

Open Space and Mountain Parks Volunteerism, Service Learning and Partnerships

2022 Annual Report



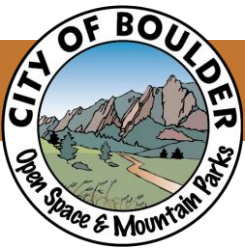
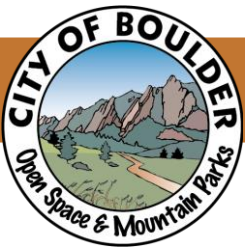


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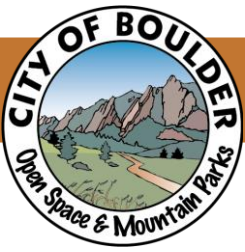


2022 Program Metrics, Data, and Partnerships



Introduction

The Team that compiled this annual report consists of three Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) work groups (Volunteerism, Service Learning & Partnerships (VSLP), Trails, and Trailheads). These workgroups provide the community with hands-on land management and conservation work that supports OSMP Master Plan Priorities. Highlighted are key successes, Master Plan implementation, links to additional resources, testimonials, and plans for 2023.



Volunteer Services 2022 Highlights

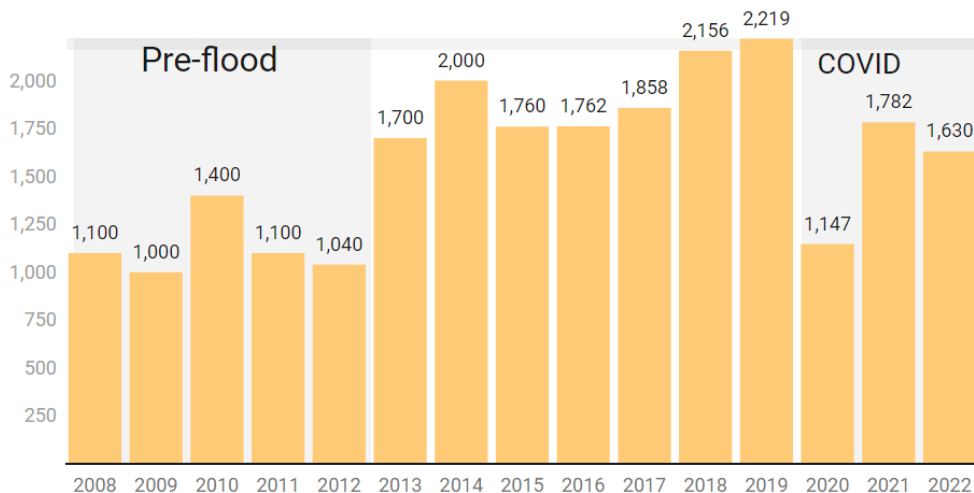
- Over 1,630 volunteers contributed 18,184 hours equaling approximately \$572,978 in value.
- Two Bridge House Crews (crews of six with two supervisors) contributed 5,904 hours on high priority projects.
- 112 Junior Rangers worked 640 crew hours (that’s over 35,000 individual hours contributed!) on high priority OSMP projects including 2,448 linear feet of new trail construction, repaired 4,297 linear feet of trail, constructed 561 feet of trail ditch, taught an education program on the NCAR Fire, and more. The Junior Ranger Program also piloted a collaboration with Parks and Recreation’s Youth Services Initiative (YSI) program to offer a paid summer opportunity for middle school age youth.
 - See the [2022 Junior Ranger Year-End Report](#) for more details on metrics and impact.

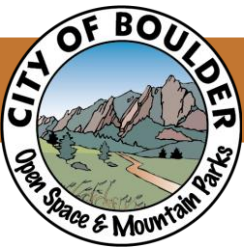
Volunteer Participation Trends 2008-2022

The number of individuals volunteering for OSMP is still recovering from COVID, however contradictory to national trends, those who are volunteering are contributing considerable hours. Opportunities for on-going volunteer roles, and one-day volunteer projects are available on at VolunteerOSMP.org and on the Count Me In Boulder websites.

Volunteer Participation Trends

Number of volunteers overtime.





Partnership Highlights

Every year OSMP partners with dozens of organizations, and many of those organizations support OSMP through volunteerism. Below, are a few partnerships that stand out for 2022.

