

PEAKS TO PEOPLE WATER FUND

Summer 2023 NEWS



Note from the Director

As I reflect upon my first year at Peaks to People Water Fund, I am truly inspired by the vast scope of collaborative efforts aimed at restoring the health of our forests, safeguarding our precious water resources, and mitigating the profound consequences of severe wildfires here in northern Colorado. We are extremely fortunate to be a part of such an extraordinary network of organizations dedicated to these vital pursuits.

The past few months have been a buzz of activity for us. Attending two different conferences this spring provided us with excellent learning and networking opportunities. At our board retreat this past April we developed an ambitious strategic plan for the next three years aimed at harnessing our strengths to amplify the momentum and significance of our contributions. Last week, I had the privilege of participating in a Wildfire Strategies panel discussion, graciously hosted by Larimer County Commissioner Shaddock-McNally. This insightful platform showcased local community partners that have effectively united their efforts to curtail the impacts of wildfires. Finally, I recently completed a 9-month Leadership Fort Collins program where I was thrilled to get to know some really exceptional local leaders as well as have a chance to learn about the history, government, social issues and needs in our community. All of these opportunities have helped me to start thinking outside the box in terms of what is possible for the future of Peaks to People.

With so much going on, this past year has really flown by. I am excited to see where all of our efforts will take us and look forward to connecting with you all soon. Enjoy this update, reach out anytime and be sure to follow us on our social media channels to stay up to date with all things Peaks to People!

Sincerely,
Julie Dubin, Director



Board Retreat

In April, the Peaks to People leadership team convened for an exceptional day-long retreat with a singular focus: crafting a visionary 3-year strategic plan. The retreat was carefully designed to align with our core mission and vision and the agenda was crafted to facilitate dynamic discussions, foster meaningful collaboration, and facilitate effective decision-making.

We began with a thorough review of our existing strategic plan, followed by an in-depth SWOT analysis to assess its effectiveness. Building upon the insights gained from this analysis, the board identified areas warranting improvement. This led to the formulation of new objectives and strategies that will guide us through the upcoming three years. The experience of coming together in this manner left us inspired, rejuvenated, and eagerly anticipating the expansion of our role in



supporting watershed protection efforts across Northern Colorado.

We are invigorated by the shared commitment to our cause and the path that lies ahead. As we embark on this transformative journey, we invite our community to join us in our pursuit of a sustainable and thriving future. Your continued support fuels our passion and amplifies our mission.

Forest Health Council Tour

In May, we had the distinct honor of hosting a field tour for the [Colorado Forest Health Council](#) along with fellow members of the Big Thompson Watershed Health Partnership (BTWHP). The Council is a Governor-appointed group of influential leaders focused on advising the Governor on matters concerning forest health across the state. Peaks to People team members



played a key role in coordinating the tour, working closely with [Larimer County Commissioner Shaddock-McNally](#) and BTWHP partners to plan the field stops, ensure a well-structured itinerary, and facilitate the overall flow of the tour. Learn all about this exciting opportunity in our blog [Exploring Forest Health and Watershed Resilience: Out in the Field with the Colorado Forest Health Council](#).





Project Updates

Breakiron

Earlier this summer Peaks to People team members had the pleasure of visiting a newly completed forest health project with our partners from the Larimer Conservation District. This project involved a forest restoration treatment of 32 acres that border the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest in the Storm Mountain Area. While a portion of the project area was affected by the 2020 Cameron Peak Fire, the unburned unit contained dense stands of Ponderosa Pine trees, with low diversity of shrubs, grasses, and wildflowers on the forest floor. The overarching goal of this project was to restore forest functionality, improve species composition, and reduce tree density, thus reducing the severity of any future wildfires that may pass through. Read all about the tricky forestry work and the rapid recovery of this project site, [Revitalizing Forests and Protecting Water: A Success Story in the Storm Mountain Area](#).



Pole Hill

We were excited to get out into the forest again last month alongside our partners from the Larimer Conservation District and the Colorado State Forest Service to explore active and completed projects in the Big Thompson watershed. This excursion was a crucial component of our Forest Restoration & Wildfire Risk Mitigation (FRWRM) Grant agreement.

