



COLORADO'S Outdoors Strategy

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2025



Why Colorado's Outdoors Strategy?

Coloradans love the outdoors, and the outdoors are essential to what makes Colorado special. The health of our wildlife, biodiversity, people, communities, agriculture, and economies depend upon the thriving natural environments and amazing outdoor recreation experiences that the outdoors provide.

However, throughout Colorado, our outdoors face significant and urgent pressures from growing populations and human disturbance to climate change, wildfires, and drought. From the Western Slope to the Eastern Plains, many communities feel they are at an important crossroads in their ability to:

- **Connect people to outdoor experiences and opportunities.**
- **Protect, conserve, and restore aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity and functioning ecosystems.**
- **Keep agricultural lands in production.**
- **Meet or grow demand for outdoor recreation.**
- **Identify the highest priorities on the landscape for both conservation and outdoor recreation.**
- **Support healthy economies, including outdoor recreation-based economies.**
- **Connect Tribal and Indigenous people to lands and waters and protect their cultural resources.**
- **Protect and enhance the resilience of lands, waters, communities, and outdoor recreation amenities to climate change, drought, and wildfire.**
- **Sustain community character and ways of life.**

VISION

Colorado's Outdoors Strategy ensures a future where our outdoors, people, community character, and ways of life endure for generations to come.



What Does the Strategy Do?

Communities across the state have unique challenges and opportunities, and are cultivating local partnerships to work toward solutions. However, to support local and regional conservation, outdoor recreation, and climate resilience goals, we also need *statewide* partnership, coordination, and action.

The Strategy is not intended to be *another* plan. Rather, Colorado's Outdoors Strategy (the Strategy) was created to support and align the many plans, knowledge, and efforts of diverse public and private partners and stakeholders statewide. The Strategy is a framework to:

PURPOSE

Colorado's Outdoors Strategy advances coordination, tools, and funding to align, prioritize, and implement strategic actions on the landscape for conservation, outdoor recreation, and climate resilience.

ADVANCE

shared goals, collective strategies, and statewide
Coordinating Partner actions for conservation, outdoor recreation, and climate resilience.

STRENGTHEN

strategic funding and partnerships for the outdoors.

CATALYZE

and align statewide leadership and planning.

PROVIDE

data, mapping tools, and resources to inform decision making, drive action, and track progress.

AMPLIFY

regionally rooted efforts and support local communities.



Who Can Use the Strategy and How?

Colorado's Outdoors Strategy supports all who love the outdoors in working together to achieve climate-resilient conservation and restoration *and* exceptional and sustainable outdoor recreation. Everyone can use the Strategy's **vision and goals** as 'North Stars' to champion our outdoors and coordinate efforts to achieve key outcomes for Colorado.

The detailed elements of the Strategy are intended for the many public and private partners and stakeholders that engage in planning efforts for the outdoors. Table A on the next page describes how partners and stakeholders can support implementing the Strategy.

The Strategy's **objectives, collective strategies, and Coordinating Partner actions** are designed to catalyze and support statewide action toward major outcomes for conservation, outdoor recreation, and climate resilience.

The **data, mapping tools, resources, and baseline measures** compiled and/or developed for the Strategy are intended to provide public and private partners and stakeholders with foundational information and knowledge to inform and advance interdisciplinary conservation, outdoor recreation, and climate resilience planning.

The **Strategy and its data, mapping tools, and resources** are not **prescriptive**; however, they provide a critical foundation for interdisciplinary planning and help to align, prioritize, and implement strategic actions on the landscape for conservation, outdoor recreation, and climate resilience.



TABLE A.

