



Volunteer News

VOLUNTEER PICNIC!

For the last 20 years, we have held an annual volunteer picnic to thank all of you. This year is no different except it's now a City-wide event! Please join your fellow volunteers from many departments at this exciting inaugural event!

How's Your Uniform?

Is your polo looking faded, worn, or torn? Does your name badge have your photo on it?

It might be time for an update!

If you need a new name badge, please email a photo of yourself (head shot) and an emergency phone number to sschafer@fcgov.com and Susan will make you a badge. If you don't have a good photo, email her to set up an appointment to come in and take one. You'll get your badge right then, too!

If you need a new shirt, vest, or jacket, please email skenney@fcgov.com and let her know what size you wear, and if you are a VRA, MN, or MNA.

Save the Date

WE WANT TO THANK YOU!

FORT COLLINS VOLUNTEER

Whether you've contributed two hours or 200 hours to the City, you are invited to a party for all Fort Collins Volunteers!

*Food Trucks
City Park Pool
Trolley Rides
Live Music
Guest Speakers
and much more!*

@
City Park-Shelter 7
August 18
3-7 p.m.

Details coming to your email box soon!

Emily and Diane - Coming On Strong!

Emily Olivo, Community Programs Coordinator, and Diane Wendt, Education Specialist, both started their positions in February. They have accomplished a lot in a few short months!

A note from Emily:



I spent my childhood exploring the woods and streams of the northeast before heading south to North Carolina State University in Raleigh. Upon receiving my B.S. in Conservation & Wildlife Biology in 2011, I moved to Denver to complete an Ameri-corps term of service with Mile High

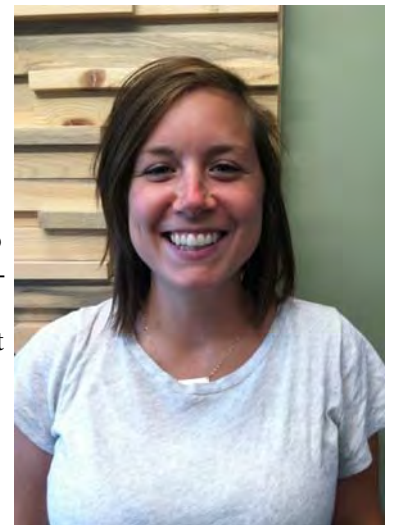
Youth Corps and fell in love with Colorado. After holding various environmental education positions around the country, I moved back to Colorado in 2014 and I'm here to stay! I am so grateful to be working for Fort Collins Natural Areas, which provides me the opportunity to pursue my passion of connecting people to nature while being part of a community of dedicated and supportive staff and volunteers!

New this year in community programs is *Outdoor Skills*. We now offer exciting programs such as *Family Fishing Night*, *Search & Rescue Demonstration*, *Native Plant Gardening*, *Animal Tracking*, *Soapstone Mountain Bike Ride*, and more. It also helps us pursue our goal of reaching teens and other underserved communities.

We increased the number of bison programs, diversified our *Creative by Nature* programs, and created educational opportunities surrounding exciting events such as the *Archaeological Dig at Fossil Creek Wetlands*. We have certainly seen an increase in demand for programs from the community and, along with your help, we hope to fulfill that need.

A note from Diane:

I grew up in a small town just north of Milwaukee, WI. I spent many days out in my backyard with my two sisters, Mom and Dad. In 2008, I travelled out west to attend Colorado State University. I graduated with a Bachelor's in Human Development and Family Studies and a minor in Early Childhood Education. I fell in love with the community of Fort Collins right away and just



could not leave! After I graduated I started teaching at CSU's Early Childhood Center in the toddler classroom. I loved working with this age group and some of my fondest memories is of taking them to explore in nature. This caused me to turn down another career path and join the movement of reconnecting children to nature. I started working for Colorado Parks and Wildlife, doing education outreach and volunteer coordinating. I just love volunteers! I decided I wanted an opportunity to work closer within my community and am very lucky to now work for the Natural Areas Department!

