

# Voice of the Canyon

SPRING 2021

## Jobs for Everyone

This issue is packed with stories about ways you can be involved as a Friends member and volunteer naturalist. Check out Pages 3, 5, 6, and 10

## Update on the Bridge

Friends president Dale Campbell brings you up-to-date on the Wildcat Canyon bridge project.

Page 4



## Sign Up to Clean Up

LNT coordinator Bev Finamore announces plans for monthly trash pickups in the park.

Page 6



## Volunteers Key to Fundraising

Volunteers helped raise the \$26K now in the Bridge Fund. More activities are planned for 2021.

Page 7



## Challenges of Protecting the Fragile East Canyon

Former Friends President Josette Mastra writes about efforts to protect the East Canyon.

Page 8



# Dale's Dispatch

**Dale Campbell**  
Friends President  
and Volunteer Naturalist

Well, it's that time of the year again. You know these days. It can be sunny and warm, or rainy and snowy the same day with temperatures dropping 30 degrees or more within several hours. Or the days that at first look like they will be absolutely delightful, but the wind howls at 30 or 40+ MPH, prompting you to seek shelter. These March/April/May conditions are often affectionally called "Springtime in the Rockies." Thankfully, there's a hint of hope in the days this time of the year. That hope for the coming summer is found in the soft warm breeze that brushes your face, the sighting of the first push of a Pasque flower through the frost creased soil surface, or just something as simple as realizing that the daylight hours are actually growing longer. It's that hope that prompts us to look for more signs of those beautiful summer evenings we love.

And, we all know a little secret, too. One of the best places to enjoy those summer outings is at Castlewood Canyon State Park. If you've ever attended one of the outdoor concerts sponsored by Friends, you know exactly what I'm describing. Or, if you've ever volunteered to help with or participated in the Dam Run at Castlewood Canyon, you know what being at the Park for sunrise is all about.

So, plan on making multiple trips to the park this year, starting with several times this spring. And be sure to stay tuned to the Friends website and look for future newsletters to see what's in the planning for the coming months. For example, in this edition of the Voice of the Canyon, you'll find an update about the Wildcat Canyon Bridge, information about a potential bird feeder project, a help request for protecting the East Canyon, and much, much more! Thanks to Sharon Randall, our newsletter editor, for her work to bring this all together, once again.

I'm looking forward to either seeing you out on the trail and/or at one of our monthly Friends meetings, which you can attend from the comfort of your home (thanks to video conferencing technology). Stay safe and enjoy those hikes at the park!



San Luis Valley, Sandhill Cranes.

# Lots to Shop for in the Friends' Visitor Center Store

**Cherie Holverstott**  
Friends Member  
and Volunteer Naturalist

As we move away from the winter months, the Merchandise Team is looking forward to what is anticipated to be an exciting time for merchandise sales.

Existing apparel includes cozy, pull-over hoods for men and women in trendy color combinations. Long-sleeve tee shirts are a must-have item when layering clothing in Colorado and there is a nice selection for both men and women in a variety of colors. With the approach of spring, the new short-sleeve tee shirts for men and women in summery colors such as Catalina Green, Ocean Depths and Lagoon Teal are sure to entice anyone.

One of our best selling items is the short-sleeve tee shirt and cap combination. This combination is a great bargain at \$32 and is available in color combinations for men and women. Caps and hats to protect from the sun are a must any time, especially when walking the trails and a variety of colors of caps is available. Another must-have is a walking stick. The current inventory includes walking sticks for all ages in an extensive array of various woods.

We anticipate the addition of water bottles to the merchandise inventory. When they become available, it will be hard to decide which of the stickers to buy as an embellishment for the bottle! Should it be one of the eco-friendly wooden stickers or one of the colorful vinyl stickers? How about both like the embellished water bottle you can see on display in the Visitor Center? The choice is yours!

Other members of the Merchandise Team are Sondra Hale and Carole Stapleton. Sondra works with me on the clothing and Carole is responsible for the walking sticks and stickers. My hubby, Charles, has been helping me for the past several months because it became clear that merchandise needs to be organized and restocked on a weekly basis. He has been an excellent assistant.



