



**RMFI**  
ROCKY MOUNTAIN FIELD INSTITUTE

ANNUAL REPORT  
**2017**

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Rocky Mountain Field  
Institute conserves and  
protects public lands in  
Southern Colorado through  
volunteer-based trail  
and restoration projects,  
environmental education, and  
restoration research.

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## Letter from the Executive Director



*Jennifer Peterson*  
Executive Director

This year continued on the great success and momentum built in 2016 to further establish RMFI as the preeminent environmental stewardship organization in Southern Colorado. Our mission of public lands stewardship and the services we provide to our community and region have never been more important. At the national level, public lands continue to be front and center in a heated debate over access, usage, preservation, and conservation. At the same time, people are visiting public lands, from municipal parks and open spaces to state and national parks, at an increasing level. In Colorado Springs, for example, the

Garden of the Gods registered an estimated 5.8 million visitors in 2017 alone, far surpassing the previous estimates of 2 million annual visitors. This trend is indicative of visitation levels observed at other popular attractions in the region including North Cheyenne Canon Park, Red Rock Canyon Open Space, and Pikes Peak - America's Mountain.

Furthermore, the most recent outdoor recreation economic impact report completed by the Outdoor Industry Association in 2017 found that the outdoor recreation industry is a powerful force in the overall U.S. economy, with consumers spending \$887 billion annually on outdoor recreation and creating 7.6 million American jobs. At the state level, the economic impact of outdoor recreation registered a whopping \$28 billion in consumer spending, providing 229,000 jobs and an estimated \$2 billion in state and local tax revenue. In Colorado Springs alone, our public parks and open spaces support \$32.4 million in resident spending on sports, recreation, and exercise equipment annually; raise the value of nearby residential properties by \$502 million; and yield an annual medical cost savings of \$56.5 million.

Public lands, and the long-term health, sustainability, and stewardship of these public lands, are a critical component of the entire outdoor recreation industry, its collective economic impact, and perhaps more importantly, the health, well-being, and quality of life for millions of people in the state. At RMFI, we take seriously the role that we play in public lands conservation and stewardship, and are excited to share with you all that we accomplished in 2017!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Peterson".

Jennifer Peterson  
Executive Director



Rocky Mountain Field Institute protects and enhances the ecological health of our land and water resources by completing projects focused on watershed restoration, forest health, and creating sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities.

## STEWARDSHIP.

RMFI actively engages thousands of community volunteers and youth corps crew members every year to protect our most treasured public natural landscapes in Southern Colorado.



## EDUCATION.

Through experiential education opportunities, RMFI is helping foster an ethic of environmental responsibility, and training the next generation of conservation leaders.



## RESEARCH.

RMFI monitors the effectiveness of restoration and erosion control treatments at our project sites to better understand our impacts on ecosystem health.



# The Importance of RMFI's Work in Southern Colorado

Southern Colorado and the Pikes Peak Region are home to some of the world's most renowned treasured natural landscapes including Garden of the Gods, Pikes Peak, Barr Trail, and many others. The Pikes Peak Region sees an estimated 5.3 million visitors per year, the majority of which travel to the region to explore the vast systems of trails, parks, forests, and open spaces. According to a public opinion survey conducted by the City of Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Department in 2014, 90% of respondents stated they visit parks, trails, or open spaces within the city at least once per week.

While a tremendous asset from a quality of life and aesthetic point of view, the abundance of natural resources in the Pikes Peak Region presents significant challenges in the form of increased visitation and threats from wildfires and other natural disasters. In the past 5 years, Colorado Springs has experienced some of the worst natural disasters in the state's history. In 2012, the Waldo Canyon Fire burned over 18,000 acres including nearly 350 homes just west of the city. The very next year, the Black Forest Fire scorched over 14,000 acres northwest of the city and resulted in the loss of 486 homes and 2 lives. This fire remains the most destructive fire in the state's history.

Coupled with these catastrophic wildfires are post-fire flooding events that continue to pose significant threats to life and safety in downstream communities. Major flooding events have occurred within the city and surrounding communities since the Waldo Canyon Fire in 2012, culminating in the historic May 2015 rains that delivered over 12 inches of precipitation to the city and surpassed the previous record held since November 1894.

Colorado's outdoors face additional and growing threats on a number of other fronts as well. Increasing population, development pressures, and declining budgets in public agencies challenge the effective management of public lands in the state. As these threats grow, the possibility exists that increased degradation of these lands will make them less inviting and potentially irrelevant to future generations, eroding the very constituency needed to protect them.

With the capacity of public land management agencies dwindling, increasing reliance has been placed on nonprofit organizations like RMFI to fill the gaps with regard to conservation, restoration, and maintenance. RMFI's work directly addresses needs within our community through active, on-the-ground, volunteer-based stewardship and conservation projects on public lands impacted by historic fires and floods as well as increased recreational use.

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Rocky Mountain Field  
Institute envisions a world  
where our work fosters  
vibrant and healthy natural  
systems that are respected  
and cared for by the public.

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RMFI actively engages thousands of community volunteers and youth corps crew members every year in the completion of hands-on trail and restoration projects that help to protect and conserve our most treasured public natural landscapes in Southern Colorado.

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2017

## STEWARDSHIP PROJECTS

*For the past 35 years, RMFI has accomplished its mission by completing key environmental projects in recreational areas throughout the Southern Rocky Mountains and Colorado Plateau. RMFI has received national, state, and local recognition for trail construction and restoration that is widely regarded as some of the finest work of its kind accomplished in the region. Our project docket is diverse and growing. A brief snapshot of our key project sites in 2017 is included below.*

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**BARR TRAIL:** In partnership with the City of Manitou Springs and Friends of the Peak, RMFI continued its stewardship work along the Incline Connector Trail and the lower 3 miles of Barr Trail. The primary focus of work this year was completing trail improvements to increase trail sustainability including drainage improvements, erosion control, gully restoration, and fencing.

**BEAR CREEK WATERSHED:** RMFI expanded its involvement in habitat protection efforts in the Bear Creek Watershed through sediment mitigation and trail closure, restoration, and decommissioning. All work efforts focused on protection and enhancement of aquatic habitat for the threatened greenback cutthroat trout, Colorado's state fish.

**BLACK FOREST REGIONAL PARK:** RMFI partnered with El Paso County to continue post-fire stabilization efforts in areas of the park impacted by the Black Forest Fire in 2013. Work focused on revegetation and closure/restoration of unsustainable trails.

**BLODGETT PEAK OPEN SPACE:** RMFI continued stewardship projects in the Blodgett Peak Open Space in partnership with the City of Colorado Springs, which was partially damaged in the Waldo Canyon Fire of 2012. Work objectives focused on completing trail maintenance, construction, and restoration projects within the open space in accordance with the park management plan.

**CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN STATE PARK:** RMFI continued construction on the new, highly anticipated Dixon Trail that will connect the newly built Top of the Mountain trail network (completed by RMFI in 2015) to the southern portion of the state park. When completed (fall 2018), the trail system will provide unparalleled views of the Front Range and will open up new public access to the southwestern part of Colorado Springs.

### DEVIL'S PLAYGROUND

**TRAIL:** A new project for RMFI in 2017 as part of the National Forest Foundation's Find Your Fourteener Campaign, the Devil's Playground Trail traverses approximately 7 miles and 4,300 feet starting from a trailhead located near the Crags Campground (Divide, CO)



Students participating in Catamount Institute's Young Environmental Stewards Program head out for a day of stewardship work in the Black Forest Regional Park located in northwest Colorado Springs.



Before and after picture showing construction of rock check dams along the former Trail #667 in the Bear Creek Watershed. This work is part of a larger multi-year effort to continue habitat protection efforts for the threatened greenback cutthroat trout, Colorado's state fish.

and terminating at the summit of Pikes Peak, elevation 14,115 feet. It is one of two primary hiking trails to the summit of Pikes Peak. RMFI focused its efforts on mitigating erosional impacts from the existing trail with plans to began an entire reroute of a trail section in 2019.

**GARDEN OF THE GODS:** RMFI completed its 17th year of stewardship work in the Garden of the Gods Park. Work objectives largely focused on trail maintenance and improvements on Cabin Canyon, Siamese Twins, and Niobrara Trails; gully restoration near Kindergarten Rock; and closure/restoration of social trails.

**HIGH CHAPARRAL OPEN SPACE:** A new project for RMFI in 2017, RMFI worked with the City of Colorado Springs to complete a variety of trail and restoration projects at this gem of a park located in the northeastern part of the City.

**HIGH DRIVE:** RMFI's efforts along High Drive focused on mitigating sediment deposition into Bear Creek to protect valuable habitat for the greenback cutthroat trout, Colorado's state fish. RMFI closed and restored a number of social trails leading to the creek, and constructed rock check dams to armor the drainage, capture sediment, and help in the narrowing of the roadway.

**INDIAN CREEK CANYON (UTAH):** RMFI partnered with the Bureau of Land Management, Access Fund, Boulder Climbing Community, Montrose High School, Petzl, and Texas Tech University to complete improvements to existing climbing access trails in Donnelly Canyon, the most visited area at Indian Creek. Work involved realigning access trails to more sustainable locations, defining the trail corridor, building rock steps, and restoring redundant social trails.

