**Action Team – Interview and Data Collection Form**

**Action Team Member:** Craig Carter

**How Might We:** Educate/Engage the public about natural resource challenges so they can become part of solutions?

**Data Source:** Personal experience with Staunton State Park (Jefferson County) volunteer committees (trail hosting, raptor monitoring, wildlife monitoring)

Name: Colin Chisholm, Park Ranger

Contact: Colorado Parks and Wildlife; http://www.parks.state.co.us/parks/Staunton

Add Contact to Envision Contacts? Y

**Insights:** Volunteer groups at the park have proven to be valuable in educating park visitors about ways to prevent or minimize impacts to natural resources while visiting the park. Educational/instructional materials provided to park visitors include:

* Trail maps with information about “best practices” to be observed while hiking, biking, camping, etc. on public lands,
* Trailhead posters listing rules to be observed to achieve “leave no trace” goals,
* Instructions to animal owners to clean up after their pets (water quality, etc.), prevent them from running off leash (dogs can chase animals and disturb their natural habitat),
* Instructions to cyclists about trail courtesy, giving right-of-way to hikers, staying on trails, etc.,
* Site-specific information about sensitive species and habitat issues; examples – providing locations of peregrine falcon nesting areas to be avoided during nesting seasons, locations of sensitive plants to be avoided, locations of wetlands, etc.

Although it is not practical to have volunteers at trailheads and on trails, it is helpful to have “trail hosts” interface with the public along the trail. A lot of volunteers in the Envision Chaffee County groups hike and bike many of our beautiful trails and we should feel free to pass along helpful information to others we meet out in the environment. Something as simple as providing tee-shirts to volunteers with a Colorado Parks and Wildlife logo (just an example) goes a long way to let other hikers know that they can ask you questions, and it opens the door for passing along information about protecting the environment and preserving natural resources.

A possible question for discussion could be: What information should be provided to trail users to inform them about environmental protection?

Many of the trailhead signs on public lands provide a lot of useful information but there may be room for improvement by providing more information pertaining to sensitive environmental issues.

The Staunton State Park web site (link above) provides information about activities conducted by volunteers at the park related to informing the public about environmental protection.