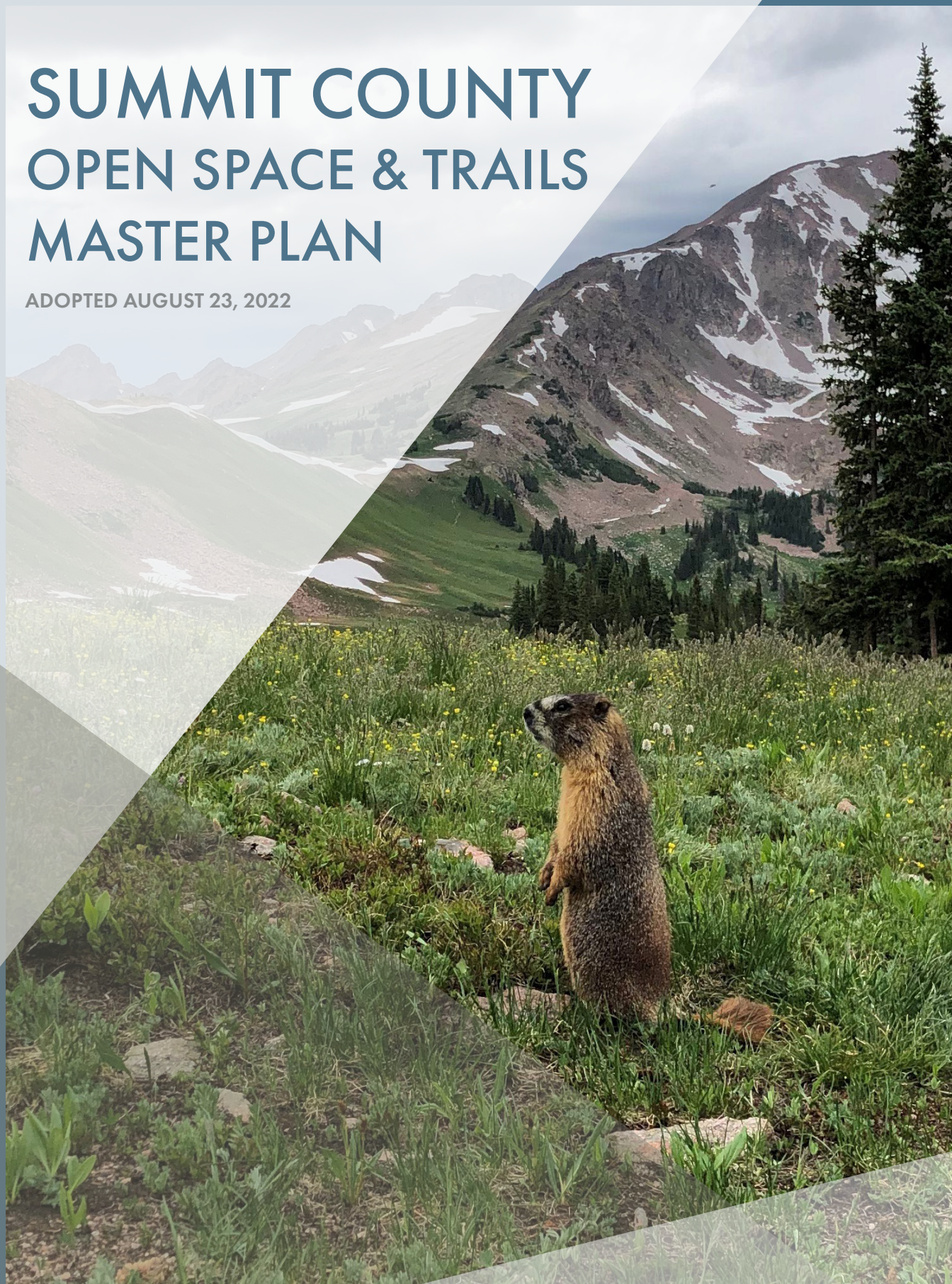


# SUMMIT COUNTY OPEN SPACE & TRAILS MASTER PLAN

ADOPTED AUGUST 23, 2022





# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



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### SPECIAL THANKS TO...

Summit County's Countywide Planning Commission and the Lower Blue, Upper Blue, Snake River, and Tenmile Basin Planning Commissions for their input and review, as well as residents of Summit County for three decades of support for open space and trails.

Photo contest participants provided many of the photos included in this plan. The winning photo presented on the cover photo was taken by Will Yahr of Frisco, CO.



L O G A N S I M P S O N

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# PARTNERS

Summit County's culture of collaboration makes open space protection and its renowned, accessible trail networks possible. Most but not all are listed below.

*Thank you, partners,  
for nearly 30  
years of successful  
collaboration!*

- Town of Blue River
- Town of Breckenridge
- Breckenridge Open Space & Trails
- Town of Dillon
- Town of Frisco
- Town of Montezuma
- Town of Silverthorne
- Lake County
- Summit Cove
- Heeney Community
- Dillon Valley
- Dillon Reservoir Recreation Committee
- U.S. Forest Service - White River National Forest
- Adventure Ice Fishing
- Adventure Paddle Tours Inc
- Alpine Fishing Adventures
- Alpine Sports
- Arapahoe Basin
- Audubon Society
- Big Eds Fishing Adventures
- Blue River Watershed Group
- Breck Creative Arts
- Breckenridge Outdoor Education Center
- Breckenridge Resort
- Breckenridge Tourism Office
- Building Hope
- Climax Molybdenum Mine
- Colorado Avalanche Information Center
- Colorado Department of Natural Resources
- Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment
- Colorado Department of Transportation
- Colorado Division of Reclamation Mining, and Safety
- Colorado Fourteeners Initiative
- Colorado Mountain College
- Colorado Natural Heritage Program
- Colorado Open Lands
- Colorado Parks & Wildlife
- Colorado Springs Utilities
- Colorado State Patrol
- Colorado Trout Unlimited
- Colorado Water Conservation Board
- Copper Mountain
- Cutthroat Anglers
- Cycle Effect
- Denver Water
- Dillon Yacht Club
- Eagle Summit Wilderness Alliance
- Federal Highway Administration
- Friends of Dillon Ranger District
- Friends of the Lower Blue River
- Frisco Rowing Center
- Great Outdoors Colorado
- High Country Conservation Center
- High Country Veterans Adventures
- Keystone Resort
- Keystone Science School
- Mountain Dreamers
- Mountain Mentors
- Mountain Wave
- National Fish & Wildlife Foundation
- National Forest Foundation
- PANTS - The Physical Activity & Nutrition Team of Summit
- Rebel Sports
- Recreation Equipment Inc. (REI)
- Rocky Mountain Youth Corps
- Sail the Summit LLC
- Sierra Club Headwaters Group
- Silver Flask Fishing
- Smart Bellies
- Snake River Watershed Task Force
- SOS Outreach
- Summit Biking
- Summit Climbing Gym
- Summit Community Care Clinic
- Summit County Chamber of Commerce
- Summit County Communities That Care
- Summit County Community Inclusion Group
- Summit County Library
- Summit County Mountain Bike Alliance
- Summit County Off-Road Riders
- Summit Family & Intercultural Resource Center
- Summit Foundation
- Summit Huts Association
- Summit Nordic Ski Club
- Summit Pet Rescue
- Summit Seniors
- Summit Shuttle
- Summit TV
- Sustainable Hiker
- The Affable Angler/Mountain Angler
- U.S. EPA - Brownfields
- Victoria Sailing School
- Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado



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*View interactive maps and additional resources referenced throughout this plan on the Story Map by [clicking here](#), scanning the QR Code, or visiting the link below.*

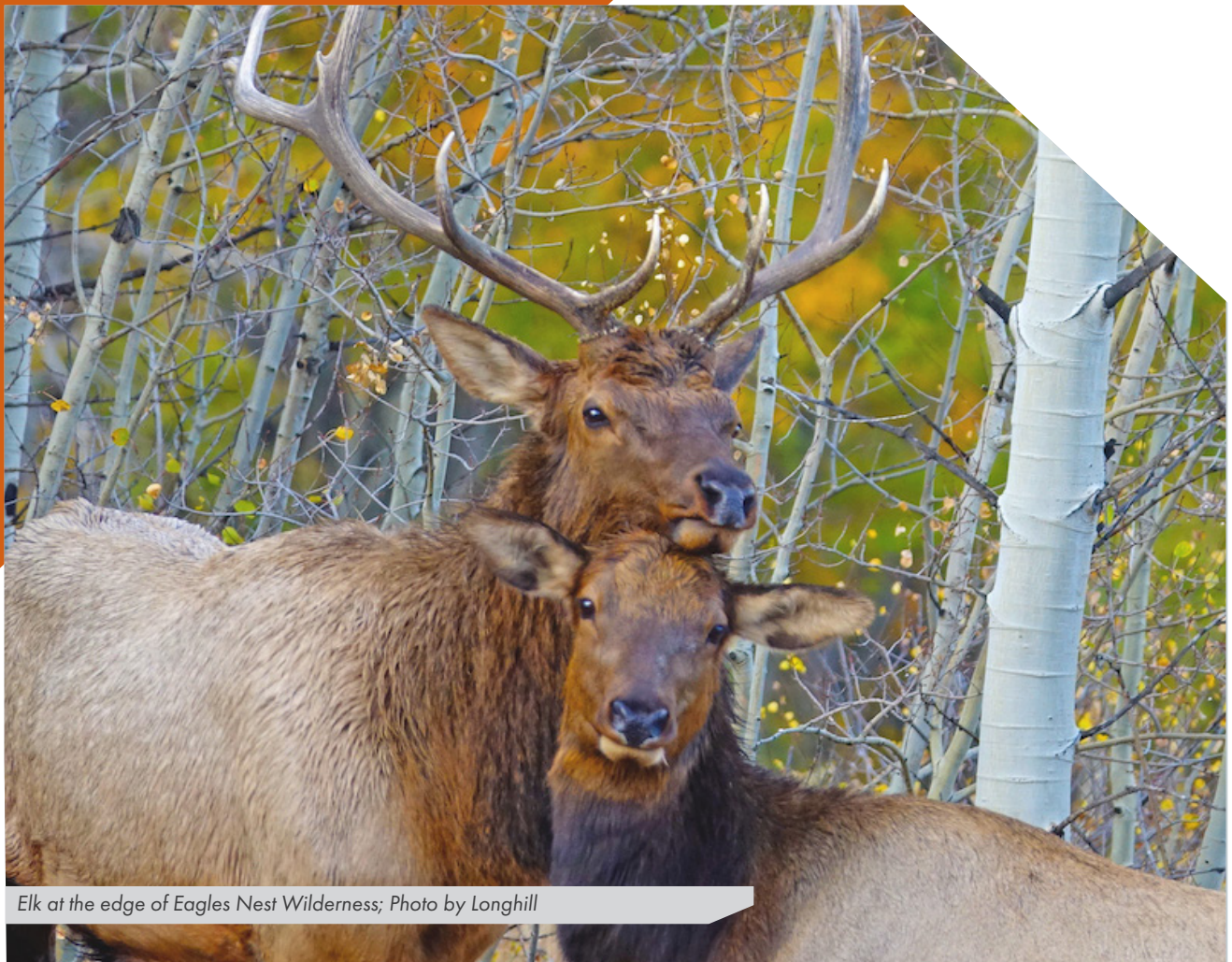


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# ACRONYMS

<b>BEA</b>	U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis	<b>NFF</b>	National Forest Foundation
<b>BOCC</b>	Board of County Commissioners	<b>OIA</b>	Outdoor Industry Association
<b>BRWG</b>	Blue River Watershed Group	<b>OSAC</b>	Open Space Advisory Council
<b>CDOT</b>	Colorado Department of Transportation	<b>OST Master Plan</b>	Open Space & Trails Master Plan
<b>CPW</b>	Colorado Parks & Wildlife	<b>R&amp;B</b>	Summit County Road & Bridge Department
<b>CSU Extension</b>	Colorado State University Extension	<b>Recpath</b>	Recreational Pathways
<b>CWCB</b>	Colorado Water Conservation Board	<b>SCOMBA</b>	Summit County Mountain Bike Alliance
<b>DRRA</b>	Dillon Reservoir Recreation Area	<b>SCOST</b>	Summit County Open Space & Trails Department
<b>DRReC</b>	Dillon Reservoir Recreation Committee	<b>TOB</b>	Town of Breckenridge
<b>EPA</b>	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	<b>TU</b>	Trout Unlimited
<b>FDRD</b>	Friends of the Dillon Ranger District	<b>USFS</b>	U.S. Forest Service
<b>FOLBR</b>	Friends of the Lower Blue	<b>WUI</b>	Wildland Urban Interface
<b>MVUM</b>	Motor Vehicle Use Maps		



Elk at the edge of Eagles Nest Wilderness; Photo by Longhill



Mountain Goats near Buffalo Mountain Peak; Photo by Yahr  
We're watching you!







Ruby Ranch Road; Photo by Longhill

# 1 INTRODUCTION

- » Why Plan Now?
- » Open Space & Trails Department
- » Plan Organization
- » Partnering to Meet the Vision
- » Public Involvement



# INTRODUCTION

*Summit County's mountain community is dedicated to exemplary open space conservation and recreation management.*

Through partnerships and the use of adaptive management techniques, Summit County strives to balance natural resource protection with providing high quality experiences in nature for the benefit of current and future generations. Land managers use adaptive management to make adjustments in accomplishing open space and trail goals in response to new information or changing conditions. The public strongly desires to preserve cherished view corridors, backcountry parcels, historical sites, wildlife habitat, wetlands, public trail access, buffer areas between towns, agricultural lands, and lands along rivers, lakes, and streams.

