

Model Rights of Nature Template for the Rights of Rivers and Watersheds and the Establishment of Legal Guardianship within U.S. Municipalities

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What are the Rights of Nature?

A global movement is underway to establish that Nature has fundamental rights, just as humans do. The Rights of Nature are now recognized at some level in over a dozen countries. A focal point of the movement has been the rights of waterways. Several rivers in the U.S. and Canada now have rights, including the Snake River in Idaho (recognized by the Nez Perce tribe), the Klamath River in California (recognized by the Yurok Tribe), and the Magpie River in Ontario (recognized by the municipality of Minganie and the Innu Council of Ekuanitshit).

What is the Scope of the Model Ordinance?

The model ordinance establishes basic rights for rivers and/or watersheds within a municipality and gives Nature a voice within local government. Municipalities would have to make the rights of local rivers (or other water bodies) and the encompassing watershed a “primary consideration” in all actions and decisions that concern them. This means a municipality would have to consider the overarching health of local waters, just as it considers the well-being of its residents. Simultaneously, the model ordinance encourages state reform to support the rights of local communities to fully implementing the Rights of Nature, which otherwise can be challenging due to state and federal preemption.

The model ordinance also establishes a guardianship body to serve as the “voice and face” of the rivers and/or watershed. The guardianship body would be populated by community members who would work with a municipality to ensure the Rights of Nature are being put into practice. Finally, the model ordinance has language to ensure that nothing in the ordinance is construed as extinguishing or diminishing the rights Indigenous Peoples have now or may acquire in the future.

How is the Model Resolution Different?

In general, ordinances are municipal acts with effect of law that are enforceable. Resolutions, by contrast, are expressions of opinion of will. The resolution recognizes the Rights of Nature similar to the ordinance. It also establishes that waterways have a right to legal guardians, but it does not formally establish the guardianship body. It then establishes certain responsibilities of local governments to consider Rights of Nature in local decision-making and to develop institutions to put those rights into practice through follow-up activities, including a possible Ordinance in the future.

What Rights Does a River/Watershed Have?

Amongst the rights included in the model ordinance are rights to flow, to support essential functions within its ecosystems, to maintain native biodiversity, and others, many of which are recognized in the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Rivers (www.rightsofrivers.org). The Watershed also would have rights to exist, to life, to integral health, to regenerate, to evolve, to be restored.

Next Steps

Earth Law Center and Save the Colorado will be developing a full implementation toolkit and annotated version of the model ordinance and resolution.

Model Rights of Nature Ordinance

AN ORDINANCE RECOGNIZING THE RIGHTS OF NATURE FOR THE

_____ RIVER AND

_____ WATERSHED

AND PROVIDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND OVERSIGHT OF THOSE
RIGHTS IN [MUNICIPALITY]

WHEREAS, residents of [city]¹ understand and value their deep relationship with Nature and the natural environment. Residents understand that Nature is a single, interconnected, living system and that life on Earth has developed as an indivisible web of ecological, environmental, and atmospheric dynamics in which the welfare of each component is essential to the welfare of the whole; and

WHEREAS, [city] residents know that they are a part of the _____ Watershed, which is their home and natural environment; and they cherish the _____ River², which flows through the heart of their city, connecting them to its vast Watershed and to Nature; and

WHEREAS, the Watershed stretches from the _____ to the _____, [encompassing _____ climate zones and _____ acres of forested mountains, valleys, and grasslands]. The River and its tributaries are the lifeblood of this entire area. In its _____ mile course [from alpine valleys to the plains], the River sustains a huge diversity of species, ranging from [black bears and bobcats to meadow mice and brown trout and from giant towering firs and pines to morning glories and milkweeds]; and

WHEREAS, just as it sustains all of the living things in the Watershed, the River also sustains the city and its people, binding the community together, supplying a hub for cultural activities and gatherings, providing city residents with immediate access to the rejuvenating powers of Nature, and giving the city a unique municipal parkway and waterway where they can [float, hike, fish, bike,] and otherwise rejuvenate and recreate in Nature; and

WHEREAS, humans living by the River and within its Watershed have long understood that their own health and welfare are inextricably connected to the welfare of the River and Watershed. The [specific indigenous People] [respected and enjoyed the River and Watershed long before [city] was founded], and many Indigenous peoples continue to do so; and

WHEREAS, today, federal law, the [state name] Constitution, state law and policy, and local laws afford some protection to the natural environment, including water quality, but those laws have proven to be grossly inadequate; and

WHEREAS, their failure results, in large measure, from the faulty underlying legal assumption that the natural world is mere human “property.” As such, current law protects its use and exploitation by its owners—be they individuals, corporations, or other entities—for their own, private, short-term economic gain, generally with inadequate regard for the longer-term, sustainable health of all living things. The resulting environmental exploitation has already led to the mass extinction of species; increasingly extreme and deadly storms and floods; ever more frequent and

¹ “**City**” is used in this model ordinance. It can be replaced with town, township, etc., as appropriate.

