



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.

Q2 2023 Accomplishments

Below is a summary of the work NoCo has completed since our [First Quarter 2023 report](#).

GRANT FUNDING

Grant Award! NoCo PLACES was awarded \$102,000 from CPW as part of their Regional Partnerships Initiative grant program.

Grant Award! NoCo PLACES was awarded \$15,000 from the Gates Family Foundation.

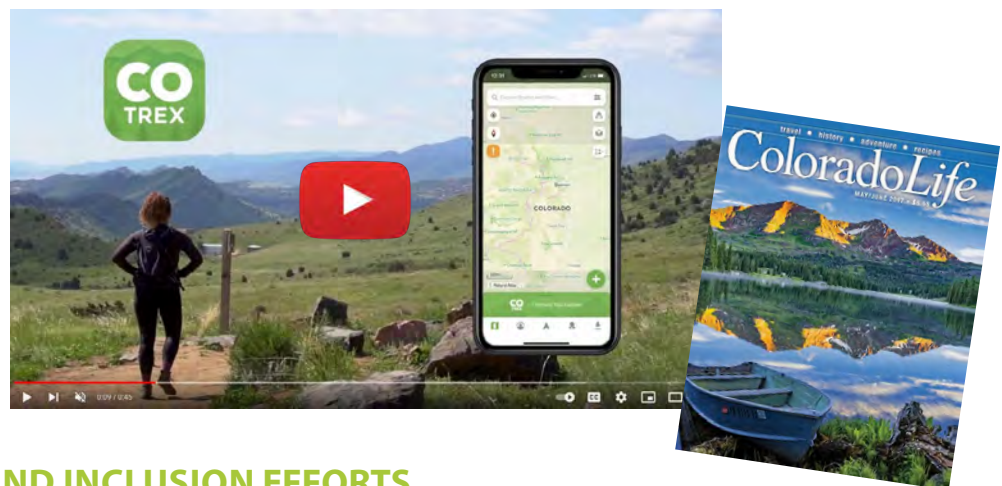
These grants will allow the coalition to move forward with the Conservation and Recreation Vision effort in summer and fall of 2023 (see page 3), as well as additional communications efforts.

Thank you CPW and the Gates Family Foundation for your invaluable support!

COMMUNICATIONS EFFORTS

On May 19, the day prior to Colorado Public Lands Day, NoCo launched a common messaging campaign centered around the promotion of the state [COTREX app](#). A priority for NoCo is to make this the go-to app for trail use because it is informed by land managers and thus more accurate than commercial apps, and because it is free—removing a barrier for those who can't afford to pay the fees that commercial apps charge. The NoCo Communications Subcommittee worked closely with CPW and DNR employees on the campaign materials, including a [video](#), [news release](#), and social media graphics. The video includes English and Spanish voiceover versions.

Among other media outlets, the campaign was picked up by Colorado Life Magazine (feature will appear in July/August issue) and Nederland's [Mountain Ear podcast](#).



EQUITY DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION EFFORTS

At the May NoCo Partners meeting, presentations were given by NoCo agencies on their EDI efforts and plans. The discussion centered around sharing successes, shining light on barriers or challenges encountered, and identifying the opportunities for cross-jurisdictional collaboration. A summary of the meeting will soon be posted on the NoCo website. EDI staff from each of the eight NoCo agencies are forming a work group to continue sharing best practices and resources.

Q2 2023 Accomplishments Continued

NOCO CONSERVATION AND RECREATION VISION

The effort to create a conservation and recreation vision for the NoCo region is moving forward with big steps in the first half of the year.

