



SUMMIT COUNTY

**OUTDOOR
COALITION**

Strategic Conservation & Recreation Plan

2026



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Executive Summary

Summit County's landscapes—its forests, waterways, wildlife habitats, and recreation areas—are central to the region's identity, economy, and quality of life. As visitation continues to grow and climate pressures intensify, the need for coordinated, regional approaches to conservation and recreation has become increasingly critical.

The Summit County Outdoor Coalition (SCOC) was established in 2023 through Colorado's Regional Partnership Initiative to serve as a collaborative forum for aligning partners and advancing shared priorities. SCOC brings together land managers, local governments, nonprofit organizations, recreation groups, and community partners to address complex, cross-jurisdictional challenges and opportunities.

This **Strategic Conservation and Recreation Plan** provides a shared, implementation-focused framework to guide that work. It builds directly on the significant planning, investment, and community engagement already undertaken by SCOC partners, ensuring the plan is grounded in current needs while avoiding duplication of efforts.

The plan is built around two strategies:

1. Balance Ecosystem Health and Recreation Pressure to Sustain World-Class Outdoor Experiences:

Ensuring that ecological health and recreation opportunities advance together so that Summit County remains a place where both people and nature can thrive.

2. Foster a Stewardship Ethic While Improving Recreation Access:

Cultivating a shared culture of care and responsible use of the region's lands and waters while improving opportunities to participate in outdoor experiences.

Together, these strategies reflect a shared commitment to ensuring that both people and nature can thrive in Summit County, now and into the future.



At the center of the plan is a targeted portfolio of priority and emerging opportunities identified through a structured, partner-driven evaluation process. These opportunities represent areas where regional coordination can accelerate implementation, align funding, and deliver measurable outcomes that no single organization could achieve alone.

Opportunities are organized by stage of readiness, providing clear entry points for action and investment:

Ready for Implementation: Projects with completed planning and strong alignment, positioned for immediate investment

Expansion & Scale: Existing efforts where increased coordination and investment can expand impact

Planning: Initiatives requiring further alignment and refinement to advance

Concept Development: Early-stage ideas that build the pipeline for future action

This staged approach ensures that the plan is both actionable in the near term and adaptable over time, supporting a continuous pipeline of collaborative projects.



The planning process was highly collaborative, involving all SCOC partners through surveys, interviews, workshops, and review of eight recent partner plans. By building on existing work and community engagement, the process minimized duplication while ensuring the strategy remains grounded in local priorities and realities.

This plan is designed to be adaptive and action-oriented. As conditions change and new opportunities emerge, SCOC will continue to evaluate and incorporate initiatives that align with its strategies and goals. Through sustained collaboration, shared learning, and coordinated action, SCOC partners are positioned to protect Summit County's natural resources while sustaining the world-class outdoor experiences that define the region.

Acknowledgments

The Summit County Outdoor Coalition Strategic Conservation and Recreation Plan was developed through the collaboration and commitment of SCOC partners and contributors. The Coalition extends its appreciation to the organizations, agencies, and individuals who shared their time, expertise, and perspectives throughout the planning process. Special thanks to the planning team led by the SCOC executive committee and CDR Associates.

This Strategic Conservation and Recreation Plan reflects the collective input, review, and consensus approval of the full partner network. The Steering Committee members signing below serve as designated representatives confirming adoption of the plan on behalf of the Summit County Outdoor Coalition.

Daniel Morris

[Daniel Morris \(Jun 8, 2026 14:50:45 MDT\)](#)

US Forest Service Dillon Ranger District
Daniel Morris, Recreation Staff Officer

Jessica Hertzberg

[Jessica Hertzberg \(Jun 8, 2026 09:15:24 MDT\)](#)

Town of Keystone
Jessica Hertzberg, Town Planner

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Colorado Parks and Wildlife
Hannah Grimes, District Wildlife Manager

Steven L. Herrman

[Steven L. Herrman \(Jun 8, 2026 09:25:38 MDT\)](#)

Town of Silverthorne
Steven Herrman, Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Director

Allison Morton

[Allison Morton \(Jun 5, 2026 15:31:05 MDT\)](#)

Summit County Government
Allison Morton, Senior Resource Specialist

Doozie Martin

[Doozie Martin \(Jun 8, 2026 09:01:01 MDT\)](#)

At Large - Friends of the Dillon Ranger District
Doozie Martin, Executive Director

Alex Stach

[Alex Stach \(Jun 6, 2026 20:46:06 MDT\)](#)

Town of Breckenridge
Alex Stach, Open Space and Trails Coordinator

Javier Pineda

[Javier Pineda \(Jun 8, 2026 16:55:50 MDT\)](#)

At Large - Mountain Dreamers
Javier Pineda, Program Coordinator

Pete Swenson

Town of Frisco
Pete Swenson, Frisco Nordic Center and Trails Manager

Summit County Context

Summit County is a cornerstone of Colorado’s public lands system and one of the most significant recreation landscapes in the American West. Spanning 619 square miles of high-elevation terrain, with 82% of land in public ownership and nearly one-quarter designated as Wilderness, the county sits at the intersection of ecological integrity, recreation demand, and regional infrastructure. Its landscapes include three 14,000-foot peaks, the headwaters of the Upper Colorado River, regionally significant wildlife habitat and migration corridors, and recreation infrastructure that serves millions of users annually.

Located along the I-70 corridor, Summit County serves as a gateway for Front Range residents and visitors accessing the White River National Forest—the most visited national forest in the United States. It is where recreation demand, watershed health, wildlife connectivity, transportation systems, and community needs converge, making the cumulative impacts of use among the most visible in Colorado.




