

2014 Annual Report

ROARING FORK



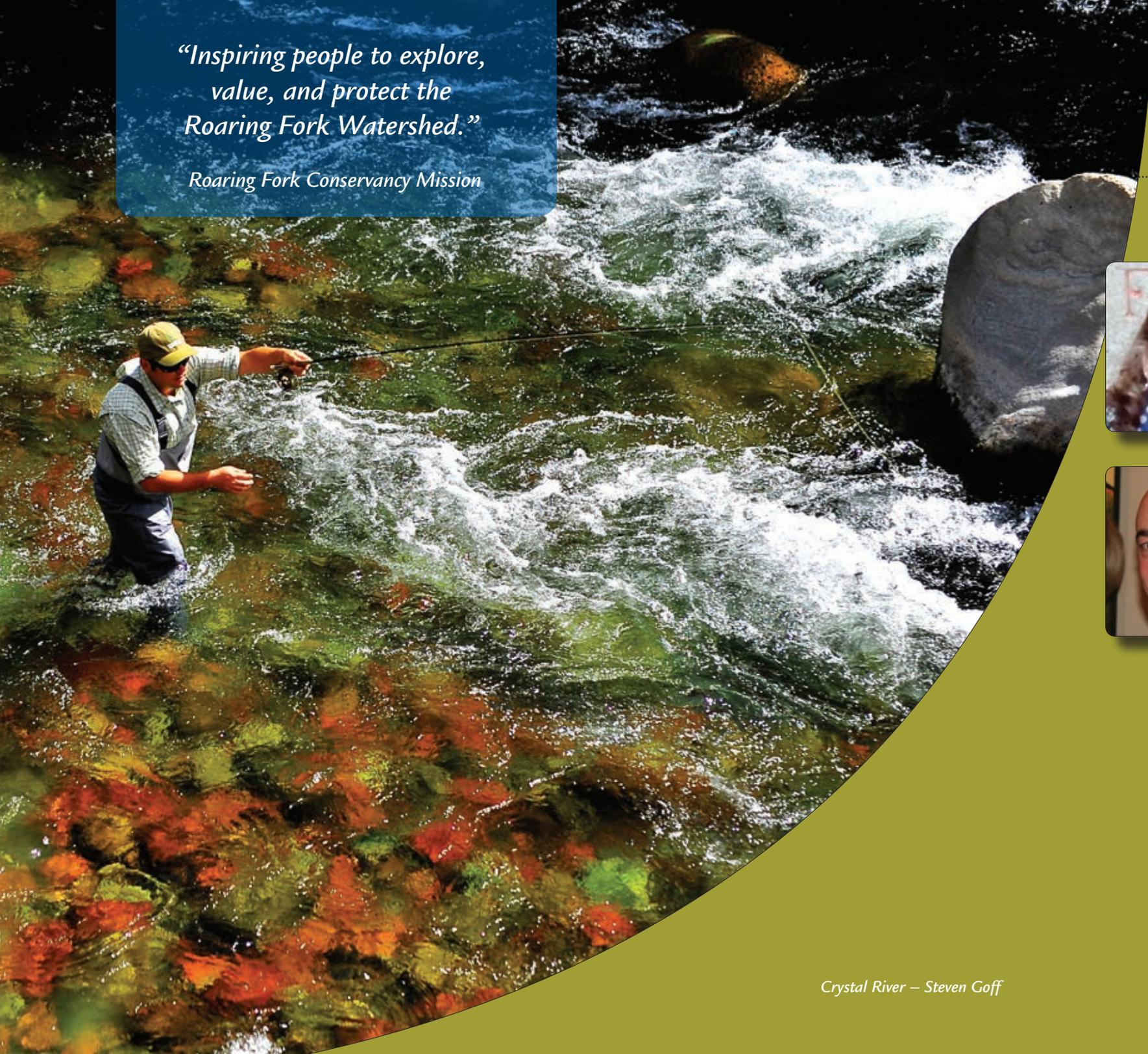
CONSERVANCY

*Bringing People Together
to Protect Our Rivers*



*“Inspiring people to explore,
value, and protect the
Roaring Fork Watershed.”*

Roaring Fork Conservancy Mission



Thank you for supporting our rivers!

The winter of 2014 came in like a lion, with seemingly endless snowstorms creating a hearty, above average snowpack. And as we all know, good skiing often means good rafting and fishing as snow melts and fills the streams in the spring and summer. As water rushed down the valley, we all celebrated the much needed peak flows that were absent in the drought-ridden summer of 2013. Thankfully, in most situations, rivers are resilient!



