
CUSP

2010 Annual Report



Projects & Programs



Our staff and volunteers get things done!

In spite of difficult economic times that are challenging to not only citizens and businesses, but also to many nonprofits, CUSP had an excellent year in 2010. Our staff maxed out at 20 individuals during the summer of 2010, and has hovered around 14 full-time equivalent employees. Over 2,300 volunteers contributed 16,792 hours to help us accomplish work across our myriad programs. The following report provides highlights and a recap of our 2010 accomplishments and finances, and the last page provides web links to many of our partners and pertinent information.

Our Mission

To protect the water quality and ecological health of the Upper South Platte Watershed through the cooperative efforts of stakeholders, with emphasis on community values and economic sustainability.

Forest Health

Our watershed is dominated by forests. Most areas are ponderosa pine forests, but there are also areas of mixed conifer, aspen, and lodgepole. All these forest types share certain features at this time: They are in poor health, and vulnerable to disease and insect outbreaks, and catastrophic fire. CUSP works actively on forest-related programs designed to improve our forests' health and protect our communities.

Collaborative Processes

CUSP actively participates in the **Front Range Round Table**, a multi-stakeholder initiative that is addressing wildfire and forest health issues across the ten counties of Colorado's Front Range (Boulder, Clear Creek, Douglas, El Paso, Gilpin, Grand, Jefferson, Larimer, Park, Teller.) In 2010 our GIS staff helped prepare maps for the Round Table's Implementation and Mapping Committee, which will help focus on-the-ground treatments for years to come. We also worked with the Round Table's Outreach Committee, hosting two tours for elected officials and the media to show on-the-ground work in and around the Woodland Park area.



Staff is also in the **Watershed-Wildfire** committee, a collaborative effort with water providers to raise awareness of the impacts on watersheds from wildfire. As part of that process, we worked to help complete a watershed wildfire assessment for the South Platte Headwaters, which is a mate to an earlier assessment completed for the lower portion of our watershed.

CUSP and other Round Table members worked to have the Pike National Forest and the Arapahoe Roosevelt National Forests selected for a federal Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Act (CFLRA) designation. Through this process we are working with federal land managers to help determine best project locations and to monitor activities. The CFLRA project is expected to bring in \$1,000,000 to \$4,000,000 per year over the next ten years for forest restoration projects. As part of our monitoring program, we are working with area students from Kendall Hovel's Environmental Education class at Woodland Park High School who are participating directly in monitoring on a USFS forest cut north of town along Hwy 67.

Woodland Park Healthy Forest Initiative (WPHFI)



WPHFI was a project we began in late 2008 that was designed to ramp up collaboration and increase forest treatments in and around the Woodland Park area. In 2010 the committee completed a Community Wildfire Protection Plan across a 50,000 acre landscape, and documented over 4,000 acres of on-the-ground treatment. Originally conceived as a two-year demonstration project, the WPHFI leadership team this year voted to continue the project into the future.

Two WPHFI projects are particularly noteworthy: 1.) We undertook a planning and code review with the City of Woodland Park (with funding support from the Department of Local Affairs) and created a Lessons Learned report (available at our website). We also performed a survey of area residents to better understand attitudes toward forest projects. The majority of respondents support the work going on to improve forest health and reduce fire impacts.

ARRA

In late 2009 CUSP received a \$1.18 million grant from the Colorado State Forest Service for development and implementation of community wildfire protection plans (CWPPs) across the five southern counties of the Round Table area (Douglas, El Paso, Jefferson, Park and Teller). These funds come from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (aka stimulus), and have provided funding to support 15 jobs at CUSP, with some of our government partners, and in the businesses of private sector forestry contractors.

Forest Treatment Stats

- * 3,144 acres treated
- * 19,687 hours of slash accumulation time
- * 1,865 slash piles stacked for winter burning
- * 320 cords of firewood provided to those in need through a partnership with *Help the Needy*
- * 1,617 loads of slash delivered to the Teller County Slash Site at Divide.
- * \$418,298 paid out in contracts to private contractors and government partners for implementation of community wildfire protection plan projects.

Rivers



Dave Rosgen, President of Wildland Hydrology, is helping CUSP and our partners to develop a long-term restoration plan for the Trail Creek drainage.

