

# PROTECT • RESTORE • EDUCATE

## ANNUAL REPORT



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



# WEILCOME

## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CFI works in remote, high-altitude locations doing technically demanding trail work. Our crews operate under the constant pressure of a weather-constrained season—usually beginning and ending the field season in snow. This unrelenting pressure forges a resilience and creativity in thinking about how we can solve complex problems in places where others simply do not work. No idea is too far fetched if it might get the job done.

Last season was a race against time on the Grays and Torreys project. It was the fourth-and-final season of funding for a dedicated crew working on the peaks. Work kept getting progressively higher, but the lack of sufficient building material near the trail corridor was exhausting our best MacGyver techniques. Metal gabions filled with lots of smaller rocks were holding back the slope at a crucial junction. However, if we could not find a way to stabilize the trail beneath the gabion walls, constant erosion would undercut these structures, leading to failure.

How could we move more than 21,000 pounds of stripped 12-foot-long logs to 12,800 feet, a distance of about 2.5 miles and 1700 vertical feet from the trailhead? Staff and volunteers had come close to rebelling when asked the prior season to haul a few logs a quarter mile up the trail. No way could (or would!) people get the logs to where they were needed. The logs also were too long to be hauled effectively by mules. Nevertheless, getting them there was vital.

Over three prior seasons CFI staff had tried to enlist the volunteer assistance of the National Guard and their heavy-lift helicopters. A CFI volunteer in the Air Force made introductions. Project managers met with the Guard staff and planned the operation's logistics. Despite seemingly everyone we spoke with being in support of the flights, nobody said they were able to sign off on the flight. Meanwhile, time kept ticking away.

In frustration I remarked, "Is there anyone we can just pay to fly the logs?" Turns out there was. And Operations Manager Hannah Clark found them. We contracted with HeliQuest, a helicopter service that would have its suitable helicopter in the Denver area for three days in late June while enroute from doing utility work in the South to fighting wildfires in the West. It was a narrow window, but it might just work.

Tuesday, June 28 dawned clear, calm and cold—perfect flying conditions in the thin air of high altitude. With the entire core staff and Grays and Torreys crew fanned out at key locations on the mountain, the operation unfolded like a charm. In a few hours the work that simply could not have been done any other way was finished. A new tool was added to CFI's toolbox.

This "can-do" attitude is why CFI received two very significant awards last year. In January the Colorado Fourteeners Partnership (CFI, Rocky Mountain Field Institute and the USFS program manager) were given one of four "Chief's Honor Awards" by Forest Service Chief Randy Moore. Then in April, CFI was named the "Statewide Partner of the Year" by Colorado Parks and Wildlife, the first time this award has ever been presented to a trail stewardship organization.

Thanks for being a part of this creative team!

Regards,



Lloyd F. Athearn  
Executive Director

• Early morning on the lower Mount Shavano bypass trail.









THE PHOTO



# NEW TRAIL CONSTRUCTION

CFI's work reconstructing summit trails reached new heights last year—both literally and figuratively. An all-time-high 22 seasonal staff worked on five separate fixed-site crews delineating trails on four 14ers. To get materials to the worksite on Grays Peak, CFI did something it had never done before: transport materials to almost 13,000 feet using a contract helicopter service. Both contributed to one of the most successful field seasons ever for CFI's new trail construction efforts.

## GRAYS AND TORREYS PEAKS

2022 was the make-or-break season for CFI's work on Grays and Torreys. It was the fourth-and-final year with a full-season, two-person CFI team and Rocky Mountain Youth Corps crew. Work performed in prior years was being undercut by summer thunderstorms that could erode an inch or more of soil from the trail in a single storm. Worse yet, a major blow-out had occurred near the Y-junction between the trails to the two peaks. Water flowing on the entire north side of Grays channels into a natural drain that was jeopardizing much of CFI's past work.

In less than six hours of flying, the helicopter dropped 70 cut, stripped logs weighing more than 21,350 pounds at a landing site around 12,800 feet. The combined crews and 83 days of volunteer labor used these logs to install 115 timber check steps. An estimated 183,350 pounds of rock were carefully stacked in 46 gabions to fortify the section of trail near the Y-junction. Crews also closed 1592 feet of trail braids and built 1421 square feet of retaining walls. Work on these high-use peaks will be ongoing, but four years of intensive reconstruction brought dramatic improvements to trail conditions on one of the most popular 14er routes in the state.

**MAJOR FUNDERS:** CFI Individual Donors, Chrest Foundation, USFS—Great American Outdoors Act, CPW State Trails, REI Co-op and The Summit Foundation.



1. The RMYC crew installs 12-foot log check steps on a steep part of the trail
2. The helicopter transports a load of logs past Kelso Mountain en route to the Grays Peak landing site
3. Crew members load more rocks into a gabion
4. Rock-filled gabions form the "Great Wall of Grays" to stabilize a troublesome drainage area on Grays Peak





# NEW TRAIL CONSTRUCTION

## MOUNT SHAVANO

Two independent four-person CFI crews operated over the field season on Mount Shavano, launching the first of six years working to improve the worst-rated 14er route in the state. The two crews were a study in contrasts. The lower crew cut tread through a mixed aspen/conifer forest, while the upper crew built rock structures on a steep, loose talus slope. Two Southwest Conservation Corps crews and 82 days of volunteer labor assisted the mammoth project.

The lower Shavano crew felled 100 trees, pulled 46 stumps, installed 192 timber check steps, delineated 2909 linear feet of new trail and removed 6188 cubic feet of soil. Progress was on schedule to open the first bypass trail midway through the 2023 field season.

