

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



YAMPA VALLEY
SUSTAINABILITY
COUNCIL

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REAL SOLUTIONS, NOW

Dear Yampa Valley community & partners,

The World Meteorological Association reports that 2023 was the hottest year on record, continuing a stretch of record-breaking warming over the past nine years.

While we enjoyed an incredible year of snowfall, we also watched natural disasters unfold around the world and felt the variability of weather that's only expected to get more extreme in future years.

Still, our work is rooted in the power of collaboration and hope, with our team feeling ever more connected to the community as we work to build a resilient, carbon-zero society that will protect all that we love, from our children to our powder turns, for generations to come.

In 2023 YVSC continued its work as project manager for the Routt County Climate Action Plan Collaborative, helping local governments reduce emissions by 35% by 2030 and 74% by 2050.

This year also marked YVSC's inaugural Insight: Art for Climate Action event, raising over \$45,000 for our work and bringing the community together to discuss climate action.

We've also strengthened our existing programs with advocacy, impactful projects and more volunteers showing up as stewards of our shared lands.

Every moment we spend on projects related to our priority areas of Energy, Transportation, Waste, Resilient Land & Water and Community Engagement, we are reminded that we have the tools and knowledge to build a safe, equitable and prosperous future. But we have to work together, and we have to act now. We hope you'll join us.

Sincerely,

YVSC Staff &

Board of Directors



Our Mission

Serve as a leader, catalyst and resource for building a sustainable and resilient Yampa Valley region.

Our Vision

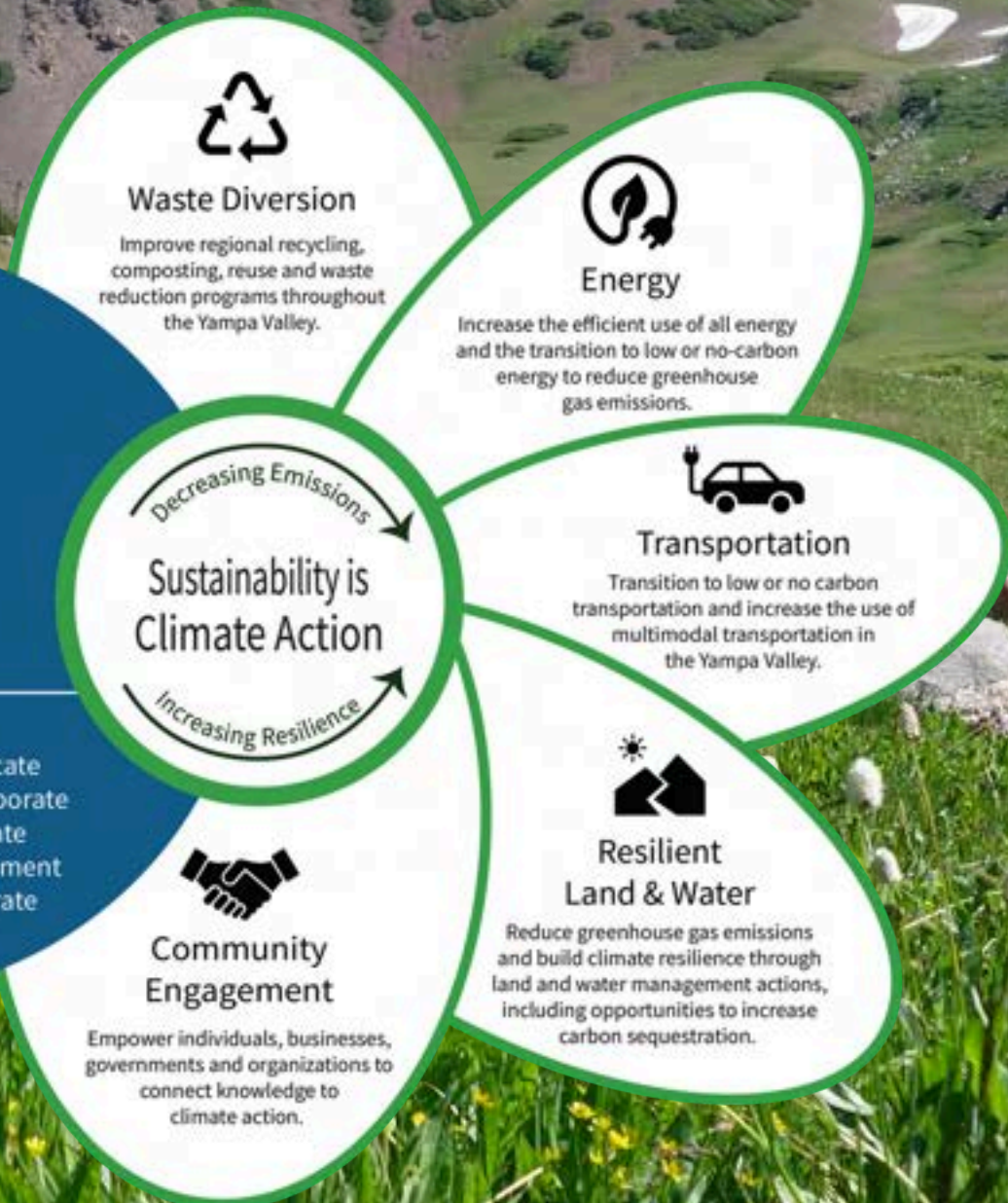
A healthy, resilient Yampa Valley united through climate action.

