

Moffat County · Rio Blanco County · Colorado

RECREATION & CONSERVATION PLAN

2026 Expanded Draft



CPW / GOCO Regional Partnerships Initiative

ABOUT THIS PLAN

This first iteration draft plan integrates specific community feedback from the Moffat and Rio Blanco County surveys, alongside the Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) and Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) Regional Partnerships Initiative (RPI) compliance frameworks to ensure competitive grant alignment. (1-3)

Vision

Northwest Colorado Outdoors Alliance is a local working group that envisions a vibrant region where future generations inherit a legacy of stunning landscapes, abundant wildlife, thriving farms and ranches, resilient communities, and diverse recreational opportunities, all balanced through mindful land use and collaborative stewardship. (4)

Mission

Advance locally led stewardship of our lands and communities by balancing conservation, sustainable use, recreation, and agriculture through informed planning. This approach champions private property rights and the wise use of public lands to support our economic vitality, cultural heritage, and rural quality of life. (5)

ALLIANCE PILLARS

Conservation	Agriculture	Recreation	Economy
Active stewardship & wildlife habitat protection	Private lands, ranching & working landscapes	Multi-use access, trails & community assets	Local business, workforce & rural resilience



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A unified, locally driven strategy for Moffat & Rio Blanco Counties

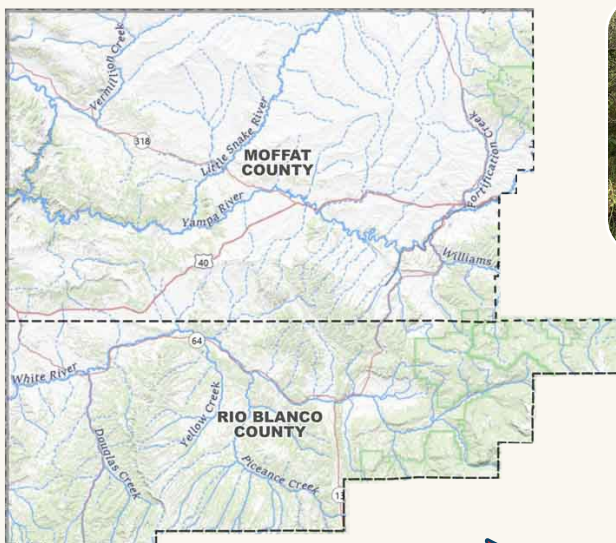
Purpose and Scope

This plan establishes a unified, locally driven strategy for managing the outdoors across Moffat and Rio Blanco Counties. Designed with the Alliance's four pillars in mind — conservation, agriculture, recreation, and economy — it is specifically structured to satisfy the CPW/GOCO "Key Planning Elements," qualifying the region for competitive implementation grants under the \$50 million RPI funding commitment. (2, 6)

Core Outcomes

- **Protect Working Landscapes and Wildlife:** Ensure recreation does not displace traditional agricultural and energy industries or compromise critical habitats, reflecting the community's desire to remain a "Stronghold of Traditional Land Use, Wildlife Protection, Ranching, and Agriculture." (3)
- **Maintain and Improve Access:** Prioritize the maintenance and improvement of existing heavily used areas (supported by 74.2% of Moffat County respondents) over the expansive development of new footprints. (3, 7)
- **Support Community-Driven Recreation:** Focus on high-demand, traditional "sportsman" activities — hunting, fishing, OHV/ATV use, camping, and snowmobiling — which rank as the top recreational priorities across the region. (3)
- **Align Investments with Local Values:** Utilize GOCO and CPW funding to catalyze local projects and partnerships that improve public access while respecting private property rights, mitigating user conflicts, and retaining the rural character of Northwest Colorado. (3, 8)

\$50M	\$2.5M	74%	100%
RPI Statewide Funding Pledge	Max Per Implementation Grant	Support Maintenance- First Approach	CPW Key Planning Elements Satisfied



REGIONAL CONTEXT & PLANNING PRINCIPLES

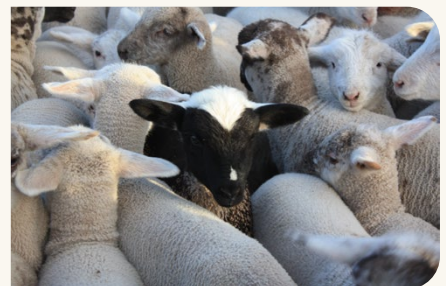
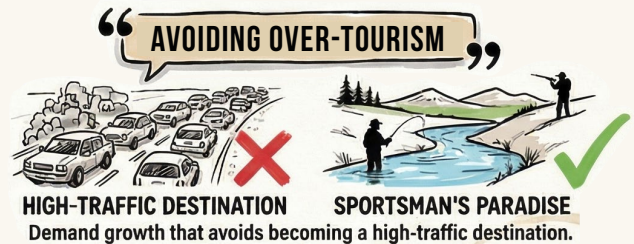
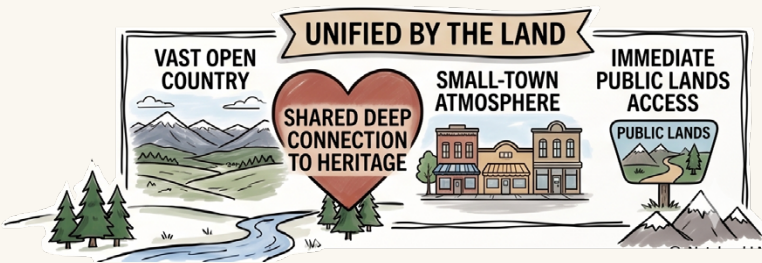
Grounded in open country, small-town character, and generational ties to the land

