

RIVER CURRENTS

Fall 2021

Celebrating 25 years of bringing people together to protect our rivers!

By Rick Lofaro, Executive Director & Chad Rudow, Water Quality Program Manager

This November, Roaring Fork Conservancy (RFC) celebrates its 25th anniversary. What began as a public/private partnership between Roaring Fork Club partners and the Town of Basalt has flourished into a mature and successful organization. RFC emerged during a boom for watershed organizations across the country. In November of 1996, RFC started as a small one-woman operation with founding director, Jeanne Beaudry, and a handful of board members who wanted to improve the Roaring Fork River and its tributaries. The initial focus was limited to the 3 miles of the Roaring Fork River through Basalt. Early on, founding board members realized that it is hard, if not impossible, to protect one reach of a river without incorporating the whole watershed. This was literally RFC's 'watershed moment' as its mission and focus suddenly increased significantly.

RFC's foundation was built on its education programs, which, to date, has served over 133,000 students and almost every school in the watershed. RFC's water quality program began when the first education director attended a River Watch training in 1997 and started collecting water samples. As the water quality program grew, RFC became the administrator of several area schools and started a network of 'stream team' volunteers. Today, RFC's water quality



program monitors 22 water quality sites through River Watch and utilizes this data as the core of its annual baseline monitoring

program. In fact, RFC currently monitors the most sites of any group in the state-wide River Watch program! In addition to local applications, River Watch data is also used at the state level and in the national Clean Water Act decision-making process.

Long-time RFC partner, River Watch of Colorado, also reached a significant milestone this year. For 30 years, River Watch has worked with voluntary stewards to monitor water quality and watershed health and utilizes this high-quality data to educate citizens and inform decision makers about the condition of Colorado's waters. In short, *real people doing real science for a real purpose.*



The partnership of these two organizations spans over 20 years and goes beyond water quality monitoring and data collection. Over the years, the two organizations have worked together to foster and support local school participation in the River Watch program. RFC staff regularly participate in annual River Watch state trainings, helping to educate new volunteers joining the program. Both groups support each other's education and outreach efforts and collaborate on grant requests supporting joint goals of water quality monitoring and related program funding.

As these two organizations, one local and one state-wide, celebrate their respective milestones, they also look ahead to ongoing work to monitor the health of streams and rivers through continued collaboration for decades to come.



To learn more about River Watch of Colorado and their 30th anniversary visit www.coloradoriverwatch.org.

RIVER WATCH IN THE ROARING FORK WATERSHED:

- RFC monitors 22 River Watch stations utilizing a combination of staff and 15 stream team volunteers.
- Five local schools monitor a total of 8 River Watch stations.

My RFC Story, Come Full Circle

By Matthew Anderson, Water Quality Technician

Recently, while going through some childhood memorabilia, I came across something unexpected. Inside my third grade Basalt Elementary School yearbook I found a picture of myself sitting amongst my classmates, listening and watching intently, as an RFC educator presented his lesson. It took me only a few seconds to realize that the educator in the photo (see photos on right) was actually our current Water Quality Program Manager, and my exceptional water quality companion, Chad Rudow. In that moment, I couldn't help but be reminded of just how important and formative my childhood was in the Roaring Fork Valley.

I grew up, went to school, worked, and did all of the other things that childhood entails right here in Basalt. As a young kid I didn't necessarily gravitate towards the river. And yet to this day, I can still remember a sixth grade field trip with RFC down to the Roaring Fork River where we chased bugs and water all day. Looking back, I can only wish to have had more days like that. Pure bliss. My passion for water and the natural environment surged in high school, where classes like Environmental Science, Ecology, and River Watch captured my attention and sent me on a path through four years of college with an environmental science and resource management degree at its end. Now, each day I spend on the river is a testament to those early years. Without our beautiful watershed, its inhabitants, and those who protect it, I would not be where I am today.

In June 2017, I started my first day of work at RFC. I can still remember walking through the door into the office, a little nervous but mostly excited, meeting the Executive Director, Rick Lofaro, with a handshake, greeting everyone, and getting a tour from Chad (for those of you keeping track, yes, this was the old office... the tour was very short). Only a year later, when I returned for my second summer at RFC, I found myself entering the newly completed River Center full of excitement and anticipation, and I knew then that I wanted to be at RFC into the future. It's now been four excellent years for me here at RFC. I started as a seasonal intern and am now a full-time Water Quality Technician. I get to travel throughout our valley and interact with all our watershed has to offer.

