



West Region Wildfire Council

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Working Together to Reduce Wildfire Risk

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends & Colleagues,

Wildfire is a fact of life here in western Colorado. West Region Wildfire Council's work to increase resilience within our communities and cherished landscapes remains as pressing as ever. Over the past year, our staff worked in tandem with many partners to assess and identify wildfire risk to a variety of values through community wildfire protection planning (CWPPs), rapid wildfire risk assessments, home assessment "site visits" as well as other forms of collaborative forest and community assessment and planning processes. All of this is done with our many local, state and federal agency partners.



When thinking about wildfire, what are the values at risk that matter to you? Maybe you're concerned about a wildfire affecting your home or your business. Maybe you're concerned about a wildfire negatively affecting your favorite areas within our beautiful public lands, critical wildlife habitat, or our watersheds, which provide water for ecosystems and human consumption. This small but mighty organization continues to play a key role in supporting proactive wildfire mitigation efforts and projects.

I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize and thank the many organizations and individuals that have contributed to WRWC and the important collective work to prepare our communities and landscapes for wildfire. The final page of this report provides details on our organization's donors and program's supporters. My gratitude for your generosity and support is enormous. I would particularly like to acknowledge our Board of Directors, who contribute their time and expertise to help our organization be successful in our western Colorado community. I'd like to thank Charles Lanoue for his years of service on our Board while welcoming Paul Rogers as our newest Board member. As our organization continues to grow and expand, we are looking for community members that may have an interest in serving on our Board. Please reach out if you have an interest or know someone who might.

Looking forward, I have little doubt that we will be able to increase the scope and scale of our collective efforts to increase resilience to wildfire. We are working towards ensuring that our programs are offered in a more equitable manner via a needs-based process to reduce or waive the financial match requirement for vegetation management projects. Additionally, I am very excited to announce that we will be launching a Wildfire Ready Home program in 2024. It will offer wildfire mitigation certificates to residents who have met or exceeded the minimum standards for mitigation as set forth within the program. The program and its standards have been endorsed by a variety of local and statewide partners, and I fully anticipate that it will become the preeminent wildfire mitigation certification in western Colorado. In addition to offering peace of mind for certificate holders, our intent is to work with representatives from the real estate and homeowner's insurance industries to recognize and promote the Wildfire Ready Home Certification. There are many exciting projects, programs and opportunities ahead for the West Region Wildfire Council, and I hope that you will consider getting involved and joining us as we "Work together to reduce wildfire risk"!

West Region Wildfire Council's Executive Director, **Jamie Gomez**

About the Cover Photo: The West Fork Fire Complex cover photo was taken in South Fork, Colorado (Rio Grande County) in June of 2013 by Jake Niece.



BEFORE



AFTER

"The results were fantastic - what you and Scott have done is transformative. We are temporary stewards of the land, and it was time to clean it up and leave it much more attractive."

-- Tom Atkinson, Gunnison County

Board Members and Liaisons

John Bennett
Scott Morrill
Paul Rogers
Damon Lange
Charles Lanoue (2021-2023)
Deana Harms (BLM Liaison)
James Savage (BLM Liaison)
Sarah Shaughnessy (USFS Liaison)

HELPING REDUCE RISK FROM WILDFIRE

West Region Wildfire Council staff help prepare people, communities and watersheds for wildfire to reduce the risk to life, property, and the places we love.

63

COMMUNITY AND PARTNER ACTIVITIES

WRWC staff facilitate and participate in collaboratives to plan landscape-level strategies to improve resiliency to wildfire. We also partner with communities and provide education, assessments and recommendations.



ACRES TREATED

West Region Wildfire Council invested \$671,334 in vegetation management projects with the support of many partners. 39 projects were completed plus 19 follow-up seedings. Participating landowners matched this investment with \$301,814 in cash and in-kind contributions of \$57,043.

1,122



WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS

WRWC staff provided 169 free site visits to homeowners. Homeowners received a report detailing recommended actions to help reduce the risk of wildfire damage. We also conducted over 1,000 rapid risk assessments!



