

THE DONOR NEWSLETTER OF WILDLANDS RESTORATION VOLUNTEERS

Gaining Ground

Fall | Winter 2022

Heal the land. Build community.

You enabled volunteers to clear beetle-killed trees from over 32 miles of trail in '22

INSIDE

You Made It Happen! New Longmont HQ facilitates more restoration and community

Find out how you're slowing climate change with your WRV donation



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ON COVER

Pack llamas carry food, materials and tools for volunteers who survey and clear hundreds of trees from trails over weekend projects in forests across Colorado. Here, WRV Project Coordinator Marten Beasley heads a group of volunteers leading pack llamas up Cascade Trail in the Indian Peaks Wilderness Area in the mountains west of Boulder.

This page: WRV volunteers have removed the weed myrtle spurge from Spruce Gulch, in the foothills west of Boulder, since 2013! Here, a Metro State University student pauses for a snapshot as she volunteers to dig up noxious weeds mandated by the state of Colorado for eradication.

When You Help WRV, You Help the Climate Too

It's true! Many WRV restoration projects address climate change by helping to pull greenhouse gas out of the air and store it in the soil, reduce erosion, and retain water in our dry western landscapes.

Many people think of planting trees to capture carbon (from greenhouse gasses), but wetlands are the unsung heroes! Wetlands store more carbon for longer periods of time than forests.

Wetlands also help recharge groundwater and mitigate floods, making surrounding areas more resilient to extreme weather events, such as those our region is experiencing due to climate change.

One example of your climate resilience impact is the Sage Grouse Habitat Restoration series. Since 2014, with help from donors like you, volunteers have installed rock structures in deeply cut eroded streams to reduce erosion and redirect water

into surrounding meadows and recreate wetlands to support declining native species, such as sage grouse.

A Colorado Natural Heritage Program study reported an average of 240% increase in wetland plant cover five years after construction of these structures in the Gunnison Basin!

In 2019, your support allowed WRV and our partners from the Gunnison Climate Working Group to achieve a Climate Adaptation Leadership Award from the National Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies for this work.

In 2022, your support has allowed WRV volunteers to make a difference for climate resilience at a variety of project types, including sage grouse habitat projects near Craig and Gunnison, Colorado.

Thank you for caring for our climate and native wildlife in Colorado!



Stone structures built by volunteers slow the flow of water to increase soil moisture and absorption of carbon. At left, a head cut at top shows where this intermittent stream bank was actively eroding. At right, water-loving grasses now benefit from the increased soil moisture brought by the water-slowing feature.

YOU MADE IT HAPPEN!

You Helped WRV Establish a Permanent Home in Longmont

Larger, more cost-effective headquarters facilitates restoration, community.

“The old, rented office space in Boulder was expensive. It was too small for our growing staff and for hosting events for volunteers in Boulder County,” explains WRV’s Habitats & Invasive Weeds Program Manager, Morgan Crowley. “We had to rent storage units offsite and spent money on staff time and gas to fetch tools for projects.”

Generous support from donors like you enabled WRV Executive Director Katherine Postelli, currently on medical leave, to purchase a former pre-school in a Longmont neighborhood and convert it to a welcoming, functional space with a spacious meeting room. Energy-efficient LED lighting was installed, and the site was landscaped with water-conserving native plants.

Staff and volunteers helped with the move. Donor, volunteer, and retired professional contractor Paul Liscom contributed time and skills to build a new tool shed, eliminating the need for offsite storage. Members of the volunteer community hauled tools, removed tons of concrete, demolished interior walls, and donated new office furniture.

According to WRV Trails Project Manager Geoffrey May, “The new kitchen saves volunteers from having to cook alone and refrigerate meals at home for projects, and from transporting raw materials to sites, which risks spoiling. Now, volunteer cooks in the headquarters kitchen prepare and freeze meals, which can then be heated and served to volunteers on overnight trips.” Consolidation of purchases for multiple projects at once reduces both food cost and waste.

But it’s not just the kitchen and tool shed that are in regular use. In addition to board, staff, and volunteer meetings, WRV hosted a Wilderness First Responder course in the big meeting space, welcoming constituents and newcomers alike.

Your help allowed WRV to reduce food waste, cash expenses, and our carbon footprint, all while building equity, and dedicating more resources to our mission. We are so grateful to you for helping WRV establish a permanent home!

Interested in visiting the building? Contact Sarah to schedule a tour: (303) 543-1411, ext. 108.



WRV donors, volunteers and board members tour the building and grounds at the spacious new headquarters August of 2022.

If A Tree Falls Over a Trail in the Forest, Does Anyone Clear It? With Your Help, We Do!

Trained crosscut saw volunteers clear miles in USFS Wilderness Areas

“Volunteers on our crosscut sawing projects are dedicated hard workers,” says Nate Boschmann, Trails & Habitats Program Manager at WRV.

“Masochistic” and “a little bit crazy” is how volunteers Andre Caron and Sean Marlow describe themselves and their group.

With your vital support, Andre, Sean, and other trained volunteers spend weekends backpacking and cutting up trees that block trails or are about to fall on campsites. Using non-mechanized equipment to cut from thirty to hundreds of trees in a single weekend is physically strenuous and mentally challenging. “Sometimes trees fall down in a tangle,” describes Sean. “And we have to figure out which part to cut up first, then second, and so on, to keep everyone safe.”



