

2014

Annual Report



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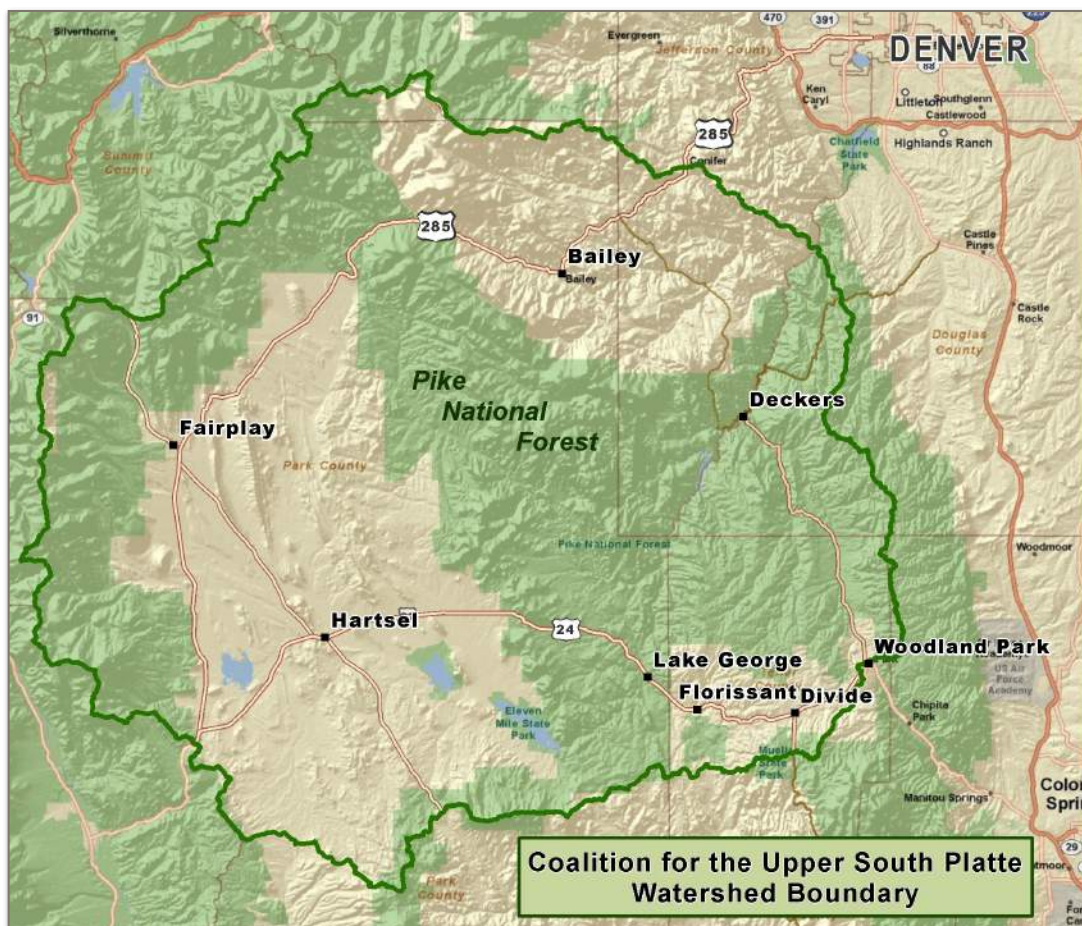
Overview

Vision: A healthy watershed - now and in the future

Mission: 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.

2014 was an exciting year for the Coalition for the Upper South Platte (CUSP). We made considerable progress on our core initiatives, and expanded our work to include more projects in the northern part of the watershed. Our staff of 25, 3,211 outstanding volunteers donating 20,695 volunteer work hours, and our generous donors made these critical watershed programs possible. The following pages highlight some of CUSP's accomplishments in 2014.

Thank you for your continued commitment to support watershed health and make these accomplishments possible!



Programs and Projects

In 2014, we continued with many projects throughout the Upper South Platte Watershed, and at the request of our neighbors in connecting watersheds, assisted with critical post-fire rehab efforts started following the 2012 Waldo Canyon Fire.

CUSP worked on the following projects and programs in 2014:

- Forest Health and Fire Rehabilitation
- River Restoration
- Water Quality Monitoring
- Education and Outreach
- Antero Ice Fishing Contest
- Sustainability and Energy
- GIS Mapping
- Noxious Weed Management
- Roads
- Trails



Forest Health



The health of the Upper South Platte Watershed is intimately tied to the health of the forests that cover the majority of the watershed. Healthy forests act as a living filter to improve the quality of water throughout the watershed and in areas downstream. In the Upper South Platte Watershed, ponderosa pine forests dominate, with areas of mixed conifer, aspen, and lodgepole. These forests are currently overcrowded and in poor health, leaving them vulnerable to insect infestations, disease outbreaks, and catastrophic fire. CUSP proactively works on projects on public and private land to improve the health of the forests and protect communities. Some of CUSP's major forest health programs and highlights of 2014 are detailed below.

State of the Forests in the Upper South Platte Watershed

Generally, the forests in this watershed are experiencing stress and decline due to an overall climate pattern of drier, warmer conditions that has continued since the late 1990s. The decades prior to this period were cooler and wetter, allowing for robust tree reproduction that was unbridled by a national policy of consistent fire suppression. In large areas of the watershed, there are tree stands typified by crowded forest conditions, with little to no undergrowth on the forest floor, and trees competing for limited nutrients, sunlight, and water. This competition and resultant stress on the trees leaves the forest in a less resilient state for withstanding wildfire, disease, and insect outbreak. Meadows and open areas not populated by trees are closing in with time due to tree growth encroachment.

Significant and damaging wildfires burned in and adjacent to the watershed in 1996, 2002, 2012, and 2013. Prior to 1996, there were no significant fires for at least 100 years in this geographic area. The existing heavily stocked forest stands can be expected to support challenging and destructive wildfire events in the near and distant future.

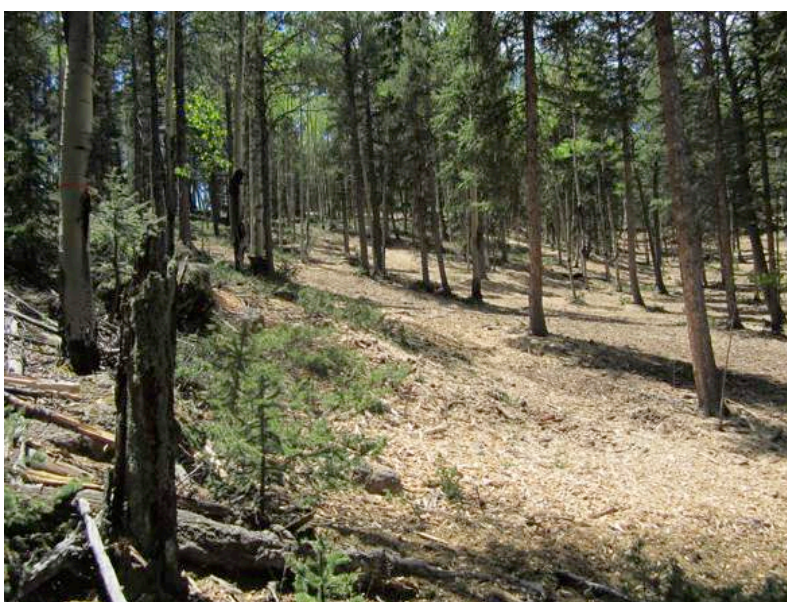
In 2014, infestations of Spruce budworm continued and increased over parts of the Upper South Platte Watershed, particularly in the southeast portion of the watershed and adjacent south end of Rampart Range, which was impacted by the Waldo Canyon Fire in 2012. The larval stage of this insect damages the new growth and buds of Douglas-fir, Engelmann spruce and blue spruce. Infestations of three to five years or more often result in tree mortality. Some private property owners are using aerial spraying techniques or high-value individual tree spraying to protect trees.

Small portions in the northeast part of the watershed along the northern part of the Rampart Range are experiencing Douglas-fir beetle activity. The beetles attack trees injured by fire scorch, windthrow, and root disease. Stand conditions and weather strongly influence these populations, and thinning to promote stand vigor is the best management approach.

CUSP in cooperation with private land owners and local, state, and federal partners is engaged in forest management activities to include vigorous thinning both for fuels reduction and forest restoration. This work includes hand-cutting and a variety of mechanical techniques in parts of subdivisions in Teller, Douglas, Park, and El Paso counties along with large private parcels in Teller and Jefferson counties. Large parcels under the care of the Colorado State Forest Service and Colorado Springs Utilities were mechanically thinned in 2014. Planning for work to be implemented in 2015 continues across the expanse of the Upper South Platte Watershed.



Before treatment



After treatment using mastication, hand-cutting, and grinding resultant slash

Trees bordering roads throughout the watershed continue to experience stress and mortality due to the application of magnesium chloride used to treat snow and ice-impacted roads.

Educating property owners concerning their role as forest managers is an important part of forest health. Decreased fire activity statewide in 2014 along with cooler and wetter weather, was accompanied by a slight reduction in interest by private land owners for the vigorous type of tree thinning that is necessary to recover and promote healthy and resilient forest conditions. Educating property owners and contractors in forest health is an ongoing endeavor for CUSP, as is staying informed and educated on the latest research.

