



ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Colorado Watershed Assembly

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Service Highlights

Since Colorado Watershed Assembly (CWA) was created in 2001 it has been our mission to provide support for collaborative efforts among stakeholders to protect and improve the conservation values of land, water, and other natural resources of Colorado's watersheds. Since 2015 CWA has focused attention on public perceptions of water and the Colorado Water Plan through increased engagement with the water quality community and expanding the knowledge and use of water quality data for local decision making. Keeping pace with communities AND changes in technology, CWA has leveraged its longstanding relationships with the Water Quality Monitoring Council, the One Water Solutions Institute at Colorado State University, the Environmental Risk Assessment and Management System (eRAMS) platform and the 'How's My Waterway' water data tool hosted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. CWA has led the effort to develop mapping tools to provide access to water data in Colorado and to support the Water Quality Control Division's priorities.

CWA maintains an informative website and library where watershed organizations can archive data and tell watershed stories. By keeping a connected network of organizations informed and involved in water, these online formats keep the Colorado watershed community consistently updated with water messaging. The bi-weekly electronic newsletter (Inflow) provides a public forum to share information on opportunities, local events, and community projects. The Inflow is a neutral, reliable source of news related to natural resource and water issues. Since July of 2015 over 130 issues of the Inflow published and distributed to our subscribers. In the COVID 19 environment our outreach efforts have included Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

We know that there is no substitute for an engaged community of educators, land and water managers, and decision makers. That is why we have been committed to the Sustaining Colorado Watersheds Conference since its inception. In the spirit of **collaboration**, we partner with the Colorado Riparian Association and Water Education Colorado to host the premier watershed conference in the state. Timely conversations are the hallmark of the Sustaining Colorado Watersheds Conference. In 2020 we were able to provide this experience for over 250 virtual conference attendees with the theme of Business as UnUsual. We look forward to being together again, in person, for the 2021 Sustaining Colorado Watersheds Conference...Together Like Never Before.

From time-to-time watershed organizations and informal networks find they need a central point of contact for data collected to inform various decision-making processes. The CWA website provides neutral and curated space for long term storage and access to historic data. CWA helps manage water data affordably and assists organizations in sharing their data by collaborating with the Colorado Water Quality Monitoring Council and promoting their Colorado Data Sharing Network (CDSN) project, CDSN is currently helping over 70 different data organizations manage, share, and analyze more than 4.1 million water quality results at over 12,000 monitoring locations throughout Colorado.

Operating Highlights

CWA began preparations in 2019 to take our operations fully remote. This was accomplished in 2020. In hindsight, this was quite fortuitous considering the onset of the Corona Virus that made remote office essential for businesses. CWA office items and supplies were moved reducing overhead costs and we initiated monthly virtual CWA Board updates.

After the office move, CWA invested in a new computer for the Program Assistant position. The new computer has an improved webcam, WiFi, and more storage capacity. CWA also invested in new software including GoToMeeting and a Camtasia video editing program to begin developing and growing our website and social media offerings.

With new software in place, CWA initiated virtual weekly staff meetings. Team members are provided a virtual room to help one-another and provide support. The virtual staff room is a space to address actions and identify top priorities. The feedback has been positive. Staff have expressed appreciation for the opportunity learn about the wider organization and how to work in the virtual team environment.

A significant adjustment was made in 2020 to the Sustaining Colorado Watersheds Conference when we determined to take the entire conference virtual.

Healthier watersheds through stronger local watershed groups.

Looking Ahead

CWA strives to provide programs that acknowledge and address the needs of our core constituencies. Our focus is on:

- Building capacity of local watershed groups by growing the Colorado Healthy Rivers Fund, providing tools and resources for organizational development, and connecting watershed organizations to one-another in support of collaborative problem-solving.
- Maintaining key relationships with public officials and state agencies to ensure that decision-makers understand the role that citizen science and local watershed groups play in the state's water planning and to ensure that CWA keeps a pulse on emerging issues and can analyze and communicate potential local impacts to our watersheds.
- Strengthening our own organizational capacity to ensure that CWA is financially robust and ably boarded and -staffed to meet its mission.
- Maintaining CWA's internal infrastructure (structure, systems, procedures, staffing, additional board, etc.) to ensure we meet our strategic goals.