Our Values

- Resourcefulness
- Inclusivity
- Science
- Hope
- Respect

Our Approach

- Advocate
- Collaborate
- Educate
- Implement
- Integrate



YEAR IN REVIEW



YVSC's annual ReTree volunteer planting event took place over two days on two separate properties, with 344 trees planted.

200 guests and 27 artists convened for the first ever Insight: Art for Climate Action fundraising event.



The Climate Action Plan Collaborative released 40 actions local governments should take to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.



2023



A record 211 community members pledged to use carbon-free transportation for the month of June.



Two new soil moisture monitoring stations came online to collect weather and climate data in real time.

RESILIENT LAND & WATER



Soil Moisture Monitoring

In March 2023, YVSC, Center for Western Weather and Water Extremes and Colorado Mountain College secured \$860,000 to expand the newly named Yampa Basin Atmosphere & Soil Moisture Integrated Network (YBASIN) project.

In fall 2023, the program brought two new soil moisture monitoring stations online on private property. The stations collect data on soil moisture and temperature, rain, snow depth, air temperature, relative humidity, solar radiation, fuel temperature, fuel moisture, and wind speed and direction, which is reported in near-live time.

Soil moisture monitoring data



Funding for the YBASIN project comes from the Colorado Water Conservation Board's Water Plan Grant, Colorado River District's Community Funding Partnership and Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District.

YVSC also partnered with the Medicine-Bow Routt National Forest Service to create a community soil moisture program to increasing data collection and community understanding of the project.

Conserving water

YVSC continued its partnership with the City of Steamboat Springs and Mount Werner Water and Sanitation District to promote water conservation outreach and education. In 2023, YVSC distributed rain barrels to Routt and Moffat County residents, hosted educational water conservation workshops and created a Water Conservation Toolkit for homeowners associations and property managers.

92 

Rain barrels distributed in 2023.

Yampa Basin Rendezvous

Over 100 people gathered for the sixth annual Yampa Basin Rendezvous at Colorado Mountain College in Steamboat Springs. This year's event, "Snows, Flows, and Drought: Managing for Western Water Resilience," took a science-based, community-centered approach to create informed, adaptive and proactive management strategies for the Yampa Basin's natural resources and communities.

100+ 

People attended YBR 2023.

Yampa River Forest Restoration

The Yampa River Forest Restoration Project (YRFRP) was launched in 2019 in collaboration with the City of Steamboat Springs in response to the 2018 Yampa River Health Assessment and Streamflow Management Plan, which identified water temperature as the biggest water quality issue facing the Yampa River.

The plan identified enhancing the quality of riparian vegetation as a top priority action to provide shading and reduce stream temperature. YVSC focuses primarily on planting native narrowleaf cottonwood trees, which are the largest riparian tree species in the Yampa Valley. This year, we completed seven projects over the span of 6,000 feet of streambank along the Yampa River and Elkhead Creek.

