



Denver and Northern Colorado Regional Destination Stewardship Strategic Plan

FISCAL YEAR 2025–2035



Contents

Acknowledgments	3
Introduction	4
Situation Analysis	6
Priority Regional Strategies.....	9
Strategy 1: Expand the Region’s Efforts Toward Inclusivity and Accessibility	9
Strategy 2: Increase Training for Frontline Stewardship Ambassadors	11
Strategy 3: Create a Youth Stewardship Program	12
Strategy 4: Enhance Trail Ambassador and Volunteer Initiatives	14
Strategy 5: Elevate the Music Scene	16
Strategy 6: Integrate Art into Outdoor Recreation	17
Strategy 7: Address Workforce Housing Challenges	19
Strategy 8: Develop and Promote Low-Impact Travel Options	21
Strategy 9: Encourage and Promote Sustainable and Responsible Tourism Practices	23
Strategy 10: Promote Ethical Wildlife Viewing and Minimize Human-Wildlife Conflicts	25
Strategy 11: Promote Native American Heritage	26
Strategy 12: Support and Market Agritourism	28
Strategy 13: Launch Destination Stewardship Recognition Awards	29
Implementation and Coordination Plan	31
Annex 1: Abbreviations and Acronyms	32
Annex 2: Destination Stewardship Partners	33

Acknowledgments

The development of a Destination Stewardship Strategic Plan for the Denver and Northern Colorado 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

- **Dave Santucci**, Denver and Northern Colorado 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 Denver and Northern Colorado 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

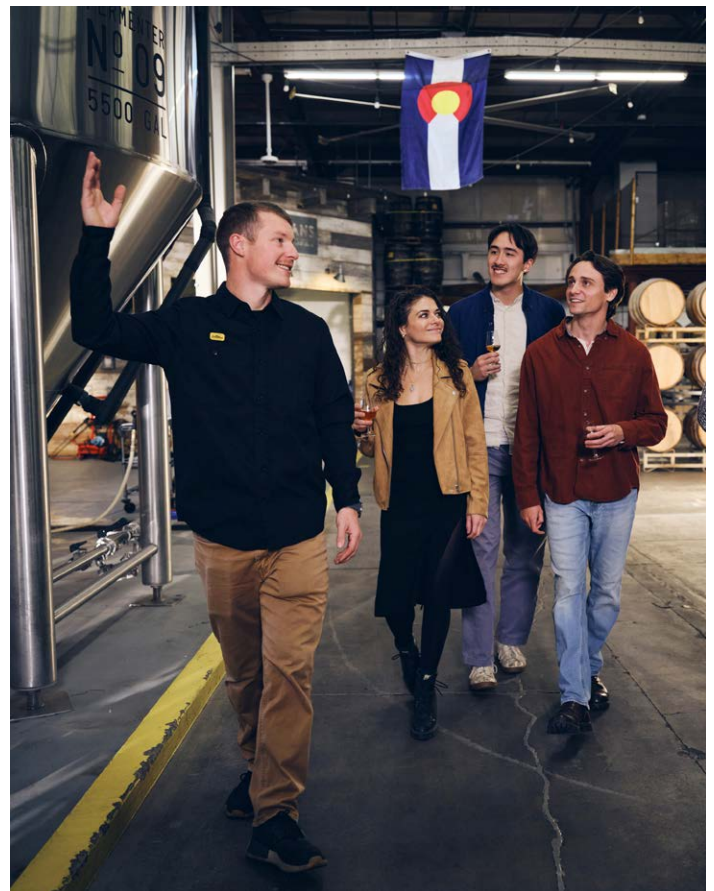
Set against the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, the Denver and Northern Colorado region is the state's urban hub. The area is rich with dynamic cities and towns, each with its own distinct character. While renowned for its stunning natural landscapes, vibrant cultural heritage, and strong community spirit, there is a pressing concern to ensure that all residents and visitors have equal access to and benefit from these assets.

To address these issues, the strategies in this plan focus on enhancing accessibility and inclusivity, with attention to socio-economic backgrounds, racial diversity, and abilities. By collaborating with industry partners to train frontline employees, the region aims to promote responsible behavior, sustainability, and inclusivity, fostering a culture of respect and stewardship. Additionally, environmental programs will engage residents and visitors in conservation, cultivating a community of informed and dedicated stewards.

Increasing volunteerism through a centralized database will strengthen community engagement and foster a sense of ownership of local parks and trails. Highlighting the region's music heritage and venues will enhance its identity as a premier music destination, while integrating art in public spaces will blend cultural and natural experiences. Addressing workforce housing challenges and promoting eco-friendly transportation will improve quality of life and environmental sustainability. Collaborative efforts to honor Indigenous heritage and promote agritourism reflect a commitment to cultural respect and economic diversification.

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

1. Expand the Region's Efforts Towards Inclusivity and Accessibility
2. Increase Training for Frontline Stewardship Ambassadors
3. Create a Youth Stewardship Program
4. Enhance Trail Ambassador and Volunteer Initiatives
5. Elevate the Music Scene
6. Integrate Art into Outdoor Recreation
7. Address Workforce Housing Challenges
8. Develop and Promote Low-Impact Travel Options
9. Encourage and Promote Sustainable and Responsible Tourism Practices
10. Promote Ethical Wildlife Viewing and Minimize Human-Wildlife Conflicts
11. Promote Native American heritage
12. Support and Market Agritourism
13. Launch Destination Stewardship Recognition Awards



Tourism Assets and Infrastructure

- **Commercial Airports:** Denver International Airport (DEN), Northern Colorado Regional Airport, Rocky Mountain Metropolitan Airport, Centennial Airport
- **Major Roads:** I-25, I-76, I-70, I-225, I-270, U.S. Route 6, U.S. Route 34, U.S. Route 36, U.S. Route 85, U.S. Route 285, U.S. Route 287, SH-7, SH-52, SH-93, SH-119, SH-121, SH-470
- **Amtrak Stations:** Union Station (Denver)
- **Scenic Byways:** Trail Ridge Road Scenic Byway, Peak to Peak Scenic Byway, Lariat Loop Scenic Byway, Cache la Poudre Scenic Byway
- **National Public Lands (parks/historic sites):** Cache la Poudre National Wilderness Area, Comanche Peak National Wilderness Area, Indian Peaks National Wilderness Area, James Peak National Wilderness Area, Mount Blue Sky National Wilderness Area, Rocky Mountain National Park, Rocky Mountain National Park Wilderness Area
- **Main Streets:** Central City, Lyons, Wellington, Windsor
- **Creative Districts:** 40 West Arts (Lakewood), Aurora Cultural Arts District, Denver’s Art District on Santa Fe, Downtown Fort Collins, Golden Triangle (Denver), Greeley, Longmont, Loveland, RiNo Arts District (Denver), Westwood (Denver)
- **State Parks:** Barr Lake State Park, Boyd Lake State Park, Chatfield State Park, Cherry Creek State Park, Eldorado Canyon State Park, Golden Gate Canyon State Park, Lory State Park, Roxborough State Park
- **Wildlife Preserves:** Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge, Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge, Two Ponds National Wildlife Refuge

Economic Impact of Tourism in 2023**

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Visitor Spending: \$11.5B | • Employment: 73,600 jobs |
| • Other Travel Spending: \$2.4B | • Local Tax: \$555.8M |
| • Total Travel Spending: \$13.9B | • State Tax: \$315.0M |
| • Travel Industry Earnings: \$5.2B | • Total Tax: \$870.8M |

Destination Stewardship Partners

The Denver and Northern Colorado region has a wide range of organizations and initiatives currently advancing destination stewardship. Eco-transit initiatives in the region, such as the promotion of cycling, electromobility (e-bikes and electric scooters), and the integration of electric buses, aim to reduce the environmental impact of travel and enhance the visitor experience. Boulder, Jefferson, and Larimer Counties have developed extensive networks of accessible trails and open spaces, connecting the more densely populated urban areas to the foothills and extending into higher elevations. Visit Denver is connecting visitors to its diverse neighborhoods through stories told by residents of those neighborhoods sharing their favorite hyper-local experiences. Additionally, cities like Fort Collins are fostering a vibrant cultural scene, with its growing music industry attracting artists and audiences, thereby supporting local economies and enriching the cultural fabric of Northern Colorado. The region covers a large geography and varied geology, and while many of the organizations included tend to work at the municipal level, many also serve the entire region and the state of Colorado. Refer to Annex 2 for a list of Destination Stewardship Partners.

