



**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT**  
CELEBRATING 5 YEARS

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## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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The High Park and Hewlett Gulch fires prompted so much change in our watershed – some dramatic and heartbreaking, but some change reflected the best of what our communities have to offer. The intensity of these wildfires brought people from across the watershed and beyond to work together to solve the immediate and long-term problems caused by the fires. In May of 2018, CPRW celebrated five years of being an official nonprofit coalition. We have spent those years working together towards a more resilient present and future for this watershed and the people that depend on it. At the heart of our mission is collaboration. Why do we focus on collaboration? Our watershed is large and complex, with stressors on multiple fronts. Those problems don't know where property boundaries start or stop. No one entity or individual has enough resources or authority to implement the needed solutions. We must listen to each other to make decisions about where to put limited resources on the ground to build a better, stronger watershed.

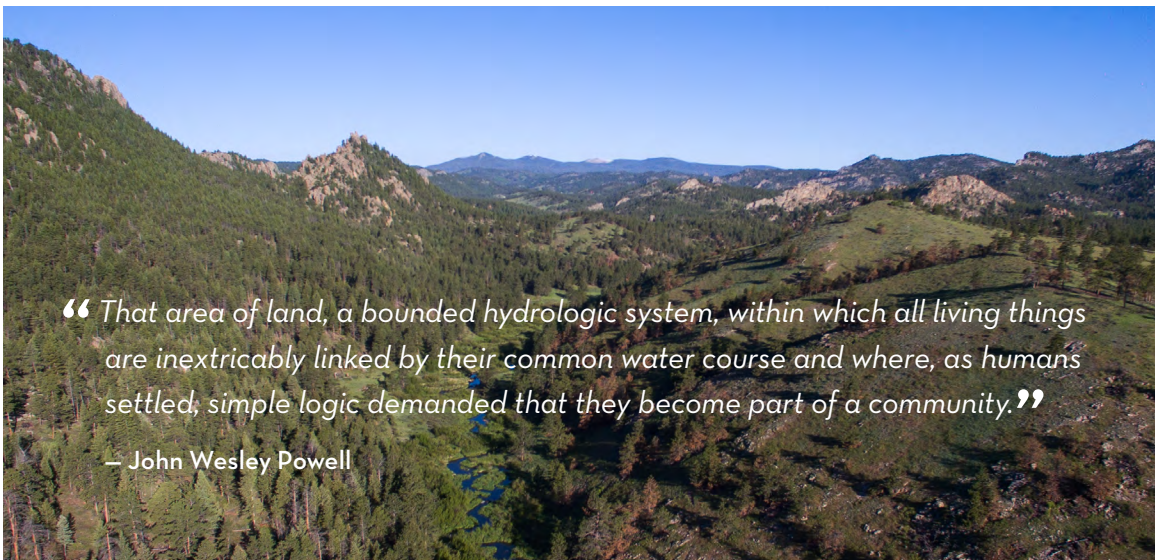
Five years is a lot of water under the bridge. For a small organization, we have come a long way in a short time. I am excited to highlight some of what we have achieved in these pages and how far we have evolved. I am filled with gratitude for the support and time that our partners, stakeholders, and funders have contributed to make this effort a success and excited to see what the next five years of collaboration, planning and restoration brings.



**JENNIFER KOVECSES**

**Executive Director**

Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed



*“That area of land, a bounded hydrologic system, within which all living things are inextricably linked by their common water course and where, as humans settled, simple logic demanded that they become part of a community.”*

– John Wesley Powell

Photo: Conservation Kate

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## ABOUT

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**Vision:** *A healthy and resilient Cache La Poudre Watershed*

**Mission:** *To improve and maintain the ecological health of the Poudre River Watershed through community collaboration.*

In the summer of 2012, wildfires burned almost 90,000 acres of the Poudre Watershed – the scale and intensity of the wildfires brought people from local water utilities, natural resource agencies, local non-profits, and businesses together to plan and prioritize post fire restoration needs. Initially known as the High Park Restoration Coalition, the group eventually formalized and became a non-profit known as the Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed (CPRW) in May 2013. We work across the whole watershed from headwaters to confluence with the South Platte on issues relating to river and forest resilience, as well as wildfire mitigation.

