



*Working to preserve,
enhance and advocate
for Denver's parks,
recreation resources,
open space and
urban tree canopy
for 47 years.*

NEWS FROM THE PARK PEOPLE

THE PARK BENCH

Be A Smart Ash!

Have you seen the 'Be A Smart Ash' or 'This Ash is Covered' tree ribbon around town? If so, you're seeing the front lines of an effort to combat what experts are calling the most significant threat to urban forests in North American history and 'A natural disaster in slow motion.'

The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) threatens to kill 15% of our city's trees – some 330,000 ash trees that line our streets and shade our yards. That's an annual value loss of \$18.3 million in environmental benefits provided by trees, including cleaner air and water, absorption and storage of greenhouse gases, flood control, enhanced property value, wildlife habitat, energy conservation, cooling of the urban heat island, and a host of physical, psychological, and social benefits.

EAB has killed 50 million trees in 28 states in the East and Midwest, costing communities billions of dollars in tree treatment, removal, and replacement.

The tiny green beetle was first discovered in Boulder in 2013, where its spread is extensive. It was detected in Longmont in June this year, and, while it has not yet been discovered in Denver, many experts believe it is likely already here.

EAB presents a serious and daunting challenge. But we have hope – and a strong plan. The City Forester's Emerald Ash Borer Response Plan incorporates lessons learned from communities throughout the East and Midwest. Denver is taking a strong, proactive leadership role on this issue, and communities across the country are watching with great interest. The City has begun treating select large and healthy right-of-way ash trees that can still benefit our communities for decades to come. They are removing small and unhealthy ash trees that should be replaced rather than treated, and in May they launched *Be A Smart Ash*, a fun, large-scale awareness campaign to educate the public.

One of the most important components of the plan is the proactive planting of new trees to reduce the impact of the eventual loss of 330,000 ash across Denver. The City is partnering with The Park People to mobilize hundreds of volunteers, residents, and community groups to raise awareness and get new trees planted throughout our community.

Through our *Denver Digs Trees* and *Community Forester* programs, The Park People will mobilize a large-scale spring distribution



EAB FAST FACTS:

- Non-native wood-boring beetle from Asia spread by the movement of infested ash trees and wood, e.g. firewood, packing material
- EAB adults lay eggs on ash trees. Larvae tunnel underneath bark, feeding on water-conducting tissues, slowly killing the tree
- Kills weak and healthy trees, young and mature, and all major North American ash species, including all White and Green Ash varieties
- Kills trees within five years unless treated with pesticide
- Typically is not found in a community until 3-5 years after pest first arrives
- Has devastated ash tree populations in Midwestern and Eastern U.S. and Canadian cities, killing tens of millions of trees and costing communities billions of dollars
- 1 in 6 trees is an ash – 330,000 trees in the City of Denver, a loss of \$18.3 million in services each year

Continues pg 7...



THE FINAL HOURS to Save Our Sundial

For the past two and a half years, The Park People has been working with residents dedicated to raising the funds needed to save the beloved Sundial & Plaza at Cranmer Park. After careful analysis of the site with the help of historic preservation specialists and design experts, we elected to pursue a renovation and reconstruction project that will resolve the plaza's structural deficiencies and drainage problems to create a more sustainable site for future generations.

We have made great progress in raising the \$1.8 million needed for the project. Since our last report in *The Park Bench*, support from foundations, businesses, and individuals has helped move the campaign forward. In a demonstration of continued City support, the Department of Arts and Venues increased their project support by \$25,000 to meet the anticipated actual costs of the mountain view panorama re-creation, and the Department of Parks and Recreation included an additional \$300,000 of funding in their proposed 2017 budget. These additional funds bring the City's contribution to over half of the anticipated construction costs. In May, the Stapleton Family through the Harmes C. Fishback Trust offered a \$50,000 challenge in conjunction with our July Independence Day Family Fun Festival. We are so grateful to these partners and to the many individuals and foundations who committed new and additional funds to leverage these powerful matching dollars. We are so pleased to have partnerships with others in our community who value this special site and appreciate the vital role that Denver's parks, shared spaces, and special places play in all our lives. Please see the full list of SOS contributors on page 9. We feel confident that with the support of the community in the Final Hours of the campaign, we can reach our goal by year's end and complete the project in 2017.

