

Pikes Peak Wonders Regional Destination Stewardship Strategic Plan

FISCAL YEAR 2025–2035



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The development of a Destination Stewardship Strategic Plan for the Pikes Peak Wonders 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

- **Beth Wright**, Pikes Peak Wonders 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

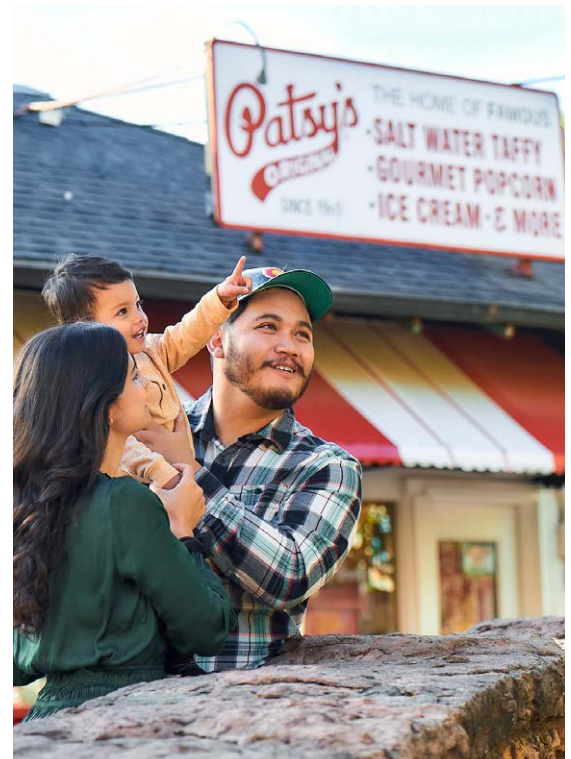
Colorado, renowned for its breathtaking landscapes and vibrant cultural scene, attracted 93.3 million visitors in 2023.* The Colorado Tourism Office (CTO), a division of the Governor's Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT), aligns with OEDIT's mission to empower all to thrive 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 Pikes Peak Wonders 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.



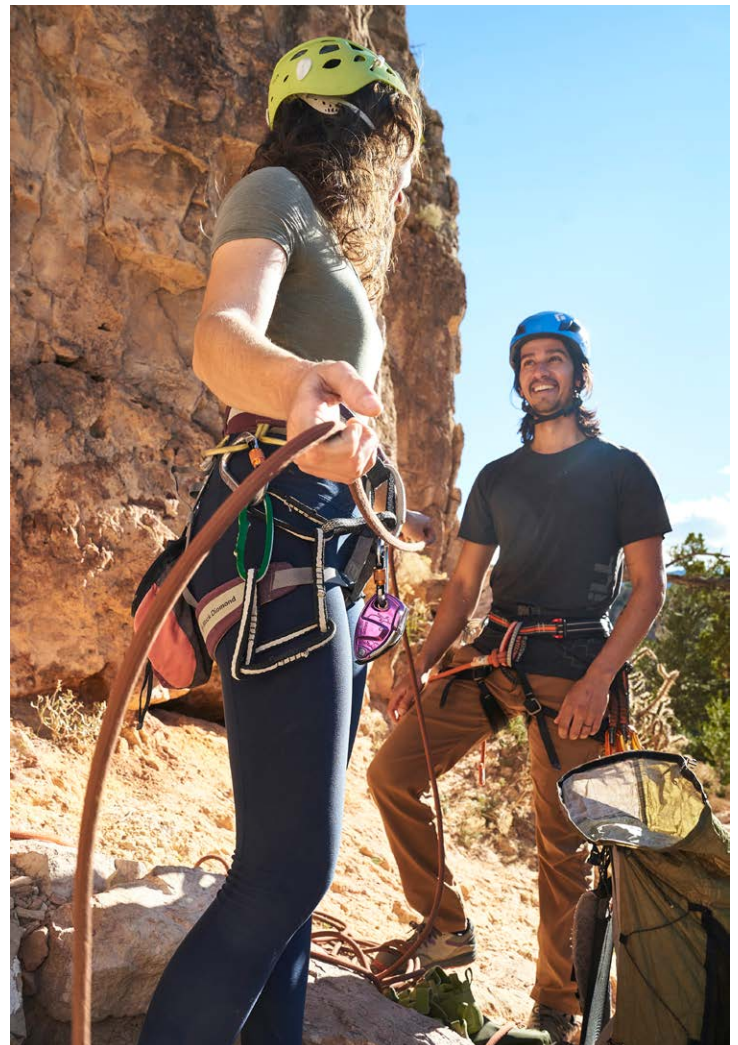
Situation Analysis

The Pikes Peak Wonders region offers a captivating blend of urban experiences and stunning natural landscapes. It boasts iconic outdoor attractions such as Pikes Peak, Garden of the Gods, and the Royal Gorge Bridge. This area is framed by the Sawatch, Mosquito, and Sangre de Cristo mountain ranges and features over 130 miles of the Upper Arkansas River, flowing from its headwaters through Browns Canyon and the Royal Gorge to the Pueblo Reservoir. Key urban centers include Colorado Springs, with its rich cultural and sports experiences, and Pueblo, known for its Chile Festival and scenic Riverwalk. The region's diverse rural communities provide unique shopping, quality dining, family-friendly events, and easy access to leisure and adventure activities.

These communities are characterized by their resilience, strong connection to their natural surroundings, proud cultures, and shared heritage. Despite its natural and cultural wealth, the region faces challenges such as limited tourism management capacity and resources, lack of local understanding and appreciation for the tourism industry, seasonal economic fluctuations, high cost of living, and endangered wildlife. To address these issues, this Destination Stewardship Strategic Plan focuses on fostering collaboration and improving communication among tourism partners and stakeholders, developing and promoting low-impact and accessible experiences, advocating for industry workforce and community needs, and educating and empowering visitors to support stewardship.

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

1. Foster Regional Collaboration and Strengthen DMOs
2. Enhance Community Awareness and Engagement in Tourism
3. Expand Regional Collaborative Outdoor Management
4. Support Wildlife and Biodiversity Conservation
5. Develop and Promote Low-Impact and Regenerative Travel Experiences
6. Improve Accessibility Communications and Infrastructure
7. Prioritize Community Placemaking and the Arts
8. Enhance Cultural Heritage Organizations and Offerings
9. Advance Agritourism Development and Promotion
10. Increase Sustainable Transportation and Parking Infrastructure
11. Bolster Local Tourism Workforce



Tourism Assets and Infrastructure

- **Commercial Airports:** Colorado Springs Airport, Pueblo Memorial Airport
- **Scenic and Historic Byways:** Collegiate Peaks, Gold Belt, Frontier Pathways
- **National Public Lands (parks/historic sites):** Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area, Browns Canyon National Monument, Collegiate Peaks Wilderness Area, Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument, Garden of the Gods, Pikes Peak - America's Mountain, Pike National Forest, Royal Gorge Bridge and Park, San Isabel National Forest
- **Main Streets:** Victor (official); Buena Vista, Cañon City, Colorado Springs (Old Colorado City), Florence, Monument, Woodland Park (affiliates)
- **Creative Districts:** Manitou Springs Creative District, Downtown Colorado Springs Creative District, Pueblo Creative Corridor, Salida Creative District
- **State Parks:** Cheyenne Mountain State Park, Lake Pueblo State Park, Mueller State Park, Eleven Mile State Park
- **Wildlife Preserves:** Arkansas River Headwaters Area, Beaver Creek State Wildlife Area, Douglas Land Conservancy areas, Fountain Creek Nature Center, Palmer Land Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy's Aiken Canyon Preserve

Economic Impact of Tourism in 2023**

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Visitor Spending: \$2.9B | • Employment: 26,500 jobs |
| • Other Travel Spending: \$157.4M | • Local Tax: \$106.6M |
| • Total Travel Spending: \$3.0B | • State Tax: \$81.8M |
| • Travel Industry Earnings: \$926.4M | • Total Tax: \$188.4M |

Destination Stewardship Partners

The Pikes Peak Wonders region is supported by various organizations and initiatives dedicated to destination stewardship. Given its vast geography and varied communities, these efforts are primarily community or county-focused rather than region-wide. Tourism coordination also operates on a municipality or county level due to funding constraints. However, most organizations face challenges with limited capacity and resources for destination stewardship initiatives. For a detailed list of destination stewardship partners, please refer to Annex 2.

Strategic Planning Process

The destination stewardship strategic planning process for the Pikes Peak Wonders 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.

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

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 Colorado Springs and Pueblo 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, enabling broader participation and gathering additional input on priorities and opportunities for the future of tourism.

