



COLORADO
Governor Jared Polis



COLORADO
Department of Natural Resources



Request for Proposals Consultant Services for Colorado Conservation, Outdoor Recreation, & Climate Resilience Planning

Responses Due via email by 5 p.m., Nov. 17, 2022

In partnership with Governor Polis, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), The State Board of the Great Outdoors Colorado Trust Fund (GOCO) seeks proposals from organizations and/or individuals to assist in the collaborative development of a plan that establishes a vision, direction and statewide metrics for climate-resilient, biodiversity supporting, community-driven conservation and recreation planning and management, that takes into consideration equitable outdoor access (“The Plan”). This plan will link together existing state-level planning efforts and align them to best capitalize on federal opportunities resulting from the America the Beautiful Initiative and the Bipartisan Infrastructure and Inflation Reduction Act. The engagement will include a multi-year contract subject to annual renewal, between October 2022 and June 2026.

The following timeline and process will be utilized to identify a preferred consultant(s) or consultant team:

- **October 13:** Request for Proposal released. Interested parties are asked to [register](#) to attend an informational webinar.
- **October 27 at 9 am:** Pre-submittal webinar
- **November 17:** Proposals due to dzimmerer@goco.org by 5 p.m. MST.
- **November 29:** Screening of responses completed, identification of and instructions to finalists for interviews.
- **December 12-13:** Finalist interviews to be held at GOCO’s office in Denver.
- **December 19:** Target decision date

Please direct any inquiries regarding this document or the selection process to Dan Zimmerer, GOCO’s Parks and Wildlife Partnership Manager, at dzimmerer@goco.org. All questions and answers submitted in advance of and during the webinar, along with a recording of the webinar, will be compiled and posted to the GOCO website the day after the webinar.

Background

Colorado’s natural and outdoor recreational resources face some of their greatest challenges today due to climate change, natural disasters, strains from population growth, increased demand for outdoor recreation, and inequitable outdoor access. Colorado partners continue to pursue alignment around a collaborative statewide strategy for conservation, biodiversity, outdoor recreation planning and management, and climate resilience and adaptation that directs specific planning, management, and funding priorities.

Colorado is privileged with numerous plans and initiatives aimed at advancing collaborative solutions toward today's challenges to ensure a resilient future for our state. The Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnership Initiative, established in October 2020 by Governor Polis via [Executive Order B 2020 008](#), aims to convene partners from different outdoor interests, races, cultures, ages, and sectors to identify regional priorities and strategies that balance conservation, recreation, and stewardship in consideration of the unique culture and needs of the regions' communities. CPW manages the initiative with funding support from GOCO, including up to \$5 million committed in June 2022.

Additionally, Colorado benefits from many strategic plans and tools including but not limited to the Colorado Water Plan, the Natural Working Lands Roadmap, the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, the State Wildlife Action Plan, and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Colorado EnviroScreen. The following forthcoming plans will also need to be considered: Keep It Colorado's Statewide Private Lands Conservation Plan, the Colorado Climate Preparedness Strategic Plan and Roadmap, and the Statewide Habitat Conservation and Connectivity Plan. All of these will also serve to inform and help develop the state's climate preparedness roadmap as directed by SB22-206 and in coordination with the Governor's new climate preparedness office as created by the same legislation.

From the national level, the America the Beautiful Initiative aims to support locally led and voluntary efforts to conserve, connect, and restore a meaningful proportion of lands and waters across the nation by 2030 to sustain the health of communities, ecosystems, biodiversity, and increase resilience to climate change. Its key principles, and the need to develop a meaningful way to measure the benefits of conservation in a climate impacted world, resonate here in Colorado. This will be key as we strive for inclusive and collaborative climate-informed conservation that recognizes the local economic power of conservation and restoration work and takes creative and adaptive approaches to protecting and caring for our natural resources.

The state and many others see an opportunity to leverage the power of Colorado's partnership network to develop a meaningful and proactive plan for Colorado's resources at a critical time for our state's economy, health, and well-being.

The effort will not duplicate planning that has already been done. Rather, it will link together existing and forthcoming state-level planning efforts; address gaps in strategic planning; and establish a regionally rooted, shared statewide vision and action plan for climate and population trend-informed, adaptation-forward, and biodiversity supporting conservation, stewardship, recreation, and equitable outdoor access. The plan will establish objectives to inform management decisions and priorities for the State of Colorado, funding partners, and natural resource managers across Colorado.

