

@The Preserve

Protecting the history and future of the Monument Preserve

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Upcoming Events

FOMP Board Meetings—
Held in the classroom at the Monument Fire Center every **second Tuesday** at 7 pm. Everyone is invited!

Feb—12th

March—11th

April—8th

Trail Maintenance Nights

Meet at the main trailhead (weather permitting).

Beginning in May!

DYAD'S GAS GAMBLE

by Amy L. Smith

Drilling in El Paso County has been largely non-existent for the past 15 years. That is about to change if Dyad receives approval to drill along the Front Range.

Dyad Petroleum Company from Midland, Texas, owns the oil and gas rights to approximately 21,000 acres in the Pike National Forest near Mount Herman.

In 2002, Dyad approached the US Forest Service requesting approval to drill. The Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have reviewed two applications for Permits to Drill submitted by Dyad. One location is approximately 5 miles west of Mount Herman Road and the other is about ½ west and north of the corner of Mount Herman and Red Rocks Road. Both well pad locations would be drilled using deviation methods (directional drilling) to target potential production zones under Raspberry Mountain.

Because of the potential impact on the Preserve and surrounding area, the Friends of Monument Preserve is committed to keeping members



Photo of drilling site on the Roan Plateau (photo from BLM)

and nearby residents informed and an active voice in the process. The main goal of the Friends of Monument Preserve is “to preserve the area as an open space in as natural state as possible, while still allowing public use without any further degradation to the resource.” The potential for drilling in this area presents a risk to this natural resource.

The Forest Service and BLM are currently completing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to disclose anticipated effects and associated activities of authoring both exploratory well sites. This could include a central production facility located 2 miles up Mount Herman Road, electric transmission lines, and pipelines to move the petroleum. The Forest Service is estimating release of the EA in April of 2008 for formal public comment.

If approved, an area approximately 4.5 acres will be bulldozed near Red Rock Ranch. The 90 foot drilling rigs are scheduled to run for approximately two months. If no gas is found at the first site, the Forest Service feels that it is unlikely that Dyad will continue with the second site.

Although there have been many exploratory attempts in the past century, oil and gas production has failed to make a profit in El Paso County according to the Oil and Gas Conservation Commission. The conditions are ripe for natural gas when organic shale is trapped in porous sandstone underneath a layer of rock. Even though the conditions appear to be similar on the Front Range, specifically near Mt. Herman, there is no guarantee any oil or gas will be found.

This kind of exploratory drilling is known as “wildcat drilling”. According to Ernie Gillingham, a surface reclamation specialist with the BLM, “way over 90 percent of wildcat wells are plugged and abandoned.”

Although the presence of gas is not certain, the Friends of Monument Preserve currently feels that drilling in this area is an inappropriate activity for

DYAD'S GAS GAMBLE— (CONT.)

this “urban interface”. We are concerned about this drilling because we believe that it will have adverse affects on the surrounding trail system and environment that cannot be mitigated. While the proposal will undoubtedly outline reclamation efforts, it remains to be seen whether the area can truly be repaired back to its original state or whether it will be changed forever. Both the exploratory efforts as well as the potential expansion to a production facility open the area up

to visual, industrial and noise impacts that will provide degradation to the resource.

The members of the Friends of Monument Preserve are working closely with the Forest Service in evaluating and providing input to this situation. Once the Environmental Assessment report is completed, there will be a 30-day public comment period in which FOMP as an organization, as well as individual mem-

bers, will be able to submit their comments.

We invite the members of the Friends of Monument Preserve to begin recording their opinions on this matter by emailing statements of concerns to info@fomp.org. We, as an organization will compile this feedback for input into the Environmental Assessment.

For more information go to the FS web page at www.fs.fed.us/r2/psicc/pp.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED! - NOXIOUS WEEDS

by Amy L. Smith

Users of the Preserve often relish the spring season when everything is in bloom. Not everything that blooms, however, is a welcome sight. The Preserve is home to several of the noxious weeds on the list for the State of Colorado.

According to the Colorado Noxious Weed Act, noxious weeds are a plant species that is not indigenous (native) to the state of Colorado and meets at least one of several criteria regarding their negative impacts upon crops, native plant communities, livestock, and the management of natural or agricultural systems. This definition applies to species listed by both state and local governing bodies.

In other words, noxious weeds are not a danger to people, but rather, other species of plants and animals by preventing the

native growth and sustainability.

According to the Colorado State Extension Office, Colorado is home to approximately 1 million acres of noxious weeds which represents more than \$10 million dollars annually in lost productivity.

The control of noxious weeds is handled by various governmental agencies at the state, county and local levels.



Leafy spurge showing its yellowish green blooms



Musk thistle in bloom

Eradication can be achieved by biological (e.g. grazing), chemical (e.g. spraying) and weed management practices (e.g. mowing) often in concert with one another.

Treating noxious weeds at the Preserve is not new. Mapping and spraying of the weeds has proven in the past to help control the presence of the weeds within the Preserve.

