

**DRAFT FOR PUBLIC FEEDBACK**

*Public feedback period: July 9 - August 6, 2024*

# **2024 - 2028 Colorado Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan**

**“SCORP”**



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# Introduction

When people think of Colorado, they think of the great outdoors – and they come to our state as visitors or new residents because of the many opportunities to get outside and recreate. Colorado is renowned worldwide for its diverse and spectacular landscapes, abundant wildlife, and exceptional outdoor recreation experiences. This outdoor recreation is also a key part of Colorado’s economy. However, Colorado’s outdoor resources face increasing challenges today due to population growth, climate change, natural disasters, habitat and biodiversity loss, and increased demand for outdoor recreation.

As Colorado’s population grows, and outdoor recreation expands deeper into the backcountry and exists year round, we must be mindful of how these pressures impact the very things that we head outside to see. Our presence on the landscape inevitably alters natural habitats, and wildlife change annual patterns in response to human activity. It is essential to proactively plan for both outdoor recreation and conservation to ensure the natural beauty that makes Colorado unique is maintained for future generations to enjoy.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) takes this responsibility seriously. Through the development of the 2024 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), the agency is working to shape the future of outdoor recreation in the state over the next five years. The SCORP was developed using broad input from outdoor recreation partners and our increasingly diverse residents. The strategies and recommendations in this report expand on the vision from the last statewide outdoor recreation planning process completed in 2019. These goals will help ensure that we balance the needs of those who live and recreate in the state with the needs of the wildlife and landscapes affected by that recreation.

## **Land Acknowledgement**

Colorado Parks and Wildlife, through its work on the Colorado Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, honors and acknowledges that the land currently known as the State of Colorado is the traditional homelands of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Southern Ute Indian Tribe, and 46 additional federally recognized Tribes with historical and cultural ties to the State. Indigenous peoples from more than 200 Tribal Nations currently reside in Colorado. As CPW continues to build its relationship with Tribal Nations and Indigenous communities across Colorado, CPW affirms the importance of tribal consultation and advancing practices that support tribal sovereignty, priorities, history, knowledge, and experiences.

## **Why a Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan?**

Every five years, Colorado Parks and Wildlife leads the development of the SCORP. Each state must develop a SCORP to be eligible for federal funding tied to the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). To develop Colorado's 2024 SCORP, CPW actively engaged a diverse set of partners and the public for over a year to reflect on evolving challenges and opportunities facing outdoor recreation and conservation. With this input, the SCORP provides the framework to strategically allocate LWCF dollars, combined with investments from other federal, state, local and private funding programs, and collaborations with outdoor recreation providers, to promote recreational enjoyment and thoughtful conservation of Colorado's special places.

Colorado's 2024 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan is a tool that:

- Recommends shared strategies generated by partners across the state to ensure Colorado's conservation and outdoor recreation heritage is maintained and improved for future generations.
- Highlights local and statewide initiatives guiding the long-term maintenance and enhancement of Colorado's outdoor recreation resources that improve the quality of lives of Coloradans for future generations.

- Provides background information on demographics and outdoor recreation, including national and statewide trends.
  - Shares research that documents outdoor recreation interests and preferences, and highlights the economic importance of outdoor recreation to the state while also providing insights about public opinion on statewide and local priorities, and emerging issues and needs in land management.
  - Expands on [Colorado's 2019 SCORP](#) in balancing the challenge of providing quality outdoor experiences while conserving the natural resources we depend on for recreation and so much more.
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## **NOW UPDATED! Colorado's Outdoor Principles**

In 2016, Colorado became the first state in the nation to adopt outdoor principles designed to integrate conservation and recreation more closely. These principles were intended to refine an outdoor ethic that promotes recreational enjoyment alongside thoughtful conservation of Colorado's special places. The original principles helped to shape the 2019 SCORP and have now been updated for the 2024 SCORP to evolve with Colorado's changing landscapes and priorities.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife believes that the unique American public land heritage is a privilege that should benefit all. Colorado's abundant open space and diverse outdoor recreation opportunities contribute to quality of life and economic vitality, providing Coloradans with spectacular landscapes to work, play, and live. We celebrate the contributions of all outdoor interests, managers, and sectors working to sustain a healthy balance of outdoor recreation opportunities and conservation of Colorado's lands, waters, and wildlife.

For these reasons, Coloradans should feel compelled to care for and conserve landscapes, waterways, and wildlife to sustain them and eliminate conflicts for generations to come by adopting the following eight principles:

- 1. (Public Lands) Outdoor recreation and conservation require that a vast array of lands and waters be available for public access, resilient to climate change, and properly cared for.**

The availability of open space and outdoor recreation opportunities in Colorado is a privilege and a major part of what makes Colorado a desirable state to live in and a place to recreate. We should seek to increase the quality of these public lands and waterways to advance their resilience to climate change, and do so under the guidance of these eight principles.

- 2. (Accessible and Relevant) Recreation lands should be accessible and relevant to all people, reinforcing the public's desire to connect to Colorado landscapes and each other.**

Colorado public lands are a place for everyone to connect with the state's beautiful landscapes. These spaces should be welcoming and inclusive of all people, relevant to their interests in activities outdoors, and easily accessible to them.

- 3. (Private Lands) Within Colorado's breadth of land and waters, private land interests play a critical role in conservation and access to outdoor recreation. They should be involved in management through collaboration and partnerships.**

Collaboration and partnerships are necessary for conserving the natural resources and outdoor traditions that have long defined Colorado's landscape. Private landowners increase the viability of our lands, waters, and natural assets by keeping habitats connected and in a natural state. Private landowners and vested parties should be involved in collaborative dialogues whenever possible and turned to for solutions and deeper partnerships.

4. **(Working Together) Both outdoor recreation and conservation are needed to support the benefits of the outdoors, including economic well-being, personal health, and healthy lands, waters and wildlife.**

This mutual need exists because outdoor recreation helps people understand the importance of maintaining healthy, intact ecosystems. In turn, that understanding builds support for natural resource protection and stewardship, and conservation protects the land, water, and wild places upon which outdoor recreation depends.

5. **(Minimize Impact) Coloradans have an obligation to avoid, minimize, or mitigate the impacts of outdoor recreation across the places they recreate and the larger landscape through ethical outdoor behavior.**

Ethical outdoor behavior demonstrates a consciousness of recreation's effects on plants, animals, other people, and even entire ecosystems and a shared commitment to Leave No Trace. This outdoor ethic is critical and must be followed by the outdoor community and taught to future generations to protect the great outdoors.

6. **(Management and Education) Proactive management solutions that engage, educate, and connect with users are necessary to promote the care for land, water, and wildlife and provide the protections needed to maintain quality recreation opportunities.**

Engaging the public to ensure recreational opportunities are relevant and accessible, while balancing the needs of ecosystems should both educate the public, and provide insight on how to best manage our natural resources.

7. **(Science-based Decisions) Physical, biological, and social science must inform outdoor recreation management.**

Management decisions should be grounded in the best available scientific information to ensure the conservation of natural resources and the quality, relevance, and accessibility of outdoor recreation experiences.

**8. (Stable Funding) Long-term, stable, and broad funding sources are essential to protect the environment and support outdoor recreation.**

Land management agencies need adequate funding from federal, state, and local governments, supplemented by new and nontraditional funding from private and nonprofit sources.

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## **Colorado's Outdoor Recreation Priorities – 2024-2028**

Public comments, survey results, and input from the Colorado Outdoor Partnership (CO-OP) and leaders representing a broad range of outdoor interests convened on a SCORP Sprint Team informed four priority areas on which to focus over the next five years. Following the example set with the 2019 SCORP, the priorities reflect the current trends, opportunities and challenges facing Colorado's outdoor recreation resources today while promoting conservation and stewardship. The priorities are interconnected and critical components to achieving a future vision where Colorado's outdoors continue to provide rich recreation experiences while conserving wildlife habitat and the integrity of natural resources. (For background on the planning process and contributors, see page 72.)

The priority areas relate to Colorado's Outdoor Principles and integrate them into outdoor recreation and conservation efforts across the state. In addition, each of the priorities incorporates statewide considerations, including responding to an expanding and changing population, being nimble and adaptive to an evolving landscape, and building partnerships and collaborating across sectors.

These aren't just Colorado Parks and Wildlife's priorities; they are for all of Colorado. As a statewide plan, this document required high involvement from outdoor recreation stakeholders. All partners,



beyond those who helped develop the plan, are instrumental to its success and are called upon to participate in the plan's implementation.

**“Colorado’s recreation opportunities would not exist without partnerships.”**

*- EngageCPW Public Comment*

## **SCORP Core Values**

Colorado’s Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan identifies four overarching values: Collaboration, Equity, Resiliency and Education. These values encompass the four priority areas and are fundamental to achieving our objectives and advancing the strategic actions outlined in this plan. These values were agreed upon using a collaborative and participative approach. They are designed to serve as touchpoints for each priority, guiding decision-making and actions for implementing the SCORP.

**Collaboration:** Collaboration and partnerships among diverse stakeholders, including government agencies, nonprofits, businesses, and communities is key to achieving Colorado’s shared goals for outdoor recreation.

**Equity:** Equity emphasizes justice and inclusion in the distribution of resources, opportunities and outcomes, focusing on addressing systemic disparities and promoting social, economic and environmental justice.

**Resiliency:** Resiliency refers to the ability to adapt to changing environmental conditions and stressors, and to prepare for and mitigate the impacts of natural disasters and climate change.

**Education:** Education plays a crucial role in promoting awareness, empowerment and behavior change among individuals and communities, contributing to the sustainable

management and enjoyment of outdoor recreation resources for present and future generations.

## **Priority Areas**

### **Access and Opportunity**

*Goal: All Coloradans and visitors have access to and opportunity for sustainable outdoor recreation.*

### **Stewardship**

*Goal: Coloradans and visitors enjoy and care for natural and cultural resources and commit to stewarding them for future generations.*

### **Land, Water and Wildlife Conservation**

*Goal: Private and public lands and waters are conserved to support sustainable outdoor recreation, the environment, and wildlife habitat.*

### **Financial Sustainability**

*Goal: Enhanced and varied funding sources combined with greater collaboration across recreation sectors directs more resources to support outdoor recreation and conservation.*

To achieve the goals within each priority area, partners identified specific objectives and strategies, which are defined as:

**Objective:** Needed action or result necessary to achieve the goal within the priority area.

**Strategy:** Planned methods or tactics to advance objectives and achieve the goal.

## **PRIORITY 1 - Access and Opportunity**

*Goal: All Coloradans and visitors have access to and opportunity for sustainable outdoor recreation.*

In crafting the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, ensuring equitable access and inclusive participation in outdoor recreation is a top priority for fostering quality experiences and thriving communities across Colorado. This priority encompasses strategies to cultivate environments where all Coloradans and visitors, from diverse backgrounds, feel welcomed and empowered to engage with the state's natural wonders. From strengthening outreach efforts for underrepresented communities to enhancing outdoor programs and facilities, the SCORP's strategies aim to bridge gaps and break down barriers, ensuring that outdoor recreation opportunities are readily accessible to every individual. Through targeted investments in workforce development, adaptive experiences, and universal design, this plan charts a course toward a future where the Colorado outdoors is truly a place of inclusion and belonging for all.

**“More users are finding ways to access trails, stay on trails, and reduce conflicts. Maps and social media technology has helped inform users where and how to recreate.”**

*-EngageCPW Public Comment*

### **Objective I. Foster Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in the outdoors**

All Coloradans and visitors have access to and feel welcome at outdoor recreation destinations in which social, cultural, and racial diversity is reflected in programs, operations, and staffing.

**Strategy 1:** Grow and strengthen the providers and programs that connect underrepresented and [disproportionately impacted communities](#) to outdoor recreation through transportation,

education, marketing, equipment, training, mentors, and other services that address barriers to connecting with outdoor recreation.

**Strategy 2:** Promote awareness of providers and programs that connect underrepresented and disproportionately impacted communities to outdoor recreation through outreach, education, and storytelling.

**Strategy 3:** Offer multimodal opportunities, universal design, adaptive experiences, digital accessibility, and inclusive signage and marketing to ensure all Coloradans and visitors have access to outdoor recreation destinations, natural spaces, information, and programs where they feel welcome.

**Strategy 4:** Grow and strengthen workforce development and outdoor leadership programs to advance Equity, Diversity and Inclusion with attention to opportunities for paid training and cultural competency.

## **Objective II. Expand and enhance responsible outdoor recreation opportunities**

Colorado offers a broad range of exceptional outdoor opportunities that meet residents' and visitors' growing and changing needs.

**Strategy 1:** Maintain and enhance the quality of outdoor recreation experiences and destinations through collaborative planning and holistic action.

**Strategy 2:** Identify and pursue priority opportunities for expanding access and destinations for responsible outdoor recreation, including the establishment of new parks, trails, and open spaces collaborating across sectors and with Outdoor Regional Partnerships (see page 76 for more on Colorado's Outdoor Regional Partnerships).

**Strategy 3:** Identify and improve close-to-home access to outdoor recreation destinations and natural spaces measured as within a 10-mile drive or 10-minute walk from residential areas while also improving public and multimodal transportation to and from recreation opportunities.

**Strategy 4:** Support the growth and development of the outdoor recreation workforce to meet the public's demand for services, equipment, and experiences, while identifying and advancing new ways to accelerate training and entry into outdoor recreation careers.

### **Objective III. Expand and enhance resources, capacity and data**

Outdoor recreation data, tools, and Indigenous knowledge inform outdoor recreation planning and management.

**Strategy 1:** Develop a shared understanding and criteria for assessing the quality of recreation experiences and best practices for monitoring and mitigating impacts to these experiences to inform planning and management.

**Strategy 2:** Support collaboration with Indigenous organizations and governments to incorporate Indigenous perspectives and knowledge into design and development of outdoor recreation sites.

**Strategy 3:** Enhance and coordinate data collection to better understand recreation use, patterns, and gaps and integrate into regional and statewide planning efforts.

**Strategy 4:** Support the development, coordination and integration of data-sharing tools and applications for governmental and nongovernmental partners to inform recreation planning and management.

### **Project Features for Advancing Access and Opportunity**

## **Mapping Inclusive Playgrounds**

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) has developed a [map of inclusive playgrounds](#) in Colorado to increase access to play spaces for all ages and abilities. With one in five youth (aged 0-17) in the state having a disability or special health care need, this mapping tool helps connect individuals to sensory-rich environments and play experiences so they can develop physically, socially and emotionally. In addition, parks and recreation professionals can learn how inclusive playgrounds are defined and best practices for planning and design efforts. This data will help identify priority communities for state-level outreach and technical assistance as well as support interventions and policy changes to create more inclusive playgrounds. The benefits of inclusive playgrounds include intergenerational social connections, sensory stimulation, and outdoor access so all individuals, regardless of age or ability, can play in Colorado.

## **Safe Routes to Parks**

In 2022-2023, Colorado was one of three states that participated in the inaugural cohort of the Safe Routes to Parks Accelerator Program with interagency collaboration from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and the Colorado Department of Transportation. With support from Safe Routes Partnership, state agencies worked together over the last year to create a Safe Routes to Parks Action Plan to enhance coordination, align planning processes, connect existing grants and technical assistance opportunities, and make it easier to install infrastructure for biking, walking, rolling, and access to transit to parks.

The 2024 Safe Routes to Parks Colorado Activating Communities program builds upon interagency work to provide hands-on coaching and planning assistance, along with a \$10,000 award to four local nonprofit organizations in the state of Colorado to develop and initiate an action-oriented strategy to make their local parks safer, accessible, and easier for people to get to by walking, biking, and rolling – especially in low-income communities and communities of color where less investment has gone into

the routes to and the amenities within parks. The following communities are participating in the program: Paonia, Wellington, Wheat Ridge, and Boulder.

