



# THE 2019 STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN







**COLORADO**  
Gov. John Hickenlooper

December 11, 2018

Dear Fellow Coloradans,

It gives me great pleasure to present Colorado's 2019-2023 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Colorado's outdoor heritage, natural beauty, and diverse landscapes make our state the perfect place to enjoy all forms of outdoor recreation.

As Governor, I launched the Colorado the Beautiful Initiative with the vision that, within a generation, every Coloradan will live within ten minutes of a park, trail, or vibrant green space. I created the second Outdoor Recreation Industry Office in the country to ensure this growing sector, which contributes \$62 billion to Colorado's economy, continues to thrive. And this October, I signed Executive Order 2018-10 to highlight the inextricable link between our growing outdoor recreation sector and the important conservation work that has gone on for decades in Colorado. The Executive Order directs state agencies to create the Inter-Agency Trails and Recreation Council, work with partners to implement the 2019 SCORP, and continue the important work under Colorado the Beautiful.

Outdoor recreation opportunities contribute to increased quality of life, economic prosperity, and the health of Colorado communities and residents. The returns we enjoy from our investment in the outdoors are extraordinary. And while there are clear economic and social benefits to encouraging more people to pursue outdoor recreation in Colorado, the need to balance growth of outdoor recreation with preservation and enhancement of water, land, and wildlife is as important as ever. The SCORP calls for all Coloradans and visitors to have outstanding opportunities for outdoor recreation while encouraging greater responsibility and stewardship of our natural and cultural resources.

I applaud Colorado Parks and Wildlife and the SCORP Advisory Group, including the Colorado Outdoor Partnership, for crafting the 2019-2023 SCORP, and I certify that the plan was developed with extensive data collection and public involvement. This is a plan for all Coloradans. Now, it is up to all of us -- local, state, and federal governments, conservation and recreation professionals, volunteers, and recreationalists -- to act upon the information and strategies provided in the plan.

Sincerely,

John W. Hickenlooper  
Governor



The 2019–2023 Colorado Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan is a collaborative effort administered by Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW). This plan was developed with the assistance of a diverse group of outdoor recreation stakeholders. This plan was financed in part by a grant awarded to the State of Colorado from the National Park Service through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Colorado Parks and Wildlife would like to thank the many contributors who provided their time, expertise and support to the successful development of the 2019–2023 SCORP.

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CPW Policy and Planning staff who assisted in all aspects of project planning, implementation, data collection/analysis, and writing/editing include: Katie Lanter, Christine Zenel, Julia Clark, and Shannon Bauman. Brad Henley, CPW Southeast Deputy Regional Manager, provided meaningful input throughout the process and review of the draft report.

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Colorado provides its residents and visitors with boundless outdoor recreational opportunities. It is a synergistic relationship – the natural beauty of the state beckons people outdoors, and they spend countless hours and much of their hard-earned money to pursue outdoor recreation. In return, Colorado's outdoor recreationists gain appreciation for sustaining the state's outdoor resources.

However, conservation and recreation in Colorado are facing challenges. Our state has one of the fastest growing populations in the country, with a current population of 5.5 million projected to jump to 8.5 million people by 2050. More residents and high tourist visitation means public recreation areas are facing crowding, maintenance backlogs and conflicting outdoor recreation pursuits. Also, increased use and year-round activity can impact natural landscapes and native wildlife. These are challenges that need to be met head on, with thoughtful planning coordinated by a wide range of stakeholders.

Every five years, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) leads development of a comprehensive outdoor recreation plan to maintain eligibility for funding through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and to inform additional investments from other federal, state, local and private programs. Given the significance of outdoor recreation in the state, this plan is much more than a federal requirement for funding.

**Colorado's 2019 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) was developed in close collaboration with a wide range of partners to provide a shared vision for the future of Colorado's outdoors.**

This plan is the first time a Colorado SCORP considers both conservation and recreation together as values that are closely intertwined. In addition, the SCORP looks at current and changing demographics and recreation trends to help the outdoor recreation sector be culturally relevant and respond to future shifts. While SCORP is a comprehensive plan that does not focus on individual recreation uses, it supports all user groups and seeks broad engagement of outdoor recreationists and conservationists as well as including community voices in solutions and action.

### **Recreation Participation in Colorado**

**Approximately 92% of Coloradans recreate in the outdoors at least once every few weeks** and some four or more times per week. It is essential to understand the needs of these outdoor recreation users, as well as the land managers providing outdoor recreational experiences, in order to successfully plan for the future of conservation and recreation in Colorado. As part of the 2019 SCORP development process, Colorado Parks and Wildlife staff identified 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.



Those who recreate outdoors had a variety of motivations, the most popular being **to enjoy nature, to relax, for social purposes** such as spending time with loved ones, and to **improve personal health**. The most common recreational activity statewide and regionally is **walking**, followed closely by **hiking/backpacking** and then **picnicking and tent camping**.

With this in mind, the public's recreation priorities focus on the **development of local walking trails and paths, increasing opportunities to view wildlife, and establishing playgrounds with built natural materials**. Having the ability to recreate close to home remains popular in terms of current activity participation (e.g. walking or jogging outdoors) and preferences for future opportunities (e.g. walking trails/paths, built playgrounds, etc.).

The top three barriers to Coloradans' recreation participation were **limited time, traffic congestion and crowding**. To address these issues, the public prefers that recreation providers prioritize long-term planning and management, maintenance of existing infrastructure, and local, regional and statewide trail networks.

When surveyed, land managers expressed concerns about the inability to curtail issues associated with crowding. Their top management issue is **maintaining existing recreation infrastructure and resources, followed by challenges adapting to changing user needs or preferences, coordinating with other outdoor recreation agencies and organizations, and the capacity to serve a growing population**. The top three visitor service issues identified were enforcing responsible use, providing programs to engage youth, and maintaining visitor safety. These high priority issues were similar with tribal land managers, however they added cultural resource management and programming as a significant issue. Although land managers identified these as challenges, most also expressed concern about financial challenges in addressing these issues.

## Outdoor Recreation Economic Impacts in Colorado

Colorado's outdoor recreation economy generates substantial economic benefits to the state through direct spending on travel and equipment purchases as well as through positive ripple effects across other sectors. In 2017, outdoor recreation in Colorado contributed:

- **\$62.5 billion in economic output**
- **\$35.0 billion in Gross Domestic Product (10% of the entire state GDP)**
- **\$9.4 billion in local, state and federal tax revenue**
- **511,000 jobs in the state (18.7% of the labor force) – a majority outside of Metro Denver**

Outdoor recreation is not only a robust sector, but a growing one. Since 2014, total economic output and tax revenue from outdoor recreation in Colorado nearly doubled and jobs increased by almost 200,000. Outdoor recreation is engrained in Colorado's culture, landscape and quality of life, as well as its economic stability.

## 2019 SCORP Priority Areas

Working together, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, the Colorado Outdoor Partnership and the SCORP Advisory Group identified four priority areas on which to focus over the next five years. Building on the 2008 and 2014 SCORPs, these priorities reflect the current trends, opportunities and challenges facing Colorado's outdoor recreation resources today. These priorities are interconnected and critical components to achieving a future vision where Colorado's outdoors continues to provide rich recreation experiences while conserving natural and cultural resources.

In addition, [Colorado's Outdoor Principles](#) were integrated in the 2019 SCORP Priority Areas. These seven core principles for advancing outdoor recreation and conservation were adopted by the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission in 2016. These principles are part of a broader national movement to "Shape How we Invest for Tomorrow" (SHIFT) that's intended to refine a collective outdoor ethic promoting both recreational enjoyment and thoughtful conservation of special places.



DUSTIN DOSKOCIL/CPW

## PRIORITY I. Sustainable Access and Opportunity

**Goal:** More Coloradans and visitors benefit from outdoor recreation and conservation.

**Objective I: Break Down Barriers** - Better understand and address barriers to engaging people in outdoor recreation. Enhance efforts to engage Coloradans who currently lack or have limited opportunities to participate in outdoor recreation.

**Strategy 1:** Compile research about the barriers Coloradans face and the motivations they have for participating in outdoor recreation. Better understand why people of all backgrounds engage in different types of outdoor recreation activities. Utilize information to better understand what drives Coloradans to recreate with the intent of minimizing barriers.

**Strategy 2:** Build trust, relationships and networks through enhanced public engagement, education and community outreach focused on breaking down identified barriers.

**Strategy 3:** Utilize and support existing programs (community, local, state, tribal, federal) that are effectively working to get underrepresented users outdoors.

**Strategy 4:** Advance collaborative efforts between community groups and health and recreation providers to increase prescriptions for nature-based recreation and other policies and practices that promote outdoor recreation for improving public health. Consider the potential barriers to certain populations for fulfilling outdoor recreation prescriptions (Strategy 1).

**Strategy 5:** Engage diverse types of users (demographic, geographic, cultural, socioeconomic, activity preference, etc.) in the management, planning and design of outdoor recreation spaces and access opportunities.

**Strategy 6:** Recruit and retain an outdoor recreation workforce that is diverse and representative of Colorado's demographics.

**Objective II: Technology Connects More People to the Outdoors** - Advance easily accessible information that enhances user experience and offers tools to outdoor recreation providers.

**Strategy 1:** Better understand and inventory technology and online resources (apps, websites, social media, etc.) that help promote and connect people to the outdoors. Compile data on how these tools are reaching underrepresented users.

**Strategy 2:** Inventory and utilize existing technologies that improve user experience by dispersing users to locations that can accommodate recreational activity. Compile data on how technologies are being effective. When possible utilize voluntary data sharing (i.e. GPS tracking, expanding trail/parking lot cameras, etc.).

**Strategy 3:** Find and leverage partners to support the development and maintenance of apps, websites, social media and other tools that address gaps identified in Strategies 1 and 2.

**Objective III: Private and Public Lands Support Outdoor Recreation** – Develop strategies across Colorado to build support for sustainable outdoor recreation access. Advance Colorado the Beautiful vision that every Coloradan will live within 10 minutes of a park, trail or vibrant green space.

**Strategy 1:** Coordinate with local, regional, state, federal and tribal planning efforts currently underway to better understand and address needs to maintain and expand access for outdoor recreation. Consider needs and potential opportunities to work with private landowners.

**Strategy 2:** Incentivize willing private landowners to allow for public access. Maintain and enhance funding for access and conservation easements. Combine with education on the value of private land, recognizing how farms, ranches and other private lands play a critical role in providing habitat, viewsheds and other benefits to outdoor recreation and conservation.



## PRIORITY II. Stewardship

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

**Objective I: Build an Outdoor Stewardship Ethic** - Foster awareness and experiences that build an ethic of stewardship and responsibility to care for natural and cultural resources and outdoor recreation infrastructure.

**Strategy 1:** Encourage organizations, and local, state and federal partners to adopt Colorado's Outdoor Principles (modeled after the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation) to endorse an outdoor ethic that promotes both recreational enjoyment and conservation.

**Strategy 2:** Work in partnerships to utilize and bolster marketing/media and education efforts to promote stewardship, conservation and respect for other users and infrastructure. Coordinate with and complement existing efforts (See the Colorado Outdoor Partnership website for list).

**Objective II: Enhance Stewardship Capacity** - Increase capacity of outdoor recreation providers, stewardship organizations and agencies to engage volunteers, employ youth and young adults, and enhance other types of support for on-the-ground, action-oriented stewardship activities.

**Strategy 1:** Promote and implement the Colorado Outdoor Stewardship Coalition best practices, tools, trainings and resources to advance on-the-ground stewardship.

**Strategy 2:** Strengthen public-private relationships and collaboration efforts to connect more people to on-the-ground activities, enhance habitat restoration and conservation, and build capacity for organizations engaged in this work.





## PRIORITY III. Land, Water and Wildlife Conservation

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

**Objective I: Advance Landscape-scale Conservation** - Work across jurisdictional and land ownership boundaries to plan for wildlife and natural resource conservation along with the growing demand for recreation access. Collaborate to tackle pressing and emerging issues and to identify and safeguard important areas for conservation, working lands and recreation access across the state.

**Strategy 1:** Initiate and support planning efforts to gather and aggregate data and produce maps that factor in landscape-scale considerations (including migration corridors and unfragmented habitat) and inform land use decisions (private, local, state, federal and tribal). Convene diverse outdoor interests with land managers to compile and interpret data and to develop effective collaborations throughout the planning process.

**Strategy 2:** Incorporate outcomes of Strategy 1 into land use decisions by promoting and utilizing consistent maps and datasets to illustrate the overlap of recreation and conservation interests. Collaborate with private, local, state, federal and tribal land managers/property owners to inform decisions in support of conservation and recreation objectives.

**Objective II: Address Recreation Impacts** - Proactively manage visitors and maintain infrastructure to provide positive outdoor recreation experiences while limiting resource impacts. Utilize best practices when developing new trails or other outdoor infrastructure.

**Strategy 1:** Compile existing research and conduct new research to better understand the impacts of recreation on land, water, wildlife and cultural resources. Incorporate findings into the development of management guidelines that optimize conservation while maintaining infrastructure and recreation experience.

**Strategy 2:** Share outcomes from Strategy 1 with outdoor recreation partners (private, local, state, federal, tribal and NGOs). Convene partners to build broad support and commitment to address findings and mitigate impacts of recreation on natural resources.

## PRIORITY IV. Funding the Future

**Goal:** Coloradans and visitors contribute to diverse funding sources that are dedicated to support outdoor recreation and conservation. Existing sources of funds are preserved.

**Objective I: Build Support for Conservation Funding** - Raise political and public awareness for the value of Colorado's outdoors to Coloradans' quality of life, economic prosperity, heritage and public and environmental health so that more people contribute funds to support outdoor recreation and conservation.

**Strategy 1:** Develop and implement a public awareness/education initiative and share coordinated messages to help build support for statewide funding.

**Strategy 2:** Continue to urge and advocate for Congress and the Colorado General Assembly to fully fund outdoor recreation and conservation programs.

