

# COLORADO FOURTEENERS INITIATIVE 2009 ANNUAL REPORT



**Colorado Fourteeners Initiative**  
*A Partnership for Preservation*

RECONSTRUCTION • MAINTENANCE • EDUCATION • OUTREACH • FINANCE



COVER: Sunrise at South Sunlight Lake. Photo by Glenn Randall, [www.GlennRandall.com](http://www.GlennRandall.com).  
THIS PAGE: Lone hiker approaching Wetterhorn Peak. Photo by Lloyd Athearn.

## Letter from the Executive Director:

While we are in the thick of a very productive 2010 field season, I want to take a moment to share with you the tremendous accomplishments made by Colorado Fourteeners Initiative last year. It was a year of organizational transitions and unforeseen challenges. Yet, thanks to the tremendous support of our donors, volunteers and partners, CFI accomplished a lot and ended the year positioned for great success in the years to come.

I was particularly excited and humbled to receive the Board's offer to take over CFI's helm in June. I watched the organization grow under past Executive Directors Keith Desrosiers and T.J. Rapoport during the decade I worked in the American Mountaineering Center as Deputy Director of the American Alpine Club. After three years in the private land conservation world, the timing was right to get back to the mountain conservation work that remains an enduring personal passion.

Last year was one of rebuilding CFI's institutional capacity and solidifying its financial footing despite the broader challenges posed by a difficult economy. Many of CFI's large government and foundation funders reduced giving for various reasons in recent years. We responded by posting a record year for individual contributions, strong corporate support and re-engaged relationships with key foundations and government grant programs. We strengthened our balance sheet and ended the year in the black.

CFI had a very productive year in the field despite some unprecedented challenges. Trail reconstruction work on Mount Massive's "Main" route was completed, the Chicago Basin project was brought back on schedule and, despite a much reduced budget and staff, the Adopt-a-Peak program posted the third-best year ever in terms of volunteer days contributed. Peak Stewards volunteered a record number of days and contacted an all-time high number of hikers and climbers. Volunteers for all field programs devoted more than 8,000 hours to preserving and protecting the Fourteeners, an in-kind contribution valued at more than \$167,000.

In September, Jerry Mack, a CPA and long-time colleague from my time at AAC, joined as CFI's part-time controller. Jerry quickly put in place needed financial controls and began building more sophisticated budgetary forecasting tools to ensure CFI takes on future projects without getting overextended financially.

None of CFI's successes in 2009 would have been possible without the tremendous support of our Board of Directors, donors, volunteers and partners. On behalf of the board and staff, I cannot thank you enough for your help in preserving and protecting Colorado's signature mountains for future generations to know and enjoy.

Regards,  
Lloyd F. Athearn  
Executive Director

## Fourteener Trail Reconstruction

The cornerstone of CFI's work is the reconstruction of the fragile, vegetated portion of Fourteener summit trails, most of which were unplanned and were literally trampled into the ground over the decades by climbers. CFI works with land managers to relocate trails to more sustainable locations using more durable materials. Unplanned trails are closed and the tundra vegetation restored. Large (12 to 14-person) crews based out of backcountry basecamps relocate trails to more sustainable locations that minimize trampling of fragile alpine tundra vegetation and erosion of thin alpine soils, and the long-term costs of performing annual maintenance.

In 2009, a two-person CFI crew facilitated 315 volunteer days and oversaw a crew from Rocky Mountain Youth Corps while completing reconstruction of Mount Massive's primary summit trail. With this addition, CFI has completed reconstruction of 22 routes on 20 peaks since the organization's inception. Special recognition is extended to Forest Service Peak Manager Loretta McEllhiney and Mount Massive crew leaders Joe Grossman and Anitra Kass who showed tremendous leadership and courage in responding to the crash of a military helicopter adjacent to their project site high atop the peak's south ridge.

