

# 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

TOGETHER, WE ARE SUPPORTING HEALTHY RIVERS





# THANK YOU FROM TIM & ANN

Dear Forever Our Rivers Friends,

Thank you for joining us and supporting rivers like your life depends on it. Because it does!

With your support, 2022 was another outstanding year of enabling healthier rivers. Together, we connected relic wetlands to their floodplains, lowered fire danger by removing thickets of invasive weeds, and created an inviting boat ramp and nature area. We restored habitat for the endangered southwestern willow flycatcher and sent children who couldn't afford it on unforgettable, educational river trips.

It was collaborations among community stakeholders, ranchers, farmers and river partners that helped us select impactful projects. Because to protect rivers, we must look directly at some daunting issues like drought, wildfire, floods and low flows. We must remember that rivers are an economic engine for communities and home to more threatened animal species than any other ecosystem. Almost no ecosystem on Earth matches the physical dynamism of rivers.

We also must distribute river conservation more equitably and empower communities to care for their local rivers.

At Forever Our Rivers, we are driven to succeed because we know the health of rivers is inseparable from our own well-being. We all depend on rivers, and rivers depend on us.

We take the long view, and we always will. Thank you again for joining forces with us.

Sincerely,



Tim Carlson,  
board chair



Ann Johnston,  
executive director



# 2022 GRANTS

## TYING TOGETHER GENERATIONS OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

Everyone—regardless of their gender, race, culture, socio-economic status, physical ability or background—must have access to rivers and opportunity to enjoy and learn about them. Our vision is for every person to feel welcome and well-equipped to make decisions and take action to protect their local rivers.

### BOAT RAMP & EQUITABLE RIVER ACCESS



In partnership with the accredited **Colorado West Land Trust**, a new boat ramp and picnic area is being installed on the Gunnison River, 2.5 miles downstream from the town of Delta, at a put-in known as “Witches Bridge”. In addition to new trails leading to a sandy beach, there will be a shade structure, ample parking and a vault toilet.

This new put in encourages a broader diversity of people to enjoy float trips in an area where previous access points were 15 miles apart. Access to the river in this community, in which 35% of children live in poverty, is no longer limited to expert rafters.



We teamed up with **Colorado Canyons Association** to help kids explore the great outdoors! They enjoyed the incredible Gunnison Gorge and McInnis Canyons national conservation areas. The special educational programs are designed for students, many of whom come from families with limited resources. Not only do they learn, but they also help preserve these beautiful areas by restoring habitats. Last year, we helped 45 children experience unforgettable trips!



*“With Funding from Forever Our Rivers, we are able to remove invasive plants along the Dolores River and revegtate and steward these areas with native plants. Together, we are making a difference.”*

*-Shannon  
RiversEdge West*



Recognizing the important role of science, a grant to **RiversEdge West** supported consistent data collection across multiple watersheds to inform future river restoration efforts. The 4Rivers geodatabase has layers for monitoring, invasive planet inventory, planned and active treatments and revegetation. Analyzing data over time offers insight into what efforts are most successful. This data is available to the public for research and reference.



# HELPING ECOSYSTEMS RECOVER AND FLOURISH

From dragonflies and songbirds to fish, beaver and moose, rivers provide sustenance for all.

Through collaboration with **High Country Conservation Advocates** in Crested Butte, relic wetlands at the headwaters of the Taylor River, which feeds into the Gunnison, were reconnected to their floodplains.

Trail Creek is one of many headwater streams that, prior to anthropogenic disturbance, was a broad valley-wide wetland, naturally maintained by beavers. After their near-extirpation during the 19th century fur trade, most of the natural stream-wetland corridors became incised, simplified and dried up. This project aims to restore natural stream-wetland conditions using process-based restoration. Wetland conditions across three river miles (about 127 acres) were improved. The beaver dams encouraged the gradual release of water and restored the historic flow regime over summer and into the fall, improving the landscape's resistance to drought and wildfires.



In partnership with the **Western Slope Conservation Center** in Paonia, two community restoration workshops focused on planting techniques and riparian communities. Over 60 native riparian shrubs and 30 cottonwood trees were planted improving 8.5 acres of riparian habitat adjacent to Delta's newest boat ramp.



## TAKING THE LONG VIEW FOR THE COLORADO RIVER

In partnership with the Walton Family Foundation and Conservation Legacy, four culturally significant watersheds receive much needed restoration work.

