

## WELCOME

### LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much" --Helen Keller

Collaboration has been a hallmark of Colorado Fourteeners Initiative's 14er stewardship work dating back to our inception in 1994 as "a partnership for preservation." With a very short alpine field season and more than 50 peaks spread across the state, CFI has always relied on partnerships with other groups to bring out as many people as possible and make the greatest impact. From youth corps crews to volunteer stewardship organizations, businesses to individual enthusiasts across the country, CFI has worked with just about any willing partner to protect the 14ers.

In 2017, however, CFI's focus on collaboration expanded significantly thanks to the first year of the National Forest Foundation's "Find Your Fourteener" campaign. The first season of this multi-year effort injected additional funding, fostered creative new approaches to getting work done and generated considerable enthusiasm that allowed Colorado Fourteeners Initiative to significantly boost project work on several 14ers.

Collaboration on Mount Elbert saw CFI fielding two separate leadership teams on the mountain (one working at timberline, one near the trailhead), two separate Rocky Mountain Youth Corps crews, a youth corps "Peak Apprentice" position helping coordinate crews and volunteer projects, a prison work crew cutting and delivering logs, and multiple collaborative projects with statewide and local trail stewardship organizations. Many of these were entirely new concepts or scaled-up versions of tried-and-true approaches.

Another example of new forms of collaboration was pre-season technical rigging training for crew leaders working on CFI's Mount Columbia project and Rocky Mountain Field Institute's Challenger Peak project. Even though neither project was formally adopted by the Find Your Fourteener campaign, the NFF-paid training boosted skills of CFI and RMFI leaders working on these very complex trail-building projects, as well as the Southwest Conservation Corps crew leaders who would assist both projects.

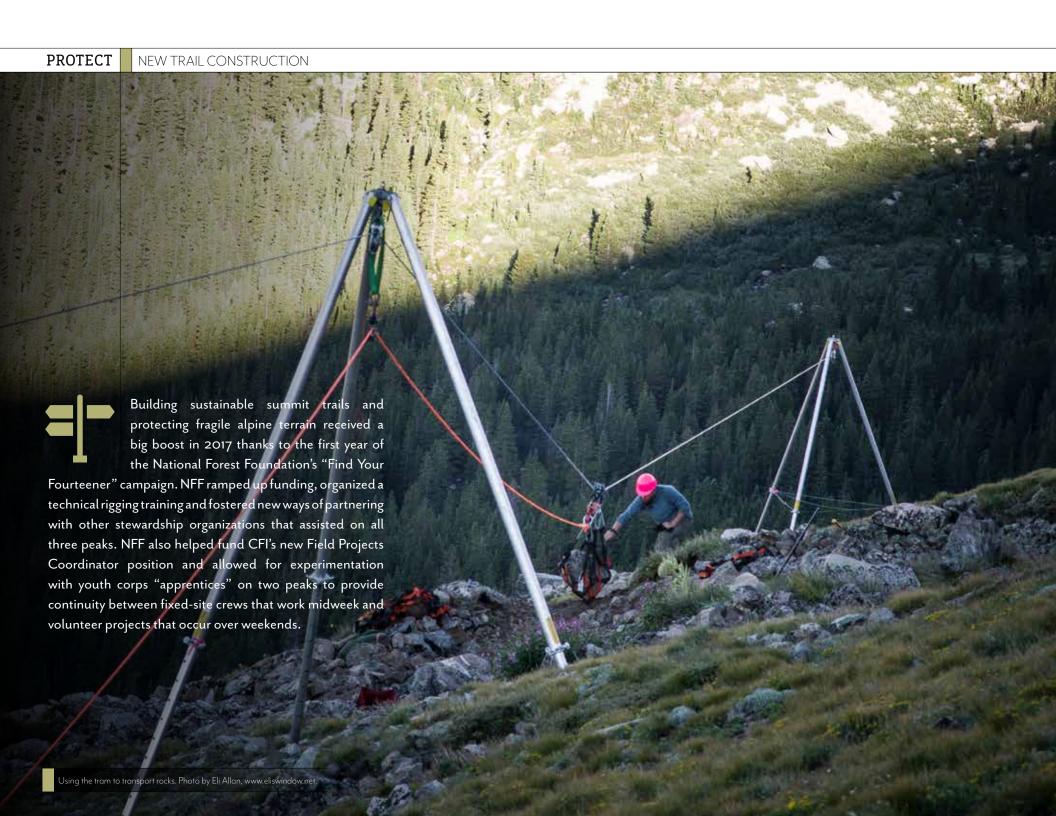
As a result of these innovative approaches, CFI posted its best year ever in terms of volunteer engagement and on-the-ground work performed. CFI also plans to utilize collaboration in future fundraising efforts and in developing mountain safety videos to address the record number of 14er fatalities that occurred this summer.

