

The Ember Alliance

Annual Report

2025



**Restoring the Relationship Between
Communities and Fire on the Landscape**

ABOUT TEA

The Ember Alliance (TEA) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit based in Fort Collins, CO. Established in 2021, TEA invests in the pillars of community, workforce, and knowledge to ensure a brighter future for wildland fire management throughout the US. We believe that an investment in people ultimately leads to pace and scale of beneficial fire. Collaboration is key to our collective success.

We are the Ember Alliance.



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OUR MISSION & VALUES



Mission: Restore the relationship between communities and fire on the landscape

Values: Integrity · Innovation · Respect

Vision: A world where communities thrive with fire



LETTER FROM THE CEO

Dear Friends of TEA,

2025 was an incredible year for The Ember Alliance. Our passionate TEAm has accomplished so much, and we continue to blossom. From writing four new Community Wildfire Protection Plans to training nearly 500 students and landowners, and supporting tip-of-the-spear wildland fire research to bringing together 20 agencies to learn to burn together, we are fostering the systems-level change we want to see in the fire management community.

This past year, I learned the true meaning of our name. It's our superpower. The Ember **Alliance**. By investing in people and relationships, TEA finds common ground and builds community-centric fire culture. Together.

A colleague recently mentioned a quote from trailblazing tennis star Billie Jean King, "pressure is privilege." TEA digs into barriers that prevent our partners from using beneficial fire and tackles them head-on. It takes time. It is often difficult. But it is an earned opportunity, not a burden. At TEA, we are honored to have a seat at the table to effect real change.

I experienced this personally as well. 2025 was a year of growth as I stretched far outside of my comfort zone to tackle policy and fundraising.

The support I felt was overwhelming. My hope is we can all feel this way as we continue to find our way back to a positive relationship with fire. Together.



With Gratitude,

— Jennifer Mueller, CEO
The Ember Alliance



TEA'S 2025 IMPACT

3.5 million acres

142,000 lives

21 communities

\$19.5 million in Community Wildfire
Defense Grants unlocked for partners



ALL-TIME IMPACT

6 million acres

1 million lives

55 communities



TEA'S IMPACT: NORTHERN COLORADO



• Fort Collins



• Greeley



• Boulder



• Denver



SUCCESSSES

1

Community Wildfire Protection Plans

Completed 2 plans in Colorado impacting 27,000 lives and 111,000 acres; unlocked \$19.5 million in Community Wildfire Defense Grants.

2

Roadway Mitigation Research

Creating guidelines to make roads safer for the public and wildland firefighters during a wildfire.

3

Pile Burn Cooperative

Trained 27 landowners to cooperatively build/ burn slash piles at hands-on workshops, empowering landowners to safely reduce wildfire risk on their land in two communities.

4

Prescribed Fire Training Exchange

Wrote two burn plans to jumpstart the City of Greeley Natural Areas fire program, and burned 33 acres at two sites. Trained 69 wildland firefighters from 24 agencies in best practices for conserving grasslands with prescribed fire.

5

Front Range Community College

Certified 109 students in introductory wildland firefighter and wilderness emergency medicine at Front Range Community College to bolster the local workforce.

6

Prescribed Fire Policy

Engaged with state agencies and advised rule makers to support collaborative burning.





Chelan, WA

COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PLANNING IN THE PNW

What is a CWPP?

TEA's Resilient Communities and Ecosystems (RCE) Department works nationwide on Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs). CWPPs are a locally led process - a collaborative roadmap - that help communities understand their wildfire risk and take meaningful action to reduce it. CWPPs align people, priorities, and funding around shared community protection goals. A CWPP is more than a plan; it becomes a shared strategy for living more safely with wildfire.

TEA treats CWPPs as living, actionable plans that reflect local landscapes and community values. Modern CWPPs go beyond fuels reduction to address home ignitability, evacuation considerations, community engagement, and clear implementation pathways that support on-the-ground action. This approach helps communities move efficiently from planning to implementation while meeting state and federal requirements needed to unlock critical funding.



