LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Base of Operations in Leadville

I’m delighted to report that the process to construct 10th Mountain’s Base of Operations is proceeding well and we expect to substantially complete construction sometime in late October. Thanks to many generous donors, 10th Mountain completed its capital campaign in early May and all funds to construct the facility are in hand. We are, quite simply, amazed and grateful for everyone’s speedy and big-hearted response.

The process to gather approvals for this facility has required a lot of interaction with Lake County including its Planning Commission, Board of County Commissioners, Building & Land Use, Public Health, Public Works & Maintenance, and Leadville/Lake County Fire-Rescue Departments. In every instance—without exception!—Lake County has demonstrated professionalism, expertise, and a firm commitment to getting the job done correctly and to high standards. This process has reaffirmed my belief in the value of a government agency comprised of good people making wise and thoughtful decisions.

This facility is already making a difference in how we take care of the huts: two large logging trucks have already delivered logs to the firewood processing area and in short order were cut, split, and delivered to the huts. This sort of scale and capability is precisely the reason to develop this facility and we look forward to using the entire facility with its work areas, office, storage, and housing so that we can better accomplish our goals and further 10th Mountain’s mission.

10th Mountain has managed to do a number of things right over the years through a combination of vision, influence, wise governance, gracious and generous donors, and a good measure of luck. Some of these most fundamental points are offered below, and are highlighted because the Base of Operations will provide the means to continue doing them more effectively far into the future.

• Construct a System of well-built huts in remote locations and maintain them to high standards.
• Hire, Retain, and Motivate highly skilled and qualified people.
• Develop a Business Plan that provides long term economic sustainability, keeps the rates affordable, and ensures that huts remain culturally relevant and valuable to people.
• Engage and Participate in Local Communities including schools, civic groups, and other non-profits.
• Provide the Opportunity for people to connect with their friends and/or family, and the outdoors, in unique and sometimes challenging environments.

We understand that the natural and business environments will continue to evolve, and people’s expectations will likewise continue to develop. Given this new facility, I am confident that 10th Mountain will be better equipped to manage for change, and build on its success.

—Ben Dodge | Executive Director

10TH MOUNTAIN DIVISION HUT ASSOCIATION
**Backcountry Snowsports Initiative**

The debate over public lands is heating up this summer and the Backcountry Snowsports Initiative is actively working to ensure protection for the backcountry landscapes where you ski, snowshoe, hike, paddle and ride. Although Colorado’s National Monuments aren’t always the snowiest, BSI has been working to defend these iconic designations across the nation and protect our backcountry conservation laws like the Antiquities Act. Currently, the Department of the Interior is reviewing 27 Monuments across the country to consider shrinking or designating places like Canyons of the Ancients, Bears Ears and Giant Sequoia, the latter of which is known for epic backcountry ski lines. BSI works closely with Outdoor Alliance to generate hundreds of comments in support of the monuments and we hope Interior Secretary Zinke will recognize the important recreation opportunities these areas provide.

A little closer to home, BSI is gearing up for two big forest planning efforts in Southwest Colorado and will need you to help speak up at public meetings and through written comments to protect your favorite backcountry areas. The Grand Mesa/Uncompahgre/Gunnison National Forest is revisiting their Forest Plan to guide management of all resources and uses, including both summer and winter recreation, in areas like Crested Butte, Ouray and Grand Junction. Public meetings will take place this summer and fall, followed by a public comment period during the scoping phase. Additionally, the San Juan National Forest is expected to start Winter Travel Management Planning to determine where snowmobile can and cannot travel in areas around Pagsanjan and Silverton. It’s important for skiers, snowshoers and winter travelers to speak up early and often to ensure access is protected on your favorite winter trails and landscapes.

Visit www.wfa.org/conservation for more info on these projects and to get involved! Also, be sure to save the date for the 2017 Backcountry Bash: October 21 in Denver.

