



FROM RISK TO RESILIENCE: SAFEGUARDING NORTHERN COLORADO'S FUTURE



Peaks to People
Water Fund

2024 IMPACT REPORT



Thank you to our partners, donors and supporters for standing with us in this critical work—your contributions make everything we do possible. If you're considering joining us, now is the perfect time to invest in the health of our forests, watersheds, and communities. Together, we can turn challenges into opportunities and momentum into lasting impact.



Ramsay-Shockey Open Space

OUR SOLUTION

At Peaks to People Water Fund, we believe that safeguarding Northern Colorado's water resources begins with healthy forests. Through strategic investments in forest health and wildfire mitigation, we're not only protecting water supplies but also building resilient ecosystems and communities.

And we don't do it alone. Collaboration is the foundation of our approach. We foster strong partnerships with organizations and people dedicated to protecting our watersheds. We develop innovative tools and collaborative solutions that drive meaningful, large-scale impact. Together, we're creating a future where our forests are healthier, our water flows clean, and our communities are safeguarded from the increasing threat of wildfires.

OVERVIEW

In 2024, we deepened our alliance with members of the Big Thompson Watershed Health Partnership (BTWHP) to advance two strategic planning tools designed to reduce wildfire risks. A key achievement was the development of the PODs-Based Treatment Planning Geospatial Tool, an innovative resource that enhances our ability to plan and prioritize wildfire mitigation at a meaningful scale.

We also sponsored the development of the Wildfire Ready Action Plan for the Big Thompson watershed which is a proactive strategy to strengthen wildfire readiness and recovery efforts across the region.

Last summer, the devastating Alexander Mountain Fire, which burned nearly 10,000 acres in the Big Thompson watershed and destroyed 51 structures, including 26 homes, was a stark reminder of the urgency of our work. While the loss was profound, the fire also demonstrated the effectiveness of our collaborative network. Pre-established relationships and trust among partners enabled rapid coordination, ensuring resources were deployed quickly and efficiently when they were needed most. This response underscored a critical truth: when we work together, we can better protect our communities and the natural resources that sustain us.

