



Pikes Peak Permaculture, Inc.



Dear Local Community



Greetings. My personal story in permaculture started over twenty years ago in 2002. I was a single mother of teenagers running a small organic gardening company. I had been an activist for several environmental movements such as Ancient Forest Rescue, trying to preserve Colorado ancient forests from logging. Working to defend the earth was something that spoke to my heart, and raising young adults made the desire even stronger. Then I was introduced to permaculture and attended my first design certification course with a good friend. My future outlook popped wide open. A permaculture-led and ethical life was revealed as possible.

Permaculture washed over me and changed the direction of my life. I was moved from a life of defending and protesting to a positive and solution-oriented direction that protected and supported natural systems. Already an organic gardener, permaculture helped me hone my business and the work that I was doing to be even more effective. I began working for the earth - one garden at a time. Permaculture proved to hold a deeper impact for me and often for my clients. My business developed a deeper purpose, new vision, and gave rise to more satisfaction.

As the business grew, I applied permaculture to the business in several ways. We provided clean and effective service. Our gardeners made good wages. Our clients became engaged with us. The gardeners performed tasks cooperatively. The financial institution of many years refused to extend suitable credit to a gardening business. (Perhaps due to being operated by a woman? Those were different times.) Permaculture showed me the path to alternate forms of 'income' to accomplish work through cooperation with the crew, pooling our resources, and tackling larger projects as a collective. Everyone benefited. We were a happy lot!

Since 2002, I have had the great honor of bringing permaculture to over a hundred eager students in the Pikes Peak region. I have engaged with other permaculture organizations such as High Altitude Permaculture. Pikes Peak Permaculture jointly provided not just beginning design courses but also taught new teachers to help shoulder the work. Those teachers are now close and valued friends. It is a privilege to be carrying this powerful work forward. We share a laugh often. Having the tools of permaculture increases our confidence in a positive future for all.

Permaculture is here and holds solutions to the problems and concerns we face. My own thoughts on permaculture are continually expanding. Today, I am still building skills, gaining experience, sharing knowledge, and refining my systems thinking. Permaculture asks for honesty, integrity, and seeks to embrace the wisdom in natural systems. Designs seek innovative and clean solutions that solve problems while adding richness and productivity. Allowing the ethics to lead us: Earth Care, People Care, and Fair Share, we can live well without living harmfully. We could stop existing for the rat race and reimagine, then design, our world to truly begin to live in peace and harmony while honoring the coming seven generations.

Becky Elder
Executive Director of PPP

Permaculture in Colorado

Permaculture is a design science that looks to nature for clues to solving problems and creating the systems we need to live without creating harm to the larger world where we live. In Colorado, we often have poor soils and little access to water, while a short growing season reduces the variety of foods and food systems we can use. However with strategy and modeling from nature, solutions and abundance can be realized.

Patterns from nature, used in permaculture design, speak directly to Colorado life, including water management, erosion control and soil building, while stacking functions within the systems allow forest gardens and agricultural systems to reduce waste, close loops, and increase production and biomass. Using the brilliance of naturally built homes allows indoor life in a non-toxic and very comfortable environment. Equally important is the awareness and embracing of our social systems. Permaculture people ask for help from other designers as multiple brains applied to a task can solve problems and complete a project cooperatively much easier and better than working on one's own. Teamwork is demonstrated and encouraged throughout a course, applied to designs, and put out into the community through PermaBLITZ's and hands-on potlucks. Everyone is welcomed.

In Colorado, permaculture is needed for the future coming fast, and the more people touched by the knowledge, the stronger our solutions and our resilience will be. There is a saying in permaculture circles: Each one, teach one. Once the understanding and tools are strong in the community, the community will be adapting to change in ways we can't even predict. Everything Gardens is another permaculture saying, and in Colorado, every seed planted in the community, in the garden, with teachers, in the business world and in the homestead will start to build upon itself into a stronger network. That is the path forward.

The Need for Permaculture Education

Over the past one to two hundred years, there has occurred a migration from mostly an agrarian, rural-based culture, to a strict urbanization of the population, disconnecting people from their innate sense of the value of nature and exacerbating that loss of connection. Much attention has gone into seeking appropriate solutions for addressing these increasing problems.

