



## Restoring the Ecology, Natural Beauty, & Safety of Independence Pass

# Newsletter of the INDEPENDENCE PASS FOUNDATION

Summer 2009

## IPF Reaches Middle Cut Milestone!

The **Independence Pass Foundation** reached a major milestone in 2008 with the completion of the Middle Cut stabilization wall and the reconstructed slope above the wall. The Middle Cut extends for 330 linear feet beginning above milepost 60.3 in the one- and one-half mile "Top Cut" section of Independence Pass just below the summit on the western side.

The Middle Cut project has been ongoing since design and engineering work was first undertaken in 2004. The

Mechanically Stabilized Earth (MSE) wall combines the practicality and aesthetic appeal of IPF's previous wall designs at the Big Cut and Twin Gullies sites with the structural stability and effective drainage demanded by current CDOT standards. Although the final product looks very much like previous walls, the internal structure required us to wrap the geotextile fabric that reinforces the earth fill behind the wall.

In addition, drain pipes were installed behind the rock facing to ensure that water infiltrating the wall structure can drain without causing instability. The wall is faced with native boulders quarried from a talus slope near the Weller Lake trailhead that has been IPF's source of rocks for previous walls.

In 2009, the reconstructed slope above the wall will be revegetated with native trees, shrubs, and grasses and treated with hydromulch to ensure strong growth in the future.



During the 2008 work season, IPF's long-time contractor, Aspen Earthmoving, rebuilt the slope above the Middle Cut Wall, covering a base layer of rock rubble with several inches of topsoil.



Grass seed incorporated within a compost blanket installed in 2008 is showing healthy growth in the summer of 2009.



To revegetate the barren slopes below the Top Cut, IPF has been applying composted organic material in at least four-inch layers over wide areas. Containing grass seed, the compost is held in place by synthetic mesh netting.



Jon White, Colorado Geological Survey, accompanied Executive Director Mark Fuller on an inspection of the Middle Cut wall (shown here) on June 23. Jon developed the original design for the Top Cut native rock walls, and has advised IPF on stabilization projects since 1995.

All Photos by Mark Fuller

# IPF Celebrates 15th Anniversary Ride for the Pass!



Craig Canon Photo



Bill Gruenberg Photo



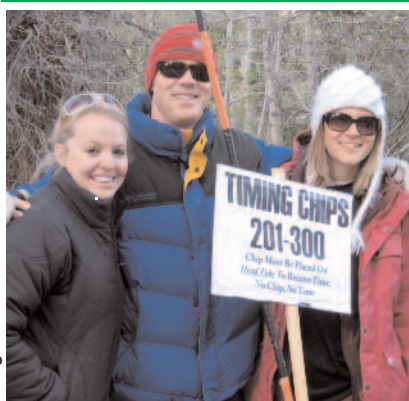
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Volunteers teamed up with IPF Board members and staff to present the 15th Anniversary Ride for the Pass. Left to right, back row: Board member Bob Camp, volunteers Debby Overeynder & Ed Barber, Board members David Hyman, Gail Holstein, King Woodward, & James Peterson. Left to right, front row: volunteers Jackie Kasabach & Gina Pogliano, Board Vice President Kristen Henry, Executive Director Mark Fuller, & Development Director Judith Olesen. We apologize to the hardworking volunteers & Board members missing from this photo!

IPF's 1st Annual Ride for the Pass 15 years ago attracted just over 100 riders. Through the years, ridership has grown by several hundred bikers. But in many respects the Ride remains the same exciting event signaling the start of the biking season in the Roaring Fork Valley. Riders appreciate the unique opportunity to ride the Pass without automobiles. Following the Ride, the participants enjoy the party at the Sky Hotel and the chance to take home one of dozens of giveaways that are donated by valley businesses and restaurants. IPF is grateful to the Sponsors, supporters, volunteers, & riders who make the Ride possible!



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## Save the Date!

IPF will host its 20th Anniversary Celebration at the Aspen Center for Environmental Studies in Aspen, 5:30-7:30 p.m., September 23. To commemorate the occasion, renowned *National Geographic* photographer David Hiser and renowned writer Paul Andersen will present photos and excerpts from their new book on the Pass. Please join us for their presentation and a tribute to IPF's founder--biologist and educator Bob Lewis (1921-2005)--as well as for hors d'oeuvres.



### Welcome Addition.

The summit of the Pass is now home to two permanent toilets. Installed on July 16, the facilities were funded by the Leadville Ranger District, U.S. Forest Service. IPF will fund the three-times weekly servicing of the toilets throughout September. The Grottos is next in line for a permanent toilet. Over the past three years IPF had helped to fund temporary port-a-potties at the summit.



**School Partners.** For many years, Aspen Middle School and Aspen Country Day School have partnered with IPF to provide hands-on revegetation experience for their students while contributing to the reclamation of the Pass. Thirty-seven Aspen Country Day students, accompanied by 10 teachers and parents, spent a day in September 2008 planting seedling trees near the Independence Ghost Town. Groups of students from both schools will return this fall.