



ANNUAL REPORT 2022



Coalition for the Upper South Platte
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FROM OUR CEO

CUSP's commitment to the watershed's health continues as we focus on many aspects of natural resources management, including water quality, forest health, wildfire mitigation, river restoration, trail maintenance, noxious weed control, and recreational improvements. We are committed to protecting and improving our watershed and helping you do the same.

Looking forward to 2023, CUSP celebrates 25 years working for the Upper South Platte Watershed! Some of our planned projects include:

- Completion of improvements at Happy Meadows to reduce recreation impacts with the installation of vault toilets and parking improvements
- Begin construction to remove the obsolete diversion structure at the mouth of Eleven Mile Canyon (no, not the big dam!)

And we keep our successful programs operating:

- Continuing operation of three slash disposal sites and neighborhood fuels reduction (chipping) program
- Fuels mitigation projects throughout the watershed for both private and public land
- Noxious weed management
- Recreation and trail improvements
- Research into the use of mushrooms to naturally degrade the biomass resulting from mitigation projects

The key to these accomplishments is collaboration with our partners, stakeholders, and the public. Thank you for your support.



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.

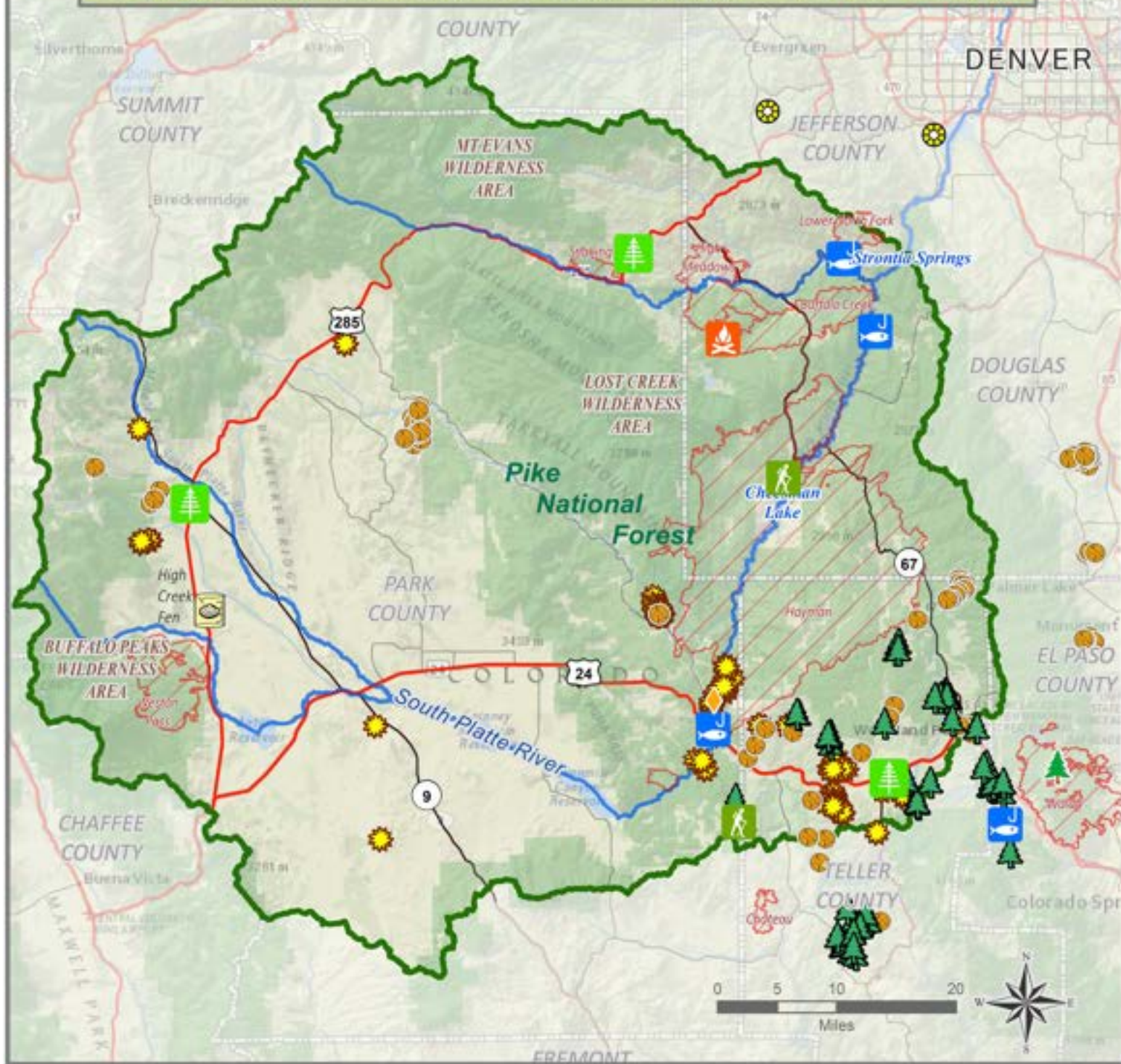
Our Vision

A HEALTHY WATERSHED



NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

Coalition for the Upper South Platte - 2022 Projects



- | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
|  | Forestry |  | Camp Fire Ring Installation |
|  | Chipping |  | Recreation Area Restoration |
|  | Trail Work |  | Biological Monitoring |
|  | Noxious Weed Mitigation |  | Mushroom Project Sites |
|  | Stream Improvement |  | Tree Planting in Burn Scars |
| | |  | Slash Sites (seasonal) |

WATER QUALITY

CUSP, the US Forest Service, Park County, Park County Land and Water Trust Fund (PCLWTF), South Platte Enhancement Board (SPEB), and Sportsmen's Paradise are working at Happy Meadows in Park County to address the impact of increased recreational use. The partners will complete restoration work along three miles of County Road 112 to protect riparian habitat while maintaining safe and accessible recreation use. The final phase of the project will reduce sedimentation into the waterway and eliminate the need for parking along the county road.