Trail Creek and Horse Creek

With help from the National Forest Foundation, Vail Resorts, the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment, Douglas County, and the Colorado Water Conservation Board and other donors, CUSP and its primary partner, the Pike National Forest, are working to address the aftermath of the 2002 Hayman fire. We hired Dave Rosgen, principal of Wildland Hydrology, and one of the leading experts in the United States on managing and restoring river systems, to help develop and implement a plan. The potential post-restoration reduction in flow-related sediment yield is 16,974 tons/yr that currently continue downstream.

During 2010 Rosgen collected field data as part of the WARSSS (watershed assessment of river stability & sediment supply) assessment of existing conditions, and began developing the restoration strategies, which will be implemented in 2011 and 2012. The cost is estimated to be around \$1 million. In the meantime, CUSP and our volunteers have done miles of stabilization work in the watershed.



Volunteers working in Trail Creek



Happy Meadows/Sportsmen's

Happy Meadows is a stream segment on the mainstem of the South Platte in Park County that is managed by the Pike National Forest for recreation, and the Sportsmen's Paradise is a private fishing community on the river, that is totally surrounded by USFS lands. Our project, which is slated to begin in 2011 and go into 2012, will remove an existing dam that is blocking fish passage and increasing sediment deposition, create a half acre of new wetlands, and do in-channel river restoration for four miles of the river. The total budget for the project approaches \$700,000.

Murphy Beaver Ponds

In 2002 the Colorado Division of Wildlife drained Tarryall Reservoir due to cracks in the dam. There were negative, downstream impacts from the fast release of water, including the wash out of several beaver dams on the Marc Murphy property. Marc came to us and asked if CUSP could help restore the beaver dams. With assistance from the Park county Land and Water Trust Fund, we hired Pete Gallagher of Fin-Up Habitat Consultants to provide suitable habitat, and to install a "beaver reliever" that would maintain static elevation of the new pond (photo right). The beaver reliever is a stand pipe that will hold the level of the water at a static state as the beavers redevelop the pond, and reduce the likelihood of future blowouts in high flows. At the same time,

Gallagher reduced stream width in several places and stabilized banks with additional willow plantings. Murphy's property is in the South Park Trout program (www.southparktrout.org), so there is public fishing. Total cost of the project: \$12,000. And the beavers are happy – they moved back in two days after the project was complete!



Beaver reliever

Michigan Creek Restoration

Paul McDaniel purchased Michigan Creek Ranch in 2001. The property was long neglected, and the river was in very poor condition due to overgrazing. Part of the river, where it crossed under Hwy 285, had also been straightened at some distant past time, as part of highway construction. There were also impacts to the property and stream from the development of the James Tingle Reservoir on an adjacent piece. McDaniel contacted Dan Drucker, a CUSP board member representing the Center of Colorado Conservancy District, and Gary Nichols of Park County, about getting help for the stream, and in 2009 they asked if CUSP could help to facilitate on project on McDaniel's stretch.

The project, which came in at a total cost of \$127,000, with funds from the Park County Land and Water Trust Fund, USDA through its Environmental Quality Incentive Program, and the owner, created a new meander (photo below) where the stream was once straightened, and restored habitat along two miles of river.



New meander in the river at Hwy 285

River Stats

- * 10.5 miles of river bank stabilization, willow planting, and clean up
- * 2,792 hazard logs removed from lower Horse Creek

Other Programmatic Work

Antero

On January 4th over 460 intrepid ice fishermen (and fisher-women and -kids) braved the winter weather for a chance to catch the whopper at the Bob Taylor Memorial Ice Fishing Contest. Funds raised at the event go back to recreational improvements and environmental projects at Antero. We raised \$7,000 this year, which will likely go to match a grant for a new boat ramp in 2011. The winning fish weighed 7.2 pounds and was caught by Bryan Johnson (pictured below with his lunker).

CUSP has also participated in the Antero Management Committee with Denver Water, the Colorado Division of Wildlife, Park County Sheriff's Office, and representatives of the recreation community. We are exploring management approaches for improving recreation and the fishery while protecting the environment around Antero, so stay tuned for more happenings in 2011.



