



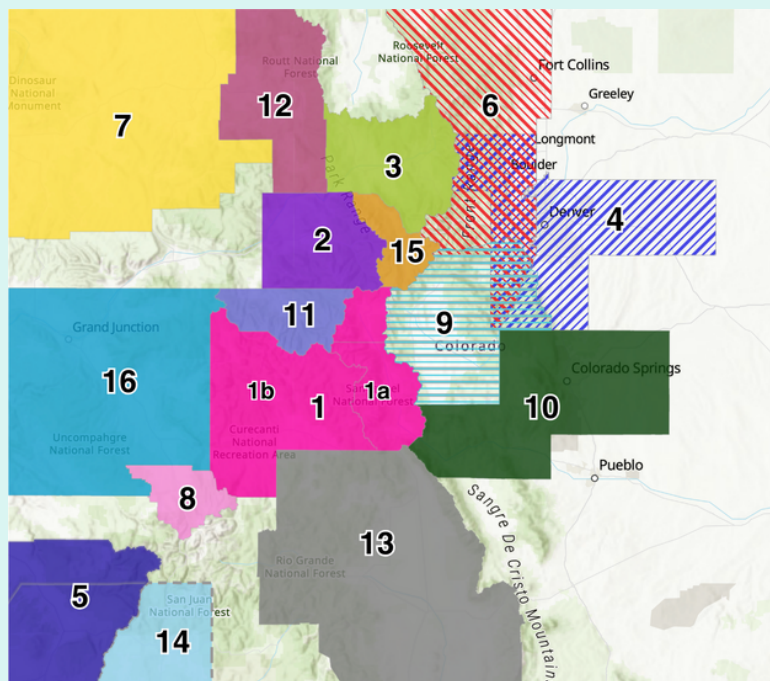
# GROWING OUTDOOR REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

*Anderson Cole, Tori Manogue, Gifford Hall, Dale Henderson*



## BACKGROUND

The state of Colorado has been seeing significant increases in population and visitation over the past few decades, which has been causing negative impacts to environments and resources. Simultaneously, the outdoor recreation industry has been booming, acting as a primary economic driver for the state and rural communities. These two separate goals of seeking to grow the outdoor recreation industry while also conserving resources in the face of human visitation are often at odds with one another and are difficult to coordinate together. Realizing the importance of addressing the balance between conservation and industry, Governor Jared Polis issued an executive order in 2020 to develop the Regional Partnerships Initiative (RPI) and create the Inter-Agency Conservation and Recreation Council to help manage the initiative. The RPI was created within the purview of Colorado Parks and Wildlife and serves primarily as a grant-funding program to help catalyze and support outdoor regional coalitions across Colorado to ensure that Colorado's lands, waters, and wildlife thrive while also providing access to quality outdoor experiences.



- Regional Partnerships**
1. Central Colorado Recreation Partnership - a. Envision Chaffee, b. Gunnison STOR
  2. Eagle County Community Wildlife Roundtable
  3. Grand PLACES 2050
  4. Metro Denver Nature Alliance (Metro DNA)
  5. Montelores Coalition
  6. NoCo PLACES 2050
  7. Northwest Colorado Outdoor Coalition (NCOC)
  8. Ouray Regional Recreation and Conservation Alliance (ORRCA)
  9. Outside 285
  10. Outdoor Pikes Peak Initiative (OPPI)
  11. Roaring Fork Outdoor Coalition
  12. Routt Recreation and Conservation Roundtable
  13. San Luis Valley Great Outdoors (SLV-GO!)
  14. Southwest Colorado Conservation & Outdoor Recreation Roundtable
  15. Summit County Outdoor Coalition (SCOC)
  16. West Slope Outdoors Alliance

Figure 1. Map of the current Regional Partnerships in the RPI (credit: Colorado Parks & Wildlife)

## PURPOSE

Our team conducted a program evaluation of the Regional Partnerships Initiative in partnership with Colorado Parks & Wildlife (CPW) and the Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office (OREC). The primary goals of this project were to incorporate feedback from Regional Partnerships (RPs) to improve and expand support from the RPI, to enhance alignment between state agencies by increasing collaboration and reducing redundancy, and finally to increase engagement from federal land management agencies.

# METHODS



- **Secondary Research:** Conducted background research on the RPI, individual RPs, and relevant state agencies
- **Online Survey:** In collaboration with CPW, OREC, Keystone Policy Center, and SE Group, the team developed an online survey, which was sent to each RP for collection of quantitative data
- **Interviews:**
  - 18 virtual and in-person interviews with the leads of each RP
  - 20 virtual interviews with members of the Inter-Agency Council and other relevant state/federal agencies
- **Analysis:** Conducted a qualitative analysis and synthesized the content within the interview and survey data to form our findings and recommendations
- **Presentations:** Presented our findings to RP leads, Colorado’s Outdoors Strategy Steering Committee, the Inter-Agency Council, and attendees of the Colorado Outdoor Industry Leadership Summit (COILS)
- **Deliverables:** Compiled findings and recommendations for the RPI, Inter-Agency Council, and federal agencies into final deliverables



## DELIVERABLES AND OUTCOMES

### STORYMAP



A StoryMap providing background information, best practices among RPs, and recommendations benefitting regional partnerships. The recommendations for the RPI to implement are categorized as: 1. Building out a resource hub 2. Broaden funding 3. Enhancing alignment 4. Improving collaboration and 5. Increasing capacity

### STATE AGENCY WRITE UP



A resource focused on state agency involvement and recommendations include: 1. Revisiting the goals in the Regional Partnership Executive Order 2. Inter-Agency Council recommendations (developing a resource menu for RPs & convening guidelines) 3. Recommendations for individual agencies, and finally a 4-step vision for collaborating with Federal agencies

### HALF PAGE IN SCORP



A brief summary in Colorado's 2024 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) to highlight the successes of the RPI and to increase visibility of the RPI



Image 2. Great Sand Dunes National Park in the San Luis Valley on the Capstone team's partner engagement trip.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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