



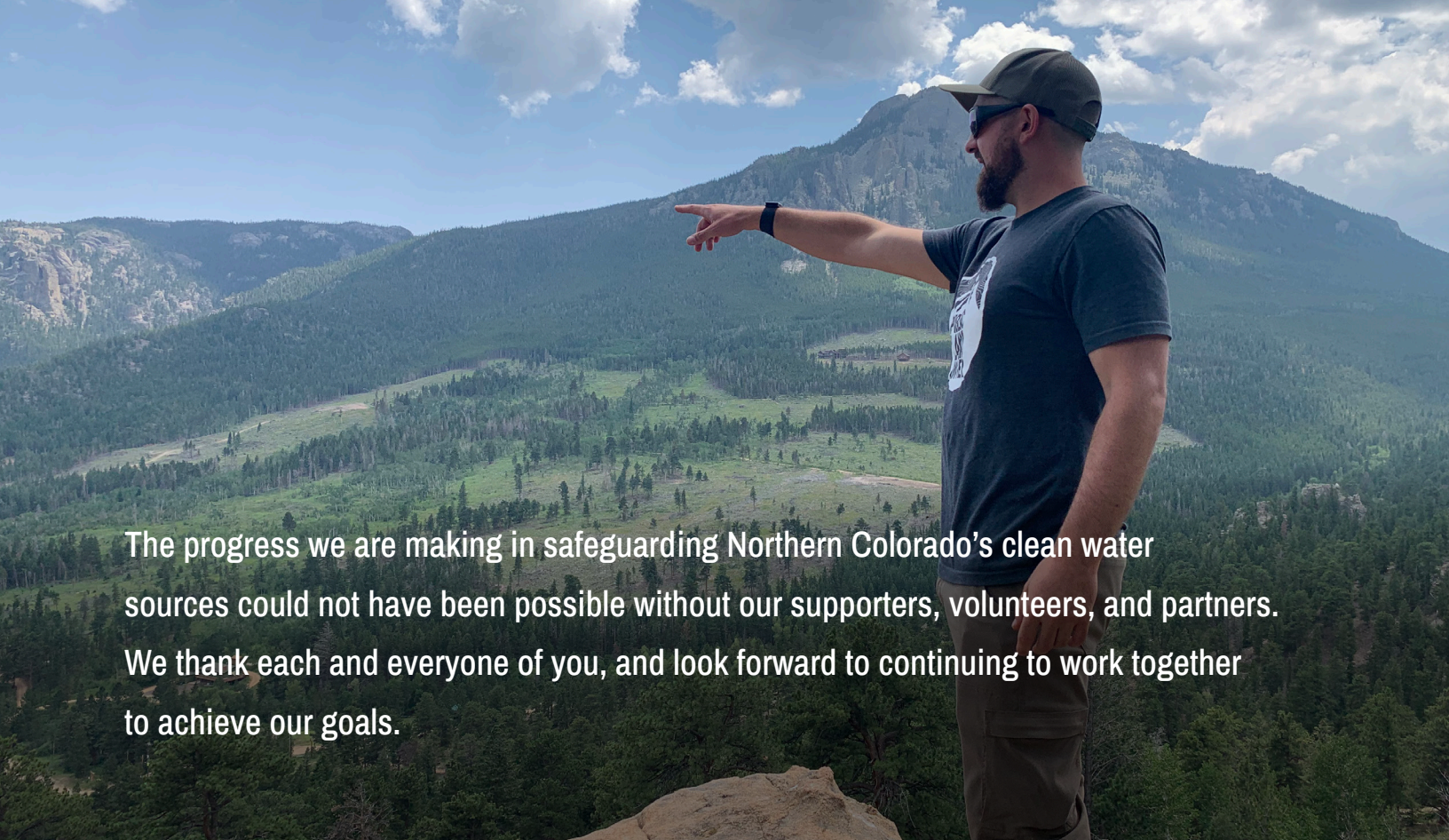
Peaks to People  
Water Fund

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



# Doing The Crucial Work Today To Preserve Our Vital Resources Tomorrow





The progress we are making in safeguarding Northern Colorado's clean water sources could not have been possible without our supporters, volunteers, and partners. We thank each and everyone of you, and look forward to continuing to work together to achieve our goals.

