



January 2, 2007

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## Time doesn't fly, it accelerates....

It seems like it was a month or two ago when we were BOA, and then changed our name to BMA at a fun and successful gala benefit dinner.

Now that the 2006 cycling season has been closed down by a blanket of snow covering all the trails, let's take a moment to look back at the past year and at what the coming year holds in store for Boulder County mountain biking.

## Let's Party.... Let's Change our Name....

At our first annual gala benefit banquet, we changed our name from Boulder Offroad Alliance to Boulder Mountainbike Alliance. Changing our name was a

monumental but necessary activity, and our benefit dinner was an appropriate and fun time to do it.

**We hope to see you at the second annual gala benefit dinner on Friday, February 2. Mark your calendars!** We are going to do it again, and we can expect an even better event! More information will be forthcoming in the next week.

## **Advocacy - Planning, Lobbying, and SUCCESS**

### *Heil Valley Ranch - Lyons Connector*

The first challenge of 2007 came in Boulder County meeting rooms; BCPOS reopened the North Foothills Master plan to finally get around to finishing the trails plan first envisioned in 1996. Options were put on the table, and then taken away by staff. It took two Action Alert/email blitzes from us, but in the end we got an extra loop to enhance the Heil Ranch trail experience. The Wild Turkey Trail should be done in late spring.

### *OSMP says "YES" to Quality Mountain Biking in South Boulder*

The second and most time consuming process of 2007 was the Eldorado Mountain – Doudy Draw Trail Study Process. This plan, when fully implemented, will create a quality mountain biking experience that residents of Boulder, Superior, Louisville and Lafayette will be able to access without the use of a car. And through this plan we finally ended the blanket ban on mountain bikes west of Broadway.

## **Trail Work, Bigger and Better Projects**

BMA's Trail Work projects in 2006 were amazing. For the first time ever, every BMA trail event featured the construction of NEW singletrack.

We had a total of 637 Volunteers doing 2752 hours of trail work. Since 1991, we have documented 16,237 volunteer trail work hours to the trails in Boulder County. That's over 8 man-years..... We have truly made a difference.

### *Trail Crew Leaders Make it Happen*

Special recognition should be given to those that stepped up to be Trail Crew Leaders for our work events. Trail Crew Leaders are one of BMA's most precious resources. Without them, we simply couldn't put as much quality singletrack on the ground as we were able to do this year.

### *A Special Thanks to IMBA*

BMA benefits in so many ways from IMBA having their home office in Boulder; some of them are:

- Two IMBA Staffers are on our Board of Directors, Scott Gordon and Scott Linnenburger
- Scott and Scott have provided professional trail consultation (at no charge to BMA or the agencies we work with) when we have discussed trail issues with the City and County. The result every time is a better finished product and a better educated agency.
- Conducted a trail building school in early 2006 to grow our Trail Crew Leader resource.

While IMBA takes a broader perspective on what they work on, they are members of this community as well. BMA is grateful for their help.

## **REI Becomes BMA's First Corporate Sponsor**

We applied for and won a grant from REI to fund our trail work events and provide t-shirts to volunteers. This was once a time consuming process of soliciting the business community for food sponsorship and schwag at our trail work events. Now we have money to buy the food, and the t-shirts keep the volunteers quite happy.

Now all of the agencies we work with know and understand what we bring to the table for trail construction projects. This has expanded our opportunities to make the kinds of trails we want to see on the ground – narrow, fun, twisty, and environmentally sustainable singletrack. If you haven't ridden the trails we built this year, put them on your list for a warm day when the snow has melted off.

- Coal Seam Trail at Marshall Mesa.... National Trails Day (now open)
- Building technical trails at Brainard Lake (still work to do in 2007)
- The Wild Turkey Trail – singletrack at Heil Valley Ranch (set to open in 2007)
- The High Plains Trail at Marshall Mesa. BMA's 100<sup>th</sup> Trail Work Day – and has less than a week's worth of work before opened
- Mud Lake Open Space opened their system to the public last July; it's an easy, stacked loop system north of Nederland - a good place to take beginners

The new trailhead/parking lot in Marshall Mesa was officially opened on December 9. Singletrack takes users from the parking lot into the trail system, and it's good stuff!

### ***Bike Patrol Makes a Difference at West Mag***

The Boulder Mountain Bike Patrol hit the trails hard this year. The patrol focused on the West Magnolia trail system and working with the U.S. Forest Service. 17 patrollers (13 men/4 women – come on ladies, let's step it up next year) contributed over 343 hours of service between Memorial Day and Labor Day. These patrollers helped forge a meaningful relationship with the Forest Service,

and according to the grapevine, a USFS service recognition award is in the works. According to USFS personnel, we've created a tremendous opportunity in the West Magnolia area, and it will be critical to show we can meet this same level of service in 2007.

### *Politics, the Necessary Evil*

This year BMA stepped up to play the Boulder political game by actively supporting Boulder County Ballot Issue 1A – the Transit and Trails initiative. While 1A, which would have completed the County trails master plan in 10 years instead of 40, ultimately failed, BMA showed the county commissioners that we are willing to support them in the political fight for better trail connectivity. Two board members served on the campaign cabinet and we held the first fund raiser for the initiative, infusing the campaign with some much needed money early in the campaign. While the failure of this initiative is unfortunate, it's clear that the current county commissioners are open and proactive regarding trails and bike paths. We hope to work in partnership with the commissioners in 2007.

