



Colorado High Trails

FOURTH QUARTER 2021

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NEWS

CORE Alpine Tunnel West Project

August 1-2

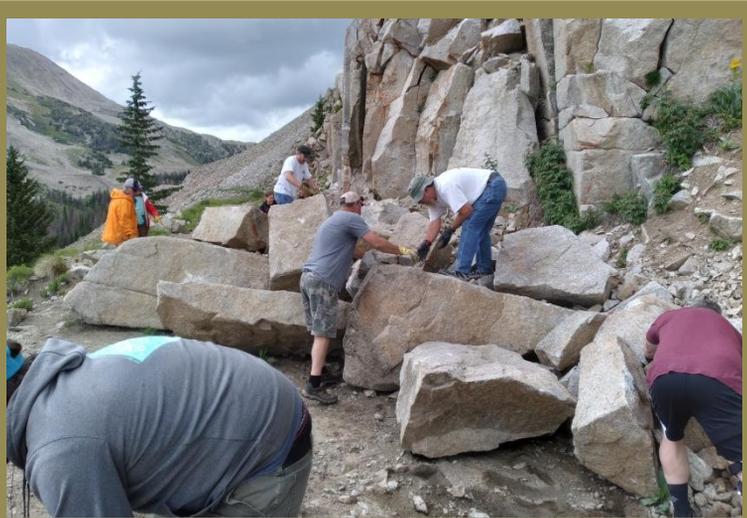
Marcus Trusty (Colorado Off Road Enterprise-CORE) swung the Williams Pass gate open for 16 volunteers to drive the pass road and clear the rock slide on Alpine Tunnel West. Upon arrival, we all realized this was going to be a LOT of work! Look at the size of those rocks!

Much of the work would be manual--meaning picks, shovels, and pry-bars. We did have two portable generators, and two hammer-drills to bore holes in the stone. We used wedges to create cracks between the bore holes, and then bars to split those lines.

Once reduced to a “manageable” size, rocks were flopped to the roadside with pry-bars or with winches, chains and straps.

Despite an afternoon storm with lightning, the volunteers worked to complete the project, and made a short visit to Alpine before nightfall.

Overall, this was an impressive effort and made a big impact!



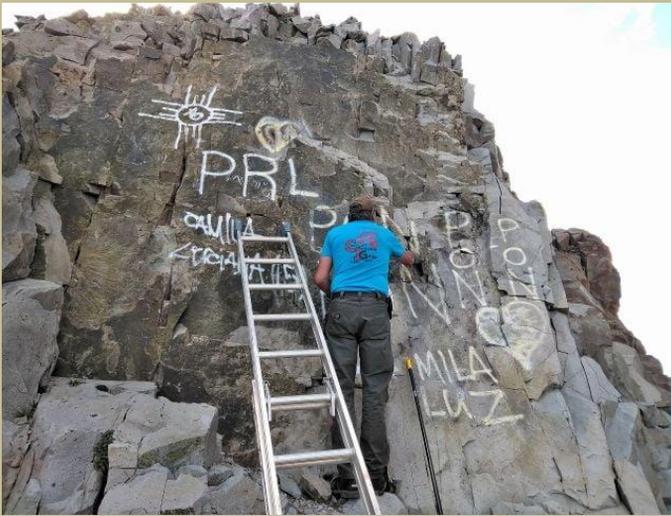
 Colorado
Four Wheel Drive
Association

NEWS

Creeper Jeepers Gang Kennebec Pass Project

August 28

The "Notch" at the end of La Plata Canyon has been getting graffiti tagged for over 20 years but has become much worse over the last few years. Creeper Jeepers talked about this project nearly two years ago. Last year, a few members went up to The Notch with power washers and scrub brushes. After several hours they made little progress, so another plan had to be made.



Our club then contacted Stephen Singer with [Keeping Colorado Beautiful](#), a non-profit that performs graffiti removal.

Stephen was interested in the project. In the past, he had come down from Colorado Springs and worked with officials to remove the graffiti at X Rock near Durango. At that time, he and Glen Hood went up to The Notch to check it out.