# RECONSTRUCTION

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CFI's four-person Chicago Basin crew, Shaun Loveless, Frances Boulding, Kenzie Carson and Ben Turati, worked with an 11-member trail crew from Southwest Conservation Corps to complete the reroute of the summit trail from Chicago Basin to above Twin Lakes. This involved some of the most technically difficult, logistically complicated work CFI has ever performed. Work planned for 2010 will continue this trail up to the West Ridge of Windom Peak and the Red Couloir on Sunlight Peak, and begin restoration of the existing social trails.



*Mount Massive before secondary restoration*



*Mount Massive after revegetation*



*Chicago Basin trail closure and reroute*



*Chicago Basin rock staircase  
and retaining wall*

*"I just wanted to pass along a little note about what a GREAT weekend I had up at Mt. Massive with Joe and Anita... It was definitely tough work being that high, but they were both such pros and really provided some great education and guidance to all of us about how trails are built and why we need to preserve them. They are doing truly thankless work, but SO appreciated by me!"*

*- Colleen Cooke  
Clif Bar & Company*

## Adopt-a-Peak Trail Maintenance

CFI's Adopt-a-Peak program marshals volunteers to perform annual trail maintenance and terrain restoration work once a sustainable summit route has been constructed. Larger, more technically proficient Adopt-a-Peak groups may tackle smaller scale trail reroute projects. Since the program's inception in 2001, the Adopt-a-Peak program has inspired almost 5,000 volunteer days of work performing Fourteener trail maintenance and restoring vegetation damaged by social trails.

**Number of Peaks Maintained**

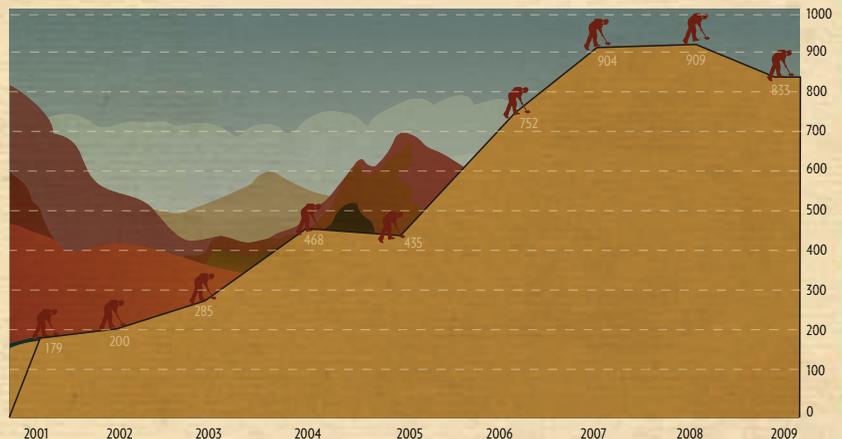


# MAINTENANCE

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**Number of Volunteer Days**

CFI's financial position last year necessitated a significantly scaled back Adopt-a-Peak program. Despite a 71 percent reduction in Adopt-a-Peak staff (two crew members



compared with seven in 2008) by focusing on the most committed and capable Adopt-a-Peak partners, volunteer days performed through the program fell by only 8 percent. Two large partner organizations completed an important reroute on the lower slopes of Mount Bross, the type of work usually performed by a backcountry basecamp crew.