Photo by Rachel Courtright

## Your Friends Board of Directors

### Officers:

**President Dale Campbell**

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**Liz Bade (along with Friends Member**

**Jeannette Littlejohn)**

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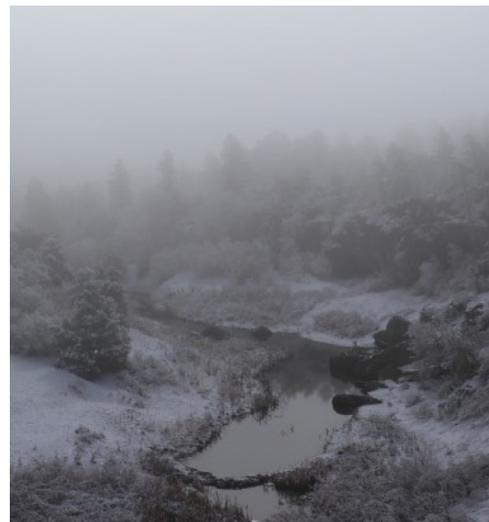
[milnes6739@gmail.com](mailto:milnes6739@gmail.com)

**Susan Williams**

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Friends meetings are held by Zoom the 2nd Saturday of the month. The next meeting is May 8 at 9:30 a.m. Send an email to [dale\\_campbell\\_co@msn.com](mailto:dale_campbell_co@msn.com) for connection details.



How often have you seen the park like this? Brent took this shot from the bridge on 83 early one morning last week. "I love it when the park is foggy and peaceful," he said.

Photo by Brent Lounsbury

## Is Anybody Out There.....

**Jeannette Littlejohn and  
Samantha Tanner  
Friends Members  
and Volunteer Naturalists**



We are trying to get the Facebook page for Friends of Castlewood Canyon more active. We would love your help! Do you have ideas on articles, have photos you would like to share? You can post them directly to [friendsofcastlewoodcanyonstatepark](https://www.facebook.com/friendsofcastlewoodcanyonstatepark) OR if you do not have a facebook login, send them to [focwcsp@gmail.com](mailto:focwcsp@gmail.com) and we will post for you.

Ideas for topics or photos:

- \* Merchandise - what's new and sale items
- \* Events - if we have any for 2021
- \* Bird watching (especially seasonal events such as return of turkey vultures and hummingbirds)
- \* Photo competition - maybe a year long competition with prizes (pending board approval)
- \* Wildcat Canyon Bridge
- \* Leave No Trace suggested topics
- \* Respect wildlife
- \* Social trail problems
- \* Scenic photo shots

Annual and seasonal happenings around the park:

- \* Vernal/Spring equinox, Thanksgiving, 1st Day Hike, Halloween, Mother's Day, Father's Day, July 4th, Dam Days and other park sponsored events.

## **New Convenience on the West Side**

**Liz Bade  
Friends Co-treasurer  
and Volunteer Naturalist**

What do we have at the East Side Visitor Center but not at the West Side Kiosk? Well, besides bathrooms that is. It would be great to keep a few weeding tools, litter pickers, and bags in the West Side Kiosk to provide a bit of convenience to volunteers who participate in these activities on the West Side. No more trips to the east side first to pick up supplies when working the west side.

So, we asked Brent and Rachel if we might put one of those combination door locks on the kiosk if Friends paid for it. They said, "Absolutely." So the new lock has been purchased and is in the Visitor Center waiting for staff to find the time to install it. We'll send word to volunteers when it is done along with info on what supplies are in the kiosk. Then the combination will be provided to those who may need it.

## **News from the Top**

**Brent Lounsbury  
Park Manager**

The park has continued to be very busy in 2021. Though not quite as high as last year where, in the end, we saw a 72 percent increase in visitation compared to 2019. Our 1st quarter '21 numbers have only represented a paltry 59 percent increase from two years ago. We've already had several days where one side of the park or the other has gone to capacity. This, combined with ongoing COVID-19 related issues and giant snowstorms have kept our lean staff very busy indeed.

We're currently reviewing applications for our vacant PRT position. In the end Human Resources sent us 27 that passed the minimum qualifications, so we'll be interviewing the top 6 soon. I'm hoping to have someone starting in late April or early May.

In other staff news, we have two seasonal Rangers starting next week, and are looking forward to new temp staff at our Visitor Center and for maintenance. Due to an absence of school groups we are not going to be hiring a Naturalist Interpreter this summer, but will rely on our staff and volunteers to provide programs to the public as restrictions permit.

Our Wildcat Canyon Bridge is looking like it's going to move forward with CPW support. The majority of the funding will be coming from federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) dollars, the timing of which has some uncertainty around it due to the pandemic and changes in Washington, D.C. Regardless, it's looking as though we'll have the bridge in place either this fall or in spring of 2022. A huge thanks to the Friends who have raised \$26,533 to date for this project! This commitment to cost-sharing has really helped get our Region's decision-maker's attention.

Speaking of LWCF money, we're also in the process of getting replacement vault restrooms at the Juniper Rock parking lot and the West Side Trailhead. These replacements will be CXT brand, prefabricated units, which will be far easier to clean and don't require moving parts for ventilation. While this project has similar uncertainty for timing, they'll most likely be going in place sometime this year.

Looking ahead, for Fiscal Year 2021-22, I put in an ops budget increase that would enable us to start our seasonal staff at \$16 / hr rather than the current \$14 / hr. This would both secure our place as having the highest paid temps in our Region, as well as keeping us ahead of local McDonald's at their \$15 / hr rate.