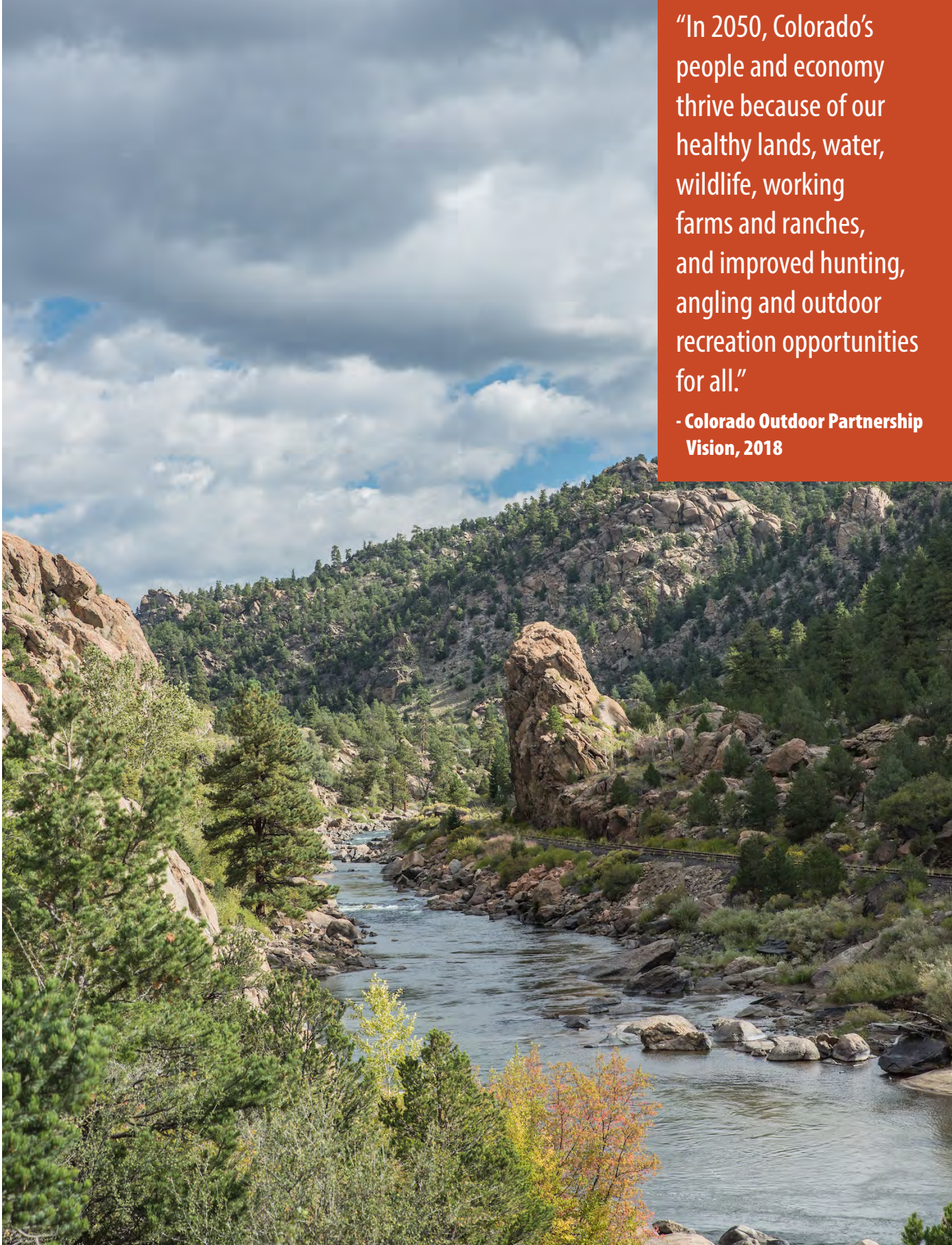
**Objective II: Diversify and Expand Funding Source(s)** - Identify and pursue new funds available to organizations and management agencies that directly benefits outdoor recreation and conservation of natural resources.

**Strategy 1:** Engage and collaborate with a wider community of user groups, businesses and constituents on innovative funding strategies. Identify paths to make it easier for users, businesses and others to contribute.

**Strategy 2:** Connect grant funding to outdoor recreation and conservation priorities and encourage other funders to do the same.

**Strategy 3:** Identify and establish new funding mechanisms utilizing findings from the CPW Funding Study, recommendations from the Colorado Outdoor Partnership and other sources to support the shared strategy presented in this plan.





“In 2050, Colorado’s people and economy thrive because of our healthy lands, water, wildlife, working farms and ranches, and improved hunting, angling and outdoor recreation opportunities for all.”

**- Colorado Outdoor Partnership Vision, 2018**



Over 125 years ago, Colorado's spacious skies, purple mountain majesties and fruited plains so inspired Katharine Lee Bates that she wrote the words for America the Beautiful after a trip to the summit of Pikes Peak. Our great state was then, and remains today, a stunning place of natural beauty that beckons for people to get outside and recreate.

In fact, outdoor recreation is a significant driver in Colorado's economy generating \$62.5 billion towards the state's economy and supporting 511,000 jobs. Whether it is improving the quality of life for Colorado residents, or tempting visitors from far and wide to revel in the wild Rocky Mountains, it is the diversity of outdoor experiences that draws people to our state. It is also this outdoor lifestyle that drives a very active citizenry with the lowest obesity rate in the country.

However, we must be mindful and plan for the challenges that outdoor recreation will face as our state's population grows and tourism increases.

As more people move to Colorado, more land is lost to development, trailheads become crowded, and increased year-round recreation impacts native fish and wildlife. **It is essential to proactively plan for sustainable outdoor recreation and conservation to ensure the natural beauty that makes Colorado unique is maintained for future generations.**

Colorado's 2019 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) charts the course for conservation and recreation in the state for the next five years. This plan reflects the shared vision and commitment of Colorado outdoor recreation and conservation partners to advance strategies to ensure all people can easily connect to Colorado's outdoors and enjoy the state's natural beauty and healthy, active lifestyles.





## INTRODUCTION

### Why a Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan?

Every five years, Colorado Parks and Wildlife leads development of a SCORP. Each state is required to develop a SCORP to be eligible for federal funding tied to the 50-year-old Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Colorado's plan, however, goes beyond federal requirements to capture the state's top priorities for outdoor recreation. To develop Colorado's 2019 SCORP, CPW worked for over a year actively engaging a wide variety of partners

and the public to reflect on evolving outdoor recreation and conservation challenges and opportunities. SCORP provides the framework to strategically allocate LWCF dollars (combined with investments from other federal, state, local and private funding programs) and support collaborations with outdoor recreation providers that promote both recreational enjoyment and thoughtful conservation of Colorado's special places.

### Colorado's 2019 SCORP is a tool that:

- Provides background information on demographics and outdoor recreation, including statewide trends.
- Shares research that documents the economic importance of outdoor recreation to the state, public opinion on statewide and local priorities, and emerging issues and needs in land management.
- Addresses both conservation and recreation and the challenge of providing quality outdoor experiences while conserving the natural resources we depend on for recreation and so much more.
- Recommends shared strategies generated by partners across the state that 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.





### Land and Water Conservation Fund in Colorado

LWCF provides federal matching grants to states and local governments for outdoor recreation enhancement, developing and acquiring land and water areas, natural resource protection and conservation (See Appendix A for more information about LWCF). LWCF grants increase recreational opportunities for Colorado's citizens and its visitors through cooperation with local communities and state agencies. **Since 1965, Colorado has received approximately \$61 million through LWCF to fund over 1,000 recreation projects implemented through state and local governments.**

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) is designated as the agency to administer LWCF and serve as the liaison between the State of Colorado and the Secretary of the Interior for the LWCF. As such, Colorado Parks and Wildlife is responsible for receiving and allocating LWCF funding. The State Trails Program and State Trails Committee establish procedures and requirements for all LWCF applications at the state and local level using the SCORP as a guide.

### 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, serve as Colorado's Open Selection Process for the distribution of 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. Final review and funding approval is made 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 is included in Appendix B.



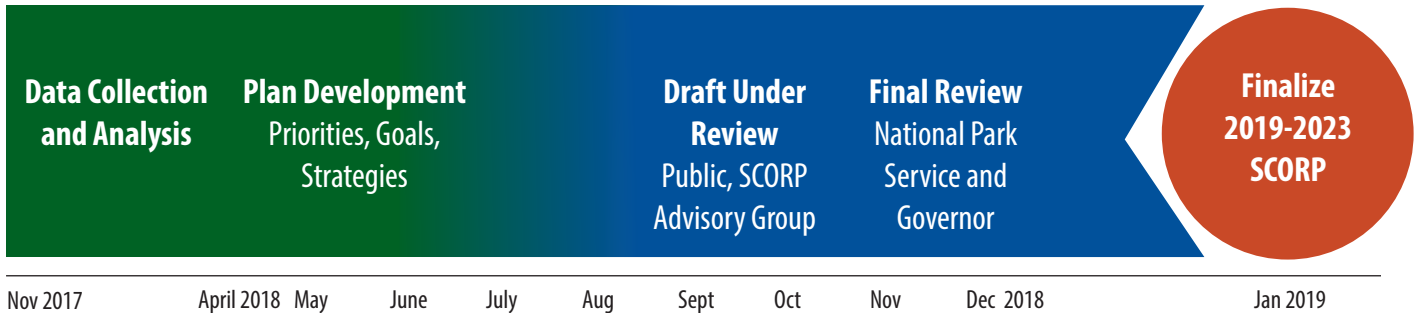
**Sylvan Lake State Park**

## 2019-2023 SCORP PLANNING PROCESS

The 2019-2023 Colorado SCORP development process spanned just over one year. Colorado Parks and Wildlife’s Policy and Planning Section coordinated this work with the support of an internal CPW team, the Colorado Outdoor Partnership (CO-OP) and the SCORP Advisory Group. The internal team provided valuable input at critical decision points throughout the process. CPW administered several statewide surveys to inform management priorities. These included large-scale com-

prehensive surveys of the general public and land management agencies and organizations. Additional outreach was conducted to reach communities that were underrepresented in the responses received through the surveys. Survey data collection and analysis occurred from November 2017-May 2018. Writers and designers drafted the main document from June-August of 2018 followed by a public comment period and further revisions. By the end of 2018, the final plan was reviewed by the Governor of Colorado and the National Park Service.

### 2019-2023 SCORP Planning Process



### SCORP Advisory Group

Extensive engagement of partner organizations and agencies invested in outdoor recreation and natural resources informed the development of this five-year plan. In order to ensure broad and comprehensive input into shaping this plan, the SCORP Advisory Group (see Acknowledgements) included representatives from recreation, industry, transportation, hunt-

ing, fishing, tourism, conservation, stewardship, agriculture, education, health and organizations representing diversity, equity and inclusion in the outdoors. Convening this group throughout several stages of the SCORP process, CPW aimed to incorporate relevant, informed and diverse feedback from professionals directly linked to outdoor recreation.



DUSTIN DOSKOCIL/CPW





Rocky Mountain National Park

MIKE DELLIVENER/CPW

## Colorado Outdoor Partnership



The formation of a new collaborative, the [Colorado Outdoor Partnership](#) (CO-OP), offered an opportunity to bring lasting leadership to SCORP. The CO-OP, comprised of outdoor recreation, conservation and agricultural interests, believes leaders across the state must collaborate and innovate to ensure private and public lands and water remain healthy to support Colorado’s diverse wildlife, outdoor and agricultural heritage, and economic wellbeing. In 2017, the CO-OP committed to promoting the importance and stewardship of public and private lands and waters to support sustainable habitat conservation and responsible outdoor recreation. Supporting and strengthening public and private funding is another primary focus of the CO-OP. The CO-OP provided leadership in drafting and reviewing the strategic direction presented in the SCORP and will play a pivotal role in ensuring its success.

ACCOMPLISHMENT FROM  
**2014 SCORP**

### Advisory Group and Partner Engagement:

- **May 2018 Workshop:** Over 65 individuals participated in a visioning session at the CPW Partners in the Outdoors Conference. Participants brainstormed what success looks like in the year 2023 for each of the four priorities. CPW synthesized the results into draft goal and objective statements.
- **June 2018 Workshop:** The Keystone Policy Center facilitated a full day workshop where the SCORP Advisory Group refined goals and objectives and generated specific strategies for success. They also discussed possible metrics to measure outcomes. From this work, Keystone compiled input into 3-5 detailed strategies for each objective. The Advisory Group worked throughout summer 2018 to refine these.
- **2018 Quarterly CO-OP Meetings:** The Colorado Outdoor Partnership reviewed and adopted key strategic planning elements throughout 2018.

## A SHIFT FOR CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

Outdoor recreation supports the economy, human health and well-being and spending time in natural settings when recreating is often the greatest motivation for supporting conservation. However, all outdoor recreation has an impact on natural areas and native fish and wildlife, so it is essential to develop a strong conservation ethic in people who enjoy outdoor recreation. Nationally, conservation and recreation interests are working together to Shape How we Invest For Tomorrow (SHIFT) in order to address challenges for natural resource conservation and the future of outdoor recreation. Together, these partners developed the SHIFT principles to

more closely integrate conservation and recreation. In 2016, the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission, with endorsement by the Colorado Outdoor Partnership, became the first state in the nation to formally adopt these principles.

Colorado's Outdoor Principles, an adapted version of the original SHIFT principles, represent an effort to further refine an outdoor ethic that promotes both recreational enjoyment and thoughtful conservation of Colorado's special places. Colorado's Outdoor Principles were a foundation for the priority areas included within this plan, making it the state's first SCORP to include conservation as a priority area.

### Colorado's Outdoor Principles

**Preamble:** We believe the uniquely American public land heritage is a privilege and a birthright, and Colorado's abundant open space and outdoor recreation opportunities contribute to our quality of life and economic vitality. Combined with the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation and private land conservation, Coloradans and our visitors enjoy spectacular landscapes in which to work, play and live. We celebrate the contributions of all sectors of our economy to sustaining a healthy balance of our state's ecosystems. Responsible recreation respects all interests on lands and waters, and works to eliminate conflicts.

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 principles.

- 1. PUBLIC LANDS** – Outdoor recreation and conservation require that a diversity of lands and waters be publicly owned, available for public access and cared for properly.
- 2. PRIVATE LANDS** – Within Colorado's diversity of land and waters, private land plays a critical role in preserving the ecological integrity of a functional landscape that is necessary for robust and meaningful outdoor recreational experiences.
- 3. WORKING TOGETHER** – Both recreation and conservation are needed to sustain Colorado's quality of life. Both are beneficial to local economic well-being, for personal health and for sustaining Colorado's natural resources.
- 4. MINIMIZE IMPACT** – All recreation has impact. Coloradans have an obligation to minimize these impacts across the places they recreate and the larger landscape through ethical outdoor behavior.
- 5. MANAGEMENT & EDUCATION** – Proactive management solutions, combined with public education, are necessary to care for land, water and wildlife, and to provide the protections needed to maintain quality recreation opportunities.
- 6. SCIENCE-BASED DECISIONS** – Physical, biological and social science must inform the management of outdoor recreation.
- 7. STABLE FUNDING** – Stable, long-term and diverse funding sources are essential to protect the environment and support outdoor recreation.