*Mount Bross trail prior to trail and restoration work*



*Mount Bross trail after reroute and primary restoration*



*Moving rocks for use in trail structures*

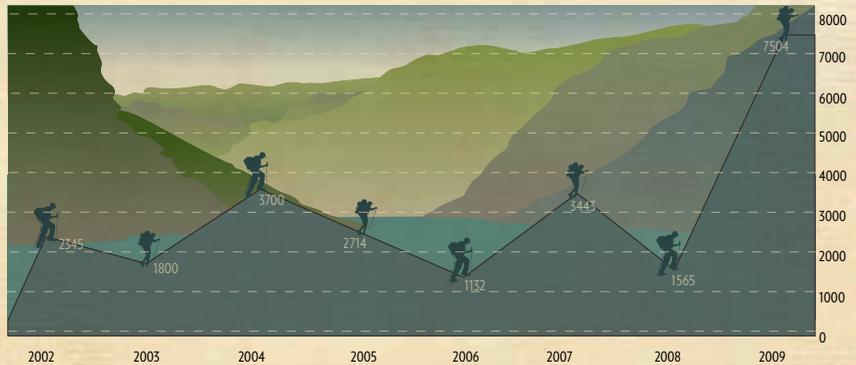


*Volunteers cutting the new trail*

### Peak Stewards

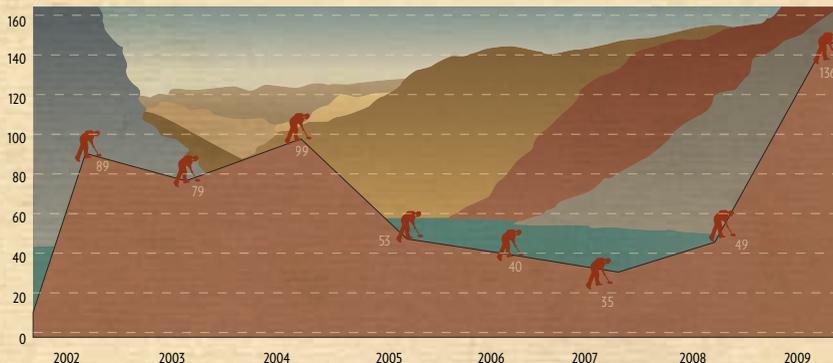
Peak Stewards teach Fourteener hikers and climbers about alpine ecology and Leave No Trace practices developed to minimize impacts to fragile alpine tundra. They reach enthusiasts while out on the peaks, at hiking events and at “How To” clinics put on by corporate partners, including REI. Peak Stewards also monitor resource conditions and track visitor use numbers. By informing the growing number of Fourteener hikers and climbers, Peak Stewards help minimize environmental impacts on the peaks and reduce the need for more intensive restoration work once damage has occurred.

**Number of Persons Contacted**



## EDUCATION & OUTREACH

**Number of Volunteer Days**



A solid core of 30 Peak Stewards volunteered 136 days on 37 peaks last year, directly

contacting more than 7,500 Fourteener enthusiasts in the process. As the charts show, 2009 was a record year for Peak Steward volunteer days and visitor contacts. Funding was secured to continue the education and outreach coordinator position through at least October 2010, raising expectations that 2010 will see an even greater Peak Steward presence on the Fourteeners.



"I met my first Steward at the Quandary trailhead this morning. I missed his name (or forgot it moments later while gasping for breath) but wanted to thank him for his time and info today! And thanks to the CFI for all the work put into the trail!"

- John Haberkorn, Grand Junction, CO

Marmot in Chicago Basin



Peak Steward training at Kite Lake

CFI's conservation work protects the Fourteeners for future generations to enjoy. By directly engaging the next generation in performing Fourteener trail-building and terrain restoration projects, CFI provides fun, hands-on experiences in the backcountry, educates youth about the importance of resource protection and helps cultivate the next generation of public land stewards.



*High Mountain Institute summer campers build erosion control features on Mount Yale*

More than 70 percent of CFI's Adopt-a-Peak volunteer days since 2001 have been performed by high school or college students. Youth summer campers at the High Mountain Institute, Sanborn Western Camps and Overland Summers programs together provided 313 volunteer days in 2009 working principally on the Main Mount Massive project. Colorado College provided 119 students to work on four peaks as part of their new student orientation program.

## YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

JOB SKILLS • STEWARDSHIP • YOUTH CAMPS • HANDS-ON



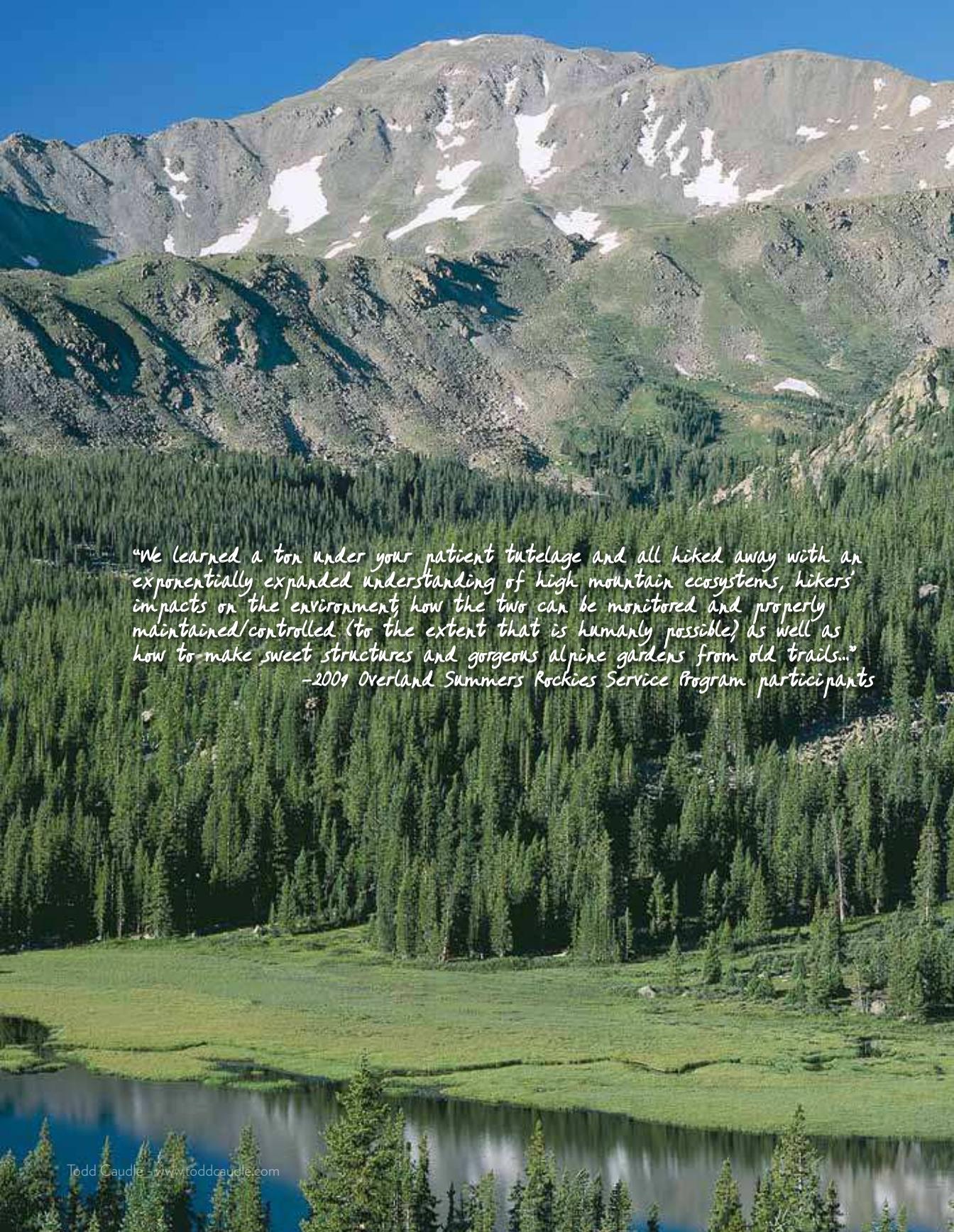
*Volunteers from Sanborn Western Camps help restore a closed trail on Mount Massive*

Youth Corps members aged 18-25 employed by partner organizations formed the bulk of CFI's backcountry basecamp crews in Chicago Basin and

Mount Massive last summer. Youth Corps members learn life and job skills while earning cash stipends and educational scholarships doing conservation-related service work. Many hope to obtain natural resource-related jobs in the future.