SUNDIAL & PLAZA QUICK FACTS:

- Cranmer Park's 6-foot quartzite Sundial is one of Denver's unique and beloved park landmarks.
- Built in the 1930s, the plaza is a visual gateway to the mountains. Its beautiful but severely damaged mosaic panorama depicts the Front Range peaks, including five 14ers.
- The site has a rich history tied to George E. Cranmer and Mayor Ben Stapleton, key visionaries behind much of Denver's parks system, including Red Rocks Amphitheatre and Winter Park.
- More than 70,000 metro area residents and tourists from around the world visit Cranmer Park each year.
- The site is listed as one of the state's *Most Endangered Places*. The plaza was built without a solid foundation, which has led to extensive buckling, sagging, and cracking over the decades.
- The sundial, plaza, and colorful mosaic mountain panorama are in dire need of a full-scale renovation and reconstruction to resolve the foundation and drainage problems that threaten the future of this iconic park landmark.

Close the Gap: Please join us in these Final Hours. YOU can ensure that one of Denver's park treasures is protected now and into the future. Donations of all sizes are appreciated! Gifts of \$5,000 or more will receive permanent recognition onsite. Save Our Sundial donations can be made at www.SaveOurSundial.com or by mail ('SOS Fund' c/o The Park People).

A special thanks to Mor Zucker, Kathleen Phelan, Morna Steninger, Denise Sanderson, and Laurie Chahbandour for leading this year's Independence Day Family Fun Festival benefitting SOS. Our continued thanks also to Denver Parks and Recreation and Councilwoman Mary Beth Susman for supporting our work.

SOS Committee Members: Co-Chairs Denise Sanderson & Laurie Chahbandour, Tim Buchanan, Andrea Dikeou, Sally Hooks, Genny Kline, Amie Knox, Alison, Judy & David Koff, Ken Malo, Leslie Newell, Kathleen Phelan, Cheryl Reese, Scott Robson, Kathleen Rust, Hank Saipe, Morna Steninger, Susan Sweeney, Tracy Willis, and Mor Zucker



While an ill-timed storm forced us to move indoors, kids enjoyed games, face painting, reptiles, character performers, music, and more at our July 1 Festival.

\$1,633,598

Funds raised and anticipated

Only **\$166,402**

TO GO! →

\$0

\$1,308,598

Raised as of 8/1/16

\$325,000

2017 proposed
additional City funding

\$1,800,000

Goal

A Timeless Community Treasure

Since the 1930s, the Cranmer Park Sundial & Plaza has been the backdrop of hundreds of thousands of people's lives. Countless individuals and families have cherished memories through all stages of life and during our important life moments. 'Summitting' the sundial is practically a rite of passage for neighborhood children and kids who frequent the park during athletic activities. This unique park landmark is also a decades-old teen hangout, the backdrop of prom photos, and the stage of marriage proposals and weddings. The plaza, with its mosaic panorama of the mountain peaks, is the viewing platform introducing visitors and tourists to the Rockies as well as the front row seat for locals enjoying sunsets and fireworks. The sundial plaza is a place of community and celebration, of family, friendship, and connection, of calm and restoration, of reflection and solace. The site incorporates our cultural heritage, a sense of place, and intriguing pieces of art that simultaneously teach us and capture the imagination. It is a privilege to serve a place that means so much to so many.



The Sundial is gorgeous, unique and quintessentially Denver. It's the home of so many wonderful memories for my family. I knew it was the spot I wanted to take the [wedding] photos that I would cherish for my whole life!

- Lizzi Sullivan Beyer



School fights – We used to go up to the Sundial to finish up business after school, if you know what I mean.

- Hal Taylor, recalling his middle school days
50 years ago, one of the many 'colorful'
recollections we've heard

So many other places come and go, but I thought the Sundial would be here the rest of our lives. - John Steninger, who proposed to his wife Morna at the sundial



Tennis for Kids

By Maureen Kechriotis



For more than 30 years, the Gates Tennis Center has been the finest public tennis facility in Colorado and consistently recognized as one of the best in the nation. It has been the recipient of the Starburst Community Award, USTA Outstanding Large Public Facility, and most recently *Tennis Industry's* Municipal Tennis Facility of the Year. The late Charles C. Gates gifted the Center to the citizens of Denver in hopes of providing the highest quality facility for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds. Wanting to ensure its long-term sustainability, Mr. Gates expressed a desire that the Center be managed by The Park People in partnership with City of Denver. In 2006, The Park People retained Colorado Tennis Management to manage the facility, and the *Tennis For Kids* Outreach Program was formally created.

