

Spring 2011

Volunteer News



*FROM YOUR
VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR*

SUSAN SCHAFFER

VOLUNTEERS TAKE THE LEAD

The entire Natural Areas Program staff is gearing up for a fabulous 2011 volunteer season. Volunteers will help with trail building and maintenance; restoration in riparian areas; annual rare plant survey focusing on wetlands; frog survey volunteers will be asked to help with bullfrog monitoring; and many more ideas.

So, how will we do all this? Read page 7 to find out! There are so many new and exciting things going on that it's hard to believe it's only March! We'll keep you updated on all the ways you can get involved with the Natural Areas Program.

NEW VOLUNTEER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

With a renewed focus on volunteerism, we evaluated the structure of our volunteer program. Volunteer policies are the foundation of strong programs, giving them order and substance. The Natural Areas Program grew so quickly that we never had time to develop formal volunteer policies—until now. A new complete volunteer manual is in the works, but in the meantime, a draft of the volunteer policies is ready for your review. You need to read the policies to make sure you understand what you are agreeing to when you volunteer with us. Visit fcgov.com/naturalareas/volunteers.php

The *Volunteer Code of Conduct* is also part of the new manual. Volunteers are ambassadors for the Natural Areas Program. This means properly representing the program when you are on duty by following all of the natural areas regulations. We will ask you to read and sign the *Volunteer Code of Conduct* in the coming weeks.

Please feel free to contact me at sschafer@fcgov.com or 416-2480 with questions or suggestions.

WHAT'S INSIDE:

VRA News.....	pg.2
Adopters.....	pg.3
Volunteer Dinner.....	pg.4
Do You Geocache?.....	pg.5
Wildlife Cameras.....	pg.5
Naturalist News.....	pg.6
New Staff.....	pg. 7
Volunteer Spotlight....	pg.8

Spring 2011

VOLUNTEER RANGER ASSISTANTS

RANGER RHONDA PECKHAM

The Volunteer Ranger Assistant program continues to be extremely popular program—our applicant pool was overflowing for the 2011 training. Twenty-five successful candidates completed 14 hours of training on all things “Ranger.” The volunteers’ backgrounds and multitude of reasons they want to dedicate their time is always interesting.

A staff member from the City of Pueblo Parks and Recreation Department audited the class in hopes of using our successful program as a model to start their own volunteer program. The Natural Areas Program is honored to be a model program and you are a huge part of that.



Active Volunteer Ranger Assistants now number 154—the largest volunteer group for the City of Fort Collins. The City of Fort Collins Natural Areas Program and the Larimer County Department of Natural Resources welcomes the newest graduating class and wishes them “Happy Trails.”

WELCOME VRA CLASS OF 2011

Salih Abdul-Mateen	Albert Fink
Mary Aldrich	Mary Joyce Fink
Erik Anderson	Vic Anderson
Wendy Anderson	Wallace Neas
Brent Bearden	Devin Neumann
Cathy Bird	Betsy Perna
David Carpenter	Robert Quist
Guy Cheatham	Shelby Robinson
Barbara Cotton	Wendell Stampfli
Debbie Dorris	Barbara Valerio
John Dorris	Janet Whitley
Catherine Schafer	Laurel Winkenwerder

NEW THIS SPRING!

Check out your new website: larimer.org/nrvolunteer/vra

You’ll find upcoming events and continuing education opportunities along with general resource information. This site is different from the secure patrol log site and requires a user name and password that can be obtained from either agency volunteer coordinator.

Volunteer News

ADOPTERS KEEP IT CLEAN!

Stewardship is such an important part of protecting natural areas. Did you know that volunteers are out in the natural areas every day watching over and caring for a special place that they've adopted? Adopt-A-Natural Area is our longest running volunteer program. Adopters are one of the main reasons that natural areas are so clean and pleasant to visit. Working behind the scenes, Adopters pick up litter, report damaged property, help with restoration projects and more. Today more than 73 people are active Adopters and every natural area has at least one volunteer assigned to it.

