

GEORGETOWN SILVER PLUME HISTORIC DISTRICT PUBLIC LANDS COMMISSION

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Clear Creek County, Clear Creek Ranger District USFS, Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife, History Colorado,
Town of Georgetown, Town of Silver Plume, Historic Georgetown Inc.

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The Historic District Public Lands Commission held five regular, and one special, meeting and two field sessions during 2012. The year was marked by work on several ongoing goals of the HDPLC: the bridge on the Georgetown-Guanella Pass Trail, renamed the Rutherford Trail, was completed, a trail marking program was initiated, a number of road issues were addressed and a plan for the stabilization and preservation of the Santiago Mill was begun.

The building of the bridge on the Rutherford Trail was an exciting adventure. The Town of Georgetown housed the grant from Colorado State Trails which provided for the design, construction and oversight of the project. Matching funds were supplied by the Clear Creek Open Space Commission, the Town of Georgetown and the HDPLC. The Town also supplied some of the materials as an in kind service. Clear Creek Technical Services developed the design of an intricate two part structure which rises at a 14 degree angle along the shore before crossing the cascade at an 8 degree angle. Tim Davis Welding from Empire, in company with Tony Brittle contractor from Silver Plume, took on the challenge and manually hauled concrete to the site and swung glulams across the torrent. The result is a beautiful bridge and the beginning of the trail on the historic Chicago Lake Wagon Road. The recent acquisition by CCC Open Space of the Capitol Central Claims in Silver Dale will make it possible for the Rutherford trail to tie directly into the Silver Dale trails.

Trails were further improved last spring when the Clear Creek County Metropolitan Recreation District undertook a trail marking program on the Argentine Central railroad grade out of Silver Plume. CCCMRD also visited Silver Dale and expressed interest in completing some way finding marking there. It is hoped that this spring will also see some of the much needed trail head signing.

Use of historic roads continues to be an issue for the HDPLC. The Commission was granted the right by the Board of County Commissioners to use historic mining roads as trails with the HDPLC lands. Saxon Mountain Road was to remain open for high clearance vehicle use. Accidents and rockfall on the Saxon Road have encouraged the County Commissioners to limit the use of the road. An initiative to have the cell tower owners provide road maintenance is still unresolved. Later in the year, a prospecting company began work at the base of the 7:30 Road also used as a non motorized HDPLC trail. The level of use is unclear. Clarification of motorized and non motorized uses is high on the HDPLC 2013 agenda.

Reestablishment of the Guanella Pass Scenic ByWay Committee was discussed although no action is yet taken. This committee may be increasingly important in light of a USFS and Xcel agreement on establishment of designated and dispersed campgrounds. The Open Space Commission purchase of the Oakley properties at the start of the Waldorf Road ties directly to advancing the low impact recreation objectives of the HDPLC including designated camping. That initiative could potentially assist HDPLC members plan for recreational use around the Waldorf cut off.

Goals for 2013 will include a trails inventory, work on the Rutherford Trail, a preservation plan for the Santiago Mill, signing trails, and reestablishing the Guanella Pass Scenic ByWay Committee

The HDPLC meets the third Wednesday of every other month: January, March, May (July in the field), September and November at the Georgetown Town Hall. The public is always welcome.