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# Roaring Fork Outdoor Coalition Vision Framework

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## **Building Capacity and Strengthening Partnerships**

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The following report identifies the structure and capacity-building efforts of the Roaring Fork Outdoor Coalition and provides an informed framework to guide the next steps for the Coalition.

Regional Partnerships, of which the Roaring Fork Outdoor Coalition is a part, are funded in part or entirely through the Regional Partnerships Initiative Grant Program, a collaboration between Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) and CPW.

**March 2024**

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## Who We Are

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The Roaring Fork Outdoor Coalition is a cross-jurisdictional collaboration among state, federal and local governments, as well as community members, local organizations and visitors.

## Mission

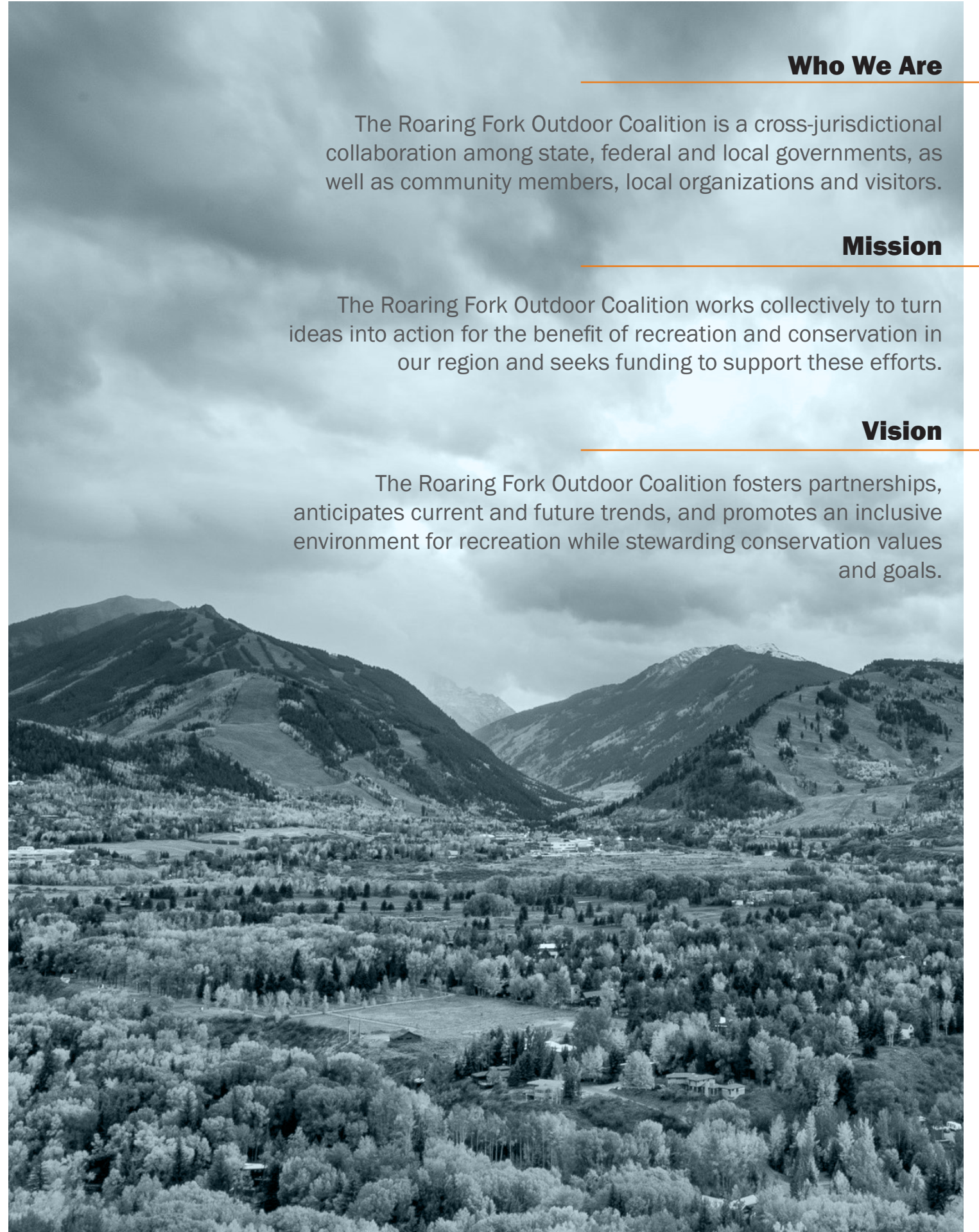
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The Roaring Fork Outdoor Coalition works collectively to turn ideas into action for the benefit of recreation and conservation in our region and seeks funding to support these efforts.

## Vision

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The Roaring Fork Outdoor Coalition fosters partnerships, anticipates current and future trends, and promotes an inclusive environment for recreation while stewarding conservation values and goals.

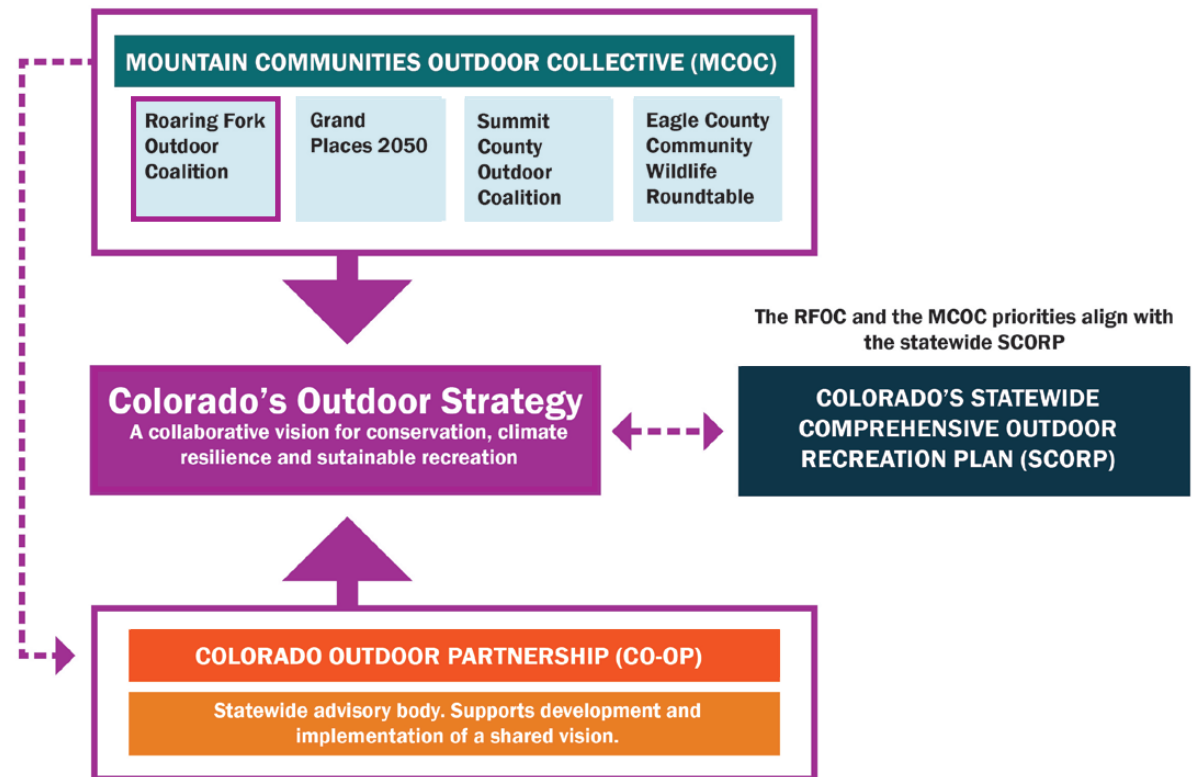


# Call to Action

Governor Jared Polis signed an [Executive Order](#) in 2020 calling for collaboration among broad interests to advance a state-level vision for balancing recreation and conservation and to ensure equitable and sustainable access to outdoor recreation. The Regional Partnerships Initiative (RPI) was created to ensure that our state remains a world-class outdoor destination while preserving our land, water, wildlife and quality of life. Collectively, Regional Partnerships learn from and elevate community-level perspectives, values, and priorities to inform planning and projects across the state.

