

@The Preserve

Protecting the history and future of the Monument Preserve

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Upcoming Events

FOMP Board Meetings

Winter Schedule – Held monthly in the Fire Center Classroom every 2nd Tuesday at **7:00 pm.**

- **Tuesday February 10th**
- **Tuesday March 10th**
- **Tuesday April 14th**

Everyone is invited!

Trail Maintenance Nights

Monthly on the 2nd Tuesday beginning in May (weather permitting) until October. Meet at the main trailhead at 6 p.m.

Tuesday May 12th

Tuesday June 9th

Tuesday July 14th

Other dates will be scheduled as needed.

Questions?

Call Jon at 719-640-1347

GREENING UP THE PRESERVE

by Amy L. Smith

For the last few years the Friends of Monument Preserve has been supporting the planting of seedlings in key areas of the Preserve. Part of the success of this program is due to the guidance and enthusiasm from our FOMP volunteer and Air Force Academy Forester / Natural Resource Planner Diane Strohm. Diane explains some of the key success factors in planting the seedlings at the Preserve.

Why is it important to replant in the Preserve? Although the USFS planted some seedlings in the 1990s, there are still extensive areas with little or no trees. Gambel oak, which typically expands through "suckering" or sending up new shoots, has aggressively claimed much of the site. The 1989 fire burned so hot in areas that it caused substantial soil damage, inhibiting natural conifer reestablishment. There are some small pockets of young vigorous Ponderosa Pine that have established since the fire, in addition to numerous young Douglas-fir seedlings that have seeded in on north slopes. Douglas-fir has more frequent cone crops (every two–three years) and considerably lighter seeds which can travel further, facilitating natural



FOMP volunteer Marianne Larivee secures a tree shelter around a seedling.

regeneration. Ponderosa Pine has much heavier seeds which generally establish within 75' of the parent tree, unless carried by birds or animals. Couple this with the lack of living trees in hotly burned areas to provide seed and the infrequency of good ponderosa pine cone crops (approximately every five years) – tree planting is important to get this area back on track to becoming a healthy forest once again.

What species are we selecting and why? We will be planting Ponderosa Pine because it is the best acclimated tree for this site. Douglas-fir is also found on primarily north slopes and higher reaches of the Monument Preserve, but most of the burn is a predominantly pine site. There are currently scattered Douglas-fir seedlings that have established since the fire, but very little natural pine regeneration.

Where do the seedlings come from? They were grown at the

USFS Bessey Nursery in Nebraska.

What makes these seedlings more apt to survive in the Preserve? These seedlings were grown from seed collected from high quality trees on the Pike National Forest at 7800' elevation. Colorado is divided into seed transfer zones which reflect physiographic, geologic and climatic similarity. These cones were collected at 7800' elevation within the same seed zone as the Monument Preserve. In addition to planting in the same seed zone, it is important to closely match the seed elevation. USFS guidelines call for planting Ponderosa Pine seedlings within +/- 400' of the collection site elevation. Since these seedlings originated from 7800' seed, they will be planted in a severely burned area in proximity to the Mt. Herman Road, generally from 7500–7800' elevation.

What is seedling release? And why is it important? Although it is not readily obvious, there are quite a few healthy young tree seedlings that have established naturally in the burn area, but are heavily overtopped by Gambel oak. These seedlings are primarily Douglas-fir on moister north slopes. These young trees

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GREENING UP THE PRESERVE—(CONT'D)

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have well-developed root systems, but their growth has slowed significantly due to competition with oak for light, nutrients and water. Many will likely die if some of the immediately surrounding oak is not cut back soon. This project involves cutting oak to the east, south and west of viable tree seedlings to a distance of approximately 5', depending on the slope and height of the oak. The oak to be cut is typically 2–6' in height, with the young trees generally 1–2' in height. No large, mature oak that survived the fire would be cut. The material is cut with loppers or handsaws, and scattered across the ground to minimize adverse visual impacts. The oak will resprout, but clearing around these strong young trees may give them enough of an edge to outgrow the oak. One additional release may be necessary in the future for some seedlings, but the realization

that you have given a new lease on life to these young trees is extremely rewarding. One can almost visualize the forest again.

Who pays for the planting? The seedlings for this year have been donated by the USFS, the tools and supplies are funded by FOMP memberships and donations and the labor is supplied by the dedicated volunteers.

How can I get involved? This year's planting project will be carried out by a local scout troop, so no additional assistance should be needed. If the summer is extremely dry as it was last year, we may be looking for assistance during the late summer in watering the seedlings. We could use volunteers for several seedling release projects which are anticipated to begin in March. Come to the March meeting to learn more about this, or contact me, Diane Stroh, directly at 481–9214.

When will the planting take place? Planting should occur in early April. The seedlings will be delivered to Colorado around March 31. Ideally, planting would take place shortly after snow has melted off and the ground is moist.

Are we going to have more plantings in the future? We are expecting a bumper Ponderosa Pine cone crop in September 2009. Ponderosa has a two-year cone development cycle, and many pines appear to have healthy first-year cones which should mature this fall. If the spring of 2010 has ample moisture to encourage germination, we will hopefully see additional ponderosa seedlings in the near future. The last bumper crop in autumn 2005 (and likely the prior crop) was followed by an extremely dry spring, resulting in very few pine seedlings establishing. There may also be an opportunity to collect cones to be utilized for seed for future planting efforts.

BOY SCOUT TROOP 17 HELPS AGAIN

by Jon Nordby

Boy Scout Troop 17, one of Monument's own local troops, continues to be involved in critical trail projects within and nearby the Monument Preserve. Perry Hensen, an Eagle Scout candidate and member of the troop, contacted us last summer about project possibilities in or near the Monument Preserve. Although FOMP's focus is primarily on the trail system within the actual Preserve, our membership-driven charter encourages us to also work on critical in the nearby Pike National Forest. In fact, a portion of our membership fees and donations from the trailhead collection station enables us to purchase tools and supplies for these large projects.

