

Summer 2011



**COLORADO
ENVIRONMENTAL
REPORT**

COLORADO ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

2011 Legislative Wrap-Up

A Record-Breaking Rebel with a Cause!

Spring Grouse Dance Draws Great Response

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Colorado's voice for conservation since 1965

The Colorado Environmental Coalition works to protect Colorado's environment by educating and mobilizing citizens, providing technical and organizing assistance to environmental organizations and other allies, and uniting and supporting them in coalitions that defend and preserve Colorado's natural heritage and quality of life.

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Making History

Elise Jones, Executive Director - elise.jones@ourcolorado.org



On May 19th, we made history. More than 535 people packed the Seawall Ballroom in the Denver Center for Performing Arts for CEC's 2011 "Rebel with a Cause" Gala – an all-time high! On

top of that the collective generosity of attendees and event sponsors also brought in record-breaking revenues to support CEC's important environmental programs. It was an evening of fun and festivity, as well as an opportunity for Colorado's conservation community to gather en masse, remind itself (and the many elected officials attending) of its size and power, and celebrate the progress we've made in the past year. Thank you to everyone who helped make this night such a wonderful success!

McKibben recently founded the group 350.org, which has coordinated 15,000 global warming rallies in 189 countries since 2009.

We couldn't have picked a more appropriate or timely topic or Rebel. At our gala, Bill was eloquent and compelling as he provided a sobering reminder of the desperate urgency of the climate change challenge we face.

And while it's awfully hard to put a positive spin on climate change, Bill didn't leave us in despair. His compelling photos of 350.org's annual day of action last year provided some much-needed inspiration. Image after image of people across the globe, in virtually every country, all acknowledging the reality of our dire dilemma and their commitment to doing something about it. Proof that people around the planet care about the future -- including folks, as Bill noted,

who don't look or live like us, who aren't white and well-off. Therein lies the seeds for hope.

Bill graciously, and rightfully, noted some of the good work that's been done in Colorado to promote renewable energy and close coal-fired power plants. But as 2010 goes down as one of the hottest years on record, and as violent weather wreaks devastating

havoc around the world in the form of tornadoes, floods wildfires, droughts, heat waves and the like, it's hard not to acknowledge that whatever we're doing, it's not enough

Climate change, as it's been noted, isn't convenient, isn't politically popular and isn't on the radar of most elected officials right now in our state or elsewhere. While



Jolyne Woodcock

Bill McKibben, climate change activist and author, present a bold call to action to Rebel with a Cause attendees in May.

“It’s a real tribute to the work that CEC does, just to see what a broad, diverse, powerful and beautiful coalition they manage to bring together.”

- Bill McKibben

But CEC's gala was more than just a big party – it was also a call to action. CEC's choice for our 2011 "Rebel" was climate change author and activist Bill McKibben. His 1989 book *The End of Nature* provided the public with its first warning on climate change more than two decades ago. A passionate advocate who realized that just writing about climate change wasn't enough,

what we accomplish in Colorado won't be enough to make a dent in global greenhouse gas emissions, we can provide a model of how to embrace a clean energy future and generate momentum among other states around the country – momentum that is essential to reach a tipping point. If citizens in a politically moderate and independent state like Colorado can make the bold, hard decisions required to address this incredible challenge, then maybe so can others. We have no choice but to shoulder this burden, because the alternative of inaction is unthinkable.

It's time to make more history. For Colorado,

Elise Jones
Executive Director

A Record-Breaking Rebel with a Cause!

Beka Wilson, Development Director - beka@ourcolorado.org

May 19th brought torrential spring rain, cool temperatures and a ballroom full of ebullient environmentalists to downtown Denver. CEC's annual "Rebel with a Cause" Gala broke records again with over 535 conservation supporters, volunteers and legislators filling the Seawell Grand Ballroom to welcome our 2011 Rebel, Bill McKibben, and Conservation Heroes EcoFlight and Mary McCutchan.

Through the generous support of corporate and individual sponsors, ticket purchases and silent and live auctions, CEC raised over \$137,000 at this year's Rebel — crucial support that goes toward our work on wilderness, water, energy, climate change and smart growth across the state.