April 2024: Regional Presentation and Roadshow

A regional presentation was held in Cripple Creek, accompanied by a “roadshow” featuring a series of focused discussions and meetings. These meetings provided an overview of the draft statewide strategy and attendees discussed region-specific strategies and priorities to be included in the draft plan.

June 2024: Public Feedback Process

The draft plan was made available online, allowing stakeholders the opportunity to provide comments and suggestions before it was finalized.

Key Metrics:

- 21 individual stakeholder interviews
- 85 attendees across three workshops
- 51 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:

Foster Regional Collaboration and Strengthen DMOs

DMOs are essential for the implementation of destination stewardship efforts both regionally and statewide. In the Pikes Peak Wonders region, DMOs include a diverse range of entities, from independent organizations like Visit Colorado Springs to chambers of commerce such as the Manitou Springs Chamber of Commerce. Other examples are visitor bureaus like the Chaffee County Visitors Bureau and Visit Pueblo Convention and Visitors Bureau, county boards like the Custer County Tourism Board and the Fremont County Tourism Council, and local municipalities like Cripple Creek, Victor, and Woodland Park. These DMOs are well-positioned to communicate with visitors, collaborate with regional and state partners, and engage with residents and tourism stakeholders. Regional collaboration is essential for delivering consistent messaging, especially since most visitors to the mountain communities and lands in the region are from the Front Range.



The complex and evolving tourism landscape underscores the need to bolster local capacity, improve organizational structures, and secure sustainable funding strategies. With support from the Colorado Association of Destination Marketing Organizations (CADMO) and the CTO, this strategy outlines actions to strengthen DMOs through capacity-building programs and regional collaboration networks.

Tactics:

- Establish a Pikes Peak Wonders Regional Destination Stewardship Network, supported by CADMO and DMOs, to meet quarterly in person to exchange ideas, share progress on stewardship initiatives, and advance collaborative actions.
- Develop and distribute educational materials on creating sustainable organizational structures at local and regional levels.
- Explore and implement new local funding strategies while advocating for expanded state-level funding sources.

Strategy 1 continued

- Identify grant opportunities to address regional priorities and foster collaborative proposal development.
- Share CTO and OEDIT resources with tourism organizations throughout the region and encourage partnerships to support shared industry priorities.

Resources:

- [CTO competitive grants and co-ops](#)
- [CTO Destination Development programs](#)
- CADMO
- [Colorado Main Street program](#)

Destination Stewardship Case Studies

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

- [Royal Gorge Chamber Alliance](#) demonstrates how organizations can combine resources and leverage local capacity more effectively for projects.
- [Roaring Fork Valley Destination Alliance](#) is an example of tourism leaders coming together to collaborate for a shared destination vision.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of destination partners reporting increased organizational capacity and/or new sustainable funding mechanisms implemented
- Number of regional projects implemented through DMO partnerships
- Amount of grant funds secured through regional DMO partnerships for destination stewardship projects

Role of the Tourism Industry: Participate in local DMO programs and events, volunteer on a local tourism board, and support activities that foster a collaborative environment to strengthen destination stewardship.

Statewide Strategy Alignment

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

Local Tourism Businesses and Organizations

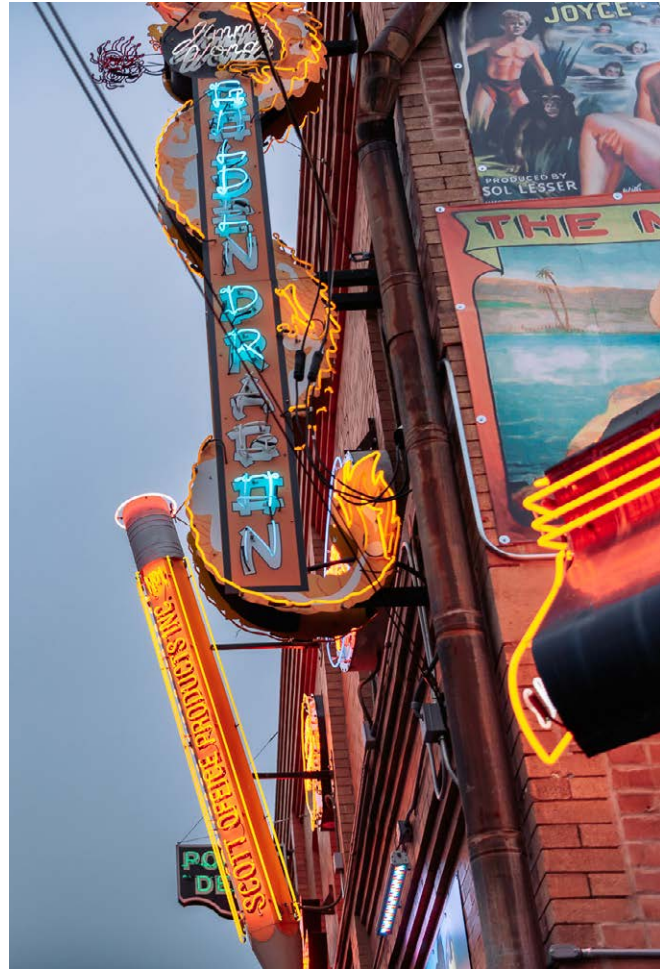
- 1: Provide Support to Rural Tourism Organizations
- 2: Strengthen Destination Management/Marketing Organizations Across the State

Potential Lead Partners: CTO, CADMO, DMO, chambers of commerce

Potential Supporting Partners: Colorado Springs Downtown Partnership, conservation districts, creative districts, Dark Skies of the Wet Mountain Valley, Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), local counties and municipalities, local colleges and universities, Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments, Pikes Peak Outdoor Recreation Alliance, Royal Gorge Bridge and Park, Scenic and Historic Byways, Victor Main Street program, Woodland Park Tourism Alliance, national, state, and private land management organizations

Strategy 2: Enhance Community Awareness and Engagement in Tourism

Tourism and outdoor recreation significantly shape the identity and socio-economic fabric of many local communities. They support 24,700 jobs and generate over \$100 million in local taxes, aiding environmental conservation, infrastructure, and cultural events. Regional stakeholders emphasize the need for a greater local understanding of tourism's impacts on the economy, culture, and environment, particularly when voting on tourism-related measures like lodging tax changes and short-term rental policies. It is essential for residents and businesses to participate in tourism planning to express their concerns and interests. This strategy aims to boost local awareness of tourism's economic and social benefits and foster collaborative development that reflects community values. The goal is to create a well-informed public that recognizes tourism's significance and collaborates with DMOs and municipalities to address both its benefits and challenges.



Tactics:

- Launch a regional education campaign showcasing the economic benefits of tourism, including stories about how tourism dollars support local communities and public lands. Highlight preserved attractions, maintained recreation sites, and cultural celebrations.
- Expand upon the CTO's Value of Tourism campaign and video to increase awareness of tourism's indispensable role in the local economy.
- Develop and share educational materials with government officials, business owners, and residents illustrating the benefits of visitor-generated tax revenues in supporting local communities and reducing the tax burden through funding community improvement projects.
- Engage local communities in the tourism planning and decision-making process, with their perspectives and needs helping to shape tourism initiatives. Engagement examples include establishing community advisory boards; hosting public forums and workshops; developing online engagement platforms; and creating community feedback mechanisms.

Resources:

- [CTO Value of Tourism video](#)
- [CTO Champion the Value of Tourism Learning Lab](#)
- [CTO Destination Development programs](#)
- [Dean Runyan Economic Impact Report](#)
- [Longwoods Travel USA Visitor Profile](#)

Destination Stewardship Case Studies

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

- [Envision Chaffee County's](#) public engagement process to create and implement the Envision Chaffee Community Action Plan is a regional example of community participation.
- [Restart Destinations Success Story: Fremont County Tourism Council](#) provides an overview of Fremont County Tourism Council's participation in CTO destination development programming to help champion the value of tourism locally.
- [Visit Denver's Tourism Pays campaign](#) showcases how tourism spending positively impacts businesses and residents throughout the state from an economic and quality of life perspective.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of community engagement sessions held to gather input on tourism planning
- Reduction in perceived negative impacts of tourism reported in resident sentiment surveys
- Increase in community support of tourism reported in resident sentiment surveys

Role of the Tourism Industry: Engage with local DMOs to develop tourism strategies that integrate diverse perspectives, preserving and celebrating community characteristics. Highlight the positive impacts of tourism for residents and visitors.

