



ON THE WILD SIDE

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE SAND CREEK REGIONAL GREENWAY PARTNERSHIP



SUMMER 2004

You're Invited to Annual Luncheon for the Greenway at Emil-Lene's

Join your friends for a memorable fall luncheon on Sand Creek Greenway on Sunday, Sept. 12, 2004, 11 until 2 at Emil-Lene's Restaurant, next to the Morrison Nature Center at Star K Ranch in Aurora. Tickets are \$75 each or \$600 per table; and sponsorships are available. A major portion of tickets are tax deductible.

The first annual fall fundraiser for Sand Creek Regional Greenway Partnership will be a day of fun and delicious food—a chance to visit Star K Ranch and its 200-acre open space beside Emil-Lene's, and to savor the fine fare of one of Colorado's most celebrated and historic restaurants. You'll also get a chance to meet famous nature photographer John Fielder and share his views about photography, environmental protection, and needed improvements along the Sand Creek Greenway.

Golf-cart tours of Star K Ranch will begin at 11 a.m.; John Fielder will speak at 12:30; and lunch will be served at 1:00 and will end in plenty of time for fans to go the 6 p.m. Bronco game.

It's all part of Phase 2 of Sand Creek Regional Greenway Partnership's fundraising campaign;

and your luncheon contribution will help build major parks in each city, trailheads with parking, good signage along the whole trail, and improvements to wetlands and areas of ecological significance.

Call in your luncheon reservation today... 303.468.3260 or register at www.sandcreekgreenway.org!

John Fielder: Views of Star K Ranch

Colorado's most famous photographer pays a visit to Sand Creek Greenway, and returns with a fresh perspective on its allure! (Page 3)



He stood at dawn at Star K Ranch taking in the view. John Fielder was at work along Sand Creek Greenway. He travels all over Colorado and the world each year to photograph the most magnificent natural spaces—often in the mountains. But today he had found a beautiful place near home, in the heart of Aurora, Colorado. (Continued, Page 3)

Welcome to our Sand Creek Regional Greenway Newsletter. To save paper, newsletters are published electronically each quarter. To subscribe:

- complete a form on the web at www.sandcreekgreenway.org
- or, email news@sandcreekgreenway.org
- or, call 303.468.3260

Your information will be shared with no one and you can unsubscribe at any time.



Kate Kramer

From the Executive Director

Summer is everyone's favorite time on the Greenway. Having picnics under the 100-year old cottonwood; dipping toes in the creek; riding horses in the early morning and commuting to work on bikes are all pleasures we can enjoy along Sand Creek.

I met a new friend at a workshop last week; she told me about another pleasure enjoyed by the neighbors of Sand Creek. Several years ago, when her family lived near the creek in Aurora, her daughter rushed into the kitchen and announced, "Mom, there are two huge birds in our back yard!" Gina turned, smiled, and said, "How big?" "Really, really big, Mom!" Gina said, "As big as penguins?" The answer came back, "No, Mom, Bigger!" Gina and her daughter rushed out to see two great blue herons taking off to fish the creek.

Neighbors of Sand Creek don't need to leave their backyard to enjoy those moments and build those memories. Visit the Greenway this summer—discover some special memories for yourself and your family!



Co-owners of Emil-Lene's Sirloin House Restaurant and Lounge, Karen L'Anglais and Jay Lombardi



SAND CREEK REGIONAL GREENWAY
Wilderness In the City



Creek's Bleak Section Through Refineries Becoming a 'Before-and-After' Story

Sand Creek is now thriving in a section of Commerce City where it once appeared as a bleak channel through an industrial wasteland.

During the 1970s oil and gasoline were found leaking into Sand Creek on a stretch between Brighton Boulevard and Burlington Canal. Owners of the adjacent refinery (now Suncor, formerly owned by Conoco) recognized that their facility—which has been in operation for over 70 years—had a role in the pollution. Under the watchful eyes of state and federal agencies, and with the neighboring refinery (now owned by Valero), the cleanup began.

The easiest and cheapest way to address the pollution would have been to put Sand Creek into a concrete channel—but that would have ruined the habitat. Rather, the companies chose to enhance the creek's ecological and recreational potential—one that even though running

through an industrial area, could one day boast of an array of wildlife from foxes, deer, and beaver to great blue herons, egrets, ducks and eagles.