The spirit of giving continues with an anonymous \$20,000 match given to CEC in honor of Bill McKibben, EcoFlight, Mary McCutchan and the other outstanding activists that make up Colorado's conservation community! Any contribution given through July 15, 2011, will be matched, up to \$20,000. Please give by going to ourcolorado.org/rebel2011 or by using the donation form in this newsletter and spread the word to your colleagues and friends about this wonderful opportunity to double your gift to CEC!

THANK YOU for your support and we hope to see you at the 2012 Rebel!

Go to ourcolorado.org/rebel2011 to see video of Bill McKibben's keynote speech and photos of attendees, and to fill out a post-event survey by June 30th, 2011. All survey participants will be entered to win a pair of Crescent Moon Gold 9 Snowshoes for your adventures next winter!

“CEC is doing some of the most important work in this state around conservation, protecting the wild places that all of us love to go visit, protecting the wildlife that is so important to our heritage in this state, and making sure that the Front Range and parts of Colorado are growing in a way that’s sustainable and is a place that we want to live and to hand off to our children.”

-Susan Daggett, environmental attorney and wife of U.S. Senator Michael Bennet.

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2011 Rebel Bill McKibben speaks about political challenges and the power of global activism.



Audience looks on as Susan Daggett praises the work of the Colorado Environmental Coalition.



The wildly successful silent auction included over 100 items donated by local businesses.



Maggie Fox



2011 Rebel with a Cause Bill McKibben impressed with the crowd.



A few of the over 25 volunteers that made this event possible.



Bruce Gordon, President of EcoFlight, accepting the Conservation Partner award.



The beautiful Seawell Grand Ballroom, decorated in anticipation for the evening's festivities



CEC Board President Linda Powers and Executive Director Elise Jones present Conservation the Conservation Activist award.

...tons of photos, video of event speakers, and more at ourcolorado.org/rebel2011.



2011 Legislative Wrap-Up

Randy Moorman, Coalition Lobbyist - randy@ourcolorado.org

When the 2011 Colorado General Assembly came to a close on May 11, the Denver Post declared the conservation community a “Winner” in its annual Winners and Losers of the Legislature column. This session was indeed a win for the environment, especially in light of the changes in the political climate at the Capitol that made conservation work more challenging. All in all, we were successful in passing 14 pro-environment bills and defeating 23 anti-conservation bills, as well as queuing up important issues for next year

With new leadership and a less-environmentally friendly majority in the House, the session saw many anti-conservation bills introduced, including attempts to roll back advances that have made our state a clean energy leader. Last year we helped pass landmark legislation that to increase our state renewable energy standard (RES) to 30% by 2020. CEC, along with its coalition partners, the utility companies and the renewable energy industry, defeated Senate Bill 71, which would have rolled back the RES to 10%. The new energy economy has brought more than 17,000 jobs to Colorado and this attempt to move the state backwards was soundly defeated, along with a number of other ill-advised anti-clean energy bills.

There were also efforts to undo the bipartisan Clean Air, Clean Jobs Act of 2010 (House Bill 1365), which will transition 900 megawatts of electricity generation away from coal by 2017. This year’s Senate Bill 113 was written to dismantle the Clean Air, Clean Jobs Act, which has become a national model for cleaning up air quality and reducing

greenhouse gases. Fortunately, CEC and our allies in the Senate defeated this bill. Opponents to the Clean Air, Clean Jobs Act tried again to attack it by opposing the state’s plan to address regional haze pollution (HB 1291), which included the final steps in implementing the retirement of several coal-fired power plants. Due to a strong and broad coalition, the state haze plan passed both chambers of the General Assembly with large bipartisan majorities -- a huge victory for clean air and the fight against climate change.

