

MASTER PLAN

For THE COLORADO

TRAIL - 1998

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of The Colorado Trail Foundation is to provide and to maintain, through voluntary and public involvement, and in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, a linear, non-motorized, sustainable, recreation trail between Denver and Durango, Colorado. This trail will provide multi-day, inspirational, and educational values keyed to the diverse, high mountain, natural environment.

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of The Colorado Trail Foundation is to develop and maintain a long distance, non-motorized trail that provides recreation opportunities, public enjoyment, and educational experiences.

Volunteerism is the heart of The Colorado Trail effort, and it is the intent of both The Colorado Trail Foundation and the USDA Forest Service that it remain so. The trail was constructed and is now maintained mostly by volunteers, and the Foundation members are volunteers. As trail construction and reconstruction are winding down, maintenance needs are increasing, providing a recurring annual challenge. Over time, it is desirable that those committed to The Colorado Trail take an increasingly active, participative role in all aspects of management of The Colorado Trail.

The key to success is an effective two way, working relationship between The Colorado Trail Foundation and the Forest Service. This begins with a regular review of the partnership agreement and how it is working; it should continue with a clear definition of roles for management and operation of the trail. The review and possible amendment of the agreement will be conducted at the Regional Office level, based on comments and suggestions from The Colorado Trail Foundation and District Rangers.

The clarification of roles will be done at the National Forest level or Ranger District level if only one District is involved on a given Forest. This process for defining roles means The Colorado Trail Foundation should anticipate differing working arrangements from one Forest to another. Over time, we will make a joint effort to resolve these differences to the extent possible, recognizing that we may never fully achieve the goal.

The Colorado Trail, including all of its loops, alternate bike routes, structures, trailheads, signs, etc., must not become the mere chance result of several projects undertaken without regard for how they function in totality. The trail must emerge through a variety of development and management initiatives that have a clear common focus. There will be numerous independent decisions, so each must be evaluated in light of all previous decisions and the primary purposes and uses of the trail as a whole. Therefore, clear and candid communications must be fostered and practiced

among The Colorado Trail Foundation, the field crews and adopters, and the Forest Service.

The Colorado Trail Foundation will reconstruct and/or relocate sections of trail that are substandard, recruit organizations and individuals to maintain segments of the trail, and train and oversee volunteers to build access loop trails, trailheads, campsites and other improvements along the main corridor.

The original concept was for the trail to have shelters along the way. If it is decided that huts and shelters are appropriate. The Colorado Trail Foundation will support the planning and development of such shelters along The Colorado Trail.

National Forests will not be responsible for building or maintaining the trail. The Colorado Trail Foundation will be the organization responsible for the maintenance, upkeep, and continued improvement of the 500 mile stretch between Denver and Durango. The Foundation will be responsible for printing educational materials, including a guide book, interpretative materials, and maps.

The Colorado Trail is defined as the main corridor from Denver to Durango. The Colorado Trail, plus the access trails and spurs off the main corridor that meet the criteria established by The Colorado Trail Foundation Board of Directors, and the appropriate government agencies become in the aggregate the Colorado Trail System.

HISTORY OF THE COLORADO TRAIL

It is possible that the original leaders of the Colorado Mountain Trails Foundation took lightly the concept of The Colorado Trail. That was in 1975 when a trail corridor across the state was being discussed as a mere linking together of existing trails.

Two years earlier, Merrill Hastings had proposed in the July issue of Colorado Magazine a Colorado Trail connecting Denver and Durango. But if anyone is to be given credit for the idea of today's Colorado Trail, it would have to be Bill Lucas, who at that time was the Regional Forester for the Rocky Mountain Region of the USDA Forest Service. Basing his concerns on an alarming increase of visitation to the National Forests and hoping to reduce the pressure on existing trails, Lucas organized a day-long session of interested Forest user groups to discuss the possibility of a recreation corridor, complete with side trails, access points, and eventually even a hut system. Additional considerations were the realities of shrinking budgets, which made the Forest Service's contributions doubtful, and the energy crisis, which heightened concern for trail access at places served by public transportation. The November 1973 meeting produced more questions than answers, but it did result in the establishment of the Colorado Mountain Trails Foundation, a non-profit organization that was to make the Colorado Trail a reality, using primarily volunteer labor.

Initially funded with a \$100,000 grant from the Gates Foundation as well as numerous smaller grants, the Colorado Mountain Trail Foundation planned on making the trail a Colorado Centennial-United States Bicentennial project. Gates promised additional funding, assuming progress on the trail continued, and completion was tentatively set for 1978.

In the first years, the Colorado Mountain Trail Foundation organized groups to inventory existing trails and to propose a definite route for the main trail corridor as well as the side trail system. Dr. Hugo Ferchau, a biology professor at Western State College in Gunnison, spent his summers fielding groups of students and documenting trail inventories from Lake Pass to Molas Pass. In the meantime, Gudy Gaskill had been named Executive Trail Director by the Colorado Mountain Trail Foundation to recruit volunteers for the inventory elsewhere on the proposed route and to begin trail construction.

When the Environmental Assessment Report for the Colorado Trail was printed by the Forest Service, it was estimated that three-quarters of the route followed existing trails. Based on this report, an official decision on the location of the Colorado Trail was made and various alternate routes proposed. The report also made vague reference to a proposed alternate route around a highly controversial and heavily used portion of the Weminuche Wilderness which, if adopted by The Colorado Trail, would only compound an already serious overuse of the area.

At the same time, questions were being raised about the ability of the Colorado Mountain Trail Foundation to continue coordinating the trail effort. The foundation had exhausted nearly all of its original seed money and, although not officially disbanded, had become severely polarized and seemed to many to be unable to establish a unified course for the project.

Here the story of The Colorado Trail might have come to a dismal end were it not for Gudy Gaskill. Gaskill had been recruiting volunteers for the Colorado Mountain Trails Foundation from its infancy and also chaired the Colorado Mountain Club's Trails-and-Huts Committee, which was established solely for the purpose of organizing volunteer trail crews to preserve the state's network of hiking trails. When the foundation collapsed, she continued to organize volunteers through the Trails-and-Huts Committee. Slowly, year by year and mile by mile, progress continued on the trail.

The first section of The Colorado Trail to be completed by Gaskill and her volunteers was on the South Platte Ranger District, the section closest to Denver. Next, the crews moved to the Leadville and Salida Districts where, in 1984, they were visited by journalist Ed Quillen. The resulting "Trail to Nowhere" cover story in Denver Post Empire Magazine (December 9, 1984) was decidedly pessimistic in describing the jubilant beginnings and unfortunate downfall of the Foundation, and raised serious doubts whether the trail could ever be finished. The disturbing article did, however, raise the eyebrows of one influential Coloradoan, Governor Richard Lamm.

Soon after "Trail to Nowhere" appeared, Lamm and Gaskill devised an ambitious schedule for completing the original links and thus finally joining Denver to Durango via The Colorado Trail. The resulting two-year plan, which had the support of the Forest Service, called for completing nearly 60 miles of trail on six Ranger Districts during the 1986 and 1987 seasons, using only volunteer labor. Almost half the total mileage would be constructed in the Animas District of the San Juan National Forest, where the proposed Hermosa Highline detour would lead trekkers around the originally proposed route down Vallecito Creek in the Weminuche Wilderness. Other areas needing attention were a 20-mile stretch between Copper Mountain and Tennessee Pass and neglected sections around Twin Lakes Reservoir and Mount Princeton.

Concurrent with this renewed focus on The Colorado Trail, a new Colorado Trail

Foundation was formed to organize the volunteers, provide leaders and supply trail crew base camps. Unlike the businessmen who dominated the original foundation board, the new Board of Directors consisted of individuals who had been affiliated with the volunteer activities of the Colorado Mountain Club Trails-and-Huts Committee or similar organizations, and was headed by the energetic Gaskill.

