



RIVER CURRENTS

The Winter We So Desperately Needed

by Rick Lofaro, Executive Director

The summer of 2018 left a wake of dismal river flows and reservoir levels, unrelenting hot temperatures, fires close to home and throughout the Mountain West, and serious concern for what winter may or may not bring in the aftermath of the fourth worst drought year on record. Collectively, the watershed community performed our best snow dances in hopes that mother nature would deliver the winter we so desperately needed. The dances worked, the prayers were answered and the jet stream relocated with Colorado right in the bullseye.

A cool and calming fall settled in and school groups arrived at The River Center daily. The ideal trifecta for watershed education had emerged in Old Pond Park, the Roaring Fork River and The River Center. Ample indoor and outdoor learning space surrounded by opportunities to interact with the riverine ecosystem have allowed our education programs to excel. Whether utilizing the outdoor courtyard to model the watershed with climbing ropes (see photo) or dipping a kick-net in the Roaring Fork River to capturing insects, our educators and visiting students are equally enthusiastic about the place and the subject matter.

The snow started falling sometime in mid-October and continued as the return of a “real” (and quite cold) winter became official, and was welcomed with resounding joy. Epic powder days returned, plows ran around the clock some days, schools had snow days and, as I had hoped would be the case, I was thankful but sick of shoveling by March 1. To the delight of the watershed, and dismay of my back, March delivered plenty of additional snow throughout Colorado to help alleviate the drought - at least for the time being.

The abundant snow and cold this winter was a welcome change. Winter gave the RFC staff time to settle into The River Center after a busy and hectic summer, and a front row seat to some of the most epic displays of winter on the river. As winter’s grip tightened, temperatures dropped allowing significant amounts of ice to form in and around low flowing streams. Periodic warming spells released ice jams in the Roaring Fork River in stellar fashion, and RFC was able to document nine

separate events between December and February. This natural phenomenon provided a notable learning opportunity for RFC and the community at large. Community alerts preceding ice jam breaks helped keep people safe and out of the river, and also brought the community together along the riverbanks and bridges to watch the ice roar through.

Shortly after a rare double-header ice jam break on January 4, I decided to see how the trout fared. My first outing from The River Center reacquainted me with the Fork I’d fallen in love with so many years ago when I first moved to Basalt. I made it out weekly between January

and mid-March, beginning every adventure from the beloved River Center mudroom where my waders and rods now hang. I went out the back door and pat the cutthroat trout bike rack for good luck, and within minutes I was reinvigorated and reminded how fortunate we are to have and protect the river in our backyard.

I’m grateful for the snow this winter bestowed upon us, but remain aware that one good year, while it relieves some pressure, does not solve the long term water shortages that exist in the West. However, today, I am thankful the outlook for this summer looks favorable. See you on the river!



ONLY RAIN DOWN THE DRAIN!

Storm drains and rivers lead downstream to someone's drinking water supply!

by Christina Medved, Director of Community Outreach

When rain falls onto hard surfaces like paved roads and parking lots, that water runs off into storm drains. Most storm drains empty directly into the nearest stream without filtering debris or pollutants. Often these streams are the sources of someone's drinking water. How do we educate residents and visitors about protecting these sensitive areas?

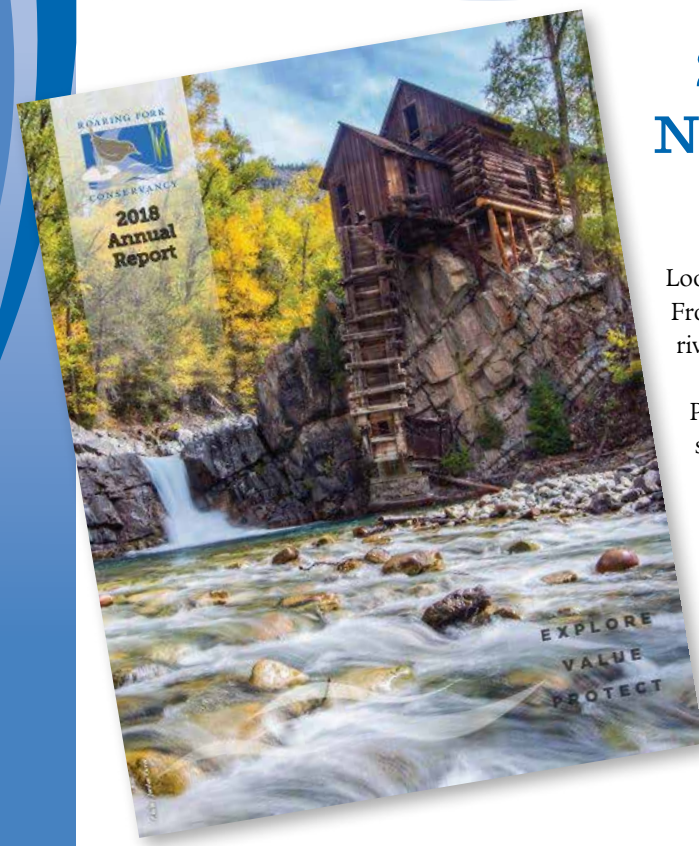
RFC partnered with Colorado Rural Water, Eagle River Watershed Council, Middle Colorado Watershed Council and most municipal water suppliers in the Roaring Fork Valley – and beyond – to address this need. Starting this



