

Tread on Trail

Arches National Park, Utah

Arches National Park is a desert biome. The native plants of the park depend on cryptobiotic soil to provide nutrients and moisture to survive in the harsh climate. Explorers of the park often encounter “crypto” alongside trails. When crypto is stepped on by a wandering hiker, the area is exposed to erosion, organisms dependent on photosynthesis are buried, and plants cannot access the resources stored within crypto they need to survive. Staying on trail is essential to plant and habitat conservation, the health of Arches National Park, and all other desert biomes in the Rockies. So “tread on trail” to “keep crypto soil safe!”

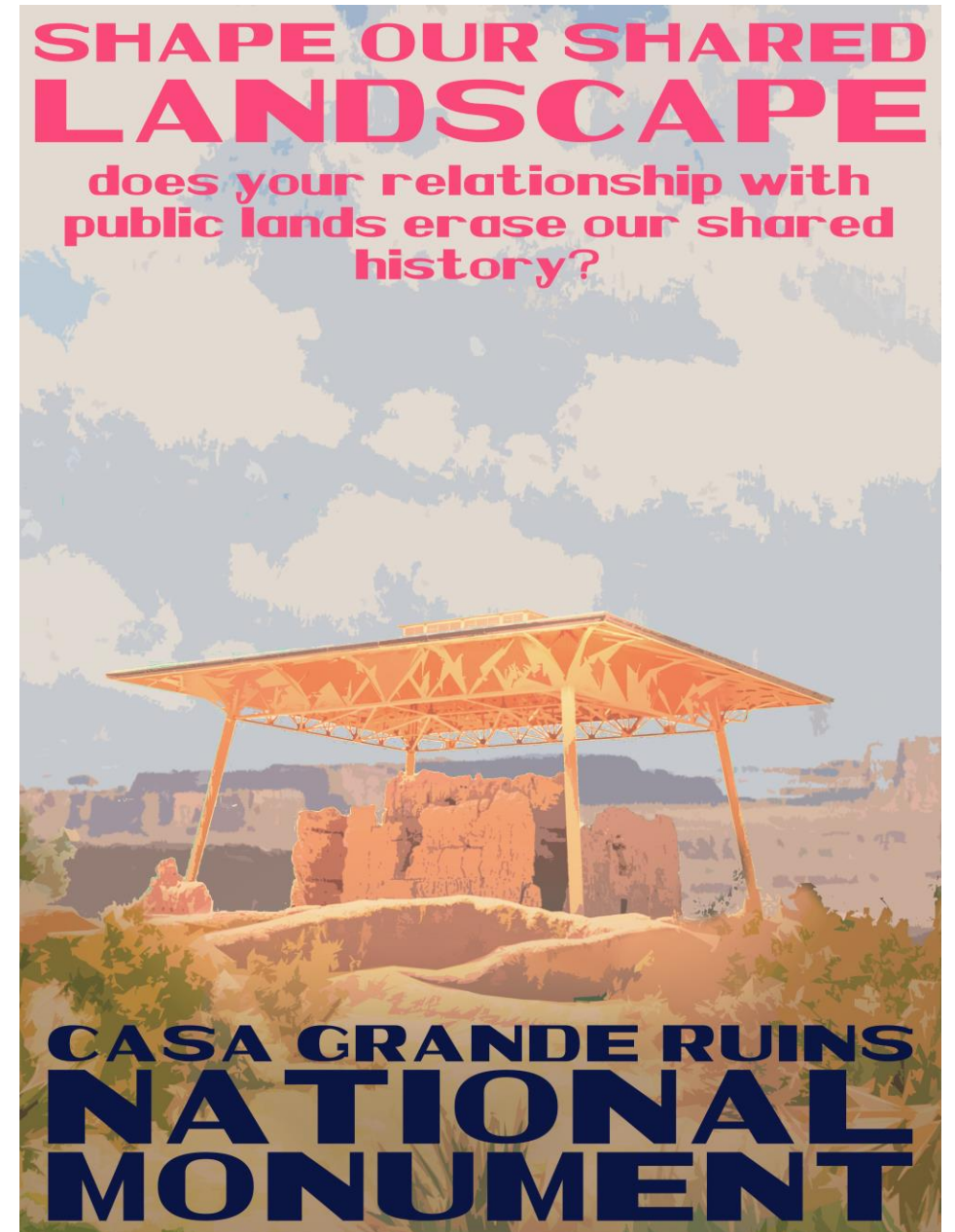
by Grace Gassel '27

Shape our Shared Landscape

Casa Grande Ruins National Monument, Arizona

"The aesthetics of public lands intertwines deeply with our nation's settler-colonial legacy. Colonial encounters with nature are best expressed by Kant's aesthetic sublime, which he calls "a capacity for judging ourselves as independent of nature and a superiority over nature." Panoramic viewpoints in national parks echo this perspective, offering privileged access to landscapes devoid of human influence. This narrative erases the violent history of indigenous dispossession essential for creating seemingly untouched landscapes. This ahistorical perception distances the park-goer from the socio-economic processes that cultivate the landscape materially and aesthetically across history. The retro posters are emblematic of this relationship, having been cultivated during the Great Depression to simulate a sense of collective unity. This new sublime, an essential American ethos, could be accessed through the consumption of National Parks as a series of object-images. Yet, these posters also reflect the potential for subversion within mass-consumption aesthetics; by depicting Casa Grande Ruins, I hope to underscore the constellation of pre-colonial histories, modern preservation efforts, and erosive forces that come together to form our aesthetic landscapes."