Permaculture emerged in the 1970's as a holistic design system, giving people a sense of reconnection with the natural world. Permaculture design allows for sustainable habitats for all forms of life that do no damage to ecosystems, and in many ways, enhances the natural system.

Nature Deficit Disorder

Coined by Richard Louv in his book, *Last Child in the Woods*, Nature Deficit Disorder (NDD) describes the idea that modern lifestyles increasingly disconnect us from nature, particularly among our children. The concept highlights the importance of spending time in nature for overall well-being. Could this be leading to a range of behavioral and health issues? Many professionals believe so. The term suggests that spending less time in natural environments can lead to a variety of problems, including obesity, attention difficulties, depression, and a diminished ability to appreciate and understand the natural world.



Permaculture offers a holistic approach to addressing NDD by reconnecting us with the natural world.

Permaculture Can Serve as a Solution:



Connection with Nature:

Permaculture encourages people to engage with the natural environment. Designers develop human-scale systems that mimic natural ecosystems. Hands-on approaches foster a deep appreciation and understanding of nature's processes.

Outdoor Activities:

Permaculture involves working directly with the land, planting gardens, tending to domestic animals, restoring habitats, and participating in other outdoor projects. These activities provide opportunities for individuals, especially children, to spend more time outdoors, nurturing a stronger connection to the natural world.



Education:

Permaculture principles emphasize observation and learning from nature, using patterns and relative location to design. Building our ecological literacy in our region. Teaching these principles, patterns, and techniques empowers us to understand our role in the ecosystem and helps us make informed choices that benefit both ourselves and the environment.



Health and Well-being:

Spending time in nature has been linked to numerous health benefits, including reduced stress, improved mood, and increased physical activity. By designing nature into our daily life, we can experience these health benefits and mitigate many of the negative effects of NDD.



Community Engagement:

Permaculture often involves working collaboratively with others to design and implement resilient projects. This welcomes a sense of community and connection, addressing social aspects of NDD. Overall, permaculture offers a multifaceted approach to addressing NDD by providing opportunities for outdoor activities and education, supporting health and well-being, and building community engagement, which leads to a deeper connection to nature.

Permaculture Education Is a Worthwhile Investment for the Future

Funding PPP will extend our outreach within the community to cater to a broader audience and cultivate more profound connections and relationships with those we seek to assist. Through tailored marketing campaigns and strategic partnerships, we can effectively convey our mission and values to a wider demographic and establish robust networks.



Environmental Sustainability: Permaculture education teaches principles of sustainable land use, water management, and biodiversity conservation. By financing permaculture education, we teach practices that regenerate ecosystems, mitigate climate change, and promote resilience in the face of environmental challenges.

Food Security: Permaculture emphasizes regenerative agriculture techniques that enhance soil fertility, increase crop yields, and promote food sovereignty. By funding permaculture education, we empower individuals and communities to produce their own food sustainably, reducing reliance on industrial agriculture and improving food security.

Economic Empowerment: Permaculture education equips individuals with valuable skills in organic farming, permaculture design, and ecological landscaping. By financing permaculture education, we create opportunities for entrepreneurship, job creation, and economic resilience in local communities.

Public Health: Permaculture promotes organic farming practices and the consumption of fresh, nutritious foods, which can improve public health outcomes by reducing exposure to pesticides and processed foods. Financing permaculture education supports initiatives that promote healthy lifestyles.

Community Resilience: Permaculture education fosters community collaboration, knowledge sharing, and mutual support networks. By funding permaculture education, we strengthen social cohesion, build community resilience, and empower people to address local challenges collectively.

Education Equity: Permaculture education is often accessible to people of all ages, backgrounds, and socioeconomic statuses. By financing permaculture education, we promote educational equity and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to learn about sustainable living practices.

Long-Term Impact: Investing in permaculture education yields long-term benefits for individuals, communities, and the environment. By financing permaculture education, we create lasting positive change that extends beyond the immediate term.



What does Pikes Peak Permaculture do in the community?

For the past 22 years, Pikes Peak Permaculture, a local non-profit organization, has been supported by dedicated volunteers, actively involved in numerous projects, activities, and educational programs, all aimed at educating the Colorado Pikes Peak community about the benefits of Permaculture design. Pikes Peak Permaculture's initiatives offer both theoretical frameworks and practical examples of genuine sustainability. Pikes Peak Permaculture promotes workshops on topics like organic gardening, rainwater harvesting, plant propagation, and natural building methods. Our Permaculture Design Certification Courses have championed the vision of a thriving community that enjoys, utilizes, and sustains the natural world's abundance.



