



## Fountain Creek Chronicles February 2024

*The monthly e-newsletter about your home watershed*

### Love Your Watershed



*Western bluebird by Jim O'Donnell.*

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

### Spread the Love

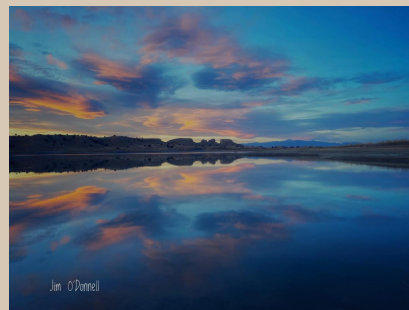
by Susan Finzel, Pueblo Outreach Coordinator

It is the perfect time to celebrate the fact that the sun is halfway on its advance from the winter solstice to the spring equinox and St. Valentine's Day is just a week away! The temperature is warming outside and so are our hearts. As we consider those we cherish, let's remember our beloved home watershed and its immense gifts to us.

**Water brings life to all ecosystems.** The plants and animals, including humans, all owe their existence to water. Fountain Creek is an artery that moves water through the landscape while providing habitats for all sizes from tiny creatures (benthic macroinvertebrates - BMI) up to large beasts like deer, moose, and black bear. Are you a bird lover? The watershed is a fantastic place for birdwatching and you don't have to be an expert to appreciate them or spot them. Just find a quiet place and listen for songs and calls.

**Water shapes the land.** Fountain Creek watershed boasts a vast elevation drop from 14,000 ft. (Pikes Peak) to 4,600 (the plains and Pueblo). In arid southern Colorado, plants help us know where the water is and landforms help us understand where water has been. The gradients and diverse soil types determine weather patterns, how and where we build homes, grow food, and travel. Geography creates vistas that we love to capture in beautiful photos.

**Water creates community.** There are two counties and seven municipalities in the Fountain Creek watershed, all communities connected by the inflow and outflow of H<sub>2</sub>O and our dependence on it. Home is where the heart is, right? Many of us enjoy walking, biking, and sitting by waterways together. The extensive trails alongside streams,



feeder creeks, and parks allow for such shared enjoyment for all.

Remember to return some love to our watershed for all it provides. Collect litter, take a senior for a short walk in nature, or fill a neighbor's bird feeder. We love you, Fountain Creek watershed.

## Project Update: Masciantonio Trust Bank Restoration

In the northern part of Pueblo County sits the Masciantonio Trust, one of the District's most successful creek restoration projects to date completed in 2018. This land was used for pasture and irrigated agriculture, but had been experiencing significant erosion due to Fountain Creek's erratic nature. Thanks to \$2 million of the \$50 million Southern Delivery System funding the District has for projects, the District was able to step in to protect and restore this verdant stretch of land along Fountain Creek.

The project site consisted of approximately 1,500 feet along Fountain Creek that had been migrating to the west. The property was losing acres of productive agricultural lands and creating significant sediment loading into the creek - around 13,653 tons per year! A series of seven bendway weirs (submerged, upstream-angled stone structures) were installed along the west bank to redirect flows away from the eroding area. Three foot rocks were buried nine feet below water level. Channel and bank improvements were made, including a robust revegetation effort consisting of over 5,000 willow and cottonwood plantings, and riparian and upland plant seeding.

A 2023 site visit and assessment concluded that the weirs are performing as designed, there is no longer any significant sediment contribution in this area, and the vegetation has successfully established creating prime riparian habitat. This investment is a great example of how the District can play a role in protecting and enhancing the watershed. We look forward to sharing more of our project work in the coming months.



## FCWD Hosting Rain Barrel Sale!

We are excited to offer the easy-setup certified B-Corp Ivy rain barrels for sale for a limited time! You can simultaneously save by purchasing from FCWD and share as a small amount of each rain barrel sale will contribute to clean water initiatives. An option to donate a little extra is also available.

Did you know a maximum of two rain barrels with a combined storage of 110 gallons or less are now allowed at each household in Colorado? Rain barrels not only save money on your water bills, but also reduce runoff and stormwater pollution, and plants will be happier with rain water that does not contain chlorine.

Visit our sale website by Rain Water Solutions now through April 1st to make your order. Order pick up will be held at El Paso Parks Maintenance Shop on April 12th & 13th.

## Brewshed 2024

In January, the Fountain Creek Brewshed Alliance had the privilege of exploring the cutting-edge Colorado Springs Utilities' Environmental Lab. Following the tour, we convened for a Happy Hour graciously hosted by Local Relic - a long standing Brewshed member. The Annual Meeting was a blend of education, connection, and planning, setting the stage for a year filled with impactful initiatives. Cerberus Brewing has joined our crew of beer-loving, watershed-cherishing breweries. Get ready for the new Brewshed Alliance Map coming soon; you'll want to visit them all!



