

Teller Historic and Environmental Coalition

Winter 2008 Newsletter



T.H.E. Coalition
P.O. Box 368
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80866

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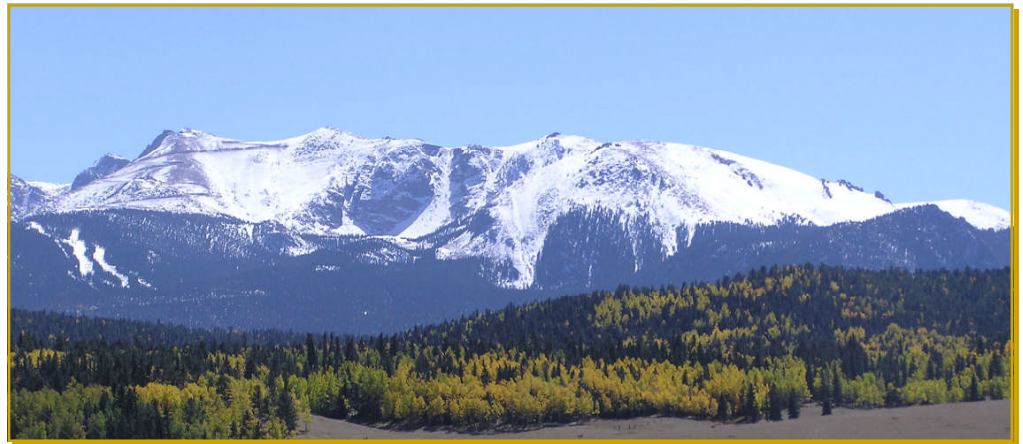
Palmer Land Trust

A founding member of T.H.E. Coalition, Palmer Land Trust works to preserve open space, natural areas, and agricultural lands in southeastern Colorado. The Coalition welcomes Palmer's new Executive Director, Scott Campbell!

Genesis and Evolution: In 1977, a group of farsighted citizens adopted General Palmer's name and philosophy to found the William J. Palmer Parks Foundation. Their original goal was to purchase and own special parcels of land that contribute to the public good and maintain the open-space character of Colorado Springs.

Trust. Its service area covers nine counties: Crowley, Custer, El Paso, Fremont, Huerfano, Las Animas, Otero, Pueblo, in addition to Teller County.

While most of Palmer's work is with private landowners who wish to preserve their land for posterity, the organization also partners with public



View of Pikes Peak from the Conservation Corridor south of Highway 24 in Teller County, an area protected by Palmer Land Trust easements

The advent of conservation easements and tax credits provided more effective tools for voluntary land preservation, enabling the Foundation to vastly increase its potential for protecting prime tracts of land. This began a transition from foundation to land trust. In 2003, the organization changed its name to the *Palmer Land*

entities including the cities of Colorado Springs and Manitou Springs and El Paso and Teller counties. In all, Palmer Land Trust protects 93 properties totaling just under 65,000 acres that offer ecological, cultural, and economic benefits to the surrounding communities.

Recognition: In November 2007, Palmer Land Trust received the prestigious El Pomar Award for

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Palmer Land Trust *(continued from page 1)*

Excellence in the Environmental Category. Organizations do not apply for the award, but are nominated and selected by an El Pomar Selection Commission.

Also in 2007, Palmer Land Trust met a challenge from the Conservation Fund of the Pikes Peak Community Foundation to raise the \$70,000 required for a matching grant. These funds will help preserve and steward open land for many generations to come.

Current Strategic Initiatives:

The **Urban Recreation Open Space Land Protection Initiative** continues the legacy left by General Palmer, who gave more than 2,000 acres of parks, bridle and foot paths, and tree-lined streets to Colorado Springs. Working with city and county governments, Palmer Land Trust is permanently protecting signature landscapes such as Red Rock Canyon Open Space, Paint Mines Interpretive Park, and the Blue Stem Prairie Open



1,300 acres of private ranchland in Teller County protected by Palmer Land Trust

Space making them available for public recreation and enjoyment.

The **Scenic Mountain Backdrops Land Protection Initiative** focuses on protecting the lands that frame Pikes Peak - lands that are under particularly heavy pressure from growth and development. At risk are not only scenery and wildlife habitat, but the quality of life and economic benefits these natural landscapes bring the half million people living in the region. This Initiative aims to protect view-sheds in the foothills along the

Interstate 25 and Highway 24 corridors from urban sprawl, provide a development buffer for public lands, and preserve critical wildlife habitat.

Through the **Gold Belt Byway Land Protection Initiative**, Palmer Land Trust is implementing a federally funded conservation plan—one of only two of its kind in the State—to protect the rich cultural landscape on the west slope of Pikes Peak. Coursing the west side of Pikes Peak between Florence, Canon City, Cripple Creek, Victor, and Florissant, the Gold Belt Byway is one of ten national scenic byways in Colorado. The landscapes, defined by fifth and sixth generation farms and ranches, are subject to increasing development pressures that threaten to displace agricultural economies, diminish wildlife habitat, and alter the region's historic character.

The shortgrass prairie, extending from the foothills of Pikes Peak through El Paso, Pueblo, Crowley, and Otero counties and into the Lower Arkansas Valley, is the toehold of the **Peak to Prairie Land Protection Initiative**. The region boasts biologically diverse prairie and riparian ecosystems, one of the greatest concentrations of native North American bird species, and a rich tapestry of human history. The lands in this area support the State's leading industries: agriculture and tourism. Protecting the area as an interconnected and ecologically functioning landscape stems the tide of urban sprawl and helps farmers, ranchers, and small communities maintain economic viability. Palmer Land Trust has already protected over 32,000 acres in this area. A partnership project with Colorado Open Lands and the Nature Conservancy aims to protect an additional 70,000 acres by the end of 2010.

