



## Fountain Creek Chronicles November 2023

*The monthly e-newsletter about your home watershed*

Welcome! We're excited to share with you the latest updates and engaging stories about this crown jewel. Let's dive in!



**The Fountain Creek Watershed District works from Palmer Lake to Pueblo to protect and enhance the health of the watershed.**

### Let's Celebrate!

#### 10th Anniversary of Creek Week

At the end of October, Fountain Creek Watershed District and many devoted Watershed Warriors gathered on the rooftop of Red Leg Brewery to celebrate a decade of hard work. We are so proud of this program and all of the support many of you have given, the growth that has occurred, and the incredible impacts on our watershed. It has all come together thanks to people and partnerships.



Over the last ten years, the Creek Week program has contributed :

- 10 Years of 9-day, watershed-wide cleanups – that's a total of 800 different cleanup crews
- 11 Communities have participated: Palmer Lake, Monument, Woodland Park, Green Mountain Falls, Manitou Springs, Colorado Springs, Fountain, Pueblo, Trinidad, and Greenhorn Valley
- Over 23,000 volunteers
- Over 150,000 tons of trash
- Over 80 different governments, businesses, & nonprofits have sponsored over the years

We saw a 46% decrease in volunteer involvement this year - a trend that has been reported by numerous organizations in the community. However, the dedicated and hardworking Creek Week crews managed to achieve an impressive feat by removing 13.5 tons of trash and debris from the watershed - a literal ton more than last year!

Throughout the last decade, the Creek Week cleanup crews have made substantial progress in improving the condition of the Fountain Creek Watershed and its surrounding areas. We couldn't accomplish these amazing numbers without our dedicated volunteers and generous sponsors. Thank you all for your gifts of time, energy, and funding!

During the celebration, we took time to recognize the especially impactful folks who have supported Creek Week throughout the past ten years. The following businesses, governments, and nonprofit friends have contributed a significant amount of time and dollars to make the Creek Week program what it is and we are so grateful for their support. In addition to our organizational partners, there have been so many amazing individuals who have contributed to the efforts of Creek Week year after year after year. Such

dedication is rare these days. Many people would have faded away, but these friends of the Watershed have not. Resilience leads to lasting impact!

#### LEGACY AWARD WINNERS

- City of Colorado Springs
- City of Fountain
- City of Pueblo
- Colorado College
- Colorado Springs Utilities
- El Paso County
- Forsgren Associates
- HBA and HBA Cares
- Keep Pueblo Beautiful
- Matrix Design Group
- Pikes Peak Group of the Sierra Club
- Pikes Peak Outdoor Recreation Alliance
- Pueblo County

#### IMPACT AWARD WINNERS

- Annie Berlemann
- Jerry Cordova
- Jon Easdon
- David Eick
- Carla Hendrickson
- Julie Knudson
- Jim Lockhart
- Dr. Brian Mihlbachler
- Lisa Mussi
- Dana Nordstrom
- David Pullin
- Konrad Schlarbaum
- Kristin Wehde
- David Woolley

Click [here](#) to see the celebration presentation including more photos from 10 years of cleanups!



Legacy award winners with FCWD staff.



Impact award winners with FCWD staff.

## Creek Week Recap Land Stewardship Projects

To highlight the Creek Week Cleanup's 10th Anniversary, the FCWD team ventured into a new undertaking to make the program bigger and better than ever before. We know that watershed health goes far beyond picking up trash; it includes water conservation, preservation, and land stewardship. We looked at the Sondermann Park project for inspiration, an annual stewardship project in Colorado Springs organized by the District and led by Colorado Springs Parks Department, which is slowly restoring Mesa Creek. We assessed the successes of this event and knew this idea could be recreated.

Meetings were held with land managers working across the watershed to discuss what types of projects were already in motion and where the District could lend a helping hand. We had numerous discussions which sparked many creative ideas and helped build valuable connections. And thus the land stewardship projects were born!

Now, as we reflect on the strides made during this year's Creek Week, we are excited to share the success of the Land Stewardship Projects. These initiatives have highlighted our commitment to environmental conservation and showcased the incredible efforts of organizations across the watershed.

