



Fountain Creek Chronicles December 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!



©Jim O'Donnell

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

Walk Your Wintry Watershed

by Susan Finzel, Pueblo Outreach Coordinator

Colorado winters tend to push people inside, but there are many sunny days to enjoy. With less strain from blazing hot temperatures, a winter walk along Fountain Creek can be an enjoyable and refreshing outing. It's an opportunity to see nature slow down and adapt. Get out along the trail system and parks and grab the small, but mighty Vitamin D, which boosts happiness.

Here are some tips for a winter walk especially to ensure your safety:

- 1. Dress in layers.** Multiple light layers can help keep the body insulated while allowing heat to circulate without overheating.
- 2. Cover your head (at minimum ears!) and hands.** Avoid frostbite by covering those vulnerable areas of the body. Any exposed skin loses heat fast, not just the head.
- 3. Footwear.** Make sure your boot or shoe has more traction than a typical athletic shoe. A snowy path may be deceiving and have ice underneath. Walk slowly and deliberately. It's a good idea to bring trekking poles or a walking stick to steady your steps. Look into ice cleats that you can attach to the bottom of any boot or shoe.
- 4. Grab a scarf or your Creek Week buff.** Cold air can agitate the lungs. Wrap the scarf or pull the buff over your nose and mouth to prevent the icy sting from the air.
- 5. Wear bright colors.** Winters are known for dark mornings and dark afternoons. Wear bright clothing and reflective gear to ensure others see you walking.
- 6. Pick your route.** Fountain Creek has some excellent walking and biking trails. [Fountain Creek Regional Trail Information](#)
- 7. Warm up.** Do some easy stretches for the legs, feet, and back. Touch the toes, flex the knees, and twist at the waist a few times to limber up.
- 8. Always bring water.** On a winter walk or hike, it can be difficult to notice when your body is sweating. Perspiration combined with the extra layers of clothing and drier air can cause the body to become dehydrated without even noticing. Drinking water also helps you stay warmer in the winter months. Humans need water to help maintain a temperature balance and to burn fat for energy. Avoid sugary beverages such as soda or energy drinks.
- 9. Bring your binoculars and camera.** Keep your distance to not disturb wildlife feeding. Deer and waterfowl are active, and the birds are plentiful; one birder identified 34 different bird species in a two-hour time frame earlier this month!
- 10. Recover afterward.** Go indoors, remove layers, rest, and drink more water directly after an outing. Head to a café for a warm beverage. Post one or two photos to the [FCWD's Facebook page](#) noting your location and impressions. We'd love to see what you experienced on the Fountain!

Creek Week Recap Impactful IPA



The Fountain Creek Brewshed Alliance brewed our first-ever collaborative beer in celebration of the 10th Anniversary milestone. Members of the Brewshed Alliance gathered to brew a delicious IPA with expert leadership and generosity from Phantom Canyon's head brewer Charles McManus.

A couple of months after the brew day, the beer was ready to get put into kegs, dispersed to participating locations, get tapped and enjoyed. District staff was invited to Goat Patch's fundraising event "Bleating Heart Night" where \$1 from every beer sold was donated back to FCWD. Our staff got to try the beer for the very first time while announcing the release and celebrating the achievement with District supporters!

Impactful IPA is a refreshing blend of citrus and pine. "It's sweet, bright, and clear," shared Charles

McManus.

Eleven Brewshed Alliance locations tapped a keg of Impactful IPA at their breweries and \$1 of every pint sold was gifted to FCWD to support watershed health initiatives. This is the Brewshed member's way of giving back to the source that makes beer possible and ensuring that downstream communities can also enjoy this precious resource. "This beer represents the partnership of the Brewshed Alliance which promotes clean water and sustainable practices and the incredible achievements that Creek Week has made over the last 9 years of existence," stated Hannah Mooney, Watershed Outreach Coordinator.

Try it today before it's gone! **OCC Brewery** still has a keg tapped. Keep on the lookout for our 2024 collaborative brew.