**KIT CARSON PEAK & CHALLENGER POINT:** In partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, RMFI continued its progress on the multi-phase, multi-year project to reconstruct the summit trail to Kit Carson Peak and Challenger Point in the Sangre de Cristo Mountain Range. RMFI spent a total of 68 days on the project between July and September 2017 with the help of the Southwest Conservation Corps and undergraduate student participants in RMFI's field studies course, Earth Corps. Work included new trail construction, restoration of undesigned campsites and social trails, and trail maintenance.



Before and after picture showing improvements to the popular Siamese Twins Trail in the Garden of the Gods Park. In this section of trail, RMFI replaced falling timber steps and improved drainage.



RMFI staff, in partnership with Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates and other volunteers, work to clear corridor in preparation for the new Missing Link Trail, which will provide a critical connection between Barr Trail and Jones Park when complete.

**MISSING LINK TRAIL:** A new project for RMFI in 2017, RMFI worked with Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates and other partners to clear approximately 3.9-miles of trail corridor along the new Missing Link Trail, which when complete, will eventually connect Jones Park/ Bear Creek/Cheyenne Cañon area to the region's most popular trail -- Barr Trail.

**PALMER PARK:** In partnership with the City of Colorado Springs and the Guardians of Palmer Park, RMFI completed critical trail improvements to the historic cobbled Edna Mae Trail, a popular trail for cyclists, hikers, and trail runners. Years of heavy use and heavy precipitation in May 2015 displaced many of the historic pavers and stone steps and caused deep incision of the trail. RMFI worked to reconstruct cross-trail drainage, rock steps, and pavers along key portions of the trail to improve overall sustainability, user experience, and safety.

**PIKES PEAK:** In partnership with the City of Colorado Springs and the U.S. Forest Service, RMFI continued its stewardship work on Pikes Peak to mitigate erosion and sedimentation originating from the Pikes Peak Highway. Work objectives included completing erosion control and gully stabilization to reduce sediment entering the streams and wetlands on Pikes Peak, restoring wetlands buried by sediment to enhance wildlife habitat and improve water quality, conducting research to monitor the effectiveness of work completed under the project for use in other mountain areas impacted by erosion from stormwater runoff.

**RED ROCK CANYON OPEN SPACE:** In partnership with the City of Colorado Springs and the Friends of Red Rock Canyon, RMFI worked to complete trail improvements on existing trails, close and restore redundant social trails, and install fencing to better define user access in the park.



Before and after photos showing improvements to the historic Edna Mae-Bennett Nature Trail in Palmer Park.



Erosion control matting installed at the Mile-17 marker along the Pikes Peak Highway. This matting will stabilize the bare alpine tundra while also forming microclimates that will help encourage vegetation growth.

**STRATTON OPEN SPACE:** RMFI continued stewardship projects at Stratton Open Space in partnership with the City of Colorado Springs. Work largely focused on trail improvements and closure/restoration of several redundant social trails.

**UNIVERSITY PARK OPEN SPACE:** A new project site for RMFI in 2017, RMFI worked with partners to complete construction of a new trail to create sustainable access to the UCCS campus and the park from adjoining neighborhoods – ultimately helping to provide a variety of trail experiences for users.

**UPPER MONUMENT CREEK:** In 2017, RMFI partnered with the U.S. Forest Service on several riparian restoration and forest health projects. Specific activities included closing and restoring non-system roads through sensitive riparian habitat and removing coniferous trees that were encroaching upon the riparian habitat, crowding out other native riparian plant species.

**UTE VALLEY PARK:** RMFI continued stewardship projects in Ute Valley Park in partnership with the City of Colorado Springs. Work objectives focused on completing trail maintenance, construction, and restoration projects within the open space in accordance with the park management plan. RMFI staff also completed construction of the new 3.0-mile, multi-use Eastern Loop Trail in the newly acquired 200-acres of Ute Valley.

**WALDO CANYON BURN SCAR:** RMFI continued post-fire restoration work in the Waldo Canyon burn scar in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service. Work efforts in 2017 focused on new initiatives to enhance natural resiliency in the watershed. RMFI planted nearly 3,000 mature willow trees in a reach of the Camp Creek drainage that was badly damaged in the Waldo Canyon Fire of 2012. Willows were also planted in lower Waldo Canyon near Highway 24. RMFI also worked to complete complementary stabilization and restoration work in the surrounding landscape through construction of erosion control structures and native species revegetation.

**WILDCAT GULCH:** A new project site for RMFI in 2017, RMFI worked with the City of Manitou Springs to complete streambank stabilization work to restore portions of Wildcat Gulch near the Crystal Park neighborhood of Manitou Springs.



Before and after picture showing rock steps and rock ramp constructed at University Park Open Space. These structures will help stabilize the trail tread as well as provide options for a variety of users including hikers, trail runners, and mountain bikers.

# PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

## UPPER MONUMENT CREEK WATERSHED

*In 2017, RMFI began implementation of key restoration treatments identified in the Upper Monument Creek Landscape Restoration Initiative, which aims to accelerate the pace of urgently needed forest restoration through collaborative implementation of science-based management recommendations for a 67,000-acre landscape located on the U.S. Forest Service's Pike National Forest.*

The Upper Monument Creek (UMC) landscape is located on Colorado's southern Front Range within a region that has experienced increasingly severe and costly impacts from wildfire, including the record-setting 2012 Waldo Canyon Fire that burned across the landscape's southern boundary. The UMC Landscape Restoration Initiative (the Initiative) was launched in 2012 in an effort to accelerate the pace of urgently needed forest restoration by forging a collaborative agreement on science-based management recommendations for a high priority area on the U.S. Forest Service's Pike National Forest.

The multi-year, cooperative process has been guided by the UMC Collaborative, a group of interested stakeholders comprised of land management agencies, municipal government, nonprofit organizations, academic and research experts, and the U.S. Air Force Academy. The UMC Collaborative used a series of workshops and field visits to identify effective strategies for restoring desired conditions to the UMC landscape. Of particular importance was the establishment of a forest structure that will allow fire to play a more ecologically appropriate role on the landscape, posing less of a threat to people and the environment and fostering the sustainability of key forest values. Also important was the creation of a framework that will facilitate ongoing stakeholder engagement, learning, and adaptive management throughout the life of the project.

In 2017, RMFI partnered with the U.S. Forest Service to pilot a number of hand thinning treatments in Ensign Gulch designed to reduce fuels, increase structural diversity, break canopy continuity where uniform canopy cover existed, perpetuate vigorous aspen clones, and protect and enhance large conifer components. In addition, RMFI supported goals of protecting sensitive riparian habitat through the closure and restoration of adjacent non-system routes, and through the engagement of community volunteers in the implementation of actions under the UMC Initiative.

RMFI completed 5 total workdays on the project in 2017 and has plans to increase its involvement in the project in 2018. Highlights of this year's accomplishments include:

- Saplings removed: 254
- Trees under 10" diameter breast height (DBH) removed: 73
- Trees between 10" and 20" DBH removed: 35
- Trees 20" DBH and larger limbed-up: 26
- Willow patch area treated by prescription: 4.2 acres
- Non-system route "Hill Climbs" restored: 3,600 square feet
- Non-system route roads restored: 1,700 square feet

# Accelerating Collaborative Forest Restoration and Resiliency on the Pike National Forest





# Creating a New Path for Collaborative Stewardship on Colorado's Fourteeners

## PROJECT SPOTLIGHT FIND YOUR FOURTEENER CAMPAIGN

*In 2017, the National Forest Foundation launched the Find Your Fourteener campaign to accelerate the pace and scale of collaborative stewardship work being conducted on Colorado's iconic 14,000 foot peaks. This ambitious campaign is bringing together Colorado stewardship organizations to more strategically address the needs of Fourteeners across the state.*

Colorado's 14,000-foot peaks, known as "Fourteeners," are legendary among hiking aficionados. Every season people make 311,000 trips up one or more Fourteeners, making these some of the most popular hikes in the country. However, surging visitation is threatening fragile alpine biodiversity and critical water sources atop these peaks. Local trail groups are unable to keep pace with the growing impacts as more and more people tick "hiking a Fourteener" off of their bucket list. The problem is particularly acute on the 48 Fourteeners that lie on Colorado's National Forests.

Collaboration is necessary to improve the future for Fourteeners. To engage local groups and expand the work each year, the National Forest Foundation (NFF) has launched Find Your Fourteener. This ambitious statewide campaign is bringing together Colorado stewardship organizations to protect the tundra by creating sustainable routes in areas most at risk from increasing use.

Improving trails on Colorado's Fourteeners is not a new idea; groups including the Colorado Fourteeners Initiative (CFI), the Rocky Mountain Field Institute, Colorado-based youth corps, and many other conservation and volunteer organizations have been involved with these trails for decades. These groups are now coming together, along with the NFF, to more strategically address the needs of Fourteeners state-wide.

In 2015, CFI released a "Colorado Fourteeners Report Card" that rated Fourteener trail and ecosystem conditions, determining that more than \$24 million in baseline investments are needed to create sustainable routes to the summits of all of Colorado's Fourteeners. NFF will work with partners to tackle many of these projects in a tiered and strategic effort — one that will also prioritize "front country," "mid country," and "back country" peaks. The NFF's Find Your Fourteener campaign is a long-term effort to ensure that these enduring peaks remain healthy, accessible, and inviting for decades to come.