**\*ACCOMPLISHMENT FROM 2019 SCORP\***

**Colorado Trail Explorer App**

[Colorado Parks and Wildlife's Colorado Trail Explorer](#) app (COTREX) provides a user-friendly public map of Colorado's trails on local, state and federal lands, containing over 45,000 miles of designated trails across 230 management entities and data sources. The app provides official, high-quality trail information for motorized and non-motorized trail visitors, including summer and winter activities. Users can review allowed use types, active closures and advisories, wildfire alerts, weather forecasts, driving directions, elevation profiles and trip mileage, and download maps for offline use, all for free.

Unlike most outdoor apps, COTREX is unique in that it contains only sanctioned information submitted directly from official agency sources, supporting SCORP priorities focused on sustainable access and opportunity while balancing stewardship and conservation. With over 1.4 million visitors and 100,000 accounts created since its inception, the app has become a highly popular and indispensable tool for residents and visitors alike. In 2023 alone, the public viewed over 13 million pages across web and mobile applications. Based on the average cost of similar apps on the market, COTREX (as a free service) provides over \$2.7 million in value to the public annually.

In addition to the public popularity of the app, the program currently serves over three dozen government partners who utilize the app's real-time advisory system to communicate critical trail closure and safety information to the public. Partners, spanning city, county, state and federal entities, as well as regional partnership groups like NoCo Places have posted over 1,000 public advisories on the platform related to habitat protection, important trail events, wildfire and prescribed burn notices, and public safety concerns. COTREX is also recognized as a national model for successful outdoor recreation app development and management. Multiple states interested in replicating the program's success have approached the state for advice and insights into what has made COTREX a sustained success over the years.

## **Boulder County's CRISP Plan**

Boulder County Parks & Open Space department (BCPOS) developed its [Cultural Responsiveness & Inclusion Strategic Plan \(CRISP\)](#) to foster greater engagement of the Boulder County Latinx Community in the full range of opportunities available through Boulder County Parks and Open Space. The overall purpose of the CRISP was to add a cultural responsiveness and inclusion lens to all that the BCPOS does. The recommendations and results of the CRISP will have effects across the entire community by serving as a model for future efforts to increase the department's engagement with other underserved groups in Boulder County. Overall, the CRISP will help the department be a more welcoming, inclusive and responsive department to all communities in Boulder County, focusing on those that have historically not been included, felt welcome, had their voices heard, or reaped the benefits provided by the department.

## **Fishers Peak: Colorado's 42nd State Park!**

In February 2019, the collaborative efforts of the City of Trinidad, Las Animas County, The Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Land, Great Outdoors Colorado, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife led to the purchase of the Fishers Peak property. By April 2020, CPW officially acquired the 19,200-acre property, designating it as Colorado's 42nd state park through an executive order by Governor Jared Polis. Formal approval from the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission in July 2020 resulted in naming the property as Fishers Peak State Park. Characterized by rugged topography, diverse ecosystems, abundant wildlife, and the prominent Fishers Peak at 9,633 feet, the park serves as a crucial corridor for wildlife movement, hosting successful raptor nests and rare species like the endangered New Mexico meadow jumping mouse.

Initiating tribal consultation in October 2020, the master plan process commenced. Tribes from Montana, Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, and Oklahoma have expressed some level of interest and participation throughout this process. Tribes were invited to workshops over multiple days to come together and engage with the park manager and planning staff to build relationships and



community over this shared sacred space. While discussions with Tribes started around the visitor center, they quickly grew to include a park-wide perspective. The Tribes bring a range of historical context and perspective, and we heard that they'd like to continue their historical ties to this area into the future. It has been a meaningful process with these Tribes that goes beyond traditional consultation by extending an invitation at the beginning of the planning process, prioritizing their ability to remain connected to this land, and listening and incorporating their input into park design considerations. We are grateful for the contributions of these Tribes throughout this process and excited to continue to build on this momentum at Fishers Peak and beyond.

In addition to tribal engagement, hunting opportunities were introduced in 2020 through a special draw system, and in the first year of CPW ownership, the Fishers Peak Trailhead, spanning 250 acres with hiking trails and picnic areas, was opened to the public. The [website](#) created for the master planning process, offers maps and reports on park features, habitat sensitivity and community surveys.

In 2021, over 100 organizations participated in master plan discussions, covering various topics from natural resources to diversity, equity and inclusion. In late 2022, with the master plan nearing completion, an additional 12 miles of newly constructed trails were opened for hikers and mountain bikers, attracting around 2,000 visitors in FY22. And in November of 2023, the trail to Fishers Peak was finished, adding another four miles to the new park's trail system. Fishers Peak State Park represents remarkable collaboration, offering a diverse and accessible natural haven for the community.

## **PRIORITY 2 - Stewardship**

*Goal: Coloradans and visitors enjoy and care for natural and cultural resources and commit to stewarding them for future generations.*

Coloradans love our outdoors, but all recreationists need to become personally invested in the stewardship of our lands and natural resources. This priority focuses on developing a stronger ethic

among everyone who spends time in our public lands and open spaces, preventing further degradation to landscapes and respecting enjoyable recreational experiences for all. Recreationists need to be part of the solution for stewardship of our natural and cultural resources.

Some of this can be accomplished through outdoor volunteer stewardship organizations that provide an important source of support in maintaining recreational land use, rehabilitating areas damaged by floods and fire, educating the public about natural resources, and cultivating leaders who care for public lands. As an example, in 2023 Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado completed nearly 100 volunteer projects across Colorado, with 2,673 volunteers contributing 19,643 hours for a total donated labor value of \$674,934 (Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado 2024). This helps address some land and trail management issues, but it is essential that every individual who spends time in Colorado's great outdoors respects these natural areas and shares in the responsibility of sustaining them.

**“As a coach in the Colorado High School Mountain Bike League, I saw firsthand how giving a diverse group of high school students access to a fun and healthy sport improved their mental health and well-being. Part of the requirement of getting a varsity letter was volunteering to do at least eight hours of trail work. This has taught the kids the value of trail stewardship and the balance of recreation and conservation. I believe continuing to push the objectives that foster the healthy use of our outdoor spaces serves our community well.”** *-EngageCPW Public Comment*

## **Objective I. More Coloradans and visitors share Colorado Stewardship Values**

Educated and empowered users self-regulate and employ a stewardship ethic while environmental literacy and experiential education opportunities are expanded.

**Strategy 1:** Enhance partnerships to promote responsible and resilient recreation practices and to educate the public on rules, safety protocols, and the importance of stewardship, including Leave No Trace principles, Do Colorado Right, and user-led education programs such as the motorized Stay the Trail program.

**Strategy 2:** Improve and promote Colorado Trail Explorer (COTREX) application as a resource for providing information on access, land management, trail updates, seasonal wildlife closures, and responsible use.

**Strategy 3:** Support existing programs and expand opportunities for youth engagement through youth-focused environmental education and outdoor recreation learning initiatives.

**Strategy 4:** Promote environmental literacy opportunities as part of the K-12 curriculum.

**Strategy 5:** Support collaboration with Indigenous organizations and governments to incorporate Indigenous perspectives, knowledge, and stories into outreach and education materials.

## **Objective II. Stewardship messages align across Colorado**

Consistent messaging and education efforts promoting stewardship practices reach Coloradans and visitors across multiple platforms.

**Strategy 1:** Use partnerships and networks to develop and share consistent, coordinated, and targeted messages through digital platforms, toolkits, training, and other resources that are easily available to partners across the state.

**Strategy 2:** Provide consistent messages across a broad array of communication platforms including print, television, and social media, with consideration for language and accessibility barriers.

**Strategy 3:** Promote and use Colorado Tourism Office resources, messages, and campaigns that offer tested and effective messaging for reaching Coloradans and visitors.

### **Objective III. Enhance stewardship volunteer & workforce network**

A strengthened stewardship workforce and volunteer network increase impact and exemplify the contributions of volunteers.

**Strategy 1:** Increase capacity for paid Youth Corps/Conservation Corps crews, agency internship programs, pathway fellowships, and other new and expanding opportunities to grow future stewardship leaders and workforce.

**Strategy 2:** Support existing programs and expand opportunities for youth engagement and training through experiential education and stewardship programs.

**Strategy 3:** Develop and share stories of stewardship impact in natural resources conservation, citizen science, and restoration of trails, campgrounds and other recreation assets.

**Strategy 4:** Build and support the network of Backcountry Search and Rescue (BSAR) volunteers and partners and enhance collaboration across BSAR communities and partnering organizations.

## **Project Features for Advancing Stewardship**

### **Destination Stewardship**

In 2022, Colorado's tourism industry reached new heights, reflected in record levels of travel spending, visitation and employment opportunities. As a cornerstone of the state's economy, it is crucial that the tourism industry's success generates a positive return for the host communities that provide the support and infrastructure necessary for travelers. The Colorado Tourism Office recognized these concerns and created the [Destination Stewardship](#) department, which was the first of its kind within a

U.S. state tourism office. The department's task is to develop a strategic framework for balancing state residents' quality of life, as well as the health of neighboring natural landscapes, while providing a world-class experience for visiting recreationists.

The Destination Stewardship department's core goals are to: 1) protect the integrity of Colorado's natural and cultural resources, 2) advance inclusivity through avenues for Colorado to share a welcoming experience with all visitors, and 3) foster a regenerative and community-focused approach to tourism. The department has also identified seven shared industry priorities: advancing off-peak tourism opportunities, advancing the tourism workforce, championing the value of tourism, developing and enhancing visitor experiences, encouraging responsible and respectful use, fostering inclusive travel opportunities, and promoting local businesses and experiences.

Since July 2023, the department has hosted workshops, webinars and interviews with over 500 industry and community stakeholders. The insights from this effort will inform the development of a statewide Destination Stewardship Plan that will be mirrored by eight distinct regional plans.

### **Care for Colorado**

In 2020, the Colorado Tourism Office and Leave No Trace founded the Care for Colorado coalition, an alliance that now includes more than 170 statewide organizations, agencies and businesses. The coalition is dedicated to educating Coloradans and visitors on how to protect the state's extraordinary natural and cultural resources, in particular through the Care for Colorado Leave No Trace Principles and the "Do Colorado Right" marketing campaign.

The seven Care for Colorado Leave No Trace Principles are:

1. Know Before You Go
2. Stick To Trails
3. Leave It As You Find It

4. Trash the Trash
5. Be Careful With Fire
6. Keep Wildlife Wild
7. Share Our Parks & Trails

**“As a volunteer for CPW, I have seen successes in the development and implementation of Leave No Trace programs to educate visitors about being good stewards of our resources. I have also seen the challenge of getting people to truly practice the Leave No Trace ethics.” - *EngageCPW Public Comment***

## **Outside 285**

Highway 285 provides easy access from Denver into the foothills and mountain communities southwest of the city. The rapid growth in the metropolitan region has led to increased trail use along the 285 corridor – a trend that was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. This has resulted in crowding of popular areas, degradation of trails and infrastructure, increased conflict, increased pressure on wildlife, and an overall loss of solitude. To address these issues, the [Outside 285](#) Partnership convened a broad group of stakeholders to explore tactics for protecting wildlife habitat, encouraging responsible trail use, and improving trail-based recreation facilities. The planning area encompasses about 550,000 acres of public lands across Clear Creek, Douglas, Jefferson and Park counties. The partnership developed a habitat analysis to identify, prioritize and map sensitive wildlife habitat within the planning area, and in October 2021 a [Master Plan](#) was released to provide a blueprint for conserving wildlife habitat while improving trail-based recreation experiences.

The planning team received proposals for over 130 trail and trailhead improvement projects and 17 conservation and enhancement efforts. After carefully considering environmental impact, land manager compatibility, recreation benefit, and overall feasibility, the Master Plan recommended implementing 58 trail projects including 26 new trails that add approximately 120 miles to the region. In addition, 17 parking improvement projects and five new trailheads were supported along with 11 target areas for private land conservation and five target areas for habitat restoration. The plan also called out 10 management and implementation recommendations that included adding Outside 285 as a formal partnership under CPW's Outdoor Regional Partnerships Initiative.

### **Backcountry Search and Rescue**

With the growth in outdoor recreation, Colorado has also seen increasing recreation in the backcountry – and unfortunately, some are not prepared for the challenge or face an emergency situation. [Colorado Backcountry Search and Rescue \(BSAR\)](#) organizations are volunteer-based and provide search and rescue services throughout Colorado, free of charge, to those stranded, lost or injured in the backcountry. Last year, 34 (of 45) BSAR counties contributed over 83,000 volunteer person-hours for backcountry emergency incident response, but funding is necessary to reimburse volunteers for expenses incurred during a response or for county purchase of needed equipment and member training. Annually, about \$600,000 has been generated to support these volunteer efforts through surcharges on hunting/fishing licenses, OHV/snowmobile permits/licenses, sale of Colorado Outdoor Recreation Search and Rescue (CORSAR) cards, avalanche safety programs through the [Colorado Avalanche Information Center](#), and grant funds and reimbursements to Colorado counties and nonprofit backcountry search and rescue organizations. This year the program will receive increased funding as one of the programs designated to receive revenues from the new Keep Colorado Wild pass.

Based on reported recreational activities prompting an emergency BSAR response, most injuries (53%) occur while hiking/climbing/mountaineering.

#### **\*ACCOMPLISHMENT FROM 2019 SCORP\***

##### **Planning Trails with Wildlife in Mind**

Colorado is experiencing rapid growth in outdoor recreation, posing challenges for conservation of the wild places and wildlife that are a key part of recreationists' connection to the outdoors. In 2020, CPW assembled a task force of agency partners and diverse stakeholders to identify challenges and develop solutions for striking a balance with trail management. The team produced [Colorado's Guide to Planning Trails with Wildlife in Mind](#) in June 2021 and highlighted how trail planning is an invaluable tool for reducing recreation's footprint on a landscape. When designed according to a framework that seeks to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts to wildlife, trails can redirect visitors away from sensitive core habitat and concentrate use in areas capable of withstanding heavier pressure.

Human dimensions research has found that recreationists often perceive their own activities as benign, while placing responsibility for wildlife impacts on other user groups. As a result, collaboration and community buy-in serve as the foundation of the task force's recommendations. Trail planning must also be grounded in species-specific considerations, since best practices may vary for species as elusive or easily stressed as Canada lynx or lekking Greater sage-grouse, compared to species more tolerant to human activity. When trail planners aspire beyond the assumption that recreation and wildlife are inherently at odds, such win-win outcomes can be achieved.

##### **Good OHV Management Trail Crew Projects**

Funded by user registration fees from OHV users, Colorado Parks and Wildlife's OHV Good Management Program is an agreement between the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Land Management, and CPW that was born out of a need to proactively maintain high-use, motorized



recreation areas on federal lands. Good Management trail crews include two or three full-time crew members that are deployed during the summer and fall recreation seasons to take a holistic management approach that preserves riding opportunities while protecting sensitive resources. These trail crews use “best practices” to maintain and restore OHV riding areas through trail maintenance, monitoring, signing, education and mapping. Crews also promote public safety by checking OHV operators for registration and required equipment. Although enforcement is not the main part of their job, crews working on USFS land can also cite operators and issue warnings for off-route use and other resource damage violations.

### **PRIORITY 3 - Land, Water & Wildlife Conservation**

*Goal: Private and public lands and waters are conserved to support sustainable outdoor recreation, the environment, and wildlife habitat.*

Colorado’s land, water and wildlife are the foundation for our recreation opportunity. It is the roaring rivers, the rugged peaks, and the opportunity to see iconic wildlife species in their native habitats that draw people to get outside and recreate. However, it’s the natural and cultural resources that we all love that are the most vulnerable to overuse and long-term damage. This priority provides objectives and strategies to avoid or minimize the impacts that outdoor recreation can have on our beloved natural areas.