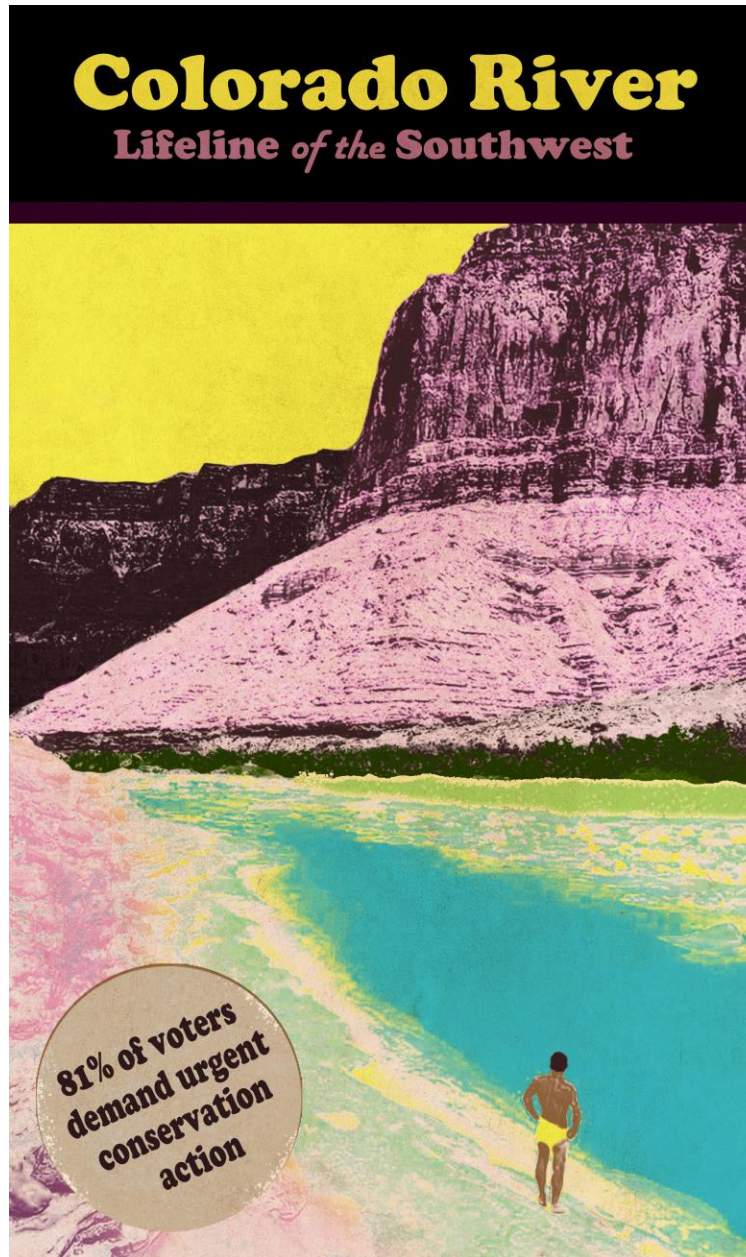
By Sam Nystrom Costales '25



Lifeline of the Southwest

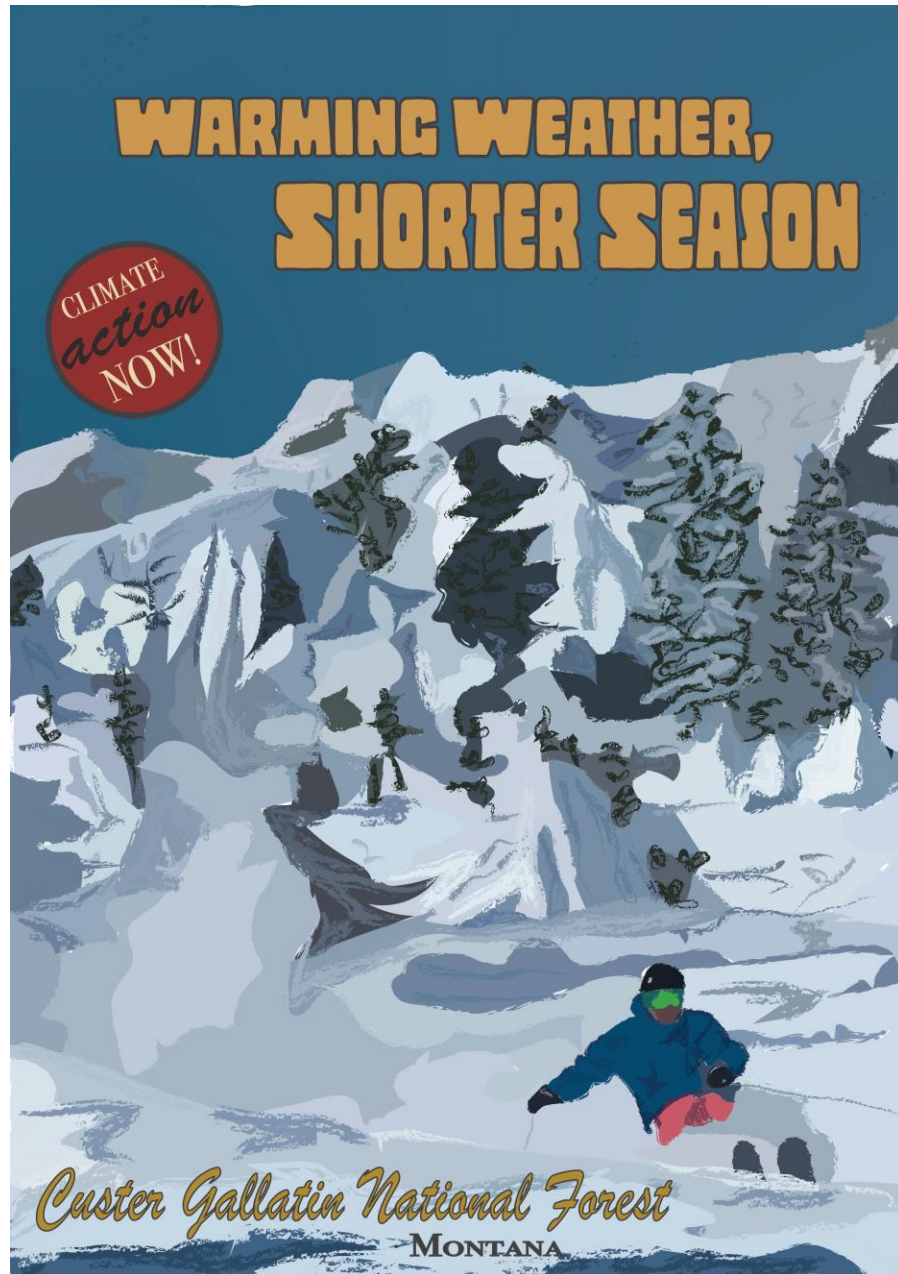
Colorado River

More than 40 million people rely on the Colorado River and its tributaries, including two countries, seven states, and 30 indigenous tribes (per the United States Bureau of Reclamation). Recently, I experienced the power of the river firsthand while rafting. Many areas between Grand Junction and Moab were remote and supported incredible biodiversity. However, other stretches bordered roads and towns, and the human effects of litter and oily residue scarred the waters.



Furthermore, the water level is diminishing year by year. 81 percent of voters in the Southwest support urgent action to preserve the river. Achieving 30x30 policies and listening to longtime indigenous tenants can save an integral Southwestern resource. My personal experience on the river and acknowledgement of its importance to all kinds of life and diversity inspired me to create this poster, and I hope that the voter support will materialize into real action.

By Sebastian Olson '24



Warming Weather, Shorter Season

Custer Gallatin National Forest, Montana

My conservation motto is based on the notion of ecosystem services— what can ecosystems provide for people? The Conservation in the West 2023 poll found that Western voters are overwhelmingly concerned about access to outdoor recreation, with Montana being one of the highest polling states at 91% support. Additionally, the poll revealed that Western voters support ensuring adequate access to the outdoors for marginalized communities. Skiing, hiking, or biking on public land helps reduce cost and barriers to outdoor access, without extensive travel and high resort prices. Custer Gallatin National Forest, in Montana, is home to Bridger Bowl, my local ski resort and a hub for outdoor recreation in all seasons. However, global warming threatens one central aspect of Montana's culture: snowpack. Reducing fossil fuel emissions, switching to green energy, and passing climate legislation can work to stop Earth's increasing temperatures and ensure that snow remains a staple in this region for generations to come.