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

Strategic Planning Process

The destination stewardship strategic planning process for the Denver and Northern Colorado travel 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 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.

September–October 2023: Regional Workshops

Regional workshops were held in Longmont and Denver 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 increase awareness of the strategic planning process, encourage broader participation and gather additional input on priorities and opportunities for the future of tourism.

April 2024: Regional Presentation and Roadshow

A regional presentation was held in Longmont, 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:

- 25 individual stakeholder interviews
- 101 attendees across three workshops
- 75 individuals consulted during roadshow meetings

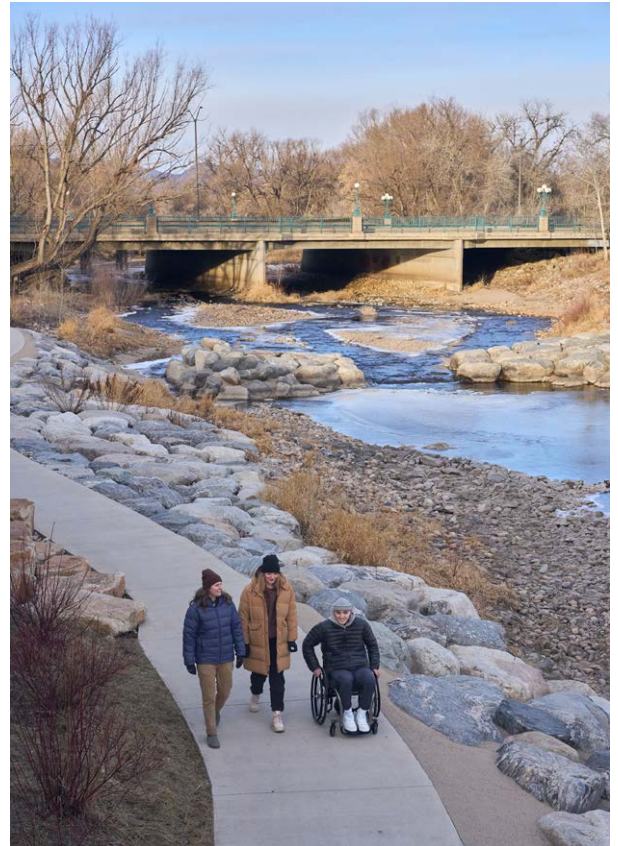
The following community-led strategies emerged from the consultation process, providing a framework for the region to address collectively its most pressing destination stewardship priorities over the next 10 years.

Priority Regional Strategies

Strategy 1:

Expand the Region's Efforts Toward Inclusivity and Accessibility

This strategy aims to enhance accessibility and inclusivity through a holistic approach that considers socio-economic backgrounds, racial diversity, and physical and mental abilities. Denver and the Northern Colorado region have implemented measures to foster more accessibility for all. The region has made significant strides in creating wheelchair-friendly public spaces, providing resources for travelers with disabilities, and offering multilingual support services. Community programs focus on bridging socio-economic gaps allowing everyone to enjoy the area's attractions. By expanding these efforts throughout the region, Denver and Northern Colorado aspire to build on existing initiatives to cultivate an inclusive environment where every visitor feels valued and welcomed, regardless of their socio-economic status, cultural background, or abilities.



Tactics:

- Promote budget-friendly stays and free or low-cost activities on Colorado.com and DMO websites.
- Promote travel during shoulder seasons as a more affordable option for those avoiding peak season prices.
- Expand the outdoor accessibility program created in Boulder across the region through technical assistance and grants.
- Identify and showcase the region's diverse communities in the following ways:
 - Create hyper-local content to connect visitors to the region's diverse communities,
 - Hire storytellers and content creators from the region's communities to share their visitor-ready experiences, and
 - Promote the region through an online interactive map that connects visitors to those diverse community experiences.
- Provide training to local businesses on reaching and welcoming diverse audiences in the following ways:
 - Create a fact sheet containing data demonstrating why it is beneficial for local businesses to engage in training, and
 - Create "Welcoming/Belonging" certifications and promote these certifications to visitors and other local businesses.
- Encourage diverse or underserved tourism staff to provide input regarding inclusivity initiatives.

Strategy 1 continued

Resources:

- [CTO Competitive grants and co-ops](#)
- [CTO Destination Development programs](#)
- [CTO Accessible Travel program](#)

Destination Stewardship Case Studies

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

- [City of Boulder](#), Open Space and Mountain Parks designs and promotes a large network of accessible trails.
- [ColoradoUpLift](#) is building long-term, life-changing relationships with urban youth, equipping them to thrive and contribute to their community including through adventure-based programming designed to create leadership and teamwork skills.
- [The City of Fort Collins Natural Areas Department](#) developed an [accessible trails map](#) with comprehensive information regarding aspects such as trail difficulty level and surface type.
- Rocky Mountain National Park visitors can rent [all-terrain wheelchairs](#) at no cost.
- Visit Colorado Springs partners with [Wheel the World](#), a travel guide service for travelers with disabilities.
- Aurora celebrates its one in five foreign-born citizens through its annual [Global Fest](#).

Key Performance Indicators:

- Increased number of new businesses opening over a specific timeframe that represent underserved populations
- Number of businesses that obtain the “Welcoming/Belonging” certification
- Businesses with “Welcoming/Belonging” certification showing increased revenue/foot traffic
- Number of Colorado destinations that have detailed accessibility information available
- Percentage of grant dollars awarded to accessibility initiatives
- Number of accessibility improvement projects

Role of the Tourism Industry: Contribute to the development and distribution of a comprehensive resource of accessibility information, thus providing a more inclusive Colorado experience for every visitor. The industry can also incorporate the CTO Inclusivity in Travel Coalition [guiding principles](#) into all aspects of tourism services and experiences, appealing to a broad spectrum of visitors who prioritize inclusivity and accessibility in their travel choices.

Statewide Strategy Alignment

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

Dreaming

3. Increase Awareness and Promotion of Colorado as an Accessible and Inclusive Tourism Destination

Tourism Workforce

5. Promote Workforce Diversity and Inclusion

Potential Lead Partners: CTO, DMOs

Potential Supporting Partners: Economic development organizations, chambers of commerce, private businesses such as [Origin](#), [Rocky Mountain National Park](#) accessibility initiative, [Access and Ability](#), [Easter Seals Northern Colorado](#)

Strategy 2: Increase Training for Frontline Stewardship Ambassadors

Enhancing the frontline workforce’s understanding of their destination will significantly improve the region’s cross-promotion of locations, increase the length of stay and spending, and advance stewardship education, such as fire safety. This strategy involves training frontline employees by collaborating with industry partners including hotels, outfitters, tour guides, and the many visitor and welcome centers staffed by hundreds of employees and volunteers across the region. This training will equip these workers with the necessary skills to educate travelers on responsible behavior, destination stewardship, inclusivity, and other essential aspects of Colorado. Additional training empowers employees to serve as informed ambassadors for the state, providing visitors with valuable insights and fostering a culture of respect and sustainability throughout their travels.



Tactics:

- Partner with NoCo Places and Denver Parks and Recreation to train frontline workers on *Do Colorado Right* priorities such as water safety in the summer or fire safety leading into wildfire season.
- Hire professionals to create the training program with hyper-local content.
- Collaborate with regional partners to provide stewardship training for a broader range of workers beyond those in frontline tourism roles.
- Implement an awards recognition program for regional leaders.
- Offer training and resources to local outfitters to integrate essential destination stewardship messaging into every sale. This could include wildfire safety information, trail safety, and awareness of the year-round fire season.

