

GREATER ARKANSAS RIVER NATURE ASSOCIATION



ANNUAL REPORT



2021

PHOTO: SYDNEY CONRAD



Mission

GARNA, through community collaboration, inspires a conservation ethic by providing educational opportunities and experiences so that those who live, work and play in the Upper Arkansas Valley are motivated to take care of the natural resources and leave a legacy of responsible use of the natural environment.

Friends of Public Lands

GARNA's Friends of Public Lands initiatives honor GARNA's 25 year-old roots as a cooperating association with the US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and the cities, towns and counties of the Upper Arkansas Valley.

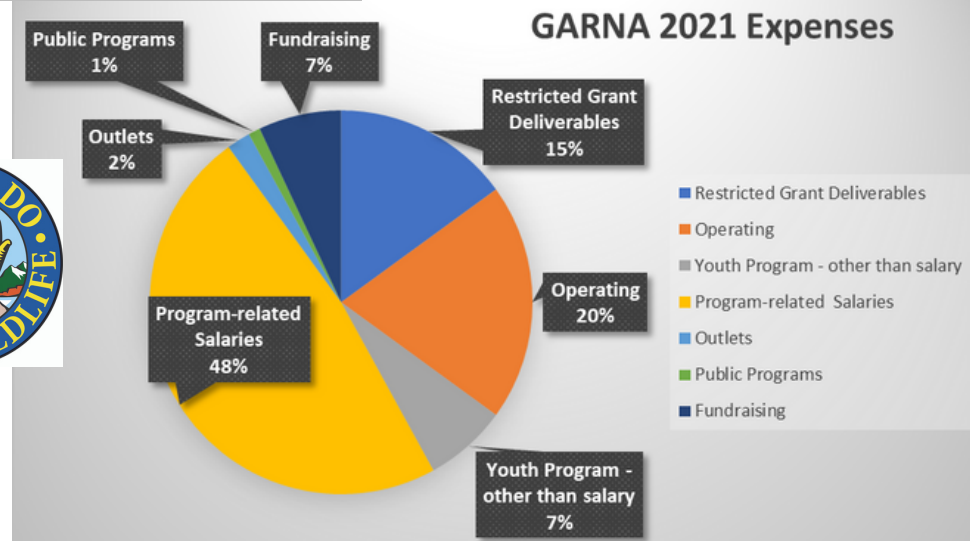
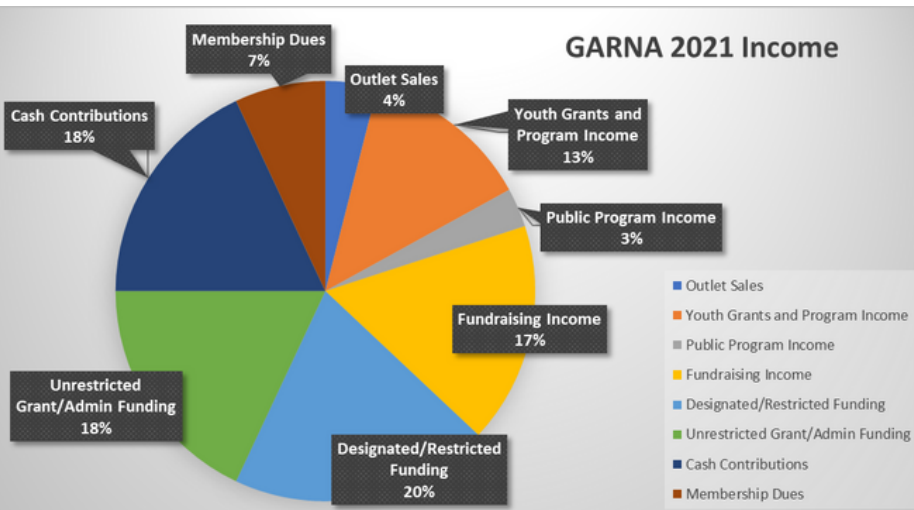
Sustainability

Since adopting a sustainability pillar, GARNA has partnered with Chaffee County, City of Salida, Town of Poncha Springs and Town of Buena Vista to address gaps in waste diversion, working for better recycling, composting, sustainable materials education and outreach, and more.

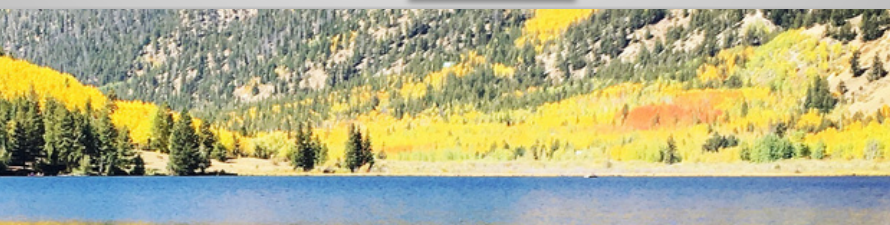
Environmental Education

GARNA is a community connector through its Youth Ecological Literacy Program, Community Education Programs and Clubs, informing residents and visitors about the valley's natural resources, water management, public lands management and sustainability issues.