Another major victory this session was protecting the diverse composition of the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission. In 2007, the conservation community passed legislation to create balance on the Commission, with greater representation for public health, environment and local government

interests. HB 1223 was introduced this session to reverse this progress. Specifically, the bill would have removed the Colorado Department of Health and Environment and the Department of Natural Resources as voting members and added two more industry representatives, giving them a 5 to 4 voting advantage and diluting consideration of public health, wildlife and water concerns. CEC and its West Slope allies, sportsmen groups, public health and local government organizations armed our champions with facts and testified in the House committee hearing. Many representatives went to the House chamber and spoke in support of the existing balanced commission, arguing that the changes in HB 1223 were unnecessary and would be detrimental to our health and environment. They provided strong

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR LEGISLATIVE PARTNERS & ALLIES WHO HELPED MAKE 2011 A SUCCESSFUL SESSION:

Environment Colorado

Colorado Conservation Voters

**Southwest Energy Efficiency Project
Sierra Club**

Audubon Colorado

Colorado Trout Unlimited

Colorado Wildlife Federation

National Wildlife Federation

Colorado Bowhunters Association

Western Colorado Congress

San Juan Citizens Alliance

Earthjustice

Oil and Gas Accountability Project

Colorado Mountain Club

The Nature Conservancy

Colorado Assoc. for Recycling

**Southern Rockies Conservation
Alliance**

Colorado Municipal League

**CO Assoc. of Local Public Health
Officials**

Colorado Counties Inc.

**Colorado Department of
Transportation**

CO Contractors Association

Department of Natural Resources

CO Assoc. of State Transit Associations

**Colorado Department of Public Health
and Environment**



evidence showing that industry is thriving under the current commission with record numbers of drilling permits. While the bill squeaked out of the House on a near party-line vote, the Senate soundly killed it on the last day of the session in the State, Veterans and Military Affairs Committee.

We were also able to stop several major attacks on environmental funding in the state. Working alongside other transportation and local government groups, CEC helped defeat three bills that would have eliminated or severely reduced the amount of funding for transit and road safety projects: HB1075, HB 1084 and SB 95. Additionally, the Wildlife Cash Fund, made mostly of license fees paid by hunters and anglers, also came under attack. HB 1150 would have raided the Department of Wildlife's fund for wildlife and wildlife

management to the tune of \$5 million per year for 10 years given instead to water storage projects. Our sportsmen partners played a crucial role in defeating this anti-wildlife bill.

This session was not all about defense, however. Along with the historic passage of the state regional haze plan, we also helped enact bills to clean up our air and grow our clean energy economy. Specifically, we worked with the motor carriers to pass a statewide diesel idling standard (HB 1275), which will greatly reduce the amount of time trucks are idling and emitting pollution in our communities. The solar industry's bill to extend an existing law that prohibits municipalities from charging solar installation permit fees (HB 1199) passed both chambers with bipartisan support. Finally, we made headway in the area of electronic waste recycling,

with the Senate passing SB 269, which would make sure that Colorado's e-waste is recycled here in state and not shipped overseas or dumped in landfills. While the bill died in the House, we and the Colorado Association for Recycling made great progress on the issue and laid the groundwork for future bills.

Despite the challenging political environment at the Capitol this session, the 2011 General Assembly once again showed that Coloradans value clean air, public safety and the job creation our state has seen from clean energy investment. Of course, there is still much work to be done to defend and protect Colorado's natural heritage and quality of life. Over the next several months, in preparation for the 2012 session, we will continue to work with state legislators and the governor in developing policies that promote clean energy and protect our air, water and land.

Spring Grouse Dance Draws Great Response

Sasha Nelson, Northwest Organizer - sasha@ourcolorado.org

Even with a spring plagued by inclement weather, CEC's northwest staff were still able to take nearly 70 people to view the greater sage-grouse doing their spectacular mating dance. After battling late snow storms and muddy roads, seven trips were made in early April to the wild sagebrush flats outside of Craig to see the famous dancing grouse.

Ranging in age from 10 to 83 and traveling from as far away as Toronto, participants included the deputy director of the Colorado Department of Natural Resources, members of the Colorado Wildlife Commission and Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, freelance reporters, professional photographers, local residents and conservationists from around the state.

A special thanks to the partners whose support made the 2011 sage-grouse trips possible: Colorado Division of Wildlife, Moffat County Tourism Association, The Wilderness Society, Center for Native Ecosystems and Friends of Northwest Colorado. We hope to continue providing opportunities for sage-grouse viewing next year as a way to educate Coloradans on the need to protect these special birds and their

sagebrush habitat and to highlight the economic benefits of eco-tourism trips like these.



