



COLORADO
TOURISM OFFICE

Destination Stewardship Year in Review

Fiscal Year 2025: July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025



Contents

Letter from Deputy Director, Destination Stewardship	3
Section 1: Introduction	4
Section 2: Programs and Grant Funding Advancing Destination Stewardship	5
Section 3: Destination Stewardship in Action	7
Focus Area 1: Industry Leadership and Support for Destination Stewardship	7
Foundational Destination Stewardship Strategies	7
Traveler Buying Cycle: Dreaming and Seeking Inspiration	10
Traveler Buying Cycle: Planning and Booking	11
Traveler Buying Cycle: Experiencing the Destination	12
Focus Area 2: Shared Stewardship of Tourism Resources	14
Tourism Resource 1: Communities	14
Tourism Resource 2: Outdoor Recreation	18
Tourism Resource 3: Wildlife and Biodiversity	22
Tourism Resource 4: Cultural Heritage	24
Tourism Resource 5: Arts and Creative Industries	27
Tourism Resource 6: Local Tourism Businesses and Organizations	29
Tourism Resource 8: Agriculture, Food, and Liquid Arts	33
Tourism Resource 9: Tourism Workforce	34
Tourism Resource 10: Climate	35
Section 4: Industry Performance Report (KPIs)	37
FY25 Destination Stewardship Council Members and CTO Staff	38
Acronyms	40

Letter from Deputy Director, Destination Stewardship

It has been one year since we launched Colorado's *Destination Stewardship Strategic Plan*, a statewide framework designed to balance the benefits of tourism with the long-term well-being of our communities, cultures, and natural resources. Reflecting on this year, I am inspired by the creativity, commitment, and collaboration demonstrated by partners throughout the state.

Stewardship is deeply rooted in Colorado's identity. This plan introduced a new level of alignment across the tourism industry, bringing partners together under a shared vision for sustainable growth and community benefit. Over the past year, destinations and tourism partners have actively embraced this framework and advanced their own stewardship efforts. Across the state, we are seeing this work take shape through practical programs, partnerships, and local initiatives that put the plan's goals into action.

This inaugural *Destination Stewardship Year in Review* highlights that collective progress. Within these pages, you will find stories of inclusive travel, dark sky preservation, community resilience, climate action, and creative collaboration, all reflecting how tourism truly can be a force for good. While our work is far from complete, the momentum built this year gives me great optimism for the future. On behalf of the Colorado Tourism Office, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Destination Stewardship Council, regional and community partners, and every organization contributing to this growing effort. Your dedication ensures Colorado remains not only a world-class destination, but a model for responsible and sustainable tourism for years to come.

With appreciation,
Jill Corbin

Deputy Director, Destination Stewardship, Colorado Tourism Office

Section 1: Introduction

In September 2024, the Colorado Tourism Office (CTO) released a 10-year Destination Stewardship Strategic Plan, outlining 14 key strategy areas (across two focus areas) to balance tourism growth with community and environmental well-being. These strategies range from industry-led initiatives (such as visitor education and inclusion programs) to shared stewardship of tourism resources, including communities, outdoor recreation, wildlife, cultural heritage, tourism workforce, transportation, and climate.

Complementing the statewide efforts, eight regional Destination Stewardship Plans were developed to address the unique challenges and opportunities within each of Colorado's diverse travel regions. These plans draw on local insights and foster regional collaborations to tailor stewardship approaches that reflect community priorities while enhancing both resident and visitor experiences across Colorado's varied landscapes and cultures.

This annual report highlights how communities across Colorado are bringing the Destination Stewardship Strategic Plans to life. The insights shared here reflect both the inspiring work observed over the past year, the accomplishments of grant recipients, and the thoughtful input gathered through the "Destination Stewardship In Action" annual survey, circulated in June of 2025. While this report offers a valuable snapshot of progress and innovation, it does not capture every initiative underway across the state. Rather, it provides a representative and inspiring view of the many ways destinations are advancing stewardship principles to ensure Colorado remains a place where residents, visitors, and the environment thrive.



Section 2: Programs and Grant Funding

Advancing Destination Stewardship

The State of Colorado demonstrates its commitment to destination stewardship through a range of technical assistance programs and grants designed to help communities put stewardship principles into practice. The following programs provide essential support for initiatives that balance the benefits of tourism and the long-term health of Colorado's natural resources, cultural heritage, and local communities. While not an exhaustive list of all funding and program opportunities offered by state and partner agencies, this overview highlights those most directly focused on advancing destination stewardship. Additional resources are also available from agencies including the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), among others, to support community priorities, tourism development, and stewardship initiatives across the state.

Program	Description	Number of FY25 Grants	Value of FY25 Funding
CTO Tourism Management Grants	Grants designed to advance tourism and destination stewardship efforts across the state.	12	\$210,022
CTO Tourism Marketing Grants	Grants for marketing campaigns and initiatives to boost traveler spending through the promotion and development of compelling, sustainable travel experiences statewide.	16	\$592,525
CTO Destination Development Mentor Program	This program matches DMOs and industry association partners with experienced tourism consultants to provide expertise, resources, mentorship, and capacity building.	11	\$187,000
CTO Destination Blueprint Program	Program that partners with DMOs around the state to increase alignment between local tourism stakeholders and to complete a priority tourism project through 100 hours of project-based consulting.	8	\$224,000
CTO Accessible Travel Program	A program in partnership with Wheel The World that amplifies accessible spaces in destinations across Colorado by providing stakeholder education, on-site assessments, and a booking solution on Wheel The World.	3	\$114,000
Colorado State Parks Dark Sky Certification Mentor Program	The CTO, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and Dark Sky Colorado partner to help state parks achieve International Dark Sky Place certification and enhance visitor experience.	13	\$52,000

Program	Description	Number of FY25 Grants	Value of FY25 Funding
CTO Dark Sky Certification Mentor Program	This program supports tourism destinations across Colorado in developing and implementing strategies to achieve International Dark Sky Place (IDSP) certification, enriching both the visitor experience and the state's commitment to preserving its night skies.	4	\$48,000
CTO Colorado Climate Tourism Champions Program	A program in partnership with the Travel Foundation that provides education and expertise to Colorado destination organizations seeking guidance on climate action planning for the tourism industry.	4	\$40,000
Colorado Energy Office DC Fast Charging Plazas Grant	Grant funding that supports electric vehicle (EV) adoption in Colorado by expanding access to charging infrastructure for communities and drivers statewide.	4	\$5,000,000
Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) Non-Motorized Trail Grant Program	Program providing financial assistance to expand and enhance opportunities for Coloradans and visitors to connect with the outdoors.	26	\$2,438,000
Outdoor Equity Grant Program	Funding that supports organizations working to remove barriers and expand access to outdoor recreation and conservation for youth and families from communities historically underrepresented in these activities.	36	\$2,999,997
Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT)/Colorado Creative Industries Division Colorado Creates Grant	Grants that provide general operating support to organizations and communities, enabling them to create and sustain arts and cultural activities.	125	\$909,000
History Colorado State Historical Fund Grants	Financial support for the preservation and interpretation of Colorado's historic resources.	107	\$12,280,247
Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO)	Through a competitive application process, grants are awarded to eligible organizations using up to 50% of Colorado Lottery proceeds, which are invested in conservation and recreation.	26	\$9,940,450
Colorado Department of Transportation Revitalizing Main Street Grants	Grants that support the creation of vibrant, inclusive, and safe community spaces that promote active transportation, economic development, and equitable access for people of all ages, incomes, and abilities.	25	\$5,547,692

Section 3: Destination Stewardship in Action

Over the past year, a wide range of initiatives across Colorado have brought the CTO's Destination Stewardship strategies to life. Below, we highlight statewide programs, local projects, and grant-funded actions that demonstrate progress in one or more of the plan's strategic areas.

Every effort was made to identify actions aligned with the plan's strategies; however, this list is not all-inclusive and represents a selection of efforts contributing to the broader goals of the stewardship plan.

Focus Area 1: Industry Leadership and Support for Destination Stewardship



Foundational Destination Stewardship Strategies

Foundational Strategies provide the groundwork for industry leadership to advance destination stewardship. They focus on allocating personnel, strengthening collaborations and local coalitions, and advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) initiatives, creating a strong base for more targeted and effective marketing, management, and communication efforts for travelers.

Highlights from FY25 by Strategy

Foundational 1: Identify Internal Resources for Destination Stewardship

- CTO staff reviewed the Destination Stewardship Plan, identified actionable responsibilities, and aligned budget allocations with strategic priorities. Cross-department meetings ensure coordinated use of internal resources to deliver unified, measurable progress.
- Through the [CTO Destination Blueprint program](#), the City of Monte Vista is developing a one-year marketing action plan and budget to optimize available resources for stewardship.
- As reported in the 2025 Destination Stewardship in Action Survey:
 - 55.6% (15 organizations) have revised their mission statement and/or communication materials to highlight their role to support destination stewardship
 - 51.9% (14 organizations) have assigned someone within their organization to lead destination stewardship efforts
 - 44.4% (12 organizations) Allocated a portion of their annual budget to support destination stewardship initiatives

Foundational 2: Strengthen Local Coalitions for Advancing Destination Stewardship

- CTO worked to strengthen local partnerships for effective destination stewardship through collaboration with:
 - Colorado Green Business Network (CGBN)
 - Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) and Regional Partnership Initiatives
 - Industry Associations including Colorado Association for Viticulture & Enology (CAVE) and Colorado Brewers Guild

- Colorado Outdoor Recreation Office (OREC)
- Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT)
- As reported in the 2025 Destination Stewardship in Action Survey:
 - 83.3% (25 organizations) have attended a meeting in their community where destination stewardship topics were discussed
 - 66.7% (20 organizations) identified priority stewardship issues specific to their local area in collaboration with others
 - 53.3% (16 organizations) created partnerships with stewardship-centric organizations to leverage their expertise and resources

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

- Visit Durango is [advancing Inclusivity](#) through DEIA and accessibility training, marketing efforts, and a partnership with the Southern Ute Indian Tribe. Initiatives include programming, All Are Welcome courses, disability training, inclusive materials, and local hires to strengthen community-visitor connections.
- Through a [CTO Marketing Grant](#), the Pikes Peak Country Attractions Association refreshed its website with an updated user interface, architecture, and development processes. Enhancements included Spanish translation and improved accessibility features.
- As reported in the 2025 Destination Stewardship in Action Survey:
 - 78.6% (22 organizations) featured diverse audiences in their marketing materials
 - 60.7% (17 organizations) developed multilingual and/or accessible communication materials
 - 46.4% (13 organizations) researched diverse audiences to create relevant and authentic content tailored to them

Foundational 4: Elevate Destination Stewardship Efforts

- The Colorado Destination Stewardship Strategic Plan was featured in [Destinations International Advocacy Insights Newsletter](#), an international industry publication that shares timely research, best practices, and policy updates to help destination organizations strengthen their advocacy efforts and demonstrate the value of tourism to communities and policymakers.
- CTO was featured in the [Destination Stewardship Report](#), an e-publication by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), the Destination Stewardship Center, and CREST that curates feature articles offering practical insights and case examples for aligning tourism with the care of places.
- CTO is developing a series of practical toolkits to support destination-level implementation—turning strategy into action with templates, funding/partnership models, and metrics to plan, pilot, evaluate, and scale stewardship initiatives:
 - Public-Private Partnerships
 - Funding Opportunities for Destination Stewardship (under development)
 - Building Inclusive Tourism Together (under development)
- As reported in the 2025 Destination Stewardship in Action Survey:
 - 70.4% (19 organizations) presented to community members about the importance of destination stewardship

