

# Mountain Park NEWS

Summer 2015 • Vol. 16 Num. 3

## I am Still in Love

After what wound up as the wettest and chilliest month of May that I can recall, today, the second day of June, feels like summer may just be on its way after all. I'm not usually one to complain about the weather, and it certainly is nice to see so much green, to hear the creek crashing over the rocks, and to smell the land verdant with moisture. But, I admit, I am ready for some summer weather.

To celebrate this momentous day of warmth and unthreatening skies, I set my feet onto the Northridge Trail and began a steady climb to the western top of the eroding granite batholith known as Devil's Canyon. After weeks of cool and cloudy days, these blue skies needed to be hiked under. And so here I sit, with Devil's Canyon and the rest of the park, the Beulah Valley as green as Ireland, Signal Mountain, the Plains and the hazy eastern horizon comprising a most pleasing viewshed.

The soundtrack for my hike included several happy-sounding birds – spotted towhees, black-headed grosbeaks, mountain chickadees, and dark-eyed juncos, to name a few. I am not hearing many of them right now due to a fairly strong wind that is filling my ears with its hum. When the wind does take a break, the bird songs return. I can also hear the happy and excited voices of many 5<sup>th</sup> grade students from Goodnight Elementary School coming from the Mace and Tower Trails, both of which are across the canyon and in the trees. Now and then I get a glimpse of students, but it is their voices that make their presence known, expressing their pleasure in spending another day in this perfect outdoor classroom under these glorious blue skies. They are in the park for their final day of Earth Studies, highlighted by a long hike to the Fire Tower as they learn about wildflowers and the basics of bird-watching.

All of these sounds – birds, wind, children – are music to my ears. Along with being such ideal habitat for so many species of birds, trees, wildflowers, and furry and scaly and squirmy creatures, Pueblo Mountain Park is such an ideal environment for learning about all of these fellow plants and animals with



"RANGE AFTER  
RANGE OF  
MOUNTAINS.  
YEAR AFTER YEAR  
AFTER YEAR.  
I AM STILL IN  
LOVE."  
~ GARY SNYDER





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environmental education for the  
community in order to create  
a citizenry that understands,  
respects, enjoys, and cares for  
themselves, their families, their  
community and the natural world.

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whom these students are sharing this little planet. It is my hope that along with learning about all of this fascinating natural history, they are also learning a few things about themselves. As John Muir so aptly put it, "I only went out for a walk and finally concluded to stay out till sundown, for going out, I found, was really going in."

My hike today has given me an opportunity to do a bit of "going in" myself. As many of you are likely aware, MPEC and I have been dancing with what has turned out to be a rather challenging transition over the past 18 months or so. After 15 years, I had realized that the time arrived for me to step back as MPEC's Executive Director. The first attempt at stepping down didn't work, so after some assessing and re-grouping, I am stepping down once again (see Jim Stuart's article on page nine for details). What keeps coming to mind today as I take this hike, and sit on this old granite, and look out at this park that has been such a part of my life, is this powerful little poem by Gary Snyder. "Range after range of mountains. Year after year after year. I am still in love."

These words say it all for me. My journey of creating MPEC has been so full of countless challenges – like hiking over mountain range after mountain range, year after year after year. And yet, after all the ups and downs, I am still in love with what MPEC does – bring people, especially young people, to Nature. I still believe connecting people with Nature is some of the most needed work to be done, here and everywhere. Yes, this transition has been difficult, but there are many more mountain ranges and years ahead, with so many children who will need to hike and look at flowers and birds and shout their joy through the trees. MPEC needs to be there to traverse those mountains so we can keep bringing children to Nature. I may no longer be running MPEC, but I am still in love with what MPEC does so well – connect people with Nature.

~ Dave Van Manen  
June 2, 2015

## Wet Numbers

By Dave Van Manen

For so many years, the topic of drought has frequently made it into the pages of *Mountain Park News*. Not always, as we've had some wet spells, but often. As I sit at my computer typing these words, I look out at the late morning sky on this late spring day and see that it is already more than 50% clouds. I just heard a clap of thunder. Another day with rain seems to be in the works; no, drought is not on my mind this time around. Wet is the word that best describes the weather lately!

