The Arboretum News

Our mission is to connect the Platteville community to the Rountree Branch corridor, through recreation, conservation, and environmental education.

SPRING 202



PCA President Bob Hundhausen

Greetings from the David Canny Rountree Branch trail:

Comings and goings: First, there have been a couple of changes on our board. Long time board member, Dan Flesch, has retired from the board, but we are grateful that Dan will continue serving on the Ecology Committee and working on the trail. Dan has been a huge contributor as board member, volunteer coordinator and volunteer. It has been a pleasure to work with continued on back page



PCA Board of Directors & Officers

Bob Hundhausen - President Kristopher Wright - Vice President Shannon Baxter - Secretary Dianne Jentz - Treasurer

Bob Digman Robin Fatzinger Dan Flesch Steven Fromader Joe Jacquinot Brian Laufenberg Mike Penn Luke Peters Julie Pluemer Gene Weber

Past Presidents:

Mike Penn - 2017 - 2019 Frank Steck - 2016 - 2017 Robin Fatzinger - 2013 - 2015 Ric Genthe - 2011 - 2013, 2015 - 2016 Kris Wright - 2005 - 2011 David Canny - 2004 - 2005

Newsletter Staff

Editor - Gene Weber Co-Editor - Susan Kies Co-Editor - Dena Nechkash Creative Director - Ric Genthe

plattevillearboretum@gmail.com www.plattevillearboretum.org PO Box 302 • Platteville, WI 53818



A few months ago while completing my daily constitutional on the David Canny Rountree Branch Trail, I heard splashing. It is normal to hear dogs taking a plunge or kids tossing stones here in warmer weather, but this was December. I peered over the side of the South Chestnut Street Bridge to investigate. There, directly below me, two river otters frolicked in a game of tag, or some such play in which river otters engage, taking advantage of the balmy 45-degrees and sunshine.

Each section of this winding trail along the southern edge of Platteville offers its own highlights on any given day in any given season. And, considering the abundant flora, fauna, and fun, you just never know what you're going to experience.

Katie's Garden, located on the grounds of the Platteville Regional Chamber and Travel Wisconsin Welcome Center, is a three-season congregation of flowers. In spring, crocuses, daffodils, hyacinths, daisies, lilies, irises and flowering crabapples disperse their colors and scents, and in summer the palette expands to annuals such as zinnias, marigolds, petunias, alyssum, nasturtiums, and impatiens. Wisteria vines, roses, mums, and asters hit their stride in late summer into early fall, followed by the foliage from the sumacs and maples. A crew of volunteer master gardeners sculpt the beds, pairing colors and textures adding new species every year in honor of the garden's namesake Katie Vaassen, a dedicated worker at the Chamber until her untimely passing.

Skeletons and witches line the path for the annual 5K/10K Monster Dash in October, and in December Santa pays a visit amid the fantastical holiday display of lights and decorations. In pleasant weather, a gazebo, picnic tables and benches at Katie's Garden allow a place to relax, have a snack or lunch, and take in the bird songs and sound of water tumbling over the stones. Both children and adults enjoy checking out the magical fairy garden and the Little Free Library, as well as Katie's Kindness Canal, an array of painted rocks where visitors can leave their own inspirational artwork. Kids can also examine plant roots through a windowpane to observe what happens underground after seeds sprout and shoot up toward the light, and the "Five Senses Garden" encourages touching, smelling, seeing, tasting, and, listening to some specially-grown vegetative species.

If you are hungry and neglected to pack a lunch, no problem. Pizzeria Uno (after 4 p.m), Fiesta Cancun, Country Kitchen and Kentucky Fried Chicken, Taco Bell, Culver's, and Dunkin' Donuts border this quarter-mile section of the trail, and other accommodating Platteville eateries and grocery stores are a short walk or drive away.

