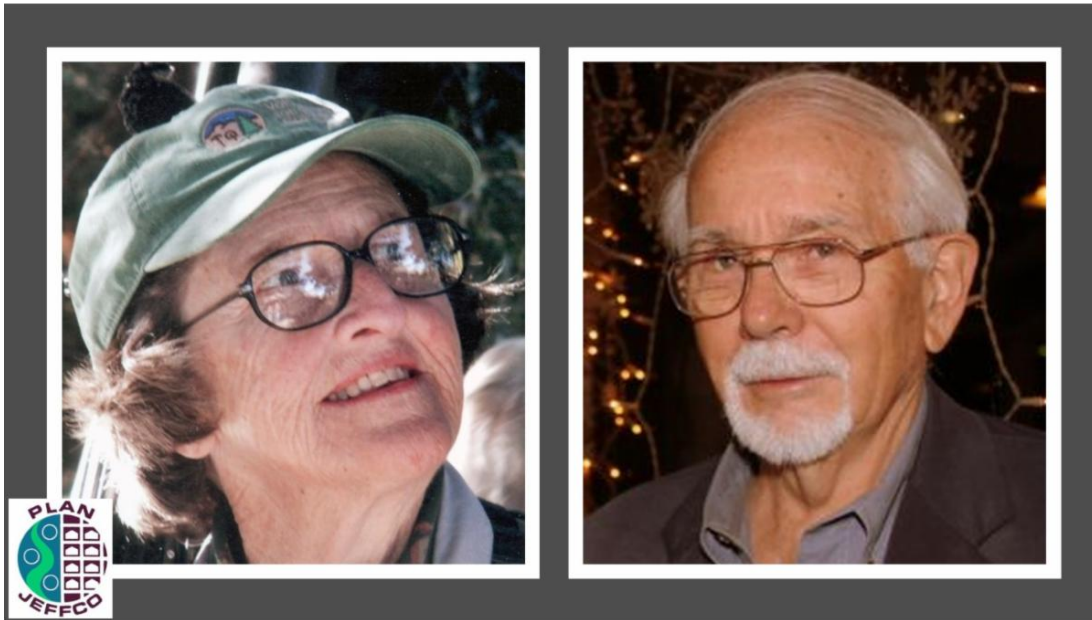




PLAN Jeffco

Working to conserve Jefferson County Open Spaces since 1972



Photos courtesy of the Bonnell Family and CarbonFibrePhoto

The PLAN Jeffco Monthly February 2024

We pay tribute to our Board Members who left us in 2023

PLAN Jeffco is a non-profit all-volunteer citizen organization based in Jefferson County Colorado.

For more than 50 years, PLAN Jeffco has advocated for conservation of open space.

PLAN Jeffco authored the “Open Space Resolution” ballot initiative in 1972 that provided a one-half percent county sales tax to establish the award-winning Jefferson County Open Space program.

<https://planjeffco.org>

Join or Renew Your Membership

It has been a rocky start to 2024. At the end of 2023 we lost two beloved Board Members, Ann Bonnell (December 26th) and John Litz (December 29th). This edition of PLAN Jeffco Monthly is dedicated to these two pioneers of conservation.

Ann Bonnell Lived A Life of Service

Ann Bonnell's death on December 26th, 2023, at the age of 85, left a gaping hole in the heart of the Jefferson County birding community and in the hearts of her fellow PLAN Jeffco Board members.

Ann's life was focused on family and service. As a high school biology teacher and volunteer Water Safety Instructor for those with special needs, she was able to reach into the lives of many, passing along her belief in service, empathy, and passion for the outdoors and all that it encompasses. Her specific focus, as we at PLAN Jeffco knew her, was birds – birding, leading Tuesday Birders, and teaching about bird life.

Another passion of Ann's was water and water quality. While on the Board of PLAN Jeffco, Ann monitored the reengineering at Chatfield State Park and reservoir, keeping us updated on the process and progress of that years-long operation. Shortly after joining PLAN Jeffco in 1997, she became deeply involved with the Save the Mountain Backdrop project here in our own Front Range, helping focus conservation efforts on the many watersheds that make up the western portion of Jefferson County.

Ann was an inveterate volunteer. She gave of her time and energy to volunteering with special needs populations and coaching Special Olympics swimming and cross-country skiing, which gave her a specialty in accessibility issues for our Open Space Parks. She was a Volunteer Naturalist for Roxborough State Park, South Platte Park, Denver Botanic Gardens and the Audubon Society of Greater Denver.

Ann wasn't just a Board member of the Audubon Society of Greater Denver, she was their 2nd Vice President. She served on their Conservation, Trip, & Nature Center Committees, which gave her a very good reason to guide nature tours and kayaking trips at every opportunity. As a technical specialist for Audubon, she served on the Restoration Advisory Board for the Air Force PJKS Superfund site, located at their former Waterton facility. She truly was a force of nature.

For the rest of the story go to <https://planjeffco.org/ann-bonnell-lived-a-life-of-service/>

Pioneer PLAN Jeffco Board Member John Litz

Pioneer PLAN Jeffco Board Member John Litz Served 51 years

By Vicky Gits

John Litz's death on Dec. 29 at 87 marked the end of an epic career in the service of PLAN Jeffco and the cause of preserving natural lands in general.