The effort put forth during those two years by the volunteers can only be described as unprecedented in the state's history. In 1986, some 400 volunteers labored in 20 trail crews building new tread for The Colorado Trail. The following year, nearly a thousand volunteers happily took up their tools in 46 trail crews. The complicated logistics taxed the foundation's volunteer organizers, who used their own vehicles to supply and relocate the trail crew base camps that moved along with the progression of trail work. The effort was helped immensely, however, by the Forest Service, especially in the Animas District, where the bulk of the work on the Hermosa Highline detour took place.

The Colorado Trail's volunteers enjoyed one of the greatest feelings of accomplishment imaginable when, on September 4, 1987, "golden spike" ceremonies were held on Molas Pass, Camp Hale and Mount Princeton to commemorate the linking of the Colorado Trail from Denver to Durango. But that ceremony did not by any means mark the true completion of work on the trail. Much remains to be done, improving the sometimes obscure routes of existing trail adopted into the main corridor and rerouting portions of the trail which presently follow roads. A system of connector and loop trails is still planned, as well as official trailhead access points, which now are not well identified. Eventually, a shelter system along the trail may eliminate the need for long-distance trekkers to shoulder the extra weight of tents.

ISSUES AND POLICIES

TRAIL OPERATIONS

The Colorado Trail exists solely for recreational use. The trail experience should be made known and available to as many who are able and willing to seek it as the trail's carrying capacity will allow. There are many documents, policies, and programs that define much of the management, design, construction, and operation of the Colorado Trail. In particular, the 1986 Letter of Agreement between the USDA Forest Service and The Colorado Trail Foundation sets forth guidelines for cooperation.

Forest Service Policy;

The documents, policies, and programs include, but are not limited to, the following:

- National Forest Land and Resource Management Plans
- Forest Service Manual 2350 Recreation
- Forest Service Handbook 2309.18 Trails Management Handbook
- Various laws such as the Volunteers in National Forests, T&E Species Act, Wilderness Act, and others
- Wilderness Management Philosophy, Rocky Mountain Region

Various publications on proper care and use of saddle and pack stock, low-impact techniques, etc.

Programs such as Leave No Trace, Windows on the Past, and other efforts that enhance and expand the Colorado Trail experience.

Code of Federal Regulations

Wilderness Implementation Schedules

The Colorado Trail Foundation Policy:

In accordance with the Colorado Trail Foundation Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, and Mission Statement, and in cooperation with the appropriate land management agency, The Colorado Trail Foundation will plan for and implement the necessary design, construction, operations, and management of The Colorado Trail.

TRAIL MAINTENANCE

From the beginning, The Colorado Trail Foundation has considered its main responsibility as ensuring that The Colorado Trail is well-maintained for non-motorized use. It has viewed trail maintenance as the primary job of the maintenance crews, and a well-maintained section of The Colorado Trail as the basic measure of the foundation's success.

U.S. Forest Service Policy:

- FSH 2309.19 Wilderness Management Handbook
- FSH 7109.11a Sign Catalog
- FSH 7109.11b Sign Specifications
- FSM 2350 Recreation
- FSH 2309.18 Trails Management Handbook
- FSM 7722 Engineering
- Various publications on proper use and care of pack stock, low-impact techniques, etc.
Programs such as Leave No Trace, Windows on the Past, and other efforts that enhance and expand the Colorado Trail experience.

Colorado Trail Foundation Policy:

Routine maintenance will be accomplished through The Colorado Trail Foundation's Adopt-a-Trail Program. Maintenance beyond the scope of the adoption program will be accomplished with volunteer work crews recruited by The Colorado Trail Foundation and assisted by the Forest Service.

RELOCATIONS

Where The Colorado Trail is located on roads currently open to motorized travel, or the location is undesirable because of resource damage or incompatible uses, relocations are made to provide a more desirable environment for the trail user. Care must be exercised so that The Colorado Trail relocations do not diminish the primitive quality or simplicity of the path. Relocations also open up new areas to public use. All relocations must provide a trail environment that is equal to or better than that of the existing location, while procedurally complying with the Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the legal responsibilities of the land management agency.

Forest Service Policy;

The Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management retain approval authority for relocation of the trail corridor. The Colorado Trail Foundation will be informed and consulted regarding proposed changes in land use adjacent to the trail (100 meters each side of the Colorado Trail System).

The Colorado Trail Foundation Policy:

To avoid conflict between user groups and/or because of increased environmental damage, The Colorado Trail Foundation, with consultation of the appropriate land management agency, may consider relocating any section of The Colorado Trail. Planning of any relocation of The Colorado Trail will be coordinated with The Colorado Trail Foundation and the appropriate federal

agency. Construction will be conducted on a case-by-case basis. Normal maintenance of these relocations will continue to be the responsibility of the Adopt-a-Trail Program.

SIGNAGE

Traditionally, long-distance trails have encouraged the use of simple directional signs, in addition to blazing, to help trail users find their way and locate side trails and significant off-trail features. With new corridor management responsibilities, The Colorado Trail Foundation now must use informational and regulatory signs to inform trail users and neighbors about restrictions that apply on The Colorado Trail corridor lands. Good planning can ensure that a sign system conveys the necessary information in a pleasing, unobtrusive manner. Restrictive signs are the responsibility of the land manager.

Forest Service Policy:

Signing of The Colorado Trail through National Forest Systems lands should be consistent with the Forest Service Sign Handbook (FSH 7109.11), management plans, wilderness schedules, and special areas. Forest Service personnel will be consulted when Forest Service authority is cited or the official symbol of the Forest Service is used. Simple wood, routed signs are preferred. Signing is particularly important at trail and road intersections.

The Colorado Trail Foundation Policy:

1. The Colorado Trail emblem directional signs will be erected and maintained along The Colorado Trail and trail system at trailheads and junctions as needed.
2. Confidence signs, consisting of The Colorado Trail logo, will be used where determined necessary.
3. Where the CDNST, American Discovery Trail or other national trails and The Colorado Trail coincide, the combined trail will be tandemly marked. Any other trail sharing The Colorado Trail corridor will only be marked at that trail's ingress and egress points.
4. Any pre-existing historical trails will be respected as the heritage of The Colorado Trail, and identification of those historic trails will be honored.
5. Signs will be erected and maintained at appropriate points along The Colorado Trail corridor and trail system as determined by The Colorado Trail Foundation with consultation of the appropriate land management agency. These determinations will be based on specific needs at particular points for purposes of prohibitions, education, interpretation, location of water sources, and emergency information.
6. Marking and signing will be determined and carried out by The Colorado Trail Foundation in accordance with current policies of the Forest Service and BLM, and with their cooperation.

7. All signs along The Colorado Trail and trail system will be inspected and inventoried on an annual basis by the maintenance team of the Adopt-a-Trail program.

BRIDGES AND STREAM CROSSINGS

Trail users commonly expect that river and stream crossings along The Colorado Trail will be safe. Traditionally, stream crossings have provided the trail user with varying degrees of adventure and tales to be told around campfires. A simple, well-designed ford or a few stepstones suffice for most stream crossings during all or most of the year, except after heavy rains or spring runoff. Others cannot be safely crossed without bridging. Bridges are, however, expensive and need frequent maintenance. They are also usually artificial intrusions into a natural environment and occasionally can be the targets of graffiti or other vandalism.

Forest Service Policy: As a general rule of thumb, any proposed bridge more than three feet off the ground or more than twenty feet long must be designed to conform with Forest Service engineering criteria. Bridges must also be evaluated for compliance with management plans, wilderness schedules, and special area designations.