Looking at these photos, I see a story that has come full circle.



The top two photos are from Matthew's 3rd grade yearbook, where Chad is teaching Matthew's class. The bottom photo is of Chad and Matthew conducting field work this summer.

A Life Along the Water

By Michael D. Schuster, CWP,
City of Glenwood Springs Wastewater Treatment Operator

Water has always been the most crucial part of my existence - between fishing in the summer, skiing in the winters, and swimming in between, everything I loved to do began and ended with water.

In 2004, I took part in the River Watch program with Andre Willie's chemistry class at Aspen High School, which started my curiosity around the science of water. I began working at RFC in 2016 and learned firsthand about the challenges and opportunities facing our local rivers. Working alongside Chad and Heather, I began to perform more water quality sampling and flow readings at some breathtakingly beautiful river sites. Thanks to Rick, I am also a much better angler than when I started at RFC (much more to learn!).

"...Everything I loved to do began and ended with water."

In 2019, my work with RFC allowed me to pursue a Master's in Environmental Management from Western Colorado University; my thesis project was an in-depth study of nutrient flow along our very own Cattle Creek, which built on work previously undertaken by RFC. Though I no longer work with RFC, my current position is still focused on protecting and caring for our water: I am a Wastewater Treatment Operator B Class for the City of Glenwood Springs, and I would not have received this opportunity without my time and experience at RFC. On a personal note, I met my future wife during a RFC wetland planting in 2018.

I'm so grateful for my time with the RFC family. Cheers to 25 years, and many more to come!



Happy 25th birthday, Roaring Fork Conservancy!

COME AND CELEBRATE WITH US!

Sweet treats and good times

Tuesday, November 9 from 12-1:30pm
at The River Center, 22800 Two Rivers Road in Basalt



For every \$25 donation made to RFC during November, you will receive a commemorative RFC mug. Supplies are limited. Details at <https://roaringfork.app.neoncrm.com/forms/25th-birthday-mugs>



Roaring Fork Conservancy's Historic Milestones

RFC sprang to life in the midst of a watershed movement in Colorado during the late 1990s. Throughout the state, interested communities and grass roots efforts yielded fledgling watershed groups organized around various local water issues. In 1996, the Roaring Fork Club and the Town of Basalt had the vision to establish a non-profit organization to promote water conservation practices and the protection of the Roaring Fork River, and RFC was born.

Like any new organization, the first steps RFC took were close to home, working with the Roaring Fork Club to create healthier riparian habitat and

helping the Town of Basalt develop a plan for the 3 miles of Roaring Fork River that flow through town. However, soon after the creation of the organization, founding board members noted that protecting the Roaring Fork River meant protecting all the water that flows into it, which includes the entire Roaring Fork Watershed. Soon RFC was taking its mission and its message of watershed protection to the far reaches of the watershed. The organization they

established was the first group focused solely on river and water issues in the Roaring Fork Watershed.

Over the past 25 years, RFC has grown to be one of the most respected watershed science, policy and education organizations in Colorado. Much of that success has come from the people who have worked alongside RFC to help make it what it is today.



1996

RFC formed. Jeanne Beaudry becomes first executive director.

1997

First scientific study completed. Joined River Watch.

1998

Education programs launched. First conservation easement acquired.

1999

First Annual Fryingpan River Cleanup.

2000

Rivers Council formed. First River Rendezvous held.

2001

First State of the Rivers Report published.

2002

First Fryingpan Valley Economic Study completed.

2003

RFC joins Colorado Basin Roundtable. First edition of Roaring Fork Watershed Inventory published.

2004

First Annual River Float.

2015

Released Comprehensive Lower Fryingpan River Assessment and Economic Impact Study.

2014

RFC's water quality data used to designate Outstanding Waters in Thompson Divide.

2012

Roaring Fork Watershed Plan published. Inaugural implementation of Hot Spots for Trout.

2011

Town of Basalt approves River Center.

2010

Produced and published first Voter's Guide to Water Issues.

2009

River Stewards outreach network established.

2008

State of the Roaring Fork Watershed Report published.

