

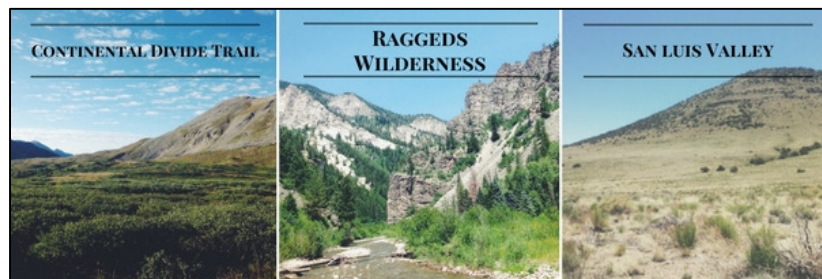


## Colorado Mountain Club 2016 Stewardship Team Program Accomplishments



### Summary

In 2016, the Colorado Mountain Club (CMC) launched the second year of the Stewardship Team program and hired a crew of three young natural resource professionals to complete high-priority conservation projects on public lands in Colorado. The program achieves the dual goal of increasing the capacity of public land management agencies and coordinating volunteer projects across the state. The Stewardship Team successfully hosted eleven volunteer events and partnered with other organizations including the Continental Divide Trail Coalition, Outward Bound, Colorado Youth Corps, and Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado. In total, over 60 conservation enthusiasts volunteered more than 420 hours of their time working with the Stewardship Team. The team's hard work resulted in 65,156 square feet of degraded habitat restored, 52 miles of system routes inventoried, 123,645 feet of corridor cleared, 3,059 feet of current trail maintained, 94 erosion control features installed, 1,730 feet of fencing installed to protect wildlife habitat, 214 downed trees removed from the trail, along with a variety of other accomplishments.



### Training Summary

Prior to the start of the field season and throughout the course of the summer, the CMC Stewardship Team completed six weeks of training on a variety of topics. Orientation included an overview of federal land management agencies in Colorado, introductions to public lands staff, discussion of stewardship funding sources, and an overview of other agency work that CMC participates in, such as Forest Planning and winter recreation advocacy. CMC staff provided training on volunteer recruitment and management, outdoor leadership, and more. The Stewardship Team also completed several trail maintenance/construction trainings both

internally and externally. Stewardship Team members were certified as Wilderness First Responders and continually reviewed risk management. The Stewardship Team also earned certification as crosscut sawyers and completed the S-212 wildland firefighter chainsaw course.

### **Project Detail**

#### **Badger Flats, Pike National Forest - South Park Ranger District (7/21-7/24, 7/28-7/31, 9/29-10/2)**

The CMC Stewardship Team completed three weeks of work at Badger Flats and hosted three volunteer projects to close non-system routes and rehabilitate damaged areas. In total, 10 volunteers worked 86.5 hours (an in-kind value of \$2,245) to construct 1,730 feet of fencing, install 15 signs, remove 11 bags of trash, and actively restore 7,000 square feet of habitat by scarifying the soil and spreading native grass seed. These projects will help protect and rehabilitate hundreds of acres of wildlife habitat from illegal recreational use. The Stewardship Team worked alongside Forest Service staff and volunteer groups that included CMC members, local landowners and the general public. The diverse set of volunteers not only added great capacity to the Forest Service but built new partnerships across user groups and developed a strong contingent of Badger Flats stewards.



*“Important project and I felt like we really accomplished something for the good of the area.  
Great people to work with and for..” – Badger Flats Volunteer*

#### **San Isabel National Forest - Salida District (8/11-8/14, 8/17-8/21)**



The CMC Stewardship Team worked closely with the Salida Ranger District and the Continental Divide Trail Coalition in the San Isabel National Forest to complete a rapid trail assessment of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDNST) from Cottonwood Pass to Marshall Pass (a length of 52.4 miles) in Chaffee County. The Stewardship Team used a mobile application to collect trail conditions data (downed trees, maintenance needs, erosion problems etc.) as well as photos and GPS points. The application data was then consolidated, analyzed and shared with both organizations to assist with management and future along this stretch of trail.

The Stewardship Team also participated in a volunteer stewardship event at Alpine Tunnel in partnership with Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado to construct 100 feet of new tread, maintain 500 feet of existing tread, construct one rolling grade dip, and install 3 drains. The Salida Ranger District is continuing to re-route the CDNST off of an all-wheel-drive road and into a more sustainable, safe, and scenic area with this project.



Lastly, the Stewardship Team oversaw the management and data collection of six infrared Trafx trail counters throughout the Salida Ranger District. The counters were installed on seven different trails across the district to inventory and monitor trail use. The Stewardship Team then analyzed the data through the DataNet online program and presented a final report to the USFS Salida to help them better manage these outdoor recreation sites. The Stewardship Team also created a plan of action and list of best practices for the Ranger District to help streamline management of the trail counters in future years.



