



**COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
OF NORTHERN COLORADO**

Foundation Contact: Ella Farhlander, 970.488.1979
ella@NoCoFoundation.org

Media Contact: Mishelle Baun, 970.488.1978
mishelle@NoCoFoundation.org

NEWS RELEASE

March 30, 2021

Fat Tire contributes \$100,000 to restore watershed via NoCoFires Fund *Encourages community to donate to support long-term river recovery plans*

In fall 2020, the Cameron Peak and East Troublesome fires devastated Northern Colorado's watersheds, burning for 100 days and consuming over 400,000 acres of timber and vegetation. The NoCoFires Fund is working to restore the Cache la Poudre and Big Thompson watersheds by getting our vital rivers and streams back to sustaining wildlife, recreation, and agriculture, as well as supplying high-quality drinking water for 1 million people.

New Belgium Brewing's flagship brand, Fat Tire, understands the need for clean water firsthand; the process to create the U.S.'s first certified carbon neutral beer begins with clean, mountain water that comes from the same watershed affected by last year's fires. Water quality and consistency are crucial to the production of craft beer, and Fat Tire has a long history of returning water used in its brewing process back into the river cleaner than it was before.

"Water is not only the most important ingredient in beer, it's the lifeblood of everything we love about Northern Colorado, from our world-class recreation to a nationally recognized economy," said Katie Wallace, director of social and environmental impact at New Belgium Brewing. "The devastating impacts of fires can last for years as forests grow and the health of the landscape returns. The region faces a significant challenge to mitigate the long-term effects this fire will have on the watershed."

The Community Foundation – with support from Bohemian Foundation – launched the [NoCoFires Fund](#) to respond to the impact of the fires. The Fund will focus on mitigation, address critical needs such as flooding in the burn areas, and long-term recovery work with a coalition of partners representing both government and nonprofit sectors.

These partners have identified mitigation projects – covering between 6,000 to 10,000 acres – at a cost of \$20 to \$35 million that will take several years to complete. Both the acreage and dollar amount could increase, depending on the severity of this spring's runoff.

"Our goal is to raise \$1 million, then further leverage this to secure three to four times that amount (\$3M - \$4M) in state and federal assistance, bringing additional recovery dollars into Larimer County," said Ella Farhlander, chief engagement officer for the Foundation. "We will begin providing funding this spring to help the 'boots on the ground' be responsive to evolving needs as additional government dollars arrive."

To date, approximately \$750,000 has been raised, and Fat Tire wants to help by leveraging the impact of its donations and encouraging others in the community to donate. To learn more and contribute to NoCoFires Fund, visit <https://nocofoundation.org/fires/>.

About the Community Foundation of Northern Colorado

The Community Foundation is a nonprofit, public foundation working for the benefit of charitable causes and organizations in Northern and Eastern Colorado. It manages over 550 individual funds and over \$132 million in assets. The Foundation has a 45-year history as a catalyst for community projects, a service provider to philanthropists and nonprofit organizations, and as a trusted steward of long-term and often complex gift arrangements. nocofoundation.org.

About Fat Tire

Fat Tire Amber Ale was first introduced by New Belgium Brewing in 1991. The award-winning easy-drinking ale from Colorado instantly became a favorite of skiers, climbers, and cyclists across small mountain towns before then establishing itself as one of America's most popular beers. A member of 1% For The Planet, Fat Tire has embodied a commitment to social and environmental responsibility for nearly 30 years by implementing energy-efficient brewing practices, advocating for public lands protection and most recently becoming America's first certified carbon neutral beer in July 2020. newbelgium.com/beer.

Breakout box

(Courtesy City of Greeley)

- Current budget allocations are insufficient considering the scale of recovery needed.
- Higher runoff from burned areas will increase the risk of flooding and associated loss of life, damage to infrastructure, and impacts to downstream communities.
- The fire will increase the amount of sediment and ash in the river by 10 or even 50 times the natural amount.
- Sedimentation will create water quality issues resulting in higher treatment costs or may even preclude the ability to treat water supplies.
- Sedimentation will fill in and decrease the volume of water reservoirs can store and may even render them inoperable.
- Post-fire mitigation, such as mulching and sediment traps, can reduce flooding and prevent erosion, but they are expensive.
- Erosion will cause significant impacts to water quality, water supply reliability, and water supply infrastructure for years to come.
- The Northern Front Range's economy depends heavily on the availability of clean, reliable water - something that only a restored and healthy watershed can support.
- Local communities that rely on water from the burnt watersheds cannot bear such costs, especially while still dealing with the financial impacts of COVID-19.

###