I sometimes ride my bicycle along the threemile paved and lighted path, stretching from the South Chestnut Street Bridge to the gazebo behind Walmart where a wooden bridge links it to Mound View State Trail, a scenic route to the town of Belmont seven miles away. These treks allow me to observe the fun

Thanking Our 2020 TRAIL BLAZERS

\$2000 +

Burr, Phil & Christina The Reeves Team of Edward Jones

\$1000+

Alliant Energy
Community First Bank
Cynthia Tang Revocable Trust
Engelke, Dan
High Vibe Fitness
John Tiedemann
Memorial Fund
L & M Corrugated
Container Corp
Mound City Bank
Nelson, Carol
Platteville Community Fund
Platteville Development Group
Richard Financial Resources LLC
Rogers, Doug

Wisconsin Bank and Trust

\$750+

Dupaco Natural Resources Foundation of WI

\$500 +

Bradley, Bruce & Tammy Builders FirstSource Digman Construction -Bob, Chad, & Jay Gates, Robert & Elizabeth H&R Block Heartland Credit Union Holverson, Clyde Inspiring Community, Inc. Kunes Country Medical Associates Clinic PC MidWestOne Bank Ruby's Pantry Samuels, Jeffrey Steve's Pizza Weber, Gene & Jan White, Jeff & Amy

\$250+

All Phase Electric & Control LLC-Wayne Tillotson Applied Micro Baker Iron Works Bard's Materials Bill's Plumbing & Heating Cobblestone Inn & Suites Burger King Clare Bank Country Kitchen Dairy Queen **Driftless Market** Eastman Cartwright Ellis, Barry & Terri Fiesta Cancun Geyer, Thom Gobin & Allion Flooring Center, LLC Holiday Inn Express Hundhausen, Bob Jentz, Ron & Dianne **McDonalds**

Karsten, Randy & Margaret Kies, J. David & Susan Long, Kerry & Lily Momentum Bikes Meyers, Mark & Lynn Mootz, Brad Platteville Chamber of Commerce Platteville Dental Platteville Optimists Club 09-137 Serres, Rob -Platteville Cross Country Southwest Landscaping Super 8 TC Networks, Inc. Weier, Ronald & Janis



ways others use the amenities along the trail. Last summer, two young women reclined on inflatable rafts in the stream, dangling feet in the current, donning sunglasses and reading books. Another day, a dad supervised a group of youngsters and joined them by cooling off in a waist-deep swimming hole. Dog walkers, joggers, baby stroller pushers and meanderers all take advantage of the great outdoors on the trail without having to worry about cars. Along the trail on the west side of Mineral Street, Nutrition World's Outdoor Fitness Center provides stations for strength-training opportunities, and adjacent to this the Platteville City Dog Park gives our four-legged partners a place to exercise and socialize, too. Once a railroad bed, the tree-lined straight stretch from Mineral Street to the gazebo behind Walmart borders pastures where horses or cows graze and corn and other crops thrive in the rich, loamy soil along the stream. As on the rest of the trail, benches are available and spaced accordingly for necessary rest stops or peaceful meditation.

Look skyward, and you may spot a hawk or eagle soaring or sitting in a tree on the lookout for their dinner of small prey, like the bunnies and squirrels you will see scampering across the path for cover. On one of my rides, a doe emerged from the brush and ran

alongside my bike for a few strides before deciding to return from whence she came. Though I'm a fairweather cycler, some use the trail in all seasons, even winter. Those hardy riders with the wide, studded-tire bikes bundle up and traverse the snowy terrain, as do snowshoers and cross country skiers, all seeking fresh air and exercise on the trail.

As a gardener and trail maintenance volunteer, I make it a point to notice the progress of the Prairie Dropseed grasses heading out at the fish garden among the sculpted trout, the colors emerging in the butterfly garden and other plants in bloom, like coneflowers, perennial sunflowers, Queen Anne's Lace, chicory and Brown-Eyed Susans. Last summer I conversed with a couple from lowa who were admiring the creativity of the fish garden. They said this was their first visit to the trail, but they would definitely be coming back: "It is so well kept—and so beautiful. You are lucky to have this right in your backyard," the woman said.