**Rio Grande Natural Area, Bureau of Land Management - San Luis Valley Field Office  
(6/16-6/19, 6/23-6/26, 9/1-9/4, 9/8-9/11, 9/15)**

The CMC Stewardship Team worked with the hydrologist from the BLM San Luis Valley office on erosion control in the Rio Grande Natural Area, just east of Antonito, CO. The hydrologist indicated certain areas in the Rio Grande Natural Area where erosion control features should be installed to reduce the sediment that is being washed into the Rio Grande. Over the course of five weeks, the Stewardship Team built 28 “one-rock” dams (measuring 15 feet wide by 3 feet high), 45 “two-rock” dams, and four “three-rock” dams in five dry stream beds that serve as tributaries to the Rio Grande. The Team was able to engage 17 volunteers in the area, contributing 109.5 hours (an in-kind value of \$2,842.62). The volunteer involvement in this area was critical to the success and amount of work completed, and fulfilled the hydrologist’s expectations and needs to control this critical area and mitigate the erosion of the Rio Grande.

*“It is great to pick a spot on the map and then go there and invest sweat equity in our public lands.” - Rio Grande Natural Area Volunteer*

*“This is the first time I've attended an event. Keep making them happen! Would love to volunteer more frequently.” - Rio Grande Natural Area Volunteer*



**The Raggeds Wilderness, Gunnison National Forest - Paonia Ranger District  
(7/1-7/10, 7/14-7/17)**

The Stewardship Team spent two weeks clearing corridor and working on trail restoration in the Raggeds Wilderness, located within the Gunnison National Forest. The Team partnered with the Paonia Ranger District to clear trails that had not been maintained in several years. Because the project site was located in a Wilderness area, the Team used a double-buck crosscut saw and several smaller hand saws to clear downed trees along both the Dark Canyon Trail and the Ruby Anthracite Trail. During the two weeks spent in the Raggeds Wilderness, the Team worked to clear 127 downed trees and 110,480 feet of corridor, maintain 1,310 feet of tread, construct 150 feet of new trail, install 24 small plants, install one water bar, install two erosion structures, install one grade dip, construct three check steps, install 11 drains, build 15 rock cairns, repair



one wash crossing, install one confidence post, and replace 203 cubic feet of crush fill. Furthermore, the Team closed three campsites and constructed 152 feet of turnpike. The Stewardship Team also partnered with the Colorado Youth Corps and Outward Bound to host three successful volunteer events with a total of 42 volunteers, contributing 146.1 hours (an in-kind value of \$3,792.16). The crosscut training that the Stewardship Team received was critical to our success in the Raggeds Wilderness, along with the large number of volunteers that assisted in the projects.

*“Outstanding Crew! Please expand and continue the program!” -Albert Borkowski, Special Uses Program Manager, USFS Paonia*

**Eagle Riparian Area, Bureau of Land Management - Colorado River Valley Field Office  
(9/23-9/25)**

The Stewardship Team partnered with the Colorado River Valley BLM to deconstruct a barbed wire fence along a riparian area that was blocking wildlife movement along the creek. The Team removed 2,800 feet (or 0.5 miles) of a 5-strand barbed wire fence during the three days in the field. The Team also hosted a National Public Lands Day volunteer event to help with the fence removal and engaged six volunteers who contributed 36 volunteer hours (an in-kind value of \$934.56). The removal of the fence will encourage and allow more large ungulate movement throughout the riparian area, making it a healthier ecosystem.



*“The BLM enjoyed partnering with CMC Stewardship Team on this project. The CMC staff were responsible and enthusiastic!” -Carla DeYoung, Ecologist, BLM Colorado River Valley*



**Bishop Rock, Bureau of Land Management - San Luis Valley Field Office  
(9/16-9/18)**

The Colorado Mountain Club Stewardship Team partnered with the BLM San Luis Valley Field Office to inventory current and potential climbing routes in the Bishop Rock, Second Rocks, and Third Rocks area, which are located outside of Monte Vista. The team also inventoried any notable wildlife habitat, archaeology, social trails, dispersed campsites, and any other natural resource issues. The Team noted 36 existing climbing routes, 31 potential climbing routes, seven sustainable campsites, four unsustainable campsites, two social trails, and three raptor nests. The Team also hosted a volunteer event to assist in the inventorying process and engaged three volunteers who contributed 15 volunteer hours (an in-kind value of \$389.40). The Bishop Rock area is quickly becoming a popular climbing destination, so the findings made by the Stewardship Team will help the BLM with current management and future planning processes to ensure that the area can remain sustainable for future use.



*“This was exactly what I was hoping to get out of the project; an inventory with a concise report that told me a lot of things I really didn't know about the Bishop Rock area, so thank you! This is the second year we've worked with the Stewardship Team and I appreciate the diversity of what they can do and the quality too.” -Sean Noonan, Outdoor Recreation Planner, BLM San Luis Valley*

**Stone Quarry, Bureau of Land Management - San Luis Valley Field Office  
(5/18-5/19)**

The Colorado Mountain Club Stewardship Team partnered with the San Luis Valley BLM and the satellite personnel for Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado (VOC) to do trail maintenance and construction on a new mountain biking trail (part of a stacked system of trails) outside of Del Norte, CO. The Team maintained 99 feet of tread, constructed 165 feet of new tread, and cleared 165 feet of corridor. The team also installed one climbing turn, two check steps, and 48 square feet of rock wall. This project allowed the Team to make the entrance to the trail easier to navigate and corrected other areas of the trail for a more fluid mountain bike ride.