Observing greater sage grouse in their ancient ritual of spring and survival.

Sasha Nelson

Hidden Gems Update

Kurt Kunkle, Wilderness Campaign Coordinator - kvirt@ourcolorado.org

On Earth Day, Congressman Jared Polis stood on the steps of Colorado's Capitol with outdoor photographer John Fielder, adventurer Aron Ralston, GoLite CEO Kim Coupounas, Vail Town Councilwoman Kerry Donovan and CEC's Elise Jones to announce the reintroduction of his Eagle and Summit County Wilderness Preservation Act. This bill, H.R. 1701, will protect 167,000 acres of unique landscapes in central Colorado, including the wildflower fields of Acorn Creek near Silverthorne and the rugged red rock canyons at Bull Gulch.

All told the bill will designate six new, stand-alone wilderness areas and expand the existing Holy Cross, Eagles Nest and Parmigan Wildernesses. The bill will also create several Special Management Areas and Companion Areas, which provide some protections for wilderness-quality lands while still allowing for additional uses such as helicopter training and mountain biking. Based on the conservation community's Hidden Gems Proposal, H.R. 1701 is the same bill Polis introduced last fall.

Rep. Polis's bill faces a different political climate this Congress – a U.S. House of Representatives controlled by anti-conservation conservatives and a House Natural Resources Committee that is not friendly to Wilderness. Nonetheless, given the strong local support for the Hidden Gems and the bill's early introduction, we are optimistic that if any wilderness legislation moves in this Congress, HR 1701 will be a part of the discussion.

While we will continue to build support for the Eagle and Summit County Wilderness Preservation Act

in the House, we will also be focusing on the Senate. Both Colorado Senators have expressed interest in working on wilderness issues, and the Hidden Gems proposal is ripe for them to take on. Polis and the Hidden Gems Campaign have both completed an incredibly thorough vetting process that involved numerous meetings with local elected officials (many of which support more wilderness), recreationists, fire districts, ranchers, water providers and many other interests that have a stake in new wilderness protections.

In addition to Congressman's Polis district, there are also Hidden Gems areas in the 3rd Congressional District, represented by Congressman Scott Tipton. Rep. Tipton defeated John Salazar last November and is new to the wilderness issue. Another of our goals this year is to educate Tipton on all of the hard work that has been done to vet the Hidden Gems areas and the broad community support that exists for more wilderness designation in his district. We are pleased that Rep. Tipton has maintained an open door policy with us and is willing to hear from all sides of the issue.

When you listen to the news, it is clear that jobs and the economy are still at the top of the list of citizens' current concerns. Consequently, we are stressing the important role that protected wilderness plays in boosting local economies by providing a place for people to visit, recreate and spend money in nearby towns. In addition to tourists, wilderness areas contribute to the high quality of life in our state, attracting new residents and workers. Indeed, many businesses that have relocated

to Colorado have cited the draw of Colorado's scenic wild landscapes as a reason they moved here. Please help us send the message to our elected officials that not only is wilderness good for wildlife, recreation and spiritual renewal, but it is also good for our economic prosperity.



FREE Hidden Gems hike series 2011

- JUNE**
 - Tues. June 14** | The Firs (Thompson Creek), bird hike near Carbondale
 - Sat. June 25** | Dillon Pinnacles (West Elk Addition), east of Gunnison
 - Sun. June 26** | Perham Creek (Assignment Ridge), just south of Carbondale
- JULY**
 - Sat. July 2** | Huntsman Ridge (Hayes Creek), near McClure Pass
 - Thurs. July 7** | Spraddle Creek, just north of Vail
 - Sat. July 9** | Carbon Trail (Whetstone), just outside Crested Butte
 - Sun. July 10** | Hay Park, horseback ride, near Basalt and Carbondale
 - Sun. July 10** | West Lake Creek, south of Avon

Registration required!
For the full summer schedule and to register, go to: WhiteRiverWild.org/hikes
rjchae@wildernessworkshop.org | 970-963-3977



Rep. Jared Polis, flanked by outdoor adventurer Aron Ralston and photographer John Fielder, introduces his bill in April.

