



2009 Annual Report

Stewardship. Education. Research.



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Sky pilot and alpine acon on Broken Hand Pass



Letter From The Director



As I reflect on my first full year as Executive Director, I am proud of all that we accomplished in 2009. The projects and programs we completed were some of the most successful ever in meeting our mission of integrating environmental stewardship, education, and research through exemplary restoration of key natural areas. In the areas of environmental education and research, we continued our progression in becoming one of the premier field institutes in the region with the addition of the Pikes Peak Corps program for high school youth. This program complements our highly successful Earth Corps program for undergraduate students. Both programs integrate environmental stewardship and a natural science curriculum while completing restoration and trail reconstruction projects at key natural areas in Colorado's Southern Rocky Mountains. The programs provide students with a diverse set of technical and critical thinking skills that will allow them to lead others in tackling the wide variety of environmental issues we face today. In stewardship, we continued to promote and expand community support for the preservation and protection of the outstanding natural areas found in our region. With increasing pressures, including growing use and decreasing funds, being placed on our public lands, the need for community stewardship has never been greater. Fortunately we have a great community here in Colorado Springs and the Pikes Peak Region. This past year over 1,000 volunteers came out and helped us complete some of the finest trail and restoration work ever accomplished in our project areas.

In addition to continuing to improve our educational and stewardship programs, 2009 also saw the reorganization of the Institute in which a new executive director and a full-time program director were hired. Previously, these positions were part-time and limited our ability to meet the needs of the community. With our new organizational capacity we are able to take on more critical projects and offer additional opportunities to the community to be involved in stewardship. This coming year will see even more stewardship opportunities available through the many diverse restoration and trail reconstruction projects we have planned.

In closing, we know our success is a direct result of your support. The achievements highlighted in this report could not have been accomplished without our great volunteers, our outstanding partners, and the generous contributions of our funders. We are honored by the trust you place in us to help care for the very special places in which we work. The staff and I are very excited about the upcoming project season and look forward to working with all of you as we continue to educate, inspire, and promote stewardship of our natural lands.

Sincerely,

Eric Billmeyer

2009 Quick Overview

Earth Corps 2009 participants atop Humboldt Peak



Reconstructed over 1,800 feet of previously unsustainable, erosion-prone trail in sensitive alpine and desert terrain with 200 rock structures and almost 1,400 square feet of rock retaining walls.

Restored over 84,000 square feet of disturbed area.

Moved over 77 tons of rock and 107 tons of dirt.

Restored and stabilized 2,800 feet of stream reach.

Transplanted 3,200 vegetation plugs into previously denuded areas.

12 Project Sites

13 Programs

153 Program Workdays

1,196 Individual Volunteers

1,328 Volunteer Days

16,721 Volunteer Hours

\$338,607 Value of Volunteer Time

2009 Highlights

New Educational Program, Pikes Peak Corps

2009 saw the launch of a new educational program, Pikes Peak Corps. Based on the same philosophy as our highly popular undergraduate Earth Corps program, Pikes Peak Corps is an environmental stewardship and education program for local high school students. The inaugural year of this program was met with much success. We received 35 applications to fill 10 spots. Participants represented public, private, and charter high schools. The 23-day program introduced students to ecosystem restoration and trail building, while incorporating an environmental education curriculum that focused on geology, geomorphology, alpine botany, hydrology, and GPS. While expanding their understanding of ecosystem science, students learned key technical skills to complete trail and restoration work. The program was run in a variety of locations within the Pikes Peak region including Garden of the Gods, Fountain Creek and Pikes Peak. 2010 will see a significant expansion of this program. The University of Colorado at Colorado Springs is now partnering with RMFI and expanding the educational component of Pikes Peak Corps. Upon successful completion of the program students will earn 4 credit hours from UCCS in GES 101: Environmental Systems—Landforms. This is a core class with transferable credit. The program will also be expanded to 8 weeks in 2010.

Pikes Peak Corps 2009 on Barr Trail after a hard day's work.