# Wildcat Canyon Bridge — An Update for You

**Dale Campbell,**  
Friends President and  
Volunteer Naturalist

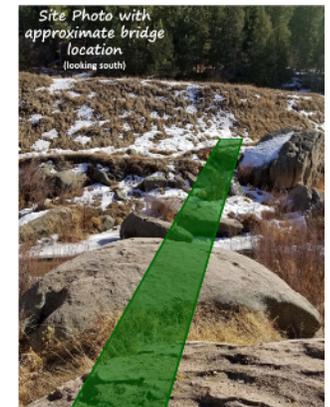
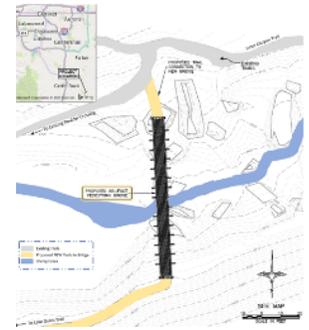
In the relatively few months since the August 2020 kickoff of the Wildcat Canyon Bridge Fundraising, we've been successful in raising more than \$26,000 in funds, including \$13,000 in seed funding provided by Friends. Half of the current funding also comes from public donations. There's more about this on pages 7 and 10.



The Friends project team is also focused on additional sources of funding, including grants. A grant request for \$100,000 has been submitted to the Gates Family Foundation; a decision on this request is expected in July. An additional grant request was sent to the El Pomar for Colorado. Feedback for this \$100,000 request is anticipated in the June-July timeframe.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) has recognized that Castlewood Canyon State Park is one of the state parks that is eligible to receive funding from the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), an additional funding source that could provide a significant amount of construction funding for the project. From past experience, receipt of approved LWCF funding support is usually delayed. This timeline for the LWCF support could delay construction of the project to fall 2022, much later than the Fall 2021 that was originally envisioned. CPW, Friends and Castlewood Canyon staff are investigating funding options or combinations (Friends' money/grant money or otherwise) that would support construction earlier than fall 2022. Sometime in late April or in May, CPW will update us about the status of State provided funding for the Wildcat Canyon Bridge. We'll provide an update via newsletter or website when more is known.

On the bridge design front, working with local agencies, CPW has determined the Bridge siting and elevation, which was influenced by Douglas County Flood Plain analysis. The deck of bridge is to be at elevation 6413', 14 feet above the creek bed of Cherry Creek. The location of the bridge can be seen in the accompanying plan and annotated photo.



Knowing the siting of the bridge provides volunteer Bridge Ambassadors the opportunity to help Inner Canyon and Lake Gulch hikers understand more about the Wildcat Canyon Bridge. Friends will create and install a sign at the North Abutment location with more information to further enhance visitors' awareness of this significant project.

Further information about the bridge location and elevation is provided in the [Wildcat Canyon Bridge Site Presentation](https://675fe8e2-2860-4bf8-8068-3a49335f2685.usrfiles.com/ugd/675fe8_11b792577cc24cb58c510642da511d9d.pdf) ([https://675fe8e2-2860-4bf8-8068-3a49335f2685.usrfiles.com/ugd/675fe8\\_11b792577cc24cb58c510642da511d9d.pdf](https://675fe8e2-2860-4bf8-8068-3a49335f2685.usrfiles.com/ugd/675fe8_11b792577cc24cb58c510642da511d9d.pdf)). If you have questions about this significant project or if you are considering making a donation, please contact us at [focwcsp@gmail.com](mailto:focwcsp@gmail.com)



## Tree of Life Bird Feeding Project— Absolutely No Hiking Required

**Friends Board Member  
Bridget Milnes and  
Friends Co-treasurer  
Jeannette Littlejohn**

*After the storm, a pygmy  
nuthatch grabs a bite  
from the mesh feeder.*

*Photo by Bridget Milnes*



Even before the pandemic, bird watching was one of the fastest growing hobbies in the United States in all age groups. And last year, as people flocked to the parks in record numbers, the sale of binoculars jumped 22 percent.

During this trying time, as folks sought comfort and distraction in nature, the staff at the park continued to meet the needs of a growing and more diverse group of visitors. Now immunized, volunteers are also returning and Jeannette Littlejohn and Bridget Milnes are extending an invitation to join them in the Tree of Life Bird Feeding Project. While this project is a work in progress, it is a unique opportunity to participate from the ground up and help design, promote and maintain a new program at Castlewood Canyon State Park.