The Colorado Trail Foundation Policy: The Colorado Trail Foundation shall endeavor to provide the capability for a backpacker to make a "dry crossing" (where water does not cover the top of the boot) unless specifically noted otherwise in the official guidebook. When bridges or improvements are constructed, they will be built in accordance with the appropriate federal land management agency.

TRAILHEADS AND PARKING

Careful planning of trailheads is important for two main reasons: (1) Location of trailheads is a powerful tool for controlling where and how much use The Colorado Trail receives, and (2) trailheads are the most visible manifestation of The Colorado Trail for the general public and provide the first impression of the trail to its visitors. Planning, design, and monitoring of trailheads can determine whether trail users and neighbors find a clean, safe, well-marked scene or are confronted by a littered area that is hazardous to traffic leaving, entering, or passing by.

Informal trailheads have tended to spring up almost anywhere The Colorado Trail crosses a road, especially where wide shoulders or cleared areas exist. Many are unnecessary, unsafe, or encourage environmental abuse. Not all road crossings are suitable for trailheads. Many existing ones cause management problems.

If parking lots are to be developed, special planning considerations are required. Parking areas must use or cross highway rights-of-way, and permits and/or approval will probably be needed to create new access to state or county roads. Concerns for public safety, particularly on roads that handle a significant amount of traffic or less-traveled winding roads with minimal sight distances, must be addressed. Vandalism is also a problem when parking areas are not visible from the roadway, and adequate provisions must be made for keeping the area free of litter. If a trailhead cannot be maintained by

the Foundation, agency partner, or someone else on a regular basis, then The Colorado Trail may be better off without a trailhead at that location.

Forest Service Policy: The District Ranger, engineer, landscape architect, and others need to be involved in development of any facility within the boundaries of a National Forest.

The Colorado Trail Foundation:

1. The Colorado Trail Foundation will identify, in the guidebook, major trailhead parking areas and their approximate vehicle capacity, after determining that these facilities have been designated for these purposes by the Forest Service.
2. The Colorado Trail Foundation and appropriate land management agencies will collaborate with appropriate authorities to collect and pass information on locations where additional facilities may be needed.

CONNECTING AND SIDE TRAILS

Designation of a side or connecting trail does not provide the Forest Service with any authority to acquire lands or interests in lands outside the National Forest boundary. If a trail proposed for designation crosses non-federal lands, the responsible agency must first obtain the consent of the land owner or land managing agency prior to designation. There have been no formal designations of side or connecting trails as of the signature dates on this Plan.

Other trails may intersect The Colorado Trail without being formally designated. Spur trails intersect The Colorado Trail and provide passage to points of interest (such as natural, cultural, or scenic features) or trail facilities (such as overnight sites or water sources) within the trail corridor. Access trails are trails within The Colorado Trail that provide access to The Colorado Trail from parking areas, road crossings, and nearby towns. Co-aligned trails refer to segments of trails which use the footpath of The Colorado Trail. Lastly, many undesignated side trails exist, particularly within large blocks of federal or state lands. These trails do not require formal designation, but they can create serious management problems. They can be the result of unrestricted or inappropriate activities, inconsistencies in marking and trail maintenance standards, and use patterns that affect sensitive resource values, such as increased littering and graffiti at a particularly scenic vista.

The construction of a new trail can have significant short-term and long-term effects. Construction of a new trail can affect sensitive resource values, such as a cultural resource site or a specific habitat for wildlife. A new trail may increase the accessibility and use of The Colorado Trail by all types of users, particularly if the new trail is not afforded the same level of protection as The Colorado Trail. Lastly, a new trail can open up a new area to increased use by the hiking public, which can change the remote character of an area.

Forest Service Policy: The Forest Supervisor is the official responsible for formal designation of connecting and side trails within National Forests. Proposals for the construction of new trails intersecting with The Colorado

Trail typically originate at the Foundation and National Forest level. They will be evaluated and approved by the management partners prior to construction. Existing trails will be retained to provide access to The Colorado Trail and connections to other trails and points of interest.

The Colorado Trail Foundation Policy; In general, The Colorado Trail Foundation is in favor of side trails connected to The Colorado Trail. Trail users should have alternative trails from which to choose. However, in some heavy use areas where trail damage is occurring, new side trails may be discouraged.

Side trails may be developed to provide other recreational opportunities or to decrease areas of overuse on The Colorado Trail. The National Forest planning process will evaluate the management and protection of these trails.

OVERNIGHT USE - SHELTERS, CAMPSITES, AND PRIVIES

Managing overnight use constitutes an important part of the efforts of The Colorado Trail Foundation. Numerous factors must be considered in locating and designing overnight use areas including soils, vegetation, topography, expected visitor use, proximity to water, distances to roads and other overnight sites, and land uses on adjoining lands. Ideally, shelters and campsites should be spaced a modest day's travel apart, and they should be designed to contain the environmental and social impacts of overnight visitors within a confined area. Provision should also be made for a dependable water supply and sanitation at each site, plus provisions for horses, bikes, etc. This will include grazing areas, corrals, or appropriate ground to hobble or picket animals. Regardless of whether a privy or dispersed disposal area is used to accommodate human waste, the site should be monitored to ensure that human wastes do not create environmental or health problems.

Other options for overnight use exist in many areas along the trail. Agencies permit dispersed camping without formal designation of specific sites. Also, many towns along The Colorado Trail have hostels, community centers, or other economical alternatives for long distance travelers.

Forest Service Policy; Shelter, camping, fire and water quality policies are described in each National Forest's management plan. Fees may be collected under one of several authorities. As a general rule, consultation with the District Ranger will avoid most problems. Proposals for shelters and developed campsites need to be evaluated, and environmental assessments must be prepared by the proponent and approved by the Forest Service before work proceeds. These facilities would be operated under the terms and conditions of special use permits.

The Colorado Trail Foundation Policy: The Colorado Trail Foundation will identify areas where high levels of use are causing environmental deterioration. In cooperation with the appropriate federal agency, the Foundation will determine appropriate solutions.

The Colorado Trail Foundation will:

Provide for coordination/cooperation with others who would develop and maintain shelters that could be used by The Colorado Trail travelers.

Participate in development of criteria for shelter systems that would be associated with The Colorado Trail.

- Be the clearing house through which shelter proposals will be presented to the Forest Service, but will not become involved directly in the construction or maintenance of the shelter systems.

WATER

Water resources on The Colorado Trail provide the vital water supplies needed by trail users, both along the trail and at shelter sites. Where water is scarce, water sources will be adequately marked, and the water sources will be clean and potable after treatment with common field processing methods. The Colorado Trail also lies on the water resources of others, traversing the headwaters of many important public and private watersheds.

Trail managers monitor activities that could significantly degrade quality of water supplies, whether they occur on or off the trail corridor, and take common sense steps to prevent and control contamination. Where The Colorado Trail crosses municipal watersheds, special efforts are required to ensure safe and sanitary practices by travelers. In several cases, safe practices are required by agreement or local regulation. Overnight camping is prohibited in such cases.

Forest Service Policy: All water sources should remain undeveloped in dispersed or undeveloped recreation settings. There may be information at trailheads about the need to treat drinking water due to waterborne diseases.

The Colorado Trail Foundation Policy: The Colorado Trail Foundation cannot and will not be responsible for the purity of water along The Colorado Trail. On arid stretches of trail, and by prior agreement with the Forest Service, The Colorado Trail Foundation may identify water sources and post them as "untested water." Water sources will be maintained in an undeveloped condition (except for minor modifications to improve the collection of water).