Stephen was hopeful this project could be done, even though he hadn't done removal at that high of elevation (12,000 feet and cool temperatures). His "usual" chemicals don't work when temperatures are below 60 degrees, so he had to go to another chemical called "Elephant Snot" that does work at lower temperatures.

Kennebec Pass Project (cont.)

Another problem was the lack of water at The Notch. The club had 3 trucks, each with a large water tank, to haul water up there. As you can imagine, the drivers later said it was a long, slow, and rough drive up to The Notch.

On August 28th we had 10 Creeper Jeepers Gang club members, two volunteers from the Colorado 4x4 Girls , Stephen Singer, and a small crew from KOB4 News out of Albuquerque.

To record and quantify this project, several volunteers used note pads and tape measures to assess the tags. It appeared to be about 5000 square feet of graffiti.

The cleaning process was fairly simple; rock in the sunlight got a spray-applied coat of Stephen's normal remover, and the rock in the shade got Elephant Snot applied by hand with paint brushes because it was so thick. After it was all applied we all took turns with scrub brushes on long handles to work the cleaner into the paint. We had to wait about 30 minutes for it to react with the paint. Then, we used to power spray washers to rinse off the cleaner and paint.



Kennebec Pass Project (cont.)

The sprayer gas engines didn't want to run very well at 12,000 feet but they did well enough to wash most of the paint right off. Some of the white and yellow paint did not want to come off completely, so we reapplied the chemicals and stopped for lunch.

After lunch we ran the power washers over the last few spots and they came right off also. We were all finished before 2:00 and had plenty of time to go slowly down La Plata Canyon and back to town.

Creeper Jeepers Gang would like to express gratitude to the following:

Stephen Singer and Keeping Colorado Beautiful for doing all he does and donating the cleaning solution;

Dave Sunderland for providing lunch from Serious South BBQ;

Colorado 4x4 Girls for coming and helping;

Tuffy Security Products for donating brushes, gloves, glasses, and other supplies;

La Plata County Government road crew for letting us close the road and donating a truck to use;

KOB4 News Albuquerque for featuring this project on the news broadcast

link to KOB4 News broadcast segment:

<https://www.kob.com/new-mexico-news/durango-four-wheel-drive-vehicle-club-commits-to-removing-kennebec-pass-graffiti/6222922/>



NEWS

Colorado 4x4 Girls “Be Heard!” Event

September 4

Be Heard! Is a fundraiser event for Robbie’s Hope, a nation-wide teen suicide prevention organization based right here in Colorado. This year’s event on Saturday, September 4th was the fifth annual event held by Colorado 4x4 Girls, and hosted at 4Wheel Parts Denver.

This year, Colorado 4x4 Girls raised over \$6,000 for Robbie’s Hope. The event included dozens of vendor displays, and several demonstrations by well known organizations such as Colorado 4x4 Rescue and Recovery, and On Trail Training.

There were tons of activities going on, including a performance by the Thornton Community Band, an RTI ramp competition, a bake sale, dunking booth, and of course the Jeep show (Toyota’s, Ford’s, and many more, too!)



Colorado 4x4 Girls “Be Heard!” Event (cont.)

The show awards and trophies, plus the raffle capped off the event in the early afternoon. The Colorado 4x4 Girls are grateful to the hundreds of participants and dozens of vendors and sponsors who made this event a tremendous success!

For additional photos and video, see the 4x4 Girls’ Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/colorado4x4girls>

For more information about Robbie’s Hope, see their webpage:
<https://robbies-hope.com/>



The Palisades Update

By Chuck Severance, Ute Pass Iron Goats

In 1880, the Denver South Park and Pacific Railroad crossed the continental divide through the Alpine Tunnel under Altman Pass between St. Elmo and Pitkin, Colorado.

As the railroad emerged from the tunnel on the west side, it twisted across a 300-foot tall cliff. To build an adequate bed for the tracks, several stone retaining walls were erected. The largest one became known as The Palisade Wall. It was 452-feet long and up to 33-feet high, constructed of local granite without mortar by Italian stone masons.