In 2021, population and tourism growth in the Roaring Fork Valley increased the pressure on our outdoor spaces and recreational facilities, making it clear that proactive and collaborative planning for recreation and conservation is needed. As resource managers, we are at a critical juncture to ensure that the qualities that draw us to popular recreation areas can be sustained, and the impact of our presence within these landscapes is understood and managed.

To achieve this goal, the Roaring Fork Outdoor Coalition (RFOC) was formed. The RFOC comprises federal, state, and local government land managers who specialize in wildlife, recreation planning and land management. The Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnerships partially fund this group. The RFOC collaborates with Eagle, Summit and Grand counties through the Mountain Communities Outdoor Collective (MCOC). This collective provides a platform to coordinate recreation and conservation priorities across the mountain region. The RFOC, together with all of other regional partnerships across the state, informs Colorado's Outdoor Strategy and participates on the state-level Colorado Outdoor Partnership (CO-OP). The RFOC is committed to upholding [Colorado's Outdoor Principles](#) while making decisions, prioritizing goals and managing resources within the regional context.



[Click here or on the boxes above](#) to learn more about Colorado's Outdoor Regional Partnership Initiative.

# Roaring Fork Outdoor Coalition

The Maroon Bells. Elk Mountain 14ers. IMBA Gold Level trails that define a top spot for mountain biking in Colorado. "Gold medal" waters. These are just some of the many attractions within the small but mighty Roaring Fork Watershed. The region's growing popularity threatens to overwhelm the very attributes that make it special. The surrounding White River National Forest is the most heavily used National Forest with more than 18 million annual visitors. Land managers in various agencies and organizations are at capacity responding to growing recreational pressure at portals within their respective jurisdictions.

The Coalition may be in its early stages, but it has accumulated the necessary data to proactively identify and respond to the issues that emerge between recreation interests and conservation needs.

The Roaring Fork Watershed is fortunate to already have real data related to conservation needs and priorities. The Watershed Biodiversity Initiative (WBI) engaged many of the Coalition partners to create mapping tools that identify priority areas for landscape connectivity, resilience and conservation in our region. It has incorporated data including but not limited to: forage, quality, habitat quality, CPW species activity maps, biodiversity hotspots, CNHP element occurrences, wetland/riparian maps, landscape disturbance, permeability analyses, irrigated/working lands and climate resilience. The Coalition will use the WBI map as a transparent, science-based way to develop and evaluate priorities brought to the table by partners and stakeholders.

In summer 2022, RFOC collaborated with Utah State University's Recreation Ecology Lab to begin studying recreation visitation at local trailheads. Surveys at five trailheads yielded responses from almost 350 people, both residents and visitors. RFOC expanded this study in summer 2023 to 10 sites and met its goal of connecting with at least 1,000 visitors.

Supported by an initial \$75,000 RPI grant, the Coalition has spent 2023 engaging with nearly 200 individuals representing over 55 local community organizations and partners to develop a vision and shared values that synergize recreation and conservation in the Roaring Fork Watershed.

## Coalition Core Values:

The following core values or principle beliefs, from which the Coalition operates, will support decision-making for all representatives of the RFOC.



We are collaborative, long-standing partners.



We are community-oriented and value relationships.



We believe in access for all and a range of experiences.



We are driven by action for the future generations.



We protect our natural resources and environment.



We value respect for others and nature.



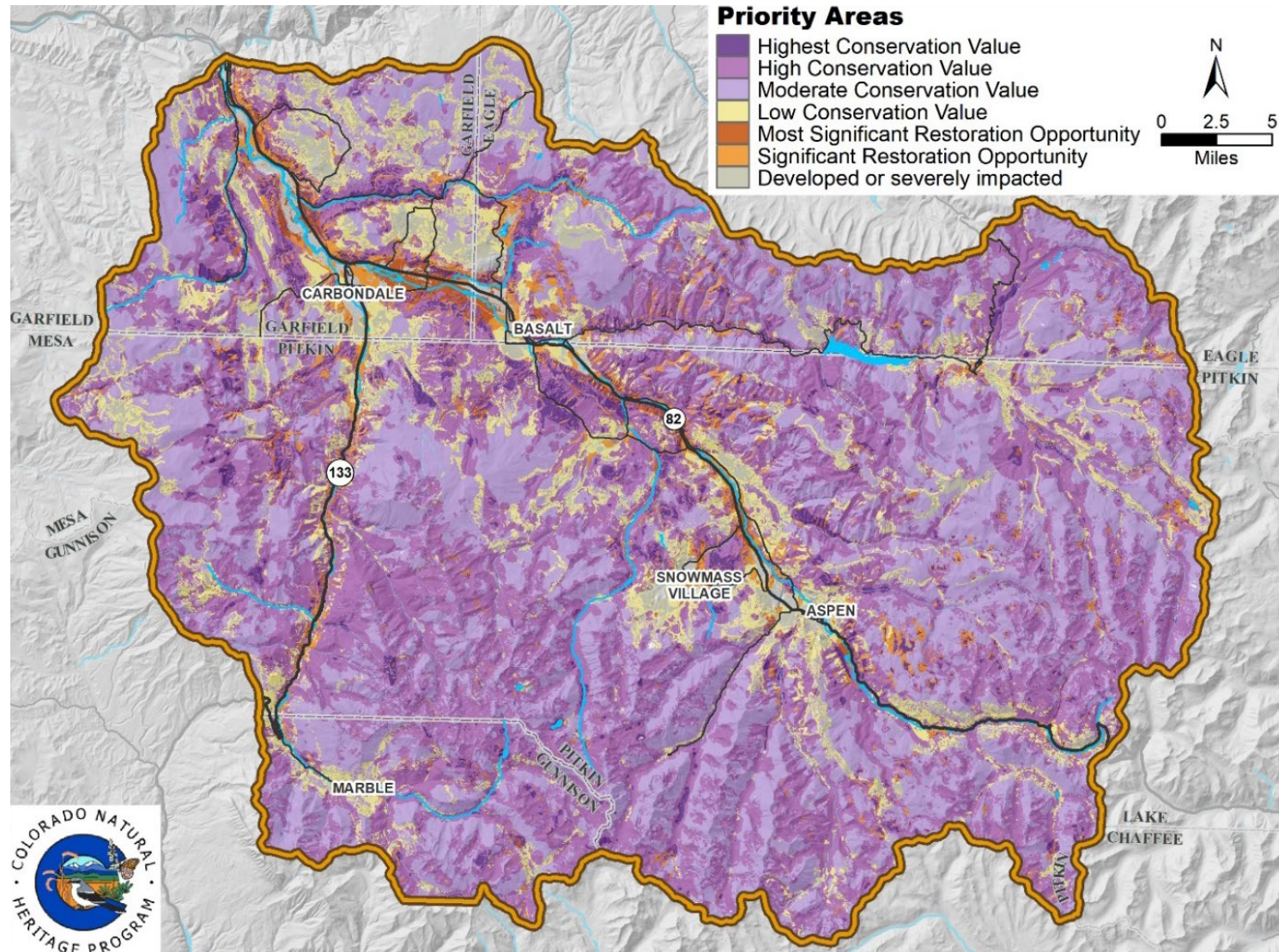
The RFOC logo was developed to serve as an identifier and visual representation for the Coalition. Rather than represent the existing logos of the Coalition partner organizations, the RFOC logo is representative of the region and goals of this collaborative group.

[Click Here](#) to view the Roaring Fork Outdoor Coalition Charter.

## CONSERVATION DATA

Roaring Fork Watershed Biodiversity and Connectivity Study, Watershed Biodiversity Initiative (2022)

The Roaring Fork Watershed Biodiversity Study utilized data collected from the field between 2019 and 2021, looking at both habitat quality and conservation priority, to develop a well-informed map of conservation and restoration priorities within the watershed.



