

# FIELD NOTES FROM OUR CEO

Dear Friends of VOC,

The past year has brought many changes, challenges, and opportunities to VOC. Your support has buoyed us through turbulent times and allowed us to come out stronger and more determined to serve our communities and natural resources when they need us most. I would be remiss not to acknowledge the efforts of our former CEO, Ann Baker Easley, as well as the staff, Board, longtime donors, and volunteers who helped build VOC's incredibly strong foundation.

As with any storm, there is always a light, and that light shines through these pages. These stories are yours and we are proud of what we accomplished together. Often, we weather a storm and emerge with greater clarity: we have been listening to our communities, exploring new partnerships, and building networks to address the many challenges our communities and public lands face. You can see the heart of VOC in these pages, but I hope you also see new opportunities that have come from our listening efforts. They are glimpses into the work that remains to be done. I look forward to building on these stories and hope you will join us as we continue to engage communities in taking care of our natural resources, open spaces, and public lands.

Thank you, Chris Nesset

### **2021 Land Management & Programmatic Partners**

VOC's work is highly collaborative and we work with many government and nonprofit partners to make our field work successful.

Buena Vista Singletrack Coalition Bureau of Land Management

- 5 Field Offices

Cal-Wood Education Center
City of Boulder Open Space and
Mountain Parks

City of Colorado Springs

City of Greeley

City of Lakewood

Cloud City Wheelers

Colorado Fourteeners Initiative

Colorado Mountain Club

Colorado Mountain College

Colorado Parks and Wildlife

- 8 State Parks
- 3 State Wildlife Areas

Colorado Plateau Mountain Biking Association

Denver Parks and Recreation Friends of Mt Evans & Lost Creek Wilderness

Grow Local Colorado Headwaters Alliance Indian Peaks Wilderness Alliance Mancos Trail Group

Mile High Youth Corps

Mount Evans Outdoor Lab

Mountain Area Land Trust

Poudre Learning Center

Purgatoire Watershed Partnership

Rocky Mountain Field Institute

San Juan Mountain Association

Shambhala Mountain Center

Southern Plains Land Trust

Southwest Colorado Cycling Association

Town of Castle Rock

US Army Corps of Engineers
US Fish and Wildlife Service

**US Forest Service** 

- 4 National Forests
- 1 National Grassland

Vail Valley Mountain Trails Alliance Weld County Public Works Wildlands Restoration Volunteers



# 2021 SEASON ACCOMPLISHMENTS



2,872 Volunteers



25,200 Volunteer hours



\$763,812 Donated labor value

21.8

miles of trail maintained

6,338

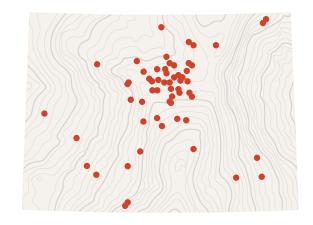
sq. feet of vegetable gardens planted, maintained, and harvested

1.14

miles of unsustainable "social trails" closed

#### **Our work in Colorado**

VOC volunteers travel to every corner of Colorado to take care of public lands. From the tops of Fourteeners to city parks, learn more about where we went this year at **bit.ly/vocprojects.** 





#### COVID didn't slow us down

In fact, this season we completed our highest number of projects since 2013 with 106 projects across 66 places in Colorado.

17.5

burn acres

4.8

miles of trail built

145

acres of invasive weeds mitigated

2.5

miles of hazardous fence removed

# RESTORING RECREATION AREAS

The White River National Forest is the most visited forest in the nation with over 10 million visitors each year, leading to a lot of wear and tear on trails. In partnership with Vail Valley Mountain Trails Alliance (VVMTA), VOC led 53 volunteers in a two-day restoration project on the steep Half Nelson Trail in Minturn. Volunteers worked along a half-mile section to build switchbacks, install drainage structures, and prepare stream crossings. In one weekend, VOC and VVMTA made significant strides in making this popular trail more sustainable, as well as safer for hikers and mountain bikers.

"It was a pleasure working with VOC staff and volunteers and they impressed us every step of the way. The dedication and high level of coordination is apparent."

- Katherine Bazan, U.S. Forest Service Eagle-Holy Cross Ranger District



# EXPANDING ACCESS THROUGH ASL

An effort ignited by one of VOC's passionate volunteer leaders, Sean Mallory, VOC's pilot project for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing individuals engaged 12 volunteers who use American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate. These individuals joined over 30 volunteers to restore Red Rock Canyon Open Space in Colorado Springs. Over the course of two days, the crews closed more than a mile of unsanctioned social trails, built 55 timber check dams to stall erosion, and installed 8 feet of fencing to direct hikers away from sensitive areas. We look forward to expanding ASL-supported projects, and our volunteer community, in 2022!