In 2017, RMFI began the Devil's Playground Trail Improvement Project as part of NFF's Find Your Fourteener Campaign. The Devil's Playground Trail is the primary western summit route to the top of Pikes Peak. This project will be a multi-year project focusing on stabilization, restoration, and reconstruction of a section of trail to a more sustainable alignment. In 2018, RMFI's Kit Carson-Challenger Ridge Improvement Project will also be a part of the NFF campaign. We look forward to working with NFF and all of the campaign partners to make substantial improvements to our state's iconic Fourteener peaks.

New summit trail to Challenger Point and Kit Carson Peak, Sangre de Cristo Wilderness

2017

# EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES

*Environmental education lies at the heart of RMFI's mission, providing the "why" behind the on-the-ground work. RMFI believes the protection and restoration of our public lands lies in cultivating an ethic of public lands stewardship. We cultivate this ethic by not only actively engaging volunteers and youth conservation crews in our work, but also by educating them on why the work is important and how it fits in with the broader landscape as well as by leading training courses that equip participants with tangible hard and soft skills.*

**EARTH CORPS FIELD STUDIES PROGRAM:** Earth Corps is a field studies program run by RMFI in partnership with the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs to provide motivated, environmentally conscious students the opportunity to live and learn in the incredible natural classroom of the Colorado Wilderness. The program began in 2002 as a way to integrate key lessons in environmental studies with the completion of multiple critical environmental restoration projects. Earth Corps attracts exceptional students from across the nation to participate in this unique service learning opportunity.

In 2017, Earth Corps students lived, worked, and learned for 30-days in Willow Lake Basin located at the base of Challenger Point and Kit Carson Peak, two iconic 14'ers in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. Students gained field experience in restoration ecology by helping with the highly technical summit trail reconstruction project to Kit Carson Peak. Visiting professors and industry experts provided lectures in the field covering topics such as geomorphology, botany, hydrology, land/recreation management, environmental policy, ethics, and other aspects of environmental studies. Upon successful completion of the program, each student received 4 credit hours from the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs.

Osprey Packs, a Colorado company based in Cortez, generously donated day packs to participating students, and Thanasi Foods, a Boulder, CO-based company and maker of BIGS Sunflower Seeds, generously donated nutritious snacks for the duration of the program.



Students enrolled in the annual "Dirt Camp" pose for a group photo after a hard days' work in the Garden of the Gods. This camp is run in partnership with the Catamount Institute and actively engages 10-12 year olds in hands-on stewardship projects and environmental education lessons.

Dirt Camp, Catamount Institute

**DIRT CAMP:** For the third consecutive year, RMFI partnered with the Catamount Institute to host a week-long "Dirt Camp" for 10-12 year olds in the Garden of the Gods Park. Students helped RMFI restore social trails in the park while also learning from Catamount Institute staff about vermicomposting, fossils, soil chemistry, landscape ecology, and geology. Catamount Institute is a Colorado Springs-based environmental education nonprofit with a mission to develop ecological stewards through education and adventure. RMFI and the Catamount Institute have partnered for several years on a variety of educational and stewardship initiatives, and will partner again in 2018 for the fourth edition of "Dirt Camp."

**PIKES PEAK REGIONAL CREW LEADER TRAINING:** The Pikes Peak Regional Crew Leader Training (PPRCLT) debuted in 2012 after severe budget cuts to the City of Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Department necessitated an increase in city-wide volunteer engagement and training initiatives. The annual training is accomplished through a collaborative partnership between RMFI, the City of Colorado Springs, the Trails and Open Space Coalition, and Friends of the Peak, and is designed to empower motivated community members with the skills and opportunities to lead safe and effective volunteer projects within our region's parks and open spaces.

The 2017 program marked the sixth edition of the training, which hosted nearly 20 participants over April 21-23 at the Bear Creek Nature Center. Participants received both classroom and hands-on instruction divided into three major components: soft skills/ leadership, trail maintenance, and restoration. After finishing the course, participants go on to complete their certification process, which requires they lead 2 volunteer stewardship workdays in partnership with either RMFI or Friends of the Peak who act as mentoring organizations. Once the certification process is complete, individuals become qualified to lead volunteer stewardship workdays at their favorite park or open space in conjunction with the local "Friends" group.

Since 2012, over 180 individuals have been trained through this program, which has significantly helped to increase the capacity of full-time stewardship groups like RMFI as well as local, regional, and state land management agencies to engage more volunteers, further leverage resources, and have greater on-the-ground impact.

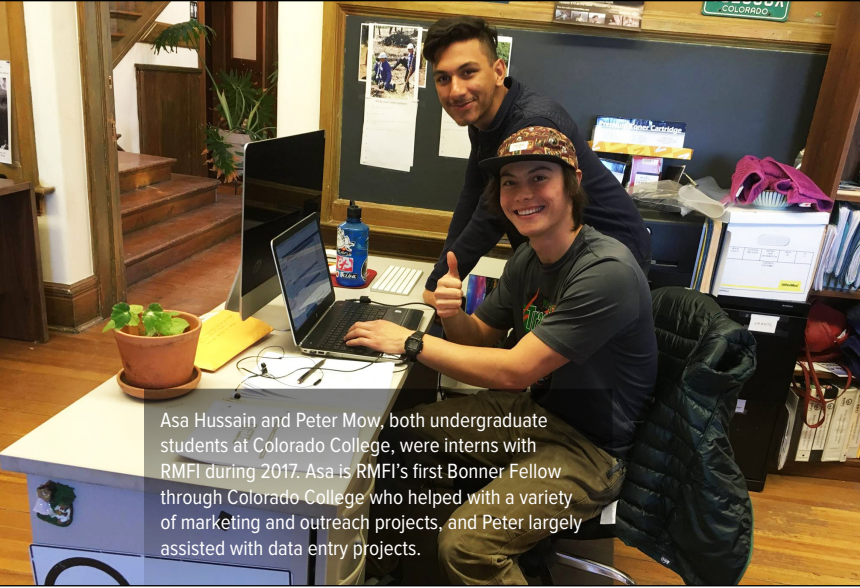


Dr. Ross McCauley, Associate Professor of Biology at Fort Lewis College, lectures to Earth Corps students about plant adaptations in the Rocky Mountains. In 2017, students received lectures from nearly a dozen industry professionals and renowned experts in geography, botany, natural resource management, environmental leadership, and biology.

Earth Corps, Joe Lavorini



Participants in the 2017 Pikes Peak Regional Crew Leader Training gather for a group shot at the Garden of the Gods Park. Trainees learned a variety of skills including trail construction and maintenance techniques, tools and safety, and outdoor leadership skills.



Asa Hussain and Peter Mow, both undergraduate students at Colorado College, were interns with RMFI during 2017. Asa is RMFI's first Bonner Fellow through Colorado College who helped with a variety of marketing and outreach projects, and Peter largely assisted with data entry projects.

**BIOLBLITZ:** To celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the City of Colorado Springs' TOPS (Trails, Open Spaces and Parks) Program, a series of four BioBlitzes was completed by teams of biologists and naturalists at four local open spaces and parks: Blodgett Peak Open Space, Jimmy Camp Creek Park, Bluestem Prairie Open Space, and Ute Valley Park. A bioblitz is an intense period of biological surveying in an attempt to record all the living species within a designated area. RMFI assisted the City of Colorado Springs at two Bioblitz events in Blodgett Peak Open Space and Ute Valley Park through tours of past project sites, citizen science training, and tabling.

**COLORADO COLLEGE BONNER FELLOW:** RMFI was one of 5 organizations in Colorado Springs to be awarded a Bonner Fellow, Asa "Ace" Hussain, through Colorado College. The Bonner Fellowship, launched by Colorado College's Community for Collaborative Engagement (CCE), is a nationwide internship program dedicated to fostering students' passions for community engagement and ensuring their personal and professional growth through the help of Bonner partners, such as RMFI. It does this by choosing students — based off merit and understanding of community engagement — to partner with local not-for-profit organizations to participate in meaningful work that is mutually beneficial for the fellow, the organization, and the community. Throughout the year, Ace worked on a variety of projects including field work, event management, blog writing, social media, data entry, video production, and more!

**ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP INTERNSHIP:** RMFI's Environmental Leadership Internship (ELI) gives motivated undergraduate and graduate students a unique opportunity to gain hands-on experience co-leading field-based trail and restoration projects throughout the Pikes Peak Region. Student interns play a dynamic and integral role in the planning and implementation of RMFI's projects.

RMFI hosted six ELI's in 2017 - Jonathan Collins, Matt Griffith, Richard Handley, Izzy Lackner, Hannah Millsap, and Jarrod Gaut - who were able to hone their environmental stewardship and leadership skills as they assisted RMFI field staff with project implementation. The intern's primary responsibility was to coordinate with RMFI field instructors and assist with planning and leading volunteer days on various trail and restoration projects. While on-site, the ELI assisted RMFI field instructors and engaged volunteers in project tasks, oversaw safety and project goals, and carried out education objectives.



Members of a Southwest Conservation Corps crew work to construct the new summit trail to Kit Carson Peak and Challenger Point in the Sangre de Cristos. The youth corps crew worked with RMFI for 35 days on the project in 2017 and will expand their involvement in the project in 2018.

**GREAT OUTDOORS COLORADO WATER ECOLOGY DAY:** RMFI participated alongside a number of community nonprofits in the first annual Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) Water Ecology Day at Memorial Park. Approximately 75 fifth grade students from Adams Elementary participated in the day, cycling through a variety of educational and recreational activities including fishing, standup paddle boarding, water safety, and macroinvertebrates. RMFI led an educational station about the impacts of erosion and the importance of stewardship.