In the last month several new Adopters have signed on to do their part in stewarding the land. We'd like to welcome Barb Andre and family, Ken and Mary Dunnington, James and Nancy Schuler, Emma and Doug Rieb, John Griffith, Michael Herder, Bruce Barber, Judy Nickerson and Pavel Vrbsky. Welcome!



Spring 2011

A GOOD TIME WAS HAD BY ALL!

More than 160 volunteers and their families attended the annual volunteer appreciation dinner in January. They met with old and new friends and enjoyed the yummy Mexican buffet.

CONGRATULATIONS 2010 VOLUNTEER AWARD WINNERS

Golden Eagle: Eileen Sake

Rookie of the Year: Barb Kittell

Busy Beavers: Everett Carlson (315 hours) and Bob Henry (261 hours)

Master Naturalists Ten Years of Service:

Jean Carpenter
Carl Sorrentino
Joann Thomas

Ranger Assistants Summit Awards:

500 Patrol Hours:

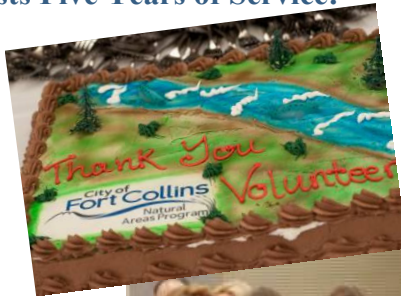
Karl Krahnke

Master Naturalists Five Years of Service:

Tom Butler
Brian Carroll
Vicki Carroll
Ann Marie Gage
Bob Meroney
Pam Peterson

200 Patrol Hours:

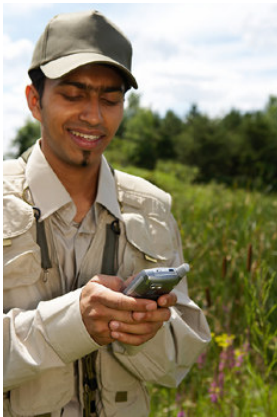
Everett Carlson
Geri Kidawski
Gary Long
Bill Moorcroft
Meg Parmer



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DO YOU GEOCACHE?

The Natural Areas Program sponsors a virtual geocache course: *GeoCache La Poudre*. This provides a fun alternative to placing physical caches on natural areas (which is not allowed because of the impacts).



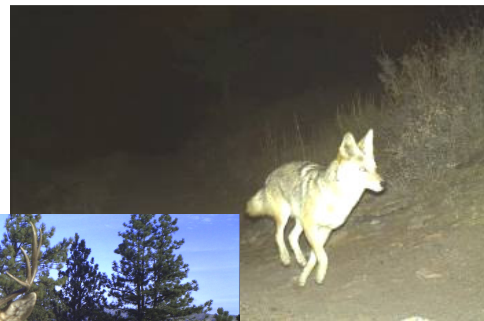
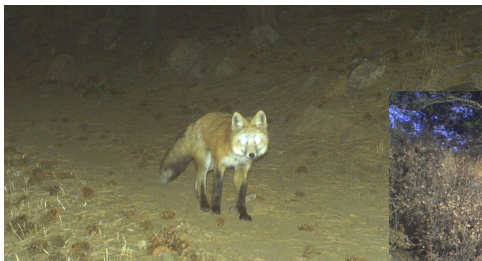
We need volunteers to get involved in several ways:

- ◆ Help with the 2011 *GeoCache La Poudre* by checking coordinates and placing one physical cache (not on a natural area) – one person needed.
- ◆ Find and collect illegal caches from many natural areas – several people needed.
- ◆ Begin work on a second virtual geocache course – three-five people needed.

For more information and to sign up contact Zoe Whyman:
zwhyman@fcgov.com or 221-6311 .

WILDLIFE CANDID CAMERA

Take a look at some the recent pictures from the motion-sensitive cameras at Bobcat Ridge Natural Area.



NATURALISTS' NICHE

What's New in Education?

