

You helped volunteer sawyers clear 50.5 miles of wilderness trails with manual (crosscut) saws



## INSIDE

YOU kept WRV afloat and THRIVING amid a pandemic!

Find out how YOU helped turn farmland into HABITAT CONNECTORS

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#### **ON COVER**

Your support allowed volunteer sawyers like Nyika Campbell, depicted here, to clear 36 miles of downed trees across Wilderness trails in 2020! Because machines are not allowed in designated Wilderness areas, these sawyers and apprentices used "crosscut" (large, handdrawn) saws to remove trees. Ultimately, this prevents trail users from creating multiple routes and trampling forest undergrowth. Bark beetle deadfall has blocked trails all over the West. WRV photo, 2020.

While fires burned across the West in 2020, you didn't pause your support of volunteer restoration. Here, WRV Board Member, Sarah Judkins, and former staff member, Meghan Mosher, wife and wife, collect native seeds together in front of a smoky sunset. Native seeds have adapted to local conditions and are more likely to survive and thrive when cast or planted near where they are collected. Wildfires are among the many reasons banks of native seeds are needed. Your support made this collection possible. WRV photo, 2020.

## Restoration in a Time of COVID-19

### Your support empowered WRV to face a pandemic

COVID-19 threw a wrench into every organization's works in 2020, and WRV was no exception. The early spring lockdown of 2020 forced staff to cancel or postpone everything. All of a sudden, projects that staff had spent months and resources preparing for, disintegrated into thin air. In addition, many long-time sources of funding were lost or cut due to tanking tax revenues.

Like many organizations and businesses during the pandemic, WRV faced a crisis. Its very survival came into question.

WRV cut costs, and delayed seasonal hires. We were forced to lay off a treasured member of our team. We applied for and were awarded a critical PPP grant. In the midst of it all, we turned to our supporters and you gave when it wasn't easy to give! Your generosity is what got us through 2020!

You helped us, not just to survive, but to continue to restore Colorado's environment and to offer life-enhancing opportunities to volunteers through 2020.

Your support allowed us to reorient and innovate. New safety protocols, new



Your support paid for newly improvised long-handled tools to allow volunteers safe physical distance. Here, volunteers use these tools to install a water-slowing structure in the stream. WRV photo, 2020.



The most crucial WRV COVID-19 adaptation, at least to some volunteers – touchless coffee stations! WRV photo, 2020

handwashing equipment, and revised plans led to over 140 projects in a year when we thought we might not have any at all.

Our first tentative 2020 "projects" were unstaffed, single-household-only outings to plant willow poles at Campbell Valley. Volunteers took shifts, washed tools when they were done, took selfies and texted them to staff to show they'd been at the site and done the work. Now over 3,000 willows are taking hold along Campbell Creek thanks to the families who used their "outdoor recreation time" to volunteer.

When the stay-at-home order was changed to "safer at home," staff and volunteers cautiously tested new safety protocols at ten-person planting events along the Big Thompson River in Loveland over seven consecutive days. Board members watched with binoculars at a safe distance to confirm that guidelines were The National Forest Foundation asked us to present to hundreds...about restoring the land with volunteers during a pandemic.

being observed. Eventually we solicited official permission from the CDPHE (the Colorado Department of Health and Environment) to run events with up to 25 volunteers. This allowance benefited stewardship groups across the state.

Volunteers jumped at the chance to get out of isolation and give back, and donors touched us with their generosity. We were humbled, inspired, and energized to continue.

Volunteers even piloted new programs in 2020! Some volunteered at sustainable farm projects. Others adopted school gardens when schools shut down. The resulting produce was donated to local families through food banks. And that's in addition to all the trails, habitat and rivers restored!

Our work was so groundbreaking and successful that the National Forest Foundation asked us to present to hundreds across the country about restoring the land with volunteers during a pandemic.

WRV had over 1,980 attendances, adding up to nearly 20,000 hours of time, worth over \$538K, to Colorado's natural heritage! Volunteers followed the guidelines, stayed safe, and got the work done.

Volunteer responses to post project surveys made it clear how much our services were needed – by our people as much as by the land:

"So enjoy this wonderful organization, really lifts our spirits especially in these extra mentally difficult times of COVID"

"Safely spending time with other volunteers means even more to me since I'm spending more time at home due to the pandemic"

Although we couldn't have campfires or share communal meals, and our numbers had to be kept low, the desire for community that sustains WRV shone through. You supported us to unite for good in a year full of uncertainty and isolation. Thank you!



Your financial contribution is a support for the over-80% of Colorado native wildlife that depends on stream-side habitat for some or all their life cycle. Here, volunteers use long-handled tools to safely build structures. These innovative, induced-meander structures heal incised streambanks and rebuild stream-side habitat. WRV photo, 2020.