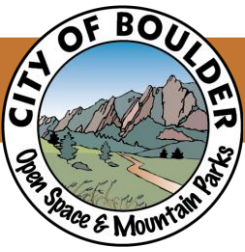
Junior Ranger/Youth Services Initiative (YSI) Middle School Crew



This Middle School aged crew is led and supported by the City of Boulder’s Parks and Recreation department. The Youth Services Initiative (YSI) offers recreational and educational opportunities for children ages 6-18, living in Boulder’s public housing sites who are also predominantly from low-income and/or Spanish-speaking families. This year, YSI and Junior Rangers partnered to make this unique crew experience a reality. The YSI Summer Mentorship Program is in its tenth year, but this was the first year partnering primarily with the Junior Ranger Program. Together, these two programs provided a structured and trusting environment that matched middle school youth with adults who guided them during work projects and recreational activities outdoors. The YSI Junior Rangers are ages 11-14, which brings workforce development to youth who aren’t necessarily age eligible for regular Junior Ranger crews. All 20 youth successfully completed their summer commitment with us, and each earned their full stipend funded by the Health Equity Fund.

YOUTH IMPACT: Supported by compassionate adult staff, youth develop valuable work skills, learn about environmental topics, increase their fitness, and gain confidence.

SYSTEM IMPACT: Introduces stewardship and love of the outdoors to a younger audience, giving them the skills to become life-long stewards and future leaders of our natural lands.



Partnership Highlights Continued

Boulder Open Space Conservancy (BOSC)



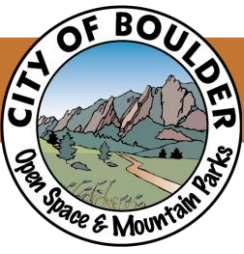
Through a Project Agreement, BOSC raised \$41,945 in 2022 to support additional trail restoration on Mount Sanitas. Money raised in 2021 went towards funding a helicopter for a day during fall of 2022 for longline material operations. In 2022, BOSC also raised \$4,555 for the Maddy Lignell Junior Ranger Memorial Fund, 1k for Volunteer Services and \$500 for the Education and Outreach team. This is a 41% increase from 2021 donations.



Youth Climber Focus – The Watershed School

This group of students worked six days with the Trail Crews restoring climbing access at two locations. The students learned restoration work techniques and OSMP Dakota Anderson talked to the group on the importance of partnership and working with agencies to restore land that is being impacted through recreation activities.





Master Plan Implementation Highlights

Volunteer, Service Learning and Partnerships (VSLP) supports the OSMP Master Plan primarily through Community Connection, Education, and Inclusion (CCEI). The delivery of these services support (CCEI.), plus Ecosystem Health and Resilience (EHR.), Agriculture Today and Tomorrow (ATT.), Responsible Recreation, Stewardship and Enjoyment (RRSE.), and Financial Sustainability (FS.). Below are just a few examples

Youth Service Learning – Junior Ranger Program

The Junior Ranger Program has two main goals: 1) complete priority conservation projects across OSMP, and 2) connect youth to nature, while helping them develop critical work and life skills. Through this job experience, youth acquire technical resource management skills, improve patience, teamwork and problem-solving skills, increase their confidence, and learn lots about themselves and the natural world.

In 2022, the Junior Ranger Program continued to prioritize mental health and community building to alleviate some of the continued impacts of COVID on youth. Staff started a new pilot program, the YSI Junior Ranger crew, partnering with the City of Boulder Parks and Recreation Youth Service Initiative (which primarily serves youth from low-income housing communities in Boulder) to serve the often overlooked middle school age group. Staff also continued to develop the: Youth Ranger Crew (first piloted in 2017), Weather & Climate Crew, and Leadership Crew. To read more about what Junior Rangers accomplished, please see the [2022 Junior Ranger Year-End Report](#).