Mary MacDonald,
Director of RCE





LEADING THE CWPP PROCESS

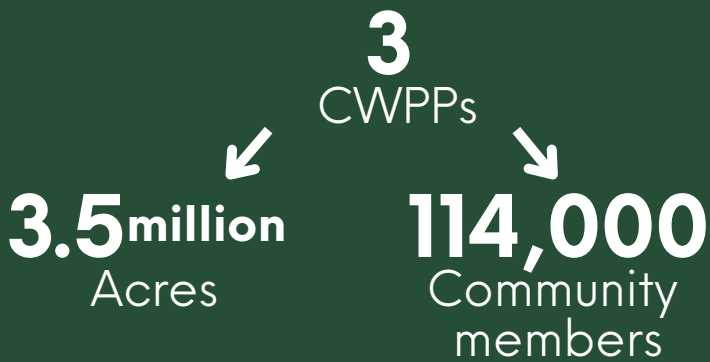
Empowering Community Leaders

TEA developed 'Leading the CWPP Process' course with an array of partners to enable community leaders to facilitate the CWPP process themselves. Leaders in fire departments, NGOs, community groups, and local governments are empowered to improve community engagement and identify and prioritize key projects. TEA's regional and state-specific courses are tailored to local ecological and social landscapes. With a clear and actionable CWPP, communities can 'unlock' funding for implementation of their CWPP.



Kenzie Hartt,
RCE Program
Manager

Impact in the PNW



TEA completed two CWPPs in Asotin County and Chelan County and assisted with the CWPP in Skamania, WA.



Bend, Oregon: TEA worked with the timber industry, agriculture, and diverse communities.

Fairbanks, Alaska: TEA worked with leaders from indigenous tribes and talked about specific challenges in the micro-rural communities they live in.



GOOD JOBS PIPELINE

Investing In a Local Workforce

A diverse workforce is critical in intersectional, multifaceted wildland fire management. In partnership with Front Range Community College (FRCC), TEA offers introductory-level, nationally-certified wildland fire courses with innovative and inclusive curriculum. TEA's hands-on approach provides students with technical and interpersonal skills that are foundational to a resilient career in wildland fire. As part of our **Good Jobs Pipeline**, TEA hires the folks we train so they can refine their skills and successfully enter the job market. This proven framework is replicable and can expand nationally to provide access points to fulfilling careers.

Community College
Wildland Fire Program



Fuel Mitigation
Squads



Resilient Careers in
Wildland Fire

Where Are They Now?

We caught up with Sarah Solis, a graduate of TEA's Wildland Fire Certificate Program at FRCC, and former crewmember on TEA's Northern Colorado Fuels Crew.

"When I decided to pursue a career in fire, I chose to take my introductory fire classes with TEA due to their emphasis on prescribed fire and their diverse cadre. This diversity in skill set offered an exciting learning experience and allowed us students to hold various perspectives on what a career in fire could be. Because I enjoyed the teaching team so much, my first fire job was with TEA on their fuels crew."

"Since taking TEA fire classes I have been: a fuels crewmember with TEA, a prescribed fire apprentice and burn crew member with The Nature Conservancy (TNC), fire effects monitor at Zion National Park, a wildland firefighter with the BLM in Redding, CA, on the Redding interagency hotshot crew, and my current position, a senior forestry technician for the USFS in southern CO."



Sarah Solis,
USFS Senior Forestry
Technician





MEET THE CREW

Uwharrie to Sandhills Landscape Collaborative



Matt Buice,
Crew Lead



Killian Farrell,
Assistant Crew Lead



Elizabeth Smith,
Crew Member

Supporting our Partners

Supported by Joint Chiefs' Funding, the Uwharrie Crew is paving the way for a new model of collaboration and on-the-job training for fire practitioners as part of TEA's **Good Jobs Pipeline**. The crew improves and restores habitat within the Uwharrie to Sandhills Collaborative Project area through prescribed fire and silviculture treatments on public and private lands.



The crew traveled from their base in Uwharrie National Forest to locations such as the Gulf Coast to teach GulfCorps Conservation Corps students, to Colorado to support fuels reduction work, and to New Mexico to support prescribed fire operations. Through this, they receive on-the-job training in different ecosystems and bring this knowledge back to their home unit and partners in North Carolina. The Uwharrie Crew is a shining example of collaboration and cross-training to shape the next generation of fire practitioners.