However, even the most resilient of rivers can benefit from a watchful eye and engaged local community. With this in mind, work on the Comprehensive Lower Fryingpan Assessment continued and a new project emerged in the Crystal River sub-watershed. Members of the education department became certified teacher-trainers in two national programs – Project WET and National Fishing in Schools Program – and started offering workshops to local teachers. By creating a venue for students and community members to comment on Colorado’s Water Plan, and hosting a meeting with the Environmental Protection Agency’s Assistant Administrator for the Department of Water, Nancy Stoner, RFC engaged the public on big picture issues that are integral to protecting our local waters.



Of course, the ability to adapt to change is not limited to the rivers. In this, our 18th year, RFC embraced new Directors in both our Watershed Education and Watershed Action programs. Ramsey Kropf, Board President, accepted a position with the Department of the Interior as the Deputy Solicitor for Water based in Washington D.C., which required her to relinquish her position with RFC. While we wish her all the best in her next adventure, Ramsey’s significant contribution to RFC’s vision and leadership will be greatly missed.

To those of you whose generosity allows us to continue our work of bringing people together to protect our rivers, we present this 2014 year-end review of programmatic and financial success. We look forward to working just as diligently to inspire people to explore, value and protect the Roaring Fork Watershed in 2015. Thank you for your continued support!

Ramsey Kropf
President, Board of Directors

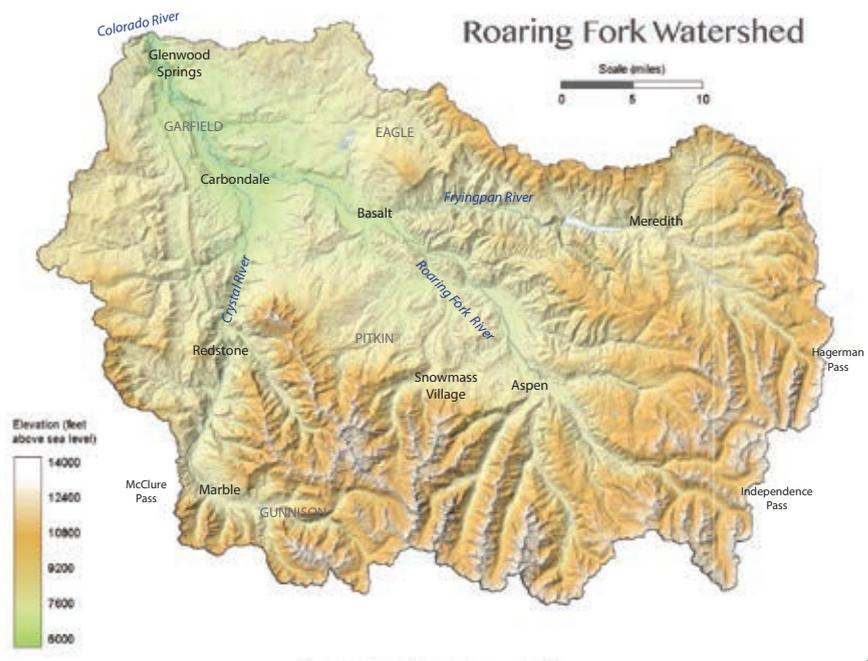
Rick Lofaro
Executive Director

Who We Are

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 local streams, monitor water quality, and preserve riparian habitat.

As one of the largest watershed organizations in Colorado, Roaring Fork Conservancy serves residents and visitors throughout the Roaring Fork Valley through school and community-based Watershed Education programs and Watershed Action projects including regional watershed planning, water resource policy initiatives, stream management and restoration.

Roaring Fork Conservancy is an independent, 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.



