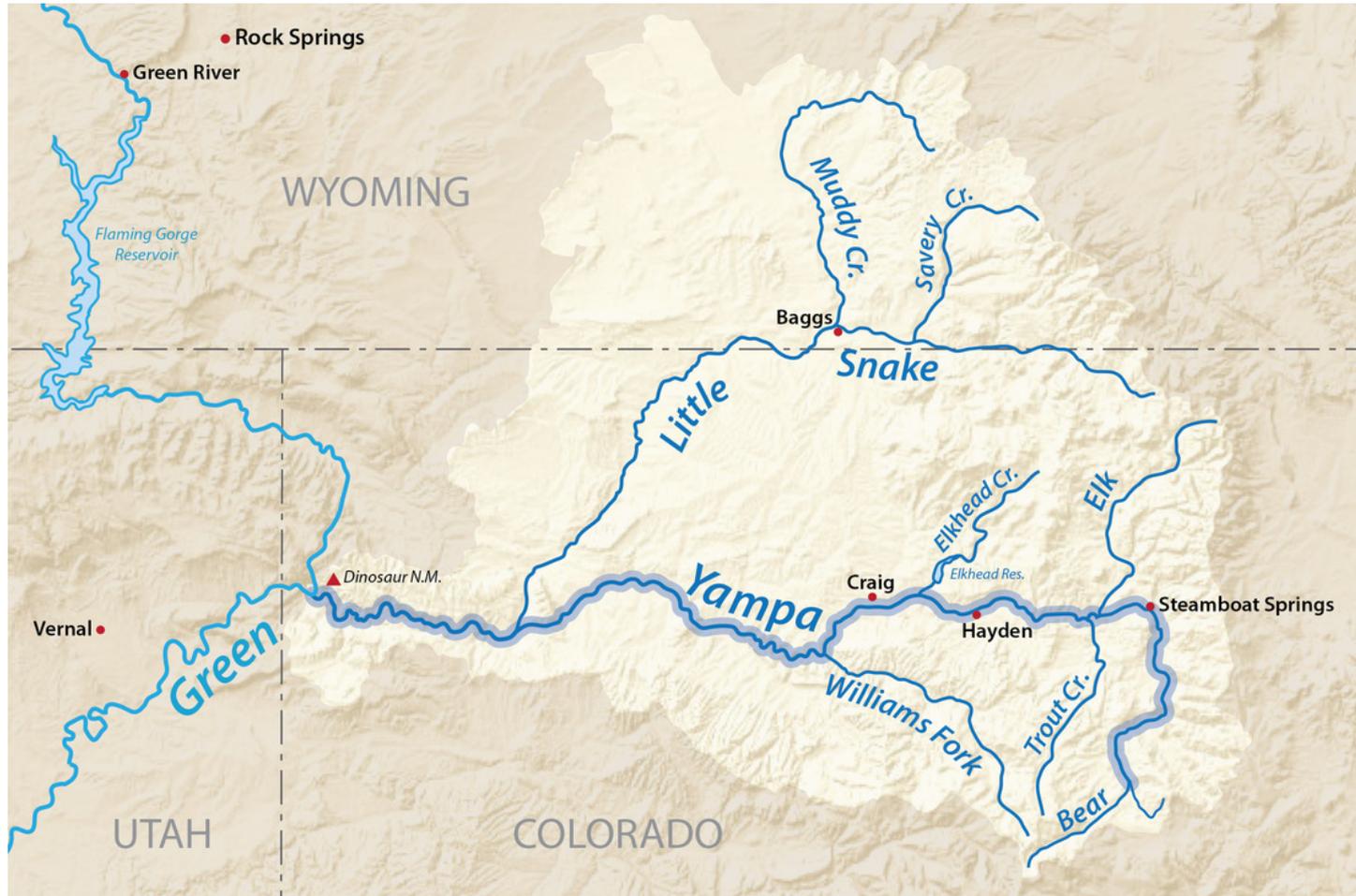


FRIENDS OF THE YAMPA 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

RESPECT THE YAMPA





FRIENDS OF THE YAMPA 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

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ABOUT FRIENDS OF THE YAMPA

Friends of the Yampa is a group based on one common passion, a shared love for the Yampa River. Established in 1981, we have a long standing history of working to develop support for a healthy Yampa River that supports a vibrant, diverse economy and is accessible for all. We organize river cleanups; work to provide access to the river; hold discussions about the Yampa’s important and rare attributes; fund and help build river habitats and river features for a variety of uses; and participate in a local, regional and national policy efforts and campaigns. Our annual Yampa River Festival is a mainstay and a

