

## CHERRY CREEK STEWARDSHIP PARTNERS

### PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

#### 2020 Highlights

Urbanization can lead to the loss of quiet spaces, natural habitat and flood attenuation. Recognition of the potential negative impacts of urbanization led to the creation of the Cherry Creek Basin Water Quality Authority in 19xx. In collaboration with other special districts, federal, state and local agencies and with support from watershed residents the Authority has played a significant role in protecting natural resources in their jurisdiction. The quality of life; schools, parks, trails and open space make the Cherry Creek community a place where people want to live, work and play. Riparian protections and stream reclamation projects constructed with public funds by collaborative public agencies have contributed to the enjoyment of the watershed by providing community connections, nature in the neighborhoods and cultural context for long term residents and newcomers.

The Cherry Creek Stewardship Partners were founded in 1999 to help tell the story of watershed protection in the Cherry Creek Basin. As a forum for engaging members of the community to better understand the nature and protection of waterways in the Cherry Creek Watershed, the Partners began by compiling the education and outreach priorities of other local agencies and districts in the watershed. The Cherry Creek Stewardship Partners created the Cherry Creek Basin Stewardship and Education Initiative. This document serves as a needs assessment and provides a set of recommendations for future efforts to engage the public with informational and educational programs in addition to the stormwater requirements in section 72.7 of **5 CCR 1002-72** (Colorado Control Regulation). The Cherry Creek Basin Water Quality Authority, identified as the designated water quality management agency for the Cherry Creek watershed, provides significant funding and expertise in order to accomplish public education and participation goals of the Cherry Creek Stewardship Partners.

#### THE RIGHT MESSAGE AT THE RIGHT TIME IN THE RIGHT PLACE

Visitors to the swim beach at Cherry Creek Park were disappointed by low water levels and pesky algae. This colorful mural was a welcome distraction and reached 1,316 people via Facebook.



The mural was created by John Hastings and Jessica VonFeldt illuminating the relationship among Walleye, Shad, phytoplankton, and zooplankton in Cherry Creek Reservoir.

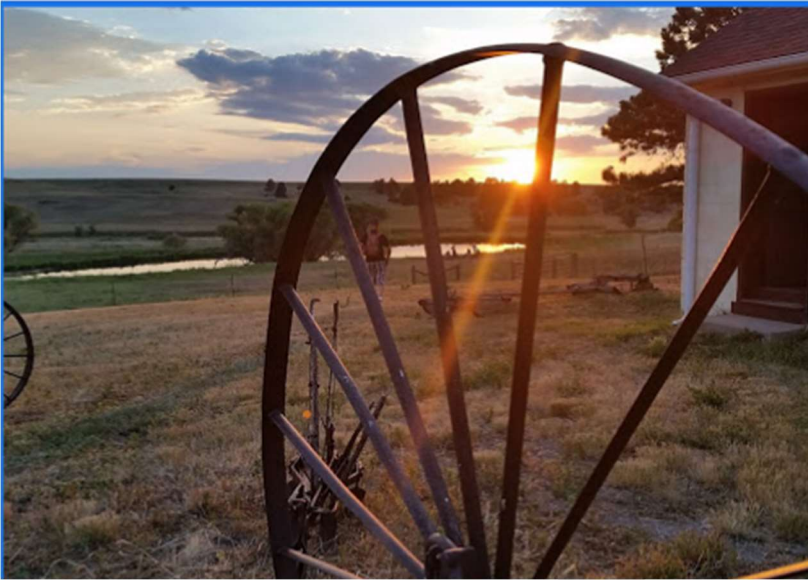
## GETTING TO KNOW THE WATERSHED

In addition to providing tours and events that remind watershed residents of their ability to reduce pollution from sources that could be mobilized during storm events, the Partners promote awareness of the value and function of the many pollution abatement projects that have been constructed in the Cherry Creek Basin with funding from the Cherry Creek Basin Water Quality Authority and their valuable partners: Southeast Metro Storm Water Authority, Mile High Flood District, Arapahoe and Douglas County Open Space Programs, the Cities and Towns of Aurora, Castle Rock, Centennial, Denver, Lone Tree, and Parker, Parker Jordan Metropolitan District, Colorado State Parks and Great Outdoors Colorado.



