



Note from the Director

Hello and Happy New Year!

I hope you had a lovely holiday season and your 2019 is off to a great start. I'd like to thank everyone who supported our 2018 year end fundraising campaign, "Who loves clean water?" because of you we raised more than \$6,000! Last year we made great strides towards our conservation goals and we are very

optimistic about our future. Thanks to our generous donors we raised over \$1 million for our 3 year proof of concept phase and secured an additional \$500,000 last summer to launch our next phase. Peaks to People is now positioned to have a significant impact in our two watersheds. With that goal in mind our stakeholders committee has begun its project selection process and we will start accepting applications for project funding in the spring. In 2019 we will continue to add members to our already impressive board. If you, or someone you know, are interested in serving on our board please don't hesitate to contact me.

In this newsletter we are pleased to introduce you to Rob Addington, Forest & Fire Program Director with The Nature Conservancy's Colorado Field Office and Peaks to People board member. We share some exciting news the 2018 Farm Bill has for the conservation community nationally and highlight conservation work being done locally.

Enjoy and thanks for your continued support,

Heather Schinkel, Director



Board Member Profile

We are very pleased to introduce you to Peaks to People's board member, Rob Addington. Rob is the Forest & Fire Program Director with The Nature Conservancy's Colorado Field Office and has nearly 15 years of professional experience working in frequent-fire ecological systems. He specializes in fire-adapted natural systems and the application of science to ecosystem management and restoration. As a Peaks to

People Water Fund Board member, he will be involved in helping to set strategic priorities for on-the-ground work and providing technical capacity for project development. In a recent interview, Rob elaborated on the benefits he sees Peaks to People having on forest health and water security in Northern Colorado.

How do you see Peaks to People adding value to the conservation efforts currently underway in Northern Colorado?

Peaks to People adds a tremendous amount of value to conservation efforts in northern Colorado as an organizing force and umbrella under which collaborative forest management projects can be developed and implemented among a broad range of agencies and organizations. Additionally, the tools that Peaks to People and its partners have developed, such as the Watershed Investment Tool and Outcomes Tracker, provide a unique platform for prioritizing work on-the-ground and for evaluating progress toward desired outcomes. We have a great opportunity through these tools to 'roll up' forest management activities across the landscape to get a better picture of how we're doing in achieving desired outcomes at the landscape scale.

How will Peaks to People's work promote landscape resilience in our two watersheds?

By managing forest structure, composition, and fuels, we're able to influence fire behavior, reduce burn severity, and increase the likelihood of trees surviving a wildfire. Having live trees on the landscape after wildfire enables the forest as a whole to recover so that important forest functions and processes are maintained. Forest management to promote landscape resilience is particularly important in the context of climate change, as wildfire seasons and other factors such as drought are expected to worsen.

Can Peaks to People focus on water infrastructure and security while simultaneously restoring historical forest structure in our two watersheds?

Yes, the restoration-based approach to forest management promoted by Peaks to People offers many benefits, including water resource protection. Forest landscapes provide us with so many ecological and social benefits – clean water, clean air, wildlife habitats, community protection, and recreation, to name a few. While Peaks to People emphasizes water resource protection, it also recognizes the importance of managing for multiple values to sustain a broad range of ecosystem services.

Thanks to Rob for lending his vast expertise and supporting the mission of Peaks to People Water Fund!





2018 Farm Bill Gives Watershed Protection a Much-Needed Boost!

Watershed protection got a big boost last month with the passing of the 2018 Farm Bill and it couldn't have come at more critical time. Throughout the Upper Colorado River Basin and Great Basin water supply volume forecasts for April-July are already below average. Drier soils conditions and poor snowpack add insult to injury. Combine these factors with longer and more unpredictable fire seasons and it becomes abundantly clear that we need to protect our source water supplies more than ever before.

Peaks to People, along with many others, are thrilled to see greater access to funding for conservation projects under the new legislation. According to Kevin Moran, Senior Director, Colorado River Program, "The new provisions in the farm bill also could help farmers and water agencies develop and fund projects that improve drought resilience and planning in the Colorado River basin, where the river supplies water for 40 million people and 6 million acres of farmland each year."

The folks at Carpe Diem West recently met up with Mike Anderson, Senior Resource Analyst for The Wilderness Society, to talk about the positive impacts the Farm Bill could have in keeping our headwaters healthy. He explains the 2018 Farm Bill includes three of the Healthy Headwaters Alliance's top legislative priorities.

- **1.** The Water Source Protection Program, which requires the Forest Service to work with downstream water users to develop partnerships to protect and restore water supplies.
- 2. The authorization of the Watershed Condition Framework, which directs the Forest Service to classify all national forest watersheds on their functionality, and develop watershed restoration action plans in cooperation with partners.
- 3. The reauthorization and doubling of the funding level for the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP), which funds collaborative restoration projects mostly aimed at reducing fuels and fire risk.

When asked if he thinks this new legislation will begin to move us to a scale of action needed to tackle the enormous challenges we face Mike was optimistic. He said, "With the new authorities and the adoption of the fire funding fix, there's a good chance we will see a significant increase in funding for watershed restoration work." He strongly recommends utilities and other partners begin working with the Forest Service right away to develop their plans and proposals for the new federal funding so this valuable opportunity is not lost. He said, "It's the same with the CFLRP – groups who are interested in applying for that new funding should be working on their plans and strategies now. It is a competitive process, so creating strong proposals is important."

While we will need to await the 2019 appropriations process to see how much funding these new programs actually receive, it is exciting to finally have bi-partisan support for conservation efforts and watershed protection in particular. Our communities





Healthy Watersheds Need Healthy Forests

The quality of the water in our rivers and reservoirs is directly linked with the health of our forests. Healthy forests protect and sustain surface and ground water supplies. Read our latest Blog Healthy Watersheds Need Healthy Forests to learn more!

Business Profile

SCHEELS is dedicated to supporting the local communities in which they live. They donate time, energy and resources to numerous organizations, teams and individuals across the country. SCHEELS Johnstown showed a strong commitment to to the communities of Northern Colorado this past December by donating \$50,000 to 15 local nonprofits, including Peaks to People. In a statement made on social media their team said, "It was a great privilege meeting the many groups doing wonderful work in our community!"



Community commitment comes straight from the top at SCHEELS, "We volunteer our time because we feel strongly about the benefits of educating our communities, and want to instill the knowledge and skills necessary to be responsible and safe patrons of outdoor activities. Through our own events, programs and external partnerships, SCHEELS encourages a love of learning to the outdoors person of all ages."

At Peaks to People, we believe in building lasting partnerships with businesses like SCHEELS. Private businesses are considered key stakeholders in the water fund process. Citizens of downstream communities such as Loveland, Greeley, and Fort Collins will benefit from Peaks to People because the program will enhance the water security of the region while providing other quantifiable environmental benefits as well like clean air, wildlife habitat, and recreational values. If you love to fish, hunt, camp, kayak and hike you probably love SCHEELS. We know you'll love the healthy forests Peaks to People is committed to providing our communities too.



News and Notes

Did you know InciWeb is for more than just tracking wildfires? It is an interagency all-risk incident information management system where you can find out about prescribed and pile burns, floods and much more! For example, this winter the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests will work to burn slash piles resulting from fuels reduction and hazardous tree removal projects across the area. Find out where and when these activities planned HERE.





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