



The Field Press



A Publication of the Colorado Natural Areas Program

Volume 10, Issue 1

Spring 2008

Colorado Natural Areas preserve some of the finest examples of Colorado's original and unique landscapes for the benefit of present and future generations. Sites qualify as Colorado Natural Areas when they contain at least one unique or high quality feature of statewide significance:

- Native plant communities**
- Geologic formations and processes**
- Paleontological localities**
- Habitat for rare plants and animals**



In This Issue

CNAP Reunion and Friend-raiser . . .	2
Watching the Grass Grow.	3
Natural Area Profile	4
Volunteer Stewards Corner	5
Friends of Colorado Natural Areas . .	6
A Volunteer Steward's Reflections. . .	7
Natural Areas Council News.	8

Mark your calendars!

CNAP is organizing two hikes for volunteers this summer: May 31st on the Front Range and September 20th on the West Slope. Come to enjoy the great outdoors and meet other stewards. Contact Brian for more information.

HAPPY 30TH ANNIVERSARY CNAP!!!

After 30 years of working hard, forming partnerships and getting our hands dirty, the Colorado Natural Areas Program celebrated its 30th anniversary in style on November 8th 2007 at a Reunion and Friend-raiser hosted by the Friends of Colorado Natural Areas (FCNA). The Friends group organized a terrific event that brought together staff, volunteers, friends and partners associated with the Colorado Natural Areas Program over our history. Almost 100 CNAP supporters mingled and reminisced about where the program has been and got revved-up about where it is headed. The room could barely contain three decades-worth of excitement that was generated by the full-house, who shared stories of CNAP successes and reflected on the changes over the past 30 years (such as the Council's hairstyles).

The evening's program included heartwarming and inspiring speeches by CNAP's biggest supporters. Lynn Riedel, current head of the Friend's group, remembered back to 1985 when CNAP Friends was started, and how far they have come since then. Rob Billerbeck, Program Manager, gave an update on CNAP's current state and emphasized the importance of a Friends group to the success of the program. Harris Sherman, recently returning as Executive Director of DNR, reflected on the atmosphere in which CNAP was created in 1977, during which time he was also Executive Director of DNR. Mr. Sherman highlighted CNAP's importance in conserving Colorado's unique natural features, and outlined his exciting vision for the future of the program. He expressed his enthusiasm for an increase in support for CNAP, as well as his hope that the program would grow to encompass twice as many designated Natural Areas as we have today.



Harris Sherman, Executive Director of DNR, reminiscing about being Director in 1977 when CNAP was born.



See 'CNAP Reunion and Friend-raiser' on page 2



Colorado Natural Areas Program
Colorado State Parks
1313 Sherman Street, Room 618
Denver, Colorado 80203
303.866.3203
**[http://parks.state.co.us/
NaturalResources/CNAP/](http://parks.state.co.us/NaturalResources/CNAP/)**

Bill Ritter

Governor

Harris Sherman

Executive Director

Department of Natural Resources

Dean Winstanley

Director

Colorado Natural Areas Council

Kathy Yates

Chair

Dr. Lee Shropshire

Vice Chair

Renee Rondeau

Member

Jill Ozarski

Member

Michele Bloom

State Board of Land Commissioners

Dr. Tom Ready

Parks Board

Dennis G. Buechler

Colorado Wildlife Commission

Program Staff

303-866-3203

Rob Billerbeck x4341

Natural Areas Program Manager

rob.billerbeck@state.co.us

Brian Kurzel x4301

Natural Areas Coordinator

brian.kurzel@state.co.us

CNAP Reunion and Friend-raiser, Cont.

Although the event was held indoors, attendees were treated to a trip around Colorado to see the best that the state has to offer. Frank Weston, a geologist and photographer who has been a Volunteer Steward with CNAP for many years, gave a sneak preview of his upcoming book that will highlight Natural Areas that CNAP works to protect. Keep an eye out this fall for his book titled "Colorado's Crown Jewels: The Best State Parks and Natural Areas", which will include beautiful photographs celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Colorado State Parks and the 30th Anniversary of Colorado Natural Areas!

