



# EAGLE RIVER COALITION

Protecting Our Local Watersheds

## MISSION

We advocate for the health of the Upper Colorado and Eagle River Basins through research, projects and education.

## CONTACTS

**James Dilzell**

Executive Director

[dilzell@eagleriverco.org](mailto:dilzell@eagleriverco.org)

970.827.5406



## EAGLE RIVER COMMUNITY WATER PLAN

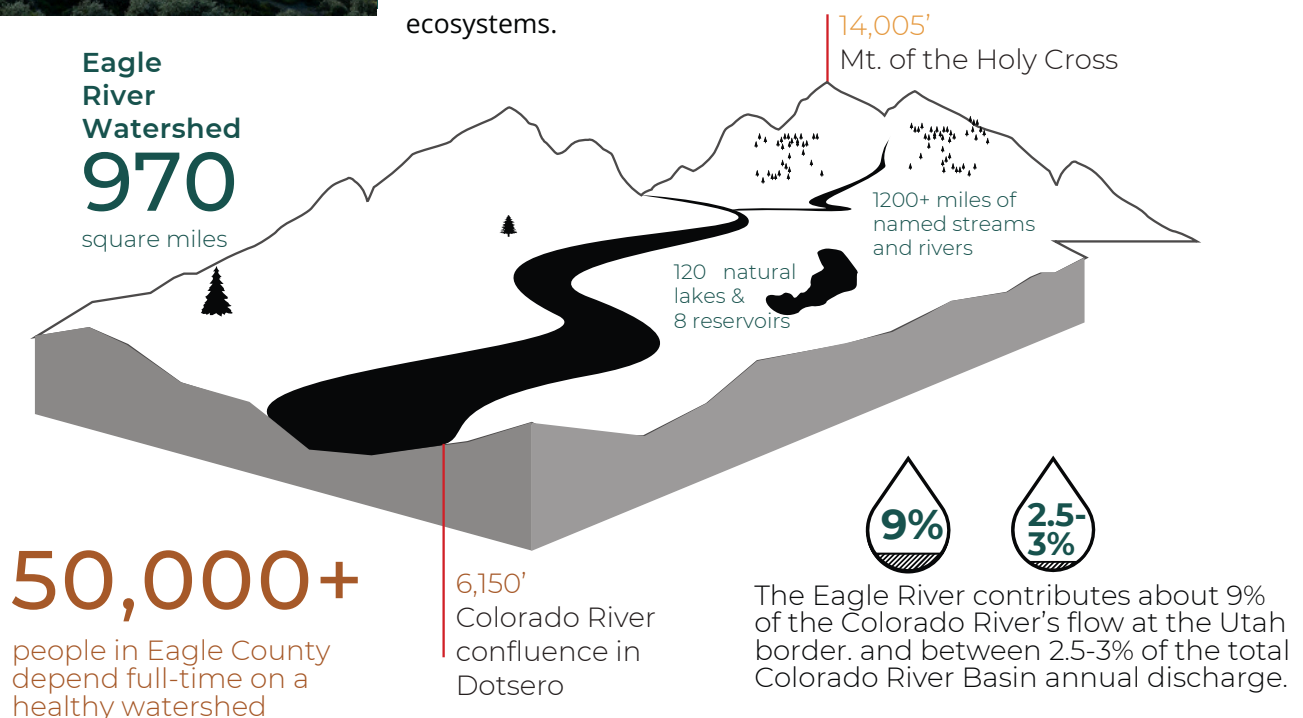
### Goals & Approach

The Eagle River Community Water Plan (CWP) studies environmental and recreational water needs in the basin. These non-consumptive water uses are frequently left out of long term planning for city and agricultural water supplies, resulting in damage to the river's ability to support wild fish communities, healthy riparian forests, and outdoor recreation activities for local community members and businesses. CWP goals are supported by the Colorado State Water Plan, which seeks to understand the state's water needs, identify gaps between need and supply, and promote projects to meet those needs. The Eagle River's ability to support environmental and recreational water uses will be strongly challenged in the near-future by climate change and population growth.

