

2025

PHW-COS Participant Program Guide

“Your Casting Forward Journey”



“The 3 C’s of Life: **Choices**, **Chances**, **Changes**... You must make the *choice* to take a *chance* if you want anything in life to *change*.”

Zig Ziglar



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PHW-COS Participant Program Guide

1 | A Note Before You Begin

This guide was created just for you, to walk alongside you as you start your journey with PHW-COS.

Inside, you'll find helpful information about what to expect, how we support you, and all the different ways you can participate. We don't expect you to memorize anything or follow a specific path. This guide is simply here to offer steady guidance, whenever you need it.

We're just glad you're here. You belong here, exactly as you are.

Thank you for giving PHW-COS a chance to be part of your healing journey!



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2 | Welcome to PHW COS

Welcome to Project Healing Waters Colorado Springs (PHW-COS)!

We are truly honored that you've chosen to be part of PHW-COS.

This isn't just about fly fishing, it's about finding a space where healing, connection, and growth happen at your own pace, surrounded by people who genuinely care.

You don't have to have any experience. You don't need to bring anything with you. You're not expected to "be" anything other than yourself. Whether you're here for quiet time on the water, to learn something new, or to reconnect with a sense of purpose, there's room for you here.

PHW-COS is built on something called *Whole Health Resilience*, which we believe healing happens in many ways, through the body, the mind, the heart, and the spirit. And we believe that fly fishing can gently support each of those parts.

You'll meet other Participants and Volunteers, some who are just starting out, and some who've been around for a while. You'll be invited to learn skills like casting, fly tying, net building, and rod building. And you'll have the chance to join us for social gatherings and fishing trips, big and small.

Everything we do is rooted in patience, kindness, and community.

You don't need to figure it all out today. One cast at a time is more than enough.

So welcome to PHW-COS. We're really glad you're here.

Regards,

Woody Boyd

PHW-COS | Program Lead



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3 | Our Mission, Vision, Core Values, and Healing Philosophy

Our Mission

At PHW-COS, our mission is simple, to help heal those who have served by offering a path to resilience, recovery, and new purpose through the art and experience of fly fishing and community. Through hands-on activities, mentorship, and real connection, we hope to help you find strength, peace, and meaning, not just on the river or lake, but in every part of your life.

Our Vision

We dream of a community where every Participant finds belonging, confidence, and joy. Where every cast, every knot tied, and every moment shared becomes a small step toward healing and hope. Where fly fishing is more than a sport, it's a bridge back to yourself, your passions, and your purpose.

Our Core Values

Compassion: We meet everyone where they are, with open hearts and without judgment.

Accountability: We hold ourselves to high standards, with kindness and integrity.

Excellence: We create a safe, caring, and skillful environment where healing can happen naturally.

Community: We believe that healing happens best *together*, not alone. We lift each other up, and support one another

Our Healing Philosophy: Whole Health Resilience

At PHW-COS, we believe that healing is not a straight line, it's a living, breathing ecosystem. Our approach is grounded in Whole Health Resilience (**WHR**), recognizing that true well-being flows through four essential pillars:

- **Mental Health** (focus, clarity, and peace of mind)
- **Emotional Health** (self-confidence, emotional regulation, and hope)
- **Social Health** (relationships, belonging, and connection)
- **Spiritual Health** (rediscovering purpose and meaning)

Through simple acts - tying a fly, casting into quiet waters, building a rod or a net, laughing around a campfire, we activate these pillars gently, one moment at a time.

Our hope is to help you move forward, become stronger, deeper, and more connected, into everything that lies ahead.



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Casting Forward: Your Healing Pathway

At PHW-COS, we believe that healing is a journey, not a race, not a competition, and not a checklist. It's a personal path, shaped by your own pace, your own hopes, and experiencing your own moments along the way.

We call this journey *Casting Forward*.

It's a simple way to think about how growth naturally happens over time through fly fishing, community, and self-discovery. There are three general phases you might experience, but remember, each person's path is different, and there's no right or wrong way to travel it.

Phase 1: Foundations on the Water

Stepping Into the Current: Wader | Just stepping in, learning the rhythm of the river.

This is where it all begins, getting your feet wet (sometimes literally!). You'll learn the basics: how to cast, how to tie flies, how to build a rod or a net. You'll meet people, connect with nature, and hopefully start to rebuild a sense of trust, in yourself, in others, in the possibilities ahead.

There's no rush here. Every small win - a cast that feels right, a fly tied with your own hands, is a big step forward.

Phase 2: Into the Current

Stepping Into the Current: Angler | Comfortable and confident in the water, finding your rhythm.

