

# NATURE JOURNAL



Winter 2020 • Vol. 3 No. 1

## INTERVIEW WITH THE HUMAN

By Lurch, Turkey Vulture in Residence and Guest Columnist

**T**he humans at the NWDC are all abuzz with some talk of an anniversary. Being the most social of the resident raptors, I thought I'd have a chat with our most frequent caregiver, Diana Miller, and get the story.

Lurch: "So Diana, I understand something very special has happened.

Diana: "Yes Lurch, a few weeks ago we celebrated my 30th Anniversary as Director of our Raptor Center."



L: "How did you come to have this awesome job where you get to take care of us?"

D: "Well, it all started in August of 1985 when I arrived for an Environmental Education internship with the Nature Center. I had no idea when I took the position that there would be birds of prey. My first day of raptor handling was so exciting. From the moment the first talons gripped my glove I was hooked! After completing my education internship, I stayed on for another in raptor rehabilitation. After that one finished, I headed back to my home in Illinois, but it wasn't long before I was missing the birds, Colorado and the Nature Center. Luckily, when I came back to Pueblo a job at the Nature Center was available. I worked as the Administrative Assistant for a couple of years, and spent my free time volunteering with the birds. When the RC Director position became available, I was thrilled when it was offered to me."



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#### NATURE & WILDLIFE DISCOVERY CENTER

PO Box 99 Beulah, CO 81023  
Mountain Park Campus  
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NWDC mission is to promote environmental stewardship and community health through Nature education, wildlife rehabilitation and outdoor recreation.



L: "I know I'm happy that they gave you the job. I really appreciated the evenings you would spend with me when I first arrived thirteen years ago. I was pretty scared, but you would sit in my enclosure, talk with me, and make paper airplanes for me to chase. I never really liked the chasing part, but shredding the paper was fun. Did you enjoy those evenings?"

D: "Lurch, I treasured every moment, except for maybe cleaning up the paper mess. It's little intimate times that I get to share with you and the other birds that make my job so special. Not everyone gets the chance to build a nest with a golden eagle, or console a bereaved barn owl that just lost its mate, or listen to an owlet chirping inside its egg shell, or fly paper airplanes with a long-eared owl and a vulture. My job has some seriously cool perks!"

L: "Some days I hardly see you. You zip by in the morning, say hello, and then you're gone. What are you doing?"

D: "Well Lurch, sadly, I can't spend all my time with you and the other birds. It's a challenge to keep the Raptor Center running. There is so much to do. I've got to train volunteers to help with your care. We've got visitors and groups coming to learn about you. The building and cages are aging and in constant need of repair. And, we've got to keep coming up with creative ways to raise funds to pay for all those rats you enjoy eating."

L: "I do enjoy those rats! Sounds like a lot of work caring for us. Why do you stay?"

D: "Some days I ask myself the same question. But then I walk through the enclosures, and as I pass yours, you come running up to greet me and the thought of leaving goes away. You're just too cute to leave."

L: "One day though, I think you'll leave."

D: "Yes, one day, I'll move on. But there will be someone that I'm sure you'll like to take my place."

L: "Any advice you'd like to give them."

D: "Well, always thank your volunteers whenever possible. They may drive you crazy at times, but they are wonderful, passionate people that you will admire and adore, and couldn't run the center without. Take time for yourself. (Something I always forget to do!) Try to talk to at least one group of visitors a day, even if your volunteers have it covered and your desk is piled with to-do lists. Sharing your passion for your job is the best fundraising tool you have. Always make time for at least one walk about the raptor enclosures daily. And finally, always clean Lurch's enclosure last in the morning. He likes to go through your bucket in search of a tasty leftover mouse."

L: "Diana, I just have one more question. Am I your favorite?"

D: "Of course you are! But, please don't tell the others."

We send warm thanks to Pueblo Rocks!; Arkansas Valley Audubon Society and Richard and Mary Tucey; Donley's Soils, Sticks, and Stones LLC for donated gravel at the Raptor Center; Joe Bumgardner for irrigation at River Campus; Toni Manuel for gardening, subbing at Earthkeeper Nature School, and much more; Danielle Vincent-Dunfee for subbing at Earthkeeper Nature School; Elaine Orazem for catching the four roosters that were dumped at the River Campus; Shawna Shoaf for years and years of putting our newsletters together and so much amazing graphic design; High Country Veterinary Hospital, Colorado Springs for in-kind veterinary services for our birds of prey; Jean Schloss for volunteer driving for the Nature School; Steve Douglas for the on-going work in the Mountain Park's forests and for working on the new trail map; and Adam Davidson for being our liaison with the Southern Colorado Trail Builders in building the Carhart Trail.