Voters have passed four different mill levies to fund Summit County Open Space & Trails, voting to make that funding permanent in 2019. Nearly 82 percent of Summit County is composed of public land, including the White River National Forest (WRNF), two congressionally-designated Wilderness Areas, and four internationally acclaimed ski areas. Many public lands are co-managed between Summit County Government, local towns, and U.S. Forest Service (USFS). Summit County Government owns, or partially owns, just over two percent of those lands. The county's population of roughly 31,000 permanent residents soars to above 150,000 people during peak tourism periods. Locals and visitors alike flock to the plentiful recreational opportunities the county offers. The Summit County Open Space & Trails Master Plan (OST Master Plan) sets the direction for existing and future open space and recreation amenities in order to fulfill the community's vision.

## WHY PLAN NOW?

Summit County has a rich cultural history and is endowed with tremendous natural resources including spectacular vistas, excellent air and water quality, and diverse wildlife habitat and ecosystems. Due to successful public land protection by the County and its partners, Summit County continues to experience increased demand for trails and recreation opportunities, along with more facilities and amenities, while facing greater natural resource protection challenges. Having acquired and protected the assets that help enable the community's high quality of life, public land managers must now also focus their efforts on the management of existing resources as the county approaches maximum build-out.

Over the last few decades, Summit County has experienced significant changes due to population growth, increased development, new trends in outdoor recreation, increased tourism, and ecosystem disruptions such as climate change, habitat loss, light pollution, and heightened wildfire risks. Current population projections from the Colorado Department of Local Affairs show a slight increase in resident population in 2030. It is also estimated that by 2040, Summit County will have grown to 35,275 residents.

Only 150 square miles of the county is privately-owned. The bulk of existing and approved development is found along major roadways and river corridors, which also contain sensitive wetlands and are home to wildlife movement corridors.

*“We need to act now to plan for growth and to preserve our open space and access to recreational opportunities for the current generation, as well as our children and grandchildren.”*

- The 2019 Approved Mill Levy Open Space Extension Ballot Measure establishes the need for this Plan.



Waiting to act will be too late. Without a strategic countywide planning approach, many environmentally sensitive and visually prominent areas could be lost. Unless mitigated, development could result in a loss of open space buffers, impact equitable and accessible recreation opportunities, eliminate important trail corridors, jeopardize visually prominent lands and viewsheds, impact night time dark skies, and result in the loss of environmentally-sensitive lands and resources that exemplify the county's rural mountain character.

These issues highlight the need for a new Master Plan to address current and future challenges for the next ten years of managing and protecting open spaces and trails in Summit County. The importance of protecting and managing open spaces and trails extends across jurisdictional boundaries. Therefore, this OST Master Plan takes a countywide approach with collaborative management opportunities highlighted throughout this document.

## SUMMIT COUNTY: HEART OF THE ROCKIES

### Countywide (all jurisdictions)

<b>619</b>	Square miles
<b>3</b>	Peaks over 14,000 feet
<b>82%</b>	Public land
<b>95,460</b>	Acres of Wilderness
<b>574</b>	Miles of natural surface trail
<b>250</b>	Miles of recreational road
<b>76</b>	Trailheads
<b>64</b>	Miles of paved multi-use path

### Summit County Open Space & Trails Department:

<b>17,784</b>	Acres of land acquired or conserved
<b>45</b>	Trail access portals managed
<b>36</b>	Trailheads managed
<b>100+</b>	Miles of natural surface trail managed
<b>38</b>	Miles of Recpath managed





# SUMMIT COUNTY OPEN SPACE & TRAILS DEPARTMENT

Summit County Government owns and manages over 17,784 acres of land acquired or conserved to protect open space values and provide a variety of recreational amenities, including managing 36 trailheads and 45 trail access portals (neighborhood access points with no parking typically), 100 miles of natural surface trails, and 35 miles of paved Recreational Pathways (the Recpath). The Summit County Open Space & Trails Department (SCOST) is charged with managing these assets. SCOST is guided by an appointed 13-member Open Space Advisory Council (OSAC), which makes recommendations to the Summit County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). The department is funded by a property tax mill levy that was renewed in 2019 to provide perpetual funding for the acquisition and preservation of open space, natural areas, and trails in the county. The mill levy was previously approved in 1993, 1999, 2003, and 2008 by Summit County voters before providing permanent funding in 2019.

## SCOST MISSION:

*To identify, protect, and manage open spaces, trails, and trailheads to preserve and maintain Summit County's rural mountain character, unique natural areas, and high quality of life for residents and visitors.*

In the last 25 years, the SCOST Department has gradually shifted focus from primarily land acquisition to spending increased financial resources and staff time on managing open space and trails assets and the people that use them. Currently, the SCOST annual budget splits funding for open space acquisition and management almost evenly.

## OVERVIEW OF PREVIOUS PLANS

In 1996, the BOCC adopted the Open Space Protection Plan, the first guiding document for the SCOST. The plan primarily focused on the acquisition and protection of unique community resources.

*The 1996 Plan does not reflect how SCOST has evolved and the number of roles the department plays in protecting open space and providing access to public lands across the county.*

The 2022 OST Master Plan is the second master plan developed since the inception of the SCOST Department. In the more than 25 years since the adoption of the Open Space Protection Plan, SCOST has protected over 250 individual properties and created a diverse array of recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. SCOST has also been guided by the Countywide Master Plan and Basin Master Plans, which provide policy guidance for decisions related to land use, growth, environmental protection, housing, economic development, and other pertinent topic areas. Summit County Government divides the county into four basins, based on its watersheds, to focus planning efforts (See map on page 3).



# THEN

1996 OS PROTECTION PLAN

AND

# NOW

2022 OST MASTER PLAN

The following graphics show a comparison between 1996, when the SCOST was formed and the Open Space Protection Plan written, and now, as we adopt this 2022 OST Master Plan. Numbers below in green represent the state of SCOST in 1996, while numbers in blue represent the current condition in 2022, unless otherwise noted.



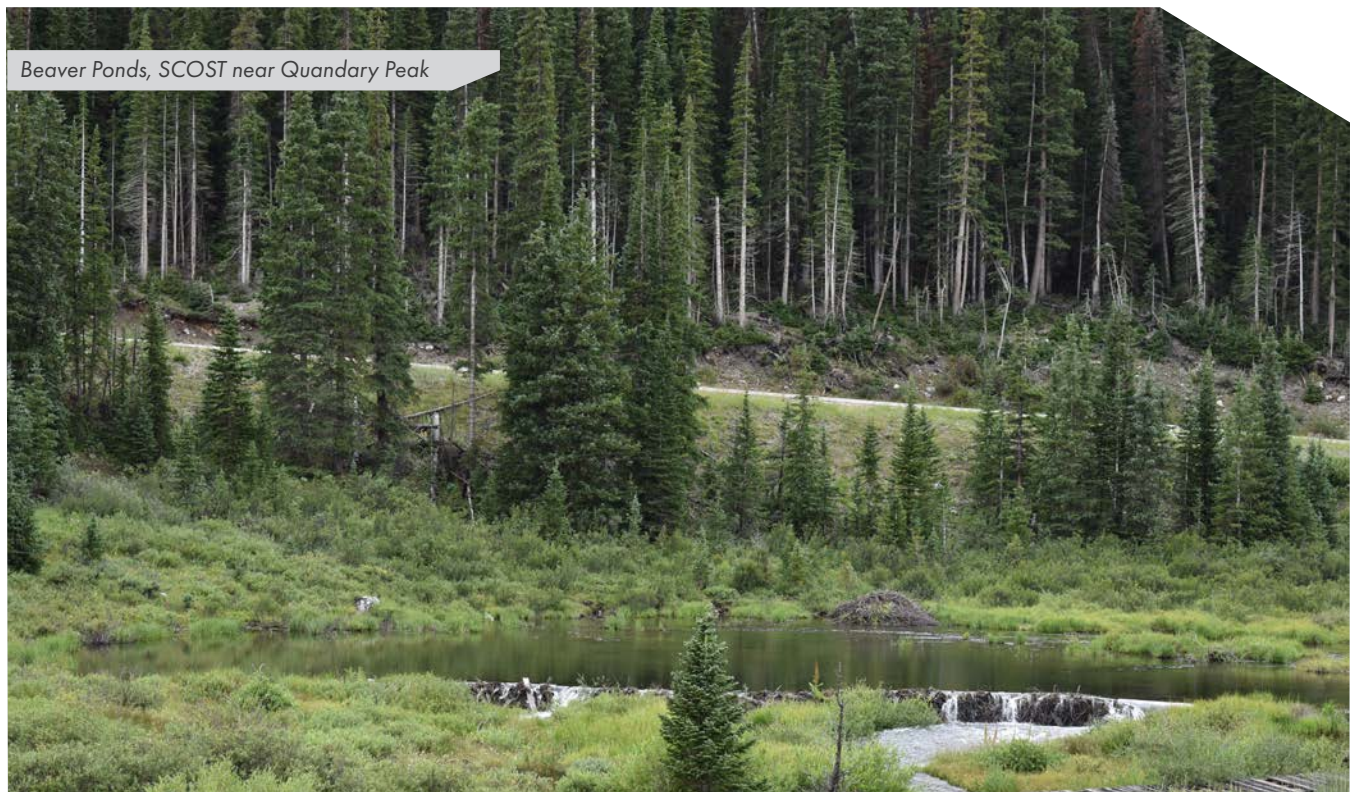


## ROLE OF THIS PLAN

Unlike the 1996 Open Space Protection Plan, this Master Plan is intended to have the same quasi-regulatory function as the Countywide and Basin Master Plans. It provides broad policy guidance on open space, trails, and other outdoor recreation topics across jurisdictional boundaries that are important to the residents of Summit County. This plan will work in conjunction with the Countywide and Basin Master Plans to reflect the community's broad vision and goals for open space and trails throughout the County. The OST Master Plan is focused on non-developed, nature-based recreation, and the Countywide/Basin Master Plans should be referred to for guidance on developed recreational facilities (neighborhood parks, golf courses, ball fields, etc.) The OST Master Plan provides guidance to federal, state, and local agencies that collaborate with Summit County, but each agency sets its own policy on the lands under their respective jurisdiction.

### WHO SHOULD USE THIS PLAN?

*The OST Master Plan should be used and referenced by any planner, developer, organization, partner, community member, or individual with resource conservation or recreation interests within Summit County. While most towns in Summit County and the USFS have their own management plans for open space and trails, all partners can look to this Master Plan for guidance when developing future goals and work plans.*



Beaver Ponds, SCOST near Quandary Peak



# PLAN ORGANIZATION

The OST Master Plan is organized around three themes and five topic areas that collectively articulate a vision for Summit County and create the overarching framework for the OST Master Plan’s goals, policies, and actions.



» OPEN SPACE PROTECTION  
» ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT



» OUTDOOR RECREATION




» PROGRAM CAPACITY  
& SUSTAINABILITY  
» COMMUNICATION

This plan is organized into five chapters:

PLAN CHAPTER	PLAN ELEMENTS
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction.</b> Sets the foundation for the plan and summarizes the SCOST program, outlines the vision, and summarizes this planning process.	<b>Vision:</b> Desired future condition of the county.
<b>Chapters 2 – 4: Conserve, Connect, Collaborate.</b> Organized around the vision and subsequent themes, highlight existing resource conditions, identify challenges and opportunities of future management, and define goals and policies.	<b>Goals:</b> Long-range and visionary; describe desired future conditions.
	<b>Policies:</b> Direction for specific topic areas to achieve the stated goal.
<b>Chapter 5: Action Plan.</b> Outlines action items to ensure progress towards goals and policies.	<b>Actions:</b> Specific steps to be taken by Summit County and its partners to achieve policies and goals and realize the vision.





**Views of snow-capped peaks, meandering riparian corridors, big game habitat, native vegetation, and healthy agricultural lands uniquely define Summit County's landscape. Summit County provides a comprehensive and accessible network of trails and pathways that connect residents, visitors, and our communities to outstanding outdoor recreational opportunities.**

*Black Creek Valley; photo by Yahr*



# OUR VISION..

.. is to lead and empower communities in Summit County to:



## CONSERVE

open space resources and ecosystem function



## CONNECT

with nature and quality outdoor experiences



## COLLABORATE

to address countywide natural resource and recreation challenges and opportunities



## PARTNERING TO MEET THE VISION

The OST Master Plan establishes a countywide vision for the protection and management of open space, nature-based recreation, and trails – regardless of land ownership. Summit County’s complex land ownership network means that town, county, and federal lands are often adjacent to or even interspersed with one another. Because of this unique pattern, County-owned trailheads and open spaces often provide access to public lands not within their jurisdiction or connections between lands owned and managed by differing agencies. In addition to these agencies, many local advocacy groups and non-profits support efforts related to recreation, stewardship, education, and natural resource management. The following provides an overview of the initiatives that SCOST or its partners lead. These roles may shift over time depending on changing priorities or organizational capacity. Further details are provided in the action items tables in Chapter 5 of this document.