² “**River**” is used throughout this ordinance. It can be replaced with creek, stream, etc., as appropriate.

destructive wildfires; deforestation and desertification which heat the planet; deglaciation which reduces fresh water supplies; and ocean acidification which kills sea life and threatens the food supply for millions of humans. This environmental destruction threatens to end life on Earth as we know it; and

WHEREAS, to address this crisis, cities and countries around the world have recognized that Nature must be respected and protected by recognizing its rights and affording it a voice in our decision- making processes and our legal systems. To accomplish these changes local, state, and national governments around the world have enacted new laws based upon respect for Nature as the source and sustainer of all life, including human life. Many such laws have recognized that Nature possesses inalienable, preexistent, and inherent rights; and

WHEREAS, among many other examples, the rights of Nature have been incorporated into the constitution of Ecuador and the statutes of Bolivia and Uganda. Likewise, three state constitutions in Mexico have been amended to recognize Nature’s rights; and dozens of cities in the United States also incorporated recognition of Nature’s rights into their laws; and

WHEREAS, many such enactments recognize the rights of waterways, lakes, and ecosystems. Tribal Nations were amongst the first to recognize the rights of rivers, with the Yurok and Nez Perce Tribes recognized the rights of the Klamath and Snake Rivers, respectively. Elsewhere in the United States, the people of Toledo adopted a local law recognizing the rights of Lake Erie, to protect it from industrial farm pollution, and the people of Orange County Florida adopted a law recognizing rivers’ rights and protecting them from pollution; and

WHEREAS, courts have enforced these rights. A Colombian Constitution Court ruled that the Atrato River basins possesses rights to “protection, conservation, maintenance, and restoration.” An Ecuadorian Provincial Court enforced the constitution rights of the Vilcabamba River, calling for its remediation and rehabilitation. The Bangladesh High Court Division of its Supreme Court ruled that all rivers have legal rights; and

WHEREAS, in addition to recognizing Nature’s rights, governments, communities, and organizations around the world are utilizing guardianships to effectuate those rights, particularly in regard to rivers and other waters. New Zealand adopted a treaty that both recognizes the Whanganui River (of “Ge Awa Tupua”) as “an indivisible and living whole” and “a legal person” and establishes co-guardians for the river consisting of a Whanganui Iwi (Māori) representative and a non-indigenous representative. To protect the Atrato River, a Columbian court created a guardianship body, with representation from riverside communities and government, charged with the responsibility of enforcing the river’s legal rights. The government of Western Australia established a River Guardianship program to protect the Swan and Canning Rivers. Legal guardianship is commonly used to uphold the rights and interests of those who cannot speak for themselves; and

WHEREAS, like these other governments and organizations, the City of _____ can best protect the health, safety and welfare of its residents and the city’s sustainable future by recognizing the rights of the _____ River and _____ Watershed and by creating a guardianship body to serve as its protector and voice and thereby effectuate those rights; and

SECTION 1. Title and Purpose

A. Short Title. This Ordinance shall be known as the “Rights of Nature for the _____ River Watershed Ordinance of the City of _____” (“Ordinance”).

B. Purpose. This Ordinance is intended to help ensure the health and vitality of the _____ River (“River”) and the _____ Watershed (“Watershed”), including all tributaries, ecosystems, and natural entities within the Watershed.

SECTION 2. Rights of Nature for the _____ River and its Watershed

A. The Nature of the River and Watershed. The River and its encompassing Watershed, and the living and other things existing naturally therein, exist and function as an integrated and interdependent system of natural communities and are therefore understood, respected, and protected by this Ordinance as a living entity, possessing fundamental and inalienable rights.