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
- 2: Increase Knowledge on the Value of Tourism for Residents

Potential Lead Partners: CTO, CADMO, Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), DMOs, chambers of commerce, local governments

Potential Supporting Partners: Colorado Springs Downtown Partnership, conservation districts



Strategy 3:

Expand Regional Collaborative Outdoor Management

Outdoor recreation is central to the region's identity and economy, attracting residents and visitors with its stunning landscapes and diverse activities. However, increased visitation has introduced challenges such as overcrowding, waste management, invasive species, and wildfire prevention. Addressing these issues requires prioritizing sustainable practices that safeguard outdoor spaces and create equitable access. This strategy aligns with ongoing initiatives led by organizations like the Pikes Peak Outdoor Recreation Alliance (PPORA), Envision Chaffee County, and other local partnerships, in collaboration with public land managers and municipalities. By leveraging the tourism industry's influence, this approach aims to foster balanced outdoor recreation management through shared decision-making and principles of recreation ecology. Key actions include advancing the *Do Colorado Right* campaigns to promote responsible behaviors, increasing fire prevention education, highlighting lesser-known recreation areas, and exploring innovative solutions for transportation and parking to reduce overcrowding.



Tactics:

- Collaborate with PPORA to advance the Pikes Peak Outdoors Initiative strategic plan and engage stakeholders.
 - Support ongoing efforts to develop and implement the plan through funding, in-kind contributions, and partnerships.
 - Participate in regular roundtable meetings and collaborative planning sessions.
- Support Envision Chaffee County in implementing its Community Action Plan and actively engage stakeholders to drive collective impact.
- Explore opportunities to expand existing regional outdoor recreation management programs to encompass additional counties or establish new leadership structures to support underrepresented areas. This may include a new Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) working group for Lower Arkansas River destinations in Fremont and Pueblo Counties.
- Expand *Do Colorado Right* campaigns throughout the region incorporating principles informed by input from land managers, tourism professionals, and local communities.
- Encourage all municipalities/counties in the region to establish or update their emergency management communication plans, ensuring tourism leaders understand their role in communicating with visitors, tourism businesses, and community members.

Strategy 3 continued

- Improve regional fire prevention education to visitors and residents through signage at visitor centers, shopping areas, and public kiosks, as well as increased social media posts during high season.
- Incorporate more backcountry safety education and information, such as trailhead signage around avalanche safety.
- Strengthen partnerships between land managers and volunteer organizations to develop and promote volunteer opportunities.
 - Develop a Pikes Peak Outdoors Volunteer webpage featuring opportunities with “Friends Of” organizations and other regional volunteer opportunities.
 - Support Trails and Open Space Coalition projects to connect volunteers with opportunities to maintain trails, greenways and open space.
- Monitor existing timed-entry permits and reservation systems (including Pikes Peak-America’s Mountain and Manitou Incline) and assess visitor impacts at popular recreation areas to explore the potential adoption of new visitor management systems.

Resources:

- [Pikes Peak Outdoors Initiative](#)
- [Envision Chaffee County initiatives](#)
- Colorado Outdoor Recreation Office [OREC Rural Technical Assistance program](#)
- [CTO competitive grants and co-ops](#)
- [CTO Destination Development programs](#)
- [CPW’s Outdoor Regional Partnership Initiative](#)

Destination Stewardship Case Studies

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

- [Pikes Peak Outdoors](#) Initiative is the result of work conducted by the CPW Working Group and Pikes Peak Outdoor Recreation Alliance to foster collaborative outdoor recreation management across the region.
- [Envision Chaffee County](#) demonstrates the value of the “Common Ground” tax and how best to utilize public funds for outdoor recreation management.
- [Do Woodland Park Right](#) is an example of a community participating in a CTO Destination Development program to create a local *Do Colorado Right* campaign.
- [Manitou Cares](#) presents how Manitou Springs took their own approach to educating residents and visitors about responsible and respectful use.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of outdoor management sessions held to gather input on tourism planning
- Number of land manager-reported negative impacts
- Number of public lands promoting *Do Colorado Right* messaging
- Number of emergency medical service (EMS) calls and rescues annually
- Visitor feedback on reservation and timed entry permits to outdoor recreation sites
- Number of volunteers participating in land management initiatives

Role of the Tourism Industry: Facilitate and engage in meaningful discussions on sustainable outdoor recreation management to support the conservation of Colorado’s natural landscapes. Lead educational campaigns promoting responsible outdoor behavior among visitors.

Statewide Strategy Alignment

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

Outdoor Recreation

- 1: Expand *Do Colorado Right* Campaigns on Public Lands
- 2: Facilitate and Convene Collaborative Outdoor Management Discussions
- 3: Identify the Need for Timed Entry Permit Systems and Seasonal Closures
- 6: Expand Trail Ambassador and Volunteer Initiatives
- 10: Provide Education on Responsible Backcountry Vehicle Use

Experiencing

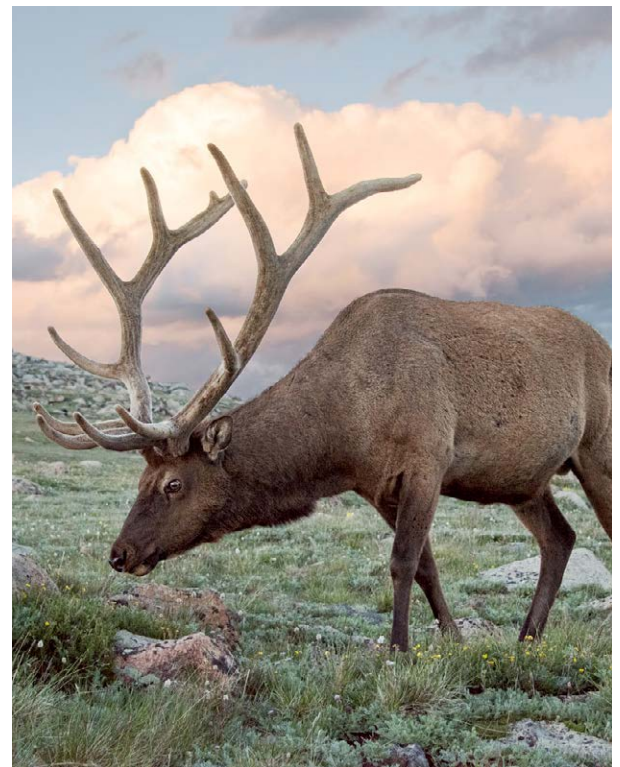
- 1: Optimize *Do Colorado Right* Messaging in the Destination

Potential Lead Partners: OREC, CPW, Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), PPORA, Envision Chaffee County, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), National Park Service (NPS), U.S. Forest Service Ranger Districts

Potential Supporting Partners: CTO, natural attractions and public lands, chambers of commerce, Colorado Avalanche Information Center, conservation districts, DMOs, GOCO, local county and municipal governments, Palmer Land Conservancy, Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments, Trails and Open Space Coalition, Trails Preservation Alliance, City of Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services

Strategy 4: Support Wildlife and Biodiversity Conservation

The Pikes Peak Wonders region is home to a rich diversity of wildlife and ecosystems, from the eastern plains and front range to mountain valleys and alpine tundra. With over 960 native species, including elk, deer, bears, and various birds, these habitats offer more than just scenic beauty—they sustain essential wildlife populations, enrich outdoor recreation, and bolster global environmental health. Preserving these natural treasures is crucial for the long-term sustainability and vitality of the region’s ecosystems. This strategy focuses on promoting respectful wildlife interactions, safeguarding sensitive areas, and partnering with hunting and fishing communities to protect the region’s diverse wildlife and biodiversity.



Tactics:

- Mitigate human-wildlife conflicts through the implementation of secure trash solutions, visitor awareness campaigns, education programs, increased wildlife crossing signage, and adjustments to speed limits where necessary.
 - Collaborate with hunting and fishing communities to promote sustainable best practices.
 - Enhance partnerships between CPW and local hunting and fishing associations.
 - Create and launch educational programs and workshops aimed at improving wildlife regulations.
 - Encourage hunters and anglers to participate in certification programs that demonstrate their adherence to sustainability standards.
 - Promote responsible hunting and fishing opportunities to visitors, highlighting ethical practices and conservation efforts.
- Foster ethical wildlife viewing by sharing local guidelines, based on CPW resources, with residents and local businesses.
- Building on the Chaffee County Recreation Council's leadership with their Decision Tools for Recreation, advocate for wildlife habitat protection by supporting habitat monitoring programs. These programs provide critical data to inform strategic tourism regulations and implement seasonal access restrictions, safeguarding wildlife migration, mating, and nesting zones.