Everyone who recreates in our state should understand that every outdoor recreation passion has an effect on the landscape. Developing processes to promote responsible recreation and manage use are essential to conserving sensitive areas and reducing disturbance to wildlife. Recreation and conservation planners must work together – and with the public – to identify and implement the practices that will make a real difference on the ground. In addition, they must now factor the stresses from our changing climate with the stresses caused by recreational use. Working together to advance

responsible recreation is essential to ensure that our land, water and wildlife are more resilient to the

Colorado's recreation sector can take meaningful actions to reduce their carbon footprint by installing electric vehicle charging stations, encouraging carpooling, powering infrastructure with renewable energy, and diverting organic waste from landfills.

many challenges they face.

## **Objective I. Address recreation impacts to help conserve important habitat and species**

Natural and cultural resources are less impacted by outdoor recreation due to enhanced planning, management, conservation and restoration.

**Strategy 1:** Improve, implement and promote the use of COTREX (Colorado Trail Explorer) to guide recreational activities to areas open and designated for outdoor recreation.

**Strategy 2:** Incorporate wildlife considerations outlined in Colorado's Guide for Planning Trails with Wildlife in Mind into trail planning processes to avoid, minimize, and mitigate disturbance to sensitive habitats and species.

**Strategy 3:** Use or conduct ecological assessments and conservation mapping tools such as CODEX to identify wildlife corridors and sensitive areas to better understand and avoid these areas in recreation planning and development.

**Strategy 4:** Conduct assessments to identify unauthorized trails in sensitive areas, prioritize these for removal and restoration, and then collaborate with land managers, outdoor recreation and conservation groups to implement trail removal projects.

**Strategy 5:** Improve infrastructure in high-use designated recreation areas, such as parking, camping, waste management, signage, etc. to help concentrate use in suitable areas.

## **Objective II. Advance climate resilient recreation and conservation**

Communities and ecosystems are prepared for climate-related threats and hazards, to adapt to changing conditions and to rapidly recover from adverse conditions and disruptions.

**Strategy 1:** Improve understanding of how natural areas and recreation destinations may respond to climate change over time and assess the range of possible impacts to recreation and conservation to inform management and planning.

**Strategy 2:** Collaborate with land managers and partner organizations to share resources, outcomes, and best practices for climate resilience in recreation and conservation, including adaptation action menus, through frameworks such as Colorado's Outdoor Strategy.

**Strategy 3:** Integrate natural disaster and natural hazard response plans into recreation planning and management to ensure safety of recreation users during emergency events, such as wildfires, flooding, and extreme weather.

**Strategy 4:** Design and implement climate-resilient conservation projects where public open spaces enhance ecosystem services, wildlife corridors, and biodiversity, identifying a few pilot projects to exemplify stories of success.

## **Project Features for Advancing Land, Water & Wildlife Conservation**

### **Collaborating for Forest Health**

For recreationists across Colorado, aspects of physical and psychological health are linked to their ability to spend time in forests. As crowded tree density, unusually warm temperatures, and prolonged

drought escalate wildfire risk in the wildland-urban interface, the public's well-being and safety have become rooted in forest health. These stressors also increase the susceptibility of forests to bark beetle infestations and disease, resulting in acres of dead or dying stands with diminished recreational value and greater potential for fire. The scale and pace of these impacts demand solutions capable of spanning organizational, jurisdictional, and landscape boundaries to ensure resiliency of these forests and nearby communities.

In a [Shared Stewardship](#) approach, the USDA Forest Service seeks to share decision space with state and tribal foresters and other partners to determine land management needs at the state and tribal level. A Shared Stewardship agreement was formalized in Colorado in 2019 when the U.S. Department of Agriculture (which includes the U.S. Forest Service) and the State of Colorado [memorandum of understanding \(MOU\)](#) to establish a Shared Stewardship framework for all lands in the state. Colorado's Department of Natural Resources is working with partners at the Colorado State Forest Service, Division of Fire Prevention and Control, and others, to advance Shared Stewardship in Colorado.

The same year, the National Wild Turkey Federation and USDA Forest Service established the Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative as a stakeholder-driven collaborative to showcase the Shared Stewardship strategy. The initiative mobilizes over 40 partners representing local, state and federal governments, NGOs, private citizens and corporations. These stakeholders identified Southwest Colorado, the Upper Arkansas, and the Upper South Platte as three priority landscapes for addressing the most critical challenges facing Colorado's forests.

In December 2019, Southwest Colorado was unanimously selected as the first focal area for restoration efforts on over 300,000 acres of public and private lands, and over the last four years partners have treated 83,123 acres. The Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative's vision is to serve as a model for resilient landscapes and livelihoods in rural communities across the West.

### **Celebrating Colorado's Beautiful Birds**

Gracing Colorado's skies with vibrant colors and sounds ranging from the melodious to the striking, birds stand out for their ability to capture the attention of outdoor recreationists. Birding can open Coloradans' eyes to the stunning diversity of species that exists in their own backyards. Yet, so many opportunities to learn and explore can seem daunting to novice birders. Where to start to find species as varied as tropical migrants or booming prairie chickens? The [Colorado Birding Trail](#) offers a comprehensive answer, outlining a network of 54 trails and nearly 800 sites for wildlife-watching throughout the state. Birders seeking a self-guided tour of Western Colorado, the Rocky Mountains, or the Eastern Plains will find vividly illustrated trail guides and upcoming events on the affiliated website. The Colorado Birding Trail has also opened access to private agricultural lands, allowing birders to view sought-after grassland species like Mountain Plovers, and in turn helping diversify rural economies. For these accomplishments, the trail was granted the Palmer Land Trust's Innovation in Conservation Award in 2015.

Another way to engage with birding enthusiasts or new birders is to host a birding event, and Castlewood Canyon State Park has focused on a more peculiar bird to celebrate in the spring. Though not collecting the same accolades of beauty as other species, turkey vultures play a vital role in disease control, consuming carrion and transforming it into soaring life. Colorado's largest vulture roosts gather at Castlewood Canyon each summer, inspiring park staff to establish it as the site for an annual Welcome Back Turkey Vulture Day. To celebrate the birds' return, visitors of all ages have been invited to participate in naturalist-led hikes, art activities, and games, as well as listen to performances by Indigenous storytellers. Events like this make Colorado a premier state to view a variety of America's most captivating birdlife.

### **Colorado's Wildlife Connectivity**

Coloradans' avid participation in outdoor recreation directly translates to a greater number of vehicles on the road, as anyone who has sat in bumper-to-bumper ski traffic has experienced. Even though one may be deeply invested in wildlife conservation and viewing opportunities at their destination, it is easy

to forget that animals can experience impacts along the very routes we take to visit wild places. Around 4,000 incidents of wildlife-vehicle collisions are reported in Colorado yearly, resulting in \$66.3 million in medical expenses ([Colorado Wildlife & Transportation Alliance, 2020](#)). Whether obstructing mountain lions' movement through traffic, or degrading amphibian habitat through chemical runoff, roads themselves carry sweeping consequences for wildlife survival and reproduction. Each year up to 9,000 individual mule deer are killed on highways, contributing to an annual loss of 2% of Colorado's big game populations ([Colorado Wildlife & Transportation Alliance, 2020](#)). These needless deaths diminish opportunities for the millions of recreationists drawn to Colorado in hopes of hunting mule deer across vast shrublands, or experiencing the antler-clashing drama of the fall elk rut. An equally broad coalition of voters calls for safeguarding wildlife corridors, with 89% of Coloradans supporting the construction of wildlife crossing structures across major highways ([Colorado College, 2023](#)).

With the safety of people and wildlife alike in mind, CPW and CDOT partnered in 2016 to construct Colorado's first wildlife overpass and underpass system along Highway 9. Inspired by this effort's 90% reduction in wildlife-vehicle collisions, CPW and CDOT have established 63 additional wildlife crossings around the state, and continue to draw on funds provided through passage of the Safe Crossing for Wildlife and Motorists Act in 2022. When completed, the I-25 Greenland Wildlife Overpass Project may produce one of the largest crossings in the country. Alongside these infrastructure improvements, CPW is developing spatial tools to map big game winter ranges and migration corridors and identify priority landscapes for a statewide habitat conservation plan. Through collaborations that span state agencies and recreation groups, Coloradans are demonstrating their enduring commitment to wildlife connectivity.

## **\*ACCOMPLISHMENT FROM 2019 SCORP\***

### **Wildlife Decision Support Tools for Recreation**

In Chaffee County, wildlife like bighorn sheep, mountain goats and elk are a key attraction, but these iconic species face increasing population threats, partly due to heavy recreational uses. The county notes that 65% of key wildlife populations are currently in decline, yet 95% of outdoor enthusiasts in the area support managing recreation to protect wildlife, with wildlife being the single most important factor for unifying recreationists around a shared value. This common ground inspired Envision Chaffee County to develop a [Recreation Management Plan](#) to guide recreation and conservation strategies under the broad vision of Keep it Clean, Keep it Fun, Keep it Wild and Keep it Going.

**“We will support wildlife populations by mapping critical habitat to focus improvements in the right areas and inform voluntary seasonal restriction strategies to give wildlife a break.”**

*- Envision Chaffee County Keep it Wild vision*

The partners responded to the growing body of evidence demonstrating that recreation can displace wildlife from critical winter ranges and production (i.e., calving or nesting) areas, effectively diminishing habitat availability and decreasing the survival of young. The partnership’s Recreation Council created a wildlife decision tool for recreational planning to identify areas that are most important to protect, enhance or restore; the areas where recreation needs to be carefully managed to support wildlife; and areas that are great for recreation development with low resulting negative effects on wildlife. The resulting [map](#) combines data on recreation impacts and habitat quality, drawing on an array of sources including trail counter data, Strava’s global heatmap, local manager experience, campground use data, and GIS species habitat layers.

By pairing innovative tools with community support, Envision Chaffee County’s toolkit will continue to advance recreation managers’ abilities to understand and mitigate impacts to wildlife. These planning efforts haven’t stopped – the partnership is creating a [Trails System & Conservation Plan](#) that will build on their existing recreation and infrastructure planning process.

## **Colorado's Wildfire Resiliency: Restoring Impacts from the East Troublesome Fire in the Sulphur Ranger District**

Collaborative efforts across the USDA Forest Service Sulphur Ranger District, Colorado Parks and Wildlife's State Trails Program, off-highway vehicle (OHV) users, Colorado Youth Corps Association, and Rocky Mountain Youth Corps led to the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the William's Fork and Grand Lake OHV trail systems following the devastating impacts of the 2020 East Troublesome Fire. These trails on the Arapaho National Forest in Grand County required extensive rehabilitation, including erosion control, signage installation, and rebuilding of trail infrastructure. The Grand Lake trail crew, alongside five Rocky Mountain Youth Corps crews, focused on sustainable trail design and fire rehabilitation techniques to improve 16,405 feet of trails and 728 feet of bridges, install 1,990 feet of ditches, 300 feet of turnpike, and 26 french drains, construct 4,952 feet of fencing, and armor 125 feet of streams. These are just some of the accomplishments that will enhance trail resilience, manage water flow, and rehabilitate fire-damaged areas for long-term trail viability. This project succeeded because multiple funders and user groups came together through community service for wildland fire recovery to enhance recreation, conservation, and local economies in this area. To learn more about restoring vital OHV recreation areas and protecting sensitive ecosystems through this project, check out this [video](#) by the Colorado Youth Corps Association.

**“When you have that level of collaboration, that level of investment, that passion for changing lives and conserving landscapes, you can move mountains.”**

*- Scott Segerstrom, Colorado Youth Corps Association*

## **Kwiyagat Community Academy – Towaoc, Colorado**

The Kwiyagat Community Academy (KCA) utilized an Outdoor Equity Grant to support KCA's goal to center the school's instruction in the Ute Tribe's history, tradition and knowledge. KCA also leads



field trips for their students to experience the region's outdoor recreation parks and landscapes, from the Tribal-owned Ute Mountain Ute Farm and Ranch Enterprise to the Bureau of Land Management's Canyons of the Ancients National Monument.

The place- and culture-based integration of the Ute Tribe's history and knowledge in KCA's instruction helps students see the linkage between the natural environment, their community, recreation opportunities, and their culture. Students learn the common and Ute names of wildlife in the region, they explore nearby places where wildlife live, and the participation by Ute Tribe community members in classroom sessions and field trips directly shows students the importance of the natural environment to Tribal culture and tradition. Through this approach students learn valuable Tribal knowledge, and experience field trip destinations as more than places to visit, but as a way to connect to and experience their culture.

## **PRIORITY 4 - Financial Sustainability**

*Goal: Enhanced and varied funding sources combined with greater collaboration across recreation sectors directs more resources to support outdoor recreation and conservation.*

Diverse, stable long-term funding that is equitable and supported by a broad set of stakeholders is important to the success of all conservation and outdoor recreation priorities now and into the future. Current funding for these efforts in Colorado comes from a variety of sources, including the Land and Water Conservation Fund, Colorado Lottery and Great Outdoors Colorado, Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Funds (federal excise taxes on hunting and fishing equipment), hunting and fishing license fees, habitat stamps, state severance tax appropriations, local bond or sales tax spending directed to conservation, and through investments in private entities such as land trusts and recreation organizations.

Developing and sustaining partnerships helps ensure that sufficient resources are available to fulfill Colorado's collaborative conservation and outdoor recreation goals. By cultivating new partnerships, strengthening existing partnerships, and exploring and implementing new sustainable funding mechanisms at all levels, partners can work together to advance new collaborative funding opportunities. For example, Colorado Parks and Wildlife relies heavily on hunting and fishing license fees and park entrance fees to achieve its mission, and there is no mechanism for many outdoor recreationists to support wildlife conservation or fund the trails and infrastructure many Coloradans demand. Long-term trends in the state, such as changing demographics, growth in demand for outdoor recreation, and a decline in participation in hunting are expected to challenge the state's ability to adequately fund wildlife and park management and outdoor recreation.

Toward this end, CPW and the Department of Natural Resources continue to explore sustainable funding streams and ways to increase the agency's relevance in the lives of all Coloradans. The Keep Colorado Wild Pass Act that Governor Polis signed into law on June 21, 2021, is a significant change to the way Colorado's state parks are funded. New revenue is expected to support state parks, wildlife and recreation programs, Colorado Backcountry Search and Rescue, and the Colorado Avalanche Information Center. Additionally, over the last two years CPW has made consistent progress toward formalizing a Philanthropy Program. This effort includes both raising funds and distributing donated funds in support of agency programs and projects. All of these efforts have increased donor support consistently each year. In FY23, private donations totaled over \$782,000 and add-on or round-up donations added to license and pass purchases totaled over \$271,000, exceeding the overall fiscal year target of \$985,000.

With the increasing interest in Colorado's great outdoors comes increased impacts to our ecosystems, wildlife and recreational infrastructure. Balancing outdoor recreation with the conservation of natural resources and moving outdoor recreation and conservation planning in a more strategic and coordinated direction require designated and sustainable resources. One example of the focus on these types of initiatives is the increased allocation and distribution of funding to propel the Regional

Partnerships' work balancing conservation and recreation across the state. Additional support to facilitate this type of coordination, organization and local capacity is needed to ensure that funding meets community needs and addresses gaps in on-the-ground programs.

Another important component of ensuring sustainable and relevant funding for conservation and recreation priorities across the state is finding ways to simplify funding processes and reduce administrative hurdles. For partners implementing conservation and recreation projects on the ground, the grant application process and reporting requirements are often significant burdens and combining funds to increase impacts can be challenging. Steps to streamline grant processes, automate reporting and facilitate partners who can combine and manage funding from a variety of sources are essential to ensure adequate resources are channeled efficiently to on-the-ground conservation and recreation projects. Programs such as RESTORE Colorado, which funds habitat restoration and stewardship projects at a large scale on both public and private land, provide important examples of this type of collaborative funding.

