

Independence Pass Foundation 2010 Annual Report



Mark Fuller Photo

Hikers approach the summit parking area from Blue Peak north of the Pass. Beautiful autumn weather extended the hiking season in 2010.

The Independence Pass Foundation continued to accomplish important goals and carry out long planned projects on the Pass in 2010. We began the year with moderate expectations due to the difficult economy and the need to conserve our resources, but the generosity of our partners and supporters enabled us to move forward with many projects aimed at a safer, greener and more beautiful Independence Pass. This Annual Report will bring you, our friends and supporters, up to date on IPF activities over the past year.

As in previous years, we have many partners and supporters to acknowledge for their contributions. The

City of Aspen and Pitkin County continue to be generous with grant funding and logistical support; the work crews supplied by the Colorado Department of Corrections are an invaluable source of labor that performs the hard and hazardous work beyond the capabilities of even the most enthusiastic volunteer; Aspen Middle School and Aspen Country Day School provide us with an opportunity to reach out and involve the next generation of environmental stewards; and our many contributors, volunteers and contractors continue to support us with their time, their expertise and their dollars. IPF is truly the beneficiary of the community's caring for Independence Pass. We are honored to represent all who love the Pass in our everyday work.

Chip Duncan Photo



Judith Olesen Photo

Judith Olesen Photo



Clockwise: DBS Helicopters delivers bundled snow fencing. Aspen Earthmoving operator John Marlow loads material into dumpster. Executive Director Mark Fuller and Doug Sheffer congratulate each other on the completion of a successful project. Leadville Ranger District personnel: Jon Morrissey, Ranger, David Lovato, Safety Officer and Recreation Special Uses Administrator, Jeni Windorski, Wildlife Biologist, and Doug Sheffer.



Judith Olesen Photo

Removing the snow fencing . . .

Completion of the snow fence removal project was our most important and high profile accomplishment this year. We partnered with DBS Helicopters, Rifle, Colorado, which donated a day and a half of helicopter time to this project. This outstanding act of generosity and caring allowed us to complete this project at minimal expense, and we are very grateful to Doug Sheffer, DBS owner/operator, and his co-workers.

On September 27, we enlisted a crew of 20 people, made up of U.S. Forest Service employees from Leadville, Aspen and elsewhere, as well as citizen volunteers

(including several IPF Board members), to tackle the snow fence remaining in the Mountain Boy Gulch area just east of the summit of the Pass. Most of the crew climbed to the top of Mountain Boy, and spent the day sorting and strapping loads while the helicopter made trip after trip from the top of Mountain Boy to the staging area along Highway 82 about 1.5 miles east of the summit. That day the helicopter made 88 round-trips, creating a large stockpile of metal debris for transfer to Rocky Mountain Recycling in Denver.

On the following Monday, October 4, we returned to clean up 99% of the remaining fencing. Only a few stray pieces are now left on the tundra where they were blown into steep and dangerous locations by the high winds that scour the Pass. Our sincere thanks go to DBS Helicopters and to the Leadville Ranger District of the U.S. Forest Service for their invaluable contributions to this project. Other important partners included A-1 Traffic Control, Aspen Earthmoving, CiteWaste Management Services, Rocky Mountain Recycling, and the Colorado Department of Transportation. We also express our gratitude to the many donors and volunteers who helped with this major project over the years.

Despite 2010's success, we are not finished with the snow fence cleanup. Our next project will be to remove hundreds of steel rebar stakes that still litter the tundra. These reinforcement bars consist of 1.5- to 2-foot steel dowels that were pounded into the ground to act as anchors for the fencing many years ago. Most of them are deeply embedded in the soil where they pose a hazard to hikers and skiers.

Removing the bars will be time-consuming as they will need to be extracted one by one and packed out. Nevertheless, we are confident that, with the help of our many volunteers and partners, we will be able to restore the tundra to its natural state over the next few years.

Continuing compost blanket work . . .

