



# RIVER CURRENTS

## Casting into the Future

By Rick Lofaro, Executive Director

*Fishing is our handshake, our language.  
A Heritage that binds us together.  
A passage our fathers took.  
A Journey that lasts a lifetime,  
That we have begun again with our sons and daughters.*

— Abu Garcia advertisement



Photo by Chris Cohen

While there seems to be no shortage of eloquent quotes about fishing, there seems to be a shortage of ‘sons and daughters’ participating in the outdoors these days. We read about it in the newspapers,

hear about it on television and radio, and discuss it with our colleagues, friends and families. Kids need to get outside more, limit their screen time, and commune with nature.

Inspiring people to explore, value and protect the Roaring Fork Watershed is what we, at Roaring Fork Conservancy, are all about. In this our 20th year, we saw our 100,000th student, each one getting a healthy dose of Roaring Fork know-how and outdoor time within the boundaries of our magnificent watershed. But how do we expand the programming, expand the learning and expand the experience?

We take ‘em fishing!

I credit our Education Director, Christina Medved, and longtime friend and Orvis Regional Business Manager, Hutch Hutchinson, for helping to start our fishing education program. Hutch had mentioned the National Fishing in Schools Program to me several times, urging me to bring it into our program. Christina reinforced Hutch’s recommendation by asking me, “If kids don’t learn to fly-fish here, where else are they going to learn?” I finally took the bait (sorry, couldn’t resist) and we brought the program on board

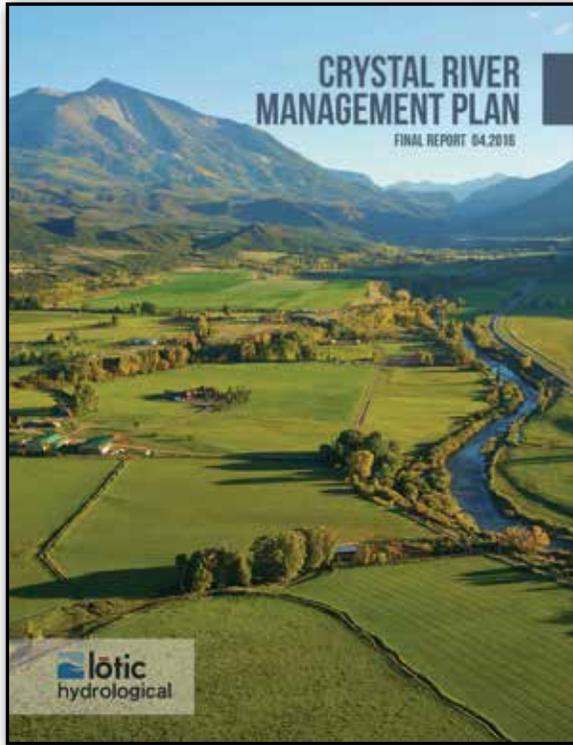
in 2014. Since then, our staff has certified over 30 teachers, and 700 local students have learned about river conservation with fly casting as the instructional tool in school. That’s right, as a physical education class, kids learn how to cast fly rods, catch fish replica pillows, and learn all about insect life cycles, fish species and conservation in the comfort of their own gymnasium.

The next natural step was for RFC to offer summer fishing camps around the Valley. In partnership with Aspen Center for Environmental Studies’ Rock Bottom Ranch and members of the Roaring Fork Valley Fly Fishing Club, RFC staff took the National Fishing in Schools Program on tour. We offered a week-long camp in all things fishing, and filled the class with a near even split of 7 boys and 6 girls. I was fortunate enough to have my oldest daughter participate in the class, and even more fortunate to act as the lead instructor for the week. I can honestly say that this was the most rewarding week of the summer for me. Campers left our program knowing more about what lives beneath the surface of the water, how to tie flies, how to cast a fly rod, and, of course, how to safely catch and release the fish that live in our world class rivers and streams.

