



**INDEPENDENCE PASS
FOUNDATION**

2023 annual report

on a mission



The mission of the Independence Pass Foundation

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words pictures colours
graphic design



A bouquet of late-snowmelt wildflowers, including queen's crown, *Rhodiola rhodantha*, mountain bluebells, *Mertensia ciliata*, marsh marigolds, *Caltha leptosepala*, and bog saxifrage, *Micranthes oregana*. IPF studies the flora and fauna of the Pass to monitor how a changing climate is affecting them; to inform restoration and management decisions; to counter shifting baseline syndrome; and to immerse ourselves in the more-than-human world, with the goal of being better planetary citizens.

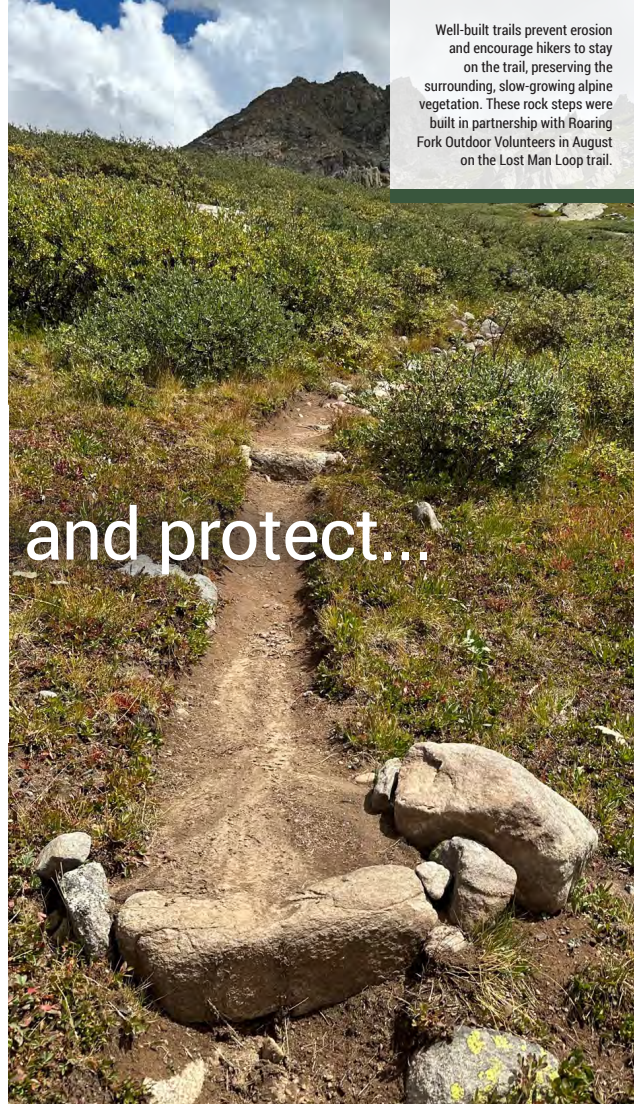


is to restore...

IPF and its volunteers continue to remove unwieldy, hard-to-reach metal debris from our mountains—remnants of the 1960s snow fence that was never completed—in order to return the wilderness to its original, untrammled state. We are hugely grateful to all the volunteers who have supported this work over three decades.