Progress was much slower at the upper worksite. Even assisted by staging the crew at a mid-mountain basecamp, the crew hiked more than two hours daily to reach the worksite. They installed 124 cribbed rock steps, 198 gargoyles and built 4037 feet of various rock retaining walls. The upper crew cut a mere 125 feet of new trail and removed 47 cubic feet of soil.

**MAJOR FUNDERS:** CPW State Trails, USFS—Great American Outdoors Act, Saguguachipa Foundation, Chrest Foundation, Meta Alice Keith Bratten Foundation and Individual CFI Donors.

1. Board Chair Adelaide Leavens uses the grihoist to move a large rock, while CFI senior staff utilize various techniques to assist
2. SCC crew members position a large rock at the upper worksite
3. Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado project participants cut tread through a stand of aspen trees on the lower reroute
4. Field Programs Manager Miriam Venman-Clay uses a rock bar to gently position a large rock on the lower trail
5. Members of CFI's Board help out by stripping and moving log check steps







3.



4.



5.



# THE OFFTOP





# NEW TRAIL CONSTRUCTION

## MOUNT WILSON

In the remote southwest corner of the state, an eight-person CFI leadership team—augmented by two youth corps crews, an Adopt-a-Peak team and volunteers from Osprey Packs—spent a second season working on Mount Wilson. The combined team installed rock structures on the main reroute of the Navajo Lake Trail that was roughed in during the 2021 season, while also pushing higher on the lower reaches of Wilson's North Ridge. Trail delineation efforts included cutting 1364 feet of new trail, building 4016 feet of various retaining walls and installing 334 square feet of rock pavers in a wet area accessing the base of the ridge. A single-slab bridge spanning the headwaters of the Dolores River was the finishing touch.

Much delineation work remains on this route. However, work in this remote area is slow, requires complex sourcing of rocks and occurs in a part of the state lacking major funding sources. CFI will pause work for a few years before gearing up again to tackle the section up to the "green wall" where work will stop due to hazardous terrain.

**MAJOR FUNDERS:** CPW State Trails, Telluray Foundation, Richard Hoffman and Karis Foundation.

1. Field Programs Director Ben Hanus checks placement of a large step by Paul Timm during a project review
- 2/3. **Before/After:** Retaining walls, a staircase and an early season navigational cairn are added to the Navajo Lake Trail
4. Crew members continue building a multi-step staircase up the lower slopes of Mount Wilson's North Ridge
5. A section of pavers and low wall help guide hikers through a wet area near the headwaters of the Dolores River





## NEW TRAIL CONSTRUCTION

### MOUNT ELBERT

The second season utilizing a four-person CFI leadership team and Rocky Mountain Youth Corps crew continued to add much-needed structures to the most-used route on Colorado's highest peak. With the crew's upper worksite located far above treeline, it took even the fittest crew members upwards of 90 minutes to reach the project worksite each day. Over the season the combined crews hiked a total of 1.44 million vertical feet—equivalent to hiking Mount Everest from sea level to summit more than 49 times!

Once at the worksite, the work to be performed was not much easier. Nearly all the usable rock for hardening the trail was located below the worksite, forcing the crews to use griphoists, rigging equipment and rock bars to haul massive rocks up the mountain. The team spent 1046 hours just quarrying rock to open a new reroute section that utilized 41 cribbed rocks steps, 1427 square feet of retaining walls and six gabion baskets—each filled with several thousand pounds of rocks. The crew also worked below treeline. Twenty trees were felled that were used to construct four Lincoln ladders and install 83 timber check steps that slow runoff and reduce erosion.

**MAJOR FUNDERS:** USFS—Great American Outdoors Act, National Forest Foundation, CPW State Trails, Great Outdoors Colorado, Chrest Foundation.

1. The partially completed staircase above the existing Elbert trail
2. Setting up the rigging system to hoist a large rock across the summit trail to the worksite

1.

2.







# THETON





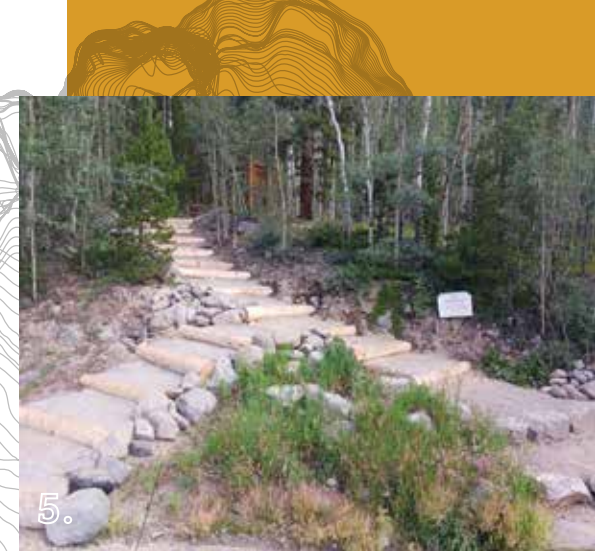
# TRAIL MAINTENANCE

Delineating a sustainable summit route—or approach route on harder peaks—is vital to protecting fragile alpine tundra ecosystems. CFI augments new route delineation and construction projects by sending out the Adopt-a-Peak crew to perform on-going maintenance and less-intensive reconstruction projects on about half the 14er routes over a two-year cycle.

The eight-member Adopt crew often deploys as two four-person teams and occasionally as four two-person teams. In 2022, the Adopt crew worked on 13 different 14ers across the state and led 46 volunteer projects. A total of 620 individual volunteers recorded 1,210 days of volunteer stewardship, an average of almost two days per person. To help manage burnout over the long season, the Adopt crew balanced working independently on more technically challenging projects, while also engaging volunteers in meaningful work on less technical, more accessible projects.