Environmental Education

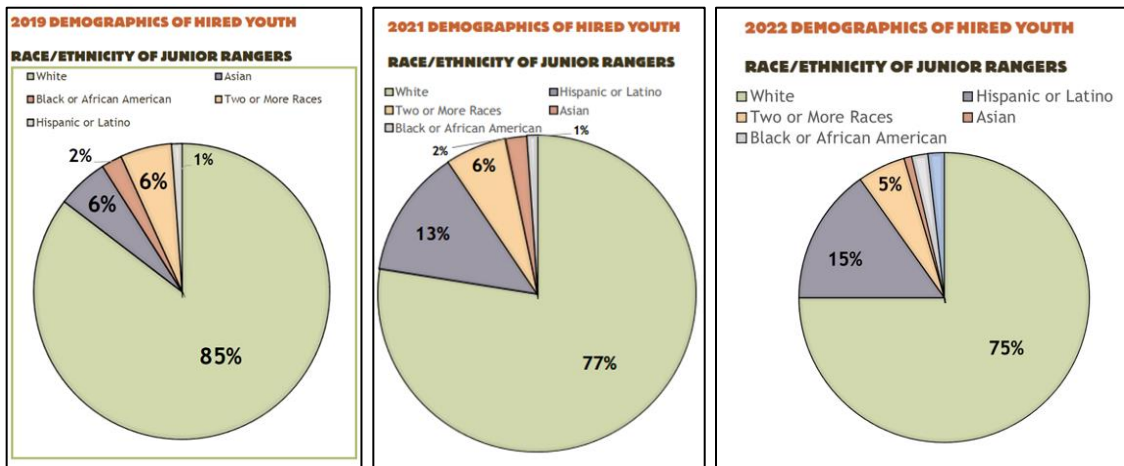
Chipping Pines with Forestry

Junior Rangers Building the New Ski Jump Trail



Youth Service Learning – Junior Ranger Program Continued

In 2022, 112 youth from 194 applicants were hired. The Junior Ranger Program continued a partnership with Nature Kids Boulder to provide family programming in Spanish & English to help introduce youth and their families to the Junior Ranger Program – resulting in more applications and hires from underrepresented communities. Staff hired the first Bilingual Junior Ranger Program Senior Coordinator to have more representation at the leadership level of the program. Equitable hiring is multi-year process that staff are working to improve over time. The pie graphs show that incremental progress is being made to increase diversity of hired Junior Ranger members.



Master Plan Implementation via the Junior Ranger Program

- CCEI. 3) CONNECT YOUTH TO THE OUTDOORS
- RRSE. 2) REDUCE TRAIL MAINTENANCE BACKLOG
- EHR. 1) PRESERVE AND RESTORE IMPORTANT HABITAT BLOCKS AND CORRIDORS
- CCEI. 1) WELCOME DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS AND ABILITIES
- CCEI. 7) CULTIVATE LEADERS IN STEWARDSHIP
- EHR. 3) ADDRESS THE GLOBAL CLIMATE CRISIS HERE AND NOW
- EHR. 4) REDUCE UNDESIGNATED TRAILS
- CCEI. 6) INSPIRE ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY AND NEW INVOLVEMENT IN OSMP
- CCEI. 5) FOSTER WELLNESS THROUGH IMMERSION IN THE OUTDOORS



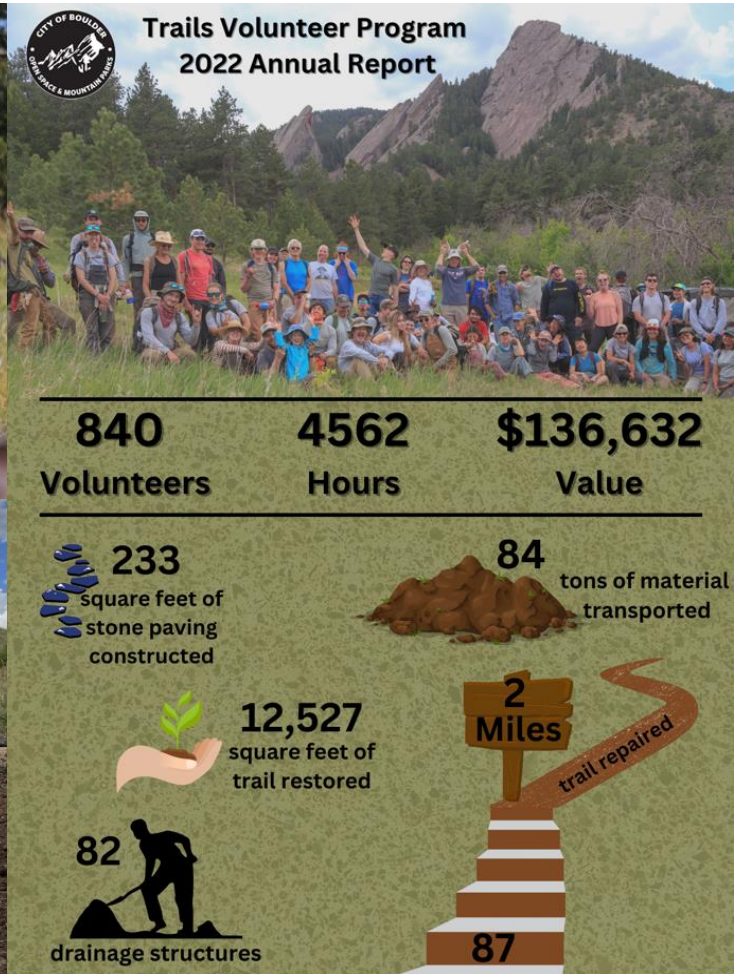


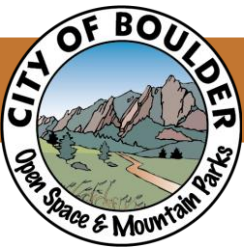
One-Day Volunteer Projects - Trails Volunteer Program

The OSMP Trails Team has a robust Trails Volunteer Program that focuses on constructing and maintaining sustainable trails. The Trails Volunteer Program offers community one-day volunteer trail projects, serving corporations and organizations, and 12 “Trail work Tuesdays,” which were a new offering and popular this season. This team also focused on closing undesigned trails system-wide with volunteer groups. OSMP Trails staff work closely with local special user groups ranging from the Boulder Mountainbike Alliance (BMA), the Flatirons Climbing Council (FCC), Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado (VOC), and the Boulder Climbing Community (BCC) to name a few. Teens from the Watershed School joined trails for 4 days on climbing access trail restoration and learned a great deal on the importance of stewardship through service learning.

