

Voice of the Canyon

SPRING 2022

Looking for a Worthwhile Job?

Sharing the President's position? Beefing up the Wonders program? Sharing your ideas? There's a chance for you to say, "I will."

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Focusing Our Time and Financial Efforts

The Friends Board intends to focus efforts on big ticket items in the coming year and keep Friends and Volunteer duties separate.

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Things are Always Changing at the Park

Park Manager Brent Lounsbury gives readers an update on staff changes and the upcoming Keep Colorado Wild Pass.

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A Guide for Friends to Move Ahead this Year

Board Vice President Steve L'Esperance put together a concise Strategic Plan for the Friends Board.

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Musical Evening Ahead

The park History buffs are bringing back Mark Cormican and his music in memory of Pat Feldmeier.

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Dale's Dispatch

Dale Campbell
Outgoing Friends President
and Volunteer Naturalist

I am constantly amazed by what can be done when people come together with a shared passion and in the spirit of cooperation. Much can be accomplished toward building community, educating others and preserving the things we love. And, this is what Friends of Castlewood Canyon State Park does. Since its inception in 1997, the organization Board, its members and a variety of contributors, all with a passion for the park, have made so many opportunities possible.

In the articles of this edition of the Voice of the Canyon, you'll read about some of these recent accomplishments, ideas that became reality by working together. And, speaking of reality, Colorado Parks and Wildlife intends to turn the concept of the Wildcat Canyon Bridge into reality in 2022 (See Page 4).

Our organization continues to provide for the park, based on our Vision for Friends and our mission towards helping the park. To fully understand just what our vision and mission are, be sure to read the article that Steve, our VP, has provided for this edition.

If you haven't attended a Friends meeting lately, I would challenge you to participate in one of our upcoming meetings. I'm sure you'll appreciate the discussions and fully come to understand just what I expressed at the beginning of this version of Dale's Dispatch. And, as Liz and others explain, we're inviting you to become involved with this passionate group of volunteers. We want to share with you the fun and enjoyment of turning ideas into reality!



Linda Pohle's camera tells us spring is coming.

Looking for a Rewarding Volunteer Job? Friends Needs You!

Liz Bade
Co-treasure
and Volunteer Naturalist

Whether you choose to spend your volunteer hours with Friends or with the naturalist endeavors, this thought extracted from a Linda Pohle profile says it all:

“I continue to volunteer because I am in awe of the knowledge, energy, and experience volunteers bring to the park—and share with other volunteers and visitors. Plus, volunteering makes me feel I am helping to protect this special little park on the plains.”

When I first started volunteering at Castlewood Canyon, I figured I'd just like to work in the native garden and was completely clueless about the tons of volunteer activities. I soon learned.

At our 2020 training session, we put out signup sheets – there are well over 15 and that doesn't even cover everything one can volunteer for at the park. But I'd like to talk about volunteering with Friends and their sponsored projects.

I think I started attending Friends meetings off and on in 2010. Among the board members at that time were Ron, Josette, Dale, Richard Brandt, and John Berry. Later Pat Feldmeier and Bob Powers took on key roles. As always, the Board was happy to get new members but, I demurred. I wasn't sure I had the time, etc, etc. But ... I was impressed by their dedication and the fact that they had really made a difference in the park right off the bat under Dave Shipley's leadership, by raising a bunch of money to expand the park boundaries and buffering it from surrounding development plans.

Well, one meeting they asked me to be the Registered Agent (it only involved updating our CO Sec'y of State standing every November) and I said, “Why not?”. I haven't looked back. Even though the officer slate has changed from time to time, many past officers continue to attend meetings and offer their experience and all important organization (and park) history. What I enjoy more than anything is the camaraderie among those who attend the meetings and work toward our goals.

We now happen to have some board openings and maybe it's you who will say “Why not?”. Dale Campbell has been an active member for over 20 years and is now ready to lighten his load and do some traveling. Recognizing this is the case with other board members, we have turned to officer teams to tide us over until, perhaps, you'd like to give it a go. Jeannette, Samantha and I share the Treasurer duties and can cover for each other when someone isn't available. Instead of a President, we're operating as a rotating co-chair scheme with Dale, Steve, and I taking turns running the meetings. Sharon Boyd also retired from the Secretary position after many years of wearing a variety of Friends' hats. So we now have a secretarial team with Jeannette, Linda Staehler, and Bridget Milnes all contributing to recording the meetings and preparing the minutes. Jeannette continues to be the main Membership Chair with valuable tech support provided by Linda Vincent. Linda Staehler, Bridget and I have been writing the grant requests. As you can see, several people can fill different roles. Maybe you're the one to join a team?