Resources:

- [CTO Learning Labs](#)
- [CTO Competitive grants and co-ops](#)
- [Care for Colorado Coalition](#)

Strategy 2 continued

Destination Stewardship Case Studies

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

- Visit Fort Collins utilized the [CTO Learning Labs and the Colorado Concierge program](#) to offer free online education for frontline tourism workers to enhance their skills, build Colorado expertise, and deliver exceptional hospitality.
- Visit Denver's [Go The Extra Mile program](#) trains frontline staff and awards them with a certificate and discount pass.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Annual increase in individuals receiving certification
- Number of staff and volunteers from welcome and visitor centers that completed online courses on destination stewardship

Role of the Tourism Industry: Encourage and provide adequate time for employees to participate in training programs to effectively communicate destination stewardship principles to visitors.

Statewide Strategy Alignment

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

Tourism Workforce

1. Promote Workforce Diversity and Inclusion

Experiencing

5. Influence Visitor Behavior at Key Locations

Potential Lead Partners: CTO, DMOs

Potential Supporting Partners: Economic development organizations, chambers of commerce, [Colorado Department of Labor and Employment](#) (CDLE), [Colorado Workforce Development Council](#) (CWDC), visitor and welcome centers, [Denver Metro Nature Alliance](#), [NoCo Places](#)

Strategy 3:

Create a Youth Stewardship Program

To cultivate dedicated environmental stewards, education must begin early. This strategy will establish a regional environmental stewardship program to engage children and young adults, similar to the National Park Service (NPS) Junior Rangers program. By fostering a sense of responsibility and empowering participation in conservation efforts and sustainable practices, the program aims to preserve and enhance the environment. It will be designed to benefit both residents and visitors, instilling stewardship values throughout the community.

Tactics:

- Collaborate with educational institutions and local groups to develop program curricula.
- Design an engaging curriculum that includes interactive lessons on environmental science, sustainability, and conservation practices, tailored to different age groups.

Strategy 3 continued

- Organize regular field trips to parks, nature reserves, and conservation projects, allowing students to experience and participate in real-world environmental stewardship.
- Host workshops and invite environmental professionals to give seminars, providing students with in-depth knowledge and exposure to career opportunities in environmental fields.
- Consider opportunities for complementing and expanding on existing programming throughout the region, such as Larimer County Youth Conservation Corps and the City of Boulder Junior Ranger program.
- Enhance existing programs to expand capacity.
- Target new program development with agencies that have not yet established these types of programs.
- Collaborate with educational institutions and local groups to promote the program and engage with potential participants.

Resources:

- [CTO Competitive grants and co-ops](#)
- [CTO Destination Development programs](#)
- [Great Outdoors Colorado \(GOCO\) grant programs](#)
- [Colorado Parks and Wildlife \(CPW\) mentored youth hunting programs](#)

Destination Stewardship Case Studies

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

- The NPS [Junior Ranger](#) program at Rocky Mountain National Park aims to engage children in learning about and preserving the natural and cultural resources of national parks.
- Eldorado Canyon State Park's Junior Ranger program for children ages six to twelve combines outdoor fun, games, activities, crafts, and teamwork to teach them about understanding and protecting the canyon's natural treasures.
- Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge [Junior Ranger](#) program awards children with a Junior Ranger Badge after completing educational activities.



Strategy 3 continued

Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of regional programs created
- Annual increase in program participation numbers

Role of the Tourism Industry: Promote the Youth Stewardship program to visitors and residents while encouraging guests to share their experiences participating in the program, utilizing their platforms to promote responsible travel practices and broaden the reach of sustainable tourism narratives.

Statewide Strategy Alignment

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

Experiencing

4. Educate Children on the Importance of Destination Stewardship

Potential Lead Partners: GOCO, CPW, CTO

Potential Supporting Partners: Regional school districts, DMOs, NPS, [NoCo Places](#), AmeriCorps, Boy Scouts of America, Girls Scouts of America, 4-H, the YMCA, Big Brothers Big Sisters, [Partners Organization](#), [Denver Metro Nature Alliance](#), [Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education](#)

Strategy 4:

Enhance Trail Ambassador and Volunteer Initiatives

Denver and Northern Colorado offer numerous opportunities for residents and visitors to volunteer as trail ambassadors or participate in other projects. However, navigating the many organizations and volunteer websites can be challenging, especially for new volunteers. Higher education institutions and nonprofit volunteer organizers play a crucial role in launching regional volunteer initiatives. This strategy aims to increase volunteerism and voluntourism by creating a centralized database of opportunities, simplifying the process for individuals to find projects aligned with their interests and skills.

Tactics:

- Partner with one of the higher education institutions in the region to create an interactive database or calendar consisting of an inventory of trail ambassador or volunteer opportunities.
- Create a culture of volunteerism by engaging with public school student trip organizers to offer opportunities to in-state schools and then expand the program regionally.
- Collaborate with local outdoor industry businesses, such as REI, on ways to grow their regional volunteer initiatives.
- Expand private partnerships for larger sponsorships of trails and public spaces.
- Partner with hotels and other accommodation providers to provide information about volunteer opportunities as part of pre-departure, welcome, and in-room information packages.
- Utilize welcome and visitor centers, Colorado.com, and DMO websites to promote volunteer initiatives.
- Launch targeted social media campaigns aimed at residents and visitors interested in outdoor activities, highlighting the benefits of voluntourism.

Strategy 4 continued

- Increase partnerships between land managers and volunteer organizations to understand the availability and skills of volunteers and to understand the need or demand for projects.

Resources:

- Volunteer organizations such as [Spark the Change Colorado](#)
- [CTO Competitive grants and co-ops](#)
- [CTO Destination Development programs](#)
- [CPW Connect](#) volunteer program

Destination Stewardship Case Studies

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

- [Chafee Rec Adopters](#) is a centralized database of opportunities for volunteers to assist in outdoor projects that is the go-to resource for volunteer opportunities in the region.
- Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado [Outdoor Stewardship Initiative](#) trains staff and volunteers in stewardship initiatives in Colorado and across the nation.
- The Denver Foundation [All In Mile High program](#) carries forward the House1000 initiative to house more people experiencing homelessness in Denver.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of partnerships with regional outdoor industry businesses
- Number of volunteers participating in programs
- Number of volunteer hours on public land
- Public school engagement
- Amount of trail and public space sponsorships generated
- Number of public lands participating in the volunteer initiatives

Role of the Tourism Industry: Support and promote public participation in trail ambassador programs and volunteer opportunities, reinforcing the importance of stewardship among visitors and locals.

Statewide Strategy Alignment

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

Outdoor Recreation

6. Expand Trail Ambassador and Volunteer Initiatives

Potential Lead Partners: NoCo Places

Potential Supporting Partners: DMOs, [Serve Colorado](#), [Volunteers for Outdoor CO](#), [NoCo Places](#), [Denver Metro Nature Alliance](#), [Boulder Mountainbike Alliance](#), [Overland Mountain Bike Association](#)



Strategy 5:

Elevate the Music Scene

Denver and Northern Colorado boast numerous music venues and assets that have established Colorado as a premier music destination, including the iconic Red Rocks Amphitheater in Morrison, the Music District and the FoCoMX festival in Fort Collins, Caribou Ranch recording studio in Nederland, Frozen Dead Guy Day Festival in Estes Park, the Mishawaka in Bellevue, the 50+ year running RockyGrass Festival, and the Chautauqua Auditorium in Boulder. These venues and festivals attract diverse audiences, foster cultural exchange, and boost the local economy through increased visitor spending on accommodations, dining, and related tourism services. This strategy aims to enhance the brand of Denver and Northern Colorado as one of America's great music destinations and raise awareness of the many venues in the region where visitors can experience live music in spectacular indoor and outdoor settings.