Biochar

CUSP is working with the Jefferson Conservation District on a demonstration project for a biochar unit from Golden-based Biochar Engineering Corp. Biochar is essentially charcoal, produced in a low-oxygen atmosphere, which is fine-grained and highly porous, so it helps soils to retain nutrients and water. We are interested in its potential for sequestering carbon, using biomass from forest thinning projects, and improving soil tilth in our poor soils. One project we completed this year was a monitoring project using biochar in the planting holes for seedling trees in the fire. We hope to assess whether the biochar increases survivability in the poor soils of our watershed.

Colorado Natural Heritage Project Teller County Assessment

We were really excited to be able to partner with the Colorado Natural Heritage Project (CNHP) at Colorado State University and Teller County to complete a Survey of Critical Biological Resources. Teller was the only county in the watershed that had yet to have the survey, so with funding from EPA, BLM, and GOCO, the partners were able to complete field season data gathering across the area. CNHP identified 51 potential conservation areas, and rare plants and animals, such as the globally unique *Oreoxis humilis*, or Pikes Peak Spring Parsley, a plant found no where else in the world other than on Pikes Peak. The CNHP team is working on a final report, which will be available in 2011. Total project cost for the assessment was \$178,000; CUSP contributed \$10,000 of our unrestricted donations toward the assessment, plus staff time.



Pikes Peak Spring Parsley

Energy

In our 2008 strategic-plan update CUSP board members and stakeholders included energy as a focus area, and 2010 brought a ramp up of a program focusing on energy conservation and alternative energy. We received \$57,500 in ARRA funding from the Governor's Energy Office to support a community energy coordinator for Teller County, and to support outreach efforts across the watershed. One of our first events was an evening sustainability summit in Woodland Park, geared toward businesses, elected officials, and other nonprofits. We also pulled together an energy advisory committee, which is tasked with developing a sustainability plan for Teller County (similar initiatives are happening in other counties, with other nonprofits or government entities leading the effort).

At the personal level, we have been working to reduce CUSP's carbon footprint. Staff members finished siding the office with locally sawn board and batten to give our building a more attractive exterior, reusing a natural and local product (some of the logs sawn by our own crew as part of our forest health work), and significantly improving heat retention in the office. We are currently working on a plan to install solar panels on the office.



Mines and Mineral Extraction

When CUSP developed its first strategic plan, abandoned and closed mines were considered a high priority. Then, due to Hayman, mining was set aside, until 2009, when we began partnering with the Western Hardrock Watershed Team (WHWT) to bring an Office of Surface Mining-VISTA (Volunteers in Service To America) volunteer to CUSP to help us begin a strategic assessment of the mines in the watershed. That first year of assessment was geared toward tracking the paper trail of mines through the various federal, state, and local government offices that had data on the mines, and selecting those most likely to be resulting in environmental degradation. In 2010, with help from the Colorado Healthy River's Fund (a tax-payer supported checkoff administered by the Colorado Water Conservation Board) and the Hillsdale Foundation, we were able to hire a new staff person, Jara Johnson – a native of Alma, and recent



Drainage from an abandoned mine

graduate from the Master's program at School of Mines – to help manage our mine related activities. With the assistance of an intern from Denver University (see more on interns on page 11), Jara completed a year-long watershed level monitoring program for the mines identified in year one of the program, and is working on plans for a second year of more detailed monitoring.

Jara has begun building connections with many of the private mine owners, who are looking at working with CUSP to correct problems voluntarily. We see this partnership as being the epitome of what CUSP is about!

There is currently a tremendous amount of activity relating to oil & gas development and uranium mining in South Park, with major industrial players, such as El Paso Oil and Gas and Royal Resources, pursuing leases and drilling sites. CUSP is working with Park County and other stakeholders to develop a baseline water-quality monitoring program, and to raise funds for doing a detailed assessment of groundwater movement and geological features in the Park, which should allow us to evaluate future risks and impacts from mineral development. We expect 2011 to be a busy year for this program.

Trails

Gill Trail runs between Jefferson County Highway 126 and the base of Cheeseman Reservoir. This rugged, 3.5 mile trail, is a heavily used by hikers and fisherman accessing the South Platte at Cheeseman Canyon. CUSP and our partners, including the USFS and Trout Unlimited, have worked on the trail for the last five years. In 2010, volunteers spent 8 days improving trail condition and our staff mapped the

whole trail to develop a long-term plan for future improvements. CUSP and our volunteers have also worked on other trails in the watershed, including at Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument and the Pike National Forest.