**RIGGING TRAINING:** RMFI helped coordinate a rigging training in 2017 designed to improve the skills and techniques utilized in backcountry, alpine trail construction, and maintenance projects. Rigging is an important skill used in the safe and efficient movement of heavy natural construction materials over steep and fragile landscapes. The training was sponsored by the National Forest Foundation as part of their new Find Your Fourteener Campaign. Several partner organizations attended the training, which was held at Cheyenne Mountain State Park.

**WORK STUDY INTERNS:** RMFI works with Colorado College to provide work study internships for students needing to meet their financial aid requirements. Interns work with RMFI on a variety of different projects throughout the semester including data entry, marketing and outreach, and events management. In 2017, RMFI had three work study students - Katherine Guerrero, Peter Mow, and Madeleine Tucker - who worked together to greatly increase RMFI's capacity to tackle various office projects throughout the year.

**YOUTH CONSERVATION CORPS:** For the past decade, RMFI has been partnering with AmeriCorps-affiliated organizations that provide service opportunities, education, and job training to young adults aged 16 to 24. This mutually-beneficial working relationship enables us to accomplish impressive on-the-ground work with help from the dedicated work crews while our expert field staff mentor the young participants with hands-on experience in conservation and public land stewardship. In addition, RMFI staff incorporate valuable educational lessons into each work week to give crew members additional skills and experience. Conservation crews spend a minimum of one week with us on any given project, enabling us to work efficiently with trained and knowledgeable work crews at our project sites that are less-accessible for single-day volunteer events. In 2017, RMFI contracted with both the Southwest Conservation Corps and Mile High Youth Corps to complete critical trail and restoration projects at Kit Carson, Waldo Canyon, Barr Trail, Bear Creek, Cheyenne Mountain State Park, and Pikes Peak.



In May 2017, RMFI helped to coordinate a rigging training sponsored by the National Forest Foundation in support of its new Find Your Fourteener Campaign. Several partner organizations participated in the training, which was held at Cheyenne Mountain State Park.



Molly Mazel, RMFI Volunteer and Partnership Coordinator leads students from Adams Elementary through a water ecology lesson at the Great Outdoors Colorado Water Ecology Day. Students learned about impacts from erosion and the importance of stewardship.

2017

# RESEARCH AND MONITORING

RMFI conducts effectiveness monitoring research of restoration and erosion control techniques we have implemented at our various project sites. Findings are shared with the conservation community and inform and further the field of landscape restoration. All of our research is geared toward gaining a better understanding of how our work is positively impacting the environment.

**CITIZEN SCIENCE MONITORING PROGRAM:** In 2017, RMFI piloted a new citizen science monitoring program to offer an additional avenue for community volunteers to engage with RMFI. Citizen science is the involvement of the public in community-driven scientific research, and provides a sustainable system for monitoring land stewardship and restoration activities by engaging adult volunteers and college students in the measurement of ecological parameters at RMFI project sites over time. During the 2017 field season, RMFI citizen scientists were recruited and trained, and collected data on 2 trails in the Garden of the Gods Park - the Niobrara Trail and a closed social trail located in the south reservoir valley. Citizen scientists collected data related to trail depth and width, trail slope and aspect, vegetative cover and richness, and pre/post photographs to answer the following questions:

- How does the trail change over time?
- How do slope and aspect relate to trail tread depth and width?
- Do structures slow the rate of change on a trail?
- Is this correlated with slope and aspect?
- Do trail improvements redirect traffic onto the designated trail, thereby reducing vegetation impacts on social trails?

To train the citizen scientists, 11 instructional videos were created, and pre- and post- tests were administered to evaluate knowledge gained after completion of the training modules. This methodology ensured quality control among the scientists collecting data in the field, and also helped in reporting the impacts of the training program on fostering community awareness about the ecology and

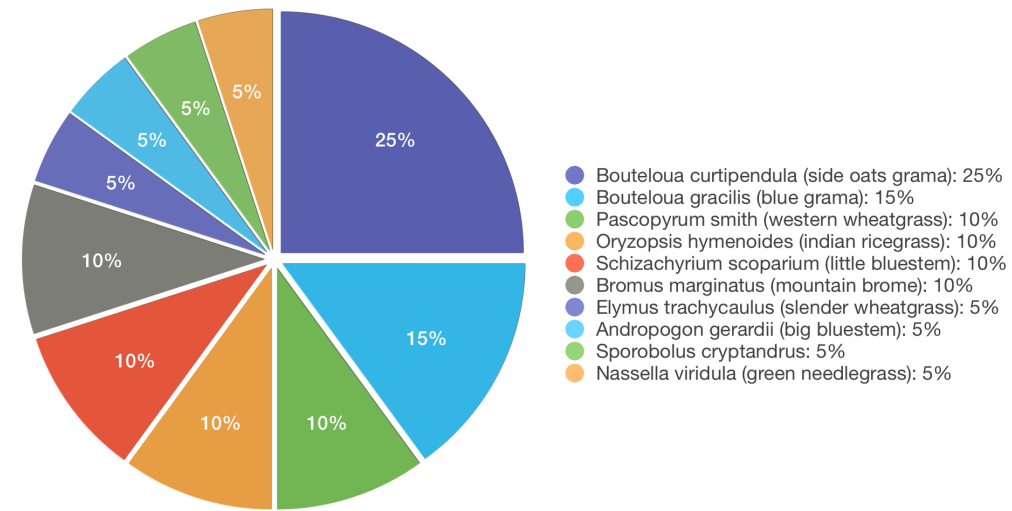


Citizen scientists completing baseline measurements along the Niobrara Trail in the Garden of the Gods Park prior to the beginning of a trail improvement project.



Citizen scientists - Maggie Gaudis

BASIC RECLAMATION SEED MIX USED TO RESEED CLOSED SOCIAL TRAILS



BLUE GRAMA



LITTLE BLUESTEM



WESTERN WHEATGRASS

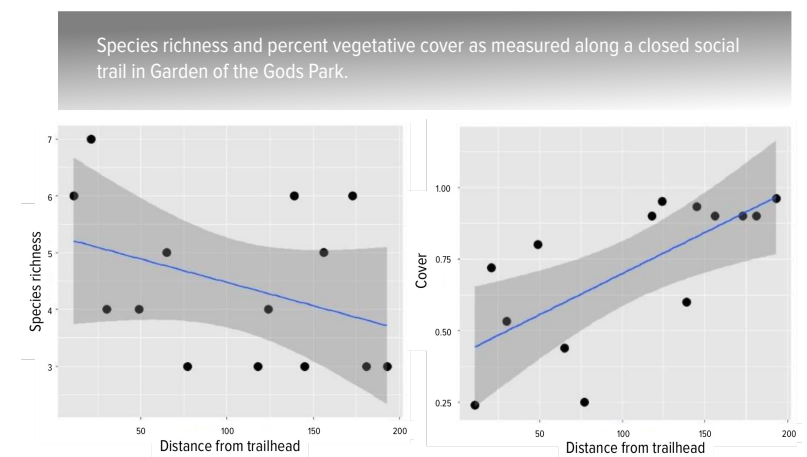
natural history of the Garden of the Gods Park as well as educating the community about the current threats to the park. In total, 10 citizen scientists were trained and completed 9 monitoring days in the field.

The Niobrara Trail in the Garden of the Gods is approximately 1.0 mile in length with an average slope of 3% and maximum slope of 7%. It is located on the southeast side of the park and is a popular trail with mountain bikers, hikers, and trail runners. A point sampling methodology along the longitudinal profile of the trail was used to collect baseline measurements including trail width and depth. The measurements indicated a deeply incised trail with excessive width. In the fall of 2017, the City of Colorado Springs and RMFI completed several improvements along the length of the trail to bring the trail back up to grade and to improve drainage. Post-measurements will be taken throughout 2018 to determine the efficacy and longevity of these improvements.

RMFI completes a tremendous amount of social trail closure and restoration in Garden of the Gods Park. In 2017 alone, we closed over 1.0 mile of social trails in the park (5.01 miles in total were closed across all of our project sites). Consequently, determining the effectiveness of our closure and restoration methodology is a priority. With the help of an Ecology Field Methods course through the University of Colorado - Colorado Springs, species richness and percent vegetative cover data were collected along the length of the closed social trail (closed in 2015). Average total cover measured was 69% and average species richness was 4.2 species per meter quadrat. The data revealed no relationship between species richness and distance from the closed social trailhead, but did show a relationship between vegetative cover and distance from the closed social trailhead. These findings can be interpreted to mean that visitors are respecting this particular closure and that the revegetation techniques are effective, hence the increase in vegetative cover from each of the closed ends of the former social trail.

**MONITORING OF TRAIL AND RESTORATION TECHNIQUES:**

Because RMFI has a defined regional presence, we have the ability to complete post-project monitoring to assess effectiveness of all treatments implemented at our project sites. Consequently, we are able to refine techniques from year to year based on observations and lessons learned from each field season. We utilize a variety of measurements and monitoring techniques to assess the impact of our on-the-ground work. One of the most beneficial and efficient ways of assessing the effectiveness of our work is through pre/post photographs. At several of our project locations, we have





A photograph of an American pika. Pikas are sensitive to climate and are disappearing from some areas in a pattern that suggests they are succumbing to recent climate change. Photograph by the Front Range Pika Project.

established monumented photopoints that allow us to revisit the same location at any time to take the same photographs from the same angle. For example, permanent photopoints established in the Garden of the Gods have allowed photos to be taken over a 5+ year period (see the picture in the bottom right corner of Page 25).