*SCOST would not be able to carry out its mission without its incredible partners.*



### OPEN SPACE PROTECTION

#### SCOST Lead

- Utilize open space protection tools to conserve land countywide, based on the Open Space Selection Criteria
- Work with the Planning Department to secure trail easements and open space dedications from developers that protect natural resources and provide pedestrian and cycling access
- Collaborate with the USFS and towns to create a network of contiguous public lands

#### SCOST Support/Partners Lead

- Leverage County support to conserve local open space and create equitable access to public lands

### ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

#### SCOST Lead

- Model best stewardship and monitoring practices on County open space
- Reclaim abandoned mines and impacted landscapes

#### SCOST Support/Partners Lead

- Collaborate with the USFS, County departments, towns, and non-profits to manage whole ecosystems through strategic watershed planning, climate change mitigation and adaptation, wildfire fuel reduction projects, light pollution prevention, and other forest health projects
- Conduct species-specific wildlife management and habitat protection
- Acquire, conserve, lease, or share water to meet multiple needs (e.g., agriculture, wildlife habitat, recreation)





## OUTDOOR RECREATION

### SCOST Lead

- Provide equitable access to public lands, regardless of jurisdiction
- Locate, design, construct, and maintain trails strategically to create a connected network of trails and connect all neighborhoods to trail systems
- Develop, manage, and monitor public use on County open space and trails to minimize impacts to ecological values while maintaining high quality outdoor experiences
- Ensure significant summer and winter routes are conserved for public recreation

### SCOST Support/Partners Lead

- Collaborate to employ adaptive recreation and capacity management techniques countywide, regardless of jurisdiction
- Conduct local trail and connectivity planning
- Support special interest groups and other community organizations in the development of open space facilities (e.g., restrooms, parking, special trail features), to share maintenance responsibilities and costs



## PROGRAM CAPACITY & SUSTAINABILITY

### SCOST Lead

- Identify and foster meaningful community partnerships
- Leverage funding through grant applications and partnerships
- Promote staffing levels that enable the department to conserve, connect, and collaborate
- Engage volunteers in a diversity of projects to enhance staffing capacity and foster a sense of stewardship for public lands

### SCOST Support/Partners Lead

- Provide enforcement, education, and resource protection on public lands countywide

## COMMUNICATION

### SCOST Lead

- Connect the public to SCOST's mission through continued outreach and volunteer opportunities
- Incorporate public feedback into management efforts

### SCOST Support/Partners Lead

- Conduct educational outreach on a number of topic areas (e.g., historic resources, natural resources, outdoor recreation opportunities)
- Connect the public to nature through continued outreach, with a particular focus on under-served communities and youth and families
- Develop consistent stewardship messages to the public, such as "recreate responsibly"

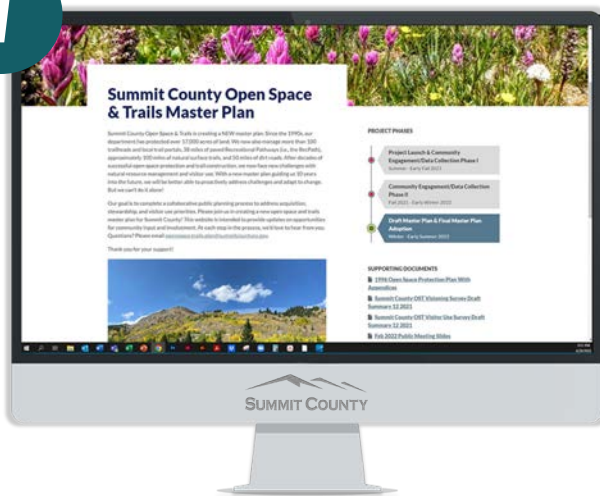


# PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

## OVERVIEW

Public input was a driving force in the development of this Master Plan. When the planning process began in late summer 2021, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic limited the ability to host in-person interactive events and activities. Because of this, a majority of the outreach for this plan was carried out through virtual public meetings or in low contact environments, such as trailhead questionnaires. Multilingual efforts to engage the public throughout the planning process involved notifications and translating services at events. Feedback from outreach efforts are summarized on the following pages and detailed reports are available on the [Additional Resources page](#) on the Story Map.

1



2

**Su contribución es importante para dar forma al nuevo plan maestro de senderos y espacios abiertos del Condado de Summit.**

**17,000 acres de espacio abierto**

**100 millas de superficie de sendero natural**

**100 senderos y portales**

El cuestionario le pide dar respuestas para servicios futuros y necesidades de espacios abiertos y senderos en el Condado.

**Visite el enlace a continuación por Octubre 31.**

**SUMMIT COUNTY**  
Open Space & Trails

3

## ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

- 1 Project website and social media
- 2 Bilingual notification materials and questionnaires
- 3 Summer and winter visitor use questionnaires
- 4 Direct-mail postcards encouraged survey participation
- 5 Trailhead kiosks





## Summit County Open Space and Trails Master Plan



17,000  
Acres



100 miles  
of natural  
surface trails



100 trailheads  
and portals

Tell us what you see for the future of trails and open spaces in the County by completing the questionnaire online by **November 14**.



Your input and thoughts will help share the County's future.

¡Comparta su opinión sobre cómo mejorar los espacios abiertos y los senderos en el Condado de Summit!  
¡Participa en nuestro cuestionario en español!



[summitcounty.civilspace.io](http://summitcounty.civilspace.io)

SUMMIT COUNTY

## OUTREACH BY THE NUMBERS

- 20,000 Postcards
- 1,000+ Visioning questionnaire responses
- 400 Visitor use questionnaire responses
- 115 Interactive map comments
- 33 Trailhead kiosks
- 20 Stakeholder organizations interviewed
- 18 BOCC/Planning Commission meetings
- 10 OSAC meetings
- 5 Community outreach events
- 2 Public open house meetings
- 2 Interagency land management meetings

In an effort to maximize participation, bilingual informational flyers for the online visitor use questionnaires were posted at 33 trailheads and recreation access points. The flyers included a QR code so visitors could take the survey on their phone after hitting the trail.





## FEEDBACK HIGHLIGHTS

Demographic characteristics of questionnaire respondents are summarized below. Subsequent chapters integrate results and input from all public involvement opportunities. For detailed questionnaire and public meeting summaries, refer to the Master Plan [Additional Resources](#) page on the Story Map.

### Visioning Questionnaire

The intent of the visioning questionnaire was to gather public input on visitation, the vision and values of the community, and future management opportunities. It was available online between October 6 and November 16, 2021. Over 1,000 respondents completed the questionnaire, including 20 submissions of the Spanish language version. Outreach for the questionnaire included social media posts and news releases, as well as attendance at multiple community events.

**“Increase community presence, volunteer coordination, and education opportunities.”**

- Public Involvement Participant

### Visitor Use Questionnaire - Summer

The first visitor use questionnaire sought information on summer visitation trends and the overall trail experiences of the community. It was made available between August 27 and November 1, 2021. SCOST staff installed kiosks and flyers at 43 trailheads and portals to gather responses in person and online (via QR code). A total of 122 physical copies and 152 electronic submissions of the questionnaire were completed.

### Visitor Use Questionnaire - Winter

The second visitor use questionnaire was made available during the winter from December 13, 2021 to March 1, 2022. SCOST staff installed kiosks at 10 trailheads, where respondents could complete the questionnaire on a paper survey or online via a QR code. A total of 57 paper surveys and 69 electronic submissions of the winter questionnaire were completed.

## SUMMARY OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

**85% - 90%**

RESPONDENTS WITH A BACHELOR'S DEGREE\*

**54% - 64%**

RESPONDENTS WHO LIVE IN SUMMIT COUNTY FULL-TIME

**54% - 56%**

RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE LIVED IN SUMMIT COUNTY 15 YEARS OR LESS

**2 - 3%**

RESPONDENTS IDENTIFY AS HISPANIC OR LANTIX

**56% - 64%**

RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE AN ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME GREATER THAN \$100,000\*\*\*

**44% - 46%**

RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE LIVED IN SUMMIT COUNTY FOR MORE THAN 15 YEARS

\* 52% of all Summit County residents have a Bachelor's Degree

\*\* 14% of Summit County residents identify as Hispanic or Latinx

\*\*\* Median household income of Summit County is \$75,231



## NEED FOR **ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT**

In the Visioning Questionnaire, the public identified the following top four characteristics for prioritization in the county. The top four priority open space characteristics regardless of basin are:

- » Open space with non-motorized recreational trails
- » Wildlife habitat
- » Open space that protects ridgelines from development
- » Access to National Forest lands

Following those characteristics, unique attributes of each basin that are important to the community include:

- » **Lower Blue:** Riparian and river corridors
- » **Snake River:** Corridors for paved trails
- » **Tenmile:** Corridors for paved trails
- » **Upper Blue:** Cultural and historically significant structures

**“** I'd really like to be able to bike or walk directly to the Recpath instead of having to walk along the street. ”

- Public Involvement Participant



Swan Mountain Recpath



## Opportunities Outreach

The community was invited to participate in a virtual public meeting and online questionnaire to provide feedback on the Plan vision and preliminary goal topics, and brainstorm management opportunities geographically across the County. The questionnaire was formatted in ArcGIS Online and collected both location-specific and general comments. Participants had the opportunity to explore the County and other public comments while zooming in and out of the map.

In combination with the online questionnaire, SCOST staff and project consultants hosted a virtual meeting with 49 community attendees. Meeting attendees were asked to rate their support for the vision and goal topics via polls throughout the presentation. In the second part of the meeting, attendees split into five breakout rooms, one for each of the four planning basins and one for Spanish language speakers, to review location-specific management opportunities. Attendees had the ability to move between breakout rooms and provide comments in each basin. The ArcGIS Online public comment tool was available in both English and Spanish from February 10 to February 28, 2022, and a total of 115 comments were received.

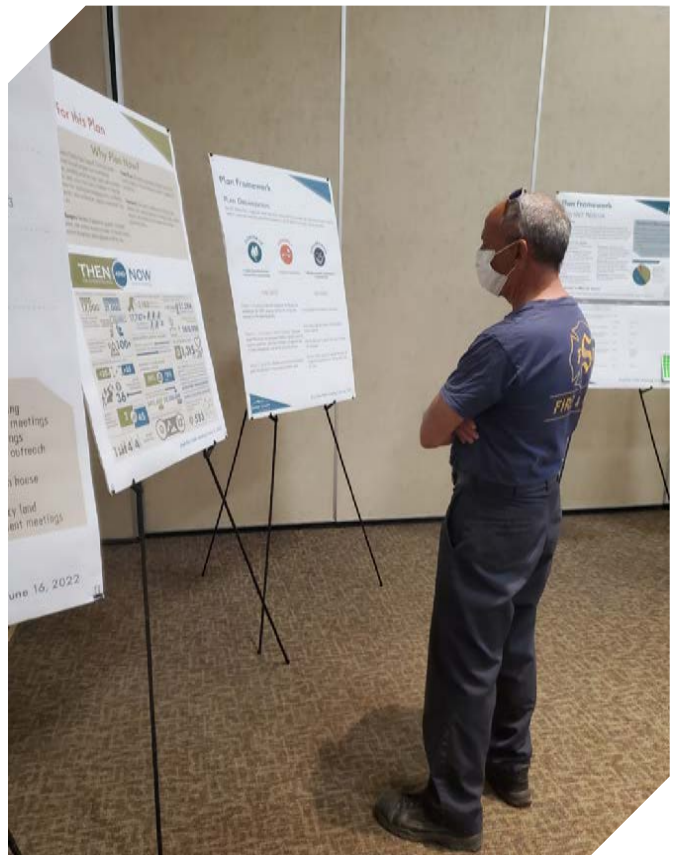
**“Increase open space portfolio and purchase more land for a diversity of uses - community buffers, viewshed, river/water access.”**

- Public Involvement Participant

## Draft Plan Outreach

After a robust 10-month planning process, the OST Draft Master Plan was released to the public. The public was able to review and comment on the document from June 7 to June 27 through an online commenting tool, public meeting, or directly to SCOST staff through email. Updates to the public were provided on the project website, social media posts, project and employee listserv, at local events (e.g., Volunteer & Care Fair and Bike to Work Day), and via flyers posted around the community. Notifications were provided in both English and Spanish. Stakeholders on the listserv were able to share flyers with their constituents (e.g., organized recreation groups, local non-profits, and community organizations).

The Draft Plan Open House on June 16th was attended by 28 members of the community. A total of 111 comments from 22 commentors were generated during the comment period. The majority of comments were collected via the online comment tool, while others were shared during the public meeting and via e-mail.







Trail camera photo of a moose at Mesa Cortina Trailhead

## 2 CONSERVE

- » Open Space Protection
- » Ecosystem Management



# OPEN SPACE PROTECTION

## BACKGROUND

Protecting open space, either by fee simple acquisitions or other means such as conservation easements, is integral to the quality of life in Summit County. Since the late nineties and in partnership with the towns, SCOST has protected close to 18,000 acres of land, including 125 acres of open space acquired for \$2.4 million in 2020 and 137 acres acquired for \$900,000 in 2021. Open space provides numerous community benefits, as outlined in the open space selection criteria below.

The open space selection criteria was established in 1994 to guide SCOST's acquisition program. These criteria are still used today, with only minor refinements based on input throughout this planning process.

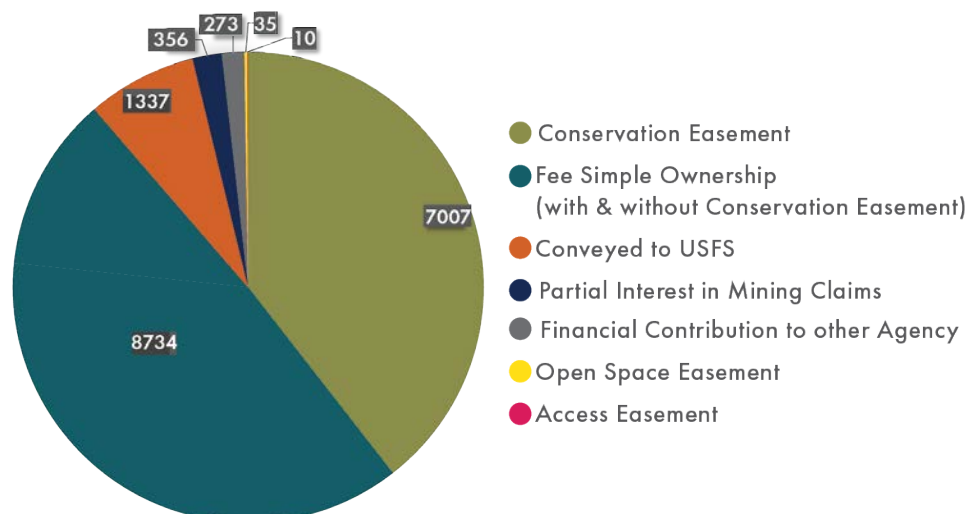
View a detailed Story  
Map of *Protected  
Lands* by [clicking here](#).