Q Dig deeper: voc.org/inclusion



"Everything went well. Having an interpreter as part of the crew meant that communication was seamless between the Deaf people and the non-signers."

- Anonymous Volunteer



# SHARING KNOWLEDGE STATEWIDE

VOC's Outdoor Stewardship Institute (OSI) training courses help volunteers and employees from any organization or agency improve their on-the-ground skills. This year, our OSI offerings expanded with the addition of four certification workshops for both chainsaw and crosscut sawyers. 50 people took part in these trainings, and many continued as volunteer sawyers for VOC! Chainsaws and crosscut saws are critical tools in keeping trails clear of downed trees, removing invasive species such as Russian Olive trees, and thinning forests to mitigate the risk and severity of wildfires. VOC sawyers undertook 10 such projects this year and we look forward to continuing to expand the skillsets of volunteer stewards across the state.

● Dig deeper: voc.org/OSI

3,042 hours of training

402 people trained this year

33 trainings in 2021





"All of the instructors came well prepared with many decades of combined experience between them. They all held a wealth of knowledge and were very enthusiastic about the opportunity to pass on this new skill set to all the trainees."

- Cori Johnson, Crosscut Saw Trainee

# CULTIVATING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

VOC has partnered with Grow Local Colorado for over 10 years to provide community gardens and fresh, healthy produce for neighbors in need. This year, 75 VOC volunteers helped plant, tend, and harvest five gardens in city parks throughout Denver. These gardens yielded over 4,550 pounds of produce, from tomatoes and peppers to squash and kale, that were donated to organizations that support food security for residents, including Metro Caring, Denver Food Rescue, The Gathering Place, and others.



## A GROUP EFFORT

Thank you to the following volunteer groups for joining us on these projects with Grow Local Colorado:

Marathon

RevGen Partners

Salesforce

Worldmind School

VOC's Cairn Youth Program

Denver's food security organizations, like Metro Caring, have reported a 300% increase in need since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- VOC has been an incredible partner over the years. Because of them our gardens have been planted in a timely, efficient, and meticulous manner. It would be impossible to start and end our grow season without VOC's volunteers.
  - Barbara Masoner, Grow Local Colorado

# ENGAGING THE NEXT GENERATION

While the pandemic put a hiatus on our youth programs in 2020, this year we were able to welcome back our young volunteers! Over 80% of our public volunteer projects were open to minors this season (including 17% of projects open to kids ages 12 or younger), and we saw 131 children and teenagers come out to help care for Colorado's outdoor places. We also restarted our award-winning Cairn Youth Program, which will engage 18 high school students in monthly activities throughout the 2021-2022 school year. Stay tuned for our 2022 volunteer schedule, which will include the return of our signature Family Camping and Young Stewards projects!

Q Dig deeper: voc.org/youth-programs



## CAIRN YOUTH PROGRAM SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

September

Garden Harvest Project October

Youth Exploring Stewardship Conference November Campsite Rehabilitation

**Project** 

Career Exploration January
Outdoor
Recreation
Activity

February
Water Quality
Project

March
Crew Leader
Training

th April
ader Tree Planting
ng Project, Planned &
Led by Students



# STEWARDING CORPORATE IMPACT

VOC's Corporate SWAT (Stewardship with a Team) program provides organizations of all sizes the opportunity to give back to the places where their employees live, work, and play. This year, staff members from Chevron and United Airlines teamed up for a volunteer day at Barr Lake State Park. The 26 employees worked together to re-stain a large boardwalk, irrigate and mulch pollinator gardens, and build a new fence. This hands-on investment is just one way these companies gave back: Chevron has sponsored every VOC project season since 2017 and United Airlines, a new partner, started strong as a 2021 season-long sponsor. Both companies also made generous in-kind donations, from travel vouchers to vehicles, to support VOC's work behind the scenes. Q Dig deeper: voc.org/corporateSWAT