2016

Published Crystal River Management Plan. Taught 100,000th student! Offered first week-long fly fishing camp.

2017

Taught first rain barrel workshop in western Colorado.

2018

River Center Grand Opening!

2019

Launched The Brooksher Watershed Institute. Published Roaring Fork Watershed Interactive Information System Map.

2021

Celebrating 25 years of inspiring people to explore, value and protect the Roaring Fork Watershed!



Become an Ecologist for a Day

By Megan Dean, Director of Education

Rarely does one fall in love at first sight; more often love is forged through multiple experiences over time. This is what RFC's education programs have strived to create over the last 25 years: unfolding the layers of interaction and beauty found within the watershed by both narrowing and expanding the lens that allows us to see how we are attached to water. RFC's goal is to create experiences that give people the opportunity to nurture a relationship with rivers, allowing the connection to grow into appreciation, and a commitment to sustaining them.

As with any relationship, support systems and partnerships create a strong foundation that allow us to expand our reach. While there are many valued partners that contribute to RFC's programs, we would like to highlight the collaboration with Pitkin County Open Space and Trails in the creation of an exciting and popular new program. *Become an Ecologist for a Day* is a middle and high school program that encapsulates and reinforces many of the objectives that students experience through the classes that we teach in elementary school. This program gives students a chance to do a riparian ecology assessment on Pitkin County Open Spaces along with a comparative study on urban open spaces and parks.

When students arrive on site – either North Star Nature Preserve in Aspen or Elk Park in Redstone – they are split into groups. Each group is then given an information card on a specific animal and tasked with finding habitat that would benefit that particular species. Students are also given a fanny pack full of ecologist's tools allowing them to study water quality, abiotic, and biotic environmental factors that indicate riparian health.

Often, students find that green open spaces within urban areas can be a great habitat for certain bird species and snakes, while other animals, like the river otter, require more uninterrupted space and access to water. Students then switch roles and become county planners, using their newfound knowledge to pick out areas within the Roaring Fork Watershed that they believe could be preserved as open space.

This program and partnership create an empowering experience that guides students into discovering their voices. It also gives students the opportunity to see how tax dollars, partnerships, and community planning can be used to create healthy habitats for



animals, rivers, and people. *Become an Ecologist for a Day* is a full day experience, with time built in for exploration and appreciation. There might even be a few students who fall in love with rivers after spending a day with one.



More Ways to Support RFC!



Honor Someone Special with your Gift

Donating in someone's honor or memory is a meaningful way to express gratitude or recognize important life events, while helping ensure a healthy and vibrant Roaring Fork Watershed.



Consider a Charitable Rollover

Individuals over 70½ may donate up to \$100,000 per year to charities directly from their IRA, known as a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD). QCDs count towards any required minimum distribution (RMD) an account holder must take from their IRA. With a QCD you can benefit your Roaring Fork Watershed, fulfill your RMD requirement, and exclude that amount from your income. Talk to your financial advisor to find out if this is a good strategy to support your rivers!



Donate Appreciated Stock

Make an impact by donating long-term appreciated securities, including stock, bonds, and mutual funds, directly to RFC. Compared with donating cash or selling your appreciated securities and contributing the after-tax proceeds, you may be able to increase your gift and your tax deduction! As always consult your financial advisor to find out what works best for your portfolio and your Roaring Fork Watershed!



Company Match

Many employers will match charitable contributions made by their employees. By taking advantage of a company's matching gift benefit, you may be able to double or even triple the amount of your contribution! Ask your HR department today!



Connect your City Market Rewards Card

- 1) Click enroll or log in to your account at www.citymarketcommunityrewards.com
- 2) Search for **Roaring Fork Conservancy** or **CV113**
- 3) **Click Enroll** and you're ready to support your rivers while you shop!



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Celebrating 25 Years

of inspiring people to explore,
value and protect the Roaring
Fork Watershed.

Since 1996 we have...

