

# CLUES FOR CRESTED BUTTE LAND TRUST LETTERBOXES

*Good luck and have fun!*

**Several of the letterboxes are out in hiding. Check out our website: [www.cblandtrust.org](http://www.cblandtrust.org) to learn which boxes are currently in hiding!**

## **Woods Walk**

**Difficulty:** Very easy, less than ¼ mile, very gentle walking.

**Clues:** Go up Kebler Pass Road (leaves town from Whiterock Ave.). The trailhead is directly on the right after Treasury Hill Road. Park on the south (left) side: you'll see an interesting sign "Welcome to the Coal Creek Watershed". Begin your search on the trail by veering left through fence posts. Follow the trail until you reach the 2<sup>nd</sup> meadow. Once there look in the direction of Mt. Crested Butte for a boulder resting in the aspens. Carefully search the boulder's parameter to seek your treasure! From here you can continue on the Woods Walk and enjoy views of Paradise Divide to the Lower Loop, or return directly to your car.

## **Peanut Mine**

**Difficulty:** More strenuous, some climbing. Distance from Restricted Lot: ½ to 1 mile.

**Clues:** Find yourself near the end of Peanut Lake Road (past the "Alien Shack" ... you can hike from the Woods Walk, bicycle out, park at the Land Trust parking spaces at the start of the road, or if needed, drive to the northern parking lot further down the road). From the northern parking lot, take the trail that heads up along the fenceline. Stay right and begin a series of switchbacks up the slope. Once high on the trail, you'll pass through various aspen stands, some of which have been decorated with rusty old cans leftover from the mining days. Carefully make your way up a short but steep climb, where you will observe more relics from the past. Keep your eyes peeled for a few rusty wheels. Just past the wheels the trail levels out and you can enjoy not one, but two Land Trust Projects; the first being the trail you have climbed, The Budd Trail. It was built by a volunteer crew in the spring of 2010. The second is the view east overlooking one of the Land Trust's famous reclamation projects, Peanut Mine. Some remnants are still visible. From this perch, and before entering a small stand of aspens ahead, search off the west (left) side of the trail for a circle of rocks hidden amongst green bushes. Here, you'll find what you seek.

## **Lower Loop**

**Difficulty:** Easy, gentle walking. Distance from northern parking lot: less than one mile.

**Clues:** Make your way out to Peanut Lake Road and to the trailhead of the Lower Loop. (This can be reached by walking the Woods Walk, or driving/bicycling to either the first or second parking area along the road. You also have the option to make this a loop with the Upper Lower Loop Trail, in which case see adaptation below). Begin on the Wide Path or Singletrack Trail, you will soon reach a junction for either the Upper Lower or Lower Lower Loop trail. Continue right (Lower Lower), and follow the Slate River along an old road grade. You will reach a lovely bench set near the river in Barbara's memory. Take a seat if you'd like and watch for herons... there is a rookery nearby! Continue on the trail until you see a singletrack trail (KB Connector) leaving from the left and marked by a single pine tree. At this stopping point observe your surroundings, such as the amazing view of Paradise Divide straight ahead. On the east (right) side of the trail is a small knoll topped with a line of pine trees that separates you from the river. Explore the hilltop for a petit rock cairn that protects your treasure.

(If coming from the Upper Lower Loop, you will walk all the singletrack of the Lower Loop. Once you hit the obvious railroad grade, look for the KB connector trail, on your right, and follow the clues from there!)

## **Upper Lower Loop**

**Difficulty:** Moderately strenuous. Distance from Restricted Lot 1 ½ to 2 miles.

**Clues:** See Lower Loop clues to reach the junction after the Wide Path or Singletrack Trail. (This can be done as a loop with the Lower Loop Trail, adaption below.) When you reach the junction, take the singletrack that winds up to your left. Climb the gradual hill, enjoying the shade the aspen groves provide. After that you will emerge to find yourself on a rolling, open trail that winds across the hillside. After a bit, you will find yourself on an obvious slate-colored (dark grey) bluff, with views of Mount Crested Butte to the east and Paradise Divide to the west. Enjoy the vistas across Land Trust-preserved land... when you're ready to enjoy a new discovery, stand directly in the center of the circle facing Paradise Divide, and head 30 paces to the base of a long-ago avalanche's victim. Look amongst the roots to enjoy yet another perspective on Paradise!

(If you are returning on this trail from the Lower Lower Loop, you will have climbed up the Gunsight Pass Road until you see the singletrack trail signed "Entering Public Lands". Once on that trail (that heads back in the general direction of town) you will walk through a small aspen grove, through several thickets of willows, eventually entering open meadows. Again... seek the obvious slate-colored bluff...)

