



Sally L. White

*naturalist & writer & historian*

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June 28, 2016

To: Denver City Council, Infrastructure and Culture Committee

**RE: Red Rocks Park property designation**

My background with Red Rocks Park goes back more than 20 years, when I first began researching its history. More recently, as a co-author, I assisted the Denver Mountain Parks Foundation in producing the centennial book, *Denver Mountain Parks: 100 Years of the Magnificent Dream*. This is the most complete history of this park system to date. My research for the book encompassed the later decades, from the dedication of Red Rocks in 1941 to the present (2012).

This interest is based partly on the fact that the view from my home near Morrison takes in Red Rocks and its surroundings and partly on the significance of the site itself. I congratulate Denver on the recent designation of the “Bradley trade parcel” as parkland. I’d like to point out a few key features that support the idea that the other three properties acquired in 2000 should be designated as well:

1. **Scenic value:** The view of Red Rocks from the east depends on the openness of these foreground properties. See, for example, the photo by John Fielder taken from Dinosaur Ridge, pages 98-99 of the centennial book.
2. **Historic features:** The ranchland south of Entrance 1 (Moreland life estate) is all that remains of the historic Derby-Nelson Ranch, owned by Alice Rooney Derby and Will Derby and their daughter Eloise Derby with her husband Gunnar Nelson. The stone barn still on the property dates to about 1900; this unique structure should be landmarked.
3. **Wildlife habitat:** With open space and parkland west, north, and east of the current park, these parcels help maintain an important connection from the foothills to the hogback. The large protected area is an important migration route for raptors as well as for small and medium size mammals and other birds. In the developing metro area, such continuity becomes more valuable each year.
4. **Geologic features:** These parcels contain a continuation of geologic units that are prominent on the Bradley trade parcel as well. Evidence of limestone and gypsum quarrying from the late 1800s remains along the north-south trend of the Glennon Limestone. Being able to trace geology, as well as history, on the land is important to the entire story of the area. The Morrison area, including Red Rocks Park, is often studied by geology classes because of its variety of rock units and its proximity to the Denver area. The entire area is a geological laboratory that has been continuously appreciated by students and researchers for decades.

With Red Rocks Park now a National Historic Landmark and the National Natural Landmark of Dinosaur Ridge adjacent to it, Denver has an opportunity to make a significant contribution to a regional landscape that merits protection and provides enjoyment for many visitors beyond the concertgoers.

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