big part of our spring efforts and then in the fall we hold our annual fundraiser, the Big Snow Bash. Every May/June we partner with American Rivers and OARS to host an annual Yampa River Awareness Project float trip down the Yampa Canyon. We engage with stakeholders and work to bridge the gap between recreation and agriculture. Our Youth River Camps help inspire youth to love and Respect the Yampa. Today, the Yampa River and its tributaries remain a model of a healthy river system, not only here in Northwest Colorado but in the entire Colorado River Basin and the Western U.S.

Our mission is to protect and enhance the environmental and recreational integrity of the Yampa River and its tributaries through education, stewardship, advocacy and partnerships.

SUPPORT US

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FriendsoftheYampa.com/donate

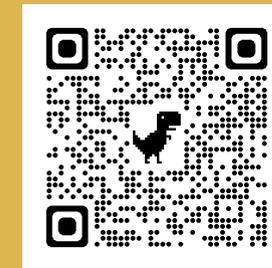
Membership

FriendsoftheYampa.com/membership

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SCAN ME TO HEAD TO
FriendsoftheYampa.com

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



If I were to pick a theme for 2024 and what we accomplished, I would say it was a year of stewardship. In multiple areas, we grew stewardship action and knowledge, whether it was to spread the idea that we are all stewards of the river through the Yampa River Ambassador Program, Know Before You Go dashboard, Youth River Camps, or it was to take action as an organization to steward the health and protection of this river.

For some highlights in 2025, we started the development of our Yampa River Stewardship Program, to map and provide the resources of future river restoration of the Yampa Watershed. We also started planning our first large-scale river restoration project in

the middle Yampa that seeks to increase riparian health and habitat. There is so much more to do in regard to being stewards of the Yampa and its tributaries and although the work will never be finished, we know the need to keep driving protections, change, sustainable thinking, and to keep ensuring that we are stewards is never going to go away.

There is beauty in the process; and Friends of the Yampa is tireless in our drive to ensure that we sustain this river and its natural environment, but also our ability to enjoy the river as sustenance and a recreational retreat is never lost to the future. We thank you all for joining us in the process, supporting what we do, and being stewards of the Yampa. The year 2025 has more to come to expand our ability to steward this river, stay tuned.

Lindsey Marlow, Executive Director

FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT



What a year! We continue to reach new heights, and 2024 was no exception. As we finalized our 2024-2029 strategic plan, our growth and impact couldn't be timelier, especially with the effects of Colorado River basin shortages looming large. Over the past five years, our annual revenue has grown from under \$300,000 to nearly \$1 million.

This remarkable progress is a testament to the dedication and commitment of so many who support a healthy Yampa River.

Reflecting on 2024, I am deeply appreciative of the vision of our founding board members, whose leadership has brought Friends of the Yampa to where it is today. I am equally grateful to our supporters, without whom this important work would not be possible. Looking ahead, we have an ambitious plan and a transformative vision to guide us over the next five years. With the exceptional team we have in place and the generous support of our funders, the possibilities are endless!

Karen Wogsland, Board President

STRATEGIC PLAN, 2025 – 2029

In 2024, we completed and approved our Strategic Plan for the next 5 years. This guiding document expands our enduring priorities, create opportunities, and positions us for success. It defines measurable goals for our five pillars of education, stewardship, partnerships, advocacy, and organizational health.



Education: Cultivate a community bond for preserving and improving the wild and healthy state of the Yampa River.



Stewardship: Sustain and improve environmental and recreational resources of the Yampa River through monitoring and action.



Partnerships: Amplify impact through collaboration.