Resources:

- [CTO competitive grants and co-ops](#)
- [CTO Destination Development programs](#)
- [CPW Wildlife Viewing Guidelines](#)
- [CPW's Human-Bear Conflict Reduction grant](#)
- [CPW's Habitat Partnership program](#)
- [CPW's Wildlife Rehabilitation grant program](#)
- [Colorado Wildlife Habitat program](#)
- [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Clean Vessel Act grant program](#)
- [Ranching for Wildlife program](#)
- [Colorado Wetlands Partnership](#)
- [Chaffee County Recreation Council Wildlife Decision Tools for Recreation](#)



Destination Stewardship Case Studies

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

- [Chaffee County Recreation Council Wildlife Decision Tools for Recreation](#) identify areas that are most important to protect, enhance, or restore, including areas where current recreation needs to be carefully managed to support wildlife.
- [Summit County Safe Passages Connectivity Plan for Wildlife](#) identifies human-wildlife conflicts on the Vail Pass and includes monitoring and mitigation projects.

Strategy 4 continued

- [Wintering Wildlife Conservation Initiative](#) is a Colorado initiative and media toolkit focused on limiting impacts to wintering wildlife.
- [The Eagle County Community Wildlife Roundtable](#) gathers diverse stakeholders in the valley for the shared purpose of understanding and addressing issues faced by local wildlife populations.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of human-wildlife conflicts
- Year-over-year number of wildlife viewing guides and ethical viewing educational materials distributed
- Number of businesses adopting sustainable fishing and hunting operations
- Reach and impact of marketing campaigns to promote responsible hunting and fishing practices
- Percentage of habitat conserved and improved in the region
- Value of investment in habitat protection and restoration

Role of the Tourism Industry: Engage in reducing human-wildlife conflicts through infrastructure improvements and visitor education. Expand the distribution of CPW guidelines for ethical wildlife viewing to educate visitors on respectful behavior. Advocate for wildlife habitat conservation and promote responsible wildlife viewing tours and activities.

Statewide Strategy Alignment

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

Wildlife and Biodiversity

2. Create Wildlife Viewing Brochures and Encourage Ethical Viewing
3. Reduce Human-Wildlife Conflicts
4. Champion Wildlife Habitat Protection and Restoration
7. Collaborate with Hunting and Fishing Communities to Promote Sustainable Practices

Climate

8. Champion Natural Habitat Restoration

Potential Lead Partners: CPW, CTO, CDOT, conservation districts, DMOs, local and Tribal governments

Potential Supporting Partners: Natural attractions, public lands, backcountry hunters and anglers, BLM, chambers of commerce, City of Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services, Colorado Wildlife Federation, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), GOCO, nature and outdoor recreation outfitters and guides, NPS, Palmer Land Conservancy, Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments, PPORA, Trails and Open Space Coalition, Trails Preservation Alliance, USFS Ranger Districts

Strategy 5:

Develop and Promote Low-Impact and Regenerative Travel Experiences

The Pikes Peak Wonders region boasts numerous hidden-gem attractions, from stargazing experiences in the Wet Mountain Valley to expansive multi-use trail systems in Fremont County, and a wealth of hot springs, rivers, lakes, and pristine forests. However, some areas lack adequate management capacity, infrastructure, guides, or visitor information necessary for responsible exploration. Regional stakeholders are keen to enhance these assets and introduce new experiences to the market, but they are committed to doing so responsibly, minimizing environmental and social impacts. They recognize the value of knowledgeable guides who can enhance experiences while educating visitors on local cultural heritage and responsible recreation practices. This strategy outlines actions to develop and promote low-impact experiences, led by skilled guides, fostering engagement with lesser-known areas while respecting the sociocultural needs of communities and preserving natural landscapes.



Tactics:

- Develop a regional digital guide featuring low-impact experiences. Providers must meet criteria demonstrating minimal environmental impact, celebrate local culture and wildlife, and benefit local communities.
- Collaborate with local industry associations and DMOs to promote guided experiences showcasing the unique expertise of local guides, highlighting hidden gems, and promoting responsible visitor behavior.
- Encourage guides to pursue professional development in sustainable practices through programs such as CTO Learning Labs, Care for Colorado Coalition, Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA) training, Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education, and World Travel and Tourism Council's (WTTC) "Guardians of Nature" resources.
- Advocate for responsible trail connectivity initiatives, including the integration of community trails with surrounding public land networks, the inclusion of public transportation options to trailheads, enhanced wayfinding and interpretive signage along trail systems, and increased funding for ongoing trail maintenance.
- Promote low-impact travel experiences by creating and advertising itineraries focused on electric vehicle infrastructure, enhancing visibility and accessibility of transportation to lesser-known attractions, and developing web pages and social media campaigns for car-free experiences.
- Support Dark Sky preservation and experiences primarily in Custer, Fremont, and Chaffee Counties by encouraging more destinations to participate in the CTO's Colorado Dark Sky Certification Mentor program and developing and promoting experiences that foster stewardship of the night sky.

Resources:

- [CTO competitive grants and co-ops](#)
- [CTO Learning Labs](#)
- [Care for Colorado Coalition](#)
- [ATTA training](#)
- [WTTC Nature Positive Toolkit](#)
- [CPW's Non-Motorized Trails grant program](#)
- [CDOT Office of Innovative Mobility grants](#)
- [CTO's Dark Sky Certification Mentor program](#)
- [OREC Rural Technical Assistance program](#)



Destination Stewardship Case Studies

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

- [The Pueblo Riverwalk](#) is an example of a multi-experiential attraction that can be reached through public transportation, includes retail and dining opportunities, and serves as a connector for other attractions and experiences locally.
- [Leadville Camp and Run](#) is an example of an annual regenerative tourism experience, organized through local partnerships, that offers participants outdoor activities such as hiking, biking, running, swimming, and paddling as well as hands-on service projects, and the opportunity to try new products gifted from outdoor apparel companies.
- [Dark Skies of the Wet Mountain Valley](#) provides unique astrotourism opportunities that educate visitors and promote environmental conservation.
- [Fremont Peak Connection Trail](#) is a local example of trail projects that improve local well-being and increase responsible visitor experiences.
- [Pikes Peak Summit Visitor Center](#) is one of the leading sustainable attractions in the area and provides an example of how tourism facilities can reduce greenhouse gas emissions without compromising visitor experiences and services.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of guiding permits issued on public lands
- Percentage of visitors reporting to use a guide
- Number of tourism professionals trained in wildlife conservation education
- Number of organizations and businesses that sign up to become a “Guardian of Nature” and use the WTTC toolkit
- Number of new or improved trail connectivity projects that prioritize sustainable access
- Number of new communities and parks applying for and achieving dark sky designation

Role of the Tourism Industry: Promote the value of local guides by demonstrating how guided experiences deepen visitors’ understanding and appreciation of the outdoors. Advocate for community-benefiting trails that connect visitors to multiple destinations and local businesses. Actively promote eco-friendly transportation options and collaborate with local and regional partners to minimize light pollution, cultivating unique dark sky experiences and bolstering the region’s sustainability credentials.

Statewide Strategy Alignment

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

Climate

7. Encourage Diverse, Climate-Adaptive Tourism Offerings

Communities

6. Promote Responsible Trail Connectivity
9. Promote Dark Sky Preservation and Experiences

Outdoor Recreation

7. Promote Guided Recreation Opportunities

Wildlife and Biodiversity

8. Implement Wildlife Conservation Education for Tourism Professionals
10. Champion Nature-Positive Tourism

Transportation

1. Increase Availability of Eco-Friendly Transit Methods

Potential Lead Partners: CTO, DMOs, Pikes Peak regional attractions, tourism and outdoor recreation outfitters and guides, trails and open space organizations, DarkSky Colorado

Potential Supporting Partners: Natural attractions and public lands, chambers of commerce, City of Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services, cultural organizations and attractions, Fremont Adventure Recreation, GOCO, municipalities, Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments, PPORA, Scenic and Historic Byways



Strategy 6:

Improve Accessibility Communications and Infrastructure

Effective communication about current and future accessibility features is essential for tourism destinations, helping visitors of all abilities to plan and enjoy their trips with confidence. By providing comprehensive accessibility information, destinations can attract a broader audience and foster a more inclusive travel experience. This strategy encourages DMOs and tourism businesses to enhance accessibility communications and infrastructure, making the visitor experiences in Pikes Peak Wonders inclusive for everyone. Inspired by the leadership of Visit Colorado Springs, this strategy includes key tactics to assess and improve accessibility-related communication resources and infrastructure needs, reinforcing the region's commitment to creating a welcoming and accessible environment for all.