This project has many advantages that will appeal to volunteers. Located at the Visitor Center, parking is convenient and there is no hiking. Other advantages include:

- \* Year 'round activity.
- \* Pandemic Safe- Outdoors with easy social distancing.
- \* Use knowledge gained in volunteer naturalist training.
- \* Chance to interact with visitors and share knowledge of park.
- \* Make new friends.
- \* Training, resource materials and mentor support provided.
- \* Ideal for mobility challenged.
- \* No age limit.
- \* Interpretive signs are already in place.
- \* Good exercise, but you don't have to be a mountain goat or extreme hiker to participate.

Two bird feeders have been up for a couple of years, but a few more plus knowledgeable volunteers would greatly enhance a visitor's experience. In addition, the location, adjacent to the VC parking lot, will be convenient. Other advantages to visitors include:

- \* An activity for all ages.
- \* Ideal for the mobility challenged and those short of time. The feeders are clearly visible so a visitor can view them from their car in the parking lot!
- \* Visitors can take knowledge gained and apply it to birds they see in their own backyards and beyond.
- \* Birds are fun to watch and at least 12 species and sub-species have been recorded at the existing two feeders. The park is an Important Bird Area (IBA) which is a national/global designation.
- \* Birds are everywhere.
- \* Bird watching can be enjoyed throughout our lives.
- \* Walls, rocks and benches make bird watching at the VC reasonably comfortable.
- \* Volunteers enhance the experience because it's more fun if you know what you're looking at.

Many details are yet to be worked out such as: How many feeders and where should they be placed? Seed- what kind and where to store it, How about water and what are the volunteer responsibilities?

Bird watching connects people with nature which has become a safe harbor and source of comfort and solace while providing a feeling of normalcy in a very abnormal time.

The Tree of Life Bird Feeding Project needs volunteer participation if it is going to take flight. For more information contact Jeannette Littlejohn at [jalitt90@msn.com](mailto:jalitt90@msn.com) or Bridget Milnes at [milnes.6739@gmail.com](mailto:milnes.6739@gmail.com)

# Leave No Trace 2021 Clean-Up Days Scheduled

**Bev Finamore, Friends  
Board Member and  
Volunteer Naturalist**

It's amazing how much trash 200,000 visitors can produce. Maybe 75 percent does get to the trashcans, and our seasonal help and Rangers have had to deal with lots of trash runs.

So rather than an occasional trash pick-up day, we will hold regular "clean up days" in different sections of the park this year. It will also be a way to get back together and visit while still maintaining that social distance.

For Earth Week this year, Leave No Trace is challenging you to [#LeaveNoTrash](#). Join the Subaru/Leave No Trace Team to find out The Rotten Truth About Trash. On Tuesday, April 20 at 5:00 p.m. Learn how long it takes for common trash items to break down in a landfill and why we should pack it in, pack it out and Leave No Trash! Guaranteed to get you motivated this Earth Week. You can register at <https://lnt.org/event/leave-no-trace-the-rotten-truth-about-trash-2/>

**Thursday April 22, 10 a.m.** Our first Clean Up Day is Earth Day, a good time to clean our little portion of the earth. Pam Steinman will be at the Canyon Point parking lot and I will be at the West Side Trail Head. We have had good results by splitting into teams and seeing how much territory we could cover.

**Monday May 3, 10 a.m.** This is the day after Mother's Day which is usually one of our big visitation weekends. Tentative plans are for the Event Center, Nature Trails, picnic tables, parking lots, the area surrounding the Visitor Center and the road.

**Thursday May 27, 10 a.m.** This is the week after Memorial Day. Meeting place to be determined with the help of Rachel and Tom.

**Monday June 21, 10 a.m.** This is the day after Father's Day, also a big weekend in our park. Meeting place to be determined.

Please remember your mask, gloves, water, and appropriate clothing for heat, snow and/or ticks. All reminders will be sent via Rachel when final plans are made.

Do not hesitate to send a message if you find a spot in the park that needs attention. [bevfinamore@gmail.com](mailto:bevfinamore@gmail.com)



*Come have some fun with other volunteers and help clean-up the park. Fran Tate, left, and Cathy Fischer, use their grabbers to shake hands at the last LNT event. The first clean-up is April 22 at 10 a.m. Start at Canyon Point or West Side Trail Head. Photo by Pam Steinman*

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## 8th Annual Dam Run Will Happen One Way or the Other this Fall

**Travis Brown  
Friends Board Member  
and Volunteer Naturalist**

It's been a long year and a half, and for many their toes are itching to run. What better place than our infamous canyons' annual Dam Run! Last year we had a fairly successful virtual run where participants came out as individuals and ran their own race at a time of their choosing. The virtual run is an adaptation to address our new COVID-19 pseudo normal, but it would be nice to get back to a traditional run format.

The jury is still out on the format of this year's run in September, but it is tentatively set for Sunday the 19th.

We hope to have another joyous and challenging run this fall. So, keep moving, be safe and get out on the trail when you feel comfortable to do so and we will see what format this fall's run will take.