Master Plan Implementation

- RRSE. 2) REDUCE TRAIL MAINTENANCE BACKLOG
- EHR. 4) REDUCE UNDESIGNATED TRAILS
- RRSE. 6) SUPPORT A RANGE OF PASSIVE RECREATION EXPERIENCES





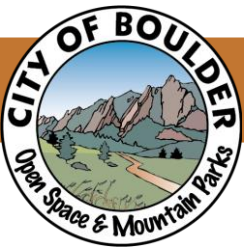
One-Day Volunteer Projects - Volunteer Service Learning and Partnerships

Requests for One-Day Volunteer Projects (ODVP) from businesses and organizations increased both from requests as well as from OSMP generated community-based public projects such as litter cleanups, seed collections. (Now also on agriculture lands, wetlands, and riparian areas.) Climate Action ODVP were developed with workgroups and recruited outwardly on our OSMP webpage and in Count Me In Boulder. In addition, several individuals made longer-term commitments to steward the land. Check out the most recent [OSMP Volunteer Spotlight](#) that features an exemplary OSMP volunteer.

Master Plan Implementation

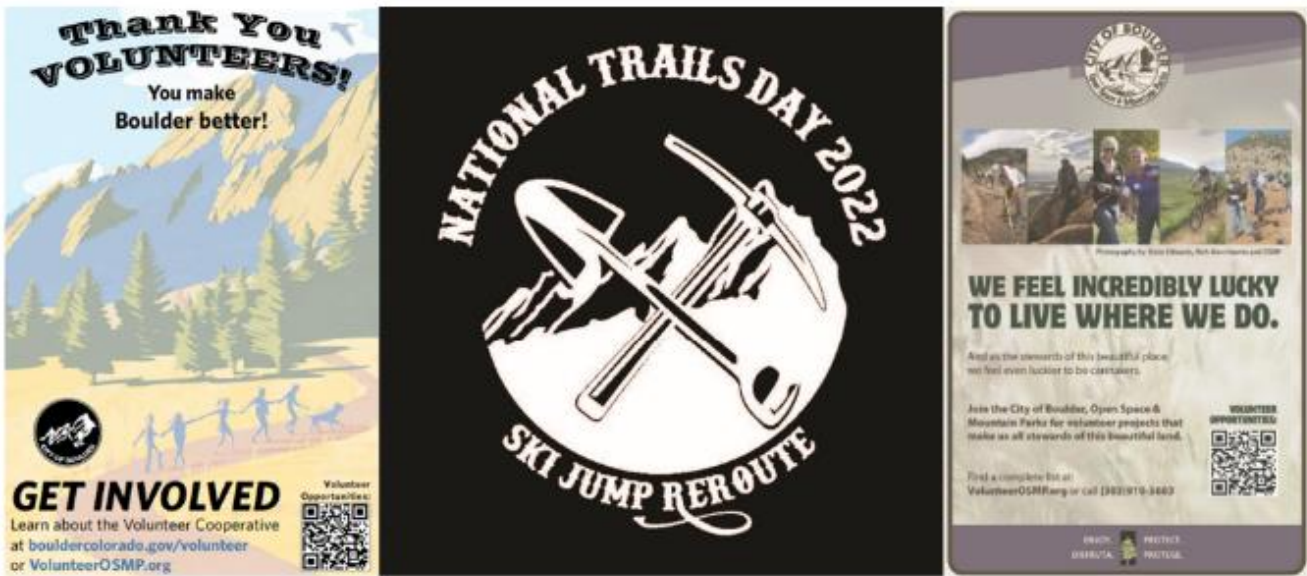
- CCEI. 7) CULTIVATE LEADERS IN STEWARDSHIP
- EHR. B) RESTORE RESILIENT HABITAT
- ATT.8) FURTHER REDUCE OR ELIMINATE PESTICIDES USE
- ATT.9) ENHANCE ENJOYMENT AND PROTECTION OF WORKING LANDSCAPES
- EHR. C) CLIMATE ACTION
- EHR. 1) PRESERVE AND RESTORE IMPORTANT HABITAT BLOCKS AND CORRIDORS
- EHR. 3) ADDRESS THE GLOBAL CLIMATE ACTION CRISIS HERE AND NOW





2022 One-Day Volunteer Project Hours for VSLP, Trails, and Trailheads

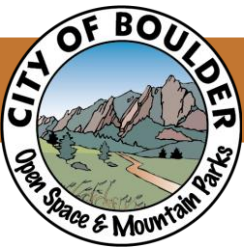
- OSMP hosted 1,354 ODVP volunteers that contributed a total of 6,806.5 hours.
- 269 youth/teens volunteered for 1346 hours on various projects such as: enhancing the Sombbrero Marsh area, maintaining various trailheads, building trails, and more.
- Trailheads staff coordinated 20 Community Service Individuals for a total of 537 hours.