This past winter saw an average amount of snowfall, with nearly half of it falling in the month of February. The snow season often begins in October, but not this past winter. I measured the first snow of a couple of inches on the morning of November 11, with 16.8" having fallen by the end of the month. December's 16.5" and January's 10.7" was boding poorly for any sort of decent snow totals for the season. Drought was in the air, and in my mind, halfway through the winter.

February wasn't adding up to all that much until the last week, when I measured over three feet, bringing the month's total to 53.6" and the season to date to 97.6". Hitting the seasonal average of 118" suddenly seemed like it was within reach.

Then March rolled in like a dry limp rag and stayed that way, bringing a paltry 5.2" of snow. April wasn't much better at 7.0" of snow, although April did bring a fair amount of rain. We went into May at 110.8" total of snow, not quite average. May will go into the record books as one of the wettest months of any year (details in a moment), but it also brought 6" of measurable snow on the mornings of the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, bringing the season total to 116.8" – essentially right on the head of an average amount of snowfall.

The wet story doesn't end there, however. Out of May's 31 days, only 8 have 0.00 entered as 24-hour precipitation total. As was the story for the rest of Colorado, May saw lots and lots and lots of rain in Beulah – and some chilly temps too. It wasn't necessarily winter, but it wasn't the warm spring-like month we all have come to expect once the weeks of May start adding up. What did add up, though, was the precipitation total, with 8.61" going into the books as May's total. So, at least for awhile, the thought of drought is spending a bit of time in the back-burner of my mind. At least for awhile!



# A Tale of Two Critters

By Dave Van Manen

Once upon a time, there was this lovely Mountain Park, owned by the City of Pueblo and managed by a bunch of folks who really loved the place. This park was – and still is – the home to all sorts of plants and animals – some obvious, like all those tall pine trees with the orange/brown bark (known as ponderosa pines) and large-eared deer (mule deer), and some not so obvious. Here is a look at a couple of the smaller inhabitants of Pueblo's Mountain Park – one seldom seen, one heard more than seen.

There is a short stretch of road just east of the park's main caretaker house (which was, incidentally, MPEC's headquarters from 2000 – 2008) that runs adjacent to a naturally moist area just uphill from the road. When the skies are generous with rain (read: May 2015), a usually unseen creature that likes this wet place sometimes creeps out onto that stretch of road and gives us an opportunity to see its slimy self. Gardeners are sometimes familiar with this kind of critter, as it can be quite the pesky pest in a garden. I am talking about a slug. I can't say it is an attractive animal to my eye, although my hunch is there are many birds that probably see it as most attractive, and tasty too!

Slugs, like snails, are gastropods; slugs are snails without a shell. Comprised of mostly water, they produce generous amounts of mucous and like to eat all sorts of plant material. My research hasn't led to any success in positively identifying just what species these slugs along the road are. They might be *Agriolimax reticulatus*, and then again they could be *Deroceras reticulatum*. As for a common name, until someone tells me otherwise, I'll call them Large Gray Garden Slugs, which range from gray to black and are common in Colorado. They are somewhat larger than the garden slugs I am familiar with; hence, the word Large.

Another critter that is more often heard than seen is a furry little package of enormous energy. Common in the park along the Devil's Canyon Trail, the pine squirrel is a very busy little tree squirrel that is quick to use its distinctive chattering alarm to let you know its



displeasure with your intrusion into its territory. Just the other day, I was out with a bunch of students when this loud chatter filled the

air. They all looked puzzled, as we had been hearing several birds and they wondered just what kind of bird they were hearing. When I told them it was a squirrel, they seemed surprised. A squirrel can make such a loud noise?

The pine squirrel, also known as a red squirrel or chickaree (not to be confused with the feathery chickadee), is active year round and lives in dense forests of conifer trees. Stands of Douglas and white firs are its preferred habitat in the park, where it feeds primarily on the seeds of these trees. It survives the cold winter months by busily cutting cones from tree branches in late summer and fall, then scurrying down to the ground and caching them in large middens found at the base of feeding trees.