Wet meadow & wetland restoration

Wet meadows in the otherwise arid grasslands of California Park have faced increased degradation from both natural and human-made impacts. To address these issues, 24 Yampa Valley Climate Crew volunteers and a Rocky Mountain Youth Corps crew constructed Zeedyk structures, a low-tech restoration technology of stones arranged to trap sediment during water runoff events.

Healthy wet meadows play an important role in increasing streamflows and enhancing soil quality and vegetation for at-risk species like Greater sage-grouse and Boreal toads. They also remove carbon from the atmosphere at five times the rate per acre of forests. In 2023, YVSC installed 44 Zeedyk structures over the span of 3.8 acres.

YVSC is also helping with planning for major wetland restoration projects near the Yampa River as it runs through Steamboat Springs.



Forest resilience projects

Conifer forests are vital in the fight against climate change as they sequester carbon and improve the condition of our watersheds. YVSC's forest resilience projects include tree plantings and regeneration

5,223 

Trees planted in 2023.

seedling surveys

at wildfire burn scars. In 2023, YVSC worked in the burn scars of the Muddy Slide, Big Red Park and Silver Creek wildfires.

YVSC is on the Routt County Wildfire Mitigation Council board and was a leader in the two-day 2023 Wildfire Mitigation Conference, where about 150 people attended. YVSC is also helping to establish a new forest restoration collaborative initiative covering much of North Routt County and extending into Wyoming.



Yampa Valley Climate Crew

Yampa Valley Climate Crew (YVCC) is a volunteer-based program that connects community members with natural climate solutions projects. These projects are hosted by local environmental organizations including the U.S. Forest Service, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Trout Unlimited and YVSC. 2023 projects include forest regeneration surveys in the Big Red Park and Silver Creek areas and wetland restoration in California Park.

“It was so rewarding walking away (from the site) and thinking how we just *did* that, and how it will change the ecosystem in the next couple decades.”

— YVCC volunteer



ReTree

Each year, ReTree brings together people of all ages to learn about the benefits of planting trees and share in the experience of stewardship.

Since 2019, ReTree has supported the Yampa River Forest Restoration

Project by planting and maintaining trees at sites along the Yampa River.

205



Volunteers joined ReTree plantings in 2023.

Over 200 volunteers gathered to plant 344 narrowleaf cottonwood trees on two separate ReTree planting days in 2023 at The Nature Conservancy’s Carpenter Ranch and on private property.

ENERGY

Renewable energy in development

Technical experts from YVSC offered their knowledge and recommendations on the use of clean energy in various development projects throughout Routt County in 2023. Some of our successes included:

- Holding two community workshops on the benefits of geothermal energy, garnering over 100 total attendees.
- Advocating for the adoption of Routt County's 2021 building code to include a restriction on outdoor fossil fuel energy use.
- Recommending that Yampa Valley Housing Authority hire a consulting firm to investigate the viability of clean energy in its new developments, resulting in the incorporation of a community geothermal energy system in the Brown Ranch development plan.
- Supporting the Town of Hayden in their quest to develop a carbon-free geothermal system in its new business park.
- Convening a working group to investigate the possibility of submitting a grant application for geothermal energy use at Steamboat Resort.



Energy Assessments

YVSC supports comprehensive Energy Assessments in partnership with Yampa Valley Electric Association, the Town of Oak Creek, the City of Steamboat Springs

15 

Energy assessments completed in 2023.

and Energy Smart Colorado that include home or commercial analyses that recognize comfort concerns, blower-door testing with infrared cameras to detect insulation voids and air leaks, and Combustion Appliance Zone (CAZ) testing to identify potential for carbon monoxide and other hazards related to combustion heating systems. A home energy assessment is a top to bottom home-as-a-system approach that identifies key areas of energy usage and generates a report that shows estimated energy and dollar savings. Starting in 2023, YVSC began performing these assessments in-house according to Building Performance Institute standards.

