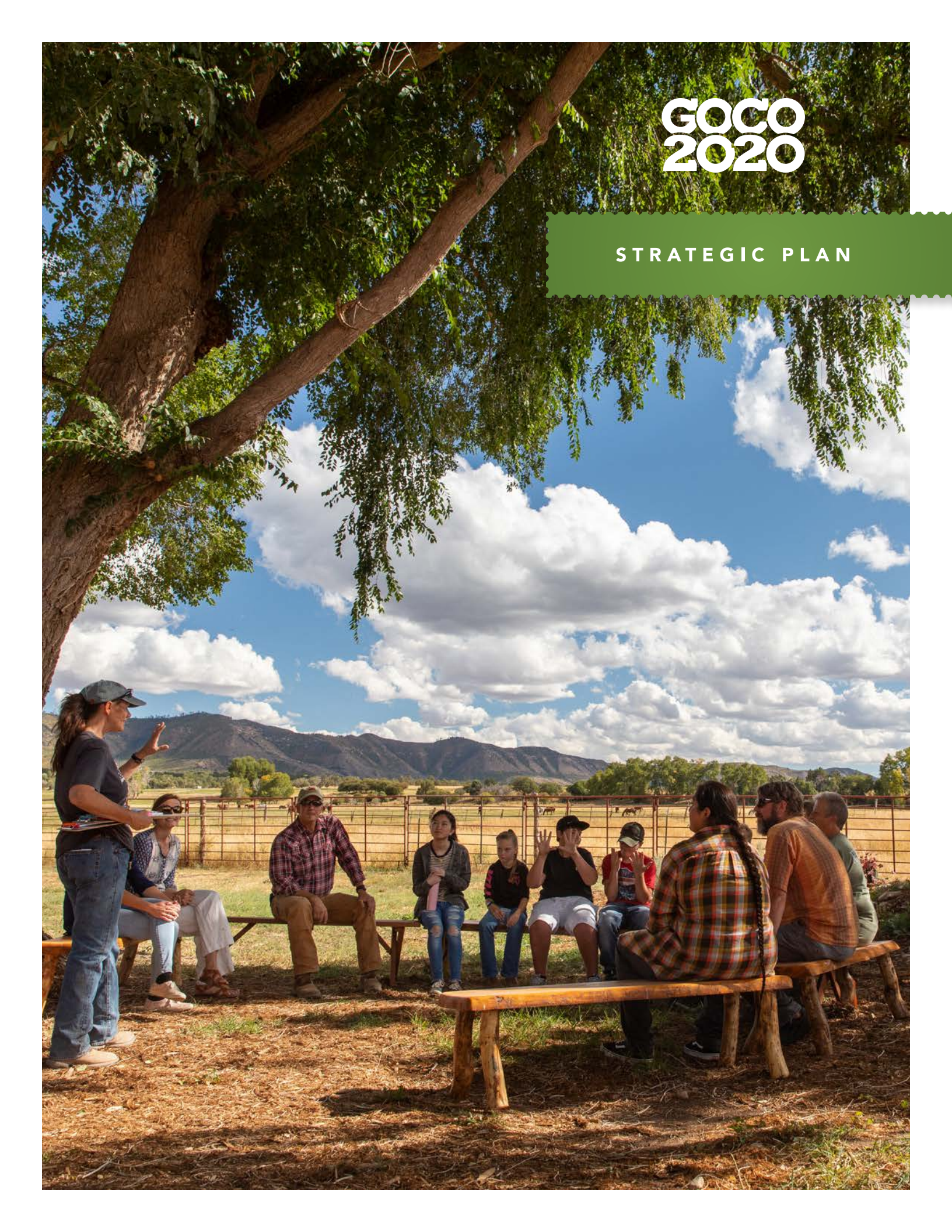


A group of approximately ten people are gathered outdoors under the shade of a large, leafy tree. One person stands on the left, gesturing while speaking to a group seated on two wooden benches. The group consists of men and women of various ages, some wearing hats and casual clothing. In the background, a fenced-in field with some animals is visible, followed by a range of mountains under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The overall atmosphere is relaxed and communal.

**GOCO
2020**

STRATEGIC PLAN

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YAMPA RIVER STATE PARK
Routt and Moffat Counties

Photo by John Fielder

Land Acknowledgment —

A land acknowledgment is a statement that formally recognizes the historical and continuing connection between Indigenous peoples and their native lands. It is an important social justice and decolonial practice that promotes Indigenous visibility and honors those who have stewarded Colorado's land for generations.

In this spirit, GOCO acknowledges that the lands and waters of our great state are the traditional homelands of many tribes, including people who identify as being from the Apache Nation, Arapaho Nation, Cheyenne Nation, Pueblo tribes, Shoshone tribe, and the Ute Nation. We respect and honor the longstanding relationships these tribes and others have to this land, as they are its original caretakers.

2020 Forward —

In 1992, voters approved an amendment to Colorado's constitution to create the Great Outdoors Colorado Trust Fund. We are proud of their vision—that Coloradans valued their state's land, wildlife, and way of life and committed Colorado Lottery proceeds to the outdoors. In the years since, we have been humbled time and again by the individuals and organizations that have invested their passion and energy in advancing conservation and recreation, completing 5,300 projects across all 64 counties.

And in 2020, we are honored to carry a meaningful mission into a new era.

