



RISTWATCH

RCVFD Quarterly Newsletter P. O. Box 2, Bellvue, CO 80512 Issue No. 113 January 2025

Letter from the President

New Year, New Opportunities.

2024 was another successful year for the RCVFD. We expanded our services, continued our community outreach and education, and — of course — had a fantastically successful Rist Canyon Mountain Festival.

Our responders have continued to provide emergency response that is second to none. I repeat, our responders are absolute pro level. In November, we held our annual meeting at the beautiful Stove Prairie Ranch.

In 2025, we will be celebrating 50 years of RCVFD serving this area with 100% volunteer labor and 100% donations. While emergency response is getting better, it is also getting more expensive.

We are glad to provide the services; please meet us halfway and consider donating — time or money or both — to the Department.

Let me also share a reminder that we can now take donations of stock. A stock donation means that you don't have to pay taxes on gains, but the Department can benefit from the value of the stock. If you want to learn more, please contact our Treasurer.

Stay tuned for special 50th Anniversary happenings!

Neil Faber
President - 2025

Chief's Report

Greetings from Chief Neuroth

The last year has been a good one for Rist Canyon VFD overall. Though, we lost a long-time firefighter, friend and community member, Larry Sippel. Larry exemplified what it means to be part of a community by participating in many aspects that benefit all, such as the Mountain Festival, the fire department and I'm sure many, many more. I didn't know Larry very well, but I wish I had. His insight and knowledge of the area would have been a great asset to me.

We had two big fires near us this year. The Alex Mountain fire and the Pearl fire. RCVFD did not get called out on these fires, but we were prepared to respond. Our trucks were full of water and fuel, and our cisterns were full of water and ready to go. Our firefighters have been training hard to learn and practice running our engines and water pumps, laying hose lines, and implementing wildland tactics. Had we been called to respond or if the fires had come into our district, we would have been ready, willing, and able.

I feel my first year as chief was successful due in large part to the hard work put in by my predecessors Carol Dollard and Jeff Elsner. My work was also supported by the Board of Director's diligence and careful

guidance in managing the business aspect of the department; the Mountain Festival, raising funds for the operation of the department; community support; and of course, my firefighters who give a tremendous amount of their time. Each of these contributions are uniquely appreciated.

I'm excited about the coming year. Plans are being made to partner with Poudre Fire Authority (PFA) to teach a Firefighter 1 course and with Thompson Valley Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to teach an Emergency Medical Response (EMR) course.

We are moving forward toward having a well-trained and equipped team to respond to any medical or fire emergency that may occur in our district. Thanks to all for allowing me the honor of being chief of RCVFD.

Gratefully submitted,

Mark Neuroth, Chief

Rist Canyon Volunteer Fire Department

P.O. Box 2, Bellvue, CO 80512

chief@rcvfd.org

Letter from the Vice President

Many attempts at a more formal, business-like letter, while dealing with pneumonia, failed. This letter has turned out to be a bit more personal, but in a way I think we share, so it is appropriate for the RCVFD community. However, of course, feel free to turn to another page if you want more professional information. I will mention some RCVFD business at the end of this note so I do not get fired from the VP job. After many years of “Letter from the Vice President” notes, it is hard to think of new ideas to share (especially with the aforementioned pneumonia). Sitting here at my desk, in my “forever home,” I look forward to more decades with my RCVFD friends and neighbors.

I am not a spiritual person, but I truly feel blessed to live in Rist Canyon. I grew up in New York City, and now I live among deer, coyotes, bobcats, bears, and mountain lions. As those of us who have been here for a while (for me, 24 years), I know to watch out for deer when driving here, especially after one crosses in front you, and the next one is waiting to dart out. So many nights recently I am awakened by my dogs barking at the howling coyotes nearby, or even better, howling with them (all from the confines of my bedroom). A couple of years ago, at dusk, I went out to see why my dog kept barking non-aggressively; he was about six feet from nose-to-nose with a bobcat, who wisely stood his ground until I got my dog’s attention, and then the bobcat left (my dog, bigger than a bobcat, was only in play mode).

