

2022 ANNUAL REPORT



TOSC
TRAILS & OPEN SPACE COALITION

Mission

We advocate for the creation and conservation of an interconnected network of trails, parks and open spaces across the Pikes Peak region.



Letter from Susan



Our 2022 Annual Report is a little late this year. Staff changes, the successful TOPS campaign our focus has been elsewhere. Nevertheless, we are delighted to share highlights from last year as we set our sights on what we plan to accomplish in 2023. As always, we thank you for your generous financial support. We could not do what we do without you!

Susan Davies
Executive Director
Trails and Open Space Coalition



TOPS Extension

When we lost the TOPS ballot initiative in November 2021, we mourned a bit – reflected on what could be done better and got to work preparing for “round two.” With TOPS expiring in 2025, time was of the essence. During 2022 we laid the groundwork for an educational effort focused on TOPS’ accomplishments over the past 25 years. With generous support from the Edmondson Foundation, we created high quality story maps to explain the

significance of key TOPS properties. TOPS champions shared stories of Red Rock Open Space, Cheyenne Mountain State Park and Blue Stem Open Space. The project was so successful it was featured on the city’s website and shared by Visit VOS. We also featured the TOPS program regularly in our widely read weekly Trail Talk. These early efforts gave TOPS the boost and support required to accomplish the 20-year extension in the 2023 April election.



Advocating for Parks Funding and Preservation of Open Spaces

Black Forest Section 16

Black Forest residents were outraged to hear that their beloved Black Forest Section 16 four mile trail could be in danger. El Paso County had leased 90 acres of the property and built a 4-mile trail years ago. The 20-year lease with the State Land Board expired in 2022. The cost climbed from \$452/year to \$21,825 per year and county parks staff weren't certain they'd find the money to keep it. TOSC went to work notifying our trail-

loving community what was at risk. Losing that property to development was not an option. Dozens of concerned users contacted TOSC, parks staff, political leaders and the media. Parks Staff was directed to finalize a new 10-year lease and Black Forest Section 16 is secured through 2032. We see the new lease as welcome but temporary. TOSC would like to see the 90 acres purchased and become part of EPC parks for perpetuity. We're working on it.

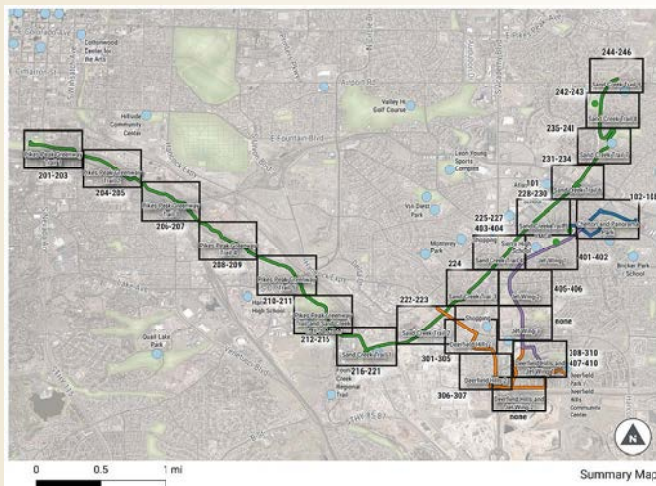


Advocating for Trail Connectivity, Signage, and Wayfinding

Signage and Wayfinding Along the Sand Creek Trail and in Southeast Colorado Springs

Following the incredibly successful Panorama Park renovation, community leaders with RISE|Southeast and their Youth Advisory Council identified the Sand Creek Trail as a major parks facility in their region in need of improvement. The trail is in good shape, but signage and wayfinding were found to be lacking and a barrier to residents using the trail to connect throughout their region.

TOSC, in partnership with the Trust for Public Land, the City of Colorado Springs, and a number of organizations and stakeholders developed a comprehensive signage plan that will support connectivity along the Sand Creek Trail; to Panorama Park, Deerfield Hills Community Center, and along the Pikes Peak Greenway connecting to the existing wayfinding network in Downtown Colorado Springs. This signage will be in place to support the opening of the Sand Creek Trail pedestrian-operated signalized crossing of Hancock Expressway, the first urban trail connection into and out of Southeast Colorado Springs.