B. The River's Rights. The River and all its tributaries possess, at minimum, the following fundamental and inalienable rights:

1. The right to maintain natural flow sufficient in quantity to maintain ecosystem health;
2. The right to support essential functions within its ecosystems, including by horizontal and longitudinal connectivity, recharging groundwater, moving and depositing sediment, providing adequate habitat for native flora and fauna;
3. The right to feed and be fed by sustainable precipitation, glaciers, and aquifers;
4. The right to maintain native biodiversity;
5. The right to exist free of pollution;
6. The right to be restored to, and preserved in, a state of ecosystem health; and
7. The right to be free of activities or practices, as well as obstructions, that interfere with or infringe upon these rights.

C. The Watershed's Rights. The Watershed and its living and non-living natural components and communities possess, at minimum, fundamental and inalienable rights to exist, to life, to integral health, to regenerate, to evolve, to be restored.

D. The Right to a Guardian. The River and the Watershed have a right to protection through the appointment of legal guardians, who will, as their public face and voice, represent their interests, and effectuate their rights as a fiduciary, acting solely in their interests.

SECTION 3. Legal Duty and Responsibility to Enforce the Rights of Nature

A. City's Responsibilities. The City of _____ ("City") has the following legal duties and responsibilities, corresponding to the rights of the River and the Watershed:

1. To make the Rights of Nature, recognized in Section 2, a primary consideration in all City actions and decisions that concern the River and Watershed, including actions and decisions about water quality, water quantity, biodiversity, and ecosystem health, and other matters that impact them. This duty includes, but is not limited to, including a brief Rights of Nature assessment in any staff report pertaining to actions or decisions that concern or impact the River and Watershed;
2. To develop, implement, and enforce laws, policies, programs, best practices, and other measures, as are necessary, consistent with and respectful of the rights of the River and Watershed enumerated in this Ordinance;
3. To oppose actions or activities that would clearly violate the rights of the River and Watershed, including by opposing all new dams and dam expansions located within the City or over which the City has ownership or control, unless such infrastructure has a compelling social and ecological purpose that cannot be met by other reasonable means; and
4. To enable the _____ River Guardianship Body, as established in Section 4, to participate in all public decision-making processes in which the public may participate; the City shall respect

the authority of the _____ River Guardian to act as the human voice and face of the River and Watershed in such public processes.

B. Public's Responsibilities. Members of the public shall have the responsibility and legal duty to respect the inherent and inalienable rights of the River and Watershed as set forth in Section 1 and to abide by City laws, regulations, and procedures that implement and fulfill the purpose of this Ordinance.

Section 4. _____ River Guardianship Body

A. Establishment and Fiduciary Duties. The _____ River Guardianship Body ("Guardianship Body") is hereby established to ensure awareness, understanding, and implementation of the rights set forth in this Ordinance. The Guardianship Body shall serve as the fiduciary guardian of the River's and Watershed's welfare, always acting in their best interest by, among other things, serving as the human face and voice for the River and Watershed. The members of the Guardianship Body shall, upon appointment, take an oath that they will faithfully discharge their duties.

B. Duties and Authority of the Guardianship Body. To promote and effectuate the rights of the River and Watershed, the Guardianship Body shall:

1. Receive information and complaints from the public regarding potential violations of the rights of the River and Watershed.
2. Consult with the River and Watershed directly by observing and assessing meaningful changes in its well-being, then determine whether the cause is the result of human infringement on established rights;
3. Hold public hearings, at least once per year, on the effectuation of the rights recognized by this Ordinance;
4. Make recommendations relating to enforcement, and have representational standing to participate in enforcement, efforts on behalf of the River and Watershed;
5. Make public recommendations and reports and otherwise provide information and education on best practices for implementing the Rights of Nature both in the City and elsewhere;
6. Provide input and recommendations to the City Council as in 3.A.4.
7. Release written and public statements regarding its significant actions, explaining how those actions honor and uphold the rights of the River and Watershed; and
8. Take other actions reasonably necessary to fulfill its duties and functions.

C. Composition. The Guardianship Body shall consist of five (5) members, or Guardians, as appointed by the Guardian Selection Committee, as defined and described herein. No more than one Guardian shall be a current or former employee of the City or an immediate family member thereof.

D. The Guardianship Selection Committee. Guardians will be chosen by the Guardianship Selection Committee ("Committee"). The Committee shall consist of the [City's Environmental Advisory Board or other appropriate body].

E. Selection Process. The Committee shall solicit applications, allowing any member of the public to apply, and select qualified applicants for public interviews. All Guardians shall be appointed by majority vote of Committee members, which vote shall be taken within six months of the effective date of this Ordinance. Their appointment shall be formalized through official action of the City Council, which will set their compensation, if any.

