

20 YEARS AGO today

BY NEL BURKETT

The following stories appeared in this publication 20 years ago this week.

Land Trust looks to buy the Peanut Mine

by Melissa Ruch

Representatives of the Crested Butte Land Trust have signed a contract to purchase the Peanut Mine and mill site from the current mine owners, to clean up the abandoned coal mine and preserve it for open space and recreational use. Officially, the Land Trust went into contract with Crested Corporation out of Wyoming to buy the 80-plus acres on September 1, 2000. The purchase price for the mine is \$300,000, set by the owners and the estimated cost for reclamation of the site is \$800,000.

The Peanut Mine was an operating coal mine from the early to mid 20th century. During the 1950s and 1960s the area was used for hard rock milling. Health hazards exist now due to remaining metal at the site and the existing railing ponds. This past summer, the coal tailings piles spontaneously combusted and burned for more than two weeks. There are also concerns that water traveling through the mine site carries heavy metal contaminants into the Slate River Drainage, including

Peanut Lake. The Land Trust owns two-thirds of Peanut Lake and the 193-acre Lower Loop Property, the public trail opened in 1999.

Land Trust board member Jim Starr has taken the lead on the Peanut Mine Acquisition Project. Starr said that the talks began at the beginning of the summer to purchase the site. Other options besides purchasing were discussed before signing a contract, he said. However, one of the possibilities, demanding the current owners to clean up the site was legally impossible. Starr explained that since the mine shut down operation before 1977, it is exempt from any federal or state law mandating them to clean up their abandoned mine.

Another alternative that was ruled out by the Land Trust was the option for citizens to make a legal claim against the owners that a severe health hazard was created by the site. "That is not clear at this point," said Starr. "In 40 years since the line has not been in operation, no one has come forward and we think that is highly unlikely."

Thus, the Land Trust signed the contract to purchase and is now under way with grant applications for both the purchasing, the fees for determining clean up costs and the



Mikey and Maya enjoy the first sled of the season in 2000. PHOTO BY TIFFANY WARDMAN

reclamation costs. This week, county commissioners voted to be the lead applicant for a \$200,000 Energy and Mineral Impact Assistance grant for the acquisition project. The Land Trust cannot apply directly for the grant since they are a non-profit organization. According to county manager John DeVore, the town of Crested Butte will be a co-applicant and not the lead, since they in the past have not been given a favorable response from the EMIA. "This should be a slam dunk for us," DeVore said on Tuesday.

Starr said the next step for the Land Trust is defining the physical

condition and estimating the cost of the cleanup. According to Starr, they have been informally awarded a \$50,000 grant from the Colorado Division of Mineral and Geology to finish determining the correct process for cleaning up the site and for the engineering work necessary to get bids on the cleanup itself.

Starr highlighted the pros of obtaining the property, saying, "Our intent is to purchase the mine site for public access, clean up the contaminants so we avoid contamination going off into neighboring properties." He explained the Land Trust wants to avoid the potential health risks of people being near the ponds. The Land Trust also wants to assure recreational use for the public in the future, with the placement of a conservation easement on the site.

He said that in his opinion the cons are minimal. The Land Trust is anticipating applying to the Colorado Volunteer Clean Up Program through the state department of health. This program would assure that no future action on the site would be taken by the health department and the Environmental Protection Agency.

As for the actual cleaning up of the mine and mill sites, Starr hopes the reclamation would begin in the summer of 2002. "The clean-up is fairly simple," he said. "You isolate the milling tailings and keep water

away from them."

The tailings are covered with fill and the drainages are rerouted around them, so water no longer passes through them. The tailings become inactive within three to four months.

Land Trust board member and former president Glo Cunningham said this week that the logic behind this acquisition was based on the invested time in the area surrounding the mine site. But she said the public's input and concern over the area also spurred the acquisition project. "It is a lot of listening—people kept asking who was going to do something about the mine."

She continued, "If someone like the Land Trust wasn't going to do it, who will?"