Organizations and individuals can sign on in support of the Colorado Outdoor Principles at [copartnership.org](http://copartnership.org)







## TRENDS AND RESEARCH ON OUTDOOR RECREATION IN COLORADO

Colorado welcomed 84.7 million U.S.-based travelers and nearly 1 million international travelers in 2017 – generating a record \$20.9 billion in visitor spending.<sup>1</sup>



Roxborough State Park

DUSTIN DOSKOCIL/CPW



**W**hile Colorado is known for its mountains, our state offers a wide variety of natural habitats that invite residents and visitors to spend time in the outdoors. Whether you like to bike, hike, hunt, fish, trap, ski, run, ride, picnic, boat or camp – there are opportunities for everyone in every region of the state. And there’s no doubt that Colorado’s residents take advantage of this; approximately 92% of Coloradans recreate in the outdoors and most of the visitors to our state are coming, in part, for the unique recreational opportunities it provides.

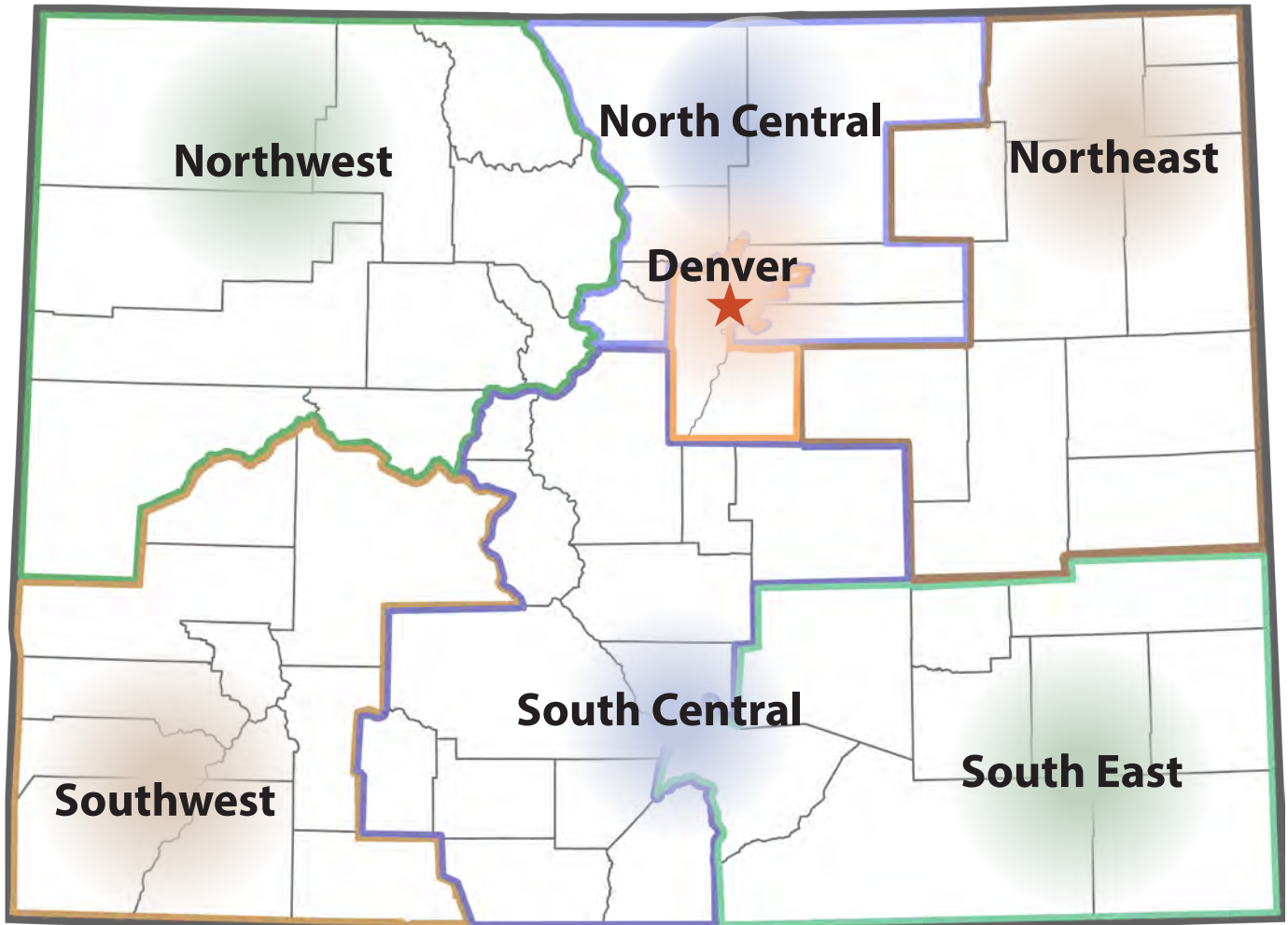
To develop an outdoor recreation and conservation plan for the entire state, it is essential that we understand who the people of Colorado are, how they recreate and the economic implications of outdoor recreation on the state’s economy. As part of the 2019 SCORP planning process, Colorado Parks and Wildlife conducted public surveys and economic impact research to inform the direction of the plan.



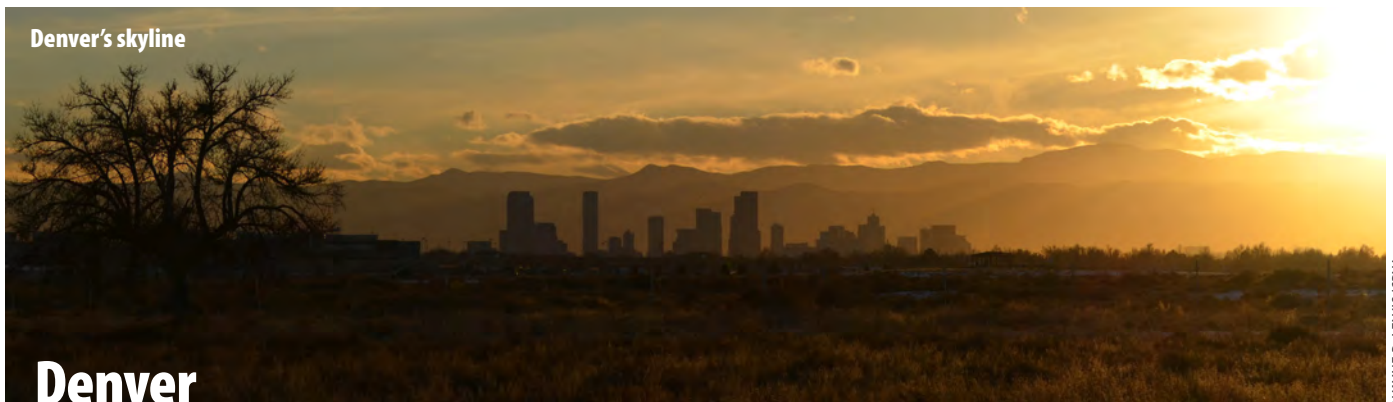
## COLORADO'S TRAVEL REGIONS

Colorado's Tourism Office identified seven distinct travel regions in the 1990s, each defined by their unique characteristics. Within each of these regions there are many partners and providers of outdoor recreational opportunities (See Appendix

C). These regions serve as the areas in which Colorado Parks and Wildlife conducted its public outreach efforts in the process of developing the 2019 SCORP. These regions were re-defined in 2018. To see the new regions, please go to [www.colorado.com](http://www.colorado.com).



Denver's skyline



## Denver

Denver is the most densely populated metropolitan area in the state, but that doesn't mean there are no outdoor recreation opportunities. County governments, non-profit organizations and local parks departments have worked hard to develop trail systems, public parks, wildlife viewing areas and

more. Great Outdoors Colorado and local land trust funds have conserved precious open spaces in this rapidly developing area. There might be fewer backcountry experiences but plenty of hiking, biking, fishing, climbing, watersports and much more!

WAYNE D. LEWIS/CPW





The Northwest region falls west of the Continental Divide, north to the Wyoming border and west to the Utah border. This region is home to Grand Junction, Colorado's largest city on the west slope, and to storied ski areas like Breckenridge, Vail and Steamboat. Federal public lands abound here including two National Monuments (Colorado and Dinosaur). Some of the state's best hunting can be found in this region, and tributaries to the Colorado River offer outstanding white water and fishing adventures.



With high mountain rivers flowing to the plains, the Southeast region offers the shortgrass prairie of the Comanche National Grasslands and was home to the state's first white American settlement, Bent's Fort. The Santa Fe Trail allows travelers to learn about the state's native and cultural history. This region provides upland as well as big game hunting and plenty of fishing opportunities. Pueblo and Trinidad are the region's two largest cities, but the region's small towns preserve Colorado's farming and ranching heritage.



The San Juan mountains descend to the Colorado Plateau in the Southwest region where Durango is the largest town. Telluride and Crested Butte provide prime winter recreation, and access abounds in the region's vast Forest Service and BLM public lands. Visitors can see Colorado's recent past in old mining towns – as well as its ancient past in Mesa Verde National Park and Canyons of the Ancients National Monument. This cultural legacy continues as the Ute Mountain Ute and Southern Ute Indian tribal lands are located here.



The South Platte River flows into the Great Plains through the Northeast region of Colorado, offering a range of recreation opportunities through a string of state wildlife areas. Throughout the region, the grasslands are vast and provided the home for many of the state's pioneer residents that arrived as the state began to grow. Today historic communities love to share their heritage. Home to the Pawnee National Grasslands and the Pawnee Buttes, this region revels in its agricultural history.



The South Central region includes Colorado Springs and dives down into the San Luis Valley. The Arkansas River provides outstanding rafting through Browns Canyon National Monument. In the spring, migrations of sandhill cranes converge on the wetlands of Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge near Alamosa. Who needs a beach when you can enjoy the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve? And Colorado's three tallest "fourteeners" – Mount Elbert, Mount Massive and Mount Harvard – are found in the Sawatch Range.



Defined as the area north and the foothill regions west of the Denver Metro Area, the North Central region includes such vibrant towns as Fort Collins, Boulder, Greeley, Idaho Springs and Estes Park. There are state parks for camping, county open spaces for hiking and biking, and public waterways for fishing or boating. Home to Rocky Mountain National Park, the Flatirons, Poudre Canyon and Long's Peak, this region offers a breadth of outdoor experiences from neighborhood parks to remote wilderness.

## THE GROWING STATE OF COLORADO

Between 2000 and 2016, it is estimated that the population of Colorado increased by 1.2 million people to a total population of 5.5 million.<sup>2</sup> Colorado is the 7th fastest growing state in the nation with a 10-year population growth rate of 17%.<sup>3</sup> Just over one million of that population increase is living in the Denver Metro Area and North Central region. In addition, almost 60% of the new population are people who moved to Colorado,<sup>4</sup> and most of the new residents are millennials between the ages of 18 and 34 years old.<sup>5</sup>

While this growth has been dramatic, the state's population could increase to nearly 8.5 million people by 2050, according to the Colorado State Demography Office.<sup>6</sup> This is driven in part by continued migration, but also because Colorado is a place where people move – and stay. As a result, it is anticipated that by 2040 the percentage of the population over the age of 65 will be three times what it is today, growing twice as fast as the total population.<sup>7</sup>



In addition to the overall population growth, we are seeing increased diversity in the state's population. As of 2015, it was estimated that 31% of Colorado's population was considered a minority, with 22% of that being residents of Hispanic origin. Predictions by the U.S. Census Bureau suggest that by 2050, minorities will make up 47% of Colorado's population, with 36% of the residents being Hispanic.<sup>8</sup>

### Population Changes Affect Outdoor Recreation

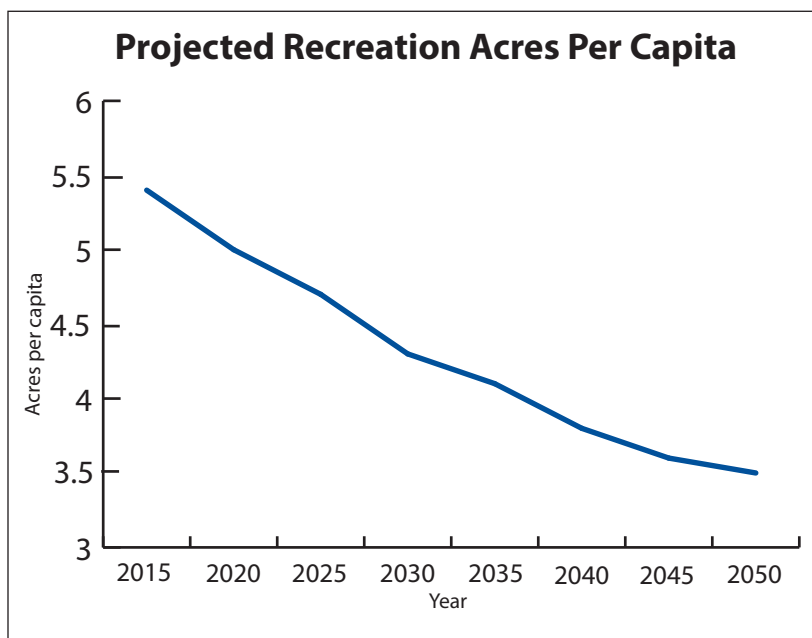
Undoubtedly, the quality of life Colorado offers plays a key role in attracting new residents, however, as our state's population increases, there are associated challenges to conservation and outdoor recreation. While the population of Colorado continues to grow, the amount of land available for recreation and wildlife habitat is finite and there is a related decline in per capita protected areas as the population grows.

With the expansion that will be necessary to accommodate new residents, more of the undeveloped land that defines Colorado will be lost. Recreation areas are becoming increasingly crowded; often, there are reports of no available parking and conflicts occurring between different types of outdoor recreation users. The rapidly increasing population will only exacerbate these challenges.

Colorado's native wildlife, an attraction for residents as well as tourists to the state, are feeling the squeeze. Development fragments their habitat and new homes and shopping centers are being built in or close to important seasonal habitats. With more human recreation on the landscape, fish and wildlife may be affected particularly as recreation spans to more year-round activities. Recreation compacts soils, brings in weeds that overtake native forage vegetation, and the growing number of people in the backcountry means that it becomes harder for wildlife to avoid human interaction.

In addition, as the demographics change within the state, outdoor recreation must be culturally relevant and planners must evaluate the different ways in which people recreate. Providing the same types of recreation options that we have for many years may not accommodate the unique needs and interests of different racial and ethnic groups, people with disabilities, an aging population and more.

