

A CEMETERY'S REBIRTH

Years after losing the ability to water one of Denver's oldest cemeteries, a group of volunteers works to revive the site with native species.

BY **DANIEL G. JACOBS** MANAGING EDITOR

PATRICIA CARMODY steers her white Subaru Outback wagon along the bumpy dirt and gravel road that winds its way through the 77-acre Riverside Cemetery, Denver's oldest operating cemetery. She muses about her desire to find a scout troop in search of a community service project, and a benefactor willing to donate some gravel to repair the many potholes dotting the road, now oozing with mud following the morning's cold shower. But the sun has

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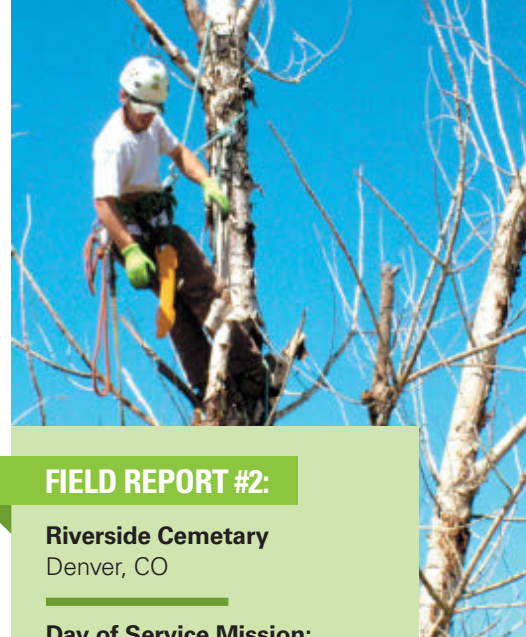
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since come out, and wispy clouds waft through a blue sky over the cemetery — through which volunteers scurry about, working on a number of projects as part of PLANET's second annual Day of Service.

Carmody passes a small raised

planter and stops both the car and her conversation. She catches her breath slightly as she sees the work some of the volunteers completed earlier. Within a few hours, the planter went from weed-filled to tilled bed to beautiful display of native and specially selected flowers, all to please visitors coming to honor the



FIELD REPORT #2:

Riverside Cemetery
Denver, CO

Day of Service Mission:

The Riverside Cemetery lost watering rights which left a number of plants and trees dead.

67,000 friends and loved ones buried in the 134-year-old cemetery.

“Look at that,” says Carmody, executive director of the Fairmount Heritage Foundation, which oversees the cemetery. Still wearing the plastic-garbage-bag-turned-rain-poncho, Carmody stares in awe at the transformed planter. “I am so grateful. It’s the revival of Riverside.”

Dozens of volunteers come courtesy of the Colorado Association of Lawn Care Professionals (CALCP) to prep and plant 2 acres of groundcover; install a variety of native trees, plants, and shrubs; plant a heritage iris garden; and remove a number of dead heritage trees — including an approximately 80-year-old American elm.

Though it will take years to complete, the goal is to make the cemetery sustainable. The only watering done will be until the plants are established.

CALCP committed to reviving the cemetery, which fell into disrepair after the organization overseeing the site lost a long court battle that went to the Supreme Court over water rights.

“This is one of my favorite days of the year,” says Andy Ferguson, president of CALCP and the district manager of the West Denver office of The Davey Tree Expert Co. “Our members show up in force.”

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Providing labor and equipment for half a day means those workers, machines and vehicles aren't doing work the company can bill for. But that's not really the point.

"It's a great way for us to make a big impact without impacting our ability to make some money," Ferguson says.

Companies from across the state and across the country participated in a variety of projects.

"We found out about Day of Service two years ago," says Bryan Gooch, marketing manager for Agrium Advanced Technology. "We jumped on the opportunity to be a lead sponsor. It is perfectly aligned with what we believe in. We saw Day of Service as not only a chance to give back to the communities that we live in, but also to donate products to people who can help extend the message, and let them use products



Workers install native plants at Riverside Cemetery. Lifescape Associates Troy Shimp and Michael Hupf (inset) create a healing garden at the Denver Children's Advocacy Center.

that are good for the environment."

