

# Pike National Historic Trail Association Newsletter Oct. 2010 Vol. 4 No 8

*Our Purpose:* To Establish federal designation of the Pike National Historic Trail A Charitable nonprofit organization

Our website is [www.zebulonpike.org](http://www.zebulonpike.org) "Zebulon Pike was an American hero, a patriot who lived and died for his country." -Thomas Jefferson



## • *Our Third Birthday* Our Association celebrates it's third birthday this month.

✓ *Wonderful News* The bill to study the feasibility of designating the Pike National Historic Trail as a National Historic Trail has introduced. We continue to move toward the accomplishment of our goals.

**GOALS-** ✓ We enjoy the support and assistance of the long distance trail community and many individuals. ✓ Our informational/educational website is [zelulonpike.org](http://zelulonpike.org) zeros in on another goal. ✓ Members and nonmembers receive newsletters, invitations for the membership meetings, and access to the website. ✓ We are an IRS Federal income tax exempt entity under section 501 (c) (3) which means your contributions to us are deductible under section 170 of the IRS Code.

• *The Medano Fire has been extinguished.* We didn't want to leave this unreported.

• *Annual Member and Board Meeting- November 6, 2010* On the eve of the Pike NHT Association Annual Meeting just outside Cañon City, CO on Saturday Nov. 6th, we look forward to a lively discussion regarding strategies and future plans for the Association.

• *We will need your help in creating an awareness in Congress for passage of S. 3926!*

**Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, Texas and Louisiana Residents---** We would like to know of your willingness to call your US Senator's staffer. Please call or email **Annie Oatman-Gardner** Regional Director Pikes Peak Office Colorado Springs, CO 719-328-1100 [phone] 719-328-1129 [fax] [annie\\_oatman-gardner@bennet.senate.gov](mailto:annie_oatman-gardner@bennet.senate.gov)

**Colorado Residents---** To voice your support to US Senator Bennet- Call or email **Annie Oatman-Gardner**, at the above address. *US Senator Mark Udall [CO] is Chairman of the Subcommittee on National Parks of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and member of the Committee. We have been assured of Senator Udall's support, and are looking for confirmation of his co-sponsorship. It is through Senator Udall's Committees that S. 3926 must pass to get to the floor of the Senate. Senator Mark Udall's information will be published soon.*

**Residents the other non-Pike state supporters---** We would like to know of your willingness to call your US Senator to seek co-sponsorship and support. Please email: **Harv Hisgen**, President- Pike National Historic Trail Association [harv.pike@gmail.com](mailto:harv.pike@gmail.com) indicating your willingness [or if you have questions.]

**Calls have been made by individuals- "Talking Points" for your phone calls aside from requesting cosponsorship-**

Some of the benefits of this new trail would be: 1. historical preservation 2. cultural recognition and documentation 3. recreational and historical tourism 4. educational enlightenment 5. illumination of the American character through exploration 6. Concern regarding costs- National Historic Trails use roads to get from site to site. There is no physical path built. This means that NHT's public costs are extremely low. Several of you have told the Pike NHT Assoc. that you have called- including the Pike President's financial advisor. Thank you!

• *What they are saying* Here are some samples of what the media have said---

**The Mountain Mail Saturday Oct. 9, 2010 Salida, Colorado The Voice of Salida and the Upper Arkansas Valley Posted 10/8/2010 9:48:00 AM by Jessica Wierzbinski Mail Staff Writer Bennet introduces Pike's Trail bill**

Pike's route could gain official designation as a national historic trail if U.S. Sen. Michael Bennet succeeds with the bill he introduced Oct. 1. Tracing Zebulon Pike's two-year expedition through the American Midwest and Southwest, Pike's route stretched through much of Chaffee County following the Arkansas River.

If Bennet's bill succeeds, Pike's route would become the first national historic trail to pass through Chaffee County.

From about 30 miles north of Buena Vista, Pike traveled south along the Sawatch Range, through Salida and into western Fremont County.

Bennet's bill represents the first in a series of steps necessary to establish Pike's route as a national historic trail. The bill would amend the 1968 National Trails System Act requesting a feasibility study by the National Park Service.

The act describes the study as "an evaluation of whether or not it is physically possible to develop a trail along a route being studied, and whether development of a trail would be financially feasible."

If the study results in a recommendation that Pike's route be designated a national historic trail, Congress would vote to add it to the National Trails System.

Final step in establishing the trail would involve creation of a comprehensive management and use plan. It would outline roles of various community and government agencies responsible for maintaining the full length of the trail.

The National Park Service website reports designation of a national historic trail can take "from six to 15 years. Because of this dialogue back and forth between Congress and the administrative agency (during) many years, a trail is most likely to succeed ... if there is a strong, well-organized, citizen organization at work ... ." [continues page 2]

The effort to elevate Pike's route to national historic status began before Bennet introduced his bill. Inspired by the 2006 bicentennial celebrations commemorating Pike's travels, a group of enthusiasts formed the Pike National Trail Association in October 2007.

