

PEAKS TO PEOPLE WATER FUND

Fall 2023 NEWS



Note from the Director

Happy Holidays! This is such a special time of year to pause, reflect and express gratitude to the many people and organizations that make our work possible. The significant and strategic progress we are making in safeguarding our critical water resources in Northern Colorado would not be possible without you!

We are always looking to invite more people, organizations, corporations and funders to partner with us to continue to expand the scope and scale of impact. Please consider joining us - the time is now! We have a short timeline to effectively improve the health of our forests in anticipation of additional wildfires across our landscape. By working together, we can vastly increase our ability to enhance forest health, reduce risk and ultimately protect the water we all depend on.

Please read on to learn about the most recent news at Peaks to People. This fall has provided many opportunities to engage with our wonderful partners via the Big Thompson Watershed Health Partnership, learn and collaborate at several conferences and forums, and to allocate critical matching funding for strategic, high impact forest projects in the Big Thompson and Cache la Poudre watersheds.

As always, we invite you to follow all of the latest news on our social media channels. We are passionate about protecting our watersheds and believe there are many ways to contribute. If this is something you care about, and you are ready to explore what it might look like to take action and make a difference, we welcome the opportunity to connect with you directly. Please reach out!

Sincerely,
Julie Dubin, Director



Preserve Colorado's Watersheds: Secure Our Future, One Drop at a Time

Imagine a Colorado where clean, abundant water is a given, where our forests are healthy and thriving, and where our environment supports our communities and businesses. This is the Colorado we're working to create, and we need your help.

Our mission is to safeguard our mountain watersheds—the unsung heroes that provide us with vital resources like clean water, diverse wildlife habitats, and abundant recreational opportunities.

WHAT WE DO

Cultivate partnerships – Working collaboratively with our partners across the region is the cornerstone of our efforts. The scope of the problems facing our mountain watersheds is far too great for any one entity to remedy. This prompted Peaks to People to convene the Big Thompson Watershed Health Partnership (BTWHP) in 2022. Comprised of 16 local, state and federal organizations, both public and private, our partnership aims to increase the pace and scale of forest health projects throughout the watershed by sharing valuable expertise and resources. Peaks to People willingly shares resources and expertise, such as grant writing and administration, with our partners.

Strategically Invest – Our one-of-a-kind [Watershed Investment Tool](#) is the original risk analysis tool developed for northern Colorado. It allows us to strategically select forest health projects that directly protect water supplies from the impacts of high severity wildfire. It provides us with detailed information on the wildfire risks that will be avoided at precise treatment locations such as: metric tons of sediment into water supplies avoided, costs to water providers avoided, acres of critical wildlife habitat protected, number of homes



within one kilometer of the treatment area, acres of parks and open space protected, miles of trails protected and much more. Our team of forestry and finance experts use this information when considering which forest health projects to fund.

WHY IT MATTERS

Access to clean water is the cornerstone of our thriving communities and businesses. It's the essence of life in Colorado. However, our clean water sources are facing increasing threats, especially from severe wildfires. Healthy forests are more resilient to the impacts of climate change. By supporting forestry projects adjacent to vulnerable water supplies we can reduce the severity of wildfires and the impacts of post fire flooding.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

By making a tax-deductible donation today, you're not just contributing to a cause; you're investing in the future of Northern Colorado. You're taking a tangible step towards restoring the health of our forests and preserving our precious water resources. Every dollar you contribute reduces the risk of severe wildfires. Together, we can make a profound difference. Will you join us in creating a better future for Colorado?

***Thank you for being a part of
this vital mission.***

DONATE TODAY



PEAKS TO PEOPLE WATER FUND Accomplishments Since 2017



\$5,742,582

Total New and Leveraged Funding

2,668

Acres of Fuels Reduction Funded



784

Acres of Active Crown Fire Reduced

2,758

Homes Influenced (within 1km of
Treatment Areas)



21,026

Metric tons of Avoided Sediment
in Water Supplies

1,329

Acres Crucial Wildlife Habitat
protected from Wildfire



368

Acres Parks and Open Space Protected
from Wildfire

Accomplishments are modeled with Peaks to People' Water Fund's
Watershed Investment Tool and Co-benefits Module.



