



WELCOME TO OUR
2015 ANNUAL REPORT



Protect. Connect. Inspire!



We've reached a tipping point.

Kids today are spending significantly less time outside than their parents did. Colorado's next generation also will live in a state with up to three million more residents, meaning ever-expanding urban areas and increasing pressure on our parks, rivers, trails, open spaces and wildlife habitat.

Colorado's vision for our future

After a year of thorough public outreach, GOCO developed a new strategic plan to address these challenges. It is anchored by three overarching goals:

- **PROTECT** more land for parks, trails, wildlife, and people.
- **CONNECT** trails and improve accessibility.
- **INSPIRE** Coloradans to get outside more and take care of our great outdoors.

A hiker wearing a yellow long-sleeved shirt, dark pants, a grey cap, and sunglasses is walking through a field of white and yellow wildflowers. The hiker has a large backpack and is looking towards the right. In the background, there are mountains with patches of snow and a river or stream flowing through a valley. The scene is bathed in warm, golden light, suggesting late afternoon or early morning.

PROTECT open lands

Protection of land for open space, parks, river corridors, and wildlife remains a top priority among Coloradans.

The Protect Initiative will expand upon GOCO's investments in protecting open space, parks, river corridors and wildlife while strategically targeting the protection of large, connected landscapes, waterways and urban open spaces to preserve the Colorado scenery that we all know and love.

First grants to be awarded in 2016.



CONNECT trails

Growing public concern over walkable and bikeable access to outdoor recreation for youth and underserved populations led GOCO to prioritize trail connections in our new strategic plan.

The Connect Initiative will help bring all Coloradans within a 10-minute walk of outdoor recreation by closing trail gaps, adding new close-to-home spaces to get outside, and enhancing existing trail networks.

First grants to be awarded in 2016.

INSPIRE children



The widening gap between today's kids and the outdoors concerns Coloradans who wonder whether the next generation will appreciate and be active stewards of Colorado's greatest treasures.

This concern is bolstered by a growing body of research that says the outdoors benefit a child physically, socially, emotionally and cognitively, and by data that says Colorado's youth obesity rate is rising rapidly.

GOCO's Inspire Initiative will invest \$25 million in places, programming, and pathways to get more kids outside more often, from the backyard to the backcountry.

More than 30 communities competed in 2015 to be one of six pilot communities for this initiative. The six pilots and 13 Tier 2 communities were awarded planning grants in October. Implementation grants will be awarded to pilots in 2016 and to Tier 2 communities in 2017.

Engaging partners

GOCO is uniquely positioned to engage partners and integrate funding for outdoor initiatives.

The Outdoors Summit, which was hosted in 2015 by GOCO in partnership with Gov. John Hickenlooper and the Colorado Department of Natural Resources, provided a starting point for new collaborations to begin. At the summit, the governor announced the beginning framework of his **Colorado the Beautiful Initiative**, which includes protecting the state's treasured landscapes, creating a comprehensive trail map, and identifying 16 high priority trail gaps to address in 2016. The governor articulated a vision that within one generation, every Coloradan will live within a 10-minute walk of a park, trail or open space area.

Colorado the Beautiful aligns with many of the goals of GOCO's new strategic plan.

Theoutdoorssummit.com



Children & Nature Network's Director of Leadership Development Juan D. Martinez engages the audience at the Outdoors Summit. PHOTO BY ANNE POGORILER

STATUS REPORT

Our accomplishments in FY2015 included:

PRESERVED
80,000 ACRES
of open space, agricultural land, and wildlife habitat

48.6
miles of new trails funded

INVESTED
\$30 MILLION
in Colorado Parks & Wildlife, including state park facilities, species preservation and educational programming

AWARDED OVER
\$675,000
for six schools
to reimagine aging playgrounds into nature-based spaces for outdoor play and learning

18 community parks funded

64 WEEKS of Youth Corps work funded that will eradicate invasive species and mitigate fire fuel hazards

FOUR RIVER AND STREAMBANKS RESTORED through new grant program that requires volunteer and/or Youth Corps labor

Since our inception in 1992:

3:1 DEMAND
FOR REQUESTED VS. AVAILABLE FUNDING

INVESTED IN **43** **ENDANGERED OR THREATENED SPECIES**

CREATED & ENHANCED MORE THAN **1,000** **community parks and outdoor recreation areas**

TRANSFORMED **30** **school playgrounds that serve** **12,000 STUDENTS**

RESTORED/RECONSTRUCTED **900** **miles of trails**

MORE THAN **750** **miles of rivers protected**

ADDED OVER **47,000** **acres to the State Parks system**

MORE THAN **1 MILLION ACRES** **have been protected through fee simple acquisition or conservation easements**

Economic Impact

- Outdoor recreation contributes \$34.5 billion to the Colorado economy, creating 313,000 jobs in the state.
- Wildlife activities account for over \$5 billion of economic output in Colorado, supporting nearly 50,000 jobs within the state.

2014 Colorado Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

School Play Yards

Aging, outdated playgrounds are being transformed across the state into nature-based havens for creative outdoor play and learning thanks to **GOCO's School Play Yard Initiative**.

