



**AGENDA**  
**for the Tourism Advisory Board**  
**of the Town of Palisade, Colorado**  
**341 W 7<sup>th</sup> Street (Palisade Civic Center)**



**October 16, 2024**

**9:00 am Monthly Meeting**

**<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/96182810397>**

- I. REGULAR MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 9:00 am**
- II. ROLL CALL**
- III. AGENDA ADOPTION**
- IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
  - A. Approve minutes of September 19, 2024
- V. TOWN REPORT**
- VI. FINANCIAL YTD UPDATE:**
  - A. YTD
  - B. Room night report
- VII. ADVERTISING UPDATE: Ryan and Melita**
  - A. Marketing Update
  - B. Discussion on Local Winter Campaign
  - C. Update on Colorado Vacation Guide placement
- VIII. CONTINUED BUSINESS:**
  - A. Update on Western Slope Passport Rewards Program – Jessica
  - B. Follow up on Fruita Welcome Center digital advertising
- IX. NEW BUSINESS**
  - A. Update on Palisade Business Economic Survey
  - B. Discussion on Destination Strategic Plan for mountains & Mesa Region. How to develop relationships with Art, Agricultural and Historic partners to enhance visitor experience. (Refer to Strategy 3, 4, & 5)
- X. PUBLIC COMMENT**
- XI. ORGANIZATION UPDATES (Please limit comments to 3 Minutes)**
- XII. ADJOURNMENT**

**[Next Meeting 9AM Wednesday, November 13, 2024](#)**



**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
PALISADE TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD  
September 19, 2024**

The regular meeting of the Tourism Advisory Board for the Town of Palisade was called to order at 11:00 am by Chair Juliann Adams, with members present: Cassidee Shull, Rondo Buecheler, Tim Wigner, Brooke McElley, Jessica Burford, JoAnn Rasmussen, Ian Kelley, Susan Metzger, Vice-Chair Ryan Robinson, and Trustee Jeff Snook. A quorum was declared. Also in attendance were Town Manager Janet Hawkinson, Town Clerk Keli Frasier and Ryan Burke & Melita Pawlowski with Slate Communications.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Motion #1** by J. Burford, seconded by B. McElley, to approve the agenda as presented.

A voice vote was requested.

Motion carried

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion #2** by R. Buecheler, seconded by J. Burford, to approve the Minutes of August 15, 2024, as presented.

A voice vote was requested.

Motion carried

**TOWN REPORT**

Town Manager Janet Hawkinson reviewed the status of getting EV chargers in town, and other current projects led by the Town of Palisade.

**FINANCIAL YTD UPDATE**

Chair Adams reviewed year-to-date expenditures, lodging fees received, and lodging room numbers. The lodging numbers were as follows:

**LODGING FEES REVIEW**

2024			2023		
	Fees	# of Nights		Fees	# of Nights
January	\$2,652.00	663	January	\$2,134.00	543
February	\$2,428.00	607	February	\$3,380.00	835
March	\$7,302.00	2,238	March	\$5,496.00	1,374
April	\$8,024.00	2,006	April	\$9,264.00	2,316
May	\$14,192.00	3,548	May	\$14,596.00	3,649
June	\$14,988.00	3,747	June	\$16,136.00	4,034
July	\$14,664.00	3,666	July	\$15,440.00	3,860
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$63,954.00</b>	<b>16,401</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$66,446.00</b>	<b>16,611</b>

DIFFERENCE		
	Fees	Nights
January	\$518.00	120
February	-\$952.00	-228
March	\$1,806.00	864

April	-\$1,240.00	-310
May	-\$404.00	-101
June	-\$1,148.00	-287
July	-776.00	-194
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-\$2,492.00</b>	<b>-210</b>

**ADVERTISING UPDATE**

**Marketing Update**

M. Pawlowski reviewed the Colorado Tourism Office (CTO) photo shoot, media coverage, and 2025 ad recommendations.

**Motion #3** by J. Burford, seconded by C. Shull, to do a ¼ page ad in CTO’s magazine and a 30-second video in the Fruita welcome center for an amount not to exceed \$4,937.00 from the 2025 budget.

A voice vote was requested.  
Motion carried.

**Discussion on Local Winter Campaign**

M. Pawlowski reviewed a proposed local campaign for 2025 to promote local businesses and Palisade history.

*The consensus of the Board is to have the promotion run from March 1, 2025 – April 4, 2025.*

**Winter Media Local Campaign**

J. Burford described a regional passport program that the Chamber of Commerce is working on implementing and asked the Board for their review, suggestions, and partnership/sponsorship.

**CONTINUED BUSINESS**

**Update on Kiosk maps – ‘You are Here’ Stickers ordered**

Chair Adams announced that the stickers arrived.

**Report on Airport Marketing – BreezeAir Hubs LA and Las Vegas**

Chair Adams reviewed the advertising prices at the BreezeAir terminals in Los Angeles and Los Vegas.  
*The consensus of the Board is not to advertise in either airport due to the extreme cost.*

**Report on Australian ‘Flow’ Bike Media Group - Jessica**

J. Burford reviewed the group’s activities and noted their joy while being in Palisade.

**Report on Katherine LaGrave, Deputy Editor of AFAR Magazine visit – Tim & Juliann**

Chair Adams reviewed the visit and noted Ms. LeGrave’s excitement while being in Palisade.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Charging Stations update**

Town Manager Hawkinson reviewed this item during the Town Report.

**Nominations for new TAB Board officers 2024/2025**

**Motion #4** by J. Rasmussen, seconded by B. McElley, to appoint Juliann Adams as Tourism Advisory Chairperson.

A voice vote was requested.  
Motion carried.

**Motion #5** by J. Burford, seconded by R. Buecheler, to appoint Ryan Robinson as Tourism Advisory Vice-Chairperson.

A voice vote was requested.  
Motion carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None were offered.

**ORGANIZATIONAL UPDATES**

Board members gave brief updates on their organizations and businesses.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion #5** by J. Rasmussen, seconded by B. McElley, to adjourn the meeting at 10:48 am.

A voice vote was requested.  
Motion carried unanimously.

X

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Keli L. Frasier, CMC  
Town Clerk

X

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Juliann Adams  
Tourism Advisory Board Chairperson

**LODGING FEES REVIEW**

**2024**

<b>Reporting</b>	<b>2024</b>		<b>Reporting</b>	<b>2023</b>	
	<b>Fees</b>	<b># of Nights</b>		<b>Fees</b>	<b># of Nights</b>
January	\$2,356.00	589	January	\$2,134.00	543
February	\$2,428.00	607	February	\$3,380.00	835
March	\$7,302.00	2,238	March	\$5,496.00	1,374
April	\$8,024.00	2,006	April	\$9,264.00	2,316
May	\$14,192.00	3,548	May	\$14,596.00	3,649
June	\$14,988.00	3,747	June	\$16,136.00	4,034
July	\$14,664.00	3,666	July	\$15,440.00	3,572
August	\$17,592.00	4,398	August	\$16,088.00	3,740
September	\$0.00	0	September		
October	\$0.00	0	October		
November	\$0.00	0	November		
December	\$0.00	0	December		
	<b>\$81,546.00</b>	<b>20799</b>		<b>\$82,534.00</b>	<b>20063</b>
	<b>% of '23</b>	<b>103.67%</b>		<b>2023 Total</b>	<b>20063</b>

**DIFFERENCE**

	<b>Fees</b>	<b>Nights</b>
January	\$222.00	46
February	-\$952.00	-228
March	\$1,806.00	864
April	-\$1,240.00	-310
May	-\$404.00	-101
June	-\$1,148.00	-287
July	-\$776.00	94
August	\$1,504.00	658
September	\$0.00	0
October	\$0.00	0
November	\$0.00	0
December	\$0.00	0
	<b>-\$988.00</b>	<b>736</b>

Account Number	Account Title	2024-24 Current year Actual	2024-24 Current year Budget	2024-24 Current year Remaining	2024-24 Current year Remaining %
<b>TOURISM FUND</b>					
<b>TOURISM FUND</b>					
003-012-5245	WEBSITE & ON-LINE MGT	5,446.13	7,500.00	2,053.87	27%
003-012-5247	DESIGN/PRODUCTION	22,879.53	15,000.00	7,879.53-	-53%
003-012-5249	ONLINE MARKETING-MEDIA COSTS	5,665.05	22,500.00	16,834.95	75%
003-012-5250	OFFLINE MEDIA	21,129.21	22,500.00	1,370.79	6%
003-012-5251	TOWN WEBSITE	9,485.82	15,000.00	5,514.18	37%
003-012-5255	ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT FEES	4,444.41	7,500.00	3,055.59	41%
Total TOURISM FUND:		69,050.15	90,000.00	20,949.85	23%

Once the final 4 of 4 SLATE invoice for \$21,666.66 is posted the YTD Actual will be \$90,716.81, which is over the 2024 Budgeted amount.  
 We will need to present a budget amendment to the Board of Trustees as spending is over the allotted amount for the year.