## RECREATION DATA

Visitor Use and Experience Assessment, Utah State University

### 14 Sample Sites

1,212 Surveys

829 GPS Tracks of Visitors

Understanding visitation at the site level informs managing recreation at the landscape level. Each trailhead intercept location was categorized on a Site Typology Spectrum:

#### Primitive

Avalanche Creek  
Capitol Creek  
Snowmass Lake

#### Semi-Primitive

American Lake  
Lower Lost Man  
Thomas Lakes  
Upper Lost Man

#### Concentrated

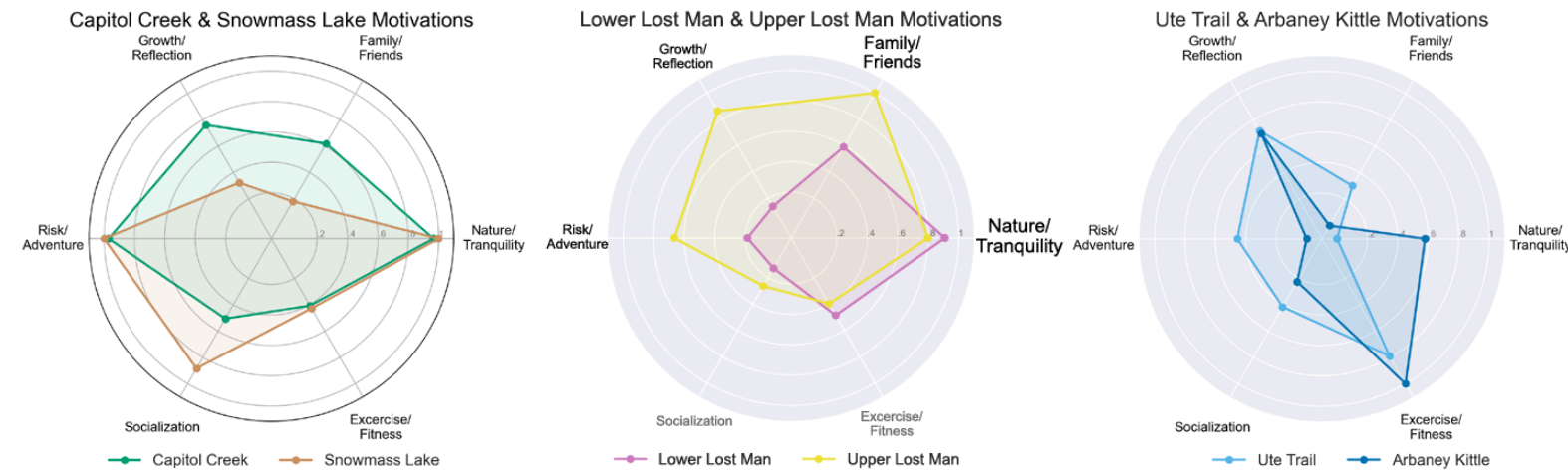
Arbaney Kittle  
Glassier Open Space  
South Rim Trail  
Tom Blake Trail

#### Urban Proximate

Grottos Day Use Area  
Smuggler Mountain  
Ute Trail

### Visitor Motivations:

The motivations for each study location were graphed in relation to the site typologies to reveal the following:



### Crowding evaluations and coping behaviors:

Primitive: Infrequent reports of conflict with other visitors or of unsafe conditions. Generally positive evaluations of interactions with other visitors. Higher reports of using less busy trails, planning for less busy times of day and avoiding areas with reservations.

Urban Proximate: Very few reports that other visitors impacted recreation experience. Infrequent reports of conflict with other visitors or of unsafe conditions. Few strong signals of coping behaviors.

### Use Estimation

#### Snowmass Lake

- Steady, low use through morning to mid-afternoon

#### South Rim Trail

- Variable use through day
- Peak use in mid-morning

#### Arbaney Kittle

- Moderate use in mornings
- Peak use in afternoons

### “Big Picture” Recommendations:

The following Big Ideas were identified for moving forward with conserving biodiversity in the Roaring Fork Watershed:

- “Stitching it back together.” Reconnect large landscapes that have been fragmented in the Watershed.
- Guide development and land conservation decisions to avoid additional fragmentation and maintain connectivity among swaths of large, intact landscapes.
- Protect large, isolated landscapes for bighorn sheep.
- “Rewet the sponge.” Restore and protect wetlands throughout the Watershed.

[Click Here](#) to learn more about the Roaring Fork Watershed Biodiversity and Connectivity Study.

### Key Takeaways

- Slightly more ethnic diversity at urban proximate locations.
- Evaluations of crowding are more closely related to site facilities rather than negative interactions with other visitors.
- Reported conflict is not prevalent across sites or at any one particular site.
- A substantial number of visitors report some coping behaviors.

[Click Here](#) to learn more about the Visitor Use and Experience Assessment.

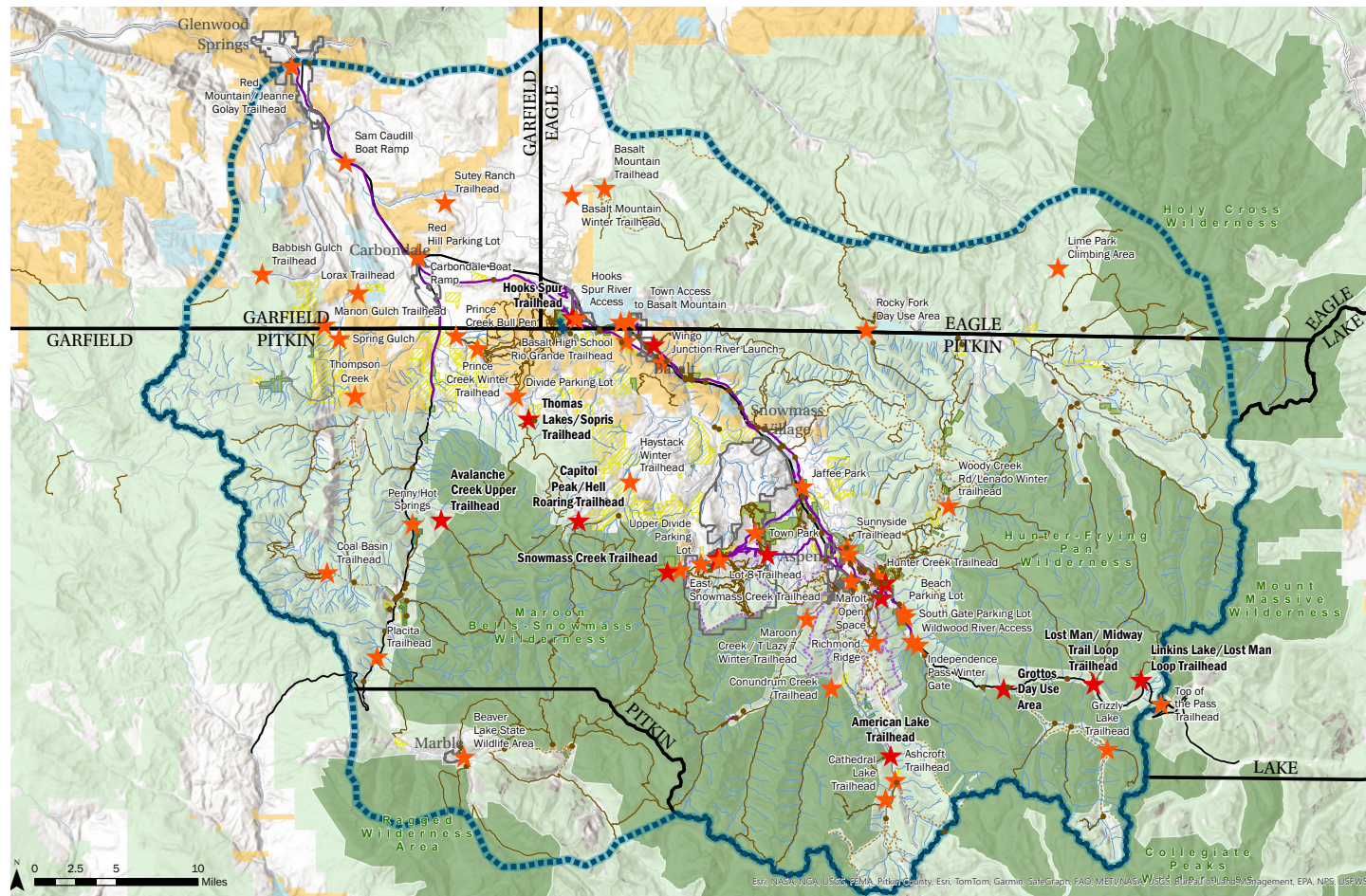
# Coalition Boundary Map

# Planning Process

The RFOC encompasses the Roaring Fork Watershed, located on Colorado’s Western Slope. The Roaring Fork Watershed begins at the headwaters atop the Continental Divide and runs to the confluence of the Colorado River in Glenwood Springs, and includes the Crystal River and Fryingpan tributaries. The watershed includes lands within Eagle County, Pitkin County, Garfield County and Gunnison County, and the municipalities of Aspen, Snowmass Village, Basalt, El Jebel, Carbondale and Glenwood Springs, and the unincorporated towns of Marble, Redstone and Meredith.

