



# Gaining Ground

Healing the land. Building community.



FALL 2017

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Some of the volunteers and staff from this year's Trout Creek project (near Fairplay) are taking a break to check out the beautiful scenery.

## High Alpine Projects

By Matt Neidenberg and Geoffrey May

There are so many stewardship organizations doing great work across the country. One of the many things that makes what we do here at WRV unique is our incredibly scenic location. As we all know, Colorado has some of the most beautiful and dramatic alpine landscapes in the country. For most of us, that is exactly why we live here!

Yes, sometimes it's nice to just sit back and enjoy the view. But for most WRV'ers they need to get up into those mountains, howl at the moon, and get some awesome work done with the coolest people we know!

As the years roll by, the number of high alpine projects WRV has completed increases. Our community has established itself as one of the leading groups in the field of high alpine restoration. We have been innovators in experimenting with different erosion control structures, matting techniques, seeding, revegetation, and seed grown plugs. We are on a mission to find out what works and what doesn't.

**The time we spend together on overnight projects really reinforces the community aspect of what we do. Which is what keeps so many of us coming back year after year. Frankly, it's just FUN.**

There are many special things about WRV's high alpine projects. Not only do we get to do great work in a unique environment but, as many of our experienced insiders also know, these are some of the best projects of the year because we often set up camp in beautiful locations. The time we spend together on overnight projects really reinforces the community aspect of what we do. Which is what keeps so many of us coming back year after year. Frankly, it's just FUN.

This was an exciting season for high alpine projects at WRV.

The largest high alpine project of the year was North Swan Drainage outside of Breckenridge. Swan was a weekend volunteer project, a two-



WRV volunteer Matt Koch is rockin' it on the Mt. Elbert project!

# E.D. Corner

by Ed Self, Executive Director

On National Public Lands Day (September 30th, 2017) WRV completed our 1,000th stewardship project. We reached this goal thanks to the 40,000 volunteers who have given over \$10 million of their time, sweat and passion. This is an exciting triple milestone.

While it's easy to be impressed by the magnitude and impact of our work on the ground (e.g., 55 miles of stream restored; see more about this and other stats on p. 5), it is also touching to hear the hundreds of stories people have of being deeply and personally affected by their involvement in the WRV community. Each story is unique and special. David Fulton Beale's story is one such story.

David Fulton Beale began volunteering with WRV at age 12 (with his mom), back in 2005. Over the next several years David and his mom attended dozens of projects. David

joined our youth leadership program when he was 16 and became a crew leader. In 2011, he went off to study Restoration Ecology at the University of Montana, Missoula. After he earned his degree, he returned to Boulder and soon after that he joined our staff. Now he's planning and running the same kind of projects he started out doing half a lifetime ago.

We don't expect every youth leader in WRV to study Restoration Ecology and come back to WRV. We're truly happy to see them take those leadership skills into whichever field they choose. However, it's been beautiful to have David come full circle and contribute so meaningfully to our community. He's smart as a whip, passionate about the mission, and gets stuff done! We've even converted his name into a verb. Staff will often say "Let's DFB that project" when they're talking about doing something well.



David Fulton-Beale, Crew Leader in Training, June 27, 2009

continued from cover...

day youth project, a two-day sawyer project, as well as a Crew Leader training! We worked along the Colorado Trail, closing an overused and denuded campground area by building 2,500 feet of buck and rail fencing. The fencing was built in order to protect a 22,000-square-foot area where we transplanted native species and laid down seed and wood-straw. Sawyers felled trees over some additional old campsites to make sure those campsites stay closed too. Our project mascot, a local fox we nicknamed Dr. Fox, was happy to have more natural habitat to bounce around in.



that we finished the work in just two half days. This was fortunate because stormy afternoons meant that's all the time we had! The storms however also created an opportunity for a little fun. When it was observed that water was leaking in between the kitchen canopies, project leaders rallied the troops to drape a gigantic tarp over all four canopies. It worked and was dubbed, "The Monster Tarp Rally!" The projects' mascot, (another local critter) Pat the Mole, was very happy about this also.

This year WRV also worked on two high alpine trail projects.