Roaring Fork Conservancy Highlights

- 1996 Founded
- 2000 Formed the Rivers Council to help raise support for Watershed Action and Watershed Education programs
- 2003 Co-founded Roaring Fork Watershed Collaborative, an ad-hoc committee of 50+ government agencies, non-profits, and citizens that proactively addresses water issues in the watershed
- 2007 Became lead consultant for Roaring Fork Watershed Plan process
- 2008 Authored a comprehensive 500-page State of the Watershed Report
- 2012 Published Roaring Fork Watershed Plan
- 2014 Over 85,000 students reached in RFC education programs



Captain Cutthroat at the 10th Annual River Float – Mary Sundblom

Our Programs



2014 By The Numbers

Rivers Council Members	65
Total Donors.....	651
Watershed Education Contacts.....	6,959
School Programs	329
Adult Programs	74
Teachers/Educators Trained.....	197
Website Visits	26,535
Facebook Likes	1,704
Twitter Followers	166
River Watch Sites Monitored.....	28
River Watch Samples Collected	145
Automated Temperature Monitoring Sites.....	8
Reports Published	4

*West Gulch (above) – Mark Fuller
Collecting water samples (top right) – Chris Ullrich
Students collect water samples (bottom right) – Sarah Johnson*



Watershed Action

The Watershed Action program addresses current issues and future threats to watershed health and vitality. Proactive science and watershed planning help inform decision-makers and drive on-the-ground improvement and restoration projects. Most current endeavors are rooted in the Roaring Fork Watershed Plan in the form of scientific studies, restoration projects, policy work and educational campaigns. Daily work of the Watershed Action staff focuses on water quantity and quality, hydrology, riparian land conservation, river ecology, and geomorphology.



Watershed Education

Inspiring people to take action requires knowledge. Each year the Watershed Education programs reach thousands of students and adults with hands-on, exploratory experiences. School programs include topics such as water chemistry, river ecology, watershed mapping, aquatic insect identification, and economics. When students cannot travel to the river, we bring the river to them.

Adult community outreach programs include River Guide Trainings, Watershed Explorations, educational dialogues and forums, and river float trips. Each program is designed to engage participants with people and/or places in the watershed they otherwise might not encounter or have access.

Water Quality Data Protects Streams

In 2014, Thompson Divide Coalition commissioned RFC and Dr. Robert Moran, a hydrogeologist with Michael-Moran Associates, LLC, to conduct a study whose objective was to define water quality conditions prior to potential natural gas development in the Thompson Divide area. The results identified streams in the Thompson Divide as “healthy and uncontaminated.” This study provided a solid baseline for comparison against future changes in water quality within this region.

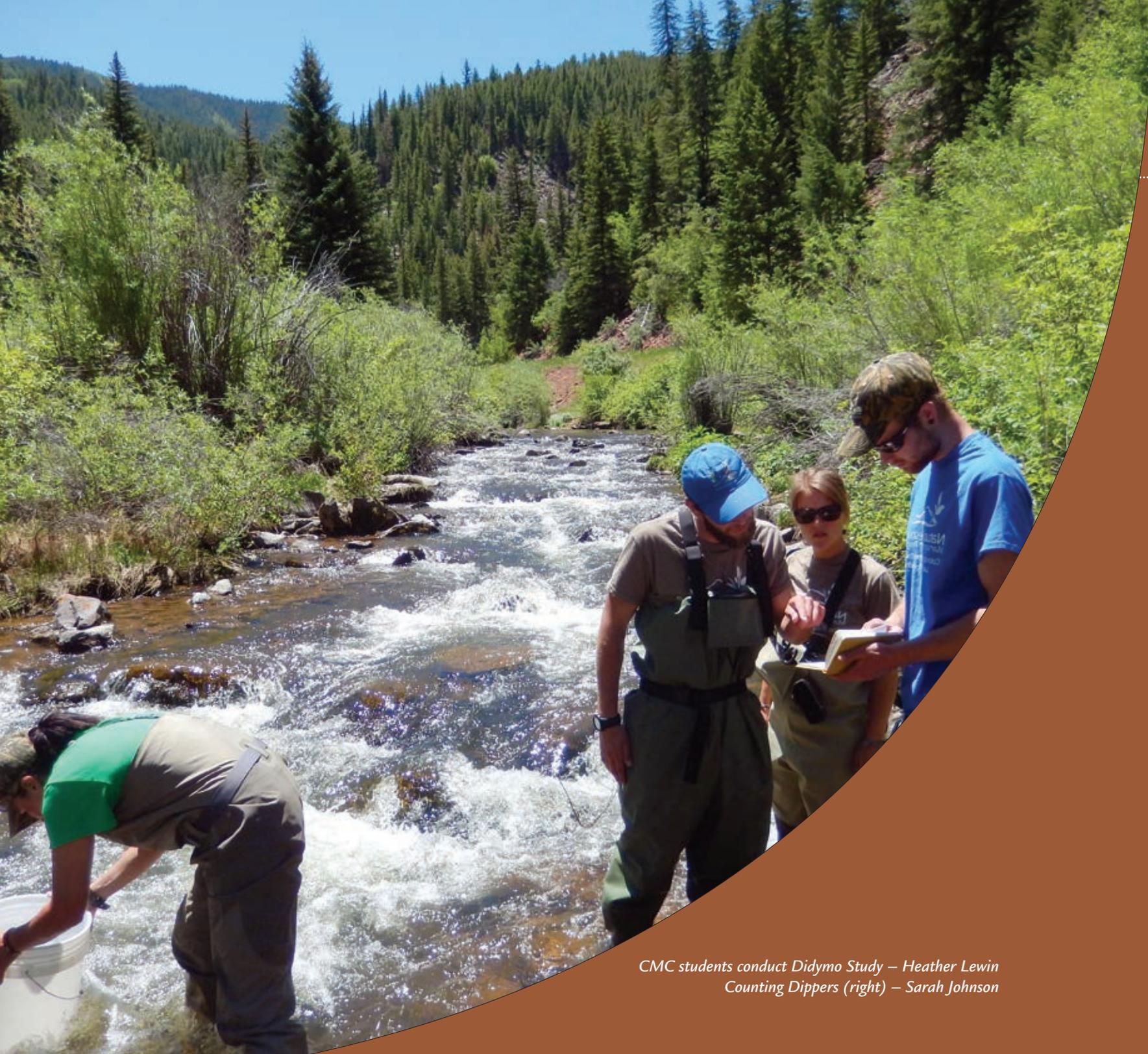
Utilizing much of the same data, RFC and Colorado Trout Unlimited submitted a proposal to the Colorado State Water Quality Control Commission, to designate portions of Thompson Creek as “Outstanding Waters”. In June 2014, this designation was approved for three branches of Thompson Creek and their related tributaries. Streams with this designation are ensured their exceptional water quality are preserved in perpetuity!

