

# VOLUNTEER VIBE

## Newsletter 'for volunteers by volunteers'

In this edition, we're highlighting two of our trail-focused volunteer programs- the Trail Ambassadors and the Trail Crew/Wire Wranglers. These dedicated volunteers play a vital role in caring for our open spaces—whether it's connecting with visitors on the trails or rolling up their sleeves to tackle hands-on stewardship projects. Their efforts help keep our natural areas safe, welcoming, and thriving for everyone to enjoy.

Spring has sprung! April was designated as Volunteer Recognition month by our Board of County Commissioners - so another big thank you for all your hard work and dedication. Let's carry all your enthusiasm and momentum with us into the summer months!

### Weed Warriors Partner with North Star Academy!

OSNR Weed Warriors teamed up with students from North Star Academy at Columbine Open Space to remove common mullein along the Front Range Trail. Along with staff and volunteers, fourteen middle schoolers collected more than 10 bags of seed heads—making a meaningful impact on the health and beauty of the riparian area. Beyond the hard work, the day offered students a chance to connect with the land and experience the value of caring for our shared open spaces firsthand.



# WHAT'S NEW IN DCOSNR?

## Introducing a New Section in the Newsletter: *Through the Volunteer Lens*

Do you enjoy capturing the beauty of nature? This is your opportunity to share your perspective! Whether you're a professional photographer or an amateur hobbyist, we'd love to see your work.

Starting this month, we're inviting volunteers to submit photographs for consideration in our newsletter. Images can feature wildlife, landscapes, or anything else that catches your eye on open space—just be sure to include the location where the photo was taken.

Each month, the OSNR team will select five submissions to be featured in the newsletter.

Please email me ([jpetersen1@douglasco.gov](mailto:jpetersen1@douglasco.gov)) your submissions by *July 6th*.

We're excited to see the world through your lens and showcase the incredible talent in our community!



Photo Credit: Tiffany McCauley

## NOW RECRUITING FOR...

### Volunteer Mounted Patrol

Are you an Equestrian that loves Open Space?

Check out Volunteer Mounted Patrol! As Ambassadors of DC, Mounted Patrol Volunteers are dedicated to public safety and the protection of the County's land and resources. Mounted Patrol educates and assists visitors in need and promotes the values of DCOSNR. Volunteers interested in joining this group must apply, interview with the Ranger Lead, and complete a skills demonstration prior to patrolling. This volunteer group has a minimum commitment of 50 hours of Volunteer service a year.

**For more information or to apply visit**  
[DouglasVolunteers.com](http://DouglasVolunteers.com)



### I Spy Agent Douglas!

Try something new this summer as a scavenger hunt is added to the popular Agents of Discovery app.

Whether you're a long-time Agents of Discovery adventurer or just discovering the program, this summer is the perfect time to jump in.

Starting in 2026, you'll still enjoy monthly missions that guide you through Douglas County's pristine open spaces and trails, but there's a new twist. Our Agents of Discovery mascot, Agent Douglas, will be hiding at three special summer hot spots your family won't want to miss.

During the summer months, June, July, and August, you'll receive clues to help you track down Agent Douglas. Follow the hints, explore new places, and unlock a little extra summer fun along the way.

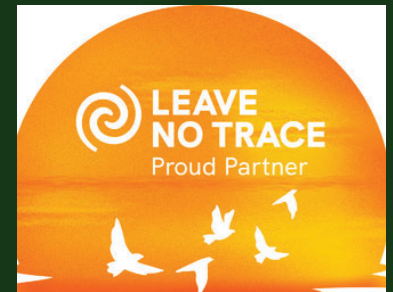
# LEAVE NO TRACE CORNER

Welcome to the new section of the DCOSNR Volunteer Newsletter! As volunteers, you play an important role in helping protect the parks, trails, wildlife, and natural resources that make Douglas County special.

Throughout the year, this section will highlight the 7 Leave No Trace principles and share seasonal reminders that support responsible recreation and stewardship on our open spaces. Our newest ranger, Cassidy Brown will be taking the lead on our journey to get all our public access Open Space properties designated as Gold Standard Sites!

## THE 7 LEAVE NO TRACE (LNT) PRINCIPLES...

1. **Plan Ahead and Prepare**
2. **Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces**
3. **Dispose of Waste Properly**
4. **Leave What You Find**
5. **Minimize Campfire Impacts**
6. **Respect Wildlife**
7. **Be Considerate of Other Visitors**



## SEASONAL STEWARDSHIP FOCUS...

### **Principle #2: Travel on Durable Surfaces — Stick to the Trail**

Spring and early summer are critical growing seasons for many native grasses, wildflowers, shrubs, and young plants across our open spaces. Even a few footsteps off trail can damage fragile vegetation, compact soil, and create unofficial social trails that spread over time.