Overseen by the Platteville Community Arboretum Board, crews of volunteers and financial donors work cooperatively to improve and groom the trail. Informational kiosks aid in making the trail experience helpful and educational for everyone. Here you can pick up a

2 continued on page 8

Donors add \$6,225 to PCA Endowment

2021 PCA Endowment Donors

Special thanks to nearly 50 wonderful donors contributing \$6225 toward our growing PCA Endowment:

Anonymous Anonymous Anonymous Anonymous Becker CPA, Steven A. Carl, Alleine L. Chandler, Connie Clare, Patrick M. and Barbara Jean Digman, Paul J. and Donna A. Donovan, Anne L. Duesbury, John H. and Evelyn M. Friesen, Richard J. and Jackie L. Fromader, Steven W. Haas, Mark G. and Joan L. Heer, Larry J. and Patricia A. Hennessy, Mary Jo Holler, James R. and Beverly K. Ihm, Mark Klaas, Jeanette J. Lindahl, Thomas J. and Lee Ann McGinley, Lawrence E. and Mary A. McKichan, Mac A. Mergen, Michael J. and Janet L. Meyers, Mark S. and Lynn M. Murphy, Timothy J. and Kathryn M. Otto Revocable Trust DTD 9-20-02 Paynter, Charles Peacock, Steve and Karin Pink, Larry V. and Sharon M.W. Rice, Deborah Rundell, Richard F. and Mary Karen Schambow, Becky J. Schlager, Lynn and Susan Southwest Health Center Steger, Velma Stoffregen, James and Elaine Stuckey, Gloria J. Stuhr, Russell and Jean Swailes, Thomas R. and Nancy A. TC Networks Inc. Trotter, Sheila Urness, John and M. Ellen Waugh, Richard A. and Therese L. Weber's Processing Plant Wright, Kristopher and Angie Yurs Management Co -

Russ & Meg Yurs

Fromader Joins PCA Roard

By Dena Nechkash

Steven "Spider" Fromader can now add "Board of Directors" to his volunteer activities for the Platteville Community Arboretum. He has taken over the board vacancy created by Dan Flesch, who stepped down in December after serving on the board for five years.

Fromader has been volunteering for PCA since the tornado caused severe damage in 2014

"My involvement began when PCA called for volunteers for assistance with the clean-up of trees and debris from the tornado that hit Platteville," Fromader said. "I had the chainsaws and trailer to help with the removal. Most of my time was spent behind Culver's and Dunkin' Donuts. I have continued to work on the trail since then."

He said he has always been an outdoor person and enjoys running, biking and walking. "Helping to develop and maintain a trail system to do those activities was a perfect fit for me," Fromader said. "When I heard about the opening on the board, I decided to apply. I felt I could add some of my life experiences to help with the organization. Loving the outdoors and willing to work with others, I feel being part of the board would be a good opportunity to work with planning and coordinating a vision for PCA. The board has done an amazing job with everything, and hopefully I can continue with that mission."

For 34 years, he taught fourth and sixth grades at Winskill Elementary School in Lancaster. He also taught one year at UW-Platteville. He continues to be involved in education, supervising student teachers for the School of Education since 2006. Since 1997 he has served as one of the cross country coaches at Platteville High School as well as the high jump coach at UW-Platteville.

Teaching is a family profession. His wife, Barb, to whom he was married for 40 years, was a home economics and health teacher at the Platteville Middle school for 32 years, retiring in 2004. She passed away of cancer in 2011. Their daughters – Abby, Ashley and Hailey – are all teachers as well, currently teaching in Appleton, Monroe and Reedsburg. Fromader also has eight grandchildren.

"My nickname is Spider," Fromader said. "That name was given to me in fourth grade by a neighbor. I was a tall and skinny kid, all arms and legs, climbing, crawling on and over anything and everything. Most people don't know my given name and just call me Spider."



Fromader grew up in Darlington, graduating in 1967.

"Helping with the recreation program in the summers spurred my interest in teaching and coaching and the rest is history," Fromader said.

He graduated from UW-Platteville in 1971 and has lived in Platteville ever since. They built a house in the country in 1978 and he still resides there.