Equestrian Signs



When asked “what does TOSC do for the community?” we say we are the “eyes, ears and voice” for trail, park and open space users. In 2022 we gathered a group of equestrians to learn what they were experiencing on our trails and we got an earful!

The result was new equestrian signage now featured in some of our city’s horse-friendly open spaces. The signs promote trail safety by teaching users how to act when they encounter horses. Our equestrian members are delighted. We’re hoping the county posts the same signs in their parks and open spaces.



Connecting People to Parks

The TOSC Trail Ambassador Program

The “Pandemic Phase” of TOSC’s Open Space Trail Ambassador program concluded at the end of 2022. TOSC trained 48 volunteers who spent a total of 1300 hours providing information in open spaces. The volunteers offered Leave No Trace information and basic wayfinding tips to hundreds of people.



Friends Group Support

TOSC lent support to nearly two dozen Friends Groups in 2022. Our Friends groups know we “have their backs.” Improved communication between Land Managers and the Friends was one of many 2022 accomplishments. TOSC facilitated three virtual Super Friends meetings and assisted with one in-person summer gathering.



Get out Get Healthy

Our 2022 Get Out Get Healthy initiative was a great success. With the support Peak Vista Community Health Center and Children's Hospital Colorado - Colorado Springs, we were able to engage a large number of community members and promote access to local parks and inspire healthy outdoor activities.

Peak Vista Community Health Centers played a critical role engaging patients throughout the year. With the support of Peak Vista Community Health Center They distributed 727 GOGH brochures in english and spanish with instructions on how to access outdoor walking locations.

Our partner event with Children's Hospital Colorado - Colorado Springs at John Venezia Park attracted 120 attendees. The event featured fun, family-friendly options all aimed at promoting the benefits of outdoor activity for physical and mental well-being.

We are grateful for the support of our partners. We look forward to continuing this important work with our initiative partners and we are planning for our next Get Out Get Healthy park activation at the newly renovated Panorama Park in Southeast Colorado Springs on Saturday, September 16th!



Promoting Stewardship

2022 Pikes Peak Regional Crew Leader Training

TOSC, RMFI and the Colorado Springs Parks and Recreation teamed up to host the annual Pikes Peak Regional Crew Leader Training. This was the first training since the beginning of the pandemic.



Over 15 people participated in the training representing Friends Groups, outdoor recreation businesses and several land managing agencies held at UCCS. During the two-day training, participants learned leadership skills from TOSC staff, trail maintenance skills from COS Parks and restoration skills from RMFI.



Ring the Peak



TOSC was fortunate enough to receive a substantial grant from the Colorado Springs Lodgers and Automobile Rental Tax (LART) fund to further our work on improving and moving forward on completing the Ring the Peak Trail. Although we were not able to use those funds on the ground in 2022, we have several trail improvement projects on the schedule for this year including Pancake Rocks Trail and portions of the Ring in the North Slope Recreation Area.

We again want to thank the LART fund of Colorado Springs, the El Pomar Foundation and Lyda Hill Foundation for providing additional resources to further TOSC's goal of completing the Ring the Peak Trail. Look forward to further news on Trail projects this coming summer and fall.

