

A Man With A Vision:
Naming an unnamed peak in Colorado Mountains - Rotary Peak



Dave Muller has been trekking in the Colorado high country for the past 46 years. He has written eight outdoor guidebooks and for seventeen years wrote a weekly “Hike of the Week” column in The Denver Post. Recently retired from a successful career as a psychiatrist in private practice, the octogenarian is currently working on his ninth guidebook.

One of the hikes described in his book, [Colorado Easy & Scenic Hikes](#), is titled “Peak 12,479” referencing its altitude. Dave had long wondered why the popular trail leading to a summit just west of the top of Loveland Pass was un-named. He noted that the trail itself did not appear on official USGS or USFS maps or other regional maps. However, that did not prevent him from making careful note of the trail and summit in his book. Being un-named troubled him for several reasons, but also because of public safety. He questioned how someone unfamiliar with the high country could identify their location to first responders in emergencies if they didn’t know the name of the trail or mountain they were on. In the back of Dave’s mind, the thought had been that someday he’d like the mountain and the trail leading to it receive a proper name. He felt strongly that the name should be in honor of some individual or entity significant to Colorado. In 2013, Dave found the entity he was looking for.

Dave leads an informal group of outdoor enthusiasts (the SEEKERS) on twice-a-week hikes. Over the course of many weeks, he learned from a member of the group about the amazing community service projects done by Rotary International clubs throughout Colorado. Learning more, he realized that the projects had been ongoing for over 106 years in almost every Colorado community! He was especially impressed when he learned of Rotary clubs’ efforts engaging youth in outdoor activities, literacy programs, and youth leadership camps. It was then that he knew he’d found the name for the unnamed peak – Rotary Peak.

He approached Rotary with his idea and was immediately impressed with their enthusiastic and positive response. In a matter of days a working group was formed. Key people representing Rotary clubs in the Front Range and mountain communities were assigned a variety of tasks in development of a plan to achieve the objective. Naming any geographic feature requires approval from both federal and state agencies, and endorsements from many stakeholders. Forms must be completed and political entities engaged. The timeline for such an undertaking is often not measured in days or

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weeks, but in years. Happily, the efforts thus far have yielded strong endorsement from all entities, including all local governments, Governor John Hickenlooper and both Colorado US Senators.

Rotary clubs are now working diligently to establish strong and consistent association with "Rotary Peak". Plans for a Trail Steward program are underway whereby Rotary volunteers will be located at the trailhead on weekend mornings during the summer. Stewards will provide visitors interested in making the hike with a trail map that will include hiking safety tips and trail etiquette rules.

Participating Rotary clubs will engage in trail maintenance activities in concert with the USFS, Rotary Interact high school clubs, and local volunteer groups. Annual Rotary sponsored events will continue. Rotary clubs that have youth focused programs will include "Rotary Peak" to encourage and engage them in outdoor activities.

Ultimately, recognition that the name Rotary Peak is in general public use, coupled with the strong local association with Rotary, will complete the final element in the official naming process. Rotary members along with Dave Muller encourage anyone interested in enjoying an awe-inspiring 360° view of the Colorado Rockies to take family and friends on the wonderful hike to "Rotary Peak".

Four Rotarians who lead in the Rotary Peak naming project are arranging a specific Rotary Peak Hike on Saturday, August 5, 2017, inviting all Rotarians, Rotaractors, Interactors, and friends to join the hike to Rotary Peak starting at 9 am from the parking area at the top of Loveland Pass. The route traces the Continental Divide, with spectacular scenery in all directions. Distance to the summit is approximately 1.5 miles with less than 500 feet elevation gain. Hikers need to be at the trailhead 30 minutes before, or 8:30. Car-pooling is strongly recommended as there is limited parking.

Commemorative "I Climbed Rotary Peak" buttons will be given to those who complete the hike

Public information flyers will be produced that will include a trail map, hiking safety tips and trail etiquette rules, and basic information on Rotary International and our Rotary District 5450. The Trail Stewards will be wearing special Rotary vests.

We ask Rotary Clubs to donate a minimum of \$100 or more to defray the cost of such promotional and public service activities. Funds expended thus far have fallen directly on the four Rotarians leading this project and your Club's financial support will enable the project to continue to completion.

The Littleton Rotary Foundation is acting as the clearing house/banker for funding of this effort.

Please submit any donation by issuing a check to the **Littleton Rotary Foundation Inc.**, PO Box 143, Littleton, CO 80160. Please make certain to, **Memo: "The Rotary Peak Project"**.

This project is not an individual Club project, nor can it be a District project, yet it benefits all of Rotary in Colorado, and indeed the US. The project is that of individual Rotarians united in sharing the vision brought to us by a non-Rotarian, Dave Muller. We look forward to the overwhelming support of Rotarians, and their clubs, both in volunteering, and financially supporting the project.

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