Your support helped purchase materials for restoration. Here, a volunteer uses a pallet of wood to deck a boardwalk. This boardwalk will protect a high-elevation wetland from trampling. WRV photo, 2020.

# You Are Regenerating New Landscapes

### Your gift helped volunteers explore a piece of this important puzzle.

Times of crisis are often also times of opportunity. The year 2020 may have seemed like an impractical year to pilot new projects but– thanks to you and your support–WRV was able to continue to explore local solutions for global problems in 2020.

Your support allowed hard-working volunteer leaders, Tracy Halward and Tim Seastedt, to work with local farms on a test case for WRV programs.

The expansion of agriculture is one of the greatest pressures threatening species with extinction. According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, out of 37,480 species that are vulnerable to extinction worldwide as of 2021, 36,510 of them are threatened by traditional agriculture. And agriculture is an integral part of human life since we depend on farms and farmers. Tracy and Tim are interested in addressing this issue by promoting regenerative agriculture.

The primary aims of regenerative agriculture are to rebuild soils, support pollinators, and improve the habitat value of farmed land. Regenerative agriculture enables farmland to connect what are otherwise small islands of habitat at the edges, supporting a greater suite of native species. Regenerative farming practices increase the diversity of plant communities and in particular perennials (plants that live for many years; most farmed crops are annuals, that only grow for one year). These perennial plant communities pull carbon out of the air and store it in the soil and improve the resilience of surrounding areas. And that's good news for native creatures.

While the benefit of regenerative agriculture work is great, launching the effort was difficult. COVID19-related group size limits required staff to host many small events to achieve the same results that were previously accomplished in a single day with larger groups. As a result, WRV staff and restoration dollars were stretched thin.

Your support allowed hard-working volunteer leaders...to work with local farms on a test case for WRV programs



You made it happen! Volunteers plant wetland species at Lone Hawk Farm with support from donors like you. WRV photo, 2020.

Perennial plant communities pull carbon out of the air and store it in the soil

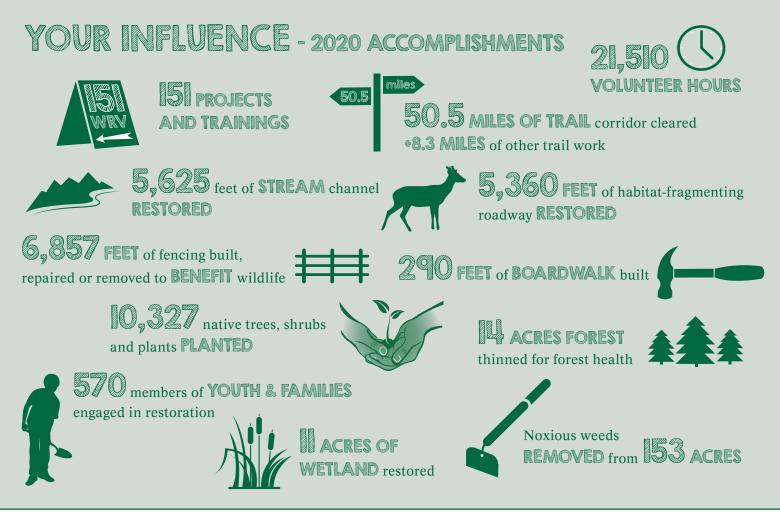
To respond to the challenge, Tim and Tracy wrote a successful grant, and Tracy stepped up to serve almost as a staff member. With minimal support, Tracy met with six organic farmers to discuss their interest in working with WRV. She then organized and completed eight volunteer events with three different farms including Ollin Farms, Golden Hoof Farm, and Lone Hawk Farm, where Tracy ran youth-specific projects.

Regenerative farm projects were well-received by the volunteer community, who were hungry for more opportunities to connect with the land and each other. With your support and volunteer determination, WRV is on track to accomplish eight more regenerative agriculture projects in 2021 and add one more farm to our partnership. To-date volunteers have planted and mulched over 1,000 shrubs and native plants, seeded wildflowers, and spread compost to accelerate plant establishment.

Thank you for supporting restoration and community building. In addition to keeping WRV afloat during a trying time, your generosity has helped volunteers pilot a local solution to a global problem.



Donor gifts such as yours supported native seed volunteer projects. Here, Cathy Foley transplants small seedlings into larger pots for a grow-out project. Lone Hawk Farm hosted the plants to multiply the available seed for habitat restoration. WRV photo, 2020.