## OPEN SPACE SELECTION CRITERIA

- **Access.** Lands that provide trailheads or public access to recreation areas on National Forest and other public lands.
- **Agricultural/Cultural.** Lands that represent Summit County's rich heritage, including agricultural lands with irrigated meadows or open cropland, ranching areas, and historic sites. The historic, cultural, or social significance of these types of properties contribute to the community's identity and wellbeing.
- **Buffers.** Natural and undeveloped lands that separate and buffer the impacts of development, define the boundaries of urbanized areas, prevent urban sprawl and strip development, and contribute to the rural mountain quality of the landscape.
- **Extensions.** Land adjacent to publicly held property that can be combined to enlarge and/or connect existing open space parcels.
- **Recreational.** Lands with significant recreational value, particularly non-motorized passive uses not requiring intensive maintenance or management. Lands that provide a unique outdoor recreation opportunity not available elsewhere in the County.
- **Unique Lands.** Lands possessing unique values such as outstanding (but not necessarily visible) scenic quality, rare flora, riparian quality, wetlands, critical wildlife habitat, fragile alpine areas, or unusual geologic or topographical formations.
- **View Corridors.** Lands with high aesthetic appeal within major view sheds that are valued by residents and visitors, and are emblematic of Summit County's rural mountain character.

### SCOST ACRES OF OPEN SPACE PROTECTED BY TOOL

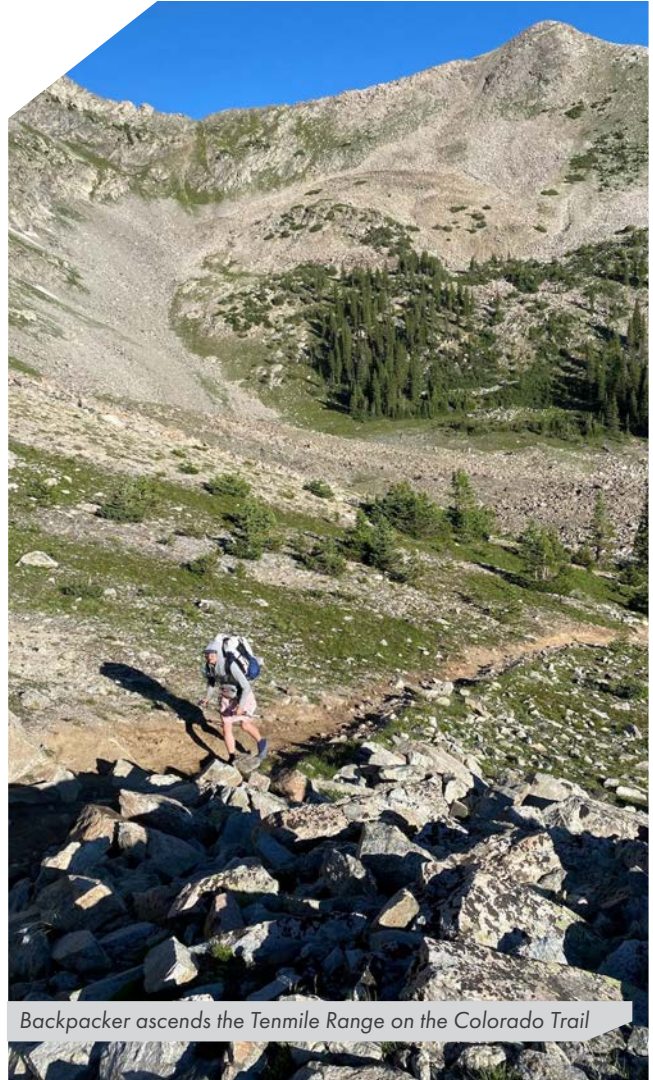




## THE FUTURE OF OPEN SPACE PROTECTION

With a small acquisition budget relative to the rising cost of property in Summit County, and limited staff capacity, protecting additional open space in Summit County is increasingly challenging. At the forefront of this challenge is the high cost and competition for land met with an increasing demand (and associated management costs) for outdoor recreation opportunities. Opportunities to acquire more land will also be limited by the availability of parcels that meet the acquisition criteria. Costs for an acre of land continue to fluctuate. Since the SCOST's formation in the mid-90s, land values have significantly increased depending on the location, site attributes, and development potential. As available land becomes scarcer within the County, new tools and funding need to be developed to improve and support the open space portfolio. Private landowners are and will continue to be vital partners in protecting open space by helping SCOST conserve additional acreage.

Since 1965, land trusts and their partners have helped Colorado families conserve more than 3.3 million acres of working lands, wildlife habitat, and open spaces that define our state and contribute to our quality of life (Keep it Colorado, 2022). In Summit County, almost 16,000 acres of lands have been conserved in perpetuity via conservation easements by both SCOST and other easement holders.



Backpacker ascends the Tenmile Range on the Colorado Trail

## COMMUNITY VALUES: OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

The Visioning Questionnaire asked the community why they think open space and trails are important and they provided the following priority values for open space and trails in Summit County.

PROVIDE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES → 63%

CONSERVE NATURAL HABITATS (E.G., WILDLIFE HABITAT) → 61%

PROTECT AREAS FROM URBAN DEVELOPMENT → 57%

PROVIDE HEALTHY LIFESTYLE → 31%



## OPEN SPACE PROTECTION GOALS AND POLICIES

### Goal 1: Protect open spaces in Summit County.

- 1.1 Protect open space properties in the four basins of the County according to the established Open Space Selection Criteria.
- 1.2 Protect open space through land exchanges and the acquisition of property interests such as full fee simple ownership, conservation easements, restrictive covenants, and trail/access easements.
- 1.3 Protect open space and trails through regulatory processes such as development review, land dedications, transfers of development rights, and sensitive site design that encourages compact development and minimizes environmental impacts.
- 1.4 Support the open space protection programs of other agencies, land trusts, and organizations in the County by leveraging open space funds and jointly acquiring properties as appropriate.
- 1.5 Ensure the Countywide Master Plan aligns with the Summit County OST Master Plan.
- 1.6 Ensure the long-term protection of open space utilizing tools such as rezoning to the Open Space Zone District, restrictive covenants, deed restrictions, and conservation easements where appropriate.
- 1.7 Consider long-term and ongoing management costs when acquiring new properties as open space.
- 1.8 Preserve and protect historic and cultural resources in Summit County and partner with organizations to stabilize and interpret them.
- 1.9 Reserve areas, zones, or certain properties solely for habitat protection, with limited or no public use.

### Goal 2: Actively manage open spaces according to their unique community benefits and natural and cultural resources.

- 2.1 Apply open space management zones (e.g., frontcountry vs backcountry) to properties with varying community benefits and natural, historic, and cultural resource conditions.
- 2.2 Create, implement, and update management plans for open space properties with periodic review for compliance.
- 2.3 Support regulations that protect natural sounds and the nighttime sky.
- 2.4 Promote climate change resiliency by supporting the Summit County Climate Action Plan and utilizing new or best available scientific data.



# ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

## BACKGROUND

Ecological resources in the County include a wide variety of wildlife, vegetation, soils, landforms, and water sources. While public lands in Summit County are abundant, the increasing demand for recreational access and development in the County puts pressure on these resources, making it critical to coordinate consistent management on County, privately-owned, and other public lands.

The ecosystems in Summit County provide a multitude of community benefits and services. These ecosystem services are categorized into four groups, all of which are essential for: 1) provisioning services, such as food, water, and fuel; 2) regulating services, such as climate, disease, and other disturbances like wildfire and flooding;

3) cultural services, including heritage values and recreation; and, 4) supporting services, such as nutrient cycling (USFS, 2016). These benefits are driven largely by biodiversity, or the variety of life within an area (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005).

From high alpine tundra to intermountain sagebrush meadows, Summit County offers an abundance of unique habitat types that are home to a diversity of plant and wildlife species. Extreme ranges in slope and elevation (7,600-14,270 feet above sea level) and high degrees of variability in water availability and growing season length, produce this diversity of vegetative communities and habitat types, many of which are unique to the region.

## THE FUTURE OF ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

Challenges such as development, recreation, invasive species, and climate change can negatively affect the unique habitats and wildlife populations found in Summit County. Roads, trails, and unchecked development can fragment and destroy undisturbed or sensitive areas including wildlife habitat and key ecosystem functions. Recreation and human activities can alter the breeding and hunting behavior of wildlife and endanger communities with activities such as campfires during fire bans. Light pollution, such as glare and uplighting, from adjacent private lands changes the natural rhythms of plants and wildlife. Social trails and unmanaged recreation can lead to erosion, noxious weed dispersal, and trampling of

native vegetation. Due to the inherently slow growth rates and lack of species diversity in high elevation ecosystems such as lodgepole pine forests, recovering from the impacts of overuse and adapting to a changing climate will be a challenge.

To address these challenges, SCOST and partnering land managers must employ best management practices to maintain healthy habitats and ecosystems, conduct studies to understand human impacts on these communities, and work collaboratively across jurisdictional boundaries to protect and restore unique habitats. In addition, SCOST and other land managers must work together to protect communities from threats such as drought and wildfire.

View a detailed Story  
Map of Vegetation  
and Wildlife by  
[clicking here.](#)



Lunar Eclipse over Loveland Pass; Photo by Steward



## Wildland Urban Interface

Wildfires are a naturally occurring and necessary disturbance in Summit County's ecosystems. The forests in Summit County have evolved with fire, but decades of fire suppression have caused dense forests to connect right to the back doors of Summit County's neighborhoods. The number of catastrophic fires has increased in recent years due to the mountain pine beetle epidemic, drought, invasive weeds, and a changing climate.

Roughly 99 percent of Summit County's total population lives within the wildland-urban interface (WUI), or the area where development and natural areas intersect. Homes and developed areas located within the WUI are at greater risk to wildfire, especially when firewise planning and mitigation efforts have not been implemented. In 2006, Summit County Government and partners developed a Community Wildfire Protection Plan to address management concerns related to worsening fire seasons, dense fuel loads, and increased risks within the WUI. Today, this plan guides forest management,

infrastructure, and funding decisions and helps the County minimize wildfire hazards by maintaining healthy and diverse forests.

To support the goals outlined in the Community Wildfire Protection Plan, Summit County voters passed the Strong Futures ballot measure in 2018 which devotes approximately \$1 million per year for wildfire mitigation and prevention. Since 2008, SCOST has completed hazardous fuel reduction treatments on 583 acres of County open space and at the landfill, and the USFS has completed treatments on over 1,260 acres on National Forest lands. This comprehensive approach helps decrease the density and continuity of fuels in the WUI.

Lastly, as Summit County reaches maximum build-out, SCOST and its partners must ensure that new development is concentrated away from undisturbed areas to protect ecosystems, wildlife habitat, and communities against wildfire.

Fuel reduction treatments focus on landscape-scale projects that follow natural changes in forest and fuel type, rather than jurisdictional boundaries. Lodgepole forests are abundant in Summit County, and many homes are built within these fire-adapted forests.



Wellington Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project



## Restoration

Restoration is vital to protecting and improving habitats and maintaining local biodiversity. Human activities such as off-trail use, unauthorized vehicle use, logging, and historic mining activity have degraded and denuded portions of Summit County's vegetated landscapes. To prevent additional resource damage, SCOST actively reclaims mined landscapes, enhances and restores streams, reforests degraded landscapes, decommissions social trails and unused roads, and stabilizes heavily used trails. To date, SCOST has completed riparian area restoration across 56.3 acres, tree plantings on nearly 36 acres, and 12 mine reclamation projects. Without these restoration activities, ramifications of adversely impacted open space resources include:

- The loss of threatened, endangered, and rare species and their habitat
- Habitat fragmentation

View a detailed Story  
Map of *Biodiversity* by  
[clicking here.](#)



- The loss of view corridors
- Reduced quality and quantity of water supply to streams, reservoirs, and well fields
- Reduced soil stability and increased erosion, especially in riparian areas
- Unhealthy forests and vegetation communities, reducing carbon sequestration potential
- Decreased resilience of ecosystems to a changing climate and associated increases in fire, flooding, and other extreme weather events
- Diminished health, safety, and welfare of the community due to loss of ecosystem function

## Climate

Colorado has warmed substantially over the last 50 years, and climate models predict an increase of 2.5 to 5 degrees Fahrenheit by 2050. Altered growing seasons and changes in soil moisture as a result of warmer and drier conditions lead to increased water demands for agriculture, shifts in habitat suitability for vegetation communities and wildlife, and an increase in wildland fire activity and season length (CWCB 2008; EPA 2021).

Protected and restored lands can mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, as they maintain ecosystem function and sequester carbon. Preserving landscape connectivity, restoring degraded landscapes, and utilizing climate adapted management strategies across Summit County are a few of the many ways that land managers can increase landscape resilience, maintain ecosystem productivity, and minimize habitat loss due to a changing climate.

**“The challenges we face will affect everyone. However, because [climate change] can enhance existing stressors, it has a disproportionate negative impact on more vulnerable populations due to social, political, and economic inequalities. Addressing the impacts of climate change will require collaborative solutions.”**

-Colorado Water Conservation Board



## ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT GOALS AND POLICIES

### **Goal 3. Maintain and enhance healthy wildlife populations and habitat in Summit County.**

- 3.1 Protect, restore, and improve habitats and habitat connectivity to support healthy wildlife populations and safe movement corridors.
- 3.2 Implement best management practices to protect wildlife from threats such as disease and human disturbances, such as litter and dog waste management.
- 3.3 Minimize human-wildlife and dog-wildlife conflicts.
- 3.4 Protect threatened species or species of concern in Summit County.
- 3.5 Coordinate consistent wildlife management practices with CPW, USFS, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Summit County towns, and private landowners.