As parents, teachers and mentors one of the most gratifying things we can do is to pass our knowledge and passion on to the next generation. Whether it is music, art, sports, or pastimes like fishing, we all have a desire and a responsibility to take a child by the hand and walk through time passing on the knowledge and passion we have for the things we hold sacred. Together we are casting into the future, one little angler at a time.



# Watershed Action Study Updates



**CRYSTAL RIVER MANAGEMENT PLAN:**

After publishing the final report in April, RFC has continued to work with stakeholders, including irrigators, the Town of Carbondale and Pitkin County, to implement ‘priority actions’ and begin the process of water conservation in the Lower Crystal River. With some exciting prospects on the horizon, we hope to have details of on-the-ground and in-river projects on our website in the upcoming months.

**COMPREHENSIVE LOWER FRYINGPAN RIVER STUDY:**

Didymo monitoring continued in 2016, with algal surveys taken both before and after high water this summer. As in previous years, the most didymo was present at the first sampling event, less didymo was detected following high flows. In 2014 and 2015, virtually no didymo was present in the fall- except for site 8 (just below Taylor Creek). We will see if this pattern continues after the final sampling event, which took place in October. On the Fryingpan River, results show didymo increases in shallow, slow moving water and, unlike many other alga, does not thrive in stagnant water such as beaver ponds. Above Ruedi Reservoir, didymo was present in reference sites at concentrations below nuisance level in year one, but has steadily increased each year.

Temperature loggers placed on the lower Fryingpan River in 2013 continue to generate data with a particular focus on conditions prime for anchor ice formation in the winter.

In addition, another round of macroinvertebrate sampling was conducted at select sites in September.

**CATTLE CREEK STREAM HEALTH EVALUATION:** Based on results from 2015 (available on RFC’s website) and the need to increase baseline data, an additional round of water quality monitoring is taking place on Cattle Creek in 2016. This round of monitoring, again funded by Garfield County, includes additional water quality parameters and another round of macroinvertebrate sampling and analysis.



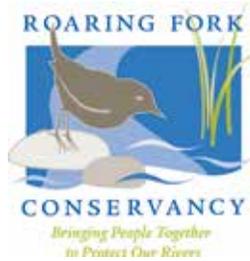
*This summer Chad Rudow, water quality coordinator, had help conducting field work around the Roaring Fork Valley from Mike Schuster, Carlson Schwoerer, and Eric Thomas.*





## The Significance of a Little Gray Bird

By Christina Medved, Watershed Education Director



In the last 20 years, the evolution of RFC's logo, seen above, held one of our favorite native species as a constant: the American Dipper.

This little gray bird lives along healthy mountain streams which provide abundant macroinvertebrates (e.g., aquatic insects) for them to eat, and diverse, undisturbed riparian habitat.

Look for a dipper the next time you are out on the river. Often found in the fastest moving section of the river, you can see them standing and "dipping" on a rock, and then

suddenly dive into the water! They swim for short segments in search of the aquatic insects they find so delicious.

Seeing dippers in our local streams lets us know in a quick snapshot that the stream food web is healthy, as those aquatic organisms they eat are also indicators of healthy streams.

The American Dipper continues to remain the perfect "mascot" for RFC - a champion of and constant presence in healthy streams of the Roaring Fork Watershed!

**2016 Roaring Fork Conservancy Golf Classic**

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Thank you to our sponsors!



Giving his best shot towards the hole-in-one prize car sponsored by Berthod Motors



Participants line up for the pre-game putting contest.



2nd Annual Roaring Fork Golf Classic held at Aspen Glen on August 22, 2016.

Perfect venue, great sponsors, terrific prizes, great food and drinks—enjoyed by all!