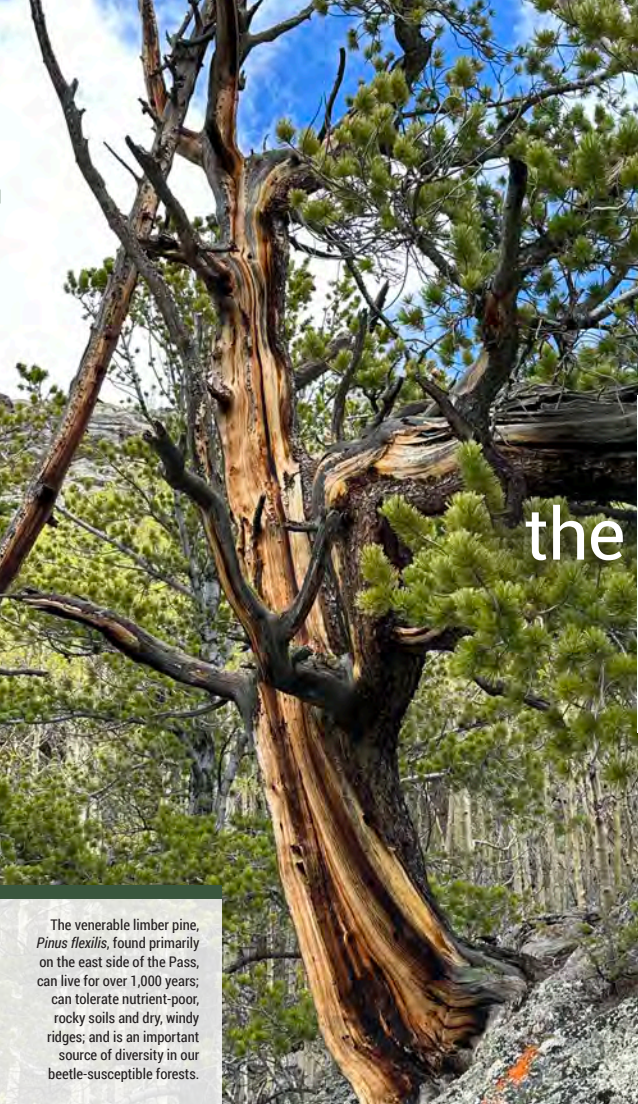


Several herds of Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, *Ovis canadensis*, Colorado's state animal and the largest wild sheep in North America, live on Independence Pass. They depend on the rugged terrain, wide-open spaces, and healthy vegetation of the Pass. IPF is dedicated to protecting the habitat of bighorn sheep and all native fauna through its watchdog and restoration work.



Well-built trails prevent erosion and encourage hikers to stay on the trail, preserving the surrounding, slow-growing alpine vegetation. These rock steps were built in partnership with Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers in August on the Lost Man Loop trail.

and protect...



The venerable limber pine, *Pinus flexilis*, found primarily on the east side of the Pass, can live for over 1,000 years; can tolerate nutrient-poor, rocky soils and dry, windy ridges; and is an important source of diversity in our beetle-susceptible forests.

the ecological integrity..



Home, sweet home! Yellow-bellied marmots, *Marmota flaviventris*, can be found throughout Independence Pass, often sunning themselves and acting as sentinels on large rocks that support their burrows.

IPF is working with members of the Hunter Creek Historical Foundation to seek permission from the US Forest Service to stabilize and preserve this gem of a miner's cabin, perched high in the alpine above Linkins Lake. IPF believes such relics awaken our imaginations, inspire awe, and bring to life the history of our region like nothing else.