COLORADO  
TOURISM OFFICE

# Mountains and Mesas Regional Destination Stewardship Strategic Plan

FISCAL YEAR 2025–2035



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# Acknowledgments

The development of a Destination Stewardship Strategic Plan for the Mountains and Mesas travel region was a collective undertaking of stakeholders throughout the region. The Colorado Tourism Office expresses our profound appreciation to all individuals who played a pivotal role, including representatives from government agencies, destination management/marketing organization partners, industry associations, tourism stakeholders, and residents. Through virtual meetings, workshops, interviews, and surveys, you generously shared your expertise, perspectives, and vision, shaping a comprehensive strategy that reflects our collective aspirations for destination stewardship. Special recognition is also extended to the members of the Destination Stewardship Council, whose guidance and leadership steered the process with wisdom and foresight.

We also extend our gratitude to Solimar International and their team of regional consultants for facilitating the development of the Colorado Destination Stewardship Strategic Plan and eight regional plans. Their dedication and expertise were instrumental in guiding us through a comprehensive and inclusive consultation process, resulting in a plan reflective of the perspectives and voices of stakeholders.

## Solimar International Team

- **Mimi Mather**, Mountains and Mesas Regional Facilitator
- **Chris Seek**, Team Leader
- **Natalie Sellier**, Project Manager

## Land Acknowledgment

*In the spirit of healing and education, the Colorado Tourism Office acknowledges the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, and the 51 contemporary tribes with historic ties to the land currently known as Colorado. We recognize and honor these Indigenous peoples as the original inhabitants of this land.*



# Introduction

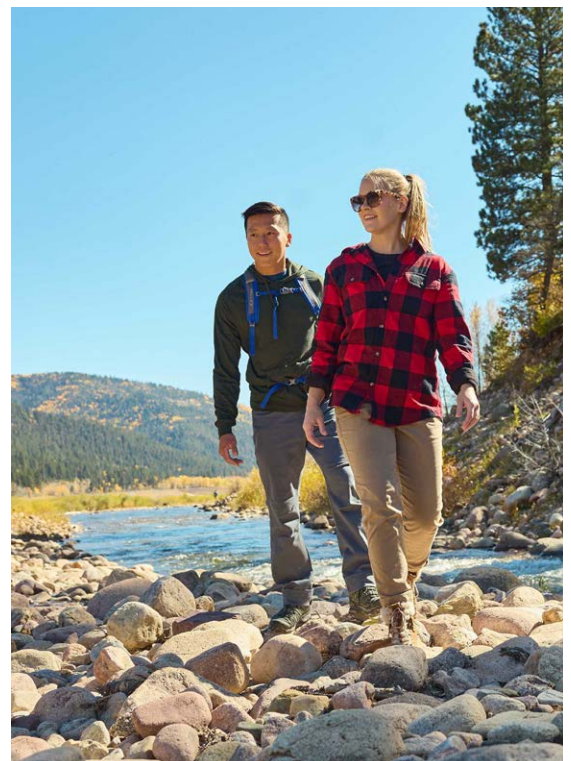
Colorado, renowned for its breathtaking landscapes and vibrant cultural scene, attracted 93.3 million visitors in 2023.\* The Colorado Tourism Office (CTO), a division of the Governor's Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT), aligns with OEDIT's mission to empower all to thrive in Colorado's economy. The CTO's vision is to empower the tourism industry by inspiring the world to explore Colorado responsibly and respectfully. As the nation's first state tourism office with a Destination Stewardship department, the creation of a statewide strategic plan and eight regional plans was essential to identify and align opportunities.

Recognizing the importance of stewardship in the tourism industry, the CTO embarked on a strategic planning initiative to achieve a more sustainable future. This endeavor resulted in the development of both a comprehensive statewide plan and customized plans for Colorado's eight travel regions. The eight regions are Pioneering Plains, Canyons and Plains, Pikes Peak Wonders, Mystic San Luis Valley, Mountains and Mesas, Rockies Playground, The Great West, and Denver and Northern Colorado. By balancing the needs of visitors with the preservation of unique local assets, these plans reflect input from diverse stakeholders and seek to foster responsible tourism practices.

The localized approach taken in crafting the regional plans empowers communities to address their specific challenges and opportunities. Through collaboration and stakeholder engagement, these plans allow for more precise resource allocation and the implementation of strategies aligned with each region's distinct characteristics. Central to this process is the tourism industry's role in advancing destination stewardship principles and informing visitors about the importance of preserving Colorado's natural resources and cultural heritage for future generations.

## Why Is This Plan Needed?

Many of Colorado's tourism destinations face critical challenges due to rising visitation and climate change, necessitating strategic action. An increase in tourists, while beneficial for the economy, can exert pressure on the environment, leading to habitat degradation, pollution, and resource depletion. Additionally, the influx of visitors in some areas is intensifying traffic congestion and affecting the overall quality of life for residents. Rising global temperatures are reducing Colorado's snowpack, shortening the ski season, and impacting other forms of winter tourism and recreation. Recognizing these complexities, the CTO and its partners across the state are working to mitigate the negative impacts of tourism while continuing to strengthen the tourism economy. This plan serves as a roadmap for our collective destination stewardship efforts, guiding the tourism industry toward a sustainable future through collaboration with organizations, leaders, and stakeholders.



\* [Longwoods International. Travel USA Visitor Profile. 2023.](#)

## Who Is This Plan For?

The Mountains and Mesas Regional Destination Stewardship Strategic Plan is the region's comprehensive roadmap for how industry leadership, the tourism industry, and tourism partners can collectively address shared priorities surrounding destination stewardship over the next 10 years. It provides guidance for stakeholders and residents on fulfilling stewardship roles within their communities. Recognizing that destination stewardship involves many interconnected efforts, this plan emphasizes the importance of public-private partnerships and aims to strengthen and align existing initiatives across multiple agencies, organizations, and communities. It underscores the collaborative efforts of the CTO and its partners, including state agencies, destination management/marketing organizations (DMOs), local communities, and tourism businesses.

### Industry Leadership



CTO, DMOs, and other tourism industry associations

### The Tourism Industry



Tourism businesses and attractions

### Tourism Partners



State and federal agencies, Tribal and local governments, nonprofit organizations, and residents

## Structure of the Plan and Implementation

The success of each strategy is based upon the details of their implementation, outlined as follows:

- **Tactics and Resources:** Specific action steps, along with the educational, financial, and communal resources available for executing the strategy.
- **Key Performance Indicators:** Metrics used by the potential lead partner to measure the success of the strategy.
- **Case Studies:** Examples of the strategy implemented in other communities. *Of note, the stewardship case studies included are not an exhaustive list. Additional references to inspiring examples of destination stewardship will be captured as implementation of the plan advances.*
- **Role of the Tourism Industry:** Outlines how tourism businesses and attractions, often coordinated by DMOs can contribute to and support these efforts.
- **Alignment to the Statewide Plan:** The regional strategy aligns closely with these statewide strategies, enabling consistent tracking and progress of stewardship efforts across Colorado.
- **Potential Lead Partners:** Recommended agencies or organizations equipped with the capacity, resources, or programs to lead the implementation and reporting efforts.
- **Potential Supporting Partners:** Entities with relevant expertise that support the action but are not directly responsible for leading it. *This is not an exhaustive list and is meant to serve as a guide.*

This plan seeks to catalyze destination stewardship by establishing partnerships and leveraging a blend of educational, financial, and community resources to bring each strategic vision to life.



# Situation Analysis

The 12-county Mountains and Mesas region stands out for its dramatic landscapes, vibrant ecosystems, rich cultural history, and productive agricultural lands. Home to two national parks, numerous national monuments, scenic byways, and the highest concentration of lakes and rivers in the state, this rugged region offers abundant outdoor recreation opportunities. The Western Slope is agriculturally rich with a strong farm-to-table ethos reflected in its many farms, orchards, vineyards, and ranches. The region's cultural diversity is reflected in its American, Hispanic, and Native American heritage, while well-preserved historical and archaeological sites reveal stories of habitation and deep connections to the land.

