



# Making Headway for our Climate

*“Think globally, act locally” rings true for making progress on an international issue.*

For an issue as global as climate change, it can be tough to see progress on a local scale. But we are making it happen! In the face of a do-nothing Congress, the best way to keep up momentum is through state and local solutions.

We’ve been organizing for action in many communities. One example is in Grand Junction, where the city council recently endorsed more renewable energy, noting that it is “good for business, and good for the people of Colorado.” The fact that elected officials in the heart of coal country threw their weight behind clean energy was thanks, in part, to the efforts of our team.

At the same time, we’ve launched new efforts to work with communities reliant on coal. We know it’s time that all of us put real resources into partnering with communities on how they can not only weather, but thrive in the 21st-century economy.

We’ve got a busy fall ahead. We’re working with the state’s largest utility to get more renewables online, and envisioning our next steps in cutting carbon pollution. And we’re looking forward to the 2017 legislative session as a chance to make further strides on renewables, clean air, and transportation policies.

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**WHEN NATIONAL POLITICS ARE DAUNTING, IT'S TIME TO GO BACK TO THE BASICS: ORGANIZING LOCAL SUPPORT TO PROVE THAT PEOPLE WANT TO SEE ACTION ON CLIMATE.**

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Climate change is one of the most pressing issues of our generation, but the lack of action in Congress presents an opportunity for Colorado’s state and local governments to be a model for the nation.

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VOTE FOR THE OUTDOORS!

# Upcoming Events

## BECCA STRELITZ MEMORIAL FUNDRAISER

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2016

- Join the Strelitz family to honor our former staffer Becca's life and to ensure that her passion and memory live on through a fully-funded internship program.

## ELECTION DAY

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2016

- Get out and vote! Better yet, join us beforehand in October to knock doors and make phone calls in order to elect pro-conservation champions!

## COLORADO GIVES DAY

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2016

- This statewide movement encourages online giving to the state's best nonprofits and charities, including Conservation Colorado. Tell your friends!

## REBEL WITH A CAUSE

FRIDAY, MAY 19, 2017

- Our annual Rebel with a Cause Gala brings together the most influential political figures, business leaders, environmental visionaries, and community members for Colorado's largest political event for the environment. Mark your calendar!

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The future is worth the fight

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# Executive Director's Corner

*In this turbulent election year, only one thing is certain: change is coming.*

EVEN THOUGH THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION DOMINATES HEADLINES, DISCUSSIONS, AND AIRWAVES, IT'S THE LOCAL ELECTIONS WHERE WE HAVE THE MOST ABILITY TO AFFECT CHANGE.

Colorado's state-level elections are heating up, and who we elect to office will have huge impacts on our air, land, water, and people.

Here's the bottom line: over the last two years, since our state Senate has been controlled by anti-conservation legislators, we've had to spend way too much time having to defend our natural resources against bad policies, and have had to fight too hard to pass commonsense measures.

**JOIN US IN OUR WORK TO ELECT A PRO-CONSERVATION STATE LEGISLATURE! SEE OUR ENDORSEMENTS AND HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED AT [CONSERVATIONCO.ORG/ELECTIONS](http://CONSERVATIONCO.ORG/ELECTIONS)**

As just one example, we sounded the alarm last spring when anti-conservation legislators tried to slash eight million dollars from the budget of Colorado's clean air agency. Their extreme proposal was intended as a protest against the state's commitment to move forward on the Clean Power Plan, but the consequences of this stunt would have cost 96 people their jobs and put our clean air in jeopardy. While we restored the majority of this funding in the end, the fight was symbolic: certain legislators were willing to hold jobs and our clean air hostage just to get their message across.

We did see some conservation successes this year, despite the divided legislature. Rain barrels were finally legalized after a two-year fight, Colorado became the first state to have its own Public Lands Day, and we are now one of the best states in the country to buy an electric vehicle.

However, it took a lot of time and effort to get these bills to pass. The anti-conservation majority in the Senate blocked many other environmental and public health bills, from those that would protect our communities from oil and gas drilling to one that would have set meaningful goals for our state's climate commitments.

This November, it's up to us to change this by electing leaders who represent our values and are willing to fight for them. We're doing everything we can to support pro-conservation candidates, knocking on thousands of doors and spreading the word about our issues.

THANKS TO YOU, WE ARE STRONGER THAN EVER, AND THIS ELECTION YEAR HOLDS EXCITING POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE. YOUR SUPPORT MAKES ALL THIS POSSIBLE – JOIN US IN LEADING THE FIGHT TO ENACT REAL CHANGE FOR COLORADO'S FUTURE!

**PETE MAYSMITH**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CONSERVATION COLORADO



BUILDING SUPPORT FOR A PRO-CONSERVATION CANDIDATE

# Democracy is a Beautiful Thing

*Helping Latinos in Colorado become citizens spurs political engagement.*



PROTÉGETE TEAM HELPING LEGAL U.S. RESIDENTS BECOME CITIZENS

THERE ARE MORE THAN 90,000 LEGAL PERMANENT RESIDENTS IN COLORADO WHO ARE ELIGIBLE TO BECOME CITIZENS.

