

THE ANNUAL REPORT EDITION OF THE DONOR NEWSLETTER OF WILDLANDS RESTORATION VOLUNTEERS

Gaining Ground

Summer 2026

Heal the land. Build community.

Your gift helped WRV build 216 structures to reduce floods and restore water quality

INSIDE

How your support can help slow a megafire

Elk and woodpeckers can't say thanks,
but you brought back some of their habitat

You're a hero for Loveland's natural areas



WILDLANDS
RESTORATION
VOLUNTEERS

wrv.org



ON THE COVER

You made it possible for WRV to host 469 volunteers at 25 stream and wet meadow restoration events in 2025. In dry meadows, volunteers built one-rock dams like the one shown here: simple rock structures that capture sediment and help restore the area's natural hydrology. In other locations, volunteers built additional rock and woody structures. All this work restores habitat for sage grouse and other rare native creatures and improves water quality for everyone downstream.

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Laughter and learning go hand in hand. Thanks to you, youth in Longmont are getting their hands in the soil – planting native seeds, discovering restoration, and building a connection to the land that will last a lifetime. Donor support makes this possible through WRV's partnership with the Longmont Youth Center and Nature Kids/Jovenes de la Naturaleza.



David and Mary Robertson in Rocky Mountain National Park. Robertson photo, 2025.

What they Built, They Give

DAVID & MARY ROBERTSON'S LEGACY FLOWS IN THE CREEKS AND WILDLANDS THEY LOVE

Aquatic ecologist David Robertson served as Executive Director of the Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust outside Philadelphia for 30 years. “I’m motivated by progress and demonstrable success,” he says. That’s one reason we’re honored that he and his wife, Mary, a Shakespearean scholar, have included WRV in their estate plans.

“Colorado feels like home,” says Mary, “full of beauty and life, but that is becoming scarcer.” For David, home is the sound of running water. “Whenever we have traveled someplace new, I would run to the nearest creek.”



Here, the couple cleans native seeds at WRV’s Longmont building, preparing them for future projects. Their hands-on work is part of a lifetime of giving back to the land they love.

**“I’m motivated by progress
and demonstrable success”**

After relocating from Pennsylvania, David spotted a WRV vehicle in a grocery store parking lot and volunteered. Now he and Mary are regulars at native seed cleaning events.

The couple chose to make an estate plan after serving as executors for Mary’s brother, who died unexpectedly. “He had a trust, and it was still difficult. Our situation, without a trust in place, was not nearly as straightforward. We didn’t want to make anyone else suffer through dealing with that!”

The Robertsons feel fortunate to be in a situation where they can make contributions, given their working-class backgrounds. “I used to put plastic bread wrappers in my shoes when I was in graduate school, because they had holes in them. We were dirt poor,” says David. The couple became financially stable and comfortable by being frugal. “We can’t give everyone money, so we want the money we can give to be meaningful,” says Mary.

There’s a line from Shakespeare’s *As You Like It* that suits the Robertsons: “*And this our life, exempt from public haunt, finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything.*” WRV is grateful to be included in their story.

YOUR HELP AFTER THE FLAMES

The Work that Saved the Scout Ranch - and the Habitat Around It

Elkhorn Creek Forest Health Initiative is reducing fire risk so history doesn't repeat itself

When the Cameron Peak Fire roared toward the Ben Delatour Scout Ranch near Red Feather Lakes in 2020, something changed: it slowed, then stopped.

Bob Sturtevant is the Natural Resources Manager for the Ranch. He credits a fire break cut in the early 2000s, along with a series of WRV's mitigation projects. Volunteers and partners had thinned unnaturally dense forest stands. The effort protected the ranch property and buildings.

Your support made this possible. And the work is about more than buildings. It's about restoring the land.

Before a century of fire suppression, ponderosa forests burned

often. Low-intensity fires cleared small trees and brush. They created open, park-like stands where native species thrived. Elk foraged in the understory. Birds of prey hunted from scattered pines. Woodpeckers and small mammals lived in standing dead trees.