Northwest Colorado at a Glance

The region is characterized by vast open spaces, a high percentage of public lands, and deep community roots. Survey respondents overwhelmingly cite the "open country," small-town atmosphere, and historical family ties as their primary reasons for residing in the area. (9, 10)

Foundations: Context & Guiding Values

- **Active Stewardship:** Viewing conservation as a hands-on responsibility. Land stewardship is rated as a top priority by over 82% of residents. (7, 10)
- **Local Voice:** Land-use planning must be inclusive, transparent, and guided by local residents — not out-of-region interests. (7, 10)
- **Right-Sized Promotion:** Managing access to ensure it does not lead to over-exposure. Residents across both counties explicitly expressed fears of the "Moab or Steamboat effect" — becoming a high-traffic tourist destination that pushes out locals, increases housing costs, and degrades peaceful remote experiences. (3)



REGIONAL COMMUNITY SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

83%

Prioritize stewardship & multi-use management

74%

"Maintenance First" improve existing assets

69%

Wildlife & ranching under pressure



PLANNING FRAMEWORK & METHODOLOGY

Strategic guidance — not regulatory mandate

Development → Conservation → Preservation Spectrum

This model guides decision-making to ensure a balanced spectrum of land use, fulfilling the RPI requirement to outline a "desired future condition." (11)



Community-Driven Process

This plan is grounded in public meetings, listening sessions, and comprehensive community surveys conducted across Moffat and Rio Blanco Counties. Stakeholders from the following sectors collaborated to establish a framework that acts as strategic guidance rather than a regulatory mandate: (3, 12)

- Agriculture and private landowners
- Hunting, fishing, guides and outfitters
- Motorized and non-motorized recreation
- River and water recreation
- Local business and chambers of commerce
- Forestry, water and rangeland health
- Energy interests
- Youth organizations and higher education entities
- Town governments
- State and federal agencies (as technical advisors)
- Conservation organizations

MOST-POPULAR RECREATION ACTIVITIES

	1 HUNTING & ANGLING	
	2 OHV & OFF-ROAD TRAILS	
	3 CAMPING	
	4 BOATING & RAFTING	



OUTDOOR ASSET INVENTORY & LANDSCAPE TYPOLOGIES

Classifying assets to identify areas of overlap and potential conflict

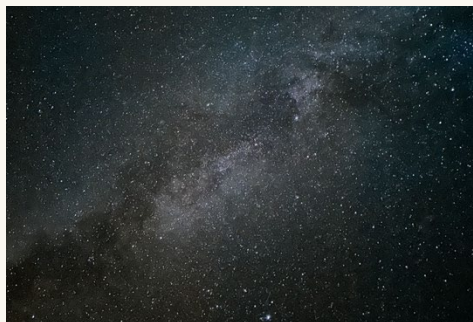
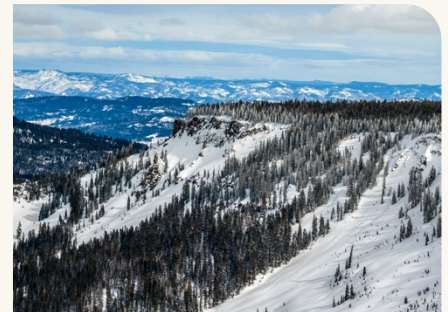
To align with the CPW "Conservation Goals & Needs" and "Sustainable Recreation Goals" requirements, this plan classifies assets to identify areas of overlap and potential conflict. (13, 16)

Asset Categories

- **Asset Inventory:** Integrating recreation infrastructure, including trails and river access (the Yampa and White Rivers and tributaries), community infrastructure, wildlife habitats, and working agricultural landscapes into a comprehensive, decision-grade **Natural Resource Asset Map. (17, 18)**
- **Landscape Categorization:** Managing areas based on resilience — for example, identifying areas with high potential for recreation/agriculture conflict (gates left open, natural resource destruction, cattle harassment) and applying appropriate stewardship and signage interventions. (3)

Natural Resource Asset Map

A decision-grade tool integrating recreation infrastructure, wildlife habitats, river corridors (Yampa and White Rivers and tributaries), and working agricultural landscapes. It will guide investment priorities and conflict identification across both counties.



RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES & ACCESS STRATEGY

Investing in what exists before building what's new

Existing Recreation Conditions

While recreation is highly valued, current infrastructure quality is lacking. Residents rated the adequacy of existing infrastructure — trailheads, restrooms, parking, signage — an average of **2.63 out of 5**. The community directive is clear: fix and improve what we have before expanding the footprint. (7)

2.63/5	87%	71%	71%
Avg. infrastructure quality rating	Hunting ranked as top recreational priority	OHV/Motorized use priority	Camping ranked as priority

Future Recreation Opportunities

• Maintenance First:

The overwhelming community directive is to invest in upgrading current assets — repairing washed-out OHV trails, expanding winter snowmobile parking, upgrading signage and kiosks for better education and way-finding, and upgrading vault toilets — rather than building new trail systems. (7, 19)

• Targeted Enhancements:

Strategic connectivity such as connecting Craig to Loudy-Simpson Park via a trail system, expanding Lake Avery, and developing community recreation amenities that offer a full range of active, social, and leisure opportunities. These are the heartbeat of a town's lifestyle — places where people of all ages can connect, play, and stay active, whether into sports, outdoor fun, or community events. (7, 20-22)

• Access Management Principles:

Proactive management of trails and habitat to ensure wildlife continues to thrive, erosion barriers are implemented and maintained, and private land boundaries and agriculture permits are respected so public trails remain open for all. OHV and backcountry education, signage, and trail information/etiquette will support our access management.

