Our rivers are natural treasures

Whether we’re fishing, rafting, swimming or just enjoying their beauty, Colorado’s rivers and streams are a huge part of what makes our state so great. Unfortunately, 68 percent of the streams in our state don’t have the protection they need due to loopholes in the Clean Water Act.

That’s why Environment Colorado is working to protect the Colorado River, Boulder Creek, and all the other waterways we love and depend on for drinking water and recreation.

73,000 miles of streams at risk

In the last decade, two polluter-driven Supreme Court decisions weakened the Clean Water Act and left 68 percent of Colorado’s streams vulnerable to unchecked pollution and development—the same streams that feed our rivers, like the Arkansas and the Colorado. This means that more than 73,000 miles of streams—and the drinking water sources for 3.7 million Coloradans—could be at risk of toxic dumping, development, and more.

This past March, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finally put forth a long-awaited rule to close the loopholes and restore protections to all of our waterways. We stood with Regional EPA Administrator Shaun McGrath to announce the rule and highlighted the immense support to protect all of our rivers from Coloradans.

But with polluters and their lobbyists in Washington, D.C., already lining up to dismantle this commonsense proposal, Environment Colorado has launched a summer campaign to show public support for protecting all of Colorado’s rivers and streams from pollution.

Polluters from the American Farm Bureau to Big Oil have promised to do everything in their power to defeat this clean water plan, including, in their own words, start “legal warfare” to keep the EPA from taking action.

Environment Colorado has launched a summer campaign to show public support for protecting all of Colorado’s rivers and streams from pollution.

Clean water campaign launched
To counter their pressure, Environment Colorado staff will have in-person conversations with tens of thousands, educating them on the issue and generating thousands of public comments to the EPA. We’re also working with recreational businesses that rely on the quality of our waterways to mobilize support for the EPA’s rule.
I hope this note finds you well and gearing up for summer hiking, camping or rafting trips with friends and family. After a long winter, there’s nothing like feeling the warmth of the sun on your face and being out in the fresh air.

For years, experiences like these are part of what Environment Colorado has been fighting for—to make sure Coloradans from every corner of the state can experience their local environment without worrying about the effects of pollution, fracking, mining and development. This summer’s no different. We’ve launched a huge grassroots effort to protect our rivers from unchecked toxic pollution, development and more.

Protecting the places we love is invaluable work. But it’s also not easy. It takes people coming together. Thanks for all you do.

Sincerely,

Kim Stevens
Campaign Director

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**GreenFutureFund: A new way to honor supporters**

Environment Colorado’s new Green Future Fund honors donors who ensure a greener future for Colorado by remembering Environment Colorado or our sister group Environment Colorado Research & Policy Center in their estate plans.

Including Environment Colorado in your planning costs nothing today, while protecting the places we love and the values we share for the future. With your permission, we’ll recognize your gift in our publications, inspiring other members to make their own legacy gifts. Or you may choose to keep your gift private. Either way, any details you choose to provide about your gift will remain confidential. To enroll in the Green Future Fund, or to learn more, call 1-800-841-7299 ext. 312, or email PlannedGiving@EnvironmentColorado.org

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**Leaders urged to protect parks from fracking**

Colorado has some of the most beautiful parks and forests in the country, from Mesa Verde to White River National Forest. Yet instead of protecting these special places, our federal officials are close to allowing fracking right outside of our national parks and in ecologically sensitive areas of our national forests.

As the Obama Administration and Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell consider rules that could protect these places, we’ve been building support across the state to show that Coloradans want to protect their parks and forests from fracking.

With over 6,000 petitions in hand, and endorsements from over 120 recreational businesses and public health officials, the Environment Colorado staff traveled to Washington, D.C., to talk with Sens. Michael Bennet and Mark Udall and Sec. Jewell about protecting our parks and forests.

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**Toward a greener future**

Environment Colorado and Environment Colorado Research & Policy Center gratefully accept bequests, beneficiary designations of IRAs and life insurance, and gifts of securities to support our work to build a cleaner, greener, healthier future.