summer, you will see signs along roadways and streams, reminding us all to “Keep It Clean ‘Cause We’re All Downstream!”

View tips and access resources on ways you can help keep our streams and drinking water supply healthy by visiting www.roaringfork.org/KeepItClean

Throughout Colorado many water providers created plans to protect their drinking water sources. Learn how by reviewing your community's “Source Water Protection Plan” at www.crwa.net.



2018 ANNUAL REPORT: New Home, New Challenges, Ongoing Successes

Looking back, 2018 may have been the most memorable in RFC's history. From moving into The River Center, to the extremely low snowpack and river flows, and the Lake Christine wildfire just outside our new front door.

Pauolo Coelho said, “You drown not by falling into a river, but by staying submerged in it.” We spent 2018 fighting our way to the surface, taking a deep breath and enacting programs to raise awareness and support stressed river ecosystems.

We invite you to read through our 2018 Annual Report to learn how we handled challenges and grew into our new home. We also invite you to share in our successes, as your continued support makes our work possible. Thank you!

Read the 2018 Annual report at www.roaringfork.org/about-us/

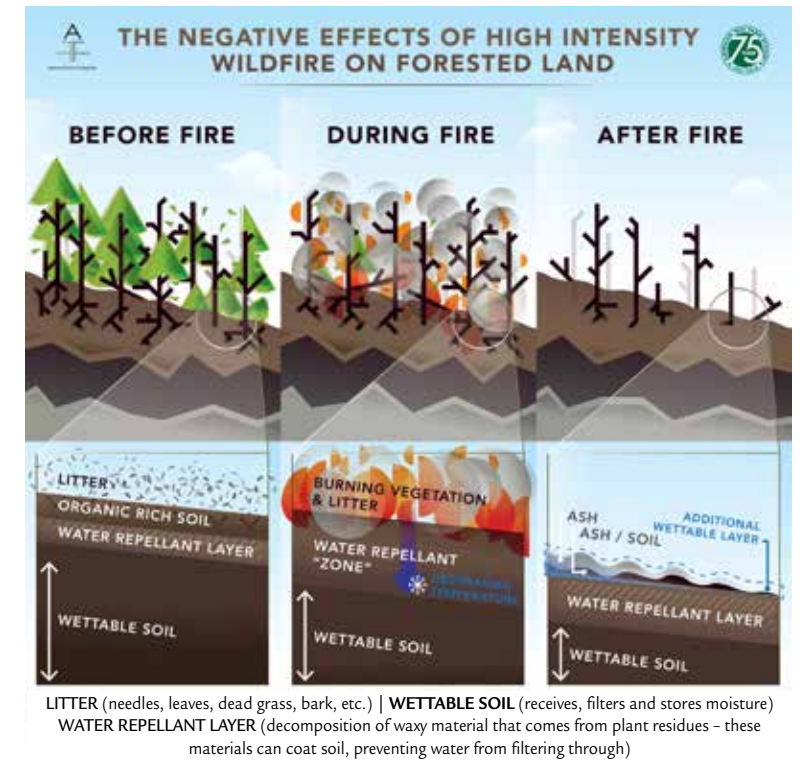
The Good, The Bad, and the Fire

by Heather Lewin, Watershed Science & Policy Director

As an abundant snowpack receded from Basalt Mountain in April, the darkened landscape reminded us of a summer that seemed long left behind. Hot, dry days in smoke-filled skies were replaced by the seemingly endless bluebird powder days this winter. While optimism abounds for a robust runoff that leaves the drought behind us, the short- and long-term changes from the fire remain in the community and on the landscape.