We continued to install compost blanket below the road along the Top Cut in 2010. This project was cut short by weather conditions in 2009, but 2010's beautiful fall weather meant that we were able to make up for 2009's abbreviated project and extend our work to new areas. In fact, 2010 weather was ideal in almost every respect for IPF's work. A cool, moist spring, many hot summer days and a dry and extended fall created good conditions for installing new plant materials and growing what was installed previously.

The compost-blanketed area is showing significant signs of robust grass and flower growth, and the formerly barren areas below the road are beginning to look healthy and green. One or two more years of compost blanket work will complete the large-scale revegetation work below the road although we will continue to plant nursery stock and tree seedlings in this area for the foreseeable future.

Our 2011 compost blanket project will be funded in part by a \$60,000 ISTEA grant from the Federal Highway Administration that we were awarded in 2010.



Mark Fuller Photo

Grass and flowers are growing in the compost-blanketed areas on the once barren slopes below the Top Cut.

Improving trails . . .

We continued our improvements to the Braille and Discovery Trails in 2010. The U.S. Forest Service felled dozens of hazardous trees, improving safety and opening the area to welcome sunshine. IPF's inmate labor crew from the Buena Vista Correctional Facility then sectioned and stacked the downed wood for firewood use.

The inmates also spent a day thinning the forest along the road to encourage more robust growth by the remaining trees and to reduce fire hazard. In addition, two more signs were added to the Discovery Trail, finally completing the signage in that location. In 2011, we hope to install a new entrance sign with information about the trails and the surrounding area as well as a new sign along the highway alerting drivers to the turnoff for the trails.

Mark Fuller Photos



Mark Fuller Photo

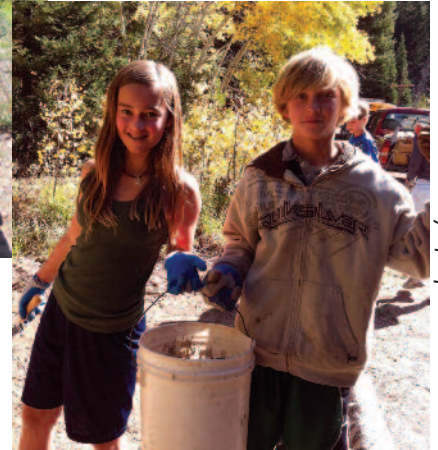


Photo Courtesy of Aspen Middle School

Left: A local group of Maroon Corps volunteers planted 200 seedling trees below the Top Cut in August. Center: Aspen Country Day School students take pride in helping to make the Pass more green. Right: Every fall, a new group of Aspen Middle School students assist with a planting project.

Planting on the Pass . . .

Extensive planting projects in 2010 utilized local school groups, volunteers and an inmate crew from the Buena Vista Correctional Facility. Volunteers from the Maroon Corps, a local group of young environmental activists, planted 200 seedling trees below the Top Cut in August. In October, a group organized as part of Global Climate Action Day on 10/10/10 planted 10 large spruce trees plus many seedlings near the Winter Gate.

School groups from Aspen Country Day School and Aspen Middle School planted in a number of areas, including at the Grottos parking area where the installation of new toilets created some bare ground to be reclaimed and at the Lodgepole Pine Nursery near the Lincoln Creek Campground. The nursery was first planted in 2009, but survival rates were poor so we did extensive re-planting in 2010. The inmate crew also planted in various areas. A total of 1,200 seedling trees—mostly Lodgepole Pine—and over 500 potted plants were installed overall.

The Catto Project

The Catto Project is aimed at reclaiming and redeveloping the turnout just below the Upper Lost Man/Linkins Lake Trailhead near Mile Marker 59.

This area has been the location of IPF’s informational sign for many years, but previous attempts to improve and beautify this area have not been very successful.

A grant from the Catto Family Foundation has allowed us to fund the redevelopment of this area into an attractive place for a new informational sign and some other unobtrusive amenities, including a short trail and an overlook bench. We appreciate the support of Henry and the late Jessica Catto for improving this area in honor of their grandchildren.

Planning for the future . . .