Tactics:

- Establish a digital and physical music guide that celebrates the history of Colorado's music and connects visitors with how to experience music in the area today.
- Develop a regional music strategy by collaborating with tourism and music industry partners to prioritize initiatives that foster growth in music tourism statewide and regionally.
- Build a regional brand as a music destination with data-driven and ongoing marketing efforts connecting music and outdoor experiences.
- Expand partnerships with local bands and outdoor brands to showcase the Colorado brand through music and outdoor experiences.
- Identify music venues and festivals across the region and create a database with information on size, location, contacts, and how to book.
- Focus marketing campaigns on lesser-known venues to drive awareness and attendance. Create an editorial calendar highlighting shows at lesser-known venues and promote them to visitors with an affinity towards live music.
- Develop a music week celebrated across the region featuring local musicians.
- Broadcast or stream Colorado music across the nation or world to showcase Colorado as a music destination. Consider a subsidized partnership with a national broadcaster or develop a streaming channel and promote it to potential visitors.
- Recruit music awards events to the region that align with Colorado's music strengths like the International Bluegrass Music Awards.

Resources:

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

Strategy 5 continued

Destination Stewardship Case Studies

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

- [Fort Collins Musicians Association \(FoCoMA\)](#) supports Northern Colorado musicians through networking, education, and events. This could be a model for creating an expanded regional musicians association.
- Visit Denver's [Live Music Calendar](#) provides detailed information on opportunities to see live music in the area.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Longwoods Visitor Profile Study tracking of NoCo and Denver as a music destination
- Increase in hotel tax revenue
- Percentage of visitors that reported attending a music event during their visit

Role of the Tourism Industry: Engage in promoting and supporting the local music scene by hosting and publicizing concerts and attracting music talent to the region.

Statewide Strategy Alignment

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

Arts and Creative Industries

1. Foster Partnerships with Local Artists
3. Promote Diverse Arts through Festivals and Events
7. Elevate Colorado's Music Scene

Potential Lead Partners: DMOs

Potential Supporting Partners: CCI, local and Tribal governments, local arts and performance organizations and venues

Strategy 6:

Integrate Art into Outdoor Recreation

Colorado's renowned outdoor recreation opportunities attract numerous visitors each year eager to experience the state's natural beauty. Denver and Northern Colorado aim to enhance this experience by showcasing local artists through the integration of art installations in public outdoor spaces. This strategy creates a unique blend of nature and human creativity, enriching the visitor experience and highlighting the region's vibrant artistic communities.

Tactics:

- Empower local artists through grants to provide sustainability solutions and educational opportunities. A specific example is collecting plastic single-use containers at trailheads, recycling those plastics into art created by local artists, and displaying the local plastic art on the trails. Use the opportunity to share the stewardship messages of *Do Colorado Right*. Fund through grants, sponsorships, and providing public art and recycling services to the county/municipality.
- Partner with appropriate organizations for ideation, planning, and permissions to install.

Strategy 6 continued

- Explore revenue sources, including foundations with arts initiatives that support projects like plastics recycling into art, to fund new initiatives.
- Identify strategic locations and stewardship themes for the art installations.
- Engage appropriate local artists with a stewardship focus.
- Leverage the stories behind the program and installations to showcase Colorado as a unique stewardship-focused destination.

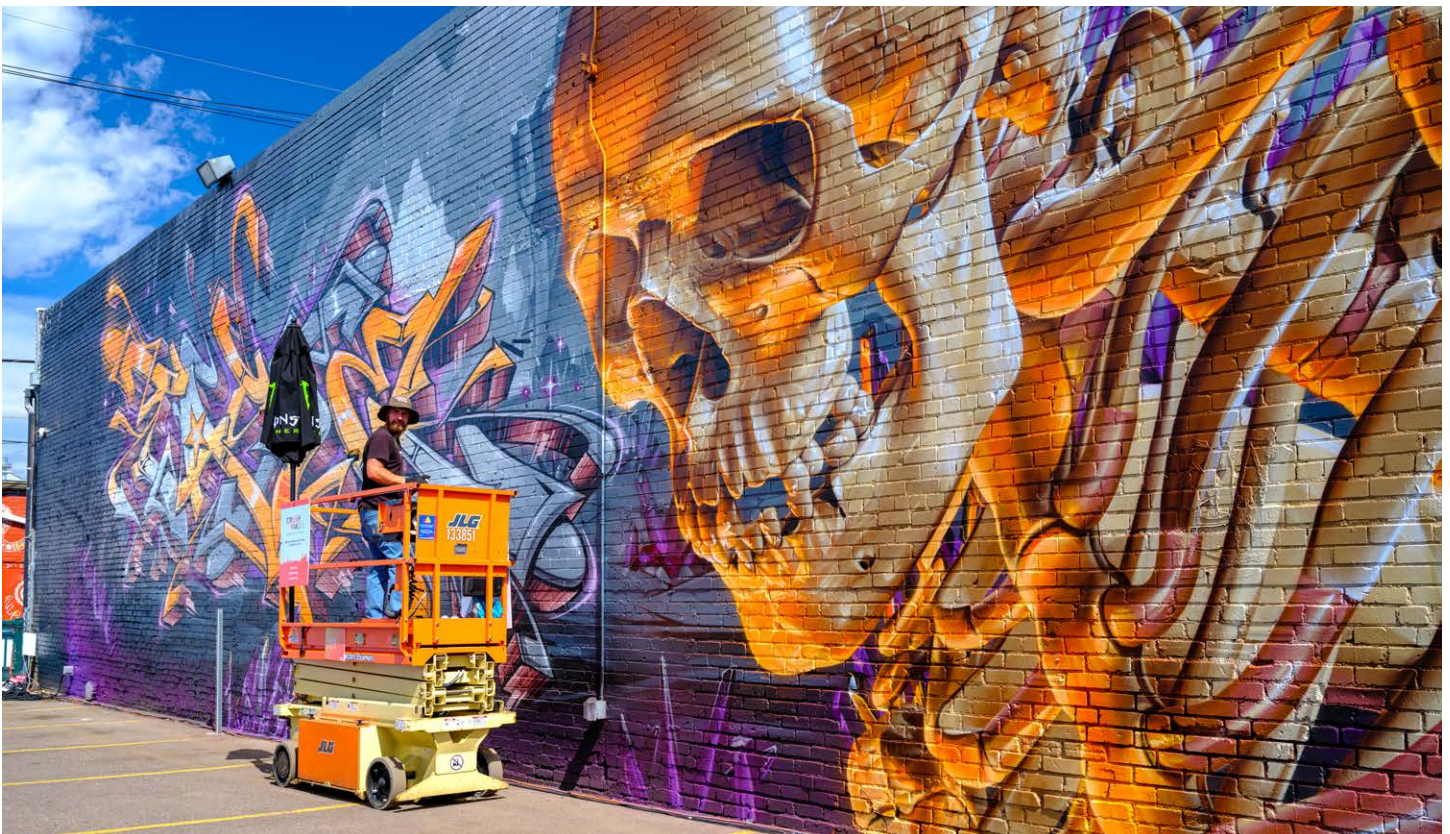
Resources:

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

Destination Stewardship Case Studies

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

- [Breck Create Precious Plastics](#) is a workspace open to visitors and residents where they can turn plastic waste into art.
- [Carbondale Rio Grande ARTway](#) is a creative placemaking project featuring parks, installations, murals, and creative institutions along a one-mile non-motorized trail through downtown Carbondale.
- [Alterra Mountain Company's Forward Stance Studio](#) created a million-dollar grant fund for arts and culture in the mountains including Indigenous artists. Identify potential grants and companies in the region interested in a similar opportunity for the region.