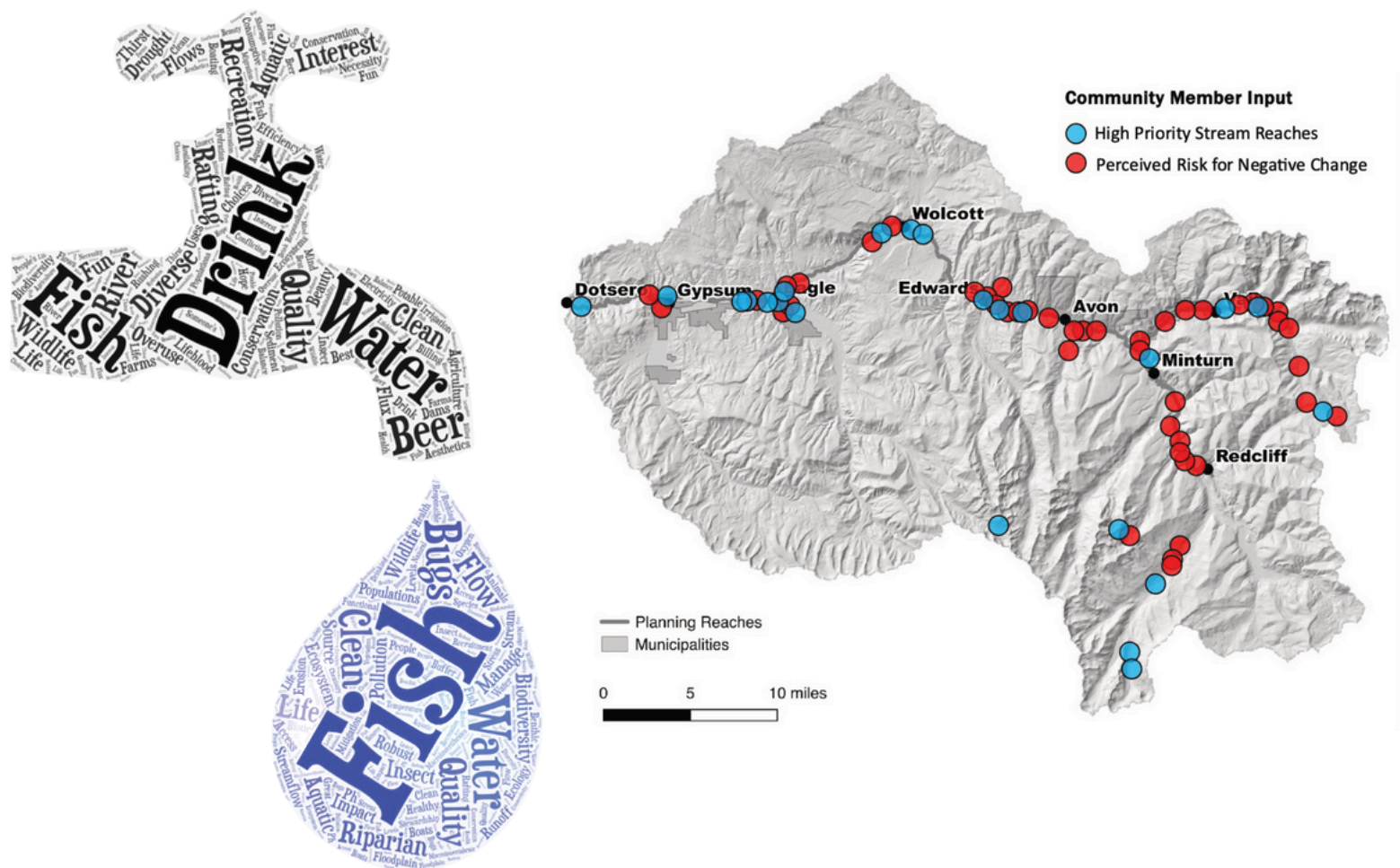
The plan assessed historical streamflow conditions against today's conditions, and tested a range of potential future water use and management scenarios to understand how our rivers and streams might continue to support diverse nature and human water needs under differing future paths and decisions. Based on results from these technical studies and analyses, local stakeholders developed and prioritized a set of management strategies to help ensure good future outcomes for our rivers. It is intended as a roadmap for community leaders and policy makers to make wise decisions for our water resources.

### About the Eagle River

The Eagle River watershed covers 970 square miles ranging from high alpine tundra to green conifer forests at mid-elevations to lower elevation desert lands near Gypsum and Eagle. Seventy five percent of the land is publicly-owned and managed by the US Forest Service (USFS) or Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The Eagle River is 75 miles long and fed by snowmelt throughout the year. It supports a diverse economy of towns, ranches, and outdoor recreation businesses all dependent on clean water and healthy ecosystems.



Stakeholder & Community Engagement



PURPOSE

Consider past, present, and future human and ecosystem river health values to identify opportunities to correct historical degradation and prevent and mitigate against non-desirable future conditions.

The CWP used a robust community engagement process spanning several years to gather local input, allow for shared learning and discussion about water concerns and issues, and establish a balanced process for developing shared strategies to address the future. The Core Stakeholder Group, Technical Advisory Committee, and Community Engagement Committee together spent over 1,000 hours at 19 meetings to develop the plan. The Community Engagement Committee conducted 3 surveys and attended numerous in-person events to gather input. They also delivered many presentations on the progress and results of the plan.





