Eagle River Watershed Council

A Year In Review | 2022

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OUR RIVER, OUR FUTURE.

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FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Eagle River Watershed Council has a rich and colorful history as a grassroots organization determined to protect local rivers. More than 20 years ago, residents and businesses convened to reclaim a polluted river that, still to this day, supports our vibrant economy and way of life.

Today, we're a dedicated staff of five, collaborating with our community and partners to continue safeguarding our waterways. With innovative programming to reduce water use and an endowment fund launch on the horizon, the Watershed Council is wading into our 20th year with undaunted hope for a healthy water future.

We're biased, but rivers mean everything - thriving wildlife, strong community and a whole lot of joy. We're excited to share with you what we've done in 2022, and we can't wait to accomplish more for our rivers and our future together with you.
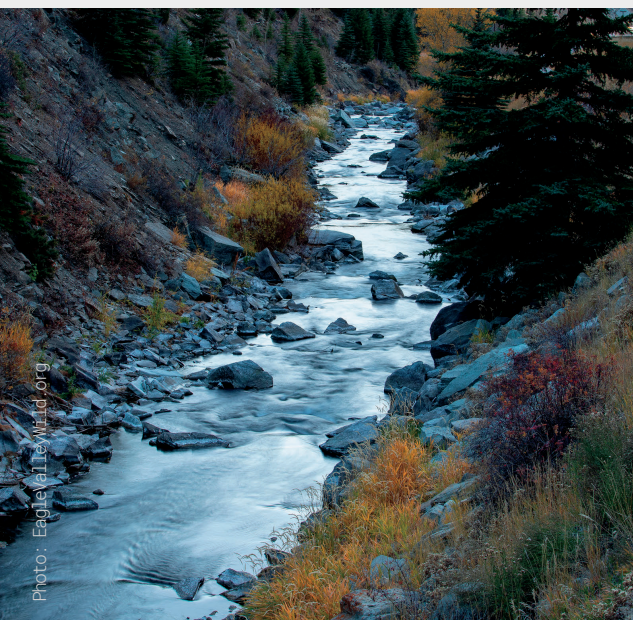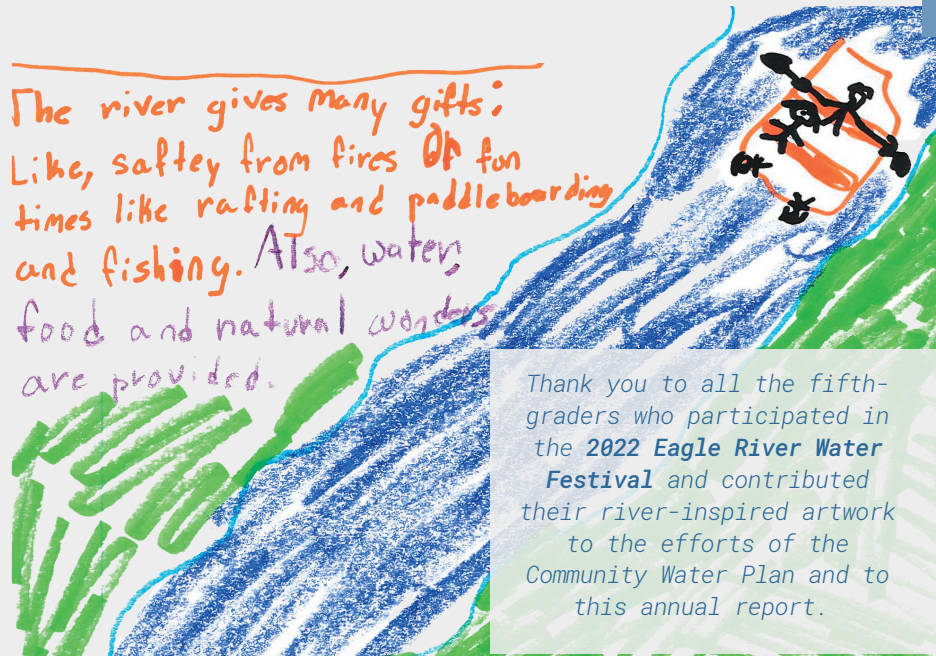
James Dilzell

James Dilzell
Executive Director

Photo: EagleValleyWild.org

The river gives many gifts: Like, saftey from fires OR fun times like rafting and paddleboarding and fishing. ALso, water food and natural wonders are provided.