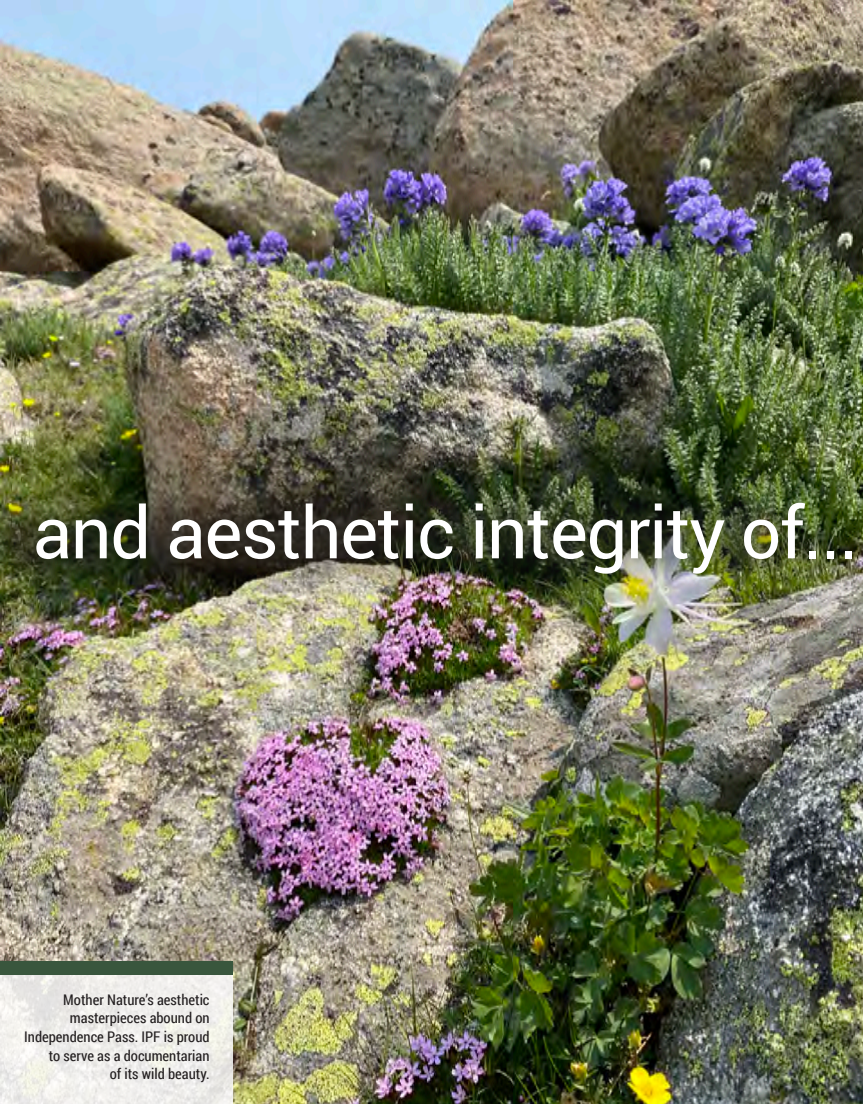


historical integrity...

Is this rock structure a hunting blind, a windbreak, or something else? Is it modern, or was its foundation built thousands of years ago, when indigenous people hunted bison and other game on the Pass?



English in Action students and tutors enjoying a summer day on the Pass with IPF. The day included a tour of the ghost town of Independence. IPF assists the Aspen Historical Society with maintenance and oversight of Independence.



and aesthetic integrity of...

Mother Nature's aesthetic masterpieces abound on Independence Pass. IPF is proud to serve as a documentarian of its wild beauty.

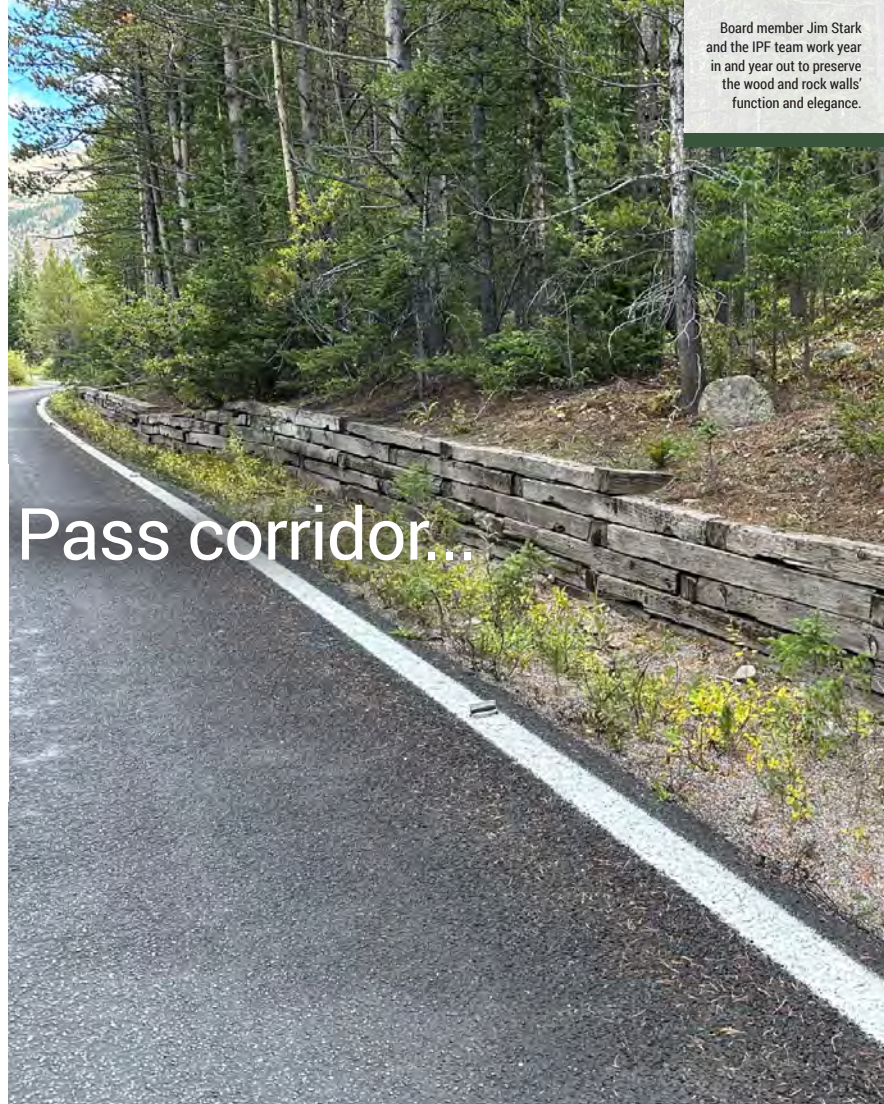


A typical, early-season trash haul on the Pass. IPF spends many hours throughout the summer and fall picking up litter along the corridor, at the summit, at day use areas, at makeshift campsites, and year-round at the winter gate area. We are grateful to Trash Crush and the Adopt-a-Highway groups who help keep our landscape clean!