## **Objective I. Advance funding efficiencies, capacity and coordination**

Streamlined and coordinated funding processes remove barriers to apply for and administer funding, making it easier for communities and partners to secure financial support.

**Strategy 1:** Simplify grant application and administrative requirements by expanding coordinated and automated systems.

**Strategy 2:** Coordinate and enhance communications and outreach on available funding opportunities to increase awareness, participation and equity.

**Strategy 3:** Offer training, workshops, and technical assistance to educate stakeholders on funding processes and opportunities.

**Strategy 4:** Prioritize and adapt funding to advance more equitable distribution of resources across Colorado’s geographic regions.

**Strategy 5:** Advance public engagement and enhance capacity by offering compensation to nongovernmental community members who devote time and share their experiences in applying for funding and informing management and planning.

## **Objective II. Diversify and expand funding sources**

Diversify funding sources and explore new revenue streams that ensure consistent and equitable financial support for conservation and recreation initiatives.

**Strategy 1:** Continue to identify and pursue new funding sources to advance the work presented in the SCORP with attention to providing equitable funding across regions and sectors.

**Strategy 2:** Enhance resources dedicated for capacity and on-the-ground people and programs providing for outdoor recreation and conservation stewardship experiences and opportunities.

**Strategy 3:** Continue to engage and collaborate across sectors and with a wider community of user groups, businesses, and constituents to increase contributions and visibility for public funding initiatives.

**Strategy 4:** Advocate for consistent and equitable funding at all levels of government, including full funding support from Congress and the Colorado General Assembly.

## **Objective III. Implement new innovative collaborative funding models**

Innovative and collaborative funding initiatives pool resources to advance the priorities presented in the SCORP.

**Strategy 1:** Design and implement new collaborative funding models and larger programmatic grants that pool resources and foster coordination across sectors and jurisdictions to advance shared priorities.

**Strategy 2:** Advance regional and statewide planning efforts to assess project needs to better align statewide funding opportunities with strategic and shared priorities.

**Strategy 3:** Identify and advance collaborative funding pilot projects to demonstrate the impacts and exemplify success stories.

## **Project Features for Advancing Financial Sustainability**

### **Access to State Wildlife Areas**

Colorado's State Wildlife Areas (SWA) are acquired using hunter and angler dollars for the purpose of conserving wildlife habitat and providing wildlife-related recreation. Colorado Parks and Wildlife manages more than 350 SWAs for this purpose. As both Colorado's human population and tourism/visitation have boomed in recent years, CPW has noticed a significant trend of people engaging in activities for which these properties were not intended. These issues run the gamut from illegal camping to engaging in recreational activities that disturb and displace wildlife.

To begin to address this trend and ensure SWAs continue to exist for the benefit of wildlife, the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission voted in 2020 to require everyone who enters an SWA to possess a valid license to hunt or fish in Colorado. In 2021, the Commission voted to add the Colorado SWA Pass as another option to access these areas and contribute to wildlife conservation.

**\*ACCOMPLISHMENT FROM 2019 SCORP\***

**Keep Colorado Wild Pass**

Coloradans live life outside – and with that comes the responsibility for everyone to care for Colorado and keep it wild. The Keep Colorado Wild Pass launched January 3, 2023, as an add-on to every vehicle registration, unless drivers specifically opt out of the \$29 charge. This annual pass gives all Coloradans easy access to all Colorado state parks and the added benefit of supporting our great outdoors and wildlife in a meaningful way. The new Keep Colorado Wild Pass saves buyers more than 60% in comparison to the traditional \$80 annual state parks pass. Plus, it's way more than state park entry, the money raised from pass sales supports the state parks system, search and rescue teams, avalanche safety programs, wildlife conservation efforts, and local accessible outdoor opportunities.

In its inaugural year, the Keep Colorado Wild Pass exceeded expectations, generating \$41,088,650 from the sale of 1,490,954 passes. The initial goal was to generate at least \$36 million annually, with the first \$32.5 million going toward state park maintenance and development, the next \$2.5 million going toward backcountry search and rescue teams, and \$1 million going to the Colorado Avalanche Information Center (CAIC). Any revenue beyond that goes to wildlife projects and outdoor educational programs. While the Keep Colorado Wild Pass program operates on the July-to-June fiscal year, the first 12 months of sales means it is very likely that Colorado's search and rescue teams and CAIC will receive their full allocated funding. The Keep Colorado Wild Pass's success demonstrates the Coloradans' commitment to preserving their state's natural wonders for future generations.

**Colorado Lottery and Great Outdoors Colorado**

Colorado's natural areas, wildlife and outdoor recreation have benefited from more than 30 years of dedicated funding generated through the Colorado Lottery. In 1992, voters supported a ballot initiative to change the state's constitution to invest Lottery proceeds in the future of Colorado's outdoors through Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) and in 2018 voters reaffirmed their support for this funding. Lottery net proceeds are allocated according to this breakdown: 10% to Colorado state parks through Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW); 40% to the Colorado Conservation Trust Fund, which allocates funds to eligible local governments on a per capita basis; and up to 50% to GOCO against a constitutionally mandated cap adjusted for inflation each year. Once the cap is met, surplus

funds go to Building Excellent Schools Today, the Colorado Department of Education’s school capital construction fund, and the Outdoor Equity Fund.

GOCO funding is allocated to outdoor recreation, wildlife, local governments and open space – in substantially equal funding over time. Outdoor recreation and wildlife funding is allocated through investments in Colorado Parks and Wildlife programs and facilities, while funding from the local government and open space quadrants is awarded through [GOCO’s Competitive Grants](#) program. Since GOCO was created 30 years ago, more than \$1.4 billion in lottery proceeds have been invested back into Colorado through 5,722 projects in all 64 counties. This includes 1,173 miles of trail built or reconstructed, 1,102 miles of river protected, 1,816 parks and outdoor recreation areas created or improved, 1,391,294 acres conserved in urban and rural areas, 66,688 acres added to the State Parks system, and 10,745 young people employed through conservation service corps.

## **Economic Contribution of Outdoor Recreation**

Colorado’s outdoor recreation generates substantial economic benefits to the state through direct spending on travel and equipment. However, the economic impacts do not stop there – outdoor recreation spending has positive ripple effects across other sectors through supply purchases, wages and other factors. People and businesses are drawn to Colorado by its outdoor recreation opportunities, further driving the state’s economic engine.

Southwick Associates conducted a study for Colorado Parks and Wildlife to estimate the economic contributions of outdoor recreational activity in Colorado during 2023. Results are still in development and will be released in the final SCORP in September 2024.

# Population and Climate Trends

## *Understanding Outdoor Recreation in Colorado: Demographic Trends and Research to Guide the Future*

Outdoor recreation defines Colorado – travel marketing abounds with images of the active outdoor lifestyle that can be found in its vast open spaces. When people come to the state to visit or live, they are attracted by the beautiful landscapes and widely varied outdoor opportunities. From biking, hiking, hunting, fishing, paddling, camping, picnicking, birding or one of the many other forms of outdoor recreation, there are opportunities for everyone.

In fact, according to research conducted for the [Colorado Tourism Office](#), in 2022, the outdoors was the main purpose of travel to Colorado for 12% of tourists (more than 4% higher than the national average), and 60% of travelers enjoyed outdoor activities during their trip (12% higher than the national average) (Longwoods International 2023). In addition, 96% of residents recreated outdoors, and 72% of residents recreated at least once a week during the last 12 months (Bruyere and Teel 2024a).

In order to develop an outdoor recreation and conservation plan for the entire state, we must fully understand who the people of Colorado are, how they recreate, the challenges and opportunities faced by land managers, and the economic implications of outdoor recreation on the state's economy. These demographic trends, along with research conducted by Colorado Parks and Wildlife, helped to direct the priorities and objectives that have been developed as part of the 2024 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

90 million Americans traveled to Colorado in 2022, a nearly 7% increase from the previous year



## Colorado Population Trends

Between 2022 and 2023, Colorado experienced an increase of approximately 36,500 people to a total population of 5.8 million, ranking 21st in the United States with the 18th highest growth rate. Yet Colorado had a slower growth rate than its annual average of the previous decade; in fact, it was the slowest since the late 1980s. Thirty-seven of Colorado’s 64 counties are undergoing a natural decrease, driven by an aging population coupled with fewer births. With these changing dynamics, migration has become more of an influence on the state’s population change (Figure 1). Accordingly, net migration accounted for 52% of the state’s growth between 2022 and 2023. Forty counties – including Weld, Douglas and Adams on Colorado’s Front Range – saw a positive net migration. In fact, the Front Range accounted for 90% of the state’s population growth ([Colorado Demography Office, 2024](#)).

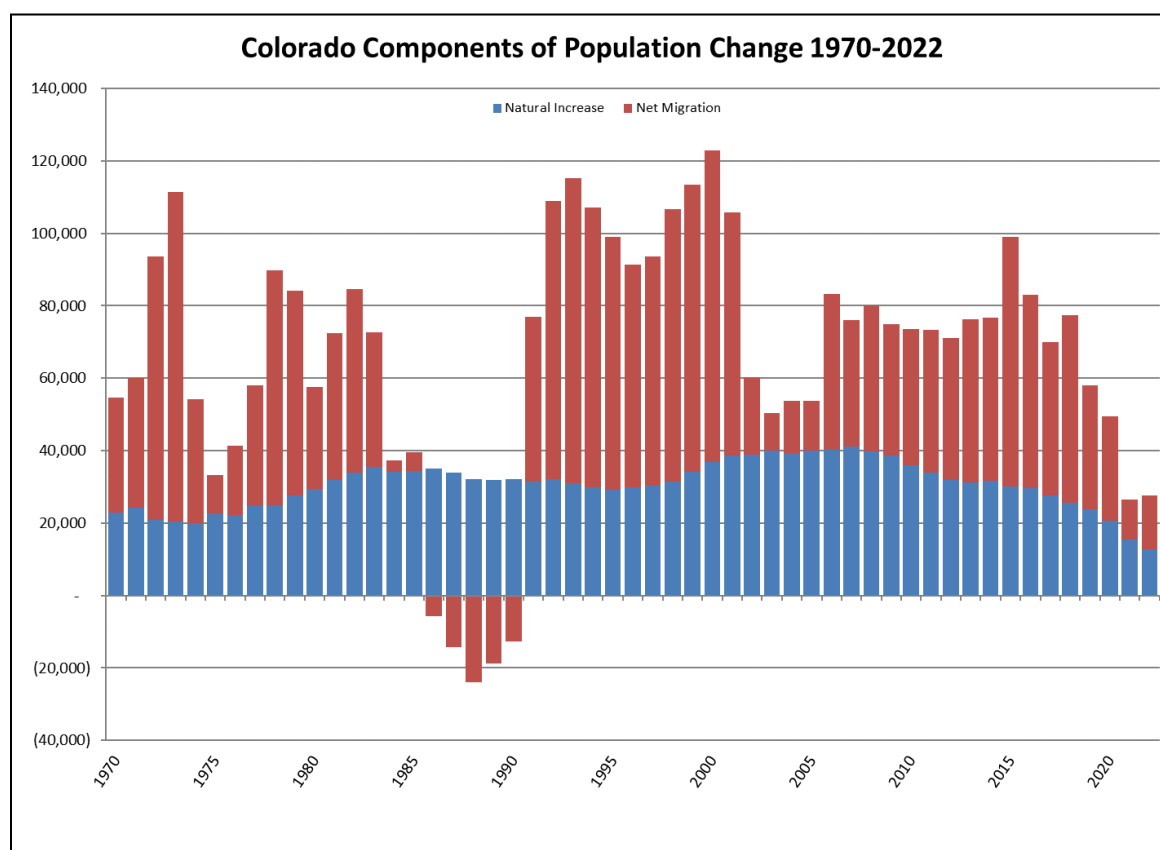


Figure 1: Colorado Components of Population Change 1970-2022 (via Colorado State Demography Office)

## Future Projections

The Front Range is anticipated to continue to act as the hub of Colorado's growth over the next few decades. The state's population is projected to number 7.5 million people by 2050, with 88% of that growth predicted to occur along the Front Range (Figure 2). The current increase in net migration is expected to yield an uptick in births in the 2030s-2040s. However, net migration will likely gradually decrease due to slower job growth from 2030-2050. Additionally, aging continues to define demographic change in Colorado. The slower job growth predicted and lower net migration expected for 2030-2050 will likely slow growth of Colorado's younger populations, instead shifting that growth to people aged 65 and older ([Colorado State Demography Office, 2024](#)) (Figure 3).

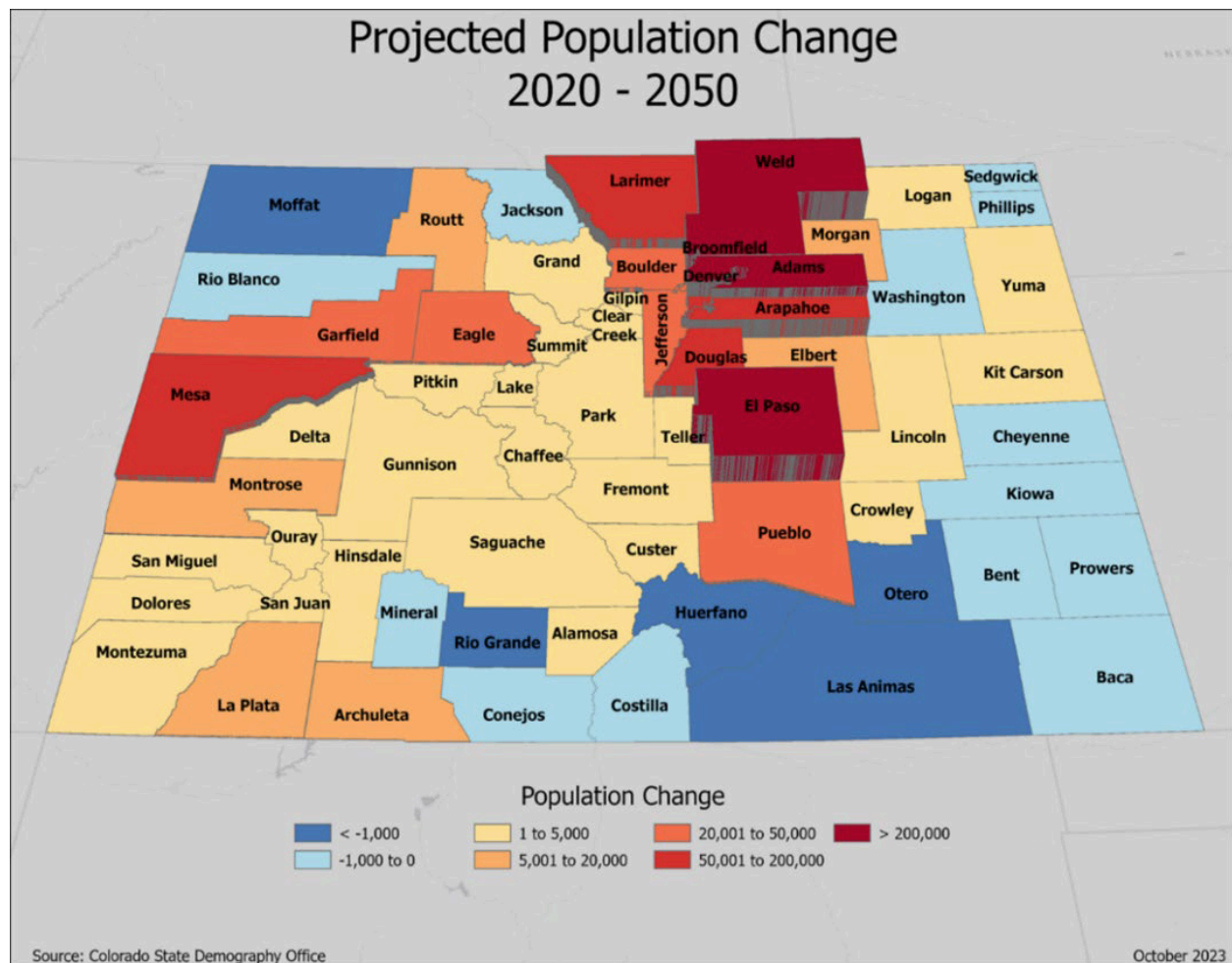
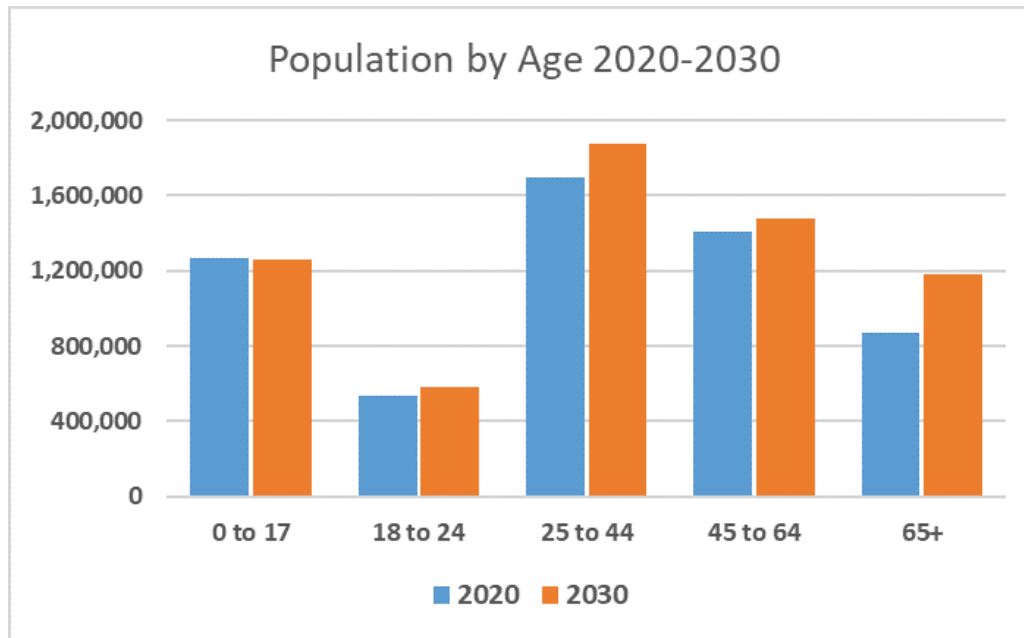