The Dolores River boasts headwaters at 14,000 feet in the San Juan mountains of southwest Colorado and runs nearly 230 miles through steep, sandstone canyons to its confluence with the Colorado River near Utah. It is impacted by flow depletion, regulation and history of grazing. Tamarisk is the dominant invasive plant poisoning soil and increasing the risk of high-intensity wildfire. Strike teams led by **RiversEdge West** restored 375 acres.



The Escalante River is one of the last free-flowing rivers in the West. Located in southern Utah, it feeds directly into Lake Powell and is home to six native species, including Colorado River cutthroat trout and roundtail chub. Invasive Russian olives are pervasive along riverbanks, restricting channel width and impeding access to campsites. Strike teams from **Grand Staircase Escalante Partners** treated 1,250 acres.

ACRES RESTORED



81

The snowpack fed upper Gila River flows from New Mexico into southeastern Arizona and is home to the endangered southwest willow flycatcher.

The tamarisk leaf beetle, released by the US Department of Agriculture in 2001 to defoliate and suppress tamarisk, exposes the endangered songbird's nests and eggs to parasitism and predation. Restoration efforts focused on preemptively establishing cottonwood-willow forests, the flycatcher's native habitat. 81 acres were restored by **Gila Watershed Partnership**.

The Verde River is one of Arizona's few remaining perennial rivers and one of two Wild and Scenic rivers in the state. At least 270 species of birds, 94 species of mammals and 76 species of native amphibians and reptiles rely on this watershed. Invasive plants have gained a foothold in isolated locations. **Friends of the Verde River** strike teams treated salt cedar, giant reed, tree of heaven, Russian olive, Himalayan blackberry and Siberian elm on 14 river miles.



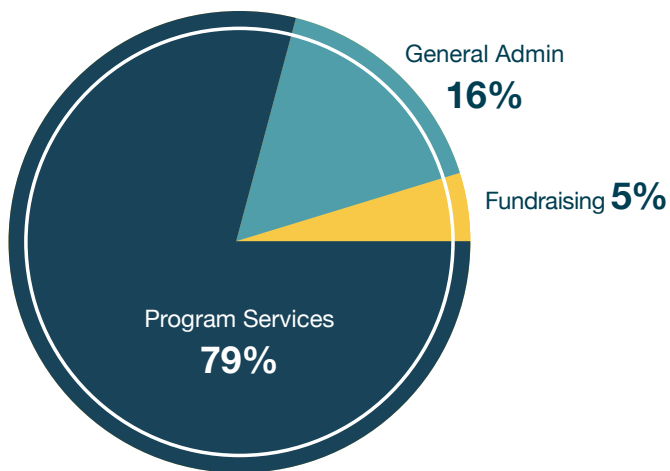
14  
RIVER MILES TREATED

For more information visit [www.ForeverOurRivers.org](http://www.ForeverOurRivers.org)

2022 7 GRANTS



# FINANCIALS



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*“Our partnership with Forever Our Rivers allows us to continue invasive species removal, leverage past investments and mitigate the effects of climate change and drought on the watershed.”*

-Kevin,  
Grand Staircase Escalante Partners

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## Revenue 2022

Contributions .....	\$953,133
Royalty .....	\$1,000
Investment Income .....	(\$64,676)
Other Income .....	\$15
<b>Total Income .....</b>	<b>\$889,472</b>

## Expenses 2022

Program Services .....	\$433,374
Supporting Services	
Management and General....	\$87,440
Fundraising .....	\$25,312
<b>Total Expenses .....</b>	<b>\$546,127</b>
Ending net assets .....	\$2,016,293





## MISSION

Our mission is to help rivers function at their highest level. We do this through two priorities: 1) Watershed conservation, including aquatic habitat restoration, water quality, and in-stream enhancements; and 2) Empowering communities to care for their rivers by providing recreational and educational opportunities for all.

Collaborating with a diverse network of partners we accomplish our mission by acquiring private and public funding, collecting and sharing data, and awarding funds through a competitive grants program.

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Ways to support Forever Our Rivers at:  
**[ForeverOurRivers.org/ways-to-give](https://ForeverOurRivers.org/ways-to-give)**

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tim Carlson, *president*

Steve Ayers

Jorge Figueroa

Jim Francis

Donna Morrall

Chip Norton

Robyn Paulekas, *treasurer*

## STAFF

Ann Johnston, *executive director*

Amy Moore, *corporate partnerships manager*



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