

2025

STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY

Elkhead Reservoir State Park. Photo by Dustin Dorskocil, courtesy of Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

Welcome

Colorado's outdoors partners are navigating interesting times. Climate change, increasing demands on the land, and resource constraints challenge conservation and recreation efforts. Yet, with passion and dedication, you have been making significant strides in safeguarding our outdoors. Together, we will continue to pursue collaborative and innovative solutions that address today's challenges while enhancing quality of life for all Coloradans. At GOCO, we are honored to carry our mission into its next era alongside you, our inspiring and persevering partners.

Our Mission, Vision & Guiding Principles

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

- Elevate 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.

The Situation

- Colorado's conservation partners face rising costs, while climate change, development, and increased use impact our land and water. Competing demands on the landscape create urgency for strategic land acquisitions.
- The need for stewardship and restoration dollars is outpacing available funding, creating a backlog of maintenance projects. Higher costs for crews, challenges in high-visitation areas, and longer-term efforts all factor in.
- Investing in capital projects like parks and trails can be transformational for communities, but our partners are contending with aging infrastructure and greater maintenance, higher construction costs, and staffing constraints.
- Not all Coloradans share equal access to quality outdoor recreation experiences. By applying an equity lens across funding opportunities, GOCO and its partners can contribute to broad-scale systems change.
- Concern about children not spending enough time outdoors stands at an all-time high. Providing a source of hope, Colorado's youth-and-outdoors movement is showing strong momentum.

Looking Ahead

Our strategy was developed around these values:

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 believe children and their families deserve opportunities to get outside and experience all the benefits of doing so.

Grant Programs: Fiscal Year 2025+

Community Impact | Planning, capital, and stewardship projects that improve a community's access to the outdoors and its quality of life

Land Acquisition | Land conservation projects that advance conservation values and connect people to place

Transaction Cost Assistance in partnership with Keep It Colorado | Costs associated with conservation easement transactions that advance statewide land protection priorities

RESTORE Colorado in partnership with National Fish and Wildlife Foundation | Significant habitat restoration and stewardship efforts across the state

Conservation Service Corps in partnership with Colorado Youth Corps Association | Projects that employ young people on critical outdoor recreation and restoration projects

Pathways | Innovative visioning, research, and capacity projects that address trends, issues, and opportunities in the outdoors

Generation Wild | 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

Regional Partnerships Initiative | Supporting Regional Partnerships as they collaboratively plan and implement project outcomes that promote sustainable outdoor recreation and climate-resilient conservation and restoration

As always, GOCO will also invest in Colorado Parks and Wildlife's (CPW's) statewide wildlife and outdoor recreation programs.

Good to Know

- The program portfolio will provide opportunities for projects of all sizes. Because costs are on the rise, we are increasing grant amounts and will fund large-scale projects more frequently.
- Our base programs will move from three to two cycles per year, affording GOCO staff more time to work with you and making grant application timelines clearer.
- In partnership with CPW, we will launch a strategic initiative focused on implementing Colorado's Outdoors Strategy (COS), which will help advance Regional Partnership efforts. Across our grant programs, we will elevate projects that align with COS.
- We plan to invest in more Generation Wild communities to inspire and grow the next generation of environmental stewards.
- We will expand funding for partner programs—RESTORE Colorado, Conservation Service Corps, and the Transaction Cost Assistance Program supporting conservation easements—to collaboratively accelerate stewardship and land acquisition efforts.

STAYING ACCOUNTABLE

Being a responsible steward of public resources and an exceptional partner to you are top priorities. To support these commitments, we evaluate our programs and approaches to measure progress, identify opportunities, and drive continuous improvement. Key methods include community listening, data gathering, storytelling, equity assessments, and partner surveys. Please contact your favorite GOCO staff member to provide input at any time.

Onward!

Whether conserving critical landscapes, expanding outdoor access, or fostering connections between people and nature, our collective efforts will help shape a resilient and thriving Colorado. We enter this next chapter with optimism and resolve, knowing that every step we take together strengthens our legacy and ensures a vibrant future for all who call Colorado home.