- 2,415 feet of post and cable fencing
- 750 feet of buck and rail fencing
- 40 feet of T-post installation to block access

CUSP also completed 110 feet of river restoration, sediment control, and riparian seeding through the town of Lake George, with funding from South Park National Heritage Area and property owners.



Aurora Water sponsored hardening projects to reduce erosion from uncontrolled river access on the North Fork of the South Platte.



Continued design and engineering for the removal of the Lake George diversion structure at the mouth of Eleven Mile Canyon. Look for construction in 2023!



FOREST HEALTH

Forest Health and Wildfire Mitigation work completed in 2022 with grants from Colorado State Forest Service Grants, Colorado Springs Utilities and property owner cost share.

200 Acres of Mitigation completed, including:

- Colorado Outdoor Education Center/ Sanborn Camps in Teller County
- Woodland Park water supply infrastructure
- Catamount Ranch Open Space in Teller County
- Green Mountain Falls in El Paso County
- Teller County eight subdivisions and six individual properties
- Manitou Springs infrastructure in El Paso County
- 900 trees planted in the Waldo Canyon burn scar by El Paso Bar Assn



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

25 Communities Served
Over 1,200 loads of slash disposed
Over 75 acres mitigated

Neighborhood Fuels Reduction

CUSP provided chipping for
162 properties
in Park, El Paso, Douglas and Teller Counties
495 acres mitigated



RECREATION

CUSP continued working with our partners on maintenance -

- South Platte Enhancement Board, Denver Water, Cutthroat Chapter Trout Unlimited supported the reconstruction of over 1,400 linear feet on the Upper Cheesman Canyon Trailhead/Upper Gill Trail
- Aurora Water and Denver Water for 2,500 liner feet of maintenance on the Trumbull Forests to Faucets site
- The team at Colorado Center for Outdoor Education/ Sanborn Western Camps supplied eager "volunteer campers" and funding for ongoing trail maintenance
- USFS Watershed Health to install 19 fire rings in 2022 at US Forest Service dispersed camping sites in Buffalo Creek Recreation Area
- Planning and design of interpretive signage at supported by Cutthroat Chapter Trout Unlimited, Denver Water, Park County Land and Water Trust Fund, and South Platte Enhancement Board



Upper Cheesman Trail/ Upper Gill Trail

HABITAT

Noxious Weeds are non-native aggressive invaders that can replace native vegetation, reduce agricultural productivity, cause wind and water erosion, and increase wildfire threats.

