



February 2006 Newsletter

Brown & Gray Amphitheaters Construction Update- H & H Excavating has completed digging out the north and south meander scars and moved the exhumed earth material to each amphitheater for the seating area berms. More material was needed for the berms so a third meander cut was added that connects the two other meanders and empties them into the wetlands area. **Jim Schofield**, the construction superintendent for **Fisbeck & Sheel**, has the crews putting in the footings and preparing the pads for the roof areas. The stone seating is being installed by **Ty Morrison** and should be completed by the next week. Road base material has been used to complete a walking path to the individual areas. **Clayton Harrison**, **Rotary Clubs'** Project Manager confirms that both amphitheaters should be finished by March 13th. Please stop by and check out the construction progress.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM-The Poudre Learning Center is currently recruiting people in the community to volunteer at the facility. Volunteers will partake in a required training program that will take place in the next few months. The volunteers will receive training in areas such as wildlife and plant ecology, geology, hydrology, soils, equipment use, and history of the Poudre Learning Center site and surrounding areas. Professionals in the respective areas will conduct the training sessions. This is an exciting time to become a volunteer as we begin a busy spring with lots of teachers and students eager to visit and learn about the outdoors. If you enjoy working with students, enjoy the outdoors, and/or would enjoy helping in areas such as reclamation, trail maintenance, plantings, etc., please inquire about our volunteer program. This is also a great opportunity to meet people who share similar interests. Please contact Ray Tschillard (rtschillard@greeleyschools.org; 352-1267) or **Lynne Fox-Parrish** (tjplfp@yahoo.com; 378-0993) to receive an application



ON THE ROAD AGAIN- On January 16th, the PLC traveling power point show was invited to join the **Windsor Rotary Club** for lunch. After a tasty lunch, the 25 members present were given an update on the student activities and construction projects at the PLC. Of course there is no such thing as a free lunch as they were all invited to join the PLC Volunteer Training Program this Spring.

DOW/PLC Evening Class offerings: Colorado Ecosystems: Crossroads of Biodiversity

This is our first evening class for teachers offered by the **Lisa Evans** of the **Colorado Division of Wildlife**. **UNC** Biology Professor, **Dr. Gerry Saunders** is leading the participants through a series of activities that will increase their knowledge of plants and animals in Colorado's ecosystems. The teachers will also learn specific Colorado examples of science concepts, including adaptations, energy flow, interrelationships, and endangered species. As well as receiving a set of 8 art-quality posters and the accompanying educator's guide, attendees will experience Project WILD and other activities, content-area reading and specific literacy connections that they can use with students to teach about Colorado ecosystems. The class will meet Feb 2nd & Feb 23rd, 4:00-8:00 pm and targeting 4th -7th grade teachers at our four partner school districts.



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PRAIRIE RECLAMATION EFFORTS- Meander scar construction is currently underway. These scars are being created to simulate land forms that represent where the river may have flowed in the past, but changed course to its present location. By changing land appearance, we have attempted to show how the area may have looked before being leveled for agricultural purposes. The scars offer learning opportunities - plant cover and diversity differences can be related to slope and moisture levels.

A plant survey of the Poudre Trail is currently being conducted by **Dr. Don Hazlett**. Information from this survey will be used for prairie vegetation plans for the PLC, as well as for developing field guides and teaching tools.

One of the goals at the PLC is to provide a learning environment that also fosters good research practices. We are currently developing a research strategy so that data collected and analyzed will produce statistically-viable results for publication. We are considering several management options to test in either randomized complete block or split-plot designs.



Red Spotted Toad Sighting- During our Fall orientation workshops, a rare sighting occurred. A pair of red spotted toads were observed on the Orientation walkabout by both **Lisa Evans & Larry Rogstad**, from the **Colorado Division of Wildlife**. In fact this was the first time a red spotted toad was observed in Northern Colorado. Previous toad sightings in Colorado have been limited to the southeast corner. We'll keep a keen look out and our cameras ready for the toad this spring.



GK-12 at the PLC- National Science Foundation GK-12 fellows from **UNC** have been assisting in the overall development of the PLC, as well as working with teacher and students who visit the site. GK-12 also provides funds for projects. This year these funds are being used to purchase equipment for soil sampling and analysis. GK-12 fellows are funded by the NSF through UNC and not by District 6 or any other related entity, so they offer assistance without the need for an increase in FTE; however, the program lasts only a few years, and one fellow will most likely complete his fellowship by fall, 2006, so an increase in FTE will most likely be needed then to maintain current staffing requirements.