Call to Action: Colorado's Outdoors Strategy Implementation

	COORDINATING PARTNERS	PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS
ROLES	Colorado Parks and Wildlife will steward Colorado's Outdoors Strategy by coordinating collaborative leadership and implementation of the Coordinating Partner actions with Great Outdoors Colorado, the Department of Natural Resources, Outdoor Recreation Industry Office, and Governor's Office , along with other agencies and partners.	Successful implementation of the collective strategies identified in Colorado's Outdoors Strategy will require a variety of public and private partners and stakeholders to collaborate and leverage their own management authorities, plans, networks, knowledge, and resources.
IMPLEMENTATION	Drive implementation and investment for the Strategy's goals, objectives, and Coordinating Partner actions.	Reference, incorporate, and contribute as relevant to the achievement of the Strategy's vision, goals, objectives, and collective strategies (through plans, projects, land management agency authorities, etc.) while elevating community priorities.
COORDINATION	Foster coordination and alignment among all public and private partners.	Champion and implement coordinated conservation, outdoor recreation, and climate resilience planning at a variety of scales.
DATA	Share and support the development, use, and maintenance of data, mapping tools, and resources.	Integrate with and use the Strategy's data, mapping tools, and resources to inform planning; contribute data and help address data and information gaps.
FUNDING	Advance sustainable funding for Colorado's Outdoors Strategy and the Regional Partnerships Initiative.	Lead and support efforts to secure sustainable funding for the outdoors from a variety of federal, state, county, local, and private sources.
OUTREACH	Promote the Strategy, success stories, and the importance of Colorado's outdoors to the public.	
ACCOUNTABILITY	Track and share progress toward achieving Colorado's Outdoors Strategy.	Sustain collaboration and coordination to help drive and track progress toward achieving Colorado's Outdoors Strategy.

Strategy at a Glance

VISION

Colorado's Outdoors Strategy ensures a future where our outdoors, people, community character, and ways of life endure for generations to come.

PURPOSE

Colorado's Outdoors Strategy advances coordination, tools, and funding to align, prioritize, and implement strategic actions on the landscape for conservation, outdoor recreation, and climate resilience.

VALUES

**The Outdoors Are Essential - Action - Collaboration - Community
- Equity & Inclusion - Knowledge - Landscape Scale**

PARTNERS

Coordinating Partners

- Colorado Parks and Wildlife
(Lead Coordinating Agency)
- Great Outdoors Colorado
- Colorado Department of Natural Resources
- Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office
- Colorado Governor's Office

Key Partners

State, federal, and local governments; Tribal Nations; private and agricultural land/water rights owners and managers; local communities; Colorado Regional Partnerships Initiative; Colorado Outdoor Partnership; diverse private and public sector partners in conservation, restoration, outdoor recreation, stewardship, climate resilience, and equity, diversity, and inclusion.





CLIMATE-RESILIENT CONSERVATION AND 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.

CONSERVATION:

Increase the conservation of public and private lands and waters with high biodiversity, connectivity, and climate resilience while supporting communities and agricultural lands.

RESTORATION:

Increase restoration of public and private lands and waters with high biodiversity, connectivity, and climate resilience, including areas most impacted by increasing populations, human disturbance, and climate change.

WILDLIFE AND BIODIVERSITY:

Enhance habitat connectivity and species recovery on public and private lands and waters for wildlife and biodiversity.



EXCEPTIONAL AND 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.

EXPERIENCES AND OPPORTUNITIES:

Enhance a broad range of exceptional outdoor recreation experiences, including close-to-home and statewide opportunities that meet diverse needs and interests.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION:

Increase the accessibility and inclusivity of outdoor experiences and opportunities for diverse and disproportionately impacted communities and individuals.

MANAGEMENT AND STEWARDSHIP:

Enhance management capacity and foster stewardship to support exceptional outdoor experiences and opportunities that are sustainable and resilient, avoid and minimize environmental impacts, and respect people and communities.



COORDINATED PLANNING AND 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.

STRATEGIC FUNDING:

Strengthen strategic funding statewide for conservation, outdoor recreation, and climate resilience.

COORDINATED PLANNING:

Catalyze and support new and existing conservation, outdoor recreation, and climate resilience planning efforts in alignment with regional and statewide goals.

DATA AND TOOLS:

Create and sustain data, mapping tools, and resources to inform planning, priorities, and management for the outdoors.