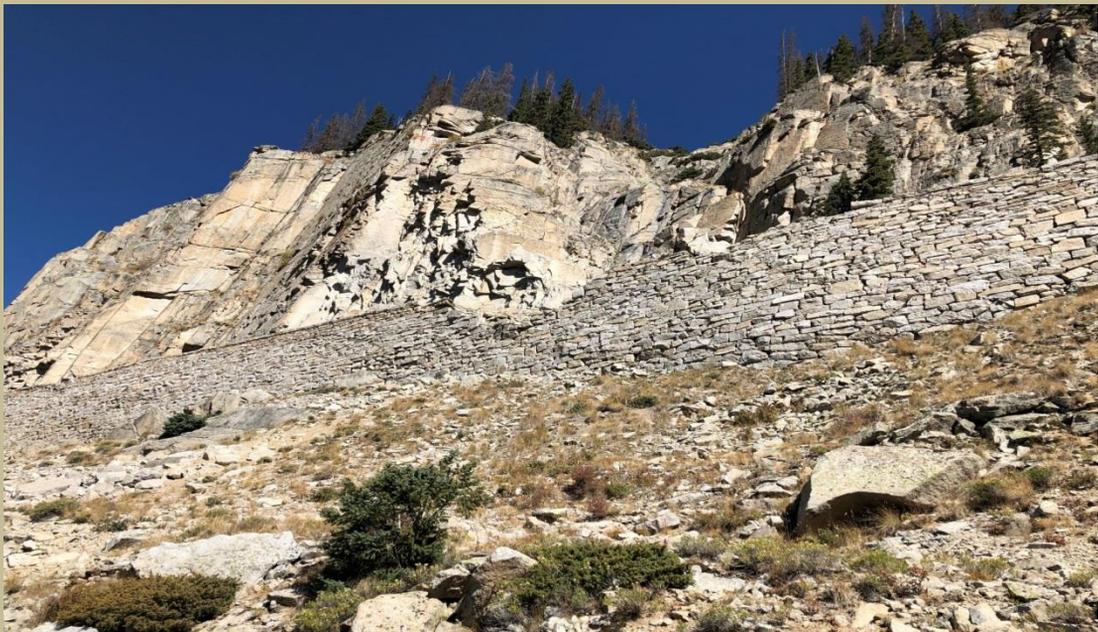
For 30 years steam engines hauled freight and passengers from Denver to Crested Butte through the tunnel and across the Palisade Wall. A passenger ticket cost \$11.50 (approximately \$308 today) from Denver to Gunnison.



The Palisades Update (cont.)

At 11,500-foot elevation, the route was constantly fraught with danger from avalanches. On March 10, 1884 an avalanche started above the Palisade Wall and crashed several miles down to the town of Woodstock wiping out the entire town. Thirteen people died in this single disaster. Woodstock was never rebuilt. The last train traveled this engineering marvel on November 10, 1910.

Over the subsequent years, state highways, county roads, and Forest Service roads used many of the former railroad routes for modern automobile traffic. The great Palisade Wall was left abandoned. In the late 1950's, the grade was cleared of fallen rocks and once again saw some traffic from those brave enough to explore the route in their new Willy's Jeeps. In the 1960's, the Mile Hi Jeep Club restored the old Water Tank at Williams Gulch, saving it from certain destruction. Over the years, as 4WD and ATV traffic increased, the route became a popular destination. Various volunteer groups working with Gunnison National Forest have preserved the depot at the west portal of the tunnel and have added informative signage to commemorate the past. In 1996, an area 200-feet wide by 10 miles long, was designated as the Alpine Tunnel National Historic Railroad District.



The Palisades Update (cont.)

During the winter of 2016, a snow avalanche crashed down on the Palisade Wall and ripped a 50-foot wide x 20-foot tall gap in the wall and weakened the remaining stone below it. Gunnison National Forest closed the route to motorized traffic for safety reasons.

In March 2019, the Ute Pass Iron Goats 4-Wheel Drive Club (UPIG's), of Woodland Park, started to make inquiries as to the fate of this historic and important segment of OHV road. The Alpine Tunnel Road, when combined with Hancock, Tomichi, and Williams Passes, comprises a popular network of OHV trails across the continental divide linking the Pike San Isabel and Gunnison National Forests.