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**What Were the First Hut Trips to Braun Huts Like?**

The main goal of their trip was to summit the foreboding and remote Star Peak (13,521’) from Tagert, this is an ambitious goal even today. Otto and his companions possessed an impressive knowledge of mountain craft and snow sense for their era. After a reconnaissance tour they decided on a 1:30 am departure for their first attempt at Star on April 28th. They crossed Pearl Pass and skied towards the Star Basin (above where the Friends Hut is now) at 10:30 am they reached a bowl 1,500’ below the summit and began the technical portion for their ascent. However, after some climbing Otto wrote, “I decided to call it a day. The making of pictures and movies had taken too much of our time, and a crossing of that avalanche slope at that late an hour would probably have spelled disaster.”

When the group finally returned from their six-week expedition the valley below the leaves had burst into a vibrant spring. Reading about this trip today it is striking at how in many ways the basics of the hut trip have changed little in almost 80 years. Otto wisely reflected that: “Whatever degree of skill a skier may possess, they should never forget that their skis are after all only an instrument, a means through which they can enjoy the winter in all it’s glory and ruggedness, can breathe fresh air, can meet human beings in their true character, and can forget all the petty troubles which beset our so-called civilization. These are a few of the reasons why skiing is not merely a sport it is a way of life.”
Wilderness, Huts and Equine Therapy

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DRIAN, A COMBAT VETERAN of Iraq, fell asleep on her horse. She wasn’t actively riding it at the time. In fact, she was sitting on a Goat Ranch backwards, comfortably reclined on the horse’s ample rump in the dappled shade of a cottonwood.

“It’s like a soft, warm couch,” explained Sheryl Barto of Smiling Goat Ranch, near Carbondale, “and it’s very relaxing.”

Adrian, a Huts For Vets participant in our July 2017 women veterans program, was among the inaugural group of women combat veterans to experience equine therapy as an addition to our regular four-day program. This is year five for Huts For Vets, which provides healing opportunities for veterans who have experienced trauma as a result of their service. HVF pays all expenses, including travel, because we feel that veterans have already paid a supreme price through the often intense rigors of their military service.

Including an optional layover day following our hut trips this summer, HVF plans to invite all of the 50 veterans we serve to equine therapy at Smiling Goat Ranch. Our veterans have the opportunity to pet dogs, stroke miniature ponies, ride horses and even paint their horses with warrior symbols of their own choosing.

Equine therapy is a fast-growing therapeutic technique that has proved its value among autistic children as demonstrated by the well documented Horse Boy project. This breakthrough program, launched by Rupert Isaacson, a human rights activist and journalist, reveals the deep healing power of animals, and especially horses. Sheryl Barto of Smiling Goat Ranch and her team of dedicated and caring volunteers, creates a healing ritual that can deliver great benefits to trauma-stricken veterans. Huts For Vets participants segue from the wilderness to equine therapy, meeting trained facilitators and the horses that are assigned to them. Success is determined by the relationships that form between these veterans and their mounts.

Our first program for summer 2017, in early July, introduced half a dozen women veterans, first offenders, nature and philosophy at Margy’s Hut, then to horses at Smiling Goat Ranch. The ranch day entailed five hours of teaching, meditation, contact with the horses, and finally, a trail ride to a ridge with a grand vista of Mt. Sopris.

For our veteran women, the experience culminated with ear-to-ear grins, showing that equine therapy is a natural follow-up to wilderness immersion. The two programs taken together touch the whole person—body, mind and spirit. And that’s just what Huts For Vets and Smiling Goat Ranch aspire to do.

For more information on Hut For Vets, please visit our website, which describes our unique healing opportunities in the wilderness at the 10th Mountain Huts—www.hutsforvets.org. | –Paul Andersen | Executive Director

Huts For Vets

YouthPower365

Girl PowHER is a middle school and high school girls’ empowerment program serving over 200 young women yearly in Eagle County. The comprehensive program seeks to strengthen participants by providing physical activity opportunities and supporting them emotionally and academically with the end goal of students being career and/or college ready. Girl PowHER Adventure Camp is everyone’s favorite time of the year. This free camp takes advantage of so many fun activities our valley has to offer, paddle boarding, horseback riding, high ropes courses and more. The camp builds in leadership, teambuilding and awareness activities for girls to understand roles and responsibilities in a group setting, all while pushing themselves out of their comfort zone.

Each year, an overnight camping trip on the last day is the highlight of the trip.

