



THE DREAM KEEPER

From the President

February 2004



February has been frustrating concerning decisions for the restoration of the Rollins Pass Road. I attended the Saving Places Conference on the "Most Endangered Places" Feb. 5-7. They had 750 registered attendees. It was held in the old mosque of the El Jebel Shrine in Denver. The RPRA entry was not accepted due to apparent disagreements with the Forest Service submission. Political dignitaries spoke on restoration projects in their areas. News 4 Weatherman Larry Green was Master of Ceremonies. Places added to the "2004 Endangered List" were: a large



*Needle's Eye Tunnel / Yankee Doodle Lake / Boulder Wagon Road On Ridge
Aerial View*

Photo by Dan Straight

1889 Beaumont home in Pueblo, a bank building in Aguilar, an old mill in Park County's Buckskin Gulch, two schools in Las Animas and, the Redstone Castle in Redstone, Colorado.



I attended a session on grant writing to hear about direct communication, specific problems, solutions and funding requests. My conclusion: we need three counties to agree and take action. The most enlightening presentation was "Building Relationships" with Doug Young, District Policy Director for U.S. Congressman Mark Udall,

on the panel. I was able to ask some specific questions and set up a later meeting at his office. The James Peak Protection Area Bill signed by President Bush directs the Secretary of Agriculture (i.e. Forest Service), "to provide technical assistance and otherwise cooperate with respect to repairing sufficiently the Rollins Pass Road in those counties to allow two-wheel-drive vehicles to travel between Colorado State Highway 119 and U.S. Highway 40." The bill states one or more counties, Boulder, Gilpin or Grand counties must request the restoration.

Discussion with Mr. Ken Tu, Forest Planner, established the Forest Service does not support opening the road, nor will the Forest Service provide funding for the work. The Rollins Pass Corridor is between two wilderness areas and increasing public access will endanger the wilderness areas. An environmental assessment or impact study will have to be accomplished before any restoration work can take place. He did say this study could be accomplished by a contractor. I asked about accomplishing tomography on the Needles Eye Tunnel to determine if the tunnel and hillside were viable candidates for restoration before expensive study and restoration work proceeds. He stated access would be granted for this initial "tomography" effort by presentation of a contract specifying road block removal and replacement, and work to be accomplished at the tunnel.



On Feb. 20, I attended a breakfast meeting in Idaho Springs with the County Commissioners from Clear Creek, Gilpin, Grand, and Summit Counties. State Senator Joan Fitz-Gerald also was in attendance. Actually there were 20 people in attendance. Following discussions of state and county finance problems, I was given the opportunity to present the Rollins Pass, Needles Eye Tunnel problems. Unfortunately with so many present no real decisions were made. The main thrust for action was to get Boulder County into the effort since both the Needles Eye Tunnel and the Devil's Slide Trestles are in Boulder County. It was a positive meeting in that RPA was given the opportunity to discuss our past relationship with the counties, offer historic background information, and to assist fund raising for future work.



Mark your calendars for our Annual Meeting - Monday, May 17, 2004, 6:30-9:00 PM, Meadows Branch Library, 4800 Baseline Road, Boulder, CO.



Dan Straight

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dan Straight', written over a horizontal line.

President



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