A midden is a pile of cone scales, cores of eaten cones, and the harvested cones that will provide food throughout the winter. Middens under feeding trees used by many generations of squirrels can be several feet wide and up to two feet deep. Although heard more than seen, chickarees are not shy and can be easily seen if one takes the time to follow the alarm sound with their eyes.

Much pleasure can be found in taking the time to slow down and look for the less obvious natural residents of our amazing Pueblo Mountain Park. I love gazing at an enormous ponderosa pine and watching deer graze in the evening meadows. But there also is much wonder to be had in checking out the smaller members of the park community. Try it and see what you see – and hear!



# Another Year of Earth Studies is Now History

By Dave Van Manen and Taylor Driver



"AND THE DAY  
CAME WHEN  
THE RISK TO  
REMAIN TIGHT  
IN THE BUD  
WAS MORE  
PAINFUL THAT  
THE RISK IT  
TOOK TO  
BLOSSOM."  
~ ANAIS NIN

As another school year of the Earth Studies program comes to a close with the 5<sup>th</sup> graders from South Park Elementary spending the night at the Lodge, a little reflection seems appropriate.

The fall of 2002, after a couple of years of providing Pueblo District 60's 5<sup>th</sup> graders with a one-day outdoor-based experience, provided the pilot of this multi-day experiential program for a few schools, while the remaining 5th graders stayed with the one-day program. The David & Lucile Packard Foundation and the Sierra Club agreed that our vision for this program was a good one, so they provided the financial support during that first year of Earth Studies.

The years went by, and the Earth Studies program evolved. In 2008 the program grew to serve every District 60 5th grader, which the completion of the classroom spaces at the newly renovated Horseshoe Lodge allowed for. And now, year number thirteen comes

to a close, and Earth Studies continues. Along with many donors and members whose support keeps MPEC's programs going, we want to thank The Rawlings Foundation, the Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Mercy Ministry Fund, the Pueblo Day Nursery Foundation, the City and County of Pueblo CSAC grant, the New Belgium Brewing Foundation, the Southern Colorado Community

Foundation, Kathy & Alex Martinez, Pat & Harry Rurup, and Patrick & Mindy Meiering for their generous support of the Earth Studies program this past year. Without their support, the Earth Studies program would not have happened.

We have been looking ahead and planning for next school year's Earth Studies program for some time, but let me close this article with a story from MPEC's Program Director Taylor Driver that illustrates one of the countless ways that the Earth Studies program impacts our students:

All day, during one of MPEC's Earth Studies Mammals and Tracking sessions, one student wouldn't leave my side. Engaged, enthusiastic and actively asking questions that propelled the group into thoughtful discussions, this student was the top of the class. One of these questions was in regards to the topic of the different scale signs (small, medium, and large) that mammals leave behind and how we categorize those signs when we are tracking them. I saw the cogs turning in his head as he thoughtfully turned to me and asked, "How would we categorize a smell, like if a skunk sprays, or we smell a dead animal?"

Having been around this student all day, and seeing his investment in what we were learning, I was surprised when my group arrived at the bus at the end of the day and the teacher pulled me aside and asked, "How was \_\_\_\_? I hope he didn't cause you too much trouble today." After a short discussion about how the student in question had been the most well-behaved and attentive student that day, I quickly learned that that was not often the case in the classroom. The point of this story is that this student, with a simple change of environment, and the opportunity for hands on learning, along with a topic of interest, excelled.

The Earth Studies program provides experiences like this every day!



# SUMMER CLASSES, PROGRAMS, WORKSHOPS & RETREATS AT MPEC

For all the details, pricing, and to register for these programs, go to MPEC's website at [www.hikeandlearn.org](http://www.hikeandlearn.org) and click on PROGRAMS. If you need assistance with registering on-line, or if you do not have access to a computer, please call 719-485-4444.