LEARNING TOGETHER

Northern Colorado TREX

The Northern Colorado (NOCO) Prescribed Fire Training Exchange (TREX), supports all levels of fire practitioners coming together to learn together and burn together to build the local workforce. Participants gain knowledge, experience, and have training opportunities to advance their professional qualifications. TREX is an important component of the **Good Jobs Pipeline**.

TEA facilitated the first ever NOCO TREX, working with the City of Greeley Natural Areas to jumpstart their fire management program. Funded by a CO Strategic Wildfire Action Program (COSWAP) grant, TEA wrote two burn plans for the City of Greeley where NOCO TREX was hosted. The Eastern CO Type 3 Incident Management Team (IMT) assisted with the planning and implementation. We collaboratively burned 33 acres at two sites, and trained 69 fire practitioners from 24 agencies.



BURNING TOGETHER

What's next?

Relationship building and hands-on learning is essential to safely getting beneficial fire back on the landscape. NOCO TREX is a critical piece of building a collaborative, local workforce that can implement prescribed fire at the pace and scale needed to protect our way of life.

In 2026, TEA is partnering with the City of Lafayette to bring NOCO TREX to their community. In addition to prescribed fire 'burn days', we will be offering workshops for NOCO TREX partners to exchange knowledge on prescribed fire program administration and implementation. The expansion of NOCO TREX will continue to build much needed collaborative prescribed fire capacity across Northern Colorado.



Kristin Leger,
Community Capacity
Program Manager



Terrestrial Laser Scanner used to collect 3D fuels information to improve prescribed fire planning and post-fire monitoring

WILDLAND FIRE SCIENCE

The Integrated Research Management Team

The Integrated Research Management Team (IRMT) is an organizing structure, comprised of career professionals, who manage large collaborative research projects on prescribed fires. These complex events include nearly 100 researchers with equipment ranging from satellites, weather balloons, and specially equipped airplanes, to on-the-ground lidar. The IRMT ensures safe and effective scientific outcomes while minimizing impacts to prescribed fire operations.

The applications are far ranging – in addition to better understanding and preparing for successful prescribed fires, decision makers on wildfires can gain access to real-time information. The 3D models can be integrated into virtual reality (VR) headsets to help train fire practitioners.



Tommy Hawkins,
Safety



Matthew Snider,
Operations



Linda Chappell,
Planning



Mark Struthwolf,
Meteorology/
Smoke



Troy Floyd,
Logistics



Lynne Howard,
Air Operations



Sue Wilder,
GIS and Planning



Victa Edge,
Public Information



3D prescribed fire simulation developed using QUIC-Fire and gaming software

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

What is co-production?

Wildland fire managers need relevant fire science and technology and often lack pathways to communicate effectively with the research community. TEA's approach to fire science is built on co-production, or intentional collaboration among the research community and fire planning and management decision-makers. In partnership with the Eastern Innovation Network (EILN), an interagency collaborative evaluating emerging wildland fire tools, TEA facilitates workshops where prescribed fire managers can test new fire behavior modeling tools like BurnPro3D and QUIC-Fire. The EILN supports co-production by helping researchers receive direct feedback from the people using the tools to make them user-friendly and applicable to on-the-ground work.



