



PEAKS TO PEOPLE WATER FUND  
SPRING 2022 NEWSLETTER



## Note from the Director

Hello and Happy Spring to you!

This time of year always has me thinking about opportunities for renewal and growth. While it could be easy to find oneself disheartened by the new reality of year-round wildfires, I am confident in the resiliency, determination and perseverance of the conservation community in Northern Colorado of which Peaks to People is grateful to be a part. As most of you know by now, I am planning to retire later this summer

which is why this spring has me feeling especially optimistic about new opportunities for our organization as I work to pass the Executive Director torch to my soon to be successor.

In addition to bringing on new leadership we are working to develop new partnerships while nurturing existing ones. We are delighted to announce the Gates Family Foundation has become a Strategic Investor in the Water Fund. We are continuing our work with Sitka Technologies to offer our robust online Watershed Health Outcomes Tracker to our partners. We are excited to be funding new projects to protect the Big Thompson watershed from severe wildfires while supporting the expansion of existing projects in the area. Read all about these developments and more in this newsletter. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or ideas for us. We are always looking for ways to improve.

As always, we encourage you to share this with your friends, family, and colleagues. Stay up to date on all the latest watershed conservation news by following us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

Thank you for your continued support and encouragement. Together we can protect the natural places we know, love and depend on in Northern Colorado.

*Heather Schinkel, Director*





# Gates Family Foundation Grant Award

We are delighted to announce that [Gates Family Foundation](#) (GFF) has joined our growing list of [strategic investors](#) with a generous grant to support our work in Northern Colorado for the next three years. The funding from this grant will close a critical gap in operations funding and allow all additional funds raised to go directly into projects on the ground in support of the [Big Thompson Initiative](#).

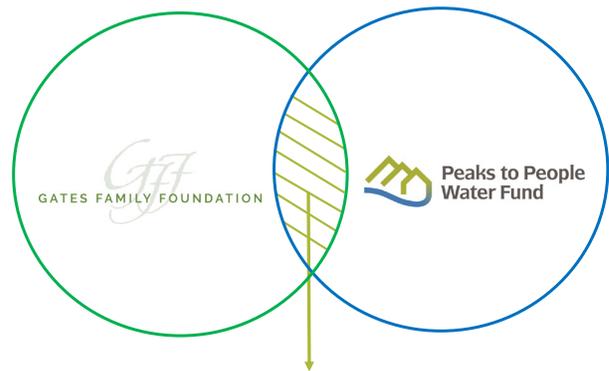
Gates Family Foundation is committed to Colorado and plays an active role in conserving Colorado's unique landscapes, waterways, and agricultural heritage.

Their project selection priorities align beautifully with ours. Like Peaks to People, Gates Family Foundation seeks out projects with:

- DEMONSTRATED IMPACT
- STRONG FUNDING LEVERAGE
- SCALE
- CONNECTIVITY
- A HIGH DEGREE OF COLLABORATION
- LANDOWNER COMMITMENT
- COMMUNITY SUPPORT

In 2021, they awarded more than \$2.2 million in strategic grants to Natural Resources projects. They believe that collaboration, innovation, and non-traditional partnerships are the key to balanced management of limited resources.

We look forward to working together with Gates Family Foundation to protect and steward forest and water resources in Northern Colorado. Thank you for your support GFF!