COVER IMAGES:
Alexander Mountain Fire
Horsetooth Reservoir



2024 IMPACT

\$1,306,000 New and Leveraged Funds

305 Acres of Forest Restoration/Fuels Reduction

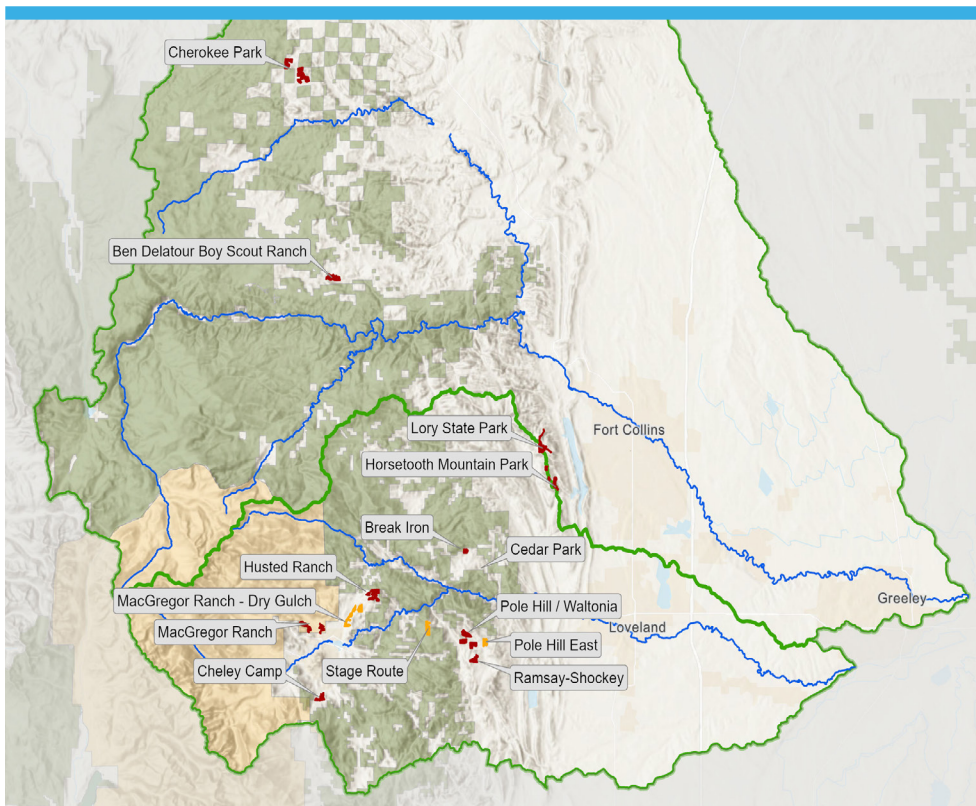
960 Metric Tons of Erosion Avoided

44 Acres of Active Crown Fire Reduced

104 Acres of Critical Wildlife Habitat Protected

398 Homes Within 1km of Treatment Areas

OUR CURRENT AND COMPLETED PROJECTS*



- Active Projects
- Completed Projects
- Cache la Poudre and Big Thompson Rivers
- Cache la Poudre and Big Thompson Watershed Boundaries
- National Forest and Grasslands
- Rocky Mountain National Park

*Current and completed projects as of 12/31/2024 in partnership with Larimer Conservation District, Larimer County Natural Resources Department, and the Big Thompson Watershed Coalition.

FUNDING HIGHLIGHTS

We are deeply grateful for the generosity of our funding partners, both longstanding supporters and new allies who share our vision for a healthier, safer future. Together, we're creating meaningful change in our community and beyond.

Welcoming New Partners

In 2024, we were thrilled to expand our network of funders, with new and diverse partners stepping forward to invest in healthy forests and secure water supplies. Your support inspires and sustains us, and we are honored to collaborate with you.

A Legacy of Impact

Our ongoing partnership with The Nature Conservancy of Colorado and Anheuser Busch InBev exemplifies the impact of sustained support. Since 2018, their contributions have provided \$545,500 in grant funding, supporting 14 transformative projects covering 2,234 acres in Northern Colorado.

Ongoing support from generous foundations such as Gates Family Foundation, National Forest Foundation and others are crucial for our efforts. Relationships and trust are at the heart of our collaborative and partnership building initiatives, which are only possible with long-term investments. Thank you!



POLE HILL/WALTONIA PROJECT 2022-2027

\$3,300,557 New and Leveraged Funds

Anticipated Outcomes

520 Acres of Forest Restoration/Fuels Reduction

2,778 Metric Tons of Erosion Avoided

63 Acres Active Crown Fire Reduced

305 Homes Within 1km of Treatment Area

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Pole Hill/ Waltonia

In 2024, we continued leveraging the \$1,000,000 Forest Restoration and Wildfire Risk Mitigation (FRWRM) grant awarded to us in 2023 by the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS). The large-scale Pole Hill/ Waltonia project, being implemented by our partners at Big Thompson Watershed Coalition (BTWC) and Larimer Conservation District (LCD), is advancing cross-boundary wildfire risk reduction and landscape-scale resiliency in the region.

This project expands and leverages a 2022 Colorado Strategic Wildfire Action Program (COSWAP) grant awarded to LCD and BTWC for forestry and wildfire mitigation work in the Big Thompson. Significant funding was also provided by the Natural Resources Conservation Service through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Northern Water, and the U.S. Forest Service.

The Pole Hill/Waltonia project represents the flagship collaborative initiative of the BTWHP, demonstrating how diverse funding sources can be leveraged to increase the scale and impact of forest restoration efforts.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS (cont)

MacGregor Ranch/Dry Gulch

In partnership with The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Peaks to People directed \$80,000 toward 104 acres of continued forest restoration at the historic MacGregor Ranch in Estes Park, Colorado, as part of our Big Thompson Initiative. The treatment area, located 1.5 miles northeast of downtown Estes Park and adjacent to private parcels, is critical for water quality protection in the Big Thompson Watershed.

