

Stakeholder Connection

Your news source on the Institute for Environmental Solutions projects and progress



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Ocean First Dive Shop in Boulder hosts the IES Chemical Footprint Project for a social workshop at their store.

Ocean First Dive Shop in Boulder hosted IES's "All Water Leads to the Sea" presentation and interactive workshop that explained the issue of chemical footprints and demonstrated how to reduce them on May 9. It was a fantastic event accompanied by drinks and tasty snacks for members of the local community! The IES Chemical Footprint Team talked with Boulder residents about how the products used in their daily lives might leave behind a chemical footprint that later shows itself in both our mountain snow and the water of the South Platte River on its downstream journey to the sea. We depicted the local water cycle, with its path of melted snowpack from the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains to the Atlantic Ocean. Participants learned how contaminants such as oxybenzone, BPA, alkylphenols, triclosan, parabens, and synthetic fragrances are not adequately treated at wastewater or drinking water treatment plants and then enter this water cycle, harming the environment and our health.



IES showed how important prevention is to reducing this pollution problem. Using safe and affordable ingredients found in most homes, everyone was able to make and take with them their own glass cleaner, all-purpose cleaner, and hand sanitizer. We provided a lesson in label reading and what contaminants to look out for, and showed how to use free-to-download product scanning apps like Think Dirty® that show some of the chemicals that exist in your personal care and household products. IES was thrilled to team with Ocean First Dive Shop and our partner nonprofit, Ocean First Institute, to present this event and show the Boulder community how to

reduce chemical footprints and improve the environment. More information:

Mike Smith, Mike@i4es.org

DaVita Village Green-IES Earth Day

IES partnered with DaVita Village Green on April 27 to celebrate Earth Day and fix up the Sheridan Quincy Trail in Sheridan, CO. Fifty DaVita volunteers teamed with IES team members, Board members, and volunteers to water, weed, and mulch the site to prepare it for the summer months. The volunteers accomplished a tremendous amount in just 3 hours. They watered 488 plants, removed all major invasive weeds, and mulched around all 71 IES trees. Volunteers were justifiably proud of the work they accomplished.



IES Chemical Footprint Project team members Mike Smith and Jennifer Cowan spent the morning talking with DaVita volunteers about ways to reduce their chemical footprints. This included understanding how contaminants in our household and personal care products pollute our water and harm our environment and health. The event took place on a beautiful sunny day, which served as a perfect reminder to discuss the benefits of using mineral-based sunscreens over those that contain endocrine-disrupting and coral-bleaching oxybenzone. Everyone made and used natural DEET-free bug spray while they watered and weeded, and later created their own hand sanitizer using common and safe ingredients to help clean their hands. Each visitor was able to take home their products as well as recipes to test at home.

DaVita volunteers were enthusiastic about having both the Tree Project Team and the Chemical Footprint Project Team organize this event. Volunteers made great progress along the trail while learning about reducing their chemical footprint at home. IES thanks Sean Mangus, DaVita Sustainability Analyst, and all the hard working volunteers! More information: Carrie Martin-Haley, carrie@i4es.org and Jennifer Cowan, jennifer@i4es.org.

Spring and summer maintenance on the Sheridan Quincy Trail

On April 16 IES met Fort Logan Northgate (FLN) Leadership students at the Sheridan Quincy Trail to present the new banner celebrating students' efforts to restore and revitalize the trail over the last year. Leadership students Nathan, Rayden, Sua, and Dulce shared their positive experiences working on the trail and what it meant to them and their community. Students unveiled the banner showcasing photos of the students building a rain garden, planting planters on the trail, installing stairs, and participating in tree science workshops in the classroom.



The banner highlights quotes from Leadership students about what the project meant to them. At the center of the banner is an image of a tree with a word cloud that the students created during a workshop to describe the project, including words like hard working, teamwork, dedication, and perseverance. Students hung the banner on the fence alongside a complete Spanish translation for display. The ceremony demonstrated how the project has affected the students and to share it for all trail users to see and enjoy. More information: Blakesley Egan, Blakesley@I4ES.org.

Growing up in the Greenbelt!