Last month, when I entered my driveway, all three of my horses were lined up together looking across Davis Ranch Road, so I looked over and, across the road, a black bear on my neighbor’s driveway was staring back at them.

Continued on page 4.



Photo credit: HJ Siegel

Letter from the Vice President

Continued from page 3. My most concerning encounter was years ago, one evening, when I was out with my pup-age dog, and he was with his back to barbwire fence between my property and my neighbor's: motion detectors in my eyes saw a silent, slowly padding, totally unafraid mountain lion about 20 feet away moving along the neighbor's side of the fence, and I carefully got to the side of my small pup away from the lion, so my pup never saw the lion, and we went into the house.

Well, my plan for this morning was to do my real Board VP job and use the notes I had prepared pre-pneumonia to share about what the RCVFD Board does and who they are. So, to help me avoid getting fired, please go to "RCVFD.org" "[About RCVFD](#)" "[Contact RCVFD](#)" for who we are, and please go to "RCVFD.org", "[About RCVFD](#)", "[RCVFD Bylaws](#)", *Article IV* for what we do.

I had fun reminiscing. I hope it reminds you of similar happy feelings you have experienced living in the RCVFD area.

H. J. Siegel
RCVFD Board Vice President and Mountain Festival Coordinator
HJ@computer.org

RCVFD Monthly Meeting Schedule

Operations —1st Wednesdays (6-7 PM)

Fire Training—2nd Wednesdays (7-9:30 PM)

Board Meeting—3rd Wednesdays (6-8 PM)

Medical Training—4th Wednesdays (7-9 PM)

Ops, Fire, and Medical Trainings are at Firehouse #1 at 11835 Rist Canyon Road. Board meetings are held at Firehouse #1, or on Zoom if necessary. All Rist Canyon area residents are welcome to attend. Around the first of each month, RCVFD sends out a Community Alert with the deadline to request a copy of the agenda. If you would like to receive the agenda, please email your name, email address, and phone number to the RCVFD Board Secretary at secretary@rcvfd.org. Please note that the agenda will arrive one to two days before the scheduled meeting. To sign up for Community Alerts, visit RCVFD.org.

Celebrating 50 Years of Community Support

RIST CANYON MOUNTAIN FESTIVAL



CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF RCVFD COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Fueled by a common desire among area residents to protect their communities, the Rist Canyon Volunteer Fire Department was established 50 years ago. In 1975 volunteers from all walks of life came together to begin building a fire department that today has 35 volunteer firefighters serving a 110 square mile area. The coverage area includes Rist Canyon, Stove Prairie, and the Buckhorn, as well as providing mutual aid for an additional 50 square miles in conjunction with other local emergency response agencies.

The first fleet of vehicles were donated and using their own personal credit, the volunteers-built Station 1 on Rist Canyon Road. In 1975 it acquired its first pumper, a 1947 Army-surplus, 2 ½ ton 6x6 converted by the Colorado State Forest Service into a 900-gallon capacity vehicle. Today the RCVFD owns, operates, and maintains 12 vehicle and three stations with the planning process for a fourth underway.

Excerpts from a RCVFD letter to residents outlined four reasons for creating the Department: "The fire danger is getting much worse because of the rapidly increasing population, the greater number of tourists, and the many pine trees killed by bark beetle which serve as ready fuel for any fires that do start." A state forest service

Celebrating 50 Years of Community Support

Continued from page 5. A state forest service warning to the founders provides reasons 2-4: “that we’re just sitting on a pile of kindling waiting for the right match; that the small-fire capability, with slurry bomber backup, of past years is not going to be enough to save our forests, range, homes, and lives under these conditions; and that we must organize ourselves for the possibility of larger and more frequent fires than we’ve had to worry about before.”

Today the RCVFD is staffed by approximately 35 volunteer highly-trained emergency responders. Its response area has grown from 38 square miles (more than 24,000 acres) in 1975 to approximately 110 square miles (more than 70,400 acres) today.