- 207 acres treated
- Nine focus species
 - Orange Hawkweed, Canada and Musk Thistle, Yellow Toadflax, Oxeye Daisy, Hoary Cress, Scentless Camomile
- C List Species: Common Mullien, Field Bindweed

Installed 2 Boot Brush Stations to encourage anglers and operations personnel to clean their footwear as they enter and exit an area to reduce the spread of Noxious Weeds.

Mushroom Study continues to monitor 10 species of wood-rotting mushrooms in vitro and examine the content and character of the carbon compounds left behind after mushrooms break down wood biomass. Completed US Forest Service Wood Innovation Grant.



CUSP crews removed 3,700 feet of fencing to remove wildlife hazards and enhance movement through Colorado Open Lands.



VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers have a huge, positive impact on the watershed.
Here's what volunteers accomplished in 2022:

- 1,072 volunteer hours mitigating noxious weeds
- 900 seedling trees were planted with 208 volunteer hours
- 547 volunteer hours on trail maintenance
- 278 volunteer hours on forest fuel mitigation
- 602 volunteer hours on water monitoring at the High Creek Fen
- 94 volunteer hours to install fire rings in Buffalo Creek

Thank you, Volunteers!

Buena Vista High School
El Paso Bar Association
Crystal Park Forestry Committee
Elk Valley Ranch
Individual Property Owners
John Wesley Ranch
Landis Ranch
Lincoln Hills Cares
Lost Dutchman
PK Enterprises
Rollins College
Sanborn Western Camps
South Park Middle School
Sportsmen's Paradise



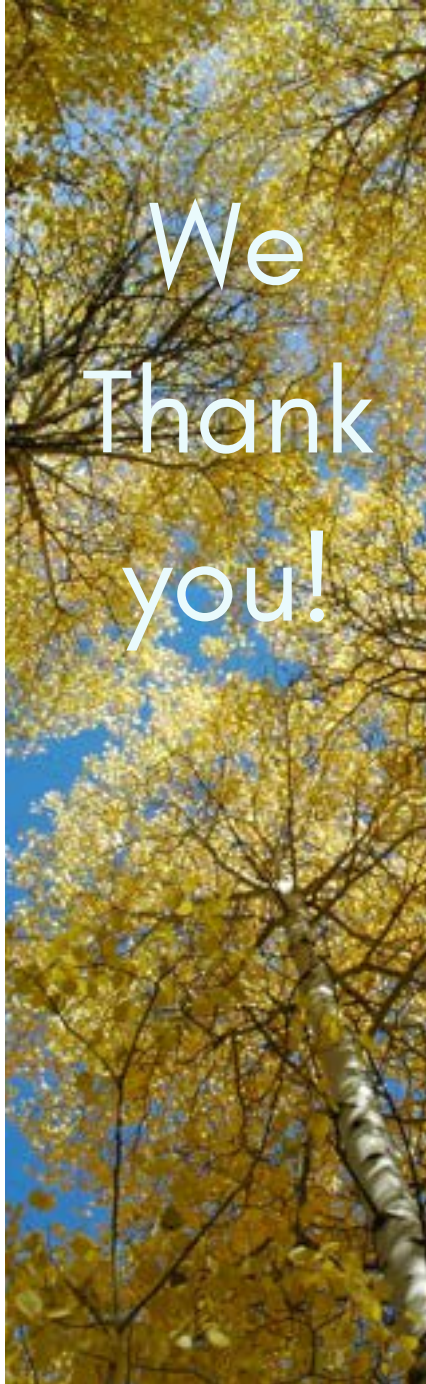
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Amazon Smile
Colorado Gives
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Newmont Legacy Fund
Ridgewood Homeowners Assn
River Collective Co, LLC
Shell Corp Matching Fund

In Memory of Jean Blaisdell



We
Thank
you!