Let's take a closer look at the awesome work done at each of these Land Stewardship Projects:

#### *Confluence Park, Pueblo*

To kick off Creek Week, the Pueblo Parks & Recreation Department employees and volunteers teamed up to tackle the invasive Siberian Elms, Tamarisk, and Russian Olive trees that had encroached upon the USGS data station and pedestrian bridge at Confluence Park. The next day, the CSU Extension Service-Pueblo staff and volunteers took over and sowed the area with over 15 pounds of native grasses and wildflowers. This essential work is helping restore the park's natural beauty and improving its ecological health and function.

#### *Sondermann Park, Colorado Springs*

In an effort to enhance the ecological vitality of Sondermann Park, dedicated volunteers planted 54 willow trees and 400 native grass seedlings. Their hard work has contributed to the park's overall well-being and will continue to do so for years to come.

#### *Palmer Park, Colorado Springs*

A group of 40 volunteers cleared 4 fallen trees from the trail, installed 10 check dams, removed 6 carts of dog waste, and picked up 12 bags of trash from Palmer Park. These collective efforts have made the park more accessible and significantly improved its cleanliness making it a more enjoyable place for everyone to visit.

#### *Concrete Coyote, Colorado Springs*

Perhaps one of the most impressive contributions during Creek Week came from the students at UCCS who embarked on a multifaceted mission at Concrete Coyote. They planted 200 acorns, distributed 150 bags of mycelium spores, removed 150 pounds of debris from Shooks Run, spread 300 buckets of mulch, and cleared two trail systems of invasive species. Their dedication and hard work have played a crucial role in the rejuvenation of this area.

The Land Stewardship Projects have been a testament to what can be achieved when communities come together with a shared mission. We hope that volunteers' experiences helped them gain a greater understanding of preservation of our natural resources and the importance of being stewards of the land.

A heartfelt thank you from Fountain Creek Watershed District to the volunteers, organizations, and their staff who dedicated their time and effort to make this new initiative a success!





A volunteer planting native seedlings at Sondermann Park.




Invasive species clearing at Pueblo's Confluence Park.

## Brewshed® Alliance

THE FOUNTAIN CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT  
 BREWSHED ALLIANCE PRESENTS:  
 LIQUID LECTURE SERIES 2023

**NOVEMBER TOPIC**  
**Thinking (W)holistically**  
**about Water Management**



**November 15th, 6-7pm**  
**Voodoo Brewing Company**  
**808 Garden of the Gods Road**  
**Colorado Springs, CO 80907**

Chris Mikolajczyk, Senior Aquatics Manager with Princeton Hydro, will address some of the more common issues from a "big picture" perspective of surface water quality, lake management, and watershed management. He will share techniques that can assist in management and improvement, including emphasis on the cause of harmful algae blooms (HABs) and ways to prevent and deal with such blooms.

Please RSVP to [fcwdaa@gmail.com](mailto:fcwdaa@gmail.com)  
 Attendees receive \$1 off beer



### Brewshed Alliance Featured Partner

#### Voodoo Brewing Company

808 Garden of the Gods Road  
Colorado Springs, CO 80907

Voodoo Brewing Co. in Colorado Springs dishes out delicious fare, a great variety of beers, plus boozy and NA slushies and cocktails EVERY DAY 11am-11pm. Voodoo hosts tons of live music and events! Check the brew pub out on socials and join us for this month's Liquid Lecture.



## Upcoming Events



### Seed Saturdays

Manitou Springs Public Library  
November 11th, 11 AM-1 PM

Manitou Springs Seed Library hosts Seed Saturdays on the 2nd Saturdays of September-May. Drop into the library to pick up native seeds ranging from wildflower, trees, shrubs, and some native grasses. Resources to learn how to grow and succeed with Front Range regional native species will also be available. **LEARN MORE**

### Sustainability Skill Share

Concrete Coyote  
November 11th, 10 AM-1 PM

Concrete Couch hosts ongoing 2nd Saturday Sustainability Skill Shares. Next up: learn woodworking,

2nd Saturday Sustainability Skill Share  
Sat. 11/17/23 (10 AM-1 PM)

**Concrete Coyote**  
(1100 S. Royer, 80903)

**Skills include:**  
Woodworking  
Collage w/ Christine  
Mycelium Planting

Lunch provided!

