



NoCo PLACES

Report

Q4 2021



About NoCo PLACES

Eight county, state, and federal public land agencies from north-central Colorado are actively collaborating on ways to address the challenges the mountains and foothills in this region are facing from high visitation and a growing population. We are committed to sustainable solutions, equitable actions, and beneficial land management practices for the long-term conservation of Colorado's public lands and the quality of the visitor experience.

Jefferson County Open Space

The Challenge

Visitation to our mountains and foothills has skyrocketed in recent years, causing congestion on the trails, impacts to wildlife and the environment, and putting at risk what makes Colorado a special place.

Leaders from Boulder, Clear Creek, Gilpin, Jefferson, and Larimer Counties; Colorado Parks and Wildlife; the US Forest Service Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests; and Rocky Mountain National Park are actively collaborating to address this challenge.

Mission Statement

NoCo PLACES 2050 collaborates to protect and conserve natural and cultural resources while providing equitable access and a quality recreation experience for current and future generations.

Q4 2021 Accomplishments

- Assembled the necessary operational agreements and governance structure; a challenge with multiple jurisdictions at three levels of government.
- Implemented the necessary NoCo staffing to make forward progress.
- Established a common mission and goals.
- Committed to developing plans in each jurisdiction to achieve the mission and an adaptive management approach to these plans, modifying them as conditions on the ground warrant.
- Educated NoCo members through extensive research with subject matter experts about the issues surrounding the long-term management of the public lands in the region, including the impact of climate change on forest health, how to better protect and manage wildlife given the increasing visitation, transportation approaches and others.

This research led to:

- A common level of understanding among all the organizations about the complexities of managing the region's lands for the long-term.
- The development of principles, potential action items, and future-oriented ideas to guide NoCo's approach to managing this challenge.



- Created an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee that worked with NoCo agencies to understand their current EDI practices and identify future actions to build on those practices to ensure the public lands in the region are welcoming and respectful to all.
- Aligned as one voice in support of management changes in the region, such as the timed entry programs recently undertaken at Rocky Mountain National Park and on the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests.
- Begun developing a common framework for how and when to implement other reservation permit efforts in the region, building upon lessons learned from timed reservation and entry programs that have been put into effect.
- Begun developing an education and messaging campaign to inspire an outdoor stewardship ethic among visitors and recreationists to the region. The approach is being developed in the fall of and winter of 2021 with implementation to begin in late spring 2022.
- Adopted as a Regional Partner by Colorado Parks and Wildlife's Regional Partnership program.





Tackling Goals

We will achieve our goals by:

- **Inspiring an outdoor stewardship ethic** among visitors and recreationists that promotes an awareness of their impact on the land and wildlife, reduces those impacts by educating them on how they can mitigate or manage them, and creates a personal sense of ownership, responsibility and pride in better protecting those resources.
- **Building community support for increased funding** for public land management, and exploring opportunities and mechanisms for sharing financial resources across jurisdictions in the NoCo region.
- **Increasing the amount of conserved and/or restored land**, and protecting the land that is already conserved and/or restored.
- **Supporting outdoor recreation and visitation** in areas best suited for that activity.
- **Improving the quality of the visitor experience**, particularly in areas facing the greatest threats from overuse and congestion, through management approaches, education, more effective infrastructure and other means.
- **Ensuring that the region continues to provide and support a wide range** of quality outdoor experience opportunities.
- **Increasing the visitation by historically underrepresented communities** and Americans with Disabilities Act/Architectural Barriers Act (ADA/ABA) communities.
- **Reducing conflict and promoting compatibility among visitors** and recreational use types, and increasing the safety of outdoor experiences.

Upcoming

We are just getting started; more is to come. Having spent 2020 and the first half of 2021 conducting that extensive research noted above, we are now focused on solutions. Discussions are underway on several additional steps we can take to achieve our mission and our goals.

 www.nocoplaces2050.com
 info@nocoplaces2050.com

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