those trails took a souvenir that would destroy the natural world. Take photos of the fun and interesting things that you see instead of taking the actual items.

Don't Litter

Some hikers don't even realize that they are littering. The same hikers who would never throw trash on the ground don't think twice about throwing orange peels or food scraps on the ground. They mistakenly think that food will break down by itself since it's organic. But food scraps can take years to break down and before they break down, they will spread bacteria and cause a hazard to the animals in the area. Take out all of your trash, even your food scraps.

No Shortcuts

If you take unauthorized shortcuts through the natural world you can cause a lot of damage. It's easy to trample the grass, rip up plants, and cause other damage without meaning to. That's why you need to stay on the trail and make sure that you don't try to make your own shortcuts.

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Black Forest Trails Ambassadors

Parks of emphasis: Black Forest Regional Park, Black Forest Section 16, The Pineries Open Space, Palmer Divide Regional Trail and Fox Run Regional Park.

- Trail Ambassadors provide general trail information, answer questions, listen to users' concerns, and connect people with resources in our community. Trail Ambassadors are trained in the following areas to promote trail stewardship and proper trail etiquette:
- Providing environmental education to trail users - Some of the most at-risk ecosystems are in the northern portion of El Paso County in the Pikes Peak Region. They contain geological treasures, are habitats for threatened flora and fauna and most contain frangible soils that don't stand up well to regular use. One of the most critical components of the Trail Ambassador program is educating trail users of the importance of staying on designated trails and respecting signs and barriers.
- Monitoring and reporting trail conditions and issues - In many cases, one park staff is responsible for monitoring and managing several larger open spaces. TOSC Trail Ambassadors serve as additional "eyes and ears" for the trails, monitoring and reporting trail conditions, usage concerns, or other pertinent information.
- Promoting trail courtesy, safety and awareness- Trail courtesy, safety and awareness have always been important, but now that we are seeing an unprecedented amount of new trail users, it's more important than ever. Trail Ambassadors promote trail etiquette, such as who has the right of way, how to announce oneself when approaching another user, picking up after pets, greeting other users in a friendly manner. Trail Ambassadors can also promote safety on the trails by alerting users to poor trail conditions and unusual hazards or being able to advise new users of trail difficulty.
- Serving as a cheerleader for the outdoor spaces - Trail Ambassadors engage users more deeply in our open spaces by sharing the location's rich history, geology and points of interest. Trail Ambassadors can recommend similar spaces for users to visit. TOSC believes the more people feel connected to their outdoor spaces the more committed they will be to preserving and protecting their trails, parks and open spaces.

TRAINING

TOSC will host several annual training opportunities throughout the year, which will include information on the Seven (7) Leave No Trace Principles, Local Environmental Considerations, Geological and Historical Facts, and Trail Monitoring Practices. At the completion of the training you should feel confident in:

- Providing environmental education to trail users - The five open spaces identified for this project are some of the most at-risk ecosystems in the Pikes Peak Region. They contain

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TIME COMMITMENT:

After the completion of the training, Trail Ambassadors can begin their patrols. TOSC will seek a commitment of 50 volunteer hours annually from each Trail Ambassador. TOSC's Program Coordinator will help you coordinate your schedule to ensure each volunteer has an opportunity to meet their required hours.

To register for a training, contact Aaron Rogers at aaron@trailsandopenspaces.org.

Scan the QR Code below to download a volunteer waiver form that you can print and provide to Aaron for volunteering.



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Black Forest Trails Association
P.O. Box 88041
Colorado Springs CO 80908

BFTA Membership

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, so if you become a member or renew now, your membership will be good through March 31, 2022. We use DonorBox, which is easy and secure, to accept online payments, or you can print out an application and mail your payment via US Postal service – either option can be completed via our website at <https://www.blackforesttrails.org/membership.html>