



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 2022 Accomplishments

Below is a summary of the work NoCo has completed since our [First Quarter 2022 report](#).

GRANT AWARD

NoCo was awarded a grant from Colorado Parks and Wildlife through its Regional Partner Initiative to continue funding our work to create a conservation and recreation vision for the NoCo region (see previous report). A significant amount of preliminary work was completed on this project in the second quarter, so this grant award means we can start on the project immediately. The first step will be to utilize the [Colorado Natural Heritage Program's CODEX tool](#) to conduct a spatial analysis of current environmental and recreation conditions in the NoCo region, including such issues as wildlife corridors, critical habitat and ecosystems, recreational hot spots, etc.

This effort will just be an inventory of what is there today. Decisions and judgments about what should be there in the future will be made after we engage the public and receive their input, which is expected to happen in summer 2023.

COMMUNICATIONS EFFORTS

- All eight NoCo agencies executed a common messaging campaign for Memorial Day weekend centered around “Know Before You Go” educational messages. We published a [joint news release](#), a [video](#) featuring each agency sharing a message, and social media graphics. A [“Know Before You Go” educational page](#) was added to the NoCo website to provide information and links to each agency.
- The website was updated to include a [news section](#) for joint news releases, articles, and videos that are published by NoCo.
- This common messaging campaign continued with a media push around the July 4th holiday in which fire safety and prevention messages were shared in a [joint news release](#) and social media graphics. Discussions are underway for a third common messaging campaign for Labor Day weekend.
- NoCo was featured in a Colorado Parks and Wildlife podcast, [Colorado Outdoors: The Podcast for Colorado Parks and Wildlife](#). NoCo agency members and Steve Coffin explained NoCo PLACES and how the coalition is working to address the challenges the front range is experiencing from increased visitation.
- NoCo co-chair Aaron Mayville and Steve Coffin briefed the Clear Creek, Gilpin, and Larimer County Boards of County Commissioners on recent developments and next steps with NoCo.



TIMED ENTRY RESERVATION SYSTEMS

NoCo submitted a letter of support to the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission in support of its proposed timed entry reservation system at Eldorado Canyon State Park. We told the Commission, “We recognize that timed entry is not a strategy that works in all areas facing overcrowding and overuse. We also recognize that these reservation systems can have impacts that must be managed, specifically raising barriers that make it even more challenging for historically underserved populations to visit public lands, and the fact that these reservation systems can create new problems in nearby areas due to displacement of visitation to neighboring lands. Nonetheless, implemented the right way and at the right location, this has been proven effective in reducing the negative impacts of increased outdoor recreation and visitation while significantly increasing the satisfaction of the visitor experience.”

The Commission [adopted the proposal](#) and the system is now underway at Eldorado Canyon State Park.

EDI AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

In June, eight members of the Executive Committee met with a group representing [Next 100 Colorado](#) to continue our dialogue around equity, diversity and inclusion in the NoCo region, and opportunities to collaborate. The discussion was focused on opportunities for funding programs or pilots; regional storytelling and visioning; affinity space/mentorship program/leadership program for land management staff across the region; and community engagement, capacity building, language translation, and youth services. These discussions will be continuing in the coming weeks.

BRIEFING REP. NEGUSE

Co-Chair Randy Wheelock and Steve Coffin met with Congressman Joe Neguse and his staff to brief him on the NoCo effort. They are very supportive, and we will continue to update them on happenings and progress.

NOCO ANNUAL RETREAT

The Executive Committee held its annual retreat on June 29. Discussion topics included the vision for NoCo over the next three to five years, the operational and budget needs to meet that vision, operational and governance procedures for the group, and more.



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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