- 63% (17 organizations) participated in a training course or webinar to learn more about destination stewardship
- 59.3% (16 organizations) summarized their support of destination stewardship in their communication materials and utilized toolkits or other materials to help them implement destination stewardship initiatives

Foundational 5: Encourage the Adoption of Green Business Practices

- During the January 2025 [Destination Stewardship in Action webinar](#), CTO explored how tourism businesses, attractions, visitor centers, and Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) can benefit from free coaching, on-site assistance, and recognition to adopt sustainable, resource-efficient practices through CGBN.
- Exclusive to members of the Colorado Brewers Guild and CAVE, a second [webinar](#) was held to introduce the recognition and free tools available through CGBN and featured case studies from Breckenridge Brewery and DuCard Vineyards to advance operations and sustainability specifically among breweries and wineries.
- As reported in the 2025 Destination Stewardship in Action Survey:
 - 63.6% (14 organizations) encouraged and supported businesses to adopt green practices and participate in a recognition program
 - 45.5% (10 organizations) educated travelers about green business programs and encouraged them to support green businesses
 - 31.8% (7 organizations) established or supported the creation of a regional partnership with CGBN for their community and recognized green businesses in their marketing collateral and website

Foundational 6: Support Local Tourism Destinations and Attractions to Advance Destination Stewardship

- 24 implementation updates were posted on [CTOstewardship.com](#), with blog articles showcasing stewardship in action—real projects, partners, and results—designed to inspire destinations, businesses, and residents to adapt, replicate, and scale proven practices.
- The CTO Learning Labs began its transition to a new Learning Management System. This upgrade is part of CTO's commitment to delivering a more dynamic and engaging learning experience. All Learning Labs content will be rebuilt to ensure it's even more effective in boosting participant tourism industry knowledge and skills, which is anticipated to be available in FY26.
- The Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce, through the [CTO's Destination Blueprint program](#), is developing a marketing and communications plan shaped by community workshops with Downtown Colorado, Inc. The plan focuses on increasing winter and off-peak visitation while strengthening collaboration among local governments, businesses, and tourism partners to support year-round economic vitality.
- As reported in the 2025 Destination Stewardship in Action Survey:
 - 58.3% (14 organizations) communicated their destination's actions to support destination stewardship
 - 45.8% (11 organizations) encouraged and supported local attractions to adopt green practices and participate in a recognition program
 - 33.3% (8 organizations) enrolled their organization in the CGBN or similar program and conducted a destination self-assessment based on destination sustainable tourism criteria



Traveler Buying Cycle: Dreaming and Seeking Inspiration

During this phase, travelers seek inspiration, exploring destination content and imagining their ideal itineraries—an experience now shaped largely by social media and user reviews.

Colorado.com and DoColoradoRight.com provide key platforms to highlight the state's natural beauty, cultural heritage, and sustainability initiatives. By weaving stewardship into Colorado's brand and marketing, the CTO both inspires responsible travel and positions the state as a leader in sustainable tourism.

Highlights from FY25 by Strategy

Dreaming and Seeking Inspiration 1: Prioritize Stewardship in Conjunction with the Colorado Brand

- CTO developed various *Do Colorado Right* targeted campaigns that encourage travelers to respect local environments, support small businesses, and travel sustainably—making stewardship an integral part of Colorado's identity and visitor experience.

Dreaming and Seeking Inspiration 2: Target Visitors who Share Colorado's Stewardship

- The City of Greeley was awarded a [CTO Tourism Management Grant](#) to fund a data platform that provides visitor demographics and behaviors to better tailor tourism strategies, improve visitor initiatives, and enhance marketing efforts to align with visitor needs.
- Colorado Springs Convention and Visitors Bureau was awarded a [CTO Tourism Marketing Grant](#) to support a multimedia marketing campaign highlighting neighborhoods and towns across the Pikes Peak Region to increase awareness of lesser-known locales and showcase year-round adventure.

Dreaming and Seeking Inspiration 3: Increase Awareness and Promotion of Colorado as an Accessible and Inclusive Tourism Destination

- Huerfano County was awarded a [CTO Tourism Management Grant](#) to expand inclusive tourism by translating existing TravelStorys audio walking and driving tours into Spanish.
- Marketing Telluride, Inc. was awarded a [CTO Tourism Marketing Grant](#) to assist in an international digital marketing campaign that expands Colorado's global tourism profile and promotes Telluride tourism to the Mexican market.
- The CTO conducted targeted market research on accessible, Black, Hispanic, Asian, and LGBTQ+ travelers to gain deeper insights into their travel behaviors, motivations, and preferences. This research was designed to identify barriers and opportunities within these diverse segments and to better understand how destinations can authentically engage with them. By doing so, the CTO aimed to supplement existing marketing efforts to these audiences with more strategic activations, expanding the region's appeal and promoting sustainable growth across visitor markets.
- Through the [CTO's Accessible Travel Program](#), partnerships with Wheel the World are expanding accessible travel in Beaver Creek, Colorado Springs, Glenwood Springs, and Pueblo by providing site assessments, booking solutions, accessible travel training and recommendations for continued work. Additionally, an [Accessible Travel Page](#) was developed for [Colorado.com](#) to highlight verified destinations, offering travelers with detailed and reliable information on accommodations, tours, attractions, and restaurants, allowing people with disabilities to plan and enjoy their trips with greater confidence.

- Visit Colorado Springs became Colorado's first [Destination Verified Seal](#) recipient as part of its program to improve information available on accessible travel to the destination.
- Visit Denver launched the [Guide to an Accessible Denver](#), a digital resource featuring over 30 inclusive attractions, adaptive activities, and transportation tips for visitors with a range of physical, sensory, and cognitive needs. Developed in consultation with accessibility advocates and experts with lived experience, the guide ensures that the city's tourism offerings are not only inclusive but meaningfully designed.
- The City of Boulder is working with COTREX to place more [accessible trails](#) on their website. They are also expanding adaptive mountain biking infrastructure near Boulder Valley Ranch to create a dedicated destination where visitors can experience and enjoy adaptive biking.
- The Telluride Tourism Board (TTB) is [amplifying community stewardship](#) by promoting sustainable travel, supporting trail care, and advancing DEIA initiatives. Through communications, campaigns, and partnerships, TTB educates visitors, fosters inclusivity, and models stewardship practices that other Colorado destinations can replicate.



Traveler Buying Cycle: Planning and Booking

At this stage of the traveler buying cycle, visitors refine their plans by researching activities, accommodations, and transportation. Industry leaders support informed decisions and responsible visitation by promoting certified green businesses, low-impact transportation, accessible trails, and *Do Colorado Right* messaging, guiding travelers toward sustainable and thoughtful choices.

Highlights from FY25 by Strategy

Planning and Booking 1: Encourage Travelers to *Do Colorado Right* Before Arrival

- The Colorado Dude and Guest Ranch Association was awarded a [CTO Tourism Management Grant](#) to enhance visitor experience by funding an expansion of the existing booking system, allowing visitors and ranches to better view availability, secure bookings, and share pre-visit information including *Do Colorado Right* messaging.
- Through the [CTO Destination Blueprint Program](#), the Manitou Springs Visitors Bureau is developing strategies for expanding the reach and impact of the [Manitou Cares program](#), including a communications toolkit for businesses and organizations to share with visitors.

Planning and Booking 2: Develop and Amplify Local *Do Colorado Right* Campaigns and Messaging

- Visit Ouray developed the [Do Ouray Right](#) campaign and ambassador programs from community feedback. Through videos, training, and business resources distributed through the web and QR-equipped pocket maps distributed by chamber members.
- The Silverton Area Chamber of Commerce is utilizing the [CTO's Destination Blueprint Program](#) to implement a [Do Silverton Right campaign](#) and tourism marketing/management strategy to encourage responsible visitation.
- A number of resources were made available for partners to repurpose and spread the *Care for Colorado* and *Do Colorado Right* messaging through websites, newsletters, and blogs. Tailored messaging included:

- Winter Backcountry Safety Awareness
- *Do Colorado Right* Keep Our Trails Clean Video
- Pet Etiquette on Trails
- Trash the Trash
- Be Careful with Fire
- Water Safety
- Share Our Trails and Parks
- Leave it As You Find It
- Reducing Your Carbon Footprint

Planning and Booking 3: Recognize Businesses and Destinations with a Commitment to Destination Stewardship

- The Governor's Award for Exemplary Destination Stewardship Initiative (formerly the Governor's Award for Exemplary Community Tourism Initiative) was introduced as part of the Governor's Awards for Outstanding Colorado Tourism Efforts. The award honors a Colorado community, Tribal nation, or region that advances the Colorado Tourism Office's Destination Stewardship Plan through collaborative programs, projects, or policies. Honorees showcase how tourism can be a force for good by balancing economic benefits with resource protection, cultivating resident support, and delivering measurable results.



Traveler Buying Cycle: Experiencing the Destination

Once in Colorado, travelers immerse themselves in the state's landscapes and attractions, presenting key opportunities to promote destination stewardship. By highlighting *Do Colorado Right*, encouraging responsible recreation, engaging children in conscientious travel, and advancing DEIA initiatives, we strengthen connections to Colorado's natural and cultural heritage and inspire visitors to act as stewards of the state's resources.

Highlights from FY25 by Strategy

Experiencing the Destination 1: Integrate the Practice of Land Acknowledgements into Various Touchpoints

- Visit Durango established partnerships with Tribal leaders, created a destination-specific [land acknowledgment](#), incorporated acknowledgments into events, and developed staff training to emphasize their importance and guide respectful presentation.
- Through a [GOCO Community Impact Grant](#), the town of Dolores is upgrading Joe Rowell Park, a 24-acre community space, into a vibrant hub with a community gathering area, bike and skate park with pump track, and outdoor exercise equipment. The redesign, shaped by years of public input, includes a permanent land acknowledgement plaque in English, Spanish, Dine, and Ute.

Experiencing the Destination 2: Optimize *Do Colorado Right* at Points of Market Entry

- Meeker Chamber Of Commerce was awarded a [CTO Tourism Marketing Grant](#) to update and increase their printed educational materials as part of their Conversation Starter Campaign which is phase one of their marketing strategy. Many organizations in the region rely on these materials to distribute valuable information to visitors.

- CTO implemented *Do Colorado Right* branded water bottle refill stations and signage in Terminal B at the Denver International Airport as well as at every welcome center across the state to optimize messaging to visitors throughout their travels. New creative also actively ran on public transportation in seven destinations throughout Colorado including Colorado Springs, Denver, Eagle County, Estes Park, Grand Junction, Pueblo, and Summit County.

Experiencing the Destination 3: Amplify *Do Colorado Right* for Colorado Residents

- CTO supported the [2025 Outside Festival](#) through providing *Do Colorado Right* hats to the first 100 bikers each day and sponsoring the bike valet and water refill stations as part of the #BYOBottle campaign, encouraging eco-friendly travel and reducing plastic waste. The event drew over 18,000 attendees, with creative placements featured on pedicabs, hydration stations, and more than 10,000 aluminum cups. In addition, the RecyClaw game—a sustainability-focused activation—received over 2,700 plays during the festival.

Experiencing the Destination 4: Educate Children on the Importance of Destination Stewardship

- Leave No Trace has launched new, free online courses, including the Youth Educator Specialization course that covers best practices and techniques for effectively teaching Leave No Trace to youth both in the classroom and outdoors.
- At the Amache National Historic Site in Granada, local students have led preservation efforts for three decades under educator John Hopper, contributing to its 2024 national designation. Today, they help run the museum, lead tours, and share Amache's story nationwide, showing how classroom stewardship can have a lasting impact.
- The Great Sand Dunes National Park Junior Archaeology Day Camp held in June 2025 engaged youth ages 11–15 in hands-on learning about the San Luis Valley's cultural heritage. Through fieldwork with professional archaeologists, participants explored local history and preservation practices, fostering early awareness of destination stewardship and inspiring the next generation of responsible travelers and community caretakers.