# Castlewood Canyon Volunteers Dive into Bridge Fundraising

**Susan Williams**  
Friends Board Member  
and Volunteer Naturalist

Castlewood Volunteers are known to wear many hats and sometimes all at once. This year was no different when they jumped right in to help kick off the Wildcat Canyon Bridge Fundraising Campaign!

Friends of Castlewood Canyon Board had voted to support the proposal of building a bridge across Cherry Creek at the junction of Inner Canyon and Lake Gulch trails. One of the first tasks was to ask Volunteers to help with the fundraising efforts.

Even with COVID restrictions, there was an overwhelming response. Over the next six months efforts to broadcast the goal of raising 100K resulted in attaining the first financial goal of 25 percent by the end of 2020. The Bridge project will continue on through 2021 and into 2022, hopefully with significant backing from CPW.

Going forward to 2021, new fundraising efforts for other projects that Friends of Castlewood support are in the works. Keep up to date on the new ideas that are hatching this spring and that will be announced for a summer launch. Good resources for new **Fun In The Sun 2021** activities will be posted on the Friends Website [castlewoodfriends.org](http://castlewoodfriends.org) and on the Friends of Castlewood Canyon FaceBook Page.



A sign went up at the rock crossing that asks visitors to "Improve Our Cherry Creek Crossing," and gives the Friends web page for more information.

Photo by Dale Campbell



Photo by Sharon Boyd

Friends President Dale Campbell and Co-treasurer Liz Bade install the large sign at the entrance to the park. Rangers say it has generated a lot of requests for information. Below, Liz Bade, right, Bridget Milnes and Susan Williams show off a poster that entices visitors to throw a dollar or so into the donation box.



Ed Blum and Derald Hoffman do some fundraising. Ed was using the "Ask Me" badge to entice visitors to learn about the bridge and how to donate and Derald was asking visitors to give a dollar or two. At right, Bridget Milnes set up a table outside the Visitor Center with information about the fundraising efforts and explained all the different ways to donate.

Photos by Susan Williams



# Can We Keep Our Fragile East Canyon Safe?

**Josette Mastra**  
Friends Member  
and Volunteer Naturalist

Friends of Castlewood Canyon State Park and the East Canyon Preservation Trail have a long and shared history. Friends was a new organization when the threat of a housing development on the canyon's northeast rim gave them their first challenge. Friends formed a private-public partnership with State Parks Division, Douglas County, and Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) to purchase 397 acres immediately adjacent to the park boundary. This tract provided the buffer needed to protect the delicate ecologies and east canyon view shed from the consequences of residential development.

After acquiring the new property 1998, the area remained in its natural state until environmental impact studies could be completed. The trail opened in 2008, with restrictions to protect the fragile environment.



Photo by Dale Campbell

What makes the East Canyon special? It is a unique property with several delicate features, which have earned the park the State designation of "Colorado Natural Area", and the global designation of "Important Bird Area".

There are rare plants, some of which are "critically imperiled", with fewer than five populations in the entire state. The grotto wetlands support eastern relict plant communities of the last ice age.

The canyon provides habitat for wildlife. Hundreds of bird species call the canyon home or use it as a stopping place during spring and fall migration. Nesting birds are easily disturbed, and migrating birds depend on peace and quiet to find food and resting places during their journey.

The ecosystems in the canyon provide critical habitat for both threatened and endangered species of mammals and amphibians, and the canyon walls provide important habitat for a variety of animal species.

The cap rock areas of the park often contain cryptobiotic soil crusts that are sensitive to disturbance. These formations can be destroyed by just a footstep.

Regulations are in place to preserve and protect the area.

*From the park website:*

## **East Canyon Trail is Closed from November 1 - May 1**

*Due to the fragile nature of this area the following regulations are strictly enforced:*

- *Visitors must remain on the designated trails.*
- *No Dogs or other pets are permitted.*
- *No climbing, traversing, or rappelling on or from rock formations.*

*The East Canyon is home to several species of rare flora and fauna that can be easily disturbed.*

Whether from a lack of education, confusion at the signage, a difference in environmental values, or willful disobedience, people and their animals have been using the East Canyon Trail during this seasonal closure. This is an especially vulnerable time for some raptor species who have nested there in past seasons, and other sensitive species. It is time for flora to rejuvenate by taking a rest from footsteps.

At the recent Friends meeting we began discussions and solicited ideas. We especially want to take advantage of our recent "Leave No Trace" Gold Status to get our message to visitors. A social trail project that is underway may also be a tie-in.

We brainstormed some ideas.

- We needed a quick solution to at least save the EC from several weeks of trespassers. Bev Finamore created some temporary, laminated signs that are attention-getting and should have more impact. (Although signs noting the trail closure already exist in both locations, the **RED STOP SIGN** pops.) Dale mounted them at the entrance to the trail on the path to the BCO, and at the steps leading to the preservation area under the Highway 83 bridge.