As described above, the goal of providing better alignment and coordination amongst state initiatives, planning and investments has been a focus and priority of Governor Polis as it provides for better efficiency, better collaboration, and better outcomes. This philosophy is at the heart of this RFP. To meet the challenges Colorado faces from the climate and biodiversity crises and the constant pressures of change, a deliberate, coordinated, efficient, and effective approach is required. The approach of this plan and the approach of SB22-206 are consistent with these aims. The broader statewide

conservation plan and metric developed here will inform the climate preparedness plan to be developed by the Governor's Office of Climate Preparedness as directed by SB22-206.

Through this planning process, we aim to balance state-level leadership and guidance by providing regional partnerships a flexible planning framework that allows latitude for the unique needs, opportunities, and cultures of local communities. The existing 10 Regional Partnerships, as well as the additional partnerships that are expected to join the effort, will be asked to utilize this framework in developing and updating their regional plans. These regional plans will then inform the larger statewide plan.

Because of GOCO's broad outdoors mission, established and growing relationships with land managers and outdoor organizations at multiple levels within the state, and flexible approach to funding and strategy building, GOCO is uniquely positioned to be a partner to accelerate the timely execution of this request leading to the development of a statewide plan. GOCO intends to update its 2020 strategic plan to incorporate the statewide vision to ensure our limited resources are invested for the highest and best use for Colorado in coordination with the state and partners.

Outcomes

At the end of the term of this contract, the following goals will be achieved:

1. Development of a framework that informs regional partnerships and supports a standard outline, common terms, and a format that aligns regional plans under the statewide plan.
2. Metrics to evaluate progress toward achieving conservation goals that yield necessary climate resilience, connectivity, and biodiversity outcomes that support related national goals.
3. A statewide plan that is informed by regional efforts and includes a vision, goals, metrics, climate roadmap, and an equity, diversity, and inclusion strategy.

Deliverables and Responsibilities

Between December 2022 and June 2026, the consultant team will work collaboratively with GOCO and the state, along with numerous stakeholder and advisory entities on the framework and plan development. At a minimum, the selected consultant will work with GOCO and the state to develop deliverables and an annual scope of work that is informed by the suggested schedule below:

Phase I – Delivered by December 2023:

- Develop a shared vision of the intended outcomes of the framework and plan.
- Develop a project management structure to include consideration of a steering committee; statewide capacity needs and resources required to support them; establishment of clear roles and responsibilities, and development of a decision-making process.
- Develop a more detailed timeline of deliverables in consultation with the state and GOCO and identify statewide capacity needs to complete interim phases of this proposal in 2023 and 2024, and the final regional partnership oriented plan by June 2026.

- Identify and research applicable existing and forthcoming statewide and regional plans to identify synergies and gaps and to elevate and integrate the priorities, goals, and metrics of relevant plans.
- Collaboratively develop a state-level framework with regional partnerships, the Colorado Outdoor Partnership (CO-OP), and other statewide partners by April 2023. The framework is intended to align regional partnership planning, language, processes, and documents with the statewide plan without duplicating effort.
- To inform draft recommended metrics, research existing literature and/or perform additional research to identify key challenges for conservation and outdoor recreation in Colorado resulting from climate change and other factors including but not limited to biodiversity loss, habitat conversion and fragmentation, sustainable and equitable public access, water resource management, disturbance such as drought and wildfire, and successful examples of current and potential future solutions to these challenges.
- Develop draft recommended metrics by which the state can evaluate progress toward achieving a conservation and biodiversity goal that yields necessary climate resilience, connectivity and biodiversity outcomes needed for the health and sustainability of Colorado's ecosystems and communities.
- Develop and implement a process whereby equity, diversity, and inclusion principles inform the framework, regional plans and the statewide plan.
- Offer recommendations for refining the Regional Partnership Initiative grant application and project review process to ensure regional partnerships are set up for success in aligning with the framework and plan.