Email: [caitlin@concretecouch.org](mailto:caitlin@concretecouch.org)

collage, mycelium planting and more at Concrete Coyote (1100 S. Royer St, 80903). A delicious community lunch for all participants will be provided. **REGISTER**

**Trash Cleanup**  
Join UpaDowna to cleanup Monument Valley Park North.  
Monument Valley Park North,  
205 W Fontanero St, Colorado Springs, CO  
Multiple Dates from Sept - Nov

RSVP at [upadowna.org](http://upadowna.org)



**UpaDowna Trash Cleanup**  
Monument Valley Park North  
November 12th 12-2 PM

Volunteer with UpaDowna to clean up its adopted park, Monument Valley Park North. Join in the preservation of the beauty of Monument Valley Park, a cherished destination for hikers, bikers, and recreational enthusiasts, by volunteering for a cleanup and making a positive impact on this urban park. Meet by the picnic table at 205 W Fontanero St, Colorado Springs. Please wear closed toe shoes and layers. Bring sun protection and water! **REGISTER**

## Featured Native Plant

### Wild Bergamot, *Monarda fistulosa*



During these next few months, we'll be featuring a native plant so you can get to know your plant neighbors and hopefully feel inspired to try one in your landscape.

The genus name *Monarda* was given by Carl Linneaus, honoring a Spanish physician, Nicholas Monardes, who published books on medicinal plants in the 16th century; the species name, *fistulosa*, means hollow or reed-like, referring to the plant's hollow stem. Their lavender to pink flowers can last more than a month once in bloom. Leave the seedheads on during winter for interest, and to attract goldfinches and sparrows for a winter meal. These are also pollinator magnets, attracting diverse species including swallowtail butterflies, native bees, and Ruby-throated hummingbirds.

*Monarda fistulosa* does best in full sun but can tolerate light shade. It will stand up well to drought, gets passed over by deer and rabbits, and spreads by underground rhizomes. It can be easily divided in late winter or early spring every 3-4 years for vigorous blooming. This is an aromatic plant and a tea can be made from the leaves or seed heads. It is often used in essential oils.

Put this one on your plant list for next season and enjoy the benefits for years to come!

## Watershed Words

### A Season of Gratitude & Stewardship

A note from Executive Director Alli Schuch

As the leaves are fading from their brilliant shades of golds and red, and the air becomes crisper, I am reminded of the incredible beauty and value of our watershed. November is a month of transition, and it's the perfect time to reflect on the progress we've made in preserving and protecting this vital resource.

**Gratitude for Our Community:** First and foremost, I want to express my deepest gratitude to all of you—our dedicated volunteers, partners, community members, and staff—for your unwavering commitment to our watershed. Your support and involvement continue to be the backbone of our efforts. This year, we've seen remarkable contributions from countless individuals who have participated in our cleanup events, planted native species, and advocated for sustainable watershed practices. Your passion and dedication to our cause are truly inspiring.

**Reflecting on Our Achievements:** We've had another successful year: building up a fantastic staff, developing our Strategic Plan, engaging the public through events and programming, planning and executing creek restoration projects, and evaluating past projects. All of these have made a significant impact on our watershed's health. We're proud to report on these positive changes and progress through these monthly e-newsletters, but our work is far from over. Watershed management is an ongoing effort and together we continue to make a difference.

**Stewardship in the Fall:** Autumn offers unique personal opportunities for watershed stewardship. As leaves blanket the ground, it's essential to manage them wisely to prevent excess nutrients from entering our waterways. Composting or mulching leaves can help you maintain a beautiful landscape while supporting watershed health. Don't forget to empty your rain barrel and flip it over to ensure it doesn't crack. (Don't have a barrel? Stay tuned! We may be able to help with that next spring!) Keep an eye on the storm drains near you and keep them free of leaves, debris, and litter. These drains move water directly from our streets into nearby waterways. This simple step can protect water quality and prevent localized flooding.

**A Call to Action:** As we embark on this new month, I encourage you all to keep our watershed's well-being close to heart. Be mindful of your actions and choices and consider the impact they have on our environment. Together, we can continue to nurture our beautiful watershed.

Let's make November a month of gratitude, reflection, and action.

~Alli Schuch

## Stay Connected

We'd love to see your watershed pictures and hear your ideas and feedback.

Email Us

Visit Our Website



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