Map courtesy of Summit County Open Space and Trails

As a result, decisions made in Summit County shape regional outcomes related to water resources, wildlife systems, transportation networks, and the long-term sustainability of Colorado’s outdoor recreation economy. Summit County has long been a proving ground for the future of recreation and conservation in Colorado. The scale of visitation, the importance of its ecosystems, and its economic role mean that what happens here matters everywhere.

Meeting this challenge requires collaboration at scale and strategic investment. Balancing recreation access with ecological health is not optional—it is essential to sustaining the landscapes, communities, and economy that define Summit County and support Colorado’s identity as an outdoor recreation destination.

Sources: U.S. Forest Service; Summit County Open Space & Trails; Colorado Outdoor Recreation Office; Blue River Watershed Group; Summit Daily; Rocky Mountain PBS; RRC Associates; Camp Hale-Continental Divide National Monument materials




619 square miles


82% public land

24% designated Wilderness

3 peaks over 14,000 feet

The Blue River system supplies 30–40% of Denver Water’s total water supply to 1.3M downstream users






8.4 million annual visits to the Dillon Ranger District

Peak day populations exceeding 150,000

\$1.2B in annual visitor spending

Nearly 10,000 recreation jobs



Recreation Under Pressure



Andrew Maciejewski/Summit Daily News

Summit County is one of the most heavily used recreation landscapes in Colorado. The Dillon Ranger District alone receives approximately 8.4 million annual visits, accounting for nearly half of all visitation to the White River National Forest. Non-ski recreation has surged by approximately 80% in recent years, with much of that growth concentrated on trail systems, trail heads, and dispersed recreation areas.

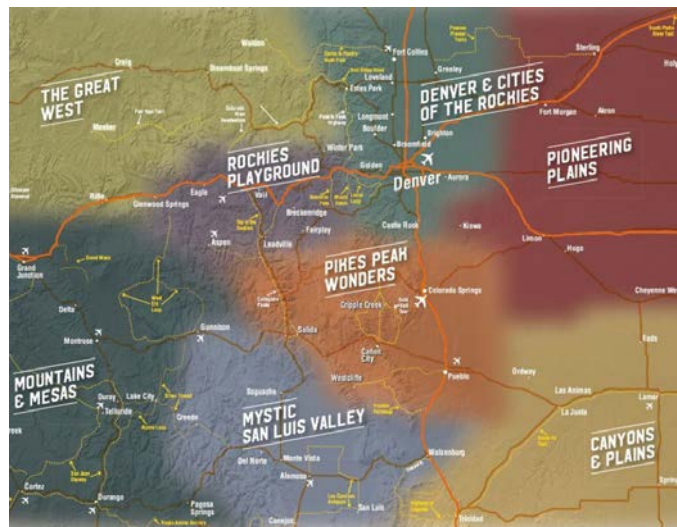
At peak times, the county's population swells from just over 30,000 permanent residents to more than 150,000 people, placing extraordinary pressure on recreation infrastructure, transportation systems, natural resources, and local communities. Many recreation sites were not designed for current levels of use, resulting in congestion, safety concerns, user conflict, and degradation of natural resources.

This intensity of visitation places sustained pressure on trail networks, watersheds, wildlife habitat, public lands, and community infrastructure, underscoring the need for long-term investment in stewardship, transportation, and recreation management systems.

An Economic Engine

Outdoor recreation and tourism are foundational to Summit County's economy, supporting nearly 9,700 jobs and generating more than \$400 million in annual wages. Recreation and tourism activity generate approximately \$4.3 billion in annual economic output within the county, including more than \$1.2 billion in direct visitor spending each year.

Summit County also plays a significant role within Colorado's broader tourism economy. As part of the Rockies Playground region—named for the internationally recognized mountain recreation experiences and public lands that draw millions of visitors each year—the county helps anchor the state's second most economically impactful tourism region, second only to the Denver metropolitan region. Summit County alone generates more than one-quarter of the Rockies Playground region's total visitor spending.



Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade

What makes this economic activity especially significant is the concentration at which it occurs. Within just 619 square miles, Summit County generates nearly \$2 million in visitor spending per square mile, reflecting one of the most concentrated recreation and tourism economies in Colorado. This intensity underscores both the county's outsized role within the state's mountain recreation system and the sustained demands placed on its landscapes, infrastructure, natural resources, and communities.

About the Summit County Outdoor Coalition

The Summit County Outdoor Coalition (SCOC) was established in 2023 as part of the State of Colorado’s Regional Partnership Initiative (RPI). SCOC brings together public agencies, nonprofits, recreation groups, and community partners to collaboratively advance outdoor recreation and conservation priorities.

SCOC's vision is a region with equitable and inclusive collaboration for scalable solutions across conservation, climate, and outdoor recreation.

Structure

The Coalition offers a variety of ways to participate to maximize partner impact with flexibility in time and capacity. The structure of SCOC prioritizes inclusive and efficient decision-making processes and ensures that participation is mutually beneficial.

Executive Committee

- Nico Cruz, Town of Frisco
- Olivia Gilmer, US Forest Service
- Tom Koehler, Sustainable Hiker
- Nina Waters, Summit County Government

Steering Committee

- US Forest Service Dillon Ranger District - Daniel Morris, Recreation Staff Officer
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife - Hannah Grimes, District Wildlife Manager
- Summit County Government - Allison Morton, Senior Resource Specialist
- Town of Breckenridge - Alex Stach, Open Space and Trails Coordinator
- Town of Frisco - Pete Swenson, Frisco Nordic Center and Trails Manager
- Town of Keystone - Jessica Hertzberg, Town Planner
- Town of Silverthorne - Steven Herrman, Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Director
- At Large - Friends of the Dillon Ranger District - Doozie Martin, Executive Director
- At Large - Mountain Dreamers - Javier Pineda, Program Coordinator

Executive Committee

Guide coalition in alignment with partner input and facilitate progress of initiatives.

