



Trails and Open Space Coalition Annual Report 2018

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Transitions



Our Executive Director Susan Davies (fourth from right) was named a "Woman of Influence" in 2018.

2018 was a year of transition for TOSC. Our Program Director Vince Cloward left us for a Nature Conservancy position close to family in California. His departure gave us the opportunity to reevaluate staff needs in light of our new strategic plan completed in 2018. As a result, we promoted Eileen Healy to Deputy Director, to oversee operations, grants and fundraising. We hired Aaron Rogers as Program/Events Coordinator and Sharie Dodge as our Office Coordinator. Aaron and Sharie share TOSC's passion

for trails, parks and open space and bring a fresh perspective to addressing the challenges of underfunded parks and the need for addressing gaps in our trail system. Our "Bike Guy," Allen Beauchamp, completed a successful project in southeast Colorado Springs connecting residents to neighborhood trails and parks. GIS Expert and Ring the Peak Project Coordinator Mike Rigney continues to produce fabulous maps that help tell our story to the community.





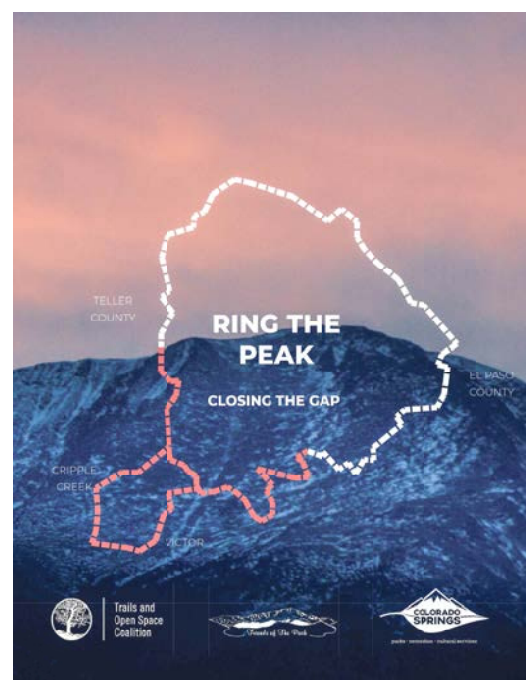
Looking to the future

Our Staff and Board are laying the groundwork for an intensive community outreach effort in 2019 and 2020. People live here for our incredible parks, trails and open spaces, but few understand what it costs to take care of them and where we're falling short. It's time to take the story of inadequate funding to the people, help them understand what's at stake and agree upon a solution. Extending and increasing the TOPS Program is gaining

traction among partners and elected officials. The tax sunsets in 2025. Reauthorizing and expanding TOPS could ensure the sustainability of parks funding for a generation. 2021–Colorado Springs' sesquicentennial--might provide the perfect time to pass an expanded TOPS. If Denver can pass a .25 tax for parks, trails and open spaces as they did in November – why not Colorado Springs?



Ring the Peak Closing the Gap



After more than a year of meetings, field work and research, a plan for completing the Ring the Peak Trail is nearing completion. The Trails and Open Space Coalition received a grant from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) in late 2016 and hired N.E.S., Inc. to assist in developing a plan to complete the Ring. N.E.S. and their team got to work organizing community meetings, consulting with land managers, and meeting with private land owners to discuss options for trail alignments and management strategies. After many discussions with stakeholders and agencies, the team developed a route and achieved consensus.

Like most major planning endeavors, consensus was

achieved through compromise. On the one hand, a higher, more wilderness experience trail was ruled out due to potential impacts to a unique population of bighorn sheep and concerns over the security of water supplies. On the other hand, a scenic, challenging route on the eastern edge of the “gap” was identified that will be a destination in itself. TOSC will continue to shepherd the process. Next steps include fostering an advisory board to focus on fundraising plans and interagency management agreements, which will need to be in place for plan implementation. We can’t thank Chris Lieber of N.E.S and his team enough for their wise leadership in this long process.





Making Connections

The 2017 Colorado Springs Health Foundation Biking Connections grant was a successful evolution and built a foundation for further cooperation. We realized going into the grant effort that there was not a high level of community support for bike activities in the southeast of Colorado Springs. Working alongside our partners, we engaged the RISE Coalition and other civic leaders throughout the community and built a level of trust that culminated in the Trails and Open Space Coalition and Bike Colorado Springs being valued as a true partner in their community building work.

During our grant work, we crafted a number of opportunities that saw over 100 community members

take part in family-friendly rides and events, including taking City Councilwoman Yolanda Avila out for a bike tour, highlighting the connectivity that the Sand Creek Trail allows to multiple parks from the very accessible Southeast YMCA.

Being able to activate this very important facility that runs through the heart of SECOS was eye opening for many of the community members who never realized that it is connected from Hancock Expressway to Airport Road. One of the follow-on success points is that the Parks Department now has a work order in for signage to be installed in 2019 along its nearly 3-mile length.

