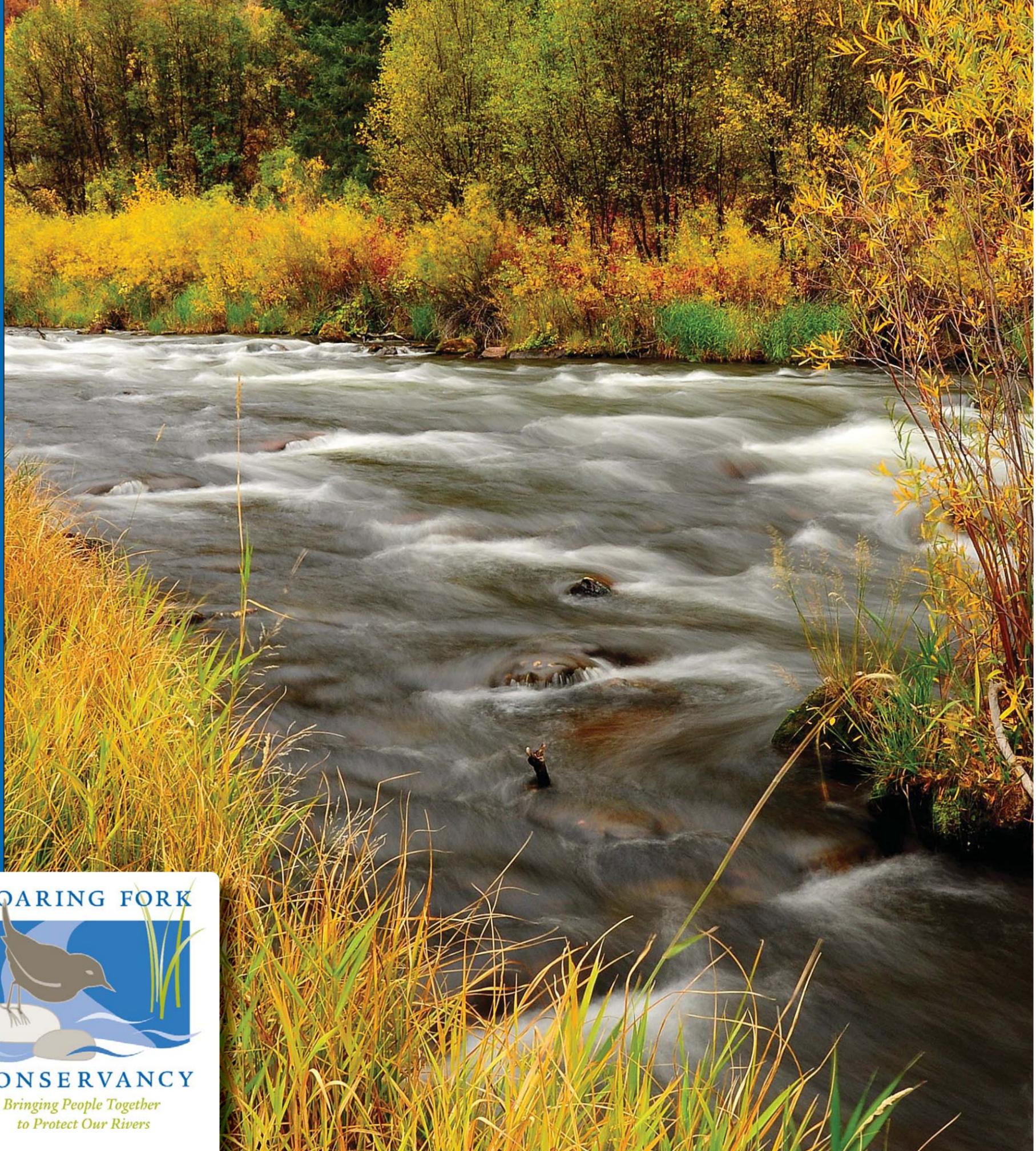


2013 Annual Report



ROARING FORK



CONSERVANCY

*Bringing People Together
to Protect Our Rivers*

“Inspiring people to explore, value, and protect the Roaring Fork Watershed.”

Roaring Fork Conservancy mission



*Crystal River – Richard Wampler
Cover photo by Paul Hilts*

Thank you for your support of our rivers!



The year 2013, full of unusual weather patterns, fires, and floods was a year of recovery following the most severe drought on record in Colorado. In the Roaring Fork Watershed, winter snowpack was lean and the summer temperatures soared, but a very wet spring and fall proved tremendously beneficial for our rivers. Local concerns about low flows, anchor ice, sporadic insect hatches and invasive algae (specifically didymo) arose on the lower Fryingpan River and Roaring Fork Conservancy responded with action. We commissioned the Comprehensive Fryingpan study, looking at both the biological factors of the river as well as the economic impact the ‘Pan has on our valley.



Planning for OUR water future is underway via Colorado’s Water Plan. As a headwaters watershed, any perceived available water could identify the Roaring Fork as a source to fuel the state’s burgeoning population centers. Roaring Fork Conservancy is engaging the people of the valley, including the youth, to weigh in on the future of their water. Now more than ever, we are making our voices heard in the name of river protection. Roaring Fork Conservancy continues to remain vigilant and on the forefront of watershed action and education in Colorado.

Your support allows Roaring Fork Conservancy to further its mission and work tirelessly to protect the watershed we all love. We are pleased to present this 2013 year-end report of our programmatic and financial success that were all made possible through your generosity. We are excited for the year ahead and look forward to having you join us as we paddle toward the future.

Thank you for your continued support!

