

PEAKS TO PEOPLE WATER FUND FALL 2019 NEWSLETTER

Note from the Director



Hello and happy fall,

As 2019 is quickly coming to a close, I'd like to extend my heartfelt gratitude for your support over the past year. It is because of you that we have been able to continue our important work to restore the health of Northern Colorado's forested watersheds. I am excited to see what 2020 brings for Peaks to People.

Our board is meeting this month to strategize an ambitious plan to raise an additional \$550,000 over the next year. We continue to accept project proposals and look forward to taking on new endeavors. I'd like to personally invite you to join us in reaching our near-term goals by taking part in our year end fundraising campaign, "[Who Loves Clean Water?](#)" Together we can protect Colorado's Front Range forests from unprecedented threats that, left unchecked, will greatly damage ecosystems vital to our wellbeing and livelihood.

In this update we are pleased to introduce you to board member Brian Janonis. His firsthand experience with the catastrophic effects of wildfire on water supplies make him an invaluable member of our team. We will also share information on the critical work being done at the Ben Delatour Scout Ranch through the Elkhorn Forest Health Initiative. We are happy to provide additional resources for landowners and much more!

I hope you find the articles in our newsletter useful and enlightening. Please share this with your friends, family and colleagues. Stay connected and current by following us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#). Feel free to reach out anytime and thanks as always for your support!

Wishing you a wonderful holiday season and a great 2020,

Heather Schinkel, Executive Director






Access to clean, abundant water is essential to keeping our communities thriving. Our mountain watersheds are the unsung heroes that provide us with this vital resource. We are committed to mitigating wildfire risks in order to improve forest health, enhance water quality and quantity, protect wildlife habitat, and ensure communities and businesses that rely on clean and available water can prosper and thrive. Join us in protecting our watersheds by participating in our year-end fundraising campaign, "Who Loves Clean Water?"

Your donation will help reduce the risk of severe wildfires that threaten our clean water sources, so we can all keep thriving. The first \$2,500 raised will be matched by New Belgium Brewing Company. Thank you, New Belgium, and thank YOU for your support!

Double your donation on Facebook!

 Donate at 6:00 am sharp on Tuesday Dec 3rd through our [Facebook page](#) and double your donation! Facebook will match dollar for dollar on a first-come, first-served basis until \$7M in eligible donations to U.S. based non-profits are matched. NO Fees either! 100% of donations made through Facebook Payments go to the non-profit; which means every dollar goes to the causes you care about, like [Peaks to People](#). The match funds can run out within minutes so set your alarm and don't miss this great opportunity to double your commitment to clean water and healthy forests!

If you prefer to go through our website, donate online at <https://peakstopeople.org/donate/> and share why you love clean water by using the hashtag #welovecleanwater!

We are very grateful to have many wonderful partners participating in our social media campaign this year including, Odell Brewing, Colorado Forest Restoration Institute, Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Brendle Group, Great Outdoors Colorado, Horse and Dragon Brewing Company, the Center for Collaborative Conservation and Sylvan Dale Ranch. If your organization would like to join the campaign, please contact Sandi Good at sandi@peakstopeople.org.

*** PLEASE Nominate Peaks to People! ***

Giving back to the NOCO community is a big part of the SCHEELS mission. They are excited to be able to donate \$50,000 to Northern Colorado again this Colorado Gives Day!

Now through December 8th, the community can nominate local non-profit organizations in 5 different categories: Environmental Groups, Veteran Groups, Youth Support Organizations, Outdoor Rec/Sports Groups, and Human Services Organizations. They will be selecting 15 winners from the campaign to receive a cash donation (5 - \$5,000 and 10 - \$2,500 donations).

Please click [HERE](#) and nominate Peaks to People in the Environmental category before Dec 8th! Visit their Facebook page (@johnstownscheels) to learn more. Winners will be announced on Colorado Gives Day - Tuesday, December 10th.

Website link: <http://www.scheels.com/johnstowngiving>

Spread the word and share the love! With your help we can complete more forest restoration projects in Northern Colorado to reduce the threat of severe wildfire and protect our precious water supplies. THANK YOU!





Board Member Profile



We are very glad to be introducing you to another of our stellar board members, Brian Janonis. Brian is retired as Executive Director of Fort Collins Utilities with over 40 years of experience in water related fields. During his tenure the High Park and Hewlett Gulch Wildfires dramatically impacted the Utilities water supply. Prior to the City, he was a principal/owner with RBD Engineering

Consultants where he provided consulting services to water agencies throughout North America. He has previously served as a board member for the Water Environment Federation, Rocky Mountain Water Environment Association, Platte River Power Authority, and North Poudre Irrigation Company. We are grateful to have Brian share his wealth of knowledge and experience with our team.

Can you tell us how the High Park and Hewlett Gulch Wildfires impacted the Utilities water supply?

When I was with the Fort Collins Water Utility, we used a mix of Horsetooth and Poudre River water and set our treatment based on the physical and chemical characteristics of the combined supply.

