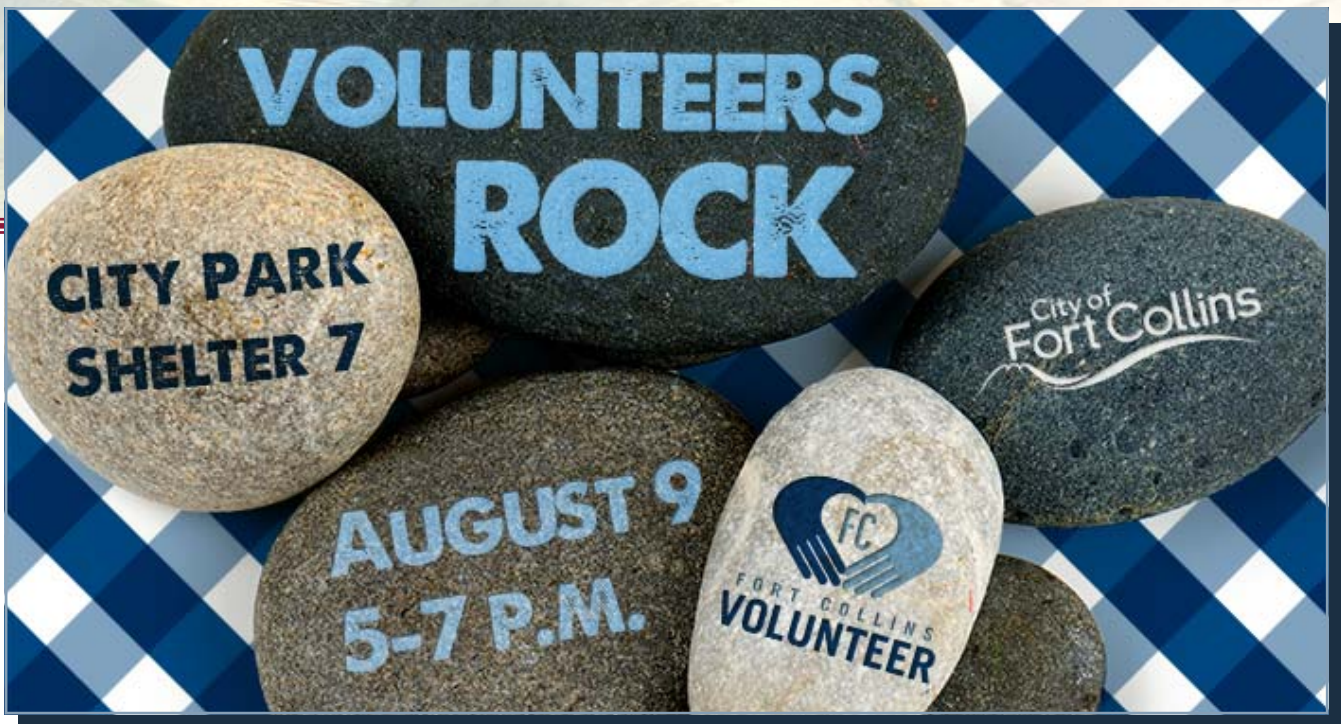


SUMMER 2017

Volunteer News



Annual Volunteer Appreciation Picnic!



As a City of Fort Collins volunteer, we hope you see the multitude of benefits that come from giving your time to such a fun and well-run organization. One of these benefits is the chance to mingle with some of the other 9,000 people who share your values at the City-wide Volunteer Appreciation Picnic. I personally am so grateful for the new resources that the City is pooling to offer such a great event. I'll be there, along with my family. I hope you'll join me! — *Susan Schafer, Natural Areas Volunteer Coordinator*

[Register Today!](#)

- ◆ Music by [Cow Town](#)
- ◆ Food Trucks and Walrus ice cream sandwiches for everyone!
- ◆ Guided Activities from 4-5 p.m.:
 - ◆ Champion Tree Tour with City Forester Tim Buchanan- <https://engage.fcgov.com/ActivityRegistration/18fa3d66-d1c3-49a4-92d0-4ffa7fdaf52e>
 - ◆ Birding Field Trip to Grandview Cemetery with Dave Leatherman- <https://engage.fcgov.com/ActivityRegistration/3138a099-4957-4a81-a257-560abfd0f728>
 - ◆ Pickle Ball Clinic with Frank Schwende- <https://engage.fcgov.com/ActivityRegistration/1779046a-21e4-48b8-821a-09d574409124>

Contact Charlotte Boney at (970) 416-4245 or cboney@fcgov.com

OUR NEW COMMUNITY EDUCATOR

This year we welcomed a new Community Educator, Alex McHenry, whom many of you have met at volunteer training or out on a program this season. Alex is a Denver native with a B.A. in Biology who recently completed her Master's degree at CSU in Conservation Leadership. She has a diverse background in conservation and education, working both in the U.S. and abroad. Alex is excited to join the Natural Areas Department team and work with such a passionate and dedicated team of staff and volunteers.

The community programs planning process got a delayed start this year, but with the help of many volunteers this season's community programs were planned, *Tracks & Trails* was printed and distributed and things have been rolling ever since! So far, we have offered 120 community programs, reaching over 2,500 people. This would not be possible without the continued support, enthusiasm, and knowledge of our volunteer educators, Master Naturalists and Master Naturalist Assistants.

We've also been able to introduce a few new programs this year, including teen programs, senior strolls and natural areas yoga. Back by popular demand are programs such as *Campfires at the Cabin*, *Nature Nuggets*, *Nature Journaling*, and *Science Behind the Scenery* to name just a few. We are constantly working as a department to be creative and respond to feedback from the community. We have received tremendous feedback from participants about the organization, and the passion and knowledge of all who participate in leading and assisting on these programs.



