



THE DREAM KEEPER

March 2010

A Rollins Pass Break Through

Doug Young, State Policy Director for Senator Mark Udall, and Matt Sugar, Western Slope Representative for the Senator, arranged for and hosted a 'Town Hall' meeting to discuss the Rollins Pass Road and re-opening Needles Eye Tunnel. The meeting was held March 12, 2010 in Idaho Springs, which is a half-way point for Grand, Gilpin, and Boulder Counties. Approximately 40 people attended the open meeting. Representatives from Rollins Pass Restoration Association, Rollinsville Historic Society, Gilpin, Grand, and Boulder County Commissioners, U. S. Forest Service, Wilderness Alliance, and Jared Polis' office were in attendance.

The Grand County Commissioners attended by way of a telephone conference line due to unexpected avalanche control on Berthoud Pass.

Doug Young acted as the morning's moderator and first reviewed the purpose of the meeting: to review "June 1, 2004 James Peak Wilderness and protection Area Act/Rollins Pass Road".

Section 7 (b) of the above act states that: If requested by one of more of the Colorado Counties of Grand, Gilpin and Boulder, the Secretary shall provide technical assistance and otherwise cooperate with respect to repairing the Rollins Pass Road in those counties sufficiently to allow two-wheel-drive vehicles to travel between Colorado State Highway 119 and U.S. Highway 40.

The open forum meeting offered opportunities for many of the attendees to share concerns and questions. Ben Pearlman, Boulder County Commissioner, was in attendance and stated that Boulder County does not want to be financially responsible for an accident by reopening the tunnel. Boulder County does not want people driving off the road. He further mentioned that shooting is also a problem in the area. Commissioner Pearlman closed his statements saying that Boulder County wants to find a way to work together.

Forest Service representative, Christine Walsh, stated the Rollins Pass Road is a part of the National Forest System and under Forest Service control. She further stated that an Environmental Impact study will have to be done before any maintenance can be undertaken on the road or the tunnel. Her projection was that such a study might cost up to a million dollars and take up to five years "for" results.

After much discussion Doug Young compiled a list of actions that need to be accomplished to direct our "Path Forward" and proceeded to assign work to individuals and organizations:

- The Possible Establishment of a Tunnel Authority - Grand and Gilpin must work with Boulder for a mutually agreeable solution
- Liability - issues must be resolved
- Ways to Maintain and Monitor the area
- Tomography on Tunnel: the Forest Service says this will take a special permit and could take years. See preceding statement by C. Walsh
- Grand County will put a procedure in place so the tunnel can be inspected
- Road Damage on East side: currently there is no money for this according to the Forest Service
- Environmental Impacts seem to be required regardless of how many years the road has been in existence
- Legal Status of Road RS2477: Doug Young from Senator Udall's office will research the legal status of the road, and tunnel stating "this must be resolved" and authority must be determined.

Historic Route Designation

Juanita Straight, Ron Cheyney, Jack Reed, Errol Salter and Su Eckhardt attended the meeting representing the Rollins Pass Restoration Association. It is our collectively considered opinion that progress was made and Senator Udall's office can be counted on to support the interests of the RPRA and most of the people in attendance.

A proposal for a tomography study of the tunnel will be prepared and presented to the Boulder County Commissioners in the near future. Your Board believes it is necessary to KNOW the tunnel can be safely repaired before we can raise the funds necessary for repair and re-opening of the tunnel.

This Dream Keeper publication date was postponed due to our desire to include information from Senator Udall's Town Meeting.

Coming Events:

2010 Dues (May 1, 2010) Dues cards will be in the mail about April 26, 2010.

**Annual Meeting : Monday May 24 - 7 pm
Meadow Branch Library Boulder, CO**

**Annual Picnic: Sunday Aug. 22
Ranch Creek Wye, West Side
12:00 noon**



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The Annual Picnic was held on August 16, 2009 at Dixie Siding. It was well attended on a very cold blustery day.

It took determination to make the drive up the East side due to an extremely rough road. It took even more determination to shield the wind enough to cook the hot dogs. As always there was plenty of good food. We were joined by attendees from Texas for the first time, Charles and Barbara Baker, both of whom won door prizes! Beth Edelmaier also won a door prize. The group included a very young attendee, Randy and Su Eckhardt's 8-month-old granddaughter, Miranda Elizabeth Eckhardt.

Su Eckhardt, Juanita Straight, and 7-year-old Nathan Eckhardt braved the winds and hiked up to the Needles Eye Tunnel after the picnic. They found the East side mesh in good condition and NO rock fall in the Tunnel itself. An older hiker surprised the group by climbing over the barricade at the West end after walking through the tunnel, over the barricade on the East. He continued down the road without a word or sideways glance.

Traversing the tunnel is truly a typical daily occurrence.

The Art Wainwright DVD “Rails Over Hell Hill” will be available for purchase at the Annual Meeting. Art presented this at the Annual Meeting last year.

It is with regret that we note the passing of two long time members Gloria Patterson and V. B. Kennedy.

Rollins Pass Restoration Association Board of Directors

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