

Gaining Ground

Summer 2022

Heal the land. Build community.

You brought restoration outdoor education to 607 youth in Colorado!



“I want to come back and plant more plants!” - Amber

INSIDE

You're restoring trails after the Cameron Peak Fire
Find out how you're helping native tundra near South Park





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ON COVER

Your generosity in 2021 allowed WRV to partner with several community groups to connect youth and families to local natural areas. Here, Amber, a participant with WRV partner organization Nature Kids/ Jovenes de la Naturaleza, plants a native plant next to Coal Creek as it flows through Lafayette.

WRV Youth Interns gather dry, dead wood, and cut small lower branches to reduce fire risk near Estes Park. Pictured left, Jorge Hernandez, won WRV's Youth Volunteer of the Year in 2021. Your contributions help students like Jorge pursue new interests! WRV photo, 2022.

WRV Lafayette Youth Corps Empowers High School Students to Pursue Green Careers

Your support is connecting young people to nature

From September 2021 through April 2022, 11 high school student interns from Lafayette, CO gathered every Saturday to work with WRV. These interns were recruited by Nature Kids/ Jovenes de la Naturaleza (NKJN), a community initiative of Thorne Nature Experience that engages the Latinx community of Lafayette in outdoor activities that might not otherwise be accessible to them. The internship is a product of WRV's collaboration with NKJN and offers an opportunity for youth in the Front Range to explore work in the environmental field, for the second year in a row. Each week the interns spend time together outside, complete restoration projects for the City of Lafayette Open Space, develop job skills, and learn about green career path opportunities. Over the course of six months, the students contributed to various projects around their community: building a fence to limit prairie dog habitat, removing invasive Russian olive trees, planting native rabbitbrush, and much more.

Your contributions help students come out of their shells, come into their own, and pursue new interests!

Some of the interns felt right at home working outside, and others were less comfortable. When Anthony arrived the first day in September, he shared with WRV staff that he wasn't used to spending much time outside and had never been camping.



WRV Lafayette Interns build a fence to keep prairie dogs in Rothman Open Space and out of a neighboring farm. In the coming season, interns will plant tall native shrubs along the fence to create a natural barrier as well. WRV photo, 2021.



Interns gather to discuss careers on a chilly morning before an afternoon of restoration work. Students share their ideas and word map posters about green careers. WRV photo, 2021.

Thankfully, this lack of experience certainly didn't stop Anthony from asking questions. Whether he was interested in the insects, ecology, or technical specifications of the work, you could always count on Anthony to speak up. By the end of the program, Anthony was much more confident working outside with his peers and was even the fastest to set up his tent during our camping trip! He recently accepted a job as a member of Boulder County Youth Corps for the summer, thanks to the formative experience your contributions made possible.

In addition to helping young people gain outdoor skills and confidence, your support helps make green career paths more accessible for youth in Colorado. When our interns aren't working hard on restoration projects, they participate in other activities including learning about green jobs and workshopping resumes with WRV staff and partners. On one chilly Saturday in January, the interns reviewed case studies of local green businesses with Martin Ogle, the Education Coordinator with Lafayette Open Space. They sipped their hot chocolate and drew colorful word maps to connect green business ideas and strategies. After a short discussion, the interns came to a consensus: to have a green economy, ALL careers must be green.

Equipped with the hands-on experience your contributions made possible, the interns finished the program on April 9th. A few might return to this program next year; others will move on to experience college or work a job. In any case, WRV is excited to see what they accomplish next!

YOUR GIFT HAS A HEALING POWER FOR TRAILS AND PEOPLE

Thank You for Giving in the Aftermath of the 2020 Fires

Heal the Land, Heal the Community

Digging into scorched earth, carrying heavy rocks, building small dams to check the flow of water. It's how dedicated volunteers—with your compassionate support—restored trails and habitat after the 2020 Cameron Peak Fire. With their tireless work, volunteers help to heal the land, trail, themselves, and the community.

Many of us recall how the Cameron Peak Fire scorched over 208,000 acres between August and December 2020. As the largest fire in Colorado to date, it forced nearly 6,000 people to flee communities from Red Feather Lakes to Estes Park to Masonville, and seared parts of Rocky Mountain National Park.

Looking for a way to give back to the land, volunteer Becky Jensen was cheered to find in 2021 that WRV was seeking volunteers for post-Cameron Peak Fire restoration projects. “WRV is so organized, and their work is so collaborative,” she says, recalling her first WRV experience potting seedlings, and revegetating riverbanks with her twin sons following

the High Park Fire of 2012. In 2020, the writer and Colorado State University alumna had just completed a two-week solo backpacking trip on the Colorado Trail, when she first learned about the Cameron Peak Fire. Eventually the fire forced her to evacuate her home in the Upper Poudre Canyon and spend the following ten weeks at her mother's home in Fort Collins.