Planning for the future of the Top of the Rockies Scenic Byway, of which the Independence Pass corridor is the most recent addition, took a major step forward in 2010 with the selection of a consultant team to develop an update to the Scenic Byway Management Plan. This update, which will address the needs of the Independence Pass corridor between Twin Lakes and Aspen, will provide a planning and project menu for future years, and will integrate the Pass’ historic, scenic and recreational values into an overall management scheme. As an integral participant in this process, IPF will host public meetings in the upcoming year to solicit community input into this important plan.



Executive Director Mark Fuller (lower right) led a group of agency representatives on a tour of the Pass as an initial step in planning for the future of the Top of the Rockies Scenic Byway.

Summit at the Summit . . .

In September 2010, IPF hosted a meeting of a number of the parties involved in managing the Independence Pass corridor, including the U.S. Forest Service, Colorado Department of Transportation and Aspen Historical Society. The group toured various sites on the Pass, including the Winter Gate, Independence Ghost Town and summit overlook with the objective of familiarizing all of the Pass' stewards with both IPF's projects and the area's future needs.

This productive and lively meeting achieved its objective of sharing concerns and opportunities on the Pass and familiarizing the responsible agencies with each other's interests and responsibilities. A number of creative ideas emerged from this meeting, including the potential for new trail developments in the Independence Ghost Town area and the need for significant upgrades to the summit viewing area.



Executive Director Mark Fuller and Warden John Davis

In addition to this formal meeting, we were honored to host some long-time partners on visits to the Pass. Warden John Davis and several other staff members from the Buena Vista Correctional Facility traveled to the Pass to see the inmate crew at work.

Debbra Stokes with Dri-Water Inc. visited us in the fall on the same day that the Aspen Country Day students did their volunteer planting. Debbra was able to see the Dri-Water irrigation packs that we have been using for years installed at one of our long-term planting sites near the Independence Ghost Town.

We also enjoyed a visit from Sue and Steve Savoy of Interior Specialty Products, Montrose. Their company has made all of our new signs for the Braille/Discovery Trails and elsewhere over the past several years. We always appreciate the opportunity to take our friends and supporters on a tour of our project sites and show them how their contributions have contributed to our work and to the experience of every visitor to the Pass.

Sue and Steve Savoy of Interior Specialty Products visited for a first-hand look at the locations of the signs they have produced for IPF. These signs are enhancing the experience of Braille and Discovery Trail users.



Mark Fuller Photo

Environmental Film Festival . . .

Held in January at Aspen's Wheeler Opera House, IPF's second annual Wild & Scenic Environmental Film Festival featured a fascinating slate of short films on environmental themes. Over 400 people attended, and encouraged us to continue this popular event. The third annual film festival will be held starting at 7 p.m., Friday, March 25, 2011, so keep an eye out for event details in local media and on the IPF website.



16th Annual Ride for the Pass

With nearly 500 participants, the 16th Annual Ride for the Pass was a great success in 2010. The weather for the Ride was excellent, and the party at the Sky Hotel following the Ride was the usual combination of “door prize swag-fest” and “welcome to summer” celebration. We have been working with the City of Aspen to coordinate the upcoming Ride for the Pass with the City’s plans for a larger and more spectacular weekend of biking in 2011. The date for the 17th Annual Ride is May 21, so put it on your calendar now!