Goals

THE STRATEGY'S 'NORTH STAR' GOALS ARE HIGHLY INTERCONNECTED:

- Ecosystems, people, and communities do not stand alone: each can contribute to, or negatively impact, the health and well-being of the other.
- Climate-resilient conservation and restoration provide and sustain resilient habitat and outdoor settings where wildlife can thrive and people can recreate.
- Exceptional and sustainable outdoor recreation experiences can create stewards of our outdoors that champion and advocate for conservation, restoration, and climate resilience.
- Coordinated planning and funding support conservation, outdoor recreation, and climate resilience - helping to prioritize and implement strategic actions for each.
- Resilience to climate change and other stressors is critical for our outdoors, people, and communities.
- Conservation and outdoor recreation are not mutually exclusive; thoughtful planning can identify, prioritize, and balance where and how on the landscape they can and should occur together or separately.
- The resilience of agricultural systems and communities can be positively or negatively impacted by conservation and outdoor recreation efforts; collaboration with agricultural producers and communities can help drive mutual benefits.



CLIMATE-RESILIENT CONSERVATION AND 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.

GOALS

Colorado's Outdoors Strategy advances three interrelated 'North Star' goals for our outdoors. Each goal is essential to achieve a future where our people, outdoors, community character, and ways of life endure for generations to come.



EXCEPTIONAL AND 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.

Objectives and Actions

The objectives, collective strategies, and Coordinating Partner actions discussed in this section support achievement of the Strategy's goals. Each of the Strategy's goals is accompanied by three objectives, and each objective is supported by collective strategies and Coordinating Partner actions.

GOALS are broad and overarching ambitions.

OBJECTIVES are specific and actionable commitments that bridge the gap between goals and practical steps toward achieving those goals.

COLLECTIVE STRATEGIES are approaches to achieving goals and objectives that are advanced by a variety of public and private sector partners and stakeholders, and their individual and/or collective actions.

COORDINATING PARTNER ACTIONS reflect commitments of the Coordinating Partners (CPW, GOCO, DNR, OREC, and the Governor's Office). As applicable, they will be implemented in coordination with other plans and partners detailed throughout the Strategy.

These goals and objectives help advance holistic outcomes for the outdoors; together, they contribute to and support efforts that **enhance the quality and benefits** of climate-resilient conservation, restoration, and outdoor recreation for our outdoors, people, and communities.

Colorado's Outdoors Strategy is envisioned as a 10-year strategy that will be adaptively implemented over time. The Coordinating Partners will use the Strategy to develop a more detailed implementation plan that delivers on the Coordinating Partner actions in coordination with other state agencies and public and private partners.

Cross-Cutting Collective Strategies

Cross-cutting strategies for *all* objectives related to climate-resilient conservation and restoration; exceptional and sustainable outdoor recreation; and coordinated funding and planning are to:

- Collaboratively identify priorities on the landscape for conservation and outdoor recreation.
- Plan and implement with the landscape scale in mind.
- Support implementation of the actions and strategies found in other relevant statewide plans.
- Incorporate strategies for both land- and water-based conservation and outdoor recreation.
- Integrate climate resilience into planning and action.
- Intersect equity, diversity, and inclusion with Strategy objectives, actions, and strategies.
- Support and align the funding needed to achieve all objectives, collective strategies, and Coordinating Partner actions.

TABLE B.

Summary of Objectives and Coordinating Partner Actions



CLIMATE-RESILIENT CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION

OBJECTIVES AND COORDINATING PARTNER ACTIONS

CONSERVATION: Increase the conservation of public and private lands and waters with high biodiversity, connectivity, and climate resilience while supporting communities and agricultural lands

Coordinating Partner Actions:

- Align state-funded land and water conservation programs to prioritize projects with high importance for biodiversity, landscape scale connectivity, and climate resilience.
- Contribute to Keep It Colorado's *10-Year Roadmap for the Future of Private Land Conservation* goal of doubling the acreage of conserved private lands by 2033, adding 3.3 million acres over the 2023 baseline.
- Align funding programs to contribute to protecting an additional 10% of the highest conservation value lands by 2035.
- Foster participation in voluntary private/ agricultural land conservation programs that support agricultural lands and economies.