### **DONOR SPOTLIGHT:**

# **Compassion for Nature Leads Scientist to WRV**

### Celebrated researcher supports Colorado's trails, habitats and BIPOC outdoorspeople.

"I believe in Wildlands Restoration Volunteers, in its mission and vision," says Dr. Nicole Mendoza, a volunteer and donor. Growing up in Texas, she developed a love of nature at a very young age. No wonder that when she relocated to Boulder, she found her way to WRV. The senior researcher at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory spends her days studying offshore wind energy, and says, "I am consistently impressed by WRV – they are truly an amazing group of people accomplishing amazing things."

"WRV accomplishes something that few others do – the ability to take a group of random volunteers and achieve a shared goal for a greater purpose! I KNOW that WRV accomplishes great things with the money I donate."

Nicole credits her mother's example for her love of the environment and lifelong volunteerism. Nicole volunteered with the Scouts, the Texas Environmental Action Coalition, and the Galveston Bay Foundation in Texas. "I feel for the world...When I see the environment being hurt, I just have to take action."



When she found WRV, Nicole dove in feet first, volunteering, training to be every type of leader, then learning to instruct future leaders herself. In 2018, she was awarded WRV's New Volunteer of the Year award. In 2021, Nicole donated new, branded sandwich boards to show volunteers the way to projects. In addition, she has committed a large gift to support WRV's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion goals, which are central to our strategic plan.

"Saving our planet requires everyone! Supporting WRV's DE&I goals will engage folks from under-represented communities in outdoor stewardship, healing the land, and building community. I want to see more women, BIPOC, and LGBTQIA+ folks in the outdoors...that's really valuable and in alignment with my goals."

Interested in supporting WRV's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion goals? Learn more by contacting Sarah Egolf-Tarr, WRV's Director of Development at sarah@wlrv.org.



Scientist and WRV donor, Nicole Mendoza, carries buckets from the Dolores River to water newly planted cottonwood poles and restore native habitat. WRV photo, 2020.

## With your support, Annemarie Fussell Grows WRV, One Person at a Time

WRV owes a debt of gratitude to supporters like you -AND to an epic, soul-searching bike trek.

You may have met Community Relations Coordinator, Annemarie Fussell at a seed collection or community event.

But you probably didn't know that she and her husband, Scott, decided to move here during a cycling trip across three different countries! Upon return, the couple migrated from Summit County, where they had lived for 15 years, to move to Fort Collins and fulfill their wish to live a more sustainable lifestyle.

Annemarie (also known as "Am") brings a degree in wildlife biology and a varied background to WRV. She previously served as Trail Restoration Project Coordinator for WRV partner, Friends of the Dillon Ranger District. Am says she was drawn in by her exposure to the WRV community on a few projects in which that organization partnered with WRV. "The reason I love volunteerism is the same reason I love traveling by bicycle. Both offer an opportunity to slow down and connect with those around you and with the landscape."

Connecting with people is a big part of Am's job. Her background has set her up to both build partnerships to grow the community – AND to swing a pick, when needed.

Your generosity supports Am to do what she loves – helping WRV volunteers succeed and thrive and multiply. Thank you!

If you see Am at a project, ask about her background. She has been a biological science technician, a backcountry trail crew leader, a cross-country ski instructor, and even an outdoor science teacher! Or, share with her about what you're growing in your garden! She'd love to talk to you more about what she does and how your support helps WRV's efforts.



Your support allows WRV to retain qualified, experienced staff to leverage your investment. Community Program Coordinator Annemarie Fussell recruits both volunteers and businesses to build on your support. Andrew Guy Photography, 2021.

## WRV's 2020 Financial Story:

In a year of deep loss and drastic changes to everyday routines, your dedicated support helped Wildlands Restoration Volunteers persevere. We are truly grateful to you!

Like many, WRV had to make painful cuts. Some of our city and county partners, reeling from COVID-19 related losses, cancelled revenuegenerating contracts with WRV. We had to lay off one treasured member of the team. Projects that needed big numbers of volunteers were extremely challenging to carry out.

But you came through for us. Individuals, foundations and corporations dug deep and even stepped up their support. Volunteers in smaller groups gathered, with COVID-19 precautions, to carry out vital projects. The federal Paycheck Protection Program and Economic Injury Disaster Loan were immensely helpful. In fact, one Paycheck Protection Loan was forgiven, and another is expected to be forgiven as well.

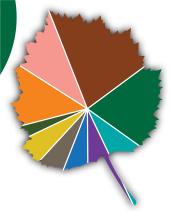
And, when WRV staff moved out of our Boulder office to work from home, our newly purchased Longmont building underwent renovations, thanks to support from people like you!

The future may be hazy, but we know that thanks to you, WRV will come through. Together we can continue healing the land and building community.

\*NOTE: In 2021, WRV transitioned to a new fiscal year, March 1 – February 28/29. This report includes the calendar year 2020 plus two months of 2021 to catch up. In future years, look for WRV Annual Reports reflecting our new fiscal year.

