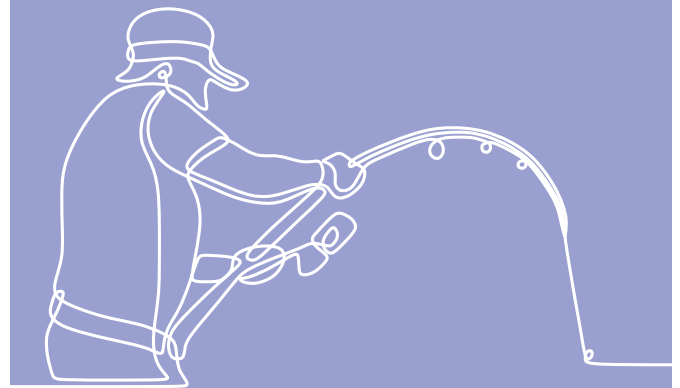
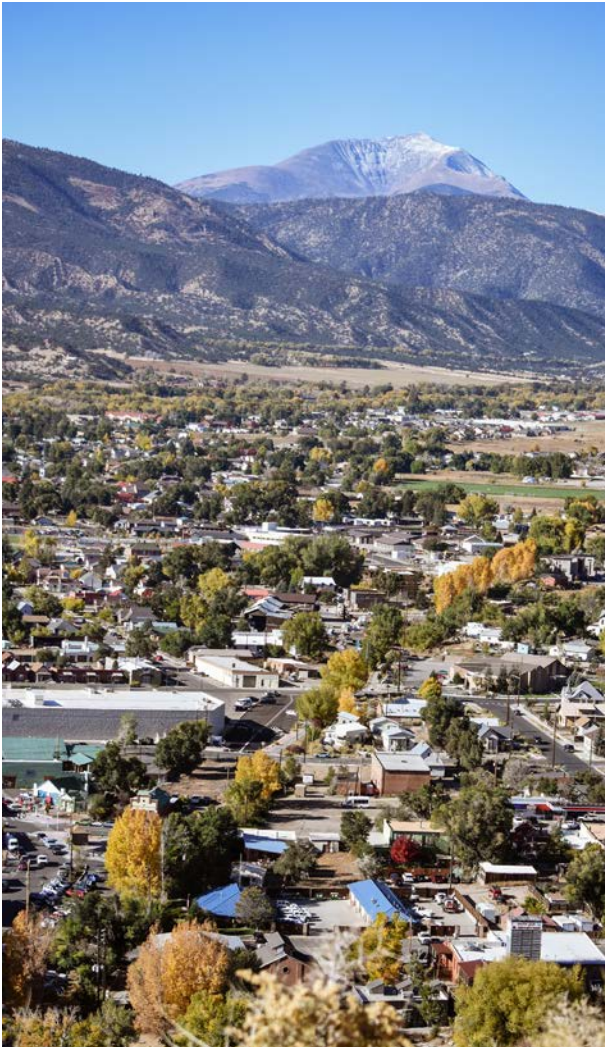




Chaffee County Outdoor Recreation Management Plan

2021-22 Annual Report
to the Community

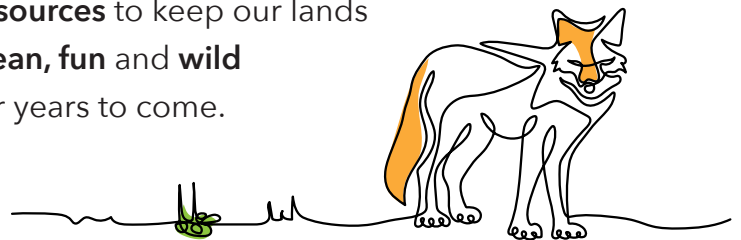




The Chaffee County Outdoor Recreation

Management Plan protects our community's natural resources, maintains exceptional outdoor experiences, and sustains the economic benefits of tourism. Our stunning landscapes contribute significantly to quality of life as access to beautiful and rejuvenating public lands is the main reason many of us choose to call this place home. Recreation use was growing before the pandemic and public land managers estimate that visitation has grown by more than 50% in the past few years.

