



ANNUAL REPORT 2021

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Coalition for the Upper South Platte
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FROM OUR CEO

It is hard to believe that I have been the Executive Director of CUSP for over two years already. There was so much to learn, and I am still learning every day. But there is also so much left to do. And not enough hours in the day to do it all. CUSP remains committed to protecting and improving our watershed.

As always, a big challenge continues to be funding projects. We are primarily grant-funded, and your generous donations are leveraged for grant matching funds to increase their impact.

The wildfire lesson in Colorado from the last two years is preparedness. Protecting your home and property is accomplished through creating defensible space, mitigating your property, and hardening your home. Thinning improves forest health, improves the understory, and creates better wildlife habitat.

Don't forget the house. Most homes that burn during a wildfire do so from spotting (embers blown well ahead of the flaming front). An ember that lands on a wooden deck or finds its way into the eaves can quickly start a fire.

Give us a call if you need help assessing your property and/or home. Or reach out to the Colorado State Forest Service. After all, it is our community and watershed too.

Have a great and safe 2022.



JOHN GEERDES

Executive Director

Our Mission

THE COALITION FOR THE UPPER SOUTH PLATTE (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.

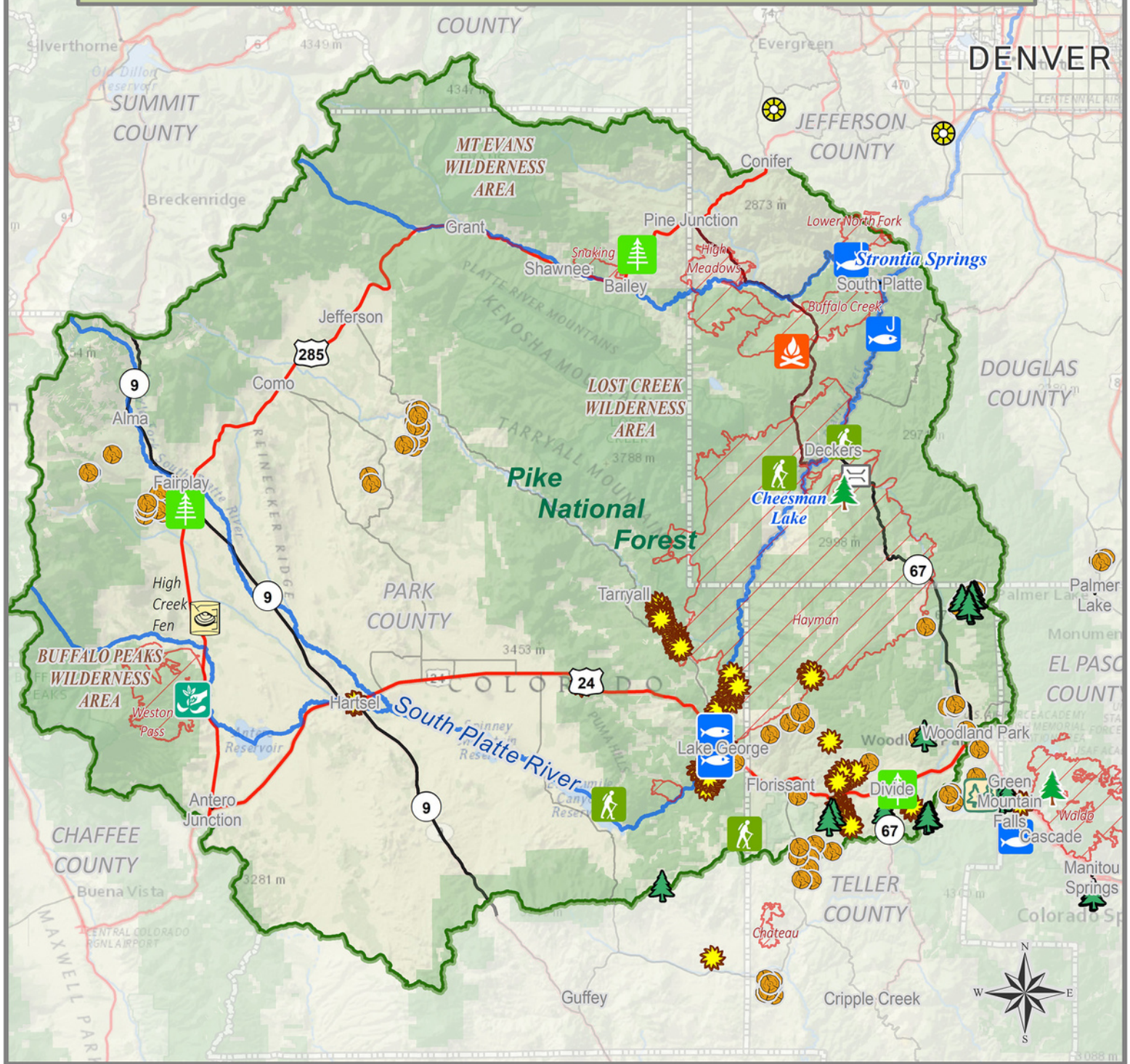
Our Vision

A HEALTHY WATERSHED



NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

Coalition for the Upper South Platte - 2021 Projects



Forestry



Noxious Weed Mitigation



Camp Fire Ring Installation



Chipping



Tree Planting in Burn Scars



Bridge, Horse Creek



Trail Work



Seedball Planting



Biological Monitoring



Stream Improvement



Mushroom Project Sites



Slash Sites (seasonal)



Forest Ag Plan



WATER QUALITY

Based on our North Fork Sediment Assessment, CUSP's crews continued hardening river access points to reduce erosion and sedimentation into the river. Unfortunately, it is human nature to take the easiest and shortest path. Along the river, this results in vegetation damage and degradation of the banks. By creating obvious paths with rock stairs, most users will use this easier path with fewer impacts on the habitat.



Completed private ranch River Restoration Plan for three miles of the South Platte River in Lake George with a grant from the Park County Land and Water Trust Fund



Pikes Peak Highway - Cascade Creek
CUSP and USFS completed erosion control by seeding and matting headcuts, rerouting water on fire access road, and planting willows.



FOREST HEALTH