Bridge House Ready to Work Contract Partnership

The Bridge House Ready to Work (RTW) focus is to provide direct support and housing to people experiencing homelessness. OSMP contracts RTW Crews for nine months out of the year and they work to support ~ten OSMP workgroups on land management priorities and goals. The RTW Crew has a reputation for working hard, and OSMP staff are grateful for the contracted partnership that has been cultivated over the past ten years.

A new pilot started in 2022 is that OSMP offers RTW members the chance to work on Vegetable Farm Wellness Projects. On these restorative projects, RTW Crews benefited from the experience of learning directly from OSMP Agriculture Tenants, and by working and learning the rich history of agriculture on open space lands preserved by the City Charter. RTW experienced unique farming methods that are gaining traction and a new way of farming that coincides with natural environments, and rooted in ancient farming techniques.

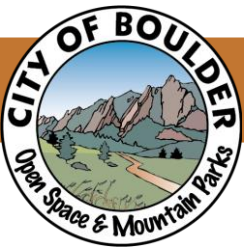


A final 2022 RTW highlight is that a former RTW Crew Member, Cedrick Resendez was hired onto the OSMP Forestry team for the field season. Prior to being employed with OSMP, VSLP staff encouraged Cedrick to gain skills related to forestry while with RTW, so that he could apply to forestry-related jobs. During the 2022 season with OSMP, Cedrick worked on four out-of-state wildland fires and thrived in this role thanks to the strong leadership, work ethic and skills developed with the OSMP Forestry Team.

Master Plan Implementation

- CCEI. 7) CULTIVATE LEADERS IN STEWARDSHIP
- EHR. 6) CONTROL INVASIVE WEEDS
- EHR. B) RESTORE RESILIENT HABITAT
- AAT. 1) REDUCE MAINTENANCE BACKLOG FOR AGRICULTURE AND WATER INFRASTRUCTURE
- ATT.8) FURTHER REDUCE OR ELIMINATE PESTICIDES USE
- ATT.9) ENHANCE ENJOYMENT AND PROTECTION OF WORKING LANDSCAPE
- EHR. 1) PRESERVE AND RESTORE IMPORTANT HABITAT BLOCKS AND CORRIDORS
- EHR. C) CLIMATE ACTION
- EHR. 3) ADDRESS THE GLOBAL CLIMATE ACTION CRISIS HERE AND NOW