Today, forests are too dense. Megafires like Cameron Peak burn so hot they kill seeds, sterilize soil, and ruin water quality.

That's why WRV and partners are thinning dense stands. The work re-creates the ponderosa savannah. That gives native species a fighting chance, not to mention human communities. But the work can't stop at the Ranch's borders.



Vehicles can't reach this site. So, volunteers hauled logs out by hand, reducing the fuel that feeds fires. For more than a decade, donors like you have made this work possible in the Elkhorn Creek area. (WRV photo, 2015)



Even sawyers need a snack break. WRV staff and volunteers (left to right: Project Manager Elle Bergly, Scott James, and Sara Painter) pause during a thinning project at Drala Mountain Center. This work reduces fire risk for neighboring communities, including the Scout Ranch, which you helped protect from the Cameron Peak Fire, and restores native habitat.

Increasing hot, dry, windy weather is making our work more important.

Elle Bergly leads WRV’s volunteer chainsaw projects. She credits the collaboration across property lines with the success. Because of you, this cooperation is possible.

Your support made it possible for WRV to join the Elkhorn Creek Forest Health Initiative. Created after the High Park Fire of 2012, the partnership has made a significant impact. It was recognized with Colorado Lottery’s Starburst Award (2024) and Larimer County’s Environmental Stewardship Award (2017). Together, we’re reducing the potential for hotter, faster, and more devastating wildfires.

But the work must continue. “Increasing hot, dry, windy weather is making our work more important,” says Bob. “The potential for fire is just getting greater all the time.”

Thanks to you, WRV volunteers continue to cut and remove hazardous trees. That way, communities near Red Feather Lakes have a chance to avoid re-living the Cameron Peak Fire, and the surrounding habitat is healthier and more fire resilient.



Hundreds of millions of ponderosa pines have died across the American West. In some places, such as the Cameron Peak burn scar, the ground is so scorched they can’t grow back on their own. That’s why volunteers are collecting pinecones in areas like this one near Loveland – part of the same fire-affected region as the Scout Ranch. The cones are grown into seedlings at WRV partner nursery OneCanopy. Your support helps make this work possible – alongside thinning dense stands to prevent more megafires. Together, we’re bringing the forest back, one cone at a time.

Elkhorn Creek Forest Health Initiative Partners:

Larimer County Conservation Corps, Ben Delatour Scout Ranch, The Nature Conservancy, The Ember Alliance, Larimer Conservation District, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Northern Colorado Fireshed Collaborative, Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and Drala Mountain Center.

How do you know you made a difference?

The Visible Science of Restoration

A NEW TOOL FOR HEALING

Volunteers often report that one of the most rewarding things about WRV projects is seeing an immediate difference in the landscape. But have you ever wondered how your efforts fare in the long run? WRV's Monitoring and Science Committee has you covered – with a new tool.

The Ecological Recovery Wheel, developed by the Society for Ecological Restoration (SER), the world's leading authority on restoration science, is helping WRV track recovery across project sites. Ecologist Laura Backus, a founding member of the Monitoring Committee, recently shared how WRV is staying at the forefront of science at WRV's Heart & Soil Circle Spring Luncheon. She's especially excited about the wheel, which is useful across ecosystem types "for the many, many restoration projects all over the world," says Laura.