The first was on Mt. Elbert, and was part of Colorado's Find Your Fourteeners campaign. Our volunteers closed, transplanted plugs, and built 100 check dams on 500 linear feet of unsustainable trail. We had two new crew leaders who finished their training and earned their red hats on Mt. Elbert. The second high alpine trail project was the Indian Peaks Wilderness project. We camped in the Brainard Lake area and worked on repairing the Jean Lunning loop trail around Long Lake. If you love the Indian Peaks Wilderness, you'll be happy to know WRV has overnight projects lined up with the Forest Service for the next three to four years. So, stay tuned!

**"WRV has established itself as one of the leading groups in the field of high alpine restoration. We have come to rely on the knowledge and expertise of their staff and volunteers for restoration projects on the Dillon Ranger District."**

**– Cindy Ebbert,  
Wilderness & Trails Manager,  
White River National Forest**

Continuing our multi-year tradition of working with Denver Mountain Parks, WRV also pulled off another successful project at Summit Lake on Mount Evans. This year volunteers planted 3,400 plugs grown from seed and collected more seed to grow plants for next year!

Of course, we also continued the musical tradition of playing guitar around the campfire at Echo Lake, which is always a blast.

The 2017 season also marked the first time we have worked with our new partners on the South Park Ranger District. Working together with the Forest Service and the Mosquito Range Heritage Initiative, WRV gathered together a group of primarily new volunteers, to restore 2,000 feet of eroding, illegal 4WD road. The small crews were so enthusiastic

## Seed Program | By Amy Ansari

The seed program has been rich with new species and explorations this year. Heil Ranch has been our favorite place this season, sporting incredible views and even hosting a bobcat sighting! Peck Garden continued to deliver on the magic and gave us the most spectacular sunsets and a variety of seed species that will be used by Boulder County to help restore multiple areas in need. And we are now heading into our favorite time to collect seed, the fall. This time of year is full of our friends including yellow Indiangrass and switchgrass.

It's been a wonderful year and we are thankful for the wild harvests that the land has provided to help us continue to heal areas that need it most. We also thank our fantastic volunteers and our agency partners!



Volunteers collecting seeds at Peck Garden in Longmont.

## Sawyer Program By Claire Morrissy

Plunge cuts, quarter cuts, boring back cuts: while the names may sound routine, these are actually advanced techniques. These techniques, used to safely cut down standing trees, are not covered in a typical Beginner Chainsaw and Safety course. The desire to build on skills and increase competency runs deep in many of our volunteers. This is especially true for our sawyers—the volunteers who use chainsaws on our saw projects to reduce fuel loads and invasive tree species throughout the season. Whether they cut trees around their home on the weekend, work professionally with chainsaws, or only touch a saw once a year on a project, WRV sawyers are hungry to learn the skills and experience they need to take on bigger and more complex trees, while always prioritizing safety.

To feed this hunger, for the second time in WRV history, this year we offered an “Intermediate Sawyer Training.” Led by friends of WRV and leaders in wildland firefighting, Dani Doyle, Erin Doyle and Matt Holzapfel, nine trainees spent their Labor Day weekend going deeper into the physics, the techniques, and the history of chainsaw use and tree removal. They were taught tricks of the trade from folks who have spent years on wildland firefighting crews. They were schooled about avoiding dangerous situations while pushing themselves to take on greater challenges. Each morning, every trainee was asked to set measurable goals and state their intentions for the day. In the afternoon, the sawyer scholars reflected on successes and lessons learned. This made for a supportive learning environment that led the way to big personal gains. WRV is grateful to these knowledgeable instructors and eager trainees who graciously give their time as stewards of ecological restoration.



## Gaining Ground

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## Weed Program

By Morgan Crowley

As the last seeds of fall begin to form and float away – hopefully none of them noxious – we turn our attention back to the opposite equinox, the weedy season of spring. We began the 2017 weed season with a few new additions to the regularly scheduled programming. One effort in particular is made possible through the generous support of our partners, the Colorado Department of Agriculture and Boulder County. With this funding we trained a new elite team of volunteer “Weed Warriors” who independently took to the foothills armed with Hori-Hori garden knives and proper personal protective equipment (PPE) to once more purge the invasive myrtle spurge. These fierce weeders were able to fill in the gaps between scheduled volunteer spurge pulls. Altogether we cleared nearly 60 acres of spurge from more than 20 sites.