F. Qualifications for Guardians. Qualifications for Guardianship Body are:

1. A demonstrated commitment to protecting the River and Watershed for its own sake beyond purely human interests;
2. Skills, knowledge and experience necessary to fulfill the purpose and requirements of this Ordinance; and
3. Residency in the City, either full or part-time, or a strong connection to the River and Watershed as determined by the Guardianship Selection Committee.

G. Diversity of Guardians. The Guardianship body should be diverse and representative of various segments of the community. The Guardianship Selection Committee shall create a guidance document prior to selecting Guardians that will further define how the Guardianship Body will embody diversity, [including racial diversity and gender diversity along with Indigenous representation].

H. Recommended Categories of Guardians: Guardianship Selection Committee is also encouraged to select Guardians that represent various segments of the community, including some or all of the following categories:

Example:

1. *Indigenous Persons;*
2. *Community members below the age of 18 who regularly visit the River;*
3. *Senior community members who regularly visit the River;*
4. *Service industry and other low-income workers who visit the River for respite;*
5. *Artists who use the River or Watershed as inspiration for their art;*
6. *Bicycle commuters who commute on the river trail and paths.*
7. *Experts in the physical and emotional healing power of Nature;*
8. *Professional or amateur naturalists who have studied riparian species;*
9. *Scientists with a professional background in ecology, biology, or the climate.*
10. *Academic community members expert in Earth jurisprudence.*

I. Terms and Vacancies. For the Guardians appointed immediately following the effective date of this Ordinance, two guardians shall be appointed for a single term of two (2) years, whereas three (3) other guardians shall be appointed for a single term of four (4) years, as determined by the Committee. The term of office for all subsequent guardians shall be a single term of four (4) years. The Committee shall convene at least six months before the expiration of any Guardians' term to begin a new selection process. If a vacancy arises during a Guardians' term, the remaining Guardians shall issue a call to appoint a new Guardian and approve a qualified candidate by majority vote.

J. Additional Rules and Procedures. The Guardianship Body and Committee may, by majority vote adopt rules and procedures necessary to fulfill their duties specified by this Ordinance.

Section 5. Annual City Report and Hearing.

At least once every twelve (12) months, the City will, with input from the Guardianship Body, prepare a concise written report to the community on the health and state of the River and its Watershed, and the realization of the rights recognized in this Ordinance. The report shall include recommendations for advancing and ensuring the welfare and sustainability of the River and Watershed. The report shall be provided to the City Council, which shall conduct a public hearing on the report.

Section 6. Limitations and Harmony with Other Laws.

A. Indigenous Peoples' Rights. Nothing in this Ordinance shall be construed as extinguishing or diminishing the rights Indigenous Peoples have now or may acquire in the future. Neither shall this Ordinance be used in any way to prevent Indigenous Peoples from exercising their rights to self-determination, self-government and the use and enjoyment of territory in accordance with Indigenous and Tribal peoples' legal rights, traditions, religions, cultures, and customs and in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

B. Private Parties. It shall be the responsibility of the City and Guardians to protect, promote and implement the rights of the River and Watershed recognized in this Ordinance. No private party shall be held liable for violating the rights of the River and Watershed if they act in accordance with the specific responsibilities set forth in Section 3.B this Ordinance and otherwise abide by local law and legislation giving effect to the Rights of Nature.

C. Ordinance of Conflicts of Rights. Any conflict between the Rights of Nature and other rights must be resolved in a way that maintains the integrity, balance, and health of the River and the Watershed as a whole.

SECTION 7. Call for State-Level Support for the Rights of Rivers and Watersheds

In order to fully effectuate the purposes of this Ordinance, City residents call upon the State of Colorado to recognize the Rights of Nature and create a statewide commission to make recommendations on how to best integrate Rights of Nature into those elements of [state name] law and governance that concern the health of rivers and watersheds within the state, including consideration of new state policies, laws, or constitutional amendments that enable and support full implementation the rights of rivers and watersheds

SECTION 8. Severability

If any provision of this Ordinance or any application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect any provision or application of this Ordinance that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application. To this end, and to effectuate the will of the voters, the provisions of this Ordinance are declared to be severable.

SECTION 9. Enactment

If a majority of all the votes cast in the election on the issue submitted shall be for the issue, the issue shall be deemed to have passed and shall become effective thirty (30) days after its adoption. As of the effective date, the Ordinance shall be self-executing.