Project Updates

Cherokee Park

We are pleased to announce our commitment of \$30,000 to an important project being implemented by Larimer Conservation District (LCD) within the [Cherokee Park community](#) in northern Larimer County. This contribution is a part of our ongoing [Cache La Poudre Initiative](#), which, in conjunction with our [Big Thompson Initiative](#), underscores our commitment to safeguarding the watershed through strategic investments in forest restoration.

The 344 acre project is situated within the Poudre River Ranch Homeowners Association and the Diamond Creek Road Association in the Livermore, CO area. By implementing forest restoration on these acres, we aim to reduce crown density significantly. This will create open spaces and diversity within the forest, making it less prone to intense crown fires. In turn, this will protect neighboring communities and enhance the efficiency of wildfire response efforts.

Learn more about this project in our latest blog: [Sowing the Seeds of Sustainability: The Cache La Poudre Initiative in Cherokee Park](#)

Cheley Camps

We are also providing \$56,000 in funding for two projects being implemented by our partners at Larimer Conservation District at the Cheley Camps of Colorado. The first project will encompass 18 acres on their Fox Creek Property near Glen Haven. The project area sits adjacent to future treatments planned by the Big Thompson Watershed Coalition (BTWC) on neighboring private property and is strategically placed to build upon that planned work, along with other planned and completed forest health projects done by various agencies/organizations in the greater Glen Haven vicinity. The second will include 40 acres on their main campus south of Estes Park, Colorado.

Restoring the health of the forests in these project areas will not only protect valuable downstream water supplies but will enhance the experiences of the hundreds of youth who enjoy these camps every year.

Learn about these projects impacts, funding sources, Watershed Investment Tool predicted outcomes and more:

[CHELEY CAMP—FOX CREEK RESTORATION PROJECT](#)

[CHELEY CAMP—MAIN CAMPUS RESTORATION PROJECT](#)



PHOTO: Poudre River Ranch in Cherokee Park BEFORE

CREDIT: Larimer Conservation District



OctoberForest 2023

Did you know that 95% of your beer is water? And 40% of the world's usable water comes from forests? We were delighted to join our partners from The Nature Conservancy in Colorado along with the Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed at Horse & Dragon Brewing Company last month to celebrate the connections between healthy forests and great beer.

If you love beer, then you should love forests!



Sustaining Colorado Watersheds Conference October 2023

We were excited to be able to attend this year's Sustaining Colorado Watersheds (SCW) conference in Avon, Colorado. For the past 18 years this gathering has brought together knowledgeable and engaged community members, scientists, ecologists, water managers, educators, community leaders, young professionals, policymakers, and regulators to share knowledge, network, and discuss current issues facing Colorado's watersheds. The theme for the 2023 conference was: "Beyond the Banks: Expanding Perspectives to Change our World." This year's theme emphasized the need to "expand our thinking, incorporate new perspectives, explore paradigm shifts, and collaborate across disciplines and sectors to continue solving complex problems."

Colorado Forest Collaboratives Summit September 2023

We enjoyed an informative two days in early September at the 2023 Colorado Forest Collaboratives Summit in Salida, Colorado where approximately 100 collaborative leaders and partners gathered to share insights on their successes and challenges working in conservation.