Spurge of course was not the only wanted weed we rooted out this year. Our old familiar foe Mediterranean sage made a brief appearance only to be firmly reminded just who is winning in that battle. Over the past 10+ years of determined volunteer Med. sage pulls, this prairie pest has gone from ubiquitous to unlikely-to-be-seen. It’s not missed, though these projects have become more like evening strolls. Occasionally the volunteers get a little shovel crazy. When this happens mullein is sometimes caught in the crossfire. Over the summer we also took down Russian olives and ripped up tamarisk, we tore out knapweed and even found occasion to take out some thistle here and there. As we begin planning for 2018, it remains clear who rules in these western wilds: it’s weeders vs. weeds out here, and the weeds don’t stand a chance!



## Flood Restoration

By Luke McNally

WRV seldom affords the opportunity to do it the way we did it last time. There’s always something new that advances our efforts. This year it was over 20 different species of woody plants and 4 different seed mix zones. At Left Hand Creek, in northern Boulder County, we planted and seeded more biodiversity than any other WRV project to date. Species Richness is the phrase scientists use to count the total number of species in an ecosystem. By this count, Left Hand will indeed be a landscape of riches.



Some things however are always the same. Once a year I sit down and crunch the project stats, and once a year I write about the flood program. As we sort through the increasing sums of revegetation treatments, I become less impressed with big numbers. Shock wears off. 650,000 sq. ft. seeded on Left Hand Creek alone, \$90,000 in-kind value volunteer labor; we have a habit of outdoing ourselves. It’s rewarding and yet there is a dissatisfaction that I feel for numbers. Ten years from now, I’ll struggle to recall if it was six or eight thousand willows. **However I will remember that it was the most historic year of stream restoration in our state’s history.** Hundreds of millions of dollars in Federal money will have hit the ground by the end of 2018. There is a slow motion sense of awareness bearing witness to history, being there was satisfaction enough. It’s like having a story to tell about Woodstock, or the 2017 eclipse. **This was the first time that government disaster funding had a river restoration fund.**

I love statistics and certainly, statistics matter, but they are not memorable. I’ll remember the sense of community at the Altona Grange, where 80 volunteers finished the Ranch Reach project in one day, or when the Backyard Collective group gathered after an impressive tour of force. Tailgates and guitars are more memorable than facts and figures. There is a humanity about these moments that belongs in a Steinbeck novel, but this is no fiction.

There is no quantifying the mounting uncertainties we face. Another natural disaster, another public agency’s budget slashed. I find comfort in the knowledge that our model works, our bonds remain resilient. Some things don’t change and we’ll be here for you next year. Country music legend Chris Ledoux reminds us... life is easy as a hard day’s work... simple as dirt.

# This year WRV completed it's 1,000th project! Check out what our volunteers have accomplished leading up to this milestone.

**51 miles of streams restored**  
**55 miles of trail work completed**  
**46 miles of roads removed for wildlife**



**377,000 trees (and more) planted**  
**40 million sq.ft. planted or seeded**  
**6,000 acres of noxious weeds removed**



**47,000 feet of boardwalk & fences built**  
**72,000 acres of habitat benefited**  
**4,000 youth engaged**  
**42,000 volunteers engaged**  
**\$10+ million of volunteer value**

## Join the IK circle | By Sarah Egolf-Tarr

Celebrate WRV's 1,000th project by investing in the next 1,000!

### Benefits

- The knowledge that you are crucial to WRV's mission!
- Invitation to mid-season and end-of-season briefing sessions with WRV Executive Director and staff members
- Personal tour of major project sites by Executive Director, expert volunteers, and/or WRV staff members (Alternately, we offer a virtual tour for those who can't get out to the backcountry)
- Invitation to other exclusive events such as plant hikes, etc.
- Recognition (with permission) in WRV's Fall Newsletter and Annual Report

### How to Join:

Make a contribution of \$1K or more to WRV in a year, and you'll automatically become a member for that year!



