

LATEST NEWS

GOCO Awards \$25.5M for Recreation, Stewardship, Land Conservation, and Regional Collaboration

La Jara Basin, San Luis Valley. Photo by Allen Law, Western Rivers Conservancy.

December 12, 2025

Big news from Golden! Today, the Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) board awarded \$25,586,783 in grants supporting Colorado's outdoors, wildlife, and people.

Created by Colorado voters in 1992, GOCO invests up to half of Colorado Lottery proceeds in partner-led conservation and recreation projects across the state. Today's grants were awarded through a

competitive process. Supported by GOCO regional program officers, eligible organizations submitted a project concept and then an application, successfully earning funding for their projects.



Eleven recreation, land conservation, and capacity projects were awarded a total of \$13.5 million in funding through GOCO's base programs. Some highlights:

Alamosa, Burlington, Mancos, Silver Cliff, and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe are getting new or improved parks and recreation areas welcoming all ages and abilities.

Major land conservation projects in Clear Creek County, northwest Colorado, and the San Luis Valley are set to protect 64,000 pristine acres.

Colorado Open Space Alliance is leveling up its efforts to serve Colorado's network of outdoors organizations, and The Nature Conservancy is offering two fellowships to empower the next generation of conservation leaders.

Twenty projects earned a total of \$1.5 million in funding to hire Colorado's mighty conservation corps for their stewardship projects through GOCO's partnership with Colorado Youth Corps Association.

Ten land conservation projects representing 7,231 acres will cross the finish line with help from

\$509,500 in GOCO funding through the Transaction Cost Assistance Program (TCAP) administered by Keep It Colorado, which covers costs associated with conservation easement transactions.



In addition, **Governor Polis, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and GOCO announced more than \$9.9 million in funding to 18 regional partnerships** working to advance conservation, recreation, and climate resilience goals aligned with [Colorado's Outdoors Strategy](#).

Read on for information on all grant awards. Congratulations, partners and Colorado!

Jump to: [Community Impact](#), [Land Acquisition](#), [Pathways](#), [Conservation Service Corps](#), [Transaction Cost Assistance Program](#), [Regional Partnerships](#)

Community Impact

This program develops and revitalizes parks, trails, school yards, fairgrounds, environmental education facilities, and other outdoor projects that enhance a community's quality of life and access to the outdoors.

*Cole Park “A Place to Play for All,”
\$659,600 to the City of Alamosa*

The City of Alamosa will transform Cole Park—the city's central 14.5-acre park—into an inclusive recreational hub for residents and

the broader San Luis Valley. Upgrades will include an ADA-accessible playground with sensory play elements, such as a merry-go-round that accommodates wheelchairs, double-wide slides for side-by-side use, and potentially an in-ground trampoline designed for wheelchair users. The sandy dirt pump track will be replaced by a new asphalt wheel park, including a small kids' pump track. Improvements directly meet the needs of Alamosa residents, nearly half of whom depend on government assistance, and 16% live with disabilities—twice the state average. The project builds on over a decade of planning and engagement with parents, educators, and adaptive youth, including gathering over 200 hours of volunteer input. Groundbreaking is expected in summer 2026, with completion and a community celebration in fall 2026.

*Parmer Park Recreational Complex
Phase 2 Project, \$749,968 to the City
of Burlington*

The City of Burlington, located in Kit Carson County on Colorado's eastern plains, will revitalize the Parmer Park Recreational Complex—a 10-acre facility serving as a central recreational hub for residents and visitors in Burlington and surrounding rural communities. Upgrades will include a new toddler playground, carousel, pump track, and renovated basketball and tennis courts. The project employs 'universal design,' prioritizing



accessibility for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. Residents were extensively engaged in the city's 14-month planning process through community events, bilingual outreach strategies, and feedback gathered from youth and other underrepresented groups. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2026, with anticipated completion in summer 2027.

Paths to Mesa Verde, \$750,000 to Montezuma County

Montezuma County, in partnership with the Town of Mancos, will build eight miles of an ADA-compliant, shared-use pathway stretching from Boyle Park in downtown Mancos to the entrance of Mesa Verde National Park. It's the first phase of a planned 17-mile corridor linking Cortez, Mancos, Mesa Verde National Park, and BLM-managed trails. Importantly, the segment provides a safe, non-motorized route to the national park entrance, replacing the dangerous route on U.S. Highway 160. It will offer scenic views and connect to communities, public lands, recreation, and historic and cultural sites. The project will minimize impact to wildlife by building within the existing highway corridor, integrating with planned wildlife crossings, and planting native species. This initiative was developed through extensive community engagement and planning, and collaboration among multiple government agencies. Construction is expected to begin in 2028.



*Pueblo County's Guiding STAR
(Stewardship, Trails, Access,
Recreation) Master Plan, \$160,000
to Pueblo County*



Pueblo County Parks and Recreation will develop a master plan for parks, trails, access, and natural resource stewardship throughout Pueblo County by early 2027. Goals include fostering operational excellence, financial resilience, and equitable access to outdoor recreation—helping sustain the county's parks and trails, care for natural resources and wildlife, and enhance community health and connection. Planning will involve robust community engagement, including outreach in multiple languages and strategies targeting youth, seniors, and underrepresented groups, with support from organizations such as Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Colorado State University Extension, and Grassroots Gravel. It will also build partnerships to support future fundraising efforts, design youth leadership and career-building opportunities, and support sustained recreation management and conservation for generations to come.