Larimer Conservation District has been enhancing forest health and reducing wildfire risk in the Pole Hill Community since 2017. The significance of funding wildfire mitigation work in the Pole Hill Community cannot be overstated. The proximity of this region to critical water supplies amplifies the importance of safeguarding it from high-severity wildfires. Peaks to People has been able to fund several phases of work in this community. Learn more about this important work in our blog [Community Resilience in Action: A Closer Look at Forest Restoration and Wildfire Risk Reduction in the Pole Hill Area](#).





Fireshed Fund Grant Award

We are very pleased to announce that we have been selected to receive grant funding to support the Big Thompson Watershed Health Partnership (BTWHP). This essential support will allow us to further our mission of creating resilient landscapes and addressing wildfire risks in Northern Colorado. The Northern Colorado Fireshed Fund, established in collaboration with the National Forest Foundation and the Arapaho Roosevelt National Forest, has awarded approximately \$975,000 in funding to six local organizations, including Peaks to People Water Fund.

Learn about our impact and collaboration in our blog [Grant Funding Awarded to Support Big Thompson Watershed Health Partnership](#)



Big Thompson Watershed Health Partnership



BTWHP POD's Mapping Exercise

Last month members of the Big Thompson Watershed Health Partnership (BTWHP) came together for a crucial initiative—to map out PODs (Potential Operational Delineations) across the watershed. Led by Daniel Godwin, Fire Management Planning Specialist and Wildfire Crisis Strategy Program Manager for the Arapahoe-Roosevelt National Forest, this mapping exercise aimed to identify and connect PODs within our watershed and neighboring areas.

These PODs, known along the front range as “the ribbon”, act as a kind of fire seawall serving as our first line of defense against future fires and providing an essential planning tool.

Learn more about PODs and our work defining them in the Big Thompson in our story [Enhancing Fire Preparedness: Mapping PODs in the Big Thompson Watershed.](#)





Staff Member Highlight

Meet Peaks to People's Program Manager, Sandi Good.

I have been privileged to call Northern Colorado my home for over 30 years, bearing witness to the transformative changes in the health of Colorado's forests. As an avid outdoor enthusiast and an advocate for nature, my concern for our changing landscape led me on a journey of knowledge and action. I began my journey by pursuing a bachelor's degree in Natural Resources Management and Conservation Biology at Colorado State University, where I deepened my expertise as a graduate student, specializing in Riparian Ecology and Restoration. In the years that followed I worked for a variety of public and private agencies, seeing up close the implications management decisions have had on our natural world. I have worked as a researcher for the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, C.S.U. College of Natural Resources, the Center for Collaborative Conservation and the Colorado Natural Heritage Program.

For the past five years, I've been fortunate to serve as the Program Manager for Peaks to People. In this role, I work closely with conservation partners to address the impact of high severity wildfires on our precious water resources. Living in the foothills west of Fort Collins, I've experienced firsthand the devastating effects of megafires on our communities.

The convergence of my personal and professional experiences has cultivated a keen awareness of the urgent need for conservation action and the

profound impact of collective endeavors in preserving our natural heritage. I firmly believe that collaboration is the key to ensuring a sustainable and thriving environment for generations to come.

Beyond my work at Peaks to People, you can find me dedicating my free time volunteering for Golden Retriever Freedom Rescue, a cause that's close to my heart. When I'm not actively engaged in conservation efforts, I'm exploring the great outdoors with my family and rescue dogs, hiking, boating and camping, or scuba diving to explore the mesmerizing depths of the world beneath the waves.

I'm driven by the belief that each of us can make a difference, no matter how big or small.





Colorado Wildland Fire Conference April 2023

We had a fun and informative time at the [Colorado Wildland Fire Conference](#), hosted by Fire Adapted Colorado. This conference, held every 18 months, is specially tailored for professionals dedicated to enhancing wildfire outcomes in Colorado communities and landscapes. It brought together a diverse group of individuals, including Mitigation Specialists, Emergency Managers, Firefighters, Researchers, Foresters, Developers, and Policy Makers, all working proactively to mitigate the impact of wildfires.