Additional information about the Thompson Divide Supplemental Water Quality Study can be found at www.roaringfork.org/publications

2014 Water Quality Accomplishments:

- With the help of volunteer Stream Teams and local River Watch schools, RFC conducted regular water quality monitoring at 28 sites, took 145 samples, and involved more than 25 volunteers.
- RFC staff assisted with statewide training of new Colorado River Watch participants.
- Published 2014 Brush Creek Stream Health Survey and presented findings to Town of Snowmass and their Environmental Advisory Board.





Comprehensive Lower Fryingspan River Assessment

Citizens, anglers and professional guides of the Fryingspan Valley approached RFC in 2013 with concerns about low winter flows, formation of anchor ice, decreased American Dipper and macroinvertebrate populations and, in turn, the potential impacts on the river resource. Flows during the winter of 2012-13 were maintained at 40cfs for over a three month period. Interested citizens along with RFC staff attended the annual Bureau of Reclamation meeting to voice these concerns. From these encounters, a scientific study was created to evaluate current conditions on the Lower Fryingspan River. In addition, the 2002 Fryingspan Valley Economic Study was resurrected and re-envisioned to aid in understanding how the fishery continues to impact the vitality of the Town of Basalt and the Roaring Fork Valley. Results from the studies will be available on RFC website in 2015.

More information on the comprehensive study, can be found at:

www.roaringfork.org/fryingspan

2014 Accomplishments:

- Partnered with the Natural Resource Management Program at Colorado Mountain College in Leadville and Colorado State University Economics Department
- Released final reports for American Dipper Survey and Benthic Macroinvertebrate Study
- Surveyed over 350 people along Fryingspan River and 160 at Ruedi for the Economic Study
- Presented findings to over 150 people, featured in The Aspen Times and Aspen Daily News, Didymo study highlighted in CMC promotional video



*CMC students conduct Didymo Study – Heather Lewin
Counting Dippers (right) – Sarah Johnson*

Crystal River Stream Management Plan

In 2013, Roaring Fork Conservancy and Public Counsel of the Rockies, working with Lotic Hydrological, LLC, met with local water users and water rights holders throughout the Crystal River watershed to listen to concerns and solicit ideas on ways to enhance riparian and instream conditions in and along the Crystal River. From these conversations, the Crystal River Stream Management Plan was born. The key components of the plan are:

Ecological Decision Support System (EcoDSS): A series of computer models developed to show how the river will respond over time to channel modification or other resource management activities.