TRANSPORTATION

EV Readiness

The City of Steamboat Springs hosted two electric vehicle (EV) ride and drive events in 2023. YVSC, in partnership with the City of Steamboat

Springs, Yampa Valley Electric Association and Clean Energy Economy for the Region, invited the public to test drive a

variety of EVs and learn about the technology and federal incentives that make purchasing one more affordable. These events include information for personal and commercial vehicles, and resulted in two confirmed EV purchases in 2023.

YVSC also acts as a resource and advocate for the installation of EV charging stations with a focus on multi-family, business and workplace locations, in addition to sharing technical advice on charger placement, funding, equipment and vendors.

185 

People tested an electric vehicle during a 2023 Ride and Drive event.



CARbon-Free Challenge

A record number of 211 people pledged to log their miles traveling by bike, foot or any other carbon-free method of transportation for the month of June.

10.7K 

Miles traveled carbon-free in June.

Together, we traveled over 10,700 miles, saving 418 gallons of gas and avoiding 4.1 tons of CO2 emissions. Of all the participants, 20 traveled more than 150 miles carbon-free over the course of the month.

EV Ambassadors

A group of 18 local electric vehicle (EV) owners acted as proponents of all things electrification in 2023, offering up their vehicles to be used for EV Ride and Drive events and displaying them at educational events. These ambassadors are a resource to prospective EV buyers, answering questions and sharing their own experience reducing their individual carbon emissions.

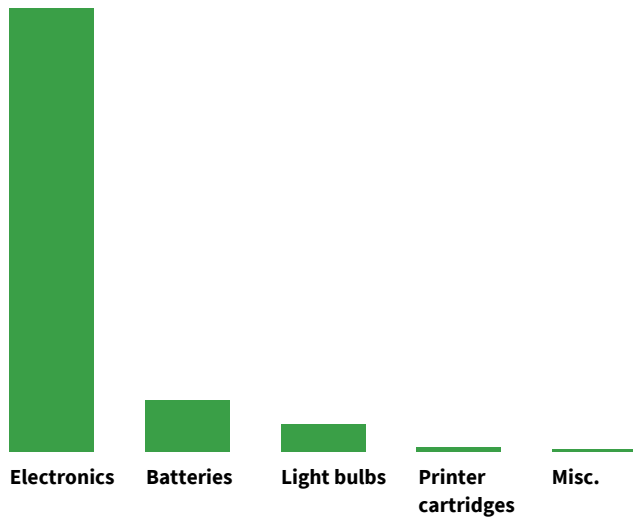


WASTE DIVERSION

YVR Depot: Steamboat’s stop for hard-to-recycle materials

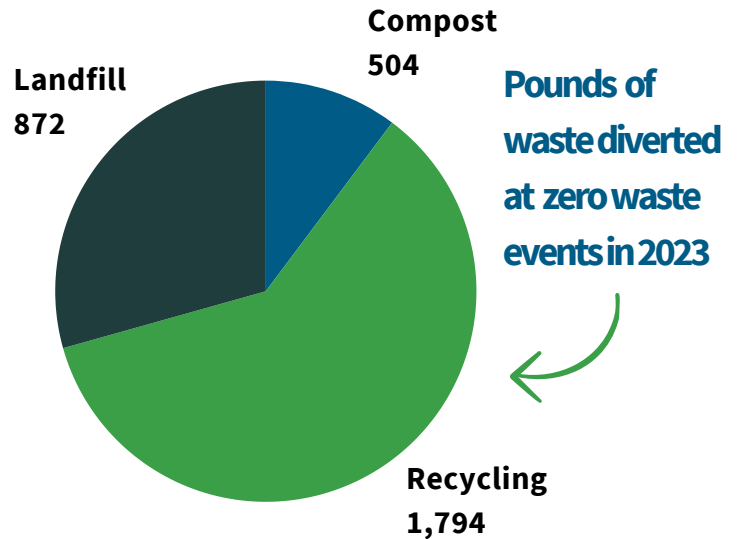
The Yampa Valley Recycles (YVR) Depot offers a convenient, year-round outlet for hard-to-recycle materials in the Yampa Valley. YVSC operates the Depot in partnership with the City of Steamboat Springs and Routt County. The YVR Depot was opened in December 2021 and is now located at 2851 Riverside Plaza Unit 250, providing service on select weekdays and accepting electronics, light bulbs, batteries, and other hard-to-recycle materials.