Steering Committee

Advise executive committee and provide strategic oversight.

Partner Network

Receive and share updates, propose ideas, provide input on strategy.

Workgroups

Ad-hoc committees formed around specific projects, tasks, or goals. Operate semi-independently to advance specific initiatives or deliverables.

SCOC Partners

- Arapahoe Basin
- Blue River Watershed Group
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife
- CSU Extension
- Eagle Summit Wilderness Alliance
- Forest Health Task Force
- Friends of the Dillon Ranger District
- Friends of the Lower Blue River
- Mountain Dreamers
- Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
- Rocky Mountain Youth Corps
- Summit County Government
- Summit County Rescue Group
- Summit County Safe Passages
- Summit County Wildfire Council
- Summit Foundation
- Summit Huts
- Sustainable Hiker
- Town of Breckenridge
- Town of Frisco
- Town of Keystone
- Town of Silverthorne
- US Forest Service - White River National Forest Dillon Ranger District



Friends of the
Lower Blue River



About this Plan

The SCOC Strategic Conservation and Recreation Plan provides a shared framework for coordinating conservation and recreation initiatives across Summit County. The plan identifies regional priorities, aligns partner efforts, and highlights opportunities where collaborative action can improve ecological health while sustaining high-quality outdoor recreation experiences.

This plan is intended to:

Align partner priorities across conservation and recreation

Identify opportunities for collaborative initiatives

Support strategic investment of funding and resources

Provide a shared framework for regional decision-making

This plan was created through a structured, partner-driven process designed to align conservation and recreation priorities across Summit County while minimizing engagement fatigue and maximizing impact.

From the onset, the planning process emphasized active participation from all SCOC partners. Partners contributed their expertise, shared ongoing initiatives, and helped shape the strategies, goals, and opportunities included in this plan. A key strength of the process was the coalition's ability to build on the recent strategic planning and community engagement work already completed by partner organizations. Many SCOC partners have recently developed or updated their own plans, often through extensive public outreach and community engagement. By drawing from these existing efforts, the planning process remained grounded in current community needs, local knowledge, and on-the-ground realities, while avoiding duplicative outreach.

Victoria McCullough/Courtesy photo



Needs Assessment

The planning process began with a Partner Needs Assessment designed to identify key conservation and recreation challenges, opportunities, and priorities across Summit County. SCOC partners participated in a survey and follow-up interviews that gathered insights about emerging issues, ongoing initiatives, and areas where regional coordination could add value. This step ensured that the planning process reflected the perspectives and experiences of organizations actively working across the landscape.

A full summary of the Partner Needs Assessment is available in Appendix B.

Plan Review

To ground the plan in existing work, the planning team conducted a review and catalog of partner plans submitted by SCOC members. Partner plans were reviewed to identify shared priorities, existing initiatives, and opportunities for coordination. These plans reflected substantial community engagement efforts conducted by partners across the region. Incorporating this work helped ensure that the SCOC Strategic Conservation and Recreation Plan aligns with established priorities and builds upon community input already gathered through partner processes.

Plans Reviewed

Frisco Nordic Center Master Development Plan (2019)

Silverthorne Parks, Open Space & Trails Master Plan (2021 Update)

Silverthorne Comprehensive Plan (2022)

Summit County Open Space and Trails Master Plan (2022)

Breckenridge Open Space and Trails Master Plan (2023)

Frisco Trails and Pathways Plan (2023 Update)

Silverthorne Sustainability Strategic Plan (2024)

Development of Strategies, Goals, and Evaluation

Findings from the needs assessment and partner plan review informed the development of the strategies, goals, and evaluation framework presented in this strategic plan.

During a Fall 2025 strategic planning workshop, SCOC partners convened to review the synthesized findings and collaboratively define the plan's core strategies and goals. Partners also worked together to develop an evaluation framework to help assess and prioritize initiatives based on their alignment with SCOC priorities, potential impact, and feasibility for collaborative implementation.

Following the Fall workshop, partners applied the evaluation framework to initiatives identified through the needs assessment and partner plan review, as well as additional projects submitted by partners. Each initiative was assessed using shared criteria that considered alignment with the strategies and goals in this plan, potential ecological and community impact, and readiness for implementation. This structured process helped identify areas of momentum and opportunities for regional collaboration.

A detailed summary of the evaluation process is included in Appendix C.

Action Planning

The planning process culminated in a 2026 strategic planning workshop, where partners reviewed the results of the evaluation process and confirmed the strategies, goals, and opportunities included in this strategic plan. During this session, partners also prioritized future projects, identified potential work groups, and next steps to support coordinated implementation, as detailed in the following sections.

Strategies

Balance Ecosystem Health and Recreation Pressure to Sustain World-Class Outdoor Experiences

For SCOC, **balance** means ensuring that ecological health and recreation opportunities advance together. **World-class outdoor experiences** means maintaining the inspiring, high-quality recreation opportunities that make Summit County a destination for residents and visitors alike.