The good news: There's significant moisture from the winter, which gives plant communities a better chance to begin to regenerate, bringing back the green landscapes and all the associated benefits including wildlife habitat, erosion control and scenic vistas we've become accustomed to enjoying.

The bad news: High-intensity fires can increase flood risks, erosion rates and vegetative recovery, jeopardizing downstream values, from homes and businesses to streams and habitat. Debris and sediment flows can be several orders of



magnitude larger than flows that historically exist in a given area, creating concerns for private property and ecological impacts, particularly in-stream.

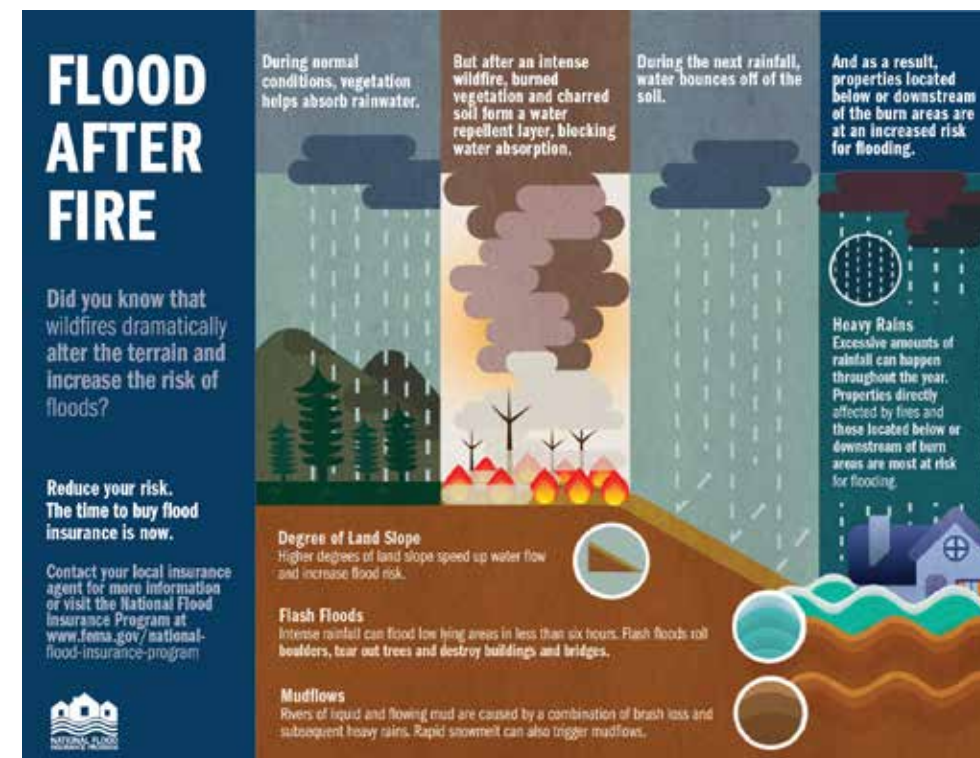
We're looking for volunteers to help with the Lake Christine wildfire restoration project on June 12. Find details at www.roaringfork.org/events

Refer to the graphic below to learn how you can protect your home and the stream.

The good news: The U.S. Forest Service, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Bureau of Land Management and Natural Resource Conservation Service all have projects underway to protect private property, revegetate public lands and mitigate debris flows.

The bad news: There will probably be some sediment or debris flows this summer, most likely during the runoff or monsoon season.

The good news: High-intensity burns only account for about 12% of the total area of the Lake Christine wildfire, meaning that much of the beloved Basalt Mountain will come back stronger and more resilient, much like the community has done.