Experiencing the Destination 5: Influence Visitor Behavior at Key Locations

- Visit Glenwood Springs is championing [inclusive, sustainable tourism](#) through accessible travel, car-free options, stewardship projects, a refreshed visitor center, and regional alliances that expand accessibility, volunteerism, and responsible travel.
- Gunnison Crested Butte Tourism Association was awarded a [CTO Tourism Management Grant](#) to expand inclusive tourism by translating and replacing existing trailhead and etiquette signage to include Spanish. They launched a stewardship campaign targeting camper behavior, using Google and Reddit ads to direct visitors to a page highlighting campsite capacity and promoting off-peak travel and lodging alternatives.
- Colorado Search and Rescue Association (CSAR) has produced a new [Trailblazers and Lifesavers series video](#) on whitewater rafting and safety practices for enjoying this Colorado adventure.
- The CTO launched a [Do Steamboat Springs Right](#) activation this summer in partnership with VRBO and the Steamboat Springs Chamber of Commerce to reach visitors in various locations during their stay in Steamboat, including lodging, welcome center and along Main Street.

Experiencing the Destination 6: Encourage Support for Destination Stewardship Among Travelers

- The [Friends of Lake County](#) program unites local partners, volunteers, and the U.S. Forest Service to maintain trails, restore habitats, and promote responsible recreation, strengthening stewardship of Lake County's public lands.
- [Breckenridge Grand Vacations \(BGV\)](#) and the nonprofit [Friends of Dillon Ranger District \(FDRD\)](#) have formed a public-private partnership to support local trail maintenance and forest stewardship. BGV contributes paid volunteer time, grant funding, and professional services to boost FDRD's capacity, while engaging its employees and community in trail improvements, ADA access, and habitat restoration.
- The [Colorado Mountain Club](#) developed a free RIMS app that enables trail users to report real-time conditions and log stewardship activities, giving land managers valuable crowd-sourced data to prioritize maintenance and improve public land management.

Focus Area 2: Shared Stewardship of Tourism Resources



Tourism Resource 1: Communities

Colorado destinations are prioritizing residents—leveraging tourism to enhance quality of life, improve wayfinding and public spaces, and encourage responsible visitation. This section highlights initiatives such as trail connectivity, litter and waste reduction, water conservation, and dark sky preservation, all of which foster local pride and community resilience.

Highlights from FY25 by Strategy

Communities 1: Prioritize Local Community Involvement in Tourism Planning

- Visit Glenwood Springs developed its first [Destination Management Plan](#) in FY25, guided by the mantra “Residents First.” This approach prioritizes resident well-being in tourism decisions, aligns with community values, and has strengthened public support for tourism development.
- The Delta Fairgrounds Recreation Development project, shaped by extensive community input from the county's 2020 master plan and public engagement, will revitalize this historic space through a [GOCO Community Impact Grant](#). Improvements include a new Miners Trail connecting to schools, parks, and businesses as well as a playground, gathering area, updated boat ramp, and frisbee golf course to promote outdoor activity and community connection.
- Shaped by community input and supported by a GOCO Community Impact Grant, the Wetland Park Destination on the Sand Creek Regional Greenway project will create an inclusive space along the 13.1-mile Sand Creek Regional Greenway connecting Commerce City, Denver, and Aurora. Community-requested features include a loop path with murals, seating, educational signage, native landscaping, and three swings—one with a culturally inspired “ranchero” design and two accessible swings for individuals with disabilities.
- Through the [CTO Destination Blueprint program](#), the Pagosa Springs Area Tourism Board is conducting an audit of current resident and stakeholders communication channels and recommended strategies to improve outreach.

Communities 2: Increase Knowledge of the Value of Tourism for Residents

- Visit Alamosa’s “[We Love Our National Park](#)” campaign promotes community pride and responsible recreation at Great Sand Dunes National Park. Launched in 2021 and expanded annually, the campaign includes citywide events, park-themed promotions, and incentive programs to encourage local business engagement. In 2024, the campaign spurred an estimated \$53,500 in traveler spending through voucher redemptions.
- Visit Leadville–Twin Lakes continued its [Community Support Program](#) that reinvests tourism revenue into local stewardship projects, demonstrating tangible community benefits and strengthening resident trust in tourism’s role in protecting places and enhancing quality of life.
- The CTO’s [Value of Tourism video](#) was developed to highlight the economic, cultural, and community benefits of tourism across Colorado, while providing industry partners with a tool to communicate these impacts to stakeholders. To leverage this resource, the CTO has a tourism subject matter expert available to schedule [one-hour consultations](#) with Colorado tourism industry partners interested in understanding how to leverage research to champion the value of tourism.

Communities 3: Create Vibrant and Welcoming Public Spaces

- City of Idaho Springs was awarded a [CTO Tourism Management Grant](#) to create a city-wide wayfinding strategy integrating Virginia Canyon Mountain Park and the [Mighty ARGO Experience](#) into Idaho Springs’ existing identity.
- The Town of Eagle was awarded a [CTO Tourism Management Grant](#) to complete a comprehensive wayfinding audit, needs analysis, and schematic plan aimed at enhancing the navigation experience for residents and visitors.
- Through support from [GOCO Community Impact Grants](#), the following projects are underway:
 - The Birch Park Project in the Graham Mesa neighborhood will develop pickleball and futsal courts, multipurpose fields, picnic shelters, an inclusive playground, climbing boulders, pollinator gardens, an amphitheater, a sledding hill, and trails. Landscaped with native, drought-tolerant plants, the park will offer free, accessible recreation for all ages and abilities within walking distance of nearby housing and Graham Mesa Elementary School.
 - The Las Animas Recreation HUB Project will upgrade the City of Las Animas park with an improved baseball field, ADA-accessible restrooms, upgraded parking, new shelters, a playground, and a multi-use court, along with enhancements to the fishing pond and trails. Informed by years of community input, the upgrades will support health, recreation, and community gatherings for all ages.
 - The City of Northglenn will develop Odell Barry Park, a 3.5-acre space serving 6,000 residents in one of the city’s most underserved neighborhoods. Honoring Northglenn’s first Black mayor and former Denver Bronco, the park—the city’s first new one in over 20 years—will feature nature-based play, ADA-accessible trails, exercise stations, drought-tolerant landscaping, and educational elements to foster community connection.
 - In partnership with South Suburban Parks and Recreation, the City of Lone Tree will begin building the 80-acre High Note Regional Park—the largest in its history. Phase one includes lighted synthetic fields, a dog park, trail connections, and activity areas along “The Braid,” an interwoven promenade of paths.

Communities 4: Encourage Responsible Visitation in our Communities

- The City of Fruita is working with the [CTO Destination Development Mentor Program](#) to develop a Do Fruita Right campaign and community engagement strategy.
- Through the [CTO Destination Blueprint Program](#), the Silverton Area Chamber of Commerce is developing a [Do Silverton Right](#) campaign, distribution and implementation strategy.
- Visit Leadville–Twin Lakes launched [Do Leadville–Twin Lakes Right](#), a localized campaign, educating visitors on responsible recreation while reinforcing stewardship values unique to the high-alpine community.
- The [Do Steamboat Springs Right campaign](#) is a responsible travel/stewardship initiative run by the Steamboat Springs Chamber to encourage visitors and participants to act mindfully while in the region. A [toolkit](#) was developed for businesses to help spread the message.
- Through the [CTO Destination Blueprint Program](#), the Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce is developing visitor education messaging utilizing the Care for Colorado principles.
- The Durango Ambassador Program is a community-led partnership launched by Visit Durango and local nonprofits to promote responsible tourism and outdoor recreation across La Plata County. Building on the Care for Durango Coalition, Ambassadors deliver real-time, location-specific stewardship education downtown, at trailheads and events, addressing visitor behavior and environmental pressures. In its second year, the program advances shared stewardship, wildlife protection, and sustainable recreation through strong collaboration with land managers and community partners.

Communities 5: Strengthen Understanding and Communication Surrounding Short-Term Rentals

- The Colorado Short-Term Rental Alliance, a new nonprofit volunteer organization known as COSTRA, is promising to be a unified voice in advocating for the state's short-term rental community. The alliance was created through a merger of various existing organizations, like Mile High Hosts and the Colorado Lodging Resort Alliance.

Communities 6: Promote Responsible Trail Connectivity

- Colorado invested \$2.438 million through Colorado Parks and Wildlife's Non-Motorized Trail Grant Program in 2025 to support 26 projects that enhance outdoor access and recreation. Among these is a grant to the Colorado Fourteeners Initiative to restore 12 summit trails on Colorado's "14ers," including boardwalk repairs, rock steps, and tundra bed restoration. Partner agencies—including Colorado Parks & Wildlife, Great Outdoors Colorado, the Colorado Lottery, and the Federal Recreational Trails Program—prioritized both new construction and ongoing maintenance, as well as trail stewardship efforts to meet growing public demand while conserving natural landscapes.
- Supported by [GOCO Conservation Service Corps grants](#), the following projects are underway:
 - The Red Rocks Trail Construction and Restoration Project, led by the City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks with Mile High Youth Corps, is improving trails at Boulder's Red Rocks complex by repairing steep sections, closing unofficial routes, and enhancing safety and habitat health.

- In Green Mountain Falls, the town has joined forces with Mile High Youth Corps–Southern Front Range to reroute part of the American Discovery Trail, creating a safer, more accessible multi-use path connecting residents to nearby open spaces.
- The Town of Buena Vista, working with Southwest Conservation Corps–Los Valles, is building a connector trail between the Rock N Roll and Walton Loop trails to expand recreation opportunities while protecting surrounding natural areas.
- The City of Alamosa, in collaboration with Southwest Conservation Corps–Los Valles, is constructing a new walking trail in Montana Azul Park, improving community access to outdoor spaces and supporting local stewardship.
- The Baker’s Park Trail Project will add 10.7 miles of new multi-use trails near Silverton, expanding the 30-mile network. As San Juan County’s first non-motorized trail system, it will provide recreation for all skill levels, strengthen community connections, and protect the alpine ecosystem.

Communities 7: Advance Litter Prevention and Zero Waste Practices

- The Town of Silverthorne was awarded a [CTO Tourism Management Grant](#) to support the evolution of recurring First Friday events to be waste-free via waste diversion and tracking systems.
- Chaffee County is advancing zero-waste goals by building a [new regional recycling facility](#) with funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, expanding landfill recycling programs, and partnering with the Greater Arkansas River Nature Association and local providers to promote composting, zero-waste events, and community education.
- In addition to recognizing organizations that are operating sustainably, the [Colorado Green Business Network](#) offers free sustainability assessments, follow-up support, and ongoing technical assistance to help businesses improve waste reduction.