Tactics:

- Promote the Pikes Peak Wonders region as an accessible and inclusive tourism destination by enhancing the accessibility information on DMOs' and tourism businesses' websites and leveraging CTO competitive grant programs to expand and support offerings.
- Foster inclusive outdoor experiences by conducting accessibility audits of attractions, sites and trails, developing adaptive infrastructure, creating inclusive interpretive signage, training staff, and partnering with advocacy groups.
- Prioritize inclusive transportation accessibility by conducting audits of transportation services and mobility hubs, upgrading facilities, and training staff on accessibility and inclusivity travel best practices.

Resources:

- [CTO Accessible Travel program](#)
- [CPW's Outdoor Equity Grant Program fund](#)
- [CTO competitive grants and co-ops](#)
- [CDOT's Multimodal Transportation and Mitigation Options fund](#)
- [Colorado Fund for People with Disabilities](#)
- [El Paso County Trailability program](#)
- [OREC Rural Technical Assistance program](#)
- [Wheel the World](#) partnerships and resources
- [Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks Accessible Trails Guide Booklet](#)

Destination Stewardship Case Studies

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

- [Accessible Colorado Springs](#) presents a model for any DMO or local government to assess accessibility communications and local visitor infrastructure and improve visitor resources.
- [El Paso County Trailability Program](#) offers off-road mobility vehicles to provide residents and visitors with mobility disabilities with trail experiences previously inaccessible to them.
- [Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks Accessible Trails Guide Booklet](#) provides in-depth details of accessibility features for 30 trails, supporting visitor and recreation planning and experiences for people with disabilities.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of public lands offering accessible facilities
- Number of new inclusive outdoor experiences developed or promoted
- Percentage of transportation services with accessibility features
- Visitor satisfaction with transportation and experience accessibility
- Number of destinations with detailed accessibility information available
- Percentage of grant dollars awarded to accessibility initiatives

Role of the Tourism Industry: Promote inclusivity in outdoor experiences by installing adaptive infrastructure and programs, and collaborating with transportation agencies to enhance inclusive features and services. Support the development and distribution of a comprehensive accessibility resource, to bolster a more inclusive experience for every visitor to the region.

Statewide Strategy Alignment

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

Outdoor Recreation

9. Foster Inclusive Outdoor Experiences

Transportation

9. Prioritize Inclusive Transportation Accessibility

Foundational

3. Identify Resources to Advance Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Initiatives

Dreaming

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

Potential Lead Partners: CTO, Colorado Disability Opportunity Office, DMOs, local governments

Potential Supporting Partners: Chambers of commerce, conservation organizations, cultural organizations and attractions, downtown development authorities, recreation site and attraction managers, local sports, event, meeting and convention venues, local tourism businesses/organizations, Main Street programs, nature and outdoor recreation outfitters and guides, public land managers, Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments, PPORA, Scenic and Historic Byways, volunteer organizations

Strategy 7:

Prioritize Community Placemaking and the Arts

Sustainable development of public art and communal spaces is crucial for enhancing community well-being and tourism appeal. Initiatives like the murals in downtown Colorado Springs and the art galleries in Manitou Springs enrich public spaces with cultural depth and historical significance. Events like “Art on the Streets” and the “Salida Arts Festival” celebrate diversity and drive economic growth. Designated Creative Districts in Manitou Springs, Salida, Downtown Colorado Springs, and the Pueblo Creative Corridor encourage visitors to explore galleries and studios. Integrating art into outdoor recreation, exemplified by Rita the Troll in Victor, enhances visitor experiences while demonstrating the region’s commitment to environmental stewardship. This approach prioritizes the creation of inviting public spaces through community-driven art projects, culturally vibrant leisure areas, and accessible green spaces. Additionally, integrating art into outdoor recreation, launching art-focused digital guides, and promoting environmental stewardship through marketing will highlight the interconnectedness of art, culture, and conservation.



Tactics:

- Coordinate with local creative districts and organizations to arrange familiarization tours for regional tourism and creative industry stakeholders to experience community spaces and outdoor areas showcasing existing artist installations and designs, fostering discussions and promoting networking and partnership opportunities.
- Create vibrant, sustainable and welcoming public spaces through community design workshops, public art installations, accessibility improvements, permaculture landscaping, and enhancements in lighting and safety.
- Foster partnerships with local artists by facilitating art projects in public places that represent local cultures and values, supporting artist-in-residence programs, and hosting live performances and cultural events.
- Integrate art into outdoor recreation by identifying strategic locations, engaging local artists, and developing themed installations that enhance visitor experiences, promoting the intersection of art and natural landscapes.
- Promote litter prevention and zero waste practices in public spaces and community events by engaging businesses, increasing recycling infrastructure, and launching educational campaigns to raise visitor awareness about sustainable practices and environmental stewardship.

Resources:

- [CTO competitive grants and co-ops](#)
- [CTO Destination Development programs](#)
- [Colorado Creates grant program](#)
- [Community Development Block grants](#)
- [CO Conservation Trust Fund](#)
- [Energy/Mineral Impact Assistance Fund grant](#)
- [Local Planning Capacity grant program](#)
- [Rural Economic Development Initiative](#)
- [Strong Communities Infrastructure and Planning grant programs](#)



Destination Stewardship Case Studies

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

- [Rita the Troll in Victor](#) is a successful community-driven public art installation, showcasing how local creativity can enhance cultural identity and tourism appeal in rural settings.
- [The Pueblo Creative Corridor](#) is a model of collaborative management and promotion of three historic centers (Downtown Main Street, Union Avenue Historic District and the Mesa Junction) that leverages pooled resources while maintaining each area's uniqueness.
- [Ridgeway Creative District designation](#) demonstrates how creative district designation can enhance a community's identity and leverage resources for housing.
- [The Manitou Springs Arts, Culture and Heritage Initiative \(MACH\) Grants program](#) is an example of a board-run grants program that allocates a portion of sales tax revenue to fund arts, cultural, and heritage projects in Manitou Springs.
- [Zero Waste Events in Erie, Colorado](#) shows how to uphold sustainability best practices with community events.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of public spaces improved or created
- Value of investments made in public spaces
- Visitor satisfaction from visitor surveys
- Number of partnerships formed with local artists and creative industries for tourism projects
- Number of communities and businesses implementing zero waste and litter prevention campaigns
- Value of investments made to reduce waste
- Number of parks with public art
- Park visitor mentions of public art installations

Role of the Tourism Industry: Support the creation of public spaces that showcase local culture and heritage, fostering partnerships with local artists to enrich the visitor experience. Implement sustainable practices in the tourism industry, including recycling initiatives, sustainable packaging, and organizing zero waste events to minimize environmental impact and enhance community involvement.

Statewide Strategy Alignment

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

Communities

3. Create Vibrant and Welcoming Public Spaces
7. Advance Litter Prevention and Zero Waste Practices

Arts and Creative Industries

1. Foster Partnerships with Local Artists
10. Integrate Art into Outdoor Recreation

Potential Lead Partners: DOLA, Colorado Creative Industries (CCI), creative districts, local governments, DMOs, chambers of commerce

Potential Supporting Partners: Colorado Green Business Network, cultural organizations and attractions, downtown development authorities, local arts and performance organizations, local museums, galleries, and performing art venues, Main Street programs, Recycle Colorado, volunteer organizations

Strategy 8:

Enhance Cultural Heritage Organizations and Offerings

Cultural heritage encompasses the rich tapestry of shared customs, traditions, beliefs, values, practices, arts, and artifacts passed down through generations. The Pikes Peak Wonders region exemplifies this heritage through its diverse history, spanning from the Ute Tribes to the eras of mining and ranching, inspiring both residents and visitors. Technological advancements and community engagement create new opportunities for innovative stewardship and sustainable cultural heritage tourism. Local leaders are pioneering efforts with themed heritage trails and tours, such as the Custer County Past and Present Historical Digest, and supporting historic preservation initiatives like the Garden Park Schoolhouse, an important site on the Gold Belt Scenic and Historic Byway. This strategy also promotes authentic multicultural heritage experiences and diverse cultural events, enhancing access to and appreciation for the region's rich history and identity.



Tactics:

- Foster inclusive cultural heritage partnerships and strengthen museum involvement in tourism by establishing partnerships between museums and local DMOs. Create local cultural heritage advisory boards to review tourism experiences and marketing strategies, and commit to engaging heritage groups to improve cultural representation in tourism development and promotion.
- Create immersive cultural heritage experiences by collaborating with local historians and cultural experts to design tours, exhibits, and programs, enhancing visitor engagement with technology, offering information and guidance for available grant programs, and promoting heritage assets in tourism marketing.
- Promote authentic Native American heritage by establishing formal tourism development partnerships with Tribal governments, sharing educational resources with tourism industry stakeholders on the appropriate presentation of artifacts with written consent per the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, and co-developing and implementing a Native American tourism marketing campaign.
- Enhance awareness of the diverse cultural heritage throughout the region by developing interpretive materials, creating video documentation and campaigns, organizing public art installations, and hosting special events and exhibitions.