# SUMMER CAMPS 2020

NWDC Summer Camps will run June 22-July 24. Camp adventures for kids entering Kindergarten through 10th Grade.

Camps back by popular demand include:

Raptor Camps, Mission Wolf & Greenhorn Backpacking Overnight Camps, and Nature Day Camps for all ages!

Registration opens online on Sunday March 1st, 2019!

Receive 10% off your registration fee when you book by March 31st!

## NEW ACCESS, NEW POTENTIAL

By Adam Davidson

Over the past two years, Southern Colorado Trail Builders and the Nature and Wildlife Discovery Center have worked together to bring something new to the park: a multi-use trail with access to US Forest Service trails and amenities. Thanks to the hard work of volunteers and the generosity of donors, the Carhart Trail along Pueblo Mountain Park's northern border is complete! Volunteers put in over 2,500 hours of labor planning and building the trail, and NWDC staff constructed a new parking area and access gate along Mountain Park Road to accommodate hikers, runners, and mountain bikers.

The Carhart Trail has already become a popular hiking destination among locals and Puebloans. The new trail traverses dramatic hillsides, overlooks Squirrel Creek as well as the historic meadows of Pueblo Mountain Park. The trail's new access to the US Forest Service trails west of the park grants access once again to the historic Squirrel Creek Campground, the Squirrel Creek Trail, and a whole system of other classic trails in the network. The potential for adventure and inspiration in this area is rich.

The next step is to work with the US Forest Service to update access signage at the intersection with the Squirrel Creek trail and, more importantly,



*The fine handiwork of NWDC's Ken Krause created this signage for the Carhart Trail.*

spread the word that the Carhart Trail is open! As the Carhart Trail becomes better known, it will serve the Pueblo region to benefit the missions of both the Southern Colorado Trail Builders and the Nature and Wildlife Discovery Center: to get more people active and outdoors, to inspire awe and respect of Nature, and to connect the Pueblo region to its outdoor identity. The trail is accessible to hiking, running, and mountain biking.



# NATURE IS OUR CLASSROOM

Our River and Mountain Campuses and Raptor Center are humming this school year with many students from throughout Pueblo County and beyond. Along with special field trip / overnight programs for out-of-town schools, our award-winning Earth Studies program, now in its 18th year, serves all 5th graders from Pueblo City Schools throughout the school year with experiential, outdoor-based programming. Earthkeeper Nature School, only in its 2nd year, has quickly become a very popular preschool and kindergarten option for families. With nearly every student opening filled, our young students are experiencing a vibrant early childhood education built around the wonders of the natural world.







# HELPING BUILD THE NATURE PRESCHOOL MOVEMENT IN COLORADO

By Dave Van Manen

Good ideas are hard to keep down. And Nature Preschools and Kindergartens are good ideas. These Nature-based schools have been around a long time in Europe. And they have been slowly popping up here and there throughout the United States. NWDC's Earthkeeper Nature School is one of the first outdoor-based preschool/kindergartens in Colorado. And word is getting around about our terrific school.

In the spring of 2018, when we were neck-deep in the multitude of details associated with opening Earthkeeper Nature School, I received an email from Erin Saunders, the Program Director at Thorne Nature Experience in Boulder (<http://thornenature.org/>). Thorne Nature Experience has been around since the mid-1950s and has been serving the Boulder area for a long time. Erin had heard that we were planning on opening a Nature Preschool and asked if I'd be willing to provide any insights we may have learned about the process of opening up such a school. Getting kids outside is one of my life's missions, so of course I said yes.



After several phone conversations and emails, right around Thanksgiving 2018, Erin arranged to come down to meet up in person and see our Earthkeeper Nature School facilities. By then, our school was up and running with 27 little earthkeepers enrolled. Our vision had become reality. I was happy to show Erin around, answer a bunch more questions, learn about her vision, and offer encouragement and support as she moved forward.

