OUR MISSION:
The Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership exists to help protect the economic, natural, and scenic values of the Upper Uncompahgre River Watershed. The Partnership works to inform and engage all stakeholders and solicits input from diverse interests to ensure collaborative restoration efforts in the watershed.

With Appreciation to many...

2015 was a special year for the Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership, filled with many milestones. In other words, it was a typical year for our little nonprofit that could.

Formed in 2007, we incorporated as a nonprofit in 2013, recruited a board of directors and started many projects that are making significant impacts on the watershed. We began remediating mine sites to keep heavy metal contamination out of the Uncompahgre River and its tributaries in 2014, and two of those projects were completed in 2015.

Last year, UWP’s volunteers spent hundreds of hours on monitoring water quality through the River Watch program, improving riparian areas through Adopt-A-Park and other activities, and educating the community about watershed issues through a variety of events – including the fun and fantastic Ridgway RiverFest. The next two pages are packed with information about how we have been working toward the goals set by our watershed plan – another one of our achievements that outlines ways our small nonprofit can partner with other stakeholders and organizations to protect and restore the Upper Uncompahgre River Watershed.

All this would not have been possible without the contributions of many people and businesses around our community. To start with, Agnieszka Przeszłowska provided truly positive leadership and professional expertise in her role as UWP Coordinator for three years. Though she is no longer in that position, we are thankful to maintain our relationship with her as our mine remediation project manager (and advisor on many watershed issues).

On page 3, you’ll see the many generous sponsors and donors listed in the RiverFest article, who often donate to other activities throughout the year. Also, check out page 4 to read about our most active supporters and contributors – our board members, Partner of the Year, and the filmmaker who produced UWP’s first video.

As for myself, for the past nine months, first as an event volunteer and then as UWP’s communications director, I have been trying to follow in the footsteps of those who came before me, many who continue to support my work now. My goals are to keep you informed of our activities and provide you with opportunities to enrich your lives through interacting with your watershed. We have a precious resource flowing down from the San Juan Mountains through the canyons and valleys of Ouray County, and it is my honor to be joining others to restore and protect it.

So, please stay tuned and keep watching as we continue to develop new activities, complete projects and make progress on our goals. I look forward to seeing you around the watershed.

Sincerely, Tanya Ishikawa
UWP Communications Director

Here I am on a raft trip with a major UWP supporter, RIGS Adventure Co. I am third from the front on the right side.
Two Mine Remediation Projects Completed in 2015

Thanks to UWP’s efforts, the Uncompahgre River should be running a bit cleaner into the future. Project manager Agnieszka Przeszlowska and her team completed remediating contaminated water flows at two abandoned mine sites in summer 2015, in collaboration with Jeff Litteral of Colorado’s Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety and funded by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment grants.

Heavy metal pollutants from abandoned mines in the San Juan Mountains are a major source of contaminants in the Uncompahgre, and are targeted for clean up in our watershed plan. Three projects began in 2014, with collecting surface water samples and river insects from the Upper Uncompahgre River, which will be compared to post-remediation samples to determine how much water quality improves.

Remediation at the Michael Breen Mine site diverted acid drainage from mine waste that would otherwise be carried into the Uncompahgre River. At the Vernon Mine site, significant amounts of copper that had been leaching into Gray Copper Gulch were diverted. The third project at the abandoned Atlas Mill off Camp Bird Road above Sneffels Creek will minimize erosion of tailings in the creek’s floodplain. Collaborating with the property owner, Ouray Silver Mine, Inc., and consulting with Western Stream Works, LLC on project design, remediation work is planned for summer 2016.

To read the full report from October 2015, go to http://www.uncompahgrewatershed.org/about-us/projects/ and click on the progress report link.

River Watch Water Monitoring

UWP participated for a fourth year in the River Watch program, a statewide volunteer water quality monitoring program, co-sponsored by Colorado Parks and Wildlife and the Colorado Watershed Assembly. UWP Board Member Dudley Case and wife Sharon Case, along with Przeszlowska, completed 99 hours of monitoring activities at five sites in the watershed: Cutler Creek, Potter Ranch, Ridgway Town, County Road 24 below the bridge, and below Ridgway Reservoir. While the activity gets local citizens involved in monitoring local water resources, we hope to gain valuable data to help understand the watershed’s health and need for restoration.

Adopt-A-Park Program

Students from West Michigan Academy of Environmental Science traveled from Grand Rapids, Michigan to volunteer for UWP’s Adopt-A-Park activities for two days in May. Three adults and 17 high schoolers helped improve Top of the Pines, Cottonwood Park and Rollans Park, as well as learning about the geology of the area, historic mines and water quality. Also during 2015, UWP board members trimmed weeds and picked up trash, and Przeszlowska monitored the riparian vegetation that had been planted near Rollans Park in October 2012.

Youth Educational Activities

Ridgway Elementary’s third graders took field trips to the Uncompahgre River again in spring 2015, to learn about water resources and how we share our watershed. Przeszlowska led the educational workshops with assistance from Cary Denison of Trout Unlimited as well as UWP Board Members Dennis Murphy and Dudley Case.

Keep updated on future mine remediation project accomplishments by going to http://www.uncompahgrewatershed.org/contacts/, filling in your email address, and clicking subscribe on the right side of the page.