**SEE YOU ON AUGUST 14, 2017 FOR THE 3RD ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC AT ASPEN GLEN!**

## Outside of Academia

By Carlson Schwoerer, Watershed Action Intern



Summer 2016 was my second with Roaring Fork Conservancy (RFC), serving as their watershed action intern. Throughout the last few months, I helped with events such as River Rendezvous on the beautiful Fryingpan River, and RFC's annual golf classic hosted by Aspen Glen Golf Club. I also worked with RFC staff on the local rivers and creeks, collecting samples and recording water quality data.

This summer I was able to start some groundwork for the five year update of the Roaring Fork Watershed Plan, thanks in part to funding from the Community Office for Resource Efficiency. The plan itself outlines proper water use and protections for the Roaring Fork Watershed and was designed through a collaborative effort which included many local entities and state groups. The interviews I conducted with several of the Roaring Fork Watershed Plan partners led to a better understanding of the progress being made on the plan. We found out who is still actively involved and excited about the plan, a few of their new implementations since the plan's early stages, and how these folks envision the plan moving forward in the next few years. It was awesome to hear such encouraging words about the future of the Roaring Fork Watershed Plan from all the people who work together to protect the Roaring Fork Valley's water resources.

As I head into to my senior year at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, where riparian areas are scarce, I will miss everyone at RFC and the beautiful rivers they help protect every day.

## Conservation Easement Profile: Silver Lining Ranch, Aspen

By Heather Lewin, Watershed Action Director



Roaring Fork Conservancy acts as a land trust, holding 16 Conservation Easements, and protecting over 280 acres of riparian habitat in the Roaring Fork Watershed. Each issue of River Currents highlights one of these easements.

### Statistics

Acres:	2.70
Date Acquired:	August 3, 2011
Riverfront Protected:	872 feet of Roaring Fork River
Owner:	Privately Owned
Public Access:	None

### About the Conservation Easement

Located on the bank of the Roaring Fork River, the Silver Lining Ranch Conservation Easement protects critical riparian, wetland, and wildlife habitat on a scenic tract of undeveloped land within the City of Aspen, where nearby areas have been heavily modified by residential and recreational development. The inhabiting plant communities, including beaked sedge, mountain big sage brush, mountain willow and narrow leafed cottonwood are considered in "fair condition." This riparian habitat is within the Colorado Division of Wildlife's mapped range for deer, black bear and mountain lion. Additionally, the property provides habitat for a variety of other wildlife, including 20 mammal species, 10 reptile species, 5 fish and 68 bird species, six of which are Watch Listed by the Colorado Bird Observatory or listed as Sensitive by the U.S. Forest Service because of concern over declining numbers. Protection of this conservation easement preserves an important reach of the Roaring Fork River and its associated riparian habitat.

**Amazon Smile:**

When you shop online,  
log in to  
[www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com)  
to support RFC!

Once you choose RFC as your designated charity, Amazon will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchases to RFC's Watershed Action and Education and Outreach programs.


**Colorado Gives Day:  
December 6, 2016**

Colorado Gives Day is an annual movement to celebrate and increase philanthropy statewide!

Search for Roaring Fork Conservancy at  
[www.coloradogives.org](http://www.coloradogives.org)

**Celebrate  
the Holidays  
or Birthdays by  
Gifting to RFC!**

Rather than getting and giving gifts this holiday season consider pledging your birthday or holiday gift exchange to RFC! We can send you a customized link that can be shared with friends and family so they can support the rivers you love by making an online donation in honor of your special day or the holiday season! Please contact Sheryl Sabandal, Development Associate, at [sheryl@roaringfork.org](mailto:sheryl@roaringfork.org) for additional details.

**WAYS TO SUPPORT ROARING FORK CONSERVANCY OVER THE HOLIDAYS****River Stewards Update – Fall 2016**

*By Nick Kilbourn, River Stewards Chair*

Another whirlwind summer is in the books for the River Stewards and brought with it a series of energetic events.

