

FRONT RANGE REPORT

January 2022 Edition



"Winter Interest"
Photo by Deb Lebow Aal

The Wild Ones Front Range chapter inspires and empowers people and municipalities to transform private and public landscapes into more native plant habitat to support all people and a healthy planet.

BECOME A MEMBER

Enjoy all of the great benefits of a membership with the Front Range Chapter of Wild Ones!!!



JOIN TODAY

Vote on our slate of Board of Directors for 2022,
please scroll down!

Our Demonstration Projects

You may know that Wild Ones Front Range Chapter has three demonstration projects, and one more we are "adopting." We have also partnered with Denver Parks and Recreation on another project. They are all different, but worthy of some attention. We highlighted two of them last month, and are highlighting one this month. We hope to have a demo project tour in 2022 so that we can all bask in their beauty in person!

Wild Ones Front Range Native Plant Demonstration Garden at Ekar Farms: A New Partnership

By Ayn Schmit

If you happen to find yourself on a summer Sunday along East Alameda Avenue in Denver, you might hear the happy hubbub of people working in the gardens at Ekar Farms. Ekar Farms, located on land belonging to the Denver Academy of Torah, is a non-profit organization that fosters community and connection to the land and grows food for distribution to metro Denver organizations that are feeding people in need. Ekar is a Hebrew word that means *the most important things*. For those of us committed to gardening with native plants, that act of healing the land IS one of the most important things.



The start of the garden transformation at Ekar Farms - lot of weeds!

Wild Ones Front Range was delighted when Ekar's executive director Sue

Salinger approached us in spring of 2021 with a proposal: Ekar would provide a plot of land, water, and some donated plants if WOFR would design, install and help maintain a native plant demonstration garden. The native demonstration garden is a great fit with Ekar's mission to repair the land and to educate the community about regenerative gardening. Wild Ones is grateful for Sue's vision to embed a native garden within Ekar's landscape, and for her generous support of our efforts. As part of regular volunteer programs at Ekar, Sue has been able to provide volunteers who have been invaluable to the progress of the native garden.

So, what has been accomplished thus far? First, removing as many of the weeds as possible was a herculean effort! The plot had a serious infestation of alfalfa, bindweed, non-native grasses and a variety of other malefactors. In mid-summer, a design was developed for the roughly 900 square-foot triangular plot. The design incorporates a woody shrub border, herbaceous perennial zones and a swath of prairie/grassland meandering through the space. Existing plants - some desert four-o'clocks, bee balm, chokecherry, blanket flower, etc - were incorporated into the design. We also designed around generous donations of plants from WOFR members and received some funds from Sue that enabled us to purchase plants at Harlequin Gardens in Boulder.



Applying a cardboard base layer to hinder future weed growth

Before planting we applied cardboard to the garden to deter weeds from returning. Then we began planting our donated plants and plants from Harlequin's! We particularly want to acknowledge the generous plant donation from Wild Ones member Jen Heath. She donated leadplant, butterfly milkweed, prairie smoke, and prairie violets (among many others). We were able to plant most of the woody shrub border including two beautiful Gambel oaks, and a good portion of the herbaceous perennial zones. Once planted, and thanks to Sue's provision of gravel, we applied gravel mulch to the perennial and woody

shrub areas atop the cardboard.

Ekar volunteers did some serious heavy lifting in digging out the path, applying landscape fabric to the path and laying wood mulch on the path. Although the hope is to use crushed fines for the path long-term, we needed an immediate solution and the path is looking great. Volunteers also helped lay a river rock border along the paths and garden edges and helped with the weeding and planting.

The area still needing attention is the prairie/grassland swath. We planted a few grasses and forbs such as prairie violets, prairie smoke and butterfly milkweed. But more dense planting is needed in this area, and we are still contemplating whether and how best to mulch this area. To provide some additional weed deterrence in the short term, a layer of mulched leaves was placed over the cardboard.



Gambel oaks are planted to create a woody shrub border between Ekar Farms and their neighbors

This winter we hope to develop a final plan for this area that we can implement next season. Additional winter plans include seeking a grant to help with signage and purchase/installation of a rock basin to provide water for pollinators and other wildlife. The hope is to apply for Audubon Habitat Hero designation in the future when the garden is able to fully meet the criteria.

We are amazed with the progress we were able to make with the garden in just a few short months! Much of that progress is due to the following volunteers and donations we'd like to give a shout-out to:

- **Sue Salinger** for her vision and support, plants, gravel, volunteers and so much more
- **Ayn Schmit and Brian Page** for design help and more
- **Jen Heath** for her generous donation of plants

- **Janis Zloto** for her donation of river rocks
- Staunch volunteers **Deb Lebow Aal, Liz Evans, Robbie Score, Nathan Zorndorf, Janis Zloto, and Ron Aal**
- And all Ekar volunteers that completed the path

Thank you to all our donors!