As the saying goes, "Many hands make light work." CFI will always strive to be the national leader in technical trail building at high altitude. However, we will always look for ways to partner with others in a collaborative manner to get the most, highest-quality work done in the shortest time possible.

Thanks for collaborating with us to make a difference on the 14ers!

Regards,

loyd F. Athearn, Executive Director



## PROTECT

# NEW TRAIL CONSTRUCTION

MOUNT COLUMBIA. CFI fielded a crew of five experienced trail builders, including one technical rigging expert, who worked with a six-member youth corps crew on the second of four seasons of new trail construction. The trail is possibly the most technically demanding ever built by CFI. The crew used a highline tram and griphoist system to move more than 500 large rocks from higher on the mountain to a section of the route almost devoid of natural building material. Ensuring crew safety was paramount during this slow process. Retaining walls and trail features needed to be scaled up from initial plans so that they would not fail due to the very steep side slope on the mountain. The crew cut 1,800 feet of new trail, installed 93 rock steps and built almost 1,500 square feet of walls.



Rigging expert Wade Frisbee reviews a rock staircase and retaining wall



 $Wade\ Frisbee\ uses\ a\ griphoist\ to\ carefully\ position\ a\ large\ rock\ into\ place.\ Photo\ by\ Eli\ Allan,\ www.eliswindow.net.$ 



Rock walls and staircases help stabilize the tread on a steep portion of the new trail.



BEFORE & AFTER:

Rocks had to be mechanically transported for retaining walls along this barren section of new trail.



Crew members haul soil by hand from the newly cut tread on the lower bypass.

MOUNT ELBERT. The first of four seasons revamping the East Ridge route occurred last summer. Since this project is located outside of wilderness (and has no group size limits), CFI was able to experiment with using multiple crews simultaneously to maximize speed in delineating two major bypasses. Five CFI leaders and two youth corps teams cut more than 2 miles of trail over the season. The lower bypass, which winds through an aspen forest from the Colorado Trail almost to timberline, was opened in early August. This allowed CFI to close and begin stabilization of the old, unplanned route. Most of a second bypass above treeline was cut, but not opened due to the need for additional trail features to be installed in 2018. A Rocky Mountain Youth Corps apprentice helped coordinate 577 volunteer days of work that were run by CFI's Adopt-a-Peak crew.



The crew use rock bars to move a large rock out of the trail corridor.



A 14ers.com volunteer cuts tread near the top of the lower bypass. Photo by Cameron Miller Photography.

# PROTECT NEW TRAIL CONSTRUCTION



CFI volunteers help install a log monowall to stabilize the lower edge of the Quandary trail.

QUANDARY PEAK. In the second of three planned years of intensive trail reconstruction, a two-person crew and RMYC apprentice performed work over the full length of the summit trail. Due to lack of rocks on the lower portion of the route, CFI felled trees and used dimensional lumber to construct almost 200 wood steps and several soil retention walls along the route. Proximity to Denver allowed crews to engage 334 days of volunteer labor on the project.



BEFORE A rock staircase installed by the crew higher up on the mountain.