Accomplishments from last season included maintaining more than 17 miles of trail, sweeping/clearing more than 42 miles of trail and cutting almost a quarter-mile of new trail. The crew installed 122 cribbed rock steps, 426 timber check steps and 228 feet of drainage features, while building 3882 square feet of retaining walls and cleaning 465 feet of existing trail drains. The Adopt crew also transplanted 52 vegetation plugs, installed 265 restoration check dams and restored 6120 square feet of eroded alpine tundra.

1. Installing the final log steps on a Huron Peak volunteer project
2. Volunteers build a retaining wall on the approach trail to Pyramid Peak
3. A portion of the finished wall on Pyramid Peak
4. Volunteers from Plante Moran work on the Mount Bross trail
5. The opening steps out of the Denny Creek parking lot for Mount Yale after a CFI trail project
6. (L to R) Nick Gianoutsos, Bill Middlebrook and Ryan Richardson install timber check steps on the Mount Shavano trail on a 14ers.com volunteer project
7. Volunteer Ajit Thyagarajan pauses to build a retaining wall on a Mount Elbert project





## SUSTAINABLE TRAILS

More than a decade ago, CFI launched the process of documenting 14er trail conditions that became known as the Sustainable Trails Program. These GPS-based trail inventories cataloged the location and condition of existing built features, the extent of natural resource impacts, as well as the time and cost of efforts required to bring trails up to long-term maintainable condition. A few years later CFI began using infrared trail counters to estimate the number of seasonal hikers using these trails. Through these two efforts CFI hoped to monitor how trails stand up to the erosive forces of hikers and weather.

During the 2022 season Field Programs Manager Tom Cronin conducted updated trail inventories of six routes that had seen significant trail reconstruction efforts in recent years. The routes included the Lake City 14ers (Wetterhorn, Uncompahgre, Redcloud, Sunshine and Handies Peaks), which saw “Find Your Fourteener” campaign investments in 2019-21, as well as Grays and Torreys Peaks, which saw investments in 2019-22. Data will be analyzed over the winter and combined with two other recent inventories to create a new “14er Report Card” on trail conditions that will be released in 2023.

After almost a decade of incident-free monitoring of 14er hiker numbers, CFI had two trail counters stolen last season. Occasionally one finds a cairn-mounted counter dug out—presumably assumed to be a geocache by a passing hiker. These counters are usually plopped back atop the cairn and are positioned in a way that they continue to obtain data. However, the Mount Bierstadt counter, which had provided reliable data for almost 16 months, was just gone. All mounting hardware was removed, too. At the end of the season, staff found that the cairn-mounted counter in Grizzly Gulch on Handies Peak similarly had vanished. Despite these setbacks, CFI helped the Colorado Mountain Club set up a trail counter on the Mount Bross side of the Decalibron Loop, providing a second counter location on that usually high-use route.

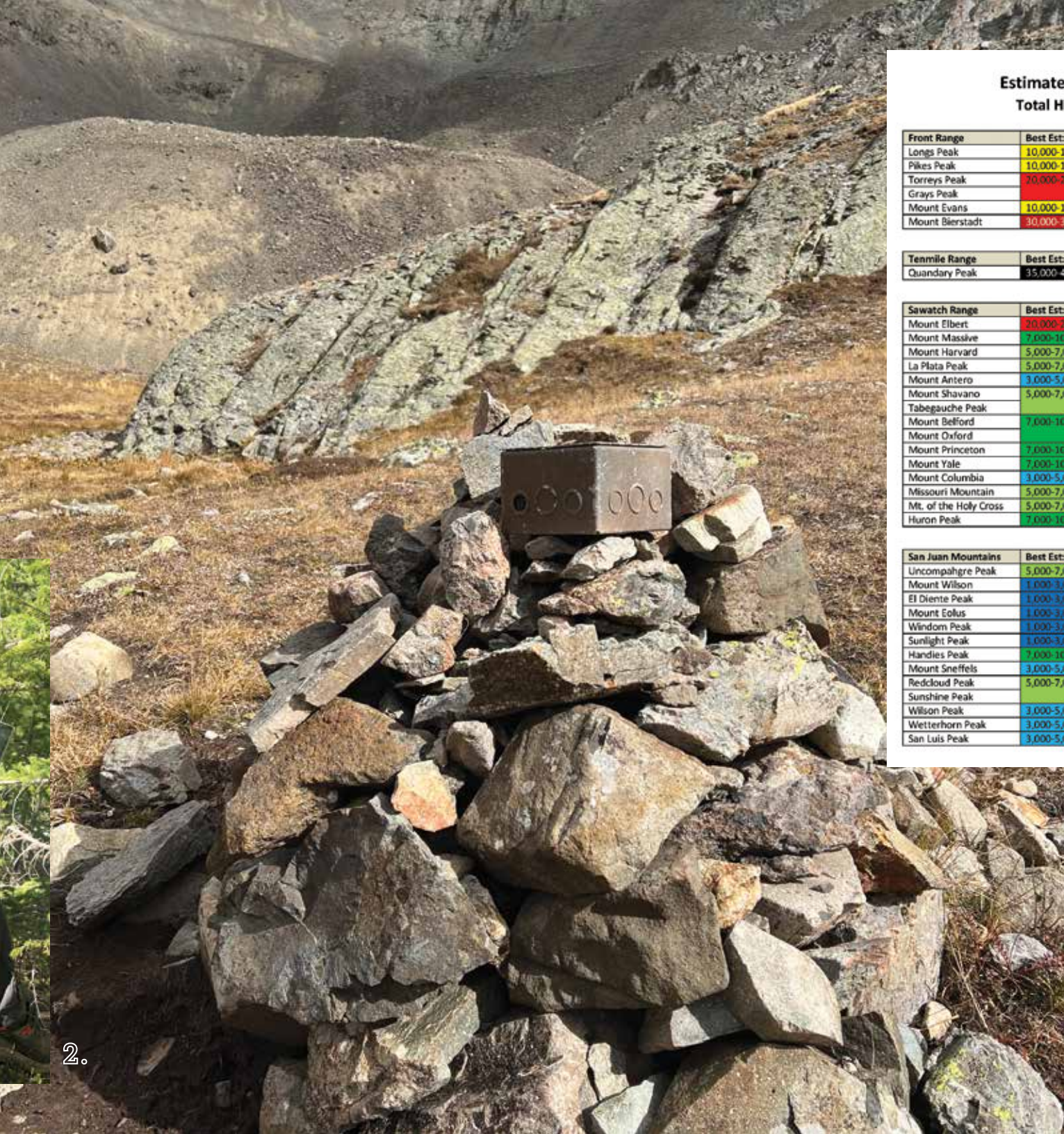
CFI released the 2021 hiking use report in late July. It showed an estimated 303,000 hiker days on the 14ers in 2021, a 27 percent decline over the all-time high of 415,000 days in 2020. More than half of the 14ers closest to Denver had some form of parking or access restriction. Most significant was the closure of the Decalibron Loop from May 1 through August 6 due to private landowner liability concerns. These restrictions cut use in the Front, Tenmile and Mosquito Ranges by 33 percent. Use dropped the least in the Sawatch Range (13%), suggesting that people may have driven past locations with access issues to the more accessible peaks in this range.

