November News & Updates

The icy breeze blows, and we think we feel winter coming on! Who’s excited for snow sports, cozy evenings by the fire (hot cocoa in hand), and time spent with friends and family?

The winter season is also a time of giving thanks for the things that mean most. We’re thankful for all of you: our volunteers, supporters, and donors—for your time and energy.

Read on to learn more about what we’re thankful for: volunteers with heart, a summer season well spent, and our Deep Powder Passes are IN!

Volunteers with Heart: Leana’s Closet

By Leana Morris, CCF Naturalist Volunteer

It all started after I retired in 2014. I wanted to volunteer with the ski school at Alta, but I found out that they don’t let people do that anymore. They told me to call Cottonwood Canyons Foundation. So I did, and that’s how I found out about the snowshoe tours. I love it! I was so excited to find out about it.

I started giving tours, and sometimes we would have groups where the kids didn’t have boots. Their shoes would get wet and their feet would freeze. Then a group came where none of them had boots, only gym shoes. One boy was crying and wanted to quit, so I took the group to the restroom to get warm. After that, I tried to think of ways to get boots for the kids. I went to Deseret Industries and Savers and asked if I could buy boots for kids at a discount. They gave me discounts, but it started getting expensive. So I talked to the lady at the Savers in South Jordan and asked her if I could come collect the boots that didn’t sell...she said yes! I was so excited! So I saved boots for the class that came without boots. They were from Escalante Elementary. The kids were so excited and loved them. One girl didn’t want to take off her boots, ever.

I started putting boots in my truck for any tour that didn’t have them. One school came and three kids didn’t have boots. One girl didn’t have a coat or gloves either. I had an extra jacket for her to borrow and I loaned out three pairs of gloves too. The three pair of boots I had fit the three kids who needed them. It was a miracle! One girl thanked me and said she loved them and that it was the first pair of boots that she had ever had.
I kept saving boots in the summer. Last winter, CCF staff sent out an email to the school teachers asking them if they needed boots for their students. We got replies from six teachers saying that their classes could use them— that’s a lot of boots! I spent most of the night anxious about how I could get boots for over 100 students. In the morning, I went to talk to people at three Savers and one Deseret Industry. They all said they would help. The Deseret Industry helped me fill out a request for a community grant, and the Savers in South Jordan gave me about 130 pairs of boots in about 2 months. So I have been having fun passing them out to schools.

This is a real miracle!

A Summer Season Well Spent and the Path Ahead

Education Programs
By Katie Burbank, Education Director

Summer 2017 was a very exciting time for CCF Education Programs. Back in April, our volunteers were introduced to a brand new online classroom as part of our developing partnership with Utah State University to create a CCF Master Naturalist Program. Shortly after, we all met up at the Big Cottonwood Canyon Regional Park for our first ever Summer Naturalist Training, where we learned tips and techniques for interpretive guides in the Canyons. To become a CCF Master Naturalist, volunteers will need to complete Summer Naturalist Training for Wildflower Guides and Silver Lake Naturalists; Winter Naturalist Training for Tour with a Rangers and Snowshoe Naturalists; and Canyon Educator Training for either Snowshoe or Silver Lake field trips. Once completed, CCF volunteers will attain a CCF Master Naturalist Certification honored by Utah State University.

After our Summer Naturalist Training, wildflower season took off and we began our 12 Wednesday evening wildflower hikes with Tim, CCF’s Botanist. It was a pleasure spending time with all the wonderful folks who participated in the program. During the four days of our Wasatch Wildflower Festival in July, our guides took out more than 2,000 people on wildflower hikes. They were total ROCK STARS!

Once the temperature cooled and school started, a small group of wildflower guides worked with us to become Canyon Educators for our Silver Lake Field Trips. During the months of September and October, CCF brings 4th and 5th grade students up the Silver Lake Boardwalk in Big Cottonwood Canyon. Many of these students live in the valley but have never been up to the Canyons before their field trip. Our guides introduced them to the magical world of Silver Lake, where we saw moose, deer, squirrels, birds, aquatic macroinvertebrate and much more.
Looking ahead to winter, we are gearing up for our Winter Naturalist Training for all our lovely new and returning winter volunteers. Now all we need is snow. So, I ask you all now, let's wish for some snow! We can't wait to see the Wasatch painted white.

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**Native Plants Stewardship**  
*By Tim Remkes, Botanist*

What an interesting and surprising season for invasive weed management. Coming out of a winter with above average snowfall and below average temperatures, I was unsure how the weed populations fared. In addition to this abnormal winter, we had a very cool and wet spring which made me worried that it was going to go from cold to hot really quick when summer hit. When that happens, all of the early blooming weeds flower and go to seed within a very short amount of time. My worries were realized when summer hit all of a sudden and we went from the 50’s to the 90’s basically overnight. We hit the ground running: my fellow crew member, Hannah, and I were prepared to be out pulling/scouting nearly every day.