Pikes Peak Permaculture will continue our permaculture programs, and post-COVID we have restarted our potlucks and film nights. Our goal is to further our reach into more public school districts and open the door to other educational partners.

HISTORY OF PPP

2002/2003- PPP Organized; began potlucks and permaculture introduction classes to the community. Becky returned to the Central Rocky Mountain Permaculture Institute to co-teach the Design Course there.

2004/2005- Potlucks continued and permaculture classes to garden shops, PPLD, and local groups. Becky continued at the Central Rocky Mountain Permaculture Institute to co-teach the Design Courses there.

2006/2007- 2006 was Becky's last year at the Central Rocky Mountain Permaculture Institute co-teaching the Design Courses as she now had teachers in the Pikes Peak Region to work on the first full Design Course in this area.

2007, Becky taught and attended a "Through the Seasons" course with High Altitude Permaculture in Boulder... a new PDC format to embrace.

2008/2009- 1st Permaculture Design Certification Course 2008; Transition Town Manitou Springs 2009; Permaculture Design Charrette for Maytag Mountain Ranch in Westcliffe, CO; 2008 Partnered with Livewell Colorado with classes in Fountain, 2009 Created Firehouse Forest Garden in Fountain.

2010/2011- Community Classes, often at Schools, PCC and UCCS; workshop on Creating your Own Food Supply Charrette in Westcliffe; Ongoing PDC, Collaboration with Green Cities Coalition.

2012/2013- PPP became 501c3 nonprofit incorporated in CO; Ongoing PDC. Joining with Green Cities Coalition, potlucks joined Green Cities Coalition Potlucks, pulling more people towards permaculture.

2014/2015- Steve Saint created local food research through a Regional Food Security Analysis of the Area; Ongoing PDCs.

2016/2017- Residential PDC in Westcliff, Colorado. Community Classes.

2018/2019- Ongoing PDC; Programs for the Tiny House Festival; Participated in the Pueblo Summit.

2020/2021- COVID hits and courses cease... Projects continue without classes.

2022/2023- First PDC starts after COVID... Wrote curriculum and hosted an elementary permaculture club. Hosted Skilling Classes on Plant Propagation, Food Preservation, a weekend design charrette for the Everson Ranch in the San Luis Valley. Began partnering with the Kansas Permaculture Institute.

2024/2025- Successful PDC of 2024 ended in September 2024. Presented at Pueblo's SunSoilWaterAG Summit; Presented Intro to Permaculture at a local garden shop. Weed Management Class.

PPP Provides Education and Skill Training

Pikes Peak Permaculture is committed to promoting and encouraging equity, diversity, and inclusion as an organization. We strive to ensure that our members, staff, and volunteers are respected and valued for their contributions regardless of their race, gender, age, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, abilities, disabilities, or any other factor. We are dedicated to creating an environment where everyone can thrive and be their authentic selves. We work with individuals unable to afford our programs and extend tuition support to those in need.