Volunteer crosscut sawyers sometimes hike up to 9 miles in before reaching fallen trees.



With your help, volunteers cleared hazardous dead trees around campsites at Crater Lake, in the Sulphur Ranger District, near Granby. Here, staff and volunteers pause along Cascade Creek Trail to admire the cascade. Pack llamas carry food and gear sustainably in Wilderness Areas.

Why are trees falling?

“The beetle epidemic in the 2000s killed hundreds of thousands of trees,” says Nate. “Trees keep falling as their roots rot. This problem eclipses the capacity of the U.S. Forest Service to remove trees. That’s where your support comes in.

“WRV offers trainings in the spring so that volunteers can become certified by the U.S. Forest Service to fell and buck [cut up fallen] trees.” Without these volunteers, trail users sometimes carve out new paths to avoid fallen logs and get to favorite spots, often trampling sensitive areas in the process.

Why saw trees by hand?

“Laws prohibit the use of mechanized equipment such as chainsaws in Wilderness Areas,” explains Nate, who has

become a bit of a vintage saw hunter by necessity. He scours websites, including Craigslist and eBay, to buy crosscut saws made before the 1950s. “Vintage saws are made of high-quality steel, don’t need to be sharpened for two seasons and are hard to damage. We also use other vintage tools such as adzes.”

Llama power to the rescue

“Llamas are great!” exclaims Andre, who was WRV’s 2021 Sawyer of the Year. Nate adds, “We couldn’t do what we do without llamas. They are the perfect wilderness pack animals. They can carry up to 80 pounds of gear and help us conserve energy to saw trees after backpacking up trails. Instead of hooves like horses, llamas have soft pads. They eat whatever is in their environment, so we don’t have to pack feed. And because of the way their digestive system works, they don’t transport seeds from their home environment to delicate Wilderness Areas.”

Instant gratification

“My work can be abstract, so it’s fulfilling to see all the trees our group removes,” says Sean, an aerospace engineer, who creates computer simulations for vehicles and vehicle components. Andre, a physical therapist and brewery packaging employee, agrees. “It’s instant accomplishment.”

Both Andre and Sean enjoy spending time in the beautiful Colorado outdoors with other volunteers, who have become good friends. Andre adds, “It’s also great to work alongside the Forest Service personnel who join us on these sawing trips.



A trained volunteer Sawyer poses with saw near trees she and other volunteers have cleared and will clear, thanks to you.

And recreational hikers on the trails are so thankful for what we do.”

We’re thankful to you, for allowing volunteers to preserve access to Wilderness Areas with your donation to WRV.



Volunteers alternate pulling a two-person crosscut saw. The law prohibits chainsaws and other machines in designated Wilderness Areas, so clearing trails requires skill with vintage tools.

Volunteer of the Year Leaves Gift to WRV

“WRV saved my life over and over,” says long-time volunteer, Liz Kellogg. “At rough times, WRV projects have been a healing experience.”

A retired molecular biologist, Liz estimates she’s volunteered on approximately 350 WRV projects since 2008. She’s served as Crew Leader starting in 2010 and became a Technical Advisor in 2022. Liz has earned multiple volunteer awards from WRV, including Volunteer of the Year (2015).

“WRV is my family,” says Liz, who updated her will to include a gift to WRV.

“I wish to leave a part of myself with WRV, so it can continue its mission of healing the land and building its nurturing community.”

Liz’s love for the outdoors was germinated in her as a

youngster. She grew up in the New York City metropolitan area. Family hiking trips in Bear Mountain State Park and the Catskills, as well as lengthy ocean sailing trips, cultivated her respect for the outdoors and the effects nature could have on her. Upon moving to Colorado 52 years ago, montane hiking became a regular source of joy for her. Liz wants this joy to be experienced by future generations.

“With big changes coming in the form of climate change, the mission of WRV becomes ever more relevant,” says Liz.

“By leaving a gift, I hope it will assist the future work of WRV.”

Thank you, Liz! We appreciate you!

If you’d like to join Liz, and leave a gift in your will, trust, life insurance, retirement plan, or other account, please contact Sarah Egolf-Tarr at sarah@wlr.org or: 303-543-1411, ext. 108.



Here, Liz Kellogg serves as Technical Advisor on a project restoring wetland habitat in Rocky Mountain National Park in September of 2022.



(L to R) Mark Evans and Patricia Burkey enjoy the donor thank-you event for WRV's Heart and Soil Circle, the recognition circle for donors with significant investments in our mission. Each year, Circle members receive invitations to a donor thank-you event, tour of a major project site, and recognition (with permission) in the Annual Report. If you'd like to join the Circle, you can either make annual gifts adding up to \$1,000 or more, or list WRV in your will, retirement, life insurance, or estate plan. Please call Sarah for more information about the Circle at 303-543-1411, ext. 108 or email sarah@wlr.org.



Youth and families plant native shrubs at the City of Lafayette's new Outdoor Classroom for Earth Day. Your support allows WRV to offer bilingual restoration projects in partnership with Nature Kids/ Jovenes de la Naturaleza.

Gaining Ground

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

List of donors and funding partners now appears in the spring/summer Annual Report edition.

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