Training Citizen Scientists

by Chad Rudow, Water Quality Program Manager

Volunteer Stream Teams contribute significantly to one of RFC's longest-running programs: baseline water quality monitoring. These incredibly dedicated citizen scientists assist with monitoring across the Roaring Fork Watershed, from Aspen to Glenwood Springs. The teams vary in size, age, location and longevity, but they all share a passion for hands-on science and a desire to help protect local streams and rivers.



conducting precise and accurate water quality monitoring. The first evening was spent at a stream near The River Center, learning proper protocols for recording measurements and collecting various water samples. The second evening involved learning how to analyze those samples through chemical titrations and scientific meters. Participants learned how additional samples are collected, processed and shipped to a lab for in-depth

analysis, and how data is compiled through the Colorado River Watch program and used by RFC and state agencies to assess the health of local streams and rivers. Recently, a number of stream teams "retired" from monitoring, providing opportunities for new volunteer recruitment and engagement. To ensure these volunteers had the necessary tools for their new "job," RFC hosted a training at The River Center, generously funded by Aspen Skiing Company's Environment Foundation. A number of existing Stream Team members also participated for "refresher training" allowing new and existing groups to meet and share their experiences.

By the end of the training, new groups of citizen scientists had the tools and knowledge necessary to begin their important work. They join the existing Stream Team members - some of whom have volunteered for more than 15 years - to form a network of 20 volunteers integral in measuring and documenting the health of local streams and rivers.

Over the course of two evenings, participants learned the intricacies of

MEET OUR STREAM TEAM MEMBERS

RFC sincerely thanks the following individuals for their dedication to monitoring the health of local streams and rivers. Their help is invaluable!

- Joanie Anderson
- Jeannette Cohen
- Matthew Hamilton
- Dick Helmke
- George Johnson
- David King
- Lacy King
- Jim Kirschvink
- Patty Lecht
- Leigh Louis
- Charlie Lueders
- Jennifer Long
- Buzz McArthur
- Martha Moran
- Bob Morse
- Lesley Morse
- Shannan Osburn
- Aimee Ruddell
- Laura Taylor
- George Wear



