



annual report

BLUFF LAKE IS A 501(C)(3) NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATION

Bluff Lake Nature Center (BLNC) owns and manages a 123 acre urban wildlife refuge and environmental education center. The BLNC mission is to “*foster lifelong learning and environmental stewardship at a unique urban wildlife refuge.*”

BLNC’s goals are to:

- Teach natural science to schoolchildren, with a special focus on low-income schools
- Conserve the wildlife refuge for community use, for this generation and those that follow
- Cultivate community members as valuable partners and active stewards

2009 STAFF

Glenn Fee, Executive Director
Susan Beckett, Education Director
Mendy Evans, Development Director
Christina Howe, AmeriCorps VISTA
Kristin Libberton, Volunteer Manager
Trisha Sejas, Bilingual Educator
Chris Story, Site Manager

REPORT CONTENTS

Board of Directors
Site Management
Education Program
Volunteer Involvement
Outreach & Communications
Financials
Major Donors
Contact Information
Get Involved
What to watch for in 2009

FISCAL YEAR 2008

Dear Bluff Lake Supporters,

Reporting on Fiscal Year 2008 (*January 1 through December 31*) is exciting, because it was a transformative year for Bluff Lake Nature Center.

The biggest news is that the City and County of Denver transferred ownership of the 123 acre Bluff Lake site to BLNC. The transfer ensures that the site will continue operating as an urban wildlife refuge and outdoor classroom for many years to come. This also means that we now need your partnerships more than ever. The city showed faith in our ability to operate Bluff Lake as an important amenity for the community. We hope the community shows equal faith through their support.

In 2008, we increased our educational programming for local elementary schools and the community, and we provided more volunteer opportunities at the site than ever before. In all, more than 7,500 people participated in our education programs and 857 people volunteered 5,150 hours of service to our education and conservation efforts.

In detailing BLNC’s accomplishments, we are aware that our work is possible only because the community supports our efforts. We look forward to seeing you out on the trails and at our public programs during 2009.

Best regards,

Glenn Fee
Executive Director



2009 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dan Reimer

Board President

Kaplan, Kirsch, and Rockwell

Billy Brown

Board Vice President

Praxis

Peter Smith

Board Treasurer

Chase Bank9

Phyllis Allen

Board Secretary

Susie Crane

Jeff Edson

Edson Ecosystems, LLC

Patrick Emery

Balarat Outdoor Education Center

Lara Jakubowski

Independent Consultant

Chris Leding

Great Outdoors Colorado

Mary Seawell

Get Smart Schools

Jeff Tejral

Aurora Utilities Department

Allison Trembly

EcoMetro Guide

Carl Wells

Seniors Financial Services

SITE MANAGEMENT

Bluff Lake's 123 acres has a diversity of habitat and wildlife that is worth conserving for many reasons: environmental, educational, and recreational. Our one acre Native Garden demonstrates native and low-water plants and represents the most formal part of Bluff Lake. The garden has seating for our Fireside Chats and picnic tables for enjoying the view. The entire site is managed as a wildlife refuge for the deer, beaver, coyotes, prairie dogs, raccoons, skunks, rabbits, fox, and myriad bird species. Bald eagles visit in the winter and the refuge becomes a "nursery" for pups, kits, fawns and owlets in the spring.

BLNC's recent habitat conservation efforts have focused on eradicating invasive plant species and reestablishing native plants. Our restoration work is overseen by a Natural Resource Committee and is led by BLNC's full-time Site Manager and a core volunteer group. The work occurs throughout the year, and the focus changes depending on the season. Our *Site Stewards* work each Wednesday, and corporate and neighborhood groups assist throughout the year. Bluff Lake is the centerpiece of nearly 600 acres of primarily native areas along Sand Creek in Denver and Aurora. We work in close consultation with our partners from Sand Creek Regional Greenway, Denver Parks and Recreation, and Aurora Parks and Open Space to manage these parcels. By working together, we hope to have a stretch of open space that is managed consistently, benefiting native habitat and wildlife.

New in 2008, BLNC had help from a crew of student interns interested in studying and mapping wildlife and plant species. While these efforts are still new, the students have already done a large amount of work and have started a wildlife mapping database and an herbarium. These collections will help us understand life at the site in a deeper way and the work already done will be the basis for continuing work by student interns during 2009.

