

# COLORADO

## COLORADO STATE FOREST SERVICE

The South Platte River Watershed provides extensive value, approximately \$7.4 billion per year in ecosystem services, to the economy and people of the watershed. Recognizing the importance and value of this watershed, public and private stakeholders came together to form the South Platte Urban Waters Partnership.

The South Platte Watershed encompasses 3.8 million acres from the mountains to the Denver Metro area and into the plains. In 2011, over 50 public and private stakeholders, under the leadership of USDA Forest Service, United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Colorado State Forest Service and the Greenway Foundation formed the South Platte Urban Waters Partnership.

The primary goal of the South Platte Urban Waters Partnership is to engage stakeholders in protecting and restoring lands and waters in the South Platte River watershed. In order to attain these progressive goals and manage a highly diverse set of natural resources and interests, the Colorado State Forest Service secured funding from the USDA Forest Service and began building the South Platte Natural Capital Resource Assessment – From Mountains to Plains (South Platte Natural Capital Assessment).

The South Platte Natural Capital Assessment is a collaborative natural capital (also called green infrastructure) assessment undertaken by a diverse project team. This team catalogued existing data sources, identified the most important natural assets in the watershed and then mapped the natural capital and valued the ecosystem services produced throughout the watershed. These maps provide a visual representation of the natural assets and ecosystem services provided by each of the three project areas (Upper Watershed, Denver Metro and Plains) and collectively by the entire watershed.

Through this partnership, a decision-support tool was produced to assist stakeholders with prioritizing future investments in the watershed, whether for preservation or conservation. Key areas of prioritization in the tool that involve human health include a respiratory hazard and urban heat island analysis.

Stakeholders can use the data and tools from this assessment to prioritize and invest in preservation and restoration activities that will increase the quality and value of natural capital in the watershed, including human health impacts from EPA's Environmental Justice Screen and Urban Heat Island impacts.



Colorado's South Platte River Watershed encompasses approximately 4 million acres and includes upper watershed, urban, and plains natural assets critical to the environment and people of the watershed. *Photo Credit: Jeremy Cantor.*

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Colorado State Forest Service, Urban & Community Forestry  
<https://csfs.colostate.edu/forest-management/community-urban-forestry>