The Mountains and Mesas region faces challenges including rising housing costs, impacted wildlife habitats, uninformed visitors, and a lack of appreciation for the tourism industry. To address these issues, this Destination Stewardship strategic plan emphasizes fostering collaboration and improving communication among tourism partners and stakeholders, developing destinations and tourism experiences with a focus on stewardship, and strengthening the partnership with the Colorado Tourism Office.

The destination stewardship priority strategies identified through stakeholder consultations for this region include:

1. Encourage Responsible Visitation and Stewardship
2. Care for the Region's Wildlife
3. Provide a Comprehensive Overview of the Region's Cultural Heritage
4. Engage Artists and Creative Industries in Stewardship
5. Support Local Agriculture and Advance Agritourism
6. Elevate Tourism Entrepreneurship
7. Address Workforce Housing Challenges
8. Promote Alternative Modes of Transportation and Car-Free Tourism

## Tourism Assets and Infrastructure

- **Amtrak Stations:** Grand Junction
- **Commercial Airports:** Durango, Cortez, Grand Junction, Gunnison, Montrose, Telluride
- **Scenic Byways:** Alpine Loop, San Juan Skyway, Silver Thread, Tracks Across Borders, Trails of the Ancients, Unaweeep Tabeguache, West Elk Loop Scenic Byways



- **National Public Lands (parks/historic sites):** Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, Canyon of the Ancients National Monument, Colorado National Monument, Curecanti National Recreation Area, Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area, Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area, Hovenweep National Monument, Mesa Verde National Park
- **Main Streets:** Lake City, Montrose, Ouray, Pagosa Springs, Ridgway, Silverton
- **Creative Districts:** Crested Butte Creative District, Downtown Grand Junction Creative District, Durango Creative District, Gunnison Creative District, Mancos Creative District, Paonia Creative District, Ridgway Creative Main Street, Telluride Arts District
- **State Parks and 66 State Wildlife Areas:** Crawford State Park, James M. Robb Colorado River State Park, Highline State Park, Lone Mesa State Park, Mancos State Park, Navajo State Park, Paonia State Park, Ridgway State Park, Sweitzer State Park, Vega State Park

## Economic Impact of Tourism in 2023\*\*

- |                                      |                           |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Visitor Spending: \$2.3B           | • Employment: 18,900 jobs |
| • Other Travel Spending: \$113.5M    | • Local Tax: \$88.5M      |
| • Total Travel Spending: \$2.4B      | • State Tax: \$60.4M      |
| • Travel Industry Earnings: \$735.5M | • Total Tax: \$148.9M     |

## Destination Stewardship Partners

Within the Mountains and Mesas travel region, many organizations are dedicated to advancing destination stewardship. These partners include government agencies, DMOs, and nonprofits focused on environmental conservation and outdoor recreation. Given the vast and varied geography of the twelve-county region, these organizations tend to operate at the municipal or county level rather than across the entire region. Additionally, the dispersal of attractions and towns, along with the abundance of public lands and outdoor recreation opportunities, means there is no standard route for traveling through Mountains and Mesas. Refer to Annex 2 for a list of regional destination stewardship partners.

## Strategic Planning Process

The destination stewardship strategic planning process for the region involved extensive consultations with stakeholders to understand their perspectives and priorities, garner broad-based support, and align the plan with their needs and expectations. This was accomplished through a series of in-person workshops, interviews, webinars, and surveys conducted from July 2023 through June 2024. Stakeholders actively participated and contributed to the development of the regional plan through these diverse engagement methods:

### July–September 2023: Introductory Meetings

During this initial phase, an introductory webinar was conducted in each region to introduce the destination stewardship strategic planning initiative and engage participants in identifying the key priorities throughout the state.

### August–November 2023: Stakeholder Interviews

Through one-on-one conversations, the regional facilitator delved deeper into the priority issues to understand the root causes, the current efforts to address them, and future opportunities.

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\*\* The Economic Impact of Travel in Colorado / 2023p / Prepared by Dean Runyan Associates

### **September–October 2023: Regional Workshops**

Regional workshops were held in Montrose and Durango to gather further input on priority issues and potential solutions.

### **December 2023: Stakeholder Survey**

An online survey was offered to tourism stakeholders and community members to raise awareness of the strategic planning process, encourage broader participation and gather additional input on future priorities and opportunities for tourism.

### **April 2024: Regional Presentation and Roadshow**

A regional presentation was held in Durango, accompanied by a “roadshow” featuring a series of focused discussions and meetings. These meetings provided an overview of the draft statewide strategy and allowed attendees to discuss region-specific strategies and priorities for inclusion in the draft plan.

### **June 2024: Public Feedback Process**

The draft plan was made available online, giving stakeholders the opportunity to provide comments and suggestions before finalization.

### **Key Metrics:**

- 24 individual stakeholder Interviews
- 101 attendees across three workshops
- 24 individuals consulted during roadshow meetings

The following community-led strategies emerged from the consultation process, providing a framework for the region to address collectively its most pressing destination stewardship priorities over the next 10 years.



# Priority Regional Strategies

## Strategy 1:

### Encourage Responsible Visitation and Stewardship

This strategy builds on the Care for Colorado Leave No Trace Principles and the *Do Colorado Right* campaign by delivering clear and compelling stewardship messaging to visitors. These communications emphasize stewardship as a core value of Mountains and Mesas residents and invite visitors to join in appreciating and protecting the region's natural and cultural resources. Recognizing that each destination may have unique priorities, destinations are encouraged to develop localized stewardship campaigns to address specific needs.



#### Tactics:

- Facilitate and engage in meaningful discussions with land managers and conservation organizations around sustainable outdoor recreation management to understand issues, identify outreach and educational opportunities, and help foster an ethic of stewardship.
- Engage tourism stakeholders in identifying problematic visitor behaviors and needed stewardship messaging.
- Develop a region-wide, Western Slope stewardship campaign that builds on *Do Colorado Right* and invites visitors to adopt stewardship values most relevant to the region through the following steps:
  - Expand on *Do Colorado Right* and Care for Colorado Leave No Trace Principles, incorporating guidelines for responsible backcountry vehicle use, backcountry travel etiquette, wildlife respect, and voluntourism. Create incentives for participation such as merchandise or discounts at local businesses,
  - Promote stewardship as a shared value and cultural ethic of the region,
  - Create a campaign toolkit and encourage businesses and municipalities to share the messaging widely with residents and visitors, and
  - Engage local artists to help with creative campaign promotions, merchandise and outreach.
- Develop customized responsible-use *Do Colorado Right* campaigns for communities with unique visitor behavior concerns. When applicable, utilize similar messaging from *Do Lake City Right*, *Do Palisade Right*, and *Do Ouray Right*.
- Incorporate backcountry safety education and information, such as trailhead signage for avalanche safety.
- Incorporate [Stay the Trail](#) and responsible off-highway vehicle (OHV) and backcountry vehicle use into stewardship messaging.

## Strategy 1 continued

- Optimize arrival stewardship messaging by incorporating *Do Colorado Right* signage in airports as well as on shuttles and public transportation.
- Establish partnerships with local businesses and equip them with a communication toolkit to effectively share *Do Colorado Right* messaging and other stewardship campaigns throughout the community.
- Increase visitor awareness about wildfire prevention and campfire safety.
- Recruit volunteers and promote participation in habitat restoration projects, trail maintenance events, and voluntourism opportunities.
- Promote guided recreation experiences and encourage visitors to choose these options for added insights on habitat, wildlife, and backcountry travel etiquette.
- Partner with guides and associations to encourage *Do Colorado Right* messaging and the utilization of the CTO or local DMO's creative assets.
- Advocate for appropriate permits on public lands while building capacity within land management agencies to issue and manage additional permits effectively.
- Advocate for increased funding for infrastructure needed to support *Do Colorado Right* messaging and stewardship campaigns such as restrooms, trash cans, and seasonal stewardship corps.
- Amplify calls for action and opportunities to support local and regional conservation and wildlife projects.
- Champion public lands by informing visitors and residents about their value and the distinct roles of various land management agencies, building greater support and understanding.