**Community-Derived Values At Risk**

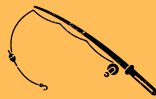
WILDLIFE AND  
BIODIVERSITY



MUNICIPAL  
WATER USE



ANGLING



RECREATIONAL  
BOATING



SNOWMAKING



AGRICULTURE



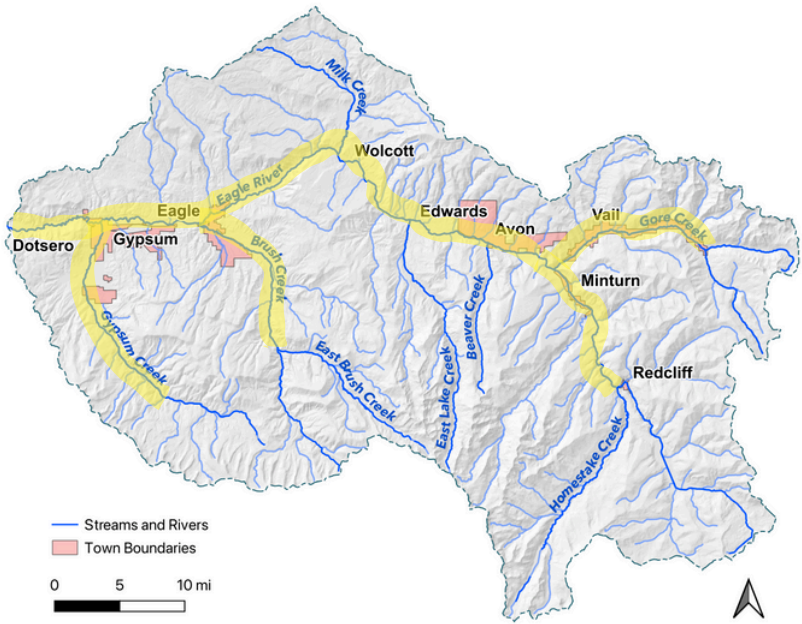
AESTHETICS AND  
VIEWSCAPES



Eagle County residents highly value water for a variety of human uses and for supporting robust natural communities of wildlife and plants. Stakeholders identified seven priority water-related values at risk. These are: Wildlife and Biodiversity, Municipal Water Supply, Agriculture, Angling, Recreational Boating, Aesthetics, and Snowmaking. These values were used to develop a set of Management Objectives to help guide future projects, policies, and other actions that support water security and river health.

**Current Conditions**

To set the stage for studying future impacts to the river, the Community Water Plan conducted an extensive review of existing scientific studies, policy documents, and management actions for the river and its tributaries. The project team conducted a diverse set of technical scientific assessments to characterize current ecosystem and water use conditions. These included completing numerous analyses on past and present streamflow trends. Planners assessed river system components like riparian vegetation health, sediment transport patterns and fish habitat quality, current whitewater boating and angling opportunities, and water quality datasets. Report Cards summarized these conditions for shorter stream segments, highlighting any issues.



**Characterizing Future Risks**

A key focus of the ERCWP was characterizing risks to river health and non-consumptive water uses due to changing hydrology or future water demands. A hydrological water supply planning model was used to understand the impacts of population growth, development of new reservoirs in the upper watershed, and different climate change trajectories. Future risks to river health and non-consumptive uses include increasing municipal water demand, new reservoirs and transmountain diversions, climate change, wildfire, and continued urbanization of the area's farmlands, forests, and rangelands. Using this model to simulate different scenario combinations allows the community to think about how future streamflow changes may affect water-related values we care about like river system health, drinking water supply, and water for recreation and business.

Use this QR Code to check out  
reach-specific information



## Drivers of Future Conditions



**Increasing Municipal  
Water Use**



**Increased Reservoir  
Capacity and TMDs**



**Climate Change**



**Urbanization**



**Wildfire**

## Initial Strategies

The Management Objective List was used to create an initial set of 30 strategies (projects, policies, or other management actions) that can help mitigate future risks to the values we derive from our streams and rivers. These strategies are grouped in nine categories:

- Instream habitat restoration
- Management of instream flows
- Climate studies/infrastructure
- Riparian habitat restoration
- Recreation infrastructure
- Recreation use management
- Turf reduction and landscaping
- Water rates
- Education and community outreach

Strategies are intended to be a roadmap for our community members and leaders to preserve and enhance the ability of our streams and rivers to meet human needs and sustain natural systems. This will require collaboration and cooperation among decision makers and resource managers, as well as funding from a variety of sources.



Get involved with **Eagle River Coalition** to help secure a vibrant future. Join as a program participant, volunteer, sponsor or donor, and become a guardian of your local rivers. Learn more and get involved at **[eagleriverco.org](https://eagleriverco.org)**.

Please visit **[waterplan.eagleriverco.org](https://waterplan.eagleriverco.org)** to view the full Eagle River Community Water Plan and Technical Appendices.



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