*Ramsey Kropf
President, Board of Directors*

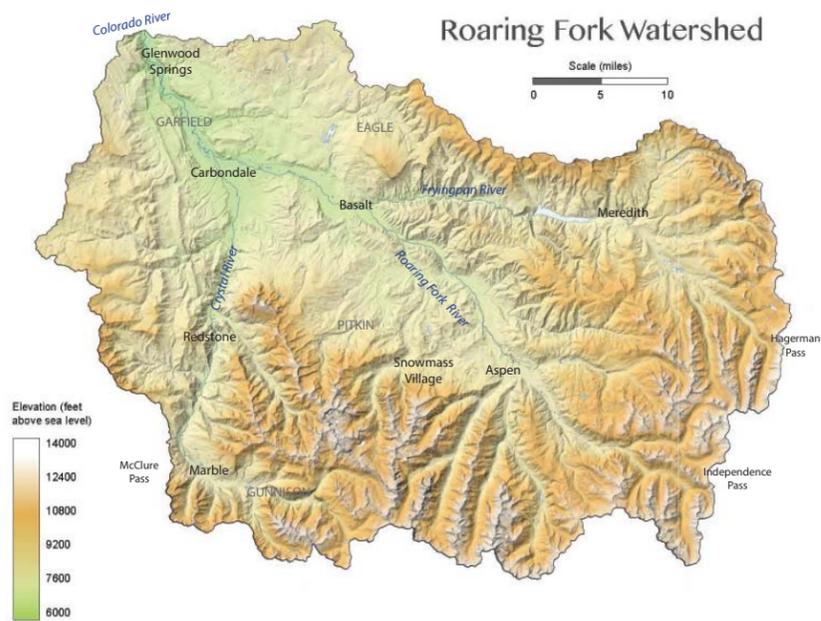
*Rick Lofaro
Executive Director*

Who We Are

Founded in November 1996 through a unique public-private partnership, Roaring Fork Conservancy has become one of the most respected watershed organizations in Colorado.

We are the watershed action and education organization in the Roaring Fork Valley that brings people together to protect our rivers. As an independent, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization our mission is to inspire people to explore, value, and protect the Roaring Fork Watershed. From Aspen to Glenwood Springs, Meredith to Marble, Roaring Fork Conservancy is focused on:

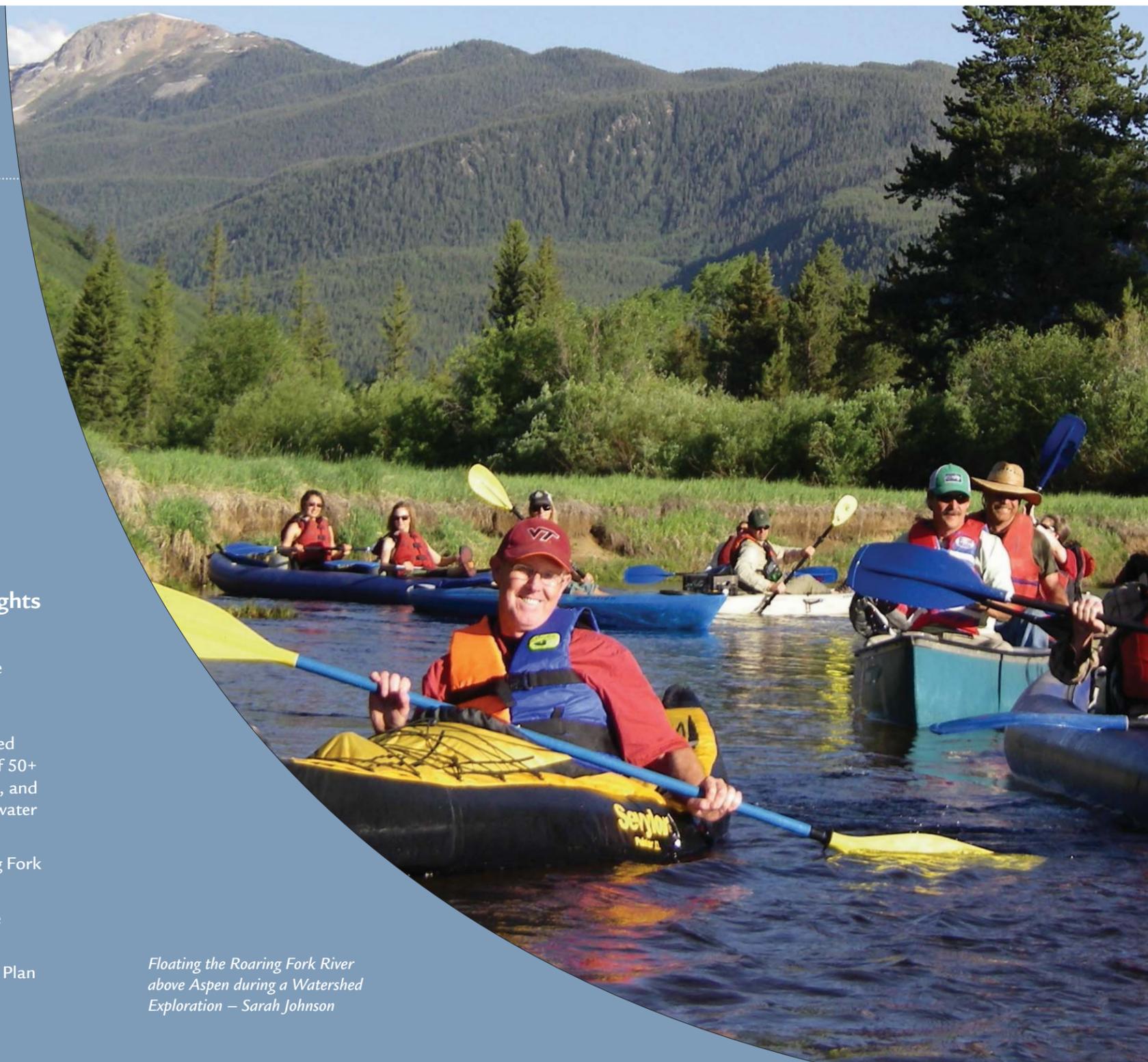
- WATER QUANTITY – keeping water in our rivers,
- WATER QUALITY – keeping our rivers healthy, and
- HABITAT PRESERVATION – keeping our riparian habitat intact.