His hobbies include anything outdoors. He enjoyed farming with his brother-in-law in the summers for 40 years.

"I have had the pleasure of working with and learning from many students, athletes and other coaches," Fromader said. "I have traveled all over the world coaching athletes from different parts of the United States. He's been to England (both winter and summer), Greece, Spain, Australia (twice) and stopped in Hawaii when returning from Australia.

"Spider is one of our most dedicated PCA volunteers," Grace Milanowski, PCA Lead Coordinator, said. "He's tireless during workdays and even spent his free time (outside of scheduled workdays) this winter removing honeysuckle along the trail on his own. He's always in good spirits and makes hard work fun whenever he's around. Clay (Shaffer) has said he's often the first one to call when he has special projects to work on and he's always willing to help."

As a member of the "Brown" team, Fromader said he enjoys the time together on Monday mornings.

"Plenty of work gets done and teasing is part of what makes the work enjoyable," Fromader said. "I am looking forward to spring so we can get to work and get caught up on what everyone did over the winter. Big shout out to Clay and Grace for all the behind-the-scenes work they do to have everything ready to go on our workday. I am looking forward to being a positive member of the board."

Out with Invasive, In with Native

By Grace Milanowski

The PCA's Ecology Committee has been hard at work this winter developing a comprehensive plan for the management, conservation and restoration of the habitats along the trail. Restoration work is never a fast process and the ultimate goal for the trail—restoring habitat to native species—will be many years in the making. This year, however, the committee plans to focus on a few projects to work toward that goal.

Along the entirety of the Rountree Branch Trail Corridor, we'll continue to remove invasive species like honeysuckle, burdock, garlic mustard and wild parsnip throughout the growing season and will work on replacing these with ecologically beneficial native species.

Toward this goal of adding more native species to the trail corridor, the committee plans to start a shrub nursery. Native shrubs can provide excellent food and shelter for wild-life and in an effort to give them a better chance at survival, we'll transplant shrubs from their "bare root" stage (dormant, young plants, much less expensive than large shrubs) and let them grow for a couple years in a protected area with volunteer caretakers before transplanting along the trail. Transplanting a larger, more established shrub gives it a better chance of survival against deer and rabbits who find tender, young foliage especially tasty.

Frequent trail users have probably noticed a few cleared areas in the section between the Mineral St. and Progressive Pkwy. trail entrances. The PCA has designated these as "Reclamation Areas" where we're doing intense mitigation on a small scale. These areas were kept mowed in 2020 in an effort to prevent aggressive weeds from going to seed. In 2021, we'll continue site preparation that includes a combination of mowing and responsible herbicide application. We've found these areas have a well-established weed seedbank and before restoring native plants, shrubs or trees to the area, we're working on eliminating those weeds that can quickly out-compete desirable species.

The committee will also continue to determine areas of the trail where new trees can be planted and would like to add a mowed trail through the prairie parcel that would allow users to explore an unpaved portion of the PCA. The committee will also explore the possibility of creating a trailside mini prairie to experiment with different management methods and hope to do some native seed collection from plants along the trail.

We look forward to working on these projects alongside PCA volunteers and while partnering with the UW-P Reclamation Club. Thanks to the Ecology Committee members, Mike Penn, Kris Wright, Dan Flesch, Tim Donovan and Scott Budd for their expertise and dedication to the PCA in developing these plans!







Grant Approved to Protect the Trail

Protecting our \$1.67 million Rountree Branch Trail so carefully cared for by our many community volunteers is a high priority and rightly so. Howard Crofoot, City Public Works Director, and Dan Dreessens, Delta 3 Co-Owner, have collaborated to gain a Department of Natural Resources \$150,000 matching fund grant. This, along with the \$150,000 to be budgeted by the city, will fund a streamside stabilization project of \$300,000 to stabilize the following Rountree Branch Stream sites:

- the section near the trail bridge crossing at Fiesta Cancun.
- along Valley Road near the water plant.
- under the E. Mineral St. bridge by the Dog Park.
- the section immediately east of the J&N Stone old railroad bridge.