Department of Natural Resources Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant and Other Forestry Grants

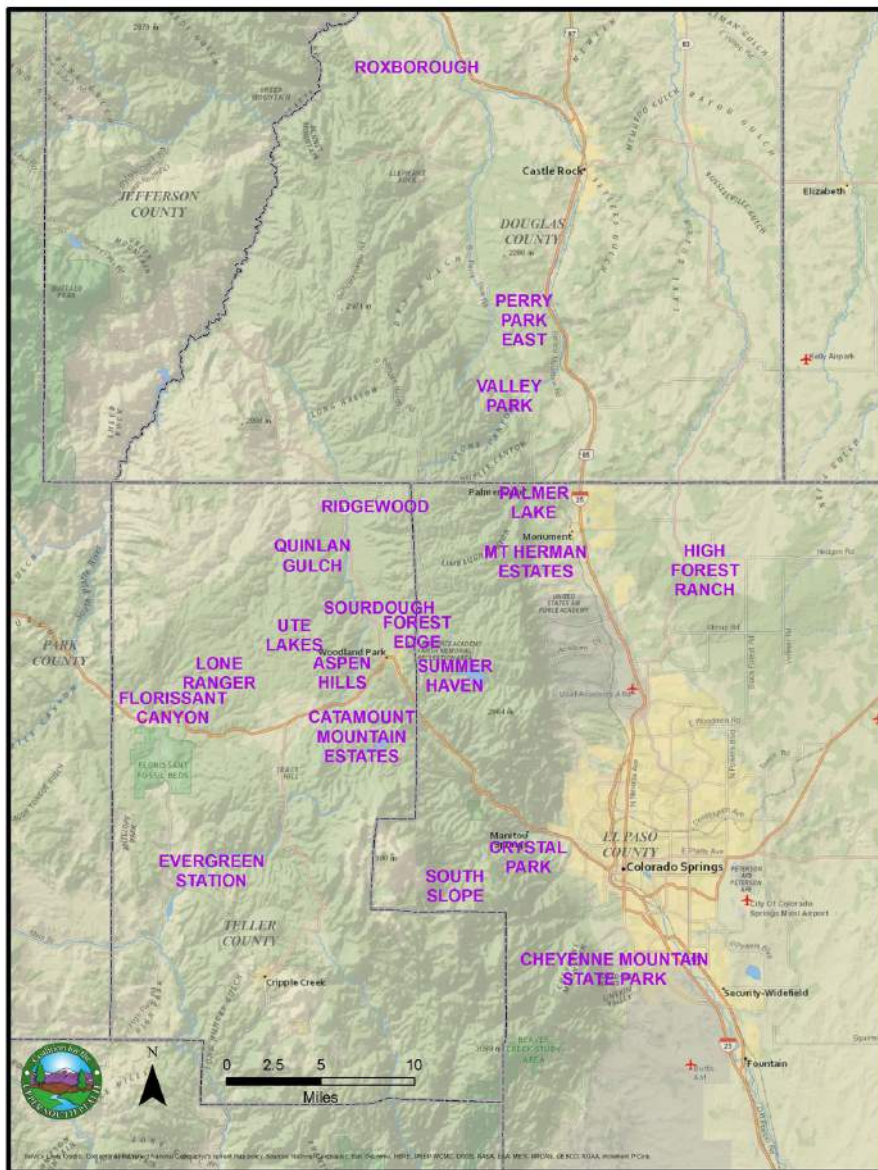
Colorado's Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant Program was established to fund projects that reduce the risk of damage to property, infrastructure, and water supplies, with a focus on the wildland-urban interface. CUSP used funds awarded through this program in 2014 to build upon previous wildfire risk reduction work.

In 2014, the CUSP fuels crew, volunteers, and local contractors completed over 1,080 acres of defensible space and forest restoration for a total of over 1,818 acres under the Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant. This represents 151% of the expected 1,200 acres under this award. The grant was matched with funding support from the Colorado State Forest Service's Community Assistance Grants for Lands Adjacent to National Forests (CAFA) Stevens Program and Forest Restoration Program, and support from Colorado Springs Utilities.

Work has been completed or is underway in the following areas:

1. Area between Florissant and Divide near Highway 24
2. Evergreen Station on Teller 1 (Florissant area)
3. Lone Ranger Home Owners Association (Divide area)
4. Ute Lakes area in North Divide
5. Catamount Estates (West of Woodland Park)
6. Ranch Estates (West of Woodland Park)
7. South Slope of Pikes Peak
8. Ridgewood, Sourdough, Quinlan areas (North of Woodland Park)
9. Forest Edge (East of Woodland Park)
10. Cheyenne Mountain State Park (South of Colorado Springs)
11. Palmer Lake
12. Mt. Herman Estates (Monument area)
13. Perry Park East (South Douglas County)
14. Valley Park (Douglas County)

15. High Forest Ranch (Black Forest)
16. Roxborough State Park (Douglas County)
17. Summer Haven (South of Woodland Park)
18. Aspen Hills (West of Woodland Park)



Community Wildfire Protection Plans

CUSP worked on two new Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) in 2014. We provided services for the creation of the Stage Stop CWPP and the Mt. Herman CWPP. The Stage Stop plan focuses on an area in Park County and falls within the Park County CWPP. The Mt. Herman community is located in El Paso County and is within the overarching El Paso County CWPP. In each of these newly minted CWPP areas, CUSP has funded initial demonstration projects to help keep the momentum going.

Fire Suppression Team

2014 was quite a year for the suppression team. In the summer of 2014, CUSP responded to three small fires within the watershed. Each of these fires were less than 5 acres and were extinguished with local resources. In the winter of 2014, the crew underwent higher level trainings at the Colorado Wildfire Incident Management Academy. CUSP currently has seven red-carded fire fighters.



Suppression team heading into the forest to burn slash piles



The CUSP brush truck is now fully outfitted thanks to the generosity of Cripple Creek and Victor Gold Mine

The CUSP brush truck was also outfitted to meet the National Wildfire Coordination Group's (NWCG) requirements for fire apparatus by a generous grant provided by the Cripple Creek and Victor Gold Mine. CUSP will achieve all NWCG requirements for a single resource in 2015. As a single resource, CUSP will be able to deploy to fires both in the area and outside of our existing area. We are extremely excited to provide high level professional response services to our watershed residents and neighbors.

The suppression team was busy in the late part of the year as well, as they began to burn slash piles. One way to reduce the cost of forest management work is to create slash piles with the by-products of forest projects. Chipping of this material can be costly and operationally impossible, whereas pile burning can provide a low cost, safe and ecologically sound means to reduce the residual fuels. Because of a rather dry 2013/2014 winter, a great number of piles remained unburned. CUSP burned 150 of the estimated 1,500 piles in 2014. This work will continue in 2015.



Pile burning near Woodland Park

Slash Drop-Off Sites



Fairplay Sort Yard

CUSP continues to manage the Divide and Fairplay Slash Sites and the Fairplay Sort Yard. These drop-off sites provide property owners with a low-cost option for removing slash accumulated during mitigation projects on their property. Slash is chipped, and mulch can be picked up for free from the drop off sites when available. Both slash sites experienced high traffic in 2014 as property owners proactively reduced fuels on private lands. Over 3,000 loads of slash were received at the two slash sites. Landowners treated just under 325 acres, and put in approximately 10,558 hours accumulating slash

and improving the health of the forests on their properties.

The Fairplay Sort Yard continues to receive woody slash. The Sort Yard provides wood chips to the Fairplay School to heat their facility during the cold winter months. In 2014 CUSP provided over 7 loads of high quality, low moisture content wood chips. While we are still refining the processing of the material, CUSP is committed and excited to continue this valuable partnership that takes material removed from our local forests to create warmth for our future watershed stewards.

Mitigation and Fuels Reduction Program

CUSP purchased a Terex PT 100, rubber tracked masticator in 2014. This piece of equipment has helped CUSP increase forest management production and improve the ability of CUSP and our clients to better utilize the by-products of our work.

CUSP also continued assisting neighbors with thinning through the operation of our chipper, also known as our Neighborhood Fuels Reduction Program. For communities with multiple individuals with too much slash to haul themselves, CUSP brought our chipper out to provide a cost-effective disposal method.



Northern Watershed Work

Work ramped up in the northern watershed during 2014. CUSP further expanded our geographic reach to work more closely with communities along the North Fork of the South Platte River in northwestern Park County and southern Jefferson County by creating a northern watershed coordinator position. Jeff Ravage, a long-time member of the CUSP team, is heading up this effort as our North Fork Watershed Coordinator.

As part of this effort, the Bailey Healthy Forests Initiative was created to connect residents to resources to improve forest health and reduce potential impacts of wildfire through www.baileyhealthyforests.org. 2014 forestry work in the northern watershed included:

- Working with the U.S. Forest Service South Platte Ranger District and volunteers in Buffalo Creek (Jefferson County) to support fuels reduction in the area
- Chipping slash with residents of the Blue Mountain subdivision (Jefferson County) to reduce their wildfire risk
- Working with Denver Mountain Parks and volunteers to reduce fuel loads on Denver Mountain Parks properties
- Working with a local contractor to remove hazardous fuels on 23 acres in the Santa Maria area

Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network

Fire Adapted Communities is a collaborative, community-wide approach for taking responsibility for wildfire risk. Recognizing the importance of continuing to improve how we approach adapting to living with wildfire, Fire Adapted Communities kicked off the Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network in 2013. The project seeks to build upon proven strategies, improve fire-adapted methods, and promote more communication within communities and between communities about what works to reduce wildfire risks. CUSP was selected as one of the first network hubs in the country. As a network hub, CUSP works to bring people together to focus on reducing wildfire risk.

In the second year of our Fire Adapted Communities Project, CUSP has increased awareness; hosted the annual FAC network meeting in the Woodland Park Area (which brought over 75 fire and forestry leaders to our neck of the woods); co-hosted the 2014 Wildfire Preparedness Kick-Off Event in Woodland Park featuring speakers, demonstration, and hands-on workshops to empower residents to be proactive about wildfire preparedness on their property and in their communities; and helped to foster the creation of two new FireWise Communities. For more information about Fire Adapted Communities, please visit www.fireadapted.org.