Outings like Hawk Walk,,Unique to the Creek, Lake Appreciation Day, Equinox and Solstice tours of the Cherry Creek Valley Ecological Park and guided hikes on Cherry Creek provide opportunities for the community to understand the investment that has been made in the Cherry Creek Basin to protect and enhance our natural resource heritage.

## HEADWATERS



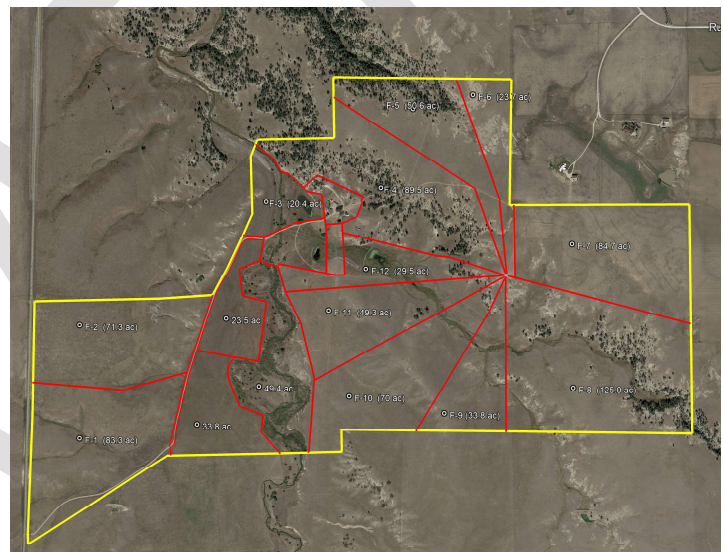
Looking to the upper reaches of the Cherry Creek watershed we find opportunities to engage with agriculture and silviculture practices, individual sewage disposal systems, large lot development greater than one acre, and other potential nutrient sources. Working with Douglas County and Kiowa Conservation Districts, Colorado State University Extension Services, Master Gardeners and Douglas County Open Space, the Partners provide educational tours and workshops.

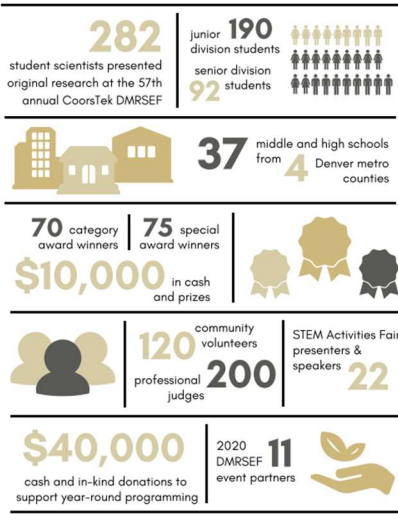
The Prairie Canyon Ranch field trip was conducted in association with the Sustaining Colorado Watersheds Conference October 08, 2020. Speakers included Bill McCormick Division of Water Resources Chief, Dam Safety Branch, Dan Nosal N.R.C.S. **Rangeland Management Specialist**, Jamie Hull Douglas County Open Space Prairie Canyon Ranch Manager and Heather Kelly, Douglas County Conservation Dist. **District Manager**. Innovative practices on the Ranch include high intensity, short duration grazing for vegetation management and soil health.



The Ranch is comprised of nearly 1,000 acres of a unique combination of open grasslands and rhyolite bluffs. Historical check dams built in 1958 along West Cherry Creek served agriculture in the 20th century. How do they function now to protect water holding capacity in the upper watershed of this prairie stream? What land conservation practices show the biggest 'bang for the buck' to protect water quality and water supply on our prairie streams?

This photo shows fence lines for rotational grazing as installed by Jamie Hull, Ranch Manager, Douglas County Open Space.





