



COLORADO'S
Outdoors Strategy

A Year of Building Momentum

**A COLLABORATIVE VISION FOR
CONSERVATION, OUTDOOR RECREATION,
AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE**



2025-26



YEAR ONE

We're Building the Future Colorado's Outdoors Deserves

In 2025, Colorado launched the nation's first comprehensive framework for conservation, outdoor recreation, and climate resilience. In the face of growth and development, wildfires, drought, and stretched resources, we won't leave our lands, wildlife, or communities to chance.

Outdoor leaders from Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), the Outdoor Recreation Industry Office (OREC), and the Governor's Office of Climate Preparedness and Disaster Recovery came together to capture community input and collaborate with statewide partners and stakeholders, including local governments, state agencies, Federal agencies, Tribal leaders, nonprofits, and others, to co-create this Strategy. It was built from Coloradans' priorities, and designed to amplify great work already underway across the state—and to inspire more of it.

In year one, state grant programs invested over \$111 million to deliver results aligned with the Strategy's goals. Across Colorado, partners are proving what's possible when we act together for the outdoors we love.

WHAT THE STRATEGY DELIVERS

Created by and for diverse partners statewide, the Strategy's framework:

- Advances shared goals, strategies, and actions for conservation, outdoor recreation, and climate resilience.
- Strengthens funding and partnerships for the outdoors.
- Catalyzes statewide leadership and planning.
- Provides data, maps, and tools to inform decision making and track progress.
- Amplifies regional efforts and supports local communities.

THE STRATEGY IN ACTION

Moving Goals Forward

The Strategy is more than a document—it's a living roadmap supporting local action statewide. It advances three interrelated 'North Star' goals for the outdoors. Each supports a future where our outdoors, people, community character, and ways of life endure for generations to come.



CLIMATE-RESILIENT CONSERVATION & RESTORATION

Conservation and restoration of lands and waters help wildlife and biodiversity thrive; habitats are resilient and connected; communities benefit from healthy ecosystems and agricultural lands.



EXCEPTIONAL & SUSTAINABLE OUTDOOR RECREATION

A diversity of high-quality outdoor experiences are accessible, equitable, and inclusive; management and stewardship enhance benefits for and minimize impacts to people, landscapes, and communities.



COORDINATED PLANNING & FUNDING

Planning and implementation are interdisciplinary, supported by robust funding and capacity, inclusive of diverse perspectives and communities, and drive meaningful action for the outdoors.

HERE'S A SNAPSHOT OF EARLY WINS



81,561

ACRES CONSERVED WITH HIGH CONSERVATION VALUE

Source: Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP)

Note: \$138 million in state tax credits leveraged



185

NEW OR ENHANCED RECREATION AREAS

Sources: CPW, GOCO, OREC, Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB)

\$31,028,563

invested in locally led projects, including parks, trails, and other access points



24

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS COVERING 91% OF STATE

Supported by \$50 million, a new 5-year funding opportunity from CPW and GOCO, with the first round of grants awarded in December 2025



WILDLIFE HABITAT & CLIMATE RESILIENCY PROJECTS

\$35,032,440 invested in improving habitat and connectivity, mitigating wildfire risk, and enhancing ecological function

Sources: CPW, GOCO, DNR, CWCB, Colorado State Forest Service, Colorado Dept. of Public Health and Environment, Colorado Dept. of Agriculture



OUTDOOR EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION PROJECTS FUNDED

\$7,859,791 invested in capacity building and inclusive outdoor programs for diverse and disproportionately impacted communities

Sources: CPW, GOCO



COORDINATED FUNDING

Funders—from state agencies to philanthropies—are responding to partners' feedback by seeking ways to simplify grants and align funding opportunities



51 SPECIES PROTECTED WITHIN CONSERVED ACREAGE

'Greatest Conservation Need' Tiers I and II species

Source: CPW's State Wildlife Action Plan, CNHP



1ST STATEWIDE

DASHBOARD OF OUTDOOR RECREATION PATTERNS ON PUBLIC LANDS

Source: Statewide Mobile Location Data Dashboard

CPW recreation study

Anonymized mobile location data on Colorado's public lands and recreation areas reveals where recreation occurs, how use changes over time, and how patterns vary across places and seasons



Across Colorado, partners who helped inspire Colorado's Outdoors Strategy have projects in motion, producing meaningful outcomes on the ground.



A FRONT RANGE GEM

Protecting Tolland Ranch

Located east of the Continental Divide in Boulder and Gilpin counties, Tolland Ranch is now permanently protected as Colorado's newest State Wildlife Area, conserving critical habitat, an elk migration corridor, and clean water resources. The Wildlife Area will also provide public access for hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing. A collaboration between The Conservation Fund and CPW's Habitat Stamp Program, with funding support from GOCO, made the acquisition possible.

