



BLACK FOREST TRAILS ASSOCIATION NEWS

President's Corner Black Forest Trails Association NEEDS YOU!



Greetings Black Forest trails users and I trust your Summer is going well in spite of all the turmoil in the world.

In this newsletter we again have a couple of guest articles for you plus interesting articles from our board members. Dr Judy Van Ahlefeldt explains the Section 16 lease history and Keith Henry updates us on his trail ventures. I hope you enjoy it and please contact me if you have anything you think our members need to hear.

But first I want to appeal to you to become an active member of BFTA using the iconic Uncle Sam character. Popular legend has it that a meatpacker from Troy, NY (adjacent to my hometown of Albany) supplied rations for American soldiers during the

War of 1812. The meatpacker, Samuel Wilson, was required to label his packages with "E.A. – U.S." When someone asked what that stood for, a co-worker jokingly replied "Elbert Anderson (the contractor) and Uncle Sam (referring to Wilson)". And thus the legend was born and later disputed. I know this image worked well for recruiting for the Army in World War II and I'm hoping it will work for BFTA this recruiting season.

BFTA needs you! After many years of dedicated service, two critical board members are stepping down this year and we urgently need replacements. Andy Meng is one of the workhorses of BFTA. Not only is he our current treasurer with many ancillary duties but he also produces our biannual newsletter you're reading now. He's served BFTA well and deserves to move on. Nancy Reinhardt is another long serving BFTA member. She currently serves as secretary and keeps track of my ramblings at board meetings. Her historical knowledge of the association is invaluable.

So now it's your turn to step up and serve your community. Board meetings are held every other month at the Black Forest Community Club. So the commitment is not overwhelming. I plan on stepping down next year after four years as president so that position will also require replacement. I figure if I can't convince you, maybe Uncle Sam will. It's time for some new thinking in BFTA.

Meanwhile BFTA has contributed 15 tons of trail base to Fox Run Regional Park and is working with the county to provide a bench around the halfway point in the Pineries Open Space. We have some other projects and solicit your ideas for improving the Black Forest trails system. Your generous donations have made this possible. Thanks!

I'm still struggling with documenting all our connector trails that cut through private property that were established with verbal agreements years, and probably owners, ago. This year I'd like to revisit these trails to ensure the owners are still cool with the agreement and try to establish a formal easement. So if you're one of these property owners please contact me to discuss. Community trails increase property value and security.

Our annual members meeting is Tuesday, Jul 12 at the Black Forest Brewing Company 11590 Black Forest Road starting at 630 PM. Susan Davies from Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC) will be our guest speaker. Greg Stanchon from El Paso County will discuss the Homestead Ranch Master Plan. Get there early to enjoy a beer on BFTA and sample the food truck offerings. We will be electing new officers and board members at this meeting so be prepared to step up.

I hope me and my Uncle Sam can convince you to be an active part of the BFTA team and don't forget to visit us at the BFTA booth at the Black Forest fest August 13. As always, feel free to contact me at president.bfta@gmail.com with your thoughts, issues and ideas. And look for me and my dogs on the trails. Happy Summer!

Sincerely, Rich Mock
President BFTA

The BFTA Trail Segments Scattered Throughout Our Forest

By Keith Henry



It was a classic autumn afternoon when I stumbled upon that first BFTA trail segment. My wife, daughter, and I had moved to Black Forest recently (refugees from the crowded west side), and as a runner, I immediately began exploring the area ten miles at a time. One day, expecting to run back and forth a few times on the two mile El Paso County Palmer Divide Path (near the corner of Hodgen and Woodlake Rd), I noticed a trail heading

south off of the main, beaten path. This trail went for an intriguing a mile, through the forest, up and down rolling hills, and behind a variety of little farms before ending at Murphy Rd. It was beautiful and I knew that I had discovered something special! The existence of this trail piqued my interest, "Maybe there are more?". To make a long story short, I found many more of these amazing trail segments throughout the Forest, even one leaving my own neighborhood near the east end of Burgess. Would you believe that one can walk/run/ride from the corner of Rex and Goodson Roads to Black Forest Rd (between Burgess and Shoup) all on dirt, save a

short section of pavement along Raygor Rd??! There is nearly a way to get from The Pineries at Vollmer to Black Forest Rd, passing north of Section 16. There are several of BFTA trails in the Raygor Rd area and there are several more in Woodlake than the original one that I found. I always loved seeing the little "BFTA" sign at a trailhead that discovered since it gave me the confidence that the trail was ok to use. I began organizing and cataloging all of these trails as I found them and then reached out to BFTA to see if a map or list of these trails existed. Unfortunately, this information was lost in the great fire of 2013, but there is currently an effort to map all of these great little trail segments. Have you walked, run, biked, or ridden a horse on any of the wonderful BFTA trail segments lately?