Summit County's outdoor economy and quality of life depend on healthy forests, waterways, open spaces, and wildlife habitats. As visitation continues to increase and climate pressures intensify, thoughtfully managing, protecting, and restoring these ecosystems is essential to sustaining both natural resource resilience and recreation quality. Through coordinated habitat protection across jurisdictions, investments in recreation infrastructure designed to minimize environmental disturbance, and the use of shared data to inform decision-making, partners can better manage the cumulative impacts of recreation—such as habitat fragmentation, erosion, and wildlife disturbance—while addressing ecological stressors early.

Maintaining this balance reflects a shared regional commitment to protecting Summit County's ecological integrity while sustaining the outdoor experiences that define the region.



Goal 1.1: Invest in recreation improvements that preserve ecological integrity and adequately accommodate visitation levels.

Goal 1.2: Protect and reconnect wildlife habitat across jurisdictions.

Goal 1.3: Support watershed health through conservation and restoration of rivers, wetlands, and riparian systems.

Goal 1.4: Promote forest health and resilience to pest outbreaks, wildfire, and climate stressors through cross-boundary partnerships.

Goal 1.5: Develop shared data resources to support regional recreation and conservation decision-making.

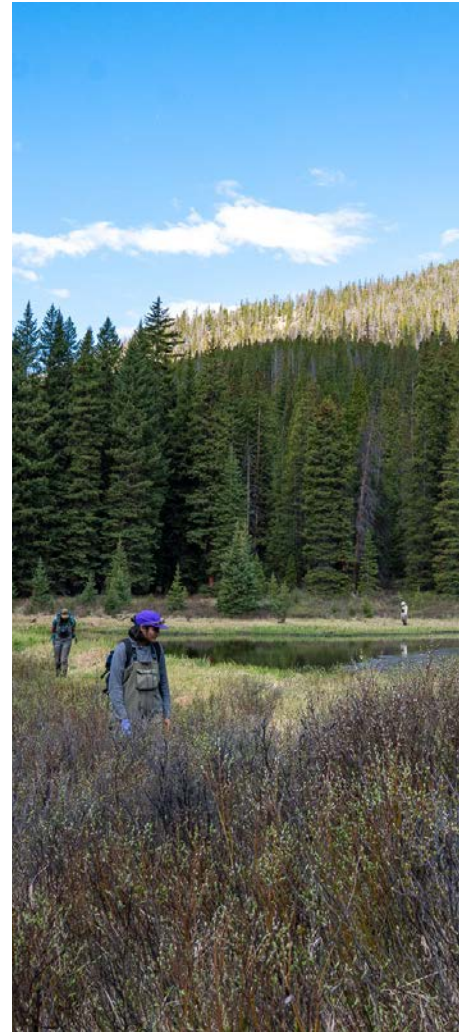
Strategies

Foster a Stewardship Ethic While Improving Recreation Access

For SCOC, **stewardship** means fostering a shared culture of care and responsible use for Summit County's lands and waters. **Access** means ensuring people of all backgrounds and abilities can responsibly experience the region's outdoor spaces.

With millions of annual visitors, a diverse local population, and rapidly evolving communication patterns, effective stewardship requires outreach that is culturally relevant, accessible, and engaging. Coordinated efforts that expand recreation opportunities for underrepresented communities while actively engaging residents and visitors help build a shared understanding of how individual behaviors affect ecosystem health.

By strengthening a stewardship mindset and a sense of shared responsibility among all users of Summit County's outdoor spaces, partners can reduce recreation-related impacts, support safe and high-quality recreation experiences, and foster a lasting culture of use and conservation that sustains Summit County's natural resources for future generations.



Goal 2.1: Improve access to recreation for all, including underrepresented communities.

Goal 2.2: Improve public awareness of recreation impacts on ecosystem health and strategies to mitigate them.

Goal 2.3: Improve awareness and adoption of safe and responsible recreation practices.

Goal 2.4: Create opportunities for public land users to participate in stewardship and conservation efforts.

Strategic Conservation and Recreation Opportunities

SCOC partners bring deep expertise, capacity, and momentum through their individual organizations and existing collaborations. Across Summit County, conservation and recreation initiatives are already being advanced at multiple scales. SCOC's role is not to duplicate these efforts, but to identify where cross-partner collaboration can accelerate progress, address gaps, and unlock opportunities that cannot be achieved by any single organization alone.

The opportunities presented below reflect this regional approach. Each aligns with SCOC's strategies and goals and represents an area where coordination, shared resources, and collective action can drive measurable progress. This portfolio is intended to be adaptive and evolving as new opportunities emerge.

To clarify both readiness and investment potential, opportunities are categorized as follows:

Ready for Implementation: Planning is complete or near-complete, partners are aligned, and actions are defined. These are immediate opportunities to deploy resources and achieve measurable outcomes. SCOC's role is to coordinate implementation, align funding, and accelerate delivery.

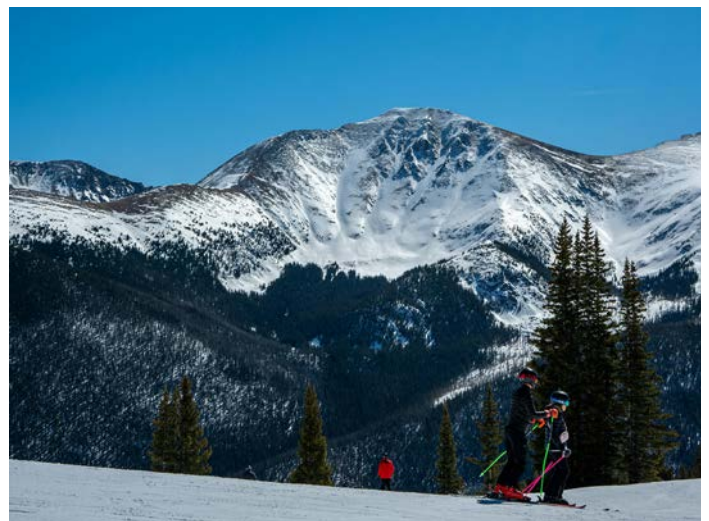
Expansion and Scale: Projects that are already demonstrating progress and impact. These are opportunities to expand reach, increase utilization, and accelerate outcomes. SCOC's role is to strengthen coordination, increase participation, and scale successful models.