The implications of rapid population growth on our natural areas, our native fish and wildlife, and our outdoor recreation experiences manifests through a variety of different 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.

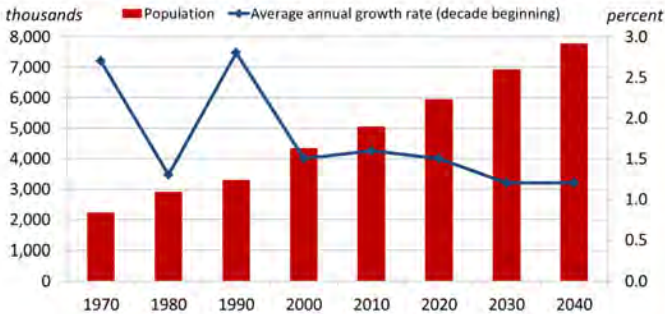




## COLORADO POPULATION 1970-2040

Slower growth, rapid aging, and increased diversity

Colorado's population was just over 5 million in 2010. Growth rates are expected to decline slowly over the next few decades to reach just under 8 million by 2040.

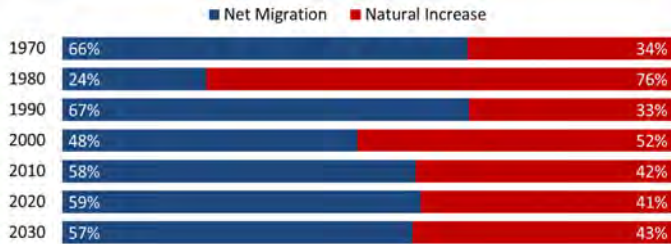


Growth rates vary significantly across Colorado. The majority of Coloradans are expected to continue to reside along the front range.



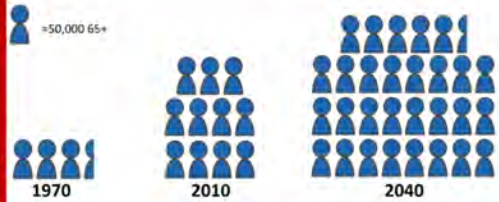
### Components of Change

Population growth in Colorado was dominated by migration in the 1970's and 90's. Migration due to job growth and the replacement of retired workers will continue to fuel Colorado's population growth.

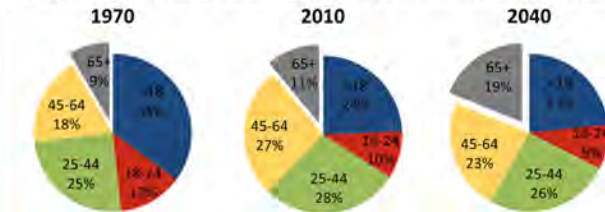


### Aging of the Population

Colorado has begun to experience rapid increases in the population over age 65 with the movement of the baby boom generation into older age groups. The number of persons over age 65 in 2040 will be nearly 3 times as many as today, growing twice as fast as the total population.

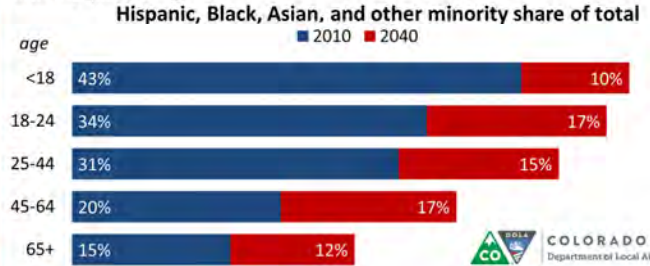


The aging of Colorado residents will generate rising shares of its older population. The majority of change will occur this decade, leveling off to relatively stable shares after 2030.



### Diversity by Age

Increases in diversity will be most significant for older age groups as younger, more diverse populations age.



COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL AFFAIRS





## STATEWIDE PUBLIC AND LAND MANAGERS SURVEYS

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. In addition to collecting data about public interests and preferences, it is equally important to understand the issues, concerns and potential opportunities facing agencies and organizations responsible for managing parks, open space and trails across Colorado.

Two survey instruments were used to collect quantitative data for the 2019-2023 SCORP. The first was mailed to a random sample of Coloradans and the second was sent via email to a range of individuals responsible for managing land in Color-

do. The purpose of the former, the Public Survey of Outdoor Recreation, was to identify statewide recreation trends with respect to activity participation and to understand the types of services and recreation preferences Coloradans are interested in both locally and statewide. The Land Managers Survey 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. See Appendix D for the complete technical report from both surveys and more information on specific user groups.

The findings are organized into two sections beginning with results from the Public Survey followed by the Land Managers Survey. However, it is important to consider the implications of both outreach efforts 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 for comparisons between the 2014 and 2018 surveys.

### Top Ten Activities in Colorado

1. Walking
2. Hiking/Backpacking
3. Picnicking and Tent camping
4. Fishing
5. Playground activities
6. Jogging/running outdoors
7. Skiing (alpine/tele)/snowboarding
8. Wildlife viewing\*
9. RV camping/cabins
10. Team or individual sports

\* bird watching was a separate category



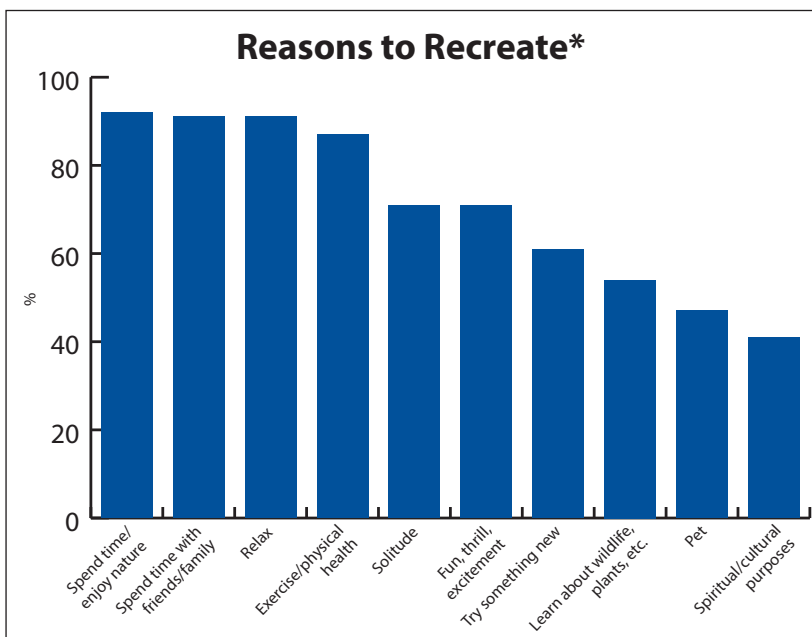
DUSTIN DOSKOCIL/CPW



**Coloradans’ recreation participation and priorities have not changed markedly since 2014.**

- Coloradans spend a lot of time recreating outdoors. Approximately 92% of Coloradans recreate at least every few weeks to four (or more) times per week (91% in 2014).
- Walking remains the most popular activity both statewide and regionally and was also ranked first in 2014.
- Statewide, hiking/backpacking was the second most popular activity followed by tent camping.
- Regional results were highly variable in terms of both the number of Coloradans who participated in a given activity and the average number of days spent enjoying various activities.

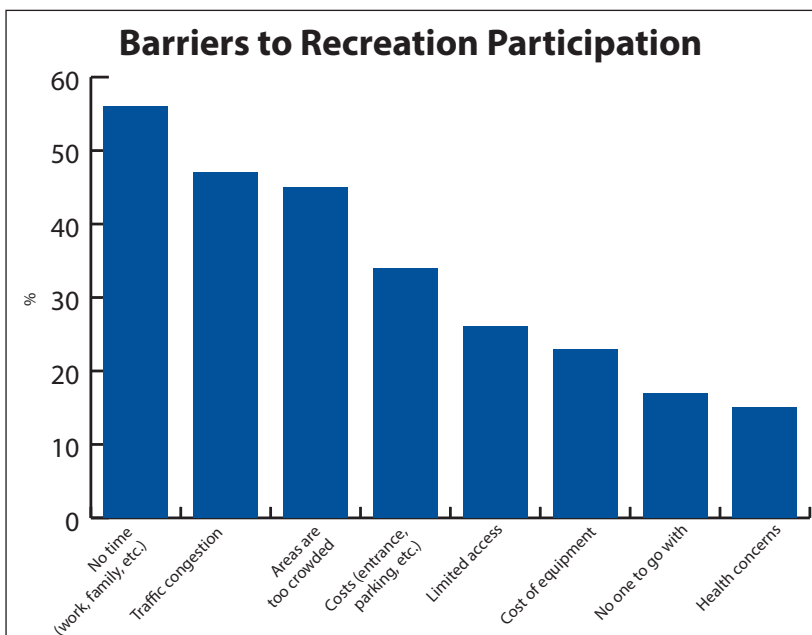
- Both local and statewide recreation priorities mirrored results from the 2014 SCORP, indicating the public’s desires to have:
  1. Local walking trails/paths (ranked 1st in 2014),
  2. Opportunities to view wildlife (ranked 2nd in 2014), and
  3. Established playgrounds built with natural materials (ranked 3rd in 2014).
- In addition, Coloradans would prefer recreation providers prioritize:
  1. Long-term planning and management (ranked 2nd in 2014),
  2. Operation/maintenance of existing infrastructure and facilities (ranked 1st in 2014), and
  3. Local, regional and statewide trails (ranked 3rd in 2014).



Respondant’s motivation to recreate outdoors \* Results comprise moderately-to-very important reasons to recreate.

**Coloradans’ recreation motivations are diverse.**

- The majority of respondents recreate outdoors for a variety of reasons. Those at the top of the list include recreating to enjoy nature, to improve personal health (i.e., relax, physical exercise), and for social purposes (i.e., spend time with loved ones).
- Land managers interested in developing programs that appeal to a range of Coloradans could target nature-based, health-focused, socially-oriented motivations, or a combination of each.



Potential barriers to respondents’ outdoor recreation participation.

**Structural constraints hinder Coloradans’ recreation participation.**

- The top three barriers to Coloradans’ recreation participation were:
  1. Limited time due to family/work/other commitments,
  2. Traffic congestion, and
  3. Crowding.
- Crowding was also acknowledged as a core management issue in the Land Managers Survey.

## LAND MANAGERS SURVEY

### Management issues mirror the public’s priorities and barriers for outdoor recreation.

- Land managers identified maintaining existing recreation infrastructure/resources as the number one management-related issue they face.
- They also identified a lack of capacity to serve a growing population (e.g., crowding/overuse) as the fourth overall management issue.
- Together, these findings are somewhat disconcerting. They illustrate a precarious situation, one in which land managers are struggling with basic upkeep of the areas and structures they oversee while at the same time, lacking the capacity to handle increasing public demand.
- This is reflected in the public’s perception as well. Many Coloradans indicated a desire for recreation providers (i.e., land managers) to prioritize the maintenance of existing infrastructure (see above) and minimize the level of perceived crowding they experience (3rd overall public barrier).

### Visitor service issues reflect capacity and visitation challenges.

- Each of the top three visitor service issues (i.e., enforcing responsible use; providing programs to engage youth; and maintaining visitor safety), represent, to some extent, a lack of capacity, an increasing number of visitors, or perhaps both.
- For example, it is unclear if managers are unable to “enforce responsible use” due to the sheer number of visitors, a lack of staff/resources, or because visitor behavior is becoming increasingly negative.

### Land managers are dealing with uncertainty and finding solutions.

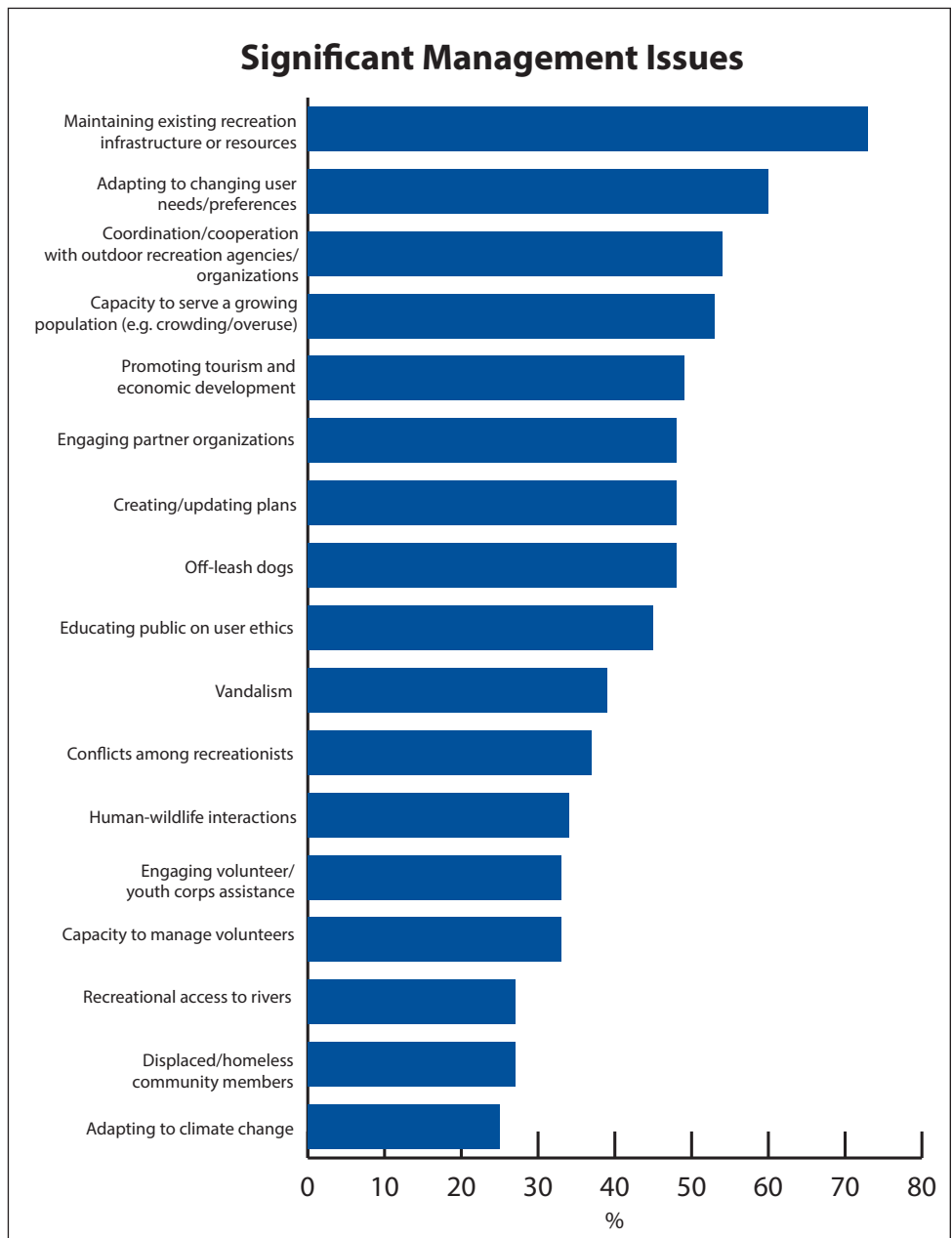
- Agencies and organizations often struggle with unmet financial needs and respondents were no different. Many indicated financial shortfalls less than \$150,000 annually but for some, the unmet needs were greater than \$3 million each year.
- Responding to such uncertainty typically involved applying for grants – which was described as relatively successful – and reduc-

ing services or staff. The latter being far less successful in the eyes of respondents.