Fast forward to the summer of 2019, and an email with a link to an article in the *Boulder Daily Camera* newspaper arrives in my Inbox. The article entitled "Boulder's Thorne Nature Experience trying outdoor preschool in the fall" told me that Erin decided to take the leap and open up a Nature Preschool. Needless to say, I was thrilled to see that families in the Boulder area would now have the option of sending their little ones to a Nature-based school. And, I was most pleased that we could be of assistance in helping another community open a Nature Preschool.



# WINTER PUBLIC PROGRAMS & GUIDED HIKES

## at the Nature & Wildlife Discovery Center



For all the details, pricing, and to register for these programs, go to [www.hikeandlearn.org](http://www.hikeandlearn.org) and click on PROGRAMS. If you need assistance with registering on-line, or if you do not have access to a computer, please call 719-485-4444. Also, note the different locations for each of the programs listed. Some are at the River Campus, some at the Raptor Center, some at the Mountain Park and some are Out & About in the community. Note that there is \$5 day pass fee required for all River Campus and Raptor Center programs. Donations are always appreciated.

"He who marvels at the beauty of the world in summer will find equal cause for wonder and admiration in winter.... In winter the stars seem to have rekindled their fires, the moon achieves a fuller triumph, and the heavens wear a look of a more exalted simplicity."

~ John Burroughs



	Weekend Raptor Talks Ongoing every Saturday & Sunday	<b>SATURDAY &amp; SUNDAY 11:30 AM</b>
	AVAS 4th Saturday Bird Walks	<b>SATURDAYS, DEC 28, JAN 25, FEB 22, MAR 28, 9 AM</b>
	Nature Toddlers	<b>MONDAYS, 10 AM DATES TBA</b>
	Post- Thanksgiving Hike	<b>SUN DEC 1, 1 PM</b>
	Beulah Parade of Lights	<b>SAT, DEC 7, 5 PM</b>
	Yule Log Snowshoe Hike	<b>SUN, DEC 8, 10AM</b>
	67th Annual Beulah Yule Log Festival	<b>SUN DEC 8, 1 PM</b>
	Full Moon Solstice Walk	<b>THURS DEC 12, 6-8PM</b>
	Raptor Resolution Run	<b>SAT DEC 28, 8:30AM</b>
	First Day Hike: River Campus and Lake Pueblo Visitor Center	<b>WED JAN 1, 1-3 PM</b>
	First Hike of 2020	<b>SAT JAN 4, 1 PM</b>
	Save the Date! Carhart Celebration: 100th Anniversary Open House	<b>WED JAN 15</b>
	Full Moon Snowshoe Hike	<b>FRI JAN 10, 5:30PM</b>
	Birds of Prey at Fountain Creek Nature Center	<b>SAT JAN 25, 10AM</b>
	NWDC Eagle Day	<b>SAT FEB 1, 10AM-2 PM</b>
	Birds of Prey at Lamar High Plains Snow Goose Festival	<b>SAT FEB 8</b>
	An Afternoon Winter Hike	<b>SUN FEB 16, 1 PM</b>
	Winter Wildflower Hike	<b>SAT, MAR 7, 1 PM</b>
	Spring Equinox Hike	<b>SAT MAR 21, 11 AM</b>



# BOOK YOUR NEXT EVENT WITH NWDC!

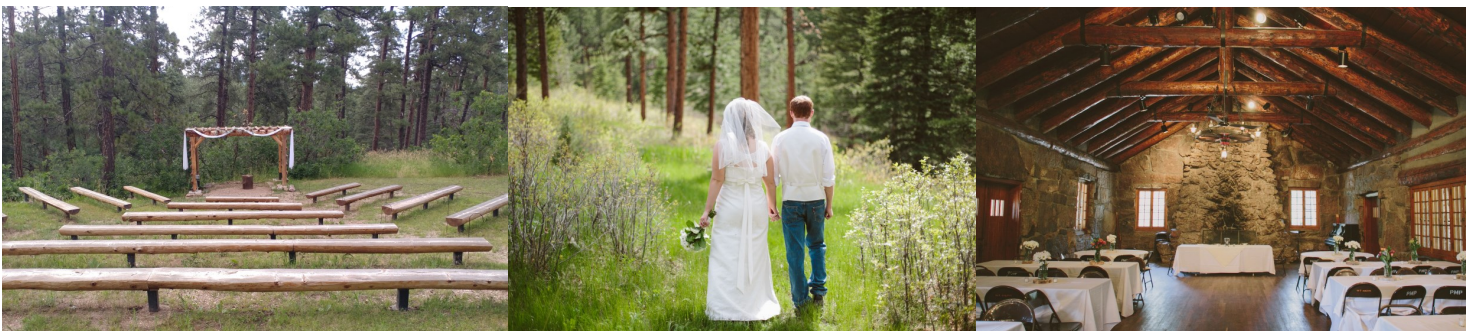
Whether you're planning your wedding, a company party, a birthday, a yoga retreat, or a family reunion, we have a space for you!



