



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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GRAND JUNCTION MONUMENT STEWARDS RESTORE NATIVE PLANTS

GRAND JUNCTION, Colo. April 25, 2024 – The City of Grand Junction has been working on a collaboration with Colorado West Land Trust to restore native vegetation in the Lunch Loop area on Monument Road.

Volunteers in Colorado West Land Trust's Monument Stewards program harvest seeds from native plants that are then cultivated by City horticulture staff into becoming seedlings for replanting on city public open space, along the Monument Trail and at the Lunch Loop Trailhead. Volunteers remove invasive weeds like Tamarisk and once those are cleared, they plant the native seedlings and over some years nurture them so the weeds don't grow back. Once the seedlings are replanted, volunteers, with the supervision of city horticulture staff and members of the Colorado West Land Trust, water weekly to ensure the baby plants get a good start at reaching maturity as healthy adult plants.

"This is an important project for our community and Monument Stewards volunteers are so proud of the contribution they make to beautifying one of the most popular areas of town," stated Joe Brown, horticulture/irrigation turf supervisor. "By restoring these areas with native plants, we are improving the trail experience for users while supporting the return of native vegetation."

"Our collaboration with the city not only promotes conservation and the value of maintaining our open space, but it builds community," stated Libby Collins, program manager for the Colorado West Land Trust. "Our volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds. Some are experienced and some are simply plant lovers but they come together for a common goal. They are dedicated to stewardship of our public lands and have grown as a reliable, skilled stewardship corps to help restore our native landscape."

Plants whose seeds are harvested for the program include Rabbit Brush, Sage Brush, Spike Dropseed grass and Four-wing Saltbush. Hardy drought-tolerant plants like deep-rooted native Four-wing Saltbush don't require much water once they get established.

In addition to beautifying the area around the Lunch Loop Trailhead, the program helped to restore land surrounding the Monument Trail after the paved trail was constructed and there are plans to do the same with the completion of the new section further west connecting Monument with S. Camp later this year.

The Monument Stewards is a collaborative effort lead by Colorado West Land Trust and the City of Grand Junction, with valuable input from Eureka! Science Museum, Grand Valley Audubon, local professionals, and native plant enthusiasts.

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