- ❦ **Summer Solstice Drum Circle** Drum in the summer season at this fun and informal gathering around the fire circle. **Sat, Jun 20, 6:30-8pm**
- ❦ **MPEC at Buell Children's Museum**  
Come see us at the Children's Museum as we participate in their "Colorful Colorado-Camp Create-a-lot" theme. Our presentations for little ones will be on mammals and birds of Pueblo Mountain Park, along with a fun art activity. Thursdays, noon – 2pm: Jun 25, Jul 23, and Aug 20. (*Admission to the Children's Museum is required.*)
- ❦ **Summer Fireside Chat** SARDOC- Search and Rescue Dogs of Colorado with Ina Bernard and Scott Robertshaw. **Fri, Jul 10, 7pm**
- ❦ **Summer Evening Yoga Hike** Enjoy a wonderful summer evening as we saunter among the trees and hills of the Mountain Park, stopping here and there to do some yoga led by yoga instructor Julie Emmons. **Fri, Jul 17, 6:30pm**
- ❦ **9<sup>th</sup> Annual Pueblo Mountain Park Butterfly Count** Guided by Mark Yaeger of the Arkansas Valley Audubon Society, this morning saunter should lead us to many species of butterflies. No experience necessary. **Sat, July 25, 9am**
- ❦ **Nature Toddlers** A wonderful way to enjoy Nature with your littlest one(s). Music, exploration, discovery, a gentle hike, fun! **Fridays at 10am: Jul 31, Aug 28, Sept 18**
- ❦ **Yoga in Nature Women's Retreat** A MPEC summer tradition that combines the beauty of Nature with the healing and restorative powers of Nature, taught by Beth McCarthy. Come for the whole weekend, includes lodging or meals, or for the day. **Sat - Sun, Aug 29-30**
- ❦ **MPEC's Founder's Picnic** Enjoy a late summer picnic at the Pavilion with MPEC's Board of Trustees as we recognize and thank "Ranger Dave" Van Manen for starting MPEC back in the late 90s. **Sat, Sept 12, 11am – 2pm.**
- ❦ **Autumn Equinox Drum Circle** Acknowledge the halfway point between the summer and winter solstices around MPEC's fire circle. **Fri, Sept 18, 6:30-8pm**

"I LOVE HOW  
SUMMER  
JUST WRAPS  
IT'S ARMS  
AROUND YOU  
LIKE A WARM  
BLANKET."  
~ KELLIE  
ELMORE

**MPEC sends a big thank you** to Becky Brown, Ruth Ann Amey, Pam Kubly, Elaine Sartoris, Jan Myers, Anne Whitfield, Anne Moulton, and Carol Kyte for putting the spring newsletter mailing together; Steve Douglas for all the help with the forest stewardship work; Shawna Shoaf for designing the newsletter, posters and many other printed items; Becky Brown, Pam Kubly, Elaine Sartoris, Jan Myers, Helen Philipsen, Anne Moulton and Trish Neff for putting the scholarship fund-raising letter together; Gary Kyte for making the beautiful new wooden trail signs; Laura Leyba for several days of volunteering helping out with various projects; Victor Reyes & the group from Minnequa Elementary and the 6<sup>th</sup> graders from Goodnight Elementary for volunteering with forest stewardship projects; and Elaine Sartoris for making donations in Memory of Sue Moore and Iris Lara; and CMHIP Recreational Therapists for donating Hats and gloves for Earth Studies, and pottery dishes for the kitchen.



# Guided Hikes - Summer

"HOW CAN YOU EXPLAIN THAT YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT THE TREES ARE STILL THERE, AND THE HILLS AND THE SKY? ANYONE KNOWS THEY ARE. HOW CAN YOU SAY IT IS TIME YOUR PULSE RESPONDED TO ANOTHER RHYTHM, THE RHYTHM OF THE DAY AND THE SEASON INSTEAD OF THE HOUR AND THE MINUTE? NO, YOU CANNOT EXPLAIN. SO YOU WALK."