Strategy 6 continued

- [Denver Metro Nature Alliance](#) is a growing coalition of more than 50 nonprofit, government, research, and private sector members aligned around the mission of championing more equitable access to nature and promoting healthy people, communities, and natural places in the metro Denver region.
- [City of Fort Collins Art in Public Places](#) is a collaborative program between the city and local artists to acquire, exhibit, and maintain public art in primarily outdoor spaces throughout the community.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of open spaces, city/county parks, state/national parks with public art
- Open spaces, city/county parks, state/national parks visitation numbers

Role of the Tourism Industry: Support and engage with arts-driven projects that creatively address stewardship challenges, integrate art into outdoor recreation areas, and foster partnerships with local municipalities and industry leaders.

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

Potential Lead Partners: Regional creative districts

Potential Supporting Partners: DMOs, local artists, local and Tribal governments, local arts and performance organizations, [NoCo Places](#), [Denver Metro Nature Alliance](#), local municipalities

Strategy 7: Address Workforce Housing Challenges

Affordable housing in Denver and Northern Colorado faces significant challenges, including rapid population growth that drives up demand and home prices. The lagging supply of housing fails to meet this demand, exacerbating affordability issues. Additionally, stringent zoning regulations and high construction costs further limit the development of affordable units. As a result, many residents face difficulties in securing housing within their financial means, resulting in an increased unhoused population and housing instability. The negative impacts of the lack of available and affordable workforce housing include increased time away from the home, environmental concerns from longer commutes, and expanded inequality between communities and their workforce.



Tactics:

- Conduct a regional study on tourism’s impact on housing prices and availability, analyzing its contribution to rising prices and shortages. The study should also assess the effects of short-term rentals and evaluate both short- and long-term housing needs. Share the findings to provide residents, elected officials, and housing authorities with data-driven insights for making informed decisions about tourism’s role in housing solutions.
- Contribute to the creation of a multi-agency plan that offers diverse solutions to address the housing shortage.
- Conduct research on effective affordable workforce housing solutions across the state.
- Incentivize employers to provide affordable housing for their employees.
- Explore incentives for second-homeowners and short-term rental owners to convert their properties into workforce housing.
- Collaborate with local banks to offer regional down payment loan assistance programs.

Resources:

- [Colorado Department of Local Affairs \(DOLA\) grant funding programs](#)
- [Colorado Housing Investment Fund](#)

Destination Stewardship Case Studies

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

- [Aspen Skiing Company - Tenants for Turns](#) is an Aspen-based program that helps mitigate the Roaring Fork Valley’s housing shortage by encouraging homeowners to rent out their units, guest houses, and spare bedrooms to Aspen One employees.
- [West Mountain Regional Housing Coalition](#) is a public-private partnership involving multiple counties in central and western Colorado, dedicated to finding solutions for workforce housing.
- [NoCo Housing Now](#) is a leader in the region in advocating and finding solutions for affordable housing.
- [Boulder Housing Authority](#) is monitoring its progress toward achieving its housing and training goals.
- [Estes Park Housing Authority](#) offers a range of housing options and services to support low-to-moderate-income households, providing rental assistance and home purchase programs to foster stability and success in the community.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Percentage of the workforce living inside the county in which they work
- Reduced workforce turnover/increased retention rates
- Reduction of median home prices in the region
- Number of new affordable housing solutions aimed at supporting the tourism workforce
- Number of businesses offering employer-assisted housing programs

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:

Communities

1. Prioritize Local Community Involvement in Tourism Planning

Tourism Workforce

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

Potential Lead Partners: DMOs, local and state governments

Potential Supporting Partners: [DOLA Division of Housing](#), [Colorado Housing and Financing Authority](#), local housing authorities, [NoCo Housing Now](#)

Strategy 8:

Develop and Promote Low-Impact Travel Options

Denver and Northern Colorado have consistently ranked among the fastest-growing populations in the nation for several decades. The resulting challenges include increased congestion, pollution, air quality issues, and contributions to climate change. Addressing these challenges requires the development and promotion of lower-impact travel options for visitors and residents. To achieve this, additional funding and infrastructure improvements are needed to enhance the frequency and availability of eco-friendly transportation methods, making them more convenient and appealing alternatives.

Tactics:

- Develop “last mile” transit infrastructure and establish partnerships proactively to ensure readiness for the Front Range passenger railroad development.
- Foster a culture of low-impact transportation in the state through a continuous content marketing plan focused on promoting sustainable travel options.
- Promote eco-friendly transit methods.
- Develop social media campaigns or gamify eco-friendly transportation to make it engaging and enjoyable.
- Enhance efforts to raise awareness of Colorado’s Electric Byways and the ease of traveling the region with an electric vehicle.



Strategy 8 continued

- Add free electric vehicle charging stations at all feasible Denver and NoCO Welcome Centers and include signage by chargers about Colorado's Electric Byways.
- Bring regional transportation organizations together to create a pass that allows for one pass/one fee access to the region's transit options.
- Add access to the Regional Transportation District (RTD) to Denver City Pass.
- Improve the interconnection of bikeways and bike trails across the region by supporting the completion of unfinished sections and increasing connectivity within underserved areas.

Resources:

- [CTO Competitive grants and co-ops](#)
- [Colorado Electric Byways Tourism Toolkit](#)
- [Colorado Department of Transportation \(CDOT\) grants](#)

Destination Stewardship Case Studies

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

- The [3-Day Visitor Transit Pass](#) in San Francisco helps visitors explore the city without a vehicle. A similar program in Denver could be marketed by DEN, Visit Denver and CTO.
- [Montreal gamified their transit app](#) and saw an increase in ridership. They also developed customized offers based on user profiles and locations to encourage public transit use for city exploration. Denver could adopt this approach for locals and create a tailored version for visitors, potentially expanding it statewide with regional authorities.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Increase in public/eco-friendly transportation usage
- Increase in the number of public-private partnerships and grants secured to support eco-friendly transportation initiatives
- Number of electric vehicle charging stations added
- Number of residents and visitors engaged in low-impact transportation campaigns
- Reduction in average daily traffic congestion levels

Role of the Tourism Industry: Help reshape the culture around public transportation to make options like buses and biking more attractive, similar to San Francisco's trolley system. Actively promote and integrate eco-friendly transportation options into tourism services.

Statewide Strategy Alignment

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

Transportation

1. Increase Availability of Eco-Friendly Transit Methods
3. Raise Awareness and Ridership of Bustang, Snowstang, and Pegasus Services

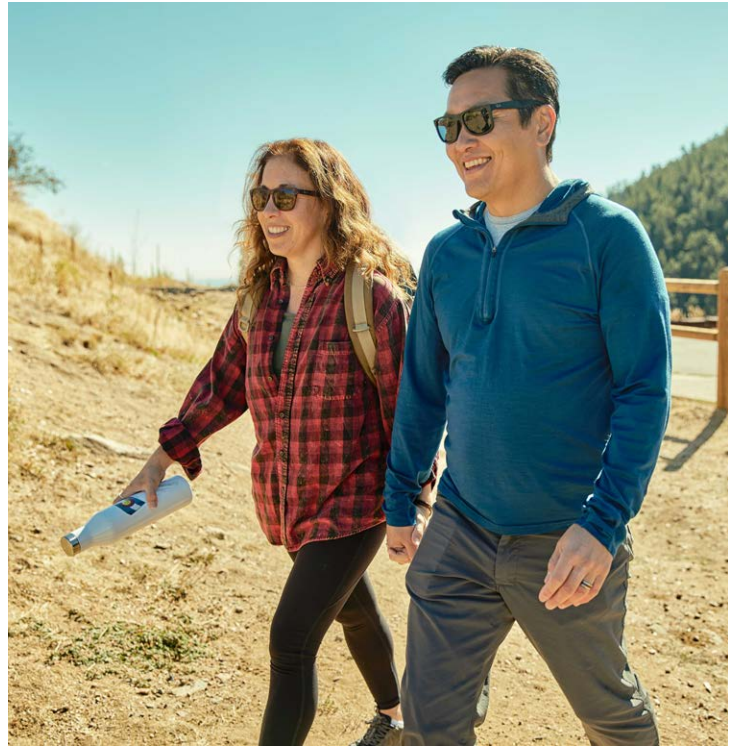
Potential Lead Partners: CTO, CDOT

Potential Supporting Partners: DMOs, DEN, [NoCo Places](#)

Strategy 9:

Encourage and Promote Sustainable and Responsible Tourism Practices

Promoting sustainable and responsible tourism practices in Denver and Northern Colorado is essential for preserving the area's natural beauty and cultural heritage. Drawing from the Care for Colorado Leave No Trace Principles and the *Do Colorado Right* campaign, this strategy seeks to enhance visitor engagement with clear and compelling stewardship messaging. This can be achieved through creating and distributing a Denver and Northern Colorado Destination Stewardship Guide aligned with *Do Colorado Right* regional priorities.