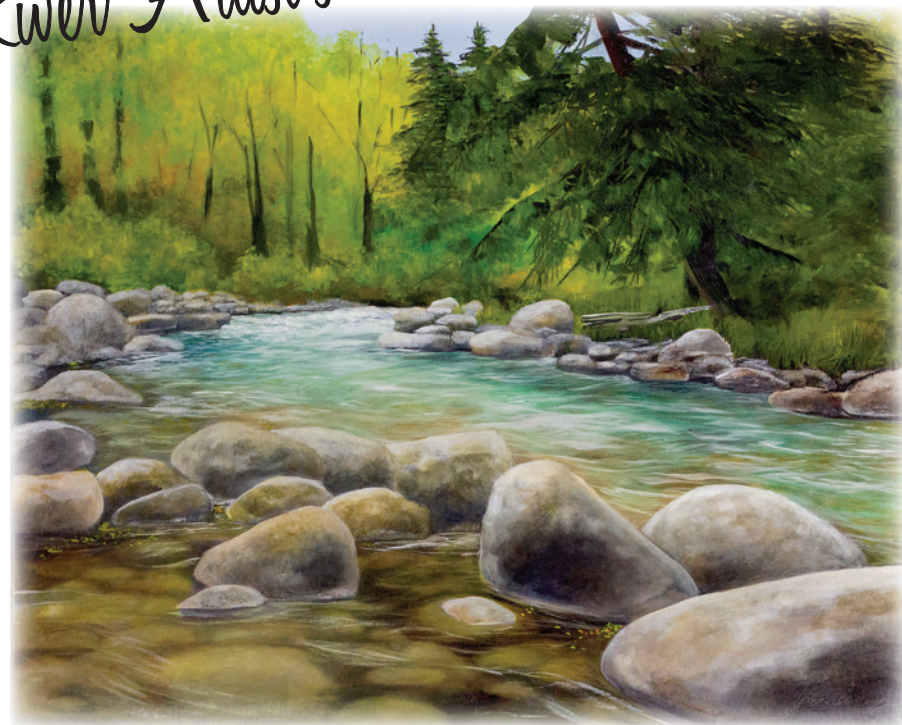
Conducted
over
66,000
water quality
tests.

Taught over
133,000
students.

Protected
270
acres of
riparian land.

Cultivated over
2,100
river stewards
through the sport
of fly fishing.

A River Artist's Journal



Painting a landscape that can transport a viewer to a specific location and invoke an emotional response is the hallmark of a great painting. My ambition in landscape painting is to exceed that primary objective, thus drawing the viewer into a deeper connection to a time and place through bright color and clarity in my painting methods.

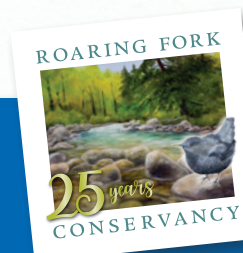
The interface between land and water can be a dynamic habitat in which we can immerse ourselves. Riparian zones and the rivers that create them are in constant flux. From dawn to dusk, week to week, season to season, rivers undergo metamorphic processes that alter the habitat. Some changes place fluvial habitats under stress like excessive heat and drought as we have been experiencing. Other seasonal changes like monsoons bring relief from hot temperatures but can flood or alter the river channel. It is rare to have more than a handful of similar days on a river.

Autumn along the banks of a river is a time that heralds the end of long, hot summer days. River levels are near the lowest for the year affording momentary access into the deepest pools that fish and other animals call home. Autumn is also a favorite time on the river for outdoor enthusiasts to experience the contrasting elements of cool mornings, warm afternoons, and the fragrance of deciduous trees losing chlorophyll and changing colors.

On this splendid autumn day spent fishing at Jaffee Park, I shared the company of a good friend who later survived cancer. This painting celebrates life and our shared reverence for the river and its habitat. I also accentuated the color palette to reflect the tones and hues I held in my memory while adding extra clarity to represent the heightened awareness of space I experienced while fishing here.

John B. Newbury

For information about purchasing or commissioning a painting, please email John at John.newbury@gmail.com.



"We are thrilled to be able to incorporate John's stunning painting of the Roaring Fork at Jaffee Park. Our staff/board design committee immediately saw the makings for our spectacular 25th anniversary logo. Upon our request, John painted a dipper to add and everything fell into place. John is a dear friend of RFC and we are grateful he's shared his talents of river science, fly tying, culinary arts, computer programming, graphic design, and an occasional fishing story with us." – Rick Lofaro



The Brooksher Watershed Institute

Fall 2021 & Winter 2022 Presenters

Roaring Fork Conservancy invites you to join us for virtual presentations addressing our most precious resource, water. We'll discuss the most current water-related issues at the local, state and national level, and provide opportunities for one-on-one dialogue with these water leaders.

