



FOUNTAIN CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT

Monthly News & Events

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JOIN THE MOVEMENT: GO PLASTIC FREE

As we head into July, it's time to join millions of people worldwide in the Plastic Free July movement. This global initiative challenges individuals and communities to reduce single-use plastics making a significant impact on our environment and watersheds.

Why Plastic Free July?

Every year, millions of tons of plastic waste end up in our oceans and waterways harming wildlife and polluting ecosystems. Single-use plastics - such as bags, bottles, and straws - are major contributors to this problem. By participating in Plastic Free July, we can all play a part in reducing plastic pollution and protecting our precious watersheds.

How to Participate

1. **Start Small:** Begin with simple swaps like using reusable bags, water bottles, and coffee cups. These small changes can make a big difference.
2. **Ditch Single-Use Plastics:** Avoid products with excessive plastic packaging. Opt for alternatives like glass, metal, or biodegradable materials.
3. **Educate & Advocate:** Share the Plastic Free July message with friends, family, and colleagues. Encourage your community to join the movement and support policies that reduce plastic use.
4. **Get Involved:** Participate in local clean-up events, attend workshops, and engage with online resources to learn more about reducing plastic waste.

The Impact on Our Watersheds

Plastic pollution doesn't just affect oceans; it starts in our local creeks. When plastic waste accumulates in our waterways, it threatens aquatic life, clogs storm drains, and takes away from the natural beauty of our region. By reducing plastic consumption, we help keep our watersheds clean and healthy, ensuring safe drinking water, and vibrant ecosystems for generations to come.

Make a Pledge

This July, take the pledge to reduce single-use plastics. Whether you commit to a day, a week, or the entire month, every effort counts. Visit the Plastic Free July website to learn more and join the challenge. Let's make this July a turning point in our fight against plastic pollution. For more tips and resources, visit [Plastic Free July](#).

MILE HIGH YOUTH CORPS SUPPORTS FCWD WITH RESTORATION AND MONITORING



EVENTS

Check out upcoming events hosted by FCWD and partners throughout the watershed. Click on the image below the event description to learn more.

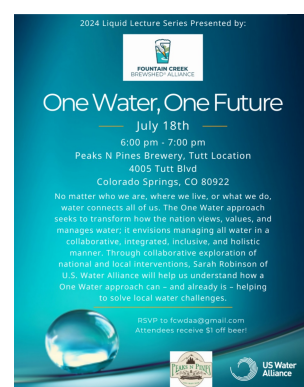
Come Plant With FCWD

Thursday, July 18 9:00 am-12:00 pm
FCWD will be starting native plant seeds at Rick's Garden Center for our fall programs and are looking for a few helpers. No experience required. RSVP by clicking the image below. We'll respond with additional details.



Brewshed® Alliance Liquid Lectures

Thursday, July 18, 6:00 pm-7:00 pm
We're doubling up our summer LL offerings. Join us in Pueblo or Colorado Springs for sips & smarts!





Through generous grant funding from Great Outdoors Colorado, FCWD and Mile High Youth Corps (MHYC) collaborated this summer on addressing critical environmental challenges along Fountain Creek in the City of Pueblo. For two weeks, a MHYC chainsaw crew worked to remove and treat invasive plant species from waterways near Confluence Park and the 8th Street bridge. A second MHYC crew worked to install rock armoring along Fountain Creek below Highway 47. The outcomes of these projects amounted to nearly 10 acres cut and treated and roughly 190 cubic feet of rock armoring installed into the creek's bank.

In reflecting on their experience at MHYC after the Fountain Creek project, one member of the chainsaw crew stated, "This is the first job where I really felt that I was doing something good for myself, the environment, and the community. I was excited to return to the project site and get to work every day knowing that I'm having a positive impact."

This is a partnership both organizations are thrilled about and we look forward to future projects together. These accomplishments will make significant impacts on Fountain Creek for years to come including improving plant and animal biodiversity, mitigating erosion on the riverbanks, and improving water quality and quantity in Pueblo and other communities downstream.

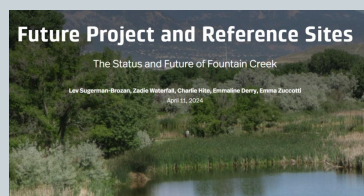
Many thanks to the support of other stakeholders: City of Pueblo for providing a chipping truck and bathroom facilities for the crew, Lake Pueblo State Park for providing campsites, and Matrix Design Group for its support in the planning process and implementation of the project.