CWA manages several programs that encompass both government grants, contracts, and watershed organization contracts. Government work secured for 2021 includes Colorado Water Conservation Board Round Table Public Education, Participation, and Outreach (PEPO) for the South Platte and Metro Round Tables, Emergency Watershed Protection Monitoring, and administration of the Colorado Healthy Rivers Fund.

Watershed organization contracts and services scheduled in 2021 include Cherry Creek Stewardship Partners program management, Chatfield Watershed Authority program management, fiscal agent for the Upper Clear Creek Watershed Post-Fire Sediment, Debris Flow, and Fluvial Hazard Assessment and the Water Quality Forum, lead communications and management of the Big Thompson Watershed Forum dissolution process, and continued management and outreach for the Colorado Water Quality Monitoring Council.

During the Sustaining Colorado Watersheds Conference in 2019 we held a Lifecycle Planning workshop for Watershed Groups. There was great interest from the groups to participate in a mentorship program. Based on workshop feedback, CWA has created a concept paper to guide the development of a mentoring program. We have shared this concept paper with the Colorado Nonpoint Source Coordinator and look forward to continued conversations.

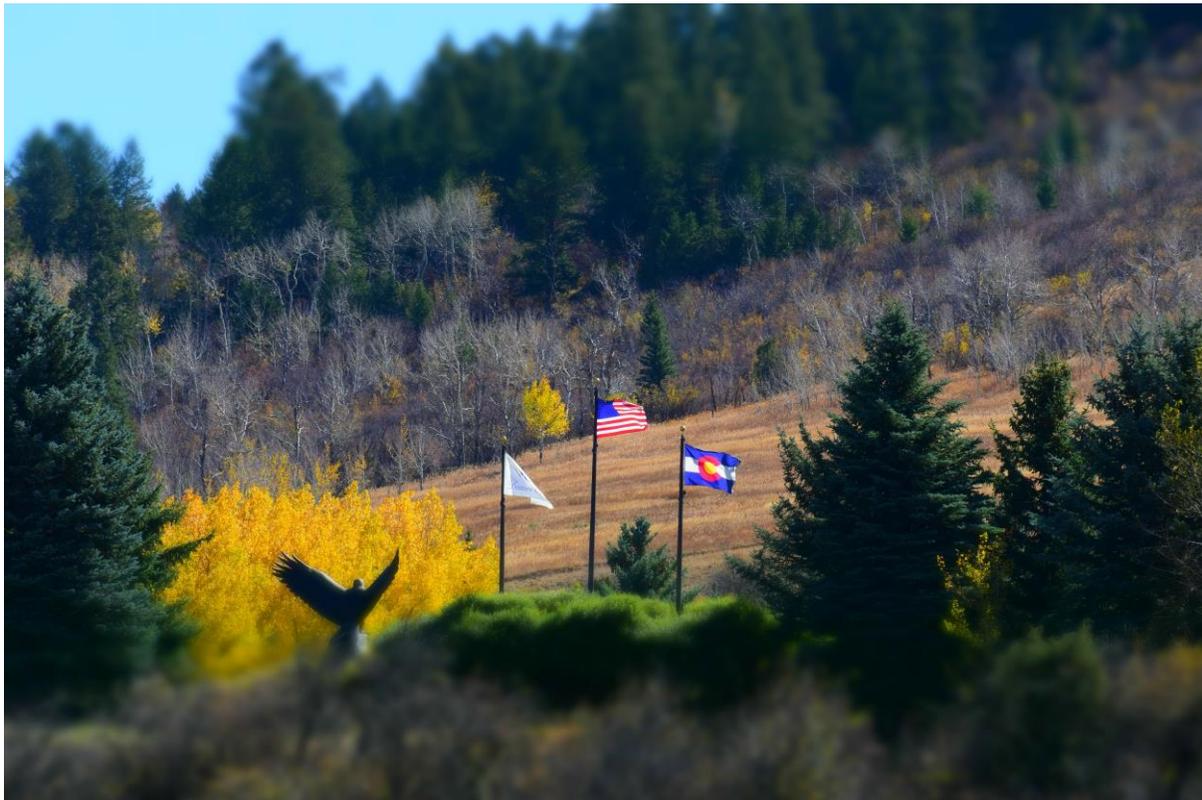
There are multiple benefits to launching this type of program. Organizationally, it would link watershed organization staff with valuable knowledge, elevate knowledge transfer through practical experience, and improve productivity. It would provide for an information exchange that would have both professional and personal benefit for the mentee and mentor. It would also provide access to experts, giving staff feedback in communication, technical skills and leadership, and change management.

