



**INDEPENDENCE PASS
FOUNDATION**

the big year 2021 annual report

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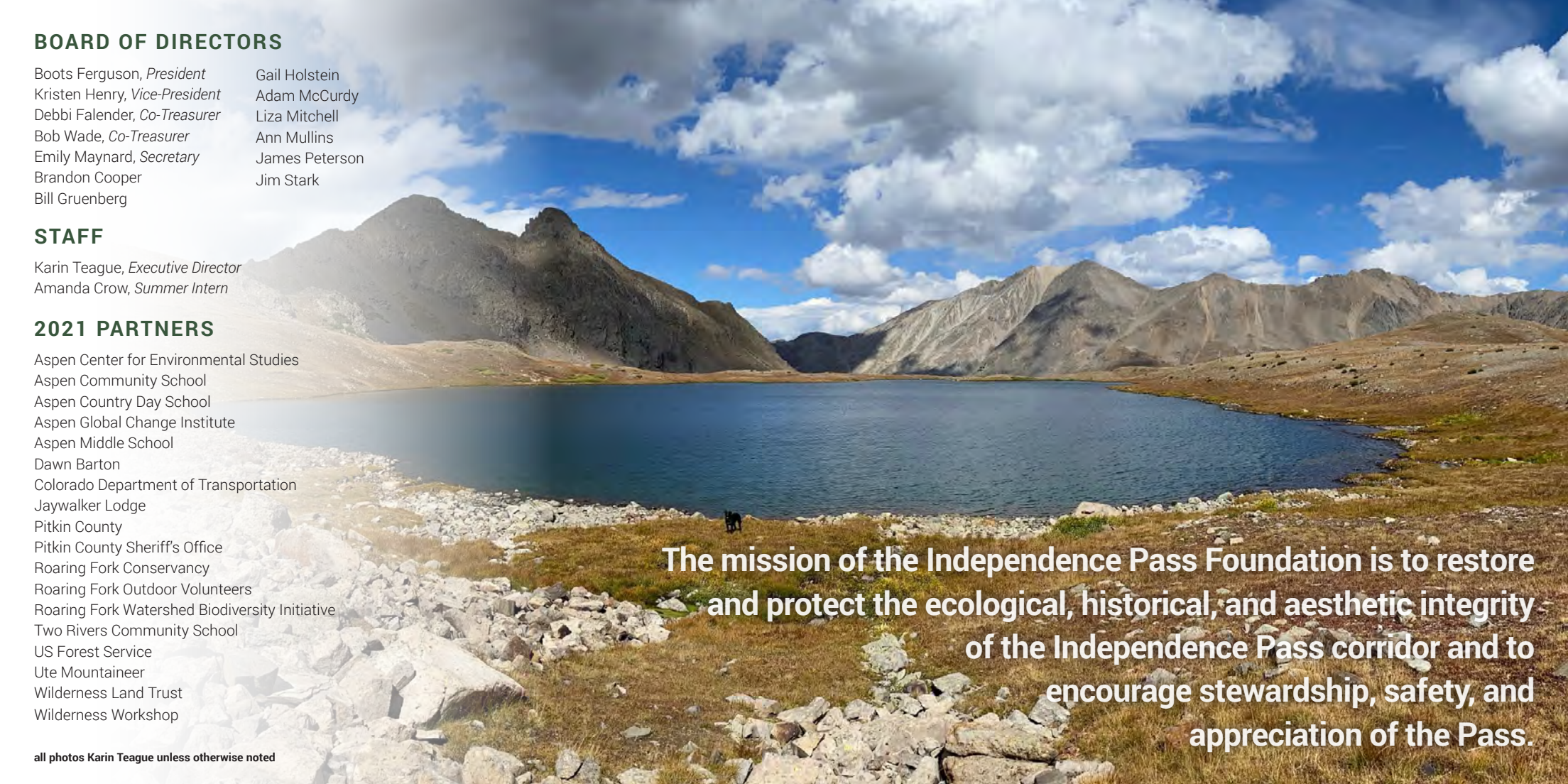
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all photos Karin Teague unless otherwise noted

A wide-angle landscape photograph showing a calm, blue mountain lake nestled between rugged, rocky mountains. The sky is bright blue with scattered white clouds. In the foreground, a rocky, grassy shore leads down to the water's edge, where a small black dog is standing. The overall scene is serene and natural.

The mission of the Independence Pass Foundation is to restore and protect the ecological, historical, and aesthetic integrity of the Independence Pass corridor and to encourage stewardship, safety, and appreciation of the Pass.

It is with great pleasure that I write to you to introduce the annual report for the Independence Pass Foundation.