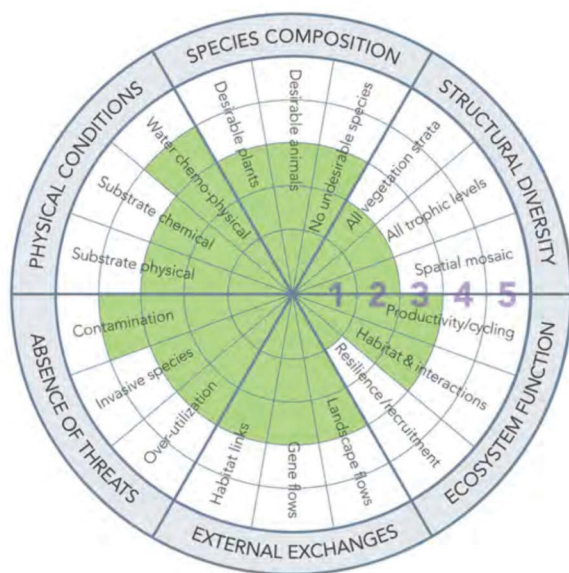
the wheel makes change visible at a glance

Using multiple criteria, the wheel makes change visible at a glance. It shows how far a site has come and helps restoration groups direct and craft next steps. The wheel can also make monitoring easier for volunteers. This means WRV can track more projects with less burden. The more data we gather, the better we can adjust what isn't working and strengthen what is.

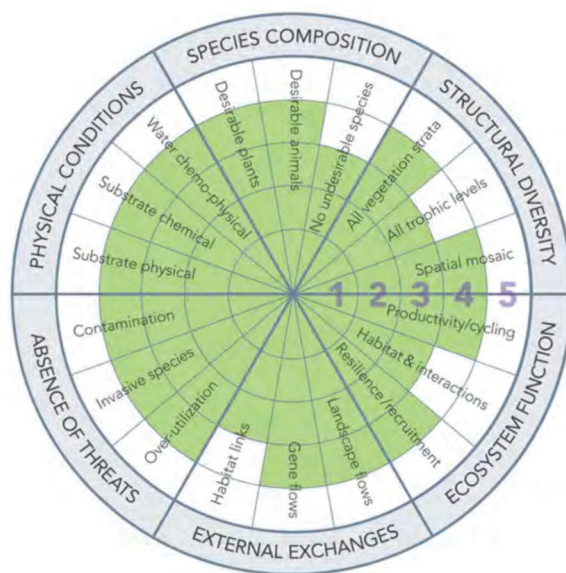
Your support makes this possible. Thank you for keeping WRV on the cutting edge!



How do we know if restoration is working? Volunteer monitors like these collect data at WRV sites – tracking recovery, learning what works, and making sure that your support makes a difference. The SER Recovery Wheel helps us show it.



Baseline



10 years later

An example of the Ecological Recovery Wheel, an evaluation process created by the Society for Ecological Restoration, ser.org/page/Standards-Tools

THE BARRIER YOU DON'T SEE

What If You Couldn't Reach the Trailhead?

From accessibility ratings to affinity projects, your support builds belonging

Imagine having limited mobility. You want to join a seed collection project, but you have no way of knowing if you'll even reach the site.

That's why WRV is testing accessibility ratings. A simple icon tells volunteers: **Level 1** is fully accessible – register with confidence. **Level 2** is accessible with assistance – bring a friend.

Clarity replaces guesswork, giving choice back to volunteers.

The scale currently addresses only physical challenges. Your feedback will shape this effort. You can fill out a form at wrv.org/contact-us/ or call WRV Community Outreach Coordinator Adam Fedyski at 303-736-9167.

Affinity Projects

Sometimes, the best way to feel welcome is to join others who share your background or experiences. With your help, WRV offers two to three “affinity projects,” (LGBTQ+, women+, and BIPOC) annually among ~200 offerings. These projects create welcoming spaces and often bring new volunteers to additional WRV projects.

Language Access

Thanks to donors like you, WRV is taking important steps to reduce language barriers. Four bilingual staff members and hundreds of bilingual volunteers now run dozens of projects annually – welcoming Spanish and English speakers to the work. This is one part of an ongoing effort to make WRV more inclusive, and the Youth & Families Program has grown as a result. New volunteers often return for more.