Resources:

- [CTO competitive grants and co-ops](#)
- [CTO Destination Development programs](#)
- [OEDIT's grants and financing programs for business start-ups](#)
- [History Colorado State Historical Fund grants](#)

Destination Stewardship Case Studies

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

- [Custer County Past and Present Historical Digest of the Wet Mountain Valley](#) is an example of community collaboration to tell a destination's collective cultural story.
- [Garden Park Schoolhouse](#) is an example of an award-winning effort by the Gold Belt Scenic and Historic Byway to secure necessary funding and partnerships to preserve a local treasure.
- [Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum](#) presents an example of a regional museum working with Native American leadership to create appropriate and meaningful exhibits and experiences about the Ute people.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of cultural heritage projects developed or enhanced with cultural heritage expert participation
- Reach and impressions of marketing campaigns
- Value of investment to support Native American tourism development and marketing
- Number of cultural heritage awareness initiatives
- Number of people reached through campaigns
- Value of investments to support cultural heritage interpretation
- Number of new cultural heritage experiences developed

Role of the Tourism Industry: Engage and support stakeholders from diverse cultures and backgrounds in developing tourism practices that honor and promote Colorado's cultural heritage. Partner with History Colorado to create compelling content that celebrates this heritage, and collaborate with cultural heritage experts to develop immersive experiences that showcase the region's richness and diversity. Champion the preservation and revitalization of historical assets by repurposing heritage sites for new tourism experiences while maintaining their historical integrity.

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
5. Develop Immersive Cultural Heritage Experiences
8. Facilitate Access to Historic Preservation Grants
9. Strengthen Museum Involvement in Tourism

Potential Lead Partners: History Colorado, OEDIT Small Business Development Center Network, DMOs, local museums and heritage organizations, local governments

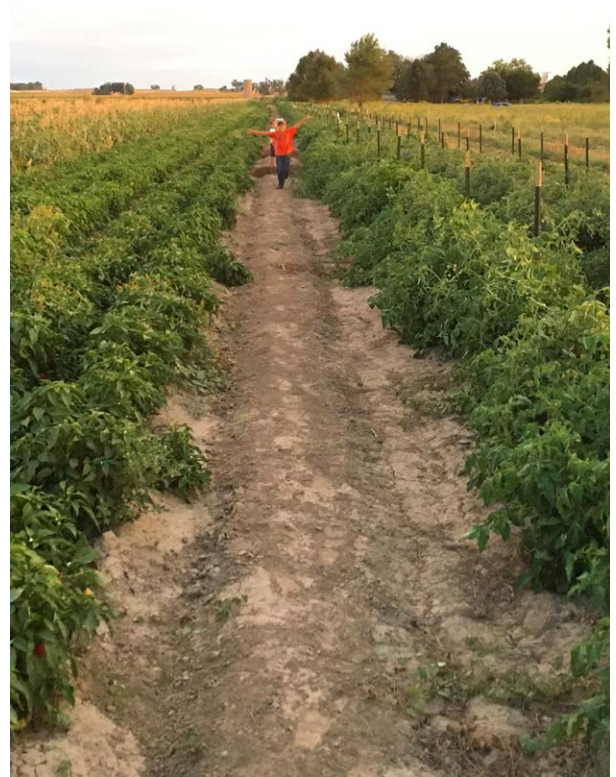
Potential Supporting Partners: CTO, Chambers of commerce, CCI, Colorado Springs Downtown Partnership, conservation districts, creative districts, Dark Skies of the Wet Mountain Valley, Dude Ranch Association, Envision Chaffee County, Friends of Lake County, Living Heritage Research Council, local colleges and universities, national, state, and private land management organizations, Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments, Pikes Peak regional attractions, Scenic and Historic Byways, Victor Main Street program



Strategy 9:

Advance Agritourism Development and Promotion

Developing and promoting agritourism in rural Colorado, particularly in the Pikes Peak Wonders region, is essential for boosting local economies and preserving agricultural heritage. Agritourism offers a gateway to the area's culture, history, and traditions through its culinary experiences. Visitors can explore local food systems by touring farms and ranches like the Venetucci Farm in Colorado Springs or staying at dude ranches like the M Lazy C Ranch in Lake George. Brewery and winery tours, including those at Pikes Peak Brewing Company in Monument and Holy Cross Abbey Winery in Cañon City, provide insights into local production and traditions. By championing these local food systems and supporting farmers, agritourism contributes to food security and diversifies tourism offerings. This strategy elevates agriculture and food as key attractions by promoting these agritourism experiences, improving signage and routes, creating immersive culinary tourism itineraries, and supporting culinary festivals and events, such as the annual Chile & Frijoles Festival in Pueblo, Farmers Market in Woodland Park, and the Apple Day Festival in Penrose.



Tactics:

- Collaborate with local farms, agricultural businesses, and culinary organizations to establish regional food trails that guide visitors through various agriculture and food experiences across the region, including enhancing signage and routes.
- Identify and share information on training and resources available to farmers and producers for marketing their current products and experiences or developing new offerings to expand agritourism and culinary itineraries in the region.
- Enhance culinary festivals and events by creating and promoting a regional festival event calendar, with DMOs providing marketing and promotional support, and by developing tourism packages in collaboration with industry partners.
- Promote agritourism offerings by developing a comprehensive agritourism guide and distributing it locally, as well as through the CTO.

Resources:

- [CTO Learning Lab](#)
- [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:

- [Pueblo Chile & Frijoles Festival](#) celebrates Pueblo's famous chile pepper harvest with culinary delights, live entertainment, and cultural activities, showcasing the region's agricultural heritage.
- [Woodland Park Farmers Market](#) offers a vibrant community gathering place where locals and visitors can enjoy fresh produce, artisanal goods, and a lively atmosphere every summer season.
- [Roaring Fork and Farm Map](#) is an initiative led by Carbondale Tourism that brings together various central Colorado producers and promotes local buying and eating in a region known mostly for outdoor recreation

Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of agritourism businesses supported
- Reach and impressions of CTO's agritourism-specific marketing campaigns
- Number of new signs installed
- Increase in agritourism site visits
- Number of culinary festivals and events celebrating local agriculture and food traditions
- Number of communities to develop agritourism guides
- Increase in agritourism site visits

Role of the Tourism Industry: Utilize resources from the CTO and other state programs to foster the development of agritourism businesses. Collaborate on curated itineraries showcasing the destination's attractions and enhancing visitor experiences. Support the establishment of agritourism signage and routes, and actively participate in organizing community-endorsed culinary festivals, liquid arts events, and food trail guides.

Statewide Strategy Alignment

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

Agriculture, Food, and Liquid Arts

4. Support Culinary Festivals and Events
5. Create Immersive Culinary Tourism Itineraries
6. Support the Development of Agritourism
7. Enhance Agritourism Signage and Routes
8. Promote Agritourism Offerings

Potential Lead Partners: CTO, Colorado Agritourism Association, Colorado Department of Agriculture, DMOs, chambers of commerce, local agriculture associations

Potential Supporting Partners: CADMO, Colorado Restaurant Association and Foundation, DOLA, farmers markets, festival and event organizers, local governments, local wineries, breweries, pick-your-own, farm-to-table or farm tour businesses, Rural Opportunity Office

Strategy 10:

Increase Sustainable Transportation and Parking Infrastructure

With reliable highway access to both the Denver International Airport and the Colorado Springs Airport, the Pikes Peak Wonders region boasts accessible connectivity to domestic and international markets. With rising traffic and congestion on Colorado's highways, including I-25 along the front range, promoting alternative transportation options is essential. This strategy advocates for an increase in sustainable transportation and parking infrastructure by emphasizing car-free itineraries with shuttle services and public buses, and expanding the network of electric vehicle charging stations along Colorado's Scenic and Historic byways. Additionally, the strategy focuses on creating integrated transport systems to improve the visitor experience, boosting awareness of public transportation options, and implementing innovative parking solutions. These efforts aim to enhance sustainable travel and connectivity, making it easier for residents and visitors to explore the region with a minimal emissions footprint.

Tactics:

- Partner with local governments to create a strategic plan for managing the impact of tourism on transportation infrastructure, congestion, and parking along the I-25 corridor, considering visitors from outside the region and their movements within it.
- Conduct a thorough regional assessment of major tourism attractions and outdoor recreation sites, along with the existing transportation options available to access them. Compile the findings into a detailed report that outlines recommendations for “last mile” transportation connectivity projects, focusing on addressing existing gaps and aligning with community priorities.
- Collaborate closely with local municipalities to gather necessary data and advocate for new transportation infrastructure that enhances accessibility and visitor experience across the region.