Led by our partners at Larimer Conservation District (LCD), the project will reduce excessive fuel loads, helping to restore the forest to a healthier, more resilient state. This work directly supports the priorities outlined in the 2022 Estes Park Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), with a focus on the North Estes Project Area. Beyond safeguarding more than 100 acres of crucial wildlife habitat, the project will also reduce wildfire risk for 339 homes located within 1km of the treatment area. This collaboration underscores the strategic importance of managing hazardous fuel loads in high-risk, high-value zones.



Pole Hill East

Pole Hill East

Peaks to People and TNC are also supporting an additional 65-acre forest health project in the Pole Hill community. This initiative builds on over 500 acres of restoration completed by LCD in the area. The project's location, upstream of critical reservoirs including Pinewood, Flatiron, Carter Lake, and the forthcoming Chimney Hollow Reservoir, underscores its importance for water resource protection.

The communities here face heightened wildfire risks due to dense populations and limited evacuation routes. By reducing fire risk and protecting downstream assets, this project provides crucial resilience for both residents and the Colorado-Big Thompson water system.

Stage Route

As part of the larger Pole Hill/Waltonia project Peaks to People is supporting a 136-acre project situated at the top of Waltonia Road. This project, also being implemented by our partners at LCD, will enhance forest health, mitigate wildfire severity, increase understory biodiversity for wildlife and livestock, and curb the spread of pests and diseases such as mistletoe and pine beetles. Downstream water supply infrastructure includes Barnes Ditch, Dille Tunnel, George Rist Ditch, Loveland Greeley Canal, and Loveland Pipeline which are important to the cities of Loveland and Greeley as well as Northern Water. Additional funding for the Stage Route project is being provided by the Natural Resources Conservation Service through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.



MacGregor Ranch/Dry Gulch

COLLABORATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

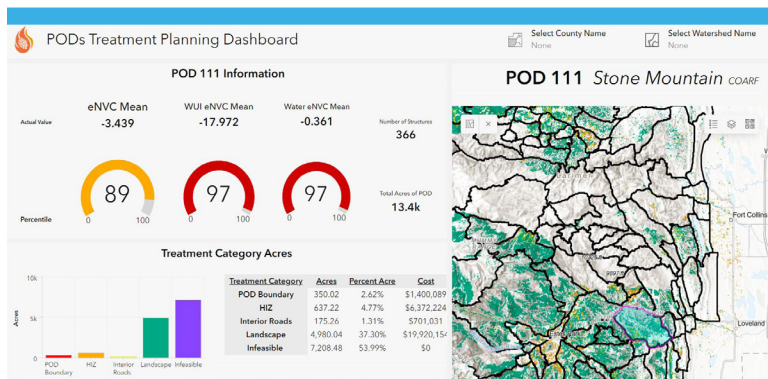
At Peaks to People, we recognize that safeguarding our watersheds and communities requires more than isolated efforts—it demands a coordinated and collaborative approach. By aligning with partners who share our commitment to wildfire mitigation, forest health, and watershed resilience, we're driving transformative change. As we continue to strengthen relationships with agencies and stakeholders, we remain dedicated to leveraging our expertise in fundraising, grant administration, communications and strategic planning.

Advancing Strategic Planning with Cutting-Edge Tools

In the first half of 2024, Peaks to People collaborated with the Colorado State Forest Service, Larimer County Office of Emergency Management, Colorado Forest Restoration Institute, and other partners to pioneer a groundbreaking watershed-level strategic planning tool.

Potential Operational Delineations (PODs)-Based Treatment Planning Geospatial Tool

The tool organizes the landscape into operationally relevant management units (PODs) using natural and man-made control features such as roads, streams, and ridges. The goal of this tool is to facilitate targeted discussions about treatment types, required funding, and land ownership within each POD. By aligning efforts across stakeholders it will transform how we visualize, prioritize, and manage treatments within the Big Thompson Watershed and across Northern Colorado.