Tactics:

- Develop Denver and NoCo *Do Colorado Right* priorities through the following steps:
 - Work with Visit Denver and the NoCo DMOs to establish the most pressing regional priorities,
 - Market to travelers before they reach Denver and NoCo region,
 - Coordinate regional efforts with statewide efforts and build on current campaigns, and
 - Work with industry associations and DMOs to introduce businesses to the opportunity and benefits of incorporating *Do Colorado Right* messaging into the booking process.
- Create and distribute a Denver and Northern Colorado Destination Stewardship Guide aligned with *Do Colorado Right* regional priorities. Incorporate the priorities of the region into the Destination Stewardship Guide.
- Encourage participation in the Care for Colorado Coalition.
- Partner with NoCo-region university students to create and distribute a Colorado destination stewardship guide as part of their degree program.
- Incorporate more backcountry safety education and information, such as trailhead signage around avalanche safety.
- Create a regional toolkit to make sustainable tourism practices and *Do Colorado Right* messaging simple and uniform throughout the region.

Resources:

- [CTO Competitive grants and co-ops](#)
- [CTO Destination Development programs](#)
- [CTO Accessible Travel program](#)
- [Care for Colorado Coalition](#)

Destination Stewardship Case Studies

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

- [Care for Colorado Coalition monthly messaging](#) brings awareness to the top stewardship initiative of the month for consistent messaging across social, email, and media.
- Visit Denver produces an [annual sustainability report](#) to track its progress toward sustainability goals. Visit Denver received the Event Industry Council's Platinum category in sustainability (the first world destination to be certified at the Platinum level).

Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of downloads of the Colorado Stewardship Guide
- Maintenance costs on public lands
- Number of regional businesses that agree to distribute *Do Colorado Right* messaging at the time of booking
- Number of visitors engaging with stewardship messaging through interacting with informational content online and in person
- Reduction in the amount of litter, waste, and environmental impacts reported in key tourist areas, tracked through regular assessments or community clean-up efforts

Role of the Tourism Industry: For the Destination Stewardship Guide, facilitate stakeholder engagement and information sharing with university students. The industry can promote *Do Colorado Right* campaigns through its channels and join the Care for Colorado Coalition to spread messaging. Participation in educational campaigns, including pre-arrival content, will help foster responsible tourism and reinforce outdoor behavior among visitors.

Statewide Strategy Alignment

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

Planning

1. Encourage Travelers to *Do Colorado Right* Before Arrival
2. Develop and Amplify Local *Do Colorado Right* Campaigns and Messaging

Experiencing

2. Optimize *Do Colorado Right* Messaging at Points of Market Entry

Communities

4. Encourage Responsible Visitation in our Communities

Outdoor Recreation

1. Expand *Do Colorado Right* Campaigns on Public Lands

Potential Lead Partners: CTO, DMOs

Potential Supporting Partners: Higher education institutions, [Care for Colorado Coalition](#), [Leave No Trace](#), [Colorado Avalanche Information Center](#), [Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office \(OREC\)](#), [NoCo Places](#)

Strategy 10: Promote Ethical Wildlife Viewing and Minimize Human-Wildlife Conflicts

This strategy focuses on promoting ethical wildlife viewing practices and minimizing human-wildlife conflicts through a combination of education, targeted messaging, and preventive measures.

The strategy emphasizes the use of clear and consistent messaging across various platforms, including online, visitor centers, and guides, to reinforce responsible behavior when encountering wildlife.

Preventive measures can include installing signage in high-traffic wildlife areas, providing wildlife-proof trash containers,

and encouraging the use of bear-resistant food storage solutions in camping and hiking regions. Collaboration with local wildlife organizations, park services, and community groups will be essential in delivering these messages and ensuring widespread adoption of best practices. The ultimate goal is to create a culture of respect and safety that not only enhances the wildlife viewing experience but also significantly reduces the potential for human-wildlife conflicts.



Tactics:

- Partner with parks and agencies to provide consistent signage and messaging.
- Target messaging at key visitor touchpoints.
- Digitize messaging and information through QR codes, apps, and videos.
- Alert visitors when entering higher-risk areas for wildlife incidents.
- Incorporate messaging into the NoCo Destination Stewardship Guide.
- Inform visitors about the importance of using secure trash solutions to ensure their safety and protect wildlife.
- Identify high visitor traffic areas that intersect with wildlife zones and collaborate to enhance wildlife crossing signage at key incident points.
- Inform visitors about the dangers and the importance of following wildlife crossing signage.
- Expand safe stopping opportunities for wildlife viewing along roadways.

Resources:

- [CPW's wildlife viewing guidelines](#)
- [CTO Competitive grants and co-ops](#)
- [CTO Destination Development programs](#)
- [NoCo Places](#)
- [Denver Zoo Animal Academy](#)
- [Wild Animal Sanctuary Wildlife Education program](#)

Destination Stewardship Case Studies

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

- [CPW's Human-Bear Conflict Reduction grant](#) aims to reduce human-bear conflicts by providing financial resources to local communities. Content from this program can be distributed by local DMOs and the CTO.
- [CPW's Habitat Partnership program](#) works to reduce conflicts caused by deer, elk, pronghorn, and moose to agriculture. Content from this program can be distributed by local DMOs and the CTO.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of ethical viewing educational materials distributed
- Number of human-wildlife conflicts

Role of the Tourism Industry: Support and promote wildlife viewing tours and activities that respect natural habitats and encourage responsible interaction with Colorado's wildlife. The industry can distribute CPW guidelines on ethical wildlife viewing to inform visitors on proper behavior and participate in efforts to reduce human-wildlife conflicts through infrastructure improvements and education.

Statewide Strategy Alignment

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

Wildlife and Biodiversity

1. Promote and Facilitate Guided Wildlife Viewing
2. Create Wildlife Viewing Brochures and Encourage Ethical Viewing
3. Reduce Human-Wildlife Conflicts

Potential Lead Partners: CTO

Potential Supporting Partners: DMOs, NoCo Places, [Northern Colorado Wildlife Center](#), United States Forest Service (USFS), NPS, CPW, CDOT, Colorado State University [Animal-Human Policy Center](#), county and city natural areas and open space departments

Strategy 11:

Promote Native American Heritage

The Denver and Northern Colorado region is home to the ancestral lands of many Indigenous peoples, including tribes and groups known today as Ute, Arapaho, Cheyenne, Lakota, Apache, and Comanche nations, in addition to the Folsom peoples. The region is committed to honoring and celebrating its Native American heritage through meaningful collaboration with Tribes and Indigenous communities. This collaborative effort aims to respectfully honor and acknowledge Native American traditions, history, and contemporary contributions in interpretive materials and tourism experiences.