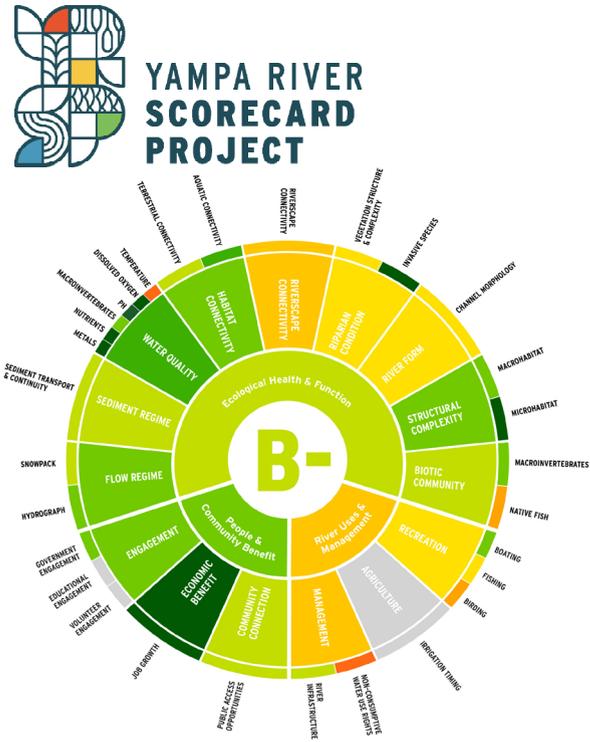
Advocacy: Advocate for land and water management policies that elevate the health and recreational integrity of the Yampa River.



Organizational Health: Position the organization for sustainable growth.

To view our Strategic Plan in full and learn more about our goals and initiatives for the next five years, please visit our website friendsoftheyampa.com/about/what-we-do/

2024 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT



<< YAMPA RIVER SCORECARD PROJECT

Over the past three years, The Yampa River Scorecard Project (YRSP) has assessed three river segments: Middle Yampa (2022), Steamboat (2023), and Upper Yampa (2024). These efforts included deploying 13 HOBO temperature data loggers across the segments and evaluating numerous environmental indicators. YRSP's contributions were honored in 2024 with the Yampa Valley Sustainability Council's "Environmental Cairn" award, recognizing its role in promoting sustainability.

The Steamboat segment's findings were shared through a technical report, website, and brochure released in May 2024, making data accessible to stakeholders and the public. In the Upper Yampa segment, 31 river miles were assessed from Stillwater to Stagecoach, with 78% of the length walked thanks to access granted by 15 private landowners. Fieldwork included electrofishing, benthic macroinvertebrate sampling, bird surveys with Audubon Rockies, and water quality monitoring during both high- and low-flow conditions.

YRSP thrives on collaboration. In 2024, the project worked with private landowners, the Town of Yampa, government agencies, consultants, and nonprofit partners like Colorado River Watch and Audubon Rockies. Funding came from entities such as the City of Steamboat Springs, the Walton Family Foundation, and private donors. This collective effort has been pivotal in providing actionable insights into river health.



2024 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT



<< YAMPA RIVER STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

In 2024, we launched the Yampa River Stewardship Program (YSTEW) to drive sustainable management and restoration of the Yampa River. Backed by a \$345,036.00 Colorado Water Conservation Board grant, this initiative is set to guide its first three years of operations. Friends of the Yampa partnered with Zenobia Consultants and their subcontractors, Alba Watershed Consulting and Strategic by Nature, to provide technical expertise. The team conducted a comprehensive review of current river conditions, utilizing nine key health indicators, and set the stage for stakeholder engagement in early 2025 to outline desired future conditions.

The program officially began with a kick-off meeting involving seven partner organizations, marking a collaborative effort to unify regional stewardship goals. Additionally, LVBrown Studio was contracted to deliver graphic design services, ensuring YSTEW materials are both visually engaging and informative.

Through strategic partnerships and robust planning, YSTEW represents a vital step toward sustaining the ecological health of the Yampa River while fostering meaningful community collaboration.

YAMPA RIVER AMBASSADORS >>

The Yampa River Ambassador program has made a significant impact, connecting with over 2,700 river users across 109 hours in its second year. Through direct engagement, the program has contributed to a reduction in river litter and increased awareness of proper river etiquette, both among locals and visitors. The program continues to grow, with plans for enhanced digital outreach through social media and increased signage to address peak use times. This partnership program with the City of Steamboat Springs is proving to be a key tool in educating locals and visitors alike.