Broad initiatives outlined in the plan are helping to manage the impacts of growing outdoor use - through new programs and fundraising for infrastructure and maintenance on public lands and in the towns. Chaffee County's recreation community is developing a shared culture that **protects natural resources** to keep our lands **clean, fun and wild** for years to come.



Keeping It Fun

We're inspiring better behaviors with Chaffee Rec Rangers and Chaffee Rec Adopters – two programs that add agency staff and volunteerism in popular camping areas. The number of Rec Rangers doubled this year, adding boots on the ground to clean up and maintain the busiest campsites.

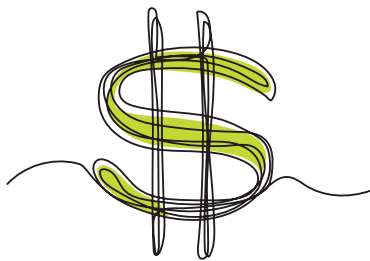
The Chaffee County Visitors Bureau is investing up to \$500K in education and tourism management, providing fire danger info in downtowns, WAG bags for campers, and zero-waste initiatives at events. The organization also continued to promote the Adventure By Nature Pledge – an award-winning marketing campaign that encourages visitors to Stay on the Trail, Be Respectful, Recreate Responsibly and Leave No Trace.

In-progress projects by user groups and agency staff are improving conditions at beloved trails such as Lost Lake, Fooses Creek on the Colorado Trail, and the Whipple & Midland Hills in downtown Buena Vista.

Better management is supported by a new BLM Law Enforcement Officer, new campground hosts, program coordinators, and a wildfire mitigation officer with Chaffee Fire.

In-town fun projects for active lifestyles include a splash pad and pickleball courts. And community partners are working to improve access for underrepresented populations.

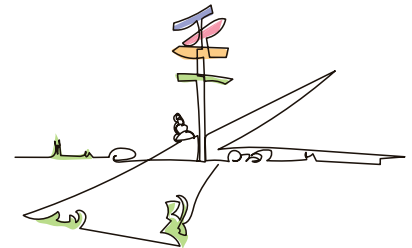
Working together in 2021, the Chaffee Rec Council and partners:



Raised
\$1.4M



Added
14 staff



Improved
4 trails

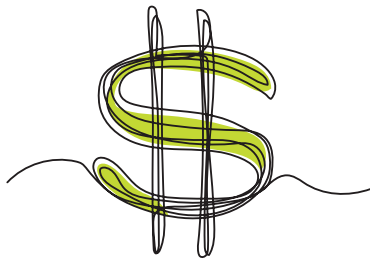


Keeping It Clean

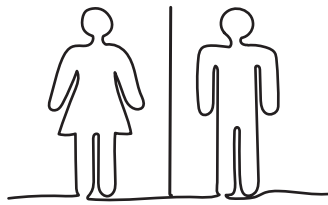
The Chaffee community is applying the **right resources** and cleaning up overused areas to ensure quality outdoor opportunities across the county. Restrooms, trash disposal and other necessities are showing up in the right places for a healthier environment and clean fun into the future.

Camping improvements took place at the Monarch Park, Chubb Park, Turtle Rock and Elephant Rock camping areas.

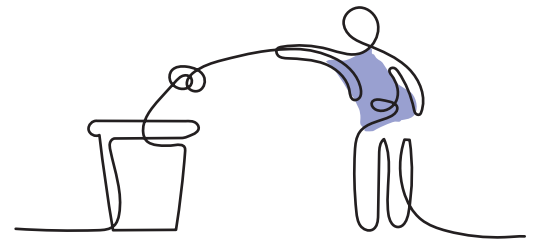
Volunteers surveyed 2,200 campsites and cleaned up more than a ton of trash and campfire ash. **Year one results include:**



Raised
\$2M
for new infrastructure



Added
12
restrooms



Removed
3,500#
ash/trash



Keeping It Wild

From wetlands to agricultural lands to Wilderness Areas, the community is coming together through collaboration to protect Chaffee County's wildlife populations.