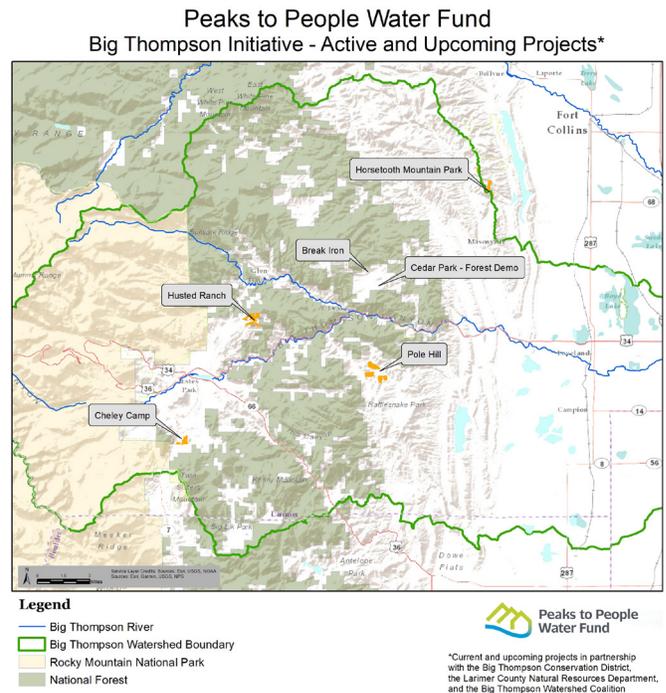


- Develop collaborative forest management strategies that support the role of healthy forests and watersheds in providing ecological, social, and economic benefits.
- Drive funding to the highest priority areas.
- Leverage existing state and federal funding to increase the pace and scale of watershed protection and forest restoration efforts.
- Promote cross-jurisdictional efforts to mitigate catastrophic wildfires.

# Project Updates

We are happy to report that several of our 2021 projects are being expanded with new phases. A new agreement has been signed with our partners at Larimer County Natural Resources to treat an additional 15 acres at Horsetooth Mountain Open Space. Another agreement is being worked on with the Larimer Conservation District (Formally the Big Thompson Conservation District) to add acreage to the Pole Hill project area and possibly Cheley Camps as well. View targeted Performance Measures calculated through our Watershed Investment Tool, Predicted Change in Fire Behavior, budget/funding information, photos, fact sheets and more for these projects and others [HERE](#).

Peaks to People aims to select projects that can be expanded over time as this will improve our chances of influencing fire behavior across the landscape. We also leverage existing state and federal funding to increase the pace and scale of watershed protection and forest restoration efforts. Treatment locations are defined by our Watershed Investment Tool (WIT) which guides forest treatments to minimize cost and maximize benefits. In the future, we will work to craft agreements that are broader in scope to allow more flexibility for the implementer on which acres are treated (i.e. treat X # of acres across several combined project areas).





## The Big Thompson Initiative

Total Investment in 2021  
For Wildfire Mitigation in the  
Big Thompson Watershed

**\$3.2 M**

### INVESTMENT BY PROGRAM

Public  
Agencies  
**82%**

Private  
Sources  
**10%**

Peaks  
to People  
**8%**

## Big Thompson Initiative Update

Since launching the Big Thompson Initiative in January 2021, funding has come into the watershed for forest health projects from numerous sources. The collaborative efforts and financial contributions from Initiative partners and others is reducing wildfire risk and protecting Northern Colorado's critical water supplies. We've got a long way to go but we're off to a good start.

[Learn more](#) about our Big Thompson Initiative and how you can help make a Big Impact today!

## The Dawn of a New Era: The Reality of Year-Round Wildfires

The combination of climate change and population growth in the western United States has brought on a seismic shift in the way we view wildfire. Once thought to be mostly contained to forested mountain landscapes during the summer months we have learned fire is not limited to or contained within natural areas but can move with ferocious ease through highly populated areas at any time of year.

The 2021 Marshall Fire in Boulder County made it clear that we are at the dawn of a new era and must be prepared for year-round wildfire. Nothing can be left to chance. Everything from the planning of new communities, such as the location and arrangements of homes and the materials they are made out of, to detailed evacuation strategies must be accounted for in advance of development.

Learn about what can be done in the face of this new reality and where you can start in our recent blog, [The Dawn of a New Era: The Reality of Year-Round Wildfires](#).