• Education and Enforcement:

Utilize educational campaigns ("Know Before You Go," "Leave No Trace," "Stay the Trail") and highly visible, consistent signage to manage user behavior, reduce trespassing, and mitigate impacts on grazing lands and wildlife. Utilize technology to create enforcement opportunities — reporting programs similar to "Operation Game Thief," "Ranch Watch," or "Community Counts." (2, 23)

"Avoid the Overtourism Effect" — grow demand in a way that preserves the character of a Sportsman's Paradise, not a high-traffic destination.



CONSERVATION, STEWARDSHIP & WORKING LANDS

Protecting the landscapes and livelihoods that define Northwest Colorado

Wildlife & Habitat Considerations

Ensure recreation does not disrupt critical big game winter ranges, lambing/calving areas, or migration corridors. The community strongly envisions the region as a "Sportsman's Paradise" and a "Leader in Wildlife and Habitat Preservation." (3)

Agriculture, Ranching & Private Lands

The most prominent concern regarding increased recreation is the potential conflict with traditional industries. Strategies include installing open-range livestock signage, utilizing agricultural gates, and acquiring voluntary conservation easements to protect high-priority agricultural ranchlands from fragmentation. (7)

Land & Water Health

Prioritize landscape-scale restoration and management focused on fire mitigation, proactive forest management, noxious weed control along trails, and protecting water resources from invasive species like zebra mussels. (26, 27)

Stewardship Strategies

Focus heavily on cross-boundary partnerships between Moffat and Rio Blanco counties for joint wildlife management and inter-county trail systems, fostering shared responsibility without restricting traditional access. (22)



COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC OUTCOMES

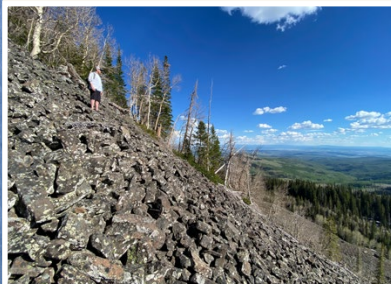
Recreation as a community asset — residents first

Quality of Life & Community Identity

Recreation must serve as a community asset that strengthens the quality of life for residents first. (3) The Alliance will focus on creating youth engagement opportunities and expanding family recreational activities across both counties. (28-29)

Economic Resilience

Integrate recreation to support local businesses, outfitting, and workforce retention — supporting our frontier communities as economic transitions occur, but without sacrificing community character. (30, 31)



PRIORITY INVESTMENT THEMES & QUICK WINS

Shovel-ready projects aligned with Colorado's Outdoors Strategy North Star goals

To optimize for GOCO and CPW RPI Implementation Grants (which fund projects up to \$2.5 million), investments will be prioritized based on shovel-readiness, community support, and alignment with Colorado's Outdoors Strategy "North Star" goals: **Climate-Resilient Conservation, Sustainable Recreation, and Coordinated Funding. (1, 32, 33)**

Early "Quick Win" Projects to Build Community Trust

1. Regional Signage / Communications Overhaul

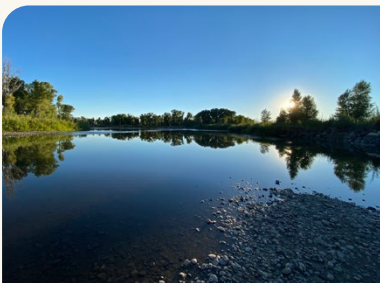
Installing clear, consistent signage regarding public/private boundaries, trail etiquette, and open-range livestock awareness. Partner with the LSFO-BLM and WRFO-BLM to upgrade existing kiosks, design and print new signage with maps and educational information. Create volunteer and partnership opportunities for installing new signage for existing recreational assets — including the LO7 OHV Open Area near Meeker and the Rangely Rock Crawling area. (3, 23)

2. Sandrocks Trailhead Clean-up & Improvement

Removing hazards, installing waste stations, and improving parking at one of the region's most-used access points. (7, 34)

3. Community Park & Trail Connectivity

Linking communities to recreation opportunities closely adjacent to, or within city or town limits, and finalizing engineered, shovel-ready trail projects meaningful to the needs of many partners, uses, and perspectives. Work with local recreation districts to partner and support planning and implementation of new recreational opportunities for our communities and youth. (7, 35)



Infrastructure is Underperforming (Trailheads, Restrooms)



"QUICK-WIN" COMMUNITY DEMANDS

- Updated Trail Mapping
- Improved River Access
- Better Signage to Prevent Trespassing



IMPLEMENTATION & GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

The Alliance as connective tissue across jurisdictions

Roles & Collaborative Funding

The Alliance will act as the "connective tissue" across jurisdictions, utilizing Action Teams to drive specific initiatives. AGNC will serve as the fiscal agent. (36)

