

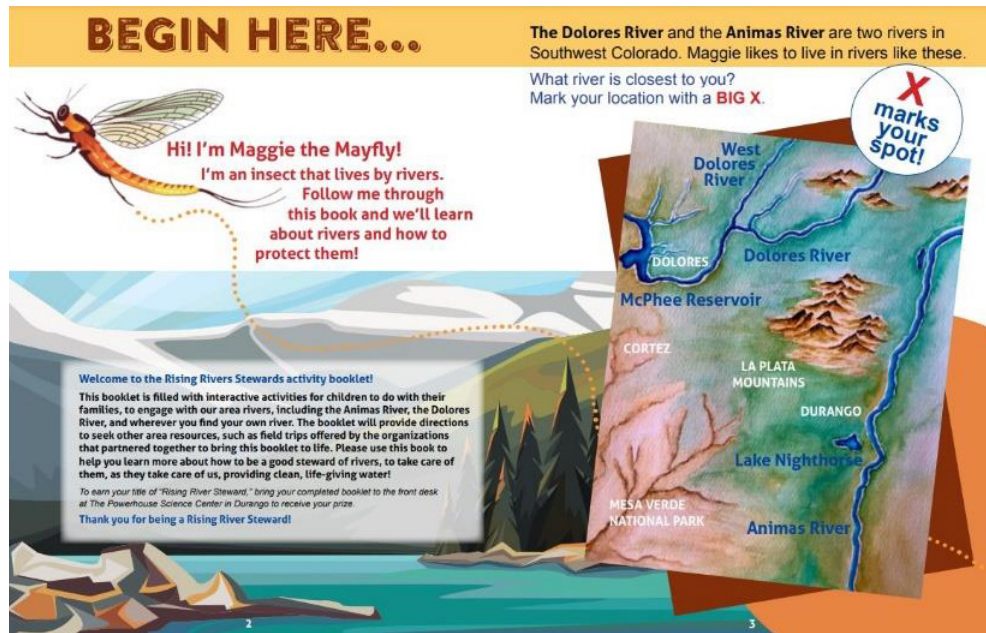
# WIP 2022 YEAR END UPDATE

## Rising River Steward Activity Book/Children's Water Festival 2023

As the COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact the education community, WIP and our partners have been looking for innovative ways to provide water education to our regional teachers and students.

Surveys of teachers, conducted by our partners at Mountain Studies Institute, indicated a need for providing content for students, to get them outside, away from screens, in a way that could be done in a self-directed manner. In past years, the Children's Water Festival has met this need. However, conditions have prevented the Water Information Program from hosting the festival from 2020-2022 on behalf of the Southwestern Water Conservation District.

As a result, WIP put together a team of highly qualified environmental education professionals from Mountain Studies Institute, San Juan Mountains Association, the Powerhouse Science Center, 4Corners River Sports, and Dolores River Boating Advocates (most have been presenters at our past water festivals). Together, we crafted a new 24-page book titled, *Rising Rivers Stewards Activity Book*. The name invokes that our area youth are rising to the challenge of being true stewards of our rivers, just as our rivers rise with the spring run-off each year. Our youth will have to learn to be stewards of our rivers, as they will face increasing water demand, drought, and other challenges.



Elaine oversaw the entire project and worked with the group to put together a story board, hired an illustrator/graphic designer who she worked closely with to make the book come to life, and worked with each entity to create and contribute activities for the book, as well as bids from printing companies.

*Stewards* book is filled with interactive activities for children to do with their families, to engage with our area rivers, including the Animas River, the Dolores River, and wherever they find their own river. The book provides directions to seek other area resources, such as field trips offered by the organizations that partnered together to bring this book to life. The goal is for children to use this book to help them learn more about how to be a good steward of rivers, to take care of them as they take care of us, providing clean, life-giving water!

The *Rising River Stewards* activity book made its first public appearances at the Animas River Days Festival and the Dolores River Festival, both on June 4th. During the Summer and Fall the book was available for free at area raft shops, The Powerhouse, the Public Lands Center, the Southern

Ute Museum, the Southwestern Water Conservation District office, Durango Welcome Center, and from all the organizations that helped to create it. Since its launch, of the 5000 books that were printed, 4500 copies have been distributed to our communities through the various outlets mentioned. As the book is timeless, we will be reprinting it and will offer it again this summer.