EDUCATION PROGRAM

BLNC's Education Program provides a variety of environmental and science related educational opportunities for local schools and the community at our unique urban wildlife refuge. More than 7,500 people engaged with our Education Program during 2008:

- Elementary Science Education: 5,031 students and 722 adults
- Service Learning: 86 students and 10 adults
- Jr. Naturalist Summer Camps: 120 children
- Fireside Chats: 281 people
- Other Family Programs: 1,655 people



Elementary Science Education: One of BLNC's highest priorities is providing science education programs for elementary schools in the area, with a focus on low-income schools from the closest urban school districts - Denver, Aurora, and Adams County public schools. Our elementary science program teaches children both in the classroom and at the site, and helps them establish a hands-on connection with nature as an enhancement to classroom learning. Our program supports state standards, and helps teachers meet their learning goals for students. Of the 5,031 participating elementary students in 2008, 83% were from low-income schools. We target low-income schools by providing free busing and early registration.

Service Learning: In 2008, BLNC piloted a Service Learning Program in collaboration with FrontRange Earth Force. BLNC staff engaged 86 students and 10 adults from Rangeview High School and Aurora Academy with both education in the classroom and restoration projects at Bluff Lake. An internship program with the Denver School of Science and Technology hosted three students for semester-long restoration internships.

Jr. Naturalist Summer Camps: BLNC offers half-day, summer camps for children ages 6 to 10. The camps get kids into nature, where they explore the outdoors while learning basic science concepts. Our camps receive consistent outstanding ratings from families, who return year after year. During 2008, the camps were full - 120 children participated and 30 of them, from predominantly Spanish speaking families, received full scholarships.

Fireside Chats: A popular family activity, BLNC's Fireside Chats were expanded from six in previous years to ten during 2008. The chats are held on the bluff-top by the fire ring, with Bluff Lake staff and guest speakers addressing families on an array of nature-related topics. The ten 2008 Fireside Chats were attended by nearly 300 people and the topics included: Bluff Lake en Español; Native plants for your garden; Bees; Healthy forests and fire; Turkey Vultures; Plants and animals of the prairie; Canines; Bats; Animal adaptations; and Prairie Dogs.

Other Family Programs: Our other programs and events reached another 1,655 people. These included:

- **Bird Walks** that are led by Volunteer Naturalists on the first Saturday of every month.
- Gatherings at local schools, like Parent Coffees, that give us a chance to explain our Education Program, suggest visiting Bluff Lake as a family, and promote our summer camps.
- **Autumn Open House**, which was heavily promoted to families in nearby neighborhoods, and included guided nature hikes and a presentation by HawkQuest.

WHAT SCHOOLS SAY

"All the instructors were wonderful with the students! We all learned a lot about wildlife that live so close to us! They especially liked pretending to be different animals as they walked through the trail. Having extra gloves and hats was so handy for children that didn't have any. Thank you so much for having instructors that speak Spanish!"

Ashley Elementary

"I've been taking my class to Bluff Lake since it opened. Every year I see something new. The staff is so energetic. What a wonderful job!!"

Kenton Elementary

"You provide a wonderful education program. Thank you so much! I love the presentation you bring to schools. We really appreciate that the program is free and that you pay for the bus.

It's a wonderful experience.

That's why I keep bringing my classes back each year."

Holm Elementary

BLNC VISITORS

Bluff Lake is open to the public every day from sunrise to sunset. An estimated 25,000 people visit the site throughout the year for running, hiking, photography, family walks, and exploring.



FY2008 ~ Page 4

2008 MAJOR DONORS

City and County of Denver's
Department of Aviation

Citizens of the Scientific and
Cultural Facilities District (SCFD)

The Denver Foundation

Charles R. Jelm Charitable
Foundation

Charles T. Beaird Family Foundation

J.P. Morgan Chase & Co.

James J. and Joan A. Gardner Family
Foundation

Denver Active 20-30 Children's
Foundation / CW2 Gives

REI

Xcel Energy Foundation

Lauren Townsend Memorial
Wildlife Fund

FirstBank of Denver

Rollie R. Kelley Family Foundation

Valassis

Kenneth King Foundation

Harvard Communities

ERO Resources Corporation

Venoco

MAJOR IN-KIND SUPPORTERS

Isaacson Rosenbaum P.C.

Agency Off Record, Inc.

Cork House Wine Restaurant



VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

During 2008, a total of 857 volunteers collectively donated more than 5,000 hours to BLNC's conservation efforts and environmental education programs. This unprecedented amount of volunteer involvement has a value of more than \$100,000.

- **Site Management:** 3,700 hours volunteered by 804 people
- **Education Programs:** 830 hours volunteered by 21 people
- **Board, Committees, Other:** 760 hours volunteered by 32 people

One of the hardest working BLNC Volunteers—and there are many of them, so this is a high honor—is **Fran Haas**. Fran is one of our Volunteer Naturalists who spends time during the week educating elementary students on field trips or summer Junior Naturalist campers. His hard work was highlighted during BLNC's *Urban Space, Wild Place* event when he was given the *Dirty Hands Award*.