Your hard-working education team has been busy planning and plotting to help you to continue bringing quality education to our community. In 2011 we are making a few changes:

Staff Updates

We welcome our newest staff member, **Catherine Dillon**, as the Service Learning Educator (see page 7 for details about her new job) and bid a fond farewell to **Pam Smith**, our wonderful Soapstone Prairie Educator. **Deborah Price** has expanded her duties from working exclusively at Bobcat Ridge to working on all the natural areas as she heads up the extensive public programming. **Kimberly Tamkun** returns heading up the prairie education and using her art degree to create awesome bulletin boards and displays. **Dolores Daniels** is back as the resource room organizer and school programs assistant. **Sue Kenney** continues training the new education volunteers while working with Deborah on public programs. **Susan Schafer** remains the master organizer who works on everything to keep it all humming along as the Volunteer Coordinator. **Zoe Whyman** continues as our leader, holding on tight to the reins.

Upcoming Training and Education

The 18th Annual Master Naturalist training session is coming up fast. You will receive the schedule in your email and are welcome to attend any of the sessions that interest you. Please send Sue Kenney a note at skenney@fcgov.com with the dates you want to attend so she can be sure to have plenty of materials on hand.

In 2011, we continue our tradition of high quality continuing education opportunities. These begin in May and continue approximately monthly to the end of the year. You will be notified in plenty of time to get these on your calendars.



From left to right: Catherine Dillon, Dolores Daniels, Deborah Price, Zoe Whyman, Sue Kenney, Kimberly Tamkun, Susan Schafer.

Volunteer News

MEET CATHERINE DILLON, SERVICE LEARNING EDUCATOR

Catherine Dillon joins the education staff in a new position: Service Learning Educator. Catherine works closely with two other important components of the Natural Areas Program: Public Improvements (trails) and Resource Management (wildlife, invasive species control, prescribed fire) to coordinate and implement outdoor volunteer projects at City of Fort Collins natural areas. Projects will range in focus from restoration to recreational activities. She will work with volunteer Master Naturalists and Master Naturalist Assistants on the educational aspects of these projects.



Catherine's interest in the outdoors and environmental stewardship began at an early age. She is from the small town of Prescott, Wisconsin and grew up playing along the riverbanks of the Mississippi River. Catherine has a Bachelor of Science from the University of Wisconsin, La Crosse and a Masters of Environmental Studies from The Evergreen State College. Her master's thesis was on ecological restoration volunteerism. She has held positions that focused on recreation, wildland firefighting, restoration, and ecological monitoring.

Catherine moved to Fort Collins in the fall of 2009 after getting married and she's happy to be returning back to work after taking a year off to start a family.

Catherine says, "Fort Collins is a unique place with a special community and I am looking forward to becoming an active part of the Natural Areas Volunteer Program. I am very excited to get out into the field to work with the volunteers of Fort Collins!"

Welcome, Catherine!

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

MEET KEN DUNNINGTON

Ken Dunnington has volunteered with the Natural Areas Program since 2008 when he moved to Fort Collins from Aurora.

Ken likes being a Master Naturalist Assistant because of the many different program opportunities and the wide variety of topics on different natural areas. His favorite natural areas are Bobcat Ridge and Soapstone Prairie. He especially likes working with children because they are so inquisitive and eager to learn. He finds this work really rewarding.

Ken also enjoys working in the Nix Garden in the warmer months. He says “I don’t have space for garden at home and this gives me the opportunity to do some garden work. And the other volunteers are so nice—we really have a good group.”



Recently, Ken and his wife, Mary, adopted Cathy Fromme Prairie as part of the Adopt-A-Natural Area Program. They have committed to cleaning up trash at Cathy Fromme Prairie once a month for the next year.

About volunteering with the Natural Areas Program, Ken says, “This is one of the greatest ideas I’ve ever encountered: the Master Naturalist and Master Naturalist Assistant programs and the natural areas that Fort Collins had the foresight to acquire—so everything doesn’t get overrun with concrete!”

We think so, too, Ken! Thank you for everything you do for the Natural Areas Program!



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naturally yours