### Resources:

- [Do Palisade Right](#) and [Do Ouray Right](#)
- Volunteer and voluntourism promotions at [Visit Durango](#)
- [American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association](#) (AIANTA) and [Leave No Trace Partnership](#) resources focused on sustainable tourism messaging
- [CTO Destination Development programs](#)
- [CTO Competitive grants and co-ops](#)
- [CTO Do Colorado Right campaign](#)
- [Care for Colorado Coalition](#)

### Destination Stewardship Case Studies

*The following case studies illustrate examples of this strategy implemented in other communities:*

- *Do Lake City Right*, [Do Palisade Right](#), and [Do Ouray Right](#) are examples of customized *Do Colorado Right* campaigns that address specific, priority behaviors occurring both in destinations and on their surrounding public lands. Interviews with residents, land managers and tourism stakeholders were conducted to identify the visitor behaviors that warranted extra attention and information.
- [Telluride and Mountain Village's How to Visit Right](#) is an example of a responsible use campaign specific to the destination.



## Strategy 1 continued

- [Visit Durango's Responsible Tourism](#) and [Care for Durango](#) pledge represents creative communications and tools for encouraging visitors to be more responsible and to adopt sustainable practices.
- [Stay the Trail](#) is a Colorado initiative to encourage responsible OHV use that includes resources for building local campaigns and spreading the message.
- [Canyon of the Ancients National Monument](#) has developed communications surrounding respectful visitation when traveling in archeological and culturally sensitive areas.

### Key Performance Indicators:

- Reach and impressions of stewardship campaigns
- Number of destinations joining the Care for Colorado Coalition
- Number of destinations working on customized *Do Colorado Right* campaigns
- Number of guiding permits issued on public lands
- Number of backcountry vehicle rental companies joining the Care for Colorado Coalition and distributing stewardship messaging
- Number of search and rescue calls and backcountry rescues

**Role of the Tourism Industry:** Participate in and promote educational campaigns reinforcing the importance of responsible visitation and respectful outdoor behavior among residents and visitors.

### Statewide Strategy Alignment

This regional strategy aligns closely with the following strategies from the statewide plan:

#### *Communities*

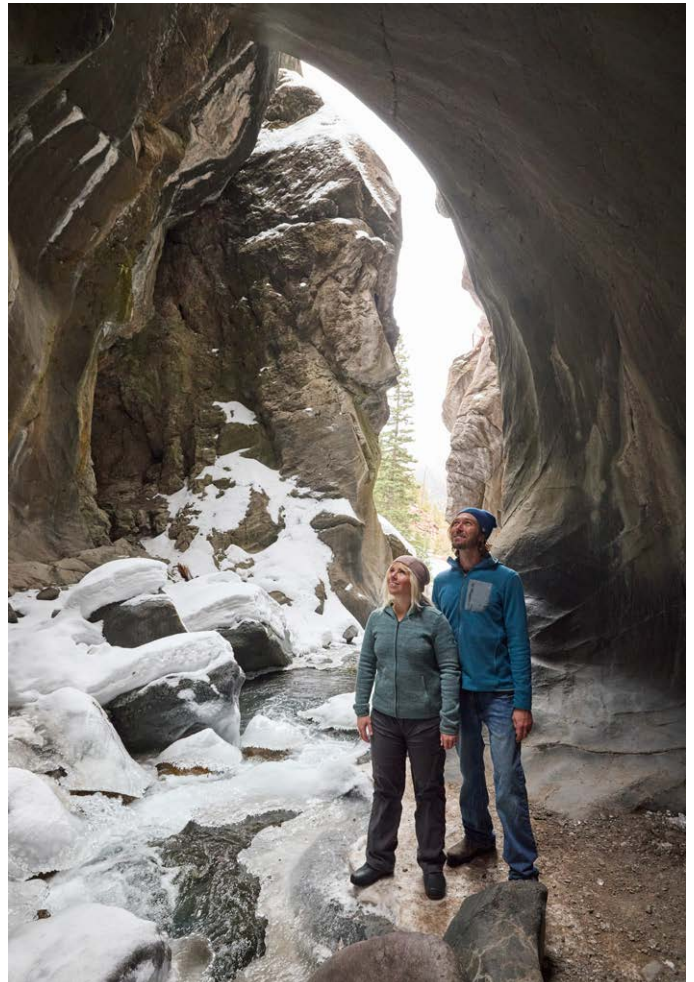
4. Encourage Responsible Visitation in our Communities

#### *Outdoor Recreation*

1. Expand *Do Colorado Right* on Public Lands
7. Promote Guided Recreation Opportunities
8. Enhance Destination Stewardship through Strategic Partnerships with the Private Sector
10. Provide Education on Responsible Backcountry Vehicle Use

**Potential Lead Partners:** CTO, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), DMOs

**Potential Supporting Partners:** Colorado Avalanche Information Center (CAIC), conservation organizations, local businesses, National Park Service (NPS), United States Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), creative districts, Colorado Search and Rescue



## Strategy 2:

### Care for the Region's Wildlife

The Mountains and Mesas region is deeply committed to raising awareness about the impacts of recreation and visitor use on wildlife habitats, underscoring the importance of protecting and restoring these areas. This strategy emphasizes safeguarding critical big game habitats, including lambing and calving areas, winter ranges, and migration corridors. It focuses on amplifying wildlife needs through creative communications and strategic partnerships to reduce human-wildlife conflicts.

#### Tactics:

- Collect annual information from CPW and land managers about seasonal closures, access restrictions, and other wildlife-related accommodations.
- Package and share this information with residents and visitors in a clear and accessible format.
- Incorporate Colorado wildlife information and the importance of habitat protection in tourism promotions.
- Showcase the work of land managers, conservation organizations, land trusts, ranchers, and others working to protect wildlife and biodiversity.
- Partner with CPW, homeowners associations (HOA), property managers, and lodging companies to ensure visitors, renters, and residents are aware of bear protocols and appropriate trash management.
- Disseminate consistent Bear Aware and Trash the Trash campaign information across the region.
- Partner with CPW and the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and identify wildlife migration paths that cross roads and areas with frequent roadkill.
- Inform travelers, tourism stakeholders, and frontline workers about migration corridors and promote responsible travel in these areas.
- Work with CDOT to increase wildlife crossing signage and adjust speed limits where needed.



## Strategy 2 continued

- Work with land managers and conservation organizations to promote volunteer habitat restoration projects and to recruit volunteers.
- Leverage the CTO Learning Lab to engage and train tourism professionals in wildlife conservation education while fostering advocacy and stewardship for frontline staff.

### Resources:

- [CPW's Human-Bear Conflict Reduction grant](#)
- [CTO Learning Lab online platform](#)
- [CPW's Habitat Partnership program](#)
- [CPW's Wildlife Rehabilitation grants program](#)
- [Colorado Wetland partnership](#)
- [CPW Ranching for Wildlife program](#)
- [Great Outdoors Colorado Grant programs](#)
- [Care for Colorado Coalition](#)

### Destination Stewardship Case Studies

The following case studies illustrate examples of this strategy implemented in other communities:

- *Do Lake City Right* is a customized *Do Colorado Right* campaign with an emphasis on respecting wildlife and their alpine habitats.
- [Wintering Wildlife Conservation Initiative](#) is a Colorado initiative and media toolkit focused on limiting impacts to wintering wildlife.



### Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of habitat restoration projects
- Value of investment in habitat protection and restoration
- Number of human-wildlife conflicts
- Number of wildlife and vehicle collisions
- Reach and impression of wildlife-focused communication campaigns

**Role of the Tourism Industry:** Advocate for and support the conservation of wildlife habitats while promoting information for minimizing human-wildlife conflicts.

### Statewide Strategy Alignment

This regional strategy aligns closely with the following strategies from the statewide plan:

#### *Wildlife and Biodiversity*

3. Reduce Human-Wildlife Conflicts
4. Champion Wildlife Habitat Protection and Restoration

**Potential Lead Partners:** NPS, USFS, BLM, Fish and Wildlife Service, CPW, CDOT, regional partnerships

**Potential Supporting Partners:** CTO, conservation organizations, DMOs

### Strategy 3:

## Provide a Comprehensive Overview of the Region's Cultural Heritage

The Mountains and Mesas region is dedicated to honoring and celebrating its Native American heritage through meaningful collaboration with Indigenous communities. This approach focuses on respectfully honoring and recognizing Native American traditions, history, and modern contributions. Additionally, this strategy proposes integrating diverse voices within the tourism industry to enrich existing interpretations and provide a comprehensive narrative of the region's history, cultural heritage, and modern cultures. By emphasizing collaboration, research, and storytelling, this strategy aims to inform visitors and residents, enhance interpretive materials, and improve tourism experiences.

