



# Colorado Native Plant Society

Denver Landmark Preservation Commission

The Colorado Native Plant Society (CoNPS) recently learned of the proposed removal of the native junipers flanking the seating at Red Rocks Amphitheatre. CoNPS, formed in 1976, is dedicated to furthering the knowledge, appreciation and conservation of native plants and habitats of Colorado through education, stewardship and advocacy.

The historic planting has been damaged from considerable foot traffic but the plants are well established and relatively healthy. With additional attention, they could live decades more. Repeating the earlier transplant operation would require use of small plants that would take years to provide the current appearance of the existing trees and most likely not survive even a small amount of foot traffic. We think it would be less expensive, and far easier, to maintain established (and historic!) plantings than to manage new ones, especially in a high use environment like this one.

The junipers in the Red Rocks Amphitheatre were transplanted, we understand, from the site itself by Civilian Conservation Corps workers in about 1940 or 1941. This represents a very early use of native materials in a public landscape in Colorado. Although in some ways their presence is symbolic, we should remember that they are seen by millions of visitors annually and, we hope, appreciated for their integral role as a natural, living element in the surrounding hardscape. Many of our 900+ members visit, enjoy, hike, and attend concerts in the Amphitheatre each year. Some have even volunteered, since 2006 or earlier, to assist with the native plant garden under development near the Trading Post. CoNPS has guided free field trips and created plant lists for the Park over the years as well.

We realize areas outside the Trading Post and Amphitheatre are not within the Landmark Commission's jurisdiction. Red Rocks Park is Colorado's newest National Historic Landmark and the Amphitheatre (with its junipers) celebrates its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. Restoring and protecting the historic junipers could be a way to honor the workers who planted these antiques.

We appreciate your consideration of our comments and concerns, and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

  
  
Charles and Jan Loechell Turner, Co-presidents

CC: Bayard Ewing, CONPS Conservation Chair  
Steve Good, Friends of Red Rocks  
Steve Turner, History Colorado  
Tom Keohan, National Park Service  
Kent Rice, Denver Arts and Venues  
Happy Haynes, Denver Parks and Recreation