Linda Chappell,
Planning Section
Chief, IRMT

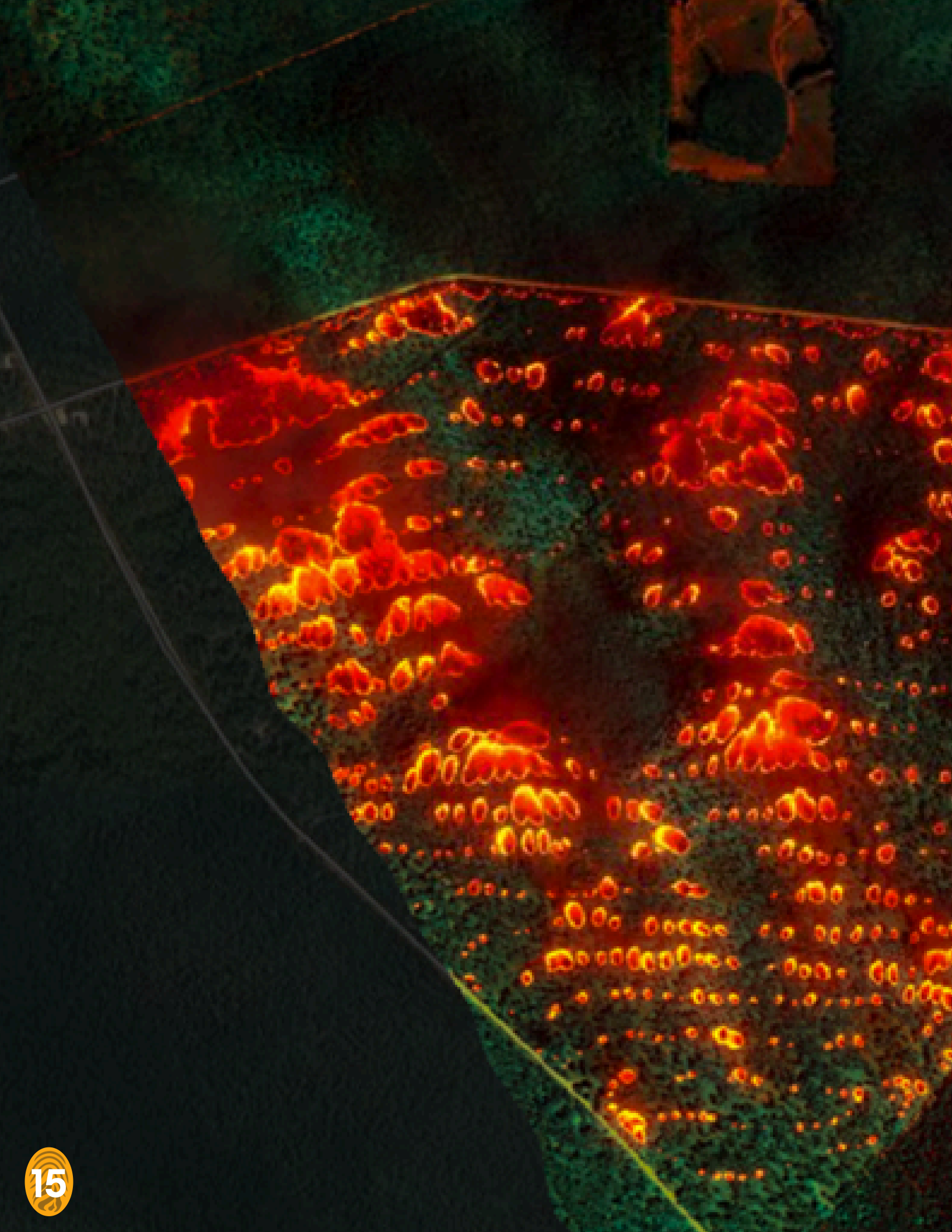


Bringing Science to Practitioners

In 2025, TEA brought together 89 workshop participants in four locations across the eastern U.S., including the New Jersey Pine Barrens, the Piedmont, and the Coastal Plains. Practitioners and researchers got hands-on, exploring new models and immersion training, and evaluating new tools in real time. These highly engaged Tribal, Federal, and State fire/fuels practitioners actively co-produced new models and tools, streamlining research development time.



VR immersion in
QUIC-Fire Simulation



FIRE FROM ABOVE

Integrating Data

At Fort Stewart, GA the IRMT supported 72 researchers from 20 organizations in collecting three 'layers' of data - ground, airborne, and satellite - during three prescribed fires covering >3,600 acres. This 'tip-of-the-spear' research is made possible by TEA's partnership with the US Forest Service R8/R9, NASA, the Department of Defense Strategic Environmental Research Development Program (SERDP), and Environmental Security Technology Certification Program (ESTCP). This data supports the next-generation of fire behavior modeling, which uses 3D imagery, to predict fire behavior and smoke impacts.



Dan Gaultieri
Director of Fire Management



Center: Real-time fire behavior imagery collected by NASA aircraft. Each circle is ignited by flammable 'ping pong' spheres strategically dropped from the helicopter.

Above: Researchers watched the fire progress live from the field as the helicopter ignited the burn unit.