# Thank you to our Sponsors, Partners and Donors of the past 12 months!

Your generosity supports restoration and community building! Donate online now: [wlr.org](http://wlr.org)

We are deeply grateful to all our donors - you are vital to our success! Sponsors, partners and donors at all levels are acknowledged in the Annual Report. We pour over these details to get everything right, but if you notice an error, please let us know by calling 303-543-1411.

## Cash and In-Kind Funders, Donors and Sponsors

### \$25,000 and Above

Aspen Meadow Veterinary Specialists P.C.  
Boulder County Parks and Open Space  
City of Denver, Natural Resources Division,  
Mountain Parks and Park & Rec Div.  
City of Longmont  
Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed  
Colorado Dept. of Public Health & Environment  
Colorado Parks & Wildlife Recreational Trails  
Program  
Colorado Parks and Wildlife  
Colorado State Forest Service  
Colorado Water Conservation Board  
Connie Holsinger  
Iron Woman Construction  
and Environmental Services, LLC  
R. A. Linden Services  
National Forest Foundation  
Terra Foundation  
The Nature Conservancy - Boulder Office  
U.S.F.S. - Arapaho Roosevelt National Forest  
and Pawnee National Grassland

### \$10,000 and Above

City of Boulder  
City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks  
Alan Cogen  
Colorado Department of Agriculture  
John S. Scuri Foundation  
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Patagonia, Boulder  
Rocky Mountain Tree Festival  
Sarah Peacock  
REI  
Town of Frisco  
Vivax Pros  
Xcel Energy

### \$5,000 and Above

Audubon Rockies  
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Alan Carpenter  
City of Boulder Youth Opportunities Program  
Climax Molybdenum,  
a Freeport-McMoRan Company  
Exxel Outdoors  
Mountain Pine Manufacturing, Inc.  
Mountain States Toyota  
Southwest Conservation Corps  
Summit Foundation  
Robert Tate  
Thorne Nature Experience  
Western Digital Foundation

### \$1,000 and Above

Aggregate Industries  
Alpha Phi Omega Gamma Theta  
Service Fraternity CU  
AR Metten Custom Contracting  
Bobcat of the Rockies  
Bohemian Foundation  
Boulder Beer  
Bowman Construction Supply  
William Brock  
Broomfield Open Space, City and County  
Bull Publishing  
Cocktail Caravan  
Colorado Department of Natural Resources  
Colorado Fourteeners Initiative  
Community Foundation Serving Boulder County  
Community Shares of Colorado  
Melinda Courtman  
John Daley  
Denver Botanic Gardens  
David Egolf  
Einstein Bros. Bagels

Elevations Credit Union Foundation  
First Congregational Church, Boulder  
Friendship Fund  
Linda Hamilton  
David Hill  
Hospira Boulder, a Pfizer company  
IBM Matching Grants Program  
Indevisual  
Jax Mercantile  
Jefferson County Nature Association  
Kiewit Infrastructure  
Tony Lavender & Linda Kuhn  
Larimer County  
Paul Liscom & Kim Pierpoint  
Lone Hawk Farm  
Lyons Community Foundation  
Mosquito Range Heritage Initiative  
Natural Resource Services, Inc.  
New Belgium Brewing Co.  
Odell Brewing Company  
John Peterson  
Rocky Mountain National Park  
Taylor Schollmaier  
Tim Seastedt  
Frank Shafer  
The April Fund  
Wallaroo Hat Company  
Webroot Software, Inc.  
William H. and Mattie Wattis Harris Foundation  
Windhover Ranch

### \$500 and Above

8z Real Estate  
Carol Achatz  
Americorps - Mile High Youth Corps  
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Kevin & Becca Bracy Knight  
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### Other Partners