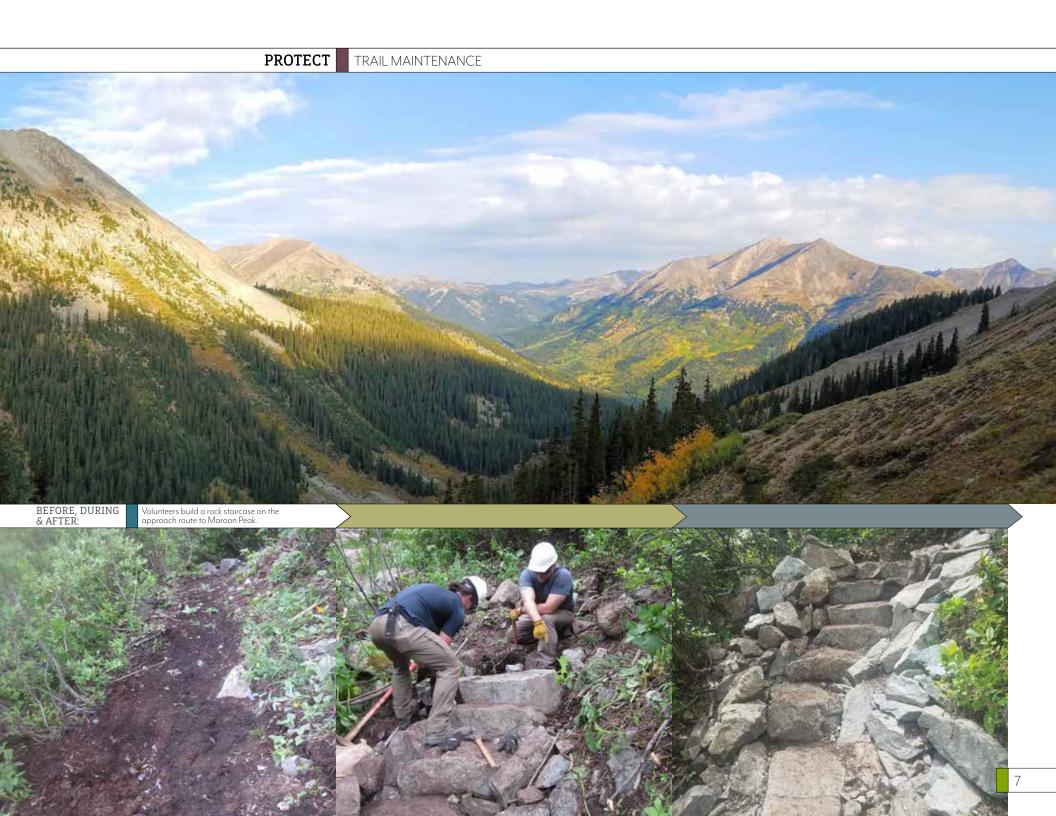


CFI continued its four-year expansion in volunteer trail maintenance work during 2017 by engaging another all-time-record number of people in reconstructing and maintaining summit trails. A total of 946 individual volunteers put in a combined 1,952 days working on the 14ers last year. This was a 25 percent increase above 2016's previous record. Volunteers worked on 74 projects located on 21 peaks across the state.

Most volunteers continue to come through organized groups. CFI's project season aligns well with youth camps that generally provide volunteers for multi-day backcountry projects. Business groups find CFIs' trail stewardship projects to be fun team-building events for employees. The first year of the "Find Your Fourteener" campaign saw several long-time stewardship partner groups, including Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado, Wildlands Restoration Volunteers and Friends of the Dillon Ranger District, commit to organizing increased numbers of large collaborative trail projects with CFI.

A volunteer project builds a backwall on the La Plata Peak trail to limit erosion and loss of vegetation.







Employees of corporate partner Big Agnes help install a log check step on the Mount Bierstadt summit trail.

To help ensure that trail maintenance efforts are deployed in ways that maximize impact, CFI surveyed 14er enthusiasts to gauge their opinions about where and how maintenance work should be targeted. More than 220 people responded to the survey. Respondents overwhelmingly agreed on the following approaches: 1) Focus on routes in the worst condition (D and F Sustainable Trails ratings), 2) Concentrate efforts on a smaller number of high-priority peaks, and 3) Prioritize work on high-use peaks in the most-accessible ranges. This feedback helped guide a State Trails grant request that will drive future maintenance priorities.



Working on the 14ers occasionally means working in the rain and snow.



 $\label{eq:Atrail} A \ trail \ project \ working \ on \ the \ Uncompany repeals summit \ trail.$ 

## PROTECT

## MOUNT SHAVANO



Placing a rock step on a VOC project on Redcloud Peak.



CFI increasingly uses logs to stabilize trails where there are limited rocks of sufficient size.

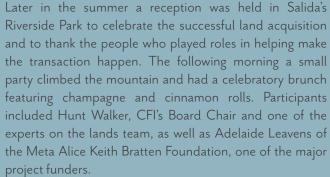
Members of a Western Colorado Conservation Corps crew work above timberline on the trail to Redcloud and Sunshine Peaks.







Once CFI gained legal access to three mining claims atop Mount Shavano in early 2017, the Forest Service began planning a new summit route. Since it will take several years for the route to be planned and constructed, CFI installed warning signs in June highlighting the inherent risks of recreating on the peak. This is a requirement of Colorado's recreational use statute. The summit signs also inform hikers about the project and how they can get involved.