*Thank you to all the fifth-graders who participated in the **2022 Eagle River Water Festival** and contributed their river-inspired artwork to the efforts of the Community Water Plan and to this annual report.*

RESTORE

Brush Creek Restoration (Phase 1)
Location: Brush Creek, Eagle

Eagle River Watershed Council and Eagle County Open Space **enhanced riparian habitat** by installing low-tech structures in the creek. The goal of the project is to **restore stream complexity** and prevent future degradation.

Wearyman Watershed Improvements
Location: Near Red Cliff, CO

The Watershed Council collaborated with the Forest Service and National Forest Foundation to **address water quality and access concerns** regarding Wearyman Road. Work involved improving drainage features, armoring road-stream crossings, and clearing slide debris. This is an ongoing project that will continue as we seek a permanent solution, but the effort **reopened the area**, allowing recreation access in the meantime.

Restore the Gore Plantings
Location: Banks of Gore Creek, Vail
Approximate Total Project Cost: $18,000
Volunteers: 37 over 3 days of projects

Gore Creek has been labeled an impaired waterway since 2012. Together with the Town of Vail, **volunteers installed plants** to help stabilize banks, offer shade, and filter pollutants. They also removed invasive species and planted **native vegetation**.

Tamarisk Mitigation
Location: Dotsero Confluence
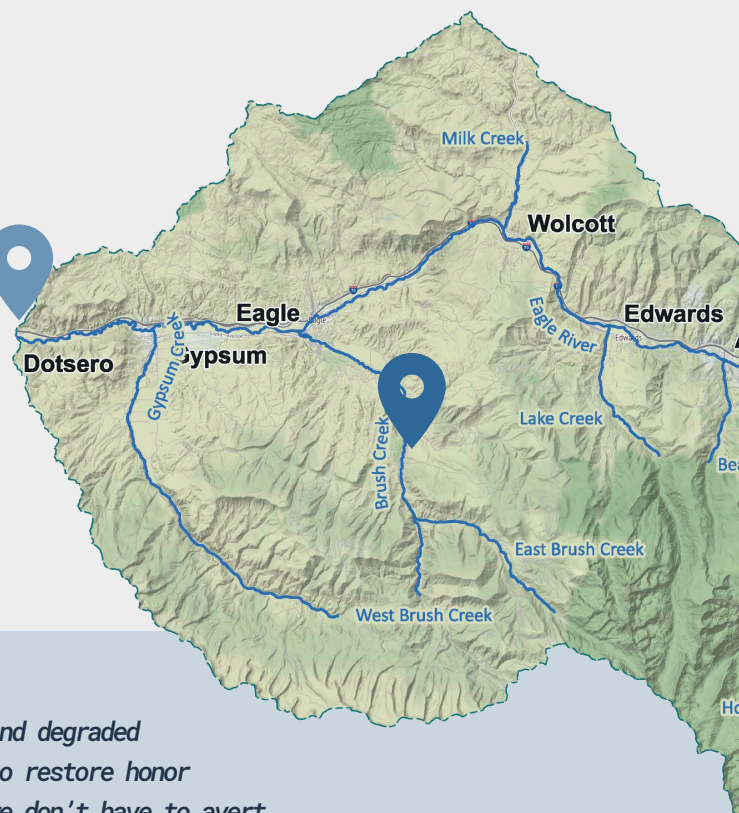**Total Project Cost:** $46,693

31 Participants **treated 2.5 acres of tamarisk infestation**. Tamarisk is an invasive species that chokes out **native vegetation**, consumes a large amount of water, and contributes to wildfire risk.

"We need acts of restoration, not only for polluted waters and degraded lands, but also for our relationship to the world. We need to restore honor to the way we live, so that when we walk through the world we don't have to avert our eyes with shame, so that we can hold our heads up high and receive the respectful acknowledgment of the rest of the earth's beings."
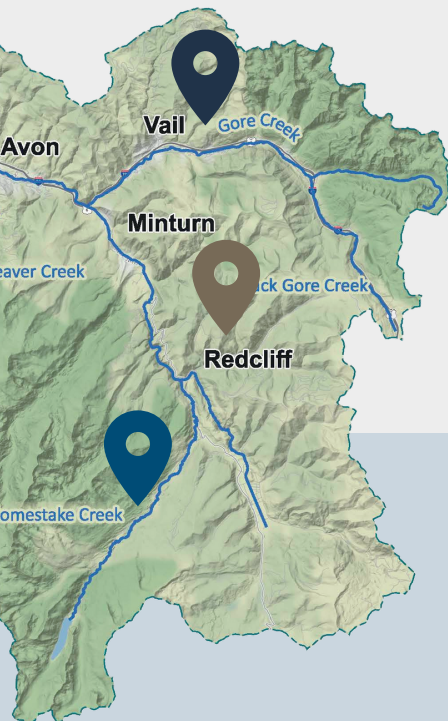
— Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*

INSPIRE

Homestake Community Science Day
Location: Homestake Valley

Participants used the iNaturalist app to **identify and mark 90 species** in a rare fen, an ecosystem in the Homestake Valley. The event was a **collaborative effort** with Wilderness Workshop, Walking Mountains Science Center, the Colorado Natural Heritage Program, and individual presenters.