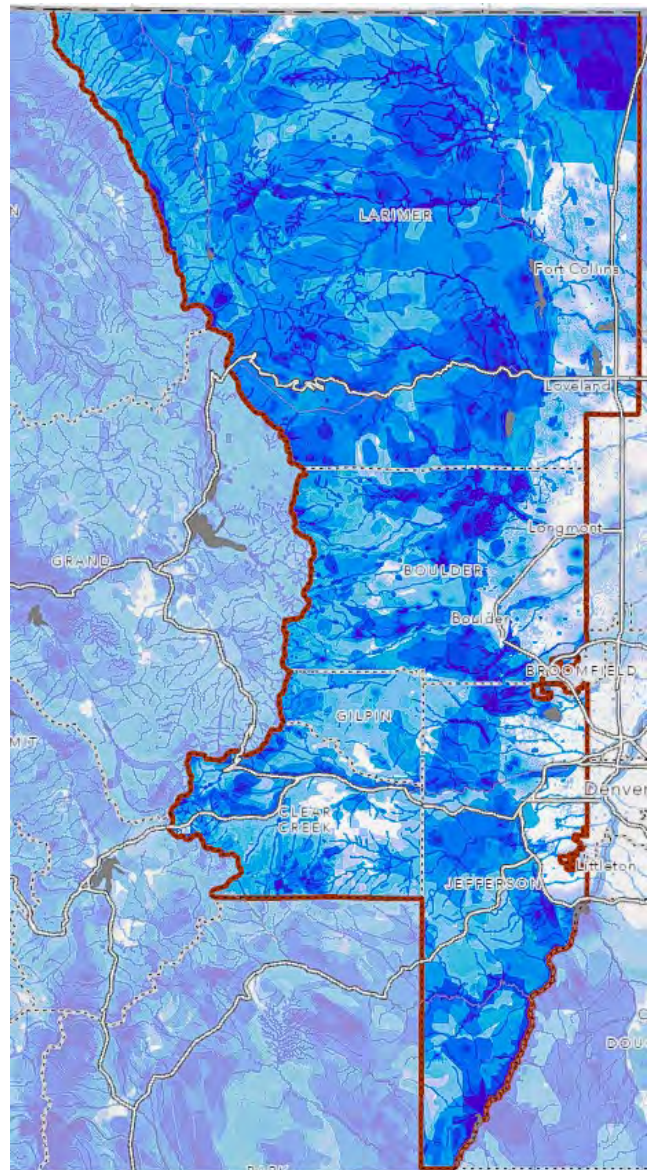
After working with the Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP) to create a map that reflects the sensitive species and habitat in the region, a work group then conducted a detailed review of this first map and provided CNHP with input that was incorporated in January. Next, we worked with CNHP's [CODEX mapping tool](#) to better understand other conservation issues and human disturbance in the region, and reviewed The Nature Conservancy's Resilient and Connected Network map, Enviroscreen (an environmental justice mapping tool) and other data. The final report from CNHP explaining the map and the methodology is nearly complete and will be posted on the NoCo website soon.

On March 29, we held a visioning workshop with the NoCo Partners where we used mapping tools to address the interaction between the natural resources and recreational assets of the NoCo region.

Also during the spring, contractor RRC Associates acquired and began their evaluation of mobile phone data of visitors to specific locations in the NoCo region that will be incorporated into our analysis and discussions. Their analysis was recently delivered to NoCo agencies, who are evaluating the findings to understand what they tell each agency about visitation to their region. We will soon begin discussions about what the data tells us about regional opportunities, leading up to a yet-to-be scheduled workshop later this summer with the NoCo Partners to review and discuss the data.

The next steps in this effort are moving forward thanks to grant funds NoCo was awarded in June. The stakeholder outreach around the Conservation and Recreation Vision will consist of a round of focus groups by interest group and by geography, the details of which are still being developed. This will be facilitated by a story map we will create that highlights the maps and data and tells the story of what's on the ground without requiring the stakeholders to go into CODEX for the layers. The story map will be developed in the summer and the engagement will be conducted in the fall.

Many thanks to Colorado Parks and Wildlife, our foundation funders, and to the NoCo agencies whose financial support is making this project possible.



Q2 2023 Accomplishments Continued

ANNUAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RETREAT

The Executive Committee held its annual retreat on June 9. The objectives of the retreat included:

- Reflecting on past year’s success and challenges as well as opportunities for the coming year
- Providing guidance to NoCo staff and contractors in implementing and operationalizing the NoCo strategy and regional vision through specific priority pilots and activities
- Begin alignment on next phase of staffing and operational needs and issues

The topics resulted in an exciting discussion. The commitment of each of the eight NoCo agencies continues to grow and deepen, with many ideas for how NoCo can continue to develop in the coming months and years.

REGIONAL PARTNER INITIATIVE

NoCo continues to work closely with CPW’s Regional Partner Initiative and their efforts to create a state conservation, recreation and climate plan. The work NoCo is doing to create the conservation and recreation vision will be folded into the state plan.



Jefferson County Open Space





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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