



NoCo Places Report Q3 2024

About NoCo Places

Nine county, state, and federal public land agencies from north-central Colorado are actively collaborating 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.



Larimer County

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; Denver Mountain Parks; 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 collaborates to protect and conserve natural and cultural resources while providing equitable access and a quality recreation experience for current and future generations.

Q3 2024 Accomplishments

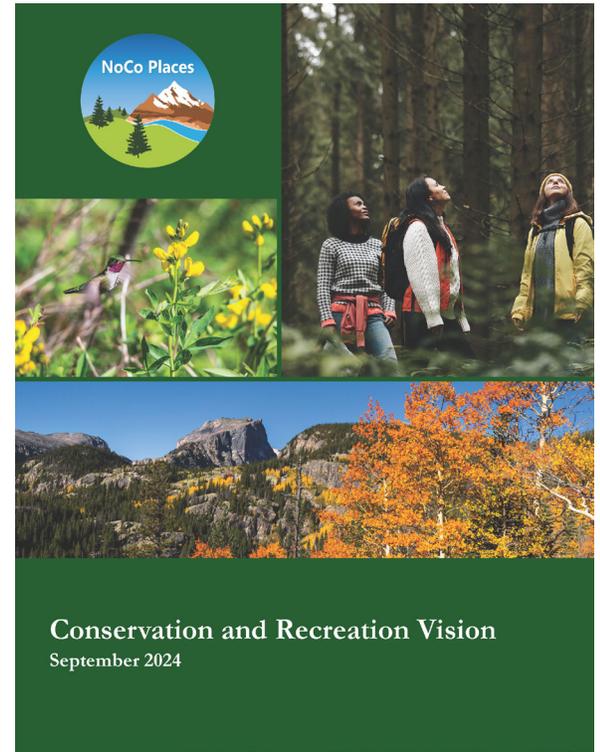
This report highlights the successes and progress of NoCo Places since our [Second Quarter 2024 report](#).

CONSERVATION AND RECREATION VISION

After over two years of collaborative effort, the NoCo Places Conservation and Recreation Vision is now complete!

The Vision describes current conditions, shared values, desired future conditions, a shared management philosophy, and management strategies and activities to achieve conservation and recreation goals. Examples of the shared vision and management principles include ensuring that landscapes and biodiversity are conserved, restored and climate resilient, visitors care for lands, honor rules and are courteous of each other, cultures and histories are valued and celebrated, and more. The visioning process also informed the development of an action plan to guide key projects for the next several years.

Special thanks to the NoCo Partners group, the stakeholder focus group participants, the Colorado Natural Heritage Program, CPW, and The Nature Conservancy.



Read the [Vision document](#)

Read the [news release](#)

Watch the [video in English](#) or [Spanish](#)

Desired Future Conditions

Landscapes and biodiversity are conserved, restored, and climate resilient.

Management balances environmental, social, and economic needs.

Cultures and histories are valued and celebrated.



NEW NOCO PLACES EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER

NoCo Places welcomes Denver Mountain Parks to their Executive Committee, successfully bridging a gap for foothills parks covered by the City and County of Denver. Shannon Dennison will represent Denver Mountain Parks on the NoCo Places Executive Committee and a member of their staff will also join the Communications Subcommittee.



Genesee Park



Red Rocks Park

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

Members of the NoCo Places Executive Committee presented at the Colorado Open Space Alliance conference in October in Grand Junction. The session, titled NoCo Places: Working Across Boundaries for Sustainable Solutions on Public Lands, detailed how the collaborative works, how the Conservation and Recreation Vision effort came together, and the benefits and challenges of a regional partnership.



TRAILS MAPPING PROJECT

NoCo Places is coordinating a trails mapping project this summer across four of the NoCo jurisdictions; Arapaho/Roosevelt National Forest, Gilpin, Clear Creek, and Boulder Counties. For this collaborative effort, NoCo has contracted with Crux Environmental to map trails and visitor use in “hot spot” areas identified by those jurisdictions. The contractor is documenting trails, trail infrastructure, and user types for those trail segments, along with providing GIS data and photos of key trail elements. This data will be used by the agencies to determine if those trails are in fact part of an existing network, the use is permitted or part of a right of way agreement, or visitor created. The project is currently wrapping up the field work and has mapped about 220 miles of trails so far. Next up: the generation of the final mapping data, and project completion by December.



Clear Creek County

COMMUNICATIONS EFFORTS

Spring and Summer Common Messaging

While the bulk of NoCo communications in Q3 were focused on the Conservation and Recreation Vision, the “Headed Outdoors?” common messaging campaign that launched in May continues to build momentum with the help of tourism partners in the NoCo region. Next up: usable trails will be added to the [map](#) to help identify more accessible areas in the NoCo region.

Campaign Objectives:

- Reach a broader audience through partnership with tourism groups in the NoCo region
- Share land stewardship messages with an audience that is likely unfamiliar with Colorado public lands
- Educate target audience on the different areas of public land in the NoCo region (thus offering alternatives when areas are sold out or full)

2025 Plans

The NoCo Communications Subcommittee will partner with the Northern Colorado Fireshed Collaborative on fire safety, healthy forests, and prescribed burn messaging.



6,600
views of interactive
story map

6
tourism centers
promoting the map

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION EFFORTS

CPW EDI Resource Guide

At the August EDI work group meeting, Keystone Policy Center shared the draft concept for Colorado's Outdoors Strategy's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Resource and Action Guide, which is intended to equip statewide partners with essential tools and knowledge to advance the state's commitment to EDI. This guide is being developed to live as an interactive, easy-to-use online tool.

A [draft of Colorado's Outdoors Strategy](#) is open for feedback through early October 15, 2024.



EDI Work Group Successes, Challenges, and Updates

Larimer County hosted two successful programs with American Adventure Sports Club over the summer, including an overnight camping experience that included kayaking, hiking, and other educational sessions. Partnering with American Adventure Sports Club was key to the success of these programs; the organization is a trusted community leader and connector, and was able to lead on marketing/registration and help bridge relationships between meeting participants and the County.

Boulder County organizes 'thematic months' with their education, outreach, and ranger teams whereby these teams work together to ensure they are sharing the same information out to the public. The County has also hosted 33 unique community engagement events over the summer specifically for Latinx and indigenous communities.

Jeffco Open Space hosted its first drag queen hike at the Lookout Mountain Nature Center and focused the event on learning about same sex behaviors in nature. The event was successful, however, Jeffco learned that they need to look into getting a terrain hopper to make the experience more accessible in the future. Jeffco also hosted a Usable Trail Roundtable at Craig Hospital in August. The roundtable discussion centered around how to provide adaptive recreation at parks.

Rocky Mountain National Park hosted Colorado Adventure Day with Outdoors Oath. Activities included nature journaling, a Women of Rocky history tour, workshops on Braiding Sweetgrass, LNT workshops, ADA workshops, and more. RMNP also hosted Latina Outdoors' annual retreat over the summer and supported the Blackwaters Brotherhood film screening.

The City of Fort Collins Natural Areas is working with the City's Equity Office to align on how best to utilize data for prioritizing projects within the context of the City's communities and demographics. The Natural Areas department is seeking to understand how to prioritize work that elevates under-resourced communities and increases their access to nature, while also ensuring that equity is operationalized throughout all planning processes.



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.