Some of the biggest highlights of the evening, besides the old photos that were shown, were the award-winning stories told by past CNAP staff and Council. Bob Finch, past CNAP Manager, won a prize for 'Most Interesting Lessee or Private Landowner Contact' with his story of taking the CNAP Council to visit Orient Mine, which is next to a clothing-optional hot spring (no photos were shown). Carse Pustmueller, the first director of CNAP, won for 'Best Example Highlighting CNAP's Past Challenges' with her story of breaking down into tears in front of a State Representative in her effort to secure the CNAP yearly budget. John Masson, past chair of the CNAP Council, won for 'Craziest CNAP Field Mis-adventure' with his story of saving CNAP-staffer Janet Coles from the acidic waters of Mt. Emmons Iron Fen. The interesting, funny, and heart-felt stories told about CNAP's 30 years protecting Colorado's unique natural features left people inspired and motivated to continue the proud CNAP tradition.

All in all, the Friend-raiser was a huge success, an exciting night, and a testament to all the people that have worked hard over the years to make the Colorado Natural Areas Program a success. Thanks to all, and we look forward to 30 more years! 🌟



Carse Pustmueller, former CNAP Program Manager, receiving a prize from Rob and Brian.

*"Forget not that the earth delights to feel your bare feet
and the winds long to play with your hair."*

~Kahlil Gibran

The CNAP Website has been revised!

Check out our new look and let us know what you think!

Please visit us at: parks.state.co.us/NaturalResources/CNAP



Watching the Grass Grow

Two little known facts: (1) CNAP is the only state program that has the protection of rare plants in its mandate from the state legislature. (2) Almost half of the 79 designated Colorado Natural Areas are designated for features that include a rare plant species. These two facts taken together explain why CNAP has played a large role in the monitoring and protection of rare plants over the past 30 years. In 2007, attention to rare plants increased in Colorado, and CNAP is ramping up our efforts to monitor and protect our often forgotten green cousins.

The Colorado Rare Plant Initiative (RPI) is a newly formed group that aims to conserve Colorado's most imperiled native plants and their habitats through collaborative partnerships for the preservation of our natural heritage and the benefit of future generations. RPI, whose slogan is "Saving Colorado's Wildflowers",



RPM Stewards performing rare plant monitoring at Park Creek Hogback Natural Area.

is working cooperatively to address the need for rare plant conservation in our extremely diverse state. CNAP, as a member of RPI, is assisting with several rare plant protection projects including addressing statewide strategies, developing Best Management Practices and monitoring the most threatened species.

Monitoring of rare plant species is a necessary component of any protection strategy due to the need for up-to-date and relevant information about the status and conditions of rare plant populations. Only with current data can land managers effectively address potential or actual threats to imperiled plants. Since the 1980's, when CNAP began monitoring of many of the rarest plants in Colorado, our program has taken a leadership role in watching over some of Colorado's rare wildflowers. In 2007, CNAP accelerated our efforts to watch over rare plants by revisiting monitoring projects that were set up on many Natural Areas in the 1980's and 1990's, as well as initiating partnerships to set up new monitoring projects on the most threatened sites.

A new approach was also developed in 2007, when CNAP, partnering with Denver Botanic Gardens and in close collaboration with the Bureau of Land Management and other landowners, was involved in the creation of the Rare Plant Monitoring Stewards program. RPM Stewards are volunteers who are 'revving-up' rare plant monitoring around Colorado (pardon the pun). These volunteers commit to 'adopting' a rare plant monitoring project that they will lead for years to come; providing invaluable quantitative data to land managers and decision-makers who are trying to make informed decisions about conservation strategies. These volunteers give a new meaning to 'watching the grass grow' as they use technical monitoring protocols to track changes in plant populations over time.