WATERSHED EXPLORATIONS

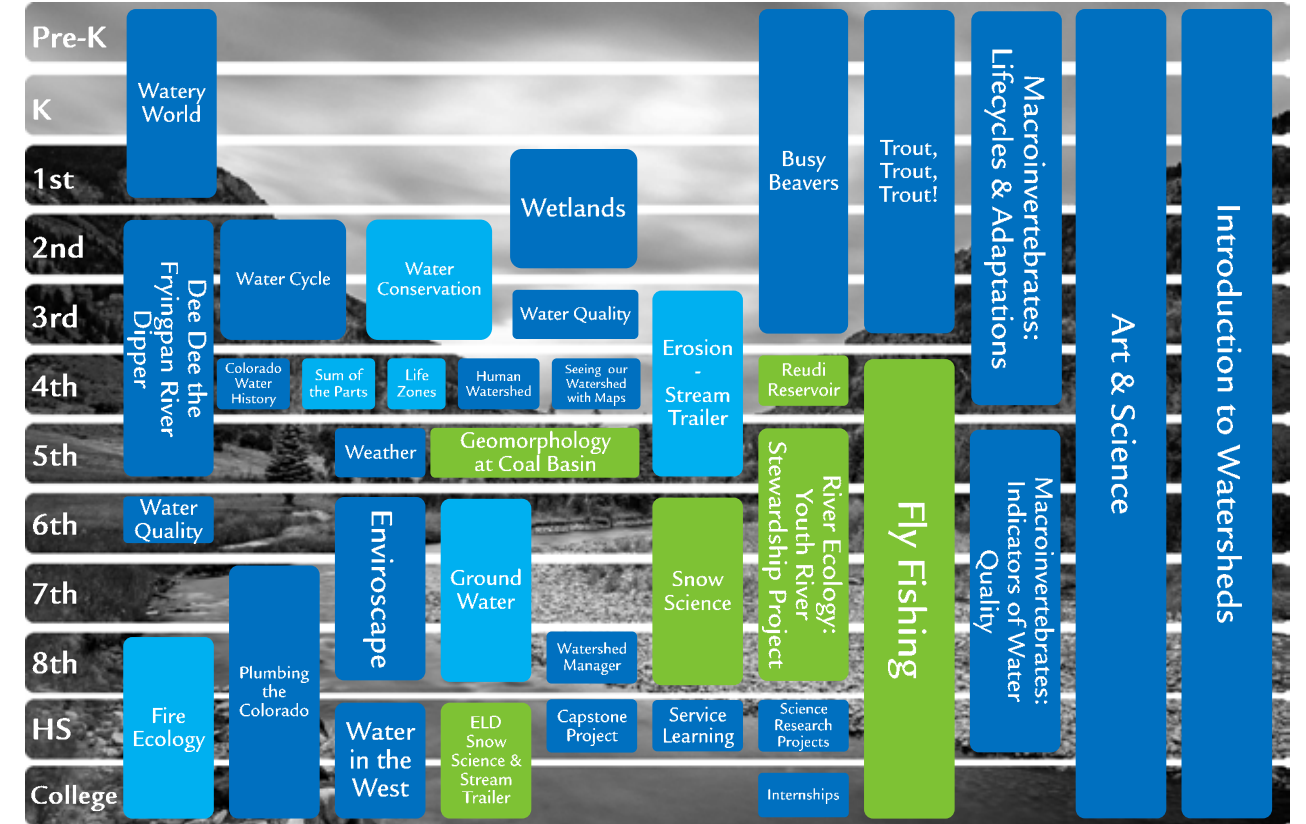
2019 Summer & Fall Events Calendar*

JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
8 15th Annual River Float	1 Filoha Meadows: Firefly & Rare Orchid Walk	6 Fishing in Schools Teacher Workshop (Basalt)
12 North Star Preserve Roaring Fork River Float	2 Filoha Meadows: Firefly & Rare Orchid Walk	8 Family Exploration at Filoha Meadows
13 North Star Preserve Roaring Fork River Float	8 Filoha Meadows: Firefly & Rare Orchid Walk	8 Fishing in Schools Teacher Workshop (Salida)
19 North Star Preserve Roaring Fork River Float	11 Family Night at Filoha Meadows: Fireflies, Bats, and Bugs	14 Family Exploration at Filoha Meadows
26 Family Night at Filoha Meadows: Fireflies, Bats, and Bugs	16 Family Night at Filoha Meadows: Fireflies, Bats, and Bugs	21 Get the Inside Scoop at Cozy Point
27 Family Night at Filoha Meadows: Fireflies, Bats, and Bugs	18 Filoha Meadows: Firefly & Rare Orchid Walk	SEPTEMBER
	19 Twin Lakes Tunnel & Diversion Tour	14 Family Exploration at Filoha Meadows
	23 Herron Park - Insects of the Roaring Fork River	18 Filoha Evening Walk: Elk & Bighorn Sheep
	24 Water in the Age of Silver: Touring Aspen's "Holden Works"	

*Registration opens 3 weeks prior to program date.

For more information and to register visit: www.roaringfork.org/events

Roaring Fork Conservancy Water Education Programs by Grade



To schedule an education program contact Watershed Educator Kristen Doyle by emailing kristen@roaringfork.org
To learn more about Roaring Fork Conservancy, visit www.roaringfork.org



River Rules for Fun & Safety!

Floating Etiquette (rafts, kayaks, SUPs)

- Wear a lifejacket. Always. Things can happen quickly on a cold, fast moving river.
- Be equipped with safety knife and whistle.
- Carry a First-Aid Kit.
- Respect private property.
- Know the river, have a map, talk to local outfitters for guidance and daily conditions.
- Pick up and pack out all trash.
- Don't crowd other river users.
- Wade anglers downstream have the right of way. Quietly move around them or communicate otherwise.
- Be organized, fast and efficient on the boat ramp when putting in and taking out. Be courteous to other river users and limit ramp time to 5-10 minutes.
- Follow the golden rule – treat others as you would like to be treated – both on the boat ramp and on the water.

Fishing Etiquette

In addition to Floating Etiquette:

- Obtain a valid Colorado Fishing License.
- Learn and follow local fishing regulations.
- Land fish quickly, do not play them to exhaustion.
- Keep fish wet and in the water. Minimize fish handling.
- Release fish gently in clear water, allowing fish to swim away after recovery.
- Barbless hooks - all the time.
- Anglers give other anglers plenty of room.



Safety First!