Our scenic River Campus Deck in Pueblo provides a panoramic view of the Arkansas River, which flows past our covered picnic Pavilion.



In Beulah, book a room or the dorms at the Horseshoe Lodge for a charming mountain getaway or group retreat. Meal options available!



Our outdoor Amphitheater is nestled in the woods, just outside our rustic WPA-era Pavilion, perfect for weddings and receptions.



**WWW.HIKEANDLEARN.ORG**  
**719-485-4444**



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# PUEBLO MOUNTAIN PARK TRAIL MAP UPDATE

By Steve Douglas, NWDC Volunteer

I'm a map guy. I love to use them to figure out where I've been, where I am now and where I can go next. They are used to illustrate an incredible range of things such as topography, water resources, vegetation, geology, buildings, roads, trails ... the list goes on. There are probably earlier maps of Pueblo Mountain Park, but the earliest one I have was hand drafted by Janet (Moore) Switzer in 1993 for Pueblo's Department of Planning and Development. It was a good map, showing roads, trails, buildings and park boundaries. It helped get us oriented to what was in the park, but since it was hand drawn, it was difficult to keep updated.

Fast forward to the digital age with satellite technology, the Global Positioning System (GPS) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS), which collectively help us locate things on the earth's surface and then display that data in a useful graphic format. The Pueblo Mountain Park map that you have seen displayed at trailheads and trail intersections in the Park since 2012 is just such a digital product. It has also been available as a handout at Horseshoe Lodge. That map was built by Pueblo County's fine staff at its GIS Center. Dave Van Manen and I helped design it, but the GIS staff used their data bases, software, hardware and extensive knowledge to create a fine map, showing the features Janet mapped in 1993, as well as topography and updated details. And, being digital, it is much easier to copy and update.

As the Carhart Trail was being constructed by the Southern Colorado Trail Builders, we began preparing to update the park map to show the new trail and add other information.

That planning included the County's GIS staff, which is an integral part of the Pueblo County Department of Economic Development and Geographic Information Systems. Dave Martin (aka Ranger Pine) walked the trail with a GPS to produce a digital plot of the trail. The GIS staff entered that plot in their database. Dave Van Manen and I again worked on map design and content. Shirley Schwinghammer (Senior GIS Analyst) took that input and worked her magic to produce a fine update of the park map. Dave Van Manen then took the finished product, added "You Are Here" flags, had the maps laminated and then proceeded to replace the old maps with updated ones. The map key already showed the length of each trail. The new Carhart Trail is 1.8 miles long. We added notes indicating how far it is from the park to Colorado Highway 165, along the Squirrel Creek and South Creek Trails.

We also added a note about trail use. Licensed motorized vehicles are welcome on the park roads, but they are not allowed on the trails. All the park trails are intended for hiking. The Carhart Trail was designed and built to support use by mountain bikes. There is a safety concern about also using the Carhart Trail for horseback riding, so it is the only trail in the park not designated for horseback use. Likewise, the Carhart Trail is the only one in the park designated for mountain bike use. We urge folks to honor those restrictions. We also hope people will take time to study the map, plan their travel and have a safe, enjoyable time in the park. The map is reproduced here for reference and it is also available at the NWDC website or in hard copy at Horseshoe Lodge.