These Coloradans pay taxes and contribute to our economy, but aren't able to reap all of the benefits of our democracy. One of the advantages of citizenship is the right to vote – not just for candidates, but for values and issues like the environment.

This year, Conservation Colorado's Protégete team set out to change that story by helping dozens of Colorado residents become citizens.

Becoming a citizen is more difficult than it sounds. Often, those who want to become citizens are forced to hire expensive legal experts to help them through the process, a barrier that is restrictive for many families. That's where Protégete comes in. At our citizenship workshops, we train volunteers to help residents through their paperwork in English or Spanish, then have an immigration attorney review everything to ensure the application is sound.

You may be wondering: why is an environmental organization organizing citizenship workshops?

It's a key part of our outreach. Low-income and minority communities are

disproportionately impacted by environmental issues, such as air pollution and water contamination. Many immigrants leave countries with extreme environmental degradation, only to settle in highly-polluted neighborhoods in the United States. It's an injustice that residents of these communities are often unable to make their voices heard in the political process.

By offering a helping hand to legal U.S. residents who want to become citizens, we're eliminating the barriers of access to voting and engaging in our democracy. There are many benefits of attaining citizenship, including the ability to participate in the civic engagement process, acquiring a U.S. passport, and voting in this year's elections.

Becoming a citizen gives immigrants a stronger stake in local, and national, environmental issues. Our workshops are elevating the voices of residents by enabling them to vote and be civically engaged. I deeply believe that democracy is a beautiful thing, and am excited to work with our newest citizens to keep Colorado majestic.

**HILDA NUCETE**  
PROTÉGETE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON OUR PROTÉGETE WORK OR THE PROMOTORES PROGRAM, VISIT [CONSERVATIONCO.ORG/PROTEGETE](http://CONSERVATIONCO.ORG/PROTEGETE)

“ Citizen: It's a word filled with hope and patriotism, and holds more meaning than many of us realize. ”

# Protecting the Dolores River Canyonlands

*This 241-mile watershed encapsulates some of the best parts of the West.*

THE SNOW-CAPPED PEAKS OF THE SAN JUAN MOUNTAINS STAND AS SENTINELS TO THE EAST, OVERLOOKING THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE RIVER.

Just a few miles away lies one of Colorado's newest wilderness areas, Hermosa Creek. As the river flows southwest through canyon country, it comes to an abrupt stop just outside Dolores. It's there that El Río de Nuestra Señora de Dolores (the River of Our Lady of Sorrows) is slowly suffocated in the McPhee Reservoir.

Like the river and its history, the McPhee Dam is a complicated deal. A changing climate combined with poor planning and overly ambitious water allocations have made the river downstream of the dam little more than a trickle.

For much of the year, Slickrock Canyon and the surrounding Dolores River Wilderness Study Area sit like an amphitheater missing its orchestra. The symphony that is water on rock rarely appears.

These stunted flows are damaging to the habitat and ecosystems in the area. Managed releases of water from the reservoir have been few and far between over the past decade. The amount of water sent downstream has dwindled, leaving



THE DOLORES RIVER RUNS THROUGH SLICKROCK CANYON

river recreationists high and dry as they wait for next year—and then the next, and then the next—to boat one of the West's most iconic rivers.

Surrounding the river is a bevy of unique resources that grew along with the river itself. Rare plants, geologic formations, cultural remnants, and wildlife make this an unforgettable place. Many of these are being considered for protection by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the federal agency that manages most of the West's public lands. The BLM's field office is deciding whether to protect some of these places as official "Areas of Critical Environmental Concern." At the same time, these areas may see changes from the planning process for the BLM's Uncompahgre Field Office.

I was fortunate enough to float the Dolores this year, just one in a group of boaters who were blissful to see Slickrock Canyon from a boat for the first time in five years. We drank in all the beauty and wildness that the Dolores has to offer. The trip only further reinforced the notion that land management planning matters – even though it is far less spectacular than a trip down the river. Without a roadmap, the future of the places we recreate in and dream about are uncertain. That's why Conservation Colorado is prioritizing this area -- because the Dolores River Canyonlands are too precious to lose.

🕒 **LUKE SCHAFER**  
WEST SLOPE ADVOCACY DIRECTOR

ADAPTED FROM "A TRIP DOWN COLORADO'S RIVER OF SORROWS." READ THE FULL STORY AT [MEDIUM.COM/@CONSERVATIONCO](https://medium.com/@conservationco)

“The beautiful landscapes surrounding the Dolores River are some of Colorado's most wild -- and most in need of protection.”



# Rain Barrels are Legal at Last!

*But they're only one step towards managing our precious water.*

## THIS SPRING, WE LEGALIZED RAIN BARRELS IN COLORADO!

This simple conservation measure was prohibited in our state because water is scarce and therefore very closely managed. But our water rights system (known as “prior appropriation”) allows exceptions for many different reasons. It makes sense to make a special case for rain barrels, since capturing rain in barrels has no measurable impact on downstream water users. We worked together with agriculture and other interests to pass a bill that allows Coloradans to use rain barrels to save money on water bills, keep their gardens green, and connect with our water supply.