Or start by administering Wonders of Castlewood, the program where we pay the bus transportation so that underserved schools can come to the park for our fabulous volunteer naturalist-led school programs. Right now it is simply coordinating Wonders requests with the park and, when the trip is done, making sure we get the transportation invoice from the school. But it can be much more. There's a huge opportunity to publicize this program to schools and increase the number of groups. So, if you've got insight into how to work with schools in our area, this might be right up your alley.

I think a big reason many might shy away from the Friends board is the very reason we exist - fundraising. I assure you, we do not go door to door with our hand out. We certainly publicize the big projects as we did with Wildcat Canyon Bridge via Bridge Ambassadors, however, the most effective means for raising goodly amounts is grant writing. We've now got some good experience there that we're happy to share *and* this is something that can be accomplished from your home if that suits your style. The most important contribution you can make, however, is your ideas. So please, attend a meeting and share them.

Focus on the Big Bucks

Liz Bade
Friends Co-Treasurer
and Volunteer Naturalist

Because all current Friends Board members and those who regularly attend Friends meetings are also Castlewood Canyon volunteer naturalists, we often lose sight of what Friends does and what Volunteers do. Friends' mission is to raise funds in support of park projects. Besides member dues, funds are raised by our merchandise sales headed by Cherie Holverstott, individual donations, participation in Amazon Smile and King Soopers community giving, grant requests, and the annual Dam Run. All have enabled our contributions to park expansion via land purchases, Visitor Center remodeling and furniture, the native garden, Wonders of Castlewood, new interpretive signs, and our latest biggie – Wildcat Canyon Bridge.

To keep our focus on fundraising, Friends is changing its Mission Statement to reflect this activity. Our meeting agendas will center on fundraising activities and strategic planning. For example, although Friends board committed \$14,000 from our general funds toward new interpretive signs and increased signage funds by another \$4,600 via a Colorado Parks Foundation grant and individuals' donations, the actual work done to design and produce the parks 24 new signs was done by volunteers. The signs' designs were reviewed and approved by park management. However, during the process, sign progress was a Friends meeting agenda item. In hindsight, once the project concept was presented, approved, and funded by Friends, the project ownership was really the responsibility of park management and the volunteer sign committee. Future funded project owners will report progress to park management.

In short, park management or a volunteer presents a park approved project that needs funding to Friends for consideration. The board approves (or not) funding. The presenter manages the project to its successful conclusion. If grant money might be needed for the project, the project owner will work with Friends in preparing the grant request.

As we experimented with fund raising projects, we learned that some projects took more effort than justified to raise funds. The wonderful concerts performed by Mark Cormican are an example. Admission was free but donations encouraged. However, after providing Mark an honorarium out of the donations, the concerts were simply a lovely way to spend an evening in the park. Friends has decided to drop them as a fundraising activity. However, in a very cool move, the HOA has decided to organize them and the performer will simply keep any donations. (See Page 7)

Starting this year, Friends meetings will be devoted to its main mission — working toward raising funds to support the park via our merchandise sales, grant requests, and the Dam Run. Efforts will go toward big ticket items like last year's Wildcat Canyon bridge fund drive. Education Center anyone?

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News from the Top

Brent Lounsbury
Park Manager

Hello Friends,

Well, there's a lot going on these days! Summer is, of course, just around the corner, and we're experiencing our perennial, neurotic Colorado spring with below freezing and warm sunny days right next to each other. Predictably unpredictable, in the last week we've seen days with nearly zero visitation on up to near capacity use.

Unfortunately we did lose Tommy, one of our full-time Rangers, this last week as well. He's going to work for his family business going forward. We were fortunate to have him at the park for four years, and he will be missed! I'm expecting this position will be vacant until January when we will, hopefully, get a new Ranger out of the 2022 class.

Fortunately, however, we're going to have five returning seasonal staff from last year join us again. This includes Mindy, Jaimi, Kate, Dale, and Laurel; their experience will be a huge boost in streamlining our operations in what I expect will be a very busy summer. We're also joined by Sam, who is already working in the Visitor Center, and Max and Ella, who will be working out on the trails.