Responses from the Forest Service have varied. First, it was “no it's closed for ever”. In time, their response had changed to “well, maybe”. In August of 2019, the UPIG's organized a site survey of the wall with representatives from History Colorado, Gunnison National Forest (GNF), and an expert in historic stone masonry from Salida.

As discussion for the wall restoration continued with the Forest Service, momentum gathered steam. Preliminary estimates for rock scaling, road clearing, and the reconstruction of the wall were gathered. The National Forest Foundation (NFF) was brought in as a teammate. Their expertise in grant writing, contract management, and insurance capabilities is proving to be the perfect partner to move forward.

To date (Summer 2021), NFF and GNF have applied for and received grants totaling \$640,000 for reconstruction. That includes, \$90,000 from Colorado Parks and Wildlife OHV Fund, \$50,000 from the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) for engineering in historic masonry methods, and \$250,000 in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 and \$250,000 in FY 2024 from GAOA for construction.

The Palisades Update (cont.)

Oh, to turn back the clock to 1880 when stone masons worked for \$5 a day winter and summer in a rush to get the walls built as fast as possible! Today construction at 11,500 feet is an unpredictable endeavor.

So far, the plan is – and it will probably change:

Winter 2022 - Prepare engineering documents for the reconstruction of the wall in historic methods and accept bids for rock scaling and reconstruction.

Summer 2022 - Apply for the final funding from History Colorado grant to achieve the total funding required.

Summer 2022 - Complete the rock scaling of the cliff wall and clearing of the Alpine Tunnel Road.

Summer 2023 - Gathering local granite rock for the wall and splitting the boulders for the huge cap stones (4' x 2' x 1').

Summer 2024 - Reconstruction of the wall.

Progress has been amazing. It looks like the reconstruction of this 140 year old engineering marvel is going to happen. Eventually the Alpine Tunnel Road will be open again for OHV use for all to enjoy and cherish. We ask all OHV users to respect the traffic signs during construction periods. Moving boulders on mountains is dangerous business, so roads below the construction site will be closed from time to time. It's only a temporary closure for everyone's safety, so please be patient.

As plans progress or change they will be announced in future Association monthly/quarterly newsletters.

For additional questions or comments contact:

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Adopt-A-Road Update

By Adam Mehlberg, Adopt-A-Road Coordinator

For the 2021 season, September 2020 to September 2021, there were 1,982 volunteer hours reported to the Adopt-A-Road Chairman. These hours were from southern area clubs and northern area clubs. I am sure that other clubs have done work on the public lands over this last year. I will report the hours I have collected to the public land managing agency so the Supervisors, as well as the District office and Field office managers are aware of the volunteer work being done.

The annual report I produce is a collective way for the volunteer hours done on the public lands to be reported to the managing agency. For the Forest Service, their fiscal year starts on October 1. The volunteer hours report is done before this time, and sent to the agencies so that they can add it to their (district) annual report that goes to the Forest Service headquarters, and ultimately on to Congress. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) follows a similar process.

Some clubs perform projects with their local public land managing agency that I don't know about. I add a statement to the report that I may not have included all of the volunteer hours that have been performed within a district due to some clubs not reporting their hours to me. A few times I have had Forest Service District personnel contact me to make sure I am aware of volunteer work done by local 4WD clubs.

It is nice to know that they want to ensure that the 4WD clubs are recognized for the work they do.



MEMBER CLUBS

West District

Creeper Jeepers Gang
Durango, Colorado

Grand Mesa Jeep Club
Grand Junction, Colorado

North District

Big Thompson 4Wheelers
Loveland, Colorado

Bighorn Jeep Club
Denver, Colorado

Colorado 4x4 Girls
Denver, Colorado

Horsetooth 4Wheelers
Fort Collins, Colorado

South District

Bighorn 4x4 Club
Colorado Springs, Colorado

Colorado Land Cruisers
Colorado Springs, Colorado

Colorado Springs Christian 4Wheelers
Colorado Springs, Colorado

Ute Pass Iron Goats
Woodland Park, Colorado

Colorado Four Wheelers
Colorado Springs, Colorado

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Colorado Off Road Enterprise (CORE)
Buena Vista, Colorado





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