



Parks & Open Space

# Education and Outreach

Education & Outreach

2023 Annual Report

## STAFF

### **Summer Alameel**

Publicity & Outreach Specialist

### **Montserrat Alvarez**

Community Engagement Specialist

### **Angela Borland**

Natural History Program Specialist

### **Jim Drew**

Volunteer Coordinator at Agricultural Heritage Center

### **Amanda Hatfield**

Volunteer Work Program Senior Coordinator

### **Sheryl Kippen**

Cultural History Program Coordinator

### **Carlos Lerma**

Natural History Program Coordinator

### **Michelle Marrotti**

Education & Outreach Specialist

### **Pascale Fried (Jan.-Aug.)**

### **Eva Lark (Dec.)**

Supervisor of Education & Outreach

### **Additional Staff**

7 seasonal employees  
9 senior tax workers

## 2023 Highlights

- ◆ 253 nature and history programs were presented to 4,568 participants.
- ◆ Park patrollers had contact with 15,665 visitors on our trails and open spaces.
- ◆ 15,917 people visited our cultural history museums.
- ◆ 304 participants were provided with bilingual programming through new partnerships.



Volunteer leads a school field trip at Altona Schoolhouse as a part of our Cultural History programming.



New training videos for volunteers were created by Education & Outreach seasonal staff.



Volunteer Naturalists lead Natural History programming in our parks and open spaces.



Latino Conservation Week was co-hosted by Parks & Open Space and held at Cal-Wood Education Center.

**Cultural History**

162 programs

3,985 participants

15,917 museum visitors

100 volunteers



Volunteer tour guide shares history with school children at the Agricultural Heritage Center.



Volunteers share butter churning activity at school outreach event.

# Cultural History Education

- ◆ 100 cultural history volunteers contributed 2,692 hours. Volunteer positions included museum guides, gardeners, livestock caretakers, seamstresses/tailors, and living history demonstrators.
- ◆ New volunteer training videos were created by seasonal staff. These videos will provide information on feeding livestock and will aid new volunteers and serve as a refresher training for returning volunteers. Volunteer recruitment videos were also created for Agricultural Heritage Center (AHC) and Altona Schoolhouse opportunities.
- ◆ The AHC participated for a second year in a multi-site program Eco-Cycle developed for school groups. At the AHC, tours focus on how farmers follow the “3 R’s” by reducing, reusing, and recycling. This program served 17 school classes.
- ◆ Barnyard Critter Day continues to be a success. This year we had 534 attendees. Yoga on the Farm, Fun on the Farm, and Hammering on the Farm returned as public programs and were well received.
- ◆ AHC staff collaborated with Harvest of All First Nations to host its Corn Festival. This two-day event hosted around 800 visitors and opened up new opportunities to reach a more diverse audience.
- ◆ AHC staff collaborated with the Longmont Museum and Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art to participate in their agriculture exhibit with an art installation at the AHC. The installation occupied the McIntosh Barn from early May to early September. Our partners held programs to complement the exhibit.
- ◆ The Nederland Mining Museum hosted more than 200 visitors on July 2 and 200 visitors on Sept. 17. These record-setting days show the potential of our museum attendance.
- ◆ Hard Rock Mining Tours and Cardinal Mill Open Houses were held again this season. A new route for the Hard Rock Mining Tours was created that encompasses a visit to the Assay’s Office and Gold Hill.
- ◆ Walker Ranch hosted two Heritage Day public programs and two weeks of School Days programs, which netted 514 participants.
- ◆ 121 people visited the historic Altona School during summer open houses. Altona School was also shared with the St. Vrain Valley Pioneer Association.
- ◆ The Dougherty Museum re-opened for its first regular season post-COVID. The season finished with the ever-popular Yesteryear Farm Show. Boulder County Cultural History staff continue to support the local non-profit by hiring and paying salaries for seasonal staff during the summer months.

**Natural History**

152 programs

3,201 participants

101 volunteer naturalists



Volunteer Naturalists led Raptor Driving programs during the winter months.



Volunteer Naturalist Joan Lutz leads a presentation at the 2023 new naturalist training session.

# Natural History Education

- ◆ 101 volunteer naturalists contributed 4,540 hours planning, preparing, and presenting interpretive and educational programs. This is more than double the volunteer hours from 2022.
- ◆ Requested programs continue to trend upwards, with 68 programs this year. Despite having 21 cancelled programs caused mostly by the wet spring weather, the NH program hosted 152 programs in 2023.
- ◆ Bilingual- or Spanish-language programs continued this year with four interpretative programs. Highlights include a night hike in October for families in the Nature Kids/ Jovenes de la Naturaleza program and a family-friendly program at Heil Valley Ranch in May with Casa de la Esperanza, a housing community in Longmont.
- ◆ Participation in programming increased by 50% because of the significant number of requested school programs. School group class sizes were larger and more programs were conducted. Another factor was the reopening of classrooms to our volunteers post-COVID. This change allowed our volunteer naturalists to provide programming to many classes in one day.
- ◆ New strategies were implemented in 2023 to boost public program attendance. These strategies included staggered registration open dates for each program and tracking participant cancellations.
- ◆ Overall, we reached a wide range of audiences: 61% of requested programs were for elementary-aged participants, followed by 22% for adults and seniors. New family-oriented programs brought in a new demographic we are capturing called “mixed ages.” Four percent of our requested programming and 6% of our public programming fell into this new category. More programs to serve families and marginalized communities will continue in 2024.
- ◆ The Volunteer Naturalists are critical to the success of the Natural History program. Volunteer Naturalists provided over 96% of the interpretation to groups in 2023, compared to 90% in 2022.
- ◆ Natural History staff provided the volunteer naturalists with 15 Learning Opportunities throughout the year. These opportunities include free training, such as CPR, AED, and Basic First Aid, as well as volunteer workdays, field trips, naturalist-themed lectures and workshops.
- ◆ In 2023, the Volunteer Naturalist program welcomed in 23 new graduates. To become a volunteer naturalist, participants must complete a 10-week intensive training program that covers a variety of topics related to Parks & Open Space.