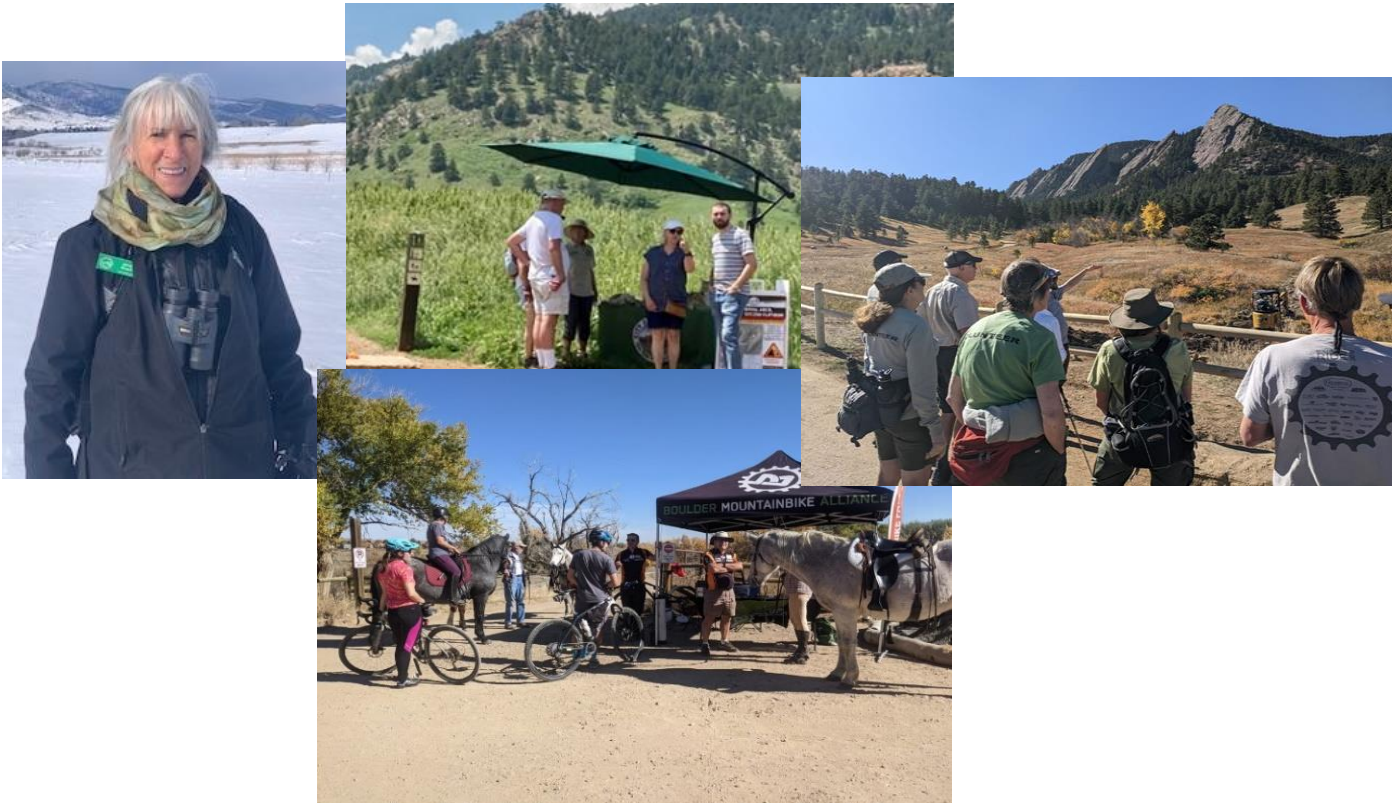
On-Going Program Volunteer Highlights

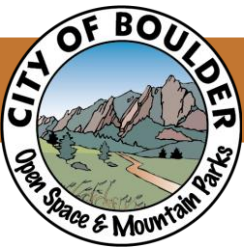
Volunteer Ambassadors

Visitor and Trail Ambassadors are creating a positive, uniformed presence on the land while welcoming, orienting, educating, and modeling good stewardship practices for all who come to OSMP to enjoy the land. In 2022, Volunteer Visitor Ambassadors made 22,000 visitor contacts, Volunteer Trail Ambassadors made 21,000 contacts, Flagstaff Nature Center volunteer made 3,800 contacts, and Bike Patrol volunteers made 575 contacts. Some Ambassadors are at popular trail heads, notably at the Chautauqua Trailhead, in the Ranger Cottage and at the Flagstaff Nature Center. Other Trail and Bike Ambassadors are out on the trails recreating alongside of our visitors. All Ambassadors wear uniforms and turn in reports to provide OSMP staff with timely information on fence and trail damage, downed trees, damaged signs and general usage or conflict issues.

Master Plan Implementation

- RRSE.B) ENJOYABLE RESPONSIBLE RECREATION
- RRSE.C) WELCOMING ACCESSIBLE TRAILHEADS
- RRSE.6) SUPPORT A RANGE OF PASSIVE RECREATION EXPERIENCES
- RRSE.8) PROVIDE WELCOMING AND INSPIRING VISITOR FACILITIES AND SERVICES
- CCEI.2) ENHANCE COMMUNICAITON WITH VISITORS





On-Going Program Volunteer Highlights

Trail and Trailhead Maintenance Volunteers

In both one-day projects and ongoing roles, volunteers learn from OSMP staff about land management and planning efforts and priorities through hands-on action. These volunteers then spread the word and share what they learn with their networks.

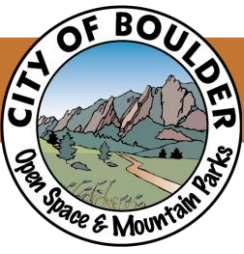
Highlights:

- **Individual dog poop pickup volunteers** put in over 170 hours of service for upkeep of areas such as Dakota Ridge, BVR, and Chautauqua. They collected and disposed of 100's of pounds of waste that would otherwise have contributed to health risks, pollution of waterways and increase of nitrogen in soils.
- **Let's Doo IT Campaign:** The OSMP Recreation Stewardship team launched this effort with support from Education and Outreach and volunteer services in 2021. In 2022, efforts were expanded from 4 to 5 of OSMP's busiest dog trailheads-Sanitas, Dry Creek, Shanahan, Chautauqua adding South Boulder Creek West. Several staff and 12 program volunteers flagged dog poop at each location along with a sign explaining why the flags were there. Staff and volunteers talked to over 600 people, many of which helped us pick up over 70 pounds of dog poop. Volunteers and dog guardians received bandanas for their dogs to wear as well as other swag and information about OSMP's compostable dog waste program.

