



BLACK FOREST TRAILS ASSOCIATION NEWS

President's Corner

Positive Developments for Trail Users

By Larry Fariss, President



Once upon a time, all the homes in Black Forest were built by individual land owners, usually on five acres or more in very rural isolated forest settings. Those days are long gone! Beginning with the Cathedral Pines, there have been over ten major housing developments constructed in Black forest over the last 20 years. These developments have subdivided vast swaths of our beloved forest into ½ to 5 acre housing sites with paved roads and houses in sight of one another becoming the norm.

Black Forest Trails Association resists the concept of this style of housing, which is often in violation of the Black Forest Preservation Plan. But since this is indeed a reality, BFTA has chosen to work closely with all developers to insure they include trails as part of the development per the BF Preservation Plan. Some Developers are easier to work with than others. Recently BFTA had the pleasure of working with two proposed developments that have fully embraced the concept of trails and included them into their plan.

Red Tail Ranch is a 67.9 acre tract planned for 12 homes with 5 acre minimum lot sizes. It lies West of Vollmer Road, South of Swan Road and North of Shoup Road. Ward Lane, Linnwood Lane, Forest Heights Circle, and Meadow Glen Lane are all dirt roads which end close to the proximity of Red Tail Ranch. Due to the developments proximity to these roads, the Pineries Open Space and Section 16, it is ideally situated to link all these into a network of trails connected by dirt roads. The developer, along with two supportive longtime residents, has agreed to allow BFTA trails to utilize their easements to create a trail system that will link these dirt roads with Vollmer Road directly across from the Pineries Open Space. This is ideal for neighbors in the area to access miles of hiking and riding opportunities. Just what BFTA champions for us all!

Winsome Ranch is another promising development situated on 800 acres NW of the Hodgen Road/ Meridian Road intersection. The developer approached BFTA directly to propose 150 acres of open space with 2+ miles of trails along Kiowa Creek in the portion of the development that has 5+ acre lots. The developer will develop the trails as both single track along the creek and an 8 foot wide graveled path along the shoulder of the developments loop road. Public access will be allowed with a small parking area set aside for nonresident trail users. BFTA fully endorses the Winsome Ranch trail plan and looks forward to its opening within the next 5 years!

These two forward looking developers understand the importance of providing opportunities for prospective homeowners to enjoy the outdoors. They are also attempting to be good neighbors with those that have made the Black forest their home for decades. BFTA will continue to reach out to developers to insure that this becomes the norm instead of the exception. If we are to have developments they need to embrace the concepts outlined in the Black Forest Preservation Plan. These two do just that!

Sincerely, Larry Fariss

President BFTA

Black Forest Section 16 Spring Road & Trail Cleanup

By Cheryl Pixley



Your help is needed at Black Forest's most popular county trail to keep it litter-free. You may have seen the signs in and around Black Forest Section 16 saying that BFTA has adopted the 4-mile trail and 2 miles of adjacent roadways. Please join us on Saturday, April 6, 2019, at 9:00 am. We will meet at the parking lot on Burgess Rd just west of Vollmer Rd and plan to finish by 11:00. BFTA members bring your friends! Students are welcome and can earn community service credits, too! Trash bags, orange safety vests and drinking water will be supplied. Bring hat, gloves and sunscreen. Rain (or snow) date is April 27, 2019. Call Cheryl at 495-9295 with any questions



Sponsoring Business Adds Spice to BFTA

By Larry Farris



Black Forest Trails Association is fortunate to have the support of many of our local businesses. They are valued members of BFTA and their long term support has benefited all who hike, bike or ride on our trails. We would like to start a series of articles that highlight our sponsoring partners.

One of our most loyal firms is R&R Coffee who have been members since 2007 when they arrived on the Black Forest scene. They brought together a plan to bring great coffee and food to Black Forest. Originally, they started out in a 735 square foot space across the street from the current store. Armed with 4 tables, 15 seats, a really comfy couch, and a borderline insane mentality, they worked hard to make the roasterie/café concept fly. A year later, they pushed around some walls in the kitchen area and grew to 950 square feet with a patio and an expanded menu.

Then, something happened. Their grand plan worked.

Continued growth caused them to move or die on the vine. They found their new home conveniently across the street from our original location. After a lengthy renovation of the old lumber store, they moved into their new space in February 2013. And haven't looked back since.

Owner Ryan Wanner has an unwavering dedication to creating the best possible coffees and meals in the most comfortable environment possible. All while fully becoming an integral part of the community of Black Forest. To that end R&R has fully embraced BFTA by displaying its many certificates and plaques and hosting our annual membership meeting each September.