8th Year of Earth Corps

2009 marked the 8th year of this highly successful program. We had 10 undergraduate students from across the country representing public, private, and state schools. Students completed critical restoration work on Broken Hand Pass and trail work on Humboldt Peak, both in the Sangre de Cristo Wilderness Area. This year saw the addition of a supplemental internship for Colorado Springs-based Earth Corps participants. The Environmental Leadership Internship is run in partnership with AmeriCorps and is designed to further train students to become outdoor leaders. After Earth Corps, four students completed an additional 60 hours of volunteer work with RMFI as junior field staff. These students were given crew leader, program orientation, logistics, and other leadership responsibilities to help run field programs.



Earth Corps 2009 participants, Caroline and Alex, carry a rock on Broken Hand Pass.

An All-Star Partnership

As part of Colorado College's New Student Orientation Program, 110 students joined RMFI and the Forest Service to inventory 250 campsites in various drainages on the west side of the Sangre de Cristo Wilderness Area. This provided a critical service to the Rio Grande National Forest and Rocky Mountain Region Forest Service offices. Students contributed 4,400 hours of volunteer time in just 4 days. This has a value of \$89,1000! (Independent Sector, 2008)

First Annual Fall Social

In an effort to show appreciation for the commitment and hard work of its 1,000+ annual volunteers, RMFI hosted its first annual Fall Social volunteer recognition event. 156 people attended the event at the Garden of the Gods Visitor Center. Over \$5,000 of food, drinks, entertainment, and silent auction items were donated for the event. Thank you to all who contributed time, services, or products to this event.



American Alpine Club works in Indian Creek

Members of the American Alpine Club joined RMFI for a work weekend in Indian Creek Canyon, Utah in September 2009. This important partnership marks an increase in climber awareness regarding the trail and restoration needs of this popular, yet fragile, climbing area. We hope to increase the reach of this critical partnership in the future.

Best view in the basin, South Colony Lakes Basin, Sangre de Cristo Wilderness

Financial Summary

FY 2009: January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009

Revenue:

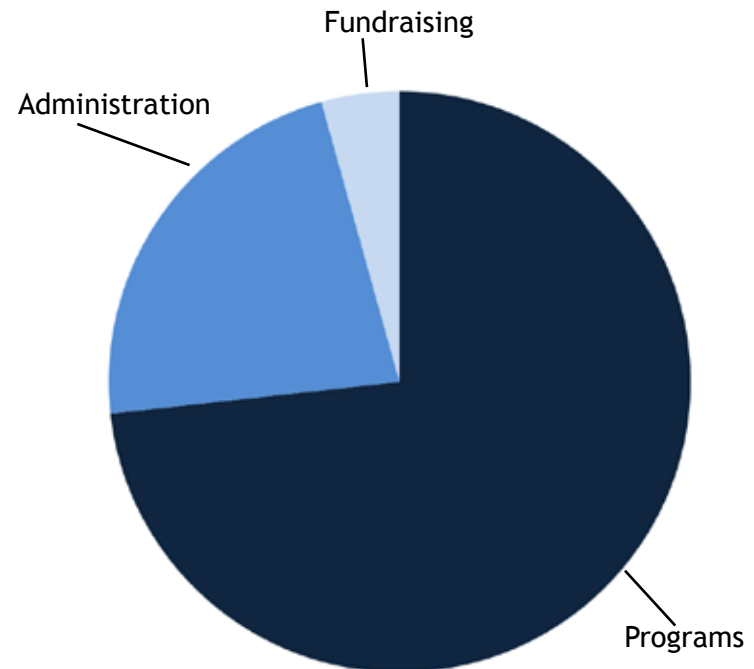
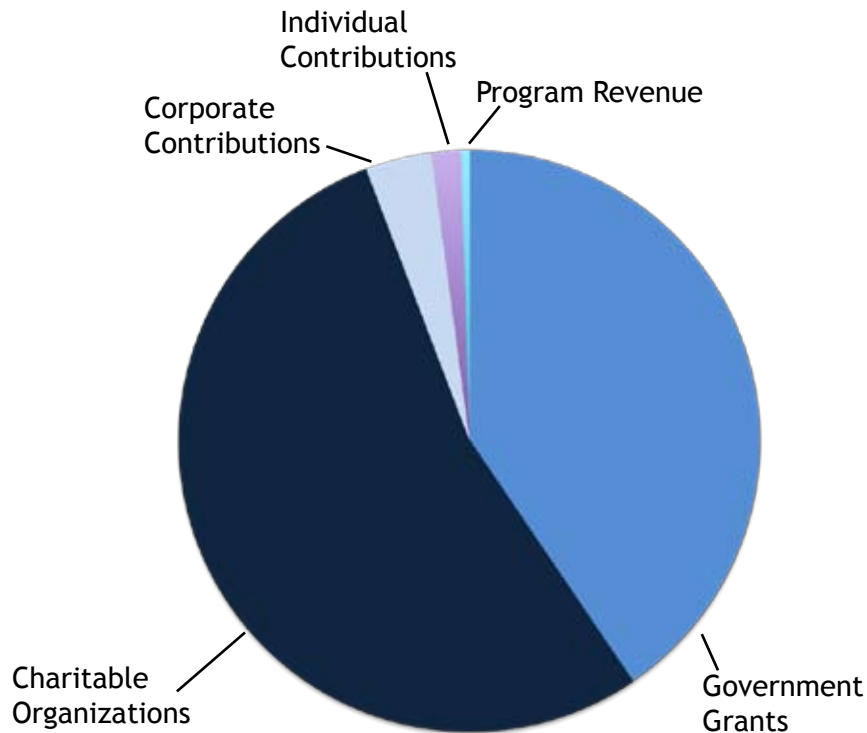
Charitable Organizations	\$204,471
Government Grants	\$154,311
Corporate Contributions	\$14,031
Individual Contributions	\$6,289
Program Revenue	\$1,780