The following article was written by Jonathan Bruno, CUSP's Chief Operating Officer, for the Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network Blog. See the blog post at <http://facnetwork.org/>

The mission of the Coalition for the Upper South Platte (CUSP) is 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.” This mission has been the guiding principle that I have used over the years for CUSP's work and endeavors. This blog will explore economic sustainability as it relates to working with forest contractors.

Over the years, CUSP has engaged many forest contractors. Without our numerous, diverse and varied contractors, CUSP would never complete the 2000 annual acres of management within our high-risk areas. This year alone we have provided over two million dollars in funding to contractors undertaking forest management projects within the watershed. We depend upon each other to complete our important work. It is a symbiotic relationship at its most basic form – without acres getting completed, CUSP would not be competitive in our efforts to seek grant funding; without CUSP, contractors would not have the work that has often propelled them into the next realm of operations. Throughout this process, I have learned some important lessons:

1) Planning is key to successful projects.

Mapping & Marking: Know your project and property boundaries.

We have had far too many close calls related to ownership due to poor spatial data. Often owners mistakenly think they own property that they do not, and even more common is faulty assessors data. When in doubt, contact adjacent owners, and mutually walk and agree upon the lines before beginning the work. Always re-walk the boundaries

to ensure your ribbon or paint is still visible. We flag property lines with ribbon on the lines hanging in a single streamer from a tree, and two horizontal ribbons wrapped on a tree to connote a corner. For some reason squirrels and hikers love to pull the flags!

On large projects we use the management by prescription approach, but will provide a sample marking on an acre or two. For this approach, and with smaller lots, we paint trees identified for removal with a high quality tree paint. Be sure to mark on the same side of each tree – there is nothing worse than having to make a contractor re-enter because you were not paying attention and marked on different sides and from different angles. Also mark with a bright color – CUSP uses orange or blue. Those white dots are far too hard to see! CUSP often will re-mark an area after the first pass. Make sure the contractor understands that this may occur. With that said, some of our partners have, in the past, re-marked areas over ten times. This is unacceptable and very costly for an operator. If you do not have your prescription dialed in, then the project is not ready for contracting.

Request for Proposals (RFP).

Consider your RFP documents as some of the most important elements in the planning phase of your work. In this document be clear about the goals, timelines, equipment needs and if there is a bond, specific insurance, or a damage deposit required. Always discuss the prescription in detail and know up front what the correct equipment is for the job – A 100 hp skidsteer, masticator might not be the best of equipment for a 200 acre Ponderosa whole tree removal project. Provide the contractors ample time to bid and review the project. CUSP requires all bidders to participate in a

“show-me-tour” or site walk prior to bidding. By doing this we give everyone a chance to price the work correctly. When responding to contractor questions, make sure that all potential bidders also see the question and answer. I often take notes at the “show-me tour” and then send out an e-mail to everyone.

2) Selection criteria is more than one number.

CUSP does not select contractors based only on their bid amount. We consider past work history, references, assumed ability to complete within budget and on time, and known customer service. Contractors often have more interaction with our clients than we do, so make sure they will represent you well. As I view the economic sustainability of our region, I also rank those contractors that have a local presence higher than those from out of the region or the state. This is vital to strong local forest economies. For every dollar I give them our region feels the benefits, from the forest employees to the coffee shops and the fuel stations.

3) Contracts are your guidebook for operations.

The more detail you put within your contracts with regard to the project prescriptions, the more likely that you and the contractor will achieve real results with limited challenges. Always carry a contract copy with you when meeting with contractors – refer to this document when discussing requirements and outcomes. It usually takes me a week to draft a contract with all of the pertinent information for the project.

4) Budgeting project payments requires planning.

The worst part of my job is telling the contractor that their payment for completed work is not yet ready.

Because our funding is often post-project reimbursement, we have within our agreements a 60-days net term. While contractors often scoff at this, it is necessary to allow us enough time to send requests to funders and receive the cash to cover the project costs. CUSP has limited cash reserves, and this process has still proven to get tricky. Recently, we had to hold payments to the dire end and this caused a great deal of stress for our contractors and for us. With this challenge in mind, here are a few ideas to help:

- When using cost share dollars, where the property owners or other funding sources are used to pay for a part of the work, consider entering into agreements whereas the owner pays the contractor directly part or all of the cost at the end of completion. I have several owners that can pay and are more able to “float” the project cost than CUSP. When a contractor receives even half at completion of the invoice they are happy.
- Consider applying for a line of credit with a local lender to cover the costs during those thin times.
- Plan your reimbursements and project timelines well. CUSP has several grants that allow for quarterly billing. When I have a \$250,000 project, I make sure that they will not finish the work in the middle of the quarter, but rather that they will finish closer to my reporting periods.
- Be honest with your contractors and consider what options are available to help them make ends meet. Forest work is expensive and many of our contractors have significant loans on their equipment.



5. Know your responsibility in ensuring safe and legal work environments.

As a contract manager, it is my responsibility to ensure crew, client, and staff safety. If I see something that is contrary to that, I will stop the project immediately. Know your local laws, OSHA regulations, Department of Public Health and Environment rules, and have all of these contact numbers available. We recently had a non-reportable petroleum spill on a site and were able to respond rapidly and correctly to the problem. It was essential to understand the rules related to accidental spills and was even more important that our contractor had a spill response plan and kit with him at the time (a requirement within our contracts).

If working with crew members from out of the country, make sure that they are eligible to work in the US (I-9's). Only hire contractors that provide their staff with the required workers compensation, proper equipment and PPE, and who treat their people well.

6. Keep good records.

When reviewing work and certifying it as complete, always do this with your contractor and the funder, if required. In our case, the Colorado State Forest

Service must certify the work as complete before we can request reimbursement for the work. Take notes and provide these notes to the contractor for review. In some cases I will even make all parties present sign the notes, acknowledging that they are aware of the items to be wrapped up. Some of my strongest relationships and friendships are with my local contractors. While the relationships can be

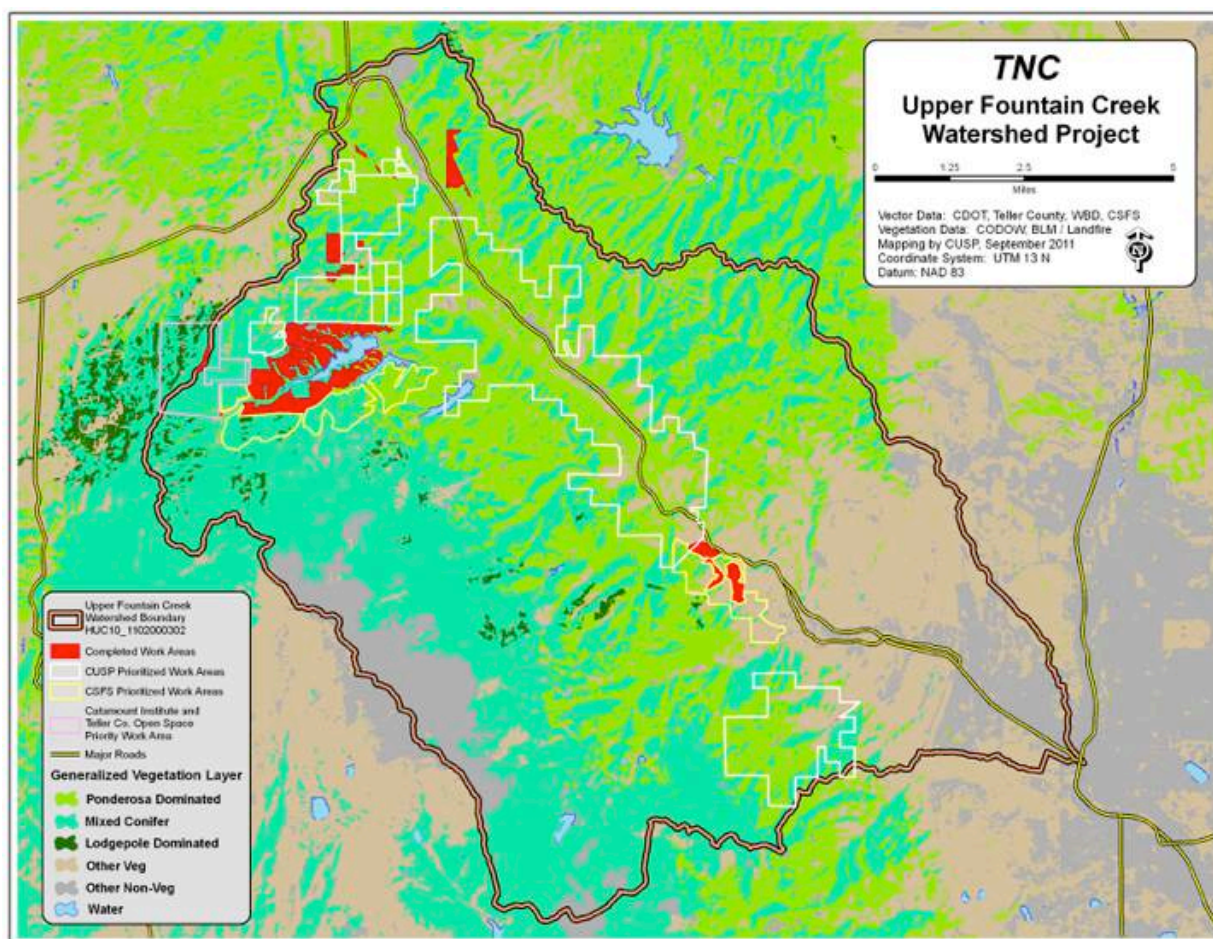
heated at times, it is important to understand that we are dependent upon each other for success. I rely on them to give me insight on operations and challenges and they depend upon CUSP to keep them up-to-date on the funding news, new scientific developments and the future of forest management. It is my responsibility to give them the tools to succeed and I am honored and humbled when I see a small outfit purchase their first skidder or hire new employees. Just this year CUSP provided a \$150,000 dollar contract to a small outfit that has only worked on small lots. Now it is our responsibility to ensure that they succeed in reducing the fire risk, increasing forest resilience and in growing their company. It is our duty to work with and manage our contractors in a way that makes us all shine.