Big Thompson Watershed Health Partnership Updates



In September the [Big Thompson Watershed Health Partnership \(BTWHP\)](#) once again convened to review and discuss Potential Operational Delineations (PODS) boundaries. Partners participated in the workshop by gathering around maps created from a previous PODS workshop. This interactive session allowed for a detailed review and discussion of the proposed PODS boundaries by the USFS, based on the valuable feedback and suggestions from the partners. In a significant decision, partners collectively agreed to prioritize the Pole Hill/Waltonia POD for immediate attention. Given the multitude of projects occurring in this area, partners recognized

the need to focus efforts where they could have the most substantial and immediate impact. Learn more about this important milestone for the partnership in our recent blog: [Collaborative Workshop Unveils Strategic Approach for Wildfire Management in Big Thompson Watershed](#)

We are pleased to announce two new organizations have joined the partnership since our last update. We welcomed Larimer County Conservation Corps and City of Greeley Water and Sewer. The addition of these two agencies brings the partnership to 16 members!




The Larimer County Conservation Corps (LCCC) promotes individual development through service for the benefit of our environment and community. LCCC is housed within and administered by the Larimer County Economic and Workforce Development.




Greeley Water's core mission is to reliably deliver safe, high-quality water that tastes great. The Big Thompson watershed is one of four source areas for Greeley Water. In addition to providing treated water to meet peak summer demands, the Big Thompson watershed is essential to Greeley's non-potable and agricultural water rental programs.



New Project Fact Sheets and Website Updates



MAC GREGOR RANCH FOREST RESTORATION



Implementing Agency:
Larimer Conservation District

Funding Agencies:
NRCS
Peaks to People Water Fund
Colorado State Forest Service

Funding Year:
2022

Treatment Type:
Mechanical Thinning

Watershed:
Big Thompson

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This phase will restore 160 acres, making the total of completed and planned treatment areas on the ranch 360 combined acres. With approx. 9% overstory trees/acre and an average diameter of 6-12 inches, the area is overgrown with many douglas fir trees in the understory along with small and medium sized ponderosa pine. The overall goals of this prescription are to increase the quality and quantity of available wildlife habitat, increase resilience to severe wildfire, increase resiliency to pests and pathogens, and finally to enhance the diversity of the understory plant life.

Location:
This historic ranch is nestled in the Northwest corner of the Estes Valley, bordering the Rocky Mountain National Park land on the north and west sides.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

167 acres
Fuels Reduction and Forest Restoration

18 acres
Active Crown Fire Reduced


367 metric tons
Conditional Reduction in Erosion

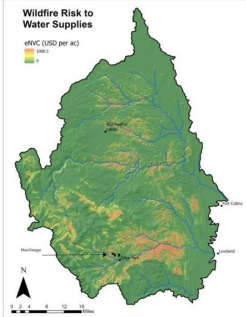
\$5,392
Conditional Reduction in Sediment Costs to Water Supplies

906 homes
Homes Within Influence Zone of Treatments

500 acres
Critical Wildlife Habitat Protected from Wildfire

179 metric tons
Conditional Reduction in Sediment Delivered To Water Supplies








Wildfire Risk to Water Supplies

Figure 2: Map of Project Area showing the treatment units and the estimated wildfire risk to water supplies. The map uses a color scale from green (low risk) to red (high risk).

We are very excited to share with you our new and improved Project Fact Sheets! These informative documents provide a wealth of information generated by our Watershed Investment Tool. We utilize these fact sheets when communicating with new and existing funders. We also share them with our implementing partners to aid in their marketing and communications programs. Let us know what you think! We value your input as we strive to improve our shared resources.