Master Plan Implementation

- EHR.B) RESTORED RESILIENT HABITAT
- EHR.6) CONTROL INVASIVE SPECIES
- CCEI. 8) HEIGHTEN COMMUNITY UNDERSTANDING OF LAND MANAGEMENT EFFORTS





On-Going Program Volunteer Highlights

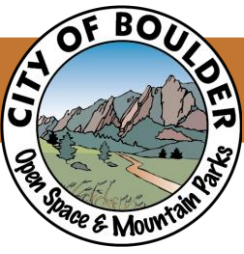
Resource Restoration Steward Volunteers

- Boulder Creek Path/Foothills Hospital Site was stewarded by a mighty team who worked weekly to make a change in this riparian zone. Lots of this work involved garlic mustard and Dames rocket removal, among other species.
- The Skunk Canyon team remained dedicated to sustainable ecosystems in their neighborhood by investing over 280 hours to remove hundreds of pounds of myrtle spurge, teasel, musk thistle and other invasives species.
- A small group of three volunteers pulled myrtle spurge around the Chautauqua area. This is a new endeavor that VSLP staff are working with OSMP's Vegetation Stewardship Manager. This was a small pilot to assess how it works to send "individuals" out to do weed eradication.
- Native Gardeners kept the gateway to OSMP beautiful for visitors. This group dwindled to only a few dedicated volunteers and VSLP staff will be looking to re-vamp it for 2023.

Master Plan Implementation

- EHR.A) HIGH DIVERSITY OF NATIVE PLANTS AND ANIMALS
- EHR.B) RESTORED RESILIENT HABITAT
- CCEI. 8) HEIGHTEN COMMUNITY UNDERSTANDING OF LAND MANAGEMENT EFFORTS
- EHR.6) CONTROL INVASIVE SPECIES





On-Going Program Volunteer Highlights

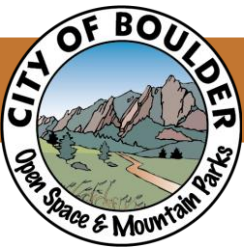
Wildlife Monitoring Volunteers

OSMP **Raptor and Bat** monitoring volunteers give some of the highest collective hours of all OSMP volunteer groups. These volunteers provided data collection and observations at OSMP sites to support OSMP resource management decisions. Volunteers are often out early in the morning and late into the night hiking into remote spots on the system to the monitoring sites. Throughout the season, 54 volunteers dedicated a total of 3,355 hours to these important projects.

Master Plan Implementation

- EHR.A) HIGH DIVERSITY OF NATIVE PLANTS AND ANIMALS
- EHR.7) DEVELOP OF A LEARNING LABORATORY APPROACH TO CONSERVATION
- CCEI.8) HEIGHTEN COMMUNITY UNDERSTANDING OF LAND MANAGEMENT EFFORTS





On-Going Program Volunteer Highlights

Education, Wellness and Recreation Volunteers

Volunteer Education Naturalists provided over 2000 hours of creative and engaging education programs to local Boulder County school students. These programs are either out on the OSMP trails or sometimes in the school classrooms. Volunteers share their passion and knowledge of the local flora, fauna and history of our land.

Through a new Behavioral Health partnership with the Boulder Community Health Pathways Program, **Wellness Volunteers** have been fostering deep connections between the natural and human community. Through movement, reflection, and the deep lessons nature provides, they foster a sense of wonder and purpose in the lives of community members. This program also supported a dedicated Wellness Volunteer that led 7 yoga classes at the renowned Flagstaff Amphitheater on Saturday mornings for interested community members.

Recreation Volunteers assisted staff with accessible wheelchair hikes and hand cycle bike rides providing invaluable trail assistance to those in our community with limited mobility and opportunity.

Master Plan Implementation

- RRSE.6) SUPPORT A RANGE OF PASSIVE RECREATION EXPERIENCES
- RRSE.9) DEVELOP A LEARNING LABORATORY APPROACH TO RECREATION
- CCEI.1) WELCOME DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS AND ABILITIES
- CCEI.3) CONNECT YOUTH TO OUTDOORS
- CCEI. 5) FOSTER WELLNESS THROUGH IMMERSION IN THE OUTDOORS



On-Going Program Volunteer Highlights

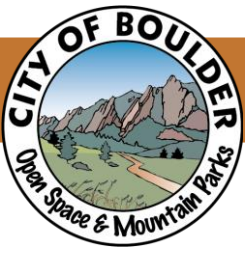
Boards and Commissions

The Open Space Board of Trustees (OSBT) makes recommendations to City Council and staff on the acquisition and management of Open Space. The five members of the Open Space Board of Trustees are appointed to five-year terms by the Boulder City Council. In 2022, OSBT gave over 1,468 hours. The Open Space Board of Trustees Meetings are typically held on the second and, if necessary, the fourth Wednesday of the month. Visit the [osbt webpage](#) to view Open Space Board of Trustees agendas and materials.