Upper Fountain Creek Watershed Restoration Project

The Upper Fountain Creek Watershed Restoration Project is one of only six such projects across the country made possible through a partnership between the U.S. Forest Service and The Nature Conservancy. Known as Scaling Up to Promote Ecosystem Resiliency (SPER), this partnership is focused on demonstrating the value of implementing forest restoration treatments on private, local and other non-federal lands in order to expand the overall positive impact of similar treatments on U.S. Forest Service land.

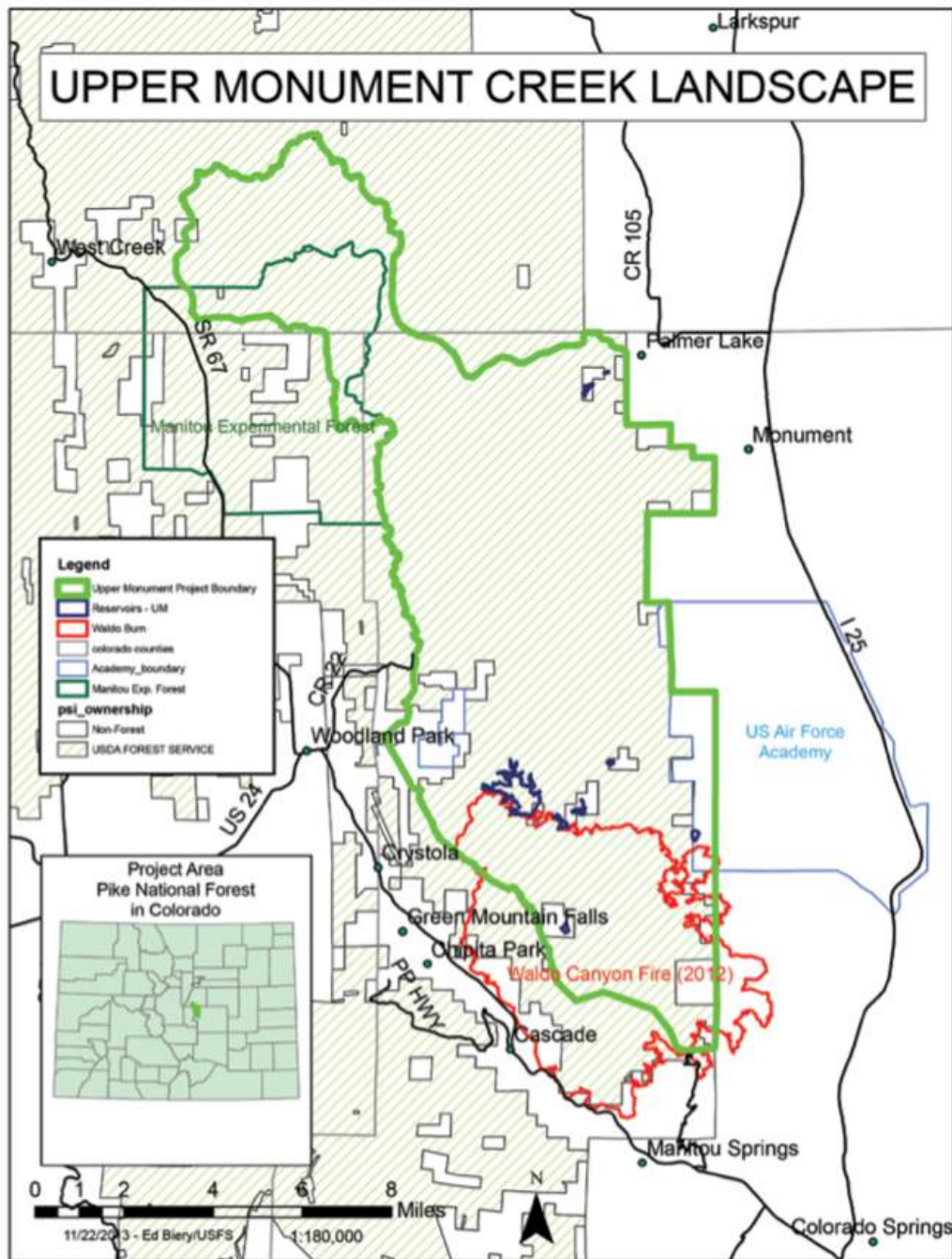
The project has focused on approximately 1,000 acres of non-federal property in the vicinity of the headwaters for Fountain Creek, located on the north slope of Pikes Peak.

Work within the Upper Fountain Creek Watershed continues with financial support from the Colorado State Forest Service and Colorado Springs Utilities.



Upper Monument Creek Landscape Restoration Initiative

CUSP worked with our agency partners to design a landscape scale forest project within the Upper Monument Creek Watershed. The work, under the principles of adaptive management practices in National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance, have identified some 20,000 acres where forest work should occur to reduce fire risk and increase forest health and resiliency to disturbance. For more information, see the full report at <http://www.conservationgateway.org/ConservationByGeography/NorthAmerica/UnitedStates/Colorado/Pages/umc.aspx>



From the Upper Monument Creek Landscape Restoration Initiative Summary Report and Collaborative Recommendations
MAP: E.H. Biery

2014 Forest Health Statistics

(see page 25 for wildfire rehab statistics)

- About 1,595 acres of forestry work
- 434 acres chipped
- 3,143 loads of slash delivered to the Divide and Fairplay slash sites, with 324 acres treated by landowners
- Over \$1.15 million paid to private contractors for forest health work on 1,595 acres



River Restoration

Rivers are the lifeblood of our communities and our watershed. CUSP is committed to protecting our rivers and streams so we can all enjoy them for generations to come. We work with partners from all sectors to restore aquatic habitats, improve water quality, and ensure recreational opportunities abound in and along rivers and streams.

Trail Creek

Trail Creek is a tributary to Horse Creek, which subsequently feeds into the main stem of the South Platte River at Deckers. This river section was overwhelmed by significant flooding and erosion events following the 2002 Hayman Fire. In a highly collaborative effort, CUSP, the Pike National Forest, the National Forest Foundation, Vail Resorts, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Douglas County, the City of Aurora, the Colorado Water Conservation Board, Coca Cola, the Gates Family Foundation, and other donors came together in 2009 to address post-fire flooding and erosion in Trail Creek on a large scale. Dave Rosgen, renowned hydrology expert and creator of the Watershed Assessment of River Stability and Sediment Supply (WARSSS) methodology, was hired in 2010 to help develop and implement a restoration plan for the area. In the following years, the restoration plan was implemented through collaborative efforts to stabilize channels; restore natural floodplains; mitigate erosion; and improve trails and roads.



Before & after work in Trail Creek

In 2014, we put the finishing touches on the project. Contractors finished the last of the heavy equipment work, and CUSP and our dedicated volunteers helped restore and revegetate sites impacted by heavy machinery work; decommission roads; and construct buck and rail fences to protect restored areas. The Trail Creek Project has successfully reduced erosion and flood impacts, keeping about 16,000 tons of sediment out of the South Platte River each year; enhanced aquatic habitat; improved overall water quality; and helped protect the community of West Creek and downstream property owners.

Horse Creek

Building on the work done in Trail Creek, CUSP and our partners are moving downstream to address impairment in Horse Creek. This South Platte tributary just outside of Deckers was also hit hard by extreme flooding following the 2002 Hayman Fire. We continued planning for work in Horse Creek in 2014, including working with the U.S. Forest Service to validate data and conduct the Horse Creek WARSSS (Watershed Assessment of River Stability and Sediment Supply). Planned work for the coming years will be based on similar methods as those found to be successful in Trail Creek. Using the Horse Creek WARSSS, river restoration work will include reworking channels, creating sediment catchments to mitigate flood flows, repairing headcuts, and maintaining roads and trails.

2014 River Restoration Statistics

- \$258,770 paid to river restoration contractors
- 137 acres treated or monitored
- 2,456 willows planted
- 297 volunteers contributed 3,492 volunteer hours to river restoration and road/trail work in Trail Creek and Horse Creek



Restoration work in Trail Creek

Water Quality Monitoring

High quality water is essential for ecological health, sustainable drinking water sources, and our continued enjoyment of the resources and beauty in the watershed. Protecting water quality is a core part of CUSP's mission and the definitive indicator of the health of the watershed, so we strive to understand water quality conditions and proactively address pollution throughout the watershed.

South Park Water Quality

South Park, a high altitude intermontane valley spanning much of Park County, is an important region within the Upper South Platte Watershed. With its diverse geology, South Park has a long history of energy exploration and development.

It is expected that natural gas development will increase significantly in the future, with thousands of acres of federal and state land being leased for development. CUSP has been approached by many individuals to take initiative regarding natural gas exploration, and we believe our best role is to provide a third party testing group to help build the background knowledge that will allow the county, its citizens, and other interested parties to have the information they need in the future to properly assess potential water quality impacts in the vicinity of natural gas development. In 2011 and 2012, CUSP conducted water monitoring projects that provided baseline water quality data in the vicinity of natural gas exploration wells in South Park. In 2012, CUSP partnered with the Colorado Geologic Survey (CGS) to create the *South Park Groundwater Quality Scoping Study* (found on our website www.cusp.ws). The Scoping Study was completed in 2013 and identified locations for the installation of monitoring wells and a network of 105 wells primarily down gradient from areas of historical, current, or potential oil and gas exploration and development. This network of wells is ideal for future monitoring based on geologic characteristics and groundwater flow patterns. Using the *South Park Groundwater Quality Scoping Study*, CUSP installed four monitoring wells in 2013.