- Others described a reliance on volunteers to provide services or programs in the vicinity of 1.8 million volunteer hours annually. This is the equivalent of 865 full time employees. It is important to note that this number may be an under-representation since about half of respondents indicated that they are not tracking volunteer hours.

Not surprisingly, outdoor recreation plays and will likely continue to play an important role in the lives of Coloradans.

As the state’s population increases, the demand for outdoor recreation experiences will likely continue to increase as well. Thus, it is important to understand both what Coloradans want to do outdoors and what land managers are able to provide.

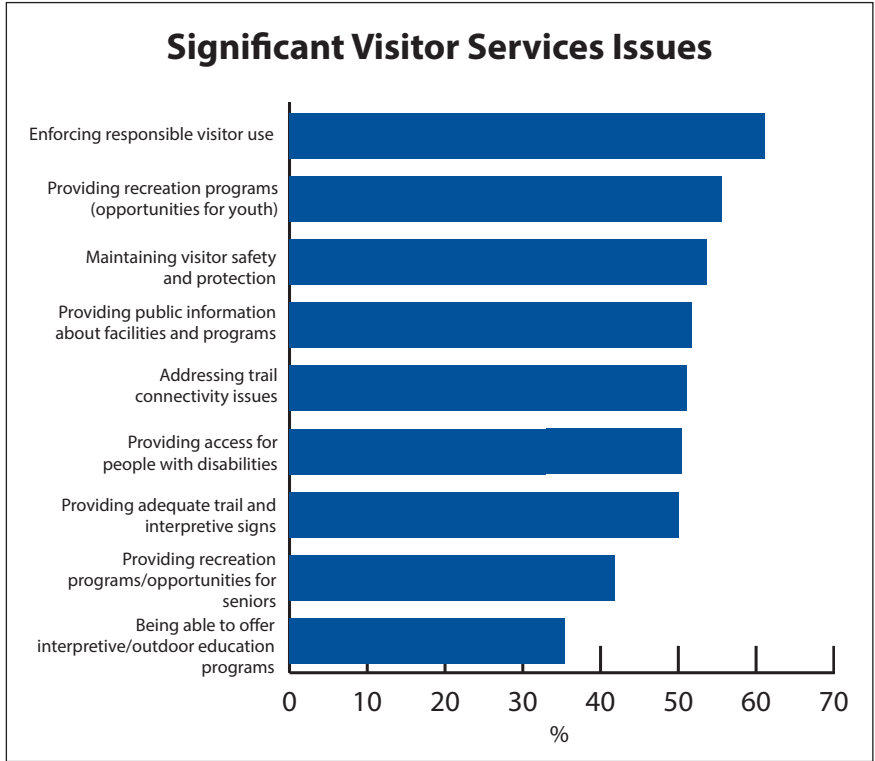


Most significant management issues identified by agencies/organizations (moderately-to-very significant issues combined).



Clearly, having the ability to recreate close to home remains popular in terms of both activity participation (i.e., walking, jogging/running) and in terms of future “local” desires/preferences (e.g., walking trails/paths; built playgrounds, etc.).

Land managers expressed concerns about their ability to curtail issues associated with crowding/overuse and being able to provide programs and opportunities for visitors.



Most significant visitor services issues by agencies/organizations (moderately-to-very significant issues combined.)



## TRIBAL LAND MANAGERS SURVEY AND TARGETED OUTREACH

To gather information from user groups that were not well represented in the broader, statewide public and land managers surveys, two additional targeted public engagement efforts were used: the Tribal Land Managers survey and the Targeted Outreach comment form (See Appendix E for the complete report from this outreach).

Recognizing that Colorado's tribes were not consulted during the previous SCORP, a Tribal Land Managers survey was developed from the Land Managers survey with review by the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs (CCIA). CCIA helped establish contacts with Colorado's two federally recognized Tribes, the Southern Ute Indian Tribe and Ute Mountain Ute Tribe for survey distribution.

The Targeted Outreach comment form, aiming to address socio-demographic gaps within the 2018 Public Survey, was emailed to individuals within fifteen local and national organizations engaging youth and people of color in outdoor recreation. These key partners then distributed the comment form to their members and contacts. This was not a representative sample. Rather, this effort represents an attempt to learn about the interests and recreation preferences of racial/ethnic minority groups who tend to be under-represented in outdoor recreation-related inquiries.

### Key Findings: Tribal Land Managers Survey

Note: These findings represent the views of the one Tribe who responded to the survey.

Tribal, federal, state and other land managers identified similar high priority management issues and needs.

- Overall, the participating Tribe identified 15 out of 18 potential management issues as "very significant." Additionally, "cultural resources management" was listed as a very significant issue within the "other" response option.
- Two significant management issues for the participating Tribe - expanding local and statewide trails and maintaining infrastructure - proved to be important to Coloradans in general as they were also major themes from the Public and Land Manager Surveys.

Tribes aim to meet future needs by improving opportunities and infrastructure.

- The following five items represent new outdoor recreation sites or activities the participating Tribe identified as high priorities in the next five years: developing team sports facilities, expanding opportunities or access for water-based recreation, expanding opportunities for hunting or fishing, developing local agriculture, and improving outdoor interpretive/educational facilities or programs.



**A Native climber is giving an offering of corn pollen on the top of Sinaajini (Blanca Peak) near Alamosa, a Navajo Sacred Mountain.**



- In addition, creating “Dedicated cultural awareness” was also identified as a “high priority,” listed in the “other” response option.

Tribes advocate for higher quality cultural resource management and programming.

- Cultural resources are very important to the participating Tribe. In fact, they listed and often described the importance of cultural resources in four out of six open-ended survey questions tied to current recreation issues.
- Two potential ways to preserve these resources include using indigenous terms to name recreational areas and providing educational signage on trails.

### **Key Findings: Targeted Outreach comment form**

Recreational preferences and barriers remain fairly constant across Coloradans.

- City/local parks are the top recreational areas identified in the Targeted Outreach comment form and in the Public Survey.
- Lack of time due to work, family or other commitments was the number one barrier identified in the comment form and traffic congestion and crowding ranked second and third, respectively. To note, these were also the top three barriers identified in the Public Survey.

- Hiking/backpacking replaced walking as the number one activity in the Targeted Outreach comment form compared to findings from the Public Survey.
- Open-ended comments in both the comment form and Public Survey showed similar concerns, although ethics and education (i.e., stewardship and understanding of outdoor spaces) rose significantly in rank in the Targeted Outreach comment form from the tenth to the third most frequent comment.

Although the Tribal Land Manager survey and Targeted Outreach comment form do not have the same statistical representation of the Public and Land Manager surveys, their findings inform the larger SCORP. The comment form, for example, helps to summarize the views of Colorado’s population, specifically, those who identify as Hispanic/Latino. Both the Tribal Land Manager survey and Targeted Outreach comment form also illustrate the inherent importance of and interest in cultural resources and stewardship programming or messaging. As Colorado’s population continues to expand and diversify, these topics may become increasingly salient to Coloradans. These surveys also support findings from the Land Managers and Public surveys, creating more urgency and unification around priority issues, recreation needs and interests, and management concerns facing Coloradans.



**Through scholarly research and gathering traditional knowledge, NativesOutdoors created Instagram geotags with indigenous place names for more than 40 mountains. Using these names highlights Native history and the stories of indigenous people in outdoor recreation and industry.**

## ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS OF OUTDOOR RECREATION IN COLORADO

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 2017. An overview of key findings is provided in this section; the complete report can be found in Appendix F.

In 2017, outdoor recreation in Colorado contributed:

- **\$62.5 billion in economic output**
- **\$35.0 billion in Gross Domestic Product (10% of the entire state GDP)<sup>9</sup>**
- **\$9.4 billion in local, state and federal tax revenue**
- **511,000 jobs in the state (18.7% of the labor force)**  
– a majority outside of Metro Denver

The following factors were used to gather a comprehensive picture of **economic output**:

- **Direct contribution:** the initial purchase made by the consumer, i.e. the original retail sale
- **Indirect contribution:** secondary effects generated from a direct contribution, such as a retailer buying additional inventory
- **Induced contribution:** results from the salaries and wages paid by the directly and indirectly affected industries

This study utilized spending profiles (i.e., spending per day or participant on all gear-related expenses and associated travel) from the Outdoor Industry Association (OIA, 2017). However, methodologies between the OIA and Southwick studies differed. Southwick expanded the OIA study to look at a larger pool of outdoor recreation activities, including those in our local communities like walking, playground activities, and team sports.

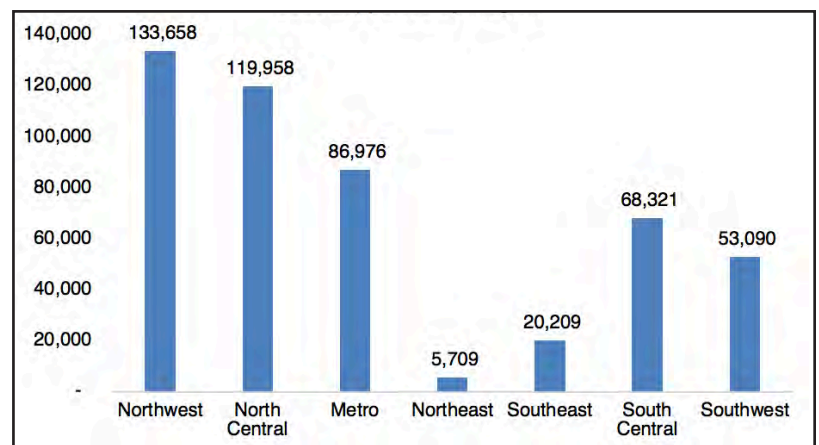
These figures also differ from the new Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account (ORSA) established by the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). The ORSA provides an estimate of the outdoor recreation economy’s contribution to current dollar gross domestic product (GDP) and illustrates the contributions of individual industries to the outdoor recreation economy.



**OHV and Snowmobile registrations have funded 63 Trail Maintenance Crews. These crews work on trails to provide access for all trail users in every season.**

MIKE JONES/BLM GRAND JUNCTION FIELD OFFICE

### Jobs Supported by Region





## Outdoor Recreation Economic Growth in Colorado Since 2014

	2014 SCORP	2019 SCORP	% growth
<b>Economic Output</b>	\$34.5 billion	\$62.5 billion	81%
<b>Jobs</b>	313,000	511,000 (19% of CO labor force)	63%
<b>Local, state, and federal taxes</b>	\$4.9 billion	\$9.4 billion	92%
<b>Salaries and wages</b>	\$12.4 billion	\$21.4 billion	73%
<b>Direct consumer expenditures</b>	\$21 billion	\$36.8 billion	75%

### Rapidly Expanding Economy

Outdoor recreation is not only a robust sector, but a growing one. Since 2014, **total economic output and tax revenue from outdoor recreation in Colorado nearly doubled and jobs increased by almost 200,000.** What's causing this rapid growth?

Participation in outdoor recreation remains high—92% of Public Survey (Appendix D) respondents indicated they participated in outdoor recreation activities, similar to the overall level of participation seen in the SCORP five years prior. However, some recreation activities showed strong increases. The number of days Coloradans recreate on a trail grew 44% between 2012 and 2017. In addition,

spending profiles increased across most activities with trail sports, snow sports, RV camping and running contributing the largest increases. It's important to note some background trends, including the fact that **Colorado has one of the fastest growing economies over the past five years and**

**has been identified as having the best state-level economy in the nation.**<sup>10</sup> Between 2012 and 2017, **disposable personal income of Colorado residents grew 24%** (60% faster than the U.S.).<sup>11</sup>

Tourism contributes to this economic development. Colorado's tourism industry generates about \$20 billion in traveler spending annually through attraction of more than 84 million U.S. based and nearly 1 million international visitors. Combined these travelers generate \$1.2 billion a year in state and local taxes. The Colorado tourism industry has enjoyed strong growth over time, with overnight trip expenditures by Colorado visitors increasing from **\$9.6 billion in 2012 to \$15.3 billion in 2017.**<sup>12</sup>

### Top 15 Activities Based on Annual Spending

1. Skiing (alpine/tele)/Snowboarding
2. Hiking/Backpacking
3. Tent camping
4. RV camping/Cabins
5. Jogging/Running (outdoors)
6. Wildlife viewing\*
7. Fishing
8. Off-highway vehicle (OHV) or 4-wheeling/motorcycling
9. Road biking
10. Snowshoeing/Cross country skiing
11. Horseback riding
12. Mountain biking
13. Rock climbing
14. Golfing
15. Canoeing/Kayaking

\*Bird watching was a separate category

### Outdoor Recreation Industry Office

Recognizing the increase in outdoor companies, the natural assets found in the state, and a workforce emboldened by the outdoors, Governor Hickenlooper launched the Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office (OREC) in 2015. OREC is one of only eight offices in the nation that provides a central point of contact, advocacy and resources at the state level for the diverse constituents, businesses and communities that rely on the continued health of the outdoor recreation industry. The mission of the Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office is to inspire industries and communities to thrive in Colorado's great outdoors.