Funding did not cover three other lower priority sites, and these will be considered for the 2022 DNR grant cycle.

Our PCA Ecology and our Trail Maintenance volunteers continuously keep the city appraised of any perceived critical situations. They also provid input early in the grant preparation process.

Save the Date

August 19th, 5:30PM
at the Broske Center
Celebration of PCA's 100+
Volunteers,
5 Year Anniversary of the
Moving Platteville Outdoors
Trail Paving and Lighting Project,
and Naming of the David Canny
Rountree Branch Trail.

Fromader \$5,000 Challenge Match for PCA Garage Addition

Volunteering for non-profits is extremely rewarding at times and PCA had one of those good days on Feb 18th . Out of the blue, Spider Fromader called to say he wanted to contribute a \$5,000 challenge match to help fundraising for the PCA new garage addition. WOW!!!

Spider, who recently joined the PCA board of directors, shared: "I had heard about Max Anderson's \$5,000 challenge match and knew from working with a wonderful group of guys on PCA's Monday crew for six years, that we desperately needed the \$20,000 garage and electricity addition. When I looked at all the wonderful people of Platteville giving back to build the trail, outdoor fitness center, library and event center, I saw this as just a perfect op-

portunity for me to give back to the trail and our community!"

"Spider is another of many Platteville people to continue building on our culture of giving back! Is it just awesome!! It makes my day when I get these types of calls out of the blue, so many special people!" noted Gene Weber, PCA Director.

Bob Hundhausen, President and Finance Director of PCA, noted: "Spider and all of our 100 wonderful volunteers give PCA and our community so much time, talent and treasure. Spider's \$5,000



Picture: L-R: Gene Weber, Spider Fromader, Bob Hundhausen

brings our challenge match total for the garage addition to \$10,000, so from here on when a donor contributes \$10, it will net \$20, \$1,000 will net \$2,000, etc.

If you would like to contribute to help PCA meet this \$10,000 Challenge Match, simply send your check to PCA, P.O. Box 302, Platteville, WI 53818 noting "garage addition" in the memo.

Any questions, please email plattevillearboretum@gmail.com or contact a PCA Director.

Platteville Community Arboretum's

1st Annual Wall Calendar Photo Contest!

14 Winners!







Capture experiences or sights along the David Canny Rountree **Branch Trail and enter now!**

Fourteen photos, one for the front cover, back cover and one for each month, will be selected on Quality,

Prizes: \$50 Platteville Restaurant photo.) Gift Certificate and a free 2022 PCA Wall Calendar (\$20 value) for fourteen photo winners.

Criteria: Photos taken after December 31, 2017 may be submitted. Photos must have been taken by the person submitting them. Submit as many photos as you like, as long as they meet the criteria above.

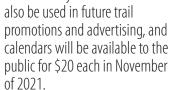


Due date for submission: July 1, 2021

Send photos to: plattevillearboretum@gmail.com

(Please include "Photo Contest" in the subject line and include your Composition and Seasonal Connection. name, contact information and caption with

FYI: Photos chosen for the calendar may



All proceeds on the sale of the PCA 2022 Calendar will be used in trail development and maintenance.



SCENES ON THE TRAIL



Photo by Dena Nechkash

A bald eagle has been spotted soaring above and swooping down frequently along the Rountree Branch in Katie's Garden this fall and winter. The Chamber staff have had a front row seat to view the hunting and feeding process of this magnificent raptor.



Photo by Dena Nechkash

The Wisconsin trout fishing season resumes on March 1 and anglers frequent the Rountree Branch for the eightmonth season. The minimum harvest length of trout in the Rountree Branch is 8 inches with a daily bag limit of three. The Platteville Regional Chamber and Travel Wisconsin Welcome Center, located along the trail at Katie's Garden, has free fishing regulation publications available. Pictured is Corey Nechkash with a brown trout he caught and released in 2020 along the trail near the Chestnut Street bridge.