A meeting was convened early in 2014 between CUSP, the United States Geologic Survey (USGS), CGS, and Park County to discuss future monitoring goals for the South Park area based on the *2013 South Park Groundwater Quality Scoping Study*. As a result, funding was granted to CUSP by CGS to sample as many of the 105 wells identified in the Scoping Study as was possible based on a restricted timeline and landowner



participation. This project was also funded by the Park County Land and Water Trust Fund. CUSP staff worked tirelessly from April to June of 2014 to reach landowners to discuss the project and take samples. We were able to collect 56 samples in 2 months covering all of the geologic features and aquifers identified in the Scoping Study.

The intended use of the data collected under this program is to establish a baseline water quality condition of the surface and groundwater in the South Park Basin. With data acquired from these projects, CUSP will be able to establish an in-depth understanding and documentation of current conditions. Baseline data is the initial collection of data that serves as a basis for comparison with the subsequently acquired data. Therefore the intent of this data collection is to establish the water quality condition prior to major natural gas or other mineral extraction development.



Mines and Mineral Extraction Assessment

In 2014 CUSP partnered with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), and the Colorado Department of Reclamation, Mining, and Safety (DRMS) to continue monitoring near mine sites of interest in the northern part of the watershed. Following up on monitoring work started in 2010, sediment samples and water quality samples were collected from select mine sites during the spring snow melt and fall low flow seasons. Samples were collected near Buckskin Joe Mine (near Alma) and Orphan Boy Mine (near Park City) to better understand seasonal trends and identify the sources and extent of metal loading exceeding state water quality standards. This data will inform reclamation and revegetation efforts in future years.

Park County Water Resources Inventory

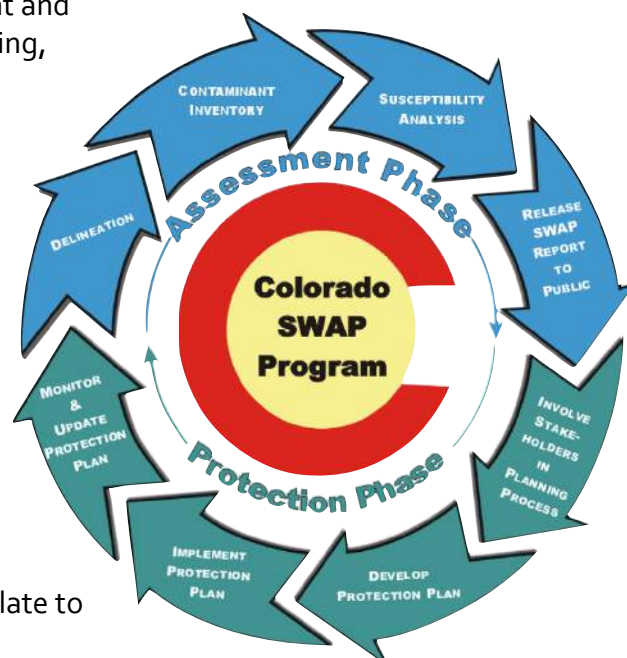
As land use changed in South Park, so did the streams and wetlands throughout Park County. River valleys in South Park were largely made up of shrubby stream and wetland complexes before the area began to be widely settled about 200 years ago. As more ranches were

established, wet riparian areas were replaced by pasture. And as more water rights were sold to Front Range municipalities in the 1900s, irrigated pastures were dried up to meet water court requirements for transferring irrigated lands. The result has been a significant shift from the vast majority of streams running through shrubs and wetlands to more channelized streams, fewer shrubby wetlands, and loss of riparian habitat.

The Park County Water Resources Inventory to assess streams and wetlands in the county began in 2014 as a partnership between Park County, EcoMetrics, and CUSP. The inventory will document the extent of wetland habitat and aquatic resource loss and prioritize areas where there are opportunities for restoration. In 2014, assessments for streams and wetlands in the South Fork and Middle Fork basins were completed. [See EcoMetrics' report on the CUSP website for more information.](#)

Source Water Protection Planning

Denver Water continued their Source Water Assessment and Protection Program in 2014. In this first phase of planning, Denver Water is focusing on the Upper South Platte Watershed. This cooperative process funded by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment brings watershed stakeholders together to identify potential pollutant sources and best management practices for protecting our shared water resource. The plan that emerges from this process will provide a blueprint for collaboratively implementing effective programs that address contaminants of concern throughout the watershed. CUSP is participating in this process as the facilitator. The bulk of the process was completed in 2014, with discussions of topics including wildfires, forest health, agriculture, energy development, mining, land use and development, transportation, and recreation as they relate to water quality. The final plan and beginning stages of implementation are slated for 2015. Find out more about the program and get involved at cusp.ws/source-water/.



South Platte Enhancement Board Water Monitoring Project

In 2003, the United States Forest Service (USFS) accepted the *South Platte Protection Plan* (SPPP) as an alternative to the Wild and Scenic River Designation of the South Platte River. This plan provides for local governments, water providers, and state and federal governments to combine their capabilities while maintaining an important level

of water management flexibility, and led to the creation of the South Platte Enhancement Board (SPEB). A primary goal for the SPEB was to monitor and oversee implementation of the SPPP, with CUSP called out as the primary partner for such efforts. In 2014, CUSP applied for and was granted funding by the SPEB to complete a comprehensive and inclusive monitoring program that incorporates historical data and establishes a baseline



Mapping social trails as part of the SPEB Water Monitoring Project

condition of the entire eligible area. By establishing baseline conditions and monitoring many resource values, not only will SPEB and CUSP meet the intent of the plan, but both organizations can also better prioritize restoration and conservation opportunities and projects for future implementation. Although some important baseline data has been obtained, CUSP believes there is a larger need to establish the baseline conditions of the Upper South Platte segments on a multiple parameter, basin-wide scale that incorporates aquatic, riparian, and wetland ecological assessments with hydrogeomorphic assessments of river sediment, supply, and stability and water quality considerations.

2014 Water Quality Statistics

- 42 abandon mine water quality samples and 84 XRF waste rock samples taken
- 56 well samples taken as part of the South Park Baseline Water Quality Study

Wildfire Recovery and Rehab

Our forests are adapted to fire, but development and well intentioned, but misguided, fire suppression policies have denied our forests the low-intensity ground fires that historically helped open up canopies and rejuvenate forests. The lack of regular fire has led to the buildup of fuels in the forest and an environment ripe for high-intensity wildfire. When these catastrophic fires strike the Upper South Platte Watershed and connecting watersheds, CUSP uses our experience with post-fire rehab to react quickly and thoughtfully to address immediate needs and begin long-term restoration.

Hayman Fire

The Hayman Fire started in June of 2002 during a period of prevalent drought. Dry conditions paired with high winds helped the fire spread quickly, running over 60,000 acres in one day. The Hayman Fire was the largest wildfire in Colorado's recorded history at 139,000 acres. Since the Hayman Fire, CUSP has been working to mitigate post-fire flood damage, improve trails, and restore tributaries that contribute high levels of sediment to the river system in and around the burn scar. These efforts are critical for preventing water contamination by reducing erosion and the amount of sediment and other pollutants flowing into the South Platte River.

CUSP volunteers made a tremendous impact again in 2014 as we continued restoration work in the Hayman burn scar. Volunteer groups including those from Coca-Cola, Colorado College, the Boy Scouts of America, the Girl Scouts of America, Ricks Center for Gifted Children, Lockheed Martin, Trout Unlimited Cutthroat Chapter, 1st United Methodist Church (UMC) of Wayne Nebraska, St. John's Episcopal Church, UMC Missouri Conference, Catholic Heart, UMC Eureka, Rollins College, Discover High School, the Colorado Bar Association, and the University of Colorado helped with projects to:

- Maintain and build trails
- Decommission social trails and social campsites that contribute to erosion
- Plant native trees
- Plant native willows
- Rake and seed to establish native vegetation, including in riparian areas
- Mitigate noxious weeds
- Install erosion control matting



Waldo Canyon Fire

A couple of weeks after the Hayman Fire's 10th anniversary, the Waldo Canyon Fire sent smoke billowing into the sky near Colorado Springs. Reported on June 23, 2012, the Waldo Canyon Fire consumed over 18,000 acres, burned 346 homes, and killed 2 people, becoming one of the most destructive fires Colorado has ever seen by the time it was contained on July 18th.

As the community grappled with the magnitude of the fire's impact, CUSP was enlisted for recovery assistance by staff from the Pike National Forest, Colorado Springs Utilities, El Paso County, the City of Colorado Springs, the City of Manitou Springs, and private landowners. Although the Waldo Canyon Fire did not burn in the Upper South Platte Watershed, we felt compelled to assist our neighbors with rehab efforts in connecting watersheds, and to protect the key transportation corridor in and out of our watershed on the southeast side. With our Board of Directors' approval, CUSP has been collaborating with multiple agencies, organizations and private citizens on recovery efforts using the lessons learned from the Hayman Fire.



Post-fire flooding and associated impacts continued to threaten communities near the Waldo Canyon Fire in 2014. CUSP led projects and worked with many partners and

generous volunteers to protect communities, safeguard vital infrastructure, and promote rejuvenation in the forest in 2014.



