

# Colorado Thrives When Our Rivers Do – Understanding the Value of Our Hardworking Rivers

March 3, 2020



The Colorado Water Plan is roadmap that leads to a productive economy, vibrant and sustainable cities, productive agriculture, a strong environment, and a robust recreation industry.

Colorado thrives when our rivers do.



## Technical Support

If your connection is lost:

Log-in again using your unique web link and passcode provided when you registered with Go To Webinar.

This webinar is being recorded and will be available March 9<sup>th</sup> at <http://waterforcolorado.org/>

Any issues or questions after the webinar please email:  
Fay Hartman, [fhartman@americanrivers.org](mailto:fhartman@americanrivers.org)

## To Ask a Question

Please submit questions throughout the webinar in the question box, or feel free to save them for the end.

Q&A - 15 minutes at the end of the webinar. Those that are not answered will be answered in the transcript after the webinar.

Finally, a transcript of all questions and answers will be available by March 9th on <http://waterforcolorado.org/>



# Agenda

- Importance of Colorado's rivers
- Colorado's Water Plan
- Economic impact of Colorado's rivers
- Questions







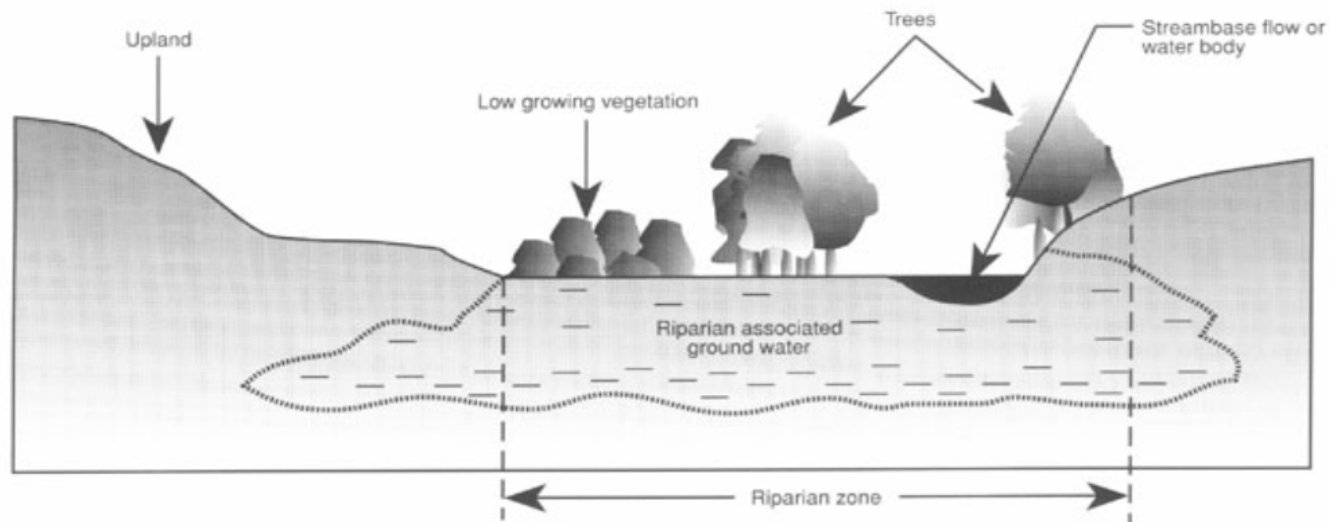
# Why are riparian areas important?



In Colorado, an estimated **90 percent** of our state's 800 species of birds, fish and wildlife depend upon riparian habitat, even though these areas comprise less than **2%** of the state.



Photo credit: Abby Burk



## Benefits of Riparian Areas



## Water connects us.

Rich common ground across sectors

- Healthy flowing rivers
- Recreation
- Aesthetic scenery
- Wildlife
- Reduced flood risk
- Wildfire mitigation
- Clean reliable drinking water
- Thriving communities and economies.







Credit: High Country News 10/2/2019

Photo credit: Abby Burk

## Rivers are big business too!

Birds, wildlife and recreation (\$9 billion +)

- 2020 update from BWS

Colorado's population could increase to 8.5 million by 2050

- An increase of more than 50% from 2015



## 2020: Big Year for Colorado's Rivers



- Gov. Hickenlooper
- Civic engagement
- Goals and objectives
- Capacity for implementation
- Tools for updates
- Funding needs



# PROTECTING LAND, WATER, AND WILDLIFE

## COLORADO:

83% believe it is important for states to use funds to protect and restore the health of rivers, lakes, and streams.