169

NOTE FROM A LANDOWNER



"The team at WRWC worked closely with us on our large project from design through reimbursement. Their detailed communication throughout and close oversight of the contractor allowed the project to succeed even with schedule and design changes. We look forward to working with WRWC again on future mitigation projects."

-- Matt Dubrovich, Ouray County

2023 FUNDING PARTNERS

Bureau of Land Management
 Colorado State Forest Service
 Colorado State University
 Delta County
 Gunnison County
 Montrose County
 Ouray County
 San Miguel County
 USDA Forest Service - Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre & Gunnison National Forests
 Colorado Department of Homeland Security & Emergency Management

CORPORATE SPONSOR:

Kroger Community Rewards

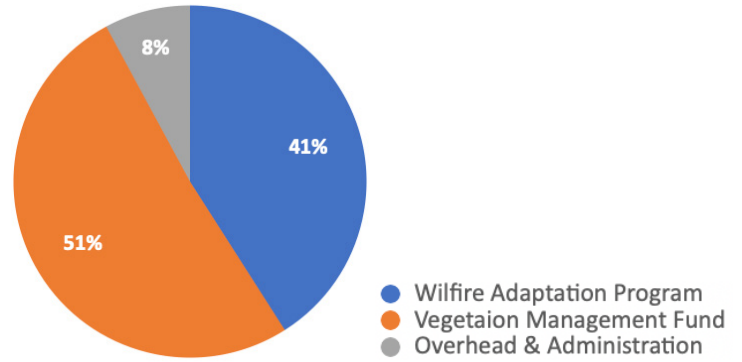
THANKS TO OUR 2023 DONORS:

Atkinson Family Foundation
 Bert Stern
 Dean Martinac
 Jacob Torrey
 Jim & Suzanne Grady
 Joe Foy, Jr.
 Julie & Dave Duff
 Laurie Moore
 Lisa Foxwell & Paul Finley-Lucky U Fund
 Maria Wagner
 Marc Bergman
 Richard Simonson
 Rocky Kimball
 Rossan Mosher
 Spring Branch Forestry
 Sybil Kiskan
 Tracy Boyce

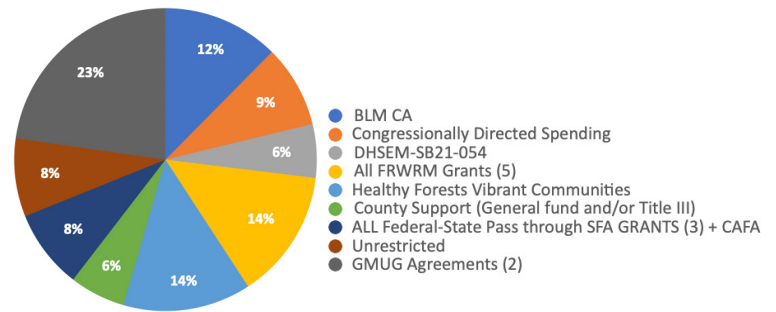


The West Region Wildfire Council promotes and empowers community wildfire adaptation while increasing ecological resilience to future wildfire. We work with landowners and partners in Delta, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Montrose, Ouray and San Miguel Counties in Colorado. To learn more, visit: www.COwildfire.org

2023 Program Expense



Expenditures by Funding Source



In 2023, WRWC spent \$1,312,324 on mission-driven work. WRWC specializes in aggregating federal, state and local funding to manage and deliver wildfire mitigation programs that are rising in demand. In 2023, WRWC was awarded \$2,198,356 in competitive federal and state funding to support our Vegetation Management and Wildfire Adaptation Programs between 2023 - 2027. WRWC secured an additional \$140,101 in local funding support from our county partners that will be used over multiple years.

West Region Wildfire Council Staff



Brad Eckert, Forester; Jamie Gomez, Executive Director; Aaron Johnson, Wildfire Mitigation Specialist; Leigh Robertson, Partnership & Collaboration Director; Danny Duda, GIS Specialist; Lilia Falk, Director of Finance, Agreements & HR; Josh Hansen, Forester.