2021 Financial Activity



**GARNA
NATURE CENTERED,
COMMUNITY DRIVEN**



2021 PROGRAM AND CHAPTER UPDATES

Community Programming

Member survey results showed that GARNA's outdoor activities and educational focus have a strong impact. GARNA hosted over **80 diverse programs educating both residents and visitors on the natural, cultural and historic resources of the region.** 2021 Programs covered topics that included Birding 101, Wildlife Watching and Boreal Toad Habitat Protection efforts.

Sustainability/Waste Diversion

In 2019, GARNA added sustainability to its pillars with a group of volunteers called Chaffee Green. Since then, GARNA has compiled a Waste Audit and helped inform and guide the **2020 Chaffee County Comprehensive Plan** so that the plan includes a systems approach to sustainability. In 2021, GARNA partnered with Chaffee County and associated municipalities to address the gaps in waste diversion, helped extend the life of the County landfill by increasing diversion rates and gathered data for a 2022 Waste Diversion Plan. In 2021, volunteers donated almost 500 hours and diverted over 90 cubic yards of waste.

Youth Ecological Literacy Program (YELP)

In 2021, GARNA adapted to the ongoing pandemic and the local youths' willingness to respect COVID rules made working with them an absolute joy. By continuing long-standing programs like Stream Explorers, made possible by a partnership with Trout Unlimited, GARNA instilled in young anglers the importance of being invested in stream ecology and health. GARNA also continued programming with Chaffee and Lake County school districts, conducting **over 12 field trips and months of ongoing programming for the Boys and Girls Clubs in both Salida and Buena Vista.**

Birding Club

In Spring 2021, the GARNA Birding Club resumed bird walks on the first Thursday morning of the month from January to October, with a second walk scheduled on random days from May to September. Generally, 5-15 members attend each outing. **Now in its 13th year, the Club has 118 members and continually attracts new ones, as a welcoming place for beginning birders.** GARNA appreciates all the experienced birders who share and teach others.

Hiking Club

Open to all GARNA members, the **Hiking Club led 15 hikes during the 2021 season**, on Fridays from May through September. Hiking Club hikes increase in difficulty throughout the season and 10-12 participants attend hikes.

Friends of Fourmile (FOF)

Active for nearly 20 years, FOF consists of volunteers from the motorized and non-motorized recreational communities who assist the USFS and BLM in managing recreation in the 100,000-acre Fourmile Travel Management Area. In 2021, **14 volunteers contributed 1,345 hours monitoring trails, roads, campsites, for natural resource damage,** repairing fences, keeping maps and brochures up to date, and interacting with Fourmile users. Since its establishment in 2003, FOF has contributed over 20,000 hours valued at nearly \$600,000.

Upper Ark Wilderness Volunteers (UAWV)

In 2021, UAWV members **hiked and inspected nearly 1300 trail miles, filed 125 trail reports and contributed over 750 hours of trail work,** including clearing 322 trees, installing signs, and creating or improving 433 water bars or other water mitigation structures. Members also assisted Envision Chaffee County by locating campsites and recording and uploading campsite conditions. UAWV was also chosen to manage the trail traffic counting project for the Leadville Ranger District.

Envision Recreation in Balance

GARNA helped lead the Envision Recreation Adopters program in 2021, training volunteers to use the Rec Collector phone app so they could collect **data about over 2,800 sites, with almost 4,000 gallons of trash, 8.65 million square feet of disturbed soil,** 1,500 sites with disturbed trees and brush, and over 150 sites with more than three fire rings.

Chaffee County Heritage Area/ Collegiate Peaks Scenic & Historic Byway

2021 projects focused on gaining funding for **strategic planning for the Heritage Board and Byway.**

NATURE CENTERED - 2021 BY THE NUMBERS

1,688 Hours GARNA volunteers spent educating youth about the natural world in 2021

18,000 Hours youth spent in GARNA field programs

\$155,914 Value of GARNA volunteer time for the Upper Arkansas Valley

5,000 Number of GARNA public education program participants

GARNA
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COMMUNITY DRIVEN

2021 Board of Directors

Lisa Martin - Chair

Retired Parks Manager for the City of Boulder

Layne Kottmeier - Treasurer

Certified Public Accountant

Jodie Snyder - Secretary

Environmental Scientist/Planner, LEED certified

Hannah Brainer - Secretary

Alpine Achievers Initiative Program Manager

Alan Stevens

Elevation Beer Company, Lead Brewer

Celia Adamec

REALTOR®, former public programs manager at Denver Botanic Gardens with background in museum education & public history.

Rob White

Retired Park Manager for the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area

JW Wilder

Retired Parks Ranger for Colorado State Parks

Amber Barnett

Colorado Outward Bound School Curriculum Manager

Hillary Fuller

Colorado Mountain College Marketing Coordinator



2021 Staff

Dominique Naccarato

Executive Director

Chris Kassar

Communications Coordinator

Kelsey Kirkwood

Program & Youth Coordinators

Bianka Isabella Martinez

Equity & Outreach Coordinator

Cat Anderson

Programs Assistant

Ryan Kempfer

Wildlife Program Coordinator

Diego Ibarra & Leah Anderson

Youth Program Assistants – Alpine Achievers Initiative
Americorps Members

TR Price & Sol Shepherd

Resource Management Project



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Greater Arkansas River Nature Association
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