We took a moment in GOCO's history to reflect on what we have learned from 27 years of experience. In the last five years alone, under our pillars of Protect, Connect, and Inspire, our partners delivered on decades-in-the-making land conservation projects, worked collaboratively on projects that create new levels of connectivity between people and place, and put communities at the center of transformative work reconnecting kids and families to the outdoors. Together we learned—about what worked and what needed work.

In the spirit of learning, we spent the last year listening to diverse groups of partners to understand their challenges, and we dug into our own, to inform GOCO's strategy for 2020 and beyond. Because of a deep trust in our partners, we had the confidence to think differently about our next strategic plan and how, alongside you, we could imagine a new way of grantmaking for GOCO.

The planning process resulted in an evolution in our role as a funder, a vision for GOCO to become a more dynamic, proactive, and values-based grantmaker. One that creates efficiencies and aims to collaborate for even greater impacts on the ground. One with dedicated resources to invest in signature projects that have lasting benefits for future generations. And one centered in equity, so that we refine over time how we break down barriers to our funding, working with all our partners to improve outdoor opportunities and experiences for more people and communities.

We will build programs that reflect our partners' priorities, and we will work closely with you to define and shape our approach over the coming years. We hope to cultivate our most collaborative relationship with you yet. The pivot to a new way of working will not be without its challenges, but we aspire to support you as you advance your most ambitious visions for your communities.

We are grateful for the input we received from hundreds of partners during the strategic planning process. And we expect you to continue to hold us accountable as we advance this values-based approach to grantmaking.

We know how fortunate we are to have partners with the vision to imagine all that is possible for our state's great outdoors and the expertise to bring ideas to life in communities across Colorado.

Onward!



Chris Castilian
Executive Director

Hollie Velasquez Horvath
Board Chair



HEARTLAND RANCH NATURE PRESERVE
Bent County

Photo by Dale Ball

Mission

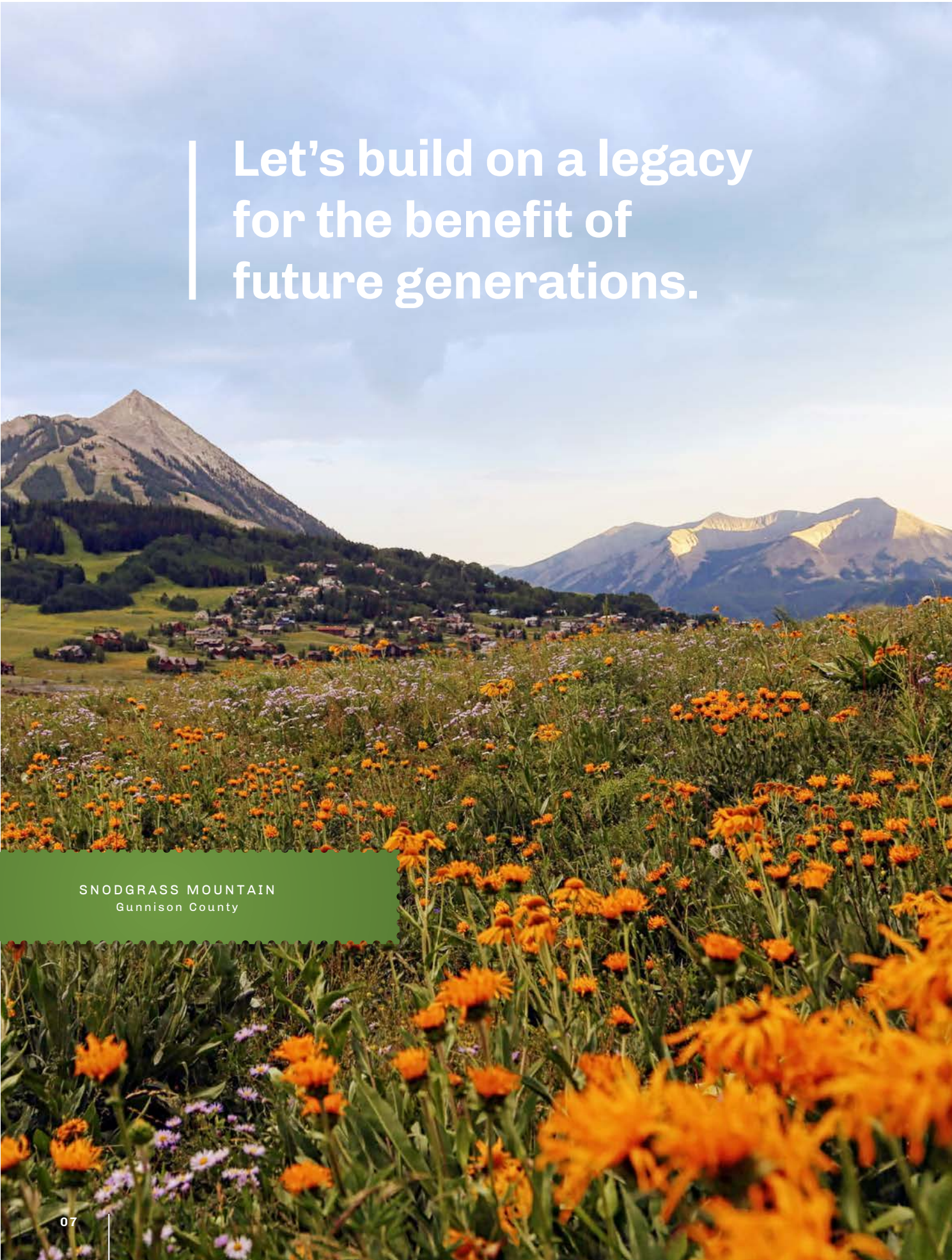
To help preserve, protect, enhance, and manage the state's wildlife, park, river, trail, and open space heritage.