CFI’s annual hiker use report was covered by 10 news media outlets, including live interviews on two Denver morning TV news shows. The report also generated a reach of 34,527 views on various social media platforms.

1. Is it just my imagination or do the interns keep getting younger every year? Walt Sargeant helps his dad, Brian, analyze data from the Huron Peak trail counter.
2. The Handies Peak—American Basin counter dug out of the cairn
3. 2021 Hiking Use Report







## Estimated Hiking Use on Colorado's 14ers Total Hiker Use Days: 303,000 (2021 Data)

Front Range	Best Est: 90,500
Longs Peak	10,000-15,000*
Pikes Peak	10,000-15,000*
Torrey's Peak	20,000-25,000*
Grays Peak	10,000-15,000*
Mount Evans	10,000-15,000*
Mount Bierstadt	30,000-35,000*

Tenmile Range	Best Est: 35,000
Quandary Peak	35,000-40,000*

Sawatch Range	Best Est: 95,500
Mount Elbert	20,000-25,000*
Mount Massive	7,000-10,000
Mount Harvard	5,000-7,000
La Plata Peak	5,000-7,000*
Mount Antero	3,000-5,000
Mount Shavano	5,000-7,000
Tabogauche Peak	7,000-10,000
Mount Belford	7,000-10,000
Mount Oxford	7,000-10,000*
Mount Princeton	7,000-10,000*
Mount Yale	7,000-10,000*
Mount Columbia	3,000-5,000
Missouri Mountain	5,000-7,000
Mt. of the Holy Cross	5,000-7,000
Huron Peak	7,000-10,000*

San Juan Mountains	Best Est: 48,000
Uncompahgre Peak	5,000-7,000
Mount Wilson	1,000-3,000
El Diente Peak	1,000-3,000
Mount Eolus	1,000-3,000
Windom Peak	1,000-3,000
Sunlight Peak	1,000-3,000
Handies Peak	7,000-10,000*
Mount Sneffels	3,000-5,000*
Redcloud Peak	5,000-7,000*
Sunshine Peak	3,000-5,000*
Wilson Peak	3,000-5,000*
Wetterhorn Peak	3,000-5,000
San Luis Peak	3,000-5,000

Mosquito Range	Best Est: 17,000
Mount Lincoln	7,000-10,000*
Mount Bross	
Mount Democrat	
Mount Sherman	7,000-10,000*

Elk Mountains	Best Est: 7,000
Castle Peak	1,000-3,000*
Maroon Peak	1,000-3,000
Capitol Peak	1,000-3,000
Snowmass Mountain	<1,000
Pyramid Peak	1,000-3,000

Sangre de Cristo Range	Best Est: 10,000
Blanca Peak	1,000-3,000*
Ellingwood Point	
Crestone Peak	1,000-3,000
Crestone Needle	1,000-3,000
Kit Carson Peak	1,000-3,000*
Challenger Point	
Humboldt Peak	1,000-3,000
Culebra Peak	<1,000
Mount Lindsey	1,000-3,000*
Little Bear Peak	<1,000

### Approximation Notes

\*Indicates data drawn from CFI TRAFx recorders, with data gap and early/late season infills from either previous years or nearby peak data. All other estimates are interpolated from a correlation between TRAFx data and reported 14ers.com peak use statistics.

\*Indicates National Park Service trailhead counter data adjusted for summit success rate based on prior studies.

Range and overall totals are adjusted to account for the frequent practice of summiting multiple peaks in one day.



# FIELD





# INSPIRE THE NEXT GENERATION

Educated hikers are more responsible hikers who cause less damage to fragile 14er ecosystems. CFI uses multiple approaches to educate hikers about the unique natural features found on the 14ers, as well as responsible behaviors that help minimize impacts. Activities include on-mountain hiker contacts and in-person talks by volunteers and staff, trailhead educational kiosks and an extensive YouTube video library designed to reach climbers before they leave home.