Total Revenue \$380,882

Expenses:

Stewardship Programs	\$171,566
Educational Programs	\$83,387
Program Development	\$7,287
Research Programs	\$13,000
Fundraising	\$16,460
Administration	\$85,146

Total Expenses \$379,846



Program Review



Garden of the Gods Restoration Program

In 2009, RMFI completed work in the South Spring Canyon Picnic Area, completed trail improvements to the Palmer Trail, and began reconstruction of the north end of the Strausenback Trail. We ran 31 program days, with a total of 888 volunteer-days and 4,262 volunteer hours, valued at \$86,306. Volunteers moved a total of 68 tons of rock and 107 tons of dirt!



South Colony Lakes Basin Restoration Program

The multi-year project to turn South Colony Lakes Basin into a prototype for effective wilderness management successfully continues. RMFI focused on four project sites within the basin in 2009—Broken Hand Pass, Mount Humboldt, basin campsite restoration, and the Forest Service's trailhead establishment project. RMFI ran many programs in the basin this year including Earth Corps for undergraduate students, adult Wildlands Environmental Stewardship Programs, Colorado College New Student Orientation, and programs with Outward Bound and Legends & Legacies Youth Corps.



Pikes Peak Watershed Restoration Program

2009 was another successful year in combating the numerous erosion and sedimentation issues afflicting Pikes Peak. RMFI completed 48 volunteer days for a total of 2,300 volunteer hours. In Ski Creek, volunteers and students stabilized 2,500 feet of the creek bank and restored over 6,500 square feet with seed and soil amendment and erosion control matting. Additionally, 31 cross-vane structures and 7 gully plugs were constructed. Extensive monitoring and research of past work was completed in the Glen Cove Wetland and North Crystal Creek. In Severy Creek wetland, restoration planning continued to determine the best course of action for this highly disturbed area.



Fountain Creek Restoration Project

2009 was a continuation of the highly successful partnership between RMFI, Fountain Creek Restoration Committee, Fin-Up Consultants, Trout Unlimited, and the City of Manitou Springs to restore and revitalize the Fountain Creek ecosystem in Manitou Springs. 2009 work focused on Schryver Park. The project rehabilitated 1620 square feet of denuded surfaces within the park. To help stabilize the banks along the creek, 215 sedge transplants were placed along a 340' reach. In addition, 9.5 tons of rock was placed to provide an access route for stocking trucks to restock the pond with trout. RMFI spent 3 work days at Schryver with a total of 74 volunteers.