The River Stewards started the year with a packed agenda centered on a spring runoff theme. Events included the Colorado premier of a local filmmaker's stand up paddling-themed film "Can I Surf That?" which was hosted at the Aspen Brewing Company. The runoff celebration theme continued in May with a Crawfish Boil co-sponsored by the Roaring Fork Beer Company. This was followed by our 'women-only' fly fishing clinic which continued to be an in-demand event, and there are discussions underway to offer multiple outings in 2017. The highlight of the year was the annual RFC River Float and gathering in June, where the Stewards helped organize the post-Float activities and gear demos.

Summer events included partnering with RFC staff to assist at events such as the annual Fryingpan River Cleanup and Aspen Skiing Company's Farm to Table dinners. Our most recent event was a combination trail run/fly fishing event called "FishSprint" at Wilton Jaffee Park near Aspen. With the year winding down, the Stewards will be bringing back their fall river floating, planning session through Ruby Horsethief Canyon.

A new year brought with it two new River Stewards members, Meaghan Lynch and Lauren Pierce. They join the four other new members who came on board last fall. We are excited about the energy and ideas the new members are bringing to the group and look forward to an eventful 2017. Stay tuned to our Facebook page for updates on our summer-long Floating Scavenger Hunt and the corresponding kickoff party to be held next spring, and please feel free to leave suggestions on our Facebook page for additional event ideas for 2017.



# Roaring Fork Conservancy Sponsors Roaring Fork Leadership Project

By Rebecca Wallace, Tish Filiss, Scott Billeisen, Kelly Cave, Lucy Laffoon, Steve Sand, and Angilina Taylor

As part of the local Roaring Fork Leadership Program, participants work in teams on civic projects in order to practice the leadership skills they acquire during the nine month program. Our team was very fortunate to have Roaring Fork Conservancy (RFC) as our project sponsor. Our project had two components: (1) help organize an educational Riparian Workshop, primarily for landscapers and landscape architects, on the how's and why's of preserving and maintaining riparian habitat in the Roaring Fork Watershed, and (2) research landscaper certification programs in other areas of the country that could serve as a model for a local program.

From the get-go, our team was excited to work with RFC. We all learned so much about our beautiful watershed, and the need to protect it. We also felt like we were able to make a tangible contribution to RFC's mission. The Riparian Workshop was well attended and received high marks from participants. Similarly, the landscaper certification research was well received by Roaring Fork Valley organizations responsible for water use management.



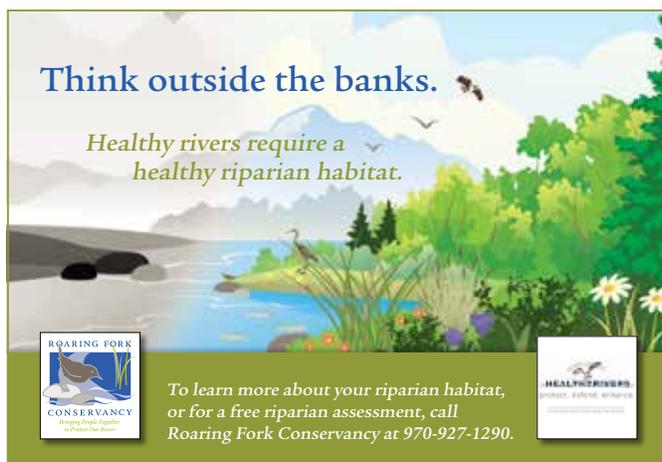
At the same time, our team had a lot of fun. Christina Medved, RFC's Watershed Education Director, was our very dedicated and fun-loving partner throughout the project, and was a blast to work with. Her active engagement with the team was invaluable to the success of our efforts. Thank you Roaring Fork Conservancy for making our team's Roaring Fork Leadership Program experience so rewarding!



In the summer of 2015, RFC initiated a riparian awareness campaign called *Think Outside the Banks* to remind and inform Roaring Fork Valley citizens and visitors that "Healthy Rivers Require a Healthy Riparian Habitat." In order to increase awareness of riparian areas and emphasize their importance to stream health, and inform, RFC placed ads in local newspapers.