Tree Planting

In 2010 we planted over 8,000 trees, primarily in the Hayman and Schoonover burns, helping to restore the forest of the future! Due to the severity of the fires, and the nature of ponderosa reproduction, foresters estimate that it could take hundreds of years, or perhaps a thousand years for the forest to come back on its own, so the trees we plant are critical to restoration.

Weeds

Invasive weeds cause significant environmental disruption, and have been something CUSP has worked on since we developed our first strategic plan in 2000. During 2010 CUSP staff, volunteers, and the landowners we work with surveyed almost 2,600 acres to document weed infestations. We directly treated 364 acres of Canada thistle, musk thistle (seen at right, held by Jeff Ravage of our field crew), oxyeye daisy, scentless chamomile, toadflax, knapweed, spurge, and orange hawkweed. We leveraged \$12,000 in state and federal grants for the weed program with over \$55,000 in cash and in-kind support from landowners and volunteers.



Education and Outreach

Since our inception, an emphasis on education has been a central tenant of all our endeavors. We work to *create a water literate society* every day, through every project and program. In 2010 we successfully extended our educational programs to include an internship-based approach to engaging students from area high schools and colleges. Our team works directly with classroom teachers to bring kids out to the field, and we collaborate with other nonprofits to extend the public's understanding of issues that relate to the values we share – clean water, clean air, abundant wildlife, healthy forests and fisheries, while promoting economic sustainability for our communities.

Education Stats

- * 8 interns worked with CUSP staff on projects and programs.
 - Two high school students from Fairplay were summer interns working on the mine assessment. They went to Colorado School of Mines with Jara to research the mines, and spent time in the field taking water quality samples.
 - A baccalaureate student at Denver University also participated in the mine assessment.
 - Two students from the GIS program at Pikes Peak Community college interned to assist CUSP with mapping associated with our various programs and projects.
 - Two graduate students from the University of Colorado School of Architecture and Planning worked on a case-study evaluation of an area ranch in affiliation with CUSP and the landowner.
 - A graduate student from the College of Public Administration at the University of Colorado at Denver worked on a first tier assessment of biomass availability in the watershed.
- * 67 tech support hours from our partners working with volunteers and students at CUSP events.
- * 862 teachers and students received 3640 contact hours who learned about forest health, mine history and ecological foot prints, wetlands, rivers, and wildlife

Finances & Management

CUSP is a 501(c)3 charitable nonprofit. Our board is made up of individuals who represent the various types of stakeholders in the watershed, and currently includes:

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Tom Eisenman, *Board Chair*, Development Director, Park County

Mary Dawson, *Vice Chair*, Environmental Programs Specialist, City of Aurora

Greg Aplet, *Treasurer*, Forest Ecologist, The Wilderness Society

Dan Drucker, *Secretary*, Director & President, Center of Colorado Water Conservancy District

BOARD MEMBERS

Connor Baker, Interested Individual

Karen Berry, Board Member of Jefferson Conservation District

Marie Chisholm, Interested Individual

Kurt Dahl Environmental Health Director, Teller County

Swithin Dick, Water Resource Engineer, Centennial Water & Sanitation District

Garth Englund, Special Projects Engineer, Douglas County

Don Kennedy, Environmental Scientist, Denver Water

Don Logelin, VP for Programs at Cheyenne Mountain Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Sara Mayben (non-voting member), Renewable Resource Staff Officer, Pike National Forest

Patrick O'Connell, Jefferson County Planning & Zoning - Development Services

Mike Smith, Business community representative, Colorado Renewable Resource Coop

Dave Wissel, Director, Upper South Platte Water Conservancy District

Jeff Zepp, Interested Individual, Motorized Recreation Community

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Carol Ekarius, Executive Director