With a permit from the US Army Corp of Engineers, the creek was moved 100 feet north, away from the area impacted by refinery residue. A 2000-foot long underground wall of soil and clay was installed that would reach down to bedrock to prevent further contamination.

After stopping current and future contamination, it was time to restore the ecosystem. In 2000 native grass seeds and trees were planted to re-vegetate the area. The droughts of the next three years led to a low survival rate, but 1000 coyote willows along the banks continue to thrive today. With the addition of an irrigation system in 2003 which uses treated, recycled wastewater, Suncor hopes this year's planting of 1,450 native trees and grasses across the 10-acre area will succeed. The expansion of vegetation and nutrients in the area not only restores the creek, but helps clean residual oil impacts in the soil and ground water.

The re-vegetation is visible along the Sand Creek Regional Greenway bike path. Currently, the trees and shrubs are small and the grasses are still competing with weeds, but the vision for the future is to have Sand Creek return to a healthy, natural grassland, cottonwood grove and wetland.

To learn more about this project and others along the greenway, come on tours Sept. 21 from 4 p.m. until 6 p.m. or Oct. 14 from 10 a.m. to noon. Experts from Suncor, Metro Wastewater Reclamation District, Xcel and naturalists will be on hand. The tour will begin at the Administration Building at Metro Wastewater at 6450 York in Denver. To attend you must RSVP to SCRGP on our website or 303-468-3260.



Before-and-after story through refinery-impacted landscape.

A Sand Creek Visionary...

Pat McClearn does not see herself as a big thinker – but it took big thoughts, confidence and experience to get hard jobs done and transform Sand Creek into today's vibrant Sand Creek Regional Greenway.

Pat was truly one of the parents of Sand Creek Regional Greenway. She was chair of the original Steering Committee, one of four founders of the Sand Creek Regional Greenway Partnership, and first president of the Board of Directors of the Sand Creek Regional Greenway Partnership. Starting from scratch, Pat built a vibrant non-profit with support of the community, first Executive Director Amy Pulver, and other board members and volunteers.

More importantly, Pat loved Sand Creek from the beginning and embraced the big ideas and large vision of a regional greenway connecting the Platte and High Line Canal and forming the backbone of open space on the former Stapleton International Airport site.

Pat was out with binoculars looking for birds and hiking year round even before there were paths! She not only saw the potential, but was able to attract many others to the project through her ability to communicate the vision and her enthusiasm for the daunting project. The Sand Creek Regional Greenway has come far since it was a gleam in the eye of visionaries and organization builders such as Pat McClearn—many thanks again to Pat for huge investments in the greenway: her time, talent and treasure; her enthusiasm and her strong leadership.

Pat McClearn:
*'Big Vision
That Became
a Reality...'*

In each issue On the Wild Side profiles someone who helped make the Greenway a reality.



Pat McClearn on the Greenway



Continued From Page 1

John Fielder volunteered to photograph the Greenway. "It is amazing to find yourself surrounded by such natural beauty without ever leaving the city," said Fielder.

Fielder's generosity is legendary. The time and support Fielder devotes to a wide range of volunteer and non-profit organizations is an inspiration. A percentage of the sale of his books goes to protect the wild



John Fielder: Views of Star K Ranch

lands he has photographed. His time and talent at Sand Creek Regional Greenway Partnership is another of those donations.

As an environmental artist and activist he has combined his interests to make a difference. "He skillfully combines his art expertise, business acumen and his remarkable activism into a powerhouse to save the places he loves," said Howard Kenison, SCRGP Board Member and lawyer at Lindquist & Venum. "His devotion to Colorado's natural places has contributed greatly to protecting some of our most treasured places."