Planning: Core concept is defined, but additional coordination, capacity, or prioritization is needed. These are opportunities where strategic investment can unlock implementation readiness and partner alignment. SCOC's role is to convene partners, refine scope, and prepare projects for funding.

Concept Development: Early-stage opportunities that identify gaps or emerging needs but might need more capacity and planning. These opportunities support innovation, feasibility, and future pipeline development. SCOC's role is to explore feasibility, build alignment, and shape invest-able projects.

SCOC will track progress across priority opportunities to understand both project implementation and regional impact. Measures of success focus on key outcomes, including implementation progress, partner coordination, access and recreation improvements, ecological health, and the use of shared data to inform decision-making.

Wherever possible, SCOC will leverage existing partner data to minimize additional reporting burden. Each priority opportunity includes specific, measurable indicators aligned with this framework.



Priority Opportunities

Priority opportunities represent initiatives with strong alignment, demonstrated momentum, and clear potential for regional impact. Many of these efforts are already supported by existing plans, partner investment, or early implementation activity.

To develop this portfolio, SCOC partners cataloged more than 300 existing and proposed conservation, recreation, stewardship, infrastructure, and community initiatives occurring across Summit County. From this broader inventory, priority opportunities were narrowed and selected based on their alignment with SCOC's mission areas, strategic goals, partner priorities, regional significance, and potential for collaborative impact.

Priority opportunities represent the highest-value areas for collective action across Summit County's recreation, conservation, transportation, and community systems. SCOC's role is to strengthen coordination, align funding strategies, and accelerate progress, ensuring that investments are complementary, scalable, and regionally impactful.

Ready for Implementation

RECREATION ACCESS MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE (RAMI)

The RAMI Study represents a comprehensive, cross-jurisdictional effort to better understand and manage trailhead use across Summit County. Through collaboration among federal, county, and municipal partners, the study compiled and integrated data on trailhead assets, capacity, current and future conditions, and visitation patterns, resulting in a holistic, county-wide plan for trailhead and trail improvements.

The study created a toolbox of management strategies for priority trailheads focused on infrastructure and management improvements such as parking, facilities improvements, and signage. It also provided demand management tools such as reservation systems, shuttle integration, and real-time capacity information to better accommodate use and reduce peak congestion.

Implementation of RAMI provides a shared, data-driven framework for coordinated decision-making, allowing partners to align investments and apply consistent strategies across jurisdictions. By focusing on high-use locations and system-level solutions, RAMI will help reduce congestion, improve safety, enhance visitor experience, and protect surrounding natural resources at trailheads throughout the county.

The RAMI study was completed in Spring 2026 and will serve as reference to guide decision making for future trailhead implementations. With the completed analysis, strong partner support, and clearly defined next steps, project partners are ready to implement the strategies identified in RAMI. This study will serve as a foundational initiative for managing recreation and addressing capacity challenges at a county-wide scale.

Leading Partners: USFS, Summit County Open Space and Trails, and Towns of Breckenridge, Frisco, and Silverthorne

Strategic Goal Alignment: 1.1, 1.2, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3

SCOC Measures of Success: Number of priority trailheads advancing into design and/or construction phases, amount of funding secured or aligned for priority trailhead improvements, measurable reduction in congestion or parking overflow at priority sites

FS PROJECT #63395 BACKYARD RECREATION IMPROVEMENTS (FRISCO BACKYARD)

The Frisco Backyard project is a comprehensive, multi-partner initiative that integrates forest health, wildfire risk reduction, and recreation management across more than 3,000 acres of heavily used public lands adjacent to the Town of Frisco. Developed through extensive technical analysis and robust community engagement, the project responds to increasing recreation pressure and associated impacts to vegetation, watershed health, and user experience.

The project includes fuel reduction treatments on over 1,500 acres, improving forest resilience and reducing wildfire risk to nearby communities. At the same time, it advances a coordinated approach to recreation management through trailhead redesign, improved access points, and comprehensive trail system planning. The project also includes addressing a dense network of undesignated trails through a combination of formalization, rerouting, and restoration.

By integrating multiple management objectives into a single effort, the project ensures that recreation improvements and ecological restoration are mutually reinforcing rather than competing priorities. Implementation will result in measurable improvements to forest health, reduced wildfire risk, more sustainable trail systems, and enhanced visitor experience.

With planning complete and strong local and federal alignment, this project is ready to move forward as a model for integrated land management in high-use landscapes.