Tennis for Kids is a nonprofit, 501(c)3 program at Gates Tennis Center supporting Colorado's youth. The program offers a sliding scale scholarship funded by donations from our local community. The purpose of our program is to provide financial assistance to enable motivated juniors ages 18 and under to learn and

play the sport of tennis. Through tennis, fundamental life skills such as determination, a strong work ethic, responsibility, integrity, commitment, physical fitness and self-confidence can be learned. *Tennis for Kids* is celebrating its 10th year and has served over 500 kids during that time; approximately 50 kids annually. This is a number we can grow; our reach has only been limited by our budget. The positive impact *Tennis for Kids* is having on young people the past 10 years has been possible because of donations from a small pool of individuals and tournaments like the Colorado State Open. However, changes in the structure of the Colorado State Open may impact *Tennis for Kids*, requiring funds to be raised from the tennis community including individuals, local businesses, foundations, and events. Donations to '*Tennis for Kids*' are gratefully accepted care of The Park People.

Gates Tennis Center is open year round. Colorado is one of the sunniest states and people are playing outdoors most of the year! The Center offers programs from Pee Wee (ages 4-8), juniors (8-18) to adult lessons, ladders, socials and tournaments. Come out to Gates for fun tennis and great exercise!

Meet Kenny Orr: A *Tennis For Kids* member for 4 years!

Name: Kenny Orr **Age:** 17 years old
Birthplace: Denver, CO
Plays: Right handed. Two handed backhand
Equipment: Wilson Prostaff 95s
Age started playing tennis: 12
Favorite Player: Roger Federer

Person who has made biggest impact on you in tennis world: There are so many to choose from! John Thornhill, my first coach, taught me all the basics and helped grow my

love of tennis. Currently my coach is Brion Salazar, he has helped me bring my game to a much higher level!

Top 5 things coaches have taught you: Always find a way to make one more ball than your opponent. Put all your effort into the point you are playing at the moment, don't worry about anything else. Watch the pros on TV. Don't be afraid of losing. Have fun!

3 pieces of wisdom you would pass to a player just starting the sport: Although it will be difficult at first, never give up, it will be worth all your hard work! Play as many matches as you can. Find a coach you like to work with.

Interests away from tennis: traveling, music, animals, church activities, the outdoors, reading

5 things people don't know about you: I sang in Carnegie Hall. I am a pipe organist, I just played a concert on the world's largest theatre organ! I am a violinist. I'm

homeschooled. I am the youngest member of the Stratus Chamber Orchestra.

What is a typical day for you? Devotions, homeschool, music, music lessons, tennis

How long have you been playing at Gates? 4 years **Favorite court?** West Center

What is your favorite thing about Gates? Awesome staff

Other than playing tennis, do you do anything else related to tennis? Yes, I have sold tickets for the Colorado State Open for a number of years. I have been able to earn some free lessons, and a tennis racquet!

Best tennis memory: Meeting Novak Djokovic

How will you use what you've learned from tennis in "real world"? No matter how many times you fail, keep getting back up and work even harder

What would you say about the Tennis For Kids program? It's great! It is the reason I have been able to play so much tennis. I am very thankful for this program.



Denver Digs 1,340 New Trees in a Snow Storm!

Despite a cold, wet snow storm, our amazing volunteers rallied to distribute 1,340 affordable and free trees to Denver residents through our spring *Denver Digs Trees* distribution. We were inspired by the heart-warming sight of 600+ households coming to claim their trees in the snow. Volunteers delivered and planted 170 trees for 120 residents, ensuring those with physical limitations could participate. More than 750 trees were planted in Denver neighborhoods most in need of trees and with low- to moderate- average incomes, and 230 trees were provided to applicants facing financial hardship. These trees will grow to cool and beautify our neighborhoods, filter air pollution, provide habitat for wildlife, improve property values, make our streets more walkable and create healthier, more vibrant communities.



Each year these 1,340 trees will...

- provide \$6,000 in energy savings
- offset 225,500 lbs of CO2
- reduce 1,660 lbs of air pollution
- manage 1,337,000 gal of storm water
- provide \$35,000 in total net benefits

... \$1,402,300 in lifetime benefits!



Who wants trees?!
We do!



Volunteers donated more than 2,100 hours...

- Raising awareness about our program
- Reviewing & approving planting sites
- Wrangling, distributing, & planting trees
- Monitoring tree health
- Supporting the behind-the-scenes prep

That's \$49,300 in time and talent!