This year we will be celebrating the 50th anniversary with *Ristwatch* articles, Facebook and Website updates as well as with celebrations during the annual Mountain Festival on Sept. 6 and at the RCVFD annual meeting next fall. We want to thank and celebrate 50 years of volunteers’ dedication to our community.

Karen Salaz



2024 Rist Canyon Mountain Festival

1975

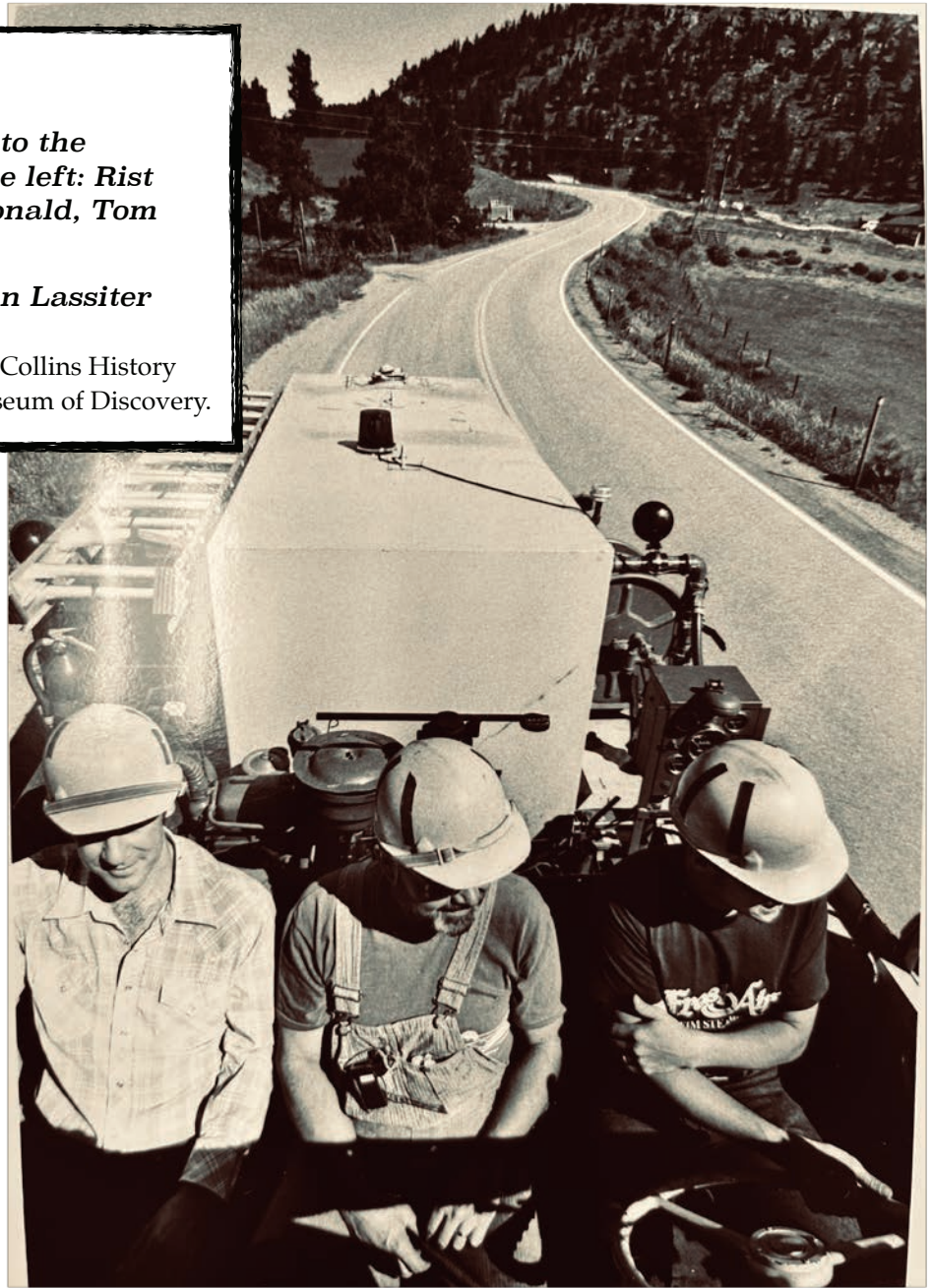
TAKING A TEST DRIVE prior to the Mountain Festival are from the left: Rist County fire fighters Jim McDonald, Tom Bender, and Bob Gann.