**FRONT RANGE PIKA PROJECT:** The Front Range Pika Project (FRPP) is a citizen science program that engages the public in conservation research on the American pika. The project was formed to help address the need for additional research and long-term monitoring to determine what factors currently limit the distribution of American pika in

the southern Rocky Mountains, and whether the species can persist in the region as climate change accelerates. FRPP also aims to educate participants about American pika and the impacts of climate change in the region and provide an opportunity for the public to engage in science and conservation.

In 2017, RMFI participated in this program at our high alpine project site located at the base of Kit Carson Peak in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. Students participating in our Earth Corps field studies course received training from the Front Range Pika Project on how to observe, track, and monitor American pika in the high alpine. Data collected by the students will assist the long-term monitoring program to gain a better understanding of pika distribution and to improve the long-term viability of this vulnerable species. This program will continue at the Kit Carson project site in 2018. For more information, please visit <http://www.pikapartners.org/>.

**WALDO CANYON RESTORATION AND WILLOW MONITORING:** On June 23, 2012, the Waldo Canyon Fire broke out just west of Colorado Springs. Seventeen days later the fire had burned over 18,000 acres. The loss of nearly 350 homes made it the second-most destructive wildfire in the state's history (the Black Forest Fire of 2013 currently ranks first). RMFI has been involved in post-fire restoration efforts in the Waldo Canyon burn scar since 2012. RMFI's efforts have largely focused on erosion control and stabilization projects in Blodgett Peak Open Space, Camp Creek, Wellington Gulch, Waldo Canyon, and Williams Canyon. Thousands of log-erosion barriers and other grade control structures have been built by RMFI in the burn scar, and hundreds of pounds of native seed have been spread to encourage revegetation of bare hillslopes. Site visits completed between 2012 and 2017 to areas of the Camp Creek



OCTOBER 2013



MAY 2016



MAY 2017

A four-year photo series showing the impact of RMFI's restoration work in the Camp Creek drainage of the Waldo Canyon burn scar. Site visits to the area in 2017 revealed tremendous vegetation growth and continued stabilization of hillslopes that were once devoid of vegetation. RMFI's work is helping to improve downstream water resources and enhance watershed health and function.

drainage revealed significant vegetation growth and enhanced stabilization throughout the drainage. RMFI has spent extensive time within Camp Creek restoring an access road that was utilized in the construction of sediment detention basins within the drainage, constructing log-erosion barriers and other grade control structures, and reseeding impacted areas (see repeat photograph above).

RMFI has also completed extensive riparian restoration efforts along Camp Creek and Lower Waldo Creek as part of its new willow propagation program, which aims to increase survival rates of willows through transplanting more mature plants with developed root systems rather than through the traditional willow stakes. Willows are commonly used in a number of recovery and resiliency initiatives including post-fire conditions. They can grow rapidly and provide effective soil stabilization along streambanks or in other highly erodible areas. Willows can sprout new shoots from roots and root crowns readily and their stems possess abundant adventitious buds that have the flexibility to form roots when in contact with saturated soils. Using willow cuttings in recovery and resiliency activities involves strategic harvesting of dormant willow stems from vigorous healthy willows. Dormant cuttings are then driven into the ground, where they will sprout shoots and roots during the growing season. Once established, willow cuttings form a web of fibrous roots that can provide highly effectively soil stabilization.

Survival of willow cuttings depends on a number of different factors. Low survival rates of stakes are often observed in areas where the water table fluctuates resulting in poor soil moisture during the growing period. Monitoring of willow transplants in the Hayman and Waldo Canyon burn scars revealed an estimated 10% survival rate. RMFI's willow propagation program seeks to maximize survival rates and accelerate watershed resiliency by growing dormant cuttings in pots in a nursery through the winter months. This approach allows cuttings time to establish a resilient root structure that would increase survival rates when transplanted the following spring.

In total, approximately 4,000 willows have been planted along degraded reaches of streams in both Camp Creek and Lower Waldo Creek. Several monitoring visits have been completed to both planting locations. Extremely low mortality rates (<1%) have been observed in both locations, which is a great sign that the plants have taken root and animal browse, while observed, hasn't impacted survival rates. Additional monitoring visits will occur in the spring of 2018. The willow propagation program will continue in 2018 with planting locations situated outside of the burn scar.



A before and after photo showing the impact of planting 2,000 willows along a degraded stretch of Lower Waldo Creek. This project was part of RMFI's willow propagation program first piloted in 2016 and expanded in 2017 to include more willows and planting locations. The project will continue in 2018.



GARDEN OF THE GODS, NORTH GATEWAY: 2013



GARDEN OF THE GODS, NORTH GATEWAY: 2017

2017

# VOLUNTEER AND WORK STATISTICS



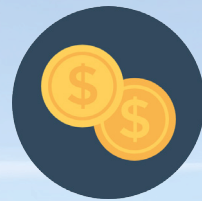
**2,118**  
VOLUNTEERS



**491**  
WORKDAYS



**16,459**  
VOLUNTEER HOURS



**\$427,427**  
VOLUNTEER VALUE



**835**  
YOUTH AGES  
8-24



**127**  
CONSERVATION CORPS  
MEMBERS



**92**  
COMMUNITY GROUPS  
AND SCHOOLS



**21**  
PROJECT  
SITES



**10,349**  
LINEAR FT. OF  
NEW TRAIL BUILT



**20,667**  
LINEAR FT. OF  
TRAIL IMPROVED



**26,495**  
LINEAR FT. OF SOCIAL  
TRAIL RESTORED



**458**  
ROCK AND TIMBER  
STEPS/RISERS BUILT



**3,000**  
SQUARE FT. OF  
RETAINING WALL BUILT



**2,900**  
TREES AND  
WILLOWS PLANTED



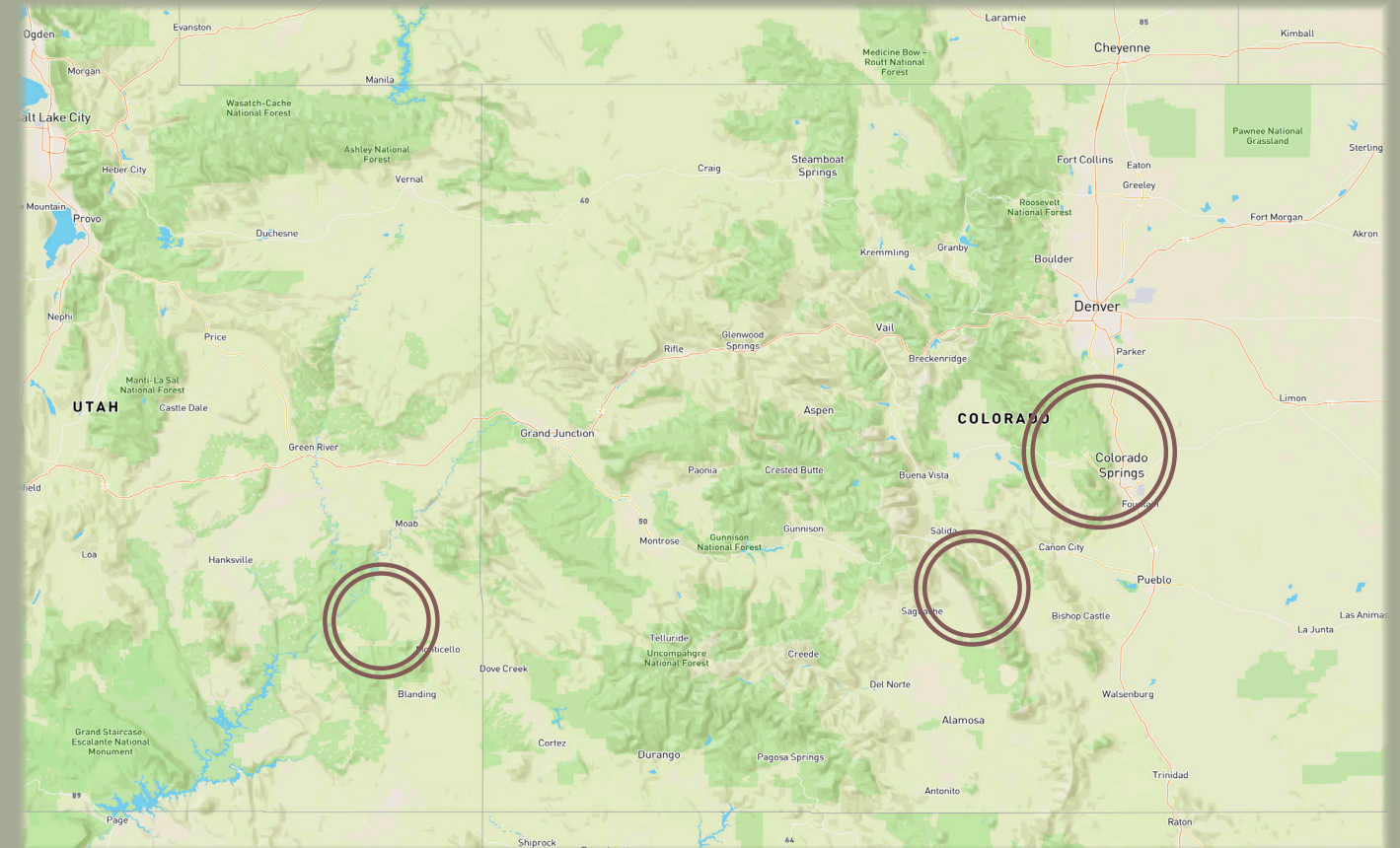
**821**  
STABILIZATION/EROSION  
CONTROL STRUCTURES  
BUILT AND MAINTAINED



**5,879**  
NATIVE TRANSPLANTS  
USED IN RESTORATION  
PROJECTS

2017

# PROJECT SITES: Southern Colorado/Eastern Utah



### EASTERN UTAH:

1. Indian Creek Canyon

### SOUTHERN COLORADO:

1. Barr Trail
2. Bear Creek Watershed
3. Black Forest Regional Park
4. Blodgett Peak Open Space
5. Cheyenne Mountain State Park
6. Devil's Playground
7. Garden of the Gods Park
8. High Drive
9. High Chaparral Open Space

