



## Fountain Creek Chronicles March 2024

*The monthly e-newsletter about your home watershed*



Stunning Colorado Winter 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!

### Women of the Watershed

This March, in honor of Women's History Month, Fountain Creek Watershed District would like to take this opportunity to recognize the extraordinary women of our home watershed working hard on restoration, conservation, and education in our region. We have a remarkable team of females at the helm of FCWD - our current Board Chair is City of Fountain Councilwoman Tamara Estes, and our Executive Director is Alli Schuch. Other leading ladies include both Outreach Coordinators Hannah Mooney & Susan Finzel, and our Administrative Assistant Jordan Witteveen. (A new member is joining the team this month to balance out the female energy; keep scrolling to meet him and see the new role he will fill!)

Beyond the team of fantastic females at FCWD, we have numerous partners and supporters of the District who have brought incredible impacts to our watershed. Let's take a moment to meet a few of these wondrous women:



**Kylee Meyer**

How are you connected to FCWD? *"I have the joy of working at Bear Creek Nature Center as the program coordinator and thus, am closely tied to the beautiful Bear Creek. We work to steward our watershed through quarterly workdays with the Bear Creek Restoration Crew. One of the first events I led at Bear Creek was the Great*



**Jessica Mills**

How are you connected to FCWD? *"(I am) a board member - and have the honor of serving as the Vice Chair - representing the Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservancy District and a representative for Pueblo County below the confluence of Fountain Creek and the Arkansas River."*



**Susan Finzel**

What is your vision for the Fountain Creek watershed? *"I envision a watershed that has connectivity of the trail systems, but still maintains untouched open space. I yearn for cleaner waterways, and solutions for the unhoused who sometimes degrade the natural areas. The watershed can be an asset when governing agencies*

**American Cleanup!"**

What do you love about FCWD? "I love the way the community shows up to support the organizations and people that work so hard to ensure our community is heard, concerns have solutions, and future generations have access to a healthy ecosystem. We're so lucky to live here and I feel that folks here are distinctly aware of that and take the steps to put that awareness into action."

What is your vision for the Fountain Creek watershed? "My vision for the future of (FCWD) is its continued advocacy and education to the public for the watershed and its health, including reducing the sediment and pollutant flow downstream. The FCWD plays a huge role in the creek's health, which ultimately affects my operation (as a 3rd Gen farmer) below the confluence in Pueblo. I also hope to see more participation from the local officials with the FCWD as they are the voices the community looks to on important issues."

What do you love about FCWD? "I love the ecosystems and geography of the watershed from mountains to plains, and the wildlife diversity: birds, deer, moose, and even bears! I also love how people and kids can easily access the rigor and calmness of flowing water right near their neighborhoods."

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**Rain Barrel Sale**

FCWD's Rain Barrel Sale is going on now through April 1st! Order your 100% recycled BPA-free IVY RAIN BARREL today by clicking the image or scanning the QR code. You can opt to donate a little more toward FCWD's education programs and order downspout diverters to set up your new rain collection system.

Investing in a rain barrel isn't just great for your wallet—it's a win for your lawn and home watershed too. By harnessing rainwater, you not only conserve water during dry spells but also save on hefty water bills. Plus rain barrels help combat soil erosion and reduce stormwater runoff, protecting both your property and downstream neighbors from pollution. It's a win-win for your pocket and the planet!

**Calling all Watershed Warriors!**

Rain barrel pick up and Great American Cleanup material pick up will be held at El Paso Parks Maintenance Shop on April 12th & 13th. We would love the support of our Watershed Warriors to help us distribute for blocks of time on April 12th 1:30-6:30 PM &/or April 13th 8 AM-12 PM. Please reach out to **Hannah** with your interest and availability.



**Great American Cleanup**  
Saturday, April 27th

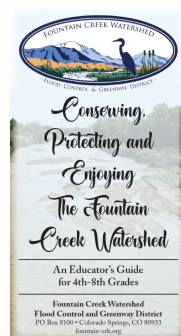
The Keep America Beautiful Great American Cleanup is the nation's largest community improvement program which takes place annually in over 15,000 communities.

The Fountain Creek Watershed District collaborates with friends like YOU to bring this 1-day cleanup to our watershed. Click on the flyer to share your interest in forming or joining a crew! Registration coming soon.