Model Rights of Nature Resolution

RESOLUTION NUMBER #####

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF [MUNICIPALITY] IN SUPPORT OF RECOGNIZING AND IMPLEMENTING THE INHERENT LEGAL RIGHTS OF _____ RIVER AND THE _____ WATERSHED

WHEREAS, the City of _____ (the “City”)¹ is defined and distinguished by its bond with the natural world that encircles, permeates, and enlivens the city; and

WHEREAS, the _____ River² flows through the City and serves as its physical, social, and cultural heart; and

WHEREAS, the Watershed stretches from the _____ to the _____, [encompassing _____ climate zones and _____ acres of forested mountains, valleys, and grasslands]. The River and its tributaries are the lifeblood of this entire area. In its _____ mile course [from alpine valleys to the plains], the River sustains a huge diversity of species, ranging from [black bears and bobcats to meadow mice and brown trout and from giant towering firs and pines to morning glories and milkweeds]; and

WHEREAS, just as it sustains all of the living things in the Watershed, the River also sustains the city and its people, binding the community together, supplying a hub for cultural activities and gatherings, providing city residents with immediate access to the rejuvenating powers of Nature, and giving the city a unique municipal parkway and waterway where they can [float, hike, fish, bike,] and otherwise rejuvenate and recreate in Nature; and

WHEREAS, humans living by the River and within its Watershed have long understood that their own health and welfare are inextricably connected to the welfare of the River and Watershed. The [specific indigenous People] [respected and enjoyed the River and Watershed long before [city] was founded], and many Indigenous peoples continue to do so; and

WHEREAS, today, federal law, the [state name] Constitution, state law and policy, and local laws afford some protection to the natural environment, including water quality, but those laws have proven to be grossly inadequate; and

WHEREAS, their inadequate results, in large measure, from the faulty underlying legal assumption that the natural world is mere human “property.” As such, current law protects its use and exploitation by its owners—be they individuals, corporations, or other entities—for their own, private, short-term economic gain, generally with inadequate regard for the longer-term, sustainable health of all living things. The resulting environmental exploitation has led to the current multi-faceted environmental crisis which is so severe that it threatens to end all life on Earth as we know it; and

WHEREAS, to address this crisis, cities and countries around the world have recognized that Nature must be respected and protected by recognizing its rights and affording it a voice in our decision-making processes and legal systems; and

1 “**City**” is used throughout in this model ordinance. Replace with town, township, etc., as appropriate

2 “**River**” is used throughout this ordinance. It can be replaced with creek, stream, etc., as appropriate.

WHEREAS, among many other examples, the rights of Nature have been incorporated into the constitution of Ecuador and the statutes of Bolivia and Uganda. Likewise, three state constitutions in Mexico have been amended to recognize Nature's rights; and dozens of cities in the United States also incorporated recognition of Nature's rights into their laws; and

WHEREAS, many such enactments recognize the rights of waterways, lakes, and ecosystems. Tribal Nations were amongst the first to recognize the rights of rivers, with the Yurok and Nez Perce Tribes recognizing the rights of the Klamath and Snake Rivers, respectively. Elsewhere in the United States, the people of Toledo adopted a local law recognizing the rights of Lake Erie, to protect it from industrial farm pollution, and the people of Orange County Florida adopted a law recognizing rivers' rights and protecting them from pollution; and

WHEREAS, courts have enforced these rights. A Colombian Constitution Court ruled that the Atrato River basins possesses rights to "protection, conservation, maintenance, and restoration." An Ecuadorian Provincial Court enforced the constitution rights of the Vilcabamba River, calling for its remediation and rehabilitation. The Bangladesh High Court Division of its Supreme Court ruled that all rivers have legal rights; and

WHEREAS, in addition to recognizing Nature's rights, governments, communities, and organizations around the world are utilizing guardianships to effectuate them, particularly in regard to rivers and other waters. New Zealand adopted a treaty that both recognizes the Whanganui River (of "Ge Awa Tupua") as "an indivisible and living whole" and "a legal person" and establishes co-guardians for the river consisting of a Whanganui Iwi (Māori) representative and a nonindigenous representative. To protect the Atrato River, a Columbian court created a guardianship body, with representation from riverside communities and government, charged with the responsibility of enforcing the river's legal rights. The government of Western Australia established a River Guardianship program to protect the Swan and Canning Rivers. In all these cases, such guardians serve as the rivers' human voices

WHEREAS, the City Council hereby determines that it may best protect the health, safety, and welfare of its residents, which are inseparable from the welfare of the River and the Watershed, and can best contribute to the global movement to respect and promote the rights of Nature, by recognizing their rights and effectuating them through guardianship.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF (MUNICIPALITY) DOES RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. ***The Rights of Nature of the River and Watershed.*** The River and its encompassing Watershed, and the living and other things existing naturally therein, exist and function as an integrated and interdependent system of natural communities and are therefore understood, respected, and recognized in this Resolution as a living entity, possessing fundamental and inalienable rights.