Anne Pogoriler



Water Update

Becky Long, Water Caucus Coordinator - becky@ourcolorado.org

As our rivers and streams run full with freshly melted snow, forecasters are already making predictions for what the summer will hold. Across the West, we are likely to see a long, hot summer, in keeping with the trend of high summer temperatures we have seen in recent years. How to ensure our rivers and streams continue to flow year-round, while also guaranteeing that clean drinking water is available to millions of Coloradans is an important discussion occurring across the state as the last traces of winter melt away. The decisions we make today for meeting future water needs will have lasting impacts. With that in mind, we released an exciting new report in March of this year: *Filling the Gap: Commonsense Solutions for Meeting Front Range Water Needs*. *Filling the Gap* is a collaborative report produced by Western Resource Advocates, Trout Unlimited and CEC.

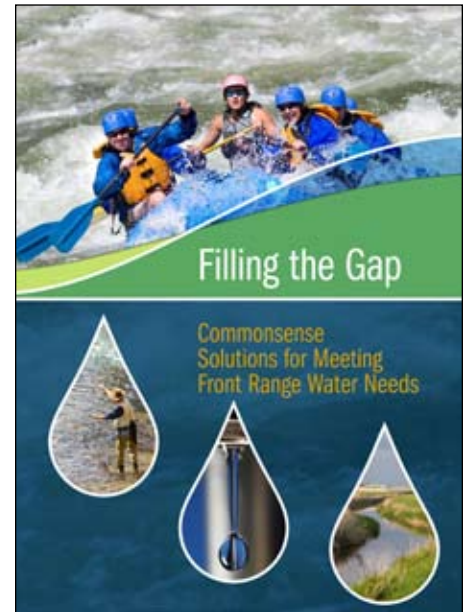
This report was born out of our concern that many traditional water supply strategies -- such as large new reservoirs and pipelines -- will damage the state's rivers. Healthy flowing rivers are among Colorado's most vital natural resources: nurturing the environment, supporting communities, powering the economy and drawing residents and visitors alike to our world-famous natural areas. Maintaining a high quality of life in Colorado demands that we preserve the state's waterways.

This report offers a realistic, balanced water supply plan that more than meets the projected needs of the South Platte Basin's Front Range communities—without additional, environmentally damaging, water supply development

from the Western Slope. Our plan is based upon four key strategies -- water conservation, reuse, voluntary water sharing with agriculture and acceptable water projects -- and protects Colorado's waterways, economy and quality of life. As we state in the report: "Just as we once put down the divining rods and found new ways for providing water supplies, today we must look beyond old ways of thinking and find innovative tools to meet new challenges. The time is now for the state of Colorado and local water providers to embrace new water supply strategies." We hope that this report continues the dialog about balancing the needs of our streams and rivers with those of our growing communities.

Filling the Gap has provided a timely discussion of how we will meet our future needs, as the past several months have brought a great deal of change and some exciting announcements in the world of Colorado water. In late April near the banks of the Upper Colorado River, Governor John Hickenlooper -- along with leaders from the Western Slope and Denver Water -- announced the Colorado River Collaborative Agreement, hailing the effort to reach compromises after years of work by all parties. This historic agreement provides some additional certainty for all parties moving forward, including assurances that the West Slope will have protections in the face of ongoing water transfers and that Denver Water can continue to provide water to millions of Front Range citizens.

While this agreement is certainly a landmark in Colorado water policy, there is still more that needs to be done to



The report is available at ourcolorado.org/what-we-do/water/resources-links/FillingTheGap.pdf

fully protect our rivers. We must ensure full implementation of the provisions of the agreement, which includes providing additional water and funds to the West Slope to improve stream conditions. Additionally, the agreement fails to include the mitigation that is needed before Denver Water and the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District divert additional flows from the Fraser River and Upper Colorado River through the proposed Moffat Tunnel Expansion and the Windy Gap Firming Project, both of which would take additional flows from the system. Additional mitigation is needed for these two projects before any federal permit is approved. CEC, along with our partners, continues to work with state and federal decision makers to ensure that the river system remains intact and healthy, and that the excitement of the new agreement does not overshadow the elbow grease needed to move us into the future.