Master Plan Implementation

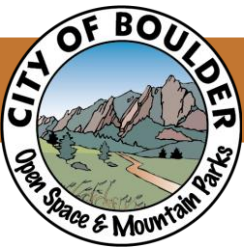
- OSBT supports nearly all of the Master Plan strategies



2022 Team



- Youth Service Learning Program Manager – Natasha Steinmann
- Junior Ranger Program Senior Coordinator – Marly Saunders
- Junior Ranger Program Senior Coordinator – Ailish McDonald
- Junior Ranger Program Bilingual Senior Coordinator – Alejandro Jaquez-Caro
- Volunteer Program Manager (on-going volunteers) – Halice Ruppi (retired in 2022)
- Volunteer Program Manager (on-going volunteers) – Debbie Cushman
- Volunteer Crew Lead (on-going) – Chance Nelson
- Volunteer Program Manager (Groups) – Kris Weinberger
- Volunteer Services Crew Lead – Hales Brown
- Volunteerism, Service Learning and Partnerships Senior Manager – Jennelle Freeston
- Trails Volunteer Program Manager – Beau Clark
- Trailheads Maintenance Volunteer Program Specialist – Dave Barry
- Citywide Volunteer Cooperative Volunteer Coordinators



Volunteer Testimonials

Adam Jack (Raptor Monitor, former Bat Monitor)

"Volunteering with OSMP has been a wonderful oasis in my otherwise busy/stressful work life; a weekly pull to get exercise outside, connect with nature, and calm the mind. Over the years I've learned about the local wildlife and met some wonderful people through the program, including the dedicated OSMP team. The spectacular wildlife encounters (too numerous to list) and regular connections with nature are memories I'll cherish forever."

Bev Hawla (Education Naturalist Volunteer)

"My motivation for leading/facilitating groups into nature has always been the hope that others might discover the magic of being in nature as I have. As an OSMP volunteer naturalist invited into the Pathways program, my goal is to inspire awe and wonder in nature that relates to the therapeutic topic of the day, and to facilitate an opportunity for participants to explore their individual path to learning and healing in nature, both during their time with Pathways and beyond. I feel immense compassion for participants as they deal with the part of their human journey that brought them to Pathways and I value the opportunity to be a part of the Pathways Program."

Debora Martin (Trail Guide, Naturalist, many programs, etc.)

"I started volunteering with OSMP on the Bear team in 2007, because I love wildlife and I had seen many bears while hiking that year and felt the need to educate to keep bears safe and give the public knowledge. OSMP staff has always been so supportive, so with their support and my love of educating kids, I became a volunteer naturalist in 2008 and my goal has always been to connect kids to nature. I feel at peace when I volunteer and I am appreciated by the children, teachers, families and OSMP. My love of hiking and nature led me to volunteer as a trail guide so that I could give back to the land that I appreciate so much. I like the connection with the community, and I could not do any of this without the amazing staff that have supported me for 15 years."

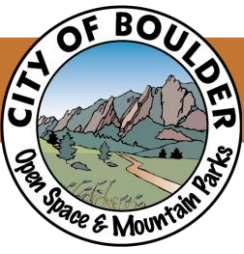
From Program Volunteer Feedback Snapshot 2022: favorite volunteer moments from 2022

"I've helped a few people who were lost find their way. I've also successfully engaged some cool young people/teens and taught/showed them something that they thought was interesting. It's always fun to help someone who is bored/hating the hike find something that interests them, even if it's brief."

"I enjoy how grateful visitors are when you can provide them guidance on trails. It makes their experience more memorable and enjoyable. I feel they appreciate knowing there are knowledgeable and friendly "locals" ensuring everyone feels welcome on the OSMP trails."

"Favorite moments were when we entered into rich dialog on interpretation programs and people expressed how excited they were to see the natural world (or some aspect of it) in a new and inspiring way."

"When we complete a section of land with dug out myrtle spurge piled high, I feel I have helped rescue the native plant community."



Looking Ahead: Plans for 2023

The Volunteerism, Service Learning and Partnership team will continue to work on the following initiatives:

- Recruit and restore to 2019 volunteer participation levels.
- Continue to integrate Climate Action messaging into one-day volunteer projects, and for on-going Ambassador volunteers to share with the public.
- Build upon hands-on opportunities for youth.
- Engage youth and adults (Latinx, BIPOC, & LGBT+) to grow vegetables with OSMP Agriculture Tenants for growing donated food.
- Continue Agriculture Farm Wellness projects for Bridge House RTW/RTWL
- Explore additional equity and diversity initiatives.
- Train additional public contact volunteers to increase presence on the land – including introducing a possible Dog Ambassador program.
- Explore volunteer roles to support OSMP’s wildland-fire and invasive weed related needs.
- Continue to pilot new Junior Ranger crew types.