Tactics:

- Support the incorporation of new or existing land acknowledgment statements across the region. Opportunities for incorporation include signage in parks, trailheads, and outdoor spaces; verbal acknowledgment at the beginning of meetings and events; and inclusion in websites, travel brochures, and written materials.
 - *Note: Many agencies across the region have already developed land acknowledgments for their city and county. This tactic should complement rather than compete with any previously developed, local-scale tactics.*
- Engage with Indigenous community members to build trust and strengthen relationships, then establish formal tourism development partnerships with Tribal governments.
- Identify visitor-ready experiences that tell the Native American story in the region through collaborating with local historical societies and museums and partnering with Native American content creators to develop and share the stories.
- Increase capacity among tribal representatives for regional tourism planning by providing grant funding to support training and job opportunities related to tribal consulting and monitoring.

Resources:

- [CTO Competitive grants and co-ops](#)
- [CTO Destination Development programs](#)
- [History Colorado Native American History and Heritage resources](#)

Destination Stewardship Case Studies

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

- [Cherokee, North Carolina](#) celebrates the Native American culture in the region by connecting residents and visitors to Native American experiences.
- Visit Denver connects residents and visitors to [Native American experiences](#) in the region.
- Visit Durango has incorporated information on Native American heritage into the [DMO's website](#).

Key Performance Indicators:

- Value of investment to support Native American tourism development and marketing

Role of the Tourism Industry: Collaborate with and support Indigenous communities in developing and promoting tourism experiences that honor and recognize Native American heritage.

Statewide Strategy Alignment

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

Cultural Heritage

2. Elevate Native American Heritage

Potential Lead Partners: DMOs, CTO

Potential Supporting Partners: [Northern Colorado Intertribal Pow-wow Association](#), [Colorado Commission on Indian Affairs](#), [CCI](#), [History Colorado](#)

Strategy 12: Support and Market Agritourism

Northern Colorado presents an exceptional opportunity for promoting the agritourism industry, bolstered by its abundant farms and producers alongside farm-to-table restaurants that draw tourists. Agritourism experiences cater not only to families with young children seeking educational opportunities about food systems but also to outdoor enthusiasts interested in recreational activities. Additionally, agritourism can be enhanced through bike routes linking multiple producers with local bike rental shops, further enriching visitor experiences.



Tactics:

- Partner with trail development organizations to create and promote bike routes that connect multiple local producers, similar to winery tours. This route would offer cyclists the opportunity to visit and enjoy various producers along their journey and could be promoted to cyclists and casual riders.
- Connect to population centers to maximize usage and minimize the need for a vehicle.
- Identify bike shops that can help promote and rent bikes with existing or attachable baskets.
- Assist restaurants and farmers' markets with marketing materials to raise awareness of regional agritourism experiences.
- Develop pocket-sized and digital agritourism guides for the region.
- Develop NoCo-specific agritourism CTO Learning Labs.
- Partner with the Colorado Restaurant Association to develop agritourism-specific programming that connects farms to restaurants through education, partnership and training programs.
- Market participating restaurants to residents and visitors.
- Build the brand of the NoCo region through agritourism, highlighting areas like [Splendid Valley](#).
- Establish a gravel bike route connecting multiple producers (similar to winery tours).
- Collaborate with state agencies like the Colorado Department of Agriculture to create a marketing program similar to [Colorado Proud](#). This initiative will support producers by partnering with grocery stores, farmers' markets, and restaurants to promote regional agritourism opportunities.

Resources:

- [CTO Learning Labs](#)
- [CTO Competitive grants and co-ops](#)
- [CTO Destination Development programs](#)
- OEDIT's Business Support Division Small Business Accelerated Growth program grants

Destination Stewardship Case Studies

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

- [Whistling Board](#) offers farm-to-fork experiences in Northeast Colorado that feature local, sustainably produced products.
- The [Historic Splendid Valley](#) in Brighton, CO is branded and marketed regionally as an agritourism experience to support the local farms and ranches in the region.
- [Colorado Dude and Guest Ranch Association](#) tells the stories of dude and guest ranch experiences with guest blogs featuring a range of the most commonly searched terms.
- [Visit Longmont](#) is promoting farm-to-table dining opportunities to residents and visitors.
- [Farm to Fork guide](#) in the Roaring Fork Valley.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Visitation to farms and ranches
- Programs developed around farm education
- Number of agritourism businesses supported
- Reach and impressions of CTO's marketing campaigns

Role of the Tourism Industry: Utilize the resources available through CTO and other state programs to develop more agritourism businesses and serve as a connector between farmers/ranchers and restaurants.

Statewide Strategy Alignment

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

Agriculture, Food, and Liquid Arts

6. Support the Development of Agritourism

Potential Lead Partners: CTO

Potential Supporting Partners: [Colorado Department of Agriculture](#), [Colorado Dude and Guest Ranch Association](#), [Colorado Restaurant Association](#), [Colorado Department of Local Affairs](#), [Colorado Agritourism Association](#)

Strategy 13:

Launch Destination Stewardship Recognition Awards

This strategy proposes the establishment of an annual program in Denver and Northern Colorado to acknowledge residents and travelers exemplifying exceptional destination stewardship. It seeks to commend individuals, organizations, and businesses dedicated to environmental conservation, cultural preservation, and community enhancement. The program will be actively promoted to visitors and residents alike, inviting them to share their destination stewardship stories. By encouraging participants to leverage their platforms, the program aims to amplify narratives of responsible travel practices, thereby expanding awareness and engagement in sustainable tourism initiatives across the region.

Tactics:

- Establish a new, collaborative program (*Do Colorado Right Awards*) where participants would be considered for a Destination Stewardship Recognition Award. Partner with Colorado-based outdoor brands to provide rewards branded with *Do Colorado Right*.
- Partner with regional partners to capture and distribute stories of travelers as they *Do Colorado Right*.
- Showcase traveler testimonials, via social channels, on how they *Do Colorado Right*.
- Partner with Colorado-based national outdoor brands to reward visitors for sharing their *Do Colorado Right* behaviors.
- Expand work with influencers to showcase *Do Colorado Right* in action.

Resources:

- [Governor’s Awards for Outstanding Colorado Tourism Efforts](#)

Destination Stewardship Case Studies

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

- [National Park Service Young Ranger program](#) recognizes youth for exploration, learning and protecting the parks. This program is an example of the kind of program that could be created in this region to recognize destination stewardship in our youth.
- [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s President Environment Youth Program](#) recognizes youth from all 50 states for environmental youth projects. This program could be launched in this region with recognition from the governor.
- [Green Destinations](#) honors destinations and individuals who champion sustainable practices, from environmental conservation to the protection of cultural heritage.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Increase in user-generated content on social media showcasing responsible travel practices in Colorado
- Number of responsible travel testimonials shared through CTO platforms and campaigns
- Number of participants and winners recognized through the Destination Stewardship Recognition Awards program

Role of the Tourism Industry: Promote the program to visitors and residents. Encourage guests to share their stewardship stories, utilizing their platforms to promote responsible travel practices and broaden the reach of sustainable tourism narratives.