Sponsors

39 degrees/Sky Hotel, ABCD Soderberg, Alpine Bank, Anonymous Donor, Aspen Associates, Aspen Earthmoving, Aspen Orthopaedic Associates, Aspen Sotheby’s International Realty, Aspen Sports, Aspen Valley Landscaping, Aspen Velo, Austin Peirce & Smith, Claudia & Kirk Beattie, Bethel Party Rentals, Bishop Plumbing & Heating, Blazing Adventures, David Borchers, M.D., Diana & Garrett Bouton, Brunelleschi’s Pizza, Bob Camp, Dr. & Mrs. Stephen Chase, Dexter & Dennis Cirillo, City Market, City of Aspen, Clark’s Market, Community Banks Aspen, Barbara & Bil Dunaway, Eagle Crest Nursery, Earth-Wise Horticultural, Ellis Design, Environmental Logistics of Colorado, Fiji Water, Forrest Painting & Decorating, Frias Properties of Aspen, Fuller Consulting Services, Garfield & Hecht, Joyce & Bill Gruenberg, H3 Architects/Heidi H. Hoffmann, Hagman Architects, Gail & Phil Holstein, Holy Cross Energy, Hotel Jerome, Hy-Mountain Transportation, Niki & Rodney Jacobs, KAJX, KKCH Jack FM, KNFO, KSPN, Kracum Resources, Tracie & Larry Kugler, Bruce L. Lee, Rockwood Charitable Trust, Lone Pine Construction, Judi & Bob Loubier, Louis Swiss Pastry, Main Street Bakery, George Mead, Mead Witter Foundation, Dwayne Niebur, M.D., Aspen Medical Care, Oates, Knezevich & Gardenswartz, Obermeyer Asset Management Co., Judith Olesen Consulting, Pagni Lawn, Panther Vision/Cap Light, Paradise Bakery, Peczuh Printing, Hensley & James Peterson, Robert Pew, Pine Tree Players, Pleasant Avenue Nursery, Pomeroy Sports, Reese Henry & Co., Barbara Reid & David Hyman, RFTA, Ryan Investment Management, Sandy’s Office Supply, Schmueser Gordon Meyer, T-Lazy-7, The UPS Store, Ute Mountaineer, Timberline Bank, Toklat, Trees for Life, Vectra Bank, Wells Fargo Bank, Yeh & Associates, Yenter Companies, & King Woodward

Drawing Prize Donors

Aloha! Mountain Cyclery, Ambiance Salon, Anonymous Donors, Aspen Club & Spa, Aspen Cycling Club, Aspen Eclectic, Aspen Film, Aspen Music Festival & School, Aspen Skiing Company, Aspen Sports Chiropractic, Aspen Wine & Spirits, Bella Mia, Breakfast in America, Bristlecone Sports, Brunelleschi’s Pizza, Café Bernard, Café Redstone, City Market, El Jebeverage, F.B. McDonald Imports, FLY Cyclery, Fringe: a Salon, Grateful Deli, Harmony Scott Jewelry Design, Hi-Tone Automotive, Hotel Jerome, KNFO/KSPN, Lankering Chiropractic, Little Annie’s Eating House, Local Spirits, Main Street Bakery, Marmot Mountain LLC, Mezzaluna, Metropolitan Theaters Corp., Mountain Soles, 02, Of Grape & Grain, Parallel 15 Coffee, Pitkin County Dry Goods, Pomeroy Sports, Queen B Salon, Red Rock Diner, Redstone Cliffs Lodge, Redstone Inn, Rocky Mountain Recycling, Roots, Roxy’s Market & Deli, Sabra’s Deli, Scottie’s, Skin Therapy Clinic, Sopris Chiropractic, Staci Stokes, Ned Sullivan, Sunburst Car Care, Taster’s Restaurant, The Butcher’s Block, The Village Smithy, Ute Mountaineer, Woody Creek Community Center, & Zheng Asian Bistro

Ride Day Volunteers

Janet Boyle, Bob Camp, Trish Chew, Maddy D’Amato, Stuart Edgerly, Chris Faison, Sally Faison, John Flynn, Mary Lou Flynn, Dorothy Frommer, Chris Fuller, Linda Gerdenich, Bill Gruenberg, Pam Hart, Casady Henry, Kristen Henry, Don Higbie, Heidi Hoffmann, Gail Holstein, Charlie Hopton, Michael Hutton, P.J. Hutton, David Hyman, Jackie Kasabach, Karen Keeney, Dinah Kinsman, Elliott Larsen, Bob Loubier, Judi Loubier, Debby Overyender, Hensley Peterson, James Peterson, Gina Pogliano, Tom Sharkey, Brad Spooner, Ned Sullivan, Bob Wade, Ruth Wade, Laurie Wallace, Susan Wilson, & King Woodward