After the 2012 High Park Fire Sediment and erosion from the fires had a significant impact on the water utility operation. Especially in the years immediately after the fire, rainfall would transport large quantities of sediment to our Poudre intake, dramatically changing the physical and chemical characteristics. This would require shutting down the Poudre. The unpredictable nature of rainfall events required the plant staff to quickly change treatment settings 24/7. We also had the landslide in the burn area that shutdown the intake to our Pleasant Valley Pipeline.

Do you believe our Watershed Investment Tool and Forest Health Outcomes Tracker are compelling tools that help make the case for investing at a larger scale?

The High Park Fire destroyed 259 home with one person killed. As I witness more development in the Poudre watershed, I have come to realize that we all have a stake in protecting our watershed. The Watershed Investment Tool and Forest Health Outcomes Tracker optimize outcomes with our severely limited resources.

Where is your favorite place in the watershed?

My favorite place is probably the upper reaches of the Poudre River. Not only is there outstanding scenery, but you can see all sorts of wildlife such as moose, elk, deer and bear. The fishing is pretty good too.



The Path to Overgrown Forests

Since the mid-1800's, human influence on the land has resulted in forests that are dramatically different from what we see today. Management practices, such as fire suppression and timber harvesting, have altered the structure of forests across most of the western United States. These actions have led to overgrown forests, which are at a much higher risk of severe wildfire. We have overwhelming scientific evidence that our forested landscapes

need fire to be healthy. We also know that thinning trees to reduce fuels is an important step in mitigating the effects of high severity wildfires. Changing the public perception that all fires are bad is critical to restoring balance in our forests. By restoring Northern Colorado's fire adapted forests to their historical conditions, we will protect our communities and our quality of life. Learn more about this important work in our blog [The Path to Overgrown Forests](#).



Conservation Resources for Landowners

The **Colorado Water Conservation Board** supports watershed planning as well as projects designed to restore and protect watersheds. Specifically, the CWCB supports watershed protection and restoration efforts through the administration of:

- The **Colorado Watershed Restoration Program**, which provides grants for watershed/stream restoration and flood mitigation projects throughout the state.
- The **Fish and Wildlife Resources Fund**, which provides grant money to mitigate the impacts of existing water supply facilities and help preserve a balance between development of the state's resources and the protection of the state's fish and wildlife resources.
- The **Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program**
The objective of the EWP program is to help "...landowners, operators, and individuals implement emergency recovery measures to relieve imminent hazards to life or property created by a natural disaster that causes a sudden impairment of a watershed." These projects are intended to provide long-term, strategic, watershed-based solutions that restore stream function, reconnect floodplains with streams, manage sediment movement, protect infrastructure, and improve public health, safety, and welfare.



Elkhorn Creek Forest Health Initiative



Peaks to People is pleased to be supporting the latest project of the Elkhorn Creek Forest Health Initiative (ECFHI) at the Ben Delatour Scout Ranch. In 2015, the Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed partnered with The Nature Conservancy,

Larimer County Conservation Corps, and Wildlands Restoration Volunteers to reduce the impact of high severity wildfire on Elkhorn Creek, an important tributary of the Poudre River. Over the past few years partners across northern Colorado have been working together to improve forest health and work towards a more resilient landscape in the Red Feather Lakes area NW of Fort Collins. This area was identified because of unhealthy forest densities, high fuel loading and the need to protect the local community from the threat of severe wildfire. The Elkhorn initiative complements existing US Forest Service and other treatments in the area. The Red Feather Prescribed Burn, located north of Red Feather Lakes, is 4,348 acres total and has been taking place since 2017. Between 2015 and

2019 the ECFHI has implemented forest management within four treatment units in the Ben Delatour Scout Ranch adjacent to Elkhorn Creek. The intent of this work is to create, maintain, or enhance the sustainable multi-resource benefits of a healthy and functional forest ecosystem including creating forest structural conditions that support characteristic low to mixed-severity fire, improving habitat for wildlife and supporting educational activities for users and volunteers with science-based frameworks for forest management.

Last month the treatment plan for Unit 4 was implemented. This plan was comprised of a 538-acre prescribed burn. The burn was led by The Nature Conservancy and supported by more than 10 partner organizations, including Peaks to People. At this time, we do not know the exact cause, but the fire escaped a designated boundary on Wednesday Oct 16. The fire was immediately converted into a wildfire (The Elk Fire), at which time, the Larimer County Sheriff's Department became the managing authority. The Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control is conducting an after-action-review of the Elk Fire. The Nature Conservancy is committed to working closely with local authorities and partners to understand and learn from the Elkhorn 4 Burn and subsequent Elk Fire. We will provide details from the review as they become available.

Now Accepting Project Proposals!

We encourage anyone interested in receiving funding from Peaks to People for a current or future project to **submit a proposal** for review. We have \$100,000 - \$250,000 available immediately and anticipate an additional \$550,000 over the next year. Working together we will be able to more effectively set goals and track all the work that is being done in Northern Colorado.

Peaks to People Project Selection Process/
How to Apply for Funding

How to register for access to the Peaks to People
Watershed Health Outcomes Tracker

How to add a project to the Peaks to People
Watershed Health Outcomes Tracker

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We're LinkedIn. Connect with us!

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