In this time, the *Rising River Stewards* book helped fill a void by providing interactive activities with learning objectives for children to do with their families, to engage with our area rivers. We are looking forward to the *Rising Rivers Stewards* book reaching far and wide to help children enjoy our area rivers, while taking care of them.

We are grateful to the SWCD for their commitment to sponsor the *Rising River Stewards* book as another great way to bring water education to our young students to learn about our rivers and watershed.

**I am happy to say that we will be bringing the Children's Water Festival back on May 10, 2023 at Ft. Lewis College.**

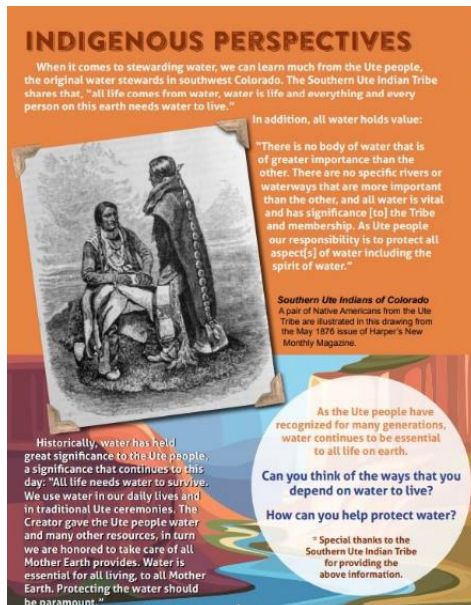
**We will be distributing the Rising River Stewards book to students attending the Water Festival.**

**\*\* Please let Elaine know if you would like copies of the book.**

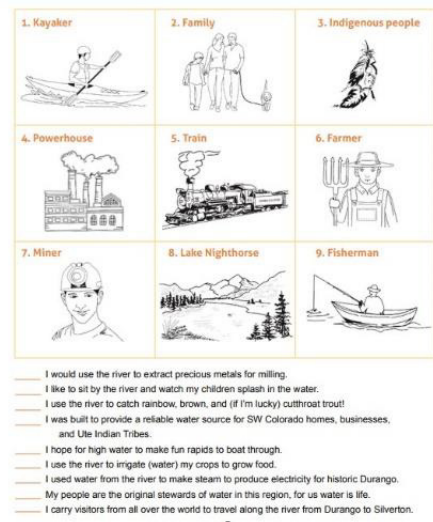
## Water Law in a Nutshell

Following on the success of the five Water Law in a Nutshell courses in 2021, WIP presented another virtual four-hour course in April with 60 participants, of which 22 people signed up for continuing education credit, and another full day SOLD-OUT in-person Water Law in a Nutshell course presented on Oct. 26 at Ft. Lewis College. It has been three years since WIP presented the full day in person course. The evaluations sent in from participants were exemplary. This course offered Continuing Education Credits for Lawyers, Realtors and Real Estate Assessors. WIP also presented a virtual short course specifically for realtors in June that was well attended. I am thrilled at the overwhelming continued success of this program!

Each course was presented by Mr. Aaron Clay, Attorney at Law and former 26-year Water Referee for the Colorado Water Court, Division 4. The Water Law in a Nutshell course covered all aspects of the law related to water rights and ditch rights as applied in Colorado. Subject matter included the appropriation, perfection, use, limitations, attributes, abandonment and enforcement of various types of water rights, and special rules for groundwater, public rights in appropriated water, Federal and interstate compacts and more.



People have relied upon the Animas river for a long time and many continue to do so now! Color the images below and match them to the sentences to discover who used the river and how. Think: "how might all of these uses affect the river?"





## Forests-to-Faucets (F2F) Teacher Training Workshop

2022 was WIP's 11th year collaborating with Mountain Studies Institute, San Juan Mountain Association and Ft. Lewis College on the Forest to Faucets teacher training program.

We rotate the location throughout the basin each year. In 2022 we presented Forest to Faucets in the Dolores/Mancos area. Fozzie's Farm in Lewis was our base for indoor presentations and activities. There was a wide range of experts that presented to our teachers, including a Tribal perspective, soil health, regenerative agriculture/irrigation efficiency; and a forest tour making the connection between forest health and watershed health.

