



## 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.

# Q4 2022 Accomplishments

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

## NOCO CONSERVATION AND RECREATION VISION

The effort to create a conservation and recreation vision for the NoCo region is well underway. We are working with the Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP) and its [CODEX mapping tool](#) to create a map that reflects the recreational and ecological/biodiversity assets in the region. CNHP recently shared with the work group we have established for this project a first cut of the map showing conservation values such as wildlife species activity maps, important bird areas, wetlands, potential conservation areas, and more. The work group is currently conducting a detailed review of this first map and providing CNHP with input that it will then incorporate by mid-January. The next step will be for CNHP to include additional layers like recreational trails, areas of human disturbance and other factors.

We are planning to hold a workshop with the NoCo Partners in mid to late March to review the map and begin to identify priority conservation and recreation areas for the NoCo region. We are close to having a contractor hired to acquire and analyze mobile phone data of visitors to the region that will also be incorporated into our analysis and discussions. Our goal is to apply for a grant that allows us to go to the public in the summer and receive their input on priorities and values to be incorporated into this vision.

Many thanks to Colorado Parks and Wildlife and to several of the NoCo agencies whose financial support is making this project possible.

## COMMUNICATIONS EFFORTS

In October, work began on the next common messaging campaign, to be launched in January 2023. This campaign will focus on winter recreation safety messages under the Know Before You Go theme. The Communications Subcommittee selected the messages to be communicated and multiple video shorts were developed to convey those messages on social media. A joint news release will summarize the messages and serve to launch the campaign in January. The messages fall in the categories of winter skills and safety, stewardship, and wildlife awareness.

We have already begun discussions about our spring campaign in which NoCo agencies will collectively promote Colorado's COTREX app as the 'go-to' app for information on trails. This is one of the priorities the NoCo Executive Committee identified at its retreat last summer. Stay tuned!

## COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL AFFAIRS BRIEFING

At its December meeting, The NoCo Executive Committee briefed the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) on NoCo's accomplishments since receiving a grant from DOLA in December 2019, including establishing a mission and goals, putting the governance structure and staff in place, creating a website, conducting the [core topic research](#), and more. That grant has now been spent down, and this briefing gave the Executive Committee the opportunity to thank the DOLA team for their invaluable support.

## 2023 STRATEGIC PLAN

NoCo staff will get together for a strategic planning session in January to finalize the 2023 Strategic Plan. More to come!





## 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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