For more information, call 1-800-841-7299 or send an email to: PlannedGiving@EnvironmentColorado.org.
As temperatures warm up and the next season of wildfires draws near, Colorado is proving that we can win the fight against global warming. Clean energy policies, such as Colorado’s Renewable Energy Standard, are significantly cutting emissions of carbon pollution—the leading cause of global warming—according to a new report by Environment Colorado Research & Policy Center. The report, “Moving America Forward,” showed that Colorado’s Renewable Energy Standard (RES) saved 3.7 million metric tons of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere in 2012. That is comparable to the annual emissions from over 750,000 cars.

A one-two punch
“By using energy more efficiently, and by generating more power from clean, renewable sources, we are delivering a one-two punch in the fight against global warming,” said Kim Stevens, campaign director with Environment Colorado. “We’ve proven that we have what it takes to protect our children and future generations from the worst impacts of climate change. We will need firm limits on carbon pollution in order to deliver a knockout blow.”

Here in Denver, Colorado’s RES of 30 percent clean energy by 2020 has helped area churches find the means to install solar panels on their roofs. Churches, such as Our Savior’s Lutheran Church in Capitol Hill, have been able to go solar in recent years as a result of policies initiated by the renewable energy standard.

“Having high standards set for our energy providers creates financial incentives for investors to partner with churches, install panels, and reap the financial benefits that these high standards create,” explained Reverend Larry Grimm of Capitol Heights Presbyterian Church, who has helped a number of churches in the Denver area finance and install solar panels.

This is just one example of the types of projects Colorado’s clean energy policies have sparked. The carbon pollution reductions of these projects are critical since scientists say extreme weather events like the flooding along the Front Range last September foreshadow what could be the new normal of weather extremes. Coal and gas-fired power plants are America’s largest source of the carbon pollution fueling global warming.

Next step: carbon limits
Stevens pointed to the Environmental Protection Agency’s plan to move forward with limits on carbon pollution from power plants as the next step to fight global warming and shift to clean energy. Power plants are America’s largest source of the carbon pollution fueling global warming, accounting for about 40 percent of total emissions. “With enough willpower, Colorado can rise to any challenge. We’ve seen that climate solutions work—now it’s time for the next round,” Stevens concluded. “Sens. Mark Udall and Michael Bennet should continue to stand up in support of the EPA’s plan to limit carbon pollution from power plants.”

Fighting an energy efficiency rollback
We have an energy problem here in Colorado.

Nearly 90 percent of our energy comes from dirty fossil fuels. And what’s worse, too much of this energy is wasted through inefficiencies in our homes and buildings.

It doesn’t have to be this way. We have the technology available today to save enough energy to significantly reduce our energy consumption. Utilities can play an important role in helping Coloradans reduce their energy use through rebates on energy efficient appliances and building materials, as well as through audits and energy consulting programs.

These programs have a big impact: Xcel Energy, Colorado’s largest utility, will reduce its consumer demand by 11.5 percent by 2020 through its consumer energy efficiency programs.

Citizens opposed rollback
Unfortunately, Xcel is talking about cutting a sizeable chunk from their energy efficiency programs. Environment Colorado has been organizing citizens in Xcel’s service territory to show the company that their customers want more, not less, energy efficiency programs.


Colorado is lucky enough to enjoy nearly 300 days of sunshine per year, and yet we get less power from the sun than New Jersey and Massachusetts. Environment Colorado launched our campaign to bring a million solar roofs to Colorado by 2030 last April. Since then, we’ve built a coalition of 300 small business owners, farmers, ranchers and elected officials.

We’ve also talked to over 30,000 Coloradan’s—11,000 of whom took political action, all calling on Gov. John Hickenlooper to embrace this vision and goal. The support for solar in Colorado is there.

In addition, we launched our new quarterly breakfast series, “Green Ideas and Ham,” which highlighted the future of solar in Colorado. We were joined by Colorado Energy Office Director Jeffrey Akerman, as well as Solar City Policy Director Megan Nutting. Our guests, along with 60 members and supporters, met at Lucille’s Creole Cafe for a great breakfast and discussion on solar.

Historic action to protect Colorado’s rivers, report shows Colorado’s role in cutting carbon pollution, and more inside.

Environment Colorado is working to bring more solar to our state.