As pressures increase on many of the rarest plants in Colorado, CNAP and many other conservation groups around the state are working tirelessly to protect the sedentary flora that needs some help. If you're interested in learning more about what the Rare Plant Initiative is doing to save Colorado's wildflowers, please contact Betsy Neely at bneely@tnc.org. If you'd like to become a Rare Plant Monitoring Steward, please contact Brian Kurzel at brian.kurzel@state.co.us. 🌱

Go Paperless!

If you'd like to receive the Colorado Natural Areas Program newsletter *by e-mail only*, please e-mail us at: brian.kurzel@state.co.us

In the subject or body of the e-mail please state:
"Newsletter via e-mail only"

If you want to continue getting paper newsletters, there is no need to contact us.



Natural Area Profile: Dinosaur Ridge / Dakota Hogback

Location: Jefferson County, Central Colorado

When to Visit: Open year round

Size: 2168 acres



Dinosaur tracks stabilized at DinosaurRidge.

The Dakota Hogback/Dinosaur Ridge Natural Area provides a glimpse of the best that Colorado has to offer, within minutes of the Denver Metro area. Whatever you fancy, you'll find something here to explore: spectacular

views of the foothills and eastern plains; unique geologic exposures that tell an intriguing story of Colorado's distant past; soaring raptors hovering over pristine plant communities stocked with a variety of wildflowers. And that's just the beginning. The Dakota Hogback Natural Area includes Dinosaur Ridge, which is one of the top fossil areas in Colorado. Rock exposures on Dinosaur Ridge reveal an impressive array of dinosaur tracks, bones, and marine fossils that will allow your imagination to roam free through the Cretaceous.

The Dakota Hogback Natural Area can be viewed along the west side of C-470, and can best be explored on the Dakota Ridge Trail. This trail, which is narrow and sometimes steep, follows the hogback ridgeline with spectacular views. You can access this trail and several dinosaur exhibits from the Dinosaur Ridge Visitor Center. The Visitor Center should be your first stop if you're looking for tours or more information about the amazing features of this site.

The Friends of Dinosaur Ridge will be celebrating the grand opening of their new exhibit entitled "Trek Through Time" on Saturday, July 5th from 10am to 4pm. This exhibit recreates the 70 to 150 million year old ancient environments preserved in stone on Dinosaur Ridge and

along Triceratops Trail. At this time you could also view CNAP's efforts to help preserve this Colorado Crown Jewel through funding of a dinosaur track stabilization project and the addition of interpretive signage. For more information call Joe Tempel at 720-971-9649.

If visiting during spring and fall, raptor sightings will be frequent, so be sure to bring binoculars. There is no camping in this area. Trails are open year round from one hour before sunset to one hour after sunset. Please stay on trails and keep dogs on leash.

To get to the Dinosaur Ridge visitor Center and access the Dakota Ridge Trail, take 6th Avenue to C-470. Go south on C-470 to the next interchange at Alameda Parkway. Go west on Alameda Parkway and turn north at the entrance to the Dinosaur Ridge Visitor Center.

For more information contact CNAP at 303-866-3203 or online at <http://parks.state.co.us/NaturalResources/CNAP/>; the Friends of Dinosaur Ridge at 303-697-3466 or online at <http://www.dinoridge.org/>; or the Jefferson County Open Space at 303-271-5925. 🌐



The prominent topographic feature known as the Dakota Hogback.

CNAP has two new ways to get involved:

- **Roving Stewards** are people with special skills related to Natural Areas, for example, bird or plant identification. We are looking for people who can create species lists or geologic/paleontologic descriptions for each natural area.
- **Interpretive Stewards** lead tours of their Natural Area(s), providing information to the public about the unique attributes of the areas.

Volunteer Stewards Corner

Growing Accomplishments

People often wonder: how does CNAP, with such a small staff, provide high quality monitoring to Natural Areas all over the state? The answer is easy... CNAP Volunteer Stewards. In 2007, the CNAP Volunteer Steward program experienced growth and consolidation that set the stage for a great 2008. The growth of the program is evidenced by the eighteen new Volunteer Stewards who have now taken our numbers to **93** Stewards on **69** Natural Areas.

