

Unique Partnerships in Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring:

Successes and Challenges from a year as an AmeriCorps VISTA as the link between Colorado Trout Unlimited and Colorado River Watch

David Thompson

Colorado Trout Unlimited/Colorado River Watch

Questions I will (try to) answer

- Who am I?
- What are the AmeriCorps VISTA program and the Western Hardrock Watershed Team?
- Why does Colorado Trout Unlimited, a sportsman group, want to form a partnership with Colorado River Watch, and vice versa?
- What was the partnership like before this position was created?
- What have been the benefits and also the struggles associated with the growth of this partnership?



Billings



University of Portland
2006-2010



Colorado Trout Unlimited/
Colorado River Watch
2011-Present



New River Gorge National River
2010-2011



VISTA

Volunteers In Service To America



Partners



Colorado Trout Unlimited

- “Colorado Trout Unlimited works to protect, conserve and restore Colorado’s coldwater fisheries and their watersheds. As the grassroots arm of our parent organization, Trout Unlimited, we use cooperation, collaboration, advocacy and education to promote conservation.”



Colorado TU works to:

- Protect high quality habitat for native and wild coldwater fish and to maintain free flowing rivers;
- Reconnect fragmented fish populations and habitats by restoring flows to dewatered rivers and re-opening fish passage;
- Restore watersheds by working in collaboration with other conservation and governmental organizations, as well as private landowners, to preserve and improve the quality of habitats that support coldwater fish;
- Sustain the efforts of our volunteers and supporters by inspiring a strong conservation ethic in the next generation of river stewards.

Colorado TU Strategies

- Grassroots engagement;
- Support for on-the-ground community-led projects and initiatives;
- Advocacy at the national, state and local levels;
- Collaboration and partnerships with private landowners, state, federal and local agencies, and other key stakeholders;
- Use of local knowledge as well as science-based tools like TU's Conservation Success Index to help develop, prioritize and initiate conservation efforts and advocacy;
- Leverage resources committed by donors and increase capacity through the efforts of our volunteers;
- Education and outreach to Colorado's young people, providing hands-on, field-based opportunities that foster awareness for the connections between Colorado's trout, water resources, the environment and themselves.

Colorado River Watch

To work with voluntary stewards
to:

1. Monitor water quality and other indicators of watershed health, and
2. Utilize this high quality data to educate citizens and inform decision makers about the condition of Colorado's waters



Partnership?

Colorado River Watch

To work with voluntary stewards to:

1. Monitor water quality and other indicators of watershed health, and
2. Utilize this high quality data to educate citizens and inform decision makers about the condition of Colorado's waters

Colorado Trout Unlimited

- Use of local knowledge as well as science-based to help develop, prioritize and initiate conservation efforts and advocacy;
- Education and outreach to Colorado's young people, providing hands-on, field-based opportunities that foster awareness for the connections between Colorado's trout, water resources, the environment and themselves.

How it came about



Volunteer Assignment Description

- Goal 1
 - Capacity
- Goal 2
 - Science Projects
- Goal 3
 - Outreach
- Goal 4
 - Revitalization
- Goal 5
 - Professional Development

Volunteer Assignment Description

- Goal 1
 - Capacity
- **Goal 2**
 - **Science Projects**
- Goal 3
 - Outreach
- **Goal 4**
 - **Revitalization**
- Goal 5
 - Professional Development

Goal 2: Assist CTU/RW with Project development and implementation

Expectations

- Work with CTU VISTA on enhancing education programs together
- Recruit chapters to participate in River Watch
- Work with CTU to secure monitoring equipment and monitoring library
- Work with CTU and CPW to work on watershed reports

Goal 2: Assist CTU/RW with Project development and implementation

Expectations

- Work with CTU VISTA on enhancing education programs together
- Recruit chapters to participate in River Watch

Reality

- Worked with CTU VISTA on enhancing education programs together.....a little
- Created survey, met with chapters and thought up new ways to participate

Goal 2: Assist CTU/RW with Project development and implementation

Expectations

- Work with CTU to secure monitoring equipment and monitoring library
- Work with CTU and CPW to work on watershed reports

Reality

- Worked with CTU VISTA to share outreach materials to create educational library
- Have spent extensive time working on watershed reports

Goal 4: Assist in efforts of community revitalization

Expectations

- Create a Watershed Celebration combining interests and presentations from both CTU and RW
 - River Week
 - River Fair
 - Community-Wide River Activity

Goal 4: Assist in efforts of community revitalization

Expectations

- Create a Watershed Celebration combining interests and presentations from both CTU and RW
 - River Week
 - River Fair
 - Community-Wide River Activity

Reality

- Plans have not progressed further than simple discussions.
- Having a Watershed Week is still a priority for CTU
- River Watch is planning a Watershed gathering for its' participants

Re-evaluation

- Goal 1
 - Capacity
- Goal 2
 - Science Projects
- Goal 3
 - Outreach
- Goal 4
 - Revitalization
- Goal 5
 - Professional Development

Re-evaluation

- ***Goal 1***
 - *Capacity*
- Goal 2
 - Science Projects
- Goal 3
 - Outreach
- Goal 4
 - Revitalization
- Goal 5
 - Professional Development

Conclusions

- Purposeful Partnerships
- Frequent Re-Evaluation
- Communicate
- Dedication



Questions?