Phase II – Delivered by December 2024:

- Further refine research findings of key challenges for conservation and outdoor recreation in Colorado resulting from climate change and other factors including but not limited to biodiversity loss, habitat conversion and fragmentation, sustainable and equitable public access, water resource management, disturbance such as drought and wildfire, and successful examples of current and potential future solutions to these challenges.
- Develop the implementation plan for a final evaluation strategy to ensure goals are identified, progress tracked, and impacts measured at regional and statewide planning levels.
- Complete interim statewide plan framework to inform federal funding opportunities, influence the work of the next phase involving regional partnership integration, and guide near-term needs and decision making with respect to statewide climate adaptation, biodiversity, and conservation efforts.
- Develop and begin execution of a statewide public engagement strategy for the statewide plan that intentionally engages diverse stakeholders including but not limited to local, state, and federal land and water managers; government agencies and working groups; private landowners, non-profit organizations; private-sector business; disadvantaged communities, Tribal Nations and other Indigenous communities; researchers, and the general public.

Phase III – Delivered by June 2026:

- Recognizing the longer-term need to incorporate this effort into the Outdoor Regional Partnerships Initiative and the longer-term development timeline of existing and new regional

partnerships, at the direction of the aforementioned RFP sponsors, collaboratively develop and or update the final Colorado Conservation, Outdoor Recreation & Climate Resilience Plan with regional partnerships, the Colorado Outdoor Partnership (CO-OP), and other statewide partners.

- Develop an internal and external communications strategy to align collaborators around shared language and communicate progress and delivery of the plan to key audiences.

Budget

This effort seeks a consultant engagement of at least three years, subject to annual review and renewal of the agreement by the parties. GOCO has a budget of up to \$1.4 million for this engagement.

Items to Address in Your Response

This effort hopes to identify a consultant team(s) with the requisite experience, skills, capacity, and mindset to partner effectively with us in support of the plan and is offering a non-mandatory, pre-submittal webinar on October 27th for interested parties to learn more about this project. This webinar will be recorded and made available for later viewing.

We recognize that one consultant will likely not possess the skillset required for the entirety of this scope of work and thus encourage partnerships at the statewide and local levels. One goal of the webinar is to provide consultants an opportunity to learn who is interested in certain aspects of the project to potentially allow partnerships to form.

Following the webinar, we request responses from interested organizations that address the following items. Please provide materials electronically, including any attachments, in PDF format.

1. **Cover Sheet**

2. **Experience:** In brief (no more than 2 pages):

- a) Share your organization's previous experience working on conservation and outdoor recreation planning initiatives with a focus on your work with public agency and/or non-profit partners in Colorado, any experience coordinating disparate efforts at a statewide scale.
- b) List the key staff on the consultant team and their backgrounds related to the work outlined in this document.

3. **Skills/Methodology:** In brief (no more than 3 pages, not including attachments):

Describe the planning tools/methods you consider most relevant to the approach, timeline, and scope/deliverables generally described. If you have a "baseline" methodology or framework, please feel free to provide succinct attachment(s) that illustrate or describe these skills.

- a) Detail how you foresee adapting those tools/methods, if at all, to the approach, timeline, and scope/deliverables generally described.
- b) If you have a relevant final work product from a past engagement to share, please include it as an attachment.

4. **Capacity:** In brief (no more than 2 pages):
Discuss your organization's capacity to address the approach, timeline, and the proposed scope/deliverables of the engagement.
 - a) Highlight if and how your organization would incorporate additional, specialized capacity (e.g., partnerships, sub-contractors) for this engagement.
5. **Roles & Responsibilities:** In brief (no more than 1 page):
Describe how you would go about delineating specific roles and responsibilities between your organization, partners on your team and the state and external partners in service of the goals of this initiative.
6. **Budget:**
Please describe your fee schedule along with the process for arriving at an estimated total budget for the engagement, given the overall scope and timeline described. Finalists will be asked to provide an estimated total budget.
7. **Final Interviews:**
Indicate any dates between December 12 and 13 that your organization CANNOT be available for interviews at GOCO's Denver office.

Notes:

1. We may also consider and entertain proposals for discrete elements of this RFP.
2. The process may be modified depending on the number and substance of responses.
3. Scope and pricing will be further refined with finalists.
4. Final selection will be based on written submissions, interview(s), and cost.
5. The aforementioned RFP sponsors reserve the right to reject any and all submissions in their sole discretion.