I go on all the school field trips--along with you all and Susan Schafer. I also coordinate special events. This spring we've done Cinco de Mayo and the Community Health Fair (volunteers were amazing in the rain!).

I'm looking forward to the rest of a busy and fun season!

Cate Dillon – moving on to other opportunities...

Cate Dillon has served as the Service Learning Coordinator since 2011. She stepped into a brand new position, worked with multiple work groups with different goals, handled complex situations, rolled with the punches, and implemented a stellar service learning component to the Natural Areas Department.

Zoe Shark, Community Relations Manager said, “Cate excels due to her great blend of skills including being an event organizer, community builder, trail and restoration technician, and educator. She has greatly increased meaningful community involvement in natural areas through service. We will miss her!”

We will greatly miss Cate, her enthusiasm, organizational skills, and dedication to volunteers in the field. We wish all the best to Cate and her new adventures in beautiful Oregon!

Starting in August, Diane Wendt will be running a reduced schedule of Service Learning Projects for the remainder of 2016. Natural Areas will offer self-directed trash clean-ups instead of customized service learning projects. National Public Lands Day (September 24) and Make a Difference Day projects (October 17-23) will be held as planned. Thanks, Diane!

A message from Cate:

I must wish you all farewell! My family is moving to western Oregon to pursue new career opportunities and explore the amazing Pacific Northwest. Thank you for an amazing six years. I have enjoyed getting to know so many of you on the trails, near the river, and while working in muddy wetlands. Thank you for your dedication, inspiration, and laughter.



Cate and the education team at Eagle's Nest Natural Area, spring, 2016.



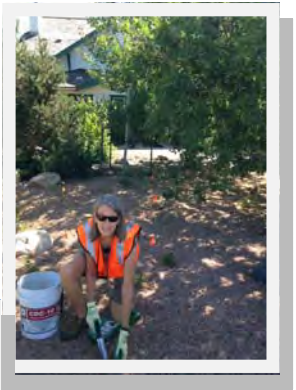
Cate in 2011.

Volunteers Bloom in the Garden

Every Monday and Tuesday morning, the Nix Farm garden is buzzing with activity. There are plenty of bees, but most of the activity is being done by the garden volunteers hard at work making this place look spectacular.

The Nix Farm campus continues to grow and with it comes more landscaping to care for. With very little staff time available to work on this, we depend on the passion, expertise and enthusiasm of volunteers to bring our native plant garden to life. This spring, we trained 20 new gardeners and many have remained active, giving time each week to help plant, prune and weed. The native plant garden successfully demonstrates the use of native plants to provide both beauty and wildlife habitat in an urban setting. Recently as we strolled through the garden with the *Family Nature Club*, the kids were pleasantly surprised by all the little nooks to explore, excited about finding toads in the water fountain, birds in the trees, and bunnies hiding under the bushes.

A big **thank you** goes out to the garden volunteers!



THANK YOU, EVERYONE!

Meet the new volunteer educators:



Master Naturalist Class of 2016 at Coyote Ridge Natural Area.



Master Naturalist Assistant Class of 2016 at Nix Farm.

Service Learning Updates

SUMMER 2016
VOLUNTEER NEWS

By Cate Dillon, Service Learning Coordinator

Service Learning Volunteers have had a busy start to the year. This spring, over 900 community members pitched in nearly 3,000 volunteer hours to maintain trails, plant in restoration areas and clean-up trash. Here are some highlights:

- ✓ Volunteers from Anheuser-Busch planted 6,500 wetland plants at Springer Natural Area in celebration of World Environment Day.
- ✓ Overland Mountain Bike Club designed and built an alternative mountain bike line, completely out of stone, at Reservoir Ridge Natural Area.
- ✓ 130 volunteers pitched in to clean-up enough trash to fill a 4 yd. dumpster at the annual Poudre River Clean-up.
- ✓ Volunteers from OtterBox constructed a 700 ft. re-route along North Loop Trail of Reservoir Ridge Natural Area.
- ✓ Over 100 volunteers of all ages celebrated National Trails Day at Bobcat Ridge Natural Area. Volunteers resurfaced trails with over 30 tons of dirt and gravel!
- ✓ Colorado Addicted Trailbuilder's Society buffed out sections of the newly constructed Cheyenne Rim Trail at Soapstone Prairie Natural Area.
- ✓ Volunteers have already picked up over 170 bags of trash to keep our community clean and healthy.