Ecosystem Functional Assessment (EFA) & Resource Management Evaluation: A series of assessments to evaluate conditions and trends in and along the river including fisheries and riparian habitat, and potential for diverted water and irrigation infrastructure improvements.

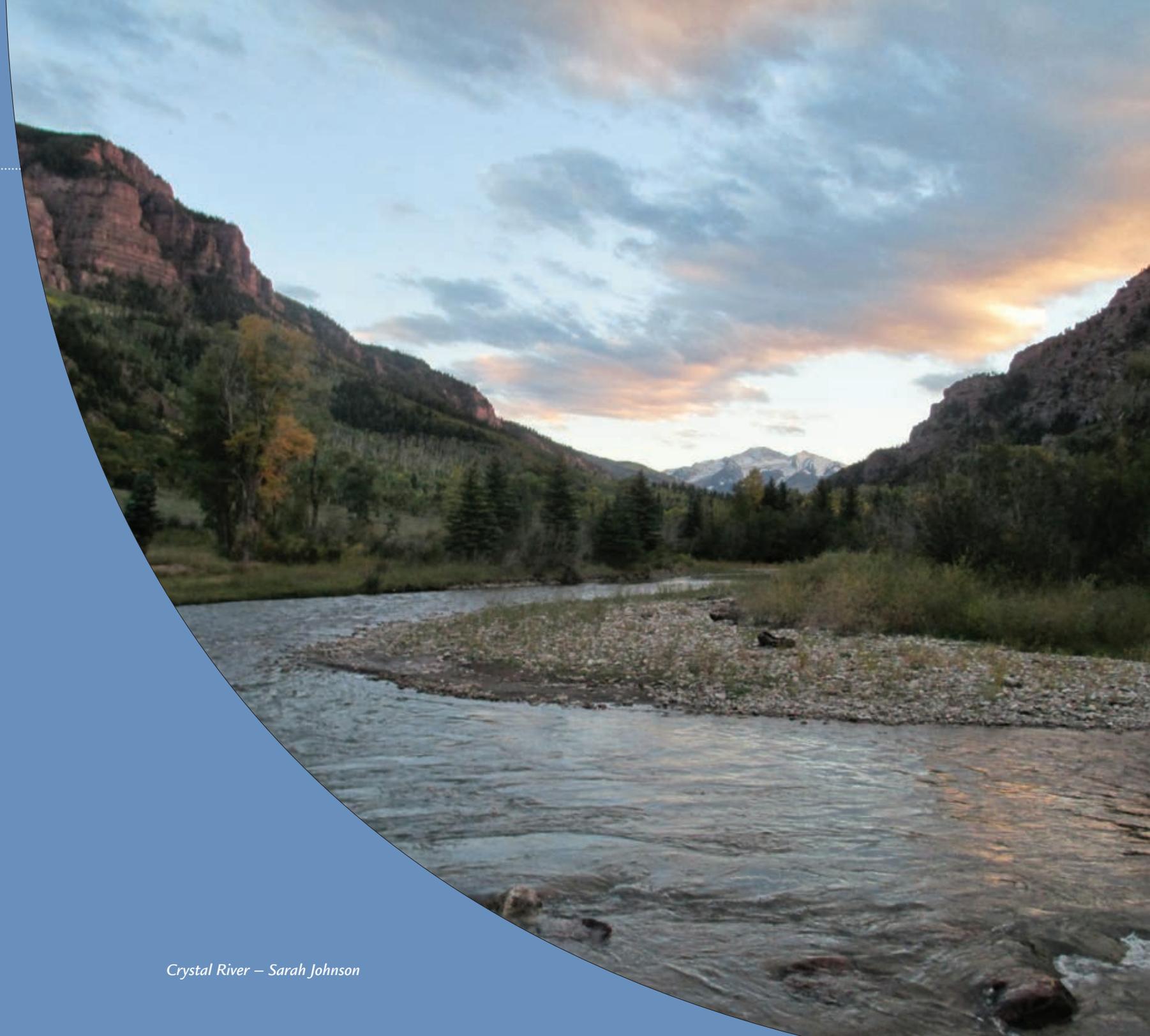
Stakeholder Engagement: The continuous work with a variety of stakeholders, from water rights owners and ranchers to the US Forest Service and NRCS, to collaboratively identify issues on the Crystal River and work together towards the best possible solutions.