The Forest Service will be treating about 45 to 50 acres of knapweed, leafy spurge, musk and Canada thistle in early August in the Monument Preserve. Volunteers can assist with mapping priority areas in July and following up with the application shortly thereafter. Applicators may need a short training session put on by the Forest Service. Interested individuals should call Forest Service Biologist **Steve Tapia** at (719) 477-4207.

CSFS SEEDLING PROGRAM FOR 2008

by Amy L. Smith

The Colorado State Forest Service is once again providing its seedling program to residents of El Paso County. Planting trees on your property helps improve the quality of the land and further advances the health and sustainability of our forests. To qualify to purchase seedlings, you must meet the fol-

lowing criteria:

1. Own 2 or more acres of land,
2. Use for conservation purposes only
3. Not use seedlings for landscaping or for resale purposes
4. Meet all defined minimum quantities (30 to 50 depending on species).

For more information or to download the order form, visit:

<http://csfs.colostate.edu/nursery.htm>



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL ON-LINE FOR 2008!

by Amy L. Smith

In the year 2007, the Friends of Monument Preserve made a concerted effort to reach out to previous members of our organization in hopes of reuniting them with our efforts. Through the newsletters, website and trail work evenings, the membership of FOMP is thriving once again.

While more members give us more help with trail maintenance, it also creates additional work maintaining the memberships and keeping up with communication. For 2008, FOMP will be trying out new processes aimed at making managing our membership easier as well as trying to better communicate the happenings of the organization.

For starters, FOMP has launched on-line membership renewal. That's right, you can donate or renew your membership by using the Google Checkout button on our

website, www.fomp.org. We hope that the on-line renewal will not only be quicker, easier and save members the cost of a stamp, but will also help us by reducing the membership processing time and effort.



Secondly, FOMP will attempt to rely more heavily on email communication methods rather than on snail mail. This will include, membership acknowledgments, donation receipts and notification of upcoming events.

Lastly, we have received a lot of positive feedback about our newsletter and are looking at ways of making it more readable and easier for people to access. We

may experiment in the upcoming year with an email distribution method to try to achieve these goals while also reducing costs.

If you are an active member and do not have email access, please let us know so that we can handle your communication differently.

*Have a computer?
Save a stamp!
Renew your
membership using
Google Checkout
on www.fomp.org*

MEET THE MEMBER—MARY CAREW

by Amy L. Smith

When you talk about the history of the Monument Preserve one specific person comes to mind, Mary Carew.

Mary was not only instrumental in the formation of the organization and served as the first president, but she is also committed to preserving the history and artifacts of the area. Mary has been enjoying the Monument Preserve area for over 21 years. Mary mostly enjoys the trails on horseback and says that it is hard to choose a favorite trail. "I love them all. Many years ago when I was conditioning my horse for a competitive trail ride, I rode 5 days a week and figured out a different group of trails for each day".

Besides horseback riding, Mary's other interest in the Preserve is the history and archeology of the area. Several years ago, Mary had the exciting opportunity to work with the Forest Service Archeologist



Mary Carew on her 14 yr. old horse, "Little Black"

launching an Archeological Survey. For 2 summers, they worked on collecting artifacts, data and samples that provided evidence of the history of the area. With the presence of the nursery and the CCC camp, there were fascinating things to be found. Objects such as wire, concrete slabs and pieces of wood begin to weave an interesting story. Mary says, "The more things you collect, the more you want to work on it to see how it fits to-

gether". Even though the Forest Service currently doesn't have the budget to continue the Archeological Survey, Mary is still interested in seeing it continue, even if it is just with volunteers.

One of Mary's favorite stories about the Preserve is the "Ghost Couple". A man and woman who both worked for the Forest Service were living in a cabin next to the Memorial Grove. In the fall, they turned on the heater, it malfunctioned and they died in their cabin. The story goes that they liked the Preserve so much, they haven't left. If you see a couple with a German Shepard dog who vanish when you get near them, you have seen the "Ghost Couple". They have been seen several times particularly on the hill above the ruin of the cabin.

Mary continues to visit the Preserve often. She says it is one of the best places to feel like you are in the wild, while being so close to home.



**FRIENDS OF
MONUMENT PRESERVE**

PO Box 634
Monument, CO 80132
Email: info@fomp.org
www.fomp.org

We're on the Web!!
www.fomp.org

**Don't forget to
renew your
membership
for 2008!**

MEMBERSHIP FORM



**FRIENDS OF
MONUMENT PRESERVE**

Become a member of the Friends of Monument Preserve.

As a member of the Friends of Monument Preserve, you will help fund trail maintenance, educational programs, volunteer events and more!

Make your tax deductible donation to

Friends of Monument Preserve
PO Box 634
Monument, CO 80132

Annual Memberships

Individual \$15 _____
Family \$25 _____
Business/Sponsor \$100 _____
Other _____

Name _____
Company _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____ Email* _____

Renew or join using Google Checkout at: www.fomp.org

* used for newsletters and event reminders



Your Interests: Hiking _____ Biking _____
Horseback riding _____ Fishing _____
Nature/Ecology _____ Archeology _____