



South Metro

LAND CONSERVANCY

SMLC's mission is to increase understanding and appreciation of the profound importance of open spaces, natural areas and trails in the lives of people of all ages. SMLC does this through advocacy, open space acquisition and educational projects.

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Dear SMLC Supporters:

You have always been deeply appreciative of our community's wonderful parks, trails and open spaces close to home. If it weren't for these, a difficult year would have just been too hard to bear for many of us. Thank you for all you have done through the years to support the acquisition and development of these spaces!

Land conservancies throughout the country are devoting considerable energies to examining how inclusive they are when it comes to the people they serve. In fact, the 2020 National Land Trust Alliance annual conference (virtual, of course) was filled with sessions that addressed this topic. In particular, there is increasing emphasis on how land conservancies can address the needs of those living in dense urban environments and cultivate nature lovers and supporters of parks and open space. The sessions SMLC board members attended were insightful and informative to the work that we're doing.

Most important, the SMLC Board decided in January to make "Reimagining Powers Park" its signature work in 2021 by committing \$10,000 to the development of a Vision Plan for that park. After the Board committed, others enthusiastically followed, with financial commitments from South Metro Housing Options (Littleton's public housing authority); a private foundation; and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. The intent of funding the Vision Plan is to facilitate the funding of a park renovation that will fully serve the neighbors in this dense area and connect them with nature. Please read more about this project on page 2.

SMLC is very excited about the direction and initiatives we are pursuing. Please support our efforts as generously as possible this year. We are twenty-eight years old – we've accomplished a lot and there is so much more to do.

Sincerely,

Patricia Cronenberger, President

Scott D. Sampson, former VP of Research & Collections and Chief Curator at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science from his book, "How to Raise a Wild Child":

"A deep connection with nature doesn't arise only through periodic trips to national parks or other wilderness. While such trips can leave deep impressions, even more important are abundant experiences in wild or semi-wild places, typically close to home."



SMLC is Laser Focused on Reimagining Powers Park

In June, SMLC commissioned STREAM Landscape Architecture and Planning to develop a vision plan for Powers Park. This work will provide conceptual plans to reimagine the park so it goes beyond being a hole in the ground to retain flood water to be a true park that the neighbors will enjoy... A place where they can play, walk, roll, sit and connect with nature.

It all started when the SMLC Board learned that South Metro Housing Options (SMHO, Littleton's public housing authority) was planning a 51-unit apartment building on a corner of the park. SMHO was interested in ideas that could make this park a true asset for the seniors who will live there. SMLC was interested in seeing the park transform to serve seniors and all of the neighbors in this dense part of the City of Littleton. The SMLC Board saw an opportunity for a partnership.

This partnership has grown with financial commitments for the vision plan from SMLC, SMHO, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and a private foundation. But nothing can happen here without the support of the City of Littleton (owner of the park); South Suburban Park and Recreation District (SSPRD, manager of the park); and Mile High Flood District (entity that manages the region's flood waters). The City and SSPRD made it very clear to SMLC: the preliminary work for the vision plan would have to be undertaken by SMLC as neither government entity had staff or resources to commit to it. Both organizations, and Mile High Flood, have been generous with their time and knowledge in providing SMLC guidance at every step of the way.



In addition to these partners, North Littleton Promise is assisting with outreach in the neighborhoods and The Denver Botanic Gardens is advising on native plantings. SMLC could not be more pleased with the enthusiasm with which this project has been met.

What's next? SMLC will be doing outreach with seniors who live in SMHO residences and with the Powers Park neighbors. We'll get people's thoughts about amenities like a perimeter path, community gardens, native plants, rainwater harvesting, the playground and exhibits about water quality. Once the vision plan is complete, SMLC will be advocating for the addition of the park renovation in future city and SSPRD's capital improvement budgets.

We'd love to hear your thoughts, as well. Please take a few moments and send them to info@southmetrolandconservancy.org.



Did you know?

"Older adults don't use public spaces. They are 20 percent of the population, but participate in only 4 percent of park use." Danielle Arigoni, AARP Director of Livable Communities in an interview "On Common Ground" Spring 2021.

Littleton City Council “Meet, Greet and Eats”

SMLC is part of this year’s Littleton City Council “Meet, Greet and Eats” ... Wilder is on the move again and will make an appearance in Littleton!

The highly popular Littleton City Council “Meet, Greet and Eats” are back! SMLC is thrilled to be a part of this event.

SMLC is sponsoring the South Platte Park naturalist staff to provide family nature activities at each of the three parks where the “Meet, Greet and Eats” will take place. The ranger naturalists will help people understand the wildlife in the ponds and creeks in their neighborhood park, demonstrate the value of urban forests for local wildlife close to home and demonstrate the value of floodplain nature in parks.