Section 2. ***The River's Rights.*** The City recognizes that the River and all its tributaries possess, at minimum the following fundamental and inalienable rights:

1. The right to maintain natural flow sufficient in quantity to maintain ecosystem health;
2. The right to support essential functions within its ecosystems, including by horizontal and longitudinal connectivity, recharging groundwater, moving and depositing sediment, providing adequate habitat for native plants and animals;
3. The right to feed and be fed by sustainable precipitation, glaciers, and aquifers;
4. The right to maintain native biodiversity;
5. The right to exist free of pollution;

6. The right to be restored to, and preserved in, a state of ecosystem health; and
7. The right to exist free of activities, practices, or obstructions, that interfere with or infringe upon these rights.

Section 3. ***The Watershed's Rights.*** The Watershed and its living and non-living natural components and communities possess, at minimum, fundamental and inalienable rights to exist, maintain integral health, regenerate, evolve, and be restored.

Section 4. ***Protection Through Guardianship.*** The River and the Watershed must be protected and may best be through the appointment of legal guardians, who will, serve as their public voice, represent their interests, and effectuate their rights as fiduciaries, acting solely in their interests.

Section 5. ***The City's Support and Responsibilities.*** The City Council intends to protect the River and the Watershed and effectuate the rights recognized in Sections 2, 3, and 4 by taking or requiring the following actions:

1. Include Rights of Nature as a primary consideration in all City actions and decisions that concern the River and Watershed, including actions and decisions about water quality, water quantity, biodiversity, and ecosystem health, and other matters that impact them;
2. Develop, implement, and enforce laws, policies, programs, best practices, and other measures as are necessary to effectuate the rights of the River and Watershed enumerated in this Resolution to ensure that Nature and current and future generations of humans thrive together in harmony within the City;
3. Oppose actions or activities that would clearly violate the rights of the River and Watershed, including by opposing all new dams and dam expansions located within the City or over which the City has ownership or control, unless such infrastructure has a compelling social and ecological purpose that cannot be met by other reasonable means;
4. Create by ordinance a guardianship body that will serve as the fiduciary guardian of the River's and Watershed's welfare, recognize the Rights of Nature for the River and Watershed, and enable the guardianship body to participate in all public decision-making processes as the human voice and face of the River and Watershed in such public processes; and
5. At least once every twelve (12) months, prepare with input from the guardianship body a concise written report for the community on the health and state of the River and Watershed and the realization of the rights recognized in this Resolution. The report shall include recommendations for advancing and ensuring the welfare and sustainability of the River and Watershed. The report shall be provided to the City Council, which shall conduct a public hearing on the report.

Section 6. ***Call for State-Level Support for the Rights of Rivers and Watersheds.*** In order to fully effectuate the purposes of this Resolution, the City's residents call upon the State of Colorado to recognize the Rights of Nature and create a statewide commission to make recommendations on how to best integrate Rights of Nature and into those elements of Colorado law and governance that concern the health of rivers and watersheds within the state, including consideration of new state policies, laws, or constitutional amendments that would enable full implementation the rights of rivers and watersheds.

Section 7. ***Effective Date of Resolution.*** This resolution shall take effect immediately upon its passage.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this ___ day of _____.

Contact Us

Earth Law Center

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Earth Law Center champions Earth-centered laws and community-led movements that respect and protect all life on the planet. A major part of our work involves advancing Nature's inherent rights to exist, thrive, and evolve, as well as related movements to harmonize human-created laws with Nature's own laws. We have written and enforced such laws throughout the world. In 2021, we released the first-ever law school coursebook on "Earth law" (Wolters Kluwer).

Save the Colorado

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Save The Colorado's mission is to protect and restore the Colorado River and its tributaries from the source to the sea. Save The Colorado focuses on fighting irresponsible water projects, supporting alternatives to proposed dams and diversions, fighting and adapting to climate change, supporting river and fish species restoration, and removing deadbeat dams. One of their programs is to advance the Rights of Nature for rivers throughout Colorado and beyond.