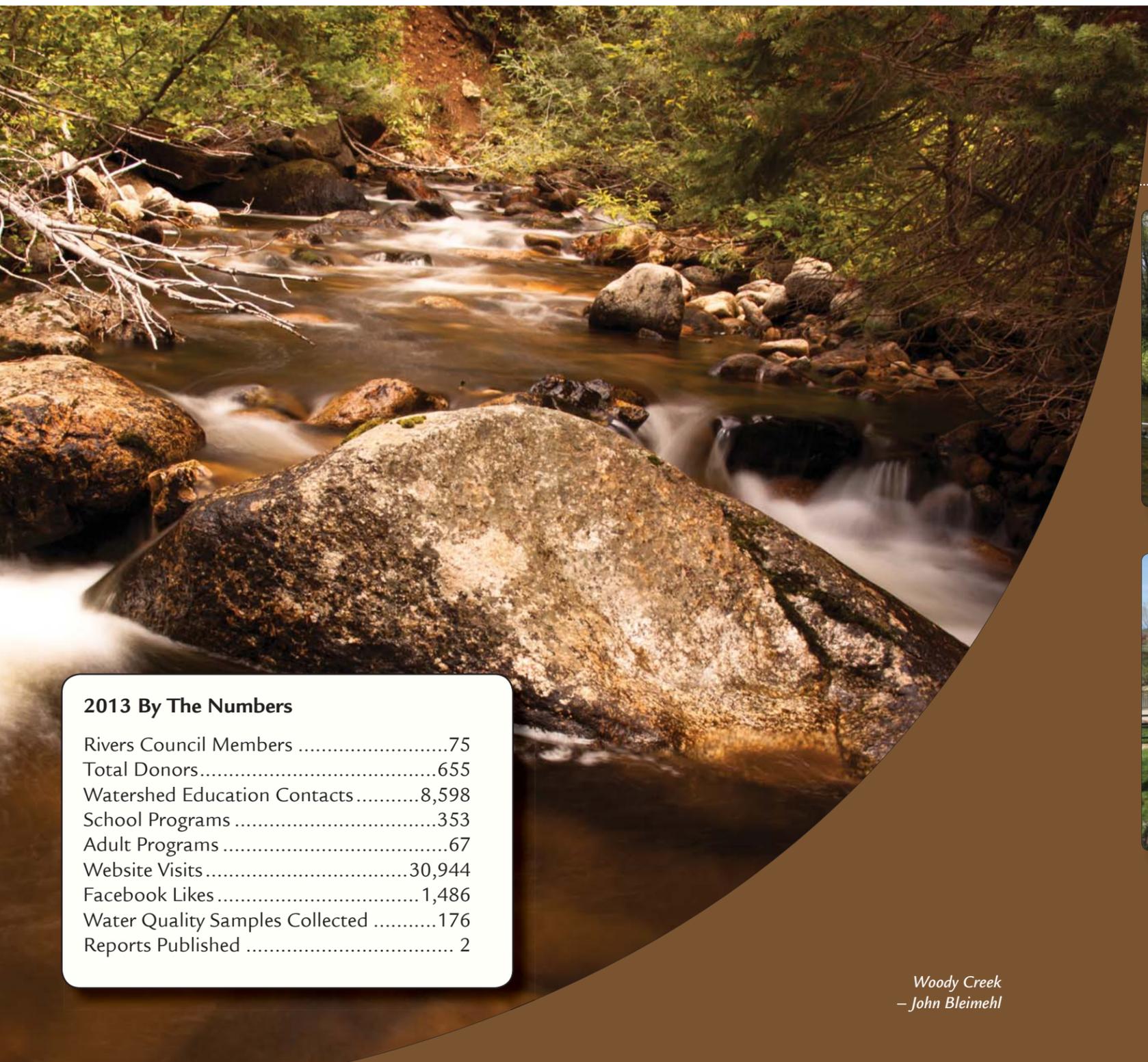


Roaring Fork Conservancy Highlights

- 1996 Founded
- 2000 Formed Rivers Council to help raise support for Watershed Action and Watershed Education programs
- 2003 Co-founded Roaring Fork Watershed Collaborative, ad-hoc committee of 50+ governments, agencies, non-profits, and citizens that proactively addresses water issues in watershed
- 2007 Became lead consultant for Roaring Fork Watershed Plan process
- 2008 Published comprehensive 500-page State of the Watershed Report
- 2012 Published Roaring Fork Watershed Plan

Floating the Roaring Fork River above Aspen during a Watershed Exploration – Sarah Johnson





2013 By The Numbers

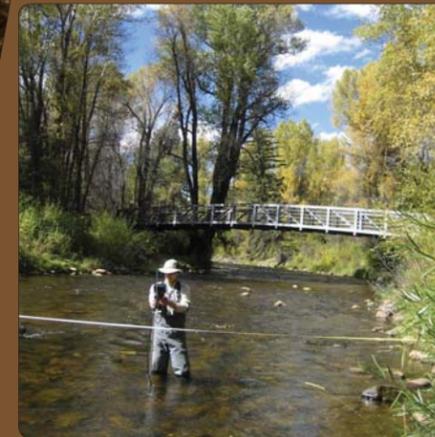
Rivers Council Members	75
Total Donors.....	655
Watershed Education Contacts	8,598
School Programs	353
Adult Programs	67
Website Visits	30,944
Facebook Likes	1,486
Water Quality Samples Collected	176
Reports Published	2

Woody Creek
– John Bleimehl

Our Programs

Watershed Action

Our watershed action program addresses current issues and future threats to our watershed. Proactive science and watershed planning help inform decision-makers and drive on-the-ground projects to improve and restore our watershed. Many of these actions come from the recently published Roaring Fork Watershed Plan and take the form of scientific studies, restoration projects, changes to policies and educational campaigns. Our watershed action staff address areas of water quantity and quality, hydrology, riparian and river ecology, geomorphology, and economics.



