



Chronicles from T.H.E. Coalition

an e-newsletter

"A community's history is a story. Its residents are the characters, what they do is the plot, the theme, the action. There is no way that participation in a community can be contrived. You can't buy your way in. You can only live it." Gurney Norman

A FUTURE VIEW OF THE WEST: Los Angeles?

Several recent articles on western growth projections have a strong correlation to both T.H.E. Coalition's mission and the future of Teller County. In a rather sobering story, author D.J. Waldie (Denver Post, 7/2/05, p. 6E) writes of the past 100-year history of Los Angeles, and how most communities in the American West may seem fated to follow in its footsteps. He points out that folks who moved to California were mostly "average Joes" who were seeking a piece of the American dream and a spot of beauty and nature that California largely used to be. Of course, Waldie notes that all those Joes resulted in a "titanic grid" of urban sprawl that includes monumental traffic congestion, long commutes, and bad air quality along with the many other downsides of modern urbanity. He warns it is easy to predict that other metropolitan areas in the West could look a lot like Los Angeles.

An article in the CS Gazette (7/2/05, p. B-1) described how homebuilding just reached a record 19-year high in neighboring El Paso County. Although Teller's population is smaller, the parallels to growth and the pressure towards sprawl are disconcertingly analogous.

Watching the traffic back-up on Highway 24 through Divide and Woodland Park during the recent 4th of July holiday reminded me of Pogo's dictum that "we have met the enemy and he is us!" Given that many of us moved here because of the quality of life, how do we go about preserving the important parts of that quality, such as clean water, parks, the environment, and historical treasures - not just for our own use but also for our children's children?

Read on in this issue and discover some of the current efforts and the wide coalition of citizens who are tackling these tough questions. It may always be a robust challenge for a community to simultaneously "grow" and "preserve," but there are ways and willing minds working on ideas that do just that. If you are interested in these issues, please consider joining T.H.E. Coalition - your participation, whether by a charitable donation or as a new member, will strengthen our endeavors and help Teller County avoid becoming "another Los Angeles..."

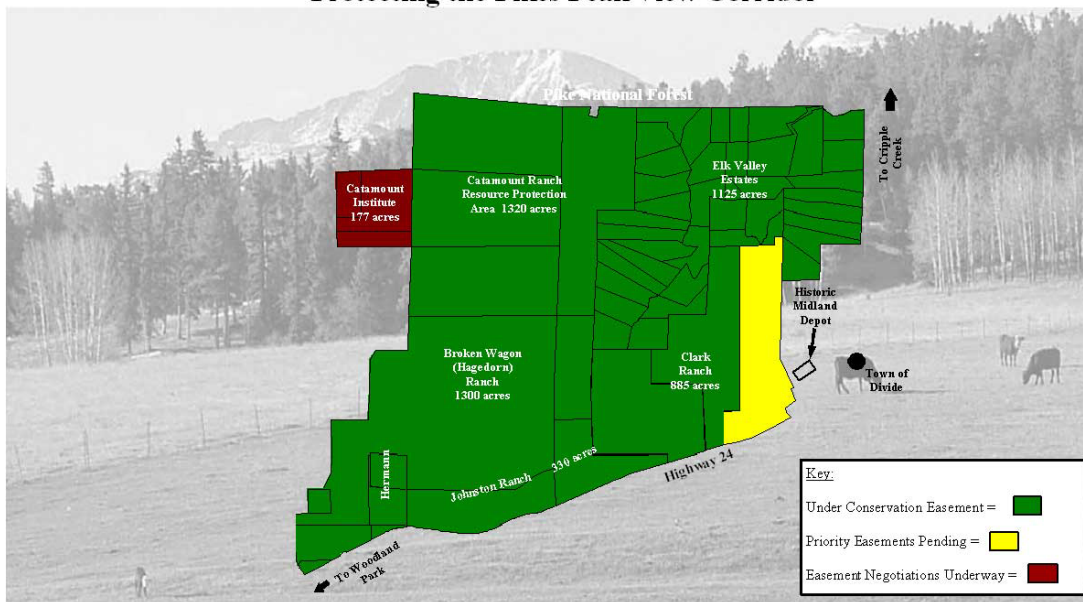
A BETTER VIEW OF THE FUTURE

A decade-long dream is about to be realized! Conservation easements on the historic Clark Ranch on Highway 24 will ensure protection of this final piece of the 5,000-acre Pikes Peak view corridor south of the highway from Edlowe Road to Divide, and help preserve the agricultural heritage of Teller County.