|  |   |   |  |                                     |
|--|---|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| <b>43,000</b><br>Population                        | <b>4,817 acres</b><br>Bureau of Land Management | <b>25 acres</b><br>City of Glenwood Springs | <b>826 acres</b><br>City of Aspen            | <b>6,216 acres</b><br>Pitkin County |
| <b>1,454 sq miles</b><br>Land Cover                | <b>652,895 acres</b><br>US Forest Service       | <b>30 acres</b><br>Town of Carbondale       | <b>859 acres</b><br>Town of Snowmass Village | <b>1,305 acres</b><br>Others        |
| <b>73% of watershed</b><br>Public / Protected Area | <b>5,910 acres</b><br>State of Colorado         | <b>94 acres</b><br>Town of Basalt           | <b>133 acres</b><br>Eagle County             |                                     |

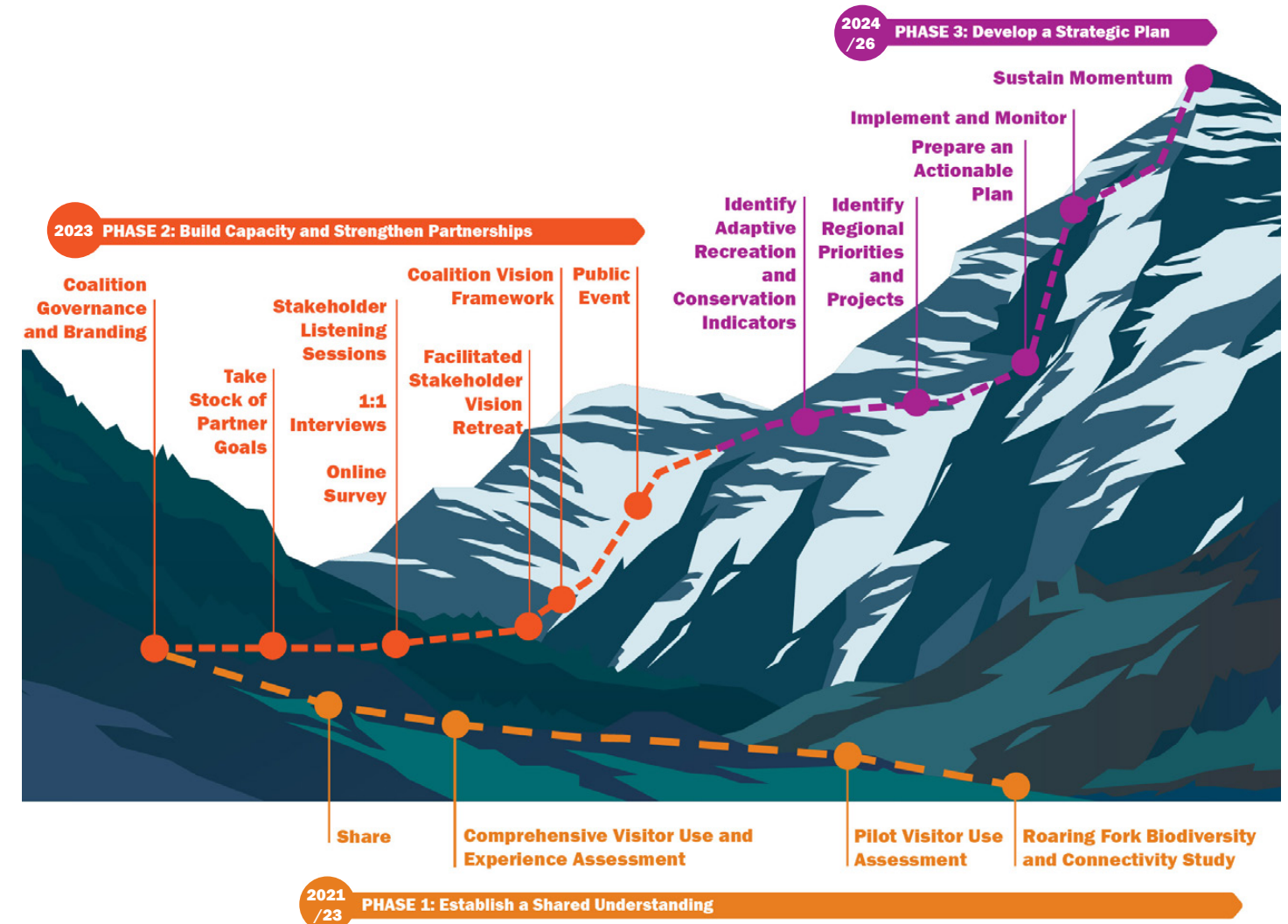
\*the above acreages represent and estimate as of 2024.



| Legend                      |                          |                       |       |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------|
| Roaring Fork Watershed      | Paved Path               | Nature Preserve       | BLM   |
| 2024 Visitor Analysis Site  | Recreational Road        | Conservation Easement | USFS  |
| Field Intercept Survey Site | Urban Road               | Park                  | State |
| Recreation Access Point     | Ski Area Boundary        | Open Space            |       |
| Trail                       | Pitkin County Open Space | Wilderness Area       |       |

The planning process for the establishment and future operations of the Roaring Fork Coalition was broken into three phases. Each phase of the planning process builds upon the previous.

- 2021 /23 Phase 1: Establish a Shared Understanding**  
The first phase of work explored current conditions for recreation and conservation in the Roaring Fork Watershed. This included developing the Visitor Use and Experience Assessment in collaboration with Utah State University, and the Roaring Fork Biodiversity and Connectivity Study in collaboration with the Watershed Biodiversity Initiative.
- 2023 Phase 2: Build Capacity and Strengthen Partnerships**  
This phase of planning will create consensus and provide an introduction to the structure of the Coalition, the goals and vision for how the Coalition will operate in the future, and engage local partners and subject matter experts to create a shared understanding of the tensions and opportunities that exist within the Roaring Fork Watershed.
- 2024 /26 Phase 3: Develop a Strategic Plan**  
The previous phases will set the foundation for the Coalition to collectively develop a strategic plan for recreation and conservation in the Roaring Fork Watershed.



# Coalition Structure and Partnerships

The Coalition is a group of Roaring Fork Watershed land managers, cities, towns and counties. The Coalition is informed by the interests of community county and municipal boards, expert advisors, residents and visitors, and is supported by community collaborators. Currently sponsored by Pitkin County Open Space and Trails, representation on the Coalition is as follows:

## Coalition Partners:

### Gary Tennenbaum

Director, Pitkin County Open Space and Trails

### Jessie Young

Planning and Outreach Manager, Pitkin County Open Space and Trails

### Carly O'Connell

Senior Planner and Landscape Architect, Pitkin County Open Space and Trails, Coalition Manager