November 16, 2021

THE COLORADO RIVER BASIN: A RIVER DOESN'T FLOW THROUGH IT

Mark Fuller, Former Executive Director of Ruedi Water and Power Authority

The Colorado River is well-known to residents and visitors to Colorado's western slope but most are not aware of the complicated history that has shaped the past and will dictate the future of this vital water source. This presentation will review the many factors - physical, political, environmental and social - that govern how the Colorado River is managed. We will also explore the challenges that are impacting flows in the Colorado including increased population, climate change and out-of-basin diversions, and we will take a close look at local water developments, like Ruedi Reservoir, and their relationship to the larger watershed.

December 1, 2021

ROLLING WITH THE PUNCHES: COLORADO WILDFIRES, DEBRIS FLOWS, AND WHAT TO EXPECT NEXT YEAR

Jason Kean, Ph.D., Research Hydrologist, Land Slide Hazards Program at U.S. Geological Survey

Following the worst wildfire season in history, Colorado was hit again by a series of destructive flash floods and debris flows triggered by 2021 monsoon rains. The impacts of debris flow in Glenwood Canyon were especially severe and the threat of repeat events remains. Dr. Kean will discuss the science of predicting post-fire debris flows and outline the ongoing interagency work to identify these hazards and mitigate impacts. He will also describe the state of vegetation recovery and discuss the likelihood of events next year.

Presentations are free but registration is required to receive log in information. Additional details and registration can be found at www.roaringfork.org/events

January 19, 2022

MEASURING SOIL MOISTURE TO UNDERSTAND A CHANGING WATER SUPPLY

Elise Osenga, Community Science Manager at Aspen Global Change Institute

The past year's record-breaking drought in the Colorado River Basin highlights the urgent need to better understand how climate change is impacting water supplies in the West. Streamflow is determined by an interacting set of variables, and in recent years, one of those variables--soil moisture--has been getting increased attention as an understudied but critical component of the water cycle. This presentation will explore how long-term soil moisture monitoring is carried out in the Roaring Fork Valley, how this year's conditions compare to other recent years, and how this data might contribute to understanding local climate impacts.

February 8, 2022

EARLIER SUMMERS AND NUTRIENT ENRICHMENT PROMOTE GROWTH OF ALGAE IN ALPINE LAKES

Diane McKnight, Ph.D., Professor, Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research, University of Colorado

High-elevation lakes are changing due to both climate warming and atmospheric nitrogen deposition. Analysis of long-term data for seven alpine lakes in Colorado, show that ice-off dates have shifted 7 days earlier over the past 33 years and that spring weather conditions--especially snowfall--drive yearly variation in ice-off timing. Dr. McKnight will share the major implications this has on the microbial community in alpine lakes and why we need to pay attention to these changes.

February 15, 2022

BINATIONAL COLLABORATION FOR THE RESTORATION OF THE COLORADO RIVER DELTA

Francisco Zamora, Ph.D., Senior Director of Programs at Sonoran Institute

The Colorado River has not reached the sea in several decades. That is, until a group of NGO's, government agencies, two countries and private individuals came together and changed that a few years ago. What resulted is an effort to restore wetlands and riparian areas even as stream flows are still at a minimum. Find out how the delta has changed and what the plans are for its future.



HUGE THANKS
 to Tracey Snow of Woody Creek Distillers and
 Mia Mascarin of 32 Winds Wine
 for their generous and delicious offerings
 that made these events possible!



Return to the River
 DINNER SERIES
 Benefitting Roaring Fork Conservancy



After a year without River Rendezvous we were especially excited to return to the river.



Over four Wednesdays in July we offered our first ever – Return to the River Dinner Series at the lovely Dallenbach Ranch. We held two cocktail-paired dinners featuring Woody Creek Distillers and two wine-paired dinners featuring 32 Winds Wine.



More casual than our usual River Rendezvous, these intimate dinners offered opportunity for people to support their rivers, reconnect with friends, and celebrate the Roaring Fork Watershed!



While guests enjoyed hors d'oeuvres and refreshments on the banks of the Fryingpan they learned more about our work from RFC staff and reconnected with fellow watershed supporters. The evenings continued with live music, a live auction, and a delectable dinner by Free Range Kitchen.