First and foremost, thank you for your support! Donations small and large, volunteer efforts for trash pickup and trail restoration, community outreach, and community support are critical to the fulfillment of our mission, and the Foundation is grateful for all of the efforts of our community to pursue that goal. You are making a difference to the Pass.

Many thanks also to our Executive Director Karin Teague and the Foundation's intern Amanda Crow for their tireless efforts on the Pass, including the performance of some unpleasant but necessary tasks.

In the past two years the increased traffic and use of the Pass have brought significant corresponding impacts. In spite of these impacts and the challenges presented by Covid-19, the Pass and the Foundation had numerous successes in furtherance of our mission, both big and small. The biggest success was the Pass itself with its bountiful gifts of wildflowers, wildlife, a great mushroom year and magnificent fall colors. Big efforts of the Foundation included:

- a. Mitigation of the impacts of the significant increased use of the Pass as a result of the closures of I-70 through Glenwood Canyon through: 1. Installation and maintenance of the restroom at the upper Lost Man trailhead; 2. Cooperation with CDOT to enforce the 35 feet vehicle length limit; and 3. CDOT's use of stoplights at the two "narrows" to manage traffic flow;
- b. Participation in the purchase and heading up the restoration of the remaining privately held mining claims on Green Mountain – with the help of many volunteers;

- c. Continued ecological research on matters such as forest health, plants and pollinators, and pikas;
- d. Design and installation of Lincoln Creek informational signs regarding dispersed camping, travel, and fire regulations.

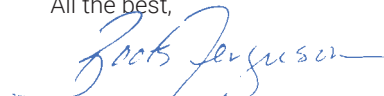
Similarly, the small or less visible efforts included:

- a. The traditional planting of 400 saplings with kids from Roaring Fork Valley schools;
- b. Extra garbage pickup and upper Lost Man toilet cleaning;
- c. Lost Man, Linkins, and climbing access trail restoration projects;
- d. Invasive weed containment;
- e. Monitoring Top Cut revegetation efforts;
- f. Conducting free bird and wildflower walks; and
- g. Working with community partners on projects of mutual concern.

A more thorough list of our projects, partners, and timing may be found in the Project Matrix on our website at www.independencepass.org/projects/current.

The Foundation is committed to its stewardship of Independence Pass and the corresponding furtherance of its mission "to restore and protect the ecological, historical, and aesthetic integrity" of the Pass. The Pass remains a place of discovery, enlightenment, and peace. Thank you for supporting our cause and mission with both your financial and volunteer contributions.

All the best,



Boots Ferguson, Board President



big traffic



left: CDOT turning trucks around at the winter gate
right: new stoplight at second narrows

Regular mudslide-related closures of the I-70 through Glenwood Canyon this summer brought unprecedented driver numbers, oversized trucks, and alternating traffic lights to the two west side “narrows.” With the increased traffic came increased trash and facilities use, to which IPF responded with additional staff and volunteer hours.





Spectacular displays of wildflowers graced the Pass all summer, thanks to generous July rains and a wet summer four years prior that created the conditions for mass blooms of green gentians and corn lilies in 2021.



left: *Geum triflorum*, prairie smoke, lower Lost Man
right: *Veratrum californicum*, corn lily, Grizzly Creek

forever protected



Over eight days, IPF's non-profit partners, volunteers, and intrepid board hauled out by hand 3,000 pounds of debris and non-historic cabin parts from the last two properties at risk of development on the west side of Independence Pass: the Panama and Principal mining lodes on Green Mountain. They will now become part of the Collegiate Peaks Wilderness, ensuring permanent public access and protection.

left: Jaywalker Lodge volunteers
right: Volunteers carrying out non-historic metal roof panels





upper left: Panama-Principal site before cleanup
lower left: Volunteer day
right: One work day's haul

left: Little brown mushrooms :)
middle: *Boletus edulis*, king bolete
top right: *Amanita muscaria*, fly agaric
middle right: *Sarcodon imbricatus*, hawk's wing
bottom right: *Ramaria aurea*, golden coral



mushroom bounty

No one can remember a year for fungi like 2021, probably thanks to big mid-summer rains and the mushrooms' notable absence the past few years. Throughout July and August, the forests and meadows of the Pass were carpeted in choice edibles, storybook toadstools, and other fanciful creations.





big improvements

With the installation of a restroom at the upper Lost Man/Linkins Lake Trailhead, the headwaters of the Roaring Fork River and the surrounding tundra are now spared the human waste and debris that were degrading both. In addition, visitors to Lincoln Creek now know what to expect of travel conditions, where and where not to camp, and current fire regulations. Both projects were funded by IPF and its generous donors.