Black Forest Festival - Volunteers Needed!

By Larry Farris



Once again it is time for our beloved Black Forest Festival. This year the event will be held on August 13th and we need your help! Each year your Black Forest Trails Association has a prominent booth on the South side of the Community Club. This setting provides us with our best annual opportunity to meet with the public to tout our mission, develop relationships, and get new members to support our ongoing effort to develop non-motorized trails throughout Black Forest.

You can help first of all by swinging by to say hello! We love to see our members to shake a hand and tie a name to a friendly face! We will be glad to answer any questions you may have and catch you up on any new issues affecting our trail systems.

Even better, you can volunteer to join us and work a shift in the booth. No particular skill needed, just a friendly smile and a welcoming heart. It is a great way to meet your neighbors and create community excitement for the trails you use and love! Our booth will be open from 7AM to 3PM on Saturday, 13 August. If you would like to join in, please email our BFTA President Rich Mock at president.bfta@gmail.com to select the time frame you would like to help. It is a lot of fun. We look forward to working with you at this year's festival!

Larry Fariss, BFTA Vice President

Section 16 Trail was spearheaded by BFTA in 1997!

By Judy von Ahlefeldt (Lifetime member of BFTA) June 29, 2022

The idea for a non-motorized trail around Black Forest State Trust Section 16 goes back to the late 1970's, when Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) in Woodland Park obtained a Silvicultural Lease in 1977.



Tom Ostermann, Woodland Park Ranger wanted to put a new barbed wire fence around the outside, remove severe dwarfmistletoe infested trees near Burgess Rd. from Vollmer to Herring Rd., and he also had a mountain pine beetle epidemic to wrestle with in northern El Paso County and Ute Pass from 1977 - 1982!

A few years before that, Black Forest Equestrian Trails Association (BFETA) had begun the idea of connecting gravel roads with informal landowner agreements, removing old sagging and loose barb wire from unused pasture fences in new subdivisions of the 1970s, and encouraging landowners to set fences back along roads to make "rural sidewalks" for local pedestrian, equestrian, and bicycle use.

In 1978 Colorado State Forest Service had already fenced along Burgess (without any setback), so BFETA approached both CSFS and the State Land Board about setting the fence back so there could be a modest trail between the new fence and borrow ditch.

Mickey Carter, Director of El Paso County Parks at the time, agreed that Shoup Rd. (Herring to Vollmer) should also be a segment of Regional Trail. Carter assisted BFETA with making 6' x 6" metal signs, and by 1981 both the Regional Trail and BFETA signs were along Shoup on a modest trail outside the fence, and BFETA signs were placed on other area improved "roadside" or connector trails.

The early 1980s were before there was State Legislation encouraging landowners to grant recreational trail easements. During the 1980s D-20 obtained a surface lease for educational use, and also during the 1980s the Pikes Peak Trails and Open Space Coalition (precursor to TOSC – the present 501(c)(3) Trails and Open Space Coalition) was organized.

Also in the 1980s (to mid-1990s) Black Forest Section 16 had the Silvicultural lease with CSFS, and the D-20 lease. These leases contributed to State Trust Lands revenue for several State Trusts including the K-12 School Trust.

In 1996, Amendment 16 to the State Constitution was passed, changing the structure of the State Land Board and creating the Stewardship Trust for 10% (at the time about 330,000 ac) of State Land holdings emphasizing long-term special management for beauty, natural values, open space and wildlife habitat. (See Colorado State Constitution Article 9, Sections 9 and 10).

The BF Section 16 leases expired in 1997. CSFS planned to renew, so did D-20. Black Forest Trails Association – BFTA - (reorganized a few years earlier from BFETA and incorporated as a 501(c)) wanted to obtain a recreational lease for Section 16. Insurance costs for the full section were prohibitive for BFTA. With assistance from EPC Solid Waste Management the Slash and Mulch Committee (SAMCOM) wildfire fuel reduction effort was already operating on the old quarry site, staffed by citizen volunteers.

So in late 1996, Judy Wise-Mason (President of BFTA), with assistance from BFTA member Judy von Ahlefeldt (who had recently returned to Black Forest from the US Forest Service – a Multiple Use organization), approached Steve Morrison (Assistant Superintendent of D-20) about working together on a lease arrangement for Section 16, proposing multiple uses compatible with State Land Board Stewardship Trust goals.

Steve Morrison is now best known as the Founder of D-20's School in the Woods – but in 1996 that was only a gleam in his eye. Morrison liked the idea of cooperating, so BFTA and D-20 teamed to approach Kurt Schroeder (Director of El Paso County Parks) about County Parks leasing a wide corridor INSIDE fence for a Regional Trail, and D-20 leasing the area in the middle, inside an inner corridor fence.