In Summer 2018, Colorado joined seven other states in adopting "[The Confluence Accords](#)", a roadmap for the outdoor recreation industry that promotes four key pillars:

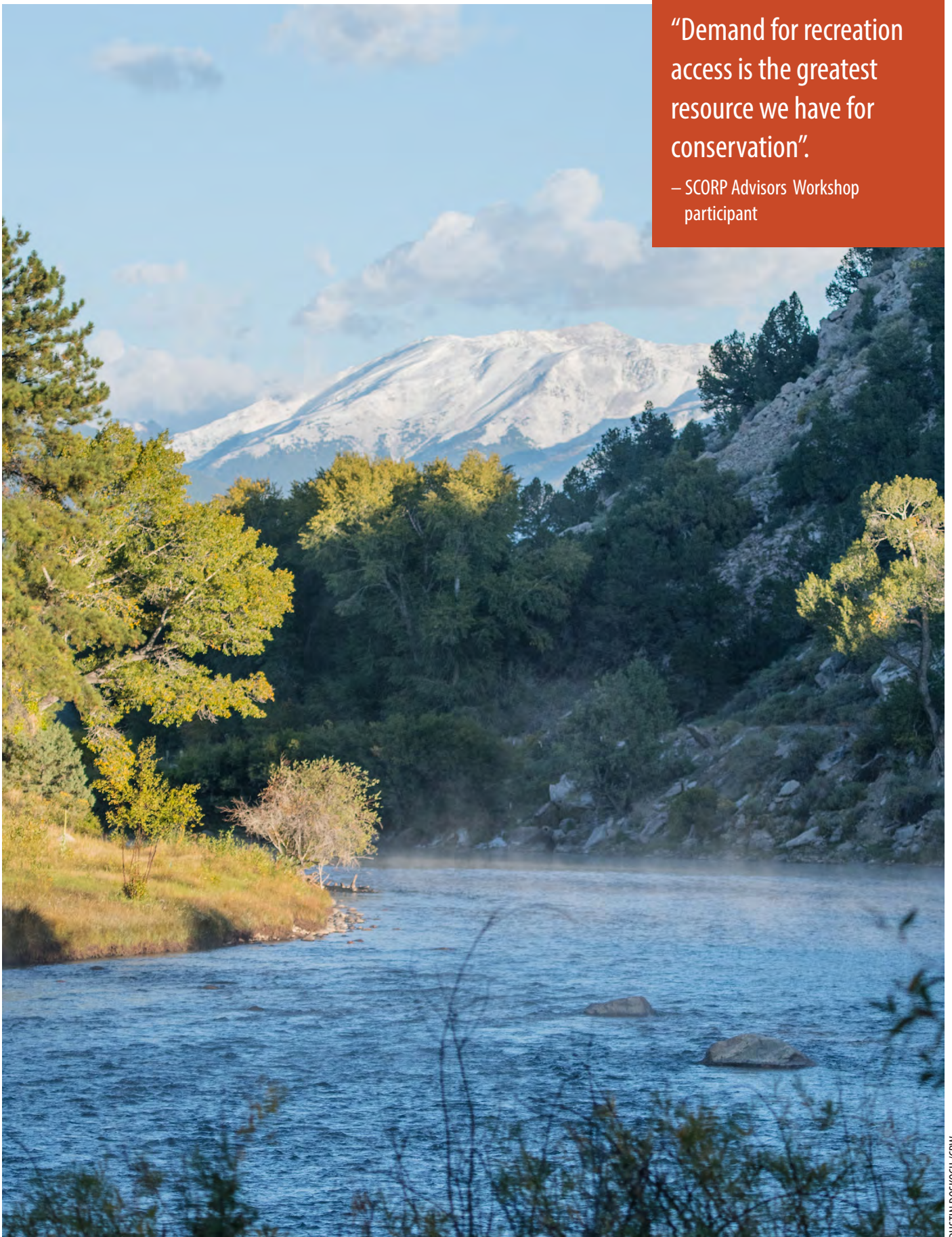
- Conservation and Stewardship
- Education and Workforce Training
- Economic Development
- Public Health and Wellness

With considerable overlap of Colorado's Outdoor Recreation Priorities, the Accords offer a framework for engaging industry in ensuring this plan's lasting success.

This combination of factors has also contributed to higher spending on outdoor recreation. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, national consumer spending on outdoor recreation increased by 37% between 2011 and 2016.<sup>13,14</sup> Comparing this to Colorado's outdoor spending growth (see table) reveals a remarkable interest and support for our state's outdoors **that is potentially outpacing national trends.** Colorado's visitors, residents and businesses are investing in outdoor recreation.

“Demand for recreation access is the greatest resource we have for conservation”.

— SCORP Advisors Workshop participant



DUSTIN DOSKOCIL/CPW



**W**orking together, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, the Colorado Outdoor Partnership and the SCORP Advisory Group identified **four priority areas** on which to focus over the next five years. Building on the 2008 and 2014 SCORPs, these priorities reflect the current trends, opportunities and challenges facing Colorado's outdoor recreation resources today, and add the new component of conservation in recreation planning. They are **interconnected** and critical components to achieving a future vision where Colorado's outdoors continues to provide rich recreation experiences while conserving wildlife habitat and the integrity of natural resources.

[Colorado's Outdoor Principles](#) provide a foundation that is evident throughout this plan. The priority areas tie back to the Principles and demonstrate efforts to integrate them into outdoor recreation and conservation efforts across Colorado. 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 levels of 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.



DUSTIN DOSKOCIL/CPW



**Priority Areas for Colorado’s SCORP for 2019-2023**

**Sustainable Access and Opportunity – Ensure quality access to Colorado’s outdoors for all of the state’s communities and visitors.**

**Goal:** More Coloradans and visitors benefit from outdoor recreation and conservation.

**Stewardship – Build Colorado’s commitment to stewardship of the outdoors, improving recreation infrastructure, and promoting responsible use of the environment.**

**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 – Increase a conservation ethic for Colorado’s outdoors and promote landscape-scale conservation.**

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

**Funding the Future - Address financial challenges to ensure that adequate funds are available to support sustainable outdoor recreation.**

**Goal:** Coloradans and visitors contribute to diverse funding sources that are dedicated to support outdoor recreation and conservation. Existing sources of funds are preserved.

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

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

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



**Sustainable Access and Opportunity**

The outdoor recreation and conservation community recognizes the critical need to actively engage all citizens of Colorado and our visitors in supporting Colorado's Outdoor Principles to expand recreational access while ensuring conservation of our healthy ecosystems. As Colorado's population grows and changes, there are increasing challenges with providing sustainable recreational access and opportunity.

Colorado's public lands, parks and open spaces offer places for families to gather together, for youth to learn about conservation and the environment, and for everyone to find peace

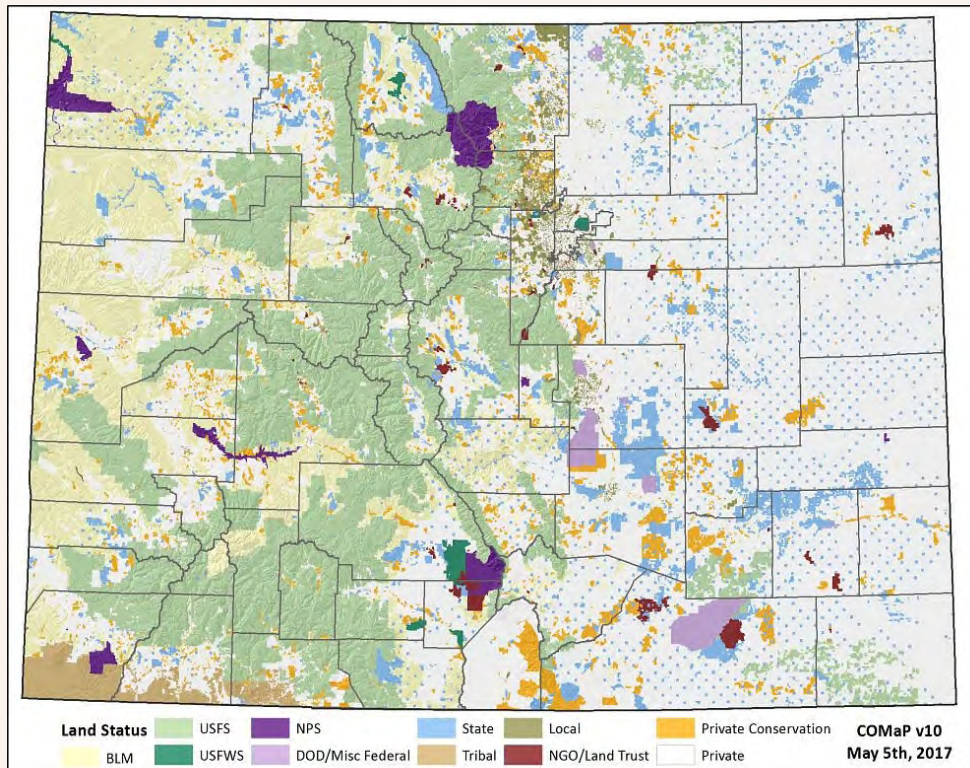
and serenity in a natural environment. Outdoor recreation provides emotional and physical health benefits and all Coloradans should have access to places to recreate regardless of race, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, ability or preferred activity. Different user groups have different recreational needs, and a challenge for land managers is to ensure that all of these needs are met.

Whether it is providing closer-to-home outdoor recreation opportunities for urban populations or helping families become more comfortable with camping, hiking, fishing or hunting, recreation managers must adapt to the needs of a changing and growing population.

**ACCESS**

**Nearly 45% of Colorado is public land,**<sup>15</sup> offering a variety of opportunities for citizens across the state to get outdoors and recreate. State and federal agencies, local governments and partners have made significant effort to provide access to trails – the top priority expressed in recreation surveys in past SCORPs as well as in this year's research. Current estimates are that there are **over 33,000 miles of trails in Colorado.** Of that total, approximately **58% (19,168 miles) are on federal lands,** principally those managed by the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. **Local and Regional governments provide about 18% of the total (6,200 miles),** while the **remaining 24% (7,970 miles) are managed by CPW** in state parks or state wildlife areas or by CDOT in highway corridors.<sup>16</sup>

However, there are many different types of outdoor recreation and ensuring that all users have the opportunity to recreate – with minimal conflict – is essential. Formalized trails and trail systems are important, but dispersed backcountry recreational access is valuable too. All the while, land managers must ensure that wildlife habitat is not fragmented more and wildlife disturbance is limited during sensitive time periods. In addition, with a growing population comes more crowded trails, parks and recreational areas. Increased development in metropolitan areas can also reduce the amount of natural areas available for recreation.



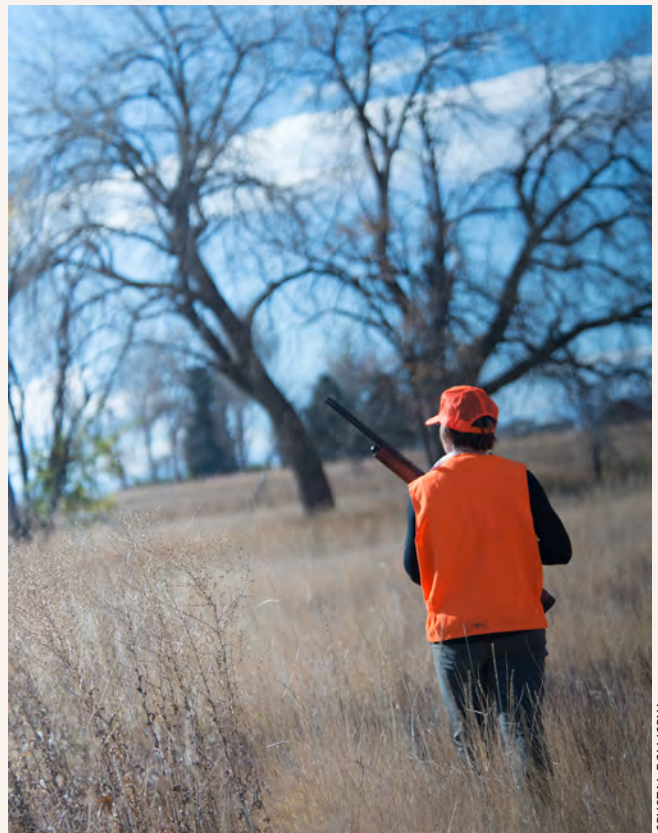
COLORADO NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM AND THE GEOSPATIAL CENTROID. 2018. THE COLORADO OWNERSHIP AND PROTECTION MAP (COMaP), V20180412. COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY, FT. COLLINS, CO.

These are all challenges that Colorado's land managers will need to collaborate on in order to ensure adequate and equitable access for all.

**ACCESS**

**Maintaining and Expanding Sportsmen's Access**

Hunting and fishing have a long and valued legacy in Colorado thanks to our healthy wildlife populations and vast areas of public lands open to sportsmen and women. Access is threatened by development adjacent to public lands that blocks entry points and, increasingly, private ranchlands that used to be open to hunters and anglers are closed to public access. Colorado Parks and Wildlife and partners in non-profit sportsmen's organizations have worked together on a variety of opportunities to increase access to public and private lands. Programs like the Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program through the Farm Bill, as well as targeted recreational access easements through the federal side of the Land and Water Conservation Fund are helping. Maintaining access is a critical challenge that needs to be addressed in order to support efforts to recruit, retain and reactivate hunters and anglers in the state. Partners are also working to ensure recreational shooting opportunities are provided which foster hunting and contribute to wildlife conservation through the federal Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Program.



CRYSTAL EGLI/CPW



**Colorado the Beautiful**

In 2016, Governor John Hickenlooper launched the Colorado the Beautiful Initiative through the Department of Natural Resources with a long-term goal of ensuring that **all Coloradans live within a 10-minute walk of a trail, park or open space**. One of the initial tasks was to map the existing trails in the state to find the current gaps. The resulting Colorado Trail Explorer online mapping system provides an interactive visual way to identify nearby access and trails for both motorized and non-motorized recreation. In addition, the state identified 16 priority trails, trail segments and trail gaps to prioritize for future funding.



**A 2015 Land and Water Conservation Fund grant was used by Larimer County Natural Resources Department to build a 2.2-mile concrete trail that connects 49 miles of concrete trail in Fort Collins with 17 miles of concrete trail in Loveland. This project helped to unite over 65 paved trail miles of the Colorado Front Range Trail, one of the Colorado the Beautiful priority trails.**

COURTESY CITY OF FORT COLLINS



**HEALTH**

Colorado's current levels of bicycling and walking help to **prevent 335 deaths per year** resulting in approximately **\$3.2 billion in annual health benefits** across the state. Increasing the number of Coloradans who walk or bike by **10 percent to 30 percent** could add **\$500 to \$968 million in health benefits**.<sup>22</sup>



CHRIS STARK/CPW

Colorado currently enjoys the number one spot as **“healthiest state” with our adult obesity rate of 22%**, the lowest in the nation.<sup>17</sup> However, Colorado's obesity rate has more than tripled since 1990. One in four Colorado children is now obese, representing one of the fastest growing rates of childhood obesity in the country.<sup>18</sup> In addition, Colorado struggles on other health indicators, including the **8th highest rate of suicide**<sup>19</sup>, the **7th highest non-medical use of prescription pain relievers**,<sup>20</sup> and **significant racial and ethnic disparities in infant mortality and life expectancy**.<sup>21</sup>

Physical activity and outdoor recreation can play a key role in reducing obesity and other health conditions and improving emotional health. Colorado's recreation partners are positioned to increase access and opportunities for recreation to residents of all races, ages, abilities, and socioeconomic levels, helping meet the Center for Disease Control's recommendation of a minimum of 30 minutes of physical activity a day. Interconnected networks of trails and neighborhood parks tie communities more closely together and make it easier for individuals to walk, bike, or jog on a regular basis.