### **Goal 4. Maintain and enhance healthy vegetation and forest communities.**

- 4.1 Discourage the establishment and spread of noxious weeds through integrated pest management practices in accordance with the Summit County Weed Management Plan and the Colorado Noxious Weed Act.
- 4.2 Minimize wildfire risks by supporting the goals of the Summit County Community Wildfire Protection Plan and other forest management plans as appropriate.
- 4.3 Improve forest health and promote long-term carbon sequestration through forest management practices such as fuel reduction, replanting projects, and prescribed burns.
- 4.4 Conserve and promote diverse and resilient vegetation communities, including both native and rare species.
- 4.5 Proactively manage ecosystems to minimize the impacts of insects, fire, climate change, light pollution, and disease through practices that mimic natural disturbance and foster healthy and resilient forest stands, based on best available scientific data.

### **Goal 5. Protect water quality and steward water resources and soils.**

- 5.1 Prevent the loss of wetlands in Summit County by supporting no net loss policies, protection incentives, management prescriptions, and ensuring mitigation occurs within County boundaries. Support regulations that ensure development avoids wetland impacts, minimizes impacts if unavoidable, and as a last resort, mitigates impacts in Summit County.
- 5.2 Protect and enhance stream flows and promote sustainable water management practices that provide high quality water, benefits to recreation and wildlife, and help ensure reliable and resilient water resources.
- 5.3 Manage healthy soils by protecting high quality soils, preventing erosion, monitoring organic matter levels, and reducing bare ground.

### **Goal 6. Restore degraded and impacted landscapes.**

- 6.1 Restore mined landscapes and waterways to improve water quality and ecosystem function.
- 6.2 Restore impacted landscapes to enhance ecosystem services, improve habitat, and increase resiliency to catastrophic events.
- 6.3 Restore and improve the function and health of destroyed or degraded wetlands.
- 6.4 Immediately respond to catastrophic events such as wildfires to minimize erosion, potential flood events, and impacts to water quality.





Vail Pass Recpath and West Tenmile Creek

# 3 CONNECT

» Outdoor Recreation



# OUTDOOR RECREATION

## BACKGROUND

Summit County has an extensive network of multi-use pathways, natural surface trails, and roads that provide numerous recreational opportunities. Many of these routes date back to the County's mining era in the late 1800s and provide critical access to and across important open space areas and other public lands within the County. These motorized and non-motorized trail networks have become destinations valued by both residents and visitors alike. Trails and outdoor recreation are crucial to the economy, health, and wellbeing of the Summit County community, as is minimizing the impact of recreational uses on the natural areas within which they occur.

View a detailed Story Map of the Recpath and Community Pathways and Trails and Trailheads by [clicking here.](#)



## VISITATION TRENDS

### A BALANCED MANAGEMENT FOCUS

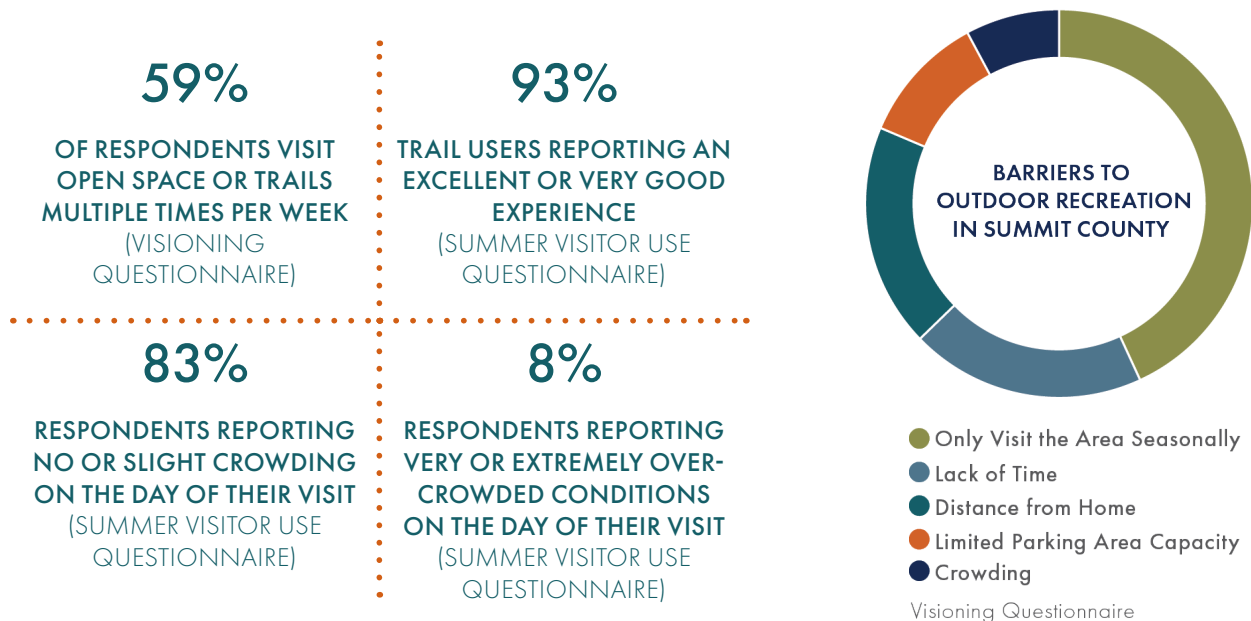
Responses to the Visioning Questionnaire highlighted a need to balance natural resource protection and providing outdoor recreation.



*Hiking and mountain biking exhibit the highest rates of participation and the highest rates of demand from Visioning Questionnaire respondents.*



As visitation increases throughout the County, it is important to understand how users perceive trails and their experiences on them. The questionnaire responses below highlight the needs and desires about recreation from the Visioning Questionnaire and Visitor Use Questionnaire.



## National and State Visitation Trends

National participation in outdoor recreation remains significant and continues to grow. In 2020, approximately 160.7 million people participated in outdoor activities—almost 53 percent of the US population—which is 7.1 million more individuals than in 2019 (largely driven by COVID impacts). Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) identifies that this was “the largest one-year jump on record” (Outdoor Foundation 2021). Households with children tended to drive this growth, showing higher participation rates (60 percent) than those without children (46 percent). The most popular human powered outdoor activities across the country in 2020 were running, jogging, and trail running; hiking; freshwater, saltwater, and fly fishing; road and mountain biking; and car, backyard, backpacking, and RV camping.

In Colorado specifically, outdoor recreation in 2020 supported more than 120,000 jobs and generated \$9.6 billion value added, with snow activities as the

largest contributor. Colorado employment growth and compensation growth relative to outdoor recreation are consistently above the US average (BEA 2021).

A special report distributed by OIA recognized that “how people spend their free time during the pandemic is largely motivated by what is available to do close to home and alone or with others in their household” (OIA 2021). Those who participated in outdoor recreation for the first time alone stayed close to home and chose a low-barrier activity such as walking, running, biking, or hiking.

These trends demonstrate the importance of access as a motivation for recreation participation. Retention of new participants can be improved through increased opportunities near home, developing programs with goals of diversifying participation, and introducing more accessible recreation activities such as walking, running, hiking, and bird watching (OIA 2021).



## THE FUTURE OF OUTDOOR RECREATION

### Carrying Capacity

Summit County continues to see increased visitation to trails in all basins countywide, creating challenges for trailhead capacity management and providing quality outdoor recreation experiences. Simultaneously with increased visitation, the County continues to experience demand for new recreation opportunities such as single use trails, e-bikes, fat bikes, and drones (among others). In order to address these and other new future recreational demands, the County, USFS, and towns must collaboratively seek public input on new uses and regulations. Land managers will need to have a greater understanding of how these and other new modes of recreation may impact natural resources and overall outdoor recreation experiences before implementing changes.

Without practices such as sustainable trail design and

### Trails

Most trails in Summit County are located entirely on public lands (e.g., USFS) or easements across private land (a property right conveying public access for a specific purpose), and are officially designated. However, some routes were created informally by historic and continued use, and are thus not officially designated. Increasing private development within the County threatens to cut off access to formal and informal trails, impacting the access to public lands cherished by Summit County residents and visitors. Connecting neighborhoods and towns to the core Recpath provides a multitude of benefits, including sense of community, less need for a vehicle, safer access, and increased safety.

There are over 574 miles of natural surface trails and 250 miles of recreational roads throughout the entire county that provide motorized and non-motorized recreation access for summer and winter sports. The majority of these trails are for shared use and are popular for hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, snowshoeing, OHVs, and dirt biking, among others. Trail users can explore high mountain peaks, multi-use trail complexes such as Tenderfoot Mountain or the Golden Horseshoe, or long-distance routes like the Colorado and Continental Divide Trails.

In addition to natural surface trails, there are also over 64 miles of paved, multi-use paths including 49 miles in the Recpath system, community pathways, and designated on-street bike lanes. These pathways are used as

trail etiquette education, increased visitation may cause resource degradation and overcrowding on trails and at trailheads, leading to conflicts (such as hiker/biker confrontation) and negative outdoor experiences.

As visitation to Summit County's amazing landscapes continues to increase—by both residents and visitors—employing best management practices on open space and trails will be more important than ever. Managing these challenges will require SCOST and its partners to explore unique solutions for parking and capacity management, and balancing outdoor recreation with conservation. Doing so will protect the unique habitats and natural resources found in Summit County, while still offering the diverse recreational opportunities that make Summit County so special.

alternative transportation corridors for commuters and visitors in addition to providing high quality recreational opportunities.

The 49-mile Recpath system is comprised of arterial routes connecting the basins within the County and to neighboring counties. The system is managed by SCOST on unincorporated Summit County lands and by the towns within their

respective jurisdictional boundaries. This system requires immense capital investment and interagency cooperation to develop and maintain.

To manage trails and recreational access, SCOST collaborates with the USFS and the Towns of Breckenridge, Blue River, Frisco, Montezuma, Dillon, and Silverthorne. For example, many access points to National Forest lands are owned or managed by the County and towns. Other collaborative partnerships include special use agreements to manage and maintain the Recpath and trails in the Golden Horseshoe, the Dillon Reservoir Recreation Area, and an interagency workgroup that adaptively manages the Quandary Peak area.

**Recpath construction typically includes many project partners and can cost over \$1 million per mile.**

View a detailed Story Map of Recpath and Community Pathways by [clicking here.](#)





Over 20 miles of paved community pathways are managed by ski resorts and private landowners, and serve as links to the larger Recpath system. Many of these community pathways were built during initial development in resort areas, and ongoing management and maintenance responsibilities are often unclear. Designating and clarifying these responsibilities is crucial to maintaining a safe and quality user experience.

## Significant Routes

Developed and periodically amended with substantial public input and incorporated into County Master Plans, Significant Route Maps are tools utilized by SCOST and the Summit County Planning Department to ensure key trails and recreational roads are protected and maintained when new development or land use changes are proposed. Routes may include trails (formal or informal) that are emblematic of a particular basin or that provide key trail network connections, or roads that

The County Road and Bridge Department and Town governments manage the on-street bike lanes that are not a part of the Recpath system. Collaboration between these entities will allow land managers to identify, improve, and connect safe on-street routes for pedestrians and cyclists to access natural surface trails, community pathways, and the Recpath system.

provide access to neighborhoods and National Forest lands. The Summit County

Land Use and Development Code also regulates Summer and Winter Significant Routes with setback requirements, standards for providing access to these routes, and restrictions on winter plowing.

View a detailed Story Map of  
Significant Summer  
and Winter Routes by  
[clicking here.](#)



*Summit County not only boasts ~100 miles of the congressionally designated Continental Divide National Scenic Trail but also two National Recreation Trails (designated by the Secretary of the Interior), and the Colorado Trail.*

The 9-mile Wheeler Trail from Copper Mountain to McCullough Gulch provides backcountry adventures for a range of non-motorized uses. The paved Vail Pass-Tenmile Canyon Trail from Gore Creek Campground to Frisco doubles as a portion of the 55-mile Summit County Recpath. The Recpath is paved with asphalt and popular with bicycle riders. Nearly 66 miles of the 500-mile Colorado Trail/Continental Divide National Scenic Trail passes by Summit County's high mountain lakes and towering peaks.





## Winter Recreation

Summit County is a premier winter destination with four renowned ski resorts and countless opportunities for backcountry adventures such as backcountry skiing, cross country skiing, fat biking, snowmobiling, and snowshoeing. Winter recreation is a major tourism draw for the County but is also extremely important to locals' quality of life. Increasing popularity of winter recreation contributes to increased visitation to the County as a whole, and can strain local infrastructure and impact backcountry resources. As population and visitation increases more

people are looking to the backcountry for less crowded experiences than can be found at resorts. Maintaining backcountry access, educating the public about safely recreating in the backcountry, and minimizing impacts to wildlife habitat, especially big game winter ranges, will be important. Climate change will also impact way of life and the tourism industry, as drier winters and water availability will alter the amount of days available for winter recreation activities.



Snowmobilers enjoy Summit County's trail system in the winter

*Non-resort winter recreation activities continue to grow in popularity such as backcountry skiing, fat biking, and snowmobiling.*



## Dispersed Recreation

In addition to trail-based recreation, Summit County offers a variety of dispersed recreational opportunities such as rock climbing, boating, rafting, camping, picnicking, and wildlife viewing. The majority of which, especially camping, is available on National Forest lands. In cooperation with Colorado Parks & Wildlife (CPW), Summit County also provides numerous hunting and

fishing access points into the National Forest and along the rivers and streams in each basin. Dillon Reservoir and Green Mountain Reservoir offer abundant water-based recreational opportunities such as boating, fishing, and paddleboarding. Rafters and kayakers enjoy the whitewater of the Tenmile Creek and Blue and Snake Rivers.

## Commercial Uses and Events

Land managers in Summit County manage commercial uses in a variety of ways. Commercial uses on SCOST managed lands are prohibited other than within the Dillon Reservoir Recreation Area (DRRA), with permits granted by the Dillon Reservoir Recreation Committee (DRReC). DRReC is comprised of Summit County, Denver Water, Towns of Dillon and Frisco, and the USFS. Together these agencies oversee motorized and non-motorized recreation activities, camping and day use areas, the Frisco and Dillon marinas, and land within the DRRA boundary. If a special event occurs within the DRRA boundary, a DRReC permit is required.