This is a 16% increase in numbers of volunteers from this time last year. And active volunteers are giving a new meaning to the word 'committed'. No, they aren't losing their minds; they have increased the number of reported hours from less than 900 in 2006 to *over 2000 volunteer hours in 2007!*



Lorain and Dick Yeatts on top of Gateway Palisade.

Become a Volunteer Steward and help protect Colorado's best natural features!!

Opportunity: CNAP is currently looking for volunteers to monitor some of the most spectacular and sensitive areas in the state! The Natural Areas Program needs volunteers to get out and visit these sites regularly to ensure these sites are being preserved for future generations. You can help!

SITE NAME	COUNTY	OWNER	ACRES	HIKING	ATTRIBUTES
CALIFORNIA PARK	Routt	State Land Board	640	Moderate	California Park provides nesting habitat for a large number of state-rare greater sandhill cranes, state-endangered boreal toad breeding, and is the only area in Colorado where the three native species of grouse occur together: Columbian sharp-tailed, blue and northern sage.
CROSS MOUNTAIN CANYON	Moffat	Bureau of Land Management	2160	Moderate	A classic example of a superimposed river gorge with vertical cliffs over 200 feet high. Rare plants, four listed fish and diverse bird species.
DOME ROCK	Teller	Department Of Wildlife	640	Moderate	Massive exfoliating outcrops of Pikes Peak granite rise 800 feet from the canyon floor. Ponderosa pine, limber pine, Douglas-fir and montane grassland plant communities and lambing grounds for bighorn sheep.
GATEWAY PALISADE	Mesa	Bureau of Land Management	2569	Moderate	An outstanding scenic feature consisting of a 2,000 foot monolithic fin of dark red Wingate sandstone. Recently discovered rare plants inhabit the area.
INDIAN SPRING	Saguache	State Land Board	640	Difficult	Indian Spring lies in the midst of an active, warm climate dune field. Unique aquatic fauna and invertebrates occur here.
MEXICAN CUT	Gunnison	The Nature Conservancy	420	Difficult	A hanging valley located high in the Elk Mountains. Interconnected ponds each have a distinct flora and fauna.
MINI-WHEELER	Fremont	State Land Board	449	Moderte	Geologic features (late Oligocene, 29 MYA) molded into unusual shapes. Isolated stand of limber pine, montane grasslands, stands of aspen and conifer.
RAJADERO CANYON	Conejos	Bureau of Land Management/ State Land Board	3632	Moderate	Large populations of a volcanic endemic plant in a good-quality pinyon-ponderosa/Arizona fescue savanna.
SOUTH BEAVER CREEK	Gunnison	Bureau of Land Management	4565	Easy	This site contains a Gunnison Basin edemic plant, along with numerous Gunnison sage grouse leks.

If you are interested in any of these opportunities, please contact Brian Kurzel at: 303-866-3203 x 4301 or brian.kurzel@state.co.us.

Volunteer Stewards Corner, Cont.

The increased number of hours by Volunteer Stewards is not surprising when you look at the exciting role that they are playing in monitoring and protecting Natural Areas around the state:

Lorraine Yeats completed a plant list on Gateway Palisade, which included some treacherous rock climbing on the impressive rock formation.

Larry Allison took stewardship to a higher plane as he took his own aerial photos of Badger Wash.

Jeanne Beaudry assisted CNAP staff with endeavors to increase program support in the environmental community.

Brenda Bafus-Williams flipped buckwheat pancakes at an event to celebrate the protection of Wacker Ranch.

Our appreciation goes out to all Volunteer Stewards who helped CNAP protect Colorado's Natural Areas in 2007. We look forward to more adventures in 2008!

