



COLORADO 600

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: CHAD DE ALVA

I found an event in Southern Colorado that is a brilliant fusion of world-class riding and symposium on trail advocacy. It's an event where you can get educated and inspired on trail advocacy, spend days riding with like-minded people and even a few big names in the motorcycle industry. This event is almost like checking out of reality and into a multi-day riding paradise where all you do is ride, hang out with good folks, ride, learn important things, ride, get blown away by where you're riding, spend more time hanging out and swapping ideas and stories with the same good people, and oh yeah – ride some more. Then you go to sleep and do the same thing the next day, and the next, for several days. Full disclosure: This riding paradise is actually a real thing and it's called the Colorado 600 or the Trails Awareness Symposium.



If the word symposium makes this whole thing sound unappealing – don't let it. Even if you have the attention span of a gnat, you'll be leaning into the talks at this event. (And good job, for making it this far into the article and not just looking at all of the photos of riding awesome-ness.) Topics covered at this symposium relate to what the Trails Preservation Alliance is doing to fight for motorized trail access, and other topics that relate to trail advocacy. The talks typically last just long enough for the cold morning air to get to perfect riding temperature, and then it's time to spend the remainder of the day riding staggeringly good trails with great people.

I came to the Colorado 600 without knowing a soul, yet it quickly became obvious that I was in good company with a bunch of like-minded folks who were incredibly passionate about riding. I was given multiple invites each day to join in on all kinds of rides, from big ADV-style rides, to laps on the national enduro course that's nearby. The Colorado 600 is a smaller event with less than 100 riders, and these riders break up into smaller groups based on the type of ride each person is looking for on that particular day. In other words, it's you and a few other folks who are after the same type of ride – and there are plenty of options for every type of rider in Southern Colorado.

Type "South Fork, CO" into Google Maps and you'll find a small town tucked in the heart of the Colorado Rockies. Scroll in almost any direction and you'll find too many contour lines to count that define a topography that contains hundreds of miles of single track, double track, and forest roads. Trails climb and weave through stands of timber, and aspen tree groves starting to blaze with the colors of fall. At timberline, the forest gives way to the alpine tundra, and the staggering views offered from the highest points around. These high mountain passes connect South Fork to numerous other towns; some currently inhabited, as well as old mining towns from another era. The riding makes the Colorado 600 more than worth it on its own, but the symposium on what the Trails Preservation Alliance is and does, is what takes this event to the next level.





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The Trails Preservation Alliance is the brainchild of Don Riggle, and it may be one of the most impactful organizations in all of motorcycling, especially in the state of Colorado. Riggle and a very skilled and dedicated board of directors work on a 100% volunteer basis to advocate for trail access. The TPA has provided guidance and seed funding for local motorcycle clubs, worked closely with land managers like the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management to protect and create new motorized trails, and done so much more to advocate for our access to places to ride in Colorado and the surrounding states. The TPA has established such a good reputation in the industry that it has the continuing support of KLIM, Rocky Mountain ATV / MC, KTM, Dunlop, and Motion Pro. If there is a model organization for trail advocacy, it would be based on the TPA.







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The Colorado 600 is a big fund-raiser for what the TPA does, and as such, the event also provides the opportunity to get to ride with (try to keep up with) some big names in the sport. This year, Broc Glover was in attendance, and other names you might have heard of like Malcolm Smith, Quinn Cody and Andrew Short have attended the Colorado 600 in years past. Competitive rides from all disciplines of racing support the TPA, such as International Six Days of Enduro (ISDE) medalists like Morrill Griffith, Jeremy Shoning, and Dennis Larratt, as well as Dakar racers like Ned Suesse, and Scott Bright. Yet this event isn't a meet and greet PR deal – these heroes of our sport are out riding with average Joes all day long and sitting at the same table that you are for breakfast. For all intent and purposes, these pros (and all of the TPA board members) are just like all the other riders at the event, so spending time with them is just like hanging out with your regular riding buddies.

Getting to spend several days riding fantastic trails with a bunch of stand-up people who all share a passion for motorcycling is a great use of your time to begin with. When you factor in all of the symposium talks, time spent with the folks who are actually fighting for the places you love to ride, and getting to meet pros and industry representatives who all believe in the TPA's mission, you can't help but feel optimistic about the future. These folks have put a staggering amount of effort into fighting for our sport's future and our access to great trails in and around Colorado. If motorcycling has made an impact in your life and the future of our sport is something you care about, you need to check out what the TPA is doing (their website is a great resource) and figure out how to get involved wherever you live. Attending the Colorado 600 will change your outlook on trail riding.







You'll realize just how many other outstanding, like-minded folks are out there who are passionate about trail advocacy, and that there is so much that can be done for our sport. With the event behind me, I can't help but wonder how different the map of places to ride in the United States would look if there was a group like the TPA and events like the Colorado 600/ Trails Awareness Symposium in every single state in the country.

