



Parks &
Open Space

Volunteer Contributions

Boulder County

2020 Annual Report

2020 Grand Totals

1,597 volunteers

17,562 hours

Ongoing Programs

934 volunteers

12,723 hours

One-Day Projects

663 volunteers

4,839 hours

Partners Program

4 Prairie Partners

9 Stewardship Partners

Boulder County enjoys a unique and spectacular setting along the Front Range of the Southern Rocky Mountains. Volunteers have played a significant role for more than 45 years when the Volunteer Naturalist program started the same year the Boulder County Parks & Open Space Department (BCPOS) was founded. Over the years, opportunities have grown to engage volunteers in almost all land management activities. *The significant contributions made by volunteers is reflected in one of the department's five goals: To provide public outreach, partnerships, and volunteer opportunities to increase awareness and appreciation of Boulder County's open space.*

Each year, even during a global pandemic, volunteers get hands-on opportunities in land stewardship and public education. Involving volunteers makes our department stronger and more productive. Volunteers are an integral part of a thriving community, and they make a tremendous impact on the quality of life in Boulder County. Volunteer opportunities are divided into Ongoing Programs and One-Day Projects. Turn the page to learn more about their 2020 contributions!



Long-term Volunteer Programs

Long-term programs use a core group of trained volunteers to complete ongoing skilled and semi-skilled duties and educational responsibilities. In 2020, these ongoing programs included:

Adopt-a-Trail (457 volunteers contributed 2,752 hours)

These volunteers focused on trash pick up. The program was designed to be autonomous, allowing volunteers to work at their own pace and on their own schedule with the understanding that they visit “their park” at least four times each year. We had 86 segments adopted by 70 different groups, families, or individuals.

Cultural History Program (106 volunteers contributed 591 hours)

Volunteers fostered an appreciation of the county’s past to a wide range of county residents. Since in-person programming stopped mid-March due to the pandemic, volunteers were recruited to help film and edit videos to post on the department’s webpage and YouTube. By the end of the year, 26 living history demonstrations, historical site tours, and field trips were produced! Volunteers also led “live” virtual programs.

Images Magazine (8 volunteers contributed 610 hours)

Nine volunteers were writers or illustrators for the department’s quarterly magazine, “Images.” Of those volunteers, two independently created the kids’ insert called “Nature Detectives,” which featured gray foxes, red-winged blackbirds, Planet Mars, and BCPOS rangers.

Left Hand Outdoor Challenge (27 volunteers, 580 hours)

The year’s challenge theme focused on outdoor skills, service learning and character development. In February 27 teens met with the American Indian group that uses the Indian Mountain property and helped restore picnic tables for use on the property. The program was put on hold in March of 2020 due to the pandemic. The program was able to host one volunteer project in the fall of 2020, where 13 participants helped remove trash from Pella Crossing.



Long-term Volunteer Programs

Monitoring Programs (114 volunteers contributed 2,655 hours)

Volunteers collected data to help the department monitor plants, wildlife, and other resources over time. The goal of all monitoring programs is to use the collected data for open space planning and management. Some of these monitoring programs have been collecting data for decades, while others were new. Details about specific programs can be found in 2020 Agricultural Resources Division, Forest Management, Plant Ecology, Real Estate, and Wildlife Management annual reports.

| Program | Volunteers & Hours | | Program | Volunteers & Hours |
|------------------------|--------------------|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Bluebird Boxes | 11 vols, 235 hrs | | Limber Pine | 5vols, 266 hrs |
| Breeding Bird Surveys | 1 vol, 20 hrs | | Native Seed Garden | 16 vols, 365 hrs |
| Burrowing Owls | 26 vols, 312 hrs | | Rangeland Health | 1 vols, 54 hrs |
| Butterflies | 17 vols, 354 hrs | | Raptor Nests | 17 vols, 734hrs |
| Caribou Weed Warriors | 2 vols, 88 hrs | | Shrub Monitors | 7vols, 27 hrs |
| Conservation Easements | 11 vols, 121 hrs | | Slash Piles | 1 vol, 67 hrs |
| Elk Count | 1vols, 12 hrs | | | |

Osprey Camera Chat Moderators (1 volunteers contributed 350 hours)

This volunteer assisted BCPOS staff with managing comments posted on the osprey camera web page. The volunteer answered questions, generated discussion, posted screenshots, and provided facts about osprey.



