



Meet the outdoor champions whose time, talent, resources, and passion cared for Colorado this year.

2019 YEAR-END REPORT

This report made possible through the generous support of Sandy Elliott.

www.voc.org

Dear Friends:

This year, we celebrated VOC's 35th anniversary! As we look back on another successful season, we are grateful to the thousands of people who make our important stewardship work possible: the volunteers who spend their weekends on the trail, the organizations and land agencies with whom we partner, and our generous donors and funders. It takes a community to care for Colorado.

As we wrap up 2019, however, we're also looking forward. In one of our favorite comic strips, Calvin offers to his best friend, Hobbes, a simple but poignant observation: "You know what's weird? Day by day nothing seems to change. But pretty soon, everything's different!" Indeed, even for VOC, things seem different than they were just a year ago! As we enter 2020, the urgency of our work feels heightened. We recognize how much Colorado has changed over the past five years, particularly in urban areas. There are many indicators that our population, and our use of the outdoors, will continue to increase, leading to inevitable impacts on our natural resources and thus, on VOC's work.

This past July, our Board and senior staff convened in Salida for our annual planning retreat. We invited guests representing funders, land managers, stewardship groups, and the outdoor industry to help us look at the future of stewardship in Colorado. Our goal was to create realistic scenarios of the future by understanding the "critical uncertainties" that will affect how VOC approaches our work in the next decade. Two major uncertainties quickly rose to the top: climate change and technology. In the former, we contemplated whether humans will respond proactively or reactively to the changing climate. In the latter, we considered how the technology of the future could either positively or negatively impact the outdoors. This nexus of technology and climate change, already playing out in our lives today, will inevitably influence how we experience the outdoors—from the technologies and equipment we use, to the places we can go, to the many different types of people who will be able to access remote places. We will keep you informed as we continue to consider these important factors.

In this report, you'll find stories of how VOC has already taken a long-term, statewide approach to stewardship. In the coming year, we will again offer volunteer projects that meet ongoing recreational demands, but we're also planning for new project experiences that will help prepare our state for these "critical uncertainties". These include constructing wetlands to prevent floods; re-establishing natural areas lost to land development; and expanding training in crosscut and chainsaw work to enable volunteers to create healthier, more fire-resilient ecosystems.

We rely on your financial help and ask that you support this important work as we look towards 2020 and beyond. Your gift today will enable VOC to take action that will create a better future for Colorado's outdoors, and for all of us who enjoy them. Please give generously by using the enclosed contribution envelope or donate online at voc.org/supportVOC.

Gratefully,

Ann Baker Easley
Executive Director

Ann Baker Earley

Jeff Trujillo

Jeff Trigillo

2019 Chair of the Board of Directors

VOC's 2019 CHAMPIONS

Thank you to the volunteers and partners who went above and beyond to make our work possible this year.

2019 AWARD WINNERS

Steve Austin Mentor of the Year | Glenn Scadden

Curt Chitwood Volunteer of the Year | Rose Beyer

Roni Sherb New Volunteer of the Year | Henry McLaughlin

Youth Volunteer of the Year | Asher Hoyt

Unsung Hero | Christa Whitmore

Land Manager of the Year | Town of Castle Rock

Partner Agency of the Year | SEP Program at Colorado

Department of Public Health & Environment

2019 LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (LDAC) MEMBERS

Gordon Carruth Arthur Knapp Paul Smith
Ryan Durham Lisa Thilker Ellen Urell
Erin King Steve West

2018-2019 CAIRN MENTORS

Tamara Atkin Susan Dellinger Pierce Lively
Garrett Bourcier Annelise Howell Rachael Sandoval-Attaway
Allison Crouse Sharon Lafer Shawn Quan

2019 NEW VOLUNTEER LEADERS Crew Leaders

Paul AmerlingKaty JolyAdam MerkelDavid BrewsterLinda LarocqueAndrew PrimoJamie BurkeJeremy MajorDan RegelsonJulia CataliniCathy McCurdyJohn WardMatt FerrierErica MillerLindy Webb