Commercial uses are allowed on National Forest lands throughout the County with a Special Use Permit granted by the USFS, and on lands owned and managed by the Town of Breckenridge. Apart from commercial uses, Summit County Government requires special event permits for large events and races on County land that have 50 or more participants and/or charge an entrance fee.

### COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR COMMERCIAL USES ON COUNTY OPEN SPACE

With increasing requests for special event and commercial use permits, the County and DRReC must consider the impact these activities have on natural resources, user experiences, local communities, and open space assets. Large events had the strongest opposition with 40.7 percent of respondents not supporting them on lands managed by SCOST according to the Visioning Questionnaire. The following activities were supported by questionnaire respondents but would require changes to existing regulations via a public process to implement.

#### **SUPPORTED WITH A PERMIT BUT NO FEE:**

- ✓ Academic Research
- ✓ Temporary Public Art Installations

#### **SUPPORTED WITH A PERMIT AND FEE:**

- ✓ Weddings and Elopements
- ✓ Commercial Photography/Videography
- ✓ Commercial Instruction
- ✓ Guided Tours
- ✓ Trail Races



## OUTDOOR RECREATION GOALS AND POLICIES

### **Goal 7. Develop, maintain, and improve quality trail-based summer and winter recreation opportunities.**

- 7.1 Create and manage for a diversity of shared multi-use, trail-based recreation opportunities including both motorized and non-motorized uses that expands Summit County's trail network.
- 7.2 Enhance user experiences, minimize conflicts, and reduce safety concerns with trail design practices and/or applying alternative management strategies such as directional trails and separating uses, when and where appropriate.
- 7.3 Expand trail etiquette education efforts to reduce conflict and improve safety.
- 7.4 Work with land managers and property owners to create a functional and connected network of local and regional trails that link towns, neighborhoods, and other trail systems together.
- 7.5 Ensure new trail proposals should minimize natural resource and wildlife habitat impacts, address a critical connectivity or safety need, be designed for their intended use, and take construction and long-term maintenance costs and responsibility into account.
- 7.6 Evaluate new proposed trail uses for consistency with trail design, safety, carrying capacity, parking availability, property management plans, trail easements, impacts to management costs, and other criteria.

### **Goal 8. Develop, maintain, and improve quality dispersed recreation opportunities.**

- 8.1 Manage, protect, and expand existing access to water-based recreational opportunities including Summit County rivers and streams, Dillon Reservoir, Green Mountain Reservoir, and other popular water-based recreation areas.
- 8.2 Assist partners to provide and maintain legal campsites (including within designated campgrounds) to deter illegal camping, illegal activity, and minimize natural resource damage.
- 8.3 Provide opportunities for non-trail-based recreation activities throughout the County (e.g., picnicking, climbing, bird watching, stargazing, etc.) and/or reduce barriers to participate in those activities.

### **Goal 9. Provide and protect access to public lands.**

- 9.1 Provide accurate electronic mapping data for conserved lands, recreational routes, and public access points in Summit County and the surrounding area.
- 9.2 Secure and protect trail easements and access points across private land to connect trails to the regional trail system.
- 9.3 Ensure new development should provide non-vehicular travel routes, and dedicate easements and construct trails, trailheads and public access to streams, lakes, public lands, and other nearby trails.
- 9.4 In cooperation with the USFS and other agencies, acquire, develop, and expand existing legal access and parking at trailheads where appropriate, based on location (frontcountry/backcountry), current and future use levels, and other available alternatives.
- 9.5 Utilize the existing and future WRNF Travel Management Plan and town trail plans to guide trail designations and trail management in each basin.
- 9.6 Prioritize reducing barriers to accessing open space and trail activities in communities where connectivity to trails is lacking, and for individuals who currently do not participate in outdoor recreation activities.
- 9.7 Encourage visitors to use modes of transportation alternative to cars to access trailheads and trail portals.



## Goal 10. Identify, protect, and maintain Significant Summer and Winter Routes.

- 10.1 Require a conditional use permit for new winter plowing in the Backcountry Zone, and that four inches of snow cover be left, to ensure recreational over-snow uses can safely be accommodated. Landowners wishing to plow a Significant Winter Route, or a route with substantial historic recreational use, must provide alternative access as deemed appropriate and necessary.
- 10.2 Work with land management partners and private landowners to prioritize trails identified as Significant Routes for access, maintenance, and improvements.
- 10.3 Work with land management partners to develop and implement backcountry road maintenance standards that protect natural resources while preserving the primitive character of backcountry routes, including Significant Summer Routes.
- 10.4 Discourage the construction of new roads in backcountry/rural areas. In order to protect natural resources and backcountry character, improvements to existing roads in the Backcountry Zone should not be allowed without a conditional use permit.
- 10.5 Cooperate with private and public entities to provide new trail connections and public access along regionally significant routes, including the Colorado Trail, Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, and other National Recreation Trails.
- 10.6 Protect trails of national and regional significance by using wide buffers, protecting viewsheds, and considering the user experience.



OHVs checking out the mountain goats in Summit County's high-country



## **Goal 11. Balance recreational opportunities with community wellbeing and the protection of natural resources.**

- 11.1 Continually evaluate the carrying capacity of trails and other recreational areas, along with educational efforts, to minimize negative environmental and social impacts as visitation to the County increases.
- 11.2 Regulate and develop standards and capacities for commercial uses and special events on County open space and trails to minimize impacts to natural resources and the wellbeing of local communities.
- 11.3 Evaluate new trail proposals for consistency with open space and travel management plans, easements, land use code restrictions (if applicable), and environmental review standards. Due to a limited land base, and the desire to protect wildlife habitat and natural resources, emphasize the importance of shared-use trails.
- 11.4 Use consistent and sustainable trail development and facility standards to design, build, and maintain trails appropriate for their intended user groups and capacity, while protecting natural resources and important habitats.
- 11.5 Mitigate environmental impacts by decommissioning, closing, or rerouting trails, or closing dispersed campsites, where resource or management concerns outweigh their community or recreational benefit.
- 11.6 Use seasonal recreational closures and dog leash/prohibition policies in open space areas to reduce recreational impacts on wildlife populations.
- 11.7 Minimize resource impacts and trail proliferation by concentrating use and access points in areas suitable for high-density recreation.
- 11.8 Incorporate *CPW's Planning Trails with Wildlife in Mind, 2021* principles, especially minimizing fragmentation of habitat and maintaining landscape connectivity, educating visitors about wildlife through education and signage, and, as appropriate, implementing seasonal closures, dogs on leash rules, and the concentration of use in high-density recreation areas.

## **Goal 12. Maintain and expand the paved multi-use pathway system (i.e., the Recpath).**

- 12.1 Work cooperatively with private landowners, municipalities, the Colorado Department of Transportation, and the USFS to acquire access easements and encourage the completion of regional, paved, recreational pathways.
- 12.2 Regulate safe and appropriate year-round uses on the Recpath.
- 12.3 Maintain uniform wayfinding, regulatory signage, and pavement markings along the Recpath.
- 12.4 Maintain a high-quality surface and recovery zone (soft surface shoulder), where feasible.
- 12.5 Provide paved bike and pedestrian access from public buildings to the Recpath, and Recpath connections to trailheads, where feasible.
- 12.6 Designate and effectively communicate jurisdictional maintenance and management responsibilities of the Recpath and paved community pathways throughout the County.
- 12.7 Align Recpath maintenance with long-term management goals and desired pathway capacity.
- 12.8 Work with Towns, County Departments, and CDOT to provide safe cycling and pedestrian routes along streets and highways.





Volunteers Build Bridge; SCRAP trails

# 4 COLLABORATE

- » Program Capacity & Sustainability
- » Communication



# PROGRAM CAPACITY & SUSTAINABILITY

## BACKGROUND

SCOST operates with a budget of approximately \$3 million per year. The primary source of funds for SCOST is a mill levy property tax that was first approved in 2008 and extended in perpetuity in 2019, and funds a number of community programs including open space and trails. Currently, SCOST allocates approximately \$1.6 million per year of this funding to property acquisitions. And since its inception, SCOST has leveraged \$39 million in acquisition expenditures with almost \$85 million in grants and property donations.

In addition to the mill levy, SCOST also collects smaller amounts of revenue from other sources, including but not limited to:

- **Conservation Trust Fund.** Lottery proceeds distributed to Colorado communities. Currently provides approximately \$85,000 per year for Recpath construction and maintenance.
- **Grant revenue.** SCOST competes for grant funding on a project-by-project basis. Funding varies per year and is primarily used for trails projects and property acquisitions.
- **Recreation events (i.e., special event permits).** SCOST assesses fees for special events held on County open space, trails, and other County roads and public areas. Funding is minimal and varies (~\$20,000 per year). Each permit costs \$100-300 with additional participant fees.
- **Public use area fees.** Fees required during the development review process to offset the impacts of development on public assets such as trails and open space. Fees are assessed at \$1,500 per residential unit or 1,000 per square foot of retail or service space. Alternative options to paying a public use area fee include providing in lieu contributions such as recreational trail easements.
- **Rental income.** Minimal income from grazing leases on open space properties. Grazing leases also enable the County to maintain water rights. In exchange for grazing rights, ranchers agree to monitor and maintain ditches owned by the County.
- **Contributions.** While rare, property owners may provide cash or land contributions to SCOST.
- **USFS Land Exchanges and Sales.** SCOST has successfully worked with the USFS to transfer or sell open space lands through land exchanges and the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The proceeds fund additional open space land acquisitions.

*SCOST is primarily funded by approximately \$3 million in annual property tax revenues, along with other smaller revenue sources.*





Currently, SCOST is comprised of eight staff members including one director, three full-time staff, and four seasonal staff. While staffing levels have increased from one full-time employee when SCOST formed in 1995, the number of staff is substantially lower than similar county open space programs in Colorado. Resource specialists work on a variety of projects related to land acquisitions, natural resource conservation, recreation planning, open space management, and volunteer coordination. In addition to staff, the OSAC helps guide SCOST. The OSAC makes recommendations to the BOCC on Open Space Fund expenditures, acquisition purchases, and open space management policies and actions. With no staff dedicated to education or law enforcement, SCOST relies on the Sheriff's Office Special Operations Division and Search and Rescue for enforcement and emergency response, on a case-by-case basis when parking or other challenges arise.

Volunteers also play a vital role in SCOST's operations. For almost 20 years, community members have helped keep the Recpath and County trailheads clean as part of the Adopt-a-Recpath and Adopt-a-Trailhead programs. Each year, SCOST partners with Rocky Mountain Youth Corps and other volunteer organizations to conduct a variety of trail and open space projects, and hosts numerous volunteer workdays that focus on building or maintaining trails.

## THE FUTURE OF PROGRAM CAPACITY & SUSTAINABILITY

The biggest challenge facing SCOST's day-to-day operations is staff capacity, as more projects are planned than staff availability allows. Project areas include meeting growing management needs such as trailhead facility maintenance, resource monitoring and management, ranger patrols, and educational outreach. Additionally, overburdened workloads can lead to staff burnout and limited ability to tackle what is "important" versus what is "urgent." To ensure long-term sustainability of SCOST and its ability to adequately address community challenges, SCOST must regularly evaluate its staffing levels, funding, and priorities.

## SCOST STAFFING TREE





## PROGRAM CAPACITY & SUSTAINABILITY GOALS AND POLICIES

### Goal 13. Improve the Open Space & Trails Department's capacity to proactively address countywide challenges and adapt to changing priorities and trends.

- 13.1 Maintain adequate staffing levels to accomplish SCOST's priorities and the goals of this OST Master Plan.
- 13.2 Increase law enforcement presence on open space properties and trails, where and when appropriate.
- 13.3 Collaborate with local public agencies and organizations to leverage resources and address countywide challenges.
- 13.4 Engage the Open Space Advisory Council to enhance staff capacity and expertise.

### Goal 14. Enhance the Open Space & Trails Department's capacity through volunteer programs.

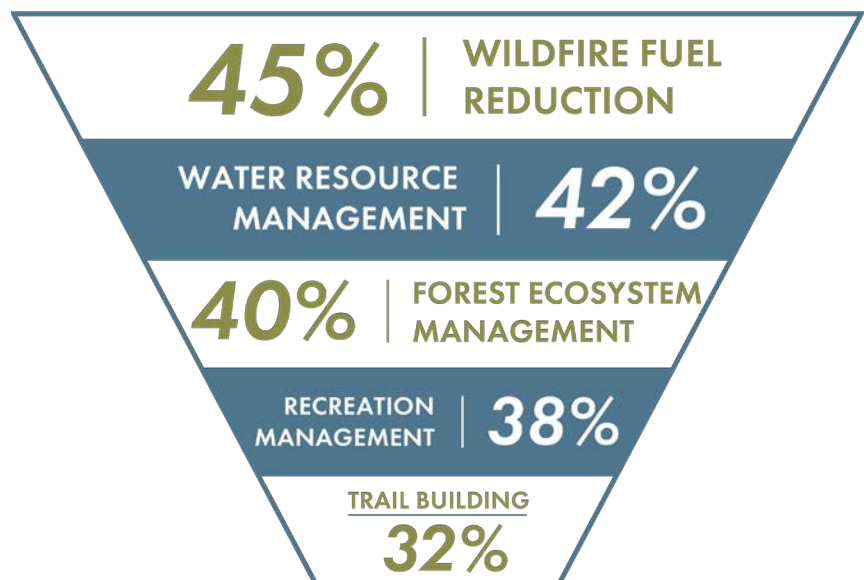
- 14.1 Create volunteer opportunities for diverse communities that foster a strong connection to the Open Space & Trails Department and its mission and sense of stewardship for public lands.
- 14.2 Utilize volunteers to leverage management, trail building, and monitoring capabilities on open space properties and trails.