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- For future closure months we could mount sturdier temporary signs on modified buck and pole fences/sawhorses, or on T-posts. The signs would be at the entrance to the trail, off the path to the BCO and at the steps leading under the HWY 83 bridge.
- We are investigating a more durable solution to install a gate that can be locked at the bridge. The closure sign would be mounted on the gate.
- A permanent, interpretive sign, using the theme and convention of our existing signs, including reasons why the trail is not always open. This would be installed at the Trailhead and would include LNT information and language.

As volunteers this summer take a walk on the wilder side, the East Canyon is splendid, and you can take the opportunity to let visitors know just how special it is. Use your interpretive training and Authority of the Resource techniques. If you have ideas as to how to get our message across, let us know.

To paraphrase Jeff Thompson, our CPW Resource Stewardship Program Coordinator:

The vital message is that if those of us tasked with stewardship and interpretation at the park do not practice good stewardship of the resources of the park, the biology of the park will move from wilderness quality toward urban edge quality. If you want to see deer, robins, and Red-tailed Hawks, this is fine. If you want to see eagles, owls, wild cats, elk, and bears this is not fine.

Look for a future article with in-depth information on the East Canyon, and maybe a report on how successful our project has been!



*Photo by Dale Campbell*

## Interested in Keeping Up with Friends? Check Our Website!

**Dale Campbell**  
Friends President  
and Volunteer Naturalist



Did you know that Friends has had an on-line presence since April 2013? We've been fortunate to be able to have this Internet presence, as it greatly broadens our reach to folks beyond Colorado's borders. And more recently, a complete remake of the website in 2019 has provided expanded capabilities and additional tools to reach out to a variety of people.

There are also multiple resources within the website that you may find helpful. Information about Friends projects, a calendar of events, dates for monthly Friends meetings, history of Friends, how to contact us and much more can be found on the various tabs of our website.

But, did you also know that the website has additional information and resources that is available exclusively for Friends members? All you need to do is click on the Log In icon on the upper right of the Home page and log in with your email and chosen password. Haven't yet set up a Members log-in? Just follow the prompts on the Log In screen. Once you're logged in, scroll to the bottom of the Home page and just click on "Member Documents." You'll be able to access meeting minutes and other members-only information about Friends. While logged-in, you can also update your member information and profile.

Note that we are currently expanding the resources available on this Members page. An enlarged Website Committee is now capable of covering more areas relating to the organization and the park. So, within the near future, you'll be able to access more documents, see more information throughout the various tabs on the site and have more timely updates to the overall information on the website. Stay tuned for further details and updates about how we're making the Friends website an improved resource for members and the general public alike.

By the way, I hope you've already bookmarked the website on your browser or smart phone. If you haven't, simply go to [www.castlewoodfriends.org](http://www.castlewoodfriends.org). And while you're there bookmarking this location, browse through the website and let us know if you see anything that you have a suggestion about or needs to be updated. Just send those comments to [focwcsp@gmail.com](mailto:focwcsp@gmail.com)

# You Can Help with Wildcat Bridge Fundraising

**Steve L'Esperance**  
**Friends Vice President**  
**and Volunteer Naturalist**

As of April 2021, WE have raised over \$26,000 toward our bridge- through a combination of dollars at the VC window, Friends contributions (seed money we call it), and outside donations (Trail Hiker up to Pride of the Canyon levels).

Thanks to all for your amazing efforts! While Friends has applied for grant money from three sources, we still have a very realistic goal of raising \$100,000 ourselves. We are 25 percent there (during a pandemic!).

Reminder of some ways we all can support this effort:

1. Spread the word, tell your friends, and refer them to our Friends website. People want to hear your story.
2. As we emerge from COVID, participate in our Bridge Ambassador program and 'fill a boot/bucket' at the bridge site.
3. When visiting the bridge site, dream big as to how we will utilize this bridge to inform, engage, inspire—share your ideas with each other as dreams are what drives our passion and excitement.

At right, you will find our donation tier designations as well as a marketing tool we're using to build excitement and tell our story. Keep up the GREAT work!