EMERGENCY PLANNING AND COORDINATION

Forest Service Policy: Responsibilities and jurisdictions for fire control, law enforcement, and search-and-rescue will not change. The following jurisdictions apply all along the Colorado Trail:

Fire - Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management
Civil and criminal law enforcement - county law enforcement
Resource enforcement - Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management
Search and Rescue - county law enforcement.

The Colorado Trail Foundation Policy: The Colorado Trail Foundation will provide local operations with a description of The Colorado Trail.

Use of The Colorado Trail by large groups, commercial outfitters, sponsored spectator events, races, or endurance competitions generates impacts that are generally inconsistent with the concept of a simple trail, even though short segments may be built to a higher standard or have relatively heavy use. Large groups can cause serious damage to soils along the margins of the trail and trample vegetation over wide areas when they congregate at viewpoints and lunch spots. They also can commandeer all available space at shelter sites and parking areas, eliminating opportunities for smaller groups or individuals to use and enjoy a particular trail section. An encounter with a large group of people on The Colorado Trail can also have a detrimental effect on the experience of the hiker seeking solitude.

U.S. Forest Service Policy; Discourage, but not prohibit large group use. In wilderness, group size (party size) must conform to the existing standards prescribed for the specific wilderness. For uniformity along the total length of the trail, group sizes of 10 or fewer people, and 15 or fewer people and stock (combined) is recommended, unless or until these group size recommendations exceed capacity guidelines in Forest Plans. Application for use of the Colorado Trail by large groups (more than 10 people or more than 15 people and stock) or for sponsored spectator events, races or endurance competitions will be reviewed with The Colorado Trail Foundation and the Foundations's comments and views considered before making a decision on approving applications for such events.

The Colorado Trail Foundation Policy: Consideration of large group use is to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. In most cases, large group use is incompatible with the purposes of The Colorado Trail. Applications for use of The Colorado Trail by large groups or for sponsored spectator events, races, or endurance competitions will be reviewed with Forest Service officials and input provided regarding whether such uses should be permitted. When such applications and uses are allowed, efforts will be made to provide environmental education and awareness of the mission and goals of the Foundation concerning The Colorado Trail, its purposes, maintenance, and protection.

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The Colorado Trail is a public nonmotorized trail, built and maintained privately, but always intended for use by a broad spectrum of the American public and foreign visitors and now located almost entirely on lands owned by the public.

As stewards of The Colorado Trail for the public at large, The Colorado Trail Foundation and the Forest Service seek to make others aware of The Colorado Trail and its possible attractions for them, to promote access to The Colorado Trail for all citizens, and to motivate those users to treat The Colorado Trail, its resources, and other users properly for the greater enjoyment of all.

From those premises stem an array of public information activities that are affected by many other local management activities, such as law enforcement, fire prevention, enhancement of natural resources, interpretation and education, and overall environmental protection. At the same time, these public information activities are an integral part of The Colorado Trail Foundation; greater awareness and use of The Colorado Trail increases the

number of potential "Friends of the Colorado Trail." Good community relations is an asset in corridor monitoring, as well as a means of strengthening The Colorado Trail Foundation with new talents for managing the diversity of activities now associated with The Colorado Trail project. Public information, or public relations, always supports some other purpose of the organization.

Users obviously want and need information about the attractions and requirements of The Colorado Trail. The news media (and commercial publishers of travel and recreation-related books and other materials) are also interested. Many will publish notices of special hikes or volunteer work party enrollments. Most are interested in "good news" about locally-oriented volunteer work that is the mainstay of The Colorado Trail. Regular contact is also perhaps an organization's best insurance against irresponsible reporting in times of crisis, minor or major.

Forest Service Policy: The public information activities of the Forest Service are governed by an extensive body of legislation and directives, some contained in annual appropriations statutes. These laws are aimed primarily at ensuring that those activities are objective, useful, and informative and that they avoid self-promotion and lobbying.

The Colorado Trail Foundation Policy:

1. The information and education program for The Colorado Trail has five objectives: (a) inform the public on how to plan and carry out a safe, enjoyable journey on The Colorado Trail; (b) educate the public on how to use The Colorado Trail without damaging trail resources or spoiling the experience for other travelers; (c) educate the public on environmental, recreation, public lands, and wildlife issues; (d) develop partnerships with schools and education organizations to provide classes and field trips; and (e) work with research institutions and other entities to enhance public understanding and scientific knowledge of The Colorado Trail and its natural resources.
2. Techniques for informing The Colorado Trail users may include publishing guides, pamphlets, and maps of The Colorado Trail, maintaining informational and interpretive signs at trailheads and along the trail, answering inquiries from the public, providing information for The Colorado Trail Foundation publications, organizing workshops, and soliciting help from user groups.
3. Accurate, timely information about The Colorado Trail will be provided to those who request it.
4. The Colorado Trail Foundation shall provide the Colorado Department of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, the Colorado State Board of Land Commissioners, the Tourism Board, and other appropriate state agencies with the information that is necessary for those agencies to fill requests for information about The Colorado Trail that are directed to them.

MOTORIZED USES

Inappropriate uses of off-highway vehicles on The Colorado Trail are major concerns of The Colorado Trail Foundation and federal and state agency

officials at all levels. Some areas are particularly vulnerable to these uses, which affect both the physical resources of The Colorado Trail and the primitive experiences available on The Colorado Trail. Constructive efforts to post The Colorado Trail with regulatory signs and communicate with trail neighbors, landowners, and off-highway vehicle clubs are preferred directions for local managers. Law enforcement may be necessary in the worst situations.

The Colorado Trail Foundation and the appropriate land management agency will jointly seek alternatives where pre-existing motorized use is inconsistent with the trail experience.

Forest Service Policy: Summer and winter motorized activities are regulated carefully by the Forest Service. In each National Forest, areas that are open for off-highway vehicle use are designated in the land management plan, and maps are published indicating seasonal limits and other constraints on motorized use. Motorized use should not be permitted in any area designated for the protection of the Colorado Trail, except for specific snowmobile routes that cross the trail, and where motorized recreation use existed prior to development of The Colorado Trail.

The Colorado Trail Foundation Policy: All use of motorized vehicles along The Colorado Trail, except for emergency or limited special-use purposes, is prohibited. (This obviously does not apply to those parts of the Colorado Trail that remain located on public or private roads.) Both motorized trail bikes and other bareground off-road vehicles are absolutely incompatible with every purpose of The Colorado Trail and should be vigorously denied access to the trail. Although snowmobile use causes less damage to the physical trail, this use can cause conflicts with cross-country skiers and is prohibited on The Colorado Trail.

LITTER AND GRAFFITI

Litter along any portion of The Colorado Trail detracts seriously from the enjoyment of the trail. The problem is most evident at road crossings, campsites, and popular destinations. Likewise, the intrusion of graffiti on The Colorado Trail environment detracts from the aesthetic experience. Both often occur at the most beautiful viewpoints or picturesque rock formations. Graffiti is not limited to vandals. Sometimes maintainer's efforts to be helpful or clever with blazing, arrows, and painted messages inadvertently encourages graffiti.

Forest Service Policy: Littering and graffiti are illegal. It is, however, very difficult to enforce these laws; the offenders must be caught in the act. In some cases, where an offender can be identified by a trail user or club member, a federal agency will issue a citation upon receipt: of a carefully documented report by a trail user.

The Colorado Trail Foundation Policy: The Colorado Trail Foundation espouses the carry-in, carry-out philosophy as regards to litter. The Colorado Trail Foundation attempts to keep vandalism to a minimum by proper construction and location of trail facilities. Litter and vandalism on The Colorado Trail have not been, and continue not to be, significant problems. The Colorado Trail Foundation does not provide receptacles for litter at its shelters or trailheads, believing that such facilities tend to create problems and cannot be properly maintained by The Colorado Trail Foundation. Three or four

clean-up visits are made to high-use areas during the summer hiking season. Shelters will be placed at some distance from roads to reduce major vandalism problems.