In addition, RFC partnered with Roaring Fork Leadership, to host a Riparian Workshop on April 27, 2016 – the first of its kind in the Roaring Fork Valley. The forty-five participants included realtors, homeowners, landscapers, and agency representatives from local and statewide organizations. Attendees participated in conversations about the importance of riparian vegetation, local ordinances, then toured a riparian restoration project along the Roaring Fork River.



A big thank you to Pitkin County Healthy Rivers and Streams and the City of Aspen, who provided funding integral to campaign success.



# Adventures in Water Sampling – 2016 Roaring Fork Algal Survey

By Chad Rudow, Water Quality Coordinator

During the late summer of 2016 Roaring Fork Conservancy (RFC) received reports of a significant algal bloom in the Roaring Fork River from Carbondale to Glenwood Springs. This “emerald carpet” appeared more extensive than usual and raised concerns about detrimental impacts to aquatic life. In response, RFC designed and implemented a water quality sampling plan and algal survey with John Newbury, a local angler, guide, and aquatic scientist.

It was determined that sampling should commence very early in the morning, in order to measure critical in-stream oxygen levels at a time when they would typically be at their lowest. Below is a sample of the field work schedule John and I followed. Results of this study are forthcoming and will be released once available.

**1:00am** Begin field work preparations: calibrate equipment, gather supplies, etc.  
Leave house (only car on the road).

**4:15am** Meet at Veltus Park in Glenwood Springs to begin field work.

**4:30am**

**4:56-5:45am** Conduct water sampling in the dark via headlamp at 3 sites in Glenwood Springs.

**6:14am** With the sun rising, bushwhack to 2 sites near Fourmile Creek to conduct additional sampling.

**6:37am** Conduct water sampling at the Westbank boat launch.

**7:21am** Hike 1/2 miles while osprey circle overhead to conduct water sampling at 2 more sites below Aspen Glen Golf Club.

**8:07am** Walk 1/3 mile to conduct water sampling at Coryell Ranch.

**8:28-8:51am** Conduct water sampling at 3 sites on the Crystal and Roaring Fork Rivers in Carbondale, encountering a black bear in the process.

**9:10am** Conduct water sampling at the County Road 100 bridge and discover a very muddy river from upstream rains. Recognize the urgent need to quickly work back downstream to stay ahead of muddy conditions.

**9:30am** Pick up quick snack/coffee in Carbondale (need more energy to keep moving).

**10:17-11:30am** Conduct water sampling and an algal streambed coverage survey working back downstream from Carbondale, revisiting 1/2 the original sites.

**12:00pm** Conduct final water sampling/algal survey at Veltus Park in Glenwood Springs.

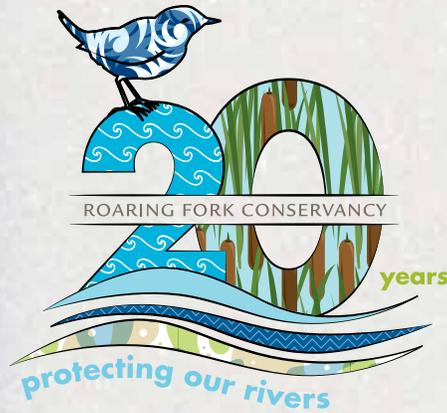
**12:30pm** Sampling complete! Pick up some much needed lunch.

**1:00pm** Return home for an afternoon nap after a 12-hour work day.

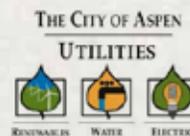
*Final calibration of instruments before collecting a measurement.*

*That's not moonlight on the water, that's Chad's headlamp as he collects a water sample in the middle of the Roaring Fork River at 5am. On the right, John records the data by headlamp-light.*

*Cladophora glomerata, the bright green algae being studied, has sometimes been called 'Mermaid's Hair'.*



Having a great partner is like having a great fly. **THANK YOU** to all our partners who helped protect our rivers over the last 20 years.