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## CPRW IMPACT

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CPRW works hard to bring value back into our watershed. For every dollar invested in CPRW by our local government, CPRW has brought \$6 back to the watershed in planning, capacity, and implementation funding. Here are other areas we have had a positive impact:

**Value of Volunteer Time**

**\$146,600**

**Volunteer & Stakeholder Time**

**4,141 Hours**

**Youth Corps Service Time**

**5,834 Hours**

**Post-Fire Hillslope Restoration**

**600 Acres**

**Wildfire Mitigation**

**371 Acres**

**Post-Fire River Restoration**

**1.5 Stream Miles**

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## AWARD WINNING

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In the past 5 years, CPRW has received the Environmental Stewardship award from the Larimer County Environmental Science and Advisory Board twice! In 2014 we received the award for our post-fire restoration and collaboration work following the 2012 wildfires. In 2016, our partnership, the Elkhorn Creek Forest Health Initiative also received the Larimer County award.

## COLLABORATE - Stakeholder Engagement & Outreach

CPRW is committed to involving different voices in our decision making. We are grateful for the time that our stakeholders have committed to our work. In the past 5 years, our stakeholder teams have given over 860 hours of their time and talent. We also work hard to provide fun and engaging opportunities for watershed communities to learn more about the ecology, science, and management of our watershed. Over the past five years, we have taken more than 30 people on watershed tours at our project sites, have co-organized the annual Poudre RiverFest for 3 years, and regularly hosted community meetings, educational panels, and science workshops about watershed topics.



Above: CPRW worked with partners to help organize a watershed tour with local watershed professionals, forest managers, and members of BreWater, a group that brings together breweries in the greater Fort Collins area to discuss local water issues.

Below: CPRW along with 4 other local entities, helps organize the annual PoudreRiverFest, a family-friendly festival that restores, celebrates and educates people about the Cache la Poudre River (left). CPRW works with local community members to discuss river resilience in the lower Poudre (right).



Photo: Backstage Flash

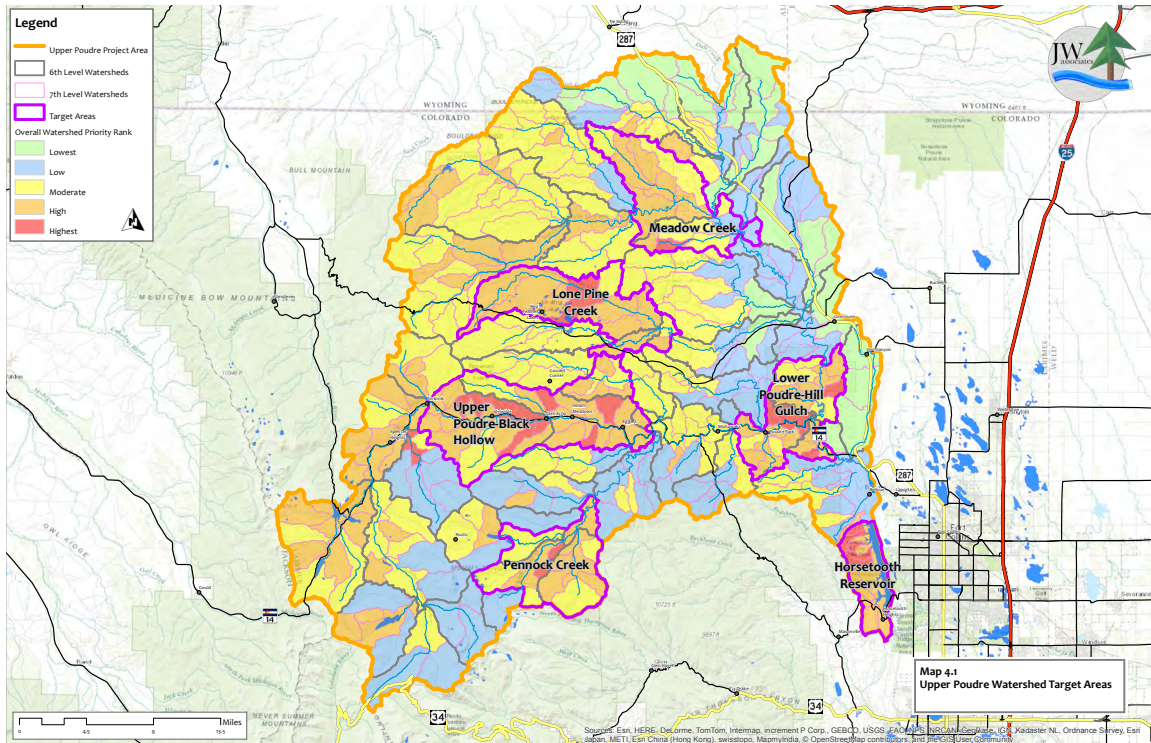
*“The Poudre Canyon owns a large piece of my heart - we lived in the Canyon for 10 years and lost our home to the High Park Fire... After the fire, I searched for a way to help improve the health of the Canyon and the entire watershed. I’ve found that by serving on the board for the Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed, I’m helping to make a difference in a meaningful way. CPRW is the unsung hero among our local ecological nonprofits.”*