10. Kit Carson Peak/Challenger Point

11. Missing Link Trail
12. Palmer Park
13. Pikes Peak
14. Red Rock Canyon Open Space
15. Stratton Open Space
16. University Park Open Space
17. Upper Monument Creek
18. Ute Valley Park
19. Waldo Canyon Burn Scar
20. Wildcat Gulch

# 2017 FUNDRAISING AND OUTREACH EVENTS

As a community-based nonprofit, RMFI relies on the generous donations from individuals, businesses, organizations, and others to make the work we do possible. To raise awareness and support for our mission, we participate in a number of different community events each year that are not only a lot of fun, but help us connect with passionate members of our community who want to support our cause.

**BANFF MOUNTAIN FILM FESTIVAL:** Since 2005, Mountain Chalet, a locally owned and operated outdoor equipment store, has been hosting the annual Banff Mountain Film Festival as a fundraiser for RMFI. The event showcases phenomenal short films from exploration of remote landscapes and mountain cultures to adrenaline-fueled action sports. The 2017 was another sellout for both nights of films. The proceeds raised from the event support RMFI's mission of conserving and protecting treasured public landscapes in Southern Colorado.

**COLORADO PUBLIC LANDS DAY:** Colorado became the first state in the nation to establish a holiday recognizing the value of public lands within the state. From now on, the third Saturday in May will be known as Colorado Public Lands Day celebrating the significant contributions these lands have to our state. To celebrate, RMFI held a collaborative stewardship and outdoor recreation event at Red Rock Canyon Open Space in partnership with the City of Colorado Springs, UpaDowna, Friends of Red Rock Canyon, and Front Range Climbing Company (with after party at Fossil Brewing Company).

**EARTH MONTH FASHION SHOW AND GREENIE AWARDS:** This event first began in 2009 in celebration of Earth Month and as a way to recognize local "green" individuals and businesses, showcase sustainable fashion, and raise awareness and financial resources for a local environmental nonprofit. Since that time, this annual "green carpet" event has grown to be one of the most unique and preeminent events in Colorado Springs and has raised nearly \$400,000 for 3 nonprofit organizations. For the past 5 years, RMFI has been the beneficiary of this amazing event, which has supported our important conservation and stewardship work in the Pikes Peak



RMFI held a collaborative stewardship and outdoor recreation event at Red Rock Canyon Open Space in celebration of the newly designated Colorado Public Lands Day. Volunteers helped to improve the new White Acres Trail in the park and then had the choice to participate in a guided hike, rock climb, or mountain bike excursion.

Region. The event epitomizes the philanthropic spirit of Veda Salon and Spa and their mission of caring for the world and giving back to society.

**GET OUTDOORS DAY:** This year marked the second year of Get Outdoors Day, a family event coordinated by Colorado Parks and Wildlife to get the community outdoors to experience a variety of activities including fishing, standup paddle boarding, biking, and more. The event was attended by more than 5,000 people. RMFI participated with an interactive tool and stewardship activity along with dozens of other community nonprofits and businesses. The event will occur next year on June 2, 2018 at Memorial Park.

**INDY GIVE! 2017:** Give! is an annual philanthropic platform that encourages everyone in the Pikes Peak region to give back and get involved with local nonprofits, with a particular emphasis on catalyzing philanthropy among those 36 years old and younger. Over the last 8 years, Give! has helped more than 200 local nonprofits, including RMFI, raise over \$9 million from over 20,000 donors in the Pikes Peak region. As part of Give! 2017, RMFI participated in a number of fundraising events including Bikes and Brew and the Rocky Mountain Highway Concert Series.

**TRAILS END TAPROOM:** In November 2017, Colorado Springs welcomed Trails End Taproom to town, the City's first pour-your-own taproom. A key component of the Trails End's business philosophy is giving back to community nonprofits. Each month, a different nonprofit is designated as the beneficiary, and Trails End donates 100% of the months' tips back to the nonprofit of the month. RMFI was designated as December's nonprofit of the month, and received a whopping donation of \$8,232!

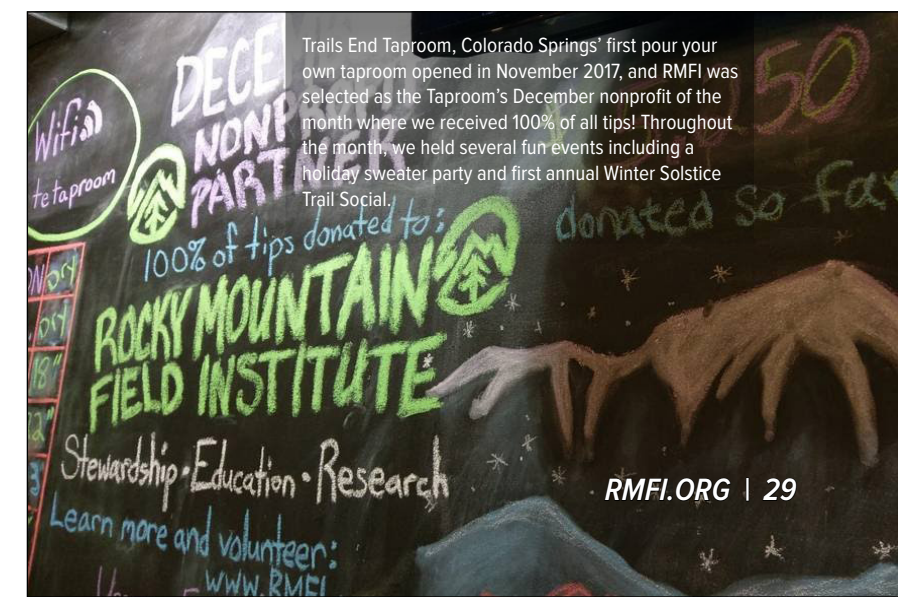
**WALDO WALDO 5K:** The Waldo Waldo 5K was set up as a response to the Waldo Canyon Fire in 2012. The 5K raises money for The Waldo Waldo Fund, a fund of the Pikes Peak Community Foundation, which supports natural disaster and fire recovery efforts as well as trails and open space maintenance in Colorado Springs and the surrounding community. Money is granted from this fund to the primary event beneficiaries, which include RMFI and the Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC). This year marked the 5th year (and largest year in terms of attendance) of the event, which has now raised nearly \$200,000 for TOSC and RMFI.



Runners and walkers participate in the event expo in downtown Colorado Springs for the 5th annual Waldo Waldo 5k benefiting RMFI and the Trails and Open Space Coalition. In 2017, 3,247 Waldos and Wendas participated in the event.



The Banff Mountain Film Festival came to Colorado Springs for 2 nights of films in early March 2017. Mountain Chalet hosts the event each year with proceeds from ticket sales going to support RMFI's mission of trail and restoration work in Southern Colorado.



Trails End Taproom, Colorado Springs' first pour your own taproom opened in November 2017, and RMFI was selected as the Taproom's December nonprofit of the month where we received 100% of all tips! Throughout the month, we held several fun events including a holiday sweater party and first annual Winter Solstice Trail Social.

2017

# RMFI STAFF, INTERNS, AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Name:** Jennifer Peterson  
**Title:** Executive Director



**Name:** Joe Lavorini  
**Title:** Program Director



**Name:** Andy Riter  
**Title:** Program Manager



**Name:** Molly Mazel  
**Title:** Volunteer & Partnership Coordinator



**Name:** Liz Nichol  
**Title:** Office Manager



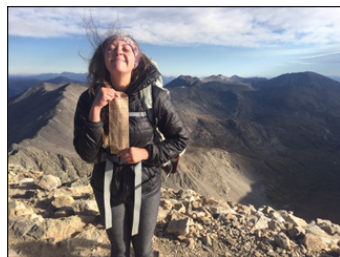
**Name:** Kelly Kaufmann  
**Title:** Senior Field Coordinator



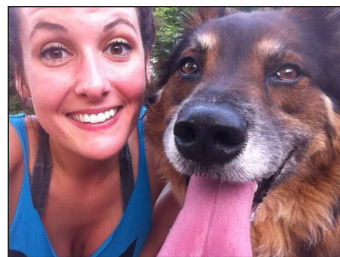
**Name:** Mark Tatro  
**Title:** Field Coordinator



**Name:** Kyle Anderson  
**Title:** Field Instructor



**Name:** Brianna Anthony  
**Title:** Field Instructor



**Name:** Alyssa Baker  
**Title:** Field Instructor



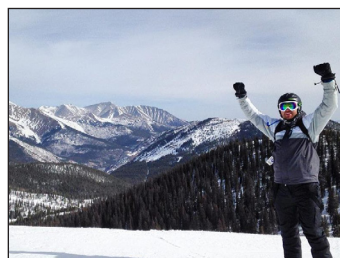
**Name:** Kate Bauder  
**Title:** Field Instructor



