



### Arkansas Basin Public Education and Outreach Workgroup

The Arkansas Basin PEPO Workgroup (ArkPEPO) is comprised of volunteers representing municipalities, agriculture, environment, recreation and education. ArkPEPO strives to provide education and outreach that is relevant to the needs and values of the Arkansas River Basin, while also promoting inclusiveness by providing information to our citizens about water resource issues across the state. The Workgroup hopes to engage the public on water resource topics, provide platforms for water related dialogue and provide a line of communication between decision makers and the public that they serve.

The Arkansas Basin covers over 30% of the State and providing adequate outreach can be challenging. The Basin is diverse in its needs and issues and these can vary depending on which region you are in. ArkPEPO understands these challenges and has developed mechanisms to ensure that the educational needs of every unique area of the Basin are addressed and supported. ArkPEPO has uniquely structured itself to provide this type of outreach for its citizens. The first mechanism employed was to hire two ArkPEPO Coordinators, one in the Upper Basin and one in the Lower Basin. These Coordinators are specialized in understanding the values and needs associated within their given regions. They work in partnership to represent their respective areas, as well as provide insight for one another and the ArkPEPO Committee. This partnership allows for expanded services, points of contact and an increased network and representation throughout the Basin.

ArkPEPO's next mechanism is to work in partnership with the highly successful Arkansas River Basin Water Forum (Water Forum). This partnership helps identify and localize education and outreach, each year. The Water Forum that has been in existence for twenty-two years, selects a new geographic location for the forum annually. The Water Forum engages local planning partners to help develop the program, identify their specific needs, and engage local stakeholders for that year's event. ArkPEPO realized this is a perfect opportunity to build upon these established partnerships and identified goals to provide further education throughout the year to these citizens. Each year, the tasks, programs, and deliverables, identified by ArkPEPO will be implemented in that selected location. By focusing in on a specific area and their specific needs, ArkPEPO is able to provide precise and meaningful education and outreach for its citizens.

ArkPEPO was generously awarded a Water Supply Reserve Account Grant from the Colorado Water Conservation Board in addition to the Education Action Plan funding, this year. These additional funds have allowed for the expansion of ArkPEPO proposed projects and programs. The location and focus for this year's programs are in the Upper Basin and on water storage (see website for details). ArkPEPO has been developing and implementing the following projects and programs for 2016.

- **Arkansas River Basin Documentary-** This documentary will explore the social and economic values associated with the Arkansas River from Leadville to the Kansas State boarder. Webisodes will be created for specific topics and the final documentary will air on Rocky Mountain PBS.

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- **Community-Led Water Festivals-** Develop and implement inaugural water festivals in communities across the basin that promote collaboration and cooperation between diverse water use components and provide education and awareness for its citizens.
- **Education to Action Program-** This program is designed to help move water projects toward implementation by providing services that fit the educational needs of the specific project. This program will work with project sponsors to develop outreach mechanisms to engage the public; develop partnerships; explore funding sources; and provide the education and outreach needed to move towards implementation.
- **Summer Library Reading Program-** ArkPEPO worked in partnership with multiple agencies to develop water education activity booklets. Over 6,000 booklets have been distributed to libraries across the Arkansas Basin to engage our youth on water resource issues and encourage conversations about water resources.
- **Please visit our website for further information about the Ark PEPO Workgroup & Its Programs -** [www.pepoarkbasin.com](http://www.pepoarkbasin.com)

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