

New trail ready for use in the Hogbacks Open Space Park

By Carie Canterbury

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Charles Rann, of the Cañonland Walkers & Hikers; Monica McGowan, director of the Hogbacks Preservation Society; Jo Rann of the Cañonland Walkers & Hikers; Kristyn Econome, assistant director of the Lower Arkansas Valley Mountain Biking Association; Cañon City Director of Parks and Facilities Rex Brady; and Tony Boone of Tony Boone Trails, walk the new non-motorized multiple-use trail in the Hogbacks Open Space Park on Tuesday. *(Carie Canterbury / Daily Record)*



Tony Boone of Tony Boone Trails works to create a new non-motorized multiple-use trail in the Hogbacks Open Space Park. *(Courtesy Photo)*

Cañon City's backyard is probably one of the biggest and most recreational in the region, and it keeps getting better and better for those who like to walk, bicycle or ride horses. A new segment of the Hogbacks Open Space Park trail system is completed and ready for use, and it's in the community's backyard.

Tony Boone of Tony Boone Trails on Tuesday completed the two-mile, non-motorized multiple-use trail. The trail may be accessed from High Street or Floral. There is no signage, but the trail is open.

"I am pretty impressed with the number of neighbors who actually use this," he said. "Some days, there were 15 or 20 people out here walking their dogs or just out getting exercise.

"I think it's really important that people should have trails in their backyard."

Cañon City Director of Parks and Facilities Rex Brady said the project truly is a community effort.

"That is the only way things happen, is when people get involved, come up with a good idea and get together and make it happen," he said. "That's what happened here."

The strength behind the project is community — citizen commitment and expertise, said Monica McGowan, director of the Hogbacks Preservation Society.

"This effort shows the true partnership and collaboration of local sources and resources," she said. "The Hogback Open Space Park will offer recreational, economic and environmental benefits to Cañon City."

The trail is good for beginner bicyclists, said Kristyn Econome, assistant director of the Lower Arkansas Valley Mountain Biking Association.

"I invite anybody to check out the new bench-cut trail to see what a sustainable trail looks like and feels like," she said.

Charles and Jo Rann of the Cañonland Walkers & Hikers and neighbors of the Hogbacks area said they look forward to supporting the effort.

"This is great," Charles Rann said Tuesday after seeing the new trail for the first time. "I think this really is an interesting area."

Boone said the economic impact of a high-quality trail system brings in a significant amount of tourism dollars to a community. Not hundreds or thousands, he said, but millions.

"A trail system can significantly add to the non-consumptive outdoor recreation opportunities in this town," he said.

This new portion of the trail is funded through a Great Outdoors Colorado Mini Grant. It is part of a larger trail system being completed piece by piece. The Mile High Youth Corps began work on a new three-quarter mile ridge trail, just past the dinosaur footprint on Skyline Drive in October, and they will return for four weeks in the spring to complete it.

Brady said work now will begin on the Core Trail, which will be seven- to eight-feet wide, and should be complete by the end of January. The Core Trail in the Hogbacks area will utilize culverts and inlets to accommodate the water drainage of the Hogbacks area and will help conserve geological and paleontological artifacts located in the Hogbacks.

Those also involved in the trail project but not present Tuesday is Jon Stone and the Garden Park Paleontology Society for being the nonprofit umbrella, Kalem Leonard of the Bureau of Land Management for much of the design work and flagging and Brian LeDoux who helped with the design work and creation of maps.

To view a map of the Hogbacks trail system, visit
<http://www.crankpedalers.com/mountain.html>.

*Carie Canterbury: 719-276-7643, canterburyc@canoncitydailyrecord.com or
twitter.com/cariecanterbury*