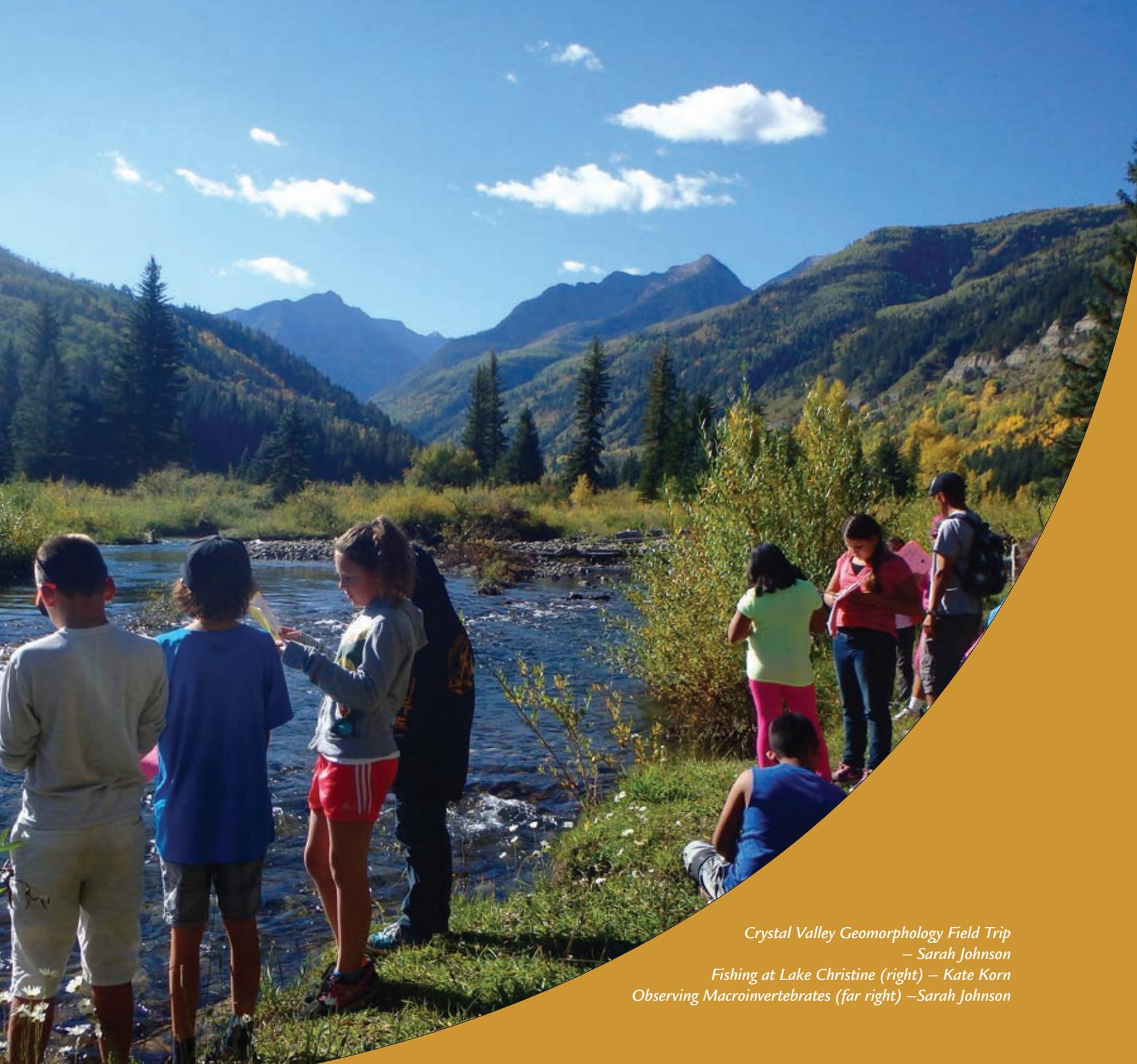
Project Prioritization: Development of a set of common goals for the river, identification of preferences for achieving those goals, and selection and prioritization of on-the-ground projects.