**Shannon Allstott** | CPRW Board Member

# PLAN A MORE RESILIENT FUTURE FOR THE POUDRE

## Upper Poudre Recovery and Resiliency Plan

In 2016, CPRW and our stakeholders completed the Upper Poudre Recovery and Resiliency Plan. The plan prioritizes sub-drainages that are in most need of resiliency work to prevent the negative impacts to our communities, water supplies, and ecosystems from catastrophic wildfires. For more information visit: [www.poudrewatershed.org/upper-watershed-resilience-plan](http://www.poudrewatershed.org/upper-watershed-resilience-plan)



Above: Map showing areas of the Poudre with the greatest need for resiliency work.

Below, left to right: Post-fire ash blackens the Poudre after the High Park Fire; forests in the Poudre being restored to more wildfire resilient conditions.

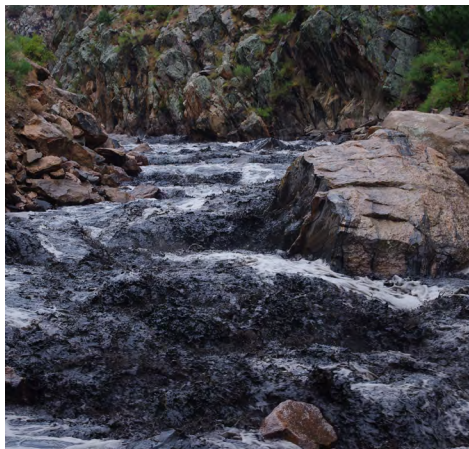


Photo: E. Stafford

## Moving Downstream: Lower Poudre Master Plan

Throughout 2017, CPRW worked with a technical team and representatives from local jurisdictions to develop the Lower Poudre Flood Resiliency Master Plan. The Plan identifies and prioritize future river restoration needs, current flood hazards, and opportunities to improve river resilience.



Above, left to right: CPRW staff and members of the technical team survey the Lower Poudre; bald eagles nesting in the Lower Poudre's riparian corridor.

Below: an example of a draft restoration concept plan.



“My time at the Boy Scout Ranch working as a sawyer assistant crew leader was a tremendous experience. I worked... with great individuals, gaining knowledge of wilderness preservation, fire mitigation, and furthering my technical skills... I wouldn't be where I am today without my experience in the Larimer County Conservation Corps working with the Elkhorn Forest Health Initiative.”