Girl PowHER traveled to Eksenman Hut above Vail for an overnight that none of us will forget. Almost all of the 12 girls had never been camping before despite growing up in the Vail Valley and just driving up to them. The girls not only slept well and after a good breakfast and filling up the water bottles we started the day heading up the trail from Janet’s cabin to the first of two passes for the day, Searle Pass. This is a beautiful hike. Most of it is above timberline through a high valley, it’s only after you cross Kokomo Pass and drop down to Cataract Creek do you get back into the trees. The day was clear, sunny, and warm with light wind. The high alpine flowers were just glorious. The summer rain kept everything fresh and alive. Many people were hiking this stretch of trail including a couple riding their horses from Denver to Durango. We got to Kokomo Pass at 1:30 Sat. down for a well deserved lunch.

We arrived at Jackal Hut at 5:00, eight hours after we left Janet’s Cabin. That was a long day. I got blisters climbing up the ridge from the valley below. Probably aggravated by thinking it would reduce the vertical and might reduce distance.

At the top of the American Eagle Lift we took a service road across and down the hill a bit to the base of the Timberline Lift. We continued following an old service road across and up the mountain to the top of the Lumberjack Lift. Here we left the ski area and started hiking with the intent of intercepting the Colorado Trail near where it crosses Gueller Creek. Other than an occasional game trail there is no path through the woods and I was relying on my GPS to make the trail intercept. We ended up staying too high and the 500 foot hillside gully we were near as we neared Gueller Creek. Rather than crossing one creek at a trail ford we ended up crossing one creek in a deep draw, climbing up the other side of the draw, descend ing into another draw, crossing a second creek then climbing up through a large boulder field to gain the actual trail. Not recommended. Six and a half hours later we arrived at Janet’s Cabin, exhausted. We were the last of the guests for the night to arrive. Along with us there were four 60-year-old women who were hiking the Colorado Trail from Breckinridge to Camp Hale in three days, and a Russian immigrant family of three who had hiked into the hut for a night.

Day 2 | Janet’s Cabin to Jackal Hut

We slept well and after a good breakfast and filling up the water bottles we started the day heading up the trail from Janet’s cabin to the first of two passes for the day, Searle Pass. This is a beautiful hike. Most of it is above timberline through a high valley, it’s only after you cross Kokomo Pass and drop down to Cataract Creek do you get back into the trees. The day was clear, sunny, and warm with light wind. The high alpine flowers were just glorious. The summer rain kept everything fresh and alive. Many people were hiking this stretch of trail including a couple riding their horses from Denver to Durango. We got to Kokomo Pass at 1:30 Sat. down for a well deserved lunch.

We arrived at Jackal Hut at 5:00, eight hours after we left Janet’s Cabin. That was a long day. I got blisters climbing up the ridge from the valley below. Probably aggravated by
the fact that I filled and carried a 3 liter dromedary bag from the valley floor because we didn’t know if the hut cistern would have water; it did, plus the previous guests had left another five gallons of potable water. At least we didn’t go thirsty.

DAY 3 | JACKAL HUT TO FOWLER/HILLIARD HUT

We had a big day ahead. Two choices, we could head down to the county road, along the road for a bit, then up a steep valley to the next ridge, basically following the winter ski route between the cabins. Or we could blaze our own trail along a 12,000 foot ridge. The day was overcast but it looked like the weather would stay that way for a day. We walked from the hut down to the saddle then headed across the slope below the ridge. The trail to Janet’s Cabin from Copper Mountain was closed and the bike path runs between the north hillside of the valley leaving a good half mile of road to travel between Shrine mountain Inn and Fowler/Hilliard Hut. Eventually we came to a meadowed valley below Ptarmigan Hill to the south and the ridge off Shrine Mountain to the north. We followed a cobbled road up to the divide between Wearyman Creek and Wilder Gulch where we had lunch. While eating lunch we heard a group of runners chatting and laughing as the came down the trail from Ptarmigan Pass then continued on down Wilder Gulch. Leaving the trail, we chose to head almost due south to climb the ridge. I do not recommend following this route. We had to climb a very steep hillside. A slip or fall would have been very dangerous. I recommend taking the trail down Wilder Gulch then following the road back to Shrine Mountain Inn.