Jonathan Bruno, Operation's Director

Mark Herndon, Deputy Operation's Director

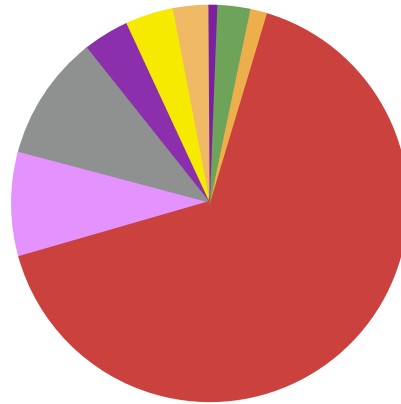
Helen Dyer, Development and Outreach Director

Chris Fuller, Office Manager

CUSP's Board approved revisions to the Bylaws and Policies in 2010. These are available upon request. Pursuant to our policies, CUSP has an audit by an outside CPA firm each year. Our audit, tax forms, and other documents relating to accountability and transparency are published each year on our website.

Income

- Biz Grants/Donations
- Utilities Grants/Donations
- Individual Contributions
- Federal Grants/Donations
- State Grants/Donations
- Local Gov Grants/Donations
- Other Grants
- Program Revenue
- Misc

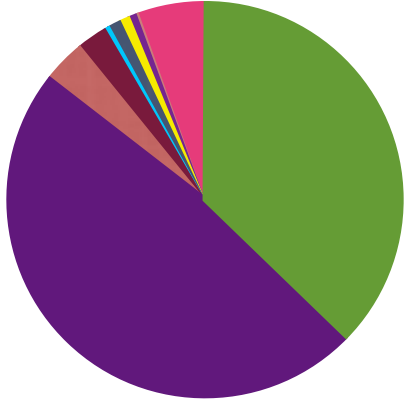


Category	Amount
Business Grants/Donations	\$ 6,239
Utilities Grants/Donations	\$ 33,000
Individual Contributions	\$ 16,932
Federal Grants/Donations	\$ 815,634
State Grants/Donations	\$ 104,621
Local Gov Grants/Donations	\$ 125,821
Other Grants	\$ 46,000
Program Revenue	\$ 48,315
Misc	\$ 38,148
Total	\$ 1,234,710

Category	Amount
Donated Services-professional	35,746
Donated Services-volunteer	156,700
Inkind	30,723
Total	223,169

Expenses

- Salaries & Related
- Contractors
- Project Supplies & Expenses
- Equipment
- Accounting & Bank Exps
- Office-Misc
- Occupancy
- Insurance except WC and UEI
- Miscellaneous
- Carryover



Category	Amount
Salaries & Related	\$ (460,740)
Contractors	\$ (596,044)
Project Supplies & Expenses	\$ (43,040)
Equipment	\$ (30,216)
Accounting & Bank Exps	\$ (4,738)
Office-Misc	\$ (12,223)
Occupancy	\$ (9,894)
Insurance except WC and UEI	\$ (7,195)
Miscellaneous	\$ (2,294)
Carryover	\$ (68,326)
Total	\$ (1,234,710)