~ AUTHOR UNKNOWN, FROM NEW YORK TIMES EDITORIAL, "THE WALK," OCTOBER 25, 1967



There will be no reason to explain why you want to join in on a guided hike in Pueblo Mountain Park, but you really should come on up to see if the trees are indeed still here. It is best to dress for varying weather, wear a sunhat and sunscreen, and wear good hiking shoes. Also bring along a water bottle and snacks on these moderately strenuous hikes that are educational and fun. Unless otherwise stated, most hikes last from two to three hours and are appropriate for adults and children over 12. Group size usually limited to 15; members free, non-members \$5. **Registration required:** [www.hikeandlearn.org](http://www.hikeandlearn.org) or (719) 485-4444.

- 🐾 **Sat, Jun 20, 9am, Summer Solstice Hike** Celebrate the arrival of summer on a morning hike along the flowery trails of Pueblo Mountain Park.
- 🐾 **Wed, July 1, 6:30pm, Full Moon Music Hike** Have you ever noticed that time seems to be slipping by, faster and faster? Well, don't let summer slip by without getting out on a MPEC Full Moon Hike. Be out among the pines as July's "Thunder" Moon rises over the ridge that separates the Beulah Valley from the eastern plains – a magical experience.
- 🐾 **Sun, Jul 12, 9am, "Zuke's" July Walk Your Dog Hike** MPEC's guided hikes for folks and their dogs have been very popular, so we're doing one each month. Your dog friends will also be treated with healthy snacks provided by Zuke's Dog Treats! Dogs must be leashed.
- 🐾 **Fri, Jul 17, 6:30pm Summer Evening Yoga Hike** Enjoy a wonderful summer evening as we saunter among the trees and hills of the Mountain Park, stopping here and there to do some yoga led by yoga instructor Julie Emmons.
- 🐾 **Sat, July 25, 9am, Butterfly Count** This excursion is less of a hike and more of a saunter that stays pretty much to the park's roads, in search of butterflies. This is the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Butterfly Count in Pueblo Mountain Park, guided by Mark Yaeger of the Arkansas Valley Audubon Society. No experience is necessary. Bring close-focus binoculars and/or a digital camera if you have them (although they are not necessary).
- 🐾 **Fri, July 31, 7pm, Blue Moon Hike** A month with a second full moon is known as the Blue Moon, and we'll be out on this mid-summer evening sauntering along the trail of Pueblo Mountain Park.
- 🐾 **Sat, Aug 22, 9am, "Zuke's" August Walk Your Dog Hike** We offer our Walk Your Dog Hike for all you hikers who want to bring your dog along, with the added bonus of healthy treats for your pooch. Dogs must be leashed.
- 🐾 **Fri, Aug 28, 7pm, Full Moon Hike** Autumn is fast approaching, so if you want to enjoy a summer evening hiking underneath August's "Green Corn Moon" on a MPEC Guided Hike, this is your last chance.
- 🐾 **Sun, Sept 13, 10am, "Zuke's" September Walk Your Dog Hike** A late summer hike with your pooch through ponderosa pine woods – a great way to spend a Sunday morning. Dogs must be leashed.
- 🐾 **Sat, Sept 19, 1pm, Autumn Equinox Hike** Acknowledge the arrival of fall on this hike in Colorado's lovely southern foothills.



# Floods No More?

By Dave Van Manen

I can still remember that first massive downpour. It was a late Sunday afternoon in late July 2013 when a thunderstorm of biblical proportions opened the floodgates (somewhat literally). In less than an hour, over three inches of rain poured down, and much of it wound up in the basement of the Horseshoe Lodge. A couple of weeks later, with the basement cleaned up and pretty much dried out, the same thing happened again. Ugh!

When we renovated the Horseshoe Lodge between 2008 and 2012, one thing we were not aware of was how vulnerable the Lodge was to basement flooding. Built at the bottom of a gently sloping hill, with its horseshoe shape open to the slope, thunderstorms with large amounts of water in a short time send lots of rain toward that open horseshoe. Equipped with wholly inadequate storm drains out front, much of that water winds up in the basement.