2024 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

<< YAMPA RIVER LEAFY SPURGE PROJECT

This year, we expanded our stewardship efforts by assuming full program management responsibilities for the Yampa River Leafy Spurge Project (YRLSP), a long-term initiative to manage the invasive leafy spurge plant. Supported by \$539,174 in Inflation Reduction Act funding, secured by Dinosaur National Monument, the project is now set to continue through 2030.

A cornerstone of the 2024 efforts was the release of 110,420 biocontrol beetles, sourced through diverse partnerships. These beetles, collected by Friends of the Yampa staff and 12 partners during a field trip to Idaho, were released at strategic locations along the Yampa River. Additional beetles were purchased from the Colorado Department of Agriculture and other sources to bolster the project. To assess the impact, volunteers and staff contributed over 700 hours monitoring vegetation response at 13 beetle release sites.

Engaging the community is also a priority. Friends of the Yampa partnered with local organizations, including the Routt County Weed Program, NRCS, and Yampatika, to host youth outreach events that introduced 21 students to invasive species management. The annual “Show Me Float” raft trip brought 14 stakeholders together to observe management strategies firsthand and discuss their importance for river health.

Through collaboration, education, and on-the-ground action, YRLSP is making meaningful strides in combating invasive species and preserving the ecological integrity of the Yampa River.



<< YAMPA RIVER FEST

2024 marked our 44th annual Yampa River Festival, spanning the course of 4 days. To better serve our ever-growing community of river stewards, we added a family area to the, multiple fly fishing specific events, and promoted creative solutions to reduce event waste. These additions make the festival even more inclusive and sustainable, while promoting river conservation, stewardship, and safety. The weekend kicked off with our State of the Yampa Address, which featured updates on critical projects, like the Maybell Diversion and Craig Whitewater Park, along with inspiring keynote presentations, including Matt Moseley’s “Soul is Waterproof.” Throughout the weekend, we saw about 7,500 attendees and had over 100 individuals participate in events. This event not only celebrates the river but also emphasizes its protection, fostering environmental awareness and inspiring action for a healthy Yampa River ecosystem.

2024 FUNDRAISER HIGHLIGHT

BIG SNOW BASH >>

In 2024, our Big Snow Bash concert and auction fundraiser came close to reaching our \$45,000 goal. The event featured a live performance by Colorado-native band Liver Down the River at Old Town Pub. It was a joyous celebration of another successful summer season, bringing together our dedicated volunteers, generous donors, hardworking staff, and the wider Yampa Valley community.



<< LOCAL YOUTH RIVER CAMPS

Through our partnership with Colorado Mountain College, Friends of the Yampa hosted 46 youth, ages 11-14, during four Youth Summer Camp sessions held from early June to mid-July 2024. These camps offered participants a comprehensive introduction to river recreation, safety, and stewardship while fostering a deeper connection to the Yampa River and its surrounding ecosystem.

Camp activities included navigating the river in 13-foot rafts, as well as individual exploration using inflatable kayaks, packrafts, and paddleboards. Educational components focused on the ecological and cultural significance of Western rivers, incorporating discussions about water usage, ecosystem health, and stewardship practices. Participants also applied their skills throughout the Yampa Valley, including in Steamboat, Hayden, and Craig, highlighting the interconnectedness of the region's waterways and communities. Additionally, we were grateful to be able to offer free day floats to 3 local non-profit organizations (Partners for Youth, The Cycle Effect, and Integrated Community) again in 2024.

<< DINOSAUR NATIONAL MONUMENT YOUTH RIVER CAMP

The DINO camp offers high school students an unparalleled opportunity to connect with nature, build valuable skills, and engage with river conservation through a free, 5-day river experience. Set in the stunning Lodore Canyon of Dinosaur National Monument, this immersive camp allows students entering grades 10-12 to experience the Green River first-hand, all while exploring key topics like river science, citizen data collection, and environmental stewardship. The camp is made possible through the generous support of the Iron Horse Family Foundation and private donors, ensuring that no registration fee is required.

During the trip, students gain hands-on experience in leadership, expedition planning, and river safety, along with practical skills in meal prep and teamwork. This experience emphasizes the critical role that young people play in the future of our environment, encouraging them to reflect on their part in preserving natural systems. By combining adventure with education, the DINO camp inspires the next generation of environmental leaders and fosters a deep connection to the rivers and landscapes that sustain our world.