Statewide Strategy Alignment

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

Experiencing

4. Educate Children on the Importance of Destination Stewardship

Potential Lead Partners: CTO, DMOs

Potential Supporting Partners: NoCo Places, CPW, Care for Colorado Coalition

Implementation and Coordination Plan

Implementing the Destination Stewardship Strategic Plan for the Denver and Northern Colorado 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

CCI	Colorado Creative Industries
CDLE	Colorado Department of Labor and Employment
CDOT	Colorado Department of Transportation
CPW	Colorado Parks and Wildlife
CTO	Colorado Tourism Office
CWDC	Colorado Workforce Development Council
DEN	Denver International Airport
DMO	Destination Management/Marketing Organization
DOLA	Colorado Department of Local Affairs
DCS	Destination Stewardship Council
FoCoMA	Fort Collins Musicians Association
GOCO	Great Outdoors Colorado
NoCo	Northern Colorado Tourism Region
NPS	National Park Service
OEDIT	Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade
OREC	Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office
RTD	Regional Transportation District
USFS	United States Forest Service

Annex 2: Destination Stewardship Partners

Government Agencies

Colorado is fortunate to have millions of acres of public lands, some of which can be found in the Denver and Northern Colorado 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 (Rocky Mountain National Park)
- United States Forest Service (Arapaho National Forest, Pike National Forest, Roosevelt National Forest)

Regional Municipalities and Counties

The Denver and Northern Colorado travel region is comprised of the following cities and counties:

- **Cities:** Adams City, Allenspark, Arvada, Ault, Aurora, Bailey, Bellvue, Bennett, Berthoud, Black Hawk, Boulder, Bow Mar, Briggsdale, Brighton, Broomfield, Buffalo Creek, Byers, Carr, Castle Rock, Centennial, Central City, Cherry Hills Village, Columbine Valley, Commerce City, Conifer, Dacono, Denver, Drake, Dupont, Eastlake, Eaton, Edgewater, Eldorado Springs, Englewood, Erie, Estes Park, Evans, Evergreen, Federal Heights, Firestone, Fort Collins, Fort Logan, Fort Lupton, Foxfield, Foxton, Franktown, Frederick, Galeton, Garden City, Gilcrest, Gill, Glen Haven, Glendale, Glendevey, Golden, Greeley, Greenwood Village, Grover, Henderson, Hereford, Highlands, Highlands Ranch, Hygiene, Idaho Springs, Idledale, Indian Hills, Irondale, Jamestown, Johnstown, Keenesburg, Kersey, Kittredge, La Salle, Lafayette, Lakewood, Laporte, Littleton, Livermore, Lochbuie, Lone Tree, Longmont, Louisville, Louviers, Loveland, Lowry, Lucerne, Lyons, Masonville, Mead, Milliken, Montbello, Montclair, Morrison, Nederland, Niwot, Northglenn, Nunn, Parker, Pine, Pinecliffe, Platteville, Raymer (New Raymer), Red Feather Lakes, Roggen, Rollinsville, Rustic, Sedalia, Severance, Sheridan, Stoneham, Strasburg, Superior, Thornton, Timnath, Valley, Virginia Dale, Watkins, Wattenburg, Welby, Wellington, Western Area, Westminster, Wheat Ridge, Windsor
- **Counties:** Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield City-County, Denver, Douglas, Jefferson, Larimer, Morgan, Weld

Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnerships Initiative

There are a number of Colorado Regional Partnerships at work in the Denver and Northern Colorado 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.

- **Metro Denver Nature Alliance (Metro DNA)** aligns nature-based efforts to ensure more equitable access to nature and promote healthy people, communities, and natural places.
- **NoCo Places** is a collaboration of eight county, state, and federal public land agencies from north-central Colorado that are actively collaborating to address the challenges the mountains and foothills in this region are facing from high visitation and a growing population.

DMOs and Local Tourism-Related Organizations

The Denver and Northern Colorado 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.

Cache la Poudre River National Heritage Area offers ample opportunities for adventure as a renowned attraction located on a healthy working river filled with abundant wildlife and breath-taking scenery.

City of Greeley Culture, Parks, and Recreation enhances the Greeley community through exceptional service and stewardship.

Clear Creek County Tourism Bureau acts as the destination marketing and management organization working to maximize visitor spending in ways that support businesses, benefit communities, and protect the homes and heritage in Clear Creek County, CO.

Colorado State University sets the standard for public research universities in teaching, research, service, and extension for the benefit of the citizens of Colorado, the United States and the world.

Continental Divide Trail Coalition builds a strong community of Continental Divide Trail volunteers, enthusiasts, and supporters who want to see the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail completed and protected.

Denver International Airport provides excellent service and support as the largest airport in the region and the state for more than 100 million passengers annually.

Downtown Boulder Partnership promotes the civic, economic, and commercial vitality of downtown Boulder while helping preserve its historic and cultural environment as the heart of the greater Boulder community.

Downtown Colorado, Inc. builds better communities by providing assistance to Colorado downtowns, commercial districts, main streets, rural communities, and town centers.

Friends of Dinosaur Ridge preserves paleontological history and offers world-class education programs that inspire wonder and curiosity.

Visit Aurora/Aurora Convention and Visitors Bureau is the DMO for Aurora, CO, showcasing Aurora as a premier destination for meetings, business, and leisure travel.

Visit Boulder/Boulder Convention and Visitors Bureau is the destination marketing and management organization for Boulder, CO, championing the mission of keeping Boulder an inclusive and sustainable source of health and rejuvenation for locals and visitors alike, now and in the years to come, by providing education on ethical conservation practices.

Visit Denver is the destination marketing and management organization for Denver, CO, bringing conventions and leisure visitors to Denver for the economic benefit of the City, the community, and their partners.

Visit Estes Park/Estes Park Local Marketing District is the destination marketing and management organization for Estes Park, CO, nurturing visitor reverence of their vibrant mountain town for business success, environmental sustainability, and community harmony.

Visit Fort Collins is the destination marketing and management organization for Fort Collins, CO, promoting all there is to do in Fort Collins.

Visit Golden is the destination marketing and management organization for Golden, CO, positioning Golden as a premier destination in Colorado by promoting its unique attributes to residents, regional visitors, and out-of-state travelers.

Visit Longmont is the destination marketing and management organization for Longmont, CO, working to enhance the image, and the historical, cultural, business, meeting, and recreational assets to draw regional, national, and international tourism to Longmont and surrounding areas.

Visit Loveland is the destination marketing and management organization for Loveland, CO.

Visit Lyons is the destination marketing and management organization for Lyons, CO.

Rocky Mountain National Park includes 415 square miles of a spectacular range of mountain environments, located just 55 miles from Denver.

University of Colorado Boulder serves as the state of Colorado's comprehensive graduate research university with selective admission standards, offering a comprehensive array of undergraduate, master's, and doctoral degree programs.

University of Northern Colorado offers a comprehensive array of baccalaureate programs and master's and doctoral degrees primarily in the field of education.

NGOs, Academia, and Community Entities

Below is a list of other groups, organizations, and entities in the Denver and Northern Colorado 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.

- Access Fund
- Access and Accessibility
- Big City Mountaineers
- Bird Conservancy of the Rockies
- Bohemian Foundation
- Boulder County Audubon Society
- Boulder Housing Authority
- Boulder Mountainbike Alliance
- Boulder Watershed Collective
- Chaffee Recreation Adopters
- Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed
- Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education
- Colorado Dude and Guest Ranch Association
- Colorado Fourteeners Initiative
- Colorado UpLift
- Denver Audubon
- Denver Botanic Gardens
- Denver Zoo
- Denver Zoo Animal Academy
- Douglas Land Conservancy
- Easter Seals Northern Colorado
- Environmental Learning for Kids
- Estes Park Housing Authority
- Estes Valley Land Trust
- Fort Collins Audubon Society
- Fort Collins Musicians Association

- Friends of Larimer County Parks and Open Lands
- Friends of Lory State Park
- Great Outdoors Colorado
- Growing Gardens of Boulder County
- High Line Canal Conservancy
- High Plains Environmental Center
- Historic Splendid Valley
- HistoriCorps
- Mountain Area Land Trust Longmont and Boulder Valley Conservation Districts
- Northern Colorado Climbers Coalition
- Northern Colorado Intertribal Pow-wow Association
- Northern Colorado Wildlife Center
- NoCo Housing Now
- Overland Mountain Bike Association
- Rocky Mountain Conservancy
- Spark the Change Colorado
- The Butterfly Pavilion)
- Urban Land Conservancy
- Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado
- West Greeley Conservation District
- Wheel the World
- Wildlands Restoration Volunteers

Photo Credits

ANDREW MAGUIRE PRDXN: Pages 21, 23

Bryan Maltais: Page 25

Lumenati: Pages 3, 6, 9, 11, 13, 15, 19, 26

Marck Guttman: Cover, pages 4, 5

Travel Shooters: Pages 16, 18, 19, 28, 31



CTOstewardship.com