### Tactics:

- Collaborate with local historical societies, historians, Indigenous communities and museums to uncover and share a more comprehensive telling of the region's cultural heritage.
- Coordinate with the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, and Native American communities in the region to build relationships and partnerships that may lead to the exploration of potential projects.
- Convene a regional workshop with tribal representatives, DMOs, History Colorado, local historians, and land managers to explore opportunities to expand the interpretation and sharing of the region's Native American culture and history.
- Host listening sessions with land managers and Indigenous communities.
- Invite Native American guides to create tours and itineraries featuring the region's cultural sights and natural areas, highlighting Indigenous culture's relationship to the land and environment.
- Consider Indigenous-language signs for public land destinations and attractions.
- Create and share land acknowledgments.



### Strategy 3 continued

- Identify and support Native American businesses and entrepreneurs.
- Offer tourism product development training and support to the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, and Native American communities in the region.
- Acknowledge Western settlers' impacts on the region's culture and environment in interpretive media.
- Launch an expanded storytelling initiative that features new voices and new, broader perspectives on the Western Slope's history, culture and people.
- Recruit a diverse range of storytellers, creatives and historians to collaborate with DMOs in sharing the region's history.
- Work with cultural experts to develop interpretive materials, regional tours, and a traveling exhibit for the region's visitor centers.
- Enhance visitor-facing websites and trip-planning resources by incorporating more cultural history.
- Identify locations to host Native American artisans interested in selling their wares and promote these Indigenous markets.
- Promote both native-made and locally crafted art and souvenirs.
- Support public art that speaks to the region's cultural heritage.

#### Resources:

- [CTO Destination Development programs](#)
- [CTO Competitive grants and co-ops](#)
- [History Colorado State Historical Fund grants](#)
- [OEDIT grants and financing programs for business start-ups](#)
- [Colorado Creative Industries \(CCI\) Colorado Creates grants](#)
- [Nativeamerica.travel](#) - AIANTA's traveler-facing website that connects visitors with Tribal tourism experiences

#### Destination Stewardship Case Studies

*The following case studies illustrate examples of this strategy implemented in other communities:*

- [The Canyon of the Ancients National Monument](#). The Four Corners Market includes a dedicated space where Native Americans can sell their art and handcrafts. Additionally, BLM has created "Visit with Respect" messaging that honors Indigenous cultures and informs visitors how to visit respectfully.
- [Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Park](#) is an example of guided, native-led tours and outdoor recreation experiences which help ensure visitors are informed and impacts to cultural resources are minimized.
- [Heritage of Durango](#), funded by a CTO grant, enabled Visit Durango to hire researchers to document the area's Indigenous, Hispanic/LatinX, and Black history. The research findings and stories are posted on Visit Durango's website.

#### Key Performance Indicators:

- Reach and impressions of new, expanded storytelling strategy and other cultural heritage campaigns
- Number of cultural heritage awareness initiatives and projects
- Value of investment to support Native American tourism development and marketing

### Strategy 3 continued

**Role of the Tourism Industry:** Engage with Indigenous communities, historians, cultural experts, and creatives to effectively share and celebrate the region’s diverse cultural heritage.

#### Statewide Strategy Alignment

This regional strategy aligns closely with the following strategies from the statewide plan:

##### *Cultural Heritage*

1. Foster Inclusive Cultural Heritage Partnerships
2. Elevate Native American Heritage
4. Enhance Awareness of Diverse Cultural Heritage

##### *Arts and Creative Industries*

6. Amplify Local Artisan Markets

**Potential Lead Partners:** Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs (CCIA), History Colorado, DMOs, Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute Tribes, local historic organizations, museums

**Potential Supporting Partners:** CTO, BLM (Canyon of the Ancients National Monument), NPS (Mesa Verde National Park)

### Strategy 4:

## Engage Artists and Creative Industries in Stewardship

The tourism industry and its regional creative partners are leveraging art to inspire greater care for Colorado’s resources. This strategy explores the integration of art to celebrate the region’s cultural and natural heritage while amplifying residents’ stewardship values. Whether encountered on trails or in town centers, diverse forms of art can provoke reflection and deepen understanding of stewardship challenges and opportunities. Additionally, this strategy strives to engage new, creative voices in the stewardship dialogue and movement across the region.

#### Tactics:

- Convene a “stewardship and public art session” at the Creative Industries Summit to explore ways in which art can be a change agent, inspiring greater care for the region and state’s resources.
- Commission a local artist to develop a local stewardship icon or identity and associated merchandise. Sales revenue from these items can fund additional stewardship-inspired art.



## Strategy 4 continued

- Sponsor a stewardship artist-in-residency program.
- Host and curate a *Do Colorado Right* art exhibit focused on stewardship.
- Develop a guide highlighting resource-based and stewardship-inspired public art and artists across the region.
- Include a stewardship theme or track in local art happenings such as film festivals, art shows, and music festivals.
- Facilitate discussions between conservation organizations and artist groups.
- Build a list of artists and art organizations in the region to share with visitors.
- Connect local environmental artists with destinations or public land managers looking for public art installations.
- Dedicate funding for arts and cultural offerings as a means to maintain local character, promote stewardship and develop unique tourism products.

### Resources:

- [Colorado Creative Industries Colorado Creates grants](#)
- [Arts in Society grant](#)
- [CTO Destination Development programs](#)
- [CTO Competitive grants and co-ops](#)

### Destination Stewardship Case Studies

*The following case studies illustrate examples of this strategy implemented in other communities:*

- [Art, Environment + Sustainability](#) is an example of an artist-in-residency program in Paonia produced by Western University, Texas Tech and Elsewhere Studios. Artists are encouraged to explore how art can help foster greater care for the environment.
- [North Fork Valley Creative Coalition](#) is a nonprofit managing the Paonia creative district and fostering art and creative expression across three communities.
- [Betty Ford Alpine Garden Vail](#) and [Denver Botanic Gardens](#) are two locations exhibiting environmental art or art that addresses social and political issues relating to the natural and urban environment.

### Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of artist-led stewardship projects
- Number of arts, film, and music festivals highlighting stewardship

**Role of the Tourism Industry:** Pursue partnerships with local artists and engage with arts-driven projects that creatively address stewardship challenges.

### Statewide Strategy Alignment

This regional strategy aligns closely with the following strategies from the statewide plan:

#### *Arts and Creative Industries*

4. Cultivate Artistic Approaches to Stewardship Challenges
10. Integrate Art into Outdoor Recreation

## Strategy 4 continued

**Potential Lead Partners:** CCI, Creative Districts including Crested Butte, Durango Grand Junction, Gunnison, Mancos, Paonia, Ridgway, Telluride

**Potential Supporting Partners:** CTO, DMOs, conservation organizations, art nonprofit organizations

## Strategy 5:

### Support Local Agriculture and Advance Agritourism

With its abundance of small-scale farms and producers, Colorado's Western Slope is well-positioned for agritourism growth. The agricultural landscapes of Delta, Mesa, and Montezuma counties, complemented by thriving markets, and burgeoning liquid arts venues such as wineries, distilleries, breweries, cideries, and farm-to-table restaurants throughout the region are a draw for tourists. This strategy identifies tactics to bolster agritourism across the region while celebrating and safeguarding the region's rich agricultural and culinary heritage.



#### Tactics:

- Showcase the different areas of agriculture, agritourism experiences, unique products, and culinary traditions by creating an illustrative regional agritourism map.
- Create a travel guide showcasing agritourism experiences and itineraries, highlighting local producers in each of the agricultural areas within the region.
- Advocate for statewide marketing of unique agritourism experiences, events, and local food and agricultural zones throughout the state.
- Promote local food sheds and the “eat local” movement by highlighting restaurants that feature locally sourced ingredients.
- Incorporate agritourism in destination marketing to highlight signature products, agricultural experience and events, agricultural history, and farmers markets.
- Host signature culinary events.
- Engage food content creators and food critics to highlight the region's culinary scene.
- Work with local bike shops and cyclists to identify and promote gravel and road bike routes connecting multiple producers, agricultural operations, and agritourism experiences.
- Collaborate with agricultural producers to develop agritourism experiences and ensure they are visitor-ready.
- Create agritourism development workshops, training and ongoing coaching for interested producers and agritourism entrepreneurs.



## Strategy 5 continued

- Offer incentives and financial discounts for farmers to participate in tourism training, conferences, and networking events.
- Facilitate connections between local producers and restaurants interested in featuring local food.
- Develop a signage or wayfinding plan to clearly mark agritourism sites and experiences.
- Support AIANTA efforts to bolster food sovereignty through the cultivation of Indigenous agritourism.
- Leverage the CTO's public relations team to generate earned media.