YAMPA RIVER AWARENESS PROJECT (YRAP)



The Yampa River Awareness Project (YRAP) is one of Friends of the Yampa's flagship outreach initiatives in partnership with American Rivers, designed to deepen public understanding of the Yampa River's ecological, recreational, and cultural value. In 2024, the program once again brought together 24 individuals—including river managers, politicians, artists, community members and more—for a five-day rafting trip through Yampa Canyon. While immersed in one of the most scenic and geologically significant river corridors in the West, participants learned directly from scientists, Indigenous voices, and conservation leaders. These immersive experiences not only educate, but also cultivate lasting relationships and inspire collaborative action to protect the river.

YRAP's reach extended beyond the riverbank in 2024 with the creation of *(A Guide to Fighting for Wild Rivers)*, a short film by filmmaker Logan Bockrath. Capturing the heart of the YRAP trip, the film powerfully illustrates how time spent on the river—learning from experts, sharing stories, and experiencing the landscape—can build deep, personal connections to place. These connections are the foundation of long-term conservation. The film serves as both a call to action and a celebration of the wild Yampa and can be viewed on OARS' YouTube channel at: [Youtube.com/@OarsRafting](https://www.youtube.com/@OarsRafting).



2024 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

2024 marked the fifth year of the Yampa River Fund, which continues to create a healthier future for the Yampa River—a vital part of northwest Colorado's lifestyle and economy. This year, \$204,125 in grants were awarded for five impactful projects, bringing the total to \$975,000 across 23 projects in the fund's first five years. With the endowment surpassing \$6 million, the fund ensures sustainable support for future river initiatives.



2024 PROJECTS:

- Colorado Water Trust, **\$53,326** for the 2024 Yampa River Environmental Release Program
- Friends of the Yampa, **\$39,600** for the Feasibility Study, Modeling, and Planning for Yampa River Habitat Connectivity in Morgan Bottom.
- Trout Unlimited, **\$16,500** for the Flanders Ranch Habitat Improvement Project
- Community Agriculture Alliance, **\$45,000** for the Nickell Diversion and Riparian Restoration
- And Community Agriculture Alliance, **\$49,700** for the Duquette Diversion Planning Phase

2024 grants supported initiatives like the Yampa River Environmental Release Program, habitat connectivity studies, and riparian restoration. Additionally, the Yampa Ripple Effect program raised over \$20,000 through 16 business partnerships, enabling direct donations to river projects.

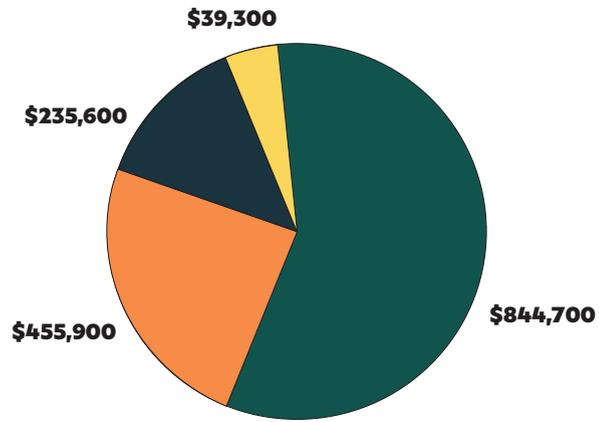
Major contributions to this fund included \$150,000 from the Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District, \$100,000 from Steamboat Ski Resort, and \$25,000 each from the City of Steamboat Springs and Routt County, alongside donations from individuals, businesses, and foundations. Operational support came from Backdoor Sports, Big Agnes, and individual donors.