Materials collected by YVR Depot



Zero waste events

YVSC provided zero waste services for 12 local events throughout the Yampa Valley in 2023. This included working with event organizers to encourage use of compostable and recyclable materials, helping facilitate product purchasing and coordinating staff and volunteers to monitor zero waste stations and educate the public on how to properly recycle and compost.



Where can I recycle? Get the app!

The Yampa Valley Recycles app allows community members to receive immediate guidance on the best way to dispose of any and all materials.

23.2K

Material views on the YVR app.

The free app is available for smartphones or online at yvsc.org.

Download the app



COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVES

Routt County Climate Action Plan Collaborative

YVSC continued its work as the program manager for the Routt County Climate Action Plan (CAP) Collaborative in 2023. The agreement, formed in 2021 by the City of Steamboat Springs, Routt County and the Towns of Hayden, Oak Creek and Yampa, aims to implement strategies to reduce local greenhouse gas emissions.

YVSC convened volunteer technical experts to form five working groups in the areas of energy, transportation, waste, land use and economy, which together spent over 1,400 hours creating 40 actionable recommendations for implementing the climate action plan. The recommendations were presented to the community during an open house in June, which gathered nearly 200 attendees.

The CAP Collaborative also established the Routt County CAP Fund through Yampa Valley Community Foundation, where people can donate to local climate action projects or mitigate their air travel emissions through a partnership with The Good Traveler program.



Colorado Green Business Network of the Yampa Valley

Colorado Green Business Network of the Yampa Valley (CGBN-YV) is a free technical assistance and recognition program that works with local businesses and organizations to advance their sustainability goals.

As a regional partner of the state-level program, CGBN-YV connects businesses with

10 

Local businesses joined CGBN-YV in 2023.

funding, resources and skills to make improving environmental performance across business sector and size simple. Participating businesses get access to networking opportunities, professional advisors and third-party recognition for their efforts.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Insight: Art for Climate Action

YVSC held its inaugural fundraiser, Insight: Art for Climate Action, in 2023. The event brought together 27 artists who created more than 35 original pieces. The event raised over \$45,000 for YVSC to advance climate action in the Yampa Valley. More importantly, it generated conversations around the ways in which we feel and experience climate change, with pieces ranging in subject matter from wildfire and species loss to the Yampa River.



Photo by Danielle Zimmerer



Photo by Danielle Zimmerer

“I am intrigued by patterns that recur throughout nature. I believe that when we come to know the living things around us more intimately, we are able to care for them more intentionally.”

— Marguerite Pilon, Insight artist & coordinator, 2023 intern

Internships

Interns at YVSC took on a range of paid, self-led projects this year, including work on electric vehicle readiness, communicating the Routt County Climate Action Plan, monitoring ecosystem resilience projects and much more. In 2023 YVSC worked with 12 interns, including one in collaboration with the Center for Western Weather and Water Extremes.

“My internship taught me that genuine care for your local community fosters a sense of belonging. If we work to make our communities stronger, that care and strength is reciprocated back to us.”

— Mackenzie Dotson, fall 2023 intern




OUR TEAM

Board of Directors

Taylor Drexler | Communications & Project Management Consultant

Katie Durrwachter-Erno | Medical Director, ProgenyHealth, LLC

Andrea Forster | Former Executive VP, Mastercard 

Gail Garey | Founder of Impact 360 Strategies, Steamboat Springs City Counselor

Paul Hebert | *Vice chair* | Retired from United Nations

Jennifer Holloway | Executive Director, Craig Chamber of Commerce

Terry Huffington | Owner, Elkstone Farm

Sarah Jones | *Secretary* | Director of Sustainability & Community Engagement, Steamboat Ski & Resort Corp.

Jay Lambert | *Treasurer* | Co-Founder, Town Hall Outdoor Co.