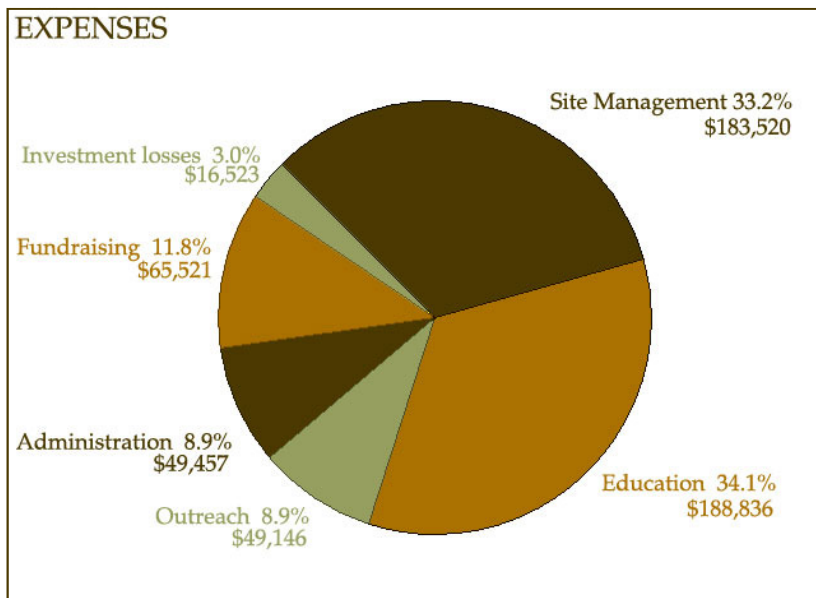
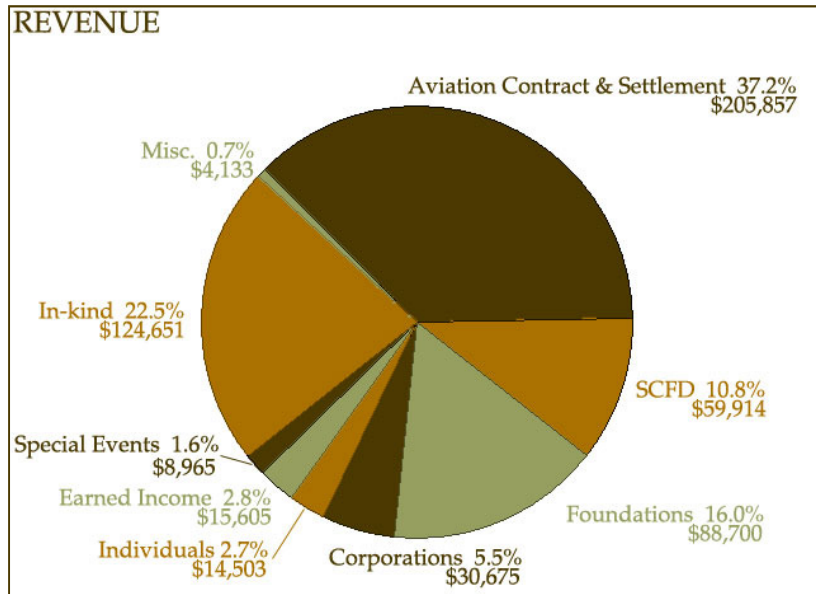
OUTREACH & COMMUNICATIONS

BLNC's outreach and communications efforts took a huge leap forward during 2008.

- **Partnerships:** BLNC continues to pursue partnerships to advance our mission. In 2008, we entered into a partnership with *The Nature Conservancy of Colorado*, allowing Bluff Lake to access TNC's vast resources and giving TNC a presence in an urban refuge. *Sand Creek Regional Greenway* continues to be an important partner in restoration efforts along a critical habitat corridor. Our work with *FrontRange Earth Force* has allowed Bluff Lake to expand our service learning work with local middle school students.
- **Events:** Bluff Lake participated in community events in Denver, Adams, and Arapahoe counties. We will continue to expand our educational outreach by participating in targeted events related to science and conservation.
- **Web site:** BLNC rolled-out of a new layout for the existing web site early in the year. The web site's new design is cleaner and yet it is still easy enough to use that staff can update the content in-house.
- **Electronic newsletter:** Though it has been around for a few years, we made efforts to improve and regularly send a newsletter via email. The aim is to send the newsletter monthly, and our emailing list grew through the year from about 700 email addresses to nearly 1,000.