Photo by Bergreen Photography, courtesy of The Conservation Fund.

KEY METRICS & OUTCOMES

3,314 acres

of alpine forested wildlife habitat permanently protected as a State Wildlife Area

Critical habitat

and migration corridor for elk, deer, and moose; includes 3.5-mile stretch of South Boulder Creek where cutthroat trout conservation and restoration efforts will take place; 16 ponds providing new fishing opportunities for brook, brown, and rainbow trout

Continued public recreation access

to existing Nordic skiing trails and a mountain bike trail

PROTECTING PEAKS TOGETHER

Outside 285's High-Alpine Conservation



The Outside 285 Regional Partnership is demonstrating how collaboration supports meaningful conservation in the Mosquito Range. This multi-stakeholder coalition unites recreationists, conservation groups, and land managers to protect critical alpine habitat, restore degraded terrain, and improve sustainable access to five Fourteener peaks.

KEY METRICS & OUTCOMES

Coalition of 30+

partners, including governments, land managers, and organizations with wildlife/conservation, outdoor recreation, and stewardship missions

Protects

South Platte headwaters, critical bighorn sheep habitat, and outdoor recreation access

OPENING THE OUTDOORS Spotlighting Colorado's Accessible Trails



Colorado Parks and Wildlife collaborated with recreation organizations, disability advocates, and land managers to publish over 100 accessibility-focused routes in the COTREX app. This multi-year initiative provides detailed trail information and aims to create a comprehensive statewide accessible trails map—removing barriers and ensuring all Coloradans can confidently plan and enjoy exceptional outdoor experiences.

Photo courtesy of Jefferson County Parks & Open Space.

KEY METRICS & OUTCOMES

Partnership

with 26 organizations, adding 100+ accessibility-focused routes to the COTREX app

A cross-jurisdictional

working group spearheading Phase 2, including CPW, NoCo Places, the City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks, Fort Collins Natural Areas, and Jefferson County Open Space

KIDS GROW BETTER OUTSIDE The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe Joins Generation Wild



Colorado's youth-and-outdoors movement welcomed Generation Wild of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe (UMUT) in 2025. The program reconnects Tribal youth and families in Towaoc with ancestral lands and cultural heritage. Guided by Elders and cultural leaders, experiences range from K-5 field trips to sacred sites to high school archaeology internships—fostering intergenerational learning, youth leadership, and outdoor career pathways.

KEY METRICS & OUTCOMES

\$900,000

Generation Wild grant from GOCO for the UMUT in partnership with Montezuma Land Conservancy (MLC)

Strong Partnership

MLC, Ute Mountain Ute Recreation Center, Kwiayagat Community Academy, UMUT Higher Education, Sleeping Ute Diabetes, Medicine Horse Center, and Southwest Conservation Corps



SHARED LANDSCAPES: WHERE RANCHING AND RECREATION MEET

West Slope Outdoors Alliance (WSOA), a Regional Partnership covering Delta, Mesa, and Montrose counties, worked with a local rancher and the Agriwest Initiative on a project to install multiple-use signs at trailheads in Mesa County providing education on grazing on public lands. WSOA members provided feedback on sign content and volunteer hours surveying trailhead users about the signs.

Join the Momentum

These results represent just the beginning of what's possible when Colorado's Outdoors Strategy goals take hold across the state. The Strategy is a long-term vision, and achieving it requires all of us working together.

HERE ARE WAYS YOU CAN JOIN IN:

- Use the Strategy to guide your planning and align your efforts with statewide priorities.
- Explore ready-to-use tools in the online Resource Hub for data, mapping, and more.
- Share your project stories and data to contribute to collective learning and inspire others.
- Engage with your area's Regional Partnership.

Let's forge ahead with pride for where we've been and hope for the future of Colorado's great outdoors.

Learn more and access resources:

cpw.state.co.us/coloradosoutdoorsstrategy



TRIBAL LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The lands now known as Colorado are the homelands of many Tribes, including the Ute Nations, Apache Nation, Arapaho Nation, Cheyenne Nation, Pueblo Tribes, and Shoshone Tribe. We respect and honor Elders past, present, and future, and all Indigenous peoples for their enduring relationship with this land. Colorado's Outdoors Strategy builds on this legacy of stewardship, recognizing the deep knowledge and care Indigenous communities have carried across generations and continue to uphold today. Partnership with Tribes and American Indian communities remains essential, as they play a vital role in stewarding natural and cultural resources across the state.

PHOTO CREDITS

Cover

Hikers by Bergreen Photography.
Biker by Joey Early.

Back

Conservation corps youth by Travis Custer.
Collard Ranch by Christi Bode, courtesy of
Western Rivers Conservancy.