### Goal 15. Ensure sustainable funding for the Open Space & Trails Department's programs and projects.

- 15.1 Pursue grant funding and funding agreements from public agencies, non-profits, and land trusts for appropriate department programs and projects.
- 15.2 Pursue sustainable, long-term dedicated funding source(s) to sustain and improve the department's mission, programs, and services.

## IMPORTANCE OF SCOST SERVICES

The following illustrates the community's stated priorities for SCOST management and stewardship, per the Visioning Questionnaire.





# COMMUNICATION

## BACKGROUND

Communication is an essential aspect of natural resource stewardship and connecting diverse communities to nature. Connecting with the public can foster a sense of stewardship and excitement toward the natural world, educate users on recreating responsibly, and can provide alerts on dangers or upcoming management activities.

Currently, SCOST does not have a dedicated communications, education, or interpretation staff member, and therefore has limited capacity to reach the community through SCOST updates, public events, volunteer opportunities, and educational opportunities. Typical communications disseminated by the County include major project updates, alerts, road closures, and trail conditions. The County utilizes Colorado Trails Explorer (COTREX), social media (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter), and a webpage to distribute public information. However, the public receives information about recreating in the County from third-party sites a majority of the time.

## THE FUTURE OF COMMUNICATIONS

The biggest communication challenges facing SCOST include better meeting the needs of diverse communities in the County, including Latinx, youth, low-income, and under served populations. Another important challenge is spreading unified messaging across the County on responsible recreation and minimizing impacts to natural resources. Land management partners, businesses, and towns desire a unified approach to messaging that educates residents and visitors about recreating responsibly and provides adequate wayfinding signage on trail networks throughout the County.

Through partnerships with local organizations, such as Breckenridge History (formerly Breckenridge Heritage Alliance), SCOST has implemented interpretive signage on Summit County's mining history throughout the trail system in French Gulch. SCOST anticipates continuing to collaborate with partners such as the Town of Breckenridge, USFS, Friends of the Dillon Ranger District, and Breckenridge History to deliver interpretive and educational programming.

To address communications challenges in the future, SCOST should bolster its partnerships to promote uniform messaging and signage, and evaluate how it may better reach and meet the needs of diverse communities countywide.

## TRIP PLANNING RESOURCES

According to Visioning Questionnaire responses, the primary resources for trip planning and learning about open space and trails include a multitude of trail applications and online mapping tools, such as COTREX or MTB Project, as well as local knowledge and prior experiences.



Word of Mouth



Mobile Trail Applications



Purchased Maps and Guidebooks

## SCOST DIGITAL COMMUNICATION



@summitcountygov



@summitcountygov



@summitcountygov



[www.summitcountyco.gov/openspace](http://www.summitcountyco.gov/openspace)



## COMMUNICATION GOALS AND POLICIES

### **Goal 16. Generate greater awareness of and support for the Open Space & Trail Department's mission and programs.**

- 16.1 Provide community engagement opportunities to raise awareness of the department's programs and projects, and utilize public input to inform the department's work program and regulations.
- 16.2 Ensure department communications and community engagement strategies thoughtfully include and are relevant to diverse communities in Summit County, including but not limited to the Latinx, immigrant, low-income, and under served communities, and those of different ages, interests, and abilities.

### **Goal 17. Connect people with nature to create stewards of Summit County's public lands.**

- 17.1 Disseminate unified "know before you go," "trail etiquette," and "recreate responsibly" messaging with public agencies, organizations, and environmental groups in the County and region.
- 17.2 Utilize uniform, simple signage across SCOST assets, and work towards consistent and clear messaging and adequate wayfinding with public agencies countywide.
- 17.3 Partner to provide countywide, interpretive signage and programs to promote ecosystem protection and the preservation of Summit County's heritage.
- 17.4 Ensure countywide messaging, interpretive programs, and programs to connect people to nature thoughtfully include and are relevant to diverse communities in Summit County, including but not limited to the Latinx, immigrant, American Indians, and low-income communities, and those of different ages, interests, and abilities.
- 17.5 Create opportunities for schools, colleges, organizations, and diverse communities to volunteer with SCOST.
- 17.6 Collaborate with American Indian Tribes and indigenous peoples to raise cultural awareness and share the culture of the indigenous populations who currently call Summit County their home and of those who historically lived here.





Scrapy Trail Directional Marker

# 5 ACTION PLAN

- » Master Plan Implementation
- » Regulatory Review
- » Funding
- » Action Items



The following chapter outlines how SCOST and its partners will achieve the goals in this Master Plan over the next 10 years.

## MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

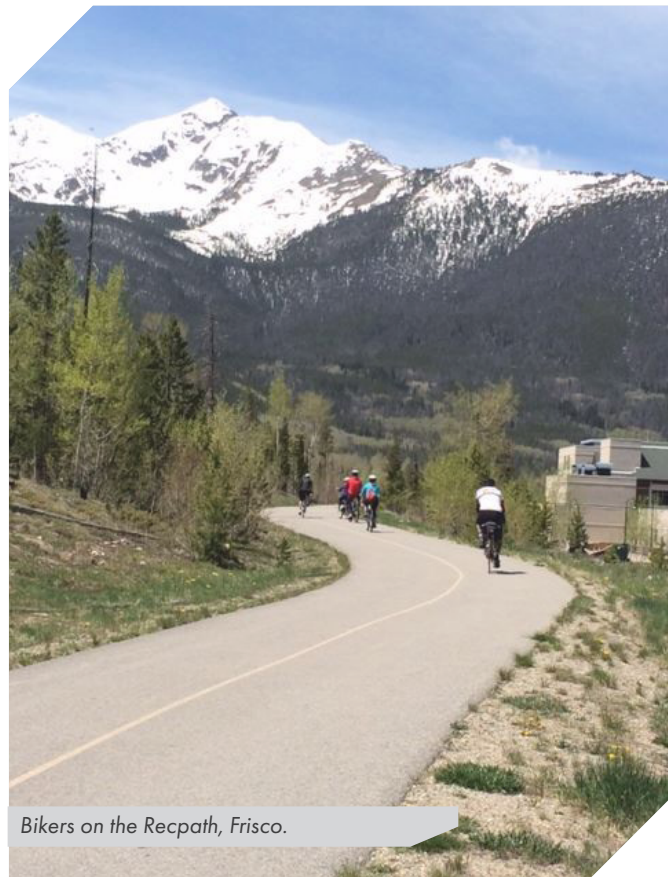
To achieve the vision set forth in this OST Master Plan, a detailed list of action items was developed based on public input received throughout the planning process. These action items will help SCOST develop annual budgets and work plans. A number of action items will depend on future staffing levels and capacity, funding, and partnerships. SCOST will work with other County departments, public land managers, and other organizations to identify action items that may be conducted collaboratively.

The OST Master Plan establishes the community vision, goals, and policies for open space and trails countywide, and will not change over the life of the Master Plan. However, to ensure adaptability in how the Master Plan is implemented, action items and their priority will

be reviewed on a regular basis during annual SCOST budgeting, work plan development, and meetings with partners. Action items can be refined, removed, or added as projects are accomplished or priorities change. Annually reviewing action items will also allow SCOST to evaluate whether it is achieving its vision of conserving, connecting, and collaborating. A more extensive check-in should be completed every five years to evaluate any significant changes or updates to the action items. Significant changes could stem from a substantial increase or decrease in population, shifts in demographics, recreation trends, or impacts from climate change or natural disasters.

## REGULATORY REVIEW

In addition to SCOST and its partners working towards completing the listed action items, the Master Plan will be used in the Summit County development review process for proposed land use and building projects. During the development review and building permit processes, the Summit County Planning Department will review applications for consistency with this OST Master Plan.



*Bikers on the Recpath, Frisco.*



## FUNDING

The priority level assigned to each action item is based on current funding, capacity, BOCC direction, and the recommendations of both the OSAC and SCOST's partners. The community demonstrated many desired outcomes throughout the master planning process. Therefore, successful implementation of the Master Plan will require additional funding and partnerships. Open space acquisition and outdoor recreation management revenues across Colorado are commonly derived from

three primary sources: a municipality's General Fund, locally approved sales tax or bond revenues, and the State's Colorado Lottery Conservation Trust Fund and Great Outdoors Colorado grants. The General Fund and sales tax or bond revenues serve to leverage grants, which often require matching funds. A number of other grant sources across a variety of industries like health and tourism may also be available on a limited basis.

## ACTION ITEMS

The action items in the following tables were compiled from multiple sources including the existing Countywide Master Plans, public and stakeholder feedback, other relevant countywide plans, and staff knowledge of current needs. During this planning process, SCOST heard a resounding number of comments and needs related to specific trail connection and enhancement needs (e.g., construct more trails on Swan Mountain or improve the sustainability of Banker's Tank Trail). Therefore, most trail specific information was compiled in a separate database to be reviewed by SCOST trails staff and partners for future planning and projects. Many of the future management plan actions and SCOST activities will involve public input. Completed summaries of the feedback collected throughout this planning process can be [reviewed online on the Story Map](#).

Each action item identifies applicable policy(ies), level of priority, agency lead, and implementation partners. Priority levels correlate to short-term: 0-3 years, mid-term: 4-6 years, and long-term: 7-10 years, or actions that are ongoing or completed on an annual basis. The "Goal. Policy" column refers to the goals and policies numbered in the previous chapters. Refer to the acronym list at the beginning of the document.

Current operation and maintenance costs are not included in the following tables. Therefore, the tables do not represent a complete picture of project feasibility and total future budget needs.

**“Develop strong partnerships with local non-profits to accomplish land and water management objectives.”**

*- 2021 Visioning Questionnaire Feedback*





## OPEN SPACE PROTECTION

Action	Related Goal. Policy #	Priority	Agency Lead	Partners
1. Annually monitor County-held conservation easements and review annual monitoring reports from conservation easement holders on SCOST properties. Provide monitoring reports to landowners of County-held conservation easements, and address concerns from conservation easement holders on SCOST properties as needed.	2.7	Annual	SCOST	COL, Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust
2. Conduct regular, targeted outreach to private landowners about opportunities for protecting their land through methods such as fee simple acquisition and conservation easements.	1.2	Ongoing	SCOST	
3. Update acquisition strategies with partners, and evaluate land/trail acquisition opportunities in all four basins for their ability to improve proximity to open space and trail access for under-served communities.	1.1	Ongoing	SCOST, OSAC	Towns, USFS
4. Assess County properties in need of longer-term conservation measures (e.g., easements, rezoning).	1.7	Short-Term	SCOST	OSAC
5. Complete a code audit and strengthen County code language to reflect natural resource protection and ecosystem management goals and policies in this OST Master Plan.	All	Short-Term	SCOST, Community Development	Towns (as applicable)
6. Create an overlay designating "open space and recreation management zones" for SCOST properties, based on natural, historic, and cultural resources, and outdoor recreation opportunities.	2.1	Mid-Term	SCOST	Towns, USFS
7. Identify appropriate partners to help preserve and protect significant historic resources in the County.	2.8	Mid-Term	SCOST	USFS, Breck History
8. Inventory cultural resources and their conditions on SCOST properties (e.g., special geographic features, significant landscapes such as ranches, historic structures, and archaeological resources).	1.8	Long-Term	SCOST	USFS, Tribes, local historical organizations, volunteers
9. Evaluate existing Open Space Management Plans for necessary updates.	2.2	Long-Term	SCOST	
10. Collaborate with American Indian Tribes and indigenous populations to identify and address cultural resource concerns countywide.	2.8	Long-Term	SCOST	Towns, USFS





## ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

Action	Related Goal. Policy #	Priority	Agency Lead	Partners
11. Continue SCOST's program to inventory and monitor wildlife on County Open Space to assess species presence, absence, and distribution using technology such as ArcGIS (e.g., Collector) and wildlife cameras.	3.1	Ongoing	SCOST	
12. Utilize beaver management strategies that allow beavers to stay on the landscape and perform critical ecosystem functions without causing infrastructure damage (e.g., ponds near Conoco in Tenmile Canyon).	3.3	Ongoing	SCOST	
13. Monitor, identify, and treat noxious weed populations on SCOST properties.	4.1	Ongoing	Summit County Weed Department	SCOST
14. Partner with relevant agencies to implement fuel reduction projects throughout the County to reduce fuel loads and hazards, create defensible spaces around communities, and promote forest health.	4.2	Ongoing	Colorado State Forest Service, CSU Extension, Wildfire Council	SCOST, USFS
15. Maintain ditch infrastructure and document flows. Work with lessees to better manage agricultural water use on SCOST properties.	5.2	Ongoing	SCOST	Agricultural lessees
16. Identify and plan restoration and enhancement projects in riparian areas based on feasibility, cost, need, and benefit.	6.0	Ongoing	SCOST	
17. Continue to participate in the Summit County Abandoned Mines working group to identify opportunities to clean up mined lands.	6.1	Ongoing	Environmental Non-Profits	SCOST, Towns, USFS, TU
18. Minimize recreational activities near known denning sites of lynx.	3.4	Ongoing	CPW	SCOST, USFS
19. Remove barbed wire from properties where no longer needed. Replace all other fencing with wildlife-friendly fencing or fencing that does not restrict wildlife movement (e.g., solid rail versus chain link, smooth wire versus barbed).	3.1	Short-Term	SCOST	CPW, USFS
20. Collaborate with CPW to spread dog-wildlife conflict awareness and install signage where wildlife conflicts frequently occur (e.g., "Moose in Area", "Do Not Feed the Bears").	3.2	Short-Term	SCOST	CPW, USFS, TOB
21. Collaborate with the National Forest Foundation to utilize the existing in-lieu fee (ILF) mitigation instrument and/or establish an independent mitigation bank or ILF in Summit County.	5.1	Short-Term	SCOST	USFS, NFF, nonprofit agencies