*Silver Cliff Community Park
Improvements, \$647,475 to the
Town of Silver Cliff*

The Town of Silver Cliff will revitalize Silver Cliff Community Park, replacing outdated and inaccessible play areas with a new ADA-compliant playground for children ages 2-12, and developing a four-

court pickleball facility. Built in 1987, the park serves as a hub for residents throughout Custer County, supporting daily outdoor activity and social connections. With these improvements, the town aims to support community health and fitness while conserving water and soil health. The project was designed with extensive community engagement through outreach to local youth, public meetings, town surveys, and community events. Local businesses and organizations contributed in-kind and match funding. Partners will help the town implement environmental best practices such as sustainable irrigation and planting, improve park infrastructure, and offer on-site wellness programs. The project is expected to be completed between 2025 and 2026

Tour de Ute North and South Pocket Parks, \$1,000,000 to the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe

The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe will construct two culturally relevant pocket parks on the Ute Mountain Ute Reservation in north and south Towaoc, which currently lack public park facilities. The parks help address a pressing need for safe, accessible outdoor recreation spaces in a community facing high rates of chronic disease and limited access to healthy activities. The parks will foster intergenerational engagement, especially between youth and elders, and support skill-building and cultural storytelling. They will include play equipment,



shaded seating and gathering areas, walking paths, sports courts, double-gated entrances, restrooms, parking, and more. The parks were designed through extensive community engagement, involving over 31% of residents. Construction is expected to begin in fall 2026.



Land Acquisition

This program supports urban and rural landscape, waterway, and habitat protection priorities and improves access to the outdoors.

*Conservation Project in Progress,
\$7,500,000 Land Acquisition grant to
Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural
Land Trust*

Funding will support a rare, high-impact land conservation opportunity that could protect nearly 18,000 acres of intact working mountain ranchland in the Colorado River watershed. The property includes significant wildlife habitat, holds important water rights, and has high climate resilience value. The transaction is anticipated to close in June 2026, with more details to follow.

*La Jara Basin, \$1,070,000 to
Western Rivers Conservancy*

Western Rivers Conservancy, in collaboration with the Colorado State Land Board, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, the Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Forest Service, will permanently protect

the 45,952-acre La Jara Basin in the southwest San Luis Valley. The landscape contains more than 30 miles of streams that flow to the Conejos and Rio Grande rivers. It's home to diverse wildlife, including big game, migratory birds, native trout, and rare species. The effort will also protect public access, including for low-income and underserved community members who use the land for grazing, hunting, fishing, and cultural traditions. La Jara Basin is part of the ancestral homelands of over 25 Native Tribes and Puebloans, containing hundreds of archaeological sites and evidence of continuous use for over 7,500 years. It is also a vital resource for local farming and ranching families, with La Jara Creek feeding many small irrigation ditches, many of whom are ancestors of the pobladores who traveled from northern New Mexico to settle in the area over 170 years ago.

Taylor Kennedy Land Acquisition Project, \$300,000 to the Town of Silver Plume

The Town of Silver Plume, in partnership with Mountain Area Land Trust, will permanently protect the Taylor Kennedy property, encompassing 350 acres of historically and ecologically significant mountainside on Republic Mountain. The acquisition will complete the Silver Plume Mountain Park in Clear Creek County, fulfilling a community vision that began in 1993. The property contains



significant wildlife habitat and connects to other federally protected lands. It expands public recreation opportunities and secures access to the locally treasured 7:30 Mine Trail. It also preserves scenic views for thousands of visitors, including passengers of the historic Georgetown Loop Railroad. The acquisition is expected to close in early 2026.



Pathways

This program supports high-level visioning processes, equity initiatives, climate resilience efforts, and community engagement strategies that build networks and partnerships.

Colorado Open Space Alliance (COSA) Governance Plan, \$450,000 to Jefferson County

In partnership with Jefferson County Parks and Open Space and other Colorado land managers, COSA fosters collaboration, resource sharing, and collective action on key issues among diverse agencies, municipalities, and nonprofits, with its highly valued conference drawing over 400 participants a year. By 2028, COSA aims to transform from a volunteer-run coalition into a robust statewide membership organization with sustainable governance, revenue, and equity practices. Planned activities include expanding its signature conference,

communications platforms, and reach to underrepresented and rural communities by offering leadership opportunities for diverse professionals, language support, childcare, and transportation to its programs. These activities will help COSA expand its support of Colorado's conservation infrastructure, benefitting wildlife, water, and landscapes.



The Nature Conservancy Colorado Fellowship Program, \$300,000 to The Nature Conservancy

The Nature Conservancy's Colorado Conservation Fellowship will empower two conservation leaders through a two-year, paid fellowship with hands-on fieldwork, professional development, and mentorship opportunities. Building on the success of the previous fellowship program, fellows from this cohort will help strengthen relationships with Tribal and Indigenous Nations and Latino communities with historic ties to the San Luis Valley. Their efforts will support cultural reconnection to ancestral lands and knowledge-sharing between generations. Through these fellowships, TNC aims to achieve conservation outcomes while building a more inclusive and skilled workforce to lead Colorado's conservation efforts into the future. Funds from the Pathways grant will also support Tribal and Indigenous travel and honorarium for shared learning experiences.