As you grow more confident, you might find yourself wanting to dive deeper, learning more advanced techniques, fishing more independently, or even exploring ways to give back a little to others.

This phase is about ownership, not just of skills, but of your own story. You start shaping your healing journey in a way that feels meaningful to you.

Phase 3: Casting Forward

Stepping Into the Current: Guide | Sharing the cast, helping others to find their rhythm.

Some Participants may eventually feel called to share what they've learned - mentoring others, leading classes, or simply being a steady presence for someone just starting out. If



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and when you reach this place, you'll become part of a powerful cycle of healing that lifts others as well as yourself.

It's a beautiful thing, and it happens naturally, without pressure or expectation.

Your Journey, Your Way

- Not everyone will move through every phase.
- Not everyone will want to teach, lead, or mentor, and that's perfectly okay.
- Some will find all the healing they need simply standing in the river, feeling the tug of the current and the peace it brings.
- Some will find purpose in tying a perfect fly or helping out behind the scenes.
- Some will find it in simply showing up, again and again, as part of a tribe.
- Wherever your journey takes you, we are honored to walk part of it with you. One cast, one step, one day at a time.



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4 | Your Participant Journey

Joining PHW-COS means stepping into a community where healing is personal, progress is celebrated in all its forms, and no one is ever expected to do it alone.

Your journey is yours, and there's no single way it has to look. Whether you come to every event you're selected for or just dip your toes in once in a while, you'll always be welcome at the water's edge.

Getting Started

Right from the beginning, you'll be invited to explore all kinds of opportunities:

- **Casting classes** to learn or refresh your skills
 - **Fly tying sessions** to create your own flies (and maybe find some peaceful focus)
 - **Rod building workshops** to craft your own custom rod
 - **Net building workshops** to create your own landing net
 - **Mentored fishing outings** to practice, connect, and enjoy the outdoors
 - **Social gatherings** where stories, laughter, and community grow naturally
- ✓ You don't need to know anything before you show up.
 - ✓ You don't need to bring anything but yourself.
 - ✓ We'll teach you, we'll equip you, and we'll walk beside you the whole way.

Participation and Attendance

At PHW-COS, we want every Participant to have the chance to grow, connect, and heal, but because we serve a large and vibrant community, we do have a few simple processes to help keep things fair and safe.

- **Signing Up:** You'll be able to sign up for classes, outings, and events through our PHW COS Scheduling Website.
- **Selection Process:** Signing up does not automatically guarantee selection. We do our best to match Participants with opportunities that fit their interests, skill level, and needs, but with over 600 Participants and limited space, not everyone can be selected for every activity.
- **Attendance:** If you are selected, we'll track attendance at activities, to ensure everyone is safely accounted for, and to meet insurance requirements.



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We understand that sometimes schedules change, if you're selected for an event and can't make it, please let us know. Life happens, and giving a heads-up helps us offer the opportunity to someone else who may be waiting.

A Bit About Our Team

- ✓ The entire PHW COS program is run by an all-Volunteer force.
- ✓ Every class, every trip, every connection happens because someone gives their time and heart to make it happen.
- ✓ Volunteers are all here for the same reason, to support you, to encourage you, and to walk this healing journey alongside you, one step and one cast at a time.

Opportunities Along the Way

As you get more comfortable, you may find doors opening you hadn't expected:

- Taking on more advanced classes if you want to
- Joining multi-day trips
- Helping out at events
- Becoming a steady voice of encouragement for others just starting out

All of these things are invitations, never expectations.

A Place Where You Belong

PHW-COS isn't just about fly fishing -

- ✓ It's about finding, or rebuilding, connection, confidence, and community.
- ✓ Every cast you make, every net you build, every fly you tie, every story you share or listen to, weaves you a little more into the fabric of this tribe.
- ✓ You belong here. You matter here. And we are grateful to have you as part of the Tribe.



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5 | How We Support You

At PHW-COS, you are never expected to walk this journey alone.

From the moment you join us, you'll find a community of Mentors, Volunteers, are here to support, and encourage you, by walking alongside you.

Our role is simple: to create a safe, welcoming space where you can learn, connect, grow, and heal at your own pace.

Mentors and Volunteers

- ✓ Throughout your time with PHW COS, you'll meet Mentors and Volunteers who help guide different parts of your experience.
- ✓ You might work one-on-one with a Mentor at a casting class, sit next to a Volunteer at a fly-tying table, or spend a quiet afternoon fishing with someone who's been where you are.
- ✓ Our Mentors are here to encourage, to support, and to celebrate your small wins with you. They'll meet you wherever you are and move at the pace you feel ready for.