Communities 8: Enhance Water Conservation and Quality Initiatives

- Supported by [GOCO Conservation Service Corps grants](#), the following projects are underway related to water conservation and quality:
 - The Elkhorn Creek Forest Health Initiative is partnering with the Larimer County Conservation Corps to enhance watershed resilience and water conservation along Elkhorn Creek and the Cache la Poudre River, a vital water supply for more than 300,000 people. Using process-based restoration techniques that mimic natural structures, crews will improve river function, water quality, and retention while reducing flood risk.
 - The Ralph Price Reservoir Protection Project is partnering with the Larimer County Conservation Corps to improve forest health and protect the drinking water supply for over 110,000 residents in Lyons and Longmont. Crews will also reduce wildfire risk at Button Rock Preserve by thinning vegetation and clearing hazardous fuels.
 - The Acequia Initiative Phase III will help Colorado Open Lands protect acequia-irrigated lands and water rights in the San Luis Valley. This phase focuses on conserving up to five properties in Costilla County and expanding outreach to acequia communities in Conejos, Huerfano, and Las Animas Counties, while documenting acequias and providing legal support for irrigators.
- In addition to recognizing organizations that are operating sustainably, the [Colorado Green Business Network](#) offers free sustainability assessments, follow-up support, and ongoing technical assistance to help businesses improve water reduction.

Communities 9: Promote Dark Sky Preservation and Experiences

- Through [CTO's Dark Sky Certification Mentor Program](#), Lake County, Town of Berthoud, Town of Rangely, and Town of Frisco are advancing Dark Sky certification via community outreach, a new lighting ordinance, sky quality measurements, and a lighting inventory.
- The CTO, Colorado Parks & Wildlife, and DarkSky Colorado partnered to implement the [State Park Dark Sky Certification Mentor Program](#), providing technical support to Crawford, Eleven Mile, Elkhead Reservoir, Golden Gate Canyon, Highline Lake, John Martin Reservoir, Mueller, Rifle Gap, State Forest, Steamboat Lake, Staunton, Trinidad Lake, and Sweetwater Lake State Parks to pursue International Dark Sky Place certification and enhance visitor experiences through sustainable travel and resource stewardship.
- Visit Leadville-Twin Lakes formed [Friends of Lake County](#) to advance community stewardship and dark sky conservation through volunteer projects, educational campaigns, and partnerships that engage visitors in preserving trails, natural resources, and night skies.

Communities 10: Increase Public Restroom Accessibility

- Visit Durango partnered with local nonprofits to address a key visitor infrastructure need by maintaining pit toilets across the San Juan National Forest's Columbine Ranger District for the summer season. This collaboration secured resources and implemented a practical solution that enhanced environmental protection and improved the overall recreation experience.
- The Sustainable Tourism & Outdoor Recreation Committee (STOR), in collaboration with the Crested Butte Chamber, implemented a program that allowed businesses to sponsor port-a-potties at trailheads. This initiative provided \$18,000 worth of facilities in areas where vaulted toilets were not being serviced due to funding limitations.
- CDOT completed construction on a new [rest area at Vail Pass](#) along Interstate 70, designed to offer safer, more modern amenities to travelers. The facility features expanded and safer car and truck parking, fully ADA-accessible restrooms, sustainable design elements, and a layout that separates vehicles from pedestrians. It also connects with the Ten Mile Canyon Trail and enhances CDOT's operational capacity, especially for winter response, improving both traveler experience and safety in the area.



Tourism Resource 2: Outdoor Recreation

Partners across Colorado are managing recreation pressures through a combination of shared tools and on-the-ground actions, including *Do Colorado Right* education on public lands, collaborative planning, site assessments, visitor guides, and volunteer ambassadors. Efforts focus on inclusive access and visitor safety while safeguarding trails, rivers, and back-country experiences.

Highlights from FY25 by Strategy

Outdoor Recreation 1: Expand *Do Colorado Right* Campaigns on Public Lands

- The “[Doo Colorado Right](#)” campaign is confronting one of the state's more sensitive stewardship challenges: human waste on public lands. Originating with the Gunnison-Crested Butte Tourism and Prosperity Partnership and supported by more than 30 tourism and land management entities, the campaign distributes bathroom kits at trailheads and offers light-hearted,

educational tools like the Daily Dump newsletter. Over 10,000 pack-out kits have been distributed, and recent surveys indicate a measurable shift in visitor behavior.

- [Pikes Peak Outdoor Recreation Alliance's](#) “Respect the Outdoors” campaign equips partners with a ready-to-use messaging toolkit addressing crowding, wildlife impacts, and responsible recreation across the Pikes Peak region.

Outdoor Recreation 2: Facilitate and Convene Collaborative Outdoor Management Discussions

- [Colorado's Outdoors Strategy](#) launched in the spring 2025, advances coordination, tools, and funding to align, prioritize, and implement strategic actions on the landscape for conservation, outdoor recreation, and climate resilience. The Strategy elevates shared goals, strengthens partnerships, catalyzes statewide leadership, and amplifies regionally rooted efforts to address significant and urgent pressures to the outdoors. It comes to life through resources and tools to foster statewide partnerships, coordination, and action.
- City of Monte Vista and SLV GO! are advancing access with a [GOCO Planning and Capacity grant](#) supporting five recreation projects—including the Heart of the Valley rail-with-trail and Lariat Ditch Trail—to strengthen the San Luis Valley's outdoor economy.
- Jeffco Open Space's licensed tour operator, Friends of Dinosaur Ridge, collaborates with the county to balance resource protection with quality visitor experiences under the park's master plan.

Outdoor Recreation 3: Identify the Need for Timed Entry Permit Systems and Seasonal Closures

- The [Colorado Association of Ski Towns \(CAST\)](#) convened a discussion in Estes Park on how timed entry and managed parking strategies can work together.
- [Rocky Mountain National Park](#) launched its 2025 timed-entry reservation system on May 23, continuing efforts from the 2024 Day Use Visitor Access Plan to protect resources, ensure safety, and provide high-quality visitor experiences through two types of day-use reservations.
- A public-private partnership between the U.S. Forest Service, local agencies, and private operator H2O Ventures continue to operate a [reservation-based access system](#) to manage visitation at Hanging Lake.

Outdoor Recreation 4: Enhance Recreation Site Assessment Efforts

- Trout Unlimited and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management launched [Colorado Rivermap](#), a restoration and mapping initiative designed to identify degraded river segments, assess recreation access, and prioritize improvements for healthier waterways and sustainable visitor use.
- Through a [GOCO Community Impact Grant](#), Pagosa Springs will conduct an assessment to enhance a 4.3-acre site along the San Juan River. Plans include expanded access and recreation while preserving natural beauty, adding ADA river access, restrooms, parking, and a riverwalk extension in future phases aligned with town goals.

Outdoor Recreation 5: Develop and Distribute Recreation and Trail Guides

- Fremont County was awarded a [CTO Tourism Management Grant](#) to fund the development of a Shelf Road climbing guide that enhances visitor experience and education.

- Logan County was awarded a [CTO Tourism Management Grant](#) to develop a gravel cycling asset, including route development and a comprehensive guide for visitors, that will establish Logan County as a must-ride gravel bike destination.
- Steamboat Springs Chamber of Commerce was awarded a [CTO Tourism Management Grant](#) to create digital and printed assets at a new Yampa River Interpretive Center in downtown Steamboat Springs that enhances visitor services and education efforts.
- Colorado Cross Country Ski Association was awarded a [CTO Tourism Marketing Grant](#) to develop and promote a mobile app that will serve as a digital visitor hub, enhancing the visitor experience and encouraging exploration of Colorado's Nordic centers.
- Lake County - Trails 132 was awarded a [CTO Tourism Marketing Grant](#) to help Colorado residents and visitors navigate the year-round recreation opportunities that Lake County has to offer and do so responsibly.

Outdoor Recreation 6: Expand Trail Ambassador and Volunteer Initiatives

- The City of Ouray is working with the [CTO Destination Development Mentor Program](#) to develop a Trailhead ambassador program and outdoor recreation roundtable. They also [engage volunteers](#) in trail maintenance and education through ongoing conservation programming with local partners, inviting visitors to “give back” during their stay.
- Pike's Peak Outdoor Recreation Alliance's [Trail Stewardship Fund](#) directs event proceeds to trail building and maintenance across the region, amplifying capacity for local nonprofits and land managers.

Outdoor Recreation 7: Promote Guided Recreation Opportunities

- Mesa Verde Country promotes [local tours](#) provided by Cortez Tours and the Squirrel Congress. Cortez Tours offers engaging walks like the Sunrise Tour at Hawkins Preserve and the Cortez Art & Mural Tour. The Squirrel Congress works with Cortez Tours to convey their Wild West Ghost Tour – unveiling the dark secrets of Cortez including wild west outlaws like Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.

Outdoor Recreation 8: Enhance Destination Stewardship through Strategic Partnerships with the Private Sector

- In the heart of Colorado's high country, a [partnership](#) between Breckenridge Grand Vacations and the nonprofit Friends of Dillon Ranger District provides volunteers and resources to expand the capacity of the U.S. Forest Service, supporting trails and forest health.
- Through the [CTO Destination Blueprint program](#), the Fremont County Tourism Council (FCTC) is developing a digital package to share with new business owners, encouraging businesses to connect with FCTC to be featured and promoted on their channels.
- Through the [CTO Destination Blueprint program](#), the City of Monte Vista is enhancing promotional resources and content to improve visitor communications, including the development of a comprehensive tourism asset inventory including private sector businesses and designing a promotional brochure.

Outdoor Recreation 9: Foster Inclusive Outdoor Experiences

- CPW worked with CTO to translate the *Do Colorado Right* Principles into Spanish in FY25. As a result, CPW printed 50,000 Spanish and 200,000 English guides with the principles on the back panels that are distributed at visitor info centers statewide.
- CPW's angler education program fosters inclusive outdoor experiences, teaches ethical and sustainable fishing practices, and promotes proper fish handling. It hosts two annual Hispanic Fishing Days with Spanish-language instruction, attracting around 600 participants, and collaborates with partners like Colorado Treks, Latino Outdoors, Environmental Learning for Kids, Viva Wellness, Denver Rescue Mission, and the International Rescue Committee to engage under-represented communities.
- CPW's [Archery in the Schools Program](#) fosters inclusivity by providing in-school archery as an accessible activity for all students in grades 4-12, regardless of athletic skill, gender, size, or physical ability. The program's universal-fit equipment and accommodations for individuals with disabilities ensure that everyone can participate, connecting youth to outdoor recreation and promoting a sense of belonging.
- The City of Boulder is working on numerous trail and trailhead [improvement projects](#) across the city's 162-mile open space trail system, with additional trail construction, maintenance, and repair efforts that include accommodations for adaptive bikes and other accessibility considerations.
- CPW's [Outdoor Equity Grant Program](#) awarded \$3 million to 36 organizations, providing up to \$100,000 each to expand outdoor access for traditionally excluded youth. Funded projects reduce barriers to nature, promote responsible recreation, support conservation, and offer job training for low-income, diverse, LGBTQ+, disabled, and Native youth. Project highlights the FY25 recipients include:
 - Cottonwood Institute is partnering with four schools to deliver five award-winning Community Adventure Program classes blending outdoor education, leadership, and community projects, including wildfire water-quality research and an Ancestral Skills Gathering that fostered youth stewardship and community connection.
 - SOS Outreach is providing skiing and snowboarding opportunities for racially diverse and low-income youth in Eagle County through 113 scholarships, ensuring access regardless of income. With grant funds, it expanded its Alumni Network and continued a 7-week career program teaching job skills, leadership, and professionalism to support long-term growth and empowerment.
 - The Amache Alliance Youth Ambassador Program is fostering inclusive outdoor experiences for Native youth and descendants of Japanese Americans incarcerated at Amache. Through visits to the Amache and Sand Creek Massacre Historic Sites, participants engaged in cultural learning and healing ceremonies, deepening their connection to history, community, and the outdoors.
 - The Adaptive Sports Association is providing 507 adaptive outdoor experiences for 113 participants with physical and cognitive disabilities, including rafting, kayaking, cycling, and camping. With 321 scholarships and new adaptive equipment, expanded inclusive recreation, boosted confidence, independence, and social connection among participants across Southwestern Colorado.

