



# Grand PLACES 2050



## 2023 Annual Report

### What is Grand PLACES 2050?

Grand PLACES 2050 is a coalition of local government entities, nonprofit groups, state and federal land managers, and businesses. We focus on Grand County's PLACES - people, land, access, conservation, ecosystems, and sustainability. Grand PLACES 2050 collaborates to protect and conserve natural and cultural resources while providing equitable access and a quality outdoor recreation experience for current and future generations.

### Vision

Grand PLACES 2050 strives to become a model coalition that sustainably manages our natural and cultural resources in balance with quality outdoor recreation experiences.



# WELCOME TO GRAND COUNTY



## A Brief History



Grand PLACES 2050 was formed out of a desire to address the rapid growth and demand for outdoor recreation in the region. The group convened in June of 2019 as “East Grand PLACES 2050” kicking off with local and regional participants. Leaders from Winter Park Resort, the Town of Winter Park, and the Arapaho & Roosevelt National Forest provided guidance to think through timely questions: How do we capitalize on the growing outdoor recreation economy? How do we deal with human resource and other constraints? How can we blur jurisdictional boundaries and proactively create solutions to these issues? And finally, how can we move forward?

Following the initial meeting, East Grand PLACES 2050 was formed, developed a work plan, and achieved several key milestones, including the mapping of outdoor recreation hotspots in 2019 and the finalization of an MOU between all governmental parties in 2020. Eventually, the group formally transitioned to Grand PLACES 2050 to encompass the entire county and more fully realize its vision. The group gained new momentum in 2022, adopting a Charter and Operating Guidelines.



## 2023 Highlights

Grand Places 2050 is excited to present our annual report for the year 2023, showcasing the collaborative efforts of our partners in the Grand County community. This year's accomplishments highlight our commitment to sustainable land management and the enhancement of public lands for outdoor recreation. In 2023 the collaborative approved a communications plan, Grand County created a new [webpage](#) to support the Grand Places mission, continued to support the Stewardship Ambassador Program and met monthly to discuss the challenges facing our community. The following updates from our key partners reflect the dedication and progress made in alignment with the goals and objectives of Grand Places 2050.

**The Town of Fraser** has been a driving force behind numerous initiatives in 2023, aligning closely with the Grand Places 2050 vision. The Fraser River Corridor Master Plan, adopted in 2018, guided three significant projects this year. A public bathroom with water/wastewater services was constructed near the Lions Ponds area. Upgrades to Marianne's Trail for year-round use were completed and plans for a bike park and playground in the Lions Ponds area were initiated. These projects are integral steps in transforming the Cozens Ranch Open Space into a multi-use signature park. The Town of Fraser also demonstrated its commitment through sponsorship of two projects on National Public Lands Day 2023.

**Hot Sulphur Springs** continued to focus on town growth management, updating its comprehensive plan. A significant trail maintenance project in Himebaugh Gulch, supported by the Open Lands, Rivers, and Trails fund, was completed with the help of a National Public Lands Day volunteer crew. The addition of erosion control structures and a new trailhead with an information kiosk demonstrates the commitment to sustainable use and preservation of the area.

**Kremmling** made strides in enhancing its Town Square with the construction of a new Pavilion that captures the historic western charm of the area. This pavilion, located near the Kremmling Visitor Center and Chamber of Commerce, provides a picturesque spot for picnics and appreciation of the surrounding cliffs. Additionally, Kremmling completed a vital pedestrian connection on HWY 40, facilitating access to essential services for the community.

**The Town of Granby**, thanks to the support from their partners at HTA, advanced work on the Fraser to Granby Trail. In the coming year, Granby is contracted to complete the "halfway pathway" along highway 40 connecting the City Market and Grand Elk area to downtown and Kaibab park. Additionally, the town expects to close on the conservation easement of the Shorefox Property for approximately 780 acres with a trail system to be built in the future. This conserves part of the property as a year-round closure and another portion of the property as a winter closure for migration routes. It connects to larger protected and public lands from BLM, C Lazy U, and Northern Water.

The Town of Winter Park continues to be a key supporter of the Grand Places 2050 initiative and efforts in Grand County. The Town continues to serve on the Steering Committee for Grand Places 2050 as well as serving as the fiscal agent for the group. In addition to providing administrative support to Grand Places, the Town continues to fund a variety of projects and initiatives that benefit and improve the public lands surrounding our community. As the home of Winter Park Resort, the Town of Winter Park works to manage the challenges posed by the increasing visitation to Grand County and the impacts placed on the community's natural resources. To manage these impacts, the Town initiated the Parks, Trails, Open Space and Campgrounds study to provide guidance on the needed improvements to the community's natural assets to preserve our environment and ensure a positive experience for all residents and guests. The Town is also advancing its Vasquez Creek Trail Improvement project, which will address areas of degradation adjacent to Vasquez Creek while creating appropriate access points for visitors to see and experience the creek up close.