IES recently finished its seventh project in the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt this spring, planting a variety of native trees, shrubs, and forbs to improve river and grassland habitats near the Kipling Trailhead as part of the 2019 Greenbelt Improvement Project. IES was excited to work again with students, teachers, and parents from Kullerstrand Elementary School and staff members from Wheat Ridge Parks and Recreation Department. The IES Tree Project team organized this year's project around the theme of life cycles. Students participated in two workshops where they learned about how the Greenbelt supports plants, insects, and animals during different phases of their lives, and recorded this new knowledge in their nature journals.

During two planting events, students worked hard to dig and plant the new trees and shrubs. Each planting day focused on restoring habitat in riparian and grassland areas near Clear Creek. Students learned how these new plants would increase canopy cover, shelter, and food for animals in the area, while also improving soils, plant diversity, and water quality. For several students, this was their fifth year planting in the Greenbelt as part of this exciting collaboration, and another opportunity to see their hard work improve this cherished open space.



Generous funding for the project was provided by Patagonia Denver, the Colorado Tree Coalition, Wheat Ridge Outside Agency Program, and the National Environmental Education Foundation. Please contact IES if you would like to help care for these new plants this summer. More information, Sabrina Kleinman, sabrina@i4es.org.

Carbon sequestration and IES contributions



Carbon sequestration is the capture of carbon dioxide (CO₂), a major greenhouse gas, from the atmosphere and conversion to organic material. Trees and other plants capture carbon dioxide as part of photosynthesis and store it in their leaves, roots, trunks, stalks, and stems. Trees can store a lot of carbon, reducing the level of greenhouse gases that cause climate change. This is one factor that makes the tree planting work we do at IES important for the environment.

This spring, an intern from the University of Colorado Denver School of Public Affairs worked with the IES Tree Project team on a capstone project to try to quantify the impact of IES tree planting projects in removing carbon from the atmosphere. Qingchun Wang collaborated with IES to study the number and types of trees that IES in the Greenbelt and offered recommendations on how to strategically plant in the future to optimize CO₂ sequestration. Qingchun concluded that 1,100 IES-planted trees have stored a significant amount of carbon. IES does not have a record of every tree and shrub planted over the last 9 years, so it was not possible to obtain a precise estimate of the amount of CO₂ stored.

Some species of trees capture more carbon than others. Among the Colorado native trees planted by IES, the ones that reduce CO2 most effectively are peachleaf willow (*Salix amygdaloides*), plains cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*) and hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*). Qingchun's Master's project will help IES improve our recordkeeping and monitoring, and optimize our plant selection. More information, Cathi Schramm, Cathi@i4es.org.

IES Denver Area Volunteer Tree Volunteers Wanted!

Tree Stewards are dedicated volunteers who care for the newly planted trees and shrubs at IES project sites in Wheat Ridge and Sheridan. We are looking for volunteers to join our team, and help with watering, weeding, and mulching through the spring, summer, and fall. It's a great opportunity to give back to the community, improve the environment, work with other terrific volunteers, and get some great exercise. Families and teenagers are welcome. To join the Tree Stewards Program and start making an impact, please contact Carrie Martin-Haley, carrie@i4es.org.

IES Institute News

IES welcomes Cathi Schramm to the Tree Project Team and Caitlin Jacobshagen to the Chemical Footprint Project Team. Cathi is an experienced project manager with an MA in Germanic Studies from Indiana University. She recently completed an MA in Biology and Conservation Leadership at Miami University (Oxford, Ohio). Caitlin holds a BS and a BA from University of Idaho, and is working on a Masters in Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Colorado Denver.

IES Opportunities

IES is seeking motivated volunteers and graduate interns who are passionate about protecting the environment to join our project teams. We have openings for project, development, social media, and fundraising volunteers and interns. Interested candidates should submit a resume and cover letter to Solutions@i4es.org.

IES is looking for an energetic professional who wants to ensure the application of sound scientific solutions to our pressing environmental challenges to join the IES Board of Directors. Please contact IES at Solutions@i4es.org for a position description and application.

We need a Tree Steward Coordinator to organize our team of dedication tree stewards to care for our trees in Wheat Ridge and Sheridan. This position is flexible and comes with lots of free outdoor exercise and occasional pizza. Please email Solutions@i4es.org if you are interested.

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