Another forward-looking initiative is to develop a coordinated application submittal process between the Nonpoint Source grant program and the Colorado Healthy Rivers Fund. CWA is entering our third year of administering the Colorado Healthy Rivers Fund program. We have streamlined the application submittal process to allow for greater ease in applicant evaluation. We see obvious connections between these two programs which would mutually benefit from joint marketing and management.

It is an honor to get to know and work with so many committed Coloradoans who make the time to be actively involved in our state's economy and environment. We sincerely appreciate the support we receive from individuals, state agencies and private businesses who appreciate our efforts and share our values.

Thank you for your interest in the Colorado Watershed Assembly.

Casey Davenhill
Executive Director



PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Colorado Watershed Assembly

Website - This website is an outreach and education tool to share current news on happenings, success stories and lessons learned on water related issues. The website has a dynamic news blog that updates bi-monthly featuring 5 headlines: 1) Job Announcements, 2) Trainings and Workshops, 3) Funding Opportunities, 4) Conferences and Events, and 5) Announcements. It also serves as a conduit to share water regulation updates and other relevant information significant to watershed organizations and professionals in the field. Through outreach and engagement activities, CWA has created and grown a network of partners to address unique geologic and stream attributes and issues within each river basin of Colorado.

The website houses an electronic directory of Colorado Watershed Groups and Soil Conservation Districts. The [Assembly Watershed Group Directory](#) lists 93 watershed groups and 76 Conservation Districts. All these organizations have the potential to protect and improve water quality in their communities. None of these organizations have the resources to meet all of their goals. Building a community of trust and collaboration is key to leveraging the goodwill and hard work it takes to be an effective community partner.

MISSION

The Colorado Watershed Assembly supports collaborative efforts to protect and improve the conservation values of our state's land, water, and other natural resources by providing the network to connect a diversity of interests with Colorado's watershed groups and other decision makers.

Inflow Newsletter - CWA manages this bi-weekly newsletter whose distribution goes to a select subset of watershed stakeholders who subscribe. We highlight watershed job and grant opportunities, upcoming conferences, trainings and workshops and special alerts. The Inflow Network was conceived as a tool for citizens and governmental institutions alike to broaden participation on natural resource issues.

FEATURED INFLOW NEWS



FUNDING
OPPORTUNITIES
LATE SEPTEMBER

[Read More →](#)

Sep 16, 2020



TRAININGS &
WORKSHOPS
LATE SEPTEMBER

[Read More →](#)

Sep 16, 2020



JOB
ANNOUNCEMENTS
LATE SEPTEMBER

[Read More →](#)

Sep 16, 2020



CONFERENCES &
EVENTS LATE
SEPTEMBER

[Read More →](#)

Sep 16, 2020



ANNOUNCEMENT
LATE SEPTEMBER

[Read More →](#)

Sep 16, 2020

Data Literacy Workshops

- In collaboration with Colorado Water Quality Monitoring Council, Colorado Data Sharing Network, Colorado State University One Water Solutions Institute and Elephant Fish GIS Services, CWA develops, promotes, and conducts data literacy workshops throughout Colorado. In these workshops we work through a local community issue from data collection and analysis to a mapped visualization and look at stream storytelling in a holistic way.

These workshops discuss the use of graphics to illustrate and communicate data stories that are both engaging and informative. Individuals with a background in local community organization, government, academia, and private business are encouraged to attend. In 2020, we conducted one workshop with the Upper South Platte Watershed "How's my water?" data literacy workshop before Covid virus protocol halted all onsite activities.



