



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.



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.

Q3 2022 Accomplishments

Below is a summary of the work NoCo has completed since our [Second Quarter 2022 report](#).

GRANT AWARD

NoCo was awarded a grant from the [Mighty Arrow Foundation](#) to continue funding our communications work into 2023. This grant award means we can continue to act upon our Communication Plan, execute common messaging campaigns, engage in community relations, and maintain our website. Thank you to the Mighty Arrow Foundation and to Nathan Fey for helping us secure this grant.

COMMUNICATIONS EFFORTS

In our second common messaging campaign, NoCo shared a [joint news release around the July 4th holiday](#) in which fire safety and prevention messages were shared as well as social media graphics.

In September, NoCo released its third and largest scale common messaging campaign yet. The campaign was tied to National Public Lands Day on September 24 and was centered around “The Value of Colorado’s Public Lands”, stewardship, and conservation messages. We produced a [video series](#) in which thirteen individuals shared their thoughts on the value of public lands and how they embody land stewardship. The multiple videos and themes allowed for each agency to pick and choose which messages fit best for them to share. We also published a [joint news release](#), and social media sample posts for all agencies to use. The videos themselves were created without mention of National Public Lands Day, ensuring their continued relevance for future uses.

On National Public Lands Day, September 24, NoCo Executive Committee member Shannon Schaller was featured on the radio show [104.3 The Fan in the Terry Wickstrom Outdoors segment](#). Shannon shared messages about National Public Lands Day, stewardship, conservation, and NoCo PLACES in general.

In July, NoCo Executive Committee Co-chair Randy Wheelock attended the National Association of Counties conference in Denver, and participated on a panel discussing responsible recreation in which he presented about NoCo PLACES.

NOCO CONSERVATION AND RECREATION VISION

The effort to create a conservation and recreation vision for the NoCo region is underway. Our first kick-off meeting was an introduction to Colorado Natural Heritage Program’s [CODEX mapping tool](#). This was followed by a second meeting in which we discussed more about the importance of the layers in the CODEX map and identified additional information to incorporate. Our next meeting will cover the possibility of prioritizing those layers and discuss the acquisition and analysis of cell phone data to further inform our understanding of the NoCo region.





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. After two years of research, in the year 2022 we are focusing on solutions and implementation. Discussions are underway on steps we can take together to achieve our mission and our goals.

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