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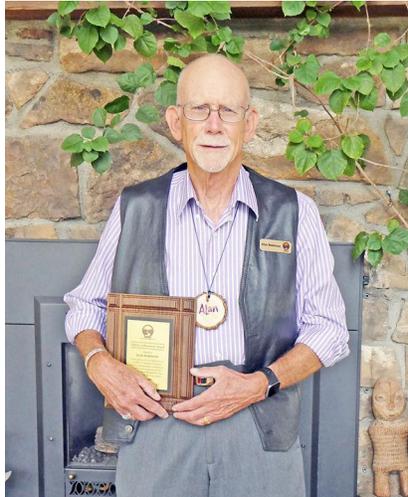
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FEATURED

GARNA celebrates with gala

Robinson honored with Lifetime Achievement Award

Cody Olivas, Mail Staff Writer Jul 12, 2019



Alan Robinson smiles after receiving the Greater Arkansas River Nature Association Lifetime Achievement Award Sunday at the organization's annual Nurturing Nature Gala in Buena Vista. Before volunteering for GARNA, Robinson got started volunteering more than 50 years ago with the Peace Corps.

Courtesy photo

The Greater Arkansas River Nature Association hosted its annual Nurturing Nature Gala Sunday at the Barn at Sunset Ranch in Buena Vista.

The event, which is a fundraiser for GARNA, sold out. GARNA Executive Director Dominique Naccarato said 160 people attended.

"It was a really fun event," she said.

The fundraiser, which also featured a "not-so-silent auction," helped GARNA raise \$33,500 in gross, Naccarato said.

Award-winning author Florence Williams was the event's keynote speaker. Her books include "The Nature Fix: How Nature Makes Us Happier, Healthier and More Creative." At the event, she talked about how nature affects the brain in positive ways.

"She did a fantastic job," Naccarato said.

VIPs also attended a reception with Williams before the gala, getting the chance to talk with her in a smaller crowd.

Also at the event, Buena Vista's Alan Robinson received the GARNA Lifetime Achievement Award.

According to his introduction, Robinson is no stranger to volunteerism. He first started volunteering more than 50 years ago as a fisheries biologist with the Peace Corps in Nigeria. After retiring and moving to Buena Vista in 1997, Robinson and his wife, Karen, helped develop a citizens' alternative for a travel management plan for the Fourmile Area.

Following adoption of that plan, the couple and others formed Friends of Fourmile, whose objective is to promote good land stewardship and multiuse recreation.

Robinson also served on the GARNA board for nine years, including four as its chair.

The money raised at Sunday's gala will support GARNA's efforts to increase youth access to the outdoors and also educate everyone who lives, works and plays in the Upper Arkansas Valley on how to recreate responsibly and steward the area's natural resources.

GARNA's new campaign is "Now this is how we recreate," which specifically focuses on how to recreate responsibly as the area grows in population.

"Education and outreach about our valley's natural resources is the heart and soul of what GARNA does," Naccarato said during her speech Sunday. "The funds raised tonight will go a long way toward supporting education and experiences that create a legacy of taking care of our natural resources."

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