

THE SPRUCE CREEK TRAIL PROJECT

Breckenridge, Colorado

August 16, 1997

A Rich Mining History

Excerpts from the Summit Hiker by Mary Ellen Gilliland

Mayflower Lakes

Eight log buildings and a large bunkhouse stand near the lake. The Mayflower Mine, discovered August 1, 1887, ranked as a notable shipper of high grade ore as early as 1888. Miners "lost" the gold-bearing ore vein and the mine stood idle for years until a new 200 foot tunnel relocated the main vein, yielding ore as rich as 30 ounces of gold per ore ton. Tom Davidson, a hermit, lived alone in this deserted camp in the early 1900's, according to author Perry Eberhart. He was discovered dead in his cabin around 1920 and his sole companion, a loyal cat, was found frozen stiff on a windowsill.

Mohawk Lakes

Continuing beyond Mayflower to Mohawk Lakes there is an old mill. Today one can view the massive wooden machinery supports, a hefty 5x5x2 feet, constructed from layered strips of cut lumber. A large wheel, used to generate water power, lies nearby. Brick from a smelter is scattered about. A thick aerial cable connects to a tramway structure above. From the lower Mohawk Lake, first called Foster Lake, to the upper Mohawk Lake evidence of mining abounds. Ore bearing fissure veins in the Ten Mile Range provided silver and gold ore for companies like Glen-Mohawk-Mt.

Gilead Mining Company, whose tunnel here extended 816 feet in 1905. The Garrison and Black Prince Mines also operated nearby. Miners fared well in these arctic life zone mines despite the extreme temperatures because their tunnels averaged 55 degrees year round.

Crystal Lakes

Half an old cabin remains at the lower lake. A mine road leading toward Mt. Helen on the south once served several lode mines. The lead-based ores here yielded silver. Mt. Helen silver claims shipped 100 sacks of good grade ore to the Leadville smelter in October, 1936, according to a news clip. On Peak 10, the famous Briar Rose Mine produced prodigious amounts of silver. The Rocky Mountain News, in a September, 1883 article on Summit County's potential, listed Crystal Lake as one of the county's eleven bustling mine camps. In 1881, volunteers had built the road to this camp in return for stock issued from a newly formed toll road company. "The road can be built for \$750 to Crystal Lake...", a June 7, 1881 Breckenridge Daily Journal reported. That same year, Summit County produced \$2.6 million in gold, silver, copper, lead and zinc. Multiply that figure today by at least seven to obtain today's inflated value--\$18.2 million



The Spruce Creek Trail Project

Spruce Creek Trail is located in the Arapaho National Forest. Spruce Creek Trail leads to several popular destinations in the Ten Mile Range. One can hike to the Mayflower Lakes, at the base of Mount Helen (13,164 ft.), and continue on to the Mohawk Lakes below Pacific Peak (13,950 ft.), or you can head toward the intersection with the Wheeler National Recreation Trail and then climb to the Crystal Lakes under Crystal Peak (13,852 ft.). The ease of access and close proximity makes this an extremely popular trailhead for locals and visitors to our county. The users are primarily hikers, mountain bikers and some equestrians.

We will be working on the 2.5 mile section to the Wheeler Trail junction. Portions of the trail have become severely eroded and boggy in spots. The trail construction will include bog bridges, a turnpike, a small reroute and general drainage maintenance. To accomplish all of this you will be teamed up with NRV trained crew leaders.

This trail serves an increasing number of recreationalists drawn to this area by the historic mining ruins, beautiful waterfalls, spectacular views, and the sheer beauty of winding mountain trails. This is a very special trail that needs special help. This project is Phase I of a multi-phase project.



The Project Partners

The US Forest Service, Dillon Ranger District, in conjunction with Nature's Resource Volunteers and the Summit Fat Tire Society have agreed to undertake this 2.5 mile reconstruction project.

NRV takes the leading role on this project in providing food, resource and logistics.

Nature's Resource Volunteers is a not-for-profit organization, located in Summit County, whose mission is to instill in Coloradans a personal sense of responsibility, thereby creating an active hands-on stewardship of our lands and resources. Our goals are to address environmental concerns (wetlands, environmental education, wildlife education, riparian areas), construct and reconstruct trails that provide for a wide variety of use and a quality experience, and promote a tangible means for our visitors and residents to take personal ownership for their trails and public lands.