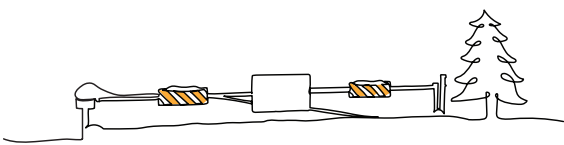
Critical habitat has been mapped to focus improvements and new recreation in the right areas.

New gates, fencing and associated signs were added in 15 locations to encourage visitors to follow seasonal closures that protect wintering wildlife. Chaffee County provides important cold-season habitat for animals such as Mule Deer, which inhabit 8 Colorado counties in the summer months.

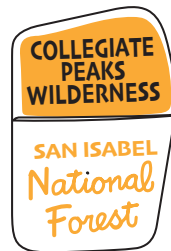
New models and five new wildlife maps were created with the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute at CSU to show where high-quality habitat is located so planners can develop sustainable trails that consider both human and wildlife needs in the future.

Local ranchers are being supported with projects like virtual fencing that keep cows where they belong, despite many gates left open by recreation users.

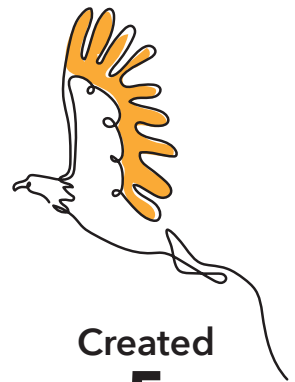
Working together in 2021, the Chaffee Rec Council and partners:



Installed
15
seasonal closure gates



Developed
1
program to protect
Wilderness Areas



Created
5
maps for sustainable
rec planning



What Comes Next?

The Chaffee Recreation Council, community and partners are collaboratively raising a **targeted \$20M** by 2026 to implement the Chaffee Rec Plan's goals over the next 5 years.

USFS and BLM are advancing assessment of big-picture camping solutions such as transition to designated sites, and the community is considering developing a trails management plan to dovetail with the new wildlife models.

A continued focus on education, enforcement and engineering solutions will help create a culture where residents and visitors can protect natural resources while enjoying the exceptional outdoor experiences that are so vital to our local economy.

The Chaffee Rec Council will **continue to communicate results** to the community each year:

- Andrea Carlstrom, Director, Chaffee County Public Health
- Ben Lara, USFS Salida District, Recreation Program Manager
- Brian Berger, Poncha Springs Town Manager
- Brady Everett, Owner Everett Ranch
- Diesel Post, City of Salida Recreation Director

- Earl Richmond, Town of Buena Vista Recreation Director
- Cindy Williams, Envision Co-Chair
- Chuck Cichowitz, Former Owner Noah's Ark and outfitter
- Dominique Naccarato, ED GARNA
- Greg Felt, County Commissioner
- Bryan Lamont, CPW Wildlife Biologist
- Jeff Post, Owner First Colorado Land Office, Chaffee County Economic Development Corp. Board
- Sean Shepherd, CPW Area Wildlife Manager
- Emily Olsen, Rocky Mountain Region Director, National Forest Foundation
- Jim Fiorelli, USFS Leadville District, Recreation Program Manager
- Perry Edwards, USFS Salida District Ranger
- Kalem Lenard, BLM Royal Gorge Field Office Assistant Field Manager
- Keith Baker, County Commissioner
- Lori Roberts, ED Salida Chamber of Commerce
- Scott Peterson, Chaffee County Visitors Bureau Marketing Director
- Patrick Mercer, USFS Leadville District Ranger
- Rick Hum, Chaffee County Community Foundation Board Member
- Tom Waters, AHRA Park Manager

envisionchaffeecounty.org/recreation-in-balance

info@envisionchaffeecounty.org



Envision Chaffee County is a community initiative focused on maintaining healthy forests, waters and wildlife in balance with outdoor recreation. It facilitates activities and outreach for the Chaffee Rec Council.