Function	Amount
Program	\$ 0
Fundraising	\$ 0
General Management	\$ 0
Total	\$ 0

Donors & Supporters

Hope & Toshio Alger
Town of Alma
Steve Allard
Allen Family
Americorps/OSM VISTA
Greg & Rhonda Aplet
Aspen Valley Ranch
City Of Aurora
Connor M Baker
Ronald Baker
Misi Ballard
Dave Bauch
Gary Bieske
Michael & Jean Blaisdell
Melissa Bleakney
Blue Mountain Mesa
Blue Mountain Ranch
Bob Knowell
Michelle Bowles
Boxwood Gulch Ranch
Boy Scouts of America
David Brown
Gary L Brown
Jonathan Bruno
BSA Troop #632
John Buerger
Dusty Burton
Bob Bynes
Tom & Linda Camblin
Joe Campbell
Marti Campbell
Laura Canby
Canyon Enterprises
Cat & Coyote Holding
Centennial W & S District
Center of Colorado Water Conservancy
Keith Chatfield
Marie Chisolm
Kate Clark
CME Wildfire Protection Group
Stacey & Tom Cochran
Colorado Division of Wildlife
Colorado Forest Restoration
Institute
Colorado Natural Heritage Project
Colorado State Forest Service
Colorado Water Conservation
Board
Gary Crane
Mary Dawson
Richard Delmargo
Denver Water
Douglas County
Dan Drucker
Helen Dyer
Echo Valley Recreation
Tims & Cathy Edwards
Carol Ekarius & Ken Woodard
Mark & Dottie Essary
Jim Fagerstrom & Deb Baxter
Doug Farquhar
Leland Feitz
Lou & Nell Fletcher
James Foster
Mark Fancis
RH & MC Friesen
Robert Fritchel
Chris Fuller
Al Gandy
Caleb & Sidney Gates
Denny Gibson
Jon Gibson
John & Kathy Gordon
Governor's Energy Office
Vickie Greene
Girl Scout Troop 256
Alfred & Jo Ann Gundersen
Arthur Hall
Hartsel Fire Protect District
Help the Needy
Mark Herndon
Hillsdale Fund Inc.
Rodney & Margaret Hindley
Indian Creek POA
Indian Mountain
Inman Family Trust
JJ Jamison
Jefferson Conservation District
Jefferson County
Ruth Johnson-Mullis
Warren Johnson
Thomas Kalter
Jim Kline
Knox Aquatic Resource Consult
Tom & Susan Kongs
Leon & Dina Krain
Baniata Kurth
Lake George Community Assn
Sherman & Sally LeMaster
Eileen Levin
Lions Camp
Lost Park Ranch Owner's Assn
Lost Valley Ranch
Lost Valley Retreat

Lutheran Valley Ranch Estates	James & Faye Plucker	Ngoc Bui Thieu
Majestic HOA	Cathy Pobega	Jeff Tienken
Matt Matwijec	Dave & Karen Praner	Chuck & Mary Todd
Sara Mayben & Stephen Quist	Quaker Ridge Camp	Robert Trombley
Paul & Lorri McDaniel	John Rakowski	Trout Unlimited - Cheyenne
Joe McGarry	Jamie Rash	Mountain Chapter
Andrew McKay	Jeff & Lori Ravage	Trout Unlimited - Cutthroat
Jack & Jineen McWherter	D. Regan	Chapter
Bruce Metzger & Jan Hanley	Robert Renninger	Turkey Rock Ranches
Mark & Sue Meyer	Katherine Rhodus	Jamie Turner
Mile High Youth Corps	Ridgewood POA	Tweeds
Donald & Lois Mileham	Kevin & Suzi Russo	UMC MO Conference
Joe Mock	Sacred Heart Ministries	USDA Forest Service
Jesse Moreland	Sage Port Homeowners	Vail Resorts
Marc Murphy	Mary Sailer	Lee VanArsdale
National Forest Foundation	Theresa Schrock	Vectra Bank
Navajo Mountain Mesa	Schumacher Accounting & Tax	Peter Wass
Robert & Lora Olmstead	Schwab Charitable Fund	Lawlor Wakem
Taylor & Nancy Owens	Nicholas Simpson	Art & Rachel Wannlund
Diane Palmer	South Park High School	Chad Watkins
Park County	South Platte Enhancement	Stanley & Keli Weilert
Park County Sheriff	Board	Jim Winzenburg
Lisa Patton	Constance & Donald Sparks	William & Carolyn Woodard
Manny & Dottie Peretz	Preston Springer	City of Woodland Park
Perry Park East HOA	Starkey's General Store	Woodrock HOA
Alice Pierson	Swayback Ranch	John Woodward
Pikes Peak Community Fdn	Teller County	Brad Ziemer
Josephine Plant	Teller-Park Conservation	Anthony Zuchowski & Sue
	District	Mitchell

Resources

CUSP Main Website:

www.uppersouthplatte.org

Other CUSP Websites:

www.uppersouthplatte-weeds.org

www.tellerenergy.com

www.divideslashsite.org

www.antero-icefishing-contest.com

www.wphfi.org

Outside Sites of Interest:

Front Range Roundtable:

www.frontrangeroundtable.org

Watershed wildfire assessments:

www.jw-associates.org

Colorado State Forest Service:

csfs.colostate.edu

CNHP:

www.cnhp.colostate.edu

National Forest Foundation:

www.nationalforests.org

Governor's Energy Office:

www.rechargecolorado.com

Pike National Forest:

fs.usda.gov/psicc

Colorado Department of Ag:

www.colorado.gov/ag/weeds