



# Watershed Watch

A publication of the *Coalition for the Upper South Platte*

*A Healthy Watershed - Now and in the Future*

A Quarterly Newsletter

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## A LOOK BACK AT 2013

What a year! We still can't believe 2013 has come to an end and we're looking toward 2014 projects. We certainly kept busy in 2013 working inside and outside of the watershed!

The impacts from the Waldo Canyon Fire kept us on our toes all year. We've seen time and time again that floods follow wildfire, so our main focus was to keep people safe and infrastructure intact when inevitable flooding struck the communities around the burn scar. We continued with work we started in 2012 after the Waldo Canyon Fire blazed through public and private lands west of Colorado Springs. Guided by a detailed assessment of where post-fire impacts would be most destructive, we worked with partners ranging from federal agencies to individual landowners to prepare communities for flooding. The high potential for extremely destructive flooding meant partners were working on a variety of projects throughout the year - community outreach, erosion control structures, reseeding, creek cleanup, evacuation planning, and sandbag walls to name a few. This proactive work to mitigate flooding made a tremendous difference when summer downpours hit the burn scar and caused intense flooding in communities below. In late 2013, we came out with an interactive map showing the work partners are doing throughout the area - take a look at [waldofire.org/map/](http://waldofire.org/map/)

While the life-threatening post-fire impacts in and around the Waldo Canyon burn scar were the most immediate concern this year, we still found time to do some exciting work in the Upper South Platte Watershed.

So much of the work we do could not happen without our dedicated volunteers. Over 6,000 people came out to lend a hand in 2013, providing over \$750,000 in in-kind match we were able to leverage for federal and state grants. This was by far the most volunteers we have ever hosted in a year, and we are very thankful for each and every one! Volunteers of all ages worked on projects doing rehab in the Waldo Canyon, Springer, and Hayman burn scars; fuels mitigation; river restoration; and improving water quality. We also hosted several AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) teams and continued our partnerships with the Mile

High Youth Corps and Rocky Mountain Field Institute. Having these groups to help our crew with much-needed rehab and forest health work was invaluable.

While CUSP is expert at reacting quickly, nimbly, and effectively to crises, we also understand the enormous value of proactive forest health work. In 2013, we continued operating slash sites in Fairplay and Divide, with more people than ever stopping by to drop off slash from projects on their land. We also continued working in communities throughout the watershed to reduce fuels and mitigate wildfire risk. As one of eight network hubs established nationwide in 2013 through the Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network Pilot Project, CUSP is working with stakeholders in vulnerable communities to coordinate wildfire mitigation efforts and share knowledge.

2013 was a great year for sustainability here in the watershed. The Cripple Creek/Victor School Board approved its first Sustainability Policy and initiated an Environmentally Preferred Purchasing Policy. The Peak Alliance for a Sustainable Future, with which CUSP has a seat on the Advisory Board, is also making progress to implement their plan for a more sustainable Pikes Peak region.

We also worked on some great water quality projects. We sampled in 11-Mile Canyon to better understand the sources of algae blooms in this stretch of the South Platte River. We also did some collaborative planning for water quality monitoring in Fairplay, Alma, and near abandoned mines throughout the South Park area.

We certainly could not have accomplished all we did in 2013 without the generous support of all our donors, supporters, volunteers, and friends. Thank you and we wish you a wonderful 2014!



*Every noble work is at first impossible - Thomas Carlyle*

# WATERSHED HERO

## NANCY WILSON

Nancy Wilson is a true watershed hero! As the Mile High Youth Corps Regional Director for the southern Front Range, Nancy helps youth gain job skills and a deeper understanding of their environment through meaningful service opportunities. Nancy's passion for making a difference in the environment and helping youth define their career goals shines through in everything she does.

We have been fortunate to work with Nancy and the youth she leads for over three years now. The Mile High Youth Corps has partnered with us on many critical programs, and our work together has really ramped up in the wake of the Waldo Canyon Fire. Our crews work together to mitigate fire risk, protect communities from post-fire flood impacts, and otherwise make our little corner of the earth a healthier place. We always enjoy working with Nancy and the youth she recruits. Their efforts make a huge difference for communities in the watershed and to those recovering from the Waldo Canyon Fire.



Nancy's dedication to the youth she works with and the environment she loves has helped make the Mile High Youth Corps an outstanding program. Not one to toot her own horn, her commitment to collaboration and environmental stewardship makes a tremendous impact in the places she works and those she works with. She certainly will have a lasting legacy through the partnerships she builds and the youth she inspires.

After four and a half years with the Mile High Youth Corps, and over 20 working in nonprofit and youth development, Nancy plans to retire this coming summer. Along with a little rest and relaxation, Nancy plans to continue giving back to her community through volunteer work. We wish her all the best in retirement and hope to see her often in the watershed!

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"It's gratifying to see young people gain a hands-on understanding of the environment"

- Nancy Wilson

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## WINTER ENERGY EFFICIENCY

**Use the Sun** Open the shades during the day to let the sun shine in and warm your home. The sun's radiant heat can have a noticeable effect on the temperature in your home, especially in sunny Colorado. Make sure to close shades and drapes at night to keep the heat from escaping.

**Seal Leaks** Weather-stripping or caulking leaky areas around windows and doors helps keep the cold out. Removable caulking or plastic film kits can cut your window heat loss by 50%, and are a great option for windows you only open during the warmer months.

**Insulate** Increasing the insulation in your attic, walls, and basement helps you use less energy to keep your home warm. Wrapping your water pipes will also reduce heat loss and helps prevent pipes from freezing.

**Increase Humidity** Boosting the humidity level in your home can help you feel warmer, especially in our dry climate. Use a humidifier, fill your house with plants, or keep a kettle filled with water on your wood stove.

**Control Heating** Use a programmable thermostat to lower the temperature of your home when you're sleeping or away working to reduce the energy bill. Proper settings can save over \$180 per year in the average home.

**Efficient Fireplace Use** Fireplaces can make your home feel cozy, but many older natural fireplaces are inefficient and can draw more heat out of the house than they produce. Close the flue when you're not using the fireplace to eliminate drafts; an open flue can let as much heat escape as 4 square foot window. Also consider caulking around the fireplace hearth.

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*Your generosity is much appreciated*

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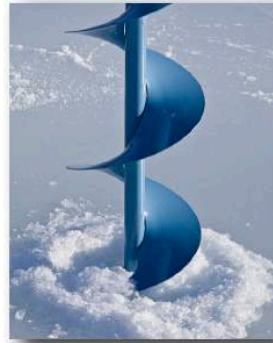
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 Event Day Registration:  
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*CUSP seeks to protect the water quality and ecological health of the Upper South Platte Watershed, through the cooperative efforts of watershed stakeholders, with emphasis placed on community values and economic sustainability*

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