Welcome to New Stewards

Congratulations to the 2007 class of new Volunteer Stewards! The following people have agreed to monitor Colorado's best places:

Jonathan Achuff, Holly Myers and Cindy Villa for Mishak

Lakes; **Lisa Bardwell and Charlie Chase** for Aiken Canyon and Chalk Bluffs; **Lynn and John Cleveland** for Fruit Paleontological Locality; **Alix Gallivan** for Geneva Basin Iron Fen; **Mike Galloway** for Needle Rock; **Philip Harrison** for Gunnison Gravels and Trinidad KT; **Ed Herb** for Droney Gulch; **Don McNair and Cathy Vaughn** at Tamarack Ranch; **Marty Richardson** for Hoosier Ridge; **Jeff Riddle** for Wacker Ranch; **Paul Rosen** for Specimen Mountain and Wheeler Geologic; **Susan Spackman-Panjabi** for Owl Canyon; and **Steve Yarbrough** for High Creek Fen. ☺



Brenda Bafus-Williams at the Wacker Ranch buckwheat pancake breakfast.

Friends of Colorado Natural Areas Program

The Friends of Colorado Natural Areas is excited to build off of our successful Friendraiser in 2007 *to build our active membership in order do more to help the Program achieve its objectives*. In order for FCNA to become a moreactiveand productive organization, the core organizational team needs to grow in membership and develop a formal structure (e.g., a board of directors). In particular, members are needed who have skills in **fundraising** and **financial management**, and who are able to devote enough time to creating a successful organization.

If you are interested in playing an active role in the Friends group, please contact FCNA at: Friends_of_CNAP@comcast.net.



Friends of Colorado Natural Areas Application

I/We wish to join or renew our membership in Friends of Colorado Natural Areas!

\$30 Member \$50 Supporting Member \$75 VIP Member

A larger gift is greatly appreciated and will help protect individual natural areas.

\$200 \$500 \$1000 \$5000

Name(s) _____ Phone () _____

Address _____ E-mail _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Yes, I would like to be a volunteer.

Make checks payable to:

Friends of Colorado Natural Areas

Mail to: Friends of Colorado Natural Areas

1040 South Gaylord Street, Suite 201 • Denver, CO • 80209

A Volunteer Stewards Reflections: Lower Greasewood By Kristine Crandall



Kristine Crandall at Lower Greasewood Creek.
Photo by Jeanne Beaudry.

Eight years ago I read a blurb in some environmental organization’s newsletter about the Colorado Natural Areas Program and its need for volunteers. Having recently moved from Boulder back to the Western Slope, where I had grown up, I was craving the opportunity to further explore the natural landscape that had inspired me as a child. Little did I know at the time that my eventual CNAP assignment would take me to a place right out of the Wild West – a blend of rock formations completely tilted on their sides, a preponderance of cattle and wild-seeming horses, tumbleweeds caught in fences, and clouds of well-packed dust so fine one can’t help feel an active observer of, if not a party to, the purest forces of erosion. Here I was, along with an adventuresome friend whom I had enticed to join the expedition (who happened, not unimportantly, also to own a four-wheel drive Jeep), heading out into what could be considered the middle of nowhere – a nowhere somewhere between Meeker and Rangely.

I won’t belabor all of the details of getting lost, bogging down in sand drifts, waiting for the ear-ringing “moo” traffic of cattle drives to pass, or trying to figure out, between our bird and mammal backgrounds, which of the plants with small white flowers on a stalk was the one we were meant to find and watch over (we finally figured out that it wasn’t the commonly occurring variety of *Cryptantha*). What I will say is that Lower Greasewood Creek is an ideal setting for a rare plant that can be considered a total risk-taker.

After a number of years of experience in its setting, my intrepid four-wheeling co-steward, Jeanne Beaudry, and I are beginning to understand that *Gilia stenothyrsa* (designated as a G2 and S1 species in Colorado, and found in only a few places on the planet – all within the Piceance Basin) depends on steeply pitched, well-drained shale-ridden slopes within a very specific elevation zone. It grows where other plants don’t dare. It’s a biennial with a beautiful, lacy rosette. When Jeanne and I go on our annual stewardship visit in the early summer, we invariably get away from our busy daily lives, becoming immersed in hot and dusty conditions – and we couldn’t be more happy about this circumstance, especially as we continue to find a hearty population of the narrow-stem gilia.