8z Real Estate

AAC Volunteers  
Ace Hardware Downtown Fort Collins  
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Amazon Smile  
Americorps - Mile High Youth Corps  
Apple  
Asher Brewing Company  
Aural Elixir  
Aurora Public Schools Online  
Backpackers Pantry  
Ball Aerospace  
Botanical Interests  
Boulder County Bar Association  
Boulder Nordic Sport  
Caffe Sole  
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Cars Helping Charities, Inc.  
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City of Fort Collins  
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Colorado Native Plant Society  
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ContourLogic LLC  
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CU Law Students  
CU Society for Ecological Restoration  
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Fort Collins Nursery  
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Friends' School  
Front Range Community College  
GE Foundation  
Google  
Great-West Financial  
Green Goo  
Greenway Foundation  
Gyrotonic Bodhi  
Headwaters Realty Co.  
Denver University Geography  
& Environmental Studies  
Horizons School K-8  
Image Outfitters  
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Larimer County Conservation Corps

Legacy High School  
Lory State Park Volunteers  
Loveland Cub Scouts  
Lyric Cinema Cafe  
Matador  
McGuckin Hardware  
McKesson Foundation Inc.  
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Mile High Youth Corps  
Mishawaka Amphitheater  
Motorola Solutions Foundation  
Mountainsmith  
Mugs Coffee Lounge  
Native Foods  
Native Roots  
Natural Habitat Adventures  
Nite Ize  
Nature Kids/Jovenes de la Naturaleza  
Noosa Yoghurt  
Northrup Grumman  
Of the People  
Old Firehouse Books  
Osprey  
Otter Products  
Outdoor Industry Association  
Pine Brook Hills Homeowners Association  
Pledgeling Foundation  
prAna  
Presbyterian Youth  
Rio Grande Restaurant - Fort Collins  
Rocky Mountain Conservancy Conservation Corps  
Rocky Mountain Flycasters - Trout Unlimited  
Ron's Printing  
Savory Spice Shop  
Shepherd Roofing  
Silicon Valley Community Foundation  
Silver Mine Subs  
South Platte River Environmental Education  
State Farm Insurance  
SunRun  
TEENS, Inc.  
The Cupboard  
The Dandelion  
The Kitchen  
The Lincoln Center  
VOLoCITY  
Walrus Ice Cream  
Weaver's Dive and Travel Center  
Wells Fargo  
Western Digital  
Youth Services Initiative - City of Boulder

Thanks to the band Elephant Revival and some of their fans who joined us on our Left Hand Creek restoration project this May.



## Corporate Groups

In addition to companies that sponsor our efforts, a number of companies give back by direct, on-the-ground participation on WRV restoration projects. It's a chance for colleagues to join together and have some fun while making a difference. We love working with these companies! For example, WRV Restoration Projects Coordinator, Geoffrey May, remarked how much he enjoyed working with a particular company because many of them were engineers and they were so precise when measuring and laying out erosion matting on a recent Left Hand Creek project.

A list of just some of the companies whose employees volunteered on 2017 projects is listed under "other partners" at the end of this newsletter. We greatly appreciate the efforts of these businesses to think globally and act locally. The people listed after the company names are the contacts who did the hard work of organizing their colleagues for these projects.

Aggregate Industries (Joel Boduc)  
Anthem Branding (Justine Talling)

Backyard Collective (Steven Hay)  
Cargill (Jenine Bryant)

Eco-Products (David Fridland)  
Exxel Outdoors (Steven Hay)  
Google (Micheal Reschly)  
Jax Mercantile  
Kiewit Infrastructure (Maisie Wingerter)  
Matador (Nellie Stephenson)  
McKinstry Construction (Ashley Ruiz)  
Medtronic (Kristin Madl)  
Natural Habitat Adventures (Emily Deemer)  
Pfizer (Ann Steyert)  
REI -Fort Collins (Caryn Wong)  
Sunrun (Anthony Gianfresco)  
Vivax Pros—Rocky Mountain Tree Fest  
Webroot (Josh Petraglia)  
Western Digital (Ky Begley)  
Xcel Energy (Keisha Hirsch)

## Youth & Family Program | By Rachel Brett

The 2017 season has been a busy one for our Youth Program. Young people from around the Front Range learned ecology and planted a native garden at the Boulder Friends Middle School; camped out at Swan Drainage outside Breckenridge for a multi-day restoration project involving lots of rain, a friendly fox, and several first-s'more experiences; planted cottonwoods and willows with the Denver Botanic Gardens; helped build and restore trails at Red Rocks, Dedisse, and Fillius Parks; and much more. In all, over 700 diverse youth participated in a variety of restoration projects during the 2017 season.