### Resources:

- [CTO Destination Development programs](#)
- [CTO Competitive grants and co-ops](#)
- [CTO Learning Lab](#)
- OEDIT's Small Business Accelerated Growth Program grants
- [Colorado Agritourism Association](#)
- [Colorado State University Extension](#)
- [AIANTA](#)

### Destination Stewardship Case Studies

*The following case studies illustrate examples of this strategy implemented in other communities:*

- [Local's First | Eat Local Month](#) is a business alliance made up of 260+ La Plata County businesses and nonprofit organizations that encourage support for local businesses including local agricultural operators and growers. The alliance sponsors an Eat Local Month and features local restaurants that support the region's agricultural producers. The month concludes with a fall feast, the [Harvest Dinner](#).
- Palisade Fruit and Wine Byway is an agritourism route and map created by Visit Palisade that links wineries, orchards, farms and other agricultural operations. The Byway features three different routes of varying lengths and visitors are encouraged to travel via bike, vehicle, or to take a tour.
- [Valley Organic Growers Association \(VOGA\)](#) is a nonprofit that represents local growers and promotes agriculture. VOGA maintains a website as well as a physical guide with listings and information on all of its members. The organization also hosts workshops, classes, and tours.
- [Good Food Collective](#) is a Durango nonprofit dedicated to bolstering the regional food system and food economy of southwestern Colorado. The organization compiles and shares information on local food and agricultural operations. The Good Food Collective is dedicated to strengthening the regional food system of southwest Colorado and addresses food security, food justice and equity.

### Key Performance Indicators:

- Reach and impressions of agritourism marketing campaigns
- Number of pageviews on Colorado.com and DMO websites related to agritourism and Colorado cuisine
- Number of agricultural operations supported
- Increase in agritourism visits
- Number of communities developing agritourism guides
- Number of new agritourism offerings

## Strategy 5 continued

**Role of the Tourism Industry:** Promote agritourism and culinary tourism experiences while empowering more agricultural operators to welcome visitors and showcase their products.

### Statewide Strategy Alignment

This regional strategy aligns closely with the following strategies from the statewide plan:

#### *Agriculture, Food, and Liquid Arts*

6. Advance the Development of Agritourism
8. Promote Agritourism Offerings

#### *Cultural Heritage*

10. Highlight Colorado's Agricultural and Culinary Heritage

**Potential Lead Partners:** [Colorado Agritourism Association](#), DMOs

**Potential Supporting Partners:** CTO, Colorado Department of Agriculture, farmers, ranchers, businesses, agricultural and local food organizations, restaurants

## Strategy 6:

### Elevate Tourism Entrepreneurship

Tourism serves as a vital economic driver across the region, offering promising career opportunities for residents and youth. This strategy aims to foster tourism careers and enhance the industry's appeal as a viable professional pathway. The Colorado tourism industry can be a major partner in developing comprehensive workforce training programs that provide residents with the agency required to pursue career paths in tourism business and entrepreneurship.



#### Tactics:

- Develop partnerships and increase collaboration between DMOs, tourism businesses, and local education institutions to support training and entrepreneurship.
- Showcase careers in tourism and share the stories and experiences of local entrepreneurs.
- Recognize the achievements of tourism professionals with annual awards.
- Develop tourism-based courses, curriculum, and programming with local colleges such as Fort Lewis and Western, led by professors and regional tourism champions.
- Foster career advancement for frontline staff workers through the CTO Learning Lab platforms.
- Encourage participation in the Colorado Tourism Leadership Journey to support professional development.
- Recruit tourism industry professionals to participate in job fairs.
- Host tourism field trips and speak in local schools.

## Strategy 6 continued

- Host tourism entrepreneur networking events and facilitate discussions about regional needs and entrepreneurial opportunities.
- Host an annual “tourism tournament” modeled after Shark Tank, where entrepreneurs can pitch their ideas to support their local economies and serve their community and visitors, with seed money provided to the winners.
- Work with CPW and other land managers to permit more entrepreneurial activity such as food trucks, equipment rental, guides, and shuttles on state parks and public lands. Build capacity within land management agencies to enable the issuance of additional permits.
- Bolster entrepreneurship and local business by creating a regional or state-wide listing of locally-owned businesses, highlighting their products, services and stories.

### Resources:

- [CTO Destination Development programs](#)
- [CTO Competitive grants and co-ops](#)
- [Colorado Small Business Development Center](#) (SBDC) for localized programming
- [CTO Learning Lab platforms](#)
- [CTO's Tourism Leadership Journey](#)
- [Region 9](#) Economic Development District Programs and information

### Destination Stewardship Case Studies

*The following case studies illustrate examples of this strategy implemented in other communities:*

- [ICELab](#) is Gunnison’s business resource center that serves as a collaboration between Gunnison Crested Butte Tourism and Prosperity Partnership and Western Colorado University to support local entrepreneurship.
- Denver’s [Startup Week](#) is a celebration of everything entrepreneurial in Denver to help build a culture of innovation.
- [Visit Denver’s Tourism Pays campaign](#) has effectively shown how tourism spending positively impacts businesses and the quality of life for residents throughout the state.

### Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of tourism businesses participating in workforce development programs
- Number of schools and non-profit organizations promoting tourism as a career path
- Number of colleges/universities working with the tourism industry

**Role of the Tourism Industry:** Foster innovation and collaboration in the tourism sector, bolster tourism entrepreneurs, and showcase the merits of careers in tourism.

### Statewide Strategy Alignment

This regional strategy aligns closely with the following strategies from the statewide plan:

#### *Workforce*

1. Develop Industry Focused Workforce Strategies
8. Promote and Integrate Tourism Career Education in Schools
9. Build the Brand of Working in Tourism

## Strategy 6 continued

**Potential Lead Partners:** [Colorado SBDC](#), [Colorado Department of Labor and Employment \(CDLE\)](#), [Colorado Workforce Development Council \(CWDC\)](#)

**Potential Supporting Partners:** DMOs, chambers of commerce, colleges, universities, entrepreneurial accelerators, tourism businesses

## Strategy 7:

### Address Workforce Housing Challenges

Rising housing and rental prices present a significant challenge to retaining the tourism workforce and maintaining the unique culture of destinations across the region. Addressing this issue requires support from the tourism industry to advocate for the development of more affordable housing and promote innovative solutions amid the statewide housing crisis. Throughout the region, tourism stakeholders can collaborate with local governments to share information, champion creative solutions, and convene discussions to support the workforce.

#### Tactics:

- Advocate for a statewide fund and technical assistance to address the workforce housing crisis.
- Incentivize employers to find or create affordable housing for their employees.
- Create a system and incentives for second-homeowners and short-term rental owners to offer their property as workforce housing.
- Develop a platform that displays affordable housing options for employees including information on housing lotteries.
- Work with local banks to offer regional down payment loan assistance programs.
- Create incentives for private companies to build more workforce housing.
- Convene land managers (BLM, USFS, NPS) and municipalities to look for opportunities to house federal employees and seasonal workers.



## Strategy 7 continued

- Provide resources and best practices in short-term rental policies.
- Create mechanisms for broader sharing of housing resources from the Colorado Association of Ski Towns (CAST) as well as other community clearinghouses and resource sites for housing inventory.
- Share examples and explore grant and funding opportunities for repurposing underused or unused community infrastructure into housing solutions.

### Resources:

- [Colorado Department of Local Affairs](#) (DOLA) Division of Housing provides housing development specialists, gap funding for acquisition, rehabilitation and new construction projects
- [Homeshare](#) is an online home-sharing platform that matches compatible home providers and renters
- [CAST and Northwest Colorado Council of Governments 2023 Workforce Housing Report](#)
- [Colorado Mountain Housing Coalition](#) partner programs
- [Colorado Housing and Finance Authority](#) (CHFA)

### Destination Stewardship Case Studies

*The following case studies illustrate examples of this strategy implemented in other communities:*

- [Gunnison Valley Regional Housing Authority](#), [Regional Housing Alliance of La Plata County](#), and [NoCo Housing Now](#) are three examples of regional housing organizations working to address housing challenges and increase the supply of affordable housing.
- The [Colorado Mountain Housing Coalition](#) collaborates with banks for down payment loan assistance and other housing programs.
- Aspen Skiing Company's [Tenants for Turns](#) program provides ski passes to homeowners who offer rooms or rental properties to the company's employees.

### Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of new affordable housing solutions aimed at supporting the tourism workforce
- Percentage of the workforce living inside the community in which they work
- Reduced workforce turnover or increased retention rates

**Role of the Tourism Industry:** Collaborate with local governments and housing authorities to advocate for and support the development of affordable housing solutions.

### Statewide Strategy Alignment

This regional strategy aligns closely with the following strategies from the statewide plan:

#### *Tourism Workforce*

3. Share Solutions to Support Workforce Housing Challenges
4. Implement Employer-Assisted Housing Programs

**Potential Lead Partners:** DOLA Division of Housing, local housing authorities

**Potential Supporting Partners:** CHFA, CAST, local businesses

## Strategy 8: Promote Alternative Modes of Transportation and Car-Free Tourism

While the Mountains and Mesas travel region spans a large geographic area, there are opportunities to promote increased car-free travel. This strategy focuses on enhancing pedestrian and bike infrastructure to benefit both residents and visitors, while also encouraging the adoption of sustainable transportation alternatives.

### Tactics:

- Promote public transportation and other eco-friendly transportation methods as enjoyable and convenient choices.
- Expand electric vehicle (EV) fast-charging infrastructure to encourage increased use of EVs.
- Assess how visitors move through destinations and evaluate the degree to which they are utilizing bike and pedestrian infrastructure, public transit options, and other modes instead of driving.
- Create car-free guides featuring bike rental shops, shuttle operators, and other alternative transportation options such as trolleys, rickshaws, bike sharing, and carpooling. Include a map of bike paths and lanes, bus schedules, and tips for exploring and enjoying the area on foot or by bike.
- Incorporate alternative transportation modes and car-free experiences into trip-planning resources and marketing materials.
- Provide recommendations for exploring destinations without a car, highlighting sites and experiences easily accessed by bike, on foot, or by public transit.
- Highlight the walkability of towns in destination promotions.
- Incorporate a carbon travel calculator on DMO websites and provide information on offsetting the impacts of travel.
- Promote a full range of multi-modal transportation options for getting to and from regional airports to destinations.
- Explore bike-sharing programs and incentivize lodging providers to provide guests with loaner bikes.
- Create a series of bike tours or routes.
- Promote and celebrate bike culture across the region.
- Engage local trail and cyclist groups in exploring opportunities for bike infrastructure upgrades and linkages.
- Look for opportunities to connect outlying trail systems with towns via bike paths, buses, or shuttles.
- Incentivize travelers to use eco-friendly transportation methods with discounts at local businesses and restaurants.
- Initiate a carpooling system for residents and visitors to access outlying trailheads and other destinations.



**Resources:**

- [5 Ways to Travel Without Your Car](#)
- [CDOT Office of Innovative Mobility grants](#)
- [CTO Destination Development programs](#)
- [CTO Competitive grants and co-ops](#)
- [Colorado Energy Office \(CEO\)](#)
- [Bicycle Colorado](#)
- OEDIT's Small Business Accelerated Growth Program Grants to support transportation-related entrepreneurs



**Destination Stewardship Case Studies**

*The following case studies illustrate examples of this strategy implemented in other communities:*

- Durango's River Trail and [Colorado Riverfront Trail](#) (Fruita-Palisade) are two examples of recreation paths that facilitate increased bike travel.
- Visit Durango's [Transportation Sustainability Practices](#) suggests ways in which a visitor can embrace greener transport and get around town using eco-minded transportation options.
- [Carbon Offset Credits](#) make it convenient for visitors to reduce their carbon footprint by purchasing carbon offset credits. Visit Durango features the local carbon offset provider [4Core Carbon Offset Fund](#).

**Key Performance Indicators:**

- Traffic counts on bike paths
- Number of people renting bikes
- Number of people using CDOT's Bustang Services
- Number of pedestrian and bike pathway infrastructure projects
- Number of carpool programs established
- Number of EV charging stations installed

**Role of the Tourism Industry:** Support the enhancement of bike and pedestrian infrastructure and promote alternative transportation options to visitors.

**Statewide Strategy Alignment**

This regional strategy aligns closely with the following strategies from the statewide plan:

*Transportation*

3. Raise Awareness and Ridership of Bustang, Snowstang, and Pegasus Services
5. Upgrade Pedestrian and Bike Pathways
6. Promote Carpooling for Tourism

**Potential Lead Partners:** CDOT, CEO, Bicycle Colorado, DMOs

**Potential Supporting Partners:** Municipal transportation departments, CTO, Main Street partners

# Implementation and Coordination Plan

Implementing the Destination Stewardship Strategic Plan for the Mountains and Mesas region is a substantial endeavor, involving the coordination of numerous regional, state, and federal agencies along with a vast network of dedicated tourism industry partners. To effectively execute this ambitious plan, securing solid commitments from these organizations and leveraging existing funding strategies will be essential.

Central to this initiative is the indispensable leadership of the CTO's Destination Stewardship Council (DSC). Comprising industry leaders, the DSC has been instrumental in shaping the strategic direction outlined in the plan. Moving forward, the DSC will serve as the implementation steering committee, convening regularly to facilitate ongoing dialogue on destination stewardship. These meetings will provide a platform to review progress, adjust strategies as needed, and foster collaboration essential to achieving our goals.

An annual report and online platform will serve as resources to evaluate progress against key indicators and celebrate achievements, demonstrating the collective impact of our efforts in advancing destination stewardship throughout Colorado.

## Looking Ahead

The Colorado tourism industry is committed to protecting and enhancing our state for present and future generations. By embracing this responsibility, we are working toward a shared vision where destination stewardship is central to our tourism industry and community life. Through collaboration, innovation, and dedication, we aim to leave a lasting legacy for all who call Colorado home and those who are drawn to its stunning landscapes and rich heritage.

We commend the pioneers who have already initiated local destination stewardship plans tailored to their communities. These independent efforts reflect the foresight and dedication of local leaders and stakeholders, deserving our collective admiration and support.

Communities that have not yet begun their destination stewardship planning are encouraged to draw inspiration from the statewide framework and regional plans to pursue strategies that meet their specific needs and ambitions. For those already engaged, we hope these plans reinforce your efforts, providing additional resources, insights, and opportunities for collaboration. By sharing experiences and learning from one another, we can foster a culture of destination stewardship that honors our diverse landscapes and cultures, enriches our communities, and secures a sustainable future for Colorado.





# Annex 1: Abbreviations and Acronyms

<b>AIANTA</b>	American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association
<b>BLM</b>	Bureau of Land Management
<b>CAIC</b>	Colorado Avalanche Information Center
<b>CAST</b>	Colorado Association of Ski Towns
<b>CCI</b>	Colorado Creative Industries
<b>CCIA</b>	Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs
<b>CDLE</b>	Colorado Department of Labor and Employment
<b>CDOT</b>	Colorado Department of Transportation
<b>CEO</b>	Colorado Energy Office
<b>CHFA</b>	Colorado Housing and Finance Authority
<b>CPW</b>	Colorado Parks and Wildlife
<b>CTO</b>	Colorado Tourism Office
<b>CWDC</b>	Colorado Workforce Development Council
<b>DMO</b>	Destination Management/Marketing Organization
<b>DOLA</b>	Colorado Department of Local Affairs
<b>DSC</b>	Destination Stewardship Council
<b>EV</b>	Electric Vehicle
<b>HOA</b>	Homeowners Association
<b>LNT</b>	Leave No Trace
<b>NPS</b>	National Park Service
<b>OEDIT</b>	Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade
<b>OHV</b>	Off-Highway Vehicle
<b>STOR</b>	Gunnison County Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Recreation
<b>USFS</b>	United States Forest Service

# Annex 2: Destination Stewardship Partners

## Government Agencies

Colorado is fortunate to have millions of acres of public lands, a good portion of which is found on Colorado's Western Slope and within the Mountains and Mesas region. The following state and federal land management agencies are leading efforts to protect natural and cultural resources and encourage responsible recreation on public lands.

