

Stakeholder Connection

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



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Warm Wishes and Thanks to Carol Lyons for Her Dedication to IES and a More Sustainable Future

IES's founder and former Executive Director Carol Lyons retired at the end of 2020. Carol's passion and dedication to solving crucial human and environmental health problems formed the sturdy foundation that IES was built on. Her leadership over the past 17 years guided IES as project teams held workshops for students and communities, conducted research on contaminants of emerging concern (CECs), and planted and maintained native plants throughout the Denver-Metro area. Carol sought to use her chemical engineering background to provide scientific information to communities that might not otherwise have access to knowledge about the benefits of native trees and plants, or the dangers of CECs in personal care and household products. Carol's vision for IES as a source of scientific information about human and environmental health will continue to guide the organization as we move forward.



I met Carol when she hired me as a Graduate Intern for the Chemical Footprint (CFP) Project team in June of 2019. Throughout my time as an intern I learned a great deal from Carol, not only about CECs and chemical footprints, but also about grant writing, workshop development, formal writing, project management, and professionalism. When I was promoted to project manager of the CFP team, Carol provided me with hands-on support through the transition as I developed new skills. I am incredibly thankful for the opportunity I had to work with and learn from such a kind, dedicated, and knowledgeable professional.

IES cannot express how grateful all of our graduate interns, IES associates, project managers, Tree Stewards, Steering Committee members, and Board members, both past and present, are to have worked with Carol. Together, we have accomplished so much to improve the sustainability and health of our Colorado communities. We extend our most heartfelt thank you to Carol for creating such a wonderful institution, for her guidance, and for her ongoing dedication and passion for human and environmental health. From all of us at IES, we wish you, Carol, the very best and hope you enjoy everything that retirement has to offer. More information: Caitlin Jacobshagen, caitlin@i4es.org.

Cleaning Up Clear Creek for Earth Day 2021



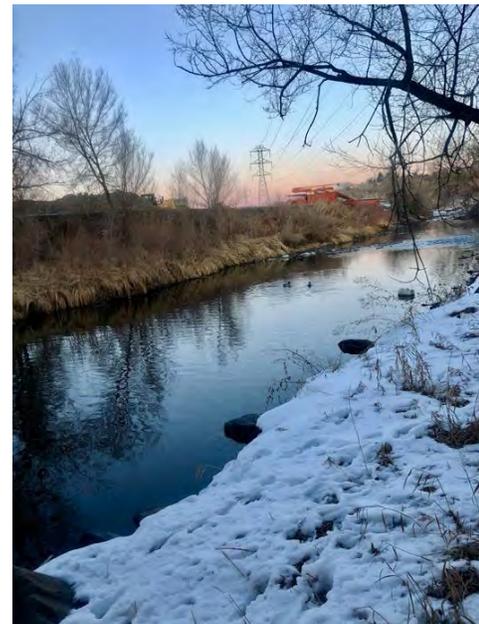
To celebrate Earth Day, the IES Tree Project team will be partnering with local organizations to participate in an internal clean-up event at the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt on Saturday, April 17. IES, Wheat Ridge Parks and Recreation Department, the Sustainable Wheat Ridge Committee, and LocalWorks will work together to pick up trash and litter along the Clear Creek Trail at Creekside Park, which is one of IES's upcoming planting sites for 2021! To ensure safety during the COVID-19 pandemic, this event will occur in two separate shifts in order to maintain small group sizes during the morning and early afternoon of the event day. Volunteers will walk along the Clear Creek Trail to pick up litter and clean up the area. IES, the Sustainable Wheat Ridge Committee, and LocalWorks will also set up information booths at Creekside Park. While the litter pick-up is a private event not open to the public, park users and trail pedestrians will be able to stop by these booths and learn more about our organizations.

The Wheat Ridge Greenbelt has been susceptible to increased litter and usage during the COVID-19 pandemic and is in need of extra maintenance at this portion of the 66-mile waterway along the Clear Creek Trail. This Earth Day event will mark IES's first partnership with both the Sustainable Wheat Ridge Committee and LocalWorks and is expected to be the first of many opportunities with these organizations, and an opportunistic networking event. Events such as this one will increase opportunities for IES team members and Tree Stewards to get outdoors and participate in environmental improvement projects with other like-minded community members. These outdoor activities and opportunities have been especially important over the past year as a way for people to interact with nature and do something engaging and impactful, all while social distancing! Keep an eye out for upcoming public community events for your chance to participate in future IES activities. More information: Laura Prickett, laura@i4es.org.

IES Expands its Outreach into Creekside Park

The Institute for Environmental Solutions (IES) will be planting at not one, but two locations in Wheat Ridge this year! The 2021 Wheat Ridge Restoration Project (WRRP) will expand on environmental improvements that IES began at Kullerstrand Elementary School last year during the 2020 Nature Play Connections Project, and will additionally plant at the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt's Creekside Park.

