



CONTACT:

Mitzi Rapkin, Community Relations Director
City of Aspen
Phone: (970) 920-5082
Email: mitzi.rapkin@cityofaspen.com
<http://www.aspenpitkin.com/>

Phil Overeynder, Utilities Engineer of Special Projects
City of Aspen
Phone: (970) 920-5111
Email: phil.overeynder@cityofaspen.com
<http://www.aspenpitkin.com/>

Amy Beatie, Executive Director
Colorado Water Trust
Phone: (720) 570-2897
Email: abeatie@coloradowatertrust.org
www.coloradowatertrust.org

ASPEN WATER RIGHTS BENEFIT ROARING FORK

Changing operations, leaving water in river makes 14% positive impact to current flow

Today, the Roaring Fork River is flowing 4.6 cfs higher thanks to an innovative program created between the City of Aspen and the Colorado Water Trust, inked this June. Historically, flows in the Roaring Fork through Aspen are low at this time of year, as much of the native flow of the river is diverted before it reaches Aspen and local diversions add to the deficit. To benefit flows in the Roaring Fork, Aspen City Council authorized a nondiversion agreement with the Colorado Water Trust at its June 10th meeting. The agreement describes how and when Aspen will reduce the amount of water it diverts from the river at the Wheeler Ditch to increase streamflows, and it has been operating for about two weeks. Aspen has been augmenting the Roaring Fork's flow by about 4.6 cfs which has been about 14% of the total flow in the reach through Aspen.

“We saw flows decreasing, so we starting taking actions to reduce diversions at the Wheeler Ditch,” said David Hornbacher, Aspen’s Director of Utilities and Environmental Initiatives.

“We’ve been communicating with homeowners and water users in the area as we’ve developed

this plan, asking for their understanding and cooperation. Public support of this pilot nondiversion project is critical to its success, and so far, it's been going very well.”

“We are in the early stages of this project, checking and double checking projections with conditions on the ground,” says Amy Beatie, executive director of the Colorado Water Trust. “Getting things dialed in this year is important. Aspen, CWT, and Grand River Consulting will be gathering information through implementation of this project to help develop long-term flow solutions for the Roaring Fork. This project will add flow to the Roaring Fork in a below-average year, help us gain understanding of flow issues in the reach, and develop long-term solutions.”

“Aspen is leading the charge, but the City can't rewater this reach of the Roaring Fork long-term without help from the local water user community,” says Beatie. “In Aspen, we see a community that cares deeply about its river, and we see interest in crafting a long-term remedy to flow issues. We hope this pilot project will help inform a way forward.”

###

The Colorado Water Trust is a private, nonprofit organization that engages in and supports voluntary efforts to restore and protect streamflows in Colorado to sustain healthy aquatic ecosystems. These efforts include water acquisitions, other creative transfers of water, on-the-ground physical solutions, and providing technical assistance to land trusts.

The City of Aspen is located high in the Rocky Mountains and is the 53rd largest city in the state. Two hundred miles southwest of Denver and 130 miles east of Grand Junction, it is at the southeastern end of the Roaring Fork Valley in Pitkin County and the Roaring Fork River flows right through town. Aspen is surrounded by the White River National Forest. Aspen encompasses 3.66 square miles and is a relatively flat valley floor surrounded on three sides by Aspen, Smuggler and Red Mountains. It was founded in 1880 and incorporated in 1881. Aspen is internationally renowned as a winter and summer resort.