Outdoor Recreation 10: Provide Education on Responsible Backcountry Vehicle Use

- The Colorado Search and Rescue Association (CSAR) has launched [Trailblazers and Lifesavers](#), a new video series that promotes safe backcountry recreation while highlighting Colorado's outdoor destinations. Produced in partnership with Plugged In Productions and local search and rescue teams, the series combines inspiring footage of skiing, rafting, hiking, and climbing with essential safety messages.



Tourism Resource 3: Wildlife and Biodiversity

Colorado destinations are reducing human–wildlife conflicts and safeguarding habitat with ethical viewing guidance, seasonal closures, monitoring, pollinator initiatives, and “drive mindfully” campaigns. Nature-positive tourism and training for industry professionals reinforce conservation outcomes alongside memorable visitor experiences

Highlights from FY25 by Strategy

Wildlife and Biodiversity 1: Promote and Facilitate Guided Wildlife Viewing

- CPW's [volunteer program](#) at Castlewood Canyon includes “Volunteer Naturalists” who present educational programs, interpret trails, work in visitor centers, and monitor birds.

Wildlife and Biodiversity 2: Create Wildlife Viewing Brochures and Encourage Ethical Viewing

- CPW released an updated Bats of Colorado pocket guide—an engaging, full-color resource designed for educational use during state park programs and classroom learning. Rather than passive distribution, the guide supports interpretive talks and complements CPW's regional education kits available for K–12 educators.
- The Keep Them WILD Card is an interactive “ethical distance viewing card” illustrating safe wildlife viewing distances. Used alongside interpretive programs, the cards teach visitors how to respect wildlife and maintain appropriate space, reinforcing Colorado's commitment to responsible, ethical wildlife viewing practices.
- CPW volunteers numbered 4,289 and provided 275,533 hours of service statewide in FY25. They interact with a wide variety of visitors, provide education on ethical wildlife viewing, contribute to wildlife habitat protection and restoration, conduct wildlife monitoring, and collaborate with/are part of hunting and fishing communities who care about our environments.

Wildlife and Biodiversity 3: Reduce Human-Wildlife Conflicts

- Gunnison–Crested Butte is reducing human-wildlife conflicts by running a *Do Colorado Right* campaign that educates visitors about seasonal wildlife trail closures and amplifying reminders each spring across owned channels—encouraging compliance to protect sensitive habitat during nesting and calving seasons.

Wildlife and Biodiversity 4: Champion Wildlife Habitat Protection and Restoration

- CPW is developing a series of *Wild Classroom* videos that showcase Colorado's eight ecosystems. Each video highlights the biotic and abiotic components of an ecosystem and concludes with a simple action viewers can take to help protect it, reinforcing the message that “conservation starts small.” The series is scheduled for release by the end of June 2026.

- Supported by GOCO Conservation Service Corps grants awarded in [December 2024](#) and [June 2025](#), the following wildlife habitat protection and restoration projects are underway:
 - The Frederick Recreation Area Restoration Project is working with the Weld County Youth Conservation Corps to restore native riverbank habitats by removing invasive trees, planting native species, and strengthening resilience to flooding, wildfire, and habitat loss.
 - The Palmer Lake Parks and Trails Commission partnered with Mile High Youth Corps to restore riverbanks along North Monument Creek, improving habitat, trail access, and recreation while working alongside the U.S. Air Force Academy.
 - The Town of Palisade is working with the Western Colorado Conservation Corps to remove invasive species and replant native vegetation along the Colorado River, revitalizing riparian habitat and offering hands-on ecological training.

Wildlife and Biodiversity 5: Promote Pollinator District Initiatives

- Manitou Springs has become the world's first certified [municipal Pollinator District™](#), in partnership with Butterfly Pavilion. The city now integrates pollinator-friendly features—such as rain gardens, green roofs, and native plantings—into public and private spaces. Residents are engaged through habitat gardening, beekeeping training, research, and public education to support local bees, butterflies, and other pollinators. This initiative highlights Manitou Springs' commitment to biodiversity, sustainability, and creating a healthier environment for both people and wildlife.

Wildlife and Biodiversity 6: Enhance Wildlife Monitoring Efforts

- CPW is updating its [State Wildlife Action Plan \(SWAP\)](#), which serves as a strategic guide for identifying priority species and habitats that require monitoring and conservation. As part of this, the state will use data (for example from IMBCR: Integrated Monitoring in Bird Conservation Regions) to pinpoint species lacking sufficient information and to focus monitoring where it's most needed.

Wildlife and Biodiversity 7: Collaborate with Hunting and Fishing Communities to Promote Sustainable Practices

- The [CPW Hunter Education Program](#) offers classes year-round, certifying 13,387 students in FY25. Some courses are offered exclusively in Spanish and others are designed specifically for women. Students learn and are tested on topics such as wildlife conservation principles, habitat protection, Leave No Trace ethics, hunter responsibility, and firearm safety. Before graduating, each student must also demonstrate shooting proficiency with a .22-caliber rifle. An [Angler Education Outreach](#) class held 336 clinics and certified 11,952 students.

Wildlife and Biodiversity 8: Implement Wildlife Conservation Education for Tourism Professionals

- CPW's annual [Partners in the Outdoors Conference](#) brings together professionals from across the outdoor industry to collaborate on strategies that balance conservation and recreation. Through workshops, panel discussions, and networking sessions, participants explore topics such as wildlife conservation, habitat stewardship, and sustainable tourism practices that support Colorado's natural resources and outdoor recreation economy.

Wildlife and Biodiversity 9: Safeguard Wildlife by Encouraging Mindful Driving

- [Wildlife on the Move](#) is a collaborative campaign by CDOT, CPW, Colorado State Patrol, Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association, and Rocky Mountain Wild to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions. The initiative raises driver awareness during migration seasons through safety messaging and education, promoting actions like slowing down and staying alert to protect both motorists and wildlife across Colorado's roadways.

Wildlife and Biodiversity 10: Champion Nature-Positive Tourism

- Opened in 2024, [Populus](#) is a 265-room hotel designed around a deep connection to nature, with biophilic architecture, sustainable materials, and locally inspired cuisine. Sustainability is integrated into every aspect, from tree-planting initiatives and regenerative food sourcing to on-site composting and carbon tracking through the Road to Carbon Positive dashboard.
- The [Crested Butte Wildflower Festival](#) is a 10-day celebration held each July in Crested Butte, Colorado. It features over 150 workshops and events—from hikes and wildflower identification to art and photography—to foster appreciation for alpine flora. Founded in 1986, the nonprofit festival advocates for wildflower conservation and community engagement.



Tourism Resource 4: Cultural Heritage

Tourism supports cultural stewardship by highlighting Native American heritage, supporting museums, and creating themed trails and immersive storytelling experiences. Across Colorado, communities collaborate with Tribes, educators, and cultural organizations to preserve heritage sites, expand interpretation, and engage youth in sharing local history. These efforts help celebrate, honor, and sustain cultural traditions for future generations.

Highlights from FY25 by Strategy

Cultural Heritage 1: Foster Inclusive Cultural Heritage Partnerships

- Visit Durango partnered with the Durango School District, Title VI Cultural Liaison Jennifer Fernandez, the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, and local businesses to honor Native American Heritage Month through events that educate, inspire and build bridges of understanding. Events included a Welcome Center cultural display, Navajo cookbook author Alana Yazzie's food demonstration, a film screening of Rez Ball and a frybread fundraiser. This inaugural effort inspired partners to pursue and secure 2025 grant funding that expanded the program's budget tenfold.
- [Visit La Junta advanced its Destination Blueprint work](#) by prioritizing cultural heritage collaboration with partners like the National Park Service, linking historic sites such as Bent's Old Fort, Amache, and Sand Creek. Alongside these efforts, the organization expanded unique initiatives like tarantula-season tourism, fostering responsible visitation and strengthening community partnerships.
- Prowers County Lodging Tax Panel awarded a [CTO Tourism Marketing Grant](#) to produce a GPS-enabled audio tour highlighting 10 significant locations in Prowers County including the towns of Holly, Granada, and Lamar.
- Ridgway Area Chamber Of Commerce was awarded a [CTO Tourism Marketing Grant](#) to support a targeted marketing initiative aimed at revitalizing the Ridgway business district, home to both a historic and creative sector.

- A [CPW Director's Innovators Fund grant](#) will help CPW launch the first-ever statewide initiative to engage Tribes and the broader Native community on their interests, needs, and concerns for Colorado's state parks. CPW will hold listening sessions to hear their perspectives and begin building relationships and dialogue around park-related issues.

Cultural Heritage 2: Elevate Native American Heritage

- The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe was awarded a [CTO Tourism Management Grant](#) to enhance visitor experience and land stewardship via new and/or updated wayfinding signage.
- The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe is working with the [CTO Destination Development Mentor program](#) to develop a tourism asset inventory and site visit to evaluate visitor ready opportunities and potential growth areas.
- Visit Durango launched the Native Voices series in collaboration with Cultural Heritage Coordinator Kristean Velasquez, Nuuchiu, an enrolled member of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe. The initiative produces authentic Native stories for tourism marketing and highlights topics including celebrations such as Leonard C. Birch Day as well as features skiing on ancestral lands, and Native students from Fort Lewis College. To date, Native Voices has attracted 1,511,054 total impressions across the 12 social posts.

Cultural Heritage 3: Promote Ethical Native American Handcrafts

- The Southern Ute Cultural Center and Museum hosted the 3rd annual [Pino Nuche Indigenous Art Market and Juried Show](#) in August 2024, at the Sky Ute Casino Resort in Ignacio, CO. The event celebrated and supported Indigenous artists from across tribal nations, showcasing diverse fine art forms such as basketry, pottery, paintings, and jewelry.
- The fourth annual [Art Market at The Dairy Arts Center](#) celebrated Native artistry and culture, featuring 26 talented artisans from across the West and Southwest. Visitors explored exquisite beadwork, silversmithing, apparel, paintings, home décor, toys, and skincare products. The event offered a unique opportunity to connect directly with artists, honoring their creativity, heritage, and craftsmanship through one-of-a-kind, handmade works.

Cultural Heritage 4: Enhance Awareness of Diverse Cultural Heritage

- The Lincoln Hills Cares Foundation was awarded a [History Colorado Grant](#) to complete construction documents for the rehabilitation of Wink's Lodge, a 1920s National Historic Landmark that once served as a social hub for Lincoln Hills—the largest African American resort west of the Mississippi. The project will preserve the lodge's integrity, address repairs, and honor its legacy of Black resilience and community empowerment.
- Lake County - Opera 403 was awarded a [CTO Tourism Marketing Grant](#) to expand awareness of the Colorado Historic Opera House Circuit and support cultural and heritage tourism in local communities.
- Through a [GOCO Community Impact Grant](#), the Lobatos Bridge Outdoor Classroom Project will create an educational space near the historic bridge to teach visitors about the region's cultural and environmental heritage, supported by decades of community collaboration.

Cultural Heritage 5: Develop Immersive Cultural Heritage Experiences

- [Friends of Dinosaur Ridge](#) provides guided bus tours and on-site interpretation at America's top dinosaur tracksite, combining fossil education with managed access along the Dakota Hogback.