Loveland, CO-based Agrium volunteers worked on their own project near the company's new headquarters (transplanting native plant seedlings to help restore wetlands and natural areas) and donated fertilizer to several more.

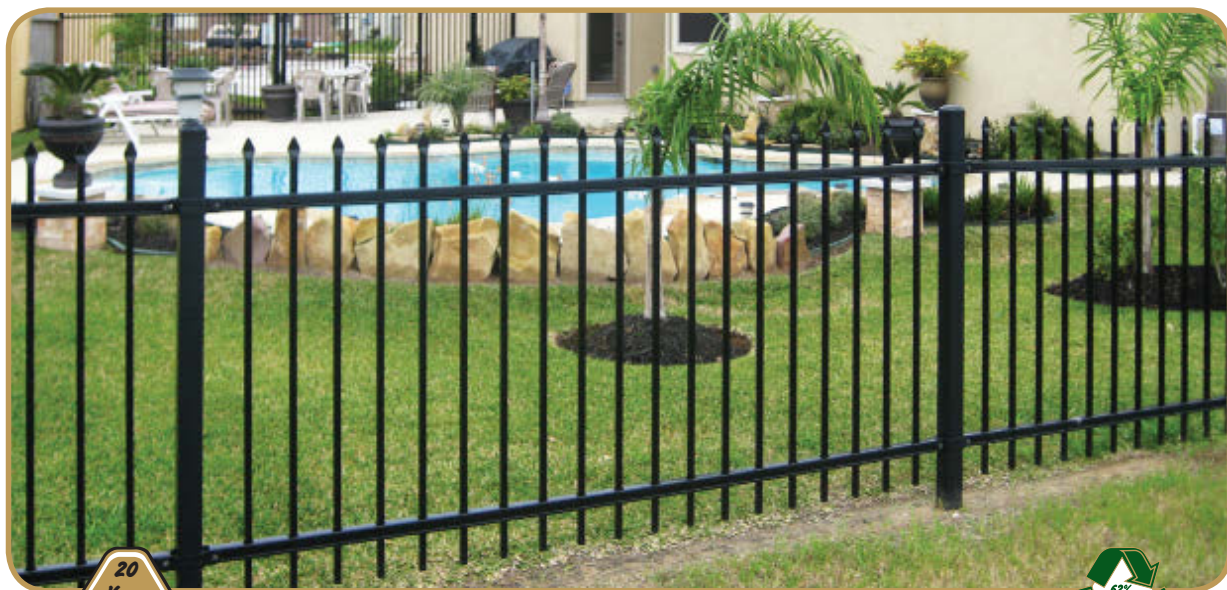
Planting the seeds for healing

While CALCP members toiled away at the Riverside Cemetery, about 20 min-

utes away Troy Shimp, senior designer for Denver-based Lifescape Associates, and his team started working on a healing garden between two buildings that house the Denver Children's Advocacy Center (DCAC). Though the rain only slowed the crew at Riverside Cemetery, it put a halt to the day's work at the DCAC. But that only meant the crew would be back at the next opportunity.

"We see giving back to the commu-

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nity as very important,” says Michael Hupf, CEO of Lifescape Associates. “For us, it creates a huge sense of teamwork.”

In all, about 15 workers will install scores of plants, trees and shrubs — along with a flagstone patio to create a seating area.

“The addition of the Children’s Healing Garden ... will make our facilities more beautiful and provide a better experience for the children and families we serve,” says Dr. Gizane Indart, executive director of the DCAC. **LM**

RIVERSIDE CEMETERY PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

A number of organizations from CALCP and a few other organizations volunteered their time and effort to the Riverside Cemetery Revival project as part of PLANET’s Day of Service on Earth Day 2010:

Agrium Advanced Technologies
Alpha One Inc.
Arkansas Valley Seed
Barr Lake Nature Center
Colorado Forest Service
Colorado State University
Colorado State University Master Gardeners
Colorado Tree Coalition
Davey Tree Expert Co.
Denver Botanic Gardens
Denver Rose Society
Fertek Co.
Front Range Community College
Green Mountain Lawn Service
Helena Chemical Co.
International Society of Arboriculture
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