Watershed Education

Inspiring people to take action requires knowledge. Each year our watershed education programs reach thousands of students and adults with hands-on science, exploration and experiences. Our student classes range from water chemistry and river ecology to watershed mapping and economics. When we cannot bring students to the river we often bring the river to them.



Our adult community outreach programs include River Guide Trainings, Watershed Explorations, educational dialogues and forums, and our popular river float trips. Each of these programs are designed to engage participants with people and/or places in the watershed to which they might not have access otherwise.

2013 Accomplishments

Address Watershed Action/

Roaring Fork Watershed Plan issues

Continuing Coal Basin and Crystal River Confluence Area Restoration Project

- Coal Basin and Crystal River Assessment - stream gage and soil moisture monitors installed; trees planted; weeds sprayed; fenced from livestock
- Netmap Assessment looked at natural and human-caused erosion sources in the Crystal River
- Worked with American Rivers, Pitkin County, and Crystal Valley Environmental Protection Association on End of the Dam Affair Celebration
- Engaging public on possibility of Wild and Scenic Designation for Crystal River
- Developed 5th grade Coal Creek/Placita Geomorphology field trip

Re-Watering Our Rivers

- Worked with lower Crystal irrigators, Colorado Water Trust, and Public Counsel of the Rockies to find creative solutions to late summer and fall low-flow situations
- Wyss graduate student intern worked on *Reel in Water Use Campaign* to promote water conservation
- Worked with Community Office for Resource Efficiency and Ruedi Water & Power Authority to initiate a *Roaring Fork Regional Water Efficiency Plan*
- Convened University of Michigan graduate student project *Informing the Development of a Regional Water Efficiency Plan for the Roaring Fork Watershed Regional Water Efficiency Plan*

Addressing Statewide & Local Water Policies

- Worked with Garfield County to keep the 35' riparian setback in their land use code
- Submitted letter to Bureau of Reclamation on Draft EA for uncontracted Ruedi water
- Submitted comment letter to Pitkin County Open Space and Trails on Roaring Fork Gorge
- Participated in the four-day *Adaptation to Climate Change in Mountain Communities & Coastal Areas: A Transatlantic Dialogue* workshop in Aspen
- Submitted comments to U.S. National Forests on Oil and Gas Environmental Impact Statement
- Regularly attended Colorado Basin Roundtable meetings
- Helped draft legislative suggestions for State Senator Gail Schwartz to bring to the Water Resource Review Interim Committee
- Member of non-consumptive advisory committee for Colorado Basin's state water plan

Conserving Riparian Lands

- Completed Park East conservation easement cleanup project as part of Colorado Coalition of Land Trusts annual program
- Coordinated paving of parts of Blue Creek parking lot to make entry/exit smoother and safer
- Created draft evaluation and management plans to drive 2014 projects and acquisitions

Conducting Pro-active River Science

- Initiated *Comprehensive Fryingpan River Study*, including macroinvertebrate, temperature, American dipper, *Didymo* and economic studies
- Reinstated Hot Spots for Trout monitoring with over 50 volunteers
- Completed *2012 Macroinvertebrate Targeted Studies*

- Performed second round of Thompson Divide baseline water quality sampling
- Co-hosted with Colorado Riparian Team 2-day proper functioning condition riparian workshop
- Joined Colorado Data Sharing Network to ensure RFC collected data is available statewide for decision makers and scientific analysis
- Partnered with Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers and City of Aspen on Volunteer John Denver Wetland Planting Project
- Prepared and presented a *Lower Roaring Fork/Cattle Creek Water Quality Summary* to the committee working on the Glenwood Springs Source Water Assessment and Protection Plan
- River Watch: with the help of our volunteer Stream Teams, conducted regular water quality monitoring at 29 sites, taking 176 samples, and involving 30+ volunteers

Developing the River Center & Watershed Institute

- Strengthened ties with University of Michigan, Colorado Mesa University, and Colorado State University for future watershed institute

Grow Watershed Education

Adult Programs

- Conducted 67 adult programs, reaching 2,197 people
- Conducted 26 Watershed Explorations with 403 participants
- 141 participants at Fryingpan River Clean Up
- Held trainings for 88 commercial raft guides
- Provided weekly summer roving interpretation for Pitkin County Open Space & Trails at Northstar Preserve