Action	Related Goal. Policy #	Priority	Agency Lead	Partners
22. Create a small stakeholder group that meets regularly to discuss and address wildlife issues (e.g., planning trails with wildlife in mind, wildlife conflicts, etc.), and update CPW on relevant land use projects.	3.0	Short-Term	CPW, USFS	SCOST, Towns, Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnership Initiative
23. Work with CPW to identify roost sites of bats, and install gates and other barriers at mine shafts to protect bat species from white-nose syndrome.	3.2	Mid-Term	CPW	SCOST, USFS, TOB
24. Complete a forest management plan for SCOST properties/complexes.	4.0	Mid-Term	SCOST	CSU Extension
25. Utilize the Westervelt Ecological Wetland Mitigation Feasibility report to help guide potential wetland mitigation projects.	5.1	Mid-Term	SCOST	
26. Collaborate with Summit County Safe Passages to protect movement corridors and reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions.	3.1	Long-Term	Summit County Safe Passages, CDOT, CPW	SCOST, USFS
27. Support the work of towns, Summit County Landfill, CPW, and Timberline Disposal to exchange all trash cans with bear proof trash cans.	3.3	Long-Term	CPW	High Country Conservation Center, Towns, SCOST
28. Identify breeding sites and conduct surveys of boreal toad presence to support the protection and recovery of this state endangered species.	3.4	Long-Term	CPW	SCOST, USFS, FDRD
29. Plant native tree species after fuel reduction treatments or wildfires to encourage forest regeneration where natural regeneration is lacking or inadequate.	4.5	Long-Term	SCOST, USFS	Colorado State Forest Service, CSU Extension, Wildfire Council
30. Work with agricultural lessees to identify new, scientifically proven or experimental ways to manage healthy soils and wildlife habitat (particularly sagebrush), and practice water conservation methods.	5.0	Long-Term	SCOST	Sustainability Office, Environmental Non-Profits, Land Trusts, FOLBR
31. Develop and implement a recreation and stewardship master plan for the Blue River corridor.	5.2	Long-Term	FOLBR	SCOST, BRWG, Towns, USFS





## OUTDOOR RECREATION

Action	Related Goal. Policy #	Priority	Agency Lead	Partners
32. Formally designate dispersed campsites and/or close dispersed campsites that negatively impact natural resources and public safety.	8.2	Ongoing	USFS	FDRD
33. Annually discuss road maintenance priorities for popular dirt roads and winter plowing strategies with the Road and Bridge Department and USFS (e.g., McCullough Gulch Road, Boreas Pass Road, Peru Creek Road).	10.2	Ongoing	SCOST	R&B, USFS
34. Expand and develop monitoring techniques jointly with partners, such as trail and vehicle counters, to collect quantitative data about visitation and use patterns on trails, roads, and in parking lots throughout the County.	11.1	Ongoing	SCOST	USFS, Towns
35. Identify locations to develop trailhead and water access facilities such as restrooms, trash receptacles, and animal waste disposal stations. Utilize the database of public comments collected during this master planning effort to understand the need for maintenance and facilities at recreation sites countywide.	7.0, 8.0	Ongoing	SCOST	Towns, USFS
36. Formalize existing undesignated trails, where appropriate and sustainable, to improve recreational experiences and connect neighborhoods to trail systems where connectivity is lacking.	9.6	Ongoing	SCOST	Towns, USFS
37. Develop a countywide trailhead capacity management plan that utilizes a carrying capacity framework, and evaluates the need for alternative management strategies at popular trails and trailheads (i.e., alternative transportation, fees, expanded parking, designated use trails).	7.2	Short-Term	SCOST	Towns, USFS
38. Develop a "Transit to Trails" program to encourage public transportation to trailheads and reduce barriers to accessing trails by eliminating the need for a car or bike.	9.7	Short-Term	Summit Stage, Sustainability Office	SCOST, Environmental Non-Profits
39. Strengthen requirements for event organizers to alert the public about upcoming special events on busy trails in the County through social media, temporary signage, and other communication strategies. Collaborate with the USFS and towns to accomplish this action.	11.2	Short-Term	SCOST	USFS, Towns





Action	Related Goal. Policy #	Priority	Agency Lead	Partners
40. Improve the permitting system countywide for special events and commercial uses by reevaluating relevant policies, streamlining the application process, and continually evaluating impacts to natural resources and crowding levels. Collaborate with the USFS and towns to ensure permitting expectations are consistent across boundaries.	11.2	Short-Term	SCOST	USFS, Towns, Other Referral Agencies
41. Improve strategies to address dog waste impacts and dog/wildlife and dog/human conflicts.	11.6	Short-Term	Summit County Animal Control	SCOST, USFS, CPW
42. Create an interagency Recpath working group that meets regularly to discuss maintenance responsibilities and improvements to the Recpath and develops an infrastructure plan for the entirety of the Recpath.	12.7	Short-Term	SCOST	Towns, USFS, Resorts, SCOMBA
43. Separate day use parking from overnight parking with proper signage at appropriate trailheads. Identify areas where backpacking is popular and allow overnight parking at these trailheads.	7.2	Short-Term	USFS	SCOST
44. Develop and adopt a Designated Trails Plan. The plan should inventory designated and undesignated trails, outline management responsibilities of public agencies, and indicate trail connection opportunities, access opportunities, and allowed uses on certain trails. This plan should prioritize building and improving shared-use, non-motorized trails in communities where proximity to trail access is lacking. Potential trail connection opportunities were collected by stakeholders and the public during this master planning effort, and are compiled in a database maintained by SCOST. Investigate future trail funding and development strategies, such as hiring professional trail crews.	7.4, 7.5, 7.6	Short-Term	SCOST	Towns, USFS
45. Re-engage with partners and seek federal and state funding to continue work on the Fremont Pass Recpath.	12.1	Mid-Term	SCOST	CDOT, USFS, Climax, Lake County
46. Identify and evaluate the conditions of popular non-trail-based recreation areas (e.g., climbing areas, scenic overlooks, and roadside rest stops), and address conditions as appropriate.	8.3	Mid-Term	USFS	SCOST





Action	Related Goal. Policy #	Priority	Agency Lead	Partners
47. Develop a central map of water access, trails, and trailheads and indicate allowed uses in these locations. Share this map with third-party trip planning apps such as AllTrails.	9.1	Mid-Term	SCOST	DRReC, USFS, Towns
48. Strengthen Code language to require trail easements from developers using the Significant Routes Map, future Designated Trails Plan, and the policies relevant to Goal 9. Trail easements are key to enhancing community walkability and connectivity to other trail systems.	9.3	Mid-Term	SCOST, Community Development	Towns (as applicable)
49. Identify motorized use trailheads to enhance the efficiency of trailer parking.	9.4	Mid-Term	SCOST	Towns, USFS
50. Identify trails suitable to develop as wheelchair accessible areas.	9.6	Mid-Term	SCOST	Towns, USFS
51. Develop an environmental review process to assess the impact and need for new trails on SCOST properties.	11.3	Mid-Term	SCOST	
52. Reassess SCOST properties in need of seasonal wildlife closures and recreation buffers.	11.6	Mid-Term	SCOST	USFS, CPW
53. Complete shoulder and surface improvement projects on the Dillon Reservoir Recpath, including the dam face and between the Towns of Dillon and Frisco.	12.4	Mid-Term	SCOST	
54. Develop a countywide comprehensive trail rating system to help the public identify the best trails for their desired experience.	7.1	Long-Term	Towns	USFS, SCOST
55. Revisit e-bike and fat bike regulations by conducting thorough community engagement and discussions with land managers.	7.1	Long-Term	SCOST	Towns, USFS
56. Revisit drone regulations by conducting thorough community engagement and discussions with land managers.	7.1	Long-Term	SCOST	Towns, USFS
57. Clearly demarcate motorized routes to eliminate passage into non-motorized and wilderness areas; give priority to installing proper signage in areas identified in Dillon Ranger District MVUMs.	7.3	Long-Term	USFS	SCOST
58. Identify joint management opportunities to provide and maintain access to rivers, streams, and reservoirs.	8.1	Long-Term	FOLBR	SCOST, BRWG, Towns, USFS





Action	Related Goal. Policy #	Priority	Agency Lead	Partners
59. Create wildlife-viewing opportunities on County Open Space (e.g., viewing deck for osprey nests).	8.3	Long-Term	SCOST	CPW
60. Identify locations where safe connections between trails and communities across interstates and busy thoroughfares are lacking, and develop connections based on public input received throughout this planning process.	9.6	Long-Term	SCOST	Towns, USFS, CDOT
61. Where appropriate, seek funding and permission for grooming additional sections of the Recpath in the winter.	10.1	Long-Term	SCOST	Towns, USFS
62. Develop and adopt sustainable design, construction, maintenance, and restoration standards and guidelines for trails and facilities that also accommodate multi-uses or user specific trails.	11.4	Long-Term	SCOST	
63. Identify private open space parcels that have significant ecological or cultural resource value, and work with landowners to mitigate adverse impacts caused by unregulated recreation.	11.5	Long-Term	SCOST	
64. Continue pursuing construction of a paved recreational pathway or designated bicycle lane between Hoosier Pass and Breckenridge.	12.1	Long-Term	SCOST	TOB, Blue River, USFS





## PROGRAM CAPACITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Action	Related Goal. Policy #	Priority	Agency Lead	Partners
65. Annually pursue grant opportunities to fund groups such as Rocky Mountain Youth Corps, Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado, and outside contractors.	14.1	Ongoing	SCOST	
66. Partner with local organizations to promote trail etiquette through ambassador programs and other means.	14.2	Ongoing	SCOST	FDRD
67. Evaluate staffing levels and address potential need for additional staff.	13.1	Short-Term	SCOST	
68. Create an interagency roundtable that meets regularly to address countywide recreation and resource challenges.	13.3	Short-Term	SCOST	Towns, Land Management Agencies
69. Evaluate OSAC by-laws and ensure they adequately reflect the scope of the new Summit County Open Space & Trails Master Plan.	13.4	Short-Term	SCOST	OSAC
70. Review and update fee structures (e.g., special event permit fees, public use area fees, etc.) to reflect the current economic environment.	15.2	Short-Term	SCOST	
71. Increase number of existing volunteer and citizen science opportunities. Develop a tool for documenting how volunteers spend their time.	14.1, 14.2	Short-Term	SCOST	
72. Establish trail “ambassadors” to educate trail users about stewardship and etiquette, conduct community outreach, monitor trail counters, conduct facilities maintenance, etc.	13.2	Mid-Term	SCOST	USFS, TOB
73. Encourage permitted research activities on SCOST properties to guide management plans.	14.2	Mid-Term	SCOST	
74. Identify trails and trailheads in need of increased law enforcement presence.	13.2	Long-Term	SCOST	Sheriff’s Office
75. Analyze the feasibility of initiating an open space fund dedicated sales tax.	15.2	Long-Term	SCOST	
76. Adopt the SHIFT Outdoor Recreation & Conservation Principles as nationally developed principles, adopted by CPW, the Colorado Outdoor Partnership, and others. Aim to guide collaboration among outdoor recreationists, conservationists, and public land managers to provide a starting point for collective, strategic conversations, and actions to protect our lands, waters, and wildlife.	15.1, 13.3	Long-Term	SCOST	CPW





## COMMUNICATION

Action	Related Goal. Policy #	Priority	Agency Lead	Partners
77. Increase frequency of communication with residents and visitors through social media, the County website, and other outlets such as press releases to promote the SCOST Department's mission, successes, and ongoing projects.	16.1	Ongoing	SCOST	
78. Identify community events at which to distribute information about SCOST.	16.1	Ongoing	SCOST	
79. Continually update publicly available statewide and private databases like COMaP, COTREX, AllTrails, Trail Forks, MTB Project, etc.	17.2	Ongoing	SCOST	
80. Establish SCOST ambassadors that can share information with and engage communities that have not historically participated in outdoor activities. Ambassadors will attend community events and have the ability to speak a language other than English, or access to translators.	17.4	Mid-Term	SCOST	
81. Hire a consultant to help SCOST understand how to broaden and diversify its reach with communications and community engagement.	16.2	Mid-Term	SCOST	
82. Create a unified signage plan to update all trailhead and trail portal signs with current maps and regulations, reduce sign clutter, improve wayfinding, and provide inclusive signage countywide.	17.2	Mid-Term	SCOST	Towns, USFS





Action	Related Goal. Policy #	Priority	Agency Lead	Partners
83. Identify opportunities to engage schools, colleges, and other local organizations in volunteer projects with SCOST.	17.5	Mid-Term	SCOST	
84. Sign up to be a Colorado Outdoor Principle Partner, and encourage all Summit County partners to do the same.	16.1	Long-Term	SCOST	
85. Create an interagency roundtable focused on generating communications campaigns for public lands countywide (e.g., countywide "recreate responsibly" campaign, series on wildlife conservation, etc.).	17.1	Long-Term	Environmental Non-Profits, Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnership Initiative	Towns, Land Management Agencies, Tourism Industry, CO Tourism Office
86. Develop, maintain, and improve interpretive signs and programs at mines, historical sites, American Indian history, riparian corridors, wildlife habitat areas, and other significant natural and cultural resource areas.	17.3	Long-Term	Local Historical Organizations & Environmental Non-Profits	SCOST, Towns, USFS, CPW
87. Identify American Indian Tribes and indigenous populations that call Summit County home.	17.6	Long-Term	SCOST	CO Commission of Indian Affairs, History Colorado, USFS, CPW, Towns
88. Collaborate with willing American Indian Tribes and indigenous populations to identify ways to raise cultural awareness of the Tribes that call Summit County home.	17.6	Long-Term	SCOST	USFS



## CALL TO ACTION

**Partner:** Connect with non-profits and partner organizations that you are already involved in and ask them to help accomplish one of the Master Plan's Action Items.

**Integrate:** Adopt relevant policies and action items into other partner, local, state, and federal land management plans.

**Support:** Talk to local community leaders about your support for open space and trail priorities.

**Volunteer:** Join the fun while giving back. Sign up with Summit County at [www.summitcountyco.gov](http://www.summitcountyco.gov) or any of our partner organizations.