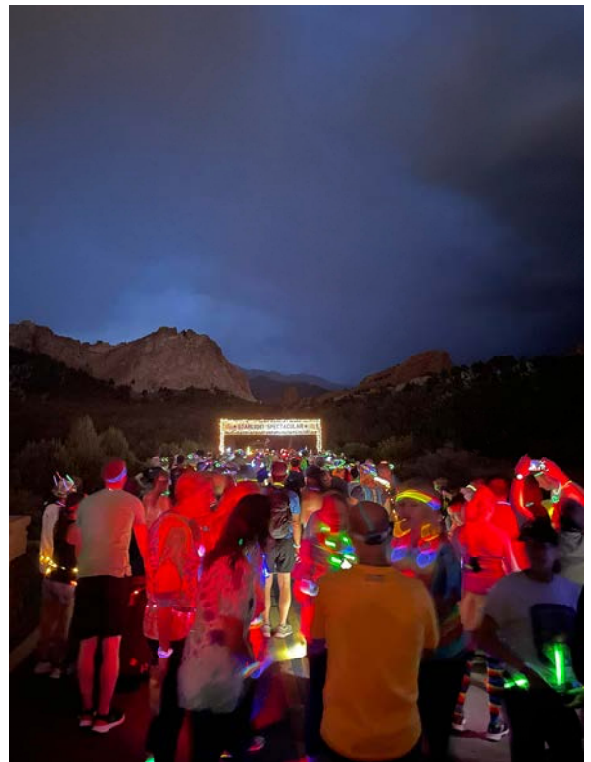


Fundraising



Starlight Spectacular

TOSC's signature event, the 26th Starlight Spectacular, took place in August of 2022. 850 participants enjoyed the first ever Starlight to be featured solely within the Garden of the Gods Park and added a 5k fun run/walk to the night bike ride. The night was magical thanks to the hundreds of people who wore costumes and made the Garden glow with colorful lights on their bikes. Special thanks to Heuberger Subaru as title sponsor and the 100+ volunteers who made the event's return post pandemic a success.



Keeping the Community Informed

Digital Advocacy

Aside from attending meetings and conferring with land managers, TOSC advocates by educating our community on current park information. Our tools are social media and “Trail Talk,” the weekly e-newsletter. Each week, the TOSC staff spends hours researching and writing content for the e-newsletter that is sent to approximately 3,500 people every week with an average open rate of 53% (national

average is 40%). In 2022, there was 101,000+ opens of the emails and over 7,000 clicks on articles. 50 e-newsletters were sent out spotlighting 583 unique stories. On social media, TOSC maintained 11,000 followers on Facebook, increased the Instagram following by 2,000 followers and relaunched TOSC’s presence on Linked-In

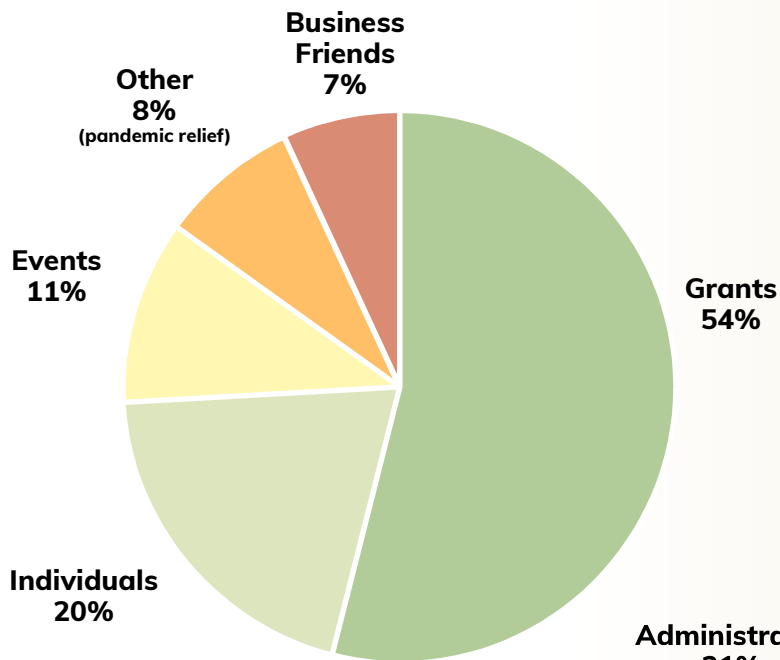


TOSC “Hoe-Down”

As proud Sustainacenter tenants, in 2022 staff decided to replant a portion of our front lawn with perennials and less-thirsty plants. As part of our xeriscape garden we added native grasses, fruit trees –we even created a small “trail” and added large boulders to make it more aesthetically pleasing and reduce our water footprint. It turned out to be a great team-building project plus other building tenants pitched in to help. We’ll continue our project in 2023. Stop by and check out our work!