Student Programs

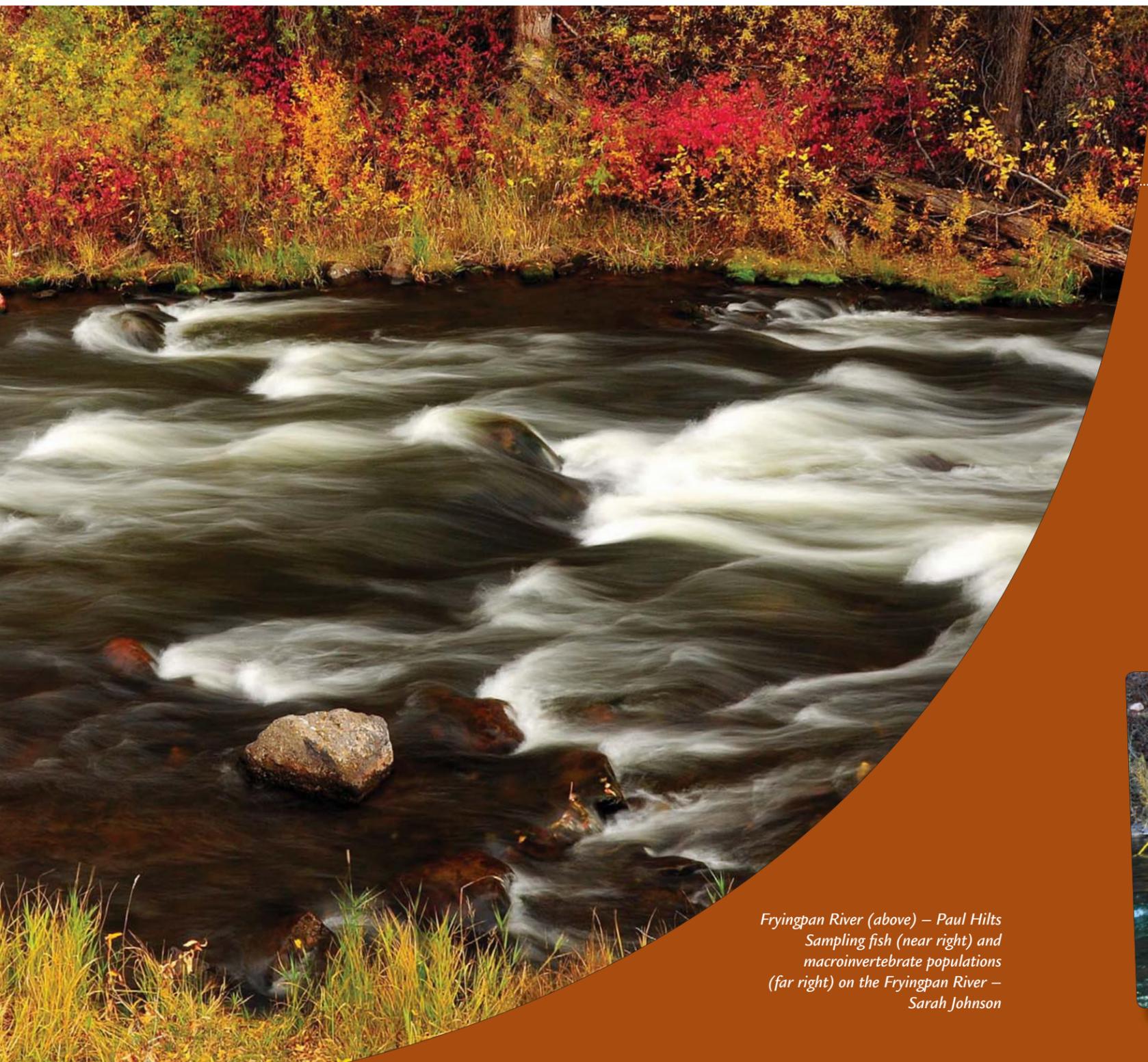
- Conducted 357 school programs with 6,079 student contacts
- Completed first year of Glenwood Springs Elementary 4th grade watershed education program
- Began Carbondale 6th grade watershed education program
- Presented at National Project WET conference and Colorado Sustaining Watersheds conference

Maintain a Healthy Community Presence

- Appeared in 43 print articles; 8 radio newscasts; 1 TV newscast
- Increased to 1,486 Facebook likes; 30,944 website visits
- Published weekly River Reports and Snowpack Reports in Aspen Times
- Had drought/low flow article hit Associated Press outlets in a dozen states
- Created new Roaring Fork Watershed map for distribution
- Redesigned Fryingpan Valley Visitor Guide for distribution

Increase Operational Capacity & Funding

- Hired new Watershed Education Director
- Added full-time Watershed Action Coordinator
- Hired part-time Watershed Educators
- Secured 4 summer interns
- Held extremely successful 2013 River Rendezvous
- Raised initial funding for Comprehensive Fryingpan River Study
- Secured funding for Crystal River & Coal Basin project



Lower Fryingspan River Comprehensive Study

Two years of extreme drought conditions and associated decline in flow has Roaring Fork Conservancy and local citizens concerned for the health of the Fryingspan River. Beginning in October 2012, Roaring Fork Conservancy launched a series of studies to better understand the river's health. The studies, collectively called the Comprehensive Lower Fryingspan River Assessment, have an overall goal to ensure the environment and economical sustainability of the Lower Fryingspan River, including its designation as a "Gold Medal Fishery". The 13 miles of river below Ruedi Dam is some of the most popular fly fishing in the world and pumps millions of dollars annually into the local economy. Work on the comprehensive study began in late 2013 and includes:

- Continuous Temperature Monitoring
- Macroinvertebrate Study
- *Didymosphenia geminata* Assessment
- American Dipper Assessment
- Economic Impact Study
- Policy & Legislative Work

For more on the comprehensive study visit www.roaringfork.org/fryingspan.



*Fryingspan River (above) – Paul Hilts
Sampling fish (near right) and
macroinvertebrate populations
(far right) on the Fryingspan River –
Sarah Johnson*

Caring For Our Future Water

As the “go-to” watershed organization in the Roaring Fork Valley, Roaring Fork Conservancy has shown the ability to build consensus on complex water issues by bridging the gaps between hard science, local and regional land use and energy policies, recreational interests, the requirements of a rural agricultural community, and the varied interests of the full and part-time residents of the community. By writing letters, drafting land-use code, commenting on management plans, and participating in focus groups, our Watershed Action team has established a presence in state, county and local government.

Work this year is highlighted by cooperation with Garfield County, Pitkin County, the State of Colorado and the White River National Forest. Advocating for protections of riparian areas and water quantity, Roaring Fork has engaged decision makers at various levels of government. Discussions have been built upon sound science and first-hand knowledge of local waterways. Communicating with elected officials benefits both the citizens of the valley and occupants of the rivers.

Scientists check Fryingpan River's health

Fish and bug counts will test observers' claims of declining numbers
Scott Condon
The Aspen Times

Miller and Rodow, water quality coordinators for the conservancy, worked with volunteer Grace Sagle to collect three samples of bugs from three sites on the river — one near the dam about 10 miles east of Basalt, one about halfway down the river near the confluence with Taylor Creek and one near town. They also are placing two temperature loggers at each of the three sites.