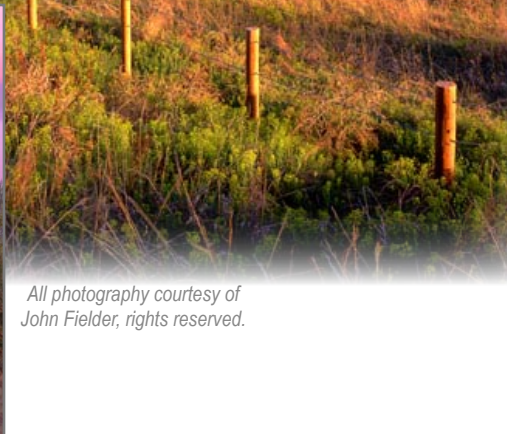
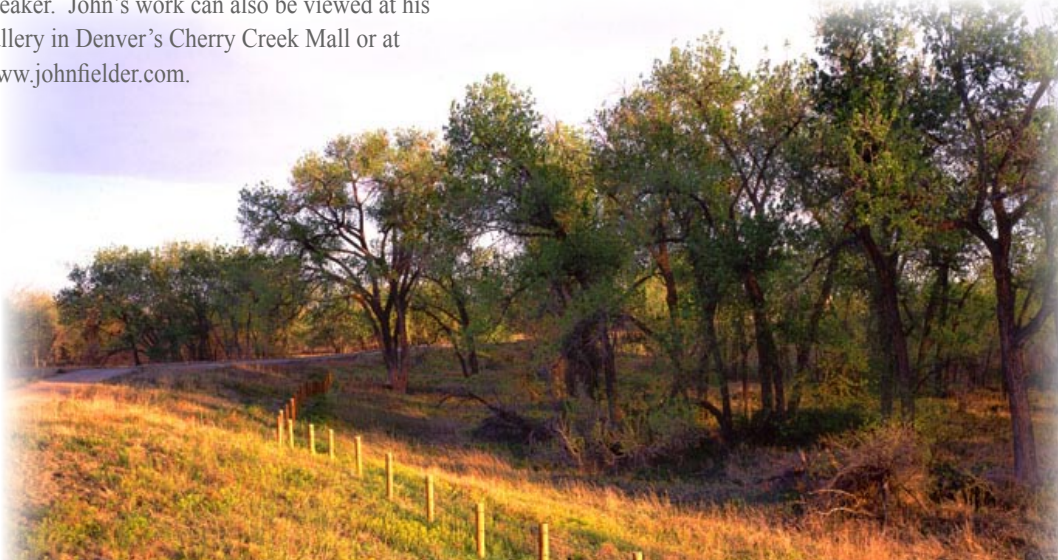
To see more of the greenway through John's eyes, visit our website at www.sandcreekgreenway.org or buy one at our fall fundraiser at Emil-Lene's Sept. 12, where John will be guest speaker. John's work can also be viewed at his gallery in Denver's Cherry Creek Mall or at www.johnfielder.com.

Thanks for Helping Us Go Wild...

Sand Creek Regional Greenway has many good friends in the business community. We would like to thank some of our special friends who have supported the greenway from the very beginning. These businesses deserve a HUGE thanks from everyone who loves the Greenway!

- Waste Management, Inc.
- Forest City—Stapleton, Inc.
- REI
- Emil-Lene's Restaurant
- CH2M Hill
- Suncor Energy
- ArtHouse
- Applied Design
- Wynkoop Brewing Company
- Xcel Energy
- Wild Oats Markets
- Wagner Equipment Company
- Wenk and Associates
- The Pauls Corporation
- The Moyer Group
- Guaranty Bank and Trust Company
- Shaw Construction
- OZ Architecture of Denver
- Management Partners, Inc.

And Many More to be Thanked in our Next Newsletter!



All photography courtesy of John Fielder, rights reserved.



Come Help REI clean up the creek and trail Saturday Morning, Aug. 14th!

You're invited to join in as famous outfitter REI, together with Denver Parks and Recreation, partners with Sand Creek Regional Greenway to host a service project along Sand Creek near the Stapleton site (I-70 and Quebec Street), Saturday, Aug. 14 from 8 a.m. until noon.

Sand Creek Greenway needs your help to clean up the trail and creek, and perhaps to wage war on weeds. Volunteers work with crew leaders to maintain the unique greenway that supports wildlife, hikers, cyclists, and horseback riders. Wear long pants, a long-sleeve shirt, sturdy footwear and work gloves; and if you own waders, please bring them. Bring water, sunscreen, and a snack.

Opportunities are available for adults and children 12 and older, but pets are not permitted. Participants will receive an event t-shirt. Pre-registration is requested by contacting Sand Creek Regional Greenway at 303-468-3260 or by email on our website at www.sandcreekgreenway.org. Specific directions to the work site will be provided upon registration.



Volunteers pitch in along the Greenway

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Wilderness in the City
SAND CREEK REGIONAL GREENWAY

