Executive Director Update

BY ASHLEY BEMBENEK

Like our streams, field work has slowed to a trickle. Without the bustle of preparing for our next sampling event or monitoring effort, it’s tempting to think our work can wait. But attentive ears in the valley know there are a number of big things under way including a potential land exchange on Mt. Emmons, revisions to the US Forest Service’s Forest Plan for the Crested Butte area, a first ever comprehensive plan for the Town, and water quality control commission rulemaking hearings. As each project unfolds, we are excited to serve the community and provide technical expertise to assure that our local watersheds are protected.

Currently, CCWC is gathering the community and key stakeholders to identify the best watershed restoration projects in our local watersheds. Years ago, the State of Colorado filed suit against Standard Metals, the operator of the Standard Mine. That suit led to a financial settlement that will provide funds, roughly $230,000, to restore natural resources similar to those damaged by mining activities at the Standard Mine. We plan to use these funds to complete one or more large restoration projects in the coming years.

With such promising opportunities on the horizon, CCWC is more inspired than ever. Please join us in protecting our local watersheds!

Welcome Dr. Jeff Writer!

Please help us welcome our newest Board Member, Dr. Jeff Writer! Dr. Writer has a Masters and PhD from the University of Colorado in Environmental Engineering, and taught secondary through university students for over 24 years. His research focuses on water issues including carbon and nutrient export from burned watersheds and understanding the fate and transport of pharmaceutical compounds in river systems. He looks forward to finding any excuse to get into the surrounding watersheds, whether skiing, backpacking with his wife and dog, or water sampling with the amazing folks committed to protecting water quality in our valley.
Field Notes

BY ALLI DEL GIZZI

This summer, we partnered with the CDPHE Measurable Results Program to sample Redwell Basin during high and low flow conditions. Redwell Basin is home to The Daisy Mine, a historic abandoned mine, and natural features that deliver metals to Redwell Creek, a tributary to Oh-Be-Joyful Creek.

Redwell Basin is striking to look at, rocks made red by iron oxide dominate the view and abandoned mining equipment dots the landscape. The Red Well itself completely blew me away on my first visit. I hadn’t sampled anything quite like it before.

The Red Well is an approximately 2,800 year old naturally-occurring hydrologic feature nestled into the red landscape. When you look into the Red Well, it’s acidic water is a deep blue with hues of green and yellow, comparable to the look of some of Yellowstone’s thermal springs.

The Daisy Mine which once produced silver, copper, and zinc now exceeds water quality standards for zinc, cadmium, copper and iron and was recognized as a “high priority abandoned hard rock mine” by the Colorado Nonpoint Source Program in 2012.

CCWC is currently pursuing funding opportunities with partners to fund an effective reclamation project at the Daisy Mine in order to reduce metal loads that originate from the mine site.

Support CCWC Today!

Your tax-deductible donations help us fulfill our mission and support various programs and projects. We can’t do this without your help! Mail us a check or donate online at CoalCreek.org

When you’re not able to shop local, please support CCWC by using Amazon Smile. Visit smile.amazon.com/charitylists and search for Coal Creek Watershed Coalition to set us as your charity!

WATER WORDS

In water words we explore the etymology of words we commonly use in the world of water.

Riparian (adj.) situated or taking place along or near the bank of a river.

Riparian is derived from the Latin word riparius (of a riverbank), a form of ripa (bank).

Riparian areas are distinctly different from the surrounding lands because their vegetation and soil characteristics are strongly influenced by water from their native river. In the image above you can see a distinct difference between the riparian versus upland vegetation.

Riparian areas - because they provide food, cover, and water - support more plants animals than adjacent uplands. They are important ecosystems to steward and protect.

Volunteers Wanted!

Feel like splashing around in Coal Creek as part of our water sampling program? We can use your help at our water quality sampling events throughout the year!

If you are interested in volunteer opportunities, please Email us at director@coalcreek.org.