

The Beaver Bulletin

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Beaver Ponds Environmental Education Center (BPEEC) helps people of all ages learn about domestic livestock, horticulture, green energy generation and environmental conservation in a high-alpine, natural setting at Sacramento Creek Ranch near Fairplay, Colorado.

Flood causes beavers to abandon ponds

During late May and early June, the High Country around Beaver Ponds suffered a severe flooding event due to a heavy mid-May snow, followed by rain and warmer temperatures. All of the large Beaver dams on Beaver Ponds' property washed out when Sacramento Creek overflowed its channel and flooded access to Beaver Ponds. The effects of the flooding

straightened the main channel of the creek and eliminated the flow of water into several of the braided side channels.

Even though we currently do not have any fully active beaver ponds, we now have access to the recently abandoned beaver ponds, which gives us the opportunity to wander through beaver ponds without getting wet. We can look into the

channels they create and see where they cache food for winter.

Local beaver experts told us to be patient; they said the beavers would return. We decided to let nature and the beavers work at their own pace, *(continued, p. 2)*

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Flooding causes beavers to abandon ponds, p. 1-2
- Meet Teddy Goggin, new volunteer and intern, p. 2
- Beaver Ponds receives grants from two agencies, p. 3
- New chickens make Beaver Ponds home, p. 3
- Beaver Ponds educates 200 kids and adults, p. 4-5
- Last chance to double your donation dollars, p. 5



Beavers abandon ponds *(cont. from p. 1)*

except for pond No. 3, which holds the inlet pipes for the micro-hydro system.

In September, with the help of three classes from the Downtown Denver Expeditionary School, we rebuilt the failed dam on pond No. 3. Their effort raised the pond level 9 inches, enough to cover the micro-hydro inlets.

Then, during the third week of September, evidence of beaver activity reappeared. Aspen limbs stripped of bark were deposited along the banks of one of the ponds where one of the dams broke last spring. It looks like the beavers are returning.



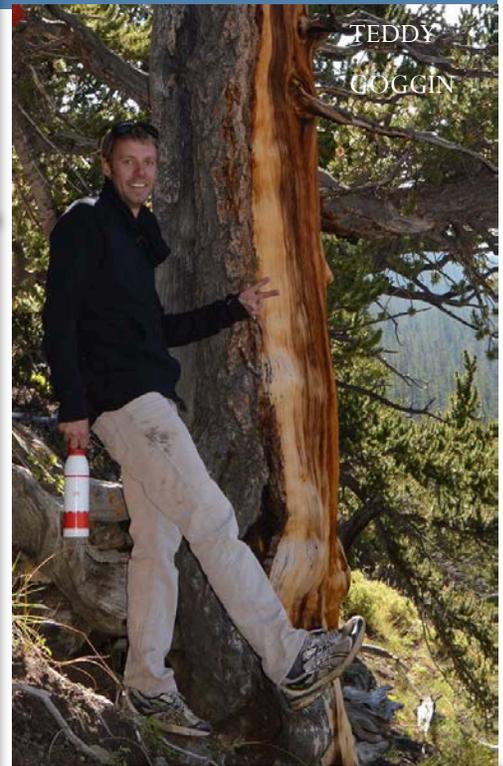
MEET TEDDY GOGGIN, NEW VOLUNTEER AND INTERN

When Teddy Goggin talks about his work at BPEEC, the excitement just rolls out of his voice. He comes from a family of farmers in Columbus, Ohio, who practice organic and sustainable growing, so, as he says, “It’s kinda my thing.”

After earning his associate’s degree in art from Colorado Mountain College, he entered its sustainability internship program. Through it, he’s building mound cultures from logs, twigs, leaves and other dead matter to enrich high-elevation soil. Logs help soil hold water in this dry climate, and as the matter decomposes, it provides a heat source, fertilizes, and extends the growing season.

Teddy’s also very interested in the new micro-fodder system; he believes that is the direction farming is headed, since “corn doesn’t make money, it’s hard to grow and it has bad PR,” he says.

He hopes to inspire others to realize they can succeed at



TEDDY GOGGIN

organic gardening, even at high elevations.

“A lot of the things we’re dealing with here are huge issues. I think we’re kind of a proving ground. Change takes time, but I think what we’re doing up here is definitely part of it. It’s unique to have a property with five sustainable energy resources — that deserves attention.”

In addition to the internship, he’s volunteering on a grant BPEEC received from the South Park National Heritage Area to study coniferous trees. He will be at BPEEC through December.

“I love what I’m doing,” he says. “I love the mountains and the gifts I’ve been given to share.”

SPNHA & Norcross Foundation fund BP

Beaver Ponds has received grants from the South Park National Heritage Area (SPNHA) and the Norcross Foundation.

The grant money from SPNHA is designated to conduct research and collect data associated with dendrochronological (tree ring) analysis of trees at Beaver Ponds and on Pennsylvania Mountain.