**Outdoor Rx**

In the fall of 2017, Colorado's State Outdoor Recreation Industry Office convened Colorado's Outdoor, Nature and Health Collaborative (The OutdoorRx Collaborative) based on the belief that health is determined by multiple factors – social, economic, built environment, individual behavior and more. In order to achieve better health for Coloradans, a much bigger, system-level, cross-sectoral approach is needed.<sup>23</sup> Nature-based recreation can play a key role in improving the overall emotional and physical health of Coloradans. The outdoor business, conservation and health sector leaders engaged in the OutdoorRx Collaborative are identifying ways that outdoor recreation can help to address some of the many factors that impact the health of our residents.

**ACCOMPLISHMENT FROM 2014 SCORP**

## EDUCATION

Creating the next generation of outdoor enthusiasts and conservationists requires actively reaching out to youth and families to get outdoors. It can be as simple as providing that first fishing opportunity, coordinating hiking or biking clubs, providing hands-on nature education experiences, mentoring a first hunt, and more. These activities can open the door to an active outdoor recreation lifestyle. Providing opportunities for Coloradans to participate in “gateway activities” in close-to-home parks, trails and open space areas is a way to get youth and families connected to the outdoors.

In addition, the tools and tactics that can be used to connect with younger audiences are rapidly changing with technology. Working to get kids to unplug from indoor technology in order to spend time outdoors can be a challenge, but there may be opportunities to use mobile technology to connect them to the natural world. As education and technology changes, outdoor recreation and conservation providers will also need to adapt.

Many Colorado land managers and outdoor recreation providers have strong education programs, providing training and resources for efforts to engage new recreation and conservation interests. Colorado developed an [Environmental Education Plan](#) in 2012 that provides a framework to improve environmental literacy and get more of Colorado's youth outdoors. However, continued investment in education is essential to ensure that future generations of Coloradans are active in the outdoors and passionate about conserving our state's natural and cultural legacy.



THOMAS KIMMEL/CPW



CPW

## GOCO Inspire Initiative

As the cornerstone of the Great Outdoors Colorado [Strategic Plan](#), GOCO created the [Inspire Initiative](#) to encourage youth and their families to develop an appreciation for the great outdoors. The Inspire Initiative establishes places for kids and their families to play and connect with the outdoors, programs that activate those places, and pathways to outdoor stewardship and leadership roles. To amplify the Inspire Initiative's message and help it achieve its goals, a social change movement called [Generation Wild](#) was launched in 2017.

ACCOMPLISHMENT FROM  
2014 SCORP

Across the state in **Generation Wild** communities, hard-working local coalitions are bringing projects to life using a community-led, youth-driven, collaborative approach to creating equitable access to the outdoors. Through this initiative, **GOCO partners are impacting 85,000 kids around the state and creating more than 1,400 jobs.**<sup>24</sup> This innovative framework is being looked to as a national model, and each coalition's approach will serve as examples to other rural, urban, suburban or mountain communities across the country.



### CULTURAL RELEVANCY

According to national research on outdoor recreation participation conducted by the Outdoor Industry Association, **70% of people ages 6–24 who spend time in the outdoors are white**, followed by **Hispanics at 12%, African Americans at 9%** and **Asians at 7%**.<sup>25</sup> In addition, the 2017 North American Camping Report showed that **74% of campers are white**, but the fact that more than one-quarter of campers are non-white is a big improvement as the rate doubled since the first survey in 2012.<sup>26</sup> Nearly **40% of new campers in 2016 were non-white**.

Recognizing that current participation statistics are skewed, a **poll of voters of color** conducted by the Next 100 Coalition found that **70% of those polled participate in outdoor activities and 57% had visited public lands**.<sup>27</sup> The survey also found that an interest in the outdoors is strong, which challenges the stereotype that communities of color are uninterested in the outdoors. The Next 100 survey found that the biggest barrier is lack of knowledge about where to go and how to access public lands, and that there are different preferences for outdoor experiences. From the comment form, people of color tend to support more urban parks, more historical and cultural programming, enhanced recruitment and hiring diversity. They would also like to see more focus on contributions of communities of color to tell the story of protected sites.

Ensuring diversity in the outdoors requires managers to look beyond ethnicity and race to provide a welcoming experience for everyone. Considerations for people with disabilities, an aging population, sexual orientation and more must be implemented to ensure the demographics in the outdoors corresponds with the demographics of our state's population. Continued work is needed to break down barriers and increase opportunity for all to participate in outdoor recreation. Community voices need to be included in determining what data to collect, how to interpret the data, and how to communicate findings so there is collaboration in solutions and action.



**Denver Parks and Recreation Department and Trust for Public Land used a Land and Water Conservation Fund grant to restore 4.5 acres of the Montbello Open Space project to a prairie habitat area. Walking trails, nature play and exploration activities (led by Environmental Learning for Kids) acquaint urban youth and their families with their natural environment. Youth can engage in protecting local ecosystems, education programming and hands-on and experiential activities that emphasize STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) education concepts, environmental health, academic excellence, conservation and stewardship.**



## COLORADO'S OUTDOOR RECREATION PRIORITIES—2019-2023

### PRIORITY I. Sustainable Access and Opportunity

**Goal:** More Coloradans and visitors benefit from outdoor recreation and conservation.

**Objective I: Break Down Barriers** - Better understand and address barriers to engaging people in outdoor recreation. Enhance efforts to engage Coloradans who currently lack or have limited opportunities to participate in outdoor recreation.

**Strategy 1:** Compile research about the barriers Coloradans face and the motivations they have for participating in outdoor recreation. Better understand why people of all backgrounds engage in different types of outdoor recreation activities. Utilize information to better understand what drives Coloradans to recreate with the intent of minimizing barriers.

**Strategy 2:** Build trust, relationships and networks through enhanced public engagement, education and community outreach focused on breaking down identified barriers.

**Strategy 3:** Utilize and support existing programs (community, local, state, tribal, federal) that are effectively working to get underrepresented users outdoors.

**Strategy 4:** Advance collaborative efforts between community groups and health and recreation providers to increase prescriptions for nature-based recreation and other policies and practices that promote outdoor recreation for improving public health. Consider the potential barriers to certain populations for fulfilling outdoor recreation prescriptions (Strategy 1).

**Strategy 5:** Engage diverse types of users (demographic, geographic, cultural, socioeconomic, activity preference, etc.) in the management, planning and design of outdoor recreation spaces and access opportunities.

**Strategy 6:** Recruit and retain an outdoor recreation workforce that is diverse and representative of Colorado's demographics.

**Objective II: Technology Connects More People to the Outdoors** - Advance easily accessible information that enhances user experience and offers tools to outdoor recreation providers.

**Strategy 1:** Better understand and inventory technology and online resources (apps, websites, social media, etc.) that help promote and connect people to the outdoors. Compile data on how these tools are reaching underrepresented users.

**Strategy 2:** Inventory and utilize existing technologies that improve user experience by dispersing users to locations that can accommodate recreational activity. Compile data on how technologies are being effective. When possible utilize voluntary data sharing (i.e. GPS tracking, expanding trail/parking lot cameras, etc.).

**Strategy 3:** Find and leverage partners to support the development and maintenance of apps, websites, social media, and other tools that address gaps identified in Strategies 1 and 2.

**Objective III: Private and Public Lands Support Outdoor Recreation** – Develop strategies across Colorado to build support for sustainable outdoor recreation access. Advance Colorado the Beautiful vision that every Coloradan will live within 10 minutes of a park, trail or vibrant green space.

**Strategy 1:** Coordinate with local, regional, state, federal and tribal planning efforts currently underway to better understand and address needs to maintain and expand access for outdoor recreation. Consider needs and potential opportunities to work with private landowners.

**Strategy 2:** Incentivize willing private landowners to allow for public access. Maintain and enhance funding for access and conservation easements. Combine with education on the value of private land, recognizing how farms, ranches and other private lands play a critical role in providing habitat, viewsheds and other benefits to outdoor recreation and conservation.



**Stewardship**

Colorado's public lands are at a crossroads. With a rapidly growing population and increased demands on Colorado's open spaces and public lands, the need for responsible stewardship of our state's special places is urgent. This priority emphasizes the need to continue the 2014 SCORP efforts to build a stronger ethic among everyone who spends time in our public lands and open spaces, preventing degradation to landscapes and respecting enjoyable recreational experiences for all.

Outdoor volunteerism, conservation corps and other stewardship organizations 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 and private lands. A 2015 report by the Colorado Outdoor Stewardship Coalition found

that in 2014 over 63,000 volunteers contributed 1.4 million hours of service to public lands in Colorado. The **total labor value rate of this volunteer work throughout all agencies equated to nearly \$35 million.**<sup>28</sup>

Recreationists need to be part of the solution for stewardship of our natural and cultural resources.

However, the quality, scalability and impact of volunteers is hampered by lack of coordination, inconsistent work practices, and trust gaps between organizations and land managers. Recreationists need to be part of the solution for stewardship of our natural and cultural resources.

**Colorado Tourism's Leave No Trace Initiative**

A first for any state, Colorado's Tourism Office entered into an agreement with the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics in 2017 to encourage the more than 80 million visitors to the state to practice the seven Leave No Trace principles during their visit. The partners developed [a brochure](#) for tourists asking if they are "Colo-Ready." The brochure provides helpful tips on recreating in the outdoors, from appropriate apparel and gear to bring, to understanding the outdoors "lingo" that Coloradans toss around regularly, to understanding the challenges with altitude and spotty cell coverage. More importantly, the brochure offers visitors the seven Leave No Trace principles: Know Before You Go, Stick To Trails, Leave It As You Find It, Trash the Trash, Be Careful with Fire, Keep Wildlife Wild, and Share Our Trails & Parks.

ACCOMPLISHMENT FROM 2014 SCORP

**"This new relationship, at its core, is a response to the heartfelt concerns many Coloradans express about the impacts of visitation on the places they love. By sharing the Leave No Trace Seven Principles in compelling ways, we can inspire and empower visitors and locals to leave our state better than they found it."**

—Colorado Tourism Office Director Cathy Ritter

**Stay the Trail**



Stay The Trail is a program of the Responsible Recreation Foundation ([www.staythetrail.org](http://www.staythetrail.org)). Their education program promotes a responsible recreation ethic as a means to maintaining motorized access on our public lands and protecting the natural resources that we are all out there to enjoy.



In 2017, the Colorado Outdoor Stewardship Coalition (which is administered by Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado) along with Great Outdoors Colorado launched the [Statewide Stewardship Initiative](#) to increase public engagement in land stewardship. Together the partners developed common stewardship best practices and tools that foster strong and sustainable programs capable of responding to Colorado's growing stewardship needs.

ACCOMPLISHMENT FROM 2014 SCORP

## Colorado Fourteeners Initiative

ACCOMPLISHMENT FROM  
**2014 SCORP**

Colorado's 54 peaks above 14,000 feet are a defining visual feature – and a recreational destination for thousands of hikers. Every season, there are more than **334,000 trips up one or more of Colorado's**

**iconic "Fourteeners."** But this growing interest in summiting Fourteeners is having an impact on the sensitive high elevation habitats, affecting fragile alpine systems, and potentially impacting water quality at the very source. In 2015, the Colorado Fourteeners Initiative issued a statewide report card that ranks



DENVER POST FILE PHOTO

the condition of 42 existing trails and found that it will cost at least \$24 million to bring these trails up to ideal, long-term sustainable conditions — \$6 million to improve 26 Forest Service-planned routes and \$18 million to build 16 new planned trails where only user-created routes exist. Sixteen additional routes need to be inventoried.<sup>29</sup>

Since 48 of Colorado's Fourteeners are found on national forest land, the National Forest Foundation (NFF) launched the Find Your Fourteener campaign to help address these challenges. In the past year, NFF worked with partners to identify "pinch points" that are currently frustrating progress on Fourteeners by partner organizations and the U.S. Forest Service. In 2017, these partners began to implement solutions on three different peaks: Mount Elbert, Quandary Peak, and Pikes Peak.

### **PRIORITY II. Stewardship**

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

**Objective I: Build an Outdoor Stewardship Ethic** - Foster awareness and experiences that build an ethic of stewardship and responsibility to care for natural and cultural resources and outdoor recreation infrastructure.

**Strategy 1:** Encourage organizations, and local, state and federal partners to adopt Colorado's Outdoor Principles (modeled after the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation) to endorse an outdoor ethic that promotes both recreational enjoyment and conservation.

**Strategy 2:** Work in partnerships to utilize and bolster marketing/media and education efforts to promote stewardship, conservation, and respect for other users and infrastructure. Coordinate with and complement existing efforts (See the Colorado Outdoor Partnership website for list).

**Objective II: Enhance Stewardship Capacity** - Increase capacity of outdoor recreation providers, stewardship organizations and agencies to engage volunteers, employ youth and young adults, and enhance other types of support for on-the-ground, action-oriented stewardship activities.

**Strategy 1:** Promote and implement the Colorado Outdoor Stewardship Coalition best practices, tools, trainings and resources to advance on-the-ground stewardship.

**Strategy 2:** Strengthen public-private relationships and collaboration efforts to connect more people to on-the-ground activities, enhance habitat restoration and conservation, and build capacity for organizations engaged in this work.



## Land, Water and Wildlife Conservation

Conservation is intrinsically linked with recreation – our land, water and wildlife provide the natural beauty on which our entire recreation economy is built. Conservation of these resources is essential to ensure the quality of our outdoor recreational experiences, and the sustainability of the land, water and wildlife themselves. However, all recreation has an impact on these natural resources.

Protecting open space for recreation also conserves important habitat for fish and wildlife (see Appendix G for more on wetland conservation in Colorado), but increased human presence in natural areas can have far reaching impacts on those populations. In addition, there is now more year-round recreational use and potential for higher levels of recreation in even the most remote places. As a result, wildlife is forced to adapt to higher levels of disturbance for longer periods of time, which can impact their survival. Even seemingly low-impact recreation can create disturbance and fragmentation of habitat. Users of recreational trails can cause erosion of soils, impact water quality and carry invasive weeds into areas where they never before had a presence.