Volunteer Co-Chair of PCA Marketing and Membership Committee Wanted

PCA is seeking a Volunteer Co-Chairperson to work with Co-Chair, Gene Weber, overseeing a wonderful talented team, who proactively perform the Marketing, Public Relations and Membership activities such as contributing to and edit newsletters, managing PCA membership records, writing press releases, creating promotional and educational materials etc. As Co-Chair, you will attend and occasionally lead a Membership and Marketing Committee meeting 3-5 times a year at 5:15PM for an hour with the wonderful Sue Kies, Dena Nechkash, Robin Fatzinger, Ric Genthe, Grace Milanowski, Juli McGuire and others. (currently by Zoom)

Duties also include:

- Annually assisting in facilitating the planning of the upcoming years activities.
- Occasionally follow up and listening to the committee to help determine what they need to get their tasks completed and act as a cheerleader in appreciation for all that they do.

Please email Gene Weber at geneweber4@gmail.com or call 608-778-6914 if interested.

Volunteer PCA Newsletter Editor Wanted

PCA creates quarterly newsletters distributed to about 1000 trail and Arboretum supporters. Our PCA Membership and Marketing Committee is searching for a new PCA Newsletter Editor who will lead a team of: one Creative Director (Ric Genthe) and creative editors and writers (Dena Nechkash, Sue Kies, Grace Milanowski, and other part time writers). Our newsletter staff has greatly improved the professionalism and quality of our newsletter, while increasing distribution from annually to quarterly.

The responsibilities of the editor include:

- Coordinating a Zoom meeting once a quarter to brainstorm and determine the articles with the staff.
- Helps determine: article completion dates and editing deadlines.
 Compiles articles for Creative Director to create newsletter draft, determine release dates..
- Listening to the staff to help determine what they need to get their articles ready and acts as a cheerleader in appreciation for all that they do.
- Attending a Membership and Marketing Committee meeting 3-5 times a year at 5:15PM for an hour with the wonderful Sue Kies, Dena Nechkash, Robin Fatzinger, Ric Genthe, Grace Milanowski, and others. (currently via zoom)

Please email Gene Weber at geneweber4@gmail.com or call 608-778-6914 if interested.

MEMBERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOMED

Become a Member or Make a Donation

The PCA is truly a community effort, as all activities, projects and maintenance are fully supported by community volunteers, donations and memberships. Become a member or make a donation at any category level, to help support such efforts.

Memberships may be purchased or donations made securely online through PayPal by clicking https://www.plattevillearboretum.org/membership

or mailing a check to:

PCA • PO Box 302 • Platteville, WI 53818

*Multi-year contributors of \$250+ are known as "Trail Blazers" and recognized on trail information media

Join our Wonderful 100 Volunteers:



Volunteers are the backbone of the PCA. Our volunteers maintain the trail and gardens and put on recreational, educational and fundraising events. There are countless ways volunteers can get involved at the PCA. We'd love to put your expertise to work! Please get in touch below if you'd like to join one of our volunteer teams or have other skills to contribute. Our volunteers love the social networking and healthy activities.

VOLUNTEER ROLES:

Join our Green Team: Maintenance teams meet at recurring 2-hour weekly workdays to restore habitat, remove invasive species, plant native species. Current teams meet Tuesdays 8:30 a.m., Wednesdays 9 a.m. or Wednesdays 5:30 p.m. And we are initiating a new 2 hour Saturday morning team for those who want to help on weekends.

Join our Brown Team:

Meets at recurring 2-hour weekly workdays to work on bigger projects like construction projects or tree removal. Current team meets at 8 a.m. Mondays.

Gardening Team:

Gardeners maintain garden plots along the trail. (hours flexible and as needed)

Join a Committee:

- Activities Committee
- Ecology Committee
- Finance Committee
- Marketing & Membership Committee
- Planning Committee

Fmail¹

plattevillearboretum@gmail.com to volunteer with us.