To visit a place year after year, always around the same time, is a fascinating journey. It’s something that we in America don’t seem to do very often, preferring often to go to new places, see new sites, add another item to the “been there, done that” list. Thanks to our marching orders from CNAP, which require the annual stewardship visit and retracing of the previous years’ steps, through the years at Lower Greasewood we’ve seen varied presentations of the gilia, ranging from frighteningly sparse to impressively tall and abundant. In 2003 we observed hillsides of charred pinyon pines and valleys of browned sagebrush after the North Barcus wildfire had rolled through the broader area during the tinder-dry summer of 2002. One year the wildflowers infused the landscape with a diversity and multi-hued brilliance that – knowing how rare this event was – had us pinching ourselves to make sure it was real. The very first year, we watched a badger emerge from an opening amidst several large boulders, and amble along for a brief time before disappearing through another hole back into the coolness. We check this spot every year, always talking about the time when we saw the badger, hoping the sighting might repeat itself. It has yet to, but going to the “badger rocks” has become tradition.



Gilia stenothyrsa



Lower Greasewood Creek.
Photo by Jeanne Beaudry.

In a way Lower Greasewood acts like a “touchstone,” a place that in its remoteness guarantees at least some sense of environmental continuity. However, part of the lesson in the annual pilgrimage also is the indication of how things are changing. Over the last several years we have been noticing a literal colonization of the region around Lower Greasewood by oil and gas production settlements, infrastructure, and traffic. It’s almost surreal, and certainly re-emphasizes the significance of CNAP in its monitoring and conservation efforts. Volunteer stewards bear witness to both subtle and dramatic changes in the same space over a spectrum of time, an experience which can embolden us to express, with great passion grounded in the details of direct experience, what we are losing or stand to lose. As I have a feeling many volunteer stewards feel about their sites, for us this first eight years at Lower Greasewood has served as the mere beginning of a much larger story. 🌱

Natural Areas Council News

By Kathy Yates, CNAC Chair

Resources. They are an underlying theme of every Colorado Natural Areas program Council meeting. One might expect this, given that the Mission Statement of Colorado State Parks says “the stewardship of Colorado’s natural resources” is a priority. But it is not just *natural* resources that CNAP is dedicated to protecting. The Colorado Natural Areas program must concern itself with other important yet limited resources: time, people and money. Rob Billerbeck and Brian Kurzel continually look at how they use these important resources. It is the



Yucca field at Two Buttes Registered Natural Area

job of the Council members to assist CNAP staff in considering options, focusing priorities and making recommendations for how CNAP can best galvanize all of its resources.

In 2007, we saw a turnover of Council members who are pledged with protecting resources, both natural and otherwise. The following Council members finished out their terms in 2007: **John A. Masson, Tom Burke, Dennis Brinker, and Tyler Nifong**. We are thankful to each outgoing Council member for the work they did on behalf of the Natural Areas Program. In 2008, we welcome the following Council members to our team: **Jill Ozarski** of the Colorado Coalition of Land Trusts, **Michele (“Mike”) Bloom** of the State Board of Land Commissioners, **Renee Rondeau** of the Colorado Natural Heritage Program, and **Dennis Beuchler** of the Division of Wildlife Commission. **Dr. Tom Ready** continues on the Council, and **Kathy Yates** and **Lee Shropshire** have been elected Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively. We look forward to supporting the Colorado Natural Areas program in 2008. You can read about our new council members on the CNAP website, <http://parks.state.co.us/NaturalResources/CNAP/>.

The Council’s accomplishments for the past year include approving designation of two Natural Areas, **Wacker Ranch** and **Boulder Mountain Park**, and registration of **Two Buttes** Natural Area. ♻️

PRSRT STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Denver,
Colorado
Permit No. 738

Colorado Natural Areas Program
Colorado State Parks
1313 Sherman Street, Room 618
Denver, Colorado 80203
341200300