Learn more: [YampaRiverFund.org](https://www.YampaRiverFund.org) and [YampaRippleEffect.org](https://www.YampaRippleEffect.org)



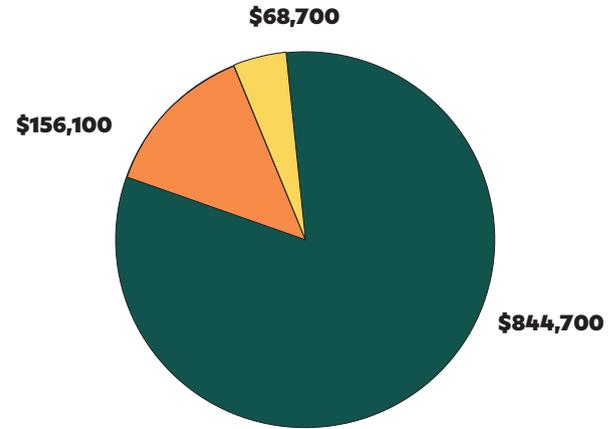
2024 FINANCIALS

2024 SOURCES OF REVENUE



■ Contributions & Grants ■ Government grants
■ Special Events Income ■ Earned Revenue

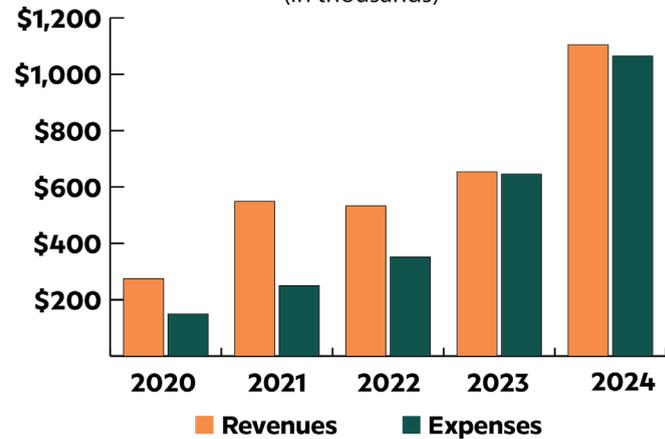
2024 EXPENSES BY FUNCTION



■ Programs ■ Fundraising
■ Management and General

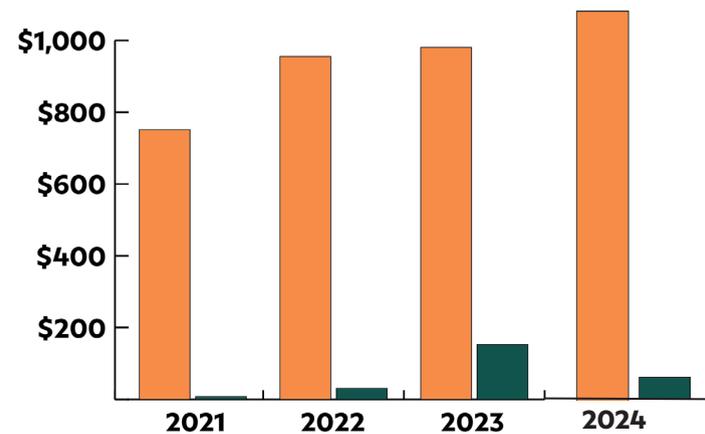
2020-2024 ACTIVITY

(in thousands)



ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

(in thousands)



THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

In 2024, over 250 incredible volunteers helped bring our mission to life - supporting everything from fundraising events to scientific monitoring. Collectively, they contributed 1,445 hours of service across our core five programs with volunteer opportunities:

- Yampa River Leafy Spurge Project • Stream Team (River Watch)
- Yampa River Festival • Yampa River Cleanups
- Yampa River Ambassadors

Their time, energy, and passion helped protect the Yampa River and ensure our events and programs ran smoothly. We couldn't do it without them!



CURRENT FRIENDS OF THE YAMPA BOARD & STAFF

BOARD MEMBERS

Karen Wogsland, *President*

Melanie Kilpatrick, *Vice President and Secretary*

Gary Kennedy, *Treasurer*

John St. John

Jennifer Wellman

Jackie Brown

Nicole Seltzer

Travis Crooke

In Memorium — Peter Van De Carr

STAFF

Lindsey Marlow, *Executive Director*

Rebecca Hext, *Development Program Manager*

Katie Berning, *Outreach Program Manager*

Jenny Frithsen, *Environmental Program Manager*

Emily Burke, *Conservation Program Manager*

Jeremy Bailey, *Program and Office Assistant*

Kent Vertrees, *Recreation and Education Coordinator*

Arianna Birdseye, *Outdoor Programs Logistic Technician*

Mike Robertson, *Yampa River Fund Manager*

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FriendsOfTheYampa.com/volunteer-opportunities

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