Staff and Board Updates

Amy Thoe, Finance and Operations Director - amy@ourcolorado.org

CEC has welcomed several new staff and board members to the team this spring!

Zachariah Walker was hired in February to be CEC's new part-time West Slope Field Organizer in our Grand Junction office. With a wealth of experience in education, Zachariah is also deeply integrated into the Grand Junction community through his work with yoga, the local radio station and his outdoor pursuits. Since his start, Zachariah has coordinated the Grand Junction CapWatch program, led online advocacy communications for the office and helped plan numerous summer events. It has been a pleasure having him on board and representing CEC to the West Slope community!

CEC's latest addition is Petrika Peters, our new full-time West Slope Energy Organizer hired in April. Petrika joins us from Arizona where she received her graduate degree in Political Science from Northern Arizona University, and spent

her time teaching and doing volunteer work. We are excited to work with Petrika and have her lead our West Slope efforts on oil shale and oil and gas.

In addition to our staff hiring, we also have three new board members to welcome for 2011! Joe Baggett is the Director of Client Relations at the Janus Capital Group. An attorney at Earthjustice, Michael Freeman works closely with CEC staff on energy issues. As the Chief Financial Officer for the Colorado Society of Certified Public Accountants, Carol Cameron will bring her financial expertise to the CEC board. With their diverse and extensive experience in nonprofit finance, investments and environmental law, our newest board members are excellent additions to the CEC family.

After a few months of focusing on hiring and recruitment, the staff and board are finally complete and we couldn't be more pleased. Please join us in welcoming these new faces to the our team!



Welcome to Zachariah - West Slope Field Organizer - and Petrika Peters, West Slope Energy Organizer!

Shout out to Interns!

Amy Thoe, Finance and Operations Director - amy@ourcolorado.org

Thank you to all our fabulous spring interns! We couldn't do nearly as much as we do without your hard work and support.

Becca Strelitz has been an amazing addition to our administrative team. She works with Amy Thoe, Finance & Operations Director, on all manner of projects including helping to coordinate staff meetings, conducting online research and providing a ton of support for our Gala. We are excited that Becca will be working with us through summer.

Tyler Kessler and Avery Perryman were instrumental in the success of CEC's "Rebel with a Cause" Gala, in addition to assisting with grant research. Working

with Development Director Beka Wilson, this team has increased the capacity of the fundraising department and their hard work has really paid off.

For the legislative session we had another excellent crop of interns working hard for Colorado. Both Dan Findlay and Patrick Murphy were tireless in their support of our Lobbyist, Randy Moorman, and Program Director, Carrie Curtiss. When the bills are moving fast and furious, it's great to know we have such high level, dependable help to support the staff.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to all of our excellent interns – the support you provide is instrumental to CEC's success!



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- Champion (\$1,000)
- Other _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

City, State Zip: _____

My gift will be matched by my employer
Employer name: _____

My check made payable to CEC is enclosed

Please charge my Visa

MasterCard

Card #: _____ Exp: _____

Signature: _____

I would like to sign up for CEC's monthly e-newsletter

I would like to sign up to receive email action alerts

I would like to sign up for volunteer opportunities

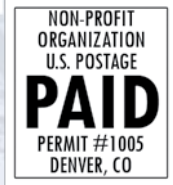
I would like this gift to be a recurring monthly donation

Please tear off and mail this form in the enclosed envelope.

CONSERVATION DESERVES MORE THAN 2%*

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Conservation and the environment receive just 2% of charitable giving in America. Put simply, conservation is not as well supported as it must be to ensure our future quality of life.

Preventative action to maintain the health of our air, waters, lands and forests costs a fraction of what we will sacrifice if we neglect our responsibilities. Conservation has one of the highest returns on investment of all charitable work. It builds strong, sustainable local economies.

The **Earth Friends Challenge** supports exceptional groups known for their efficiency and effectiveness.