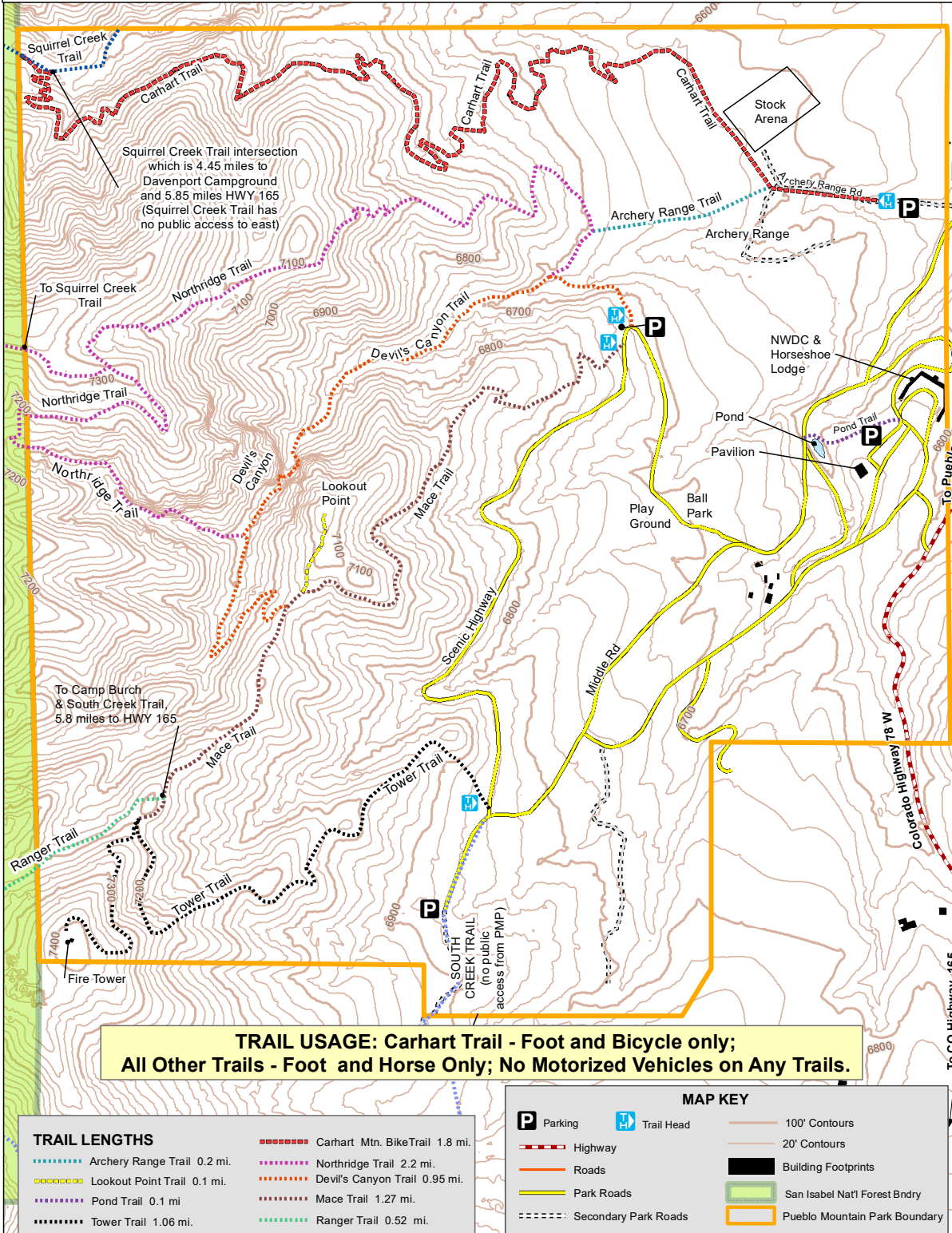
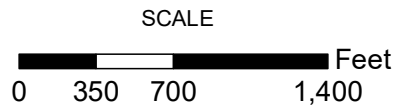
## Watch for ReFund Colorado in January 2020

In 2020, when Colorado taxpayers complete their 2019 Colorado Income Tax Returns, we have the option of donating a portion of our income tax refund to a nonprofit of our choice.

You may recall that in the past there has been a list of charitable causes to which taxpayers could choose to contribute. That option will still be available. Starting in 2020, however, an additional line will be added to provide the option of naming an individual Colorado nonprofit organization. Taxpayers will need the eleven-digit Colorado registration number for the nonprofit of their choice.

The State Registration number for Nature and Wildlife Discovery Center is 200830053000. Nature and Wildlife Discovery Center would be honored to be named as a recipient of a portion of your Colorado Income Tax Refund.

# Pueblo Mountain Park





# LEADERS LEARN THE IMPORTANCE OF REAL-LIFE EXPERIENCES

By Dr. Christine Rochester, Professor CSU-Pueblo

School settings get old. Same gym, same classroom, same teachers, same clothes. Students these days? Wow, they are ever changing. Different emotions, different problems interfering with their ability to focus on your class. Apathetic students that are contagious. They look apathetic and it spreads to a group of peers. Engagement by some is real and others would rather be on social media.

