



Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado (VOC) Project Services for Public Engagement

Since 1984, Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado (VOC) has served as Colorado's leading volunteer stewardship organization engaging over 137,000 volunteers. As our 2026 project selection process gets underway, VOC seeks new and returning partners interested in leveraging prepared, skilled volunteers in fulfilling on-the-ground project deliverables while also building broad-based support for Colorado's treasured natural spaces, lands, and waterways.

VOC has over 40 years of proven outdoor stewardship project management experience, working effectively to mobilize volunteers in accomplishing landscape-scale challenges. Each year, VOC manages thousands of volunteers in a variety of outdoor projects across the state, spanning both front and backcountry settings, and urban areas. VOC can help your organization engage the public in addressing stewardship projects related to building and maintaining trails; developing and maintaining other recreational infrastructure; improving accessibility for parks and trails; performing seeding, planting, and erosion control tasks; fire and flood restoration; habitat restoration efforts including noxious weed management and fence removal; gardening projects including urban food gardens and pollinator gardens; and the deployment of crosscut and chainsaw crews.

VOC works with our partners to provide the most efficient and cost-effective experience possible on any given project. VOC volunteers are highly capable of successfully completing a variety of recreation and ecosystem improvement projects, and VOC's Outdoor Stewardship Institute (OSI) training program further ensures volunteers complete the work with the level of technical skills required to ensure high-quality project accomplishments while simultaneously building public involvement and support.

Project Application Process

VOC employs an annual application process for stewardship projects after conducting outreach to partners. The selected projects are intended to deliver high-quality accomplishments for land managers; represent a range of experiences and technical challenges from easy to very difficult; cover lands and waterways in different regions of Colorado; and be engaging and educational for volunteers. VOC staff and trained volunteers scout projects with the respective resource or partner agency as part of the review process to ensure they are appropriate for volunteers, determine the type and skill level of work, and assess logistics and our ability to accomplish the objectives as outlined by the land manager.

Project applications are available at: <https://www.voc.org/voc-stewardship-project-application>

VOC's Project Services

Though most projects are held over a one- or two-day weekend schedule, VOC successfully manages a variety of volunteer project types each year. This includes morning and evening projects, half-day and full-day projects, weekday and weekend projects, and single-day, multi-day, or weeklong projects (weeklong are often backcountry). Our model can be adjusted to best meet our partner's needs. VOC's services include:

- **Volunteer Management:** Recruitment and training are handled by VOC, with assistance from partners when applicable. All volunteer registration and communications are handled by VOC.

- **Volunteer Leadership and Training:** Each year, VOC engages 100+ trained volunteer leaders in a variety of roles. This cadre of skilled volunteers is an indispensable part of our programs, providing project planning, logistics, and crew leadership on a volunteer basis.
- **Project Design:** If appropriate, VOC has the capacity to perform technical project design in consultation or collaboration with our project partners. We can also help partners determine the best priorities and scope of work for volunteer projects.
- **Tools and Equipment:** VOC provides the basic hand and power tools necessary to complete trail or ecological restoration projects. *Tool needs should be confirmed with VOC staff during the site visit.*
- **Safety:** Safety is always the utmost priority for VOC. VOC performs a risk assessment, and our Crew Leaders are trained to ensure that project work proceeds in a safe manner.
- **Food and water:** Most VOC projects include food provided to volunteers; food procurement and preparation is generally VOC's responsibility or is negotiated with project partners. We have the capacity to provide adequate water for projects and typically request partner assistance in procuring a location to fill containers when water cannot be provided on-site.

Project Planning & Implementation

The following timeline represents a typical planning and implementation process and is meant to serve as an example of the level of detail and organization VOC brings to our projects. Not all projects will adhere to the same timeline and process, and VOC strives to provide our partners with the flexibility to meet unique requirements.

Three to six months prior to project (or when snow level/weather allows):

- Site visit conducted with VOC staff and project land manager; project size and scope of work determined.
- Project design and planning completed.
- VOC Volunteer Project Team Lead recruited and briefed.
- VOC Volunteer Project Team needs are determined, and members recruited.
- VOC and agency complete Scope of Services Agreement.
- VOC Project Manager and Volunteer Project Team determine volunteer Crew Leader training needs, and schedule necessary training sessions.
- Volunteer recruitment begins: Project description posted on websites and other outreach strategies implemented including outreach to organized groups in the local area; print materials developed.
- VOC Project Manager and Volunteer Project Team are engaged to begin logistics planning.

Two months prior to project:

- Risk management assessment by agency staff, VOC staff, and Volunteer Project Team; emergency plans written.
- Project logistics finalized and reviewed by VOC staff and leadership volunteers.
- Volunteer recruitment continues.
- Project tools and any necessary materials secured.

Three weeks leading up to project implementation:

- Crew Leader recruitment and orientation.
- Volunteer recruitment continues.
- Local media contacted and engaged.
- Final project site prep is completed.
- Logistical and background communications sent to volunteers.

Post-project Evaluation (up to two weeks following project):

- Crew Leaders complete evaluations and submit to VOC along with their project hours.
- Volunteers contacted by VOC staff with post-project thank you and photos, summary of work accomplished, and request for evaluation.
- Volunteer waivers processed and hours logged.
- Written evaluation sent to land manager to improve program offering.
- VOC Project Manager and Volunteer Project Team debriefs held.

For more information, contact Kelly Clouse, Director of Programs, at kclouse@voc.org.