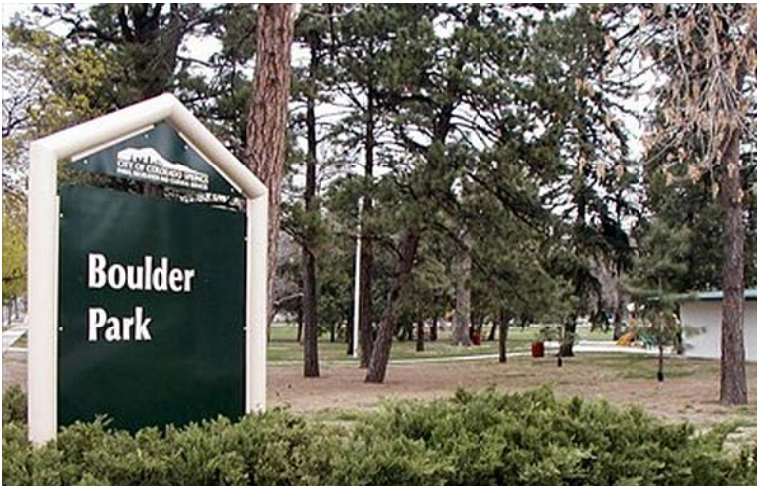


Committees & Programs

The Trails and Open Space Coalition works in part through committees and program groups to achieve its mission. Our newest committee is the fiscally-sponsored fund Friends of Boulder Park. The Friends of Ute Valley Park is a more established group that is also a fiscally-sponsored

fund of TOSC. Bike Colorado Springs, a program of TOSC, began as a coalition of bike-friendly groups under the leadership of the Trails and Open Space Coalition, and now consists of several active committees dedicated to making Colorado Springs more bike friendly.

Friends of Boulder Park



Boulder Park is a neighborhood park on the city's near east side. Neighbors became frustrated with the condition of their park and came to the Trails and Open Space Coalition for help. Their main concerns: illegal smoking on the east side of the park and padlocked tennis and basketball courts due to unsafe surface conditions. We met with them, devised a strategy to address their

concerns and helped them create "Friends of Boulder Park." TOSC is now their fiscal sponsor and will continue to support them as they seek to reimagine their park, raise funds to address some of the needs and work with parks staff to get Boulder Park added to the priority projects list.



Bike Colorado Springs



2018 was a foundation-building year for Bike Colorado Springs as well as for the overall bicycle friendliness of our city. Throughout this past year BCS has been building relationships and support with City Staff and celebrating our successes throughout our community through social media and community rides. BCS helped our city's new Bike Master Plan become reality which will shape bicycling in our city for the foreseeable future. In 2019, BCS will continue to further one of the Bike Master plan's primary goals of "Creating Greater Support for Biking." To reach this goal BCS will build a broader base of supporters with a focused branding initiative, continue to strengthen relationships with the City, and implement a membership program through a concerted outreach effort.

Friends of Ute Valley Park

2018 was a very successful year for Ute Valley Park, a committee of the Trails and Open Space Coalition. Here are some of the highlights:

- ▶ 384.5 Volunteer hours helped improve the park.
- ▶ Removed 100 railroad ties from the Popes Valley entrance.
- ▶ Armored poor drainage sights in the newer TOPS property.
- ▶ \$1 Million FEMA Fire Mitigation Grant awarded, implemented and nearly complete.
- ▶ A new Kiosk was added to the Ute Valley Trail parking lot, with the Mayor kicking off the event.
- ▶ Golden Hills entrance completion.
- ▶ Numerous rogue trails have been successfully closed.

2019 promises to be yet another stellar season with trail reroutes, rogue trail closures, fire mitigation and the ultimate goal; building new trails!



Giving Back



Progress in conservation is only possible with a true coalition of individuals, organizations and businesses who support it with time and dollars. We are deeply grateful to the companies, large and small, that help us in many ways. Whether it be direct contributions, matching donations, sponsorships or in-kind donations, gifts from our business partners are a large part of our success. We celebrate the businesses that contributed in 2018. Major business partners included Live Dream Colorado Real

Estate, Cerberus Brewing Company, Bristol Brewing, Pikes Peak Roadrunners, Phelan Gardens and Kreuser Galleries. Our bike shop sponsors for the Starlight Spectacular made it possible for us to put on a huge biking event for 1,000+ people—Ted's Bicycles, Bicycle Village, CS Bike Shop, Criterium Bicycles, and Old Town Bike Shop. Other major Starlight sponsors included Heuberger Subaru, Penrose St. Francis, SRAM, the CS Cycling Club, Ent Credit Union, and the Downtown Development Group.