The group dedicated itself to establishing legal designation for the trail. Members resolved to "cooperate with federal, state and local agencies, and trail organizations" along the proposed trail.

The Pike National Trail Association website reported, "counties and towns returning letters of support have overwhelmingly emphasized the economic ... and educational benefits" of securing national historic status.

Chaffee County Commissioners sent a letter of support. The Chaffee County Heritage Area Advisory Board, sent a similar letter.

In it, Cheryl Brown-Kovacic wrote, "We understand the route will utilize existing roads close to the actual trail so no land acquisition or permission from property owners along the route will be required."

Nineteen national historic trails have been established. So far, two pass through Colorado.

The Santa Fe National Historic Trail crosses the southeast corner of the state and multiple segments of the Old Spanish National Historic Trail cross Colorado from north of Grand Junction to east of Great Sand Dunes National Park.

The National Trails System Act specifies that for a trail to qualify as a national historic trail, it must commemorate an historic route of travel with significance for the entire nation.

Historians argue Pike's 1806-07 journey was as important as the Lewis and Clark expedition farther north.

As a U.S. Army lieutenant, Pike was charged with extending American sovereignty westward, establishing peace with Great Plains tribes, and locating headwaters of the Arkansas and Red Rivers.

Much of the Louisiana Purchase was mapped as a result of his travels.

Pike's journals were seminal to later 19th century explorations of the American southwest. His accounts of Mexican politics provided contemporaries a first glimpse of their southern neighbors.

### **The Fairplay [CO] Flume 10/22/2010 5:41:00 PM Pix included Pike [b&w] & Central CO By Laura Van Dusen - Correspondent** **Pike National Historic Trail designation sought**

The Pike Trail, tracing the route Zebulon Montgomery Pike followed in his expedition of 1806 - 1807, would be closer to achieving national historic designation if the bill introduced by U. S. Senator Michael Bennet (D-Colo.) is passed, according to an Oct. 4 press release by Bennet.

That trail passes through part of Park County, and the national historic designation is being spearheaded by a group based in Conifer.

Bennet's bill requests that the National Park Service conduct a feasibility study. If, after the study, the results lead to a recommendation by the National Park Service to designate the Pike Trail as a National Historic Trail (NHT), Bennet would then introduce a bill to formally designate the trail. The vote would then go to Congress.

"Pike's expedition is an important piece of the history of Colorado and of the American Southwest as the first American-led effort to explore the Rocky Mountains," Bennet said in the press release. "Historic Trail designation would ensure the trail's recognition for generations to come and would create more opportunities for heritage tourism and related economic development in surrounding communities across Southern Colorado and the San Luis Valley."

**Journey through Park County** The Pike expedition was in the Park County area in mid-December 1806.

The group came from the area that is now Cañon City and on about Dec. 13 entered what is now Park County, where they found the Middle Fork of the South Platte River. In the days following, the party, while exploring the region, camped at a site in Eleven Mile Canyon. They camped in two different spots near present-day Hartsel, including at least one night at what is now the Santa Maria Ranch. Pike's party ventured into the area around current-day Fairplay and what is now Antero Reservoir before continuing south along Trout Creek and into the Arkansas watershed near present-day Buena Vista. They left the South Park area in the third week of December 1806.

It was somewhere in South Park that Pike met mountain man Jim Pursley. Pursley reported that he had discovered gold in the area. But, according to information at the Park County Web site, [www.parkco.us](http://www.parkco.us), neither man was interested in gold. They both had other interests. Pursley was a trapper, and Pike was an explorer. It would be more than 50 years later before there was much interest in gold in Park County.

**Pike is credited with the first recorded discovery of the South Platte River.** "He mapped the area he was in, possibly scouting the headwaters," according to Harv Hisgen, president of the Conifer-based Pike National Historic Trail Association and retired chemistry and physics teacher.

The association is a group of Pike enthusiasts who organized in October 2007 with a mission to establish federal nomination and designation of the Pike National Historic Trail and to provide educational materials about Pike to the public, according to its Web site at [www.zebulonpike.org](http://www.zebulonpike.org).

As far as sites specific to Park County, Hisgen said in an e-mail: "The owners of the Santa Maria Ranch are convinced, as is the Pike National Historic Trail Association, that Pike camped on their ranch. Should the feasibility study bill pass and the Pike National Historic Trail becomes designated, the Santa Maria Ranch will likely have a second preservation effort, the second for Pike. Many know of the current building preservation effort on the Ranch. (The Santa Maria Ranch is on the National Register of Historic Places, and historic preservation efforts are underway.)