Other passes in different stretches of the river, where fish are more abundant, are planned in coming days.
The wildlife division's fish count is a routine procedure that's been carried out regularly since 1978, Bakish said. The agency measures, weighs and notes the type of trout found in the survey. The fish are released unharmed. Bakish said her preliminary observations

Concern arose this summer about the Fryingpan River habitat when several anglers and river-side residents familiar with the environment reported seeing fewer fish numbers, including fewer large trout, according to a report on the Roaring Fork Conservancy's website.
Observers also reported fewer macroinvertebrates, the bugs that

Study documents '12 drought conditions on Fork and Crystal

By Brent Gardner-Smith
Aspen Journalist

Due to water diversions during the hot and dry summer of 2012, sections of the Roaring Fork River through Aspen and the Crystal River above Carbondale were running significantly below the levels a state water agency says are necessary to protect the environment, according to a recent study.
The Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) holds an instream flow right of 32 cubic feet per second (cfs) for the upper Roaring Fork River for the reach between Dillard and Maroon creeks — the amount of water needed “to protect the environment to a reasonable degree.”
But measurements taken in July, September and October showed the river at the Mill Street bridge in Aspen running at 4.7 cfs in July, 17 cfs on Sept. 5, 19 cfs on Sept. 18 and 26 cfs on Oct. 16.
“The upper Roaring Fork River was found most

vulnerable to low flows in the segment located near the city of Aspen between the Aspen Club and the confluence with Castle Creek,” states a report from S.K. Mason Environmental, LLC. “In July, diversions on this section

Conservancy urges GarCo to keep river setbacks
Land-use code hearing continues today

John Stroud
Post Independent Staff

GLENWOOD SPRINGS — A local river watchdog group is urging the Garfield County commissioners to include even stricter river and wetlands setbacks in the county's revised land-use code, instead of removing them as is being proposed.
“Current research shows that the greater the riparian buffer, the greater the protections from physical and chemical damages such as sedimentation, erosion and runoff contaminants,” representatives from the Basalt-based Roaring Fork Conservancy said in a June 4 letter to the Garfield Board of County Commissioners.
“The Conservancy recommends,

at minimum, retaining the previous code standard of 35 feet and encourages increasing these standards ... to enhance protections of waterways and aquatic life,” wrote Rick Lofaro, executive director, and Heather Tattersall, watershed action coordinator, for the organization.
One of the proposed changes in the county's land-use and development code overhaul is to do away with county-level protections of wetlands, water bodies and water quality, in favor of whatever state and federal regulations are in place.
“That would include the removal of what's now a 35-foot setback provision for most structures, as well as a 100-foot restriction for storage of certain hazardous materials, sand and road salt.
However, regulations such as those contained in the federal Clean Water Act may be inadequate, the Conservancy argues.
“Permitting under the Clean Water Act, while necessary and beneficial, may not adequately protect the rivers,” Lofaro and Tattersall state in the letter. “Restricting storage of hazardous materials within (county codes) makes the applicant accountable to the county, allowing enforcement and clean-up on a local level with support from the state and federal government when appropriate, rather than relying on distant



The Colorado Capitol building in Denver
— Dan Pack

SETBACKS, A5



Students shaking fins with Captain Cutthroat, our new water efficiency ambassador – Sarah Johnson

Water Efficiency Campaign

Roaring Fork Conservancy is partnering with the Community Office for Resource Efficiency to promote water efficiency throughout the Roaring Fork Valley. This program is designed to grab attention, inform the public, and empower citizens to take action in and around their homes and communities. Decreasing municipal water use can increase resource efficiency through decreasing water and wastewater-treatment as well as potentially increasing in-stream flows on critical stretches of our local streams and rivers.

Catch Captain Cutthroat

Meet Captain Cutthroat, our native trout, who is the ambassador for our Reel in Water Use campaign. Captain Cutthroat made a splash at community events this past summer, which included farmer's markets, parades, and music festivals, to promote water use awareness. His role is to help you conserve water in and around your home. Thanks to Captain Cutthroat creative arts director, Liz Munn, for bringing the Captain to life.

Regional Water Efficiency Planning

Led by Ruedi Water and Power Authority and Community Office for Resource Efficiency in partnership with Roaring Fork Conservancy, this initiative will contribute to the body of knowledge regarding regional water efficiency strategies. The observed impacts of this program may be used as part of the University of Michigan's Graduate Project, informing the development of a Regional Water Efficiency Plan for the Roaring Fork Watershed.