Triangle Review photos by Dan Lassiter

Photo and caption, courtesy of the Fort Collins History Connection Archive at Fort Collins Museum of Discovery.

Do you have photos or short stories from years past to share?

We would love to hear from you and learn what you might have to share and incorporate into this year's 50th Anniversary Celebration of the RCVFD activities. Please be in touch or send submissions to the Ristwatch Editor at ristwatch@rcvfd.org.



Submissions to the Ristwatch

Submissions of written work or photographs are welcome and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Please send submissions to the Ristwatch Editor at ristwatch@rcvfd.org.

The Ristwatch reserves the right to edit, refuse, reject, or cancel any article or ad at any time. We base this decision on our responsibility to our readers. We will not knowingly print any article or ad that is misleading or untruthful. Articles submitted to the Ristwatch are a representation of the author and not necessarily an endorsement by the RCVFD.

Notes from Your Area Representatives

As I write this, the New Year's bells ring in the new year! Happy New Year! The canyon has been pretty quiet this winter. Minimal snow has left the road in good shape, but as the season progresses, watch for ice and snow on the roads. The county does maintain the roads with plows to keep the roads clear. Some deer, moose, and elk have started to shed their antlers. Reminder that shed collection is prohibited on public lands until April 30 west of I-25. Hope you all enjoyed the holidays and look forward to a successful new year!

Erica Michel
Upper Buckhorn Area Representative



Photo credit: Randall Stanley | *"Turkeys forgot to move their clocks back by an hour"*

It's been such a dry winter so far. Beautiful weather, and evenings with a gorgeous super moon, and recently colorful Northern Lights. As it is so dry, don't forget to put some water on trees you have planted. Even some perennials could use a little drink when it's a bit warmer for the ground to absorb. Also, if you haven't cleaned your chimney yet this year, it's never too late to have the chimney sweep come up and do so. Good insurance against potential chimney fires. Keep your Chimfex away from the fireplace, but close at hand. The cold nights are just starting and we'll be using our fireplaces and wood stoves more. That said, be sure not to leave any firewood around your house, specially under your deck. Enjoy the sunny brisk days and have some winter fun. Cheers,

Louise Creager
Stratton Park Area Representative

Houseplants

Stay Green All Year

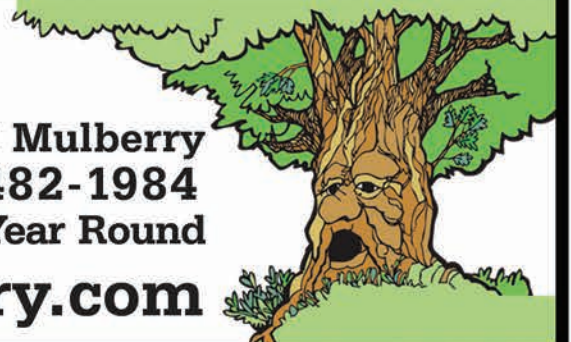


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Notes from Your Area Representatives, *cont'd from pg 8*

Things have been surprisingly boring in the lower Buckhorn since the last Ristwatch. I would say that the most potentially alarming news, though, has been the complete lack of moisture in the form of precipitation. Even the dew point has produced little noticeable frost every morning. With that said, I'm sure that everyone is aware of the regular high winds we get here in the foothills. Thus, please be careful of any open flames outside. The extreme dryness and low humidity coupled with our winds are a recipe for a major wildfire. A word to the wise is sufficient. Happy New Year.

Dean Yoder
Lower Buckhorn Area Representative



Photo credit: Paige Hogan

As the year comes to a close, we are thankful that we still live in this beautiful area with all our great neighbors. This month, we on FR2 had a mountain lion kill. Neighbors out walking also shared a sighting of a bald eagle.

