

Plant Awareness Project seeks to spread knowledge

By Claire Palmer

With good weather comes outdoor adventure — hiking and biking that increases in popularity as spring arrives in Golden.

Meg Langley, of Wildsight Golden, says what better time to learn about nature than when people leave their home to bask in the warmer temperatures.

Langley has spearheaded the Plant Awareness Project over the last two years, her goal being to educate the community on the native plant species living along the various trails.

The project will see 23 signs erected along the Rotary Trail, depicting local plants that can be found near the signs, with paintings by local artists accompanied by some information for those who want to learn more.

“I love plants and I love knowing my plants, I think it’s a great way for people to connect with nature,” said Langley.

“I wanted to help other people learn their plants and I think it’s a great literacy project, as well as providing infrastructure for the local schools to get their classes outside and learning in nature.”

An avid hiker herself, Langley was first inspired to take on this project when she noticed the signs along the Rotary Trail had a blank side to them.

She figured that space could be utilized to help people engage more with their surroundings and learn more about the ecosystem and biome they live within.

Over the last two years, Langley has mapped all the signs on her phone and the plants surrounding them to decide which plants would be featured.

She has also partnered with 23 local artists to submit paintings of the plants to add to the sign.

“It’s really cool when I hear people learning about their plants, it’s fantastic and extremely rewarding,”

said Langley.

“Everyone has been supportive and helpful, especially in the last month. I’ve walked that loop so many times and always thought it would be good to see people learn and now that’s being realized.”

Langley also hopes to see an environmental upside to her project, as she believes educating people on the plant life and vegetation in town will encourage people to be more aware of preserving the nature around them.

A long-time resident of Golden, Langley said she has seen plants disappear along some of the trails and hills as a result of humans trampling plants, mostly inadvertently.

“I’ve been here 22 years and I see recreation exploding and as a result I see the woods getting trampled and trashed and I think that if people knew what the plants are and know their names I think they’ll be less prone to stomp all over it,” said Langley.



Depicted is the plant *Scoopolalie*, also known as *Buffulo Berry* or *bearberry*, one of the local plants that will be featured on signs created through the Plant Awareness Project. (Tracey Vivar photo)

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