A field trip into Nature, even one in walking distance from your facility might, be what is needed. Recently at a regional conference I was privileged to go with a group of leaders into the forest of Pueblo Mountain Park, which is adjacent to the San Isabel National Forest. It was like a walk in Narnia. It was a mid-April conference and even though Pueblo sits at 4,700 feet above sea level, Pueblo Mountain Park is at 6600 feet in the Wet Mountains, so it is much different than being in Pueblo.

The day before our Hike, Write, Share Workshop at the Mountain Park, I awoke to a foot of fresh overnight snow that fell on the park, and my home (I live in Beulah, just

across the road from the park). As I drove into Pueblo I wondered if we could do the workshop in Beulah. Should we change it to a lower altitude? Participants could get cold, muddy and wet. Maybe much of it will be melted by tomorrow, I thought. Then I went about my regular day of helping future leaders learn to teach physical activities, not giving much thought to the Beulah snow.

Friday morning finally dawns and folks are arriving at the conference from all over the Rocky Mountain Region. John Bennion (the coleader of the workshop) and I meet for the first time and we discuss yesterday's snow and think about the traveling that many of the participants have done, and the 35-mile drive to the park. We throw out the idea of changing locations to Lake Pueblo State Park. I know the Mountain Park will be a much better location for the workshop, and I do know which trail might be somewhat dry. I call a friend in Beulah and ask her how the snow is melting. She assures me that the road in the park will be ok for getting to the trailhead. And I have planned the driest trail for our hike. Participants are all outdoorsy people, I figure, or they wouldn't have planned to participate in this type of workshop. Plus, it's at least partly sunny. OK, the Mountain Park it is!

We load the participants in the van and head for the hills. As the tour guide, once we get to Beulah, my life flashes before me. I realize I have lived in three different places just on Pine Drive, the main road through Beulah to the park. I point out to the group the cabin in which I wrote my PhD dissertation. Pine Drive is gorgeous and is Pueblo's version of the Redwood Forest's Avenue of the Giants. We arrive at the park and meet up with Dr. Carol Fortino and Dr. John Broome, who will be joining us for the workshop. It's a gorgeous day, and only about 6 inches of heavy wet snow remain on the ponderosa pines. Sitting in a shelter near the park's Archery Range, John Bennion gives us the following writing prompts:

How is this landscape different from the landscape you last hiked in?

How might thinking about the tribes who lived in this area before Anglos arrived affect your walk today?

Mindfully consider what you might want to discover today as you walk, hike and talk.

Consider taking mental snapshots as you write, then



describe these images in your journal.

Think about something you'd like to escape as you walk, possibly some problem you're facing. Instead of ignoring thoughts of that tangle, allow it to sit in a corner of your mind, perhaps nodding toward it in your thoughts or in your writing. Describe how the tangle changes as you do this.

*I write this:*

Birds fly under the clouds. Sun is causing the snow to melt and hit the shelter. The drop sounds almost like a hailstorm. Is this the last big Beulah snow? The ponderosas hold it so gracefully. The ravine has deep powder. Signal Mountain is thick with trees. There is no snow on the Indian toilet paper. The stone wall built by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) has made this flat spot - this location where so many have been before. Beulah is beautiful.

The vapor is rising and forming clouds right in front of my eyes. Little snowflakes glisten as they fall right off the trees. I ponder if the evaporated snow forms its own cloud or joins with previous clouds. The children's playground, little slide, little monkey bars - done from the 70's - sit under the ponderosas somewhat protected from the elements. Certainly usable still. The grass is bursting, I must find wildflowers. A woodpecker is working on a tree. Carelle (my dog) has calmed down. The air is chill.

We all do some writing and sharing. I don't share my writing. As a leader, I feel it's only my place after the participants have shared, or to set an example for participants. This group seems willing as John leads by example. I'm in heaven sharing my special place with a group of visitors.

We head up Northridge Trail, which I haven't been on in years. I have only recently returned to Beulah to live and

it's been a snowy winter. As the hike goes on, everyone is chatting away, talking of their identities work, family and places they live or have traveled to. Sometimes we stop and point out a wildflower that has managed to blossom in the cold temperatures. As we get to our final destination on the hike, we look into the wilderness of what lies beyond - a truly wild area. Some bear tracks are spotted. Hibernation has ended.