On-mountain hiker contacts again played a vital part of CFI's educational efforts. Forty-one Peak Steward volunteers put in a combined 168 days out on the 14ers and contacted 8163 hikers about Leave No Trace practices. There were even two Peak Steward dogs, which helped in contacting people hiking with dogs off leash. The popular Front Range peaks saw the most volunteer days, with Bierstadt topping the list (23 days), followed by Grays and Torreys (15) and Quandary (10). CFI field crews added 5875 hiker education contacts, most performed by the Adopt-a-Peak and North Elbert crews.

To help inspire the next generation of 14er enthusiasts and ensure they recreate with respect for the mountains, volunteers and staff gave several talks to school-age classrooms. Carrie Supino and Teresa Cierco-Lopez, both CFI Peak Stewards, gave talks to school groups in Westminster and Edwards respectively. Meanwhile, Development and Communications Manager Brian Sargeant gave two talks to a combined middle/high school in Nederland about outdoor recreation and stewardship professions.

While only two new videos were released last year, CFI's YouTube channel received 71,746 views of new and existing videos. Several filming efforts occurred that will feature in videos to be released in 2023 and subsequent years. With private lands access issues in the Mosquito Range anticipated to be incredibly important in the years to come, CFI did drone video filming on Mount Sherman and shot video on the Decalibron Loop. Several video shoots were done on Mount Shavano that will lead to new project update videos, as well as updated Peak Steward videos and a future series featuring the stories of diverse 14er climbers.

1. Videographer Tom McDonald films 14ers.com volunteers on the Mount Shavano project
2. Lloyd Athearn sets up for an interview about private land issues facing the Mosquito Range with Mount Lincoln in the background
3. Outreach efforts extended to several classrooms, including this talk by Carrie Supino to fifth graders at John E. Flynn A Marzano Academy in Westminster
4. Whatever she said, it must have been funny. Two Shavano hikers laugh during an interaction with Peak Stewards Mary O'Malley and Brittany Nguyen





## OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

Despite a full dance card with existing projects, CFI is always looking ahead regarding future projects and opportunities to resolve current 14er access and policy problems. Here are a few of the things CFI is working on that could play out in the months and years ahead.

### FUTURE TRAIL PROJECTS

At the last minute, CFI opted to delay the start of reconstruction work on the Black Cloud route on Mount Elbert until the 2023 field season. This two-person crew—augmented by youth corps—will spend two seasons working near the top of the ridge at almost 13,500 feet on the southern route on Colorado's highest peak. While CFI will be tied up on Mounts Shavano and Elbert for the next few seasons, trail reconstruction plans are in place or being finalized for future projects on Mount Princeton, Castle and Conundrum Peaks and Snowmass Mountain. If funding can be obtained, CFI also hopes to return to address the upper route on Mount Columbia. Hikers definitely notice when CFI's past reconstruction work ends on that peak.

### PRIVATE LANDS ACQUISITION

All the 14ers in the Mosquito Range are located on or are accessed by private lands. CFI, the Conservation Fund and the Mosquito Range Heritage Initiative are working with landowners in the area to see whether peaks can be brought into public ownership. The Conservation Fund has worked the federal appropriations process to get funding set aside from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund to ultimately acquire any parcels they are able to secure from willing sellers. CFI and partners are also monitoring the bankruptcy court proceedings for the defunct Leadville Corp assets, which include around 1700 acres of high-altitude claims running from Horseshoe Mountain across Mount Sheridan to Mount Sherman and beyond. If peaks can be secured, that will allow CFI and the Forest Service to move forward on high-priority trail and trailhead projects that have been stymied by private ownership.

### GOCO CENTENNIAL VISIONING

In concert with the National Forest Foundation and Chaffee County, CFI is helping lead the statewide "visioning" effort for the 14ers. During 2022, the Civic Canopy consulting group was hired to help engage the public in setting up a vision for the 14ers and needed investments to help achieve that vision. Surveys, a statewide virtual meeting and several regional meetings will help refine the plan, which should be completed by late 2023. If the Great Outdoors Colorado Board supports that vision, a multi-million-dollar investment package should result that will benefit 14er trails and trailhead areas.

### CABIN COVE ADMINISTRATIVE FACILITY

What was supposed to be a 90-day review process by the Forest Service has dragged on into several years. Nevertheless, CFI is optimistic that it will eventually obtain a 30-year permit to operate this cabin, garage and operations base facility that the organization has had access to on an annual basis for many years. Under Granger-Thye permitting authority, CFI will be able to meet annual lease obligations by investing in much-needed facility improvements and maintenance. Located on the banks of Twin Lakes, the almost five-acre site is centrally located for much of CFI's work and could not easily be replaced should the deal fall through.

1.

2.





1. The slopes leading up to Mount Democrat's summit are some of the private lands CFI and conservation groups are most interested in buying to bring into public ownership
2. The Quandary Peak trailhead is one of several that have access issues to resolve
3. Staff from the USFS Salida Ranger District, Chaffee County, National Forest Foundation and CFI talk about trailhead-area camping near Mount Shavano
4. BLM cadastral surveyor (and CFI supporter) Wayne Hancock surveys old mining claims on Mount Democrat as part of a potential land purchase
5. CFI's administrative base facility at Cabin Cove





## CORE STAFF

**Lloyd Athearn**, Executive Director

**Hannah Clark**, Operations Manager

**Tom Cronin**, Field Programs Manager

**Parker Grimes**, Field Projects Coordinator

**Ben Hanus**, Field Programs Director

**Megan Poole**, Controller

**Brian Sargeant**, Development and Communications Manager

**Miriam Venman-Clay**, Field Programs Manager

1. (L to R): Ben Hanus, Brian Sargeant, Parker Grimes, Tom Cronin, Lloyd Athearn, Hannah Clark, Megan Poole, Miriam Venman-Clay in the hills outside Golden.