PCA Wish List

- Pole Saw \$850
- Trees \$7,000
- Replacement for worn/damaged tools \$250
 Thanks to Aaron Cullen for \$250 donation for worn/damaged tools.
- 2 battery operated drills \$200
- 100 3–5-gallon landscaping pots to start a PCA shrub nursery (secondhand/reused are welcome)
- Volunteers interested in 2 hour/week work teams, committees, board member or one-time tasks
- Estate Gifts
- Endowment Gifts

Interested? Please email: plattevillearboretum@gmail.com



handy trail map or learn about the history of the trail and the area, such as the tornado that devastated trees and vegetation in 2014, as well as the mining history of the area, the railroads, the Platteville Brewery and the Mill Pond. Bike racks combine utility and artful ingenuity along the way, and two new organic art pieces bring cultural interest to the trail: "Funnel Vision" and "CRISPR," designed and created by commissioned artist Bill Mitchell, are now installed, and two more are in the making.

The Rountree Branch Trail connects with a more rustic path heading west along the stream at the South Chestnut Street Bridge onto the UW-Platteville grounds below Pioneer Stadium. Mostly unpaved, this route follows the Rountree Branch stream across Southwest Road to a lovely meadow loop amid prairie grasses where woodchucks and foxes sometimes reveal themselves. It was here that I crossed paths with a mountain lion a few years ago on a morning bike ride. After brief eye contact, he took off up the hill and into the brush. Local wildlife experts said he was just passing through, and after a few weeks in the area he left for greener meadows.

No matter the season, Rountree Branch is the artery of the trail, circulating along the trail in this rich pocket of the Driftless Region of

Wisconsin. Unless engorged as the result of a downpour or hefty spring snowmelt, the stream's current flows slowly but steadily from east to west, but, in places, sections of shallow whitewater form and foam. Compared to the powerful Big Thompson in Colorado or the speeding Blackfoot in Montana, Rountree Branch is but a mere trickle. However, at times the rushing sound of water over rocks moves me to stop and listen.

Yesterday, while experiencing one of these moments, I was reminded of the quote by Norman Maclean in his novel "A River Runs Through It," also a popular movie narrated and directed by Robert Redford (1992): "Eventually, all things merge into one, and a river runs through it. The river was cut by the world's great flood and runs over rocks from the basement of time. On some of the rocks are timeless raindrops. Under the rocks are the words, and some of the words are theirs" (i.e. our loved ones who have passed).

Whether seeking a space for contemplation, exercise, observation, socialization or some other outdoor escape, The David Canny Rountree Branch Trail is an open door to nature and all it has to offer. Come explore. Come see what you can find. No matter the season, it is ready and waiting to feed your mind, body and soul.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

and beside him. His thoughtfulness will be missed on the board.

We have received great news that Dan's replacement on the board is Spider Fromader, avid runner, track coach and tireless PCA volunteer. His contribution to trail projects, buildings, and week-to-week work on the trail dates to the beginning of the trail and have been essential to its success. We are looking forward to his unique point of view on the board.

It is cold out there on the trail right now. We are happy to see that winter usage on the trail may be at the highest we have ever seen. We hope that our awesome volunteers are enjoying a restful break from the ongoing work of mulching, trimming, mowing, removal of invasive species and all-around maintenance and beautification of our wonderful trail.

While it may look like a lull in activity for PCA, I would like to give you a peek behind the curtain as to what we do in the winter months:

Projects that our various committees are working on:

- 1. Proposed History/Educational walk on trail in partnership with The Mining and Rollo Jamison Museums
- 2. Installing four pieces of beautiful, natural artwork on the trail by artist Bill Mitchell two are already installed for all to see)

- 3. Expansion of our equipment shed to house PCA tools and equipment
- 4. Fall PCA fun run
- 5. Volunteer recruitment
- 6. Possible winter trail grooming for winter skiing, fat tire biking, snowshoeing and of course, walking
- 7. Financing all of the above

We have been amazed at the increased usage of the trail in 2020. It has been a nice escape from the craziness of the year. We are working hard over the winter months to make the trail even better for 2021 and beyond. As always, I want to thank our hardworking volunteers. We are always looking for more. I also want to thank our incredibly generous donors and members. You folks make this all possible.

Happy Trails,

Bob