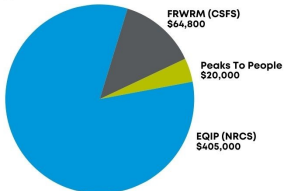




Pole Hill Phase III 2021

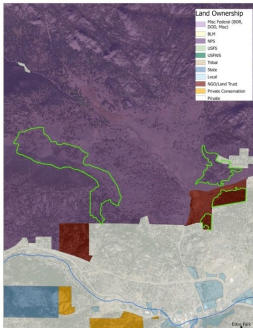
WATER SUPPLY INFRASTRUCTURE

The treatment units drain into Black Canyon Creek which joins the Big Thompson River ~ 0.7 miles downstream near the town of Estes. Sediment delivered to the mainstem of the Big Thompson River has potential to affect water supply infrastructure associated with the Colorado-Big Thompson Project, the City of Loveland, and the City of Greeley. The closest downstream water infrastructure is Lake Estes < 1 mi downstream of the Black Canyon Creek and Big Thompson confluence. Lake Estes, formed by the Olympus Dam, contributes to the Colorado-Big Thompson Project power system through both the Estes and Pole Hill power plants.

FUNDING PROFILE

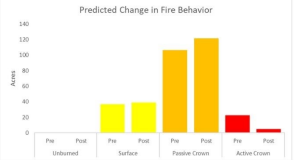


MAP





Detailed site map showing the proposed project boundary in green, with land ownership depicted with shading


PREDICTED CHANGE IN FIRE BEHAVIOR



CONTACT US TO LEARN MORE AND SUPPORT OUR WORK:

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 info@peakstopeople.org

 970-829-0020

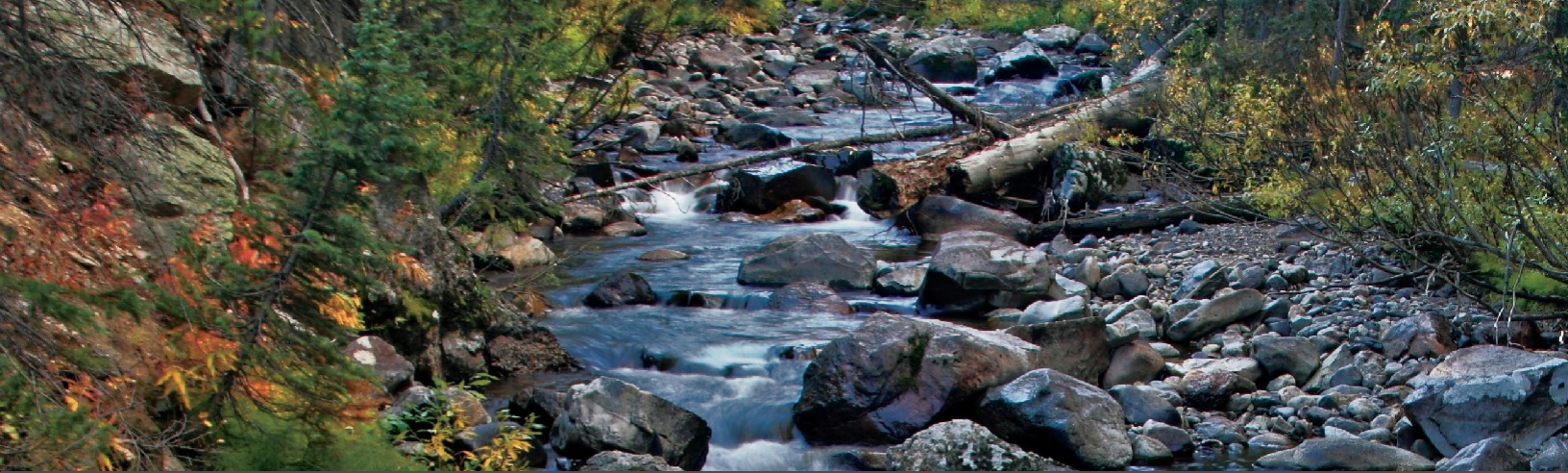
We have also made a few updates to our [website](#)! Check the dropdown menus under [The Outcomes](#) to learn about the [Demonstration Sites](#) we began our journey with, recent [Projects](#) we have funded and their impacts to downstream water supplies, and our cumulative [Accomplishments](#) since 2017. These accomplishments could not be possible without the dedication and hard work of our partners and the generosity of our supports. Thank you!



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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