*Photo by Povy Kendal Atchison, [www.povy.com](http://www.povy.com).*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Adelaide Leavens**, Chair

**Stephanie Welsh**, Vice-Chair

**Daniel P. Harris**, Treasurer

**Morgan Mahoney**, Secretary

**Tom Barney**

**Christopher Bouck**

**Priscilla Clayton**

**Clint Emmerich**

**Alex Hayes**

**Claire Jordan**

**David Kennedy**

**Brad McQueen**

**Tim Rampe**

**Heidi Ruckriegle**

**Stephen Ruyle, MD**

**Wagner Schorr-Ratzlaff, MD**

**Hunt Walker**

## 2022 CFI SEASONAL STAFF

2. Front Row (L to R): Tony Ondrus, Jo DeVilbiss, Sarah Barringer, David Sandberg, Maung Lay, Eve Monaghan, Mathiue Foucher, Andrea Zelinski. Middle Row (L to R): Mac Gibson, Parker Smedley, Zane Pergram, Paul Timm, Halle Vernon, Margaret Nilsen, Tanner Hunt, Kristen Oleson, Sydney Schaus. Back Row (L to R): Sam Newman, Nikola Vran, Carson Dover, Albert Chizmar, Ryan Engledow, Mike Crockett, Jack Bidwell, Ben Perkins, Chris Wyrembelski.





## 2022 PROJECT TEAMS

### MOUNT WILSON CREW

Mac Gibson, Crew Leader  
Andrea Zelinski, Crew Leader  
Jo DeVilbiss, Crew Member  
Eve Monaghan, Crew Member  
David Sandberg, Crew Member  
Carson Dover, Crew Member  
Joanna Scott, Crew Member  
Nikola Vran, Intern

### MOUNT SHAVANO CREW

Tanner Hunt, High Crew Leader  
Ben Perkins, High Crew Leader  
Maung Lay, High Crew Member  
Ben Rothstein, High Crew Member  
Zach Strickland, Low Crew Leader  
Albert Chizmar, Low Crew Leader  
Kirsten Oleson, Low Crew Member  
Chris Wyrembelski, Low Crew Member

### MOUNT ELBERT CREW

Tony Ondrus, Crew Leader  
Parker Smedley, Crew Leader  
Zane Pergram, Crew Member  
Halle Vernon, Crew Member

### GRAYS AND TORREYS CREW

Mike Crockett, Crew Leader  
Sam Newman, Crew Leader

### ADOPT-A-PEAK CREWS

Paul Timm, Pika Crew Leader  
Jack Bidwell, Pika Crew Member  
Ryan Engledow, Pika Crew Member  
Mathiue Foucher, Pika Crew  
Appelson Intern  
Carlie Harrison, Marmot Crew Leader  
Sarah Barringer, Marmot Crew Member  
Sydney Schaus, Marmot Crew Member  
Margaret Nilsen, Marmot Crew  
Appelson Intern

## 2022 AWARD RECIPIENTS

**Peak Steward of the Year:** Dr. Gary Nussbaum

**Adopt-a-Peak Volunteer of the Year:** Markus Klauser

**Adopt-a-Peak Rookie of the Year:** Meredith Sagara

**Out-of-State Ambassador of the Year:** Jim Day

**Special Recognition for Outstanding Service:** Brittany Nguyen

**Corporate Partner of the Year:** onX Backcountry

**Foundation Partner of the Year:** The Karis Foundation



3. Dr. Gary Nussbaum 4. Brittany Nguyen  
5. Meredith Sagara 6. The Karis Foundation  
7. CFI Board, Staff and friends following a work project on the lower Mount Shavano bypass  
(Front Row, L to R) Kirsten Oleson, Megan Poole, Priscilla Clayton, Charles LeCompte, Steve Ruyle, Miriam Venman-Clay. (Back Row, L to R) Albert Chizmar, Adelaide Leavens, Hannah Clark, Hunt Walker, Brad McQueen, Brian Sargeant, Ben Hanus, Tom Cronin



## 2022 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

### ADELAIDE LEAVENS

Proving that the degree of commitment to protecting Colorado's 14ers does not necessarily correlate to the number of 14ers you have climbed, CFI named Adelaide Leavens as its 2022 Volunteer of the Year. Leavens has summited seven 14ers, some multiple times. Nevertheless, she has played key roles in advancing 14er private land acquisitions and trail construction efforts that will protect the peaks for generations.

A native of Fort Worth, Texas, Leavens and her family vacationed every summer in the shadow of the Collegiate Peaks where her father would take the kids hiking. In 1984, Adelaide, her father and husband, Tom, summited Quandary Peak, her first 14er.

Leavens first learned of CFI through a Peak Steward contact at the Mount Belford trailhead during the summer of 2015. Later that fall she attended a CFI talk at a Dallas-area REI store. Upon learning of the effort to purchase the summit mining claims on Mount Shavano in order to build a new summit trail, Leavens became a key donor to that project through the Meta Alice Keith Bratten Foundation, where she serves as President. Years prior Tom broke his ankle while descending the peak's steep social trail.

Adelaide was recognized as an Out of State Ambassador in 2017, joined CFI's Board of Directors in 2019, served two years as Vice-Chair (2020-21) and became the Board Chair in 2022. Her home in Salida is frequently the venue for CFI's summer Board meetings and receptions.

- Adelaide Leavens (red jacket) gets a briefing from CFI staff on the Mount Columbia trail reconstruction project along with representatives of the Chrest Foundation.