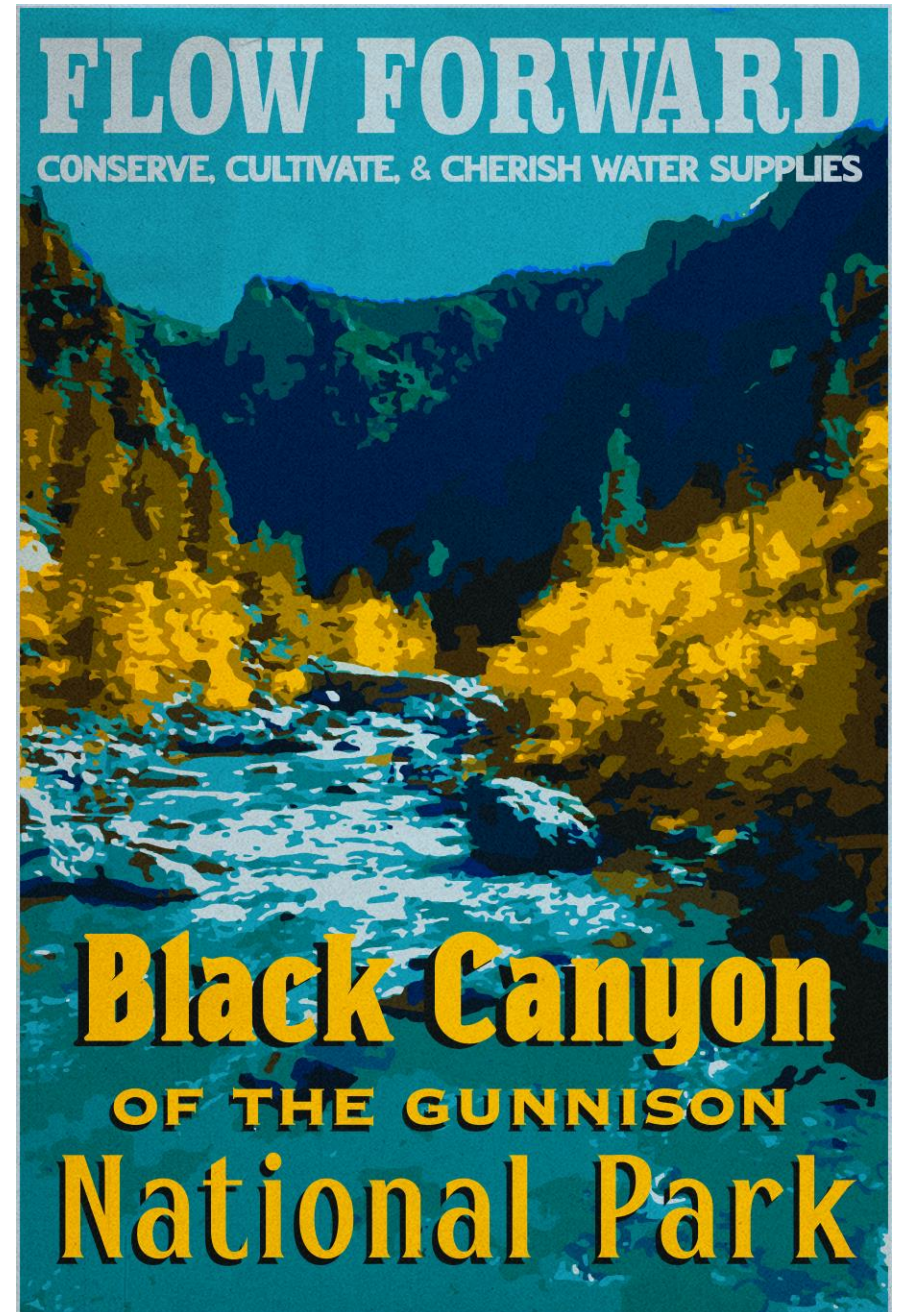
By Sada Schumann '27

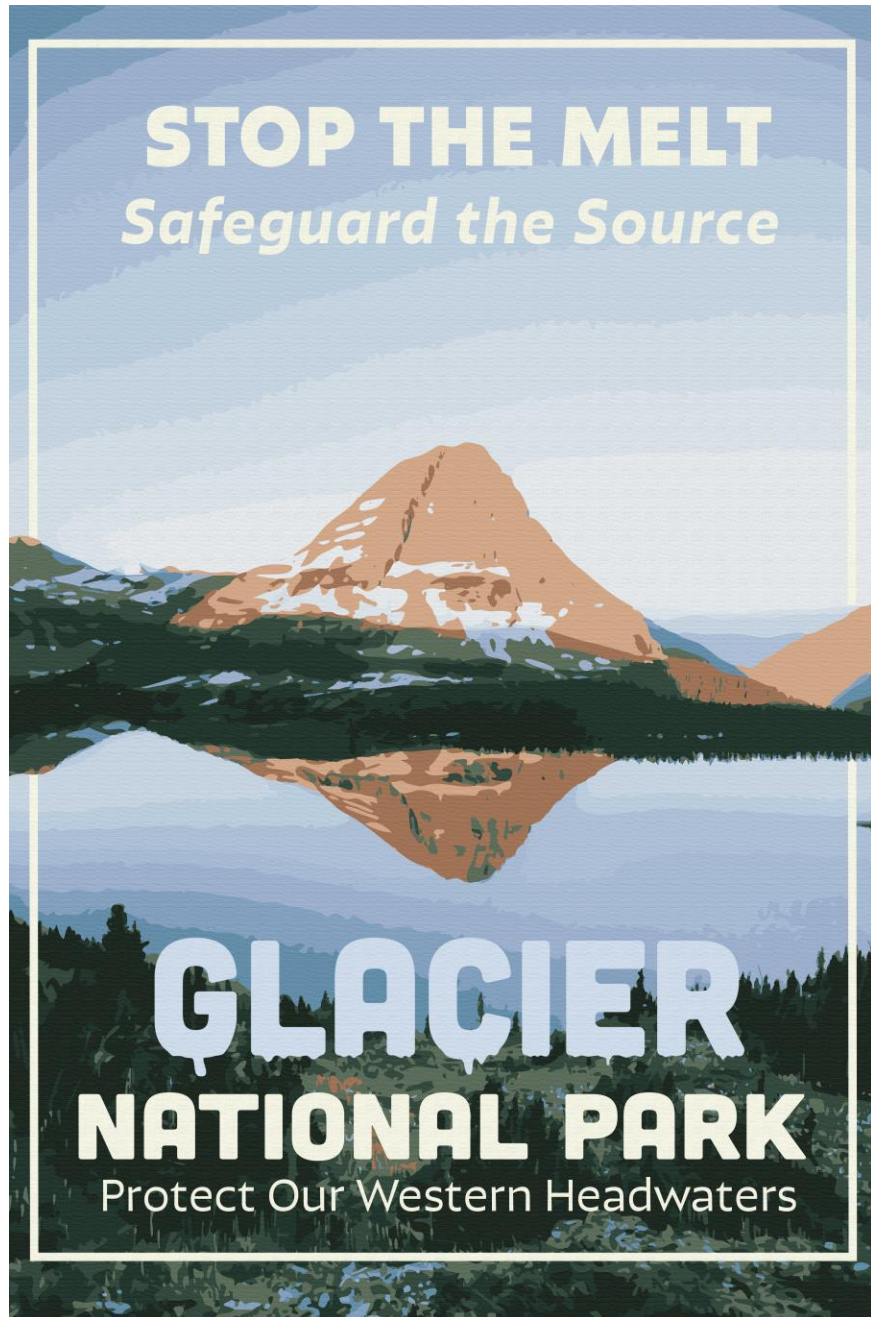
Flow Forward: conserve, Cultivate, & Cherish Water Supplies

Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park

The Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, with its striking landscapes and the mighty Gunnison River, serves as a testament to the delicate balance of nature. My decision to choose this location is based on its role as a microcosm of the broader dynamic between the interconnected ecosystems and residents of the Southwest's region. The results of the 2023 Conservation in the West Poll indicated that water supplies in the west are in a serious crisis, with rivers such as the Colorado and Gunnison viewed more at risk than ever before. The motto "Flow Forward: Conserve, Cultivate, and Cherish Water Supplies" encapsulates the urgency to address the environmental challenges highlighted by the poll results, while also promoting a positive call to action metaphorically tied back to the park.