Funds for this project were awarded by Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), which receives a portion of Colorado Lottery proceeds, to the Colorado Youth Corps Association for use by accredited conservation service corps. The goal of the program is to employ crews throughout the state on critical outdoor recreation and land conservation projects in partnership with local governments and open space agencies.

FEATURED DISTRICT PROJECT

Community Collaboration: Colorado College Student Projects, Part 3 of 3

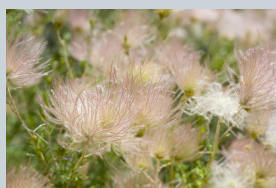
This final feature of CC student project work from a Landscape Processes and Evolution class focused on the future of the District's work. The students used aerial imaging to hone in on new sites for proposed project work on Fountain Creek. They selected three sites that, from their assessment, are high risk and near critical infrastructure. Those are just a couple of the many factors FCWD considers when contemplating a new project. We were very pleased with the student's work and have plans to engage with another class this fall. View the final storyboard by clicking the image.



FEATURED NATIVE PLANT

Apache Plume, *Fallugia paradoxa*

These hardy, drought tolerant shrubs prefer full sun and have rose-like white blooms. After the flowers fade, a feathery pink seedhead emerges, looking like a Truffula Tree tuft. They can grow 4-6 feet tall and just as wide. Apache Plume is attractive year round and supports



Every Tuesday, 4:00 pm-6:00 pm
Dedicated volunteers come together to clean up different locations throughout the Pikes Peak Region, positively impacting our community and environment. Afterward, we meet at various local restaurants to celebrate our hard work at discounted prices. All supplies are provided including safety gear. To register to volunteer and get details on when and where each cleanup will occur, click the image below or follow on socials @richardsrubbishroundup.



Weeds Have a Story for You!

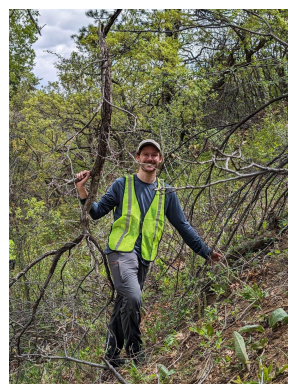
Saturday, July 20, 9:00 am-4:00 pm
Spend the day learning about what the weeds in your landscape are telling you about your soil. Specific weedy species will be discussed: how and if they can be used and what strategies you can use to get them to give way to other more desirable plants. This class will be held at the Fountain Creek Nature Center. \$35/person.



Bear Creek Restoration Crew

Wednesday, July 31, 5:00 pm-7:30 pm

Become a steward of our parks and join the Bear Creek Nature Center Restoration Crew. This group conducts quarterly restoration projects including fire mitigation, trail maintenance, and invasive species removal. Varying levels of difficulty for each project; there's something for everyone!



Concrete Coyote Summer Camps

This summer, Concrete Couch is offering free camps for children ages 9+. Each child may attend up to two camps. Topics range from art - like mosaic and sculpture - to science.

bees and butterflies.

TRY OUR NEW COLLABORATIVE BREW

Fountain Creek Brewshed® Alliance has made another fantastic collaborative brew, *Flower Eater*. The honey lavender blonde ale tapped this week at participating locations. Drop into any of the participating breweries to get a taste before it's sold out. You'll be supporting your watershed as \$1 per beer goes toward FCWD's clean water initiatives.

Thank you to the incredible brewers and breweries that supported this year's collaboration through the donation of their time, resources, and profits including our hosts at Peaks N Pines Brewing Co., and Brass Brewing Co., Cerberus Brewing Co., Goat Patch Brewing Co., Manitou Brewing Co., Mash Mechanix Brewing Co., Voodoo Brewing Co. Colorado Springs, Walter's Brewery & Taproom, and Whistle Pig Brewing Co.!



Trailability Hikes

The Trailability Program at Bear Creek and Fountain Creek Nature Centers utilizes off road mobility vehicles to allow members of the El Paso county community and visiting guests with disabilities to experience trails previously inaccessible to them. The 1-3 miles of trail will take participants through varying foothills and wetlands habitats, accompanied by their friends and family as well as a Nature Center volunteer or staff member. Hikes available at Bear Creek and Fountain Creek Nature Centers through October. Participation is free.