When we arrived at Shrine Mountain Inn we found out who the runners were. They were members of the Aspen Cross Country team and they were running hut-to-hut from Aspen to Vail. They had run from Jackal Hut to Shrine Mountain Inn in one day. They also said that there’s a trail from the saddle directly to Shrine Mountain Inn.

DAY 5 | SHRINE MOUNTAIN HUT TO COPPER MOUNTAIN

Today is the final day. We will be walking dirt roads and the paved bike path from the Vail Pass rest stop down to Copper Mountain. The bike path runs between the east and west bound lanes of I-70. Not the most serene environment after four days in the back country but it closed the loop. It’s not really all that bad. The design engineers put the east bound lanes on the south side of the valley up on the hillside a bit and the west bound lanes up on the north side of the valley leaving a good half mile of valley floor between. The bike path follows the creek as it tumbles down the mountain. You do hear road noise but it’s not like you are walking on the shoulder of the road.

We happened to be walking down the path the day of the 2016 Copper Triangle bike ride. Cyclists start at Copper Mountain, ride over Fremont Pass to Leadville, then over Tennessee Pass to Vail, then over Vail Pass back to Copper Mountain. It’s a 76-mile loop that takes 4-8 hours depending on your conditioning. Many riders start at 5 a.m., so we were in the thick of it as we got near Copper Mountain. We had to keep a constant eye up the trail to make sure we could step off the path and out of the way of the speeding cyclists.

SUMMARY | LESSONS LEARNED

Your body needs to adapt to long duration exercise and recovery. Even though your body is burning 3000+ calories/day your digestive system isn’t accustomed to more than 2000 calories/day. We had close to 16 pounds of food left in our packs when we got back home. I was too conservative with my meal planning then we didn’t eat as much as I thought we would and finally, our hut mates at Fowler/Hilliard Hut fed us dinner and breakfast so we ended up carrying that food and never used it. We were so glad to get to the hut.

When we arrived there was a large group and they still had lots of food and asked us to join them, a generous offer we gladly accepted.

Can We Not Bring Up Forest Gump?

10th Mountain’s past summer intern Rickey Gates is getting closer to his personal journey of running from South Carolina to San Francisco, March-August, 2017. Rickey is the creator of Hut Run Hut, a six-day, one-hundred-mile, Aspen-to-Vail mountain running adventure with a priority of fun over fast.

Running ten to twenty-five miles per day along the iconic and breath-taking Continental Divide, participants will traverse a portion of the Rockies while resting at the secluded 10th Mountain Division Huts along the way.

Rickey says, “As a former hut-keeper and trail-worker with the 10th Mountain Division Hut Association I am eager to share the experience of running remotely through the mountains that have long been my backyard.”

Join Hut Run Hut for two trips this fall.
- September 4-9 with Jean Shelton
- September 18-23 with Rickey Gates

www.hutrunehut.com | www.huts.org
Welcome to our Summer Crew

MEGAN BALLARD | I was born and raised in Boulder, Colorado. I was fortunate enough to be brought up in a hiking, biking, skiing family, who enjoyed trekking to the 10th Mountain Division Huts. My parents passion for the outdoors has shaped my lifestyle to include: raft guiding, ski instructing, rangering, mountain biking, and backcountry trail crews. I also love surfing, stand up paddling, and yoga. I feel very lucky to spend my summer working, learning, and helping to maintain the 10th Mountain Division Huts! Hope to see you on the trail!

RYAN BING | I am from Charleston, South Carolina and just finished an Environmental Science and Physics undergraduate degree at Colorado College. I grew up fishing and surfing, and have recently gotten into mountain biking. I’m hoping to pursue architecture in the future, however, am looking forward to first taking some time to work, be in the mountains, and travel. After working with the 10th Mountain Division this summer, I plan to spend a few months living out of a van that I recently converted into a camper.

KATIE KETCHUM | I am originally from northern Idaho and just completed my third year at the University of Denver where I am double majoring in Geography and International Studies. I hope to pursue a career dedicated to increasing food security in the United States through sustainable agriculture. In my free time, I love to ski, hike, and garden. A fun fact about me is that I am fluent in Turkish! 🏔️