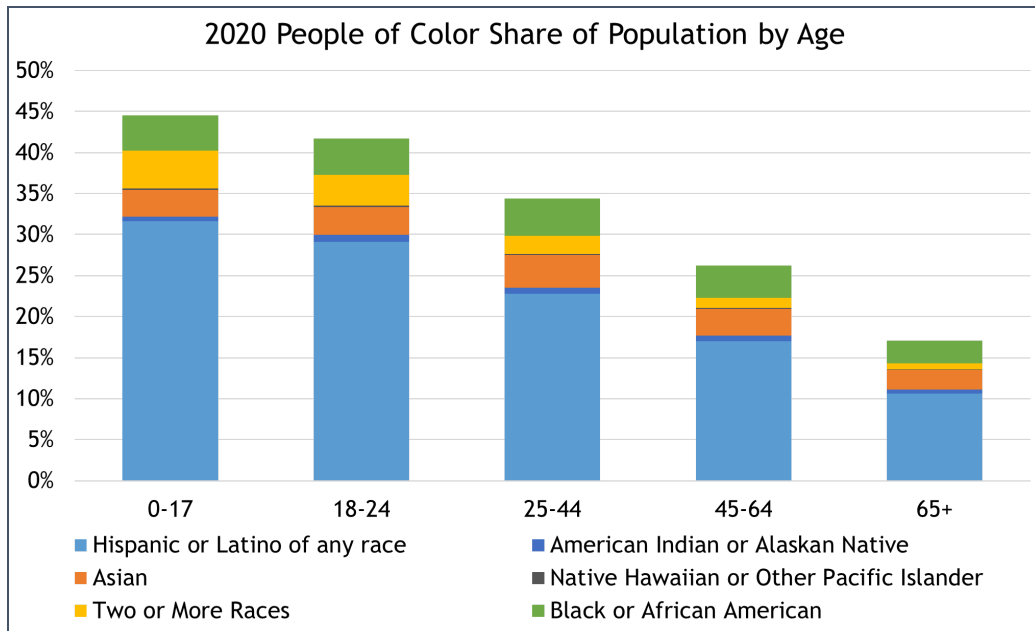
Figure 2: Colorado Population Growth by County 2020-2050



*Figure 3: Colorado Population by Age 2020-2030 (via Colorado State Demography Office)*

### **Demographic change and increasing diversity**

As Colorado's population grows, racial and ethnic diversity is growing as well, especially among younger-age population cohorts. Figure 4 highlights the increased racial and ethnic diversity of the younger age groups in Colorado. As these segments of the Colorado population age, the population as a whole will continue to become more diverse.



*Figure 4: 2020 People of Color Share of Population by Age (via Cindy DeGroen, Demographer)*

## Implications for Recreation

Colorado's long-term demographic change is expected to be characterized by an aging population and increased diversity among younger people. The 2024-2028 SCORP's priorities reflect the ongoing efforts that recreation planners are pursuing to address barriers and expand opportunities for communities historically underrepresented in outdoor recreation and older adults with mobility challenges.

Enhanced transportation options and infrastructure with inclusive signage and marketing can better serve disabled people, non-English speakers, and immigrant communities. Collaborations to promote medical prescriptions for nature-based recreation can aid communities disproportionately impacted by public health issues. While serving these demographics can mean new programs and infrastructure, developing trails and recreation spaces closer to people's homes can also expand accessible recreation opportunities.

### **The Influence of Remote Work**

The State Demography Office's American Community Survey found that, between 2018 and 2022, the percentage of people who reported working from home more than doubled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This increase occurred across 37 counties, with an average of 17% of people working from home in the Front Range ([Colorado State Demography Office, 2023](#)).

With remote work opportunities, people may look closer to home for recreation opportunities to get outside during their lunch break, or to take advantage of the time they would otherwise spend commuting. Other workers, especially younger people, enjoy this flexibility by teleworking while camping, which has compelled managers to develop wireless internet infrastructure in recreation areas ([Follansbee & Damicis, 2023](#)).

The public's emphasis on personal health and the availability of safe outdoor gathering spaces has continued post-pandemic, compelling recreation planners to expand opportunities in proximity to residential communities. This new approach is perhaps best exemplified by this SCORP's collaboration with the Colorado the Beautiful Initiative, which aims to ensure recreation access within a 10-minute walk or drive of every community.

Another factor affecting Colorado's demographic trends is the increasing role of net migration, which may bring new values and priorities for outdoor recreation. Despite their transience, Colorado's nonresident populations, such as tourists and out-of-state visitors, compel recreation planners to balance opportunities to bring more people to the state while ensuring a positive return for resident communities. To address some of these concerns, the Colorado Tourism Office created a unique new Destination Stewardship department to provide marketing and education information to visitors on how to recreate responsibly. Other studies have demonstrated the influence of urbanization on shifting wildlife values held by the public ([Manfredo et al., 2020](#)), such that people moving from urban centers may bring their own values to bear on wildlife management decision-making in Colorado.

The implications of population change on our natural areas, our native fish and wildlife, and our outdoor recreation experiences manifest through various land and recreation management challenges. Anticipating these challenges and planning for the future to ensure the balance of Colorado's open

spaces, fish and wildlife, and outdoor recreation will set the stage for how our state manages its natural and cultural resources.

## **Climate Change Trends**

Colorado's climate underpins the state's recreation sector and contributes to Colorado's culture. Our sunny, dry climate encourages people to get outside at all times of year, and cold, snowy winters in the mountains support Colorado's world-class winter sports industry. Spring runoff fuels our rafting and fishing sectors, and hot summers on the Front Range drive people into the mountains and to our lakes, streams and reservoirs for camping, boating and swimming opportunities.

Colorado is warming, and our warming climate is already impacting recreation in our state. Colorado warmed 2.9°F from 1895-2022, and is expected to warm an additional +1-4°F under a medium-low greenhouse gas emissions scenario by 2050 (Bolinger et al. 2024). By 2050, an average year is likely to be as warm as the very warmest years on record through 2022, and by 2070, an average year is likely to be warmer than the warmest years through 2022 (Bolinger et al. 2024) (Figure 5).

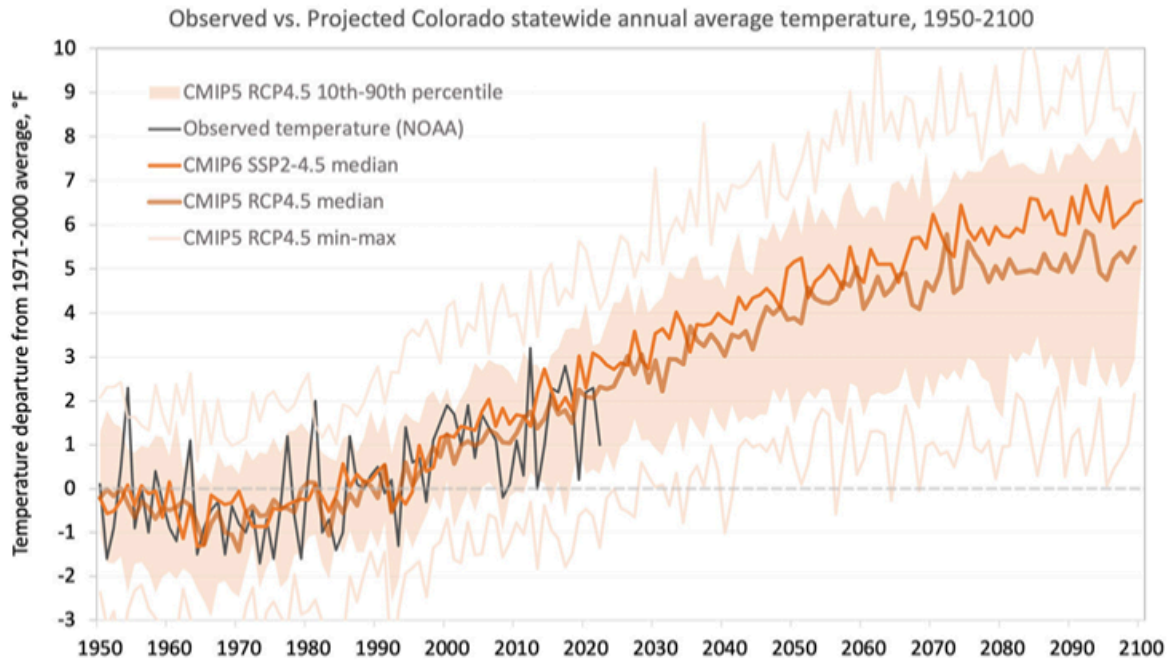


Figure 5: Projected change in Colorado statewide average annual temperatures to 2100, relative to a 1971-2000 baseline, from CMIP5 models (median and range) and CMIP6 models (median only) under medium-low emissions scenarios (RCP4.5, SSP2-4.5), compared to observed temperatures through 2022. (Data: Observations: NOAA NCEI nClimGrid, <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/cag/>; CMIP5 data: GDO-DCP, <https://gdo-dcp.ucllnl.org/>; CMIP6 data: KNMI Climate Explorer, <https://climexp.knmi.nl/>) (Bolinger et al. 2024).

Rising temperatures and changing precipitation patterns are causing more frequent heat waves, drought, earlier peak streamflows, and larger wildfires, which all impact recreation activities and their seasonality across Colorado. Colorado’s declining snowpack, particularly at lower elevations, will lead to a shortened winter recreation while expanding shoulder season recreation opportunities. Lower streamflows and warmer waters will force rafting outfitters in some areas to shift operations earlier in the year, and are leading to more voluntary or mandatory fishing closures to protect heat-stressed fish. Some areas in Colorado are already shifting to stocking more heat-tolerant fish, such as brown trout.

More frequent heat waves, particularly in the Front Range and Grand Junction areas, will likely increase visitation pressure on mountain communities and parks with water resources, and may drive greater recreation activity in the early morning and evening. Higher wildfire risk leads to more frequent fire bans, which may increase local demands for resources to locate and extinguish illegal campfires. Wildfires can also cause area closures, smoke and resulting health impacts on the public, and post-fire flooding and landslides that disrupt transportation routes and aquatic ecosystems.

Outdoor industries are already adapting to changing conditions and may increasingly need to modify operations and infrastructure as warming continues. Examples of adaptation actions include shifting the seasonal or daily timing of operations, building shade structures, and building alternative water features for public recreators to reduce pressure on aquatic ecosystems.

## **Statewide Public and Land Managers Surveys**

Outdoor recreation plays a critical role in Colorado's economy and is vital to Coloradans' way of life. To successfully plan for the future of conservation and recreation in Colorado, it is essential to understand the needs of Colorado's outdoor recreation users and land managers. Through a series of surveys, Colorado Parks and Wildlife staff identified what activities Coloradans enjoy, why they are motivated to participate, what barriers stand in their way, and what types of outdoor recreation experiences they prefer both locally and statewide. These data help land managers and others interested in natural resource conservation to balance biological factors with social desires.



**Public Recreation Survey Quick Facts:** 72% of survey takers recreate outdoors at least once per week and the majority (64%) enjoy parks, trails and open spaces in their neighborhood, city, or county. Walking (84%) and hiking (61%) are the most common forms of recreation reported by respondents. A majority (60%) of survey takers would like land managers to prioritize operation and maintenance of existing outdoor areas and facilities. Wildlife viewing was the top-ranking recreation area priority for survey takers.

## Surveying Coloradans and Land Managers

A public survey of residents' participation in outdoor recreation in Colorado (Appendix to be included in final report) was used to identify statewide recreation trends with respect to specific activities and to understand the types of services and recreation preferences in which Coloradans are interested both locally and statewide. The research team developed online panel surveys to collect this quantitative data, with quota sampling to ensure the representativeness of respondents on key sociodemographic variables. The sample was also stratified by the following state geographic regions: Western Slope, Front Range, and Eastern Plains. For inclusivity, the research team translated the surveys into Spanish, and respondents were able to select their preferred language at the outset.

Just as it is important to understand the types of experiences and recreation opportunities desired by the public, it is equally important to learn about land managers' priorities, challenges and successes. Those responsible for stewarding parks, greenspaces, natural areas, and state and federally-owned land are tasked with balancing recreation demand with resource sustainability. As the number of recreationists and visitors continues to increase throughout the state, land managers face increasing pressure to find this balance. The Land Managers Survey (Appendix to be included in final report) sought to identify the core issues, concerns and opportunities facing agencies and organizations responsible for managing parks, open space, trails and recreation areas throughout Colorado. This survey was sent via email to more than 800 individuals responsible for managing land in Colorado.

Because it was a purposeful survey seeking qualitative data, efforts were made to reach the appropriate contacts and reminder emails were sent to encourage response.

While the findings are separated in this report, it is important to consider the implications of both surveys holistically. Many of the sentiments shared by the public were also expressed, albeit in somewhat different ways, by land managers. It is important to note that several survey questions from previous SCORP outreach efforts were retained to allow comparisons between the 2014, 2018 and 2024 surveys.