HUNTING

Hunting along most sections of The Colorado Trail has been a traditional use of the land. It is a use that may pose a concern for the safety of hikers on the trail, and, as such, has been an issue that is the focus of continuing discussion.

The Colorado Trail passes through many jurisdictions, most of which allow hunting. Hunting is allowed in National Forests and on many state-owned lands. On many privately owned lands adjoining the trail, it is a well-established use. Frequently, these lands are not posted, and no means exist by which a hunter can distinguish between lands that are open and lands that are closed to hunting. On those Colorado Trail lands that are open to hunting, the question of visitor safety remains.

Forest Service Policy: Hunting is permitted on National Forest System lands, including those lands that are adjacent to The Colorado Trail.

The Colorado Trail Foundation Policy: Management of The Colorado Trail will be consistent with state fish and game regulations. During hunting seasons, trail users are urged to wear bright or blaze-orange clothing for safety. Should incidents occur, greater efforts to inform trail users and hunters of each other's existence may be necessary.

HORSES AND PACK ANIMALS

Forest Service Policy: All saddle and pack stock are compatible with The Colorado Trail. The use of weed-free processed feed is encouraged for use on The Colorado Trail. Compliance with "Tread Lightly" and "Leave No Trace" programs is encouraged.

As new policies are adopted by the Forest Service on the quality and content of processed feeds, they will automatically apply to The Colorado Trail users.

The Colorado Trail Foundation Policy:

1. Use of horses, llamas, donkeys, mules and other saddle or pack stock is compatible with The Colorado Trail. Wherever possible, the use of llamas as pack animals should be encouraged because of the low impact these animals have on the footpath.
2. The Colorado Trail Foundation encourages the use of low-impact practices to reduce the impact of all animals.

ROADS

Remoteness, isolation, and separation from the works and influences of man are significant factors in the recreational and therapeutic values of The Colorado Trail. Road construction and use of adjacent private lands, on National Forests, on state and municipal public lands, and on reserved rights-of-way that cross the trail corridor have a significant, long-term, cumulative impact on the values of The Colorado Trail.

Forest Service Policy: The impacts of proposed roads and road systems within the National Forests are analyzed and documented in an environmental assessment. The assessment process normally considers, but is not limited to:

- noise levels that would occur at points along the trail;
- the character of the trail in proximity to the proposed road; standards and management of the road; trail use in the area; impacts upon recreation opportunities; cost alternatives;
- potential for unlawful motorized access.

A road may be built if the analysis determines that building the road is the best and most prudent alternative and that all available measures had been taken to minimize impacts to The Colorado Trail.

The Colorado Trail Foundation Policy: Proximity of The Colorado Trail to roads decreases trail user security and the quality of the trail experience. New road construction is particularly damaging because it is unsightly and provides additional access to The Colorado Trail by persons who may disturb, harass, or perhaps even assault trail users. Springs may be damaged by construction so that needed water supplies are destroyed. For these reasons, The Colorado Trail Foundation desires to minimize the number of road crossings and to eliminate all but very short use of roads. The Colorado Trail Foundation believes that these adverse impacts should be included in an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement before construction or improvement of roads crossing or paralleling The Colorado Trail. The Colorado Trail Foundation expects to have the opportunity to provide input into the road planning process when effects on The Colorado Trail are possible. In evaluating the effect of a planned road on The Colorado Trail, specific factors we will consider include, but are not limited to, trail and resource damage, water source protection, user safety (including the possible need for pedestrian bridges over busy roads), allowing access by foot traffic only, and vehicle noise. We urge our agency partners and other road building

agencies to explore all other alternatives to road construction before planning new roads near The Colorado Trail. If road construction must proceed," The Colorado Trail Foundation will work with agencies as a partner to minimize impacts of road construction on the trail. In the event that significant damage to the trail from road building is probable, and a suitable remedy cannot be found, The Colorado Trail Foundation may exercise its responsibility to utilize appeals procedures to provide as much protection for The Colorado Trail as possible.

ROAD CLOSURES AND ACCESS CONTROL

The Colorado Trail lands are often susceptible to encroachment due to the narrow, linear shape of the corridor. Encroachments usually are associated with some form of vehicular access. Careful planning and design of road closures and other means of access control can minimize improper uses, such as motorized recreation, timber theft, and dumping.

Access problems are often complex, requiring detailed site studies and planning. Access points must be located, valid rights must be recognized, and illegal and unauthorized access must be controlled without obstructing legitimate access. Land ownership and National Forest access are key factors in any situation where a road closure is being considered.

If no legal rights for access exist, the land management agency has no current use for a road, a permanent closure may be possible. The roadway can be rehabilitated and seeded, and a physical barrier constructed to discourage access. Depending upon the site, the most effective permanent barrier may be a boulder closure, a vegetative barrier of planted trees, a log barrier, a "tank trap" or excavated portion of the road, a gate, or a combination of the above.

If a private party holds a right-of-way for access within The Colorado Trail corridor, or if a land-managing partner uses an access road for a purpose not in conflict with The Colorado Trail, gates are the most effective means of "selective" access control, although signs may discourage many potential vehicle operators, too.

Problems also arise on occasion with unrestricted access onto The Colorado Trail corridor lands from public highways and roads that are maintained by state or county departments. The state highway department official or county road supervisor will usually be willing to look at an access control problem, but may not be in a position to take corrective action alone.

Forest Service Policy: The Forest Service has established a policy that prohibits use of motorized vehicles on The Colorado Trail. The U.S. Forest Service, as a multiple-use management agency, may have other needs for access on lands near the trail. They will often implement permanent closures for these roads at the completion of a timber harvest or other management activity.

The Colorado Trail Foundation Policy: When serious conflicts occur, the management committee of The Colorado Trail Foundation will assess conditions and work with the appropriate land manager for a solution.

SPECIAL USES

The Colorado Trail lands have numerous other potential uses, several of which are historical uses that "created" the present setting for The Colorado Trail. Ranching, in particular, can enhance the trail's environment by providing a pastoral, open landscape.

Special-use permits are used by the Forest Service to allow for and control temporary uses on National Forest System lands. Although these permits also benefit the permittee, they are issued primarily to serve a particular management purpose, such as maintenance of a view, protection of a structure, or allowing a site-specific use. Forest Supervisors and District Rangers retain authority for special-use permits. For new special uses within a half mile of either side of The Colorado Trail, analysis of special use applications should include input from The Colorado Trail Foundation.

Forest Service Policy: The regulations governing Forest Service special-use permits are outlined in 36 CFR 25-1.51 of the Code of Federal Regulations (Forest Service Manuals 2300, 2340, and 2700 contain this information, also). A Forest Service special-use permit is, by definition, "a special use authorization which provides permission, without conveying an interest in land, to occupy and use National Forest System land or facilities for specific purposes, and which is both revocable and terminable." Special-use permits are generally designed to meet long-term objectives of a forest plan and to protect and/or enhance the environment. The Forest Service is entitled to fair rent plus administrative costs. The actual permit includes stipulations to control use and mitigate adverse impacts. A wide variety of uses are allowed, including recreation residences, resorts, organization camps, grazing, communications sites, and utilities. Uses that are not compatible with The Colorado Trail environment are discouraged.

The Colorado Trail Foundation Policy: Special-use permits in areas that may impact the recreational experience of The Colorado Trail user will be coordinated with The Colorado Trail Foundation. Special-use permits should be approved provided that the requested use would not be inconsistent with the purposes for which The Colorado Trail was established.