- The [Ute Indian Museum](#) continues to connect the past with contemporary Ute life through dynamic, immersive exhibits. Centered on geography, they highlight the Ute peoples' adaptation, persistence, and significant historical places. Visitors experience stories of cultural survival, political determination, and economic opportunity while celebrating enduring traditions like the Bear Dance.
- The [Southern Ute Cultural Center and Museum](#) offers an immersive cultural heritage experience that honors the Núuchi (Ute People). Through inclusive programs and interactive exhibits, it fosters understanding and respect for Ute origins, language, and traditions while celebrating the Tribe's resilience and living heritage.

Cultural Heritage 6: Develop Themed Cultural Heritage Trails and Audio Tours

- Through the [CTO Destination Blueprint program](#), the City of La Junta is developing a three-day itinerary and marketing campaign that highlights the region's three National Historic Sites, using La Junta as a base camp. The city is also creating a comprehensive content library that showcases the cultural heritage and history of La Junta and the surrounding region for diverse uses.
- The Amache Alliance in Prowers County received a [History Colorado Grant](#) to update the driving tour at the [Amache National Historic Site](#), enhancing interpretive content and signage to align with National Park Service storytelling about Japanese incarceration during World War II. The project includes oral histories, reconstructed buildings, and improved accessibility while protecting sensitive archaeological areas.

Cultural Heritage 8: Facilitate Access to Historic Preservation Grants

- [History Colorado's State Historical Fund](#) concluded Fiscal Year 2025 by awarding 107 grants statewide, totaling \$12,280,247. The funding included General Grants (\$50,001–\$250,000) and Mini Grants (up to \$50,000), supporting preservation projects that protect and celebrate Colorado's rich cultural and historic heritage.
- The Grand County Historical Association in Grand County received a [History Colorado Grant](#) to restore the early-1900s Kremmling Depot, the last surviving station on the Moffat Road. The project will stabilize the structure and transform it into a community gathering space celebrating Colorado's railroad heritage.
- Eighth Street Baptist Church in Pueblo, one of Colorado's oldest Black congregations, received a [History Colorado Grant](#) to stabilize its historic 1891 structure linked to the Civil Rights and Women's Suffrage movements, preserving its legacy and supporting ongoing community services.

Cultural Heritage 10: Highlight Colorado's Agricultural and Culinary Heritage

- Mesa Verde Country partners with Wild West Excursions to inspire visitors to deeply engage with the "[County with the Bounty](#)." Through pack goat hikes, trail rides, and farm-to-table tours, guests experience local agriculture, ranching, and wildlife while learning about sustainable farming and conservation practices.
- The "[4 Reasons to Eat Local in Colorado](#)" [Do Colorado Right campaign](#) promotes fresh, sustainable, and locally sourced foods while supporting Colorado farmers and communities. It inspires pride in the state's agricultural heritage and connects consumers to authentic, seasonal dining experiences that celebrate Colorado's local flavors and identity.

- The [Roaring Fork + Farm Map](#) promotes regional agritourism by highlighting local farms, ranches, and culinary partners across the Roaring Fork Valley, connecting visitors with food producers and celebrating the region's agricultural heritage through a collaborative effort led by five DMOs and the CTO.



Tourism Resource 5: Arts and Creative Industries

From murals and maker markets to music programs, creative projects bring downtowns to life and strengthen a community's sense of place. This section highlights how destinations collaborate with artists and venues to extend seasonal activity, foster inclusive cultural expression, and use creativity to address stewardship challenges.

Highlights from FY25 by Strategy

Arts and Creative Industries 1: Foster Partnerships with Local Artists

- Visit Fort Collins was awarded a [CTO Tourism Management Grant](#) to enhance visitor engagement with the local public art scene by developing a comprehensive and interactive mural experience.

Arts and Creative Industries 2: Boost Art Venues through Grant Programs

- A total of 125 arts organizations across 33 Colorado counties were awarded \$909,000 in [Colorado Creates Grants](#) for two consecutive years beginning in 2024. The grants will help organizations and communities create art and cultural activities by providing general operating support. Two examples include:
 - The [Cortez Cultural Center](#), a grant recipient of the Colorado Creates Grant, enriches community life by promoting the arts, cultural awareness, and local history. Recent programs include Young People in Recovery, offering weekly multi-disciplinary arts classes, and the Book Anthology Project, which published three volumes of regional poetry and prose on Earth, Wind, and Fire.
 - In Denver County, [Phamaly Theatre Company](#) is utilizing its Colorado Creates grant to support artists with disabilities, model an inclusive theatrical process, and challenge conventional narratives to transform audiences and communities.
- Colorado Creative Industries announced 10 recipients of the [Community Revitalization Tax Credit](#), supporting creative sector capital projects that blend arts spaces—such as studios, performance venues, and arts education centers—with community amenities like housing, childcare, and retail to foster economic growth and vibrant, inclusive neighborhoods. Eligible applicants can receive tax credits of up to \$3 million to cover up to 25% of eligible expenses.

Arts and Creative Industries 3: Promote Diverse Arts through Festivals and Events

- Held in July in Cherry Creek North, the nationally recognized Cherry Creek Arts Festival features more than 250 curated artists showcasing fine art, music, and food. The event attracts thousands of visitors and supports arts education and community engagement, reaffirming Denver's role as a hub for creativity and cultural connection.
- The [Steamboat Art Festival](#) transforms downtown Steamboat Springs into an open-air gallery each summer. Featuring fine art across multiple mediums, the festival celebrates mountain culture, connects visitors with artists, and enriches the region's vibrant creative community.

- Set against the dramatic red rock formations of Garden of the Gods Park, the Garden of the Gods Art Festival features more than 100 talented artists. The event highlights fine art, jewelry, and sculpture while linking creativity with Colorado's natural beauty and heritage.
- Held over Memorial Day weekend, the Denver Arts Festival showcases top local and national artists in painting, ceramics, photography, and glass. The event emphasizes accessibility and community engagement, strengthening Denver's dynamic arts scene.
- A beloved Carbondale tradition, the Mountain Fair blends art, music, and community celebration. Featuring local artists, live performances, and workshops, it highlights creativity and sustainability while fostering a strong sense of pride in the Roaring Fork Valley.

Arts and Creative Industries 7: Elevate Colorado's Music Scene

- The Chaffee County Visitors Bureau is working with the [CTO Destination Development Mentor Program](#) to develop a strategy for growing and promoting music tourism opportunities in the off-peak season.
- Visit Fort Collins is working with the [CTO Destination Development Mentor Program](#) to develop a strategy to grow and promote music tourism during its off-peak season.
- The Fort Collins Conventions & Visitors Bureau was awarded a [CTO Tourism Marketing Grant](#) to implement a Sounds of Fort Collins campaign to promote the city's rich musical heritage, which will include the development of a comprehensive music marketing strategy, a new music-focused microsite, video content featuring live performances and interviews with local musicians, and targeted promotions for music festivals.

Arts and Creative Industries 8: Create Interactive Artistic Experiences

- [Meow Wolf Denver's Convergence Station](#) is an immersive, multi-sensory art experience combining narrative storytelling, interactive installations, and surreal environments across four "worlds." Visitors explore mysterious corridors, hidden passageways, and enigmatic art pieces over 70+ rooms. The venue also hosts live performances, events, and social experiences, and offers food, drink, and local gallery integration to enrich the visitor journey.

Arts and Creative Industries 9: Develop and Promote Community Arts Guide

- The [2025 Summit County Art Guide](#) showcases the region's vibrant arts scene, featuring galleries, public art, performances, and creative events across Breckenridge, Frisco, and Silverthorne. It highlights self-guided art tours, workshops, and opportunities to engage with local artists.
- The [Yampa Valley Arts and Culture Guide](#) is a biannual publication spotlighting the visual and performing arts in Northwest Colorado—especially around Steamboat Springs. It features profiles on local artists, galleries and venues, upcoming events, and stories that reflect the region's evolving creative community.

Arts and Creative Industries 10: Integrate Art into Outdoor Recreation

- A 58-foot mirrored stainless-steel sculpture by Belgian artist Michael Benisty was permanently installed in Aurora's Hogan Park. Originally featured at Burning Man 2024, "[Liberty](#)" serves as a reflective community landmark symbolizing freedom and inclusivity while anchoring the Aurora Highlands development as a new cultural gateway along I-70.

- Patrick Shem's [*Off the Beaten Path*](#), unveiled at the Green Box Art Festival, is a vast suspended installation spanning 6,000 square feet. Made from 35,000 colorful pieces of kite fabric, it floats above a pond, swaying with the wind and transforming the landscape into a kinetic, immersive artwork.



Tourism Resource 6: Local Tourism Businesses and Organizations

Building capacity at the local level ensures tourism benefits are widely shared.

Destinations and partners are strengthening DMOs, empowering entrepreneurs, supporting minority-owned businesses, and championing tourism's value—while pursuing new collaborations, including film/TV and Tribal partnerships.

Highlights from FY25 by Strategy

Local Tourism Businesses and Organizations 2: Strengthen Destination Management/Marketing Organizations Across the State

- Through the [CTO Destination Blueprint program](#), the City of Monte Vista is developing a draft framework that will outline roles and responsibilities of the MVCOC, Monte Vista, and partner organizations.
- The City of Trinidad was awarded a [CTO Tourism Marketing Grant](#) to support a tourism website redesign for Trinidad to include updated content, improved website navigation and expanded visitor experiences.
- Fremont County Tourism Council was awarded a [CTO Tourism Marketing Grant](#) to enhance its marketing capacity through an influencer program with the aim to increase Fremont County Tourism Council profile visits, engagement, link clicks and more. This investment will compliment existing organic social and paid advertising efforts
- Through the [CTO Destination Blueprint program](#), the Manitou Springs Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau is developing a template and process for the development of a Visit Manitou Springs annual report.

Local Tourism Businesses and Organizations 3: Empower Tourism Entrepreneurs

- The [“What to Wear in Colorado: The Basics” campaign](#) and guide offers practical packing tips for Colorado's diverse climates and activities. It also encourages travelers to shop for Colorado-made products and apparel.

Local Tourism Businesses and Organizations 4: Provide Technical Assistance and Disaster Relief to Tourism Businesses

- [CTO's Crisis Communications and Recovery Toolkit](#) offers a variety of crisis communications preparedness and recovery assets for communities and organizations impacted by natural disasters and tourism crisis situations.

Local Tourism Businesses and Organizations 7: Support Cannabis Entrepreneurs in Tourism

- Colorado started as a leader in the cannabis industry and continues to bolster this important sector. The [Cannabis Business Office](#) has provided over 3,500 hours of technical assistance to social equity licensed cannabis entrepreneurs since its inception. Cannabis Business Grants

have resulted in nearly 300 jobs created or retained and 55 new businesses started in the last three years.

- The [Cannabis Experience](#) is Denver's first licensed mobile cannabis lounge and tour company, offering immersive, educational, and entertaining cannabis-themed experiences. Guests enjoy curated tours—such as art, food, and cultivation experiences—while promoting responsible consumption and cannabis culture.

Local Tourism Businesses and Organizations 8: Attract Film and Television Shoots to Colorado's Tourism Destinations

- The relocation (starting 2027) of the [Sundance Film Festival](#) to Boulder signals Colorado's growing appeal in the film and media landscape.