**Burn Canyon, Bureau of Land Management - Uncompahgre Field Office  
(6/8-6/12)**

The Colorado Mountain Club Stewardship Team worked with the Visitor/Volunteer Services Coordinator to close off and rehabilitate old and unused trails in the Burn Canyon area, just west of Norwood, CO. The Team was able to rehab 47,156 square feet by naturalizing the line of site with organic materials to better disguise the area and deter future use. The team also worked on a hiking trail in the Burn Canyon area with the help of four volunteers. This section of trail was brought to attention by community members who wanted an easier hike up a very steep section

of trail. With the help of volunteers, the team installed two erosion structures, maintained 550 feet of tread, installed one waterbar, constructed seven check steps, installed one drain, maintained eight drains, and maintained one switchback. The crew also constructed a rock wall and picked up one bag of trash in the area. The volunteers contributed 30.5 hours of service (an in-kind value of \$791.78). This was a successful new partnership for the Colorado Mountain Club's Conservation Dept. and there continues to be interest in continuing this partnership in the future, due to the amount and quality of work completed and the success of the volunteer event.

*"I was really impressed with how efficiently the team worked to complete our project, how easy and enjoyable they were to communicate with, and how organized they were, particularly for our volunteer project. Todd and Julie were great staff to begin conversations with; the transition from staff to stewards as our point of contact was seamless from a project partner standpoint."*  
-Robin Lewis, Volunteer and Visitor Services Coordinator, BLM Uncompahgre

### **Wolford Mountain, Bureau of Land Management - Kremmling Field Office (8/26-8/28)**

The Stewardship Team worked closely with the Kremmling BLM office to close and restore unauthorized routes that were being closed in accordance with the recently updated Travel Management Plan. The team de-compacted and reseeded 11,000 sq. ft of unauthorized routes and constructed 80 feet of buck and rail fencing. The team removed eight carsonite signs, installed two new signs, collected one bag of trash, constructed one water bar, installed one drain, and installed two u-channels. The Stewardship Team completed trail maintenance on 500 feet of existing routes. The Team also hosted a volunteer event with one volunteer who contributed 10 volunteer hours (an in-kind value of \$259.60). The closing and reseeding of this area will encourage plant growth and discourage users from making illegal tracks on these closed roads.

*"It was really awesome seeing the work that you had accomplished throughout the day!"* -TJ Moore, Wolford Mountain Volunteer



### **Rio Grande National Forest – Saguache Ranger District (8/4-8/7, 10/8)**

The Stewardship Team partnered with the Rio Grande National Forest to help maintain the San Isabel Trail, near Crestone, CO. This trail had not seen maintenance in many years so work focused on distinguishing the trail in high meadows and clearing the overgrown corridor which made following the trail challenging at times. The Team cleared 3,000 feet of corridor and removed 54 trees along the entire length of the San Isabel Trail. Additionally, the team constructed 31 rock cairns in high meadows to delineate the trail and to establish the San Isabel Lake Trailhead.

The Stewardship Team also hosted a volunteer event on the Elkhorn Trail near Bonanza, CO in partnership with the USFS Rio Grande in an effort to delineate the trailhead and clear fallen trees which impede horse and foot traffic. The CMC conservation department and one volunteer were able to clear 10,000 feet of corridor, maintain 100 feet of tread, and cut and remove 33 fallen trees. A sign was also installed at the trailhead to further distinguish the trail. The CMC's work on the Elkhorn trail will increase user accessibility and make it easier to find for future equestrians and hikers alike. By maintaining these two trails and delineating their appropriate routes, the trails will hopefully see more users throughout the season.

What did you enjoy most about this project?  
*"Learning about the area and culture of CMC."*  
*-Elkhorn Volunteer*

### **Program Review**

The Stewardship Team's efforts with various land management agencies across the state of Colorado were successful in accomplishing the goals that were set. The Stewardship Team was able to communicate with the different BLM and Forest Service offices in a timely manner, while also balancing input from other non-profit organizations to ensure an across-the-board knowledge of the details for upcoming projects. Receiving feedback from project partners helped the Stewardship Team to improve their approaches (e.g. prior research of area/worksites, templates for project partners, overview of necessary skills, appropriate use of time, understanding of land agency processes, etc) to different assignments. With the Stewardship Team's capabilities and knowledge of conservation on a regional scale, they have become an invaluable resource for land management agencies to rely on for high-quality work and dedication. In coming years of this program the Stewardship Team can hope for more internal support in marketing and outreach to the CMC's 6,000 members for the volunteer events hosted by the Stewardship Team.