### Liza Mitchell

Natural Resource Planner and Ecologist, Pitkin County Open Space and Trails

### Andrew Knapp

County Engineer, Pitkin County

### Marcia Gilles

Director, Eagle County Open Space and Natural Resources

### Emily Seddon

Natural Resource Planner, Eagle County Open Space and Natural Resources

### Austin Weiss

Parks and Recreation Director, City of Aspen

### Matt Kuhn

Parks and Open Space Director, City of Aspen

### John Spiess

Open Space and Natural Resource Manager, City of Aspen

### Andy Worline

Recreation Director, Town of Snowmass Village

### Jakob Moe

Parks and Trails Manager, Town of Snowmass Village

### Catherine Christoff

Town Engineer, Town of Basalt

### Chad Smith

Trails and Open Space Supervisor, City of Glenwood Springs

### Daniel Roper

Parks Superintendent, City of Glenwood Springs

### Kevin Warner

District Ranger, White River National Forest

### Kendra Head

Developed/Dispersed Recreation Manager, White River National Forest

### Hillary Boyd

Assistant Field Manager, Bureau of Land Management

### Alan Czepinski

Outdoor Recreation Planner, Bureau of Land Management

### Nick Jaramillo

Wildlife Biologist, Bureau of Land Management

### Matt Yamashita

Area Wildlife Manager, Colorado Parks and Wildlife

### Dani Newman

Land Use Specialist, Colorado Parks and Wildlife

## COLLABORATORS

2023 Listening sessions  
2023/24 Vision symposium  
(Future) Work group meetings

## RESIDENTS and VISITORS

2022/23 Field intercept surveys  
(Future) Public survey  
(Future) Outreach events  
(Future) Public Open House

## PARTNERS

US Forest Service  
Bureau of Land Management  
Colorado Parks and Wildlife  
Pitkin County Open Space and Trails  
Eagle County Open Space and Natural Resources  
Town of Snowmass Village  
City of Aspen  
Town of Basalt  
City of Glenwood Springs

## ADVISORS

Watershed Biodiversity Initiative  
Utah State Recreation Ecology Lab  
(Future) Outdoor equity expert

## DECISION-MAKING BOARDS

Pitkin County Board of County Commissioners, Open Space and Trails Board  
Aspen City Council, City of Aspen Open Space and Trails Board  
Town of Snowmass Village Parks, Open Space, Trails and Recreation Committee  
Town of Basalt Parks, Open Space, Trails and Recreation Committee  
Eagle County Mid-Valley Trails Committee

## Invited Community Collaborators:

10th Mountain Huts  
Aspen Center for Environmental Studies  
American Rivers  
American Whitewater  
Ascendigo  
Aspen Ambulance District  
Aspen Chamber Resort Association  
Aspen Community Foundation  
Aspen Country Day School  
Aspen Cycling Club  
Aspen Expeditions  
Aspen Fire Protection District  
Aspen Historical Society  
Aspen Indigenous Foundation  
Aspen School District  
Aspen Skiing Company  
Aspen Snowmass Nordic Council  
Aspen Valley Land Trust  
Aspen Valley Ski and Snowboard Club  
Aspen Youth Center  
Audubon Society  
Avalanche Outfitters  
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers  
Basalt Chamber  
Bookcliff, Mount Sopris, Southside  
Conservation Districts  
Braun Huts  
Colorado Avalanche Information Center  
Carbondale Fire Protection District  
Cattlemen's Association  
City of Aspen Community Development  
City of Aspen Engineering Department  
City of Aspen Police  
Coal Basin Ranch  
Colorado Mountain College  
Colorado River Water Conservation District  
Colorado Rocky Mountain School  
Colorado Tourism Office/Carbondale Tourism

Conservation Colorado  
Colorado Parks and Wildlife  
Cripple Creek / Basalt Bike and Ski  
Crystal Echo Newspaper  
Crystal River Riparian working Group  
CSU Extension - Eagle County  
CSU Extension - Garfield County  
Crystal Valley Environmental Protection Association  
Dooley Creek Farms  
Eagle County  
Elk Mountain Expeditions  
English in Action  
Farm Collaborative  
Forest Conservancy  
Holy Cross Cattlemen's Association  
Independence Pass Foundation  
Independence Pass Outfitting Company  
Independence Run and Hike  
Indigenous Awareness  
Lotic Hydrological  
MANAUS  
Marigold Livestock  
Middle Colorado Watershed Council  
Mount Sopris Nordic Council  
Mount Sopris Rec Riders  
Mid Valley Trails Committee  
Mountain Rescue Aspen  
Mountain Voices Project  
Mule Deer Foundation  
National Forest Foundation  
Northern Ute tribal members  
Pitkin Area Co-Responder Team (PACT)  
Pitkin County Community Development  
Pitkin County Engineering Department  
Pitkin County Healthy Rivers  
Pitkin County Regional Emergency Dispatch Center

Pitkin County Sheriff  
Protegete @ Conservation Colorado  
Redstone Community Association  
Roaring Fork Transportation Authority  
Roaring Fork Conservancy  
Roaring Fork Fire Rescue  
Roaring Fork Fishing Guide Alliance  
Roaring Fork Valley Horse Council  
Roaring Fork Mountain Bike Association  
Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers  
Roaring Fork Safe Passages  
Roaring Fork School Districts  
Rock Bottom Ranch  
Rocky Mountain Bighorn Society  
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation  
Rocky Mountain Farmers Union  
Roaring Fork Farmers and Ranchers  
RWAPA  
Seed Peace / Farm Collaborative  
Sierra Club  
Stepping Stones  
T Lazy 7  
Town of Basalt Community Development  
Town of Basalt Engineering Department  
Town of Basalt Police  
Town of Snowmass Village Community Development  
Town of Snowmass Village Police  
Town of Snowmass Village Tourism  
Trout Unlimited  
Two Roots Farm  
Uproot Colorado  
Crystal River Riparian Working Group  
Ute Mountaineer  
Valley Settlement  
Voces Unidas de las Montañas  
Watershed Biodiversity Initiative  
Wilderness Workshop



# Build Capacity and Strengthen Partnerships

The Coalition sought to gain consensus through three methods of engagement with the RFOC, local partners, subject-matter experts, and the broader community: Coalition Meetings, Listening Sessions and the Coalition Symposium. The Coalition enlisted the support of Design Workshop to provide skilled, neutral facilitation of the three outreach methods. Summaries of each engagement method follow.

## COALITION MEETINGS

June 2023 - February 2024

The facilitator, Design Workshop, facilitated four meetings of the Coalition partners throughout the process to reflect on and refine feedback from the broader community. These meetings established both the internal charter of the RFOC partners and defined the outcomes for this Framework Plan.

**4**  
Coalition Meetings

**17**  
Coalition Land Management Partners

## LISTENING SESSIONS

August 2023 - November 2023

The RFOC conducted a series of 10 listening sessions between August 29th and 31st, 2023, as part of its efforts to develop a Recreation and Conservation Plan. These sessions invited subject-matter experts from the upper Roaring Fork Watershed to share their insights on key challenges and opportunities related to conservation and recreation. The feedback gathered from these sessions has been used to shape the Coalition's framework and guide its future work. In addition to the initial 10 sessions, further interviews were conducted to ensure a broad range of perspectives and participation.

**11** sessions

**200** subject-matter experts invited

**120** participants

**6** 1:1 interviews

**55** organizations represented

## COALITION SYMPOSIUM

January 2024

After the listening sessions, the RFOC organized a Symposium in January 2024. The main purpose of the Symposium was to gather land managers and participants for further discussions on conservation and recreation trends, challenges and opportunities, and to brainstorm ideas for the future.