The Alliance will aggressively pursue CPW/GOCO RPI grants — and possibly other match funding beyond the \$50M GOCO RPI pledge — positioning the bi-county NWCO Alliance region as unified and ready for investment. (37)

Role	Entity	Function
Fiscal Agent	AGNC	Financial management & grant administration
Strategic Lead	Alliance	Coordination, facilitation & community voice
Technical Advisors	CPW / BLM / USFS	Regulatory guidance & grant compliance
Implementation	Action Teams	Sector-specific project execution
Community Input	Steering Committee	Local oversight & adaptive management



NWCO Outdoors Alliance Representation

The NWCO Outdoors Alliance Steering Committee brings together representatives from the public, private, nonprofit, education, recreation, agriculture, conservation, business, and government sectors. Collectively, the committee reflects a broad cross-section of interests across Moffat and Rio Blanco Counties.

Agriculture, Ranching and Private Landowners

Moffat County Cattlemen's Association
Moffat County Cattlewomen
Colorado Cattlemen's Association
Colorado Cattlewomen
Routt-Moffat Woolgrowers
Colorado First Conservation District
Douglas Creek Conservation District
Moffat County Jr. Livestock Sale Foundation
Ranching and Private landownership
Ranching for Wildlife
Agricultural production and working lands
Equestrian and livestock interests

Hunting, Fishing, Guides and Outfitters

Colorado Outfitters Association
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Mule Deer Foundation
White River Habitat Partnership Program
Hunting guides and outfitters
Sportsmen and wildlife interests
Ranch-based hunting operations
Fishing and outdoor access interests

Motorized Recreation

Northwest Colorado 4 Wheelers
Wagon Wheel OHV Club
White River Snowmobile Club
Recreational off-roading
OHV and side-by-side use
Snowmobiling

Non-Motorized and Equestrian

Meeker Area Mountain Biking Association
Mountain Biking
Horseback Riding
Hiking
Skijoring

River, Water and Watershed Interests

White River Integrated Water Initiative
Yellow Jacket Water Conservancy District
Yampa-White-Green Basin Roundtable
Colorado River District
River recreation
Watershed planning
Water conservation and management
Municipal and agricultural water interests

Forestry, Conservation and Rangeland Health

Forestry committees
Conservation districts
Wildlife habitat conservation
Rangeland health
Watershed restoration
Sage-grouse habitat
Forest management
Post-fire restoration
Erosion control
Weed management
Fencing and livestock infrastructure

Energy and Natural Resources

Oil and gas
Natural-resource industries
Regional water and resource planning
Energy-sector interests
Land-management coordination

Youth, Education and Community Organizations

4-H
Communities That Care
C4K
Youth livestock programs
Youth outdoor recreation
Colorado Northwestern Community College
Science and natural-resource education
Workforce and trade education

Business, Tourism and Economic Development

Local business owners
Outdoor recreation businesses
Outfitters and guides
Tourism boards
Rangely Development Authority
Contracting and construction businesses
Recreation-based economic development
Automotive and powersports businesses
Rural economic diversification

Local Government, Public Safety and Civic Representation

City of Craig, Town of Meeker, Town of Rangely

Working in partnership with:

Moffat County, Rio Blanco County, Associated Governments of NW Colorado (AGNC)
Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Bureau of Land Management— White River & Little
Snake Field Offices, U.S. Forest Service— White River & Routt Bears Ears District

State and federal agency representatives participate as non-voting technical advisors, providing land-management expertise, regulatory guidance, mapping support, project coordination, and technical resources while preserving locally led decision-making.

Together, this structure represents agriculture, private property, wildlife, water, recreation, conservation, energy, education, youth, business, tourism, economic development, local government, and public safety across Northwest Colorado.



MONITORING, ADAPTATION & PLAN EVOLUTION

A living document guided by continuous local feedback

Success will be measured by the completion of prioritized infrastructure upgrades, the reduction of user/agricultural conflicts, and the successful acquisition of state grant funding. The plan will remain adaptable, guided by continuous local feedback and data from the Outdoor Asset Map. (14, 37)

Measures of Success

- Completion of prioritized infrastructure upgrades
- Reduction of user/agricultural conflicts
- Successful acquisition of CPW/GOCO state grant funding
- Continuous local feedback integrated into plan updates
- Data-informed decision-making via the Outdoor Asset Map

APPENDICES & RPI CORRELATION MATRIX

Full documentation supporting 100% CPW Key Planning Elements compliance

This section contains full survey data, public meeting minutes, and the matrix proving 100% compliance with CPW Key Planning Elements. (38, 39)

Appendix A: Full Community Survey Data

Complete survey results from Moffat and Rio Blanco County community surveys, including demographic breakdowns, priority rankings, and open-ended responses.

Appendix B: Public Meeting Minutes

Documented minutes from all public meetings and listening sessions conducted throughout the planning process.

Appendix C: RPI Correlation Matrix

A matrix demonstrating 100% compliance with all CPW/GOCO Regional Partnerships Initiative Key Planning Elements, cross-referenced with plan sections.

Appendix D: References

Full bibliography of cited sources, datasets, frameworks, and agency documents referenced throughout this plan. See References Tab.