Supporters & Contributors

Active.com, Alchemy Sound, Aspen Chapel, Aspen Skiing Company, Roy Brandt/Brandt Creative, Craig Canon, City of Aspen, Colorado Department of Transportation, Colorado State Patrol, Community Banks, Maddy D’Amato, Paul D’Amato, Dreamtime Water, Flatirons Timing/Your Cause Sports, Donna Jacobson/Panther Vision, Michael Kraemer/Pitkin County, Limelite Lodge, Louis Swiss Bakery, Rochelle Obechina/KNFO & KSPN, Paradise Bakery, Jim Richardson/Aspen Ambulance Service, Sky Hotel, U.S. Forest Service, Ute Mountaineer, Michael Wampler/Aspen Velo, & Michael Waters/Waters Industries

Plant Materials Installed

Lodgepole Pine Seedlings - 1,200

4-foot Spruce Saplings - 10

Englemann Spruce Seedlings - 90

Misc. Native Shrubs & Wildflowers - 600

TOTAL PLANTINGS: 1,900

(Plus approximately 60 lbs. of native grass seed)

Miscellaneous shrubs and wildflowers included the following species: Red Elderberry, Wild Raspberry, Thinleaf Alder, River Birch, Whitestem Gooseberry, Red Twig Dogwood, Woods Rose, Shrubby Cinquefoil, Golden Currant, Blue Stem Willow, Chokecherry, Fireweed, Native White Yarrow, Richardson's Geranium, Aspen Daisy, Mountain Bluebells, Candle Anemone, Rocky Mountain Penstemon, Tall Coneflower, Queen's Crown, Wild Blue Columbine, Moss Campion, Whipple's Penstemon, Hall's Penstemon, Alpine Penstemon, Golden Ragwort, Mountain Goldenrod.

Project Partners, Volunteers & Services

U.S. Forest Service (Martha Moran, Jon Chapman, Scott Snelson, Scott Fitzwilliams, Donna Graham, Lori Crystal, Jon Morrissey, Travis Bruch, Bill Mulholland), Colorado Dept. of Transportation (Floyd Strater, D'Wayne Gaymon, Toby Brown), Colo. Dept of Corrections (John Turner, John Davis, Don Tanner), Aspen Middle School (Mark Munger), Aspen Country Day School (Bill Huffman), Plant Trees 4 Life (Pam Hart), Maroon Corps (Sarah Johnson, Olivia Siegel), Climate Action Day (Lauren McDonell, Pitkin County (Mitzi Ledingham), City of Aspen (Nancy Lesley, Sandra Doebler, Kristin Drake, Sheila Babbie) Pleasant Avenue Nursery (Gary Ludwig), Interior Specialties (Sue & Steve Savoy), DriWater (Debbra Stokes), Colorado State Forest Service Nursery, Aspen Center for Environmental Studies, The Catto Family Foundation (Jennifer Crossett), ELC Inc. (Mike Mirowski, Don Vache), For the Forest (John Bennett, Kate Olson), Aspen Historical Society (Anna Scott, Tom Egan, Georgia Hanson), Top of the Rockies Scenic Byway (Cathy Patti), Red Brick Center for the Arts, Aspen Square, South Yuba River Citizens League, Patagonia Clothing, Wheeler Opera House, Jeff Webster, Bill Murray, Paul Andersen, David Hiser, Katie Etienne, Marcia Corbin, & Hensley Peterson



Climate Action Day volunteers planted 10 large spruce trees plus many seedlings near the Winter Gate.