To really be in a place, one must disengage from conversation with others and have quiet. That's the beauty of writing. It's done in solitude. John and I know that the participants need solitude to embrace their surroundings. So we decide to do a solo hike and write session on our way back to the van. John Broome, a local, leads and makes sure the participants stay on the trail back to the van. I stay back in the wildest area with Carelle, the bear tracks and the first aid kit.

I notice the details of the flora that surrounds me; it is so beautiful. Beulah has given me so much over the years. Today it gives me this experience and this bit of writing.

Mindful conscious intention for today: Be as good a colleague as I can! An observer of Nature back in the city. My love for Beulah was here before CSU-P. Jack Sielhiemer is looking down and smiling. He was an important part of the University being able to implement a workshop of this kind in Pueblo County. I notice the beauty in everything. The beauty in the small details that I have often in the past avoided. Now I can appreciate them; details, not just the big picture, can be beautiful too! They can be sad, too! Details, synchronicity, life.

“Winter  
is not a  
season, it's a  
celebration.”

~ Anamika Mishra

**YES!** I want to be a member of Nature & Wildlife Discovery Center and be a part of an organization that brings people to Nature for education and recreation, and cares for injured wildlife. Note that we are still in the process of developing our new membership package, but here's what a membership comes with for now: the perks listed at <https://natureandwldc.org/become-a-member/>, and you will receive free access to guided hikes at the Mountain Park, discounts on other educational programs, and discounts in the Mountain Park gift shop and on overnight stays in the Horseshoe Lodge. Plus the knowledge that you are supporting the great work that the NWDC does!

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ ST \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

# \_\_\_\_\_ Senior (over age 70) x \$10 = \_\_\_\_\_ # \_\_\_\_\_ Senior (over age 55) x \$30 = \_\_\_\_\_

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# \_\_\_\_\_ Cottonwood \$100 \_\_\_\_\_ (/3 passes)

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# \_\_\_\_\_ Bobcat \$250 \_\_\_\_\_ (/4 passes)

# \_\_\_\_\_ Rock Canyon \$2,500 \_\_\_\_\_ (/10 passes)

# \_\_\_\_\_ Trout \$500 \_\_\_\_\_ (/5 passes)

\_\_\_\_\_ I decline to receive any additional gifts offered.

Total Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Check # \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Visa/MC/Discover Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration \_\_\_\_\_ V-Code \_\_\_\_\_



Membership



# VOLUNTEERING WITH NWDC IS GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH

By Marlene Stiles

In her book *The Nature Fix*, Florence Williams makes a good case for immersing ourselves in the natural world. This improves both physical and mental health by relieving stress and nourishing our spirit. Doctors in countries as diverse as Korea and Finland recognize the benefits of exposure to the outdoors which initiates “a profound sense of the interconnection of all living things.” They even prescribe “Nature baths” to their patients.

Our connection to Nature is based on fact, not whimsy. As Florence Williams points out, “Humans and birds co-evolved language centers, both using the same neural hardware, specifically an area called the arco palladium in birds and the basal ganglia in humans, a region also known for regulating emotions.” Having evolved in the natural world along with other species, it’s no wonder that we share connections with wild creatures and are often calmed by environmental experiences.

Studies have shown that exposure to animals lowers our

stress levels, but there’s an added bonus as well. Anyone who wants to experience Jurassic Park up close but safely can do so at the Raptor Center. Modern day eagles, hawks and owls are descended from dinosaur ancestors and possess a gripping power that surpasses our own as well as a keen eyesight that encompasses the ultraviolet spectrum.

What better way to receive the psychological shot in the arm that comes from getting in touch with the ecosystem than to volunteer at our Nature and Wildlife Discovery Center. There are multiple opportunities. Besides the Raptor Center, gardeners are needed to cultivate bee friendly plants. Also consider supporting the many unique learning opportunities that the Center offers for members of our community both young and old.

We all appreciate being thanked for our efforts, but it is particularly admirable to care for the Earth and for animals who are dependent on us but who cannot thank us with words.

NEW!! FACEBOOK ADDRESS  
New Facebook address: [www.facebook.com/nwdcco/](http://www.facebook.com/nwdcco/)



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