Vision

To fulfill the trust of the people of Colorado through wise investments in the great outdoors.

Guiding Principles

- Advance equity.
- Lead with legacy in mind.
- Leverage innovation and be flexible to increase impact.
- Evolve how to approach investment areas.
- Be a responsive and cooperative partner.



Let's build on a legacy
for the benefit of
future generations.

SNODGRASS MOUNTAIN
Gunnison County

Photo by Ed Roberson

GOCO's Role in a Changing State —

GOCO's mission is a broad one. Our four constitutionally mandated funding quadrants and their 40 articulated outcomes span many important facets of conservation and recreation—from conserving land and protecting rivers for people and wildlife, to building parks and trails that connect people with the outdoors and its many benefits. For GOCO, it is both a privilege and a challenge to support Colorado in balancing the protection of our outdoor spaces with access to them.

For decades, GOCO's land conservation programs have partnered with nonprofit land trusts, local governments, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife to conserve more than 1.2 million acres of open space. Now, perhaps more than ever before, Colorado's land and water face their greatest challenges due to development, natural disasters, climate change, and increased use.

GOCO's land conservation partners are thinking long-term about some of our state's critical resources and what strategic regional and statewide conservation opportunities they see on the horizon. The benefits of thinking holistically and proactively are clear. Land conservation projects protect wildlife habitat, safeguard the state's water supply and watersheds, sustain local agriculture, and help communities and regions retain their cultural identities and sense of place. Protecting lands, from forests to fields, also contributes to climate resilience, which will only become a more pressing need in the years and decades to come.

For GOCO, responsible public access is of increasing priority as the state's population grows. Coloradans who spend time outdoors and receive the many benefits recreation provides will feel more connected to the land and will help protect it into the future.

With more Coloradans and visitors recreating at our parks and open spaces and on our trails, we need to inspire more people to take care of and maintain the places we access and enjoy. At a statewide level, it is critical that we work together to cultivate the stewardship ethic among users of our great outdoors by increasing awareness and sharing information about the need to recreate responsibly and minimize impacts.

Broad-scale stewardship projects include a range of activities, from trail maintenance to ecological restoration, wildfire recovery, invasive species removal, and more. A significant backlog of maintenance and restoration projects in Colorado has further highlighted the need to increase the scale of efforts to manage the places we value.

Across Colorado, a movement is rising, connecting more young people and their families with our great outdoors and inspiring the next generation of outdoor leaders. Launched in 2015, Generation Wild has supported 15 coalitions, in urban, suburban, and rural communities, working to break down barriers to getting kids and families outside through community-led solutions. These passionate, locally-based, and diverse groups of individuals and organizations are elevating youth voices, delivering culturally relevant programming, and promoting equitable access to the outdoors. The partners—from schools and local governments to health-based organizations and nonprofits—have formed powerful new networks, sharing resources and developing relationships that will strengthen communities into the future.

The movement has demonstrated scalability, as tens of thousands of kids and their families have reaped the benefits of new places to play and enriching outdoor programming, but just as importantly, individual youth lives have been deeply impacted by positive, lasting experiences.

For GOCO, putting equity into practice means recognizing that some communities, and some people within those communities, have more resources and advantages than others. Funding for the outdoors can be a meaningful equity lever in Colorado—and a means to address issues of disparity and disproportionality—because the benefits of conservation and recreation are multi-faceted, bolstering health, supporting education, and diversifying local economies. By striving for equity, we believe we can contribute to broad-scale systems change. To that end, we will work to create and administer programs that are accessible to and equitable for all prospective grantees.

Visionaries founded GOCO. Nearly three decades ago, forward-thinking state leaders and a committee of community-minded individuals created the platform for prioritizing our state's great outdoors in a changing world. These inspired individuals were building a legacy and putting future generations of Coloradans, their land, their rivers, and their quality of life at the center of a mission.

The coming years for GOCO and our partners represent an exciting opportunity to lift up their vision and root our work in values that evolve with the changing needs of a state and its people.