As you may have heard the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission voted this last week to set at \$29 the Keep Colorado Wild Pass (the vehicle registration Annual Pass starting in 2023). At this price we're expecting high participation among Colorado's 5 million registered motor vehicles, and accordingly, a strong increase in park use. It's very foreseeable that the peak visitation we saw in 2020 may become normal for the park going forward, with capacity days even in December and January. With this increase should come an increase in funding, though, and we'll see more full-time staff, seasonals, and volunteers to carry us through

In other news, CPW's purchase of the Metzler water rights under the West Entrance, and accordingly the sale price donated to the Friends Group, is currently bogged down in contract negotiations. The conversation is ongoing, and I've been keeping the Board apprised as I find out more info. I'm still very optimistic that we'll be able to keep the rights out of commercial hands, but I'm not quite sure what that will look like quite yet.

I've often heard it said that change is one constant in life, and we're certainly experiencing no shortage of it. I think there are good days ahead, though, and while they come with their challenges I believe where we'll end up will be better than where we've been.

I hope this finds you all well, and thank you for what you do!

9th Annual Dam Run at Castlewood Canyon – Save the Date!

Dale Campbell
Outgoing Friends President
and Volunteer Naturalist

Yes, it is the 9th time for hosting the Dam Run at Castlewood Canyon. The run will occur on Sunday morning, Sept. 18 this year. Travis Brown, the Run Co-Director since 2018, has provided the leadership to create successful events over the ensuing years. And, the fantastic team of supporting volunteers has also grown. I want to thank Travis and all our volunteers who helped make these fundraisers a continuing success for Friends and the park.

This year, Travis is turning over the reins to Shawn and Steve L'Esperance and I will remain as the Co-Director to provide continuity since the inception of the Run. Initial planning will begin later this month, with more detailed efforts beginning in early May.

Stay tuned for more about the 2022 event. We'll be posting updates on the Dam Run tab of the Friends website, sending out volunteer assignment invitations through the signup app, all the while moving toward our September event date. If you have any questions or would like to find out more about how you can help, just ask!

A Really Big Heartfelt Thank You to Everyone

Jeannette Littlejohn
Friends Co-Treasurer
and Volunteer Naturalist

During the year many people have made generous donations to Friends of Castlewood Canyon State Park and Friends would like to thank you (not in any particular order and I apologize if I have missed anyone):

Patrick Logan and Maria Sobboleva, Linda and Rich Whitman, Ron and Cathy Claussen, Dave Jimenez, Robin Hood, Ellina Robischon, Joann Orefice, Albert Bioko, Hunter Halvorson, Pam Steinman, Jeremy Mollison, Joseph Showers, Jon Schmitz, Liz Bade, Dale Campbell and Sharon Boyd, Daniel Ruoss, Pauline and Gene Reetz, Ed Blum, Susan Roberts, Mindy Kim, Jonathan Feifarek, Analice Decker, Bev Finamore, Gretchen Koehler, Ilene McLain, Camille and Scott Schiraldi, Rudy and Alice Ramsey.

Individual donations	\$3,974.00
Liberty Community	\$4,878.00
Kroger/King Soopers	\$291.17
AmazonSmile	\$147.94
Park Events	\$600.00
Donations Boxes	\$64.50

FOR A GRAND TOTAL \$9,932.94

Financials in Good Shape

Liz Bade
Friends Co-Treasurer
and Volunteer Naturalist

We remain in excellent financial health as you can see from the February Balance sheet prepared by Samantha Tanner:

Climber Equipment Fund	\$376.62	
Interpretive Sign Fund	\$2,930.11	
Leave No Trace Fund	\$2,127.88	
Native Garden Fund	\$1,972.96	
VC Displays Fund	\$ 4,878.00	
VC Remodel Fund	\$4,827.98	
Wildcat Canyon Bridge Fund	\$30,840.17	
Wonders Fund	\$3,181.08	
Friends of Castlewood Canyon - Other	\$19,217.37	
Total Friends of Castlewood Canyon		\$70,352.17 bank balance

We expect the \$30,840 bridge funds to be totally spent later this year. The other monies will be spent over time. For example, park management is planning on a relief map to enhance the Visitor Center Displays. That will come out of the VC Displays Fund. We hope to have about six Wonders groups this year at a max \$300 /group and have budgeted \$1,800 this year for that but really wouldn't mind spending more for that program. (See Friends Needs You on page 2.)

Attend the May Meeting — IN PERSON

Friends meetings have been held by Zoom for months now, but on May 14 we will meet at the Visitor Center at 9:30 a.m. We are still looking for someone to step up and volunteer to take over the president job so Dale Campbell can move on to other things. Sharing is an option. Already both the treasurer and secretary roles are shared. You do not have to be a Board member to fill an office.