Over 30 teens also participated in High School Crew Leader Training, learning the science of restoration and the skills to lead



crews on projects. Eight participants went even deeper, helping to plan and implement a project for their families and neighbors in their own neighborhood along the Coal Creek Trail

in Lafayette. At this truly locally-planned and locally-attended event, 70 first-time volunteers of all ages joined WRV one Saturday in July to pull invasive species, plant native shrubs, explore the creek, and eat copious amounts of watermelon and ice pops.

The Youth Program also won recognition from the EPA with a two-year grant. As a result, we will be taking the lead in coordinating a regional Youth Stewardship Coalition with nearly 20 stewardship- and youth-focused organizations. We're looking forward to the coming months as we launch our new Youth Advisory Board, giving young people an even more powerful voice as stewards and leaders in our community.

## Volunteer Profile: The Simpsons | By Linda Lee



If you've been on a trail or revegetation project recently you may have run into one of the members of the family we are

highlighting in this edition – Jane Gouveia-Simpson, Alan Simpson, and their daughter, Helen Simpson. The family has been volunteering with WRV since 2015, either as crew members or leaders. And on top of that, this year they arranged for nearly two dozen members from their running/cycling group to join WRV on the Beaver Brook trail project.

We posed a few questions to this hard working family about their experience with WRV:

**Do you have a memorable experience working on a WRV project?** *Brainard Lake. It was our first project with the entire family. A great camping experience, a live band, a family of moose by the lake, evening trail runs for Alan and more duff than we knew what to do with.*

**Is there any particular aspect of volunteering on a WRV project that**

**you particularly enjoy?** *Jane loves trail work—watching a trail appear like magic from nowhere. The satisfaction of knowing that a well-built trail will survive the rigors of thousands of footfalls to come. Helen enjoys the tranquility of planting. Alan likes the process of “disappearing” a social or unsustainable old trail, or any activity next to a river or lake. We all love learning new skills and techniques.*

**WRV's motto is “Healing the Land. Building Community.” What does that mean to you and your experiences?** *We feel that we make more genuine connections with people as we work together on a project with a common goal and where we have all chosen to participate. By working as a team we can accomplish so much in a condensed period of time. Also, you never know what topic may come up around the campfire.*



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## WRV reaches the top of the world!

This May, WRV Volunteer John Peterson successfully reached the summit of Mount Everest, carrying the WRV flag with him. Thank you John! And, as he stated prior to this ascent, "Training for Everest, I found it lot more fun carrying wattles up Georgia Pass for a WRV project than doing loops on Mt. Sanitas with sand bags in my pack!"

## Monitoring Group Reports: Lessons Learned and Progress Observed | By David Fulton-Beale

Have you ever wanted to return to a project site years later to see the effects of your work? WRV has a dedicated monitoring group that revisits some of our project sites to take photos and make observations about how the sites change over time. Two of the goals of the monitoring program are to help us improve restoration outcomes by learning which treatments work best, and to help us report our successes to our community.

While many of our projects are successful, we often learn more when things don't turn out the way we planned. At Summit Lake, we have been working to restore alpine tundra damaged by overuse. On one visit to the site, our monitors found that not all of our plantings survived. However, they noticed that the survival rate was higher when plants had rock cover to protect them from the wind. As a result, we have adapted our methods to include intentionally placing rocks to protect

the plants and increase their survival rates.

In addition to helping us learn, our monitoring results confirm one of the things we can't tell you often enough; our volunteers make a huge difference! From the high alpine to the prairies, after fire or flood, your efforts make a real and lasting impact on the landscape. Georgia Pass is a good example. In 2012, our objective at Georgia Pass was to close and restore an unsustainable section of road. When our monitors returned to the site in 2015, they found the site changed. Plants were growing where there used to be only bare soil, and there were few signs of erosion!

Thanks to our monitoring group for helping us learn from our work and celebrate our successes! Visit our monitoring page on the WRV website for more information about this program.



Before Image:  
Georgia Pass in 2011, one year prior to the project.



After Image:  
Georgia Pass in 2015: vegetation is growing in the road, and there are few signs of erosion.