Forest Health and Wildfire Mitigation work completed in 2021:

- Colorado State Forest Service Grants
 - 88 acres treated in Teller County
 - 12 acres treated in El Paso County
 - 5 acres treated in Park County
- Colorado Springs Utilities Grants
 - 44 acres - Catamount Ranch - Teller County
 - Matching funds for Crystal Park and Green Mountain Falls
- Great Outdoors Colorado Grant
 - Neighborhood Forest Management (Chipping)
 - Slash Sites
 - 2 acres at Mueller State Park
- US Forest Service - Watershed Health Improvement Program Grant
 - Erosion control at Cascade Creek
 - Tree Planting in the Waldo Canyon burn scar

Slash Disposal Sites and Neighborhood Fuels Reduction

Still two of our most well used programs
With funding from Teller and Park Counties

Divide, Bailey, and Fairplay Slash Disposal Sites

31 Communities Served
1702 loads of slash disposed
113 acres mitigated

Neighborhood Fuels Reduction

CUSP provided chipping for
108 properties
in Park and Teller Counties
264 acres mitigated

RECREATION

We continued with our partnerships for maintenance -

- Denver Water for the Upper Gill Trail at Cheesman Reservoir area
- Aurora for the Trumbull Forests to Faucets site
- Great Outdoors Colorado, South Park National Heritage Area, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife supported the reconstruction of the Corral Cove Backcountry Trail at Eleven Mile State Park
- The team at Colorado Center for Outdoor Education/ Sanborn Western Camps supplied eager "volunteer campers" and funding for ongoing trail maintenance
- Installed 19 fire rings at US Forest Service dispersed camping sites in Buffalo Creek



FIRE RECOVERY

Sometimes things don't work out the way we planned, so we double back and try another method for the desired result.

Following the disappointing success of post-fire seeding at the Weston Pass Burn, CUSP's intrepid volunteers and staff spread 10,000 seed balls over areas that hadn't shown vegetation since the fire in 2018.

The seed balls are CUSP's native seed mix wrapped in soil, clay, and compost, then dried. The soil and compost give the seeds a head start to grow and discourage the wildlife from gobbling up the tender seeds and sprouts. Planting is as easy as spreading the balls in the spring. Then wait for moisture and warmer weather.

The project was successful! The photos show the result.





VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers have a huge, positive impact on the watershed.
Here's what volunteers accomplished in 2021:

- 246 acres were treated for noxious weeds with 390 volunteer hours
- 1,055 seedling trees were planted with 189 volunteer hours
- 683 volunteer hours on trail maintenance
- 464 volunteer hours on forest fuel mitigation
- 280 volunteer hours on water monitoring at the High Creek Fen
- 76 volunteer hours with the mushroom study



Thank you, Volunteers!