Donation Amount	Donation Level	Donation Image	Benefits
\$ 1-\$19	Donate a Dollar (DaD)		✓ Feeling good and getting rid of loose change
\$20-\$49	Trail Hiker		✓ Verbal thanks, feeling REALLY good, and have a GREAT place to get rid of your ATM \$20s!
\$50-\$199	Trail Guide		✓ Many thanks and a great Castlewood Canyon Sticker
\$200-\$499	Trail Explorer		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 1 bridge plank designated for donor</li> <li>✓ Castlewood Canyon Sticker</li> <li>✓ \$20 merchandise coupon</li> <li>✓ Name on plaque in Visitor Center</li> <li>✓ Name on bridge dedication sign</li> </ul>
\$500-\$999	Wildcat		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 2 bridge planks designated for donor</li> <li>✓ "First Crossing" photo with group and with individual upon request</li> <li>✓ \$20 merchandise coupon</li> <li>✓ Name on plaque in Visitor Center</li> <li>✓ Name on bridge dedication sign</li> </ul>
\$1,000 or more	Pride of the Canyon		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 4 bridge planks designated for donor</li> <li>✓ "First Steps" Bridge party for 4 people Guided hike for up to 10 on trail of their choice</li> <li>✓ Name on plaque in Visitor Center</li> <li>✓ Name on bridge dedication sign</li> </ul>



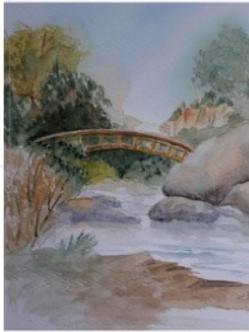
## Wildcat Canyon Bridge

### Dreams Can Come True!



**Dollar by Dollar You Can Help!**

- Improve trail safety
- Reduce trail erosion
- Protect habitats
- Connect trail systems



Together we can build, Wildcat Canyon Bridge at Lake Gulch and Inner Canyon trails.

We need your help to raise \$100K and qualify for matching grants.



Donate Today or Go to Friends of Castlewood Canyon

[www.castlewoodfriends.org](http://www.castlewoodfriends.org)



## A brief 1Q21 financial summary

**Liz Bade**  
**Friends Co-treasurer**  
**and Volunteer Naturalist**

Why the big difference when we compare net income for 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2020 (\$ -509) vs 2021 (\$5,264)? In 2020, the Visitor Center was closed most of March resulting in fewer sales. Merchandise expenses in 2020 were \$2269 vs \$0 this year resulting in twice as much 2021 profit even though the Visitor Center did experience some 2021 Q1 closures. Bridge donations 2021 to date (\$3005) also contributed to higher income vs 2020 Q1. So bridge donations and merchandise sales kept our income higher in 2021. Operating expenses remained about the same. With Covid seemingly ebbing (cross our fingers), we anticipate more Visitor Center traffic and more sales. With warmer weather, the Bridge Ambassadors will be out communicating with our visitors and perhaps getting some nice donations toward Wildcat Canyon Bridge. And, if we're really lucky, we can hold more park events including a major fundraiser and fun time – the Dam Run.

# Our Projects – and Funds Allocated to Them

**Liz Bade**  
**Friends Co-treasurer**  
**and Volunteer Naturalist**

Thanks to dues, donations, and grants, Friends has money in our checking account to support many projects that Friends uses to preserve, promote and protect Castlewood Canyon State Park. A quick look at our most recent financial reports show these project account balances as of the end of March, 2021.

## **Climber Equipment Fund \$ 376.62**

If you've hiked near the west side cliffs, you many have seen climbers practicing on one of our many climbing routes. Most of them are members of organized climbing clubs and they actually do more than climb. They devote one day a year to cleaning up the area around the climbing routes, they help us enforce closures during nesting seasons, and they maintain the climbing routes to help keep all climbers safe. Two years ago, Friends committed \$2000 from our general fund to the climbing club that they used to replace equipment to make climbing safer. The climbers themselves installed the new gear and are the keepers of a high powered drill that the funds allowed them to purchase.

## **Interpretive Sign Fund \$4,124.11**

Through Friends commitments, donations, and grants, we were able to budget almost \$19,000 to replace and add to the park's interpretive signs. You may remember that many of them were faded and cracked and some of the kiosk signs were missing altogether. We now have 23 new interpretive signs in the park plus informative labels on the Homestead self-guided trail. This year, Pam Steinman and Carole Stapleton are working on content for a butterfly interpretive sign.

## **Leave No Trace Fund \$2,127.88**

Friends committed \$3000 to our newest project. With that money, we have been able to provide dog poop bags and stations, and signs that will be used to inform the public about Leave No Trace principles and why they are important to keeping our park's resources litter free for all to enjoy.

## **Native Garden Fund \$1,922.96**

Thanks to materials donations from Quality Landscape, Pioneer Sand & Gravel, and C & S Sand & Stone, a Liberty Community Giving Grant and almost \$900 in bee house sales at the Friends store, we were able to rehab the native garden areas around the Visitor Center starting five years ago. We had the benefit of a great start by the garden's originators but were faced with new challenges because of well repair work in around 2014. We still have some funds left over to ensure we can enhance the garden areas as needed.

## **Visitor Center Displays Fund \$2,100.00**

We can thank Liberty Community Giving again for this grant that will be used to add to interpretive displays in the Visitor Center.