Operational Expenses By program 14 month period	Percent
Sustainable Trails	21%
Natural Habitats	20%
Youth & Families	8%
Native Seeds	7%
Vital Rivers	6%
Training & Community Building	6%
Invasive Species	6%
Healthy Forests	3%
Administration	13%
Fundraising	10%

Operational Revenue	Percent
Individuals	21%
Government Fee for Service and Grants	33%
Covid Relief	12%
Corporate	11%
Community Partners	9%
Foundations	8%
In-Kind Revenue	3%
Other	2%







Your help restored natural gems from mountains to plains in 2020. Here, WRV staff and volunteers pose in a "WRV" shape with the logs they later used to stabilize eroding slopes. The volunteers healed a route up to Mt. Evans, one of Colorado's 14,000-ft peaks. WRV photo, 2020.

### 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.

#### Individuals

#### \$5,000+

Jean-Pierre Georges & Linda V Andes-Georges Anonymous (1) Peter Boerma Eileen Brown & Brian Rasmussen Alan Carpenter & Betsy Neely Alan Cogen Paul Liscom & Kim Pierpoint Katherine Postelli

#### \$1,000-\$4,999

David Allen Anonymous (7) William & Susan Brock Jay Browne The Courtmans Sarah & Andrew Egolf-Tarr Ellen Flannelly & Don Deane Mark Flower Cathy Foley Bradley Freyberg Karl Friedman Larry & Jan Glassburn Elizabeth Goodrich Elaine Hill Greg Holman & DeAnna Bertwell Kimberly Keen Liz Kellogg Dave Kopp Robert Koppe John Peterson Taylor Schollmaier Tim Seastedt & Cathy Tate Sheila Sereshteh **Rebecca** Trafton Deneen & Ray Wentz Alexandra Zelinskava

#### \$500-\$999

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Pam & Joe Piombino John Reuter Lynn Riedel Phil Rowe Jan Schmid Robert & Daryl Schmitt Scott Smidt Walter Stelzer Bob Sturtevant Mick Syzek & Diana Dwyer Carol Tarr Jessica Toll Joe Tonahill George Wallace **Richard West** Kevin Wheeler Dorothy & Vick Williams Vivian Wilson

#### \$100-\$249

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#### Organizations

#### \$100K+

Colorado Parks & Wildlife Recreational Trails Program Small Business Administration

#### \$25K-99,999

City of Denver, Natural Resources, Mountain Parks & Parks & Recreation Division City of Loveland, Open Lands and Trails Colorado Water Conservation Board National Forest Foundation Nutrien Park County Land and Water Trust Fund Thorne Nature Experience U.S. Forest Service

#### \$IOK-24,999

Big Thompson Watershed Coalition Boulder County Parks and Open Space Bureau of Land Management City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks Colorado Department of Agriculture Colorado Watershed Assembly Firespring Foundation Givesource South Park National Heritage Area Partners Group REI Rocky Mountain National Park Southwest Conservation Corps Visintainer Sheep Co. Xcel Energy

#### \$2,500-9,999

Aggregate Industries Audubon Rockies Chaffee Common Ground City of Boulder Youth Opportunities Program City of Longmont Climax Molybdenum, a Freeport-McMoRan Company Colorado Young Leaders Community Foundation Boulder County Denver Foundation Fairway Estates Property Owner's Association **GE** Foundation Terra Foundation Jax Mercantile Jefferson County Open Space Larimer County The Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation **Overland Mountain** Partners for a Clean Environment Patagonia

Patagonia University of Colorado Western Digital Foundation

#### \$IK-2,499

The April Fund Ball Corporation BioLogic, Inc. Bohemian Foundation City of Greeley Colorado Mountain Club Boulder Group Community Shares of Colorado Denver Botanic Gardens First Congregational Church o f Boulder The Friendship Fund Green Machines of Boulder ATMs IBM King Soopers

#### Up to \$999

Alliance for Sustainable Colorado Applewood Plumbing, Heating & Electric Blue Ocean Foundation Cal-Wood Environmental Education Center **Community First Foundation** Community United Church of Christ Draper Kaplan Kirch & Rockwell LLP Longmont Community Foundation McKinstry Charitable Foundation Medtronic Mile High Skyliners Motorola Solutions Foundation Network For Good Pane Therapy LLC Verizon Match Foundation

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## **Gaining Ground**

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We welcome content and images for future editions of the newsletter. Please submit materials to info@wlrv.org.

Printed on recycled paper.

Your support enabled WRV to engage the next generation by hosting many family-oriented restoration events in 2020. Here, WRV partners with Nature Kids/Jovenes de la Naturaleza and Thorne Nature Experience to restore Sombrero Marsh, in Boulder. Family projects often include bilingual interpretation, youth education, and child-friendly activities! WRV photo, 2020.