Researchers from the University of Missouri visited BP to instruct personnel on proper sample collection methods and preparation.

The researchers were impressed by the amount, and quality, of older trees and downed woody material available for sampling.

The analysis will help us better understand the natural history processes (climate variation) at work at these locations, as well as give us an indication of the incidence of wildfire in the area.

The Missouri Tree Ring Laboratory will analyze samples and provide ages of the lodge pole pines at BP and the bristlecone pines on Pennsylvania Mountain.

The Norcross Foundation once again generously donated funds to BP to help complete the interpretive trail and purchase equipment to aid in instruction of field courses associated with biological field measurements.

Thanks to funding from SPNHA and Norcross, BP will be better equipped to provide instruction to help students understand their place within the environment.



Beaver Ponds adds new chicks

In June, Beaver Ponds added five new breeds of chickens to its flock. The breeds include Cuckoo Maran, Silver Laced Wyandotte, New Hampshire Red, Silver Leghorn, and Barred Rock.

Chickens are excellent examples of small-scale, sustainable agriculture. They are relatively hardy and easy to raise, and they provide meat, eggs, and feathers. We use them to teach visitors about sustainability, animal care, egg production, and heritage breeds.



Beaver Ponds educates 200 kids and adults



The last three months have been filled with many visitors at Beaver Ponds. During that time, approximately 200 adults and kids came to the site for a variety of educational and fun activities. We also collaborated with a variety of other organizations, including non-profits, colleges and universities, in a number of interesting and rewarding ways.

Collaborations

- Beaver Ponds provided space for [Keystone Science School](#) (KSS) to hold kids' workshops and provide a jumping off point for wilderness camping experiences.
- Beaver Ponds provided space for a children's program led by the folks from the

[Mosquito Range Heritage Initiative](#) (MRHI).

Students and adults came to learn how to build birdbaths.

- South Park Archeology Project, sponsored by the Skidmore College Anthropology Department in Saratoga Springs, New York, held a two-day workshop at Beaver Ponds. The course taught participants how to be stewards of archeological sites.
- Beaver Ponds served as a meeting space for researchers and graduate students from University of Missouri who were part of a long-term project studying various aspects of rare plants, bristlecone pines and pollinators on Pennsylvania Mountain. Beaver Ponds served

(continued on p. 5)

Beaver Ponds educates 200 kids and adults, *(cont. from p. 4)*

as a jumping-off point for tours of Pennsylvania Mountain, given by the graduate students.

Twelve people attended.

- Five professors/researchers from five different universities and colleges held a planning meeting with Beaver Ponds personnel in July for next year's activities. Academic institutions include University of Missouri, Appalachian State University, Colorado College, Denver University, Indiana University - South Bend, University of Kansas, SUNY-Old Westbury and Regis University.

- Beaver Ponds collaborated for the first time with [Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado](#) (VOC). While parents volunteering for trail construction and maintenance worked on Pennsylvania Mountain, their kids were engaged in activities with VOC counselors at Beaver Ponds. This successful visit is expected to be repeated next summer.

Student Visits: South Park RE2 pre-school

visited, with 19 students and parents. Kids fed the animals and harvested potatoes and other vegetables from the raised-bed gardens.

- The [Downtown Denver Expeditionary School](#) visited three separate weeks with students, teachers and counselors camping two nights at Beaver Ponds. Kids got to help feed the animals in the morning, learn about beaver adaptations, ecology, and sustainable gardening and helped rebuild a beaver dam that had broken during the Spring floods.

- Students from the [Bristlecone Montessori](#) visited twice. They are using Beaver Ponds as a base to work on long-term research projects.

- Three classes from Colorado Mountain College in Summit County visited. The Ecology and Sustainability class learned how to conduct forest measurements. Two sessions of the Introduction to Environmental Science class learned about sustainable energy, beaver ecology, fire mitigation, greenhouse agriculture and domestic animals.

Stretch your donation dollars until Dec. 31, 2015

The year is coming to a close, and so, too, is the unique opportunity to double your donation, without spending an extra dime. Our anonymous benefactor has committed to matching ALL donations Beaver Ponds receives through this December, up to \$25,000. We're growing and serving the community more and more, but we need your help.

Last quarter, Nancy C.'s donation doubled through the anonymous donor, allowing us to buy a micro-fodder system, which now provides fresh grass for our animals year-round.

Beaver Ponds still has a number of funding needs. For example, we want to complete our Passive Solar Energy Education Classroom, which would display key components of our energy systems, by adding glass walls, a tiled floor, and other necessary items to our first two garage bays. We'd also like to add a scientific quality weather station and energy tracking software to get a better handle on energy usage during various weather conditions.

Beaver Ponds also participates in the AmazonSmile program, automatically receiving 0.05% of purchases you make on Amazon. To contribute, log in through [AmazonSmile.com](#), and select Beaver Ponds.