The Fountain Creek Brewshed Alliance Presents:  
Liquid Lecture Series 2024



## FEBRUARY TOPIC

### BUILDERS OF ECOSYSTEMS: BEAVERS THEN & NOW

FEBRUARY 15TH  
6-7 PM  
GOAT PATCH  
BREWERY  
BEER GARDEN



Learn why beavers are coined as nature's architects at our captivating Liquid Lecture featuring Jim Hunter, a distinguished zoology expert. Join us for an evening of education, inspiration, and appreciation for these unsung heroes of our watershed!

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



### Brewshed Alliance Featured Partner

#### Goat Patch Brewing Company

2727 N Cascade Ave #123  
Colorado Springs, CO 80907  
Colorado Springs, CO

Goat Patch Brewing Co. is a long-time friend of the watershed. Located in the former Lincoln School, Goat Patch brings an awesome community element to the Roswell neighborhood through their numerous workshops and events. They have hosted many Liquid Lectures over the years and will host FCWD for a Bleating Heart Night fundraiser in September 2024!

## Upcoming Events

Click on the image to learn more or register!

### Richard's Rubbish Roundup

Glen Ave parking lot across from the  
Horticulture Art Society Demonstration Garden

Presented by Peter Dinklage's Dinerettes

## RICHARD'S RUBBISH ROUNDUP

EVERY TUESDAY! 3PM - 5PM

Join our weekly trash roundup team, and help keep our community clean!

Head to Peter Dinklage's Dinerettes for a free drink (beer) for those who are accompanied by an adult.

TEAMS MEET HERE (PARKING LOT OF THE MARIANA HOUSE OFF BLVD BETWEEN CASCADE & F-25)

Every Tuesday, 3-5 PM

Help clean up Monument Valley Park every week! Supplies provided (trash bags, gloves, safety vests, trash grabbers, etc). Volunteers are invited to Rico's Cafe for a complimentary house wine or draft beer and discounted appetizers! All ages are welcome; 17 and under must be accompanied by an adult.

### 2nd Saturday Sustainability Skill Share

FEBRUARY 10TH from 9 AM TO NOON

**Mile High Youth Corps**  
(417 E. Vermijo Ave, 80903)

**Activities:**  
Collage, Sharpening tools, Build a bench, Make a community lunch and more

**Email:** caitlin@concretecouch.org

**Sustainability Skill Share**  
Mile High Youth Corps  
February 10th, 9 AM-12 PM

Concrete Couch hosts ongoing 2nd Saturday Sustainability Skill Shares. This month: learn how to sharpen tools, how to build a bench, and the art of collage at Mile High Youth Corps (417 E. Vermijo Ave. 80903). A delicious community lunch for all participants will be provided.

### Winter Fun at Fox Run

Saturday, February 10  
10 AM-2 PM  
\$5 per person  
Fox Run Regional Park  
2110 Stella Drive, CO

Campfire with hotdogs and marshmallows  
Wagon rides • Games • Storytelling • Craft • Cocoa

Pre-register here or CASH ONLY day of!

All proceeds support the future Fox Run Nature Center

**Winter Fun at Fox Run**  
Fox Run Park  
February 10th, 10 AM-2 PM

Embrace winter's beauty with friends and family at Fox Run. Witness puppet shows and stories, make crafts, roast marshmallows and hot dogs, ride a hay wagon through the park, and pawticipate in a dog costume parade and contest with a special prize! Learn about the future Fox Run Nature Center and contribute to its creation. All proceeds from the event support Friends of El Paso County Nature Centers. \$5/person.

**Manitou Seed Library**  
Est. 2012

**Seed Saturdays**  
Manitou Springs Public Library  
February 10th, 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.

**Watershed Wonders**  
Unravel the mystery of water sustainability in this interactive challenge!

**Watershed Wonders Series**  
Garden of the Gods Visitors Center  
February 24th, 2 PM-4 PM

Join us for the liftoff of "Watershed Wonders: A Three-Part Series with NASA and Local Allies." Dive into the depths of our local watershed, unraveling the mystery of water sustainability in Colorado Springs. Paddle through a fun and interactive cafe challenge and engage in a thrilling round of a "Water Wonders" Jeopardy-style game. It's not just about water—it's a splashy, knowledge-packed adventure toward a sustainable future!

**ECOSYSTEMS**  
— as models for restoring our —  
**ECONOMIES**

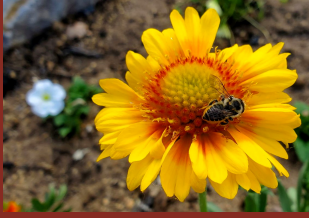
John H. Giordanengo

**Ecosystems as Models  
for Restoring our Economies**  
Memorial Hall, Manitou Springs  
March 14th, 6 PM

You're invited to an enlightening presentation from John Giordanengo, a restoration ecologist, national speaker and Colorado author. Discover how the symbiotic relationship between our environment and economic development can lead to a more sustainable future. Mr. Giordanengo will share insights on aligning environmental values with economic goals. This event is a collaborative effort with sponsors including Manitou Pollinators, City of Manitou Springs, Wild Connections, Fountain Creek Watershed District, Colorado Speakers Bureau, Beth Chorpensing, and the Butterfly Pavilion.