**THOMPSON DIVIDE COALITION**  
OUR HOME. OUR WATERSHED. OUR LIVELIHOOD.



**ROARING FORK LEADERSHIP**



**Colorado Coalition of Land Trusts**  
*Conserve Colorado*



**COLORADO**  
Water Quality Control Division  
Department of Public Health & Environment



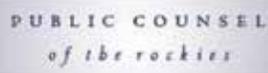
Community Office for Resource Efficiency



**American Rivers**  
*Rivers Connect Us*



**RUEDI WATER & POWER AUTHORITY**



## Staff & Board Flows



**Michael Schuster,  
Program Assistant**

Mike has lived in the Roaring Fork Valley since 1995. He first worked with RFC during the 2015 field season. He returned this past May, after a busy winter managing Four Mountain Sports at Buttermilk Ski Area. Armed with a B.S. in Water Science, with a minor in Ecology from the University of Colorado, Mike assisted staff with water quality and didymo sampling, and led educational outreach programs targeting local farmers markets and other community events.



**Carlson Schwoerer,  
Watershed Action Intern**

Carlson is an undergraduate student in Environmental Management and Policy at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo. This was his second summer assisting the RFC Watershed Action team in collecting water quality samples, and helping

the Education & Outreach team with public events and updating the Roaring Fork Watershed Plan. We wish him the best on the homestretch toward graduation!



**Eric Thomas,  
Water Quality Intern**

Eric grew up living along a small lake in Ohio. He fell in love with the recreational opportunities the lake provided, but was confronted with the need to protect the resource at an early age. While he was in high school, a CAFO (Concentrated Animal Feeding

Operation) was proposed for development not far from the lake. This spurred him to get involved with the local movement to protect the lake's water quality and to keep the surrounding environment safe. Eric is now an undergraduate in the Watershed Program at Colorado State University. As an intern with RFC during the summer of 2016 he was able to gain some "real world" experience that will help him be an even more effective advocate for lakes, rivers and streams in the future.

## Glenwood Springs Tamarisk Removal Project 2016

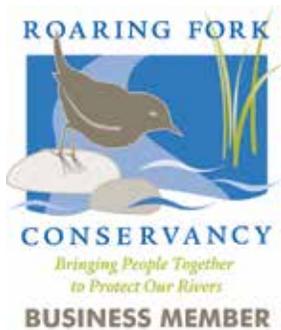
*By Chad Rudow, Water Quality Coordinator*

On October 8, RFC partnered on a Tamarisk Removal Project along the Roaring Fork and Colorado Rivers in Glenwood Springs. Tamarisk, currently on the state noxious weed list, is known for its ability to out-compete native plants, alter riparian diversity, and even change hydrologic patterns. We are grateful to the 20 staff and volunteers who worked all day removing and discouraging the regrowth of this invasive species.



*Photo by Todd Patrick Photography*

Many partners collaborated to make this project a success, including Roaring Fork Conservancy, Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers, Garfield County, City of Glenwood Springs, and Mount Sopris Conservation District.



**THANK YOU,  
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# Connecting Roaring Fork Valley Students to Their Future Water Supply

By Liza Mitchell, Education & Outreach Coordinator



Students collect data

Watershed science does not stop when the water freezes, nor does watershed science education. The Roaring Fork Watershed is a snow-dominated system, since most of the water that fills our streams and rivers year-round originates as snow. Many wintertime visitors do not understand the connection between the fluffy white powder and the summertime beauty, recreation and livelihoods that it supports. Luckily, most local 6th graders do, because middle school students in Aspen, Basalt, Carbondale, Marble and Glenwood Springs attend RFC's Snow Science programs with their schools each winter.