Additional information on the Crystal River Stream Management Plan can be found at www.roaringfork.org/crystalriver

2014 Accomplishments on the Crystal River Stream Management Plan:

- Research progress: Bathymetric and Topographic Mapping Complete; Water Rights Allocation and Accounting Model and Water Quality Data Analysis (80% complete)
- Stakeholder's meeting and two Crystal River Conversations attended by more than 60 people
- Published Crystal River Newsletter to inform and update stakeholders





Educating the Roaring Fork Valley

School Programs

Each year RFC educators teach a multi-unit Watershed Education program for 4th grade students at Basalt Elementary, Glenwood Springs Elementary, and Crystal River Elementary, and 6th grade students at Carbondale Middle School and Two Rivers Community School in Glenwood Springs. Our programming is diverse and interdisciplinary and includes preparing Aspen Middle School 7th graders for their annual raft trip, teaching snow science at Snowmass and Sunlight ski areas, using a Stream Trailer to teach erosion, and teaching students how to read and use watershed maps. Sixteen new teachers incorporated RFC programs into their classroom curriculum. RFC educators taught over 5,600 elementary school, middle school, high school, and college students from Aspen to Glenwood Springs in 2014.

Watershed Explorations

RFC offers field-based educational programs for adults through its Watershed Explorations series. These hands-on programs, designed to bring participants to unique places in the watershed, educate participants about particular water issues via local and regional experts. Twenty-five Watershed Explorations were offered in 2014 including river floats, hikes through riparian habitat, tours of water diversion projects, snowshoe hikes, and viewing fireflies. Most Watershed Explorations are offered for free due to the support of Pitkin County Open Space and Trails, City of Aspen Parks and Open Space, and the City of Aspen Water Department. Over 1,200 adults participated in our Watershed Explorations in 2014.

*Crystal Valley Geomorphology Field Trip
– Sarah Johnson
Fishing at Lake Christine (right) – Kate Korn
Observing Macroinvertebrates (far right) – Sarah Johnson*



Teacher Professional Development

RFC educators became certified teacher-trainers for the international-based Project WET (Water Education for Teachers) Foundation and the National Fishing in Schools Program's *Cast a Fly, Catch a Student* curriculum. Six workshops reached 200 local and regional teachers in 2014. By offering professional development workshops, teachers obtain required hours for the renewal of teaching licenses through the Colorado Department of Education and are inspired and empowered to conduct more hands-on water education with their students



Additional professional development was provided to educators and summer naturalists at the Aspen Center for Environmental Studies. These training sessions focused on understanding watersheds and the importance of snowpack and how it is measured.

RFC educators also presented at the following professional conferences in 2014:

- Society for Freshwater Sciences in Portland, OR
- National Science Teachers Association in Boston, MA
- National Association for Interpretation in Denver, CO
- Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education in Denver, CO



Fishing in Schools Program Teacher Training
– Christina Medved



Community Outreach and Engagement

Colorado Water Plan

When Governor Hickenlooper gave an executive order to develop the Colorado Water Plan, RFC realized the potential impact on local rivers and immediately began planning ways to engage residents of the Roaring Fork Valley to ensure their voice was heard. RFC educators developed school programs focused on the Water Plan, giving over 300 school children the opportunity to submit comments to the state describing why water in the Roaring Fork Valley is important to them. RFC also hosted an educational community meeting, creating a venue for over 100 local residents to present comments.

Voter's Guide

RFC released the third issue of the Roaring Fork Valley Voters' Guide to Water Issues, a non-biased, non-partisan forum where each candidate, from county commissioner to US Senator, is given the opportunity to answer the same two questions about local and/or state wide water concerns. This created a venue for citizens to learn elected officials' view on water issues that may not be available elsewhere. Educating voters on candidates' view of water issues can help shape future legislation to protect vital water resources.

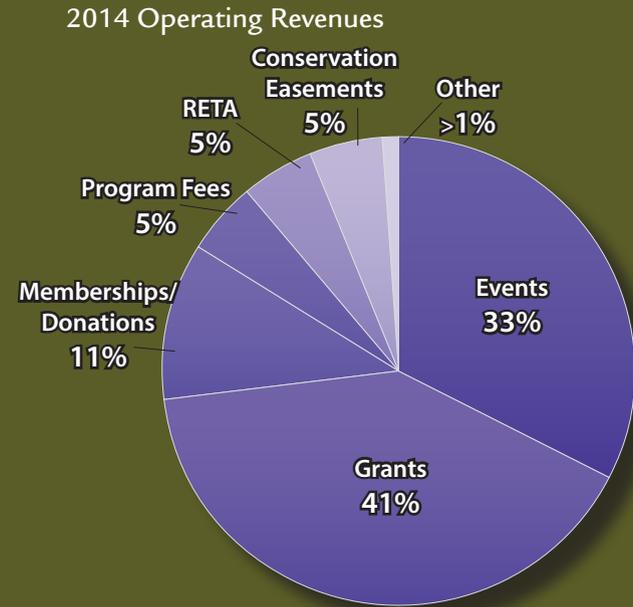
Fryingpan Cleanup

At the 16th Annual Fryingpan Cleanup 150 residents picked up trash along 14 miles of road adjacent to the Fryingpan River. Trash along the road can easily become trash in the river. The hard working volunteers helped to ensure clean water and happy fishing on the Fryingpan once again!