## **Gunsight Bridge**

**Difficulty:** Easy, gentle walking. From parking area: less than ½ mile.

**Clues:** Find your way out Slate River Road to the Gunsight Bridge. You will see the results of a reclamation project to restore the wetlands completed in the fall of 2011. Cross the bridge over the Slate River (heading toward the Lower Loop). From the end of the bridge take 40-45 paces down the road. Turn 90 degrees to your left and note the towering evergreen in the distance. Head toward this tree, passing a small rotting stump and numerous smaller evergreens. What you thought was one is actually two! Seek your reward at the base of the northernmost friendly giant!

## **Washington Gulch**

**Difficulty:** Moderate. Though less than a ¼ mile (you can see your destination from your car!) it does involve some climbing.

**Clues:** Drive up Washington Gulch for approximately six miles, until you see the big, green, square “6” sign. There is a small pull-off on the left side of the road, where you can park. (Please don’t park in the private drive ahead). Get out of your car, and walk in the direction you were traveling. You will pass a small sign (facing the opposite direction) stating you were in the Crested Butte Land Trust’s Washington Gulch parcel. On your right is a sea of corn lilies (these ubiquitous plants are commonly misidentified as skunk cabbage, but don’t you think they look more like corn!?) Continue past the gated driveway, and then turn right to leave the road and climb along the perimeter of the corn lilies. As you climb to attain the ridge in front of you, spectacular Gothic Mountain looms above. Once you reach the small ridge’s top, SURPRISE! Between you and the peak you’ll discover the amazing handiwork of some industrious beavers. From this ridge top vantage, notice there are four separate evergreens. Go to the evergreen closest to Crested Butte. (Don’t be confused by the clump of tall trees down off the ridge closer to the ponds.) At the base of this easternmost tree (the smallest of the four), you’ll find what you seek!

## **Schofield Park**

**Difficulty:** Easy, gentle walking. Less than ½ a mile from parking area. A vehicle with good clearance is suggested for this drive.

**Clues:** Drive out Gothic Road and continue 9 ½ miles past the town of Gothic until you reach a small parking area past Schofield Pass. You will see a large yellow sign that reads “Narrow Steep Road”. Park here and begin walking back down the road you drove up. Soon you will pass a large willow on the right side of the road across from which are a row of spruce trees growing snug to the road. Continue down the road, to the left. You should spot a tall fence that is protecting a long-term research project. You are not there yet, walk

a little further and you will come to an opening on either side of the road. On the left side of the road are several spruce tree stands. On the right side of the road grow several healthy willows. Continue slowly on the road and see if you can spot an orange colored pile of rocks. They will be on the right side of the road, about 100 feet away. Once you have spotted the rocks, turn 180 degrees so you are facing the left side of the road. You will see another stand of spruce trees with some dead trees sticking out of the canopy like needles. Walk up the short hillside to the right side of the trees. You should see four large rocks embedded in the ground. Walk four paces past the rocks to an opening in the tree cave. Once you have entered the tree cave search amongst the fallen branches for your treasure!

### **Lupine Trail**

**Difficulty:** More strenuous, some climbing. Distance from Slate River Trailhead less than 1 mile.

**Clues:** Drive out Slate River Road for approximately 2 ½ miles and park at the Slate River Trailhead (at the base of the Lupine Trail). Begin by following the windy trail uphill through the wildflowers and sage. This portion of the Lupine trail was built by a group of volunteers in 2012. It makes its way through the Land Trust's Kikel property. Soon you will pass a sizable patch of corn lilies on your left. Continue to wind up the hillside and through a small aspen grove. You will be presented with a magnificent view of Crested Butte's Whetstone Mountain to the southeast followed by a left bend in the trail which is held in place with a stone wall. Soon after, you will cross over a beautiful, handmade, stone and wood bridge leading you back into the aspens. Once out of the aspens, look to your right for an obvious knoll with a bench to rest on. Walk to the knoll's southernmost point and search beneath the stones for your Lupine Trail treasure.

### **New Slate River Property**

**Difficulty:** Moderate. Though less than a ¼ mile (you can see your destination from your car!) it does involve some climbing.

**Clues:** From Gothic Road, make your way out Slate River Road to a left turn approximately 3 ½ miles out. The left turn will take you to the Land Trust's popular Gunsight Bridge, a wonderful spot to dip your toes in the water. However, this Letterbox is located on the new Gunsight Connector Trail, which begins across the road from the left turn to Gunsight Bridge. Once parked, begin by making your way up the new trail as it traverses across the open meadow below the aspen forest above. After a mere .20 miles the trail will bring you to the edge of the forest. Take a moment to observe the mature aspen trees, but look closely for a single pine tree just off the right side of the trail. At its base, enjoy a game of pickup sticks to find what you seek.