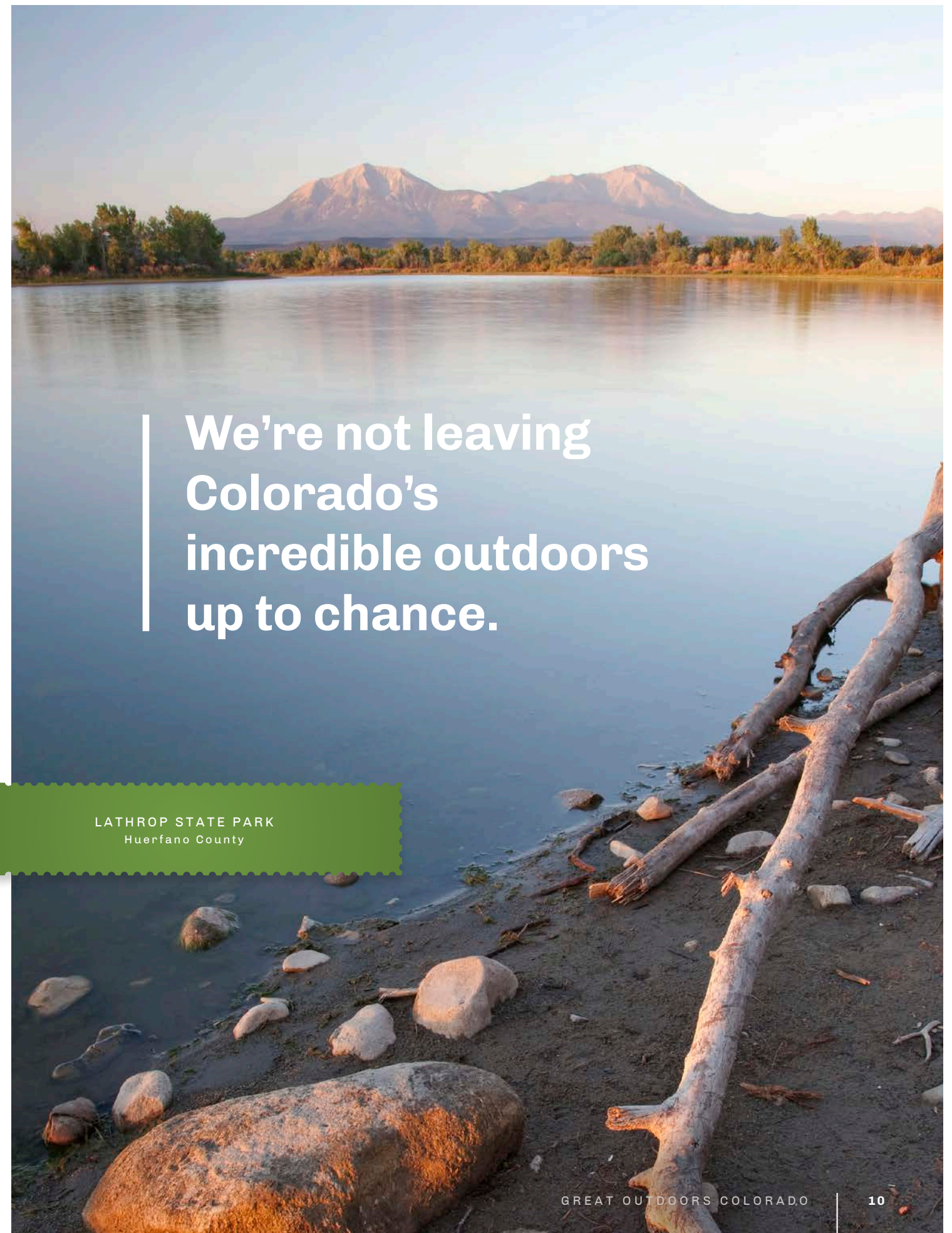


Photo by John Fielder



Together we are
the great outdoors
task force.

FIVE CARD DRAW RANCH
Larimer County

Photo by John Fielder

A New Approach

GOCO's strategic planning process offered an opportunity to revisit our approach to grantmaking, which over the years has supported hundreds of partners—and key stakeholders including local governments, nonprofit land trusts, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife—in their efforts to protect and enhance our state's outdoors. The result of reflecting on our history with these partners is a values-based approach that will be more flexible, collaborative, and equitable.

The highly participatory planning process helped us identify recurring themes that would inform strategic direction; establish new guiding principles for the organization; and shape the values, program portfolio, and end results nested within this plan.

Through internal and external interviews, surveys, and public meetings, we engaged hundreds of people with diverse perspectives to provide feedback and insights on the strengths, challenges, needs, and opportunities within local communities, our state, and our organization.

Of course, each of GOCO's partner groups, and the communities they represent, is unique. So too are their challenges, and because of this, solutions must be flexible. To support a diverse range of partners, priorities, and projects, GOCO is organizing programmatic efforts in pursuit of shared values—all within our constitutionally mandated funding parameters.

In this plan, the types of projects and outcomes that have driven GOCO's grantmaking since 1992 will persist, but the organization's approach will evolve, when useful, to support partners from project conception to completion and to accommodate a range of timelines to complete important work. We will meet partners where they are in their projects' visioning processes and adjust our approach based on their distinct situations and needs.

We will take a community-centered approach to our work and encourage our partners to do the same. Our partners, not GOCO, will define what "community" means for their respective vision or project. We believe when our partners consider the unique needs of their community members in project design, engage their communities authentically, and elevate unheard voices, not only are project outcomes more impactful but communities become more cohesive and inclusive.

We know capacity is a barrier for many organizations, and so we will simplify grant application and administration. In addition, as needed, GOCO will consider funding for capacity within partner organizations.

Each step of the way, a learning-based approach will be essential. GOCO will prioritize

continuous learning opportunities for our board members, staff, and partners and expand our partner and community engagement and technical assistance practices. Additionally, we will evolve our evaluation processes to reflect the new way of working and continuously improve it.

While GOCO hopes to engage more authentically with partners at the local and regional levels, we also aim to leverage our unique role as a statewide entity to elevate themes and trends that impact all Coloradans and convene groups with common interests and missions to create more shared learning opportunities. Our state's great outdoors has benefitted from collective thinking and collaborative action for decades, and together we will protect what we value into the future.