OUTFITTING AND GUIDING

Increasing numbers of people are hiring guides to help them access many back-country recreation opportunities. In addition, many others are renting equipment, horses, and vehicular transportation for the same purposes. As The Colorado Trail has become increasingly popular, entrepreneurs are planning to expand outfitting and guiding services to accommodate people specifically seeking recreation along this particular trail. There are also many outfitting and guiding services using segments of The Colorado Trail as part of their travel routes to other destinations and opportunities.

The Colorado Trail and the terrain it traverses has a finite capacity. Capacities can be expressed in many ways such as the available forage for saddle and pack stock, the number of people that can be dispersed and "absorbed" to maintain solitude, or the volume of human and animal waste that can be processed by the ecosystem. The question is what portion of the capacity should be allocated to commercial outfitting and guiding, and what portion should be available for general public use.

Forest Service Policy: In Congressionally designated wilderness areas, capacities and their allocation between commercial and non-commercial uses is specified in the Wilderness Implementation Schedule for each wilderness area. In other areas, the capacities will be based on the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum assigned to the area in question. Normally, capacities will be determined on an as-needed basis outside of wilderness.

The Colorado Trail Foundation Policy: The Colorado Trail Foundation wants to assure that The Colorado Trail will not become a thoroughfare for commercial activities and that anyone seeking use of the trail will have an opportunity to do so. Where there are conflicts between commercial and non-commercial users based on capacity, the conflicts should be resolved in favor of the non-commercial users. The Colorado Trail Foundation recognizes that commercial use of some trail segments predates The Colorado Trail and must be accommodated in the allocation of capacity.

UTILITIES AND COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES

Natural gas pipelines, electric transmission lines, telephone trunk lines, and many smaller distribution lines of all types already cross The Colorado Trail in many locations. There are also communications towers, dishes, antennas, and buildings that dot the landscape. Frequently, the most desirable location for these communications facilities is on the highest available terrain, in direct conflict with the route of The Colorado Trail. Utility lines and communication sites are, by nature, intensive, high-profile land uses. The visual and, in some cases, audible presence of these facilities detracts from the primitive recreational experience of hiking on The Colorado Trail.

Existing utility rights-of-way and communications sites usually are owned by quasi-public utility companies. A perceived public service is provided by these companies; the electric power, natural gas, television, and communication systems provide what are considered essential needs for modern living. As these needs continue to grow, more proposals will be advanced for utilities to cross The Colorado Trail corridor and for mountaintop communications sites on lands adjoining The Colorado Trail corridor.

The cumulative impacts of the expansion and development of new utilities and communications facilities upon The Colorado Trail are significant. Cleared swaths of land, towering steel structures, invasions by off-road vehicles on utility rights-of-way, chain-link fences around communications sites, homes, roads, skyline towers, microwave dishes, and many other adverse impacts are associated with the facilities.

Communications towers located on private lands adjoining The Colorado Trail often can be easily seen, and they can disrupt an undisturbed scene in an otherwise remote environment. The land managing agencies have no jurisdiction in these cases, and The Colorado Trail Foundation must work to convince local zoning boards, state-agency officials, and utility representatives not to compromise the scenic values of The Colorado Trail.

Early involvement by The Colorado Trail Foundation in public hearings and review processes can often eliminate conflicts between The Colorado Trail and a proposed utility line or communication site. Relocation alternatives are often available that are inconvenient for the utility company but have less

impact on The Colorado Trail. Communications facilities often can be accommodated in an existing site, and utility lines often can be upgraded or combined in order to reduce impacts, if no alternatives exist to crossing The Colorado Trail.

Forest Service Policy: Uniform general standards for review of utilities and communication sites are described in the land management plans for the National Forests crossed by The Colorado Trail. Utilities and communications sites are considered in management areas that encompass The Colorado Trail only when an overriding public benefit can be demonstrated. The proposal must be analyzed in an environmental assessment and, if the proposed use is authorized, mitigating measures may be incorporated into any special-use permit or right-of-way authorizing the proposed use in order to protect The Colorado Trail values and resources.

The Colorado Trail Foundation Policy: The Colorado Trail Foundation encourages consolidation of communications and transportation facilities along existing corridors and sites. It is the policy of The Colorado Trail Foundation to oppose any construction of new utility lines or communications site facilities on The Colorado Trail corridor lands unless it can be demonstrated that (1) the proposed project is of overriding public benefit, (2) locating the proposed project on or across The Colorado Trail corridor lands is the only feasible and prudent alternative, and (3) adverse impacts to the scenic, cultural and natural resources of The Colorado Trail can and will be adequately mitigated. The Colorado Trail Foundation will urge agency partners to stipulate, as conditions of the authorization for use of The Colorado Trail corridor lands, detailed plans for mitigation of adverse impacts. The Colorado Trail Foundation seeks to limit the number of facilities visible from the trail and shall support measures that reduce or eliminate the visual impacts of such facilities when viewed from The Colorado Trail.

STRUCTURES AND DAMS

The Forest Service and several state agencies have purchased several man-made structures during the process of acquiring lands along The Colorado Trail corridor. Many of these "incidentally acquired" structures are vacant, deteriorating buildings. They are often an invitation to vandalism and a potential liability hazard, even if posted. Once these structures are acquired, decisions must be made as to their fate. These decisions are often complex, requiring careful consideration of the potential benefits that might be gained by keeping a structure and the costs of long-term upkeep and repairs. Liability issues and whether or not the structure is compatible with the purpose and values of the Colorado Trail are also important.

At times, interim management of structures is necessary while decisions are being made. A temporary occupant may be needed to care for the building and prevent vandalism. Boarding up all entrances to a vacant structure to prevent accidents could be appropriate in other cases. Where a previous landowner has reserved the right to use the structure, some basic planning decisions can be made in preparation for vacancy. Periodic contact by The Colorado Trail Foundation with the occupants is appropriate to ensure that use is following the terms of the reservation.

When a determination has been made that a structure serves no purpose and should be removed, The Colorado Trail Foundation coordinates removal of the structure with local managers and the Forest Service. Several possibilities exist. Structures have been demolished through controlled burning by the local fire department. They have also been salvaged by clubs or local contractors.

Forest Service Policy: The Forest Service is responsible for all structures located on National Forest System lands, and any action to occupy, improve, or demolish a building on these lands must be approved by the Forest Supervisor or his designee. The Forest Service is constrained by the same laws and regulations that direct management and disposition of structures more than 50 years old.

The Colorado Trail Foundation Policy: Where structures are creating a significant hazard or where vandalism becomes a problem, consideration should be given to the removal or alternative use of the structure. Proposed new structures which could potentially effect the trail should be made available for review by The Colorado Trail Foundation prior to approval.

MONITORING

Some of The Colorado Trail lies upon a narrow corridor of public land that threads its way among privately owned lands. Even within National Forests, The Colorado Trail is vulnerable to abuse. Many of the conflicting uses described in the preceding sections (such as motorized vehicle use, dumping, and litter) can be discouraged by an active monitoring program. A monitoring program is also essential for detecting encroachments and violations.

An effective monitoring program should be a grassroots campaign coordinated by The Colorado Trail Foundation that involves the Forest Service, local governments, and local residents. In National Forests, a monitoring program may just be a matter of inspection of the trail footpath and the lands within The Colorado Trail management area and advising the agency partner of any encroachments or unauthorized uses.

Forest Service Policy: Monitoring programs on National Forest System lands should be closely coordinated with the District Ranger. In general, the District Ranger should be informed of any unauthorized or incompatible use that is occurring within The Colorado Trail management area.

The Colorado Trail Foundation Policy: Those people using and maintaining The Colorado Trail are encouraged to advise The Colorado Trail Foundation of any irregular activities taking place, i.e. logging, road construction, building construction, firewood theft, littering, camping, etc. Advisors are encouraged to provide information that includes "who, what, when and where" in addition to updated inventory information.