- life jacket
- whistle
- safety knife
- first aid kit
- medications
- patch kit
- plan
- phone

Before you get on the water, ask yourself:

- Am I capable of navigating the river in its current state?
- Is the river at a safe level for me and my guests?
- Do I have a plan?
- Does someone know where I am floating and when I plan to be back? (*Remember to make contact when float is finished and take-out is reached safely.*)

Be a STEWARD of the River

- S**hare the river - with everyone
- T**read lightly and leave no trace
- E**tiquette is for ALL river users
- W**ait your turn and be patient
- A**dhere to closures & regulations
- R**espect all life - wild and human
- D**o your part to protect the river



Explore
Value
Protect

www.roaringfork.org

2019 River Conservator: RICK NEILEY



Roaring Fork Conservancy will honor Rick Neiley as our 2019 Robert Billingsley River Conservator at the 20th Annual River Rendezvous on July 10, 2019. Rick joined RFC's Board in 2000 and after 18 active years retired at the end of 2018. His expertise around river issues, conservation easements and vast experience serving on other boards throughout the Roaring Fork Valley helped shape the direction of RFC in its first decade. Rick was also instrumental in the direction and eventual completion and opening of The River Center. As an attorney with Neiley Law Firm, LLC, Rick's expertise in legal and financial matters was particularly valuable over his long tenure with RFC. We wish him tight lines and best fishes!

You're invited to



The Brooksher
Watershed Institute



Thursday, JULY 18 • 1pm

50 Years of River Protection

NICOLE SILK

Executive Director, River Network

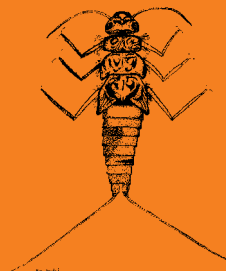
As water champions celebrate the 50th anniversary of the burning of the Cuyahoga River in northeastern Ohio, Nicole will share what river protections have emerged since that infamous day, and shed light on what the next 50 years of water protection will bring.

Roaring Fork Conservancy invites you to The Brooksher Watershed Institute at The River Center for presentations that address our most precious resource, water. We'll discuss the most current water-related issues at the local, state and regional level, and provide opportunities for one-on-one dialogue with these water leaders. Light refreshments will be served.

SEATING IS LIMITED. Register at www.roaringfork.org/events.



COME VISIT THE RIVER CENTER
and check out a fly rod or our new River Discovery Kits.



Staff & Board Flows



Elliott Audette,
Business Manager

Originally from Saratoga Springs, New York, Elliott moved to the Roaring Fork Valley in 2011 to work for the Aspen Skiing Company. During his time with them he grew a passion for winter and summer sports, the great outdoors, and the Roaring Fork Valley community. Elliott has enjoyed volunteering for RFC since the spring of 2016. His favorite events are the Frypanpan River Cleanup and River Rendezvous. Elliott is looking forward to expanding his impact on the community by working with RFC year-round!



Megan Dean,
Education Program Coordinator

Megan's love of rivers began on the mighty Mississippi where she worked as a water patrol officer for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. Wanting to focus on education instead of law enforcement, she graduated from the University of Iowa with a B.S. in Education with a Specialization in Sciences. She moved to Colorado to pursue her passion for education as a teacher in the Roaring Fork Valley. After gaining some amazing teaching experience in the classroom, Megan opened Unlimited Horizons Tutoring and Enrichment, enabling her to build and offer after-school environmental education programs to valley students. With a dedication to watershed education, she became a part-time educator for RFC in 2015, then returned to the classroom for a short time, and finally rejoined RFC full-time in June as the Education Program Coordinator. Megan can often be found playing on her paddleboard and enjoying other watersports with her family.

Thank you!

After serving a combined 41 years on the RFC board, Stephen Ellsperman, Dick Kipper, Rick Neiley and Don Schuster stepped down this past spring. Thank you for your many contributions to RFC!



Stephen
Ellsperman



Dick
Kipper



Rick
Neiley



Don
Schuster



2019 PREMIER BUSINESS MEMBERS

Aspen Flyfishing/
Chris Lemons
Aspen Whitewater LLC
Barnes, Pearson
& Associates LLC
Bob Harris
Casey Brewing
Cottle Carr Yaw Architects Ltd
Crystal Fly Shop
FootSteps Marketing
Proudline Guided Fly-Fishing
The Romero Group, LLC
The Rulon Kelly Team at
Douglas Elliman Real Estate
SGM
Ute Mountaineer

STANDARD BUSINESS MEMBERS

M.G. REALTY CO., INC
Dunlop Environmental Consulting
Harry Teague Architects
mountainFLOW eco-wax

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



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