# EVENT PARTNERS



Cherry Creek Basin Water Quality Authority awarded Deena Safiulla, Challenge Middle School, the 2020 Environmental Achievement Award for her project "The Mightiest Creatures of All" ...Copepods!

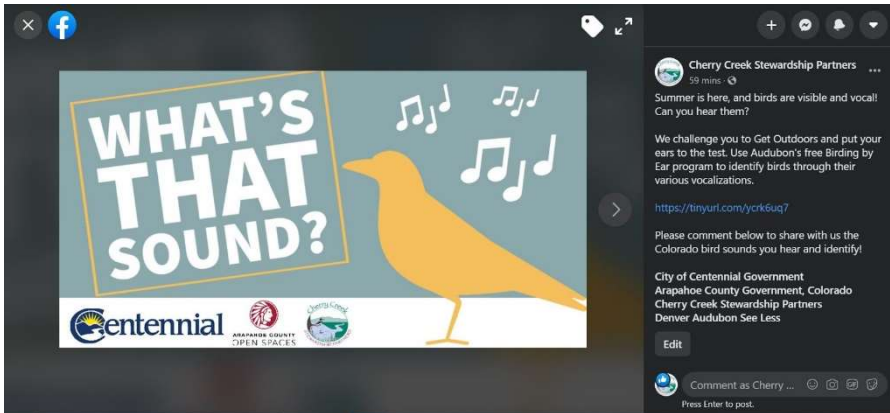
The object of this experiment was to learn more about the effects of cyanobacteria on cyclops copepods.

Deena received her award from Cherry Creek Stewardship Partners Educator Mallory Hiss.

**The Cherry Creek Basin Water Quality Authority sponsors the Science Fair each year and provides this award in recognition of excellence and outstanding achievements in Environmental Science.**

