

The Colorado Trail Foundation

Speaking Points for Volunteers

Thanks for helping build awareness and for being a Friend of The Colorado Trail. We appreciate your efforts at reaching out to new Friends, providing them with quality information and encouraging them to be involved.

The Colorado Trail

- Colorado's Premier long-distance Trail.
- 500 miles across the Colorado Rocky Mountains between Denver and Durango.
- Trail users experience eight mountain ranges, six national forests, six wilderness areas, and five river systems.
- The Trail is unique in that it was built by volunteers and is maintained by volunteers.
- Each year The Colorado Trail is enjoyed by thousands of hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians.
- The Trail is mostly a dirt path.
- Visitors experience every mountain ecosystem from plains near Denver to rugged canyons, forest, lush valleys and high Alpine tundra.
- The low point is 5520' above sea level and the trail tops out at 13,271' above Lake City.
- Average elevation is approximately 10,300 feet.
- Accessible from The Trail are several of Colorado's "Fourteeners," the state's highest peaks above 14,000 feet.
- Access points are numerous, probably around 50. Some areas are very accessible and convenient while other places are relatively isolated.
- Each of the 28 segments has a road access at both ends.
- The best trip planning resource is The Colorado Trail, The Official Guidebook, available from The Colorado Trail Foundation office, www.coloradotrail.org, as well as a variety of retailers.

The Colorado Trail Foundation

- The nonprofit Colorado Trail Foundation coordinates the volunteers who care for The Colorado Trail. The work is done in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service.
- The CTF volunteer trail care programs include Trail Crews, weekend to week-long camping and trail work trips, as well as the Adopt-A-Trail program, with dedicated adopters who do annual maintenance on the section for which they're responsible.
- CTF volunteers, altogether, donate over 20,000 hours each year doing trail work and all the other tasks required to sustain The Trail and the organization
- Volunteers build new tread, rehab existing trail, improve signage and build lifelong friendships. Our hands-on, volunteer CTF Board of Directors sets Foundation policies that are carried out by dedicated program Coordinators under the supervision of our Managing Director.
- The Colorado Trail Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation funded almost entirely by donations from individuals and businesses.
- Donations to the CTF are tax deductible.
- CTF volunteers and supporters alike are considered "Friends of The Colorado Trail" and the organization works hard to maintain its friendships.

Friends of The Colorado Trail

- Friends of The Colorado Trail are the keepers of The Trail. Our “Friends” are the trail care volunteers and the financial supporters who sustain the effort.
- Many of the Friends of The Colorado Trail have enjoyed the trail and want to “give back.” They value The Trail and want to help sustain it.
- Friends receive information from The Colorado Trail Foundation, the Tread Lines newsletter, and invites to events. They enjoy knowing that they’ve helped keep the trail in good shape.

History of The Colorado Trail

- Conceived in 1973 by the U.S. Forest Service, The Trail was to fill a void in a growing segment of outdoor users: individuals and families who wanted to enjoy quiet outings on our public lands but weren’t necessarily looking for the extremes of a wilderness experience.
- The Trail effort started in earnest in 1974.
- Gudy Gaskill, “The Mother of The Colorado Trail,” and thousands of volunteers provided the painstaking manual labor to build The Trail.
- By the end of the summer 1987, The Colorado Trail was connected between Denver and Durango.
- The initial trail alignment included many miles of forest roads as well as existing trails that were in disrepair.
- Since inception, The Colorado Trail has been a work-in-progress, and CTF volunteers have constructed reroutes to improve the initial alignment. Very little of the current trail follows roads and most every mile is in good condition.
- Today, The Colorado Trail offers a friendly tread for the casual day user, but still provides plenty of challenge for through-hikers intent on completing the entire length.

How Can I Get Involved?

- **Become a Friend of The Colorado Trail** – volunteer your time and/or make a donation.
- **Maintain your Friendship** – support the effort each year by volunteering and/or making your donation.
- **Volunteer Trail Crews** – help care for The Trail and have fun by helping on a Trail Crew.
- **Adopt-A-Trail Program** – become an adopter or help an adopter do the annual maintenance on one of the 64 adopted sections.
- **Office Volunteers** – assist with mailings, outreach, recruitment, computer, or one of the many supportive tasks that help sustain the effort.
- **Field Volunteers** – assist with moving equipment, food, and preparing for the trail work crews.
- **Participate in Other CTF Programs** – attend an outdoor Educational Class for a week at the CTF cabin tucked away high in the San Juan Mountains or sign up for a Supported Trek and hike for a week carrying only your day pack.
- **Special Event Volunteers** – help with fun, successful gatherings, provide information, attract additional Friends and hold raise funds to sustain The Trail.