PARTNER AND

Local, Tribal, State, Federal Agencies

Arapahoe Roosevelt National Forest
Asotin Conservation District
Berthoud Fire Protection District
Cascadia Conservation District
Choctaw Nation
City of Greeley Fire Department
City of Greeley Natural Areas and Trails
City of Louisville
Coal Creek Canyon Fire Protection District
Coconino County
Colorado Department of Natural Resources
Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control (DFPC)
Colorado Parks and Wildlife
Colorado Springs Fire Department
Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS)
Conifer Fire Protection District
Coos County
Coos Fire Protection Association
Crystal Lakes Fire Protection District
Department of the Interior (DOI)
Department of War (DoW)
Eastern Colorado Incident Management Team
Elk Creek Fire Protection District
Environmental Security Technology Certification Program (ESTCP)
Evergreen Fire and Rescue
Florida State Forest Service
Fort Bragg Forestry Branch
Fort Collins Natural Areas
Fort Stewart Wildland Fire Program
Frederick-Firestone Fire Protection District
Genesee Fire Protection District
Glacier View Fire Protection District
Golden Gate Fire Protection District
Hartsel Fire Protection District
Huerfano County
Huerfano County Board of County Commissioners
Huerfano County Emergency Management
Intertribal Timber Council
Jefferson County
Jefferson County Sherriff's Office of Emergency Management

Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership
Kittias County
Larimer Conservation District
Larimer County Office of Emergency Management
Larimer County Open Space
Larimer County Planning Division
Larimer County Sherriff's Office
Livermore Fire Protection District
Los Alamos National Laboratory
Louisville Fire Protection District
Loveland Fire Rescue Authority
Lyons Fire Protection District
Mesa View Estates HOA
Michigan Army National Guard
Mississippi Sandhill Crane Fire Center
NASA Firesense
National Advanced Fire & Resource Institute
National Indigenous Fire Safety Council
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
Nederland Fire Protection District
New Mexico Prescribed Fire Council
New Mexico State Land Office
Northwest Fire Protection District
Oregon State Fire Marshall
Poudre Canyon Fire Protection District
Prescribed Fire Training Center
Seminole Tribe of Florida
St. George Fire Protection District
Strategic Environmental Research and Development Program (SERDP)
Thule River Tribe
Timberline Fire Protection District
US Fire Administration
Underwood Conservation District
United States Forest Service (USFS)
USFS Northern Research Station
USFS Rocky Mountain Research Station
USFS Southern Research Station
Uwharrie National Forest
Vail Fire
Washington Department of Natural Resources
Washington Resource Conservation and Development Council
West Metro Fire Rescue
Windsor Severence Fire Protection District

DONOR APPRECIATION

Businesses, Corporate Partners

Alpine Forestry
Avery Counseling & Services
Award Advisors
Banded Peak Ranch
Booze Allen Hamilton
Conservation United
Conservation X Labs
Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions
InFoRM
Kingfire LLC
Logan Simpson
Lynker
Mountain West Insurance and Financial Services
NetEarth
Northern Water
Peak Consulting
Perteet
PRO-IS
SE Group
Sector Law
Teren
Trestle
United Power
Xcel Energy
Zephyr

Schools and Educational Partners

Aerie Backcountry Medicine
Avondale Scout Reservation
Beckwith Camp and Conference Center
Ben Delatour Scout Ranch
Colorado Forest Restoration Institute
Colorado State University
Front Range Community College
Great Plains Fire Science Exchange Network
Kansas State University
San Diego Supercomputer Center
Southern Rockies Fire Science Network
The University of British Columbia
University of California - San Diego
University of Colorado
University of Idaho
University of Montana Fire Center