Interestingly, when recreational users are asked who is having the greatest impact on natural systems, they often believe it is a different user group; in reality, all users have impacts. Everyone who spends time in Colorado's outdoors needs to understand and minimize their own impacts. Users should also recognize that management decisions may need to happen that will restrict or change recreational access in critical habitats or at sensitive times of the year.

So how can we ensure continued recreational access while maintaining air and water quality, conserving fish and wildlife, and minimizing impacts to soil and vegetation? Outdoor recreationists should be key supporters of land, water and wildlife conservation efforts. Their experience in nature should spawn their active engagement to ensure that the land, water and wildlife that defines Colorado is conserved for future generations.



416 OFFICIAL FIRE FACEBOOK

**In addition to population growth, Colorado is facing increasing environmental stressors such as fire and drought. These events impact our natural resources and recreation activities as well as the outdoor and travel industries. For example, in the summer of 2018 the 416 Fire closed the San Juan National Forest for three weeks, cancelled reservations for the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad and reduced visitation to the communities nearby. In addition, after already experiencing abnormally low flows, dirt and ash run-off into the Animas River caused fish die-offs and temporary closures for fishing. Poor air quality also impacted local residents and further compromised recreation.**

## Ranchers Host Birders at Mountain Plover Festival

Mountain plovers are known as the Ghost of the Prairies for a good reason – they're really hard to see! The little birds nest on the shortgrass prairie in the eastern part of Colorado, but in the early 2000's, concerns about declining populations led to a petition to list the birds as an endangered species. While doing population surveys, a biologist with CPW spotted Mountain Plovers nesting on a ranch near the town of Karval and recognized an opportunity. CPW, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies and their partners started working with private landowners to implement conservation measures that benefited the birds – and the ranches. Locals became enamored with mountain plovers and recognized that birdwatchers across the country wanted to see the "ghosts." Seeing the opportunity to bring people into their community, Karval started the annual Mountain Plover Festival. Hotels are limited in the area so ranchers literally welcome birdwatchers into their homes and host evening barbecues, while biologists lead birdwatching trips to show off the rare birds. The result has been a conservation collaboration that has helped to keep mountain plovers off the endangered species list and provided the local community with the opportunity to bring passionate birders to their town.



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

## **Need for Research on the Impacts of Recreation on Wildlife**

A key strategy identified by partners is improving knowledge about the ways recreation impacts wildlife and how to reduce negative impacts. One research priority for Colorado Parks and Wildlife's Mammals Research Section is to determine how ungulates respond to recreational development and activity. This information will be useful in future planning for trails and protecting wildlife habitat and migration corridors. In addition, the U.S. Forest Service has committed to developing a research plan for needs related to sustainable tourism. Their proposed research focuses on identifying what information is needed for public land managers to maintain and enhance community well-being while protecting the natural and cultural heritage on our public lands.



## **Collaboration for Greenback Cutthroat Trout Wins Forest Service Award**

A variety of recreation and conservation partners outside of Colorado Springs formed the Bear Creek Roundtable to conserve the federally threatened greenback cutthroat trout in Bear Creek. To date, the Bear Creek Roundtable and Forest Service collaboration has resulted in a watershed assessment, removal of 20 tons of sediment, fish population monitoring, decommissioning and rerouting of 4.5 miles of trail outside of riparian areas, and storm-proofing of trails and roads. The collaboration was so successful that the Pikes Peak Ranger District on the Pike-San Isabel National Forests in the Rocky Mountain Region and the Bear Creek Roundtable were recognized as **co-winners of the U.S. Forest Service's 2016 Rise to the Future Award in the Collaborative/Integrated Aquatic Stewardship category.**





## Planning for Conservation and Recreation

Colorado Parks and Wildlife completed a [Strategic Plan](#) and its [State Wildlife Action Plan](#) in 2015 providing guidance on stewardship of the state's fish and wildlife species, as well as CPW's role in supporting outdoor recreation. Many of

the priorities closely match with the priorities of the conservation and recreation community identified in the 2019 SCORP planning process. In addition, GOCO uses the strategies identified within the SCORP for their own strategic planning.

With the strategies so closely aligned, CPW and its partners will continue to work together to ensure the conservation of the land, water, and wildlife in Colorado.

ACCOMPLISHMENT FROM  
2014 SCORP

CPW Strategic Plan Goals:

1. Conserve wildlife and habitat to ensure healthy sustainable populations and ecosystems
2. Manage state parks for world class outdoor recreation
3. Achieve and maintain financial sustainability
4. Maintain dedicated personnel and volunteers
5. Increase awareness and trust for CPW
6. Connect people to Colorado's outdoors



CPW

### PRIORITY III. Land, Water and Wildlife Conservation

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

**Objective I: Advance Landscape-scale Conservation** - Work across jurisdictional and land ownership boundaries to plan for wildlife and natural resource conservation along with the growing demand for recreation access. Collaborate to tackle pressing and emerging issues and to identify and safeguard important areas for conservation, working lands and recreation access across the state.

**Strategy 1:** Initiate and support planning efforts to gather and aggregate data and produce maps that factor in landscape-scale considerations (including migration corridors and unfragmented habitat) and inform land use decisions (private, local, state, federal and tribal). Convene diverse outdoor interests with land managers to compile and interpret data and to develop effective collaborations throughout the planning process.

**Strategy 2:** Incorporate outcomes of Strategy 1 into land use decisions by promoting and utilizing consistent maps and datasets to illustrate the overlap of recreation and conservation interests. Collaborate with private, local, state, federal and tribal land managers/property owners to inform decisions in support of conservation and recreation objectives.

**Objective II: Address Recreation Impacts** - Proactively manage visitors and maintain infrastructure to provide positive outdoor recreation experiences while limiting resource impacts. Utilize best practices when developing new trails or other outdoor infrastructure.

**Strategy 1:** Compile existing research and conduct new research to better understand the impacts of recreation on land, water, wildlife and cultural resources. Incorporate findings into the development of management guidelines that optimize conservation while maintaining infrastructure and recreation experience.

**Strategy 2:** Share outcomes from Strategy 1 with outdoor recreation partners (private, local, state, federal, tribal and NGOs). Convene partners to build broad support and commitment to address findings and mitigate impacts of recreation on natural resources.

### Funding the Future

All strategies to implement the conservation and outdoor recreation priorities require one primary element – funding. Colorado's parks, recreation areas and open spaces are a key part of public infrastructure that help improve economic development, property values and public health. They also support environmental health, because healthy ecosystems provide clean air and water, stormwater management, and much more. Land conservation, wildlife management, trail and park development, maintenance of facilities and related recreation, and conservation programs require stable funding in order to be implemented.

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 Sportfish Restoration Funds (federal excise taxes on hunting and fishing equipment), hunting and fishing license fees, habitat stamps, user fees, state severance tax appropriations, local bond or sales tax spending directed to conservation, and, of course, through investments by private entities such as land trusts and recreation organizations.

While Colorado has many conservation and recreation funding programs, financial challenges within the state grow as our population increases. The cost of land leases or acquisitions increases as land values go up. The need for additional facilities and maintenance of existing facilities rise along with increased recreational participation. Finding new and creative ways to encourage outdoor stewardship and foster conservation ethics in future generations is essential, but costly.

In addition, funding for wildlife conservation is largely based on licenses and equipment purchased by hunters and anglers, but there are growing conservation challenges for game and non-game species. All recreational users have impacts on the state's land, water and wildlife, but not all recreational users pay into the "user-pay" system that has been successful for fish and wildlife conservation.

With increasing costs for all levels of conservation and recreation programs, there is a growing need for more stable funding sources – a challenge being faced by many states across the country. The Colorado Outdoor Partnership is committed to addressing this challenge, and the Colorado Department of Natural Resources initiated an alternative funding study to identify potential new streams of revenue that can be targeted toward anticipated needs.

### Future Generations Act

Colorado Parks and Wildlife is [funded primarily through user fees](#), not general tax dollars. However, those fees have not kept pace with rising operational costs. Without additional funding, **CPW was forecasting budget shortfalls of \$30 million annually for wildlife and \$11 million annually for parks**. CPW and partners statewide worked together to raise awareness of the challenges the agency faces in providing conservation and recreation services for the benefit of future generations. Due to broad support, the Colorado State Legislature passed the Hunting, Fishing and Parks for Future Generations Act, signed into law by Governor John Hickenlooper on May 4, 2018.

ACCOMPLISHMENT FROM  
**2014 SCORP**

The additional funding will help CPW fulfill its top ten goals by 2025:

1. Grow the number of hunters and anglers in Colorado.
2. Expand access for hunters, anglers and outdoor recreationists.
3. Identify and begin planning Colorado's next state park.
4. Reduce CPW's dam maintenance and repair backlog.
5. Increase the number of fish stocked in Colorado waters through hatchery modification and renovations.
6. Attract and retain high-caliber employees.
7. Improve species distribution and abundance monitoring through partnerships with private landowners.
8. Increase and improve big game populations through investments in habitat and conservation.
9. Engage all outdoor recreationists in the maintenance of state lands and facilities and the management of wildlife.
10. Provide quality infrastructure at CPW properties by completing much needed construction and maintenance.





## Colorado Lottery



The Colorado General Assembly approved the Colorado Lottery as an enterprise fund in 1982 under the Colorado Department of Revenue. By statute, Lottery proceeds are distributed “according to the will of the voters through a 1992 amendment to the state constitution.” This amendment directed Lottery proceeds to the Great Outdoors Colorado Trust Fund (GOCO). Since its inception, the Colorado Lottery has returned more than \$3.2 billion to Colorado’s parks, recreation, trails, pools, wilderness, open space, wildlife projects and public school construction. In 2018, The Lottery was reauthorized by the General Assembly and will continue to operate to 2049. Overall, lottery proceed distributions are as follows:<sup>30</sup>

- 50% to the GOCO Trust Fund (based on an inflation-indexed formula established in 1992).
- 40% to the Conservation Trust Fund (CTF) under the Colorado Department of Local Affairs. These proceeds are provided to counties, cities, towns and special districts that provide park and recreation services and support projects such as the creation of parks and facility maintenance.
- 10% to Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) to support projects such as wildlife habitat protection, maintenance of facilities, trail construction and visitor education.
- Spillover funds support the Colorado Department of Education/Capital Construction Fund’s Building Excellent Schools Today Program (BEST).

## Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO)



Since 1992, GOCO has invested its funding from Colorado Lottery proceeds in “improving Colorado’s trails, parks, wildlife, open spaces and rivers.”<sup>31</sup> A 17-member Board of Trustees appointed by the Governor awards competitive grants to local governments and land trusts and approves investments in CPW. GOCO, which uses no tax dollars, operates under a constitutionally mandated annual funding cap, which when adjusted for inflation was **\$66.2 million in FY 2018**. The Colorado Constitution requires GOCO to allocate funds equally over time to achieve outcomes in four areas: outdoor recreation, local governments, wildlife, and open space. GOCO has committed more than **\$1.1 billion in Lottery proceeds to more than 5,000 projects in all 64 counties without any tax dollar support**. This translates to more than 1 million acres of land conserved; 1,000 miles of river protected; 900 miles of trails built or restored; 1,600 community parks and outdoor recreation areas created and improved; 43 endangered or threatened wildlife species supported; and dozens of school playgrounds transformed.<sup>32</sup>

### PRIORITY IV. Funding the Future

**Goal:** Coloradans and visitors contribute to diverse funding sources that are dedicated to support outdoor recreation and conservation. Existing sources of funds are preserved.

**Objective I: Build Support for Conservation Funding** - Raise political and public awareness for the value of Colorado’s outdoors to Coloradans’ quality of life, economic prosperity, heritage and public and environmental health so that more people contribute funds to support outdoor recreation and conservation.

**Strategy 1:** Develop and implement a public awareness/education initiative and share coordinated messages to help build support for statewide funding.

**Strategy 2:** Continue to urge and advocate for Congress and the Colorado General Assembly to fully fund outdoor recreation and conservation programs.

**Objective II: Diversify and Expand Funding Source(s)** - Identify and pursue new funds available to organizations and management agencies that directly benefits outdoor recreation and conservation of natural resources.

**Strategy 1:** Engage and collaborate with a wider community of user groups, businesses and constituents on innovative funding strategies. Identify paths to make it easier for users, businesses and others to contribute.

**Strategy 2:** Connect grant funding to outdoor recreation and conservation priorities and encourage other funders to do the same.

**Strategy 3:** Identify and establish new funding mechanisms utilizing findings from the CPW Funding Study, recommendations from the Colorado Outdoor Partnership and other sources to support the shared strategy presented in this plan.



**IMPLEMENTING COLORADO'S OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN**





There is no doubt that Colorado is unique – our state's beauty and vast recreational opportunities entice Coloradans and visitors to get outside and enjoy nature, no matter their preferred recreational activity. However, there are many challenges ahead to maintain a healthy environment and outstanding outdoor recreation opportunities. It is an obligation for everyone who is engaged in recreation and the conservation of our natural landscapes to ensure Colorado's beauty and recreational opportunities are available for current and future generations.

The 2019 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) provides a road map for all Coloradans to actively engage in the future of conservation and recreation. No one entity can tackle these challenges alone—successfully implementing SCORP will require the continued active involvement of many individuals and organizations.

### Call to Action!

The four Priority Areas and Shared Strategies presented in this plan offer a direction for collective action over the next five years and are the sideboards to developing the full SCORP Implementation Plan. Through implementation, these Strategies support lasting opportunities for meaningful outdoor experiences while taking care of our natural and cultural resources. SCORP connects to and builds on the synergy of existing initiatives occurring across the state. Success will come from working across sectors and interests to enact statewide and local solutions.

During the annual [Partners in the Outdoors Conference](#), where many of Colorado's leaders in outdoor recreation and conservation gather together, there will be opportunities to highlight progress made toward SCORP's Priority Areas. At this event, partners will share updates on the status of implementation planning and progress in achieving success. In 2019, the conference theme will be "SHIFT from Planning to Action" and pose the question "How can we work together to implement the SCORP?" Conference presentations will fall under tracks based on the SCORP Priority Areas and there will be opportunities for participants to collaborate on shifting from the planning process to on-the-ground implementation.

### GET INVOLVED!

- Adopt [Colorado's Outdoor Principles](#)
- Join [CPW's Partner Network](#) and receive its newsletter
- Attend the [Partners in the Outdoors Conference](#)
- Visit <http://cpw.state.co.us/partners> for more!



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