Crew ChefsTool ManagersPaul ClarkeRosa ChandlerSusan GrahamHenry McLaughlin

Joni Loftis

Mike Mattice **OSI Instructors**Brandon Smith

Technical Advisors

2019 VOLUNTEER PHOTOGRAPHERS

Scott Anderson - Alexander Bliskovsky - Cindy Bond - Sue Daniels Photography - Morgann Dulle Jessica Hughes - David Kennedy - Jeanne Kerr - Owen Lavin - Greg Lobser - Julie Majors Jessie Marie Photography - Sharon Menard - Cosima Reichenbach - Timothy Starr



PEOPLE & PROJECTS



- 4,634 VOLUNTEERS
 - including 671 YOUTH VOLUNTEERS
 - contributed 35,792 VOLUNTEER HOURS
 - ON 93 PROJECTS in 63 PLACES... equal to a DONATED LABOR VALUE of \$958,516
 - including 14 YOUTH-ONLY PROJECTS

TRAINING & LEADERSHIP

- 31 CAIRN YOUTH PROGRAM GRADUATES
- 22 NEW VOC VOLUNTEER LEADERS

Through VOC's Stepping Up Stewardship Toolkit...

- 333 VOLUNTEERS & AGENCY STAFF TRAINED at 30 TRAININGS THROUGH VOC'S OUTDOOR STEWARDSHIP INSTITUTE (OSI)
- 13 PROFESSIONAL CONSULTATIONS
- How-to Guides downloaded 391 times

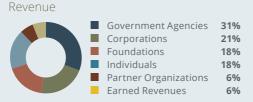
SUSTAINABLE RECREATION

- Restored 12.5 miles of trail and built an additional
 9 miles combined, we worked on enough trail to hike up and down Mt. Bierstadt three times!
- Closed and revegetated 1.8 miles of user-created "social" trails, including the installation of 66 erosion control barriers and check dams
- Built and restored 315 steps to mitigate trail erosion and improve trail experience and safety – enough steps to take you to the top of Red Rocks 2 ½ times!
- Constructed and restored 496 feet of turnpike, puncheon, or elevated tread, allowing sustainable access through sensitive meadows and wetlands
- Constructed 28 climbing turns and 4 switchbacks, and built and maintained 1671 sq. feet of rock wall to support sustainable trail grades and minimize erosion
- Installed and maintained 391 water drainage and diversion structures to mitigate erosion on trails
- Built 9 bridges totaling 130 feet in length
- Built 1,636 feet of buck 'n' rail fence and improved and installed 60 campground pads to provide camping opportunities that have minimal impact on the surrounding natural area

HABITATS & ENVIRONMENT

- Planted 3,498 plants, shrubs, and trees – providing habitat for wildlife and improving the quality of water resources
- Planted, harvested, and donated 240 pounds of produce in urban vegetable gardens
- 1,150 observations
 made in iNaturalist app for
 our new Citizen Science
 projects, collecting data
 to inform management
 of wildlife and natural
 resources
- Mitigated 24 acres (about 18 football fields!) of invasive weeds
- Thinned 11 acres of trees to improve forest health and mitigate fire risk
- Opened up 10 acres of wildlife habitat by removing a half-mile of obsolete fence

2019 Financial Overview





Wilder: 8 Feet of Fur and Advocacy

At least 70% of Coloradans play outside, yet less than 1% engage in outdoor stewardship. To adequately care for the outdoors, we need to reach beyond 1% in a big, bold way - a way that only an eight-foot-tall creature can accomplish.

Over the years, we've had many conversations about the mounting issues facing



Colorado's outdoors. With whomever we have spoken – land manager, volunteer organization, retailer – one thing was paramount: the need for a statewide campaign that teaches people how to behave when playing outside.

So, when Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) approached us to partner on their "Generation Wild" campaign, it was a natural fit. Generation Wild had already inspired families to get outside and explore nature. Now, VOC would help make sure children and families knew how to care for it.