The Clark property was homesteaded before Colorado became a state. Its picturesque ranch house and log barn date from the 1860s and '70s. The dam that forms Coulson Lake on its western perimeter was constructed by CCC workers during the Depression. Ice cut from the lake and stored in sawdust in a seven-story ice house once cooled the lettuce and other local produce that was shipped by railroad to Colorado Springs or Cripple Creek.

Ranch owner Denny Sponseller is working with two founding members of T.H.E. Coalition -- the *Rural Land Preservation Group* (RLPG) and the *Palmer Land Trust*, to ensure that this historic 885-acre property remains forever undeveloped. Denny has already donated conservation easements on 605 acres. The final 280-acre parcel remains to be protected. In December, 2004, GOCO approved a \$300,000 grant toward that end, contingent on matching funds to be raised from other sources. The Trails and Open Space Coalition, the Conservation Fund, Palmer Land Trust and the Woodford family have already contributed to the match, and two grant applications are pending.

Protecting the Pikes Peak View Corridor



Because a portion of the matching funds is in the form of a **challenge grant**, ultimate success will depend on the willingness of individuals in Teller and El Paso counties to contribute our share to preservation of the landscape and the views we sometimes take for granted.

Land conservation is truly a community affair. It is a guarantee that there will be habitat for elk and other wildlife; that watersheds will be protected; that Teller's landmark views of Pikes Peak will not be obstructed, and that its rural character will not completely disappear.

NATIONAL TRAILS DAY/T.H.E. TRAILS TEAM CHALLENGE A SUCCESS!

Saturday, June 4th dawned cool and cloudy, but spirits were warm for T.H.E. Trails Team Challenge. This fundraising event, held in conjunction with National Trails Day and the Great Divide Kite Flight, netted over \$2,000 for THE Coalition. By far, the most successful individual fundraiser was Board Alternate (Trails) Faye McNabb, who alone raised \$1,000. Awesome job and a true inspiration, Faye!

A group of 15 people, along with two horses, a pack burro and a dog completed the nearly 5-mile journey along the newest section of the American Discovery Trail between Woodland Park and Divide. Several modes of trail travel were used including horse and burro-back riding, jogging, hiking, mountain bike riding, dog walking and cross country skiing.

Starting the east end of the Johnston Ranch, the group headed west on the trail situated along the north side of State Highway 24, then through the west end of the Clark Ranch before joining the Loop Trail in Divide, managed by the Teller County Division of Parks.

A special thank you is owed to ranch owners Jerry Johnston and Denny Sponseller for the one-time use of their properties for the event.

Board members and alternates on the hike included Marion Vance, Faye McNabb, George Parkhurst and Kevin Tanski. They were joined by the Colorado Coordinator for the American Discovery Trail Dick Bratton, equestrians Theresa



Rieger and Susan Halterman, professional pack burro racers Dave and Lori TenEyck, Pikes Peak Historical Society member Shavano Wycoff, Ute Pass Courier journalist Pat Hill, avid golfer and skier T. Blair Nowlin, and the three "California Boys," Chris, Casey and Jason. Thank you to all who helped to make this a successful fundraiser and showcase for the American Discovery Trail. We just may need to try this again next year ...

CONSERVATION FINANCE STUDY REVEALS A NEED FOR EDUCATION

In January of 2005 the Teller County Board of County Commissioners requested technical assistance from the Trust for Public Land to continue an exploration of conservation finance options in the County. Funded in part by grants from the Boettcher Foundation, the Trails and Open Space Coalition and others, the two entities teamed up with a steering committee of citizens and stakeholders from around the county to assess the future of parks, trails and preservation of natural areas in the county.

The motivation for this project, in part, is concern over the lack of adequate resources to meet needs to protect the water, wildlife and the rural character of the area. There is the recognition of many of these needs going unmet because of a lack of dedicated funding, including plans to protect natural areas along the Gold Belt National Scenic Byway, complete linkages on the coast-to-coast American Discovery Trail, and to make necessary improvements to well-used community parks.

Over the course of four months, the steering committee met to coordinate research and discuss the changing demographics and interests in these issues, and to understand options for financing future park, natural area and trail projects. Research was also pursued to gauge public opinion about the importance of parks, trails and the preservation of natural areas, and the community's potential support for a county-wide program to fund conservation efforts.

Through the process, particularly the public outreach, it was learned that county residents feel strongly about preserving lands for outdoor recreation, in particular the places where we hunt and fish. County residents are dually concerned about growth and impacts on their quality of life as well as the condition of infrastructure and roads.