Restoring the Crystal River Watershed

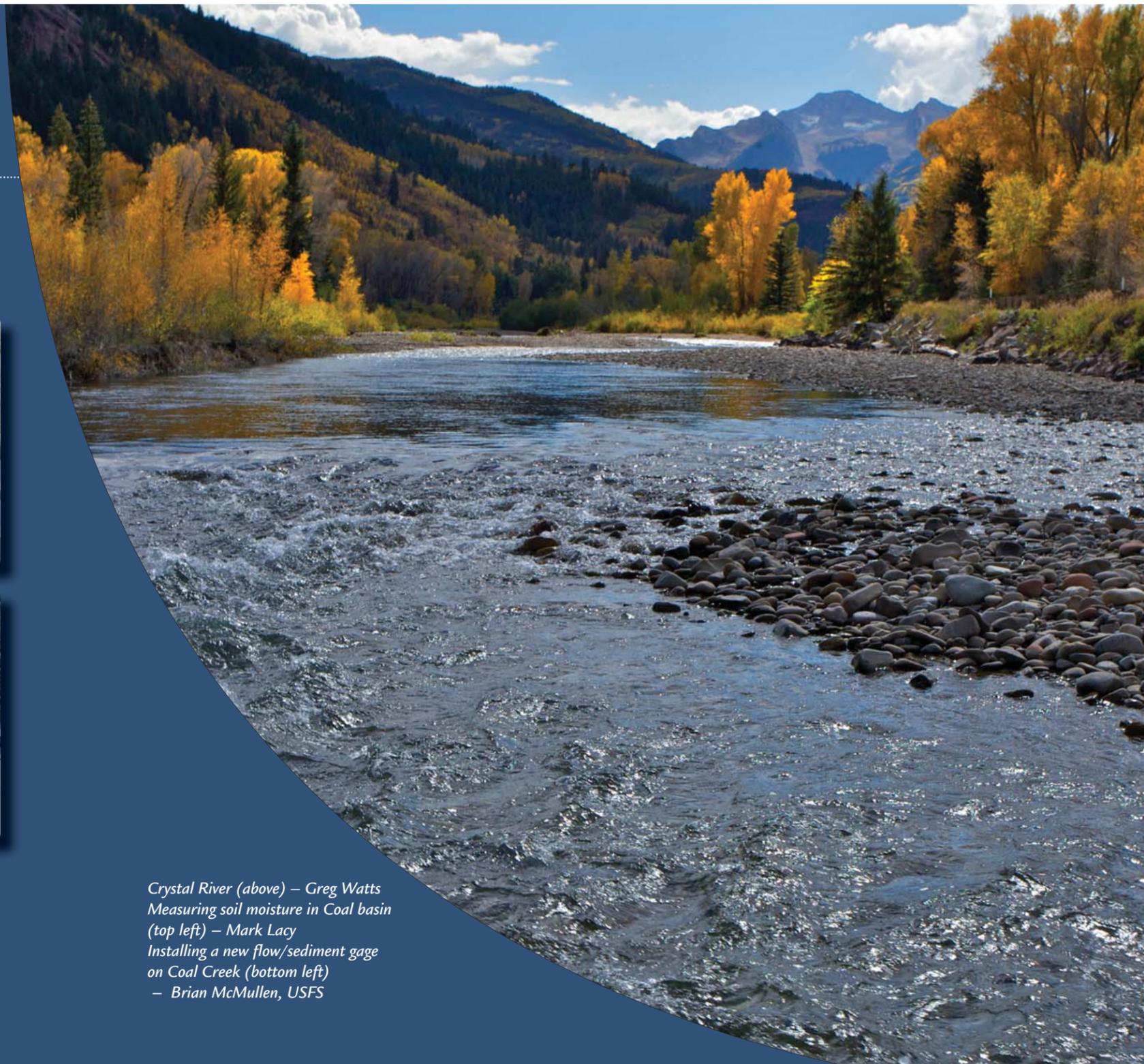
The Crystal River begins as snow melt in the Elk Mountains and flows for 40 miles through an extraordinarily wild and scenic valley. The Crystal River Watershed produces 50% of the peak flows in the Roaring Fork Watershed and provides essential fish and wildlife habitat as well as a myriad of recreational opportunities. The Crystal River was recently named one of America's Most Endangered Rivers.

Serious stream flow alterations, water quality issues (mainly sediment), and riparian and instream habitat degradation exist on the Crystal River; conditions that worsen as a result of droughts. Roaring Fork Conservancy is working with multiple partners to address these issues. Work in the Crystal River Watershed continued in 2013 and included:

- Instillation of stream gage and sediment monitor on Coal Creek
- Planted trees in Coal Basin pilot project area
- Monitored soil and vegetation in pilot project area
- Spot sprayed for weeds in areas disturbed by pilot project work in 2012
- Obtained results from 2012 macroinvertebrate surveys in Coal Basin and Crystal River
- Identified and ranked sediment sources in Crystal River Watershed

To specifically address flow alteration, the project is collecting, analyzing, and disseminating, hydrological and biological information. This is necessary for the informed identification, development and implementation of water efficiency measures by Crystal River water users, as well as the decision makers engaged in water resource management in the watershed.

For more on the comprehensive study visit www.roaringfork.org/crystalriver.

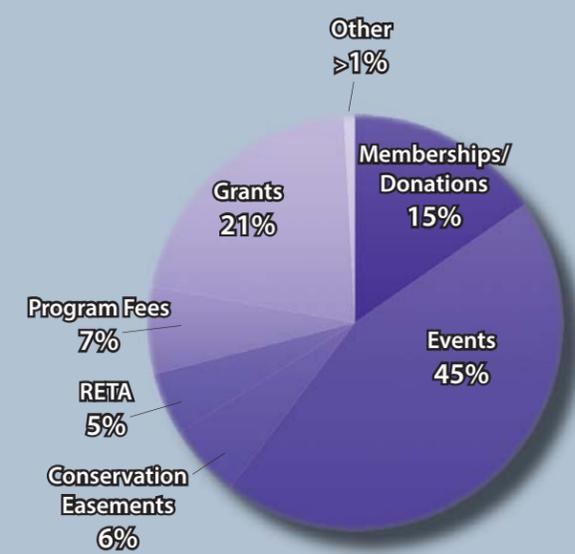


*Crystal River (above) – Greg Watts
Measuring soil moisture in Coal basin
(top left) – Mark Lacy
Installing a new flow/sediment gage
on Coal Creek (bottom left)
– Brian McMullen, USFS*

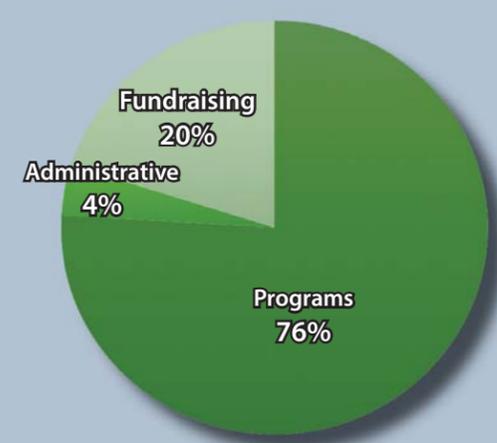


Thomas Lakes, headwaters of Thomas Creek at the foot of Mount Sopris – Mike Garbarini

2013 Financial Summary



2013 Operating Revenues



2013 Operating Expenses

Events	383,815
Grants	182,007
Memberships/Donations	130,842
Real Estate Transfer Assess.	41,892
Conservation Easements	49,474
Program Fees	58,177
Other Income	7,360
Total	853,568

Programs	632,358
Fundraising	167,598
Administration	32,719
Total	832,657

Additional financial reports are available at www.roaringfork.org.