OPEN AREAS AND VISTAS

From the beginning, The Colorado Trail's scenic opportunities provided by open areas in the forest cover have been considered one of the most important features of the trail experience. Management of open areas and vistas often

requires active measures, which include mowing, grazing, cutting, and controlled burning. Careful planning is needed in order to ensure that The Colorado Trail Foundation achieves the results it desires for these landscapes.

Forest Service Policy: Where appropriate. District Rangers may approve measures to maintain or create vistas, excluding wilderness areas.

The Colorado Trail Foundation Policy: Generally, The Colorado Trail Foundation will not interfere with the natural environment or processes except as necessary to maintain the hiking corridor.

TIMBER MANAGEMENT

The Colorado Trail is located on forested lands for most of its 500 mile length. Prior to the trail protection effort, many of these lands were managed for such timber products as lumber, pulp, and firewood. In some areas along the trail, timber management remains as the predominant use on adjoining private and public land.

If poorly planned or carried out, a timber harvest can have dramatic, long-term effects on water, soils, and visual resource values. The removal of vegetation and the soil disturbance associated with construction of roads and skid trails can cause a substantial increase in run-off and erosion. The removal of part or all of the overstory in an area that can be seen from the trail also can have a significant effect on the scenic environment of the trail. Agency partners and responsible timber companies usually employ forest management practices designed to minimize impacts to soils and water resources, and, on publicly owned forested lands, agency partners usually are sensitive to the visual impact of a proposed timber harvest upon the scenic environment of the trail. Selective cutting techniques, erosion-control measures, and reclamation and reseeded measures can be used and harvest area boundaries can be modified to reduce visual impacts.

Under most circumstances, a timber harvest within the trail corridor would cause unacceptable impacts to the scenic environment of the trail, even with detailed mitigating measures in place. Timber harvests on lands outside the trail corridor also may have a significant impact to trail values. The sensitivity of the viewer and the ability of the landscape to absorb the impacts of a proposed harvest are important factors in determining the level of visual impact. A hiker on The Colorado Trail may be comfortable with seeing a clearcut harvest from a particular viewpoint, simply because it is at a distance and its appearance does not contrast with the surrounding landscape.

Forest Service Policy: The primary federal agency managing and harvesting timber in areas visible from The Colorado Trail is the Forest Service. On National Forest System lands, the primary tool for assessing visual impacts of proposed timber cuts is called the Scenery Management System (SMS). Using SMS, lands identified within the foreground zone as viewed from The Colorado Trail are the most sensitive. Timber activities should be designed to enhance the trail environment in this zone. Such activities may include work to improve wildlife habitat, protect soil and water, control insects and disease, maintain or create vistas or openings, and meeting trail construction and maintenance needs.

Lands outside the foreground that can be seen from the trail are managed according to management area prescriptions in the Forest Plans. Timber management activities visible from the trail will be modified to meet "visual quality objectives" for minimizing visual impacts to The Colorado Trail. The Forest Service conducts site-specific project planning for timber harvests that potentially affect the trail in consultation with The Colorado Trail Foundation and segment adopters.

The Colorado Trail Foundation Policy: The Colorado Trail corridor's sphere of influence has been designated as a minimum of 100 meters extending from the center line of the trail (200 meters total width). Inside this corridor, timber management will not be done unless it enhances the trail environment and will be limited to improving the health of the stand, to providing scenic vistas, to control insects and disease, and to attract wildlife.

PEST MANAGEMENT

Attempts to control pest outbreaks present one of the most controversial aspects of management of trail lands. Many types of native and introduced pest species are present on The Colorado Trail lands and lands adjoining the trail. Forest pests are the cause of some of the most dramatic naturally caused impacts to the trail environment. Defoliators such as the spruce budworm and gypsy moth continue to go through cyclic outbreaks or spread to new geographic regions. Besides the obvious negative visual effects that insect and disease outbreaks can have on the trail environment, significant economic impacts to surrounding areas occur as timber inventories drop.

Forest Service Policy: Integrated pest management (IPM) tactics and strategies are practiced on National Forests to manage or suppress pests that may cause unacceptable levels of resource damage and loss or to protect health and safety. Due consideration is given in any decision regarding pesticide use to environmental concerns, biological effectiveness, and economic efficiency. IPM methods will be used to minimize or prevent the development of pest problems. Where pest problems are unavoidable, the control method selected will be based on objectives, effectiveness, safety, environmental protection, and cost.

The Colorado Trail Foundation Policy: The Colorado Trail Foundation is generally opposed to chemical methods for control of vegetation or insects in The Colorado Trail corridor except in very special circumstances. All reasonable efforts should be made to protect the hikers and the natural environment of the corridor from negative effects of spray programs, if they should occur.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

The terms "threatened" and "endangered" pertain to the specific legal status of a plant or animal species as designated by the Secretary of the Interior, under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, following a recommendation by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

An endangered species is one that is close to extinction throughout all or significant part of its range. A threatened species is one likely to become endangered in the near future. The Endangered Species Act prescribes specific procedures for determining the eligibility of a species for threatened or endangered status. The process is a long one, requiring publication of a notice in the Federal Register, consultation with governors of affected states, and other safeguards. Other terms are used to describe the relative population of a species, including "rare," "relict," and "sensitive" species. These latter terms do not give a species any legal protection under the Endangered Species Act, They do, however, provide a general indication of the size of a local population.

Forest Service Policy: The Forest Service will evaluate the potential impact of any action upon threatened or endangered species. To fulfill this obligation, the agency normally consults with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the state natural heritage office to determine if any known threatened or endangered species are present in the area of a proposed action. If it is determined that a threatened or endangered species may be present, then an on-site review is conducted by a qualified biologist prior to any major surface-disturbing activity on federal lands. Should an on-site inventory reveal the existence of a threatened or endangered plant or animal, the federal agency must initiate a formal consultation process with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service must issue a finding of "no jeopardy" to the identified species before the federal agency can undertake any further action. It may require specific mitigation to prevent any impacts to threatened and endangered species such as relocation of a shelter or section of trail.

The Colorado Trail Foundation Policy: The Colorado Trail Foundation recognizes the importance of maintaining and enhancing the continued existence of threatened and endangered species and the obligations imposed by federal statute upon federal agencies (and by state law upon state agencies) for protection of threatened or endangered species.

WILDLIFE

The natural habitats along The Colorado Trail support a great variety of wildlife. In most cases, the narrowness of the trail corridor precludes management practices that will significantly enhance habitat to a point of improving a species' overall health, distribution, or range. However, in areas where there is pressure from development, the corridor may provide an important source of forage and cover that sustains populations of small mammals and birds. The corridor can provide critical nest and den sites for species such as eagles, hawks, and falcons.

Forest Service Policy: The Forest Service is required to manage lands for wildlife as a main component of its mission under the Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act. National Forests are managed under the "featured species concept," where management of these species is emphasized with the goal of maintaining or enhancing habitat for that species. Featured species are selected in coordination with state biologists. Within the management area identified for The Colorado Trail general direction is to increase opportunities to see wildlife from the trail. Only habitat improvements that are complementary to the Colorado Trail are considered.

The Colorado Trail Foundation Policy: The Colorado Trail Foundation recognizes wildlife as an important part of the trail experience and encourages protection of the natural environment.

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT AND RECLAMATION

The management of vegetation is an area very familiar to experienced trail builders and maintainers. The removal, control of, or in some cases, the promotion of plant species plays a large role in trail construction and maintenance. Vegetation management involves the manipulation of plant species or habitat in order to meet some desired goal. The goal may range from simply keeping the footpath passable to that of maintaining an open landscape. In other instances, it may call for encouraging the conditions necessary for a desired species to thrive such as some flowering plant or rare species.