*Overland Summers participants build a rock staircase on Mount Massive*





*"We learned a ton under your patient tutelage and all hiked away with an exponentially expanded understanding of high mountain ecosystems, hikers' impacts on the environment, how the two can be monitored and properly maintained/controlled (to the extent that is humanly possible) as well as how to make sweet structures and gorgeous alpine gardens from old trails..."*

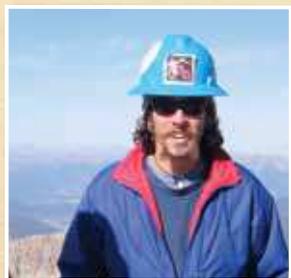
*-2009 Overland Summers Rockies Service Program participants*

## 2009 Staff

Lloyd Athearn,  
Executive Director



Greg Seabloom,  
Field Programs Manager



Brian Wallace,  
Education and Outreach Coordinator



Jerry Mack,  
Controller

# ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

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## 2009 Board

Mark Soane, Chair

Chuck Bartholomew, Vice Chair

Michael McCabe, Treasurer

Kathleen Brennan, Secretary

Warren Buettner

Steve Dayney

Alice Jennison

Trygve Kjellsen

Norbert Klebl

Tim Leddy

Bill Middlebrook

Nate Palmer

Anne Vickery

## 2009 Board Partners

Jon Morrissey, USFS Liaison, Leadville District Ranger

Loretta McElhiney, USFS Region 2 Peak Manager

*Chicago Basin Crew*

Shaun Loveless - Leader, Frances Boulding, Kenzie Carson, Ben Turati

*Mount Massive Crew*

Joe Grossman - Co-Lead, Anitra Kass - Co-Lead

*Adopt-a-Peak Crew*

Drew Hill - Leader, Hilary Sgalitzer - Outdoor Leadership Intern



*2009 Seasonal Staff Photo*

CFI 2009 seasonal staff at pre-season field training. (L to R) Frances Boulding, Drew Hill, Hilary Sgalitzer, Kenzie Carson, Ben Turati, Anitra Kass, Shaun Loveless, Joe Grossman.



*2009 Volunteer of the Year*

Last year CFI honored long-time volunteer George Griffin as its volunteer of the year. For more than a decade Griffin has been active in protecting the Fourteeners by serving on numerous trail construction and restoration projects, as a trail design assistant and, most recently, as a Peak Steward. Griffin has helped instruct new Peak Stewards and during 2009 volunteered as a Peak Steward on 15 of the 54 Fourteeners, the highest number for any Peak Steward last year.

*George Griffin (right with back to the camera) participates in a Peak Steward training*

## Operating Revenues

Despite the challenges posed by the tough economy and overreliance on a handful of large institutional funders, CFI ended 2009 in a sound financial condition with a more diversified base of operating revenues. Total operating revenues last year were \$512,239, a 20 percent increase over 2008 revenues, though still significantly below 2007's record mark of \$990,328. Support from the US Forest Service and competitive grants from the Colorado State Trail Program continued to be the largest sources of CFI's operating revenues. However, gifts by individuals last year reached record levels, with more than \$145,000 received from individual Fourteener supporters across the country. Particular thanks go to CFI Director Bill Middlebrook, founder and operator of the 14ers.com website, who launched a fundraising effort among 14ers.com users nationwide. Corporate partnerships were renewed with several past funders, while new relationships were struck with outdoor industry businesses and companies with an interest in protecting Colorado's signature mountains. Proposals were submitted to a broader array of foundations, including those with an interest in volunteer community engagement, youth and protection of the environment.