Missed these dinners or just can't get enough?
 Both Woody Creek Distillers and
 32 Winds Wine offer online ordering:
www.32windswine.com and
www.woodycreekdistillers.com



Whatever next summer holds – make sure you don't miss out on the fun! Email Elliott@roaringfork.org to ensure your email is up to date in our system!





2021 PREMIER BUSINESS MEMBERS

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2021 STANDARD BUSINESS MEMBERS

- Ute Mountaineer

Thank you for supporting essential river research, education and conservation work!



HOT SPOTS FOR TROUT!

Citizen Science Stream Temperature Monitoring in the Roaring Fork Watershed

We are extremely grateful to the Hot Spots for Trout volunteers that collected and reported almost 300 stream temperature readings from July to early October! Thank you!

Rob Angier	William Mitchell	Jennifer Long
Jeff Davlyn	Joel Shute	Brent Maiolo
Ken Everett	Doug Walker	John McDermott
Greg Jeung	Ted Behar	Christine Pearson
Lani Kitching	Sheldon Doolan	Karin Teague
Buzz McArthur	Abby Harris	

A special thank you to John B. Newbury for developing the Hot Spots for Trout database!

Staff & Board Flows



Alexis Hitzeroth, Watershed Educator

Alexis grew up moth hunting and trout fishing with her family in the Midwest. In addition to serving in the U.S. Army for 13 years, she earned a degree from Northern Illinois University in Environmental Studies with an emphasis on water. In 2015, she moved to Grand Junction after getting a job with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). She fell in love with the trout streams of the Roaring Fork Valley and joined RFC the summer of 2021 to help protect some of her favorite fishing waters and educate others on their importance. She loves to watercolor trout, bake delicious treats, ride motorcycles with her boyfriend, and travel. She is also obsessed with Harry Potter and her cat, Kimchi.



Andrea Tupy, Ecologist

Andrea first joined RFC in 2015 as a contractor and in 2021 became a full-time seasonal employee working on land conservation and ecology. Since moving to the Roaring Fork Valley in 2005, she has worked on habitat assessment, conservation easement monitoring, and environmental baseline documentation throughout western Colorado. As a consultant, she conducts species surveys, focusing on threatened and endangered species, locally and throughout the western United States. Andrea obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Speech Communications, a Bachelor of Science in Bio-Agricultural Science, and a Master of Science in Entomology from Colorado State University. In addition to having a passion for all creatures great and small she is an avalanche professional and loves to geek out over snow science. She spends her winters ski patrolling at Aspen Highlands and if you can't find her, she's probably managed to get out for a quiet fly fishing excursion, a long alpine climb, or extended mountain bike adventure.



Jenny Sauer

Thank you for serving on RFC's board for 11 years! Jenny's passion for rafting with her family and protecting the rivers and streams she loves was a natural fit for the board of directors. Jenny provided great leadership on the River Center Working Committee and helped to oversee the construction loan, completion of, and grand opening in 2018. We wish Jenny and her family all the best and thank her for over a decade of service!

Base flows: (n) the normal flow conditions in a river that provide adequate habitat to support diverse, native aquatic communities and maintain groundwater levels for riparian vegetation.

BECOME A MONTHLY Base Flows Donor

Your monthly support provides dependable funding so we can focus on inspiring people to explore, value, and protect the Roaring Fork Watershed!

Join today!

RIVER CURRENTS

is published biannually by Roaring Fork Conservancy. Since 1996, Roaring Fork Conservancy has inspired people to explore, value and protect the Roaring Fork Watershed. We bring people together to protect our rivers and work to keep water in the streams, monitor water quality, and preserve riparian habitat. Roaring Fork Conservancy is an independent 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization registered in the state of Colorado.

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Bringing People Together to Protect Our Rivers

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COMMUNITY FIRST
FOUNDATION

COLORADO
GIVES
DAY 

December 7, 2021

*Remember
your
Rivers
on
December 7!*

When you donate at ColoradoGives.org/RoaringForkConservancy, you bring people together to protect your rivers, monitor water quality, preserve riparian habitat and prepare the next generation of river stewards!



**Join us December 7
for Colorado's
largest giving day!**