



River Currents

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A Quarterly Newsletter from the Roaring Fork Conservancy

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Conservancy Launches Environmental Education Program

The Roaring Fork Conservancy, in partnership with the Roaring Fork Watershed Coalition, is proud to announce the launching of its pilot *Environmental Education Program*. Working with Glenwood Springs, Basalt, Carbondale and Aspen school systems, the Conservancy will begin a pilot *Wetlands Watch* program in all parts of the valley. They will also help strengthen the existing Colorado Department of Wildlife's *Riverwatch* program. Two part-time naturalists are working on developing this pilot program for children of all ages. The 97/98 school year will focus on high school and grade school programs where the high school students will mentor and teach the lower grade levels.

A pool of \$5,100 has been gathered to fund this program. The Conservancy will contribute \$1,800, the Coalition \$1,500, and the remaining \$1,800 has been donated as a matching grant to the Conservancy by the Needmor Foundation. Leigh Gillette, a part-time naturalist for the Conservancy, was awarded a fellowship grant of \$6,500 by the Needmor Foundation to encourage and promote environmental education. She has contributed this grant to the Conservancy. From this grant, \$1,800 is specifically allocated to river and wetlands education, and the remaining \$4,700 will be used for other types of environmental education programs. We are very fortunate to have Leigh as part of the Conservancy team. Through her very generous actions, she has demonstrated a determination and faith that the Conservancy will succeed in accomplishing its goals.

Introducing the Conservancy's New Naturalists

Leigh Ann Gillette comes to the Conservancy from the Aspen Center for Environmental Studies where she was an environmental educator. She attended Colorado College where she received a Bachelor of Arts degree in biology. At Colorado College, she received a Boettcher Foundation Scholarship, a National Merit Scholarship and the Hughes Research Grant. Most recently, she received a fellowship grant from the Needmor Foundation (see prior story).

Leigh will design and implement environmental education classes, accompany teachers on their outdoor education excursions to give the outing a more distinct environmental quality, and will act as a consultant to those teachers who want to design their own environmental education programs. For example, Leigh will oversee the launching of the *Wetlands Watch* monitoring program so students of all ages will experience diversity, explore challenges and serve their communities.

Zoe Stark joins the Conservancy as a naturalist from the Aspen Center for Environmental Studies. She is a graduate of Prescott College where she received a Bachelor of Arts degree in human biology, outdoor education and humanities. As an Environmental Educator, Zoe will assist the Conservancy in its goal to promote appreciation, understanding, and awareness of the Roaring Fork River corridor. She will focus on river ecology and encourage the four "R's" of resource conservation: reduce, reuse, rethink, and recycle.

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Students will study the water cycle, the functions of wetland/riparian areas, the inhabitants of a wetlands area, and the importance of a watershed while engaging in dramatic play, testing water quality and pH levels, and undertaking interactive nature walks.

The Conservancy is very fortunate to have these two ambitious and talented women join its part-time staff. Their insight and experiences as naturalists will not only help foster the Conservancy's mission, but also allow children of all ages to appreciate and take action to protect their river environments. Welcome Leigh and Zoe!

Jacobson Joins RFC Board

The Conservancy is pleased to announce the appointment of Bob Jacobson to its Board of Directors. Bob has been a resident of the Roaring Fork Valley since 1972. Employed in the fly-fishing trade for twelve years with Taylor Creek Fly Shop, Bob recently joined Mason & Morse as a broker associate. Bob lives with his wife, Kay, and their daughters, Kristen and Deborah. He has a special interest in river access issues, which will be of particular value to the Conservancy.

RFC Seeks Funding to Support BHS River Project

The Conservancy and the Biology Department at the Basalt High School are planning a joint project to study the Roaring Fork River. The purpose of this study is to collect baseline data on the water chemistry, physical habitat and aquatic macro invertebrate life found in the river. With this baseline data in place, it will be possible to measure the effects of the future restoration work on the riparian habitat.

Basalt High School has a long history of stream quality monitoring. Since 1989, biology classes have been involved in the collection of data regarding the physical, chemical and biological characteristics of the local rivers. In 1991, the river-monitoring project was greatly improved with help from the Colorado Division of Wildlife's (CDOW) *Riverwatch* program.

The CDOW provided valuable monitoring equipment, computer hardware, training and a statewide network of other Riverwatch schools linked by telecommunications. The primary focus of the Riverwatch program is the collection of monthly water samples from local rivers, but after ten years of use, the program needs to update its equipment.

Therefore, the Conservancy is actively seeking funding to support the *Basalt High School's River Project*. With funding, BHS will expand its Riverwatch program in two directions: enable students to monitor aquatic invertebrates at a level which will foster reliable annual comparisons of data and allow more students to obtain hands-on experience collecting data in the field.

The Conservancy has requested funding from the Town of Basalt and others for the total amount of \$2,143. These funds will be used to purchase hip waders, nets, a stream flow meter and a spectrophotometer. For more information, or to make a donation to this particular project, please contact Andre Wille, Conservancy Board member and BHS biology teacher, at 970-927-3325.

Conservancy Scores at Hole-in-One Contest

Thanks to the members of the Roaring Fork Club, the Conservancy raised over \$3,500 at the Club's Labor Day Picnic. At the picnic registration, each Club member received one golf ball to use in the Hole-in-One Contest. Mulligan balls were sold for \$100 each and benefited the Conservancy. In the qualifying round, members hit from a make shift tee next to the administration building, across the Roaring Fork River, to the 16th green. The closest 25 balls to the 16th pin were entered in the Hole-in-One Contest, which took place from the official 16th tee. The 16th is the Roaring Fork Club's signature hole. At about 185 yards, the par three 16th hole has a challenging natural fairway. Prizes ranged from \$10,000 to \$1 million for a hole-in-one. The Conservancy would have received \$200,000, but unfortunately, no participant sank a hole-in-one this year. Maybe next year!

Conservancy Wish List

The Conservancy is in need of a few items ranging from \$10 to \$1,000. Please earmark your annual contribution!

1. Fax Machine
2. Xerox Machine
3. Hip Waders
4. Surber Sample, Frame Aquatic, and Aquatic Kick Nets
5. Stream Flow Meter
6. Research & Curriculum Development Books for RFC Library

Thank you for your consideration.

RFC in the News

The *Roaring Fork Sunday* featured the Conservancy in a two-part series about river groups embracing valleywide advocacy roles. In the Nov. 9-15 issue, the Conservancy's efforts to preserve land which otherwise might have been developed, and the formation of the Four Rivers Coalition were highlighted. The Nov. 16-22 issue mentioned the installation of new water-monitoring systems at the Roaring Fork Club and the mobilization of high school students to take routine water samples, and emphasized that advocacy groups need to work together to achieve their goals.

River Watch Tip...

The image of the *American Dipper* or *Water Ouzel* is used in the Conservancy's logo. When seen by the river, it is a prime indicator of pristine waters. In order to identify the bird in the field, look for a chunky, 18-21cm, slate-colored bird that is shaped like a wren. Its tail is stubby, legs are pale, and eyelids are white. It lives in fast-flowing mountain streams, diving and submerging, and singing a clear and ringing, mockingbird-like, sharp *zeet* (*Peterson Field Guide of Western Birds*).

Next Issue...

Look for photographs of Robert Wagner, on location, lending a hand with the educational video. Filming of the video will resume in the springtime.