**Environmental Studies Internship Opportunity Form**

**Organization name:** Upper Colorado River Watershed Group

**Organization Web address:** http://ucrwg.org

**Physical Address:** PO Box 1842

**City:** Grand Lake **State:** CO **Zip:** 80447

**Contact person:** Lisa Caruana

**E-mail:** [ucrwgteam@gmail.com](mailto:ucrwgteam@gmail.com) **Phone:** 716-913-9604

**Internship available these semesters (please mark one or more semesters):**

**Spring \_X\_\_ Summer** \_X\_\_ **Fall** \_X\_\_

**Brief description of Your Organization:**

UCRWG is a small, grassroots nonprofit based in Grand County, Colorado that focuses on protecting and restoring the headwaters of the Upper Colorado River. UCRWG was formed in 2016 by concerned community members who saw the need for a watershed group in the Upper CO River headwaters to unite disparate stakeholder groups in open, productive conversations. UCRWG’s mission is to protect and restore the headwaters of the Upper Colorado River through outreach, education, and science-driven restoration projects.

UCRWG faces unique challenges in that most of the water that flows through our watershed is owned by large water municipalities in the Colorado Front Range metro areas. Approximately 75% of flows no longer reach the watershed, with the Adams and Moffat Tunnels diverting water east over the Continental Divide in transbasin water diversions. The combination of decades of transbasin water diversions, increasing pressure from climate change and widespread devastation caused by the East Troublesome wildfire in October 2020 are threatening the overall ecological stability of the region.

The UCRWG Board of Directors consists of a team of highly skilled water scientists, hydrologists, environmental engineers, and community activists with deep roots in the local community and decades of experience in watershed restoration and reclamation projects. UCRWG stakeholders are both community members who love the wildness and beauty of the Upper Colorado River and the thousands of people in the Denver and Fort Collins metro areas that rely on transbasin water diversions from the watershed to meet their daily needs. UCRWG’s goals are to involve Front Range water users in supporting efforts to protect and restore the watershed they depend on and to oppose proposed increases in transbasin diversions in favor of increased water efficiency standards for the growing metro areas.

As a small, newly established organization, UCRWG would be an excellent internship opportunity for students interested in learning how to grow a nonprofit from the ground up and in the politically contentious world of water in the West.

**Project:** White paper on the pros and cons of the Gross Reservoir expansion project

**Describe the nature/goals of the project(s):**

Produce an in-depth research report on the pros and cons of the proposed Gross Reservoir expansion project, objectively examining the ability of the expansion to meet the need for more water in the Colorado Front Range metro areas compared to projected long-term environmental impacts on the source watersheds on the Western slope, with consideration given to projected population expansion in the Front Range, anticipated impacts from climate change on the Upper Colorado River watershed and existing environmental conditions from current transbasin diversions.

**Please list required and/or desired skills and qualifications:**

* Ability to analyze watershed data and project changes into the future
* Some background knowledge of transbasin water diversions in Colorado
* Familiarity with the Upper Colorado River watershed
* Familiarity with the ongoing legal disputes surrounding the Gross Reservoir expansion
* Research, writing and editing skills
* Ability to place contentious political issues within a broader historical context
* Ability to remain objective
* Ability to identify credible sources and meticulously document research process
* Self-starter comfortable working with minimal supervision, well-organized and able to establish own research schedule and goals