We feel very fortunate to have Ryan and R&R Coffee in our corner! Thanks on behalf of our membership for your ongoing support to Black Forest and BFTA

Conquer Cheyenne Mountain! The DIXON TRAIL

By Jeremy Jones – Springs Media



El Paso County is very supportive of developing Open Spaces and Trails that allow its citizenry to enjoy the boundless vistas that are a hallmark for this part of Colorado. Recent additions are increasing that

opportunity and in the forefront is the new Dixon Trail that scales one of the Front Ranges most iconic peaks-- Cheyenne Mountain. Here is some great information for those wanting a challenge!

Even in Pikes Peak country, Cheyenne Mountain has managed to gain icon status of its own. The peak rises abruptly above southwest Colorado Springs, but it was the underground Cold War fortress of North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) that put the peak on the national map. Yet Cheyenne Mountain's summit has never been open to the public until 2018. Now, thanks to the completion of the Dixon Trail in Cheyenne Mountain State Park, intrepid hikers and hardcore runners can journey to the top. For those up to the serious challenge, here's what to expect.

First a word of reason—or warning: The trek to the top of Cheyenne Mountain is long and extreme. Liken it to a 14er ascent—a long 14er ascent. While you'll "only" be standing at 9,300 feet on top, you'll be logging about 3,500 feet of elevation gain to get there. You're in for a round trip of around 15 to 17 miles or more, depending on how much exploring you do on top. And you do not want to be caught on top in a thunderstorm, so check weather forecasts and plan to head up and down early to stay ahead of afternoon storms.

Start your trek up Cheyenne Mountain at the Limekiln Trailhead parking lot. Follow the Talon Trail as several other trails branch off near its beginning. All trails in Cheyenne Mountain State Park are extremely well-marked. Talon will guide you 2.64 miles through the park's lower meadows gradually, upward through rolling foothills covered with scrub oak, then steeply into dense pine forest. At about 2 miles, stay on the main Talon Trail past the first junction with North Talon Trail. But at the bench at 2.64 miles, take a right turn onto North Talon. You'll ascend northward and switchback onto a more open, rocky ridge before encountering the start of Dixon Trail on your left.

It would be hard to miss the sign here letting you know you're now on the new Dixon Trail and giving fair warning about the rugged terrain ahead. Dixon covers 4.5 miles before connecting with the Top of the Mountain trail loops, and from here you'll gain 2,500 feet of elevation to the top.

The new trail begins on a fairly gradual ascent, though the ground is rocky and rough. Early on, the double track follows the route used by Thomas Dixon for his family and cattle to reach their homestead cabin and grazing land on the southeast end of the mountain around 1917. Bikes and horses are allowed on the first 2.5 miles of the Dixon Trail (about 5.8 miles in total) then it's time to park your bike or turn around your horse—from here it's foot travel only. And it's going to get steep in Dixon's final 1.5 miles!

The vegetation is dense here as you switchback and climb along a ridge that drops off on its eastern side. As you near a large rock pinnacle to your north, the trail sweeps west. This is where the trail gets extremely challenging, switchbacking and climbing steeply among large rock outcroppings. Power over several stone stairways, and know that gentler grades are coming soon. Open sky will begin to appear on the horizon, and the landscape levels out into broad grassy meadows dotted with aspen trees. It's an unexpected landscape compared with the rocky crags of Cheyenne Mountain visible from town. Here Dixon Trail intersects the Top of the Mountain trails. Follow the 1.4-mile Mountain Loop Trail through the meadows and into towering groves of aspen where you veer right and follow the trail uphill until you reach a large granite formation. Scramble about 20 feet up the clear chute on the left, and you'll top out on Robber's Roost. This is the vantage point you've come for, and the reward is sweeping views over the city, NORAD, Fort Carson and to Lake Pueblo and the Sangre de Cristos on a clear day.

To head back down, you can reverse course the way you came, or follow the .85-mile Dragon's Backbone for a strenuous scramble along the eastern ridge line before reconnecting with the Dixon Trail. Be prepared for a steep and rugged descent on Dixon. As you drop elevation rapidly, you'll realize why you were working so hard on the way up—and why the rewards of this hike are all the sweeter for the effort required.

How to Get There: From I-25 and S. Nevada Avenue, head south on S. Nevada and continue as the road changes names to CO-115. After approximately 5.4 miles, turn right on JL Ranch Heights Road across from the Fort Carson entrance. Continue straight through the traffic circle for .4 miles and enter Cheyenne Mountain State Park. Follow signs to Limekiln Trailhead, taking the first left to drop down into the parking lot.

Distance: 17-plus miles out and back from Limekiln Trailhead covering the entire trail network

Difficulty: Advanced / Extreme

Know Before You Go: Access to Cheyenne Mountain State Park is \$7 for a daily pass or \$70 for an annual pass, per vehicle. Dogs are not allowed.

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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, 2020. 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>**