As SMLC is a partner with Great Outdoors Colorado Generation Wild, we are thrilled to announce that Wilder is on the move again and will join us for the July 14th Meet, Greet and Eats. A cross between a mountain goat and bigfoot, he’s an ambassador for nature and getting kids outdoors. We can’t wait to see him!!

Each “Meet, Greet and Eats” takes place between 4 and 6 p.m. Please join us!



Meet, Greet and Eats 2021

Schedule:

*Wednesday, June 30 at Sterne Park
Wednesday, July 14 at Progress Park
Wednesday, Aug. 11 at Ketring Park*

Arapahoe County Open Spaces

When Arapahoe County decided to ask citizens to fund an open space program in 2003, SMLC was there to help make it happen by convincing citizens of its importance to our quality of life. Since then SMLC has been a partner with the County by advocating for particular parcels and contributing financially to their acquisition.

The County just updated its Open Spaces Master Plan and SMLC provided comments on the draft in April. The Master Plan document is available at <https://www.arapahoe.gov.com/1780/Open-Spaces-Master-Plan>.

SMLC believes that the County is doing important work with its program, in particular to preserve natural areas and wildlife corridors in the eastern portion of the county. These parcels provide excellent opportunities for the enjoyment of nature and for solitude and to learn about our prairie lands.

Pictured here are SMLC Board members touring Arapahoe County Open Space parcels with County staff in early May.



Remembering Dick Hershey

Last year, SMLC added the names of two conservationists to the SMLC boulder in the round-about just west of the Carson Nature Center: Dick Hershey and Bruce Kramlich, founding board members of SMLC. Sadly, Dick passed away earlier this year. He will be remembered, in particular, for his dedication to creating Jackass Hill Park and the trail along Mineral Avenue to connect the Highline Canal Trail and the Mary Carter Greenway. We will miss him.



Dick Hershey, former SMLC board member



Bruce Kramlich, former SMLC board member, during the rock engraving ceremony last summer.

SMLC Welcomes Steve Barr as Newest Board Member

SMLC is delighted to announce the addition of Steve Barr of Littleton to the Board.

In his professional life he serves as the Program Manager for the Community Engineering Corps (CECorps), a program of the American Water Works Association. In that capacity he assembles pro bono technical teams to help underserved communities address their water and wastewater needs.

Steve has 10 years of experience in the international development and environmental engineering industries, having received his B.Sc. in Environmental Engineering and M.Sc. in Science, Technology and International Development, the latter from the University of Edinburgh.

During and in between consultancy positions he is a volunteer with Engineers Without Borders and has worked on projects in Cameroon, Honduras, Thailand and the West Bank.



Welcome aboard, Steve!

Long Term SMLC Board Member Retires

John Hershey has resigned from the SMLC Board of Directors after serving for over 16 years.

During his tenure he managed to serve in all officer positions, including four years as President. John played key roles in the purchase of open space parcels including Lee Gulch Open Space, Marjorie Perry Preserve and the Marrs Property in eastern Arapahoe County. In 2016, he oversaw the transfer of two of SMLC's easements to Colorado Open Lands, one of the state's largest land trusts.

It was not unusual to run into John enjoying Littleton's parks and open spaces with wife, Lynn Marie Bell, and sons, Henry and Daniel. John liked to say that he filled the SMLC board position that his dad, Dick, once held (please see article on page 4). John's expertise and commitment to open space – not to mention his easy-going manner and great sense of humor – will be sorely missed.

Thank you, John!



A cedar waxwing along the Mary Carter Greenway.

Photo compliments of Bill Hopping.



The masked members of the SMLC board hold a socially distant board meeting in June 2020 in President Pat Cronenberger's backyard. It was wonderful to be outdoors together and take care of business!

Photo by Rick Cronenberger.

Did you know? The North American bird population is down by 3 billion since 1970. Grassland bird populations collectively have declined by 53% or 720 million birds.

Source: The Cornell Lab of Ornithology

our purpose...

Without question, being outdoors and experiencing nature is central to our daily lives. South Metro Land Conservancy is the principled voice for nature in places close to home. Using creativity, strong relationships and unfaltering passion, we seek opportunities to preserve, educate, promote and align a grand vision for how we all connect with nature.



THANK YOU!

You may make your donation electronically by going to the South Metro Land Conservancy website (<http://www.southmetrolandconservancy.org>) and clicking on the “Donate” button on the homepage. Your contributions are vital to our work.

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