**Naturalist & Stewardship Curriculum Project ABSTRACT:**

**Mentors:** Seth Davis, Warner College of Natural Resources and Natural Resources PRU co-leader; Extension mentors are Kerri Rollins (interim Front Range Regional Director), Lisa Mason (interim Director Arapahoe County), Deryn Davidson (Hort agent, Jefferson County) and Michele Richie (Local Food & Farm Coordinator, El Paso County).

**Location:** Work virtually with a few possible day trips to Arapahoe County possible (mileage can be reimbursed)

**Position description:** Under the guidance of your mentors, this internship will build on work done last year to gather and combine existing curriculum to create a new Naturalist and Stewardship Extension certificate course to be delivered via Extension office across the state. Specifically, this position will:

* Gather, combine and coordinate the previously identified content of Extension Naturalist Programs and natural resource curricula into modules that will educate Colorado’s non-student public about Colorado’s various biomes.
* Develop citizen science and field activities that can be integrated into the curriculum for engaged, hands-on learning for both adults and youth.
* Recommend additional modules and activities to fill known gaps for future build-out of the CSU Extension Volunteer Naturalist & Stewardship Program.

Colorado is a leader within the outdoor industry, boasting scenic beauty and abundant wildlife for visitors and residents alike to enjoy throughout the year. With the onset of COVID, it is well documented that people are turning more to the outdoor experience for physical, mental and emotional wellbeing, creating an increased need for educational opportunities in the outdoors.

CSU Extension has successfully offered volunteer engagement programs such as Master Gardener, Native Plant Master and Master Food Safety Advisors, leaving space for a Volunteer Naturalist & Stewardship program. These programs are known to engage community through volunteerism and programming for the general public, as well as generate funds that can supplement county budgets. Additionally, many County Extension Offices partner with their county’s parks and open space departments and are housed within its operational structure. Many of these departments aspire to have an environmental education component, such as a Volunteer Naturalist Program, which can engage their communities through educational talks, hikes and trailhead tables. It is reasonable to conclude that counties will see Extension’s ability to fill this role, and in fact there are 2 front Range counties ready to pilot the program when the curricula and training are completed.