FINANCIALS

FY2008 ~ Page 5



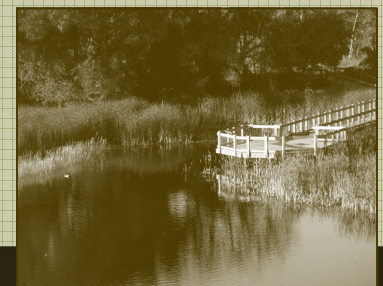
2008 CONSERVATORS

- Phyllis & Vance Allen
- Dr. Neiel Baronberg
- Linda Boone
- Billy & Krista Brown
- Susie Crane & Gary Prado
- Jeff Edson
- Patrick Emery
- Sam & Nancy Gary
- Tom Gougeon
- Rhonda Grant
- Fran & Carol Haas
- Beverly & Hal Haddon
- Tom & Caroline Hoyt
- Lara Jakubowski
- Catherine Jarvis & John Burriss
- Dennis Johnson
- Michael & Diana Kearns
- Barry & Donna Levene
- Steve & Jackie Norris
- Dan Reimer & Wendy Berhman
- Mary Seawell & Lee Ferguson
- Craig Sommers
- Peter Smith & Abbie Hoverstock
- Matt Stoddard
- Jeff Tejral
- Penny & Fritz Trask
- Allison Trembly
- Carl & Allie Wells

This information is from BLNC's 2008 Financial Audit. If you would like to see a copy of the entire audit, please contact Mendy Evans at 303-344-1836 or mevans@blufflake.org.

If you would like to obtain past IRS Form 990s filed by BLNC, they are available online through GuideStar (<http://www.guidestar.org/>).

BLNC's nonprofit determination number (EIN) is 84-1305302.



CONTACT INFORMATION

Office & Mailing Address
9801 E. Colfax Ave. STE 100
Aurora, CO 80010

Glenn Fee
303-344-1249
gfee@blufflake.org

Susan Beckett
303-344-1649
sbeckett@blufflake.org

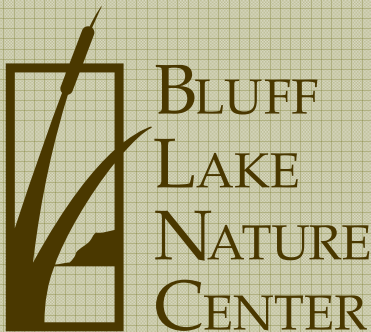
Mendy Evans
303-344-1836
mevans@blufflake.org

Kristin Libberton
303-344-1282
klibberton@blufflake.org

Trisha Sejas
303-344-0134
tsejas@blufflake.org

Christina Howe
303-344-0031
chowe@blufflake.org

Chris Story
303-344-1826
cstory@blufflake.org



THANK YOU

BLNC thanks **Antonio Muñiz-Martínez** (Bilingual Educator), **Christin Ripley** (Americorps VISTA), and **Michelle Trent** (Contract Educator) for their hard work and dedication during 2008.

GET INVOLVED

Bluff Lake is open, with free access to our trails and open space, every day from sunrise to sunset. BLNC offers a variety of educational opportunities throughout the year. In return, BLNC needs your support. Could you make a donation of money, time or goods?

Become a Member...

A Bluff Lake Membership is an investment in your local wildlife refuge and outdoor classroom. You'll help ensure that there's a wild place practically in your own backyard.

Volunteer...

BLNC has many volunteer opportunities available and you don't have to be a natural resources or wildlife expert to get started. We'll train you to be a Site Steward, Naturalist or Ambassador.

Help with our Wish List...

By making donations, you can help BLNC save money. A few of our current wish list items include: A pickup truck to support our Site Management; Gift cards for Office Depot, Target or Hobby Lobby; binoculars for students; tools and heavy work gloves.

THINGS TO WATCH FOR IN 2009

While 2008 was a big year for BLNC, 2009 is shaping up to be equally eventful.

- Though **Earth Day** is every day at Bluff Lake, we are planning fun activities around April 22nd that will focus on birds and encourage area residents to become *locavores* by supporting local businesses and their local nature center.
- We will have ten **Fireside Chats** again this summer.
- All six weeks of the **Junior Naturalist Summer Camps** will sell out again this year. We will once again offer 30 camp scholarships to low-income families from nearby neighborhoods.
- Corporate and individual volunteers will contribute even more hours than in 2008.
- In the fall, we will host our **Urban Spaces, Wild Places** event, a 15 year **Tree Planting** celebration, and our late October **Autumn Open House**.

Stay connected with all that is happening by checking our web site, joining our email list, and becoming a fan of the Bluff Lake Nature Center page on Facebook.