Perry's contact galvanized FOMP to work with USFS Pike District Rangers to identify a project in need of a large, coordinated group of volunteers. We ended up settling on a trail outside of the Preserve, a section of USFS TR715 with quite a bit of

ongoing erosion damage – approximately ½ mile northwest of where the trail crosses Mt Herman Road near the “No Motorcycles” sign marking where the trail drops down into the Limbaugh Canyon drainage.



Perry's job was to use his leadership skills and coordinate all available resources to repair and reroute a

section of this trail. FOMP worked with Perry to define a project that would preserve the existing trail where possible, and reroute around the most severe damage to ensure a safe, sustainable trail for all types of trail users. To be successful, Perry needed to provide input to a more sustainable route of the trail, learn how to use trail tools and to explain their safe use to his crew, and

supervise the execution of his plan. Perry had to overcome some difficult logistics for this project – devising a plan to get a crew of 25 that far up Mt Herman road and to haul tools (Pulaski's, rock bars, shovels, and McLouds), first aid supplies and a days worth of supplies into the work area was no small feat. In addition, evacuation plans had to be put in place in case of injury and weather.

After several trips to the project site to prepare and plan, July 26th became the agreed upon date to implement the project. At the start of the day, Perry gathered his crew and gave a safety demonstration on how to carry these trail tools, and split the supplies needed at the work site between the volunteers. Once we hiked in to the work site, he explained the project to the crew, and demonstrated the use of each of the tools. We made excellent progress in the morning, fixing all the damage we could and finishing most of the reroute prior to a lunch coordinated by

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Perry and brought in by the Hensen family.

Safety was an important aspect of Perry's project. In addition to tool safety, Perry had to deal with a nearby popular target shooting area, and had to expect and plan for a variety of trail users on the stretch of trail we were working on. Perry posted signs at the shooting area indicating that a large group of volunteers was in the area. Trail users were informed by using cones

and signs on both ends of the project, alerting traffic approaching from either direction that there was work in progress. Also, Perry enlisted the help of his father, Roger, who is certified in Wilderness Rescue and First Aid, to provide any assistance in case of accident or injury.

During the course of the day, several groups of hikers, bikers and even a well-timed horseback rider (Herman Spielkamp!) came through. Having the

horseback rider come through really underscored to the crew how high branches needed to be pruned in order for the trail to accommodate equestrians.

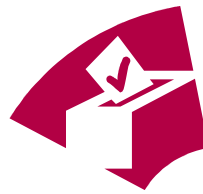
This project was a fantastic service to the community of trail users, and feedback so far has been very positive. Thank you behalf of FOMP members, the Pike District Rangers who supply us with some of the tools and training that enable us to maintain this area, and from all trail users for years to come.

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP & VOTE MARCH 10TH!

by Amy L. Smith

At 7:00pm Tuesday, March 10, 2009, the Friends of Monument Preserve (FOMP) is holding its annual membership meeting and Board of Director elections. The purpose of this meeting is to elect a governing board to direct the activities of FOMP and act as your representatives to interface with the community and the USFS.

If you or someone you know is interested in a board position, or just want to be more involved in defining our goals and operational plans, please plan on attending. The meeting is held in the classroom in the Fire Center Administration area. Follow



Mt. Herman Rd and take the first left after it turns to dirt and continue into the parking area. The classroom is the first building on the right. Only active FOMP members are eligible to vote, so plan on renewing your membership either prior to the meeting, or at the meeting itself. A membership application form can be found on the back of this newsletter.

MEET THE MEMBER—CHRIS TIRPAK

by Amy L. Smith

Chris Tirpak has been mountain bike racing and riding all over, but finds one of the best single track trails right in his own backyard. Over the last 15 years Chris has used and come to love the trails in the Monument Preserve. And with that love comes a real sense of protectiveness and responsibility.

"The Preserve is a great resource for our community but it is being used more and more every day. If we didn't do preservation and trail maintenance work, the Preserve would have some serious erosion problems on many trails. There are also other historic parts of the Preserve that provide a fascinating part of the areas history that would disappear forever" says Chris. Staying involved as an active volunteer is important to Chris. Because he uses the trails so often, you can often find Chris working on trail maintenance through the summer. He enjoys digging in the dirt and improving the trails to ensure that users



Chris Tirpak enjoying the Preserve his favorite way - on two wheels

will be able to enjoy the area for years to come. Chris has also had some formal training in building trails which he tries to instill in others. "When we have well constructed trails with good grades, grade reversals, water bars and drains, the water stays off of the trails. When we come back, we can see and feel the difference. The trail isn't rutted and it stays a single track and people stay on it whether they are hiking, biking, or riding their horses."

Chris has been a member of the Friends of Monument Preserve for approximately 8 years. He started out just helping out with the trail crew, then became a Board member and for the last 4 years he has served as the Board President.

"I felt like I was being watched and sure enough a huge mountain lion crossed to road about 50 yards ahead of me."

When asked about an interesting experience he has had at the Preserve, Chris describes, "I was on the south side fire road about 10 years ago, riding by myself. I felt like I was being watched and sure enough a big huge mountain lion crossed to road about 50 yards ahead of me. It was spooky." It is a great reminder to all Preserve trail users that it is truly still a wild place.



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**Now is the time
for a 2009
membership**

MEMBERSHIP FORM



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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!

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Your Interests: Hiking _____ Biking _____
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* used for newsletters and event reminders