2014 Priorities

Restoring the Crystal River Watershed

With designation of Most Endangered River by American Rivers in 2012 and significant impacts to the Crystal River, Roaring Fork Conservancy is working towards a collaborative multi-year, multi-million dollar restoration plan in the Crystal River Watershed. The effort will integrate ongoing and planned projects.

Targeted Science on Fryngpan River & Brush Creek

In light of recent drought, conditions on local streams have anecdotally deteriorated. Roaring Fork Conservancy is working on a comprehensive biologic and economic study of the lower Fryngpan River and a focused water quality assessment on Brush Creek in 2014.

Re-Watering Our Rivers

Having published our Opportunities for Water Conservation report in 2012, and launching the Reel In Water Use Campaign in 2013, Roaring Fork Conservancy is now working collaboratively on a regional water efficiency plan and will further promote water conservation that puts water back in our rivers.

Engaging in Statewide Water Issues

With Governor Hickenlooper's call for a

comprehensive water plan by the end of 2014 and pending water legislation that would directly impact the Roaring Fork Watershed, Roaring Fork Conservancy will join the table for state-wide discussions and policy actions.

Conserving Riparian Land

As one of the few watershed groups in Colorado that also serves as a land trust, Roaring Fork Conservancy will continue to build relationships with current and future easement donors, pursue leads for new easement acquisitions, actively monitor existing properties, and host an annual volunteer work day.

Maintaining a Healthy Media Presence in the Community

The drought in 2012 and 2013 offered a platform for Roaring Fork Conservancy to engage the public in some new ways. We will continue that effort in 2014 as we seek to increase awareness and action throughout the watershed.

Increasing Operational and Capital Campaign Funding

Roaring Fork Conservancy sees the need to expand our current capacity to keep pace with demands for watershed-related work.



Watching great blue herons at Northstar Preserve along the Roaring Fork River – Emily Chaplin



*The staff enjoying an annual
Christmas celebration
– Michael Pagan*

Roaring Fork Conservancy

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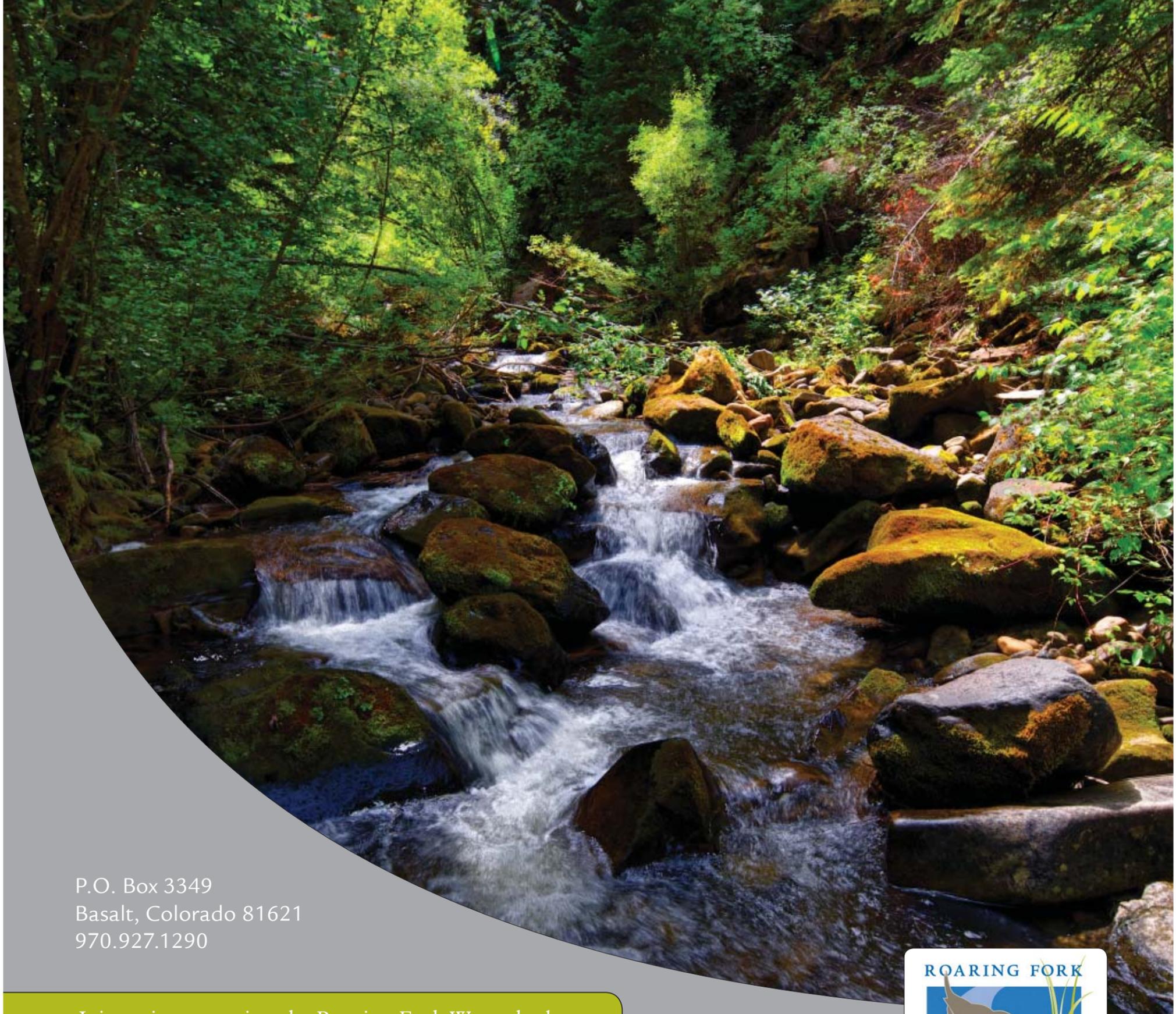
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Sarah Woods, Director of Philanthropy



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970.927.1290

Join us in protecting the Roaring Fork Watershed at
www.roaringfork.org

Middle Thompson Creek – Greg Watts