Restoration of disturbed sites is a less well-known area of land management. Returning damaged or eroded sites to something resembling natural conditions is a well-developed scientific field in Europe that is now receiving a great deal of attention in the United States. Experts in this field study ways to return disturbed, eroded, or otherwise damaged areas to as near their previous appearance as possible. The field incorporates natural sciences, such as horticulture, botany, ecology, and soils science, with landscape ecology, hydrology, and engineering. Applications to the trail might include revegetating overused campsites, repairing erosion caused by poor trail design, and returning abandoned mining areas to woodland or meadow. This topic also can involve the control or removal of exotic or unwanted plants, such as poison ivy, on the footpath or around a shelter.

Forest Service Policy: The Forest Service has not developed specific policies for its Colorado Trail management zones. General guidance can be found in the land and resource management plans that have been published for each Forest. Whenever actual reclamation plans are developed, they should be done with full consultation with the individual Forest's staff.

The Colorado Trail Foundation Policy: The Colorado Trail Foundation encourages the least vegetation management policy possible, consistent with the maintenance of the trail in accordance with the U.S. Forest Service "Trail Management Handbook."

HERITAGE RESOURCES

The lands crossed by The Colorado Trail have a rich history. Parts of the trail were major travel routes for Native Americans and for settlers pushing west to explore the new frontiers of our country in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Many of the springs, campsites, gaps, and lookouts along the trail were used by earlier travelers and settlers. These sites, and the objects and other physical evidence left behind by these travellers and settlers, are an important part of our cultural heritage.

Heritage resources can range from individual artifacts such as arrowheads, tools, bullets, housewares, and other items for human use, to structures and large areas of land. Campsites, farms, and other broad areas of human occupation or use are also important to the historian or archaeologist. A

trained archaeologist can learn a great deal from an examination of an in situ cultural artifact, an object in place and undisturbed. The exact location of an artifact in relation to other artifacts and its surroundings is often more important than the artifact itself. In some cases, an archaeologist will undertake an excavation or "dig" to locate, examine, and document subsurface artifacts.

Though heritage resource sites are vulnerable to gradual destruction from exposure to the elements, the most significant impacts usually result from human activity. Cultural sites can be affected by surface disturbing activities, such as treadway construction on a relocation, or by construction of a new shelter. They also can be affected simply by opening a new area to public use.

The most dramatic impacts result from vandalism. Vandalism can take many forms such as graffiti, removal of artifacts, or destruction of unoccupied buildings and other structures. Amateur "pot hunters" can often make substantial profits by removing and selling artifacts from an archaeological or historic site on public lands. As a result, professional archaeologists are often cautious about releasing information on the location and importance of known cultural sites.

Forest Service Policy: Forest Service Manual 2361 provides guidance to District Rangers to locate, identify, evaluate, preserve, manage, collect, and interpret heritage resources so that they may be passed on to future generations in unimpaired condition.

The Colorado Trail Foundation Policy: The Colorado Trail Foundation supports federal policies identifying, evaluating, and managing heritage resources.

WILDERNESS

". . .in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain, . . .an area of undeveloped federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the sources of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value."

- Public Law 88-577 (The Wilderness Act)
September 3, 1964

Within a wilderness area or area being managed as wilderness, the following activities are prohibited by law, unless provided for by special exceptions: roads, commercial enterprises (other than guiding and outfitting) , motor vehicles, motorized equipment, motorboats, landing of aircraft, any other form of mechanical transport, structures, and installations. Special exceptions may be provided for the following activities:

- o existing private rights;
- o measures required in emergencies involving the health and safety of persons within the area;
- o activities and structures that are the minimum necessary for the administration of the area as wilderness;
- o use of aircraft and motorboats, where already established;
- o measures necessary in the control of fire, insects, and diseases;
- o some activities for the purpose of gathering information about mineral or other resources, if carried on in a manner compatible with the preservation of the wilderness environment;
- o water resource development authorized by the President where he determines that such use will better serve the interests of the United States and the people thereof than will its denial;
- o livestock grazing, where already established;
- o commercial services necessary for activities that are proper for realizing the recreational or other wilderness purposes of the area;
- o adequate access to surrounded state and privately owned lands;
- o access to surrounded valid mining claims and other valid occupancies.

Forest Service Policy: Designated wilderness areas, potential wilderness areas, recommended wilderness areas, and wilderness study areas are managed for their wilderness values in accordance with the Wilderness Act. Wilderness Implementation Schedules, prepared for each wilderness area, address visitor use, prohibited uses, and uses that are authorized by permit or reserved right, and capacities for various wilderness-compatible activities.

The Colorado Trail Foundation Policy; Within wilderness areas. The Colorado Trail Foundation will construct and maintain a trail with minimum physical modifications consistent with the definition of a primitive hiking trail in accordance with the Forest Service Trail Management Handbook.

SPECIAL AND UNIQUE AREAS

A number of sites along The Colorado Trail are special or unique because of their biotic, geologic, cultural and/or scenic values. These sites, even though they do not qualify for protection under the Endangered Species Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, or the Wilderness Act, still deserve special recognition and management. Land managing agencies often give these areas special designations and manage them with a higher level of protection from use and development, such as stands of old growth timber, areas above timberline or alpine tundra sites; sites of historic events; unusual geologic formations and landforms; areas where unusual flora or fauna exist; scenic areas, etc.

Forest Service Policy: The Agency recognizes special management areas within its land and resource management plans for each Forest. As the name implies, these areas are set aside within the Forest to be managed for their unique or special features.

The Colorado Trail Foundation Policy: In cases where The Colorado Trail traverses areas subject to special management considerations. The Colorado Trail Foundation will cooperate with all interested parties to minimize the impact of the trail. We believe The Colorado Trail is compatible with such areas and that the presence of The Colorado Trail has contributed significantly to the desire for their preservation. Indeed, trails such as The Colorado Trail may provide the only ecologically acceptable means of access to these areas for study and enjoyment. For these reasons. The Colorado Trail Foundation desires to continue to participate fully in management planning for any special management areas through which The Colorado Trail passes.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) COMPLIANCE

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 directs federal agencies to consider the potential impacts of a proposed action or policy upon the environment before implementing the action or policy.

Forest Service Policy: The Forest Service has issued specific guidelines on when an environmental assessment is or is not required (FSM 1950 and FSH 1909.15). Any time The Colorado Trail Foundation is considering an activity on National Forests that requires earthwork or vegetation removal beyond areas of existing disturbance, the District Ranger should be contacted. An environmental assessment usually is prepared for significant relocations and other activities that could affect natural and cultural resources.

The Colorado Trail Foundation Policy: The Forest Service will continue to take the lead in the environmental assessment process, including advising The Colorado Trail Foundation when such compliance is needed. As part of a sound planning process, The Colorado Trail Foundation will consider the environmental impacts of its management proposals and consult with appropriate agencies, experts, and the local community, in cooperation with the Forest Service. In addition, any trail relocation or development of a facility along The Colorado Trail will comply with the National Environmental Policy Act and state and local ordinances. The Colorado Trail Foundation has cooperated and will continue to assist in preparation of environmental documentation. The Forest Service will continue to take the lead in the environmental assessment process, including advising the Foundation of when such compliance is needed.

END

The undersigned hereby agree that this Master Plan for the Colorado Trail will guide the programs and projects needed to manage and maintain the Colorado Trail.

Lyle Lavery
Lyle Lavery, Regional Forester

11/30/98
Date

Andrew Gaskill
Colorado Trail Foundation

11/30/98
Date



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