A metallurgical engineer by profession, John was a remarkably prolific volunteer who donated most of his free time over the years to various charitable organizations and land stewardship causes.

He is survived by three daughters, Kari Litz, Kirstin Litz, and Denise Litz and by three grandchildren. His wife of 49 years, Karen, died in 2007.

He was a member of nonprofit PLAN Jeffco for 51 years from 1972 to 2023 and treasurer for most of that time, working closely with longtime chair Margot Zallen. He was a member of the Jefferson County Open Space Advisory Committee for 30 years, from 1993 to 2023.

John was known for his spreadsheets and mastery of finance and operations, said Ralph Schell, executive director of the Open Space Division from 1998 to 2009. But he was also approachable. "John was just someone that everyone could appreciate and get along with."

He was a tireless workhorse on behalf of the outdoors and a living history record of the open space saga.

At the beginning

Litz's involvement with PLAN Jeffco began in the fall of 1971 when it was just a grassroots advocacy group meeting in the living room of Carol Karlin in Lakewood.

At the time, raising money for raw land and putting just trails and trailheads on it was still a somewhat unusual proposition, but the citizens of Jefferson County passed the resolution with 55 percent of the vote in favor.

John Litz co-authored the 1972 measure that created the county open space agency and a half-cent sales tax to fund it. The money was for acquiring land in its natural state, parks and recreation lands, greenbelt and agricultural buffer zones, scenic easements, historic monuments, wild rivers and wildlife habitats.

John said he joined PLAN Jeffco because his wife was a member of the League of Women Voters and the league had produced an influential land-use study endorsing more parks. The league and PLAN Jeffco shared some members and PLAN Jeffco was looking for men and a Republican so they could claim bipartisanship.

One of the original PLAN Jeffco members who was the treasurer died unexpectedly and so John took over the job. He went on to ring doorbells and play a leading role in identifying and financing large parcels of land for the park portfolio.

For the rest of the story go to <https://planjeffco.org/pioneer-plan-jeffco-board-member-john-litz/>

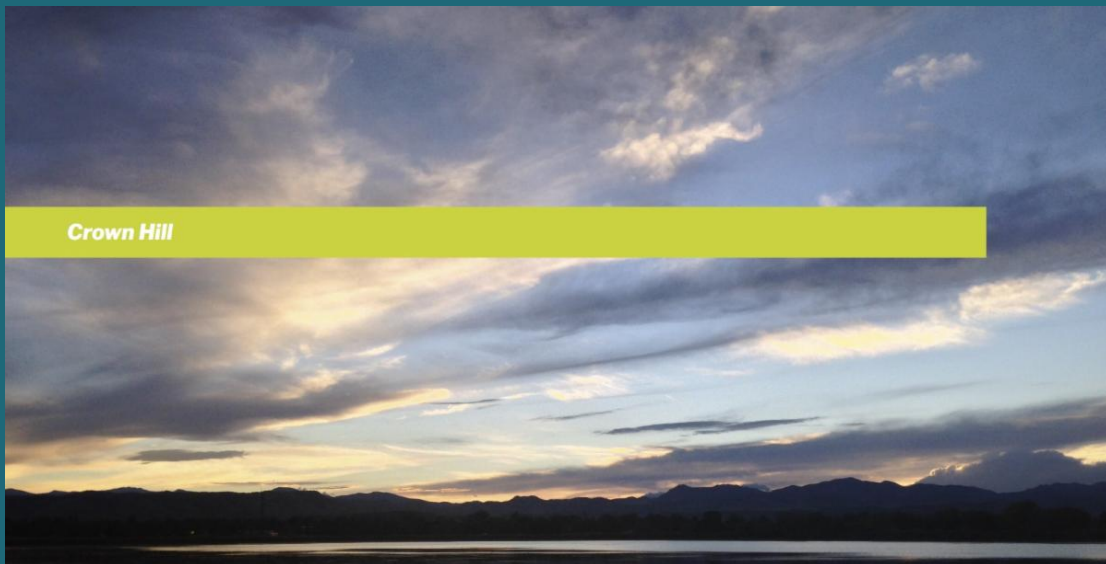
With the New Year we're anticipating changes in the way we connect with you, our treasured members. John was our newsletter publisher. His demise means that we'll be moving the biannual hard-copy newsletter to a monthly electronic version. It's our hope that this more frequent connection will bring value to all.

PLAN Jeffco has openings on the Board. We would love to hear from you, we would like to hear your thoughts, we would like you to consider a Board position.

If you're interested in exploring this possibility, drop us an email at ContactUs@PLANJeffco.org

Did you forget to renew your membership? Click on the button below and get caught up!

[Renew My Membership](#)



Support conservation in Jeffco, donate here so we can keep doing what we do!

[JOIN or RENEW](#)

Know someone who might be interested in this newsletter? Subscribe, like, share - forward this

to them, and thank you!



About PLAN Jeffco

In 1972, PLAN Jeffco launched the citizen's initiative which created the Jeffco Open Space Program, protecting more than 70,000 acres comprising 27 parks and more than 270 miles of trails.

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PLAN Jeffco | 24395 Cody Park Road, Golden, CO 80401 +1 303.526.1839

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