OK, we thought, time to find a solution. After talking with several folks with experience dealing with such issues, we landed on a plan. Recognizing the funding limitations that we would be dealing with, the option of installing new 12" storm drain pipes to replace the too-small ones that run underneath the lodge's west wing was soon considered out of our price range. But we all were confident that the plan we came up with was a good one: Dig out an area to serve as a holding pond; lower the storm drains; install a bunch of stem walls and other water-diversion structures; and redesign the handicap ramp, including a roof over it. The project was projected to cost around \$35,000.

The Frank Lamb Foundation came through with a grant, and much of the work was completed during the spring of 2014. As the year wore on, delays associated with installing the roof over the ramp – the last remaining task to be done – dragged the project into 2015. With assistance from the City's engineers, a roof design was finally approved. As of this writing, the project is essentially complete save for a little finish work on the new railing and some paint.



*Left to right, Ted Sillox with Sierra Homes, Shane Ewing (MPEC's Maintenance Director), and Martu Bechina with Sierra Homes.*

So, with fingers crossed, we believe the Horseshoe Lodge is now much better prepared to handle a major downpour. It has already seen some significant rain, but still hasn't had to handle one of those three- or four- or five-inch per hour rates of rainfall. One of these days it probably will. Like I said, fingers are crossed!

MPEC sends a huge thank you to the Frank Lamb Foundation. Through the years, this foundation has supported many MPEC projects, and we can't begin to express how appreciative we are for the support of all of these projects, including the flood mitigation project highlighted here. We also want to thank Marty Bechina with Sierra Homes. Marty donated a fair chunk of his time to help keep this project from costing more than the grant dollars that we had. Marty knows the good work that MPEC does quite well, as he works part time as one of our Earth Studies field educators. If you are looking for a good contractor, give Marty a call (544-6097; 647-2369) – we highly recommend his work. Lastly, thank you to the volunteers who spread the grass seed in the newly dug holding pond and other areas in front of the lodge. Like MPEC itself, this flood mitigation project truly was a grassroots effort – thanks to all who made it happen!



Visit MPEC's on-line donor page at our website. You can easily and securely renew your membership or make a donation using your credit card at our new web link. Just go to **www.hikeandlearn.org** click on **Help MPEC Grow**. Thanks!



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# Singing to the Choir

By Lamar Trant, MPEC Board of Trustees

Everyone reading the *Mountain Park News* is likely more enamored with Nature and all its wonders than the average person. How did this first begin? What has been different in our lives than some of our friends or acquaintances who ask, "Why do you want to walk all day and sweat and get all dirty?" when we are talking excitedly about a recent hike or camping trip.

For me, I feel like I was born outside. Pictures as a young child involve me playing with bugs or reptiles, building a tree house, riding horses or on a family camping trip with smoke all around (my father wasn't that good at starting fires, but he WAS safe). Growing up in the South, in the winter, and Colorado in the summer, there were plenty of opportunities to play outside. My parents were often doing something out of doors as well. Outside always felt more like home to me.

After getting a serious job, like many folks, the playing outside diminished and I needed to become more intentional in order to get my daily "fix". Daily runs or walks were great but I seemed to need something to get me back to the mountains. The opportunity to become a member of the Mountain Park Environmental Center Board of Trustees came up several years ago and I thought this would be a perfect time to help support an incredible mission while also becoming reunited with Beulah and Pueblo Mountain Park.

One of the highlights of my time on the Board occurred in late May of this year when I got to hike with 5th graders from Baca Elementary up the Tower Trail. They were there for their fifth and final Earth Studies class of the year which focuses on flowers and birds. Ranger Sandy, who has a wealth of knowledge, was incredible in reviewing trail etiquette, pointing out the many species of flowers, and engaging all the kids in the word lessons and the world lessons of the trail.