By staying on designated trails and educating others on Principle #2, volunteers help:

- Protect native plant communities and restoration areas
- Reduce erosion and soil damage
- Preserve important wildlife habitat
- Set a positive example for visitors

As ambassadors for open space, you all have a unique opportunity to model good trail etiquette and encourage others to recreate responsibly.

### **Principle #6: Respect Wildlife — Give Them Space!**

As temperatures warm, wildlife activity increases. Bears are emerging from hibernation, birds are nesting, and many animals are raising young during the spring season.

Giving wildlife plenty of space benefits both animals and people. When wildlife becomes stressed or habituated to humans, it can lead to unsafe encounters, altered behavior, or animals relying on human food sources. Maintaining distance helps wildlife stay healthy and wild while keeping visitors safe.

Helpful reminders for you and others this season:

- Observe wildlife from a distance and never approach young animals
- Keep dogs leashed
- Never feed wildlife
- Store food and trash securely while recreating

Thank you for helping protect our county's natural resources through stewardship, education, and leading by example. Small actions on the trail make a big difference!

# Trail Ambassadors Volunteer Program

Written by Brian O'Malley



Founded with the opening of Sandstone Ranch in Sept. 2020, our Douglas County Open Space and Natural Resources Trail Ambassadors contribute over 500-hours per year in providing our trail users with a friendly and welcoming experience. The Trail Ambassadors are dedicated to public safety and the protection of Douglas County's land and resources. Ambassadors work closely with OSNR staff and Rangers by reporting any concerns while promoting the values and ideals of DCOSNR with our trail users.



Trail Ambassadors greet and provide our Open Space visitors with information at the trailhead and while on the trail.

The Ambassadors are familiar (but may not be experts) with the area's history, flora and fauna, wildlife, and geological features. We encourage, but do not enforce, compliance with trail etiquette, County leash law, and conserving our natural resources. Ambassadors will report to our County staff on unsafe behavior and any degradation of County Open Space property.

Funded by the citizen approved .08% Parks, Trail, Historic Resources, and Open Space sales tax, Douglas County Open Space has helped conserve over 65,000 acres of land. Along with 17,000 acres of publicly accessible land, Douglas County Open Space provides over 100 miles of trails for hiking, biking, and horse riding on 16 properties.

If you have a passion for the outdoors and love engaging with others, you can apply to be a Trail Ambassador at [DouglasVolunteers.com](http://DouglasVolunteers.com)!



All photo credits: Brian O'Malley

# Trail Crew & Wire Wranglers Volunteer Program

Written by Jay Sage



Ever dreamed of joining an elite squad where the uniforms are mostly dirt and the "office" has a serious lack of Wi-Fi? DCOSNR is looking for a few brave souls to join our Trail Crew. Led by our fearless leader Land Manager/Ranger, Lindsay Williams, we meet every other Tuesday to play—err, work—in the mud.

## Your Weekly To-Do List (Actual labor required):

- Wrestling Rusty Wire: We rip out abandoned barbed wire so local wildlife can roam without getting a "surprise" piercing.
- Drainage Duty: We fix puddles to save hikers from "muddy foot syndrome."
- If you've ever wanted to wield a pick mattock like a medieval warrior, we have one with your name on it.
- Installing Water Bars: Basically, we're teaching the trail how to handle its liquid. No more washouts on our watch.
- The Jackson Hole Vibe: We repurpose "buck and rail" fencing. It's exactly like working in Wyoming, except you can still be home in time for Netflix.

## Become Bilingual (In Trail-Speak):

We aren't just a bunch of pretty faces in high-vis vests. You'll learn a whole new language. Within weeks, you'll be fluently shouting "Bumping!" (passing a teammate), discussing "Grade Reversals" (math, but for dirt), and obsessing over "Tread" (the ground you're standing on).

## The "Trail Crew" Diet:

This isn't a spa day; it's a "moderate-to-challenging" workout. After three hours on the crew, you can eat a slice of pizza—or three—with zero guilt. Some members claim they've lost 10 pounds in two months. Forget expensive weight-loss shots; we offer GLP-1: Great Landscape Projects - Part 1.

## The Perks:

- Free Endorphins: Science says being outside pumps you full of "feel-good" chemicals. We say it's just the relief of finally putting the shovel down.
- Facial Workouts: You'll likely head home with sore cheeks from laughing at our terrible jokes.
- Hero Status: You'll leave knowing you made Douglas County a little less messy and a lot more beautiful.



**Ready to trade your desk chair for a dirt pile?**