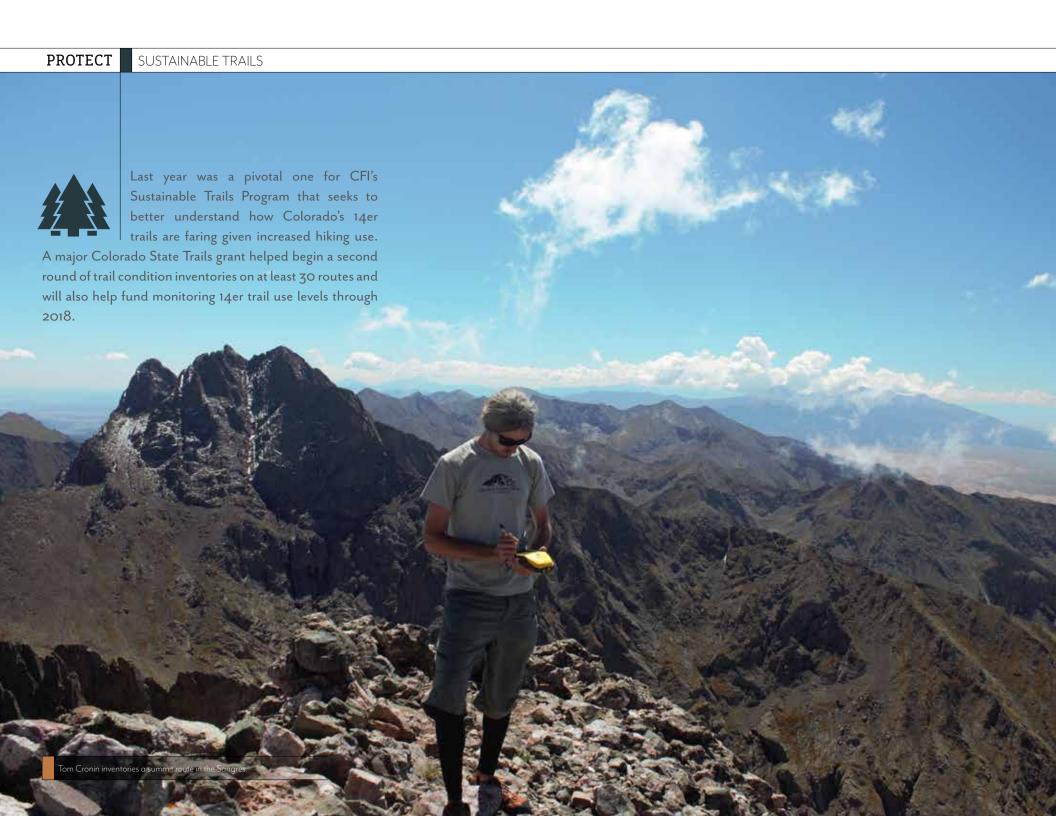




Members of the celebratory climb on CFI's land atop Mount Shavano. (*L to R*) Tom McDonald, Hunt Walker, Adelaide Leavens, Jake Bothe, Jerry Mack, Ben Hanus, Lloyd Athearn.

A bear canister filled with ice makes a great champagne cooler.

Ben Hanus (L) and Brian Sargeant install a sign where one summit route crosses onto private land.



# PROTECT

# SUSTAINABLE TRAILS

Tom Cronin, a long-time trail project leader, hiked more than 250 miles and climbed almost 89,000 vertical feet while completing 21 inventories during the summer field season. This included 9 baseline condition inventories and 12 secondary inventories. He recorded more than 5,250 GPS-based data points on 83.1 miles of trail that will be added to CFI's accumulating database of trail condition scores.

Estimated Hiking Use on Colorado's 14ers Total Hiker Use Days: 311,000 (2016 Data)

Front Range	Best Est: 75,000
Longs Peak	7,000-10,000
Pikes Peak	15,000-20,000
Torreys Peak	20,000-25,000*
Grays Peak	
Mount Evans	10,000-15,000
Mount Bierstadt	20,000-25,000

Tenmile Range	Best Est: 18,000
Quandary Peak	15,000-20,000*

Sawatch Range	Best Est: 115,000
Mount Elbert	25,000-30,000*
Mount Massive	7,000-10,000
Mount Harvard	5,000-7,000
La Plata Peak	5,000-7,000*
Mount Antero	3,000-5,000*
Mount Shavano	3,000-5,000*
Tabegauche Peak	
Mount Belford	7,000-10,000
Mount Oxford	
Mount Princeton	10,000-15,000*
Mount Yale	7,000-10,000
Mount Columbia	3,000-5,000
Missouri Mountain	5,000-7,000
Mt. of the Holy Cross	5,000-7,000
Huron Peak	10,000-15,000*

Best Est: 43,000
3,000-5,000
1,000-3,000
1,000-3,000
1,000-3,000
1,000-3,000
3,000-5,000*
5,000-7,000*
3,000-5,000*
3,000-5,000*
3,000-5,000
1,000-3,000