**Approx. 78** participants

**Approx. 55** organizations

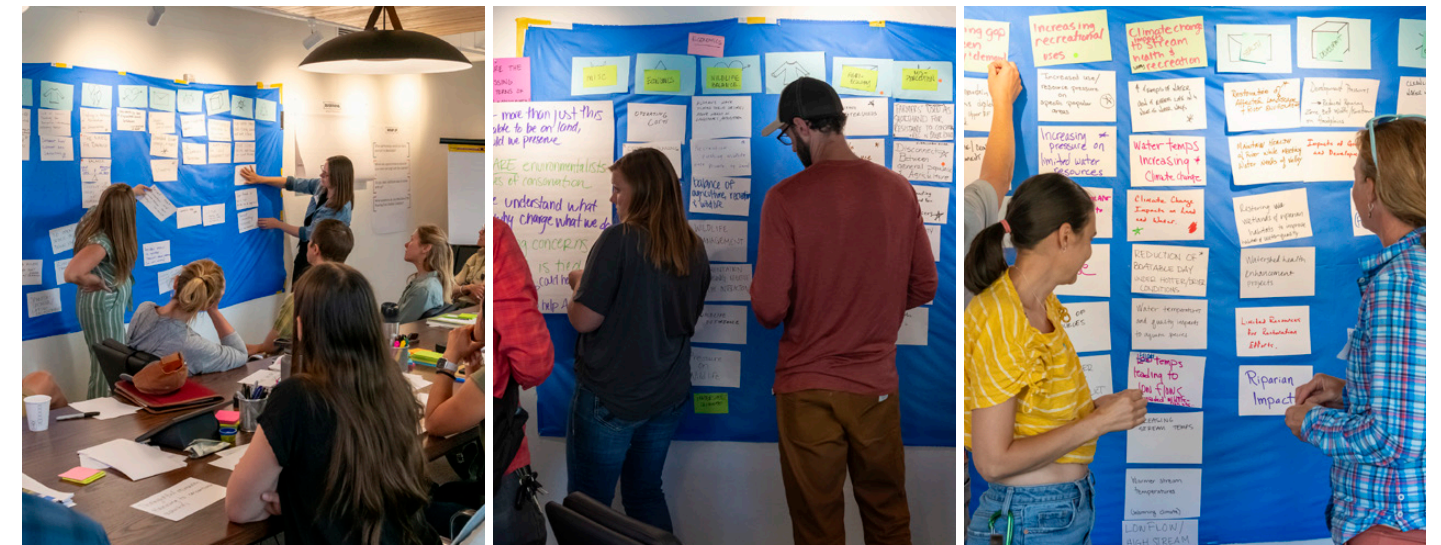
**27** locations identified for future study

# Listening Sessions

**A series of listening sessions took place in August 2023 with the goal of understanding the diverse perspectives and experiences that organizations and community members face in terms of recreation and conservation.**

Sessions focused conversations on the topics of Education / Programming, Community, Land Use and Planning, Tourism Business / Economy, Conservation /Wildlife, Recreation, Water, Emergency Response, Sporting and Outdoors Persons, and Agriculture.

The next pages, 14-17, contain the findings of the Listening Sessions. These sessions covered the most pressing issues facing recreation and conservation, top challenges and opportunities. A matrix organizes these discussion topics from the sessions in which the topic was raised and identifies the overlapping and divergent ideas discussed during each listening session. From this information, a SWOT analysis identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. From these discussions, three tensions were identified that exist between recreation and conservation in the Roaring Fork Watershed.



While each listening session followed the same agenda, sometimes there was deviation from the agenda. Each listening session was focused on a "blue wall" exercise where participants were asked to provide input on the biggest challenges and opportunities facing the Roaring Fork Watershed today.

## Listening Session Findings

Participants in all listening sessions were asked the same question: "What are the most pressing issues facing the Roaring Fork Valley in terms of recreation and conservation?" The discussions were analyzed to understand the priorities for the RFOC. The identified issues were grouped into categories as follows:

- |                           |                                |                           |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Capacity                | 6 Climate Change + Resiliency  | 11 Safety                 |
| 2 Education + Stewardship | 7 Wildlife + Habitat           | 12 Enforcement            |
| 3 Growth + Development    | 8 Financial Considerations     | 13 Water-Based Recreation |
| 4 Access + Equity         | 9 Multiple Jurisdictions       | 14 Other                  |
| 5 User Groups             | 10 Management + Implementation |                           |

Findings

# LISTENING SESSION FINDINGS

Discussion Findings - Key Challenges and Opportunities

## Challenges

The following key challenges emerged from the listening sessions, representing themes that overlapped across different conversations.

**Volume Pressure and Impacts:** Outdoor recreation is becoming more popular, leading to increased use and overcrowding in ecologically important areas. Therefore, it will be important to proactively manage usage and address the environmental impact to handle the growing number of users.

**Stewardship and Education/Safety:** Insufficient education and lack of mentorship and stewardship are top concerns for land managers, conservation and recreation organizations, and public safety professionals. Increasing education about public land stewardship and encouraging active participation can ensure best management practices. Pre-planning and education are also needed for safety, as inexperienced users may cause harm due to human or animal behavior.

**Equitable Access/Language Barriers:** Our valley is home to a diverse community. However, according to USU's visitation study, only 3% of the trail users intercepted at trailheads were Spanish speakers, which is not in line with the demographics of our valley. This indicates a critical need to make sure that our trails and recreational spaces are accessible and welcoming to all members of our community.

**Regional Growth and Climate Change:** Changes within the region, such as population growth, have an impact on our recreational assets. Larger changes, such as climate change, also affect both the ecosystems and how people use recreational assets.

**Connectivity and Wildlife Balance:** Habitat fragmentation and loss due to development and recreation creates stress on wildlife. Ensuring connectivity of habitats, including rivers and land areas, will sustain ecosystems in the valley for the future.

**Working in Silos and Funding:** It is important to keep in mind that the boundaries of jurisdictional areas do not always align with the conservation and recreational needs of the region. Therefore, it is critical to work together and make sure that the present initiatives, policies and programs are coordinated, taking a comprehensive approach to the entire watershed.

**Use, Etiquette and Conflict:** Different user groups have varying equipment and motivations, leading to expectations of different experiences and potential conflicts over access to areas. Therefore, it's important to assess recreation needs across the watershed and address any misperceptions about recreation use and conservation needs.

## Opportunities

The following are the opportunities identified through the listening sessions, which became the foundation of the guideposts explored at the symposium.

**Increase Education, Stewardship and Outreach:** The RFOC could provide alignment for education and programs to increase understanding and safety in the outdoors and increase the sense of comfort and participation in land stewardship.

**Increase Diversity and Access:** The RFOC could support initiatives and ensure consistency to promote access to the outdoors, which may include signage, universal access or transportation access.

**Broaden Partnerships - Coordinated Land Use Management:** The RFOC is well situated to align

partners - from local municipalities, community organization and state and federal land managers - to work together and provide more coordinated efforts. These partnerships could bridge the "silos" to better manage natural resources, and the interconnectedness of recreation and conservation priorities.

**Manage Resources and Responsible Growth:** Growth in the valley puts pressure on many different systems, and the RFOC can look "big picture" to align management for a more balanced decision-making that considers the needs of the people, visitors, plants and animals that call this region home.

