



*Our Purpose: To Establish federal designation of the Pike National Historic Trail*

We are 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

# Pike National Historic Trail Association Newsletter

March 2014 Vol. 8 No 2



## *The Association's Annual meeting-*

**The Annual meeting** of the Association will be held as announced on **Saturday, April 26, 2014, at 9:30 am in Cañon City** at 6th and Macon. Please consider attending this meeting.

We will be concentrating on developing guidelines for the Association's projects, including Interpretive Materials, with our new committee; Funding and Preservation options from Erwin Young; and routing details for our tourist routes – auto and hiking/bicycling.

We want to move ahead with our work. Our legislation will also be on our mind.

We can also tour the construction area and again imagine Zebulon Pike climbing up Pike's Gulch.

Let us know if you will be attending by calling 303/816-7424.

The Bighorn Lodge, where our meetings are usually held & which was not touched by the fire, is not available because it is being used as the Construction office.

## *Exciting progress at the Royal Gorge Bridge and Park- Canon City, Colo.*

— in the wake of their devastating fire last June, Mike Bandera, one of our Pike NHTA Board Members and Manager of the Park reports wonderful results in the effort to give a new experience for visitors.



The interest in the rebuilding of the park has been off the charts according to Bandera. Thousands of cars have traveled up to the Royal Gorge since the fire, June 11, 2013, with patrons hoping to catch a glimpse of the Royal Gorge and the park. Continued on Page 2

## *Browns Canyon & Exploring of the Arkansas River Headwaters- Today*

by **Dr. J. Curtis Kovacs, MD** (inhabits Chafee every summer.)

Buena Vista & Salida -- Chaffee County, Colorado

Browns Canyon of the Arkansas River is an incredible area which provides outstanding fish and wildlife habitat, sweeping views of the Arkansas Valley as well as four-season recreation opportunities for people to explore the outdoors and experience the area's scenery and solitude.

Elevations at Browns Canyon range from 10,000 to 7,300 feet, making this a unique mid-elevation area of public land. As the elevation increases, the pinon & juniper trees that dominate the arid lands along the river give way to Douglas fir, Ponderosa pine and large stands of aspen.

The sheer ruggedness, proximity to water and lower elevation provides important habitat for wildlife including black bear, bighorn sheep, elk, mule deer, mountain lions, eagles, falcons, imperiled bats and many other species of wildlife.

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*Browns Canyon & Exploring of the Arkansas River Headwaters - Today Continues*

Senator Udall has officially proposed a "wilderness" designation for 22,000 acres East of the Arkansas River.

For one thing, the river provides some great fishing opportunities—the stretch of river in and around Salida has up to 5000 trout per mile! And, there is more than 70 miles of public access along the river, as well as plenty of sites to launch boats and float-and-fish. Also, the area has almost year round insect action, a plus for those who love fly fishing.

Trout fishing is king along the Arkansas River, waters which are home to the brown trout and the rainbow trout. Brown trout were introduced in the 1800s and subsequently overtook the rainbow trout as the dominant fish. Just this year 102 miles of the Arkansas has been designated "Gold Medal" fishing status. In Colorado there are only 13 "Gold Medal" streams - all the rest (12) total 220 miles.

Perhaps the most popular summer activity is rafting. Couple this with proximity to the Great Divide, hiking trails, bike trails, historic train right of ways, Jeep trails, and Ghost Towns making for a

smorgasbord of activities for all ages.

Where else can you dine on sushi hear a Salida-Aspen concert and be deep in a wilderness area in less than an hour?

Exploring the Brown Canyon area on foot or by Jeep is interesting. Just sitting in Browns Canyon and imagining Pike, his men and his expedition is very satisfying.

Note: The Association's interest in Browns Canyon is sparked by the fact that Pike and his men were the first Americans to explore Browns Canyon during December 1806. We have interest in the community-driven proposal for the Browns Canyon National Monument because it is immediately adjacent to the proposed Pike National Historic Trail.

*Exciting progress at the Royal Gorge Bridge and Park- Canon City, Colo. Continues*

**The Fire and Devastation-** Last June's wild fire swept through the park decimating 48 out of 52 buildings and world-class attractions in the 85-year-old park. The Royal Gorge Bridge was relatively unscathed and received only minor damage. Miraculously, none of our animals were harmed. In fact, the birth of a baby bison was celebrated in the days following the fire and is aptly named "Smokey" & is doing well. Mike is happy to say that the other attractions and tourism operators were not affected by the fire.

**Phase 1-** The first rebuilding phase of the park will include a new 14,000 sq. foot Visitor Center (old one was 9,600 square feet). which is scheduled to open this August. A new double zip line racing at 40 mph across the Royal Gorge and a new aerial gondola will also be added in the first phase with a large children's play area attraction. The first rebuilding phase is estimated to cost \$23 million.