Expanding upon the water cycle and basic snowflake morphology, students get more than knee-deep in the snow, digging snow pits on local ski hills and public lands to analyze the water content of our snowpack. RFC educators use the same sampling technique as expert snow surveyors from Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to help students calculate how much water is

held within the snowpack. Students also learn to think critically about the data they are gathering by comparing our results to those obtained by another sampling technique: melting the snow right there in the field.

It is amazing to see how students react to hands-on educational experiences. Many students arrive cold and unsure of the day, but those worries quickly fade as they dive into the sampling. Some giggle as they throw snow at each other, some sit quietly inspecting shapes of snowflakes from different layers in the snowpack, others gravitate towards the calculators to punch out the density calculations. In the end, the students and teachers have a great time exploring the watershed and leave with a better understanding of just how critical snow is to our local economy and regional water management.



Digging a snowpit

**A big THANK YOU to the crew at Backbone Media for volunteering their time to help rehabilitate several riparian areas at RFC's Blue Creek Ranch Conservation Easement. Thank you Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers for partnering on this project.**

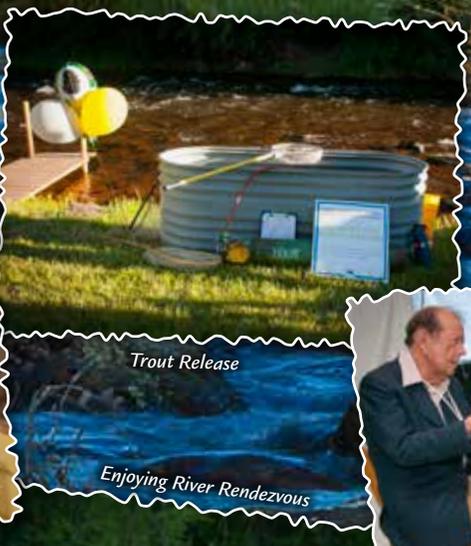
**If you or your organization would like to participate in a volunteer project to benefit our local rivers, please contact us!**

**BACKBONE**  
MEDIA





Wine & Liquor  
Silent Auction



Trout Release

2016 Robert Billingsley River  
Conservator Award recipients:  
Cornelia & Meredith Long



Rick Lofaro,  
RFC Executive Director



Bo Hale Treatment



Live Auction fun - Special Liquor Drawing



Live Auction



On the banks of the Fryingpan River



Dancing to the great music



Bidding at Live Auction



Dick Kipper, President of RFC National Council,  
welcomes guests

17TH ANNUAL

# River Rendezvous

ON THE BANKS OF THE FRYINGPAN

JULY 13, 2016



Situated near downtown Basalt and Old Pond Park, the River Center will provide easy access for both residents and visitors to drop in and learn more about the pivotal role rivers play in the community, the watershed, the state and the American West. The River Center will also boast an ideal location to host water-related educational seminars and classes, in addition to providing much needed lab space for water quality testing and river research.

*With the unique combination of accessibility, visibility and functionality, the River Center is not just a building; it is an innovative concept to demonstrate, experience and share the actions and interactions necessary to protect our exceptional rivers and watershed.*

For more information please contact: Sarah Woods, Director of Philanthropy, (970) 927-9595, [swoods@roaringfork.org](mailto:swoods@roaringfork.org)

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is published by Roaring Fork Conservancy biannually. Roaring Fork Conservancy is the watershed action and education organization for the Roaring Fork Valley. Our mission is to inspire people to explore, value and protect the Roaring Fork Watershed. We are an independent 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization based in Basalt, Colorado, the geographic center of the Roaring Fork Watershed. Roaring Fork Conservancy was founded in December 1996 to bring people together to protect our rivers. We appreciate your support and comments.

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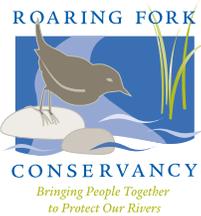
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