CATAMOUNT INSTITUTE
El Paso County

Photo by moxie82inc.

How We Engage —

In implementing this strategic plan, GOCO has the opportunity to refine our programs and processes to make access to funding more efficient, so you can focus on what matters most: meaningful outcomes for the people, places, and wildlife of Colorado.

Accessibility | We work to remove barriers to ensure equitable access to funding and make grantmaking processes clear and efficient.

Community-centered Approach | We strive to meet communities where they are. Together with partners, we consider the unique culture and needs of each community in order to fulfill its vision.

Education and Support | We provide partners with resources, training, and shared learning opportunities to support success.

Communications | We communicate with clear, accessible, and inclusive language and lift up the authentic, community-created stories of our partners.

How We Work —

GOCO advances equity not only through its partnerships but also through its internal operations, including its practices and culture, to create a workplace that is inclusive and equitable. We value diverse perspectives and make decision-making processes transparent. To foster ongoing learning, we will provide access to resources and opportunities that enrich equity education for our staff and board. As always, we welcome your feedback as we work to progress.

What We Value

Putting values at the center of GOCO's programs and decision-making is a way to reflect the priorities of the state and its communities. These values are intentionally open to interpretation and definition by our partners; how they are or could be reflected in each community is unique. And not every project will integrate multiple values. Projects that demonstrate several values, as well as projects that embody a singular value, can have meaningful impacts and be high in merit.

Resource Conservation | We value strategic land conservation and resource protection work.

Outdoor Stewardship | We support sustainability of and improvements to the state's natural and recreational resources.

Community Vitality | We invest in conservation and outdoor recreation efforts that support communities and quality of life.

Equitable Access | We partner with communities to break down barriers to the outdoors.

Youth Connections | We support projects and programs that help children and families get outside more often and experience all the benefits of doing so.

Our values
are a reflection
of yours.



MOUNT EVANS
Clear Creek County

Programs that prioritize the Colorado way of life.



PEAKS TO PLAINS TRAIL
Jefferson and Clear Creek Counties

Photo by moxie82inc.

Program Portfolio

Demonstrating project vision and alignment with values will provide our partners with greater opportunity in this new program portfolio. The model also allows for more flexibility as partners identify community needs, determine priorities, and bring concepts to life.

Land Conservation | GOCO invests in land conservation projects that protect significant conservation values and connect people to place.

Stewardship | GOCO invests in restoring, enhancing, and sustaining Colorado's natural and outdoor recreational resources by increasing the scale of habitat restoration efforts, amplifying the work of outdoor stewardship organizations, and enhancing the impact of conservation service corps.

Community Impact | GOCO invests in capital projects that enhance a community's access to the outdoors and its quality of life.

Generation Wild | GOCO invests in advancing equitable access to the outdoors through local coalitions that provide program and pathway opportunities to youth and families who might not otherwise have them.

Planning and Capacity | GOCO invests in research, education, planning, and capacity-building projects that address trends, issues, and opportunities in the outdoors.

Centennial Program | GOCO invests in high-value, once-in-a-lifetime projects with lasting impacts for the state and future generations of its people.

Land Conservation

Through the Land Conservation program, we will work with our conservation partners to identify and support important landscape, waterway, and habitat protection priorities from urban to rural areas and respond to Coloradans' desire for increased access to the outdoors. Together, our land protection efforts secure our state's irreplaceable natural resources, contribute to strong resilient ecosystems, mitigate the negative impacts of climate change, and provide places for people to connect to the outdoors—all of which benefit current and future generations.

Through this program, we will invest in projects that protect unique open spaces, natural areas, and agricultural lands with significant conservation values. These projects will safeguard essential wildlife habitat and migration corridors, critical watersheds, waterways and riparian ecosystems, scenic viewsheds and greenways, and farms and ranches. Some will provide public recreation access and use, bolstering the health of people and communities, and some will help advance landscape-scale connectivity, which is so critical to providing healthy habitat into the future.

To advance this vision, we will encourage and support opportunities for collaborative visioning and community conservation. We believe that investments in community-driven conservation projects will provide GOCO and our partners with opportunities to advance shared conservation priorities, explore new and innovative implementation practices, help connect more people to our conserved landscapes, and elevate the perpetual stewardship of Colorado.

Program Opportunities

We will invest in the protection of priority landscapes, waterways, and habitats across the state and in urban land acquisitions.

We will invest in and provide comprehensive funding for land conservation projects that support public access and enhance community vitality.

We will invest in projects that were generated from a collaborative and community-informed process and/or projects with significant community conservation values that connect more people to conservation and the outdoors.

Desired Outcomes

Increase the number of protected urban and rural open spaces, natural areas, and agricultural lands across the state that reflect significant conservation values.

Increase the number of protected properties that provide meaningful public access and enhance community vitality.

Increase the number of collaborative and/or community-informed land conservation projects.

Share the public benefits of land conservation projects through storytelling that elevates diverse perspectives and experiences.



VAN LOAN RANCH
Mesa County

Photo by John Fielder

Let's create something
our great-grandkids
will appreciate.

Stewardship —

Through three distinct programs, RESTORE, Stewardship Impact, and Youth Corps, GOCO will amplify stewardship efforts from the local level to landscape scale. GOCO will invest in significant habitat restoration and stewardship efforts across the state to meet an increasing demand on our parks, trails, and wildlife resources and to address the impacts of land-use, climate, and technological changes.