“I watched the apocalyptic skies in town,” says Becky. “I saw ash falling and wondered if any of that was from my house.”

Eventually, Becky was able to return home. Her feelings included both gratitude to survivor's guilt. “My home stands,” she says. “But my friend's house didn't make it. I can see the burn scar from my living room window, and it reminds me of how much other people lost and how close I came to losing everything.”



Kids of all ages love digging in the dirt!



Did you know a trail could burn? It's true, both organic features under the soil, and the soil's ability to slow water, were destroyed by the Cameron Peak Fire. Together, these changes destabilize trails and cause them to later “blow out” in small floods. That's where you came in, supporting WRV to restore fire-damaged areas. WRV photo, 2021.

In 2021, Becky volunteered with WRV to restore Jacks Gulch Trail in the Poudre River watershed. “The land looked like a moonscape,” she recalls. “The trees were charred, black sticks. The ground was black ash. Scorched soil can repel water and increase the likelihood of flash flooding. I was on an awesome volunteer team that built water bars and check dams to restore the trail and make it more resilient to flooding and erosion.”

Like Becky, first-time volunteer Vineet Agarwal had personal reasons for spending a weekend at a WRV post-fire project. “My oldest daughter was two at the time of the fires,” says the software developer. “My wife and I kept all the windows closed. Smoke is not good for young lungs.”

Vineet and family love to camp, bike and hike. After he read a post on Reddit, he researched WRV online and chose a restoration project near Pingree park. “The land looked sad and desolate,” he recalls. “The burnt soil just crumbled beneath our feet.”

Volunteering was a way for me to heal.



Volunteers Vineet Agarwal, left, and his crew, pause for a picture along Jack’s Gulch Trail after repairing fire-damaged drainage features. You supported Vineet and others to restore the trails our community values after fires destroyed them. Vineet Agarwal photo, 2021.



Volunteers Becky Jensen and Kelly Randell take a break from hard work among charred trees along Jack’s Gulch Trail to pose for a photo. Kelly Randell photo, 2021.

Even working in these devastating settings, both volunteers found their experiences rewarding. “Volunteering was so enjoyable. Kids of all ages love digging in the dirt!” says Vineet. “WRV has great planning and logistics. I would love to volunteer again and bring my daughter. I think it’s an important part of her learning.”

“Volunteering was a way for me to heal,” adds Becky. “It was great to be with other caring people to rebuild the trails we love.”

WRV Program Manager Nate Boschmann foresees a future need for volunteers. “After the High Park Fire in 2012, we had restoration projects for three years. Now we need to work that long again or longer—it seems like everything was on fire in 2020.” Nate’s conclusion foreshadowed the Marshall and Middle Fork fires of December 2021. Fortunately, our community is responding, and many volunteers are already signed up for fall post-fire restoration projects.

Your support has put WRV in a position to get to work quickly when natural disasters strike. Thank you.

YOUR INFLUENCE, YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS!

OFFICIAL 2021 RESULTS



232 PROJECTS AND TRAININGS



33.5 MILES OF TRAIL maintenance, reconstruction, or enhancement



11,406 native plants, shrubs and trees **PLANTED**



88 ACRES weeded



471 FEET of boardwalk, bridge, puncheon, deck or turnpike **CONSTRUCTED**



607 YOUTH under 18 engaged



3,782 VOLUNTEER attendances



32,400 VOLUNTEER HOURS



2.3 MILES of protective fence or barrier **BUILT** or repaired



\$925,153 VALUE of labor & expertise contributed to Colorado's natural heritage



20.6 ACRES planted

2,820 FEET unnecessary fence removed to allow **WILDLIFE PASSAGE**



75 ACRES of **FOREST** thinned for habitat and reduced fire risk

Longtime Volunteer Leaves a Long-Term Gift

As the author of a book on choices that nurture body, mind, and spirit, Alan Carpenter knows a thing or two about feeling good. And as a longtime WRV volunteer and board member, Alan knows it feels good when he makes contributions. “It doesn’t feel like my money is walking out the door, instead I feel all the good it’s doing.” The avid backpacker and ecologist has shared his sweat equity, professional expertise, and financial gifts with WRV for 20 years and realized there was still more he could do.