Enter Wilder: "half-yeti, half-mountain goat, all friend". GOCO introduced him this summer to remind kids and kids-at-heart of the magic in nature. Now, under VOC's leadership, this gentle giant is traveling across the state as Colorado's newest spokescreature for stewardship. As one who calls the woods home, Wilder is sharing his words of wisdom, "You are what you leave behind".

With his tricked-out Wildermobile and jam-packed social calendar, Wilder is here to stay – changing hearts, minds, and ultimately behavior when it comes to how we engage with the great outdoors.

Learn more about how VOC and Wilder are teaming up for outdoor stewardship at voc.org/wilder.

Long-Term Experience Meets Local I

We've learned a lot in our 35-year history, and we're sharing these lessons through our Stepping Up Stewardship Toolkit. As we expand these efforts, all of Colorado benefits as more groups become better equipped to develop local volunteer programs and meet increased stewardship needs.

Three decades ago, VOC was one of few stewardship organizations in Colorado. Today, there are many – some large and some small, many of whom are mobilizing local trail users. This is

how the Buena Vista Singletrack Coalition (BVSC) started two years ago, formalizing as a nonprofit in 2018.

This year, BVSC and VOC joined forces to strengthen stewardship in the Upper Arkansas Valley. First, as a "Toolkit Tester", BVSC used VOC's Stepping Up Stewardship Toolkit to fine-tune their marketing, risk management, and volunteer engagement efforts, while providing important feedback to VOC to make the Toolkit more effective.

Next, we utilized BVSC's connections with area residents and businesses to rally 70 volunteers to continue BVSC's work in building the Camp Elevation Trail. We also worked

Expanding Access, Fostering Connections in the San Luis Valley

In July, volunteers built 550 feet of trail complete with a bridge, drainage structures, and a rock retaining wall. This wasn't just any VOC weekend, however. For the locals of San Luis, this trail was special.

Nestled near Culebra Peak – one of Colorado's only 14ers on private land – lies San Luis, the state's oldest town. It is a mere half-square mile and home to about 630 people, but San Luis is rich in Hispano culture and heritage. Yet the area is also fraught with a long history of land

rights struggles. Today, more than 99% of the county is privately owned.

Rito Seco Park is part of Costilla County's efforts to change that story. Developing the public park is a priority for County Commissioners, and VOC was ready to help! With a grant from the San Luis Valley Conservation and Connection Initiative (SLV CCI) and the guidance of local partners, we trained local area Crew Leaders and recruited Valley residents for the July project.





When the project weekend arrived, volunteers ranging from 17 to 85 years old – several of whom were descendants of San Luis' founding families – joined together to extend the park's hiking and biking trail, traversing past beaver ponds and connecting to historic cabin ruins.

For Costilla County residents, volunteers' efforts will have an impact far beyond the July weekend. As one local volunteer stated, "This is personal. This is my park."

Check out our 2019 Project Map at bit.ly/2019voc to see the many places where VOC volunteers worked this year.

Expertise in the Arkansas River Valley

with BVSC to recruit and train local-area volunteers in crew leadership through VOC's Outdoor Stewardship Institute (OSI).

Later in the summer, BVSC's Executive Director, Nancy Anderson, joined VOC's Board at our strategic planning retreat in Salida. She provided local insights from one of Colorado's rural, outdoor recreationbased communities – an important



perspective as we look to advance stewardship across the state.

No one group can take care of Colorado alone. By working together, VOC's proven practices can be applied to better meet local needs. The number of groups working onthe-ground can increase, engaging more people in more communities. Together, we can spread an ethic of stewardship across the state.

Learn more about VOC's resources for stewardship organizations at **steppingupstewardship.org**.

Lockheed Martin Continues a Legacy of Stewardship



Steve West

Nearly 25% of VOC's funding comes through corporate sponsors; many businesses volunteer, too. Others, like Lockheed Martin, go above and beyond to have a lasting, positive impact on the land.

Lockheed Martin has been a major supporter of VOC since the beginning, generously donating each year since 1988. They've also organized several corporate volunteer projects with VOC, often with The Mission Continues, a

veterans service organization.