We will ensure that our investments in stewardship support both the organizations and the people who facilitate these efforts across our state. For the first time since GOCO’s inception, we will explicitly elevate stewardship as a critical and relevant component of our programs to address Colorado’s overburdened natural and recreational resources.



INTEMANN TRAIL
El Paso County

Photo courtesy of Mile High Youth Corps

RESTORE

Colorado is a national leader in land conservation, fueled by innovative programs such as GOCO and the Division of Conservation’s tax credit program. Faced with the challenges of supporting a growing population by way of infrastructure, recreation, and development, conserving land is a crucial first step in protecting the natural resources we value and enjoy.

And now, through the RESTORE program, Colorado has an opportunity to lead our nation in habitat restoration efforts as well. GOCO will continue to work with a network of private, public, statewide, and national funding partners on a collaborative funding framework for habitat restoration and stewardship outcomes across our state’s wide range of unique and diverse habitats.

Program Opportunities

We will recruit and expand the network of funding partners to create a more efficient and accessible grantmaking process for applicants and funding partners.

We will work with partners to identify, promote, and incentivize innovative, project-based solutions and practices to mitigate habitat impacts from climate change, drought, fire, and other limiting conditions.

We will invest across jurisdictional boundaries in consideration of ecological function rather than land ownership or management.

Desired Outcomes

Reduce the amount of time and resources spent by funders and applicants on the application process, including securing match funding and leverage.

Increase the scope and scale of habitat restoration efforts across several ecosystem types (e.g., riparian areas, wetlands, grasslands, sagebrush, and migration corridors).

Enhance a self-sustaining program with direct contributions from federal, state, and private entities with partnership agreements extending for five years or more.

STEWARDSHIP IMPACT

GOCO will invest in outdoor stewardship projects that demonstrate meaningful improvements to ecological and recreational amenities throughout Colorado with Stewardship Impact grants. We intend to harness the power of Colorado's outdoor stewardship organizations. These organizations coordinate, manage, and implement stewardship projects using dedicated staff and volunteers and serve a critical role in helping to address the state's growing list of stewardship needs.

Program Opportunities

We will catalyze stewardship efforts in a given region by investing in capacity to comprehensively plan and prioritize collaborative stewardship projects and move away from the opportunistic, project-by-project engagement model.

We will incentivize collaboration among outdoor stewardship organizations, land managers, and community partners.

We will invest in the people and resources necessary to engender authentic partnerships and collaborations that elevate a shared mission over the achievements of individual organizations.

We will invest in the stewardship of natural resources such as river restoration, invasive species control, and forest health, as well as the stewardship of recreational resources such as parks, trails, campgrounds, and associated amenities.

We will invest in communication efforts designed to engage the public in outdoor stewardship, elevate understanding, promote action, and cultivate a stewardship ethic among Coloradans and its visitors.

Desired Outcomes

Increase the number of projects that are the result of a comprehensive, multi-partner planning process of appropriate scale to achieve the highest priority outcomes within the plan.

Increase stewardship outcomes in Colorado as measured by miles of trail built or maintained, acres of habitat restored, miles of river restored or enhanced, or other key metrics.

Increase the awareness of stewardship concerns and ethics in communities served.

YOUTH CORPS

GOCO invests in projects that employ youth and young adults throughout the state on critical outdoor recreation and restoration projects. Youth corps service is designed to provide meaningful employment opportunities while accomplishing tangible stewardship goals in partnership with state and local government entities, land trusts, and other organizations.

Projects can include constructing and maintaining Colorado's trail systems, restoring riparian areas, mitigating fire fuels, restoring wildlife habitat, mitigating and removing invasive species, and improving outdoor recreation amenities such as playgrounds and parks.

Through their work, corps members learn about a range of stewardship issues facing Colorado, including water conservation, land use, fire danger, and the impact of invasive species. Young people are also engaged in service to their communities and learn job readiness and leadership skills that prepare them for future careers in outdoor industries. Additionally, some corps members earn a stipend for their service and an AmeriCorps education award to use toward attending college or reducing existing student loans.

Program Opportunities

We will increase GOCO's investment in youth corps to create job opportunities for additional youth and increase the on-the-ground impact of youth corps services.

We will work with partners and land managers to provide training opportunities for youth corps members on current best practices and leverage our networks to create opportunities for youth corps projects among land managers.

We will invest in capacity to reach currently underserved communities through the expansion of existing corps services and the development of new, innovative, and responsive programming relevant to community needs.

Desired Outcomes

Increase the number of communities served by youth corps over the next five years, especially those without historical service opportunities.

Increase the number of individuals entering corps service.

Increase the on-the-ground impact of youth corps service as measured by miles of trail built or maintained, acres of habitat restored, miles of river restored or opened for access, or other key metrics.

Increase the awareness of youth corps as an important training and career path opportunity for more high school and early college students.

Parks: the original social network.



NATURE KIDS DISCOVERY ZONE
Boulder County

Photo by moxie82inc.

Community Impact —

Through the Community Impact program, GOCO will invest in processes and projects that enhance a community's quality of life and access to the outdoors. Partners can apply for funding to develop and revitalize parks, trails, schoolyards, fairgrounds, environmental education facilities, and other outdoor projects as identified and prioritized by the communities they serve. Partners will be encouraged to pursue holistic visions for outdoor connections and advance the most needed and urgent projects that will serve the highest and best interests of their communities.