Many Thanks to our Volunteers and to our Spring 2016 Sponsors:



ARCHITECTURE
URBAN DESIGN
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Denver Digs Trees Class Reunions

By Jackie Burghardt

Class reunions. An invitation that sparks the imagination to wonder how your classmates are doing. A time to remember some of the stories and events that took place in that passage of time you shared with others through one part of life's journey. *Where are they now? What are they doing? Will I recognize them?*

Here at The Park People we have been imagining a class reunion of our own. We are looking back to some of the early classes of our trees that have found homes in our wonderful city. We wonder about the passage of time and their own life journey. We wonder, *How are they doing? Will we recognize them? What have they seen over the passage of time?*

We interviewed some of the owners of the many different kinds of trees that left our hands and were lovingly received by their new caretakers over the last 20 years. As these little saplings have grown, they have experienced their

own passage of time: increased traffic along our streets and boulevards; drought which has challenged their tenacity for nourishment; children swinging from a rope or climbing their inviting branches; dogs; a plethora of different kinds of birds nesting in their branches often squaring off with the squirrels who also nest there; shade from leaves who have seen picnics, yoga classes, and young lovers; leaves that have given shade to houses and buildings; and the unseen chemical interactions between water, roots, and oxygen that make photosynthesis, taking in carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen to purify the very air we breathe.

Here are a few trees that we learned about. If you have a story to tell about your *Denver Digs* tree or trees, we invite you to contact us. Our goal is to share some of the many inspiring and heart-warming tree stories through our *Park Bench* newsletter and social media. Maybe in telling your own story you will look back to the time you first came in contact with that scrawny little branch of a tree and wondered if it would ever amount to anything. Let us know!

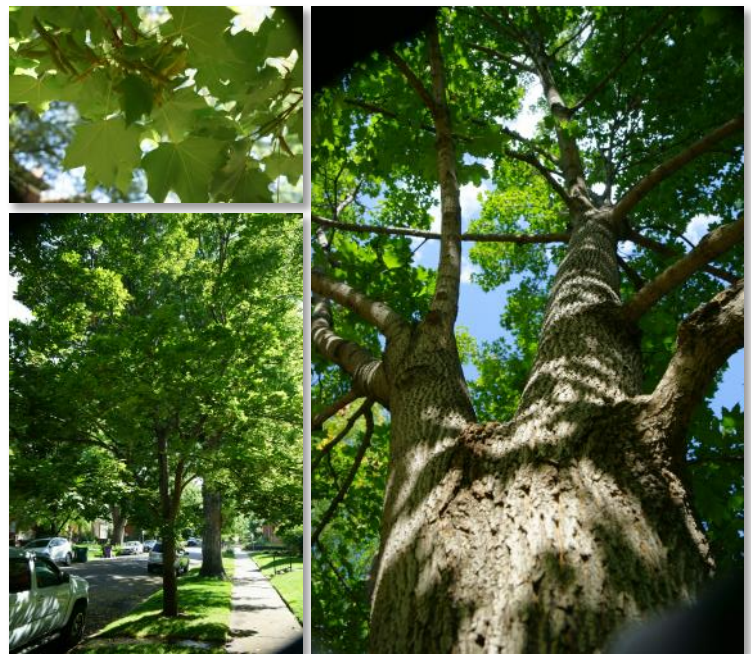
Our thanks to these *Denver Digs Trees* participants for sharing about their trees. We appreciated hearing how for each of these folks planting, nurturing, and caring for plants – especially trees – helps them do their part to improve their little piece of the planet.



While digging a hole for a burgundy maple in 2010, Jennifer Blair found a crusted piece of dirt with what looked like blue glass in it which she stuck in her pocket. After the soil was cleaned off, a beautiful opal ring appeared, inspiring the tree's new name: "Opal Tree." Having now planted many more than her original 8 maple and oak trees, Jennifer is a great example of commitment to our city's canopy and inspiration to all who enjoy the benefits of the trees' shade. In addition, she has the help of resident homeless people who help her do the digging and taking care of these trees.



Tom Culig remembers a neighbor helping him plant 2 oak trees when his daughter was very young. Now his daughter is grown and married and has children of her own. This tree has seen the passage of a generation and the hope of a new generation keeping the tradition! Tom enjoys the shade and uses the leaves for composting.



Kathy Kurtz: Barely a stick, bare root, this Norwegian maple was planted about 20 years ago when the *Denver Digs Trees* program was in its infancy, operating out of a house in Washington Park. As the tree grew out over the street, a moving truck took out a few branches! But now the tree has grown so tall that the branches are enjoyed from inside a second floor window. This fall Kathy will enjoy the wonderful yellow leaves as they turn before falling off. Culig and Kurtz photos by Community Forester Steve Clemens.