left: new Lincoln Creek informational sign
right: new CXT toilet installed



big wildlife

Bighorn sheep saw strong numbers of youngsters join their herds, which roamed from Twin Lakes to the summit of the Pass to 13,700' Mt. Champion. Moose, too, made themselves at home on the Pass, becoming regulars at Difficult Campground and Lincoln Creek and wandering up as far as the ghost town.



left: bull moose at Indy ghost town, photo Mark Fuller
right: Bighorn sheep near La Plata trailhead



Nothing matches the intimate sensory experience and health-giving benefits provided by hiking trails. Good trails allow people to focus on the landscape they're traveling through and the people they're traveling with. They also protect the surrounding terrain from erosion and trampling.

This summer IPF and partners completed three important projects along the Lost Man Loop, the Linkins Lake Trail, and at the Ptarmigan Creek climbing area.



upper left: Linkins Lake public trail project
bottom left: Ptarmigan climbing trail project
right: new rock stairs at Linkins Lake Trail



big steps

small things making big differences



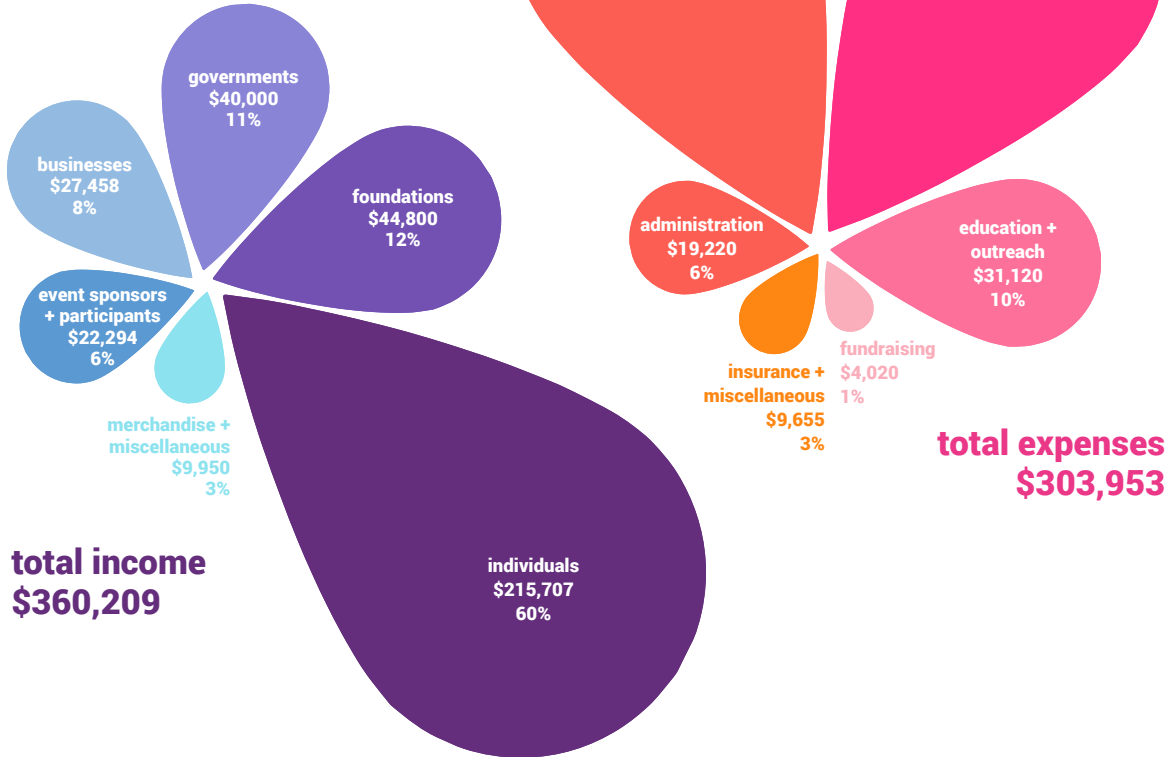
Whether it's planting eight-inch trees with school kids, scattering native seeds on road cuts, pulling invasive weeds, leading free bird and wildflower walks, cataloguing alpine plants, or searching for signs of pika, IPF works year in and year out to protect and restore the landscape, contribute to the body of science on climate change and alpine ecology, involve our community in stewardship, and improve and enrich the public's experience of the Pass.

Aspen Middle School displaying number of saplings planted next page, left: Top Cut displaying robust growth on lower portions next page, right: Green Mountain bird & wildflower walk



annual income + expenses

2020



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