Annual Eagle River Water Festival
Location: Kids from across Eagle County

Eagle River Watershed Council partnered with presenters from local organizations and agencies to provide **educational experiences** for 420 local fifth-grade students. Topics ranged from macroinvertebrate identification and fly fishing basics to games teaching water safety principles and allocations.

Annual Community Float
Location: Colorado River

Brought Eagle Valley Outdoor Movement participant families and bilingual guides together for a **fun and educational day on the water**. Most of the 62 participants had never been on a raft, and felt welcome because of how the event helps to **overcome barriers to access**, including experience and cost.

2022 Impact by the Numbers

869 people participated in 2022 education programming to connect with, learn about and explore our watershed.

Avon

Vail Gore Creek

Minturn

Beaver Creek

Black Gore Creek

Redcliff

Homestake Creek

When I'm near the water, I feel calm and the space around me feels peaceful.

Audrey (10), Eagle County

Eagle River Watershed Council

OUR MISSION AT WORK

Eagle River Watershed Council advocates for the health of the Upper Colorado and Eagle River watersheds through research, education and projects.

MONITOR

Coordinated by the Watershed Council, the 2022 Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Program's Water Quality Report Card collated and analyzed **36,073 data observations** of **200 different monitoring parameters** collected at **75 sites** throughout the watershed by **7 partner organizations**.

COLLABORATE

We review, comment on and participate in local master and comprehensive plan development. In 2023, we will publish the Community Water Plan, the result of a 6-year+ stakeholder-guided process to **identify core values around local waterways** and protect them against current and anticipated threats.
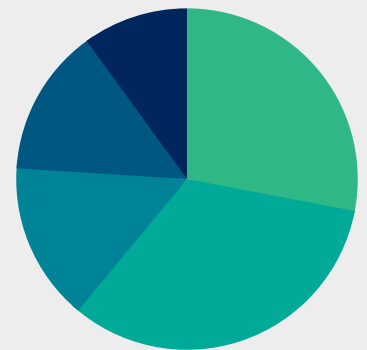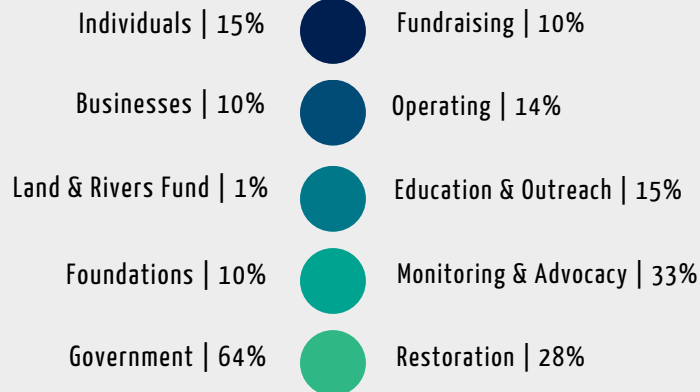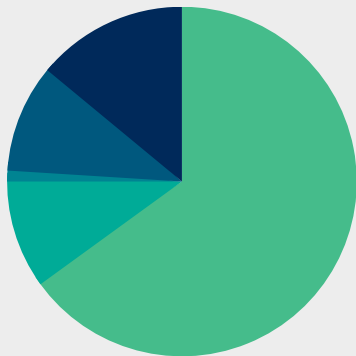
ADVOCATE

Acting as a local **referral agent**, we review land use applications, including proposals for urban developments. By **providing feedback** on stormwater runoff, setbacks, landscaping, riparian and more, we ensure **the river has a voice** and advocate for best practices.

REVENUE 2022 EXPENSES

Individuals | 15%

Businesses | 10%

Land & Rivers Fund | 1%

Foundations | 10%

Government | 64%

Fundraising | 10%

Operating | 14%

Education & Outreach | 15%

Monitoring & Advocacy | 33%

Restoration | 28%

Photo : EagleValleyWild.org