Strategy 10 continued

- Raise awareness of public transportation options along the I-25 corridor through targeted marketing campaigns, partnerships with accommodation providers, and integration with booking platforms.
- Create parking solutions by conducting parking needs assessments for downtown areas, popular attractions, and trailheads, identifying suitable locations for additional parking with accessibility considerations, and exploring Public-Private Partnerships to fund new parking infrastructure, maintenance costs, and capacity.
- Expand EV infrastructure by identifying strategic locations for expansion, integrating with planning policies, and promoting EV usage and accessibility of charging stations.

Resources:

- [CDOT's Multimodal Transportation and Mitigation Options fund](#)
- [Transportation Alternative program](#)
- [Revitalizing Main Streets](#)
- [Federal transportation infrastructure grants](#)
- [CTO competitive grants and co-ops](#)
- [CTO Destination Development programs](#)
- [COTREX](#) and AllTrails apps
- [Colorado's Energy Office Charge Ahead Colorado grant program](#)

Destination Stewardship Case Studies

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

- [The I-70 Coalition](#) is an example of a local strategic planning effort that includes research, strategic planning and projects to improve traffic and congestion issues along the I-70 Mountain Corridor.
- [The Collegiate Peak Scenic Byway](#) is an example of an engaging driving route with interesting and scenic stops along the way and accessible EV charging stations.
- [U.S. Forest Service Hanging Lake Management Plan](#) was designed in partnership with Visit Glenwood Springs, the City of Glenwood Springs, and Glenwood Adventure Company, and provided transit solutions to a natural attraction with limited access and parking facilities.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of local transportation projects that link major transit hubs and tourist locations
- Number of people using CDOT's Bustang, Snowstang, and Pegasus services
- Percentage of people that have heard of Bustang, Snowstang, and Pegasus services
- Number of environmentally friendly parking structures built
- Number of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations installed along popular routes in the region
- Awareness campaigns promoting locations of chargers

Role of the Tourism Industry: Collaborate to enhance and promote comprehensive transportation networks that allow travelers to enjoy the region's attractions without relying on car rentals. Support awareness campaigns, such as *Do Colorado Right*, to promote public transportation options to visitors and reduce traffic congestion. Advocate for effective parking solutions, ensure sufficient parking availability for residents, and support the installation and promotion of EV charging stations within communities.

Statewide Strategy Alignment

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

Climate

5. Promote Electric Off-Highway Vehicles

Transportation

2. Develop Comprehensive Transportation Connections
3. Raise Awareness and Ridership of Bustang, Snowstang, and Pegasus Services
8. Create Parking Solutions
10. Expand Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

Potential Lead Partners: CTO, CDOT, Scenic and Historic Byways, local governments, DMOs, chambers of commerce, Mountain Metropolitan Transit, Pueblo Transit, Chaffee Shuttle, Mountain Express

Potential Supporting Partners: Colorado Hotel and Lodging Association, Colorado Springs Airport, local attractions, recreation sites and event venues, local colleges and universities, national, state, and private land management organizations, Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments, Pikes Peak regional attractions, short-term rental owners and managers

Strategy 11: Bolster Local Tourism Workforce

The workforce is crucial to the tourism industry, shaping traveler experiences and supporting Colorado communities. From tour guides to transportation providers, each role is essential for delivering exceptional service and promoting responsible tourism. Challenges in hiring and retaining skilled professionals have emerged due to increased living costs, aging community populations, and seasonal economic fluctuations. This strategy outlines approaches to build a satisfied workforce by enhancing the attractiveness of tourism careers, offering comprehensive training, and addressing community issues like affordable housing. It focuses on developing industry-specific workforce strategies, integrating tourism education into schools, supporting career advancement, and enhancing recognition for tourism professionals.



Tactics:

- Develop industry-focused workforce strategies by establishing stakeholder collaboration forums, implementing training programs tailored to the specific needs of the tourism sector, and fostering formal partnerships between tourism businesses and local educational institutions.
- Promote and integrate tourism career education in schools through developing collaborative educational programs, launching career awareness campaigns, and implementing mentorship and internship programs.
- Foster career advancement in tourism by expanding access to leadership programs, enhancing training and development opportunities, and creating structured mentorship programs.
- Encourage managers and mid-career professionals who are seeking to grow their tourism leadership skills to participate in CTO's Colorado Tourism Leadership Journey.
- Enhance professional development, networking, and recognition opportunities for tourism professionals by developing award categories in collaboration with regional and local associations, partnerships, and coalitions, implementing annual recognition events, promoting award winners through local media, expanding access to conference participation for young professionals, and fostering year-round industry networking opportunities.
- Advocate for workforce housing solutions to identify and assess viable housing options tailored to specific communities, and actively participate in national and global events addressing housing and workforce support in the hospitality and tourism sectors such as the [National HR in Hospitality Conference](#), [City Nation Place](#), [Crest World Tourism Day Forum](#), and [U.S. Housing Community Development Conference](#).

Resources:

- [CTO Destination Development programs](#)
- [CTO's Colorado Tourism Leadership Journey](#)
- [Governor's Awards for Outstanding Colorado Tourism Efforts](#)
- [Colorado Mountain Housing Coalition Network](#)

Destination Stewardship Case Studies

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

- [Colorado Hospitality Scholarship program](#) has two scholarship programs to support students who are interested in exploring work opportunities in tourism and hospitality.
- [Colorado Mountain Housing Coalition](#) connects housing professionals to foster creative solutions, providing a hub for information and networking to support local housing initiatives. The group focuses on advocacy and collaborative efforts to improve local workforce housing in rural mountain areas.
- [Aspen Skiing Company's Tenants for Turns](#) is a program that incentivizes homeowners in the Roaring Fork Valley to rent a unit, affordable dwelling units, guest house, mother-in-law unit, or even an extra bedroom to an Aspen One employee; incentives include ski ticket vouchers, a season pass, or a gift voucher.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of tourism businesses participating in workforce development programs
- Number of schools and nonprofit organizations promoting tourism as a career path
- Number of graduates each year in the CTO's Colorado Tourism Leadership Journey
- Number of awards given each year
- Reach and impressions from local media coverage

Role of the Tourism Industry: Collaborate with educational institutions and associations to facilitate training programs that prepare local tourism workforce for current and future industry needs. This includes hosting school field trips, engaging in classroom presentations, creating mentorship and internship opportunities, supporting career advancement programs, and actively promoting awards and recognition initiatives to celebrate the achievements of tourism professionals and encourage ongoing excellence.

Statewide Strategy Alignment

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

Tourism Workforce

1. Develop Industry-Focused Workforce Strategies
6. Foster Career Advancement in Tourism
7. Enhance Recognition for Tourism Professionals
8. Promote and Integrate Tourism Career Education in Schools

Potential Lead Partners: CTO, Colorado Department of Education, Colorado Housing and Financing Authority, Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, Colorado Workforce Development Council, local governments, DMOs, chambers of commerce, industry associations

Potential Supporting Partners: Junior Achievement, local sports, event, meeting and convention venues, local tourism businesses and organizations, Main Street programs, public land managers, Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments, Pikes Peak Workforce Development Board, PPORA, Prairie Rose Development, recreation site and attraction managers, volunteer organizations



Implementation and Coordination Plan

Implementing the Destination Stewardship Strategic Plan for the Pikes Peak Wonders 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

ATTA	Adventure Travel Trade Association
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CADMO	Colorado Association of Destination Marketing Organizations
CCI	Colorado Creative Industries
CDOT	Colorado Department of Transportation
CPW	Colorado Parks and Wildlife
CTO	Colorado Tourism Office
DEIA	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility
DMO	Destination Management/Marketing Organization
DOLA	Department of Local Affairs
DNR	Department of Natural Resources
DSC	Destination Stewardship Council
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
EV	Electric Vehicle
NPS	National Park Service
OEDIT	Colorado Office of Economic Development & International Trade
OREC	Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office
PPORA	Pikes Peak Outdoor Recreation Alliance
USFS	United States Forest Service
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council

Annex 2: Destination Stewardship Partners

Government Agencies

Colorado is fortunate to have millions of acres of public lands, an abundance of which can be found in the Pikes Peak Wonders 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 (Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument)
- U.S. Forest Service (Pike National Forest, San Isabel National Forest)
- State Park Services (Cheyenne Mountain State Park, Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area, Mueller State Park, Lake Pueblo State Park)

Regional Municipalities and Counties

The Pikes Peak Wonders travel region is comprised of the following cities and counties:

- **Cities:** Bailey, Buena Vista, Black Forest, Cañon City, Cascade, Chipita Park, Colorado City, Colorado Springs, Cotopaxi, Cripple Creek, Deckers, Divide, Fairplay, Falcon, Florence, Fort Carson, Fountain, Green Mountain Falls, Howard, Lake George, Larkspur, Manitou Springs, Monarch, Monument, Nathrop, Palmer Lake, Penrose, Peyton, Pitkin, Poncha Springs, Pueblo, Pueblo West, Rye, Salida, Silver Cliff, Twin Lakes, Victor, Westcliffe, Woodland Park, U.S. Air Force Academy
- **Counties:** Chaffee, Custer, Douglas, El Paso, Fremont, Gunnison, Lake, Park, Pueblo, Teller

Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnerships Initiative

The Pikes Peak Outdoor Recreation Alliance (PPORA) is the sole CPW Working Group in the Pikes Peak Wonders region and works in El Paso, Teller, and Fremont Counties. PPORA works closely with other local and county-level organizations with similar missions and priorities to support collaboration between tourism, outdoor recreation, conservation, business and community stakeholders to support local communities and preserve nature ecosystems through tourism and destination stewardship.