## **Visitor Center Remodel Fund \$4,827.98**

An original commitment of \$10,000 was spent on new chairs for the education room and the great Colorado style furniture in the main part of the Visitor Center that gives the room a welcome feeling.

## **Wildcat Canyon Bridge Fund \$26,473.24**

Funds so far for our biggest and newest project that will provide safe passage over Cherry Creek at the Lake Gulch/Inner Canyon junction are the result of a \$13,000 Friends commitment, a \$3,125 grant, and individual donations from \$1 to \$1,000. We've also applied for grants from three sources in the hopes of reaching our \$100,000 goal toward building the bridge. Starting this spring, we'll be going full force into fundraising with our Bridge Ambassador program and outreach to local businesses.

## **Wonders Fund \$ 3,219.43**

In normal years we sponsor about six underserved schools a year in our Wonders of Castlewood program. We pay for the bus transportation and, once here, the students participate in one of our naturalist-led environmental education programs. We are able to offer this to schools thanks to generous grants from the Castle Rock Kiwanis, National Environmental Education Foundation, Liberty Community Giving, and the sales of the canvas bags in our Visitor Center. Over the life of this program, our income has been \$10,053 and we've expended \$6,774. We hope we'll be able to welcome school groups back to the park soon so we can put these funds to good use.

## **General Fund \$ 7,229.60**

This Fund holds proceeds from dues and donations that do not designate support of a specific project. These monies are used for our Fixed and Variable operating expenses and, if a surplus, may be directed to a project by approval of the Board such as the Climbers described above.

# Ravens We Encounter

**Sharon Boyd,  
Friends Secretary and  
Volunteer Naturalist**

Ravens are intelligent birds that have the ability to manipulate others into doing work for them, mimic sounds from their environment and mimic people. However, in the Bible, a raven obeyed God and fed Elijah bread and meat twice a day.

I was surprised to be introduced to Ravens in my Bible Study this winter. The Land of Israel had been experiencing a severe drought for three years. The Lord told Elijah the Tishbite, an Old Testament prophet, to walk eastward and hide at the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan River. God commanded the Ravens to feed him. Elijah drank from the brook.

In February, I enjoyed a presentation from Amy Graziano of Douglas Land Conservancy (DLC) along with Kate Hogan of Denver Audubon about *Curious Corvids: Jays, Crows, Ravens, Magpies, and Nutcrackers*. This group's behavior is at the top of the avian IQ test. You will be charmed when as you watch this presentation, found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2NWAboaoBZs>

My Colorado Springs neighborhood has a large number of Ravens. In March, I walked to our mail building after we received a couple of inches of snow. As I turned the corner, a Raven was walking in the snow and observing me. I wondered if people had been feeding the Raven when they picked up their mail. I could see the hump on his large bill and noticed his shaggy feathers. I hoped he would fly away so I could see his wedge-shaped tail.

A Raven is one of several larger-bodied species of the genus *Corvus*, a large all-black passerine bird, and distinguished by the arrangement of its toes. The name for a group of ravens is "unkindness" and "conspiracy." Larger than Crows, they are thick-billed with a hump on the top of their bill. They have a shaggy plumage, especially under the throat. Their feathers have a blue or purple iridescence, readily noticeable in their pointed wings and wedge-shaped tail. Ravens have few predators.

Ravens use alliteration, the repetition of beginning consonant sounds to imitate human speech. They learn to "talk" better than some parrots. These ingenious Ravens can mimic noises like bird calls, animal sounds, car engine, and toilet flushing. They also use non-vocal signals, by gesturing to communicate. They may point with their beaks to indicate an object to another bird or hold up an object to get another Raven's attention.

Ravens are playful, adaptive, and show empathy. They make toys by using sticks, pinecones, golf balls or rocks to play with other Ravens or even themselves. Ravens mate for life.

These big, sooty-looking birds thrive among humans. However, if a Raven is aware another Raven is watching it hide its food, it will pretend to put the food in one place, while actually hiding it in another place.

Ravens are among the smartest of all birds, gaining a reputation for solving complicated problems invented by ever more creative scientists. For example, one test had a Raven retrieve a hanging piece of food. The Raven pulled up on the string, anchored the string with its claw and repeated the process until the food was within reach. Many Ravens that were given the hanging food test were able to reach the food in thirty seconds.

In winter, Ravens were observed stealing fish by pulling a fisherman's line out of an ice hole. Ravens have been observed playing dead beside a beaver carcass to scare other Ravens from a most delicious feast. They are known to imitate wolves or foxes to attract them to a carcass that a Raven is unable to break open. After the wolf is finished eating, the Raven eats the leftovers. Observed in the wild, Ravens push rocks on people to keep them from climbing up to their nests.

Perhaps the next time you see a Raven, you might be able to observe some of these behaviors. And wonder if the Raven is observing you to learn something about your behaviors!