THIS YEAR | \$675,000 AWARDED FOR NEW PLAY YARDS SERVING MORE THAN 2,000 STUDENTS | **\$15,000 IN FUNDING** FOR PROFESSIONAL DESIGN SERVICES | **6 STUDENT TASK FORCES** FORMED TO DESIGN THEIR OWN PLAYGROUNDS.

Pictured: Students at Harrison K-8 School in Cañon City enjoy their new GOCO-funded playground. PHOTO BY CARIE CANTERBURY CANON CITY DAILY RECORD

Youth Corps

Tomorrow's outdoor stewards are cultivated in the youth corps crews that GOCO grants help employ. GOCO funding enables crews to take on vital environmental projects, such as fuel mitigation and invasive species removal, as well as improve and expand outdoor recreation opportunities.

THIS YEAR | 17 PROJECTS FUNDED IN 14 COUNTIES | \$1 MILLION TOTAL INVESTED BY GOCO AND COLORADO PARKS & WILDLIFE | 103 ACRES OF FIRE FUEL MITIGATION | 31 ACRES OF INVASIVE SPECIES REMOVAL | 1,600 YOUTH EMPLOYED | 16.8 MILES OF TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS OR CONSTRUCTION.

Pictured: Two Mile High Youth Corps members hike into their worksite on the Iron Horse Trail. PHOTO BY SEAN SHERIDAN

THIS YEAR | \$4.4 MILLION IN GRANTS AWARDED | 18 COMMUNITY PARKS UPGRADED OR CREATED | 48.6 MILES OF NEW TRAILS FUNDED, INCLUDING ELIZABETH'S FIRST REGIONAL TRAIL NETWORK | 30 ACRES IN WEST DENVER REIMAGINED | 2 ADA ACCESSIBLE PARKS FUNDED | 2 VACANT PAVED LOTS TRANSFORMED INTO OUTDOOR ACTIVITY HUBS.



Celebrated the opening of Johnson Habitat Park, the first overnight urban campground for kids in Denver. Located along the South Platte River, the park offers river access, nature play areas, a firepit and educational displays. Pictured

Parks and Trails

Close to home places to get outside are the stepping stone to enjoying regional parks and trails. GOCO funding improves and enhances parks of all sizes while closing trail gaps and adding walkable access to help Coloradans to get outside safely.

*Pictured: A father-daughter moment at Eldorado Canyon State Park. PHOTO BY CAVEMAN COLLECTIVE
Inset: Kids enjoy the new playground at Johnson Habitat Park in Denver. PHOTO BY THE GREENWAY FOUNDATION*

Open Space and Rivers

Colorado's wide open spaces and breathtaking vistas are what brings people to our state. As our population continues to grow, care must be taken to conserve not only the land, but the rivers that are our state's lifeblood.

THIS YEAR | 80,000 ACRES OF OPEN SPACE, AGRICULTURAL LANDS, AND WILDLIFE HABITAT PRESERVED | NEARLY \$200,000 AWARDED TO EFFORTS TO ADVANCING MANAGEMENT AND STEWARDSHIP OF COLORADO'S NATURAL RESOURCES | \$60,000 INVESTED IN THREE COUNTIES TO RESTORE FOUR RIVERBANKS OR STREAMS | 45 MILES OF RIVERS AND STREAMS PROTECTED | \$25,000 INVESTED IN THE NEWLY COMPLETED RESTORATION OF EAST PLUM CREEK ALONG I-25.

Wildlife

GOCO awards about \$15 million every year to support Colorado Parks and Wildlife's efforts to preserve and improve wildlife habitat and to help protect the hundreds of diverse species that call our state home. CPW is funded through GOCO, federal funding, hunting and fishing licenses, and the sale of habitat stamps; CPW receives no general fund dollars.

THIS YEAR | \$4M INVESTED IN HUNDREDS OF MAMMALS, BIRDS, FISH, REPTILES, AND AMPHIBIANS | 9,000 ACRES OF HIGH PRIORITY HABITAT ACQUIRED | \$175,000 INVESTED IN WILDLIFE VIEWING OPPORTUNITIES | \$344,255 INVESTED IN YOUTH INTERNSHIP PROGRAM | 30,000 ACRES OF ADDITIONAL SAGE BRUSH HABITAT PERMANENTLY PROTECTED THROUGH GOCO OPEN SPACE GRANTS.

Pictured: A mountain goat and her kid enjoy the sunshine on Mt. Evans PHOTO BY WAYNE D. LEWIS

State Parks

GOCO helps support Colorado's 42 state parks by providing about \$15 million a year for operations, land acquisition and capital improvements. GOCO also funds volunteer programs to provide visitor education. In addition to GOCO funding, CPW directly receives 10% of Lottery proceeds for state parks capital improvements

THIS YEAR | \$5.6M INVESTED IN COLORADO'S STATE PARK SYSTEM | **31 STATE PARKS AND 37 WILDLIFE AREAS** HOST INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS FUNDED BY GOCO | **NEARLY \$400,000** INVESTED IN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION | **34.3 MILES** OF TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS.