By Holden Perry '25





Stop the Melt

Glacier National Park

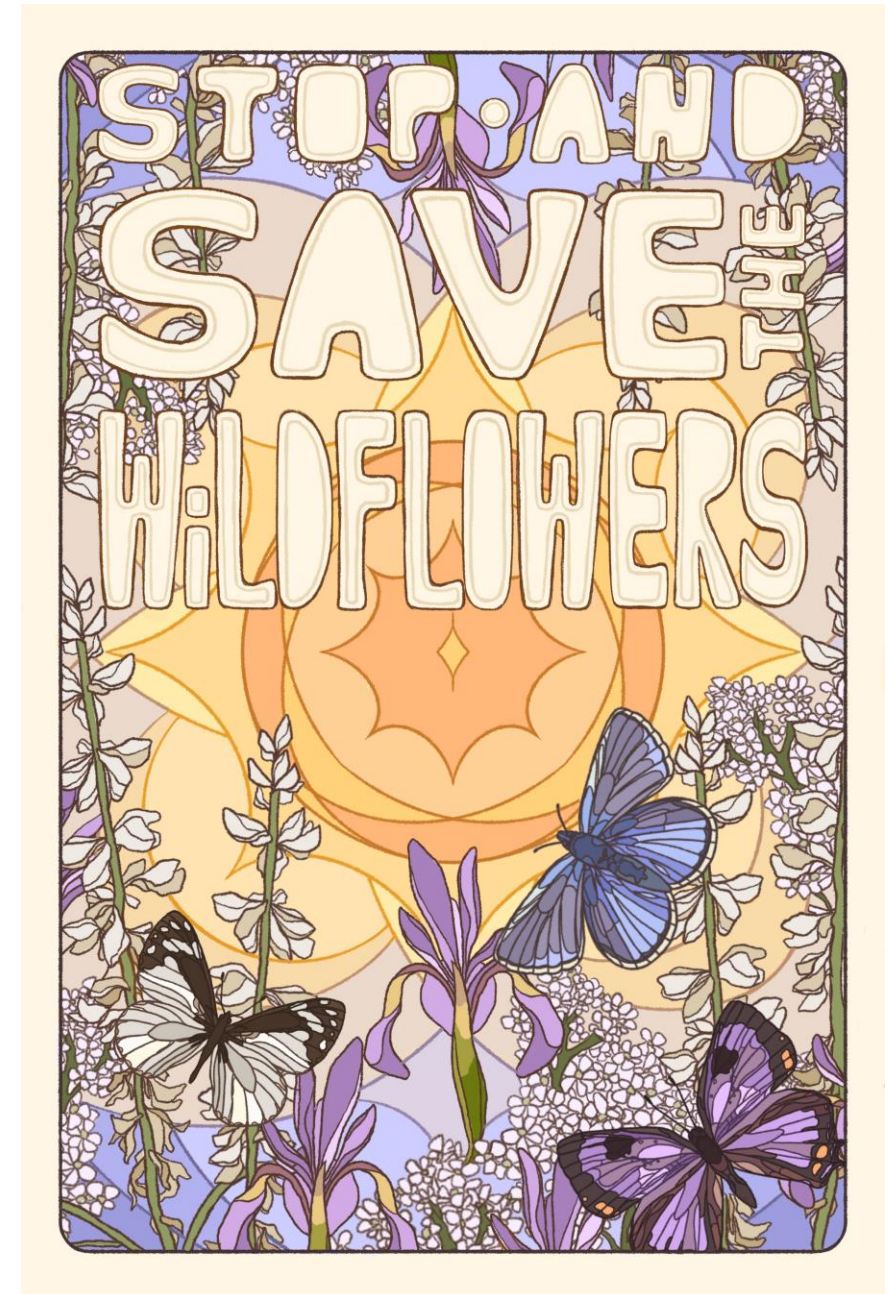
The stunning Glacier National Park in Montana is the homelands to the Blackfeet, Salish, Pend d'Oreille, and Kootenai tribes. However, Glacier National Park is melting at two times the global average rate, due to anthropogenic warming (NPS 2020). Throughout the 2023 Conservation in the West Poll, participants in all states demonstrated that drought and water availability is a point of stress, with 56% of voters in Montana agreeing that drought is a serious problem. Glacier National Park is the headwaters for three major North American watersheds: Hudson Bay, Atlantic, and Pacific. Quality and quantity of the headwaters has immense impacts on downstream ecosystems and users. Anthropogenic warming has increased glacial melt rate, sparked wildfires and reduced average precipitation in the park, significantly altering natural flows. Climate mitigation efforts and increasing the efficiency of water use is key to protecting our nation's headwaters.

By Ben Curry, '25

Stop and Save the Wildflowers

For this project, I focused on fauna and flora in Colorado's aspen forests. Based on survey results that emphasize keeping land separate from industry and protecting lands as national monuments, especially in Colorado, I decided to focus on land and wildlife conservation for this project. My poster is hand-illustrated, and I chose to illustrate local Colorado wildflowers such as the Common Yarrow, Silvery Lupine, and Rocky Mountain Iris, and prominent Colorado butterfly species, such as the Colorado Hairstreak, the Pine White, and the Blue Copper.