In August, the Grand County Board of County Commissioners approved placing Grand County Ballot Issue 1A, Open Lands, Rivers and Trails Measure, extending and expanding use of the 0.3% countywide sales tax for the operation of the Open Lands, Rivers and Trails (OLRT) Fund on the November ballot, which citizens subsequently passed in November. Beginning in 2024, the OLRT fund may be also be used for river restoration and wildfire mitigation projects, and for operational costs for approved non-profit applicants. OLRT grants help support Grand PLACES 2050 members and partners to fulfill the PLACES mission of sustainably managing Grand County's natural resources while offering quality outdoor recreation experiences

Headwaters Trails Alliance (HTA) achieved remarkable milestones in 2023, boasting its largest summer field staff in history and launching a paid Stewardship Ambassador program. Trail assessment and maintenance spanned 561 miles, including the construction of 5.8 miles of new trail and rerouting 3.3 miles of unsustainable trail. The organization hosted the 6th Annual Colorado Trails Symposium and made substantial trailhead improvements at 15 locations. Notably, the successful passage of the Open Lands, Rivers, and Trails (1A) 2023 ballot measure secured 73% of the vote, ensuring continued support for conservation and recreation projects. For more details on HTA's 2023 achievements, visit: [Headwaters Trails Alliance](#).



BEFORE

AFTER



Photo credit to Meg Soyars with SkyHighNews. <https://www.skyhighnews.com/news/kremmling-celebrates-new-pavilion-in-town-square/>

Winter Park Resort is a key supporter of the Grand Places 2050 initiative and efforts in Grand County to restore, maintain and improve the public lands surrounding our community. Ever increasing visitation to the resort and Grand County has meant increased impacts on the community's natural resources including our trail systems and camping areas. Winter Park received acceptance of their updated USFS Master Development Plan (MDP) in the Fall of 2022. They are working with their partners at the USFS to assess, plan, and implement a number of projects that are contained in the MDP, including additional hiking trails on the mountain to provide "controlled" access to high alpine environments as well as other enhancements to the Resort's operations to increase the variety of recreational opportunities for those visiting Winter Park and the surrounding communities. Winter Park continues to work with all community partners on improvements and preservation of the community's natural assets to ensure a positive experience for all residents and guests for years to come. As one of the larger Forest Service special use permit holders in the area, Winter Park is dedicated to the efforts of Grand Places 2050. Winter Park Resort serves on the Steering Committee.

U.S. Forest Service (USFS), with the comprehensive support and involvement in the Grand PLACES 2050 group, had numerous achievements in the 2023 summer season. The Sulphur Ranger District installed 3 new restrooms: a replacement at Meadow Creek, one replacement at Junco Trailhead and a new unit at the AA Bar Barn. Youth conservation crews assisted the USFS throughout the summer including the Rocky Mountain Conservancy's Conservation Corps (RMC-CC) and the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps (RMYC), funded through the Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) Good OHV Management Grant. The RMC-CC crew spent the summer working with different crews in the recreation program constructing and maintaining trails, building buck and rail fencing, installing signs, and brushing out parking spots at Monarch Lake. The RMYC crew teamed up with the CPW OHV grant-funded Grand Lake trail Crew working in the East Troublesome Burn Scar Rehabbing trails and built buck and rail fencing in the Grand Lake Trail System. The USFS partnered with HTA on several projects across the district including trail smart sizing and several bridges along the High Lonesome Trail with the Continental Divide Trail Coalition (CDTC). On the top of Rollins Pass, 860ft of buck and rail fencing was constructed with Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado (VOC), CDTC and GLTC. On National Public Lands DAY (NPLD), 10 sections of buck and rail fencing in the Stillwater Pass Area and a 30-foot turnpike on Chainsaw trail in Fraser were completed. Additionally, the USFS worked in collaboration with HTA to launch the Stewardship Ambassador Program. The ambassadors were stationed at four locations: Destination Granby, Winter Park Visitor Center, Monarch Lake Cabin, and Junco Cabin. The ambassadors interacted with more than 14,000 visitors on weekends between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