Foundations, Trusts, NGOs

American Forest Foundation
Argosy Family Foundation
Audubon Canyon Ranch
Big Thompson Watershed Coalition
Blackfoot Challenge
Bohemian Foundation
Boulder Watershed Collective
Clear Creek Watershed and Forest Health Partnership
Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed Coalitions & Collaboratives
Community Foundation of Northern Colorado
Council of Western State Foresters
Cultural Fire Management Council
Environmental Policy Innovation Center
Estes Valley Watershed Coalition
Fire Adapted Colorado
Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network
Fire Forward
Fire Learning Network
Forest Stewards Guild
Indigenous Peoples Burning Network
Kalamazoo Nature Center
March Conservation Fund
Mighty Arrow Family Foundation
Mile High Youth Corps
Montana Land Reliance
Moore Foundation
Mountain Studies Institute
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
National Forest Foundation
New Mexico Consortium
New Venture Fund
Peaks to People Water Fund
Quail Forever
Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project
Rocky Mountain Field Institute
Southern Regional Strategy Committee
Tall Timbers
The Climate Resilience Fund
The Corps Network
The Nature Conservancy
The Watershed Research and Training Center
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
United Way of Weld County
United Church of Fort Collins
W.O.L.F. Sanctuary



THANK YOU FROM OUR TEAM

TEA is committed to being a trusted partner and steward of a wide range of funding sources. We are grateful for the donors and partners who make our work possible.

To The Future

In 2026, we are looking forward to a year of sustainable growth and continued improvements to support the organization:

Expand organizational structure to support our Programs

- Build out a Development Department and Fundraising Program
- Interactive Story Map
- Grow the Board of Directors
- Implement a Volunteer Program

Reduce barriers for prescribed fire practitioners in Colorado

- Engage with legislators and rule makers in Colorado to support collaborate burning
- Offer Pile Build/Burn Workshops to landowners, increase access to Certified Burner Courses
- Participate in the Colorado Fire Commission's Prescribed Fire Subcommittee to help advance the Statewide Strategy for Prescribed Fire

Scale the Good Jobs Pipeline

- Increase offerings at Front Range Community College
- Expand our crews nationally to include a Virginia-based Prescribed Fire Crew and Terrestrial LiDAR Scanning Crews