CFI continued to set new financial performance records in 2022, ending the year in robust financial health. Total revenues exceeded \$2 million, individual giving exceeded \$900,000 and total expenditures exceeded \$1.8 million. All were record highs for the organization. The organization ended the year with a surplus of \$218,586.

## OPERATING REVENUES

The \$2,096,649 in record overall revenues received in 2022 exceeded 2021's total by \$263,076 (14%).

Donations from individuals totaled \$903,992

last year, up \$222,690 (33%) over the prior year.

Included were two gifts exceeding \$100,000.

Individual gifts represented 43 percent of total revenues and were the largest share of revenues for the fourth consecutive year.

Government grants totaled \$541,945, down \$15,164 (3%) from 2021's total. Grants from the Colorado State Trails program and the USDA Forest Service were the largest sources in this category.

Foundation grants totaled \$524,673, up \$41,526 (9%) over the prior year. Leading the way were grants of \$116,858 from the National Forest Foundation, \$85,232 from the Saguguachipa Foundation and \$65,854 from the Telluray Foundation.

Corporate donations surged to \$118,173, a 61 percent increase over 2021. Most corporate gifts matched employee contributions, though onX Backcountry, REI Co-op and TINCUP whiskey each awarded grants exceeding \$14,000.

The value of labor performed by project volunteers and Peak Stewards, while not able to be counted formally in the audited financials, totaled \$304,891.

\$2,000,000

\$1,800,000

\$1,600,000

\$1,400,000

\$1,200,000

\$1,000,000

\$800,000

\$600,000

\$400,000

\$200,000

\$0

2004

2005

2006

2007

2008

2009

2010

2011

2012

\$145,866

\$171,849

\$72,004

\$180,635

\$124,072

\$216,227

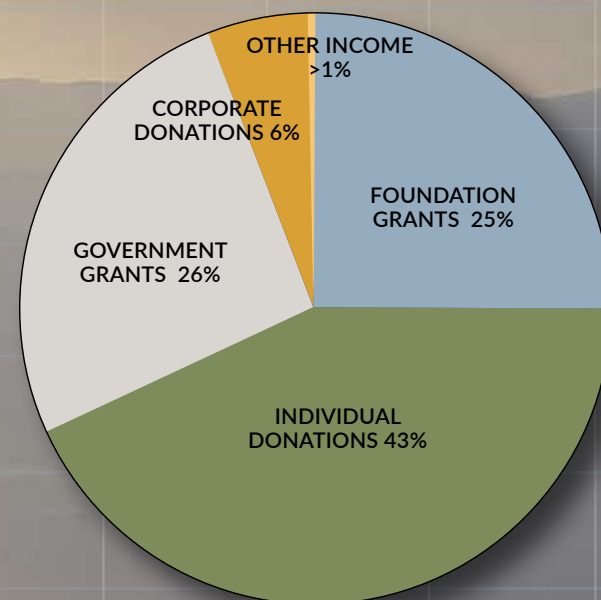
\$144,695

\$372,696

\$363,797

## OPERATING REVENUES

\$2,096,649





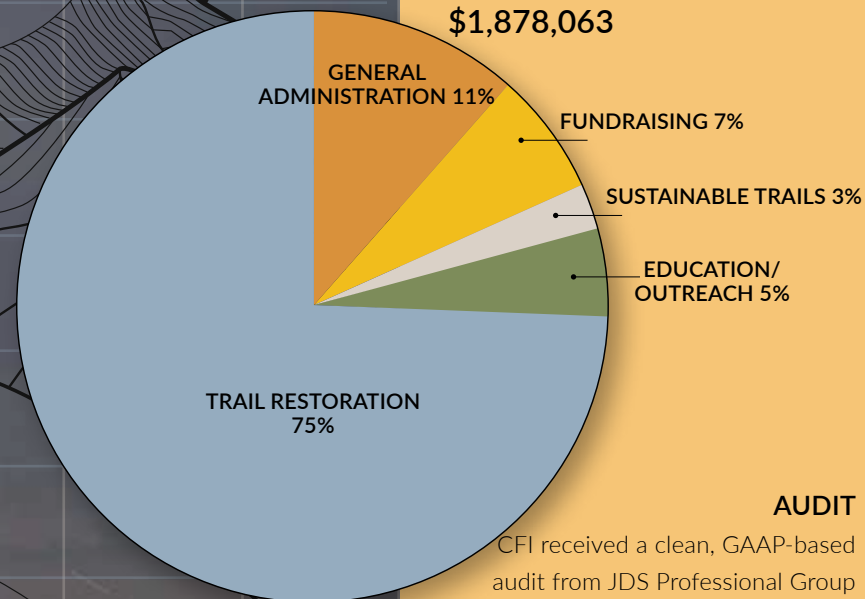
## OPERATING EXPENSES

Operating expenses last year totaled \$1,878,063, which was \$352,865 (23%) higher than in 2021. The value of work going into the 14ers in 2022 was actually \$2,187,355 due to CFI directing \$309,292 in Great American Outdoors Act funding from the Forest Service to our youth corps partners. These funds did not flow through the organization, but benefitted CFI project accomplishments. Work building, maintaining and restoring summit trails on the 14ers continued to dominate all programmatic activity in 2022, representing 75 percent of all expenditures (\$1,399,893). Funding paid for a record 30 seasonal staff members who worked on five crews. Education and outreach efforts represented 5 percent (\$87,737) of total expenses. Most of the cost was allocation of core staff time. Sustainable Trails data collection and trail counter monitoring work represented 3 percent of all expenses (\$47,146), again spent paying for core staff time. General Administration expenses totaled \$215,788 last year, an increase of \$11,816 (6%) over the prior year. Long-time CFI Controller Jerry Mack retired in the spring after almost 13 years. The overlap with incoming Controller Megan Poole was principally responsible for the increased administrative costs. Fundraising expenses totaled \$127,499, which accounted for 7 percent of the budget. This tied the all-time low as a share of all expenses. The total AFR rate (Administration and Fundraising) fell to 18%, which also tied an all-time low. (Totals are not 100 percent due to rounding).