Rocky Mountain National Park, and the National Park Service (NPS), continued advancing the goals of the Visitor Services Assistants (VSA) work group created in 2020, in response to high visitation. The VSA work group was specifically created to manage the parking situation at the Alpine Visitor Center. When COVID hit and the park transitioned to timed entry, the VSAs were used in other areas, such as managing long lines at the entrance station and turning cars around during timed entry. The VSAs also work at outlying trailheads such as East and North Inlet in Grand Lake. The focus here is timed entry between 9-2, but also Leave No Trace (LNT) and Preventative Search and Rescue (PSAR). Moving forward VSAs will continue to staff the East and North Inlet Trailheads. The NPS will experiment with rotating through the Grand Lake chamber. Cross-training with HTAs Trailhead Ambassadors could provide more presence at Grand Lake Trailheads, focusing on Ambassadors being present outside of the 9-2 timed entry window if working park trailhead. Cross-training could include LNT, PSAR, de-escalation, park regulations, alternative trip planning for lesser impacted areas. There is also a park volunteer group that roves within a mile of trailheads. This group focuses on PSAR contacts. The NPS, through their engagement with the Grand Places collaborative, is interested in exploring how the Grand Lake area groups can work together to lessen impacts to high use areas, especially the timed entry domino effects to other areas in town and on the National Forest.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) OHV Crew played a crucial role in 2023, addressing land management challenges by hiring well-qualified Rocky Mountain Youth Corp members. Their efforts included trail dozer training, increased staff presence at North Sand Hills and Wolford Recreation Areas, and collaboration with local ATV clubs for cleanup and signage projects. Notable accomplishments involved maintenance of fences, installation of kiosks and metal width restrictors, and substantial improvements to drainage along various trails.

This year, the **Grand County, Colorado Tourism Board (GCCTB)** invested in a fresh, dynamic brand, and our modern, user-friendly website authentically represents Grand County. The rebrand has amplified their online visibility and established a robust framework for enhanced engagement with their target demographic. The board has grown stronger with adding five new members, each bringing diverse perspectives and expertise. Education and community engagement have been at the heart of GCCTB efforts this year. GCTB sponsored three impactful Google Business Seminars, equipping local enterprises with invaluable insights and resources to thrive in the digital arena. Furthermore, GCCTB assumed a significant role as a primary sponsor for the Grand County Economic Summit. Recognizing social media's pivotal role in today's interconnected landscape, GCCTB enlisted a social media contractor to enhance our online presence and interact with their audience across diverse platforms.

In December 2023, **Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW)** successfully released 10 Gray Wolves in Grand and Summit Counties, marking a significant milestone in their conservation efforts. Throughout the year, CPW has diligently monitored the wolf populations across Colorado, fostering collaboration with stakeholders and partners. This includes hosting informative meetings and specialized training sessions for agricultural producers, as well as disseminating vital information to our communities about coexisting with wolves during recreational activities.

Additionally, in 2023, CPW undertook the initiative to stock Shadow Mountain Reservoir with Tiger Musky, enhancing the biodiversity of our aquatic ecosystems. Concurrently, CPW has been updating their herd management plan for elk, ensuring sustainable practices that benefit both the wildlife and our community.

Community engagement remains a cornerstone of our mission. By partnering with organizations such as the Winter Wildlife Alliance and the Grand Places group, CPW continues to advocate for responsible recreation. These joint efforts aim to educate recreationalists on the importance of minimizing their impact on wintering wildlife, striving for a harmonious balance between recreational pursuits and wildlife conservation.

Grand Places 2050 expresses gratitude for the unwavering commitment of our partners and the collective efforts that have transformed our vision into tangible achievements. We look forward to continued collaboration and success in the year ahead, confident that together we can create a lasting legacy of sustainable recreation for Grand County and its residents.



# Participating Organizations

Grand PLACES 2050 is composed of the following members and partner organizations.



**Grand County**  
Colorado



**COLORADO  
HEADWATERS  
LAND TRUST**



for more information visit:

[https://co.grand.co.us/1546/Grand-PLACES-](https://co.grand.co.us/1546/Grand-PLACES-2050#:~:text=Grand%20PLACES%202050%20is%20a,conservation%2C%20ecosystems%2C%20and%20sustainability.)

[2050#:~:text=Grand%20PLACES%202050%20is%20a,conservation%2C%20ecosystems%2C%20and%20sustainability.](https://co.grand.co.us/1546/Grand-PLACES-2050#:~:text=Grand%20PLACES%202050%20is%20a,conservation%2C%20ecosystems%2C%20and%20sustainability.)