

CATS ON A MOUNTAIN

By: Bob Johnson, Director CATS



On July 17-19, 2015 Colorado Addicted Trail-builders Society (CATS) arrived at Lory State Park to work on Timber Trail at the top the mountain (no-name) to the North of Arthurs Rock. This adventure was CATS second camping trip in 2015. CATS made arrangements with the state park earlier in the year to utilize several of the back country campsites and set up a trail work station for a weekend. A mobile trail crew would then have the flexibility to move up and down the trail – repairing trail. “Our mission involved a multitude of trail repairs not far from the back country campsites on Timber Trail.”

An earlier walk-thru with Park Resource Technician, Cameron Landis, helped provide CATS with clear expectations of the proposed project. CATS agreed to repair trail fixtures, fix corridor issues, improve existing drainages, redefine trail in certain areas, limb back some dead snags, and generally make the trail safe for all user groups. The range of trail work extended up to approximately six tenths of a mile.



Late afternoon of Friday, September 17, CATS was at the park maintenance facility assimilating and loading personal camping gear, trail tools, food, and kitchen equipment into two park vehicle's and one 'mule' (mechanized) for the long trip up the fire road to the back country campsites. Cameron Landis and his park staff assisted our group in transporting all our gear. The ride to the top was scenic and memorable for some of us in the mule. Actually, the ride set the mood and excitement level for the whole weekend. CATS members were very motivated and practiced decent teamwork in unloading, packing equipment into the

campsites and setting up a respectable looking field headquarters for the weekend. We bid our park officials farewell as they had to return that night with the assumption that they would return on Sunday at 3 pm.



CATS members set about erecting the camp and their personal tents. Later the crew ate a scrumptious dinner and sat about watching the stars, meteors, and other strange objects in the sky. The stars and ever expanding universe was very vivid that night. Star gazing is so much fun in the comfort of your own camp chair and on top of a mountain.

Early morning joggers and bikers were astonished to see our camp and I am sure they were wondering 'how we got all that stuff up there?' CATS does not travel light. We have a 10x10 tent for the camp kitchen, tables, stoves, and coolers – almost a whole house. After breakfast, clean up, securing the camp and preparing personal trail lunches, we set off down the trail to the most challenging aspect of the whole weekend.

CATS expanded a piece of trail that was pinched by slab rock – causing all bikers to dismount and walk the bike over the obstruction. Our crew chipped and banged away for hours on the stone, busting it up and eventually enlarging the trail. A new mono-wall was installed in addition to the clear passageway. This repair was made in approximately three hours by four members of CATS. Trail repairs extended up the trail from this point forward. Other accomplishments included: stone steps, some social trail closures, rip-rap hillsides and drainages, stone water bar enhancements and repairs, creation of several new water bars/nicks, corridor clearing in all areas, limbing a burned snag that was too close to the trail, and back slope reconstruction.



A two pm thunderstorm drove us 'up' the mountain and back to our camp in a hurry. The 20 minute deluge enabled our crew to witness the awesome velocity and volume of water in concentrated areas, ex gr. - the trail. The rain caused a water torrent down the path and forced many of us out and up on higher ground.

It is so easy to see how water works as it finds its way on the trail. In essence, our job was to help water find its way 'off' the trail. Water is the number one maintenance foe for trail repair groups.

Soaking wet crew members filed into the camp at their own pace. Fitting up with dry clothing, putting on rain slickers, and huddling in the command tent was the portrait later that afternoon.

When the clouds parted we again were able to enjoy another outdoor dinner feast and watch the heavens.



Sunday morning was active with a quick breakfast, followed by tearing down the camp and restoring the area applying 'Leave No Trace' methods.

We set out down the trail for one bigger whack on

Timber Trail. Actually, the hike provided a wealth of insight on how water gets off the trail. We were able to fix numerous drainages. In addition, we cleared away encroaching tree limbs, pulled back sloughing backslope, improved stone step alignments, and even removed a large rotten tree stump in the middle of the trail.

By two o'clock we were finished and found our way back up the mountain to the welcome sight of our extraction team - Lory State Park officials. Cameron and his daughter walked the trail improvements and were very pleased with the results.



Thus ended our second camping trip/outing for the CATS group in 2015 and we were quite proud.

For more photos and info – check out our Facebook page (without joining) and website.

<https://www.facebook.com/trailcats.org>

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