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.

- **Colorado Springs Downtown Partnership** enhances the vibrancy of downtown Colorado Springs through events, economic development, and advocacy for businesses and residents.
- **Envision Chaffee County** collaborates on community planning and sustainability initiatives, promoting responsible growth and natural resource stewardship in Chaffee County and in partnership with neighboring counties of Gunnison and Lake Counties.
- **Pikes Peak Regional Attractions** collaborates to promote and enhance visitor experiences at attractions in the Pikes Peak region.

- **Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments** supports regional planning and community development initiatives, fostering collaboration among local governments.
- **Royal Gorge Chamber Alliance** supports businesses and tourism in the Royal Gorge region through advocacy, networking, and economic development initiatives.
- **Southern Colorado Equality Alliance** advocates for LGBTQ+ rights and equality in Southern Colorado, promoting inclusivity and community support.
- **Trails and Open Space Coalition** advocates for trails and open space preservation, promoting outdoor recreation and conservation.
- **Trails Preservation Alliance** works to preserve access to motorized and non-motorized trails, supporting outdoor recreation and land stewardship.

DMOs and Local Tourism-Related Organizations

The Pikes Peak Wonders 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.

The following organizations work to promote destinations within the region and are at varying stages of incorporating sustainability and responsible visitor management in their communications, outreach efforts, and business practices.

Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area manages public lands along the Arkansas River, offering recreational opportunities such as fishing, rafting, and camping, balancing recreation with resource protection, ensuring sustainable tourism and conservation of natural habitats.

Browns Canyon National Monument protects scenic landscapes and offers outdoor activities such as hiking and whitewater rafting on the Arkansas River through the conservation of the area's natural beauty and biodiversity while promoting sustainable outdoor recreation.

Buena Vista Area Chamber of Commerce promotes local businesses and tourism through advocacy, partnerships, and community events. Their mission includes fostering economic growth and sustainable tourism practices that benefit the local community and environment.

Chaffee County Visitors Bureau works to sustainably manage tourism growth and create economic opportunities for tourism-related businesses.

Cheyenne Mountain State Park provides hiking, wildlife viewing, and educational programs in a natural setting overlooking Colorado Springs.

City of Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services manages parks and cultural sites, promoting outdoor recreation, cultural heritage, and sustainable tourism.

City of Cripple Creek Heritage Tourism Department educates the public on the history of the Cripple Creek area, directs visitors to local attractions, businesses, and casinos, and monitors center productivity.

City of Woodland Park collects and administers the city's lodging tax revenue, and provides visitor information and education resources.

Collegiate Peaks Scenic Byway/Chaffee County Heritage Area Advisory Board fosters tourism and preservation efforts through sustainable practices and educational outreach along the scenic beauty and cultural heritage along the Collegiate Peaks Scenic Byway.

Collegiate Peaks Wilderness Area preserves rugged mountain landscapes, provides opportunities for hiking, backpacking, and wildlife observation, and promotes responsible outdoor recreation.

Colorado Springs Airport provides convenient and efficient air travel services, enhancing connectivity and supporting economic growth in Colorado Springs.

Creative Alliance Manitou Springs/Manitou Springs Creative District fosters creativity and economic vitality through arts initiatives and cultural events in Manitou Springs.

Custer County Tourism Board oversees tourism lodging taxes and is responsible for developing and implementing a plan to market and promote tourism for Custer County.

Dark Skies of the Wet Mountain Valley promotes awareness and protection of dark skies through education and advocacy, enhancing stargazing opportunities and sustainable tourism practices.

Divide Chamber of Commerce fosters business development and community relations in Divide through leadership and economic initiatives, including supporting local tourism and sustainable economic growth.

Downtown Colorado Springs Creative District supports artistic and cultural initiatives to enrich the downtown area, attracting visitors and supporting local businesses.

Fountain Valley Chamber of Commerce supports economic growth and community development in Fountain Valley through business advocacy and partnerships.

Fremont County Tourism Council allocates lodging tax dollars collected in Fremont County to increase visitors to the area, promoting sustainable tourism and contributing to local economic development.

Gold Belt Tour Scenic and Historic Byway Association preserves and promotes historic sites and scenic drives along the Gold Belt Tour.

Greater Pueblo Chamber of Commerce supports business growth and economic vitality in Pueblo through advocacy, networking, and community engagement.

Greater Woodland Park Chamber of Commerce promotes business growth and tourism in Woodland Park through advocacy, events, and community engagement. Their work includes providing visitors with trip planning information and promoting responsible visitor experiences.

Historic Arkansas Riverwalk of Pueblo Authority manages and promotes the Riverwalk as a cultural and recreational hub in downtown Pueblo, supporting tourism and community events, and enhancing local cultural engagement.

Lake Pueblo State Park offers water-based recreation and camping opportunities in Pueblo County. Their mission supports tourism and outdoor enjoyment while promoting environmental conservation.

Larkspur Area Chamber of Commerce promotes local businesses and tourism in Larkspur through community events and economic development initiatives.

Latino Chamber of Commerce Pueblo supports Latino-owned businesses and economic development in Pueblo through advocacy and networking opportunities, promoting inclusive economic growth and sustainable community development.

Manitou Springs Chamber of Commerce, Visitors Bureau and Office of Economic Development provides visitor information to guide activities and promotes experiences, attractions and responsible visitation and recreation principles to visitors.

Monarch Mountain provides skiing and outdoor recreation in the San Isabel National Forest, contributing to tourism and winter sports in Chaffee County through sustainable practices.

Mueller State Park offers camping, hiking, and wildlife viewing in Teller County. Their mission preserves natural habitats and promotes outdoor recreation, enhancing sustainable tourism.

Pikes Peak - America's Mountain manages access to Pikes Peak, promoting tourism and outdoor recreation while preserving natural and cultural resources. Their mission supports sustainable tourism and environmental stewardship.

Royal Gorge Bridge and Park offers breathtaking scenic views and adventure activities, supporting tourism through unique visitor experiences.

Salida Chamber of Commerce promotes local businesses and tourism in Salida through events, advocacy, and economic strategies, fostering community development.

Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development and Visitor Center supports business growth and community enhancement in the Tri-Lakes area through leadership and economic initiatives.

Visit Colorado Springs inspires travel through marketing and educating visitors about sustainable and accessible experiences, promoting responsible tourism.

Visit Leadville-Twin Lakes leads tourism marketing and management for Leadville and Twin Lakes, enhancing visitor experiences and supporting local businesses.

Visit Pueblo Convention and Visitors Bureau promotes visitor experiences and services for the City of Pueblo and surrounding areas, supporting tourism and economic development.

Woodland Park Tourism Alliance collaborates to promote tourism and outdoor recreation in Woodland Park, enhancing visitor experiences and economic vitality.

NGOs, Academia, and Community Entities

Below is a list of other groups, organizations and entities in the Pikes Peak Wonders 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.

- Beckwith Ranch
- Colorado College
- Colorado State University Extension in Chaffee County
- Colorado State University-Pueblo
- Douglas Land Conservancy
- El Paso County Conservation District
- Friends of Lake County
- Garden of the Gods Visitor and Nature Center
- Great Outdoors Colorado
- La Veta Trails
- Mile High Youth Corp
- Palmer Land Conservancy
- Pikes Peak Small Business Development Center
- Pikes Peak State College
- Pikes Peak Workforce Development Board
- Prairie Rose Development
- Pueblo Arts Alliance/Creative Corridor
- Pueblo Community College
- Teller County Farmers Market Association
- United States Air Force Academy Visitor Center
- Victor Main Street Program

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