Local Tourism Businesses and Organizations 9: Champion the Value of Tourism

- Alamosa Convention and Visitors Bureau is working with the [CTO Destination Development Mentor Program](#) to develop a Resident sentiment survey and strategy to champion the value of tourism and raise awareness of the value of Visit Alamosa.
- Through the [CTO Destination Blueprint Program](#), the Grand County Tourism Board is championing the Value of Tourism through the development of a stakeholder partner and community communications kit for the new GCCTB priorities to assist with tourism management and budgetary challenges.
- Through the [CTO Destination Blueprint Program](#), the Pagosa Springs Area Tourism Board (PSATB) is developing content that captures three stories that champion tourism management in Archuleta County to be distributed to residents and stakeholders over a three-month period. It will also produce a step-by-step guide for PSATB to continue creating and distributing similar content, helping build community understanding and support for tourism.
- Through the [CTO Destination Blueprint Program](#), the Fremont County Tourism Council is identifying opportunities and strategies to promote the value of tourism.

Local Tourism Businesses and Organizations 10: Bolster Tribal Tourism through Strategic Partnerships

- The Nature Conservancy (TNC-Colorado) was awarded a [History Colorado Grant](#) to conduct cultural resource surveys at the Zapata Ranch Preserve near Great Sand Dunes National Park. In partnership with Tribes historically connected to the region, the project will identify and preserve cultural sites. Building on TNC's long-term restoration and Tribal engagement work, the surveys aim to strengthen relationships, support cultural reconnection, and guide future management of this ancestral landscape through inclusive conservation practices.
- Supported by a [GOCO Conservation Service Corps grant](#), the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe is partnering with Southwest Conservation Corps—Four Corners to restore the Pool Canyon Trail in the Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Park, reopening cultural tourism access and providing training in trail restoration and archaeology.



Tourism Resource 7: Transportation

Sustainable mobility underpins responsible travel. Colorado destinations are expanding eco-friendly transit, stitching together multimodal connections, improving wayfinding to transit-served trailheads, and accelerating EV infrastructure—advancing access while easing congestion and emissions.

Highlights from FY25 by Strategy

Transportation 1: Increase Availability of Eco-Friendly Transit Methods

- The City of Longmont approved a [\\$1.5 million contract](#) with the Colorado Energy Office for the Community Accelerated Mobility Project, which will fund the launch of a regional electric bike share program in the northwest metro area—including Superior, Broomfield, Westminster, Lafayette, Boulder County, and Longmont—over the next three years beginning in 2025. This initiative marks a significant step toward expanding access to rentable e-bikes and advancing sustainable mobility across the region.

Transportation 2: Develop Comprehensive Transportation Connections

- Lake County launched free seasonal shuttles linking Leadville with Twin Lakes in summer and Ski Cooper in winter, equipped with bike racks and funded through public-private sponsorships, reducing congestion, supporting through-hikers, and improving multi-modal travel.

Transportation 3: Raise Awareness and Ridership of Bustang, Snowstang, and Pegasus Services

- The Colorado Department of Transportation [added services](#) for its Snowstang bus route between Denver and Copper Mountain in January to test demand from riders, a time when the state typically sees an influx of winter enthusiasts on the road.

Transportation 4: Encourage Rail Travel for Visitors

- CTO actively promotes [heritage and scenic train journeys](#) as key tourism attractions. Its official travel guides highlight historic railways such as the Georgetown Loop, Royal Gorge Route, and Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad that combine breathtaking scenery, rich heritage, and recreational adventure.

Transportation 5: Upgrade Pedestrian and Bike Pathways

- The [Revitalizing Main Streets program](#) from the Colorado Department of Transportation awarded \$5.5 million across 25 projects in 2024 to improve safety, accessibility, and active transportation statewide. Examples include:
 - Expanding Pedestrian Infrastructure: Communities like Akron, Fort Lupton, Silverthorne, Telluride, and Monte Vista are replacing deteriorated or missing sidewalks, adding ADA-compliant ramps, and improving crosswalks along key corridors to make walking safer and more accessible.
 - Advancing Bike and Multimodal Connections: Projects in Fraser, Durango, Mountain Village, and at University of Colorado - Colorado Springs are adding multi-use paths, bike racks, and dedicated cycling facilities—linking neighborhoods, campuses, and business areas while encouraging car-free travel.

- Boosting Safety and Accessibility: Towns such as Berthoud, Hotchkiss, Kersey, Loveland, and Pueblo are installing rapid flashing beacons, bulb-outs, and artistic crosswalks to increase pedestrian visibility and slow traffic in busy downtowns.
- Creating Community Spaces: Communities like Eaton, Norwood, Wheat Ridge, Yuma, and Blanca are transforming underused lots into plazas, walking trails, and park pathways that enhance both mobility and placemaking.

Transportation 6: Promote Carpooling for Tourism

- The [Do Colorado Right Public Transit campaign](#) encourages alternative forms of transport to ease congestion throughout the state.

Transportation 7: Implement and Incentivize Congestion Reduction Measures

- Colorado Association of Ski Towns (CAST) partnered with the Colorado Trail Explorer (COTREX) app to add trailheads accessible by public transportation. Developed with Colorado's Center for Advanced Spatial Technologies, the feature lets users filter trails served by transit options like Denver's RTD. This helps reduce parking congestion and traffic in popular outdoor areas by encouraging hikers to use alternative transportation.

Transportation 8: Create Parking Solutions

- Great Sand Dunes National Park in the San Luis Valley received significant funding for infrastructure improvements, including parking expansion, through the Great American Outdoors Act.

Transportation 9: Prioritize Inclusive Transportation Accessibility

- Several 2024 Revitalizing Main Streets grants directly improve accessibility across Colorado. Projects in Akron, Craig, Dinosaur, Fort Lupton, Eaton, Kersey, Silverthorne, Telluride, Yuma, and at UCCS focus on ADA-compliant sidewalks, ramps, bulb-outs, and multi-use paths that connect neighborhoods, parks, and campuses to help ensure people of all abilities can safely navigate community spaces while enhancing pedestrian comfort and inclusivity statewide.

Transportation 10: Expand Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

- One of the state's most visible stewardship efforts is the [expansion of Colorado's Electric Byways](#), a collaborative initiative between the CTO, the Colorado Energy Office, and the Colorado Department of Transportation. By installing electric vehicle charging stations on 19 of 26 Scenic and Historic Byways, the program supports rural tourism, cuts carbon emissions, and enhances travel for eco-conscious visitors. A dedicated [Electric Byways Tourism Toolkit](#) provides resources to help DMOs and visitor centers promote their participation, and EV travel now accounts for 16% of destination visits statewide—underscoring both environmental and economic impact.
- Visit Pueblo is expanding electric vehicle (EV) access with new and planned chargers and supports accessible shuttles via [Senior Resource Development Agency](#), improving inclusive mobility for residents and visitors.
- Through the DC Fast Charging Plazas Program, the Colorado Energy Office [awarded \\$5 million](#) in its seventh round of EV fast-charging grants, funding 56 new stations across the state. The program supports public and private partners in building critical infrastructure, adding to Colorado's 1,400 existing charging ports.



Tourism Resource 8: Agriculture, Food, and Liquid Arts

Culinary storytelling connects visitors to working lands. Destinations promote farm-to-table experiences, agritourism routes and signage, and local product spotlights—alongside MICHELIN partnerships—to elevate Colorado’s food and beverage identity and support rural economies.

Highlights from FY25 by Strategy

Agriculture, Food, and Liquid Arts 2: Promote Colorado as a Culinary Destination

- CAVE and Colorado Winefest is working with the [CTO Destination Development Mentor Program](#) to analyze existing and develop new membership models, and promote new benefits and structure.
- CTO’s Public Relations strategy generates global visibility by integrating culinary storytelling into the majority of the 300+ media placements each year, which feature local restaurants, chefs, breweries, wineries, and distilleries. This ongoing effort strengthens the state’s reputation as a leading culinary destination—reflected in [The New York Times 2025 list of America’s 50 Best Restaurants](#), which included *Mezcaleria Alma* (Denver) and *Bin 707* (Grand Junction).

Agriculture, Food, and Liquid Arts 3: Engage Culinary Experts for Global Exposure

- The CTO, Atlas Obscura, and Blue Apron launched a [first-of-its-kind collaboration](#) celebrating Colorado’s culinary heritage. The campaign put a spotlight on Colorado’s farm-to-table culture by having chef Brother Luck create a recipe featured in Blue Apron boxes. The campaign generated over 110 million media impressions, delivered a 12% lift in recommendation intent for Colorado, and drove an estimated \$209 million in economic impact—all with a return of investment (ROI) of 52:1.
- The [“Eat Local” Do Colorado Right campaign](#) promoted the state’s farm-to-table culture by encouraging locals and visitors to choose Colorado-grown food. It emphasizes fresh flavor, supporting local farmers and the economy, preserving agricultural heritage, and fostering sustainability, thereby reinforcing the state’s culinary brand and strengthening the link between food, place, and tourism.

Agriculture, Food, and Liquid Arts 4: Support Culinary Festivals and Events

- Visit Pueblo’s signature [Chile and Frijoles Festival](#) celebrates local agriculture and connects visitors with growers through downtown programming, entertainment, and food experiences.
- Palisade, Colorado hosts the annual [Palisade Peach Festival](#) in August at Riverbend Park, celebrating the region’s iconic peaches with live music, food trucks, artisan vendors, chef demonstrations, peach-themed competitions, and family activities. The event also features special “Feast in the Field” dinners at local orchards, offering chef-driven, farm-to-table meals paired with regional wines for an immersive culinary experience.

Agriculture, Food, and Liquid Arts 8: Promote Agritourism Offerings

- Through the [CTO Destination Blueprint program](#), the Fremont County Tourism Council is developing a campaign to highlight the off-peak outdoor recreation activities, cultural experiences, and culinary adventures available in the region.
- Colorado Mills in Lamar offers [facility tours](#) and operates as a zero-waste, full-cycle sunflower-oil producer, connecting local growers to visitors through products and education.

Agriculture, Food, and Liquid Arts 9: Elevate Local Agricultural Products

- Five Roaring Fork Valley DMOs—Aspen Chamber Resort Association, Snowmass Tourism, Basalt Chamber, Carbondale Tourism, and Visit Glenwood Springs—released the [Roaring Fork + Farm Map](#), an artist-designed guide elevating local agricultural products, connecting visitors to farms, markets, and food champions across the valley.

Agriculture, Food, and Liquid Arts 10: Broaden MICHELIN Guide Partnerships

- Colorado's farm-to-table legacy and fertile landscapes continue to fuel its thriving culinary scene, with [MICHELIN-recognized chefs](#) like Tommy Lee (Hop Alley) and Mawa McQueen (Mawa's Kitchen) showcasing authentic, diverse cuisines rooted in local ingredients and cultural heritage.
- Denver's culinary profile rose with new [MICHELIN Guide Colorado selections](#), strengthening the city's food-forward brand and visitor draw.



Tourism Resource 9: Tourism Workforce

A thriving visitor economy depends on a skilled, supported workforce. Initiatives span career pathways, industry-college collaboration, housing solutions, DEIA, professional recognition, and education in schools—building talent pipelines and raising the brand of working in tourism.

Highlights from FY25 by Strategy

Tourism Workforce 1: Develop Industry-Focused Workforce Strategies

- A [local nonprofit in Summit County, Oso Outdoors](#), offers free ski lessons, gear, and season passes to hospitality workers—especially from the Latino immigrant community—to break down financial and language barriers and make skiing accessible to those who support Colorado's ski industry.
- At Visit Denver, the [Go the Extra Mile workforce training program](#) prepares front-line staff to serve as concierges for the industry through an online training platform designed to educate them on all things Denver, highlight the value of tourism, and provide resources to support positive and informed visitor interactions.
- Responding to shifting needs, Visit Leadville–Twin Lakes formalized an Memorandum of Understanding with the Early Childcare Fund, directing tourism resources to expand childcare access.