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Get to Know ... T.H.E. Coalition Board Member Dee Breitenfeld

“Put me in the middle of nowhere and I’ll find something interesting.”

If you’ve lived in Teller County for any length of time, you have met, or at least know of, Dee Breitenfeld. As a graduate of the original Woodland Park High School (the Ute Pass Cultural Center today) and a long-time Woodland Park resident, Dee’s knowledge of the area is legendary.

Doris “Dee” Breitenfeld was born and grew up on a 5-acre farm in Rocky Ford where her father was a custom thresher. Having fun in a rural environment required creativity and imagination. Most of Dee’s playmates were boys, so play involved building tunnels and miniature adobe forts.

During World War II, the Breitenfeld family often entertained airmen from nearby La Junta Army Air Field. Dee’s stature among her peers escalated when the pilots buzzed the farm while winging a hello.

In 1954, when Dee was a senior in high school, her family purchased Woodland Park Grocery, now the

home of The Cowhand western wear. Dee became active in *everything* the school had to offer and also worked in the store. To Dee, it seemed she was the only kid who didn’t have a horse. She solved that problem by dating the local wranglers!

Dee had a fondness for sports, especially tennis. She held a number one ranking in Junior Women’s Tennis in Colorado Springs and was in the top ten in the Intermountain Classification.



Dee in her college days

After graduation from high school, Dee attended University of New Mexico for two years, majoring in anthropology and health / physical education and recreation. She transferred to Valparaiso University in Indiana, earning a B.S. in youth leadership training and, once again, health / physical education and recreation.

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Midland Depot at Divide T.H.E. Coalition and its Partners

At its 2007 annual meeting, T.H.E. Coalition honored three local organizations for their partnership in the Midland Depot at Divide Preservation Project. Marion Vance presented plaques to Lisa Lee of the Divide Chamber, Sandy King of Divide Park Board, and Sharon Quay of Rampart Library District (shown left to right in the photograph).



A working committee, headed by volunteer Dick Unzelman, has recently applied to Colorado State Historical Fund for an archeological assessment grant. Dick brings a wealth of knowledge to the project as well as a passion for railroads. He has 36 years program and project management experience in public and transportation facility development, with specific experience in facility planning and programming; contract administration; design and construction management; and cost, schedule and quality control.

T.H.E. Coalition board members contributing their time, energies and expertise to the MDAD working committee are Marion Vance, Dee Breitenfeld, Jane Lass, Dave Conley, and George Parkhurst. As requested, Chuck Severance of CRS Architects in Woodland Park, provides technical expertise. Chuck was the lead architect in developing the Depot structural assessment and site master plan. Nancy Desilets serves as staff coordinator for the MDAD project.

In the near future, T.H.E. Coalition will form additional functional Depot committees. Call Nancy at 651-5339 to volunteer. *Let’s get the Depot back on track!*

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T.H.E. Coalition Board of Directors meets 4 – 6 pm on the fourth Wednesday of January, March, May, July, and September at the Woodland Park Public Library.

Teller Historic and Environmental Coalition is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. Members of T.H.E. Coalition include nonprofit organizations, county agencies, and local businesses that share a common mission: *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.*

Dee Breitenfeld *(continued from Page 3)*

Dee furthered her education with an M.S. from MacMurray College in Illinois and did post graduate courses at colleges and universities throughout the country.

Dee's first career was as a teacher, beginning at the high school level then at Concordia Teachers College, and ultimately at Indiana State University. At ISU she was Director of Undergraduate Professional Education in the Physical Education Department and also coached women's athletics including tennis, her own "sport of choice."

In 1989, Dee returned to Woodland Park and has been here ever since. Her love of history led her to manage "Jerry's Junque," an antiques and collectibles retail store, where the Martini Hut now stands. Next came her own shop, "Mountain Mercantile" in the former location of Woodland Liquors next to Travel Trek. Dee now leases space in the Colorado Country Antique Mall on 21st Street in Colorado Springs.



Dee today, on her way to or from one of her many volunteer activities

Being interested in people plus having a fondness for history and deep respect for the environment led Dee to volunteer with Ute Pass Historical Society. One thing led to another, and she became involved with Teller County Centennial Committee, which led to election as a founding member of T.H.E. Coalition board, which led to chairmanship of Teller County Historic Preservation Advisory Board ...and so on. Dee is a charter member of Faith Lutheran Church and is an ad hoc officer of Faith Ladies Guild.

Of Interest ...

Thanks to the **City of Woodland Park** and **Ute Pass Historical Society**, T.H.E. Coalition has temporary office space in the Centennial Trailhead Building located at 710 West Midland (US Hwy 24 W and CO Hwy 67 S). Nancy Desilets staffs the space on Mondays, 10:30 am—1 pm, other times by appointment.

Speaking of **Ute Pass Historical Society**, T.H.E. Coalition is indebted to UPHS for its continued participation in preservation of the Midland Depot at Divide. The organization has been and continues to be an enthusiastic partner in planning and promoting the project.

And speaking of the Midland Depot at Divide, T.H.E. Coalition recognizes and thanks **Intermountain Rural Electric Association** for its generous support for the Depot Preservation project.

The **Nonprofit Resource Center** at **Woodland Park Public Library** has tools for grant-writers and fundraisers. The Center, sponsored by T.H.E. Coalition and **Rampart Library District**, is open during Library hours. You'll find it in the Colorado Room on the second floor of the Library.