Thank you for your dedication and continued support as we move through another highly successful community programs season!

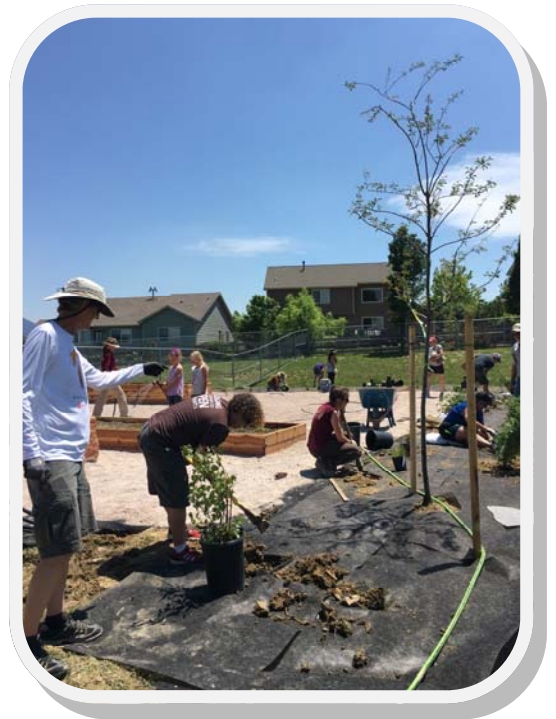
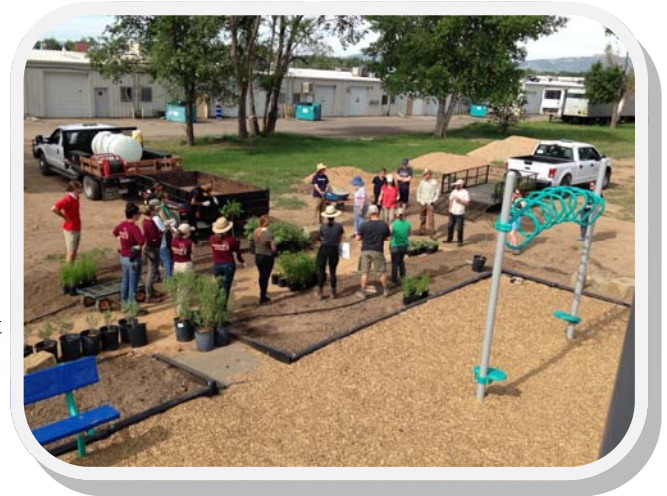


By Allison Mitchell, Land and Water Management Technician

As the flowers and warm weather started to arrive this spring, the 2017 Nature in the City (NIC) community projects kicked into full gear! Last year, the NIC community grant program received over 60 applications and was able to fund nine new projects, as well as continue two projects from last year. This spring, volunteers helped install hardscape and more than 500 plants at Coyote Ridge Elementary School, the Genesis Project, the Murphy Center, and the Manhattan Townhomes.

At Coyote Ridge Elementary, volunteers transformed the unused turf grass lawn into a pollinator haven, community garden, and outdoor classroom. At the Genesis Project, community members of all ages from the Park Lane Mobile Home Park are now able to enjoy a new vegetable garden, pollinator garden, and trail connection thanks to volunteer support. At the Manhattan Townhomes, a habitat hero garden was installed and completed with the help of neighborhood volunteers. Collectively, these ongoing efforts directly involve the community in the expansion of habitat for wildlife while increasing access to nature at the neighborhood scale.

In citizen science news, 34 volunteers are currently assisting NIC staff and partners at Colorado State University by monitoring birds, butterflies, and bees through the *Nature in the City Biodiversity Project*. Volunteers monitor fifteen bird and ten butterfly indicator species at different sites across the city to understand how land use affects species biodiversity. This spring, volunteers completed over 140 bird surveys at 78 sites and are currently in the middle of the butterfly monitoring season that will finish August 15th. These surveys will help Nature in the City target areas to conserve or restore as micro-habitat for wildlife.



***Thank you to all our volunteers
who worked on these projects!***

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 Ranger 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.

This year started off with another full Volunteer Ranger Assistant training class of nineteen wonderful folks, enthused about their mission to volunteer and give back. Spring visitation and parking lot capacities at many of the City- and County-owned properties in the foothills got the new class off to a brisk start.

Here are some excerpts from the very diverse VRA reports:

- “One man was grateful that I talked with the group as he had not wanted to get into a jangle. He commented ‘Nice approach!’ referring to how I handled the group.”
- “Two hikers, who were just starting out, forgot to bring water with them. I gave them my unused bottle. It was just too hot to be out there without hydration.”
- “Noticed smoke to WSW direction. Reported smoke to Ranger. Advised hikers/bikers not to continue. Assisted Rangers, LC personnel and others to have drivers leave.”
- “I finally remembered to grab a plastic bag and pick up cigarette butts along the trail. I didn’t want it to look like smoking is allowed or that the trail is one gigantic ashtray.”
- Some VRAs served as CPR/First Aid Instructors: “A great class of Master Naturalists!”
- Some VRAs served at the Soapstone Prairie gatehouse: “Another great day!” “Is there a bird list?”
- Some VRAs did a special project: “Create tree cookies for Sue...”
- Some VRAs hosted at the Fort Collins Museum of Discovery: “They pet the (black-footed ferret) pelt and ask ‘Is it dead? Did you kill it? Why did it die?’ Anything on display—questions are asked. Life is great!”



Yes, life *is* great! A hearty “well done” to the new class and the veterans alike, in this very warm and dry year.

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!