IES will host a community planting day at Creekside Park, near I-70 and Marshall Street, on Saturday, May 22, in conjunction with the Wheat Ridge Parks and Recreation Department. Creekside Park has undergone significant environmental damage in recent months due to the uptick of pedestrian traffic caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This damage has increased erosion along the Clear Creek, seeping multiple soil contaminants into an important Colorado waterway. Next to a major highway, Creekside Park visitors are vulnerable to air pollution and other toxic fumes. IES will improve both the air and water quality and restore this vital municipal park by planting 5-10 native trees and 20-30 native shrubs and grasses along the



creek's bank. These plants will provide soil stability, increased canopy cover, and diverse pollinator habitat. Volunteers who attend IES's Creekside planting day will also participate in educational activities centered around the health of riparian habitats.

The 2021 WRRP marks the first year IES will commit to revitalizing Creekside Park, an important greenspace within the Wheat Ridge community. IES plans to continue Creekside Park improvements for our 2022 spring project, with multiple restoration opportunities in the future. More information: Sarah Turner, SarahTurner@i4es.org.

Turning the Next PAGE: IES's Tree Project Begins its Eighth Year at the Sheridan Quincy Trail



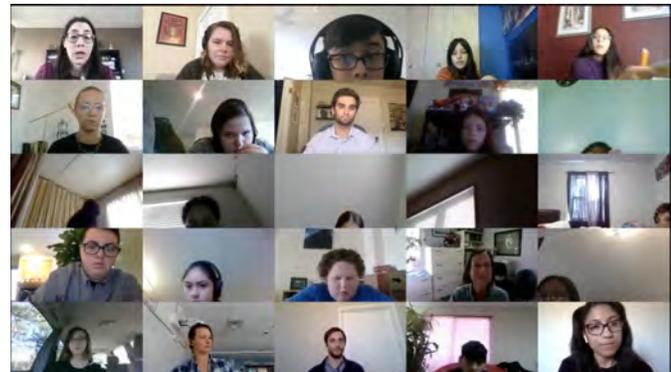
The IES Tree Project is happy to announce our continued partnership with the Sheridan community with the 2021 Sheridan Play, Adapt, Grow, and Engage (PAGE) project. IES will continue its collaboration with South Suburban Park and Recreation District, the City of Sheridan, Sheridan School District No. 2, and Fort Logan Northgate School (FLN) to continue environmental improvements along the Sheridan Quincy Trail. Objectives for this year's project include planting 90 new pollinator plants and 4 new trees, and installing a shade structure in the community space for neighbors and students to enjoy. These features will not only continue to promote ecological sustainability in the area, but will also increase soil stability and nutrients, native pollinator habitat,

and community usage.

As in past projects, IES is committed to engaging with the local community and students in tree science and the promotion of environmental stewardship. This year, the Tree Project will implement two ecological education workshops and two interactive planting days with FLN students. These events will follow COVID-19 regulations and protocols in order to ensure the safety of our stakeholders and their families. IES will facilitate a 3-year maintenance program to water, weed, and mulch the new planting sites twice a week and encourage nature stewardship in Sheridan community members. At the end of the project, IES will release a full report summarizing the events as well as a project video highlighting our planting days. More information: Alex Modrzecki, alexander@i4es.org.

Teaching Fort Logan Northgate Students to Reduce their Chemical Footprints

IES's Chemical Footprint (CFP) Project held a virtual Reduce Your Chemical Footprint workshop for the Leadership Class at Fort Logan Northgate School in November 2020. The workshop received positive reviews from the students and teacher. This virtual workshop educated students on water pollution, contaminants of emerging concern (CECs), and chemical footprints, while encouraging students to share this new information with their family and friends. The most common feedback was that the students were exposed to a significant amount of new information in a short amount of time. To help



the students understand the material presented during the workshop, the CFP Project will hold a virtual Reduce Your Chemical Footprint workshop series for the Leadership Class. This workshop series will provide more time for CFP team members to fully explain information to the 7th and 8th grade students.

The virtual Reduce Your Chemical Footprint workshop series will be made up of four workshops. The CFP Project team will teach students about the water cycle, water pollution, CECs, chemical footprints, how students can reduce CEC exposure and pollution, and how students can share their knowledge with other community members. These workshops will focus on hands-on activities, like Do-It-Yourself product making, to engage students on the topics presented and enable them to apply their knowledge to minimize their exposure to CECs and decrease water pollution. The workshop series will break content down into manageable sections so students can retain all new knowledge.

Help the CFP team educate students at Fort Logan Northgate about the hidden dangers of CECs through donating to IES at www.coloradogives.org/i4es. A donation of \$25 provides the workshop's printed materials and a \$50 donation will provide the materials needed for one workshop's hands-on activity. We appreciate your support! More information: Kathryn Steinmann, kathryn@i4es.org.