*- 2019 Conservation in the West Poll , Colorado  
College State of the Rockies*





## Colorado's Hardworking Rivers

- Colorado River water reaches all four corners of the state.
- Headwater state
- Shows how we are connected.



A wide-angle photograph of the Grand Canyon, showing the Colorado River winding through the deep, layered rock formations. The canyon walls are illuminated by warm, golden light, likely from the setting or rising sun, creating a dramatic play of light and shadow across the rugged terrain. The sky is a pale, hazy blue.

SECURING WATER FOR  
**BUSINESS, NATURE,  
AND COMMUNITIES**

# BUSINESS FOR WATER STEWARDSHIP

Business for Water Stewardship helps businesses advance smart solutions to ensure that our communities, economies and ecosystems have enough clean water to flourish.

## SUCCESS BY THE NUMBERS:

1300+

COMPANIES  
ENGAGED

19B

GALLONS  
RESTORED

35+

NGO PARTNERS  
FUNDED

60

WATER PROJECTS  
SUPPORTED ACROSS 13  
US STATES AND MEXICO





# The Economic Contributions of Water-Related Outdoor Recreation in Colorado



# Background on Recreation Study



- 2012 Study with Southwick Associates
- Basin-wide, \$26 Billion in 7 states
- Audubon Arizona updated AZ numbers in 2019
- BWS commissioned 2020 study to update CO numbers

# 2019-2020 Study Methods



- Methodology- this study characterizes outdoor recreation on or along waterways within Colorado with data collected in December 2019.
- WHAT: Nine types of recreation include water sports, biking, hunting, fishing, camping etc.
- WHERE: Nine Basins in the state- where people were recreating
- OIA spending figures
- “Multiplier Effect” or Economic Contributions

# \$10 Billion spent last year directly on river related recreation in Colorado



## Direct Spending/Jobs/Tax Revenues

- Direct retail spending by residents and non-residents recreating along waterways in Colorado generates an estimated \$9.9 billion in economic output and contributes \$5.4 billion to the state's GDP.
- This recreation also supports 80,943 direct jobs that provide \$3.3 billion in household income and generate an estimated \$1.7 billion in tax revenues.

## Multiplier Effect= \$18.8 BILLION last year



Collectively, the retail spending by these recreationists and the related multiplier effects generate an estimated:

- \$18.8 billion in economic output
- Contributing \$10.3 billion to the state's GDP
- Total contributions support over 131,000 jobs that provide \$6.3 billion in household income and generate an estimated \$2.7 billion in tax revenues.



# Nine Statewide Basins



- **Arkansas**
- **Colorado**
- **Gunnison**
- **Metro**
- **North Platte**
- **Rio Grande**
- **South Platte**
- **Dolores, Miguel, San Juan**
- **Yampa, White Green**

# Colorado Mainstem, Arkansas and Yampa/White/Green



- **Colorado Mainstem-** Total Output= \$3.8 billion and supports 26,768 jobs
- **Arkansas-** Total Output= \$2.6 billion and supports 18,384 jobs
- **Yampa/White/Green-** Total Output= \$425 million, supports 2970 jobs



For the love of Colorado 💧

## Ways we will use this information

BWS is working with the For the Love of Colorado coalition to educate Coloradans on the importance of water to the state's economic, environmental and community health. The data points discussed today will be important as we urge funding the state's water plan to support river recreation, river health, water quality and water conservation and efficiency.

***BOTTOM LINE: Continued stewardship of the state's lakes, reservoirs, and headwaters for major American rivers adds to the health of Coloradans as well as the recreational economy.***

## What's next for this data?



- Legislative Breakfast: March 10<sup>th</sup> at Colorado State Capitol
- Basin roundtables, local and municipal water meetings
- Official Release of the study- Week of March 23<sup>rd</sup> media outreach, social media
- Webinar will be on [www.WaterforColorado.org](http://www.WaterforColorado.org) by next Monday

# PARTNER TO BOLSTER YOUR OWN BOTTOM LINE



COMMUNITY

ECONOMY

ENVIRONMENT

Whether meeting with lawmakers, participating in roundtables and meetings to learn more about the current status of water in the West, or helping tell your corporate story about innovation, conservation or efficiency to inspire action; BWS is ready to partner with you to profile business leadership and action on water stewardship.



**We make better decisions together. Thank you!**

## Questions & Answers



# Stay in Touch

Abby Burk, Audubon Rockies

[abby.burk@audubon.org](mailto:abby.burk@audubon.org)

Fay Hartman, American Rivers

[fhartman@americanrivers.org](mailto:fhartman@americanrivers.org)

Molly Mugglestone, Business for Water Stewardship

[molly@businessforwater.org](mailto:molly@businessforwater.org)



<http://waterforcolorado.org/>