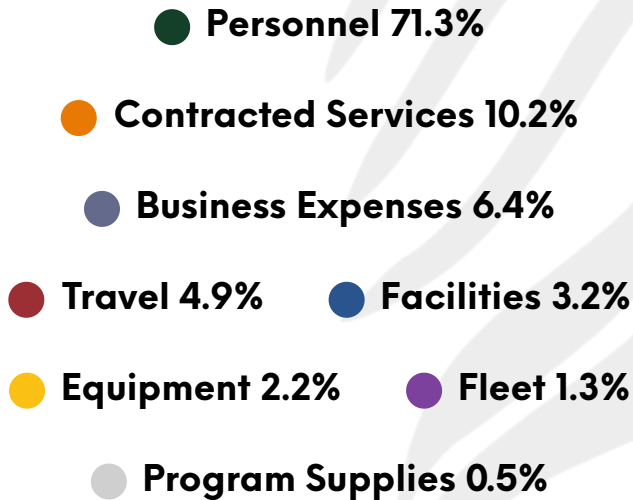


Sean McCormick,
COO

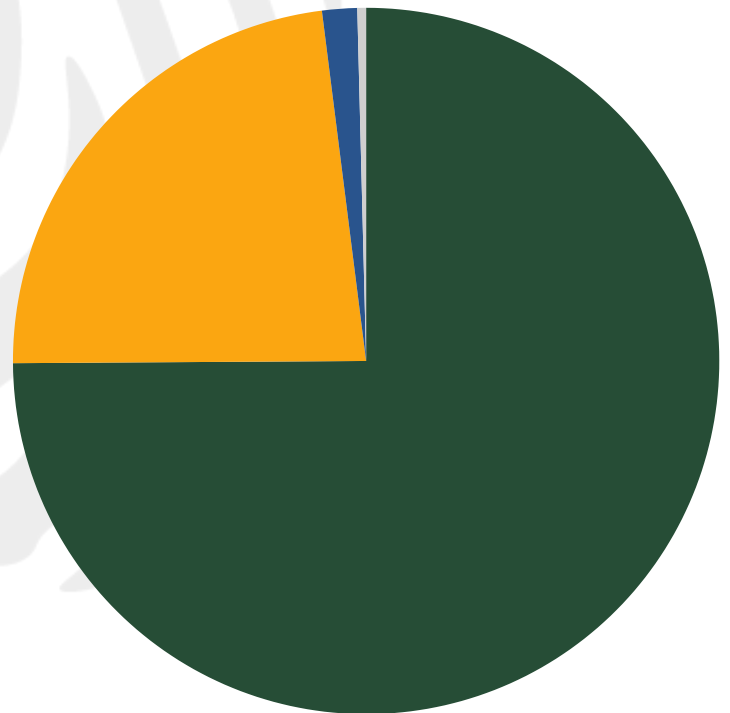
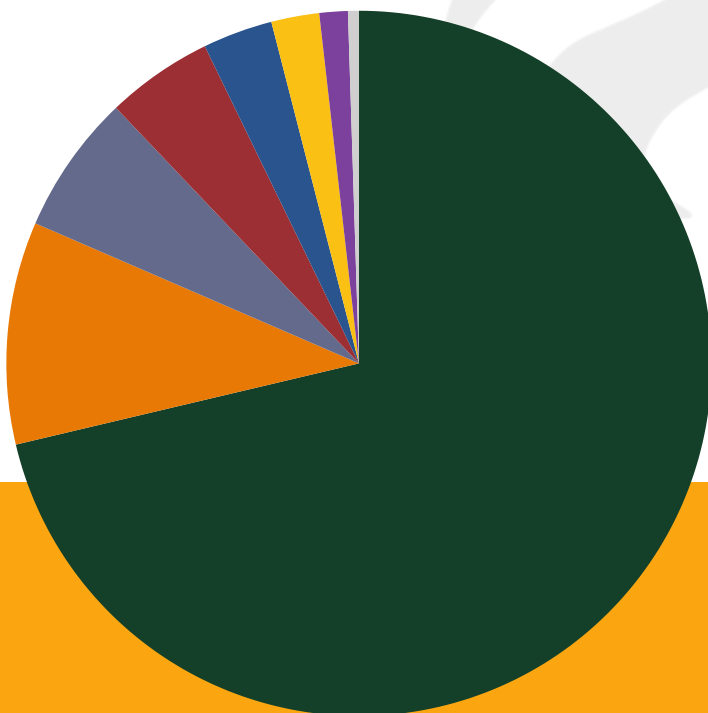
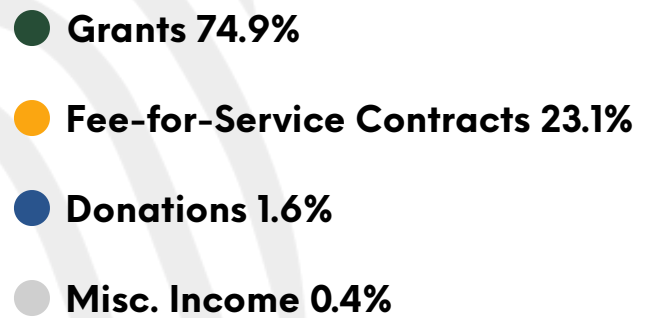


2025 FINANCIALS

EXPENSES



REVENUE





SNAPSHOTS IN TIME

How far we've come together

TEA is Incorporated

Our First Logo



Jan 25, 2021

April 2022

Good Jobs Pipeline Expands

Greater Outdoor CO funding connects Front Range Community College students and Conservation Corps members with TEA's Northern Colorado Fuels Crew. Crewmembers receive on-the-job training and springboard into careers

June 2022

Dec 2023

Mission and Vision Redefined

Increased Fireline Medical Preparedness

TEA's Medical Risk Management Guide helps improve medical and mental health planning and response for administrators and fireline personnel

TEA Improves Internal Financial Processes

Trestle's CFO, accounting, and HR services provides critical infrastructure and stability to TEA staff

TEA Expands Into Wildland Fire Science

The IRMT joins TEA to support cutting-edge research and development, and helping science to reach fire practitioners

International Expansion

TEA provides training at the Indigenous Public Safety Conference in Vancouver, BC to share community-based wildfire planning knowledge

NICRA Established

January
2024



May
2024

Oct
2024

Legal Counsel

TEA obtains dedicated legal support from Sector Law to strengthen organizational protections

May
2025

Community Capacity Program Launched

NFF grant allows TEA to expand landowner pile burn cooperatives and build collaborative prescribed fire capacity in Northern CO

Strategic Vision Workshop

TEA staff prepares for our Strategic Plan by outlining Outcomes, Strategy, and Values



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