“I included WRV as a beneficiary on my life insurance policy,” says Alan. “My wife and I own our home and have retirement accounts. We put our children through school, and I thought, why not leave a gift to WRV? Our kids think it’s cool.” This way of leaving a legacy gift is free, easy to do, and does not affect Alan’s current finances.

Legacy gifts power restoration for future generations. They are a wonderful way to contribute to organizations that contribute to the community. Alan recalls suggesting another nonprofit begin a legacy giving program back in 1988. “Like



After graduating from volunteer to Crew Leader and Technical Advisor, Alan now serves in these roles as well as many more, including Legacy Giver! WRV photo, 2018.



Alan Carpenter, Ecologist, sneers in mock disdain for invasive species such as myrtle spurge, depicted here. Photo taken while Alan shared instruction with WRV’s “weed warriors” to ensure they stayed safe from spurge’s toxic sap. WRV photo, 2018.

My goal is to inspire others!

planting a tree, 10 years ago is the best time, but now is the second-best time.”

Alan hopes that if other volunteers and donors know people are leaving legacy gifts, they will consider doing the same. “My goal is to inspire others! I’ve had plenty of inspiration bestowed upon me!”

If you are planning on leaving a legacy gift to WRV or would like more information on doing so, please contact Sarah Egolf-Tarr, Director of Development at sarah@wlv.org or (303) 543-1411, ext. 108

AN UPDATE ON WRV SUCCESSES IN SOUTH PARK

You Restore Native Plants to Colorado's Tundra

Report Made Possible by Volunteer Monitors

From 2012 to 2018, WRV and our partners, took on a truly heavy lift to restore eroded, informal four-wheel drive roads on the western edge of South Park. The roads cut through alpine forest and meadows, and subalpine tundra, on Georgia Pass, in Taryall Creek and Sheep Creek. The roads were severely eroded and were harming local waterways.

Last August, longtime volunteers Alan Carpenter and Mark Evans revisited the area to check whether WRV's restoration did indeed succeed. Alan and Mark sum it up this way: "Every year, volunteers monitor a small sample of WRV projects. We keep doing what works well and modify what doesn't."

The original projects involved:

1. Building a barrier to prevent vehicles from using restored areas
2. Using heavy equipment to scar the compacted roads, fill gullies, and alter drainage to encourage native plants to grow
3. Installing erosion mat on steeper sections of roads to minimize erosion and provide sites for seed germination
4. Transplanting sod to the scarred road sites to jumpstart plant growth
5. Scattering native seeds over the scarred roads

Happily, Alan and Mark found that the work that the volunteers had done to obliterate the informal roads had stopped vehicles from trespassing. Native plants had taken hold and excess soil erosion ceased.

Your support not only helps restore native plants but also ensures that WRV is truly doing effective restoration projects. Thank you!



At left, a dirt road heads up Georgia Pass, in South Park, in 2012.

At right, photo of same site after restoration, taken in 2021.

Lack of braiding or tire tracks, and re-establishment of tundra grasses in the scar indicate good progress in healing this fragile natural area.

Your generosity makes this possible. WRV photos.

The work the volunteers had done to obliterate the informal roads had stopped vehicles from trespassing. Native plants had taken hold, and excess soil erosion ceased.

WRV's Financial Story 3/1/21 - 2/28/22

Thanks to your generosity, WRV conducted a record 232 volunteer restoration projects and trainings in the past fiscal year.

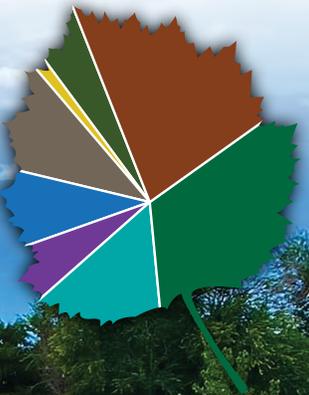
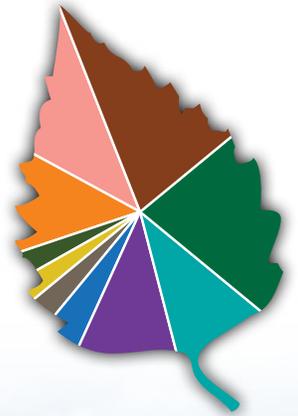
Your longtime support of WRV has vaulted our small nonprofit to become a leader in Colorado volunteer restoration. Despite restrictions on volunteer group sizes, supply chain slowdowns, and changing regulations, WRV had a record-breaking season in our second field season of the pandemic. In addition to supporting the implementation of more than 200 volunteer restoration projects and trainings across Colorado, you helped us complete renovations on our new Boulder County headquarters in Longmont. The team will move into the new space in summer of 2022.