Our Culture: Kindness, Patience, and Respect

We believe that healing starts with simple things:

- A kind word when you're learning something new
- A patient presence if you're facing a tough day
- A quiet moment shared by the water without expectations

At PHW COS, we lead with compassion... always!

- ✓ Every person's story is honored and respected.
- ✓ Mistakes are part of the learning process.
- ✓ Struggles are met with understanding.



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How to Reach Out for Support

If you ever feel unsure, stuck, or simply need someone to talk to, you're never alone. You can reach out to any of your Mentors, Instructors, or Volunteers, or contact one of our leadership team members through the PHW-COS Scheduling Website or your local Program contacts.

There's no such thing as a small question here. You matter. Your journey matters. And we are always ready to support you however we can.



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6 | Opportunities for Growth (*If You Choose*)

Healing at PHW-COS isn't just about what you learn, it's also about what you discover inside yourself. Sometimes, as confidence grows and connection deepens, Participants feel a quiet nudge to give back, to help guide others, or to take on new challenges.

- ✓ If that moment comes for you, we're here to welcome you and walk beside you.
- ✓ There's no pressure. No timeline. Just open doors, waiting if and when you're ready.

Becoming a Mentor

Some Participants eventually feel called to step into mentorship, sharing their skills, encouragement, and wisdom with others who are just beginning their own journeys.

As a Mentor, you might:

- Teach a skill you've come to love, like casting, fly tying, or net building
- Offer encouragement to someone feeling unsure or overwhelmed
- Help lead an outing or welcome new Participants at a social event

Mentorship here is about being present. And being actively engaged. It's about showing others that healing is possible because you've walked the path yourself.

Exploring Leadership Roles

For those who feel ready, there are also opportunities to help shape the future of PHW-COS:

- Supporting trips as a Trip Assistant or Trip Lead
- Helping organize classes or events
- Offering your time behind the scenes to strengthen the community

Leadership here looks different; it's less about being "in charge" and more about lifting others higher. It's about serving with heart, humility, and the understanding that we all grow stronger together.

Giving Back in Ways That Fit You

You don't have to be a Mentor or a Trip Lead to make a difference. Every encouraging word you share, every hand you lend, every moment you show up with kindness all of it ripples outward.

Healing doesn't just happen *to* you here; it also happens *through* you.



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No Pressure, Only Possibilities

Whether you feel called to help others or simply continue focusing on your own journey, you are equally valued here. Healing is deeply personal, and your path will unfold exactly the way it needs to, in your time.

We're just honored to walk it with you.



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7 | Staying Connected

Healing happens through connection, with nature, with others, and with a community that welcomes you exactly as you are.

At PHW-COS, we work hard to make sure you're always informed, included, and supported every step of the way.

How We Stay Connected

We use a few easy ways to stay in touch with you:

- **Email:** Most updates, trip sign-ups, and class information will be shared by email.
- **PHW-COS Scheduling Website:** You'll use our website to sign up for classes, outings, and events. (You can check it out anytime at cospwhschedule.com.)
- **Phone/Text:** Sometimes you may get a quick call or text from a Volunteer or Trip Lead if you're selected for an event or if there's a change.
- **Meetings and Gatherings:** We hold social gatherings and meetings where you can connect with others, hear about new opportunities, and share your journey.
- **Social Media and Website News:** We post stories, photos, and announcements to help everyone feel connected to the bigger PHW-COS family.

Who to Contact if You Have Questions

You'll never be expected to figure things out alone.

If you have a question, a concern, or just need a little help, you can reach out to:

- A Mentor or Volunteer you've met at an event
- The Trip Lead listed on your event information
- Your local PHW COS leadership team (info is available on the website and during onboarding)

There's no such thing as a small question here, we're happy to help anytime.

A Living, Breathing Community

PHW-COS isn't just a program, it's a living, breathing community that's here to walk with you, support you, and celebrate you every step of the way. Whether you're tying your first fly, landing your first trout, or simply sharing a story by the river, you're part of something bigger now. And we're grateful to have you with us!



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8 | Closing Message

Thank you for trusting PHW-COS to be part of your journey.

Thank you for stepping into something new, something that might feel a little uncertain at first, and giving it a chance to become something meaningful.

Here at PHW-COS, we believe that healing doesn't happen all at once.

- ✓ It happens one cast, one knot, one conversation, one quiet moment at a time.
- ✓ It happens when you're ready, and it unfolds at your own pace.

You are not alone here. You are surrounded by a community that believes in your strength, respects your story, and stands ready to support you, wherever your journey leads.

Whether you come for a single class, a handful of outings, or grow into a Mentor helping others, know this:

- ✓ You are seen.
- ✓ You are valued.
- ✓ And you are always welcome here.

We are proud to walk beside you, casting forward, together!