Maroon Corps Volunteers

James Arnott, Cynthia Bonner, Will Bradford, Kristen DeMay, Lindsay Fortier, Daniel Fullmer, Anna Haudenschild, Howard Kuhn, Dustin Lutomski, Adam McCurdy, Alli Oeding, Sulieka Pevac, Kendall Reiley, Olivia Siegel, Kevin Toeneboehn, & Chris Ullrich

Climate Action Day Volunteers

Dana Berry, Emily Cowley, William Feldman, Ben Fierstein, Lauren Grant, Pamela Hart, Jason Hartmann, Charlie Hopton, Emerson Jacobson, Heidi Jacobson, Oleana Jacobson, Ellie Kershow, Lincoln Larde, Libby Rosenzweig, Stephanie Smith, & Betsy Willey

Snow Fence Removal Volunteers & Supporters

Independence Pass Foundation: Mark Fuller, Kristen Henry, Gail & Phil Holstein, David Hyman, Judy Olesen, Bob Wade, & King Woodward; **White River National Forest, U.S. Forest Service:** Bill Kight & Brian Porter; **Leadville & Pike-San Isabel National Forest, U.S. Forest Service:** Sandy Bearden, Lisa Boehmke, Andy Bogan, Patrick Craig, Barb James, David Lovato, Brennan McAuliffe, Jon Morrissey, Bill Mulholland, Luke Orr, Chris Prew, Chris Schneider, Larry Shalett, Steve Sunday, & Jeni Windorski; **DBS Helicopters:** Lisa Balcomb, Barbara Sheffer, Doug Sheffer, & Paul Rinker; **Aspen Earthmoving:** Steve Kinney, John Marlow & Rick Stevens; **Rocky Mountain Recycling:** Sharen Stamp; **CiteWaste:** **A-1 Traffic Control:** Cal Whitman; **Photography:** Edgar Boyles & Chip Duncan

Volunteer & Donated Labor

Volunteerism and in-kind support from our partners is key to the Independence Pass Foundation's success. We appreciate the many hours of donated labor and services described below.

The [Colorado Department of Transportation](#) helps IPF when and where they can while carrying out their many maintenance and safety functions. In 2010, CDOT assisted with ditch cleanout, helped ready Highway 82 for the Ride for the Pass, and worked with us on our 2011 ISTE A grant application.

Miscellaneous labor and field assistance = 50 hrs.
Administrative assistance = 12 hrs.

TOTAL: 62 hrs.



Mark Fuller Photos

Golden Ragwort (*Senecio atratus*) and other native flowering plants have established a rock garden in the Big Cut Wall.

[Aspen Middle School](#) and [Aspen Country Day School](#) students are regular participants in our annual planting program. In September, classes of fifth and sixth grader from both schools planted enthusiastically in a number of locations.

Aspen Country Day School 52 participants x 4 hrs. = 208 hrs.

Aspen Middle School: 30 participants x 4 hrs. = 120 hrs.

TOTAL: 328 hrs.

On August 14, a crew from the Maroon Corps, a local environmental group, planted over 200 seedlings below the Top Cut and then on October 10 another volunteer crew planted with us near the Winter Gate as part of Global Climate Action Day.

Maroon Corps: 16 participants x 4 hrs. = 64 hrs.

Climate Action Day: 16 participants x 3 hrs. = 48 hrs.

TOTAL: 112 hrs.

The [Colorado Department of Corrections](#) provides an inmate work crew to IPF every year to do planting, trail rehabilitation and other projects on the Pass. This year the crew from the Buena Vista Correctional Facility worked on those projects as well as tree thinning, weed control, trash removal, and campsite cleanup.

7 inmates + guard x 6 hours x 28 days = 1,344 hrs.

TOTAL: 1,344 hrs.

The [U.S. Forest Service](#) contributed significant labor to the snow fence removal project as well as other activities such as supervising the inmate crew, helping with planning and Scenic Byway management, and supporting our beetle-control and trail development work.

Consultation and Planning: 8 participants x 20 hrs. = 160 hrs.

Field Support: 20 participants x 30 hrs. = 600 hrs.

[Individuals](#) support IPF in a myriad of ways and with a variety of projects from the Ride for the Pass to the snow fence removal project to seed gathering and helping with fundraising events. Our list of volunteers elsewhere in this report is lengthy. We appreciate everyone's help!

Approx. 10 days x 12 participants x 8 hrs. = 960 hrs.

**TOTAL OF ALL VOLUNTEER
& DONATED HOURS: 3,566**



Mark Fuller Photo

Aspens put on their annual display of fall colors near Weller.