- Bureau of Land Management
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife
- National Park Service (Colorado National Monument, Mesa Verde National Park, Black Canyon of the Gunnison and Curecanti NRA)
- U.S. Forest Service

## Regional Municipalities and Counties

The Mountains and Mesas travel region is comprised of the following cities and counties:

- **Cities:** Almont, Bayfield, Cedaredge, Chimney Rock, Clifton, Collbranm Cortez, Crawford, Crested Butte/Mt. Crested Butte, De Beque, Delta, Dolores, Dove Creek, Durango, Eckert, Fruita, Gateway, Grand Junction, Gunnison, Hesperus, Hotchkiss, Ignacio, Lake City, Mancos, Marble, Mesa, Mesa Verde National Park, Montrose, Naturita, Norwood, Olathe, Orchard City, Ouray, Pagosa Springs, Palisade, Paonia, Placerville, Powderhorn, Rico, Ridgway, Silverton, Somerset, Telluride/Mountain Village, Towaoc, Uravan, Vallecito Lake
- **Counties:** Archuleta, Delta, Dolores, Gunnison, Hinsdale, La Plata, Mesa, Montezuma, Montrose, Ouray, San Juan, San Miguel

## Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnerships Initiative

There are five Colorado Regional Partnerships at work in the Mountains and Mesas travel region. While their missions and scope of projects vary, they are based upon collaboration between land managers, conservation organizations, and recreation user groups, as well as a commitment to habitat protection, restoration, and stewardship.

- **Gunnison County Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Recreation (STOR)** facilitates idea-sharing between entities (including land managers, trails organizations, tourism industry professionals, businesses, and city and county officials) that might not otherwise communicate with one another.
- **Montelores Coalition** balances sustainable outdoor recreation, conservation of cultural and natural resources, and economic development opportunities in southwest Colorado.
- **Ouray Regional Recreation and Conservation Alliance** collaborates to expand land, water and wildlife conservation as well as advance shared goals of outdoor recreation, natural resource management, priority setting, and planning for surrounding areas.
- **Southwest Colorado Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Roundtable** convenes diverse users and voices from the region to develop common ground, share up-to-date information, and chart a course for the region to identify overarching goals and strategies related to conservation and recreation.

- **West Slope Outdoors Alliance** covers Delta, Mesa, and Montrose counties. It is a collaboration of individuals representing nonprofits, government entities, businesses, agriculture, ranching and outdoor user groups who recognize the value of our region's natural and recreation assets as drivers of economic stability, community wellness, and resiliency for our land and wildlife.

## **Other Regional Associations, Alliances, and Coalitions**

In addition to numerous organizations working on tourism management and destination stewardship in the region, several regional alliances and coalitions are dedicated to addressing challenges and developing shared solutions. These include:

**Colorado Association of Ski Towns** addresses the unique challenges mountain resort communities face in providing municipal services to residents and visitors

**Colorado Association of Viticulture and Enology** encourages and supports enology and viticulture in Colorado.

**Colorado Canyons Association** fosters community stewardship, education, and awareness of our National Conservation Lands with a focus on McInnis Canyons, Dominguez-Escalante, and Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Areas (NCAs) in western Colorado.

**Colorado Creative Corridor** promotes culture, arts, food and fun in the mountains of Western Colorado

**Colorado Housing and Finance Authority** strengthens Colorado by investing in affordable housing and community development.

**Colorado Mountain Housing Coalition** collaborates with banks for down payment loan assistance and other housing programs

## **DMOs and Local Tourism-Related Organizations**

The Mountains and Mesas region boasts a diverse array of organizations and initiatives focused on advancing destination stewardship. Many of these organizations work locally and often partner with municipal governments. This list is not exhaustive, as numerous emerging efforts involve collaboration among multiple DMOs, local and county governments, state and federal land managers, and other nonprofit organizations.

**Colorado National Monument Association** protects and celebrates the Colorado National Monument.

**Cortez Chamber** increases and sustains economic vitality in the Cortez Area and Montezuma County.

**Crested Butte/Mt. Crested Butte Chamber of Commerce** provides communication, event, and advocacy services for business members, the Crested Butte and Mt. Crested Butte communities and visitors.

**Delta County Tourism Cabinet** works to promote tourism in Delta County and encourages visitation to and exploration of the county.

**Dolores Chamber of Commerce** shares information about the Dolores area and serves business, community, and visitors.

**Fruita Chamber of Commerce** builds business connections and a strong community in which local businesses thrive.

**Fruita Tourism Advisory Board** advises and recommends the budget and expenditures of lodging tax funds.

**Fruita Welcome Center** offers travel and trip planning services.

**Gunnison Crested Butte Tourism and Prosperity Partnership** leverages Local Marketing District and grant monies to grow overnight visitation revenues, diversify and develop the Gunnison County economy in a sustainable manner, and support Western Colorado University and the creation of entrepreneurial opportunities.

**Ignacio Chamber of Commerce** supports the economic health of local businesses by working together for community success, advancing economic development and networking with citizens, governments, businesses, and education organizations.

**Lake City/Hinsdale County Marketing Committee** plans for and implements a comprehensive tourism marketing strategy both short and long range for Lake City and Hinsdale County.

**Mancos Chamber of Commerce** supports the business community, promotes pro-business activities, and increases business visibility and revenue while embracing the Mancos' diverse heritage and tourism-based economy.

**Mesa Verde Country** promotes and manages visitation in Montezuma County.

**North Fork Valley Creative District** manages the Paonia Creative District.

**Nucla-Naturita Chamber of Commerce** promotes existing businesses and industries and the Nucla-Naturita area for vacationing and relocation, assisting with the economic development of the area.

**Pagosa Springs Area Tourism Board** makes specific recommendations relative to expenditures of lodging taxes.

**Pagosa Spring Chamber of Commerce** assists members of the Pagosa Springs business community with development opportunities through resources, advocacy, services and education.

**Palisade Chamber of Commerce** supports and advocates for local businesses and promotes Palisade.

**Palisade Tourism Advisory Board** works on heightening the Palisade's exposure among potential visitors and improving the visitor's experience.

**Paonia Chamber of Commerce** supports and promotes local businesses as well as community growth in the Town of Paonia and the North Fork Valley.

**Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce** promotes business and community growth and development in the Town of Ridgway and the surrounding area.

**Silverton Chamber of Commerce** promotes San Juan County/Silverton businesses, events, promotions and recruitment of new residents and businesses.

**Southern Ute Indian Tribe** resides in southwestern Colorado on the Southern Ute Indian Reservation.

**Telluride Tourism Board** markets and maintains the quality of the Telluride region experience for the benefit of both the visitor and the economic sustainability of the community.

**Ute Mountain Ute Tribe** resides in southwestern Colorado on the Ute Mountain Ute Indian Reservation and is the Weenuche Band of Ute Nation.

**Vallecito Lake Chamber of Commerce** supports businesses and tourism in Vallecito, Colorado.

**Visit Durango** serves La Plata County by channeling the power of visitation.

**Visit Grand Junction** is the city's destination marketing organization responsible for promoting Grand Junction's brand to create an attractive destination while elevating its public image as a dynamic place to live and work. Through the promotion of travel and tourism, the department strengthens Grand Junction's economic position, which provides a sustainable, diverse, and consistent economy that supports businesses, and enhances the quality of life for residents.

**Visit Montrose** promotes and manages visitation in Montrose and its surrounding areas.

**Visit Ouray** markets and manages the Ouray travel experience while promoting local businesses and respectful use.

**West End Economic Development Corporation** creates and encourages an inviting, pro-business environment, integrated with our independent spirit and friendly culture, while capitalizing on our natural and historic resources.

## **NGOs, Academia, and Community Entities**

Below is a list of other groups, organizations and entities in the Mountains and Mesas travel region currently engaged in resource stewardship at a community or county level. It is important to note there are many other public and private sector individuals and organizations supporting the work of the listed entities as well as championing other initiatives.

- 1% for Open Space
- Animas Conservancy
- Coal Creek Watershed Coalition
- Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Trail Association
- Colorado West Land Trust
- Cortez Cultural Center
- Crested Butte Land Trust
- Crested Butte Mountain Bike Association
- Crow Canyon Archaeological Center
- Dark Sky Colorado
- Durango Trails
- Elk Mountains Backcountry Alliance
- Fort Lewis College
- Good Food Collective
- Gunnison Trails
- High Country Conservation Advocates
- ICElab
- La Plata Open Space Conservancy
- Lake Fork Conservancy
- Living Rivers
- Local's First
- Mesa Verde Foundation
- Mountain Roots Food Project
- Mountain Studies Institute
- Rico Trails Alliance
- San Juan Development Association
- San Juan Mountains Association
- San Miguel Conservation Organization
- Silverton Singletrack Society
- Southwest Land Alliance
- Stay the Trail

- Telluride Foundation
- Telluride Institute
- Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership
- Ute Indian Museum

- Valley Organic Growers Association
- Western Colorado Alliance
- Western Colorado Conservation Corps
- Western Colorado University

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