With the addition of Black Forester Ruth Ann Steele of SAMCOM (Slash and Much Committee - also a 501(c), John Fisher, head of El Paso County Solid Waste Management Department), and Dave Root (Forester at Colorado State Forest Service) the Partnership for Section 16 was complete!

This ad-hoc partnership consisted of four governmental entities County Parks and County Solid Waste Management Departments (with the support of EPC County Commissioners who signed the leases), D-20 and Colorado State Forest Service), and citizens from two non-profits (BFTA and SAMCOM) and the Black Forest Land Use Committee (BFLUC).

They met regularly from late 1996 through 1997 to develop a Multiple Use Vision for Section 16 that included land uses for conservation, education, and public recreation. Public meetings were held in Black Forest in January and June of 1997.

Management Goals for education, conservation and recreational land uses, were developed during 1997 by the Partnership for Section 16, in harmony with the Stewardship Trust purposes, the Black Forest Preservation Plan and its (conceptual) new Trails Addendum (later adopted in 1999 by El Paso County Planning Commission).

The State Land Board approved a non-simultaneous exchange of 10 acres (for School in the Woods) with D-20 on November 17, 1997. Two months later, The Vision, and Management Goals for land uses, developed by the Partnership for Section 16 (per several separate leases) was approved by The State Land Board at their January 27, 1998 meeting in Denver.

The Proposal was presented formally to the State Land Board (SLB) on Jan. 27, 1998 by Steve Morrison, Executive Administrative Assistant Superintendent for D-20, Kurt Schroeder of El Paso County Parks (also representing EPC Solid Waste Management), and Dave Root, Colorado State Forest Service. BFTA was represented by Irv Perelstein, Ruth Ann Steele for SAMCOM,

and Judy von Ahlefeldt represented the Black Forest Land Use Committee (BFLUC). The El Paso County Commissioners signed the lease on behalf of County Parks and County Solid Waste Departments.

The Land Board agreed that this was “a unique and outstanding proposal for use of school trust land”.

Following the enthusiastic unanimous approval by the SLB in January of 1998, Dave Root and Judy von Ahlefeldt prepared the Stewardship Trust nomination for Black Forest Section 16. This parcel was among the first State Lands chosen for Stewardship Trust Designation Statewide in 1999. It is a Charter Member of the Colorado Stewardship Trust.

An important criterion for Stewardship Trust qualification is the support of local governments, community groups, adjacent landowners and the leasees along with meeting Stewardship Trust standards and goals.

Since the Jan. 1998 lease approval, Colorado State Natural Heritage Program (CNHP) S1-S3 relict tall grass prairie rare plants have been found on both the Parks and D-20 lease areas. BFTA (and members of Cavalier Riding Club) has assisted El Paso County Parks by laying out and roughing in the perimeter Partnership Trail in 2000-2001, contributed \$7,000 toward funding of the vault toilet (headed by Judi Tobias) in 2012, the funding and placement of memorial benches, and regular trail and road cleanups (organized by long-time members Cheryl Pixley and Nancy Reinhart) for nearly 25 years!

Now, during summer 2022, there is much angst and discussion occurring about continuing the leases which have served students, property owners and families so well in so many ways for a quarter century.

There is now Opportunity to continue the Vision for Black Forest Section 16 for both the State Land Board's Stewardship Trust, and perhaps a renewed Partnership for Black Forest Section 16.

Yuck, Yuck and Poo!

by Nancy Reinhart

During the recent Great American Cleanup, my friend Christine and I cleaned up dog poo at Section 16. (thought I'd spare you pictures). FYI - it takes a lot longer than you might think for dog poo to decompose and go away. I know from my own experience it's impossible to predict when my dog will decide to take a poo, so I've resolved to take a couple bags with me on our walks, one for pickup and one for carry. Thanks for considering this to keep our trails clean and pretty.

EL Paso County Parks Master Plan Update

The county is working on an update to the Parks Master Plan this year. There is a website at <https://epcountyparkplan.com/> with a usage survey and a place to make suggestions. The Master Plan was

last updated in 2013 and with a major forest fire in Black Forest and tens of thousands of new residents it is time for an update. There is not much information about the county's thinking at this point but they are concerned about balancing ongoing maintenance with new acquisitions and amenities to serve the growing population.

The process plan is to update the parks inventory and condition assessments and collect public input via Focus Groups and the website through the summer, i.e. NOW! In the fall there will be a public meeting and presentation of Findings to the Parks Advisory Board and a Draft Plan posted for public comment in the winter. A Final Plan is expected to be presented to Parks Advisory board this winter.

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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, 2023. 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>