"Pike and his men camped on public lands where preservation and interpretation will be pursued. The Pike National Historic Trail Association has had preliminary discussions with an international company regarding the preservation of the Pike site on the Park Co. side of Trout Creek Pass."

**Trail markers and cost** The cost of a National Historic Trail is minimal because existing roads are used to get from site to site, according to Hisgen. "One does not build a path on the historic footprint or wagon rut. Therefore, costs for establishment and maintenance of NHT's are low and private property is not used. Unless, of course, the owner chooses," he said in the e-mail.

The trail would be marked by a series of signage and pull-out areas built on the sides of existing highways. There would also be trails in some areas for bicyclists and hikers to travel from site to site. Hisgen said the biking and hiking trails would not be on the trail Pike used. "Hiking/walking trails on Pike's footprint would destroy the historic aspect," he said.

**Support** Park County's Board of County Commissioners has given its support to the proposed project. In a letter dated Jan. 21, signed by Board Chair Mark Dowaliby, the commissioners said, "We believe the Pike Expedition to be an important event in the developing history of the United States, of Colorado and of Park County. The Pike trail travels through the heart of the newly designated South Park National Heritage Area and adds a significant chapter in the national importance of the cultural and natural resources of this area."

**Criteria for designation** According to information found on the National Park Service Web site, "National historic trails commemorate historic (and prehistoric) routes of travel that are of significance to the entire Nation." [continues page 3]

"Such trails are established by Act of Congress," it says. Trails designated at NHTs must meet three criteria. They must first "be a trail or route established by historic use and must be historically significant as a result of that use."

Second, they must "be of national significance with respect to any of several broad facets of American history, such as trade and commerce, exploration, migration and settlement, or military campaigns."

And third, they "must have significant potential for public recreational use or historical interest based on historic interpretation and appreciation," according to the National Trails System Act.

It is expected that the South Park area would benefit from an increase in tourism if the Pike Trail is designated as a National Historic Trail and sites such as those at Santa Maria Ranch and Trout Creek Pass are preserved.

In addition, said Hisgen, "Grants will be more easily obtained because of this entity from the private and public sector."

If the designation attempt is successful, the Pike National Historic Trail would be the 20th such trail in the nation, joining the ranks of the Lewis & Clark Trail, Pony Express Trail, and Santa Fe Trail, among others. The Pike Trail is 3,664 miles long; 2,697 miles are in the United States and 967 miles are in Mexico. It passes through seven U.S. states and three Mexican provinces.

Valley Courier Alamosa, CO *Posted: Tuesday, Oct 26th, 2010*

BY: Virginia Simmons **Rabbitbrush Rambler - A Pike National Historic Trail?**

Here is good news for those of us who love the Valley's history. The first official step has been taken toward making a Pike National Historic Trail a reality.

We have learned that on September 29 U.S. Senator Michael Bennet introduced a bill he is sponsoring to create the Pike National Historic Trail. This bill (S. 3926), which has been read twice and referred to committee, would amend the National Trails System Act to provide for the study of the Pike National Historic Trails.

As described in the bill, the Pike National Historic Trail is a series of routes extending approximately 3,664 miles, which follows the route taken by Lt. Zebulon Montgomery Pike during the 1806-1807. Pike expedition that began in Bellefontaine, Missouri, extended through portions of the States of Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas, and ended at Natchitoches, Louisiana - the detour to Mexico being omitted from the Senate bill.

If this effort moves forward as planned, it will bring attention to an important event in our nation's history and, of special interest here, to Pike's trail and stockade in the San Luis Valley.

The Pike Historic Trail Association, headed by Harv Hisgen of Conifer, CO, has received official and private support in the San Luis Valley, throughout Colorado, and other states.

Senator Mark Udall is expected to co-sponsor this bill in the Senate, and we anticipate that it will find a companion bill this winter in the House, also.

The trail would feature signs and markers along the route, such as those that were erected in 2007 at the time of the bicentennial celebration. Brochures and educational activities would call attention to and would call attention to the Pike's expedition.

Our regional history is receiving good publicity these days. Along with the Pike Stockade National Historical Landmark, the Sangre de Cristo National Historic Area, and the Old Spanish National Historic Trail in our area, the newly proposed national historic trail honoring Zebulon Montgomery Pike is now generating well-deserved buzz.

Many travelers are already aware that we have 19 national historic trails throughout our nation and have visited them during trips. Countless volunteers, scholars, National Park Service, and BLM personnel have studied these projects, enriching our lives on the road or in armchairs.

Our newest addition, the Old Spanish Trail (OST), was a trade route which extended from Santa Fe to Los Angeles, had a branch running through the San Luis Valley and other possible pathways along the way. This trail invites adventurers to get out and learn about trappers, the long-ago markets in livestock and woven goods, challenges from climate and native dwellers, and some great scenery along the way.

*Time to renew your membership- see the membership form on the website.*