

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Upper South Platte

WHY IS THIS WATERSHED SPECIAL?

An essential resource nestled in the Rocky Mountains, the Upper South Platte Watershed supports fifty percent of Colorado's irrigated agriculture and also supplies municipal water to three quarters of the state's residents. Each year more than three million visitors enjoy recreational activities, and world class trout fisheries attract anglers. The watershed is threatened by extensive wildfires and rapid population growth and development.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

The Targeted Watersheds Grant will address a number of environmental problems, including those associated with the 2002 Hayman fire.

- The U.S. Forest Service has designated this watershed as a critical red zone due to the area's high vulnerability to large-scale, severe fire impact. An estimated 140 tons per acre of sediment due to deforestation could threaten downstream drinking water resources.
- Severe flooding destroys homes and bridges and decreases soil stability within burned areas.
- Rapid urbanization has resulted in habitat loss, increased erosion, and accelerated stormwater runoff.

RESTORATION ACTIVITIES

The Coalition for the Upper South Platte will use EPA Targeted Watersheds Grant funding to:

- Promote the conservation of riparian and wetland areas in Craig Creek.
- Develop and implement fire protection measures in partnership with the Colorado State Forestry Service and private landowners.
- Seed and mulch severely burned areas by coordinating more than 45,000 hours of volunteer work.
- Partner with the Buena Vista Correctional Facility, which teaches prisoners how to operate heavy machinery and equipment for watershed restoration work.

"The Coalition for the Upper South Platte is making tremendous progress studying and demonstrating methods grassroots watershed groups can use to build effectiveness and sustainability, while restoring the Upper South Platte Watershed."

– Aimee Rathburn
Coalition for the Upper South Platte



Post-fire erosion nearly fills this culvert with sediment.

A STRONG PARTNERSHIP FOR CHANGE

Restoration and protection activities are possible due to a diversity of committed stakeholders including:

- Coalition for the Upper South Platte
- U.S. Forest Service
- Department of the Interior
- U.S. Geological Survey
- USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Colorado State Forest Service
- Colorado Department of Corrections
- Denver Water
- Numerous local governments
- Several non-governmental organizations, including: the Nature Conservancy, Trout Unlimited, and Colorado Open Lands

Upper South Platte



0 2.5 5 10 Miles
0 5 10 20 Kilometers

Elevation
Low High



Surveying for a restoration project on the Tarryall River.



Straw is used for mulch and check dams are constructed in burned areas to stop erosion.



The sun shines through the smoke from the Hayman fire, the largest fire in Colorado history.

EPA'S TARGETED WATERSHEDS GRANT PROGRAM

EPA's Targeted Watersheds Grant Program is a new, competitive grant program designed to encourage collaborative, community-driven approaches to meet clean water goals.

For more information about the selected watersheds, please visit:
<http://www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/initiative/>



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