High school interns spread native seeds on Lafayette land – and they get paid for it. Your support, and that of the City of Lafayette, provides stipends for youth to work weekends during the school year, gaining hands-on restoration experience while giving back to their community.



You helped save the seeds that will restore tomorrow's landscapes. Volunteers collected native grass seeds at Loveland's Dakota Ridge Natural Area – made possible by you and a grant from GOCO. These seeds will grow into the plants that heal future sites.

Loveland Stewardship by the Numbers

Thanks to you, and to a Stewardship Impact Grant from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), the two-year Loveland Community Stewardship Initiative just wrapped with great results.

In partnership with the City of Loveland, WRV, and three other local organizations, 802 volunteers (including 50+ youth) invested 3,852 hours. Their time and expertise is worth \$148,769, according to the Independent Sector's most recent valuation of a volunteer hour.

What did those hours accomplish?

- countless native seeds and ponderosa pinecones collected
- 101 volunteer leaders trained in Loveland, strengthening the community's ability to care for natural areas
- 8,574 trees, shrubs, and plants planted across 124,000+ square feet
- 25,000 feet of creek cleared of trash
- 29.5 acres weeded
- 4,825 feet of obsolete fencing removed for wildlife passage

This community-driven success was possible because GOCO invested in the vision, and because you provided the flexibility and local support to bring it to life. Thank you for stewarding Loveland with us.

Is the initiative complete? Yes. But every partner continues the work. Find future Loveland projects at Wrv.org or connect with our local partners: City of Loveland, Loveland Youth Gardeners, Big Thompson Watershed Coalition, and Boys & Girls Club of Larimer County.

YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS!

OFFICIAL 2025 RESULTS



257 PROJECTS
and **TRAININGS**



109.4 ACRES PLANTED
with potted or sod materials



25,584 plants, shrubs,
trees, and willows **PLANTED**



112 MILES of **TRAIL** maintenance,
RECONSTRUCTION, or enhancement

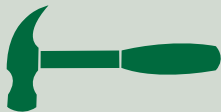


4.4 acres of
WETLAND RESTORED



4.2 MILES of **FENCING** built,
repaired, or removed to benefit wildlife

11.5 acres of **RIPARIAN**
area **RESTORED**



216 STRUCTURES BUILT
to reduce flooding and **RESTORE WATER QUALITY**



24 ACRES of **FOREST** thinned
to **RESTORE** forest or grassland health

186 ACRES WEEDED



2.3 MILES of **ROADWAY** obliterated
and/or revegetated



7 ACRES SEEDED
with **NATIVE PLANTS**



\$1,126,361 VALUE of labor
and expertise contributed to Colorado's
NATURAL HERITAGE

Because of you, 2025 was transformative for WRV!

Your generosity made it possible to:

- Complete 219 stewardship projects and 38 training courses across 14 Colorado counties
- Train 475 new volunteer leaders and build 24 new partnerships while continuing dozens more
- Turn every dollar donated by an individual or family into \$6.96 of volunteer-powered restoration and community-building

You also helped WRV strengthen its foundation:

In 2025, WRV incurred a small operating deficit. But when contributions to pay down the Postelli Building's mortgage and cover facility reserves are included, we ended the year with a surplus.

The Katherine Postelli Legacy Campaign is now complete. Katherine dreamed of a permanent home for WRV – and thanks to you, that dream is now a reality. Pledges are expected to be fulfilled through January 2027 for our Longmont headquarters.

Building reserve funds proved their worth when a refrigerator died last summer. We bought a new one and volunteers continued to be fed thanks to you.

Thank you for investing in WRV's future. Your support keeps this community thriving.

Operational Revenue	Percent
Individuals	23%
Federal	29%
State	16%
County	6%
Municipal	9%
Foundation Grants	6%
Corporations	4%
Community Partners	6%
Other & In-Kind	1%

Expenses by Program	Percent
Natural Habitats	11%
Sustainable Trails	26%
Youth & Families	17%
Healthy Forests	9%
Plants & Pollinators	7%
Vital Rivers	4%
Training & Community Building	5%
General Admin	12%
Fundraising	9%



THANK YOU, SPONSORS, PARTNERS, AND DONORS! Mar 1, 2025 - Feb 28, 2026

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!