RESTORATION: Increase restoration of public and private lands and waters with high biodiversity, connectivity, and climate resilience, including areas most impacted by increasing populations, human disturbance, and climate change

Coordinating Partner Actions:

- Prioritize and align funding for restoration efforts that address multiple benefits for conservation, outdoor recreation, climate resilience, forest health, wildfire resilience, and watershed health in high priority lands and waters.
- Develop and improve upon comprehensive land use/land cover change monitoring and land and water restoration data tracking tools and baseline data to inform future goals and priorities.
- Support wetland, riparian, and aquatic health through restoration efforts that incorporate climate-smart and nature-based solutions, in partnership with efforts that address environmental and recreational flows and water quality impairments.
- Advance voluntary programs and technical support for climate-smart soil health practices, agricultural land restoration, stream and watershed restoration, and habitat programs.

WILDLIFE AND BIODIVERSITY: Enhance habitat connectivity and species recovery on public and private lands and waters for wildlife and biodiversity.

Coordinating Partner Actions:

- Lead and align funding to implement priority efforts supporting a diverse array of wildlife and biodiversity identified in the forthcoming *CPW Habitat Conservation and Connectivity Plan* and the *State Wildlife Action Plan*.
- Lead efforts to achieve management objectives for Colorado's game species including elk, deer, and bighorn sheep, and other species in alignment with climate-resilient conservation and outdoor recreation.

TABLE B.

Summary of Objectives and Coordinating Partner Actions (*continued*)



EXCEPTIONAL AND SUSTAINABLE OUTDOOR RECREATION

OBJECTIVES AND COORDINATING PARTNER ACTIONS

EXPERIENCES AND OPPORTUNITIES:

Enhance a broad range of exceptional outdoor recreation experiences including close-to-home and statewide opportunities that meet diverse needs and interests.

Coordinating Partner Actions:

- Support identifying and implementing priority projects that enhance close-to-home outdoor recreation experiences and opportunities.
- Establish a collaborative, statewide forum for outdoor recreation leadership that supports coordination among federal, state, local, and private interests to identify and implement priorities for outdoor recreation.
- Align and enhance investments in collaboratively-identified priority outdoor recreation projects through a variety of funding sources including but not limited to State Trails Committee grants.
- Invest in priority statewide and regional outdoor recreation data and information - including experience surveys, visitation patterns, opportunity/amenity assessments, and economic returns on investment - to inform future goals and priorities.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION:

Increase the accessibility and inclusivity of outdoor experiences and opportunities for diverse and disproportionately impacted communities and individuals.

Coordinating Partner Actions:

- Evaluate and update data integrated with Colorado's Outdoors Strategy to understand and improve equitable access to outdoor experiences for disproportionately impacted communities and people experiencing disabilities, including the *2025 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan's* Recreation Access Map.
- Improve equity, diversity, and inclusion in the outdoors through continued investment in and collaboration with the Regional Partnerships Initiative, CPW's Outdoor Equity Grant Program, GOCO's Generation Wild, and other state-led environmental justice and equity in the outdoors programs.

MANAGEMENT AND STEWARDSHIP:

Enhance management capacity and foster stewardship to support exceptional outdoor experiences and opportunities that are sustainable and resilient, avoid and minimize environmental impacts, and respect people and communities.

Coordinating Partner Actions:

- Expand partnership models that enhance boots-on-the ground capacity for public land management agencies.
- Coordinate with statewide stewardship plans, education programs, and messaging campaigns.
- Develop educational, storytelling, and awareness efforts for the outdoors through improved agency communications and outreach methods.
- Lead implementation of priority efforts identified in the *2025 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan*.

TABLE B.

Summary of Objectives and Coordinating Partner Actions (*continued*)



COORDINATED PLANNING AND FUNDING

OBJECTIVES AND COORDINATING PARTNER ACTIONS

STRATEGIC FUNDING:

Strengthen strategic funding statewide for conservation, outdoor recreation, and climate resilience.

Coordinating Partner Actions:

- Align state and public-private funding opportunities to reflect Strategy goals and objectives.
- Pursue opportunities to simplify, connect, and streamline grant programs for the outdoors.
- Conduct a phased funding needs assessment for the outdoors.
- Invest in continuing the Regional Partnerships Initiative, including funding for capacity, plan development, and implementation of both Regional Plans and Colorado's Outdoors Strategy.
- Identify and advance a long-term, sustainable funding strategy to accomplish Regional Partnerships Initiative and Strategy goals and objectives.