## Our Solution

Peaks to People Water Fund aims to fill funding gaps so our partners can increase the pace and scale of their work. We prioritize performance by selecting projects based on expected outcomes utilizing our Watershed Investment Tool. This helps us direct funds towards projects with the greatest impact and maximize return on investment. We verify outcomes through monitoring which helps us track progress towards stakeholder goals. By decreasing the cost and increasing the speed in which projects are implemented, Peaks to People can ensure funding is yielding the maximum impact.

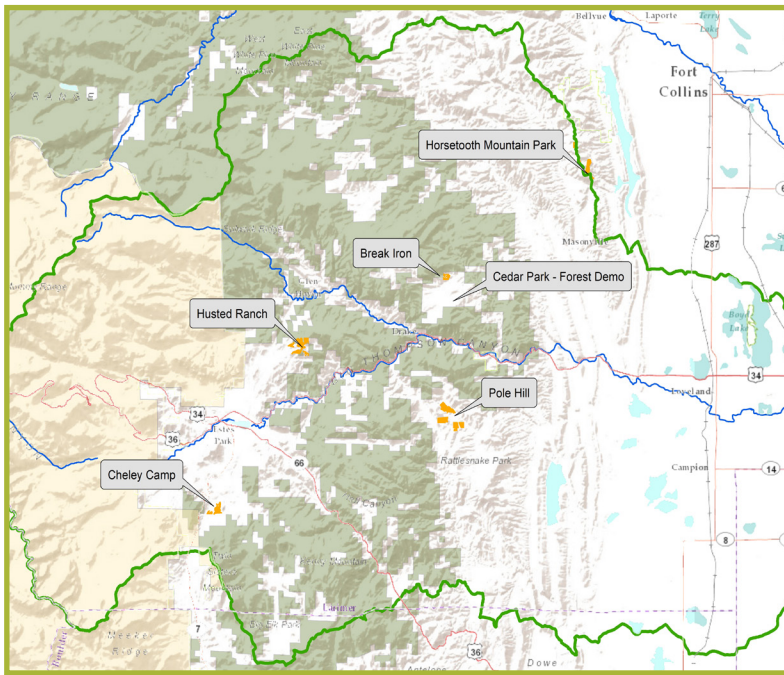
## Overview

During our Fiscal year 2021 Peaks to People Water Fund launched our most important initiative to date, the [Big Thompson Initiative](#), a critical collaborative effort between multiple private and public agencies. We invested \$160,000 in new funds for a combined total of \$1,700,000 in leveraged funds towards five new projects within our initiative priority areas to treat more than 560 acres of forest. Together with our initiative partners we are working to restore forest health, prevent catastrophic wildfires and protect water supplies in Northern Colorado.

*"The water fund model employed by Peaks to People is an innovative platform for strategically investing in collaborative multi-stakeholder projects. We use data to drive decisions about where to invest in the watershed for greatest benefit. Our watershed investment tool helps with project selection, but has also helped to form our bigger picture strategy. Our stakeholders and project partners want to know their time and resources are being well spent."*

Judy Dorsey, founding president and principal engineer of Brendle Group and Peaks to People board member

## Big Thompson Initiative - Active Projects - Sept 2021\*



- Project Area
- Big Thompson River
- Big Thompson Watershed Boundary
- Rocky Mountain National Park
- National Forest

\*Current and upcoming projects in partnership with the Big Thompson Conservation District, The Larimer County Natural Resources Department, and the Big Thompson Watershed Coalition

## Impacts

Projects funded by Peaks to People Water Fund not only protect water from sedimentation and debris, but also improve forest health, reduce the size and severity of wildfires, protect homes and critical wildlife habitat while creating jobs and boosting the local economy.