Please sign up for a burn permit. Contact your local rep for Chimex sticks, house # signs, and helicopter insurance. We are here to help you or answer your questions about the Rist Canyon Volunteer Fire Department.

Also, keep in mind we would love to have you join the FOTF (Friends of the Festival) meeting to lend a hand in kicking off our 50th anniversary!

Carolyn Stanley
Davis Ranch Area Rep

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Notes from Your Area Representatives, *continued from pg 10*

I hope the new year is bringing you joy. We're having a tough one. Just like many of our neighbors, our insurance was dropped. The company pulled out of Colorado all together. I call this one huge **STRESSFUL** mess. It affects and strains things in a way I have never experienced. Quite frustrating!

So, we are going through the mitigation process with the RCVFD and Larimer County. It's time consuming and labor intense. These are two things we can deal with. We have until February sixth to complete our mitigation and get signed off by the county. I'll let you know how it goes.

Fingers crossed!

Take it Easy,

Tim Stratman
Stove Prairie Area Representative

Notes from Committees

We Need Book Donations for the Book Tent

WE NEED YOUR HELP! We have very few books for the 2025 Mountain Festival Used Book Tent. Over the winter, please consider going through your book collection to see if there are books you could donate. Ask family, friends, or if you know someone that is moving, if they have books they'd like to donate.

We can pick them up at your location and we can bring you boxes to pack if you need them. Also, you can drop off books anytime at the drop box in front of Fire House Station # 1, located at 11835 Rist Canyon Road or the Pleasant Valley Church of Christ near the Bellvue Post Office.

If you need us to pick up books, please contact Carolyn Stanley (cloud9sewing@gmail.com, 970-221-2024), Patti Clutter (clutterp28@gmail.com, 858-248-6328), or Kathy Cox (kathyc228@yahoo.com, 970-472-1972). Thank you!

Book Tent Co-Chairs

From Your Sponsorship Committee

Do you own, work for, support a business, or are you personally interested in sponsoring the Rist Canyon Volunteer Fire Department Mountain Festival? I encourage individuals to support the RCVFD Mountain Festival by dropping off a sponsorship donation package at their place of work, businesses they frequent, and individuals they think might be interested.

Sponsorships start at \$100 and go up from there. They help cover the costs of producing the festival and add to the net proceeds that benefit the fire department. Sponsors are recognized on large banners at the front of the festival grounds, on the RCVFD website, and in social media posts for the RCVFD Mountain Festival.

I can help you with the forms for requesting Sponsorships. We have an official packet that contains a cover letter and Sponsorship forms that I will send you. Please contact me at clutterj11@gmail.com or 970-657-5254.

James Clutter | Sponsorship Committee Chair

AirMedCare

Here's a message from Amy Scott, your local area representative for AirMedCare Air Ambulance Insurance:

"In a medical emergency, every second counts, especially when transporting patients who are far from definitive medical care. No one knows that better than the participating providers of AirMedCare Network (AMCN) - America's largest air medical membership network, providing coverage across 320 locations in 38 states. Expenses for emergency air medical transport can put stress on your finances. With an AirMedCare Network membership, you will have no out-of-pocket expenses only if flown by an AMCN provider."

Protect yourself, and anyone who resides within your home at the time of transport for 10+ years for the best value. Our local providers include: UCHHealth Lifeline @ Medical Center of the Rockies in Loveland, CO, UCHHealth Lifeline @ Cheyenne Regional in Cheyenne, WY, MedEvac @ Boulder Community Health in Boulder, CO, MedEvac Greeley @ North Colorado Medical Center in Greeley, CO".

You can enroll in an AirMedCare membership for as low as \$99.00 per year or opt for a ten-year membership at \$769.00. Senior members can enjoy significant savings, and there may be an opportunity to receive a gift card upon signing up. With each new member, AirMedCare generously donates a percentage to the Rist Canyon Volunteer Fire Department (RCVFD), which helps support RCVFD operations. Paper Membership applications are available at Station 1 or can be requested through your local RCVFD area representative.

It's also reassuring to know that RCVFD responders adhere to the UCHHealth air ambulance protocol, so you can be confident that air support is called in only when a medical emergency meets the necessary criteria.