We are grateful for your generous donations for 2021. We raised well over \$7,000 this year!

These donations plant the seeds for everything we do at Wild Ones Front Range. These funds will create educational programs that will be free or have nominal fees; support our ever popular seed swaps; and provide knowledge and funds for the demonstration gardens we've developed and plans for new ones.

Our immense appreciation to the amazing Wild Ones' community mentioned below, who stepped up.

If you wish to be a part of the growing movement transforming our gardens to sustainable and healthy landscapes, please send your contribution to Wild Ones Front Range Chapter, Attn. treasurer, 6631 S. Adams Way, Centennial, CO 80122.

Really... there is no gift too small.

Visit our Website

Deborah A	Allidah H	Daniel R
Jeff A	Caroline H	Kim R
Ruth A W	Mary H	Jeanette R
Donna B	Felicia H	Steve R
Eleen B	Shirley H	Amanda R
Catherine B	Ruth I	Tom R
Jacob B	Sally J K	Brian R
Candace B	Mary K	Lee R
Anne B	Michele K	Lynn R
Rick B	Nicole K	Cynthia R
Carol B L	Kevin L	Pamela S
Reta C	Jeanette L	Cynthia S
Thomas C	Danna L	Elaine S
Carrie C	Kathryn L	Jennifer S
Emily C	Kathleen M	Diane S
Laurel C	Deborah M	Laurel S
Courtney C	Barbara M	Nancy S
Terry C	John M	Lynne S
Nico D	Jan M	Jennifer S
Kristen D	Rahman M	Tom S
Kirk F	Nora M	Candace T
David F	Sarah N	Judy and Larry T
Deborah F	Kari O	Lynn V
Margaret G	Steve O	Anna W
Jody G	Susan P	Jo Z
Rebecca G	Brenda P	Anonymous
Christine G	Suzanne P	Anonymous
Jim and Ann H	Richard and Vicki P	Anonymous
Peggy and Greg H	Jennifer P	King Soopers
John H	Rachel P	

Wild Ones National Landscapers is 45!

Bet you didn't know the Wild Ones national organization has been around that long! In 1997, nine people attended a natural landscaping workshop in Milwaukee, WI and became intensely interested in this "new" concept of landscaping with native plants. Their enthusiasm blossomed into the Wild Ones organization we know now, and continues to educate and share information on native plants at the "plant roots" or "native grass root" level, to promote biodiversity and environmentally sound landscaping practices.

You may be wondering how old our local chapter is. The answer is, it's complicated! Founded in January, 2010, the chapter stayed small for years. In 2017, when membership was down to four people, several people serendipitously contacted the chapter president at the same time, asking for information about the chapter. She promptly handed the four of us the reins, and we meandered along for a time, trying to re-energize the chapter. Once we formed a Board of Directors in 2019, the chapter took off. As of this date, we have over 230 members, and are active on many, many different policy and landscape levels. Officially, our chapter is 11 years old. In reality, it is more like 5 years old.

Happy birthday, Wild Ones Natural Landscapers! The world is a better place with you in it.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Member Mixer

When: January 12, 2022 6:30 - 8:00 pm Mountain Time (US and Canada)

Where: This is a virtual event. Register in advance for this meeting: <https://uso2web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMtdeqqrzotHdHWqzdnaYP6JgEclv-ibAY> After registering, you will receive a confirmation email with information on joining the meeting.

Join us to celebrate the end of another gardening season. Grab your favorite beverage, get comfortable on your couch, and join other WOFR members to discuss:

- Things I learned from my garden this year (what went spectacularly wrong, or, what I wish I'd done differently)
- What went spectacularly well
- What's on my idea/intention goal list for 2022!
- And, if you'd like, share a virtual tour of your garden (please send a photo or video of your garden from this year to **Christine** by January 5 and be ready to share a few words about it on the call).

We will also vote in our new slate of Board of Directors at our January member mixer, so please participate! You can also vote, below.

How I Got Rich Growing Native Plants by Peter A. Gierlach - Virtual talk

When: January 26, 2022 6:30 - 8:00 pm Mountain Time (US and Canada)

Where: This is a virtual event. Please check the website for information on how to register.

Growing Native with Petey Mesquitey on kxci.org!
KXCI Petey Mesquitey is KXCI's resident storyteller. Every week since the spring of 1992 Petey has delighted KXCI listeners with slide shows and poems, stories and songs about flora, fauna, and family and the glory of living in southern Arizona.