Northwest Colorado Outdoors Alliance · Moffat & Rio Blanco Counties · Powered by AGNC · CPW / GOCO RPI Aligned



REFERENCES & SOURCE DOCUMENTS

Supporting documentation for the NWCO Alliance Recreation & Conservation Plan

The following references correspond to numbered citations throughout this plan. All source documents are maintained in the NWCO Alliance Master Resource Folder.

1.

RPI Grant Program Structure: The RPI grant program is structured into distinct categories to meet coalitions at their current stage of development:

- **Capacity Grants (\$50,000–\$150,000):** Support newly forming collaboratives in regions that do not yet have a Regional Partnership. Funds are used to hire coordinators, facilitate stakeholder meetings, and build the initial coalition.
- **Capacity, Plan Development, and Early Win Grants:** Support established coalitions in creating comprehensive Regional Conservation and Recreation Plans. Plans must demonstrate support from diverse perspectives, incorporate climate-resilient data, and drive meaningful action.
- **Capacity and Regional Impact Grants:** The most competitive category — grants potentially up to \$2.5 million — fund high-impact, on-the-ground projects like the 18,000-acre ranchland conservation easement in the Colorado River watershed.

GOCO_StrategicPlan_English.pdf (pp. 41–42) — <https://goco.org/about/our-strategic-plan>

2.

Key Planning Elements — Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnerships: Each Regional Partnership, when applying for funding through the Regional Partnerships Initiative, agrees to produce a Regional Plan with several key planning elements: vision, goals (including for conservation and recreation), measurable objectives, priority actions and projects, and implementation and monitoring. For Regional Partnerships that have not yet written their own Regional Plans, Colorado's Outdoors Strategy, the Resource Hub, and its data, mapping tools, and resources provide foundational guidance.

Key Regional Planning Elements (1).pdf



3.

Community Survey Synthesis — Moffat & Rio Blanco Counties: This summary synthesizes resident perspectives on land use, recreation, and the future of Northwest Colorado. Key findings include:

- **Regional Identity and Core Values:** Survey respondents across both counties are predominantly long-term or lifetime residents with deep roots in the region, choosing to live here for its open country, small-town atmosphere, and immediate access to public lands.
- **Stewardship and Multi-Use:** Exceptionally high value placed on land stewardship and multi-use management, balancing agriculture, energy production, and recreation.
- **Traditional Ties:** For many, the land represents a historical family legacy, particularly in the ranching and agricultural sectors.
- **Top Activities:** Hunting and fishing are the highest-rated activities in both counties, followed closely by OHV/ATV use, camping, and snowmobiling.
- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Existing infrastructure received mediocre ratings, averaging 2.63 out of 5. Residents identified significant gaps in signage, trailhead maintenance, and restroom facilities.
- **Maintenance First:** A strong majority supports maintaining existing areas over developing new ones.
- **Desired Recognition:** Most popular future visions: "Sportsman's Paradise" and "Stronghold of Traditional Land Use, Ranching, and Agriculture."
- **Concerns Over Crowding:** Significant fear of the "Moab or Steamboat effect" — becoming a high-traffic destination that pushes out locals and degrades the uncrowded experience.
- **Wildlife and Industry Protection:** Top concerns: impact on wildlife and conflicts with traditional industries like ranching and energy.

Survey Results Combined RBC_MOCO.pdf

4, 5.

Alliance Vision, Mission & Goals (March 2026 Charter): Vision — Northwest Colorado Outdoors Alliance is a local working group that envisions a vibrant region where future generations inherit a legacy of stunning landscapes, abundant wildlife, thriving farms and ranches, resilient communities, and diverse recreational opportunities, all balanced through mindful land use and collaborative stewardship. Mission — To advance locally led stewardship of our lands and communities, balancing conservation and sustainable use to support our economy, heritage, and rural quality of life. We champion protecting private property rights and the wise use of public lands through informed recreation, agriculture, economic vitality, and conservation. Goals — The Alliance will support responsible, sustainable recreation with a focus on minimizing impacts and fostering stewardship that sustains and improves the land for future generations.

March 2026 Current NWCO Alliance Charter.pdf

6.

\$50 Million RPI Commitment and Grant Evolution: The Regional Partnerships Initiative (RPI) provides the engine for execution — managed by CPW and funded in collaboration with GOCO — supporting regionally driven coalitions that work to ensure Colorado's land, water, and wildlife thrive. A transformative development was the 2025 announcement of a \$50 million funding commitment over five years, representing a significant scaling of the program (which had previously awarded approximately \$16 million since 2021). This surge in capital is specifically intended to transition partnerships from capacity building and planning phases to the implementation phase.

GOCO_StrategicPlan_English.pdf — <https://goco.org/about/our-strategic-plan>



7.