In addition, a \$2,000,000 GOCO loan was approved for a project led by Colorado West Land Trust, with more details coming soon.



Conservation Service Corps

This program is administered in partnership with Colorado Youth Corps Association to help partners hire conservation service corps for outdoor recreation and stewardship projects. These organizations engage youth and veteran crews across the state to complete land and water conservation projects while gaining paid service experience.

*Boulder Reservoir Eurasian
Watermilfoil Management, \$303,600
to the City of Boulder*

The City of Boulder's Open Space and Mountain Parks will partner with Mile High Youth Corps (MHYC) on a 13-week project to restore undesignated social trails and improve climbing access at the Flatirons, a highly visited and ecologically sensitive area. MHYC will close and restore nearly three miles of social trails, repair or build 2,033 feet of designated climbing areas, and build climbing infrastructure like belay pads, providing youth crews with hands-on training in restoration and trail work. The project will protect sensitive wildlife areas while enhancing recreation through safer, more sustainable access to world-

class climbing for visitors and Boulder's climbing community.

Climbing Access, Social Trail Management in the Flatirons, \$183,300 to the City of Boulder



City of Boulder's Open Space and Mountain Parks will partner with Mile High Youth Corps (MHYC) on a 13-week project to restore undesignated social trails and improve climbing access at the Flatirons, a highly visited and ecologically sensitive area. MHYC will close and restore nearly three miles of social trails, repair or build 2,033 feet of designated climbing areas, and build climbing infrastructure like belay pads, providing youth crews with hands-on training in restoration and trail work. The project will protect sensitive wildlife areas while enhancing recreation through safer, more sustainable access to world-class climbing for visitors and Boulder's climbing community.

East Big Thompson Invasive Species Control Project, \$29,600 to the City of Loveland

The City of Loveland Open Lands and Trails will partner with Larimer County Conservation Corps to remove invasive Russian olive, Siberian elm, and tamarisk from 20 acres of river corridor at Willow Bend Natural Area. The fast-spreading invasive trees crowd out native plants and limit river access for wildlife and people. The project will support safe and healthy

watersheds, wildlife habitat, and ecologically rich open spaces close to home while providing corps members with hands-on training and work experience.



*Ecological Restoration & Trails
Phase 3, \$59,200 to Boulder County*

Boulder County Parks & Open Space will partner with Mile High Youth Corps (MHYC) and Cal-Wood Education Center for a third phase of its post-fire restoration project. MHYC will remove trees at risk of falling, manage invasive plants, seed native species, and implement erosion control to restore forest health and protect downstream water quality. They will also build new trail connections to provide safe access for more than 9,000 students and families each year. The project supports Cal-Wood's mission to connect diverse and underserved communities to outdoor learning while improving ecological health so youth and families can safely explore the outdoors.

*Elkhorn Creek Collaborative River
Restoration Project, \$71,900 to
Larimer Conservation District*

Larimer Conservation District will partner with Larimer County Conservation Corps and Poudre River Watershed to restore river habitat at Ben Delatour Scout Ranch. Partners will thin dense forests, rebuild damaged stream sections, and improve wildlife habitat and water quality in an area impacted by the Cameron Peak Fire.

The project will protect water supplies for more than 300,000 Front Range residents, provide youth crews with hands-on forestry training, and help create a healthier and safer outdoor environment for local communities and visitors.



*Forest Health & Trail Restoration,
\$81,600 to the City of Durango*

The City of Durango will partner with Southwest Conservation Corps (SCC) to restore forest health, improve trails, and protect the long-term health of public lands and watersheds by removing invasive species, thinning stressed pinyon pines, and reseeded with native plants. Partners will also complete significant trail restoration and maintenance in high-use areas, such as Dalla Mountain Park and City Reservoir, ensuring safe and sustainable access for diverse user groups. This project will support the long-term care of natural resources through collaboration between SCC, the U.S. Forest Service, and nonprofit partner Durango Trails.

*Go With The Flow Bike Trail, \$55,200
to the Town of Oak Creek*

The Town of Oak Creek will partner with Rocky Mountain Youth Corps to build the “Go With The Flow” bike trail at Oak Creek Mountain Park. The trail will have two miles of bike flow—a smooth, rolling style of trail designed for all skill levels—to diversify recreation opportunities in the community. It will be designed to help water drain properly, prevent

the trail from washing out, and protect sensitive areas while creating a safe and engaging route that separates downhill riders from other users, reducing conflicts. The project will provide a much-needed recreational resource for local youth, families, and visitors in a rural community with limited outdoor infrastructure.