## **2021 Corporate SWAT Partners**

BranchPattern

Chevron

CoralTree Hospitality

Credit Union of Colorado

Delta Dental of Colorado

DISH

Lockheed Martin

Marathon

Monarch Investment and Management Group

**Newmont Mining Corporation** 

Origami Risk

Pivot Energy

Prologis

RevGen Partners

Salesforce

Schneider Electric

**United Airlines** 

Xcel Energy





66% of Partners Previously Volunteered with VOC



**18 Corporate Partners** 

# **ADVANCING OUTDOOR CAREERS**

VOC's Grossman Scholarship Program was established in 2018 to help make educational dreams possible for those who have demonstrated a commitment to caring for the environment. The scholarship, funded by former VOC Board Member Rick Grossman and his wife Susie, has since awarded \$70,000 to 14 Colorado students to pursue degrees related to environmental, natural resource, climate, or outdoor industry-related work. This year, the Grossmans generously doubled the scholarship. VOC now offers two \$10,000 scholarships and four \$5,000 scholarships each year!

➤ Applications are open for the 2022-2023 Grossman Scholarships at voc.org/scholarship.

### **2021 Grossman Scholars**



Beckett Wagner

Mardoche Dowling-Davis

Rosston Sherlock

**Casey Bries** 

## **IMPORTANT 2022 DATES**

## **Mid-February**

#### 2022 Volunteer Projects Announced

Our 2022 volunteer project schedule will be posted online at voc.org/volunteer-calendar.

### March 1

### **Volunteer Registration Opens**

Sign up online for one or multiple projects at voc.org/ volunteer-calendar. VOC Members register early!

#### March 10

#### **New Leader Night**

Join us to learn more about how to get involved with VOC as a Volunteer Leader or Project Team volunteer.

### **April**

**Volunteer Projects Start** 

### **May 12**

#### **Uniquely Colorado**

Save the date for our annual fundraiser!

# A LOOK AHEAD TO 2022

VOC is already planning for our 2022 volunteer season! Planned projects include building a new trail with the Town of Breckenridge, maintaining pollinator gardens in Boulder, and restoring the trail to the Devil's Head Fire Lookout. We'll also continue this year's work on the Legacy Trail in Gateway Mesa Open Space, the Electric Hills Trail system in Montrose, and the Raccoon Trail in Golden Gate Canyon State Park. In addition, VOC will be focused on:

#### Beginning a new strategic plan

VOC's staff and Board will embark on a strategic planning process to guide the next three years of our work.

#### **Building back our team**

COVID-19 significantly reduced our staff capacity, and we look forward to hiring on key positions to round out our team.

#### **Budding partnerships**

In addition to new project partnerships with the Sand Creek Regional Greenway and The Nature Conservancy, we will be working with a variety of community-specific organizations to better serve and engage all Coloradans.



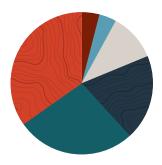
#### Donate to help VOC start the New Year strong!

Scan the QR code to make a year-end donation today. You can also visit us online at voc.org/supportVOC, use the enclosed envelope, or call us at 303-715-1010 ext. 115. When you donate \$40 or more, you'll become a VOC Member and receive exclusive benefits such as a discounted state parks pass and early registration on volunteer projects. **Learn more at voc.org/membership.** 

# **2021 FINANCIALS**

35%

4%

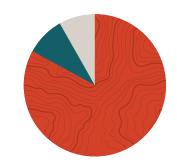


#### Revenue

	O .	
•	Corporations	279
	Individuals	199
	Foundations	119
	Earned Revenues	4%

Partner Organizations

Government Agencies



### **Expenses**

Program Costs	83%

Administration 9%

Fundraising8%



# **2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Gerald Free, Board Chair** Chevron

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# THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

➤ Become part of a growing community invested in the future of Colorado's outdoors at voc.org/supportVOC.

#### VISIONARIES (\$50,000+)

Colorado Parks and Wildlife Mike O'Brien Memorial Trail Fund U.S. Forest Service

# STEWARDSHIP SOCIETY (\$25,000 - \$49,999)

Bank of America

Bureau of Land Management - Colorado State Office

Chevron

City and County of Denver Parks &

Recreation

Delta Dental of Colorado

Sandy Elliott

Xcel Energy Foundation

#### TRUSTEES' CIRCLE (\$10,000 - \$24,999)

City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks

City of Greeley

Colorado Lottery

Colorado Native

CORF Consultants

Deane Family Fund

Firman Fund

Fred & Jean Allegretti Foundation

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Lockheed Martin

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Southern Plains Land Trust

Stewardship Alliance

Suncor

United Airlines

VF Foundation

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#### LEADERSHIP CIRCLE (\$5,000 - \$9,999)