Individuals

\$20,000+

Alan Carpenter & Betsy Neely
The Courtman Family
Charlton Friedberg
Connie Holsinger
Scott & Carol James
Annette & Ronald Postelli

\$5,000-\$19,999

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Julie & Dan DeGolier
David Pillmore & André Dupont
Kimberly & Stephen Keen
Doug & Loma Kruesi
Robert R Montgomery

\$2,500-\$4,999

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Jay Browne
Shawn Conner
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& Kenneth Wilson
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Tim Seastedt & Cathy Tate
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Colorado Supplemental
Environmental Projects
National Forest Foundation
U.S. Forest Service

\$50,000-\$99,999

Adams County Parks
& Open Space
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City of Loveland,
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Colorado Parks & Wildlife
Denver Mountain Parks
& Rec Div.

\$10,000-\$24,999

Big Thompson
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\$2,500-\$9,999

Agoda
Athletic Brewing Co
Blendings Winery
at the Hillside Vineyard
City of Fort Collins
City of Longmont
Community Foundation
Boulder County
Cool Boulder
First Congregational
Church, Boulder
Friends of the Front Range
Wildlife Refuges
Jefferson County Open Space
Marathon Petroleum Company
Town of Windsor

University of California,
Berkeley
Western Digital

\$1,000-\$2,499

All Trails
Central Presbyterian Church
Colorado Mountain Club -
Boulder Chapter
Google
GR's Foundation
IBM
Kroger
Medtronic
Namaqua Unitarian
Universalist Congregation
Northern Water
Conservancy District
Odell Brewing Company
OtterCares Foundation
Patagonia, Boulder
Poudre Heritage Alliance
The Nature Conservancy -
Phantom Canyon Office
Unitarian Universalist
Church of Boulder

Up to \$999

Abbott
AMD
Apple
Ben Delatour Scout Ranch
Bobo's Oat Bars
Boulder Bird Club
Breeze Thru Car Wash
Caterpillar Foundation
Cisco
Colorado Native Plant Society
Colorado Gives Foundation
Columbine Garden Club
Community Shares of Colorado
DiNatale Water Consultants
Discovery Art for Youth
Earth Force
Hoover Family Fund
Horse & Dragon Brewing
Jacobs
Microsoft
Nutrien
Oskar Blues Denver
Pega
Shida Brown Giving Fund
St Vrain Cidery
The Human Bean
Trail Fund
Travelers
Tyler Technologies
United Healthcare Group
Xentify Corp





Gaining Ground

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We welcome content and images for future
editions of Gaining Ground. Please submit
materials to info@wrv.org.

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Stewardship Society

Stewardship Society members keep our work going year-round, project after project, by giving monthly. Your reliable support means we can plan ahead, nimbly respond to needs, and show up for the land no matter what.

As a member, you'll receive special invitations to two events each year – a chance to connect with staff, partners, and fellow supporters.

Monthly giving starts at any amount. Many donors love that they can give more over time with less up front impact.

We love celebrating your generosity!

Questions? Please contact WRV Director of Development
Sarah Egolf-Tarr at 303-543-1411, ext. 108.

Thanks to you, WRV volunteers repair bridges, rebuild turnpikes, and restore the Emmaline Lake Trail to the foot of Comanche Peak. In designated Wilderness Areas, machines aren't allowed – so every shovel of dirt and every hammer blow is powered by volunteers like these. Now, visitors can cross streams and bogs without trampling the plants that hold the wetland together. In all, WRV volunteers maintained, reconstructed, closed, built, or enhanced 115.5 miles of trail in 2025.



wrv.org