**Beekeeping School**  
Bear Creek Nature Center

March 16th & 17th, 8:30 AM-3:45 PM



Pikes Peak Beekeepers Association is hosting a two-day seminar covering all aspects of beekeeping in the Pikes Peak region: how to acquire bees, equipment, bee biology, and management through the seasons. All lectures are presented by local beekeepers with years of collective knowledge. The book *First Lessons in Beekeeping* is included. Tickets start at \$65.



### Western Landscape Symposium

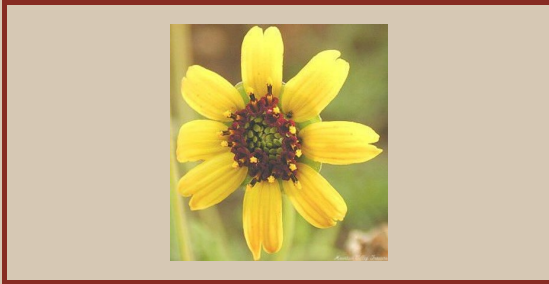
Pueblo Community College  
March 30th, 9 AM-3:30 PM

This is an educational forum to promote the creation of appealing and sustainable landscapes in southeastern Colorado, incorporating water wise garden practices and plants adapted to local climate and soil conditions. We're very excited to announce our Keynote Speaker, world renowned ecologist and conservationist Dr. Doug Tallamy, who will speak about how changing the way we landscape can stitch together fragmented habitats that support critical biodiversity.

## Featured Native Plant

### Chocolate Flower, *Berlandiera lyrata*

Also known as green-eyed lyre leaf or chocolate daisy, these beauties are classified as an herb and can garnish your salads as well as highlight your bouquets. The flowers of this member of the Aster family have a delicious chocolate aroma and are a great choice for your Colorado-scape yard. The two inch daisy-like blooms have yellow rays and a maroon center with flowers opening in the morning that become droopy with the heat of the day. Chocolate flowers prefer full sun, well drained soils, are drought tolerant/resistant, and will bloom all summer long. This native attracts a variety of pollinators including bees, butterflies, and birds and is deer resistant. These plants will die back to the ground in winter and return with a larger crown each spring, growing up to two feet across.



## Get Involved!



### Seeking Brewshed Alliance Ambassadors!

This unique partnership with 25 breweries across the watershed is looking for outgoing, water and beer-loving volunteers.

Receive training, support events, get a Brewshed hat, and help promote the beer-water connection! Must be 21+ years old.



### Great American Cleanup

Keep America Beautiful's Great American Cleanup is the nation's largest community improvement program which takes place annually in over 15,000 communities.

The Fountain Creek Watershed District will collaborate with friends like YOU to bring this 1-day cleanup to our watershed. Click on the flyer to share your interest.



Inquire  
Here

Learn More

## Watershed Words Love is in the Air

A note from Executive Director Alli Schuch

As February unfolds, stores are filled with pink and red flowers, candies, and stuffies, so clearly love is in the air. Some of my favorite love stories are the heartwarming tales of unexpected animal friendships. In the animal kingdom, love transcends the boundaries of species – reminding us that just like humans, animals can form bonds based on companionship, care, and understanding.

There's Owen, the baby hippo, and Mzee, the tortoise, who were introduced at a rescue facility and have been inseparable ever since. Even a 130-year age difference can't come between these besties!

Or Bubbles, the elephant, and Bella, the black lab. Bubbles was rescued from ivory poachers in Africa and Bella was left behind by a previous owner. They can be found - always together - at the Myrtle Beach Safari in South Carolina.

There's a group of small-clawed otters who have taken a liking to two orangutans at the Belgium Zoo. The otters live in a river in the orangutan exhibit, and it seems they have an affinity for each other. A spokesperson for the zoo says they live together for enrichment and entertainment. "It makes life more fun and interesting for both animal species."

You may remember Koko, the gorilla, who learned over 1,000 signs and comprehended over 2,000 words of spoken English. Koko had a kitten that she "adopted" and nurtured. You can read all about it in the book *Koko's Kitten*.

These stories of unlikely animal friendships should serve as a reminder that love can be found in unexpected places. Let us celebrate love in all its forms, extend our compassion to the natural world around us, and embrace our responsibility to protect and nurture our home watershed. After all, in this season of love, our commitment to preserve the beauty of our environment is a testament to the love we hold for the planet and all its inhabitants.

~Alli Schuch



Photo: Migrated Image



Photo: Pascale Jones/Pairi Daiza



Photo: The Gorilla Foundation



Photo: Barry Bland

### 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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