

# Message from Carol Ekarius, Executive Director

Dear Friends and Supporters,



As CUSP wrapped up our second decade of service in the Upper South Platte Watershed, it is an appropriate time to reflect on the work we have done throughout the watershed as well as in neighboring areas that impact our watershed.

2017 marked the fifteenth anniversary of the Hayman Fire and the fifth anniversary of the Waldo Canyon Fire. We know that these are not the last fires that will occur in our area, so we continue working to reduce the impacts of future fires.

One of the 2017 projects I'm most proud of was the revision to the Woodland Park Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). The new plan, dubbed the Greater Woodland Park CWPP, more than doubles the area we are planning for work in, covering the Hwy 24 corridor from Cascade to Lake George, and included a first of its kind analysis of post-fire flooding impacts before a fire occurs. The new CWPP will enable CUSP and our many partners to more strategically implement fuel mitigation projects in the years to come.

We have also been working actively on forest health and fuel mitigation in the northern area of the watershed through the Upper South Platte Partnership ([www.uppersouthplattepartnership.org](http://www.uppersouthplattepartnership.org)). This partnership is increasing on-the-ground treatments on private lands along the Hwy 285 corridor.

Fire rehab and forest-health work account for the lion's share of our efforts at CUSP, but we still find time to work on trails, water quality monitoring, environmental education, and myriad other programs that benefit our watershed and our communities. In 2017 we completed a river restoration project along the Tarryall River with the residents of Landis Ranch. This project not only improved the fishery, it also reduced the chances of a catastrophic failure of their downstream neighbor's water diversion. A failure at that diversion would have threatened Tarryall Road and done significant damage to the stream corridor itself.

We are keenly aware of the critical role that our friends, volunteers, donors and

partners play in all that we do. Without this committed and ongoing support, we could not implement and manage the vast breadth of significant projects and programs we have completed throughout our watershed in the past 20 years. We look forward to continuing these essential relationships and expanding our reach and spheres of positive influence well into the future – all for the benefit of the health and vitality of the Upper South Platte Watershed and the millions who depend on it, *now and in the future.*