## Partner Updates



Exciting development for our partners at the Big Thompson and Fort Collins Conservation Districts. Earlier this year, these teams merged to form one organization, the Larimer Conservation District (LCD). LCD is one of 75 conservation districts in Colorado. They collaborate with private landowners, residential communities, and local, state, and federal government entities to conserve natural resources in Larimer County. They work to maintain and improve water, soil, and wildlife resources by providing technical, educational, and financial resources to support conservation practices. Peaks to People has funded numerous projects for the District in the Big Thompson watershed in recent years and we look forward to many more collaborations in the future. Check out their new website and learn more about their work [HERE](#).



## Partner Updates (Cont.)



COLORADO FOREST  
RESTORATION INSTITUTE

**COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY**

Congratulations to our partners at Colorado Forest Restoration Institute (CFRI)! The Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes, which includes the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute as well as Highlands University's New Mexico Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute and Northern Arizona University's Ecological Restoration Institute have been awarded \$20 million from the federal government to improve forest resilience and reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires in the Interior West.

The funds are part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act passed by Congress with bipartisan support and signed by

President Joe Biden in 2021. The funding is prompted by climate change-driven increases in fire activity and fire season length, continued development in the wildland-urban interface and interactions between fire and disturbances like pest and pathogen disturbance.

"The work we're charged with developing under the Infrastructure measure will create opportunities for land and fire managers, scientists and community stakeholders to co-produce actionable knowledge to lessen the harmful effects of wildfire events to people and the environment" explained Tony Cheng, CFRI's Director and CSU professor.

Considering recent wildfires like the Cameron Peak and Marshall fires in Colorado, Cheng said that the stakes are at an all-time high to create actionable plans for mitigation. Read the full Press release on this incredible opportunity [HERE](#).

## Board Member Recruitment

Help us safeguard Northern Colorado's clean water sources! We are seeking additional leaders to serve as Board members.

### BOARD MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

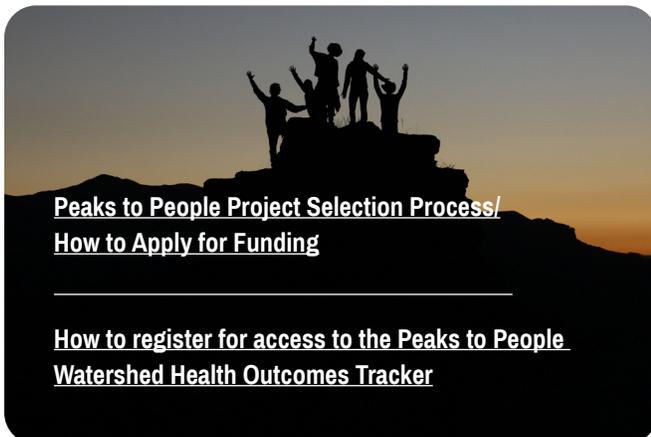
- Serve a three-year term of office (minimum).
- Attend bi-monthly board meetings (minimum 75% attendance required) and occasional board retreats.
- Be an advocate for Peaks to People and its mission.
- Secure warm leads to support Peaks to People. Generate awareness and revenue.
- Provide expertise and guidance to the organization.

### DESIRED SKILLS AND EXPERTISE

We are recruiting for diverse leaders with expertise in the following areas:

Fundraising, Marketing/Communications, Human Resources, Finance, Business Leaders.

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).



[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](#)

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. Working together we will be able to set goals and track all the work that is being done in Northern Colorado more effectively.



## Don't Miss a Drop of Good News

Like and Follow us on Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/peakstopeople/>

Follow us on Twitter! We'll share the news you need to know.

<https://twitter.com/PeakstoPeople>

We're LinkedIn. Connect with us!

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/peakstopeople/>



## Peaks to People Water Fund

[info@peakstopeople.org](mailto:info@peakstopeople.org)

970 829.0020

[peakstopeople.org](http://peakstopeople.org)