This training empowers educators to include place-based watershed education in their lesson plans and engage students to think critically about Colorado's water issues.

Since 2012, over 170 teachers have been trained in this program across the San Juan River Basin in the *My Water Comes from the San Juan Mountains* teacher guide, children's book, and kit developed in 2009 and facilitated by Mountain Studies Institute, the Water Information Program, San Juan Forest Association and Ft. Lewis College. Up to 20 teachers can attend the two-day workshop where they explore topics in forest and watershed health, practice in the lessons found within the *My Water* guide, which includes place-based activities that address Colorado State standards, and meet with local water experts and professionals. The two-day workshop is offered free of charge to educators.

The workshops build teachers' capacity for teaching watershed science by providing place-specific knowledge and activities that can be easily integrated in science and social science curricula.

Along the way, teachers wear the "student hat" while instructors demonstrate teaching activities from the *My Water* guide. Teachers meet with water resource experts and scientists who cover topics ranging from the importance of water quality and quantity, the impacts of wildfire on municipal water supply, forest health, to touring the areas Water and Sanitation Districts to the "how to" of implementing watershed service-learning initiatives.

We have received wonderful feedback from past attending teachers how they are implementing some of the activities and curriculum from the workshop with positive response. [We estimate that these teachers will bring watershed science to an additional 500 students per year!](#)



## WIP Education Scholarships

Elaine worked with Ft. Lewis College to create a scholarship fund that contributes tuition for students to attend their Water Seminar class. Elaine collaborated with Kaitlin Mattos, Ph.D. - Environment and Sustainability Department | Teacher Education Department, who will be teaching the course. WIP had \$2000.00 in the budget to go toward this special scholarship that provided \$500.00 towards tuition for each of the four qualifying students. There were nine students who presented applications, and four were selected based on the certain criteria we created. This was a one-time effort on behalf of the Water Information Program.



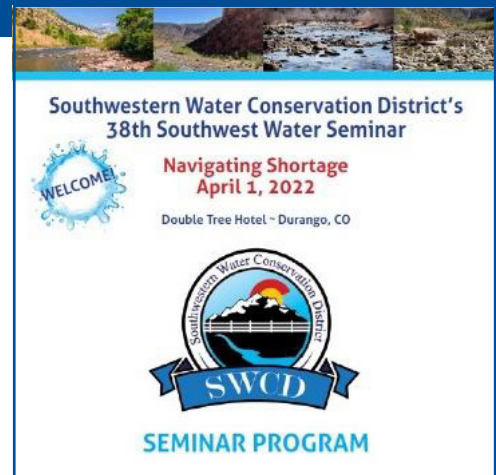
## SWCD's Southwest Water Seminar

Elaine served as the event logistics coordinator and producer for the **sold-out, SWCD 38th Southwest Water Seminar: Navigating Storage**; including coordination of the speaker/board dinner the night prior. The hybrid event was held at the DoubleTree Hotel in Durango on April 1, 2022.

Elaine handled all of the marketing, logistics, registration, the layout and printing of the seminar program, food and beverage coordination, hotel coordination, technical production, speaker coordination and day of show management. SWCD put together the agenda content and selected presenters. A large backdrop display was created for the seminar stage that is also used in the SWCD boardroom.

This was SWCD's first hybrid seminar. Elaine hired a professional sound company and videographer to handle the live and virtual presentation portion. The videographer provided SWCD with a final edited video of the seminar that was put up on the SWCD website. A sold-out crowd of 140 people attended the seminar at the DoubleTree Hotel and another 50 tuned in online. Water managers, researchers, college professors, climatologists and representatives from the Ute Mountain Ute and Southern Ute tribes gave presentations about the lack of water supply in Southwest Colorado and participated in panels.

The seminar proved to be a huge success!