**Land Manger Survey Quick Facts:** Most (76%) land managers who responded to the survey represented local agencies. The majority of land managers (72%) said developing new or expanding current trails is a top recreation priority. Safety was the top visitor services priority (79%) for land managers, which had previously ranked as the third-most important in 2019 and 2014. Funding was the most commonly mentioned challenge in managing lands used for outdoor recreation in Colorado. Grants were the most commonly mentioned strategy for funding challenges

### **Post-Pandemic Outdoor Recreation Trends**

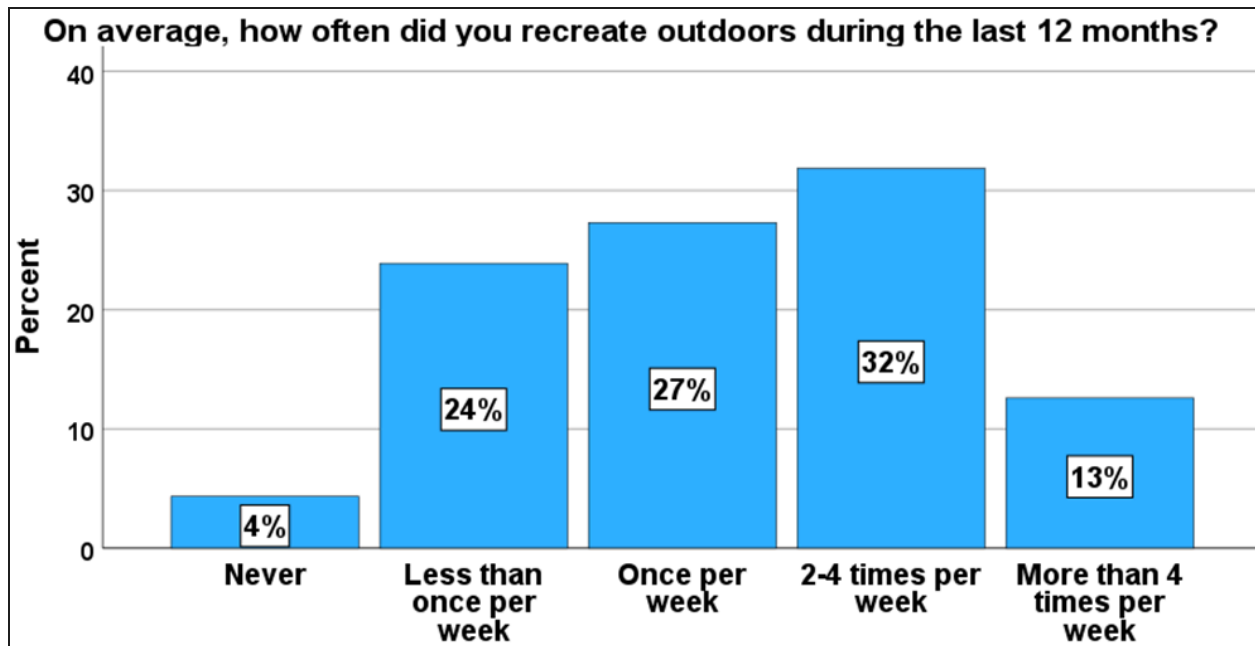
Nationally, the number of Americans who recreate outdoors continues to increase, with 55% of the U.S. population above the age of six engaging in outdoor recreation in 2022. However, for the first time since the 2020 pandemic, the number of outings per participant decreased, indicating that new participants are continuing to recreate outdoors post-pandemic, but they tend to do so less frequently (Outdoor Industry Association 2023). Additionally, the participant base is increasingly becoming more demographically diverse, with increased Hispanic, black, LGBTQIA+ and senior participants in 2022. While the outdoor recreation participant base still does not reflect the demographic diversity of the U.S. population at large, youth and new participants in outdoor recreation suggest trends toward a more representative population enjoying the outdoors (Outdoor Industry Association 2023).

In Colorado, the public survey found that 42% of all respondents reported participating in outdoor recreation more frequently following the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 (Bruyere and Teel 2024a). More than half of respondents to the land managers survey (62%) indicated that visitation increased during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, and another 18% suggested that visitation has increased *significantly since the pandemic has subsided* (Quartuch MR, Cooney J, and Wilson K 2024).

## **Colorado Outdoor Recreation Public Survey**

### **Recreation participation**

Coloradans are active in the outdoors, with 72% indicating they participated in outdoor recreation at least once per week in the last year (Figure 6).



*Figure 6. Frequency of participation in outdoor recreation in the last 12 months.*

Most respondents (70%) expected their participation in the next year to remain about the same compared to the previous year, and only 19% reported that they were generally new to outdoor recreation.

**Recreation is good for mental health.** A vast majority of respondents indicated that outdoor recreation is an important part of their personal wellbeing (81%) and that they feel much more positive when participating (90%).

### Where Coloradans Recreate

Though respondents tend to recreate in their neighborhood, city, or county (64%), other locations are also popular. 48% recreate in local parks, trails, or recreation areas; 16% recreate in county parks or open spaces; 13% recreate in state parks or wildlife areas; 12% recreate in national parks, forests or recreation areas; and 10% recreate in private lands.

## **Top Outdoor Recreation Activities**

Walking, hiking and picnicking were the most common outdoor recreation activities which is consistent with the 2019 SCORP survey. These activities are convenient and incur relatively low expense compared to other activities. While there is some variation in activity participation rates by region (i.e., Western Slope, Front Range and Eastern Plains), the top activities within each region are similar to the statewide results.

### **Top Ten Activities in Colorado (percent participating):**

1. Walking - 84%
2. Hiking - 61%
3. Picnicking - 48%
4. Swimming - 44%
5. Wildlife viewing - 38%
6. Biking - 35%
7. Playground activities - 32%
8. Running - 30%
8. Team or individual sports - 30%
9. Fishing - 29%
9. Off-highway vehicle use - 29%
9. Birdwatching - 29%
10. Tent camping - 28%

## Motivations for Recreation

Respondents reported a variety of motivations for their participation in outdoor recreation. Overall enjoyment was the top motivation for most respondents (69%), followed by relaxation and mental health benefits (56% each), spending time with family or friends (51%), and exercise or health benefits (49%).

## Barriers to Participation

The survey found various barriers to outdoor recreation participation, with “not enough time” being the most frequently identified constraint (61%). Also among the top barriers were “too many people” at respondents’ preferred recreation areas (53%), personal health or mobility limitations (42%), cost of participation (42%), and “no one to go with” (40%) (Figure 7).

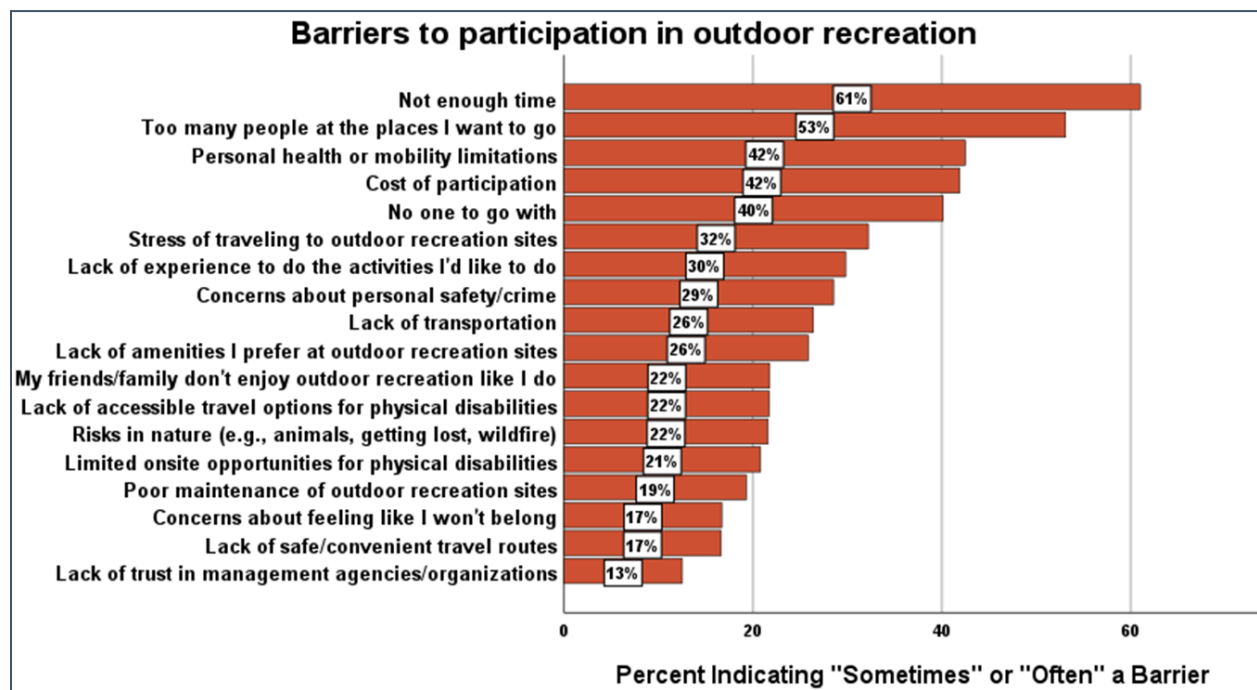


Figure 7. Barriers to participation.

## Prioritizing Future Outdoor Recreation Areas

Going forward, survey respondents hope to see prioritization of wildlife viewing areas (42%), dirt or soft surface trails and paths (35%), picnic areas for small (31%) and large (30%) groups, and off leash dog areas (30%) (Figure 8).

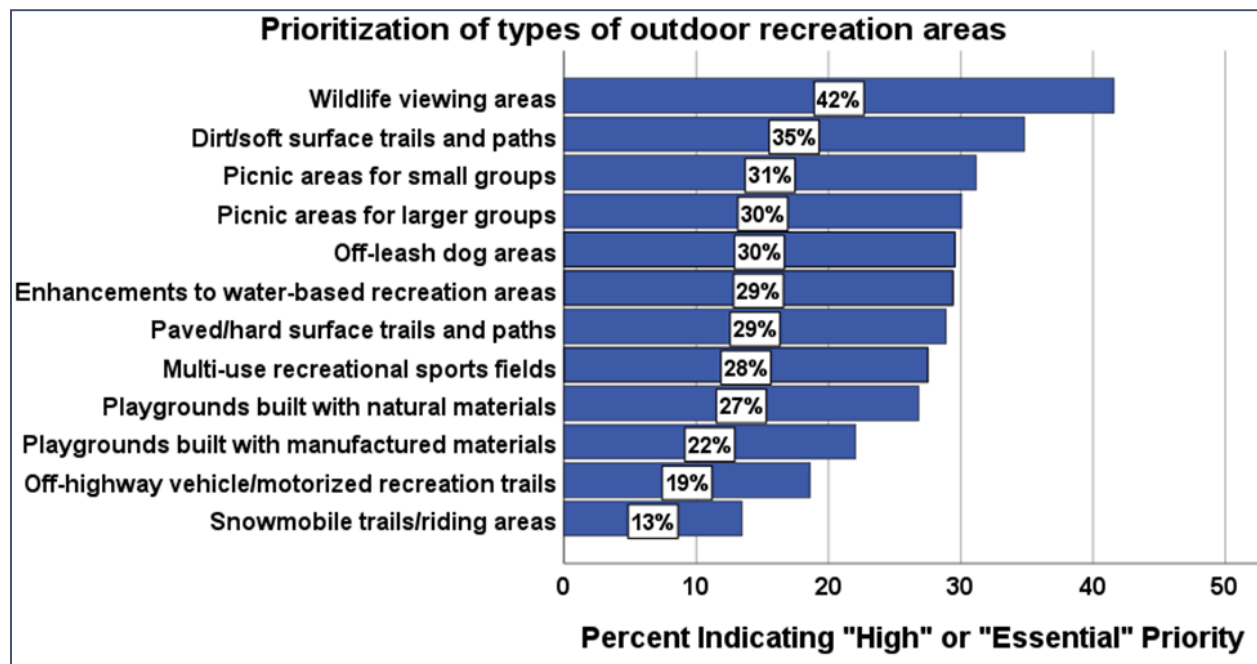


Figure 8. Outdoor recreation area priorities.

## Prioritizing Future Investments

In terms of types of management activities for outdoor recreation areas in Colorado, the majority of respondents prioritized operation and maintenance of existing areas and facilities (60%) as well as long-term planning and management (55%).

### **Trust for Public Land Recreation Access Map**

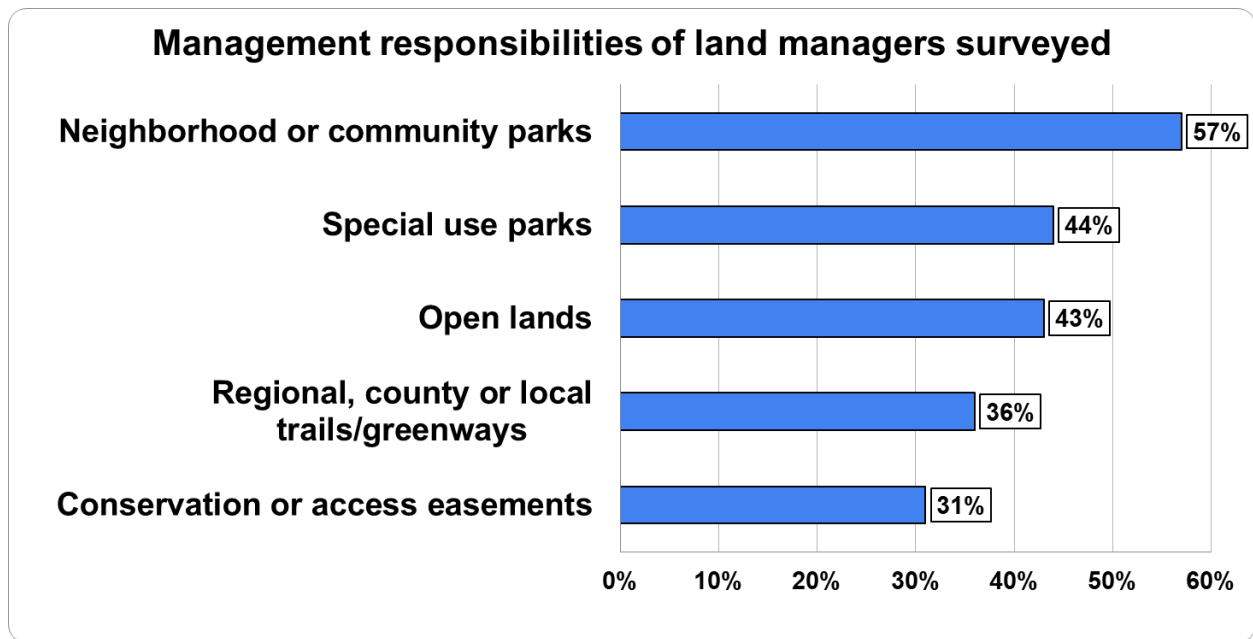
The [Colorado Recreation Access Map](#) tool reveals that 1.2 million Coloradans – 20% of the state’s population – lack access to open space, parks, trails and water within a 10-minute walk of home. Alternatively, approximately 1% of the state’s population lives outside a 10-mile drive to any recreation. The Trust for Public Land conducted a spatial analysis, considering a 10-minute walk and a 10-mile drive, to identify populations without close-to-home recreational resources. These findings, emphasizing equity considerations, aim to address disparities in access to the outdoors. The analysis sheds light on Colorado’s recreation system gaps and offers valuable insights for targeted interventions. Detailed data is available for download in [Colorado’s Conservation Data Explorer](#) (CODEX).

### **Land Managers Survey**

This survey aimed to identify challenges facing land managers in Colorado and determine where opportunities exist to share expertise and innovative solutions. Capturing the perspectives of land managers and resource professionals will help CPW better understand the complex social-ecological system of land use and management throughout the state and inform future land management efforts.

Sixty percent of land managers who were contacted completed the survey. The majority (76%) represented local agencies. Fewer respondents represented state and federal agencies at 13% and 11% respectively. The greatest percentage (57%) of respondents were responsible for neighborhood or community parks, followed by special use parks (44%), and open lands (43%) (Figure 9). (See the full survey in the Appendix to be included in the final report.)