SunShare and IES Team Up to Implement Community Virtual Workshop



IES and Sunshare Community Solar will collaborate for the first time to host a virtual workshop educating the community about contaminants of emerging concern (CECs) on June 10, 2021! SunShare Community Solar is a Colorado company that produces solar energy and provides it to Xcel Energy subscribers, enabling households and apartment dwellers to support solar energy without installing solar panels on their roofs.

The collaborative virtual workshop will be open to the public and will last an hour over the Zoom platform. During half of the workshop, Chemical Footprint Project team members will give a presentation about CECs and how they negatively impact human and environmental health. The presentation

will include information about how different CECs and CEC pollution can harm humans and the environment, products that commonly contain CECs, and strategies for reducing use and exposure to CECs. Participants will then practice one of those strategies by creating their own contaminant-free products during a product-making activity. Participants will have the opportunity to create their own CEC-free insect repellent and hand sanitizer. All the products for the do-it-yourself activity will be provided by SunShare and IES, and kits will be sent to participants prior to the workshop.

During the other half of the workshop, SunShare will provide information about community solar and the services they provide. Community solar is an easy way for families to support green energy and address climate change. Through our partnership with SunShare, this workshop will be a great way for members of the community to learn how to live more sustainably by addressing CEC pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Stay tuned to sign up for the IES and SunShare Community Solar workshop on June 10!

Microplastics: Your Daily Decisions Matter

Plastic waste is one of the most common types of debris found around the world, particularly in our oceans. From single-use straws to water bottles, plastic waste comes in many forms and sizes. Some plastics, called microplastics, are so small that they are only slightly larger than a grain of sand or pebble. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), microplastics are extremely small pieces of plastic that measure less than five millimeters long, or smaller than the top of a push pin. Microplastics come from a range of sources, including larger pieces of plastic that break down and degrade into smaller parts. Microplastics can frequently be found in common beauty products like facial cleansers and toothpastes. These miniscule particles of plastic are a severe environmental problem.



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Because microplastics are not filtered out through water treatment processes at water treatment plants, a large majority ends up back in oceans and lakes. Animals like fish and birds often mistake microplastics as a food source. This is extremely hazardous to all forms of life and has unfortunately, and too commonly, led to death. According to a 2017 UN report, "there are more than 51 trillion microplastic particles in the sea, more than 500 times the number of stars in the Milky Way". There are actions we can take at the individual and community level to help reduce this number and our impact:

1. Invest in a reusable bottle
2. Bring reusable grocery bags to the store
3. Limit your single-use plastic intake by purchasing in bulk, or opt for paper packaging
4. Dispose of your waste appropriately, and do not litter

Here at the Institute for Environmental Solutions, the Chemical Footprint Project team is working to combat the effects of microplastics and contaminants of emerging concern (CECs) by conducting research, finding safe alternatives, and educating the community on this issue. Stay informed and help support our mission by following us on social media and by donating. More information: Sara Haney, sarahaney@i4es.org.

Small Donations Make a Big Difference for IES



With tax season in full swing, remember that you can exempt any donation made to IES in 2020! As a non-profit, 501(c)3 organization, donations can be deducted from your federal taxes, saving you money as you file this year. In addition, if you are a Colorado resident, you are able to donate part or all of your state income tax return to IES when filing. To donate and support IES's mission and projects, enter IES's registration number (20063002845) on the Voluntary Contribution Schedule (DR0104CH) of your Colorado Individual Income Tax Return. Submit your 2020 tax returns by April 15, 2021 in order to receive 100% of the taxed compensation for your non-profit contributions! For

more information on how to claim or make your donation and receive a deduction, please visit the IRS website for tips: <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/eight-tips-for-deducting-charitable-contributions>.

IES thanks supporters for their generous financial contributions in 2020. With your support, IES's Tree Project and Chemical Footprint Project teams completed all proposed 2020 projects, including improving native plant presence, hosting interactive educational workshops with students, and educating Colorado communities on how to reduce their chemical footprints. All of this was achieved while maintaining and improving IES's community presence and publication content.

This year, IES used financial donations to support project costs and materials, bettering Colorado's natural landscapes in partnership with Denver-area students to inspire environmental stewardship and sustainability. Donations allow IES to purchase plants, educational supplies, associated media and outreach materials, and support staff time. IES relies solely on donations and grants to complete projects, so any donation is welcomed and valued! If you are interested in supporting IES's mission to create a better natural environment while supporting youth environmental education, please visit <https://www.coloradogives.org/i4es/>.

IES looks forward to our 2021 programs to continue improving the environment and human health in the Denver community! More information: Catherine Trowbridge, catherinet@i4es.org.



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