*A young Lamar Trant (right) with some friends on a family camping trip.*

Some of these children had never been to the mountains before this year and now, after four previous full-day Earth Studies adventures, they seemed totally at home navigating the steep and muddy trail, identifying animal tracks, scat and different trees and watching a bear with binoculars in the field below. As we were watching the bear in the field down near the bus (and my car!), I realized it was time for me to leave the group to hike back down to the Lodge for our Board meeting. I kind of wished I was in 5th grade so I could stay but I packed up my best whistling and noise making skills and headed down, keenly aware that the bear did not know or respect that I was a Board member. Fortunately we didn't meet up and I made it to the Board meeting but...my...mind...was still enjoying being on the Tower Trail with those kids.

Speaking of being a member of MPEC's Board of Trustees, we are currently in need of a few new Board members. Might you have an interest in serving on MPEC's Board? It's a great way to "give back," and it's a great way to be more involved in making so many great things happen in Pueblo Mountain Park. If you would like more information, please send me an e-mail ([lamarcbe@hotmail.com](mailto:lamarcbe@hotmail.com)) and I'd be happy to give you more details about serving this great organization as a MPEC Board member.



# The Best of Both Worlds

by Jim Stuart, Chair of Board of Trustees

Change is again upon us at the Mountain Park Environmental Center. As I am sure many of you recall, we made a management change in January of 2014 to allow Dave Van Manen to back off from his many duties as Executive Director so he could focus on the aspects of our organization that are dearest to him and less stressful, programs and development. The management plan we put together at that time didn't pan out as we had hoped, and so Dave agreed in September 2014 to take back the reins of MPEC until we could find an experienced manager to replace him as Executive Director.

I am happy to report that the Board of Trustees has hired David King to be our new ED. David has many years of experience as a manager in the for-profit world in the Durango area. He moved to Beulah with his wife Nancy several years ago and lives just a quarter mile up the road from the Pueblo Mountain Park entrance. His engineering education, management experience and love of nature make him a perfect fit to help move MPEC to the next level. Meanwhile, Dave Van Manen is still our "Ranger Dave" as Founder/Special Projects Coordinator and doing the things he loves most, while continuing to be the heart and soul of the Mountain Park Environmental Center.

The Board of Trustees believes this new management structure gives us the best of both worlds and puts these two wonderfully talented and experienced men where they can best use their skillsets to enrich and grow our organization and fulfill our mission which means so much to all of us.



*MPEC's new Executive Director David King and MPEC's Founder Dave Van Manen will be working together so many more children, like the child in this photo, can experience the wonders of Nature through MPEC.*

"HERE IS YOUR COUNTRY. CHERISH THESE NATURAL WONDERS, CHERISH THE NATURAL RESOURCES, CHERISH THE HISTORY AND ROMANCE AS A SACRED HERITAGE, FOR YOUR CHILDREN AND YOUR CHILDREN'S CHILDREN. DO NOT LET SELFISH MEN OR GREEDY INTERESTS SKIN YOUR COUNTRY OF ITS BEAUTY, ITS RICHES OR ITS ROMANCE." ~ THEODORE ROOSEVELT

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"FOR MY  
PART I KNOW  
NOTHING  
WITH ANY  
CERTAINTY,  
BUT THE SIGHT  
OF THE STARS  
MAKES ME  
DREAM"  
~ VINCENT  
VAN GOGH

# A Day in the Park

*Editor's note: This note was written by a gentleman who recently visited Pueblo Mountain Park. As the note indicates, he used to visit the park many years ago when he was a child. His recent visit apparently sparked some good memories. I bet some of you have some good memories associated with the park. Please send them to Dave Van Manen, [mpec@hikeandlearn.org](mailto:mpec@hikeandlearn.org), and we will put them in the newsletter.*

A day in the park began with a twenty-something mile bike ride to the park. We had many rides to the park beginning with stingrays and graduating to 10-speeds with the many gears. There were times when 12 to 15 would ride together and it was focused on a day of war and taking the tower. There was a lot of play time on the swings, ballgames with a stick and rock rather than a bat and ball.

What a pleasure to have access to the park and great to hear that the park is alive and thriving.

Sincerely, Bill Kerr

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