

## **The Battlement Mesa Service Association**

### **Battlement Mesa's Community Park**

**By Keith Lammey, President, Battlement Mesa Service Association**

Recently, I have attended several Village Annual Meetings. Judging from some of the questions that I heard at these meetings, several residents are excited and curious about the new Community Park while others are confused and perhaps even concerned about it. Yes, it is true. We plan to build a new community park.

About three years ago, the school district acquired 35 acres for the new Grand Valley Middle School, but they really only needed about 29 acres for the school. Under Garfield County regulations, it is much easier to transfer 35-acre-and-larger land tracts than it is to transfer tracts smaller than 35 acres. In order to avoid the more arduous land transfer process the district acquired more land than they needed but "gave back" an easement on six acres. The easement is actually four, twenty-five year easements and, until 2108, limits the six acres to one use: a community park.

As a community, we need to decide, do we want to have a pile of rocks, which is what is what we have now, or do we want to have park?

Emotions seem to be fairly high on this issue. Although some residents are excited about the prospect of a new park and are eager to get it built, others seem to prefer a pile of rocks to a new park. Some residents simply want to understand what we are planning to do, how it will impact them financially and what will be included in the park. Unfortunately, at this point, we aren't able to satisfactorily answer everyone's questions. Nevertheless, doing nothing until we can answer all of the questions doesn't seem like a good choice to me.

It is my belief that progressive and vibrant communities need parks. Furthermore, I believe that if properly planned and built, parks have a universal appeal to all and are used by all. Admittedly, not everyone uses the parks for the same reasons. I also believe that the day when a "great park" consisted of some nice turf grass, a few trees and a covered pavilion for a company picnic or family reunion is long gone. Today's great parks are much different!

Those that are against this park probably won't be excited to learn that, according to most standards, even when the proposed new park is added to our existing parks, like the parks in Valley View Village, Saddleback and Tamarisk, we'll still need more parks as our community grows.

Our existing parks have a lot of turf grass but that is about all they have. I agree with those that say, we have enough grass to take care of. We're thinking of an entirely different kind of park. The proposed park, and subsequent parks, must include one or more features that can be enjoyed by everyone. Unfortunately, this fact means that park creation is a complex and time consuming process. Great parks aren't conceived and built overnight.

Some have asked what the park will cost, what will be in the park and who will pay for the cost of building and maintaining the park. Before we can answer these questions we need to know at least two things: What is going to be in the park and how much of each thing will be used in the park? The recent, Common Ground-sponsored effort to gather input on these issues will help us figure out what people want and what it will cost to build and maintain. From this preliminary survey information, we'll propose a design concept for the new park and project not only construction costs, but future maintenance cost. Unfortunately, this process will likely take months, perhaps even years, to gather adequate information to design and complete the required cost and maintenance projections for the

new park. Until that phase is complete, it is impossible to tell you exactly how the park will be paid for and who is going to bear the cost.

Nevertheless, I believe that we need a new park and when confronted with a choice between a pile of rocks and a new park, I'm voting for a new park. I've never liked rock piles all that much and I am confident that collectively, this community will figure out what features we want and need in a new park and what we're willing and able to pay for. It won't happen overnight, but, rest assured, it will happen.