GOCO celebrates the unique impacts the outdoors has across Colorado's diverse communities. Through this program, we will fund community-driven projects of all sizes in communities of all sizes.

Program Opportunities

We will work collaboratively with grantees to support projects from concept to completion and, as needed, fund local capacity for project management, land acquisition for development, community-centered planning and design, and project implementation within a single grant.

We will enable partners to pursue multi-component, comprehensive projects rather than force partners to break projects into multiple phases to accommodate the requirements of discrete grant programs.

We will operate within a flexible funding framework to ensure the program is accessible to and accommodates communities of all sizes and with varying degrees of capacity. For example, matching requirements and project timelines will be customized to the grantee partners and projects.

Desired Outcomes

Increase the number of communities employing a community-centered approach to identify, prioritize, design, and/or implement capital outdoor recreation projects and environmental education facilities.

Through a community-centered approach, partners will remove barriers to the outdoors and provide places for outdoor recreation and education that are most relevant to and reflective of the communities they serve.

Grantees will invest more time in project development and execution and less on grant applications and administrative processes.

Grantees will save money by not having to phase project development out to accommodate multiple grant timelines.

Generation Wild



GOCO will advance equitable access to the outdoors for youth and families through continued investments in select, existing Generation Wild coalitions, and a limited number of new coalitions. In each community, investments are made in culturally relevant programs; in pathways that provide youth with outdoor leadership, internship, and career opportunities; and in the people and positions needed to direct, manage, coordinate, and administer Generation Wild at the local level.

After reflecting on lessons learned since the launch of Generation Wild in 2015, coalitions will implement evolved plans that aim to increase coalition resilience, drive sustainability, and through continued, coordinated efforts, get more kids outside more often—from the backyard to the backcountry.

Our investment in the implementation of revised, local visions provides more opportunities for learning about the Generation Wild model, which is unique in the nation, and an opportunity to develop best practices and shared resources for existing and new coalitions.

Continued funding for existing, community- and youth-driven coalitions will also help foster the culture of collaboration that is a Generation Wild pillar of success. Time and steady resources are needed to support coalitions through the cycle of collaborative work.

Program Opportunities

We will support the statewide movement to get more kids outside more often by showing up as a trusted and flexible funding partner.

For existing community-driven Generation Wild coalitions, we will invest in evolved implementation plans that aim to increase coalition resilience and impact and drive sustainability.

We will invest in programs, pathways, and capacity for new Generation Wild coalitions.

Desired Outcomes

Increase the amount of time youth and families in Generation Wild communities are spending outdoors and improve the quality of their experiences.

Grow the connection between young people and the outdoors to strengthen our state's next generation of outdoor stewards.

In partnership with their communities, coalitions will identify and break down local barriers to the outdoors.

The statewide partner network will be stronger as reflected in more partners connected to each other and more collaboration among organizations.

Generation Wild impacts are conveyed through local storytelling that elevates community voice and a streamlined quantitative evaluation effort.

Increase Generation Wild coalitions' connection to the Generation Wild communications program and marketing campaign to better leverage the power of the brand.



Photo by Julie Harris Photography

GENERATION WILD COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM

Studies show a growing disconnect between today's kids and the outdoors. To help address this issue, GOCO launched the Generation Wild communications program in 2017 after a year of research, strategy, and brand development. The integrated, statewide marketing campaign has been gaining awareness while building a community of partners and Coloradans aimed at tackling the issue head-on.

Over the last three years, Generation Wild has seen remarkable results in moving the needle on attitudinal and behavioral change. Families are reporting stronger bonds to the outdoors, especially with the introduction of Wilder, a furry, loveable, eight-foot-tall spokescreature for the outdoors.

In its fourth year in 2020, the powerful social movement continues its mission, alongside the Generation Wild coalitions, to change a generation of Colorado kids. Because kids grow better outside.



WILDER

Photo by Joe Hancock

Planning and Capacity —

GOCO will invest in planning, capacity, research, and education projects that address opportunities, explore issues, and examine trends in the outdoors. This program will accommodate a wide range of projects, including strategic plans, master plans, or site plans for open space, wildlife habitat, parks, and trails.

GOCO will invest in capacity building and education efforts intended to support partners with resources, tools, and skills helpful in advancing their work in service of the people and places of Colorado. Through this program, GOCO will also invest in research projects that can be disseminated to develop knowledge and facilitate learning, as well as community engagement and education efforts to develop and foster networks, partnerships, and collaboratives.

Program Opportunities

We will support the production of research and planning work documents that help our network of partners make informed decisions and take action.

We will invest in efforts that build individual and collective knowledge from diverse viewpoints in recreation and conservation issues.

We will invest in community-driven research, planning, and design and community engagement efforts in service of the outdoors at local, regional, and statewide levels.

Desired Outcomes

Planning efforts advance solutions to local, regional, and/or statewide challenges and opportunities in the outdoors.

Capacity needs are sufficiently funded to advance planning, research, and education efforts.

When appropriate, partners work collaboratively with communities to ensure they reflect and respond to the communities they serve.



**Dream it. Do it.
See it through.**

FISHERS PEAK
Las Animas County

Centennial Program

GOCO will invest in high-value, once-in-a-generation visions and projects that will create lasting impacts on the state and future generations.