We sincerely thank every one of you who sent an email, signed a petition, attended and spoke at a public meeting or called a decision maker on one of our Action Alert Issues. Don't let anyone tell you different, we are very effective and making a difference.

## **2007 will be our biggest and most successful year ever.**

We have a critical mass of new trail opportunities coming our way in 2007. Plans to expand mountain biking opportunities have been written and approved for City Open Space, County Open Space, and in the National Forest, and all that remains is design and construction.

### *Quality Mountain Biking That Doesn't Require a Car?*

The South side of Boulder is going to please you, especially now that we have overturned the decades-old ban on mountain biking west of Hwy 93. We have over a dozen miles of trail that need building which will create a system of trails that doesn't require a car to access. But many of these new trail opportunities will require time and effort on the part of mountain bikers to be successful.

Gaining this access came at a cost, and it won't be a business as usual trail opening. We have gained access to the Fowler Trail, a trail corridor that connects Marshall Mesa with Eldorado Mountain State Park, but BMA will have to enter into a cooperative agreement with the State Park and City Open Space to prove we belong on this "Americans with Disabilities Act" trail. If we can't make the land managers happy, they can take this trail access away. So look for programs like

our bike patrol and other innovative approaches to user management on these lands.

### ***Boulder County- Lyons to Heil***

With the County really stepping up for recreation and purchasing the Olson Property in September, the only significant obstacle keeping the Connector trail from becoming a reality in 2007 is bureaucracy. It will take a steady, unwavering effort to get the Heil Connector Trail open in 2007. BCPOS staff is already trying to lower expectations, we need to help them exceed their own expectations.

### ***USFS – The Sky is the Limit***

The Forest Service is warming up to the concept of challenging, technical trails. There is tremendous opportunity in the West Mag Area, if we can harness it. There is so much opportunity just waiting for us with the Forest Service, the limiting factors will be how much BMA works to make those opportunities a reality. In the coming years we will hear about “niche management” from the USFS. Each Ranger District will designate the top five niches that their district will focus on. And the good news; mountain biking is one of those niches for the Boulder Ranger District.

### ***More Planning with OSMP in 2007 – and We Are Already Working It***

OSMP will be reviewing the Trail Study Plan Process to attempt to make this process faster. BMA representatives are reaching out to organizations such as the Audubon Society, Plan Boulder, and The Boulder County Nature Association to discuss the Visitor Master Plan and try to break down some of the acrimony and distrust that has festered over the years.

More TSAs will be considered in 2007, the next one likely to be the North Foothills TSA. We hope our work with these groups will create dialogue that helps both of us understand “what’s real and important” with every piece of land that is considered. Ideally, we would like to work out what we agree upon and what we don’t agree on, and hand this over to OSMP Staff. By doing this preliminary work out of the limelight of public meetings, we hope to speed the TSA process and in the end produce a plan that makes sense for the land and the humans that play there.

### ***Culture Change at OSMP***

OSMP will also be hiring their first ever recreation planner in the first quarter of 2007. This is a monumental turning point for the City of Boulder, but culture change on staff will take much longer. There is still an abundance of staff that believe environmental protection and a high quality user experience are mutually exclusive goals. Progress is slow, but it is in the correct direction.

## **A Message From the President**

At BMA's December Board Meeting, the newly elected Board voted officers for 2007. The results are as follows:

Mike Barrow, President  
Botsy Phillips, Vice President  
Gary Sprung, Treasurer  
Kerry White, Secretary

As many of you know, I have been doing the mountain bike trails advocacy thing for a very long time. Having just a few people doing most of the work is bad karma for an organization. We need to 'spread the love' and get a bunch of people doing work for BMA, but at a reasonable clip.

I have significant aspirations (not delusions of grandeur) for BMA in 2007; I need your help to make these things written about in this newsletter and a lot more happen this year. Remember, this is just what we know about right now.

We have become victims of our own successes; we've been fighting and working for change in attitudes and management approaches, and now the floodgates are beginning to open. Who knows how long this "window of opportunity" will last?

It is my intent and desire to enlist as many new faces as possible doing things for BMA so nobody burns out and we get twice or three times as much stuff done.

2007 will bring a dozen miles of new trail access to Boulder County mountain bikers, and we had a significant hand in making it happen.

Boulder County mountain biking is going to have an excellent year in 2007. If you are interested in being a more significant participant in this success story, please send me an email at [mtnbikemike@gmail.com](mailto:mtnbikemike@gmail.com) or give me a call at 303 513 2823.

How much actually gets done is directly related to how much we get involved.

## **BMA THANKS OUR SPONSORS IN THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY**

It's always a good time to thank those who say, "Yes, we can help.", and we have plenty to thank them for. Please make an effort to patronize these businesses because they are part of our 'community' and demonstrate it every time we ask them for something. Rather than single out anybody, suffice it to say that everyone is eager to assist us and we couldn't do it without them.

**Amante Coffee  
Oskar Blues (yeah Dale!)  
Full Cycle  
Tokyo Joes Restaurant  
Cutting Edge Sports  
Blue Sky Cycles  
High Gear  
Sports Garage  
Maverick American  
REI  
Performance Bicycle Shop  
Boulder Cyclesport  
Rocky Mounts  
BATCO  
Latitude 40 Maps**

**Tired of seeing trails closed to mountain bikes in Boulder County? Then DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT!! Join the Boulder Mountainbike Alliance and join the fight to open trails. Send a \$25 check to BMA, PO Box 4954, Boulder, CO 80306, check our website at <http://www.bouldermountainbike.org/for> more information**