Long-term Volunteer Programs

Park Patroller Program (129 volunteers contributed 2,748 hours)

Three different groups, Volunteer Ranger Corps (VRC), Boulder Mountain Bike Patrol (BMBP), and Angler Hosts, are part of the park patroller program. VRC and BMBP contacted open space visitors on trails or staffed trailhead displays. They answered questions about the property's natural resources, park amenities, recreational opportunities, and land management activities. They also provided a uniformed presence, encouraged responsible use of open space, and addressed infractions of park regulations and public health orders to wear face coverings and maintain social distancing. Bark Rangers educated park visitors about picking up after their dogs, always using leashes, and dog safety such as rattlesnakes, heat, etc.

Schools Stewardship Projects (7 volunteers contributed 40 hours)

Partnership with local schools, groups, and clubs perform outdoor projects to benefit the department and the community at large. Projects include an educational element to help students understand the importance of their contribution. Follow-up is often included to gauge the success of their efforts. In 2020, projects were brought to a halt due to the pandemic. The only school project that continued was the wildlife camera monitoring project at Ron Stewart Preserve at Rabbit Mountain, in partnership with Longs Peak Middle School.

Volunteer Naturalist Program (85 volunteers contributed 2,392 hours)

The Volunteer Naturalist Program was created in 1975 when the department was founded. Over the years, the program has grown from a handful of volunteers to over 100 naturalists (in a typical year) who present natural history programs to children, families, seniors, and the general public. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all in-person interpretive programming and training was suspended mid-March through the end of 2020. Before mid-March, volunteers conducted 44 programs to 1,029 participants.



One-Day Projects

The department sponsored 67 episodic work projects in 2020. There were 20 requested projects, 22 public projects, and 25 work projects with groups that are part of the department's Partners Program. **These projects included 663 volunteers who contributed 4,839 hours of service.**

Buildings & Historic Preservation: sponsored one project engaging nine volunteers for 27 service hours. Volunteers picked up five bags of trash around the Twin Lakes Open Space.

Forestry: sponsored one project engaging three volunteers for four service hours. Volunteers seeded and restored 45 slash burn piles at Reynolds Ranch.

Grounds: sponsored one project engaging nine volunteers for three service hours. Volunteers built a log fence in the area surrounding the Altona Schoolhouse.

Plant Ecology: sponsored 23 projects engaging 217 volunteers for 616 service hours. Volunteers collected 242 pounds of seed, cleaned 31 pounds of seed, and installed 289 vole cages.

Trails: sponsored 34 projects engaging 394 volunteers for 4,032 service hours. Volunteers built and maintained five miles of trail including the construction of the Tolland Ranch trail. Volunteers also maintained several drainages at Heil Valley ranch.

Resource Protection: sponsored two projects engaging 10 volunteers for 26 service hours. Volunteers helped build a fence to help deter trespassers at Heil Valley Ranch. Volunteers from the Hillside Estates HOA also helped construct a fence to help protect a critical ecological area along the Niwot regional trails.

Wildlife: sponsored two projects engaging 21 volunteers for 99 service hours. Volunteers helped build an elk enclosure fence at Heil Valley Ranch to protect a vulnerable aspen stand. Wildlife also sponsored an Eagle project, where volunteers removed cattails in a wetland area to improve habitat for native amphibians.



Partnership Program

Stewardship of county open space lands has been deemed an “essential service” during the pandemic, allowing volunteer groups to participate in projects, with some adaptations including: groups of 10 or less, volunteers from different households to drive to the project site in separate vehicles, and needing to wear masks throughout the project. Nine partners participated in stewardship projects in 2020:

- Altona and Longs Peak Middle School, partners since 2019, continue to monitor wildlife cameras.
- BMA, partner since before 2008, hosted seven projects at Heil Valley Ranch (HVR) and one day at Tolland.
- The Boulder High School Mountain Bike Team, partners since 2018, participated in six projects at HVR. Important routine maintenance and rock restoration trail work was accomplished by both organizations.
- CEMEX, a new partner in 2020, removed vegetation and cleared drainage ditches at Hall Ranch.
- Corden Pharma, partner since 2009, applied stain to a restroom at Caribou Ranch. Prosaic but important work.
- Community United Church of Christ, partner since 2016, collected annual blue flax seed at the Beech property.
- KBI-Bio Pharma, partner since 2017, participated in three trail projects at Hall Ranch.
- Tetra Tech, partner since 2014, built a fence at the Picture Rock trailhead at Heil Valley Ranch to prevent trespassing into an area closed to the public.

Prairie Partners for 2020 included the Ocean First Institute and the St. Vrain Valley School District for their support of the Redbelly Dace Recovery project and Skcratch Labs for donating masks and drink mix to department rangers. The Boulder County Parks & Open Space Foundation donated significant funds to the remodeling of the Volunteer Naturalist Center and toward a portable sawmill. In addition, they contributed to funding a wildlife employee to reach out to adjacent landowners for wildlife protection and partnerships, and contributed to the graphic design services for the Walnut Wonders booklet.