Throughout the collaborative event, attendees were treated to a wealth of valuable information through a diverse range of presentations, all centered around the conference theme: "Accelerating Adaptation and Managing Expectations." With wildfires increasingly outpacing our efforts, the 2023 Colorado Wildland Fire Conference took a focused approach to explore ways to expedite action and develop robust strategies to aid our communities in adapting to these challenges.



Cross-Boundary Landscape Restoration Workshop May 2023

From insightful discussions to cutting-edge research findings, the [Cross-Boundary Landscape Restoration Workshop](#) hosted by the Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes provided an unparalleled opportunity to network with like-minded professionals, fostering a strong sense of camaraderie and cooperation. This workshop did not disappoint!

The overarching goals of this workshop were for attendees to share successes and lessons learned on cross-boundary collaborative efforts; explore gaps and needs to better incorporate diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice in forestry, fuels, and fire research, and management; and co-developing recommendations, strategies, and resources for collaborative landscape-scale restoration projects. The collective dedication was evident, as we engaged in meaningful conversations, exchanged ideas, and collaborated on innovative solutions.

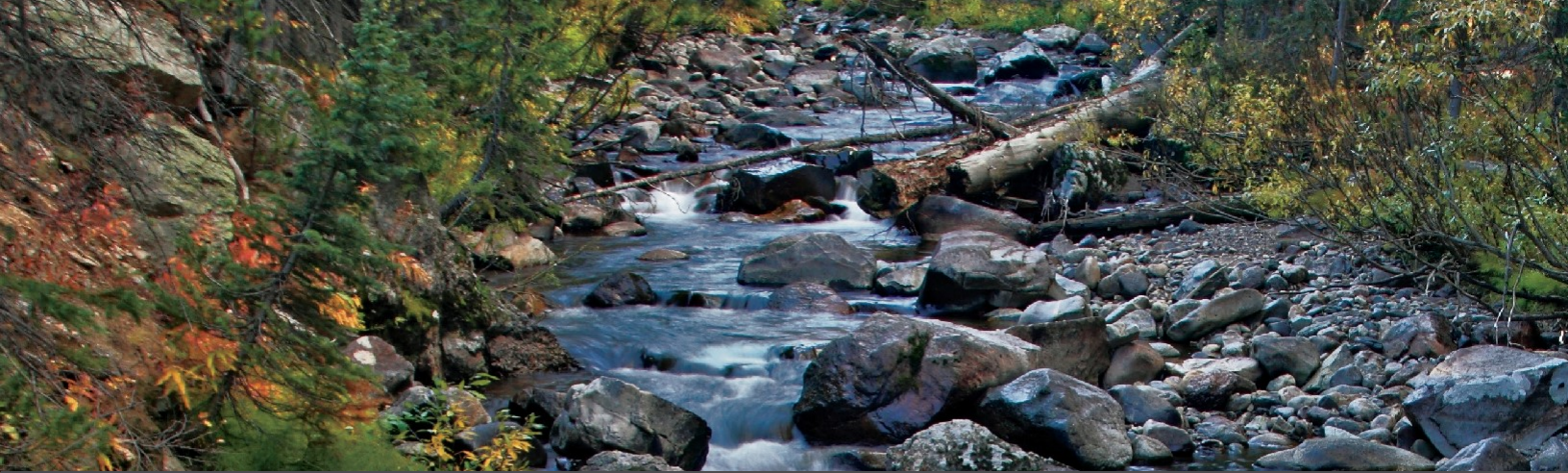
In the face of the escalating climate challenge, the 2023 SWERI Workshop theme of "Adapting to a Climate-altered West" took a forward-looking approach, focusing on innovative ways to expedite action and foster the development of robust strategies for community adaptation. With wildfires consistently outpacing efforts, the conference delved deep into actionable solutions, inspiring attendees to become catalysts for change.

Now Accepting Proposals!

We encourage anyone interested in receiving funding from Peaks to People for a current or future project to submit a proposal for review.

Click [HERE](#) to get started





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