Erosion control structure

Many critical flood mitigation and erosion control structures were installed on public land higher up in the Waldo Canyon burn scar as part of a very productive partnership with the U.S. Forest Service during the past couple years. Building on this work, recovery efforts in 2014 focused on the downstream, lower reaches impacted by the fire.

CUSP installed sill logs in 2014 to supplement erosion control and flood mitigation work done by the U.S. Forest Service in Sand Gulch, a drainage that funnels water toward Highway 24 between Green Mountain Falls and Cascade.

Cascade, located along Ute Pass between Colorado Springs and Woodland Park, sits below the burn scar and has experienced flooding and sediment issues following the fire. In partnership with our contractors, CUSP completed several critical projects in drainages that lead into the town of Cascade. 2013 projects included:

- A large sediment detention basin designed to be cleaned out was installed. The basin was tested by a significant rain event after completion and found to be effective in trapping sediment and reducing flood and erosion impacts.
- Drop pools were installed to slow runoff and trap sediment.
- Flood mitigation was done in the northern part of the Cascade drainage to protect the Cascade Library, which sits at the mouth of the drainage. On-site flood mitigation was also done at the library. The library survived 2014 rain events, but some of the mitigation structures had to be repaired and re-worked following damage from flood flows.
- Wagner Construction generously donated the use of their heavy equipment and staff time to install erosion control and flood mitigation structures in another drainage above Cascade. The incredible teamwork from this group was instrumental in stabilizing this drainage and reducing flood impacts.
- In conjunction with the projects above, El Paso County spearheaded a substantial culvert project to help private property owners and residents safely pass on flood-impacted county roads in Cascade.



Manitou Springs, which also sits below the burn scar, has experienced intense flooding and erosion problems following the Waldo Canyon Fire. In 2014, CUSP continued work to protect lives and property through projects above the town. A sediment detention basin installed in 2013 that had reduced sediment movement and flood flow intensity was reworked in 2014. The basin was cleaned out down to a similar structure designed and built in the 1930s by the

Civilian Conservation Corps to reduce flooding. This structure was put to the test during a 2014 rain event, and successfully helped reduce flooding impacts in Manitou Springs.

Post-fire flooding and erosion also continues on the west side of Colorado Springs. Camp Creek, which flows through the Garden of the Gods and the Glen Eyrie property, has taken on more sediment and experienced flood flows following the fire. In partnership with our contractors and local landowners including Glen Eyrie, we built a catchment, including an inlet and outflow, to slow down water in 2014.

In the North Douglas Creek drainage, which also flows into the west side of Colorado Springs, CUSP and our contractors built a very large catchment that can be cleaned out once it fills with sediment. This structure is also working well to slow flood flows and trap sediment.

In addition to the heavy equipment work needed to complete the structures described above, handwork by CUSP's field crew and dedicated volunteers is a critical component for successful erosion control and post-fire flood mitigation projects. 2014 handwork included:

- Installing erosion control blankets to slow erosion and act as mulch to protect germinating seeds.
- Seeding impacted areas with nurse crops and native species to establish ground cover to stabilize soils, reduce erosion, and promote ecosystem recovery.
- Installing log erosion barriers (logs placed across the hillslope to intercept runoff) to reduce erosion and encourage native species reestablishment.
- Training and working with sawyers, including Mile High Youth Corps and the State Wildland Inmate Fire Team, to fell trees to reduce hazards and contribute to erosion control structure implementation.

The projects completed in 2014 demonstrated their value during and after summer rainstorms. The installed structures and erosion control efforts reduced the intensity of flood flows and the amount of sediment and debris coming down with the water, which protected many in communities below. Work in the years to come will build upon these projects, and will address some of the more challenging issues still facing communities and ecosystems in and around the Waldo Canyon burn scar. See the Waldo Canyon Fire Impacts and Recovery Story Map (<http://waldofire.org/map/>) for more information about collaborative work in the Waldo Canyon burn scar.



2014 Wildfire Recovery and Rehab Statistics

- 82 rehabilitation workdays
- Over \$3 million paid out to wildfire restoration contractors
- 1,971 volunteers contributed 12,624 hours to flood mitigation and rehabilitation efforts in burn scars



Education and Outreach

Education is the common thread that runs through all of CUSP's work. In everything we do, we hope to share knowledge and inspire those we work with to become stewards of the land and water.

Education Events

In addition to the valuable learning and information sharing that took place during 2014 volunteer events, CUSP also participated in various presentations and workshops in 2014 to engage students and teachers in watershed issues. CUSP staff led activities, presentations, service-learning projects, and tours with students in our watershed and connecting watersheds, including Colorado Springs students during Water Awareness Week at Sand Creek High School, the Lake George Young Environmental Stewards (YES) Club, high school students at Youth Urban Water Collaboration



Lake George YES Club students learn about river ecology

Day at Overland Park in Denver, elementary school students at the first annual Denver Metro Water Festival, and Denver-area elementary students learning about natural disasters. CUSP also supported the Fire Ecology Institute for Educators based in Florissant put on by Project Learning Tree and the Colorado State Forest Service. Teachers explored natural resource issues and how to engage their students in interdisciplinary activities focused on topics such as fire, floods, bugs, and drought during a full week at this hands-on institute. Visit <http://learn.uppertsouthplatte.org> to schedule service-learning activities or access free education materials developed by CUSP staff.

High Creek Fen Site Steward Program

With funding from the South Park National Heritage Area, CUSP taught middle school students about water quality, ecological health, and monitoring important natural resources in South Park. The High Creek Fen Program was developed in 2012 to engage students in learning about the unique biodiversity in the South Park area. This program allows students to explore water quality and ecosystems in their backyard by taking a field trip to the High Creek



Students identify macroinvertebrates

Fen, the most ecologically diverse fen in the Southern Rocky Mountains. Students performed water tests, recorded observations, collected monitoring data, discovered how macroinvertebrates act as stream health indicators, and learned about water chemistry. The third year of the program was a great success, and CUSP will continue to support the program as it becomes an annual event for South Park middle school students in future years. Ultimately, the program has the potential to foster the next generation of natural and heritage resource stewards in the South Park area and provide longitudinal data to monitor the health of this valuable

wetland over time. The High Creek Fen Site Steward Program gained recognition in 2014 as one of the best projects in National Heritage Areas nationwide.

Internships

CUSP hosted several interns this year. As forest health work continues to ramp up, we brought on a forest health intern for the summer to gain experience in forestry and explore other watershed programs. We also brought on two interns through the Trails 4 Teens program with the Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument. These Cripple Creek high school students did a tremendous amount to improve the trail network at the Fossil Beds while developing trail building and maintenance skills.



Trails 4 Teens interns lead an interpretive trail talk

Website Redesign

CUSP updated and improved our website in 2014. The site now offers more relevant information about program areas, events, opportunities, and ongoing watershed issues. The new site also offers new ways to connect with CUSP, easier options for donating, and a revamped volunteer site. Explore the new website at <http://cusp.ws> (please note the new web address).



Homepage of the new CUSP website - <http://cusp.ws>

Other Programmatic Work

Antero Ice Fishing Contest



1st place winner Herbert Taylor

On Saturday, January 18, 2014, 450 dedicated fishermen and fisherwomen braved the frigid temperatures hoping to win the top prize at the Antero Ice Fishing Contest. Herbert Taylor took that honor with his first place trout. This annual event keeps gaining in popularity, bringing in anglers from all over the state and beyond. The family-friendly environment and the great door prizes are always a big hit. As of January 2014, we have raised \$35,000 since CUSP started hosting the event. This money will be used for recreational improvements at the reservoir for all to enjoy in the coming years. The event is co-sponsored by Denver Water, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and CUSP.

Sustainability and Energy

Sustainability is a key concept when it comes to protecting our watershed. It brings together the three pillars that support CUSP's mission: mindful stewardship of natural resources and environment, economic vitality, and a healthy, vibrant community. Sustainability should be responsible and enduring - meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. In 2014, CUSP's Teller Energy program once again promoted sustainable practices throughout the Pikes Peak region.

CUSP has joined several other mountain county resource offices in a partnership with Colorado Natural Gas and Energy Smart Colorado to promote low cost energy audits and assistance with upgrades for residences and businesses in the region. This model provides a central website and call center, a database of qualified local contractors and a dedicated staff of certified energy analysts to help our community save on their utility usage.

Our ongoing partnership with Black Hills Energy and Smart Watt, and promotion through the Woodland Park Chamber of Commerce and Office of Economic Development has similarly helped a number of businesses and municipal buildings in Woodland Park achieve greater efficiencies. Services include free energy audits,

comprehensive reports, rebates for upgrades and interest-free financing. Building owners could then take advantage of weatherization procedures, high-efficiency appliance replacements, and installation of insulation, programmable thermostats, and water saving fixtures. A total of 13 businesses, 4 municipal buildings, 2 churches, 1 county and 1 state office have so far taken advantage of this program (see table to the right).

We continue in our leadership role with the Peak Alliance for a Sustainable Future (PASF), promoting the 10 focus areas of sustainability (Agriculture, Arts and Culture, Built and Natural Environment, Economics, Education, Energy, Health, Materials Management and Procurement, Transportation, and Water) addressed in the Pikes Peak Regional Sustainability Plan. Along with our participation in numerous regional events, we collaborate with the Catamount Institute and Sustainable Fort Carson to hold monthly Sustainability Breakfasts, bringing together expert presenters and the community in a forum of education and dialogue. We also have an ongoing sustainability survey for regional organizations to assess past successes, current projects, and future priorities. The survey results will be used to compile a regional Sustainability Report to complement the Quality of Life Indicator report for the Metropolitan Statistical Area of El Paso and Teller Counties. PASF continues to broaden their partner base and build community awareness through outreach and increased social media presence. More information can be found on the <http://peakalliance.co> website or the [PASF Facebook page](#).

