

Adopters Leave Their Mark

“When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect” Aldo Leopold, Sand County Almanac

Volunteers who adopt natural areas embody this quote by actively treating the land with love and respect! About 70 adopt-a-natural area volunteers have donated over 500 hours this year. They work behind the scenes by donating their personal time to visit natural areas and do crucial stewardship work- picking up trash.

Several Adopters stood out this year as “super stars”. In April, a young man, Chris Verdone, came to me with a concern about the trash problem and Springer and Williams Natural Areas. Chris is an avid angler and has spent a great deal of time on the Poudre River. Rather than simply complaining about the litter problem, Chris decided to get involved. In addition to becoming a monthly Adopter, Chris mobilized 40 other CSU students to participate in a trash clean-up on April 10. On a cold, windy Saturday, these students removed 47 bags of trash from Springer and Williams. What an impact!

The other star that has been a shining adopter for over 12 years is Charles Ralph who has served as steward of Riverbend Ponds, Running Deer and Cottonwood Hollow Natural Areas. As a retired CSU biology professor, Charles wanted to spend his free time doing something interesting in the field. His knowledge and experience gave him the tools to be a driving force behind the removal of tamarisk, an invasive noxious weed.

The impact that he has made is best highlighted in this statement by Matt Parker, Resource Management Crew Chief, *“Charles Ralph, through his generosity, dedication, and persistence, has ensured that the natural areas will not need to spend significant resources fighting tamarisk in the future. Solely through his work, the Natural Areas Program, and the City of Fort Collins, can stand as a leader in the battle against this highly invasive and very costly noxious weed”*.

Every Adopter makes a huge impact on the site that they care for and the community around them. They also model good environmental ethics to their friends, family and children. We want to thank all 70 Adopters for their quiet, noble work that makes natural areas cleaner, safer and healthier for all.

“There are some who can live without wild things and some who cannot”, Aldo Leopold

- By Susan Schafer, Natural Areas Education and Volunteer Coordinator