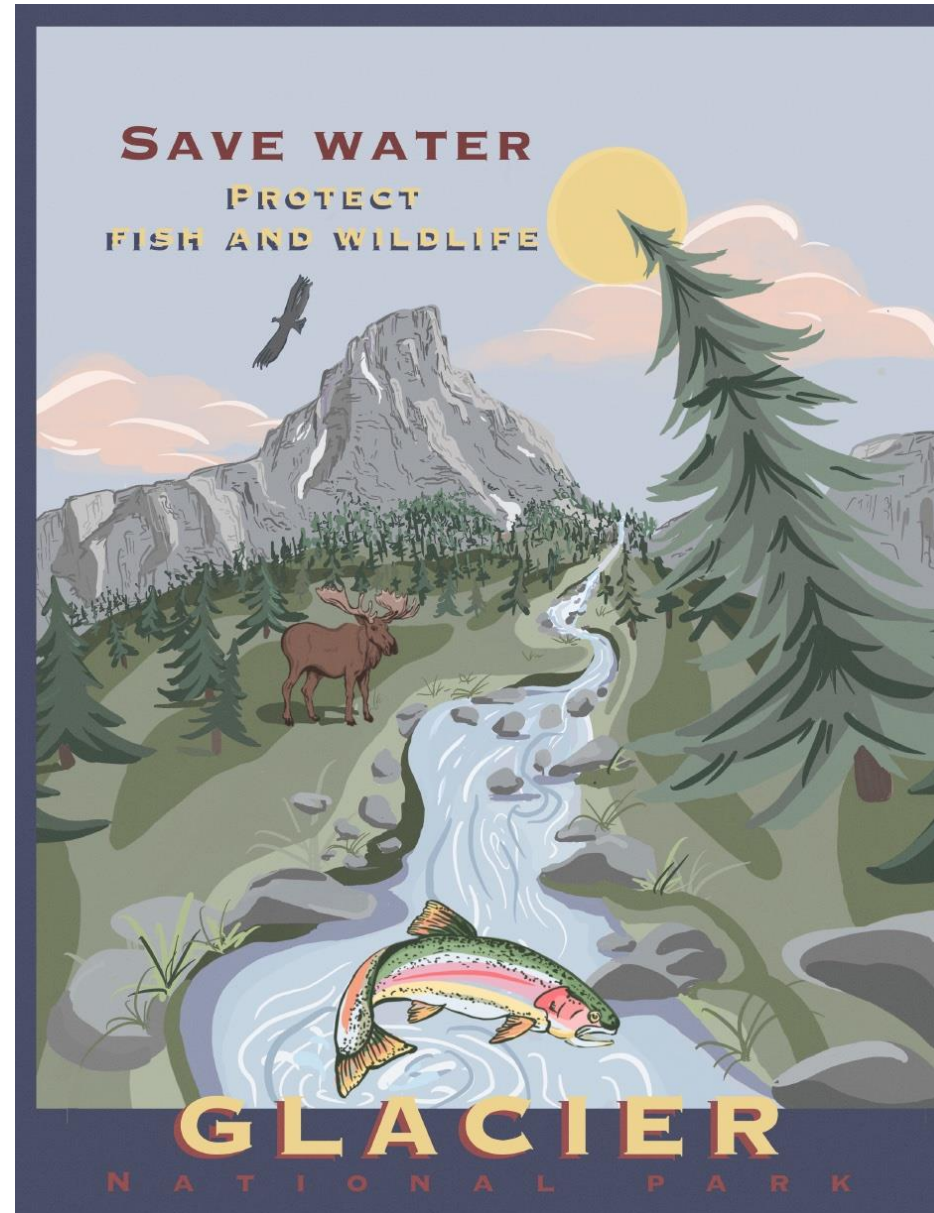
By Madeleine Broadhurst '25



Save Water

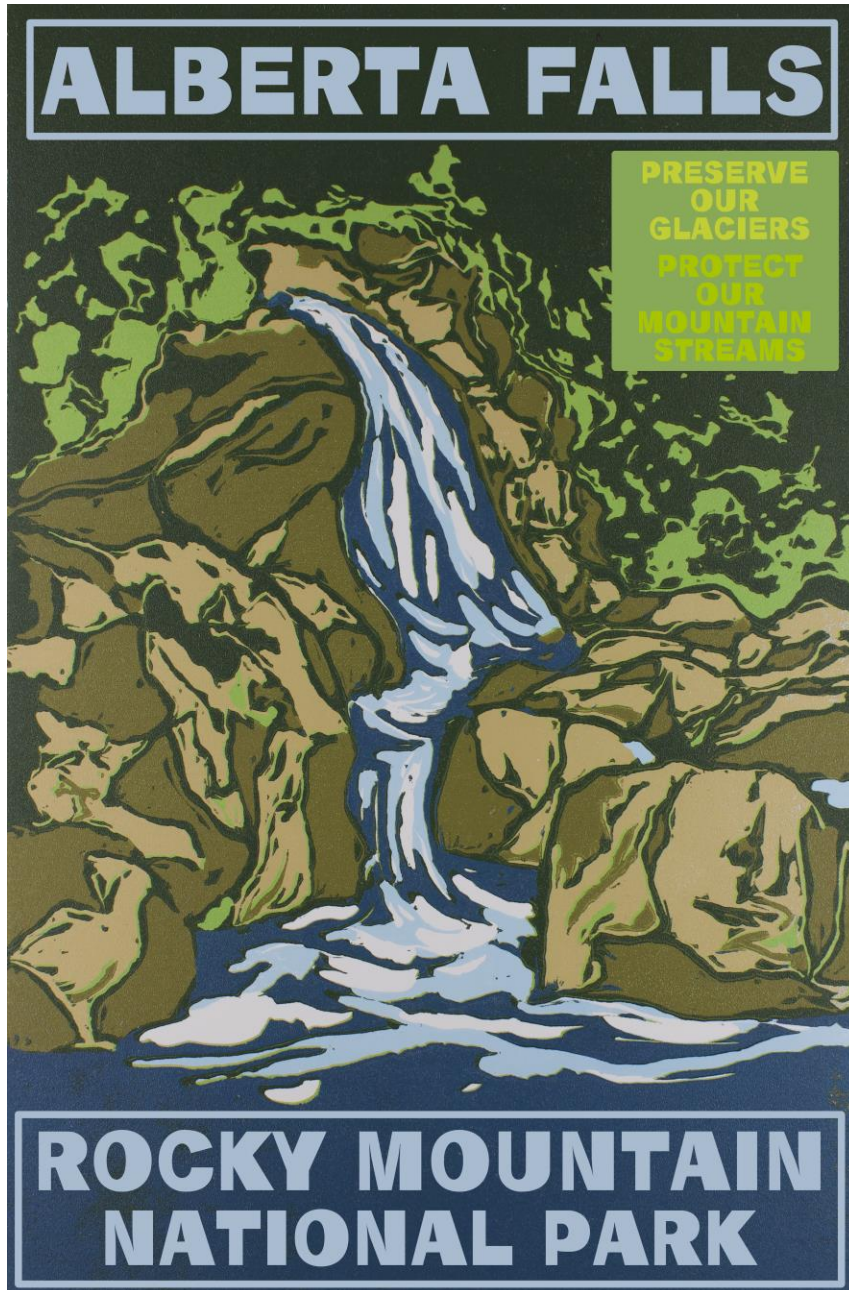
Glacier National Park

Water in the west is scarce. According to the 2023 Conservation in the West Poll, 80% of Montana residents view the increasingly low levels of water in rivers to be a very serious problem. The majority of Montana voters, 85%, also consider the loss of fish and wildlife habitat to be a major concern. In hopes to counteract the loss of water in rivers and preserve natural habitats, Montana voters are in strong support of enacting the Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Act which aims to safeguard streams and protect wilderness areas.



When I had the chance to visit Glacier National Park, I was struck by the beauty of the many lakes, streams, and rivers. Further, I admired the abundance of fish and wildlife which rely on these water sources for their livelihood. With my poster, I hope to express the importance of saving water to protect the habitats of fish and wildlife.

By Josie Herr '27



ALBERTA FALLS

Rocky Mountain National Park

With forest fires, rising temperatures and dropping water levels facing Westerns, 92% of respondents believe that drought is a serious issue. In Colorado, 86% of respondents believe that loss of natural habitat is a serious problem. The lowering of the Colorado River is often the spotlight of these concerns, however, other rivers deserve attention as well. Alberta Falls is a Rocky Mountain National Park phenomenon, is fed from Glacier Creek and is home to the native Colorado cutthroat trout. Aptly named, Glacier Creek is fed from the shrinking snow fields in the mountains, leading to a slow loss of habitat for the native endangered cutthroat trout. I chose Alberta Falls as its popularity for hikers can be used as a platform to recognize the importance of preserving our glaciers and mountain streams. As the mountains grow drier, the tributaries of major rivers shrink vital habitats as well, like Alberta Falls.

By Sam Daley '25