Kyle McCabe/Summit Daily

[Read More About FS #63395 Here](#)

Leading Partners: USFS, Town of Frisco

Strategic Goal Alignment: 1.1, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4

SCOC Measures of Success: Total acres treated for forest health and wildfire risk reduction

Miles of trail improved, rerouted, or restored, number of trailheads or access points improved, amount of funding leveraged across partners for implementation



FS PROJECT #68593 SOUTHERN TENMILE RECREATION ACCESS PROJECT (STRAP)



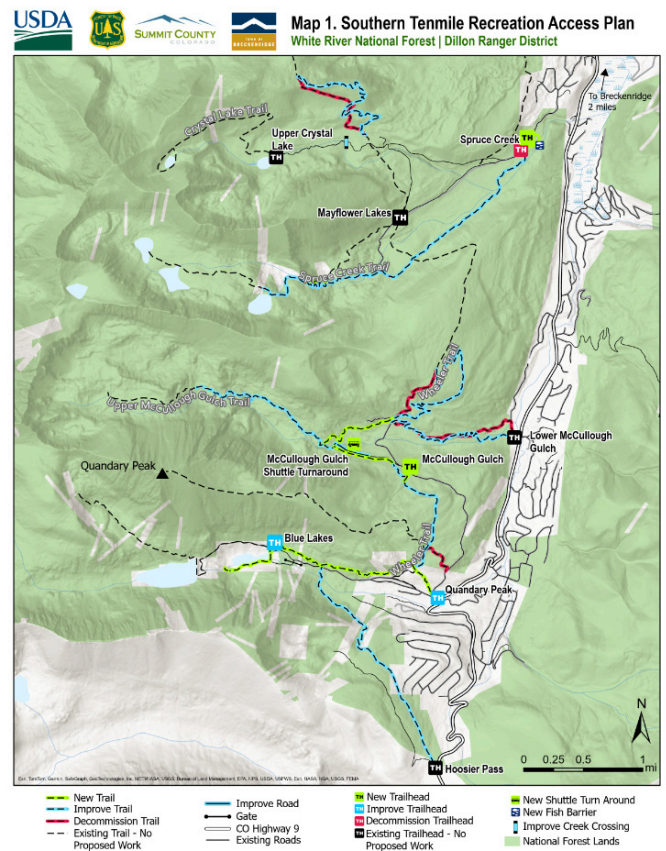
The Southern Tenmile Recreation Access Project (STRAP) is a multi-jurisdictional effort addressing access and management across some of Summit County's most heavily visited recreation destinations, including Quandary Peak, McCullough Gulch, Blue Lakes, and Spruce Creek. Developed over multiple years through coordinated planning, technical analysis, and extensive public engagement, the project reflects shared priorities across federal, county, and municipal partners.

STRAP responds to rapidly increasing visitation and associated impacts by outlining targeted, site-specific improvements to trailheads, trails, and infrastructure. These include expanding or reconfiguring parking areas, improving trail connectivity, enhancing signage and wayfinding, and implementing shuttle and reservation systems to manage peak demand at certain trailheads.

The project takes a system-level approach to access management, recognizing that changes at one site influence use patterns across the region. By coordinating implementation across jurisdictions, STRAP aims to reduce congestion, improve safety, minimize impacts to surrounding neighborhoods and natural resources, and provide a more predictable and high-quality visitor experience.

With completed planning, strong partner alignment, and clearly defined implementation actions, partners are ready to implement the improvements identified in the STRAP plan and are positioned to deliver measurable improvements to infrastructure, access, and resource protection.

[Read More about FS #68593 Here](#)



Leading Partners: USFS, Summit County Open Space and Trails, Town of Breckenridge

Strategic Goal Alignment: 1.1, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4

SCOC Measures of Success: Number of priority access improvements completed (trailheads, trails, parking areas), implementation of visitor management tools at STRAP sites (e.g., shuttle, reservations, reduction in parking overflow and roadside congestion at key locations), improved distribution of visitation across STRAP sites

SCOC WILDLIFE COORDINATION WORKGROUP



Establish a recurring stakeholder group to coordinate wildlife-related projects and communications across Summit County. This group will provide a structured forum for information sharing, coordination of wildlife-related projects, and alignment of public-facing messaging.

The evaluation process identified a strong concentration of opportunities related to wildlife conservation and public safety communication. A wildlife coordination group previously met but efforts stopped due to staffing changes, therefore, SCOC identified the need to re-establish the group.

Priority topics include lynx habitat protection, bat roost and mine safety, bear-proof waste strategies, and boreal toad recovery efforts—all of which span multiple jurisdictions. Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) brings significant data, expertise, and communication resources that can be amplified and coordinated through this group.

This group can be launched quickly and will address more consistent messaging, improved coordination across agencies, and more effective implementation of wildlife-related projects.

Leading Partner: Colorado Parks and Wildlife

Strategic Goal Alignment: 1.1, 1.2, 1.5, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4

SCOC Measures of Success: Establishment of a recurring coordination structure (e.g., quarterly meetings), consistent and active participation from multiple partner organizations, number of coordinated messaging campaigns or materials developed, number of joint wildlife-related initiatives advanced across jurisdictions



Expansion and Scale

TRANSIT TO TRAILS



Create opportunities for visitors to access trailheads across Summit County without relying on personal vehicles, reducing congestion and resource impacts while expanding equitable access to outdoor recreation. This effort builds on the Transit to Trails program, a partnership between Summit Stage and Summit County Open Space and Trails, which provides free, transit-based access to popular trailheads.

The program connects users to trailheads within approximately ¼ to ½ mile of Summit Stage bus stops, leveraging an existing countywide transit system. This opportunity focuses on increasing awareness, usability, and ridership of existing routes, rather than expanding service areas.

SCOC's role is to support coordinated outreach, improved wayfinding, and better integration of transit into recreation planning, helping more users take advantage of the system.

By increasing ridership, this initiative offers a cost-effective way to reduce parking demand, alleviate congestion, and expand access for residents, seasonal workers, and visitors without vehicles.