the Independence Pass corridor...

The numerous wood and rock walls along the Independence Pass corridor, most built many decades ago, require constant maintenance.



Board member Jim Stark and the IPF team work year in and year out to preserve the wood and rock walls' function and elegance.



Aspen High School volunteers hoisting aluminum panels off the Continental Divide. We must also acknowledge the numerous "rebar fairies" who carried out materials of their own accord, on their own time. We are inspired by our community's embrace of this kind of land ethic.



and to encourage...

Aspen Community School 6th graders and their Principal, Casey White, planting trees on the Pass, a rite of passage for generations of Roaring Fork Valley kids.

Board member Bob Wade planting seeds on the upper reaches of the Top Cut. IPF has been working to revegetate and restore the road cuts along Independence Pass for over 30 years.

stewardship...



IPF strives to reduce human waste and tp on the Pass by erecting signs like this; by installing and servicing the restroom at the upper Lost Man trailhead; and by offering free wag bags at popular climbing areas.

left, below: This pile represents the low-hanging telephone wire and aluminum and steel debris, hazardous to wildlife and humans alike, carried off the Pass in 2023 by Roaring Fork Valley kids, Jaywalker Lodge clients, Aspen Ski Co employees, Wilderness Workshop, and IPF's loyal cadre of volunteers. It takes a village, and we have the best!



safety...

right, top and bottom: These photos show the acceleration in rockfall along the slope north of Difficult Campground along Highway 82 since 2008, when the catchment area was clear of debris. The spring of 2023 saw significant rockfall and rock removal by CDOT. IPF is continuing its decades-long role of partnering with CDOT on engineering studies, potential grants, and other funding sources for remediation work on this hazardous slope.

