



# Fountain Creek Chronicles

## May 2024

*The monthly e-newsletter about your home watershed*



Fountain Creek near America the Beautiful Park by Jim O'Donnell

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

Click on images to learn more or register for related events!

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## Return to Nature

### Spending Time Outdoors Benefits Our Mental Health

Written by Hannah Mooney

As Mental Health Awareness Month begins, it's a great time to explore the avenues we can use to foster and maintain our mental well-being. An often underestimated but impactful avenue is connection with nature. Amidst the chaos of modern life, nature provides a sanctuary for our minds offering peace, rejuvenation, and a sense of connection. In a world dominated by screens, notifications, and constant connectivity, spending time in nature provides a much-needed reprieve allowing us to unplug, unwind, and reconnect with ourselves and the world around us.

Spending time in green spaces such as forests, parks, or gardens has been proven to reduce stress, anxiety, and depression. Engaging our senses with the sights, sounds, and scents of nature inherently soothes us grounding us in the present moment and reminding us of the beauty around us.

In his book *Blue Mind*, Marine biologist Wallace J. Nichols delves into the therapeutic effects of water on our mental state and coined the term "blue mind" to encapsulate the calm, peace, and serenity experienced near bodies of water. Whether it's the ocean waves crashing, the flow of a stream, or the vast ocean horizon, water possesses a remarkable ability to quiet our thoughts and instill clarity and contentment.

Research consistently validates the positive impact of nature on mental health, demonstrating improved mood, increased vitality, and enhanced cognitive function associated with time spent in natural environments. One theory suggests that our connection with nature is deeply ingrained in our evolutionary history. For millennia, humans lived in harmony with the natural world relying on it for

survival. In today's tech-driven world, reconnecting with nature may signify a return to our primal instincts encoded in our DNA.

As we commemorate Mental Health Awareness Month, let's recognize the connection between our mental well-being and nature. Embrace the healing power of nature as you take a stroll or hike, gather for a picnic, or spend some time at a nearby reservoir or creek.

If you would like to learn more about how spending time in and around water benefits our mental health, join us for the Liquid Lecture on May 16th, 6 pm at Red Leg Brewery. Christine Malmborg with Dragonfly Paddle Yoga will present all about the power of water for our well-being. Want more information? Keep scrolling!

## Let's Recap!



### Great American Cleanup: Pause & Action!

As many of you know, some of the Great American Cleanup (GAC) crews had to pump the brakes on their cleanups due to severe weather. Click the image above to visit the registration page and see rescheduled opportunities.

A few crews still gathered and did great work that weekend including our fantastic Pueblo folks. Rain, hail, lightning and cold temps rolled into Pueblo the last weekend in April, but then rolled out and created a blue bird day. Volunteers rallied on Sunday, April 28 to clean around Runyon Lake near downtown Pueblo, pictured above.

Stay tuned for the June issue of the Fountain Creek Chronicles for a complete GAC report with data and more photos from all over the watershed!



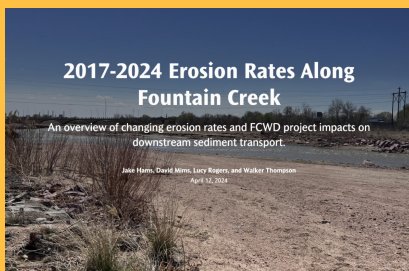
### Rain Barrel Sale a Big Success!

FCWD hosted its first rain barrel sale featuring the Ivy rain barrel. These functional, attractive barrels made from recycled materials can hold 55 gallons of water. Colorado residents can have up to two 55-gallon barrels on their properties.

We sold six pallets of barrels - 198 in total! Customers could add on a diverter, and opt in or out of a \$5 donation to support our education programs. In addition to connecting with many new friends in the watershed, it was a great fundraiser for our outreach work.

Did you miss the sale? We have ONE rain barrel left! Click the picture to request it - first come, first serve. Don't worry; we will be doing more of these in the future. **Let us know** you're interested, and you will be the first to know about our next rain barrel sale.

Now we just need some rain to collect!



## Featured District Project

### Community Collaboration: Colorado College Student Projects Part 1 of 3

This spring, the District partnered with Colorado College Landscape Processes and Evolution class and their professor Sarah Schanz. FCWD Executive Director, Alli Schuch, provided an introduction to the District, its work, and an overview of the Fountain Creek watershed for the students in early April. The class spent time in the

field observing and measuring some of the District's projects, and presented them to the Citizen Advisory Group at its April meeting. The first storyboard presents an overview of erosion on Fountain Creek from 2017-2024 and can be viewed by clicking the image.

We'll share the other storyboards in future articles and continue to work with Colorado College students in the coming years. We are grateful for this collaboration and the valuable projects created by the students.

# Brewshed® Alliance

Fountain Creek  
Brewshed Alliance  
Presents:  
Liquid Lecture Series 2024

## MAY TOPIC

### Harnessing the Power of Water for Well-Being

The earth's waters - oceans, lakes, rivers, creeks - are known as 'blue spaces.' They are breathtaking and a powerful source of well-being. Christine Malmberg of Dragonfly Paddle Yoga will explore the vital role blue spaces have on our physical and mental health and overall well-being.

Join us after for an FCWD social hour with a special announcement!