PLC / GK 12 SCHEDULES WEEKLY MEETING- Monday 8-10:00

- **Rod Simpson** (10-15 Hrs per wk) (*Also assigned to Union Colony*)
- **Lynne Fox-Parrish** (5-10 hrs per wk)
- **Mike Urban** (10-15 hrs per wk) (*Also assigned to J. Evans*)

PLC GOING POSTAL- Next time you enter the drive at the PLC get a look at our new mail box. **Jim Brown**, PLC custodian and Hazelton alumni, assembled and painted the post and box, the **District 6 crew** installed it and **Zac Tschillard, Young Electric Sign CO**, designed and installed the logo. We think we have a mailbox that is beautiful and will last for years, *Thanks!*

PLC RESOURCES LIBRARY- The staff members and the curriculum committee at the PLC are currently compiling a list of resources to be purchased for the development of a library thanks to a grant from **Wells Fargo**. The resources are aimed at fostering or enhancing the curricula at the center and include background materials for teachers and students as well as class sets of materials. An initial draft of the resources list will be completed by mid-February. The list will be of a bibliographic nature and will include prices so that decisions can be made regarding purchasing and quantities.

PLANT SURVEY- Resident botanist and expert on local flora, **Dr. Don Hazlett**, has completed his initial survey of plants in the vicinity of the PLC. The survey is being funded by a gift from PLC Board Director **Myra Monfort**. The next step represents an opportunity to involve participating high school students in researching details about the distribution, duration, and origin for the 176 identified plant species occurring at the center. It will afford the students a chance to work with a practicing scientist and participate in a local scientific endeavor. The project is flexible enough to be integrated into the normal course curriculum as an extension activity and



includes the potential for further continued involvement in future activities (e.g., field trips to the site for specimen collection). UNC GK12 Fellow **Mike Urban** is currently recruiting Biology teachers about participating. For more information call the PLC 352.1267

Orientation to the PLC Workshops- This past Fall over 300 teachers participated in the Orientation to the PLC workshops in which they studied the Poudre Watershed as it meanders through our communities and out onto the plains to meet the South Platte. The orientation prepared our teachers to safely use the PLC, introduced them to the Use & Reservation policies, PLC Curriculum, PLC Staff support, and PLC facilities available. Before any class or school group may schedule time to use any of the PLC facilities, at least one instructor from that class or group must attend an Orientation to the PLC workshop. Upcoming PLC ORIENTATION Dates:

	Saturday February 11 th	Saturday March 25 th
Saturday April 8 th	Saturday May 13 th	Tuesday June 13 th

For more information, contact the PLC- 352.1267 or RTschillard@GreeleySchools.org

Help us select a name for the Poudre Learning Center's newsletters... some of the suggestions are; **The Meanderings** * **POUDRE PAGES of NEWS** * **Poudre River News** * **Poudre & Prairie Hearsay**
Please let us know if you like one of the names or have a suggestion.



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PLC Curriculum Institutes: Want a chance to find out more about how to use the river, lake, wetlands & prairie of the PLC plus help select, adapt and revise activities that align with your schools' curriculum?

The Colorado Division of Wildlife and the four PLC partner school districts are sponsoring Intermediate and Secondary PLC Curriculum Institutes in June 2006. The institutes will include: background content, use of science notebooks, integration, and inquiry-based learning. Teachers can apply individually or as a school-based grade level team!

At the Institutes you will select, adapt & revise activities that will support your existing district's curriculum, include literacy integration, inquiry-based science methods and are aligned with the Colorado State Model Content Standards. Still have questions? Email Rtschillard@GreeleySchools.org

WHO: PLC 3rd to 5th Curriculum Institute. Elementary teachers from the 4 cooperating districts are invited to apply. **(2 teachers per grade per district)**
PLC 6th to 12th Curriculum Institute. Teachers from the 4 cooperating districts are invited to apply. **(2 teachers per grade per district)**

WHEN:	Intermediate- June 5-8, 2006	Secondary- June 26-29, 2006
WHERE:	Poudre Learning Center	TIME: 8:00 - 4:30
CREDIT:	2.0	STIPEND: \$100

APPLICATIONS DUE March 17th, 2006

SCHOOL TRIPS DO CHANGE LIVES- Changing Minds: The Lasting Impact of School Trips' is the result of the first ever study of its kind. It was conducted over one year for the National Trust by Dr Alan Peacock of Exeter University, a leading expert in environmental education and education outside the classroom. 'We looked at whether school children's learning about their local environment would influence the way they treat it. We found that not only was this the case, but high quality out-of-classroom learning also influenced how children behave and the lifestyle choices they make. It shows the potential for schools trips not just to change children's lives, but the lives of whole communities,' Dr Peacock said. Learn more about the study at http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-global/w-news/w-news-top_story.htm

THAT'S IT FOR NOW- but look for more emails from us in your inbox; because the developments will keep on coming - and so will the cool events and opportunities at your Poudre Learning Center. Thanks again,
Your friends at the Poudre Learning Center

PLC provides site-specific, outdoor education opportunities for the K-12 students & teachers from our four partner school districts of Eaton, Greeley-Evans, Johnstown-Milliken and Windsor.

Please send newsletter comments and suggestions to rtschillard@GreeleySchools.org