This year Lockheed Martin took their stewardship commitment even further. On October 4th, 13 employees successfully completed Independent Stewardship for Trails Training through VOC's Outdoor Stewardship Institute (OSI). This training enables them to independently perform trail maintenance in partnership with land managers.

They were taught by VOC's accomplished, jack-of-all-trades volunteer leader, Steve West. A former Lockheed Martin employee, Steve has led hundreds of volunteers on VOC projects in the past 30 years – and trained hundreds more as an OSI Master Instructor.

This training will allow Lockheed Martin employees to "adopt" portions of the Bear Creek Trail and other connecting trails in partnership with Denver Mountain Parks, performing important trail maintenance tasks on their own time. These newly trained independent stewards will soon be trusted partners to Denver Mountain Parks, helping to accomplish important work while also providing the employees with meaningful opportunities to connect with, and care for, the outdoor places they enjoy.

Contact Anna at anna@voc.org to learn more about how your company can be a champion for Colorado, or Dan at dan@voc.org to learn more about training opportunities.

Thank you to the following companies for supporting VOC through a custom Corporate Stewardship with a Team (SWAT) volunteer project:

Adobe
Ambient Energy
Anadarko
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Bureau of Land
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JLL
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Monarch Investment
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Noble Energy
Pivot Energy
Prologis
Schneider Electric
S&P Global
The Mission Continues
The North Face
UMB Bank
U.S. Forest Service
Viasat
Vivax Pros

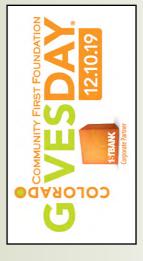
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at cogives.org/VOC.





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Thank you to our friends, partners, and donors for a successful season of stewardship!

Your support makes our work possible.

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

(from October 17, 2018 to October 17, 2019)

VISIONARIES (\$50,000)

Johnson Foundation of the Rockies Mike O'Brien Living Trust National Forest Foundation US Forest Service - Rio Grande National Forest

US Forest Service - Rocky Mtn Region 2 **STEWARDSHIP SOCIETY** (\$25,000 - \$49,999)

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Bob and Shari King

Bob Van Wetter and Betsy Brew Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, LLC Buena Vista Singletrack Coalition

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Park Burger

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Todd and Priscilla Clayton

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Jackie and Tim Griggs Jake Isaacson Jeff and Mia Trujillo

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Ellen Spangler Frank and Monty Kugeler

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Garden Club of Denver George and Cornelia Gibson

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Greg and Rebecca Watson

Grover Cleveland

Hannah Morvay Photography

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wiid iribute

TI Carson

TRAILBLAZERS (\$249 & under):

815 individuals gave a Trailblazers level gift in 2019. Please accept our sincerest gratitude for your support of outdoor stewardship!

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Bailey and Yeti Carolyn Reid Charmian Choate Dos Chappell Ellie Henke Jeffery Swain Jennifer Heth Ioshua Pink Linda Pancratz Mary Jo Egloff Matthew Kern Nancy V Trujillo Rilev and Casev Robert Leatherwood Roni Sherb Terry Joseph Mckee

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Denver Botanic Gardens

Denver Zoo

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\$99 AND LESS

Thank you to all who provided food and/or product donations for VOC's 2019 season! Your support is greatly appreciated by our volunteers, partners, and employees.

2019 PROJECT PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Alpine Achievers Initiative Baca National Wildlife Refuge Bureau of Land Management

- Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area
- Grand Junction Field Office
- Gunnison Field Office
- Royal Gorge Field Office

- San Luis Valley Field Office

Bluff Lake Nature Center

Buena Vista Singletrack Coalition

Cal-Wood Education Center

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Colorado Young Leaders Continental Divide Trail Coalition Colorado Parks and Wildlife

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- Castlewood Canyon State Park
- Cherry Creek State Park
- Golden Gate Canyon State Park
- Jackson Lake State Park
- Lory State Park
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- Gunnison Ranger District
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- Pikes Peak Ranger District
- Saguache Ranger District
- South Platte Ranger DistrictSulphur Ranger District

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