**Name:** Mike Beitner  
**Title:** Field Instructor



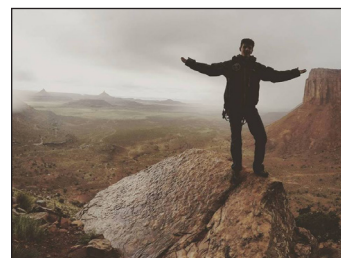
**Name:** Carter Eng  
**Title:** Field Instructor



**Name:** Donnie Ferns  
**Title:** Field Instructor



**Name:** Jamie Goins  
**Title:** Field Instructor



**Name:** Alex Hladkyj  
**Title:** Field Instructor



**Name:** Sigrid Meadows  
**Title:** Administrative Assistant



**Name:** Hannah Millsap  
**Title:** Field Instructor



**Name:** Jaz Odhner  
**Title:** High Alpine Field Instructor



**Name:** James Osaer  
**Title:** Field Instructor



**Name:** Kyle Rodman  
**Title:** Field Instructor



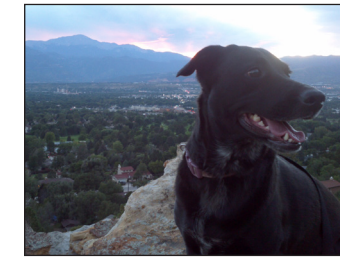
**Name:** Greg Selinger  
**Title:** Field Instructor



**Name:** Jacob Twerskey  
**Title:** Field Instructor



**Name:** Chris Ullom  
**Title:** Field Instructor



**Name:** Lucky  
**Title:** Office Dog

## INTERNS

Jonathan Collins  
Jarrod Gaut  
Matt Griffith  
Katherine Guerrero  
Richard Handley

Asa "Ace" Hussain  
Izzy Lackner  
Hannah Millsap  
Peter Mow  
Madeleine Tucker

## OFFICE VOLUNTEERS

Rich Broyles  
Lori Lilly  
Barb Colvin  
Tenaya Collins  
Pete Rodas

Amy Sullivan  
Deane Swickard

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Lori Nicholson, *President*  
Lee Derr, *Vice President*  
Heidi Sinclair, *Treasurer*  
Jeff Mohrmann, *Secretary*  
Emilie Gray, *Member*  
Ian Kalmanowitz, *Member*  
Emily Mooney, *Member*  
Gurney Sloan, *Member*  
Mike Smith, *Member*  
Jim Smith, *Member*



RMFI board and staff pose for a photo at our annual strategic planning session.



2017

# RMFI FALL SHINDIG

Each year, the Garden of the Gods Visitor and Nature Center hosts RMFI's annual Fall ShinDIG, which recognizes RMFI's many volunteers, funders, supporters, and other folks who make our work possible.

### FALL SHINDIG SPONSORS:

Garden of the Gods Visitor and Nature Center  
Kirkpatrick Bank  
The Mitguards  
Ian and Carrie Kalmanowitz

Picnic Basket Catering  
Pocket Pals Trail Maps  
Raymond James  
Tim Davis Art Images  
Gray Warrior Photography  
Rick and Cheryl Walker

### AWARD WINNERS:

Funder of the Year: *Colorado Water Conservation Board*  
Stewardship Partner of the Year: *Friends of Cheyenne Mountain State Park*  
Land Management Partner of the Year: *Colorado Parks and Wildlife*  
Volunteer Group of the Year: *FedEx*  
Volunteer of the Year: *Stephen Toledo, Taylor Metzger*

### NATURE! PHOTO CONTEST FINALISTS:

*Restoration:* Erica Vandiver, David Kennedy  
*Mountains:* Wendy Gedack (Grand Prize Winner), James Van Hoy  
*Flora:* Liz Hunt, James Clavet  
*Fauna:* James Van Hoy, Andrew Ketsdever  
*Interaction:* Leah Dziezawiec, Taylor Allen  
*Staff Pick:* Chuck Rasco



Wendy Gedack, Grand Prize Winner, Mount Sneffels.



Rock Star Volunteers being recognized at RMFI's 9th Annual Fall ShinDIG in November 2017. Rock Star Volunteers are those who have volunteered with RMFI 5 times or more during the year. In 2017, we ended up with 56 rock stars, the most in the organization's history. We simply couldn't do what we do without our amazing volunteers - thank you!

2017

# ROCK STAR VOLUNTEERS

RMFI's volunteers are the lifeblood of the organization. Rock Star Volunteers represent those who have volunteered with RMFI 5 or more times throughout the year, and are listed below. Thank you, rock stars!

- |                       |                       |                     |                      |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Gail Allen         | 24. Wilson Kaplan     | 47. Larry Swisher   | 54. Robert Weggel    |
| 2. Carson Bachet      | 25. Isabella Lackner  | 48. Jeremy Thompson | 55. Bronwyn Woodward |
| 3. Susannah Barnes    | 26. George Lee        | 49. Marcie Thompson | 56. Rick Zunino      |
| 4. Carol Beckman      | 27. Lori Lilly        | 50. Stephen Toledo  |                      |
| 5. Jack Busher        | 28. Mary Lundin       | 51. Dean Waits      |                      |
| 6. Mitchell Clark     | 29. Bailey Mabis      | 52. Francesca Watts |                      |
| 7. Jonathan Collins   | 30. Joel Marx         | 53. William Weeks   |                      |
| 8. Slade Custer       | 31. Connor McCarrie   |                     |                      |
| 9. Steve Driska       | 32. Nicholas McFerron |                     |                      |
| 10. Jeff Erhard       | 33. Daniel Mcgivern   |                     |                      |
| 11. Andrew Fletcher   | 34. Tony Merschdorf   |                     |                      |
| 12. Toni Gacek        | 35. Taylor Metzger    |                     |                      |
| 13. Jarrod Gaut       | 36. Michelle Miller   |                     |                      |
| 14. Thomas Geoghan    | 37. Hannah Millsap    |                     |                      |
| 15. Eileen Griffin    | 38. Leah Montgomery   |                     |                      |
| 16. Matt Griffith     | 39. Peter Mow         |                     |                      |
| 17. Elizabeth Hallman | 40. Patrick Nelson    |                     |                      |
| 18. Richard Handley   | 41. James Osaer       |                     |                      |
| 19. Corinne Hara      | 42. Craig Putzstuck   |                     |                      |
| 20. Eleanor Harrigan  | 43. Sara Scherschligt |                     |                      |
| 21. Mark Hinchman     | 44. Mike Scott        |                     |                      |
| 22. Asa "Ace" Hussain | 45. Jeff Shapiro      |                     |                      |
| 23. Eric Julian       | 46. Anna Socha        |                     |                      |



RMFI supporters packed the Garden of the Gods Visitor and Nature Center for the 9th Annual RMFI Fall ShinDIG. Guests were treated to live music from The Mitguards and catered meal by the Picnic Basket.

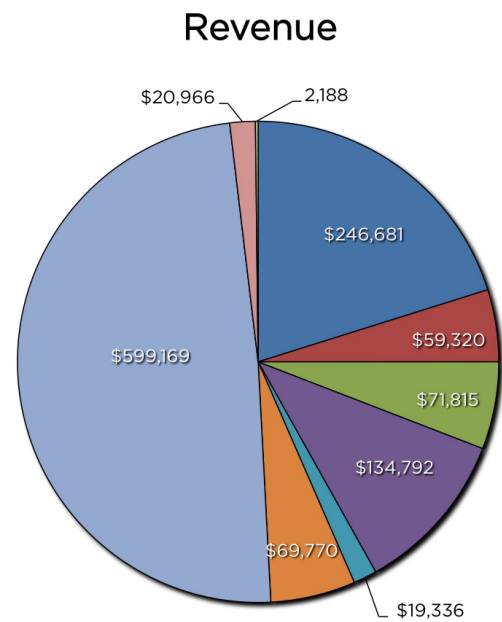


RMFI Program Director, Joe Lavorini (left), poses with members of the Friends of Cheyenne Mountain State Park who were awarded the 2017 Stewardship Partner of the Year at the 9th Annual RMFI Fall ShinDIG.