| Issues Identified   | Education / Programming | Community | Planning / Land Use | Tourism / Business / Economy | Conservation / Wildlife | Recreation | Water | Emergency Response / Public Safety | Sportspersons / Outfitters / Hunting | Agriculture |
|---|-------------------------|-----------|---------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|-------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>CAPACITY (9/10)</b><br>Volume/Pressure Impact, Capacity, Increasing Recreational Uses, Pressures to Handle Bigger Numbers, Recreation Impacts, Etiquette / Crowding        | X                       | X         | X                   | X                            | X                       | X          | X     | X                                  | X                                    |             |
| <b>EDUCATION + STEWARDSHIP (8/10)</b><br>Stewardship , Education, Education Access, Institutional Knowledge, Understanding the Natural Environment (Bad Human Behaviors)      | X                       | X         |                     | X                            | X                       |            | X     | X                                  | X                                    | X           |
| <b>GROWTH + DEVELOPMENT (8/10)</b><br>Development, Sustainability of Human Resources, Adapting to Trends + Change, Responsible Growth, Housing                                | X                       |           |                     | X                            | X                       | X          | X     | X                                  | X                                    | X           |
| <b>ACCESS + EQUITY (7/10)</b><br>Access & Equity & Opportunity, Spanish Language Barriers, Equity in the Outdoors, DEI, Equality, Competing Priorities, Planning for Everyone | X                       | X         | X                   | X                            | X                       | X          |       | X                                  |                                      |             |
| <b>USER GROUPS (7/10)</b><br>User Group Experiences, Conflicts, Misperceptions, User Behavior   |                         |           | X                   | X                            | X                       | X          | X     |                                    | X                                    | X           |
| <b>CLIMATE CHANGE + RESILIENCY (6/10)</b><br>Climate Change, Climate Resiliency, Climate Change Impacts to Stream Health and Recreation, Agri-Ecology                         | X                       |           | X                   | X                            | X                       |            | X     |                                    |                                      | X           |
| <b>WILDLIFE + HABITAT (5/10)</b><br>Habitat Conservation & Connectivity, Impacts to Biodiversity from Habitat Loss, Wildlife Balance, Balance                                 |                         |           | X                   | X                            | X                       | X          |       |                                    |                                      | X           |
| <b>FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS (5/10)</b><br>Costs, Funding & Preservation, Economics, Lessees/ Permit Holders   |                         | X         | X                   |                              |                         | X          | X     |                                    |                                      | X           |
| <b>MULTIPLE JURISDICTIONS (4/10)</b><br>Jurisdictional, Coordinated Land Use & Management   | X                       |           | X                   | X                            |                         |            |       |                                    | X                                    |             |
| <b>MANAGEMENT + IMPLEMENTATION (3/10)</b><br>Informed Management, Holistic / Science-Based Planning and Implementation, Regional Comprehensive Planning                       |                         |           | X                   |                              | X                       | X          |       |                                    |                                      |             |
| <b>SAFETY (3/10)</b>  |                         |           |                     | X                            |                         |            | X     | X                                  |                                      |             |
| <b>ENFORCEMENT (2/10)</b><br>Enforcement, Lack of Education / Compliance, Regulation  |                         |           |                     |                              | X                       |            |       |                                    | X                                    |             |
| <b>WATER-BASED RECREATION (2/10)</b><br>River Access, Water Recreation  |                         |           |                     |                              |                         | X          | X     |                                    |                                      |             |
| <b>OTHER (1/10)</b>   |                         |           |                     |                              |                         |            |       |                                    |                                      |             |
| Tourism   |                         |           |                     | X                            |                         |            |       |                                    |                                      |             |
| Advocacy  |                         | X         |                     |                              |                         |            |       |                                    |                                      |             |
| Culturally Relevant Programming   |                         | X         |                     |                              |                         |            |       |                                    |                                      |             |
| Riparian Health   |                         |           |                     |                              |                         |            | X     |                                    |                                      |             |
| Water Quantity & Quality  |                         |           |                     |                              |                         |            | X     |                                    |                                      |             |
| Water Consumption   |                         |           |                     |                              |                         |            | X     |                                    |                                      |             |

A SWOT (Strength / Weakness / Opportunity / Threat) Analysis is a tool that can help to describe and understand issues and opportunities. A strength or a weakness is related to current conditions, and an opportunity or a threat is something that could happen. Often these overlap, where a weakness is also an opportunity to build upon. The following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were synthesized following the Listening Sessions.

**Current Condition**

**What are Strengths within the RFV?**

- Cross-jurisdictional Participation
- Stewardship
- Community Culture (Outdoor Ethic)
- Engaged Partners
- International Destination
- Extensive Recreation Opportunities
- Informed Regional Experts

**What are Weaknesses within the RFV?**

- Enforcement of Regulations
- Non-cohesive Regulations on Key Issues / Use Patterns
- Access + Equity for Under-represented Communities
- Language Barriers
- Funding Challenges
- Crowding
- Staffing and Capacity
- Outreach Effectiveness
- Sustaining Momentum in Efforts
- Elected Support
- Shared Initiatives

**In The Future**

**What are Opportunities within the RFV?**

- Cross-jurisdictional Collaboration
- Engagement with Under-represented Communities
- Environmental Education
- Mentorship
- Habitat Restoration + Connectivity
- Cohesive + Enforced Regulations
- Coordinated Land-use + Management
- Actionable / Strategic Planning
- Public Engagement
- Leveraging Resources

**What are Threats within the RFV?**

- Changing Climate
- Environmental Issues
- Loss of Habitat
- Warming Water Temperatures
- Lack of Etiquette / Bad Behavior
- Lack of Knowledge Promoting Unsafe Recreation
- Rising Real Estate Values
- Land Availability
- Loss of Open Space

The Listening Sessions raised points of tension between recreation and conservation. These topics were explored in a Coalition meeting with the following findings:

**Tension between conservation and recreation in the Roaring Fork Valley.**

**Need for Balance:** Recreation management should begin by considering the entire watershed area before focusing on specific locations. It is important to recognize that the nature of recreational use and its impacts can vary from site to site. By considering the entire system, we can develop actionable strategies to achieve a balance that acknowledges varying levels of impact in different areas.

**Education on “Why”:** The data collected by the RFOC could be shared with users, both locals and visitors, to explain the importance of why. Share how we are promoting best practices for safe recreation and the benefit of preserving ecosystems. Educate users on the rules and regulations of various outdoor spaces.

**Coexistence of Recreation and Conservation:** Recreation and conservation goals can contradict each other. Promote strategic goals and initiatives that create a balance between the two.

**Understanding Trends:** Research from USU and other data can support understanding use trends, and how resources are best utilized to manage these spaces effectively.

**Tension between accommodating increasing recreation and recreation trends and limiting recreation use and access.**

**Need for Proactive Response:** Land managers are often reactive to changing conditions and pressures in natural areas due to funding and capacity. Increased collaboration between management agencies and joint-funding pursuits may help managers to be proactive and cohesive in their response to changing trends.

**Education Framing:** Promote positive and encouraging messaging to users about best practices in outdoor spaces.

**Understand the Reservation System:** Understand if reservation systems are obtaining the intended results. A full understanding is needed to determine if the use is limited or dispersed, if visitors and locals are helped or hindered by reservation systems, and if reservation and permit systems push users to areas without systems in place.

**The need for equitable and inclusive access to the outdoors for diverse communities within the Roaring Fork Valley.**

**Capacity:** Volume and impacts is a better descriptor of the challenges that are applied to both a regional and local level of recreation and conservation, as the trends differ at the various scales. When describing the “user experience” of recreation, strict numbers and scientific values alone are not enough to describe the experience. Emotions and the individual experience must be considered, which will likely vary for the different user groups that are experiencing each place.

**Barriers are Multifaceted:** Understand that barriers to recreation and conservation are often multifaceted. Vulnerable populations in the RFV include marginalized populations, under-served populations, people living with disabilities, and the unhoused. Planning should consider economic, health, systemic and other barriers to access.

**Understand Motivations:** Prioritize understanding what characteristics underrepresented communities look for in outdoor spaces and support these types of programming.

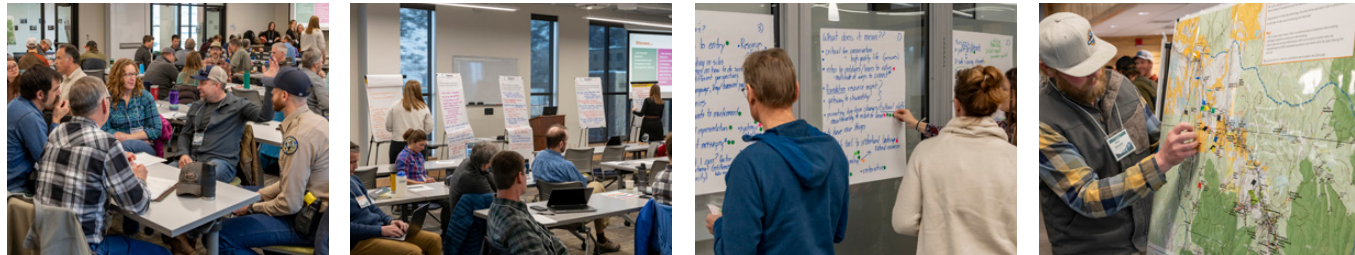
**Signage:** Signage should be educational and available in multiple languages to be inclusive of all community members. The use of native history and names is important.

[Click Here](#) to learn more about the findings from the Listening Sessions.

# Coalition Symposium

**The Symposium brought together interested and affected collaborators throughout the Valley to build on the findings of the Listening Sessions. The objective of the day was to collectively define priorities for the RFOC to focus on in the forthcoming plan for recreation and conservation.**

The morning session included presentations from Design Workshop facilitators and Utah State University researchers to give context to the RFOC and explain work completed to date. Following the morning presentation, there was the opportunity for small-group discussions and reporting back. The afternoon session included larger breakout sessions on the key themes to dig deeper into topical areas.



The Symposium saw representation from over 55 organizations with nearly 80 participants, all interested in the future of recreation and conservation in the Roaring Fork Watershed.

