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Care for Colorado Coalition Meeting Notes - December 11, 2025

Small Group Discussion

- DMOs and land managers, how are you currently working with your guides and outfitters? Guides, how are you currently working with your DMOs and land managers?
 - Land management issues permits to guides. To get a permit, guides agree to a lot of stipulations, such as agreeing to Leave No Trace principles and documenting how they will do that.
 - Land managers have more relationships with guides, while the destination side focuses more on promotion.
 - Guides work more with land managers, and less with DMOs, so there are more opportunities for collaboration.
 - Tap into the regional partnership program with CPW
 - Some DMOs are promoting guides, but this continues to be an opportunity
 - Some DMOs that are part of the town/municipality government work closely with Parks & Recreation. They aim to expand education and create alignment across departments, ensuring consistent language and up-to-date information across websites and marketing materials.
 - Some associations employ guides and encourage the guides to promote a broader vision of stewardship while on trips
 - Focus on ensuring guides have the safety information they need and can relay it accurately to DMOs and land managers.
 - In Mesa Verde Country, it's not just a guide but someone who can share the gems of the area and how to get off the beaten path. Cortez Welcome Center does events that feature guides and help demonstrate how they can benefit the visitor experience

- The Destination Stewardship Plan calls for the **Promotion of Guided Recreation Opportunities** by encouraging more visitors to opt for experiences with a guide. What can the coalition do to bring together the CTO, DMOs, Land Managers, and tourism industry partners to promote the use of guides and outfitters?
 - The Coalition can share compelling reasons for travelers to hire and spend their money on a guide. One idea was to develop a “meet the guide” video series so travelers can know who they will be working with. This helps show the value of this richer experience for travelers.



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- CTO marketing materials can show more travelers with guides, illustrating that this is a safe and smart option.
 - Discussed promotional tactics, but conversation kept coming back to the theme of education – knowing the dangers, avalanche warnings, why you can't hike in flip flops, etc.
 - Lead with education first to let people know the dangers. Develop a Know Before You Go concept that leads into why you should go to an outfitter. This goes beyond just “hey, here is an outfitter” and into details. For example: What is a licensed guide? This gives licensed guides recognition.
 - Colorado Canyons uses guides to raise awareness of conservation with youth groups.
 - With a local hat on, Summit County Rescue Group is plagued in winter with snowmobiles. Inexperienced travelers have no education and get stuck, or worse. We do education with outfitters who provide snowmobile equipment to recommend guides.
 - DMOs are such a lynchpin in this: bringing guides to the table and to the discussion, learning from them, talking about how we can continue to educate.
 - Break through barrier of not being seen as weak because you've hired a guide
 - Ambassador programs at trailheads and in downtown (Moab and Durango)
 - Networking events for outfitters
 - Directory of DMO's for outfitters
 - Gov Con session
 - Emphasize consistent messaging that guided experiences improve safety and enjoyment.
 - Guide/outfitter quality varies, so highlighting experienced operators is important.
 - Utilize Do Colorado Right campaigns. Their success in hiking could inspire similar campaigns for other recreation areas (e.g., snowmobiling). Suggested a “one-stop shop” marketing approach for various outdoor recreation types.
 - Use messaging that guides play an essential role in creating memorable visitor experiences.
 - Apply Do Colorado Right campaign messaging and tactics to the use of guides as well. For example: feature guides in Visit COlorado or other DMO content such as hiking influencer videos.
- In addition to what Andy discussed, what else can guides and outfitters be doing to promote stewardship of natural areas and safety to their clients?
 - Leave No Trace harnesses passive education that comes with networking with guides.



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- Outfitters can explain to visitors why some places are closed.
- Include stewardship information in confirmation emails
- Guides and outfitters can reach out to hotels and businesses where guests are staying/visiting, who can then educate guests about responsible activities that use guides.

- What strategies can we use to recruit more guides and outfitters to join the Coalition?
 - Have the Coalition come speak at guide meetings and share the benefits of becoming a member.
 - Spread the word. A lot of companies do their own training.
 - Help guides see the Coalition as a place to network and learn.
 - Maybe the Coalition can give some perks to guides. They are not always paid the highest wages, so are there things we can give them as perks? For example: Come to this event and get a free meal.
 - Recruit locally, rather than a statewide
 - DMOs and land managers can work together.
 - Develop a directory of DMOs
 - Gov Con session about guides and outfitters
 - Direct outreach, including mass emails and leveraging knowledge of organizations that support or represent outfitters.
 - Hosting or attending a summit where the Coalition can convene partners and showcase opportunities for engagement.
 - It will happen organically (the more that get involved, the more will come over time)
 - Have a guides and outfitters summit, or have the Coalition be present at an existing summit.
 - Do direct outreach to outfitters and guide companies via email or other direct communications.