Improving Accessibility of Outdoor Learning in Delta County, \$43,000 to North Fork Pool, Park and Recreation District

North Fork Pool, Park, and Recreation District will partner with Western Colorado Conservation Corps, the local Generation Wild community (Nature Connection), Bureau of Land Management, and local schools to support the Delta County Learning project. Partners will improve accessibility and safety across multiple trails and outdoor education sites by removing trees at risk of falling, rerouting damaged trails, and enhancing beginner-friendly routes. These efforts will protect streamside forests and natural ecosystems by preventing soil from washing away and limiting damage to sensitive areas. It will also build inclusive trails designed for children, families, seniors, and people using mobility devices, so all community members can participate in outdoor learning and recreation.

Joe Rowell Park River and ADA trails, \$55,800 to the Town of Dolores



The Town of Dolores will partner with Southwest Conservation Corps to improve user access and restore trails along the Dolores River. The project will prevent riverbank erosion, reduce trail damage, and protect streamside habitats that support wildlife and water quality. It will also improve trails and add new trail sections within Joe Rowell Park, implement ADA trail standards, and create safe and enjoyable spaces for walking, biking, and riverside access.



*Lower Cache la Poudre River
Watershed Stewardship, \$70,700 to
the City of Greeley*

The City of Greeley Natural Areas & Trails Division will partner with Weld County Youth Conservation Corps to remove invasive trees, reseed native species, and improve habitat connectivity and wildlife across 600 acres of open space. Partners will also reroute and resurface trails, remove safety hazards, improve connections to regional bike paths, and close outdated infrastructure like the disc golf course to restore natural environments. The project will provide young adults with hands-on stewardship and improve the safety, usability, and connectivity of Greeley's public open spaces used by over 300,000 visitors annually.

*LPOSC Riparian Habitat
Conservation, \$55,200 to La Plata
Open Space Conservancy*

La Plata Open Space Conservancy (LPOSC) will partner with Southwest Conservation Corps to remove invasive weeds, improve streamside habitats, and install wildlife-friendly fencing along the La Plata and Florida Rivers. This project will help protect water quality, healthy vegetation, wildlife, and scenic views on conserved lands where LPOSC holds conservation easements and landowners are committed to long-term stewardship. It will also sustain opportunities for wildlife viewing, hunting, and fishing, while ensuring that the ecological and cultural benefits of these open spaces remain available to local communities and visitors.

Noxious and Invasive Weed Mitigation Project 2026, \$27,600 to the City of Manitou Springs

The City of Manitou Springs Parks and Recreation Department will partner with Mile High Youth Corps to remove invasive weeds along 3.4 miles of the Intemann and Creek Walk Trail systems. Partners will remove Canada thistle, myrtle spurge, and mullein to help native vegetation return and protect surrounding open spaces and conserved lands. The project will ensure that these heavily used community trails remain safe, scenic, and ecologically healthy for hikers, bikers, and visitors while protecting the neighborhood-connected open spaces they link together.



*Purgatoire-Cucharas Collaborative
Forest Health & Stewardship,
\$46,900 to the City of Trinidad*



The City of Trinidad will partner with Mile High Youth Corps for Phase 5 of the Purgatoire-Cucharas Collaborative Forest Health and Stewardship Project. Partners will thin overgrown vegetation, clear woody debris, improve wildlife habitat, restore damaged campsites, and make trail improvements. This project will provide hands-on experience for local youth, improve safe access to the North Fork Purgatoire Trail system for residents and visitors, and help protect nearby forests, watersheds, and drinking water sources from wildfire impacts.

*Rainbow and Pot-o-Gold
Restoration, \$56,400 to Chaffee
County*

Chaffee County will partner with Salida Mountain Trails and Southwest Conservation Corps to restore 11 miles of the Rainbow and Pot-o-Gold Trails, both part of the Methodist Mountain trail system. Corps crews and community volunteers will improve drainage, clean corridors, and implement erosion-control structures to restore fire-damaged landscapes, address backlogged maintenance, and improve trail sustainability. The project will help ensure safer, more accessible trails for hikers, bikers, and motorized users.

*Riparian Restoration at the
Purgatoire River, \$74,000 to
Southern Plains Land Trust*



Southern Plains Land Trust will partner with Mile High Youth Corps to restore river habitat at the Purgatoire River Preserve. Partners will remove invasive tamarisk, Siberian elm, and Russian olive to make room for native cottonwoods, willows, and shortgrass prairie to return. The project will improve biodiversity, soil health, and watershed resilience while enhancing one of the few publicly accessible river areas in southeast Colorado, helping create better opportunities for fishing, birdwatching, and community gatherings. Crews will gain hands-on stewardship experience, and the work will help expand safe and meaningful access to a restored river corridor for community members and visitors.

*Rock Creek Wildlife & Forest Health
Improvement, \$59,200 to Colorado
Parks and Wildlife*

Colorado Parks and Wildlife will partner with Southwest Conservation Corps and Colorado State Forest Service to improve 30 acres of forest on state trust land at Rock Creek in Saguache County. Partners will thin dense ponderosa pine, piñon-juniper, and mixed-conifer trees to create a more natural forest structure. This work will increase native vegetation growth; improve food and habitat for deer, elk, and other wildlife; improve

forest health; create a more enjoyable experience for visitors; and provide hands-on forestry training for youth crews. The project will also preserve a historic wagon trail and provide stacked firewood for public use.