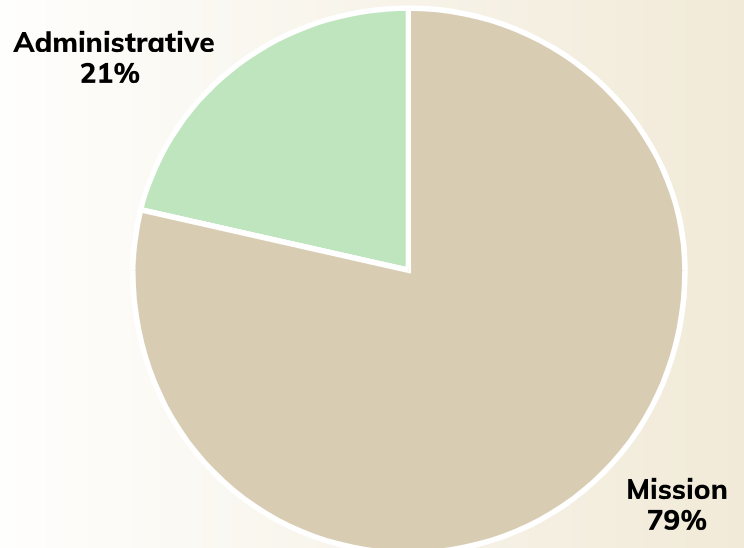


Financials



Income

Expenses



Donors

Business Partners

Adam's Mountain Cafe
Animal ER Care LLC
Buffalo Lodge Bicycle Resort
Cerberus Brewing CO
Visit COS
Colorado Springs Utilities
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National Christian Foundation
Northrop Grumman
Pikes Peak Community Foundation
Price Family Foundation
Saponas Foundation
The Colorado Trust
The English Family Foundation
The Richard Petritz Foundation

Summit Society (\$1000+)

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Andrew Fowle
Carol Cannon
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David Clark
Jim Strub
Nancy Ericson and Richard Leap
Nancy Wilkes
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Pikes Peak Marathon and Ascent
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Tony Hoewisch
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Janet Rose
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Pikes Peak Over The Hill Gang
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Karen and Bill Wiedemann
Nicholas Wilson
Leslie Wolken

Strategic Planning

Why do we do what we do? How do we measure success? How could we do it better? Those are questions every non-profit should ponder on a regular basis.

In 2022 we were able to bring in a strategic plan facilitator thanks to support from the Colorado Springs Health Foundation. After a series of meetings with the Board of Directors and Staff, TOSC came to the conclusion that our current goals are still relevant, critical and mission related but did need to be "refreshed." Increased funding for parks, trails and open spaces; improved trail connectivity,

preserving more acres of open space are still our primary focus. Of course we approach those goals employing a number of tactics by supporting ballot initiatives, engaging community leaders and supporting Friends Groups in our region.

In light of our new Equity Resolution, we added a goal, objective and tactics that align with our belief that our trails should be for everyone and everyone should have access to trails and parks. We have several projects in development to improve equity on our trails.



Looking Ahead

Ring the Peak: In 2023 Construction will begin to improve two portions of the Ring the Peak Trail thanks to LART (Lodging and Auto Rental Tax) funding. We will reconvene stakeholders to get key agencies back to the table and increase momentum to get new trail built.

Starlight Spectacular: Our popular fund-raiser will allow walkers and runners to register their dogs. Plan to join us August 5th at Garden of the Gods Visitor and Nature Center.

Friends Group Support: After surveying Friends Groups we better understand their challenges and how we can help maximize their effectiveness. New MOU's (requested by TOSC) with Colorado Springs parks will define the partnership and lead to a better working relationship.



Welcome Claudine and Chris: Claudine Malcolm and Chris Gonzales are providing much-needed help as contract employees. Claudine is a passionate hiker and is using her amazing people skills to attract new business partners. Chris lives in Teller County, has started a trails organization and is assisting Mike with our Ring the Peak Trail project. Sheridan Stancliff joined the team as our new Office Manager and she is a rock star!

TOPS – 78% Voter Supported! Building on the TOPS extension success, we will be meeting with the new Mayor and new City Council and make sure they understand both the role of TOPS and parks funding deficiencies. We'll also begin talks with county leaders about a future EPC TOPS tax.

Advocate for New Open Space Opportunities and Improved Trail Connectivity: TOSC continues to be the community's voice – advocating for open space and connected trails. Progress on the Legacy Loop and Chamberlain Trail and securing Kettle Creek Open Space will be organizational priorities in 2023.



Staff & Board



Staff

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Executive Director

Allen Beauchamp
Community Engagement Director

Michael Rigney
Ring the Peak Project Manager & GIS Specialist

Aaron Rogers
Program Manager

Sheridan Stancliff
Office/Membership Manager

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*Alyssa is our first UCCS Student Board of Directors representative

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