Judy's Gift (part 2)



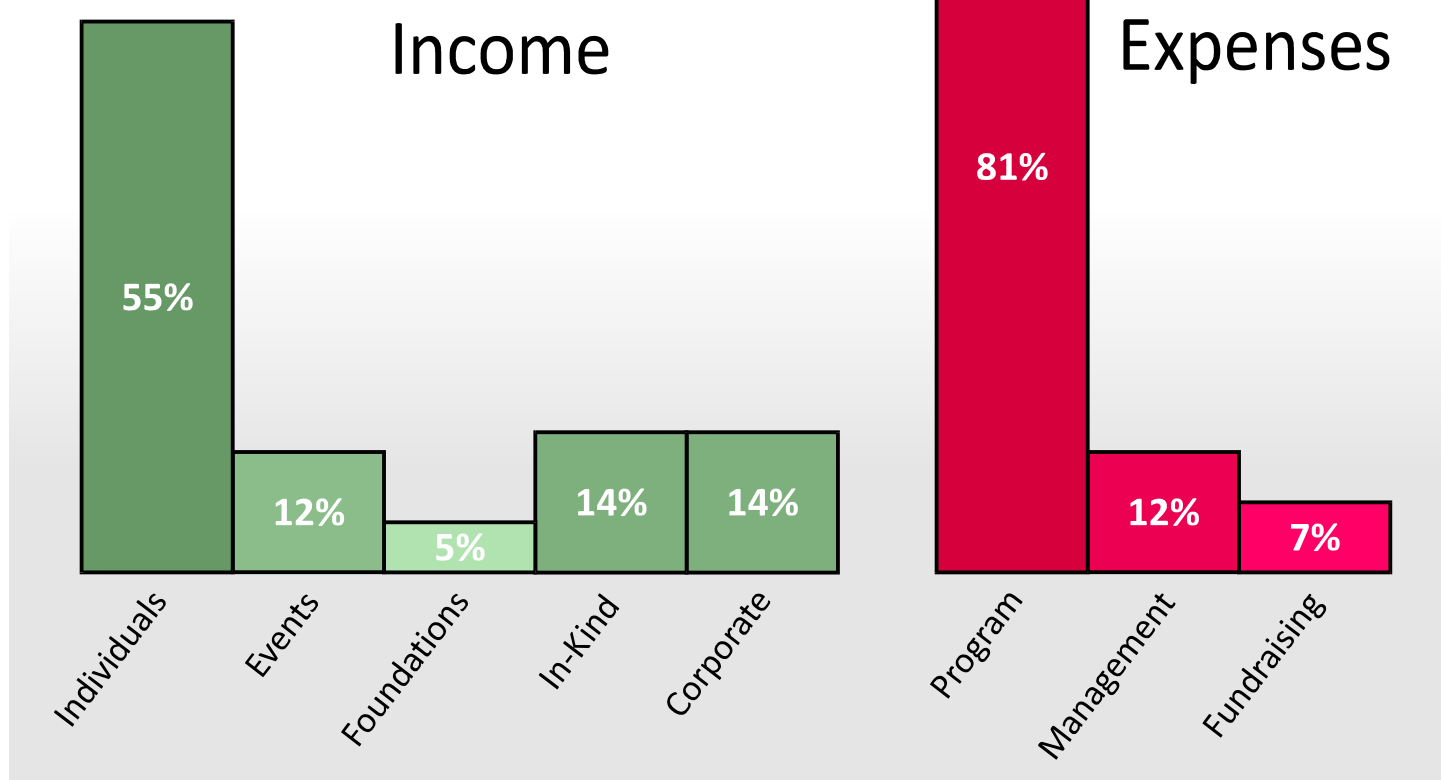
In 2017, we received a bequest from the estate of Judy Connally in honor of her son, Tucker, who passed away in 1998. In 2018, we partnered with the Colorado AAA Insurance company to do a work project around Tucker's memorial at the Edmondson Trailhead off Woodmen Road. The volunteers pulled weeds, painted fences, and dug out around the "Tucker's Tie-In" memorial stone to

put down rock. Many thanks to the volunteers and the City of Colorado Springs Parks Department, and to Tucker's dad Jim, who joined us to work on the project and thank the volunteers.

Thank you to the friends and families of Dr. Sean O'Donnell, Patricia Niehans Auxier, Mary Davies, Nancy Lewis, Joe Craig, and Bob J. Miller for donating to the Trails and Open Space Coalition in memory of their loved ones.



Financials



The Trails and Open Space Coalition is a 501(c)3 nonprofit, funded by donations from more than a thousand individuals, including 100% support from our Board of Directors. Businesses, organizations and foundations contribute, and we make up the difference through fundraising events.

Each year, more than 80% of our expenses are used for programming. These figures are from pre-audit reports; for our audited numbers, see our website, where we post our IRS forms 990 each year, along with our annual reports.

www.trailsandopenspaces.org/annualreport



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