**Jacob Gardner** | Former Larimer County Conservation Corps Crew Leader & current member of the Berthoud Wildland Fire Team

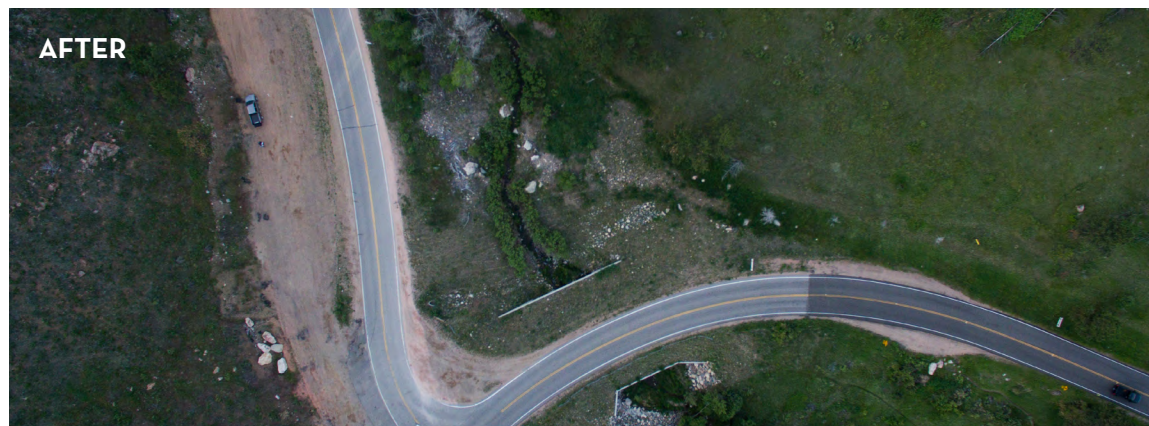
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## RESTORATION: Project Spotlights

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### Post Fire Restoration - Skin Gulch

When the High Park Fire roared through this small drainage, it severely burned the slopes and dramatically changed how water flows out of this system. CPRW worked with the Forest Service, partners, consultants, and volunteers to recontour the channel, connect the floodplain, and stabilize banks to reduce sediment delivery to the Poudre.



Top: Aerial photo of Skin Gulch after post fire storms showing damage to the road, river, and floodplain.  
Bottom: Aerial photo of Skin Gulch after CPRW's restoration project. Volunteers donated over 2,056 hours to help make the project a success.

## Elkhorn Creek Forest Health Initiative

In 2015, CPRW partnered with Larimer County Conservation Corps, Wildlands Restoration Volunteers, Ben Delatour Scout Ranch and The Nature Conservancy to design and implement a forest health project to reduce high severity wildfire and protect water quality in the Elkhorn Creek, a major tributary of the Poudre River. The project started at the Ben Delatour Scout Ranch, and in 3 years we have treated more than 300 acres of high priority forest. The project has successfully reduced wildfire hazard in the area and we are looking forward to expanding to surrounding land in the Elkhorn drainage.



Top: In the fall of 2017, our partner, The Nature Conservancy, led a prescribed fire to help restore forest health and reduce wildfire hazard.

Bottom, left to right: Multiple agencies, partners, and volunteers cooperate on a prescribed fire on the Elkhorn project; Youth Corps remove high fuel loads from overly dense forest along the Elkhorn Creek.





“CPRW has been instrumental in improving the health of the Poudre River watershed that so much of Northern Colorado relies upon for water supply... We look forward to continue working with CPRW along the Poudre River; Greeley is especially excited to begin collaboratively developing the river restoration projects that were recently identified in the Lower Poudre Flood Recovery and Resiliency Master Plan.”

**Burt Knight** | City of Greeley Water & Sewer Department

### Seaman Reservoir

The Hewlett Gulch Fire started in May of 2012, just prior to the High Park Fire. While much smaller than the High Park Fire, it severely burned a catchment that drains directly into the Milton-Seaman Reservoir, one of the principal water reservoirs managed by City of Greeley. CPRW has worked closely with the USFS, the City of Greeley, and other partners to address post-fire restoration needs to protect water quality and reduce sediment delivery to the reservoir.