## WATER22

### Water '22 It All Starts Here

WIP collaborated with Water Education Colorado (WECO) on the **Water '22 – It All Starts Here** campaign

and events for the year. Elaine collaborated with WECO in sending an email survey to all of our 5th grade teachers in the SW basin to provide feedback on plans for a statewide Water Awareness Week in Colorado's elementary schools. We asked them to look through a Sample Water Awareness Week plan and respond to our survey so we could coordinate a date for the statewide water awareness week. Student engagement is a crucial component of Water '22 - It All Starts Here, as youth today are the future stewards of Colorado water. Water Education Colorado and other collaborators such as WIP, planned events and created resources geared towards engaging youth in this exciting initiative.

As well, WIP collaborated with WECO to plan a SW Basin mini-tour that took place September 1st.

Elaine coordinated the agenda and all the logistics, speakers, and transportation. We invited a diverse group of 12 participants to attend this free mini-tour of important water-related sites and topics in the Southwest Basin, that also represent projects completed in the Basin Implementation Plan. The people we invited were a diverse set of participants OUTSIDE of the "water community" with some commitment to share their learning with their networks. The tour itinerary included the ALP Tribute Garden, Lake Durango, McElmo Flume, Mancos River Restoration topics, and Ute Mt. Ute Farm and Ranch Enterprise. We had presenters on the mini-bus talking about various topics, as well as at each stop. This tour was one of a series throughout Colorado that highlighted achievements since the Colorado Water Plan was adopted in 2015, identify issues moving forward, and highlight the public comment opportunity for the Colorado Water Plan update in 2022. WECO had a videographer on all of the tours and will create a short compilation video in the next few months.







## WIP Website

([www.waterinfo.org](http://www.waterinfo.org))

The WIP website has been a successful resource that provides current events, each monthly newsletter is posted under the news tab, as well as a plethora of useful water-related information. In addition, the website has information on each participating entity and direct links to their respective websites.

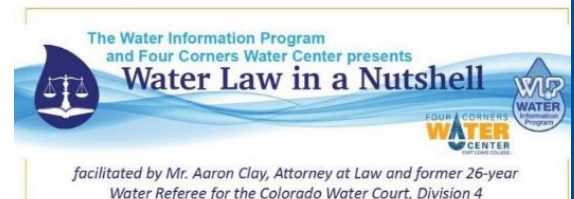
## The Nine Basins Bulletin Newsletter

The Nine Basins Bulletin is the new newsletter from the Southwestern Water Conservation District and the Water Information Program, that provides a summary of the latest updates from southwest Colorado. In this email forum, we want to raise awareness, engagement, and coordination among our nine distinct watersheds—and share our successes with the state. Each month we will feature a different WIP partner around the basin, as well as local and statewide water related news stories, educational events and other listings. I am always looking for water stories and our goal is to feature our partners throughout the year. It's for you. You can click here view past newsletters, or here:

<https://waterinfo.org/newsletters/>



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## Brochures and Information Pieces

WIP produces a wide variety of water-related topic brochures — e.g., rainwater harvesting, water conservation, ditches and diversions, methane gas and water wells, saving water indoors & outdoors, and water terms, to name a few. Come by the office to pick some up.





## WIP Booth & Displays

Tabletop and floor water-related displays available for use at a variety of events. A WIP booth was at the SWCD Annual Water Seminar, Animas River Days and the Dolores River Festival.

## WIP Lending Library

The WIP lending library has more than 200 books and movies on water-related topics are available to the public to checkout.



## Water Educator Network

WIP participates in and is a member of the Water Educator Network, and attends the annual Water Festival Coordinators gathering that brings together water festival coordinators from across the state to discover strategies to improve their events. It's also an opportunity to share best practices, challenges, and lessons learned. In 2022 we met virtually to discuss the probability of live Festivals and other options to offer our 5th grade teachers and students.

## Additional Outreach and Meetings

On behalf of WIP, Elaine belongs to a variety of educational organizations such as SW Colorado Education Collaborative; SW Environmental Education Leadership Council, is the Public Education, Participation and Outreach (PEPO) coordinator for the SW Basin Roundtable, to name a few. Elaine also conducts educational outreach at regional meetings and events, such as SWCD board meetings, CWCB board meetings, SW Basin Roundtable meetings, statewide PEPO meetings, and the Colorado Water Congress Conference.

Elaine has been invited to be a presenter talking about children's water education during one of the concurrent sessions at the Colorado Water Congress Annual Convention on January 26, 2023 in Aurora, CO.