



# ON THE WILD SIDE

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE SAND CREEK REGIONAL GREENWAY PARTNERSHIP



FALL 2003

## Morrison Nature Center Opens at Star K Ranch

The Star K Ranch portion of the Greenway in Aurora has a newly opened nature center and trailhead that showcases the beauty of the trail and its surroundings. The Morrison Nature Center is built around the old Stark homestead, leaving much of the original building intact. Inside are educational displays about the history of the area, natural surroundings, wildlife, ecosystems in the park, and the wider Greenway beyond. A park ranger answers questions and provides walking tours through 200 acres of wetlands and wildlife area.

December programs at the Center include Snack-n-Story times (ages 3-5), 'Junior Ranger' (ages 6-10), bird hikes (all ages), and a trail cleanup day. Call 303-739-2428 or stop by for a complete schedule. A good way to arrive is by bike via the Greenway trail or by car, turn south on Laredo from Smith Road, 1/2 mile east of Chambers; a great lunch can be had at Emil-Lene's steakhouse (a short walk) before you head back!



Morrison Nature Center



Kate Kramer

*From the Executive Director*

As my own family bikes through the Greenway's new, reclaimed expanse this season, I can't help but marvel at the Herculean task accomplished during the first ten years. The nearly fourteen miles of trails the SCRGP staff and volunteers established are a tribute to what can be brought about through dedication, cooperation and hard work.

Those are all things we'll again need as we set out to expand the Greenway to its next level of usability. And first on that list of priorities is to raise some much needed capital to help us tackle pressing tasks that will allow us to make the trail more accessible to our current and future users. We urgently need to help Commerce City move the trail off Sand Creek Drive. We need major park development in each of the three cities with convenient trailheads. And we need good way-finding signage and in the future, basic amenities for trail users including picnic tables, restrooms, and interpretive signage.

People who come out to the trail have their minds forever changed by the experience. My 13-year-old said, "Mom, why didn't you tell me your new job is in such a beautiful place!" Call me to arrange a tour—I love sharing the experience with friends who discover the golden eagles, red foxes, and grinning bicycle riders.

Let's not underestimate the broader environmental goals we can accomplish through expanding the Greenway's resources. Imagine a Wilderness in the City so alluring that Northeast families will sometimes choose to stay in our own backyard rather than drive to distant mountain destinations. Help us build that resource, and bring your friends along next time you explore it!

## What's Next on the Greenway

Great things are beginning all along the Greenway with two major construction projects starting over coming months. In Aurora we'll soon break ground on **Sand Creek Park** and on the **underpass at Peoria**. When complete we'll be off that busy street, we'll have another trailhead at a convenient location, and a connection to Toll Gate Creek Trail. This project shouldn't interrupt your use of the trail since construction will be on the south side of the creek and the current trail is along the north.

One of the most exciting projects is the building of new trail at creek level between the **Dahlia trailhead and 47<sup>th</sup> Street**. We all dread that section along Sand Creek Drive, fighting huge trucks while riding on a narrow shoulder. The project will be done in two phases: constructing trail for about a mile on the north side of the creek and building a bridge over the creek to a new wetlands area (should be finished by Fall 2004); then, when funds are raised, completing the creek-level trail and underpass at 47<sup>th</sup> Street on the south side of the creek.

As we add amenities, we'll update you on how your use will be affected and when you can expect to use new features. Check the website for information on closures and detours.



Peoria Street Bridge

**W**elcome to the premier issue of the Sand Creek Regional Greenway Newsletter.

To save paper and cost, after this first issue the newsletter will only be published electronically and distributed by email once each quarter. To receive future issues:

- fill out the subscription form on the web at [www.sandcreekgreenway.org](http://www.sandcreekgreenway.org)
- or, email [news@sandcreekgreenway.org](mailto:news@sandcreekgreenway.org) • or, call 303-468-3260

Your information will not be shared with anyone and you can unsubscribe at any time.



**SAND CREEK REGIONAL GREENWAY**  
Wilderness In the City



## Odyssey School Pitches In to Clean Up Graffiti Along Trail



*Odyssey students pitch in to remove trash*

Sand Creek Regional Greenway has 50 new friends, all seventh and eighth graders from The Odyssey School at Stapleton. On Oct. 13 the students donned heavy gloves and picked up paint rollers and trash bags to clean graffiti and debris from under two bridges along the trail.

“The mission of The Odyssey School,” says Nelson Chase, school director, “is to foster every student’s unique potential and spirit of adventure through exemplary standards of

character, intellectual achievement, and social responsibility. Service to our community is an open part of our curriculum.”

Students painted over extensive graffiti on bridges where the Green-way trail passes under I-70 and under Quebec Street. They also picked up dozens of bags of trash and pulled weeds that had encroached on the trail.

How’s the cleanup fared? Minor tagging a week after the cleanup was immediately painted over again; and since then, walls have stayed clean. (More pictures can be seen on the Sand Creek website.)



*Removing graffiti on the I-70 Overpass.*

## Special thanks to Amy...

When Amy Pulver saw Sand Creek in 1998, she imagined the potential of a world-class natural and recreational area that would wind through neighborhoods and industrial areas. There were plenty of naysayers at that point, but Amy drew a deep breath and began a tireless effort to build a trail through sometimes polluted, sometimes untouched, and always exceptional areas in Aurora, Commerce City and Denver.

First on her long list of accomplishments was to “grow” our present Sand Creek Regional Greenway Partnership...including creating the bylaws, guidelines, and practices that characterize a professional not-for-profit organization. Meanwhile, she began moving mountains and meadows — literally — to implement the Master Plan, enlisting landowners, cities, contractors, government agencies, and volunteers to build the nearly 14 miles of trail.

The dream was realized with the trail’s opening in June 2002. “It could not have been done without her,” stated Pat McClearn, former Board President of Sand Creek Greenway. On behalf of the Board, partners, and staff of the Sand Creek Greenway, we wish Amy all the best as she carries her boundless energy to new challenges.



*Amy Pulver*

*Thanks for Helping Us Go Wild...*

As we move ahead to the challenging tasks of building trails and reclaiming more land this coming year, let’s thank the over 800 families and institutions that during our first ten years envisioned and started work on Sand Creek.

When you hike and bike the Sand Creek Regional Greenway this season, think appreciatively of Great Outdoors Colorado; Gates Family Foundation; Pauline A. and George R. Morrison Charitable Trust; City and County of Denver; City of Aurora; Commerce City; Adams County; Suncor (formerly Conoco); W.M.B. Berger Foundation; Waste Management, Inc; Boettcher Foundation; Donnell-Kay Foundation; The Helen K. and Arthur E. Johnson Foundation; The University of Colorado, Health Sciences Center/University Hospital; Stapleton Development Corporation; El Pomar Foundation; The Denver Foundation; and Xcel Energy Foundation.

Those are just the major corporate and institutional contributors...In coming issues we’ll mention hundreds of households that have given selflessly to create a priceless resource for all!

## We’ve Moved...

Sand Creek Regional Greenway Partnership is now located at:  
7350 East 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 300  
Denver, Colorado 80238  
Phone 303.468.3260  
Fax 303.393.6805

*Don’t forget to sign up for future issues of the newsletter!*