Dear Friends:

Years ago, long before I became Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado’s executive director, I trained under the tutelage of a very talented crew leader, Curt Chidhow. It was late May, and I couldn’t have asked for a more beautiful training site than Twin Lakes near Leadville. Lake Twin Lakes is a hiker and cross-country skier’s dream; the inspiring Colorado Trail, the legendary Continental Divide Trail, and the Rocky Mountains’ highest summit, Mount Elbert, are all within a few minutes of this spectacular glacial-formed lakes. Our task that day was to learn how to construct a rock wall to stabilize a steep and eroding shoreline embankment. Looking back now, I think we actually erected a cathedral nestled against snow-covered peaks—both walls and peaks mighty and strong, and created to last! I make a point to visit our masonry work every time I am in the area. 20 years later, the wall is still holding the embankment tight.

Like the Cheyenne mountain VOC volunteers I will be up to task. Whether it’s constructing and maintaining drainage structures on mountain trails, creating wetland’s and rock climbing turns, or planting new willows to restore wetlands VOC volunteers are building a better Colorado everywhere we work, enabling those who follow in our footsteps to enjoy the outdoors as much as we do.

Stewarding of Colorado’s natural resources and our vision held by all of VOC’s core values of VOC for over 30 years. This year, VOC board and staff members have been intentionally focused on building several fresh stewardship initiatives to reach Colorado’s burgeoning millennial and youth populations. We are adding “new media” components to our outreach and implementing on-the-ground stewardship efforts to invite up-and-coming generations, who are critical to ensuring that VOC’s vision continues to inspire Coloradans in the years ahead.

We hope you will take the time to read the stories shared in this year-end report. Close your eyes and relish the sights and sounds of the outdoors whenever we spent our time, and hear all the different VOC volunteer voices: young children, adolescents, college students, parents, working professionals, and retirees. Building a better Colorado sounds good. Whether it is done through a VOC project or through individual stewardship actions using VOC’s new YourCO mobile app, VOC volunteers possess enormous Colorado pride, eager to share their deep love of nature with others.

As we round out 2015, we hope you will consider a generous financial donation to help us keep building a better Colorado. Your contribution is an investment in a growing, changing Colorado where stewardship of the outdoors is more important than ever. Your financial contribution will ensure that VOC is able to continue our important work in caring for Colorado’s many parks, trails, and open spaces, whether in urban communities, mountain forest, or on the rural plains. Your support will enable us to keep discovering ways in which Coloradans can build a “cathedral” that lasts, inspiring all of us to care and protect our amazing outdoor recreational amenities and natural landscapes. We invite you to send your donation in the enclosed envelope or donate securely online at voc.org.

Thank you for your continued involvement and support!

Executive Director
Ann Baker Easley

Thank you for your support!

Thank you for your support in helping build a better Colorado!
Want to Give Back to YourCO on Your Own Time? There’s an App for That

Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado have mobile phone recycling利器, and now, with YourCO, getting involved is even easier. YourCO makes it easy for Coloradans and visitors to the state to find places where they can volunteer to work on the outdoors, from trails and parks to historic sites and wildlife areas. You can also use YourCO to view and register for volunteer projects or complete more than 50 DIY stewardship activities. You can also use YourCO to view and register for volunteer projects or complete more than 50 DIY stewardship activities.

Let’s build a better Colorado!

Finding New Ways to Build a Better Colorado

This year, 4,574 VOC volunteers demonstrated how collectively we can build a better Colorado. Are you curious why we are passionate about what we do? At VOC, we believe that if you love the outdoors, you should work to protect it. But, did you know that VOC volunteers also take on different roles, helping to build a better Colorado while you’re giving the movement a boost? By taking on the leadership role for Colorado, you are exploring a new, fun, and exciting way to get involved. You can help build a better Colorado, along with other outdoor enthusiasts and members of our team, by taking on leadership roles and volunteering your time and expertise.

Let’s build a better Colorado!

Building the Next Generation of Outdoor Stewards

In August, VOC hosted our first-ever family overnight camping opportunity at the Mount Evans Outdoor Lab building in the Arapaho National Forest. We also hosted our first-ever Family Overnight program at the Rocky Mountain National Park. VOC has led the charge in promoting outdoor stewardship and conservation activities for families, but this was the first time that we have offered a program that is specifically designed for families. The program was a huge success, and we are looking forward to hosting more programs of this type in the future.

VOC is all about building a new generation of outdoor enthusiasts and volunteers! In August, we hosted our first-ever family night camping opportunity at the Mount Evans Outdoor Lab building in the Arapaho National Forest. We also hosted our first-ever Family Overnight program at the Rocky Mountain National Park. VOC has led the charge in promoting outdoor stewardship and conservation activities for families, but this was the first time that we have offered a program that is specifically designed for families. The program was a huge success, and we are looking forward to hosting more programs of this type in the future.

Colorado Companies Prove That Doing Good is Good Business

The benefits of employee volunteerism are endless: it boosts employee morale, helps a company's reputation among investors, consumers, and the community.

In 2015, 12 Colorado companies offered their time and financial resources by participating in VOC’s Corporate Stewardship with a Team (SWAT) program. These SWATs are a fun, rewarding way for a group of employees to get involved in building a better Colorado, offering a unique combination of volunteerism and teambuilding activities.

Denver-based Icel Energy, a long-time financial supporter of VOC, regularly involves its employees through their corporate employees, including our members. This year, Icel Energy provided 87 volunteer hours valued at thousands of dollars in a landscape and yard cleanup, and invasive weed removal project at Growce Colorado’s Outdoor Stewardship Institute.

“I volunteer because I like to give back to the community and I understand the importance of VOC. Employees in VOC organizations that depend on volunteering to survive,” said John Butler, manager of gas and electric field operations at Xcel Energy.

“This year, Icel Energy chose to volunteer with VOC at the Paleozoic Learning Center because it was a great choice to be a part of a company’s reputation among the business world. The beneﬁts of employee volunteerism are endless: it boosts employee morale, helps a company’s reputation among investors, consumers, and the community.

To make your company’s year volunteer! Visit VOC.org/SWAT for more information.