The first couple populations of Dyer’s Woad (an invasive plant) that we visited had very low numbers of individual plants as compared to previous seasons. Then, day after day, this trend continued for this early summer weed and I was surprised at how little work it took to hand pull all of these plants. Areas that had taken us days or half days in the three years previous were taking one or two hours to clear. This was incredibly rewarding to see that we had finally started making a difference in the areas that we manage. This trend continued all summer long with other invasive plants. Hannah and I constantly re-organized the schedule on the fly because projects that were slated for half days only took one or two hours. At this point, it is unclear that the invasive weed levels were lower just because of our treatment efforts, or if this was just a low year due to other factors, but none the less, we are hopeful for future years.

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**Trails Stewardship**  
*By Patrick Morrison, our NEW Trails Director*

Marching through the canyons to witness the dramatic peaks and valleys in all directions, it can be easy to overlook the time and thought that went into what's underfoot. But the trails themselves are, in fact, engineered projects, requiring great resources, both mental and physical. To those of us who build and maintain these trails, they can be almost as awe-inspiring as the landscapes surrounding them. The more skilled and technically trained we become, the more effective these trail features become in use and longevity.

For this past season, the rock work and sawyer skills we acquired were crucial in opening up our capabilities as an effective crew. A hike around the Alpenbock Loop in Little Cottonwood Canyon shows you an example of exemplary rock work we were able to take part in, thanks to the guidance of our partners at [Single Track](#) and the [Access Fund](#). Additionally, our ability to take meaningful part in new trail construction at Cardiff Fork and Lower Big Water was in part thanks to this season’s investment in saw training.

As we look forward to next season, we hope to increase our effectiveness at maintaining and restoring our beautiful trails. Along with continuing our rock and sawyer training, we eye graffiti removal as a logical next step in helping to preserve our public lands, and beyond that, a second crew to double our capacity as trail stewards. We know that the support given to us by the Forest Service, our partners, and the community, is how we are able to accomplish the goals that we set, as well as fund the equipment and training this work requires. To all we remain appreciative as well as committed to our standards of quality and
Community Engagement and Outreach
By Elise Hinman, Community Engagement Coordinator

The summer and fall seasons were a whirlwind for me as a new team member. From the Wasatch Wildflower Festival, to Kid’s Days, to conferences and summits and new partnerships...whew. I’m impressed by CCF’s productivity, to say the least. Here are just a selection of things I appreciate from the season behind us (to list them all would require a great many newsletters), as well as a handful of endeavors I’m excited to tackle in the coming year:

First, I’m thankful for our volunteers! I had so much fun getting to know our wildflower guides and Silver Lake volunteers this season: individuals with passion, empathy, and a curiosity to learn more. I can’t wait to see what the winter brings with our Tour with a Ranger and Snowshoe with a Naturalist Guides!

Second, I appreciate the freedom we have to expand our outreach to the Salt Lake community on both new and existing platforms. With the help of CCF’s leadership team, I’ve been updating our website, improving the consistency of our online presence, and even getting into some video production—it’s a blast! We’re also involving volunteers in social media, web development, and newsletters, since many of them have pretty amazing skills, stories, and knowledge to share. How lucky are we?

Third, I am appreciative of the numerous opportunities we’ve had to make face-to-face connections with community partners and members of the public who share our love of the canyons. This is one of my favorite parts of my job. I recently attended an outreach event at Goldman-Sachs for their employees, and I was so energized by the enthusiasm and motivation of their staff to give back to the community. But, there’s always more work to do: more individuals and families and schools and communities to empower through our education and stewardship programs. CCF is looking forward to this aspect of our mission in the coming year. I can’t wait!

A Season of Thanks
By Serena Anderson, Executive Director

This month, we think about being thankful. We look closer at what we do, at the people with whom we connect, at the work we are doing. We analyze ourselves and the impact we are having on the community around us. We consider how we spend our time and our money. We take a deep breath for the beauty we see all around us.

I think about the impact Cottonwood Canyons Foundation has on our beautiful tri canyons. I think about the wonderful people who make our work successful, year after year. I think about why this amazing non-profit was formed. I wonder if the canyons would be much different without us? I know the answer, of course, but pondering this question is an important reminder to keep pushing forward.

Who are the people of CCF? We are thousands of dedicated volunteers, giving our time and talent to make sure we never see the devastating deforestation of the past. We are a devoted Board of Directors, who had the foresight and the love to...
create a fledgling non-profit to serve the forest. We are a staff of dedicated professionals, growing and fostering our mission. We are a community of naturalists, those committed to the everlasting beauty we have been afforded.

Speaking of our staff, I’d like to take a moment to tell you about the caliber of people working for CCF. I am proud to announce that we finally have our full-time year ‘round leadership team assembled. We have a Botanist running our native plants / invasive weeds program. Tim chose his career path because he wanted to be up in the mountains full time making a difference. Our Education Director, Katie, has her doctorate and chose to work for CCF, giving up a professor role to do so. Elise, our Community Engagement Coordinator, is in the process of finishing her doctorate and moved here from New York to do the work she loves! Even our newest hire, Patrick has his master’s degree. He joined us as Trails Director after being a member of our trails crew. This is one of the best teams I have had the honor of building in my twenty years of non-profit management. I am so thrilled to work for them, and all of you!

My heartfelt thanks to everyone involved in helping us take care of our forest and our water supply! We wish you the very best holiday and hope you’ll keep showing up on behalf of the forest!

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