**Wild Ones Presents 'America's Public Gardens: A Resource for Native Plants'
Webinar with Matthew Ross**

When: January 13, 2022 7:00pm Mountain Time

Where: This is a virtual event. Register in advance for this meeting:
<https://wildones.org/ross-public-gardens-registration/>

Take a journey to several of the nation's public gardens. From gardens that grow only native plants to others that have worked them into their diverse collections, get an in-depth look into how public gardens can help inform and influence your design and maintenance practices. Wild Ones National Board Member Matthew Ross is the Director of Continuing Education at the world-renowned Longwood Gardens in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, where he manages more than 175 educational programs. Prior to his arrival at Longwood Gardens, Matthew spent six years in Toledo, Ohio, where he worked as a horticulturist at Toledo Botanical Gardens, instructed nearly 20 courses as an instructor at Owens Community College, and developed a nearly 5-acre urban farm and training center. Read more about what inspired Matthew to become involved with Wild Ones on his [Board bio](#). **This webinar is free and open to the public.** A recording will be available to the public on Wild Ones [YouTube channel](#) soon after the event.

Register Now!

<https://wildones.org/ross-public-gardens-registration/>

A webinar link for this event will be emailed to registrants the day of the event.NOTE: Please do not unsubscribe! This is the only method you have for receiving important communications from Wild Ones! Please add marketing@wildones.org to your address book - this is needed to keep Wild Ones emails out of your SPAM folder.

**7th Annual Landscaping with Colorado Native Plants Conference
Registration is open!**

What's the buzz about native plants? Find out at the 7th Annual Landscaping with Colorado Native Plants Conference! Experts in horticulture, ecology and landscape design share how to plan, plant and maintain beautiful and biodiverse native landscapes from the ground up.

This year's conference is online. Recordings of the speakers' presentations will be available for registrants to view after the event as well. The conference runs from 9 am - 4 pm on **Saturday, February 26, 2022**. Registered attendees are invited to preview the conference platform prior to the event (links will be distributed by Feb 23, 2022).

Register [here](#) for this virtual event.

This year's keynote speaker, renowned entomologist Dr. Doug Tallamy and author of *Nature's Best Hope*, outlines a homegrown approach to conservation. Other program topics include merging ecosystem function with landscape aesthetics, growing *Castilleja* spp. in Colorado gardens, well-behaved prairie plants, gardens that

cater to Colorado birds, and native plant production. The Conference will also showcase the River's Edge Natural Area Native Plant Demonstration Garden in Loveland and the 2021 Conference Grant awardee residential and public gardens.

Hope to see you there!

2022 Board Of Directors Election Slate

Below is our electoral slate for the 2022 Wild Ones Front Range Chapter Board of Directors. We still have some vacancies in key positions. Please vote for the entire slate - either yes or no, [here](#). Title your email **WOFR Board of Directors**.

Officers:

Acting President: WOFR Executive Committee

Courtney Cowgill

Peggy Hanson

Mary Hinton

Diane L Stahl

Vice President: Diane L. Stahl

Diane owns a design-build landscape company that focuses on low water and native species. She is the former founder and owner of Urban Roots, a city garden store and landscape company specializing in small space gardening and commercial amenities, and is now designing and installing commercial and residential properties utilizing native and xeric species. Her love and knowledge of gardening have been apparent since her high school days in Chicago, earning a Master Gardener's certificate from the Denver Botanic Gardens, horticulture certificate from Front Range/Colorado State University, and many hours of home gardening. She possesses a distinct passion for horticulture and applied gardening that is sustainable and aesthetic. In her previous professional life, Diane has been a successful fundraiser and business development leader for some of Denver's high profile non-for-profit organizations, including the Denver Botanic Gardens. Diane is a "native transplant" and resides in Washington Park.

Treasurer: Peggy Hanson

Peggy is a trained accountant who has embraced the need for environmentally sound residential landscaping practices. In 2000, while volunteering for conservation groups in Lake County, Illinois, she became acquainted with the vital place native plants occupy in preserving and restoring open spaces to have rich bio-diversity and consequently, less demand on municipal resources. Since moving to the Front Range in 2012, she has volunteered at the Denver Botanic Gardens and became a docent there in 2016. She's gained a better appreciation of water conservation and the need for water-smart landscaping in our urban/suburban settings. In 2016, she and her husband began the process of replacing a large portion of their front lawn with native and water-smart/regionally appropriate plants. They are enjoying the benefits of their labor in the variety of textures, flowers, birds, bees and butterflies, and the lower water bills are awesome too!