After the historic fires Colorado experienced in 2020 and 2021, our generous community was ready to begin the road to recovery. Thanks to individuals, foundations, corporations, and organizations such as the American Red Cross, WRV has nearly \$100,000 to invest in 2022 post-fire restoration.

Gifts such as yours are crucial to recruit volunteers, build partnerships, train leaders, and turn every \$1 donated by an individual into \$6.87 worth of restoration and community building. WRV couldn't do what we do without you. Thank you!

Operational Expenses By program 14 month period	Percent
Natural Habitat	20%
Sustainable Trails	22%
Youth & Family	10%
Healthy Forest	11%
Native Seed	4%
Vital Rivers	3%
Training & Community Building	3%
Invasive Species	3%
GA	13%
Fundraising	11%

Operational Revenue	Percent
Individuals	21%
Government Fee for Service and grants	33%
Foundation & Grants	15%
Corporations	6%
Community Partners	9%
COVID-19 Relief	10%
Other	1%
In-kind	4%



Volunteers including students from CU Boulder's Masters of the Environment program installed living mulch systems into perennial research fields at Ollin Farms using cover crops, biochar, mushroom mycelium, hay, and woodchips. Your support allows WRV to pilot restorative agricultural projects like this! WRV photo, 2021.

Thank you, Sponsors, Partners and Donors Mar 2021-Feb 2022!

Your generosity allows us to build community and heal the land!

We are deeply grateful to all supporters – you are vital to WRV's success! We pore over these details to get everything right, but if you notice an error, please let us know by calling 303-543-1411, x108. Thank you!

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\$10,000+

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\$10,000-24,999

AEC Trust
Cargill
City of Denver - Mountain Parks & Parks & Recreation

Denver Foundation
Ducks Unlimited
National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance
Odell Brewing Company
Park County Department of Heritage, Tourism & Community Development
REI
South Park National Heritage Area
Terra Foundation
The Nature Conservancy
The Summit Foundation
University of Colorado, Boulder
Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District
Visintainer Sheep Co
Xcel Energy

\$2,500-9,999

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Bohemian Foundation
Breckenridge Grand Vacations Gives
City of Boulder Open Space & Mountain Parks
Climax Molybdenum, a Freeport-McMoRan Company
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Fairway Estates Property Owner's Association
Foundation for Sustainability & Innovation
Jax Mercantile
Jefferson County Community Services
One Tree Planted
Park County Land & Water Trust Fund
Planet Home Lending Boulder
Roundup Riders of the Rockies
Heritage & Trail Foundation
The Max & Victoria Dreyfus Foundation
Western Digital

\$1,000-2,499

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Caddis Collaborative
Colorado Mountain Club - Boulder Group
Community Foundation Boulder County
First Congregational Church of Boulder
Hageman Earth Cycle
The Kroger Co
National Corporate Housing
National Renewable Energy Labs
The April Fund

Up to \$999

Alpine Recruiting Company
Amazon Smile
Broadcom
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Deckers Outdoor Corp
Elasticsearch
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Great Western Bank
IBM Matching Grants Program
Jacobs
McKinstry Charitable Foundation
Medtronic
Mobb Mountain Distillery
Motorola Solutions Foundation
Oracle Matching Gifts Program
Otak
Pine Brook Hills Homeowners Association
Stanley Family Charitable Fund
TBK Bank
Tres Litros Beer Co.



Your gifts supported WRV volunteers to lead youth participants from South Platte River Environmental Education (SPREE) in maintaining the Phantom Canyon River Trail in one of the last remaining roadless canyons along Colorado's Front Range. WRV photo, 2021.



Gaining Ground

Editors: Erin Mulligan, Christina Lui, and Sarah Egolf-Tarr

Design: Nicole Bizzarro Designs

Offices: 2100 Collyer Street,
Longmont, CO 80501

2926 E. Mulberry,
Fort Collins, CO 80524

Contact: 303-543-1411
wlrv.org | info@wlrv.org

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WE PLANTED ALL THE TREES! These intrepid volunteers gathered to plant trees in areas of the High Park Fire. WRV and partners have now purchased and planted every available ponderosa pine seedling in Colorado and beyond. Extensive fires have reduced the availability of trees to plant across the region. With your support, WRV volunteers will be training, gathering, and preparing coniferous seeds for nursery grow-out to support post-fire projects in 2023. WRV photo, 2021.