Sustaining Colorado Watersheds Conference -

2020 marked the 15th year of this highly popular event that expands cooperation and collaboration throughout our state for natural resource conservation, protection, and enhancement by informing citizen groups, agencies, consultants, and legislators about current issues and through networking opportunities. CWA along with our

conference partners, Water Education Colorado and Colorado Riparian Association, tap into the creativity of our watershed communities and highlight how diverse watershed interests interact and solve complex water issues. Water touches us all from forests to farms, recreation, mining, energy, city water, rural water, source water, and recycled and reuse water.

The two key conference themes for 2020 were the River Ethic: Shaping a river ethic to improve societal understanding of stream corridors, and the Colorado Water Plan—Past, Present, and Future Visions: Prioritizing projects that protect watershed health and benefit our water supplies. A significant conference adjustment was made in 2020 due to Covid-19. With our conference partners we determined to take the entire conference virtual.

A decision to be made in 2021 will be whether to move the Sustaining Colorado Watersheds Conference back to a live venue, keep it virtual, or develop a hybrid approach.

Colorado Healthy Rivers

Fund - CWA serves as a state-level umbrella

organization for locally based watershed groups around the state that are committed to collaborative approaches to the restoration and protection of lands and natural resources within Colorado's watersheds in concert with economic development. The Colorado Water Conservation Board and the Water Quality Control Commission collaborate with the Colorado Watershed Assembly to manage and operate this fund which allows Colorado citizens the opportunity to support local watershed efforts by making voluntary contributions for such purpose. CWA serves as grant manager for awarded grants and administrator of the application process. In 2020, 8 projects were selected to receive CHRF funding listed in the table below.



Cherry Creek Stewardship Partners - CWA benefits from a long-

standing fiscal agent relationship with the Cherry Creek Stewardship Partners and their many supporters including the Counties of Arapahoe, Denver and Douglas, the Cities of Aurora, Centennial, Castle Rock, Lone Tree, Parker, the Mile High Flood District and the Cherry Creek Basin Water Quality Authority, Tri-County Health and Parker Water & Sanitation District. The Cherry Creek Watershed is home to some of the most innovative stream reclamation projects in Colorado and we are able to offer and arrange for tours and workshops with landowners, businesses, land use agencies, civil engineering firms, landscape architects and contractors in this vibrant and valuable watershed. In September of 2018, CWA co-hosted a tour for USEPA staff to see firsthand the watershed protections projects that have been put in place since 1998.

Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment

- A considerable effort in 2020 was the closeout and reporting of a five-year Colorado Watershed Assembly NPS Program Outreach and Education grant that ran from 2015 - 2020. A final grant year drive to create an interactive map highlighting NPS projects throughout Colorado and produce a data literacy video was accomplished. Both initiatives were completed on time and in scope. The total expenditures of the grant over the 5-year period were \$807,415, with matching funds accrued at \$322,966. Over the course of 5 years the grant was amended three times. As a 501(c)(3) Colorado organization that supports collaborative efforts, CWA provides network connectivity to diverse interests represented by Colorado's watershed groups, Conservation Districts, land managers and technical specialists. The purpose of this grant had been to provide watershed support services to the local community through the publication of a bi-weekly newsletter, maintenance of an informative website and developing an informed network of watershed groups and other nonpoint source partners involved in water quality protection.

SECTION 319 NONPOINT SOURCE POLLUTION CONTROL PROGRAM ASSESSMENT/PLANNING PROJECT FINAL REPORT



Colorado Watershed Assembly: NPS Program Outreach and Education Final Report 2015 - 2020