Secretary: Courtney Cowgill

Courtney Cowgill has been a gardener her whole life, but lacked the free time to

get any formal training until her retirement when she completed the Master Gardener Program in Arapahoe County. Courtney became a CMG to learn how to reclaim the five acres she has lived on and to rebuild the Piney Creek stream bed that runs through the neighborhood. As a Colorado Native Plant Master, Courtney recognized that both she and her neighbors needed to become “stewards” of the land, restoring its habitat value for the many insects, birds and animals that call it home. She is working to rebuild the pastures and creek-bed and reintroduce native plants. Courtney serves as Secretary of WOFR because this gives her a deep immersion into native landscaping resources. Being an active member provides her a network with the best native gardeners in Colorado and outstanding educational programs.

Membership: Mary Hinton

Mary moved to Denver eight months ago to be near her two young grandchildren. She retired from teaching high school math in Nashville, TN, where she lived for over thirty years. Mary's interest in sustainable landscaping began fairly recently, and she joined Wild Ones Mid-TN Chapter. As soon as she landed in Denver, she looked up the local Wild Ones chapter. She feels privileged to be a part of this group of highly committed and welcoming people.

Board Members at Large: Deb Lebow Aal:

Deborah was born and raised in New York City. There was not a lot of gardening going on there, so she left as soon as she could, raising her family in the Washington, D.C. area, and moving to Colorado in 1998. Deborah worked for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for over 30 years, first in D.C., then in Denver. She worked on issues related to water quality, air quality, sustainability, and more. Deborah also worked as Program Director for the Renewable Natural Resources Foundation for two years in the 1990's. More recently, she got her certificate in Permaculture, and was a docent at the Denver Botanic Gardens. She practices, and reads a lot about, permaculture and sustainable gardening, as well as native plant gardening, and has a deep passion for healing the earth, one garden at a time. She is an avid hiker, cyclist, and gardener.

Alex Bruce:

Alex started gardening at a young age with her Mom in Iowa, planting flowers and a huge vegetable garden every year. She has a BS in Materials Engineering from Iowa State University, focusing on plastics and sustainability, and did some graduate work at Purdue University before moving to Colorado in 2018. She and her partner bought their first home in the summer of 2019, and Alex's interest in native plants was sparked as she contemplated plantings in a drought-stricken climate (very different from her beginnings in Iowa!). Every year she has made leaps of knowledge, and started over 2,000 plants for a seedling sale in 2021. She brings her engineering mindset to all activities, and is establishing a small backyard nursery, Dashpot Plants, which will focus on starting native plants from seed.

Danna Liebert:

Danna is certified Colorado Gardener who has been working since the summer of 2019 with the Englewood Parks Department to establish pollinator habitat in Depot Park. With Wild Ones, Danna hopes to develop community-minded strategies to convert Denver-metro area open spaces to native prairie. Danna sees untapped opportunities in the neglected nooks, median strips, and high-maintenance turfs which, if planted appropriately, could reverse environmental damage, support pollinators, strengthen local communities, and bring “nature”

into everyday urban life. In 2013, after two decades of working in film production in New York City, Danna and her family transplanted themselves to Englewood, CO. Here, in the process of turning her conventional front lawn into a low-water wildscape, she discovered her passion for naturalistic landscaping. The planning, coordination, and research skills Danna previously used as a documentary producer she now applies to landscaping projects in the service of environmental transformation.

Tom Swihart:

Tom spent his professional career in Florida with the state Department of Environmental Protection. He served as Administrator of the Office of Water Policy and as the state Water Conservation Manager. Since moving to Colorado, he has been a Lafayette Open Space volunteer and served as a member of the Town of Erie Tree Board. On the Tree Board, he was the lead individual in persuading the Town Trustees to adopt a resolution formally promoting native landscaping and low-irrigation practices. He and his wife are undertaking a native plant makeover of their yard in Erie. They believe that transforming urban landscapes of grass and non-native ornamental species to native species is one of the best things that Front Range communities can do for natural systems and people.

Wild Ones Front Range Chapter is run by volunteers. If you are interested in being more active with our chapter, please contact us via [email](#).

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Wild Ones, Front Range Chapter Board

Wild Ones, Front Range Chapter 2022 Board of Directors

If you want to know more about what is going on with Wild Ones Front Range Chapter, and would like to join us for a Board of Directors meeting (online), we meet every third Wednesday of the month at 6pm. Please [email](#) us of your interest and we will send you the zoom link to join. Here are our current [Board member bios](#), Thank you!

Report Editor: Alex Bruce

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