Wildcat Canyon Bridge – An update

Dale Campbell
Outgoing Friends President
and Volunteer Naturalist

The Wildcat Canyon Bridge is queued up for construction after mid-year 2022!

Based on recent information we've received from Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), they should have all the funding and the design in place to build the bridge in the summer of 2022. Considerations for minimizing impacts on park visitors will also be factored into the construction start date and timeline. Park staff will be involved in that planning. At the beginning of February, a geotechnical consultant visited the park to do the needed geotechnical investigation (rock testing at the north bridge abutment and soil borings at the south abutment location). Further geotechnical exploration will occur later in April. After CPW receives the results of this geotechnical testing, they will move forward with design and development of construction drawings, which should have a completed design in the spring of 2022. That timing should align well with obtaining the Land and Water Conservation Fund grant, which provides 50% of the funding for the construction.

We at Friends are beginning our planning for the bridge dedication events, as well as developing verbal and printed updates to be provided to park visitors during the construction period. We are excited about the potential to have the bridge in place for visitors by later this year.

Questions about the project or its history? Just go to the [Bridge Project](https://www.castlewoodfriends.org/the-bridge-fundraiser) on the Friends website. (<https://www.castlewoodfriends.org/the-bridge-fundraiser>)



Fifth graders cross Cherry Creek the old way.

Kudos to Rachel

Friends is working to make sure credit card payments at our Visitor Center store are compliant with the latest security requirements governed by the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCI DSS). While our procedures have been stamped compliant, the overseer for 1st Bank (our bank), SecureTrust, has not been able to scan our credit card reader at the park to make sure it is not vulnerable. Ranger Rachel Chaffee has stepped in big time to help us through this as Friends does not have access to the park's network let alone the knowledge to get this done. So – thank you Rachel for replying to our calls for help, and working with SecureTrust's technical support to get us compliant with industry standards.

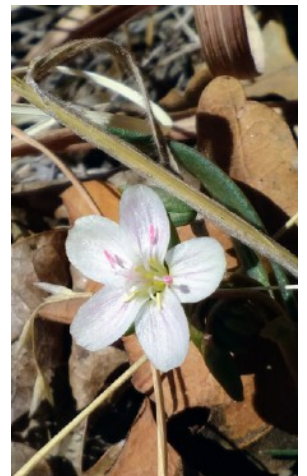
—Liz Bade

Touch of Spring

Pam Steinman was hiking March 15 on Lake Gulch Trail and discovered this pretty Spring Beauty! One of three, actually.

She showed it to a few visitors who were amazed to see some blooms this early (and with snow predicted).

The coolest thing about Spring Beauties is their pink pollen.



Our 2022 Strategic Planning— Setting Direction



Steve L'Esperance
Friends Vice President
and Volunteer Naturalist

“You’ve got to be very careful if you don’t know where you are going,” Yogi Berra said, “because you might not get there.” So, we better plan where we want to go, just like we’d do upon entering into our park for the first time!

Regarding our volunteering events at Castlewood have you ever wondered, “what are volunteer vs Friends events”? Or... “I am both a park volunteer and a Friends member, how do I balance both interests?” I know I’ve had these questions, and if you’re like me sometimes you can get a bit confused wearing both hats! So, your Friends Board did a little soul searching as to what our core mission and vision is, and what we need to focus on for 2022 (and beyond). This way we’ll have something to help give us focus and convey our priorities to our volunteer group and others interested in joining in as new members.

While it may sound a bit money-oriented, at our core the Friends group is chiefly a fund-raising arm of Castlewood Canyon SP. And wow- has Friends delivered on that mission! Over the years this group has help raise over \$284,000 for projects like East Canyon, Metzler Ranch, Visitor Center upgrades and recent efforts raising seed money for Wildcat Canyon Bridge coming soon to our beloved park! This group has left a lasting footprint all over the park!

So where do we go from here? Looking to this year, we’ve broken down our 4 key areas as:

- *Conducting fund raising events (ex. Dam Run)
- *Executing the Wildcat Bridge launch (Coordinate bridge kickoff, etc.)
- *Investing dollars and time strategically (ex. Interpretive signs)
- *Planning for the future (ex. Execute long range plans for water rights monies)

We are very excited at the opportunities for us to continue to make a difference. Friends works hand in hand with the volunteer group (all of us in Friends are in that group too) when it comes to other park events such as Dam Day, First Hike etc., although those events are owned and driven more by the park than Friends. If you wonder “is this a Friends event or a volunteer event”- if it involves some sort of \$s being passed (donations, event fee, purchasing an interpretive sign, raising money) it’s probably a Friends-led effort.