Help UWP to continue our projects that educate the community and improve as well as monitor community resources by donating. Find donation options at http://www.uncompahgrewatershed.org/membership/
**2015 San Juan Mining & Reclamation Conference**

UWP was a coordinating partner for the fifth annual San Juan Mining Conference on May 28 and 29, 2015, in Telluride Mountain Village, Colorado. The conference brought together 115 stakeholders including researchers, industry professionals and government employees to discuss current and future mining and water quality issues related to the San Juan Mountain region.

Conference presentations and panels focused on how mining and reclamation has evolved with the needs of society and technological advances, and society’s dependence on natural resources. Field trips went to the Telluride Idarado and Uravan mine sites.

Generous sponsor support and grants continue to make the conference free and accessible to the public. In 2015, $16,317 in funding and more than $10,062 in kind and volunteer services was received. Sponsors included the Colorado Division of Public Health and Environment, Telluride Foundation, Trout Unlimited, Division of Mining Reclamation and Safety, Hecla Mining Company, Western Small Miners Association, Alpine Bank, Idarado-Newmont, Western Fuels, Trust for Land Restoration, Monadnock Mineral Services, and private sponsors. Other coordinating partners were Mountain Studies Institute, Willow Creek Restoration, Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety, San Miguel Watershed Coalition, and Telluride Institute.


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**A Watershed Celebration at the 2015 Ridgway RiverFest**

High water flows, exciting river races, great live music and nearly 500 of our closest friends were the highlights of the 2015 Ridgway RiverFest on June 27. The eighth annual event on the riverbanks and in the water of the Uncompahgre River at Rollans Park was a fun time for all ages.

Organized by UWP for the last few years, the 2015 festival weekend began with a screening of wild, whitewater films on June 26 at the Sherbino Theater. Saturday’s celebration included a presentation by Uncompahgre Ute Roland McCook, music by The Royal We and Six Shooter Rodeo, local food and drink, kids activities, and watershed education. River races including the ever-popular “Junk of the Unc” with recycled crafts and the premier of the stand up paddle board category.

The festival was made possible by many dedicated volunteers and generous donations from Alpine Bank, Jagged Edge, Mountain Market, Paragon Outdoors/Bootdoctors, Town of Ridgway, RIGS Adventure Co., Osprey, San Miguel Power Association, San Juan Huts, The Liquor Store, Rocky Mountain Cannabis, Ridgway Ouray Community Council, Randy Gregory of Re/Max Cimarron Realty, Mountain Khakis, CKS, Shavano Conservation District, Energy +Environmental Economics, Transition Ourway, Ridgway Real Estate, Dave Jones & Judi Chamberlin, Colorado River District, CB Design, Alpine Edge Engineering, Abigail Seaver, MD, ACME Healing Center, Alternative Power Enterprises, Orena Chamberlain & Wendell Houser, Ridgway Family Dentistry, San Juan Accounting, Ponderosa Real Estate, and numerous silent auction donors.

Save June 25 on your calendar for the 2016 Ridgway RiverFest. For info about sponsorships, vendor opportunities, the schedule and race registration, go to ridgwayriverfestival.org.

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**UWP’s 2015 Financial Report**

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<tr>
<th>Fund Use* by Category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programs = 90.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundraising = 6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration &amp; Operations = 3.3%</td>
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</tbody>
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* For the period from June 2013 to the end of 2015

The Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership accomplished a lot and dramatically increased community awareness in 2015, even with a relatively small budget due to our low administrative expenses and a ton of volunteer support.

From June 2013 to the end of 2015, average gross revenues were $62,614 per year, while average expenditures were $57,392 per year.

Donations and membership income increased by 67 percent between 2014 and 2015, while memberships increased 56 percent over that time.
Jeff Litteral, pictured above in a scene from UWP’s new video, is the co-owner and project manager for MtnGeo-Geek, a natural resource consulting firm in Ridgway. He is also an environmental scientist for the abandoned mine closure program of the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety.

Jeff served for two years on UWP’s initial Steering Committee as the nonprofit formed. He now serves on our Advisory Committee, volunteering as technical lead on mine remediation projects. He contributed valuable expertise and many hours to UWP’s mine remediation projects in 2015. His assistance included technical project coordination, water sampling, data analysis, design of remediation approaches, and leadership of the ground implementation. He continues to help identify future UWP projects and has contributed his time to the San Juan Mining & Reclamation Conference.

We thank Jeff for his long-term commitment and honor him as our 2015 Partner of the Year.

UWP premiered our first mini-documentary about our nonprofit and the watershed in December 2015. Produced by Jay Canode of TerraVision Media in Paonia, the inspirational video tells our story with a combination of beautiful and fun images as well as significant insight from a broad range of community members.

We truly appreciate Jay’s hard work and many days of filming on location and his fine editing of 12 hours of raw video into an engaging four-minute video. And we thank TellurideTV for showing the video on their website and channel.

Watch the video at: https://youtu.be/NSDmqb1R9Y8

THANK YOU to our Board Members who served in 2015, providing our nonprofit with invaluable guidance, community outreach and volunteer support: (not pictured) Ken Lipton and Cary Denison, and (left to right) Jon Barker, Judi Chamberlin, Dudley Case, Dennis Murphy, Anthony Ramsey, Scott Williams, and Brad Wallis.

Visit www.uncompahgrewatershed.org to sign up for our email updates, donate and learn more about our activities and volunteer opportunities.

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