2014 Rio Grande Wetlands Planting

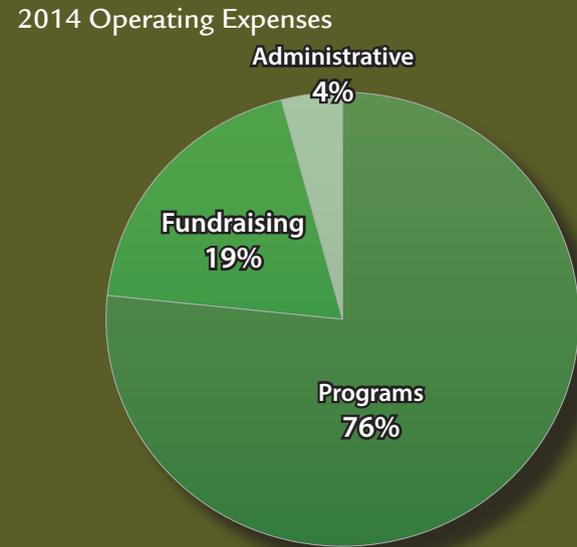
RFC partnered with Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers and the City Of Aspen to conduct a large-scale wetland planting. Volunteers planted thousands of native plants in a created wetlands designed to filter stormwater and prevent pollutants from entering the Roaring Fork River.

2014 Financial Summary



2014 Revenues

Events	330,000
Grants	406,683
Memberships/Donations	105,422
Real Estate Transfer Assessment	48,053
Conservation Easements	47,994
Program Fees	48,205
Other Income	1,748
Total	988,105



2014 Expenses

Programs	731,392
Fundraising	185,729
Administration	34,606
Total	951,727



Maroon Lake – Tina Ogburn



Celebrating 18 years – Robert Woods

Roaring Fork Conservancy

Board of Directors

Ramsey Kropf, *President*
Rick Neiley, *Vice President*
Jennifer Sauer, *Secretary/Treasurer*
Ted Borchelt
Carter Brooksher, *River Council Liason*
Stephen Ellsperman
Jim Light
Rick Lofaro, *Executive Director*
Pat McMahan
Don Schuster
Diane Schwener, *Past President*
Jacque Whitsitt, *Town of Basalt Rep.*
Larry Yaw
Valerie Yaw

Rivers Council Executive Committee (National Council)

Carter Brooksher, *President*
Bill Gruenberg, *Vice President*
Judy Baum, *Secretary*
Dick Kipper, *Treasurer*
Janice Beck
Joyce Gruenberg
Ken Kendrick
Nancy Kempf
Jean Moore
Jan Peterson
Sarah and Robert Woods

River Stewards Steering Committee (Young River Enthusiasts)

Kara Armano, *President*

Catherine Berg
Dan Berg
Jeff Conklin, *Vice President*
Nick Kilbourn
April Long
Brian Long
Natasha Lucero, *Secretary*
Cal Viall
Monica Viall

Program Staff & Associates

Rick Lofaro, *Executive Director*
Sharon Clarke, *Watershed Action Director**
Megan Dean, *Watershed Educator*
Larry Gruel, *Controller*
Sarah Johnson, *Watershed Education Outreach Coordinator*
Heather Lewin, *Watershed Action Director*
Seth Kurt Mason, *Hydrology*
Christina Medved, *Watershed Education Director*
Holly Pagan, *Development Associate*
Chad Rudow, *Water Quality Coordinator*
Rose Ann Sullivan, *Strategic Partnerships*
Sarah Woods, *Director of Philanthropy*

2014 Interns

Taylor Applewhite
Christina Briseno
Kristjan Danis
Emma Gildesgamme
Austin Owen
Adam Smith

**From January-June 2014*



P.O. Box 3349
Basalt, Colorado 81621
970.927.1290

Join us in protecting the Roaring Fork Watershed at
www.roaringfork.org

Crystal River— Seth Andersen
Cover photo, Crystal River – Greta Burkart

