

Boulder activists set sights on climate rally planned for NYC

People's Climate Train," plus bus from Boulder, two locals to make trip

By Charlie Brennan, Camera Staff Writer

By bus, by train, by car and plane, Boulder-area activists will be headed to New York City in coming days to be part of what is being billed as the largest march in history highlighting the issue of climate change.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has invited world leaders, from government, business and across society to Climate Summit 2014 on Sept. 23 to spur action aimed at reducing fossil fuel emissions and build political will for a meaningful legal agreement in 2015. President Obama is expected to attend.

The People's Climate March is set for Manhattan on Sunday, Sept. 21. Activists are using the event to urge support of measures that would create a world "safe from the ravages of climate change," according

to the organizers' website. "To change everything, we need everyone on board," they urge.

Many will take that prompt literally, jumping on the People's Climate Train, in which activists are boarding Amtrak's Zephyr runs leaving Emeryville, Calif., today and Tuesday, and picking up others in Reno, Salt Lake City, Denver, Omaha and Chicago, before arriving in New York on Thursday and Friday. Activists will be switching from the Zephyr to Amtrak's Lake Shore Limited, in Chicago, to complete their journeys to the Big Apple.

The Climate Train ventures are being organized by the Center for Biological Diversity, in partnership with Buddhist Global Relief, 350.org, the Sierra Club and more. Teach-ins, trainings, mixers and

movement-building workshops are planned along the way.

"I think this could be a watershed moment in the climate movement," said Valerie Love, of Berkeley, Calif., a "No Tar Sands" campaigner for the Center for Biological Diversity. "Every successful movement that has made big changes turned out tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands in the streets, and that's what the climate movement needs to do. And that's what we're planning to do, September 21st."

Love said all 170 seats available to activists on the first train passing through Denver on Tuesday have been claimed, with about a dozen expected to be getting on in Colorado. As of Friday, only 30 had been claimed on the second day's train.

A “whistle stop rally” is slated for 6 p.m. Tuesday at Denver’s Union Station, when activists from Colorado, including many from Boulder, will get on board the first of the two trains.

Meanwhile, a newly formed group calling itself Boulder Moves is putting together a “Climate Bus” to make the trip from Boulder to New York on a schedule leaving little margin for traffic jams. It is to leave Boulder at 5 p.m. Friday, aiming to reach the Big Apple shortly before the march. It will start the return trip not long after it’s over, with plans to reach Boulder by about 6 a.m., Sept. 23.

Boulder Moves secured its bus and two drivers through BusToShow.org, and hopes to put about 40 people on board, paying \$96 a head, to buttress Colorado’s representation at Sunday’s march. Through the website eventbrite.com, people can either reserve their spot, or, if they can’t make the trip, make a donation to help pay someone else’s way.

Cory Katuna, a 22-year-old who left her job as a graphic designer recently and is spending September “bucket listing,” as she put it, is a member of Boulder Moves working to put the bus trip together.

She envisions Boulder Moves as being active in the future on a variety of fronts — the environment being just one of them, but an important part of the group’s efforts.

“The thing that combines everything is sustainability,” said Katuna. “And it is not limited to environmental sustainability. But environmental sustainability is such a foundational factor in community sustainability, that it has to be a priority.”

Rick Oberreuter, a 38-year-old Boulder resident also helping to spearhead Boulder Moves, said the Sept. 21 march is “an important moment.”

“World leaders have this opportunity to do something and make a fix and right now, they seem to be dropping the ball,” he said. “It’s an opportunity to do something, and I think this is a good way for the rest of us to say we are on board with trying to make a change.”