Next steps include the need to assess possibilities to preserve wildlife habitat and water quality, and overall to preserve the quality of life for residents in the county. In terms of available funding options the only currently-available source for significant new funding is through an increase in property taxes, and it was clear that this option was not favored among citizens. Division of Parks and Trust for Public Lands staff will continue to work with the community to seek solutions for a sustainable program in the county to protect water and wildlife habitat, while enhancing recreation opportunities including hunting and fishing. One option under consideration is a voluntary "1% for open space" program modeled after programs in Crested Butte, Winter Park and Chaffee County. The possibility of involvement by T.H.E. Coalition for this option will be explored.

MAPPING TELLER'S TREASURES

The month of May was designated as "National Historic Preservation Month". To honor that occasion, T.H.E. Coalition teamed up with the Teller County Historic Preservation Advisory Board to sponsor a workshop on May 25 entitled "Mapping Teller's Treasures". Organized by Dee Breitenfeld, the workshop featured keynote speaker Lyle Miller from the Colorado Historical Society and three excellent panelists: Carol Beam of Elbert County, Kathy Moore of Park County, and Barbara Darden of Douglas County. Marion Vance of T.H.E. Coalition moderated the panel discussion.

The topic at hand was how to plan, fund, and carry out a Reconnaissance Survey - the step that lays the groundwork for historic preservation, landmark designation, and public awareness campaigns. Lyle set the stage by clarifying the purpose of surveys, illustrating various types of survey, and outlining the resources available to support non-profit or local government initiatives. The panelists, all of whom have extensive hands-on experience, then spoke to the real-life practicalities of applying for grants, managing staff and volunteers, creating interpretive materials, and trying to generate public interest.

Twenty-six people attended, representing non-profit groups, civic organizations, and government agencies from four counties, Teller, Pueblo, Elbert and Douglas. Question-and-answer sessions were lively and informative, and conversation carried on over the gourmet lunch provided by the TCHPAB and T.H.E. Coalition, and prepared by Kathy Mac Iver. Now the challenge is follow-up.... If you're interested in helping survey Teller's historic treasures, contact Dee Breitenfeld at 687-9653.

2005 ANNUAL FALL FUNDRAISER

Our fundraising committee will be meeting soon to finalize plans for another fun and festive October gathering that will highlight the many important facets of T.H.E. Coalition's mission. Watch this space for dates and additional details regarding the upcoming 2005 Fall Fundraiser.

THE MIDLAND DEPOT at DIVIDE

The first draft of a new plan for the 100-year-old Midland Depot at Divide (MDAD) is now completed. A broad base of interested groups has been working to preserve the historic legacy of the Depot while offering usable space that strengthens the community.

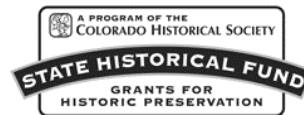
An architectural team headed by Pinnacle DesignWorks has been engaged in historical assessment of the property, and in crafting a vision of how MDAD might be designed for its next one hundred years. The building itself has gone through various transformations, from the earliest use as the train depot to the most recent use as the Whistle Stop Bar.

The new master plan, developed after gaining input and thoughts in work sessions with community groups and individuals, brings together a number of significant concepts. The depot will feature historical displays, serve as a trail head for the coast-to-coast American Discovery Trail, display information about area attractions, and encourage visitors to learn more about our area.

The final Historic Assessment and Master Plan will be submitted to the State Historical Fund for review and feedback. Future steps include building a collaborative group to plan and carry out a capital campaign and put the master plan into action.

GRANTS AND FUNDERS

Special thanks are overdue! In addition to the many generous individuals who have assisted T.H.E. Coalition thrive as a viable nonprofit organization, we have benefited by grants from three foundations.



The Gay and Lesbian Fund provided \$4,500 for general operating support, which enabled the organization to continue services to our various members. The G&L Fund also provided money for Two Mile High Club's acquisition of "The Locals" donkey sculpture near the Cripple Creek Visitors Center.

The Pikes Peak Community Foundation donated \$3,000 for general support, which helped underwrite the coordinator's position.

The Colorado State Historical Fund contributed \$12,880 towards the MDAD historical assessment project, which was also generously supported by a major gift from PK Enterprises.

ABOUT THE LOGO



Our logo is an original artwork that features a graphic depiction of our mission, which is *"to facilitate preservation of the historic, cultural, environmental, recreational and scenic resources in and around Teller County, and to broaden public understanding regarding the significance of those resources."*

T.H.E. Coalition members include nonprofits, government agencies, corporations, and individuals who believe in conserving the best of Teller County. If you would like to hear more about joining T.H.E. Coalition, or about the benefits of membership, please contact Luke Cammack at (719) 575-0976 or LCammack3@cs.com.