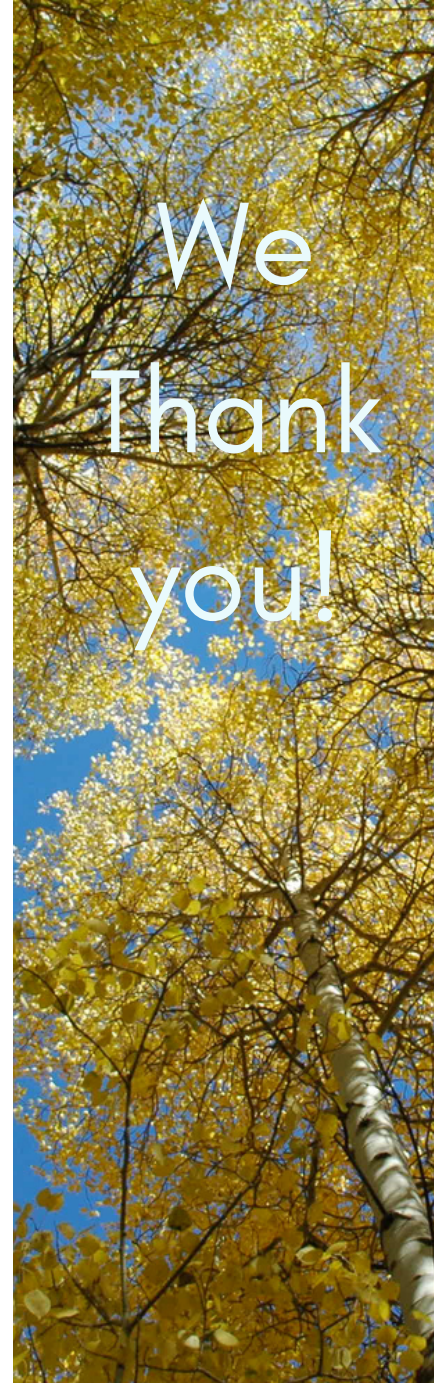
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Amazon Smile
Benevity
Colorado Trailblazers
Newmont Legacy Fund
Shell Matching
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In Memory of JoAnn Dufty
In Memory of Jean Blaisdell
In Honor of Michael Murphy



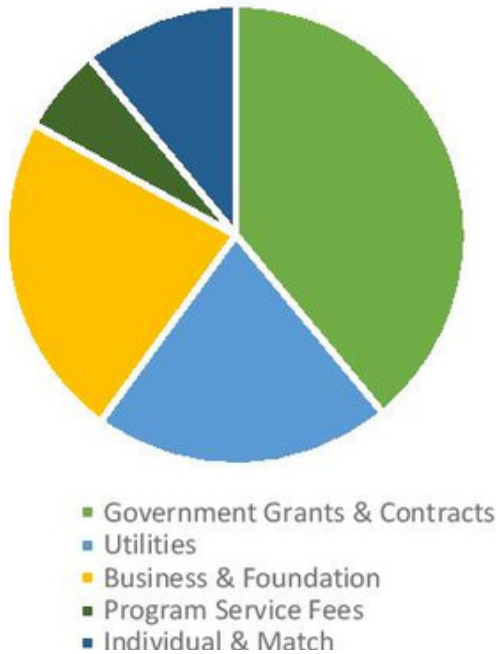
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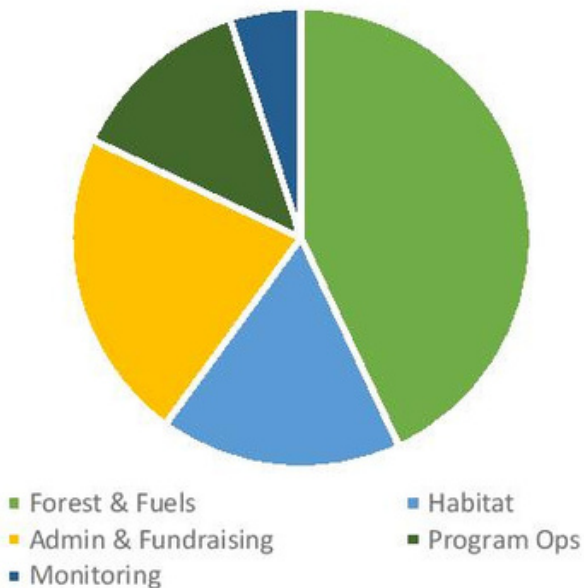


FINANCIALS

2021 Revenue Sources



2021 Expenses



Grantors and Supporters

Centennial Water & Sanitation District
Center of Colo Water Conservancy Dist
City of Aurora
Colo Dept of Agriculture
Colo Dept of Public Health & Environment
Colo Parks & Wildlife
Colo Springs Utilities
Colo State Forest Service
Cutthroat Chapter Trout Unlimited
Denver Water
Douglas, Jefferson, Park & Teller Counties
Great Outdoors Colorado, GOCO
Park County Land and Water Trust Fund
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Rocky Mtn Recreation Center
Sanborn Western Camps
South Park Nat'l Heritage Area
South Platte Enhancement Board
Upper South Platte Water Conservancy Dist
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