*Russian Olive Removal Continuation,
\$58,200 to the City of Lakewood*

The City of Lakewood will partner with Mile High Youth Corps to remove invasive Russian olive, replant native vegetation, and strengthen stream banks used by wildlife across 202 acres along Bear Creek Trail. Removing Russian olive will allow native plants more room and water to grow and improve access to the creek for people and wildlife. The trail is a major regional connector used by more than 450,000 people each year for walking, cycling, fishing, and commuting. This project will help keep the corridor safe, healthy, and welcoming for residents and visitors while supporting a connected stretch of natural open space across the Denver metro area.

*Trail Improvements and
Resurfacing, \$27,600 to South
Suburban Parks and Recreation
District*

South Suburban Park and Recreation District will partner with Mile High Youth Corps to make trail improvements at South Platte Park. Partners will resurface and repair worn areas and address user-made connecting trails. The project will

create safe, durable, year-round trails for hiking, biking, and river access, making heavily visited areas more comfortable and accessible for a wide range of visitors in a growing community. It will also support a healthy urban wildlife corridor, protecting forests and wetlands along the South Platte River.



*Trails & Open Space Restoration,
\$28,200 to Town of Bayfield*

The Town of Bayfield will partner with Southwest Conservation Corps for trail and open space improvements at Little Pine, Eagle, and Joe Stephenson Parks. Partners will resurface one mile of trail with gravel, clear overgrown vegetation, build erosion-control structures at two river access points, and hand-pull invasive musk thistle across 15.3 acres. The project will support the health and sustainability of local trails and river corridors, promote outdoor stewardship through youth corps and volunteer involvement, and improve access by creating safer in-town recreation opportunities for a growing population.

*Ute Mountain Tribal Park - Pool
Canyon + Casa Colorado, \$112,800
to the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe*

The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe and Ute Mountain Tribal Park will partner with Southwest Conservation Corps to restore and maintain trails in the Pool Canyon and Casa Colorado areas. Partners will improve trail

designs and conditions to reduce erosion and protect fragile landscapes and cultural sites. They will also reopen and expand access to historic cliff dwellings, petroglyphs, and other areas that have been closed for years, allowing for guided tours. This project will employ Indigenous youth crews and support long-term maintenance by Tribal Park staff while helping reconnect the Ute Mountain Ute community and visitors with the park's cultural and natural heritage.



Transaction Cost Assistance Program

Administered by Keep It Colorado, [this program](#) re-grants GOCO funds to nonprofit land trusts to help cover the costs associated with conservation easement transactions.

Anderson Farm and Ranch, \$75,000 to Palmer Land Conservancy

This 265-acre agricultural property sits in the heart of Beulah, a rural community in the foothills of the San Isabel National Forest. Through a robust community visioning process, supported by the Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office's Rural Technical Assistance Program, residents from across the community identified conservation as their top priority and named the Anderson Farm and Ranch as the

most important place to protect. The landowner operates a regenerative ranch and also conducts professional research on regenerative practices. The planned conservation easement will protect the property's productive agricultural land and its associated water rights. It will also include a public trail connecting the local school to downtown Beulah.



*Box 6 Ranch Conservation Legacy,
\$75,000 to Colorado Open Lands*

At the base of Thirtynine Mile Mountain, this 2,444-acre ranch is a large, intact, and ecologically diverse landscape that includes more than 70 acres of wetlands. A conservation easement will help protect habitat for dozens of wildlife species, including species of special concern. A fourth-generation rancher and her husband manage the ranch, which is one of the largest agricultural properties in Park County. Their rotational grazing system supports a sustainable ranching operation. The property borders Pike National Forest and sits next to a growing block of conserved lands. Its varied and remote terrain will help the land stay resilient to climate change, supports connected wildlife habitat, adds to the area's landscape diversity, and allows water to spread naturally across the property.

*Frenchman's Creek Ranch, \$15,000
to Central Colorado Conservancy*

This project protects one of the largest privately owned but unprotected properties in Chaffee County. Just north of Buena Vista, the 447-acre ranch runs along the Arkansas River for about a mile. The property connects the river valley to adjacent national forest land, conserving an important wildlife corridor. This property is one of the most important areas for ungulates that has not been protected. The ranch provides critical wintering habitat for pronghorn, elk, and bighorn sheep. Historically, the ranch has supported grazing on the west side and 80 acres of hay fields on the east. The current owners have improved irrigation to use water more efficiently and plan to continue both farming and hosting limited community uses, such as camping and small events.

Hindmarsh Winter Range, \$75,000 to Montezuma Land Conservancy

This 320-acre property is the last piece of private property within a more than 65,000-acre block of protected land surrounding Mesa Verde National Park. The project is timely, as the area experiences growing pressure from low-density housing and energy development. Visible from Highway 160 and from Ruins Road inside the park, the project will protect scenic views as well as high-priority wildlife habitat. The land includes small canyons, seasonal streams, and a mix of shrubland, grassland, and pinyon-juniper forests. Mule deer and other wildlife benefit from the property's



above-average climate resilience, especially during winter. Conserving this property will also allow for continued hunting in the fall and grazing in the winter.