## TOTAL NET ASSETS

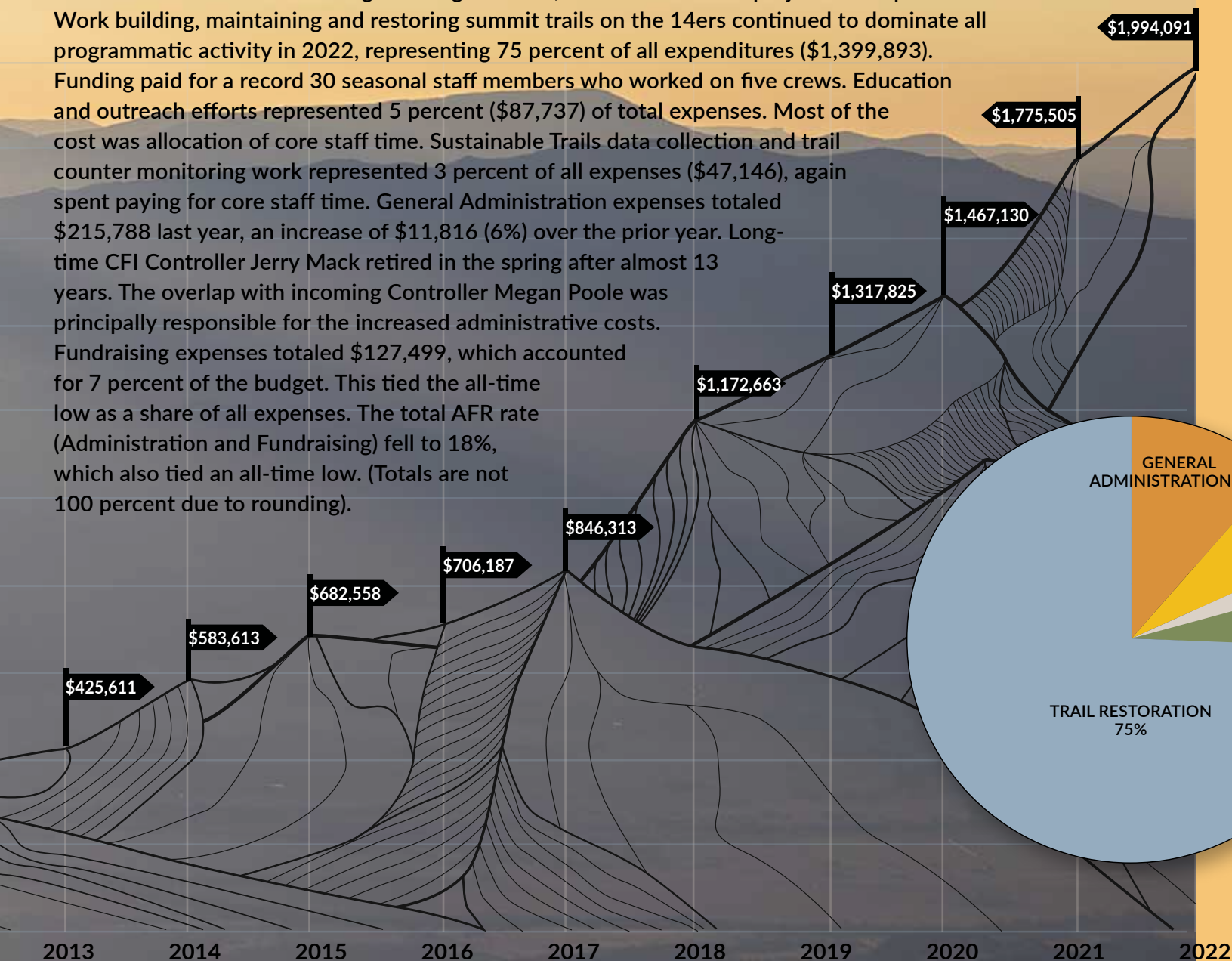
A cash surplus of \$218,586 at year end boosted CFI's total net assets to an all-time-record \$1,994,091. Included is CFI's general endowment of \$199,066, which received a \$105,488 Board-directed boost from a received planned gift donation, as well as \$346,389 in financial reserve funds. Grants received for future projects totaled \$295,421, while the net value of property and equipment totaled \$151,590. Four parcels of land atop Mount Shavano—including one purchased in 2022—totaled \$55,841.

## OPERATING EXPENSES \$1,878,063



## AUDIT

CFI received a clean, GAAP-based audit from JDS Professional Group for its 2022 financial statements. This marks the 14th consecutive clean audit for CFI.







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

1511 Washington Ave, Suite 310  
Golden, CO 80401  
(303) 278-7650 | [www.14ers.org](http://www.14ers.org)



- Front Cover: First light strikes Grays Peak (14,270 ft.) and Torreys Peak (14,267 ft.), the only two fourteeners peaks that lie on the Continental Divide  
*Photo by Jody Grigg. [www.jodygrigg.com](http://www.jodygrigg.com)*
- Back Cover: A mountain goat strikes a pose on Mount Cameron's summit
- Design by OPEN Creative

Scan the QR code to make a donation to CFI.