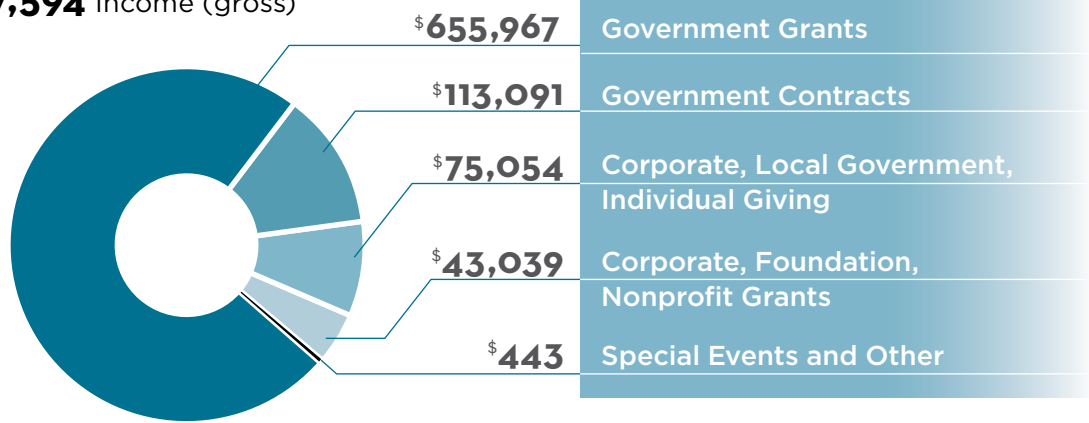
Top: Aerial showing sediment delta formed from post-fire erosion with some post-restoration structures visible. Bottom, left to right: Volunteers installing erosion control structures; crews stabilizing channel.



## FINANCIALS

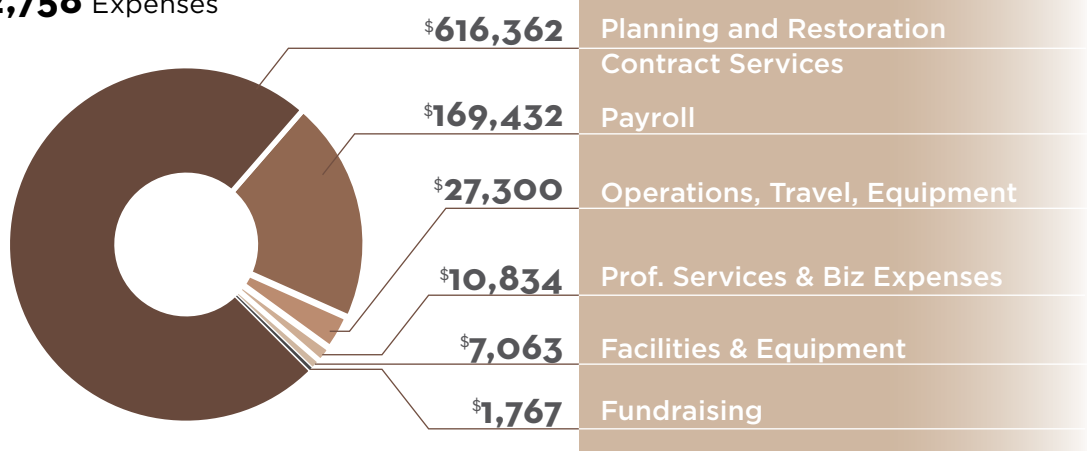
### 2017 | INCOME

**\$887,594** Income (gross)

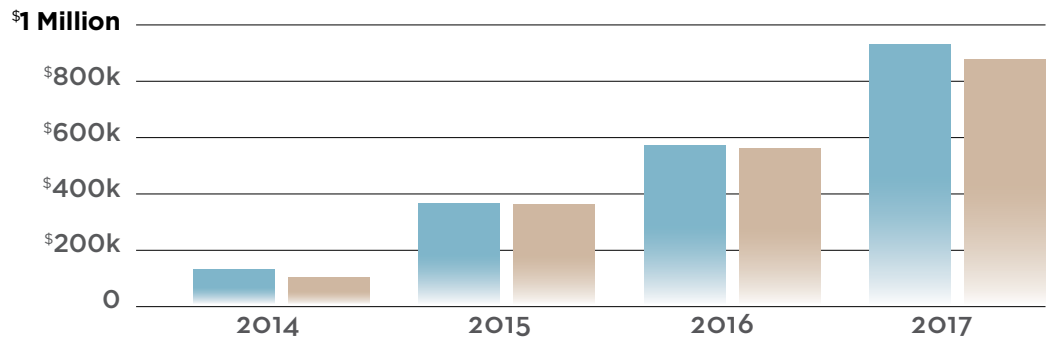


### 2017 | EXPENSES

**\$832,758** Expenses



### 2017 | HISTORIC INCOME / EXPENSES



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## CPRW BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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### Officers