Oxbow Ranch, \$49,600 to Colorado West Land Trust

This project will protect 266 acres along the Dolores River in the Paradox Valley of western Montrose County. The ranch includes one mile of river frontage, 125 acres of riparian forest and wetlands, and a cottonwood gallery. It contains important habitat for elk, mule deer, and black bears, and supports bald and golden eagles, great blue herons, and migrating sandhill cranes. The river is home to the “Native Three” warmwater fish species—flannelmouth sucker, bluehead sucker, and roundtail chub—which support a healthy ecosystem. The property is visible from Highway 90 and from a well-loved stretch of the river used by boaters when water levels are high.

Billy Creek Ranch, \$44,000 to Colorado West Land Trust

Billy Creek Ranch is a 1,156-acre property in Ouray County, located near the Billy Creek State Wildlife Area and lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Its location helps create a continuous habitat for wildlife movement between the San Juan Mountains and the Uncompahgre Plateau. The ranch spans 2,000 feet of elevation change, supporting a wide variety of

ecosystems, including Mancos shale badiands, sagebrush flats, oak savannah, pinyon-juniper woodlands, riparian corridors, and aspen groves. The ranch also contains globally rare plant species and sits within one of southwest Colorado's most important big-game migration corridors. Billy Creek Ranch also hosts a multigenerational working cattle operation. Conserving the property will protect habitat that's especially resilient to climate change, keep a long-standing ranching tradition alive, and secure a landscape that, in the landowners' words, means "no Taj-Mahals and plenty of cows" for the next hundred years.

Miller Ranch, \$47,000 to Colorado Open Lands

Located northwest of Fort Collins in Buckeye, the Miller Ranch sits in the viewshed of the Laramie Foothills and the Mummy Range in Rocky Mountain National Park. The ranch builds upon the Laramie Foothills Mountains to Plains Project, which has protected more than 140,000 acres in this area. The Miller family has already protected the western part of their ranch and now hopes to place a conservation easement on the remaining 145 acres, including its senior water right. Park Creek, which flows into the Cache la Poudre River, runs through the property and supports wetland and streamside habitat for many animals, including elk, mule deer, pronghorn, and the threatened Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse. The ranch is also



home to Bell's Twinpod, a rare plant found only in Larimer and Boulder counties, which Colorado State University students monitor every year.



Capulin Ranch, \$60,500 to Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust

Nestled at the edge of the San Juan Mountains in the San Luis Valley, this 495-acre family ranch is home to vibrant wetlands and cottonwood- and willow-lined creeks that flow year-round. Seasonal wet meadows and the steady waters of La Jara Creek and Hot Creek provide essential habitat for more than 30 species identified in Colorado's State Wildlife Action Plan. The ranch is also an important winter refuge for elk, mule deer, and pronghorn. Its senior water rights support hay production, cattle grazing, and the natural wetlands that make this landscape valuable for both agriculture and wildlife. Through a conservation easement, those water rights will stay permanently tied to the land, protecting its habitat and working-lands legacy for generations to come.

Blanca Farms, \$13,400 to Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust

Near the town of Blanca in southern Colorado, this 1,500-acre project is part of a larger family farm, part of which is currently conserved with the Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust. This property is a centerpiece of both agriculture and wildlife habitat. The property includes 411

acres of wetlands and supports a mix of grain and forage crops, livestock grazing, and natural open spaces fed by three creeks and streams that wind through the land. Next to the Smith Reservoir State Wildlife Area—a well-known haven for waterfowl and a key stop for migrating birds—the farm plays an important role in maintaining the region’s ecological health. A conservation easement will permanently protect the property’s water rights, while allowing the flexibility to lease water for community use when it doesn’t affect habitat or conservation goals. This project strengthens the connection between working lands and wildlife, ensuring a sustainable future for local agriculture and the diverse species that depend on the wetlands.

West Mancos Project, \$55,000 to Montezuma Land Conservancy

The West Mancos project is the final step in a 23-year effort to protect the Mancos River watershed. The vision began in 2002 when the Montezuma Land Conservancy completed its first conservation easement along the West Mancos River. This 165-acre property includes healthy ponderosa pine forests and 1.4 miles of river and streamside habitat. It is the last privately owned stretch of land along the West Mancos River before the river reaches State and then U.S. Forest Service lands. When added to the existing protected lands to the south, conserving this property will



complete a permanently protected five-mile stretch of the river and 1,168 acres of land along its corridor. The property provides important winter habitat for elk, and the landowner plans to carry out river restoration and forest health projects as part of Montezuma Land Conservancy's larger effort to improve conditions for big game and fish species along the West Mancos River. This project will also help safeguard the local watershed and, farther downstream, the Colorado River.



Regional Partnerships Initiative

Funded by Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) and Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), [this program](#) supports a network of Outdoor Regional Partnerships (RPIs) that develop visions and action plans that reflect regional priorities and support [Colorado's Outdoors Strategy](#)—a statewide vision for conservation, climate resilience, and sustainable recreation.

\$2,500,000 to Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust

Funding will support a rare, high-impact land conservation opportunity through a proposed conservation easement that could protect nearly 18,000 acres of intact working mountain ranchland in the Colorado River watershed. The

property includes significant wildlife habitat, important water rights, and high climate resilience value. The transaction is anticipated to close in June 2026, and CPW and GOCO will continue working closely with the Regional Partnership and land trust partner.