*Figure 9. Management responsibilities of land managers surveyed.*

Managers mentioned 198 “new or surprising” recreation activities they’ve observed over the past five years. E-bike use was mentioned most often (11%), followed by pickleball (10%), and stand-up paddleboarding (8%).

### **High-Priority New Outdoor Recreation Sites**

Similar to the 2019 SCORP land manager survey, the top three priorities identified by land managers for new outdoor recreation sites included developing new trails or expanding existing trails (72%) followed by connecting to adjacent or regional trail systems (66%), and developing neighborhood, community or special-use parks or facilities (e.g., playgrounds) (60%). Local and federal managers had similar priorities, while the highest percentage for state managers was expanding opportunities for hunting and fishing (92%).

## **Trail-related High Priorities**

Overall, survey respondents identified maintaining existing trails as the highest trail-related priority (83%). Once again, this was also the top priority identified in the 2019 SCORP land manager survey. The priorities that ranked next included creating or improving opportunities for ADA accessibility or usability (74%), and addressing stewardship issues from increased use (e.g., human waste/increased trash; social trails) (69%). State (84%) and federal (96%) respondents had stewardship issues from increased use as their highest priority.

## **ADA and ABA Accessibility**

A majority of respondents (86%) representing federal agencies identified a need for increased funding for infrastructure to address or improve ADA- and ABA-accessible infrastructure. Similarly, about three-quarters of local respondents (72%) and nearly two-thirds of state respondents (65%) identified this need.

## **Highest Current Priority Management Efforts**

The vast majority of survey respondents (87%) identified maintaining existing recreation infrastructure or resources as the highest priority for current management needs. This was also the highest priority issue in the 2019 and 2014 SCORP land manager surveys. Below, Table 1 shows the top five highest priorities for land managers in local, state, and federal agencies.

***Table 1. High management priorities for local, state, and federal land managers***

<b>Prioritization</b>	<b>Current management high priorities</b>	<b>Local (%)</b>	<b>State (%)</b>	<b>Federal (%)</b>
1	Maintaining existing recreation infrastructure or resources	86	-	-
2	Seeking additional funding for staff, programs, infrastructure, and/or materials	82	-	-
3	Coordinating/cooperating with other agencies/organizations that manage outdoor recreation	68	-	-
4	Adapting to changing user needs/preferences	62	-	-
5	Staffing capacity to serve a growing population (e.g., crowding/overuse of parks, trails, etc.)	61	-	-
1	Staffing capacity to serve a growing population (e.g., crowding/overuse of parks, trails, etc.)	-	89	-

<b>Prioritization</b>	<b>Current management high priorities</b>	<b>Local</b> (%)	<b>State</b> (%)	<b>Federal</b> (%)
2	Seeking additional funding for staff, programs, infrastructure, and/or materials	-	89	-
3	Coordinating/cooperating with other agencies/organizations that manage outdoor recreation	-	85	-
4	Maintaining existing recreation infrastructure or resources	-	85	-
5	Addressing human-wildlife interactions	-	85	-
1	Maintaining existing recreation infrastructure or resources	-	-	96
2	Coordinating/cooperating with other agencies/organizations that manage outdoor recreation	-	-	93
3	Seeking additional funding for staff, programs, infrastructure, and/or materials	-	-	93

<b>Prioritization</b>	<b>Current management high priorities</b>	<b>Local</b> (%)	<b>State</b> (%)	<b>Federal</b> (%)
4	Staffing capacity to serve a growing population (e.g., crowding/overuse of parks, trails, etc.)	-	-	85
5	Staffing capacity to manage and engage volunteers or partnerships	-	-	82

### **Highest Priority Visitor Service Efforts**

Most (79%) survey respondents identified maintaining visitor safety and protection as the highest visitor service priority. This issue was ranked third in both the 2014 and 2019 SCORP land manager survey, indicating an increased importance for land management in Colorado. The next-most important visitor service issues were identifying opportunities to ensure programs, services and activities are accessible for all (70%), and identifying opportunities to ensure facilities are accessible for all (68%).

### **Challenges and Strategies in Land Management**

To better understand the challenges land managers face and the strategies they employ to address them, the survey included a series of open ended questions. CPW Human Dimensions staff analyzed the responses and developed thematic categories which span the breadth of challenges and strategies described by respondents. Challenges (Table 2) are included below and ranked by the number of times they were mentioned. Common strategies employed for each challenge theme can be found in Table 3.

***Table 2. Most pressing challenges described by land managers***

Theme	Mentions
Funding	222
Staffing	194
Visitation & population growth	138
Recreation issues (includes trails and recreation infrastructure)	93
Public (e.g., approval, attitudes, behavior, education, participation, and justice, equity, diversity, and justice [JEDI])	85
Climate change, wildfire, water issues	61
Wildlife & resources	59
Infrastructure (includes maintenance and updates to it as well as improvements to signage)	59
Policy, planning, regulatory constraints, internal agency culture issues (including lack of or limited collaboration with other agencies)	53
Vandalism, theft, unhoused populations, public safety concerns	47

***Table 3. Common land management strategies employed for pressing challenges***

Challenges	Strategies
Funding	Grants, budgeting, donations, ballot measures, fee increases
Staffing	Hiring, wage / pay equity, increased housing, job postings & advertising
Visitation	Management plans, reservations, parking expansion, shuttles
Rec. mgmt.	Rec / trail plans, monitoring & research on visitor rec behavior
Public	Education & outreach, social media, non-English resources incl. staff
Climate, fire, water	Planning, agency / area collaborations
Wildlife, conservation	Easements, public education, conservation planning, area closures
Infrastructure	Signage, ADA / ABA planning, waste stations, engineering / design
Policy, planning	Key issue / master planning, agency culture initiatives
Vandalism, safety	Law enforcement presence, remote monitoring, specialized staff / training to work with specific audiences

## **Learning from Tribal Land Managers and Outdoor Equity Grant Proposals**

To better understand and incorporate the needs, interests and desires of sovereign Tribes and underserved communities, data collection for the 2024 SCORP included a comment opportunity for Tribal Land Managers and a qualitative study of strategies in and barriers to participation in outdoor recreation employed by applicants to the CPW Outdoor Equity Grant. (See the Appendix to be included in the final report).

### **Tribal Land Manager Comments**

A Tribal Land Managers comment form was shared with the Southern Ute Indian Tribe and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe to better understand the challenges and issues facing these two federally recognized Tribes that directly manage land within the state.

Tribal land managers reported that outdoor recreation means different things to different community members. Hunting, fishing, and camping are popular activities. Camping, photography, or simply enjoying time by the campfire were also identified as activities that Tribal members participate in. Tribal youth frequent fitness facilities, playing fields, skateparks, and engage in organized sports. Organized leagues for Tribal members were also highlighted for engaging youth and adults in outdoor activities, and one respondent reported that “This community thrives around group competitions.”

Tribal managers highlighted that Tribal lands will generally remain restricted for Tribal members and family, while outside Tribal boundaries there are challenges with land use, including overuse by recreationists and impacts to sensitive areas from trespassing. The Southern Ute Indian Tribe and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe have off-Reservation hunting and fishing treaty rights within the Brunot Treaty area, which Tribal managers emphasized is both a cultural and recreational practice. Tribal Managers also noted that this Treaty right is regularly being infringed upon by overdevelopment and other practices that affect the health of wildlife.



Looking at the next five years, Tribal managers identified top priorities as cultural resources management, partnering on traditional use studies, incorporating Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in resource management plans, and ensuring Tribal members have access to cultural resources throughout the state. Tribal managers expressed interest in expanding youth outdoor recreation opportunities with new facilities and recreation experiences. For future projects that have potential impacts on historic trails or sites, Tribal managers stressed the importance of always consulting with Tribes and the need to identify and protect cultural resources.

### **SunUte Community Center – Ignacio, Colorado**

The Southern Ute Tribe used funding through an Outdoor Equity Grant to improve a hard court surface for basketball and pickleball on the SunUte Community Center campus in Ignacio, Colorado. Prior to the improvements, the courts were cracked and dilapidated, and the use of the courts was limited.

The improved facility not only provides a better playing experience for participants – especially youth – but also expresses to the entire community that *they matter* and that their well-being is important to SunUte. The courts are also an indicator of the potential for high-quality outdoor recreation spaces to provide community members a place to gather and share their common interests, which is especially powerful in highly diverse communities like Ignacio. The improvements at SunUte are used by Tribal and non-Tribal members alike, and busy weekends are a constant illustration of how outdoor recreation contributes to the social fabric of communities.

## CPW's Outdoor Equity Grant Program

The Outdoor Equity Grant Program (OEGP), established in 2021 through the passage of House Bill 21-1318, is dedicated to supporting youth up to age 25 and their families from underrepresented communities by providing equitable access to Colorado's parks, outdoor recreation, conservation activities, career exploration, and job training. The traditionally excluded communities served by this program include: Black, Indigenous and people of color; LGBTQ+; those with disabilities; and low-income individuals.

The OEGP is funded by Colorado Lottery proceeds, with annual allocations increasing in range from \$750,000 in FY21 up to \$3,000,000 in FY24 and beyond, to the extent available. Administered by the Outdoor Equity Grant Board, composed of nine members appointed by the Director of Colorado Parks and Wildlife, the program adheres to values emphasizing community-defined priorities and instilling environmental responsibility in Colorado's youth. In 2023, the OEGP Board adopted these values and used them to guide funding decisions.

As of July 2024, OEGP funds have supported 93 organizations across 41 counties, benefiting 38,000 participants in recreation, conservation, education, and career opportunities. One OEGP recipient, Diversify Whitewater, organized four inclusive paddle sports events, engaging 216 participants. Ninety percent of attendees reported having an amazing time, and 95% agreed that the events removed barriers to paddling. The success of initiatives like Diversify Whitewater underscores the Outdoor Equity Grant Program's positive impact, providing unique outdoor experiences to communities that might otherwise lack such opportunities.

**“Our work has benefitted from CPW's attention to equitable access to the outdoors and prioritizing youth involvement and participation.”**

*- EngageCPW Public Comment*

## **Outdoor Equity Grant Proposal Study**

The purpose of the Outdoor Equity Grant Proposal Study was to describe the barriers to outdoor recreation and proposed strategies for overcoming obstacles in Outdoor Equity Grant proposals submitted to CPW (see the Appendix to be included in the final report). The grants increase outdoor participation and engagement for youth that have been traditionally underrepresented in outdoor recreation and conservation. Reviewing the content of the grant applications can serve as an indicator of barriers that program providers around the state consider a high priority, and also reveal strategies for overcoming barriers that may contribute to a knowledge base of best practices from which CPW and other organizations can benefit.

Outdoor Equity Grant applications present potential solutions to barriers to outdoor recreation participation. Among some of the more frequent barrier and solution pairings in the findings include the following. Note: structural barriers represent constraints that are external to an individual (e.g., costs associated with recreation participation); intrapersonal barriers are individual attributes (e.g., recreationists' age or their attitudes about a particular activity); while interpersonal barriers stem from social relationships with others (e.g., family/friends are not interested in a particular recreation activity (Quartuch et al., 2017; Hunt and Ditton, 2001; Metcalf et al. 2015).

### ***Structural barriers: Cost and transportation***

#### ***Common proposed strategies: Cost offsets and providing transportation***

Structural barriers of cost and transportation were frequently addressed in proposed activities, which also addresses a top barrier among ethnically and racially diverse statewide survey respondents (i.e., cost), and a likely barrier for most youth (i.e., transportation). The strategies here included scholarships for programs, provision of gear for participants, free or reduced cost fees, transportation to outdoor recreation sites, and similar approaches.

***Structural barrier: Time***

***Proposed strategies: generally not addressed***

The most common reported barrier in the statewide survey, including for racially and ethnically diverse audiences, was time. Overall time in a day is the same for everyone; in this case, time refers to people feeling unable to spend time on recreation rather than other activities. Grant applicants rarely addressed this barrier, either explicitly or implicitly. While the potential of a provider to influence an individual's or household's available time for outdoor recreation is highly limited, strategies such as family-level programming or programs hosted close to home were infrequent, yet could help mitigate the perception of time as a barrier.

***Intrapersonal barrier: Unfamiliar/lack of knowledge/awareness***

***Proposed strategies: Linkages to careers***

A frequent component of many grant applications was the integration of career content, such as partnering with higher education institutions, public land organizations, or outdoor recreation industry to emphasize career pathways for youth. In the short term, this strategy can address an intrapersonal barrier by raising a participant's awareness of jobs and, therefore, their potential interest in outdoor recreation via a career or job opportunity for their future. In the long term, this could also address more complex barriers related to lack of representation and inclusion within the outdoor recreation professional sector.

***Intrapersonal barriers: Lack of experience/skill***

***Proposed solutions: Instruction, practice***

As mentioned above, some barriers are more clearly within the scope of program providers than others, including lack of experience outdoors or skills for specific outdoor activities. One of the most frequent strategies in the grant applications was to enhance youth's proficiency and self-efficacy with a specific

activity through training and practice, from snow sports in the mountains to swimming at neighborhood facilities.

***Interpersonal barrier: No one to go with***

***Proposed solution: Capitalizing on group formats***

“No one to go with” was reported as a frequent barrier in the statewide survey, including among racially and ethnically diverse respondents. While the programs of most grant applicants proposed convening groups of youth, rarely did these applications explicitly link the group format with its potential to address the “no one to go with” barrier. There could be an opportunity for grant applicants to more strongly capitalize on the potential of a group format to build a community or peer network of youth with similar interests, by elevating the barrier of “no one to go with” as an explicit target of programs and integrating program activities that enhance relationship- and community-building among participants.

**Case Study: Get Outdoors Leadville – Leadville, Colorado**

Get Outdoors Leadville (GOL) initiated its Afuera Sin Barreras (ASB) program for the community’s Spanish-speaking and immigrant population to participate in outdoor recreation in culturally and linguistically relevant ways. Geographically situated in the heart of the state’s Rocky Mountains, many Leadville residents work in industries supporting the region’s robust outdoor recreation economy yet have minimal opportunity to share in the same outdoor experiences that thousands of people travel to the region to do.

Imperative to the success of ASB are its Promotores, a group of trained local individuals who serve as a liaison for GOL with specific communities and neighborhoods in Leadville. The Promotores gain a deep understanding about needs, values, and preferences at a household scale, and use this knowledge to advise GOL on the co-design and co-delivery of programs. Via these relationships, they also effectively recruit families to ASB programs, including neighborhood block party-style activities, guided trail hikes for families, field trips to Great Sand Dunes National Park, and more. ASB and its Promotores illustrate the benefit of taking time to build relationships and design programs to address significant barriers and meet the specific needs of communities.

***Interpersonal and discriminatory barriers: Lack of representation, feeling unwelcome***

***Proposed solution: Diverse representation via staff and mentors***

One of the most common strategies in the grant applications to address interpersonal and discrimination barriers was providing or recruiting staff and mentors representing participants' backgrounds. This approach can address several barriers, as youth interact with and are led by adults during their outdoor experiences with whom they can relate and identify, and potentially shift youth's perceptions about who participates in outdoor recreation. In addition, the leadership of representative staff and mentors can also help youth feel welcome in outdoor places and provide feelings of safety and inclusion.

***Structural and discrimination barrier: lack of desired amenities/facilities***

***Proposed solution: infrequently addresses***

Some barriers seemed overlooked or underestimated within the grant applications that could be within the purview of some applicants, particularly providers who provide and maintain the actual spaces for outdoor recreation. For example, very few grants focused on physical facilities or amenity improvements, yet "lack of amenities I prefer" was a top barrier among racially and ethnically diverse respondents to the statewide survey. Inadequate facilities could address multiple barriers, including structural (i.e., lack of facilities/amenities to do preferred activities), interpersonal (i.e., lack of amenities to do activities enjoyed by family), and discrimination (i.e., organizations failing to provide spaces relevant to all communities).