Wells Fargo Plants in NW Denver

In April, Wells Fargo employees joined The Park People for their second tree planting project through our *Mile High Tree Champions* program. Their team planted 21 trees at an affordable housing community in the Sunnyside neighborhood. These trees will grow to shade the homes, sidewalks, and shared spaces of this Denver Housing Authority site that is home to 1,500 residents. The trees here were carefully sited and selected to maximize shading and other benefits while ensuring compatibility with rooftop solar panels on many of the buildings.

"Our Wells Fargo team members loved the tree planting event hosted by The Park People on Earth Day. It was great to have the opportunity to spend time with others who have a passion for the environment and to make our communities healthier. And as an added bonus, we all learned something we didn't know about trees. Thanks Park People!!" - Elaine Nelson, Community Relations, Wells Fargo



Wells Fargo employees flex their muscles to plant trees at an affordable housing community in northwest Denver.

Our warm thanks to the Wells Fargo team – champions of our urban forest! Have a suggestion for a prospective partner company? Or a potential planting site? Please contact Kim@TheParkPeople.org!

Smart Ash continued...

of street and yard trees during the optimal planting season. We are also recruiting applicants for a new year-round free street tree program offering delivery, planting, and tree care support. Throughout the programs, we will actively spread general awareness of the Emerald Ash Borer, its impacts, and ash-owners' options.

"The City cannot do this alone. We need allies and community partners to help us meet this challenge and protect our city forest and our communities."

- Rob Davis, City Forester
City & County of Denver

Action Items:

- To **become an Ashvocate and volunteer** for the cause, contact us at info@TheParkPeople.org.
- To learn more about Emerald Ash Borer, identify if you have an ash tree, or apply for a free street tree now, visit www.BeASmartAsh.org
- To apply for free and affordable street and yard trees through our spring distribution, visit www.TheParkPeople.org
- To **Donate** to support free and affordable trees for Denver's neighborhoods, please visit www.TheParkPeople.org
- To inquire about **Sponsorship Opportunities & Benefits**, please contact Kim@TheParkPeople.org



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Park People Team Transitions

We wish to express our deep gratitude to **Spencer Roberts** for his service as our Program Associate once again, supporting a successful *Denver Digs Trees* 2016 distribution. This year we are delighted to welcome new Trustees **Randy Moore** and **Claudia Winkler** to our leadership team. We are also thrilled to have **Leah Jean Shafer** continue leading our urban forestry efforts as Program Manager, and we are fortunate to have long-time Community Forester and lead volunteer **Mike Haaf** come on board as our Program Coordinator to support outreach and stewardship for *Be a Smart Ash* and *Denver Digs Trees*!



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Contributions from September 1, 2015 through August 31, 2016. If we inadvertently omitted your name, please contact us.

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This list includes contributions through August 31, 2016. If we inadvertently omitted your name or mis-recorded your giving level, please contact us.

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

Fall 2016

As we are reminded on a daily basis, our community is growing rapidly. Heavy traffic, cranes erecting multiplexes across the city, the soaring housing prices – these are the common topics of conversation if you live in Denver. And who can blame anyone for wanting to move here? It *is* the best. But the impacts of this growth cannot be ignored. Denver proper is anticipated to grow by 12% by 2025 – that’s another 80,000 people in only 9 years. The seven-county metro area will grow by more than 1 million by 2040, increasing pressure on the urban core.

In the face of such growth, our parks and other green infrastructure will play an even more critical role in balancing the strains of the built environment and supporting the vibrancy of our communities. Even and especially as we face Emerald Ash Borer, we need a full and healthy forest canopy to cool our neighborhoods and mitigate the urban heat island effect, to reduce flooding as impermeable surfaces expand, and to filter pollutants from our air as traffic congestion worsens. We need urban oases where we can rest, relax, find inspiration, and re-create ourselves; where we can connect with nature and run uninhibited on occasion; where we can escape, exercise, and gather with others. As our city grows, we need those common spaces where people from different backgrounds and perspectives can share a space and interact or simply co-exist; spaces where strangers become more familiar and where community becomes possible.

As The Park People embarks on a year of strategic planning and the City of Denver begins a community-driven process to update the parks and recreation master plan and other citywide goals for the future (Denverright), I ask for your support. Please invest in the health, beauty, vibrancy, and sustainability of our communities. Please choose to support The Park People. We welcome gifts made via www.TheParkPeople.org, by mail, and over the phone.

Sincerely,

Kim Yuan-Farrell
Executive Director