



**COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
OF NORTHERN COLORADO**

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NEWS RELEASE

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Community Foundation NoCoFires fund grant committee awards \$670,000

Three nonprofits receive funds to mitigate watershed damage

(Fort Collins, Colo.) – In response to the devastating impact of Colorado’s largest wildfire – the Cameron Peak Fire – the Community Foundation of Northern Colorado established the NoCoFires fund last year. The fund’s purpose is to assist with raising money to mitigate the fires’ negative consequences of Northern Colorado’s two primary watersheds – the Poudre and the Big Thompson rivers. To date, hundreds of donors have contributed nearly \$750,000 to the cause.

The NoCoFires grant committee announces awards totaling \$670,000 to three nonprofit organizations working together to protect river health, water supply, and community safety: Big Thompson Watershed Coalition, Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed, and Wildlands Restoration Volunteers. Each of these nonprofits is actively working to support watershed recovery. Grants will help them add staff to build capacity and pay for vital materials required for watershed mitigation and environmental restoration.

“The grant committee has done an incredible job identifying nonprofits and projects that will benefit the dozen communities in the burn scar and the hundreds of thousands of residents who depend upon the Poudre and Big Thompson rivers for their water,” said Ella Farhlander, chief engagement officer for the Community Foundation. “We’re honored to provide funding, before federal dollars become available, so these groups can get to work on reducing the fire’s impact before the first monsoon season. Heartfelt thanks to those individuals, businesses, and foundations who contributed.”

These grants respond to a significant need caused by last year’s Cameron Peak and East Troublesome fires, the two largest wildfires in state history, which together burned more than 400,000 acres. Large wildfires such as these can negatively impact water quality and river health while the loss of tree canopy and increased surface runoff and erosion may cause debris flows and flooding. Mitigation experts estimate tens of millions of dollars will be needed to fully address the impacts to wildlife, recreation, agriculture, and drinking water supplies for approximately one million people.

<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 Colorado. In fiscal year 2020, it distributed \$9.9M, managed \$132M in assets, and served hundreds of individual charitable funds. The Foundation provides a unique leadership role by bringing people and resources together around important local issues. More than 75 local nonprofit organizations have their endowments housed with the Community Foundation and many individuals and businesses have established donor advised funds.

Breakout box

- Core collaborators include Coalition for the Poudre Watershed, Big Thompson Watershed Coalition, Wildlands Restoration Volunteers, Greeley Water, Larimer County, Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest, Rocky Mountain Research Station, Colorado State University, Colorado Forest Restoration Institute, Colorado State Forest Service, Trout Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, and local water providers.
- 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.
- Higher runoff from burned areas will increase the risk of flooding and potential associated loss of life, damage to infrastructure, and impacts to downstream communities.
- The fire damage will increase the amount of sediment and ash in the river between 10 and 50 times the natural amount.
- Erosion may cause significant impacts to water quality, water supply reliability, and water supply infrastructure for years to come.
- Post-fire mitigation – such as mulching and sediment traps can reduce flooding and prevent erosion – but is expensive. With this grant funding, the Coalition for Poudre Watershed will purchase mulch for use by the contractor the City of Greeley is procuring.

Source: City of Greeley and Community Foundation of Northern Colorado research