*\$182,900 to Eastern Colorado
Grassland Coalition (ECGC)*

The ECGC, launched in 2024, is dedicated to conserving and enhancing the native grasslands, croplands, and communities of eastern Colorado through collaborative community-driven conservation, sustainable land management, and responsible recreation. ECGC is continuing to build its regional recreation and conservation plan. With this funding, they will conduct outreach and engage community members through workshops and a community survey, refine the coalition's website, and develop social media profiles. Funding will also support a wildlife habitat enhancement project with community partners.

\$175,000 to Grand Places 2050

The Grand Places 2050 coalition is taking a phased approach to developing a strategic action plan for Grand County, starting with a review of existing plans and stakeholder outreach to define the coalition's vision, goals, and strategies, then refining objectives and creating mapping tools to



support decision-making. Funding will also support the Stewardship Ambassador program, which staffs busy trailheads in the region to educate visitors about wildlife safety, Leave No Trace principles, and related topics. Headwaters Trails Alliance manages the Stewardship Ambassador program in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and the local chamber of commerce, and it has reached more than 100,000 visitors to date.

\$225,000 to Gunnison County Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Committee (Gunnison STOR)

Funding will help Gunnison STOR Committee complete a regional conservation and recreation plan. The planning process will emphasize coordinating and consolidating existing efforts that have gone through community planning processes while also engaging additional key stakeholders. Partners will conduct wildlife crossing planning in coordination with the Colorado Department of Transportation to improve landscape connectivity and reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions. Funding will also support seasonal public lands stewardship and ranger capacity, and help install agricultural gates to reduce conflicts between recreation and ranching.

\$159,600 to Metro Denver Nature Alliance (Metro DNA)



Funding will help Metro DNA strengthen its coalition, deepen community engagement, and complete its Regional Vision for People and Nature. The grant will support administrative needs, marketing, committee stipends, and events that advance conservation and equitable outdoor recreation in Metro Denver. Once finished, the vision will guide a more coordinated, cohesive approach to environmental initiatives across the Metro Denver area.



\$300,000 to Montelores Coalition

The Montelores Coalition, covering Montezuma and Dolores counties, is working to sustain and grow its capacity and to finalize a regional recreation and conservation plan. The plan will guide efforts to provide high-quality outdoor recreation while also protecting healthy ecosystems, cultural heritage, wildlife, clean water, and scenic landscapes. It aims to balance new recreation opportunities with working agricultural lands and open spaces, safeguard important wildlife habitat and natural resources, and support economic development in the region. Funding will also launch a pilot conservation and recreation strike team focused on removing or modifying fencing, controlling noxious weeds, and maintaining trails and sites to improve wildlife habitat, visitor safety, and the overall experience on public lands.

\$560,000 to NoCo Places

NoCo Places is a partnership of nine public land agencies in the northern Front Range, formed in 2018 to address rising visitation and promote sustainable recreation, equitable access, and conservation. The NoCo Places Conservation and Recreation Vision, finalized in May 2024, lays out key strategic actions for the region. Grant funding will support staff capacity and one year of a program that will begin to assess 345 miles of user-created trails to determine whether they should be restored, closed, monitored, or added to the formal trail system. This landscape-scale work aims to reduce habitat fragmentation, protect wildlife corridors, and improve recreation experiences while fostering a culture of responsible outdoor use.



*\$150,000 to Northeast Colorado
Regional Partnership (NECORP)*

NECORP is a new regional partnership convened to help connect rural communities in Weld, Morgan, Washington, Logan, Yuma, Phillips, and Sedgwick counties, fostering collaboration across this broad geographic area. This region is known for its agricultural heritage, vast grasslands, and key role in Colorado's economy. Funding will support formalizing the coalition by providing resources for facilitation, cross-county outreach and engagement, and the development of a governance structure and charter.

\$130,000 to Northwest Colorado Outdoors (NWCO)

NWCO works to strengthen regional collaboration, finalize a shared vision for outdoor planning, and increase capacity and visibility in Moffat and Rio Blanco Counties. Funding will support facilitation, outreach, and technical experts to create a regional plan that benefits communities, honors local cultural heritage, and promotes sustainable wildlife and recreation management. The grant will also support the development of an Outdoor Asset Map. This public GIS-based tool will combine ecological, recreation, and working lands data to guide transparent decisions about planning and project selection.

\$1,610,825 to Outside 285

Outside 285 encompasses the foothills region southwest of Denver within portions of several counties that serve as the beloved rural “backyard” for the metro area. Funds will restore sensitive wildlife habitat and improve visitor experience in the Indian Creek trail system by eliminating social trails, constructing new routes, and developing signage and wayfinding in the area. Awarded funds will also advance work near several 14ers in the Mosquito Range west of Fairplay, protecting critical wildlife habitat and water resources while improving trails and recreational access. A project centered at Mount Silverheels will protect bighorn sheep habitat by closing social



trails, rehabilitating sensitive habitat, and establishing a sustainable summit trail on this popular 13er.