Construction for the rebuild began Jan. 31 by BeckGroup Architectural firm, Denver, Colorado.

Today during reconstruction, the park does not have water and sewer, and electricity is spotty throughout the park. Continued on Page 3



*Exciting progress at the Royal Gorge Bridge and Park- Canon City, Colo. Continues*

## **Cold and Snow Doesn't Dampen Enthusiasm at the Royal Gorge Bridge & Park Groundbreaking Friday, January 31**

1. Approximately 70 people braved cold snowy weather and snow-packed roads to commemorate the groundbreaking ceremony at the Royal Gorge Bridge & Park, Canon City, Colo., on a frigid Friday morning, January 31. The spirit and resiliency of Coloradoans was certainly evident—words read from the proclamation Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper sent for the event where local officials and dignitaries broke ground in the snow. The Royal Gorge Bridge celebrates its 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year after a devastating fire, which destroyed 90 percent of the buildings and attractions within the park, leaving the Royal Gorge Bridge relatively unscathed.

The Governor's proclamation stated "the Royal Gorge Bridge is an icon of tourism in the State of Colorado....and this celebration signifies the rebuilding of the Royal Gorge Bridge & Park," as read by Tony Greer, Mayor of Canon City. Harry Hargrave, Royal Gorge Company President told the crowd the Bridge Company and the City of Canon City "have been good partners since 1947," and "we're ready to build this for the community and make it successful."



2. Just in time for spring break beginning (today) March 15, the Royal Gorge Bridge & Park is offering guided tours on park vehicles through construction zones and over one of the world's highest suspension bridges (weekends only) according to Mike Bandera, Vice-President and General Manager. The group tours will travel

to the Royal Gorge Bridge where guests can step off and take in the scenery- weather and construction permitting.

3. The park expects a Grand Re-Opening August, 2014 with Phase 1 of the rebuild completed.

For more information visit the website [www.royalgorgebridge.com](http://www.royalgorgebridge.com) or call 888-333-5597.

## *Oxford University Press - Citizen Explorer by Jared Orsi*

In January, Oxford University Press proudly published [Citizen Explorer: The Life of Zebulon Pike](#) by Jared Orsi.

Follow the intrepid explorer Zebulon Pike, a contemporary of Lewis and Clark, across the deep and beautiful wilderness of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century American frontier. His start in the army would serve as the catalyst for various daring expeditions; Pike sought the headwaters of the Mississippi as well as the sources of the Arkansas and Red Rivers. These expansionist and exploratory missions would lead him to come into conflict with forces competing for a continent whose borders had not yet congealed.

Jared Orsi narrates Pike's life and work through a rich environmental, political, and cultural lens. Orsi vitalizes Pike's quest to incorporate Western territories, through his blunders and victories, all of which can be emblemized in his effort to scale one of the largest mountains in the Rocky Mountains [Pikes Peak]. To understand this remarkable man's story is to survey the birth of the national landscape as we know it today.

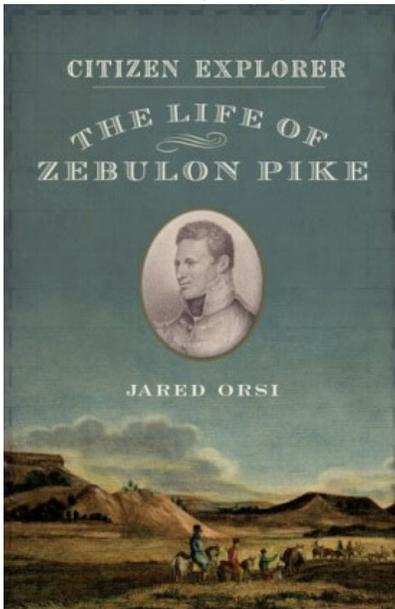
I believe the book would be of great interest to you and the members of the Pike National Historic Trail Association.

Praise for [Citizen Explorer](#):

"With thorough research and clear prose, Jared Orsi insightfully recovers the dramatic life and violent death of a military hero and western explorer of the early republic. In an unstable age of competing regions, Zebulon Pike pioneered a national style of manhood which flourished in, and gave shape to, the American

West." --Alan Taylor, author of *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and War in Virginia, 1772-1832*

Brendan Pratt Marketing Assistant Oxford University Press USA



*Our mail- regarding Dr. Robinson's relative inquiry of Dec. 9, 2013*

I have not found nor do I know of any information that would support such a proposition. I believe if this were true we would find some record in the writings of Zebulon. While he does not always tell us about every detail of his exploration I believe he would have mentioned this if it were true.

Rev. Dr. Roy Escott Pike, President of the Pike Family Association of America  
20 December 2013

See the December Pike Newsletter for details on the inquiry.

*•Membership* - Thank you for our new members and those who have renewed their membership in the Pike National Historic Association!

*Please consider joining us with your membership. The membership form is on our website or contact us at 303/816-7424.*

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