For any questions or to learn about applicable discounts and current promotions, please reach out to Amy Scott, your local Membership Manager, at 720-237-5959 or visit <https://www.amcnrep.com/msm/amy-scott> before enrolling.

Hope this helps, stay safe and take care!

Jocelyn Wolf
FFT2, EMT, Co-Medical Officer,
WPP Ambassador, Grants Chair



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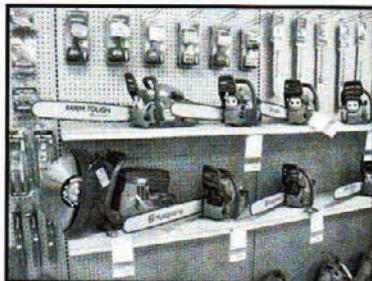
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Bellvue Happenings

Happy New Year Rist Canyon Residents.

To foster wide community outreach, I submitted a newsletter frequently emailed. Each issue includes information of events and get-togethers in and about Bellvue and beyond. If you'd like to receive timely community information, please email ivylane1934@gmail.com and request she add you to the distribution list.

Carol Miller

Happy Holidays Dear Readers!

I can't wait to share NEW LEVELS of happiness in our little and growing community coming our way in 2025. Don't be shy about sharing items for our newsletter. We had a good conversation at the potluck over ways to support our local Post Offices, for instance. That will be covered in a future issue of Bellvue Happenings.

We support each other through the hard times and celebrate our joy together. What more can we ask?

All Glory to God for our many Blessings.

Lisa aka "Ivy Lane"



Mission: Food Rescue and Sharing

Next Distribution - THIS SUNDAY
January 5th from 12 - 1 pm

Thanks to Vindeket Foods, Grangers are bringing rescued food to the Cache La Poudre Grange to be distributed to the Bellvue's Seniors and the broader community. The word is spreading and more seniors are finding out about the goodness to be had at the Grange Hall on Thursdays.



Food not taken by the Seniors is available to the broader community prior to the Grange Music Jams 1st and 3rd Sundays from 12-1 pm. Bring your grocery bags and take home this rescued food! Great for people AND the planet.

Senior Lunches at the Grange

Every Thursday 12 - 1 pm. (Weather Permitting)

Seniors - Call 970-472-9630 to reserve a FREE meal through Volunteers of America (VOA) by Weds of any given week, and be in attendance for the first choice of the Vindeket/Grange food distributions too. Or you can bring your own lunch if you prefer.

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- ~ 4.93 Acres
- Crystal Lakes Mtn Get-Away



TBD Poudre Canyon Rd, Bellvue

- ~ 0.5 Acres
- Across Road from the River



151 Stone Cutter Rd, Bellvue

- ~ 37.8 Acres
- Great Investment Opportunity



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192 Moondance, Bellvue**

- ~75 Acres - 2 Lots Together
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TBD Stratton Park Rd, Bellvue

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FyrePro specializes in transforming outdoor spaces into stunning, functional retreats by adding key features like outdoor kitchens, fire pits, and fireplaces.

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Thank You, Rist Canyon Volunteer Fire Department!