Moffat County Survey — Priority Data & Future Vision: Community priority ratings and future growth strategies from the Moffat County Recreation Survey:

- **Land Priorities (Top Priority ratings):** Land Stewardship: 82.3% · Recreation: 80.6% · Public Land Access and Trails: 79% · Multi-use Management: 79% · Wildlife Habitat Protection: 69.4%
- **Top 5 Recreation Activities:** 1. Hunting: 87.1% 2. Camping: 71% 3. OHV/ATV/MOTO: 71% 4. Fishing: 69.4% 5. Snowmobiling: 66.1%
- **Infrastructure:** Overall quality and adequacy of existing recreation infrastructure rated 2.63/5. Key gaps: outdated/missing signage, poor trail maintenance, lack of winter snowmobile parking.
- **Future Vision (10–20 years):** "Sportsman's Paradise" (56.5%) and "Model for Sustainable Outdoor Recreation" (51.6%). Growth management priorities: maintain existing heavily used areas (74.2%), invest in educational messaging and signage (62.9%), concentrate new development in/around towns (56.5%), develop new opportunities where least ecological impact (46.8%).
- **Immediate Quick-Win Projects:** Sandrocks trailhead clean-up and infrastructure improvements · Improved trail connectivity between Craig and Loudy-Simpson Park · Updated signage and mapping for better navigation and education.

Moffat County Recreation Survey.pdf · Executive Summary Moffat County.pdf

8.

GOCO/CPW Funding as Catalyst — Community Survey Input: Survey respondents articulated that GOCO and CPW funding should serve as catalysts for local projects, helping communities leverage limited resources to achieve conservation, recreation, and habitat goals that might otherwise be out of reach. Most impactful uses: enhance or protect working lands through easements and stewardship support; improve public access and recreation infrastructure in a way that respects private property; restore landscapes and watersheds.

NWCO-RPI Survey — Moffat County.csv

9.

Moffat County Survey — Executive Summary Demographics: The survey collected feedback from 62 individuals, the vast majority (90.3%) residing in Craig. Approximately 29% are lifetime residents and another 21% have lived in the county for 26 years or more. Residents cited the "open country," small-town atmosphere, and proximity to outdoor adventure as primary reasons for living in the area.

Executive Summary Moffat County.pdf

10.

Moffat County Survey — Full Context: The community places exceptionally high value on its relationship with the land: land stewardship (82.3%), recreation (80.6%), public land access (79%), and multi-use management (79%) ranked as top priorities. Economic potential, while significant, ranked slightly lower (51.6%) compared to environmental and recreational values. Current outdoor activities are dominated by traditional "sportsman" pursuits.

NWCO-RPI Survey — Moffat County.csv

11.

RPI Correlation — Vision & Values: RPI Requirement: Vision and Values (future condition, alignment with Colorado's Outdoors Strategy & Principles). Plan Reference: Section 2 — Regional Context & Planning Principles, Section 2.2 — Guiding Values & Planning Ethos.

V3 Draft NWCO MC + RBC Outdoor Rec_Conservation Plan.docx



12.

RPI Correlation — Key Plans & Partners: RPI Requirement: Key Plans and Partners (how plans connect, niche filled by Regional Partnership). Plan References: Section 3 — Planning Framework & Methodology · Section 9 — Implementation & Governance Framework. Alignment Notes: Clear differentiation between strategic guidance vs. regulatory authority. Governance, roles, and partnerships are defined without over-committing.

Draft NWCO MC + RBC Outdoor Rec_Conservation Plan.docx

13.

RPI Correlation — Conservation Goals & Needs: RPI Requirement: Conservation goals, existing conditions, trends, threats, opportunities. Plan References: Section 6 — Conservation, Stewardship & Working Lands · Section 4 — Outdoor Asset Inventory & Landscape Typologies. Alignment Notes: Explicit attention to working lands + wildlife is a major strength. Landscape typologies directly answer "existing condition" and "sensitivity" analysis requirements.

V3 Draft NWCO MC + RBC Outdoor Rec_Conservation Plan.docx

14.

Outdoor Asset Map Framework — Chief Purpose: The Outdoor Asset Map will serve as a conversation aid during public and Steering Committee meetings, a long-term resource to support thoughtful implementation, and a guardrail against unintended impacts. It will evolve slowly and deliberately, guided by trust rather than urgency. Grant Requirement Language: This foundational GIS-based project integrates state and local datasets, visualizes recreation and conservation assets, and identifies areas of overlap or conflict. It guides where to focus habitat protection, access improvements, and wildfire mitigation — creating cost savings for future projects and strengthening long-term decision-making capacity.

Draft NWCO Outdoor Asset Map Framework.docx

15.

RPI Key Planning Elements — Conservation & Recreation Goals: Description of required plan elements including desired conservation outcomes, goals, existing conditions with private and public lands, trends, threats, opportunities, equity and diversity considerations, and sustainable recreation goals — including current conditions of outdoor recreation opportunities and infrastructure, and trends and threats to achieving desired future conditions.

Key Regional Planning Elements (1).pdf

16.

Sustainable Recreation Goals — RPI Planning Requirements: Key planning element addressing outdoor recreation-specific goals, current/existing conditions of outdoor recreation opportunities and infrastructure, and trends, threats, and opportunities for achieving desired future conditions.

Key Regional Planning Elements (1).pdf

17.

Natural Resource Asset Map — Rio Blanco and Moffat County: Rio Blanco and Moffat County can strengthen both stewardship and economic opportunity by creating a Natural Resource Asset Map in ArcGIS — a single, authoritative platform bringing together water, wildlife habitat, energy/minerals, soils, rangelands, recreation access, cultural resources, hazards, and environmental quality. This system would serve as both an internal decision-grade dashboard for county officials and a public-facing recreation and safety portal. Much of the required data already exists through state and federal agencies and would involve adding shape files to the County GIS portal with regular sync updates.

NR Asset Map 1 pager.docx



18.