Photo credit: [Phantom Canyon Instagram](#)

Fountain Creek Brewshed® Alliance



The Brewshed® Alliance was featured in Thirst Colorado Magazine this month!

Click the button to read "South Colorado Breweries Dive in for Conservation."

[Thirst Article](#)

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



DECEMBER TOPIC
The Twelve Days of Christmas:
Colorado Bird Edition



December 20th, 6pm
Brues Alehouse Brewing Co
120 E Riverwalk
Pueblo, CO 81003

Let's get festive! The 12 days of Christmas span between Christmas Day and Epiphany which historically were often a time of rest, feasting, gathering with loved ones, and general merrymaking. Our guest speaker, Dr. Claire Ramos, Assoc. Professor of Biology at CSU Pueblo, will share info about the birds of the well-known carol and their species found in Colorado.

Please RSVP to fcwdaa@gmail.com
Attendees receive \$1 off beer



Brewshed Alliance Featured Partner

Brues Alehouse Brewing Co
 120 Riverwalk Place, Pueblo, CO 81003

The Pueblo Riverwalk has direct, easy access to Brues Alehouse, the first FCWD Brewshed Alliance member in the "Home of Heroes." This brewery, restaurant, and vibrant live music venue hosts Liquid Lectures and meeting lunches, and has given yearly discounts to Creek Week cleanup volunteers. You can bike the Fountain Creek Trail, connect to the Arkansas River Trail, and pedal right up to the patio at Brues. Thank you to manager Tony and event staff Kaci and Ryan for your Watershed support!



Upcoming Events



Richard's Rubbish Roundup
Tuesdays, 4-6 pm
 Glen Ave parking lot across from
 the HAS Demonstration Garden

Richard's Rubbish Roundup works to clean up Monument Valley Park South every Tuesday. This is one of the most used and neglected public spaces in the downtown area. Meet at the parking lot off Glen Ave across from the HAS Demonstration Garden. Supplies will be provided (trash bags, gloves, safety vests, trash grabbers, etc). Everyone is invited back to Rico's Cafe for a complimentary house wine or draft beer and discounted appetizers after the cleanups. All ages are welcome! 17 and under must be accompanied by an adult. Cleanups will take place Dec 12, Dec 19, take a break Dec 26, and resume Jan 2, 2024. **REGISTER**

Sustainability Skill Share
Saturday, December 9, 9 am-12 pm
 Mile High Youth Corps
 417 E Vermijo Ave, Colorado Springs, CO 80903

Concrete Couch hosts ongoing 2nd Saturday Sustainability Skill Shares. This month's is in partnership with Mile High Youth Corps and takes place at its warehouse. Learn how to sharpen tools, collage, build benches and more this month. A delicious community

2nd Saturday Sustainability Skill Share
DEC 9TH from 9 AM TO NOON

Mile High Youth Corps
(417 E. Vermijo Ave, 80903)
Activities:
Collage, Sharpening tools, Build an insulated blanket for Food to Power, Build a bench, Make a community lunch

Email: caitlin@concretecouch.org



lunch for all participants will be provided. [REGISTER](#)



Seed Saturdays
Saturday, December 9, 12-1:30 pm
Manitou Springs Public Library

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. Please note, this week's event occurs at a different time than usual.

[LEARN MORE](#)

S'mores Off 2023
Hosted by Generation Wild of the Pikes Peak Region

Monday, December 11, 5-7:30 pm
Meadows Park Community Center
1943 S El Paso Ave, Colorado Springs, CO 80905

The S'mores Off is a fundraiser, friendly cooking competition, and community outreach all-in-one! Come out and support this fun, family-friendly winter gathering. Taste test all of the orgs s'mores recipes and vote for your favorites! The winner receives additional funding for community-centered programming.

This year's competitors include:

- Blackpackers
- Catamount Institute
- Fountain Creek Watershed District
- Kids on Bikes
- Leave No Trace
- Mile High Youth Corps
- Rocky Mountain Field Institute
- Trails and Open Space Coalition
- YMCA Camp Shady Brook



[LEARN MORE](#)

Great American Cleanup
Save the Date
Saturday, April 27, 2024

The Great American Cleanup is hosted by Keep America Beautiful. It's the nation's latest community improvement program and takes place annually in 20,000 communities.