Mosquito Range	Best Est: 34,000
Mount Lincoln	15,000-20,000*
Mount Bross	
Mount Democrat	
Mount Sherman	15,000-20,000*

Elk Mountains	Best Est: 9,000
Castle Peak	1,000-3,000*
Maroon Peak	1,000-3,000
Capitol Peak	1,000-3,000
Snowmass Mountain	1,000-3,000
Pyramid Peak	1,000-3,000

Sangre de Cristo Range	Best Est: 17,000
Blanca Peak	1,000-3,000*
Ellingwood Point	
Crestone Peak	1,000-3,000
Crestone Needle	1,000-3,000
Kit Carson Peak	1,000-3,000*
Challenger Point	
Humboldt Peak	3,000-5,000
Culebra Peak	1,000-3,000
Mount Lindsey	1,000-3,000
Little Bear Peak	1,000-3,000

#### Approximation Notes

\*Indicates data drawn from CFI TRAFx recorders, with data gap and early/late season infills from either previous years or nearby peak data. All other estimates are interpolated from a correlation between TRAFx data and reported 14ers.com peak use statistics.

Range and overall totals are adjusted to account for the frequent practice of summiting multiple peaks in one day. Data collected during the 2017-18 period will help CFI issue an updated "14er Report Card" by early 2019. The second phase of data collection will ensure that every major 14er route has had at least a baseline assessment. Several peaks will also have had a secondary assessment. The follow-up inventory will help show where CFI's investments in trail reconstruction and maintenance since 2011-13 are improving conditions, as well as where the impacts of hikers and weather may be deteriorating trail conditions.

The hiking use report released last year estimated that 311,000 people hiked 14ers during the 2016 season. This use contributed to an estimated \$84.3 million in economic impact to Colorado through gas, food, lodging and gear-related purchases. This was the first hiking use report that factored in a doubled number of trail counters (20 vs. 10 for the first report), which utilized a broader network of counter locations.



2016 Colorado 14er Hiker Use Days Estimate.

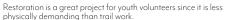


### RESTORE

CFI's biggest restoration effort in 2017 was starting the closure, stabilization and restoration of the roughly mile-long old social trail on Mount Elbert's East Ridge route. Once the new bypass trail opened in early August, CFI crews and volunteers set to work installing log check dams, importing fill soil to restore the natural contours of the hillside, and transplanting vegetation to start the naturalization process. They were able to restore 1,480 linear feet of trail by installing 275 log restoration check dams and transplanting more than 600 vegetation plugs.

Restoration was also a part of the intensive reconstruction effort on Quandary Peak. Crews and volunteers restored more than 1,500 square feet of trail braids on this route through transplantation of 286 vegetation plugs. Smaller scale restoration projects occurred on numerous Adopt-a-Peak trail maintenance projects.

Restoration is a slow process. It will take years before the old trails have been consumed by spreading vegetation. It is vital for hikers to avoid entering closure areas, as any disturbance will set back the restoration process.







NFF Colorado Director Emily Olsen digs holes for plug transplants being carried by CFI Intern Shelby Johnson.

Plug transplants along the lower section of the closed Mount Elbert trail.



