

## **Intemann Trail gap could soon be closed**

**By Jeanne Davant**

The purchase agreement between Manitou Springs and Iron Mountain landowner Tom McGee opens the way for completion of the Intemann Trail.

"The Intemann Trail Committee will contact the city to try to get the trail through the McGee land, assuming the city buys it," said Kenyon Jordan, Intemann Trail Committee coordinator.

The Intemann Trail currently spans about five miles from Section 16 to the Iron Spring. The official trail stops, however, at Crystal Valley Cemetery and picks up again at the Manitou Mesa overlook, leaving a gap of about a mile.

In between lie McGee's property and two parcels owned by Stephen and Wendy Beisel. The committee has not been able to obtain easements from McGee or the Beisels because of their ongoing disputes with the city over access from Manitou to their properties.

Now, Jordan says, "I think we can access the McGee property and complete the trail."

The original plan was to route the trail through the Beisels' property. The Beisels own two parcels abutting McGee's land on both sides.

Jordan says he thinks the trail can be routed alongside the Beisels' property to access the McGee property and reconnect with the Manitou side of the trail somewhere along Pawnee Avenue.

At one point, the Beisels were going to let the trail run through their land, Jordan says.

"We did meet with him," Jordan says. "He once told me he would make the trail part of any subdivision he put in. We went up there with him and looked around (for a route). He made a good-faith effort to find a route that might work. But as time went by, it became apparent that it was not going to happen."

Jordan says he also met with McGee and found him to be a pleasant person. But trail easements became a casualty of McGee and the Beisels' disputes with the city, and that part of the trail has never been built. Instead, trail users have had to walk through Manitou to get across the gap.

The trail honors Paul Intemann, a Manitou Springs city planner who envisioned a system of trails in the foothills south of Manitou. According to Jordan, his dream was to link the many informal trails that have been worn by hikers and animals on the sides of Red and Iron mountains.

When Intemann died in a traffic accident in 1986, a small group of volunteers formed the Intemann Trail Committee and set out to build the trail. They obtained an initial grant from Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado and completed about a mile of trail from the El Paso County Section 16 trail to the hills above Crystal Park.

Since then, the committee has hosted workdays every summer. Hundreds of volunteers have helped to construct and maintain the trail. The committee also maintains several other trails, including the Red Mountain and Waterfall trails.

The purchase agreement between Manitou and McGee ends a dispute between the two parties that has lasted nearly two decades.

On the eve of a court hearing on a complex lawsuit that also involves the Beisels, McGee's attorney, P.J. Anderson, and Manitou Mayor Marc Snyder, also a lawyer, reached an agreement after McGee decided he was tired of fighting with the city. The legal contest between the city and the Beisels continues.

Manitou Springs City Council ratified the final purchase agreement and settlement of McGee's portion of the lawsuit Tuesday night.

The city will buy McGee's land for \$ 1.1 million and is pursuing a grant from Great Outdoors Colorado to finance \$550,000 or more of the purchase price.

McGee's house, which is visible at the top of Iron Mountain, might be torn down, but its fate is still under consideration.

Mayor Pro Tern Aimee Cox said public input would be sought on the disposition of the house.

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