Program Review



CC Environmental Service & Canyoneering Adventure

2009 marked the 8th year of this highly successful Spring Break program partnership between RMFI and Colorado College. Eleven students joined RMFI staff for 5 days of trail and restoration work followed by 5 days of canyoneering and backpacking in Indian Creek Canyon and Cedar Mesa in Utah. Students improved 75 linear feet of trail with 33 steps and 154 square feet of retaining walls, and closed and restored 746 square feet of social trails on the Supercrack Buttress in Indian Creek Canyon. 16 Montrose High School students contributed 2 days of service to this project. Volunteers contributed 696 hours to this project with a value of \$14,094.



Fountain Valley Senior Seminar

RMFI has partnered with Fountain Valley School since 1993 to provide an environmental service component to FVS's multi-day senior seminar program. This year 65 students and faculty joined RMFI for 4 days at Elephant Rocks Area of Critical Environmental Concern near Penitente Canyon in the San Luis Valley. Participants put in a massive cleanup effort and removed an astounding amount (read: 40 cubic yard roll-off dumpster worth) of trash, built fences, and restored closed roadbeds.



Shelf Road Recreation Area

After 20 years of work, Shelf Road continues to be one of our favorite legacy work sites. RMFI ran two programs in 2009, one in partnership with the Kent Mountain Adventure Center and Morey Middle School, and the other with Montrose High School. Volunteers made improvements to the Bank Trail and began work on a new trail leading to the Mural Wall.



Indian Creek National Public Lands Day Program

Western State College students and American Alpine Club members joined RMFI for a 3-day work weekend in September 2009. Volunteers restored closed campsites near Newspaper Rock. 8,480 square feet of area was de-compacted, scarified, and revegetated with 557 transplants. Prior to restoration, volunteers removed an astounding 27 cubic yards of road base from the area. 652 volunteer hours were donated for a total in-kind value of \$13,203.

Thank you to our 2009 Sponsors

Charitable Organizations

Anonymous • Clif Bar Family Foundation • Colorado College Ahlberg Adventure Fund • Colorado Springs Utilities-Community Focus Fund • Friends of Garden of the Gods • Hillsdale Fund, Inc. • HJW Foundation • Hostetler Charitable Fund • iGive • National Forest Foundation • Ritt Kellogg Memorial Fund • Vista Grande Community Church

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Western State College students hamming it up for the camera



Thank you to our 2009 Partners

American Alpine Club • American Hiking Society • City of Manitou Springs-Fountain Creek Restoration Project • Colorado College-Outdoor Recreation Center • Colorado Division of Wildlife • Colorado Springs Utilities • Colorado Water Conservation Fund • Fountain Valley School • Friends of the Peak • Great Outdoors Colorado-State Trails Program • Kent Mountain Adventure Center • Legends & Legacies Youth Corps • Make A Difference Month • Montrose High School • Outward Bound West • USDA Forest Service-Rio Grande National Forest • USDA Forest Service-San Isabel National Forest • USDI Bureau of Land Management-Monte Vista Office, Colorado • USDI Bureau of Land Management-Royal Gorge Resource Area, Colorado • USDI Bureau of Land Management-San Juan Resource Area, Utah • Volunteer Match • Volunteer Outdoors • Volunteer Pikes Peak • Western State College

Spectacular South Colony Lakes Basin sunrise



Thank you to our 2009 Volunteers



Clubs and Organizations

American Alpine Club • American Hiking Society • Colorado Springs Utilities • Girl Scout Troop 95 • Make A Difference Month • Mortar Board Senior Honor Society • Outdoor Club of Colorado Springs • Peterson Air Force Base • Salvation Army Youth Group • Schriever Air Force Base • Sierra Club • USAFA Hospital • Volunteer Match • Volunteer Outdoors • Volunteer Pikes Peak

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Air Academy High School • Colorado College Freshman Orientation • Colorado College Hockey Team • Colorado College Outdoor Recreation Center • Discovery Canyon Campus • Emily Griffith Centers for Children • Fountain Valley School • Montrose High School • Morey Middle School • NCO Academy, Peterson Air Force Base • North Middle School • Outward Bound West • Palmer High School • Pine Creek High School • The Colorado Springs School-8th Grade • The Colorado Springs School-Upper School • US Air Force Academy Cadets • Wasson High School • Western State College • Zebulon Pike Detention Center

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Thank you to our 2009 Volunteers

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