Alpine Bank

Anschutz Family Foundation

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loe Santoro

Marathon Petroleum Foundation

Mountain Area Land Trust

Newmont Mining Corporation

Schneider Electric

Shambhala Mountain Center

The Kroger Co. Foundation

Town of Castle Rock Parks & Recreation

Department

#### CONSERVATORS (\$1,000 - \$4,999)

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Andy Stratton

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BranchPattern

Bronson Family Foundation

Buena Vista Singletrack Coalition

Burrell Family Foundation

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City of Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation,

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Community First Foundation

CoralTree Hospitality

Credit Union of Colorado

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David and Nancy Marlow

Denver School of Science and Technology

DISH Network

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Peter & Marjorie Roosevelt

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The Ihle Family

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Wesley Go and Sook Hee Lee

William Cort Workday

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Tim Gardner and Deborah Froeb

Tom and Ellen Fairley Traci Case and Pete Gotseff United Launch Alliance Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.

Wendy Hodges

#### TRAILBLAZERS (\$249 & under):

823 individuals gave a Trailblazer level gift. Please accept our sincerest gratitude for your support of outdoor stewardship!

#### MEMBERS (\$40 or More)

926 individuals invested in Colorado as a VOC Member. We are incredibly grateful for the support of this community!

#### **GIFTS IN MEMORY OF:**

Brian Davenport Carolyn Reid Chaka Schroeder Charles Johnson Dos Chappell

George Woodrow "Woody" Shenk II

Gerald Edmund Husted Gilbert White

Gregory C. Cooper, Sr.

lake Isaacson John J. Bell, Sr Kumudini Hâté Leander Halbur Marty Schweitzer Mary Geihsler

Mary Lou Roesler Marylin Greeneisen Melissa Miller

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Sidney Fleishman Stephen Brockmeyer

Steve Hartwell Steve Nelson Tv Laporte Wendell Gadd Wil Miller

#### GIFTS IN HONOR OF:

Aimee Stitt

All the amazing VOC volunteers

Ann Baker Easley

Arvie Baie

Benjamin and Kathleen Ziff

Calvin Alma Coleman Tuggle Danielle Sukenik

Dany

David and Maddie Kiker Dylan Sondermann Florence E Finch Gabrielle Frankel

Gina Lux

Greg Verschelden less & Steve Hedden

Keeva & Kai Kelly Clouse Kevin Wheeler Lauren Walters

Lexie, Star and James Holloway

Linda Strand Lisa Thilker Lumpers Lydia Yanak Marie Clark Mike Wilson Ms. Gabi Netzer Nancy McCraley Natha Espeland Office Evolution Pat McClearn

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Stephanie and Colin Dunn

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The Miller Erikson Family The Owen Neary Family

Wayne Zahm Will Murray

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Baird Foundation

CenturyLink Clarke M. Williams Foundation

DCP Midstream Matching Gifts Program

Flasticsearch

**Empower Retirement** 

Etsv

HCA Healthcare

**Janus Henderson Foundation** 

Medtronic Foundation

Oracle

Ovintiv-Canada S&P Global Salesforce Schneider Flectric Shell Oil Company Sherpa 6. Inc.

Starbucks Foundation TEGNA Foundation United Launch Alliance UnitedHealth Group

USAA

Viasat Inc.

Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. Western Union Foundation

Workday

**700m Video Communication** 

#### IN-KIND SUPPORTERS (\$100+ Value)

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Chevron

Clear Fork Cider Clif Bar & Company

Colorado Lottery

Colorado Native

Denver7

Einstein Bros Bagels

Ellen Schoeler

Fred & Jean Allegretti Foundation

John Fielder

KEEN Footwear King Soopers/City Market

Locale Colorado Luna Bay Booch

MODL Outdoors

Nest Fresh Eggs

Pachamama CBD

Red Bird Farms

Sierra Nevada Brewing Co.

Skratch Labs Topo Designs

Welborn Sullivan Meck & Toolev PC

Wyld CBD

#### \$99 AND LESS

Thank you to all who provided product donations for VOC's 2021 season! Your support is greatly appreciated by our volunteers, partners, and employees.

#### **PHOTOGRAPHY**

A special thank you to our volunteer photographers for the photos you see in this report:

Cindy Bond Cole Tucker Greg Lobser lay Poules P. Demosthenes

Sue Daniels Photography



PO Box 100577 Denver, CO 80250 (303) 715-1010 voc@voc.org voc.org



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