Task Description		Product	Required Match	Current Cumulative Match*	Other Sources of Funds
Task 1	Conduct 12 Outreach Activities	E&O Materials and WQ Focus Group feedback	\$170,000.00	\$281,271.00	Colorado Data Share Network, Colorado Water Quality Monitoring Council, Water Education Colorado, Sustaining Colorado Watersheds Conference Speakers & Volunteers, Colorado Riparian Association, CWCB Public Education and Public Outreach PEPO) and Colorado Healthy Rivers Fund, Watershed Community Conservation Network, National Resource Conservation Service, Colorado State University Extension Service, Colorado Ag/Water Alliance
Task 2	Approved content on CWA Website	Funding, Clean Water Initiatives and Programs, NPS Project Support	\$50,804.67	\$5,705.00	ElephantFish
Task 3	Bi-weekly electronic newsletters	26 e-Newsletters	\$38,148.00	\$21,600.00	Metropolitan State University Internship Program
Task 4	Conduct a series of statewide focus groups as follow up on survey of water quality issues.	Inclusive Process and Report	\$53,013.33	\$45.00	Colorado Stormwater Council, Water Educator Network, One World/One Water at Metropolitan State University, Keep It Clean Partnership, Colorado Foundation for Agriculture
Task 5	Provide data repository and mapping tools.	Data Project	\$11,000.00	\$15,798.00	Colorado Water Quality Monitoring Council, Colorado Data Sharing Network
Totals			\$322,966.00	\$324,419.00	

*Leveraged resources with partners and co-hosts on events throughout the state for in-kind and match.

Colorado Water Quality Monitoring Council - The Colorado

Watershed Assembly works with the Colorado Water Quality Monitoring Council in managing and promoting the Colorado Data Sharing Network (CDSN) as a collaborative project. CDSN was formed to solve many of the historic barriers to effective sharing of water quality data in Colorado. CDSN products and services seek to satisfy reporting requirements for Colorado NPS (Non-Point Source) project sponsors. The CDSN project addresses the top priorities echoed throughout the collective watershed management, assessment and monitoring community in Colorado including the Colorado Water Quality Control Division, local governments, private entities and non-profit organizations. With the Council and other partners, CWA develops, promotes, and conducts data literacy workshops throughout Colorado.

Healthy Rivers Fund & Nonpoint Source Pollution 319 Funded Projects

Colorado Watershed Assembly

NPS 319 Grant Program | Healthy Rivers Fund | 2019 Healthy Rivers Fund Recipients

1 NPS 319 Grant Program for Subsets and Techniques
2 Upper Cache La Poudre River Watershed Plan
3 Lower North Engine River Restoration
4 Goshute Mining Processing Area
5 Restore the Goshute Town of All Public Works
6 Upper North Engine Creek Restoration
7 Upper North Engine Improvements in the
8 Upper North Engine Control Phase 2 Later
9 Unimpaired Stream Control Phase 2 Later
10 Inorganic Mountain River Water Control
11 Upper South Engine River Restoration
12 Upper South Engine River Restoration
13 Upper South Engine River Restoration
14 NPS Pollution Reduction in Upper South Engine
15 Upper South Engine River Restoration
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Healthy Rivers Fund & Nonpoint Source Pollution 319 Funded Projects

Colorado Watershed Assembly

NPS 319 Grant Program | Healthy Rivers Fund | 2019 Healthy Rivers Fund Recipients

1 Healthy Rivers Fund
2 Upper North Engine River Restoration
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FINANCIAL SUMMARY

VALUES

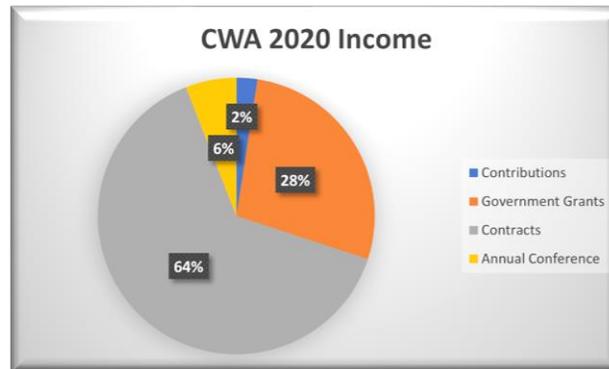
Supporting watershed protection at the local level by emphasizing local control, local agenda-setting, and engaging local expertise.

Growing the “water ethic” by engaging citizens in work to benefit their watershed as a way to grow local stewardship, understanding, and connection to the local resource.

Expenses \$321,583



Income \$337,766



Do your part for healthy watersheds today. Make a donation at coloradowater.org