Sarah Loughran | *Chair* | Former Co-Founder, HealthGrades

Alston Williamson | Associate Director of Philanthropy, The Nature Conservancy 

Staff

Paul Bony, M.B.A. | Energy & Transportation Director

Kate Brocato | Communications & Program Manager

Conner Byrnes | Sustainability Coordinator

Winn Cowman, M.A. | Waste Diversion Director

Ashley Dean, M.E.S.M. | Collaborative Initiatives Manager

Dakota Dolan | Forest Resilience Projects Manager

Ryan Messinger | Natural Climate Solutions Project Manager


Madison Muxworthy | Soil Moisture, Water, & Snow Program Manager

George O'Brien | Waste Diversion Technician

Nicole Pepper | Geospatial Analyst & Internship Program Manager

Michelle Stewart, Ph.D. | Executive Director

Tim Sullivan, M.Sc. | Resilient Land & Water Director

Abby Vander Graaff | Operations Assistant 

 New growth to team

Interns

Isabella Cecchi

McKenna Deeble

Chloe Denning

Mackenzie Dotson

Abbey Ertzbischoff

Tyler Jacobs

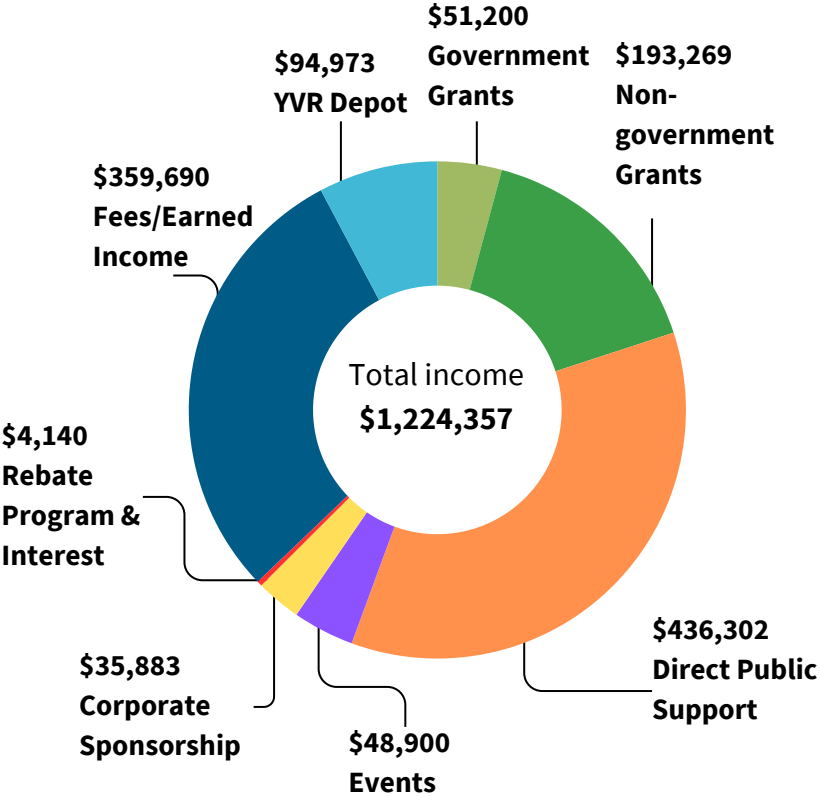
Marguerite Pilon

Alex Verachtert

Macey Wyman

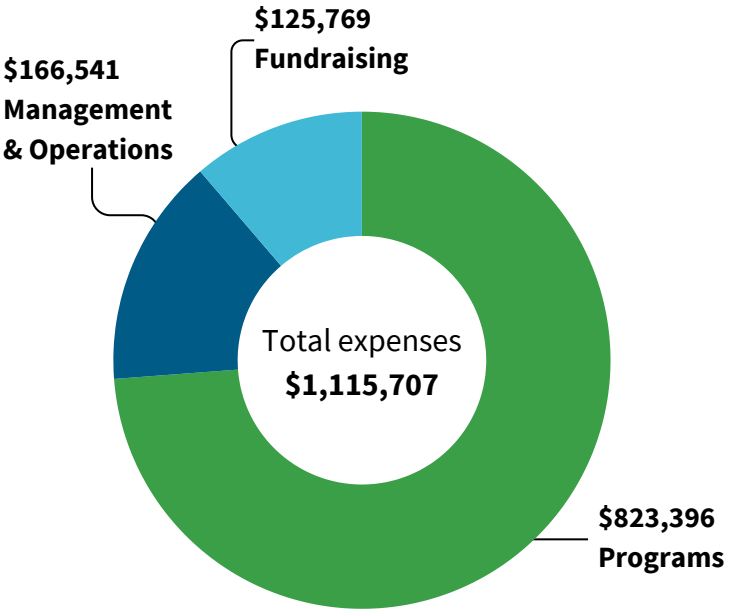
Samantha Wyman

FINANCIALS



Income

	2022	2023
Government Grants	\$81,530	\$51,200
Nongovernmental Grants	\$412,285	\$193,269
Direct Public Support	\$119,547	\$436,302
Events	\$21,500	\$48,900
Corporate Sponsorship	\$25,500	\$35,883
Fees/Earned Income	\$199,076	\$359,690
Other: Rebate Program & Interest	\$2,846	\$4,140
YVR Depot	\$122,772	\$94,973
Total Income	\$985,056	\$1,224,357



Expenses

	2022	2023
Programs	\$703,152	\$823,396
Management & Operations	\$142,616	\$166,541
Fundraising	\$99,611	\$125,769
Total Expenses	\$945,378	\$1,115,707

Climate action takes collaboration. Thank you to our donors & partners.

Aspen Global Change Institute
Bud Werner Memorial Library
Center for Western Weather & Water Extremes
City of Craig
City of Steamboat Springs
Clean Energy Economy for the Region (CLEER)
CLEER
Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust
Colorado Crane Conservation Coalition
Colorado Climate Center
Colorado Dept. Public Health and Env.
Colorado Dept. of Natural Resources
Colorado Energy Office
Colorado Green Business Network
Colorado Mountain College
Colorado Parks & Wildlife
Colorado River District
Colorado River Water Conservancy District