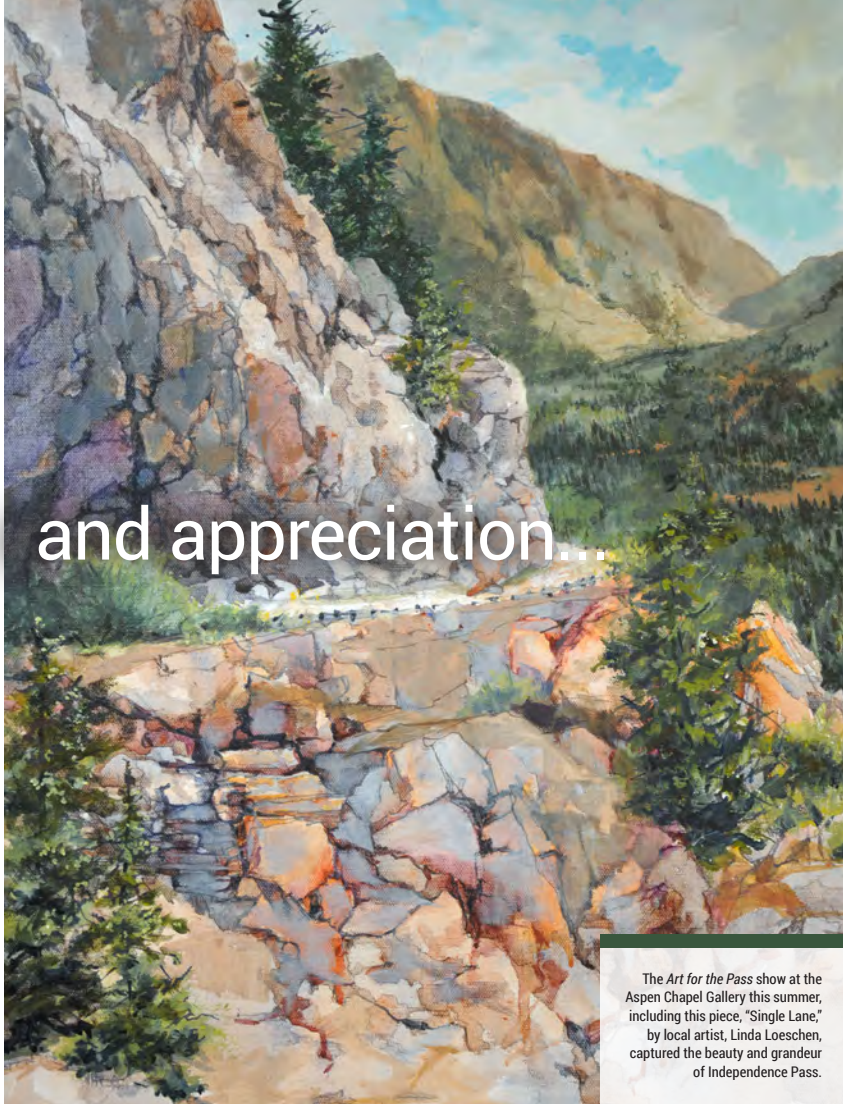


2008



2023

A classic car club enjoying a tour in early June over Independence Pass. Appreciation takes many forms, and we are grateful to this group for supporting IPF's work through the years.



and appreciation...

The *Art for the Pass* show at the Aspen Chapel Gallery this summer, including this piece, "Single Lane," by local artist, Linda Loeschen, captured the beauty and grandeur of Independence Pass.



Penn Street reading braille at the Braille/Discovery Day Use Area. Penn works with the Audio Information Network of Colorado, a nonprofit dedicated to providing audio access to print information and empowering services for blind and low vision individuals. AIN's input has been critical to helping IPF better serve the over 100,000 legally blind Coloradans by improving the signage at the trail and bringing greater awareness to the trail.



of the Pass.

Local artist Amy Beidleman teaching a watercolor class on the Pass. There is perhaps no better way to truly see and appreciate a landscape than to paint it!



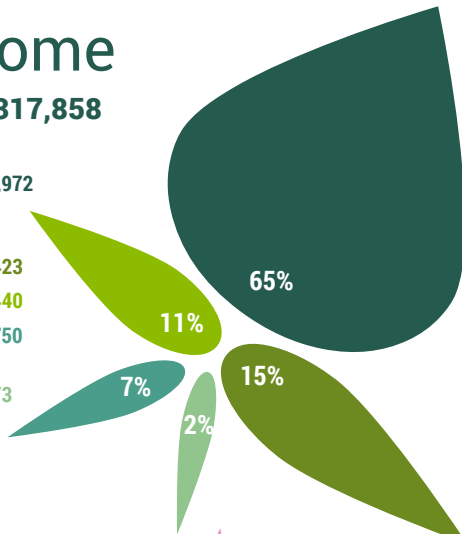
Birders and wildflower enthusiasts spending a day with Rebecca Weiss and Karin Teague documenting the presence of the rare alpine Brewer's sparrow and identifying the Pass's myriad alpine flowers.

photo by Rebecca Weiss

2022 income

total income | **\$317,858**

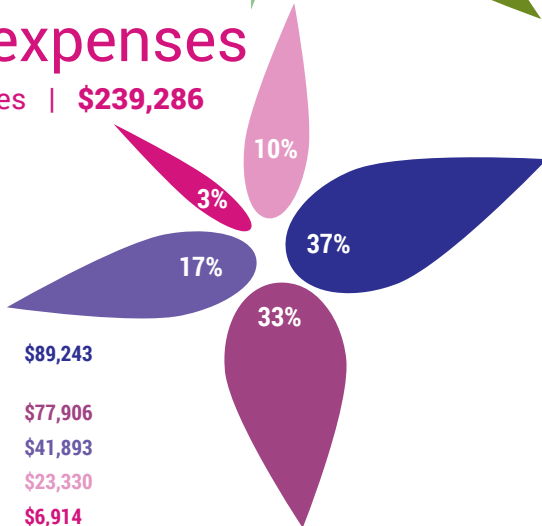
Individuals	\$205,972
Event sponsors, participants & businesses	\$47,423
Governments	\$37,440
Foundations	\$20,750
Merchandise & miscellaneous	\$6,273



2022 expenses

total expenses | **\$239,286**

Projects	\$89,243
Education & outreach	\$77,906
Administration	\$41,893
Fundraising	\$23,330
Insurance	\$6,914



Many thanks to our generous donors

October 1, 2022 - September 30, 2023

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