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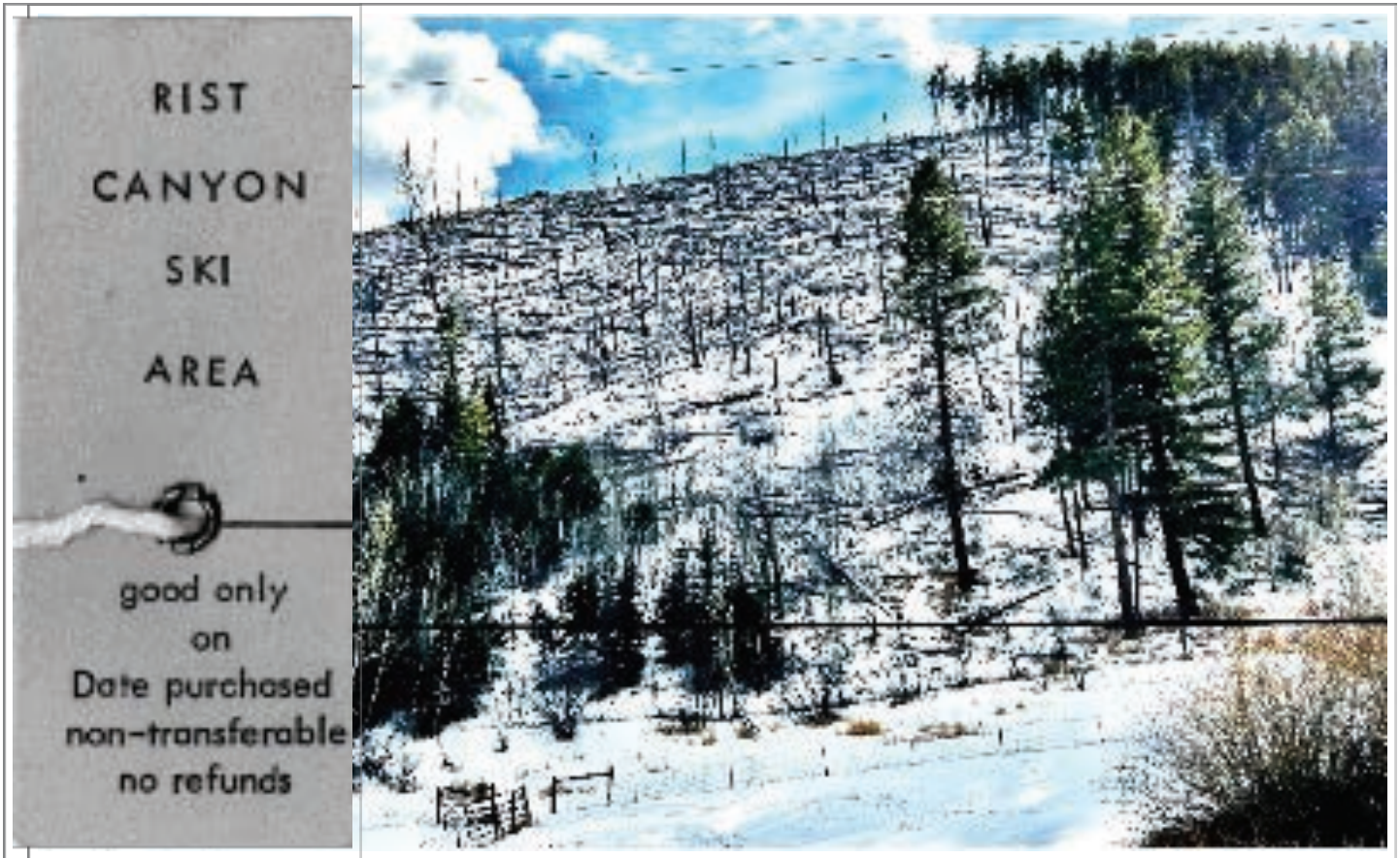
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Blast from the Past



Winter Sports in Rist Canyon: Dashed Dreams

Rist Canyon Ski Area

The Rist Canyon Ski Area was a short-lived enterprise attempting to draw winter enthusiasts to Rist Canyon. Open from about 1965-1974, it was on the hill adjacent to the Stratton Park Road mailboxes.

The brainchild of optimistic co-owners and ski-advocates Robert Spotts and an unnamed individual,^[1] the area had humble beginnings. The owners used chainsaws to cut runs through the pine-covered slopes then cleared rocks and stumps. Each fall the hills were “groomed” by ambitious managers with lawnmowers.^[2] The snow on the slopes and trails was hand raked.^[3] In 1966 advertisements running in local

[1] Risk it at the Rist, *The Rocky Mountain Collegian*, 1/14/1971: <https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=RMC19710114-01.2.44>

[1] *The Rocky Mountain Collegian*, 1/22/1970: <https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=RMC19700122-01.2.31>

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[1] *The Rocky Mountain Collegian*, 2/11/1966: <https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=RMC19680112-01.2.26>

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Lift ticket: *Lost Ski Areas of the Front Range and Northern Mountains*, Caryn Boddie & Peter Boddie, The History Press, Charleston, NC, 2024. Available from the Poudre Libraries. Photograph in book Courtesy of the Fort Collins Museum of Discovery, Accession #2008.021.0001.