Asset Inventory & Landscape Categorization Detail: Asset Inventory identifies trails (motorized and non-motorized), river access, and community infrastructure alongside wildlife habitats and working landscapes. Landscape Categorization manages areas based on resilience: high-use areas, moderate-use managed growth areas, and sensitive conservation-priority areas. Strategic Pillars: Conservation, Agriculture, Recreation & Economy. Sustainable Recreation focus: improving trail connectivity and water access while employing access management principles to reduce overcrowding and conflicts.

V3 Draft NWCO MC + RBC Outdoor Rec Conservation Plan.docx

19–21.

Rio Blanco County Survey — Selected Community Input: Survey respondents expressed support for a range of future visions including Sportsman's Paradise, Human-Powered Wilderness Destination, and Multiple Use recreation. Key priorities included Lake Avery expansion, inter-county trail systems, improved river access, and perpetual conservation easements on key private lands with willing landowners. Respondents cited the importance of local knowledge driving decision-making and expressed concern that state/federal agencies do not always align with local values.

NWCO-RPI Survey — Rio Blanco County.csv

22.

Cross-Boundary Collaborative Strategies & Quick Wins: Clear desire for improved communication and cross-jurisdictional partnership. Cross-Boundary Priorities: Respondents strongly support inter-county trail systems and joint wildlife/habitat management between Moffat and Rio Blanco Counties. Local Control: Many expressed need for local knowledge to drive decision-making. Immediate Quick Wins: Improving trail signage, coordinating clean-up days at popular trailheads (Sandrocks), and enhancing connectivity between towns and local parks. Regional consensus favors a balanced, moderate approach prioritizing quality of life, wildlife habitat protection, and long-term viability of traditional agricultural and energy industries.

Survey Results Combined RBC_MOCO.docx

23.

Education, Signage & Visitor Management — Survey Input: Respondents called for unified visitor education campaigns — a regional "Know Before You Go" initiative sharing clear guidelines on land use, fire safety, wildlife interactions, and respect for private property, promoted through local businesses, lodging, trailheads, and social media. Consistent, easy-to-read signs across public lands highlighting safe recreation practices. Trailhead and signage improvements to address user conflicts between ranching operations, motorized users, and non-motorized recreationists.

NWCO-RPI Survey — Rio Blanco County.csv

24–25.

Conservation Easements & Agricultural Protection: Conservation projects directed toward protecting sensitive habitats, conserving agricultural viability, and controlling invasive species. Strategies include: Conservation Easements (CEs) and land purchase/exchange to protect high-priority agricultural ranchlands and critical wildlife habitats from fragmentation and development pressures. Habitat improvement via vegetation manipulation (pinyon-juniper removal, understory restoration, prescribed fire) for mule deer, elk, and sensitive species (Greater Sage-Grouse, sharp-tailed grouse). Formal noxious weed management cooperation with federal, state, and county agencies.

NWCO-RPI Survey — Rio Blanco County.csv · RBC_MOCO_Regional Priorities.pdf



26.

Land & Water Health — Survey Input: Respondents cited noxious weed control along OHV trails and public lands, zebra mussel prevention in water bodies, and conservation easements as critical land and water health priorities. Agricultural lands surrounding communities like Meeker were cited as unique assets for protecting authenticity, preventing wildfires, providing tourism vistas, and maintaining critical wildlife habitat.

NWCO-RPI Survey — Rio Blanco County.csv

27.

Regional Trail Linkages & Access Priorities: Projects aimed at providing alternative transportation corridors extending from the Flattops Wilderness to Dinosaur National Monument, including trail connections to the Kokopelli Trail and systems near Rifle and Kremmling. Focus areas include: loop and spur trails, mountain biking on existing oil and gas infrastructure corridors, equestrian use, accessibility for persons of all abilities, river access for boating and fishing, and acquisition of easements/ROWs across private or state lands to ensure public trail access.

Overall - Priorities for Conservation and Recreation Development.pdf

28–30.

Additional Survey Input — Cross-Jurisdictional Priorities: Survey respondents from both counties emphasized the importance of transparent communication, collaborative mapping, youth engagement, expanding family recreational activities, reinforcing local cultural identity, improving local trails and parks, and job growth and economic opportunity. GOCO/CPW cited as important partners — not dictators. NWCO Alliance recognized for major strides in engaging local stakeholders.

NWCO-RPI Survey — Moffat County.csv · NWCO-RPI Survey — Rio Blanco County.csv

31.

Community & Economic Outcomes — Plan Detail: Recreation aligned with landscape resilience. Stewardship strategies: trail maintenance and restoration, education and user responsibility over enforcement, smart infrastructure (signage, staging, parking), and maintenance partnerships. Community outcomes: recreation as a community asset (not an extractive industry), youth engagement and local health, maintaining local identity. Economic resilience: local business support, workforce retention and attraction.

V3 Draft NWCO MC + RBC Outdoor Rec Conservation Plan.docx

32.