FIELD OF DRINKS RECAP



There was a great crowd at Metcalf Park baseball field in Fountain for the *Field of Drinks* Beer Festival on June 29. Many of FCWD's Brewshed® Alliance members participated in the event. Congratulations to Fountain Creek Brewshed® Alliance member **Reservoir Brewing** for winning the People's Choice Award! Special thanks to Peaks N Pines Brewing Co. for event organizing and having so many dedicated volunteers.

MEET OUR SUMMER FELLOW!

We are excited to bring Fiona McLaughlin to the FCWD team as our Colorado College Summer Fellow. Fiona graduated from Colorado College this past May where she studied Environmental Science. As the Watershed Outreach Assistant, she will help strengthen the Outreach and Education branch of FCWD by running outreach programs, supporting event planning, creating social media content, and more. When not working, she enjoys spending time in the mountains, painting, and playing the guitar.



BREWSHED® ALLIANCE FEATURED PARTNER

Located in historic Pueblo, this family friendly brewpub dishes up fresh, house-made grub to pair with excellent craft beers. If you enjoy history, take a seat at the bar to view the original mahogany design from the 1940s. Choose from a variety of seasonal brews as you join us for the Fountain Creek Brewshed® Alliance Liquid Lecture on July 18th. Mile High Youth Corps will share more on their maintenance support of Pueblo area FCWD projects.



GROWING WITH NATURE: NATIVE PLANT & VEGETABLE GARDENS IN COLORADO

A note from Executive Director Alli Schuch

As we bask in the warmth of July, I've been able to spend a little more time in my yard. Gardening is not just a hobby for me; it's a way to connect with nature, beautify my landscape, continue to learn, grow my own food, and contribute to the health of our watershed.

Embracing Native Plants

When we first bought the place 7 years ago, there was a lush, green, Kentucky Bluegrass lawn with an irrigation system. It was our first house and we knew we wanted to make some changes. After two months of seeing and paying the water bills, we immediately stopped watering – I did not want to spend our dollars nor our community's limited water budget on grass! We have since added a rain barrel and replaced a quarter of the grass with a rock garden, several types of cactus, dianthus, a low-growing rabbitbrush, and a spruce tree. We've been steadily adding native perennials every year in the other areas, burying the grass under cardboard, and getting free mulch from the City of Colorado Springs. We also added a raspberry patch, peach tree, and golden currant for some edibles. It has been a delight to see my plants returning year after year, self-seeding, and attracting birds. We have had a significant reduction of our water bill and continue to nurture a more biodiverse environment.

Growing Your Own Vegetables

Vegetable gardening is another wonderful way to make a positive impact on our environment, and it can be so rewarding. Fresh, homegrown vegetables reduce the carbon footprint associated with transporting produce from farms to grocery stores. Plus, there's nothing quite like the taste of a tomato picked straight from the plant or the crispness of freshly harvested lettuce. As with any type of gardening at our house, it's always an experiment. In our vegetable gardens, we always grow 100+ head of garlic and lots of sweet peas. I try different varieties of other veggies: tomatoes, squash, zucchini, green beans, leafy greens, the list goes on. I have learned that Brussel sprouts and corn do not do well for me, so I pick those up at a local market when possible. We employ organic gardening methods such as using compost, building raised beds, and mulching which helps conserve water and keep the soil moist (a critical practice in our arid climate). My biggest tip for new gardeners: get hail cloth! We learned the hard way a few years ago.

Quick Tips for Water-Wise Gardening

1. **Select Drought-Tolerant Plants:** Choose plants that require less water. Native plants are an excellent option.
2. **Mulch:** Apply mulch around plants to retain soil moisture and reduce evaporation.
3. **Drip Irrigation:** Use drip irrigation systems to deliver water directly to the plant roots, minimizing water waste.
4. **Rain Barrels:** Collect rainwater to use in your garden reducing the need for municipal water.

A Community Effort

Gardening is a rewarding way to contribute to the health of our watershed. By choosing native plants and practicing sustainable gardening methods, we can each play a part in conserving water, supporting wildlife, and maintaining the natural beauty of our communities and for those downstream. I encourage you to explore the joys of gardening and to consider how you can make your own gardens more sustainable, whether its in your apartment window, front porch, or backyard. Together, we can create a more resilient and vibrant ecosystem for future generations.

See you around the watershed,
Alli Schuch



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