**Program Volunteers**

581 park patrollers

127 work projects  
volunteers

10 writers & illustrators



Trailhead display included a dog cooling station.



Volunteers collect data that will help the department monitor resources over time.

## Informal Education & Outreach

- ◆ **Trailhead Displays:** 2,189 park visitors stopped by various of our 48 trailhead displays. The majority of displays were scheduled on weekends during peak-use hours, and the themes included: Abert’s squirrel, Altona Schoolhouse, badger, black bear, bobcat, coyote, dog safety & regulations, elk management, golden eagle, heron, leave-no-trace, moose, mountain bike trail share with bike bells, mountain lion, nests, rattlesnake, squirrels, turkey, and wildflowers. Trailhead displays were offered at Anne U. White, Betasso Preserve, Caribou Ranch, Coalton Trailhead, Hall Ranch, Heil Valley Ranch, Hessie Trailhead, Mud Lake, Pella Crossing, Ron Stewart Preserve at Rabbit Mountain, Twin Lakes, Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat, and Walker Ranch .
- ◆ **Park Patrollers:** 49 Volunteer Ranger Corps (VRC) and 71 Boulder Mountain Bike Patrol (BMBP) spoke with visitors on open space properties. Park Patrollers provided 2,160 hours of volunteer time. This uniformed presence encourages responsible use of open space. Rangers observed and/or contacted 15,665 visitors in the parks this year.
- ◆ **Fishing Events:** We held two Catfish Nights events at Carolyn Holmberg Preserve at Stearns Lake. Thirty-two anglers attended the two night event which allowed fishing until 11p.m. on the property. Twenty-four people attended the Junior and Senior Fishing Derby in October and the annual Senior Fish Off in April. Both events are held at the Wally Toevs Pond at Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat. Fishing partners (one senior and one junior) worked together to fish for prizes. In collaboration with the Housing and Human Services Prevention Programs team and Colorado Parks & Wildlife, we were able to offer a low-income family fishing clinic on the free fishing weekend in June, with educational stations, fishing equipment loans, and gift certificates for annual fishing licenses. This event was taught by bilingual Resource Protection and Education & Outreach staff, with half of our participants speaking Spanish. Thank you to the BCPOS Foundation for funding this great opportunity for 30 participants!
- ◆ **Volunteer Work Projects:** 1,577 volunteers participated in one-day projects on open space properties. During these 127 projects, volunteers learned about a property’s cultural and natural resources and how their work that day played in the overall management of the property.
- ◆ **Partnership Program:** The partnership program was re-launched with new structure that included hour requirements and participation expectations. Six partners successfully committed to the new program and completed between 90-120 hours of service. Our 2023 partners include: Cemex, Emerson-Micro Motion, KBI Biopharma, New Vista High School, Qualcomm Inc., and Verily.

## Informal Education & Outreach



A bilingual family fishing clinic included interpretation by parks staff.



Seasonal staff provide shelter talks.



2023 Education & Outreach Staff at the annual volunteer picnic.

- ◆ **Shelter Talks:** Our seasonal Education & Outreach staff provided semi-formal talks for groups who reserved a group picnic shelter. Groups could select time for a park naturalist to drop by for ~20 minutes to present information about the property, a specific topic, or just to answer questions about the park. We talked with 144 participants and received positive feedback about the opportunity.
- ◆ **Local Town Festivals:** We spoke with 1,394 people about BCPOS properties and management activities at four festivals held in unincorporated Boulder County communities: Erie’s Town Festival, Superior’s National Trails Day, Lafayette’s Earth Day festival, and Longmont’s Pride festival.
- ◆ **Artist Residency:** Five artists stayed at Caribou Ranch as part of the Artist-in-Residence Program: a crafter, a photographer, a writer, and two painters. This program provides the opportunity for artists to pursue their work in an inspiring landscape and, in turn, create a legacy of art for future generations.
- ◆ **“Images” Magazine:** 688 subscribers received hard copies, and 1,788 people received electronic copies of the quarterly magazine that highlights the department’s management activities, natural resources, recreational opportunities, and local history. Our mailing list decreased in 2023 because of running a national change of address report for the first time.
- ◆ **Nature Detective Club:** Between Memorial Day weekend and Labor Day weekend, 110 children explored nature and recorded their observations by completing a “mystery guide,” earning a prize for their future outdoor explorations; 139 guides were mailed in as complete.
- ◆ **Email Listserv Communications:** 1,874 people received monthly notices about hikes & events, and 1,476 people received notices for kids’ events. These numbers are double our email lists from previous years. We also have 3,073 people on our volunteer newsletter list.
- ◆ **Community Engagement:** Considerable efforts went into building intentional partnerships this year not only with the Latinx community but with local Indigenous communities. New partnerships were developed with Latino Outdoors, Thorne Nature Experience, Indigenous People’s Community Church, Sister Carmen, and Harvest of All First Nations. We co-hosted the largest Latino Conservation Week event in the Front Range, created access for ceremonial use on our open space property, and hosted The Corn Festival at the Agricultural Heritage Center. We sponsored the Eco-Inclusive Summit for Action, which allowed 12 staff members to dive deeper into their EDI practices.



## Parks & Open Space

Resource Management  
Education & Outreach

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