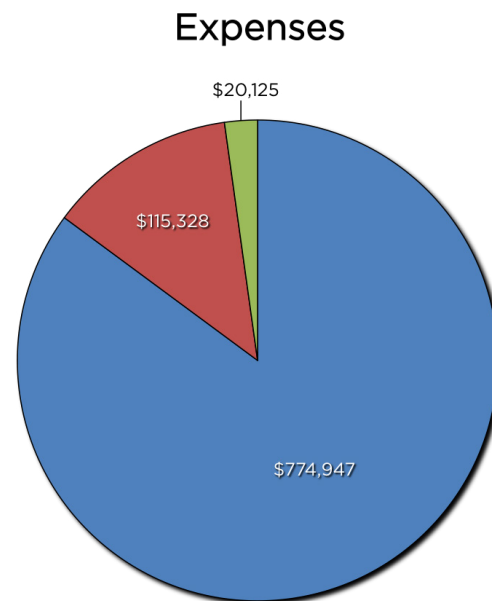
2017

# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

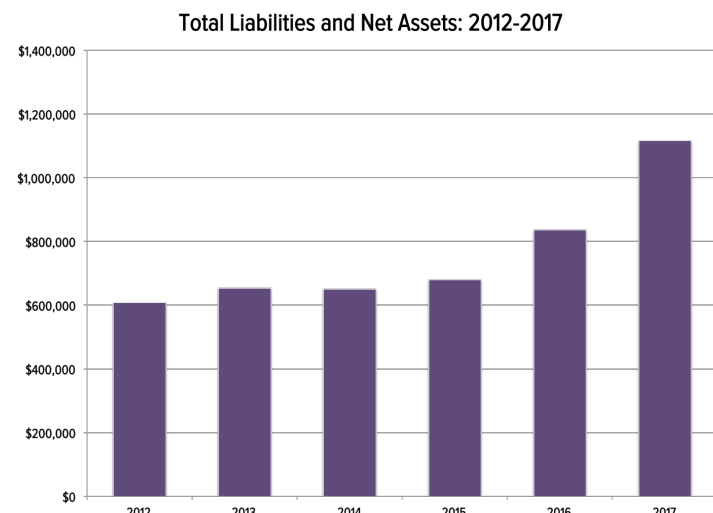
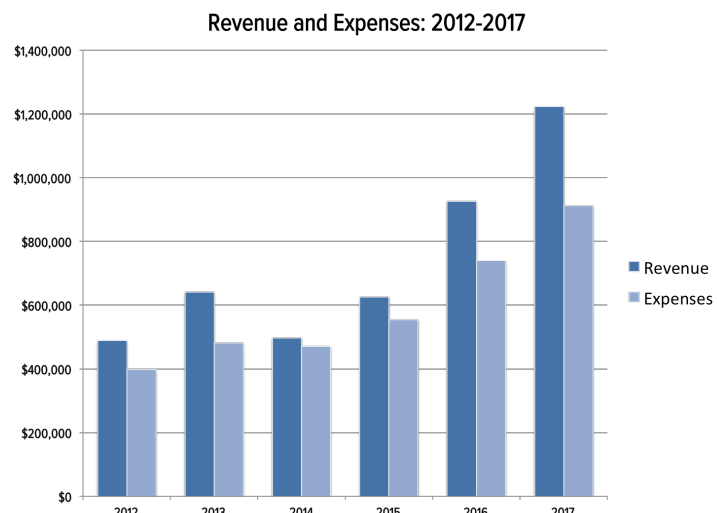
RMFI finished 2017 with a strong financial performance throughout the year. Both revenue and expenses were the highest in the organization's history due in large part to an increase in demand for our services. We are well-positioned for another busy field season in 2018, which will be supported through a combination of grants, government agreements, and donations.



- Individual Contributions (20%)
  - Corporate Contributions (5%)
  - Organization Contributions (6%)
  - Foundation Contributions (11%)
  - In-Kind Support (2%)
  - Government Revenue (49%)
  - Investments (2%)
  - Other Revenue (<1%)
- Total Revenue: \$1,224,037



- Program (85%)
  - Administration (13%)
  - Fundraising (2%)
- Total Expenses: \$910,400



From left to right: Josh Nehring, Colorado Parks and Wildlife; Janelle Valladares, U.S. Forest Service; and Jennifer Peterson, RMFI Executive Director.



On left, RMFI Executive Director, Jennifer Peterson, poses for a photograph at the award ceremony for the Rise to the Future Awards in Washington D.C. in November 2017. On right, Bear Creek Roundtable partners cut the ribbon to open new trails in the watershed.

From left to right: Oscar Martinez, U.S. Forest Service; Robert Seal, Colorado Parks and Wildlife; Jennifer Peterson, RMFI Executive Director; Don Logelin, Trout Unlimited; Bob Falcone, El Paso County Parks Advisory Board.

2017

# OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

**COLLABORATIVE INTEGRATED AQUATIC STEWARDSHIP AWARD:** In November 2017, RMFI was awarded a U.S. Forest Service Collaborative Integrated Aquatic Stewardship Award to recognize our role in the Bear Creek Roundtable, a stakeholder group that has worked collaboratively for many years on solutions to protect the habitat of the threatened greenback cutthroat trout while also allowing for sustainable outdoor recreation in the Bear Creek Watershed, located immediately southwest of Colorado Springs. On hand to accept the award on the Roundtable's behalf were RMFI, the U.S. Forest Service, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

**GOCO INSPIRE INITIATIVE:** In December 2017, the City of Colorado Springs was awarded an Inspire Initiative grant from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO). The Initiative aims to connect underserved youth and their families with the outdoors. RMFI is a key partner in the grant - stay tuned on some exciting new initiatives within the City over the next 3 years!

**OUTDOOR RETAILER:** In 2017, RMFI had the opportunity to travel to the Outdoor Retailer show in Salt Lake City to participate in a photoshoot with Jim and Elaine Smith, owners of the famed gear shop, Mountain Chalet. The photoshoot was part of the Outdoor Industry Association's national "Together We Are a Force" campaign aimed at demonstrating the diversity and impact of the collective outdoor recreation industry. In 2018, the Outdoor Retailer show will move to Denver, Colorado.



2017

# GRANTORS, CONTRIBUTORS, AND SPONSORS

## GOVERNMENT

Bureau of Land Management  
City of Colorado Springs  
City of Manitou Springs  
Colorado Water Conservation Board  
Colorado Parks & Wildlife  
El Paso County Parks  
U.S. Forest Service

## ORGANIZATIONS

Barr Trail Mountain Race  
Broadmoor Garden Club  
Friends of Cheyenne Mountain State Park  
Friends of Garden of the Gods  
Garden of the Gods Visitor & Nature Center  
Great Outdoors Colorado  
High Valley Farm  
Indy Give  
Leadership Pikes Peak  
Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates  
National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance  
Pikes Peak Fund  
Pikes Peak Marathon, Inc.  
RMFI Board of Directors  
Texas Tech University  
The Mitguards  
United Way

## FOUNDATIONS

AmazonSmile Foundation  
American Express Foundation  
Arbor Day Foundation  
Clif Bar Family Foundation  
Community First Foundation  
El Pomar Foundation  
Garden of the Gods Foundation  
George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation  
HDR Foundation  
Joseph Henry Edmondson Foundation  
Kirkpatrick Family Fund  
Louise Arnold Maddux Foundation  
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation  
National Forest Foundation  
Petzl Foundation  
Pikes Peak Community Foundation  
T. Rowe Price Foundation  
Union Pacific Foundation

## BUSINESSES

Avago Technologies  
Bristol Brewing Company  
Columbia Sportswear Company  
ConocoPhillips  
Crossroads Animal Hospital  
Dunagan Childs

Farmers Insurance - Justin Burns Insurance Agency, Inc.  
Fossil Brewing Company  
Great Storm Brewing  
Harris Corporation  
Kirkpatrick Bank  
Kum & Go  
La'au's Taco Shop  
LexisNexis  
Mike's Camera  
Mountain Chalet  
Mountain Equipment Recyclers  
New Belgium Brewery  
Old Town Bike Shop  
Osprey Packs, Inc.  
Oxbow Labs  
Pizzeria Rustica  
Pocket Pals Trail Maps and Outdoors, LLC  
Raymond James and Associates, Inc.  
REI, Inc.  
RTA Architects  
Starbucks Coffee Company  
SunWater Spa  
Thanasi Foods  
Trails End Taproom  
Veda Salon & Spa  
Waldo Waldo, Inc.  
Wells Fargo

## INDIVIDUALS

Anonymous  
Chris Aaby  
Mitchell Ackerman  
David Adair  
Angie Adams

Sam Alexander  
Gayle Allen  
Taylor Allen  
William Allen  
Jason Alwine  
Jessica Amschl-Meir  
Michael Anderson  
Josiah Anthony  
Patrick Antrim  
Jane Ard-Smith  
Michelle Asher  
Denise Avitabile  
Chris Babbs  
Richard Bachet  
Matthew Baldwin  
Emily Bankhead  
Renee Barall  
Groucho Beckenhaupt  
Donna Becker  
Charlie Becquet  
Paul Beineke  
Chris Beiswanger  
Jolene Berlin  
Jose Bermudez  
Lynn Bevington  
Jeff Bieri  
Wayne Bland  
Heather Boehlke  
JW Bolin  
Lisa Bonwell  
Kent Borges  
Heather Briggs  
Andrew Brinkman  
Mike & Tanja Britton  
Howard & Dale Brooks

Keith Brown  
Rayann Brunner  
Teri Buchanan  
Sandra Buck  
Kim Burt  
Jack Busher  
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 Aspen Valley High School  
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 Avid4 Adventure  
 BELFOR Property Restoration  
 Catamount Institute  
 Colorado College  
 Challenger Middle School  
 Cheyenne Mountain Resort  
 CityServe  
 CIVA Charter High School  
 Colorado Mountain Club  
 Colorado Outward Bound School  
 Colorado Springs Early Colleges  
 Colorado Springs School  
 Colorado Young Leaders  
 CorePower Yoga  
 Colorado Parks and Wildlife  
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 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
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First Presbyterian Church (Kirkwood, MO)  
 GE Johnson  
 Griffith Centers for Children  
 Harrison High School  
 HDR, Inc.  
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 Next Step Ministries  
 Peterson Air Force Base  
 Pikes Peak Community College  
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**THANK YOU TO OUR  
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Garden of the Gods, Justin Peterson



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