Rain barrels are a great first step, but they're just part of ensuring a healthy water future. Colorado faces staggering challenges when it comes to our water supply, from population growth to climate change. We need to be smart about how we use our water. Fortunately, Governor John Hickenlooper recently released Colorado's Water Plan, which will help us manage our water for years to come. The plan recognizes that increasing water conservation in our cities is one of the easiest ways we can protect the health of our rivers, which is a place we'll be focusing on in the coming months and years.



GOVERNOR HICKENLOOPER SIGNING A RAIN BARREL

But we've got to make sure the plan is implemented. If we're going to confront our water challenges, it'll take working together and committing to our goals for the years ahead.

**◉ THERESA CONLEY**  
WATER ADVOCATE

## Your Donations at Work

*With your support, we're enacting change across the state!*



“ Like a Vulcan neck-pinch, Conservation Colorado knows exactly what pressure points most effectively drive change.

Because of Conservation Colorado, we've had the satisfaction of participating in real progress on key issues like methane regulation, clean power standards, and state climate action. ”

**◉ AUDEN SCHENDLER**  
VICE PRESIDENT, SUSTAINABILITY, ASPEN SKIING COMPANY, AND CONSERVATION COLORADO BOARD MEMBER



“ It goes without saying, but we have to protect our wild places. These areas mean something to everybody

that spends time in them and are nourishment for the soul. But, they're often forgotten in today's political landscape. Conservation Colorado is here to keep them relevant, because in many ways protecting our wild places is the most important issue. ”

**◉ NATHAN JESSE**  
CONSERVATION COLORADO VOLUNTEER



“ Conservation Colorado is the group I turn to for any question about conservation and the environment. Their smart and committed staff,

political savvy, and drive to make my district and Colorado a better place make them a perfect partner at the Capitol. ”

**◉ REP. JESSIE DANIELSON**  
COLORADO HOUSE DISTRICT 24

# Bringing Community Stories to Washington, D.C.

*Local activists share their stories with national leaders.*

I RECENTLY VISITED OUR NATION'S CAPITOL WITH TWO OF OUR ACTIVISTS, ISABEL AND ROXANNE, TO DISCUSS ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AFFECTING THEM EVERY DAY, AND WHY THEY BELIEVE IT IS SO IMPORTANT TO PROTECT OUR EARTH FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.



PROMOTORAS IN WASHINGTON D.C.

While we were there, we met with eight elected officials, and the stories that our volunteers shared were a powerful way to ask our leaders to stand up for the people they represent.

Isabel talked about how she grew up in Kansas City, and how four children of her close friends died of cancer. She admits that it could be a coincidence -- but maybe it's not. More studies are finding increased rates of cancer in polluted areas, and higher percentages of people of color live in those places.

Roxanne remembers realizing that, when President Barack Obama was first elected, she had never expected to see people of color as leaders of our country. After that election, she found that she wanted to be a leader but

“ One of my proudest moments as a Protégete Community Organizer was watching two Protégete activists speak with elected officials in Washington, D.C. ”

had never before imagined it was possible. Her tale brought light to the importance of making sure the voices of underrepresented communities are heard.

This trip had two remarkable outcomes: it allowed two activists to find their voices, and it brought environmental justice issues into focus for some of our national elected officials. We'll be visiting the Capitol to lobby for years to come!

◉ SOPHIA GUERRERO-MURPHY  
PROTÉGETE COMMUNITY ORGANIZER

## Becca Strelitz Internship Program

*Her life impacted many, and her legacy lives on.*

I never got to meet her, but from what I hear Becca Strelitz was charismatic, loving, and passionate. Becca started her time at Conservation Colorado as an intern, so it's fitting that after she passed away last year, a memorial fund was established in her honor to make it possible for diverse and enthusiastic interns to learn at this organization.

During my internship, I learned about developing solutions to our most pressing environmental problems. The staff at Conservation Colorado taught me how to approach policy solutions and hold

legislators accountable, and these are ideas that I will carry with me throughout my career. The experience I gained at Conservation Colorado will undoubtedly serve as the foundation to help me accomplish my goals in the future. Now I understand why Becca loved working here so much, and I hope her legacy lives on for years to come if generous donors help us to fund this important program.



◉ SAM WALLACE  
SUMMER ADVOCACY  
INTERN

“ This summer, I was lucky to be part of the first class of the Becca Strelitz Internship Program. ”

# Without You, Our Work isn't Paw-sible!

*Our donors allow us to engage in this challenging and important work. We extend our sincere thanks to all of our supporters.*

LISTED BELOW ARE INDIVIDUAL DONORS TO CONSERVATION COLORADO AND CONSERVATION COLORADO EDUCATION FUND FROM JANUARY 1-AUGUST 15, 2016.

Donations made after this date will be published in our next newsletter. If you would like to become a donor or if you have noticed an error or omission in this list, please contact Development Manager, Moe Leneweaver, at 303-405-6711 or [moe@conservationco.org](mailto:moe@conservationco.org).



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