Leading Partners: Summit County Open Space and Trails, Summit Stage, Towns of Breckenridge, Frisco, and Silverthorne

Strategic Goal Alignment: 1.1, 1.5, 2.1, 2.4

SCOC Measures of Success: Increase in ridership to trailhead-accessible transit routes, number of trailheads with improved transit wayfinding and access information, reduction in vehicle trips or parking demand at targeted trailheads (where data is available)

BLUE RIVER WATER QUALITY MONITORING & DATA AGGREGATION

Expand and coordinate water quality monitoring efforts across Summit County by building on the Blue River Watershed Group's existing program. This initiative focuses on securing sustained funding, expanding monitoring sites, and improving geographic coverage, particularly in underrepresented areas.

While substantial data exists, it is often fragmented and not consistently accessible. This effort will align monitoring approaches across partners and ensure that data is standardized, integrated, and publicly available.



It will also expand collaborative and citizen science monitoring efforts, increasing capacity while strengthening community engagement. Improved data visualization and reporting will support more effective decision-making and long-term watershed management.

Leading Partner: Blue River Watershed Group

Strategic Goal Alignment: 1.3, 1.5, 2.2

SCOC Measures of Success: Number of active monitoring sites and geographic coverage across the county, amount of sustained funding secured for long-term monitoring, number of partners contributing to shared monitoring efforts, availability of publicly accessible, standardized water quality data

Planning

UNDESIGNATED TRAIL MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE

Identify and assess undesignated (user-created) trails across Summit County. As recreation pressures increase, these informal trails often reflect gaps in connectivity, access, or user experience within the existing system. This effort would use a data-informed, site-specific approach to evaluate undesignated trails and apply appropriate management strategies—including formalization, rerouting, restoration, signage, or closure—based on ecological sensitivity, user demand, and system connectivity.

The initiative would help partners identify priority areas, align management approaches across jurisdictions, and support a more intentional and sustainable trail system that improves recreation experiences while reducing environmental impacts.



Leading Partner: USFS

Strategic Goal Alignment: 1.1, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2

SCOC Measures of Success: Number of undesignated trails mapped and assessed, priority areas identified for management action, number of sites where management actions are implemented (e.g., restoration, closure, formalization)

Concept Development

SILVERTHORNE TO FRISCO SOFT-SURFACE TRAIL CONNECTION



Develop a soft-surface trail connection between Silverthorne and the Frisco Exit 201 / North Ten Mile Creek Trailhead. This trail would connect Silverthorne, the Wilderrest neighborhood, Exit 203 (pedestrian access only), Meadow Creek Trailhead, North Ten Mile Creek Trailhead, the Kayak Lot, the Ten Mile Recpath, and the Town of Frisco. The project would support non-motorized, soft-surface commuting between towns and neighborhoods while improving access to recreation areas including Lily Pad Lake, Eagles Nest Wilderness, the Ten Mile Recpath, and multiple trailheads.

This segment represents a critical missing link in the regional trail system, where gaps between existing segments currently limit seamless travel between destinations. Completing this connection would significantly improve regional connectivity, expand recreation access, and support non-motorized transportation. The project could also help reduce short-distance vehicle trips along the I-70 corridor, advancing broader congestion reduction and sustainability goals.

While still in early development, this project represents a high-impact, long-term investment in regional connectivity.

Leading Partners: Town of Frisco, Town of Silverthorne, and USFS

Strategic Goal Alignment: 1.1, 2.1, 2.3

SCOC Measures of Success: Completion of feasibility, design, or permitting milestones, funding secured for design and/or construction phases

NON-TRAIL RECREATION SITE CONDITION ASSESSMENT



Assess conditions of non-trail-based recreation areas across Summit County—including scenic overlooks, climbing sites, dispersed use areas, and roadside recreation pull-offs—to better understand how these locations are being used and managed. While trail systems and trailheads have been the focus of recent planning efforts, there is currently limited, consistent information on the condition, use patterns, and impacts of non-trail recreation sites, despite their growing popularity.

This effort would establish a more complete picture of these sites by identifying areas of high use, infrastructure needs, safety concerns, and environmental impacts such as erosion, vegetation loss, and informal site expansion. By filling this information gap, partners can better understand where management attention is needed and develop appropriate, site-specific responses.

The results will support more informed decision-making across jurisdictions, helping to improve user experience, enhance safety, and reduce environmental impacts while ensuring that non-trail recreation areas are incorporated into broader recreation and conservation planning efforts.

Leading Partners: USFS, Summit County, Town of Breckenridge, Town of Frisco, Town of Silverthorne

Strategic Goal Alignment: 1.1, 1.5, 2.1

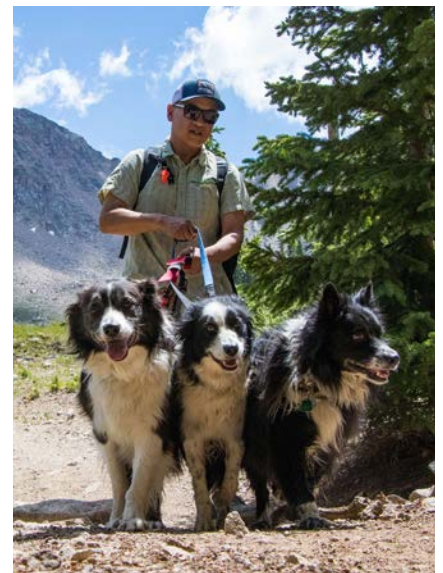
SCOC Measures of Success: Completion of a countywide inventory of non-trail recreation sites, identification of priority sites for management action, integration of findings into partner planning or management decisions

DOG WASTE & CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Identify and develop a coordinated, cross-jurisdictional toolkit to address dog-related impacts on wildlife, water quality, and visitor experience. Increasing dog use across recreation areas has led to inconsistent management approaches and growing impacts.