Colorado Outdoors Strategy — Triple-Pillar Framework & North Star Goals: Three interrelated "North Star" goals guide state investment, regional planning, and local project implementation:

- **Climate-Resilient Conservation and Restoration:** Conserve and restore lands and waters to support biodiversity, enhance habitat connectivity, maintain resilient ecosystems and working agricultural lands. Targets: increased acreage of protected habitat, enhanced species recovery, improved wildlife connectivity, sustained agricultural production.
- **Exceptional and Sustainable Outdoor Recreation:** Provide high-quality, inclusive outdoor experiences; manage landscapes to minimize human impact; foster a statewide stewardship ethic. Targets: enhanced visitor experiences, increased access for underrepresented communities, reduced environmental degradation from recreation.
- **Coordinated Planning and Funding:** Advance interdisciplinary planning supported by robust funding; utilize data and mapping tools to inform decisions; drive meaningful action through collaboration. Targets: alignment of regional and state goals, sustainable funding streams, widespread use of the COS Resource Hub and CODEX tools.

Colorado Outdoor Strategy — Colorado Parks & Wildlife



33.

Priority Investment Themes — Plan Implementation Lens: Rather than a rigid project list, the plan uses an investment lens to prioritize actions based on shovel-readiness, partnership strength, and cost-effectiveness. Priority themes: access where infrastructure already exists, community-scale recreation amenities, stewardship and maintenance capacity, planning/design/shovel-ready readiness, and early win projects ranked by cost, shovel-readiness, partnership strength, and timing across recreation, conservation, and agriculture.

V3 Draft NWCO MC + RBC Outdoor Rec Conservation Plan.docx

34.

Sandrocks Trailhead — Community Quick-Win Rationale: A highly visible and immediately achievable quick win is a coordinated cleanup and minor improvement effort at the Sandrocks trailhead. This includes removing broken glass, installing durable waste stations, and arranging regularly scheduled pickups in partnership with city, county, or local volunteer groups. Why it works: addresses a well-known local concern with a fast, tangible solution; makes the area safer and more welcoming for hikers, families, and visitors; and provides an easy opportunity for collaboration among recreation groups, land managers, and conservation organizations.

NWCO-RPI Survey — Moffat County.csv

35.

Rio Blanco County Survey — Community Recreation Priorities: Respondents identified developed OHV loops, improved trail connectivity, better river access and boat launches, mountain biking/eBiking trails, skatepark/BMX pump-track, and more recreation in and around town as top recreation investment priorities. Inter-county trail systems and joint tourism efforts cited as top cross-boundary collaboration priorities.

NWCO-RPI Survey — Rio Blanco County.csv

36.

Alliance Governance Structure (March 2026 Charter): The Northwest Colorado Outdoors Alliance is a Colorado Regional Partnership representing Moffat and Rio Blanco counties, with three levels of structure: Advisory Committee (primary administrators — includes county facilitators, AGNC, and County Commissioners; AGNC acts as fiscal and managing agency), Steering Committee (local stakeholders with primary decision-making and voting power, appointed by County Commissioners after submitting letter of interest; expected to participate actively and travel for alternating meetings in Craig, Meeker, and Rangely), and Stakeholders (local community members who attend meetings, have a voice, and occasional voting via surveys/polls). Action Teams are assembled as needed.

March 2026 Current NWCO Alliance Charter.pdf

37.

Collaborative Funding & Phased Governance: Priority themes focus on existing infrastructure, community-scale amenities, and stewardship capacity. Collaborative funding pursues shared resources and grants (CPW, GOCO, federal) with local match and in-kind contributions and regional coordination to stay competitive. Phased governance outlines roles for counties, agencies, and nonprofits across near-term (1–2 years), mid-term (3–5 years), and long-term horizons.

V3 Draft NWCO MC + RBC Outdoor Rec Conservation Plan.docx

38–39.

Appendices & RPI Correlation Matrix: The appendices section includes public meeting summaries, survey results, asset maps (beta and future iterations), definitions and terminology, and the full RPI Correlation Matrix. The NWCO Draft Plan Outline is aligned with RPI Key Planning Elements across all sections. Bottom line: this framework keeps the plan values-forward, action-oriented, and defensible — serving as a living document and strategic guide rather than a regulatory policy, aligned with state-level planning requirements while remaining firmly rooted in local values and voluntary partnerships.

V3 Draft NWCO MC + RBC Outdoor Rec Conservation Plan.docx



NWCO Alliance Master Resource Folder

All source documents, survey data, meeting minutes, charter, draft plans, and supporting materials are maintained in the shared Google Drive folder:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/18SuGAvZ3wGLW_N_iRlgUUrgRX1Yyv4um

Selected Source Documents

The following documents were consulted in the preparation of this plan:

- 2025 Strategic Plan — Great Outdoors Colorado
- Colorado's Outdoors Strategy (CPW)
- Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnerships Initiative & Grant Program
- Key Regional Planning Elements (1).pdf
- March 2026 Current NWCO Alliance Charter.pdf
- GOCO_StrategicPlan_English.pdf
- CPW Draft Strategic Plan (CPW_Item.9_Draft_Strategic_Plan.pdf)
- Draft NWCO Outdoor Asset Map Framework.docx
- NWCO-RPI Survey — Moffat County.csv / .pdf
- NWCO-RPI Survey — Rio Blanco County.csv / .pdf
- Regional Partnership Strategy with appendices.pdf
- Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnerships Initiative — ArcGIS StoryMaps
- Colorado's Outdoors Strategy — COS Resource Hub
- The Northwest Colorado Outdoors Alliance Strategic Framework (Draft Plan).pdf
- Conservation Partners — Colorado Parks and Wildlife.pdf