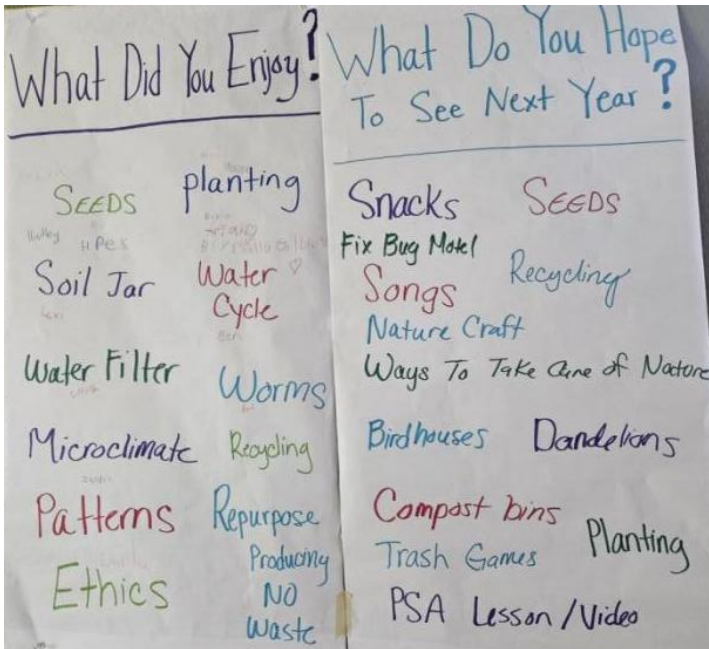


Permaculture Design Courses Our permaculture design certification follows PINA's curriculum standards with a minimum of 70 hours of educational instruction. Students will experience a deeper connection to their environment, as local permaculture practitioners from our region come together to delve into topics such as water systems, soil ecosystems, natural building, forest gardening, community development, and more.

Green Movies Free film screenings have been organized by Pikes Peak Permaculture. Over 60 environmentally conscious movies have been showcased in diverse locations across the city to expand awareness of current environmental practices and discoveries around the world. Recently, our focus has been on narratives centered around the rejuvenation of soil and respecting water resources.



Community Tabling Pikes Peak Permaculture has worked very hard to build relationships with our local community, and we strive to continue supporting these partnerships. We pursue an interactive approach to engage with the local community, believing it fosters unity and collaboration, motivating active participation in shaping the future. Recently, we have been educating about permaculture and making pollinator seed balls at the UCCS Cool Science Fair and Rocky Mountain Highway's Meadowgrass Music Festival.



Elementary School Program PPP created a Permaculture curriculum focusing on presenting permaculture to 24 students in 2nd through 5th grade, for eight weeks in Spring of 2023. We were invited to host again in the Spring of 2024. To see more, check out our blog here: <https://www.pikespeakpermaculture.org/blog/> We have a planned club for Spring 2025. (Photo to right shows the 2024 topics learnt, and what the children want for next year).

How has Pikes Peak Permaculture impacted our community members?



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For the last 18 years Permaculture training has enabled me to be part of the solution to the problem of the poisoning of the unsuspecting American public from now unavoidable toxic air and water pollution as well as the degradation of the natural world. I have proven by example that one can live a comfortable, enjoyable and bountiful life working with nature not against it in the small rural Colorado high-mountain community to which we retired. Studying and practicing permaculture principles during my retirement years offered a refreshingly positive approach and “safe guild” in which to live, grow, and in a small way contribute to the betterment of the world.” Thank you, Pikes Peak Permaculture!”
Sue Pitman in Westcliff, CO



Elementary Children with their Pollinator Bug Hotel in Spring 2023

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We have been so lucky this year to partner with Pikes Peak Permaculture. I cannot express enough how meaningful and impactful this experience has been for our students. We don't have a lot of resources, we don't have an art teacher, and we don't have a lot of opportunities to get the kids outside... understanding the Earth, understanding where all the things and food come from, understanding the systems that play into our world, and how important it all is.”

Emily Zarkovacki, School Social Worker



Elementary Children with the permaculture principles in 2024

PPP Program Initiatives

Outside of designing curriculum tailored to our region, we also offer skills training to enhance individuals' capacity to replicate these tasks in their personal lives and surroundings.

Information is disseminated through newsletters via email, pertaining to current events, workshops, and bi-annual certification programs on a regular basis. When events happen in our region that harmonize with our ethics (People Care, Earth Care, Future Care and Fair Share), we happily support and share!

General Support \$100,000/year for three years

Administration Operating Costs

**Although we have been an organized nonprofit since 2002, our community efforts are just beginning to expand. We currently do not have any major organizational contributions.*

Educational Programs 50,000/year

Supporting Programs and Projects

Permaculture Design Courses

Teacher Training Courses

Advanced Permaculture Design Courses

Elementary Permaculture Curriculum & Program

High School Permaculture Curriculum & Program



Acquiring a Permanent Location \$400,000

A demonstration site for building a permaculture hub open to the community. Resources would include implementing a Tool sharing program, space for our library, space for Classrooms, Outdoor demonstration of lands use and ethics, and a commercial kitchen; an Incubator Space for the community.

Pikes Peak Permaculture's dedicated staff is ready to provide guidance and support to individuals seeking to deepen their understanding of permaculture. We are ready to do more! Will you help us?