Other sustainability outreach efforts in 2014 included:

- Work with University of Colorado, Colorado Springs (UCCS) Chancellor and other area leaders to determine regional challenges, successes and priorities in sustainability, with the goal of demonstrating broad-based community support for sustainable practices in the region.
- Collaboration with the Clean Energy Working Group and the Southeastern Colorado Renewable Energy Society to promote higher standards for

Black Hills Energy Projects in Woodland Park

Dayspring Christian Fellowship
Mountain Naturals Community Market
Langley & Allred Architects
Denny's Restaurant
Colorado Lions Camp
Bristlecone Lodge
Northeast Teller County Fire Department
Woodland Park Senior Center
Big D Motor Sports
Angletech
Woodland Park Church of Christ
Foxworth-Galbraith Lumber Company
Nuts 'n Bolts Needleworks
Catamount Powersports
City Of WP - Fleet Maintenance Building
City Of WP - City Hall Administration Building
City Of WP - Ute Pass Cultural Center
City of WP - Water Treatment Facilities
Colorado State Forest Service
The Clothes Closet
Woodland Professional Building

renewables and efficiency, and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in the Colorado Springs Utility territory.

- Promotion of Colorado State University (CSU) Extension office programs such as Master Gardeners, Radon Testing workshops, and Energy Master trainings.
- Support of K-12 environmental education initiatives in local school districts and of post-secondary sustainability programs at UCCS, Colorado College, and Pikes Peak Community College.
- Highlighting the robust sustainable practices in the area's numerous military installations, such as Fort Carson's Net Zero program and the Air Force Academy's 6 megawatt solar array and sustainable curriculum.
- Regular postings on the TellerEnergy.com website of blogs, events, energy tips and sustainability news.
- Continued partnership with the Colorado Sustainability Collaborative and the Alliance for Sustainable Colorado on statewide efforts towards clean energy, protection of water resources, transportation efficiency, and materials management.
- Participation in events such as the Colorado Sustainability Conference and Family Fair, Sustainovation at UCCS, Teller County Earth Day, Citizens Climate March, Electric Integrated Resource Plan community input meetings, Local Food Week, Woodland Park Business Expo, and the Green Cities Sustainability Summit.
- Outreach articles and efforts in the Ute Country News, Pikes Peak Courier and Woodland Park Chamber Grapevine, social media, and during the KRCC radio station fund drive.

Lastly, in 2014 CUSP began the process of rebranding the Teller Energy program to become the South Platte Sustainability Project. It is our position that this program has much more than just an energy focus and that the website, logo, and name need to reflect the diverse range of activities in which we are engaged. Look for the transition to be completed in early 2015.

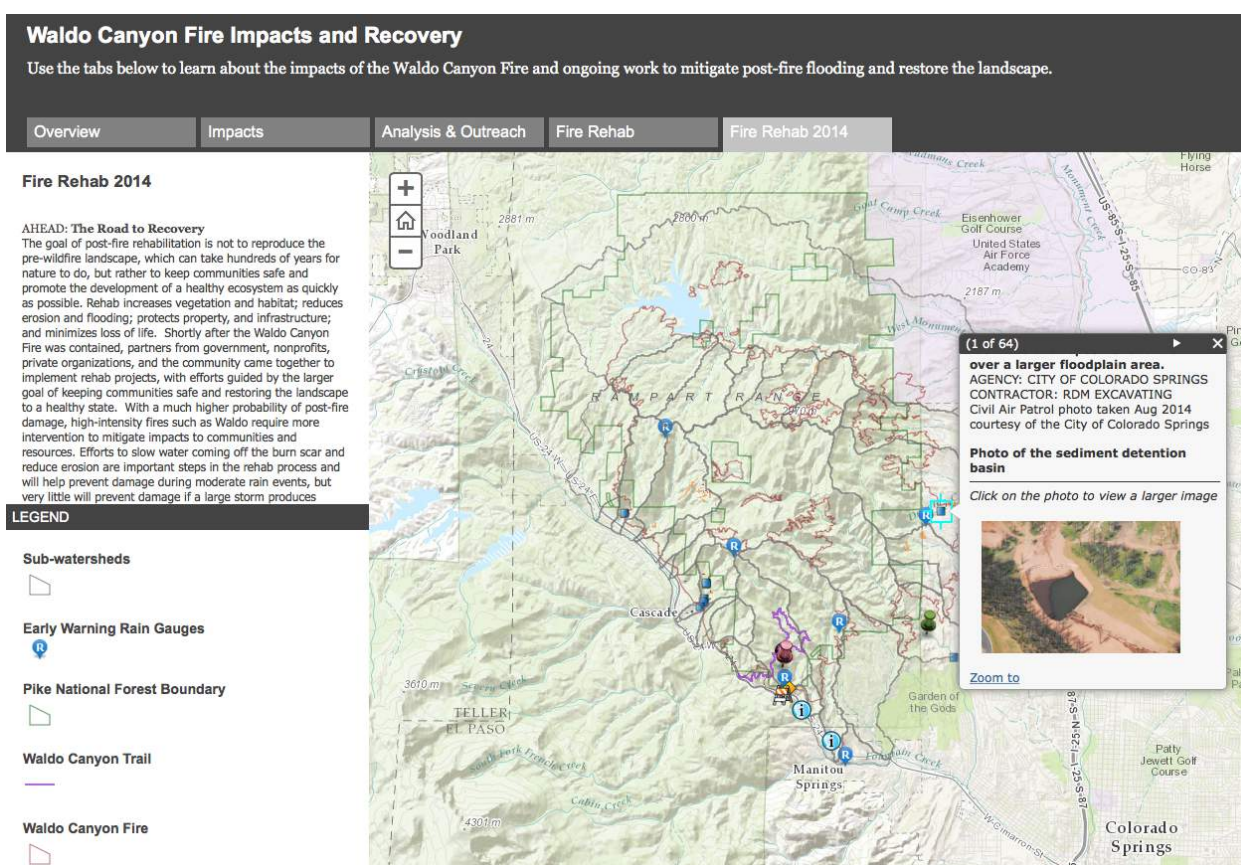


Sustainability Breakfast at the Ivywild School

GIS Mapping

CUSP's mapping capabilities are critical for planning projects, implementing programs, and collecting data. In 2014, CUSP's GIS (Geographic Information Systems) team worked on several special projects in addition to supporting core watershed programs.

CUSP added data depicting recovery work done in 2014 to the Waldo Canyon Fire Impacts and Recovery Story Map (<http://waldofire.org/map/>). This interactive map tells the story of the fire and post-fire impacts, and provides the public and decision-makers with information on the progress of rehab work in and around the burn scar. CUSP also used our GIS capabilities to support data requests from the Waldo Fire Regional Recovery Group as the group moves forward with post-fire work.



The Waldo Canyon Fire Impacts and Recovery Map is an interactive map telling the story of the Waldo Canyon Fire. Find it at waldofire.org/map

With funding from the South Platte Enhancement Board, CUSP partnered with Groundwork Denver to map social trails along an 18-mile stretch of the South Platte River in an area recovering from the 2002 Hayman Fire. CUSP GIS staff worked with Groundwork Denver's Green Team youth to teach them GPS data collection strategies and analysis and review techniques as part of the project.

CUSP provided mapping support for the Bureau of Land Management's Oil and Gas Leasing Plan for South Park, including mapping critical wildlife impact areas.

In addition to these special projects, GIS staff provided ongoing support for numerous CUSP programs in 2014, including (but not limited to) forestry, water monitoring, wildfire rehab, road assessments, noxious weed management, trail work, Community Wildfire Protection Plans, and improvement and enhancements for field data collection.

Noxious Weed Management

CUSP's 2014 Noxious Weed Program resulted in 108 treated acres and an additional 187 acres inventoried/monitored on public and private lands to control and/or eradicate 13 species on the Colorado's Noxious Weed List. CUSP also successfully integrated weed management with other projects, such as river cleanup and restoration, trail maintenance, fire rehabilitation and forest health projects. This integration allowed CUSP staff to educate volunteers about noxious weed management and the benefits of our efforts. CUSP leveraged \$8,000 in federal pass-thru funds for the program with over \$50,000 in cash and in-kind match from CUSP, stakeholders, landowners, and volunteers.



Roads

Gravel and dirt roads contribute sediment to our streams and rivers. Starting in 2011, CUSP began working with partners to reduce sediment from erosion-prone roads adjacent to Sugar Creek and Pine Creek. These roads run along the South Platte River between Deckers and Sedalia in Douglas County.

Data collection began in 2013 after installation of erosion-control structures was complete for the Sugar Creek Demonstration Project. After one year of monitoring, CUSP has been able to measure that the work has reduced the amount of sediment entering into the stream by approximately 20,000 tons annually. The project has been a great success and has provided us with invaluable information that we will incorporate into future mountainous gravel drainage management.

A culvert project in Pine Creek will complement the work done along Sugar Creek. A plan for the re-design of a new culvert on South Platte River Road has been completed

as part of this project. The new culvert will allow for fish passage and be designed to limit sedimentation into the river. With a plan in hand, CUSP will now seek implementation funding to complete the work.

Trails

CUSP again worked on the Gill Trail in 2014. The Gill Trail runs along the South Fork of the South Platte River toward the gaging station for Cheesman Lake Dam, and is heavily used to access trout fishing. CUSP led five volunteer events on the Gill Trail in 2014. Work included trail maintenance and the installation of water bars and erosion control structures.



Volunteers improve Gill Trail



Trails 4 Teen Crew

CUSP also partnered with Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument in 2014 on the Trails 4 Teens program funded through an Active Trails Grant from the National Park Foundation. The program was designed to increase visitation and use of the 14 miles of trails at the Fossil Beds by teens and young adults; improve park trails; and provide summer employment opportunities to local students from Cripple Creek/Victor.