Our Finances

GOCO has awarded grants from lottery proceeds for:

- Local government park, outdoor recreation and environmental education facilities projects.
- Outdoor recreation and wildlife enhancement projects through Colorado Parks & Wildlife.
- Open space projects.
- Trail projects.
- Special opportunity and larger initiatives that integrate parts of GOCO's four constitutionally-mandated funding categories.

Administrative expenses over time are approximately three percent of total revenues, substantially less than interest earned on cash balances. GOCO is not tax-supported.

[Click here for our 2015 financial statements.](#)

REVENUES | GREAT OUTDOORS COLORADO REVENUES ARE PRIMARILY FROM LOTTERY PROCEEDS AND INTEREST INCOME

REVENUES	FY 2014-2015	AMOUNT TO DATE
Lottery Proceeds	\$61,992,978	\$971,250,579
Interest & Other Income	\$571,627	\$37,776,683
Total Revenues	\$62,564,605	\$1,009,027,262

EXPENDITURES | GREAT OUTDOORS COLORADO EXPENDITURES INCLUDE PAYMENTS TO GRANTEES AND COVERING ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES. ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES INCLUDE OPERATING COSTS AND BOARD EXPENSES.

EXPENDITURES	FY 2014-2015	AMOUNT TO DATE
Grant Expenditures	\$50,803,068	\$917,218,940
Administrative Expenses	\$2,293,878	\$34,389,013
Total Expenditures	\$53,096,946	\$951,607,953

BUDGET | FISCAL YEAR 2015-2016 ESTIMATED BUDGET

Lottery Proceeds	\$61,200,000	Grant Expenditures	\$60,000,000
Interest & Other Income	\$300,000	Administrative Expenses	\$2,224,000
Total Revenues	\$61,500,000*	Total Expenditures	\$62,224,000*

Grant Authorizations: The GOCO Board has approved a spending plan for FY2016 of grants and investments not to exceed \$44.9 million.

*Difference between budget revenues and expenditures reflects monies designated for prior grant obligations.

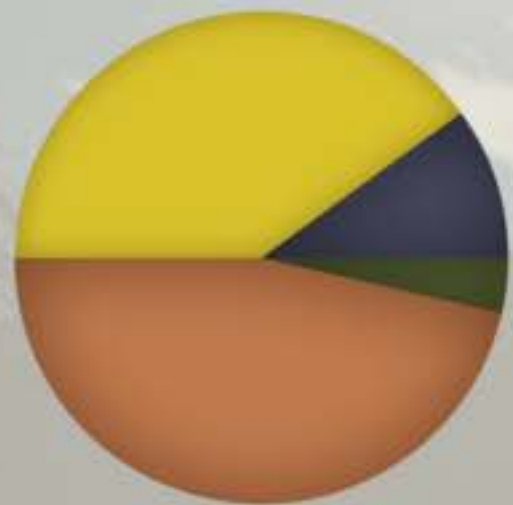
Our Mission

Constitutional Mandate

The Great Outdoors Colorado Trust Fund was created in 1992 when voters approved Amendment Article XXVII to the Colorado Constitution to allocate Colorado Lottery proceeds. It directs a portion to GOCO for projects that preserve, protect and enhance the state's wildlife, park, river, trail and open space heritage, and created a board of trustees to govern distribution.

The Constitution requires GOCO to allocate funds to four areas — state parks, wildlife, local governments, and open space — in substantially equal portions over time.

The text is available at goco.org/amendment.



CONSERVATION TRUST FUND
40% - \$51.1 million

COLORADO STATE PARKS
10% - \$12.7 million

SCHOOL CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION FUND
5% - \$1.8 million

GREAT OUTDOORS COLORADO
Up to 50% - \$62 million

Our Governance

An Independent Board

Board members decide how GOCO allocates its funds and which projects receive grants. They are responsive to communities' needs while remaining accountable as the trustees of public funds and are appointed by the governor and approved by the State Senate.

Members by Congressional District

- 1: Katherine Cattanach (R), Hollie Velasquez Horvath (D), both Denver
- 2: Jenn Dice (U), Boulder; Tony S. Lewis (D), Longmont
- 3: Tom Burke (R), Grand Junction; Alan Schwartz (D), Crested Butte
- 4: Chana Reed (R), Lamar; Jody Rogers (U), Yuma
- 5: Heather Carroll (D, chair), Dave Palenchar (R), both Colorado Springs
- 6: Jason Brinkley (R), Linda Strand (D), both Aurora
- 7: Jacy Rock (U), Golden; Jim Spaanstra (D), Lakewood

State agency representatives

Natural Resources: Mike King
Parks and Wildlife Commission: John V. Howard, Jr.; William G. Kane

GOCO Leadership

Lise Aangeenbrug, Executive Director
Peter Ericson, Chief Operating Officer

More information is available at goco.org/board.

GOCO UPDATES

- GOCO is now paperless. Grant applications are now submitted through an online portal, eliminating the use of hundreds of thousands of sheets of paper.
- GOCO now offers grant cycles annually instead of biannually to best meet the needs of our grantees.