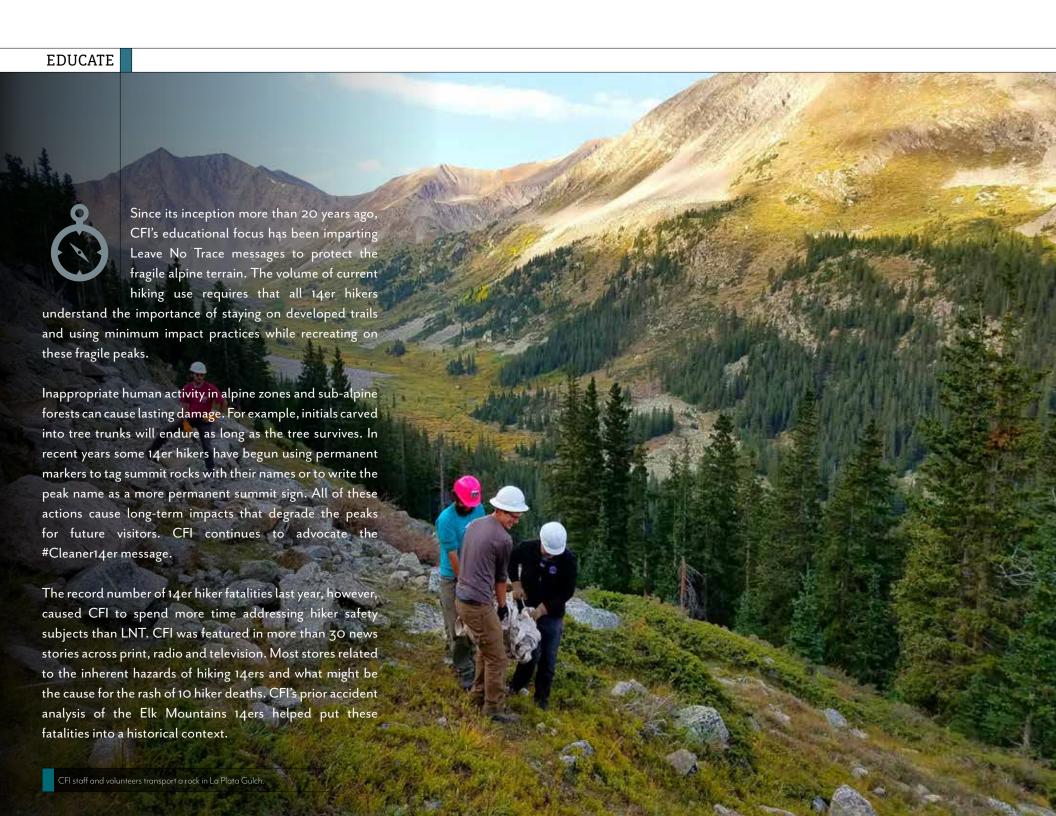




Logs are used to keep hikers off the lowest portion of the closed Mount Elbert trail.



CFI directors Andrew Mahoney (center) and Craig Mackey (right) install a log restoration check dam as Brad McQueen moves along the old social trail.



# **EDUCATE**

PEAK STEWARD

Since many of those who died appeared to have had minimal knowledge about general and specific risks of climbing Colorado's high peaks, CFI raised funds from the Colorado Tourism Office and Aspen Skiing Environment Foundation that will fund the roll-out of several mountain safety videos in 2018. Completed videos will be added to CFI's YouTube library of more than 40 existing subjects.

CFI crews and volunteer Peak Stewards continued to provide on-mountain hiker education. Season-long projects on Quandary and Elbert, among the most-climbed 14ers in the state, allowed CFI crews to make more than 13,000 hiker education contacts. This was the third-best year ever for crew contacts. Volunteer Peak Stewards put in 43 days on the 14ers and made more than 1,700 hiker contacts.



Sharpie graffiti like this found near Quandary's summit is increasingly occurring on the 14ers.



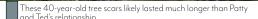
Peak Steward of the Year Terry Mattison helps Educate 14er hikers about LNT, including the Denefits of keeping dogs on a leash.

# Outside

# Should We Warn Hikers About Dangerous Trails?

Seven hikers have died on 14ers since May, an unusual string of fatalities that has Aspen officials wondering what measures they're obligated to put in place to keep people safe in the mountains







TRAIL PLANNING. Planning new sustainable 14er summit routes is a known Forest Service roadblock that CFI is hoping to support through hiring a future core staff position. Route planning assistance is needed for forthcoming projects on Mounts Wilson and Shavano, which we hope to launch in the field as early as 2020, as well as projects on Castle Peak, Mount Princeton and Snowmass Mountain. The envisioned position will also be involved in managing CFI's growing field programs and technical training of seasonal staff.

PRIVATE LANDS. Directors with experience in private land transactions continue to delve into how CFI can help provide legal public access to a few 14ers. After years of reaching out, CFI officials are set to meet with the Blanca Ranch in early 2018 to discuss access to Mount Lindsey, which is entirely located on Ranch property. Directors have also dug into land ownership information for Mount Sherman. While all relevant mining claims are owned by one corporation, the number of individual parcels and the presence of significant past mining activity may make any easement tricky to pull off.

BASE FACILITIES. For many years CFI has used a Forest Service cabin, garage and land near Twin Lakes to support operations. Use of the "Cabin Cove" facility has been authorized annually, which means that CFI has no guaranteed use of this convenient location. Discussions are under way on a long-term lease whereby CFI would have exclusive, year-round access to this facility in return for undertaking facility maintenance and capital improvements. Last year CFI bought a new 30-foot yurt to house our growing seasonal staff. CFI's existing 20-foot yurt will be moved in 2019 to BLM land near Lake City to support growing work in the San Juans.