Invested \$1,700,00 in new and leveraged funds

570 acres of forest restoration/fuels reduction work funded

4,500 metric tons of sediment avoided into water supplies

240 acres of active crown fire avoided

140 acres of Parks and Open space protected from severe wildfire

350 acres of critical wildlife habitat protected from severe wildfire

770 homes within 1km of treatment areas influenced





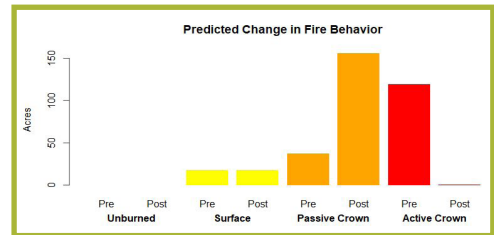
## Highlighted Projects

### Husted Ranch

Husted Ranch has experienced a drastic shift from historical reference conditions. Species compositions have shifted from

Ponderosa Pine to

Douglas-Fir & forest densities have greatly increased. The project area has also experienced Mountain Pine Beetle and mistletoe outbreaks which have adversely affected forest health. Our partners at the Big Thompson Conservation District are conducting mechanical thinning on approximately 195 acres of forested lands to restore the functionality and vigor of the forest and reduce the effects of severe wildfire on the Dry Gulch/Lake Estes drainage. The project is adjacent to treatment planned on the National Forest as part of the Glen Haven Fuel Reduction Project. It is also within the Crosier Mountain Burn Unit proposed as part of the Joint Chiefs' Project Planning, so completing this project has potential to facilitate future prescribed fire efforts in the area.



*“Current and emerging conditions are threatening the health and resiliency of forests in Colorado. There is a solution, but it requires an investment in our forests that cannot be sporadic. Rather, that investment must be focused and strategic, cross-boundary and collaborative.”*

Michael Lester, former Director of Colorado State Forest Service and Peaks to People board member

### Cheley Camps

The Cheley Camps Project is located in a moderate to high wildfire risk area within the Fish Creek sub-watershed that drains to Lake Estes. Lake Estes is an important component of the Colorado-Big Thompson Project where water for multiple users is exposed to potential wildfire impacts from the Estes Valley and adjacent forestlands. This project site is a popular summer camp utilized for recreation. To support Peaks to People funding decisions, the Watershed Investment Tool (WIT) was used to compare the water supply risk mitigation benefits of the Cheley Project treatment units to other planned forest management projects compiled across agencies. We assumed generic mechanical thinning treatment effects for Cheley based on the prescriptions for similar projects by the Big Thompson Conservation District. Cheley Camp treatment units rank in the top half of the planned work across all agencies.





## Performance

Our partners at the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute (CFRI) install field monitoring plots within select fuel treatment projects to assess on-the-ground ecological and wildfire risk reduction benefits. Field-based monitoring results are compared to the [Watershed Investment Tool](#) outputs, which are then used to refine modeled landscape data inputs and fuel treatment effects. Peaks to People and CFRI are committed to using locally-relevant science to efficiently allocate resources that promote resilient forests and protect clean water supplies.

Our [Watershed Health Outcomes Tracker](#) is a valuable shared resource used for reporting on estimated and actual outcomes of local forest health projects. This helps all stakeholders involved determine if the work being done is occurring at scales that matter. The tracker generates fact sheets for each project which include: key accomplishments (performance measures), changes in fire behavior, funding, photos and other relevant information. Performance measures demonstrate cost effectiveness and improve transparency of publicly-funded investments.

## Join the Effort

We are seeking additional diverse leaders to serve as board members who will advocate for and support Peaks to People's mission. To inquire about opportunities on the Peaks to People Water Fund Board, contact Board President, Rob Addington, [Raddington@tnc.org](mailto:Raddington@tnc.org) or Executive Director, Heather Schinkel, [heather@peakstopeople.org](mailto:heather@peakstopeople.org).

We are also looking for strategic partners and are offering several levels of participation through our [Partner Program](#). Your investment in this crucial conservation effort will not only improve our region's water security, it will also ensure our businesses and communities continue to thrive. This is unquestionably our best opportunity to protect our water, and with it our recreation, commerce, and prosperity.