## **Land and Water Conservation Fund in Colorado**

Established in 1965 under Public Law 88-578, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act is a cornerstone of America's commitment to outdoor recreation and conservation. Initially proposed by the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission (ORRRC) in the 1960s, the LWCF Act aims

to preserve, develop, and make accessible natural resources for the enjoyment and well-being of all Americans. Administered locally by Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) in collaboration with the National Park Service (NPS), LWCF grants support states and local jurisdictions in acquiring and developing land for public outdoor recreation, with a 1:1 match requirement. With funding primarily sourced from federal oil and gas leases, LWCF has been instrumental in funding over 1,000 projects in Colorado alone, totaling almost \$86 million since its inception. The recent passage of the Great American Outdoors Act in 2020 further strengthens LWCF's mission, providing total and permanent funding at \$900 million annually to support conservation and recreation efforts nationwide.

### **Recreational Trails Committee and the Open Project Selection Process**

In Colorado, the Open Project Selection Process (OPSP) underpins the state's administration of LWCF, ensuring transparency in the distribution of funds. The Recreational Trails Committee (RTC) in accordance with the Colorado Revised Statutes (sections 33-11-105 through 33-11-107) oversees the program. This includes the OPSP, which outlines the criteria and standards for grant rounds and project selection. From competitive CPW grant application documentation to final funding recommendations, the OPSP outlines each process step, including application review, scoring, public comment periods and technical assistance. Following a four-tiered recommendation and approval protocol involving CPW staff, subcommittee review, RTC review, and funding recommendation to the CPW Commission, the OPSP ensures that LWCF funds are allocated by the SCORP and Colorado's recreational priorities. (See the Appendix to be included in the final report.)

### **Colorado's Recreation Trails Grant Application and Review Process**

Starting in 2000, CPW began working with local government parks and recreation leaders to use the existing Colorado Recreation Trails Grant Program process to award LWCF funds for non-motorized trail projects. The grant scoring criteria, developed by CPW's trails program staff and approved by the Recreational Trails Committee, serves as Colorado's Open Selection Process for distributing LWCF grant funds.

The Recreational Trail Grant Applications follow a set recommendation and approval process that includes review and evaluation by CPW regional field staff, scoring and evaluation by three Grant Review and Ranking Subcommittees (i.e., Large Trail Maintenance or Construction, Small Trail Maintenance or Construction, and Trail Planning or Support grant application categories), ranking and funding recommendations by the Recreational Trails Committee members, then final review and funding approval by the Parks and Wildlife Commission.

This process invites public review and comment at four separate stages: upon submission and posting of the application by CPW, before the subcommittees, before the Recreational Trails Committee, and before the Commission. The complete grant process, including the detailed LWCF Grant Requirements, will be included in the Appendix of the final report.

## **SCORP Planning Process**

The 2024-2028 Colorado SCORP development process spanned nearly two years (Figure 10). CPW coordinated this work with the Colorado Outdoor Partnership (CO-OP), with members providing valuable input at critical decision points throughout the process. CPW administered several statewide surveys to inform management priorities. These included large-scale comprehensive surveys of the general public and land management agencies and organizations. Additional outreach was conducted to reach underrepresented communities. Survey data collection and analysis occurred from February to November 2023. In early 2024, CPW held a 30-day public comment period and convened core partners – including members of the CO-OP and other state agencies – in a SCORP Sprint Team to assist with drafting the objectives and strategies. The Sprint Team met several times, reviewed multiple iterations of draft language, and contributed to this plan. CPW also hosted SCORP sessions at the 2024 Partners in the Outdoors Conference, where research findings were presented followed by breakout group discussions to help inform top priorities. Writers and designers drafted the main document from February to May 2024, followed by a public comment period and further revisions. By



the end of 2024, the final plan was reviewed by the Governor of Colorado and the National Park Service.

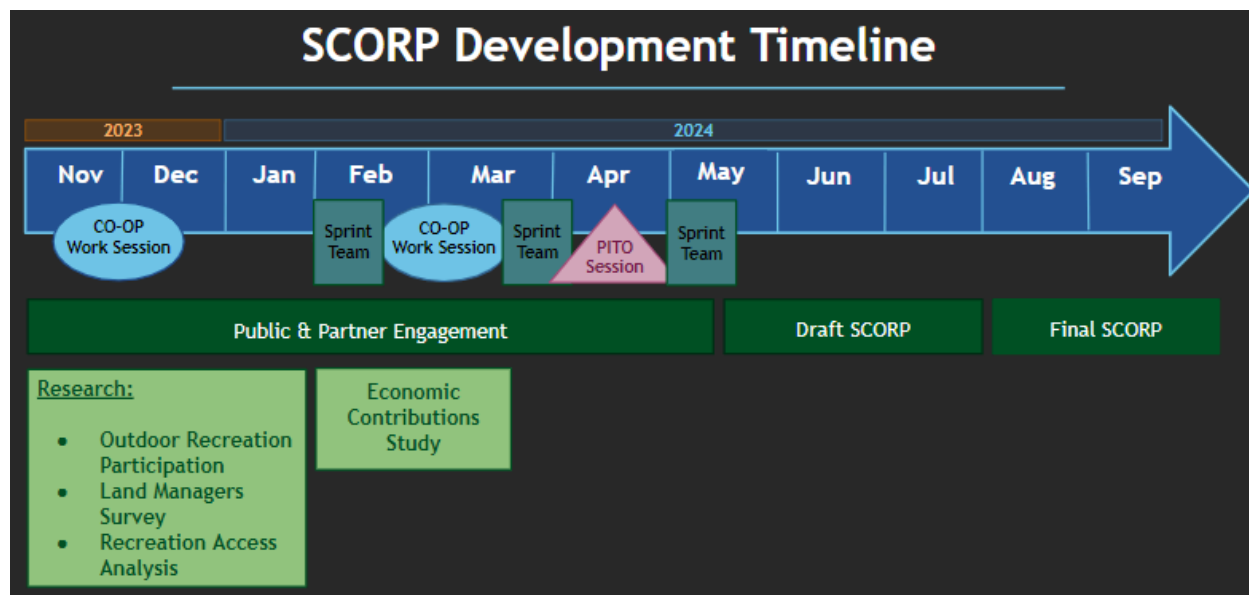


Figure 10: SCORP Development Timeline

## SCORP Advisory Groups

Extensive engagement of partner organizations and agencies invested in outdoor recreation and natural resources informed the development of this five-year plan through the Colorado Outdoor Partnership and the SCORP Sprint Team. Engaging these groups ensured comprehensive input by representatives from: recreation, industry, transportation, hunting and fishing, tourism, groups promoting demographic diversity in the outdoors, conservation, stewardship, agriculture, education, health and equity. Convening partners throughout several stages of the SCORP process, CPW aimed to incorporate relevant, informed, diverse feedback from professionals directly linked to outdoor recreation.

What do you love about Colorado? We asked the Sprint Team this question during our first meeting, followed by a visioning exercise to imagine Colorado five years from now to help us draft the 2024-2028 SCORP objectives and strategies.

## Colorado Outdoor Partnership

Convened in 2017, the Colorado Outdoor Partnership (CO-OP) reflects a recommendation in the 2014 SCORP. Participants in the CO-OP represent a broad cross-section of the stakeholders involved in conservation and outdoor recreation in the state. The CO-OP shares a state-level vision: "In 2050, Colorado's people and economy will thrive because of our healthy lands, water, wildlife, and working farms and ranches, accompanied by improved, inclusive outdoor recreation, hunting, and angling opportunities for all." With this focus, the partners were actively engaged in developing the 2024 SCORP from start to finish.

### Partners in the Outdoors

Every spring, CPW hosts the [Partners in the Outdoors Conference](#) to bring its many partners together; the planning team utilizes the SCORP as a framework for conference themes, topics, speakers, and sessions. Between 2019 and 2024, this conference attracted a total of 3,284 attendees. In addition, the Partners in the Outdoors Grant Program funds partner projects that are collaborative and address the SCORP priority areas. Colorado Parks and Wildlife awarded \$858,051.68 from 2019-2024 to 90 different organizations to implement 118 different projects and programs that directly supported the 2019 SCORP priorities. View our full list of [Partners in the Outdoors Program grant recipients](#).

## Public Input through EngageCPW

Through EngageCPW.org, the public had an opportunity to learn about the SCORP planning process and offer feedback, starting with a comment form that gauged public support for elements from the past (2019-2023) SCORP. The EngageCPW comment form was live on January 29, 2024, and closed

on February 28. In total, 878 individuals filled out the form. The form asked individuals about their familiarity with the 2019-2023 SCORP and how they enjoy the outdoors in Colorado. In addition, they were asked about each of the objectives from the previous SCORP and how important it is to include those priorities again in the 2024-2028 SCORP. They were also asked about any successes or challenges they experienced with any of the objectives, and if they felt anything was missing from the priorities. Feedback obtained from the EngageCPW.org comment form was considered in the final development of priorities for this plan; results can be found in the summary report (Appendix to be included in final report).

## **Colorado's Planning Landscape is Evolving!**

As Colorado's outdoors face significant pressures from growing populations, visitation, and a variety of human uses of the landscape, they are also experiencing increased temperatures, droughts, wildfires, and floods. From the Western Slope to the Eastern Plains, many communities feel they are at an important crossroads in their ability to balance connecting people to the outdoors, conserving and restoring habitats, and sustaining their community character and way of life.

CPW is collaborating with Great Outdoors Colorado, the Colorado Department of Natural Resources, and the Governor's Office to develop Colorado's Outdoors Strategy: A regionally rooted, statewide vision and action plan for conservation, outdoor recreation, and climate resilience. Expected to be completed by early 2026, this statewide strategy will provide new resources, tools and capacity to support and align the many efforts of state partners working to advance conservation, outdoor recreation, and climate resilience. It also strives to be the "connective tissue" between these existing efforts while catalyzing statewide leadership to elevate common and actionable goals, amplify regionally rooted efforts, provide data and tools to inform local decision-making, and advance coordinated statewide strategies and investments in the outdoors.

The 2024 SCORP will inform Colorado's Outdoors Strategy, laying out the objectives and strategies to ensure that outdoor recreation is beneficial, exceptional, accessible, and respectful across Colorado.

Furthermore, the strategy will call attention to the SCORP and elevate the important work outlined in this plan for future action and funding.

Central to the success of Colorado's Outdoors Strategy is the expanding network of Colorado's Outdoor Regional Partnerships.

## **Outdoor Regional Partnerships**

In October 2020, Governor Jared Polis signed an executive order that created the Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnership Initiative (RPI) and established the Inter-Agency Conservation and Recreation Council. The goals of the RPI mirror those of the CO-OP, centering local and regional priorities and objectives with a statewide purpose in mind:

1. Ensure that Colorado's land, water and wildlife thrive while also providing equitable and safe access to quality outdoor recreation experiences;
2. Convene voices from different outdoor interests, races, cultures, ages and sectors through Regional Partnerships to identify regional priorities and strategies;
3. Collaborate to develop a state-level vision and plan for conservation and recreation to inform future investments to conserve Colorado's landscapes, rivers, wildlife, sensitive habitats, and recreational opportunities.

The Regional Partnerships Initiative created a new CPW-administered grant program in collaboration with GOCO to provide funding for new and existing coalitions. Through six grant cycles between 2021 and 2024, the Regional Partnerships Initiative Grant Program awarded \$4.8 million to 20 coalitions working towards partnership development and collaborative regional conservation and recreation planning efforts. Coalitions that have received grant funding cover approximately 75% of Colorado and represent a broad range of conservation and recreation interests. It is essential that these active coalitions continue to bring their region's unique perspectives, values, and priorities to statewide

planning efforts. Looking ahead, the RPI is bringing local perspectives to the CO-OP statewide forum and informing Colorado's Outdoors Strategy.

The [first annual RPI report](#) and [second annual RPI report](#) highlight the progress and projects implemented through this initiative. The detailed local plans developed through the regional partnerships feed into the broader SCORP process and ensure that funding is directed toward regional priorities.

**“The community partnerships created across Colorado are outstanding. The work accomplished by Regional Partnerships leverages insufficient appropriated funds by millions of dollars. CPW should keep working with local communities to help improve their quality of life, economy, and other benefits.”**

*- EngageCPW Public Comment*

### **University of Colorado Capstone Project on Regional Partnerships**

A group of students from the Masters of the Environment graduate program at the University of Colorado Boulder conducted a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of the Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnerships Initiative (RPI) to develop recommendations for the RPI and associated state and federal agencies. Collaborating with Colorado Parks and Wildlife and the Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office, the team engaged with over 45 representatives from state and federal agencies and regional partnerships to assess the RPI's effectiveness.

The analysis identified three major themes of success: funding, network and structure. Challenges faced by regional partnerships include long-term funding, role and program clarity, stakeholder engagement, and capacity constraints. The report's recommendations aim to enhance collaboration between Colorado agencies and the regional partnerships. The five proposed actions include building the resource hub, broadening funding sources, enhancing alignment, improving collaboration, and increasing capacity.

Despite being a relatively new program, the Regional Partnerships Initiative is recognized as an innovative tool for addressing contemporary challenges in conserving Colorado's natural resources while promoting equitable and quality outdoor recreation. The report emphasizes the importance of relevant agencies' ongoing engagement with the RPI to ensure the program's growth and effectiveness. As the need for proactive and interdisciplinary management of conservation and recreation issues continues to rise, the Regional Partnerships Initiative and its associated agencies are positioned to play a vital role in addressing these challenges and ensuring Colorado's lands, waters and wildlife thrive, while offering exceptional outdoor recreation opportunities for current and future generations.

To learn more about this landscape analysis project, "Growing Colorado's Outdoor Regional Partnerships" by Anderson Cole, Gifford Hall, Dale Henderson, and Tori Manogue, please visit the [StoryMap Collection](#).

## **Call to Action!**

As we reflect on Colorado's updated Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, we celebrate the accomplishments from the 2019-2023 plan and build on that momentum to set even higher standards for what Colorado's recreation landscape will look like in the future. The path forward

requires a concerted effort and collaboration from all who cherish our state's natural resources. The strategies and objectives outlined in this plan are more than just guidelines—they are a call to action. They compel us, across sectors and interests, to balance our passion for outdoor recreation with a deep commitment to conservation, ensuring that Colorado's stunning landscapes, diverse wildlife, and vibrant outdoor economy thrive for generations to come. By embracing the lessons learned through this report and implementing the recommended strategies, we can create a future where the great outdoors remains a source of inspiration, adventure, and sustenance for all. Let us unite in our dedication to sustainable recreation, thoughtful conservation, and the enduring beauty of Colorado's natural heritage. Together we can preserve the legacy of our spectacular state, keeping it wild and wonderful for every Coloradan and visitor to enjoy.

If you would like to learn more about how the SCORP is being implemented, or to share what your organization is doing to advance the SCORP strategies, please visit [EngageCPW.org](https://EngageCPW.org).

Progress on SCORP's priority areas will also be featured at the annual Partners in the Outdoors Conference. This is an opportunity for Colorado's outdoor recreation and conservation leaders to come together and engage in our shared vision. At this signature event, our partners will highlight the interconnectedness among the SCORP priorities and how they are contributing to its success. In 2024, the conference theme was "We are Better Together: Creating a Connected Conservation Community," emphasizing the importance of connections, relationships, and trust across diverse outdoor sectors for the greater good of Colorado's land, wildlife, and people. At the Partners in the Outdoors Conference and beyond, success is enhanced by a greater focus on building collaborative relationships and plans to achieve both statewide and local priorities.

## **GET INVOLVED!**

- Adopt [Colorado's Outdoor Principles](#)

- Join CPW's Partner Network and receive its newsletter
- Attend the [Partners in the Outdoors Conference](#)
- Share your SCORP accomplishments on [EngageCPW.org](#)
- Visit <http://cpw.state.co.us/partners> for more!

## Acknowledgements

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