## WATER FESTIVALS AND FIELD EXPERIENCES

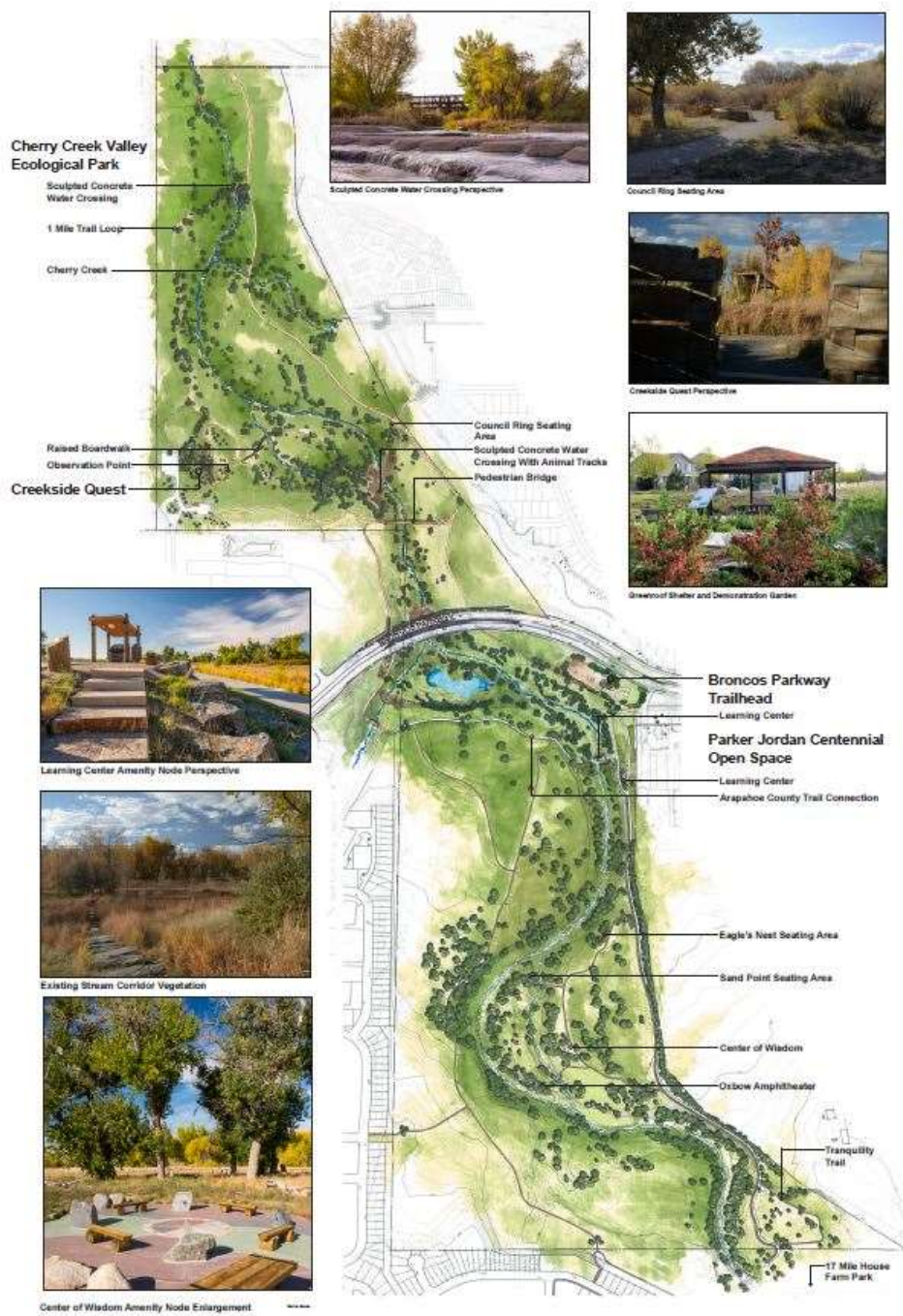
Cherry Creek Stewardship Partners took to Facebook and Twitter in 2020. With the help of Arapahoe Open Space and Extension, the City of Centennial and the Denver Audubon Society, multiple social media campaigns were created throughout the summer season. Birding by Ear was curated with Audubon's free birding program with the hopes to inspire others to get outside and get to know their neighborhood birds. This was followed by our Hug a Cottonwood Tree campaign. The 17 Mile House Field Guide, created by the Partners, was used to facilitate various activities encouraging the enjoyment of Cottonwood trees. Book lists for children and adults to read by the Cottonwoods and a shared poem by Ruth Race reflecting on her time growing up on the 17 Mile House brought history to life and provided a bit of peace and comfort. These campaigns were designed to create activities for readers to get outside safely and build a relationship with the nature. Partners' social media platforms are very new and have proven to be helpful to our community in providing engaging content and sharing our events and photos. Check them out.



## **ANNUAL CHERRY CREEK WATERSHED CONFERENCE**

Every year, since 1999, the Cherry Creek Basin Water Quality Authority has co-sponsored the annual Cherry Creek Watershed Conference. In 2020 we knew we had to do what we do best and take the Conference **outside**. We could not resist the opportunity to explore just some of the many successful stream reclamation and protection projects which have benefited from Authority funding and expertise. On bikes and by foot, Cherry Creek devotees explored the history of economic development and stream reclamation. Speakers, situated along the two-mile reach between the 17-Mile House Farm Park and the Cherry Creek Valley Ecological Park, shared their experience with seventy-two local water quality professionals, engineers, practitioners and neighbors. All gathered outside to be socially connected at a safe physical distance. The collaborative approach implemented in the Cherry Creek Basin has leveraged funds, experience and expertise to protect beneficial uses in Cherry Creek. Preserving cultural treasures and natural features create community connections that contribute to long term stewardship of the Cherry Creek Watershed.

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**THANK YOU**

With broad support from local jurisdictions and the Cherry Creek Basin Water Quality Authority, the Partners bring students of all ages and area residents out to the Creek to learn the history and ecology of the Cherry Creek watershed. Events and outings are posted on their website: [www.cherry-creek.org](http://www.cherry-creek.org) You are invited to join the Partners on any of their excursions. Come on out to the Creek!





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