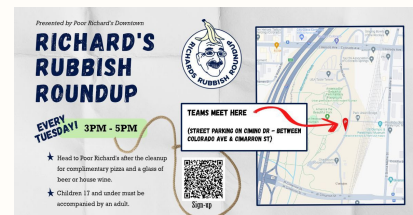
**Sun Soil Water Summit Recap**

Sun Soil Water Ag Summit 2024 was held February 23-24 at Pueblo Community College. FCWD's Pueblo Outreach Coordinator Susan Finzel presented on the benefits of Fountain Creek to farming and ranching operations, flood damage mitigation, and trails and open space advocacy. Susan met and gifted many participants with District swag. The Summit was hosted by FCWD partners: the CSU Extension



**New Educator's Guide Available!**

The *Conserving, Protecting and Enjoying the Fountain Creek Watershed Educator's Guide* is now available for free download on the District's webpage. The guide offers five modules that prompt students (4th-8th grade level) to research and learn about our watershed and environmental




**Richard's Rubbish Roundup Interview**

The innovation of environmentally minded community leader Richard Skorman paired with the support and expertise of Fountain Creek Watershed District has produced Richard's Rubbish Roundup: a weekly cleanup which takes place at parks in need of extra love! First up was Monument Valley Park and now America the Beautiful Park. Check out the podcast from Studio 809 to

Service-Pueblo and the Pueblo Food Project. Susan will attend the *Western Landscape Symposium* at the end of March to educate participants about native plantings, use of rain barrels, and water conservation.

stewardship. Educators can use the guide to creatively educate and inspire learners. Many interesting websites are referenced. This Guide was created for use in any school or informal setting in El Paso and Pueblo counties. Please share with educators you know!

learn more.



**Pikes Peak Women invites you to...**  
**WINE, WOMEN & CHOCOLATE**  
 HONORING & CELEBRATING HEROINES OF THE PIKES PEAK REGION  
 WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20  
 5:30 - 7:30 PM  
 COS CITY HUB  
 4304 AUSTIN BLUFFS PKWY.  
 Featuring wine from local distributors, chocolate delicacies and, most importantly, the women who lead our community.  
 BUY YOUR \$25 TICKET ONLINE!  
[bit.ly/wwc2024](http://bit.ly/wwc2024)

## Wine, Women & Chocolate

Local organization Pikes Peak Women will host their annual *Wine, Women & Chocolate* event on Wednesday, March 20 5:30-7:30 PM at COSCityHub to celebrate local women making impacts in the Pikes Peak community. Heroines to be honored include our very own Executive Director Alli Schuch, FCWD Board Member Alternate and Colorado Springs City Councilwoman Nancy Henjum, and our non-profit partner CONO's Executive Director Sara Vaas! The festivities are sure to be tasty and full of community building.

## Brewshed® Alliance

The Fountain Creek Brewshed Alliance Presents:  
 Liquid Lecture Series 2024




# MARCH TOPIC


## Wacky Watershed Weather

FOX21 Storm Team Chief Meteorologist Matt Meister will share his expertise about weather in the Fountain Creek Watershed and the shadow of Pikes Peak. Get ready for an interactive presentation with weather maps, timelapses, and plenty of time for questions!

**MARCH 21, 6-7 PM**  
**STORYBOOK BREWING**





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



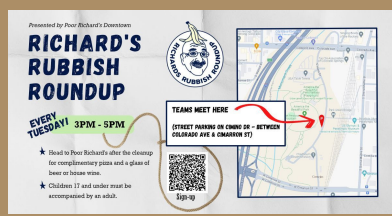
### Brewshed Alliance Featured Partner

**Storybook Brewing**  
 3121 A North El Paso St  
 Colorado Springs, CO 80907

Storybook Brewing in Colorado Springs is a nano brewery that focuses on real ingredients and fairy tale experiences! They host different food trucks daily with a variety sure to satisfy the cuisine curious. Drop in for arts & crafts nights, karaoke, and other themed events throughout the month. Visit Storybook on socials and in person for a legendary Liquid Lecture!

## Upcoming Events



**Richard's Rubbish Roundup**  
 EVERY TUESDAY! 3PM - 5PM  
 \*Based on Peter Richard's donation for complimentary pizza and a glass of beer on house wine.  
 \*Children 17 and under must be accompanied by an adult.

### Richard's Rubbish Roundup

\*NEW MEETING PLACE\*  
 Every Tuesday, 3-5 PM

Richard's Rubbish Roundup - in collaboration with FCWD - will meet at America the Beautiful Park on Cimino Dr (between Colorado Ave and Cimmaron St); see map for exact location. Supplies provided (trash bags, gloves, safety vests, trash grabbers, etc). Volunteers are invited to Rico's Cafe for complimentary pizza, a house wine or draft beer, and discounted appetizers! All ages are welcome; 17 and under

must be accompanied by an adult. Let's all work together to keep our beautiful city clean!