## Symposium Findings MORNING SESSION

Participants in the morning session were asked to discuss the tensions identified in the listening sessions. The key issues for each tension were identified as follows:

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <p><b>1</b></p> <p>Tension between conservation and recreation in the Roaring Fork Valley.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education on “Why”</li> <li>• Coexistence of Recreation and Conservation</li> <li>• Understanding Trends</li> </ul> | <p><b>2</b></p> <p>Tension between accommodating increasing recreation and recreation trends and limiting recreation use and access.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for Proactive Response</li> <li>• Education Framing</li> <li>• Understand the Reservation System</li> </ul> | <p><b>3</b></p> <p>The need for equitable and inclusive access to the outdoors for diverse communities within the Roaring Fork Valley.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barriers are Multifaceted</li> <li>• Understand Motivations</li> <li>• Signage</li> </ul> |
|---|--|---|

Findings

## Guideposts Overview

For the Symposium, five guideposts were identified based on the momentum established in the listening sessions. Four of these guideposts were used to frame the discussions in break-out rooms during the afternoon session. The four guideposts were Recreation Volume and Impacts, Access and Equity, Education and Stewardship, and Conservation and Habitat Connectivity.

Cross-jurisdictional partnerships is an overarching guidepost that will be critical to address the other four guideposts.

### Symposium Findings AFTERNOON SESSION

Participants in the afternoon session selected a break-out room topic to discuss as a group. Facilitated activities sought to define the terminology used in each guidepost, craft a vision statement to direct future work, and identify metrics of success.

### Understandings:

## Cross-Jurisdictional Partnerships

A key theme from the listening sessions identified a need to reduce silos and encourage different jurisdictions and partners to work together and identify areas where there are aligned missions and goals to amplify outcomes and impacts.

## Recreation Volume and Impacts

Analysis demonstrates that there are varying user experiences, motivations and needs in different areas that should be addressed at both a regional and local level. There were concerns voiced during the listening sessions that the growth in recreational use may increase conflict and impact visitor experiences.

## Access and Equity

Findings from the listening sessions demonstrated the notion of “recreation” needs to be expanded to include more than trail-based recreation. Only 3% of trail users intercepted identified as Latino/a. Improved access to recreation needs to consider communal and family-based recreation amenities, bilingual signage, ADA access, transit access, and access to equipment.

## Education and Stewardship

Findings from the listening sessions demonstrate that education is an important tool to not only ensure safety and preparedness in the outdoors, but also to help people understand appropriate/desired behavior and etiquette. This includes fostering an understanding of the impact both humans and their pets have on the environment.

## Conservation and Habitat Connectivity

Analysis and recommendations support reconnecting large landscapes and guiding development and land conservation decisions to avoid additional fragmentation. The listening sessions raised concerns about impacts to biodiversity and about habitat loss due to increasing development and recreation. Differing regulations and land-management plans in the Valley were also noted.

[Click Here](#) to learn more about the findings from the Symposium.

**Cross-Jurisdictional Partnerships**

**Recreation Volume and Impacts**

**Access and Equity**

**Education and Stewardship**

**Conservation Habitat and Connectivity**

# Guideposts of the RFOC

The Coalition’s vision statement and the guideposts, and indicators of success for a future strategic plan for recreation and conservation, were developed through facilitated conversations with 55+ community collaborators and engagement with 1,212 residents and visitors.

## — Guidepost 2

### Recreation Volume and Impacts



By gaining a comprehensive understanding of how the environment and user experiences are affected by the increased usage of recreational resources, more effective and proactive maintenance and management measures can be taken. Coordinated management is needed to ensure the longevity of our shared ecosystems. The RFOC strives to work together with land managers and community collaborators to educate, monitor and strategically plan to ensure sustainable recreation opportunities.

#### What does success look like?

**Protect the Places We Recreate In:** Healthy and resilient ecosystems support the visitor experience and functionality that land managers desire. The world-class outdoor destinations in our communities depend on healthy wildlands.

**Collaboration Among Land Managers:** Land managers across jurisdictional boundaries can work together to educate, monitor and manage sensitive ecosystems. Land managers should collaboratively address user impacts and trends with cohesive messaging.

**Support Positive User Experience (within a thriving natural environment):** Variation in user motivations creates a range of experiences within our outdoor spaces. Land managers can promote and provide a positive experience for varying user groups and their motivations that doesn’t compromise ecosystem function or habitat health.

**Address Crowding and Conflict:** Visitors report having a positive experience. Evaluations of crowding are mitigated at site facilities and negative interactions with other visitors is not prevalent across sites or at any one particular site.

## — Guidepost 3

### Access and Equity



Outdoor spaces should be inclusive, giving focus to underrepresented communities to allow for everyone to benefit from the diverse opportunities in the Roaring Fork Valley. The RFOC strives to break down barriers through increased efforts to make sure that our trails and recreational spaces are accessible and welcoming to all members of our community.

#### What does success look like?

##### Ensure Access and Equity is Fundamental:

The comfort and confidence of outdoor users of all abilities and backgrounds in accessing and utilizing outdoor spaces is fundamental to future decision-making.

**Assure Community Orientedness:** Trust is built with under-represented communities when they are heard. Promote the right to access for all members of our community and provide the facilities and programming to increase diversity and multi-generational use of our outdoor spaces.

**Proactively Address Barriers:** Barriers to access include but are not limited to those related economics, language, ADA access, age and other unknown complexities.

**Balance Goals with Nature and Community:** The interconnectedness of nature and community support shared goals for a resilient and equitable future. There should be ample opportunity and access to recreational activities and a focus on conserving and preserving the natural environment.

## — Guidepost 1

### Cross-Jurisdictional Partnerships

There are many partners within the Roaring Fork Valley that care deeply about our recreational spaces and shared ecosystems. However, differing goals, policies and boundaries create confusion around or duplicate efforts intended to support the environment. The RFOC strives to represent public municipalities and public lands, and will serve as the bridge to other boards, advisors and collaborators.



## — Guidepost 4

### Education and Stewardship



Fostering relationships and connection to the outdoors is critical for individuals to have a sense of ownership and feel empowered to take action within outdoor places. Yet, cultural and systemic challenges exist which create barriers to participation. The RFOC strives to inspire individuals to become outdoor stewards by supporting accessible engagement opportunities that deepen connections within our Valley.

#### What does success look like?

**Create Accessible Messaging:** A unified approach to messaging, accessible to all community members and through multiple languages, increases awareness on “best practices,” programming and responsible recreation. Signage and messaging should be cohesive across jurisdictions and management areas.

**Build on Values and Foster Connections with the Land:** Education around the value of the land can be established at a young age carried through generations. Land managers should evaluate and monitor existing conditions and create awareness within the broader community

**Ignite Cultural and Systemic Change:** Positive user perspectives and behaviors are a result of collective community change. Land managers can motivate participants of outdoor spaces to become stewards of the land.

**Alleviate Barriers to Participation:** Barriers that prohibit or hinder access are detrimental to community participation in shared public spaces. Opportunities for education on how to safely participate in our outdoor spaces can help alleviate barriers for participation.

## — Guidepost 5

### Conservation Habitat and Connectivity



The Roaring Fork Watershed is blessed with large expanses of public land and wilderness areas; adequate space and corridors are needed within them to support plant and wildlife health. Unmanaged use can negatively impact biodiversity, ecosystem function and quality of life. The RFOC strives to collaborate and strategically leverage management tools that support conservation and connectivity of our public lands.

#### What does success look like?

##### Maintain and Provide a Net Gain in Biodiversity:

Biodiversity within our natural areas is essential to the preservation of their ecological integrity and function. Promote the biodiversity of each ecosystem within the Roaring Fork Watershed, understanding the requirements and makeup of each.

**Address Human Use and Impact Management:** Education on the impact of human use and recreation on our ecosystems and recreation areas is fundamental to ecological literacy and can promote understanding each individual’s responsibility and ownership of the continued health of our outdoor spaces.

**Provide Public / Private Land Strategies:** Public and private landowners have the potential to create actionable and attainable management plans to achieve a common vision.

**Reduce Fragmentation:** Cross-jurisdictional management and collaboration can reduce fragmentation and improve connections between natural areas.



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