This initiative will define priority locations, key behaviors to address, and a range of management strategies, including education campaigns, standardized signage, enforcement approaches, and infrastructure improvements such as waste stations.

By aligning approaches across jurisdictions, this effort will support more consistent expectations for responsible recreation, reduce environmental impacts, and improve overall user experience.



Leading Partners: USFS, Summit County, Town of Breckenridge, Town of Frisco, Town of Silverthorne

Strategic Goal Alignment: 1.1, 1.3, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4

SCOC Measures of Success: Identification of priority locations and key behaviors to address, installation of infrastructure improvements (e.g., waste stations, signage) at priority sites

Emerging Opportunities

Emerging opportunities represent additional areas of alignment identified through the evaluation process where collaboration across SCOC partners could add value, but where initiatives are early in development, more narrowly scoped, or require additional scoping before advancing as priority investments.

While some are ready to move forward in a limited or targeted way, others represent pipeline opportunities that can be advanced through partner alignment, scoping, or pilot efforts. As these initiatives mature, they may be elevated into the Priority Opportunities portfolio.

Ready for Implementation

WILDLIFE MOVEMENT CORRIDOR & SAFE PASSAGE COLLABORATION

Support multi-agency coordination to advance wildlife crossings and protect migration corridors while reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions. This effort builds on existing regional initiatives and focuses on aligning partners, supporting funding strategies, and coordinating implementation across jurisdictions to improve wildlife connectivity and public safety

Leading Partner: Summit County Safe Passages | **Strategic Goal Alignment:** 1.1, 1.3, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4

Expansion and Scale

WILDLIFE EDUCATION & MESSAGING

Coordinate consistent, year-round wildlife messaging across partners to improve public awareness, promote responsible recreation, and reduce human-wildlife conflicts. This effort focuses on aligning existing materials, campaigns, and seasonal messaging to ensure clarity and consistency across jurisdictions, increasing the effectiveness of outreach and behavior change.

Leading Partner: Colorado Parks and Wildlife | **Strategic Goal Alignment:** 1.2, 1.5, 2.3, 2.4

Planning

REGIONAL TRAILS AND CONNECTIVITY PLANNING INITIATIVE

Advance a coordinated, countywide approach to trail planning that improves connectivity, expands access, and enhances safety. This effort will identify gaps in the existing trail network, prioritize safe crossings across highways and busy roads, and support development of a comprehensive trails plan that clarifies management responsibilities and aligns investments across jurisdictions.

Leading Partners: Summit County Open Space and Trails, Town of Breckenridge, Town of Frisco, Town of Silverthorne, USFS | **Strategic Goal Alignment:** 1.1, 2.1, 2.3

GREEN MOUNTAIN CAMP PUT-IN

Facilitate coordination among partners and jurisdictions to address access challenges, user conflicts, and management needs at this high-use, multi-jurisdictional site. This effort will focus on aligning stakeholders, clarifying roles, and identifying feasible solutions to improve river access, safety, and resource protection.

Leading Partners: Summit County Open Space and Trails | **Strategic Goal Alignment:** 1.1, 2.2, 2.3

Concept Development

ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS IDENTIFICATION

Identify and prioritize opportunities to expand accessible recreation infrastructure across Summit County. This effort will assess existing conditions, identify gaps in accessibility, and support future project development that improves inclusive access for people of all abilities.

Leading Partner: USFS, Summit County Open Space and Trails | **Strategic Goal Alignment:** 1.1, 2.1, 2.3

COMMUNITY OUTREACH WORKGROUP

Analyze and communicate the feasibility of a dedicated funding mechanism to support long-term conservation and recreation investments. This effort will explore potential funding structures, revenue projections, and community considerations to inform future decision-making.

Leading Partners: SCOC Executive and Steering Committees | **Strategic Goal Alignment:** 1.5, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4

COUNTYWIDE TRAIL RATING SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

Develop a standardized, user-facing trail rating system supported by shared data to help users select trails aligned with their desired experience and ability levels. This effort will improve trip planning, reduce user conflicts, and support better distribution of recreation use.

Leading Partners: Town of Breckenridge, Town of Frisco, Town of Silverthorne | **Strategic Goal Alignment:** 1.5

ASSESSMENT OF FUTURE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Analyze options for future opportunities to support SCOC's mission and the projects identified in this strategic plan. This effort will explore potential grant and other funding opportunities to support long-term conservation and recreation investments in Summit County.

Leading Partners: SCOC Executive and Steering Committees | **Strategic Goal Alignment:** 1.1, 1.5

FREMONT PASS RECPATH FUNDING & PARTNERSHIP RENEWAL

Re-engage partners and coordinate funding strategies to continue development of the Fremont Pass recreational pathway between Summit and Lake counties. This effort will focus on rebuilding momentum, aligning partners, and identifying viable funding pathways to advance the project.

Leading Partner: Summit County Open Space and Trails | **Strategic Goal Alignment:** 1.1

MYCELIUM FOR NATURE SOLUTIONS

Support development and evaluation of demonstration projects using mycelium-based approaches to address ecological restoration and soil health challenges. This effort represents an opportunity to test innovative, nature-based solutions and contribute to shared learning across partners.

Leading Partner: Sustainable Hiker | **Strategic Goal Alignment:** 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 2.4











SCOC Strategic Conservation and Recreation Plan 2026

Final Audit Report

2026-06-08


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