“The Colorado State Forest Service Fort Collins Field Office appreciates and values Peaks to People Water Fund and the role they bring towards a shared vision of stewarding our state’s forests and the watersheds we rely on. They have provided a unique and important role in the formation and leadership of the Big Thompson Watershed Health Partnership (BTWHP), which resources and aligns a wide range of stakeholders on specific and strategic implementation. Through this partnership Peaks to People has created a reliable and actionable framework for partners to collaborate on projects together and innovate new ways of strategic planning. Specifically, they played a pivotal role developing a new planning tool which combines the USFS Potential Operational Delineations framework and the National Cohesive Wildfire Strategy to plan and track the implementation of wildfire mitigation projects at a large scale.”

Max Erickson, Supervisory Forester,
Fort Collins Field Office, Colorado State Forest Service

COLLABORATIVE HIGHLIGHTS (cont)

Watershed Investment Tool Update

During the second half of 2024, we worked together with the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute (CFRI) to align Peaks to People's unique [Watershed Investment Tool](#) with the [Northern Colorado Fireshed Collaborative's Wildfire Risk Assessment](#) and account for the Alexander Mountain Fire. To do so, we updated both fire behavior and burn probability inputs to the Watershed Investment Tool. Wildfire risk is still assessed on the potential for sediment delivery to critical drinking water infrastructure in the event of a fire. Our treatment priorities remain driven by three key factors: the type of treatment (mechanical thinning vs. prescribed fire), treatment cost, and feasibility (e.g., land ownership and access considerations).

While the ways we use this innovative tool have evolved since its initial development in 2016, the original intent—outcomes-based investment—remains at the heart of our mission.

We are extremely grateful to our partners at CFRI and for their 9+ years of collaboration and innovation with Peaks to People.

Big Thompson Watershed Wildfire Ready Action Plan

Over the past 18 months Peaks to People has sponsored the development of a Wildfire Ready Action Plan (WRAP) for the Big Thompson watershed, part of the Colorado Water Conservation Board's Wildfire Ready Watersheds (WRW) initiative. The mission of the WRW initiative is to assess the susceptibility of water resources, communities, and critical infrastructure to post-wildfire impacts and advance a framework for stakeholders to plan and implement mitigation strategies to minimize these impacts—before wildfires occur.

We have worked closely with Big Thompson Watershed Coalition (BTWC), Estes Valley Watershed Coalition (EVWC), and Larimer Conservation District (LCD) as part of the Core Team leading the WRAP effort. Northern Water, BTWC, and EVWC contributed critical match funding, significant time, and key data sets to support this initiative.

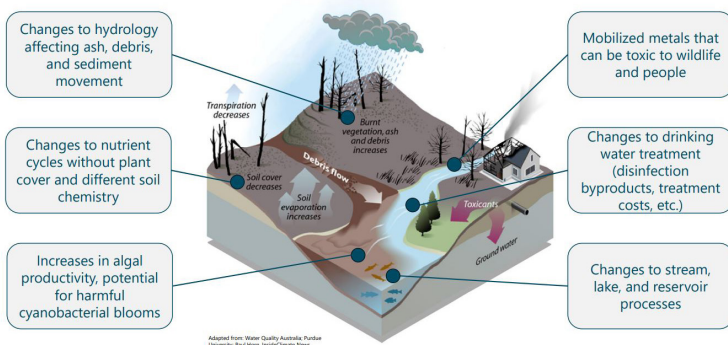
The WRAP will be completed in early 2025 and will culminate in a prioritized list of projects designed to enhance the watershed's resilience and protect its resources. Our collaborative efforts with stakeholders and experts underscore the importance of proactive planning and resilient infrastructure. By addressing potential wildfire impacts before they occur, and being prepared to respond immediately following a fire, we can safeguard our water resources, protect communities, and ensure the long-term health of our watershed.