Lloyd Athearn, Executive Director



Claire Gomba, CLIMB Intern



Ben Hanus, Field Programs Manager



Jerry Mack, Controller



Brian Sargeant,
Development &
Communications Coordinator



Miriam Venman-Clay, Field Projects Coordinator

## 2017 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Hunt Walker, Chair Tom Barney, Vice-Chair Brad McQueen, Treasurer Tim Rampe, Secretary Christopher Bouck Wendy Boutin Lynn Guissinger Richard Heppe Mandy Hughes Ben Krasnow Craig Mackey Andrew Mahoney John W. Mill Nate Palmer Laura Schafer Jim Wason Stephanie Welsh Len Zanni Marty Zeller



### 2017 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board members at the February Board retreat in Denver. Back Row (L to R): Tom Barney, Chris Bouck, Brad McQueen, Hunt Walker, Stephanie Welsh. Front Row (L to R): Wendy Boutin, John Mill, Lynn Guissinger, Mandy Hughes, Jim Wason.



## 2017 SEASONAL PROJECT MANAGERS

Members of CFI's 2017 seasonal staff at the season-ending BBQ. Back Row (L to R): Kevin Langevin, Eric Haggstrom, Eli Allan, Tom Cronin, Eric McSwan, Taylor Beeson, Christopher Kucich, Wade Frisbee, Steena Cultrara. Middle Row (L to R): Pat Hall, Timo Holmquist, Brennan Turner, Riley Nicolay. Front Row (L to R): Abby Mortimer, Roslyn Peters, Sarah Rockford, Miriam Venman-Clay, Shelby Johnson, Margaret McQuiston, Dana Young.

### ORGANIZATION

2017 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR: BILL ANDERSON (Colorado Springs, Colorado)

#### 2017 SEASONAL PROJECT MANAGERS

#### MOUNT ELBERT CREW

Eric Haggstrom, Lead Project Manager Kristine Velez, Assistant Project Manager Kevin Langevin, Crew Member Spencer Phillips, Crew Member Macey Wiley, Crew Member Hannah Clark, RMYC Peak Apprentice

#### MOUNT COLUMBIA CREW

Eli Allan, Lead Project Manager Steena Cultrara, Assistant Project Manager Wade Frisbee, Lead Technical Advisor Pat Hall, Crew Member Eric McSwan, Crew Member

## QUANDARY PEAK CREW

Margaret McQuiston, Lead Project Manager Timo Holmquist, Assistant Project Manager Jack Paskin, RMYC Peak Apprentice

#### ADOPT-A-PEAK CREW

Christopher Kucich, Crew Leader
Taylor Beeson, Crew Leader
Abby Mortimer, Crew Member
Roslyn Peters, Crew Member
Sarah Rockford, Crew Member
Brennan Turner, Crew Member
Shelby Johnson, Outdoor Leadership Intern
Riley Nicolay, Outdoor Leadership Intern

# SUSTAINABLE TRAILS

Tom Cronin, Sustainable Trails Coordinator

TRAIL PLANNING
Dana Young, CFI-USFS Design Assistant



Colorado Fourteeners Initiative recognized Bill Anderson as the organization's 2017 Volunteer of the Year due to his tremendous commitment over the past three years to the Adopt-a-Peak and Peak Steward programs. Last year Bill spent 13 days working on four volunteer trail projects across the state. He also worked four days as a Peak Steward providing LNT information to hikers out on the peaks and participated in several "How to Climb a 14er" clinics at local REI stores

Bill's fascination with Mount of the Holy Cross was what drew him to CFI three years ago. Though born in Minnesota, Bill's family moved to Pueblo when he was a child. He spent many days during his childhood hiking 14ers with his father, initially in the Sangres. He learned about Holy Cross while looking through maps and guidebooks, eventually becoming "infatuated" with the mountain, its secluded location and the history of exploration and pilgrimages. In fact, the desire to sign up for a CFI volunteer project on Holy Cross three years ago was what connected Bill to CFI.

When not volunteering with CFI or working as a heavy equipment operator in the construction field, Bill is likely to be found working his smoker to create the perfect barbeque. He's been fired up about barbecue for 20 years, and began entering competitions five years ago. For the past couple of years he has hosted a season-end trailhead cookout for the Adopt-a-Peak crew, which has received rave reviews. Sign up for that project next season and you might have the opportunity to sample brisket or pulled pork prepared by one of CFI's most committed volunteers.