Volunteers improve trail tread

Two high school interns were hired through the program. Working with CUSP and Fossil Beds staff one to two days per week through the summer, the interns greatly improved Fossil Bed trails. The team's accomplishments include a trails assessment, rehabilitation of the two most heavily used trails (the Petrified Forest Loop and Ponderosa Loop), erosion control structure installation, and hosting 290 youth

and adult volunteers to assist with trail work and other needs at the National Monument. The interns valued the program for the trail improvement and volunteer management skills they learned, as well as the increased connection they felt to the Fossil Beds and their local environment.

A hiking challenge was also included in the Trails 4 Teens program to encourage teens to hike all 14 miles of trail at the Fossil Beds over the course of the summer. CUSP helped promote the challenge, which ultimately brought 150 teens out to participate, with 30 hiking the complete trail network.

Awards and Honors

CUSP was recognized by several Colorado and national organizations with awards and honors in 2014, including:

- The Federal Emergency Management Agency Individual and Community Preparedness Award for our work to reduce wildfire risk in our communities and prepare communities for post-fire flooding in the aftermath of the 2012 Waldo Canyon Fire.
- Jonathan Bruno, Chief Operating Officer, was honored as a White House's Individual and Community Preparedness Champion of Change for innovating for positive change in our communities.
- The 2014 Southern Colorado Conservation Award by the Palmer Land Trust for positively impacting the land and the way members of our communities understand and respect their relationship to the land.
- A Certificate of Appreciation from the Schools to Work Alliance Partnership.
- The Western Governors' Association Outgoing Chairman Appreciation Award by Governor John Hickenlooper.



Jonathan Bruno accepts an award from the White House

Finances and Management

CUSP is a 501(c)3 charitable nonprofit. Pursuant to our policies, CUSP has an audit by an outside Certified Public Accountant (CPA) firm each year. Our policies, audit, tax forms, and other documents relating to accountability and transparency are published each year on our website, and are available in hard copy upon request.

Board of Directors

Our board is made up of individuals who represent the various stakeholders in the watershed, and in 2014 included:

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Mary Dawson - *Board Chair*, Environmental Programs Specialist, City of Aurora

Patrick O'Connell - *Vice Chair*, County Planning & Zoning, Jefferson County

Greg Aplet - *Treasurer*, Forest Ecologist, The Wilderness Society

Dan Drucker - *Secretary*, Director & President, Center of Colorado Water Conservancy District

BOARD MEMBERS

Tom Eisenman - Development Director, Park County

Karen Berry - Board Member of Jefferson Conservation District

Connor Baker - Interested Individual

Marie Chisholm - Interested Individual

Kurt Dahl - Environmental Health Director, Teller County

Swithin Dick - Water Resource Engineer, Centennial Water & Sanitation

Garth Englund - Special Projects Engineer, Douglas County

Lynda James - Upper South Platte Water Conservancy District

Don Kennedy - Environmental Scientist, Denver Water

Don Logelin - VP for Programs at the Cheyenne Mountain Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Kris Sexton - South Park Ranger District, USDA Forest Service

Tedd Stiles - Interested Individual

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Carol Ekarius - Executive Director

Jonathan Bruno - Chief Operating Officer

Jara Johnson - Operations Director

Jeff Tienken - Deputy Operations Director

Helen Dyer - Development and Outreach Director

Chris Fuller - Office Manager

Theresa Springer - Waldo Canyon Fire Rehabilitation Coordinator

Carrie Adair - Deputy Director for GIS

Lisa Patton - Deputy Development Director & Executive Assistant

Jeff Ravage - North Fork Watershed Coordinator

Fundraising

In 2014 CUSP moved to a mobile giving platform to enhance our ability to raise much needed funds. Our end of year campaign, bolstered with a \$5,000 challenge grant from Cripple Creek and Victor Gold Mining Company, brought in more than \$21,000. Our biggest day of donations was Giving Tuesday, December 2, 2014.

Fundraising is always a challenge and while we try to be subtle and not overwhelm our friends and supporters with requests for donations, these unrestricted funds are particularly important as they not only support general operations, they are also strategically leveraged to support large projects.

HOW YOUR MONEY GOES FURTHER

WHEN YOU GIVE TO CUSP



CUSP works across boundaries to improve watershed health.
WHEN YOU GIVE A LITTLE, YOU GET A LOT. HERE'S HOW:

You **INVEST** in your watershed

CUSP is a stakeholder-driven organization. We rely on your input and your investment to support long-term watershed protection. Your donation allows us the flexibility to respond quickly to urgent needs in the watershed and sustain innovative programs. Ongoing support from individuals provides a dependable base of support that reduces the resources needed to fundraise. *95% of your donation goes directly to programs that support the health of your watershed.*



Your gift is **LEVERAGED** for additional funding

CUSP works collaboratively with partners from all levels of government, communities, the private sector, and other nonprofits to identify critical needs in the watershed using the best available science. We apply for grants from foundations and federal, state, and local agencies to fund projects to address identified needs. Your donation is used to fulfill matching fund obligations required to secure grant funding. By leveraging your donation as matching funding, *your gift of \$100 yields \$350 for vital watershed programs.*



We put your money to **WORK**

CUSP works with private and public partners, big and small, to proactively address shared challenges with collaborative solutions on a landscape scale. We work on-the-ground and in the boardroom to ensure available resources are used to fund projects that maximize benefits for watershed stakeholders. We use cutting-edge practices to implement projects, and monitor programs in order to continually improve outcomes and share knowledge with partners near and far. Whatever amount you choose to give, we take your investment seriously and work hard to ensure it has the *greatest impact* possible in your watershed.




COALITION FOR THE UPPER SOUTH PLATTE
A HEALTHY WATERSHED - NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

Assets

Net Assets	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	2014 Totals	2013 Totals
Net Assets, beginning of year	\$491,792	\$7,950	\$499,742	\$195,957
Net Assets, end of year	\$270,568	\$103,250	\$373,818	\$499,742
Change in Net Assets	(\$221,224)	\$95,300	(\$125,924)	\$303,785

Revenue

Category	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	2014 Totals	2013 Totals
Government grants	\$5,188,158		\$5,188,158	\$3,458,755
Donated professional services	\$438,087		\$438,087	\$881,347
Program fees	\$330,755		\$330,755	\$167,367
Foundation and corporate grants	\$118,500	\$100,000	\$218,500	\$194,500
Contributions	\$100,293	\$20,790	\$121,083	\$270,736
Other revenue	\$17,020		\$17,020	\$9,129
Special events income	\$9,510		\$9,510	\$10,940
Satisfied program restrictions	\$25,490	(\$25,490)		
Total Revenue	\$6,227,813	\$95,300	\$6,323,113	\$4,992,774

Expenses

Program Services	Unrestricted	2014 Totals	2013 Totals
Forest health & restoration	\$3,779,531	\$3,779,531	\$3,036,333
Fuel mitigation	\$1,683,407	\$1,683,407	\$1,026,241
River restoration	\$420,096	\$420,096	\$93,585
Program outreach	\$150,808	\$150,808	\$87,486
Mining assess	\$88,331	\$88,331	\$141,020
Noxious weeds	\$16,933	\$16,933	\$12,719
Environmental education program	\$13,301	\$13,301	\$17,913
Carbon/energy	\$12,235	\$12,235	\$10,869
Firefighting	\$6,112	\$6,112	\$5,035
Total program services	\$6,170,754	\$6,170,754	\$4,431,201

Supporting Services	Unrestricted	2014 Totals	2013 Totals
General and administrative	\$245,562	\$245,562	\$239,995
Financial development	\$32,721	\$32,721	\$17,793
Total Supporting Services	\$278,283	\$278,283	\$257,788

Total Expenses	\$6,449,037	\$6,449,037	\$4,688,989
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Donors and Supporters

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 Dan Allen
 Kathy Allen
 Stephen Alsbrooks
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 Amazon Smile Foundation
 Austen Anderson
 Greg Aplet
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 Aspen Hills
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 Colorado Natural Gas, Inc
 Colorado Springs Utilities
 Colorado State Forest Service
 Colorado Water Conservation Board

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 Town of Fairplay
 John Falton
 Jan Fay
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Shaun Flageolle
 Florissant Fossil Beds Natl Monument
 Flying W Ranch
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Kelly Zotto
Travis Zunk
And all the individual volunteers that
helped throughout the year!

Thank you to all our donors, supporters, and volunteers!
We couldn't do it without you!

Resources

CUSP Websites

<i>Main website</i>	http://cusp.ws/
Donate	http://cusp.ws/donate
Volunteer	http://volunteer.cusp.ws
Teller Energy	http://www.tellerenergy.com/
Noxious Weeds	http://www.uppersouthplatte-weeds.org
Divide Slash Site	http://www.divideslashsite.com/
Fairplay Slash Site	http://www.fairplayslash.com
Antero Ice Fishing Contest	http://www.antero-icefishing-contest.com/
Woodland Park Healthy Forest Initiative	http://www.wphfi.org/
Waldo Canyon Fire	http://waldofire.org/
Upper South Platte Interactive	http://search.uppersouthplatte.org/
Environmental Education Site	http://learn.uppersouthplatte.org/

Outside Sites of Interest

Front Range Roundtable	www.frontrangeroundtable.org
Watershed Wildfire Assessments	www.jw-associates.org
Colorado State Forest Service	csfs.colostate.edu
National Forest Foundation	www.nationalforests.org
Governor's Energy Office	www.rechargecolorado.com
Pike National Forest	fs.usda.gov/psicc

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