Thank you to all the businesses and organizations who pitched in for this effort!



Thank you to the following organizations for sponsoring service learning events:

- * REI
- * Backcountry Delicatessen
- * Larimer County Conservation Corps
- * Trailology.
- * Mountain Whitewater Descents
- * Morning Fresh Dairy Farm
- * City of Fort Collins Volunteer Services

VOLUNTEER RANGER ASSISTANTS

By Rhonda Peckham, Natural Areas and Trails Ranger

The City of Fort Collins Natural Areas Department and the Larimer County Natural Resources Department co-manage the Volunteer Ranger Assistant program. Volunteer Rangers Assistants (VRA) greet visitors on the City's natural areas and the County's open space trails, promote outdoor safety, and assist rangers by explaining the reasons for policies and regulations. These one-on-one contacts are invaluable to our visitors and to our departments.

February brought us another contingent of enthusiastic, wonderful people who wish to contribute to Natural Areas and Open Space by volunteering as a front-line contact with visitors. They call themselves Volunteer Ranger Assistants and twenty three of them were trained early this spring.



**VRA
CLASS OF
2016**

We thought that the 2015 record-breaking numbers for patrols and public contacts were amazing, but 2016 is shaping up to reset the standards for volunteers. With fresh eyes every spring, VRAs continue to keep track of visitor behavior, relay valuable information, ask and answer questions regarding management of our natural resources, and note issues that should be addressed regarding safety and aesthetics. An astonishing 1,669 hours have been contributed this year -to-date! Every year they surprise us with their dedication and commitment—we like being surprised!



By Susan Schafer, Volunteer and Education Coordinator

SCIENCE LESSONS GO WILD!

It was another successful year of school field trips! Once again teachers are excited to take their science lessons outdoors and give kids a more meaningful experience. In the 2015-2016 school year, we conducted 56 school field trips (out of the 59 scheduled) and taught 3,059 students and their parents. While these numbers are our average, what is astounding is that we continue to offer such high-quality field trips year after year with your help! We have a very dedicated group of school field trip Master Naturalist, some of whom volunteer for every field trip!



Thanks to our consistent high-quality work, teachers are lining up for program slots. We regularly end up with a waiting list for hundreds more students. Teachers have also started scheduling their field trips a full year in advance just to secure their slots. We are so proud of this service that we can provide to local schools. I want to personally thank every volunteer that dedicates time to field trips. I would be lost without you.

From all of us at the Natural Areas Department: Thank you to every volunteer. No matter what your service is, we appreciate it and feel honored that you want to contribute your time, efforts, and talent to the natural areas. You make a difference every day!

We sadly say goodbye to Dot...

Dot Tomlinson became a Master Naturalist in 2005. Dot was one of the first to volunteer for anything! She led many school field trips and community programs. Dot was at her best when there was no particular script or lesson plan. She loved to draw people into activities and wouldn't allow kids or adults to remain on the sidelines.



Dot eagerly worked with staff educators to create new programs and participate in flora and fauna surveys. She loved to teach the pioneer life station at Bobcat Ridge sharing many of her life experiences to help make it authentic.

Dot not only volunteered for the Natural Areas Department, but also for many other community organizations. She was awarded the *Dot Tomlinson Lifetime Achievement Award* by TEAM Fort Collins in February for her decades of service in our community.

She was extemporaneous, flexible, and always, always, enthusiastic. It is remarkable that her enthusiasm never waned—not even a little. Her longevity was also notable. She volunteered with us for over ten years, doing program after program, year in and year out.



Sadly, Dot passed away on April 5, 2016 after battling an aggressive form of leukemia for the past year.

We all miss her and the youthful enthusiasm she brought to all that she did.