#### 2017 AWARD RECIPIENTS

ADOPT-A-PEAK VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR: Sarah Seibold (Longmont, Colorado)

ADOPT-A-PEAK ROOKIES OF THE YEAR: Wes Cochran and Rachael Aronson (Salida, Colorado)

ADOPT-A-PEAK PARTNER OF THE YEAR: Friends of the Dillon Ranger District (Silverthorne, Colorado)

PEAK STEWARD OF THE YEAR: Terry Mattison (Arvada, Colorado)

OUTSTANDING AGENCY PARTNER: Jim Lovelace, BLM Gunnison Field Office (Gunnison, Colorado)



CORPORATE PARTNER
OF THE YEAR:
14er Brewing
(Denver, Colorado)

FOUNDATION PARTNER OF THE YEAR: National Forest Foundation (Missoula, Montana)

# SPECIAL RECOGNITION FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE:

Luis Benitez, Director, Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office (Denver, Colorado) Glenn Randall, Glenn Randall Photography (Boulder, Colorado) Colorado Fourteeners Initiative enjoyed a ninth year of exceptional financial performance during 2017. Operating revenues increased 16 percent compared to 2016, while operating expenses were up 6 percent. Total revenues and expenses were both all-time highs. This was also the second year in the organization's 24-year history in which revenues and expense surpassed \$1 million. CFI ended the year with an operating surplus of \$140,126 (11 percent), which was almost six times larger than the 2016 operating surplus.

Total net assets grew for a fifth consecutive year to an all-time high of \$846,313 at year end. This represents a one-year increase of 20 percent. The total net assets figure includes \$175,329 in grants obtained to fund work in future years, \$116,612 in property and equipment, \$111,079 in a reserve fund to ameliorate seasonal cash-flow swings, \$46,014 in land owned on Mount Shavano, and additional retained cash reserves to cushion the organization from unanticipated revenue downturns or uncontrollable events such as forest wildfire closures.

#### **OPERATING REVENUES**

Total operating revenues were \$1,271,735, making 2017 the organization's best year ever for fundraising. Individual donations rose 17 percent compared to last year, led all revenue categories for the second time in the organization's history and reached an all-time high of \$501,187. Instrumental to CFI's long-term individual revenue growth has been Bill Middlebrook's twiceannual email fundraising campaigns targeting his 14ers. com registered users. Government grant revenues slipped to \$374,620. Most government support came from competitive Colorado State Trails grants, though several trailhead communities provided smaller local government grants. Gifts from foundations totaled \$304,003. The first year of the National Forest Foundation's "Find Your Fourteener" campaign was a major boost to foundation gifts. Corporate gifts totaled \$87,570, an increase from 6 to 7 percent of all revenues. Interest and miscellaneous income were insignificant revenue sources. The inkind value of volunteer labor working on 14er trails and educating 14er hikers totaled \$405,548 for the year, again an all-time high. Accounting rules prevent this number from being included as revenue in CFI's audited financials, though it can be used to match some of CFI's larger government and



#### OPERATING EXPENSES

Total operating expenses in 2017 were \$1,131,609, another all-time high, reflecting CFI's biggest year ever in work protecting the 14ers. Programs represented 82 percent of all expenditures last year (\$929,753), a 2 percent increase over 2016. Funds invested in trail restoration work increased by \$64,960 last year, but remained stable at 87 percent of all programmatic expenses. This reflected the expansion in trail crews as part of the "Find Your Fourteener"-funded work. Hiring staff to embark on a second phase of trail condition data collection boosted Sustainable Trails expenditure by \$23,399, an increase of 59 percent compared to the prior year when only hiker counts were performed. Education and outreachrelated expenditures declined to \$58,566, a reduction of 13 percent. Much of this represented staff time working with the media due to the record number of 14er fatalities. No educational videos or trailhead kiosks were produced in 2017.

General administration (\$101,454) and fundraising (\$100,402) each represented 9 percent of all 2017 operating expenses. Despite fundraising expenses declining 14 percent due to consolidating annual and year-end reports into one direct mail solicitation, total revenues increased by 17 percent. Administrative expenses increased \$3,568, a jump of 4 percent, but supported 9 percent more program-related spending. CFI's administrative and fundraising expense ratio (referred to as "AFR" in the nonprofit sector) was 18 percent last year. CFI's AFR has fallen 7 percent over two years, largely attributed to increased individual donations and bigger foundation giving. CFI is always at a disadvantage based on this metric since most of our programmatic work is performed for only four months, but fundraising and administrative work occurs for a full year.

CFI received a clean, GAAP-based audit from JDS Professional Group for its 2017 financial statements. This marks the ninth consecutive clean audit for the organization's financial reporting.

Mountain goat on Mount Columbia. Photo by Eli Allan, www.eliswindow.net.