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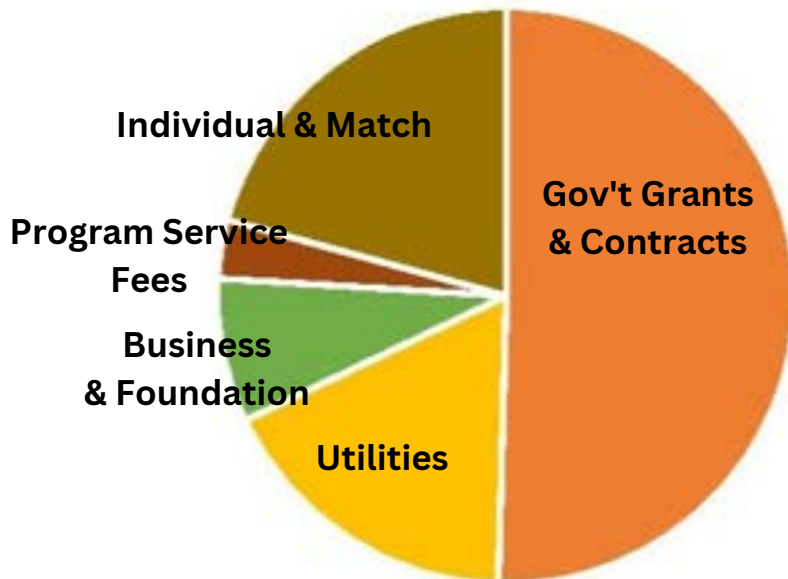
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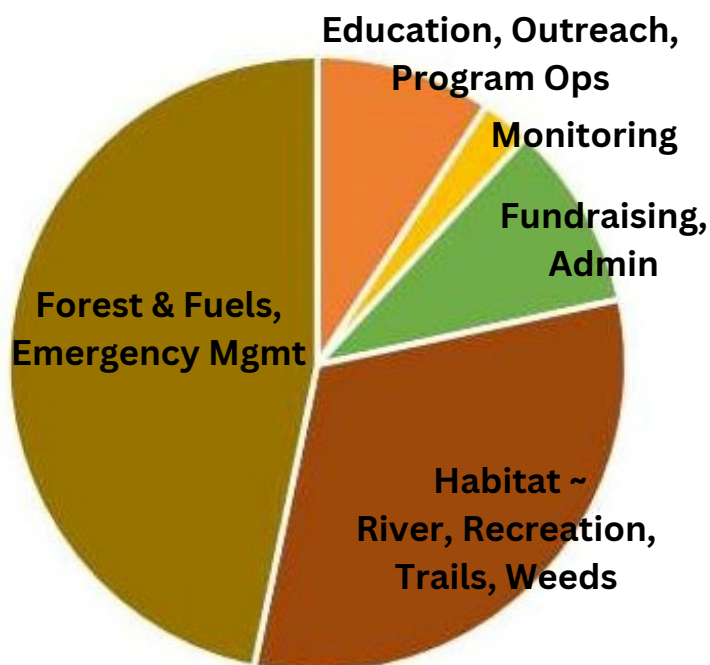


FINANCIALS

2022 Revenue Sources



2022 Expenses



Grantors and Supporters

- *Aurora Water/ City of Aurora
- *Centennial Water and Sanitation District
- *Center of Colorado Water Conservancy District
- *Chatfield Reservoir Mitigation Company
- *Coalitions & Collaboratives, Inc
- *Colorado Department of Agriculture
- *Colorado Springs Utilities
- *Colorado State Forest Service
- *Cutthroat Chapter Trout Unlimited
- *Denver Water
- *Hillsdale Foundation
- *Jefferson County
- *Newmont Legacy Fund
- *Park County
- *Park County Land and Water Trust Fund
- *Sanborn Western Camps
- *South Platte Enhancement Board
- *South Platte National Heritage Area
- *Rocky Top Resources
- *Sportsmen's Paradise
- *Teller County
- *United States Forest Service
- *Upper South Platte Water Conservation District