**MAY 16TH, 6 PM**  
**RED LEG BREWING CO**  
**SOCIAL SCENE TENT**

Attendees receive  
\$1 off beers  
RSVP:  
fcwdaa@gmail.com



## Brewshed Alliance Featured Partner

### Red Leg Brewing Company

2323 Garden of the Gods Rd  
Colorado Springs, CO 80907

Veteran-owned and operated, Red Leg Brewing Company is a production brewery on the west side of Colorado Springs. Red Leg hosted FCWD's 10th Anniversary Creek Week Party last year, and frequently hosts Liquid Lectures and fundraising events for the District. Their large location is full of fun activities and food vendors. Join us for this month's Liquid Lecture in the Social Scene Tent and an after party to celebrate some news from FCWD!



## Upcoming Events



Presented by Four Richard's Downtown

### RICHARD'S RUBBISH ROUNDUP

EVERY TUESDAY! 3PM - 5PM

★ Head to Four Richard's after the cleanup for complimentary pizza and a glass of beer or house wine.  
★ Children 17 and under must be accompanied by an adult.

TEAMS MEET HERE  
(STREET PARKING ON CHINO DR - BETWEEN COLORADO AVE & CHAMBER ST)



### Richard's Rubbish Roundup America the Beautiful Park Every Tuesday, 4-6 PM

Join us every Tuesday from 4-6 pm during daylight savings time (and 3-5 pm during the winter) for our Rubbish Roundup events! Our dedicated volunteers come together to clean up different locations throughout the Pikes Peak Region each week positively impacting our community and environment. Afterward, we meet at various local restaurants to celebrate our hard work at discounted prices. All supplies are provided including safety gear. To register to volunteer and get details on when and where each cleanup will occur, visit our website



### SoCo Collab Frost Fest Bear Creek Regional Park May 11th, 1-5 PM

Breweries across the region have teamed up to create unique collaboration beers specifically for this event, highlighting the creativity and camaraderie that define Colorado Springs' craft beer landscape. Attendees can expect to sample exclusive beers crafted through these unique partnerships, all set against the stunning backdrop of Bear Creek Regional Park. Advance tickets for the festival are available for \$30 each.



### Concrete Coyote 5 Year Anniversary Concrete Coyote May 14th, 4 PM-7 PM

Join our partners from Concrete Couch to celebrate the 5th anniversary of Concrete Coyote, the community park at 1100 S Royer Street. The Coyote was designed by the local community and includes playgrounds, picnic areas, a stretch of Shooks Run, and miles of trails. The evening will include tours of the park, festivities, free food, and live music. Take this chance to explore and celebrate with your neighbors! [RSVP](#)

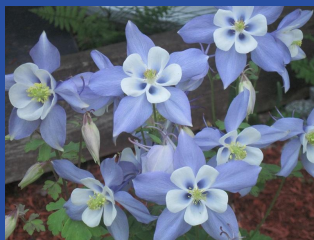


### Scoop the Poop Bear Creek Dog Park May 29th, 10 AM-12 PM

Taking place multiple times a year, Scoop the Poop events aim to raise awareness about the importance of cleaning up after pets to maintain clean and healthy environments. This year, we are also teaming up with the City of Colorado Springs Stormwater Enterprise and Trails and Open Space Coalition to spread our efforts watershed-wide. Join us throughout the watershed to assist in cleaning our parks! No RSVP required.

## Featured Native Plant

Colorado Columbine, *Aquilegia coerulea*



The gorgeous state flower of Colorado grows throughout the Rocky Mountains at elevations ranging from 6,000 to 10,000 feet. They can tolerate different soil types, except heavy, poorly drained ones, preferring rich moist soil with light to moderate shade. Their pretty clump-forming flowers bloom April-July and readily self seed. Columbines are great for attracting hummingbirds, butterflies, and bees. In 1899, children in Colorado voted to make it the state flower and in 1925 the state gave the flower protected status.

## Watershed Words

### Understanding Phenology: Tracking Nature's Calendar for Watershed Health

A note from Executive Director Alli Schuch

As the seasons shift, nature awakens and our surroundings change daily: from the sounds of different

birds than those we hear in winter to green leaves unfurling and flowers in bloom. Have you ever paused to consider the intricate timing of these changes? Welcome to the world of phenology - the study of cyclic and seasonal natural phenomena - such as the timing of plant blooming, bird migrations, and insect emergence. It's like nature's calendar, influenced by climate, weather patterns, and other environmental factors.

Our home watershed is a hotspot of phenological activity, with diverse flora and fauna responding to the changing seasons. From the first pasque flower we find in the meadow to the great blue herons returning to nest in the cottonwoods, there's always something exciting happening in our environment. I have started to mark my calendar when my first bulbs bloom in my garden (eight days earlier this year than last), and I can go to a [website](#) that shows the monarch butterfly migrations.

Why does phenology matter for our watershed? The answer lies in its profound implications for ecosystem health and resilience. By closely monitoring phenological events, we gain valuable insights into the impacts of climate change, habitat loss, and other environmental stressors on our local ecosystems. For instance, shifts in the timing of flowering and leaf-out can disrupt crucial pollinator-plant relationships potentially threatening biodiversity and food security. Changes in migration patterns may indicate shifts in habitat availability or resource availability impacting the delicate balance of our ecosystems.

Phenology serves as a powerful (and fun!) way that we can deepen our connection to the natural world and strengthen our stewardship of the environment. By paying attention to the subtle changes unfolding around us, we not only enrich our understanding of the world but also empower ourselves to make informed decisions that benefit both people and nature. Check out the [USA National Phenology Network](#), [Monarch Watch](#), or [Journey North](#) to learn about some really cool tracking and monitoring projects.

I encourage you to celebrate and protect the rich biodiversity of the Fountain Creek Watershed through the lens of phenology. Together, we can ensure a future where the rhythms of nature continue to thrive, sustaining life and inspiring wonder in all who call this watershed home.

Happy exploring!

Alli Schuch

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## 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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