**Arkansas River Basin Water Forum**  
Otero College, La Junta, CO  
March 6th & 7th

Know Water, Know Colorado. In Colorado, water makes everything possible. To know water is to better understand our state. Since 1995, the Arkansas River Basin Water Forum has provided a friendly, constructive medium where individuals and organizations are able to explain their views and engage in open dialogue with other water users.



**Building for the Birds**  
March 9th, 10 AM - 12 PM

Build a nesting box for common backyard birds, learn who they are and their calls. An adult able to handle tools must accompany children. Bring a hammer and pliers if you have them. Other materials provided. Prepaid registration required. \$10/ member kit, \$12/non-member kit.



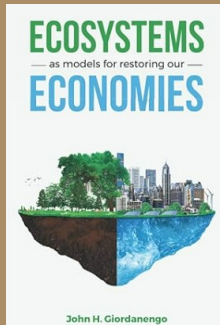
**Seed Saturdays**  
Manitou Springs Public Library  
March 9th, 11 AM-1 PM

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. Other resources will be available to learn how to grow and succeed with Front Range regional native species.



**TENACITY: Women in Conservation 2024**  
The Pinery at the Hill  
March 13th, 5-7 PM

Hosted by Palmer Land Conservancy, the annual TENACITY: Women in Conservation event celebrates the enduring and tenacious commitment of women who are dedicated to protecting Colorado's wide-open spaces and precious natural resources. It includes a fun and inspiring evening of conversation and good food with women who have blazed their own paths and are defining conservation in the 21st century.



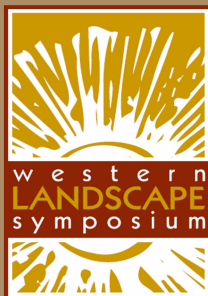
**Ecosystems as Models for Restoring our Economies**  
Memorial Hall, Manitou Springs  
March 14th, 6 PM

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 Chorpenning, 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**  
Palmer's Penstemon, *Penstemon palmeri*

This month's native is fragrant with large spikes of light pink flowers in early summer. Palmer's Penstemon is one of the 60 varieties of penstemon that can be found in Colorado. This is a heat-loving plant that needs well drained soils and can grow four to five feet tall. We recommend mulching with pea gravel instead of wood chips to allow for good air circulation. These beauties are great for attracting hummingbirds and bees - especially bumblebees. Seeds can be easily collected in mid-September when they become hard and dark in color. Gather the seeds by hand and share with friends and neighbors!



### Meet FCWD's Operations Manager

We are excited to bring to the District team Colorado Springs native Steve Rodriguez. Steve has 30 years of experience as a project manager with Colorado Springs Utilities and a degree in Construction Management. He will help oversee District improvement projects and related contracts. When not working, you can usually find Steve out on the trails walking the dogs or traveling with his wife exploring other cultures and cuisines. Welcome, Steve!

## Watershed Words Wacky Watershed Weather

A note from Executive Director Alli Schuch

*"It was one of those March days when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold: when it is summer in the light, and winter in the shade."* ~Charles Dickens

March is upon us which always comes with a whirlwind of wacky watershed weather. Will it come in like a lion and out like a lamb? Will the predicted "strong" El Nino result in a big, wet snowstorm or two? Should we start our garden seeds earlier given our recent 60+ degree days?

This erratic dance of the elements keeps us on our toes. One moment, parts of our watershed may be bathed in the soft glow of a sun-kissed morning beckoning us to venture outdoors and revel in the beauty of budding blossoms and awakening wildlife, while higher elevations could be suffering from yet another graupel or a hailstorm.

We get a wild mix in our watershed, no doubt. To help us all understand a little more about our local weather phenomena, FCWD is excited to host Fox 21's Chief Meteorologist Matt Meister as our Liquid Lecture presenter this month on Thursday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, 6pm at Storybook Brewing. Join us to see some crazy clouds, marvelous maps, and get your weather-related questions answered by our local amusing weatherman.

This spring is also a perfect time to pick up a rain barrel or two from our online sale! Time to save water and money by getting an easy to install barrel. Rain barrels collect runoff from your roof, allowing you to use natural rain water instead of treated water from the tap; your plants will thank you! Rain barrels also prevent water from running off your property and onto the street where it can pick up pollutants before entering local waterways.

As stewards of our watershed, we must adapt and respond to the ever-changing conditions that nature may throw our way. We work to restore the natural processes, enhance ecosystem services, and support a resilient and biodiverse watershed. As we navigate the twists and turns of springtime in our watershed, let us do so with a sense of wonder, gratitude, and reverence for the remarkable world in which we live.

Let's embrace it, cherish it, and protect it - one raindrop (or snowflake) at a time!

~Alli Schuch

## Stay Connected

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

Email Us

Visit Our Website



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

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