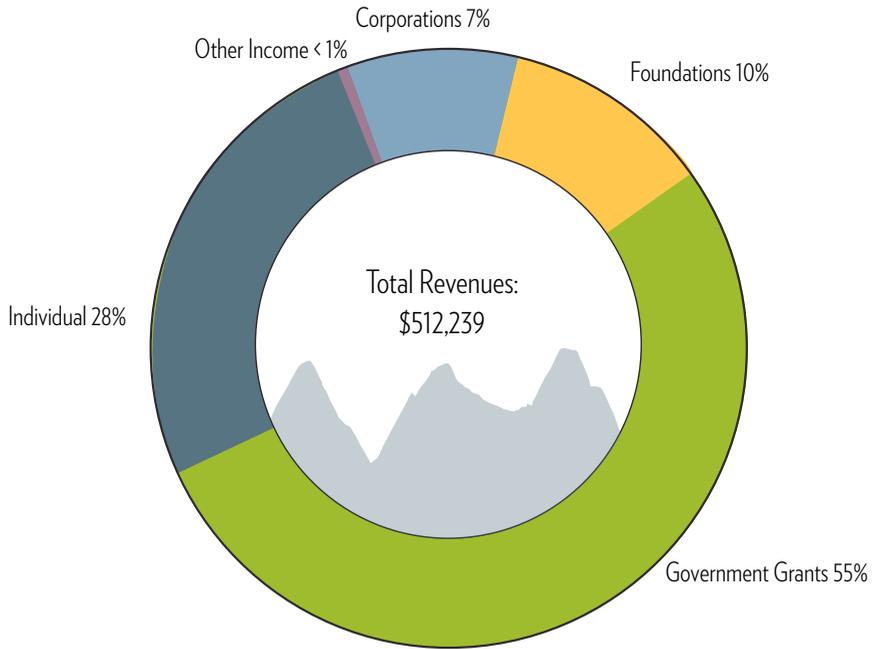
# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

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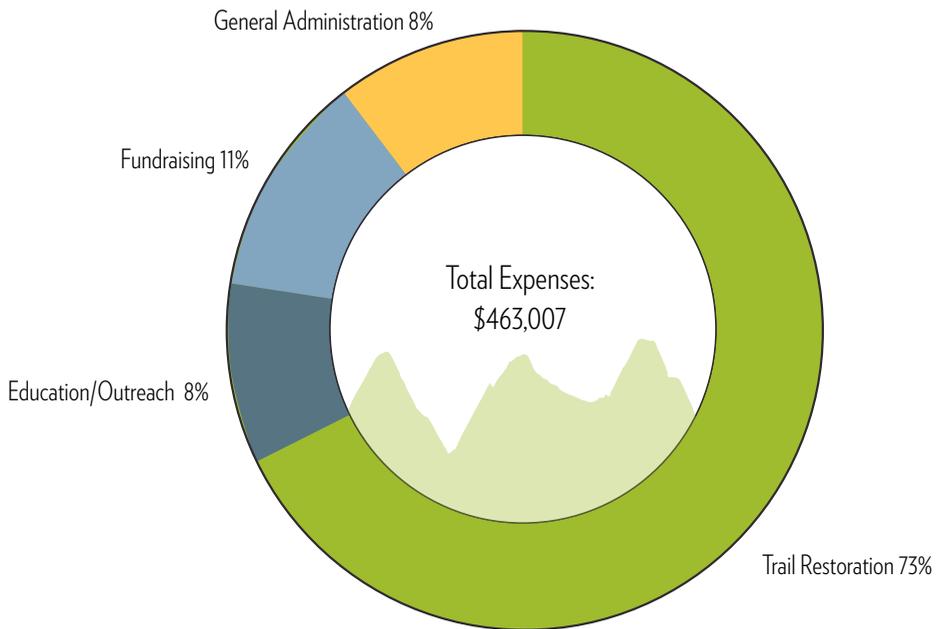
## Operating Expenses

In addition to embarking on an aggressive and more diversified approach to raising operating revenues, CFI last year utilized a more efficient service delivery model that focused on partnerships. CFI in past years fielded larger crews composed principally of CFI employees. In 2009 CFI focused on hiring smaller, two and three-person leadership teams that oversaw youth corps crews and volunteers. This model accomplished almost the same amount of work but at a significantly reduced cost. Notwithstanding the need to devote a significant amount of time to fundraising, CFI's operating expenses remained focused on the organization's mission, with 81 percent of expenses being spent on programs.

2009 Operating Revenues



2009 Operating Expenses





**Colorado Fourteeners Initiative**  
*A Partnership for Preservation*



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