"It is important that we put funds in specific places that make the most difference. So this idea of making investments that have the biggest return is why Peaks to People makes such a big impact. Water has always been the primary indicator of forest health. Nothing monetizes the investment in forest health like water does"

Mike Lester, Director
Colorado State Forest Service (Retired)

Potential Postfire Water Quality Impacts



COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

At Peaks to People, our partnership provides more than just financial backing—we strive to empower organizations with enhanced public messaging and social credibility, essential for building lasting community support for forest health and wildfire mitigation. Through collaborative communication, we amplify awareness and trust in these critical efforts.

In 2024, Peaks to People facilitated 12 BTWHP monthly meetings, averaging 19 attendees from approximately 14 agencies per meeting. We actively engaged with many BTWHP and community partners throughout 2024 to discuss and refine the PODS strategy for the Big Thompson watershed and aid in the development of the PODs Dashboard for the Northern Colorado Fireshed Collaborative. We also participated in numerous site visit tours and community outreach events. Here are a few of the highlights:

Project Site Tours

MacGregor Ranch

We co-hosted a field tour for 45 attendees of the After the Flames conference in Estes Park, highlighting collaborative efforts in the Big Thompson Watershed. The tour included the 400-acre MacGregor Ranch project, showcasing forest health initiatives, adaptive management, and riparian restoration to mitigate post-fire impact



MacGregor Ranch

Cheley Camps and MacGregor Ranch

This summer, we co-presented with partners on the Big Thompson Watershed Health Partnership (BTWHP) and the Potential Operational Delineations (PODs) strategy. Participants toured MacGregor Ranch and Cheley Camps to observe forest thinning and habitat restoration projects that enhance forest resilience and firefighting conditions. Discussions highlighted the importance of collaboration in managing fire-adaptive landscapes.

Ramsay-Shockey Open Space

Together with our partners at The Nature Conservancy of Colorado and the Larimer Conservation District, Peaks to People hosted a project site visit for a special team of AB InBev representatives. The visit to our demonstration site at Ramsay-Shockey Open Space showcased the critical link between wildfire, forest health, and water. The tour highlighted the impact of AB InBev's support and the benefits of forest restoration.

Cherokee Park

Last spring, we joined our partners from Larimer Conservation District and Larimer County Office of Emergency Management on a field tour in [Cherokee Park](#), a project Peaks to People provided financial support for in 2023. More than 30 community members saw the transformation of forest health projects, emphasizing collaboration and funding to address high biomass removal costs.



Ramsay-Shockey Open Space

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS (cont)

Community Outreach and Education

Trek the Thompson

In September, we joined BTWHP partners at Trek the Thompson. Hosted by our partners at Big Thompson Watershed Coalition, this fun and informative event engaged 150+ attendees on watershed health, wildfire impacts, and proactive planning.

Colorado State University Student Engagement

We co-facilitated workshops with Sylvan Dale Ranch and Big Thompson Watershed Coalition for CSU's Masters in Conservation Leadership students, inspiring future leaders with hands-on learning in sustainable land management and community engagement.

Fireforest Film Launch

Peaks to People co-funded *Fireforest*, a 16-minute film on how restoration and prescribed burns mitigated Cameron Peak Fire impacts. With 18 screenings, 880 attendees, and its online release, the film has inspired broader support for wildfire mitigation. [Watch it here.](#)



CSU Workshop at Sylvan Dale

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We are pleased to announce we recently welcomed three dynamic new board members to our leadership team!

John Song

is a Senior Technical Project Manager in Water Utilities for the City of Fort Collins.



Shelby Sommer

is Vice President and Director of Planning & Engagement at Brendle Group.



Tatum Cochran

is the General Manager of Horse and Dragon Brewery in Fort Collins.



THANK YOU!

Our impact in 2024 demonstrates the power of working together to achieve meaningful change. As we look ahead, we remain committed to fostering partnerships, advancing forest restoration, and inspiring communities to take proactive steps toward a resilient future. Thank you for helping us to create landscapes that thrive—protecting water, wildlife, and livelihoods across Northern Colorado and beyond.



Cache La Poudre River



Peaks to People Water Fund

PROTECTING WATERSHEDS | SUSTAINING HABITATS | ENRICHING COMMUNITIES

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