Colorado State Forest Service
Colorado State University
Colorado Tourism Office
Colorado Water Conservation Board
Community Agriculture Alliance
Craig Chamber
CSU Extension, Routt County
Energy Outreach Colorado
Energy Smart Colorado
Fridays for Future
Friends of the Yampa
Gecko Landscaping
Glas Deffryn Ranch
Integrated Community
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Moffat County
Mount Werner Water & Sanitation District
Natural Resources Conservation Services
Northern Colorado Clean Cities

Northwest Colorado Council of Governments
Northwest Colorado Health
Partners in Routt County
Protect our Winters
Reaching Everyone Preventing Suicide
Rivers Network
Rocky Mountain Youth Corps
Routt County
Routt County Economic Development Partnership
Routt County Soil Conservation District
Routt County Wildfire Mitigation Council
SavATree Steamboat
Seminars at Steamboat
Solar United Neighbors
South Routt Recreation Association
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Steamboat Springs Redevelopment Authority (SSRA)
Steamboat Springs School District
Steamboat Springs Ski & Resort Corporation
Storm Peak Laboratory
The Nature Conservancy
Tour De Steamboat
Town of Hayden
Town of Oak Creek
Town of Yampa
Trout Unlimited
Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District
US Forest Service
Walking Mountains
Yampa River Botanic Park
Yampa River Fund
Yampa Valley Community Foundation
Yampa Valley Electric Association
Yampa Valley Housing Authority
Yampa Valley Partnership for Students, Stewardship & Sustainability (YVPS3)
Yampa/White/Green Basin Roundtable
Yampatika

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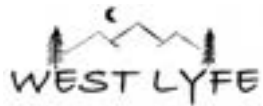
STEAMBOAT POWDERCATS



STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, COLORADO



JILL BERGMAN



THANK YOU

Our impact is only possible with the support of our many dedicated partners, donors, funders, sponsors, volunteers, staff, board and community members.

Photo by Diane Miller



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Volunteer | Intern | Partner

Yampa Valley Sustainability Council

919 Oak Street

Steamboat Springs, CO 80487

970-871-9299

yvsc.org

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Yampa Valley Sustainability Council