[1] [Olympics may come to Rist residents for 1992 — The Rocky Mountain Collegian - CSU Fort Collins April 20, 1983 — Colorado Historic Newspapers Collection](#)

Blast from the Past

The Sport Shop
122 WEST LAUREL
484-4777

We would like to announce
the opening of

Rist Canyon Ski Area
this
Saturday & Sunday



Lift Rates
adults-\$2.50
juniors-\$1.50
Under 12
Tickets may be picked
up at the Sport Shop.

Lessons
\$1.50 per lesson
Beginners—10 AM-11AM
Adv. Beg.—11:30 AM-12:30 AM
Certified Instructors
reservations must be
placed at the
Sport Shop

OPEN 10am-4pm weekends
We're not an Aspen or a Vail,
only a rope tow with plain good
skiing for Beginners & Intermediates.

OPEN SATURDAY AND SUNDAY

papers touted, "Excellent beginners and intermediate area, 600' rope tow, only 30 minutes from Fort Collins, located nine miles west of Bellvue up Rist Canyon, tow only \$1, no rentals or snack bar – bring your own, and open Sat. and Sun. 12:30-4:30."^[4] The hill boasted a 250-foot-drop. When other Colorado ski areas were charging \$6-\$8 for lift tickets, the \$1 tow tickets at the Rist were a bargain along with the 50-cent tuber fee on a separate slope. By 1974 prices had increased to adults \$2.50 and juniors \$1.50. Morning lessons were by then also available for \$1.50/hour. Spotts noted the Rist had lights for night skiing and that interested parties need only put up a \$25 minimum guarantee of business to make arrangements.^[5] The outlines of the ski runs were faintly visible prior to the High Park Fire. Now that the area has burned, there are no distinguishable features visible from Rist Canyon Road.

Submitted by Karen Salaz

According to an article in The Rocky Mountain Collegian, April 20, 1983 (see references below)

Olympics may come to Rist residents for 1992^[6]

A group of Rist Canyon landowners announced Wednesday that they plan to make a bid to host the 1992 Winter Olympics. The landowners, led by Rist Canyon residents Joe Winter and Sam Snow, said they hope to convince the International Olympic Committee (IOC), to allow the games to be held in the scenic canyon 10 miles west of Fort Collins.

"It'd be fun," Snow said. "It'd be real fun," Winter agreed.

NOW OPEN RIST CANYON SKI AREA

- Excellent beginners and intermediate area
- 600' Rope Tow
- No long drive—only 30 minutes from Fort Collins.
- Open Sat. and Sun. 12:30 to 4:00
- Located 9 miles west of Bellvue—up Rist Canyon Road.
- Tow—\$1.00
- No rentals or Snack Bar—Bring your own.

^[1] Risk it at the Rist, The Rocky Mountain Collegian, 1/14/1971: <https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=RMC19710114-01.2.44>

^[2] The Rocky Mountain Collegian, 1/22/1970: <https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org/?a=d&d=RMC19700122-01.2.31>

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^[6] [Olympics may come to Rist residents for 1992 — The Rocky Mountain Collegian - CSU Fort Collins April 20, 1983 — Colorado Historic Newspapers Collection](#)



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Two Easy Ways to Help the RCVFD

You can donate through Colorado Gives any time of the year!
Please Spread the WORD to family and friends!



It's easy—just post this link:

<http://coloradogives.org/RistCanyonVolunteerFireDepartment>
to Facebook and ask them to donate! Your fire department thanks you!



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The RCVFD earns about \$1,800 every quarter, or \$7,600 annually, from the King Soopers Rewards Card.

This generous program gives the RCVFD 5% of all of your purchases at King Soopers. This includes groceries, toiletries, supplies, clothing, gas, and even prescriptions.

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