Starr said that after the numbers come back on the clean-up costs and the assessment of the physical condition of the property, the Land Trust has a final chance to make a decision whether they want to purchase the property or not. He and Cunningham said the property owners have been very cooperative. Starr concluded, "It has taken a while to get this far. Things are looking good."

Nel Burkett is the curator at the Crested Butte Mountain Heritage Museum and enjoys putting the present in the context of history.



The crew feels their finished product at the completion of the first heated sidewalk on Elk Avenue. PHOTO BY MELISSA RUCH

Legals

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—CB SOUTH P.O.A. BOARD MEETING NOTICE & AGENDA—

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 9TH, 2020 ~ 6:00 P.M.

P.O.A. BOARD MEETING AGENDA

VIRTUAL UBERCONFERENCE

Join the call: <https://www.uberconference.com/dom658>
Optional dial-in number: 781-448-4005
PIN: 70089
Questions about this Agenda/Meeting can be directed to 349-1162 or info@cbsouth.net
This agenda can also be viewed on-line at www.cbsouth.net
6:00 PM Call to Order
6:05 PM Approval of Minutes for November 2020

P.O.A. Board Meeting
6:10 PM Monthly Financial Report for November 2020
New Business:
6:25 PM Scheduled Property Owner Comment Time
6:35 PM Resolution to Contribute to the Reserve Fund
Continued Business:
6:45 PM Review the Application and Policy for Busi-

ness Licensing
Capital Improvement Budget Planning
7:00 PM Manager's Report:
7:25 PM Manager's Report
7:40 PM Confirm January 13th, Board Meeting Date
Identify January Board Meeting Agenda Items
7:45 PM Association Manager's Contract: (Possible Executive Session)
8:15 PM Adjourn

ADA Accommodations: Anyone needing special accommodations as determined by the *American Disabilities Act* may contact the Association Manager prior to the day of the hearing.
Agenda Items: All times are estimates. Please allow for earlier discussion. Please show up at least 20 minutes prior to the listed times.

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—REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING—

DECEMBER 1, 2020 ~ 6:00 P.M.

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

MT. CRESTED BUTTE

DRAFT AGENDA

for the official agenda please go to <https://mtcrestedbuttecolorado.civicweb.net/portal/>
Please note that starting January 1, 2021 all Town Council, Planning Commission and Downtown Development Authority Agendas will no longer be published in the newspaper. You can find our agendas on our website at: <https://mtcrestedbuttecolorado.civicweb.net/portal/>
WORK SESSION – Marketing Consultant(s) – 5:00 P.M.
CALL TO ORDER
ROLL CALL

PUBLIC COMMENT - Citizens may make comments on items not scheduled on the agenda. Per Colorado Open Meetings Law, no Council discussion or action will take place until a later date, if necessary. You must sign in with the Town Clerk before speaking. Comments are limited to three minutes.
CONSENT AGENDA – The consent agenda allows Town Council to approve, by a single motion, second and vote, matters that have already been discussed by the entire Council or matters that are considered routine or non-controversial. The agenda items will not be

separately discussed unless a Councilor, Town staff, or a citizen requests an item be removed and discussed separately. Items removed from the consent agenda will then be considered after consideration of the consent agenda.
• Approval of the November 17, 2020 Regular Town Council Meeting Minutes.
• Letter to Colorado Congressional Delegation Regarding COVID-19 Relief Funds
CORRESPONDENCE BUSINESS
• Crested Butte/Mt. Crested Butte Chamber of Commerce – COVID-19 –

Admissions Tax Grant Report – Brittany Couts
• Crested Butte/ Mt. Crested Butte Chamber of Commerce Third Quarter Report – Stephanie Sandstrom
• New Standard Amenity Fee Area for the Gunnison National Forest Presentation - Lizzy Bauer
• North Village Update – Crockett Farnell
• Community Housing In-Deed Program Overview – Carlos Velado and Troy Russ
REPORTS, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

• Town Manager's Report and Discussion Items
• Clerk's Report and Discussion Items
• Town Council Reports and Discussion Items
ADJOURN
If you require any special accommodations in order to attend this meeting, please call the Town Hall at 349-6632 at least 48 hours in advance. Public comment on these agenda items is encouraged.

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