The Fountain Creek Watershed District assists in hosting in our region. We've scheduled April 27th for this one-day springtime cleanup. Participants of all ages and abilities are invited to volunteer and clean up a park, waterway, open space, or drainage ditch. Registration is coming soon so keep on the lookout!



2023 GAC Highlights!



Great American Cleanup Sites

Have you come across areas in the watershed filled with litter and unsightly trash? We would love your input on identifying locations that need to be cleaned up. Help us ensure our Cleanup volunteers concentrate their efforts where they are needed most. Click the button below to share pictures and specific locations.



Featured Native Plant

Rocky Mountain Penstemon, aka Rocky Mountain Beardtongue, *Penstemon Strictus*

This is one of the easiest Penstemons to grow; we highly recommend it! *Penstemon strictus* loves well-drained soil and full sun, and is a great choice for “Coloradoscaping” your yard since it is drought-resistant and requires little supplemental water once established. It thrives in our high elevations and dry climate and makes for a great companion plant to your other natives. These beauties attract all sorts of beneficial wildlife including pollinators such as bees, songbirds, and hummingbirds. It can grow to three feet tall in varying colors of blue, purple, and violet with blooms lasting a month or so between May and August. It will self-seed naturally and return to bloom and beautify your site each year. The flower has two upper petals extending over the 3 longer lower petals, and inside sit the stamens with hairy, purple anthers - resembling an open mouth - hence the common name of beardtongue. With over 300 species and many more hybrids and cultivars, you’re sure to find a *Penstemon* that suits you.

Conservation Corner

As we approach the season of giving, let's unwrap the magic of sustainability. In a world that often sparkles with holiday excess, we invite you to join us in a mindful exploration of being a sustainable consumer during the Christmas season. We challenge you to embrace the joy of DIY and craft your Christmas presents and decorations with love and consideration for the planet. This is not only beneficial to our environment, but it also provides a wonderful opportunity to spend quality time with loved ones which is what the holidays are all about. The simple act of creating can transform the way we celebrate bringing forth a festive season that not only warms the heart but also leaves a gentle footprint on the Earth.

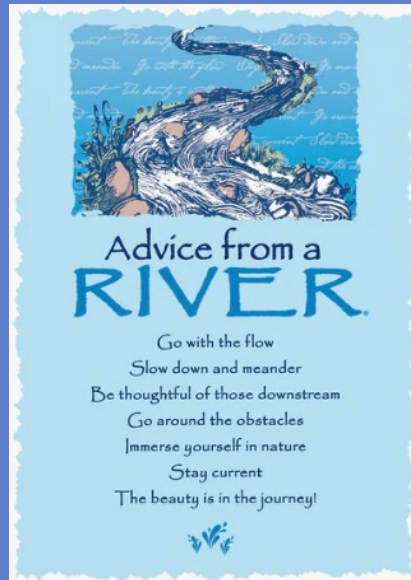
Here are some festive ideas courtesy of Pebble Magazine:

- Dried citrus garland
- Popcorn tree garland
- Recycled or fabric wrapping paper
- Natural place settings and centerpieces
- Origami stars
- Twig or cinnamon ornaments
- Christmas cards made with newspaper or recycled materials
- Handmade gifts
- DIY Christmas tree
- DIY Wreath



Check out [DIY Christmas Decorations](#) for more inspiration. If you incorporate conscious giving and decorating, share your creations with us. Email fcwdaa@gmail.com to get featured in next month's edition of Fountain Creek Chronicles!

On behalf of our Board of Directors and staff, we wish you and your family a wonderful holiday season and a prosperous 2024. See you around the watershed!



Stay Connected

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

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Us

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Website



Fountain Creek Watershed District | PO Box 8100, Colorado Springs, CO 80933

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