COORDINATED PLANNING: Catalyze and support new and existing conservation, outdoor recreation, and climate resilience planning efforts in alignment with regional and statewide goals.

Coordinating Partner Actions:

- Develop and implement an interagency implementation strategy led by CPW in coordination with the other Coordinating Partners of the Strategy, and across state agencies.
- Create opportunities for shared collaboration and learning for state agencies, federal partners, and other public-private partners and stakeholders through the Colorado Outdoor Partnership, Regional Partnerships Initiative, Partners in the Outdoors Conference, Colorado Outdoor Industry Leadership Summit, and by hosting an annual summit.
- Expand the Regional Partnerships Initiative and align the program and its funding to incentivize diverse and inclusive representation from public and private sectors including interests in conservation, outdoor recreation, restoration, stewardship, agriculture, wildlife, water, wildfire, and more.
- Encourage and incentivize integrating best practices for equity, diversity, inclusion, and Tribal and Indigenous engagement and representation, in planning for the outdoors.
- Integrate Colorado's Outdoors Strategy objectives, actions, and resources into the strategic plans and actions of CPW, GOCO, DNR, OREC, and other state partners as appropriate.

DATA AND TOOLS: Create and sustain data, mapping tools, and resources to inform planning, priorities, and management for the outdoors.

Coordinating Partner Actions:

- Launch Colorado's Outdoors Strategy Resource Hub and provide training and resources on the Hub to partners and stakeholders; update the Hub as new information becomes available.
- Invest in the *Data, Information, and Knowledge Roadmap*.
- Add capacity for state staff to support monitoring and updating Strategy data, mapping tools, and resources.

Funding Colorado's Outdoors

A variety of federal, state, local, and private sector funding sources support projects focused on conservation, outdoor recreation, and climate resilience. These funding sources often work together, allowing for the development of a strategic funding stack that addresses multiple benefits simultaneously.

Despite significant investments and recent progress in funding for the outdoors, Colorado faces an estimated funding shortfall of hundreds of millions of dollars for conservation, outdoor recreation, and climate resilience. When combined with the wide range of water, forest, and transportation-related needs that intersect with these priorities, total unfunded needs likely reach into the billions of dollars.

This reality underscores the urgent need to strengthen strategic funding statewide for conservation, outdoor recreation, and climate resilience. A comprehensive funding assessment of all federal, state, local, and private sector sources and needs is not included in the Strategy; therefore, a phased funding assessment is identified as one of the Strategy's Coordinating Partner actions.

Other key actions identified in the Strategy include championing funding for the outdoors, sustaining and expanding current investments, assessing existing funding and unmet needs more comprehensively, aligning funding opportunities with Strategy goals and objectives, and developing a long-term, sustainable funding framework.



Online Data, Mapping Tools, and Resources

COLORADO'S OUTDOORS STRATEGY RESOURCE HUB is an essential component of the Strategy that provides online data, mapping tools, and other resources for conservation, outdoor recreation, and climate resilience planning.

Please visit Colorado's Outdoors Strategy Resource Hub to find:

- An interactive **Data Dashboard** with state and county scale information, data, and links for conservation, outdoor recreation, and climate resilience.
- An interactive **Plan Library** that is searchable for federal, Tribal, regional, state, and county scale conservation, outdoor recreation, and climate resilience plans in Colorado.
- **Planning Resources and Guidance for Conservation, Outdoor Recreation, and Climate Resilience.**
- A statewide **Guidance Framework for Tribal Collaboration in Conservation, Outdoor Recreation, and Climate Resilience.**
- An interactive **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Resource and Action Guide** that is searchable by topic area.
- **Colorado's Conservation Data Explorer (CODEX)** and **StoryMap** with conservation, outdoor recreation, and climate resilience mapping tools.

In addition, a **Data, Information, and Knowledge Roadmap** identifies important needs that can be addressed in the future to further support interdisciplinary planning in conservation, outdoor recreation, and climate resilience.







COLORADO'S

Outdoors Strategy

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

cpw.state.co.us/colorados-outdoors-strategy