The Summit Fat Tire Society offers technical, logistical, and financial support to solve a complex problem. SFTS, founded in 1990, is a nonprofit, membership organization dedicated to supporting mountain bike opportunities in Summit County through education, advocacy, trail projects and social activities. They are a bunch of no-frills folks that love to mountain bike and care deeply about the local trail system. They act as an organized spokesgroup for mountain bikers, build and repair trails, educate bikers about responsible riding practices, work to preserve local trails and keep them open to mountain bikes, speak out for their sport, and ride a lot!

We are also very fortunate to also have the participation and expertise of the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA)/Subaru Trail Care Crew to assist us with the Spruce Creek Project. This husband/wife team of trail maintenance and construction experts travels the country under IMBA's sponsorship working with IMBA affiliated clubs on volunteer trail projects. By the end of 1997, they will have visited at least 35 states and participated in 80 projects in their goal of encouraging public participation in trail work projects.

We are expecting 70 volunteers from Summit County and Front Range.

SPRUCE CREEK TRAIL PROJECT FACTS

Please read the information in this fact sheet carefully.
If you have any questions or are unable to participate call NRV at (970) 262-3497

Thanks for your participation!

DATE:

Saturday, August 16, 1997

is generously providing sack lunches, and a tail gate party following the project.

TIME:

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Trailhead

WHAT TO WEAR:

Elevation is above 10,000 feet, so wear layers. Be prepared for the constantly changing weather typical in the Rocky Mountains. You should dress in layers and bring:

- long pants (or lots of mosquito repellent)
- boots or sturdy footwear (no TEVAs)
- hat

LOCATION:

Spruce Creek Trail, just south of the Town of Breckenridge.

DIRECTIONS & PARKING:

Drive south on Colorado Rt. 9, 2.4 miles from Breckenridge Bell Tower Mall. Turn right on Spruce Creek Road (across from the Goose Pastors Tarn, a large pond on the left), follow Spruce Creek Road as it wanders through the Crown subdivision. At the Y, go to the left 1.2 miles to the trailhead. You will see parking directional signs on the road. Please follow them and park as indicated. ***Our parking space is limited. We strongly urge you to car pool.*** You can park at the F lot just around the corner from the Bell Tower Mall.

WHAT TO BRING:

- leather work boots/shoes and gloves
- rain gear and warm clothing
- extra clothing
- insect repellent
- sun screen
- water bottles filled with water
- gaiters (if you have them).

PLEASE NOTE: We will be using a shuttle to transport you from the trailhead to the work site. Please arrive on time to accommodate the shuttle and plan to spend all day on the project. Come prepared with a fanny pack to carry water and your day needs.

SCHEDULE:

7:30 a.m. All Project team and crew leaders arrive

8:00 – 8:30 Registration and shuttle from trailhead

8:30 – 4:00 Project construction, lunch with crew at work site

MEALS:

Coffee and bagels will be provided at registration. Hearthstone Catering (MiCasa)

4:00 p.m. - ?? Tailgate party at trailhead

SPECIAL NOTES & REMINDERS:

- ◆ Pets make unsafe participants. To ensure the safety of your pets, other volunteers, and area wildlife, pets are not permitted at NRV project sites. Pets should not be left in cars for extended periods.
- ◆ Individuals volunteers under 16 must be accompanied one to one by an adult. Due to the nature of the work, it is not recommended to bring children under 12 years of age to this project.
- ◆ Since we all appear to be under the age of 30 something, please bring your ID if you would like to sample the micro brew Saturday evening. Only those over 21 will be served.

IN KIND DONATIONS:

NRV would like to thank the following for their generous donation for the Spruce Creek Project:

Hearthstone Catering
Knorr House
Racer's Edge Bike Shop
Love's Bagels
Starbucks Coffee
Summit Fat Tire Society
Breckenridge Brewery
Great Outdoors Colorado – State
Trails Trust
US Forest Service
Tiger Run Tours

DRAWINGS & GOODIES:

All participants will be placed in a drawing for a ProFlex Mountain Bike, Osprey Backpack, Mountain Bike Tour, and other outdoor goodies sponsored by LoneStar Sports, Western Sprint Cycling, Knorr House, Christy Sports, Sport Stalker, Carvers, A Fat Tire Repair Shop, Racer's Edge and Pearl Izumi.

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