



River Currents

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A Newsletter from the Roaring Fork Conservancy

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"Protecting and Preserving the Valley's Rivers."

**River
Currents**

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WHAT HAVE WE BEEN UP TO?

The Roaring Fork Conservancy was founded in December 1996. Already we have made significant strides towards accomplishing our mission of preserving and protecting the rivers that comprise the Roaring Fork Drainage. Here are some of the highlights:

- In conjunction with the Watershed Coalition we launched an Environmental Education program with two naturalist educators who have been conducting programs on rivers and wetlands for school-age children in the Roaring Fork Valley.
- We helped establish the Four Rivers Coalition with the Roaring Fork School District, Colorado Mountain College, Science Outreach Center, and the Aspen Center for Environmental Studies.
- We acquired two parcels of land as field study sites.
- We facilitated the installation of a U.S.G.S. water gauging station at Hook's Lane Bridge near El Jebel.
- At the request of the Town of Basalt, we conducted extensive research on a three-mile section of the Roaring Fork River through Basalt.
- We initiated a river access program with the Colorado Division of Wildlife to facilitate public access to the river.

We're proud of what we have accomplished thus far and know that there is much more to do. With support from individuals, businesses, and partners like the Town of Basalt, the Colorado Division of Wildlife, and the Four Rivers Coalition, we are confident that our efforts to protect and enhance our Valley's most valuable resources will continue to make a significant impact.

ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION HELPS BEAUTIFY BASALT ENTRANCE

On May 16th, the staff and board of the Roaring Fork Conservancy were joined by over 60 volunteers for the second annual Arbor Day Celebration. Working with the Town of Basalt, Pitkin County Open Space & Trails, Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers, Basalt Beautification Committee and others, the Conservancy helped plant 30 trees, 85 shrubs, and 200 willow cuttings in Fisherman's Park at the east entrance to Basalt. So next time you're driving into town, take a moment to admire the work of your fellow community members!

CONSERVANCY LEADS EFFORTS IN WATER MONITORING

The Roaring Fork Conservancy, along with Pitkin County, Eagle County, the Town of Basalt, the Colorado River Conservancy District and the United States Geological Survey (U.S.G.S.), has installed a Water Gauging Station in the Roaring Fork River at Hook's Lane Bridge near El Jebel and Basalt.

The Water Gauging Station will provide valuable information regarding stream flow and will be the site for monitoring water quality. Many of us might not consider the delicate balance of the river's ecosystem and the role stream flow levels play. From an environmental standpoint, proper stream flow levels are critical to the health of plant and animal life and to maintaining water quality. From a recreational standpoint, stream flow levels affect the quality of fishing and activities such as kayaking and rafting. Monitoring stream flow will also be valuable in predicting floods. The information generated by this computerized

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station will be available on the World-Wide Web to be used by all river enthusiasts.

LOCAL BUSINESSES
FOR OUR RIVERS

Beginning this summer, the Roaring Fork Conservancy will have some new partners in their efforts to preserve and protect the rivers. Many local guides and outfitters are participating in the Conservancy's **FOR OUR RIVERS** program and have agreed to donate \$1.00 out of every customer guided trip to the Conservancy. Look for the Roaring Fork Conservancy poster and window decal at participating businesses and next time you're going out on the river, visit one of these establishments and **help them help us!**

Contact the Conservancy to find out how your business can become a **FOR OUR RIVERS** participant.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

If you're looking for a way to get involved in the Conservancy's activities, we've got some terrific opportunities coming up.

Basalt River Days Children's Water Festival — August 15 & 16

The first annual Basalt River Days will take place in Arbaney Park on August 15 & 16. As part of this community event, the Conservancy is sponsoring the Children's Water Festival filled with a host of fun, educational activities for young people.

On hand to entertain and teach young people about various aspects of water will be various events such as "Otto the Otter," the mascot of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and a 25-foot Aquatic Maze from the Colorado Division of Wildlife used to teach children about bugs, critters, and fish found in Colorado. The Colorado Water Conservancy will bring its "mystery faucet" to teach young people where water comes from, a "water cycle display" that demonstrates how water cycles work, and

the "wall of water" display constructed of 160 gallon jugs with lights.

If that's not enough, the Colorado Water Institute will teach children about water education and careers, and local storytellers Anita Strickbine and Maurine Fitzpatrick will tell stories about water, animals, and other related subjects.

Don't miss this exciting and fun event. Please come and support us and bring your children!

Brush Creek Streambank Restoration — Saturday, September 19

Spend a day working with Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers and Conservancy staff stabilizing and enhancing the stream corridor of Brush Creek which runs through the heart of Snowmass Village. Volunteers are needed to help with planting willows and building crib walls.

WHAT DOES THE CONSERVANCY'S FUTURE HOLD?

Not unlike the rivers we work so hard to protect, the Conservancy is moving along at a rapid pace towards accomplishing some significant goals. In a spring planning session, the Conservancy's Board of Directors set its sights on projects that will further its goals in education, conservation and community awareness.

The Conservancy is in the process of identifying the ideal location for construction of a Nature Center. Once the location is chosen, the Conservancy will move headlong into fund-raising and planning for construction of a state-of-the-art facility that will serve as a central location for educational programming and river access for residents and visitors alike.

Though the Nature Center is a key element to the Conservancy's educational programs, immediate plans call for expanding existing programs being conducted at several sights along the Roaring Fork River. Conservancy naturalists and educators are already working with local

schools to develop specialized activities and a curriculum for the study of wetland and riparian ecology.

The Conservancy is committed to broadening community outreach and education possibilities. Activities like the Children's Water Festival and the annual Arbor Day celebration demonstrate this commitment. We will continue to take an active role in planning and implementing these and other events.

The Conservancy believes that public access to the Valley's rivers is a crucial component for developing awareness and support of this valuable resource. To this end, we are working to identify and purchase available parcels of land that can be used as public access sights for education and recreation.

Our goals are ambitious and our success depends to a large degree on the support that we receive from individuals, local businesses, foundations and other environmental organizations. We are also grateful to our partners in the **FOR OUR RIVERS** project for their support, and to the many individuals and organizations who have made donations. For information on how you can support the Conservancy's efforts to protect and preserve the Valley's rivers, please contact us at (970) 927-1290.

WE'VE MOVED!

We moved across the hall from Suite 221B to Suite 226 in the River View Plaza, 100 Elk Run in Basalt. Come see our new office!

RIVER INFORMATION ON THE WEB

The Conservancy now has a World-Wide Web site! Visit our home page at **www.roaringfork.org** to see our new brochure, newsletters and recent photographs of our ongoing projects. An on-line link to the U.S.G.S. Gauging Stations provides local water quality information for anglers and boaters.