So, here’s to 2022— be sure to keep those two hats close at hand in the closet—your “volunteer” hat and your “Friends” hat, as we need to wear both interchangeably to continue this great marriage working smoothly. Keep an eye on the Website for a plan document that outlines these duties we have set out for ourselves. Please let us know of any questions or comments or jumping in to help!

For extra credit, here’s the explanation of the difference between a mission and vision statement....

What is the difference between a vision statement and a mission statement?

The vision statement focuses on tomorrow and what the organization wants to become. The mission statement focuses on today and what the organization does. While companies commonly use mission and vision statements interchangeably, it’s important to have both. One doesn’t work without the other, because having purpose and meaning are critical for any business. (Turn the Page for more)

More mission statement ... (from previous Page)

Your mission statement drives the [organization]. It is what you do/the core of the business, and from it come the objectives and finally, what it takes to reach those objectives. It also shapes your company's culture.

Mission statement questions look like:

- What do we do?
- Whom do we serve?
- How do we serve them?

This trickle-down effect of a mission statement confirms its value at any company. Just by its definition, you can quickly see how a solid mission motivates a team to advance toward a common goal, because they started at the same place, and they are working together to reach the same end-goal.

Your ... strategy supports the company's mission statement — think of it as the HOW of what you do. This helps you stay on track, true to your ... goals. Every piece of content you create should be rooted in your mission statement, from the tone of voice to the call-to-action.

What is a vision statement?

Your vision statement gives the [organization] direction. It is the future of the business, which then provides the purpose.

The vision statement is about what you want to become. It's aspirational.

Vision statement questions look like:

- What are our hopes and dreams?
- What problem are we solving for the greater good?
- Who and what are we inspiring to change?

SOURCE: [Difference Between Vision & Mission Statements: 25 Examples \(clearvoice.com\)](https://clearvoice.com/difference-between-vision-and-mission-statements-25-examples/)

Wildcat Canyon HOA Taking Over Mark Cormican Concert

The Mark Cormican concert will be back this summer in honor of the board member who started it, Pat Feldmeier, who died four years ago. Pat was also a member of the park history sleuths who go by the name Wildcat Canyon HOA. Its members approached Mark Cormican, the singer, songwriter and John Denver tribute artist who agreed to perform, Sunday, June 19 at 6:30 in honor of Pat.



The first concert in 2015, Paul Swanton, Pat Feldmeier and Mark Cormican.

Last summer, the Friends Board decided to cancel any further concerts as they reset priorities for fund raising efforts. This year the concert isn't planned as a fundraiser but as a get-together for the volunteers and to promote the park. Participants will chip in to give Mark a generous tip. (See Page 3)

If you remember, the moon was up for the 2015 concert and it is expected to shine again this year.

Wonders Fund Helped Families Enjoy Presidents' Day

It was a day off from school, a February Monday with decent weather and a free voucher for park entrance that enticed 16 families (involving 55 children and adults from surrounding school districts) to come to the park for a hike and other fun.

The third annual event, conceived and organized by volunteer Natalie Reeser, drew many volunteers to help out including some of our board members, Outgoing President Dale Campbell, Beverly Finamore and Chris Glaeser. The Friends' Wonders Program provided funds for the vouchers— \$160 well spent.

Wonders, which mostly pays for bus transportation to get underserved schools to the park to participate in one of our naturalist-led environmental education programs, is funded with grants from Castle Rock Kiwanis, National Environmental Education Foundation, Liberty Community Giving and the sales from the hand-painted canvas bags in the Visitor Center. The 2020-21 school year brought four schools to the park to enjoy nature—some children had never gone on a hike before. This is a program Friends hopes to expand with an eager volunteer.



Board Member Chris Glaeser, left, helps Dot Anderson, center, lead a Skins and Skulls presentation.



Outgoing Friends President Dale Campbell shows kids and parents the ins and outs of animal tracks. Sharon Boyd was helping but she stopped away to take the picture.



Board Member Bev Finamore's station making suet feeders was so popular, she ran out of supplies. At right, Fran Tate took this shot of parents and kids after she led them on a hike.



Photos of Chris and Bev by Linda Pohle.