Tourism Workforce 6: Foster Career Advancement in Tourism

- A [GOCO Planning and Capacity grant](#) will expand the Southwest Conservation Corps' (SCC's) Indigenous Youth Crew program, offering paid conservation jobs to Indigenous high school students in the Four Corners region. Over three years, SCC will engage about 50 youth in 7,500 hours of hands-on conservation work, supported by a new coordinator and crew leader training. The program helps participants build skills, explore careers in natural resource management, and reconnect with their ancestral lands.

Tourism Workforce 7: Enhance Recognition for Tourism Professionals

- The [Governor's Awards for Outstanding Colorado Tourism Efforts](#) celebrate excellence across the state's tourism industry, honoring individuals and organizations for their leadership and innovation. Presented each fall at the Colorado Governor's Tourism Conference, the awards include distinctions such as the Frontline Hospitality Worker Award, Governor's Award for

Excellence in Advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility in Tourism, the Governor's Award for Exemplary Destination Stewardship Initiative, the Governor's Award for Outstanding Colorado Tourism Champion, and the Governor's Award for Rising Tourism Star.

Tourism Workforce 8: Promote and Integrate Tourism Career Education in Schools

- Through Alamosa Public School's 5th Day Programming—implemented in partnership with San Luis Valley Generation Wild—students are exposed to hands-on, experiential learning that introduces them to a variety of career paths in the outdoors, including outdoor leadership, guiding, park services, and more.

Tourism Workforce 9: Build the Brand of Working in Tourism

- [CTO's Careers that Take you Places Campaign](#) increases awareness of tourism-related jobs and education opportunities in Colorado, inspiring young adults to explore careers in the industry. The campaign landing page also integrates local DMO job boards to connect interested applicants with real opportunities statewide.

Tourism Workforce 10: Support Professional Development and Networking Events in the Industry

- The [Colorado Governor's Tourism Conference](#) is an annual three-day event for tourism professionals and industry leaders to learn and network. Participants evaluate current tourism efforts, explore innovative ways to market the state, its communities, and local businesses, and gain inspiration from dynamic speakers from across the country.
- Held in conjunction with the annual Colorado Governor's Tourism Conference, the Visitors Summit is a one-day pre-conference event designed for visitor and welcome center staff who engage directly with travelers. The summit provides valuable insights and resources to strengthen visitor services—a vital component of Colorado's tourism industry.
- The [Colorado Tourism Leadership Journey](#), launched in 2017, is a year-long, tuition-based program that develops leadership skills among managers and mid-career tourism professionals. Designed to strengthen Colorado's tourism industry through its people, the program helps participants, employers, and communities by fostering talent, inspiring innovation, and ensuring a strong, competitive future for this vital economic sector.
- [CTO Learning Labs](#) is a free online educational platform designed for students, DMOs, hospitality staff, and tourism industry professionals. The platform helps learners at every level sharpen their skills and deepen their Colorado expertise so visitors feel welcomed, cared for, and inspired to return.



Tourism Resource 10: Climate

Colorado is advancing climate action through sustainable business practices, clean mobility, renewable energy, and climate-adaptive offerings. Destinations are also developing action plans and reporting frameworks—supported by initiatives like Climate Champions and the Climate RiskScan project—to reduce risk and emissions across the sector.

Highlights from FY25 by Strategy

Climate 1: Encourage Sustainable Business Practices

- After a rigorous certification process, Aspen earned [Mountain IDEAL sustainable destination certification](#) and launched a Green Business Network with city partners to expand training and standards.
- VISIT DENVER achieved Platinum under the Event Industry Council's Sustainable Event Standards and promotes rail access from DEN to downtown for low-carbon meetings.

Climate 2: Advance Sustainable Aviation Initiatives

- Avfuel opened the first central U.S. sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) terminal in Denver, producing fuel from used cooking oil. The facility expands SAF access nationwide and supports business aviation's goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Climate 3: Support Renewable Energy in the Tourism Sector

- In addition to recognizing organizations that are operating sustainably, the [Colorado Green Business Network](#) offers free sustainability assessments, follow-up support, and ongoing technical assistance to help businesses improve energy efficiency.

Climate 6: Expand and Promote Electromobility Options for Visitors

- [Three new routes](#), the Peak to Peak, Mt. Blue Sky, and Gold Belt Tour Scenic & Historic Byways, were added to Colorado's Electric Byways program, bringing the total to 19. These routes, promoted on Colorado.com, mark continued progress toward electrifying all 26 of the state's scenic byways.

Climate 7: Encourage Diverse, Climate-Adaptive Tourism Offerings

- The City of Ouray was awarded a [CTO Tourism Marketing grant](#) to build awareness of Ouray as a winter destination through an expanded winter marketing campaign.

Climate 8: Champion Natural Habitat Restoration

- Through a [GOCO Conservation Service Corps grant](#), and in partnership with Southwest Conservation Corps–Four Corners, the City of Durango will undertake a 10-week project to restore forest, riverbank, and open space health at Oxbow Park & Preserve and City Reservoir. Efforts include removing invasive trees, planting native species, protecting cottonwoods, maintaining trails, and restoring 100 acres of watershed habitat by removing unauthorized fire rings and improving campsites.

Climate 9: Facilitate the Creation of Destination-Specific Climate Action Plans

- The [Colorado Tourism Climate Champions Program](#), in partnership with the Travel Foundation, equips destination organizations with online coursework, peer learning, and dedicated coaching to develop and implement climate action plans for tourism; the inaugural cohort includes Aspen Chamber Resort Association, Snowmass Tourism, the Town of Mount Crested Butte, and Visit Durango.

Climate 10: Encourage Climate Impact Mitigation and Reporting

- The CTO is one of six leading global-tourism destinations spearheading the [“Climate RiskScan” project](#), a groundbreaking initiative to develop a new methodology for identifying and mitigating climate-related risks within the sector. Partnering with researchers from CELTH (Dutch universities) and Risklayer (German risk scientists), this project addresses the increasing threat of extreme weather, rising emissions and associated costs.

Section 4: Industry Performance Report (KPIs)

The Colorado Tourism Office has advanced a major research initiative to strengthen the state's approach to destination stewardship. This project builds on the *Destination Stewardship Strategic Plan* by integrating sustainability principles with economic intelligence, creating a framework that balances tourism's growth with environmental protection, cultural preservation, and community well-being.

Originally conceived as an effort to refine key performance indicators, the project evolved through extensive engagement with stakeholders, who emphasized the importance of demonstrating tourism's broader value. In response, CTO expanded the scope to develop a public-facing dashboard available on www.ctostewardship.com that brings together real-time data on economic performance, community impacts, cultural vitality, and environmental sustainability.

To ensure consistency and global credibility, the project organizes indicators under an adapted framework inspired by the UN Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism and the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria. Indicators are grouped into four categories:

- Employment & Economic Benefits
- Cultural and Community Well-Being
- Environmental Sustainability
- Destination Stewardship Leadership

These indicators cover areas such as visitor spending, small business vitality, housing affordability, resident perceptions, public lands usage, emissions data, and local planning participation—providing a holistic view of tourism's contributions and challenges.

Drawing on international best practices and robust data collection methods, this dashboard positions Colorado as a national leader in transparent, data-driven destination stewardship. To be launched in Q4 2025, the dashboard will serve as a trusted resource for policymakers, destination managers, residents, and industry partners alike, helping track progress and guide decisions that ensure Colorado remains a thriving place for both people and nature.

FY25 Destination Stewardship Council Members and CTO Staff

Destination Stewardship Council Members

- **Adam Ducharme**, Tourism & Economic Development Director, Lake County Tourism
- **Conor Hall**, Director, Office of Outdoor Recreation Industry
- **Dr. Christina Cavaliere**, Assistant Professor, Colorado State University
- **Dzidra Junior**, Tourism Consultant
- **Jeff Christenson**, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Bureau of Land Management
- **Jeff Lyman**, Tour Operator/Business Owner, Southwest Adventure Tours
- **Jess Beaulieu**, CPW Commissioner, CPW Commission
- **Jody Kennedy**, Regional Partnership Program Manager, Colorado Parks and Wildlife
- **Kathryn Redhorse**, Executive Director, Colorado Commission on Indian Affairs
- **Ken Murphy**, Owner, H2O Venture's, Adventure Outdoors, LLC
- **Kiera Skinner**, Executive Director, Visit Telluride
- **Kim Langmaid**, Professor, Colorado Mountain College
- **Kyle Patterson**, Management Specialist/Public Affairs Officer, National Park Service
- **Laura Soard**, Senior Director of Destination Development, Steamboat Springs Chamber
- **Lucy Kay**, CEO/President, Breckenridge Tourism Office
- **Margaret Bowes**, Executive Director, CO Association of Ski Towns
- **Mick Daniel**, Executive Director, SLVGo!
- **Nick Catmur**, Gunnison County Stewardship Coordinator, National Forest Foundation
- **Pam Denahy**, Director of Tourism & Economic Development, City of La Junta
- **Sarah Leonard**, CEO, Visit Longmont
- **Stacey Stegman**, Senior VP Communications, Marketing, Customer Experience, DEN
- **Tim Mauck**, Deputy Director, DNR
- **Tom Kleinschnitz**, Director, Visit Moffat County, Moffat County Tourism Association
- **Topher Downham**, Outreach Coordinator, City of Boulder, Open Space & Mountain Parks

CTO Staff

- **Tim Wolfe**, Director
- **Andrea Blankenship**, Deputy Director, International Tourism
- **Shelley Cooper**, Deputy Director, Marketing
- **Jill Corbin**, Deputy Director, Destination Stewardship
- **Julie Dufault**, Senior Manager, International Promotions
- **Terry Fabrizio**, Operations Coordinator
- **David Fishman**, Senior Manager of Fiscal and Operations
- **Kaiti Jacobson**, Senior Manager of Industry Partnerships and Education
- **Jake Jensen**, Senior Marketing Manager
- **Hilary Lewkowitz**, Director of Destination Development and Sustainability
- **Taren Mulch**, Director of Visitor Services
- **Elizabeth O'Rear**, Director of Grants and Funding
- **Faith Overall**, Destination Stewardship Manager
- **Natazshya Rodriguez**, Director of Marketing
- **Hope Smith**, International Program Manager
- **McKenzie Steward**, Sales and Marketing Coordinator
- **Sami Wells**, Grants and Funding Manager
- **Michelle Wulfson**, Marketing Copywriter

Acronyms

ADA	The Americans with Disabilities Act
BGV	Breckenridge Grand Vacations
CAST	Colorado Association of Ski Towns
CAVE	Colorado Association for Viticulture and Enology
CDOT	Colorado Department of Transportation
CGBN	Colorado Green Business Network
COSTRA	Colorado Short-Term Rental Association
COTREX	Colorado Trail Explorer
CPW	Colorado Parks and Wildlife
CSAR	Colorado Search and Rescue Association
CTO	Colorado Tourism Office
DEIA	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility
DEN	Denver International Airport
DMO	Destination Marketing/Management Organization
DNR	Department of Natural Resources
EV	Electric Vehicle
FCTC	Fremont County Tourism Council
FDRD	Friends of Dillon Ranger District
FY	Fiscal Year
GOCO	Great Outdoors Colorado
GSTC	Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria
IDSP	International Dark Sky Place
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
NPS	National Park Service
OEDIT	Office of Economic Development and International Trade
OREC	Office of Outdoor Recreation Industry
ROI	Return on Investment
SAF	Sustainable Aviation Fuel
SBDC	Small Business Development Center
SCC	Southwest Conservation Corps
SWAP	State Wildlife Action Plan
TTB	Telluride Tourism Board