**Maely Oropenza**, Board Chair  
*Larimer County Conservation Corps*

**Bob Sturtevant**, Vice Chair  
*Society of American Foresters*

**Shannon Allstott**, Treasurer  
*Unaffiliated*

**Evan Stafford**, Secretary  
*American Whitewater*

### At Large Board Members

**Jennifer Petrzela**, Reserved Seat  
*City of Greeley Water and Sewer*

**Dick Jefferies**  
*Rocky Mountain Flycasters, Trout Unlimited*

**Shayle Nelson**  
*Larimer County*

**Jill Oropenza**, Reserved Seat  
*City of Fort Collins Utilities*

**Jeremy Sueltenfuss**  
*Colorado State University*

**Nate Boschmann**  
*Wildlands Restoration Volunteers*

### Former Board Members

**Suzanne Bassinger**

**Joel Max**

**Patrick Flynn**

**Lacey Gaechter**

**John Giordanengo**

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## CPRW FUNDERS & DONORS

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### Grant Funders

Colorado Department Public Health & Environment

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Colorado State Forest Service

Department of Natural Resources

Department of Local Affairs

USFS Forest Service

City of Fort Collins

City of Greeley

Colorado Conservation Exchange (Peaks to People Water Fund)

American Forest Foundation

Southern Rockies Fire Science Network

New Belgium Brewing

Patagonia

### Reserved Seat Funders

City of Fort Collins Utilities

City of Greeley Water and Sewer

Larimer County (through 2015)

### Local Business Support

Odell Brewing

Horse and Dragon Brewing

Pour Brothers Community Tavern

Mobb Mountain Distillers

Fort Collins Ale Trail

Balance Bodywork

### Individual Donors

Anonymous

KimberlyAlire

Brandon Alperin

Steve Archambault

John Bartholow

Eric Berg

Lorae Blum

Nathan Boschmann

Jeremy Christensen

Michael Combs

Robert Dellapina

Marguerite Distel

Helen Dyer

Carol Ekarius

Denise Esposito

Leland Evans

Paula Flagel

John Giordanengo

Randy Hediger

Dick Jefferies

Shayna Jones

Colin Khoury

Barbara King

Jen Kovecses

Jessica MacNaughton

Marsha Marberry

Susan McFaddin

PatriciaO'Brien

Maely & Jill Oropenza

William Paschal

Kent Paschal

David Piske

Chuck Rhoades

Daniel & Kimberly Smeak

MaryLou Smith

Marilyn Starrett

Amber Strevey

Bob Sturtevant

Jeremy Sueltenfuss

Leslie Thompson

Richard Thorp

George Wallace



*“CPRW has been a critical part of our efforts in reducing the risk wildfire poses to water and values in Larimer County... CPRW has brought concerned publics, landowners, NGO’s and government agencies together and been a catalyst to develop a common vision on how to move forward. We could not move at the pace and scale necessary to make a difference without CPRW leading the way.”*

**Monte Williams** | Arapaho-Roosevelt Pawnee National Grassland Forest Supervisor

## WITH GRATITUDE

None of the work that we’ve been able to accomplish since our creation would have been possible without the support of our Board of Directors, donors, volunteers, sponsors, and people like you. This community has allowed us to implement our mission and set lofty goals for the future. With additional volunteers and monetary donations, these goals are on the horizon. We invite you to stay in touch with us to learn about more opportunities to assist.

To donate or volunteer, please visit: [www.poudrewatershed.org](http://www.poudrewatershed.org)