The same factors that motivated Coloradans to invest in the outdoors nearly three decades ago, when GOCO was established, are even more acute across the state today: more people in our wild places, less habitat for wildlife, significant barriers to getting outside for youth, and funding shortfalls at the state and local levels. These challenges call for solutions of significant scale and present opportunities that are most effectively addressed through thoughtful collaboration at both local and regional levels.

GOCO is in the unique position to consider how to authentically bring people and partner organizations together to spark new visions and further transformational initiatives that will leave lasting imprints on a region, or the state as a whole, to the benefit of its people, places, and wildlife.

Program Opportunities

We will fund high-value, once-in-a-generation projects that span two or more of GOCO's funding quadrants: open space, local government, outdoor recreation, and wildlife.

We will support acceleration of local visions that otherwise might take decades to realize.

We will provide communities and partners with adequate time and resources in the early years of the plan to request large investments in later years.

We will build in flexibility that allows communities to iterate with GOCO on their visions.

Desired Outcomes

Given the flexibility of longer timelines and availability of larger investments, more partners and communities will coalesce around shared visions, thinking broadly about the great outdoors and spearheading projects that capture one or more of our program values.

Several large multi-value, multi-quadrant projects will be realized, continuing GOCO's tradition of supporting efforts of statewide significance in land and wildlife conservation, outdoor recreation, and environmental education.

The Centennial Program will encourage collaboration and strengthen partnerships on the ground to the future benefit of communities beyond the funded projects.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) is the single largest recipient of GOCO funding, as outlined in the constitutional amendment that created GOCO in 1992. The state agency receives roughly half of GOCO's funding each year from our outdoor recreation and wildlife funding quadrants, contributing to CPW's leading efforts in conservation, wildlife management, and recreation.

GOCO's investments in CPW fund critical activities across the state including environmental education, wildlife research, wildlife habitat restoration, state park system operations, public information, and youth internships.

As GOCO evolves from a reactive funder to a dynamic collaborator with our partners in the conservation and outdoor community, we will build deeper relationships with CPW in order to understand the agency's most pressing priorities to meet the needs of future Coloradans. By listening to and learning from experts within CPW, GOCO will not only be better suited to fund CPW priorities but also help guide communities across the state in project development that supports wildlife and outdoor recreation values.

Colorado's entire conservation and outdoor community faces shared challenges: habitat fragmentation, overcrowding in outdoor spaces, lack of accessibility, and aging infrastructure. By working together towards CPW's highest priorities, statewide challenges will be easier to overcome.



ROXBOROUGH STATE PARK
Douglas County

Photo by Caveman Collective



SANDHILL CRANES
Rio Grande County

Photo by Mike DelliVeneri, courtesy of Colorado Parks and Wildlife

End Results and Measurement

GOCO considers ongoing evaluation of its programs important to demonstrating the effectiveness of our approach, identifying areas for improvement, and most importantly, sharing the powerful impacts of our partners' hard-earned projects.

We will continue to track key quantifiable metrics—from acres of land and miles of river conserved to miles of trail constructed and numbers of parks built or enhanced—to convey the breadth and scope of funded projects. We will leverage data collected by our partners working on the ground in communities, through their own measurement strategies, as a way to learn and evolve our approach in support of our partners.

In our evolved approach to grantmaking, we will track progress toward the end results described here using a variety of measurement tools with quantitative and qualitative outputs:

Community-Driven Approach | GOCO listens, learns, and reflects shared values to help partners elevate and respond to local priorities.

Measurement method: Frequently executed partner satisfaction surveys and key stakeholder interviews to benchmark GOCO's partnership success and foster continued relationship improvement

Values-Based Grantmaking | Every funded project integrates one or more program values, and GOCO's investments as a whole reflect the collective values we share with partners.

Measurement method: Regular gap and opportunity analysis of the portfolio's advancement of program values in conjunction with grant award cycles

Collaborative Partnership | GOCO grows authentic relationships with partners, takes a flexible approach to align project concepts with funding opportunities, and iterates partner ideas to achieve successful outcomes.

Measurement methods: Operational assessment and ongoing evaluation of performance through partner satisfaction surveys and key stakeholder interviews

Financial Flexibility | GOCO will pursue a flexible spending plan and diverse investment portfolio to increase financial assets and enable response to unforeseen situations and immediate opportunities.

Measurement method: Ongoing staff and board reviews of the restructured spending plan and investment strategy



DON ANEMA MEMORIAL SKATEPARK
Adams County

Photo by John Fielder

Onward! ———

With this strategic plan, we are purposefully shifting our thinking and practices for the long term. We know putting values at the center of GOCO’s programs and decision-making and taking a community-centered approach will require a reorientation of our work and ongoing organizational learning.

In the coming years, we will carefully develop programs, align our staffing structure to the new approach, and fine-tune our spending plan. We will also collaborate with Colorado Parks and Wildlife to closely align investment priorities to benefit outdoor recreation and wildlife across Colorado. Our promise is that change will be iterative over the duration of this plan and that we will continue to learn and improve together with you.

We invite you—our partners—to join us on this exciting journey.

Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) receives up to half of Colorado Lottery proceeds each year and invests that funding in improving Colorado’s trails, parks, wildlife, open spaces, and rivers. Created by a vote of the people in 1992, GOCO is managed by an independent board and uses no tax dollars.

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El plan estratégico está en español a goco.org/plan.



ROCK CREEK FARM
Boulder County

Let's get to work
(and play).