\$86,055 to Pagosa Area Recreation Coalition (PARC)

PARC, spanning Archuleta and parts of Hinsdale and Mineral counties, is developing a community-driven outdoor recreation plan that will enhance recreation experiences while protecting natural resources and wildlife. Funding will support ongoing coordination and facilitation, including stakeholder engagement and a communications strategy using a new website, social media, community presentations, and public events to share the coalition's work. In addition, the partnership will protect sensitive landscapes, encourage responsible recreation, and improve visitor experience by placing seasonal porta-potties and trash cans at high-use trailheads and implementing a wayfinding and signage plan.

\$2,500,000 to Pikes Peak Outdoor Recreation Alliance (PPORA)

As part of its Peak Exceptionalism Project, the Pikes Peak Outdoor Recreation Alliance (PPORA) will lead several efforts alongside project partners advancing conservation and sustainable recreation across the Pikes Peak Region, which includes El Paso, Fremont, and Teller counties and welcomes over 25 million visitors

each year. The partnership will construct, realign, and authorize segments of the currently 63-mile Ring the Peak (RTP) Trail encircling Pikes Peak. Partners will also restore 300 acres within Dome Rock State Wildlife Area to improve bighorn sheep habitat, lower wildfire risk, and foster a more resilient ecosystem. Camping opportunities will be enhanced along the RTP corridor and the Gold Belt Scenic Byway, with new campsites and access points added at Red Canyon Park. A three-year ambassador program will deploy trained staff to educate visitors, maintain trails, and collect recreation-use data. These initiatives build on a four-year planning effort that engaged more than 1,400 community members in shaping a shared vision for the region's outdoor spaces.

\$87,000 to the Roaring Fork Outdoor Coalition

The Roaring Fork Outdoor Coalition builds partnerships, anticipates future recreation needs, and promotes inclusive recreation while upholding conservation goals. In advance of completing a regional plan in 2026, this funding will support a pilot Decision Support Tool to help select stewardship and education projects in the Roaring Fork Valley. Anticipated projects include habitat restoration, trail stewardship and maintenance, and volunteer events. The coalition will also continue working across county lines with neighboring



regional partnerships in Eagle, Grand, and Summit counties through the Mountain Communities Outdoor Collective.



\$388,856 to Routt Recreation & Conservation Roundtable (RRCR)

RRCR spent two years developing a comprehensive Conservation and Recreation Strategy, working with a wide range of members and partners across the county to identify and prioritize projects. Funding will support continued facilitation of the Roundtable, collaboration across sectors and interest areas, and a summer stewardship crew. The crew will carry out on-the-ground trail and resource stewardship across the broader Hahns Peak–Bears Ears Ranger District, focusing on high-use recreation areas and dispersed camping corridors.

\$394,000 to San Luis Valley Great Outdoors (SLV GO!)

SLV GO! works to ensure outdoor recreation in the San Luis Valley is developed and maintained sustainably, protecting the region's natural resources through strategic planning, adaptive management, and advocacy. Following a multi-year planning process, SLV GO! completed an SLV Great Outdoors Strategy informed by community surveys, focus groups, listening sessions, data analysis, and local knowledge. Funding will support continued capacity for the coalition and a wildlife fencing project. The

project will convert 12 miles of fence along the Colorado–New Mexico border to wildlife-friendly fencing, helping big game move through critical winter habitat, and construct fencing in the Rio Grande Natural Area to protect riparian habitat from overgrazing.



\$124,575 to Spanish Peaks Outdoor Coalition (SPOC)

SPOC focuses on recreation, conservation, and economic development in southern Colorado. After its first year, the coalition established a governance structure, guiding pillars, and a consensus-based decision-making process. It's now developing a regional plan to guide future conservation, outdoor recreation, and sustainable economic development. This grant will support coordination, facilitation, and community engagement. It will also help the coalition produce an outdoor guide showcasing the Spanish Peaks region, highlighting local destinations, public land access, cultural sites, conservation areas, wildlife habitat, and outdoor businesses in Huerfano and Las Animas counties.

\$141,429 to West Slope Outdoor Alliance (WSOA)

WSOA formed in 2022 to bring together community members from Delta, Mesa, and Montrose counties to balance recreation and conservation. The coalition's vision is a vibrant West Slope where future

generations enjoy stunning landscapes, abundant wildlife, productive farms and ranches, and diverse recreation opportunities, all supported by thoughtful land use and shared stewardship. While WSOA finalizes its regional recreation and conservation plan, funding will support its partnership coordinator and projects focused on responsible recreation education, habitat protection, reducing recreation impacts on agriculture, and improving equitable access to the outdoors. Projects include installing multi-use signs, hosting a youth responsible recreation video contest, repairing wildlife guzzlers, supporting seasonal closures, and restoring habitat in the Escalante Headwaters area.

\$75,000 to Wet Mountain Valley Outdoors (WMVO)

Starting in 2025, WMVO began doing community outreach to create a long-term vision and action plan for outdoor recreation, conservation, reclamation, and land preservation on public and private lands in Custer County. This funding will support continued outreach and engagement to build a shared vision, identify strategies, and form action teams that will guide the partnership's work.

In addition, a \$200,000 direct grant to Colorado Parks and Wildlife will help the agency support regional partnerships with facilitation and other services as they grow and evolve.



Have questions? Email us at
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